

= Royal Tunbridge Wells =

Royal Tunbridge Wells (often shortened to Tunbridge Wells) is a large affluent town in western Kent , England , about 40 miles (64 km) south @-@ east of central London by road , 34 @.@ 5 miles (55 @.@ 5 km) by rail . The town is close to the border of the county of East Sussex . It is situated at the northern edge of the High Weald , the sandstone geology of which is exemplified by the rock formations at the Wellington Rocks and High Rocks .

The town came into being as a spa in the Restoration and had its heyday as a tourist resort under Beau Nash when the Pantiles and its chalybeate spring attracted visitors who wished to take the waters . Though its popularity waned with the advent of sea bathing , the town remains popular and derives some 30 percent of its income from the tourist industry .

The town has a population of around 56 @,@ 500 and is the administrative centre of Tunbridge Wells Borough and the UK parliamentary constituency of Tunbridge Wells . In the United Kingdom , Royal Tunbridge Wells has a reputation as being the archetypal conservative " Middle England " town , a stereotype that is typified by the fictional letter @-@ writer " Disgusted of Tunbridge Wells "

= = History = =

Evidence suggests that during the Iron Age people farmed the fields and mined the iron @-@ rich rocks in the Tunbridge Wells area , and excavations in 1940 and 1957 ? 61 by James Money at High Rocks uncovered the remains of a defensive hill @-@ fort . It is thought that the site was occupied into the era of Roman Britain , and the area continued to be part of the Wealden iron industry until its demise in the late eighteenth century ? indeed , an iron forge remains in the grounds of Bayham Abbey , in use until 1575 and documented until 1714 .

The area which is now Tunbridge Wells was part of the parish of Speldhurst for hundreds of years , but the origin of the town as it is today , however , came in the seventeenth century . In 1606 Dudley , Lord North , a courtier to James I who was staying at a hunting lodge in Eridge in the hope that the country air might improve his ailing constitution , discovered a chalybeate spring . He drank from the spring and , when his health improved , he became convinced that it had healing properties . He persuaded his rich friends in London to try it , and by the time Queen Henrietta Maria , wife of King Charles I , visited in 1630 it had established itself as a spa retreat . By 1636 it had become so popular that two houses were built next to the spring to cater for the visitors , one for the ladies and one for the gentlemen , and in 1664 Lord Muskerry , Lord of the Manor , enclosed it with a triangular stone wall , and built a hall " to shelter the dippers in wet weather . "

Until 1676 little permanent building took place ? visitors were obliged either to camp on the downs or to find lodgings at Southborough , ? but at this time houses and shops were erected on the walks , and every " convenient situation near the springs " was built upon . Also in 1676 a subscription for a " chapel of ease " was opened , and in 1684 the Church of King Charles the Martyr was duly built and the town began to develop around it . In 1787 Edward Hasted described the new town as consisting of four small districts , " named after the hills on which they stand , Mount Ephraim , Mount Pleasant and Mount Sion ; the other is called the Wells ... "

The 1680s saw a building boom in the town : carefully planned shops were built beside the 175 yards (160 m) long Pantiles promenade (then known as the Walks) , and the Mount Sion road , on which lodging house keepers were to build , was laid out in small plots . Tradesmen in the town dealt in the luxury goods demanded by their patrons , which would certainly have included Tunbridge ware , a kind of decoratively inlaid woodwork .

" They have made the wells very commodious by the many good building all about it and two or three miles around which are lodgings for the company that drink the waters . All the people buy their own provisions at the market , which is just by the wells and is furnished with great plenty of all sorts of fish and fowl . The walk which is between high trees on the market side which are shops full of all sorts of toys , silver , china , milliners and all sorts of curious wooden ware besides which there are two large coffee houses for tea , chocolate etc. and two rooms for the lottery and hazard board (

i.e. for gambling) . " ? Celia Fiennes , 1697

Following Dr Richard Russell 's 1750 treatise advocating sea water as a treatment for diseases of the glands , fashions in leisure changed and sea bathing became more popular than visiting the spas , which resulted in fewer visitors coming to the town . Nevertheless , the advent of turnpike roads gave Tunbridge Wells better communications ? on weekdays a public coach made nine return journeys between Tunbridge Wells and London , and postal services operated every morning except Monday and every evening except Saturday . During the eighteenth century the growth of the town continued , as did its patronage by the wealthy leisured classes ? it received celebrity cachet from visits by figures such as Cibber , Johnson , Garrick , Richardson and the successful bookseller Andrew Millar and his wife ? and in 1735 Richard (Beau) Nash appointed himself as master of ceremonies for all the entertainments that Tunbridge Wells had to offer . He remained in this position until his death in 1762 , and under his patronage the town reached the height of its popularity as a fashionable resort .

By the early nineteenth century Tunbridge Wells experienced growth as a place for the well @-@ to @-@ do to visit and make their homes . It became a fashionable resort town again following visits by the Duchess of Kent , Queen Victoria and Prince Albert , and benefited from a new estate on Mount Pleasant and the building of the Trinity church in 1827 , and improvements made to the town and the provision of facilities such as gas lighting and a police service meant that by 1837 the town population had swelled to 9 @,@ 100 . In 1842 an omnibus service was set up that ran from Tonbridge to Tunbridge Wells , enabling visitors to arrive from London within two hours , and in 1845 the town was linked to the railway network via a branch from South Eastern Railway 's London @-@ Hastings Hastings Line at Tonbridge . During this time Decimus Burton developed John Ward 's Calverley Park estate .

In 1889 the town was awarded the status of a Borough , and it entered the 20th century in a prosperous state . 1902 saw the opening of an Opera House , and in 1909 the town received its " Royal " prefix . Due to its position in South East England , during the First World War Tunbridge Wells was made a headquarters for the army , and its hospitals were used to treat soldiers who had been sent home with a " blighty wound " ; the town also received 150 Belgian refugees . The Second World War affected Tunbridge Wells in a different way ? it became so swollen with refugees from London that accommodation was severely strained . Over 3 @,@ 800 buildings were damaged by bombing , but only 15 people lost their lives .

= = = Toponymy = = =

Edward Hasted made the assertion that although the wells were originally named the " Queen 's @-@ Wells " , they soon took on the name of Tunbridge Wells due to their proximity to the town of Tonbridge (then known as " Tunbridge ") :

In compliment to [queen Henrietta Maria 's] doctor , Lewis Rowzee , in his treatise on them , calls these springs the Queen 's @-@ wells ; but this name lasted but a small time , and they were soon afterwards universally known by that of Tunbridge @-@ wells , which names they acquired from the company usually residing at Tunbridge town , when they came into these parts for the benefit of drinking the waters ? Edward Hasted , 1797

The prefix " Royal " dates to 1909 , when King Edward VII granted the town its official " Royal " title to celebrate its popularity over the years among members of the royal family . Royal Tunbridge Wells is one of only three towns in England to have been granted this (the others being Royal Leamington Spa and Royal Wootton Bassett , which became a Royal town in 2011) .

Although " Wells " has a plural form , it refers to the principal source , the chalybeate spring in the Pantiles (where the waters were taken) .

= = Governance = =

Royal Tunbridge Wells is the administrative centre for both Tunbridge Wells Borough and the parliamentary constituency of Tunbridge Wells . The Borough is governed by 48 Councillors ,

representing 20 wards (eight wards fall within the town of Tunbridge Wells itself) . Elections are held for 16 Council seats each year on a rotational basis , with elections to Kent County Council taking place in the fourth year of the cycle . Each councillor serves a four @-@ year term .

Tunbridge Wells local elections show a pattern since 1973 of Conservative party dominance , apart from a two @-@ year period from 1994 to 1996 of no overall control and a two @-@ year period from 1996 to 1998 when the Liberal Democrats held a majority . The most recent elections , held in May 2008 , gave the Conservatives a large majority with 44 seats compared with the Liberal Democrats ' four . The extent of the Conservatives ' dominance is further illustrated by the fact that in some wards (e.g. Park) Labour did not even field a candidate in the 2008 council elections .

The Member of Parliament for Tunbridge Wells is the Conservative Greg Clark , who was elected in 2005 with a majority of 9 @, @ 988 and held the seat in 2010 with a majority of 15 @, @ 576 . The constituency has been Conservative since its inception in 1974 for the 1974 General Election ; the two previous MPs were Sir Patrick Mayhew (1974 ? 1997) and the former Asda chairman Archie Norman (1997 ? 2005) .

= = Demography = =

In 2006 the town of Royal Tunbridge Wells was estimated to have a population of approximately 56 @, @ 500 . The wider borough of Royal Tunbridge Wells is home to considerably more people ? some 104 @, @ 000 in 2001 , up from around 99 @, @ 500 in 1991 .

The population of Royal Tunbridge Wells is predominantly White and British in its ethnic origin and Christian in its religious affiliation : 97 @. @ 5 % of residents of the district described themselves as white in the 2001 census , and 75 @. @ 0 % identified themselves as being Christian .

The statistics for crime in Royal Tunbridge Wells show that in 2005 / 6 there were fewer crimes occurring in the area than the national average .

= = Geography = =

Tunbridge Wells is located at 51 ° 07 ? 55 ? N 00 ° 15 ? 46 ? E on the Kentish border with East Sussex , about 31 miles (50 km) south of London ; the original centre of the settlement lies directly on the Kent / East Sussex border , as recalled by the county boundary flagstone that still lies outside the church of King Charles the Martyr .

The town is situated at the northern edge of the High Weald , a ridge of hard sandstone that runs across southern England from Hampshire along the borders of Surrey , West Sussex , East Sussex and Kent ? the town 's geology is illustrated by the exposed sandstone outcrops at the Wellington Rocks and High Rocks (a Site of Special Scientific Interest due to its exposed gulls) , and the quarries at nearby Langton Green from which sandstone was taken to build houses in Tunbridge Wells . The town is sited at the head of a valley that runs south @-@ east to Groombridge ; like the River Teise , which originates in Tunbridge Wells , the stream in the valley is one of the many tributaries of the River Medway , which runs through a much larger valley north of the High Weald .

Nearby villages have been subsumed into the built @-@ up area of the town , so that now it incorporates High Brooms to the north , Hawkenbury to the south , and Rusthall (whose name resonates with the iron content of the rocks) to the west .

= = = Twinning = = =

Royal Tunbridge Wells is twinned with :
Wiesbaden , Germany

In 1960 , through an advertisement in the national press , contact was made between former paratroopers in Wiesbaden and four English ex @-@ servicemen in Royal Tunbridge Wells . Through this contact the friendship that now exists between the two towns sprang up , leading to the signing in 1989 of the official Twinning Charter . Also through this the Tunbridge Wells Twinning and Friendship Association (TWTFa) was formed .

== Climate ==

Tunbridge Wells, like the rest of Britain, has a temperate maritime climate, lacking in weather extremes. The nearest official weather station is Goudhurst, about 8 @. 5 mi (14 km) to the east of the town centre.

The absolute maximum temperature in Goudhurst stands at 34 @. 7 ° C (94 @. 5 ° F), recorded in August 1990, compared to the average annual warmest day maximum of 28 @. 7 ° C (83 @. 7 ° F). In total, 11 @. 8 days should attain a temperature of 25 @. 1 ° C (77 @. 2 ° F) or above.

The absolute minimum temperature recorded in Goudhurst was ? 19 @. 2 ° C (? 2 @. 6 ° F) during January 1940, compared to the average annual coldest night minimum of ? 8 @. 3 ° C (17 @. 1 ° F). In total 52 @. 8 nights should report an air frost.

Annual rainfall averages in Goudhurst 823 @. 3 mm (32 @. 41 in), with over 1 mm (0 in) falling on 120 @. 7 days.

== Economy ==

The economy of the town no longer depends on the chalybeate spring. Hardly anyone comes to the town purely to take the waters.

As of 2002 there were around 50 @, 000 people employed in the borough of Tunbridge Wells. The largest sector of the local economy consists of hotels, restaurants, and retail (the centrally located Royal Victoria Place shopping centre, opened in 1992, covers 29 @, 414 square metres (316 @, 610 sq ft)), which accounts for around 30 % of all jobs; the finance and business sector makes up just under a quarter of jobs, as does the public administration, education and health sector. Royal Tunbridge Wells is arguably the most important retail centre between London and Hastings.

The largest single employer in the town used to be the Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust, at the Kent and Sussex and Pembury Hospitals, employing around 2500 people; the largest single commercial employer was AXA PPP healthcare, employing around 1 @, 700 in four offices (PPP House, Union House, Phillips House and International House). Tunbridge Wells enjoys a relatively low unemployment rate of around 1 @. 0 % as of August 2008, compared to a UK national rate of around 5 @. 4 %.

== Transport ==

Tunbridge Wells is at the hub of a series of roads, the primary ones being the A26, which runs from Maidstone to Newhaven; the A264, which runs from Five Oaks to Pembury (via Crawley and East Grinstead); and the A267, which runs south from Tunbridge Wells to Hailsham. The A21 passes to the east of the town, following the route of its turnpike ancestor, from London to Hastings.

Bus services are operated chiefly by Arriva Kent & Sussex, providing local town and rural services to Tonbridge, Paddock Wood and Sevenoaks, as well as express services to locations such as Bromley and Maidstone. Eastbourne and Brighton on the south coast are accessible on services run by Stagecoach in Eastbourne and Brighton & Hove respectively, and Metrobus operates hourly services to Crawley.

Tunbridge Wells town historically had three railway stations: two of these are still in use by National Rail services. Tunbridge Wells station is, as its former name of Tunbridge Wells Central suggests, centrally located within the town at the end of the High Street, whilst High Brooms station is situated in High Brooms, to the north of the town. Both stations are located on the double @-@ tracked electrified Hastings Line; services are operated by the Southeastern train operating company.

Tunbridge Wells West station was opened by the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway in 1866 as the terminus of its competing line to Tunbridge Wells, but closed in 1985 along with that

line . The station building ? a Grade II listed building ? is now a restaurant , and a Sainsbury 's supermarket occupies the former goods yard . In 1996 , however , part of the line was reopened by the Tunbridge Wells and Eridge Railway Preservation Society , which now ? as the Spa Valley Railway ? operates a steam heritage railway that runs from Tunbridge Wells West to Eridge via High Rocks and Groombridge . The western end of the service was extended from Groombridge to Eridge , on the London @-@ Uckfield line of Southern Railway , on 25 March 2011 , serving a platform at Eridge which had been disused for many years . The tunnelled link line between the West and erstwhile Central stations , opened in 1876 , remains closed .

In 2009 Network Rail installed a 12 @-@ car turnback siding just south of Tunbridge Wells station between the Grove Hill and Strawberry Hill tunnels , at a cost of £ 10 @.@ 4 million , to allow London trains starting or terminating at Tunbridge Wells to be operated in 12 @-@ car formations , providing the rolling stock was equipped with Selective Door Opening (e.g. the Class 375 trains which currently run to Tunbridge Wells) . Previously such services were 11 @-@ car at most due to the platform length between the tunnels at each end of Tunbridge Wells station . The new turnback siding also facilitated the operation of the new timetable from December 2009 with 4 trains per hour between London Charing Cross and Tunbridge Wells in the off @-@ peak , instead of only 2 trains per hour .

Average daily passenger flows on trains between Tunbridge Wells and London have increased from about 10 @,@ 000 in 1999 to over 12 @,@ 500 in 2008 , a compound growth rate of about 2 @.@ 5 percent per year . Average daily passenger flows between Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks , and between Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge , have grown considerably faster , though are still much smaller than the flows between Tunbridge Wells and London .

= = Education = =

Kent County Council is one of fifteen local authorities in the UK that still provides selective education through the eleven plus exam .

Royal Tunbridge Wells does not have a university of its own , but the Salomons Campus of Canterbury Christ Church University is located just outside the town (near Southborough) and provides postgraduate programmes .

= = Sports = =

= = = Football = = =

Tunbridge Wells ' football team , Tunbridge Wells F.C. , plays in the Southern Counties East Football League at the Culverden Stadium , and has a history that stretches back to 1886 . Tunbridge Wells F.C. were finalists in the 2013 FA Vase and competed at Wembley Stadium on 4 May , coming second to Spennymoor .

= = = Motorsport = = =

Tunbridge Wells Motor Club is one of the oldest motor clubs in the UK , being founded in 1911 . It is still active in the Tunbridge Wells area promoting grass roots motorsport organising an autotest series and several sprint races throughout the year at circuits such as Lydden Hill and Goodwood .

= = = Rugby Union = = =

Tunbridge Wells RFC plays its home games at St Mark 's , and plays London 2 South East Rugby at RFU level 7 .

= = = Rugby League = = =

Weald Warriors RLFC are a Rugby League team based in the town , also at St Mark 's . The Warriors were founded in 2012 and currently compete in the 4th tier of English rugby league in the London & South East Men 's League .

= = = Cricket = = =

The Nevill Ground hosts county and international cricket , and Kent County Cricket Club uses it regularly as one of its outgrounds . Tunbridge Wells came into the cricketing spotlight during the 1983 Cricket World Cup when Kapil Dev and Syed Kirmani scored 126 not out for India against Zimbabwe at the Nevill Ground on 6 July 1983 ; this is the record for the highest 9th wicket partnership score in a one @-@ day international . Also based at the Nevill Ground is Tunbridge Wells Hockey Club , which competes in the Kent / Sussex Regional (men) and East Premier (women) divisions .

Linden Park Cricket Club , which plays in local leagues , hosts its home matches at the Higher Cricket Ground on Tunbridge Wells Common .

= = = Swimming = = =

The RTW Monson Swimming Club competes in swimming , diving and water polo and is based at the Tunbridge Wells Sports Centre . Former Monson member Joanne Rout , née Round , took part in the Swimming events at the 1988 Summer Paralympics in Seoul , aged just 12 , winning two relay Gold Medals (also setting two new world records) and three individual Silver Medals ; and as of 2012 remains the youngest ever British Paralympian . A plaque can be found located in the club 's trophy display . Tunbridge Wells Borough Council honoured Joanne with the award of their Civic Medallion after her return from Seoul in recognition of her efforts and achievements at such a young age .

= = = Running = = =

The Tunbridge Wells Half Marathon is an open road race that takes place every February , organised by the Tunbridge Wells Harriers running club .

= = = Squash = = =

Tunbridge Wells Squash Club on London Road is a traditional Squash (sport) club with three courts . There are internal leagues for squash and raquetball , and both men 's and ladies ' teams in the Kent Priory squash league .

= = Public services = =

Health services are provided by the West Kent Primary Care Trust . Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust runs the new Tunbridge Wells Hospital at Pembury (usually referred to as Pembury Hospital) , nearly three miles (4 @.@ 8 km) from the town , which opened in 2011 .

Royal Tunbridge Wells is policed by Kent Police , and in May 2000 the main police station for the area moved from Royal Tunbridge Wells to a new building in Tonbridge and operations at the Royal Tunbridge Wells station , in Crescent Road , were scaled back so that it now operates as an administrative centre . Fire services are carried out by Kent Fire and Rescue Service , which operates one station in Grove Hill Road that is manned 24 hours a day by both full @-@ time and retained firefighters .

The electricity Distribution Network Operator is UK Power Networks , and water services are managed by Southern Water ; the main reservoir in the area is Bewl Water .

The Kent and Sussex Crematorium and Cemetery opened in 1873 , known initially as the Frant

Forest Cemetery due to its location , laid out over 23 acres (9 @. @ 3 ha) by the then town surveyor .

Royal Tunbridge Wells also has a library , museum and art gallery in Civic Way .

= = Cultural references = =

References to Royal Tunbridge Wells occur in literature as diverse as Arthur Conan Doyle 's The Valley of Fear , H. G. Wells ' Christina Alberta 's Father , Thomas Pynchon 's Gravity 's Rainbow , Philip Reeve 's Mortal Engines , E. M. Forster 's A Room with a View , Oscar Wilde 's The Importance of Being Earnest and Zadie Smith 's White Teeth . The Inspector Bone mysteries by Susannah Stacey are also set in and around Tunbridge Wells . In Fanny Burney 's 1796 novel Camilla , several characters make an excursion to Tunbridge Wells , and there are many references to The Pantiles and other local sites . In Bleak House by Charles Dickens the children find a mug in the cupboard entitled " A Present From Tunbridge Wells . "

David Lean 's epic film Lawrence of Arabia closes with Mr. Dryden answering King Feisal : " Me , your Highness ? On the whole , I wish I 'd stayed in Tunbridge Wells " , and in the James Bond film On Her Majesty 's Secret Service Tracy Di Vincenzo says to Bond that she " looks forward to living as Mr and Mrs James Bond of Acacia Avenue , Tunbridge Wells " . Less well known is H. G. Wells 's sending up in his 1925 book Christina Alberta 's Father : " Tunbridge Wells is Tunbridge Wells , and there is nothing really like it upon our planet " .

In Spitting Image , when Britain enters a revolution , Royal Tunbridge Wells declares independence under the slogan of ' liberty , equality , gardening ' .

In the TV sketch comedy series Rutland Weekend Television , there is a musical sketch that tells the tale of 3 US Navy sailors who plan to spend an exciting ? " More exciting than a book of Norman Mailer 's " ? and glamour @-@ filled 24 hours in Royal Tunbridge Wells .

= = = " Disgusted " = = =

In the UK Royal Tunbridge Wells has a reputation as being a bastion of the middle class and a typical example of " Middle England " . This is reflected by the locution " Disgusted of Tunbridge Wells " , a fictional writer of letters to national newspapers in the 1950s to express outrage and defend conservative values .

= = Parks and landmarks = =

The Pantiles and its chalybeate spring have been the landmarks most readily associated with Royal Tunbridge Wells ever since the founding of the town , though the 5 @-@ metre @-@ high (16 ft) steel Millennium Clock at the Fiveways area in the centre of town , designed by local sculptor Jon Mills for the Millennium celebrations , stakes a claim to be a modern landmark .

Tunbridge Wells contains green spaces that range from woodland to maintained grounds and parks . The most substantial areas of woodland are the Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Commons , which comprise 250 acres (0 @. @ 39 sq mi ; 1 @. @ 0 km2) of wood and heathland and are close to the centre of the town . Open areas of the common are popular picnic spots , and there is a maintained cricket ground situated next to Wellington Rocks .

Located in the town centre opposite the railway station , Calverley Grounds is a historic park with ornamental gardens and a bandstand (now demolished) . The park was part of Mount Pleasant House ? which was converted into a hotel in 1837 ? until 1920 when the Borough Council purchased it for the town . The bandstand dated from 1924 and was damaged by an incendiary bomb in 1940 and parts of the metalwork were sold for scrap metal . The subsequently repaired bandstand and the adjacent pavilion were intended to form part of a new centre to the park but were never completed . The bandstand was demolished in 2010 although the pavilion still exists as a café . Just inside the entrance to the park coming from the station is a memorial to Air Chief Marshal Lord Dowding , hero of the Battle of Britain , who lived and died in Tunbridge Wells .

Dunorlan Park , at 78 acres (0 @. @ 122 sq mi ; 0 @. @ 32 km2) the largest maintained green space in the town , was once a private garden that was part of the millionaire Henry Reed 's now demolished mansion , and only passed into public possession in 1941 . The gardens were designed by the renowned Victorian gardener James Green , but over the years they became overgrown , making it hard to distinguish the full scope of Marnock 's design . In 1996 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council applied to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a grant to restore the park in line with the original designs , and in 2003 / 4 Dunorlan underwent a £ 2 @. @ 8 million restoration . The River Teise rises in the park , and two dams on it have created a pond and a boating lake . Dunorlan is listed as Grade II on English Heritage 's National Register of Historic Parks and Gardens .

Great Culverden Park is a small , 9 ½ acre woodland in the Mt . Ephraim area behind the site of the old Kent and Sussex Hospital and is the remnant grounds of the previous Great Culverden House designed by Decimus Burton that used to stand on Mt . Ephraim .

The oldest public park in Royal Tunbridge Wells is Grosvenor Recreation Ground designed by landscape architect Robert Marnock , located close to the town centre on Quarry Road . It was opened in 1889 by Mayor John Stone @-@ Wigg , on the land that was formerly Caverley Waterworks . The lake area with dripping wells remains , but the other lakes , bandstand and open air pool have all gone . There is a bowls club , café , toilets and children 's play area , including cycle track . It is adjoined by the Hilbert recreation ground , parts of which have been designated as a local nature reserve by the Kent High Weald Partnership ; these include Roundabout Woods and the adjoining grass areas . The Hilbert Recreation Ground was donated to the town by Cllr Edward Strange in 1931 , on the site of the form John Beane 's Charity Farm . There are two football pitches , built as part of the King George V playing fields scheme , and a skatepark .

The Salomons Museum preserves the home of Sir David Salomons , the first Jew to serve as Lord Mayor of London and the first non @-@ Christian to sit in Parliament . It preserves the bench from which Salomons rose to speak as the first Jewish MP ever to speak in Parliament .

= = The arts = =

The town 's largest theatre is the Assembly Hall in Crescent Road , which has a capacity of 1020 . Nearby , in Church Road , is the Trinity Arts Centre which is a converted church .

The Forum is a 250 @-@ capacity live music venue in the town , run by Jason Dormon , where many bands have played their early concerts on their way to success .

Unfest is an annual free music festival which takes place in May .

Royal Tunbridge Wells held its first TEDxRoyalTunbridgeWells on 6 June 2015 .

= = Local media = =

Royal Tunbridge Wells has one local commercial radio station , KMFM West Kent . Many London stations can also be picked up in the town . The BBC has its regional centre in the town at the Great Hall Arcade . It is the base of BBC Radio Kent and for BBC South East regional programming , the complex containing studios , offices and a BBC shop .

= = Notable people = =