

## A Walsall Timeline

1086	Domesday Book mentions Aldridge, Bescot, Shelfield, Pelsall, Bloxwich, Great Barr and Rushall. Walsall is omitted, probably due to a clerical error. The town is first mentioned in 1159.
1200	St Matthew`s Church recorded
1220	King Henry III grants right to hold a weekly market and annual fair.
c.1225	Grant of Borough charter gives the burgesses of Walsall exemption from most feudal tolls and customs
c.1300	First reference to coal and iron ore being worked in Walsall: Margery Le Rousse, owner of one half of the manor, agrees to `share the profits` of any coal and iron ore raised.
1377	Burgess Roll commences, listing the town`s burgesses. First mention of mayor and town council
1386	Market cross mentioned
1416	Guildhall in the High Street mentioned
c.1540	Walsall described by John Leland as a little market town with many smiths and bit-makers, and coal, lime and ironstone pits.
1553	Nicholas and George Hawe petition Queen Mary for the establishment of a grammar school, to be endowed with former chantry lands.
1616	The Fishley Charity (still operating today) is established with money given by William Parker. It pays for the apprenticeships of poor boys.
1643	English CivilWar. Rushall Hall is besieged and taken by Prince Rupert and Royalist forces. Queen Henrietta Maria stays briefly in Caldmore.
1653	New enclosures in the town`s common fields are destroyed by rioters
1651	King Charles II is hidden by the Lane family of Bentley Hall following the disastrous battle of Worcester. He escapes to Bristol disguised as Jane Lane`s manservant.
1680	Walsall a flourishing centre of the lorinery trade: Dr Plot says the towns metalworkers “chiefly relate to somewhat of horsemanship” such as bits, stirrups and spurs
1700	Population of the Borough and Foreign estimated at 5500
1743	John Wesley attacked by the Walsall mob on the Bridge- he escapes over the fields via the mill dam, minus part of his coat.
1748	First Turnpike Act passed, enabling improvement of some local roads.
1777	Horse racing started on the Long Meadow. Annual race meetings held until 1876
1799	Walsall Canal opened, with terminus at Town End

1801	Population of Walsall 10,399
1819-21	St Matthew`s church extensively rebuilt.
1830	Lichfield Street constructed, replacing Rushall Street as the main road to Lichfield
1832	Serious cholera epidemic. Great Reform Act gives Walsall parliamentary representation for the first time. Walsall`s first MP, Charles Forster, is elected
1836	Walsall Poor Law Union set up .New workhouse opens in 1838 on the Pleck Road.
1837	Grand Junction Railway opens with station at Bescot Bridge
1847	Walsall railway station opens in Bridgeman Place, replaced by one in Station Street in 1849
1851	Population 26,816
1859	Jerome K. Jerome born in Walsall on May 2 <sup>nd</sup> . Free Library opened in Goodall Street.
1863	First cottage hospital established.
1865	Sister Dora comes to Walsall
1866	Walsall described as “the chief seat of saddlery manufacture in the kingdom”.
1870	Education Act makes schooling compulsory and free. It enables setting up of local school boards. Walsall School Board builds 8 new schools by 1884
1871-2	Smallpox epidemic kills 433
1872	Pelsall Hall colliery disaster kills 22, and 45 children orphaned
1874	Grand Opening of the Arboretum on 4 <sup>th</sup> May
1875	59 collieries in Walsall
1877	Walsall Swifts football club founded. Becomes Walsall Football Club in 1896 following merger with Walsall Town.
1878	New Cottage Hospital opened. Sister Dora dies a month later, aged 46. Statue erected to her memory in 1886.
1880	Explosion at Birchills kills 22 men.
1884	Council buys the Arboretum, to ensure free access
1886	Walsall and District Co-op society established
1890	Grand Theatre built in Park Street
1892	Walsall Anarchist `bomb plot` uncovered
1892	Electric tram service introduced, only the second overhead system in the country.
1900	<i>Her Majesty`s Theatre</i> opens at Town End.

	Local leather trades at their peak, employing about 10,000 people.
1901	Population rises to nearly 90,000- a ninefold increase since 1801.
1904	First car to be registered with a Walsall registration number, DH1.
1908	First cinema, <i>The Imperial</i> , opens
1905	New Council House and Town Hall opened in Lichfield Street. New library opens the following year.
1916	Zeppelin raid on Walsall causes panic. Several people are injured and a number of buildings destroyed. The mayoress later dies from her injuries.
1914-1918	Over 2000 Walsall men killed serving in the First World War
1920	First council house built
1931	New ring road opens, `The Broadway`. Unemployment reaches 30%
1933	Tram services withdrawn, largely replaced by trolley buses.
1935	5000 <sup>th</sup> council house built. `Slum clearance` takes place around Church Hill. Municipal airfield opened near Aldridge
1939-1945	World War II. Walsall factories work flat out manufacturing items such as steel helmets, Anderson shelters, and bomb components for the war effort.
Mid-1960s	Much of Walsall`s historic High Street is demolished and replaced by new concrete and glass `piazza`. Many terraced streets cleared and replaced by tower blocks, eg in The Chuckery and The Butts.
1964	Walsall Wood colliery closes, ending the town`s 700 year history of coal mining
1966	Willenhall and Darlaston become part of Walsall Borough as a result of local government reorganisation.
1968	Walsall section of the M6 opened
1970	Walsall`s last tannery, the historic Lower Rushall Street site, closes after three hundred years.
1974	Local government reorganisation. Borough`s boundaries extended to include Aldridge and Brownhills. Population now 270,000.
1979	Demolition of one of Walsall`s finest buildings, the George Hotel on the Bridge.
1980	Opening of Saddlers` shopping centre, and new railway station.
1988	Opening of Leather Museum, followed by Locksmith`s House Museum, Willenhall, and (in 2000) an Art Gallery at Town Wharf.
2007	Walsall`s population estimated at 253,000. Walsall still the leading centre in Europe for the making of saddlery and related horse equipment.
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