

A GUIDE TO
THE MURALS



THE
**Royal
Exchange**
SINCE 1571



History of The Royal Exchange

In 1566, the wealthy merchant Sir Thomas Gresham, known as the father of English banking, established The Royal Exchange as London's first purpose-built centre for trading stocks. The building was modelled on the Bourse in Antwerp, the world's oldest financial exchange, and was opened officially by Queen Elizabeth I in 1571, who awarded it a royal title and a license to sell alcohol.

In 1660, Thomas Gresham added two additional floors to house retail businesses, creating the first shopping mall in Britain.

The original building was destroyed in 1666 during the Great Fire of London, and a second site opened thereafter in 1669, built in a Baroque style. In 1838, whilst home to The Society of Lloyd's, it was destroyed by fire once more, most likely caused by an overheated stove in Lloyd's coffee house.



The murals as they were intended to be viewed, without obstacles.

In 1844, an architectural competition was launched to design the third and current The Royal Exchange, which was won by Sir William Tite. His designs reverted back to the original layout of the building, while adding an eight-column entrance inspired by the Pantheon in Rome. The building was officially opened by Queen Victoria in 1844.

From 1892, 24 scenes were painted on the first-floor walls by artists including Sir Frederic Leighton, Sir Frank Brangwyn and Stanhope Forbes. The murals run as a sequence depicting the British history of trade and commerce.



Throughout the early 1950s its courtyard was home to a theatre, and in 1980 it briefly returned to its trading past when the London International Financial Futures Exchange moved in, replacing the Victorian roof and adding two floors of new offices.

In 2001, the Grade I-listed building was extensively remodelled by architects Aukett Fitzroy Robinson to become the luxury shopping and dining destination we stand in today.

Visit theroyalexchange.co.uk/heritage for more information on the history of The Royal Exchange.

The Royal Exchange is home to twenty-four murals depicting scenes from London's history of trade and commerce painted by various artists including Sir Frederic Leighton, Sir Frank Brangwyn and Stanhope Forbes. Located at mezzanine level, the murals run as a sequence around the entire building covering events between 1895 to 1922.



Phoenicians trading with early Britons on the coast of Cornwall by Lord Frederick Leighton, 1895



Alfred The Great repairing the wall of the city of London by Sir Frank Salisbury, 1912



William The Conquerer granting a charter to the citizens
of London by J. Seymour Lucas, 1898



William II building the Tower of London
by C. Goldsborough Anderson, 1911



King John sealing the Magna Carta
by Ernest Normand, 1900



Sir Henry Picard, Master of the Vinters' Company, entertaining Kings of England,
France, Scotland, Denmark & Cyprus by Albert Chevallier Tayler, 1903



Sir Richard Whittington dispensing his Charities
by Henrietta Rae, 1900



Philip the Good presenting the charter to the Merchant
Adventurers by Elija A. Cox, 1916



Henry VI Battle of Barnet 1471, the Trained Bands marching to the support of Edward IV by John H. Amschewitz, 1911



Reconciliation of the Skinners & Merchant Taylors' Companies by Lord Mayor Billesden in 1484, by Edwin A. Abbey, 1904



The Crown offered to Richard III at Baynard's Castle
by Sigismund Goetze, 1898



The Foundation of St Paul's School, 1509
by William F Yeames, 1905



The opening of the first Royal Exchange by Queen Elizabeth I
by Ernest Crofts, 1899



Charles I demanding the Five Members at the Guildhall,
1641-42, by Solomon J. Solomon, 1897



The Great Fire of London, 1666,
by Stanhope Forbes, 1899



The Founding of the Bank of England, 27th July 1694,
by George Harcourt, 1904



Nelson leaving Portsmouth, 18th May 1803,
by Andrew C. Gow, 1903



The Destruction of the Second Royal Exchange in 1838,
by Stanhope Forbes, 1899



The Opening of the Royal Exchange by Her Majesty Queen Victoria,
28th October 1844, by Robert W. Macbeth, 1895



Women's Work in the Great War, 1914-1918,
by Lucy Kemp-Welch, 1922



Blocking of Zeebrugge Waterway, St George's Day, 23rd April 1918,
by W. L. Wyllie, 1920



Their Majesties King George V & Queen Mary visiting the Battle Districts
in France, 1917, by Sir Frank Salisbury, 1917



National Peace Thanksgiving Service on the steps of St Paul's Cathedral,
6th July 1919, by Sir Frank Salisbury, 1919



Modern Commerce
by Sir Frank Brangwyn, 1906

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