

Introducing the London Sri Murugan Temple

*O Lord Muruga, in the beautiful city of London,
which is garlanded by the fleeting Thames River,
at the heart of East Ham town,
is the temple that is Your divine abode*

The London Sri Murugan Temple was created for the spiritual needs of the growing Hindu Tamil community in London. It has undergone many transformations and moved throughout various locations in London to its present site in East Ham.

East Ham

The London Sri Murugan Temple is located in East Ham in the borough of Newham situated around 7 miles to the east of the City of London. East Ham is a culturally diverse area which is also home to a large Tamil community.

Four major Tamil migration waves to Britain

- 1940s – after Sri Lanka's independence from Britain
- 1960s – beginning of political unrest in Sri Lanka
- 1980s – 1990s – fleeing the civil war
- 2000s – secondary migration from Europe to Britain



London Sri Murugan Temple: Past

Early beginnings

Tamil migrants of the 1940s did not have a communal space for prayer. By the second mass migration wave of the 1960s the first spiritual Tamil Hindu organisation called the 'Hindu Association of Great Britain' was set up. Initially, the spiritual aims of this organisation were met with little enthusiasm as the migrants of the 60s felt that their stay was temporary and the development of community structures in the UK was not a priority. These attitudes, however, changed with the outbreak of civil war in Sri Lanka. This brought larger numbers of Tamils to the UK and the increasing realisation of the need to build a more permanent life in the UK.

April 1975: Tamil New Year celebrations

The 1975 Tamil New Year celebration (14.04.1975) marked the creation of the London Sri Murugan Temple. Pooas (prayers) were conducted at the home of one of the worshippers in London. Around 100 people attended and at the end of the celebration 78 of them joined forces as founding members of the Temple. As the number of worshippers increased the Temple moved across different locations in London.

London Sri Murugan Temple: Present

January 1983: Purchase of the Temple's current site

The community began fundraising for a permanent home for the Temple. On January 1983 it purchased the property on 78 Church Road which is the Temple's current location. It took a year to transform it into a Temple. The first priests were appointed from India and statues of deities and other religious artefacts were also brought in from India. Meanwhile, the Temple continued to buy the lands around the property for expansion.

1999-2005: Building the new Temple

In 1999 the construction of a new purpose built Temple began and lasted for 6 years. The original building was demolished. The deities were temporarily moved to a building next to the construction site where daily pooas (prayers) were carried out. In May 2005 a grand ceremony took place at the opening of the new Temple.



References:

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