

Digital Editions

The *Country Living Guide to Rural England - Berkshire* published by Travel Publishing in conjunction with *Country Living Magazine*, is one of a series of county-based digital travel guides covering England which will be made available to readers free of charge through the *All About You* website and through Travel Publishing's own websites.

The guides are based on the popular series of Country Living Guides to Rural England published in printed form which can be purchased through the *All About You* bookshop, *Country Living Magazine*, high street bookshops, internet retailers and Travel Publishing.

This digital guide to Berkshire is published in PDF format which means that you can browse the guide page by page or simply search for specific villages or towns (see pages 4 and 5). You can also print off individual pages of your choice if you are planning a visit to a particular area of Berkshire or, alternatively, the whole of the digital guide.

If you want more information on the places to see, stay, eat, drink or shop advertised in this guide all you need to do is click on the relevant website or e-mail address contained in the advertisement.

We do hope you like using this version of the *Country Living* rural guide and that it helps you enjoy exploring the county of Berkshire. We are always interested in receiving comments on places covered (or not covered) in our guides so please do not hesitate to give us your considered comments by e-mailing us on info@travelpublishing.co.uk.

For more information on other titles in the Country Living Rural Guide series or any other Travel Publishing titles (printed or digital) or to buy a printed guide please visit the *All About You* website on www.allaboutyou.com/countryliving or one of the Travel Publishing websites - www.travelpublishing.co.uk and www.findsomewhere.co.uk.

Travel Publishing

© Travel Publishing Ltd

All content within this edition is protected by the UK copyright of Travel Publishing Ltd. All rights reserved. This material may be used only for internal, informational, noncommercial purposes. You may not modify or alter the content in any way. You may not, without obtaining Travel Publishing's written permission, republish, redistribute, or otherwise make any copies except for personal use. You may not use the material in a manner that suggests an association with any of our publications or services.

Guide to Rural England

BERKSHIRE



WHERE TO GO | WHAT TO SEE | WHAT TO DO
WHERE TO STAY | WHERE TO EAT | WHERE TO BUY
Fully illustrated with detailed directions and maps

LOCATOR MAP



Towns and Villages

Please click on any of the towns and villages listed below for information on that location.

Aldermaston	pg 17	Donnington	pg 8	Sandhurst	pg 24
Aldworth	pg 19	Dorney	pg 24	Slough	pg 27
Arborfield	pg 17	East Ilsley	pg 6	Sonning	pg 15
Ascot	pg 22	Eton	pg 26	Swallowfield	pg 17
Basildon	pg 19	Finchampstead	pg 17	Thatcham	pg 13
Beenham	pg 18	Greenham	pg 13	Twyford	pg 23
Binfield	pg 23	Hampstead Norreys	pg 8	Wargrave	pg 23
Bisham	pg 26	Hungerford	pg 9	Whitchurch	pg 18
Boveney	pg 24	Hurst	pg 16	Wickham	pg 9
Bracknell	pg 23	Lambourn	pg 6	Windsor	pg 20
Bray	pg 24	Maidenhead	pg 25	Winterbourne	pg 8
Combe	pg 12	Newbury	pg 7	Wokingham	pg 16
Compton	pg 6	Pangbourne	pg 18	Woodley	pg 16
Cookham	pg 25	Reading	pg 14	Woolhampton	pg 18
Datchet	pg 27	Runnymede	pg 27		

Berkshire

The Royal County of Berkshire receives its honorific title because one of the Queen's three official residences, Windsor Castle, lies within its boundaries. The most important landmark in the east of the county, the 900-year-old castle is the county's major tourist attraction.

Berkshire extends over some 485 square miles in the valley of the middle Thames and is divided into six main districts.

The western area of the county is important for racing and the training of racehorses, with a top-class course at Newbury, and the training centres of Lambourn and East Ilsley.

Another feature of West Berkshire is the number of communication routes that flow across the region linking London with the West Country, dominated today by the M4 motorway. The ancient Ridgeway Path, England's oldest road, follows the county border with Oxfordshire, and the Kennet and Avon Canal, completed in 1810, crosses southern England from Bristol to join the River Thames at Reading. Entering the county at Hungerford, this major waterway passes through a charming rural landscape as it winds through villages and market towns. The canal prospered until the arrival of the Great Western Railway in 1841, after which it inevitably declined; by the 1950s it was largely unnavigable. After a full clearing and restoration programme, the canal can now once



Dun Mill Lock, Kennet & Avon Canal

again be travelled its full length, providing a wide variety of leisure activities for thousands of visitors each year.

The central region of Berkshire is dominated by Reading, a thriving commuter town with excellent links to both London and the West Country. Though seeming to be very much a product of the past two centuries, it has a long and interesting history.

The Thames, forming the northern county border with Oxfordshire, has, especially along its southern banks, many delightful villages, which became fashionable thanks to the Victorian and Edwardian passion for boating, and they remain fashionable to this day.

Across Windsor Great Park, the remains of a royal hunting forest, lies Ascot racecourse, founded in 1711 by Queen Anne. Five days in June see the worlds of fashion and horseracing meet at the highest level at the Royal Ascot meeting.

Lambourn

Church of St Michael Seven Barrows

Lambourn Trainers' Association

Lying up on the Berkshire Downs, in the extreme west of the county, this village, which has the feel of a small town, is best known as a major centre for the training of racehorses. More than 1200 horses are trained here and there are more than 100 miles of gallops. The **Lambourn Trainers' Association** brings together racehorse trainers and individuals and organisations involved in the training of racehorses in the Lambourn area. It organises guided tours of the stables and trips to the gallops to view the horses going through their paces. Lambourn has been home to some of the greatest trainers in the history of the racing game, including Fred Winter and Fulke Walwyn over the jumps, Peter Walwyn on the



St. Michael's Church - Lambourn

flat and current incumbents Barry Hills, Clive Coc, Marcus Tregoning and Nicky Henderson.

Lambourn's medieval **Church of St Michael** is one of the finest parish churches in Berkshire. Originally Norman and constructed on the cruciform plan, it has been greatly altered and extended, though the west end still has its Norman doorway, complete with zigzag ornamentation. The lychgate was dedicated to the memory of William Jousiffe, who brought horses from Newmarket to Lambourn in the 1870s and thus established a still-flourishing industry.

To the north of the village are **Lambourn Seven Barrows**, one of the most impressive Bronze Age burial sites in the country and actually comprising no fewer than 32 barrows.

Around Lambourn

EAST ILSLEY

10 miles E of Lambourn off the A34

This attractive downland village has managed to retain several interesting features, in particular the winding mechanism of the now long disused village well by the pond. It was because of sheep that the village chiefly prospered – from the early 1600s East Ilsley held fortnightly sheep fairs that were second only in size to Smithfield, London. At their peak in the 19th century, permanent pens were erected in the main street to contain the animals and, on one day, it was recorded that 80,000 sheep were penned. During the 19th century the station in the nearby village of **Compton** became an important centre for the passage of sheep to and from the great East Ilsley sheep market, but the decline in the sheep trade resulted in the closure of the station.

About a mile south of Compton lie the

Looking for somewhere to stay, eat, drink or shop? www.findsomewhere.co.uk



Click Here for travel guidebooks

remains of an Iron Age fort, Perborough Castle, while to the northeast, just above the Ridgeway, is Lowbury Hill, where traces of a Roman temple and a Roman military outpost can be seen.

Today, along with its neighbour West Ilsley, the village is associated with racehorses, which use the gallops on the downs as their training grounds.

Newbury

Church of St Nicholas Kennet & Avon Canal

West Berkshire Museum Racecourse

This crossroads town has, for many years, dominated the rural area of West Berkshire. Prospering during the Middle Ages, and afterwards on the importance of the woollen industry, the town became famous as the Cloth Town. Among the various characters who made their money out of the weaving of the wool the best known is John Smallwood, always known as Jack of Newbury and the "richest clothier England ever beheld". Asked to raise two horsemen and two footmen for Henry VIII's campaign against the Scots, Jack raised 50 of each and led them himself. However, they only got as far as Stony Stratford in Buckinghamshire before news of the victory of Flodden reached them and they turned for home.

Evidence of the town's wealth can be seen in the splendid 'wool' **Church of St Nicholas**, which was constructed between 1500 and 1532. Built on the site of a Norman church, no expense was spared – Jack of Newbury gave the money for the magnificent five-bayed nave. The church has seen much restoration work, particularly during the Victorian age, but the fine pulpit and



Kennet & Avon Canal, Newbury

elaborately decorated nave roof have survived.

After the Civil War, the town's clothing industry declined. However, the 18th century saw the construction of turnpike roads and Newbury became a busy coaching stop on the road from London to Bath. The town further opened up to travellers and the needs of carriers with the completion of the **Kennet and Avon Canal** in 1810. Newbury Lock, built in 1796, was the first lock to be built along the canal and it is also the only one to have lever-operated ground paddles (the sluices that let in the water), which are known as Jack Cloughs.

Back in the centre of the town, in the Market Square, is the **West Berkshire Museum**, housed in two of the town's most historic buildings, the 17th-century cloth hall and the adjacent 18th-century granary, a store once used by traders travelling the canal. The history of the canal is explained, and other exhibits include crafts and industries, the two Battles of Newbury (1643 and 1644) during the Civil War, the story of Greenham Common and local archaeology.

Those arriving in Newbury from the south will pass the Falkland Memorial, which has nothing to do with the 1980s conflict in the South Atlantic. It is in fact a memorial to Lord

Falkland, who was killed at the first battle of Newbury. To the east of the town lies **Newbury Racecourse**, which stages top-quality flat and National Hunt racing throughout the year.

Around Newbury

HAMPSTEAD NORREYS

6 miles NE of Newbury on the B4009

 The Living Rainforest

Just to the north of the village lies **The Living Rainforest**, an education and conservation charity devoted to the raising of awareness about the world's rainforests. Here, in a tract of tropical rainforest inside a giant glasshouse, the temperature never falls below 70°F. Visitors can walk through the humid and shadowy jungles of the lowland tropical forests, the cool, orchid-festooned and ferny cloud forests, and the Amazon with its amazing flowers and wonderful bromeliads. There is also a unique collection of spectacular and rare plants, tranquil pools, the sounds of the tropics, and rainforest animals, including a pair of Goeldi's monkeys, marmosets, tree frogs, iguanas and Courtney the dwarf crocodile. Also on site are a shop selling plants and gifts, and a teasop. Signed from the A34/M4 J13 intersection.

DONNINGTON

1 mile N of Newbury on the B4494

 Castle

Despite being so close to the town of Newbury, Donnington has managed to retain its village identity and atmosphere. To the west of the village, and visible from the road, is Donnington Grove House. Built in 1759, and designed by the architect John Chute,



Donnington Castle

this was the home, in the late 18th century, of the Brummell family; Beau Brummell, the instigator of the Bath Society, lived here as a child.

However, most visitors to the village come to see **Donnington Castle** (English Heritage), a late-14th century defence that was built by Sir Richard Abberbury. Once a magnificent structure, only the twin-towered gatehouse survives amidst the impressive earthworks. The castle had its most eventful period during the Civil War when it was the scene of one of the longest sieges of the conflict. Charles I's troops were held here for 20 months and it was during this period that most of the castle was destroyed.

WINTERBOURNE

3 miles N of Newbury off the B4494

 Snelmore Common Country Park

Just south of the village lies **Snelmore Common Country Park**, a heathland site surrounded by woodland. The common comprises several different habitats, including woodland, heathland and bog, and it supports a correspondingly wide variety of plant and animal life. It is a particularly important area for ground-nesting birds such as the nightjar and woodlark. The site has

Looking for somewhere to stay, eat, drink or shop? www.findsomewhere.co.uk

many footpaths and tracks and an area set aside for picnics.

WICKHAM

6 miles NW of Newbury on the B4000

 Church of St Swithin

This ancient village with its typical Berkshire mix of brick and flint, thatch and tile is most notable for its **Church of St Swithin** that stands atop a hill with grand views across the Kennet valley. It has a Saxon tower – unique in the county – but it is the interior that is truly remarkable because of the elephants in the north aisle. Made of papier-mâché and gilded, they were purchased at the Paris Exhibition of 1862 and intended for the rectory. They were too large, however, so they now appear to support the spectacular wooden roof of the church.

THE BEAR HOTEL

Charnham Street, Hungerford, Berkshire RG17 0EL
Tel: 01488 682512 Fax: 01488 684357
website: www.thebearhotelhungerford.co.uk

Located in the thriving market town of Hungerford, **The Bear Hotel** is one of England's oldest coaching inns and has been the focus of hospitality since 1464.

The hotel has been sympathetically restored and refurbished and has thirty-nine individually designed bedrooms, an award-winning restaurant and bar, conference and wedding facilities with private entrance, and gardens set on the banks of the River Dunn.

Situated just over an hour by direct train from London, The Bear Hotel is ideally situated for short breaks, visiting friends or relatives or business. The hotel has a fascinating royal history full of romance and character. Henry VIII owned the manor of Chilton Foliat in which The Bear Hotel lay; Charles 1 used The Bear as a headquarters during the English Civil War in 1644. Later, Prince William of Orange, soon to be William III, was offered the crown of England at The Bear Hotel.

In the bedroom department there is a choice of compact doubles through to spacious suites with king-size beds. Some bedrooms have balconies and river views while others overlook the rooftops of Hungerford. The Bear is ideally suited for weddings and private events and the hotel is licensed for civil ceremonies. Ring for details.



Click Here for travel guidebooks

HUNGERFORD

9 miles W of Newbury on the A4

 Bear Hotel  Tutti Day

Although not mentioned in the Domesday Book, by the Middle Ages this old market town was well established. The manor of Hungerford had some distinguished lords, including Simon de Montfort and John of Gaunt. Hungerford's heyday came in the 18th century when the turnpike road from London to Bath was built, passing through the town. By 1840, the town had eight coaching inns serving the needs of travellers and its prosperity continued with the opening of the Kennet and Avon Canal. The building of the railway took much of that trade away and the town reverted to its early, gentle lifestyle. However, several of the old coaching inns have survived, notably **The Bear Hotel** (see below). Although it has

BOW HOUSE

3-4 Faulkner Square, Charnham Street,
Hungerford, Berkshire RG17 0EP
Tel: 01488-680826

e-mail: bowhouseantiques@aol.com
website: www.bowhouselifestyle.com

Bow House has built up a large and loyal following from those who have been lucky enough to discover its unique charms. These include locals who use its house and room design services, and visitors who come a long way to browse its eclectic range of both modern and antique furniture and houseware. Owners Jo and Jess Preston travel throughout Europe to find the best of everything that catches their eye, which they think would look good in someone's home. Rather than shop across Europe, customers just have to make their way to the Berkshire market town of Hungerford.

It's hard to say what you'll find at Bow House as the stock changes constantly, which is why customers keep returning. What catches Jess and Jo's eye doesn't stay on display for long. From towels to tables, from cute coat hangers to dazzling dinner plates, you'll find them all at Bow House. There are chunky sofas and exquisite delicate jewellery, scarves and sunglasses, lovely children's toys, prints and perfumes too. Anything that enhances your home or your lifestyle can be found at Bow House – and if they don't have exactly what you want they'll help you to track it down.



THE EMPORIUM

112 High Street, Hungerford, Berkshire RG17 0NB
Tel: 01488 686959

e-mail: the-emporium@btconnect.com
website: www.emporium-hungerford.co.uk

The grandly named **The Emporium** is an established antiques centre occupying a stunning 17th Century building in the heart of the historic town of Hungerford. It offers a wide variety of items from around 50 specialist dealers who aim to provide a fine selection of quality antiques and gifts at affordable prices. The elegant layout of the shop perfectly compliments The Emporium's brilliant combination of contemporary and antique ranges; it has become a well established addition to Hungerford's renowned quality antique and modern independent shops.

Due to the amazing number and variety in the dealers who make up the Emporium, the products and colours in the shop are ever changing, making every visit a unique experience. Dealers include specialists in silver, jewellery, ceramics and fine art, plus glassware, scientific instruments and art nouveau period pieces, as well as gorgeous antique furniture, antique garden tools and painted pine, and oriental carpets and upholstery fabrics. Such a range can be overwhelming, were it not for the owners Barbara and Richard Mills, together with manager David Keig, who are always on hand to offer help and advice. Opening hours are 9.30 to 5pm Monday to Saturday, 10am to 4pm Sundays and Bank Holidays.



Looking for somewhere to stay, eat, drink
or shop? www.findsomewhere.co.uk



Click Here for
travel guidebooks

an impressive Georgian frontage, the building actually dates back to 1494, making it one of the oldest buildings in the town.

An event of great historical importance occurred in December 1688 when William of Orange arrived to stay at The Bear to negotiate with the Commissioners of King James II concerning the future of the monarchy. The result was the Glorious Revolution of 1689, generally accepted as the beginning of true Parliamentary democracy as William and his wife Mary were invited to take the throne by a Protestant Parliament.

As well as still holding a weekly market, the town also continues the ancient tradition known as the Hocktide Festival or **Tutti Day** (tutti meaning a bunch of flowers). Held every year on the second Tuesday after Easter, the



festival was originally used as a means of collecting an early form of council tax. During the colourful event, two men carrying a six-foot pole decorated with ribbons and flowers go around each household collecting the tax. To ease the burden of their visit, the men share a drink with the man of the house, give him an orange, and kiss his wife before collecting their

THE TUTTI POLE

3 High Street, Hungerford, Berkshire RG17 0DN
Tel: 01488 682515

A delightful traditional tea shop and restaurant on Hungerford's High Street. The same family has owned and run the business from the start in 1981 and the head chef has been with them for 28 years.

Home-made food is their speciality and they are particularly known for their toasted tea cakes and meringues, however a full three course lunch can also be enjoyed here, booking is recommended, particularly on Sundays. Food is served throughout the day from 9.00 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. Monday to Friday and 9.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

The oldest parts of the bow window fronted building date from the 15th century, and there's plenty of room here and in the more modern extension, as well as seats for 50 outside. Situated near the canal it is perfect for a stroll after your visit.

Owners and staff are warm and friendly, and a visit here is always a pleasure. The unique name of The Tutti Pole refers to the annual ceremony of Hocktide, celebrated on the second Tuesday after Easter. Tutti Poles are still carried by the Tithingmen around the town on this day. Tutti means nosegay, the flowers which in this case are adorning a pole.



THE CROWN & GARTER

Inkpen Common, Inkpen, Hungerford, Berkshire RG17 9QR

Tel: 01488 668325

website: www.crownandgarter.com

In days gone by **The Crown & Garter** is reputed to have been a resting place for James II on his way to visit one of his mistresses. Today, this fine old traditional country inn, set in stunning countryside, offers outstanding food, purpose-built accommodation and a truly welcoming atmosphere.

The inn's ancient and unique charm can best be seen in the bar area, the oldest part of the building which boasts a huge inglenook fireplace and wooden beams. The bar stocks a fine selection of local and guest real ales, malt whiskies and fine wines as well as free broadband access.

In the restaurant you'll find a delicious and interesting variety of dishes all freshly prepared on the premises using mainly local produce. Meals can be enjoyed in either the cosy wood-panelled restaurant, the bar areas, outside on the new patio or in the enclosed beer garden beneath ancient English oak.

The accommodation comprises 8 purpose built bedrooms which surround a private, very pretty cottage garden complete with pond. The spacious bedrooms are tastefully decorated and equipped with comfortable beds, en suite facilities with power showers, flat screen TV, Freeview, radio, hospitality tray and hairdryer.



penny payment. Today, however, though the visits are still made, no money is collected but the kisses are still required.

Hungerford lies at the centre of the North Wessex Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, designated as such in 1972. It stretches from the River Thames in the east to Devizes in the west, Wantage in the north and Andover in the south.

COMBE

7 miles SW of Newbury off the A338

Walbury Hill

The isolated hamlet of Combe is overlooked by **Walbury Hill**, which at 974 feet is the highest point in Berkshire and the highest chalk hill in England. A popular place for walking and hang-gliding, the hill offers terrific views and the bonus of an Iron Age fort on its summit. Close

THE FORBURY

Crossways, Kintbury, Hungerford, Berkshire RG17 9SU

Tel: 01488 658377

Overlooking its own 5 acres of unspoilt woodland and a stream, **The Forbury** has been offering quality bed & breakfast accommodation since 1972. The extended 17th century cottage was originally a thatched bakery with a double bread oven and inglenook fireplace. Today, there are 4 guest bedrooms, one of which is a family room with a connecting room for children. Guests are assured of a warm welcome at The Forbury and also, its speciality, a great full English breakfast! The attractive village of Kintbury is just a mile away and there are several local pubs serving excellent food.



historic building museum and heritage historic site scenic attraction flora and fauna

Looking for somewhere to stay, eat, drink or shop? www.findsomewhere.co.uk



Click Here for travel guidebooks

THE QUEEN'S HEAD

Southend Road, Bradfield, Berkshire RG7 6EY

Tel: 01189 744332

e-mail: info@queens-bradfield.co.uk

website: www.queens-bradfield.co.uk

Occupying a sturdy Victorian building dating back to the 1850s, **The Queen's Head** at Bradfield has a warm down-to-earth charm, and customers receive a warm welcome from owners Andrew Loupekine and Laura Maton, both of them local people. The restaurant at The Queen's Head, with its duck egg blue walls, mix 'n' match wooden chairs, eclectic bric a brac and open fireplace, is a major attraction for discerning diners.

Andrew is the chef and his traditional British menu is a hit with the locals and visitors alike. You'll find Devilled Lamb's Kidneys, and Wood Pigeon with bacon and black pudding amongst the starters. The delicious main courses include favourite dishes Whole Roast Sea Bream with Fennel Salad and new potatoes, and Fillet of Beef with seared foie gras and sauté potatoes. In good weather, you can enjoy this fine fare in the neat and peaceful garden where there's also a children's play area. To accompany your meal, the bar offers great choice in drinks that includes Fuller's real ales and a lovely selection of wines, available by the glass. The Queen's Head is open all day every day; the kitchen is closed between 2.30pm and 6pm but you can still enjoy afternoon tea and cakes.



to the hill stands Combe Gibbet, one of the last public hanging places in the country. This gibbet was first used in 1676 to hang a pair of adulterous murderers, George Broomham and Dorothy Newman, and has a crossbar with a 'his' side and a 'hers' side.

GREENHAM

1½ miles SE of Newbury off the A34

Greenham Common and Crookham Common

Greenham Common and the adjacent **Crookham Common** make up the largest area of lowland heathland in Berkshire. In 1941 the common land was taken over by the Air Ministry and became an important military base, first for British squadrons and then for the US Air Force. In 1981 nuclear-armed Cruise missiles arrived at Greenham and the site became notorious for anti-nuclear demonstrations. The airbase is gradually being

returned to nature and the site is once again open to the public. Designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), it is home to many rare and endangered plants and animals.

THATCHAM

3 miles E of Newbury on the A4

Thatcham Moor

Thatcham Nature Discovery Centre

Believed to be the oldest village in Britain, it is hard to imagine that this now large suburb of Newbury was once a small place. **Thatcham Moor** is one of the largest areas of inland freshwater reed beds in the country. As well as the reeds, which can grow up to six feet in height, the area supports numerous species of marshland and aquatic plants. Birds also abound here and it is an important breeding ground for reed and sedge warblers.

Thatcham Nature Discovery Centre,

stories and anecdotes famous people art and craft entertainment and sport walks

situated close to the Thatcham Moors Local Nature Reserve, is a multi-activity based centre where visitors are encouraged to look, listen, touch and learn through an exciting range of interactive exhibits. In Discovery Hall they can find out what lives beneath the lake, get a bird's-eye view of the world, learn about local and global environmental issues or watch the wildlife from the comfort of the lakeside observation area. Open 10am to 5pm April to October. Closed Mondays except Bank Holidays and School Holidays.

Reading

🏰 Abbey 🏰 Gaol 🏰 Museum

🏰 Museum of English Rural Life

This thriving commuter town, which took its name from the Saxon chief Reada, is a delightful combination of more than 1000 years of history and a vibrant and modern city. There are Victorian brick buildings nestling beside beautiful medieval churches, famous coaching inns opposite high tech offices, and some of the best shopping in the area. Reading began as a Saxon settlement between the Rivers Thames and Kennet and, as a defensible site, was used by the Danes as a base for their attack on Wessex in the 9th century. The town grew up around its **Abbey**, which was founded in 1121 by Henry I, the youngest son of William the Conqueror, and it was consecrated by Thomas à Becket in 1164. The abbey went on to become one of the most important religious houses – its relics included a piece of Jesus' sandal, the tooth of St Luke, and a slice of Moses' rod. Henry, its great benefactor, was buried in front of the High Altar in 1136.

The atmospheric abbey ruins stand in Forbury Gardens on the banks of the River

Kennet; these gardens are also home to the Maiwand Lion, a magnificent statue of a lion that commemorates the men of the Berkshire Regiment who died in the Afghan War of 1879.

Reading boasts several other pieces of distinguished public art, including the Robed Figure by Dame Elizabeth Frink and the Soane Obelisk designed by Sir John Soane, architect of the Bank of England. Adjacent to the abbey ruins is another of Reading's famous buildings – **Reading Gaol** where Oscar Wilde was imprisoned and where he wrote *De Profundis*. His confinement here also inspired the writer to compose the epic *Ballad of Reading Gaol* whilst staying in Paris in 1898.

Though the town developed during the Middle Ages as a result of a flourishing woollen industry, it was during the 18th century with the coming of both the turnpike roads and the opening of the Kennet and Avon Canal that the town boomed. By the 19th century, Reading was known for its three Bs: beer, bulbs and biscuits. As the trade of the canal and River Thames increased, the movement of corn and malt explains the growth of the brewing trade, and the leaders in the bulb trade were Sutton Seeds, founded here in 1806 but no longer in the town. The world renowned biscuit-making firm of Huntley & Palmer began life here in 1826, when Joseph Huntley founded the firm, to be joined, in 1841, by George Palmer, inventor of the stamping machine.

The Story of Reading, a permanent exhibition at the **Museum of Reading** in the Town Hall, is the ideal place to gain a full understanding of the history of the town, from the earliest times to the present day. Here, too, can be seen the world's only full-size replica of the Bayeux Tapestry, made

Looking for somewhere to stay, eat, drink or shop? www.findsomewhere.co.uk



[Click Here for travel guidebooks](#)

in the 19th century and featuring Edward the Confessor, once Lord of the Royal Manor in Reading, as a central figure. As a contrast to the museum's displays depicting the life of the town in the 20th century, the Silchester Gallery is devoted to describing the day-to-day life at Calleva Atrebatum, the Roman town of Silchester, using Roman artefacts unearthed there during early excavations. This museum, one of the most go-ahead in the country, has special events and changing exhibitions throughout the year, so every visit will reveal something new and exciting to see.

In 1925 Reading Extension College became a university in its own right. Lying to the south of the town centre in Redlands Road, the **Museum of English Rural Life** (see panel below) houses the most comprehensive national collection of objects, books,

photographs and archives relating to the history of food, farming and the countryside. Call 0118 378 8660.

Around Reading

SONNING

3 miles NE of Reading off the A4

This pretty little village leading down to the Thames is a popular spot to visit, especially on summer weekends. In 1399, after he had been deposed, Richard II brought his young bride Isabella here to be looked after in the palace of the Bishops of Salisbury. Her ghost is said to appear on the paths beside the river. On Grove Street stands Turpin's, a house that belonged to the aunt of Dick Turpin and which provided occasional refuge

Museum of English Rural Life

University of Reading, Whiteknights, PO Box 229,
Reading, Berkshire RG6 6AG
Tel: 0118 931 8660 Fax: 0118 975 1264
e-mail: rhc@reading.ac.uk
website: www.ruralhistory.org

The **Museum of English Rural Life** at the University of Reading is the English national centre for the history of food, farming and the countryside. With artefact, library and archive collections of international importance, the Centre tells the story of farming and the countryside in England over the past three hundred years. Discover an amazing range of country crafts, find out about Victorian farmhouse kitchens and explore England's largest collection of vintage ploughs, wagons and machinery, including a steam-powered threshing machine. There are captivating displays for visitors of all ages, as well as quizzes and trails for children and families plus an interactive computer area.

The Object Collections is one of the country's finest collections of objects related to daily life and work in the countryside. The Library has over 50,000 books and periodicals. The Archive includes the business records of major agricultural engineering firms, archives of national countryside organisations and a large collection of individual farm records. The Archive of Photographs and Illustrations has over 750,000 images of farming and rural life. Visitors wishing to consult the reference collection are asked to make an appointment in advance.



for the notorious highwayman. Behind the wall of the old bishop's palace is Deanery Gardens, a house built in 1901 to the design of Sir Edwin Lutyens.

WOODLEY

3 miles E of Reading off the A329

 Museum of Berkshire Aviation

At Woodley Airfield the **Museum of Berkshire Aviation** (see panel below) celebrates the contribution the county has made to the history of aviation. The exhibits include Fairey, Handley-Page and Miles aircraft, which are shown along with fascinating pictorial records and archives. Call 0118 944 8089.

HURST

4½ miles E of Reading off the A321

 Dinton Pastures Country Park

This attractive, scattered village is home to a Norman church, well endowed with monuments, and a row of fine 17th-century almshouses. The village bowling green is said to have been made for Charles II.

Just to the south lies **Dinton Pastures Country Park**, a large area of lakes, rivers, hedgerows and meadows rich in wildlife. Until the 1970s, this area was excavated for sand and gravel, but the former pits are now attractive lakes and ponds; one of them has been stocked for coarse fishing and the largest is set aside for canoeing and windsurfing.

WOKINGHAM

6 miles SE of Reading on the A329

This largely residential town has, at its centre, an old triangular market place with a matching triangular Town Hall built in 1860. In the mainly Victorian town centre is a sprinkling of attractive Georgian houses and shops, and the medieval parish church of All Saints. The most attractive building, however, is Lucas Hospital, built of mellow red brick and rather like a miniature Chelsea Hospital. It was originally built in 1666 as almshouses and a chapel, by Henry Lucas, a mathematician and MP for Cambridge University. Today, the hospital still cares for the elderly though now in the style of a retirement home. It can be visited by appointment with the resident matron.

Museum of Berkshire Aviation

Mobawk Way (off The Bader Way), Woodley, nr Reading, Berkshire RG5 4UE
Tel: 0118 944 8089
e-mail: MuseumBerksAv@gmail.com
website: www.museumofberkshireaviation.co.uk

Berkshire's dynamic contribution to aviation history is graphically re-captured at the museum. Run as a charitable trust, the museum is at the historic site of Woodley Airfield - once the centre of a thriving aircraft industry. Miles and Handley Page aircraft built at Woodley are being re-constructed and exhibited along with fascinating pictorial records and priceless archives. The museum welcomes group visits and runs an active educational programme for schools, linked to National Curriculum requirements, demonstrating the development of aviation techniques.



 historic building  museum and heritage  historic site  scenic attraction  flora and fauna

Looking for somewhere to stay, eat, drink or shop? www.findsomewhere.co.uk



Click Here for travel guidebooks

ARBORFIELD

4 miles S of Reading on the A327

 California Country Park

Arborfield Garrison is the home base of REME, the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, and the site of their museum. To the south is **California Country Park**, a wooded beauty spot where the woods support 34 different species of tree, and the bogland provides a range of habitats for the many animals, birds and plants that are found here.

SWALLOWFIELD

5 miles S of Reading off the A33

 Swallowfield Park

The manor house here, **Swallowfield Park**, has been associated with both royalty and other notables. The present house (unfortunately now a shell) was built in 1678 by Wren's assistant William Talman for the 2nd Earl of Clarendon who acquired the estate upon marrying the heiress. In 1719, the park was purchased by Thomas Pitt, a former Governor of Madras, who used the proceeds of the sale of a large diamond he bought while in India. The diamond can now be seen in the Louvre Museum, Paris. The story of Pitt and his diamond provided the inspiration for the novel, *The Moonstone*, by Wilkie Collins,



Swallowfield Park

 stories and anecdotes  famous people  art and craft  entertainment and sport  walks

who visited the house in 1860. The Italian Doorway, by Talman, is probably the house's most outstanding remaining feature and it marks the entrance to the walled garden. Here can be found a dog's graveyard where lies one of Charles Dickens' dogs. The novelist had bequeathed the pet to his friend and owner of the house, Sir Charles Russell.

FINCHAMPSTEAD

8 miles S of Reading off the A327

 Finchampstead Ridges

To the east of the village are **Finchampstead Ridges**, a popular spot for walkers that offers wonderful views across the Blackwater Valley. Simon's Wood has a varied mixture of conifers and broad-leaved trees, and in the wood and on the heath are siskin and flycatchers, dragonflies, damselflies and a wide range of invertebrates and lichens.

ALDERMASTON

9 miles SW of Reading on the A340

 St Mary's Church  Aldermaston Wharf

 Kennet & Avon Canal Visitor Centre

It was in this tranquil village, in 1840, that the William pear was first propagated by John Staid, the then village schoolmaster. First known as the Aldermaston pear, a cutting of the plant is believed to have been taken to Australia where it is now called the Bartlett pear.

Still retaining much of its original 12th-century structure, and with a splendid Norman door, the lovely **St Mary's Church** provides the setting for the York Mystery Cycle, nativity plays dating from the 14th century, which are performed here each year. Using beautiful period costumes and contemporary music, including a piece written by William Byrd, the cycle lasts a week and the plays attract visitors from far and wide.

Another old custom still continued in the village is the auctioning of the grazing rights of Church Acres every three years. Using the ancient method of a candle auction, a pin – in this case a horseshoe nail – is inserted into the tallow of a candle one inch from the wick. The candle is lit while bidding takes place and the grazing rights go to the highest bidder as the pin drops out of the candle.

Outside, under a yew tree in the churchyard, lies the grave of Maria Hale, formerly known as the Aldermaston witch. She was said to turn herself into a large brown hare and although the hare was never caught or killed, at one time a local keeper wounded it in the leg, and from then on it was observed that Maria Hale had become lame.



Aldermaston Wharf

Close to the village is a delightful walk along the Kennet and Avon Canal to **Aldermaston Wharf**. A Grade II-listed structure of beautifully restored 18th-century scalloped brickwork, the wharf houses a **Visitor Centre**, where the canalman's cottage tells the story of the creation, restoration and re-opening of the waterway link between the Thames and Bristol.

WOOLHAMPTON

9 miles W of Reading on the A4

This tranquil village on the banks of the

Kennet and Avon Canal had a watermill at the time of the Domesday Survey of 1086 and was mentioned again in 1351, when the manor and mill were owned by the Knights Hospitallers. The present mill, built in 1820 and extended in 1875, was powered by a brook that runs into the Kennet. It was last used in 1930 and has since been turned into offices.

BEENHAM

9 miles W of Reading off the A4

UK Wolf Conservation Trust

Set in 6000 acres of beautiful woodlands, the **UK Wolf Conservation Trust** proves that wolves are not the big, bad, dangerous animals of nursery rhymes and legend. There are wolves here you can actually stroke and which are taken to schools, shows and seminars. The European wolves are the first to be successfully bred in England for 500 years, and the Trust also cares for packs of North American wolves. The site is open all year round, by appointment. Call 0118 971 3330.

PANGBOURNE

6 miles NW of Reading on the A417

Church Cottage Whitchurch Lock

Situated at the confluence of the River Pang and the River Thames, the town grew up in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as a fashionable place to live. As a result there are several attractive Victorian and Edwardian villas to be seen, including a row of ornate Victorian houses known as the Seven Deadly Sins. It was here that the author Kenneth Grahame retired, living at **Church Cottage** opposite the church. Grahame married late in life and it was while living here that he wrote *The Wind in the Willows* for his son.

Visitors to the town who cross the elegant iron bridge to neighbouring **Whitchurch** must

Looking for somewhere to stay, eat, drink or shop? www.findsomewhere.co.uk



Click Here for travel guidebooks

still pay a toll, though now very small. The right to exact the toll has existed since 1792 and it is one of the very few surviving privately-owned toll bridges. It was at **Whitchurch Lock** that the characters in Jerome K Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat* abandoned their craft, after a series of mishaps, and returned to London.

BASILDON

8 miles NW of Reading on the A417

Basildon Park Beale Park

This small village is the last resting place of the inventor and agricultural engineer, Jethro Tull, whose grave can be seen in the churchyard. The inventor of the seed drill and the horse-drawn hoe also wrote several books on farming and plant nutrition, including *The New Horse Hoeing Husbandry* and *An Essay on the Principles of Tillage & Vegetation*. Outside the churchyard is a classic pavilion built in memory of his parents by the late Mr Child-Beale, which is, today, the focal point of **Beale Park**. Covering some 300 acres of ancient water meadow, the park is home to a wide range of birds and animals. There are small herds of unusual farm animals, including rare breeds of sheep and goats, Highland cattle, deer, and South American llama, more than 120 species of birds living in their natural



Basildon House

habitat, and a pets' corner for smaller children. The park's work is not confined to the keeping of animals. A Community Woodland has been planted and an ancient reed bed restored. The park's other main attraction, housed in the pavilion, is the Model Boat Collection, which is one of the finest of its kind.

However, the village's main feature is **Basildon Park** (National Trust), an elegant, classical house designed in the 18th century by Carr of York and undoubtedly Berkshire's foremost mansion. Built between 1776 and 1783 for Francis Sykes, an official of the East India Company, the house has the unusual addition of an Anglo-Indian room. The interior, finished by JB Papworth and restored to its original splendour after World War Two, is rich in fine plasterwork, pictures and furniture, and the rooms open to the public include the Octagon Room and a decorative Shell Room. If the name Basildon seems familiar, it is probably as a result of the notepaper: the head of the papermaking firm of Dickinson visited the house and decided to use the name for the high quality paper his firm produced.

ALDWORTH

11 miles NW of Reading on the B4009

Aldworth Giants

The parish Church of St Mary is famous for housing the **Aldworth Giants** – the larger than life effigies of the de la Beche family, which date back to the 14th century. The head of the family, Sir Philip, who lies here with eight other members of his family, was the Sheriff of Berkshire and valet to Edward II. Though now somewhat defaced, the effigies were so legendary that the church was visited by Elizabeth I. Outside, in the churchyard, are the remains of a once magnificent 1000-year-

old yew tree that was damaged in a storm.

Nearby, at **Little Aldworth**, is the grave of the poet Laurence Binyon who wrote the famous lines: "At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we shall remember them." Opposite the Bell Inn is one of the deepest wells in the country. Topped by great beams, heavy cogs and wheels, it is some 327 feet deep.

Windsor

-  Castle  Guildhall  St George's Chapel
-  Frogmore House  Savill Garden
-  Racecourse  Smith's Lawn  Legoland
-  Windsor Great Park  Long Walk
-  The Royal Windsor Wheel
-  Changing of the Guard  Savill Building

This old town grew up beneath the walls of the castle in a compact group of streets leading from the main entrance. Charming and full of character, this is a place of delightful timber-framed and Georgian houses and shop fronts, with riverside walks beside the Thames, and a wonderful racecourse. The elegant **Guildhall**, partly built by Wren in the 17th century, has an open ground floor for market stalls, while the council chambers are on the first floor. Concerned that they might fall through the floor on to the stalls below, the council



Windsor Castle

members requested that Wren put in supporting pillars in the middle of the market hall. As his reassurances that the building was sound fell on deaf ears, Wren complied with their wishes but the pillars he built did not quite meet the ceiling – thereby proving his point!

A regular and magnificent spectacle that takes place at 11am Monday to Saturday in the summer months, weather permitting, is the **Changing of the Guard**. The correct term for the ceremony is actually Guard Mounting, when the new guard exchanges duty with the old guard. The Guard is provided by the resident regiment of Foot Guards in their full-dress uniform of red tunics and bearskins. They march up to and from the Castle accompanied by the Guards Band playing traditional military marches as well as popular songs.

The greatest attraction here is, of course, **Windsor Castle**, one of three official residences of the Queen (the others are Buckingham Palace and Holyrood House in Edinburgh). The largest castle in the country, and a royal residence for over 900 years, it was begun in the late 11th century by William the Conqueror as one in a chain of such defences that stood on the approaches to London. Over the years its role changed from a fortification to a royal palace; various monarchs added to the original typical Norman castle, the most notable additions being made by Henry VIII, Charles II and George IV. Various parts of the castle are open to the public, in particular the state apartments with their remarkable collection of furniture, porcelain and armour. Carvings by Grinling Gibbons are to be seen everywhere, and the walls are adorned with a plethora of masterpieces, including paintings by Van Dyck and Rembrandt. The Gallery

Looking for somewhere to stay, eat, drink or shop? www.findsomewhere.co.uk



[Click Here for travel guidebooks](#)

shows changing displays from the Royal Library, including works by Leonardo, Michelangelo and Holbein. On a somewhat smaller scale, but nonetheless impressive, is Queen Mary's Dolls' House. Designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens for Queen Mary, this is a perfect miniature palace, complete with working lifts and lights and running water. Built on a 1-to-12 scale, it took three years to complete, and 1500 craftsmen were employed to ensure that every last detail was correct; the house was presented to the Queen in 1924.

In November 1992, a massive fire swept through the northeast corner of the castle and no-one in the country at the time will forget the incredible pictures of the great tower alight. Following five years of restoration, the damaged areas were re-opened to the public.

Within the castle walls is the magnificent **St George's Chapel**. Started by Edward IV in 1478, and taking some 50 years to finish, the chapel is not only one of the country's greatest religious buildings, but also a wonderful example of the Perpendicular Gothic style. It is the last resting place of 10 monarchs, from Edward IV himself to Henry VIII with his favourite wife Jane Seymour, Charles I, George V with Queen Mary, and George VI, beside whom the ashes of his beloved daughter Princess Margaret were laid in February 2002 and the body of his wife, the Queen Mother, in April 2002. It is also the Chapel of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, Britain's highest order of chivalry.

Frogmore House, a modest early 18th-century manor house in Home Park, has over the years acted as a second, more relaxed royal residence than the nearby castle. It was bought in 1792 for Queen Charlotte, consort of George III, and later became a favourite retreat of Queen Victoria, who remarked that



Frogmore House, Windsor

"all is peace and quiet and you only hear the hum of the bees, the singing of the birds". She and Prince Albert built a mausoleum in the grounds to house the remains of the Queen's mother, the Duchess of Kent, and their own – both Victoria and Albert are at rest here. The former library now contains furniture and paintings from the Royal Yacht *Britannia*. The house is surrounded by 30 acres of picturesque gardens containing masses of spring bulbs and some fine specimen trees.

To the south of the town stretches the 4800-acre **Windsor Great Park**, a remnant of the once extensive Royal Hunting Forest, and a unique area of open parkland, woodland, and impressive views. Within the park, at Englefield Green, is the **Savill Garden**, created by Sir Eric Savill when he was Deputy Ranger, and one of the finest woodland gardens to be seen anywhere. A garden for all seasons, its attractions include colourful flowerbeds, secret glades, alpine meadows and a unique temperate house. The gateway to the garden is the iconic **Savill Building**. Inspired by the shape of a leaf, the building's roof has a gold award-winning grid shell design and was created from sustainable resources from the forests within Windsor Great Park. The

building contains a visitor centre, shopping, a boutique plant centre and a terraced restaurant.

The **Long Walk** stretches from the Castle to Snow Hill, some three miles away, on top of which stands a huge bronze of George III on horseback, erected there in 1831. The three-mile ride to nearby Ascot racecourse was created by Queen Anne in the early 1700s. On the park's southern side lies **Smith's Lawn**, where polo matches are played most summer weekends. Windsor Great Park is also the setting for the Cartier International competition, polo's highlight event held every July, and the National Carriage Driving Championships.

To the southwest, set in 150 acres of parkland, is **Legoland Windsor**, where a whole range of amazing Lego models is on display, made from over 20 million bricks. Designed for children aged 3 to 12 – and their families – the site also offers more than 50 rides, shows and attractions including a 3-D cinema and – new in 2010 – a Pirate Training Camp.

In a pleasant setting close to the River Thames, **Royal Windsor Racecourse** is one of the most attractive in the country. Though less grand than neighbouring Ascot, its Monday evening meetings always bring a good crowd, but many regret the decision to give up the jumping fixtures.

From May to the end of August, the town is graced with the **Royal Windsor Wheel**, a smaller brother of the London Eye. Weighing 365 tonnes and 50 metres high, the Wheel provides a spectacular 360 degree view of the surrounding area. There are 40 capsules seating up to six adults and two children, and the ride lasts approximately 12 minutes.

Around Windsor

ASCOT

6 miles SW of Windsor on the A329

 Racecourse  Englemere Pond

A small village until 1711 when Queen Anne moved the Windsor race meeting to here and founded the world famous **Ascot Racecourse**. Its future was secured when the Duke of Cumberland established a stud at Windsor in the 1750s and, by the end of the century, the meetings were being attended by royalty on a regular basis. Today, Royal Ascot, held every June, is an international occasion of fashion and style with pageantry and tradition, and the very best flat-racing spread over five days.

To the west of the town is **Englemere Pond**, a Site of Special Scientific Interest and also a local nature reserve. Once part of the royal hunting ground, which surrounded Windsor Castle and is still owned by the Crown Estate, the main feature is the shallow acidic lake, which offers a wide range of habitats from open water to marsh, for the many species of plants, birds, animals and insects found here.



Ascot Racecourse

 historic building  museum and heritage  historic site  scenic attraction  flora and fauna

Looking for somewhere to stay, eat, drink or shop? www.findsomewhere.co.uk

BRACKNELL

7 miles SW of Windsor on the A329

 Windsor Forest  Look Out Discovery Centre

Designated a new town in 1948, Bracknell has developed quickly from a small village in poor sandy heathland, with some 3000 inhabitants, into a large modern town of around 60,000 residents. It boasts one of the first purpose-built shopping centres in the country – opened in the 1960s. The centrally located Bill Hill is a very prominent landmark, seen from many parts of the town. At the top of the hill, a circular mound of earth is visible, hollowed out at the centre, which is all that remains of a Bronze Age round barrow. Used throughout that period, these burial mounds, which may cover either individuals or groups, are the most common prehistoric monuments in the country.

What remains of the great royal hunting ground, **Windsor Forest** (also called Bracknell Forest) lies to the south of the town and has more than 30 parks and nature reserves and some 45 miles of footpaths and bridleways. Of particular interest in the area is the **Look Out Discovery Centre**, an interactive science centre that brings to life the mysteries of both science and nature. In the surrounding 1600 hectares of Crown Estate woodland there are nature trails and walks to points of interest, as well as the inappropriately named Caesar's Camp. Not a Roman fort, this camp is an Iron Age hill fort built more than 2000 years ago although, close by, runs the Roman link road between London and Silchester. Known locally as the Devil's Highway, it is said to have acquired the name because the local inhabitants thought that only the Devil could have undertaken such a prodigious feat of engineering.

 stories and anecdotes  famous people  art and craft  entertainment and sport  walks



Click Here for travel guidebooks

TWYFORD

10 miles W of Windsor on the A4

At Twyford, the River Loddon divides into two separate streams from which the town takes its name – double ford. With its watery location, it's not surprising that there have been several mills here. A miller is mentioned in a document of 1163, although the first mill is dated 1363. There was a silk mill here until 1845, and a flour mill until 1976 when it was destroyed by fire. The replacement modern mill lacks the traditional appeal, but it does continue the milling tradition in the town.

BINFIELD

8 miles SW of Windsor on the B3034

 Pope's Wood

Binfield is famous as the boyhood home of the poet Alexander Pope. The family moved here after his father had amassed a fortune as a linen draper, and the boy Pope sang in the local choir and gained a local following for his poems about the Windsor Forest and the River Loddon. To the south of the village is **Pope's Wood**, where the poet is said to have sought inspiration. Other connections include the artist John Constable, who sketched the parish church while here on his honeymoon, and Norah Wilmot, who was one of the first lady racehorse trainers to be allowed to hold a licence in her own name, having been forced to train for years in the name of her head lad. The Jockey Club abandoned this archaic ruling as recently as 1966.

WARGRAVE

10 miles W of Windsor on the A321

 Hannen Mausoleum  Druids' Temple

This charming village developed as a settlement in the 10th century at the

confluence of the Rivers Thames and Loddon on an area of flat land in a wooded valley. The peace that generally prevails here was disturbed in 1914 when suffragettes burnt down the church in protest at the vicar's refusal to remove the word obey from the marriage service. In the churchyard, undisturbed by the riot or anything since, stands the **Hannen Mausoleum**, a splendid monument that was designed for the Hannen family by Sir Edwin Lutyens in 1906.

Another interesting sight can be found on the outskirts of the village, at Park Place. In 1788 the estate was owned by General Henry Conway, Governor of Jersey. In recognition of his services, the people of the island gave the general a complete **Druids' Temple**. The massive stones were transported from St Helier to the estate and erected in a 25-foot circle in the gardens of his mansion. In 1870, Park Place was destroyed by fire and the estate broken up, but today the temple stands in the garden of Temple Combe, close to a house designed by the famed American architect, Frank Lloyd Wright. The only house of his in this country, it was built in 1958 to an elaborate U-shaped design; its many unusual features include suede-panelled interior walls.

SANDHURST

11 miles SW of Windsor on the A3095

-  Royal Military Academy Staff College Museum
-  Trilakes

The town is famous as being the home of the **Royal Military Academy**, the training place for army officers since it was established in 1907. The academy's **Staff College Museum** tells the history of officer training from its inception to the present day. Close by is **Trilakes**, a picturesque country park set in 18 acres with, of course, some lakes. This is a

wonderful place to visit with children as there are a wide assortment of pets and farm animals that they can get to know, including miniature horses, pygmy goats, donkeys, aviary birds, pot-bellied pigs and Soay sheep.

DORNEY

2 miles NW of Windsor off the A308

-  Dorney Court
-  Church of St Mary Magdalene

One of the finest Tudor manor houses in England, **Dorney Court**, just a short walk from the River Thames, has been the home of the Palmer family since 1530. Built in about 1440, it is an enchanting building, which also houses some real treasures, including early 15th and 16th-century oak furniture, beautiful 17th-century lacquer furniture, and 400 years of family portraits. It is here in 1665 that the first pineapple in England was grown.

On **Dorney Common** is the village of **Boveney**, which served as a wharf in the 13th century when timber was being transported from Windsor Forest. The flint and clapboard church of **St Mary Magdalene**, down by the riverside, was the setting for several scenes in Kevin Costner's film *Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves*.

BRAY

5 miles NW of Windsor on the B4447

-  Vicar of Bray

A pleasant riverside town, Bray has a good mix of attractive houses and period cottages from various centuries surrounding the Church of St Michael. The **Vicar of Bray**, celebrated in Goldsmith's famous poem, was a real person, the Rev.d Simon Alwyn. As the church fluctuated between dogmatic Protestantism and doctrinaire Catholicism, the Reverend's flexible principles allowed him to keep his post through the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI,

Looking for somewhere to stay, eat, drink or shop? www.findsomewhere.co.uk



Maidenhead Clock Tower

Mary and Elizabeth I. He is buried in the churchyard here and a plaque in the Hinds Head Hotel tells the full story. In recent years, Bray has established itself as a gourmet's seventh heaven. It now boasts two of Heston Blumenthal's restaurants, The Fat Duck and The Hinds Head, as well as the famous French restaurant, The Waterside Inn.

MAIDENHEAD

7 miles NW of Windsor on the A4130

-  Brunel's Rail Bridge
-  Boulter's Lock
-  Maidenhead Commons and Cock Marsh

Transport has played a major role down the years in the history of Maidenhead, first with Thames traffic, then as a stop on the London-Bath coaching route, and finally with the coming of the railway, which helped to turn the town into a fashionable Victorian resort. The Maidenhead **Rail Bridge** was built by Isambard Kingdom Brunel in 1839 to carry his Great Western Railway over the Thames.



Click Here for travel guidebooks

The bridge, which comprises the widest, flattest brick arches in the world, was hailed at the time as the pinnacle of engineering achievement and has been immortalised in Turner's incredibly exciting and atmospheric painting *Rain, Steam and Speed*.

Boulter's Lock, one of the biggest on the Thames, takes its name from an old word for a miller. A flour mill has stood on Boulter's Island since Roman times. The island was also the home of Richard Dimbleby, the eminent broadcaster and father of the famous broadcasters David and Jonathan. To the north and west of the town, **Maidenhead Commons** and **Cock Marsh** contain a variety of habitats, including woodland, scrub thickets, grassland, ponds and riverside. Both are popular with walkers and nature-lovers: Cock Marsh is an important site for breeding waders, and both sites are rich in flora and invertebrate fauna.

COOKHAM

9 miles NW of Windsor on the A4094

-  Cookham Woods
-  Stanley Spencer Gallery

This pretty, small town, on the banks of the River Thames, has been fortunate in being protected by **Cookham Woods** (National Trust) from becoming a suburb of Maidenhead and still has a distinctive character of its own. The town was made famous by the artist Sir Stanley Spencer, who used Cookham as the setting for many of his paintings. He was born here in 1891 and was buried here on his death in 1959. The town's tribute to its most renowned resident is the **Stanley Spencer Gallery** (see panel on page 44), a permanent exhibition of his work, which is housed in the converted Victorian chapel Stanley visited as a child. His painting, *Resurrection*, which depicts recognisable locals

The Stanley Spencer Gallery

The Kings Hall, High Street, Cookham, Berkshire SL6 9SJ
Tel: 01628 471885

e-mail: info@stanleyspencer.org.uk
website: www.stanleyspencer.org.uk

The Stanley Spencer Gallery is unique as the only gallery in Britain devoted exclusively to an artist in the village where he was born and spent much of his life. To Spencer (1891-1959), Cookham and its surrounding area was the scene of heavenly visitations. Set in the heart of the village he immortalised, the gallery occupies the former Victorian Methodist Chapel where Spencer was taken to worship as a child. It contains a permanent collection of his work, together with letters, documents, memorabilia, and the pram in which Spencer wheeled his equipment when painting landscapes. It also displays important works on long-term loan, and mounts a winter and summer exhibition each year. Over a thousand works have been shown since the gallery opened in 1962.

Fern Lea the artist's birthplace is in Cookham High Street. The village remained a source of inspiration throughout his life and formed the setting for numerous biblical and figure paintings, as well as landscapes. The parish church, the High Street, Cookham Moor and the river are all recognisable from his pictures. Documents include the Chute Letters, written by Spencer to Desmond Chute during the First World War.



emerging from the graves in Cookham churchyard, caused some residents to protest when it was first exhibited in the 1930s. The Gallery is open seven days a week in the summer, Thursday to Sunday in winter. Call 01628 471 885.

BISHAM

11 miles NW of Windsor off the A404

"Breathing the very spirit of sweet peace", Bisham Abbey occupies a superb position with its churchyard sloping down to the Thames. The major attractions inside are the three sumptuous tombs of the Hoby family dating back to the late 16th and early 17th centuries. The most impressive is dedicated to Elizabeth, Lady Hoby, and shows her gorgeously attired in widow's weeds attended by her equally splendidly-dressed six children. At her feet lies the recumbent figure of a small boy. An enduring story claims that Lady Elizabeth beat

the child to death for smudging his copy book.

Despite its name, Bisham was never inhabited by monks, but was built for the Knights Templar in 1338.

ETON

1 mile N of Windsor on the A355

 Eton College

Just across the River Thames from Windsor, this town has grown up around **Eton College**, the famous public school that was founded in 1440 by Henry VI. Originally intended for 70 poor and worthy scholars, and to educate students for the newly created King's College, at Cambridge University, the college has been added to greatly over the years. Of the original school buildings, only the College Hall and the kitchen have survived; the great gatehouse and Lupton's Tower were added in the 16th century, and the

Looking for somewhere to stay, eat, drink or shop? www.findsomewhere.co.uk



Upper School dates from around 1690. Guided tours of the college are available.

The school has kept many ancient traditions over the years, including the black tail mourning coats that were originally worn on the death of George III in 1820 and which are still worn today. For centuries the college has educated the great and the good, among them William Pitt the Elder, Harold Macmillan, Thomas Gray (author of *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*), Henry Fielding, Shelley, George Orwell, Ian Fleming and the Princes William and Harry. Eton has also been famous in the past for its strict discipline, personified in 1832 by a master who told the pupils when they rebelled: "Boys, you must be pure of heart, for if not, I will thrash you until you are."

SLOUGH

3 miles N of Windsor on the A355

 Church of St Mary  Museum

A small settlement until the creation of a trading estate in 1920, Slough then grew rapidly from around 7000 to 100,000. The area does have a long history, however, and a visit to **Slough Museum** makes for an interesting hour or two delving into the past. Slough has a lovely surprise in the shape of one of the most splendid churches in the county. The **Church of St Mary** is a real gem, notable

Click Here for travel guidebooks

particularly for the private family pew of the Kedermisters, totally screened from the main part of the church, and a library filled with painted panels.

In the Church of St Laurence at Upton, on the outskirts of Slough, is the grave of the astronomer Sir William Herschel (1738-1822) and a stained-glass window in his honour.

DATCHET

2 miles E of Windsor on the B470

Just across the river from Windsor Castle's Home Park, Datchet has a spacious green and some attractive riverside houses. The town featured in Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor* when Falstaff, concealed in a laundry basket, is brought here for his "Datchet mead" – ie a ducking in the river.

RUNNYMEDE

3 miles SE of Windsor off the A308

It was here in 1215, in a peaceful riverside meadow, that King John reluctantly placed his seal on Magna Carta, thereby establishing the principle of constitutional monarchy and the individual's right to liberty and justice. Despite the charter's importance, no memorial was placed here until the American Bar Association erected one in 1957.

Nearby, on an acre of ground given to the United States by the Queen, stands a memorial erected in 1965 in memory of President John F Kennedy. Officially opened by the Queen in the presence of JFK's widow and children, it includes an extract from the President's inaugural address. Higher up the hill is another memorial, erected in 1953 as a tribute to the 20,455 members of the Air Forces of the British Commonwealth who have no known grave. From this tranquil spot there are magnificent views across the Thames Valley.



ADVERTISERS AND PLACES OF INTEREST

Accommodation, Food and Drink		Home & Garden	
The Bear Hotel, Hungerford	pg 9	Bow House, Hungerford	pg 10
The Crown & Garter, Inkpen, Hungerford	pg 12	Jewellery	
The Forbury, Kintbury, Hungerford	pg 12	Bow House, Hungerford	pg 10
The Queen's Head, Bradfield, Reading	pg 13	Places of Interest	
The Tutti Pole, Hungerford	pg 11	Museum of Berkshire Aviation, Woodley,	
		Reading	pg 16
Antiques and Restoration		Museum of English Rural Life, Reading	pg 15
Bow House, Hungerford	pg 10	Stanley Spencer Gallery, Cookham	pg 26
The Emporium, Hungerford	pg 10		
Giftware			
Bow House, Hungerford	pg 10		

Travel Publishing Order Form

To order any of our publications just fill in the payment details below and complete the order form. For orders of less than 4 copies please add £1 per book for postage and packing. Orders over 4 copies are P & P free.

Please Complete Either:

I enclose a cheque for £ made payable to Travel Publishing Ltd

Or:

CARD NO: EXPIRY DATE:

SIGNATURE:

NAME:

ADDRESS:

TEL NO:

Please either send, telephone, fax or e-mail your order to:

Travel Publishing Ltd, Airport Business Centre, 10 Thornbury Road, Estover, Plymouth PL6 7PP
Tel: 01752 697280 Fax: 01752 697299 e-mail: info@travelpublishing.co.uk

	PRICE	QUANTITY		PRICE	QUANTITY
HIDDEN PLACES REGIONAL TITLES			COUNTRY LIVING RURAL GUIDES		
Cornwall	£8.99	.....	East Anglia	£10.99	.....
Devon	£8.99	.....	Heart of England	£10.99	.....
Dorset, Hants & Isle of Wight	£8.99	.....	Ireland	£11.99	.....
East Anglia	£8.99	.....	North East of England	£10.99	.....
Lake District & Cumbria	£8.99	.....	North West of England	£10.99	.....
Lancashire & Cheshire	£8.99	.....	Scotland	£11.99	.....
Northumberland & Durham	£8.99	.....	South of England	£10.99	.....
Peak District and Derbyshire	£8.99	.....	South East of England	£10.99	.....
Yorkshire	£8.99	.....	Wales	£11.99	.....
			West Country	£10.99	.....
HIDDEN PLACES NATIONAL TITLES					
England	£11.99	.....			
Ireland	£11.99	.....			
Scotland	£11.99	.....			
Wales	£11.99	.....			
OTHER TITLES					
Off The Motorway	£11.99	.....			
Garden Centres and Nurseries of Britain	£11.99	.....			
			TOTAL QUANTITY		
			TOTAL VALUE		

Looking for:

- Places to Visit?
- Places to Eat & Drink?
- Places to Shop?
- Places to Stay?

Then why not visit Travel Publishing's fully searchable website?



You'll find it very easy-to-use with:

- Informative pages on places to visit, stay, eat, drink and shop throughout the United Kingdom.
- Information on tens of thousands of places of interest as well as interesting stories, amusing anecdotes and historical facts on over 5,000 villages, towns and cities.



www.findSOMEWHERE.CO.UK