

Bracknell Forest - a brief history

Bronze Age – Bill Hill Open Space – Bronze Age bowl barrow, already dug out.
Iron Age – Caesar’s Camp Iron Age Hill Fort.

AD 942 Braken Heal described in a Saxon royal charter as being one of Winkfield’s boundaries.

AD 1066 – 1087 The Domesday Book lists separately Lachenstade (Easthampstead) and Warfelt (Warfield).

1300 -1800 Royal hunting lodge built at Easthampstead in Plantagenet Times.
Towards the end of this period Bracknell Street began to take shape with buildings such as the Bull, the Red Lion and The Manor.

1813 The Windsor Forest Enclosure Act was passed.

1800s heyday of coaching era and coaches travelled between Reading and Staines along the London Road, which was turnpiked with a tollgate at Lily Hill Park.

1856 Staines to Wokingham Branch line opened. This line provided Bracknell with its passenger railway station, redeveloped in 1975.

Binfield – original name was Benetfeld meaning “land of broken grasses” probably referring to a clearing in the woods.

Crowthorne – The original ‘Crowthorne’ dates back to Anglo Saxon times as was located at the heart of the Great Forest of Windsor where the walks of Sandhurst, Bagshot and Easthampstead meet.

Sandhurst – the first mention of Sandhurst is found in Exchequer Rolls dated 1175, when the receipt of one mark for ‘Villata de Sandhurst’ is recorded.

Warfield – Two possible derivations of the name Warfield have been put forward: Woer-Feld meaning ‘Weir Field or Woernawell-Feld meaning ‘Wren’s Stream Field’ perhaps a reference to the minute tributary of the River Thames, Bull Brook which cuts the parish in half.

Winkfield – The name comes from Wineca’s Field, Wineca being a man’s name meaning Little Friend.

By 1891 the population of Bracknell was 2200 with Priestwood being the most populated area.

The Lawrence’s Store Ltd dominated the high street from 1885.

1948 Bracknell was put forward as one of the New Towns to help alleviate the housing crisis in West London.

The First ‘Neighbourhoods’ of the New Town – Priestwood, Easthampstead, Bullbrook, Harmans Water.

Expansion of the New Town - Wildridings, Great Hollands, Hanworth, Birch Hill, Crown Wood.

Additional housing development and future plans. As Bracknell became the centre for increasing numbers of industries further developments followed – Forest Park, Martins Heron were built in the late 1980s. Temple Park, Quelm Park and Whitegrove were additional housing developments built in the 1990s. Jennetts Park is the latest development on Peacock Farm running between Bracknell and Wokingham.

The regeneration and redevelopment of Bracknell town centre is an ongoing objective which seeks to revitalise the heart of Bracknell.