

GREEN FLAG

The Green Flag Award Scheme presents awards to public parks and open spaces that meet the very highest standards, judged on a range of criteria including health, safety, maintenance, cleanliness, sustainability, conservation and community involvement.



Pope's Meadow was both Bracknell Forest's first and Berkshire's first Green Flag Award winning site, praised for its access, facilities, maintenance and nature conservation. It is hoped that it will retain this award for many years.

GET INVOLVED

Bracknell Forest Borough Council rangers hold a wide variety of events and activities at parks and countryside sites throughout the year, many of which take place at Pope's Meadow.



Activities range from children's events such as Easter Egg hunts and pond-dipping, to conservation volunteering including clearance works and wildflower planting. Many different walks and talks also take place.

For more information, contact:
the Parks and Countryside helpline on 01344 354441
or email ranger.rangers@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

how to get there



On Foot - two pedestrian entrances to Pope's Meadow are located off St Mark's Road, with two further entrances from Murrell Hill Lane.

By Bicycle - cycle stands are located in the site car park.

By Bus The site is also served by public transport with First bus services servicing St Mark's Road and Terrace Road South. For more information contact Traveline on 0870 6082608

By Car - Pope's Meadow is located between Bracknell and Binfield, with the main entrance off St Marks Road, just to the north of its junction with the B3408 London Road. The site has its own free car park.



useful contacts

Bracknell Forest Borough Council
Culture and Visual Environment
Environment and Leisure
Time Square, Market Street
Bracknell, Berkshire, RG12 1LR

Parks and Countryside Helpline: 01344 354441



Pope's Meadow





INTRODUCTION

Pope's Meadow is a countryside park in Binfield, managed by Bracknell Forest Borough Council.

Once part of the grounds of Pope's Manor, the site was acquired in 1984 and consists of 5.5 hectares of established parkland, including open grassland, ponds and a copse. Its main aim is to provide a diverse wildlife habitat and a scenic landscape feature for visitors to enjoy. The site can be easily explored by strolling around the copse, ponds and meadow.

HISTORY



Pope's Meadow is named after Binfield's most famous resident, the 18th century poet and philosopher Alexander Pope (1688-1744). His childhood from the age of 12 was spent at Binfield Manor, known then as Whitehill House. His years in Binfield were spent developing his writing skills, with his most famous works written during this time including Windsor Forest (1713) and The Rape of the Loch (1714). There are many references to Pope in Binfield, such as Pope's Wood to the south of the village, where the poet was said to have gained most of his inspiration.

The present Georgian Binfield Manor is far grander than the 18th century building Pope would have known, and its grounds are open to the public twice a year. Whitehill House would have been a timber framed middle class home rather than a gentleman's residence, although the grounds may have been formally laid out. The area including the modern day Pope's Meadow site was probably a mixture of farmland and woodland coppices at the time.



NATURE AND WILDLIFE

Although comparatively small, Pope's Meadow includes a range of habitat types and, therefore, quite a varied range of species.



THE MEADOW

In spring and early summer parts of the site become a dazzling carpet of different colours when the daffodils and bluebells come into flower. Other flowers including lesser celandines, buttercups, ladies' smock (or cuckoo flower) and umbellifers such as cow-parsley can also be seen. Butterflies are often seen in the meadow, including small tortoiseshell, peacock, red admiral and painted lady varieties. Another common insect you might see is the grasshopper. Its familiar singing - or 'stridulation' - can be heard in the long grass throughout most of the summer.



The large standard trees of the parkland are mostly common or pedunculate oak, although there are limes and conifers near the top gate, and a mixed hedge of native species has been planted along the dividing fence.

THE POND

The pond at Pope's Meadow is another important habitat for a variety of species, especially as undisturbed and unpolluted ponds are becoming much less common.



In spring, look for signs of life in the pond as frogs and toads come out of hibernation to mate and spawn. Frog spawn is easily identified as a mass of jelly, whereas toad spawn is a long jelly-like string of eggs entangled in the reeds. Young tadpoles can later be seen developing in the shallows where they become an important food source for the other pond life.

In the summer, damselflies and dragonflies may be seen flying over the water. Dragonflies are usually larger have equal pairs of wings, but they are most easily told apart when at rest as the dragonfly rests with its wings open unlike the damselfly which folds its wings under its body.

THE COPSE

The copse in the middle of the meadow consists mainly of holly, oak, hawthorn and hazel, providing good shelter for birds such as chaffinch, blackbird, thrush, robin, dunnock, great tit and blue tit. Wood pigeons, magpies, jays and perhaps a green or greater-spotted woodpecker may also be seen.

The copse is an important habitat for woodland plants such as wood sorrel and bluebells. Its trees support a large variety of insect and bird life whilst decaying wood is host to a wide variety of fungi, the fruiting bodies of which can be seen in the autumn. Fungi play an important part in the natural cycle as they break down rotting wood and allow the nutrients to be taken back into the soil.



In the summer, migrants such as blackcap, chiff-chaff and willow warbler may be sighted. At dusk or dawn owls or foxes might be spotted returning from a hunting expedition, but rabbits and squirrels will be much easier to spot. Even if not, their evidence is everywhere - look for rabbit holes, scrapes and latrines, and listen to grey squirrels scurrying through the trees and undergrowth.