

Welcome to Lily Hill Park

Located close to the centre of Bracknell, Lily Hill Park offers 56 acres of restored heritage parkland and gardens for you to explore and enjoy, all set around historic Lily Hill House.

An extensive network of restored surfaced pathways allows you to explore the Parkland, which consists of ornamental planting, wildflower and hay meadows, veteran trees, ancient woodland and a notable collection of hardy-hybrid Rhododendron plants largely untouched since 1922.

Take a step back in time and enjoy the grand views and attractive features of Lily Hill Park that were experienced by Victorian ladies and gentlemen some 160 years ago.

Wildlife value

Lily Hill Park is an important Local Wildlife Site and is carefully managed to provide a diverse range of habitats for birds, bats, insects, wild flowers, grasslands and trees. Interesting species observed at the Park include birds such as; Bullfinch, Tree Creeper and Goldcrest; bats from at least six species including Long-eared, Noctule and Pipistrelle; and wildflowers such as Ragged-Robin and Common Spotted Orchids. The Park forms part of a larger network of linked green spaces including neighbouring woodland at Scott's Hill and Clinton's Hill.



Early history

The land on which Lily Hill Park is located was once part of Windsor Forest, which spanned much of the Borough and beyond. The site was purchased by Henry Dormer Vincent Esquire, the second son of the MP for Surrey in 1807 and the original Lily Hill House was built by 1817 when it first appeared on Warfield Parish map. Upon his death in 1833 the Lily Hill estate passed to his eldest son, Henry William Vincent, who was at that time 37 years old and working for the Exchequer in a judicial post called the 'King's and Queen's Remembrancer'.

It was Henry William Vincent who designed much of the current house and gardens. This task he completed without professional assistance, but was greatly influenced by



the garden designers and plant hunters of the time. Henry also consulted regularly with his Eton school friend Ralph Sneyd of Keele Hall in Staffordshire, who was undertaking similar work. In letters between the two friends Henry William expressed concern about felling many trees to create views across the estate, with Henry writing: "I found that it was impossible to get the effects I had in my head, and develop the shapes of the ground, without felling by masses - when you see the result of all this, perchance you will think me rather less goodlooking than before; it will take a year or two - yea, more - to recover; but I live upon the hopes that my grandchildren will say 'after all, the Old Boy was clearly right in making this sweep!'"

Lily Hill Park today is a small fraction of the size of the original estate which measured 300 acres and covered most of Harman's Water when it was auctioned in 1901. The wider estate included a farm house, barns, stables, arable and grazing land, orchards and estate worker housing.

Horticultural value

Lily Hill Park is home to both native and introduced trees, ranging from the veteran English Oaks that stood as part of the Windsor Forest over 500 years ago to the fashionable trees that Henry William Vincent introduced as an enthusiastic plant collector when developing his estate in the mid 1800's. These include species such as the Monkey Puzzle, Fern Beech, Douglas Fir and the majestic Wellingtonia or Giant Redwood trees.



The tradition of plant collecting was continued by later owners of the Lily Hill estate, most notably the Scott-McCoomb family. In 1922, they purchased Starch Copse, which is semi-natural ancient woodland that dates back to at least 1761, and introduced a large quantity of hardy-hybrid Rhododendrons from the Waterer Nursery in Knapp Hill. (See Rhododendron and Azalea Collection.) Lily Hill Park provides a spectacular seasonal variation with Daffodils and Snowdrops arriving in spring, Rhododendron and Azalea blooming at the end of May and ornamental flower displays changing throughout the summer. In autumn tree leaves turn to rich shades of reds, yellows and golds and eventually fall to carpet the ground and reveal spectacular winter views across the estate.

Useful Information

Directions

Lily Hill Park is located just east of Bracknell town centre, north of A329 London Road.

Access

There are ten pedestrian access points around the perimeter of the park, linking to London Road, Lily Hill Drive and Lily Hill Road. Free car parking is available in two council owned car parks adjoining the site; the Lily Hill Road car park (RG12 2RX) to the North of the park and the Lily Hill Drive car park (RG12 2UG) which also houses the re-cycling facilities.

Facilities



Get involved

For a full list of events taking place at Lily Hill Park, visit our website. To learn more about supporting Lily Hill Park through our volunteer network please email us.

Contacts

**Bracknell Forest Council
Parks & Countryside Service
01344 352000
lilyhillpark@bracknell-forest.gov.uk
www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/lilyhillpark
Travel Line 0871 200 22 33**

Copies of this leaflet may be obtained in large print, Braille, on audio tape or in other languages. To obtain a copy in an alternative format, please telephone 01344 352000.

Time line for Lily Hill ownership

1816 – Henry Dormer Vincent

(The 2nd son of Sir Francis Vincent)

1833 – Henry William Vincent

(The eldest son of Henry Dormer Vincent)

1865 – Susan Ann Bagot Lane

(The eldest daughter of Henry William Vincent)

1899 – In trust for Bagot Lane children

(Estate sold by public auction and Lily Hill leaves the 'Vincent' family)

1902 – Charles Neck

(Purchases the Lily Hill estate at auction)

1904 – In trust to Mrs Charles Neck

(Following the demise of Charles Neck)

1912 – Jennings Scott McComb

(Is sold the estate by Mrs Charles Neck who moves to London)

1928 – Mrs Mary Scott McComb

(Inherits following the demise of her husband Jennings Scott McComb)

1955 – Bracknell Development Corporation

(Land purchased for development by a public body set up under the New Towns Act, which later becomes the Commission for New Towns.)

1983 – Bracknell Forest Council

(Bracknell is completed as a new town and various parts of the original Vincent estate are included in the Transfer of Community Related Assets. Ownership passes from the Commission for New Towns to the Council.)

Today - the park is managed by Bracknell Forest Council and the privately owned Lily Hill House is left as office space.



Discover ... Lily Hill Park



A historic parkland in Bracknell



Edwardian Water Garden, Well and Cascade ⑤

Beautiful ornamental borders surround a restored water feature which is fed by a natural well and runs to a pond. The area is kindly supported by the hard work of local volunteer horticulturists. (See Useful Information.) Please keep dogs on leads inside the fenced areas.

Story Telling Throne ⑱

This raised seat is a great spot for a photograph or two. Use the platform opposite to take photos from the same spot on each of your visits to the park and build a collection of memories of time spent with family and friends. Email us your pictures if you would like to see them on our web pages.



The Ha-Ha ⑥

This 'invisible fenceline' marks the boundary with the private lawns of Lily Hill House (which are not accessible to the public.) Historically the meadows provided grazing for livestock so the Ha-Ha was invented to protect the house and lawns while preserving the views from the windows. The term Ha-Ha is said to be derived from the noise of surprise people made when they stumbled across this invisible ditch.



Rhododendron and Azalea Collection ⑲

Spread throughout the woodland is a collection of Hardy Hybrid Rhododendron and Azaleas, notable for their uninterrupted growth over the last 90 years. Plants such as 'Sappho' and 'Gomer Waterer' have now reached a magnificent 20 metres across. Come and enjoy the spectacular floral displays in late May/early June.



- 1 Bog Garden
- 2 Wildflower Meadow
- 3 Log Pile
- 4 Pond & Boardwalk
- 5 Edwardian Water Garden, Well & Cascade
- 6 Ha-Ha
- 7 Lily Hill House
- 8 Historic Driveway
- 9 Orchard
- 10 Yew Walk
- 11 Summer House
- 12 Giant Picnic Bench
- 13 Amphitheatre
- 14 Wellingtonia Trees
- 15 Site of Forester's Public House
- 16 History Tree
- 17 Green Flag
- 18 Story Telling Throne
- 19 Rhododendron & Azalea Collection
- 20 Windblown Tree
- 21 Veteran Oak
- 22 Bracknell Lawn Tennis Club
- 23 Bracknell Rugby Club
- 24 Traditional Hay Meadow

Key

- Historic Carriageway
(Suitable for pedestrians, including wheelchairs and buggies. Cycling permitted. No motor vehicles.)
- Accessible Paths
(Suitable for pedestrians, including wheelchairs and buggies. No motor vehicles or cycling.)
- Footpaths
(Surfaced paths suitable for pedestrians but featuring steps or steep inclines. No motor vehicles or cycling.)
- Car Park
- Bus Stop
- Information & Interpretation Board
- Viewpoint

Orchard ⑨

The traditional community orchard was planted in 2005 to recognise that all of the land around Lily Hill Lodge was historically planted with apple trees. Each apple tree is of a different species that was available in Victorian times, including unusual varieties such as Bess Pool, Forge and Tom Putt.

Summer House ⑪



Giant Picnic Bench ⑫

This fantastic picnic bench is the largest in England to be carved from a single piece of wood. Made from the trunk of a Lows Fir Tree which fell over during high winds within the Foresters Hill woodland, the bench now provides the focal point for family picnics and large community events.

Meadows ② ⑳

The meadows provide valuable habitat for a diverse array of wildlife including plants, insects, birds and bats. They are only cut once a year to support the growth of wildflowers such as Meadow Buttercup and Birdsfoot Trefoil.

