

= Basingstoke =

Basingstoke (/ ˈbeɪzɪŋstəʊk / BAY @-@ zing @-@ stohk) is the largest town in Hampshire in south central England . It lies across a valley at the source of the River Loddon . It is 30 miles (48 km) northeast of Southampton , 48 miles (77 km) southwest of London , and 19 miles (31 km) northeast of the county town and former capital Winchester . According to the 2011 census the town (including its outer suburbs) had a population of 107 @, @ 355 . It is part of the borough of Basingstoke and Deane and part of the parliamentary constituency of Basingstoke . Basingstoke is nicknamed " Doughnut City " or " Roundabout City " because of the number of large roundabouts .

Basingstoke is an old market town expanded in the 1960s as a result of an agreement between London and Hampshire County Councils . It developed rapidly after World War II , along with other towns in the United Kingdom , to accommodate part of the London ' overspill ' as perceived in the Greater London Plan in 1944 . Basingstoke market was mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 , and remained a small market town until the 1950s . At the start of World War II the population was little more than 13 @, @ 000 . It has a regular market , but is now larger than Hampshire County Council 's definition of a market town .

Basingstoke became an important economic centre during the second half of the 20th century .

= = Etymology = =

The name Basingstoke (A.D 990 ; Embasinga stocæ , Domesday ; Basingestoches) is believed to derived from the town 's position as the outlying , western settlement of Basa 's people , and the suffix -stoke refers to a stockade (of which there is now no trace) that surrounded the settlement in medieval times . Basing , now Old Basing , a village 2 miles (3 km) to the east , is thought to have the same etymology , but is considered to be the older settlement .

= = History = =

= = = Early settlements = = =

A Neolithic campsite from around 3000 BC beside a spring on the west of the town is the earliest known human settlement in the area , but the Willis Museum has flint implements and axes from nearby fields that date from Palæolithic times . The hillfort at Winklebury (2 miles (3 km) west of the town centre) , known as Winklebury Camp or Winklebury Ring dates from the Iron age and there are remains of several other earthworks around the town , including a long barrow near Down Grange . The site is now home to Fort Hill Community School . To the west , Roman Road and Kempshott Lane mark the course of a Roman road that ran between Winchester and Silchester . Further to the east , another Roman road from Chichester passes through the villages of Upton Grey and Mapledurwell . The Harrow Way is an Iron @-@ age ancient route to the south of the town . These cross @-@ cutting highways , and good agricultural land led to the establishment of numerous Roman villas in northern Hampshire , the farming enterprises of Romanised native aristocracy (Roman villa) . The first recorded historical event here was the victory gained by Æthelred of Wessex and Alfred the Great over the Danes in 871 . In 904 Basingstoke saw a savage battle between Edward the Elder , Alfred 's only son , and his cousin Æthelwald .

= = = Market town = = =

Basingstoke is recorded as being a market site in the Domesday Book , and has held a regular Wednesday market since 1214 . During the Civil War , and the siege of Basing House between 1643 and 1645 , the town played host to large numbers of Parliamentarians . During this time , St. Michael 's Church was damaged whilst being used as an explosive store and lead was stripped from the roof of the Chapel of the Holy Ghost , leading to its eventual ruin . It had been incorporated in

1524 , but was effectively out of use after the Civil War . The 17th century saw serious damage to much of the town and its churches , because of great fires in 1601 and 1656 . Cromwell is thought to have stayed here towards the end of the siege of Basing House , and wrote a letter to the Speaker of the House of Commons addressed from Basingstoke .

The cloth industry was important in the development of the town until the 17th century along with malting . Brewing became important during the 18th and 19th centuries , and the oldest and most successful was May 's Brewery , established by Thomas and William May in 1750 in Brook Street .

= = = Victorian history = = =

The London and South Western Railway built a line from London in 1839 and within a year it was extended to Winchester and Southampton . In 1848 a rival company , sponsored by the Great Western Railway built a branch from Reading , and in 1854 a line was built to Salisbury . In the 19th century Basingstoke moved into industrial manufacture , Wallis and Haslam (later Wallis & Steevens) , began producing agricultural equipment including threshing machines in the 1850s , moving into the production of stationary steam engines in the 1860s and traction engines in the 1870s .

Two traders who opened their first shops within a year of each other in the town , became household names nationally : Thomas Burberry in 1856 and Alfred Milward in 1857 . Burberry became famous after he invented gabardine and Milward founded the Milwards chain of shoe shops , which could be found on almost every high street until the 1980s .

Ordinary citizens were shocked by the emotive , evangelical tactics of the Salvation Army when it arrived in the town in 1880 , but the reaction from employees of the breweries or the licenced trade grew openly hostile . Violent clashes became a regular occurrence culminating on Sunday 27 March 1881 with troops being called on after the mayor had read the Riot Act . The riot and its causes led to questions in Parliament and a period of notoriety for the town . The town was described as ' Barbarous Basingstoke ' by one London newspaper in 1882 .

In 1898 John Isaac Thornycroft began production of steam @-@ powered lorries and Thornycroft 's grew to become the town 's largest employer .

= = = Recent history = = =

Basingstoke was fortunate during the Second World War to suffer very little bomb damage with mainly a stick of German bombs falling along Flaxfield Road near to St Michael 's Church . After the war , the town had a population of 25 @, @ 000 .

As part of the London Overspill plan , along with places such as Ashford and Swindon , Basingstoke was rapidly developed in the late 1960s as an ' expanded town ' , in similar fashion to Milton Keynes . Many office blocks and large estates were built , including a ring road . The shopping centre was built in phases . The first phase was completed by the 1970s and was later covered in the 1980s , and was known as The Walks . The second phase was completed by the early 1980s , and became The Malls . The third phase was abandoned and the site was later used to build the Anvil concert hall . The central part of the shopping centre was rebuilt in 2002 and reopened as Festival Place . This has brought a dramatic improvement to shoppers ' opinions of the town centre , but it is unclear if it has softened the town 's overall image .

Later that year , the Basingstoke Gazette launched its " Basingstoke ? A Place to be Proud of " campaign , aimed at changing people 's perception of the town . The campaign is ongoing (as of September 2014) and marked by the presentation of annual awards to individuals , organisations or businesses nominated by the public for commendable local achievement . As a mark of the improving image of the town as place to live , the borough entered the top 50 best places to live in the 2011 Halifax survey at number 47 .

Further work to improve the image of the town continues with the latest Central Basingstoke Vision project coordinated by the Borough Council . In the mid @-@ 1990s , numerous reports described sightings of the Beast of Basingstoke , a big cat believed to be a lion or a puma , possibly two .

Local legend suggests the animal was shot and killed , although no official news sources document any capture or killing of the beast .

Basingstoke houses the UK headquarters of De La Rue , Sun Life Financial , The Automobile Association , ST Ericsson , GAME , Motorola , Barracuda Networks , Eli Lilly and Company , BNP Paribas Leasing Solutions , the leasing arm of BNP Paribas in the UK , and Sony Professional Solutions . It houses the European headquarters of the TaylorMade @-@ Adidas Golf Company . Other industries include publishing (Palgrave Macmillan , etc .) , IT , telecommunications , insurance and electronics .

During the severe snow storms of December 2009 , Basingstoke and the surrounding area was one of the worst hit regions in the United Kingdom , where an estimated 3000 motorists were forced to abandon their vehicles around the town and on the ring road during the evening rush hour of the Christmas holidays .

= = Geography = =

Situated in a valley through the Hampshire Downs at an average altitude of 88 metres (289 ft) Basingstoke is a major interchange between Reading , Newbury , Andover , Winchester , and Alton , and lies on the natural trade route between the southwest of England and London .

= = = Physical geography and geology = = =

The precise size and shape of Basingstoke today are difficult to identify , as it has no single official boundary that encompasses all the areas contiguous to its development . The unparished area of the town represents its bulk , but several areas that might be considered part of the town are separate parishes , namely Chineham , Rooksdown , and Lychpit . The unparished area includes Worting which was previously a separate village and parish , extending beyond Roman Road and Old Kempshott Lane , which might otherwise be considered the town 's ' natural ' western extremity . The ward boundaries within the parliamentary constituency are not (as of August 2007) coterminous with the parish boundaries .

Basingstoke is situated on a bed of cretaceous upper chalk with small areas of clayey and loamy soil , inset with combined clay and flint patches . Loam and alluvium recent and pleistocene sediments line the bed of the river Loddon . A narrow line of tertiary Reading beds run diagonally from the northwest to the southeast along a line from Sherborne St John through Popley , Daneshill and the north part of Basing . To the north of this line , encompassing the areas of Chineham and Pyotts Hill , is London clay .

= = = Divisions and suburbs = = =

Basingstoke 's expansion has absorbed much surrounding farmland and scattered housing , transforming it into housing estates or local districts . Many of these new estates are designed as almost self @-@ contained communities , such as Lychpit , Chineham , Popley , Winklebury , Oakridge , Kempshott , Brighton Hill , Viables , South Ham , Black Dam , Buckskin and Hatch Warren . The M3 acts as a buffer zone to the south of the town , and the South Western Main Line constrains the western expansion , with a green belt to the north and north @-@ east , making Basingstoke shaped almost like a kite . As a result , the villages of Cliddesden , Dummer , Sherborne St John and Oakley , although being very close to the town limits , are considered distinct entities . Popley , Hatch Warren and Beggarwood are seeing rapid growth in housing .

= = = Demography = = =

The population has increased from around 2 @, @ 500 in 1801 to over 52 @, @ 000 in 1971 ; the most significant growth occurring during the later half of the 20th century . The borough of Basingstoke was merged with other local districts in 1974 to form the borough of Basingstoke and

Deane . Since then most census data has been for the larger area : before 1974 , census information was published for the town as a separate entity .

Figures published for the most recent UK census in 2001 for the Borough of Basingstoke and Deane , give a population of 152 @, @ 573 and a population density of 2 @. @ 41 persons per hectare . The number of women at 50 @. @ 48 % slightly exceeded that of men . 96 @. @ 56 % of the population were White British , 1 @. @ 22 % Asian or Asian British , 1 @. @ 02 % mixed race , 0 @. @ 58 % Black or Black British and 0 @. @ 61 % Chinese or other ethnic group . With regard to religion , 74 @. @ 02 % of the population were Christian , 16 @. @ 98 % had no religion and 7 @. @ 22 % did not respond . Other religions in total accounting for less than 2 % . Among other findings were that 74 @. @ 33 % felt they were in good health , 50 @. @ 98 % were economically active full @- @ time employees (over 10 % higher than the National Average) and 48 @. @ 73 % were buying their property with a mortgage or loan (almost 10 % higher than the national average) . Amongst the working population , 64 @. @ 2 % travelled less than 10 kilometres (6 @. @ 2 mi) to work . The biggest percentage of employees , 17 @. @ 67 % worked in real estate , renting and business activities .

= = Governance = =

Basingstoke is part of a two @- @ tier local government structure and returns county councillors to Hampshire County Council . When the cities of Southampton and Portsmouth attained unitary authority status in 1998 , Basingstoke became the largest settlement in the county administered by the county council , although it remains the third largest settlement in the ceremonial county .

Basingstoke and Deane is the local Borough Council and has its offices in the town centre . Elections to the council take place in 3 out of every 4 years . After the latest election in 2012 and 2 Conservative defections thereafter , the council has under no overall control but with a Conservative majority . As of 2014 , the council is compiled of 30 Conservative , 14 Labour , 11 Liberal Democrat , 4 independent and 1 UKIP councillors . The Basingstoke parliamentary constituency was formed under the 1885 Act and is currently served by Conservative Member of Parliament (MP) Maria Miller , who was elected in the 2005 general election . In September 2012 , Miller was appointed as Secretary of State for Culture , Media & Sport under the Prime Minister 's cabinet reshuffle , a position from which she resigned in April 2014 .

Under the town twinning scheme , the local council have twinned Basingstoke with Alençon in France , Braine @- @ l'Alleud in Belgium , and Euskirchen in Germany .

= = Facilities = =

The former Town Hall , adjoining the old marketplace , houses the Willis Museum (originally the Basingstoke Museum , until 1956) . This was founded and directed by Alderman George W. Willis , a local clocksmith , who served as Mayor of Basingstoke in 1923 @- @ 24 . He established the museum in 1931 and with much public support was able to build it up into a major collection on local history , with a particularly extensive collection (largely made by him) of prehistoric implements and of antique clocks and watches . His association with the expanding museum continued for forty years . Its central location today is where , once upon a time , Jane Austen and her sister used to go to dances . Although ostensibly set in Hertford , Austen 's novel *Pride and Prejudice* , written in 1797 , is thought to have been based on her view of Basingstoke society two centuries ago .

The Top of Town is the historic heart of Basingstoke , housing the Museum in the former Town Hall building (rebuilt 1832) as well as several locally run shops , the post office , and the market place . Basingstoke is also home to multiple theatrical organisations : The Anvil , and the Haymarket , situated in the former Corn Exchange .

Festival Place , opened in October 2002 , gave a huge boost to the town centre whilst transforming the former The Walks Shopping Centre and the New Market Square . Aside from a wide range of shops , there is also a range of cafés and restaurants as well as a large multiscreen Vue cinema (formerly Ster Century from Festival Place 's opening until their takeover in 2005 ; the pre @- @

existing Vue in the Leisure Park was sold to Odeon) .

Central Basingstoke has two further shopping areas : The Malls and the Top of Town . The Malls area had declined since the opening of Festival Place and the closure of its Alders department store , though still home to several major retailers . The leasehold was purchased in 2004 by the St Modwen development group in partnership with the Kuwait property investment company Salhia Real Estate , with provision for redevelopment The redevelopment of The Malls started in late 2010 , and the shopping centre was given a major facelift . The existing canopies were removed and a clear roof canopy installed , to protect the centre from bad weather , but still allow natural light and air in . The whole shopping centre has been repaved and new street furniture installed . A new gateway entrance to The Malls links it to the rail station . The redevelopment was completed in the last quarter of 2011 . The redevelopment work has been carried out by Wates Group using a variety of subcontractors .

Immediately outside the Malls , in the centre of Basingstoke 's Wote Street stands the most noticeable Willy , the heaviest sculpture of a male organ on public display in the UK , weighing seven tons . The image of a mother and child is carved into the side of the sculpture .

The town 's nightlife is split between the new Festival Square , and the traditional hostelrys at the Top of Town , with a few local community pubs outside the central area . The town has four nightclubs , two in the town itself , one on the east side and one 2 miles (3 @. @ 2 km) out to the west .

In Portchester Square is the Basingstoke Sports Centre which has a subterranean swimming pool , sauna , jacuzzi and steam room . Above ground there is a gym , aerobics studios , squash courts and main hall . There is also a playden for young children .

= = = Sports and leisure = = =

Outside the town centre , there is a leisure park featuring the Aquadrome swimming pool , which opened in May 2002 . The park includes an ice rink , bowling alley , Bingo club and a ten screen Odeon (formerly Vue prior to the takeover of the Ster Century cinema in Festival Place , and before that , Warner @-@ Village) cinema , as well as a restaurant and fast food outlets . The leisure park is home to the Milestones Museum which contains a network of streets and buildings based on the history of Hampshire .

Basingstoke has a football club , Basingstoke Town F.C. the Basingstoke Rugby Football Club , and the Basingstoke Bison ice hockey team . Basingstoke also has a swimming team , known as the Basingstoke Bluefins and an American Flag Football Team known as the Basingstoke Zombie Horde . The diversity of sporting activity in the area is also illustrated by organisations such as Basingstoke Demons Floorball Club , Basingstoke Volleyball Club , Basingstoke Bulls Korfbal Club and Lasham Gliding Society . The home ground of Basingstoke & North Hants Cricket Club , Mays Bounty was until 2000 used once a season by Hampshire County Cricket Club . As of 2011 , Basingstoke has a roller derby league and team , the Basingstoke Bullets . Due to difficulty finding a suitable venue , the team practice in nearby Whitchurch .

Plans have recently been announced for a new multimillion @-@ pound sports facility at Down Grange , which would be suitable for many sports . Proposals include a stadium for Basingstoke Town FC and Basingstoke RFC which would be up to the standard of the Football League , a new 8 lane athletics track and hockey pitch , as well as a gym , swimming pool , hotel and conference facilities .

= = = Musical groups = = =

Basingstoke has a wide diversity for musical groups ranging from brass bands to symphony orchestras . The Basingstoke Concert Band is a traditional wind band which has now been in existence for more than 35 years . The band was started by Lawrie Shaw when Brighton Hill Community School opened in Basingstoke in 1975 where he was the first headteacher . Lawrie formed the band as an evening class for amateur wind players and it was then known as the

Brighton Hill Centre Band . In the years immediately after World War II the Basingstoke Symphony Orchestra was being conducted by D. Cecil Williams .

= = = Media = = =

Basingstoke is served by regional radio stations The Breeze serving North Hampshire and parts of Surrey and Sussex and Heart Berkshire , broadcast from Reading and London also provides regional coverage in the area . BBC Berkshire is available in the town . The town has coverage from digital radio ; the BBC , Independent National and Now Reading multiplexes can be received in the town , and the outskirts can receive London and South Hampshire stations as well . The BBC national stations and DAB coverage is enhanced by a small relay just south of the town centre .

Local TV coverage is provided by BBC South and ITV Meridian , with BBC London and ITV London also received in the town . There are three local newspapers ? the Basingstoke Gazette which also publishes the Wednesday Extra , and the Basingstoke Observer . The town is also covered by the broadsheet newspaper Hampshire Chronicle .

= = Education = =

The Holy Ghost School (subsequently Queen Mary 's School for Boys) was a state funded grammar school operating in Basingstoke for four centuries , from 1556 until 1970 , producing nationally @-@ recognised alumni such as Revd . Gilbert White (1720 @-@ 1793) , a pioneer naturalist , and the famed cricket commentator , John Arlott (1914 @-@ 1991) .

In modern times education in Basingstoke has been co @-@ ordinated by Hampshire County Council . Each neighbourhood in the town has at least one primary school , while secondary schools are distributed around the town on larger campuses . Basingstoke has two large further education colleges : a sixth form college , Queen Mary 's College (QMC) and Basingstoke College of Technology (BCoT) . The University of Winchester had a campus in Basingstoke (Chute House Campus) which closed in July 2011 ; it had offered full @-@ time and part @-@ time university courses in subjects including childhood studies , various management pathways , community development and creative industries . Bournemouth University 's health and social care students can work on placement at the North Hampshire Hospital . However , the hospital only caters for midwifery students .

= = Transport = =

Basingstoke is at Junction 6 and Junction 7 of the M3 motorway , which skirts the town 's southeastern edge , linking the town to London and to Southampton and the south @-@ west . The central area of the town is encircled by a ring road constructed in the 1960s named The Ringway and bisected from east to west either by the A3010 or Churchill Way . The A33 runs north east to Reading and the M4 Motorway and south west to Winchester . The A30 runs east to Hook and west to Salisbury . The A303 begins a few miles south west of Basingstoke to head west towards Wiltshire and the West Country , sharing the first few miles with the A30 . The A339 runs south east to Alton and north west to Newbury . Basingstoke has a reputation for having a large density of roundabouts , and with some larger roundabouts dealing with traffic from six directions , this only adds to the illusion , as does the fact some multilevel junctions on the Ringway were never built or completed .

The South Western Main Line railway runs east and west through the centre of the town and Basingstoke railway station linking it to the West of England Main Line to Salisbury and the South West of England , London Waterloo (the fastest train Basingstoke to London takes 44 minutes) , Winchester , Southampton , Bournemouth and Weymouth , and via the Eastleigh to Fareham Line and West Coastway Line to Portsmouth and Brighton . The West of England Main Line to Salisbury and Exeter diverges at Worting Junction , to the west . The Basingstoke Branch runs north @-@ east to Reading , providing services to Oxford , Birmingham , the north of England and Scotland .

The town was the terminus of the defunct Basingstoke and Alton Light Railway . Current rail services from Basingstoke are operated by South West Trains , CrossCountry and First Great Western .

Most bus services in the town operate from Basingstoke Bus Station . The majority are provided by the Stagecoach Group through their Stagecoach in Hampshire sub @-@ division , Newbury and District also operate over individual routes and Cango operate a service linking villages between Basingstoke and Alton . A Park and Ride service links Basingstoke leisure park with Basing View , via Basingstoke Railway Station . This service provides a daytime service at roughly 10 @-@ minute intervals throughout the week . The buses on this service being provided by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council . Currently (2010) , a complementary peak time service is also provided by Courtney Coaches Limited between Chineham Business Park and the railway station . National Express offers direct coach services to London , Heathrow Airport and Southampton from the bus station .

Separating provision for cyclists from other road traffic was not part of the remit of the 1960s town redevelopment , and in 1996 the perception of provision for cyclists was very poor . A Basingstoke Area Cycling Strategy was developed in 1999 and subsequently an extensive cycle network has been developed mainly utilising on @-@ road routes or off @-@ road routes that run parallel with and directly alongside roads . Basingstoke was linked to Reading on the National Cycle Network route 23 in May 2003 and the route was extended south to Alton and Alresford in April 2006 .

= = = Basingstoke Canal = = =

The Basingstoke Canal started at a canal basin , roughly where the cinema in Festival Place is located . From there the canal ran alongside the River Loddon following the line of Eastrop Way . The old canal route passes under the perimeter ring road and then follows a long loop partly on an embankment to pass over small streams and water meadows towards Old Basing , where the route goes around the now ruined palace of Basing House and then through and around the eastern edge of Old Basing . It followed another loop to go over small streams near the Hatch public house (a lot of this section was built over when constructing the M3) and headed across fields on an embankment towards Mapledurwell . The section of the canal from Up Nately to the western entrance of the Greywell Tunnel still exists and is a nature reserve ; there is water in the canal and the canal towpath can be walked . A permissive footpath at the western entrance to the tunnel allows walkers to access public footpaths to get to the eastern entrance of the tunnel . The limit of navigation is about 500m east of the Greywell Tunnel . The renovated sections of the canal can then be navigated east towards West Byfleet where it joins the Wey Navigation , which itself can be navigated to the River Thames at Weybridge .

Plans to reconnect Basingstoke with the surviving sections of the Canal have been delayed several times in the past and this remains a long term aim of the Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society .

= = Religious sites = =

The notable Anglican church of St. Michael 's is west of Festival Place and the chancel dates from 1464 ; the south chapel may be older . The nave and aisles were added 50 years later by Richard Foxe , Bishop of Winchester . The Memorial Chapel at the north east corner of the church was completed in 1921 . The ruined Chapel of the Holy Ghost , north of the railway station , has not been a place of worship for the past four centuries , an effect of the Reformation . It was built by the first Lord Sandys , beginning in 1524 , when King Henry VIII issued a charter of incorporation . However the west tower of a 13th @-@ century building survives . It is surrounded by an ancient cemetery ; Lord William Sandys himself lies buried in the chapel with his wife . According to the authors of Premature burial and how it may be prevented , a lady by the name of Blunden was buried alive in this cemetery by accident in a family vault . Schoolboys were supposed to have heard her struggles in her coffin , which was opened too late to save her life . The Church of St Mary , Eastrop is an old church enlarged in 1912 . All Saints ' Church was built in 1915 , designed by Temple Moore . St

Peter 's Church was built in 1964 @-@ 5 designed by Ronald Sims and is in a housing estate built in the 1960s . In 2014 a group named Basingstoke Community Churches covered an area of six churches in the town . There is also an Assemblies of God church called Wessex Christian Fellowship , two very new Roman Catholic churches , St. Bede 's and St. Joseph 's , and churches of other denominations .

= = Cultural associations = =

The Gilbert and Sullivan comic opera Ruddigore uses the word " Basingstoke " as a catchphrase , reminding the " mad " character Margaret not to relapse into abnormal behaviour . In 1895 , Thomas Hardy referred to Basingstoke as " Stoke Barehills " in Jude the Obscure . Patrick Wilde 's 1993 play , What 's Wrong with Angry ? is set in Basingstoke . It was later adapted into the 1998 film , Get Real , which was filmed at various locations around Basingstoke .

Park Prewett Hospital was the unnamed setting for the novel " Poison in the Shade " (1953) by the local author and sculptor Eric Benfield , who was working as an art therapist there when it was a mental hospital .

Basingstoke 's North Hampshire Hospital was one of two hospitals used for the filming of Channel 4 's hit comedy Green Wing . George Formby 's film , " He Snoops to Conquer , " was partly shot in the town in 1944 . And in 1974 the National Film Board of Canada produced a documentary here called " Basingstoke ? Runcorn : British New Towns " .