

= Southcote , Berkshire =

Southcote ( / ˈsaʊkət / ) is a suburb of Reading in the English county of Berkshire . Located to the south @-@ west of Reading town centre , Southcote has a population of about 8 @, @ 500 ( as of 2011 ) . The settlement lies primarily between the London @-@ to @-@ Bath road and the River Kennet .

The area was sparsely populated until after the Second World War , though excavations have revealed evidence of Paleolithic and Iron Age activity in Southcote , as well as Roman and Saxon habitation . By the time William the Conqueror undertook the Domesday Survey in 1086 , Southcote was sufficiently established to warrant a Lord of the Manor , who at that time was William de Braose . From the 16th century onwards , Southcote Manor was owned by the Blagrove family , who sold the manor house in the 1920s . The area was subsequently developed into housing : much of the land changed from agricultural to residential . A large proportion of the land in Southcote not used for housing is classified as flood @-@ meadow , providing flood plains between urbanisation and the River Kennet .

Southcote forms an electoral ward in Reading . The area is seen as a safe seat for Labour , as the Conservatives have not held a seat on the council since the 1980s .

Residents of Southcote generally self @-@ classify as Christian . The male life expectancy in the area is lower than the national estimate , although the female expectancy is slightly higher . Claimants of out @-@ of @-@ work benefits ( such as Jobseeker 's Allowance ) are more prevalent in Southcote than in surrounding areas . Attainment in education in Southcote is lower than the Reading average , as is residents ' self @-@ evaluation of health .

Near to the settlement is Southcote Junction , where two branches from the Great Western Main Line diverge : the Reading to Taunton line and the Reading to Basingstoke line . The railways were preceded by the Kennet and Avon Canal , which passes south of the settlement . Southcote lends its name to the 104th lock on the canal .

= = History = =

= = = Toponymy = = =

Recorded in the Domesday Book as Sudcote , Southcote has also been referred to as Sutcot , Sudcot , Sukote , Suthcot , Suthcote , Suthcotes , and Southcoat , with the present spelling entering usage in the 15th century . Alternative spellings of Southcot and Southcott have also been used .

The name " Southcote " , comparable to that of neighbouring Norcot , originates from the Old English " suth cote " , meaning " south [ ern ] cottage " . It is likely that Circuit Lane , one of the primary roads into Southcote , derives its name from " Circourt Lane " , a corruption of " Southcote Lane " . A similar development of names occurred at Circourt Manor near Denchworth , Oxfordshire .

= = = Early history = = =

Lower Paleolithic and Palaeolithic materials have been recovered in various excavations in the Southcote area . An Iron Age occupation was located when houses were constructed in the 20th century . A Saxon urn was found in Southcote in 1924 . The urn contained ashes and bone fragments , and was given to the Museum of Reading . A polished stone celt was also found in Southcote in 1926 . An excavation of Southcote Manor in the 1960s uncovered many Roman , Romano @-@ British and medieval artefacts such as sherds and pottery ; a sample of the latter was discovered to have originated in Oxford in the 2nd century . Similarly , a Pannonian brooch and samian ware have been found in the area , and Roman pottery was found in the vicinity of the clay pits at Prospect Park Brick Works . Later inhabitation of Southcote was discovered at Anslow 's Cottages south of the Kennet , where excavation suggests that a Bronze Age waterfront was made

on a branch of the river . A 1991 report by the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England ? now known as English Heritage ? detailed the discovery of fragments of twined basketry at Anslow 's Cottages , showing that eel or fish traps were used on the river near Southcote . Archaeological findings of timber structures adjacent to the trap suggest that it dated from the eight or ninth century . Later discoveries , made in the 1980s during gravel extraction in the area , also uncovered evidence of a landing stage or jetty on the river channel .

= = = 11th ? 15th century = = =

The settlement of Southcote grew largely around the medieval house at Southcote Manor . Before the Norman Conquest , Southcote was held by Brictward ? a Saxon landowner and priest ? under Edward the Confessor . The settlement was documented in the Domesday Book as Sudcote with a total population of 13 households , consisting of five villagers and eight smallholders , though a manor house is not mentioned . At this time Southcote was mostly ploughlands , but had a mill and a fishery , and was valued at £ 5 . The Lord of the Manor at the time was William de Braose , 1st Lord of Bramber . In the early 1200s a house was built and Southcote was owned by Henry Belet . This house had two moats , supplied with water by a channel from the nearby Holy Brook . Upon Henry 's death the estate was inherited by his son Michael , who was cup @-@ bearer to Henry II . In 1337 , a grant of free warren was made to the Belet family for the manor . In 1365 the manor and 13th @-@ century moated house passed into the Restwold family , and it passed through marriage to the Drew family of Seagry , Wiltshire , then the Sambourne family . Margaret Sambourne , the heir to the manor , died in 1494 and an inquisition the following year suggested that she held the manor ( then valued at £ 20 ) as a trustee on behalf of Hugh Kenepy . Around this time a brick house was built to replace the earlier dwelling . After the death of Sambourne 's son , Drew , an inquisition reported in contradiction that the manor was held by the Abbot of Reading ; in their work on the Berkshire section of Victoria County History , Peter Ditchfield and William Henry Page write that at this point " the correct tenure had evidently been lost " . Through Drew Sambourne 's granddaughter , Margaret , the manor passed through marriage to William Windsor , 2nd Baron Windsor . William 's grandson , Henry ( 5th Baron Windsor ) , sold the manor to Anthony Blgrave by the early 16th century .

= = = 16th century ? 19th century = = =

The Blgrave family were wealthy landowners around Reading , and the manor passed down through the family ( which included mathematician John Blgrave , who built a new house at Southcote ) ; a lease document dated from 1596 suggests that the manor was divided between three Blgrave brothers . Daniel Blgrave , a cousin of John , inherited the manor on the latter 's death in 1611 . At the time of the English Civil War , during the Siege of Reading in 1643 , the Blgraves allowed Robert Devereux , 3rd Earl of Essex to use the manor as his headquarters . The Blgrave family , who were sympathetic to the Roundheads , are said to have hosted Oliver Cromwell , John Hampden and Robert Blake for a council of war in one of the house 's oak panelled rooms . In January 1649 , Daniel was one of the signatories of Charles I 's death warrant .

In 1665 Elias Ashmole wrote to Mervyn Tuchet , 4th Earl of Castlehaven at " Southcote neere Redding " . At some point that century the manor house was largely rebuilt and modernised ; the existing 15th century guardhouse and vaulted well were retained . Come the Restoration in 1660 after the end of the war , Daniel fled from England and died in Aix @-@ la @-@ Chapelle in 1668 . Southcote saw development with the opening of the Kennet Navigation in the 1720s , where the River Kennet was made navigable by vessels as far upstream as Newbury ; industrialisation along the canal continued for the next century .

Throughout the 18th century the manor continued to pass through the Blgrave family , including John Blgrave MP . In 1778 , Frances Blgrave married John Blgrave of Watchfield ( Ditchfield and Page suggest that the couple were not related before marriage ) . In 1813 , Daniel and Samuel Lysons wrote that the manor and mansion house were unoccupied but remained the property of the

Blagrave family , who at that point resided at nearby Calcot Park . The same year , Calvespit House ( near Calvespit Farm to the west of Southcote Manor ) was renamed Southcott Lodge and incorporated into the estate . Between 1828 and 1850 the house was let to Charles and Frances Lutyens , whose son Charles was born at the house and who later fathered the architect Sir Edwin Lutyens .

Southcote was mentioned in Samuel Lewis 's 1835 Topographical Dictionary of England . It was described as a tything within the parish of St Mary 's , Reading , and had a population of 84 .

In 1847 , the Reading to Taunton branch of the Great Western Main Line was built through Southcote . The following year the Reading to Basingstoke line opened to the east of Southcote ; the railways diverging at Southcote Junction . Two years later , in 1850 , a water pumping station was built alongside the Kennet and Avon Canal at to Southcote Lock . The facility , owned by the Reading Corporation , was connected to the Bath Road Reservoir ( 1 @. @ 1 miles ( 1 @. @ 8 km ) north @- @ east ) and provided Reading with a source of water that originated upstream of any pollutants from the town .

In 1860 the occupant was Louisa Mundy , widow of Lieutenant Governor of Jersey Godfrey Mundy . Louisa was the niece of Henry Herbert , 2nd Earl of Carnarvon , and lived at Southcote with her sons Herbert and Cyril . By this time , Southcote had expanded to a population of 87 , with 14 houses . In his Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales , John Marius Wilson stated that the real property of Southcote was valued at £ 608 .

After the Mundys ' tenure , Southcote Manor was let to the Brisco ( or Briscoe ) family , who had made their money in slave trading and plantation ownership . The family were relatives of Hastings MP Musgrave Brisco and inheritors of the Pryce baronetcy . Along with one of his labourers , Wastel Brisco was taken to court in Reading in 1874 , charged with the " assault with intent to ravish " a 13 @- @ year @- @ old servant girl . During the trial , the Reading Observer reported that " several rumours were in circulation that a person connected with the case had committed suicide " . Brisco supposedly used his wealth and social status to dissuade witnesses from testifying and the case was apparently abandoned .

Brisco was eccentric and wealthy , and added a ballroom to the building in 1891 , replacing a timber chapel . He also began construction of the house 's distinctive tower the same year but died before it was complete and building work was abandoned .

= = = 20th century = = =

The manor of Southcote remained in the Blagrave family until the early 20th century , when it was owned by Henry Barry Blagrave . Henry died in 1927 , though the manor house was demolished in 1921 after lying empty following the death of Wastel Brisco and his wife Sarah in 1891 and 1901 respectively . In 1920 the house had been purchased by a contractor with intentions to demolish the site , though the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings organised a committee to attempt to raise money to save the house . The Sphere reported that the bricks and oak panelling were in demand and were likely removed for re @- @ use before the building 's demolition .

In 1908 Reading Central Goods railway station was opened on the Coley Branch Line diverting at Southcote Junction . During the first few decades of the 20th century , however , most of Southcote remained rural and undeveloped . An Ordnance Survey map of 1914 shows the majority of land as agricultural ( farms and nurseries ) with a number of gravel pits and smithies . The 1930s saw the construction of the Southcote Park Estate , a housing estate built on land inherited after the death of William Berkeley Monck of Coley Park . An Ordnance Survey map of 1938 shows greater provision for the population ( as opposed to industry ) ; some of the gravel pits no longer existed and Presentation College , a boys ' school , had opened in two large Victorian buildings ? Rotherfield Grange and Oakland Hall , the latter a suburban villa built in the 1870s . By the advent of World War II , Southcote had begun to experience urban sprawl from Reading and the land bordering the Great Western Railway had begun to be used for housing . Following the war , Denton 's Field on the Bath Road in Southcote was used for celebratory events ; Battle of Britain commemorative fêtes were held in September 1949 and 1950 , and featured a performance by three Alsatis ? Rocky , Lindy

and Irma ? to recognise their work in the war . Denton 's Field gained reputation as a location for outdoor community events , and was comparable to places such as Caversham Park and Palmer Park .

In the 1950s , a huge building project centred around Coronation Square ( named for the 1953 Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II ) with hundreds of council houses built to satisfy post @-@ war demand . The residents of many of these had moved from houses in central and east Reading that fell short of sanitation requirements of the Public Health Act 1875 , were compulsorily purchased and later demolished .

The gatehouse at Southcote Manor stood until the 1960s , when a fire broke out . It was demolished by 1964 to make way for housing . Reading Central Goods station was closed in 1983 , and with it the branch line from Southcote ceased to operate . Two years later the track bed and sleepers were removed .

The same decade a campaign was started to raise £ 1 million to save the decaying mansion in Prospect Park ; in 1986 the building was described as " crumbling " and " likely to be demolished " , though plans existed to convert the building into offices . In the 1990s , however , the building was renovated and re @-@ opened as a restaurant .

In 2004 , Presentation College went into administration . It was taken over by the Society of Licensed Victuallers and renamed The Elvian School . The school closed in 2010 . Following its closure , Taylor Wimpey applied to build 193 new homes on the site , competing with a proposal by a community group ( the West Reading Education Network ) to reopen the site as a free school known as the WREN . The housing plan was rejected , but Taylor Wimpey then appealed to Reading Borough Council and submitted a revised plan for 120 homes , which left room for the school . The appeal was taken to the High Court , which ruled that the site should be used solely for education ; the school opened for Year Seven pupils on 7 September 2015 .

= = Government = =

= = = Local elections = = =

Southcote forms an electoral ward of the Reading West constituency , and has three seats on Reading Borough Council . It is seen as a safe seat for the Labour Party ; the Conservative Party last won a council seat in Southcote in 1987 . The current three councillors are Debs Edwards , John Ellis and Matt Lawrence . The most recent election was held in 2016 , which saw Edwards re @-@ elected . The ward has seen three by @-@ elections : in 2006 , in 2014 when Lawrence was elected following Pete Ruhemann 's death , and in 2016 when Lawrence resigned from councillorship . The seat , which was contested by candidates from Labour , the Liberal Democrats , the Green Party and the Conservatives. was held by the Labour party who gained 63 @. @ 7 % of votes .

Like all wards in Reading , the boundaries of Southcote ward were redrawn in 2004 . The ward holds elections by thirds ? three seats are available , and in three years in every four , one seat comes up for election .

= = = = Elected councillors = = = =

Incumbent councillors are listed in bold .

= = = Community government = = =

Southcote has a number of action groups , including the Southcote Residents ' Association ( for general residents ' interests ) , the Southcote Neighbourhood Action Group ( for a police and council relations ) , and Southcote Globe ( for environmental issues ) . Southcote Park Estate , a large area of semi @-@ detached housing on unadopted roads built in 1933 , has an elected volunteer

committee .

## == Geography ==

Southcote , as a ward , is bounded to the north by Norcot , to the north @-@ east by Battle , to the east by Minster and to the south @-@ east by Whitley . To the south , south @-@ west and west Southcote forms the boundary between the Reading and West Berkshire . The boundaries of Southcote are formed by Calcot Park to the north @-@ west , the northern edge of Prospect Park to the north , the Reading to Basingstoke railway line to the east and by channels of the River Kennet to the south . The western boundary runs through housing in the Fords Farm area . Beyond the south @-@ west and western boundaries , in West Berkshire , are the wards of Burghfield and Calcot .

Less formally , Southcote is bordered by the settlements of Horncastle and Fords Farm to the west , Tilehurst to the north , West Reading to the north east , Coley to the east , Whitley to the south @-@ east and Pingewood to the south .

## == Topography ==

Southcote is bordered to the south by the Holy Brook and the River Kennet ; as such much of the land in the south of the area is floodplain . The proximity of Southcote to the river has led to flooding of roads and residences , particularly during the 2013 ? 2014 United Kingdom winter floods . Flooding is exacerbated by the routes of the Holy Brook and railway line ; the railway crosses the stream by bridges and culverts and in some locations the embankment acts as a bund , inhibiting the dissipation of floodwater . Similarly , a report by West Berkshire Council found that during the 2013 ? 14 floods the single track road between the Holy Brook and the Kennet at Southcote Mill " acted as a barrier until the rising waters backing up in the flood plain fields finally breached " . Network Rail 's plans for electrification of the Great Western Main Line include provision for flood defences where the line is in proximity to the Holy Brook .

The elevation of Southcote ranges from almost 100 metres ( 330 ft ) in the north @-@ west extreme of the ward ( SRTM data records this as 94 metres ( 308 ft ) , Ordnance Survey as 92 metres ( 302 ft ) ) to approximately 37 metres ( 121 ft ) in the floodplains north and south of the Kennet .

## == Geology ==

The geology of Southcote includes the Reading Formation ? rock strata in the Lambeth Group consisting of clay , silt and sand formed in the Palaeogene period . Bedrock in Southcote is also formed of chalk , with geological surveys also finding flint samples . A map produced by the Geological Survey of Great Britain in 1860 identifies the area as being predominantly Plastic Clay ( now known as the Lambeth Group ) and chalk north of the river , with flint and gravel samples typical of the Bagshot Formation south of the Kennet . More specifically , the 2000 survey showed different types of gravel , including Winter Hill ( variably clayey and sandy ) , Lynch Hill ( sand and gravel with lenses of silt , clay or peat ) , and head ( a polymict deposit usually formed by periglacial solifluction or gelifluction ) . The survey also identified that much of the land south of the Kennet is " infilled " or " worked " ground ; this area was formerly gravel pits and now used for leisure . The British Geological Survey defines infilled ground as " areas where the ground has been cut away then wholly or partially backfilled " and worked ground as " areas where the ground has been cut away such as quarries and road cuttings " .

## == Built environment ==

The settlement is concentrated to the south of the Bath Road ( A4 ) . Southcote consists substantially of planned post @-@ war housing , much of which is Wates @-@ constructed

prefabricated housing . The majority of dwellings are semi detached , which account for 37 % of all residences . 29 % of dwellings are flats , and 23 % are terraces . Reading 's first high rise dwellings ? three eight storey tower blocks ? were built in Southcote in the late 1950s . Home ownership in Southcote is 58 % , which is average for the Reading area . Use of social housing is above the local average at 29 % .

Southcote 's main thoroughfare is Southcote Lane which runs east ? west through the area , connecting Southcote to Fords Farm ( to the west ) and Coley ( to the east ) . Southcote is centred around Coronation Square , an area of open grassland surrounded by community facilities and commercial premises . To the north of the Bath Road is Prospect Park , a large urban park surrounding the Mansion House . Development to the south of Southcote is restricted by the Holy Brook and the Great Western Main Line , and although the land is used for recreation , proposals are occasionally put forward to build housing on the floodplains . The land south of the railway line is subject to a Tree Preservation Order ( TPO ) . This land is defined by Reading Borough Council as Southcote Meadows , and stretches from the Burghfield Road ( near to the western boundary of Southcote ) to Milkmaid 's Bridge at the foot of Southcote Lock . Other parts of Southcote are subject to similar restrictions , including areas adjacent to ( but north of ) the railway embankment , trees lining the Kennet and Avon Canal west of Southcote Lock , and various individual sites .

#### = = = Parks and open spaces = = =

Prospect Park , one of the largest open spaces in Reading , is in Southcote Ward . Smaller parks such as Linear Park and Southcote Farm Lane playground are in the community . Coronation Square is a designated green space in the centre of Southcote .

Bordering Prospect Park is Devil 's Dip , a former gravel and clay pit . The site is recognised by Reading Borough Council as an area of wildlife and historical interest , and examples of elm , walnut , ash , horse chestnut and sycamore trees grow there . Other flora found at the site include nettle , bramble and elder , with flowers such as lesser celandine , bluebells and Queen Anne 's lace appearing in the spring . Peacock butterflies and various species of woodland bird are prevalent in the area .

#### = = = Demography = = =

According to the United Kingdom Census 2011 , the population of the Southcote area was 8 ,548 , of which 48 % were male and 52 % female . This is an increase of 58 residents compared to the 2001 census . Censuses before this cannot be compared , as the ward boundaries ( and therefore population ) changed after the 1991 census .

The majority of residents of Southcote Ward ( 58 % ) identify as Christian , with people specifying " no religion " counting for 24 % of the population . The second most prevalent religion in Southcote is Islam , with 6 % of people identifying as Muslim . The vast majority of Southcote residents ( 73 % ) are White British ; the Reading average is 65 % . Almost one in twenty ( 4 % ) of residents identify as Black African , 4 % of mixed heritage , 3 % Pakistani , 3 % Indian and 2 % Black Caribbean . 82 % of the population in Southcote were born in the UK , and 91 % speak English as their first language . 1 % of residents do not speak English well .

The life expectancy in Southcote is 77 .5 years for males ? lower than the national estimate of 78 .3 ? and the expectancy for females ( 82 .6 years ) is slightly higher than the national estimate ( 82 .3 years ) .

The census counted Southcote in Reading 's labour market , where 75 .6 % of the population is deemed as economically active . 71 .9 % of the population are engaged in employment , and 6 .5 % are classified as unemployed . Out of work benefit payments ( such as Jobseeker 's Allowance , incapacity , lone parent , disability and carer benefits ) in Southcote are higher than the Reading average .

80 .2 % of Southcote 's residence evaluate their health as " good " , although this is lower than

the Reading average of 85 @. @ 5 % .

= = Economy = =

Historically the land at Southcote was used for farming and gravel extraction . Farms such as Calvespit Farm ( SU683716 ) , Honey End Farm ( SU684725 ) , Southcote Manor Farm ( SU691718 ) , and Southcote Farm ( SU695719 ) were in the area . The 1888 Kelly 's Directory lists some residents of Southcote Lane as being employed as coachmen , butlers , gardeners , labourers , florists , dairy farmers , thatchers and carters . One resident was a member of the county police , and Major @-@ General C J Addington resided at Southcote Lodge . An Ordnance Survey map surveyed in the 1870s also identifies a vinery and kennels .

The farming and gravel industries declined with the expansion of Reading after the Second World War , though the existence of the anti @-@ extraction groups " Save Southcote Meadows " and " Residents Against Gravel Extraction " ( RAGE ) in the 1980s suggests the demand for such industry in the area remained . By the mid @-@ 1980s , the Tarmac Group reportedly owned land near the site of Southcote Manor with the intent of extracting gravel there .

There are two primary centres of economical activity in Southcote ? Coronation Square and Southcote Farm Lane . Coronation Square is home to a number of commercial and community premises , including a post office , takeaway food outlets , newsagents , healthcare businesses and a pet shop ; as well as a community centre and library . The square also featured a public house until its demolition in 2011 ; the land was subsequently used for affordable housing . Southcote Farm Lane has a small parade of shops and businesses including a convenience store and hairdressers . On the border of Southcote and Tilehurst is the Meadway Precinct , which includes an Asda supermarket and a Boots pharmacy , as well as other smaller shops . The precinct opened in 1967 , and a survey in 2012 revealed that the public thought the site had become run @-@ down and required modernisation . In 2015 a planning application was submitted to Reading Borough Council by a developer who plans to renovate the site .

Branches of Beefeater and Harvester @-@ owned public houses are in Southcote ; the latter in the former Prospect Park mansion . A third pub , The George and Dragon , is located at the westernmost extreme of Southcote , and is owned by Greene King and operated as a Hungry Horse outlet .

The Southcote Service Station is an Esso petrol filling station and Tesco Express convenience store , adjacent to which is a Nissan dealership .

= = Culture and community = =

In the years following the Second World War , Southcote hosted a number of community events on Denton 's Field . Many of these fêtes included grasstrack motorcycle racing events , which were held in 1947 , 1948 and 1949 . Speedway stars Bill Kitchen and George Wilks raced at Southcote in 1949 for a Conservative Party fête . The field was also used in 1949 for a gymkhana and a church fundraising fête .

Southcote holds an annual May fayre in Coronation Square ; the 2015 event was organised by community groups from local churches and community centres . The event focuses on cuisine , live music and children 's entertainment .

The Reading branch of the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust meet at Southcote for talks and meetings , and undertake maintenance work on the canal through the Southcote area .

= = Public services = =

Southcote is within Thames Valley Police 's catchment , and is grouped as a neighbourhood with Norcot . Residents identified nuisance and illegal parking and excessive speed as of concern in the area , as well as the antisocial use of mini motos , quad bikes and motorcycles on the Kennet towpath . Measures to alleviate nuisance parking were introduced in early 2015 with a ban on

parking on the road verge . In June 2015 , signs were installed on the lane to Southcote Mill to warn motorcycle users of their prohibition on that right of way .

The majority of reported crime in Southcote is categorised as either violent or sexual attacks , where 46 incidents of this nature were reported in June 2015 within a 1 @-@ mile ( 1 @.@ 6 km ) radius of Coronation Square . The highest concentration of crime occurs near the service station on the A4 road . Neighbourhood liaison sessions ( known as " Have Your Say " meetings ) are held in Coronation Square .

A surgery , operated by the Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust , is located at the junction of Circuit Lane and Southcote Lane . In late 2014 the practice was the subject of significant local media coverage when all five of the surgery 's general practitioners resigned . Other NHS facilities in Southcote include Prospect Park Hospital ( catering for in @-@ patient mental health and psychiatric intensive care ) and the Dutchess of Kent Hospice , which is also part of the Sue Ryder group . The NHS 's North and West Reading Clinical Commissioning Group 's headquarters is located in Southcote on the Bath Road .

Southcote has a number of council @-@ funded community facilities , including a library , a community centre , and a children 's centre . A number of community organisations , such as an elderly residents ' social club , litter picking groups , and allotments are in existence in the area . Reading 's RESCUE ( Rivers and Environmental Spaces Clean @-@ Up Event ) , a rural litter @-@ picking initiative , operates periodically in the parks and along the tracks and towpaths in Southcote .

= = Transport = =

Southcote is situated north of the M4 Motorway , approximately halfway between junctions 11 ( Reading central ) and 12 ( Reading west ) .

The Reading to Taunton branch of the Great Western Mainline railway bisects Southcote laterally . At the eastern boundary of the settlement is Southcote Junction , where the Reading to Taunton and Reading to Basingstoke Lines diverge . A third line ? the Coley Branch Line ? ran from the junction until its closure in the 1980s . There are a number of Brunel @-@ designed brick arch bridges along the Reading to Taunton line through Southcote , two of which have been described as " notably well preserved examples " and are designated " heritage assets " by Network Rail . A third bridge , which carries the main Burghfield to Reading road , may have originally been timber before being replaced with a steel deck by the Great Western Railway company .

Southcote is linked to Reading by a number of Reading Buses services along the A4 Bath Road , with some services stopping within Southcote itself . One service , named " Jet Black " , links Reading to Newbury via Southcote .

The Kennet and Avon Canal at Southcote is still used for pleasure boating ; moorings for narrowboats are located between Southcote Lock and Burghfield Bridge . The canal is accessible from footpaths near Burghfield Bridge , Southcote Mill and Fobney Lock , and the towpath through Southcote is a designated portion of National Cycle Route 4 .

During the First World War , an aerodrome was established near to Southcote at Coley Park . Aviator Henri Salmet based himself at Woodley Aerodrome , from which he gave " joyrides " in his Blériot Aéronautique aeroplane , but also gave flights in a Blériot XI from the Kennet meadows in Southcote . In 1915 a Farman aeroplane crash @-@ landed at Southcote Farm next to Southcote Junction . The pilot was able to jump from the plane before it crashed , and ran alongside it until it collided with a hedge near the railway embankment .

= = Education = =

Three primary schools are situated in Southcote ? Manor Primary School , Holy Brook Special Educational Needs School , and Southcote Primary School . In each of their most recent Ofsted inspections , the schools achieved a " good " rating .

Three secondary schools are in operation in Southcote . Prospect School is a specialist sport and



ICT school run under the academy system . In its latest Ofsted report , the school was judged to require improvement . The other secondary school in Southcote is The Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School , a Catholic school named after the Reading abbot Hugh Cook alias Faringdon . The school was deemed to be " good " in its latest Ofsted inspection . In September 2015 , the third school ? The Wren School ? opened on the site of the former Elvian School . This operates as a free school , and was envisaged by a volunteer network after Reading Borough Council identified a shortfall in school capacity in 2012 .

Educational attainment in Southcote is lower than the Reading and national average . 47 % of students at GCSE ( or equivalent ) attain five or more A \* to C passes , compared to the Reading figure of 57 % and 61 % nationally . The number of students achieving Level 2 writing at Key Stage 1 is 83 % ? the same as in the wider Reading area ? though the national percentage is higher at 85 % . Overall , the proportion of Southcote residents with no qualifications is higher than Reading .

Based at Stoneham Court , within the grounds of Prospect School , is the headquarters ( and central Berkshire base ) of the Berkshire Maestros music school .

= = Religious sites = =

Southcote is in the Reading Deanery of the Diocese of Oxford . Southcote 's Anglican church is dedicated to St Matthew . A United Reformed Church was built in 1958 , shortly after the Southcote housing estate became occupied , and a Christian Mission was established in Southcote in 1965 . The Catholic Church of English Martyrs is situated adjacent to Prospect Park at the northernmost boundary of Southcote ward . The Kennet Valley Free Church is just beyond the Southcote ? Fords Farm boundary .

Provision for other faiths is found closer to Reading town centre and in East Reading .

= = Sport = =

Southcote 's main football club is Southcote Colts . The under @-@ 13 team won the 2014 ? 15 East Berkshire Third Division without being beaten . The under @-@ 14 and under @-@ 16 teams both currently play in their respective Premier Division of the Peter Houseman Youth League . The under @-@ 15 team is currently in the " A " league of the Oxford Mail Youth Football League .

= = Notable people = =

The Blagrove family :

John Blagrove ( c.1561 ? 1611 ) , mathematician

Daniel Blagrove ( 1603 ? 1668 ) , Member of Parliament and signatory of Charles I 's death warrant

John Blagrove ( 1630 ? 1704 ) , Member of Parliament

Derek Watkins ( 1945 ? 2013 ) , trumpeter who appeared on every James Bond film soundtrack until his death after Skyfall .

Michael Bond ( born 1926 ) , author and creator of Paddington Bear