



READING CIVIC SOCIETY

Bracknell Before the New Town

Andrew Radgick

Talk (12 April) and Walk (12 June)

Bracknell is well known for being one of the 'new towns' built after the Second World War to relieve the pressure of housing and industry in London – but the history of Bracknell goes back much further than that.

Early hunter gatherers, Iron Age people and Romans have all called Bracknell their home. Hidden in the royal hunting ground of Windsor Forest for many centuries, the village began to develop with the arrival of the railway. Local brickyards expanded, their output being used in many important buildings, both in Britain and abroad.

Bracknell has a unique history, and this is its story told through a talk and a walk.

Talk – Saturday 12 April 14.00 hrs , Garden Hall, Watlington House. Arrive from 1:45

Andrew has lived in Bracknell for nearly fifty years, and has been the Bracknell Forest Civic Society's History Officer for the past ten.

The talk is free to members of the Reading Civic Society, but we would appreciate donations which we will put towards the fund for the new Jane Austen plaque

Copies of Andrew's book 'The Story of Bracknell: Before the New Town' will be available for sale (£20 cash only).

Walk – Thursday 12 June 19.00hrs in Bracknell

Andrew and members of the Bracknell Forest Civic Society will lead us on this walk of exploration around Bracknell.

Starting from Bracknell railway station, the walk will be a gentle stroll around Bracknell town centre, highlighting the history of a bustling market town, hidden for centuries in Windsor Forest. There is still evidence of the turnpike road that ran through the town, the inn where coaches stopped, and a house with a priest hole. We pass the sites of Bracknell's brewery, prison and stocks, weekly cattle market, and first department store, an emporium from 1860 that sold everything under the sun. There are stories of secret tunnels and a Sweeney Todd innkeeper - but are they true?

The walk will take no more than an hour and a half and consists of easy walking with one short flight of steps.

Getting there – best by train as the tour will start from the station. The nearest parking is the Bracknell Station car park - there should be free spaces by 19.00. The next nearest is [Princess Square car park](#), a short walk from the station.

A donation of £10 per head is sought, to be given in cash on the day to The Bracknell Forest Society.

Booking the walk. Please register by **6 June** with the Bracknell Society. Email the society at tbfsinfo@gmail.com giving your names and contact details, tel no.