

The Basing Trail:

An attractive circular walk of up to 7 miles (shorter circuits are available).
Allow up to 3 hours to complete the entire circular walk.

This is one of three Basingstoke Heritage Trails

For Basing House, continue upstream with the river on your right for another 100 metres where you will reach the footbridge, which leads towards the main entrance.

The Great Barn at Basing House

To see the impressive 16th century Great Barn, or "Bloody Barn"; scene of some of the fiercest fighting during the Civil War of 1643; you must first cross the footbridge giving access to Basing House. Before you stands the Great Barn and beyond this on the horizon are the earthworks and ruins of a medieval castle, later the home of William Paulet, Marquess of Winchester. The house was visited by Henry VIII, Elizabeth I and other monarchs. You too can visit this site to learn more about the fascinating story of Basing House and the events that led to its destruction during the Civil War. Evidence of the siege of Basing still scars the Great Barn and the landscape today.

Railway Viaduct

The landscape of the village of Basing was dramatically altered in the 1830's by the construction of this immense railway viaduct. Here the soft fenland of the River Loddon caused a major constructional challenge for Joseph Locke, the railway's Chief Civil Engineer. He overcame the problem by building this enormous structure. So successful was the railway that by the beginning of the 20th century extra lines were required. Consequently, the existing bridge was doubled in width; you can clearly see where the new section abuts the old. Note the unusual, oblique brickwork in the arches.



▲ The Interior of the Great Barn, circa 1900's (Hampshire Record Office)



▲ Loddon Railway Bridge (photo c1920's). See the Great Barn in the distance

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- Attractive parks of Eastrop Park, War Memorial Park and Basingstoke Common.
- Short cuts to create walks of either 2, 3 or 4.5 miles

Interpretation panels are located at key points along the trail.

Trail leaflets can be obtained from Basingstoke railway station, the Millstone public house in Old Basing and from Basing House.



SHORTCUT: Walkers may take the marked Short Cut to reach St Mary's Church, Old Basing (see map).

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Old Basing village

The village dates from the Saxon times. However the appearance of a number of the houses today was influenced by the destruction of the nearby Basing House. Much of the stone and brick used in the houses of the village was removed from the ruins of Basing House in the late 17th century.

▼ Old Basing street scene



Oliver's Battery

This earthwork, known today as Oliver's Battery, appears to be the remains of a large **motte and bailey castle**. William the Conqueror is thought to have passed through Basing during the campaign of 1066. William may have instigated the building of fortifications on this site, if this is indeed the case, it would make Oliver's Battery one of the first castles built in England.

Despite its name, Oliver's Battery has no connection with Oliver Cromwell, and is certainly in the wrong place for a battery constructed for the famous Siege of Basing House (archaeological evidence reveals that the nearest gun position was in St Mary's churchyard).

The motte was an earthen mound that would have supported the wooden keep of the castle. It once stood in the north west corner of the site. Despite later ploughing it still survives to the height of 1.6 metres. The two baileys, ditch & banks, (originally defended by wooden stockades) are divided by a cross-bank and in the south west corner there is a gap which is probably the original entrance.

Oliver's Battery is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Recreation Ground

Today's recreation ground, with its cricket and football pitches, tennis and archery grounds, was gifted to the parish council in 1947 by Mr and Mrs Beddington. Betty Holmes (once Mrs Beddington) remained a populated servant of the parish until her death in 2009.



▲ Motte and Bailey castle

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For Basing House, cross in front of the pub and follow the Basing Trail waymarks beside the river for approximately 400m until you reach the footbridge which leads to the main entrance.

Bartons Mill

The Millstone pub was once a water mill owned by Mr Barton. If you visit the restaurant you can still see the mill wheels and water race. The picture below shows Barton's Mill when it was still in use.

Mill Field Nature Reserve

The Mill Field Local Nature Reserve is a mixture of grass and scrubland. Usually hay meadows once neglected gradually return to woodland. Today the balance of grass and scrub is managed to improve the diversity of wildlife.

Nowadays you can find several types of orchid, over 20 species of butterflies, 400 species of moths, and over 100 kinds of birds.

The most secretive residents are the dormice on the edge of the wood.

All this is present due to the efforts of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council and the Mill Field Conservation Group. For further information please visit:

www.basingstoke.gov.uk/leisure/conservation/millfield.htm



▲ Barton's Mill viewed from the railway viaduct; photo circa 1920's

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Old Basing Village

The village could have begun in the Iron Age but it was most likely in Saxon times before permanent settlements were founded at Old Basing. In the 17th century the church, like the rest of the village, was much rebuilt after the Civil War. A lot of the stone and brick used in the reconstruction was removed from the ruins of Basing House, which was largely destroyed following a long and bloody siege.

Basingstoke Canal

In the 1790's the Basingstoke Canal was constructed to include a village wharf which once stood near this spot. Later in the 1830s even larger civil engineering works brought the railway through the village which in turn led to the canals decline. A surviving canal bridge and dry section of the canal still remain in the parkland in Basing House. Another trail the Canal Heritage Footpath traces the original course of the canal near here.

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▲ Interior of St Mary's Church



▲ Dry section of the old canal and original bridge



SHORTCUT 1: Walkers can take a shortcut from Old Basing church to the river Loden at the Millstone pub by using the footpath opposite the church.
SHORTCUT 2: Take walkers from the Common either to Basing House or to Eastrop Park this latter route avoids returning to Basingstoke by way of Crabtree Plantation (see map).

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Bolton Arch

Only a sad remnant survives today of the impressive classical arch that was named after the Duke of Bolton; a title held by the Paulet family in the 18th & 19th Centuries. This arch once formed an entrance into the Hackwood Estate which, after the fall of Basing House, was the family's main residence. Today the modern M3 motorway has cut off this entrance from the rest of the estate, leaving this arch to slowly decline from its original splendour.

▼ Bolton arch in c1800



Crabtree Plantation

Originally part of the property controlled by Basing House, these lands adjacent to the Bolton Arch have now become a public open space and nature reserve. The woodland is rich in wildlife, in spring you can see wild flowers, lords and ladies and other wild flowers, whilst in summer rare butterflies fly amongst the canopies of oak, ash and horse chestnut.



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Black Dam Ponds

The Black Dam ponds lend their name to this suburb of Basingstoke. These quiet ponds, which contain a rich variety of aquatic wildlife, were once fish stock ponds for the Hackwood estate. This estate also included Basing House.

Today Black Dam Ponds, Crabtree Plantation and Eastrop Park are all managed by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. A series of activities regularly takes place in these parks and volunteer groups also pursue a programme of conservation works.

If you would like to know more please use the Borough Council website: www.basingstoke.gov.uk/conservation



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Choice of Routes:

The Basing Trail leads to the Basing House visitor attraction (Allow 1/2 hour to walk from here).

However other options are available (see Map). Walkers must choose which of these routes to follow: i) Back to railway station, ii) To Basing House via Eastrop Park or iii) via War Memorial Park to Basingstoke Common.

A circuit of 4.5 miles goes as far as Crabtree Plantation and features the Common, Eastrop Park & the War Memorial Park.



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SOUTH WEST TRAINS



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Choice of Routes:

This Trail leads to Basing House and the village before returning to Basingstoke Station. However other options are available (see Map).

To visit Basing House, follow the waymarks towards Basing House and beyond. Alternately, walkers can take the Short Cut marked across the Common and return to Basingstoke by way of Crabtree Plantation and the War Memorial Park.



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