

The Binfield Tree Trail



Binfield Parish Council

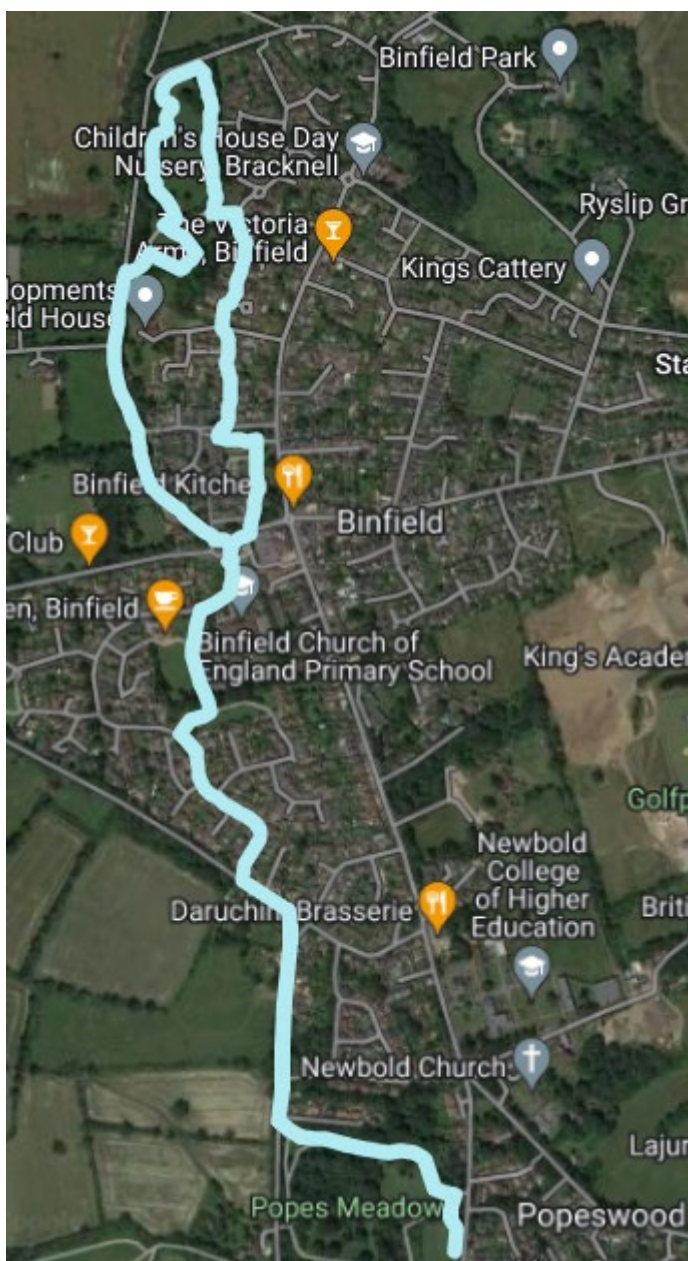
Benetfeld Road

Binfield

RG42 4EW

01344 454602

office@binfieldparishcouncil.gov.uk



Welcome to the Binfield Tree Trail which consists of a short 2-mile village walk, showcasing some of the important trees within the Parish.

Bracknell Forest is the third most tree-covered local authority in the UK. Historically, the local authority area was the centre of the royal hunting forest established by William the Conqueror and expanded by his successors. More recently, the area became dominated by the houses of MPs and other rich landowners trying to live away from the pollution of London but still be within a day's ride of parliament. The remnants of their parkland estates can still be found in Binfield.

The walk begins in Pope's Meadow, which can be found on St Marks Road, Binfield, RG42 4BA. There is a car park at this location but please be aware that the trail ends in the centre of the village.

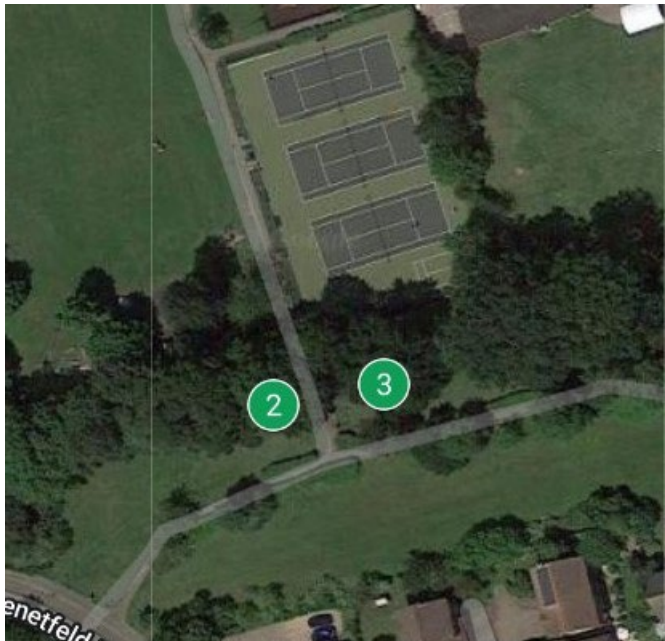
Pope's Meadow was once part of the grounds of Pope's Manor, the home in the early 18th Century of the poet, Alexander Pope. On the St Marks Road boundary with the park, just south of the car park, you will find some of the oldest trees in Binfield **T1**. With girths exceeding 5 metres, we estimate that these three Oaks are at least 400 years old and would have formed part of the Windsor Royal Hunting Forest. Two of these Oaks with a hollow trunk have recently been monolithed, (*reduced to a main stem*); having been deemed unsafe. It is hoped that these trees will live on.



Pope's Meadow has at least 30 veteran Oaks (defined as trees with a girth more than 3 metres) most of which are between 100 and 200 years old. *Walk west through the meadow, down towards Murrell Hill Lane, where you will see that some of these trees have suffered badly, perhaps due to climate change.* Where possible these trees are being left to decay where they stand as the remains of these trees provide homes for hundreds of species. In the more open area of the meadow, oak trees have been fenced off to recreate the parkland landscape that would have been evident around Binfield's big houses. This fencing also prevents compaction of the soil close to the trunk, extending the lives of these trees.

Leave the park through one of the gates on the western edge and turn right to walk up along Murrell Hill Lane. After about 500 metres, as you approach the end of the road, you will notice the 16th Century Whitehouse Farm Cottage, on your left. This is a small two storey cottage, which was altered in the 17th and 18th Centuries, with timber frame and brick infill panels. It is likely that some of the building's timbers are the oldest wood in the village. Cross over and turn left onto the pavement on Foxley Lane and just a hundred metres down the road, turn right through the pedestrian access, onto Benetfeld Road. Follow the road round until you approach a post box on your right and turn onto the path here.

You are now approaching Foxley Fields open space and as you walk along the path, you will notice a line of veteran trees on your left. You will find some more mature Oak trees along this boundary **T2 and T3**. They were once the field boundary before the Foxley Fields housing estate was developed. These “green corridors” are of great value to wildlife as they provide a secure route through the built-up environment. Lines of trees like these also give us a clue to where historical boundaries between properties or parishes might have been.



Take the left hand turning along the path, which runs past the tennis courts, and you will reach Benetfeld Road again. Turn right, past Binfield CE Primary School and Binfield Library. Cross Forest Road at the zebra crossing and enter Knox Green open space through the opening in the hedgerow.



Here we reach another row of veteran oaks and tree stumps, remnants of another field boundary. As you walk down this path, with the houses to your left, you will see two veteran oaks in the middle of the Green, on your right **T4** and **T5**, with old pollarding wounds. As you head northwards, you will encounter one of the village's most splendid veteran trees **T6**.

This veteran Oak probably dates back to around the mid-18th Century. It shows up on old maps (1843 – 1893) and on the Woodland Trust's ancient tree register (<https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/>) and is numbered 142314. The old maps show that the tree was part of an old hedgerow.

The tree shows evidence of decay and fungus but outwardly, the tree looks healthy. The rope barrier is in place to reduce damage to the tree caused by compaction of the earth and to reduce the risk of bits of the tree dropping on passers-by.



Left to their own devices, the lower limbs of oak trees of this age would rest on the ground and provide extra support to the tree. However, we tend to remove these limbs in a misguided attempt to keep the trees looking tidy.

This tree makes a significant contribution to the village's character and is also important in terms of biodiversity and history.

Heading northwards, now cross Knox Green and head down Hall Gardens, past what was once the walled vegetable garden for Binfield House. Continue along the footpath which leads onto Stevenson Drive. Continue northwards down Stevenson Drive and you will approach the Wicks Green car park on your left.

*Follow the perimeter footpath which you will find on your right from the car park. Continue anti-clockwise around the Wicks Green open space. You will pass a lectern, which provides information on the eight trees, which are planted around the perimeter of Wicks Green. The four Hornbeams and four Field Maples were planted to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of VE Day in August 2020, in dedication to the eight fallen Binfield soldiers, who died in conflict. **T7, T8, T10, T12, T13, T15, T16 and T17.***

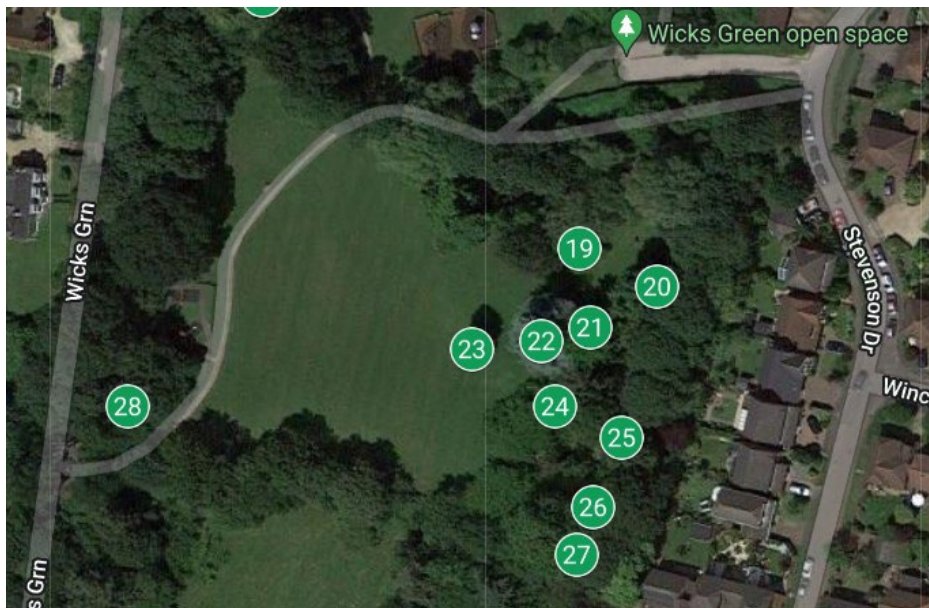


You can also admire the magnificent Veteran Oak in the middle of the open space **T9**, along with the Cypress Oak **T14** and Red Oak **T11** which were planted when the Stevenson Drive houses were built. As you carry on along the perimeter path, take time to admire the wildflower areas within the open space.

Once you have walked around the Wicks Green open space, cross a ditch and enter Silver Jubilee Field. Look to your right and you will see a White Willow within the balancing pond **T18**. Silver Jubilee Field was formerly part of the extended garden of Binfield House – the home of General Sir Alfred and Lady Knox. The Arboretum, which you will find to the east of the open space, was established by them after World War One, with additional planting when the land passed into Binfield Parish Council ownership during the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977. The trees produce a colourful display through the seasons.



If the field is not too wet, walk towards these trees where you will find various species, including Swamp Cypress **T19**, Deodar Cypress **T20**, Sweet Gum (or Liquidamber) **T21**, Blue Atlas Cedar **T22**, Pear **T23**, Honey Locust **T24**, Snowdrop Tree **T25**, Maidenhair Tree (or Gingko) **T26** and a Pin Oak **T27**. These are all specimen trees and range from middle aged to mature. Take some time to enjoy these trees in their quiet surroundings.



*Return to the path and pass the toddler play area, and to your right, pass a lovely Persian Ironwood **T28**, and leave the park through the gate in its south-eastern corner. This leads onto Wicks Green Lane. Turn left onto the lane and you will pass Binfield House on your left and Monks Alley on your right. As you pass, look down Monks Alley and admire the line of Horse Chestnut trees.*

At the end of Wicks Green, head straight over the roundabout to bring you back to Benetfeld Road where the trail ends. You could now enjoy refreshments from the many establishments in the centre of the village.

To return to the Popes Meadow car park, you can either re-trace your steps across Foxley Field or follow the main road (Terrace Road South / St Marks Road) south. If you do the latter, you will pass Newbold College on your left. The College grounds also contain several interesting trees.

We hope you enjoyed this trail. Many thanks to Binfield Parish Council and the Binfield Environment Group for providing all the information and photos. For more details of the Binfield Environment Group please visit: binfieldeg.wixsite.com

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