

Hampshire

Plastic pig

Since the late 18th century 'Hampshire hog' has been the traditional nickname for residents of the county. It derives from the fact that hogs or boars were once widespread in the area. There is a bronze, life-size, model of a hog outside County Hall in Winchester. However, some have disputed the use of the word 'hog' arguing it means 'hogget' (young sheep) as sheep were the most common farm animal.

Lent by Roger Ottewill, Janet Hird.

Occupations fined 1464-1535 (plus A4 laminate sheet © Hampshire RO)

Basingstoke was an important regional centre within Hampshire. In the 15th century it acquired a new role as a manufacturing and marketing centre, producing cloth for export through London and Southampton.

The town court collected a series of business fines. Added together these give an indication of its main occupations. Notice the importance of the food industry, as in other small towns, and of the cloth industry, seen in both the mercantile and cloth production sectors.

Lent by John Hare author Basingstoke: A Medieval Town, c.1000-c.1600.

Langdon's Map of Mapledurwell 1616

Langdon's map of Mapledurwell, 1616 was drawn for Corpus Christi College, Oxford, the owners, and is preserved in a beautiful book of maps in their archives. The map shows the village settlement, all the arable strips in the open fields on the chalk downlands with their tenants, small old enclosures, woodland, parish boundaries and the lanes which terminated at the entrances to the open fields and pastures making the area remote despite its proximity to Basingstoke.

Donated Jean Morrin joint author Mapledurwell; Image © Corpus Christi College Oxford.

Two musket balls

Basing House was destroyed by Oliver Cromwell in 1645 after three sieges in the Civil War. Many musket balls have since been found, particularly by the walls - flattened ones (which hit the wall and fell to the bottom) and round ones. The round ones came from the defenders on the walls who, in panic, did not load their muskets properly and the balls rolled out when they pointed the guns downwards. They then fired nothing!

Lent by Andrew Howard, Janet Hird, Alan Turton former curator Basing House.

Geology map

The Basingstoke geology map clearly shows the twofold division of the area with the Reading Beds (RB) and London Clay (LC) in the upper part of the map forming the claylands of the London Basin and the Upper Chalk downlands in the south. The superficial deposits on the Chalk of Clay with Flints (Cf) are only a few feet thick overlying the bedrock Chalk. The Loddon and Lyde river valleys rise on the chalk and flow north on the clay lands.

Lent by Derek Spruce.

Clay and chalk samples

The clay/chalk geology affected much of the life of the area. Settlement in the chalklands tended to be nucleated, surrounded by large open fields, while in the claylands it was dominated by dispersed farmsteads. Agriculture involved mixed farming; in the chalklands this was characterised by large sheep flocks, while in the claylands it was increasingly dominated by cattle and dairying. Early buildings were timber-framed structures, with wattle and daub infill. The chalklands offered limited flints which could be used for foundations, while the claylands offered a plentiful supply of timber. The claylands also provided material for brick production initially for local use and later for export outside the region.

Lent by John Hare author Basingstoke: A Medieval Town, c.1000-c.1600.

Teasel and sheep's wool

By the early 16th century Basingstoke and its rural hinterland had a flourishing cloth industry. Flocks of up to 500 sheep pastured on Basingstoke Down and some even larger elsewhere on the chalk downlands of North Hampshire. Basingstoke merchants supplied the textile industry in England and Europe, selling wool and cloth often spun and woven in the nearby villages. Inventories include spinning wheels and looms as well as teasels for raising the nap on finished cloth.

Lent by Sue Lane.

Basingstoke canal token

A shortage of legal coins in the 1780/90s led many contractors to issue tokens to pay workers. These were unpopular if they could only be redeemed at the contractor's own stores where inflated prices were charged. John Pinkerton, the main contractor for the Basingstoke Canal arranged for his tokens to be redeemed at other local stores and inns. Sailing barges were never used on this canal.

Lent by Derek Spruce.

***Northanger Abbey* by Jane Austen, book**

From 1775 to 1800, Jane Austen lived in Steventon, 'the cradle of her genius', where, from 1796 she wrote early versions of three novels: *First Impressions* (*Pride and Prejudice*); *Elinor and Marianne* (*Sense and Sensibility*) and *Susan* (*Northanger Abbey*). They were probably written on the writing desk purchased for Jane in 1794 by her father, rector of Steventon, from John Ring of Basingstoke. The final versions were written after she settled in Chawton, Hampshire.

Lent by Jean Morrin author Steventon.

Burberry Gabardine sample

Thomas Burberry set up shop in Basingstoke in 1856. He and his nonconformist allies took advantage of the new conditions created by the railways to develop three major clothing factories. He experimented with various materials to produce fabrics which were weatherproof, yet breathable, and suitable for those who enjoyed the outdoor pursuits. He named the final version Gabardine. In 1921 Burberry's employed over 300 workers in the production of waterproof garments in Basingstoke. Burberry garments were worn by the Arctic and Antarctic explorers Shackleton, Scott, Nansen and Amundsen, and were taken to Mount Everest in 1922 and 1924.

Lent by Bob Clarke, Diane Kelly, Barbara Large.

Model of Wallis & Steevens steamroller

A steam road roller of the type manufactured in Basingstoke by Wallis & Steevens in the late 19th century. The rollers and W&S traction engines were the same basic design. The traction engines were general purpose vehicles used for road haulage and agriculture. Over 2,300 traction engines and steam road rollers of various sizes and designs were produced between 1878 and the end of production of steam road rollers in the 1930s. They were exported worldwide.

Lent by Bob Applin.

Model of Mighty Antar

For much of the 20th century the Thornycroft vehicle works was the largest employer in Basingstoke. It is perhaps best remembered for the Mighty Antar, a heavy-duty tractor unit that was developed in the late 1940s for the Iraq Petroleum Company as an oilfield vehicle capable of transporting loads of up to 100 tons across the desert. During the 1950s and 1960s the Antar was the British Army's main tank transporter.

Lent by John Ashworth.

Postcard advertising train excursion

Basingstoke stands on the main route to the West Country. In the 18th century it became a major coaching stop with many busy inns. The arrival of the railway in 1839 brought this trade to an abrupt halt but it then became an important railway junction with lines to London, Southampton, Exeter, Reading and Alton. Today it remains an important rail and road centre.

Lent by Derek Spruce.

DVD *The Story of Basingstoke* told by John Arlott.

John Arlott, OBE (1914–1991) was a radio broadcasting ‘immortal’. He was BBC radio’s voice of English cricket for over a generation, retiring in 1980. With his poetic phraseology and Hampshire ‘burr’ he became noted for his ‘wonderful gift for evoking cricketing moments’ and set the tone for the Test Match Special we listen to today. He was ‘a Basingstoke boy’ and has a street near his birthplace named after him

Lent by Andrew Howard, Mary Oliver.

Model chamois goat

The shield of the Wallop family, earls of Portsmouth from 1743, is supported by chamois. These wild goats also appear as finials on either end of the altar rail in St Andrew’s church, Farleigh Wallop, the hamlet which is the home and administrative centre of the family’s estate. Their lands include much of the parish of Cliddesden and did include the ancient parish of Hatch before its transfer to Basingstoke.

Lent by Sue Lane, co-author Cliddesden, Hatch & Farleigh Wallop.

Notorious Basingstoke

Basingstoke has long been a target for jokes and adverse publicity. Here are some examples of the town’s notoriety.

Lent by Barbara Large, Bob Clarke.