

# BERKSHIRE FROM THE AIR

Jason Hawkes

Proudly calling itself the Royal County, Berkshire is home to the one of Britain's greatest historic sites, Windsor Castle, but it has a history dating back way beyond this, to prehistoric times. It is a county of great contrasts, bordering as it does Greater London in the east and also Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Surrey, Wiltshire and Hampshire.

With an area of over 470 square miles (c.1200sq km), and a population of under a million it is a relatively small county, but rich in historic sites and blessed with a quintessentially English landscape. Reading is by far the largest town (pop.235,000), followed by Slough (122,000), but there are many smaller, delightful villages throughout. The River Thames winds its way through the county, with many settlements having grown up along its route and around its major tributaries, principally the River Kennet. Because of its huge significance in Berkshire, often defining the county boundary, the course of the Thames is followed at many points throughout this book. It is to the north of the Kennet that the famous Berkshire Downs roll gently across the landscape, while to the south, where the county borders Hampshire, lies Walbury Hill, at 974ft (297m) being the highest point in South East England.

The fascinating aerial photographs in this book by internationally-renowned aerial photographer Jason Hawkes are selected to provide the reader with an overview of a variety of landscapes and settlements, with historic sites included. There can be no better way of appreciating the many glories of Berkshire than to view the county from above.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jason Hawkes is one of the country's best-known photographers specialising in aerial photography. From his base near London he travels worldwide to produce images for books, advertising and design. Since 1991 he has provided photographs for major international companies including Nike, HSBC, Ford, Rolex, Toyota and BP. The images in this book and the sister publications in the series were specially commissioned by Halsgrove.

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## HALSGROVE TITLE INFORMATION



**Format:** Hardback, 144 pages, 214x230mm  
With 130 colour photographs

**Price:** £14.99

**ISBN:** 978 1 84114 940 0

**Imprint:** Halsgrove

**Published:** April 2010



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Top left: Eton College, the best-known of British public schools.

Top right: River Thames near Caversham.

Left: Beale Wildlife Park and Gardens. The Lake.

Windsor Castle.



Above: Thomas Valley Park, Woodley.

Left: Reading. The county town of Berkshire since 1867, it has been an important centre since medieval times. Its position at the confluence of the River Thames and River Kennet meant that it was of commercial importance historically, and this status continues to the present day, although the M4 and the West of England main line are the modern transport links of choice.



Donnington Castle with Newbury in the background.

Example of a double-page spread.