

# New Forest Fact File

## Important dates in the history of the New Forest

- 1066** Area was woodland and furze waste with sparsely scattered farms and homesteads.  
Duke William of Normandy conquered England and became King William I
- 1079** “New Forest” created by William I as Royal hunting preserve. Forest laws were set up to protect “beasts of the chase” and their habitat with punishments for transgression ranging from death to fines.  
Indigenous peasants unable to enclose their land by common right to graze domestic animals throughout Forest.
- 1086** Area first recorded as The New Forest in The Domesday Book.
- 1100** William II (Rufus), son of William I, killed whilst hunting; mystery still surrounds his death.
- 1217** Charter of the Forest.
- 1269** Forester’s Table in the account book of Beaulieu Abbey
- 13-15 Centuries** Demand for timber increased, became principle raw material of the time. Six Royal Hunting Lodge sites in the New Forest.
- 1379** New Forest timber supplied for the defences of Southampton.
- 1483** First tree growing act passed allowing large areas to be enclosed to establish woodlands, later to be opened when outgrown danger from cattle. Known as rolling power of enclosure because new areas were enclosed as mature woods thrown open.
- 1565** Timber census (5,800 acres of Inclosures).
- 1611** First recorded felling of timber for the Navy. No record of any sovereign Hunting after James I.
- 1669** Last visit of the Lord Chief Justice in Eyre.
- 1698** Act of William III allowed enclosure of further 6000 acres for growing Navy timber. Rolling powers meant this could increase, to the detriment of Commoners’ grazing rights.
- 1745** First ship built at Bucklers Hard. Called the ‘Surprise’
- 1776** Scots pine introduced at Ocknell and Bolderwood. Production of Navy timber becoming more important than hunting.

- 1781** Nelson's favourite ship the 'Agamemnon' built at Bucklers Hard costing £24,000 and using 3000 oak trees.
- 1787** Survey of the New Forest by Drivers, Richardson and King.
- 1808** Act for the increase and preservation of timber in Dean and New Forest.
- 1845** Southampton and Dorchester Railway Act - extended the London to Southampton railway as far as Dorchester.
- 1851** Deer Removal Act - all deer to be destroyed and 10,000 acres enclosed and planted. Attempt to remove deer began under this Act.
- Unique process began - the registration of all Rights of Common on unenclosed land within the boundary of the Forest; today safeguarded by the Court of Verderers.
- 1860** Schultz gunpowder mill at Eyeworth. Taken over by Nobel during 1914 -1918 war. Closed 1926.
- 1877** **New Forest Act** passed, meant Crown gave up its rolling powers, and no more land could be enclosed beyond what had been enclosed in reign of William III, and subsequently up to the passing of this Act. Court of Verderers reconstituted as guardian body for the common rights. Express mention made of amenity and landscape value of the Forest.
- 1909** Commoners' Defence Association formed.
- 1919** Forestry Commission set up.
- 1923** Forestry Commission took over management of the New Forest from the Office of the Woods.
- 1935-45** Wartime airfields at Stoney Cross, Holmsley and Beaulieu Heath. Military encampments in Forest.
- 1949** Amendment to New Forest Act. Adjustment of New Forest Boundary – perambulation. Conservation emphasised.
- 1963** By this date the perambulation was fully enclosed.
- 1969** New Forest becomes "National Nature Reserve".  
"Minute of Intent" signed by Forestry Commission and Nature Conservancy Council (now English Nature), recognising importance of working together.
- 1970** New Forest Act.
- 1971** Wild Creatures and Forest Laws Act - abolition of Forest Law. Joint steering Committee report approved by Ministry of Agriculture. Conservation measures began.  
New Forest Consultative Panel formed.  
New Forest declared a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

- 1981** Wildlife and Countryside Act - reinforced the legal status of SSSI.
- 1986** Review Group formed to consider conservation of traditional character of Forest for future generations.
- 1990** New Forest Committee formed as a result of Review Group's report. It was formed "to co-ordinate the activities of the six national and local government bodies which have greatest involvement in the life and future of the Forest", (New Forest Committee First Annual report 1990).
- 1991** National Parks Review Panel recommend to the government that the New Forest be formally recognised as a National Park with a "tailor-made constitution".
- Nature Conservancy Council becomes English Nature.
- New Forest Committee adopts New Forest Heritage Area.
- 1992** Forestry Commission produces "New Forest Management Plan 1992-2001" as its guidelines for management.
- 1992** The Government responded favourably to the National Park Review Panel recommendations. The New Forests' unique value in terms of landscape and nature conservation was recognised as deserving the strongest protection in keeping with its national and international importance. Its distinctive management and administrative history should be maintained.
- 1994** After public consultation, the government announced that the New Forest would not be granted National Park Equivalent status, nor would the New Forest Committee be granted statutory powers for management of the whole New Forest Heritage Area. However, planning protection in the Area was extended as if the New Forest were a National Park.
- 1995** "Declaration of Intent" signed by the Forestry Commission, English Nature and the Verderers, committing each organisation to working together.
- Proposal that New Forest become a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).  
Decision to be made by 2003.
- 1996** Several strategies brought out for the New Forest:  
*Transportation Strategy for the New Forest* - Hampshire County Council  
*Tourism and Visitor Strategy* - New Forest District Council  
*A Strategy for the New Forest* - New Forest Committee
- 1997** *Life* Project set up to restore the historic landscape of the ancient woods and heaths through a series of conservation projects. The project is a partnership between English Nature, Forestry Commission, Hampshire County Council, Hampshire Wildlife Trust, New Forest Committee, Ninth Centenary Trust, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Verderers of the New Forest and Wiltshire Wildlife Trust.

- 1997** Forestry Commission released “*A Framework for Recreation consultation document*”.
- 1998** “*Minister’s Mandate consultation draft*” released.
- 1999** Launch of New Forest New Future - a project to produce plans which will guide the management of the New Forest inclosure woodlands into the next century.
- Minister’s Mandate for the New Forest: 1999-2008, signed in July 1999, gave priority to conservation of nature and heritage over timber production.
- In October 1999, the Countryside Agency (CA) decides to begin the process of designating the New Forest as a National Park.
- 2000** The Countryside Agency (CA) identifies the draft National Park boundary and initiated a 3 month public consultation on the draft boundary.
- 2001** Management Plan for the Crown Lands of the New Forest. 2001-2006.  
Produced by the Forestry Commission
- Seven detailed ‘Subject Plans’ support the Management Plan;
- Access and Recreation Management Plan 2001
  - Working Together Community Plan 2001
  - Heathland Management Plan 2001
  - Ancient and Ornamental Woodlands. 2001
  - Inclosure Plan. 2001
  - Deer Management Plan. 2001
  - Scheduled Ancient Monuments. 2001
- Forest Friendly Farming Project is launched to support farming in the New Forest.
- The Countryside Agency considers responses to public consultation and undertakes a ‘formal’ 3 month consultation on proposed boundary with local authorities affected, as legislation required.
- A National Park Designation Order was made and advertised in local papers. The Secretary of State announced that a Public Inquiry is to be held.
- 2002** Public Inquiry held in October 2002. If the Designation Order is confirmed the New Forest National Park is created.
- 2003** *Life3* project set up to restore mire and riparian habitats, river features such as meanders and debris dams – to encourage upstream flooding, to benefit habitats and discourage downstream flooding near residential areas.
- Progress Project established to study activities of visitors to the Forest and recommend strategy to alleviate pressures from people on sensitive habitats. Partnered with Fontainebleau Forest in France.
- 2004** To date National Park status is not yet confirmed.

For further information:

[www.countryside.gov.uk/proposednationalparks/newforest.htm](http://www.countryside.gov.uk/proposednationalparks/newforest.htm)