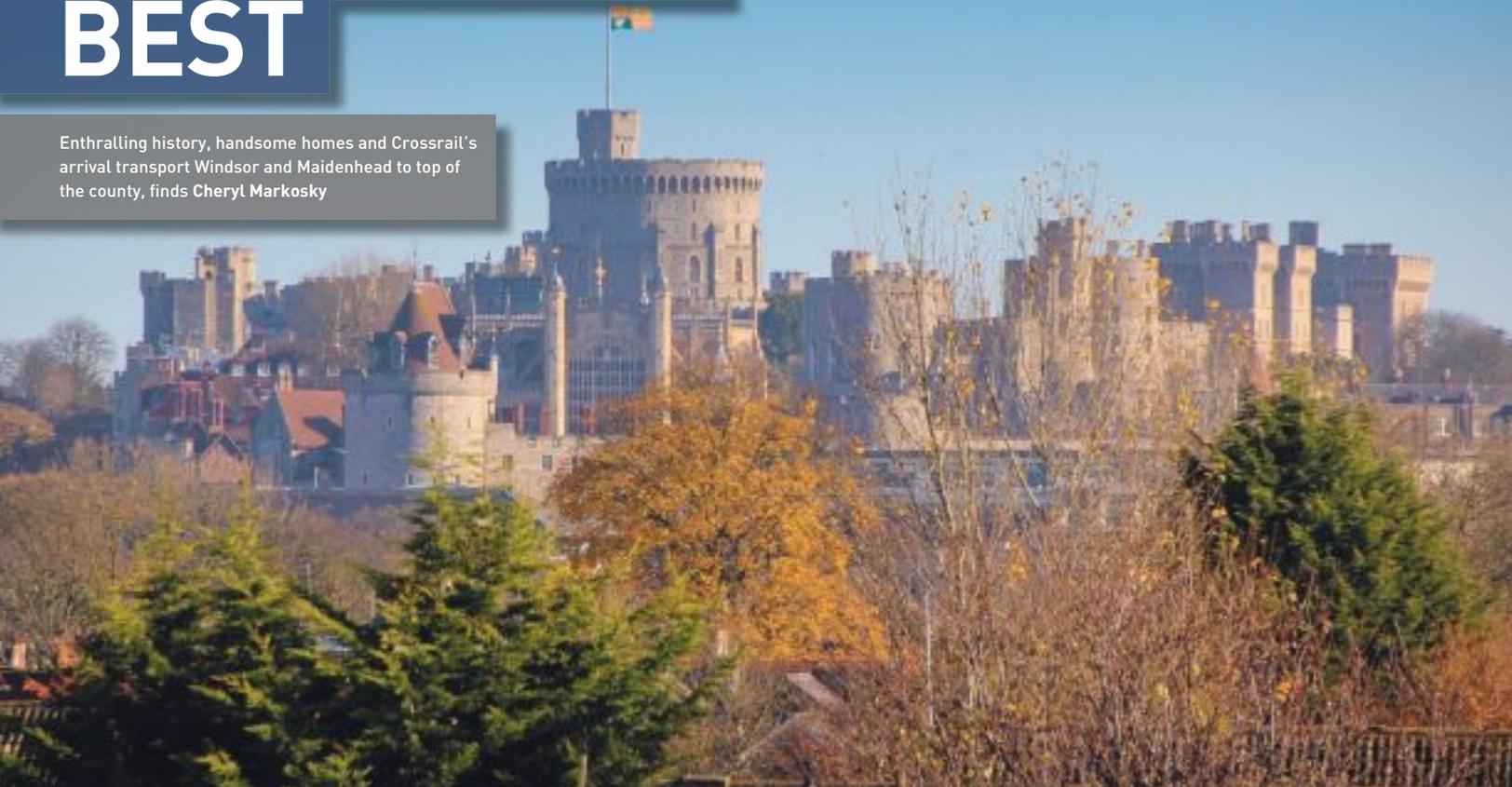


# BERKSHIRE'S BEST

Enthralling history, handsome homes and Crossrail's arrival transport Windsor and Maidenhead to top of the county, finds Cheryl Markosky



The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead – home to Windsor Castle, Eton College, Ascot Racecourse and Legoland – sits in the prosperous commuter belt west of London.

If you're concerned about young upstarts, you can't get much more historic than 'Maiden Hythe' or 'Windsora' – early monikers of Maidenhead and Windsor dating back to Anglo-Saxon times.

Today's settlers flock to the two towns not only for their ancient annals, but also for excellent educational establishments, a broad variety of housing built over the decades, and the blessings bestowed by upcoming Crossrail.

Maidenhead, which is in the SL6 postcode area and on the western fringes of the Elizabeth line – Crossrail's official name commemorating the Queen – has seen prices rise by 46% since the new rail link was announced seven years ago.

Commuters will be able to glide directly into Bond Street in 41 minutes, without changing from train to Tube, and arrive at Heathrow within 20 minutes from December 2019 when the Elizabeth line kicks off.

Although not directly on the route itself, Windsor will benefit from proximity to it. Values have jumped in the SL4 postcode district by 45%, says David Fell, research analyst at Hamptons International.

"So far this year, a record one in 10 homes sold for over £1 million in Windsor and Maidenhead, with the average price of a property at £605,920," he explains.

Windsor property values could soar higher, however, with talk of the privately initiated Windsor Link Railway. It would replace Windsor and Eton Riverside, and Windsor Central stations, speeding up the run further to the capital and Heathrow.



## CASTLE VIEW, WINDSOR FROM £375,000

Corgis (and other pets) are welcome at retirement flats fit for a queen, with views of the castle from the sky lounge's bowling green or mini-golf area.  
[www.castleviewwindsor.co.uk](http://www.castleviewwindsor.co.uk)

## WINDSOR

Windsor has impeccable Royal connections – the Queen’s weekend bolthole is Windsor Castle – the Thames, Great Windsor Park and good access to London. It’s only 30 minutes to Paddington, 55 to Waterloo, and the M4 (Junction 6) is nearby.

“Windsor will be underpinned by two nearby Crossrail stations – Maidenhead on one side and Slough on the other,” points out Savills’ Charles Elsmore-Wickens.

Unlike property prices slumping in other parts of the country, Windsor’s only suffered slight falls at the top end, Charles notes. “While the market at £1.5 million plus is less active, homes below £1 million are still selling well.”

The regal town is popular with downsizers and young couples creeping out of London, according to Chris Littler of The Frost Partnership. “For the same amount as a Chiswick flat, you get a three-bedroom period property in Windsor.”

There aren’t many large new schemes under construction in the town, due to its archaic layout, but small infill schemes are cropping up in the core and in surrounding towns and villages.

The Frost Partnership’s selling five remaining Regency-style houses from £840,000 in Datchet, and Hamptons International has four apartments from £535,000 left at Hogarth House, a period conversion smack next to the castle in the heart of Windsor.

Hamptons is also marketing the last two split-level apartments, starting at £350,000, at Alexandra Court, conveniently located on the town’s High Street; and the final two flats, from £250,000, at Sefton Lodge on Clewer Hill Road.

Sebastian Stanford-Smith of Hamptons International is observing a shift towards local buyers, as higher levels of Stamp Duty tax discourage some buy-to-let landlords and Londoners finding it hard to sell their abodes in the capital.

“Nevertheless, we’re getting young couples, single professionals and retirees hunting for homes in the area.”

And Sebastian believes there will be renewed interest in large Victorian terraces and detached villas costing over £2 million in Windsor’s Golden Triangle – the prized Kings, Osborne and Frances Roads.

“Those favouring a more semi-rural existence and larger gardens head for the villages of Fyfield, Holyport and Oakley Green, where price tags for houses are anything from £1 million-£30 million,” he adds.



### PARK STREET, WINDSOR

£2,095,000

Updated, elegant townhouse on desirable road next to castle stables, kitted out with walnut flooring, period fireplaces and bespoke kitchen.

[www.savills.com](http://www.savills.com)



### THE VILLA, CLARENCE ROAD, WINDSOR

£2,750,000

Renovated family villa with 43ft kitchen/living room, library, CAT 6 wiring, skylights with rain sensors and castle vistas.

[www.savills.com](http://www.savills.com)



### VANSITTART ROAD, WINDSOR

£1,100,000

Extended and renovated family house in central location, with studio annex containing kitchenette and shower room.

[www.hamptons-int.com](http://www.hamptons-int.com)



### THAMES STREET, WINDSOR

£350,000

Modern one-bed apartment with split-level sitting/dining room in town centre near the castle, Long Walk and Royal Mews.

[www.savills.com](http://www.savills.com)

## MAIDENHEAD

The big game changer in Maidenhead – whose local Member of Parliament is no less than Prime Minister Theresa May – is the £300 million major transformation of the town over the next decade by Countryside and the local borough.

Four council-owned sites at York Road, West Street, Reform Road and Saint-Cloud Way will be revitalised, delivering 1,200 new homes, shops, restaurants, offices and a cultural quarter for the heart of Windsor.

Countryside's senior development manager Zoe Mulholland says the developer hopes to start building by the end of 2018.

"The project's based around a new town square. By bringing homes and upmarket bars and restaurants to the centre, more retail and footfall will follow, improving Maidenhead's economy."

In addition, charity Maidenhead Waterways is in the process of restoring and enlarging the town's channels, which can only advance the town more.

"This is a really up-and-coming area," comments Henry Day of Riverhomes. "Maidenhead has a lovely stretch of water, where some homes come with direct river access and their own moorings."

To buy a smart waterfront home, you need to be in a position to proceed quickly with a sale, advises Henry. "Sell your own house first and then go looking on the Thames, or you'll be broken-hearted."

Maidenhead isn't just about road and rail networks and the water. It's also a foodie paradise, with Heston Blumenthal and the Roux Brothers in nearby Bray, and Tom Kerridge and a branch of The Ivy in Marlow.

It's no wonder that luminaries such as George and Amal Clooney, Ricky Gervais and Russell Brand own property locally. Even Brad Pitt considered buying a home when he was over here filming.

And yet, you don't need to be a millionaire to pick up a new flat starting at £294,500 at Redrow Homes' The Loftings, or a detached house costing £880,000 at Spitfire Bespoke Homes' Green Gates near the station.

Things do get pricier on the water. A new four-bedroom villa on the river at neighbouring Taplow Riverside by the Berkeley Group will set you back at least £2 million.

And a period mansion on its own Thames island with nine bedrooms, tennis court, cinema, gym and library like the Clooneys'? Only George and Amal know the figures, but it's reckoned the house and renovations ran to about £30 million.

No matter what sector of the market you make your purchase, everyone's likely to profit in Windsor or Maidenhead – towns with interesting pasts, and, thanks to a flourishing transportation system and fine-looking homes, a bright future.



### THAMESIDE, WINDSOR

FROM £2,595,000

Rare chance to buy a riverside flat or townhouse, with balconies and two parking spaces for each property.

[www.shanlyhomes.com](http://www.shanlyhomes.com)

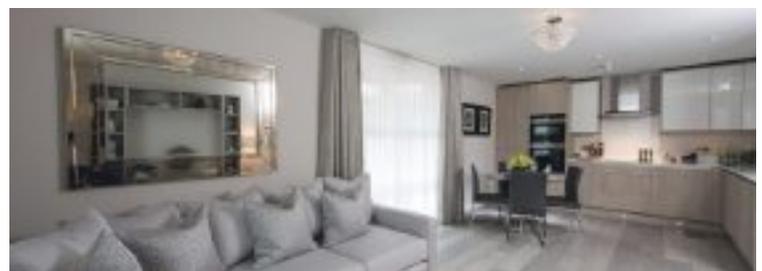


### FLAGPOLE HOUSE, BRAY

£2,250,000

Three-bed house complete with oak floors, vaulted beamed living room ceiling and Mark Wilkinson kitchen in one of England's most culinary villages.

[www.hamptons-int.com](http://www.hamptons-int.com)



### CHAPEL ARCHES, MAIDENHEAD

FROM £330,000

Seventy-eight flats with Siemens integrated kitchens and Villeroy & Boch bathrooms at new scheme on rejuvenated waterway.

[www.shanlyhomes.com](http://www.shanlyhomes.com)



**GREEN GATES, MAIDENHEAD**

FROM £880,000

Traditional meets contemporary in four- and five-bed homes with kitchen/dining/family rooms extending the whole length of the house.

[www.greengatesmaidenhead.co.uk](http://www.greengatesmaidenhead.co.uk)



**TAPLOW RIVERSIDE, TAPLOW**

FROM £2,125,000

Newly launched four-bed waterfront villas surrounded by open meadows and riverside walkways. Moorings for selected homes.

[www.berkeleygroup.co.uk](http://www.berkeleygroup.co.uk)



**THE LOFTINGS, MAIDENHEAD**

FROM £294,950

Pick up a new one- or two-bed flat in the town's core – handy for bars, shops, eateries and the station.

[www.redrow.co.uk](http://www.redrow.co.uk)



**COURT ROAD, MAIDENHEAD**

£3,000,000

Period waterfront house with a cottage to rent or for guests, fully fitted home office, and 90ft mooring so you can park your boat.

[www.riverhomes.co.uk](http://www.riverhomes.co.uk)

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**FUN FACTS**

- The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead is the only royal borough outside Greater London.
- Princess Margaret and the Rolling Stones stayed at Skindles Hotel – now Berkeley Homes' Taplow Riverside – on the river outside Maidenhead. Now, Michel Roux's opening a new restaurant there.
- William the Conqueror built Windsor Castle in the 11th century.
- In 2012, Chris Brown was appointed as town crier of Windsor. The previous town crier retired in 1892 – the post had been vacant for 110 years.
- Current Maidenhead Bridge dates from 1777 and was built at a cost of £19,000.
- King Charles I met his children for the last time before his execution in 1649 at the Greyhound Inn on Maidenhead High Street, where NatWest Bank's now located.
- The Queen owns 4,800 acres of the town of Windsor, and the Windsor Crown Estate 15,815 acres in the area.
- Maidenhead was named Britain's 'capital of infidelity' three years ago, when Illicit Encounters website placed it at the top of its 'cheating towns' table.
- Team GB won its first gold medal of the 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games at Eton Dorney Lake, just outside Windsor.
- Clocks in Windsor Castle's Great Kitchen are always five minutes fast to ensure that food served to The Queen is never late.