## Greenham and Crookham Common: A Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50,000 BC</td>
<td>Crookham - Palaeolithic axe made.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3,000 BC</td>
<td>Crookham Manor - polished Neolithic axes made.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1,700 BC</td>
<td>Bronze Age urn buried near Crookham House.</td>
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<td>43-400 AD</td>
<td>Romano-British activity near commons – at Pyle Hill, Bowdown, Chamberhouse Farm, George's Farm. Possible date for construction of Bury's Bank, an earthwork across the common, although this could be Iron Age or even Bronze Age.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1086</td>
<td>Greenham Chapel mentioned in Domesday Book.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1199</td>
<td>King John confirmed granting of manor of Greenham to military order of Knights Hospitallers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1338</td>
<td>Preceptory founded at Greenham by this date, house for order of Knights Hospitallers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1540</td>
<td>All possessions of Knights Hospitallers passed to the Crown.</td>
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<td>1740</td>
<td>A military camp is recorded on a map at Greenham Heath.</td>
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<td>1746</td>
<td>Ownership of manor of Greenham passes to Croft family.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1798-1829</td>
<td>First Greenham Lodge built on new site. Old Greenham Manor house near the chapel, for many years used as a farmhouse, is pulled down and replaced with a new farmhouse.</td>
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<td>1859</td>
<td>Fear of invasion by the French may have led to 'The Butts' being built on Crookham Common for rifle practice.</td>
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<td>1872</td>
<td>20,000 troops on exercise camp on Greenham Common. A.R. Tull, owner of Crookham House, buys Manor of Crookham.</td>
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<td>1875</td>
<td>New church St Mary Virgin built on site of old chapel at Greenham.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1878-1881</td>
<td>New Greenham Lodge built, largely replacing older house.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>5,000 cavalry arrive on the common for manoeuvres.</td>
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1914-1918 Commons used as occasional training area for troops and tanks during World War I.

1923 127 acres of Greenham Estate turned into Newbury & District Golf Club, a rival to Crookham's club.

1937 Death of Harry Baxendale, owner of Greenham Lodge.


1939 Outbreak of World War II.
Sale of Crookham House Estate

1941 Common requisitioned for airfield. An unfenced airstrip and associated buildings put up, mainly on Greenham Common, but also on Crookham Common - the historic golf course closes.

1943 RAF Greenham Common officially becomes USAAF base Station No. 486.

1944 D-Day preparations, including a glider assembly camp on Crookham Common - 101st Airborne Division addressed by General Eisenhower.

1945 Greenham Common reverts to RAF control, being a training centre after the end of World War II.

1946 Crookham and Newbury Golf Clubs amalgamate

1947 Land de-requisitioned, reverting to Newbury Borough Council control.

1948 Part of airfield runway removed to restore common.

1951 Announcement that RAF Greenham Common would be needed again as a US airfield, but with new buildings, longer runways and much bigger jets. Month-long protest by Newbury residents is in vain.

1954 Aerodrome operational, but B47 planes damage runway and it needs strengthening.


1956 RAF Greenham Common operational again.

1958-1964 Airbase part of Reflex Alert Scheme, bombers standing-by for immediate take-off with nuclear weapons.
1960  Newbury Corporation sells Greenham Common to Air Ministry with the understanding that the land could one day be offered back.

1964  Strategic Wing de-activated, Americans leave Greenham, and its buildings are used for personnel from RAF Welford.

1966  President General de Gaulle orders French withdrawal from NATO.

1967  USAF returns to take on some of French relocation commitments, air base then up-graded to stand-by base.

1972  Ugandan Asians, expelled by Idi Amin, pass through Greenham Common seeking shelter in Britain.

1973  First of several International Air Tattoos at airbase, huge air-shows attracting thousands.

1976-1978  F111 planes use Greenham Common while the Upper Heyford base undergoes maintenance.

1978  Rumours of re-activation of Greenham prove true - USAF plans to base KC-135 refuelling tankers there. Huge public outcry leads MoD to reject this.

1979  NATO takes decision to site cruise nuclear missiles in Britain and other European countries.

1980  Defence Secretary announces Greenham Common will house 96 missiles. Labour Party, CND and peace groups oppose this, but most in Newbury accept reluctantly. Richard Noble uses Greenham runway to break several British Land Speed records in his vehicle Thrust 2.

1981  Group called Women for Life on Earth march from Cardiff to Greenham, and 4 women chain themselves to fence demanding a televised debate on nuclear weapons. Peace camp starts a week later.

1982  Peace camp becomes exclusively for women and children at night. Tents and caravans set up near main gate, and return after evictions. Other camps, named after colours of the rainbow, develop round fence. Blockades, vigils, arrests and Embrace the Base rally attract worldwide attention.

1983  Peace women break into base to dance on unfinished missile silos. More actions, including 14 mile human chain linking Berkshire’s nuclear sites, and the birth of a baby keep Greenham Common in the news. Conservatives win General Election. Local discontent with peace camps increases, but anti-peace women rallies in Newbury fail to attract large numbers. Vigilante action prevalent.
Newbury District Council draws up new by-laws. Last Air Tattoo. Turnpike School asks peace women to give talk. 16 cruise missiles arrive, another large demo leads to fence being pulled down in several places.

1984  RAGE (Ratepayers Against Greenham Encampments) formed. First cruise convoy testing, major eviction of tents at main gate. 10 million women, 10 days protest. More cruise weapons come to Greenham Common.

1985  Right of peace women to vote challenged, but later re-instated.

1986  GAMA completed with 6 flights of Ground Launched Cruise Missiles. Dwindling numbers at peace camps, frequent bailiff evictions and complaints of bullying.

1987  Split between Yellow Gate and Blue Gate peace women. Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev sign INF (Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces) treaty to rid Europe of cruise.

1988  Revelation that commoners’ rights may make building on the base illegal. Russians come to inspect Greenham’s missiles under treaty terms. MoD attempts to pay commoners for the extinguishment of some rights.

1989  First cruise missiles leave to be destroyed. A peace woman is killed in a traffic accident outside main gate of the base. Small group of commoners refuse to give up their partial rights.

1990  ‘Commons Again’ forms as pressure group for return of common land. House of Lords rules MoD by-laws prohibiting trespass on base are illegal.

1991  Final cruise missiles leave Greenham Common for destruction.

1992  USAF leaves Greenham Common in low-key ceremony.

1993  MoD puts airbase up for sale. Newbury District Council draws up future plans. Sir Peter Michael proposes a trust and management company, a public-private partnership for Greenham.


1995  Runway begins to be removed.
1996  Radiation scare over 1958 accident leads to scientific survey of land – no evidence of raised radioactivity at Greenham.

1997  A linked deal with the MoD allows the Greenham Common Trust to purchase the airbase for £7 million and Newbury District Council to buy back the open common land for £1. First piece of perimeter fence removed.

1999  Greenham and Crookham Commons Bill promoted in House of Parliament to restore land in ownership of West Berks Council as common land open to public.

2000  Commons officially open to the public except for areas covered by INF treaty. Last surviving peace camp at Yellow Gate disbands on 19th anniversary of first protest.

2001  Stock fencing erected around 380ha of Greenham and Crookham Common. Commoners’ livestock once again graze the heaths and grasslands.

2002  Greenham and Crookham Commons Act passed to restore land at Greenham and Crookham Commons as common land open to the public, make provision for the conservation of the natural beauty of that land, grant public access over that land in perpetuity and restore and extend commoners' rights. Also constituted the Greenham and Crookham Common Commission for the management of that land and conferred powers on West Berkshire District Council and on that Commission with respect to that land.

2006  Exmoor ponies graze commons.

2008  West Berkshire Living Landscape Project agreement signed (28th March). A partnership between West Berkshire Council and Berks Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT). Project area of 2600 ha. includes Greenham & Crookham Commons in the core area along with Thatcham Reedbeds and Bowdown Woods. The vision- ‘To protect, expand and enhance this unique and diverse landscape of West Berkshire; creating an environment richer in wildlife’