

The Brocas

Richard Hill

I'm sitting on the riverbank on common ground, called the 'Brocas', a large meadow on the Eton side of the river at Windsor. I dip my toes in the cool water as Swans glide gracefully by and ducks dart here and there in the hope of discarded morsels of food. The field has just been mechanically mown and smells of new summertime grass. Pleasure craft, narrowboats, launches and trip boats chug on by.

There are children flying kites while a man flies his drone. To the left are groups of brightly coloured houses, a hotel, a restaurant, and an iron and granite arch bridge linking the two towns. The bridge carries pedestrians only these days, though one can imagine horses and carts crossing the river here in times gone by. From here I have a wonderful view of the world-famous castle, its flagpole flying the Royal Standard. The King is in his castle.

Above flies an airplane, droning into London Heathrow airport a few miles east of here.

To my right, is Windsor Railway bridge crossing the river, approached by a long multi-arched brick viaduct. Every few minutes the shuttle train linking Windsor and nearby Slough whines its way across with a familiar clackidy clack. Back on the Brocas, courting couples, hand in hand, walk along the riverbank. Picnickers enjoy their food freshly cooked on disposable tin barbeques. It smells delightful.

The sun sets. The Brocas comes alive to a different atmosphere.