



## Bentley Priory Storytelling

Using the prompts below, write a short story about a period of Bentley Priory's history.

You could transport your reader, or listener, back to World War II, when Bentley Priory was an RAF base, or further back to the Victorian era when Bentley Priory was a hotel.

**How many of the key words can you include in your story?**

When your story is complete you could read it aloud to someone at home. You could also illustrate it with drawings or create story stones, like these ones here of a dog, pilot and rowing boat...



### Story 1 - RAF:

Keywords: WAAF | Pilot | Spitfire | Radar | Dog

Bentley Priory was an RAF base from 1926 – 2008, although there was no flying taking place. Instead, women in the WAAF (Women's Auxiliary Air Force) were using Radar information to track incoming and outgoing aircraft above Britain to help pilots know where the enemy was. There were over 1,000 women working at Bentley Priory during WWII.

Dogs were often a feature on RAF bases as they were good for keeping pilots company. If you have visited the Museum before you might have seen a model of our mascot dog, Scramble. Look out for him next time!



*Women and men working in the Filter Room at Bentley Priory*



*Pilots with a dog*

### Story 2 - School:

Keywords: Teacher | Pupils (Girls) | Rowing boat | Golf clubs | Chalk

Bentley Priory was a school between 1908 - 1924. It was an all-girls' school, so for your story you can keep it this way, or you can make it a mixed or a boys' school.

The girls had a varied curriculum which included rowing and golf lessons!

Life would have been very different at school 100 years ago – the teachers would have written on a blackboard with chalk, and there was no internet to help with lessons!



*Schoolgirls rowing on the lake in the grounds*

### Story 3 - Hotel:

Keywords: Chef | Maid | Keys | Mangle | Train

Bentley Priory was Hotel between 1882 – 1908. Frederick Gordon, who own the hotel, had a new trainline built from Harrow to Stanmore so that guests could travel more easily to the hotel.

Can you imagine cleaning and drying all the sheets in a hotel using a mangle? If you haven't come across one these before you could look it up.

An 1888 review of lunch at the hotel for lunch said “disappointed that there was no hot food (...this would have been available with prior notice, but the kitchens were too far from the luncheon room”.



An advert for the Gordon Hotels

### Story 4 - Georgian House:

Key words: Earl of Abercorn | Horse & Carriage | Wig | Ballroom | Dancing

Bentley Priory was a Georgian family house between 1788 - 1846. The Earl of Abercorn, who lived at Bentley Priory with his family, was well known for throwing impressive parties!

People would get very dressed up for these parties – it was fashionable for both men and women to wear wigs at this time. The women's wigs in particular would be big and elaborate.

Lady Morgan, a writer at the time and friend of the family, wrote that “The house is no house at all, for it looks like a little town, which you will believe when I tell you that a hundred and twenty people slept under the roof during the Christmas holidays without including the under servants’.



John James Hamilton,  
Earl of Abercorn



Sarah Siddons, a famous actress,  
wearing a large wig and hat