

■ **To find the start point of the trail go to Foxburrows Avenue, off Southway. On the east side (opposite Derby Road) look for a path next to house number 24. Walk up the path and look for an information board – you will then be ready to begin.**

This whole area of Westborough and Park Barn is steeped in history with royal connections. Try to imagine it 800 years ago when there were no houses here and the town of Guildford was just a small settlement on the banks of the River Wey.

Where you are standing was part of a medieval royal deer park. It was created by Henry II in 1154. The park covered about 1,620 acres that included what today is Onslow Village, Westborough, Park Barn (hence its name) Guildford Park and The Mount.

The park would have been surrounded by a ditch and a large bank with wooden posts on top. There were gaps in the banking where deer could wander in, but were unable to get out.

It was created so that the king, his royal court and guests could come here to hunt for venison. The whole area was then a part of Windsor Great Park.

There would have been tracks through the deer park and a number of lodge buildings. The royal party would have stayed at Guildford Castle or at a manor house that stood near today's Surrey Sports Park. Parts of a moat are all that remain of the manor house on a site still known as Manor Farm.

Records show that Edward III spent Easter at the park in 1336 and Christmas here in 1337, 1340 and 1347. Edward IV stayed here in 1479 and 1482, and Henry V in 1546. It is also believed that Elizabeth I visited on several occasions.

Eventually the park became disused and in 1628 Charles I sold the land to a John Annadale, a groom of the royal chamber. He turned much of the land over to agriculture leasing it to tenant farmers.



■ **Continue following the path using the Westborough Trim Trail signs as guides. From Burrows Close turn left into Woodside Road and walk on. (Note: the trail itself has an alternative shorter route from here, see signs for details). Between houses numbers 66 and 68 of Woodside Road walk down through Westborough Woods with the houses of Vernon Way to your right.**

The first houses in Westborough were built in the early 1920s in answer to a national housing shortage following the First World War. Guildford, like many other towns and cities, began to build social housing. Westborough was originally known as the Aldershot Road Estate and by 1938 372 houses and 140 flats had been built. They all had the then latest mod-cons: electricity, electric cookers and wash-boilers, together with necessary heating points and aerials for wireless.

Areas of green space were left between the homes for recreational use, one of them being here at Westborough

Woods. At one time it was known as Rifle Range Plantation as that is what it was used for. And in particular to train boys in the art of marksmanship. Rifle ranges were set up across the country often in disused pits or quarries, or in the case here, with a back-drop of a hill.

Rifle clubs were formed, often by retired army officers and clergymen. A steady supply of boys would no doubt have jumped at the chance to practise a bit of shooting after Sunday school! Unfortunately, it would not be long before many of these boys, then as young men, were in thick of the horrors of the Great War.

■ **Once you have walked through the woods, turn right and walk along Southway, then turn right into Fairfield Rise, then left into Linkway. Look for a cut through with bollards on your left. Go through here and via the playground to Woodside Road. Turn right and take a cut through Eastway using the footpath across the open space to Coachlads Avenue.**

'Coachlads' is a corruption of the original Cole's Lodge, a building dating from the time of the royal deer park as previously mentioned. It was the second largest of 13 parks that formed part of the Royal Forest of Windsor.

Picture the area once more before it was developed into farmland. In 1709 the land came into the ownership of the Onslow family of Clandon Park. At that time the main farms here were Guildford Park Farm, near today's Walnut Tree Close; Wilderness Farm, now Onslow Village; and Manor Farm, near the main manor house. Later farms included Bannister's Farm, near today's Tesco store; Park Barn Farm, near the site of a Roman villa beside Broadstreet Common; and Deer Barn Farm, now one of the car parks at the University of Surrey.

The whole area and its development in more recent times is right on top of the footprint of what was here in the past!

**Continue to follow the signs and you will soon return to the starting point.**

