

WINDSOR GREAT PARK

THIS WALK THROUGH WINDSOR GREAT PARK INCLUDES PART OF THE LONG WALK. THE STARTING POINT IS AT THE BISHOPSGATE ROAD ENTRANCE IN ENGLEFIELD GREEN (MAP REF. 978722) WHERE THERE IS SOME PARKING BY THE GATES ON THE ROAD.

Enter the park and walk towards the gates of Royal Lodge. Turn right at the crossroads towards the Deer Gate on the road. Deer were kept in the Great Park for many centuries but were taken away in 1940, during the Second World War when additional areas of land were ploughed for food production. In 1979, at the suggestion of The Duke of Edinburgh, The Chief Ranger, 1000 acres of the park were enclosed and the deer reintroduced. Go through the gate into the Deer Park and turn right onto a track. This track soon slopes down hill and curves past the grassy incline. A fenced area excludes deer from the Bears Rails Millennium Project. Where the path meets the crossing track, continue straight on. There are many fine oaks along this stretch of the walk. Over the next few years the Crown Estate is going to restore this area of the Great Park by creating a mosaic of wood pasture, beech and oak woodlands with ancient trees. The programme of works includes the felling of non-native conifers and turkey oaks, an exotic invasive broadleaved tree.

Coming through the trees off to your left is the Bears Rails Camping Area with its pond. Cross the bridge over the small stream to the track crossing ahead of you. Looking to the right is the Bears Rail Gate. Turn left, following the track by the wire fence and hedge. Pass through the Deer Gate.

After a couple of minutes, look to your left to behold the spectacular Copper Horse upon Snow Hill. Leave the fence line to cross the grass to the Long Walk. This is the famous two and half mile roadway, which leads to the heart of Windsor Castle. Look down the avenue to see the Castle and the double row of trees on either side of the Long Walk. These trees are London Planes and Horse Chestnuts, which were planted in 1945.

Turn left into Long Walk and climb steadily up to the Copper Horse statue. The foundation stone of this statue was laid in 1829 by George IV. He erected the equestrian statue in memory of his father, George III, who took a keen interest in the Great Park and Windsor Castle. George IV wanted the statue of his father to resemble that of Peter the Great in St Petersburg, hence the massive base. Return to the road and with your back to the statue turn right.

Walk along the road over the stone bridge. It is here that the stream, which wends its way through Old Windsor and flows into the River Thames near the Bells of Ousley Restaurant, has its source. Continuing along the track pass through the Deer Gates, on your right hand side are the strawberry pink gatehouses to the private grounds of Royal Lodge and the Royal Chapel. Royal Lodge was the home of the late Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother. Her Majesty and the late King came to live here in 1932, when they were still the Duke and Duchess of York.

Turn left at the Crossroad and straight ahead of you is the Bishopsgate entrance where the walk began.

Since the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, planting of trees has been considered of great importance in order to provide timber for the Navy. It is due to this policy that we can still enjoy walking through Windsor Great Park.

