

Farnham Park is an important historic landscape. The combination of a Norman Castle adjacent to a medieval deer park that has survived intact for over 600 years, gives Farnham Park a very special heritage.

Today, the Park is a peaceful place to relax and enjoy the countryside, but it echoes with the stories of earlier battles and wars.

The Park has a fascinating history dating back to 1376, when the Bishop of Winchester, Bishop William of Wykeham, enclosed woods, fields and pasture to create his own private deer park. Over the following 600 years, it was visited by royalty and nobles, fought over during the Civil War and used as a defence against invasion during World War II.



Keeping it special

Farnham Park is a very special place for its history and its wildlife. Its importance is recognised nationally and it's listed as a Grade II Park and Garden of Special Historic Interest, Site of Nature Conservation Interest and a Local Nature Reserve. It is a proposed Historic Battlefield site.

Enjoy Farnham Park and help us protect it by...

- Binning your dog's mess (in any litter bin)
- Keeping your dog under close control
- Cycling with consideration for others
- Not lighting fires
- Reporting criminal incidents to the Police (101)

Farnham Park is managed by Waverley Borough Council. Contact the Ranger at the Park Office on 01252 717047. For out-of-hours emergencies, please ring 02392 242161.

www.waverley.gov.uk/farnhampark



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Powerful bishops

The Bishops of Winchester have owned land around Farnham since the 9th century. They controlled one of the greatest medieval estates in England - owning land and property on a vast scale and with a diocese covering Surrey, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. The early medieval Bishops were Royal nominees and their immense wealth and power could not be ignored.

A castle and palace

Farnham Castle was originally a Norman 'motte and bailey' structure built in the 12th century. Various Bishops added to it through the following centuries and the mixture of architectural styles - primarily early Norman, Tudor and Restoration - are seen in the complex of Grade I and II listed buildings that form the Bishop's Palace. Historical associations, near-continuous occupancy and the proximity of an intact medieval deer park, make it an important historic landscape in southeast England.

Two parks

Originally one of two deer parks established by the Bishops in Farnham, today's Park was known as the New or Little Park when it was 'emparked' in about 1376. Both were surrounded by a wooden 'pale' or fence of cleft oak to prevent deer escaping and deter unwelcome incursion by the public. The parks were not only used for keeping deer, they offered grazing for the Bishop's horses and cattle and were 'live larders', supplying venison, and other game as well as timber and arable crops.

Fit for a king - or a queen!

Farnham Park was visited by many kings and queens over the centuries. They came as guests of the Bishop to enjoy a little medieval 'sport' - venison was a treasured and respected gift - perfect for cementing relationships with the rich and powerful. James I was particularly enthusiastic, his visit was described "as beautiful and great an entertainment as ever a King received from a subject". Queen Victoria was also a regular visitor, often riding through the Park after visiting the army camp at Aldershot.



Civil War skirmishes

For much of the Civil War, Farnham Castle was under Parliamentary control. Soldiers set up camp in the Park where they fought off attacks by Royalist forces. During this period, locals broke down the pales and killed many of the deer. After the Civil War, the Castle and the deer parks were in a poor state of repair and Bishop Morley undertook a number of repairs and improvements.

The Ranger's House and the Avenue

The imposing Ranger's House in the centre of the Park was built by Bishop Morley in the late 17th Century at a time when poachers, squatters and general troublemakers were commonplace. He also planted the magnificent Avenue that crosses the Park, although the original elms have



The People's Park

In 1930, a large part of the Park was sold as public open space to the local council. The southern part of the Park was obtained in 1952, and in 1956, the last in a long line of Bishops left the Castle for good.

Digging for Victory

The Park played a variety of roles during both World Wars. During the Great War, horses were grazed here to get them fit before being shipped out to France. As well as military activities, parts of the Park were ploughed and the Women's Land Army grew potatoes and other crops here as part of the war effort.

"The grass... was a source of sheer bliss. A clean green playground with room in it for thousands. We sprayed on it as a cushion bed... rolled over and over down its hollows, in jolly laughing safety!"

Victorian childhood memories

During Victorian times, as now, the Park was much enjoyed by the people of Farnham. Celebrated local writer George Sturt recalled: "The grass... was a source of sheer bliss. A clean green playground with room in it for thousands. We sprayed on it as a cushion bed... rolled over and over down its hollows, in jolly laughing safety!"

now been replanted with lime and beech. The majestic cedars of Lebanon, planted around the Ranger's House in the 1790s, survive and remain prominent landmarks in the Park.

The 'History of Farnham Park' can be bought from the Ranger's Office and a number of outlets in the Town, priced £10.

Farnham Park is full of fascinating historic sites. Some, like Farnham Castle, are clear to see. Others have vanished, their locations only discovered by experts who have uncovered the faint clues that remain.

of the Castle among other things and was in operation from as early as the 13th century.

1 Prehistoric site Finds in the Park, including Mesolithic (middle stone age) flint fragments, show there has been human activity in this area for at least 7000 years. A scattered hoard of coins and pottery fragments, dating from the Iron Age and Roman occupation, was also discovered near here.

2 Medieval tile kiln

Now hidden in the undergrowth beside the stream, the kiln probably supplied tiles for the roof

3 Civil War skirmish site

Two lines of lead shot have been discovered here. One misty November morning in 1643, Royalist troops attempted to recapture the Castle from their encampments on the heathland above the Park. However, the defenders were alerted by the sound of 8000 troops and used the Castle cannons to disperse the attackers. The Royalists retreated after a series of cavalry skirmishes.

4 13th century vineyard

Early documents refer to this area on the south facing slopes as 'Wynerde' field and it is probably the site of a 13th century vineyard supplying grapes for the Bishop's wine.

5 Air Raid Shelter

During World War II, Farnham Park had a range of military uses. Pillboxes and anti-glider posts were built to protect it from enemy attack and the Ranger's House became an Air Raid Precautions Centre and a base for the Home Guard.

6 Medieval Ridge and Furrow

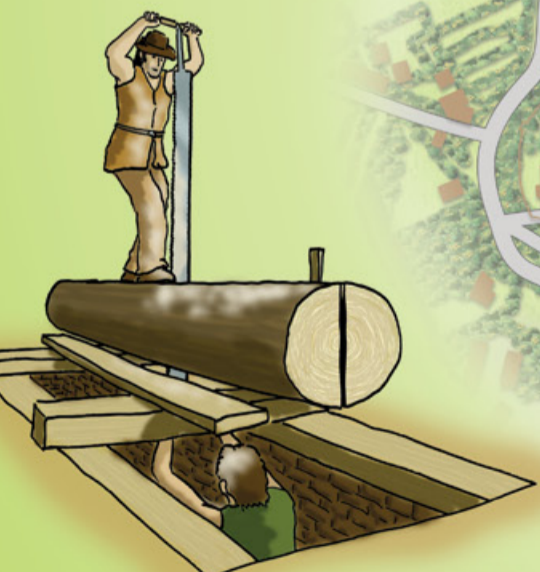
Visible along the southern slope, particularly in low light, are the lumps and bumps of an ancient arable field system. Barley, oats and wheat were all grown here and continued even when the Park was enclosed.

7 Cannon Road

The subtle raised earthworks in this area are evidence of a cannon storage yard used by the Parliamentarian army, when they occupied the Castle. A roadway running parallel to the Avenue was constructed to take heavy cannon onto site avoiding Castle Hill.



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8 Saw pit Now lying preserved under the cricket nets, this brick lined saw pit has graffiti from 1764, but may date from medieval times. It would have been used to prepare timber for the frequent building works at the Castle and may also have been where joists for the roof of the magnificent Westminster Hall were prepared at the end of the 14th century.

9 Spigot Mortar site Part of the Second World War defences, the mortar was manned by the Home Guard and positioned overlooking South Street. It would have helped defend this approach to the Castle, where the War Office had established the Camouflage Development and Training Centre.

10 Ice House

This subterranean chamber was constructed sometime in the 18th/19th Centuries and during the winter, ice and snow would be stored and packed with insulation, often straw or sawdust. It would remain frozen for many months and used by the Palace kitchens as a source of ice during the summer to store meat, cool drinks, or allow ice-cream and sorbet desserts to be prepared for the Bishop's feasts.