

# Virginia Water & Windsor Coach Trip – 22 May 22



Ivel Valley Coach Trip Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> May

The 3 mile “Long Walk” approach to Windsor Castle from Snow Hill

We meet at **Biggleswade Market Square at 7:30am** and at **Bedford Bus Station at 8:00am** to catch the coach to Virginia Water. Parking is free on Sundays in the Market Square and the carpark opposite the bus station. The journey is reasonably short (1½ hours) and there are no planned comfort stops. Arriving at the Visitors Centre we will take 20 minutes to refresh at the café, where there are toilets. The morning walk is 6 miles and twists around the northern shores of Virginia Water, through The Valley Gardens, through the Heather Gardens; out past Obelisk Pond to **Savill Garden for lunch**. The coach will be there after lunch to pick up those who want an afternoon in Windsor, so take your lunch with you. The afternoon walk of 6 miles continues from here, passing the Royal Lodge onto Snow Hill and down the 3 mile “Long Walk” into Windsor (pictured).

The lake at Virginia Water was created in the 18th century under the stewardship of William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland, with the help of his architect Henry Flitcroft – construction work first began in 1752. The Duke had ambitious plans for the area, and work on the project continued when his brother Henry Frederick succeeded him as Ranger. But on 1st September 1768, a great storm destroyed the pond-head and cascade, emptying the lake completely. In 1780 under the guidance of George III; Paul and Thomas Sandby began the reconstruction of a much larger lake at the site, they went on to add an artificial waterfall, Meadow Pond and Obelisk Pond. The lake replaced a small stream of the same name which was probably named after Queen Elizabeth I, who was known as the "Virgin Queen". The lake and grounds were reinstated as a place of pageantry and spectacle, with fishing temples along its shore and an ornate Chinese Junk on the waters. Today, park rangers continue to landscape and create new vistas across Virginia Water.

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*Things to see on the morning walk:*

**The Cascade.** A new Cascade was built in the 1780s, when the lake was enlarged.

**The Totem Pole.** The 100 foot totem pole was a gift to the Queen from the people of Canada – carved by Chief Mungo Martin of the Kwakiutl Federation. It was erected in 1958 to mark the centenary of the province of British Columbia.

**The Valley Gardens.** During WW2 Virginia Water was drained (bombing target). After the war gardeners from all over the country donated shrubs – in particular azaleas and rhododendrons – to the care of the rangers at Windsor Great Park.

**Smith's Lawn.** Home to Guard's Polo Club and best known for prestigious polo events which are held here throughout the year, including the Queen's Cup.

**Savill Garden.** Developed under Royal patronage dating back to George VI.



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Water

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The afternoon walk starts at Savill Garden and heads out past the Royal Lodge to Snow Hill where there are splendid views across Windsor and Central London. Ahead is the 3 mile “Long Walk” which had been laid out by King Charles II and the planting of its trees completed by William of Orange in the 1680s, with double rows of elms which lasted until World War II. The Georges extended and built other numerous features and monuments, such as the Copper Horse (George III) and the Obelisk (William, Duke of Cumberland). George III, even had a set of Roman ruins imported from Libya and placed in the park – Leptis Magna.

*Things to see on the afternoon walk:*

**The Royal Lodge.** Residence of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother from 1952 until her death in 2002. Since 2004, it has been the official country residence of Prince Andrew, Duke of York.

**The Copper Horse.** Standing high on Snow Hill, the copper horse depicts George III on horseback, and was commissioned by George IV as a tribute to his father.

**Windsor Castle.** Was begun in the 11th century by William the Conqueror as it afforded a good defensive point over the River Thames. The vast area of Windsor Forest to the south of the castle became reserved by the King for personal hunting and to supply the castle with wood, deer, boar and fish. In 1129, the first parker was appointed, and in 1240, King Henry III officially laid out the borders of the "Park", a region many times larger than the current Great Park. The castle at this time was a fortress and when hunting, King Henry would have been resident at the more comfortable manor house of Old Windsor. The title "Parker" exists today as "Ranger of the Park", currently vacant following the death of Prince Philip. Kings Edward I and Edward III used the park for jousts and tournaments and the latter had his Royal stud there to supply horses for the Hundred Years' War. Except for a brief period of privatisation by Oliver Cromwell implying subdivision to pay for the civil war, the area remained the personal property of the monarch until the reign of George III when control over all Crown lands was handed to Parliament.



The Copper  
Horse Statue  
on Snow Hill

Depicting  
George III on  
horseback

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The coach will leave promptly at **5:30pm from the Coach Park in Alma Road, Windsor** (SL4 3HY), close to the railway line as pictured in red on the map. Enjoy the remainder of your afternoon visiting the shops and castle in Windsor.

*Windsor Street views – meet at large red arrow to catch the coach home*



To Book: Email [roycarter367@hotmail.com](mailto:roycarter367@hotmail.com) and indicate departure point.

Biggleswade or Bedford

To Pay: BACS £18.00 to Sort Code: 60-83-01, Account: 20201274

Reference Code: Windsor

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