

- This trail is for children to use individually or in small groups, with as much adult help as they need. Use the map to help you find your way around.
- Windsor Castle covers a large site and you may wish to follow the trail in two halves with a break in between. After sections 1 and 2, which are on your way into the Castle, you can follow the trail in whatever order you like.
- Refer to this sheet at each section of the trail as it gives interesting facts as well as answers.
- If you have any queries or need to ask for directions, the wardens in the Castle and the stewards in St George's Chapel will be happy to help.

1

### ON YOUR WAY IN...

#### KEEP OUT! Castle defences

As you walk up the hill, some of the Castle's medieval defences can still be clearly seen. From the late 12th century, square towers were often replaced by round or semi-circular ones, which were more stable and presented fewer blind spots for the defending archers. Notice how some towers are wider at the base. This also added stability and made rocks dropped from above bounce outwards towards the enemy.

Arrow loops were wider on the inside to enable the archer to move from side to side, giving him a wider field of fire. They were also tall to allow him to aim upwards and make his arrows travel further.

There used to be a ditch around the Castle walls which was very difficult for enemy soldiers to cross or tunnel under. However there was no water in the ditch because the chalk soil here lets water drain through it.

2

### MIDDLE WARD

#### What was used to build Windsor Castle?

In about 1170 King Henry II replaced William the Conqueror's wooden defences with nearly half a mile of stone walls. The hard heath stone used came from Bagshot about 10 miles south of Windsor. The shiny stones in the mortar are pieces of flint. Before flint, they used oyster shells!

#### Is Windsor Castle on a hill?

##### Why did the King choose this site?

The Castle is built on a hill that overlooks the River Thames to the north. A hill was an excellent site for a castle because it gave defenders a good view of anyone coming to attack and the enemy would find it difficult to fight going uphill.

##### Why is the Castle this shape?

During the Norman invasion of England, motte and bailey castles were mainly built by the forced labour of the local inhabitants under the supervision of the conquering army. A mound of earth, the motte, was made by digging a ditch in a circle and piling up the earth inside the circle. A courtyard, or bailey, with a wall and another ditch around it was made next to the motte. This provided protection for men, animals and stores. A tower was built on top of the motte called the keep, which was the strongest part of the castle.

The design of Windsor Castle with its motte and two baileys made best use of the long, narrow site. Look at the map and you will see the Round Tower on top of the motte in the centre and the baileys on either side.

3

**ST GEORGE'S CHAPEL****The Knights of the Garter**

The Most Noble Order of the Garter is Britain's oldest and most senior order of knighthood. Each Knight has a banner, crest, helmet and sword above his stall in the Chapel. In days gone by, a Knight displayed his coat of arms on his shield, his banner, the coat he wore over his armour – even on the coat worn by his horse!

**King Edward III**

The missing words are: *cloak, fur, Arthur, Knights, sword.*

4

**NORTH TERRACE**

Early castles were built to protect major roads, rivers and towns. The River Thames was the main route for supplies from this part of the country to London. It would also have provided an enemy coming from the east with an easy route inland and so an important job for the soldiers on watch duty at Windsor Castle was to keep a close eye on river traffic. As the Castle was built long before the town, it was then much easier to see the river than it is now!

**The State Apartments The Garter Symbol and Motto**

The Garter symbol looks like a belt with the cross of St George inside it. It is said that King Edward III chose a garter as the symbol of his new order following a ball where the garter belonging to a lady fell to the floor as she danced. To save her embarrassment he picked it up, tied it to his own leg and said 'Honi soit qui mal y pense' meaning 'Shame on him who thinks evil of this'. He told his courtiers they too would soon be proud to wear such a garter and the words became the motto of the new order and part of its symbol. The Garter symbol is found in many parts of the Castle and a fine example decorates the outside of one of the houses opposite St George's Chapel.

5

**ENGINE COURT****The Quadrangle**

*JINGOUST* unscrambled becomes *JOUSTING!* Tournaments were often held at Windsor and knights came from all over Europe to test their fighting skills. Each contestant was allowed three lances and when these had been broken, the knights dismounted and continued fighting with heavy swords until one of them was beaten. Although blunted weapons were used, knights were sometimes injured or killed.

**Defending the Keep**

The items fired or thrown down at the enemy were: *boiling oil, hot sand, boiling water, bows and arrows, rocks and stones.*

6

**NORMAN GATEWAY****Guarding the gates**

To see the portcullis, find the grooves in the walls and then look up. The picture in the trail shows a portcullis being lowered.

The Norman Gate, built in 1360 by King Edward III, was heavily defended because it guarded the entrance to the royal apartments. Lowly prisoners were thrown into the dungeons beneath the gate towers and often forgotten about. Royal prisoners, including at one time the King of France, were treated much better and were allowed to have their own apartments and go hunting in the forest. The Scottish king, David II, was held at Windsor for 11 years at a cost of 3s 4d a day (about 16½p) – quite an expense in the 1350s!

For almost 300 years the rooms above King Henry VIII Gate, now the visitor exit, included a court room for hearing offences committed locally, as well as several prison cells. Some of the windows were smaller then and had bars fitted across them.