

The Importance of Hunting

For a medieval king, hunting wasn't just a weekend hobby - it was serious business.

- Riding horses at lightning speed through thick trees and shooting bows and arrows was one of the ways kings and their knights practiced their battle skills.
- If the king wanted to throw a massive feast at Guildford Castle his hunters had to catch wild deer and other game to feed the hungry guests.
- The king would invite important ambassadors from foreign countries to go hunting. While riding through the woods they would discuss important business.



The end of the Royal Park

For over 400 years, the park was full of life and was regularly visited by the kings of England. But as time went on, things began to change.

By the start of the 1600s, kings and queens preferred to stay in giant, luxurious palaces closer to London, like Hampton Court. They stopped visiting Guildford and the grand old buildings began to crumble.

In 1611 King James I was looking for a way to raise some money. He decided he no longer needed the royal park in Guildford and so sold it to the Earl of

Annandale. The wild deer were moved away, much of the woodland was cleared, and the land was broken up into quiet, peaceful farms looked after by tenant farmers. In 1709 Lord Onslow bought the Estate and continued farming it and so for 300 years cows and sheep grazed where kings once rode.

In 1920 Lord Onslow heard that there was a desperate shortage of housing in England. He wanted to help so he sold some of his land on his Guildford Park Estate to a company who wanted to build a new village on the edge of Guildford. He gave them a reduced price on the condition that the houses, although small, were built to the highest standards, with good sized gardens and lots of open space amongst them.

And so it was that the land that had once been part of the royal hunting ground became Onslow Village!



OVRA's Summer Holiday Treasure Trail 2026

The Search for the Missing Ring



For 400 years the kings of England hunted deer on the land where Onslow Village now stands.

King Henry II loved deer hunting, so in 1154, shortly after he became king, he ordered a new royal hunting forest to be created close to Guildford Castle.

One day, when Henry was staying at Guildford Castle, he returned from a day of hunting and noticed he'd lost his precious ring.

It must have fallen off as he was riding in the Royal Forest.

He ordered all the people of Guildford to go and search the forest for his ring and not to stop until they found it!

They were on the point of giving up when suddenly.....

Follow the trail and solve the clues to discover where the ring was finally found!



Cross off each place on the map as you solve the clue.

At the end of the trail there should be just one place left that hasn't been crossed off. This is the place where the ring was found.

The True Story of the Royal Hunting Ground

The Gateway Town

Eight hundred years ago, kings didn't live in just one place. They moved around the country with their knights, soldiers, and friends, staying in different castles and manor houses as they travelled.

Guildford was a very important place at that time because it was the gateway to the south coast of England. It sat in a gap in the high chalk hills, with a giant stone castle to guard the river. Anyone needing to travel between London and the ports on the South coast had to travel through Guildford. So it was an excellent place for the kings to come to keep an eye on the comings and goings in their kingdom.

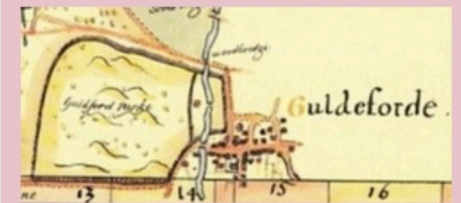


The creation of Guildford Park

In the year 1154, a powerful king named Henry II took the throne. He liked visiting Guildford Castle, but he had a problem: he loved hunting, and there wasn't a private royal hunting park nearby!

So, King Henry II made a grand decree. He ordered his men to take over a large area of land just west of the town and turned it into Guildford Park, a new royal hunting ground.

He built a giant wooden fence all the way around it to keep the deer inside, and hired royal park keepers to guard it from thieves and poachers.



The southern border of the park followed the line of the hedge that you can still see running along the top of the Mount. Henley Grove, the small area of woodland on the top of the Mount was an important feature of the park, though it was much bigger 800 years ago! In total the park was about 6.5 square kilometres and supported several hundred deer.



Clue 20:

Find another house whose door is being visited by an insect. Which insect is it this time? - that's your clue.

Direction 16:

Finally walk through the car park back to the village hall. Somewhere on this building you'll find your last clue.

Clue 21:



Direction 1:

The trail starts by the village hall, opposite the parade of shops.

Clue 1:

Find the map of Onslow Village. Locate the 'You are here' arrow. Look directly to the left of the arrow and the first name you see is your clue to somewhere on the map.

Direction 2:

Stay on this side of the road and start walking down the hill past the village hall car park. As you are passing the car park look down for your next clue.

Congratulations you've finished the Treasure Trail! There should only be one place remaining on the map that hasn't been crossed out. This is the place where the ring was found.

If you would like to know if your answer is correct simply email your answer to info@ovra.org.uk or scan the QR code and fill in the contact form on the website.



Anyone who emails in a correct entry before Saturday 5th September 2026 will be entered in to this year's prize draw!

If you enjoyed doing this Treasure Trail and would like to do another, the 2024 and 2025 Trails are still available to download from the OVRA website. Go to ovra.org.uk and click on the **Events** button or scan this QR code:



Clue 2:

Keep looking down until you find a small metal square. It will give you a clue to the next place on the map that can be crossed off.

Direction 3:

Continue walking down the hill, cross over Orchard Road, (don't turn down it). Before you get to Ellis Avenue look for your next clue.

Clue 3:

Find 2 large metal boxes, one of them gives you the clue to the next place you can eliminate.

Direction 4:

When you reach Ellis Avenue, turn right in to it. Staying on the right hand side of the road start walking down. There are 3 clues to find along this road.

Clue 4:

When you reach 2 large triangles in the middle of the road stop. Now very carefully look for a lettered brick in a nearby gatepost. It will give you your next clue.

Clue 5:

Walk on a little way until you see an H on a yellow background on the opposite side of the road. Add up the individual digits you can see. The total you get is your next clue.

This Treasure Trail has been created by **Onslow Village Residents Association** for the enjoyment of our local community.

OVRA's aim is to '**Strengthen Community in the Onslow Area**'. To this end we organise events, produce a monthly diary called '**What's on in Onslow**', keep people informed of changes in the local area with our '**Local Focus Updates**' and celebrate all that is going on in our local community through our termly **Village Voice** magazine.

It's totally free to sign up, simply visit the website at ovra.org.uk. **Don't miss out!**

Clue 6:

Continue walking but start looking up at the houses on your right as you pass them. When you see a blue triangle you have found your next clue.

Direction 5:

Cross straight over at the crossroads with West Meads and continue to the bottom of Ellis Avenue. As you go see if you can see any of these swift boxes.



Point of Interest

Swifts are in decline and one of the reasons for this is loss of suitable nest sites. We can help them by putting up nest boxes but because they live in colonies there need to be lots of nest boxes in the same area before they will use them..

Clue 7:

Cross over the road to the bus stop on East Meads. Carefully look for the word 'Diamond' somewhere nearby. When you find it you've got your next clue.

Direction 6:

With the bus shelter on your left start walking along the road towards 'Hedgeway'. When you reach the top of Hedgeway look for your next clue.

Clue 8:

Find the picture in the next box. Look carefully to see what has been covered by the red squares on the crown? That's your next clue.

Clue 13:

Turn around again and continue walking up the road. When you see this, look at the house number, that's your clue.

**Clue 14:**

Keep walking up the hill. Before you reach the railings find the colourful plaque with the house number. The picture on it is your next clue.

Direction 11:

Continue walking up Curling Vale. When you reach the footpath on your right leading up to All Saints Church take it - but read the next clue before you take the first step.

**Direction 7:**

Walk along Hedgeway. There are no clues to find until about half way along. Stay on the left hand side of the road for the moment.

Clue 9:

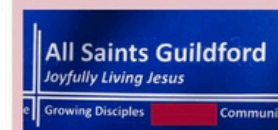
Once you get about half-way along the road start looking up at the houses you are passing. Find an interesting wind vane on a chimney stack. That is your next clue.

Clue 15:

Count how many vertical posts there are holding up the handrail. Your answer is the next clue.

Clue 16:

When you get to the top look for this:



The missing word is your next clue.

Direction 12:

Start walking up the right hand side of Vicarage Gate. Before long you will reach your next clue.

Direction 8:

Once you've found the wind vane cross over the road and immediately start looking up at the roofs on the houses on this side of the road.

Clue 10:

Find the roof that has a permanent visitor. The visitor is your next clue.

Direction 9:

Continue walking down Hedgeway until you reach the grassy area at the bottom. You'll find your next clue here.

Clue 17:

Look for an insect visiting a door post. This is the clue you need.

Direction 13:

Very soon you will reach a footpath going down the hill on your right towards Bannister's Road. Walk down this path but look for the next clue as you go.

Clue 18:

Look carefully at the lampposts as you pass them. You'll find two letters that will be the clue you need.

Clue 11:

Look for something made in Stirlingshire. Your next clue is on it.

Direction 10:

At the bottom of Hedgeway turn right and start walking up Curling Vale. There are 3 clues to find as you walk up this road.

Clue 12:

When you get level with no. 3 turn around and behind you. You should see something golden in the distance. This is the clue you need.

Direction 14:

When you get to the bottom of the path carefully cross over the road and start walking up the right hand side of Orchard Road. Immediately start looking for your next clue.

Clue 19:

Keep looking down until you find something made in York. This will give you your next clue.

Direction 15:

Cross over the road and walk almost to the top of Orchard Road. Shortly before you reach the Village Hall car park start looking for the penultimate clue.