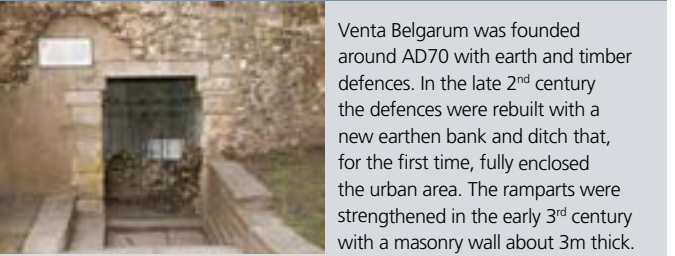


City centre guide to Winchester's military past

Winchester

One of King Alfred's defensive 'burhs', Winchester was established as refuge and strong point to resist the Danish invaders. A raiding army had destroyed the settlement in 860AD but the old Roman town walls were refurbished and a new street system was laid out inside the walls. These intramural streets (such as North Walls) were laid with the intention of rushing troops to threatened parts of the walls. The town's walls were largely dismantled by the end of the 18th century.

1 Winchester's Roman walls



Venta Belgarum was founded around AD70 with earth and timber defences. In the late 2nd century the defences were rebuilt with a new earthen bank and ditch that, for the first time, fully enclosed the urban area. The ramparts were strengthened in the early 3rd century with a masonry wall about 3m thick. The succession of defences can be seen in the model in the **City Museum**. The same line of the walls continued to be followed up to the 18th century when great lengths of the walls were demolished. The short lengths that survive are mainly post-Roman though the fragment behind the grill in the weirs is part of the core of the Roman wall.

**VISIT WINCHESTER**

If you would like this leaflet in a larger format, please contact the tourist information centre

01962 840 500
tourism@winchester.gov.uk
visitwinchester.co.uk

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2 Winchester Cathedral



Winchester Cathedral enshrines a long history of military service and sacrifice. It contains major memorials (including the Rifle Brigade Centenary Window), monuments to illustrious military leaders, and many inscriptions recording the deaths of individual soldiers in both famous and lesser-known campaigns. It houses the laid up colours of several local regiments, and also Books of Remembrance for units including The Royal Hampshire Regiment, The Rifle Brigade and the Merchant Navy. The cathedral itself is no stranger to conflict – the West Window testifies to a violent incursion by Parliamentary troops during the Civil War and Bishop Peter Mews, a Royalist spy identified by the number 757, was Winchester's equivalent of James Bond. Special military-themed tours can be booked through the website.
www.winchester-cathedral.org.uk

3 Winchester Castle



Just months after 1066 and Winchester's surrender, William the Conqueror ordered the construction of a castle within the city walls. Winchester Castle became one of the great fortresses of medieval England. It was maintained and enhanced until 1645 when it was besieged, captured by Cromwell, and eventually demolished. The Great Hall, built between 1222 and 1235, is the only substantial surviving part of the medieval castle. A drawing of Winchester made by Willem Schellinks in 1662 shows the slighted castle as a still imposing ruin overlooking the city. On-site interpretation panels and displays tell the story of the castle.

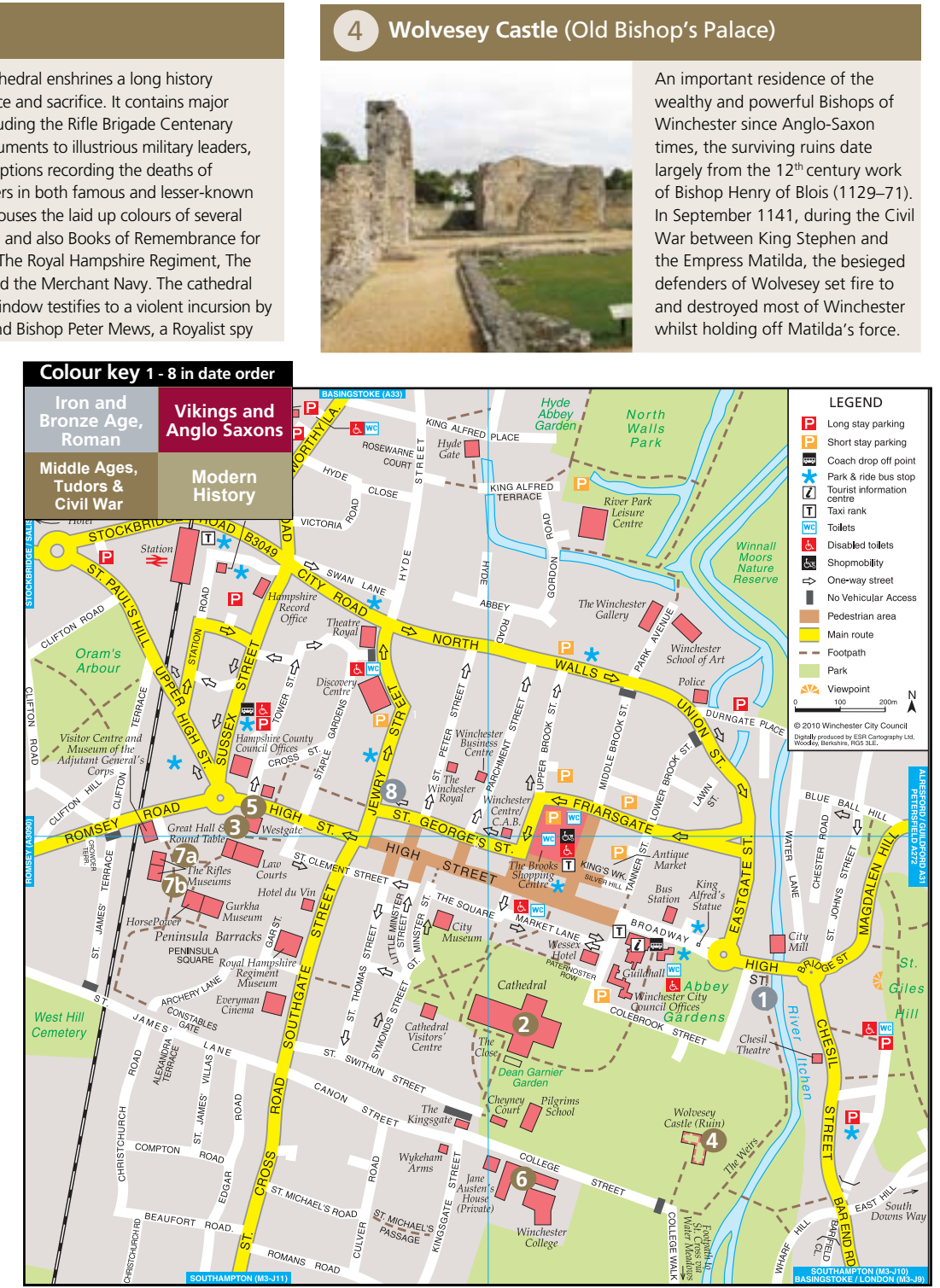
Colour key 1 - 8 in date order

Iron and Bronze Age, Roman


Vikings and Anglo Saxons

Middle Ages, Tudors & Civil War

Modern History

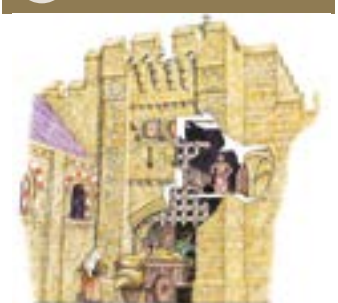


4 Wolvesey Castle (Old Bishop's Palace)



An important residence of the wealthy and powerful Bishops of Winchester since Anglo-Saxon times, the surviving ruins date largely from the 12th century work of Bishop Henry of Blois (1129–71). In September 1141, during the Civil War between King Stephen and the Empress Matilda, the besieged defenders of Wolvesey set fire to and destroyed most of Winchester whilst holding off Matilda's force.

5 The Westgate



Now a museum, the Westgate was built to be one of the defensible gateways in Winchester's city walls, first established by the Romans in the first century AD. The line of the walls remained unaltered throughout later times and, though the Westgate's present structure is medieval and dates mainly from the 12th to 14th centuries, it is thought to stand on the site of the earlier Roman gate. The west wall was entirely rebuilt in the 14th century when a whole series of new defences was added in view of a possible invasion from France. The works included a portcullis, machicolations, gun ports and possibly a drawbridge. The two inverted keyhole gunports, intended for primitive hand cannons, are amongst the earliest pieces of architectural evidence for the use of artillery in this country. The Westgate is open weekends in the afternoon between February and October.


Did you know?

15 Victoria Cross medals are currently on display in Winchester Military Museums. Further medals of Wintonians who have been awarded this honour are also on display in the Imperial War Museum.

Did you know?

Hampshire Record Office offers help to people looking to trace their ancestry via army records. Go to www3.hants.gov.uk/archives/hals-collections/army-records.htm to find out more.

6 Winchester College




Founded in 1382, Winchester College has the longest unbroken history of any English school. Whilst WWI claimed the lives of over 500 old Wykehamists, a further 275 died in World War II. Officially opened in 1924, the War Cloister was designed by Sir Herbert Baker to commemorate those who had lost their lives. Notable Old Wykehamists with a military career who were all awarded the Victoria Cross include Dennis George Wyldbore Hewitt (1897–1917); Charles Doughty-Wylie (1868–1915); Daniel Burges (1873–1946); Arthur Forbes Gordon Kilby (1885–1915); and Air Chief Marshal Hugh Dowding (1882–1970). Please see www.winchestercollege.org/guided-tours for details of regular guided tours around the College and for tours of War Cloister.

Did you know?

Winchester city centre is spectacularly transformed by Homecoming Parades that assemble at The Guildhall for a reception by the Mayor of Winchester.

7a Peninsula Barracks 'The King's House'




The city offered the site of the castle to Charles II who paid his first known visit in 1682. A scheme was developed for a park and a 'noble Palace, sufficient like Windsor, for a summer residence for the whole Court'. Construction of the palace, designed by Sir Christopher Wren and influenced by Versailles, began in 1683 but ended on the death of Charles in 1685. 'The King's House', little more than a carcass of a house, served as a prison for 5,000 French soldiers during the Seven Years' War from 1757 to 1764 and from 1778 to 1785 during the American War of Independence. From 1792 to 1796 it was home to refugee clergy from revolutionary France before becoming an army barracks in the same year. The King's House was eventually destroyed by fire on the night of 19th December 1894. Some parts of Wren's palace were reused in the replacement building which was ready for the army by 1904 and later renamed Peninsula Barracks, see **7b**. The army remained in occupation up to 1983.

Did you know?


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7b Peninsula Barracks in WWII



Located directly opposite Normandy, was the springboard for 'Operation Overlord', the code name for the Allied Invasion of Europe in World War II. The country became a vast armed camp full of allied troops encamped in towns, villages and woods. Winchester's newly-built by-pass became a giant tank park and camp for British and American troops. Even Peninsula Barracks in the city was taken over by the Ninth US Infantry Division see **12** overleaf for more information on their stay. It was here that American troops were reviewed by Churchill and Eisenhower. (See **13** and overleaf for more details)


8 Boer War horse trough



Erected in 1905, located near the junction of Jewry Street and St George's Street in Winchester, this landmark commemorates the 450,000 horses killed in the South African War of 1899–1902.


MILITARY

Trace Winchester's military past from the Iron Age to the Nuclear Age



Winchester has a rich and varied military history. From Iron Age forts, to Civil War sites, through two World Wars to the completion of a Nuclear bunker sited at Twyford - the district's military stories span centuries of history.

If you are interested in finding out more about the military history of Winchester, ancient and modern, then follow these two informative trails – one based in the city and one taking you further afield.

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Around Winchester guide to military past

1 St Catherine's Hill SU 484 276



In the early Iron Age an unfortified settlement, dated at 550-450 BC, was established on this hilltop. The defences, formed by the building of a ditch-and-bank earthwork enclosing nine hectares, were constructed around 250-200 BC. The original wide entrance was reconstructed with timber and included guard houses set in bays in the ramparts on either side. In the 2nd century BC, the entrance was narrowed and strengthened with chalk blocks. The site was abandoned on or shortly after 50BC.

2 Old Winchester Hill SU 642 205



The enclosure consists of a simple defensive bank and ditch built in the 1st millennium BC but there are a number of earlier Bronze Age burial mounds within the interior. Outside the western entrance to the hillfort there are further barrows of Bronze Age date grouped around an even earlier Neolithic long barrow.

3 Norsebury Ring SU 4909 4008



A Scheduled Ancient Monument on private land, and just visible from the adjoining footpath, this is a single ditch Iron Age enclosure of 7.9 acres (3.2 hectares). Sub-circular in shape, the enclosure was badly damaged by ploughing with only the north and west ramparts surviving. The original entrances lie at the south east and south west corners of the site.

4 Merton Castle



The Bishop of Winchester, Henry de Blois, built this castle in 1138. It continued in the ownership of the Bishops of Winchester until 1552 when it was surrendered to Edward VI. The castle is on private land but some overgrown remains can be seen from the road. The castle is sited within an earthwork whose form is suggestive of a much earlier Iron Age hillfort.

Did you know?
The Royal Armouries at Fort Nelson benefitted from a £3.5m Heritage Lottery Fund redevelopment in 2011 that launched a new 'Voice of the Guns' gallery showcasing two sections of the Iraqi Super Gun.

