

## ERECTION OF HISTORICAL PLAQUE AND SIGNPOST

on the

Little Green in Longwater Lane, Finchampstead.

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Saturday afternoon, October 21st. 1978 at 3 o'clock

At the time of the Battle of Hastings in 1066 the Royal Forest of Windsor — which extended westward from Windsor Castle to Loddon Bridge at Reading and South to Guildford — belonged to Earl Harold. With Harold's death it was claimed as personal spoils of war by Duke William and the Manor of Finchampstead was granted by his son Henry I to the Lords of Aldermaston who, a century later, granted it to Alard Banister whose grandson William Bannister died without male issue in 1276 and the Manor was divided into East Court, held by his daughter Constance, and West Court held by his daughter Agatha.

The greater part of Windsor Forest was open heath land but the western half of Finchampstead was one of the few well wooded areas from which the deer could be chased out on to the open ground. (The Royal Forest of Windsor was divided into four Bailiwicks one of which was Finchamistede Bailiwick and this was divided into four Walkes of which Bigshotte Walke became our present Parish of Finchampstead).

For six centuries this area was a favourite royal hunting ground with the Lords of East and West Court Manors being its two Keepers and the King having his Lodge at Easthampstead Park. It was while Henry VII was hunting in Finchampstead Woods in 1501 with his sons Prince Arthur and Prince Henry that news came that the Infanta Katherine of Aragon had reached his Lodge at Dogmersfield.

Prince Arthur and Katherine — daughter of the Emperor Charles V who thirty years later held the Pope beleaguered inside Castel San Angelo to prevent the annulment of her second marriage to Henry VIII — had been betrothed during their infancy and Katherine had now come to England with her retinue to complete the marriage and was travelling from Southampton to Lambeth Palace with halts at the King's Lodges at Dogmersfield and Chertsey. At the same time the King and his sons set off from London to welcome the Infanta but got no further than the Royal Hunting Lodge at Easthampstead as they were enjoying good sport and it was in Finchampstead Woods that the Spanish Envoys brought them the news that the Infanta had reached his Lodge at Dogmersfield.

In those days the present Longwater Road with its bridge over the River Blackwater had not been built and the only road south out of Finchampstead was down what we now call Longwater Lane (until 100 years ago it was called the Long Water Road because it crossed the river by means of a ford with the shallow water on the Finchampstead side about 80 yards west of the shallow water on the Eversley side where the Long Water Road continued) and no doubt Henry and his Court went splashing up the river bed through the 'Long Water' to get to Dogmersfield 6 miles away as the crow flies.

When the King and his two sons reached Dogmersfield the Spanish Ambassador refused to allow the King to see the face of his future daughter-in-law as it was contrary to Spanish custom for the bridegroom to see the face of his bride before the wedding ceremony. However, Henry insisted that the Infanta was in England now and must abide by English customs. Needless to say the King won the day and the Infanta removed her veil and the King, with his two sons, returned to their hunting in Finchampstead Woods and next day the Infanta and her retinue continued their progress to the King's Lodge at Chertsey crossing over Hartfordbridge Flats to the Blackwater Bridge and on over Bagshot Heath.



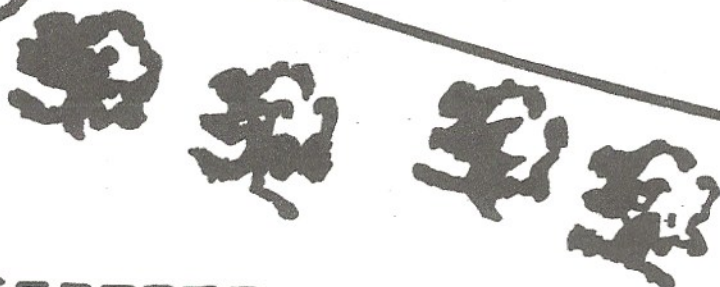


ORDNANCE SURVEY OF 1871.

THE FOUR NEW PROPERTIES WHICH HAVE BEEN BUILT ON THIS SITE HAVE BEEN ADDED IN DOTTED OUTLINE.

THE OLD YEW TREE CAN BE SEEN AT THE SOUTHERN END OF THE ALMSHOUSE AND THE PROPOSED SITE FOR THE HISTORICAL PLAQUE AND SIGNPOST WHICH HAS BEEN CARVED FROM THE YEW TREE TIMBER, AS RECORDED AT H.M. LAND REGISTRY IN THE TITLE DEEDS OF THE NEW PROPERTIES, IS INDICATED BY A CROSS ON THE GREEN OPPOSITE FOOTPATH 13.

THE VERY WIDE FOOTPATH TO THE WEST OF THE ALMSHOUSE IS A TWELVE FOOT RIGHT OF CARRIAGEWAY ACCORDED TO THE RECTOR OF THE PARISH FOR VISITING THE ALMSHOUSES.



which the Commissioners of George IV had granted to them as Glebe and the Trustees of the Finchampstead Charities lost their Almshouse on the strange grounds of a fault in the Title Deeds of a quite different property.

From 1817 until the present decade the old Almshouse continued in private ownership with a Yew Tree alongside – on which the Finchampstead Society obtained a Preservation Order – proclaiming its original history.

Unfortunately the Yew Tree was demolished by Messrs Crest Homes on April 1st 1976 unaware of the Preservation Order that had been placed upon it and as an expression of their regret Crest Homes gave £50 to the Finchampstead Society towards the cost of this Historical Plaque and Signpost (to be made out of pieces of yew salvaged from the old tree) and placed upon the Green adjacent to where the yew tree formerly stood in a position that was agreed at the Site Meeting on the Green in 1976 and is now recorded at H.M. Land Registry in the Title Deeds of 'The Paddock' and Crest Homes' new properties. Close by is the Camp Site used by the Scouts and the Berkshire Boy Choristers who have contributed the remainder of the cost of the engraved plaque and the signpost which has been carved by Mr. Brian Leemens of Eversley.

When the Signpost and Plaque have been placed in position by the Chairman and members of the History and Heritage Group of the Finchampstead Society, and any other local Councillors present and we hope a representative of Crest Homes, we would like you all to join in singing the Royal Hunt Song printed overleaf. The song will be accompanied by two Cors de Chasse of the type used by the Royal Hunt in 1501 which are being played by Willem Robert Preece (12½ years old) and his brother Oliver John Preece (11 years old) of Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead. The instruments are not easy to play and have no modern aids. Do please join in the song – it is easy to learn and anyway the hunting horns will probably win the day.

A.B.S.



# THE KING'S HUNT



The hunt is up the hunt is up and it is well nigh  
 east is bright with morn-ing light, the dark-ness it is  
 hors-es snort to be at the sport, the dogges are run-ing  
 wake,all men, I say a-gen, be mer-rie as you

day and Harry our King is gone a-hunt-ing to bring his deere to  
 fled, and the mer-rie horn wakes up the morne to leave his i-dle  
 free. The woddes re-joice at the mer-rie noise of hey tan-tar-a tee  
 may for Har-ry our King is gone a-hunt-ing to bring his deere to

bay, To bring his deere to bay. v.2 The  
 bed, To leave his i-dle bed. v.3 The  
 reel! Of hey tan-tar-a tee reel! v.4 A-  
 bay, To bring his deere to bay.