

## JANE AUSTEN 200

A life in Hampshire



### Jane Austen 200: A year packed with exhibitions, talks, walks, writing competitions, performances and much more

2017 marks the 200th anniversary of the death of globally loved author Jane Austen – and Hampshire Cultural Trust is coordinating a yearlong series of events across the historic and beautiful county to celebrate her creativity and talent.

Hampshire was not only Jane Austen's birthplace (and where you can visit her grave today), but its people, landscape and the society in which she moved provided inspiration for her novels, classics such as *Pride and Prejudice*, *Emma*, *Mansfield Park* and *Sense and Sensibility*. From a landmark exhibition to talks and walks, from picnics to performances, 2017 will be a very special celebration of her life, times and work.

Sure to be a highlight of the celebrations is the exhibition *The Mysterious Miss Austen*, which opens on 13 May 2017 (until 24 July) at The Gallery in Winchester Discovery Centre, before travelling to the Gallery at Gosport Discovery Centre and the Sainsbury Gallery at Basingstoke's Willis Museum.

This unique exhibition, presented in partnership with Jane Austen's House Museum, will explore Jane's life, work and her relationship to Hampshire. The centrepiece will be five portraits of Jane together under one roof for the very first time – including two works from the National Portrait Gallery, London and three from private collections, one of which has not been seen in public for more than 40 years.

*The Mysterious Miss Austen* will also include a surviving manuscript of an alternative ending to her final novel *Persuasion*, in her own hand (on loan from the British Library). There will also be a silk pelisse coat (one of the only garments in the world with a provenance that can be traced back to Jane), first editions of her works and fascinating personal letters. Bringing a contemporary view, Grayson Perry's *Jane Austen in E17* vase is evidence of her lasting legacy and influence on the arts.

Set to be a 'deliciously' popular feature of Jane Austen 200 are downloadable Picnics Packs. These feasts of fun and nibbly gorgeousness will inspire bakers and 'Janeites' to unite and create their own Regency-style *Bake Off*.

Much as there will only ever be one Jane Austen, Hampshire Cultural Trust passionately believes that Jane's work still inspires excellent writing today. To find not only the next great literary talent, HCT has created a brand new competition for children and adults, with two categories; short story and letter. Grown-ups need to submit a short story of 2017 words, based on Jane's classic quote from *Mansfield Park*: "Selfishness must always be forgiven you know, because there's no hope of a cure". Youngsters are invited to write a letter of 400 words based on 'A day in the life,' real or imagined. Entries for both have just opened (and close 28 February 2017).

Actor Hugh Bonneville, star of *Downton Abbey*, and of course, the 1999 film of *Mansfield Park* is a Hampshire man and says: "As a local and as a fan of Jane Austen, I hope you will join us in Hampshire in 2017 to get to know a bit more about the woman behind the novels. We have a great year ahead, packed with regency celebrations, talks, arts installations and so on. So please google Jane Austen 200 and come and join in the fun."

Janet Owen, Chief Executive of Hampshire Cultural Trust, echoes Hugh's invitation: "Jane Austen has been a much-loved figure worldwide for more than two centuries, so we are pulling out all the stops to celebrate her life and works here in Hampshire. Whether you are a Jane Austen scholar or have just enjoyed one of the many TV or film adaptations of her works we will have something for everyone, young and old, to celebrate her legacy."

This is just a small handful of the events taking place for Jane Austen 200, for the latest news and information visit [www.janeausten200.co.uk](http://www.janeausten200.co.uk)