

January 2017

## **Jane Austen's Regency Week in East Hampshire –marking the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her death**

**Jane Austen Regency Week** - a nine- day annual Festival of events celebrating Jane and the Regency period – will take place between 17<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> June in and around the market town of Alton in Hampshire and the nearby village of Chawton. Jane Austen's former home is in Chawton, now the Jane Austen's House Museum. Jane spent the last 8 years of her life here and produced 6 great novels. Nearby Alton is the place where she shopped, banked, collected and delivered post, visited her friends and caught the stagecoach to London.

This year's Festival is a very special one –commemorating the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jane's death. It's also 10 years since the start of Regency Week. This year has a fantastic line-up of activities and events, including **music from the period, talks, singing, walks, dancing, house and garden tours, embroidery workshops, cream teas, film, cricket, supper and a vintage fair.**

Saturday 17th June launches Regency Week with a free **Regency Day** in Alton – a day full of historical delights such as people in costume, horse & carriage rides, a market, petting animals and more. The celebrations continue with a **dancing workshop** and then into the evening with a sumptuous **Regency Ball**. *(daytime activities 10am - 3pm, High Street, Alton, no entry fee, fee for some activities. Dancing workshop, Alton Community Centre 3.30pm - 5.00pm.Box office/ Contact: Alton Community Centre Tel: 01420 85057, Price £10. Regency Ball, 7.30pm -10pm Alton Assembly Rooms, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 1BA. Dress in Regency Costume or smart Evening Wear. Price £37 (earlybird price up to 31/5) to £47 (from 1/6 – contact Box Office).*

**Chawton's Vintage Fair** on 18 June will have up to 30 stalls offering a plethora of interesting and unusual items *(10 am – 3.30pm,Chawton Village Hall, Winchester Road, Chawton, Alton,*

Hampshire, GU34 1SB. Price £1 Contact: Jerry Fabian Tel 07799 478584). Why not take time out to enjoy a **cream tea and tour of Chawton House Library's wonderful garden** on the same day. Chawton House Library is the 'great house' which belonged to Jane Austen's brother, Edward Austen-Knight (2.30 – 4pm, Chawton House Library, Winchester Road, Chawton, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 1SJ, Price £10 for adults, £7 for children under 16 <http://chawtonhouse.org/>). The day ends with a **Regency choral evensong** at St Lawrence's Church in Alton, the church where one of Jane's brothers preached and several nieces and nephews were christened. (6:30pm – 8:00pm, doors open 6.15pm, St Lawrence Church, Church Street, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 2BU. free entry, Regency costume encouraged. Contact for information: Tony Willman, [Tel:01420 543628](tel:01420543628)).

There are many more events to choose from and here are some examples to inspire you! Take a **tour of Chawton House Library with its curator** on 19 June. The same tour is available on 21<sup>st</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> – (see website for details:

<http://www.janeaustenregencyweek.co.uk/community/jane-austen-regency-week-13273/events/>). Get creative and hands-on with history Regency lady-style on 20 June and **learn how to embroider a handkerchief using rare eighteenth-century patterns**. You'll be guided by Royal School of Needlework graduate Charlotte Bailey, who worked on the Duchess of Cambridge's wedding dress and fashion commissions from Louis Vuitton and Mary Katrantzou! (10:30am – 12:30pm, Chawton House Library, Chawton, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 1SJ, Price £25. Ring Box Office to book or visit website <http://www.janeaustenregencyweek.co.uk/community/jane-austen-regency-week-13273/events/>).

If you like Darcy, The Scarlet Pimpernel, vampires and superheroes, **'Darcy then, now and forever'** is just the talk for you - by Dr Gabrielle Malcolm about the enduring popularity of the hero, based on research for her new book. (2:30pm – 4:00pm, Assembly Rooms, High Street, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 1BA, Price £10 Ring Box Office to book or visit website <http://www.janeaustenregencyweek.co.uk/community/jane-austen-regency-week-13273/events/>). See the website for details of other talks on offer. To round off the day take a once-in-a-year opportunity to enjoy Jane Austen's House Museum and garden (plus some activities not normally on offer!) in the evening (5:00pm – 8:00pm, Winchester Road, Chawton, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 1SD, £8. No need to book in advance.)

A new addition to Regency Week on 22nd is a rare opportunity for those not staying at **Wyards Farm (now a B&B) to discover this eighteenth century gem of a house** – and to enjoy a cream tea. Wyards was well known to Jane Austen, being the home

of Anna Austen, her niece. The current owners are Ann and William Monk and William is a distant relation to the family, which only came to light when they moved to Wyards! (*tour and cream tea, 2:30pm – 4:30pm, Wyards Farm, Basingstoke Road, Beech, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 4AA, £10*).

On 22<sup>nd</sup> in a fascinating **talk by Jane Hurst, discover more about the life of one of the last local people to see Jane** before she died - Alton apothecary William Curtis. His honesty regarding Jane's illness being beyond a cure led her to Winchester to seek the help of Mr Lyford. Sadly he was also unable to help and she died in the city.

(7:30pm – 9:00pm Allen Gallery, Church Street, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 2BW, Price £5. *Ring Box Office to book or visit website <http://www.janeaustenregencyweek.co.uk/community/jane-austen-regency-week-13273/events/>).*

The Festival's finale on 25<sup>th</sup> brings a day full of celebratory activity. Enjoy a **Victorian Cricket Match and entertainment** for all the family on The Butts (*10:00am – 8:00pm, The Butts, Butts Road, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 1RD, Price – Free.*), followed by a **Regency Musical Soiree**, (£10,

*Alton House Hotel, 6pm to 7.30pm*). Bringing this year's very special Regency Week to a close,

after a short break from the Soiree, comes Regency Week's popular **traditional**

**Regency Supper** at the Alton House Hotel, celebrating cuisine of the period. (*8:00pm – 10:00pm, Alton House Hotel, Normandy Street, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 1DD. £22. £29 combined ticket with Regency Musical Soiree . Ring Box Office to book or visit website <http://www.janeaustenregencyweek.co.uk/community/jane-austen-regency-week-13273/events/>.*)

Other events include **more talks, a special tour of Alton, walks and more**. For a full run-down of all the events planned for this year's Regency Week visit

<http://www.janeaustenregencyweek.co.uk>. The Box Office is Alton Community Centre and can be reached on 01420 85057. See website for individual booking instructions. For more about this year's planned anniversary activities visit

<http://www.janeausten200.co.uk>

ENDS

**For further information, interviews or images, please contact: Rachel Shimell,**

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**Notes to Editors: East Hampshire** The area of the South Downs that spills into East Hampshire - around Chawton where Jane Austen lived – has quite a different feel from the rest of the new National Park. Hidden away between the cathedral cities of Winchester and Chichester, its steep wooded hills and hidden valleys of watercress farms, lavender fields, vineyards, hop gardens and trout-filled streams,

together with its picture-perfect villages and peaceful market towns, make it undoubtedly one of the loveliest parts of rural England. [www.easthants.gov.uk/tourism](http://www.easthants.gov.uk/tourism)