



Guide

Lines

The *Occasional* Newsletter
of the
Winchester Area Tourist Guides Association

Issue of Winter 2023

Contents:

- Item 1: **What is the population of Winchester? – Elizabeth Newport**
- Item 2: **St Cross Graffiti - Sue de Salis**
- Item 3: **Alfred the Great – Colin Cook**
- Item 4: **Peter des Roches - Sue de Salis**
- Item 5: **Bloody British History, Winchester – Clare Dixon**
- Item 6: **City Museum Coats of Arms – Judith Hoskins**
- Item 7: **Itchen Valley Shooting Club Visit – Patrick Craze**
- Item 8: **St Swithun - His Memorials and Legends - Karen Dagwell**
- Item 9: **Twyford Tour and WATGA Summer Walk - Clare Dixon**

Item: 1	Title: What is the population of Winchester?
Date: Jun 2022	Contributor: Elizabeth Newport

What’s the population of Winchester? When I did my Green Badge in 2015 we were told the population was around 46,000. A recent article in the Hampshire Chronicle about the growth of St Paul’s surgery quoted Practice manager Philip Heiden: "Winchester's population is significantly growing. The current population registered to practices is 63,000 and looking to grow to 73,000 within the next 15 years", citing developments at [Barton Farm](#) and on Romsey Road.

<https://www.hampshirechronicle.co.uk/news/20186607.planners-approve-gp-surgerys-extension/>

Editor’s note

Karen and I delivered the ‘Population’ presentation as one of the ‘Winchester Today’ topics on the Green Badge course.

The figure of 46,000 came from the 2011 census - Winchester and District **116,600** of which Winchester City **46,000**. The 2021 census records that the population in Winchester and District increased by 9.3% to **127,400** of which Winchester City **51,850**. Perhaps the difference in the census figures and the figure in the article is the article is referring to the number of people registered to GP practices in Winchester which may include people living in the surrounding villages within the district.

Item: 2	Title: St Cross Graffiti
Date: 31 Oct 2022	Contributor: Sue de Salis

St Cross Hospital Graffiti

Colin and I both attended a talk at St Cross in October 2022 discussing the findings of a survey of graffiti in the St Cross buildings. The survey was part of a project being undertaken by the Hampshire Field Club which has been going on for several years. Many hundreds of graffiti marks have been found at St Cross, some of these being of national importance.

The talk lasted about one and a half hours and we were then invited to wander round the church to see some of the marks for ourselves. We noted the following points which may be of interest to Guides (Colin takes sole credit for the excellent photos):

- There are many “apotropaic” marks. These are marks intended to keep evil spirits away- daisy wheels, mazes, overlapping circles, zigzag lines etc. These were thought likely to trap and confuse anything evil and would be placed near entrances where evil spirits might be trying to get in;
- There are also a huge number of mason’s marks. These are identifying marks left on stone etc in order to show which craftsman had done the work-probably for calculating payment due and for quality control. 43 were identified on the four columns supporting the tower (Fig 1);
- There is an extraordinary graffito opposite the Porter’s Lodge which is thought to be astronomical and which may represent the Copernican theory that planets go round the sun. There is speculation that the Elizabethan astronomer, John Dee, may have been responsible (Fig 2);



Fig: 1 Tower columns pictured from above



Fig: 2
Beaufort
Tower –
Opposite
Porter’s
Lodge
astro-
nomical
graffiti

- On the first column on the north side of the nave is another complex pattern with a possible celestial interpretation (Fig 3);
- There are some game boards which could have been used for playing noughts and crosses and Three Men’s Morris;
- on the north wall of the church, there is an architectural drawing of the like often used to help reassemble elements of a timber framed building that had been marked out while laid out flat off site;

- especially in the bell tower, there are several textual bits of graffiti, some left by workmen and some possibly by the children of Masters. One may relate to the time of the notorious Master, Francis North (Fig 4);
- a prayer desk on the north side of the Choir is heavily marked with graffiti left by bored choristers, some quite elaborate and dating to the mid to late 1500s.



Fig 3:
Nave
column,
north side –
possible
celestial
influences



Fig: 4
Pencil or charcoal drawing in bell tower
thought to represent family of the
infamous Master North

Item: 3	Title: Alfred the Great
Date: 16 Nov 2022	Contributor: Colin Cook

Alfred the Great – Inventor

Talk by Professor Chris Mulvey 20 October 2022 Winchester

The English Word

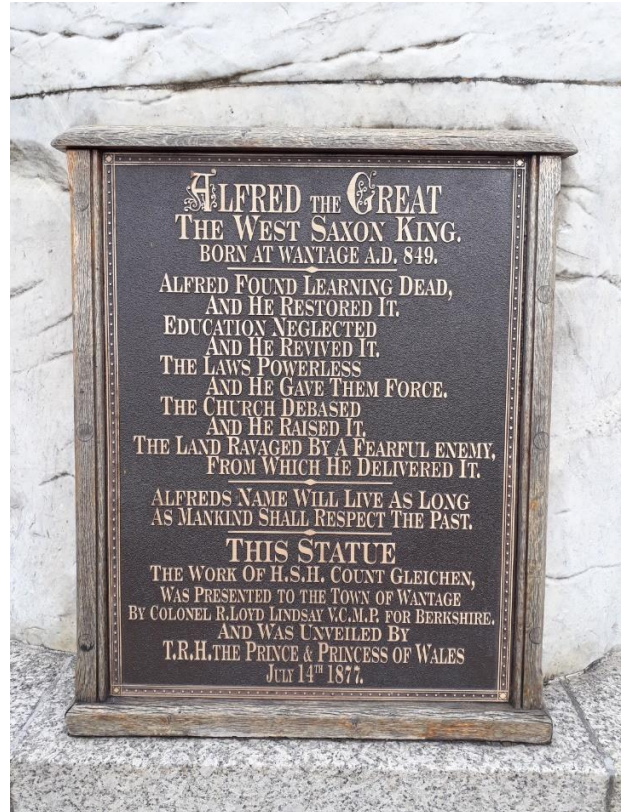
In 881 Alfred ordered the translation of Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* into Anglo-Saxon. It was the first book to be translated into English. Bede referred in 714 to the “Angli” ie the Angles and Alfred adopted the title “*Rex Anglorum*” i.e. ‘King of the English’. The Scots however derogatively referred to the Anglo-Saxons as “*Sassenachs*” i.e. ‘Saxons’.

Books

Alfred was concerned about the lack of education in his kingdom of Wessex and instructed his monks to translate a further five Latin books into English thereby establishing a written English language for the first time. These translations were so important they were copied without alteration of the West Saxon spellings (there were also Northumbrian, Mercian and Kentist dialects also), thereby establish the foundation of the English language. One of these was the first 50 psalms from the Old Testament and another the oldest surviving English manuscript, a translation of Gregory’s Pastoral Care, now in the Bodleian Library.



King Alfred the Great statue at Wantage



Candle Clock

Alfred was a workaholic but to ensure his 'work-life' balance he commissioned a candle clock to be made which divided the day into 3 parts – 8 hours for stately activity, 8 hours for mental activity and 8 hours of mental refreshment (sleep etc). Asser, his biographer, later wrote that in 893 the clock divided the day into 6 x 4 hour sections and shielding was designed to protect the flame from draughts etc.

Burhs

The Treaty of Wedmore in 878 sealed a 7 year truce with Guthrum during which time Alfred set about creating walled defences with local standing armies to protect towns in Wessex from incursion by the Danes. There were 30 in all, the northern most at Southwark on the south bank of the Thames (still locally known as "The Borough").

Royal Navy

To ensure that he could outmatch the Danes prowess at sea, he recruited ship builders from Freesia to build high decked vessels from which arrows and spears could be rained down on his foes. By this means he mounted an attack up the Thames in 885 on the Danish fleet moored at London to enable him to take control of the city.

English Nation

By his diplomatic, strategic and far-sighted vision for an English identity he can without doubt be regarded as the founder of the English Nation – "*Rex Anglorum*"

Cakes

The myth that he burnt the housewife's cakes through his inattention and his subsequent castigation by her demonstrated that he was a man 'of the people' and emphasised the importance for leaders to be 'grounded' and to show humility.

Hyde 900

Without Alfred and the subsequent removal of his grave and that of his wife and son to the medieval Hyde Abbey in 1110 there would be no Hyde 900!

Item: 4	Title: Peter des Roches
Date: 16 Nov 2022	Contributor: Sue de Salis

Peter des Roches- a “vain and worldly” Bishop

Although not one of Winchester's best known Bishops, Peter des Roches nevertheless crops up from time to time. I thought it might be useful to pull together some bits and pieces about him for readers of Guidelines.

Peter was Bishop of Winchester from 1206 until his death in 1238. During this time, a lot happened, much of it involving both Peter and Winchester.

- In 1207, Henry, eldest son of King John, is born at Winchester and baptised in the Cathedral, probably by Bishop Peter;
- King John gets into an argument with the Pope over who should be Archbishop of Canterbury and, in 1209, is excommunicated. The excommunication results in the majority of Bishops leaving England. By 1211, Bishop Peter is the only Bishop in England. The excommunication is finally lifted in a ceremony conducted by Bishop Peter in the Chapter House of the Priory of St Swithun in 1212;
- In 1215, in response to angry demands from the powerful Barons, King John seals the Magna Carta-Peter is almost certainly present;
- In May/June 1216, the Barons are up in arms against King John and call on the French Prince Louis to come to their support. This he does, being acclaimed (but not proclaimed) as King of England in London and capturing Winchester;
- In October 1216, John flees from Louis and the Barons, literally loses his Crown Jewels (he drops them in the Wash in Norfolk), and then dies. Henry becomes Henry III at the age of 9. Peter is his guardian and tutor;
- In 1217, the forces of Louis are defeated at the Battle of Lincoln by an army that includes Bishop Peter, justifying his reputation as a “warrior Bishop”;
- In the 1220s, lots of building work takes place in Winchester, very likely restoring damage done during Louis's attacks, as well as updating the City's defences: the Castle's square towers are replaced with round ones, the city walls are rebuilt and, of course, the Great Hall is built. Henry's fondness for Winchester will have motivated some of this (he spent £10,000 on building works here during his reign) but Bishop Peter would also have been instrumental, being noted as an engineer and lover of fine architecture;
- During the 30 plus years that Peter was Bishop of Winchester, he would have had numerous dealings with the wealthy and important local Jewish community. He was known to have used Jewish moneylenders to help him accumulate land by encouraging cash strapped landowners to borrow and then acquiring their land at a knock down price when they had to repay the debt. He may also have encouraged the “blood libel”-a demonising myth which held that Jews stole Christian children for their rituals and murdered them. It is

thought that Abraham Pinche, master of the synagogue in the 1230s, was accused and found guilty of child murder having got on the wrong side of Peter;

- In 1231, Peter creates a new area of the Bishop’s jurisdiction outside the city called the Soke. (The expression “soke” is defined as “a district under a particular jurisdiction”.) This gave the Church in Winchester control over these lands and the income from them. It is possible that Peter felt it important to establish the area of Church property because the City had recently established a mayoralty (earliest references around 1200) and, in 1227, had been given a new charter by Henry III;
- Peter did lots of other things as well, including being Chief Justiciar (broadly, Regent) for a while and founding more religious communities than any other Bishop of Winchester, including those at Titchfield and Netley;
- He died at Farnham in 1238 and his heart was buried at Waverley Abbey. His body is, of course, buried in Winchester Cathedral, though his Purbeck marble effigy may have been moved in the 19C.



So much for the facts. Of course, for Guides, the best Peter des Roches story is the tale of the Butterfly Bishop. Faithfully recorded in the Chronicle of the Lanercost Priory, written in the 1220s, is the tale of Bishop Peter’s encounter with “the once and future King”, King Arthur. The story describes the Bishop being out hunting, a worldly pursuit he very much enjoyed, and coming across Arthur and his knights and being entertained by them. When he asked Arthur how he would later prove that he had met him, Arthur told him that every time he opened his hand, a butterfly would appear. The fact that Peter’s tomb is made of black Purbeck marble which attracts the heat and that its original position may well have been in a particularly sunny spot in the Cathedral may account for claims that butterflies have been seen on his tomb. The monks claimed that the meeting with Arthur took place in 1216-as we have seen, a difficult year for England thanks to the armed conflict between King and Barons and the invasion of Prince Louis. An appropriate time for Arthur to reappear and perhaps remind Peter of his spiritual obligations.

The other story associated with Peter relates to the New Forest. There is an area near Beaulieu known as the Bishop’s Dyke. One version of the story says that the King got so fed up with Peter trying to expand his property and asking for land that the King said he could have whatever he was able to crawl around in a day on his hands and knees. The land continued to belong to the Church until 1944.

Overall, it seems to me that Peter was a pretty impressive operator who navigated the tricky waters of 13C England rather well. Of all the facts and stories above, the one I find hardest to believe is the last, concerning the New Forest. I very much doubt that Bishop Peter would have been prepared to crawl-at all, ever!

Item: 5	Title: Bloody British History, Winchester
Date: 02 Dec 2022	Contributor: Clare Dixon

Bloody British History, Winchester

In 2013, four of Winchester’s official Tourist Guides wrote a book for the Bloody British History series about some of Winchester’s most gruesome events. The queen who walked on fire. Viking death and destruction. Bloody executions and much more. The book was published by the History Press.

The book has sold well, and on Wednesday 10th August 2022 the authors made good on their promise to donate their royalties to the Mayor of Winchester’s charities. Clare Dixon made a presentation on behalf of herself and her fellow authors, Don Bryan, Geraldine Buchanan and James King, to Mayor Derek Green in Abbey House.

The Mayor said: ‘I am delighted to accept this cheque, which will make a real contribution to the work of my charities this year: Winchester Hospice, Trinity Winchester and British Heart Foundation. My thanks to the tourist guides for their generosity, and for all that they do to promote and share Winchester’s history.’

A few copies of the book are still available for sale in Winchester’s Visitor Information Centre, The Broadway, for £9.99.



The photo shows Clare presenting the cheque to the Mayor in Abbey House. Looking on are some visitors to Winchester who were taking part in a tour of Abbey House organised by the Winchester Tourist Guides.

Item: 6	Title: City Museum Coats of Arms
Date: 16 Dec 2022	Contributor: Judith Hoskins

City Museum Coats of Arms

The Winchester City Museum was opened in 1903 and was the first purpose built city museum outside London. Three coats of arms appear above the entrance door to the museum. The outer coats of arms belong to people who were involved with the opening of the museum and were described in the local newspaper when the museum was opened:

Externally the building is faced with flint, with dressings to windows, doors, and quoins of Monk's Park stone. In the three panels above the entrance door are carved the following arms:- In the centre the City of Winchester, on the north side those of Mr. B. D. Cancellor, and on the south those of Mr. Alderman F. Morshead, respectively Mayor and Chairman of the Museum Committee when the building was commenced. In the carved bosses which terminate the label moulding over the door is shown the Hampshire rose.

Hampshire Chronicle, 17 October 1903



Research into the coats of arms was undertaken using Burke's *General Armory*, Burke's *Family Index*, various editions of Burke's *Landed Gentry*, Marshall's *The Genealogist's Guide*, Whitmore's *A Genealogical Guide* and Barrow's *The Genealogists' Guide*. The reference works listed in these volumes were also consulted. This was supplemented with genealogical research from a wide variety of sources – a bibliography is available on request.

Frederick Morshead

The coat of arms on the right has the following heraldic description, known as a blazon:

azure, a cross crosslet argent between four martlets or, on a chief of the second, three escallops gules

[In English: a blue shield, with a silver cross (with each of its arms crossed) between four gold martlet birds, and three red shells on a silver bar at the top]

Using the heraldic reference works it was possible to trace Frederick Morshead's family and establish that he was a descendant of the family granted the coat of arms on display above the City Museum. The Morshead family originated in Cornwall and included a baronetcy which died out with Frederick's cousin Sir Warwick Charles Morshead Bt. At the time of Frederick's retirement in 1906 there was an extensive piece about him in the *Hampshire Chronicle* of 24 February 1906. The full piece took up five and a half of the eight columns on the broadsheet page! Briefly, it relates that he was a Wykehamist (former pupil at Winchester College), House Master at Winchester College, twice Mayor of Winchester (1872/3 & 1875/6), Town Councillor for 7 years & an Alderman for 28 years. He was made an Honorary Freeman of the Borough, involved in many Winchester schemes including improving the drainage, school attendance, building the Guildhall, establishing the Park (probably Abbey Gardens), purchasing St. Giles' Hill, establishing the Museum etc. On his retirement he moved to Devon. He died in January 1914, before the start of the First World War when many of the boys he taught will have lost their lives as officers leading their men into battle.

Whether he regularly used this coat of arms is unknown, but he certainly had a genuine connection to the person who had originally received them and the Morshead baronetcy which did use it. When the idea of having coats of arms above the museum entrance was decided upon, Frederick had one he could use.

Bertram Douglas Cancellor

The coat of arms on the left has the following blazon:

or, a lion rampant sable, on a chief gules three mullets of the first

[In English: a gold shield, with a black rampant lion, and three gold stars on a red bar at the top]

It was soon discovered that the coat of arms being displayed for Bertram Cancellor is for a family by the name of Chancellor from Shieldhill in Lanarkshire, Scotland. It was therefore necessary to establish whether Bertram's family name had dropped the h at some point but had originated in Lanarkshire or whether the coat of arms was not connected to him at all. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain* was consulted and from that it was evident that the two surnames had separate origins. The name Chancellor did not appear in the dictionary, but Cansell did and has its origins in Essex and Suffolk. Chancellor, on the other hand, was an occupational name from Scotland, but with some other Chancellor names found to come from Sussex, London, Somerset and Warwickshire.

Despite extensive research into Bertram's family no connection to Scotland could be found. The Chancellor family were established in East Anglia in the 17th century and were of the "middling sort" – the class of tradesmen and yeomen in the shires. When John Chancellor lost his parents at a young age in 1747, he attended a free grammar school in Bury St. Edmunds and the money

earned by his father, Stephen, as a vintner paid for John to be apprenticed in a trade in London. The family soon moved up the social scale, living first in the crowded streets of the City of London and then moving to the newly built elegant terraces of Regent’s Park. Money was probably acquired along the way in stockbroking and a series of marriages to women of means which resulted in Cancellor sons, by the mid to late 19th century, being educated at top public schools Harrow School and Winchester College. This was a family clearly climbing the social ladder by investing in education, hard work, good connections and respectable life choices. But it was a family that was moving upwards without acquiring a coat of arms.

Why one was not applied for, which would most probably have been granted, when a third coat of arms to balance the Morshead one and the Winchester one above the entrance to the new museum was required, will remain a mystery – possibly embarrassment at not having one already? Instead, one from a similar sounding family from the other end of the country was used. The Chancellors of Shieldhill, Lanarkshire, have no connection to Winchester City Museum other than that their coat of arms has been displayed above the entrance for nearly 120 years without comment and it masks the real story of Bertram Cancellor’s family.

Item: 7	Title: Itchen Valley Shooting Club Visit
Date: 17 Jan 2023	Contributor: Patrick Craze



On Monday 14th November 2022 David Atraghji very kindly organised a visit for WATGA members to the Itchen Valley Shooting Club at Winnall. We were shown around the club house as well as the main 25m range at the 'other' end of the Chesil Tunnel. Some members tried their hand at the smaller air-rifle range, located above the club house, with varying degrees of success.

The 25m range at the north end of the Chesil Tunnel



Mexican standoff at the Itchen Valley Shooting Club

Item: 8	Title: St Swithun - His Memorials and Legends
Date: 08 Jun 2023	Contributor: Karen Dagwell

St Swithun – Bishop of Winchester 852-863. Miracles and Legends



Swithun was born, possibly in Winchester, circa 800. His name is Old English: Swid-hun meaning strong bear-cub. Not much is reliably known about his life but he lived through turbulent times especially circa 835 when Viking coastal attacks became prevalent. He was ordained the 18th Bishop of Winchester and at this time the diocese extended from the Thames to the Isle of Wight. It is likely that Swithun lived close to the Old Minster which was staffed by secular canons who lived in the town rather than together as a group of clergy. Not a great deal is known about the events during Swithun's time as bishop but he would have been an important advisor to Anglo Saxon Kings of Wessex, Egbert and Ethelwulf. It has also been suggested that Bishop Swithun was a tutor to the future King Alfred the Great and took him on pilgrimage to Rome but there is no evidence of this.

St Swithun statue the Great Screen, Winchester Cathedral

Miracle of the Eggs

A Latin poem, dating from around the tenth century survives and says that, in 859 Swithun built a bridge over the Itchen. A miracle was later recorded as having taken place on the bridge when a woman who had been carrying a basket of eggs across the bridge was jostled and she dropped her basket, breaking all her eggs. Fortunately, Swithun was present on the bridge that day and he stepped forward, knelt down and restored the eggs to whole ones.

Old Minster

Swithun died on 2nd July 863 although it was formerly supposed that he died in 862. At his own request he was interred outside the Old Minster, so that water from the roof would fall on him and passers-by could walk over his grave. His grave, however, was "covered by a large monument resembling a small house occupying the most prestigious position possible" (John Crook). A modern stone slab now marks this original place.

A century after Swithun's death, Ethelwold was appointed Bishop of Winchester and he initiated a programme of reform for the Old Minster. At this time, monasteries in France had patron saints who had often been local bishops and Ethelwold decided that he too needed a local saint which would represent his newly reformed monastery after he had replaced the secular canons with monks from Abingdon. It has been suggested that Swithun was chosen because he was related to one of the secular canons who had been replaced and that this was a form of appeasement. Another reason could have been due to the many miracles taking place around Swithun's grave.

Wulfstan of Winchester, a precentor at Old Minster and an Anglo Saxon poet and writer described his boyhood experience at this time and how his studies were often interrupted when the bell rang as it did each time a miracle occurred. He also mentions the crutches left behind by lame people when they had been miraculously cured.

St Swithun's Day

St. Swithun's day if thou dost rain
 For forty days it will remain
 St. Swithun's day if thou be fair
 For forty days 'twill rain na mair

Many people will have heard this rhyme or a variation of it and it relates to a legend about Swithun and the weather. According to the oldest known account of St. Swithun's life written by Lantfred of Fleury, Swithun appeared to a certain smithy and instructed him to tell Bishop Ethelwold, that his bones should be moved to a more prestigious place. The day fixed to transfer the bones was 15th July 971. The grave was opened and Swithun's bones were lifted out one-by-one, then placed in a temporary reliquary which Bishop Ethelwold set near to the High Altar in the Old Minster. The story of his legendary influence on the weather has grown over time and suggests that Swithun was so dismayed to be moved inside that 40 days of rain ensued.

A second move then took place c. 973 after a splendid new reliquary to house St. Swithun's bones, had been created by metal-workers, probably at the royal estate of King's Somborne. The reliquary was a gift from King Edgar and was said to have contained 300lbs of gold, rubies and silver. Some of the relics were placed into the new reliquary and it was then ceremoniously "carried from Somborne, to be met by a great crowd three miles from Winchester, who accompanied the relics through the Westgate into the city and to the Saxon cathedral" (John Crook).

Queen Emma

One of the best known miracles/legends came during the life of Emma of Normandy (circa 985 – 1052), King Cnut's widow. She had been accused of having an affair with Bishop Alwine of Winchester (1032-1047). Queen Emma stated that she would prove her innocence through trial by ordeal. Her son, King Edward the Confessor, agreed and summoned Queen Emma to walk over nine red hot plough shares which would be placed on the Cathedral pavement.



Emma spent the night before the ordeal in prayer at the shrine of St. Swithun who appeared to her and assured her that she would not be harmed. The following day, in front of the King, his court and a huge crowd, two bishops led her barefoot over the glowing red hot metal. Her feet were then examined and found to be uninjured. King Edward was mortified and fell at his mother's feet saying 'Mother I have sinned before heaven and before you'. He was then whipped by both bishops and his mother. As a thanks-offering Emma gave nine manors to St. Swithun's Priory.

Winchester Cathedral

In 1093 as the new Norman Cathedral was being built, Swithun's bones were brought into the Cathedral and placed near the High Altar. Then in 1476, following the construction of a new shrine built in the Retrochoir, Swithun's relics were paraded through the city before being placed in the new position. In less than a hundred years, after the construction of the new shrine, it was demolished. In the 1530s Henry VIII set about dissolving the monasteries and as part of this process, Henry's chief minister, Thomas Cromwell set up a commission to oversee the destruction of shrines and adornments. On 20th September 1538 the commissioners arrived at Winchester Cathedral. The official report written by the commissioner in charge, Thomas Wriothesley, was sent to Thomas Cromwell. The report noted that at about three o'clock in the morning "we made an end of the shrine here at Winchester". They failed to find any gold, precious stones or rings, but found a substantial quantity of silver amounting to 2,000 marks (approx. £1.4 million today). They concluded that it had been their intention to sweep away all the bones, or relics, but none were found. A legend says that the monks hid the bones before King Henry's commissioners arrived, so perhaps they were buried within the Cathedral or the Cathedral precincts in a safe place. To date they have not been found.



Replica of St Swithun's stone shrine from the Kings and Scribes exhibition, Winchester Cathedral

JANE AUSTEN

One interesting connection with Winchester Cathedral is in regard to Jane Austen’s father, Rev George Austen who was married in 1764 at St Swithun’s Church in Bath. Following his death in 1805 he was buried in St Swithun’s churchyard, Bath.

Jane Austen herself wrote a poem on 15th July 1817, three days before she died, about Winchester’s races entitled Venta. In this poem Jane is imagining St Swithun cursing the race goers for holding their race on his day and henceforth promising that all their future race meetings will be accompanied by rain. July 1817 was notably wet!

Sources

- St Swithun, Patron Saint of Winchester Cathedral – John Crook
- Saint Swithun, Patron Saint of Winchester – Frederick Bussby
- Winchester – Bloody British History – Don Bryan, Geraldine Buchanan, Clare Dixon, James King
- Hampshire History

Item: 9	Title: Twyford Tour and WATGA Summer Walk
Date: 09 Aug 2023	Contributor: Clare Dixon

Twyford Tour with Don

On the evening of 15th June an enthusiastic band of Winchester guides, together with one or two guests, enjoyed a sunny walk around Twyford with Don



Don took us to the water meadows of the River Itchen to understand the ‘two fords’ of the village name, and then on a delightful wander down country paths and back streets far from the rush and noise of the main road. What a shame that passing traffic doesn’t see this rural side of Twyford.

We learnt about a circle of sarsen stones (possibly), an old manor house, pubs, cottages much older than they looked, the school and church, connections with Parliamentarians in the Civil War and a magnificent tithe barn.

Many thanks to Don who, as usual, brought the place to life and pointed out lots that we would otherwise have missed.

WATGA Summer walk and Supper



The WATGA summer walk this year found us back in East Stratton again with Patrick as our very knowledgeable local guide. Happily, the weather was not as bad as the forecast had predicted and waterproofs were mostly carried rather than worn!

Who knew that dead bodies used to have their own roads? Patrick explained that the rural footpath we used from East Stratton was a “corpse road”, along which coffins would be carried to the ‘mother’ church at Micheldever. As such it was a straight and level path, to make the task easier, but was also uncultivated where it ran across a field because the dead spirits would prevent crops from growing. That section is still not cultivated to this day.

A meeting in the church at Micheldever prevented us from looking inside, but the outside was curious enough with its combination of a medieval stone tower and an octagonal brick nave (the work, inevitably, of the Baring family in the 19th century). The building also has stone reused from Hyde Abbey to repair the church under the patronage of Sir Thomas Wriothesley, later the 1st Earl of Southampton, who purchased the Hundred of Micheldever from the Crown following the dissolution of the monasteries.

Micheldever itself was delightfully rural, full of thatched cottages, and apparently with its ‘dever’ to be pronounced with a short ‘e’ as in ‘ever’. In contrast to the River Dever, which we learnt is pronounced Deever.

Interestingly, we crossed the South Brook. And yes, there is also a North Brook after which Lord Northbrook took his name.

Then it was back to East Stratton for a delicious supper in the new dining extension to the Northbrook Arms and a vote of thanks to Patrick for a most enjoyable evening.

Guide Lines Dates

- Summer Issue
 - submit copy by 20 June 2024
 - publish 30 June 2024
- Winter Issue
 - submit copy by 20 December 2024
 - publish 31 December 2024

WATGA takes no responsibility for the accuracy of the information in this Newsletter. Please contact individual contributors with any queries.

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