



# Winchester Area Tourist Guides Association



## Newsletter



**JUNE 2007 ISSUE**



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## **Letter from the Chairman (Sue Coles)**

Dear Guides,

The new guiding season has been tinged with sadness with the death of three former very active guides – Val Russell, Elizabeth Ashlin-Wood and Jane Cole, all of whom made significant contributions to the guiding in Winchester. It was good to see so many guides at the memorial services for Val and Elizabeth and thanks to Elizabeth Proudman for attending Jane's service on behalf of WATGA. WATGA has made a small donation to a charity named by each of them.

Both Elizabeth and Jane were also Welcome to Winchester guides (WATGA's forerunner) and at the recent memorial service for Jane Cole, her Welcome to Winchester badge was proudly on display. Is it the only one still in existence? It occurred to me that we ought to write our own history. I have spoken briefly to Hania about this who has already written something about our history. I hope she will expand it. More on this in due course.

Barbara Hall has stood down from the committee of the Friends of Hyde Abbey Garden but has been appointed President. Barbara has worked tirelessly to promote the garden and without her it would not be there. Dale has been appointed to the committee and so the guides will continue to be represented.

The new guiding season is bringing mixed fortunes. The early walks in the Historic Series were well supported but the later ones did not fare as well. Similarly, the Tuesday evening walks have had a mixed response - several only single figures (weather inclement!) but one had 32 (weather glorious)

The publicity team of Geraldine Buchanan and David Sutcliffe work very hard on your behalf but they would benefit from occasional help. If you feel you could help with publicity, please contact David (Geraldine is away for a few weeks).

From anecdotal reports, it would appear that numbers on rota tours have not been good. It is early days yet but because of print deadlines, we do need to start thinking about tours for 2007/2008. When I receive the statistics up to the end of May I will circulate them. It is extremely frustrating to turn up and have a "no show" but equally I know that rota tours with even a small number can be valuable for keeping knowledge fresh and new themed walks provide an opportunity for personal research. However, if the poor attendance on tours does continue, we need to start thinking soon about what we should be offering. Diversification is a word often cited and we are trying to strengthen links with other organisations and offer walks in conjunction with them. We are also trying to expand our work with hotels – both those with whom we work already and others.

The latest training in the Cathedral – Military Memorials was well attended and very much enjoyed by City guides. We are liaising with Cathedral guides about similar training opportunities during next winter.

The Laon sub-committee has been busy on preparations for the visit by 14 guides from Laon in October. Thanks to all who have already volunteered to help.

One final plea: Please don't forget that committee members do have a life outside WATGA. They cannot always drop everything and respond immediately. Most guides are extremely considerate but just occasionally a tone of impatience creeps into communications to committee members – particularly emails.

Wishing you good guiding for the rest of the season!

### **Dates for your diary**

**Mon 11 June 19:30 – WATGA General meeting – The Taylor Room, The Close**

**Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> July - Country Walk and Social Evening (Dale Greenwood)**

This summer's evening walk will be based at Bentworth with a meal afterwards at the Star Inn.

We plan to start the walk at 17.30 to enable us to return to the pub at roughly 19.30

The distance is 4 miles in gently undulating remote countryside, but there are a number of stiles - a few of which are somewhat dilapidated! A degree of agility may be needed! However, don't let this deter you as there is an easy short cut which effectively halves the distance. We hope to visit Bentworth Church which dates from the early 13th Century and is in excellent condition.

**Could you please let Dale know by Monday, 25th June if you want to come.** This will give him time to email you joining directions and to send you a copy of the menu. Spouses, partners and friends are most welcome. All we need is some good weather to enhance what promises to be another enjoyable social evening.

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**Fri 13 July 20:00 – The Search for Alfred – the Festival Players – The Guildhall**

The Festival Players draw on contemporary sources to illustrate what happened to the memory of King Alfred after his death. Initially revered, he was then forgotten until the Victorians recognised his greatness and set about honouring him again.

### **Tourist Information Centre (TIC) Update (Alison Woods)**

New Marketing Theme: The Golden Age

Elizabeth, the 1998 film starring Cate Blanchett, won great critical acclaim including seven Academy Award nominations. A sequel, The Golden Age, featuring scenes filmed in Winchester cathedral is due for release on 2 November.

To coincide with the launch, Winchester Tourism is planning a mini marketing campaign and would like to encourage the guides to put on Tudor walks to tie in with the Elizabethan theme.

We are delighted to confirm that Winchester Museum Service's next guest lecturer will be Alison Weir on the subject of Elizabeth I – The Virgin Queen? This will take place at Winchester Guildhall on Thursday 8 November at 7.30pm and tickets will be on sale at the Tourist Information Centre.

## Year of Sculpture Update

Two of the exhibitions are now under way. The first show, Rummage – Sculptors' Drawing, opened at the end of April in Winchester Gallery. The second called Light, in the atmospheric setting of Winchester Cathedral, opened to the public at the start of May. With a whole range of supporting talks, tours, family and schools activities and 'fringe' events, the Year of Sculpture promises stimulation and participation for all ages and interests. For further information log onto the dedicated website at [www.yearofsculpture.com](http://www.yearofsculpture.com)

Media coverage to date has been excellent with substantial features in The Guardian, The Independent and the Belgian daily Le Soir. There have also been smaller features in the Sunday Times' travel section, Daily Telegraph and on Teletext.

## Winchester Official Tourist Guide Badges

Following several requests from guides who had mislaid their Winchester city badge (in red and gold bearing Winchester's coats of arms), the TIC have ordered extra supplies which can be purchased at £5 each.

## Coach Training

The guides who recently attended a course on guiding group coach tours were presented with special certificates by the Mayor of Winchester, Cllr Sue Nelmes, at Abbey House in March. Thanks go to the guides' training co-ordinator, Pamela Boyes, and to the guides and museums service staff who provided much of the information for the course.



## Opening Hours

A reminder that, as of the beginning of May, the tourist information centre changed to its summer opening hours:

Monday to Saturday	9.30am to 5.30pm
Sundays	11am to 4pm
Bank Holiday Mondays	10am to 4pm

## Staff Update

We recently welcomed back Sarah Harfield (a former summer season information assistant) in the Senior Information Assistant role formerly occupied by Stuart Fensome. Sarah (re)joins us from Tourism South East, where she worked in the training unit. We are delighted to have her back – full of new knowledge about the wider tourism industry and still as enthusiastic as ever about Winchester. Don't forget to introduce yourselves next time you are at the TIC.

This month we will also be welcoming our annual complement of summer season information assistants:

- Catherine Le Prevost has been working for her husband, helping him in his duties as a vicar, and has also run her own sub Post Office. She lives in Chandlers Ford and speaks French and Spanish.
- Diana Langford intends to combine working in the TIC with her part-time job as a student and activities officer at Portsmouth University. She also lives in Chandlers Ford.
- Patricia Donaldson has over 30 years experience of customer service and is currently doing a BSc in retail management at the University of Surrey. She is moving to Winchester to be near her daughter.
- Anne Whitmarsh has been working as a retail manager for the Women's Royal Voluntary Service at Winchester Hospital. She lives in Harestock.
- Derek Fancett, currently working as a negotiator at Connells Estate Agent, has had a varied career including previously being a Winchester City Councillor.

## **Abbey House (Pat Byford)**

Several members enjoyed Pamela's excellent training visit to Abbey House in March. We are all familiar with the exterior of the house and the main reception room on the first floor, but the other rooms are normally out of bounds. They proved to be real gems, the Mayoress' sitting room being very "Jane Austen" and the dining room very elegant.

Whilst admiring and trying to memorise all the paintings and ceramics, not to mention seeing the Abbey House ghost, we absorbed a lot of information about the history of the house.

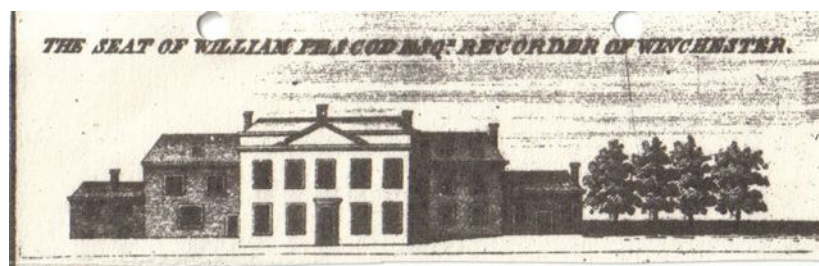
First owned by William Pescod, the Recorder of Winchester in 1750, it was replaced by a new building which forms the core of the present house in the 18th century.

By 1790 the house was owned by Thomas Weld, a prominent Roman Catholic, two of whose daughters were with the Franciscan nuns in Belgium. Understandably, he answered an appeal from their abbess (his cousin) when the European situation worsened and he offered them sanctuary in the house. Hasty alterations were necessary - the main reception room was partitioned into cells for the nuns, the dining room converted into a chapel, another room enlarged for a refectory and last but not least space was cleared in the roof for their priest, who had to climb up a ladder to reach his bedroom! On the wall behind the Soroptomists' garden there is the bell which was rung to call the nuns to prayer. But Abbey House proved to be a temporary home since there was too much distraction for the nuns from activity in the street. They therefore moved to a more secluded home in Taunton in 1808.

The house and its grounds changed hands several times until 1889 when the Mayor proposed buying the site so that the garden and grounds could be enjoyed by the public. It was the public who petitioned in 1893 that the house should become the official residence of the Mayor.

There was however one last surprise - Winchester had its own version of Burke and Hare - for during the 18th century the kitchen table had acted as a mortuary slab for young doctors who improved their knowledge of anatomy by dissecting the corpses of suicides and executed prisoners. You will be relieved to know that this table has been replaced.

Note from the Tony Humphrys. The south face of the house has had the front door bricked up and inappropriately large windows fitted. The picture from the margin of Godson's map, below, shows how it looked as "the seat of William Pescod"



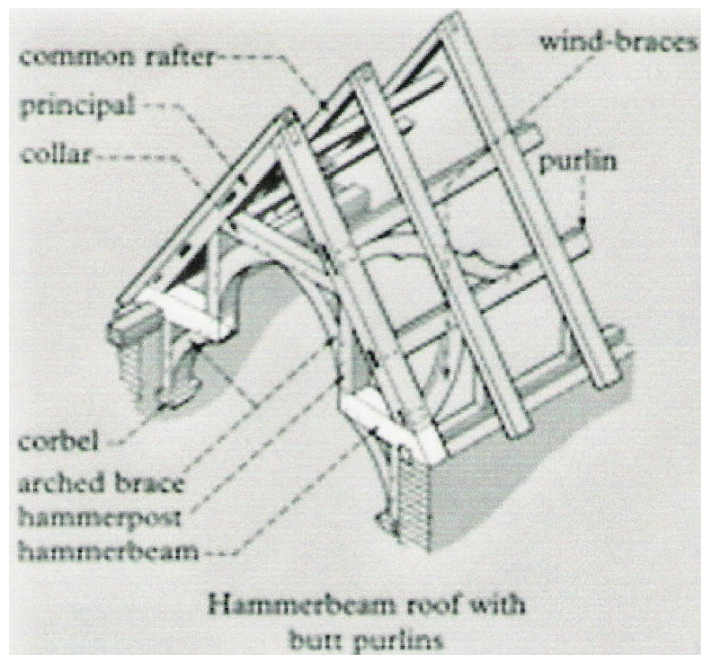
## Pilgrims' Hall hammerbeam roof – (Mike Craze)

During my Mitres and Mortarboards Tour on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> May, I took my group into Pilgrims' Hall to see the hammerbeam roof. I gave the usual talk on the Hall predating Westminster Hall by a hundred years and pointed out the carvings on the ends of the beams. At this point, a lady in the group asked a very interesting question - "why it was called a hammerbeam roof?"

Well I wasn't entirely sure and proffered something along the lines of it being to do with the shape. We all then stood there craning necks, striking awkward poses and drawing imaginary hammers in the rafters for a few moments before I decided the best course of action would be to take an e-mail address and promise to research the query and forward an answer.

This solution accepted, I returned home after the tour to search the internet with Google (as one does after an afternoon's guiding!). Firstly I entered "hammerbeam" and then more usefully "architectural glossary".

After sifting through several sites I hit upon a page (see below) from a site called lookingatbuildings.org.uk. Using Pevsners Architectural Guides, it gave, not a reason for it being called a hammerbeam, but a useful illustration showing the composite parts of the roof. Apologies for the focusing, but you can see the actual hammerbeam highlighted in white and, going off it vertically, the hammerpost. The idea was to open up the roof space and offer more room.



“Hammerbeams, in a timber roof, are horizontal brackets projecting at wall-plate level like an interrupted tie-beam; the inner ends carry hammerposts, vertical timbers which support a purlin (horizontal longitudinal timber) and are braced to a collar-beam above”.

For more information, look at the following website

<http://www.lookingatbuildings.org.uk/default.asp?Document=2.30&Image=474&gst=Hammerbeams>

NB The site copyright allows only one download of an image to a personal PC so I suggest that if you would like a copy please visit the site and download the page in full for yourselves.

## **The Origins of the Customs and Excise organisation (Michael Fielding)**

Excise Duty is a form of tax charged on goods produced within the country. The origins were in the Civil War and were a tax on domestic consumption, the concept having been borrowed from the Dutch Republic. The Long Parliament created a Board of Excise in 1643. Duty was charged on a variety of goods but was soon reduced to: beer, spirits, coffee, tea and chocolate. In later times, the tax was applied to various other things including salt, leather, paper, windows and even to soap but that on the latter was removed by Gladstone in 1852.

An ordinance, also in 1643, entrusted the regulation of the collection of customs to a parliamentary committee. This and succeeding committees controlled collection for a time but Charles II subsequently formed the Board of Customs in 1671.

The origins of 'customs' dates back to medieval times and were customary payments made to the monarch, bishops and the church. Later the term was applied only to royal revenues and related to duties payable on the importation and exportation of goods. This centralised system of taxes dates to the time of King John and the Winchester Assize of 1203-04. Legislation can be traced to the reign of Edward I in whose reign smuggling started in reaction to a duty having been imposed on wool, then much in demand in mainland Europe. The duty was not large, to start, but the rate was increased to pay for troops and fighting as the Hundred Years War progressed.

## **An interesting Manhole Cover (Pamela Boyes)**

There is a Crapper manhole cover in College Street, although some Guides may have difficulty with the word, I don't have any problem with it.

The word "crap" was an ancient word for rubbish which had fallen out of use in Britain by the end of the 16th century. However early English settlers took the word with them to America and it is in continuous use, although considered rather vulgar.

Crapper manhole covers can be found all over the south of England; there are several in Westminster Abbey (one in the cloisters near the deanery is popular for brass-rubbings) and many in the flower-beds both at Sandringham and at Park House next door.

Thomas Crapper was born in 1836 - the year before Victoria came to the throne - in the little town of Thorne, near Doncaster in Yorkshire. Thorne was then a thriving port; barges came up the River Don and unloaded cargo on the docks. Thomas' dad was a sailor, and his brothers were dockers. In 1847, at the age of eleven, he walked 165 miles to London and got himself apprenticed to a plumber in Chelsea. By 1861 he had his own business, which became Thos Crapper & Co, Marlborough Works, Chelsea, and the firm survived until 1966. Mr. Crapper's firm has now been revived and is being run by a sanitary ware historian and collector.

Thomas Crapper died 27th January 1910 and interred with his wife Maria, who died in 1902/ in Elmer's End Cemetery ( -now known as Beckenham Crematorium) close to W. G. Grace, England's greatest cricketer.

## Winchester Palace, built for Charles II 1683 – 85 (Don Bryan)

Judy Simmons has acquired a superb copy of The Wren Society Volume VII (1930) in which is recorded various costs involved in the building of the Winchester Palace. With Judy's permission I have reproduced some of the information given by Wren himself in the report.

The volume also includes similar reports on the construction of the palaces of Whitehall, Kensington and St James's by Sir Christopher Wren, *architect for their Majesties* King Charles II, King James II, King William III and Queen Mary II, and Queen Anne. 1660 – 1715.

The motive of the King, in his project of building a miniature Versailles at such a distance from London, has been explained by historians as arising from a general disgust with recent metropolitan events, such as the execution of several of his particular friends, victims of the involved religious and political intrigues of the day. The Treaty of Portsmouth, renewed in 1678, was comparatively recent, and Winchester may have possessed advantages as a centre for the private maintenance of close relations with the French Court, in view of their insidious advice to Charles to govern without a Parliament.

A section of the book is devoted to Reports, Valuations, and Agreements, made for the purchase of properties. The old Castle of Winchester, surrounded by great ditches, and roughly oval in form, had been sold in lots, or perhaps was in the hands of squatters, and these had to be bought out separately, to a total value of £7,180.

The land purchased was not only to construction the castle but also to provide for a private park for the king to use. According to the report these properties included two pubs, *The Five Bells* and *The Nags Head* as well as Hop Fields. Land was purchased from local farmers including: Thurmond's Farm, Forder's Farm, Painter's Farm, and part of Oram's Farm, (Alex Oram and Catherine Badger owned the north-east ditch of the castle). Various tenements were also acquired between the South Gate of the city up to St Faiths Field. Some of the land was owned by the Bishop Lessee, Mr Morley. The total amount of land acquired was 352 acres 1 rod and 19 perches.

The report includes various Warrants, one dated April 7<sup>th</sup> 1683 is to fell and load 500 trees from the New Forest and transport them to The Palace site at Winchester. Other Warrants detail the construction of lime kilns and the manufacture of bricks.

The foundations of the Kings House were to be 12ft deep reinforced with masonry dug from the old castle remains and mixed with rammed chalk.

### ***Estimate for Building (October 21<sup>st</sup> 1683)***

<i>Charge</i>	<i>of stone and stonework</i>	<i>£5498</i>
	<i>of timber and carpenters work</i>	<i>£8396</i>
	<i>of bricks and brickworks</i>	<i>£8500</i>
	<i>of lead and pipes</i>	<i>£4200</i>
	<i>of scaffolding and tackling</i>	<i>£ 450</i>
	<i>of Iron and ironworks</i>	<i>£1200</i>
	<i>of day labour</i>	<i>£ 900</i>
	<i>of incident charges</i>	<i>£1000</i>

Total charge from the water table to the covering (roof) amounted to £30144

(Actual costs amounted to £37664 . 15s . 1d)

The total charge for the year 1682 – 83 amounted to £12,210 . 0s .0d. which included digging the foundations, building two lime kilns and for the making of 20 hundred thousand bricks.

The volume continues giving month by month detailed reports on various expenditure on Winchester Palace and the acquisition of more land.

Urgency was required of Sir Christopher Wren, and he seems to have zealously responded, for in the brief period before the sudden death of the King on 6<sup>th</sup> February, 1685, and an astonishing amount of heavy work had already been done. The structure was far enough advanced to have a roof over all but the centre pavilion, when the order to suspend the work was given by James II on his accession.

There seems to have been piles of stone and timber still lying around the construction site after the work was halted and it is this material that was given to the Duke of Bolton:

*Received from the Treasury a Warrant dated 20<sup>th</sup> November 1723, directing the several quantities of wrought and unwrought stone, as well as marble and other stone, which belong to the Crown and lie in the yard and places adjacent to H.M. Palace at Winchester to be delivered upon the premises and to the Order and for the use and account of His Grace, Charles, Duke of Bolton, to whom his Majesty is graciously pleased, as a testimony to his services, and the good esteem he has thereof to make a present of the same.*

### **An Editor's thoughts on the WATGA Newsletter (Denis Howe)**

I have now been an Editor for a whole year and this is the fourth Newsletter that I have edited. Pulling this edition together has started me thinking about the role of the Newsletter and has raised questions about the best way to distribute information to our members. We now have almost an "information overload" situation - with the WATGA Newsletter, our own excellent WATGA website, the Winchester "Tourist Times" and the more general "Insight" magazine. As busy Guides, do we have enough time to read all this good stuff?

I can see advantages in taking the information that is currently published in the Newsletter and putting it into the Members section of the WATGA website. If we do this we would

- Have information available straight away (no waiting for the next edition)
- Have information that was easier to access (no ploughing through back issues)
- Save the extra distribution effort of sending .pdfs over the internet

On the downside, it would mean that four Guides and several Associates without internet access would find it difficult to get to the information. We would obviously make separate arrangements for them.

So, where should we go? Last year brought us the e-Newsletter. Are we now ready for the "virtual Newsletter"? Tell me what you think!

*"Thank you for the manuscript; I shall lose no time in reading it" attributed to Disraeli...*