



# Winchester Area Tourist Guides Association



## Newsletter



September 2009



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Editorial Team: Denis Howe 01962 713512 e-mail: [d.f.howe@clara.co.uk](mailto:d.f.howe@clara.co.uk)  
Tony Humphrys 01962 854881 e-mail: [tandm@3mvwinch.fsnet.com](mailto:tandm@3mvwinch.fsnet.com)  
David Sutcliffe 01962 865570 e-mail: [D@sutcliffe677.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:D@sutcliffe677.fsnet.co.uk)

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

September is a time for guides to look back and forward. The summer season has brought mixed results for Winchester guides. Numbers on rota tours have been particularly poor. It is difficult to know whether this is a lack of publicity or whether it means that the majority of visitors prefer a more independent approach. What we do know is that those who do come invariably say how much a guide adds to their enjoyment of the visit. However, WATGA may wish to consider some minor changes to the frequency of rota tours in 2010.

A particular thanks to the guides who have been so patient pending allocation of tours for the Knights Templar International conference. The number of delegates is less than expected and this has obviously impacted on tours. However, we do have 14 different guides involved in the tours.

It is also the end of the WATGA year with elections for the new committee taking place at the AGM on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> September. I should like to take this opportunity to thank Angela, Tina, Kate, Clare, Lis, Mike and Pamela for their support at Committee meetings. All have worked very hard. Thanks also to the Newsletter team of Denis, Tony and David.

Turning to the future, I am pleased that we at long last have a Blue Badge Course starting in our area. Pamela has worked extremely hard to bring this to fruition. Clare Dixon and Mike Craze are doing the course and we wish them every success.

Less certain is the composition of the committee for 2009/2010. Angela and I are at the end of our 3-year tenure and Mike is standing down because of the Blue Badge Course. Clare has also indicated that she will have less time to devote to WATGA activities because of the BBG course. As I have said in recent communications, we need a full complement of officers and committee to offer a full range of guiding activities, particularly the themed tours. Enough said!

The debate on the new structure for the ITG continues but it is assumed that 2009/2010 will be a continuation of the status quo. The thorny issue remains the branch structure with many of us unhappy at the possibility of a South East England grouping.

The approaching "low season" turns our thoughts to training. Tina and I saw the Bursar of Pilgrims Hall recently to discuss access arrangements. The School plans to restrict access but I hope we have agreed a solution that will allow guides to visit the Hall when not in use by the School (key pad with guides being given the code). At the same time, we discussed the possibility of refresher training on Pilgrims Hall and the School. We are arranging an afternoon or evening session for us and the school staff, hopefully given by John Crook and the Bursar.

We have a General Meeting on Tuesday 9th February at St. Cross. Starting at 2pm with a tour by one of the Brothers, followed by tea and cake and then our meeting in the Hundred Men's Hall

It is also time to think about those CPD forms. Please can you send me your form as soon as possible after the AGM. Many guides find the process useful as it crystallises what has and, more importantly, what has not been done.

Best wishes to you all.

Sue Coles

## **Dates for your Diary**

### **WATGA Events**

21 Sept (19:00) WATGA AGM, The Wykeham Room, Guildhall  
9 Feb (14:00) WATGA General Meeting, St Cross (see previous section)

### **Winchester Events:**

1 Sep -(13:00) Lunchtime Concerts, Winchester Cathedral – most Tuesdays.  
(Last concert on Tues 20<sup>th</sup> Oct)  
10-13 Sep Heritage Open Days (see next section)  
3, 4 Oct Hampshire Harvest Weekend  
3, 4 Oct Tudors at the Westgate  
30, 31 Oct Vikings at the City Museum  
31 Oct Halloween Tours at the Westgate  
7 Nov Winchester Round Table Bonfire and Fireworks  
27 Nov-3 Jan Winchester Cathedral Ice Rink  
27 Nov-20 Dec Winchester Cathedral Christmas Market see  
[www.winchesterchristmasmarket.co.uk](http://www.winchesterchristmasmarket.co.uk)

### **Events in the Local Area**

27-30 Oct “The return of Dr Terror in the Tunnels” – Fort Nelson.

### **Winchester Cathedral, special Wed afternoon tours (13:30)**

Tours last approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes. Please reserve places in advance on 01962 857225 as tour places can be limited.

9 September: Tour of the Cathedral Close  
16 September: Winged Messengers  
23 September: The Life and Times of Jane Austen  
7 October: Our Military Heritage – Service and Sacrifice

## **Winchester City Council Update (Alison Woods)**

### **English Language Day**

On 13 October 2009, the English Project will be coordinating the first ever English Language Day to celebrate one of the wonders of the world, the English Language. Amazingly, although English is spoken by some 2 billion people on the planet, there's never been a day in the calendar when we can celebrate its full glory. It is hoped that this will now become an annual event.

This date was chosen because it was on 13 October 1362 that the Chancellor of England for the first time opened Parliament with a speech in English. During that same Parliament, a Statute of Pleading was approved that stipulated that "all Pleas shall be pleaded, shewed, defended, answered, debated, and judged in the English Tongue". English had once again become the official language of law - the reason that this year's theme will be the language of law in its widest sense.

The English Project will be hosting three events on the language of law at leading law firm Taylor Wessing: one for London and Hampshire schools, one for university law students and practitioners and the third for the general public. And, of course, the unfolding story of English is something in which we all have a stake. We hope you'll take this opportunity to celebrate with us and mark the first ever English Language Day in English speaking history.

For anyone who's ever been baffled by legal jargon, put off by the pomposity of the language or simply been confused when signing a contract, then find out more about the language of law and how you can take part in English Language Day by calling 01962 827106 or visiting [www.englishproject.org](http://www.englishproject.org).

### **High Street Refurbishment**

The High Street refurbishment works will start on 14 September 2009. The project will take approximately a year with a break over Christmas from 15 November 2009 until 4 January 2010.

The first stage will involve excavations from the southern end of the High Street up as far as the Butter Cross. There will be a temporary road closure for the duration of the works from Middle Brook Street to Jewry Street. Two-way working operated by traffic signals will be installed on Market Avenue to allow access to The Square and to the lower part of the High Street for deliveries. This closure and the construction works will mean that parking areas in the lower part of the High Street will not be available during the construction period. Winchester City Council is currently preparing a leaflet to show where disabled parking will be available.

The contractor (Mildren Construction) and the communication teams at Winchester City Council and Hampshire County Council will liaise with the public and businesses to keep them up-to-date with the situation and with progress throughout the works through signing, information boards, newsletters and letter drops. Information will be

put on the Winchester City Council and County Council websites and a 24 hour telephone line will be available.

### **One Step Ahead Accessibility Seminar**

Thank you to the guides who turned out in force for the One Step Ahead seminar held at Marwell Wildlife in July. The seminar, organised in conjunction with the regional tourist board Tourism South East and the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), aimed to help tourism businesses enhance their welcome for disabled visitors as the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games approach. The city council has also commissioned an access audit of Winchester City Centre and is encouraging accommodation businesses to improve their welcome for disabled visitors.

### **Heritage Open Days**

Taking place between Thursday 10 and Sunday 13 September, Heritage Open Days offer four days of free events and activities on your own doorstep. The event celebrates Winchester's architecture and culture with FREE access to many interesting properties. Explore buildings that are either not usually open or would normally charge an entrance fee. For further information visit: [www.visitwinchester.co.uk/site/whats-on/heritage-open-days](http://www.visitwinchester.co.uk/site/whats-on/heritage-open-days).

Special thanks to the guides who are helping the Mayor of Winchester open up Abbey House for the Heritage Open Days.

### **New look tourism website ([www.visitwinchester.co.uk](http://www.visitwinchester.co.uk))**

The popular site at [www.visitwinchester.co.uk](http://www.visitwinchester.co.uk) has just undergone an exciting redesign as part of Winchester City Council's continued efforts to draw visitors to the area and to support the local economy. As well as a new look and fresh images, the site is now equipped with new features designed to tempt visitors and encourage them to spend longer exploring Winchester and the surrounding area - and to spend more in the process! The website redesign is one of a series of new initiatives to capitalise on the regionally confirmed 'staycation' trend.

Following extensive analysis of the previous site's online traffic and the browsing habits of web users, development work on the new site began in January. The contemporary, easier to use site is now also ready for the run up to the London Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012 when millions more visitors are expected to plan trips to the UK from overseas. The overall aim is to make Winchester stand out as a more attractive proposition to visitors browsing the internet for a UK destination, and to streamline the way information is presented, reducing the number of clicks needed to reach it.

The site comes with brand new content to target different niche markets including a 'body and soul' page for those looking for a relaxing break, plus integrated 'microsites' for cricket and Jane Austen enthusiasts with suggested itineraries. Visitors can now also plan ahead of their journey using an online itinerary planner. To complement the new accommodation features, further exciting developments are planned for spring 2010 including an online booking system, making it even easier to arrange a stay in Winchester.

## Jane Austen Trail

The new Jane Austen trail offers visitors a ready made itinerary that traces the landmarks of Austen's life in Hampshire and examines various influences upon her writing. Starting at the site of her birthplace in Steventon and St Nicholas church where her father was rector, the trail touches on the grand houses that Jane used to dance in with her sister Cassandra. 'Janeites' can find out about the author's experiences in Georgian Southampton and Portsmouth, and at the newly refurbished house at Chawton, learn about the rural family home where she wrote and revised her novels. Of course the tour ends in Winchester, which showcases the cathedral ledger stone and plaque, the College street residence and a small display at the City Museum.

It is hoped that these ready-made itineraries will encourage residents and visitors to do more in the area and of course Winchester's Tourist Guides are clearly flagged up. Visitors are encouraged to link the tour in with the recently launched cricket tour – there are common points in Winchester, Alresford and Southampton.

Ellen Simpson would like to extend her particular thanks to Elizabeth Proudman who provided invaluable editorial and factual expertise to the publication.

Copies of the new Jane Austen trail and cricket leaflet will be posted to all official Winchester Tourist Guides.

## Food, craft and status in Medieval Winchester



This new book, produced by Winchester Museums Service, is part of an integrated series of studies of Winchester's archaeology, based on excavations carried out on the city's defences and in the historic suburbs during the 1970s and early 1980s. It incorporates reports on large collections of animal bone, as well as a chapter on plant remains and some information from mollusca. Consideration of Winchester's medieval economy and society through time and in relation to other towns and settlements - the food, craft and status of the title - is also offered as a synthesis of all of the evidence.

The book sheds new light on the management of the animal and plant resources in and around one of England's foremost cities, and incorporates specialist contributions by Jennifer Bourdillon, Kate Clark, Jennie Coy, Frank Green, Dale Serjeantson, Pippa Smith and Ken Thomas.

The book retails at £17 (or £22 to include postage and packaging). For your copy contact [museums@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:museums@winchester.gov.uk) or 01962 848 231. Copies can also be purchased on line at [www.winchester.gov.uk/museums](http://www.winchester.gov.uk/museums) or in person from the City Museum in the Square.

## Treasures of Hyde Abbey

Winchester City Council, in conjunction with the Hyde 900 steering group, is planning a major exhibition, Treasures of Hyde Abbey, which will be mounted in the Gallery at the Winchester Discovery Centre in Jewry Street between 6 March and 2 May 2010. The exhibition will explore the significance of Hyde Abbey which was founded in Winchester in 1110 as successor to the Anglo-Saxon New Minster in the centre of the city. The move to Hyde was marked by a procession of monks bearing New Minster's sacred relics including the bones of King Alfred the Great, his wife and son for reburial in the new abbey. The project will bring together in one place for the first time in five centuries a selection of late Saxon and medieval treasures. Chief among these will be the manuscripts, Liber Monasterii de Hyda, the Liber Vitae and the Monasticon, on loan from the British Library; the Hyde Abbey Breviary and Psalter, on loan from the Bodleian Library; and, from the V&A, the Hyde Abbot's crozier. St Bartholomew's Church, Hyde, has agreed to lend the five Romanesque capitals and fragment of arcading from the abbey's cloisters that are in its possession.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a series of workshops, talks and other events. We also hope that the Winchester Tourist Guides will be able to put on walks linking to this theme.

## “Winchester Cathedral” – the song (Denis Howe)

Winchester cathedral  
You're bringin' me down  
You stood there and watched as  
My baby left town

You could've done something  
But you didn't try  
You didn't do nothin'  
You let her walk by

Now everyone knows just how much I needed that girl  
She wouldn't have gone far away if only you'd started ringing your bell

Winchester cathedral  
You're bringin' me down  
You stood there and watched as  
My baby left town

Geoff Stephens (1966)

Judy Simmons kindly passed me a copy of information that Brian Sharpe had collected about the famous 1966 hit by the New Vaudeville Band – to add the Cathedral Library and Guides Handbook. This was very valuable since in the 40+ years since the song was a big hit on both sides of the Atlantic, a lot of “urban myths” have grown about the song and its origins. I was particularly interested since, several years ago, I had managed to contact the song's writer, Geoff Stephens. Here is a summary of some of the information that Brian and I have collected so that, hopefully, the Winchester City Guides and the Cathedral Guides will be “singing the same song”!

Q- Who wrote the song?

A – Geoff Stephens (b 1934) a school teacher from Southend, who developed his interest in amateur dramatics and music into a full time career – to become one of the top song writers of the 1960s and 70s. Geoff now lives in Berkhamsted and is still writing music (much now for the Royal British Legion)

Q – Who were the artists on the hit record?

A – Session musicians – with John Carter (a friend and musical collaborator of Geoff's) doing the vocal. Note: John didn't sing through a megaphone, but just used his cupped hands to get the 1920s sound.

Q – So was there ever a “New Vaudeville Band”?

A – Yes – After huge success in America (the song was top of the Billboard hit parade for 3 weeks over Christmas in 1966) Geoff saw the need for a US tour. He assembled a group of 8 musicians who went on tour. John Carter was replaced by Alan Klein who adopted the title of “Tristram, the Seventh Earl of Cricklewood). Their tour was a great success and the band even appeared on the “Ed Sullivan Show”.

Q – Why Winchester Cathedral?

A – Geoff knows Winchester – but there is (sadly) no personal story of a broken romance. Geoff explained to me that in writing a song, you often use “dummy” lyrics whilst composing the tune – and these will be replaced later with better? words. When Geoff played the song to friends, the catchy dummy words were considered to be fine and Geoff simply changed the original “Westminster Cathedral” to “Winchester Cathedral”!

Q- Did the Beatles record it?

A – Urban myth says that they did. Maybe they sang it in concert, but they didn't record it. It was recorded by Frank Sinatra, Petula Clark and many other famous performers.

Q- Can I still buy the song?

A – Yes there are two CDs available from Amazon that include the song

[http://www.amazon.co.uk/New-Vaudeville-Band/e/B000APTNOE/ref=ntt\\_art\\_dp\\_pel\\_1](http://www.amazon.co.uk/New-Vaudeville-Band/e/B000APTNOE/ref=ntt_art_dp_pel_1)

More sources of information:

Wikipedia has several items about the song, Geoff and the New Vaudeville Band. Start with the page:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_New\\_Vaudeville\\_Band](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_New_Vaudeville_Band)

A recent article on Geoff from a Hemel Hempstead local newspaper

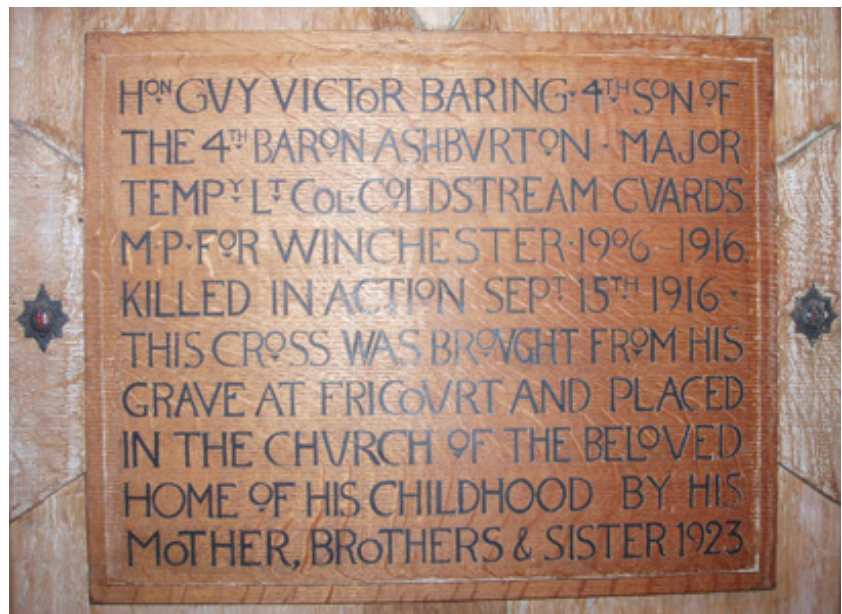
<http://www.hemeltoday.co.uk/entertainment/Hit-songwriter39s-Remembrance-song.4696799.jp>

## Out and About with the Winchester Guides

### Summer Walk – Northington (Tony Newing)

On the evening of 16 July a group of guides, plus partners, accompanied by two Labradors, gathered in the car park of Northington Church. After a brief look around the surprisingly large church, which boasts the original grave marker for Lt Col Guy Victor Baring, killed on the Somme in 1916, we set off, led by Dale Greenwood, for the short walk to The Grange, along the path which presumably had been the Barings' route to worship. Arriving at The Grange we spent some time walking around the outside of the great edifice, trying to imagine how it must have appeared in its heyday, pausing to study the several explanatory boards which have been strategically placed around the building, before making our way back to the car park, arriving back at our cars just as the rain began.

After a short drive we enjoyed a warm welcome in the Woolpack Inn, Totford, and a most convivial supper. Despite the unseasonably cool weather it was a most enjoyable evening in excellent company! Our grateful thanks to Dale for organizing an interesting and agreeable outing.



Photos by Tony Newing

## **Cheriton Battlefield (Tony Newing)**

On 12 August – Chris Maxse, my wife, Jill, and Labrador, Lexi, and I spent a couple of pleasant hours walking around the Civil War battlefield at Cheriton. Beginning near the Hinton Arms we walked along the front of what had been the Parliamentary troops' position then set off across the fields towards the Royalists' location on the morning of 29 March 1644. Little of the landscape has changed over the intervening centuries and we were left to enjoy the walk almost on our own. Recently several descriptive marker boards have been placed around the battlefield and near the Royalist lines is a particularly handsome one, with a seat fashioned to look like a musket with the figure of a soldier carved on the front. We then retraced our steps back towards the village, down one of several narrow lanes hemmed-in with high banks topped by hedges, which so restricted the Royalist cavalry in their manoeuvres.

After an enjoyable lunch in the Flowerpots pub, we walked around the village, visited the church then returned via Alresford, spending an hour and a half walking around the town and along the river, before returning home, after a most enjoyable outing.



Chris, Jill and Lexi surveying the Battlefield Photo Tony Newing

### **Next year's walk?**

One of the difficulties of walking around the battlefield in the summer months is the thickness of the vegetation, which obscures one's view of the country. If there is sufficient interest we propose to return there on Monday 29 March 2010, the anniversary of the battle to repeat the walk – concluding with lunch at the Hinton Arms. Please note the date in your diary – further details will be published in due course. The distance involved is about 5 miles and stout footwear and suitable clothing will be needed.

## Winchester Pub Walks (Denis Howe)

As part of this Summer's Themed Tours three different Pub Walks were offered. Mike Craze managed to be involved in all three! Here he is doing a great job before visiting the first pub (The Wykeham) on the final walk of the series.



Photo Denis Howe

## An unusual Japanese Tour (Dale Greenwood)

I had an unusual tour in Winchester ( - although perhaps ridiculous would be a better adjective!) It happened that I had "won" the ballot to lead a special tour for a group of Japanese.

The Tour Operator kept changing his mind what I was to do - finally I had to report at the Winchester Hotel at 8.20 as they wished to leave Winchester by 10.30.

It transpired they were a nursery rhyme group (only 12 in number and none of whom apart from the professor in charge spoke any English) who wanted me to tell them all about nursery rhymes associated with Winchester! This stumped me completely as I had not been told in advance. The best I could think of was the rhyme of rain on St. Swithun's Day - hardly a nursery rhyme\*.

We left the Hotel in their coach at 8.30 and they then wanted me to do a panoramic tour of Winchester before they visited the Cathedral at 9.00. I explained that Winchester in a coach during the rush hour would hardly be ideal and in any case

they wouldn't see too much of interest in the time available. In the event I got them into the Cathedral on the dot at 9.00 and it was like the "Marie Celeste". The reception desk was unmanned; no vergers or guides were on duty and there wasn't a soul about. It was a strange sensation - almost as if we were trespassers.

It was a hurried tour as I had to get them to the Great Hall (by coach) by 10.00. Oh, and their driver had never been to Winchester before and had no idea of pick up points.

*\* Dale (quite properly) erred on the side of historical accuracy. I would have been tempted to talk about the 18th century Winchester widow, Mrs Hubbard, who had a lot of trouble caring for her dog - or possibly about Jack and Gillian Smith who encountered problems fetching water from the well at the top of St Catherine's Hill....Ed.*

### Update on Trevor Wilson (Robert Wainwright)

I thought Guides and TIC might like to know that Trevor Wilson is now at Challoner House Nursing Home, 175 Winchester Road; Chandlers Ford (tel 02380-266036). This is located on the brow of the hill just before the King Rufus pub as you come into Chandlers Ford driving towards the Fryern Arcade and Shell Garage from the Winchester and Otterbourne direction. I'm sure he would welcome anyone passing to drop in for a chat. Mornings are better for visiting - but do try other times (*maybe call first - Ed*).

### A Word from the Editor (Denis Howe)

To follow hyperlinks (references to websites which are shown in blue) move the cursor over the link until the "open hand" becomes a hand with a pointing finger. If you then left click the mouse you should go to the website in question. If this doesn't work you may be working with a very old version of the Adobe Reader and you need to get an update

I'm most grateful for the photos and words from Tony Newing and Dale's humorous tale - but a bit disappointed that nobody else seems to have done anything of interest to the rest of us! I'm strongly of the opinion that the Newsletter is a "local newspaper" and human interest stories are important. With Google, Wikipedia and the internet it is easy to research topics of general interest to Guides. However, things specific to WATGA and its members won't be found. So, please, remember to slip your digital camera in your pocket and start taking pictures.