



# Winchester Area Tourist Guides Association



## Newsletter



Spring 2011



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## **Letter from the Chairman (Kate Colwill)**

As I put pen to paper, during this beautiful spell of early Spring weather, the evening of 14 January, when 37 members gathered for our annual New Year Party, seems a distant memory. The venue and format for the occasion being somewhat different, I admit now to having been rather apprehensive that the evening would prove successful. However, from the comments I received, both on the night and subsequently, it seems that it did; certainly, no-one seemed in a hurry to leave, enjoying the pleasant surroundings of Hockley Golf Club and the opportunity to meet up again after the enforced hibernation most of us endured this winter! The idea of trying something new was mine, borne out of a sense that the traditional buffet supper at St. Lawrence Hall, while fun, was also a lot of work; however, nothing is set in stone and new ideas are always welcome for future years. A lunch party?

WATGA members gathered again in early February for the Spring General Meeting, held in the Guildhall, affording us the opportunity of a conducted tour of the newly refurbished building beforehand. Ian Folger, Senior Event Manager, was most informative as he told us the fascinating tale behind the recent bequest and showed off proudly the various facilities now created as a result.

I am pleased to say that the fairly up-beat tone of my missives to you, to date, continues, despite the constant talk of cuts and change - and the arrival of the recently well publicised Greeters' Scheme, due to be launched officially on May 9th. To quote Colin, we have indeed 'hit the ground running' this year, as he reports that all 5 'Forgotten City' tours were sold out, 61 people went on the Winchester and Alresford English Place Names tours and 14 enthusiasts turned out for Colin's own initiative, our first 'Lamplight Tour'. Add the higher numbers turning up for our Saturday 'City Highlights' tours so far this year, and it does seem that we are offering a valued and popular service and our varied, enthusiastic and well publicised programme is capturing the imagination and paying dividends already. My thanks to all of you who have set us off on such a flying start!

Thanks to the overtures of Chris Maxse, I have been in touch with Mike Davies with a view to restarting the mutually beneficial partnership between the Cathedral guides and ourselves. Their current training programme is, in fact, just coming to an end but we will be informed of the details of their next schedule as soon as it is available.

On a more practical note, one or two reminders as our programme of rota tours begins to get under way, in earnest, as from 1 April, I would urge you all to check your commitments and also to ensure that you have informed Michael of any changes; this is doubly important, of course, to be sure that all payments are correct, as the new system is also now coming into operation; our revised price structure, too, is effective from 1 April.

I have heard nothing more from the Royal Hotel - I would be grateful to hear if any of you do get a tour.

I do hope that our early successes continue and that we all benefit from increasing numbers and the positive interest in our tours. I look forward to seeing you at the Summer General Meeting on 6 June and more socially at the Summer walk in July. Till then - good guiding! Kate

## Dates for your Diary

### **WATGA Meetings/Events:**

6 Jun (19:00)	WATGA General Meeting (Education Centre, Inner Close)
8 Jul	Summer Walk (with Dale) – Whitchurch and the Test (TBC)
19 Sep (19:00)	WATGA AGM (Guildhall)

### **Key Celebrations in the Winchester District 2011 (from Ellen Simpson)**

- 28 April – 1 May **Winchester Chamber Music Festival**
- 29 April **Royal Wedding** – possible Best of British Celebration in conjunction with Winchester BID (Winchester City Centre) Cathedral events/displays.
- 29 April – 3 Oct **The King James Bible 1611 – 2011: Celebrating the Book of Books**, Winchester Cathedral (a multi-media exhibition which incorporates recorded sound, projected images, photographic reproductions, books and manuscripts, digital resources and visitor activities).
- 15 May **Alresford Watercress Festival**
- 21 - 27 May **Bishop's Waltham Festival**
- 22 May **Bishop's Waltham Farmers Market**
- 21 May **Emerge Festival**
- 28 May to 12 June **"Countryside 2011"**: A two-week showcase of countryside events and activities in the South East (Winchester Events TBA)
- 5 June **"One Big Table"**, Winchester Cathedral Outer Close
- 20- 26 June **Armed Forces week.**  
Mon 20 June Raising of the Flag and Military March; Tue 21 June Winchester Military Museums (WMM) Medal Valuation Day at Serle's House; Wed 22 June Film Shows in the Gurkha Military Museum; Thu 23 June Talk by General Lord Dannatt in the Guildhall Winchester at 18:45; Fri 24 June WMM 'Tracing your Army ancestors' Sat 25 June National 'Armed Forces Day' main event in Edinburgh. Winchester Cathedral Evensong. Sun 26 Jun Armed Forces 'Sunday Fun Day' at WMM
- 14 – 17 July **Southern Cathedral Festival**
- 22 – 24 July **Guitar Festival**
- 27 June - 3 July **Winchester Writers' Conference**
- 1 - 3 July **Hat Fair**

- 1 - 3 July **Blissfields, Woodmancott**
- 2 -3 July **Battle of Cheriton**
- 1 - 10 July 2011 **Winchester Festival**
- TBA **Winchester Film Festival**
- 14 -17 July **Southern Cathedrals Festival**
- 24 July **Pedal, Paddle, Pace**
- 25-31 July **Winchester Fashion Week**
- 30 July **Winnall Community Association 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**
- 31 July **Winchester Food & Produce Show**, Winchester Guildhall
- 1 August **Dean Park Event** (TBC)
- 5- 8 August **Wickham Folk Festival** (TBC)
- 12- 14 August **Boomtown Fair Matterley**
- 19 -21 August **British Grand Prix Motocross** (TBA)
- 20 August **Party in the Park** (A2 Dominion), Garrison Grounds Winchester
- 3 September **Alesford Show**
- 2 October **Clarendon Marathon**
- 9 October **Law Sunday**
- 13 November **Remembrance Sunday**
- 2 October **Clarendon Marathon**
- 5 November **Winchester Fireworks & Bonfire**
- 17 November **Christmas Lights Switch on**
- 20 November **Winchester Charity Festive Market**
- **Winchester Cathedral Christmas Market** (November – December 2011 (TBC))
- **Winchester Cathedral Ice Rink** (November – January 2012 (TBC))

## **Winchester Cathedral**

29 Apr – 30 Oct The King James Bible (exhibition)  
more details at <http://winchester-cathedral.org.uk/event/?id=33>  
11 May (19:30) “A Festival of English Music” – RAF Regiment Band  
12 May (19:30) KJB Lecture; “The Bible and Art” – Prof Michael Wheeler  
19 May (19:30) KJB Lecture: “The Bible and Language” Prof G Campbell  
26 May (19:30) KJB Lecture: “The Bible and Music” Prof John Harper  
14 Jun (19:30) KJB Lecture: “The Winchester Bible” Prof C de Hamel  
21 Jun (19:30) KJB Lecture: “The Bible and Literature” Prof D Norton  
more details at <http://winchester-cathedral.org.uk/whats-on/>

“CPD” Events (No booking needed - £3.50 for Guides – please wear your badge!)

27 Jul (13:30) **HIDDEN PLACES IN THE CATHEDRAL – Chantry chapels and other unusual places.**  
3 Aug (13:30) **PESTILENCE , PENITENCE AND PUTREFACTION : A MEDICAL HISTORY OF WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL**  
10 Aug (13:30) **JUST WILLIAM(S)! - OR MAKERS, SAVIOURS AND DESTROYERS**  
17 Aug (13:30) **WILLIAM WALKER**  
24 Aug (13:30) **700 YEARS OF STAINED GLASS**  
31 Aug (13:30) **THE OTHER CLOSE RESIDENTS**  
7 Sep (13:30) **THE MONKS OF ST SWITHUN’S PRIORY**  
14 Sep (13:30) **GREEN MEN**  
21 Sep (13:30) **ARE THERE BONES BENEATH THESE STONES?**  
28 Sep (13:30) **A NEW MODERN ART TOUR**  
more details at <http://winchester-cathedral.org.uk/whats-on/>

## **Update from the Visit Winchester Team (Ellen Simpson)**

Congratulations! Firstly, we would like to congratulate the guides who have passed the recent examinations. We know that the course is a rigorous one and the commitment that individuals show in undertaking this means that Winchester has an enhanced quality offering for visitors looking for an insightful experience.

### **A new era for tourism**

Following our successful stakeholder day, the consensus from businesses is that they are overall in favour of buying into a membership organisation that manages tourism for Winchester and the ‘rural heart of Hampshire’.

This will mean expanding the footprint of the Winchester brand. As economic circumstance continues to pressurise local authority budgets, we are looking to our nearest neighbours, East Hampshire District Council, South Downs National Park Authority and also Test Valley to explore potential partnership working. We are also continuing to discuss the benefits of partnership working with our colleagues at Hampshire County Council. When a clear plan is ready, the Head of Tourism will be in contact with the Guides in order to discuss the future ‘shape’ of the Visit Winchester brand and the processes we can develop for publicising it.

One of the most important developments to come out of our research is that the TIC is a focal point for community and local business alike. As a result we are broadening the scope of the TIC's remit in order to make it more relevant to local people. As well as selling parking top ups, theatre tokens and becoming a vendor for the new Greyhound Bus Service, you will see a change in emphasis evolve in the centre regarding the way information is presented:

The leaflets will be moved to the four faceted white column at the front of the centre. The visitors will be met by one panel selling the delights of the city centre; a second one displaying the offering of the wider district; a third showcasing the 2 national parks (South Downs and New Forest) and a fourth focusing on coastal Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Information panels above will introduce the four distinct visitor experiences.

The Guided tour leaflets will therefore be on the foremost information point as visitors arrive. It is hoped that this will help build the profile of the service.

### **The Greeter Scheme – an update**

Thus far we have had 5 Greets. One was a press trip, leading to an article in Hampshire Life; another was for Steve Brine MP to mark British Tourism Week; Clr Dominic Hiscock, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, also sampled a Greet; and the other two are from visitors. As we have 11 Greeters, it does therefore look as though the slow burn start that we predicted is the reality.

### **What's happening?**

We have been pulling together a list of all the major events planned from Summer 2011 to End of 2012. The list is constantly changing and sometimes events are cancelled, but we are providing the Guides with a copy as it may help with future planning (Note: 2011 Dates are included in "Dates for your Diary" above – Ed.)

### **Staff changes**

Alison Woods is now working as Acting Head of Economy and the Arts while Kate Cloud is on maternity leave. She is no longer based in the TIC Managers office. The tourism marketing team will be partially based there and the office is to be refurbished so that it can accommodate three workstations.

## **Blue Badge Guide Course Results (Pamela Boyes)**

As Course Director of the South/South East Blue Badge Tourist Guide training course, I am very pleased to report that our of 20 who took their exams 17 candidates all passed including our own Clare Dixon, Tina Reid and Mike Craze and congratulations must go to them. They worked very hard and had to pass all 8 topics which included the Background Knowledge, Tour Planning, two other written papers which covered the counties of Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Surrey, Sussex, Kent, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight; also 4 Practical exams consisting of a walk in Old Portsmouth, Winchester Cathedral, Southampton Art Gallery and a 3 hour coach tour around South East Hampshire. In addition they are now qualified to guide at Windsor Castle.

## **2011 “and all that” (Colin Cook)**

When I took on the role of Marketing Officer last year I didn't anticipate just how effective the printing of 25,000 leaflets and updating of our website would be in bringing in extra numbers for both the daily Rota tours and our Special Guided Walks. Having recorded a high on 40% increase in 2010, what can we expect for 2011?

This year we have started 2 months earlier and have 30,000 leaflets printed for our Special Guided Tours and another 5,000 for the daily summer City Walks. The website is again updated with all the 2011 walks and tours with a new 'Coming Soon' section which will promote the next month's special walks. Do go into the 'Members' section regularly as this has up to date details of who is assigned for the Rota tours and also the Specials. I would like to up date the numbers coming on these so could I ask all guides after they have done a special tour to email me the following information:-

1. The number attending - adults and children
  2. Where they found out about the tour - ie leaflet, website, poster, papers, TIC etc
  3. Whether the tour should be repeated in 2012 or 2013
- So far this year we have had an excellent start.

- The five 'Forgotten City' tours linked to the 'Forgotten Emperor' exhibition at the Discovery Centre have almost all been 'sell-outs' with a total of 101 tickets sold
- Following the runaway success of the October Place Name tours, the three further tours, funded by the English Project, and provided free, attracted 61 people, making a total of 143 for the two series.
- The first free Lamplight tour had 14 on it, some who had already sampled the other free tours. As with the Place Name tours, everyone who had not already picked up a 2011 leaflet was given one, and this tour was specifically used as a 'taster' to promote many of the other tours scheduled this year.
- City Highlight tour attendances have also shot up, with a 30% increase recorded so far. Increasingly people are looking on the web when they are planning a visit and factoring in a guided tour.

### **Do's** (for both Rota and Special Tours)

Take a supply of 2011 leaflets with you for every tour (the TIC have a stock which I will keep topped up).

Hand them out to any in your party who do not have one, and anywhere else you think our tours will be of interest.

Ask where they heard about our tours and feed back this information to me.

I feel sure we can look forward to another excellent year!



Launch of the Guided Tours leaflet - Jan 2011 Colin and the Mayor (photo Denis Howe)

## **Winchester Health Walks (Dale Greenwood)**

Some of you may have seen me [wearing a high-vis jacket] leading large groups of walkers round Winchester on a Monday morning and wondered if it was some form of guided tour! In fact it is a Health Walk – part of a nationwide initiative to encourage people with little experience of walking to get out and take more exercise and thereby improve their health.

The Winchester walks started in November 2008 and the City Council were actually one of the last in the UK to be involved. Eastleigh Council celebrated its 10th Birthday last year and Test Valley is not far behind!

The walks are free and last for an hour or sometimes a little over. They start from the TIC in the Broadway every Monday morning at 10.30 and in view of their popularity [30 to 40 walkers attend regularly] there are two separate walks set at a faster or slower pace. The distance covered varies between 2 to 3 miles. Since the majority of the walkers possess a free pass, buses are sometimes utilised to vary the regular routes and to provide more interest and variety. Similar walks operate every day of the week elsewhere in the District e.g. Bishops Waltham and Sutton Scotney, and at Weeke on Friday mornings our own John Flood is one of the leaders. All the leaders are volunteers so the cost to the City Council is negligible – just a small fraction of the salary of the officer who is responsible for the organisation and procedure.

Quite apart from the obvious health benefits there are also social benefits – friendships spring up and every week many of the participants enjoy a coffee together after the walk. Several of the Eastleigh walkers now organise holidays together! On a personal level – having been fortunate enough to lead guided walking holidays all over the UK for many years [which have given me improved health and many lasting friendships] – health walks have provided the opportunity to give back to walking a small part of the pleasure it has given to me. Perhaps I should add that although they are in no way guided tours I am sometimes naughty in that I

often let slip tit bits of information with the comment “Come on a WATGA Tour and you will learn a lot more”! A number of people have done just that!

## **Sarah Doudney (Michael Fielding)**

**Sarah Doudney:** born Portsea 15<sup>th</sup> January 1841, died Oxford 8th December 1926

Each year I change the way I talk about various topics on the Rota Tours in the light of experience, taking note of what visitors on previous occasions seem to have found interesting and also adding other snippets of information which I have come across and have found interesting. I then try them out on the next season’s visitors.

We all have our different takes, for example, on how we talk about the City Mill, whether it is about the historical aspects of Saxon or Tudor times, the decline of grain milling by water mills, as steel rolling mills became much cheaper in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, or the time when it was a Youth Hostel, until it became a centre for the study of wildlife a few years ago.

It might be stretching a point but I came across a poem written by Sarah Doudney late last year entitled *The Lesson of the Water Mill*, the refrain of which appealed to me: *The mill will never grind with the water that has passed.*

Sarah Doudney was born in Portsea where her father ran a candle and soap manufacturing business and she was educated at Madame Dowell’s College in Southsea. It was there that Miss Doudney started to write prose and poetry and contributed to *The Churchman’s Family Magazine* and similar periodicals with an Anglican leaning. Charlotte Yonge was another contributor to that Magazine.

In the census of 1881 Miss Doudney described herself as a *Writer for Monthly Journals* but in 1891 the description had changed to *Novelist* - for by that time she had written 35 novels. She also wrote a number of hymns including *The Christian’s Goodnight* which was set to music by Ira D Sankey and which was sung at the funeral in 1892 of Charles Spurgeon, the great Baptist preacher. Her mother had died the previous year and her father died the following year and she then moved to Oxford. A poem written there, *Great Tom of Oxford*, immortalises the Christchurch bell of that name (recast in 1680 by Christopher Hodson) which rings 101 times each night to represent each of the original 100 students, plus one added in 1664.

First verse (of 4) of the poem.

Listen to the water mill  
Through the livelong day;  
How the clicking of the wheel  
Wears the hours away.  
Languidly the autumn wind  
Stirs the withered leaves;  
On the field the reapers sing,  
Binding up the sheaves;  
And a proverb haunts my mind,  
And as a spell is cast,  
“The mill will never grind  
With the water that has passed.”

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarah\\_Doudney](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarah_Doudney)  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christ\\_Church,\\_Oxford](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christ_Church,_Oxford)

## **Easter Customs (Judy Simmons)**

- extract from the April edition of the Guide Post

### **18-26 April Pesach – Jewish Passover**

This major Jewish festival celebrates the liberation of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt. Its principal feature is a ritual meal. This takes place in the home on the first and second evening of the festival, and there are ritual dishes to recall the events of the Exodus (18/19 April this year). Because they left Egypt in a hurry, the Jews did not have time to let their bread rise, so for the eight days of Pesach, observant Jews will not eat bread or leaven of any kind. Bread is replaced by matzo, unleavened biscuits made with water and plain flour. A special set of kitchen utensils, cutlery and crockery that have not been contaminated by yeast or leaven will be used. Like all Jewish holy days, it starts on the evening of the day before.

### **21<sup>st</sup> April – Maundy Thursday**

The day of the Last Supper which Jesus had with his disciples – and the origin of the Christian Eucharist. Just as Jesus washed his disciples' feet at the Last Supper, so in some churches, the priest washes the feet of members of the congregation. Originally the monarch washed the feet of poor men, but nowadays the Queen distributes money to chosen pensioners at the Royal Maundy service on the morning of the day. This year she will distribute the Royal Maundy to 84 men and 84 women (one for each year of her age) at Westminster Abbey

## **Some words from the Editor (Denis Howe)**

Many thanks to the contributors to this edition. We really could have done with some more photos for this edition, so please remember to take your digital camera with you and capture some interesting photos for our "Summer" edition.

Finally, Sue Coles asked me to include the following:

"Thanks again to all the current and former guides who contributed to the presentation at the New Year Party. I was absolutely amazed at your generosity. The revised Pevsner is getting good use and I have used the cheque to buy an Internet radio that allows me to listen to German and French radio stations whenever I want. It allows me to keep my ear attuned to both languages, which helps of course with foreign-language guiding.

Wishing you all a good guiding season and, once again, many thanks. Sue"

**Wishing you all a Very Happy Easter - and good Guiding this Summer**