

News release

January 2016

## **Jane Austen's Regency Week in the Hampshire area of the South Downs National Park**

**Jane Austen Regency Week** - an eight day Festival of events celebrating Jane and the Regency period – will take place between 18<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> June in and around the market town of Alton in Hampshire and the nearby village of Chawton. Chawton is home to the Jane Austen's House Museum, where Jane spent the last 8 years of her life and produced 6 great novels. Nearby Alton is the place where she shopped, banked, collected and delivered post, visited her friends and caught the stagecoach to London.

This year's Festival boasts a fantastic line-up of activities and events, including Regency-style **music, dining, drama and film, talks and walks, a vintage fair** as well as a **Regency Day with ball and dancing workshop**.

Saturday 18th June will kickstart Regency Week with **Regency Day** in Alton – a day full of historical delights such as carriage rides, a swordsmanship display, costumes, market stalls, dancing and other entertainments. The celebrations continue with a **dancing workshop** and then into the evening with a sumptuous **Regency Ball**.

(daytime activities 10am - 3pm, High Street, Alton, no entry fee, fee for carriage rides, dance workshop 4pm - 5.30pm, Alton Community Centre, Amery Street, Alton. Price £10, Ball with Hampshire Regency Dancers and live music by Hampshire Regency Players - dress in Regency Costume or smart Evening Wear. 7.30pm for 8pm start - finishing at 11pm, Alton Assembly Rooms, High Street, Alton. Price £35 earlybird discount till 31/5 then £45)

**Chawton's Vintage Fair** on 19 June will have up to 30 stalls offering a plethora of interesting and unusual items (10 am – 3.30pm, Chawton Village Hall, price £1 (under 14s free)

and free tea/coffee between 1pm and 2.30pm if you show a copy of the printed Regency Week programme). This will be followed in the evening with a **Regency choral evensong** at St Lawrence's Church in Alton, the church where two of Jane's brother preached and several nieces and nephews were christened. (6.30pm, Church Street, free entry, Regency costume encouraged).

A new addition to the programme of talks is '**Jane Austen Actors**', on 21 June. Actress Angela Barlow looks at the significance of acting and the theatre in Jane's life and work. (7.30pm, venue TBC, Price £10). And on 23 June discover the eccentricities of formal dining, from table etiquette to wine adulteration, promiscuous seating and chamber pots in a fun history talk by Dr Bob France in '**Stedman the Regency Butler**'. (7.30pm - 9pm, Allen Gallery, Church Street, Alton. Price £5). On 22 June Dr Kathrin Pieren, curator of the Petersfield Museum, will take you on a fascinating journey through fashion history using examples from the Museum and other collections in '**Fashion of the Regency Period**' (6.30pm for 7pm, Chawton House Library, Chawton. Price £11 Adults and Seniors, £8.50 CHL friends and students)

**Get creative Regency-style on 25 June** by learning to '**Make a Regency Bonnet**' in a workshop at Jane Austen's House Museum. (10am -4pm Learning Centre, Jane Austen's House Museum, Chawton, Price £40.00 including materials and entry to the house). Also at the Museum is a **display of the quilt** made by Jane, her sister and mother. On 22 June there will be a **talk about the history, construction and fabrics of this unique quilt** as well its conservation and how Austen's work and needlework have inspired modern quilters around the world. (2.30pm, Learning Centre, JAHM, £5 not including entry to the house).

On 25 June follow in the footsteps of Jane as you see where she regularly walked around Alton to post and collect letters, to shop and catch the stagecoach to London. Author Jane Hurst will take you on a tour of '**Jane Austen's Alton**' - taking in historic buildings and highlighting the details of the local people of the time known to Jane Austen (takes about 1.5 hours, starting at 11am from the Curis Museum, High Street, Alton. Price £5)

The weekend's finale comes in the shape of a **Victorian Cricket Match** and entertainment for all the family on The Butts Green on 26<sup>th</sup>, followed by a **Regency**

**Supper** at the Alton House Hotel, celebrating cuisine of the period. (Regency Supper - 7pm for 7.30pm, Normandy Street, Alton. Regency costume or smart dress. Price £25)

This event marks the end of the 2016 Regency Week. 2017 is a very special year for us as we **celebrate Jane's life in the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of her death**. Many events are planned throughout the year. 2017's Regency Week will be between 17 and 25 June.

For a full run-down of all the events planned for this year's Regency Week visit <http://www.janeaustenregencyweek.co.uk>. The Box Office is Alton Community Centre and can be reached on 01420 85057

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

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### **Notes to Editors:**

#### **East Hampshire**

The area of the South Downs that spills into East Hampshire - around Chawton where Jane Austen lived – has quite a different feel from the rest of the new National Park. Hidden away between the cathedral cities of Winchester and Chichester, its steep wooded hills and hidden valleys of watercress farms, lavender fields, vineyards, hop gardens and trout-filled streams, together with its picture-perfect villages and peaceful market towns, make it undoubtedly one of the loveliest parts of rural England. [www.easthants.gov.uk/tourism](http://www.easthants.gov.uk/tourism)