

Tips to Prepare for Your Next Family Road Trip

Few learning opportunities can compare to experiencing new places and things firsthand.

See B5

SEAN GALLUP/GETTY IMAGES



TIM JOHNSON



A Culinary Adventure Through Istanbul

As it has for hundreds of years, it remains one of the finest places on earth to find a good meal.

See B6

TRAVEL

THE EPOCH TIMES

IRISPHOTO1/SHUTTERSTOCK



(Above) The Winchester Cathedral. Author Jane Austen was one of the last people to be buried there. (Below) A portrait of Jane Austen, 1873.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

IN THE *Footsteps* OF *Jane Austen*



Winchester, England, and its surrounding area, offers lovers of history and literature much to explore

WIBKE CARTER


WINCHESTER, England—When Jane Austen was buried in Winchester Cathedral in 1817 in Hampshire, England, the inscription on her tombstone only recorded her virtues and stoicism, but not her standing as a published novelist. It was her nephew, James Edward Austen-Leigh who wrote her first biography and, from the proceeds, paid for the brass plaque that can be seen next to her grave. The inscription begins: “Jane Austen, known to many by her writings ...” One of England’s most widely read authors, Austen spent only

a short amount of time in Winchester. In 1816, she started to feel increasingly unwell. However, she continued writing, and began her last, unfinished work, “Sanditon,” in early 1817. Her condition worsened, and in May, her sister Cassandra took her to Winchester for treatment with a doctor at the newly established hospital. The sisters rented lodgings at 8 College Street, where Austen died at the age of 41, probably of Addison’s disease or a type of lymphoma, on the morning of July 18. “She was one of the last people to be buried in the cathedral,” said city guide Pauline Shire. “Most


Austen’s modest funeral was attended by only four people and she was laid to rest in the north aisle of the church.

likely because both her father and brother were clergymen, and her friend Mrs. Heathcote knew the dean of Winchester Cathedral well and put in a good word for her.” Austen’s modest funeral was attended by only four people and she was laid to rest in the north aisle of the church. Born on Dec. 16, 1775, in Steventon, the famous author also left her mark in Bath and Southampton. But it was in the small village of Chawton, about 17 miles from Winchester, where she lived for the last eight years of her life, that her genius flourished.

Continued on B2




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IN THE Footsteps OF Jane Austen

Continued from B1

The modest house, which she occupied together with her mother, sister Cassandra, and friend Martha Lloyd is now Jane Austen's House Museum. It holds treasures like the little walnut table on which the author did most of her writings, the Reverend Austen's bookcase, and her stone turquoise ring.

The women's rent-free lodgings were owned by Jane's brother Edward, who had been adopted by the wealthy Knight family and had since inherited the Chawton Estate. The Elizabethan manor house where he lived is only a few minutes' walk away and open to the public. Both her mother and sister are buried in the graveyard of adjacent St. Nicholas Church. It is believed that many of Austen's inspirations derived from social gatherings and events she observed at Chawton House.

Inheritance taxes and high running costs forced current owner Richard Knight, who is a descendant of the Knights, to sell a 125-year lease in 1987. The building was bought, refurbished, and donated to a trust by American entrepreneur and philanthropist Sandy Lerner, who turned it into an internationally respected research center for the study of early women's writing from 1600 to 1830. The library at Chawton House holds more than 10,000 works, including rare first editions and original manuscripts.

It also provides a home to the Knight Family Collection, which was broken up due to financial duress in the early 20th century. An important core still remains, including books Jane Austen herself read.

"We work closely with the Godmersham Lost Sheep Society, which searches for works that were originally in the library," said general manager Anthony Hughes-Onslow. "And we like to hear from anyone who has books containing Knight family bookplates so they can be brought back into the collection."

John Keats

It was not only Jane Austen who left a literary footprint in Winchester. The English Romantic poet John Keats also stayed here during the late summer and early autumn of 1819. He wrote in a letter, "Since I have been here at Winchester I have been improving in health—it is not so confined—and there is on one side of the City a dry chalky down, where the air is worth Sixpence a pint."

His visit, meant to calm his tormented love for Fanny Brawne and improve his ill health, seemed to have been peaceful and pleasant.

Keats enjoyed daily walks through the Cathedral Close and water meadows to the Hospital of St. Cross, the country's oldest charitable institution. It still functions as an almshouse. The young man was so inspired by his surroundings that he penned his ode "To Autumn," regarded by critics as one of the most perfect short poems in the English language, 200 years ago, on Sept. 19, 1819. Little has changed since Keats strolled through Winchester, and following in his steps on a self-guided walk is a tranquil experience.

It is known that he strode up and down the aisles in Winchester Cathedral reading letters from Fanny Brawne. Outside, he passed under the building's stone arches and walked through the Inner Close, described by him as "two college-like squares seemingly built for the dwelling place of Deans and Prebendaries—garnished with grass and shaded with trees."

Then and now, the Great Hall, the last remaining part of Winchester Castle, is a place where history and legend meet. Keats would have seen the ruins of the castle, which was founded in 1067 by William the Conqueror and was for more than 100 years the seat of government of the Norman kings. In 1222, Henry III, who loved architecture, began the construction of the Gothic-style medieval hall.

The centerpiece of the mostly empty room is believed to be a replica of King Arthur's Round Table, which hangs on the wall. The mention of the legend-



ary ruler's table first appeared in poet Wace's "Roman de Brut" in 1155. The "Winchester Round Table," bearing the names of various knights of Arthur's court, was probably created for a tournament during Edward I's reign. The current paintwork was done by order of Henry VIII for Holy Roman Emperor Charles V's 1522 state visit, and depicts the English king himself sitting in Arthur's seat above a Tudor rose. However, the table itself is significantly older, with tree rings dating it to around 1290.

Downton Abbey

Much younger than the legend of King Arthur are the trials and tribulations at Downton Abbey. The lives of the Crawley family and their servants in the majestic country house will hit the big screen soon, and a visit to Highclere Castle, about 23 miles north of Winchester, offers a behind-the-scenes view of the finest occupied Victorian mansion in England.

The estate, designed by Sir Charles Barry, architect of the Houses of Parliament, has been the home of the Carnarvon family for more than 300 years. "[Screenwriter] Julian Fellowes is a friend of the countess. He already knew the castle prior to filming, and that's how Highclere became Downton Abbey," explained marketing manager Hannah Gutteridge.

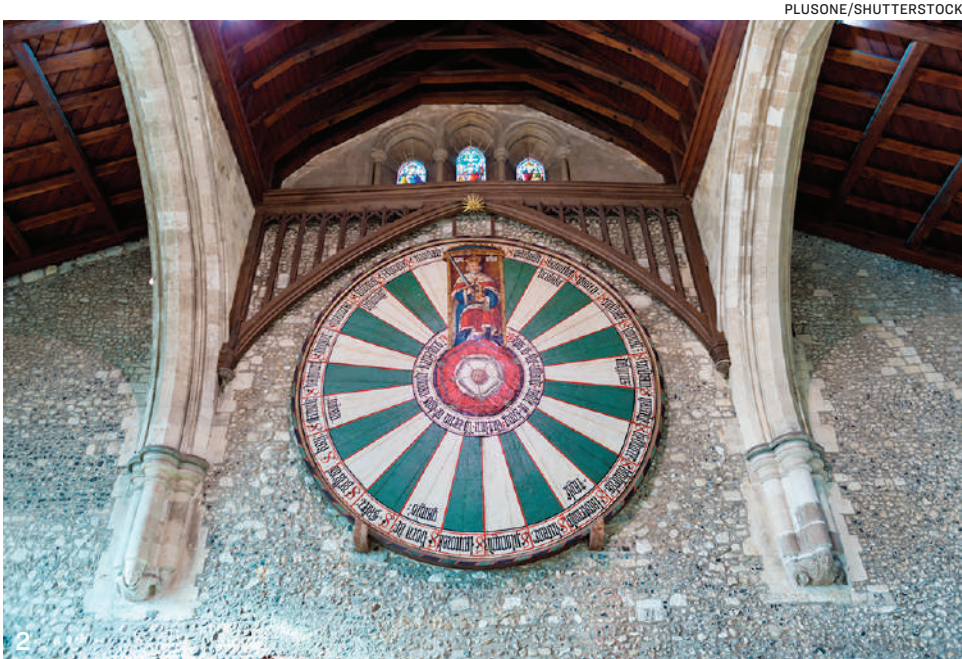
For about 60 days a year, between July and September, the castle and gardens are open to visitors. This year, an Egyptian exhibition will celebrate the achievements of the fifth Earl of Carnarvon who, with Howard Carter, discovered the tomb of Tutankhamun. Anyone interested in the new adventures of the Crawley family can purchase a ticket for the premiere of "Downton Abbey" on Sept. 13 in the UK and Sept. 20 in the United States.

Wibke Carter is a travel writer who hails from Germany. She has lived in New Zealand and New York, and presently enjoys life in London. Her website is WibkeCarter.com





HIGHCLERE CASTLE



PLUSONE/SHUTTERSTOCK



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**Then and now,
the Great
Hall, the last
remaining part
of Winchester
Castle, is a place
where history and
legend meet.**




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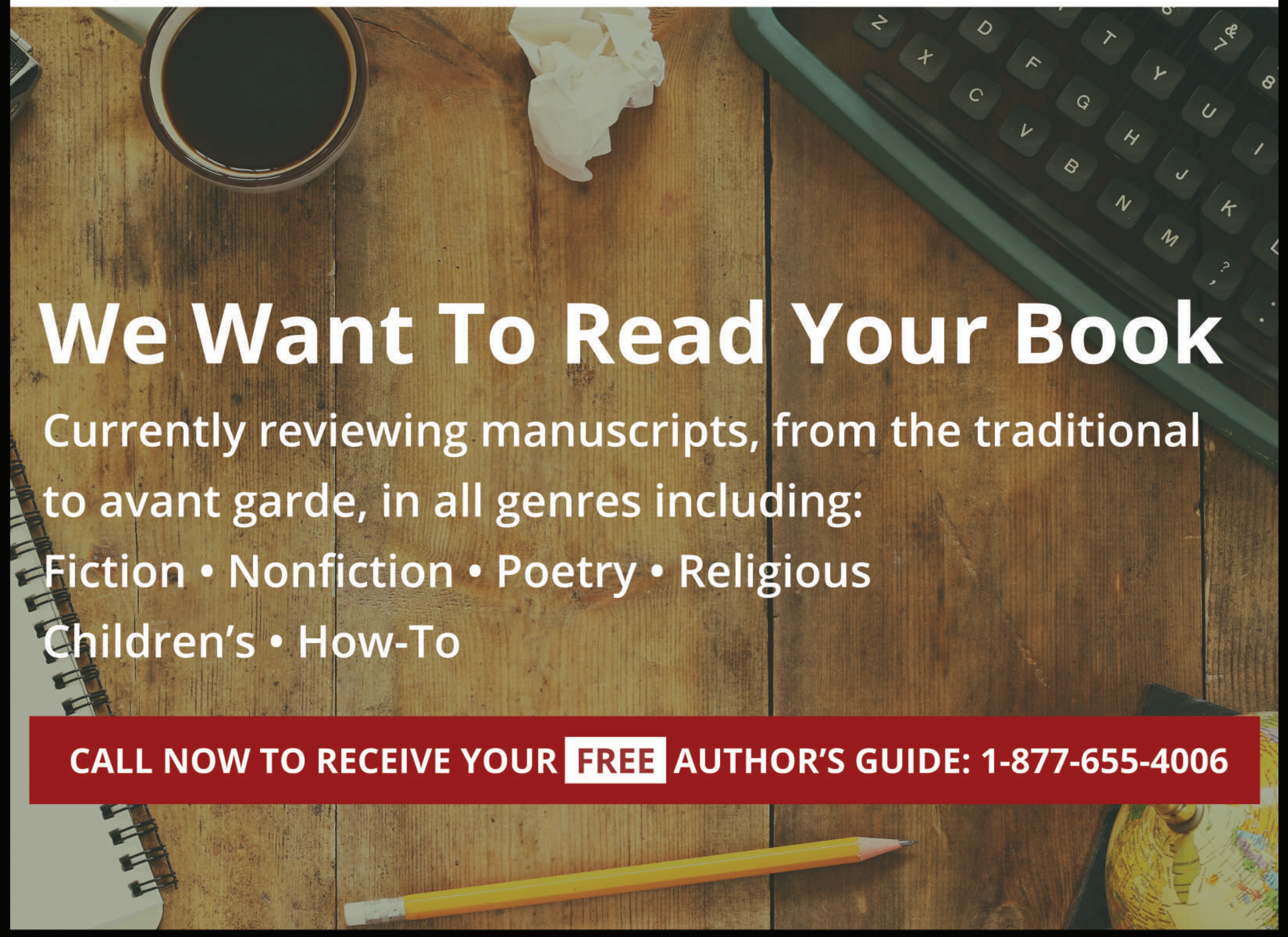
- 1 - Highclere Castle lies 23 miles north from Winchester.
- 2 - A replica of the famous Round Table of Arthurian legend at Winchester Castle.
- 3 - A brass plaque commemorates Jane Austen in Winchester Cathedral.
- 4 - Chawton House. It's believed that many of the social gatherings here inspired Austen.
- 5 - Jane Austen's House Museum.
- 6 - Poet John Keats walked under these stone arches, at Winchester Castle.



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