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## *How to get there*

Chawton is 1 mile Southwest of Alton, signposted off the roundabout at the junction of the A31 Winchester road with the A32 Fareham Road.

### ***Transport***

Public car park available in Chawton village

Rail: Alton Station

Bus: Service from Alton Station to Alton Butts, then 12 minute walk down Winchester Road to Chawton village.

### ***Places to visit***

Jane Austen's House and Bookshop

Chawton Church

### ***Refreshment***

The Grey Friar public house

Cassandra's Cup restaurant

The Rose and Crown, Upper Farringdon, passed on the route

The Royal Oak, Lower Farringdon, a short detour from the route

### ***Further Information***

Alton Tourist Information Centre: 01420 88448

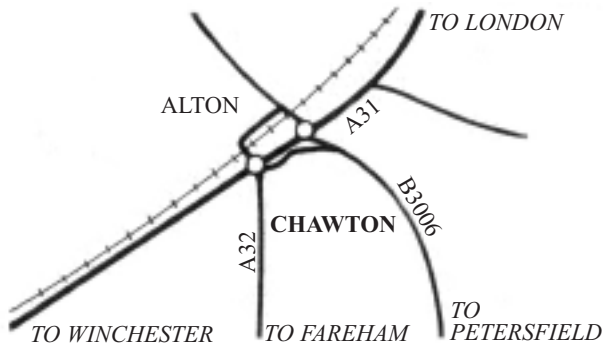
St. Swithun's Way and other walks [www.hants.gov.uk/walking](http://www.hants.gov.uk/walking).

### ***Credits***

This leaflet was prepared by Anne Mallinson of the Selborne Circle or Rural Writers for East Hampshire District Council.

### ***Maps***

Ordnance Survey Explorer 133 and 132



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## *Literary Walks in East Hampshire*



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## **Jane Austen 1775-1817**

### ***A Walk from Chawton to Farringdon***

*“...and the plan is that we should all walk with her to drink tea at Faringdon”*

Letter to Cassandra, 29th May 1811

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## *Points of literary interest*

- a Jane Austen spent the last eight years of her life in Chawton, from 1809 until 1817. The 17th century house, now known as Jane Austen's House, is open to the public. Here, where she lived with her mother and sister, Cassandra, and their friend Martha Lloyd, Jane wrote or revised her six great novels.
- b This valley contains land springs which provide one of the sources of the river Wey. Jane Austen wrote of it as "a fine running stream" in January 1817, "...it is nothing but what beautifies us and does to talk of". Sometimes there is no water to be seen, for the Lavant stream is rather elusive.
- c Edward, Jane Austen's third brother, took the name of Knight on inheriting the estate at Chawton. This included the 'Great House', as it was known. Jane often visited the house, particularly when Edward and his family were in residence.
- d Gilbert White, the 18th Century parson naturalist, lived at The Wakes in Selborne (see Selborne Literary Walk leaflet). Jane Austen refers to a special occasion of 'Gaities' on Selborne Common in which her own friends and Gilbert's nephew took part.
- e White was curate of Farringdon from 1761 to 1784, but it is the Revd. John Benn, who held the living of All Saints from 1797 to 1857, who claims our interest here, for his family were particular friends of the Austens and there was much visiting between the two villages. "Harriet Benn" wrote Jane Austen, "sleeps at the Great House to-night and spends to-morrow with us; and the plan is that we should all walk with her to drink tea at Faringdon".
- f Wood Barn, a small isolated farm, has disappeared but in Jane Austen's time the farm provided poultry for the table, as Jane record in a letter to her sister Cassandra, who was visiting their brother at Godmersham in Kent ... "We shall have pease soon - I mean to have them with a couple of Ducks from Wood Barn..." And they did on the 7th June that year, with the rector of Farringdon's sister, Miss Benn, who lived in Chawton, and Maria Middleton from the 'Great House'.
- g As you approach Jane Austen's House you pass thatched cottages on your left. Here by the roadside too was once a considerable pond, which in "sad weather" induced Jane to write rather dismally in March 1816... "Our Pond is brimfull and our roads are dirty and our walls are damp, and we sit wishing every bad day may be the last". However, the days themselves were not dull. She ends the letter... "We have had a great deal of fun lately with Postchaises stopping at the door; three times within a few days, we had a couple of agreeable Visitors turn in unexpectedly."

"Our Chawton home - how much we find  
Already in it, to our mind,  
And how convinced that when complete  
It will all other Houses beat,  
That ever have been made or mended,  
With rooms concise or rooms distended."

J. A. Austen, July 26 1809.

### **Acknowledgements:**

Jane Austen's Letters  
edited Deidre Le Faye (OUP)

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# Route

The route is about 4½ miles (2¾ hours)

- 1 The walk starts from the centre of Chawton on the outskirts of Alton; once on the main highway to Winchester Jane Austen's village is now by passed and lies to the south of the A31.

Jane Austen's house (see a) is situated in the village and there is a public car park opposite. The Grey Friar Inn is nearby.

From the car park turn left and follow the old road, now a no through road, towards Chawton Church which lies along the valley on your left (see b). On the higher ground behind the Church of St Nicholas the Elizabethan Chawton House can be seen (see c).

In the churchyard the graves of Jane Austen's mother and sister, Cassandra, can be found round the back of the church. The building is Victorian for the church was rebuilt in 1871 after a disastrous fire.

Continue along the old road to its end and turn left. cross a stile and follow a grassy path parallel to the busy road - a far cry from the days when this was the Gosport turnpike road in Jane Austen's time!

- 2 Soon, a stile on your left takes you away from the road, as you cut diagonally across a field and through Noar Copse, leading to higher ground beyond. Keep straight on to Berryhill Plantation.

Here, at the highest point, you can look away, left, over the countryside - and a line of pylons - to Gilbert White's village of Selborne, which Jane Austen knew (see d).

Continue along the track bordered by tall Wellingtonia trees which give way to yew (trees) as you descend into Upper Farringdon. Turn left as you reach houses and the playground. Go through the farm yard with Manor Farm House on your left. Turn right to the church of All Saints (see e). Enter the churchyard via the lychgate.

- 3 From the church porch walk across the churchyard into the lane. Turn left and after a short distance turn right, you will soon reach the Rose and Crown Inn.

Turn right and continue straight on between attractive cottages on either side, turn right into Church Road and take the footpath by the telephone box at the entrance to Parsonage Close. On passing the playground again turn left along track to the A32. Cross this road with care and follow the road opposite for a short distance. A footpath leads off to the right just before the bridge. Take this path down onto the disused Meon Valley railway line which ran between Alton and Fareham. This part of the route follows the St. Swithun's Way.

- 4 Follow the track as far as it goes. Away on your left the wooded countryside rises to where Wood Barn once stood, (see f).
- 5 At the end of the old railway track follow field edge towards a clump of trees. Walk through here to a stile at the far end. Climb stile and follow hedgerow, right, back to the A32.
- 6 Cross the road with care, mount the steps and take the stile into the field opposite. Keep straight on with the belt of trees on your right. Continue through kissing gate and into Ferney Close. On reaching the old road again turn left and retrace your steps to the village, (see g).

# Map

