



Jane Austen

SOUTHAMPTON



Jane Austen, her mother, sister Cassandra, brother Frank and his wife Mary and family friend Martha Lloyd moved to Southampton in 1806.

Southampton was still a fashionable Spa town, and close enough to the naval centre of Portsmouth to make it a popular residence for naval officers. When Mrs Austen was widowed in January 1805, she and her two spinster daughters found themselves in straightened circumstances so when the offer to join Frank's household was made, it was gratefully accepted. The Austens were not without connections in the town. Jane's second cousin Elizabeth Austen had married the prominent John Butler Harrison II who was twice mayor of Southampton.

Front cover image & here inside of Jane Austen by Cassandra Austen © National Portrait Gallery
Cover main image Old Southampton by Tobias Young © Southampton City Council Arts & Heritage.



For further information on Jane Austen's life in Southampton there is a companion book 'Jane Austen & Southampton Spa' available from info@sarahsiddonsfanclub.org



In 2025, Southampton will be celebrating 250 years since the birth of famed author, and Southampton-resident, Jane Austen.

JANE AUSTEN 250
Visit Southampton

Discover Jane Austen's Southampton story at www.visitsouthampton.co.uk/janeausten250

Our thanks to the Sarah Siddons Fan Club Theatre Company who produced the original version of this trail www.sarahsiddonsfanclub.org.uk

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1 The Bargate

The Bargate was still the main entrance to Southampton, although because of the town's popularity and the increase in its population, there were new developments in Above Bar and 'country' houses around The Avenue. Jane's second cousin Harriet Austen leased a house just outside the gate at No 1 Hanover Buildings. On the south side of the Bargate is a statue of King George III presented to the town by the Marquis of Lansdowne in 1809 on the occasion of the king's golden jubilee.

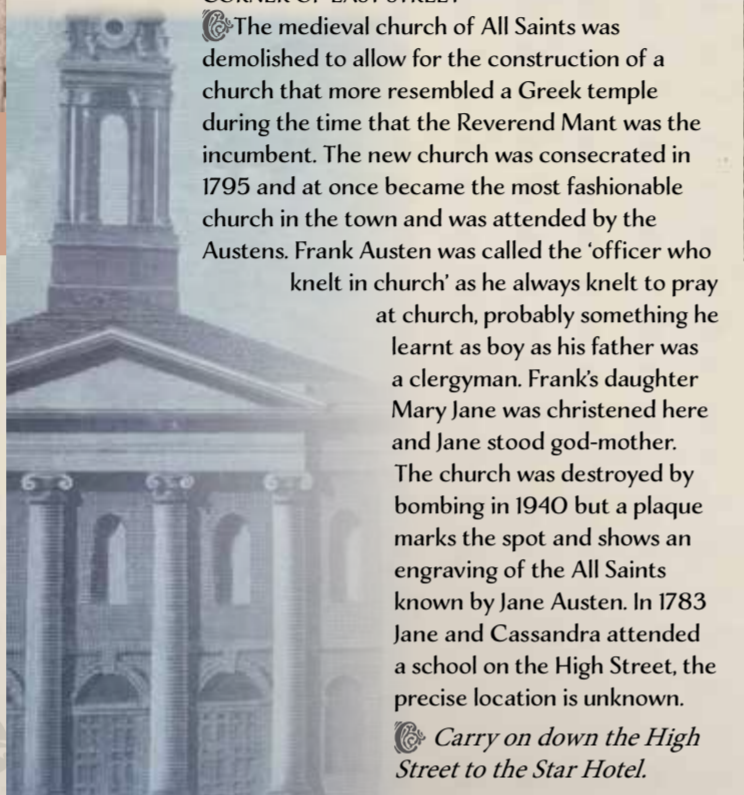
Walk down the High Street to the corner with East Street.

2 All Saints Church

CORNER OF EAST STREET

The medieval church of All Saints was demolished to allow for the construction of a church that more resembled a Greek temple during the time that the Reverend Mant was the incumbent. The new church was consecrated in 1795 and at once became the most fashionable church in the town and was attended by the Austens. Frank Austen was called the 'officer who knelt in church' as he always knelt to pray at church, probably something he learnt as boy as his father was a clergyman. Frank's daughter Mary Jane was christened here and Jane stood god-mother. The church was destroyed by bombing in 1940 but a plaque marks the spot and shows an engraving of the All Saints known by Jane Austen. In 1783 Jane and Cassandra attended a school on the High Street, the precise location is unknown.

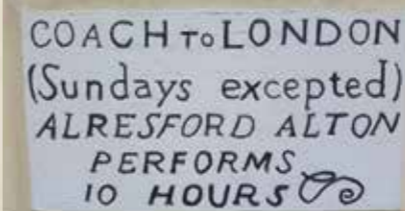
Carry on down the High Street to the Star Hotel.



3 The Star Hotel

Travel was much advanced by road improvements that took place in the eighteenth century, especially when Telford and MacAdam introduced tarmacked roads. This led to a great increase in coach traffic and the development of coaching inns such as The Star and The Dolphin which were only two of several inns that lined the High Street. The Star is still has its coaching sign which boasts that visitors could reach London in ten hours.

Cross the High Street, turn right and then go left up Castle Lane, cross over the main road, Castle Way and proceed to the town walls, view of West Quay.



4 The Spa Gardens & Spa Rooms

The Spa was adjacent to where the West Quay shopping centre is situated (Spa Road survives off Portland Terrace).

In Jane's day the area to the north of Arundel tower was beautifully landscaped and a botanical garden was established by William Bridgewater. The site was chosen because a chalybeate spring had been discovered which health giving waters were said to cure jaundice, scurvy, paralytic disorders, green and yellow fever, barrenness in women, intestinal blockages, feebleness experience by young females, fainting fits, lassitude and rabies. Subscriptions to the Spa were 15s per year (2d per glass for non-subscribers), poor people were able to have the water for free before 8 a.m. The actress, Sarah Siddons owned a house the other side of the gardens.



on Portland Street, which had an unrestricted view across the western bay of Southampton. Mrs Siddons was Jane Austen's favourite actress, although she missed her Southampton performances in the Tragedy of Douglas and Mrs Beverley in The Gamester.

Follow the line of the walls southwards to the top of the forty steps.



5 Forest View

This spot was a favourite with artists, as you could see views of the New Forest. John Constable and JMW Turner both visited Southampton and drew and painted its landscape, and the painter Tobias Young lived in the town capturing many of its vistas, now lost. The Southampton City Art Gallery have paintings by Constable, Young, William Shayer, Maria Spilsbury and other Georgian Artists. The area around Forest View was developed with new houses in Albion Place by the architect John Plaw, which occasioned the need to provide better access to the beach, and so the forty steps were built. Sadly this area was destroyed by air raids in 1940.

With your back to the forty steps walk back towards the main road then turn right down Castle Way until you reach the castle gate steps, go up the steps to Lansdowne House & Lansdowne Hill.



Jane Austen

Heritage Walking Trail

SOUTHAMPTON

JANE AUSTEN 250

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6 Lansdowne House & Lansdowne Hill

Lansdowne house was owned by the second Marquis of Lansdowne and stood at the foot of the hill on which the ruins of Southampton's medieval castle stood. The Marquis had acquired the site when he inherited the title in 1805 and proceeded to build a gothic castle on the site, a great attraction to the Spa town. The castle was short lived as the marquis died in 1809 and his half-brother inherited the title. The marchioness left Southampton in 1813 and the castle site was sold to developers and was gone by 1818. The third marquis, was an admirer of *Pride & Prejudice*. Mary Arabelle, widow of the second Marquis lived in Lansdowne House during her widowhood. On the outside of the house are two fire plaques, marks of the insurance companies who offered protection and recompense if fire broke out in the premises. A fire had taken place on the High Street, very close to the property, during Jane Austen's time in the town, and she wrote in length about the burning of Webbes the pastry cooks in 1808, which also gutted adjoining shops before being brought under control.

Carry on straight across Castle Square to Cement Terrace.



7 2 Castle Square

THE AUSTENS HOUSE WAS ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF CEMENT TERRACE.

When the Austen's first moved to Southampton they lived in lodgings on the High Street before leasing the large tenement on Castle Square from the Marquis of Lansdowne. Frank Austen paid £40 rates per year for the privilege. The house had a superb garden which ran down to the town walls which Jane said was considered 'the best in the Town'. Jane rented a piano for the house, and Frank was employed making fringes for the curtains. They left this house in early 1809, with Mrs Austen and her daughters moving to their final home in Chawton, a cottage on the estate owned by Mrs Austen's son Edward.

Retrace your steps back to Upper Bugle Street, walk southwards until you reach St Michaels square. Turn right down the side of Tudor House and proceed down Blue Anchor Lane. Opposite is a view of The Quays.



8 Long Rooms & Martins Baths

THE QUIAYS IS THE SITE OF THE LONG ROOMS & MARTINS BATHS

Mr Martin built a bathing establishment on what was then the shore of Southampton, so that visitors could 'Take the Flounce' being dipped in the saltwater - which some physicians also recommended patients drank. We do not know if Jane bathed whilst in Southampton but she bathed in Lyme. Bathing was a cure for all manner of ills, such as semi-paralysis, rheumatism, gout, and corpulence, and was so popular Martin added viewing rooms to his baths. These rooms developed in the Long Rooms where the summer assembly balls would be held. To get to the Long Rooms via Blue Anchor Lane meant the real possibility of being set upon by cutpurses, who would literally cut the strings of a purse to run off with its contents.

Turn left at the bottom of Blue Anchor Lane and proceed to Anspach Place.

9 Anspach Place

NOW THE PIG IN THE WALL

This property, along with several others around the West Gate was, during Jane Austen's time in Southampton, owned by Lady Elizabeth Craven, Princess Berkeley and Margravine of Anspach. She was a more famous writer than Jane during her lifetime. She wrote travelogues about her journeys to Russia, the Crimea and Constantinople as well as plays and pantomimes. She was also notorious for having left her husband, Lord Craven, and then living with the Margrave of Anspach before they were both free to marry. When her second husband died she came to live in Southampton before taking off on her travels again, dying in Italy.



Carry on to West Gate.



10 West Gate

Once owned by Walter Taylor, West Gate was his first factory where he designed blocks for use on naval ships and invented the circular saw. He eventually moved to new premises at Woodmill and it is said Nelson visited him there. Frank Austen would have been very familiar with his inventions which made the manoeuvring of ships and cannon so much easier, giving the Royal Navy a great advantage over the French navy.

Walk through the gate, and carry on up West Gate Street Pause as you cross Bugle Street to look at the streetscape and paving.



11 Bugle Street Houses

The Austens would have frequently walked down Bugle Street where many of its original medieval houses were given a Georgian make-over, with the addition of sash windows, and bow windows, the brickwork overplastered with stucco, with iron railings in front, and doors with added fanlights, pediments and pillars. Some houses had windows filled in to reduce the amount of window tax they had to pay, a tax introduced to help finance the wars with France. The Southampton Pavement Commissioners were granted, by act of Parliament, the powers to improve the streets by adding paving stones, and to install gas lamps, which can still be seen today on Bugle Street.

12 The Duke of Wellington

The Duke of Wellington is a medieval building, but in 1815 to commemorate the Duke of Wellington's victory against Napoleon at Waterloo, changed its name from the Shipwright Arms. A number of veterans from Waterloo are buried in Southampton Old Cemetery, on the Common, including Lt Colonel William Hewett, the last of the English officers who fought at Waterloo as a junior captain. He lived on until 1891, dying at the age of 95. General Shrapnel was also a former resident of Bugle Street, the shell he developed and which bears his name was considered to be one of the factors in Wellington's Victory.

Walk south down Bugle Street.



13 Register Office

FORMERLY EDWARD VI SCHOOL

The Headmaster of the Edward VI School, the Rev. Richard Mant was the victim of Jane's creative imagination. She wrote to her sister Cassandra suggesting a romantic entanglement between Mant and Martha Lloyd, the result of which had caused Mrs Mant to flee to her daughter's house. The very upright clergyman, who was also vicar of All Saints, would have been horrified.

Walk south down Bugle Street.



14 The Wool House

NOW DANCING MAN BREWERY

The French Revolutionary Wars and the Napoleonic Wars meant that Southampton was awash with militia and army regiments, particularly in the 1790s when Jane made a visit to the town to stay with her Butler Harrison relations in St Marys. The returning soldiers were often riddled with disease which in 1783 had caused an outbreak of typhus in the town, unfortunately Jane and Cassandra were in Southampton as parlour boarders at Mrs Cawley's school. Both succumbed to 'putrid throat'. Mrs Austen took the girls back to their home in Steventon where Jane very nearly died. Success in battles also meant there were an influx of French prisoners of war and Jane's brother Henry, whilst serving in the militia, was sent to Southampton to escort prisoners to Stapleton Prison near Bristol 1793. The Wool House in Southampton was one premises used as a temporary prison.

Walk eastwards along Town Quay then turn left and go north up French Street.

15 The French St. Theatre & 58 French St.



Jane attended performances at the French Street Theatre but did not think much of what she saw, yet the building was based on the same plan as Covent Garden and some of the most important actors of the age performed there: Charles Kemble, Frances Maria Kelly and Sarah Siddons. After the death of Nelson at Trafalgar the owner of the theatre, Mr Collins, staged a 'Victory' Trafalgar benefit. On 14 September 1807 Jane and her family saw two plays starring the comedian, John Bannister. 58 French Street was used as theatrical digs for the theatre.

With your back to 58 French Street, cross the road and proceed along Brehouse Lane to the High Street, turn right to the bottom of the High Street, cross the road via the crossing and proceed along Winkle Street.



16 Gods House Gate

NOW GOD'S HOUSE TOWER ARTS & HERITAGE VENUE

In Jane Austen's day, God's House gate and tower were the town's debtors and felons prison, but lead out to a fashionable walking place called The Beach, which would take visitors down to the River Itchen where they could take a ferry boat to Peartree or travel up the river to Northam to see the boat builders. Jane made that very journey to Northam with her two nephews, who came to stay at Castle Square on the death of their mother Elizabeth Knight in 1808. The land around The Beach was marshy and in 1806 had frozen over allowing for skating, which Jane reported her brother Frank was keen to try.

Retrace your steps back under the gate, turn right and follow the line of the old wall till you reach Briton Street turn left and at the end of the road turn right turn onto the High Street, go north and cross Bernard Street.

17 Holy Rood Church

HOLY ROOD DIBDIN PLAQUE

Holy Rood has always been associated with sailors, and is now a maritime memorial garden. On the outside of the church tower is a plaque to

Charles Dibdin an actor, composer and theatrical impresario, who was born in Southampton in 1745. He wrote many patriotic songs during the Napoleonic Wars which the French Emperor said boosted recruitment and raised morale in the navy. Jane Austen owned copies of Dibdin's work and amended the title of his 'Soldier's Lament' to the 'Sailor's Lament'.



INTERIOR TAUNTON TOMB

At the rear of the church is the tomb of Richard Taunton who formed a joint-stock company in 1750 with Frederick Prince of Wales, a royal visitor who popularized the town as a Bathing Resort. Taunton built herring busses (ships) at Southampton making it a centre for the herring industry. This may have influenced Jane Austen's quip:

'Beware of the unmeaning luxuries of Bath and the stinking fish of Southampton'.

Carry on up the High Street to the Dolphin on the right hand side.

18 The Dolphin

The upstairs rooms of the Dolphin, with their magnificent bow windows, were the venue for the winter assembly balls. Jane Austen danced there on the occasion of her 18th birthday, whilst staying with her Butler Harrison relations. She also became god-mother to Elizabeth-Matilda Butler Harrison. Just prior to the Austen's leaving Southampton Jane attended two balls in December and January in the company of their friends the Lances (who gave their name to Lances Hill, which was near their house at Chessell). Jane was sad that Emma Lance and her sister Mary only had partners for two dances. Emma died in 1809 aged just 18, her elder sister

Mary lived to a ripe old age, and one of her favourite memories was attending the Duchess of Richmond's ball prior to Waterloo. Jane herself was asked to dance, her partner having pleasing 'black eyes' and as Jane remembered her earlier visit to the Dolphin commented that she was 'quite as happy now as then'.

