



Ten things you never knew about Hampshire

Famous for any number of reasons, Hampshire is also regarded as the birthplace of modern fly-fishing, wind-surfing and bird-watching. But here's our list of *Top 10 Things You Never Knew* about the county...

1. Winchester - once King Alfred's capital, and the venue for the marriage of Queen Mary I to King Philip II of Spain – has been crowned the best place to live in Britain by *The Sunday Times*. The cathedral city inspired John Keats to write his famous *Ode To Autumn* in 1819. Today, the ancient capital includes restaurants such as Chesil Rectory and Michelin-starred Black Rat.
2. Leckford Estate in the Test Valley was purchased by John Spedan Lewis in 1929, and has been farmed for over 87 years. Home to The Waitrose Farm, it's a place where visitors will find a fabulous farm shop, café, a garden nursery in nearby Longstock, and see one of the finest water gardens in the world. Leckford village itself comprises around 40 houses and cottages, which are occupied by present or retired employees of the John Lewis Partnership, and are painted in the partnership colours of green and white.
3. 2017 will see the county mark the 200th anniversary of the death of Jane Austen. Less well-known is the fact that 50 years later, Sweet Fanny Adams was brutally murdered by solicitor's clerk Frederick Baker in nearby Alton. A couple of years later, new rations of tinned mutton - introduced to sailors in Portsmouth - failed to impress the seamen, who suggested it might even be the butchered remains of poor Fanny Adams. "Fanny Adams" became national slang for mutton stew, and then for anything worthless...from which comes the current use of Sweet Fanny Adams or "Sweet FA".
4. Watercress has been grown commercially in Hampshire since the 19th century. Before modern production, the Arle in Alresford was one of the principal streams used for growing watercress. With the expansion of dedicated watercress farms fed by spring water, Alresford soon became the capital of watercress with large quantities being sent to London by stagecoach and later by train on what became known as 'The Watercress Line'. Much of the watercress grown in Hampshire is now packed locally for national distribution. A Watercress Festival is held in Alresford each year, in May.
5. The annual Great Hampshire Sausage and Pie Competition attracts interest from local butchers who compete for top prizes in a variety of categories including best Hampshire Sausage, Hot Pie, Traditional Pork Pie, Black Pudding, Meatballs & Faggots, and Charcuterie. The competition highlights the local meat products available across the county and the expertise which goes into making them. Entries are examined and assessed by a panel of professional judges working alongside guest judges - while strict national guidelines focus on external and internal appearance, texture, structure, colour, smell and taste.

6. Hambledon Vineyard's Non-Vintage Classic Cuvée tastes better than French Champagne, according to a recent blind tasting organised by *Noble Rot*. Hambledon's Classic Cuvée topped the list ahead of famous French champagnes Veuve Clicquot, Taittinger and Pol Roger. Hampshire's chalky soils are similar to that of France's Champagne region. Combined with recent innovations and improvements in winemaking, it comes as little surprise that the county is now leading the way in terms of UK wine production.
7. Hampshire's Highclere Castle is the main filming location for popular ITV drama, *Downton Abbey*. Set within a thousand acres of parkland, the castle and its grounds also provided the backdrop for *Jeeves and Wooster*, starring Stephen Fry and Hugh Laurie.
8. Hampshire is world-renowned for its gardens, but Upton Grey Garden would certainly appear in any top ten list. Just over 30 years ago this garden had fallen into a state of disrepair. But underneath the jungle were the foundations of a very special garden - one that Gertrude Jekyll had designed in 1908 for a house belonging to Charles Holme, a leading figure in the Arts and Crafts movement. It is now open to the general public May-July.
9. Portsmouth FC is a record holder for holding the title of FA Cup champions for the longest time. This was due to the outbreak of WWII - which resulted in the competition being cancelled for seven years after Portsmouth's victory against Wolverhampton Wanderers in 1939. Portsmouth was tasked with keeping the cup safe, and it was moved around the city before coming to rest at the Bird in Hand Pub, where it was kept under the landlord's bed each night.
10. Leading global fashion brand Burberry was founded by a Basingstoke draper. In 1857, 21-year-old Thomas Burberry opened a clothing outfitters in Basingstoke, providing innovative, functional outerwear. Farmers and sportsmen were the original market for Burberry's famous trench coats, which have gone on to be worn by everyone, from rockstars to aristocrats.