

10 Things You Never Knew About Hampshire

The world's first ecologist

July 18 2020 marks the tercentenary of Gilbert White's birth. Gilbert White's House & Gardens is located at his former Hampshire home, in Selborne, and is home to the original manuscript of the *Natural History of Selborne* and other treasures. Not a widely recognised figure, White (often called the world's first ecologist) is a hero amongst naturalists, and GW300 provides the opportunity to help to tell this incredible story.

Leckford Estate in the Test Valley

Purchased by John Spedan Lewis in 1929, the Estate has been farmed for over 87 years. Home to The Waitrose Farm, it is also close to Longstock, which boasts 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.

Sweet Fanny Adams

Sweet Fanny Adams was brutally murdered by solicitor's clerk Frederick Baker in 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".

Watercress

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.

Highclere Castle

The main filming location for popular ITV drama, and big screen adaptation, 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.

Portsmouth FC

The club has the record 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.

D-Day

Hampshire played a pivotal role in the D-Day landings of 1944, and was at the centre of the nation's 75th anniversary commemorations in 2019. The village of Southwick with its thatched roofs and half-timbered cottages remains largely unchanged from June 6 1944, when this little Hampshire village was the centre for Operation Overlord. It was at Southwick House - the ancestral home of the Thistlethwayte family - that General Dwight D Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force, made his momentous decision to commit three million men and 2,727 ships to an operation which

turned the tide of World War II. The original 'D-Day Map' still famously hangs in Southwick House.

Mary Rose

The Mary Rose was a favourite ship of King Henry VIII and sank in The Solent in 1545. She was raised in 1982 along with a vast array of exceptionally preserved artefacts, including the bones of 179 people and the ship's dog, plus a urethral syringe, leather shoes, nit-combs, rat bones and an early vanity mirror. The ship and many other items are preserved at the Mary Rose Museum, in Portsmouth.

The Legend of King Arthur

Winchester's Great Hall is home to the legendary King Arthur's Round Table. This 5.5 metre diameter object is now famously hung from a wall and attracts visitors from all around the world. Probably dating back to the 13th century, this object was painted in the 16th century with a Tudor rose in its centre and Henry VIII at the top, with 24 places for his knights. Winchester itself was once King Alfred's capital, and the venue for the marriage of Queen Mary I to King Philip II of Spain. The cathedral city also inspired John Keats to write his famous *Ode To Autumn* in 1819.

The birthplace of cricket

Hambledon Cricket Club - founded in Hampshire in 1750 - is known as 'the cradle of cricket'. The club was once the most powerful and foremost cricket club in England, and was instrumental in helping to develop many of the rules of the game, prior to the focus switching to Lord's. Thomas Lord, founder of the MCC at St John's Wood, is buried in West Meon Church graveyard in Hampshire, where the village pub is named after him. And Hampshire's William Nicholson - one of the MCC's star players - supposedly gave the Club its colours.

*[This background feature is prepared for, and on behalf of, Visit Hampshire:
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