

Literary Austen, Dickens & Other Literary Giants



From inspirational bustling cities to idyllic secluded countryside, South East England has been the muse to many great English writers. Following are a selection of some of the many great English writers who have called South East England home.

One of the most prolific English writers is **Jane Austen** who was born in the charming village of Steventon in Hampshire. Later on in life she spent much of her time in the picturesque village of Chawton in Hampshire. She passed away whilst visiting the city of Winchester in Hampshire, in 1817 and was buried in the city's famous cathedral.

Another great English writer, **Charles Dickens**, was born in Portsmouth in Hampshire in 1812. However he is perhaps best known for his associations with the city of Rochester in Kent. He lived in the city for many years and used it as the setting for many of his most famous novels.

More than 100 years later, another memorable English writer arrived in South East England in the form of **Kenneth Grahame**. He spent many of his formative years on the banks of the River Thames in Berkshire. Later on in life he created the celebrated *Wind in the Willows*, one of the classics of children's literature.

Further authors of note who lived in South East England include **Roald Dahl** and **J.R.R. Tolkien**. Both spent much of their lives in the region, however, Dahl was born in Wales and Tolkien in South Africa. Famous children's author Dahl had many connections with the South East – his home near Great Missenden in Buckinghamshire still houses his famous writing shed and gypsy caravan. Also in Great Missenden is the Roald Dahl museum and story centre. J.R.R. Tolkien was often associated with Oxford in Oxfordshire, where he taught at the colleges and spent time socialising, and it was also here that he was inspired to write many of his books. Magdalen College in Oxford was also important in the life of the remarkable English writer **C.S. Lewis**.

Childhood memories can be evoked by a visit to the Red Lion in Knotty Green. The famous children's author **Enid Blyton** accompanied her husband to their local pub in Beaconsfield and penned most of her books in the snug, now called The Enid Blyton Room. You can take a trip down memory and share a 'bottle of ginger beer' as you rekindle the adventures of the Famous Five, Noddy and many more childhood stories.

www.visitsoutheastengland.com/inspire-me/literary-links

❖ Jane Austen



Most famous Jane Austen's novels

Pride and Prejudice

Sense and Sensibility

Emma

Persuasion

Mansfield Park

Northanger Abbey

Steventon Rectory - Hampshire: Jane Austen was born in Steventon Rectory, North Hampshire, where her father was rector. The rectory no longer stands but you can visit the 12th century church where she was baptised.

www3.hants.gov.uk/austen/deane-parsonage/steventon-village.htm

Chawton House Library - Hampshire: her brother Edward lived at nearby Chawton House, now the Chawton House Library, which is open for tours. Visit this fascinating blend of architectural styles and features, as well as splendid gardens.

www.chawtonhouse.org/

The Wyne, Basingstoke - Hampshire: dances were a popular activity of the day and Jane Austen loved to go to them at the Wyne, a warm red-bricked Tudor mansion built in the 16th century and sets in 13 acres of beautiful relaxing gardens.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/vyne/



Jane Austen's House, Chawton village - Hampshire: visit Jane Austen's House, a small private museum, where you can view the bedroom she shared with her sister. Pride of place is her desk by the window in the parlour where so many Jane Austen classics were revised and written including *Mansfield Park*, *Emma* and *Persuasion*.

[Jane Austen's House Museum - About](#)

Winchester Cathedral - Hampshire: Jane Austen was buried in 1817 in Winchester Cathedral where a tablet pays tribute to her prolific life. This Europe's longest medieval Cathedral is home to the beautiful illuminated Winchester Bible, 12th-century wall paintings, medieval carvings, contemporary art and much more.

www.winchester-cathedral.org.uk/

For more information on this great British literary figures visit:

www.visitsoutheastengland.com/inspire-me/literary-links/jane-austen

❖ Charles Dickens



Most famous Charles Dickens' novels

Bleak House

David Copperfield

Little Dorrit

Great Expectations

Oliver Twist

Our Mutual Friend

The Pickwick Papers

A Tale of Two Cities

Charles Dickens Birthplace Museum, Portsmouth - Hampshire: Charles Dickens was born on 7th February 1812, not in a 'bleak house' but in a cosy terraced house in Portsmouth. Now the Charles Dickens Birthplace Museum, you can see the room where he was born and the couch on which he died in 1870.

www.charlesdickensbirthplace.co.uk/

Broadstairs - Kent: one of his most colourful characters was Betsy Trotwood from *David Copperfield*, who was based on Miss Mary Pearson Strong. Charles Dickens often visited her in Broadstairs, Kent. A Dickens House Museum containing memorabilia prints, costume displays and Victoriana is dedicated to this great author.

www.visitthetant.co.uk/attractions/dickens-house-museum/8522

Restoration House, Rochester - Kent: the house was used by Charles Dickens as the home of Miss Havesham in *Great Expectations*. It is so named because King Charles II stayed there on his way to reclaim England's throne, an event known as the Restoration. This medieval mansion house has a wonderful collection of English furniture and paintings, pottery and trees, as well as a splendid garden.

www.restorationhouse.co.uk/



Rochester - Kent: The ancient cathedral city of Rochester, with its Norman castle was cherished by Charles Dickens, who lived in the area as a child and returned as a successful author. Rochester would feature in many of Charles Dickens books; wander down the Victorian High Street and you'll feel like you have stepped into the pages of *The Pickwick Papers*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* and *Great Expectations*.

www.visitkent.co.uk/destinations/rochester-chatham-and-gillingham/6533

Dickens World, Chatham - Kent: You can really get into the spirit of Charles Dickens' books here; go down Victorian Sewers, visit Newgate prison cells and call into Fagin's Den.

www.dickensworld.co.uk/

For more information, please visit:

www.visitsoutheastengland.com/inspire-me/literary-links/charles-dickens

❖ **Kenneth Grahame**



Most famous Kenneth Grahame's books

The Wind in the Willows

The Reluctant Dragon

Toad of Toad Hall

The Golden Age

Pagan Papers

River and Rowing Museum, Henley on Thames - Oxfordshire: *The Wind in the Willows*, so magically told by Kenneth Grahame, comes to life in an exhibition that tells the story through 3D models, sounds and dramatic lighting, at the River and Rowing Museum.

www.rrm.co.uk/

Mapledurham House, Reading - Berkshire: this late 16th century Elizabethan house is reputed to have been the inspiration for E. H. Shepard's illustrations of Kenneth Grahame's *Toad Hall*. Mapledurham House is today open to the public and located within the grounds is the Mapledurham Watermill.

www.mapledurham.co.uk/index.php

Cookham - Berkshire: Kenneth Grahame lived with his grandmother at 'The Mount' in Cookham Dean. It is thought this is where he wrote the book and it is certainly accepted that the river scenes between Cookham and Henley inspired the work along with Winter Hill above it.

www.windsor.gov.uk/discover-the-area/cookham-p281711



For more information, please visit:

www.visitsoutheastengland.com/inspire-me/literary-links/kenneth-grahame

❖ **Roald Dahl**



Most famous Roald Dahl's books

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

James and the Giant Peach

Matilda

The Fantastic Mr. Fox

The Witches

The BFG

The Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre, Great Missenden - Buckinghamshire: The Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre is located in Great Missenden, the village where Roald Dahl lived and

wrote many of his famous novels. The centre is a fun place where you can learn about the life of Roald Dahl, get involved in the story-telling sessions and concoct a revolting recipe in Cafe Twit.

www.roalddahl.com/museum

Roald Dahl Children's Gallery, Aylesbury - Buckinghamshire: You can ride in a Great Glass Elevator like in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, crawl through the tunnel from *Fantastic Mr Fox* and listen in on the world of the *BFG*, the Big Friendly Giant. The school reports of Roald Dahl are on show and make interesting reading.

www.buckscc.gov.uk/bcc/museum/dahl_gallery/dahl_childrens_gallery.page



❖ **J.R.R. Tolkien & C.S. Lewis**

Most famous J.R.R Tolkien's books



The Lord of the Rings

The Hobbit

The Silmarillion

The Children of Húrin

Unfinished Tales

Farmer Giles of Ham

The Adventures of Tom Bombadil

Most famous C.S. Lewis' books

The Chronicles of Narnia

Mere Christianity

The Screwtape Letters

The Space Trilogy

The Great Divorce

The Four Loves

Till We Have Faces



Oxford: Much of the life of J.R.R. Tolkien was spent in Oxford, and it was at his home in Northmoor Road that he wrote many of his books; he was best known for *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*.

www.visitoxfordandoxfordshire.com/see-and-do/Literary-Links.aspx

Museum of the History of Science - Oxfordshire: For a while, a young J.R.R. Tolkien worked for the Oxford English Dictionary based in the Old Ashmolean Building. Today the building is the Museum of the History of Science.

www.mhs.ox.ac.uk/

Wolvercote Cemetery - Oxfordshire: Tolkien was laid to rest in Wolvercote Cemetery.



Magdalen College - Oxfordshire: Magdalen College played a very important role in the life of C.S. Lewis, where he lived whilst working on his most famed book the *Chronicles of Narnia*. He was elected a Tutorial Fellow in English of Magdalen in 1925.
www.magd.ox.ac.uk/

Eagle and Child pub - Oxfordshire: J.R.R. Tolkien & C.S. Lewis were firm friends and liked to meet for a drink in the Eagle and Child pub in Oxford, where they pioneered a club, the Inklings. The pub is still there so why not call in and take a look at memorabilia displayed in the Rabbit Room, which they regularly frequented.
www.nicholsonspubs.co.uk/theeagleandchildoxford/

For more information, please visit:
www.visitsoutheastengland.com/inspire-me/literary-links/j-r-r-tolkein-and-c-s-lewis

❖ **Enid Blyton**

Most famous Enid Blyton's books

Famous Five

Malory Towers

The Faraway Tree

The Secret Seven

The Naughtiest Girl in the School

The Wishing Chair

Noddy (TV)



Red Lion Knotty Green, Beaconsfield - Buckinghamshire: The famous children's author Enid Blyton accompanied her husband to their local pub in Beaconsfield and penned most of her books in the snug, now called 'The Enid Blyton Room'. You can take a trip down memory and share a 'bottle of ginger beer' as you rekindle the adventures of the *Famous Five*, *Noddy* and many more childhood stories.
<http://www.redlionweb.com/>

❖ Literary itinerary

▪ On Jane Austen's footsteps

Day One

The village of Steventon is best known as the birth-place of the author Jane Austen. See where the rectory in which she once wrote *Pride & Prejudice*, *Northanger Abbey* and *Sense & Sensibility* once stood. It is marked by an old lime tree that is believed to have been planted by her eldest brother, James Austen.

Admire the memorial tablets to Austen family of the 12th century Steventon Church, where Jane Austen's father was rector.

Head for Basingstoke and have a seat in one of the numerous restaurants of the Winchester Street, or choose one of the 31 different restaurants of the Festival Place Shopping Centre.

Dances were a popular activity of the day and Jane Austen attended regular balls at the Assembly Rooms in Basingstoke, situated just above the Market Place in the city centre. The Assembly Rooms no longer exist but you can see a plaque erected on the wall of Barclays Bank, Market Place, site of the old Assembly Rooms.

Jane Austen also loved to go to dance at The Vyne, a warm red-bricked Tudor mansion of the 16th century. Admire its furniture, tapestries and paintings and explore its 13 acres of beautiful relaxing gardens.

Day Two

Follow Jane Austen footsteps through the beautiful countryside which inspired her novels. Take a trail across fields and through the village of Alton, where Jane and Cassandra normally went for a walk every day and used to go shopping.

Stop in Chawton and visit Jane Austen's House Museum, where she lived, wrote or revised her novels. Also, see the Chawton House Library where Jane's brother, Edward Knight lived. A short walk from Jane's home is St Nicholas's Church where Jane's mother and her sister are buried.

Have your lunch in Chawton at the Greyfriar or Cassandra's Cup, then head for Winchester.

Visit the Europe's longest medieval cathedral, the Winchester cathedral, where she was buried. Admire the tablet which pays tribute to her prolific life and discover the other hidden treasures such as the beautiful illuminated Winchester Bible, 12th century wall paintings, medieval carvings, contemporary art and the awe and wonder of this magnificent building.

See the house in which she lived a few weeks before she died in College Street. A commemorative plaque is on the wall of the house.



2014 is the 200th anniversary of the publication of *Mansfield Park*, the first book Jane wrote entirely at Chawton. The Jane Austen's House Museum will be celebrating all year with a range of events and activities.

- **Charles Dickens in Medway**



Day One

Charles Dickens' most impressionable childhood days were spent in Medway. The historic city of Rochester inspired the author so much that he featured it in his work more than any city, other than London.

Follow Dickens footsteps on a costumed guided walking tour of Rochester. This exciting 90-minute walking tour takes in the beautiful buildings the author immortalised in his books.

After the tour, why not take time to visit the heritage attractions that can be found on the historic High Street. Explore Rochester Cathedral, take in the spectacular views from the top of Rochester Castle and finish with a visit of the impressive 17th century Guildhall Museum with its excellent museum, Restoration House. Explore Dickens Discovery Room displaying numerous personal effects and texts of this great author.

Make the most of your visit by stopping for lunch in one of the many fine restaurants located on the High Street.

In the afternoon, Dickens World in Chatham Maritime will take you on a fascinating journey through Dickens' lifetime where you will step back into Dickensian England and be immersed in the urban streets, sounds and smells of the 19th century.

Day Two

Stroll around the charming gardens, beautiful beaches and bays, quirky little lanes, tiny flint houses and fishermen's cottages of Broadstairs.

Visit the lovely old house of Broadstairs Dickens Museum, once the home of Miss Mary Pearson Strong, on whom Charles Dickens based much of the character of Miss Betsey Trotwood in his novel 'David Copperfield'. Admire Dickens memorabilia prints, costume displays and Victoriana.

Have your lunch in one of the several restaurants and pubs of Harbour Street.

Head for the Charles Dickens' birthplace Museum in Portsmouth, which contains the bedroom where Charles was born. An exhibition room features a display on Charles Dickens and Portsmouth, as well as a small collection of memorabilia: the couch on which he died at his house in Kent, together with his snuff box, inkwell and paper knife, poignant reminders of an author celebrated for his prodigious talents and creative output.

The South East of England hosts a full calendar of colourful and lively events throughout the year. These include the famous twice-yearly Rochester Dickens Festivals and the one of Broadstairs.

- **Oxfordshire and its famous writers**



Book an Official Guided Walking Tour from the Oxford Tourist Information Centre and learn more about J.R.R. Tolkien & C.S. Lewis life in Oxford.

Young, J.R.R. Tolkien worked for the Oxford English Dictionary based in the Old Ashmolean Building. Today the building is the Museum of the History of Science. Discover its collection of historic scientific instruments from antiquity to the early 20th century.

Explore the quadrangles of the magnificent Bodleian Library, where Lewis would have studied and read. It contains over seven million items along 118 miles of shelving!

Visit Magdalen College, that played a very important role in the life of C.S. Lewis. He was a Fellow and taught here. It is also where he worked on his most famed book the *Chronicles of Narnia*.

Have lunch at Eagle and Child pub where liked to meet for a drink the Inklings.

Travel to Henley on Thames and visit the acclaimed River and Rowing Museum. Explore the magical story of *The Wind in the Willows* with a fantastic exhibition that tells the story through 3D models, sounds and dramatic lighting. Other exhibitions cover the sport of rowing, the River Thames and the town of Henley on Thames.

Relax at the water's edge and sit out on the many cafes of offering alfresco dining.