A WINCHESTER WALK
Winchester College from the Warden’s Garden, George Shepherd, 1826.

Winchester City from St Giles Hill at Sunset, George Shepherd, 1827.
Introduction

In 1819, the poet John Keats described Winchester as ‘the pleasantest town I ever was in’.

Much of its charm survives: unlike its battered sisters, Basingstoke to the north, and Southampton and Portsmouth to the south, Winchester was spared the worst of wartime bombing and post-war redevelopment.

For those pressed for time, a walk around the College will take 30 minutes. There are then two extensions to this walk, both taking approximately one hour: EXTENSION A, via the Hospital of St Cross; and EXTENSION B, via Winchester City centre. You will find these options clearly indicated in the text.

If you would like to follow these guided walks, please inform the Registrar, and sign in at the Porters’ Lodge, where you will be given a lanyard. This lanyard must be visible at all times, and please do not enter any buildings or staircases which are not clearly included in the guide. Winchester College is a working school, and unfortunately there may be occasions when access to some of the buildings mentioned in the guide may not be possible. At the end of your walk, please return your lanyard to the Porters’ Lodge.
Winchester College Walk
(30 minutes)
We start from outside Outer Gate on College Street, under the gaze of a 14th-century Virgin and Child, one of the finest Gothic sculptures in the country. The paint that once brightened her features has long since weathered away, but she is still serenely beautiful, holding in her right hand a lily as a sign of her purity. Christ grasps what is presumably a goldfinch, a bird associated with thorns, alluding to His passion and future crucifixion.

Winchester College, or ‘The College of the Blessed Mary of Winchester, near Winchester’, as the school should properly be known, is the oldest school of its type in England, with a foundation charter dating to 1382. The first pupils, 70 Scholars and 16 Quiristers, or choirboys, arrived in 1394 to be educated, some progressing to Winchester’s sister college in Oxford, also dedicated to Mary of Winchester, commonly known as ‘New College’. From Oxford, many would enter the priesthood, a boy’s career determined when he was only eight or nine.

Education was free for these 86 boys; they were mostly from unexceptional families and of limited means, their backgrounds similar to that of the Founder, William of Wykeham (1324-1404), Bishop of Winchester from 1367.

The gate in front of which you are standing, Outer Gate, was built in the 1390s, the entrance to Outer Court. It has guarded the College ever since. The walls are thick, the doors solid, necessary as the 14th century was a time of uncertainty and tension in the country. Events such as the Black Death of 1348 and the Peasants’ Revolt of 1378 must have been in Wykeham’s mind when he founded the College.

Walk through the gate and into Outer Court, once busy with the working buildings of College. To your right along College Street ‘small beer’ (alcoholically weak) was brewed in a fully functioning brewery until 1903, beer a safer alternative for boys than local water, which was often polluted. In 1710, there was a pupil rebellion about the quantity and quality of the beer ration. Also to your right were a slaughterhouse and stables (converted in 2016 into ‘Treasury’ or the College museum, rich in exhibits and worth an extended visit: opening times are advertised in the Porters’ Lodge in College Street).
Opposite is **Middle Gate**: in rooms above the arch, for 200 years, the Wardens of College (heads of the Winchester College community, with a role different to that of the Headmaster) kept a bird-eyed watch on the comings and goings of tradesmen, visitors and schoolboys. In the late 16th century, Thomas Bilson (Warden 1576–96) moved himself out of Middle Gate and into lodgings to the east of Outer Court, to which later Wardens added a series of rooms. Though at times demanding, the role of Warden (until 19th-century reforms swept away many of the privileges) was attractive, not least for the food allowance that by 1629 had reached a gargantuan scale: two whole sheep a week, 100 oysters every Friday, and 15 gallons of beer per day. Today’s Wardens no longer live off College revenues, though they still reside in the **Warden’s Lodgings** when in College, and they have a number of formal, social and administrative obligations which take up a great deal of time. The Lodgings are not open to visitors, but you can see their scale and splendour from the gardens at the back, accessed via **Cloisters** (see below).

Middle Gate was the centre of a pupil rebellion in 1793, when a number of boys took control of the flat roof of the tower, arming themselves with a handful of firearms as well as cobbles dug out from the pavement of **Chamber Court** (see below). Amid much excitement, the red cap of liberty was raised (an idea borrowed from the revolutionaries in France), until school authority was restored and 35 Scholars expelled. According to Winchester legend, flints then replaced some of the cobbles.
Beyond Middle Gate is Chamber Court, home since the earliest days of College to the 70 Scholars who slept, worked, studied, prayed and ate in this quadrangle consisting of Chapel, College Hall, the old schoolroom (Seventh Chamber) and dormitories (‘Chambers’), then at ground-floor level. At this time, ten Fellows, three chaplains, the Headmaster and an assistant master occupied rooms on the first floor.

From the start, non-Scholars (or ‘Commoners’, a name given to them as they had to pay for their daily food allowance or ‘commons’) were educated alongside the Scholars (though most were accommodated separately). The statutes provided for ten Commoners; today, there are over 600, living in ten separate boarding Houses to the west of the main site.

College Hall and Chapel occupy the south range of the quadrangle, of dressed stone rather than the vernacular flint used elsewhere. Though much altered since Wykeham’s day, both buildings still fulfil the functions established by the Founder: regular prayer and regular feeding, though the quality of food has mercifully improved since the days when meals were identified by different nicknames, all equally unappealing: Cat’s Head, Fat Flab, Flesh, Long Dispar, Middle Cut, Rack.

Wykeham entrusted William Wynford (died 1405) with the building of most of the medieval buildings of the school. Wynford, a master mason, had honed his skills at Windsor Castle, Wells Cathedral and New College, Oxford, before starting work at Winchester (from 1386). Much of the stone he used was shipped from the Isle of Wight, transported by horse and cart before being shaped on site.

On entering Chapel, bright with its late-Georgian glass, look up at the fine painted wooden vaulting above, designed by Hugh Herland, King Richard II’s chief carpenter. Thurburn’s Chantry is to the south-west; it contains some of the Chapel’s medieval glass, taken out in the 1820s, and repositioned here thanks to the generosity of Kenneth Clark and others. Exit Chapel, go through Seventh Chamber Passage (the racks on the left-hand side were built for boaters and top hats when boys wore such things, taking them off before entering Chapel) and turn left into the 14th-century courtyard of Cloisters, with its 15th-century chantry chapel (a place of perpetual prayer for the souls of the dead, built in memory of John Fromond, a steward of the College’s estates).

The walls of Cloisters are decorated with plaques to Wykehamists and College servants, some famous, some obscure. Look for the mountaineer George Leigh Mallory’s memorial in the north-east corner, ‘who was lost to human sight between heaven and earth while attempting to reach the summit of Everest June 8th, 1924’. And at the opposite end of East Walk, in a pavement memorial, Latin testimony to the Wykehamist Thomas Welsted, who was killed by a falling stone ‘and therefore proceeded to Heaven rather than to Oxford’.

Until the building of School (see below) in the...
1680s, Cloisters found use as a teaching space during the summer, giving rise to the ‘notion’ (Winchester terminology) of ‘Cloister Time’ instead of Summer Term.

Walk around Cloisters to enjoy shifting views of Chapel and Chantry, pausing to step through **Bell Gate** (named after a don (teacher) killed during the First World War) and into The Warden’s Garden. Here, you will find shrubs, trees, gravelled walks, and one of the finest views of College: the East ranges of Cloisters, Chapel, Chamber Court and the Warden’s Lodgings.

The large projecting block at the centre of the Chamber Court range once served as the garderobe (College lavatory), offensive waste swept away by a diversion of the Logie (the stream) out towards the Itchen.

Cloisters also reveal the difficulties of the site chosen by Wykeham. The land on which the school was built was once a water meadow. Before stones and bricks were laid, builders had first to ram wooden stakes into the ground to create foundations, a solution for soft ground also used in Venice. Though Winchester’s buildings are mercifully not sinking at a Venetian rate, subsidence is clear in the arcades of Cloisters.
which partly collapsed as early as 1431. Rising damp and occasional flooding have been challenges since the College was founded; in 2014 the water level was so high that boys were able to take a boat and row across Meads, the adjacent sports field.

Fromond’s Chantry is often open; step inside and look up at the magnificent lierne vault, the bosses decorated with the coats of arms of leading 15th-century families, many the relatives of Cardinal Beaufort (grandson of Edward III and Bishop of Winchester after Wykeham’s death in 1404). Beaufort appears in his striking red cardinal’s hat as the boss second from the altar wall. The east window displays some of the medieval glass that was originally in Chapel; it gives an impression of what was lost when, in the 1820s, Chapel glass was taken out and soft medieval colours replaced with bolder substitutes.

Just behind Beaufort’s boss is that of Henry VI (1421–71), who visited Winchester College eight times in the 1440s. He must have been impressed by what he saw, taking Winchester’s Headmaster, Waynflete, as the second Provost of his new school at Eton, modelling the Eton statutes on Winchester’s, bringing a number of Scholars from Winchester to Eton, as well as at least a cartload of earth (to give scholarly soil in which Etonians might thrive). Henry even insisted that the cloth of his Scholars’ gowns at Eton should be from Winchester, recognition of the authority of the older foundation.

Leave now the sheltered calm of Cloisters by the same gate as you entered. Outside this medieval core, later buildings sprung: School, to the
west, freestanding and built of brick with crisp corner quoins of white stone in the elegant style of the 17th century (formerly attributed to Sir Christopher Wren).

The sculptor Caius Gabriel Cibber (1630–1700), famous for his work at St Paul’s and Trinity College Cambridge, cast the leaning statue of William of Wykeham above the central door of School. Cibber had put forward his elder son, Colley, as a candidate for a foundation scholarship at Winchester (worth full fees and lodging and open to the descendants of William of Wykeham), on the strength of his wife’s (tenuous) ancestral connection to the bishop, but the boy was rejected; however after the ‘gift’ of the sculpture the Warden and Fellows found reason to change their decision, awarding Cibber’s younger son, Lewis, a scholarship. As Colley (later poet laureate) archly recorded: ‘It was as no sooner set up, than the door of preferment was open to him’.

Go inside to see where teaching continued at Winchester for nearly 200 years under the Aut Disce board. Its tough message gave Wykehamists three options: either Learn (and become a bishop); or Leave (and join the army, the law, or go into business); or be Beaten. The throne in the corner to the left of the board is where the Headmaster gave his lessons, mostly Latin, Greek from 1519. The coats of arms around the ceiling are those of the donors who helped fund the construction of School.

Exit School and look left to neo-Gothic Flint Court, built as a Commoner boarding house by G S Repton in the 1830s, and converted into a teaching block by William Butterfield in the 1860s. Diagonally opposite Flint Court, facing Meads, lies Museum, or Musa, a museum and later an art school, built in 1894–97 to mark the 500th anniversary of the founding of College, a challenging building in a bold Renaissance style by Basil Champneys. It was here that a young Kenneth Clark (1903–83), later Sir Kenneth of Civilisation fame, improved his drawing skills, and such was his talent that he won the school’s art prize for four years in succession (admittedly there were few, if any, rival competitors). Happily, matters have since improved, and today pupils in the College’s Art Department show technically excellent and original work in a variety of media. Beyond, to the left, is the delightful 17th-century Bethesda, formerly the College’s Sick House, now the Common Room.

Walk back towards Flint Court, and at School Court take the passage to the right (Arcadia Passage). To your left is Moberly Court with, at the northern end, the sashed brick façade of what was formerly the Headmaster’s House. You will find yourself in a charming small courtyard (Paradise Found or Arcadia, depending on who you ask) facing a 17th-century wall with two open arches and Treasury on your left. Take either arch, and return to the Porters’ Lodge, handing in your lanyard as you exit, unless you wish to see War Cloister, described below.

Exit the Porters’ Lodge. Then turn right along College Street. After 50 metres, if it is open, go through the gate on the left-hand side after
the bridge and follow the path towards the extensive ruins of Wolvesey Castle (now in the care of English Heritage, free to visitors). To the left of the path, you can see the grand 17th-century Baroque façade of Sir Thomas Fitch’s Wolvesey Palace, often mistaken as a work by Sir Christopher Wren. Built for Bishop Morley between 1662 and 1684, as a replacement for Wolvesey Castle, the palace has been the official Winchester residence of Bishops of Winchester ever since. As you approach the ruins, look behind you towards the College, and then to the left of the palace and over the trees to the looming Norman tower of the Cathedral, two of the great views of Winchester.

The information panels in the ruins tell you much about the wealth and influence of the medieval Bishops of Winchester. William of Wykeham had, through hard work, ability, and ambition, risen high from unpromising origins, serving both Edward III and Richard II as Lord Chancellor (the equivalent of Prime Minister). He was enormously powerful: Froissart, a French 15th-century chronicler, would write, somewhat pointedly, that ‘everything was done in England by his consent, and nothing was done without it’. Wykeham’s establishment of Winchester College, and his endowment of it with lands and estates, was in the hope that boys like him, bright but from modest backgrounds, would follow his example. Over 600 years later the College’s bursary programme ensures that the Founder’s aims continue. At the time of writing, about £3.5 million a year, largely derived from Wykehamists’ bequests, is directed towards making possible the education of boys who would otherwise not be able to attend the school, and the Registrar is always happy to hear from any prospective pupils, especially if they might benefit in this way from the Founder’s benefaction.

Wykeham also intended that prayers for his soul would quicken his path through purgatory, of deep concern during the medieval period when Christians believed that years of punishment would be the consequence of crimes thought or realised. Medieval man thought it was possible
to buy his way out of the flames of purgatory, or at least shorten his time there. By founding a school where prayers would be said in perpetuity for his soul, Wykeham believed his reward would be a reduced sentence in the afterlife, thus reducing the effect of his sins by the purchase of increased or total salvation. It is worth noting that part of Wykeham’s substantial income came from London lands given over to brothels and bearbaiting.

Returning to our route, follow the road to the right, College Walk. Over the garden wall, particularly in winter when leaves do not obscure the view, you can see a tangle of buildings from the Middle Ages onwards, first the Warden’s Lodgings, then Chambers and the towers of the Chapel. Turn right at the end, pass a late 1950s building, **New Hall**, of rather unsympathetic brick, much extended in 2014, before turning left just before a black entrance gate to join a public footpath by a crystal-clear stream, the Logie. The stream moves quickly, eager to join the river Itchen to your left. After 60 metres, look right, first at the Cameron Bespolka outdoor classroom (opened in 2019 in memory of a pupil who loved nature and the outdoors); beyond is the boundary wall of Meads, now a cricket pitch, where the Fellows once kept cattle.

Then there is the neo-Baroque red and white block of the **Science School** (1903–04), and to its right what resembles a Scottish castle in Victorian brick (the College’s former sanatorium, built in the 1880s, enormous with two operating theatres and a separate Fever Wing, converted in the 1980s into the **Art School**). To your left, flanking the Itchen, is one of the school’s two nature reserves, alive with insects in summer, and rich in various grasses and wildlife. Those who are very fortunate will here see the blue flash of a kingfisher, or hear the splashes of water voles and, on occasion, otters.
It is a magical place: John Keats was so captivated that he here conceived his ode ‘To Autumn’. There were, he said, ‘the most beautiful streams about I ever saw’, and the air was ‘worth sixpence a pint’.

The timber-framed cricket pavilion, Hunter Tent, that next comes into view across the playing fields, looks out over a ground where Douglas Jardine (1900–58) learned the cricketing skills needed to defeat Donald Bradman’s Australians in the controversial ‘Bodyline’ Test series of 1932–33.

To the left is the looming presence of St Catherine’s Hill with the remains of an Iron Age fort at the top. Before formal games became a regular part of College life, boys would regularly process up its slopes for badger hunts, free fights, loosely arranged cricket and football matches, and collecting wildflowers and birds’ eggs.

At the point where the footpath meets Garnier Road, there are two options to extend the walk: A or B. Both will take you back to College, and both take about one hour.
EXTENSION A

Cross Garnier Road, follow the footpath marked ‘Clarendon Way’, and continue on the path to the Hospital of St. Cross, a rich mix of medieval buildings. There is a café and shop here, and it makes a pleasant stop. The Hospital still serves its original function as a living community of elderly men, known as ‘Brothers’, who wear a distinctive dress of a black or red gown, and a trencher hat for daily church and formal occasions. Ambitious walkers who wish to follow the 192 km Pilgrims’ Way to Canterbury start from here, and can still claim a pilgrim’s dole of beer and bread from the St. Cross porter. Once you have seen what you would like of St. Cross (if open, you can spend between 30 and 60 minutes on a visit – there is much of interest, particularly the Church and Brethren’s Hall), turn back towards the College following St. Cross Road, later Kingsgate Road.

EXTENSION B

Turn right down Garnier Road, then right again at the T-junction, to return via Kingsgate Road to the College. For thirstier travellers there are two pubs, the first the Queen Inn, the second the Wykeham Arms, but, be warned: these are favourite haunts of Winchester dons, so it might be better to go to the Refectory, opposite the Cathedral. To your left, just after the Queen Inn, is Kingsgate House, known as Beloe’s, with its four-columned portico, one of the ten boarding Houses mentioned earlier. Then, if you still have your lanyard, on your right, opposite St. Michael’s Passage, enter the neo-Gothic South African Gate (1902) to the War Cloister (1922–24).

Built of the finest materials, Sir Herbert Baker’s War Cloister is a magnificent classical creation that recalls in its order and simplicity the early...
Florentine Renaissance. It was very much the vision of Montague Rendall (Headmaster 1911–24), designed as a memorial to the 513 Wykehamists killed during the First World War. Rendall agonised over every detail: the wording of the Lombardic script that runs along all four sides took him months to compose, and at one point during construction he was spending several hours a day on site. The planting scheme (much altered) was originally by Gertrude Jekyll: the yews standing as sentries to the central cross.

A few yards on, to your left along Kingsgate Street, is the white-painted portico of another boarding house, Moberly’s, where Kenneth Clark was once a pupil.

At the end of Kingsgate Street (described by Pevsner as ‘surely one of the finest Georgian streets in England’) again you have a choice: either to return to the Porters’ Lodge at Winchester College by turning right down College Street, passing the house in which Jane Austen died; or to continue straight on through the gate in front, known as Kingsgate, to move into the city and the second half of the tour via the Cathedral precinct. Those with energy and time should allow about 40 minutes to walk the second half of the tour, more if they wish to see the Cathedral and the Round Table.

Pass through the depressed arch of Kingsgate, one of Winchester’s two surviving medieval gates (late 14th-century), and, before turning right, take the timber-framed staircase to your left. Climb the stairs to find yourself in the delightful St Swithun-upon-Kingsgate. The church has been much altered over the centuries – at one point in the 1660s pigs were kept at one end while the Kingsgate porter slept at the other – but it has a quiet charm. It was probably built to serve as a chapel for lay people who worked in the Cathedral in the Middle Ages.

When you return to street level, look back: Kingsgate is either on or near the site of what was
once a Roman gate, and the medieval city wall of which it is part sits on Roman foundations (visible near the river). Under Priory Gate, the royal coat of arms gleaming since its 2019 repaint, proceed towards the jumbled mix of buildings that forms part of Inner Close. Space does not allow even a partial description of the many different buildings that make up Inner Close, itself formed out of the destruction of two quadrangles of monastic buildings that once served the Cathedral. Distinguishing the styles of these buildings is a complicated job best left to architectural historians; perhaps we should simply enjoy the ensemble and continue walking, though it is worth pausing in front of The Pilgrims’ School, set back to the right in a grand red-brick building, where the College’s 16 Quiristers are educated, alongside 22 Choristers of the Cathedral and about 230 further pupils. The Channel 4 News broadcaster, Jon Snow, was a pupil here, a Cathedral Chorister.
Moving on, drawn by the looming masonry cliff of the Cathedral, it is worth stopping for a minute next to the massive stone columns of the former **Chapter House** of the Cathedral. The columns themselves are repurposed Saxon or Roman; but to their right, and just in time as we have walked for a while and are probably in need of a break, is the entrance to the **Dean Garnier Garden**. Laid out in 1994–95, above the undercroft of what was once the monks’ dormitory, the Dean Garnier Garden is a delight, with views over the Cathedral, **Deanery** (to the south), and Inner Close. Information panels give a concise account of the history of the Cathedral.

Return to the route, and take the arch and passage, built for Bishop Curle in 1662, through to **Outer Close** and your first sight of the **West Front** of the Cathedral. Shelves of books have been written about Winchester Cathedral, explaining the building campaigns that together created this most architecturally rich of English cathedrals (mostly 1089–1520). Wykeham played his part, ordering the remodelling of the nave from 1394 onwards, work at Winchester College by then mostly complete.

The entrance fee, £9.50 for an adult at the time of writing, provides an annual pass and helps keep the Cathedral standing, a problem since at least 1107 when the crossing tower fell down (blamed by medieval chroniclers on the burial under it of the widely hated William Rufus in 1100). Problems of subsidence have, alas, persisted: in the early 20th century the diver William Walker would spend five years working underground to replace and strengthen waterlogged foundations, working by touch in darkness to prop up walls dangerously close to collapse. 900,000 bricks, 114,900 concrete blocks, and 25,800 bags of cement later, and the work of the ‘diver who saved Winchester Cathedral’ was complete.

Inside the Cathedral, a badged guide will point out the architectural and historical details, or, if you have time,
you can go on a tour, free with your entrance ticket.

Given the variety of styles in the Cathedral (every major architectural form is represented, from Anglo-Norman to late Perpendicular), it is impossible to fully describe all points of interest here, indeed difficult even to select highlights to visit, but it would be a pity to leave without seeing the following:

1. The grave of Jane Austen in the North Aisle. Famously, the wording on her memorial stone fails to mention anything about her literary achievements, an omission that only a brother (the author) could make.

2. The grave of Izaak Walton, author of The Compleat Angler, in the Chapel of St John the Evangelist and the Fisherman Apostles.

3. The magnificent tomb and Chantry Chapel of William of Wykeham in the South Aisle.

4. The 12th-century ‘Winchester Bible’ with its rich Romanesque illuminations, which can be seen in the permanent exhibition, Kings and Scribes.

5. Antony Gormley’s Sound II, a sculpture of a standing man in the Crypt. When the Crypt floods, the effect of sculpture against water in the groin-vaulted Anglo-Norman Crypt is particularly striking.

On leaving the Cathedral, you might wish to visit the grave of Thomas Thetcher, a 26-year-old grenadier (grenade-carrying soldier) in the Hampshire Militia who died ‘of a violent Fever contracted by drinking Small Beer when hot the
You will find the grave of this over-thirsty soldier 60 metres to the west of the West Front, beyond War Cross. It is a place of modern-day pilgrimage as it was here that Bill Wilson, one of the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous, found inspiration when visiting the Cathedral as a young American officer on his way to the Western Front in 1918. Bill would survive the war, later writing the AA’s Big Book, which has sold well over 25 million copies, its success making Thetcher famous, as the doggerel above begins the first chapter.

Here sleeps in peace a Hampshire Grenadier,
Who caught his death by drinking cold small Beer,
Soldiers be wise from his untimely fall
And when ye’re hot drink Strong or none at all

12 May 1764. On the tombstone, the following advice is given:

The Morley Library, Winchester Cathedral.
Returning to the left of the West Front, you will see on the ground dark-coloured bricks that mark out the foundations of the Old Minster (begun in 648), an important Saxon church, then a cathedral from the 660s, and the first burial site of Alfred the Great. Poor Alfred has not been left to rest – his bones have been moved twice, possibly three times, since he died in 899. Their current location is disputed.

North of the Cathedral is Morley College, originally a 17th-century building, rebuilt in 1880 as a house for widows of the clergy of Winchester and Worcester. Turn right here (just before the William Walker), and staying within the Close, walk past the Wessex Mercure Hotel, aggressively 1960s in its concrete and brick, then left down Paternoster Row. Take a left at Colebrook Street, then right at The Broadway, past the high-Victorian Guildhall (inspired by the Cloth Hall at Ypres), then castellated Abbey House, official residence of the Mayor of Winchester, before stopping in front of Hamo Thornycroft’s enormous 1901 statue of King Alfred the Great, the ‘Founder of the Kingdom and Nation’ according to the plaque beneath. He stands on two Cornish granite boulders weighing 103 tons, and his pose commands the city, but he would not recognise much of modern Winchester: almost all of its Saxon predecessor lies buried in foundations beneath your feet, or has been recycled by later builders.

The weathered information sign to the right of the statue carefully suggests that Winchester ‘was his capital’ rather than the ‘capital city of England’, as is (misleadingly) often stated. Saxon and later kings lived a peripatetic existence until London claimed the ‘capital’ title centuries later. However, Alfred remains Winchester’s most celebrated son, and his street plan, or at least one he would have been familiar with, mostly survives.

Turning back up the Broadway, the Abbey Gardens to your left is a good place to stop and rest before climbing the gentle slope of the High Street, past commercial shops in buildings of a bewildering mix of styles; then past the early 15th-century Butter Cross, so called because it
was historically a spot where butter and other country produce was sold (much restored by George Gilbert Scott in 1865), before reaching Westgate, Winchester’s second surviving medieval gate.

Within the gate is a small museum with a range of displays relating to Tudor and Stuart Winchester, including a magnificent ceiling of oak boards, vigorously painted in bright colours with portraits and scrolling foliate designs in anticipation of the Winchester marriage, in 1554, between Mary Tudor and Philip of Spain. Discovered by chance in 1885 when a partition was taken down at Winchester College in the original Warden’s Lodgings, the ceiling has been on loan to the Winchester Museum for display at Westgate since 1980. There are also exhibits that relate to the gate’s use as a prison from the 16th to the 18th centuries. From the roof of the gate, there are fine views over the city.

Just beyond the Westgate, to your left, is Castle Avenue, with its flanking ranges of Victorian and post-Victorian buildings, leading us on to the early 13th-century Great Hall. Little else survives of the medieval castle begun by William the Conqueror on Roman foundations.
The Great Hall, the finest and largest medieval hall after Westminster, gives an impression of what has been lost with its rhythm of elegant pointed arches in the arcades. At one end is the celebrated **Round Table**, 5.5m in diameter, painted in 1522 when Henry VIII entertained his powerful fellow monarch, the Habsburg Charles V, at Winchester. At the centre is the white and red Tudor Rose (York and Lancaster); radiating quadrants of green and white (Tudor colours), the names of his 24 knights at the edge, and a fully bearded King Arthur dominating the vertical. Tudor propaganda and links to a mythical past disguise a table that is much older (1290), probably commissioned by Edward I for a tournament to celebrate the betrothal of one of his daughters. The circular shape pays homage to the legendary Round Table of King Arthur. Beyond the hall is **Queen Eleanor’s Herbarium**, planted in the 1980s as a 13th-century herbarium.

On exiting the Great Hall, turn right and go down the steps of the courtyard, past 1960s law courts of fortress-like appearance. Turn right at Trafalgar Street, first left at St Clement Street, then first right again down Southgate Street. Here begin some of the grandest Early Georgian houses in the city, for example the 1715 **Hotel du Vin** (open for tea and drinks to non-residents); then the magnificent **Serle’s House**, now the Royal Hampshire Regimental Museum, a 1730 Baroque masterpiece of red and blue brick contrasting with white stucco, possibly by Thomas Archer. At this point the Victorians take over in the soaring Gothic revival church of **St Thomas and St Clement** (converted into residential houses), the former **Garrison Chapel and Schoolroom** (now a cinema), and a grand terrace of Italianate brick stucco (**Chernocke Place**). At the Green Man pub, turn left down St Swithun Street and onto the final leg, stopping only to look at the 1605 almshouses of **Christes’ Hospital**, built for ‘six old men, one matron and four boys’, a surprising mix. At the end of St Swithun Street, turn right under Kingsgate and then left down College Street (noting the house where Jane Austen died), past the austerely Gothic **Headmaster’s House**.

This was built in 1839 on a palatial scale to house the Headmaster, George Moberly, and his expanding family. Moberly and his elegant wife had no less than 15 children. Mrs Moberly’s magnificent Regency lying-in couch, slightly the worse for wear, remains in the Headmaster’s study. Headmasters of the 20th and 21st centuries have found the property exciting to explore, but expensive to heat: indeed, shortly after the Second World War, one Headmaster was
known to hold meetings and job interviews in the airing cupboard, and to move between rooms on a bicycle. As a consequence, and given that Headmasters of the 20th and 21st centuries have averaged fewer than two children apiece, the house has been largely redesigned as a library and as classrooms for Modern Languages. The tour ends at the Porters’ Lodge.
A WINCHESTER WALK

We hope that you have enjoyed this walk and guide. A good full-length history of the school is James Sabben-Clare’s *Winchester College*, 1982. Much information can also be found on the College’s website: www.winchestercollege.org


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