Experience for yourself the same colours of inspiration as Keats and celebrate Autumn in Winchester. Join in one of many events and activities including poetry trails, exhibitions, workshops and competitions for all aspiring and professional poets to mark the bicentenary of his stay.

For full details of events, see visitwinchester.co.uk/keats200/

12 Aug - 9 Oct Keats & St Cross Exhibition
Free entry on 19 Sep as part of Heritage Open Days
Brettenham Hall, St Cross Hospital

10 Sep - 20 Dec Keats in Winchester Exhibition
New exhibition about Keats and Winchester in the early 19th century
Winchester College Treasury

11 Sep 7pm
Professor Sir Jonathan Bate public talk:
‘John Keats, his time in Winchester and ode To Autumn’
New Hall, Winchester College

13 Sep 5.30pm
Water meadows guided walk
Guided walks following in the footsteps of John Keats

22 - 27 Sep Mon - Sat
9.30am - 5pm, Sun 1pm - 5pm
Poetry Trail
St Cross Hospital

3 Oct 7.30pm
Bright Star Screening of the 2009 movie directed by Jane Campion which chronicles the three-year romance between Keats and Fanny Brawne.
Winchester Discovery Centre

7 Oct 7.30pm
200 Years of Autumn
Theatre Royal Winchester

Featuring contributions from Blue Apple Theatre and Storm Cloud Theatre, and from the University of Winchester’s Creative Writing and Performing Arts students, this celebration of the Keats bicentenary will include an introduction by Dr Gary Portell (University of Winchester), a set of dialogues between Keats and Fanny Brawne (told by poet Philip Pullman, Founder and performed by drama students), and the winning entries in the Hampshire Writers’ Society’s Keats competition.

WINCHESTER HERITAGE OPEN DAYS
Every September local volunteers organise over 140 FREE EVENTS in the Winchester district.

13 - 22 Sep The Treasury
Winchester College

13 - 29 Sep A Celebration of Hampshire’s Seasons
An exhibition of children’s Artistic & Poetic responses to Keats
City Museum

14 Sep 1.30pm
‘Gathering Swallows’
Keats poetry readings
Winchester Poetry Festival
Winchester Discovery Centre

19 Sep 7pm - 8pm
Pre-booking is essential
Winchester Poet Power: The Path to Keats’ Autumn
Winchester College Headmaster, public talk
New Hall, Winchester College

19 - 22 Sep Pre-booking is recommended
College Tours
Winchester College

21 Sep 5.30pm - 6.30pm
Pre-booking is essential
Hyde 900: Keats in Hyde
Guided Walk with Poetry Readings
Corner of Paternoster Row & Colebrook St, SO23 9BG

The English Romantic poet, John Keats, stayed in Winchester during the late summer and early autumn of 1819. Keats enjoyed a daily walk through the Cathedral Close and water meadows to St Cross. Inspired by the natural beauty of Winchester on Sunday 19 September 1819 he penned his ode ‘To Autumn’ on his return. The area has changed little in the 200 years since Keats visited - read on and take the walk and enjoy some of the special events to mark the bicentenary of his stay.

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We invite you to follow in the poet’s footsteps from the city to St Cross, passing through the landscape which inspired the ode To Autumn.

The round trip covers approximately two miles on pavements, gravel paths and grass. The walk begins at the first tourist information centre in the Victorian Guildhall, close to King Alfred’s statue. It is likely that Keats’ lodgings were on the north side of the cathedral and the High Street, but the exact address is unknown.

Turn left outside the tourist information centre and walk up the High Street. Take the second left into Market Street and continue to the ‘beautiful front’ of Winchester Cathedral.

Winchester Cathedral was already 725 years old when Keats visited. Two years previously Jane Austen had been buried here, although there is no mention of her literary occupation on her tombstone in the north aisle. Keats would walk up and down this aisle reading letters from Fanny Bourne. In 1872 and 1960 respectively a brass plaque and a stained glass window were erected in Austen’s memory.

From the cathedral, turn left under stone arches and walk through the Inner Close.

Keats described the Close as: ‘two stone arches were erected in Austen’s memory. It is likely that Keats’ lodgings were here, although there is no mention of his literary occupation on his tombstone in the north aisle. Keats would walk up and down this aisle reading letters from Fanny Bourne. In 1872 and 1960 respectively a brass plaque and a stained glass window were erected in Austen’s memory.

The lovely buildings of the Inner Close include the ruined Chapter House, the 14th century Deanery and Pilgrims’ School where the cathedral choristers and Winchester College quinesters are educated.

One of Winchester’s most photographed buildings is Cheyney Court, formerly the Bishop’s courthouse.

Leaving the Inner Close by St Swithun’s Gate, adjacent to Cheyney Court.

On your left is Kingsgate, one of only two surviving city gates, with the tiny church of St-Swithun-upon-Kingsgate above.

Go under Kingsgate, turn left and walk along College Street.

If you have time to browse, this tucked-away area holds some of the city’s best kept shopping secrets.

Jane Austen spent the last few weeks of her life at Number 8 College Street, where she composed the comic verse Venta, her last piece of writing. She died on 18 July 1817.

This area of Winchester is dominated by Winchester College, founded in 1382 by Bishop William of Wykeham. It is the oldest continuously running public school in England. Take the fascinating tour to glimpse the 14th century chapel with its unusual wooden vaulted roof and a red brick schoolroom in the style of Christopher Wren.

On your left at the end of College Street is the present-day bishop’s palace, Wolvesey. Beyond lie the ruins of the extensive palace of the medieval bishops, known as Wolvesey Castle.

Turn right into College Walk. At the end of College Walk turn left into College Street.

Walk through the water meadows as Keats did, alongside a chalk stream of the River Itchen with its trout, moorhens and wild flowers. The angel Izak Walton, who is buried in the cathedral, fished in the River Itchen.

To return to the city you could retrace your footsteps through the water meadows or, if you prefer a paved route, walk along Back Street, St Faith’s Road and Kingsgate Street. St Cross Road is also paved and buses are available.

There is some evidence that Keats may have returned via St Catherine’s Hill and the Itchen Navigation. He said:

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For a full list of events and more information see VISITWINCHESTER.CO.UK/KEATS200/

After half a mile cross Garnier Road and continue for a further quarter of a mile until you reach Hospital of St Cross.

Keats described St Cross as: ‘a very interesting old place, both for its gothic tower and almsh-square, and for the appropriation of its rich rents to a relation of the Bishop of Winchester’ - a reference to a contemporary corruption scandal which was one of the themes of Anthony Trollope’s novel The Warden 35 years earlier.

The mellow Medieval buildings of the Hospital of St Cross enjoy an idyllic meadow landscape setting. Founded in 1136, the hospital is the country’s oldest charitable institution and still functions as an almshouse. Those arriving on foot may ask for the Wayfarer’s Dole, bread and ale which has been given to travellers since the almshouse was founded. The Hospital serves refreshments in the summer months, and The Bell inn on St Cross Road is the nearest pub. Keats’ final instruction is: “pass across St Cross meadows till you come to the most beautifully clear River.” He did not elaborate further and we do not know his return route.

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