

## PRESS RELEASE

### FREE TO EXPLORE ON HERITAGE OPEN DAYS 2006

This year there will be all kinds of entertainment for visitors coming to Chawton House on Heritage Open Days. For the first time the Elizabethan manor house set in a 275-acre working estate once owned by Jane Austen's brother, will be open to the public on two days, namely Thursday 7 September and Saturday 9 September from 10.00am to 4.30 pm.

Visitors will be able to wander through many of the rooms of this historic house seeing the Great Hall, the Dining Room with the table at which Jane Austen often sat when visiting her brother Edward Austen Knight and his family, and also have the opportunity of going into the Library with its unique collection of rare volumes written by women from 1600 to 1830. Some of the outbuildings will be open including the Game Larder and the Elizabethan Well.

On both days, with staff dressed in Regency costume, there will be entertainments for children including treasure trails, I-Spy and Jane Austen readings and delicious home made lunches and teas as well as loads of traditional things to buy. Horse and cart rides on Thursday afternoon between Chawton House and Jane Austen's House, the Farrier busy shoeing the shire horses and on Saturday the Liss Band will play, the Hampshire Regency Dancers will dance, there will be Regency dressing up and dancing for children, and lots of other things to do and see.

Heritage Open Days is a national event co-ordinated by the Civic Trust and the programme is funded and supported by English Heritage whose Chief Executive, Dr. Simon Thurley, said: "It is a great success story for our heritage. It celebrates people and places and everyone can take part and learn more about their local history."

Heather Shearer, Director of Chawton House Library, commented: "We are delighted to be involved with Heritage Open Days, especially having two days this year to welcome visitors to Chawton. We love to see the house used and enjoyed by people who clearly make the most of this opportunity."

**For further information, please contact:**

Susie Grandfield, Public Relations Officer, Chawton House Library, on 01420 541010  
[susie.grandfield@chawton.net](mailto:susie.grandfield@chawton.net), or  
Sara Moger, Head of Fundraising, Chawton House Library, on 01420 541010  
[sara.moger@chawton.net](mailto:sara.moger@chawton.net)

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