

Southampton in Jane Austen's Time

17th September 2002 - Roy Underdown Pavilion

At our September meeting we were taken on a fascinating tour of Southampton. Not the busy city that we see today, but the one that Jane Austen knew. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries Southampton was very much smaller, the Western Docks had not been built and water lapped the walls along Western Esplanade. Our speaker, Sheila Thomson, showed us maps and pictures of that era, and guided us on a walk that the Austen family might have made. From the Bargate, which looked familiar, down a very different High Street and through the wall onto a muddy shore. Round to the Itchen where there was no bridge, floating or otherwise, but a ferry service provided by fishermen. Then back to the spa within the walls. Not a motor car in sight, just the occasional horse and carriage which you didn't have to pay for to park or use!