

# Muse & Musings

*"The company of clever, well-informed people, who have a great deal of conversation"*

## February 18th meeting

### And what happens in after years?

Organized and led by Aileen Hollifield, our members happily formed teams of three and dreamed up further adventures for all their favourite characters. Here is a sampling:

Elinor and Edward Ferrars start out happy with very little money, but much help is received from the Brandons. They are respected in the community and are very keen to start a family, especially as Marianne is having loads of children. Sadly, although Elinor conceives, she miscarries several times until finally they do have an adored son, who unfortunately dies young, tragically and dramatically. Edward becomes so involved in trying to better the lives of the local poor that he becomes the much respected local MP after the electoral reforms of 1832, finally being fulfilled and satisfying his mother's ambition.

The Bertrams send Maria and Mrs. Norris into seclusion in Tuscany, Italy, where they live in a community of expatriates. Maria falls for the Count Scarlatti di Venezia (she falls for his title, he thinks she is rich), and in spite of a tempestuous affair, the community accepts them and they marry. Meanwhile, Mrs. Norris marries an aged cleric who thrives under her care, but she pines for England (where he cannot return because he is in disgrace). Maria and her Count – each disillusioned in the other's wealth – move into the Count's decaying castle near Venice.

Mr. Darcy and Mr. Gardiner form a business partnership, while Elizabeth sets up schools in the village, educates her servants and marries off Mary, Kitty and Georgiana. They have four daughters and one son, and Mr. Bennet outlives Mrs. Bennet!

In spite of his wayward ways, Jane Fairfax finds some contentment and security with Frank Churchill – who travels outside his novel to have an affair with Mary Crawford.

Lydia and Wickham, finding themselves far from society and without admirers, reform their dissolute ways.

Marianne and Colonel Brandon have two children and live happily until he dies following a riding accident. Then Marianne discovers that Willoughby's wife has died in childbirth – W. presents himself to Marianne, their youthful passion reignites and they get married.

Henry Tilney and Catherine go to India as missionaries. Henry is the paterfamilias and Catherine a good submissive wife who bears him five daughters and a son. He spends his time translating the New Testament into the local language. When Catherine dies of dysentery, the Missionary Society send him a new wife.

After settling in town, Lucy and Robert Ferrars are very soon bored with each other. They spend time increasingly apart, until his self-indulgence, gambling, liver disease, syphilis, and debtors' prison bring him to an early and dismal end. Lucy fares better, keeping a string of male admirers handy to amuse her, has a daughter (but not by Robert) and once widowed, eventually manages to find a rich gullible husband to keep her and her daughter in reasonable luxury for the rest of her days.

Mr. Collins climbs up a library ladder at Rosings, falls off striking his head, and dies. Lady Catherine allows Charlotte to live with her daughter in a grace-and-favour cottage in the village until the new parson falls in love with her, they marry and she returns to her beloved parsonage. Longbourne reverts to the Bennets.

– by Elspeth Flood



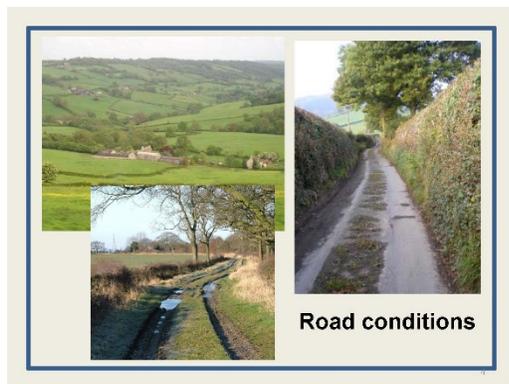
Frank Churchill (played by Raymond Coulthard in the 1996 BBC mini-series of *Emma*) and Mary Crawford (played by Embeth Davidtz in Patricia Rozema's 1999 *Mansfield Park*)

## March 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting

### Carriages in Jane Austen's World by Joan Reynolds

In March, Joan delighted us with the long-promised reprise of her presentation on carriages, originally given about ten years ago by herself, Ros Hansen and Marg Savery. Jane Austen lived in the golden age of carriages – before the advent of the railway – and her novels are full of references which conveyed far more information to her original readers than they do to us in the age of the automobile.

Joan's talk covered the context and conditions of travel – slow, uncomfortable, inconvenient, and sometimes dangerous. Travel for young ladies was highly restricted, requiring a servant or male family member for escort. There was huge industry around the building and operation of carriages, as well as the roads for them to travel over.



She also told us about the many different types of public and private conveyances, ranging from huge stage coaches – equivalent to modern intercity buses – to small one-horse gigs. In between were town carriages, chaises, barouches, landaus, landaulettes, phaetons, curricles – and the list goes on! Some were driven by a coachman on a box, some by postillions mounted on one or more of the horses, and some were self-driven. Each type conveys something different about the status, tastes and driving skill of its occupants.

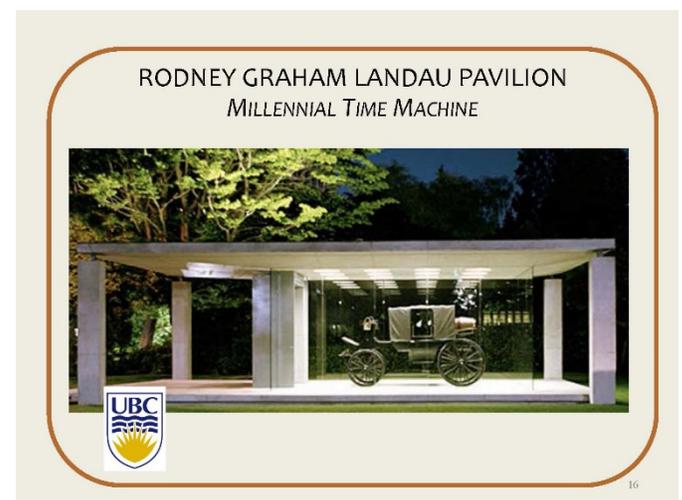


She also pointed out many scenes in the novels where carriages play a role – and left us with a final injunction to go back and reread the novels with a special eye to the role played by carriages. – by *Elsbeth Flood*

### You can see a Landau at UBC

Seen below is a 19<sup>th</sup>-century, horse-drawn landau that has been incorporated into a sculpture called the *Millennial Time Machine*, unveiled on June 25, 2003. Inside the landau is a *camera obscura* focused on a young sequoia tree in the landscaped bowl between UBC's Koerner Library and Main Library. As the tree grows to maturity, the *camera obscura* will be a time machine.

If you see this carriage you will notice that it is a later model, as it has the elliptical springs that act as its suspension, cushioning the uneven road from the actual carriage and its occupants. Looking at its interior, it really brought home how small and tight the seats were and the fact that one's knees would touch the person's opposite – and to think we complain about the legroom in airline economy! – by *Joan Reynolds*



## Adventures in English Literature\*

### More thoughts arising from Gaskell's

#### *North and South*

In the last issue of *Muse & Musings*, I wrote an article about the parallels between *Pride & Prejudice* and Elizabeth Gaskell's *North & South*, which I had been studying in a seniors' class given by Dr. Mason Harris at SFU.

Near the end of the last class Dr. Harris suggested we ought to read David Lodge's *Nice Work* (1988), which he said was based on *N&S*. Now it happens that David Lodge is a writer I love, and I had *NW* in a three-novel volume of campus-based novels with recurring characters, but not a continuous story. I had read them all long ago and enjoyed them hugely, without ever noticing a similarity between *NW* and *N&S*. So, of course I reread *NW* and then the other two, *Changing Places* (1975) and *Small World* (1984). They are all rollickingly funny satires on academic life.

*Nice Work* is about a work-shadowing exchange between a female university professor and a factory manager, paralleling the interchanges between Margaret, the young lady from the south of England, and Mr. Thornton, the factory owner from the North. Possibly the reason I didn't see the parallel to *N&S* is that there is no love story in *NW*, just a little fling. I think that David Lodge and Mason Harris, as male readers, do not see the courtship narrative as central to *N&S*, as I do and I think many female readers do. However, rereading the three Lodge novels led me down further rabbit holes.

In *Changing Places*, the first of the three (published in 1975, but set in 1969), he introduces a wildly improbable American academic called Morris Zapp, a Jane Austen scholar, whose critical project is:

“. . . a series of commentaries on Jane Austen, which would work through the whole canon, one novel at a time, saying absolutely everything that could possibly be said about them. . . Freudian, Jungian, existentialist, Marxist, structuralist, Christian-allegorical, ethical, exponential, linguistic, phenomenological, archetypal, you name it; so that . . . there would simply be *nothing further to say* . . . The object was . . . to put a stop to the production of any further garbage on the subject.”

When I encountered that bit on my latest reading, I felt sure I had seen or heard it very recently. And in Morris Zapp, I felt an echo of Mortimer Cropper, another wildly improbable American academic in A.S. Byatt's huge and wonderful novel *Possession*, which won the 1990 Booker Prize and which I had recently reread. So I reread

*Possession* again, but didn't see anything like the passage above – perhaps I heard it in someone's presentation at the DC AGM.

*Possession* is about academics researching two Victorian poets (Byatt's creations, along with many of their poems and letters) and discovering unknown connections between them. The *Sunday Times* says: “This cerebral extravaganza of a story zig-zags with unembarrassed zest across an imaginative terrain bristling with symbolism and symmetries, shimmering with myth and legend . . .”



British authors David Lodge and A.S. Byatt

In rereading *Possession* I find an answering note in Lodge's three novels, particularly the middle one, *Small World*, set among international academic conferences. The subtitle to *SW* is *An Academic Romance* and the subtitle to *P* is *A Romance*, and both authors make very clear that they are using the term “romance” in the sense that Jane Austen understood, not in the contemporary sense of a love story. Both of them preface their works with a quotation from Nathaniel Hawthorne on the distinction (as he saw it) between romance and novel.

David Lodge, writing about conferences on English literature, frequently has his characters explicate or parody different critical theories. In *SW* a pivotal character, who has hitherto been reading formula love stories but has had a lesson from one of the English academics, says:

“I mean they're not really romances at all, are they? Not in the true sense of romance. They're just debased versions of the sentimental novel of courtship and marriage that started with Richardson's *Pamela*. . . Real romance is a pre-novelistic kind of narrative. It's full of adventure and coincidence and surprises and marvels, and has lots of characters who are lost or enchanted or wandering about looking for each other, or for the Grail, or something like that. Of course they're often in love too . . .”

This description holds for both *Possession* and *Small World*, which is full of literary and mythological

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\*The title of my Grade 12 English textbook

references and parodies. David Lodge's work was published in 1984, while Byatt's came out in 1989, and I can't help but wonder if she was influenced or inspired by his work.

Once again I am struck by one of the great joys of reading, which is discovering connections between different books and authors. – by Elspeth Flood

## Member Profile

Jayne LaVierge



*In her spare time, Jayne keeps the St. Philip's kitchen organized and running during JASNA meetings.*

### 1. Tell us a bit about yourself and your life to-date.

I was born in Vancouver and raised in Kitsilano. In my wild and errant youth I once lived on a private island, spent a brief time working in Amsterdam and raised a family for six years in the Toronto area. I have tried skydiving and obtained NAUI (scuba diving) certification. For my mid-life crisis I ran away to the circus for a week. I currently work as a full-time Administrative Assistant.

### 2. When did you join JASNA?

I first joined JASNA in 2012 (I think).

### 3. How did you first get started with Jane Austen?

My friend Jennifer Giles introduced me to JASNA – Jennifer is the former wife of Stuart Davis, the *Vancouver Sun* photographer who did a promotional photo-shoot

before the Vancouver AGM in 2007. [Editor's note: The same *Sun* story is what influenced me to join – ENF.]

### 4. What do you like about JASNA?

The JASNA-Vancouver program committee works hard to present top of the line programs and lecturers. I'm always learning new and interesting facts about the world in which Jane Austen lived and the history and politics of Austen's time. The membership's wealth of knowledge and their enthusiasm to share their experiences is as refreshing as it is enlightening.

### 5. Has JASNA given you any special memories? New friends? Inspiration to new experiences?

I enjoy the convivial atmosphere of each meeting. Truly, you had me at the first glass of wine. The potluck luncheons are a bonus and so civilized. Jane would be proud.

## Regional Coordinator's Corner

In July 2017, we are working with VPL for a day to mark the 200th anniversary of Jane's death. If you would like to help out, volunteer, wear your costume, speak to the public at our booth, or help out in any other way, please contact me and leave your name so I will be in touch as we continue to plan.

If you have programming ideas, please speak with me or send me an email: [jasn VancouverRC@gmail.com](mailto:jasn VancouverRC@gmail.com)

– by Michelle Siu



## Books & Berries in June

**Bring used books to recycle at our annual Book Sale!**

May 27<sup>th</sup> **Jane Austen Day** June 17<sup>th</sup> **Books & Berries**

Please see the program of events on our website:

[JASNA-Vancouver program](http://www.jasn Vancouver program)

**This Newsletter**, the publication of the Vancouver Region of the Jane Austen Society of North America, is distributed to members by email and posted on our website. Members who so request may receive a hard copy either at a meeting or in the mail. All submissions and book reviews on the subject of Jane Austen, her life, her works and her times, are welcome.

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