



# The Jane Austen Society of North America

JASNA Vancouver

NEWSLETTER NO. 60

NOVEMBER 1997

## THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF TIMBUKTU: MUNGO PARK IN AFRICA - E.Sutherland.

There are some cities, like Samarkand, Ophir, Ninevah and Tyre, that give off an aura of seduction and mysticism in their very names. Timbuktu is another of these mysterious, alluring cities. Sir Edward Denham, in Jane Austen's Sanditon, chose "the neighbourhood of Tombuktoo" as the ideal destination when he abducted and seduced Clara. But it was for much more mundane reasons that Britain hoped to discover the site of Timbuktu and open up the interior of Africa in the late 1790s. The Industrial Revolution had made Britain the greatest manufacturing country of the world, and new markets, as well as a source of raw materials, were eagerly sought.

The Moors had crossed the Great Desert from Suez and set up trading routes through Africa. The Portuguese, and later the English themselves, operated centres on the west coast for trading in ivory, gold and slaves. But the vast areas of the interior remained almost entirely unknown to the western industrialized world.

The English African Association, under the leadership of Sir Joseph Banks, had sent two explorers in the late 18th century in search of Timbuktu and the Niger River, and both met their deaths in the attempt. In 1795, however, the Association was willing to sponsor another expedition, and chose Mungo Park to lead it.

Mungo Park was born in 1771 on a small farm in Scotland. His parents wanted him to enter the Church, but he chose instead to be apprenticed to a surgeon. There is nothing in his early life to indicate how or why he developed his intense desire to explore Africa.

From reports of the Arab traders, Europeans knew of the great Niger River in the interior of Africa, but they considered it either an eastward-flowing branch of the Nile - perhaps its unknown source - or part of the Gambia or Senegal rivers at whose mouths the trading posts were located, and which flow from the rugged coast mountains down to the Atlantic Ocean. The upper reaches of these rivers had never been explored.

Reports of the potential riches of the interior, and the increasing interest in scientific exploration, led to the formation of the Africa Association, and expeditions were dispatched to search for the Niger. Three failed. Mungo Park was eager to set off on the fourth trial. In 1795, he began the journey up the Gambia until the rainy season forced him to stop. During the delay he made further preparations, and learned one of the local languages. Everyone he met tried to discourage him from proceeding further. The idea of travelling for curiosity was incredible to these people, and the Arabs were jealous of their trade routes and believed him a spy. Opposition only made him more determined.

If Park had worn native dress (his Calvinist upbringing prevented him from pretending to be a Moslem) and learned Arabic as well as the native language, his problems might have been eased. As it was, he met with hostility and opposition all the way.



Park's return and account of his travels encouraged the Africa Association to plan a further expedition. It was hoped to explore the route of the Niger and establish forts at intervals to protect trade along the river. Troops with field guns would ensure the success of the venture. Several years passed with no action. Not until the French seemed to be claiming the territory did the British government decide on further exploration. In April 1805 the group set off.

With the experiences of his first expedition in mind, Park should have realized what he was getting into. The soldiers were enthusiastic about leaving garrison duty, but they did not have his stamina and they had no interest in the results of their labours. He set off at an impossible time with the rainy season imminent. The pack animals were inadequate to carry their supplies, and Park did not have native people to manage them.

Almost from the beginning the men began to sicken and the animals to flounder in the mud. A detour to higher, drier ground left them all exhausted. Nothing seems to have deterred Park from pressing on - in an obsession with reaching his goal he ruthlessly abandoned dying men, and forced the sick onwards. He drove his men and animals to their deaths, but drove himself even harder.

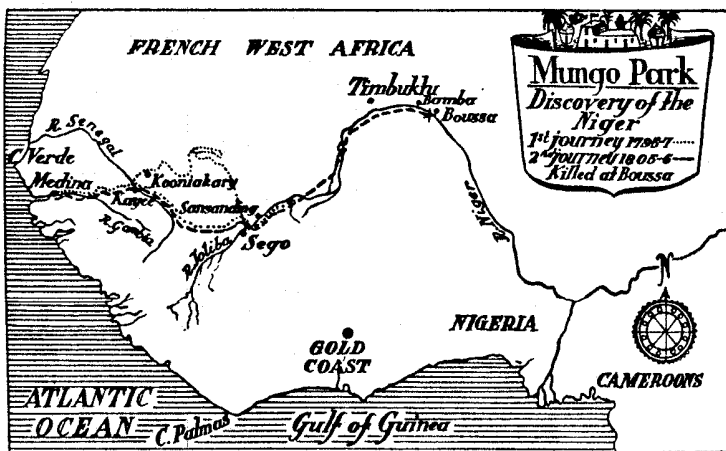
Park was in grave danger almost every step of the way. Not only were the natives hostile, but he found himself in the middle of a war between two tribes. He was at times robbed, beaten, imprisoned and threatened with torture and death. However, he always managed to plunge onwards. The later part of his journal is filled with unemotional statements of the number of men who died, or were too sick to carry on, or who could not even drive the asses laden with baggage. But his feeling of triumph and thankfulness is apparent when "coming to the brow of the hill, I once more saw the Niger rolling its immense stream along the plains!" His next thoughts are depressing - "of thirty-four soldiers & four carpenters who left the Gambia, only six soldiers & one carpenter reached the Niger."

Just before the last stage - returning to the coast by sailing down the river - Mungo Park wrote letters to Sir Joseph Banks and to his wife, which would be taken to Gambia by a trader. The letter to his wife, although it mentioned the hardships of the weather, and the deaths of many of the soldiers, ended with great optimism: "I think it not unlikely but I shall be in England before you receive this. You may be sure that I feel happy at turning my face towards home. We, this morning [19 Nov. 1805], have done with all intercourse with the natives; & the sails are now hoisting for our departure for the coast." That was the last word from Mungo Park.

Later, it was learned that the natives had attacked Park and the nine remaining men in their canoe, throwing boulders and spears from the high rocky banks of the river. The boat overturned, and all were drowned.

Park became a hero in Britain, and his journals, published with an account of his death, were almost as popular as Cook's account of his voyages. Park gives a vivid description of the country he passed through: "The country itself, being an immense level, and very generally covered with woods, presents a tiresome and gloomy uniformity to the eye; but although nature has denied to the inhabitants the beauties of romantic land-

scapes, she has bestowed on them, with a liberal hand, the more important blessings of fertility & abundance." For safety at one place, they travelled by night: "The stillness of the air, the howling of the wild beasts, & the deep solitude of the forest, made the scene solemn & impressive." In another area: "The face of the country is everywhere interspersed with a pleasing variety of hills & valleys; & the windings of the Senegal river, which descends from the rocky hills of the interior, make the scenery on its banks very picturesque & beautiful."



The natives he met cultivated fields; hunted and fished; smelted iron and gold; spun, wove and dyed cloth; sewed cotton into clothes and leather into sandals, quivers and sheaths; made baskets, hats and other utensils from reeds. Park was interested in it all.

The people fascinated him. "The Moors have singular ideas of feminine perfection... With them, corpulence & beauty appear to be terms nearly synonymous." "Queen Fatima, & a few others of high rank, like the great ladies in some parts of Europe, pass their time chiefly conversing with their visitors, performing their devotions, or admiring their charms in a looking glass." He reminds us of Jane Austen's comments in Northanger Abbey when he writes: "The education of the girls is neglected altogether; mental accomplishments are but little attended to by the women, nor is the want of them considered by the men as a defect in the female character." Describing a market, he mentions "a large butcher's stall, or shade, is in the centre of the square, & as good & fat meat sold every day as in England" - compare Mrs. Bennet's complacent remark at about the same time about her roast venison: "Everybody said, they never saw so fat a haunch."

Mungo Park could have answered all Fanny Price's questions about slavery here. "Slaves are found in all parts of this extensive country, & constitute a considerable branch of commerce with the states on the Mediterranean, as well as with the nations of Europe... There are regular markets where slaves are bought & sold; & the value of a slave in the eye of an African purchaser, increases in proportion to his distance from his native kingdom - they are less apt to try to escape, & more reconciled to their situation. On this account the unhappy slave is frequently transferred from one dealer to another until he has lost all hopes of returning to his native kingdom."

Park discusses other trade goods. "Nothing creates greater surprise among the Negroes on the sea coast, than the eagerness displayed by the European traders to procure elephants' teeth; it being exceedingly difficult to make them comprehend to what it is applied... They cannot, they say, easily persuade themselves that ships would be built, & voyages undertaken, to procure an article which had no other value than that of furnishing handles to knives, etc., when pieces of wood would answer the purpose equally well."

Another important article of trade was salt. "In the inland parts, the poorer class of inhabitants are so rarely indulged with this precious article, that to say a man eats salt with his victuals is the same as saying he is a rich man."

Park attended the local law "courts", and wrote of the advocates, "If I may judge from their harangues...I believe that in the forensic qualifications of procrastination and cavil, and the arts of confounding and perplexing a cause, they are not always surpassed by the ablest pleaders in Europe."

In Africa for many years the "tall white stranger" was remembered. A biographer wrote of him: "He was a man driven by a purpose, driven beyond himself, so that he achieved depths of brutality and inhumanity that have seldom been matched in the history of exploration, so that he achieved heights of endurance and heroism that have seldom been matched in history."

It was Mungo Park's great achievement that marked the beginning of a systematic exploration of the interior of Africa.

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TO THE GREAT VARIETY OF READERS:

*The fate of all books depends upon your capacities, and not of your heads alone but of your purses. Well. It is now publique and you will stand for your privileges, we know: to read and censure. Do so, but buy it first.*

*Heminge & Condell: Shakespeare's First Folio.*

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## PRIDE AND PRO-BRITISH PREJUDICE

Many Chinese have grown fond of 'the English' now they're about to do the decent thing. Jasper Becker explores a phenomenon.

Giant red banners hang from every corner of Beijing welcoming the return of Hong Kong and promising to 'wash as white as snow China's 100-year-long shame.' But the nation is simultaneously in the grip of a growing Jane Austen craze.

As some in the media relive the humiliations inflicted by British gunboats, millions of Chinese are also watching Pride and Prejudice enthralled by how Mrs. Bennet marries off her five daughters.

Jane Austen has become the new opiate of the masses as Chinese Central Television (CCTV) re-broadcasts the BBC series twice a week and millions of copies of her works are bought.

'Everyone's watching it, turn on your TV and it's there,' said Zhu Hong, translator and professor of English literature at the Institute of Foreign Literature in the Chinese Academy of Sciences. 'It is about the problem of self-delusion, and that is something the Chinese don't like to own up to.'

'It is a real masterpiece and there is no sex or violence.' explained CCTV spokesman Feng Wangyou. According to CCTV surveys, the series has at least 10 million -- perhaps 20 million -- viewers.

- From the Hong Kong South China Morning Post, June 26, 1997, via Letter From Chicago, August, 1997.

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## THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU.

*Her grateful and gratified heart could hardly restrain its expressions within the language of tolerable calmness.*

Very sincere thanks to our faithful kitchen helpers, to those who come early and help set up the chairs and tables, and those who continue to send in clippings from newspapers and magazines. We couldn't function properly without you all.

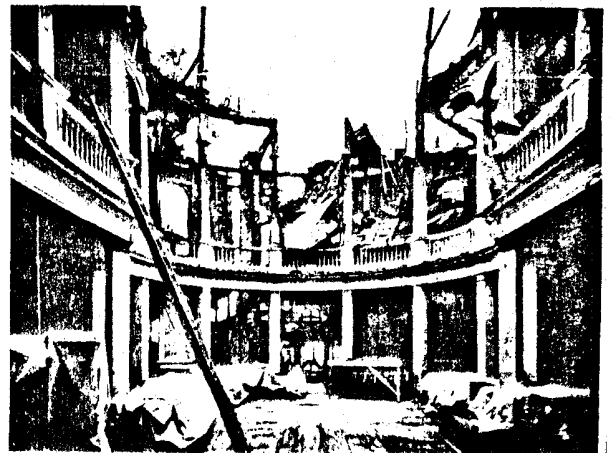
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## ST. GEORGE'S, HALIFAX - Up-date.

*The Flames were considerable...happily however the night was perfectly still, the Engines were immediately in use, & before ten the fire was nearly extinguished...*  
Letter No.56, Oct.1, 1808.

In 1805, Charles Austen was with his ship, HMS Indian, at Halifax, and no doubt worshipped at the lovely new church, St. George's, a round church with a gilded cupola designed under the influence of the Duke of Kent, and partly supported by a donation from his father, George III.

In early June, 1994, the church was accidentally set on fire and nearly completely destroyed. However, hard work by the devoted parishioners and donations from all over the world, have enabled its restoration to be almost completed, and "under budget". A campaign is under way to raise funds for the last stages: the pews, the main gallery, the floors, the bell and the organ. The Round Church is back in use, and the congregation is optimistic that the remaining \$1.7 million will be forthcoming.



If you would like to help out financially - no amount too small (or too large!) - contact Linda Crockett, 2222 Brunswick Street, Halifax, NS B3K 2Z3.

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## JANE AUSTEN: PSYCHOLOGIST

*Mine is a misery which nothing can do away.* (S&S)

"In studies at the University of Virginia, subjects told not to think about a former love registered higher levels of anxiety than those who frequently revisited a failed relationship. The researchers' advice: 'Rather than trying to blot out all memories of the loss, express your feelings - in a diary, through a tape recording, by talking with friends. Only by coming to terms with the love that got away can you move on to other passions.'" [Ladies' Home Journal, October 1997].

Marianne, "covering her face with her handkerchief, almost screamed with agony." According to the research mentioned above, this was the best reaction she could have made - and eventually she did get over her lost love. Elinor's stoicism, keeping her grief to herself, perhaps intensified and prolonged her grief. Where did Jane Austen come by her insights into characters and feelings?

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## A GENERATION OF GENIUS

*"Austen was born in the village of Steventon, Hampshire, on 16 December 1775... The year of Austen's birth had seen the battles of Lexington and Bunker Hill in England's American colonies, and by the time she was seven months old, those colonies had declared their independence. Among her generation of writers and artists, all of whom were more celebrated than she during their lifetimes, Austen was five years younger than William Wordsworth, four years younger than Walter Scott, three years younger than Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a year younger than Robert Southey, the exact contemporary of Charles Lamb and J.M.W. Turner, a year older than John Constable, and three years older than William Hazlitt. Without mystifying the 1770s into a decade which brought forth giants, we may safely observe that Austen and her contemporaries were decisively and permanently to shape modern practice and understanding of fiction, poetry, non-fiction prose, aesthetics, and painting and drawing. Without their work, our own cultural histories are simply unimaginable."*

- Gene Ruoff: Jane Austen's Sense and Sensibility (1992).

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## ROLE MODELS

"The flaws in the social structure...are especially evident in the circumstances surrounding women's domestic and conjugal roles...That Austen was aware of such severe limitations on a woman's possibilities for happiness is evident in her portraits of older women who often provide intimations of what may befall the heroine. Thus we have, for Catherine, the portrait of Mrs. Morland exhausted 'at the end of a morning' spent teaching her many children (NA 110); for Elizabeth Bennet, the image of Mrs. Gardiner at Pemberley, feeling the heat and tired from their walk, still having to wait while her husband looks at the trout (PP 254); for Emma, the near-mirror of Mrs. Weston, married to a happy-tempered man, but needing to exert herself like a 'sweet-tempered woman and a good wife' to fulfil her duties (cf. E 38, 255; see also Miss Bates' comments about 'how much trouble' Mrs. Weston has had in preparing the party at the Crown, E 322). Perhaps the most poignant portrait is that of Mrs. Croft, 'as intelligent and keen as any of the officers around her' (P 168), and yet lacking her own field of employment on which to exercise her powers."

- Laughter, War and Feminism: Elements of Carnival in three of Jane Austen's Novels: Gabriela Castellanos (1994).

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WAS HEATHCLIFF A MURDERER? GREAT PUZZLES IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY LITERATURE:

John Sutherland (1996)

CAN JANE EYRE BE HAPPY? MORE PUZZLES IN CLASSIC FICTION: John Sutherland (1997)

In both these collections of short essays, Sutherland looks at anomalies which the authors missed through carelessness, left unclear through vagueness, or in some cases were not "errors" but misunderstanding on the readers' part. Among the questions are: Did Heathcliff kill Hindley Earnshaw? Why did Robinson Crusoe only find one footprint? Who was Tom Jones' father?, and dozens of other fascinating enigmas.

In each book are two essays concerning Jane Austen's novels. Sutherland calls the changing sex of Pug in MP "an inconsequential quibble", but he uses it to give a slightly sharper picture of Lady Bertram's character. More important is the discussion of the origin of Sir Thomas' wealth - was it necessarily from slave-ownership? During the years of the Napoleonic Wars, large fortunes were made from sheep-farming, cattle-raising, and agriculture in general. (Sir Walter Scott went on a "farm-buying spree" around Abbotsford and only lost his money in the post-war period when agricultural land prices fell). Sir Thomas may have rented farms on the Mansfield estate as his main source of income. Even in Antigua, he could have "a farm supplying produce and timber to other plantations," or his financial problems could have resulted because he "ill-advisedly chose to raise some other crop than sugar," or because he "declined to use slave-labour as heartlessly as his fellow plantation owners." Jane Austen says nothing specific about his West Indian affairs.

Emma provides two puzzles. Mrs. Elton's favourite phrase, caro sposo, was a very common and fashionable fad in the 1770s and 1780s. By the time of Emma, the words had become hackneyed and no longer used by literate society. This reveals Mrs. Elton as "not only uncultivated but badly out of date with her fashionable slang."

The situation is more complex, however. Mrs. Elton uses the phrase three times in the course of the novel [278,302,356]. In the original text of 1816, the words were printed as cara sposo, grammatically incorrect, and cara sposa, still worse. Chapman, in his edition of 1923, corrected both occurrences to caro sposo, supposing them to be printers' errors. Was he correct to make the changes? Did Jane Austen intend to show Mrs. Elton as "very vulgar and very ignorant", mispronouncing the words? There is a third usage when Mrs. Elton gets the phrase right, caro sposo, in the early editions. Has Mr. Elton at last corrected her usage? Sutherland leaves readers to decide for themselves: "Is Mrs. Elton the kind of grossly uneducated woman who would mangle a well-known Italian phrase? Or is she merely someone who would use a once-fashionable phrase correctly, but long after it had ceased to be fashionable? Is she coarse; or merely egotistic and insensitive to social nuance?"

Sutherland discusses another enigma in Emma. Jane Austen was teased by her brother Frank, and chastised by critics, for her "most lamentable landscape-painting error" in describing the distant view of Abbey Mill Farm in June: "It might be safely viewed with all its appendages of prosperity and beauty, its rich pastures, spreading flocks, orchard in blossom, and light column of smoke ascending."

Sutherland does not view this passage as an "error" on Jane Austen's part. He feels it is a reader's "error" of misinterpretation. Emma is thinking of Harriet now completely "safe" from falling in love with Robert Martin again - all through the changing seasons of the year: in Spring ("the spreading flocks" of the lambing season), early Summer ("orchard in blossom"), mid-Summer ("rich pastures") and Autumn ("column of smoke ascending"). Sutherland adds: "What Austen offers us in this sentence is...a precise depiction, in the form of a miniature montage, of the turning seasons. Months may come and months may go, but Harriet will not again succumb to a mere farmer."

Sutherland has read these novels closely and thoughtfully. In clear easy-flowing prose, he isolates oddities and inspects them with deliberate and careful insights. His essays are witty, precise and full of challenges. You will read his books, and perhaps go back to the novels themselves, with renewed interest and delight.

JANE AUSTEN HOLDINGS AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM - Phyllis Taylor.

The following items written by Jane Austen are in the manuscript collection at the British Museum.

1. Letter to her sister, C.E.Austen, 1801.
2. Correspondence with Crosby and Co., 1809.
3. Opinions of Mansfield Park by relatives and friends of Austen, in her autograph, after 1813.
4. Opinions of Emma by relatives and friends of Austen, in her autograph, after 1813.
5. Letter to her sister Cassandra, 1811.
6. Correspondence with her brother, C.J.Austen, 1817.
7. Two chapters of Persuasion, 1816. Autographed.
8. Letters to her brother, F.W.Austen, 1805-1813.
9. Correspondence and agreement relative to copyright of her novels, 1832.
10. Receipt for copyright of Pride and Prejudice, 1833.

If you wish to view any of the above items by Jane Austen, make an appointment with:

Mrs. Sally Brown,  
Curator, Library Manuscripts,  
The British Library,  
Great Russell Street,  
London, England. WC1B 3DG  
Telephone: 0171 412 7517.

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LONDON'S WATER SUPPLY - WINE, ANYONE?

"When London was rebuilt after the Fire, the houses were supplied by water pumped in wooden mains from either the New River Water Company's works in Clerkenwell or from the London Bridge Waterworks. The spread of London westwards created a demand for new waterworks, and in 1675 the York Buildings Water Works were built at the foot of Villiers Street, south of the Strand. This building, with its pyramidal wooden tower, stood until 1829, and supplied the west end of London and Westminster. The drinking water supplied by the company was the unfiltered water of the Thames, and the water intake pipes were claimed to be 600 feet out into the centre of the river to avoid contamination. Although the river was little better than an open sewer, the water was thought to be preferable to that of the New River because...the sediment settled more quickly in the glass. Shortly afterwards a rival company was established: Marchant's Waterworks. Their reputation was far more insanitary, for their water intake pipe was almost next to the sewage outlet into the Thames."

- 2000 Years of London: Michael Hanson.

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DEMAND THE BEST

"It is a funny thing about life - if you refuse to accept anything but the best, you very often get it." - Somerset Maugham, quoted in Tea Celebrations: The Way to Serenity; Alexandra Stoddard (1994).

Compare Mary Crawford: "Selfishness must always be forgiven you know, because there is no hope of a cure". MP

Or Emma: "I always deserve the best treatment because I never put up with any other". Emma.

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WHO WROTE THIS? - ANSWERED

In the August Newsletter, I quoted a few lines from a poem and asked if anyone could tell me the source. Thanks to Sheila Calvert, Leila Vennewitz and Joan Philosophos (Chicago), who supplied the answer.

Morituri Salutamus - We who are about to die, salute you.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote the poem with this title for the fiftieth anniversary of his graduating class of Bowdoin College in Maine.

The lines I quoted came from this stanza:

The scholar and the world! The endless strife,  
The discord in the harmonies of life!  
The love of learning, the sequestered nooks,  
And all the sweet serenity of books;  
The market-place, the eager love of gain,  
Whose aim is vanity, and whose end is pain!

The long poem ends on a more optimistic note:

For age is opportunity no less  
Than youth itself, though in another dress,  
And as the evening twilight fades away  
The sky is filled with stars, invisible by day.

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VANCOUVER WEATHER

Vancouver's typical Fall weather has been in the newspaper headlines recently. The amazing thing is that anyone would ever consider it news. There have been complaints about the rain on the Northwest Coast since the first historical contact.

Captain Vancouver's descriptions usually contained the words "dreary", "desolate", "gloomy" and "dismal". He named one of the most beautiful spots on the coast "Desolation Sound".

Lewis and Clark reached the coast at much the same time. Clark's journal (in his unique spelling) is full of the weather: "We are all wet and disagreeable", "Rain as usual", "A blustery rainy day", "A hard rain all the last night we again got wet".

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MOST TRULY THE GENTLEMAN

"Since official titles were not commensurate with demand, there was instead a rapid growth in the numbers claiming to be 'gentlemen'. That was also a position of social prestige. The 'gentleman' was deemed to be part of the 'quality', to use the expressive 18th-century phrase. He was described as 'Mr.' and his spouse was a lady, although not formally a 'Lady'. In fiction, he was admirably represented by Austen's untitled but much admired Mr. Knightley of Donwell Abbey - or later by Trollope's Mr. Thorne of Ullathorne. However, the position was completely informal. It was not granted by official decree, but was awarded by a subtle mixture of individual assertion and social acceptance."

Power and the Professions in Britain - 1700-1850: Penelope J. Corfield (1995).

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### A RIDE A DAY KEEPS THE DOCTOR AWAY

A common topic of discussion in Jane Austen circles is Fanny's health. What is the matter with her? Hypochondria? Anaemia? Depression?

John Dussinger [Sensibility in Transformation, ed. Syndy McMillen Conger, 1990] suggests that "With the first mention of Fanny's horse-riding for health's sake, there may be a hint of what the family suspects to be her constitutional problem - hysteria, a familiar complaint...in this period." (p.96) Their recommendation of horse-riding was a regimen strongly endorsed by Dr. James, for this disorder and other nervous diseases:

"But the best Thing I have hitherto found, for clearing and strengthening, is a frequent and long-continued Practice of Riding on Horseback...Every Disorder of the Functions, or natural Weakness of the Organs, must be relieved by the often repeated Agitation of the Body in the open Air....And, by this motion, the Blood, being continually agitated and mixed, is purified and strengthen'd likewise."

Ironically, it is Mrs. Norris who gives excellent advice about Fanny's health:

"If Fanny would be more regular in her exercise, she would not be knocked up so soon. She has not been out on horseback now this long while, and I am persuaded, that when she does not ride, she ought to walk..." Good advice, then and now, whatever the source.

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### MORE CHANCES TO TALK ABOUT JANE AUSTEN

*He had a pleasing anticipation of what would be.* [MP 280]

We have already had a preliminary notice of the multi-regional conference which is being planned for May 12-14, 1999, at Jasper Park Lodge, by Juliet McMaster and others at the University of Alberta. Nearby regions have been asked to help in planning.

The year 2000 will see all sorts of celebrations, not least a Jane Austen Conference. This has been proposed for Boston. 2001 is planned for Seattle. Judith Fiedler, co-ordinator for the Puget Sound Region, has suggested that Vancouver and Victoria might like to be on a committee to help with the planning and operation. No date has been set, but it will probably be at the usual early-October time.

Any member interested in helping in any way - adjudicating papers, preparing schedules, or later, manning registration desks, etc. will be very welcome. Keep these events in mind.

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### ROUTINE FOR HOUSEMAIDS

Rise at six  
 Open shutters by a quarter past  
 Clean grates by Seven  
 Sweep rooms by half past  
 Dust and have downstairs rooms ready by Eight  
 Have your own breakfast till half past  
 Prepare all ready to go up Stairs by Nine  
 Turn down Beds and open windows by half past  
 Clear away things, empty slops and change water by Ten  
 Make beds by Eleven  
 Sweep bedrooms by half past  
 Dust and lay all smooth by One  
 Clean yourself ready for Needlework or  
 whatever may be required by half past.

The Housekeeper's Oracle (London, 1812)

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HAMPSHIRE CHURCHES

"In my rambles about this corner of Hampshire, during which I visited all the villages nearest to Selborne...I could not help thinking a good deal about Hampshire village churches generally. It was a subject which had often enough been in my mind before in other parts of the county, but it now came back to me in connection with Gilbert White's strictures on these sacred buildings. Their 'meanness' produced a feeling in him which is the nearest approach to indignation discoverable in his pages. He is speaking of jackdaws breeding in rabbit holes, and shrewdly conjectures that this habit has arisen on account of the absence of steeples and towers suitable as nesting-places. "Many Hampshire places of worship," he remarks, "make no better appearance than dovecotes." He envied Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire, the Fens of Lincolnshire, and other districts, the number of spires which presented themselves in every point of view, and concludes: "As an admirer of prospects I have reason to lament this want in my own county, for such objects are very necessary ingredients in an elegant landscape."

That smallness, or 'meanness' as he expresses it, of the Hampshire churches, is, to my mind, one of their greatest merits. The Hampshire village would not possess that charm which we find in it - its sweet rusticity and homeliness, and its harmonious appearance in the midst of a nature green and soft and beautiful - but for that essential feature and part of it, the church which does not tower vast and conspicuous as a gigantic asylum or manufactory from among lowly cottages dwarfed by its proximity....

The small village church with its low tower or grey-shingled spire among the shade trees, is beautiful chiefly because man and nature with its softening processes have combined to make it a fit part of the scene, a building which looks as natural and harmonious as an old hedge which man planted once and nature replanted many times, and as many an old thatched timbered cottage, and many an old grey ruin, ivy-grown, with red valerian blooming on its walls."

Hampshire Days: W.H.Hudson (1923) p.184-188.

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GLOSSING

Some years ago B.C.Southam gave a talk on "Glossing" a forthcoming edition of the novels, and the problems involved. The first consideration must be to whom the new edition is directed: explanations of words or phrases will not be the same for students, academics, "English as a Second Language" readers, or the general public. The decision of how much to gloss is a "nice" one, as Henry Tilney would say.

During the question period, someone asked the speaker if he would gloss the word "shrubby". Southam - very British - was puzzled: why would anyone need that word explained? He was told that in North America if you "walked in the shrubby" you would be clambering through the bushes, rather than strolling along a pretty path winding between plantings of shrubs. Such are the pitfalls of "glossing".

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*This Newsletter, the publication of the Vancouver Region of the Jane Austen Society of North America, comes out four times a year: February, May, August and November. All submissions on the subject of Jane Austen, her life, her works and her times, are welcome. Mail to the Editor: Eileen Sutherland, 4169 Lions Avenue, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada, V7R 3S2. Price to non-members: \$4.00 per year.*