

JANE AUSTEN SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

Vancouver Region

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THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF JOHN NICOL, MARINER - Eileen Sutherland.

[The first edition of Nicol's book, edited by John Howell, was published by Blackwood (Edinburgh) in 1822. It was never reviewed and gradually passed into oblivion. This new issue, edited with an introduction by Tim Flannery, was brought out by Atlantic Monthly Press, New York, in 1999. Perhaps now it will receive the favourable attention it deserves.]

John Nicol, in 1822, was a tattered old derelict seaman picking up bits of coal from the cobbles in Edinburgh streets for his fire. John Howell was a printer and bookbinder who liked to help unfortunate people. He heard the old man's stories and decided to get them published. He took down the story of Nicol's life and adventures "from his own mouth . . . as nearly as I could, in his own words." It is fine prose. The old seaman had spun his yarns to crowds of eager listeners, re-telling and polishing the phrases in his mind for years. He knew which anecdotes were most effective, which would give the most entertainment. This account is an example of the great oral story-telling tradition of the sea.

Born in 1755 in a village near Edinburgh, Scotland, Nicol's only desire was to go to sea. He was not used to drinking or swearing, and prayed and read the Bible daily. Most of the crews he sailed with were "pressed" men, rough and tough. Nicol had been trained as a cooper, and became the ship's cooper; this partially removed him from the violence of the rest of the crew, as he messed apart with the steward.

One of Nicol's early voyages was taking troops to North America (the War of Independence had begun). Troops and crew were unhealthy - "we threw overboard every morning a soldier or a sheep." Arrived at Quebec, the ship was laid up for six weeks with most of the crew suffering from dysentery. Nicol was allowed to go ashore, and he was eager to learn about everything he saw. In the St. Lawrence, he watched "Indians come alongside every day with [salmon], either smoked or fresh, which they exchange for biscuits or pork." He described how they took the fish, in wicker traps fastened to posts in the sand. He was intrigued by the rafts of logs which were poled down the river to the mills - "like floating islands. They were covered with turf, and wood huts upon them, smoke curling from the roofs."



JOHN NICOL
MARINER, AGE 67

When peace was declared in 1783, Nicol returned home, but he was too much a wanderer by nature to settle down. He got a berth as a cooper on a whaler bound for Greenland. It was winter and the weather was stormy. Nicol described the situation when the ship was trapped ten days in the ice: "Locked up in ice, all exertion is useless; the power you have to contend with is far too tremendous and unyielding; it, like a powerful magician, binds you in its icy circle, and there you must behold in all its horrors, your approaching fate . . . while the crashing of the ice, and the less loud but more alarming cracking of the vessel, serve all to increase the horrors of this dreadful nightmare." But this time the weather changed and the ice was blown away.

Nicol had had enough of icy weather in the north, and his next ship sailed for the West Indies. He was very interested in the life of the slaves, and admired their good spirits: "On the evenings of the Saturday and the Sabbath, no sound of woe is heard in this land of oppression - the sound of the *Benji* (drum) and rattle, intermixed with song, alone is heard. I have seen them dancing and singing of an evening, and their backs sore from the lash of their cruel task-masters."

The next voyage was one he had long wished for - a cruise of exploration and trading for furs around the world. They sailed to Tenerife, the Falkland Islands, around Cape Horn, to the Sandwich Islands, and the Northwest Coast of America. Nicol gives interesting descriptions of each place, and amusing anecdotes about the people he encountered. They found the Northwest Coast Indians inclined to steal anything they wanted, but to prevent jeopardizing their trading ventures, the sailors made no trouble, merely buying back the next day or so whatever items, such as a compass or iron bolts, which they needed.

Nicol points out with interest that the natives of the Sandwich Islands [Hawaii] could not be understood when they tried to repeat English words, but the coastal Indians "could pronounce every word we spoke almost as well as ourselves." On the way to Nootka Sound they encountered a dreadful gale, were blown off course, and suffered so much damage to sails and rigging that they sailed for the Sandwich Islands again to refit, much to the delight of all: "We had suffered a good deal of hardship on this coast, and bade it adieu with joy." He was beginning to pick up lots of words in the "Owhyee" language, and pointed out that many were quite like Latin, e.g. *terra*, earth; *nuna*, moon; *sola*, sun; *oma*, man, and so on.

After a pleasant winter in that delightful climate, they sailed again for the Northwest Coast, and had a "pretty successful" trade in furs. They stopped for provisions at Owhyee (where they were not allowed ashore because the captain was fearful of trusting too much to the islanders because of the murder of Captain Cook), and then sailed to China, sold their furs, and took on a cargo of tea for the East India Company. At first Nicol was delighted with China: "their trees and flowers so like their paintings, and the myriads of floating vessels; and, above all, the fanciful dresses and gaudy colours of their clothes." He comments: "[The mandarins] have the longest nails to their fingers I ever saw . . . half as long as the rest of the finger. . . . A Chinese will hold, by their means, more dollars in one hand than an Englishman will hold in both of his. Shaking hands will never be the fashion in China."

After three years circumnavigating the globe, Nicol's ship came back to England. "I now returned to Scotland with a sensation of joy only to be felt by those who have been absent for some time. Every remembrance was rendered more dear, every scene was increased in beauty. A piece of oaten cake tasted far sweeter in my mouth than the luxuries of eastern climes. I was for a time reconciled to remain."

Before he could really get settled, however, he was offered a job on a ship taking female convicts to New South Wales. They sailed by way of Tenerife, Rio and the Cape of Good Hope, and arrived at Port Jackson exactly one year from their departure from London. Nicol had fallen

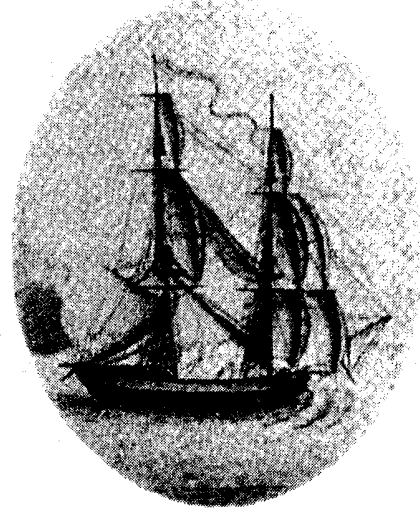
in love with one of the women convicts, and sadly had to leave her. For the next few years he tried to get on a ship that would take him back to her, but failed.

In 1794, caught by a press-gang, Nicol had to join a British man-of-war. He was in the battles of Cape St. Vincent, Aboukir, and other lesser engagements, and when peace was declared he was finally discharged as ship's corporal.

Back in Edinburgh after twenty-five years, he found it all changed: "I now wandered in elegant streets where I had left corn growing." He married a cousin and set himself up in business making casks for a soap works; but when war broke out again, he was in danger from press gangs and had to flee from the ports. After the war he had a hard time: he couldn't find employment, his wife died, he was forced to sell his property to pay debts. His old captain, who would have helped him, had died; the Admiralty Office told him he was too late applying for a pension; the Governor of Greenwich Hospital was away - he had nobody to turn to, and his money was gone. "I can look to my death-bed with resignation; but to the poor's house I cannot look with composure." It is good to know that Howell's publication of his story made enough to keep him in comfort for the rest of his life; he died "like an admiral, in his bed."

Nicol ends the book, summing up his life: "I have been a wanderer, and the child of chance, all my days; and now only look for the time when I shall enter my last ship, and be anchored with a green turf upon my breast; and I care not how soon the command is given."

Captain Wentworth, Admiral Croft, even Midshipman William Price described life at sea, in peacetime and in war, but they spoke as officers; in this account of the life and travels of John Nicol, we see British ships and foreign lands from the unique point of view of an Ordinary Seaman - but he was far from ordinary.



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LIBRARY NOTICE - Rachele Oriente

The Vancouver library collection will be housed at the home of Virgil and Jean Oriente, 1365 Walnut Street, Vancouver, B.C. If you would like to have access to the collection - books, videos, cassette tapes, some articles, and newsletters from other regions - please phone Jean or Virgil [738-7008], or Rachele [876-0133] to make arrangements to view the collections and borrow items. Unless you phone and ask for a specific item to be brought to the next meeting, none of the collection will be carried back and forth to St. Phillip's. A complete list of the collection is being prepared and will be distributed to members, who will be able to decide what they want to borrow. Members will be kept informed of additions made from time to time, and are requested to make suggestions as to new books or tapes to be purchased. The fee is fifty cents per item borrowed, and the time limit is one month.

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"Book collecting is an occupation, a disease, an addiction, a fascination, an absurdity, a fate. It is not a hobby. Those who do it must do it. Those who do not do it, think of it as a cousin of stamp-collecting, a sister of the trophy cabinet, bastard of a sound bank account and a weak mind."

- Jeanette Winterson, *TLS*, July 14, 2000.

NOVEMBER MEETING

Essay Contest Winners Read Their Work.

The two winners are busy students, working towards degrees, planning for future careers; and we were impressed at their insight and fluency in expressing their points of view. Our congratulations to them both, and good wishes for their future.

To Have Sense or Sensibility - that is the Question: Nicole Malysh, U.B.C.

Elinor and Marianne Dashwood are two opposites, both equally alluring role models. Elinor is a female intellectual primarily representing "sense" - she has strength, reason, social responsibility, judgment and balance: the epitome of "Realism". Marianne has sensibility, emotion, spontaneity, individualism - a devotee of "Romanticism". In their language, Elinor is restrained, Marianne immoderate; but both have strong feelings.

Nicole gave a good assessment of their characters, and interesting ideas of how Jane Austen used them.

Carelessness and Extravagance in *Mansfield Park*: The Estate and the Withdrawal of Paternal Responsibility: Corinna Wagner, S.F.U.

The novel is a clever and subtle political commentary. The interior and grounds of Mansfield Park show the status and functioning of the landowning class. Seeing it through Fanny's eyes, we sometimes receive a negative view, but her impressions often prove to be wrong - e.g. her nostalgic love of her Portsmouth home, until she visited it again. The influence of Sir Thomas is far-reaching. The family members have no practical independence; when they leave the estate they come to disaster. Sir Thomas is out of touch with family and community - he is an absentee landlord, as is Henry Crawford. Jane Austen sees this isolation as self-destructive. Corinna calls this moral degradation the beginning of the decline of the great estates.

Reports from the Conference.

Lady Catherine De Bourgh and the Mysterious Workings of Patronage: Irene Collins. Reported by Phyllis Taylor.

Patronage in Jane Austen's time was an all-pervading part of society - government officials, the navy, landowners, and other institutions. There were several kinds in the Church: institutional (bishops, colleges, etc.), and private (individual landowners). Jane Austen did not disapprove - her own family received patronage; three of her clergymen characters owed their livings to patronage, and three of her landowners were patrons of the church. She was not trying to undermine the system - there were no alternatives in place.

The conduct of church patrons was criticised for (1) perverting the system by keeping most or all of the tithes themselves; they appointed a vicar or curate instead of a rector; (2) selling the rights of the next presentation, i.e. the right to appoint the next incumbent; (3) neglecting the parishes. Lady Catherine was the patron of the parish of Hunsford - she was a good patron. She made Mr. Collins a rector (he could collect all the tithes); she did not sell the presentation; Hunsford was a parish in good condition. Lady Catherine did not have to toe the line, it was her choice: the bishop could object to a prospective incumbent for only three reasons - if he was an atheist, a loose liver, or masquerading as a clergyman.

So what was wrong with Lady Catherine? She interfered too much and too arrogantly. She was bossy with everybody. She would have had a lot of influence - giving a living was only one part of her largesse. Charlotte Lucas speaks well of Lady Catherine, judging by results.

Laughing at Mr. Darcy - Wit and Sexuality in *Pride and Prejudice*: Elvira Casal. Reported by Dianne Kerr.

Laughter was considered indelicate for women. Elizabeth defies social conventions (as did Jane Austen) by laughing at Mr. Darcy. She is challenging the idea of male dominance and female submission.

Laughter can be used as a sexual weapon and an enticement at the same time. Caroline Bingley and Mrs. Hurst use rational laughter in a social way when talking among women; but when Mr. Darcy is present, Caroline uses laughter aggressively towards him.

Lydia's laughter also is sexually aggressive. Mrs. Bennet laughs like Lydia, thoughtlessly carelessly. By their laughter, Elizabeth, Lydia and Mrs. Bennet are linked to amorality, licentiousness and sexual desire.

The Redcoats Are Coming! The Redcoats Are Coming!: Clive Caplan and Janice Caplan. Reported by Ron Sutherland.

Dr. Caplan, dressed for the occasion in an officer's coat and three-cornered hat, with breeches and boots, gave an illustrated talk about the military aspects of *Pride and Prejudice*. His wife, in a dress from Jane Austen's period, read various passages with military reference from the novel. Interesting slides were shown, including: the Gazette listing of Henry Austen's commission to the rank of Lieutenant; drawings and paintings showing women along on the military march (women were limited to 6% of the number of men); uniform styles of volunteers, militia, and regulars, and Rowlandson drawings of military subjects.

One slide showed Brighton Camp, with George III's son as colonel. Brighton had a notorious reputation at the time - over 300 prostitutes were known to be there. Possibly Mr. Bennet didn't appreciate the full meaning of "leaving Lydia to her fate." Militia officers and men got regular army pay, but were only recruited for home defense, and so seldom saw action.

Pemberley and the Visiting of Country Houses: Stephen Clarke. Reported by E.Sutherland.

Elizabeth and the Gardiners were welcomed when they arrived to see Pemberley. This was the time of the Picturesque - tourists travelled around to view wild natural countryside, and beautiful estates and gardens. Jane Austen uses the framing device of a window to show Elizabeth looking out at different aspects of the landscape of Pemberley: natural not artificial; praiseworthy use of water; simpler than some of Repton's or Payne Knight's; an image of status.

A housekeeper showed visitors around the house (for a tip). Some houses had fixed days of admission, or tickets upon application; many had certain open hours. Some had good maps, booklets and guide books available.

The country house was a cultural icon - the visitor must be able to appreciate what he sees. Often it was a rushed visit, with no time to linger and appreciate details. Visitors often remarked upon the rapacity, ignorance, rudeness, even drunkenness of the housekeeper, but they were also often spoken of as helpful, talkative, informed and welcoming.

A "display of wealth" and of "good taste" were the main reasons for country houses being on show - they were models of fashion and of conspicuous consumption. Ostentatious show, or "less of splendour and more real elegance" could be found in different houses. Visitors had various feelings: gaping wonder, serene joy, or complacent pleasure. It is misleading to identify the houses in the novels with real houses.

“A spirited beginning to [our] winter engagements” - December Meeting.

On the worst day of the year (frozen slush and black ice on the roads and sidewalks, and a soaking downpour of rain), an intrepid band of about twenty members met for our annual Birthday/Christmas celebration. We hustled inside, only to find that the furnace was out, and the hall just as cold as outside - but at least not wet! With the fireplace vainly trying to warm the big room, our kitchen helpers turned on the ovens and made a big pot of tea to try to warm us up. Another splendid idea, eagerly accepted, was for a little glass of our luncheon wine to get us in the mood. We remembered Mr. Woodhouse's comment: "I do not think it could disagree with you." Gradually we took off coats, unwound scarves, and moved our circle of chairs a little bit away from the fire.

The meeting began with a re-cap by Keiko Parker of the troubles at Chawton Cottage with the proposed development there. We hope a barrage of disapproval will influence the Hampshire Council to reconsider its decision.

Dianne Kerr has laboured in our library for the past ten years, carting books to each meeting and back home again, keeping track of borrowings, and suggesting purchases of new books. On her resignation today, to show our appreciation for all she has done, Keiko presented her with a small book - "Jane Austen's Thank You Recipe Collection."

Several members then gave reports on articles in the last *Persuasions*.

René Goldman recently read a book studying outsiders in a community. The title of one chapter caught his eye: "*Pride and Prejudice*" or "*Sense and Sensibility*": *How Reasonable was Anti-Semitism in Vienna, 1880-1939?* The author, Stephen Beller, discussed the antipathy towards Jews in Austria, from the point of view of the antitheses in Jane Austen's novel titles. He points out that *Pride and Prejudice* is a novel about a heroine struggling to overcome her first mistaken impressions: "This being a novel written by a sensible author in empirical England in the early years of the age of improvement, Elizabeth does overcome her prejudice, because her mind is open to counterargument and the factual evidence. Why, then, did something similar not occur in Austria, particularly in Vienna?"

René believes that reason may alter one person's judgment of another, but the same is rarely the case where a majority population is prejudiced against a minority living in its midst. Jews remained "mysterious" and "dangerous" in spite of the great musicians, writers, artists, scientists, doctors and philosophers among them. Probably Jane Austen never met a Jew in her life, yet the phrase "rich as a Jew" appears twice in *Northanger Abbey*. However, the remarks are both made by John Thorpe, never an exemplary character. In *Persuasions On-Line*, you can read René's review of this book, which develops the theme in greater depth.

Irene Howard discussed "*Emma and New Comedy*" (Laura Mooneyham White). New Comedy has a long tradition, dating from Classical Greek literature. Certain conventions are found in this genre: (1) A cruel and arbitrary law imposed by a tyrant. As applied to *Emma*, Emma herself is the author of her own strict "sharp Athenian law": She must never marry. The reader wonders how this law will be broken. (2) An important disclosure of the truth and reversal of fortune. These come together in *Emma* when she realizes she loves Mr. Knightley, but thinks he is lost to her. (3) A trickster complicates the plot. Emma herself plays this role when she breaks her shoelace to give Mr. Elton a chance to pursue Harriet. (4) A boaster or braggart - Mrs. Elton. (5) Killjoy - Mr. Woodhouse. It is significant that the main events - the strawberry picking and the Box Hill excursion - occur at mid-summer, recalling Shakespeare's "dream world."

“Temporal, Spatial and Linguistic Configurations” (T.P. Tsomondo) was the article referred to by **Dianne Kerr**. She considered the language pompous, with the unnecessary use of what Jane Austen called “hard words.” For example, the author writes: “Mr. Suckling is not part of the novel’s *diegesis*.” [How many readers know what this word means? My OED defines it as “a narrative statement of the case”.] Dianne wondered why Mrs. Elton says that “Mr. Suckling” was in favour of the abolition of slavery; why did she not say this about her father, Mr. Hawkins? Did he have some slave-trade connection? The name “Hawkins” is certainly suggestive - Sir John Hawkins was a famous freebooter (e.g. pirate) and slave-trader in Elizabethan times, and Bristol was a notorious port. Dianne asked for interruptions, comments or disagreements - she got them - we had a lively discussion.

Sandy Lundy gave excerpts and statistics from “Mr. Lock: Hatter to Jane Austen’s Family” (Kenneth S. Cliff). Anyone who was anyone in the late 18th and early 19th centuries bought his hats at Lock’s. It is a small shop, with a low entrance doorway, still in the same place, #6 St. James Street, London. Recently old ledgers and accounts have been studied. Sandy picked out items referring to the men of Jane Austen’s family: the Rev. Mr. Austen (perhaps her father); her brothers Francis, James, and Edward Knight; a distant cousin; and others of the name of Austen who may have been related. Sandy showed a picture from *Jane Austen in Style* of Edward Austen Knight holding a “round hat” as illustrated in this article.

Our Shakespeare expert, **John Parker**, discussed “The Hartfield Edition; Jane Austen and Shakespeare” (John Wiltshire). Jane Austen knew Shakespeare well. There are many references in the novels to the plays or characters. As Henry Crawford said, “Shakespeare has passed into our language as our common heritage.” Several bits of dialogue have echoes of Shakespeare, e.g. Miss Bates and Mistress Quickly. The verbal sparring of Beatrice and Benedict is similar to that of Elizabeth and Darcy. The infamous dialogue between John and Fanny Dashwood cutting down the amount of the obligation they have to his step-mother and sisters reminds us of Lear’s daughters discussing how little they can do for their father. Writing her own stories, Jane Austen draws all this material from deep within her mind and memory.

As the programme came to an end, **Keiko Parker** proposed a tongue-in-cheek toast to Jane Austen, à la Mrs. Elton: “Must I go first? I really am ashamed of always leading the way. However, it is a great honour to be the first to give a toast to Miss Austen. She is such a genius to create so many fine ladies and gallant young men. Among the former, I, of course, count myself. You know, I took a quick look at the display of collation in the kitchen. Oh, you people have brought so many nice things for our luncheon it quite reminds me of Maple Grove, my brother, Mr. Suckling’s seat. Very like Maple Grove, indeed! I was quite struck by the likeness! These are the very foods which are my sister’s favourite. Such abundance! Is not it astonishingly like, Mr. E.? Oh well, my Caro Sposo does not hear me, but I assure you, ladies and gentlemen, it is very delightful to me to be reminded of a place I am so extremely fond of as Maple Grove. So, to Miss Austen. A very happy Birthday to you!”

Sandy Lundy proposed a last toast - to ourselves, “this happy few”, who made it to the meeting and survived the cold - we echoed her words enthusiastically.

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My favourite compliment:

Amelia Opie to Mary Wollstonecraft (1796) :

“...only you and the Lakes of Cumberland have exceeded my expectations.”

Eighteenth Century Writers

Louise Yearwood reported on a recent speaker at the Toronto meeting. Dr. Kenneth Graham, University of Guelph, spoke about the 18th century writers, Godwin and Beckford. "The suppression of liberal attitudes and the stemming of change which was an ideology of the time, evinced by Edmund Burke, created a cultural trauma when the ruling classes were repressive and arrogant . . . This climate did not permit either Godwin or Beckford to flourish."

The talk concluded with a look at Jane Austen's work and how it might comment on this period of repression. "He suggested that Austen's unease in the 1790s with Burke's equation is reflected in *Northanger Abbey*, and in Catherine's dislike of General Tilney, his Gothic abode and his exertion of power. Dr. Graham argued, however, that twenty years later with the publication of *Emma* and the revival of "creative audacity" in England, Mr. Knightley's Donwell Abbey is celebrated for its style and the man himself for his chivalry and benevolence; indeed, Knightley is faithful to his name. The chivalry of the gentry in *Emma* is without display and the manner, elegance and creativity of this period of English history, and Austen's obvious comfort with it, renders the nation and her work beautiful."

The Writing Desk, August 2000

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Quotations, contributed by Jacquie Johnston.

"Jane Austen was a comedian - her outlook was always humorous. And even when she penetrates into one of her characters with knife-edged clearness, she always does so with a smile on her lips." From *Bruce Chatwin*, by Nicolaus Shakespeare. [The author, aged 15 or 16 in the 1950s, wrote an essay in the classical Lower Sixth at his public school, Marlborough, on *Pride and Prejudice*].

Katherine Mansfield read Jane Austen while convalescing in Switzerland in 1921. In her biography, *Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life*, Claire Tomalin notes:

"They read Proust together and Jane Austen, whose ability to make plots Katherine admired," writing: "She makes modern episodic people like me, as far as I go, look very incompetent ninnies."

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Don't You wish . . . ?

"Her tone of calm languor, for she never took the trouble of raising her voice, was always heard and attended to." [Lady Bertram, *MP* p.218]

The attainment of supreme satisfaction in life!

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"You cannot embark on life, that one-off coach ride, once again when it is over. But if you have a book in your hand, no matter how complex or difficult to understand that book may be, when you have finished it, you can, if you wish, go back to the beginning, read it again, and thus understand that which is difficult and, with it, understand life as well."

Quoted in *A History of Reading*: Alberto Manguel.

Filthy Lucre: Kathleen Glancy

Jane Austen very nearly got her picture put on the back of the Bank of England £20 note the last time it was redesigned, which was only last year. The front of Bank of England notes is reserved for the Queen, but portraits of people of eminence traditionally adorn the back. Jane was in the short list, her rival being Sir Edward Elgar. Now Elgar was **one** of the greatest English composers, and in the opinion of all discerning people Jane was **the** greatest English novelist. It should have been no contest, but he had one asset which swung the balance. The only portrait of Jane accepted as genuine by the authorities is Cassandra's drawing, which has straight and simple lines. Forgers love straight and simple lines. What forgers dislike is hair. Lots of hair. Like a large bushy moustache. Whatever their relative peer rankings, Elgar beat Jane hands down in the large bushy moustache department. So now he is on the £20 note - but let us never forget he only won this honour by numerous hairs.



Repressive or Liberal Attitudes.

In a recent Toronto Newsletter, Louise Yearwood (Regional Co-ordinator) commented on one of their speakers. Dr. Kenneth Graham, of the University of Guelph, gave a talk about the 18th c. writers Godwin and Beckford: "The suppression of liberal attitudes and the stemming of change which was an ideology of the time, evinced by Edmund Burke, created a cultural trauma when the ruling classes were repressive and arrogant . . . This climate did not permit either Godwin or Beckford to flourish."

Dr. Graham concluded with a look at Jane Austen's work and how it might comment on this period of repression. "He suggested that Austen's unease in the 1790s with Burke's equation is reflected in *Northanger Abbey*, and in Catherine's dislike of General Tilney, his Gothic abode and his exertion of power. Dr. Graham argued, however, that twenty years later with the publication of *Emma* and the revival of "creative audacity" in England, Mr. Knightley's Donwell Abbey is celebrated for its style and the man himself for his chivalry and benevolence; indeed, Knightley is faithful to his name. The chivalry of the gentry in *Emma* is without display and the manner, elegance and creativity of this period of English history, and Austen's obvious comfort with it, renders the nation and her work beautiful."



Seattle Conference Quiz

The latest newsletter from Seattle includes a gratifying comment by Kimberly Brangwin, on the quiz developed by five members of the Vancouver group:

"I received the test that the wonderful Vancouver chapter has made up. I must say that I was glad that the answers were included! It should prove a delectable challenge for those tempted to complete it. As we have some great champions in the Society, it needs to be tough. The Vancouver chapter has kindly offered to mark the tests. Eileen Sutherland, former JASNA President, has a group working on this project as their contribution to our AGM. The test covers 'dining and drinking/fashion and dress/reading/pleasure trips/music.' They certainly have done a marvelous job."



Resignations Regretfully Received.

Eleanor Hill phoned in December to report that she was going to resign from JASNA. Ill health - a return of angina and vision problems (which her doctor feels may be ameliorated in time) - prevents her from joining us. Her friends and co-car-poolers from West Vancouver, Pat Harrison and Roxy Yelf, are also incapacitated by various health problems and are unable to come to meetings. We'll miss them.

When Eleanor mentioned her decreased vision, I asked whether she had Cover-to-Cover cassettes, or Story Tapes, but she said she didn't think she had the time!! She is making an album to illustrate her "memoirs". She takes old pictures, writes little stories or family histories about each incident or person, and mounts them in a loose-leaf album (one for each member of her immediate family) in transparent protective "sleeves". She is creating a treasure for her family and enjoying wonderful memories of her childhood and growing-up years - an inspiration for us all. We wish her well.

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Northanger Abbey FILM - Bad News.

We have been waiting for some time for definite news about the reported filming of a new version of *Northanger Abbey*.

The Jane Austen Web Site mentioned that Andrew Davies had written a screen play for British Television, but the rights were sold to the American film company Miramax. However, Miramax's recent *Mansfield Park* did not come up to expectations financially (nor in other ways) and the company seems to have deferred indefinitely any plans to produce another Jane Austen film - So, re-read the book!

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"The wisest and most balanced of all Jane Austen's men, Mr. Knightley, does not appear to engage in shooting or any other sport. In a novel where the giving and receiving of food is a recurring theme, there is no reference to anything that has to be shot or caught, except the pigeons for Mr. Weston's pies. Everything that is eaten - the goose that Mrs. Martin sends to Mrs. Goddard, the pork that goes from Hartfield to the Bates, the cold meat in Mr. Knightley's dining-room - is farmed; and it is significant that Donwell is seen as a working estate, with Abbey Mill Farm essential to its prosperity, and Mr. Knightley not a solitary, leisured sportsman on a rented property but a busy landowner working closely with his steward and his tenant farmer." (*Jane Austen and Leisure*: David Selwyn)

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This Newsletter, the publication of the Vancouver Region of the Jane Austen Society of North America, is issued 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. V7R 3S2. Subscription price to non-members is \$10 per year.