

# JANE AUSTEN SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

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## The Glories of Carlton House. Eileen Sutherland

Carlton House was described as “the shortest lived and yet the most tasteful and exquisite of London’s vanished royal residences.” [L.W.Cowie, *History Today*. Feb.1978]. It was a plain red-brick building built in 1710, with extensive and secluded grounds and an impressive view of St. James Park. It came into the possession of various members of the Royal Family, including the mother of George III. Finally the King granted the estate to his eldest son, the Prince of Wales, on his twenty-first birthday. By this time the house had become rather dilapidated. The Prince, already with a strong passion for building and embellishment, set about to remodel it, with Henry Holland, son-in-law of ‘Capability’ Brown, as his architect. Holland’s classicism was gentle and austere, and he began with a columned Corinthian portico in the centre of the Pall Mall façade. Walpole hailed it as “august simplicity” and approved the “taste and propriety” of the work.

The interior was more ornate: an oblong hall decorated with brown marble Ionic columns led to an octagon; to the right was a graceful double curved staircase within a large oval, covered by two semi-domes. Above were the state apartments, including a music-room, a drawing room decorated in the currently-fashionable Chinese style, and the Prince’s private rooms. Below were new kitchens, sculleries, larders, pantries, cellars, and servants’ quarters. Outside, the gardens, originally laid out by William Kent with bowers, grottoes and statues, were given a waterfall and a temple.

The Prince moved into Carlton House in 1784 and began a series of lavish entertainments often celebrating the political victories of his Whig friends. For the next thirty years or so neighbouring houses were bought and demolished to make way for extensions to Carlton House: a circular dining-room with silver-lined walls, a crimson drawing room and a rose-satin drawing room on the ground floor; below were a Corinthian golden drawing room, a Gothic dining room and library, and a fantastic conservatory with clusters of carved pillars, stained glass windows and a marble pavement.

The Prince continually added to and improved his collections of furniture, pictures, china and all sorts of works of art. The cost, as the Prince admitted, was “enormous,” and the common people called it “spendthrift extravagance.”

At the end of the Napoleonic Wars, Carlton House was at the peak of its glory,



and the foreign visitors who came to London when peace was declared in 1814 were astonished at such a fine town residence and magnificent art collection.

The Prince gradually transferred his interest in building and decorating to the Royal Pavilion at Brighton, and to transforming the modest royal residence of Buckingham House. He decided that Carlton House should be sacrificed to raise the money he needed. By 1827 only the Corinthian columns of the portico remained. They were subsequently re-used as the portico of the National Gallery at Trafalgar Square.

An exhibition of the glories of Carlton House was held at The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace, in 1991-2. We have a copy of the catalogue in the library. Illustrated with black and white photos and over three dozen superb colour plates, the book gives the history of the palace, and details of the beautiful collections of paintings, furniture, plate, porcelain and arms amassed over the years. Many people (probably including Jane Austen who was shown over the palace in 1815 by James Stanier Clarke, the Prince's librarian) considered the palace too ornate and overdecorated, but nobody can deny the beautiful workmanship of its treasures.

What I found very interesting was the description of the cleaning and maintenance involved in caring for the building and its magnificent contents:

"A visitor to Carlton House would have been struck by the freshness of the fabrics and the condition of the ornaments and furniture. The jobbing accounts of the tradesmen reveal the degree of attention which was given to ensure that standards were maintained. The Vulliamys were constantly engaged in overhauling and repairing clocks. The gilt bronze mounts of ornaments, clocks and furniture were regularly cleaned using a mixture supplied by the *tapissier*, John Bosquet . . . who also provided 'Loaves to Clean the Ceiling of the Apartments with.' Mounts, which were too far gone, were regilt. Tapestries were taken out into the garden and scoured with bread. Carpets were beaten, curtains, draperies and seat covers were also regularly cleaned with cloths, flannels and bread. Veneered furniture was restored and polished. . . .

Perhaps the most interesting feature of these accounts . . . was the degree of preventive care which was taken. Holland covers were supplied for draperies, curtains, seats, chandeliers and ornaments. . . . For the Hervé seats, for which loose covers of pink and green clouded cotton had been provided in 1792, additional protective paper cases were also made. In 1794 Robert Campbell charged £1 15s for taking off the cotton covers, brushing, cleaning and giving 'them Air for some days out of doors,' and then replacing them and 'Sewing the Covers round the bottom of the feet to prevent them being uncovered.' . . .

All the carpets were fitted with druggets, generally green or grey, but also occasionally blue or crimson. Sometimes brown holland covers were also used. Leather covers of different colours were supplied for tables and chests of drawers and brown holland covers for other pieces of furniture, such as bookcases. . . . Care was taken to exclude or reduce daylight, so as to protect the furnishings from fading. The windows were fitted with Venetian blinds (sometimes painted green or stone colour), and hung with muslin curtains. Two sets were supplied so as to allow for one set to be cleaned.

Everything shone and glittered and never more so than at night. . . . We must try to imagine the combined effect of the glowing alabaster vases, lit from within with old lamps, the flickering flames of the candles on candelabra reflected in mirrors and glinting off the burnished surface of gilded frames, gilt bronze mounts and Sèvres porcelain vases, while many-faceted glass chandeliers, fitted with Argand oil lamps, shed a radiant glow over the whole scene."

It must have been magnificent!

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September Meeting reported by E.Sutherland.

**Class and Society in *Emma* and *Persuasion*: Siobhan Maria Carroll.**

Rachele Oriente introduced the speaker, Siobhan Carroll, the winner of our annual essay contest. Siobhan has been interested in Jane Austen since she read *Pride and Prejudice* in high school. At UBC she received her BA with Honours in English earlier this year. She is now trying to decide between graduate studies or going into law. She is currently teaching Social Science and English at an E.S.L. preparatory school.

Siobhan's topic was "Class and Society in *Emma* and *Persuasion*". What did "class" mean to Jane Austen and the society of her time? How did it affect her work? We must not look at the early 19<sup>th</sup> century from the point of view of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century attitudes.

*Persuasion* is a contrast to the other novels, with its melancholy tone, and its departure from Jane Austen's previous works in theme and class: bold risk-taking is celebrated. It has sometimes been considered "a reaction against the conservative static society" of *Emma*, or as a "society in decline". Scott wrote of the "middling classes" of society in *Emma*. In this last novel, Jane Austen describes a diverse group, merchants and gentlemen of leisure. Her society shows a lack of definition, a fluidity. There is a degree of upward mobility threatening to the landed gentry.

More threatening is the downward mobility, especially of women, who must make a good marriage. In *Emma* Jane Fairfax and Miss Bates are examples of what can happen to unmarried women. At 21, Emma rejects for herself the fate of becoming a disagreeable old maid - she believes a woman of fortune will always be acceptable in society.

But Emma's ideas are always wrong - about Harriet and about herself. Her belief in her influence in this small isolated community misleads her into thinking she can raise Harriet ("obviously" the daughter of a gentleman or nobleman) as far up in society as she wants to. Emma is not incontrovertibly at the head of Highbury society: the Coles are part of a rising class - their parties are attended by all the better people in town. Mrs. Elton, also, intends to become the social leader of Highbury. Emma really has no control: she must marry like all the other young women. Emma's education is the recognition of the changing society of Highbury; she must change along with the community, if necessary alienating her father and his wishes and beliefs, and forfeiting his estates.

Anne Elliot sees a clear choice between the old estate and the self-made man. In *Persuasion*, society is not static, but in a state of flux. Sir Walter Elliot disparages the naval profession - it raises men to honour out of their original class. This upward social mobility is contrasted with the declining status of the Elliot family. Anne at 27 is poised on the brink of spinsterhood, but the arrival of Captain Wentworth and Mr. Elliot appears to change her status.

Mr. Elliot is the favourite of Lady Russell, who would like to see Anne in "your dear Mother's place", a smooth transition to a new generation, with no alienation from the old estate. For Anne, however, the "excitement of the unknown with the man she loves", shows her choice of evolution over stagnation. Personal merit not rank is seen as what is important to society. The fate of the personal estate is no longer the major issue.

Emma and Anne confront the fact that the world is changing and they must change, too. Emma inherits and Anne leaves the old estate. Individual work and worth must justify one's position in society. The Elliots shirk the duties of their class; the Crofts show themselves more worthy.

Some interesting questions, and Siobhan's insightful replies, brought an end to the meeting - a good beginning for the new Fall season.

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### Joan Austen-Leigh

Janeites all over the world share in the grief at the recent passing of Joan Austen-Leigh. With her valuable role in founding the Jane Austen Society of North America, she gave a focus for the serious study of Jane Austen, and opportunities for the inimitable pleasure of endless discussions of her works with like-minded friends.

In Vancouver we have a special reason to be grateful for all that Joan did over the years. It was she who gave impetus to the establishment of the Vancouver chapter of JASNA. In 1981 she gave a small supper party, inviting the few local members on the JASNA membership list, and some of her Vancouver acquaintances with known literary interests. We had a delightful evening. Before we left, Joan spoke plainly - if we wanted a Jane Austen Society in Vancouver, it was now up to us.

Some months later, a dedicated group began holding regular meetings, and JASNA Vancouver was born. Joan Austen-Leigh maintained an interest in the Vancouver group, occasionally came over for our meetings, and several times gave witty, informative and interesting talks. We gave ourselves the honour of making her an honorary member of JASNA Vancouver, and have always felt particularly close to her. Joan will be greatly missed.



### Amending the First Impression: On Re-reading Carol Shields' *Jane Austen*:

by Keiko Parker.

"Carol Shields is writing a new biography of Jane Austen!" Such was the advance notice I heard here and there, and I must say I was looking forward to reading it. I was rather disappointed on my first reading of the book, as there was nothing new in biographical facts. However, the appearance in Vancouver Region Newsletter No. 75 of the phrase "Coles Notes approach"—which comment was not mine—made me re-read the book. Since my book report at the June meeting was not detailed enough, I would like to take this opportunity to remedy that.

This is one of a series of "A Penguin Life" books which includes writers, philosophers, artists, scientists, etc. As such we cannot expect Shields' *Jane Austen* to contain newly researched material. That was my mistake. What Shields does is to relate what is known of Austen's biographical facts and put down her thoughts about them. I should state at the outset it bears a second reading. "THE DIFFERENCE between a published and unpublished author is enormous." So writes Carol Shields, speaking from her own experience as a writer. It is this unique first-hand view of writing experience that Shields brings to the book which makes it worth reading.

Her commentaries scattered among the biographical facts are often cogent. This makes me wonder if the book would not have been a more significant one if Shields were not bound by biographical obligation. Certainly the book would have been more focussed. Dividing her attention between biographical facts and commentary on them makes the whole work a little too diffuse.

I found Chapter 12 dealing with the elder Austens' decision to retire to Bath and Jane's dismay at such a move the most penetrating of all the observations in the book: "Bath, real or mythical, was part of Jane Austen's geography, a place and also an idea. It had lost some of its excitement and edge in the late eighteenth century, but never its respectability or its healing powers. Jane Austen's use of Bath demonstrates her precise understanding of new attitudes toward money and leisure. With the accurate placement of Bath in her contemporary universe she proves herself an astute reporter on sociological change."

Shields makes a convincing case for the advantage of writers having discourse with other writers in the form of writers' colonies, unions, and guilds. It is interesting to consider. Would Jane Austen have written differently if she could have run her work by her colleagues? But not only were such writers not near at hand in Hampshire, the genius of Jane Austen is surely that she produced her six major novels without any outer stimulus than that of reading previous writers.

I was not completely satisfied with Shields' assessment of the relationship between Cassandra and Jane. Is it so obvious Jane was always wanting to propitiate Cassandra? Was Cassandra in any way jealous of Jane's talents and growing fame? I felt I had to accept Shields' opinion on credit.

Once in a while I felt Shields was sounding a false note, such as when she calls Emma Woodhouse's deceased mother "the enfeebled spouse of Mr. Woodhouse." The late Mrs. Woodhouse is described by Mr. Knightley as "the only person able to cope with [Emma]. She inherits her mother's talents and must have been under subjection to her." This is backed up by Mr. Woodhouse himself: "Ah! it is no difficulty to see who you [Emma] take after. Your dear mother was so clever at all those things. If I had but her memory." Anything but enfeebled, I'd say.

Shields is perhaps the strongest when she is discussing Austen's novels in general as she does in Chapter 3. Who can argue with a statement like "Jane Austen's writing with its wit, elegance, and narrative control outshone that of her contemporaries and those Victorian novelists who came after her"?

Although Shields states that there is no mention of toes and other body parts in Jane Austen's novels and says, "there is scarcely a single mention of toothache." I fail to see why this is a crucial point for discussion of a novelist's merits. And in fact, Harriet Smith in Emma has "a tooth amiss" near the end of the novel and is sent to Brunswick Square in London. As to ankles, we know Mr. Bennet exclaims, "O! that he had sprained his ankle in the first dance!" at his wife's effusions of enthusiasm after a dance. Also Elizabeth Bennet arrives at Netherfield Park "with weary ankles, dirty stockings," etc., which gets roundly criticized by Miss Bingley: "above her ankles in dirt." We must conclude that Jane Austen mentioned human anatomy as she required to, for characterization and truthfulness of dramatic situations—a refreshing point of departure from many of the present-day novels which go into graphic details for their own sake.

There are eight or nine errors. One error appears twice in the book. It is Mrs. Mitford of Alresford, the mother of Mary Russell Mitford, not Mary Russell Mitford herself, who spoke of Jane Austen as "the prettiest, silliest, most affected husband-hunting butterfly . . ." Mary Russell Mitford had her own uncomplimentary opinion of Jane Austen, but it is not worth repeating here.

Throughout the book the narrative moves seamlessly in Shields' quiet voice, which is attractive in itself. Once you accept it as "a life" and not "a biography," the book is quite acceptable. And because of its slim size, it would make a good entry book for students into the life and world of Jane Austen. I did buy a second copy and donated it to our library. I hope many people will read it.

### **Reports from the Conference - October Meeting.**

A dozen or so Vancouver members enjoyed a visit to Seattle and the annual JASNA Conference. They reported about the sessions they had attended, and the entertainment provided for their leisure hours.

**Getting and Spending: Conspicuous Consumption in Highbury** (Sheryl Bonar Craig). The reports were led off by **Diana Bodnar**, who described the discussion on the spending habits in *Emma*, and how this was reflected in the personalities of the characters. The Knightley brothers were not spenders, as opposed to Frank Churchill who was very extravagant, and who had poor relations with others. Mr. Elton was poor but spent a lot of money. (He also had the opportunity of eating out a lot, which saved him that expense). He needed to marry money. Shopping habits were also discussed - Harriet's indecision at Ford's is only one example of the lack of firm decisions in her life. Jane Fairfax also is poor, but she buys gifts for others rather than for herself. Jane Austen used shopping as a way to change the subject: Frank decides to go to Ford's when he wants to stop Emma's questions about Weymouth. The speaker was prepared with lots of hard facts - income comparisons, interest on money, etc., and the talk generated many questions. The parallels in personalities and shopping habits made the audience think again about the characters and the novels.

**Profitable and Purposeful Performances: Austen's Accomplished Women** (Juliette Wells). **Dianne Kerr** gave an account of this session, which began with a few opinions by Hannah More: accomplishments are not pernicious in themselves, but music, for instance, can be dangerous if it absorbs a young lady's whole life (to the detriment of looking for a husband). Mary Bennet's wish to be accomplished ended in excessive vanity; Fanny Price was not musical and did not try to learn; Mrs. Elton had a veneer of gentility, which fooled some of her acquaintances; Emma put her drawing ability to use to try to attract Mr. Elton to the subject of her portrait, Harriet; Edward Ferrars's story shows how accomplishments can be used by women to attract men. Accomplishments could be all on the surface, or engage the intellect - the more valued way. The accomplishment most mentioned in the novels is music, but not all the heroines play. Mary Crawford uses her harp as a lure to men; Anne Elliot and Mrs. Weston play so that others can dance; Emma admits that Jane Fairfax is genuinely talented and has more "taste" than she has; Marianne plays mainly for her own entertainment; Elizabeth knows her playing could be better if she would practise more. This was the speaker's first public talk; it was well attended, and the session ran out of time for all the questions.

**Viviane McClelland**, who was unable to attend, sent a paper on the same topic, which was ably read by **Virgil Oriente**.

Gales of laughter were heard from the session, **Choosing the Man: Heroic Husband of Lustful Lover?** (Pamela Whalen & Nora Walker), attended by **Marg Savery**. The two speakers played off each other, one supporting and one deploring each candidate. Various men in the novels, not necessarily just the heroes, were divided into categories, faithful, lustful, dull, interesting, etc., and rated by the speakers and the audience. It was a very popular session, judging from the audience response.



*JASNA - October 5-7*

**Gossip as Pleasure, Pastime and Passion in Jane Austen's Novels** (Elaine Bander), reported by Eileen Sutherland. Women need "community" to resist the power of others. Gossip - knowledge - is power, used in all societies and all periods. Gossip can be harmless, merely giving information, or malicious, intending to hurt. In Jane Austen's works gossip is put to the service of the narrative structure of the novel. Miss Bates talks incessantly, but within the mass of words she reveals essential information to the reader. Isabella Thorpe, Lucy Steele and Charlotte Lucas, for some, make use of gossip. John Thorpe's gossip to General Tilney is what makes the courtship of Catherine possible. Anne was too busy with Wentworth at the concert to be able to tell Mrs. Smith who else was there, but Mrs. Smith, "through the shortcut of a laundress and a waiter," knew more than Anne. The false report of Anne's engagement to Mr. Elliot came to Mrs. Smith through the chain of Mr. Elliot, Col. Wallace, Mrs. Wallace, Nurse Rooke, and so on. Mrs. Jennings takes great interest in others - she "wonders" a lot: she wonders about Brandon's sudden departure from the Middletons', she wonders if it is about money matters, she wonders if his sister is worse in health. This is all useful to the plot, but it also is important as a contrast to the silence of Marianne and Willoughby. To a lonely, isolated person like Mrs. Smith or Miss Bates, gossip is all her life. Women had no good education so that they could discuss important literature or political policies, etc. - they had to talk about matters which were part of their domestic lives.

**Joan Mann** spoke briefly about **Pictures of Imperfection: Gilray, Rowlandson and Caricature in the Age of Jane Austen** (Paula Stepankowsky & Marian La Beck). The title comes from JA's comment "Pictures of perfection make me sick and wicked." The ironic contrasts of the novels are the equivalent of the distortions of caricature. The talk, illustrated with lots of slides, was done in duet format, the speakers taking turns to give short sections. Both knew the topic well, and could talk well. The slides showed social as well as political cartoons.

Other members who were speakers in Seattle were **Rachele Oriente, Keiko Parker** and **June Sturrock**, all of whom are going to be asked to present their talks to our group in the near future. The meeting ended with general comments and discussion about the conference - great plenary speakers, a delicious "simple" supper and Saturday evening banquet, the splendid costumes and dancing, the delights of Seattle, and the meticulous timing of the programme - every session started and ended almost exactly on time. It was a weekend well spent!

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**Invitation to the party:** Joan Austen Leigh, (2001). Review by Beverley Gropen.

Joan Austen-Leigh's latest novel, *Invitation to the Party*, offers an entertaining comedy of manners set in an Okanagan town called Kalalalka. We share the lives of about a dozen friends in the weeks preceding the community's most prestigious social event, Mrs. Beaumont's annual Shakespeare birthday celebration.

Eliza Beaumont is a very wealthy divorcée and "native daughter" of Kalalalka who returns to live for part of each year at palatial Hillcrest House, her old family home, accompanied by her acerbic cousin and companion, Violet Stokes. Invitations to Eliza's fête are highly prized and two or three subplots follow the manoeuvres of some excluded locals trying to make it onto the guest list. One of these is the book's only truly nasty character, the new reporter on the local newspaper.

Among the favoured regulars on the party list are several of the book's main characters, actor Simon Partridge and his partner, pianist Nicholas Forrest, and their close friend Ivan Garnett, kind-hearted host and gourmet cook. Along with those three, we have Daphne Chamberlain, a charming "lady of good taste," Lydia Lee Larson, an impecunious poet and free spirit, and Madame Henshawe, a tiresome, elderly school mistress. This group, along with several other characters, share and support the town's intellectual and artistic life. They do so by joining organizations like the Classical Music Club and the Kalalalka Watercolour Society, and by holding intimate and elegant luncheon parties.

Newcomer Myfanwy O'Hara, unhappily married to an alcoholic husband and struggling to keep the modest Kalalalka Lodge from bankruptcy, is introduced to the above group and her story provides one of the two main plots. The other tale concerns Simon, who has had a long and successful career at Stratford and other major stages, and has now been contracted to write his autobiography. He is suffering a major case of writer's block, with devastating results to his temper and to his relationship with Nicholas and their friends. (In one scene his behaviour closely resembles Emma's in the Box Hill incident.) The book's various story lines are brought to successful conclusions at the celebrated April 23<sup>rd</sup> party.

My only quibble with the book was the author's apparent need to include a high "romance" content. She does this by arranging to have three of the middle-aged women (all bright and capable, but "lonely") each land a charming man who is eminently suited to her personality, interests, and economic circumstances. These ideal love matches more or less start and come to fruition within the two-week span of the story. The speed and neatness of these pairings was not really believable and created quite an unnecessary Harlequin Romance touch. Apart from that personal reservation, I found *Invitation to the Party* provided a light but entertaining read.

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### **Piobaireachd - the Classical Music of the Highland Bagpipe.**

When the Piobaireachd Club of Vancouver meets at our house - every couple of months or so - the pipers tune their pipes in what they call "the Jane Austen room", my study where I have pictures and posters on the walls, and books on the shelves, about Jane Austen. Thus it seems appropriate that the recent bit of history sent to members deals with Jane Austen's period - the days of Waterloo. [E.S.]

"COGADH NO SÌTH - [War or Peace].

This is a simple, ancient piobaireachd played either as a brosnachadh (a tune played on the eve of a battle to rouse the clansmen to a high emotional state) or in battle. It was a tune once favoured by the Camerons. It was much played by Cameron of Lochiel's pipers during the '45 [the Bonnie Prince Charlie Uprising].

However, the most famous playing of *Cogadh no Sìth* was at the Battle of Waterloo when Piper Kenneth MacKay of Tongue played the tune. Kenneth was a piper with the 79th Cameron Highlanders. As his regiment was forming a square to defend themselves against the charging French Cuirassiers, Kenneth stepped outside the square and took up his pipe to play *Cogadh no Sìth*. Around and around the square he marched despite the repeated charges of the French cavalry, all the while playing *Cogadh no Sìth* over and over.

The square held firm despite very heavy casualties - over 300 officers and men killed or wounded. Kenneth MacKay by some miracle was unharmed. The Cameron Highlanders were singled out for special mention by the Duke of Wellington. Kenneth MacKay played *Cogadh no Sìth* for the Tsar of Russia when representatives of his regiment were invited to Paris to appear before Royalty. He was later presented with a set of silver mounted pipes by the King."

[From: Ron Macleod, Vancouver Piobaireachd Club]

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## The Musgroves' Navy List - Adele Shaak.

In the JASNA Vancouver Newsletter #75 of August 2001, Eileen Sutherland raises the question of just how the Musgroves come to own a Navy List, "(their own navy list, the first that had ever been at Uppercross)" when they had only known the Crofts and Captain Wentworth for "about a week."

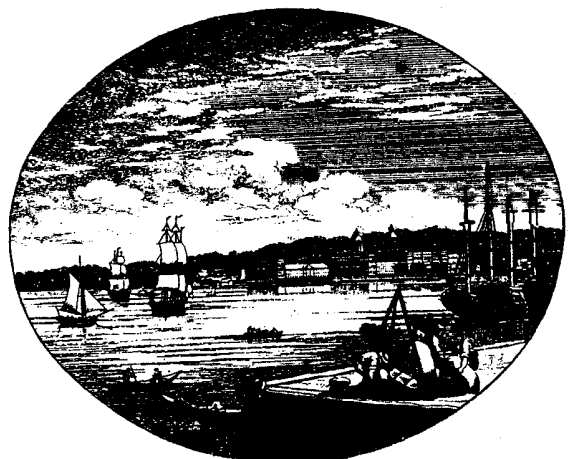
I don't think that "about a week" is the correct length of time. In Jane Austen's books the timeframe is quite fluid; weeks pass in a sentence or an hour passes in a chapter. I looked through the novel to see what clues we have as to the time period involved in the acquisition of the Navy list. First of all, the Crofts took possession of Kellynch Hall at Michaelmas, September 29<sup>th</sup>. This date occurs in the middle of Ch. 6. Mary Musgrove insists her husband visit the Crofts "on an early day", and the visit was reciprocated in the same paragraph. (We can assume, within a day or two.) During that visit, which was probably early in October, we learn that the Crofts had already been visiting the senior Musgroves at Uppercross, which was the visit that made Mrs. Musgrove realize that Captain Wentworth had been her late son's captain, and she and her husband resolved to make his acquaintance. "The resolution of doing so helped to form the comfort of their evening", is the last sentence of Ch. 6. This realization probably occurred at the beginning of October - let us say, Oct. 4<sup>th</sup>.

The first words of Ch. 7 are: "A very few days more, and Captain Wentworth was known to be at Kellynch, and Mr. Musgrove had called on him, and come back warm in his praise, and he was engaged with the Crofts to dine at Uppercross by the end of another week." Suppose we put these events at some time around the 9<sup>th</sup> of October, with the Captain engaged to dine on the 16<sup>th</sup>.

At this point the timeframe speeds up. Captain Wentworth "made a very early return to Mr. Musgrove's civility" with a daytime call at Uppercross; probably within a day or two and long before the proposed dinner. Anne would have met him at Uppercross except the Musgrove's son has his accident and dislocates his shoulder. However, the news is brought that evening with a visit from the senior Musgroves, and we learn that Captain Wentworth is to dine at Uppercross the following day. This dinner invitation was issued only that day and cannot be the original dinner invitation. This is the dinner party Anne does not attend because Mary leaves her at the cottage to nurse her nephew.

Captain Wentworth appears at the Cottage on the very next morning for a short visit. In the following page and a half we learn that the Musgrove sisters accompany him, that they are a bit smitten with him, that they later tell Anne he spoke slightly of her, that Anne thinks he has not forgiven her, that he himself thinks he has not forgiven her and that he would be willing to marry either sister, Louisa or Henrietta, and that his own sister knows better. So ends Ch. 7, somewhere around the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> of October.

Ch. 8 starts with "From this time Captain Wentworth and Anne Elliot were repeatedly in the same circle. They were soon dining in company together at Mr. Musgrove's, . . . and this was but the beginning of other dinings and other meetings." I believe this "dining in company together" would have been the dinner that was the subject of Mr. Musgrove's original invitation; it was the first dinner at which Anne was present, though not the



*View of Greenwich*

first time Captain Wentworth dined with the Musgroves. These sentences allow for quite a time to pass. Captain Wentworth would not ride over from Kellynch Hall every day; there would be some days with no meetings at all, and yet "other dinings and other meetings" took place. Let us allow two weeks for all of this activity.

Finally there comes an evening, probably at the very end of October, when there is yet another dinner, and the talk turns to his ships and to Dick Musgrove, and the sisters pull down their new Navy List. Jane caustically points out that they had never had one before; they had not bothered when all they had was a brother in the Navy, even though his ships were listed in the book and so the Navy List might have been of interest then as it is now that they have Captain Wentworth at their table.

It was only after this memorable evening, which takes up most of Ch.8, that Charles Hayter returns and is jealous of Henrietta, spends some days there and then goes away, which all happens in Ch. 9. At the beginning of Ch. 10, they all go on their long walk to Winthrop, which occurs "on a very fine November day."

*Conclusion:* I would think from these details that the Musgroves decided to acquire a Navy List at some point in the second week of October, and had it in their hands within a fortnight. Their reason for getting one is obvious: Captain Wentworth. Not only was he their son's captain, but he is, from the start, a favourite of both their unmarried daughters. Jane Austen is careful to say, in Ch. 9, that the Musgroves "... seemed to leave everything to take its chance" and were not speculating on whether or not the Captain would propose to Louisa or Henrietta, but they would have been very indifferent parents indeed not to show a little interest in a well-mannered and wealthy unmarried naval officer.

I think it would have been quite easy to acquire a Navy List within two weeks; probably even within one week with sufficient motive. The Musgroves lived in Somerset, in the south west of England. Uppercross is definitely placed 17 miles from Lyme, which is on the south coast, and Uppercross would probably therefore have been about 40 miles from Plymouth Harbour, and possibly 70 miles from the naval centre of Portsmouth. Certainly you could get a Navy List at either of these places, and certainly a fond father with a sudden interest in the Navy and a reasonable income could get one within a week or so of wanting one.

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"While exchanging e-mails with Mr. Isaac [in Hampshire], I asked him about the development that was proposed across the street from Jane's House. He said the developer will try again and that 'the problem that we have in the south of England is that there is a shortage of housing, and the government has decreed that every area must play its part by finding space for new housing. In such a small country this creates difficulty. You either build on green fields, or fill in the gaps in existing towns and villages. I am sure that something will be built on this site at some time. We will have to make sure that when this happens it is designed in a manner sympathetic to its position' "

From: *The Writing Desk*, Toronto, Nancy Stokes, ed.

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| <p>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.</p> |
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