

# Jane Austen Society of North America

VANCOUVER REGION - NEWSLETTER NO. TWENTY-FOUR - NOVEMBER 1988

## "THE HAZARDS OF LEADERSHIP"

That was the caption of this greeting card which I received from my "nearest and dearest" when I accepted the office of President of JASNA at the Conference in Chicago in October.



A more favourable omen, I hope, was the fortune cookie message I got at a cafe at the Chicago airport: "Your life will soon be grace with the presence of stardom".

*Vancouver, October 22, 1988*

*To Eileen Sutherland*

*Our Dearest Eileen, we wish you joy  
On being elected President of JASNA,  
Which office will give you the busiest employ  
Compared with anything you know.  
May you a Blessing to the Society prove,  
And well deserve its members' Love! —  
Thy judgment sound and great knowledge  
We'd not dispense with, and freely acknowledge.  
For now it does delight us  
That you are President of CANADA-U.S.*

And this tribute was presented to me at our October meeting. [See JA's letter of 26 July 1809 to her brother Frank]

My grateful thanks to all of you who have wished me well in this new position — I know I can count on your support!

*Freely adapted from Jane Austen  
by Keiko Parker  
on an idea from Paula Peretto*

Two new elements have been added to this series of comparisons of the illustrators of JA's P&P - Keiko Parker has included some work by H.M. Brock, and my Nelson Classics edition of P&P (no date) has C.E. Brock illustrations which are probably later than those in Keiko's edition of 1895.

HENRY MATTHEW BROCK (1875-1960) was the youngest of the four artist sons of Edmund Brock of Cambridge. His career was longer and more varied than that of C.E. Brock; he was mainly a painter of landscapes and was more gifted as a humorous artist. His drawings can be told by their thicker ink lines and bolder handling. In a letter to his publisher, H.M. Brock stated his views on colour illustration: "A coloured drawing to look well should have for a key-block, a drawing almost in pure outline, with perhaps a few pieces of solid black; but certainly not a lot of shading and cross-hatch".

The Times obituary called him "a pleasant and highly successful illustrator and draughtsman, somewhat in the Hugh Thomson tradition of lightly humorous, skilfully controlled and clear-cut pen drawings...he did many illustrations for reprints of old books, which demanded an historical knowledge of costume..."

The books he illustrated ranged from fairy tales, Bible stories, children's classics, Pilgrim's Progress, Dickens, Stevenson, Borrow and Hilton.



*"You must allow me to present this young lady to you"*  
Chap. VI.

H.M. Brock (Dent, 1898)



C.E. Brock (Macmillan, 1895)



C.E. Brock (Nelson, no date)

## CORRESPONDENCE

There was so much to say during the September meeting when we discussed the various biographies you read over the summer, that we ran out of time before everyone had a chance to express an opinion. Please write me a short account of what you read and what you thought about it, and I'll print a selection of opinions - the more controversial the better! - in the next Newsletter.

What do think about the illustrator series? Here are some letters about that:

### ONE OPINION

A picture is worth a thousand words -- maybe.

The beauty of characterisation in fiction is the chance it gives for exercise of the imagination. Who does not have a mental image of Mr. Collins? of Lady Catherine? or of Mr. Bennet? For that reason, if for no other, the addition of illustrations to text is, if anything, likely to detract from the reader's enjoyment by addition of an alien element. And the more complex the character, the less likely is the artist's impression to square with the reader's.

Thus the smug, self-satisfied figure of C.E.Brock's illustration of Mr. Bennet (Newsletter No.23, p.6), his posture, toasting his own backside while denying warmth to others, fails utterly to take into account the self-doubt of a man harried by the fates, once by his own youthful folly in an unsuitable marriage, and again by the eventual loss of his property to the heir-in-entail, Mr. Collins. In other words, I prefer my own picture of Mr. Bennet as one whose only relief from the cankers within lies in irony and withdrawal.

On the other hand, Hugh Thomson's wide view shirks the difficulty. In short, unless it exists as an editorial filler, there seems little point in its inclusion. He has, of course, given us a full bevy of ladies, but one is hard put to it to identify the hoydenish younger sister or the blue-stockings, Mary. The text in this, as in other instances, can surely speak for itself given the authorial comment at the end of the chapter immediately preceding the incident.

- David Macaree, West Vancouver

### AND ANOTHER:

I need no comparisons of drawings to cast my vote for Hugh Thomson as my preferred illustrator. The others stick to scenes from the books - Thomson indulges his whimsy and wit, and sometimes makes very telling comments. His chapter heading to Chapter XV of P&P, for example, depicts Mrs. Bennet in an imagined scene presenting her five daughters, seated in a row, to Mr. Collins. But Jane has a "Not For Sale" sign over her head. This says a lot about Mrs. Bennet's character - in the most polite way possible we are reminded that she has the soul of a procuress.

- Kathleen Glancy, Edinburgh

ALL LETTERS AND COMMENTS WELCOME -- KEEP THEM COMING IN.

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## REPTON'S RED BOOKS

If Humphrey Repton, the famous landscape architect, had been called in, as Maria Bertram suggested, to give Sotherton Court "a modern dress", one of his unique Red Books would have been produced to demonstrate his proposed "improvements". They were magnificent volumes, bound in red Morocco leather, and illustrated with water colour paintings of buildings, vistas, gardens and lakes, with ingenious folding pages showing "before" and "after" views. Repton designed over 250 landscaped gardens and parks, and many of the Red Books have been lost.

In Country Life, Sept.15, 1988, an article by Tim Warner reported the recent discovery of such a Red Book, prepared for Sir Thomas Windsor Hunloke, Bt., for his estate of Wingerworth Hall, Derbyshire. Its importance is partly due to the fact that this was one of only two commissions which Repton had done in that county. (Pemberley also was in Derbyshire, but Elizabeth had never seen "a place for which nature had done more, or where natural beauty had been so little counteracted by an awkward taste". Darcy would have curled his lip in scorn at the proposal of hiring a professional to "improve" his home according to the latest fashionable taste.)

Wingerworth Hall, however, had been built in 1726-27, an enormous cube with width almost the same as height, and no special features to distinguish it. Even from a distance, its size failed to give it an impressive appearance. The "improvements" suggested by Repton are typical of his ideas for landscaping estates, and make interesting reading.

For the building itself, Repton planned to extend one side with a classical courtyard flanked by colonnades. In front of the principal façade he designed a terrace, for a pleasant place to walk and admire the view, but equally important, to keep the animals away from the house itself. This was evidently a problem at Wingerworth, as Repton's "before" illustration shows a servant sweeping away animal droppings from the front porch, while horses and cows graze on the lawn and gardens beside the house.

Immediately in front of the house, a steeply sloping lawn - according to Repton, "an inclined plane" - swept down to a stream below. This uninteresting slope Repton proposed to relieve by the flat terrace area, and a lake created in the middle distance. Another reason for the lake was to distract the eye from the view of the foundry which was the main source of the Hunloke fortune, and thus not to be eliminated. The exclusion of industry from aesthetic landscape was the common practice, but in this case such a course would not be tactful.

Other plans of Repton's included opening up vistas by cutting through groves of trees to reveal the crooked spire of a 14th century church in the distance, and a castle silhouetted on the skyline in another direction. Repton did not believe in the indiscriminate cutting down of avenues of trees. At Wingerworth, Fanny Price would have no cause to lament, "Ye fallen avenues, once more I mourn your fate unmerited". The formal avenue of oaks was not to be destroyed. Repton proposed removing some trees to create cross views and to allow the avenue to "peter out" naturally as it neared the shore of the lake.

Among the additions Repton designed, was another lake and a grand "keeper's cottage" to house Sir Thomas Hunloke's menagerie of wolves, bears, monkeys and exotic birds, at that time accommodated at the main hall. Again it was a necessary improvement - already one visitor had been frightened away after coming face to face with an escaped bear.

Shortly after Repton submitted these designs, however, the family fortunes began to wane, and scarcely any of his plans were carried out. What was done, mainly the planting of groves of trees in areas where Repton had not intended them, did not meet with his approval and he was sadly disappointed when he saw the house a few years later. Only the Red Book remains to give an idea of what Repton had envisioned for this estate.

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# SHARING SOME INTERESTING READING - Kay Carter, Vancouver

Since I'm not able to enjoy the comradeship of your meeting, I shall follow your suggestion and copy some comments I came upon in a book I was reading recently. It was called Away From Home, written in 1985 by Kildare Dobbs about Canadian writers in exotic places. This is an excerpt from Paris by John Glasco at a party at Gertrude Stein's. John and his friend were leaving the party, which they had crashed, as they felt *de trop*, when Narwhal approached, saying -

"I have been reading the works of Jane Austen for the first time, and I am looking for someone to share my enthusiasm. Now, these are very good novels in my opinion. You wouldn't believe it but here - among all these writers, who are presumably literary artists - I can't find anyone who has read her books with any real attention. In fact, most of them don't seem to like her work at all but I find their dislike is founded on a false impression - that she was a respectable woman."

"Jane Austen??"

"I don't mean to say that she was loose in her behavior, or not a *verhjin*. I'm sure she was a *verhjin*. I mean she was aristocratic, not bourgeoisie, she was no creep, she didn't really give a darn about all those conventions of *chaystity* and decorum."

"Well, her heroines did."

"Oh sure, they *seem* to, or else there'd be no story. But Austen herself didn't. Who is the heroine, the unheroine, of Sense and Sensibility? It's Marianne, not Elinor. Of Pride and Prejudice? It's the girl that runs off with the military man. What's wrong with Emma? Emma!"

"You mean Willoughby and Wickham are her real heroes?"

"No, they're just stooges, see? But they represent the dark life-principle of action and virility that Austen really admired, like Marianne and Lydia stand for the life-force of female letting-go, and when Anne Elliot falls for Captain Wentworth - you'll notice he's the third "W" of the lot - it's the same thing only this time he's tamed. It's a new conception of Austen's talent which I formed yesterday and which was suggested to me by the fact that Prince Lucifer is the real hero of Paradise Lost, as all the savants declare."

This idea of Jane Austen, as a kind of early D.H. Lawrence, was new. Never had the value of her books been so confirmed by this extraordinary interpretation of them. It was a real tribute.

Next he describes an imaginary portrait of her. He says, "I see her in a wood in a long white dress. She's looking at a mushroom. All around her are thick young trees growing straight up - some are black with little white collars and stand for ministers of the church, and some are blue and stand for officers in the Royal Navy.

"The focus of the whole will be the mushroom", he said. "It represents the almost overnight flowering of her genius - also its circumscribed quality, its suggestion of being both sheltered and a shelter - see? - and its economy of structure.

"An edible mushroom?"

"You've got it. That will be the whole mystery of the portrait. The viewer

won't know and she won't know either. We will all partake of Jane Austen's doubt: faced with the appalling mystery of sex."

Several other guests had gathered round the animated speaker. One tweedy Englishman said, "You are talking of Jane Austen and sex, gentlemen. The subjects are mutually exclusive. That dried up lady snob lived behind lace curtains all her life. She's of no more importance than a drone."

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This should provoke some discussions!

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NEXT MEETINGS

SATURDAY, November 19, 1988

Speaker: Dr. Jocelyn Cass: "The Mercenary and the Prudent Motive"

What is the difference between Charlotte Lucas marrying for a secure position in life; or Wickham courting the rich Mary King; or Mary Crawford preferring an older son?

11:30 a.m.  
Pot Luck Luncheon

4169 Lions Ave.,  
North Vancouver, B.C.

RSVP: Eileen Sutherland  
988-0479

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SATURDAY, December 17, 1988

Speaker: Michael Skelton: "Jane Austen's Changing World, Reflected in her Novels"

11:30 a.m.

4169 Lions Ave.,  
North Vancouver

RSVP: Eileen Sutherland  
988-0479

Pot Luck Luncheon, including a special Birthday Cake provided by Pamela Delville-Pratt.

Birthday Discussion: If you were invited to their birthday parties, what unique and appropriate gift would you bring for:

Mr. Woodhouse (E)? [Greek worry beads?] General Tilney (NA)? [Emily Post's Book of Etiquette?]; Mr. Collins (P&P)? John Thorpe (NA)? Willoughby (S&S)? Mr. Bennet (P&P)? Lady Bertram (MP)? Mrs. Norris (MP)? Mrs. Bennet (P&P)? Marianne Dashwood (S&S)? Mrs. Allen (NA)? Harriet Smith (E)? Lucy Steele (S&S)? Mrs. Clay (Pers.)? Isabella Thorpe (NA)?

Sharpen your wits, and with a "flourish of malice" (S&S), or of "sarcastic humour" (P&P), or a "hearty laugh" (E), choose the perfect gift, and we will "laugh at its absurdity" rather than "censure its impertinence" (S&S).

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OVERDUE LIBRARY BOOKS

During a discussion at the last meeting about what dire retribution should be visited upon delinquents, one suggestion was execution, but that seemed a little too severe. The idea of contribution found more favour: an additional user-fee for each over-due book or tape. And someone put forth the idea of publication of names in the next Newsletter. A final suggestion was co-operation - a list of members' names and addresses would make it easier to find someone living near who could return the book at the next meeting. I will be attending to the implementation of some of these ideas.

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WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL...ARE YOU 'PUTTING US ON'? - Dianne Kerr

In April 1988 I had half a day only in the City of Winchester. I spent it all trying to discover the explanation for JA's interment in the Cathedral.

There are presently NO Burial Records in Winchester Cathedral for the years 1812-1820. Like 'James James Morrison Morrison's Mother', they are: Lost or Stolen or Strayed. They are not in the Thorold Library (located in the Cathedral grounds), nor in the Hampshire County Records Office, nor in the Reference Library, nor in the Public Library.

The Very Important Person (highly esteemed, thoroughly informed, Freeman of the City of Winchester), who guards the Records of the Cathedral Library, informed me that I could touch nothing, peruse no records, learn nothing - unless I had obtained prior permission from the 'Dean and Chapter', in writing, along with a definite appointment date; AND I was required, furthermore, to be an officially accredited Researcher for a Publishing Company, or a PhD Student.

But the Curator of the Hampshire Records Office assured me that I WAS entitled to see Burial Records, simply by virtue of being a member of the Public, upon request, at any time.

VIP at the Cathedral was not at all happy to see me again. Ordering me, somewhat ungraciously, to SIT, in one public room, while rummaging for records took place in the other room - even though that other room was also open to the Public. Then, for more than an hour, books were conveyed from one room to the other, and I enjoyed the unaccountable privilege of paging through the forbidden records dating back to the 14th century, when Winchester bore the name Winton - discontinuous records dating up to 1812, and following 1820 - vainly protesting that I only wanted 1817.

So I actually touched and perused records, despite my lack of qualifications, and I also learned something from VIP.

VIP: Jane Austen died on the street which was the boundary between St.Michael's and St.Swithin's Parishes. Normally, you are buried in the Parish where you die, and she didn't die in St.Michael's, so she couldn't go there. And she couldn't be buried in St.Swithin's because that burial ground was RESERVED FOR MEN! (astonished emphasis is mine).

ME: Today you couldn't be buried in the Cathedral on the grounds that you were of noble family, or even if the whole Parish...

VIP: (Interrupting very indignantly) Indeed YOU couldn't. It would take an Act of Parliament, and even THAT wouldn't be the end of it! (Emphasis is VIP's).

ME: So I'm trying to discover what might have been the criteria for burial in the Cathedral in 1817, because...

VIP: And I keep telling you, and you don't seem to understand, that there was NOWHERE else for her to go!

ME: So you're saying that they preferred to hammer up a stone floor, rather than spade up soft earth, for an unknown...

VIP: That's where she HAD to go! Her maid, the maid who was in the house where she died, is also buried in the Cathedral.

ME: Then really, she was not in any way being honoured, being buried in the Cathedral?

VIP: SHE wasn't being honoured. She was the patient of a very famous physician. It would have been done out of honour for him.

ME: I see. Does he have a more important spot in the Cathedral?

VIP: (greatly exasperated) No, no, no. He's buried in a corner of St.Laurence's.

At this point ME thought it wisest to abandon pursuit.

Jane Austen in Winchester (1969), a Cathedral pamphlet by Frederick Bussby, reads: "...although she had great confidence in Mr. Lyford, she also consulted that 'learned and pious body, the Dean and Chapter', about a grave in the Cathedral..." And this 'fact' is repeated on another page; but Mr. Bussby cites no source whatever for his knowledge of this 'petition', as he terms it, by JA. Further, he quotes from the Cathedral Burial Register: "Jane Austen, Winchester, buried July 16th". The date discrepancy can be explained as clerical error, but is she, in fact, even really there?

Dr. Stella Rogers, Curator of the Thorold Library, informed me that the body isn't really under the tablet, unless the letters H.S.E. appear thereon -- Haec Sepultus Est -- Here Sepultured Is. JA's tablet has no H.S.E., although it is sufficiently large: fully 6' x 4' in dimension.

The Hampshire Records Office yielded a promising volume entitled Correspondence of Bishops of Winchester. But the year 1817 contained only records of ordinations, including: "On 31 May 1817...Henry Austen AB St. John's College Cambridge...had letter(s) Dimissory to be ordained Priest by the Lord Bishop of Exeter..." Possibly significant, except that Henry is quite evidently one of the least important persons in this particular listing - others had higher Degrees, and one had a double appointment including a salary. And although this list is apparently a collation made later, it was not alphabetized: Austen is not first, but fifth out of seven. Ranking was possibly by importance.

The Winchester Public Library produced, on reel, for Monday July 21st, 1817, The Hampshire Chronicle and Courier. Directly under its banner, in spread, reads: "Portsmouth, Portsea, Gosport, Chichester, Salisbury, Winchester, Southampton, and the Isle of Wight Gazette". The format is an unvarying six-column division. No headlines, no specials. Local news is printed under the name of each place, and seemingly randomly, without pecking-order, or significance: order is not as banner-listed; it is not alphabetical; and big towns intersperse with little towns. By and large the news is locally pertinent. For example:

"ISLE OF WIGHT

Newport, July 18 - The average price of Wheat at our market, on Wednesday, was £23 15s. 7d. per load.

On Monday se'ennight a Provincial Grand Lodge was held at Free Mason's Hall, in this town".

But, near the foot of the 4th column of the last page, this curiously non-pertinent entry appears:

WINCHESTER, SATURDAY, JULY 19 - In the foreign Papers received this week there is scarcely an article of intelligence worth recording. The French Papers of Tuesday announce that the Duchess de BERRI was safely delivered of a daughter on Saturday, which died on the Monday following. This event speedily terminated the rejoicings which had previously taken place. We learn also that the celebrated Madame DE STAEL died at Paris, on Saturday, in the 53rd year of her age".

Local news of Winchester follows that item to the bottom of the column, and on into the next one. In that next column, directly beside the foreign news item, appears:

"Died, yesterday, in College-street, Miss Jane Austen, youngest daughter of the late Rev. George Austen, formerly Rector of Steventon, in this County".



A scholastic Scouser (in Liverpool) shot me an immediate opinion on that: he claims that juxtaposing seemingly unrelated items was a regular method of conveying information in the 18th and 19th centuries; he claims that the purpose was to print something scandalous or libelous, without actually exposing the writer or the Paper to charges of libel.

He suspects (he is not an Austenian) that readers were being reminded that Miss Jane Austen, the Duchess de Berri, and Madame de Stael had in common that they had all been mistresses to the Regent at one time.

He believes that Chronicle readers would have known instantly to "prick their eyes" when they saw that unlikely item from France under "WINCHESTER" and known to look for the related item which would explain its presence. Unfortunately, lack of time prevented me from testing the consistency of the "information by insinuation" theory (or whatever it's called), for widespread application.

In support of this particular conjecture, however, is my observation that elsewhere in the Chronicle deaths appear to be regularly listed serially - unless due to unusual circumstance (murder, accident, etc.). In such cases the death is recounted extraneously - i.e., omitted from the obituary listing, and given much fuller treatment: 15, 20, lines or more, sandwiched between dissimilar and unrelated items.

Austen's death notice is preceded by a theatre opening, subscriptions for a Female Asylum, and a marriage; it is succeeded by a long account of a mugging, to the end of the column. Yet it is as brief as possible: it seems to qualify for a spot in a regular obituary listing. There may be some ground for querying a normal "obit" placed outside of normal "obit orbit".

Now it certainly is a fact that Austen was not mistress to the Regent. But that fact doesn't rule out the possibility that some of her contemporaries may have THOUGHT that she WAS: thought she was because they knew that she had written Emma; knew that she had dedicated it to the Prince; and knew that she was being buried and/or commemorated in the Cathedral upon orders from...someone!

The idea (that some thought Austen mistress to the Regent) has intriguing possibilities, because it does imply that the "secrecy" of Austen's authorship was not really quite so secret as we are led to believe.

Possibly the Prince did order Austen to the Cathedral; and possibly more than the accompanying few knew that. If so, some may very well have drawn an inevitable conclusion, based on the circumstantial evidence - the Winchester Correspondant to the Hampshire Chronicle and Courier among those thinkers. Particularly since the Regent was a known womanizer.

Nevertheless, the "information-by-insinuation" theory can't be accepted as true, or even probable, unless it can be found to be frequent. Without better evidence we may infer nothing regarding Austen's Death Notice, except chance. Perhaps she happened to be the only person to die in Winchester the week of July 14th, 1817. If so, of course, she had a singular Death Notice for that reason only.

But what can be the explanation for the interment? (If indeed she actually is interred?) Nothing seems to indicate familial importance; nothing seems to indicate that Henry's just-prior ordination conferred particular distinction, or any sort of authority to command burial in the Cathedral.

And Word from the Top certainly insists that "authority" isn't even in question; that Austen was buried in the Cathedral because, just like Mary and Joseph,

she lacked importance: "There was no room for her at the Inn", so to speak; she wasn't "good enough" (not being a man) for open ground at St. Swithin's.

Can it really be the case that every time a female person died in the parish of St. Swithin's, Winchester, the powers-that-be felt obliged to take up a floor of stone and concrete for her interment? Can it really be that they had available no option less troublesome, less time-consuming, less expensive?

Do the laws of probability favour the supposition that poor and unknown females, such as the College Street maidservant, were invariably buried at great public expense, rather than given paupers' graves? From what we can observe of human behaviour, do the probabilities even allow this unlikely action? Is it probable that men, who wouldn't allow women into the exclusive Mens' Club of open ground at St. Swithin's, allowed them instead the superior ambience of the Cathedral? With their names and places to be tended in perpetuity, as they never could be under open ground? Do snobs normally take time, trouble and effort to secure distinction for those they snub?

In any case, so much for my Royal Command Theory, for which I could find no proof. I must retract my enthusiastic know-it-all argument, and concede -- Savannah, that wasn't a bad question.

Because, if Austen really went into the Cathedral 'faute de mieux', as we are told, then the Laws of Human Behavioural Probability certainly demand a Judicial Review!

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#### THE NIGHT WAS COLD AND STORMY. (S&S)

December 1796 was probably the coldest in England since reliable records have been kept. The intense frosts of that time - on December 24th, the temperature fell to -16°F. - provided unusual gaieties as well as great hardship. "Ice Fairs" were held on the ice of the Thames, and contemporary illustrations show crowds skating in Hyde Park.

But outside the large towns, water on tap hardly existed. In the country water came from pumps and wells, both of which freeze easily. Illustrations showing village girls collecting water in buckets from a stream, or bringing home bundles of faggots for winter fuel, may be very picturesque, but it would be bone-chilling work in such weather.

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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 Ave., North Vancouver, B.C. V7R 3S2.