

# JANE AUSTEN SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

## VANCOUVER REGION

NEWSLETTER NO. 69

FEBRUARY 2000

### A British Architect in a Foreign Land - Eileen Sutherland.

Few British tourists travelled to Russia at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but any who did so would have experienced an amazing feeling of *deja vu*. Catherine the Great's favourite architect, Charles Cameron, was building her palaces, country estates and villas that rivalled the most beautiful English aristocratic Great Houses.

Set in English-type landscaped parks, the buildings followed a Neo-Palladian tradition like Chiswick or Kedleston Hall, or the neo-gothic like Walpole's Strawberry Hill. A "Siberian" bridge was an exact copy of the Palladian bridge at Wilton; a pyramid was erected in the form of the one at Kew; and a "Temple of Friendship" was reminiscent of William Chambers' Temple of Pan at Stowe.

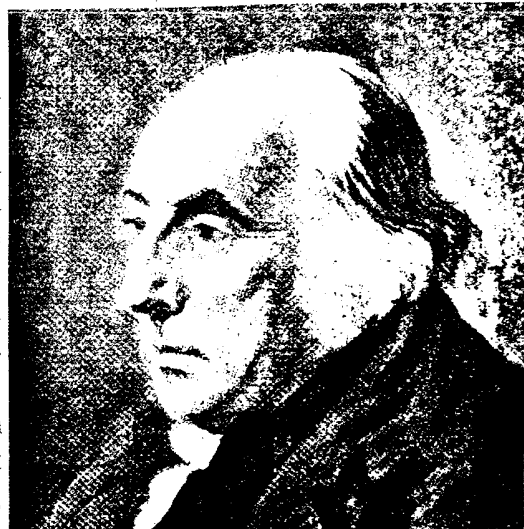
Palace interiors reflected the best of Adam styling, with decoratively patterned ceilings matching the designs of the floors. Blue and white Wedgwood medallions depicting Apollo, Bacchus and the Muses adorned the walls of drawingrooms, and magnificent Wedgwood dinner services had been created especially for each palace.

Russia had experienced a resurgence of architectural innovation that corresponded to ideas of the Enlightenment all over Europe.

Confirmed facts about Charles Cameron's early life are scanty, obscured by a complex web of deceit and concealment. Catherine the Great wrote of him as "by birth a Jacobite, educated in Rome...with a wonderful mind, afire with inspiration." Cameron had evidently identified himself in Russia as a friend of the Pretender and nephew of "Miss Jenny." [Jenny Cameron was famous at the 1745 Scottish uprising for bringing 250 soldiers to join the Stuart forces, and becoming the lover of the Pretender's eldest son. Her memoirs - later revealed as forgeries - spread her fame throughout Europe]. Such a "background" gave Cameron great prestige in Russia.

Certainly there was a Charles Cameron who fought at Culloden, and later became Chief of Clan Cameron. He returned from exile to Scotland intending to raise a military force to fight for the Hanoverian crown; but when his men decided to join the French side instead, he disappeared and was believed to have died.

Another Charles Cameron at the same period was the son of a rebel who was executed, leaving his young son in the care of a carpenter, Walter Cameron, of London. The young man spent most of his life in France and Italy. It has recently been discovered that this Walter Cameron was the father of the architect, Charles Cameron.



Walter Cameron had a building company which earned him a moderate income. His son Charles, born in the mid 1740s, was to inherit the business and was signed up as his father's apprentice. But Charles' interests were more on artistic lines, and he never actually became a member of the Carpenters' Company. An album of his drawings from 1764 shows bowls, vases, lamps and designs for pilasters in baroque, rococo and classical forms. They are vividly decorated with twisted, demonic snakes, lizards and misshapen faces.

Cameron's work came to the attention of the architect Isaac Ware who was planning to re-publish Palladio's book on the measurements of Roman baths. When Ware died in 1766, Cameron carried on this work, travelling to Italy to study Roman ruins. Back in London in 1772, he published The Baths of the Romans, to great acclaim. Cameron clearly stated his architectural philosophy of rigorous adherence to the classical ideal.

The recognition of his talents spread widely. In 1779, the Empress of Russia, planning "to create an ancient house with all its decor," at her palace at Tsarskoye Selo, turned to Cameron as "a great expert on antiquity."

Cameron became the Empress' personal architect. The magnificent, baroque, jewel-like palaces he found there were regular and controlled - it was his role to establish neo-classicism in Russia. He was to provide a brilliant back-drop for court life, far removed from the problems of Russia's economy, wars, and peasant revolts.

Two great palace ensembles were the site of Cameron's most important work: Tsarskoye Selo, the imperial estate about twenty miles from St. Petersburg, and Pavlovsk, the home of the heir to the throne, Grand Duke Paul. For fifteen years, Cameron was involved in reconstructing existing buildings and designing and building new ones - the most luxurious buildings and grandiose residences, decorated with valuable gemstones and china, glass and lacquer. He did not work on private commissions, or in cities or towns. He concentrated entirely on the royal palaces, building not only the main residences but also pavilions, galleries, a pyramid and Chinese bridges, temples, aviaries, obelisks and memorials in the parks.

Cameron at last had the opportunity to realise his ideas. His career in Russia, however, progressed unevenly. For the first five years he worked almost feverishly creating the halls and pavilions at Tsarskoye Selo. He was determined and independent, paying no attention to established procedures, intent only on producing magnificent structures. He ordered expensive materials, furniture from abroad, lavish decorations for the walls, all with little attention to financial considerations. In the next decade, he seemed to be concentrating only on finishing details, and nothing of significance was done.

At Pavlovsk, he was aware of the bad relations between the Empress and her son, and Cameron refused to stand on ceremony with either the officials or the Grand Duke himself. When Catherine died in 1796, her architect was dismissed and remained out of favour for three years. But the Grand Duke and Duchess, although they disliked him and his cavalier attitude, recognized the genius of his work.

Cameron's mood varied considerably. He had had such great hopes of creating splendid and unique palaces that any reversals, alterations to his designs, obstruction of his workmen, or general unpleasantness and "deceptiveness," was reflected in a heavy mood of discouragement.

After several misunderstandings with contractors, Cameron took the unusual step of advertising in Edinburgh newspapers for clerks, masons, bricklayers and a smith, hoping to organize a colony of craftsmen who could carry out his work. He offered good wages and paid

their travel expenses himself. Eventually the Scottish craftsmen and their families - about 140 people in all - were taken into service, and many remained in Russia: two of the builders later became well-known architects in their own right.

Those first years were busy, but lonely. Nearby lived the English gardener who had created the beautiful Tsarskoye Selo parks, with his wife and four agreeable daughters. In 1784, Cameron married one of the daughters, Catherine, and his personal life and happiness improved. He was surrounded by several lively young pupils; he indulged his taste for reading and assembled an enormous library, showing him as a typical 'intellectual' of the Enlightenment. His books included volumes on biography, rebellions, somnambulism, magnetism, chemistry, classical authors, geography, ancient religions and *belles-lettres* - as well as books on architecture from various countries.

When Paul was assassinated in 1801, the new regime under Czar Alexander returned to what it had been while Catherine was alive. Exiled officials were recalled to service, and Cameron was appointed Admiralty Architect, settled in St. Petersburg. In his charge were the



capital's maritime buildings, as well as constructions in all Russian ports, and factories producing items for ship-building. He was responsible for building and repairing lighthouses, hospitals, warehouses, ship-building sheds, and harbours. Along with the hard work came petty administrative matters, very different from his artistic endeavours at the splendid palace sites.

Outside of his working hours, however, Cameron made many congenial new acquaintances among the St. Petersburg intelligentsia, cultured, cosmopolitan people who shared his aspirations and valued his talents. He retired in 1805, and died at the end of 1811.

Cameron's great architectural achievements are little known in England, but in Russia the high opinion held by his contemporaries has remained constant ever since his death. Even in the Soviet period, "Cameron's name was synonymous with the highest precision in the reproduction of antique forms," and is remembered by many Soviet architects to this day.

The Empress and the Architect by Dimitri Shvidkovsky with its lavish illustrations gives an excellent idea of Cameron's reputation and achievements in Russia.

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### **Dr. Johnson's Mulled Wine.**

In response to many requests, Jean and Virgil Oriente passed along this recipe for the delicious mulled wine we enjoyed at the December meeting:

Ingredients: 1 bottle red wine; 2 cups hot water; 1/3 cup of brandy; 1/3 cup curacao (or other orange liqueur); 6 cloves [to each litre of wine]; 12 lumps [e.g. 12 tsps.] sugar; sliced oranges and lemons; stick of cinnamon.

Method: Heat slowly; DO NOT BOIL. Remove the cooked fruit to achieve a somewhat clear liquid. Add a little nutmeg and allow to stand.

NOTE There was none left over!

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## Tribute to Eileen Sutherland - Keiko Parker

May 28, 1981 proved to be a fateful day. I had become a member of JASNA the previous year, and, on that day a meeting of Jane Austen enthusiasts was called by Joan Austen-Leigh at the apartment of her daughter Freydis. There I first met Eileen Sutherland. We talked about our love of Jane Austen novels. I remember discussing with Mary Coleman, who now belongs to the Victoria Region, the BBC production of "Pride and Prejudice" that had aired on PBS earlier that year. I remember telling Mary that I thought Mrs. Bennet was too "downstairs" for me. Note the Masterpiece Theatre language I was using! In those early days we were corresponding with Joan Austen-Leigh individually. One day Joan phoned me and I remember her saying, "I should get Eileen to get something going" to form a Vancouver group. I almost thought she sounded like Emma planning her next "scheme"!

Eileen has already written about those early days. She met the challenge posed by Joan in an exemplary way, so that a small group of people who met occasionally grew to the present active membership which meets every month. Those early days when everything was done from "scratch" must have been very difficult for Eileen. When one thinks of her, words such as "patient," "gentle," "warm," "enthusiastic," "intelligent," and "informed" come to mind. Coupled with these qualities, she had the firmness of purpose to carry out her task to the utmost scope of her ability. Consider the fact that during her four-year tenure as the President of the entire JASNA, she carried on her local Regional Coordinator's work as usual, and, throughout, has published the Vancouver Region Newsletter, which I think is one of the best of its kind.

When Eileen first approached me about taking over from her, I had to think hard. After all who can step into her shoes? After considering the matter for the whole summer, and remembering that she had been looking for a successor for some time, I said I will take over "in two year's time." That was only a year ago, and at the end of this last summer, I was thinking I still had one more year to prepare myself. But at her urgent request I took over this autumn, a year earlier than I had planned. What motivated me most in my decision was the fact that Eileen had worked so hard for so many years that someone should be willing to assume her responsibilities. I am not at all sure that that someone should be me. I can only say that I have enjoyed the fruit of Eileen's hard work all these years and I am willing to do my best, in turn, for the group. I am happy that Eileen is remaining the Vancouver Region Newsletter editor.

To those of you who were unable to attend our December meeting, I wish to report that we presented Eileen with a token of our appreciation for her many years of dedication and service. The first gift was a Coalport limited edition figurine of "Anne Elliot." *Persuasion* is Eileen's all-time favourite, and we hope that the figurine will bring a smile to her face every time she passes by it. The second gift, as you know, is an album with cards of appreciation of Eileen—from the JASNA Vancouver Region members, past and present, the Co-founder of JASNA Joan Austen-Leigh, the JASNA President Elsa Solender, the Vice-President and other Directors, and the Regional Coordinators in Canada, as well as Eileen's friends from JASNA's early days—eighty-four in all. It is a beautiful album, if I say so myself, and I wish to take this opportunity to thank all those who responded to my invitation to participate in our tribute to Eileen. Freydis Welland attended the Eileen Tribute portion of the meeting, and spoke very highly of Eileen's achievements.

At the same meeting, Ron Sutherland's contribution to the running of our meetings was also recognized with a gift. As I said at the time, "It is a truth universally acknowledged that behind every successful woman, there is a man." Ron will no longer manage the front desk, but he will continue to serve wine as before. I give me pleasure to salute both Eileen and Ron.

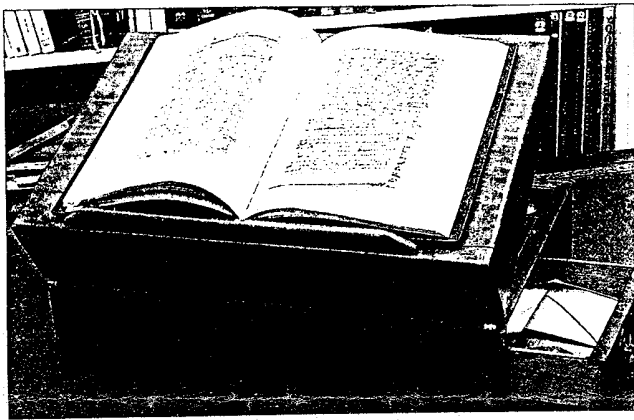
It was wonderful to celebrate so many things at once at the December meeting—Jane Austen's birthday, Eileen's contributions, and the approaching Christmas. My sincere thanks to everyone for making our "Georgian Luncheon" such a success.

### Jane Austen's Writing Desk Goes "Home"

Last October, Joan Austen-Leigh and her daughter Freydis Welland travelled to London for a ceremony when she presented Jane Austen's desk to the British Library. The desk will have a prominent position in a millennium exhibit, "Chapter and Verse: 1,000 years of literature," which will open there in March 2,000.

The desk, a simple hinged box of well-used but tenderly-cared-for mahogany, could be adjusted to form a slope for ease in writing, with space inside for papers and writing materials. It was probably given to Jane by her father in 1794, when she was 18 and eagerly writing her delightful juvenile pieces. It travelled with her wherever she went, and was still in her possession and being used almost daily until shortly before her death. The desk was inherited by Cassandra, and then descended from aunt to niece for several generations, ending up treasured by Jane Austen's great-great-grand-niece, Joan Austen-Leigh.

Joan kept it safe in a bank vault and only brought it out on special occasions. We in Vancouver were honoured to have it on display at the Vancouver Public Library when the JASNA Conference was held here in 1986.



It is sad to have such a treasure leave the family, but in London many people will be able to see it, and imagine Jane Austen sitting before it, creating those immortal characters.

We all thank Joan and her family for making this splendid gift.

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"It was Hans Meyrick's habit to send or bring in the 'Times' for his mother's reading. She was a great reader of news, from the widest-reaching politics to the list of marriages; the latter, she said, giving her the pleasant sense of finishing the fashionable novels without having read them..." *Daniel Deronda*: George Eliot.

(Thanks to Sandy Lundy for passing on this reading tip).

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### November Meeting - Eileen Sutherland.

There was only one king in Jane Austen's lifetime: George III reigned from 1760 to 1820.

At the November meeting, speaking on "The Monarchy in Jane Austen's time," **Vivienne Brosnan** vividly described the powers and responsibilities of the monarchy and of Parliament, and the effect of them both on the life of the people. She began with a brief summary of the overthrow of the Stuart kings, and the accession of the Hanoverians, who did not have the legitimate right of their predecessors but ruled by edict of Parliament.

George, the Elector of Hanover, was a great grandson of James I. He was German, and spoke no English; he was also more interested in Hanover than in England. But he was Protestant. He became George I of England. His son, George II, was also born in Hanover, but spoke and understood a little English. When he died in 1760, he was succeeded by his grandson, George III.

Vivienne described the harsh, lonely and rigid childhood and youth of the future George III. He loved books - eventually there were 65,000 volumes in the royal collection - and had a lifelong interest in astronomy and music, but was allowed almost no contact with other children his age. When he was 17, the Earl of Bute became his tutor, friend, favourite and eventually his Prime Minister. George married his cousin, Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, a dim, ugly young woman. They both had a great sense of duty, and were determined to make their marriage a good one. They had 15 children, and a long, dull and domestic life together.

During the Hanoverian reign, the system of British government gradually evolved, with a diminution of the powers of the Crown and the increase of those of Parliament, including a monopoly of the right of taxation. A personal feeling between king and parliament was very important. With only a primitive development of the party system, the Prime Minister could not count on support. The problem was to find a minister who would be suitable to king and parliament.

The greatest conflict in George III's reign was the rebellion of the American colonies, and their eventual independence, for which George could not be blamed. Parliament had tried to impose taxes which the colonies refused to pay, and war could not be avoided.

George III developed serious spells of illness - weakness in his limbs, bad eyesight, unbearable pain, delirium and finally madness. From 1811 to 1820 he was permanently disabled. Medical opinion today is that he suffered from an obscure genetic disease called Porphyria, which can be traced back to Mary Queen of Scots. Especially during his last decades, George became popular with the people, who affectionately called him "Farmer George." He was faithful to his wife, religious, hard working, but domineering and obstinate.

George IV was brought up in the same harsh, rigid educational system as his father. As Prince of Wales, he had nothing to do, was given no job, allowed no army or navy career, and no access to any state papers. It was a licentious age, and he could not be long protected from its influence. He became a leader of fashion and patron of the arts. He remodelled and redecorated his home, Carlton House, and entertained there lavishly, with no stinting of expense. His arranged marriage to Princess Caroline of Brunswick was a disaster: she was boisterous, flamboyant and dirty. They were separated almost immediately after the marriage.

During his ten years as king, George IV was very unpopular with the people, but he made several successful tours - to Hanover, Ireland and Scotland, where Sir Walter Scott arranged magnificent welcome festivities. The king died in 1830, ending a life of self-indulgence, recklessness and extravagance. A new age dawned, and Georgian and Regency memories were expunged as "not fit for drawingrooms." We had been given an enthralling picture of the times.



**Birthday Meeting, December 1999 - Eileen Sutherland.**

The Birthday meeting has always been special, a highlight of the year. On December 11<sup>th</sup>, it was certainly unforgettable for me. Keiko Parker began with a presentation and tribute which left me almost speechless with surprise and delight. On behalf of the Vancouver members, former members and friends from the JASNA Board and other Regions, she presented me with a beautiful Coalport figurine of Anne Elliot, dressed fashionably but conservatively in blue bonnet and spencer over a white gown, a quietly intelligent expression on her face, and holding a book - just the image of Anne as we know her. Along with it, was a scrapbook which Keiko had created from cards sent in by members. The book was a beautiful work of art, and the lovely comments and tributes on the cards make it a keepsake I shall treasure for the rest of my life. I can only say, like Fanny, "You are too kind. How can I ever thank you as I ought, for thinking so well of me."

Ron also was honoured as a supportive husband with a bottle of excellent Scotch - he won't have that for years and years!

The regular programme was readings from Jane Austen's works and from other writers. Jean Brown and Phyllis Taylor read of recipes and food, to whet our appetites; Viviane McClelland chose a passage from Fanny Knight's diary about family celebrations of birthdays and Christmas - the food and games when Fanny was young. Sandy Lundy read from *The Aristocrats*, a biography of the wealthy and beautiful Lennox sisters, about their Christmas activities, expenditures (the household spent about £40 a year per person on sugar), and ended with an appropriate quotation from one sister, Louisa: "Being thin is not a natural state for any of our family."

Irene Howard's reading emphasized the enjoyment of food: Emily Carr in *Klee Wyck*, visiting Indian villages, vividly described the sensual pleasure of an old man eating a ripe, sweet, juicy pear, perhaps the first he had ever tasted. Eric Fowweather led us in a choral poem in which we all joined enthusiastically, even if Eric gave us faint praise, hoping we would do better next time. Rachele Oriente read a passage from Washington Irving's *Sketchbook of Jeffrey Crayon*, about festivities in the north of England. In contrast, Eileen Sutherland read from several of Jane Austen's letters, which seemed to emphasize the lack of special Christmas celebrations in their family circle. René Goldman told of the English custom of honouring the one who received the "bean" in the cake or pudding: he was in a Paris restaurant last New Year and found the "fève" in his portion - the waiter immediately brought him a gold crown and all the other diners applauded him. Joan Mann mentioned that in her family this tradition is maintained.

Virgil Oriente served spicy mulled wine - Dr. Johnson's own recipe - to sip while we listened to the readings, and to drink a toast to Jane Austen for the pleasure she has given us.

Then on to our Christmas/Birthday repast. We did not actually have "tressels and trays, bending under the weight of brawn and cold pies," but we did have a feast, starting with a smooth and delicious white soup. There were platters of sliced roast turkey served with cranberry sauce and Regency gravy (or a vegetarian George Bernard Shaw gravy), cheese topped potatoes and other vegetables. Then the desserts: several kinds of trifle, a bowl of syllabub, plates of shortbread and decorated cookies, mince tarts, Christmas fruit cakes and a Christmas pudding flamed with brandy. If we needed anything more, we could find bowls of fruit and platters of cheeses.

Anne Elliot, gracing our mantel as I write, would have agreed that it was a joyous and festive occasion in the "company of clever, well-informed people, who have a great deal of conversation." She would have enjoyed it all.

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## PERSUASIONS ON-LINE - Eileen Sutherland.

If *Persuasions: The Jane Austen Journal* is not enough for you, JASNA has begun a new series of stimulating and perhaps controversial articles in an on-line format, planned to appear twice a year, and to appeal to scholars, students, and general readers. If you do not have access to the web, the text has been printed - our library has two copies for you to borrow and enjoy.

Issue No. 1 gives a good range of new ideas and interpretations. **Gene Koppel** compares *Mansfield Park* and Anne Tyler's *Morgan's Passing* as "problem novels" - offering "wildly different interpretations" to a variety of readers. Some readers see Fanny Price as a "monster of traditional morality;" others consider her as vulnerable and erring but also strong and sensitive. Tyler's protagonist, Morgan Gower, thinks of himself as a romantic hero, and in the end may or may not be transformed into a responsible and dependable family man. There is no final definite answer to the controversy of either novel.

**Diane Shubinsky** looks at *Sense and Sensibility* as an 18<sup>th</sup> century narrative, more closely linked to the works of Austen's predecessors than the later novels. As in other publications in the 18<sup>th</sup> century tradition, money or the lack of it effects all the action. The two heroines must wait for external events to alter their lives, rather than acting to bring about different circumstances. This is the only one of Austen's novels where the heroines do not have a chance to develop a solid and sure relationship of mutual respect and affection with the men they eventually marry.

The vagaries of weather influence the action of the plot and characters in all the Austen novels. **Tina Enhoffer** discusses the topic of chance in literature from the Greek and Roman to the Renaissance worlds, and points out how Austen uses weather to make and alter plans: Jane Bennet visits Netherfield in the rain and becomes ill; Marianne Dashwood is caught in a rainstorm and meets Willoughby; a sudden snowfall and a mixup with the carriages gives Mr. Elton his opportunity to propose to Emma; Louisa's fall at Lyme can be blamed on the high winds on the upper part of the Cobb. Chance, and the weather, must be encountered rather than evaded. The personality of the characters is reflected in the way they deal with what fortune brings.

**Henry N. Rogers** describes how the narrator in *Northanger Abbey* manipulates the reader as well as Catherine. Over and over we are led to believe in a gothic plot, and then find a rational explanation for the happenings. At the end, when General Tilney drives Catherine from the Abbey, we are tricked to find that he is a true Gothic-type villain after all.

Jane Austen gives little physical description, but in many instances she mentions height in a comparison between two characters - Captain Wentworth is taller than Captain Benwick; Darcy has a "fine, tall person," Bingley is evidently much shorter; Emma has a "firm and upright figure" while Harriet is "short, plump and fair." **Jean Graham** illustrates that the "advantage of height" distinguishes elegant females as well as handsome heroes.

The films *Emma* and *Clueless* are compared by **Sue Parill** from the point of view of the feeling of control exercised by both heroines. In the novel, Emma indulges in much less physical activity than in the film, where she competes in sport, drives a gig, and runs up the walk to see Harriet. This physical action is in keeping with the plot and theme: control of a bow and arrow, or a horse, symbolize the love of control and manipulation of others which is a dominant part of the character of the heroine.

Three papers given at the 1998 conference at Quebec are included in this volume. **Barbara Benedict** looks at reading in *Northanger Abbey*. Literature had become commercialized in the Regency period - circulating libraries offered books to be read quickly or skimmed and



returned; literature was used for fashionable display; or books were read for plot only. Austen “advocates a moral code of reading in which the reader penetrates the intricate causal connections of characters and events.”

**Deirdre Gilbert** examines the laws of inheritance - primogeniture, strict settlement and entail. Austen’s novels often show the conflict between a profligate elder son who will inherit everything and his more worthy younger brother. She also emphasizes the fact that inheritance and property laws increasingly marginalized the power of women.

In a paper on “Civility” in *Northanger Abbey*, **Joseph Wiesenfarth** discusses the helpful and unhelpful conventions of society. The first kind are those that enable individuals to “live equably together [and] think and feel for themselves.” The unhelpful inhibit genuine civility and discourage thinking and feeling. Henry helps Catherine distinguish between what people say and what they do.

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On the whole, these short articles are well researched and written in a readable style. The booklet is an addition to *Persuasions* and a bonus for members who want “more Jane Austen.”

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#### **Recommended Reading:**

(Have you recently read a book - Jane Austen-ish, or otherwise - that you would recommend to other members? Here are some we have heard of recently).

*The Underpainter*: Jane Urquhart (Darlene Foster).

*The Scotch*: John Galbraith (Vivienne Brosnan)

“Twelfth Night Festivities” from *Jane Austen’s Christmas*: compiled by Maria Hubert (Phyllis Taylor).

“The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon” by Washington Irving, in *Jane Austen’s Christmas: The Festive Season in Georgian England*: Maria Hubert. (Rachele Oriente).

Selections from chapters on “Homes, Education and Adultery” in *Aristocrats*: Stella Tillyard. (Sandy Lundy).

*Almost Another Sister*: Margaret Wilson (Viviane McClelland).

“Juice” from *Klee Wyck*, stories of Emily Carr, compiled by Ira Dilworth (Irene Howard).

“Georgian Table Manners”, p.276 of *Mrs. Jordan’s Profession*: Claire Tomalin (Sandy Lundy).

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We are cold here [Southampton]. I expect a severe March, a wet April, & a sharp May.-

Letter to Cassandra. 20 February 1807.

We have...had a touch of almost everything in the weather way; - two of the severest frosts since the winter began, preceded by rain, hail & snow.- Now we are smiling again.

Letter to Cassandra, from Southampton, 20 February 1807.

**Mary Anderson**

Towards the end of January, we visited Mary Anderson, who sends good wishes to all Vancouver members, and who deeply regrets that she can no longer attend our meetings.

Mary's address now is: Mary Anderson, Room 105,  
Capilano Care Centre,  
525 Clyde Avenue,  
West Vancouver, B.C. V7V 1S1

Mary has her own phone: 922-2330. She would love to hear from any of you, by note or phone-call.

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**TIME WARP**

Here am I, bowling along at 30 mph, knowing almost for certain that I will reach my destination within 60 minutes, the smooth road ahead of me brilliantly lit up by lamps that I can switch on and off, or dip, by the pressure of my fingertip. I am warmed by an adjustable stream of hot air, and am listening to *Emma* on a tape.

Imagine Jane Austen on the same road. She is in her brother's landau, on her way to a ball in the Assembly Rooms at Ashford six miles away. Her journey will take the same time as mine.

The coach is as beautiful as the pair of greys that draw it. Its hoods are closed, but the windows have no glass. It is draughty and very cold. The road - for it has not yet been turnpiked - is narrow, rutted, and deep in mud. The only illumination comes from a pair of guttering candles set each side of the coachman's box. The risk of overturning is far greater than mine of collision, and there may be robbers on the road.

All this Jane takes completely for granted. She thinks the dance worth the danger and discomfort. And that is without the journey home, after midnight.

She returns to Godmersham, her brother's house near Canterbury. It is a beautiful house, furnished with 18<sup>th</sup> century elegance, and large enough for Jane to have a bedroom of her own and a great library where the house party can congregate after dinner.

There are 50 servants - 30 indoor and 20 outdoor - fires in every room and delicious meals. But the fires lose half their heat up the chimney and emit half their smoke into the room. The drains are odoriferous; the window sashes let in the cold air; the beds are lumpy, because spring mattresses have yet to be invented; you read by the pale light of a tallow candle that requires constant snuffing; there is no running water except in the kitchen, where the food is still cooked on open grates; and Napoleon is poised to invade, only 50 minutes away at Boulogne."

"If Jane Austen had foreseen the invention of the Fax": Nigel Nicolson (*Sunday Telegraph*, London), quoted in *Letter From Chicago*, January 1999.

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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. Price to non-members: \$4.00 per year.