

JANE AUSTEN SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

Vancouver Region

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CLOUDS.

People have been watching clouds, and talking and writing about them from earliest times. There are many Biblical references:

There ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. (I Kings, 18.44.)

Cloud imagery was used by poets, from Shakespeare:

Hamlet: *Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?*

Polonius: *By the mass, and 'tis like a camel indeed.* (Hamlet, Act III, Sc.2)

to the Romantics:

The hand of science pointed out the path / In which the sun-beams gleaming from the west / Fall on the wat'ry cloud. (Mark Akenside, 1721-1770, "The Pleasures of Imagination").

to A.A.Milne:

How sweet to be a Cloud / Floating in the Blue! / It makes him very proud / To be a little cloud. ("Winnie-the-Pooh", 1926).

Jane Austen's heroines expose their characters in their attitude to clouds. Mary Crawford considers herself infallible: *South or north, I know a black cloud when I see it.* (MP). Catherine Morland believes wishing will make it so: *If the clouds would only go off and the sun keep out.* (NA). Marianne Dashwood thinks life will turn out the way she wants it to; she predicts that *every threatening cloud would be drawn off and the day would be lastingly fair*, just before she and Margaret, out for a walk, are caught in a violent rain-storm. (S&S). Jane Austen herself, as narrator, gives a vivid picture of a lovely Spring day: *It was really March; but it was April in its mild air, brisk soft wind, and bright sun, occasionally clouded for a minute* (MP).



Cumulo-Pileus Clouds, above, create a fluffy castle in the sky.

It was in Jane Austen's lifetime, with the growing interest in all forms of scientific inquiry, that clouds were thoroughly studied and analysed. One of the founders of the science of meteorology, was Luke Howard, born in London in 1772. His father, Robert, was a manufacturer of tin goods, who accumulated considerable wealth. He was a member of the Society of Friends, and his son Luke, also a Friend, was sent to a private school in Oxfordshire, where he "learned too much Latin grammar and too little of anything else." At age 14, he was bound apprentice to Oliver Sims, a retail chemist.

After hours, the young man taught himself French, botany, and the science of chemistry, deeply impressed by Lavoisier and other scientific writers of the time.

In 1793 Howard commenced business as a wholesale and retail chemist in London. He moved to Essex to take charge of the manufacturing department of the firm. Later the business moved to Stratford, and finally he resided on an estate in Yorkshire for the rest of his life.

Botany was one of Luke Howard's favourite pursuits. In 1800 he read a paper to the Linnaean Society on the *Microscopical Investigation of several Species of Pollen*. It showed close observation and suggested lines of inquiry which were subsequently followed up by others.

From the first, his real *penchant* was towards meteorology: he was interested in the formations of clouds, the expansion of water in freezing, remarkable summer hazes, and the *aurora borealis* of 1783. He witnessed a stupendous meteor that same year, passing from north to south (from Iceland to the north of Italy).

Retired and settled at Plaiston, in Yorkshire, Howard methodically studied shapes of clouds and the laws of their changing. He read his essay *On the Modifications of Clouds* to the Askesian Society (a small philosophical club). Reprinted in "The Climate of London", this gave him his scientific fame. In it he applied the methods of Linnaeus to the varying forms of clouds. He defined three chief modifications: *cirrus*, *cumulus* and *stratus*, and four intermediate or compound modifications, the best known of which is *nimbus* or rain cloud. These names have been generally adopted by meteorologists.



From 1806, Howard kept a meteorological register, published with notations up to 1830. His instruments were rude and insufficient from today's point of view, but his are the only observations from the early years of the 19th century that have been preserved. In 1821, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.

He had been married in 1796 to Mariabella Eliot of London, who died in 1852. After that Howard lived with his son Robert in Tottenham, Yorkshire. He died aged 91, on March 21, 1864.

Remember Luke Howard when you look at clouds on lovely summer nights, and call them by name.

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Gruel, Anyone?

In "Capital Letters", Jonathan Watts writes from Beijing for the *Guardian Weekly*. His July 8, 2004, article is about strange foods offered in restaurants and markets. "The stalls sell kebabs of roasted scorpion, cicadas, sea horses, chicken hearts, frogs, sparrows and various animal genitalia . . . testimony to a distinctly modern feature of the country's economic landscape: the liberalism of food." Competition, rising incomes, and consumers' growing desire to try something new, have transformed the dietary options in the cities. The influx of migrant workers from the provinces has brought about an astonishing increase in street stalls selling such items as Japanese raw fish; spicy Sichuan and Korean dishes; bangers, mash and baked beans at English-style pub; and "gruel restaurants offering a cheap and tasty range of glutinous dishes from northeast China."

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Portrayals of Autism in Pride and Prejudice. - February Meeting.

Phyllis Ferguson Bottomer.

When supper was over at the Netherfield ball, Mary was asked to sing. Elizabeth tried with looks and gestures to prevent this, but in vain; *Mary would not understand them*. Phyllis Ferguson Bottomer, in her talk about autism, pointed out that Mary was possibly autistic, and actually might find it very difficult to change her focus from singing to sitting quietly. Perhaps the word *would* should have been *could*.

Phyllis is a speech language pathologist. She has been studying novelists who sometimes give readers a picture of characters without themselves being aware why these fictional people act the way they do. She concentrated on *P&P*, giving us new insights into the covert feelings and communication skills of many of the characters. From her earliest reading of Austen, Phyllis was amazed at the depth of insight of the author, her ability to observe and describe behaviour, probably without understanding it.

Autism is a biological disorder affecting the brain and central nervous system, which can result in impairment in social skills. A primary ability of intelligent adults is that of communicating, to various degrees, with others. An autistic person, on the other hand, may find great difficulty in shifting the focus of attention, in reading people's faces, judging the very quick, transient emotions which cross their faces. They may have difficulty grasping the "back-and-forth" nature of a conversation; there is a tendency to be at one extreme or the other, producing a monologue or sitting silent. They may change the topic suddenly, or don't follow a logical conversational turn, seeming to be a poor listener. They appear to have some difficulty conceptualizing and appreciating the thoughts and feelings of others. They may have slow, limited or no response to others' emotions. Their difficulty with social interactions (often called "poor manners") may result in their avoiding social situations. Phyllis went over some of the characters in *P&P*, quoting passages in the novel which indicate that what Jane Austen noticed in their behaviour could have been the result of varied degrees of autism.

Mary was called by her father "a young lady of deep reflection, reading great books and making extracts". Austen points out that "Mary wished to say something very sensible, but knew not how" - this is typical autistic behaviour: she has difficulty entering into a conversation. Her remarks are usually solid and pedantic. She cannot express emotion. Trying to console her sisters upon hearing of Lydia's elopement, Mary could only say: "We must stem the tide of malice, and pour into the wounded bosoms of each other, the balm of sisterly consolation."

Mr. Collins is called "an oddity", with "a mixture of servility and self-importance", "awkward and solemn", "conceited, pompous, narrow-minded and silly" by various other characters. His letter shows him "grave, stately and very formal". At the university he "kept the necessary terms, without forming at it any useful acquaintance." Whatever he does, he shows himself to have no social graces, and no great emotional depth. He talks in monologues, but doesn't listen to others. In his formal conversations, he seemed to make a rigid plan, and then keep to it, regardless of how he was received. This is all very much autistic behaviour.

Lydia shows similar behavioural symptoms: she is a most determined talker, often with a loud voice, but these are not give-and-take conversations with others. She is not a listener, and doesn't pay attention to any other person. She "abruptly breaks into conversations", interrupts Mr. Collins' sermon reading. She is impulsive, and not aware of the consequences for herself or others. Austen wrote "she chose to be insensible", but again, Lydia perhaps could not do otherwise. Leaving home at the end of the novel for the north, her mother is in tears, but Lydia shows no emotion at all. These scenes indicate the damage that can be done in social and family life by a person with such disabilities.

Mr. Bennet displays definite symptoms of Asperger's Syndrome (high-functioning autism). He cannot put himself into the feelings of others, to the extent that he has done nothing to provide for his family after his death, even for his favourite Lizzy. His treatment of Mary and Kitty is negative, he ignores them, or puts them down almost every time he speaks to them. Even at the beginning of the novel, when Mrs. Bennet comes in with important news about a new neighbour, "Mr. Bennet made no answer." Over and over he lets the conversational ball drop. He has lots of abilities, but he cannot connect with others; socializing is difficult for him. He is "fatigued with the raptures of his wife." His attempts at humour are often insensitive: Mr. Collins "may turn you all out of this house when I am dead" - not funny, too real. He cannot process emotion quickly: he is in a state of shock when he learns that Lydia has run away. He goes to London to hunt for her, but doesn't write to let his family know how matters stand. He does only things that are "little trouble to himself."

Lady Catherine has no social or emotional reciprocity; she talks incessantly, questions and one-sided conversations. She is bossy, not used to disagreements. There are constant breaks in her conversations when she changes the subject abruptly. She has a limited ability to see herself, and dominates the interactions with others.

Darcy is a little like his aunt Lady Catherine - Elizabeth's first impressions are sometimes true. He has not the talent to catch the tone or rhythm of conversation, he is withdrawn and solitary in a group. He is least skilled and most vulnerable in social situations. He inadvertently may say or do things that may offend or annoy people. He called Elizabeth "tolerable" - it takes a special part of the brain to process faces - he cannot help himself. He has great difficulty in starting a conversation - he moves closer, hesitates, moves closer still ("What does Mr. Darcy mean by listening to my conversation with Colonel Forster?"), trying to find a way to begin. The judgement of his conduct by others is "pride." It is ironic how similar the proposals of Darcy and Mr. Collins are: Both men nerve themselves to begin, they do not read her reaction in her face, and once started they go on and on, and are extremely surprised at her refusal of their offers. Written communication is easier - Darcy leaves Elizabeth and writes her a letter. With no distraction of her face before him, he can be clear and literate.

What or who is to blame for this lack of social skills? Bad character or bad upbringing? Darcy blamed his parents who taught him to be proud. He compensates by choosing friends with more social address - Bingley, Colonel Fitzwilliam, the Gardiners. Within certain social classes two hundred years ago, there was a "script" for behaviour. Society in the past was more structured. One class was not used to dealing with certain people or situations - are we reading difficulties into the novel? But Mr. Darcy had experience of lots of years and places and people. He still has difficulties coping, but he is doing his best.

Today there are all kinds of treatment for autism, the earlier the treatment the better. Austen in her novels described more women than men with autistic disabilities - this is not the ratio found today in studies. Understanding autism, and reading about characters who may have severe symptoms of the disability, makes us aware of the unhappiness it can bring on its sufferers and on their families. We look at the story in *P&P* mostly through the eyes of Elizabeth, and we can understand the shame and humiliation she feels in connection with these close relatives.

It is an amazing achievement for Jane Austen to portray these afflictions, at a time, 200 years ago, when there was no medical knowledge which could explain the causes of their attitudes and actions. As many times before, we are overcome by admiration for this great novelist.

As we prepared for lunch, we agreed that Phyllis' talk was "one of our best" meetings - the symptoms of autism carefully explained, the examples from the novel well chosen, and the talk delivered with an infectious enthusiasm. We look forward to hearing Phyllis again.

The Green Veil: Landscape and Mansfield Park: Sarah Munro - March Meeting.

In *Mansfield Park*, Jane Austen reflects the fashionable romantic sensibilities of nature, and also a contrasting point of view: a natural world corrupted by imperialism. The settings of *Mansfield Park* and Antigua “highlight the imperial and colonial misuse of nature both within England and abroad.” Improving their estates at the expense of neighbouring parkland, English landowners used the same process of territorial acquisition as plantation owners overseas.

In a similar way, Mary and Henry Crawford “colonize *Mansfield Park* and attempt to advance the lifestyle and landscape of the estate through ‘improvements’ - changes to the physical appearance of a home to make it more fashionable and aesthetically pleasing.” Fanny and Edmund, on the other hand, want to improve family ties and religious morals in their home. The Sotherton scenes highlight these contrasts - Fanny’s religious faith compared to the material desires of the other characters.

Fanny responds to the proposal to cut down an avenue of trees with: “Ye fallen avenues, once more I mourn your fate unmerited,” a quotation from Jane Austen’s favourite poet. William Cowper felt that the natural world possesses “divine innocence,” whereas the unnatural world, human civilization, “corrupts God’s natural creations.” Fanny’s love of the natural world is shown also in her conversation with Mary Crawford in the shrubbery. As Sarah points out, “Fanny views nature as historical, embodied and inherently beautiful, while Mary finds beauty in nature only when it has been reshaped by human hands.”

Mary’s opinion that there is “no practical purpose in the natural world other than its use to humans,” reflects the sentiments of British imperialists. “Although *Mansfield Park* appears to be self-sufficient and enclosed, the estate actually depends on the economic sustenance provided by Sir Thomas’s plantation in Antigua . . . the estate improvements the novel’s characters discuss . . . depend on the money drawn from England’s colonial economies.”

The green baize stage curtain sewn by Aunt Norris “reflects the greenery of the Northamptonshire countryside, the avenue of trees Fanny admires, and the island of Antigua, itself.” Like Rushworth’s desire to improve his estate, Aunt Norris’s obsession with the green curtain symbolizes the English preoccupation with improving the natural world. “As a result of opening the curtain, the fence gate, or England’s buffered enclosure, the natural, innocent world falls prey to immoral acts. Just as Mary and Henry Crawford come from London society to the countryside and infect the Edenic landscape with their lack of Christian morals, so Sir Thomas goes to Antigua and robs the island chain of its innocence.”

Sarah ended her talk: “Austen’s setting thus functions as a background for the interrogation of British imperialism . . . Through her use of settings, Austen displays the imperial misuse of the natural world in *Mansfield Park*.”

It was an interesting, thought-provoking talk, and Sarah gave us another way to read and assess this “darkest” of Jane Austen’s novels.

Sarah Munro is a fourth year English Honours student at the University of British Columbia. For this paper she received the Jane Austen Society Prize in 2004. We want to express our sincere congratulations to her.



Sydney Smith was “once described as the most playful, impudent, careless cassocked infidel ever met with.”

Jane Austen Day - Apparel and Appearance. April 16

June Sturrock began the programme with a talk on "Dandies, Beauties and the issue of Good Looks in *Persuasion*." She pointed out that the idea of "bloom" pervades the novel: not merely the *bloom of youth, a fine bloom, the bloom of full health*, but also *past the bloom of life, her bloom had vanished early, the loss of bloom and spirits, and illness destroys the bloom forever*. Linnaean botany was growing in importance at this time, and led to the portrayal of a woman as a flower.

Female beauty was often coveted and commented on. June showed slides of three Lawrence portraits of women, in elaborate gowns and attractive poses which enhanced their beauty. Male beauty was not a factor in most Western cultures, but after 1813 - the period of *Persuasion* - came the beginning of the "dandy" era, whose devotees were also called "exquisites" or "swells". It was Romantic in character - the times of Shelley, Keats and Byron, the Regency, and George "Beau" Brummell. Prints, usually caricatures, in shop windows kept passers-by aware of the latest fashions: the wasp waists, high collars and cravats, and brilliantly-polished boots. The Prince Regent was notorious for his concern with his appearance; Byron was one of the most visible men of his day - we saw him pictured in his magnificent, glittering Albanian uniform with sash and high brimmed cap.

Persuasion shows the English concern for masculine beauty. Readers are reminded of the physical passage of time. *The Baronetage* lists dates of births, marriages and deaths; Sir Walter adds extra dates for members of his family. This is the first of Jane Austen's novels to be set at a precise time; 1815 - the war is over and naval officers have been discharged ashore.

Sir Walter would not be called a "dandy", but he was Narcissistic - a natural product of such a social world. He judged everyone he saw by his own standard of beauty: Admiral Baldwin, *his face the colour of mahogany . . . all lines and wrinkles*; Colonel Wallis, *a fine military figure, though sandy-haired*; the distressing *crow's foot about Lady Russell's temples*. He could not tolerate anyone *plain and awkward*, unless they were the aristocratic Dalrymples. Captain Wentworth luckily had *such an air and appearance* worth cultivating.

Sir Walter thought he and his like were immune from time - he refused to accept the marks of age, weather, grief, and experience. Jane Austen represents these changes over time as a natural outcome of responsiveness and interaction. Anne responds mentally, emotionally, and physically to the needs of others as well as herself - not a mere spectator, she is an active participant, a valuable member of any society except in her own home.

Many members participated in the lively questions and answers afterwards. Only the imminence of luncheon brought an end to the session.

Luncheon. Barbara Phillips and her group of helpers provided a delicious and lavish luncheon, "as well dressed as any I ever saw". We extend our grateful thanks for all their time and effort.

Who's Who in Jane Austen?

Mary Atkins had prepared a challenging quiz, asking members to identify each character on a list of 20 names, giving the title of the appropriate novel, the relationship to a major character, and one other thing for each. Some of the "toughies" included Mrs. Younge, Rebecca, Mrs. Wallis, Thomas, and Old John Abdy. The prizes for those who had the nearest to perfect scores was packets of JA hasti-notes, with designs by Joan Hassall.

Regency Raiment.

Ivan Sayers has given us talks before, to great acclaim, and we welcomed him back again. He brought models gowned in interesting, decorative fabrics, and a tableful of loose pieces to illustrate his talk. The dates he chose were those of Jane Austen's lifetime; a little before, to show precedents, and a little later, to show influences. He recommended several books, outlining the fashions of the day, and showed slides, mainly 18th century, and primarily of English garments.

Silk was the fibre of prestige and ambition. Cotton was very expensive; linen and wool were the common fabrics. The garments were mostly identical in cut - status came from the fabric and decoration. In the late 18th century, the three parts of a dress were the robe, petticoat and stomacher. Corsets were worn underneath ("stays" were old-fashioned). Straps over the shoulders lifted the chest to outline the bust. The smallness of the waist was emphasized by increasing the width of the skirt, with hoops or panniers. Display was important - the shift showed at the bottom of the sleeves - an erotic touch. The fashionable world was "crazy" for trimmings. The most expensive and valuable silks were imported from China.

Early in the 19th century, one noticed the garment; later the figure is emphasized. A raised waistline resulted in the appearance of a short body and long legs, tall, not wide. After the French Revolution, the clothing industry had a major reorganization - a retreat from ostentatious display: colour was subdued, hair was unpowdered (except in older people) A fitted jacket was worn over a skirt reduced to a plain panel, with a white shift underneath. The gown under the robe was now a vest with a long tail, sometimes with sleeves. It was sometimes laced at the back. The white shift became more conspicuous: very plain, it looked like a nightgown. This was worn in sympathy with the victims of the revolution; it was almost the same as ancient Greek dress, and could be worn with either political focus. A high waist gave a more conspicuous display of the body. Turbans indicated an interest in the Near East, and ostrich plumes decorating the head were a reference to the Egyptian campaign.

Earlier, China was an important influence; by Jane Austen's time, it was India. With new machinery, the cotton industry "took off", production costs came way down, and cotton became the fabric of choice, working well with the ideas of Neo-Classicism. Ivan partly "undressed" a model, to display the construction of the gown: he undid the drawstring around the waist, unpinned the diamond-shaped bodice, to show us how impossible it would have been to dress or undress oneself without the help of a maid.

In the late 18th century, men's outfits were of three pieces (worn over a shirt): waistcoat, jacket and breeches. Fabrics were rich, usually figured, and all pieces matched. After 1800, the three pieces were usually in different colours. Men began to wear a ruffled shirt and high collar. Instead of pantaloons, trousers became more and more important. The fabrics were in solid colours and stripes, the trousers light, the jacket dark.

By 1810, the shift in focus in women's garments became noticeable. A more conservative attitude meant that undergarments were worn more again: women of influence were getting older and more mature - there was more masking and less display. The overall aspect was that of a column; the head is the capital, the volutes which the capital sits on are the puffed sleeves and shoulders; the gown is straight but fluting, and balls out a bit at the bottom. By 1818, volume was increased across the bottom and the shoulders, with the focus on the waistline again. Sleeves were puffed at the shoulder, or all the way down; the lower sleeve could come off for evening.

We were enthralled for over two hours, and left with our thoughts whirling with ideas for ball-dresses for 2007.

Barbara Peacock.

It was with great regret that I learned that Barbara Peacock died last December. Some of you will remember Barbara. She was a member of JASNA Vancouver almost from the beginning, and regularly attended the meetings and participated with interest in the discussions.

However, we haven't seen much of her for the last few years. About fifteen or more years ago, Barbara and her husband moved to Comox, on Vancouver Island, for their retirement. She kept her membership in our group for some time, and we were in touch by occasional phone calls and letters. I knew her eyesight was failing badly, and her health was getting more and more frail.

Barbara's daughter Joanne phoned me a short time ago to tell me her mother had died in the Comox hospital on December 19th.

Barbara had always remained interested in the Vancouver group, and kindly decided to pass on her collection of Jane Austen books to us, to sell them to raise funds, or put them in our library, or do with them whatever we decided.

We greatly appreciate Barbara's generosity, and will certainly put the books to good use.

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Manners and Customs.

Miss Bates was the daughter of a former vicar of Highbury. She would have been carefully brought up, taught quiet and respectful manners, and "was a woman whom no one named without good-will." We can trust her good manners and behaviour.

At the ball at the Crown, Miss Bates comes in talking (two pages of it!). She comes to Emma and is about to make some remarks about Emma's appearance, and then: "Must not compliment, I know - (eyeing Emma most complacently) - that would be rude - but upon my word, Miss Woodhouse, you do look - how do you like Jane's hair? . . ."

This is an interesting custom - obviously one should not tell a young lady she is looking well or attractive - or perhaps not comment on what she is wearing.

A little later at the same party, Mrs. Elton moves to speak to Jane Fairfax: "After a good many compliments to Jane on her dress and look, compliments very quietly and properly taken, Mrs. Elton was evidently waiting to be complimented herself - and it was, "How do you like my gown?" etc.

As usual with Jane Austen, we learn a good deal in this short scene - about Miss Bates, Jane Fairfax and Mrs. Elton.

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Gardens - 1805

"While the Empress of the French had her English garden [at Malmaison], English gentry filled summer *parterres*, greenhouses, hanging baskets and window-boxes, with brilliant displays of strongly-scented plants, with velvety petals of deep rose, scarlet, powder-pink, salmon-pink, crimson and ivory; zonal, ivy-leaved, shrubby and climbing, all of which they termed **geraniums**."

Britain Against Napoleon: Carola Oman (1969).

In *M.P.*, Fanny had geraniums in her East Room: after the quarrel about Fanny not being willing to act in the theatricals, she went to her room "in an agitated, doubting spirit, to see if . . . by giving air to her geraniums she might inhale a breeze of mental strength herself." (p.152.

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Early Canadian Entrepreneur. (1811).

"Enos Collins [was] a Nova Scotian quickly making a name for himself as an entrepreneur with an uncanny knack for finding opportunity in the oddest of places.

It has been said that one such situation had presented itself to Collins a few years previous. During the Peninsular War (1808-1814), the British army had found themselves outside of Cadiz unable to continue battling Napoleon's forces because of lack of provisions. Learning of their plight, Collins loaded three ships full of food, selected three reliable captains, and dispatched them across the Atlantic. The ships slipped through enemy lines, eluding detection and capture, and reached the British safely. Their cargoes were then sold at a great profit, and the three captains returned with a substantial sum to add to Collins' coffers."

"The Privateer": Ben Maycock (*The Beaver*, June/July, 2003).

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"The Georgians were capitalists who had little protection from the negative consequences of unregulated capitalism. All of Austen's characters depend on capital that they obtain in a variety of ways through inheritance, marriages, and investments; and through income earned from an occupation or profession. Inherited capital, which comes to characters both patrilineally and matrilineally - from male and female parents and relatives as well as through marriage - is a necessary thing in all of Austen's novels. However, because few characters can inherit or earn what Austen would call an 'independence', or have access to a 'competence', many (if not most) of her marriages are enabled by a combination of bequests, entitlements, and earnings that both bride and groom receive from different sources and pool in order to maintain a comfortable standard of living."

Jane Austen and Religion; Michael Giffin (2002) p.18.

"[Jane] enjoyed driving about town [London], visiting shops and theatres, and calling on friends and acquaintances; and she seemed charmed by Henry's successive houses - first in Sloane Street, on the outskirts, then in Henrietta Street, in bustling Covent Garden, and finally back in Chelsea, at No. 23, Hans Place. With her usually precise eye for society's nuances, she registered the hierarchy of different addresses, which emerges clearly in her novels: the Bennet girls' uncle, as a tradesman, is sneered at by the Bingley sisters for living in the City, Gracechurch Street 'within view of his own warehouses' - whereas elegant, ostentatiously well-bred and wealthy characters such as the John Dashwoods, the Bingleys and the Rushworths live in the exclusive environs of the West End - at addresses such as Berkeley Street, Conduit Street, and Harley Street." P.185.

Jane Austen. A Companion. Josephine Ross (2002).

Newspapers

"Every morning paper, as an essential retainer to its establishment, kept an author, who was bound to furnish daily a quantum of witty paragraphs. Sixpence a joke, and it was thought pretty high too - was [the] settled remuneration in these cases. The chat of the day, scandal, but above all, dress, furnished the material. The length of no paragraph was to exceed seven lines. Shorter they might be, but they must be poignant."

Essays of Elia, Charles Lamb c.1800.

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Researching the Austen Family in Kent: Claire Gill.

"When Margaret Wilson's family were of an age when they no longer needed her close attention, there was no question of how she would fill her time. For Margaret, an historian who had taught A-level history, biographical research was in her blood. A life-long Jane Austen fan, she began researching Jane's Kentish relatives. . . .

Jane's brother Edward Austen, changed his name to Knight in gratitude to a rich benefactor who adopted the young Edward and made him heir to his substantial properties which included Godmersham Park, in Kent. Edward's daughter, Fanny, grew up there in a happy family atmosphere. . . . It was Fanny Knight who caught Margaret's interest and provided a starting point for her research.

Margaret spent a great deal of time at the Centre for Kentish Studies in Maidstone, many hours in reference libraries throughout Kent, and was a frequent visitor to The British Library and Newspaper Division, and occasionally the Public Records Office. As she delved deeper, she became more and more fascinated with the family. She contacted members of the Jane Austen Society for information and visited descendants who made family papers accessible, and recalled family stories passed down through the years.

Beginning her research with the famous five letters sent to Fanny by Jane in 1814 and 1817, Margaret explains, 'that was before the advent of microfilm and it was a great thrill to be allowed to handle the original letters.' Visitors to the Kentish Studies Centre now are shown photocopies. . . . Looking at all the information she had amassed, Margaret realized she had enough for a book. Jane's own words, that she thought of Fanny, who was only seventeen years her junior, as 'almost another sister', gave Margaret her title: *Almost Another Sister, The Story of Fanny Knight, Jane Austen's Favourite Niece*. . . .

While researching Fanny, Margaret discovered a great deal of interesting information about other members of the Austen 'clan' living in Kent, and says, 'although Fanny was the starting point, I regard her as rather like a tree. Fanny is the trunk and there are many interesting branches.' Every branch bore fruit for Margaret. Two more booklets followed: *A Kent Girl Graduate*, the story of Fanny's granddaughter, Eva Knatchbull-Hugessen, one of the first students to attend Newnham College, Cambridge, and *Jane Austen's Family and Tonbridge*, about the branch of the Austen family who lived there. As well as the booklets, Margaret has written numerous articles about the Austens who lived in Kent.

Margaret's latest research is for the family of William Hampson Walter, half brother of Jane's father. Margaret is off again on yet another journey into the past!"

From: *The New Writer*, May/June, 2004.

[Claire Gill is the cousin of Joan Reynolds' mother]

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Charles Lamb wrote to a friend that he had met two lord-like Bucks in a gallery who seemed to wish him away, and so "I plebeian'd off" immediately.

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