JANE AUSTEN SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

Vancouver Region

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Weymouth - Seaside Resort and Invasion Site.

The seaside holiday was "invented" in the 17th century. Sea water was first prescribed for its therapeutic properties by Dr. Russell of Brighton. He originally instructed that it should be *drunk* for health. Then *bathing* in the sea was urged as a cure, but soon became accepted as a pleasure in its own right. George III patronized Weymouth, where he loved taking the salute. The Hon. John Byng, by contrast, detested its affected vulgarity, writing: 'a sandy shore, being excellent for bathing, has first induced the neighbours to come; since, by fashion, and by the Duke of Gloucester's having built a house, it is become the resort of the giddy and the gay: where the Irish beau, the gouty peer, and the genteel shopkeeper blend in folly and fine breeding.'

The Austens enjoyed summer holidays on the south coast, and in 1804 they were at Lyme with Henry and Eliza, who eventually moved on to Weymouth, taking Cassandra with them. In her letters to Cassandra at this time, Jane Austen jokes about Weymouth, and it is hard to determine what she really felt.

"Your account of Weymouth contains nothing which strikes me so forcibly as there being no ice in the town . . . Weymouth is altogether a shocking place, I perceive, without recommendation of any kind, & worthy only of being frequented by the inhabitants of Gloucester [probably *Gloucester House*, where the Leigh-Perrots stayed, or *Gloucester Lodge*, the residence of the King and Queen and the Royal Family]. I am really glad that we did not go there, & that Henry and Eliza saw nothing in it to make them feel differently."

Weymouth evidently was too busy a place to please Jane Austen. It was the romantic and wonderful stretches of the untamed coastline that appealed to her. Once a fishing village had become so fashionable, crowded and built up that it was just another social centre, she responded with as much distaste as she did to Bath. Weymouth, a few miles from Lyme, came into this category. However, she used the town with great success in her novels: Charlotte Jennings visited her uncle at Weymouth (S&S), Tom Bertram

Weymouth (1810) One of the most fashionable and frequented of seaside resorts in the Regency period

idled six weeks there (MP), and part of Mr. Knightley's condemnation of Frank Churchill, before he has ever met him, is, "We hear of him for ever at some watering-place or other. A little while ago he was at Weymouth." In this novel (*Emma*), Weymouth is used to describe events and characters which carry on the story line: Miss Bates gives a long impassioned account of Jane Fairfax's nearly fatal accident on a boat trip there; and Emma was tantalized by knowing that Jane and Frank had been "a little acquainted" at Weymouth, "but not a syllable of real information could Emma procure as to what he truly was."

Jane Austen may have considered there were too many people of the wrong sort, and too much vulgar gaiety. However, to the eye of an impressionable schoolgirl, the Weymouth season was a scene of great excitement. Here are excerpts from the diary of Elizabeth Ham, who grew up in and around the resort.

"The great plague of the place was the 'Season' to all sober Housewives. Our country connection was large, and no sooner was the King come than country Cousins came too. The influx of visitors at such times was very great. The Continent was quite shut to the British idler, and Weymouth was all the fashion. Every house and every room that could be procured was engaged. Every day something was going on to amuse the King. There was in general either a Public Breakfast, a Review, or a Sail, for the morning, and the Play in the evening four times a week. Tuesdays and Fridays were Ball nights, but the Royal Family did not attend these. On Sunday evenings the rooms were open for Tea and Promenade. This the King never missed. A cord was stretched from the Ball-room door to the Tea-room, or rather Card-room, where the Royal Family took their tea. They were met in the Lobby by the Master of Ceremonies, with a candle in each hand, who walked backward before them, up the stairs and into the Ball-room, where all those who had the *entrée* were standing within the cord. His Majesty was generally dragging the Queen behind him with one hand, bowing his head slowly, and speaking fast to those within the cord, whilst she ducked and smiled and spoke according to the time allowed her. The Princesses followed according to age, and had their say in turn. It generally took from three quarters to an hour to make this short transit. The cord was then removed, but the door was always left open where their Majesties and their invited guests were taking their tea.

At the Public Breakfasts, Marquees were generally pitched in some chosen spot and a platform laid for Dancing. The Public were permitted to go and look at the Breakfast before hand, and to stand near enough to see the eating and dancing, one side of the Marquee being generally open, and His Majesty's loving subjects could enjoy the satisfaction of seeing their beloved Monarch draw a Drum-stick through his teeth, in which he seemed to delight, and hearing his call for 'Buttered Peas', and 'Moneymusk' to set the dancers in motion. Country Dances were the only ones then in vogue, but the Princesses never joined in them on these occasions.

Once a week the Royal party generally went for a sail. The Royal Yachts were in attendance for this purpose. There were three Frigates lying in the Roads for protection. These always accompanied the Royal Yachts. The King never seemed afraid of weather. The Queen and Princesses always wore dark blue Habits on these occasions, and I have often seen them look very miserable and bedraggled on their return

There were frequent Reviews, but not weekly, for the waste of life and powder was to be considered. I do not know if this was much thought of. With all this gaiety going on, it was no wonder that all who could flocked to Weymouth.

One year there was a rural fete given on Maiden Castle, a British Camp, close to Monkton where my uncle resided. I went to stay a few days at his house at this time. We walked, a party of

us, to the ground. Every regiment had a marquee pitched, with refreshments. The sports were: grinning through a horse-collar, jumping in sacks, catching a pig by the tail, which said tail had been previously shaved and greased, donkey racing, the last donkey to be the winner; rolls dipped in treacle suspended by strings to be devoured by boys with their hands tied behind them; diving for apples in a meal-tub; *Le mat du Coc* [greasy pole?]; women racing for under garments, with other rural sports made Royal for the occasion."

Elizabeth Ham also remembered the year that Cassandra Austen visited Weymouth, 1804, but not for its gaiety. She wrote in her diary: "Old Mr. Mansell and my brother John happened to be with us, when one morning very early the latter came and tapped at my father's door, which was close to mine, to tell him the French Fleet was off the coast. This I heard, and immediately began to dress. Mr. Mansell was disturbed by the noise and opening his door called out, 'What's the matter, John?' 'The French are landing in the West Bay,' he replied. 'Oh, d—m 'em; let's be at 'em,' said the old man hurrying on his clothes.

In a few minutes Drums were beating to arms. Officers galloping about in all directions. The horses being put to the Royal Carriages, and everybody standing at their doors asking everybody for news. Nothing more was known all this time but that under cover of a dense fog, the French were landing somewhere. That there was real cause for alarm no one could doubt, who witnessed the anxious looks of the hurrying Field Officers, and saw the Royal Carriages drawn up in front of Gloster Lodge, ready to start at a moment's notice. Still the fog hung its dense veil over the threatened mischief, and mystery and suspense added ten-fold force to the alarm. All that could be learnt was this. Soon after dawn some Portland fishermen had landed on that Island with the report that having been out looking after their nets they were lost in the fog. When all at once they found themselves in the midst of a large Fleet of armed ships. They pulled with all their might, and it was fortunately towards land. A certain Mr. Daniel who had recently purchased some stone-quarries in the Island, was awakened, and taking horse galloped to the Ferry and brought the news to Weymouth, declaring that the shots were making the pebbles fly about him as he rode along Chessel bank. Of course there were Sentinels stationed along the shore but as there was no attempt to land on that part up to nine or ten o'clock it was concluded that the Enemy was trying some other part of the Coast.

By this time troops of Yeomanry were galloping into the Town. Everybody still at their doors asking everybody for further news. About twelve o'clock the fog thought proper to lift up its awful curtain and to disclose to all eager eyes strained seaward, first the frigates and Royal Yachts with sails all set and ready for action, then a clear expanse of smooth unruffled water without another speck of canvas in sight. The French Fleet had vanished, 'and like the baseless fabric of a vision left not a wreck behind' ."

The mention of camps and parades reminds us that this was the height of the Napoleonic invasion scare - that a flotilla of troop-carrying barges was believed to be assembled in a French port - and that Jane's own brother Captain Francis Austen had been employed until May of that year in organizing a corps of 'sea fencibles' to defend the Coast around Ramsgate, and was now commanding a ship blockading Boulogne. The Georgians certainly did not allow this serious threat to their national security to interfere with their carefree enjoyment of life; indeed, one gains the impression that the military presence added a pleasantly patriotic spice to the other pleasures of the coastline for some people.

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Books and Book-Binding in Jane Austen's Time - Adele Shaak. May Meeting.

Most books were published as three-volume novels at this time: not separate books, but one divided into three sections (issued as three books for sale). All the work was done by hand - nothing mechanized until the 1820s. It was a long process taking, for example, about six months to cast the type for an average book. The publisher had to pay for all this work before any money came in. For this reason, the first volume was printed and sold, and that money could be used for the expenses of volume two, and so on.

Books were small - about "paper-back" size today. Not so many words were printed on a page then: *S&S* at first had 876 pages, with 200 words on a page (about half as many as it might have today). This was a marketing advantage: books were small, slim, easy to hold; a lady could sit and read in an elegant pose and place. For a good book, the leather was shaved paper-thin, not strong enough to hold a bigger book. The paper also was very thin. [In a special area of *MacLeod's Books* downtown, you can see examples of 18th and 19th century books].

The printing of a book was shared out to various printers, with the result that not all books were the same from store to store. All the sections went back to the central workshop, and then were bound together. Each section might be quite different from the others - this was accepted then, as we would not accept it today. The actual cutting of the sections also would be a bit different depending on where it was done.

The publisher published "stacks of paper" - he had to decide how many to bind: cheap for popular sale, some expensive for gift sales. The most expensive would be "Full calf leather with gold printing on the spine". These decisions would be made by the book-seller depending on his known market. A cheap paper binding was not intended to be permanent. It was only meant to get the books to the book-binder for a permanent binding. However, they could be purchased at this stage, and this was the cheapest way for the customer to buy a book.

Modern paper is very different from old papers. In Jane Austen's time, book paper was hand-made from linen or rags. After the 1850s, it was made from wood-pulp. There were few illustrations; later came woodcuts, and after about 1600, engravings. The period of Blake and Bewick was the age of beautiful engravings. After the end of the Napoleonic Wars, which held back printing and publishing progress, lithographs came in about the 1820s.

"Half-binding" - leather on the spine only, where needed for strength - was fairly cheap to do. Goat or calf skins of course are not rectangular. For a full binding, rectangles are cut out of the skin, and a lot of little pieces are left over, which can be used for half-bindings. Books were sold at a wide range of prices, mainly because of the binding. A good income might be £30 a year, but a book might cost 10s - half a pound.

Circulating Libraries were becoming popular at this time, and were a huge factor in book reading. It cost a member perhaps a penny a time to borrow a book. Any medium or larger town could support a circulating library, with perhaps a hundred or so books. Small towns formed book societies which bought books: each member had a set time to read a book and then pass it on. At first, publishers and book-sellers were alarmed at this custom, but actually the sale of books was greatly increased as the taste for reading became much more common.

Publishing by subscription was also a common way for an author to have work published. The subscriber would pay half the cost at first, and then pay the remainder later. This gave the publisher an initial amount of money to begin publishing and selling.

Adele gave us an excellent, fast-flowing talk, clear and interesting with lots of information, and delightful touches of humour.

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Educating Alice: Adventures of a Curious Woman. Alice Steinbach (2004).
(Reviewed by Eileen Sutherland).

The author admits to three great passions: learning, traveling and writing. In this book she has found a way to combine them: she traveled around the world as "an informal student", taking lessons in subjects that attracted her, in places that she found interesting.

In one chapter she describes studies as a culinary student in Paris: *Cooking at the Ritz*, "witnessing all the daily routines necessary to run a world-class hotel . . . The work was hard, the pace fast, the knives dangerous, the students serious." Outside of class, she explored the Right Bank neighbourhood: the sounds, sights, smells of quintessential Paris. She "accepted the French way of thinking, that there were only two ways to do something: a right way and a wrong way. This belief applied not only in their cuisine but in their architecture and manners and daily life as well. It was, she decided, the quality above all others that defined the French and made them who they are."

In a travel newsletter, Alice learned about an Association in Kyoto, Japan, whose purpose was to "introduce foreign visitors to Japanese culture in daily life." Lessons were arranged for her in origami, flower arranging, the tea ceremony, antiques appreciation, traditional dancing, and woodblock printmaking. In addition, she tried to find out what Japanese women's daily lives were like, how they felt about the role of women in Japan, "about geisha, old traditions that were dying out, marriage customs and child raising, and the spread of Western Culture into their country." She remembers that "a walk through Kyoto is a walk through more than ten centuries of Japanese history . . . I was learning to appreciate the value of the past and present existing side by side, MacDonald's golden arches just outside the large, glorious park surrounding the Imperial Palace."

Other chapters told of strolling through old and new Havana, studying Mediaeval churches in Florence, learning about Czech literature in Prague, trying to herd sheep with a young collie on a Scottish farm - (a failure, ending with the sheep huddled between a tree and the fence, and the young dog "creeping away, casting at me a look of deep disdain.")

But the chapter I enjoyed the most (of course) was Alice as "a pilgrim in search of a woman I'd never met but considered my friend, Jane Austen." Starting at Winchester, she went to find the house with a small plaque on the door where Jane Austen died. "I was watching Cassandra stand at this very door, her eyes following the coffin containing her beloved Jane being wheeled away from her, through College Street to Winchester Cathedral." As she strolled along, she realized she was "walking through Jane Austen's world. Most of the buildings and grounds were already centuries old when Jane arrived by carriage to 8 College Street. I was seeing now what she saw then."

At Exeter, she enrolled in a course, *The World of Jane Austen,* to discover "the understanding a contemporary reader of Jane Austen might have had." "The relationships between men and women, the antipathies between mothers and daughters, the role of women in a male-dominated society: with themes like these, was it any wonder that Jane Austen's novels spoke so effortlessly across the centuries to generations of readers? . . . Envy, pomposity, seduction, betrayal, love, loss, pride, prejudice, and my personal favorite, self-delusion - all these universal emotions are exposed by Jane in a way that is always insightful and sometimes makes us laugh. Partly, I think, because we see bits of ourselves in every character."

This is an interesting concept in travel writing, and has some fascinating insights into various cities and situations around the world.

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Readers' Reactions to *Persuasions* No. 26 - June Meeting.

Members were asked to describe and comment on various articles in the latest edition of *Persuasions*. **Jackie Johnson** presided.

Keiko Parker chose "Why Lyme Regis?" by Peter Graham, p.27. Why was this seaside town indispensable to *Persuasion?* The chapters about the excursion to Lyme Regis are at the exact centre of the novel. Anne's feelings and relationship to Captain Wentworth change at this point: before, she had been anxious to avoid crossing his path at Kellynch Hall. After meeting the Harvilles and Captain Benwick, Anne feels their unpretentious ease and domesticity: "these would have been my friends." Anne and Benwick discuss the romantic poetry of Scott and Byron. Anne realizes that the advice she gives to Captain Benwick - to read more "edifying prose" – was advice she should take herself.

On an early morning walk by the seaside, Anne's returning bloom and freshness of youth attracts the admiration of a stranger. Wentworth notices his reaction, and his heart is beginning to be moved. Later, Louisa's insistence on having her own way leads to her famous fall from the steps of the Cobb. In contrast, Anne displays strength of mind, calmness and common sense, directing the others to help Louisa, go for a doctor, and look after the fainting Mary. In this scene Wentworth unconsciously uses Anne's first name, rather than the social usage of "Miss Anne" or "Miss Elliot". Jane Austen demonstrates that she is capable of displaying plenty of passion if the reader looks for it. Back at Uppercross, Wentworth defers to Anne's opinions as to what they should do, and their relationship continues to develop.

Lyme Regis is not depicted as an ordinary seaside town. It is the place where Captain Wentworth and Anne appear at their best. It prepares Anne to turn her back on pretension, and look forward to joining the naval society of Captain Wentworth and his friends.

"Hands and Arms and Legs Enough" (Kay Souter, p.176) the article selected by **Laureen McMahon**, analyses "Sibling Dynamics" – the differences between first-born, middle, and later-born children in large families. This is a deep and interesting subject, what Jane Austen's novels are mainly about. Frank Sulloway did advanced research in 1996 about the efforts of children competing for parents' attention, seeking their own niche in the family. In Austen's time, families often had many children. Souter points out there is a difference between earlier and later novels: the Dashwood sisters detest their brother and sister-in-law; the Bennet girls express rage and humiliation towards the younger sisters, but not hatred. The Bertrams and the Prices indulge in conflicts over men and knives. What can explain the differences among children in one family? If the parents are not at all similar, the children will align with one or the other.

Jane came from a large extended family, and made use of this environment for her works. Her letters occasionally show exhaustion at "so many young relatives." Children compete for family resources, for example money and attention. Her novels are usually focused on the second-born or middle children (rather than the oldest or the youngest), who develop diplomatic skills, co-operation, and flexibility. The eldest child may become the head of the family: as a youngster he might be coddled, and subject to illness. The middle ones are peer-oriented, closely attached to each other, less likely to depend on parents in an emergency; they live their lives away from the family. Darcy (first-born) and Elizabeth (not first) make a good fit, have good characteristics from both types. Older ones are considered stuffy; the younger one, wild and frivolous.

We respond to Austen's novels. She understood how to depict characters as real families, with groups of siblings interacting with each other.

Ruth Nesbitt discussed "Jane Austen and History Revisited," by David Woolf (p.217). Woolf considers that Jane Austen did indeed have much to say about history. She was writing at a period of debate about the importance of history. Her near-contemporary, Mary Wollstonecraft, was interested in history, and felt that the study of history for women and men was important to prepare for civic life.

Jane Austen makes little reference to actual historical events in her novels. In her "Letters", however, early and recent history is often mentioned.Her first major heroine,Catherine Morland, complains that in most histories there is "too much invention." Her friend Eleanor is fond of history, but agrees that it is not always trustworthy - it is a good idea to read sceptically.

Characters' names in the novels sometimes remind us of historical personages: Fairfax, for instance, was a civil war parliamentary commander; Mansfield was a staunch opponent of slavery; Wentworth was the family name of several English noblemen.

Past attitudes to history by authors, scholars, poets, etc., are not uncommon. Jane Austen's complex views require us to read her works with an informed mind.

"Domestic Virtues of the Navy" by Elvira Casal (p.146) was reviewed by **Bev Gropen.** The author made many good points about Wentworth - seen through Anne's eyes. He went into the navy young, and he had no close women models. We hear of Anne breaking the engagement - Wentworth was also responsible, he had an immature, limited view of women. He still has this view later in the novel. He was very able in the navy, but only in the course of the novel does he mature. He feels women are frail, feeble, subject to weakness. He looks upon strength of character as willfulness, but in reality Louisa is willful, Anne is strong. His sister Mrs. Croft tries to mould his opinions and actions, but has no luck doing so. The accident at Lyme was a harrowing experience. If it had happened at sea, he would have been capable and strong; here he realizes his judgment was at fault, and he must re-assess his attitudes towards Anne, and their future together.

"Persuasion and the Spa", by Sally Palmer (p.111), was the article considered by **Viviane McClelland**. She felt the opening paragraphs were not inviting, but the piece improves and even becomes an entertaining and interesting article. Jane Austen lived in Bath, and hated it; Anne Elliot also detested the thought of going to Bath, but she emerges at the end healed in spirit. Other characters in *Persuasion* also benefited by the healing waters of the Spa: Admiral Croft came to be treated for his gout; Mary Musgrove feels the benefit to her spirits and enjoys the gaiety; Mrs.Smith finds "a spring of felicity" in Bath. The spa had been the source of miraculous cures since Roman times. The curative effects of the traditional regimens prescribed by doctors - drinking the waters, sensible diet, and refreshing exercise, paralleled Anne's activities in Bath, and she begins a new life of felicity.

Sandy Lundy picked an article from Vol.24, p.33: "Beckford, Godwin and Austen," by Kenneth Graham, for her report. Graham wrote of two men of the 1790s, Godwin and Beckford, regarded as scoundrels, and their possible effects on *Northanger Abbey* and *Emma.* The period of the 1790s was one of political and philosophical ferment.War in France, the Reign of Terror, the Napoleonic Wars, were followed by a conservative reaction, when the "open society' was closed. The 1790s' repressive measures and restrictions contributed to later Victorian attitudes.

Beckford was very wealthy, his fortune based on sugar, molasses, rum and slaves, but his conduct made him a pariah in his lifetime. He built a fabulous neo-Gothic palace, Fonthill Abbey, but was shunned socially. Sandy showed *Country Life* illustrations of Fonthill. Godwin, author of *Political Justice*, challenged the restrictive ideas of the gentry, the church, and the

government. Increasingly, the reviews of his writings considered him seditious, and attacked and distorted almost everything he wrote.

The influence of the repressions of the 1790s can perhaps be found in Jane Austen's depiction of her two abbeys: Northanger and Donwell. Northanger (in the early novel) has been clumsily modernized; Donwell, in *Emma*, twenty years later, is a harmony of past and present. General Tilney is an encloser: the view from Henry's parsonage is of "an empty cottage" due for destruction. The view from Knightley's Donwell is of a prosperous farm.

The programme was a session of interesting talks on the *Persuasions* articles. The speakers did not merely quote from the pieces chosen, but gave personal interpretations and evaluations of what the author had to say. Now we'll go back to *Persuasion*s and read it again with pleasure and new insights.

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Jane Austen's Descriptions.

"It is impossible to conceive a more perfect piece of village geography, a scene more absolutely real than Highbury, with Ford's shop in the High Street, and Miss Bates's rooms opposite, the parlour on the first floor, with windows from which you can see all that is going on, and, indeed, call to your friends down below, and hold conversations with them. And the vicarage lane at one end of the town, which is muddy, and where the young vicar from his study can see the young ladies passing on their way to their cottage pensioners, and has time to get his hat and umbrella and join them as they come back. And Hartfield, with its pretty shrubberies, standing well out of the town, a dignified conclusion for the walks of the ladies, whom Mr. Woodhouse is so glad to see; and Randalls, farther on, with its genial sanguine master, and the happy, quiet, middle-aged wife, who has been Emma's governess, and is still 'poor Miss Taylor' to Emma's father.

Nothing could be more easy than to make a map of it, with indications where the London road strikes off, and by which turning Frank Churchill, on his tired horse, will come from Richmond. We know it as well as if we had lived there all our lives and visited Miss Bates every other day." . . .

"Miss Bates, no doubt, is a person we would fly from in dismay did she live in our village; and had she belonged in the *P&P* period, no doubt she would have been as detestable as she was amusing. But other lights have come to the maturer eyes, and the endless flutter of talk, the never-ending still-beginning monologue, the fussy, wordy, indiscreet, uninteresting old maid is lighted up with a soft halo from the heart within. Instead of impaling her on the end of her spear, like Mr. Collins or Mrs. Bennet, her author turns her outside in with an affectionate banter - a tender amusement which changes the whole aspect of the picture. It is not that the fun is less, or the keenness of insight into all the many manifestations of foolishness, but human sympathy has come in to sweeten the tale, and the brilliant intellect has found out, somehow, that all the laughable beings surrounding it - beings so amusingly diverse in their inanity and unreason - are all the same mortal creatures with souls and hearts within them." . . .

"Mr. Collins . . . is one of the most distinct and original portraits in the great gallery of fiction, and we accept him gladly as a real contribution to our knowledge of human-kind; not a contribution certainly which will make us more in love with our fellow-creatures, but yet so lifelike, so perfect and complete, touched with so fine a wit and so keen a perception of the ridiculous, that the picture once seen remains a permanent possession."

"Miss Austen and Miss Mitford", (anon.),
Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, March 1870.

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Bath gives way to Ireland!

We can imagine what chagrin the worthy burghers of Bath are feeling: the latest TV serialisation of Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* is to be filmed entirely in Ireland. Tax breaks won out over authenticity, and not for the first time. The films *The Tudors* and *Becoming Jane* were also done in Ireland.

Irish producer James Flynn considers that "Ireland lends itself well to period dramas such as Jane Austen, with its big estates and country gardens." Buildings that can double for Bath have already been identified in Dublin and other Irish cities, and on Georgian estates nearby.

Certainly it is obvious that "the public's appetite for Austen has not waned." ITV's 2007 season will also include *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion,* and the BBC will air an adaptation of *Sense and Sensibility* in 2007. [From *The Sunday Times*, thanks to Mary Atkins

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List of Expenses, 1810.

"In 1810, the London compositors, probably the highest-paid of all artisans, submitted a claim to their employers for an increase in view of the rising cost of living. Their wages at that time varied, according to whether they were engaged on reprint or manuscript work, from £1 17s. 6d. to £2 0s. 9d. a week. In order to substantiate their claim for higher wages, they compiled a typical weekly budget for a compositor, his wife and (small) family of two children:

		s.	d.
Rent, per week		6	0
Bread and flour, 5 quarterns		6	9 ¼
Meat, 14 lbs. at 9d. per lb.		10	6
Butter, 2 lb. at 1s. 4d. per lb.		2	8
Cheese, 1 lb.			11
Porter, 3 pints per day		4	4 ½
Candles, 1 ½ lb.		1	7 ½
Coals (average price) 1 bushel		1	9
Soap, starch and blue			9
Tea, ¼ lb. at 7s. per lb.		1	9
Sugar, 2 lb. at 9d per lb.		1	6
Vegetables		1	6
Milk			7
Pepper, salt, vinegar, etc.			6
Clothing, shoes and mending		4	0
Schooling, books, etc.		1	6
Benefit Society			10.
	£2	7s.	6 ¼ d.
Average earnings.	£1	19s.	2 ½ d.

This was affluence approaching middle-class standards. The heavy expenditure on meat, rent and clothes, and the inclusion of items for education and insurance, are particularly interesting."

Plenty and Want: John Burnett, (1966).

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Esther Birney. 1908 - 2006.

We regret to announce the recent death of our long-time member, Esther Birney. She was born in England, but in 1936 she emigrated to Canada, and studied Social Science at the University of Toronto. She worked as a social worker in Toronto and later in Vancouver. She was intensely interested in literature and music. Esther was a faithful member of JASNA Vancouver until illness and advanced age prevented her attending the meetings. We shall long remember her insightful comments and witty additions to our discussions. A celebration of life will be held later at Brock House.

"Characters" Book Tokens.

"Thank you to everybody who purchased a "Characters" token. We raised $130.00 from books left over from the jumble sale and in addition were given a donation of book credit worth $50.00 from the estate of Donna Laws, thanks to the generosity of Donna's sister Barbara. Donna was an enthusiastic member of JASNA for several years before her death last year. The combined amount of $180.00 has been added to the AGM fund. Thank you again to everybody who contributed. I hope that you all enjoyed your visits to "Characters." - Rae Fraser.

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"One odd fact should be kept in mind about literary representation in England in the decades surrounding 1800. Austen lived in an age of repression of freedoms of expression that we now unfortunately take for granted. Writing was seldom free, and the lists of writers harassed, imprisoned or exiled in the England of Austen's maturity shows that liberties taken were sometimes dearly purchased. As the struggle with France intensified, indirection was more often the order of the day, and we have only recently realised that the obscurities of William Blake's allegories may be attributed as much to his awareness of the watchful eyes of government censors, as to his indubitable (and manifold) idiosyncrasies. Austen's earliest work on *Sense and Sensibility* coincided with the treason trials of John Horne Tooke, Thomas Hardy, John Thelwall and others in 1794, the failure of which led to the two "Gagging Acts" of 1795, which severely restricted freedoms of speech and assembly. Topics (and habits) of silence and secrecy, so pervasive in Austen's novel, come easily in an age of counter-revolution."

Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, Gene W. Ruoff, 1992, p.11.

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