

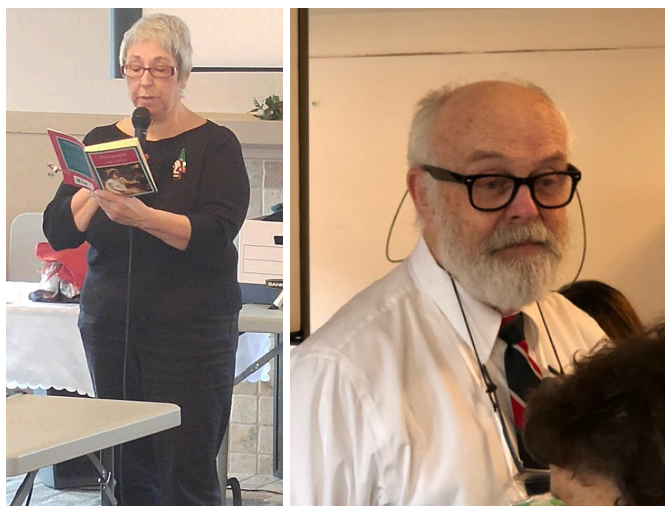
Muse & Musings

"The company of clever, well-informed people, who have a great deal of conversation"

December Meeting

Ivan Sayers, Fashion Historian

On December 15, Ivan Sayers spoke to our group on fashion in Jane Austen's time. The meeting also featured our customary enhanced potluck lunch with birthday cake, as well as a prize draw which raised \$212.



Carole Wylie did the reading; Ivan Sayers

Ivan Sayers is a collector and curator of historical fashion who specializes in the study of women's, men's, and children's fashions from 1650 to the present. Ivan has collected period costumes for more than 50 years and now has one of the largest and most comprehensive private collections of historical clothing in Canada. He commonly jokes that his collection is so vast, he sleeps in the dining-room of his three-bedroom home.

Ivan is a long-time resident of Vancouver, who graduated from UBC in 1969 with a BA in Classical studies. He worked at the Vancouver Museum from 1970 to 1990 and was its Curator of History from 1976 to 1990. Ivan has received awards from the Western Canadian Designers and Fashion Association and the Vancouver Historical Society; he was given a distinguished service award by the BC Museum Association in October 2010. He is the Honorary Curator of the Society of Museum of Original Costume whose mandate it is to establish a museum of clothing and textiles in the lower mainland. In May of 2015 Ivan was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Laws

Degree by Kwantlen Polytechnic University. In September 2016 Ivan was honoured by the Museum of Vancouver with the distinction of Curator Emeritus.



Birthday cake and assorted goodies; prizes for the draw.

Ivan now produces Historical Fashion shows and Museum exhibits across Western and central North America and is a popular speaker and lecturer at several local universities and colleges.

— information assembled by Joan Reynolds

See more pictures on the last page.

From Eileen's Archive

Newsletter #84 November, 2003

"To see oursels as ithers see us!" (Robert Burns)

Speaking at the Scottish Cultural Centre last November, Sharon Alker, in "Marketing Caledonia: Scottish Culture in Eighteenth Century London." Discussed "Scottishness." From the beginning to the end of the century, an Englishman's view of Scottish culture changed tremendously, from looking at a Scot as a caricature to a marketable fashion icon. London booksellers and publishers welcomed books with a Scottish slant: even in books with English themes, Scottish heroes, Scottish characters and Scottish travel stories were common.



There were lots of nasty thoughts against the Scots, but also many expressions of good feeling, trying to view Scottishness in more complex, positive terms than in previous eras, as in Shakespeare's depiction of Macbeth, for example.



The change began in the early 18th century, with the passage of the Act of Union. Cheap pamphlets were put out aimed at ordinary people, using the language of reason. In Scotland there was great discontent with the Union: armed uprisings were put down, and political and military clashes broke out in many parts of the country. In London, the people were curious about the Scots. Writers of "True Histories" and "Romances" used Scottish characters, as in *The Agreeable Caledonian* by Eliza Haywood. The nationality of the characters, however, didn't influence the plot or affect the interpretation.

Certain attributes were commonly given to Scottish characters: they had supernatural powers; they were intelligent and honourable, noted for courage and loyalty, and for a roguish good-heartedness – Rob Roy, an outlaw and cattle raider, came to be considered as a kind of Robin Hood. The characters in the books were not realistic, but showed a multi-complexity. Readers, however, generally had to look hard to find much Scottishness in publications in publications at this time. James Thomson's popular poem *Seasons* (1793), had brief references to Scotland: "the craggy cliff . . . on utmost Kilda's shore;" "the Atlantic surge pours in among the stormy Hebrides;" and "Caledonia['s] airy mountains, . . . fertile vales . . . , nurse of a people, . . . a manly race, of unsubmitting spirit, wise and brave."

As the century wore on, the language used in England about the Scots moderated. There was continuing dissension and painful tensions, but pamphlets were published looking at the good side, too, favourable to the Scots. Smollett's *Roderick Random* was a very popular work; the hero was representative of Scots in England. It seemed possible to have a positive relationship between England

and Scotland – there was really no difference between them.

In the last decades of the century, there were allegations that Scottish political figures were trying to take over the British Parliament, but overwhelmingly the attitude to Scots was truly positive. The Anglo-Scottish relationship was only one of several issues being challenged; class, feminism, slavery, etc. In a host of novels published between 1780 – 1790, English-, Irish-, and Scottishness were considered as part of the present, not the past; the relationship was used to persuade readers of the author's political views. Robert Bage's Scottish hero in *Mount Henneth* is an intelligent humorous professional man. Maria Edgeworth's *Moral Tales* has Scottish middle-class characters who are cultivated, civilized, intelligent and courteous. It is interesting to see English writers considering Scots as virtuous, intelligent arbiters of civilization.

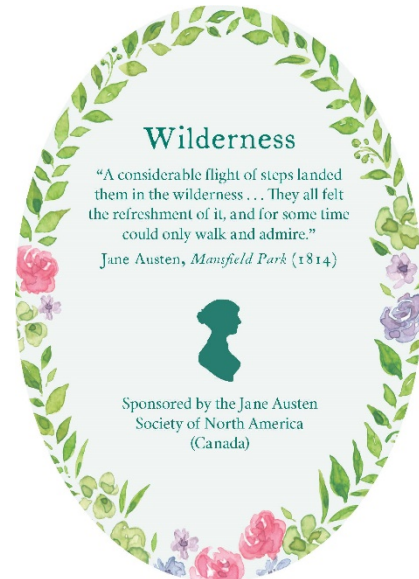
Sharon's talk was interesting, lively and packed with information.

– by Eileen Sutherland (2003)

In honour of Burns Day, January 25th

Chawton House

JASNA (Canada) sponsors the Wilderness



JASNA (Canada) now "owns" the Wilderness at Chawton House! At the 2018 AGM in Kansas City, Janine Barchas, President of North American Friends of Chawton House, was selling sponsorship rights to various parts of the Chawton House Garden for a donation of £1,000 (US\$1,300). Spots were going fast. Your JASNA (Canada) Board acted quickly to claim the Wilderness, a decision later confirmed by our members at the Business Meeting. We are now unveiling the plaque that will be placed in the Wilderness in the Chawton House Garden.

– Elaine Bander, President JASNA (Canada)

The Female Spectator

Chawton House has put additional issues of its magazine *The Female Spectator* on its website. There are some very good articles about women writers of the 18th century, among other things. They have posted issues between 1995 and 2017. From 2018 onward they are publishing only one issue per year.

<https://chawtonhouse.org/the-library/the-female-spectator/>

– Joan Reynolds

From Our Library

Fashion in the Time of Jane Austen by Sarah Jane Downing



In December Ivan Sayers was our guest speaker and he referred several times to this book, which is in our library, and which I would recommend to anyone with an interest in the clothing and fashion of this period. It is a short, easy read with many photos and drawings to illustrate the different fashions. As well, there are many quotes from both Jane Austen's personal writings and her fiction to illustrate her interest in the subject.

As the book's author writes: "Jane's works seem very conventional from a twenty-first century perspective, as do the fashions, but taking the time frame of Jane's major writing period from 1791 to her death in 1817, this book will show that it is a unique moment in fashion, unparalleled in its daring nudity, cropped hair and masculine styling until the jazz age nearly a century later."

The first chapter outlines the historical and social setting of the time which allowed London to replace Paris as the fashion capital of Europe. The author then goes on to describe the clothing fashions of this period, which were influenced by wars and the military, revolution, democracy, neoclassicism, the new textile technology and the new wealthy industrialists and merchants who wished to assert their position in society. As Ivan Sayers explained, for women, this period saw the transition from

the wide hooped silhouette to the slim, vertical silhouette with rising waistlines and simpler fabrics like muslin. For men, Beau Brummell set the fashion standard, as this book describes.

My favourite chapter, entitled "Reticule and Ridicule," discusses women's accessories of this period. For example, in previous centuries skirts had been large enough to conceal small bags in their folds, but with the slender lines and diaphanous muslin of the 1800's this was no longer possible. Thus the reticule (small handbag, originally of netting but later made from various fabrics) became the most popular accessory of 1800. The 1790s saw the rise of Oriental turbans topped by ostrich feathers which were a nod to Napoleon's Egypt Campaign. The scanty gowns worn by women were frequently chilly, and so gave rise to the shawl which added elegance and warmth to the outfit without concealing the line of the outfit or the figure wearing it, both very important elements to remain visible. Also discussed in this chapter are parasols, fans, stockings and shoes. I found this a very interesting and enjoyable read.

– Cathleen Boyle, librarian

Spring 2019 meeting dates

Mark your calendar!

March 2	Nova Scotia member author Sheila
Note change of date!	Kindred "Presenting Fanny Palmer: Jane Austen's Transatlantic Sister"
April 13	Jane Austen Day
May 11	Panel of aunts in Jane Austen
June 15	Books & Berries (and Book Sale)

For fuller and more up-to-date information, please see the program of events on our website:

[JASNA-Vancouver program](#)

RC's Corner: Michelle Siu

Happy year of the pig!



First, allow me to express best wishes to you for a prosperous year ahead, may it be filled with much to learn and love about our Jane.

JA Day April 13

Our programming committee held our winter planning meeting just a week ago, and we have an exciting Spring program. Keep an eye out for our tickets sales to start for Jane Austen Day on April 13 this year. And keep your

calendars open and watch for details about a possible evening activity at Metro Theatre.

Volunteers

If you are an early bird, we need your help! Before our meetings can start we are in need of members to help with setup of the room. More helping hands make light work of placing chairs and tables in the right spots. If you can join these helpers, please show up at St Philip's before 9:45am.

We also need someone to share the responsibility for setting up the registration table: arriving early and bringing a bag of displays and forms to be set on the table near the entrance. There is already one assistant (thank you, Carole Wylie!) but need a second person to share the responsibility. Please see Michelle if you would be willing to help.

If you have programming suggestions, please approach me at our meetings or email me at:

JASNAvancouverRC@gmail.com



Two kinds of Regency shoes; a dedicated crew of early arrivers set up the room.



Left: Detail of an Indian lace shawl. **Middle:** Ivan's models plus new member Julia VanDelft (in red). The cream dress in the middle is an Edwardian "Regency Revival" probably from 1911 or 1912. **Right:** Regency spencer (lady's short jacket), gentleman's coat and waistcoat.

Photos by Isobel Wilson, Azarm Akhavian and possibly others

This Newsletter, the publication of the Vancouver Region of the Jane Austen Society of North America, is distributed to members by email and posted on our website. Members who so request may receive a hard copy either at a meeting or in the mail. All submissions and book reviews on the subject of Jane Austen, her life, her works and her times, are welcome.

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