

Muse & Musings

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

Spring Greetings from our RC

Michelle Siu

Spring greetings to our members. Our world has changed in ways that none of us could have ever predicted. I trust you, dear member, may not tire of a book as quickly as Caroline Bingley and so have plenty to help you pass the hours. I send my sincerest wishes that you and your loved ones are safe and healthy, perhaps finding small joys inside while the world has stopped its hustle and bustle.

It was early in March when the news about COVID slowly rolled out, as government officials came to us via television and radio to tell we needed to be cautious, that the illness was spreading quickly, and everyone including our little group had to take action. With heavy heart I cancelled our March meeting, along with other JASNA regions across the continent. Days it took me to understand the idea that letting our members meet in person was taking risks, was a danger to others. I am proud of the fact that from that moment and to this day, we can look to the capable leadership in B.C. and Canada to set the guidelines that will lead us out of the pandemic.

It is very little that is asked of most of us. To keep physical distance from our neighbours, friends and family. To reduce our travel outside the home. To commit to (not doing) such small things so that we might save lives. A sombre consequence to our collective small actions.



Michelle at the advance screening of *Emma* in February.

But let me end this reflection with Jane Austen. How incredulous Jane would be to know that her own small actions, her writings, which she described as "the little bit (two Inches wide) of Ivory on which I work with so fine a Brush, as produces little effect after much labour," would have made an immeasurable mark on the world. I hope when we meet again at the end of our own small task that we will feel proud to have made a change in the fate of the world.



Jennifer, Marjorie, Janice and Phyllis at the February meeting.

February 15th Meeting

"She said yes"

The February meeting was a panel discussion about the marital decisions of two Jane Austen characters: Charlotte Lucas, who married Mr. Collins in *Pride and Prejudice*; and Jane Fairfax, who married Frank Churchill in *Emma*. There were four panelists, one pro and one anti for each match. Jane and Frank were defended by Janice Mallison, while Marjorie Johnson disapproved. Charlotte's champion was Phyllis Ferguson while her naysayer was Jennifer Bettiol. After the presentations a lively debate ensued. Jennifer has provided a write-up of her presentation, and as with the Aunts who showed up in previous issues, we will publish the other presentations in future issues.

It is a truth universally acknowledged that Charlotte Lucas was a fool to accept Mr. Collins

Elizabeth Bennet might have composed – then destroyed – a letter such as the following in the hope of persuading her dear friend, Charlotte Lucas, to decline Mr. Collins' offer.

My dear Charlotte,

During our long friendship, you have always been thought the rational one, while I have often let my warmer emotions rule my actions. Therefore, it astonished me to hear that my wise friend has chosen to disregard that august saying, "Marry in haste, repent in leisure."

While I know that you desire an establishment of your own, dear Charlotte, think with whom you must share

your days ... and your nights! Is your life at home so dreadful – is your father too amiable – that you need to throw reason away and take up housekeeping with a “conceited, pompous, narrow-minded, silly man.”

You say you are “not romantic” and that “happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance.” While you preach that it is “better to know as little as possible of the defects of the person with whom you are to pass your life,” surely you must have already discerned many of Mr. Collins’s faults?



Charlotte played by Lucy Scott and Mr. Collins played by David Bamber from the 1995 P&P

Are you willing to sacrifice your “principle,” “integrity” and “prudence” for nothing more than a pretty parsonage? Recall that your life and livelihood will be at the whim of Mr. Collins’ patroness. While I have not met Lady Catherine de Bourgh, I doubt she would condescend to be a true friend to a mere country rector and his wife.

Yes, one day you will replace my mother as the lady of Longbourn House. However, your future comfort will depend upon your foolish husband producing an heir who has enough sense to provide for you after his father is gone.

Charlotte, our own dear author accepted a family friend [Harris Bigg-Wither] one night, only to change her mind the very next morning. Obviously, she understood that the impoverished life of an old maid, with its reliance on family generosity, was better than being bound to a man she could not respect. My dear friend, it is not too late for you to change your mind. But if you do not, “you [will] have made your bed” and then you must “lie in it.”

Therefore, if you are willing to marry Mr. Collins because you have high regard for him or you are willing to marry him solely for “worldly advantage” and a “comfortable home,” either way, Charlotte, you will have “sunk in [my] esteem.”

While I pray to never address you as “cousin,” I remain your dear friend,

Elizabeth Bennet

– Jennifer Bettiol

“I have had the small-pox and must therefore submit to my unhappy fate.”

Lesley Castle - Letter the Tenth

As in all pandemics, we hope for the development of a vaccine to protect us once and for all. When Jane Austen was born, smallpox was a disfiguring and often killer disease. Her close friend, and later sister-in-law Martha Lloyd bore the scars from catching the disease as a child. During Jane’s lifetime, Edward Jenner was to discover the process of vaccinating against smallpox, and his discovery led to people in ordinary walks of life carrying out community vaccination programs. One such program was carried out by Jane’s friend, Mrs. Anne Lefroy.

Edward Jenner and vaccination against smallpox

Like any other doctor of the time, Edward Jenner carried out variolation (inoculation with smallpox virus) to protect his patients from smallpox. In May 1796 a dairymaid, Sarah Nelmes, consulted Jenner about a rash on her hand. He diagnosed cowpox rather than smallpox and Sarah confirmed that one of her cows, a Gloucester cow called Blossom, had recently had cowpox.



Edward Jenner and Mrs. Anne Lefroy

Edward Jenner realised that this was his opportunity to test the protective properties of cowpox by giving it to someone who had not yet suffered smallpox. He chose James Phipps, the eight-year old son of his gardener. On 14th May he made a few scratches on one of James’ arms and rubbed into them some material from one of the pocks on Sarah’s hand. A few days later James became mildly ill with cowpox but was well again a week later. So Jenner knew that cowpox could pass from person to person as well as from cow to person. The next step was to test whether the cowpox would now protect James from smallpox. On 1st July Jenner variolated the boy. As Jenner anticipated, and undoubtedly to his great relief, James did not develop smallpox, either on this occasion or on the many subsequent ones when his immunity was tested again.

Jenner followed up this experiment with many others. In 1798 he published all his research into smallpox in a book entitled “An Inquiry into the Causes and Effects of the Variolae Vaccinae; a Disease Discovered in some of the Western Counties of England, Particularly Gloucestershire, and Known by the Name of The Cow Pox.” In each of the next two years he published the results of further experiments, which confirmed his original theory that cowpox did indeed protect against smallpox. Doctors all over Europe soon adopted Jenner’s innovative technique, leading to a drastic decline in new sufferers of the devastating disease.

Mrs Lefroy and her vaccination work

As the wife of the Rector of Ashe, Mrs Anne Brydges Lefroy, great friend to Jane Austen, was expected to take the lead in promoting the education of parish children. This she did through setting up a Sunday school, where she taught village children the basics of reading, writing, Scripture and useful skills such as knitting and sewing. Shortly after Edward Jenner developed a cowpox vaccine for smallpox, Anne received ‘vaccine material’ from him, and, along with neighbours such as Wither Bramston, used it, each winter, in a program of vaccinating people in the surrounding areas. She wrote to Christopher Edward in February 1803:

“I am now again very busy in Cowpox inoculation as the Smallpox is in many of the Villages around us the common people are all now eager to be secured from infection. Mr. Bramston inoculated 140 in one day & numbers of those whom I inoculated last year & the year before have been employed in attending their neighbours who have the Smallpox & not one has had the least symptom of having taken the infection.”

– Joan Reynolds

Sources: The Jenner Museum; Wikipedia; The letters of Mrs. Lefroy, Jane Austen’s beloved Friend: Jane Austen Society 2007.

A Journal of the Plague Year Or Fun during Quarantine

Should you have spare time on your hands (!), you may enjoy any of the following items from the web:

To view:

“Dress in the Age of Jane Austen” If you have 45 minutes to spare, this is a wonderful talk by Hilary Davidson, describing her research for her recently published book. The presentation includes the most beautiful slides that illuminate her presentation, and which were not included in the book. Well worth setting some time aside to watch and enjoy. (DAR Museum lecture March 10, 2020)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G80nwTRjw4&fbclid=IwAR2-C6T8SsIJINwq_qbMUjFQdHfepWmFb80g6cxTb1ixOk9Qt2IHAsNo

“Jane Austen vs Emily Brontë: The Queens of English Literature Debate” An oldie but a goodie: John Mullan rooting for Jane Austen against Kate Mosse advocating on behalf of Emily Brontë – supported by the authors’ readings from such thespians as Samuel West and Dominic West. This debate is two hours long, so one needs to pace oneself with appropriate refreshment, perhaps over two or three sessions. Originally aired in 2014 but not to be missed if you are a Janeite.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mP8dlITkpEg>

Facebook Canada and the National Arts Centre Canada will live stream “One Man *Pride and Prejudice*, Part 1,” on April 18 at 7 pm Pacific.

<https://www.facebook.com/CanadasNAC.CNaduCanada/>

“Getting Dressed” –Jane Austen and her sister Cassandra Austen help to dress each other in the Regency fashions of 1810. Of especial interest for those who remember the past presentations made to our group by Melanie Talkington and Ivan Sayers. This clip lasts about five minutes:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0W36w-PT9ic&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR2Fe5HpYyGkgW5ZDtGO_KDTJMIWN2Xg3Zk73UKXaGnbo_pXjhqmRJUrLo

A seven-minute narrated tour of Lyme Park, the home that stood in for Pemberley in the BBC production of *Pride and Prejudice*. This production provides some beautiful shots of the home, its interiors as well as the history of the Legh family who were the owners of Lyme Park for over six hundred years.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lsPcqCRPcC0&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR2G-YOve3V7WWcvjKFzdDMpgyxwewsKH2v1Brs0L7Ucut1w6wM5VwSZP-Y>

To listen to:



Richard Armitage and Daniela Denby-Ashe in *North & South*

Richard Armitage reads chapter one of *The Jane Austen Society*, a new book by Natalie Jenner

https://soundcloud.com/orionbooks/the-jane-austen-society-by-natalie-jenner-read-by-richard-armitage?fbclid=IwAR32AjM860D8FGFij86O91KRY9TfVQOLoOG_F-iZI87aRY6xROzSHX2A5M6



Matthew Macfadyen in P&P 2005

Matthew Macfadyen reads the first proposal passage from *Pride and Prejudice*:

Part one

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XGmCZnliYmg>

Part two

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mOspkI3ySZg>

To read:

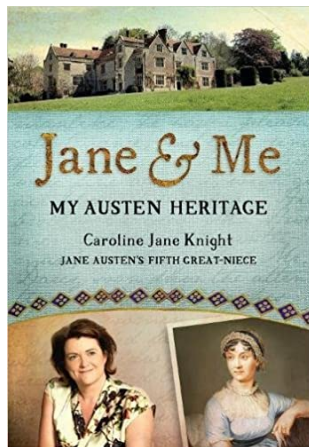
The Spring 2020 edition of *Persuasions on-line* is now available for reading:

<http://jasna.org/publications/persuasions-online/volume-40-no-2/>

If you have the fortitude to read about plagues, the BBC has some recommendations:

<http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20200413-what-can-we-learn-from-pandemic-fiction>

To browse (shop!):



Chawton House now has online sales from its gift shop. Browse a selection of bespoke souvenirs, gifts, books and accessories and show your support of Chawton House via the art of shopping. Shipping is free to UK addresses and priced according to item size and weight for international orders. Total costs will be calculated at checkout.

<https://chawtonhouse.org/shop/?fbclid=IwAR1CUYzyUVvlt6oqYdwf60SQLCYpoRzC6Ngs0bqGnKHXPPZyEKc7Usq50Ww>

– Joan Reynolds

Between Art and Quarantine Challenge

The Editor of this publication (with her esteemed spouse) decided to join a challenge seen on the Internet to re-enact a famous painting. Being in possession of a green dressing gown and of a brass chandelier (as well as a small stuffed dog and two pairs of sandals), we chose the *Arnolfini Portrait* by Jan van Eyck (1438). Labouring under the handicap of photographing with a propped-up cell phone on a ten-second timer, we came up with this:



If you can see only one pair of sandals in the original painting, I give you this:



The signature on the wall (Johannes van Eyck was here):



And my version (quite invisibly posted up on the blind):

Johannes van Eyck was not here

We challenge one and all to try any famous painting you like. The most popular seems to be *The Girl with the Pearl Earring* by Vermeer; *Lady with an Ermine* by Leonardo and many self-portraits by Frida Kahlo are also very popular. For inspiration see the *Museum News* Facebook page and there are literally thousands on Instagram. Toilet paper and cleaning products are common themes as well as a lot of cross-dressing; but there are many meticulous and absolutely spectacular re-creations.

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/MuseumNews/photos/>

<https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/tussenkunstenquarantaine/>

<https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/betweenartandquarantine/>

<https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/gettymuseumchallenge/>

– Elspeth Flood

Eleanor Jackson

The Second Mrs. Henry Austen

Review of an article by Angela Barlow, Jane Austen Society Report 2018 – published July 2019

The Jane Austen Society



Report for 2018

One of the benefits of membership in the UK's Jane Austen Society is receiving their annual report. This is not so large a volume as JASNA's journal *Persuasions*, but full of very interesting material all the same. As with *Persuasions* there are always one or two outstanding articles that are not available to read anywhere else. The cover at left shows a

portrait of Jane Porter, a contemporary fellow-author of Jane Austen who lived in Bath at the same time, and illustrates an article by Devoney Looser, who is writing a book on Porter.

This issue also had an article written by the Austen devotee, author, and actress Angela Barlow. She writes about the little-known Eleanor Jackson, Henry Austen's second wife, married during his "second life" as a parson. Henry had previously been married to Eliza de Feuillide, Jane Austen's glamorous and flirtatious cousin and during his time with Eliza, Henry enjoyed a busy and dynamic career as a banker, living in London in relative prosperity, owning a carriage, attending parties and plays, as well as handling Jane Austen's dealings with her publisher. Becoming a country parson was quite the career change.

Eleanor Jackson was the niece of the Reverend John Rawstorn Papillon (who had been suggested as a suitable match for Jane Austen by Mrs. Knight in 1808). Although dogged by inferior health and severe arthritis throughout most of her life, Eleanor was married to Henry for 30 years, and lived another 18 years after his death. She was considered an excellent wife to Henry by Cassandra Austen. In fact, it was Cassandra who gave Eleanor Jane's turquoise ring just prior to her marriage to Henry in 1820, and it was Eleanor who, a year before her own death, gave Jane's ring to Caroline Austen with a handwritten note that provided evidence of its provenance:

My dear Caroline, the enclosed Ring once belonged to your Aunt Jane. It was given to me by your Aunt Cassandra as soon as she knew that I was engaged to your Uncle. I bequeath it to you. God bless you!

Your affectionate Eleanor Austen

When Eleanor became engaged to Henry she was 24 years old and living at home in comfortable circumstances, whereas Henry was a bankrupt of 50 with just a modest clergyman's stipend. Obviously, Henry's massive charm was still in evidence, but they had known each other for years before, and Eleanor's own father had had a similarly financially devastating experience when Eleanor had been very young. It could be that she sympathised with Henry's financial situation, saw him as a victim of unfortunate circumstances and that given time and the right support, he would be able to successfully "re-trench." The famous portrait of Henry Austen in middle-age was painted the year of his marriage to Eleanor. Their union seemed very happy. Henry said of her that she was "one dearer to me than life, and for whose comfort I am solicitous beyond my own existence."

Henry and Eleanor started married life at Steventon Rectory and he, like his father, took in pupils to supplement his income. This practice continued when two-and-a-half years later he and Eleanor moved to Farnham parsonage and parish. A year later he took on the additional position of School's Master at the local grammar school – but money was still tight. Henry, however, said that he and Eleanor were determined to live "very quietly and frugally."

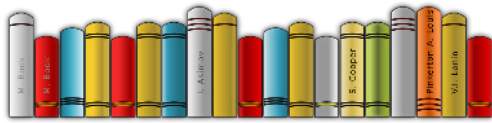


Left: Jane Austen's turquoise ring was given to Eleanor by Cassandra and by Eleanor to Jane's niece Caroline; **Right:** portrait of Henry Austen (ca. 1820). Both items are now held by Jane Austen's House Museum, Jane Austen Memorial Trust.

Like Henry's first marriage, he and Eleanor were childless, but Eleanor was an active, supportive clergyman's wife, accompanying Henry on his parish rounds despite her infirmity – by middle age she was periodically using a wheelchair. She also seemed very sensible with money and after Henry died in 1850, endeavoured to make early settlement of his still outstanding debts and managed to arrange her own financial affairs to allow for a relatively secure, albeit modest widowhood. Eleanor died from bronchitis in early May 1864 aged sixty-eight and is buried in Bath where she was residing.

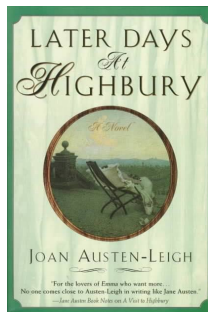
I found it interesting to read about this little-known player in the Austen family. From the little we know of her (one letter and one note) she was intelligent, quick witted,

tolerant and liked by the Austen family members. Angela Barlow has done a very thorough piece of research on her and has made clearer how Henry Austen made the transition from successful man-about-town to a country parson. (If anyone would like to borrow my copy the Report to read Angela Barlow's account in full, please let me know.)
— Joan Reynolds



Library Corner

Later Days at Highbury by Joan Austen-Leigh



Later Days at Highbury was written by JASNA co-founder Joan Austen-Leigh (whose great-great aunt was Jane Austen). I was curious to read a novel written by a relative of Jane Austen, and this one is worthwhile. It's the second book by Austen-Leigh that continues the story of *Emma*, and is told through letters written by the side characters. I enjoyed this format and felt it was appropriate as a means of glimpsing our beloved characters through a different lens.

The stars of the show are really the secondary characters, but that just gives us a fuller picture of Highbury, and it was a delight to see the town and its inhabitants through this perspective. New characters are introduced, and the story is told in such a way that it is a believable continuation. All of the elements that endear us to Jane Austen's novels are present in this one: behaviours that vex, matchmaking attempts, and small-town mindsets where "...the actions at a dance created greater interest than the movement of armies..."*

I like to think that Jane Austen would have been pleased with her great-great niece's imagining of what happened next after the first novel ended. Before *Later Days at Highbury*, Austen-Leigh's first novel was *A Visit to Highbury*, which is also in our library. I hadn't realized that when I picked *Later Days*, but now I know what I'm going to read next!
— Jennifer Cothran, co-librarian

*from the narration at the start of the 1996 film adaptation of *Emma*

April 18th Virtual Meeting

Skype chat and Devoney Looser

A virtual meeting held on April 18th with 28 members in attendance went very well indeed, including Devoney Looser's entertaining and erudite presentation "The Words and Wisdom of *Northanger Abbey*."

We were saddened to learn that long-time member Phyllis Taylor passed away late in March. She was living in a seniors' community where she had a fall, and died unexpectedly a few hours later in hospital. I am told she was in good spirits and "spunky" right through.

Finding JASNA online

JASNA national is sending out biweekly email newsletters filled with links and interesting reading, so you too can "Social Distance with Jane Austen". If you are a JASNA national member in good standing, to get this newsletter please check your email address is updated in the JASNA [Member Portal](#) in the View/Update My Profile page. If you need help with this, please let me know.

If you are on Facebook, you can also find many regions across the continent online. Check out their pages and "Follow" or subscribe to get their postings in your newsfeed. Besides [JASNA](#) and [Vancouver](#), there are [Puget Sound](#), [Greater New York](#), [Greater Phoenix](#), or [Victoria B.C.](#) and many other regions.

Other links mentioned in today's chat

Search for *Northanger Abbey* on Youtube, and you'll also find a clips from the film and audiobook file. You can also search [audiobooks with VPL](#) and [other digital resources](#).

Do you have an activity idea?

If you have an idea or would like to lead an offline activity with the group, please let me know via email.

—Michelle Siu



No Spring 2020 meeting dates

Wait and hope

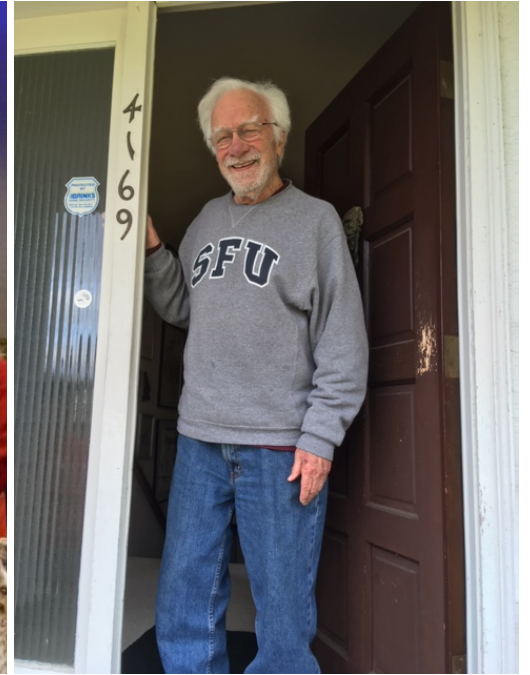
May 16th Virtual meeting: more info coming soon

Due to COVID-19

all in-person meetings are suspended until future notice

Please see the program of events on our website for more up-to-date information (thanks to webmaster Lauren McMahon): [JASNA-Vancouver program](#)

Gallery



***Above left:** On February 27 (in the time before the plague), a group of our members saw *Emma* (and received swag), as the guests of Focus Features. **Left to right:** Liane Chen, Megan Barker, Jayne Lavierge (hidden in hat), Joan Reynolds, Keiko Parker, Michelle Siu, Elaine Wong, Maureen Williams. **Above right:** Ron Sutherland sports a new look during quarantine.*



The highlight of many days in quarantine is “Applaud Healthcare” every evening at 7 pm. Although they are mostly in the shadow and don’t show up in this photo, there are hundreds of people out in the street, on the balconies, at windows and on rooftops – even some of the ships at anchor – all making a huge and joyful noise.

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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