

Muse & Musings

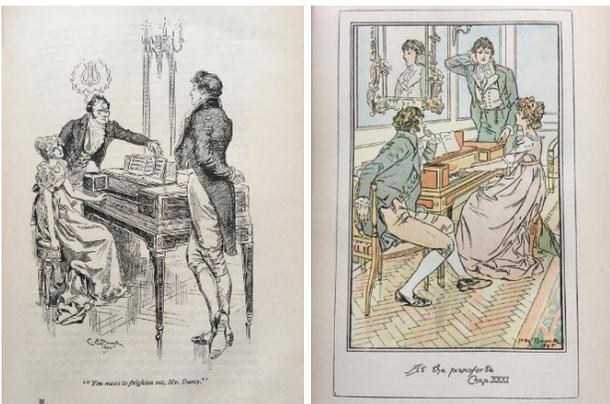
"The company of clever, well-informed people, who have a great deal of conversation"

Zoom meeting December 12, 2020

Jesse Read: Harmony and Melody in Jane Austen's World, recap by Keiko Parker

Professor Jesse Read opened his lecture speaking on the keyboard instruments available in Jane Austen's day. The harpsichord was popular since around 1700, and then the first "piano" as we know it was invented by Bartolomeo Christofori in 1720, and was called "fortepiano." This was a reference to the fact that his keyboard was capable of producing loud (*forte*) and soft (*piano*) sounds by the touch of the performers' fingers, compared to the harpsichord which could produce the change in dynamics only by switching from the loud keyboard to the soft one, and back. We know the instrument now as "pianoforte," or simply as "piano."

Broadwood, an instrument maker in London since c.1728, was established under the name of Broadwood & Sons in 1807. John Broadwood took a model from another maker and produced his own "square piano" (patented in 1783), and Professor Read believes this is the type of square piano that Jane Austen had, and also Emma Woodhouse (in *Emma*, published in 1815).



"You mean to frighten me, Mr. Darcy" by C. E. Brock. The Pianoforte by H. M. Brock

Professor Read played recordings of a short passage from Bach on both the harpsichord and the fortepiano so we could hear the difference. To me the harpsichord sounded tinnier than the fortepiano. He also showed us the two illustrations of Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*



Winter-spring 2021 virtual meeting dates and newsletter deadlines

Due to COVID-19 all **in-person meetings are suspended** until future notice. However, the following online Zoom meetings have been scheduled:

March 13 Virtual AGM Video: Alden O'Brien on Children's Clothing, 1760-1800; plus small-group discussion on fashion/clothing in the novels (Carole Wylie)

April Muse & Musings deadline: March 26

April 10 **Jane Austen Day**

Morning: Gordon Laco maritime historic consultant for feature film *Master & Commander*.

Afternoon: Professor Lise Gaston, who spoke at UBC on *Sanditon* in 2019

May 8 Panel on financially vulnerable women

June Muse & Musings deadline: May 28

June 12 AGM Video: "Well Behaved Women Seldom Make History:" Jane Austen, Women Historians, and Histories of Women, Caitlin Kelly and Misty Krueger

Please see the program of events on our website for more up-to-date information (thanks to webmaster Lauren McMahan):

[JASNA-Vancouver program](#)

playing the piano at Rosings with Col. Fitzwilliam listening eagerly and Darcy joining in.

An important research tool is the Austen Family Music at the University of Southampton, a collection containing 600 hand copied pieces of music. This music book is an oblong folio, 24 x 30 cm, full calf binding, and the pieces are written down in a pre-lined music notebook. The watermark suggests the notebook was produced before 1794. The inside front cover has a hand-coloured rectangular paper label with "Jane Austen" on it. The manuscript consists of keyboard music, both solo and

duet. The repertoire appears in printed publication from c.1790 to 1810. The handwriting for both the contents and the index has been securely identified as that of Jane Austen, and Read commented on her beautiful calligraphy in the musical notation.

Read next showed both the handwritten and printed music from various composers, such as George Frederick Handel’s “Water Piece” of 1717, and the opening page of Haydn’s Keyboard Sonata in C major. Some of these instrumental pieces had verses set to them. As he showed Haydn’s printed music, he played the recorded song version for a soprano. It was very slow, but the keyboard version was much faster, adding to the interest as to how these pieces were “adapted” by the Regency people. Papageno’s song in Mozart’s opera *The Magic Flute* came disguised as a song “Away with Melancholy.”

An example is a collection of pieces published in 1820, which had a very long title taking up most of the cover sheet: “Collection of English, Irish & Scottish Songs, Glee, Duets, etc., as Sung at the Theatres and convivial parties, with The Music adopted to the Voice, Flute, Violin, etc., to Which is Prefixed, an Introduction to Singing.” This last-mentioned “Introduction to Singing” has interesting things to say about how not to sing: “Never shut your eyes while singing, nor continually looking up to the ceiling; but address yourself at the company, in an easy and free manner, neither affected nor over-strained; yet not too tame and inanimate that you appear insensible of what you are singing about.”

a third man sits asleep. This print is interesting as it shows the music making at home by lay people.



In Austen’s manuscript music the word “soldier” has been crossed out in two places and substituted by the word “sailor,” Jane very likely honouring her two sailor brothers, Frank and Charles.

The song that we know well from its Jane Austen connection, “The Soldier’s Adieu” by Charles Dibdin goes like this:

Adieu, adieu, my only life,
My duty calls me from thee,
Remember thou’rt a Soldier’s wife,
Those tears but ill become thee.

Then came the song “Robin Adair,” mentioned in *Emma*. The verse starts with “What’s this dull town to me?/ Robin is not near.” It describes the loneliness of not being near Robin Adair who no longer loves the heroine. The song is supposed to be the favourite of Mr. Dixon, as Frank Churchill informs Emma misleadingly. It was wonderful to hear the square piano at the Jane Austen Museum at Chawton House living room actually being played to accompany this song.

Professor Read then moved on to other instruments. Among the eight illustrations of harp playing was one from *Mansfield Park*, where Edmund is enchanted by Mary Crawford’s harp playing.

Among the other illustrations of harp playing were portrait paintings of Countess Eglinton by Sir Joshua Reynolds (c. 1890) and of Juliet de Villeneuve by Jacques Louis David (c. 1820).

The guitar was represented by a portrait painting of Carolin D’Arcy (d.1778), 4th Marchioness of Lothearç by Joseph Adolphes (over). In all these prints and paintings the guitar seems to be more slender than the present-day guitar. Piano and guitar combination seems to have been popular, too. Not a household instrument now, tambourine seems also to have been a popular instrument among the upper class. Two examples were a portrait painting of



“Farmer Giles” by Gilray

This amusing bit in the talk came with a Cruickshank’s illustration, eliciting laughter from the online audience. Gilray’s print of “Farmer Giles and His Wife Showing off Their Daughters to Neighbours” had one daughter at the square piano, accompanying the other daughter’s singing, while their parents look on with delight, and one female guest fast asleep. This one is obviously for laughs, too, but another Gilray print of 1810 shows a woman playing a pianoforte, a man singing, another man with a flute, and

“Emma Hart, later Lady Hamilton as a Bacchante” by Elizabeth Louise Vegée-Lebrun (1790) and “Emily St Clare as a Bacchante” by John Hoppner (c. 1807).



“She played with the greatest obligingness.” by H. M. Brock;
Carolyn D’Arcy (d.1778), by Joseph Adolphes

As to the next instrument, triangle, “Twelve Waltzes for the Pianoforte with an Accompaniment for a Flute, Tambourine and Triangle” by Steibelt was mentioned together with an illustration, and also “Rondos for the Harp with an accompaniment for the Tamborino” by James Platts.

One of the original pieces by Haydn with the verse by Robert Burns (1791) was mentioned, and we heard the 1935 recording of the former sung by John McCormack. To go with this, a print was shown of “Progress of an Irishman” by Richard Newton (1794). This song has the refrain of “But they’ll never love like an Irishman.” Burns’ song “Their Groves of Sweet Myrtle” was performed and recorded at Jane Austen Museum at Chawton. It was just delightful. I need not say that the name “Jean” has been duly replaced by “Jane.” With this video recording the famous letter of Jane’s, “I am to flirt my last (with Tom Lefroy)” was read, and a print of instrumentalists was shown – a man at the square piano, a girl playing a violin, and a couple dancing, as others, seated, look on. This is just the sort of image we have of the home music making in Jane’s days.

To conclude, Professor Read has gathered a rich store of material to go with his talk – prints, oil paintings, illustrations, sheet music both printed and by Jane’s own hand, sound and video recordings, etc. I could not possibly include every title in the talk, nor reproduce all the material to accompany his talk, but this report should give you some idea. Jane Austen indeed lived in a world replete with music making.

– Keiko Parker

Austen Sighting

From *Funeral Music: A Mystery* by Morag Joss

I came across two references to one of Jane Austen’s novels. I can only give the first one as the second is crucial to identifying the murderer. The story is set in Bath. Sara, a cellist, and Edwin, an elderly man who was also a classical musician, have just been served tea by Serena, his personal care attendant.

Edwin: “[Serena’s] from Sydney, you know. Doing Europe. Bath’s a revelation to her, of course.” He chuckled, “She went to see that film, *Emma*. Raved about it. ‘Oh, I said, borrow it. It’ll be in the bookcase.’ ”

He began to snigger and some of his tea went down the wrong way. As he recovered he reached out to touch Sara’s arm and said, in a voice high-pitched with mirth, “And you know what she said? She said, ‘Oh, is the book out already?’ ”

– contributed by Phyllis Ferguson

Music and Jane Austen; Jesse Read

by Lorraine Meltzer

Jesse Read’s talk on “Harmony and Melody in Jane Austen’s World” in December was highly informative. His knowledge of music in the Regency era is extensive; the information from his presentation is covered capably by JASNA’s own music expert, Keiko Parker. I am covering the information that Read gave us about music in Jane Austen’s life and in her novels.

Music was an important part of Jane Austen’s life. Her niece Caroline stated that Jane started each day with music but she would not play for others. Jane copied many music manuscripts that are part of the Austen Family Music Library. Dr. Read commented on the care Jane took in her copy work, pointing out that the music notations and lyrics have no evidence of errors. Three generations of the Austen family contributed to the 600-piece library; aside from Jane, her mother, sister, sister-in-law, and nieces are all represented in the eighteen large volumes of the Austen music library. Jane Austen did not like opera, preferring popular songs, so they predominate in the collection.

Music manuscripts were borrowed, copied and circulated to add to the collection. For example, “How I Love the Swallows” by François Devienne, probably came to Jane Austen via her cousin, Eliza, Comtesse de Feuillide. It is known that Eliza did subscribe to a harp periodical. Although the Austens did not own a harp, a copy of “Pauvre Jacques” by Marquise de Travant is included in the harp volume of the Austen family library. Austen does not mention the guitar which, was not as fashionable in her area but was popular in London. Pieces such as “Pauvre Jacques”, although written for the harp, could

also be played on the guitar. This indicates that perhaps one of the Austens played this instrument.

Although Jane only played for her own enjoyment, music is pivotal in numerous scenes in her novels. For example, Marianne Dashwood, representing sensibility, releases her emotions at the pianoforte. Who can forget Mary Bennet embarrassing her family by playing and singing badly at the Bingley party? “Mary had neither genius nor taste; and though vanity had given her application, it had given her likewise a pedantic air and conceited manner, which would have injured a higher degree of excellence than she had reached.”



Lucy Briers plays Mary Bennet in *P&P* 1995

Frank Churchill’s gift of a pianoforte for Jane Fairfax is a major plot point in *Emma*. Interestingly, this is the only novel in which the brand name (Broadwood) and the name of a composer (Cramer) are given in a work by Austen. “Le Petit Rien” by Cramer came with the Broadwood piano which Jane Fairfax received. Austen also mentions that Jane plays the song “Robin Adair,” adding to the banter between Frank Churchill and Emma about the identity of the secret admirer who gave Jane such a personal and expensive gift.

The instruments owned or played by characters in Austen’s novels indicate the skill of the musicians but also the financial situation of the family. Both Mrs. Cole and Lady Catherine De Bourgh offer the use of their pianoforte to others. The Bateses cannot afford a pianoforte; thus, Frank Churchill’s gift of one to Jane Fairfax emphasizes the disparity in their economic status. The harp, on the other hand, is fashionable, but only affordable by those who are well-to-do. Louisa Musgrove (*Persuasion*) and Mary Crawford (*Mansfield Park*) both have harps.

As with so many other areas of Jane Austen’s writing, music develops the reader’s curiosity and knowledge about life in Regency England. Jesse Read’s presentation increased our knowledge and piqued our interest to learn more about the role of music in Jane Austen’s life and in her novels.

– Lorraine Meltzer

Austen sighting

From *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry*

by Rachel Joyce

The protagonist, 65, retired and shy, has on the spur of the moment decided to walk from his home in Devon to Berwick-upon-Tweed, a distance of some 600 or so miles. He wants to visit his dying friend in order that she will keep on living. Along the way, he encounters a variety of people and places, including a married couple who are experienced hikers.

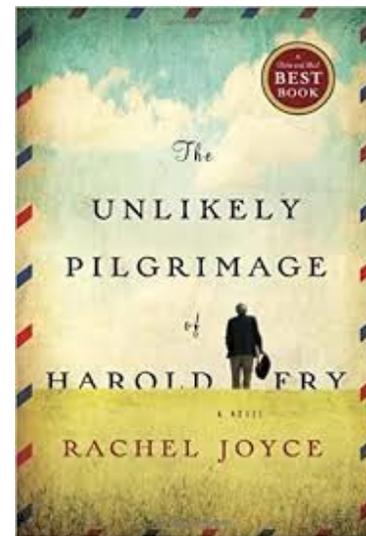
“Walking is what makes our marriage. Which route are you doing?”

Harold explained that he was making it up as he went along, but he was, in essence, heading north.

The hiking man continued talking. It occurred to Harold that he was one of those people who didn’t require other people in order to have a conversation. His wife studied her hands.

“Of course, the Cotswold Trail is overrated. Give me Dartmoor any day.”

“Personally I liked the Cotswolds,” said his wife. “I know it’s more flat, but it’s more romantic.” She twiddled her wedding ring so hard it looked as if she might unscrew her finger.



“She loves Jane Austen,” laughed the hiking man. “She’s seen all her films. I’m more of a man’s man, if you know what I mean.” ... “We like Dartmoor best,” said the hiking man.

“You like Dartmoor best,” corrected his wife.

They looked at each other as though they were complete strangers.

– contributed by Joan Reynolds

November 14th Meeting Continues

More recaps of the 2020 Virtual AGM

Instead of an October meeting, JASNA Vancouver members were encouraged to attend the virtual AGM on JA's Juvenilia, originally planned for Cleveland, but moved online because of COVID-19.

JASNA Jane Austen's World

Locked down in Whistler with my family over Thanksgiving, I could see that accessing the AGM during the weekend was not going to work, so I did not even try until later in October when really it was all over. This meant that I missed all the socializing and the fun and games. However, the advantages were that I could access the plenary speakers, the break-out sessions and the special events at my own pace over the following two weeks – and sometimes more than once.

All the lectures from well-known scholars were as interesting as usual, but what really fascinated me was the new feature called Jane Austen's World. These were insights into a variety of passions of JASNA members across North America. One presenter collected tea sets of the Regency period, and another showed us how to make Syllabub and yet another told us how to make Mr. Woodhouse's gruel, which was much tastier and nutritious than I had ever imagined. There was a collector of antique books, descriptions of children's clothing and a history of the reticule with examples: tiny fans, tiny perfume bottles, and tiny calendars all made especially to fit into the reticule so as not to spoil the slim silhouette of the Regency gown.

Each presentation was only ten minutes long, so perfect for a quick survey, and each took place in the presenter's home so we could see the actual books and their frontispiece and we could see the pattern on the teapot. None of this would have been possible at a real AGM. Who would risk their precious porcelain or rare library on a plane or even the trunk of a car?



Some Regency collectibles: reticule, perfume bottle, brisé fan

I enjoyed these short presentations so much that I am very much hoping future AGMs will contain a virtual component. I do not think it would detract from the real thing but it would mean that everyone (with a device) could attend and we could all enjoy the intriguing passions of other JASNA members. – Aileen Hollifield

Austen's Inharmonious Numbers

Professor Bharat Tandon, University of East Anglia

The concept of “harmonious numbers” in verse and prose refers to a certain musicality, meter, rhythm, balance, and order in writing that was promoted by 18th century rhetorical guides written by Samuel Johnson and Hugh Blair (whom Austen referenced in *Northanger Abbey*). While Austen's writing “stays within earshot of late 18th century stylistic guides, her juvenilia actually upends the harmony, by “turning the familiar rhythms of late-Augustan prose to altogether less decorous ends” for comedic effect.

Tandon says Austen is “bursting at the seams of polite style” for she uses “stylistic conventions while simultaneously exploding them.” For example, in *Jack and Alice*, instead of listing harmonious opposites, Austen lists (inharmonious) appositives: “benevolent and candid . . . generous and sincere . . . pious and good . . .” Austen uses zeugma [a figure of speech in which a word applies to two others in different senses] for comedic effect, such as in *Jack and Alice* when she writes, “Oh, cruel Charles to wound the hearts and legs of all the fair.”

In the late 18th century, the emerging novel was viewed as “a child of enlightenment empiricism” and realism was viewed as harmonious. While Austen is viewed as a realist author, she uses “‘unreal’ realist numbers in her early works.” For example, in *Evelyn* she writes whimsically of “four white cows which were disposed at equal distances . . . [while] four Rose trees served also to mark the quarters of the Shrubbery . . .” Jane Austen liked to “play[] with numerical correspondences,” such as in *Lesley Castle*, where she describes a “dear Creature [who] is just turned of two years old’ as handsome as tho’ 2 & 20, as sensible as tho’ 2 & 30, and as prudent as tho’ 2 & 40.”

Tandon notes that Austen's “juvenilia bequeath[ed] to the published novels a way of inhabiting stylistic conventions whilst simultaneously exploding them.” He observes an implied “[m]athematical proportion problem” in *Pride and Prejudice* when Austen writes that, “The report which was in general circulation within five minutes after his entrance, of his having ten thousand a year.” If Darcy had had £20,000 a year, Tandon wonders if the report would have gone around the room in two-and-a-half minutes? – Jennifer Bettiol

September 12th Virtual Meeting revisited

Dr. Catherine Morley: Reading the Food in *Emma*

The oldest cookbook at the Chawton House Library is from the 1640s. Recipes include foods that are clear and liquid such as gruel and cow's foot jelly and those that are not clear. These restrictions are still used for post-surgery patients today, even though there is no connection to

nutritional information we have now. The clear/unclear foods are connected to the belief in the influence of humours on the human body. Foods were divided on the categories of humours (wet, dry, hot, cold).

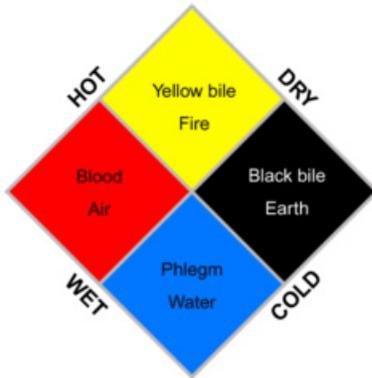


Diagram of the humours and elements.

It was believed that each person was determined by the dominant humour. Hot and wet humours influenced the production of blood in the liver creating a sanguine personality. Conversely, hot and dry humours led to the production of yellow bile in the gall bladder, leading to a choleric personality. Cold and wet humours created phlegm in the brain/lungs, determining a phlegmatic personality. Cold and dry led to a production of black bile in the spleen and a melancholic personality. The goal of medicine and nutritional study was to balance the humours in the patient.

Another important consideration in diet in Jane Austen's time was class and locale. These two factors controlled the food supply of the population. People were divided into lower income and wealthy as well as whether they lived in the town or country. Lower income citizens who lived in urban areas had less healthy diets with the mainstays being starch-based (bread, pies) and roast meat or bacon on Sunday. Lower classes in the country had better nutritional choices with produce from gardens, a variety of meats, bread, milk products and remains from the local estate.

Wealthy town dwellers had a meat-dominant diet. Their food was purchased and delivered from local merchants or sent from their estates. Wealthy residents in the countryside also had a meat-dominant diet but their food was produced on their estates. Meat came from the local farms, the deer park or fishing stream. Each estate had greenhouses and a kitchen garden. Because food sold in areas away from the source of production could not be preserved safely, food adulteration was common. Thus, food safety was a concern in order to balance the humours, based on "seeing the food when it was alive."

Therefore, it is easy to see why Mr. Woodhouse, as a proponent of the humours theory, cared about what his

guests ate. After Dr. Morley's talk, I was left thinking about Jane Austen's diet. How much of her medical care was based on the aim to balance her humours rather than on the physical needs of her body? Dr. Morley's talk left us with much to think about. – Lorraine Meltzer

Austen sightings

From *Life after Life* by Kate Atkinson

13-year-old Ursula is with her mother Sylvie and father Hugh:

"Do you, by the way, know who it was who said, 'A large income is the best recipe for happiness I ever heard of?'"

...

"Austen," Sylvie said promptly. "*Mansfield Park*. She puts the words in Mary Crawford's mouth, for whom she professes disdain, of course, but really I expect Aunt Jane rather believed those words. Why?"

Ursula shrugged. "Nothing"



"Till I came to *Mansfield*, I had not imagined a country parson ever aspired to a shrubbery, or anything of the kind. Wonderful stuff. I always think the word shrubbery denotes a certain kind of person."

"We have a shrubbery," Hugh said but Sylvie ignored him and continued to Ursula. "You really should read Jane Austen. You're surely the right age by now."

– contributed by Joan Reynolds

From *Magpie Murders* by Anthony Horowitz

The funeral wouldn't begin for another forty minutes and she didn't want to be the first to arrive. How was she going to fill in the time? She went into the kitchen where the washing-up from breakfast was waiting but she didn't want to do it while she was wearing her best clothes. A book lay, face down, on the table. She was reading Jane Austen – dear Jane – for the umpteenth time but she didn't feel like that either right now. She would catch up with Emma Woodhouse and her machinations in the afternoon...

Clarissa lived in a modern house. So many of the buildings in Saxby-on-Avon were solid Georgian constructions made of Bath stone with handsome porticos and gardens rising up in terraces. You didn't need to read Jane Austen. If you stepped outside, you would find yourself actually in her world.

– contributed by Lorraine Meltzer

From Eileen’s Archive
Newsletter # 1 – February 1983

Weather Report: More Rain (and Quiz)

On February 20, 1807, Jane Austen wrote from Southampton to her sister Cassandra in Kent:

“We could not pay our visit on Monday, the weather altered just too soon; and we have since had a touch of almost everything in the weather way – two of the severest frosts since the winter began, preceded by rain, hail and snow – now we are smiling again ... I expect a severe March, a wet April and a sharp May.”

In our part of the country we haven’t suffered much from the cold this winter, but we have had our share of rain-storms. So draw up a cosy chair and sit in front of the fire with a cup of Jane Austen’s favourite Twining’s tea, and see if you can recall the situations during these other periods of inclement weather:

1. “It began to rain, not much, but enough to make shelter desirable for women”



Morning dresses April 1797

2. “Suddenly the clouds united over the heads, and a driving rain set full in their face.”
3. “...the first dim view of the extensive buildings, smoking in rain.”
4. “From the day of the invitation to the day of the ball there was such a succession of rain as prevented their walking ... once.”
5. “... the information of the ground being covered with snow, and of its still snowing fast, with a strong, drifting wind.”
6. “We have had such incessant rains almost since October began, that we have been nearly confined to the house for days together.”

(Answers on page 3 of Newsletter Issue 1, [Newsletters](#))
 – Eileen Sutherland 1983 – submitted by Joan Reynolds

RC’s Corner
Happy Year of the Ox

From my computer screen to yours, I am sending you warm wishes for happiness, peace and prosperity in this new lunar year.



Already in 2021, we have seen change for the better and our hope grows stronger as we continue to wait patiently for the distribution of the vaccine against COVID-19. It gives promise that we will meet again in person one day soon. May you continue to stay safe and stay healthy. Our programming committee continues to work hard to bring you programming that connects you to our community. To bring a little music into your lives, a little laughter and some chatter. I hope that you find our group is a “company of clever, well-informed people, who have a great deal of conversation.” Thank you for continuing your membership in JASNA and I hope that our meetings continue to bring some joy and pleasure into your life. May 2021 bring more good fortune! – Michelle Siu

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Happy Birthday Jane and Ludwig!!!



December 2020: Screen shot #2 of JASNA Vancouver members and guests in festive bonnets hoisting a glass to toast the birthdays of JA and Beethoven.



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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