

Muse & Musings

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

March 12th Meeting

Panel discussion on JA's comic characters

This will be covered in a future edition or editions when we can gather all three contributions.

April 9th Meeting: Jane Austen Day

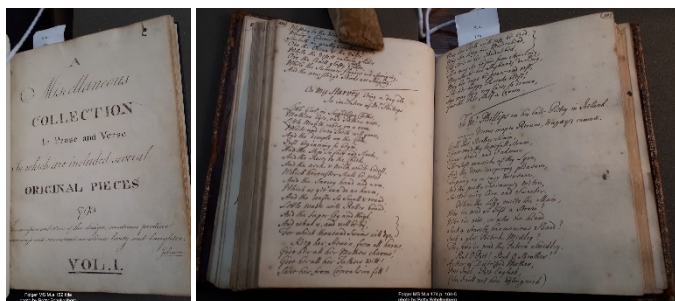
Two speakers, cake; alas, no catered lunch or wine

Our Jane Austen Day meeting was partway back to our pre-pandemic format. The meeting was in-person at St. Philip's, with a fair number attending from near and far by zoom. There was a cake (seen in the April issue of *Muse & Musings*) to celebrate JASNA-Vancouver's 40th anniversary, but the lunch was brown-bag instead of catered and there was no wine.

"Whims, Scraps and Trifles to Kill Time: Making Manuscript Poetry books in the time of Jane Austen" by Betty Schellenberg, SFU



Dr. Schellenberg spoke about manuscript books of original writing and extracts that JA's contemporaries compiled, providing context for JA's volumes that we now know as *Juvenilia*. Her presentation focused on four different productions, which displayed the creators' accomplishments in taste, elegant penmanship and wide reading.



Fall and winter 2022 meeting dates At St. Philip's: Mark your calendar!

September 10 th	Keiko Parker will speak on book illustrations, especially <i>Sense & Sensibility</i>
October	There will be no meeting because the AGM will happen in October
November 12 th	AGM recaps
December 10 th	Jane's birthday: program TBA
February 11 th	TBA

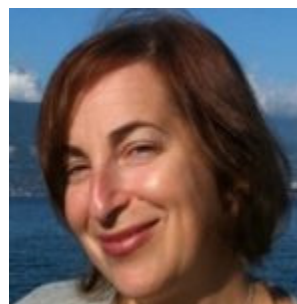
Covid protocols will be in place, if required by Public Health Orders at the time.

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

[JASNA-Vancouver program](#)

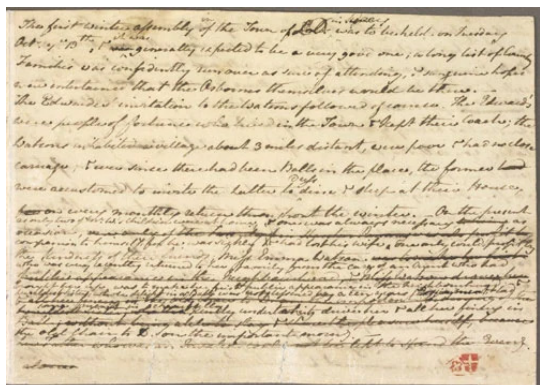
The four books are all somewhat different from each other in terms of the people who compiled them and the connections between the books' contents and their owners' lives.

"Unfinishing *The Watsons*" by Michelle Levy, SFU



Dr. Levy presented from her research on the manuscript of the unfinished work *The Watsons*. This manuscript, which was written in tiny booklets, is unique in being held in different institutions, parts of it having been separately sold long after her death. The first of these parts was donated to the Red Cross, who sold it in a fund-raiser to the Morgan Library in New York, making it the only JA

manuscript held outside the UK. *The Watsons* is the only piece of JA's writing we see between the early version of *Northanger Abbey* in 1798-99 the publication of *Sense and Sensibility* in 1811; and the only place where we see her extensive revision as she wrote.



The Red Cross stamp is seen at the bottom of this fragment

The main part of the talk was on why and how *The Watsons* was left unfinished and what this unfinished state means. Levy suggests that JA found catharsis in writing the book, but was unable to resolve its contradictions or provide happy resolutions to its plot pieces.

– Elspeth Flood

May 14th Meeting

Alison Dacia Brown with on the Victoria AGM and Elaine Bander on “Performing to Strangers”

At our May meeting, Alison Brown (below left) provided an update and promotion on the Victoria AGM in her first trip off-island since the beginning of the pandemic. She surprised us all with the announcement, made the previous day by the Provincial Government, that the Royal B.C. Museum was to close for eight years – but that project has subsequently been put on hold, so our members will be able to visit it.



Our main speaker, JASNA-Canada president Elaine Bander (above right), came to us from Montreal by zoom with “Performing to Strangers” about the way “gentlemen and ladies, who have all the disadvantages of education and decorum to struggle through” are inhibited from performing in the manner of professional actors or musicians. The performance of gentility requires

knowledge and practice, as well as clothing and furniture, and is in no way “natural.”

– Elspeth Flood

A surprise visit from Mr. Bingley

As an early arrival at our May meeting, I had the extreme good fortune and delight to be formally introduced to a certain Mr. Bingley, a handsome and energetic individual – albeit with four legs and a wagging tail! He was exactly as Jane Austen had described him, both “lively and unreserved” with “easy and unaffected manners” and soon made himself “acquainted with all the principal people in the room.” We later learned that he has a brother called Mr. Darcy.



Mr. Bingley and his human companion; the Bingley Arms

His human companion went on to explain that the name Bingley is very old and there is in fact a place called Bingley, a market town in West Yorkshire – which also happened to possess the oldest pub in England, namely The Bingley Arms*. As I grew up very near to the ancient English city of St. Albans and my late husband was living in Nottingham when I met him, I was familiar with the fine hostelries Ye Olde Fighting Cocks (St. Albans) and Ye Olde Trip to Jerusalem (Nottingham). Both of these claim to be the oldest pub in England, but the *Guinness Book of World Records* gives their nod to Ye Olde Fighting Cocks. More information on these and other “oldest” historical establishments can be found [here](#).

*The Bingley Arms is actually located in the village of Bardsley, about midway between York and Leeds, and quite some miles from the market town of Bingley, but a minor detail. Bingley village appeared in the *Domesday Book* of 1086.

– Joan Reynolds

Why was *Lovers' Vows* so shocking?

Mansfield Park and *Playing at Love*

A group of young people, passing the rainy weeks of autumn together in “a dull country house,” decide to entertain themselves by staging a play. What’s so wrong about that, as the critic Lionel Trilling asks rhetorically in his 1954 essay?

The characters in Jane Austen’s great novel, *Mansfield Park*, devote a great deal of time to debating the question.

The play chosen, *Lovers' Vows*, is a real play, and Austen could have relied on the fact that her contemporary readers would be familiar with it. A greater understanding of the play, and of the social milieu of *Mansfield Park*, will help modern readers understand why the novel's hero and heroine – Edmund Bertram and his meek cousin Fanny Price – thought that yes, there was plenty wrong about that.



Frontispiece to *Lovers' Vows*

Lovers' Vows has two storylines – one melodramatic and one comic. Frederick, a young soldier returning home, encounters his mother starving by the roadside. He also learns to his horror that he is illegitimate, and his father is the long-absent Baron Wildenheim. A kindly local peasant, or Cottager, and his wife take his mother under their roof. Frederick accosts his father and is thrown in prison, but matters are eventually sorted out and the remorseful Baron marries Agatha. Meanwhile, the Baron's legitimate daughter, Amelia, is the lead in the comic storyline. She flirtatiously woos her tutor, the preacher Anhalt, while fending off a marriage proposal from Count Cassel. The entire action is commented on, in rhyming verse, by the Butler, another comic character.

In other words, the themes of *Lovers' Vows* (in the original German, the play was called *The Love Child*) are extra-marital sex and seduction, although of course it's a story where sinners repent and Virtue triumphs in the end. Fanny thinks the two female leads, Agatha and Amelia, are “totally improper for home representation—the situation of one, and the language of the other, [are] unfit to be expressed by any woman of modesty.”

Critics in the increasingly genteel Regency age – leaving behind the rowdy, bawdy Georgian age and looking forward to the Victorian age – considered *Lovers' Vows* to be improper. One critic complained of the “radical

defects and absurdities of the piece” and opined, “the Play of *Lovers' Vows*, drawn from the polluted sources of the German School, however it may occasionally strike upon our feelings, has no moral influence upon the heart, and leaves no permanent impression behind it. That it should have maintained a place among our acting plays, is a serious impeachment of the taste and judgment of the public . . .”

Whether or not Austen saw *Lovers' Vows* performed, she was aware of the criticisms against it, and the first readers of *Mansfield Park* would have known of the controversy around the play as well.

Yes, by modern standards the play is, in Kingsley Amis's words, ‘innocuous rubbish,’ but taking into consideration as well the fact that professional actresses were socially at about the level of courtesans in Regency society, we can begin to appreciate Fanny's apprehensions on behalf of her cousins.

When Mary Crawford takes the part of Amelia, it's clear that she wants Edmund as her Anhalt. He initially refuses out of principle, but his swift capitulation is clear evidence, to a dismayed Fanny, of Mary Crawford's growing power over him.



The Rhyming Butler in a 2019 production of Lovers' Vows

Poor Fanny is roped into acting as prompter while the man she loves enacts love scenes with Mary Crawford, and they exchange dialogue like this:

Amelia: *I will not marry.*

Anhalt: *You mean to say, you will not fall in love.*

Amelia: *Oh no! [ashamed] I am in love.*

Anhalt: *Are in love! [starting] And with the Count?*

Amelia: *I wish I was.*

Anhalt: *Why so?*

Amelia: *Because he would, perhaps, love me again.*

Anhalt: *[warmly]. Who is there that would not?*

Amelia: *Would you?*

Anhalt: *I – I – me – I – I am out of the question.*

Amelia: *No; you are the very person to whom I have put the question.*

Anhalt: *What do you mean?*

Amelia: *I am glad you don't understand me. I was afraid I had spoken too plain. [in confusion].*

To twist the knife even further for Fanny, Amelia loves Anhalt in large part because he was her tutor; he formed her and shaped her mind, just as Edmund has done with Fanny. In the play, Anhalt feels himself to be of too low a rank to dare confess his love; while Fanny feels herself to be so far below Edmund that to even think of him romantically is a “presumption for which she had not words strong enough to satisfy her own humility.” Alas, poor Fanny – as Amelia could tell her, love comes just as it pleases, without being asked.

Meanwhile the hapless Mr. Rushworth is playing the Count, a heartless seducer of women: (*in a gay, lively, inconsiderate, flimsy, frivolous coxcomb, such as myself ... to keep my word to a woman, would be deceit: 'tis not expected of me. It is in my character to break oaths in love*) while his own betrothed is being seduced under his nose by Henry Crawford. A contemporary audience would have understood the irony of this juxtaposition and if they knew the play well, would also have picked up on the fact that when Mrs. Norris rebukes Fanny for refusing to take the minor role of Cottager's Wife, she quotes that character's opening line. Cottager's Wife comes to the aid of Agatha at the end of Act I and brushes off Frederick's thanks with: “Thanks and blessings! Here's a piece of work indeed about nothing! Good sick lady, lean on my shoulder.”

Aunt Norris scolds Fanny with “What a piece of work here is about nothing,” clearly a reference to this opening line, for her unwillingness to join in the play-acting.

Fanny protests, “I could not act anything if you were to give me the world,” and the fact is that Cottager's Wife has some pretty droll lines, which one simply can't imagine Fanny being able to deliver: “If you find friends and get health, we won't trouble you to call on us again: but if you should fall sick or be in poverty, we shall take it very unkind if we don't see you.” No wonder Mrs. Grant, who steps into the role, “spoiled everything by laughing.”

The return of Sir Thomas wrenches everyone back to reality – Henry later describes the “acting week” as a “pleasant dream,” and recalling her rehearsal with Edmund puts Mary “into a reverie of sweet remembrance.” But the mischief has been done – Maria has been seduced, in spirit if not in fact, by Henry

Crawford, and Edmund is equally under Mary Crawford's spell. Both Edmund and Maria face disillusionment, and she faces ruin, by the end of the novel.

In the words of the Rhyming Butler:

*Then you, who now lead single lives,
From this sad tale beware;
And do not act as you were wives,
Before you really are.*

– Lona Manning

Do let us have a little music

Addendum to the 40-year memoir by Joan Reynolds

It was hard to summarize all of the past 40 years' activities in one bite and do everything full justice. One particular aspect of our history not mentioned in my previous article, but which deserves a special mention, is the number and variety of musical performances there have been over the years. Music has always been a very large part of JASNA-Vancouver. Two of our long-time members, Susan Olsen and Keiko Parker, are retired professional music teachers.



Susan Olsen as Peg the Cook singing “The Song of the Discontented Cook” – a traditional rhyme that Susan set to music – at the December 2014 meeting.

One of the very first accounts of a musical entertainment was recorded in Issue 22 of our Regional newsletter. This described Jane Austen Day held at Brock House on March 12th, 1988, where a rousing chorus of sea shanties was led by local musician and folk singer, Mike Absalom. (It was an appropriate choice, as it set the stage for the talk on Nelson's navy that followed.)

In December 2003 at one of my earliest meetings, I was fortunate to be present at a brilliantly performed recital held in St Philip's Church (Newsletter 85): A talented trio from UBC School of Music (Bo Peng, cellist, Ruth Huang, violinist, and Cherry Li, pianist) played the Mozart Piano Trio in B flat major, Beethoven Piano Trio Opus 70, and the Schubert Piano Trio in B flat. A few years later in December 2007, Susan Edwards, a Vancouver music teacher provided piano accompaniment

for her student, Kendra Coleman who sang two solos, one an oratorio from Handel. We were fortunate enough to see Susan again in December 2010. This time she appeared with soprano Margaret Behenna who sang songs by Thomas Arne and Robbie Burns, as well as “The Dream” and “Weep No More Sad Fountains,” which Patrick Doyle composed for Ang Lee/Emma Thompson’s 1995 feature film of *Sense and Sensibility*.

On two occasions, talented young harpist Silke Billings came to play for us, wearing period costume at one performance in December 2008 and looking just as the young Louisa Musgrove must have done in *Persuasion*. She visited us again in December of 2013 at our “Hats Off to *Pride and Prejudice*” Birthday meeting. (The biggest challenge on each occasion was the fraught operation of maneuvering her fragile harp up the front stairs – and then carefully down again.)



Guest performer Silke Billings plays the harp, pictured here in December 2013

Perhaps the most powerful musical performances were those by the members of the UBC Opera Student Ensemble. In December 2017 in celebration of Jane Austen’s birthday we enjoyed “Opera at Highbury.” This performance featured opera selections from Mozart and Rossini performed by baritone Alireza Mojibian (son of member Azarm Akhavian), with fellow ensemble singer mezzo-soprano Charlotte Beglinger, and accompanied by pianist Professor Richard Epp, Music Director of the UBC Opera Ensemble. A particular highlight was their performance of the Mozart duet “*Voi Che Sapete*” from *The Marriage of Figaro* that was featured in the 1995 television adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*. The following April 2018 we enjoyed another recital of music from two more members of the UBC Ensemble: Ivy Calvert, soprano and Justin Cho, tenor, together with their accompanist and music coach, David Boothroyd. They performed music selections inspired by the works of Jane Austen, while two members of our group read extracts

from Jane Austen’s novels where music was featured in the plot.



Members of Little Flower Academy perform some English Country Dancing, May 2011

You may recall that Sir John Middleton enjoyed arranging “a little hop at the Park” as often as he could, and we followed his example. English Country Dance (ECD) has featured at a number of our meetings. Some dance sessions were led by former member Marie Disiewicz, but we also received special visits and demonstrations from local Vancouver ECD teachers June Harman and Peggy Roe. It is no surprise that these dance sessions were most popular at meetings in the years immediately before and after the very successful ball at 2007’s Vancouver JASNA AGM, but we do have one or two members who still dance regularly, both locally and all over North America and beyond. We also experienced a fully costumed country dance performance in May 2011 from the young students at Little Flower Academy. Under the direction of their teacher and former member, Julie Mills, these students had worked hard studying Jane Austen’s works and had learned the dances she was familiar with. Under her direction they held their own Jane Austen special event each year, and that year’s students were proud to show their newly acquired dance skills to our group.

Many of our own members have provided us with musical performances over the years. Former member Sophia Morley (daughter of Cath Morley, now a member of the Halifax Region, and regular speaker at Jane Austen events) often provided flute recitals at our meetings.

In November of 2014, Susan Olsen persuaded her talented husband, and all-round good sport, Jim, to provide us with a lively piano medley of songs that were popular with the troops during World War I – “Pack up your Troubles,” “Long way to Tipperary,” etc. – providing some toe-tapping cheer following the poignancy of our dramatic reading of Kipling’s “The Janeites.” The following month, Susan herself gave her spirited rendition of Peg the Cook’s lament: “The Song of the Discontented Cook” – choral comedy at its finest.

More recently in June 2019, two of our members, Jennifer Cothran, and Julia VanDelft teamed up to give us a performance of selected songs from the feature films, *Emma* and *Sense and Sensibility*, and in December of 2019 they encored with Christmas carols that Jane would have known.

In addition to all these live musical performances, we have also had a number of musical academics and experts over the years come to our meetings and share their research and knowledge of the music that Jane Austen enjoyed and which she practised herself.

Certainly, over the past 40 years, Vancouver Region has demonstrated that we share Mrs. Elton's sentiment that we "absolutely cannot do without music." and long may that continue.
— Joan Reynolds

Member profile

Carol Sutherland



1. Tell us a bit about who you are and your life to-date.

I was born and raised in North Vancouver, where I was fully immersed in equal parts of "outdoor activities" and "books." To this day those are two major themes in my life. I did a degree at UBC in Special Education and have always worked with children and/or people with additional needs. After UBC I moved to Scotland (pretty much on a whim, with a friend) and spent the next 27 years there. I have three sons, two in Scotland and one here in Vancouver, so I have two places that are truly home.

2. When did you join JASNA?

I joined JASNA about eight years ago when I moved back from Scotland, but I had been an interloper over the years when my mother was a part of JASNA.

3. How did you first get started with Jane Austen?

As with many of my other favourite authors, my first introduction was in my teens when I said to my mother, "What's a good book I could read?" and she would pull one off the shelf. This time it was *Pride and Prejudice*, and I was hooked. Other authors I started with at that time included Dickens, John Buchan, Arthur Conan Doyle and Shaw.

4. What do you like about JASNA?

I so enjoy meeting and talking to people with a shared interest in Jane Austen. I'm often amazed that for a group with seemingly just one thing in common, we all have many similar interests; at the same time, I enjoy how different we each are as well. I particularly like learning new things about Jane Austen, her writing, and her times. There's never a shortage of knowledge or opinions at our meetings.

5. Has JASNA given you any special memories? New friends? Inspiration to new experiences?

My favorite memory is of the AGM/Conference in 1986. My sister and I were supposedly helping behind the scenes at the Hotel Vancouver, but I remember a lot of galloping around the empty hotel halls. However, we were both very proud of our quiet, studious mother and all she was achieving with JASNA.

Noteworthy article

In the latest issue of the *Journal of Juvenilia Studies*, member Bonnie Herron reviewed two *Persuasions* volumes: Vol 42, 2020 and *Persuasions On-Line*, Vol 41, both of which address the fascinating area of stories written by young authors who later became famous, including our Jane, of course. This particular JJS volume also contains a review by Isobel Grundy of Margaret Atwood's "Early Writings."

<https://journalofjuveniliastudies.com/index.php/jjs/article/view/78/89>

Austen Sighting

In retired Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin's excellent memoir *Truth Be Told: My Journey Through Life and the Law* (2020), she comments about acquiring a new Labrador puppy at a time when she had been falsely targeted by then Prime Minister Stephen Harper. "I thought about calling my new puppy Harper so I could say 'Harper, sit! Harper, lie down!'" I actually liked the name, but I decided people in the dog park might misunderstand. In the end, I decided on Darcy from Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. My Darcy – handsome, dark and the folly of my old age."

— Submitted by Phyllis Ferguson

RC's Corner

Janice Mallison



Thank you to our programming committee who have done so much challenging work and put in so much time and effort to ensure a successful year, despite the pandemic restrictions. Also, many thanks to all our volunteers, from *Muse & Musings* newsletter to our website and Facebook page and the many hands who contribute to the setup of a successful meeting each month.

We have had changes to the Committee this year, with me taking over as RC, from Michelle Siu and her excellent stewardship, Jennifer Cothran assuming responsibility for the website from Laureen McMahon, Lona Manning has volunteered to assist on preparation of *Muse & Musings* and Barbara Elliott has recently stepped up to be Program Committee chair. We continue to look for a new volunteer for the co-RC job. We hope to have to more announcements soon as many of our long-time volunteers on the Committee and in other important roles, seek to hand over the baton to fresh, new helpers.

We are always to have your input. If you have ideas for a future meeting, have a topic or speaker you would like to see at our meeting, please approach me or any member of the Program Committee email me:

jasnavancouverrc@gmail.com

It just remains for me to wish you all a happy and pleasant summer. I hope to see you at the AGM in October.

– Janice Mallison



JASNA Vancouver Contacts

Regional Coordinator:	Janice Mallison jasnavancouverrc@gmail.com
Co-RC:	vacant – looking for a volunteer
Treasurer:	Elaine Wong treasurer.jasnavancouver@gmail.com Marg Young has volunteered to take over
Program Committee chair:	Barbara Elliot
Newsletter Editors:	Elsbeth Flood & Lona Manning
Website coordinator:	Jennifer Cothran
Facebook Administrator:	Joan Reynolds
Library:	Cathleen Boyle & Meghan Hanet
Austen Extracts:	Aileen Hollifield
Bountiful Basket:	Phyllis Ferguson Bottomer

To contact any of these volunteers, email our Regional Co-ordinator at jasnavancouverrc@gmail.com.



Gallery of Memories



Left: Julia VanDelft (left) and Jennifer Cothran sang songs from the films *Sense and Sensibility* and *Emma*, June 19, 2019; **Centre:** UBC Opera Ensemble's Justin Cho, tenor and Ivy Calvert, soprano, with David Boothroyd, accompanist and music coach, April 2018. **Right:** Baritone Alireza Mojibian, mezzo-soprano Charlotte Beglinger and pianist Professor Richard Epp, Music director of the UBC Opera Ensemble, December 2017.

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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