

New The Female Spectator.

VOL. 4 No. 1: Summer, 2020

Special Lockdown Issue

Chawton House in a Digital Age



“Ah! there is nothing like staying at home for real comfort.”

So says the dreadful Mrs. Elton in Jane Austen’s *Emma*. She is not to be trusted, of course, and contradicts herself seconds later. But over recent months, we have been forced into being, in *Emma*’s words ‘a very quiet set of people’, with many of us confined to our homes as the Covid-19 pandemic swept the globe.

Chawton House temporarily closed to the public in March 2020, but work certainly did not

cease: a vibrant digital programme including ongoing social media posts, interactive activities for our audiences, two online festivals, a planned Summer Series of talks, and the re-launch of our magazine, *The Female Spectator* – now to appear three times annually – have kept us busy in our bid to entertain and educate, and to provide a welcome refuge to those feeling isolated and uncertain. The response has been phenomenal. We are currently planning reopening and hope to see visitors again in 2020, but will continue to offer digital content to our audiences further afield. •

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The first part of a serialised history of the estate

Dear Readers,

An update from our Executive Director, Katie Childs



The world was quite different in January when we decided to re-launch *The Female Spectator*. For years, the magazine brought the best of Chawton House Library and research it supported to readers worldwide. It was always my intention to find a way for it to return, but I could not have imagined a digital publication that was this engaging, entertaining and beautifully designed. It has been edited and designed by Kim Simpson, our Postdoctoral Fellow, and, as well as fascinating guest contributions, features many of the Chawton House team. Re-launching *The Female Spectator* in this way is part of a bigger aim to bring all that we do to as many people as possible, onsite and online and in partnership where we can. Whether it is the menu in the Tea Room, planting in the garden, or even the colours used in this publication, the story of the Chawton House estate, the Knight and Austen families, and the early women writers runs like a thread tying everything together.

This edition has been written in the Covid-19 crisis, and although Chawton House is closed to visitors,

we have not stopped or placed the organisation in mothballs. In unsettling times, arts and culture provide a way to make sense of the world, and to escape from it. They provide a way to connect to others and be part of a community, just as Chawton House does when it is open. We couldn't provide a physical place, but by moving so much of what we do online, we could provide a digital place. Having created this space and seen how we can reach those not able to visit, it is now a permanent fixture.

The Female Spectator now lives in that digital space. It is free to those who are Chawton House Friends and North American Friends of Chawton House, and I am delighted that we can make this bumper edition freely available to many of the people who generously supported our Emergency Appeal. Your generosity has meant that we can continue during the lockdown, and whilst the future will undoubtedly be tough, we do have a future. I am proud of the ingenuity of the Chawton House team, and delighted that three times a year we can once again bring you the best of what we do in *The Female Spectator*.

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Man Up!

On 2 March 2020, Chawton House's exciting new exhibition opened. Curated by doctoral student and Communications and Public Engagement Manager Clio O'Sullivan, it showcases eighteenth- and nineteenth-century women who made their way in male-dominated spheres, from landowning and balloon aviation, to piracy and literature. In this article, Clio talks about creating Man Up!



Last year, I was thrilled that the board of trustees accepted my proposed topic for the 2020 main exhibition. As curator, I was given a modest budget and just six months to confirm the subject, conduct research, acquire loans, design and write interpretation material and stage the exhibition. The result was 'Man Up! Women who stepped into a man's world', a two-room exhibition highlighting little-known tales of extraordinary women who challenged the acceptable norms of female behaviour in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

However, the concept for Man Up! came to me long before I was officially commissioned with the task of curating an exhibition. The library collection at Chawton House is astounding and I am always delighted with new and unexpected discoveries whenever I embark on a research project, whether it be for writing a social media post or for my studies at the University of Southampton. Often the most interesting items that come across my radar do so by chance. I was sitting in on a rare books seminar,

given by Helen Cole, when she produced a slim volume titled, *The History of Miss Betsey Warwick, the Female Rambler*. Supposedly 'founded on facts', this work is an example of a chapbook, popular items from the 17th to 19th century. These small booklets were cheap to make and easy to buy and covered a wide range of subjects. The narrative follows Betsey Warwick, who, during her various ramblings, adopts several male identities and is considered to be 'much too handsome for a man' by ladies in society. Within the work is an illustration of Betsey in men's attire above the following couplet:

*"Men some to Business some to Pleasure take,
But every Woman is at Heart a Rake."*

This quotation derives from an unfortunately misogynistic source: Alexander Pope. Yet within the context of Betsey's adventures dressed as a man, it takes on a new and positive meaning. I was immediately taken with the concept of women inhabiting and thriving in male spaces and wondered if there were any other examples within our collection.

It turns out, yes! The more I delved, the more fascinating stories I discovered. These included accounts of female soldiers donning male clothing, fooling their comrades and finding glory on the battlefield. One of these works, featured in the 'Soldiering' section of the exhibition, is *The life and surprising adventures of Mary Ann Talbot* and has been digitized as part of Chawton House's Novels Online Project. The first half of the exhibition focusses on women 'manning up' in a literal sense and is thus themed into 'Soldiering', 'Pirating' and 'Duelling'.

However, not all the women featured in Man Up! masqueraded as men in order to commit acts of bravery or violence. Some used their talents and influence to enter those male-dominated spaces thought not to be 'the business of a woman's life' - Robert Southey's words to Charlotte Brontë. In the second part of the exhibition, I included women who challenged the acceptable norms of female behaviour and placed them within the following themes: 'Landowning', 'Acting', 'Ballooning' and 'Writing'. The final section on writing is the largest, focussing first on Mary Wollstonecraft, once called a 'hyena in petticoats'. This attack on Wollstonecraft's lack of feminine decorum highlights the perils of a female author revealing herself, especially when the subject is politics. 'Writing' concludes with the Brontë sisters, who concealed their gender by adopting androgynous nom de plumes. They wished their work to be judged on merit alone, and given the experience of Wollstonecraft, their trepidation was not unfounded.

All previous exhibitions at Chawton House have focused entirely on books - understandable given the wealth of material within the collection. However, I wanted to include a broader range of media to convey the exhibition's narrative. One item in our main collection that I brought into focus is a portrait of George Sand by Jean-Baptiste Bizard (1847), which provided the opportunity to tell her fascinating story. I also set about acquiring loans from other organisations, including prints, textiles and other ephemera from the Brontë Parsonage, The National Aerospace Library, Hampshire Cultural Trust and Hampshire Records Office. The Brontë material was particularly exciting, as it was the first time these objects have been displayed in the south of England.

The advent of Covid-19 and the ensuing closure meant that very few people actually got to see the exhibition - heart-breaking given the amount of work that went into it. However, I have put 'Man Up!' onto the Chawton House website ([click here to visit](#)). This means that many who may never have visited Chawton House can now see the exhibition and learn about these brave and bold women, irrespective of the closure.

 Follow Clio: @ClioCliona



Ellora Sutton is a Creative Writing MA student from Hampshire. Her work has been published by Young Poets Network, Poetry News, The Cardiff Review, Poetry Birmingham Literary Journal, and Mookychick, amongst others. Her debut chapbook, *All the Shades of Grief* is forthcoming from Nightingale & Sparrow. You can find her on Twitter @ellora_sutton.

Hyena in Petticoats

I ask Mary Wollstonecraft: when did the metamorphosis begin

MW: with a papercut when I was five I let it fester to see how much of myself could grow around it the alchemy of air to skin

I: when did you realise

MW: laughing I laughed a whole burning palace! Versailles it came out of nowhere the first of a new genus

I: what other symptoms

MW: I became aware of how sharp my teeth are the power in them learnt a bigger language

I: & the petticoats

MW: Marie Antoinette's bedsheet the whites of your eyes

I: this bigger language

MW: smash a window you'll find it there

I: your daughter

MW: my pup I tore the sun off her with my own rough hyena tongue

I:

MW: I was unafraid of the fierceness I held



untethered

In 1785 Letitia Ann Sage became the first Englishwoman to fly in a balloon.

each cloud
could be a lady, swelling,
unbound,
petticoats shucked
each cloud
reclining female nude

the androgynous sun

calls me native
welcomes me
open-mouthed dissolving

as I ascend
blue, blue, blue
and
edgeless

I fill the entire sky

Creating a new visitor journey at Chawton House

Over the course of 2019, Visitor Experience Manager Louisa Carpenter was busy orchestrating a rehang of Chawton House. Here, she shares the thinking behind the changes, and some of the overlooked objects in the collection now receiving attention.

At Chawton House, stories are at the heart of everything we do. In the literal sense, our library shelves are filled with wonderful tales written for readers to escape into, but not only this: the authors themselves have lived astonishing and remarkable lives. The building tells a story of its own, one that weaves through over 400 years of history with a parade of interesting characters each leaving their mark. Each day that we're open to visitors we engage with them and learn about their own journeys to the house, what brought them here, and

what they're most excited about seeing. Our team of volunteers and staff are intrepid story hunters, continuously adding to our pool of knowledge and uncovering intriguing information. In short, storytelling is what we do.

I have now been at Chawton House for two and a half years, but it was at the end of my first year that the idea to re-tell the story of the house began to form. After many conversations with colleagues, volunteers, visitors and guests who we'd taken on tours it was striking that the story we told people as they moved through the rooms was not the story they received from the paintings, furnishings or information boards in those rooms. As the organisation transformed from research centre to museum, it felt as though the house's former purpose lingered. Many rooms were configured for reading, with large tables at their centre, and numerous chairs. The paintings were hung in a way to convey the sense of the building's age, and its identity as a place to promote women writers, but there was little sense of narrative.

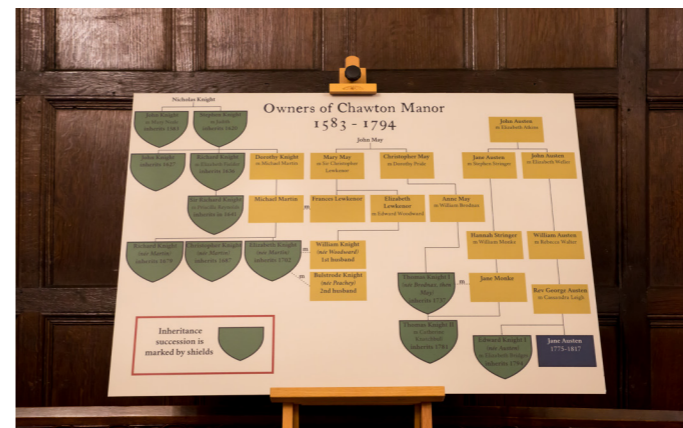
Once Katie Childs had started as Chief Executive in February 2019, conversations on doing something about this began and resulted in the 'rehang project', in which I was tasked with retelling the story of Chawton House, the Knight family, and the women writers ready for the launch of the 2020 visitor season. That summer we set to work, tasking our intern Yvonne Ramp to conduct initial research on the paintings and then working closely with a small project team consisting of myself, our tremendously helpful volunteer-come-archivist Martin Caddick, and later, when she was recruited, our new Curator and Collections Manager, Emma Yandle.



THE OAK ROOM, BEFORE (ABOVE), AND AFTER (BELOW)

The research conducted by Yvonne and Martin, which built on years of collections research (including very helpful *Female Spectator* articles) all fed into the thinking behind how the new layout would work. From early on we knew we wanted to switch the paintings round – moving the women writers upstairs and bringing the Knight family downstairs. This was not without its drawbacks – it had always felt fantastic to be able to say to visitors as they entered the Great Hall ‘can you notice what is different about this place compared to other properties? The walls are hung with women!’ However, this sacrifice meant that we were able to create the new women writers galleries, giving them much more prominent wall positions (visitors no longer have to crane their necks to admire Mary Robinson), and being able to tell their stories in a space purely focused on them.

The visitor journey still begins in the Great Hall but now, as visitors are told about the origins of the building, its early history and the story of the Knight family who built it, they can see portraits relevant to that story. The Great Hall is our most genuinely Jacobean space – with the original wooden panelling, complete with apotropaic (or witches) marks – and it feels appropriate in that space to have be-ruffed Knights staring down at you from above.



THE GREAT HALL & KNIGHT FAMILY TREE

In the Dining Room we wanted to capture imaginations and convey the sense of family and togetherness that the Great House must once have offered its occupants. Using stories from Fanny Knight's pocketbook as a reference, we re-imagined what a Knight family meal might have looked like in Jane Austen's time. During the spring of 1813, when Edward had relocated his clan to Chawton from Godmersham Park whilst renovations were taking place, Fanny recorded numerous occasions when the two Chawton households dined together. 'We dined at the Cottage' or 'The Cottage dined here' are noted with such frequency that occasionally she confuses where events took place, writing on 21st June: 'We drank tea at the Cottage, or else they here, I forget which'. Keeping the Knight dining table as the star piece, we have set the table with name-cards for a possible family meal and we ask visitors to imagine the hum of conversation, the teasing of family members, and the clang of cutlery that would have gone on. We have also included some other portraits, a silhouette of Fanny herself, an oil painting of Edward's son George Thomas Knight – looking every bit the dashing Regency gent, and then later paintings of Edward's successors, notably Montagu 'Monty' Knight, to whom the aesthetic of the house and grounds, even to this day, owe a great deal.



FANNY KNIGHT & GEORGE THOMAS KNIGHT (ABOVE), AND MONTY KNIGHT (BELOW)

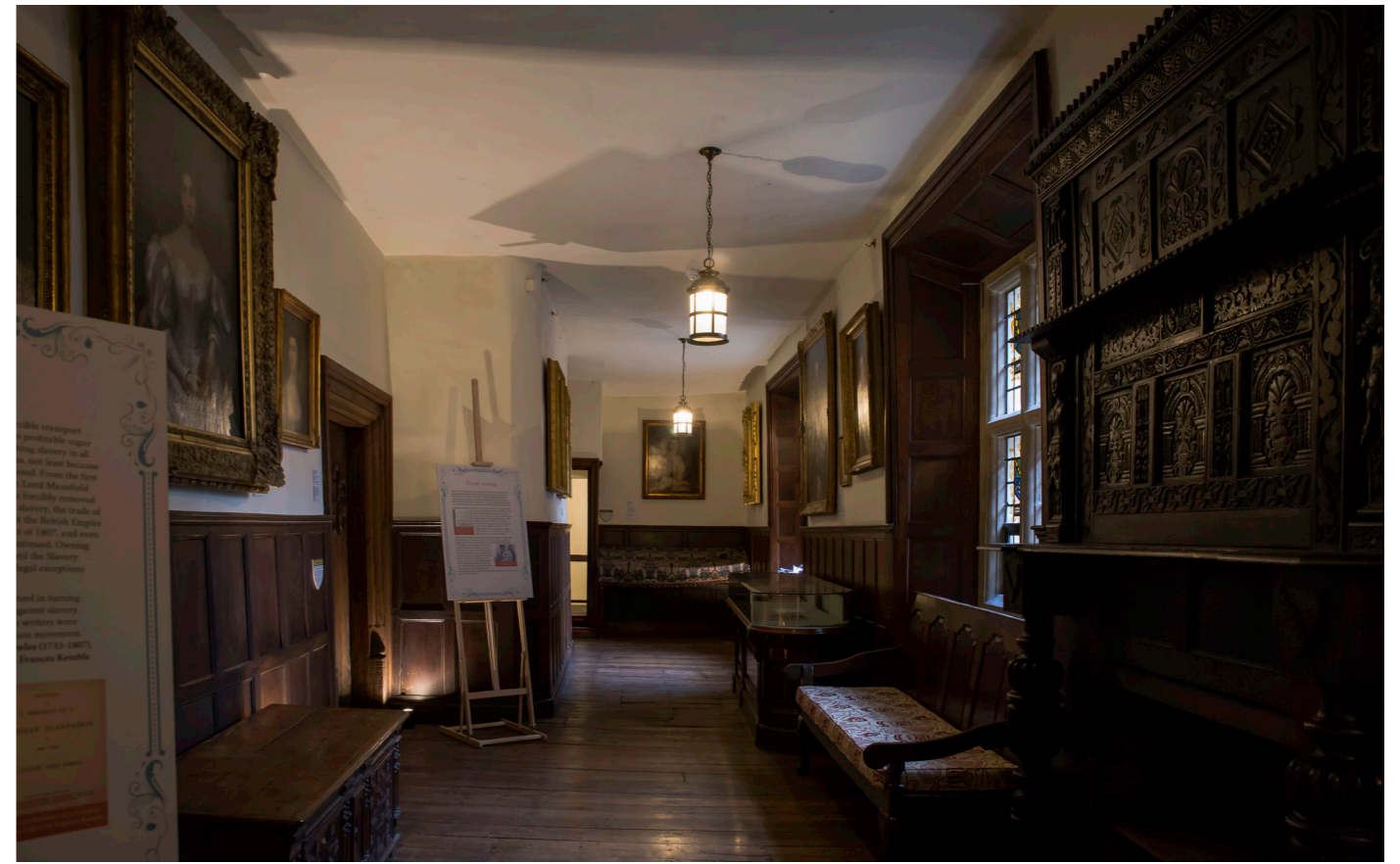
Monty's story was one we were keen to bring to the forefront. He resided at Chawton in the nineteenth century and he took the role of country squire very seriously, making continued alterations to enhance the Jacobean features of the manor and its grounds. Monty was a great cataloguer and it is thanks to his book *Chawton Manor and its Owners*, plus various records he kept, including an exercise book titled 'recollections of changes at Chawton since I was a small boy', that we know as much as we do about the house's history. A nice surprise when we moved the Knight portraits from the walls was that he had beaten us to it and already numbered and catalogued them, adding notes attached with his wax seal stamp.



MONTY'S STAMP (ABOVE), THE TAPESTRY GALLERY (BELOW), THE LONG GALLERY (P. 11)

Many of the building's quirky features are 'Montyisms', from antique wardrobe doors hung on a wall, to William Morris wallpaper, and the stained glass windows that adorn the Long Gallery. We have now made these more noticeable – with the addition of 'can you spot?' shields, hung throughout the house to point attention to them.

As the story moves upstairs to the Tapestry Gallery, visitors are shown different depictions of the estate over time and asked to consider how the landscape features of the gardens may have influenced Jane Austen's works and how her life in Chawton was at her most settled – back in her beloved Hampshire countryside having experienced the bustle of Bath and Southampton.



From here we move into two exhibition rooms in which our plan is to continue to highlight stories of women writers in our collection with annual exhibitions. We then enter the new permanent women writers galleries which encompass the Oak Room, the Long Gallery and a small Writing Room, previously closed to the public.

Portraits of women are grouped together by theme: from novelists to campaigners, to those working in the arts. This enables us to convey the true breadth of the areas in which these women worked, as well as the often difficult societal conditions in which they lived. We were keen to maintain the homely feel of the house, encouraging spaces to sit, read and reflect. Our aim is for visitors to soak up Austen's story and then be inspired, as she was, by her contemporaries and predecessors.

This story too, doesn't end here. In further phases of the project we hope to uncover and convey yet more of the fascinating narratives in our collections and to inspire future generations of writers and artists to work within the space. •

To find out more about the rehang project, you can [visit our website](#) to listen to our May podcast.

 Follow Louisa: @pastpampteer



Our portrait of Sarah Harriet Burney (1772–1844) formerly hung above the fireplace in the Upper Reading Room, seen only by visiting scholars and researchers. She has now moved to the Long Gallery, where she can be appreciated alongside her fellow women writers. Although now often eclipsed by her half-sister Frances Burney, Sarah published five successful novels in her career, travelled and lived in Continental Europe, wrote lively letters, and read widely, especially enjoying her 'prime favourite', Jane Austen.

Sickness, Productivity and the Archive

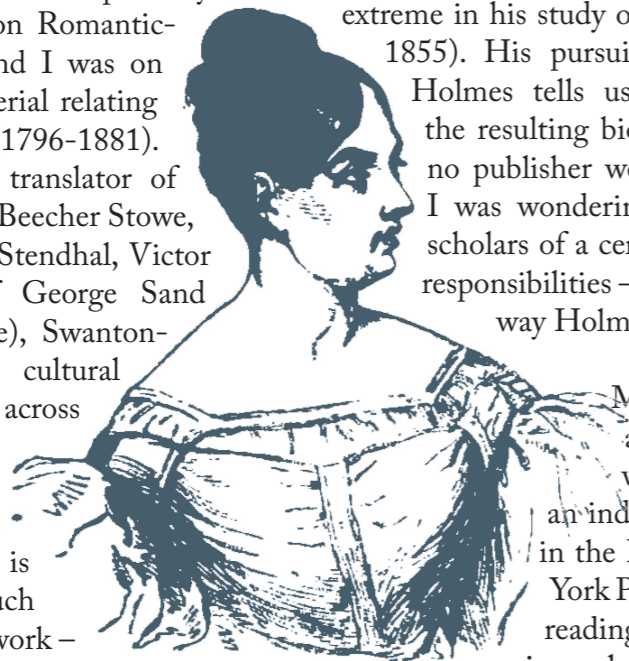
Gillian Dow

Dr. Gillian Dow is an Associate Professor in English at the University of Southampton, and was Executive Director at Chawton House from 2014–2019. She is currently working on a Leverhulme-funded book project which examines women writers and translation from 1750 to 1830.

Friday the 13th of March 2020 found me working in the manuscript reading room of the beautiful Bibliothèque Nationale Richelieu in Paris. It was the final research trip of my Leverhulme-funded project on Romantic-Period women translators, and I was on the hunt for manuscript material relating to Louise Swanton-Belloc (1796-1881). Biographer of Lord Byron, translator of Dickens, Gaskell and Harriet Beecher Stowe, friend of Maria Edgeworth, Stendhal, Victor Hugo and acquaintance of George Sand (whom she didn't much like), Swanton-Belloc was one of those cultural mediators who worked across national borders. Of Franco-Irish descent, she published exclusively in French: archival material relating to her is scattered across Paris, and much further afield. Her published work – like the work of so many translators, both male and female – has been neglected because of concerns about 'originality', and perhaps because so much of it appears anonymously in neglected French periodicals of the early nineteenth century. But I had recently read Swanton-Belloc's passionate, witty and informative letters at the National Library of Scotland and in Girton College, Cambridge. And I was increasingly obsessed with her.

Much has been written about self-identification with the authors one studies, and about obsession

and biography more particularly. I often return to Richard Holmes's seminal study of the Romantic biographer, a work I read as a set text at school in Yorkshire in the early 1990s. *Footsteps* (1985) provided me with my first introduction to Mary Wollstonecraft (somewhat curiously, with hindsight: Wollstonecraft lived in Beverley, spending formative years just a few miles away from my own home). Holmes writes brilliantly about the parallels between his own life in Paris during the 'événements' of May 1968 and Wollstonecraft's time in the city in the aftermath of the September massacres of 1792. But Holmes's self-identification is at its most extreme in his study of Gérard de Nerval (1808-1855). His pursuit of this Romantic poet, Holmes tells us, nearly drove him mad: the resulting biography was confused, and no publisher would touch it. Increasingly, I was wondering to what extent women scholars of a certain age – and with caring responsibilities – could be driven mad in the way Holmes so eloquently describes.



My own archival trips abroad, so necessary for my work, feel like time stolen, an indulgence. I spent two weeks in the Berg collection in the New York Public library in March 2019 reading Frances Burney's French journals. The latter demonstrate Burney's complete and unwavering devotion to the education of her son Alex: as I read, I felt overwhelmed with guilt at being away from my own boy of exactly the same age. When I returned, he clung to me with animal whimpers for several days, and I promised never to leave him for such a length of time again. But the damage was done, it seems: he still talks about 'that time mummy went away for a really long time' with the accusatory manner small children excel in. It's not at all original, of course, to think about the room of one's own, or



JOHN MURRAY ARCHIVE, NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND

the pram in the hallway, in relation to writing and motherhood. The tremendous productivity of certain eighteenth and nineteenth century women does not always help. For every Jane Austen, with only the care of remote nieces, or the occasional creak of a door, to interrupt her, there's a Charlotte Smith, or an Elizabeth Gaskell, writing to feed their families, remarkable for their 'outputs'. Austen herself wrote in September 1816 of her 'astonishment' that Jane West could have been so productive 'with all her family cares'. I compare myself to women then and now, and I always find myself wanting.

Friday 13th March 2020 was not, however, business as usual. The previous evening, I had watched President Macron's speech announcing the closure of Parisian schools from Monday 16th in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Naively, I had not realised the full implication of Macron's words. I walked to the library, washed my hands, read, washed my hands, read some more. I transcribed a letter of Bessie Rayner Parkes (1829-1925), the educationalist and feminist campaigner, Louise Swanton-Belloc's daughter-in-law and mother to her literary grandchildren Hilaire Belloc and Marie Lowndes. Writing in French from her home in London to educationalist Luce Herpin (1825-1914) in Paris, Rayner Parkes described being bedridden with a 'grippe' for twelve days. Those eighteenth and nineteenth-century epistles, with their pages and pages of detail about their health, and the health of their loved ones – how amusing! When I went to return my material to the issue desk,

and tried to put a box aside for the next day, I learned that the archives would be closing for the foreseeable future. Of course. The weekend saw me scrambling to get back to the UK, as Paris shut down. When I arrived at the airport on Sunday 15th, on the off-chance I could be put on a flight (it was impossible to contact anyone by phone or email), people looked frightened. I was frightened myself.

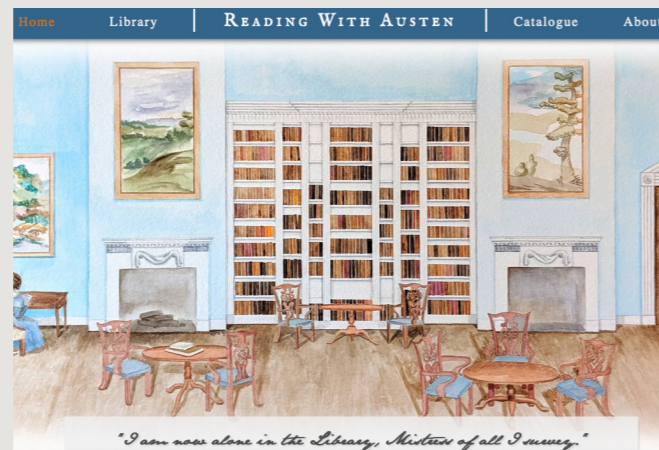
The comparisons are glib, and I am acutely conscious of hyperbole, not to mention the dangers of using military rhetoric to describe anything related to public health. But politicians tell us this is a war, and it certainly provokes in me the dread, anxiety and crucially the powerlessness that scholars know have been felt by women through the ages. At times, I can amuse myself thinking about a turn around the room – so refreshing – or the cup of leaf tea in a posh cup that I now make sure I have at 4pm every day: routine is everything. Mostly, though, I sit. I talk to my son about why he might feel 'sad' and how I can help with that. I coax him through an exercise on adverbs of time and manner, and thoughts of Swanton-Belloc – desperately trying to finish a translation while heavily pregnant with her third child – intrude. I wonder what it must have felt like for her to nurse a newborn while the July 1830 revolution raged outside her central Paris window. Despite my largely inexplicable exhaustion, I drag my little family on an early morning, socially-distanced, walk, and I think of Swanton-Belloc, 'walking for health' round the volcanoes in the Auvergne, and wonder: 'perimenopause'? I worry about my mother in law in France, self-isolating with emphysema and type two diabetes; my mother in Yorkshire, waiting for an urgent operation that has now been postponed indefinitely; my sister in London, a civil servant working on Covid-19 response, and unable to talk about it. I think about Swanton-Belloc, newly widowed, and desperate for news of children and grandchildren in Britain and France as the Prussians invade her home in La Celle St Cloud in the war of 1870, destroying much of her rich correspondence in the process. I am grateful for FaceTime and Microsoft Teams, for the ease and effectiveness of modern communication, for my garden, for my relative job security, and for Zoom locktails. But I think – constantly, anxiously – about productivity, or rather the lack of it.

An article dated April 21st in *Inside Higher Ed*, titled 'No Room of One's Own', is subheaded 'Early journal submission data suggest Covid-19 is tanking women's research productivity', and explores the domestic and affective labour that falls to women, and the gender inequalities that are exacerbated by the current Covid-19 restrictions. This is unsurprising. But I'm certain I'm not alone in feeling that 'leaning in' is not a response to the current crisis, or indeed the crisis in universities or the humanities more broadly. I have been thinking, more than usual, about the importance of collaboration, of collective resistance of a metrics-driven approach to our work, and about – shockingly – being kinder, and doing less. Here, too, I've been thinking about Swanton-Belloc. A great deal of her own work was collaborative. Throughout her adult life, she lived close to, and worked closely with, Adelaide de Montgolfier, the daughter of balloonist Jacques-Étienne Montgolfier. Adelaide was unmarried, and served as a mother by proxy to Swanton-Belloc's three children. The two published a periodical for young girls, *La Ruche*, and co-wrote a great many articles. Sometimes, it's impossible to identify which of them wrote what. There's a certain wistfulness in Swanton-Belloc's letter from just outside Paris to John Murray III in London, dated October 1840 and therefore written at 'a time when the political horizon is darkening, and when dissension may arise between our two countries'. I read it on a cold November day in Edinburgh last year:

"I have been very lazy of late, being all engrossed by the education of my boy, the very one who was born in June 1830, at the moment of your first visit to Paris. I read, write, and explain Greek and Latin all day, which is rather a silly occupation for a person who has passed 'lang syne' her school days."

Swanton-Belloc's 'lazy' and 'silly' days are full of a different kind of productivity. This is not, perhaps, a productivity that will speak directly to John Murray III, one of the leading London-based publishers of the age. But it is certainly one that speaks to those of us currently educating our children at home, occupied with the domestic and the quotidian, and wondering when – or indeed if – we shall return to our scholarship, our books, and our archives. •

VITAL RESOURCES FOR THE LOCKED DOWN LIT LOVER



Reading with Austen

*A digital recreation of the library Jane Austen used when she visited her brother Edward in Kent.
Designed by Professor Peter Sabor.*

FutureLearn

Online courses and degrees from leading universities or organisations on broad-ranging topics from history and literature to psychology and mental health.

ODSECS

The Open Digital Seminar in Eighteenth-Century Studies brings together researchers in eighteenth-century literature and culture for conversation, debate, and sociability in monthly seminars.

The Hidden Histories Podcast

Explores subjects that the textbooks hid, held-back, or hijacked, starting with a 6-part series on 'The Great Forgetting: Women Writers Before Austen'.

Chawton House

Lockdown Literary Festival

The full playlist of talks on the Chawton House YouTube channel, featuring a wide array of novelists, academics and heritage workers discussing women's life and writing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.



Jane Austen in a Time of Coronavirus Alison Daniell

As well as being in lockdown with the rest of the UK over the past few months, I have been in the curious position of also being a lockdown activity myself. Along with three colleagues from the University of Southampton, I have been tutoring on a mass open online course (MOOC) 'Jane Austen: Myth, Reality and Global Celebrity'. It is free (always my favourite price) and guides learners through aspects of Austen's life, work and legacy via a variety of tailor-made tutorials, videos and external digital resources. On this run, we had more than two and a half thousand participants from all round the globe.

The combination of learning, thinking and being part of a world-wide virtual community is a powerful restorative. The conversations on the message boards are always lively and interesting but this time there was a particular edge to the course. Although there is plenty of shade as well as light in Austen's novels, her writing has traditionally been a refuge during times of stress and uncertainty. So, although we were all there to learn about Jane, there was a sense that we were also immersing ourselves in a soothing fictional world as a cultural antidote to events elsewhere. The Jane Austen Society of North America recommended us as a lockdown activity so we knew we would have a number of participants joining us specifically as a virtual retreat from the pandemic. As a team, we

made sure we referenced this – not frequently – but enough to acknowledge the external situation and to build a sense of community within the group. We were also aware that some of our learners were frontline healthcare workers, using the course as a safe place to recuperate after finishing their shifts.

Teaching Austen is always a privilege but to know that we were, in a small way, helping those who were (and are) putting their lives on the line, was a humbling experience. What Austen herself would think of being a refuge in times of trouble, we will of course never know. Although as an author who lived through the Napoleonic wars (with two brothers in the navy), was alive to the miseries of the slave trade, and who herself suffered greatly during her final illness, I feel she would be happy that her work has provided uplift and solace during a dark moment in world history. •

*Jane Austen:
Myth, Reality and Global Celebrity
is tutored by postgraduate students
Alison Daniell and Alastair Dawson,
and course designers Gillian Dow and Kim Simpson,
and features films created at Chawton House.
The next run begins 22nd June 2020.*

[Click here to sign up](#)



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Notes from the Reading Room

Despite the disruption caused by Covid-19, Chawton House's dedicated reading group have continued to meet each month to discuss works by or about eighteenth- and nineteenth-century women writers. 2020 saw discussions of Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814), Hester Lynch Piozzi/Thrale's *Anecdotes of the Late Samuel Johnson* (1786), and Jane Porter's, *Thaddeus of Warsaw* (1803).

From April, our sessions took a new format as we began to meet online using Microsoft Teams. The group was able to master the technology, and it was a joy, in the midst of full lockdown, to meet virtually and escape into the saucy world of early eighteenth-century theatre with Mary Pix's *The Innocent Mistress* (1697) & Susanna Centlivre's *The Busybody* (1709). Our discussion considered women's legal status, disguise and crossdressing, bigamy, references to empire and colonialism, cynicism about marriage, a society on the make but obsessed with inheritance, and the potential for and pitfalls of modern adaptations of works like these. Our final

meeting before Summer break was to discuss the fascinating anonymous text *The Histories of Some of the Penitents in the Magdalen House* (1760). We talked about radicalism, authorship, and restorative female community.

Meetings recommence in August, led by Postdoctoral Fellow Kim Simpson and [you can find the 2020/21 book list by clicking here.](#)



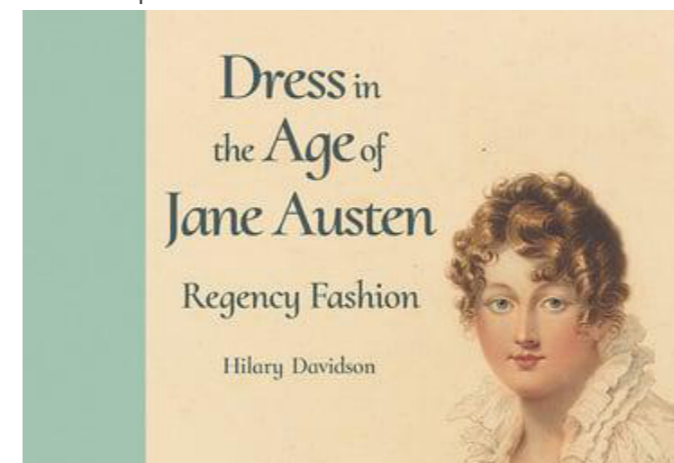
Over a weekend in mid-May, Chawton House hosted an innovative digital festival, offering workshops, lectures, interviews, and Q&A sessions on a wide range of topics, from women refugees in poetry to eighteenth-century female pirates, from the very well-known – Jane Austen, Mary Wollstonecraft – to the obscure – Jane West or Louise Swanton-Belloc.



THE PERILS OF BALLOONING



4 O'CLOCK COCKTAILS WITH GILLIAN DOW



HILARY DAVIDSON'S BOOK

We were joined by writers of novels and poetry, including Wendy Moore, Natalie Jenner – whose moving talk on writing about the Jane Austen society for her forthcoming novel remains a firm YouTube favourite – Joanna Trollope, Therese Kieran, Lisa Andrews, Gill Hornby, and Janet Todd. Austen descendent Caroline Knight gave us a wonderful glimpse into her childhood growing up at Chawton House, whilst journalist Sharon Wright spoke on her new book about female balloonists, and journalist Bee Rowlatt relived her travels through Scandinavia in the footsteps of Mary Wollstonecraft. We heard from the Chawton House team, who gave talks and answered questions on Jane Austen's *Emma*, women's rights in the long eighteenth century, managing the estate, the 2020 exhibition, 'Man Up!' and the secrets of Chawton House. We also heard from neighbouring heritage sites – Gilbert White's House and Jane Austen's House. We laughed with comedienne Alison Larkin, and admired the work of artist Louisa Albani. Creative writing workshops by Claire Thurlow and Sinéad Keegan proved immensely popular. We heard from scholars on a delicious variety of topics: Julie Wheelwright (masquerade), Rebecca James (female pirates), Alison Daniell (female landowners), Devoney Looser (famous Janes), Emma Clery (the Jane Austen Society), Gillian Dow (Jane Austen's publisher, John Murray II – accompanied by fabulous themed cocktails), Janine Barchas (Jane Austen's translations), Jennie Batchelor (embroidery) and Hilary Davidson (Regency dress).

The response has been superb, with viewing numbers continuing to rise, and ongoing conversations on social media. If you missed it, you can still see many of the videos on our YouTube channel, or join the conversation on Twitter: #ChawtonLitFest •

The Face of Frances Kemble Emma Yandle

In the five months since my appointment as the first Curator of Chawton House, I have become familiar with the faces of the women – writers, artists, actresses, campaigners – who grace our walls. Yet when writing new labels for artworks during this year's re-hang, the extent of what we don't yet know about these paintings became clear. Many of our portraits show the telltale signs of cautious attribution: sitters are often 'traditionally identified as' or 'believed to be', and artists listed as the 'school' or 'follower' of an established name, rather than definitively determined. Labelling our artworks for the public is often a balancing act between what we know with certainty about their sitters and creators, and Chawton House's mission to promote the stories and achievements of pioneering women in the arts. It is only through strong research into the provenance of our paintings of women writers that we can rescue them from the anonymity of the fallback title, 'Portrait of a Lady'. How, then, does one go about researching the history of a painting?

One that I have recently turned my attention to is our portrait of Frances or Fanny Kemble (Figure 1). Measuring at over a metre high with its ornate frame, it is one of the largest oil paintings in our collection. This portrait bears all the hallmarks of cautious attribution, for both the sitter and the artist. It is identified by the proto-museum label (a plaque attached to the front of the frame) as 'A Portrait of Fanny Kemble, by a follower of Thomas Lawrence'. From this starting point, through connections with other artworks, as well what lies on the reverse of the canvas, I have been able to unravel some of the mysteries of its provenance.

Frances Kemble is now largely known as the writer of *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation in 1838-1839* (1863), an account of her American husband's Georgian plantations that highlighted the



FIGURE 1.
PORTRAIT OF A LADY THOUGHT TO BE FRANCES KEMBLE (1809-1893), FOLLOWER OF THOMAS LAWRENCE (1769-1830). DATE UNKNOWN. OIL ON CANVAS. CHAWTON HOUSE.

brutality experienced by his enslaved workers. As well as writing plays, poetry and publishing memoirs, her artistic career began on the stage. She hailed from the theatrical Kemble family, her aunt the pre-eminent tragedienne Sarah Siddons. Frances caused a sensation when she debuted as Juliet at the Covent Garden Theatre in 1829. In our painting we see her as a young woman, wearing a white satin gown with the voluminous gigot sleeves so in vogue during the 1830s. She sits, holding in her hands a small red volume, with a blue and gold shawl wrapped loosely around one arm. Surface varnish must be removed for background details to be more clearly visible, but we can see she is seated near a column (on the right), with a landscape in the background (on the left). Her hair is parted in the middle, bunched in curls either side, with a gold hairband completing the look. Are we looking at a likeness of Frances Kemble as the frame-label states? And what is her link to one of the most famous painters of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Thomas Lawrence? There are a number of well-authenticated paintings



FIGURE 2.
FANNY KEMBLE AND HER AUNT, MRS. SIDDONS, HENRY PERRONET BRIGGS, (1791/93-1844). C. 1830-31. OIL ON CANVAS. IMAGE COURTESY BOSTON ATHENÆUM.



FIGURE 3.
PORTRAIT OF MISS KEMBLE, AFTER A DRAWING BY LAWRENCE (GARLICK 1964, P.231). 1830. LITHOGRAPH ON CHINE COLLÉ © THE TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

of Frances Kemble. In the UK, a portrait from her later years is held by the National Portrait Gallery, but most are housed in galleries in the United States, where she lived for many years. A magnificent work in which her appearance bears similarities to our painting was gifted by Kemble to the Boston Athenæum in 1863 (Figure 2). It is a dual portrait with Sarah Siddons, commissioned by the Kemble family as a symbolic passing of the torch from one generation to another: but this is not by Thomas Lawrence. When Frances made her stage debut, aged 20, as Juliet, Thomas Lawrence was 60. The history of his earlier tragic romantic entanglements with the Siddons family cannot be adequately covered by this short article. Yet Frances Kemble herself retains a notable place in Lawrence's biography as the last person to sit for him before he died. His drawing of her was the final work he is known to have produced. Lawrence died suddenly on 7th January 1830, only weeks after meeting Frances. It is Lawrence's drawing of Kemble that has become the most ubiquitous image of her. This is in spite of the original being lost, for the very month it was drawn, it was engraved as a purchasable portrait of the popular actress and beauty (Figure 3). The intimate nature of the drawing is maintained by the delicate figuration and particularly the inclusion of the drawing's original inscription: in the bottom left hand-corner we see, in Lawrence's own hand, that it was a gift for Frances' mother: 'To Mrs. Charles Kemble, with Sir Th(omas) Lawrence's Respects'. By comparing this engraving to our painting, the prior labelling and attribution become clear. The similarities are undeniable, from the costuming to the posture, and it offers compelling evidence that Kemble is our sitter. However, there are some notable differences between the two depictions, to which I will return.

The story of how Lawrence's drawing of Kemble came to be, and an interesting revelation concerning his presentaiton of her, is contained in Kemble's own memoir, *Records of a Girlhood* (1878). She explains that Lawrence did not merely want to record her likeness, but planned to produce a painting of her in the role that made her famous: Shakespeare's Juliet. Sketches by John Doyle of Kemble on-stage (now in the collection of the British Museum), confirm that Lawrence has shown

her in costume. Such a painting was of course never completed, due to Lawrence's untimely death. Yet we can now place our painting of Frances Kemble into a specific artistic tradition: that of an actor depicted in the guise of the role that defined them. Such is the case with another of our portraits, that of Mary Robinson by John Hoppner, in the role of Perdita from *The Winter's Tale*.

In one way then, our oil painting has fulfilled Lawrence's original desire to paint Kemble as Juliet (although it is far from the style or quality of his own work). When and why our painting came to be created, can be guessed at from the information concealed on its reverse. Having taken the portrait off the wall during our rehang, I discovered that another, older, frame-label was attached to the back, reading 'Miss Fanny Kemble | Sir Thomas Lawrence'. It has become clear that this label was removed by Chawton House when we acquired

the painting in 2006, likely for the understandable reason that it incorrectly attributes the work to Lawrence. And yet, as the backs of things in the art world so often do, it is the back of this older label that holds intriguing information. A hand-written note, that appears to be nineteenth-century, states that the portrait was 'painted for the family'. This offers tantalizing provenance, suggesting that our painting was a commission by Kemble's relatives.

The back of the canvas itself holds further clues. In the nineteenth century, companies that produced materials for artists, including canvases, were known as Artist's Colourmen. They stamped or stenciled their products with distinctive labels, identifying the firm and its address. Thanks to pioneering research by Cathy Proudlove and Jacob Simon, the National Portrait Gallery have produced a catalogue of these labels. If one is present on the back of a canvas, it is possible to narrow down the date range within which it must have been produced. Our portrait of Frances Kemble, bears such a stamp (see Figure 4). It is possible to decipher that our canvas was produced by Lechertier Barbe & Co., an Anglo-French firm based at 60 Regent Street, London. Helpfully, they traded under different names throughout the nineteenth century, allowing us to narrow the date range within which the canvas was sold down to 1859-1897. Conclusively then, our painting could not have been created before 1859, when Frances was 50 years old.

The National Portrait Gallery database records two other artworks with the same specific design of stamp on their canvas, both dated to 1874. This is suggestive of the year of our painting's creation, but not conclusive. There is however further evidence that it was created after 1872. This was the year that Lawrence's likeness of Frances was repurposed for a new engraving, created for the American publication, *Portrait Gallery of Eminent Men and Women of Europe and America* by Evert A. Duyckinck (see Figure 5). Kemble is once again shown as 'Juliet', but her surroundings have been altered: and it is here that the pillar, shown in our painting, now appears. It seems highly likely that our work was created after this depiction.

Our painting can be thus be dated to between 1872 and 1897. This is still quite a range and further work will be required to narrow it down. Yet it was clearly produced in the final decades of Kemble's life, if not posthumously (she died in 1893). How different an

atmosphere the painting has, when we know its youthful depiction of Frances at the very outset of her career was created so much later in her life. If the hand-written annotation can be authenticated, it is touching to consider why the family would have wanted a portrait of her, in the prime of youth and fame, at this time. Yet what are we to make of the final distinguishing details of our artwork, not found in the Lawrence drawing, or the later engraving: the small red volume in her hands and the blue and gold shawl? It is tempting to add all the pieces together: Frances the actress has been preserved but expanded into Frances the writer. If this work were painted for her family, it is tantalising to read it as a symbolic depiction of Kemble's creativity and achievements.

And yet, a further discovery muddies the water. I have come across another painting, also attributed to a 'follower of Thomas Lawrence'. Another young woman, with nothing to identify her as Frances Kemble, sits in front of a pillar, with a blue and gold shawl wrapped around one arm and a small red volume in her hands. The likeness is unmistakable and cannot be coincidental. Without further information they cannot be attributed to the same artist, but now the book appears merely a genteel prop, or an artistic convention denoting refinement of taste. My reading of our portrait of Frances Kemble is called into question.

When interpreting paintings, as with literature, what is present in the work need not be confined to the intentions of its creator. I am concerned with rigorous research into our collection, but also how such information can be used to encourage engagement with early women's literature. My research has offered new avenues through which we can tell Frances Kemble's story and the painting itself, like a text, suggests different readings. As such, this portrait – now confidently identified as of Frances Kemble – can contribute to



Fanny Kemble
Litho. from a painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence

FIGURE 5.
FANNY KEMBLE, STEEL ENGRAVING BY JOHNSON WILSON, & CO., AFTER PAINTING BY ALONZO CHAPPEL AFTER PAINTING BY SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE. IMAGE COURTESY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS

Chawton House's mission to unite its library and art collections into a dual experience for visitors. I hope that one day we will be able to display Frances' memoir, *Records of a Girlhood*, in which she returns later in life (rather like our painting) to her time sitting for Lawrence as 'Juliet', alongside our artwork: placing her own book into her hands. •

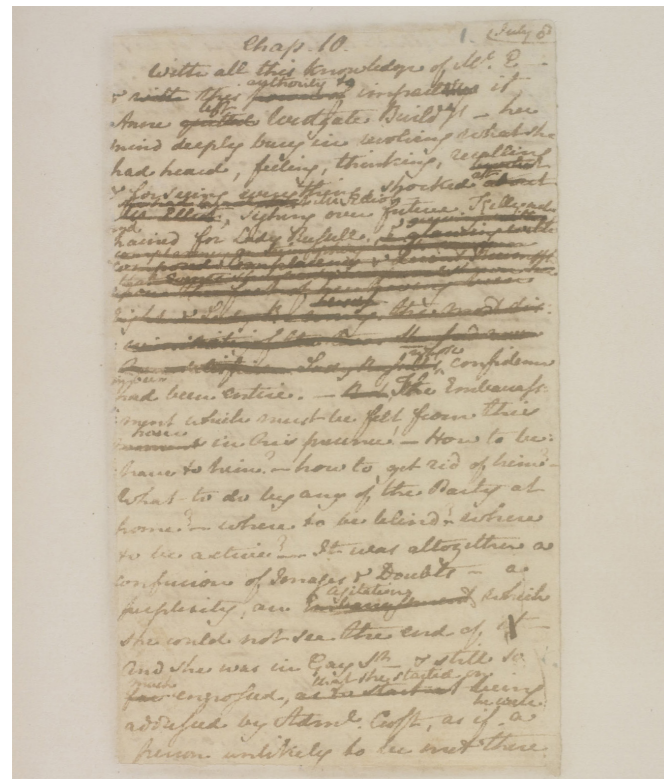


FIGURE 4.
CANVAS STAMP ON PORTRAIT OF A LADY THOUGHT TO BE FRANCES KEMBLE, READING "LEC]HERTIER BARBE & C[O] [60] [RE]GENT STREET LONDO[N]". CHAWTON HOUSE.

'The Pen has been in Their Hands': Jane Austen and the Art of Revision

Amy Franklin-Willis

Iconic French writer Colette said a writer is someone who puts down everything that comes into her head, but an author 'can judge his own stuff's worth, without pity, and destroy most of it.' The British Library provides the rare opportunity to observe Jane Austen performing as an author. It holds the world's only surviving manuscript pages of an Austen novel, written in her own hand, that she planned and completed for publication – two cancelled chapters from *Persuasion*, the novel published posthumously in 1818.



JANE AUSTEN, MANUSCRIPT OF CHAPTERS 10 AND 11 FROM *PERSUASION*. BRITISH LIBRARY [EGERTON MS 3038]

The chapters contain an alternative ending from the published version and consist of sixteen unnumbered leaves of laid paper, watermarked 1812 and written in brown iron-gall ink. Austen composed the pages during a ten-day period in July 1816. Only two months earlier she had visited Cheltenham Spa to take the waters for ongoing back pain¹ but her diminishing health cannot be perceived through the handwriting. It is precise, elegantly slanted, and economical. She uses all of the page available.

The text is difficult to read due to its small size and numerous correction marks.

In one section on page nineteen, Austen has deleted and substituted so much that further revision is impossible and she is forced to paste a small patch of paper over the passage. To imagine Austen realizing she can revise no further, solving the problem by writing on a separate paper, cutting it out, and pasting it to the manuscript offers a touching and intimate glimpse of her performing an ordinary task as part of her writing process. It is also evidence of the basic tools available to long-form writers during her time. The cancelled chapters resolve the courtship plot by having heroine Anne Elliot speak privately with her former fiancé Captain Wentworth. When he determines that Anne's alleged engagement to another man is false, their love is re-affirmed through a very restrained scene. The two lovers – separated eight years before – sit alone in a room, declaring their feelings for one another not through their own words but through actions: 'silent, but...powerful Dialogue' exchanged through looks of understanding and touch: 'a hand taken and pressed.' The revelation of feelings between the two is implied rather than explicitly stated.

In the draft completed on 16 July, 1816, the novel ends with commentary about secondary character Mrs. Smith, a sickly widower. While Mrs. Smith's character has an important role in the novel – she exposes Mr. Elliot, the cousin seeking to become Anne's husband – she is far from the focus of *Persuasion* and this ending seems an odd narrative choice. Austen must have agreed as only two days later, on 18 July, exactly one year before her death, she strikes through the 'Finis' penned on the 16th and composes again: 'She (Anne) gloried in being a Sailor's wife, but she must pay the tax of quick alarm, for belonging to that Profession which is... more distinguished in its Domestic Virtues, than in its National Importance!'² This concludes the story with the focus on the happy heroine and her beloved Captain Wentworth.

Both Cassandra Austen and Austen's biographer nephew James Austen-Leigh report that Austen continued work on the manuscript into the first week of August 1816 as she remained unsatisfied with the ending. In the printed version of *Persuasion*, first published in 1818 in conjunction with *Northanger Abbey*, sections of the cancelled chapters are threaded amongst a radically different denouement scene. Instead of a private conversation between Anne and Captain Wentworth, Austen creates a grand set piece at the White Hart Hotel where no fewer than six people fill the stage. Anne has a discussion with Captain Harville on whether men or women are more naturally prone to be faithful in love during which Austen gives Anne the famous lines: 'Men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story. Education has been theirs in so much higher a degree; the pen has been in their hands.'³ Anne's answers inspire Captain Wentworth to hope she may still have feelings for him and he dashes off a letter to her, still in the midst of the group, declaring his undying devotion to her. The quiet restraint and silent communication from the previous version are exchanged for written passion: 'I have loved none but you...For you alone I think and plan...I can hardly write.'⁴ Is this ending more effective? At the least, it is more affecting. Its complexity and drama make the original scene pale in comparison. Anne's monologue on women's lack of access to education and thus to writing their own stories is reason enough to be thankful that Austen persevered onward to this revision.

The *Persuasion* cancelled chapters allow us to go beyond the image of Austen demurely writing at her table in Chawton Cottage to catching her in the intense messy labor of creation – striking through words, cutting, pasting, deciding the work is good enough. Then returning to the manuscript days later with pen in her hand, because she was wrong. It was not yet good enough. Austen the author remains resolute even when enduring the illness that will eventually kill her. She judges her work, without pity, and continues revising until her perfect vision of the novel is, at last, Finis. •

¹ E. J. Clery. *Jane Austen The Banker's Sister*. London: Biteback Publishing, 2017, p. 278.

² MS, Egerton 3038, holograph manuscript fragment of *Persuasion*, London: British Library, p. 29.

³ Jane Austen. *Persuasion*. New York: Bantam Classic, 2008, p. 251.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

Of the nine existing Austen fiction manuscripts, the British Library contains three: two volumes of Austen's Juvenilia and the Persuasion chapters. The remaining fiction manuscripts are held in three different collections: Oxford's Bodleian Library, Cambridge's King's College Cambridge and the Morgan Library & Museum in New York. Chawton House holds one manuscript in Jane Austen's hand: a stage adaptation of Samuel Richardson's novel Sir Charles Grandison. Austen family tradition suggests that it was dictated to Austen by her niece, Anna.

Amy Franklin-Willis is the author of the novel The Lost Saints of Tennessee (2012). She is currently undertaking the Jane Austen MA programme offered at the University of Southampton.

Notes from the Garden



It has been a joy to work in Chawton House's garden surrounded by the fresh, green foliage and bright flowers of spring shrubs, fruit trees, Banksia roses, prolific herbs and the trees in the Wilderness as they spring into life. There are weeds in abundance, the increased buzzing of bees and the constant chatter of birds – swifts, bullfinches, chaffinches, sparrows, and the blue tits in their hidden nest in the veg garden box hedge, and of course the robins, squabbling to get to the worms that have just been dug up while weeding the Shrubbery border! The wild garlic is flowering along Lime Walk, following the excellent display of snowdrops, narcissi and bluebells through spring. The greenhouse has been home to tomatoes, courgettes, squash and cucumber, with seedlings of summer sunflowers, cleome, marigolds, and cosmos all waiting to be planted into containers and herbaceous borders. Mowing and edging the lawns has been done weekly with winding paths mown through the orchard to let the wild flowers grow; the gate from the Walled Garden to the Shrubbery is now open; and the rose garden has been pruned and tidied up ready for opening.

Julia Weaver, Gardener, Chawton House



Hot off the heels of the successful literary festival in the middle of May, Chawton House hosted another virtual festival in the final weekend of May, but this time the garden, not the house, took centre stage in a bid to bring a little of the beautiful Hampshire countryside to the homes of our global audience. Writing coach Claire Thurlow returned to lead another two successful creative writing workshops, in which she invited participants to increase their wellbeing, and craft themselves a garden writing retreat, whilst our in-house photographer Claire Lewis shared her expertise in a photography tutorial and a display of her images of Chawton House. A virtual tour of the beautiful gardens was given by volunteer Yvette Carpenter, and this was complemented by volunteer Pat Brough's tour of her allotment, and Clio O'Sullivan's Jane Austen Garden trail, which allowed watchers to follow in Jane's footsteps, stopping off at iconic spots around the garden and learning about how they may have influenced Austen's works. Chawton House gardener Julia Weaver laid out her future plans for the garden, led a tutorial on potting succulents, and introduced audiences

to some of the unusual plants found at Chawton House. Professional storyteller Amanda Edmiston retold the fascinating life story of botanist Elizabeth Blackwell, whose beautiful volume *A Curious Herbal* (1737-39) was the inspiration for our herb garden (pictured below). Nature-lover and author Bex Partridge instructed us on how to create with dried flowers – the topic of her latest book *Everlastings*. We enjoyed further talks from Rebecca Lilley (Godmersham Park) on the architect and garden designer Sir Edwin Lutyens; Katie Childs (Director of Chawton House) on the women in our collection who wrote about plants; and Professor Stephen Bending (University of Southampton), who was interviewed by Postdoctoral Fellow Kim Simpson about his current research on pleasure gardens in the long eighteenth century. Our headline event saw writer Kim Wilson (*At Home with Jane Austen; Tea with Jane Austen; In the Garden with Jane Austen*) discuss how gardens appear in Austen's work, and how her characters react to nature.

Talks remain available on our YouTube channel.



Saving Chawton House: A History

Martin Caddick

PART I OF 4

At the time of writing, most of the world is locked down under coronavirus restrictions and Chawton House is under threat. The house, once owned by Jane Austen's brother, Edward, has stood for well over 400 years, and we hope it will survive and continue to give pleasure for hundreds of years to come. Yet not so long ago it was in a desperate, dilapidated state with an uncertain future and needing millions spending on it. This article is the first part of the story of how it came to fall into disrepair, and how it was saved.

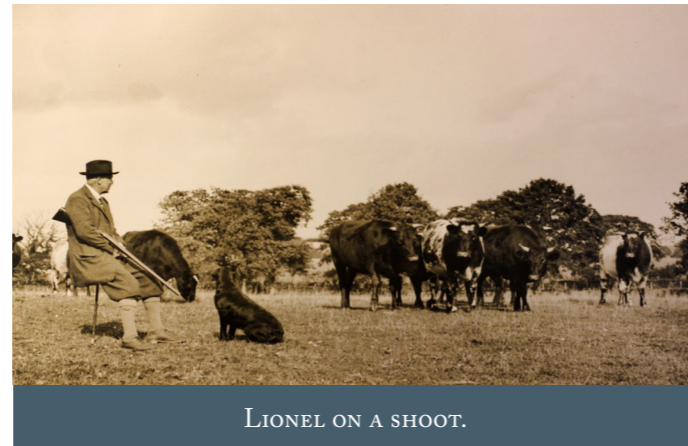
At the end of the 19th century, Montagu Knight lived in Chawton House together with his wife, Florence. When he died in 1914, Chawton House was perhaps at its very best. Montagu was the grandson of Edward Austen Knight. He was proud of his connections and of his historic house which he restored to its Jacobean splendour. It was filled with paintings, a wonderful library, and the treasures gathered by the Knight family over hundreds of years. The estate, which included Jane Austen's former home, covered over 5000 acres. The parklands retained their English landscape elegance, to which had been added Edwardian flower beds, carriage drives, and terraces by the famous 'arts and crafts' architect, Edwin Lutyens.

Montagu had no children, and his heir was Lionel Knight, the son of his brother, the Reverend Charles Knight. Lionel, raised in Chawton Rectory, was a retired career soldier who had married Dorothy Deedes from Chilham Castle in Kent.

Lionel's family moved to Chawton House at the outbreak of WWI, but he himself immediately re-enlisted. Fourteen of Edward Austen's

descendants were to lose their lives during WWI, some very dear to the family at Chawton. But Lionel survived the war, leaving the army as an honorary Lieutenant-Colonel.

Lionel and Dorothy were products of the Victorian era. They tried to return to a pre-war lifestyle. He led daily prayers for the family and staff, sat on various rural committees, and enjoyed the shooting parties he hosted. Dorothy became increasingly committed to her religious ideals, choosing governesses for her children based on their religious zeal rather than educational credentials. It was in most ways a happy time and certainly a privileged lifestyle. The growing children enjoyed tennis, cricket, riding and hunting. Lionel died suddenly and relatively young in 1932.



LIONEL ON A SHOOT.



MAJOR LIONEL KNIGHT DURING WWI.

His death brought to a head financial issues that had been brewing, in common with many estates at that time. Death duties are often blamed for such problems, but in this case, these were less of a problem than family legacies. The value of the estate and personal possessions at the time of Lionel's death was about £100,000 (in today's terms, about £30 million). The inheritance tax due was £15,000. Much more significant was that £30,000 needed to be put aside to fund the widows' jointures for Dorothy and Florence,



HAMPSHIRE HUNT MEETING IN 1929.

and settlements for the younger children. This meant selling off nearly half of the land – over 2000 acres.

The 3300 remaining acres was settled in trust upon Lionel's heir, his eldest son, Edward Knight III. At the age of 23 he was far from ready to take over the management of the estate, especially during the extreme agricultural depression of that time.

Edward had just married Mary 'Peggy' Curren Williams, the daughter of a doctor living in Ivy House in Alton (now a Wetherspoons pub). Although Peggy was bright, attractive and sporty, Lionel and Dorothy hadn't really approved of the relationship, not least because Edward was so young. Money was extremely tight, and so the newlyweds decided to move to Kenya, where Edward took on a role as ADC to the Governor, rather than take on Chawton. Edward told the family that he intended to learn farming out there, and they bought a small farm in the hills. Their agricultural education seemed to involve a good deal of polo, safaris, and gin.

Lionel's brother, George Brook Knight (known to the family as Brook), took over running the estate, moving his family into Chawton House. As a solicitor, he was better suited to the role, and he loved the house and



BROOK, PICTURED AT CHAWTON HOUSE.

the lifestyle it offered. He needed to turn the estate around, since it needed investment. Under his management, improvements were made to the farms and their accommodation. He also built a swimming pool in the grounds of the Great House.

His fortunes turned when he drove into a family one night late in 1936, killing the father. He was prosecuted for manslaughter, and although not convicted of that, he was banned from driving for life and fined heavily. His wife stood by him during the trial, but their marriage had been under strain, and afterward she left him taking their children.

Edward and Peggy returned to England and decided to rent out Chawton House. In 1937, they found someone who seemed to be an ideal tenant – Euphrasia Emmeline Cox. She was a prolific romantic novelist, writing as Lewis Cox. Her book, *New Loves for Old*, was written in the Oak Room at Chawton where family tradition says



Jane Austen read to her nieces. Edward had to spend the equivalent of two years' rent bringing the house up to her exacting standards, but he hoped it would release him from the burden and expenses of looking after the house and its staff. Unfortunately, 18 months later she was declared bankrupt, having underestimated the costs of running the house.

In August 1939, Edward and Peggy prepared to take back the house, but Peggy had to do this alone. In a repeat of his father's experience, just as he was about to move in, war was declared against Germany and Edward was called up to the army.*

PHOTOS COURTESY OF DAVID ROSE & BRODNAX MOORE



AN EPISODE IN *TRISTRAM SHANDY*: DR. SLOPE WITH HIS WIG ON FIRE ANGRILY GESTICULATING TO SUSANNAH WHO HOLDS HER NOSE NEAR THE WOUNDED BABY TRISTRAM SHANDY. COLOURED ETCHING AFTER H.W. BUNBURY AFTER L. STERNE. WELLCOME COLLECTION

Of the Mouths (and Noses) of Babes

Dr. Emily Cock

Former Visiting Fellow Emily Cock completed her PhD at the University of Adelaide, and is currently a Leverhulme Early Career Researcher in Cardiff University's School of History, Archaeology and Religion.

In February 2017 I had the great pleasure of staying at Chawton as a fellow, watching the garden spring back to life out of the winter. I also spent time with the collections looking for material on a darker subject: children with facial difference and disfigurement in eighteenth-century Britain. I examined the threat posed to children in utero, childbirth or infancy, with additional regard to risks faced by the mother, wet-nurse, or other connected women through contagious diseases like smallpox. Chawton holds an exceptional collection of printed advice manuals for mothers and expectant women by male and female authors, and manuscript medical recipe books, which were examined for evidence of engagement with facial disfigurement.

The experiences of people living with facial difference

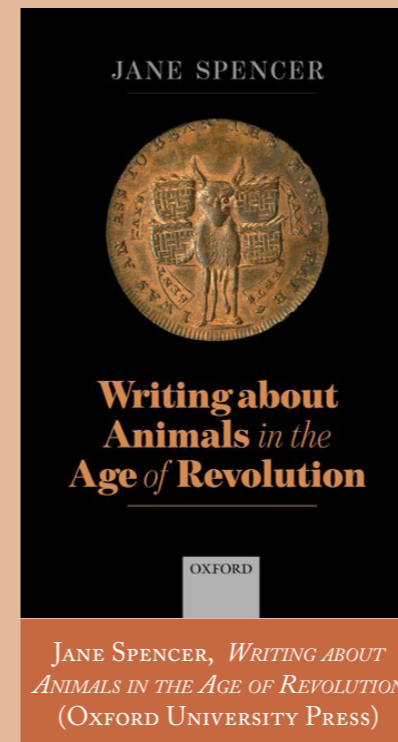
in historical periods is receiving increasing attention. For example, we now know a lot more about the experiences of men who returned from World War I with significant facial injuries: their treatment (in the UK, at the Queen Mary Hospital Sidcup under the care of Harold Delf Gilles and team), their employment and family life afterwards, and the broader social and cultural impact of these men both in their communities, and for countries trying to recover after the war (see for example the work of Suzannah Biernhoff and Marjorie Gehrhardt). Scholarship on medical practice has also shown that surgeons and physicians have taken particular care when treating wounds and diseases that could mark the face – such as using particular stitches or adhesive mixtures to minimise scarring. Studies of non-normative-from-birth pre-modern bodies have predominantly been framed through discussion of ‘monstrous’ births, with emphasis on the idea of non-normative bodily expression as a divine punishment for sin. In my research at Chawton I instead looked at how facial disfigurement in children was linked to disease, injury, medical intervention or other factors.

One of the key areas of discussion was advice for practitioners about avoiding disfiguring injuries during childbirth. The midwives and informal female networks who had controlled childbirth in the medieval and early modern periods were gradually replaced by male practitioners from the late seventeenth century (sometimes called ‘man-midwives!’). Chawton’s collection of midwifery manuals includes the frequently republished *Complete Midwife’s Practice Enlarged* (Chawton holds the 1680 edition, which still assumes female midwives). The title page promises to provide ‘a perfect DIRECTORY of Rules for Midwives and Nurses’, with insights from leading physicians like Sir Théodore Turquet de Mayerne and Dr. Thomas Chamberlayne, popular medical writer Nicholas Culpeper, and midwife to the Queen of France, Louise Bourgeois, whose portrait appears at the front. It warns that the baby’s nose might be put ‘awry’ by bumping the mother’s pelvis, and guides midwives to ‘gently stroke’ it straight again. But it warns any who are confronted by ‘flat nosed Children, rather to let the nose alone, than by squeezing and closing it too much to render the nose obstructed; for that compressing the Gristles of the nose, renders the Child liable either to speak always in the nose, or to lose his smelling’.

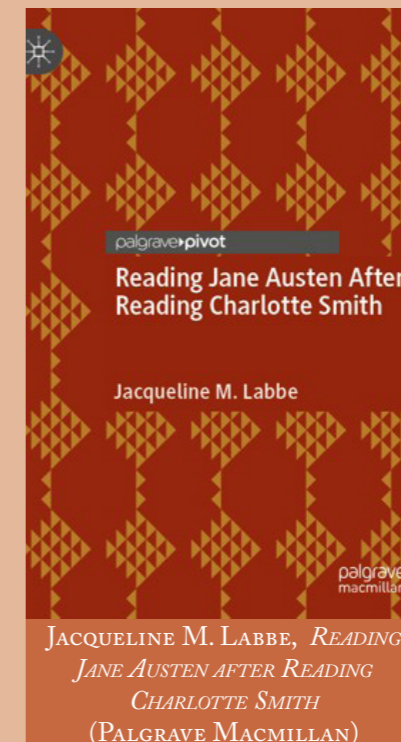
The introduction of tools like the forceps exacerbated anxiety about injuries, culminating in one of the most famous fictional accidents of the period: the crushing of Tristram Shandy’s nose by the forceps of Dr. Slope in Laurence Sterne’s *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1759–1766). Of Tristram’s forceps delivery, the servant Trim reports: ‘In bringing him into the world with his vile instruments, [Dr. Slope] has crush’d his nose, [the maid] Susannah says, as flat as a pancake to his face, and he is making a false bridge with a piece of cotton and a thin piece of whalebone out of Susannah’s stays to raise it up’. This method follows the principles for a nasal fracture laid down by sixteenth-century French surgeon Ambroise Paré, which were still being repeated by surgeons in Sterne’s own book collection, such as the London-based Daniel Turner. The use of whalebone and cotton would have been a realistic solution, but here the mending of the young master’s nose through the maid’s underwear is deliberately comical.

I talk about this more in my book, *Rhinoplasty and the Nose in Early Modern British Medicine and Culture* (Manchester University Press, 2019), and am grateful to Chawton House for facilitating this research. •

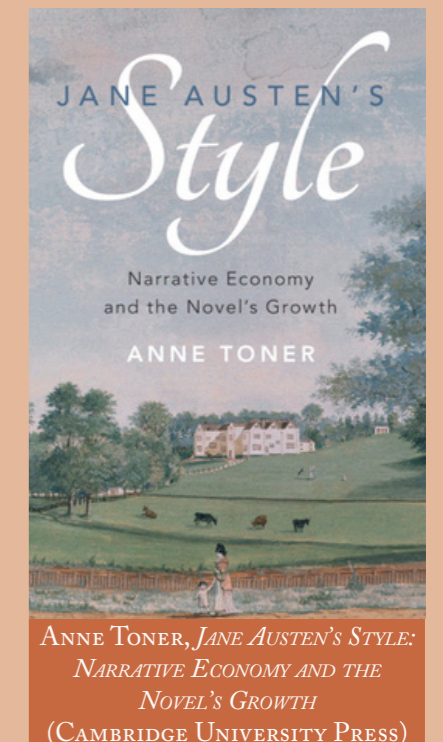
NEW IN 2020



JANE SPENCER, *WRITING ABOUT ANIMALS IN THE AGE OF REVOLUTION* (OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS)



JACQUELINE M. LABBE, *READING JANE AUSTEN AFTER READING CHARLOTTE SMITH* (PALGRAVE MACMILLAN)

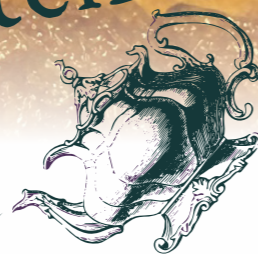


ANNE TONER, *JANE AUSTEN'S STYLE: NARRATIVE ECONOMY AND THE NOVEL'S GROWTH* (CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS)



notes from

The Old Kitchen Tearoom



The Old Kitchen Tearoom is a lovely place to work surrounded by history and a glorious garden, which I take inspiration from to come up with tasty food and cakes to serve. Our range of wonderful cook books such as *The Jane Austen Cookbook* by Maggie Black and Deirdre le Faye, and *Tea with Jane Austen* by Pen Voger, as well as *The Knight Family Cookbook*, which contains recipes from the eighteenth century, also give me lots of good ideas. I use BBC Good Food to modernise some of the recipes in the Knight cookbook though – ‘Snail’s Milk’ and ‘Pickled Pigeons’ don’t sound very appealing!

At the start of the year I came up with a rotational menu, using produce which was in season, and these dishes have a three month span before new seasonal specials replace them on the menu. As spring rolled around though, no one foresaw that the country would go into lockdown because of Covid-19. For me this has been an adjustment. Instead of making food and cake to serve to customers directly, I have been experimenting with cakes and traybakes to be placed into boxes and sent through the post. We made up boxes for specific events from March to

June, including Mother’s Day, Easter, VE Day and the Virtual Garden Festival.

Being closed to the public has also given me a chance to really experiment with cakes using produce from Chawton House’s very own garden. I used basil and thyme in a lemon cake, which I would not have thought of doing, but which is a lot tastier than it sounds. I also used rhubarb from the garden to make rhubarb chutney, and goat’s cheese and rhubarb tarts. The Virtual Garden Festival Box included wild garlic from the garden in its pesto pinwheels. As more produce grows in the garden, I hope to use it in my cooking to experiment more and hopefully bring our visitors tasty treats like lavender shortbread, and gooseberry and elderflower jam. •

**Enya Nwaegbe,
Cook, Chawton House**



Basil & Thyme Lemon Cake

The sweetness of the cake, sharp lemon, and the aromatic herbs marry really well together in this unusual recipe, but beware, you won't want to share!



Ingredients

For the cake:

- 325g plain flour
- 2½ tsps baking powder
- ½ tsps salt
- 110g unsalted butter
- 340g granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 100ml whole milk
- 3 tbsps chopped fresh basil
- 3 tbsps fresh thyme leaves
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- zest of 2 large lemons
- 1 tablespoon of lemon juice

For the frosting:

- 115g unsalted butter
- 224g/1 pack Philadelphia cream cheese
- 360g icing sugar
- 1 tsp of vanilla extract

Method

Preheat the oven to 190° (fan ovens 170°). Combine the flour, baking powder and salt in a mixing bowl. In a separate bowl, beat the butter and sugar together until fluffy. Whisk the remaining ingredients together and slowly add to the butter/sugar mix, beating well. Fold in the flour mix with a metal spoon. Pour into a 9-inch cake pan and bake in the centre of the oven for 35 minutes.

We like this cake on its own, but for extra indulgence, smother with cream cheese frosting. To make the frosting, beat the cream cheese and butter together for about 3 minutes, add the vanilla extract, and then slowly add in the sugar, beating until you get the desired consistency. Garnish with fresh raspberries and lemon slices.

Enjoy with a cup of Green Tea, or a Gin & Tonic!

The Knight Family Cookbook is a facsimile edition of the beautiful handwritten recipe book that has been in the Knight family since the late eighteenth century.

It is available to purchase from our online shop ([click here](#)).

If you are local to us, The Old Kitchen Tearoom offers a selection of cakes and scones for local delivery or takeaway, and will be taking orders for Father's Day Afternoon Tea boxes until noon on Friday 19 June.

To find out more, visit our food shop ([click here](#)).



Jane Austen's Men

Dr. Sarah Ailwood

Dr. Sarah Ailwood is Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Law, Humanities and Arts at the University of Wollongong, Australia. In addition to her fascination with women's writing and masculinity in the Romantic era, she also researches in the field of law and humanities, with a particular focus on women's legal testimony and memoir from the eighteenth century to the present, law, gender and sexuality and copyright history.

My book *Jane Austen's Men: Rewriting Masculinity in the Romantic Era* has recently been published with Routledge. The research for the book was several years in the making, beginning in 2004 when I commenced my PhD and made my first visit to Chawton House as a researcher, and to attend my first eighteenth-century studies conference. I was amazed by the scope and scale of the collection of eighteenth-century and Romantic women's writing, and the access to some novels and authors that, in the pre-digital era, were scarcely available in Australia. I arrived with the belief that my research was only about Jane Austen, and left with the conviction that I needed to interpret Austen's novels as part of a collective textual scrutiny, interrogation and ultimately rewriting of masculinity among women writers of the Romantic era.

Austen's philosophic predecessors and contemporaries well knew that there were problems with the way that masculine gender identities were socially and culturally constructed in the late eighteenth century and Romantic Era, and the challenges they presented to women. Catharine Macaulay early identified

socially-sanctioned ways of 'being a man' as a barrier to women's progress in *Letters on Education* (1790). In 1792 Mary Wollstonecraft addressed *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* to men and argued that the realisation of women's aspirations in terms of education and agency depended on a fundamental shift in male attitudes and behaviour not only towards women, but towards themselves. Mary Hays titled her 1798 treatise *An Appeal to the Men of Great Britain in Behalf of Women* and insisted that women's advancement depended on a fundamental transformation of masculinity itself.

Although these writers were convinced that prevailing notions of the desirable man were a barrier to women's advancement, they did not devise a replacement model of masculinity that was more tailored to the feminine agency they and other women wished to see flourish. In *Jane Austen's Men*, I argue that women writers of the courtship romance genre took up that challenge in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Rewriting masculinity through the courtship romance novel demanded a rethink of the stock modes of literary masculinity Romantic women writers inherited from their eighteenth-century predecessors.

Austen embarks on this task in *Sense and Sensibility* through a dialogue with both Minerva Press novelists and Jane West, whose *A Gossip's Story* (1796) is frequently cited as a source for Austen's first published novel. For writers like Austen and West, stereotyped literary men – rakes, villains, fops, romantic heroes – were inadequate for the more complex dialogue of gender formation they wished to foreground through the courtship romance narrative. In her debut novel Austen rejects stereotyped masculinity and replaces it with three composite, layered male

characters: John Willoughby is at turns an idealised romantic hero, a coquet and a libertine, who is eventually unmasked as a thoroughly ordinary young man who Elinor ultimately pities; Colonel Brandon is a broken man whose romantic plot arc has concluded in tragedy before the novel opens, and who Austen explicitly presents as unromantic before finally marrying him to Marianne Dashwood; and in Edward Ferrars, Austen turns performative, socially-pleasing masculinity on its head to extol the values of an internalised sense of self, personal integrity and authenticity. By the time she wrote *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen had so advanced her innovative model of an authentic, independent masculine gender identity – grounded in personal integrity and dismissive of social performance – that she placed it at the centre of her novel. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Darcy's transformation of masculine identity in response to Elizabeth Bennet's determined agency becomes a subject in its own right.

The influence of new fictional genres associated with Evangelicalism, the national tale and the historical novel – and the literary masculinities they endorse – is evident in *Mansfield Park* and *Emma*. In *Mansfield Park*, Austen is in dialogue with Hannah More, Mary Brunton and other Evangelical writers, casting doubt over whether models of Evangelical masculinity represented in *Coelebs in Search of a Wife* and *Self-Control* can effectively serve women's interests. Men such as Edmund Bertram, Henry Crawford and Sir Thomas Bertram are, in different ways, in search of women who can essentially serve their own needs, particularly when they recognise their own weaknesses and turn to Fanny as a moral salve: Edmund urges Fanny, his 'perfect model of a woman' to marry Henry Crawford because she 'will make him everything'. Each of these men fail, Austen asserts, because they represent a model of masculinity that can neither recognise nor enable Fanny's agency. In *Emma*, Austen turns her attention to different genres – the national tale and the historical novel – and to the models of masculinity championed in the works of Maria Edgeworth, Sydney Owenson and Jane Porter. Although Frank Churchill is often interpreted through a Francophobic lens, Austen draws clear parallels with the 'heroes' of Edgeworth's *Ennui* (1809) and *The Absentee* (1811), as well as Owenson's *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806), through his

leisured existence, his fits of ennui and his shallow adoration of the artistic and accomplished Jane Fairfax. Frank, like the heroes of national tales, is incapable of supporting the agency of a woman like Emma Woodhouse. Instead, Austen takes up Jane Porter's William Wallace in *The Scottish Chiefs* (1810), an emotionally expressive man who falls deeply in love with the fictional heroine Lady Helen Mar, a woman who finds gendered restrictions unbearable and whose exploits throughout the novel include acting as a messenger across a battlefield, saving Wallace twice from assassination and breaking into the Tower to declare her love and marry him. In *Emma*, Austen domesticates and Anglicises Porter's gender dynamism in *The Scottish Chiefs*, a progressive vision of heterosexuality that is reflected not only in Emma, but enabled by the masculine identity embodied in Mr Knightley, arguably Austen's male paragon.

There is so much further work to be done to fully recover the informal, collaborative and collective networks among Romantic women writers in the Chawton House collection – not just as they rewrite masculinity, but in so many other ways as well. Writers including Medora Gordon Byron, Sarah Harriet Burney, Christian Isobel Johnstone and Catherine Hutton are yet to receive the attention they deserve as they satirise, lampoon, critique and reinvent masculine gender identities. Yet these writers not only spoke to the concerns of the Romantic era, but fostered new approaches to writing literary masculinity that would influence the novels of the Victorian era, and beyond.



HUGH THOMPSON, ILLUSTRATION OF *MANSFIELD PARK* (1897)

Truly, Madly, Deeply Elizabeth Hopkinson

We are the same, you and me.

You recoil when I say this, your eyes wide. What's the matter? Never seen a brown person before? The truth is, I now barely remember India, nor my Tamil mother. I remember York and Manor House School. I remember Anne Lister.

Oh! You're listening now, aren't you? A blush comes to your Yorkshire Rose cheeks, pink creeping over snow like dawn over the Caucasus. Do you think you're the first she loved and left? No, my dear Miss Walker. That was I. And look where it got me. Where it got us both. Once Dr. Belcombe turns the key on the asylum, there is no thought of leaving.

You look from your hand to mine. Yes, she exchanged rings with me, too. Back when we were schoolgirls, sharing an attic room. We pledged our troth and planned our future. When I came into my majority, we would have all the wealth we needed. We would set up home together as ladies of the manor, sharing a bed as we always had, protecting one another from goblin men.

Does this sound familiar, Miss Walker? I hear you were an heiress too when you exchanged vows. Does any of your money yet remain? Or did she sink it all into that bottomless pit at Shibden Hall? Come now, don't call me heartless. We both know she considered us beneath her. It was money she wanted. Money and a warm bed.

Oh, don't weep! I'm sure she loved you, in her way. But she was a woman of granite, implacable as those mountains she loved to climb. And we – her lovers – broke ourselves like water upon her.

What's that? You say you are not insane, only grieving. That your aunt will come for you. That this

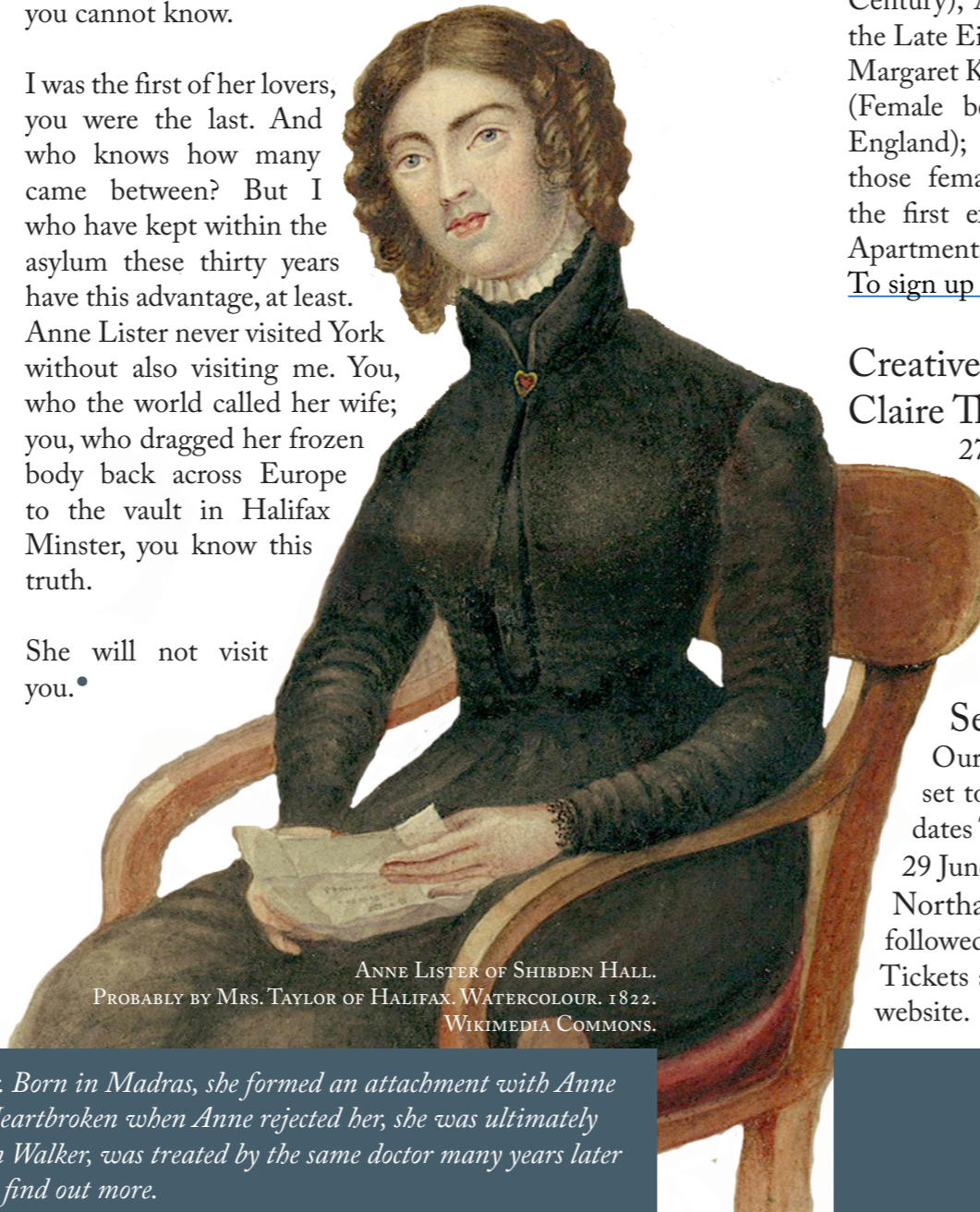
would never happen if Anne was still alive.

Oh, but my dear, it would. It did. My only crime was to speak out against the cruelty and hypocrisy of my guardian. And Miss Lister – my beloved Anne – took that vile man's side. She handed me over to Dr. Belcombe and began an affair with his daughter.

We all wished her to be faithful. But how faithful would she have remained, had she come back alive from the shores of the Caspian? The truth is, you cannot know.

I was the first of her lovers, you were the last. And who knows how many came between? But I who have kept within the asylum these thirty years have this advantage, at least. Anne Lister never visited York without also visiting me. You, who the world called her wife; you, who dragged her frozen body back across Europe to the vault in Halifax Minster, you know this truth.

She will not visit you. •



ANNE LISTER OF SHIBDEN HALL.
PROBABLY BY MRS. TAYLOR OF HALIFAX. WATERCOLOUR. 1822.
WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

Eliza Raine (1793–1860) was Anne Lister's first lover. Born in Madras, she formed an attachment with Anne when the two shared an attic room together at school. Heartbroken when Anne rejected her, she was ultimately committed to an asylum in York. Anne's final lover, Ann Walker, was treated by the same doctor many years later following Lister's death. Visit www.annelister.co.uk to find out more.

Elizabeth Hopkinson is author of around 100 published short stories and articles.

for the diary

The Women's Studies Group 1558-1837 Seminar

20 June, 12.30-3.30pm. Talks by Lindy Moore (The Scottish Schoolmistress in the Eighteenth Century); Alexis Wolf (Women and Mentoring in the Late Eighteenth Century: Mary Wollstonecraft, Margaret King and Mary Shelley); Rachel Eckersley (Female benefactors to dissenting academies in England); Catriona Wilson: ("Some attention to those female members": Feminised monarchy in the first exhibition of Kensington Palace's State Apartments, 1899.)

[To sign up click here.](#)

Creative Writing Workshops with Claire Thurlow

27 June (11am), 28 June (5pm)
18 July (11am), 19 July (5pm)
22 August (11am), 23 August (5pm)
Topics TBC. Tickets available shortly on the Chawton House website.

Chawton House Summer Series

Our new fortnightly evening lectures are set to run through July & August, with exact dates TBC.

29 June, 7-8.30pm. Janet Todd, 'Sanditon and Northanger Abbey: a shared pen?'. Talk to be followed by a Zoom Q&A.

Tickets available shortly on the Chawton House website.

Chawton House Presents the Jane Austen Society 80th Birthday Party

11 July

A free online day of celebration hosted by Chawton house with talks by Helen Cole and Emma Clery

Open Digital Seminar in Eighteenth-Century Studies

15 July, 4pm. Freya Gowrley (University of Derby), 'Anna Seward and the Poetics of Exchange: Portraiture, Poetry and Gift Culture'

[To sign up click here.](#)

The Intermedial Eighteenth Century: Textual and Visual Arts, 1660-1832

14-17 September

Keynote Lecture: Prof. Malcolm Baker (University of California, Riverside) 'The Agency and Role of Author Portraits within Changing Notions of Authorship in Eighteenth-Century Britain'

In Conversation: Dr. Lucy Peltz (National Portrait Gallery, London) & Dr. David F. Taylor (University of Oxford)

This free online conference will explore the ways in which different spaces, practices and individuals within the textual and visual Arts came to influence one another, creating dialogues and exchanges crucial to the works that emerged.

[Click here to visit the conference website.](#)

Orlando Database access

Enjoy temporarily free access to a wealth of entries on women's lives and writing careers. [Click here](#) and enter username User2020; password Access2020.



For regular updates follow us on Twitter @ChawtonHouse

REVIEW

My Dearest Heart: The Artist Mary Beale (1633-1699). By Penelope Hunting. London: Unicorn. 2019. 208pp. £25 (hb). ISBN 9781912690084



While the principle mission of Chawton House has been to promote scholarship on the work of early modern women writers, no such institution provides an equivalent space for women artists. The National Gallery has been late on the scene with its admission that it has only 21 works by women artists in its 2,300 painting collection, and is signalling a new awareness of this exiguity by staging its current exhibition, 'Artemisia'. Paintings by Mary Beale (1633-1699), like the written works of her contemporary Aphra Behn (1640-1689), have had their place in our cultural life for decades, albeit as marginal contributors. In her introduction to *My Dearest Heart* Penelope Hunting paraphrases the statement usually made about Behn: '[Beale] was one of the first women in England to make a living from her art' (p.10), and on Beale's strangely unfinished portrait of Behn which is now at St. Hilda's College, Oxford (Acc.No. PCF 45) she comments that the two 'were like-minded women who overcame traditional prejudices towards women in the arts' (p.153). However, it seems unlikely

that Beale herself would have identified with the playwright or many other women in the Court circle of Charles II, given her puritan beliefs.

Beale was a professional artist who, Hunting demonstrates, established her place among art practitioners through careful self-fashioning. The many clergymen who chose her for their portraits 'favoured the industrious, pious Mary Beale' (p.113). It was the writer, Mary Hays, who in 1803 characterised Beale as a significant artist and as the writer of the 1667 *Discourse on Friendship* in her prosopography *Female Biography or Memoirs of Illustrious and Celebrated Women of all ages and centuries*, which also includes an entry on Behn. Beale's c.1666 self-portrait found a place in London's National Portrait Gallery in 1912 (NPG 1687). However, as we learn in *My Dearest Heart*, there have only been two exhibitions on Beale, both held at the Geffrye Museum in 1975 and in 1999 and curated by dedicated scholars of her oeuvre.

The thorough research undertaken for this book takes us back into the family tree and a network of connections which soon became crucial for Beale's success in her career as an artist in late seventeenth-century London, and also provided a financial lifeline for her family when times were hard. The even more important fact that her husband undertook the role of amanuensis and book-keeper for her practice ensured its smooth-running and indicates that this role reversal was not an unthinkable proposition if managed carefully. Hunting offers a brief outline of the history of women painters, including Beale's contemporary Joan Carlile (c.1606-1679), pointing out that 'if Carlile was the first professional female English artist, Mary Beale was the most prolific' (p.53). The fact that most of us have not heard of Carlile is probably due to the fact that only a dozen attributed paintings are known. The sheer volume of Beale's output has ensured a place for her in the canon of female artists. Dr. Helen Draper's research has found that between 1666 and 1740 'at least seventy-nine female apprentice Painter Stainers were indentured' as members of the artists' guild and though this was a small proportion, 'what is important is that there were female apprentices and mistresses at all' ('Mary Beale and Art's Lost laborers: Women Painter Stainers', *EMWJ* 10:1 (Fall

2015), p.149). What became of all these apprentices is harder to ascertain.

As Hunting's book progresses, the pages become a roll call of commissions. She takes the reader systematically through Beale's career as it developed. One of the earliest portraits is a self portrait with her husband, Charles, and son, Bartholomew, c.1659-60 (Geffrye Museum), which is currently at the Foundling Museum as part of the exhibition 'Portraying Pregnancy' – curator Karen Hearn proposes that Beale depicts herself as pregnant in this painting. Hunting writes that Beale 'practised her skills' in such works while awaiting commissions and draws our attention to two recently discovered profiles of Beale's son which offer clear comparisons with the child in her self portrait. Hunting writes 'The popularity of Mary Beale's portraits lay in her ability to capture good likenesses' (p.112). This is corroborated by contemporary comments, and led to further commissions by friends and families of satisfied clients. Hunting has found numerous examples of the important social engagement with clients which the Beales maintained, often hosting generous dinners for sitters after the work of the day had ended. Many other portraits were 'personal memorials', objects of social exchange and signs of friendship rather than commercial undertakings.

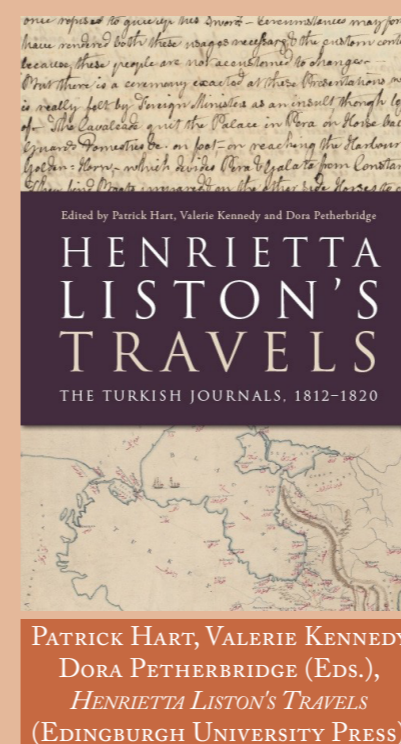
My Dearest Heart is a valuable contribution to art history, a source book of research on Mary Beale to which I am sure many scholars will refer as Beale's important place among the artists of the seventeenth century continues to become assured.

To purchase *My Dearest Heart* from our shop, [click here](#).

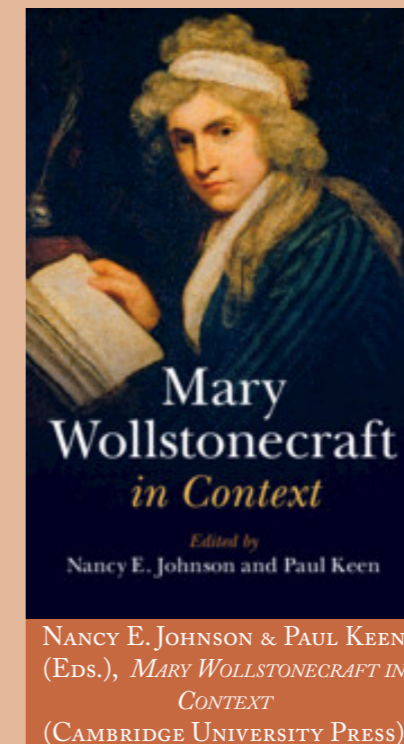
MIRIAM AL JAMIL



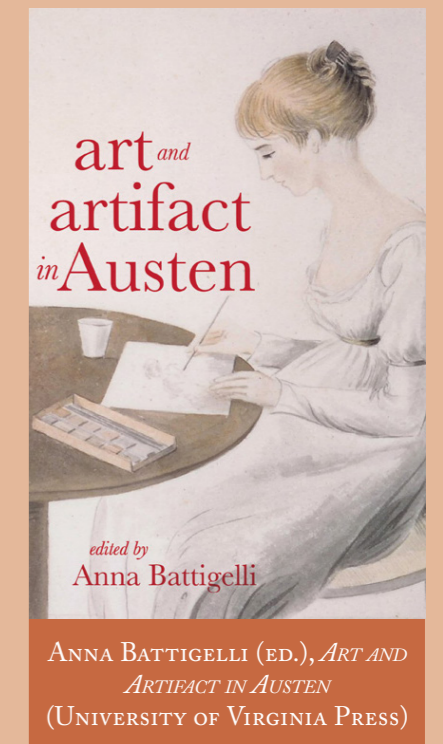
NEW IN 2020



PATRICK HART, VALERIE KENNEDY, DORA PETHERBRIDGE (EDS.), *HENRIETTA LISTON'S TRAVELS* (EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY PRESS)



NANCY E. JOHNSON & PAUL KEEN (EDS.), *MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT IN CONTEXT* (CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS)



ANNA BATTIGELLI (ED.), *ART AND ARTIFACT IN AUSTEN* (UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA PRESS)

Chawton House Lockdown Poetry Challenge



- Hail! Goddess of persuasive art!
- The magic of whose tuneful tongue
- Lulls to soft harmony the wand'ring heart
- With fascinating song

- Mary Robinson, 'Ode to Eloquence' (1789)

Over four weeks in April and May, Chawton House put on a Poetry Challenge to help keep audiences busy during the UK lockdown. Each week, we posted one of our favourite poems by a woman writer in our collection, and invited followers to try their hands at imitating the style. We are delighted to include a selection of our favourite responses in this special issue of *The Female Spectator*.

PACE & SOUND: THE CHALLENGE

The Camp

Tents, marquees, and baggage waggons;
Suttling-houses, beer in flagons;
Drums and trumpets, singing, firing;
Girls seducing, beaux admiring;
Country lasses gay and smiling,
City lads their hearts beguiling;
Dusty roads, and horses frisky,
Many an Eton Boy in whisky;
Tax'd carts full of farmers' daughters;
Brutes condemn'd, and man who slaughters!
Public-houses, booths, and castles,
Belles of fashion, serving vassals;
Lordly gen'erals fiercely staring,
Weary soldiers, sighing, swearing!
Petit-maitres always dressing,
In the glass themselves caressing;
Perfum'd, painted, patch'd, and blooming
Ladies—manly airs assuming!
Dowagers of fifty, simp'ring,
Misses for their lovers whimp'ring;
Husbands drill'd to household tameness;
Dames heart sick of wedded sameness.
Princes setting girls a-madding,

Wives for ever fond of gadding;
Princesses with lovely faces,
Beauteous children of the Graces!
Britain's pride and virtue's treasure,
Fair and gracious beyond measure!
Aid-de-camps and youthful pages,
Prudes and vestals of all ages!
Old coquets and matrons surly,
Sounds of distant hurly-burly!
Mingled voices, uncouth singing,
Carts full laden, forage bringing;
Sociables and horses weary,
Houses warm, and dresses airy;
Loads of fatten'd poultry; pleasure
Serv'd (to nobles) without measure;
Doxies, who the waggons follow;
Beer, for thirsty hinds to swallow;
Washerwomen, fruit-girls cheerful,
Ancient ladies—chaste and fearful!!
Tradesmen, leaving shops, and seeming
More of war than profit dreaming;
Martial sounds and braying asses,
Noise, that ev'ry noise surpasses!
All confusion, din, and riot,
Nothing clean—and nothing quiet.

OBERON [MARY ROBINSON]

PACE & SOUND: THE RESPONSE

Victoria Line

Sweat and blisters, sleepy eyes,
Checking emails, morning sighs;
Brimming bags and bulky cases,
Commuting in each other's faces,
Businessmen spread legs apart
Jolting as the tube restarts,
A labrador lies in the aisle,
Averted eyes dart up to smile,
Then furrow down lest strangers dare,
Find more than fleeting friendship there.
Books and papers, coffee, pills,
Adverts claim to help with bills,
Couples kiss and smirk and stare,
Fathers braid their children's hair,
And mutter darkly, blame distractions,
When asked about their homework fractions.
Train tracks grumble, flickering lights,
Tourists plan to see the sights,
Passengers shuffle, room for more,
Latecomers run at the open door,
And turn their sprint to a casual swerve;
Doors slide close, they lose their nerve.
And among this all the women stand,
With laptop, bag or bump in hand,
Eyes with liner, cheeks with powder,
Lipstick, planning to be louder,
In meetings, playgroups, gardens, pubs,
Present ideas, ignoring snubs.
For, Marys, Janes, in days of yore,
Writers, thinkers, who came before,
By giving us voice with paper and pen,
You granted us this rush hour zen.

MIRA, COMMUTING

SONNETS: THE CHALLENGE

Written at the Close of Spring

THE garlands fade that Spring so lately wove,
Each simple flow'r, which she had nurs'd in dew,
Anemonies that spangled every grove,
The primrose wan, and harebell, mildly blue.

No more shall violets linger in the dell,
Or purple orchis variegates the plain,
Till Spring again shall call forth every bell,
And dress with humid hands her wreaths again.—

Ah, poor Humanity! so frail, so fair,

Are the fond visions of thy early day,
Till tyrant Passion, and corrosive Care,
Bid all thy fairy colours fade away!

Another May new buds and flow'rs shall bring;
Ah! Why has Happiness—no second Spring?

CHARLOTTE SMITH

SONNETS: THE RESPONSE

Untitled

Sun-soaked trees whose riotous leaves unfurl,
And trap Spring's gentle beams in boughs untamed,
How sweetly your mild scent must rise and swirl,
Though Nature's charms are by closed windows framed.
Oh, grant me beauteous days with languid hours,
For wand'ring down each radiant path Hope sends,
Content and careless in those wine-drenched
bow'rs,
Dissolved in mirth, hearts brightened by old
friends.
Among such verdant banks and moss-trimmed
flow'rs,
For now must Melancholy's hand entwine,
Though blissful Spring wreathes branches with her
pow'rs,
In Solitude's dark vale we'll stretch and pine,
While reckless and fragile those leaves still tease,
And dance at the brush of the softest breeze.

EMILY LOVELOCK

Sonnet for a hillside lost

As dusk's cool hue creeps o'er the wooded hill,
The soil heaves one last earthy, scented sigh,
Through darkened trunks the pheasant's evening
trill,
Calls time on daylight's brashly painted eye.

Upon this calm, this sleeping shadowed mound,
Soft sunken lanes and chalky fields so fair,
Hide trails of lovers, decades etched in ground,
Mere fragile threads their secrets now laid bare.

Alas! For now this twilight must recoil,
As time rips forth and wrenches root from clod,
I weep to see the 'dozer's angry spoil,
Dusk's gauzy beauty tramped beneath the sod.

Forever in my heart this thrilling time,
No concrete strangled silence will be mine.

NANCY PETERS

NATURE POETRY: THE CHALLENGE

Return to Tomhanick

HAIL, happy shades! Tho' clad with heavy
snows,
At sight of you with joy my bosom glows;
Ye arching pines, that bow with every breeze,
Ye poplars, elms, all hail my well-known
trees!

And now my peaceful mansion strikes my
eye,
And now the tinkling rivulet I spy;
My little garden, Flora, hast thou kept,
And watch'd my pinks and lilies while I
wept?

Or has the grubbing swine, by furies led,
Th' enclosure broke, and on my flowrets fed?

Ah me! that spot with blooms so lately
grac'd,
With storms and driving snows is now
defac'd;
Sharp icicles from ev'ry bush depend,
And frosts all dazzling o'er the beds extend:
Yet soon fair Spring shall give another scene,
And yellow cowslips gild the level green;
My little orchard sprouting at each bough,
Fragrant with clust'ring blossoms deep shall
glow:

Ah! then 'tis sweet the tufted grass to tread,
But sweeter slumb'ring is the balmy shade;
The rapid humming bird, with ruby breast,
Seeks the parterre with early blue bells drest,
Drinks deep the honeysuckle dew, or drives
The lab'ring bee to her domestic hives:
Then shines the lupin bright with morning
gems,
And sleepy poppies nod upon their stems;
The humble violet and the dulcet rose,
The stately lily then, and tulip blows.

Farewell, my Plutarch! farewell, pen and
Muse!

Nature exults—shall I her call refuse?
Apollo fervid glitters in my face,
And threatens with his beam each feeble
grace:

Yet still around the lovely plants I toil,
And draw obnoxious herbage from the soil;
Or with the lime-twigs little birds surprise,
Or angle for the trout of many dyes.

But when the vernal breezes pass away,
And loftier Phoebus darts a fiercer ray,
The spiky corn then rattles all around,

And dashing cascades give a pleasing sound;
Shrill sings the locust with prolonged note,
The cricket chirps familiar in each cot.
The village children, rambling o'er yon hill,
With berries all their painted baskets fill,
They rob the squirrel's little walnut store,
And climb the half exhausted tree for more;
Or else to fields of maize nocturnal hie,
Where hid, th'elusive water-melons lie;
Sportive, they make incisions in the rind,
The riper from the immature to find;
Then load their tender shoulders with the
prey,
And laughing bear the bulky fruit away.

ANN ELIZA BLEECKER

NATURE POETRY: THE RESPONSE

Bees

Each hum a different chord
an impromptu chorus made
Bumbling and dislodging
pale drifting petal showers
Twitching black and yellow limbs
through pollinating hours.
Restless and unceasing in
a full-blown noon
A shiver in the branches
of a droning April tune.
Sensing every stamen with
a teasing penetration
Touching softly, surely, swiftly
till the deepening shadows fade.
The urgent rite and focussed task
anticipates a harvest,
The promise sweet and sure is made
for human consolation.

HOMERLONER

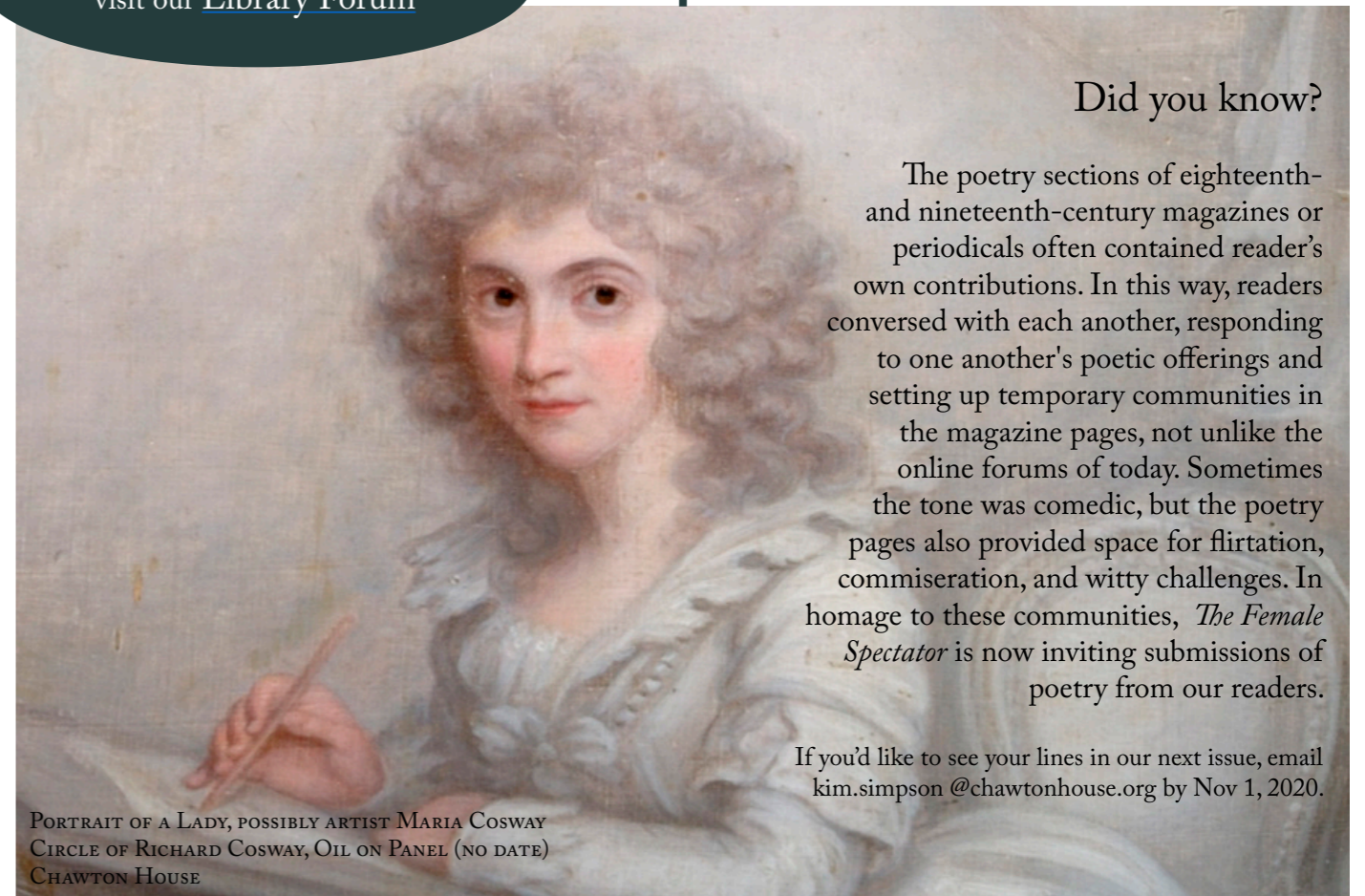
Untitled

How meticulously you plan
To obliterate all my efforts
To stay away from you..
You have a new agenda
To embrace
All those places
I wouldn't dare to explore
If not for you.
My beloved..
You take such risks
To reach all those heights and depths
You wouldn't dream of leaving

A single nook unexplored
But you must understand
All that stretching
And bending
And waltzing
Each morning
Oblivious to the rest of the world
Is no longer possible
I'm too old
A mother of two adults
One on the threshold of
Tying the knot..
So please do understand
If you do not control your vigour
I have no choice
But invest in a noisy monster..
Unlike me
Without any passion
It'll suck you up
With such rage....
Our waltzing
Will be forgotten
My beloved...
Speck of dust! Speck of dust!

MANIL

To read the other entries in the Challenge,
visit our [Library Forum](#)



PORTRAIT OF A LADY, POSSIBLY ARTIST MARIA COSWAY
CIRCLE OF RICHARD COSWAY, OIL ON PANEL (NO DATE)
CHAWTON HOUSE

WIT & WORDPLAY: THE CHALLENGE

A Rebus

That goddess who sprung from Jupiter's brain;
What Bacchus is crown'd with as poets feign;
A bird that rises when morning just breaks;
An instrument whose sound courage awakes;
Who charm'd with his music the rocks and tress;
A fabulous god that guards the green seas.
The initials above when rightly you've found,
Will name you a poet whose works are renown'd.

SOPHIA JULIANA

WIT & WORDPLAY: THE CHALLENGE

Can I just say that I was born first and
Always seen as the sensible one but my
Sister was like quicksilver, lively and clever
So bright and witty that she was
Always our family's pride ,though sometimes she
was a
Nuisance ,yet always my companion in hopes and
Dreams ...until she left us. When I
Read her words now I hear her laughter and life
And miss her on every page.

LIS RICKETTS

Did you know?

The poetry sections of eighteenth-
and nineteenth-century magazines or
periodicals often contained reader's
own contributions. In this way, readers
conversed with each another, responding
to one another's poetic offerings and
setting up temporary communities in
the magazine pages, not unlike the
online forums of today. Sometimes
the tone was comedic, but the poetry
pages also provided space for flirtation,
commiseration, and witty challenges. In
homage to these communities, *The Female
Spectator* is now inviting submissions of
poetry from our readers.

If you'd like to see your lines in our next issue, email
kim.simpson@chawtonhouse.org by Nov 1, 2020.

Emergency Appeal

Thank you for supporting us by purchasing this copy of *The Female Spectator*.

When Chawton House closed on 20 March, we instantly lost 60% of our income – heartbreaking for us given we had just turned Chawton House’s finances around. We decided that we were not going to just fade away. We could not lock up and go home: the collection, house and gardens still need to be maintained, bills paid and a new business plan put together so that we can survive and welcome visitors again later in 2020. Donations to the Chawton House Emergency Appeal will help us to care for the house, gardens and collection whilst we are closed, and will ensure that we can continue to produce digital content even after our doors are open again later this year. •

[To donate, please click here.](#)

Thank you for all your support.



Paying tribute to pioneering women

The Female Spectator is named after Eliza Haywood's publication of the same name, which was published from April 1744 - May 1746. It provides a fascinating insight into eighteenth-century life, with content including fiction, moral essays, social and political commentary, and topics as diverse as tea drinking, gambling, diplomacy and natural history. In the opening pages, we are introduced to the female spectator, a reformed coquet who, having spent her youth engaged in 'a hurry of promiscuous diversions', is now older, wiser, and ready to share 'useful and entertaining' insights with the public. Haywood's female spectator stresses that her 'ambition was to be as universally read as possible.' •

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