ON 23 APRIL 2015, Chawton House Library opened its doors to the public in an entirely new way. Rather than visitors being restricted to guided tours on specific times and days, people can now visit the Library on a self-guided tour Tuesday to Friday from 2.00pm until 4.30pm and the Gardens from 1.00pm until 4.30pm.

‘Absolutely wonderful to see the house — so significant as a Jane Austen lover — great it is opened to the public — good luck for ventures to maintain and expand this treasure.’

J.R., Sydney, Australia

As we have previously relied on tour guides leading people around the house, the new approach involved a lot of hard work to ensure that there was signage and interesting information throughout the house to guide people around. We need to give particular thanks to Hazel Barry-Scott and Amy Clarke, our volunteers who worked immensely hard on planning the visitor experience and pulling all of the information together, and to Jon Clark for designing our new visitor map and interpretation material, entirely free of charge.

Our steadfast volunteers have familiarised themselves with a new ticketing system, and with being stationed at specific places in the house to assist visitors and give extra information when required. It has been a huge success thanks to a great team effort from all concerned.

The comments in our visitor book and on feedback forms have been absolutely glowing in their praise, with a number of references to the Library as a ‘treasure’. Our future vision is to give people a more integrated experience with some of the most special texts in the Library collection displayed in key places around the house. The first step towards this is a new display case outside the Lower Reading Room. This currently houses six rare first editions, ‘Treasures of the Collection’, which together help to highlight the depth and range of works that are housed here. We are delighted to thank the Foyle Foundation for a generous £15,000 towards fully realising our vision. This contribution will go towards more display cases and explanatory signs throughout the building. We are also seeking further funding for our ambitious plans, which include a permanent exhibition in the Exhibition Room. Watch this Space! •
New Friends Programme Announced

We have recently been working on an exciting new version of our Friends programme and we are delighted to unveil the four new levels. Now you can become a Friend of Sarah Fielding, Frances Burney or Ann Radcliffe. Or you can perhaps become what you always knew you were – a Bluestocking. Whichever you choose – you will be making a much appreciated commitment and difference to Chawton House Library.

For those of you who are already a UK or North American Friend, we will be inviting you to join the new programme when your membership is due for renewal. And if you can persuade other like-minded individuals to join you in supporting us, we would be very grateful for your help.

### The Exclusive Quill Badge

We are delighted to be including specially made quill badges for Friends of Chawton House Library as an iconic emblem of affiliation with the Library. The first of these badges – a specially made gold version – was presented to Joan Ray, Trustee and President of the North American Friends of Chawton House Library, by our Founder Dr Sandy Lerner on International Women’s Day, 8 March 2015. Joan is the founding member of our Legacy Circle, having pledged a generous $100,000. All of our Friends will now receive an exclusive quill pin, modelled on this original version, as part of their welcome pack. Special thanks go to Master Jeweller Kate Wolf who kindly carved the original design for us entirely free of charge.

### Sarah Fielding’s Real Friend

£36 a year or £3 a month / Joint membership: £48 a year or £4 a month

*A Person who could be trusted, one who was capable of being a real Friend*

Sarah Fielding, *The Adventures of David Simple, in search of a Real Friend* (1744)

As a token of our thanks you will receive:
- Welcome Pack, including quill bookmark
- *The Female Spectator*, our regular newsletter
- One Library tour for you and a guest
- Selected offers for our annual events programme including conferences, talks and recitals
- An exclusive silver-plated quill pin

### Frances Burney’s Honoured Friend

£120 a year or £10 a month

*’My dear and Honoured Friend… I come to you now without hesitation’*

Frances Burney, *Camilla, or a Picture of Youth* (1796)

As a token of our thanks you will receive all of the above, plus:
- An invitation to a special annual event at Chawton House Library

### Ann Radcliffe’s Preserver

£480 a year or £40 a month

*’Ellena could find no words to express her joy and surprise on beholding her preserver’*

Ann Radcliffe, *The Italian* (1797)

As a token of our thanks you will receive all of the above, plus:
- Welcome notice in *The Female Spectator*
- An exclusive sterling silver quill pin
- Personal annual update on the collection by the Librarian

### The Bluestocking Circle Lifetime Membership

£3,000 minimum donation

*’The Men not bound by pedant rules Nor Ladies Precieuses ridicules’*

Hannah More, ’Les Bas-Bleu; or Conversation’ (1787)

As a token of our thanks you will receive all of the above, plus:
- Members name recorded in our *Book of Bluestockings* held in the Library
- Recognition and thanks in the Annual Report & Accounts
- An exclusive gold quill pin
- Invitations to Bluestocking Circle events

The giving levels for our North American Friends are: Sarah Fielding’s Real Friend $50–$199, Frances Burney’s Honoured Friend $200–$749, Ann Radcliffe’s Preserver $750–$4,495 and The Bluestocking Circle $5,000 minimum single donation.
2015 is the bicentenary of the Battle of Waterloo and we commemorated this with two popular events in May and June. First, talented musicians and scholars Penelope Cave and Katrina Faulds (University of Southampton), treated guests to a recital of domestic music and readings reflecting political and social issues from the end of the eighteenth century up to the aftermath of Wellington’s historic victory. This fascinating collection of music was performed on a Stodart 1828 piano, on loan from the University of Southampton, and included battles, dances, duets and operatic transcriptions by popular composers of the time. This event was followed by a talk from Jenny Uglow OBE on her new book In These Times: Living in Britain through Napoleon’s Wars, 1793-1815: a fascinating crowd biography of the experience of different people from all classes and ages – a view of the home front – through twenty years of war. Jenny’s talk particularly focused on the tumultuous year leading up to the historic battle which brought the decades of conflict to a definite close.

Cartoon above is from The Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine, or, Monthly Political and Literary Censor, Vol. 1 (1798-9). French revolutionaries, and the English who supported the French Revolution in its early stages were known collectively as Jacobins. Many writers in our collection supported the French Revolution in its early stages: Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), Charlotte Smith (1749-1806) and Helen Maria Williams (1761-1827) all went into print with their approval. Other vocal supporters included William Wordsworth (1770-1850), Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) and Robert Southey (1774-1843). Many of these writers were later horrified by the ensuing reign of terror of 1793-1794, which was characterised by mass executions of ‘enemies of the Revolution’, and thus became disillusioned with the cause. This right-wing publication lampoons the romantic revolutionaries, with Coleridge and Southey depicted as asses and Mary Wollstonecraft’s writings, represented by ‘Wrongs of Women’ (a reference to Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman, 1798) joining the pamphlets spilling out of the ‘cornucopia of ignorance’. 

This cartoon, from the Anti-Jacobin Review, ridicules Mary Wollstonecraft’s work, among other writers.
As many of you will know from the last issue, we launched a book conservation appeal at the end of 2014. Since then, we have made significant progress as our Librarian, Darren Bevin, reports...

In February 2015 the accredited conservator, Caroline Bendix, returned to help us with the next steps of our book conservation programme. Caroline led a training day for library volunteers who were shown how to mend frayed book corners and repair hollow-back spines. The day was a combination of demonstration and the opportunity to practice on our rare books (under close supervision!). Caroline also gave a fascinating evening lecture where she discussed the places around the world where she has worked on rare collections, including Saint Catherine’s Monastery at the foot of Mount Sinai in Egypt, and also the damage that can be caused to books by various insects and unsuitable environments.

Since the training day, library volunteers have been based in the Lower Reading Room working systematically through the collection and carrying out repairs where necessary. They work at times when the Library is open to the public allowing visitors the opportunity to see the work in progress. Sue Dembowski is one of our volunteers working on the project after expressing interest at the end of 2014: ‘After retiring from bookbinding and working in libraries, this is such a wonderful opportunity to help conserve such a rare collection of books in the lovely setting of Chawton House Library.’ David Woods, another volunteer (and an amateur bookbinder), works alongside Sue and remarks that it is ‘wonderful to think that we are giving these books another 100 years, or more, of life.’
While the library volunteers can undertake minor repairs, there are books in our collection that require professional treatment. We are in a good position to start addressing this issue having already raised half of the £60,000 needed to restore works in the collection thanks to many generous donations, from individual friends and supporters of the library, and from the George Cadbury Quaker Fund, the Foyle Foundation and the Mercers’ Company. The money has enabled us to approach Ruth Stevens of the book and paper conservation company, Sussex Conservation Consortium, a company recommended by Caroline Bendix. Ruth has already been to Chawton House Library to examine the collection and will shortly return to start taking batches of items away to be professionally repaired.

In the meantime, library volunteers will continue working in the lower reading room. They will eventually move to our rarest books following a second training day hosted by Caroline later in the year – this will include learning to repair torn pages among other things. We still need to raise the remaining £30,000 but it is reassuring to know that the books are starting to get the attention that they need.

Horse lovers can get more involved with the horses through our Sponsor a Shire programme – you can read more about this and sign up on our website.

Please join us in giving Simone Marshall a warm welcome to the Chawton House Library team. Simone, who has joined us as our new Assistant Horseman, will be helping Head Horseman, Angie McLaren, to care for the five heavy horses kept at the Library – Summer, Speedy, Charlotte, Royston and Isaac. Simone has plenty of experience in horsemanship as her passion for horses led her to spend the last ten years volunteering with Suffolk Punches, another breed of heavy horse commonly used for farm work.

Speaking of her new post, Simone has said: ‘I am thrilled to be looking after these beautiful working animals with such unique personalities. I look forward to working with Angie to promote their welfare and carry on their training in traditional agricultural methods’.

Horse lovers can get more involved with the horses through our Sponsor a Shire programme – you can read more about this and sign up on our website.
The Unknown Lady’s Account Book; or, Mrs. Topham’s Treasure, Being a Tale of Historical Deduction, True in All Particulars

written by Miss Hilary Davidson, of Australia, and compiled during her visiting fellowship in residence in the village of Chawton in March 2015.
of a garment through its material qualities. For example, when on 1 February 1820 she buys 10 yards of bombazine, 1/2 oz black silk, black Cotton needles, a Remnant and a yard of Crape, 5 yards of black Ribbon, a pair of slippers, a Crape Cap, a pair of gloves, and has the new gown made up, I can total her spending on mourning for the death of George III on January 29 as a luxurious £6:2s:3d. Regularly buying two pairs of gloves at the same time bespeaks an economy of use: if one glove is lost or stained, the other can be brought in to make up the pair. The nicety of ribbon purchases suggest specific uses, as well as her fondness for the colour green. The lady bought yard and fraction lengths each time, precise amounts that hint at a definite purpose, not stockpiling. This contrasts with quotidian items such as Irish linen, or flannel, bought in long pieces of over 10 yards to make shifts and other underwear as required. If she bought a length of fabric for a garment, such as January 1812’s ‘3 yds of merino cloth’, the subsequent ‘2 yards of Persian’ (a silk lining fabric), ‘¾ yard white velvet, 1 ¼ yards Gold trimming’ and a ‘Gold tassel’ conjure the finished appearance of a handsome winter Spencer. The need for 100-200 visiting cards a year underpins a robust social circuit. The slow increase of piping and wadding mentioned matches the wider padded hems and applied decoration seen in surviving garments from the late 1810s. Regularly buying new walking shoes shows my lady was active on foot, while the time between entries shows how fast those shoes wore out.

Such purchases also expanded on what I knew of the inequalities between costs of materials and the labour to make them up. The usual cost for making up a gown is seven or eight shillings – the price of a figured sarcenet silk alone was between 2s:6d and 6s a yard. As I know personally, hand stitching a gown takes upwards of twenty hours work. It’s a very small return for the time, which opens new research questions for me on how dressmakers made a profit. There is a clear delight in lovely clothes running through the accounts. Age in no way diminishes the lady’s consumption of fashionable adornment. In fact, when in April 1818 she receives a £15 windfall above her usual allowance, she promptly spends the whole lot on clothes: ‘a Pellisse Silk Lined’ (£8:8s), ‘a work’d Mus[li]n Gown’ (£2:1s:9d), and ‘a Long Shawl’ (£5:15s). The human reality of this purchasing is an enjoyable contradiction to the constant admonishments of the moral texts I was reading at the same time, all promoting the idea that one should not be overly concerned with dress and appearance. My lady was regularly pious – though her church collect drops from 3s to half a crown – and a follower of fashion.

By the time I reached the end of the account I was itching to discover the author. I wanted to know the bigger picture, to contextualise her spending in place and social standing. The internal clues were few. At Lymington, she gave a cap to a Mrs. Peyton. An online search brought up the Peytons of Priestfields, Milford, a property once belonging to Rear-Admiral John Peyton. This was a semi-fruitful lead, as further investigation into this family brought in the Armstrongs – a name seen in the accounts, including a John and William who are recorded as recipients of presents. While some of the family’s probates were online, they didn’t lead to my lady. However, at the end of the 1823 accounts is recorded an income of ‘Mrs C Peytons Legacy Ten Guineas’. If I could discover this lady I might find her friend. At first I thought Mrs. Peyton was the admiral’s widow (he died in 1809). Searching on Google Books turned up one chance reference in the Gentleman’s Magazine to a Mrs Catherine Peyton, spinster, who died in Kensington in late 1823. Her title was a red herring as she wasn’t married but had a courtesy ‘Mrs’. This death notice moved my search away from Hampshire to London, and to the National Archive’s probate lists. With the new place information, I found a Catherine Peyton with a probate dated 6 November 1823, and bought the scan of her will, peering through the
A pelisse is a woman’s outer garment very popular from the 1790s, blossoming into inventive varieties to become an essential part of early nineteenth-century fashion. It was a style of coat-dress made in every kind and weight of fabric, from sheer cotton muslins to fur-lined luxury, worn indoors and out, in all seasons, and reaching anywhere from the wearer’s knees to her ankles. Pelisses were vehicles for style, situated between the essential gown and the harder warmth of redingotes, mantles and cloaks, going some way towards compensating for the reduced number and thickness of petticoats, which was all that the new line of dress would accommodate, as the late textile historian Natalie Rothstein observed. Pelisse styles inspired by the Napoleonic conflicts often appear in fashion plates, echoing details of military masculine uniforms. The word derives from the medieval French ‘pelicon’, meaning a fur-lined mantle.

WE ARE DELIGHTED to announce that Chawton House Library has three new patrons who are all internationally renowned scholars of early women’s writing...

Cora Kaplan is Honorary Professor of English at Queen Mary University of London and Professor Emerita at the University of Southampton. Professor Kaplan was instrumental in setting up the links Chawton House Library enjoys with the University of Southampton, established before the Library opened in 2003. Author of Salt and Bitter and Good: Three Centuries of English and American Women Poets, Sea Changes: Essays in Culture and Feminism and Victoriana—Histories, Fictions, Criticism, she has edited several volumes resulting from conferences held here and, together with Dr Jennie Batchelor, she is the series editor of the Palgrave MacMillan History of British Women’s Writing.

Isobel Grundy, Professor Emeritus in the Department of English and Film Studies at the University of Alberta, Canada, was formerly a Trustee of Chawton House Library and we are immensely grateful that her expertise remains available to us now as a Patron. She is an international authority on the life and writing of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762) and part of the team responsible for the groundbreaking Orlando Project, a database of women’s writing in the British Isles from the Beginnings to the Present, an extraordinary resource for people interested in women’s writing (orlando.cambridge.org).

Janet Todd OBE, President of Lucy Cavendish College Cambridge, has written and published widely on women’s writing of the eighteenth century. She has written biographies of Aphra Behn (1640-1689), Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), Fanny Wollstonecraft and Lady Mount Cashell and edited the complete works of Behn and Wollstonecraft. She is the general editor of the nine-volume Cambridge Edition of Jane Austen and the co-founder of the journal Women’s Writing.

A spencer was a short, close-fitting, long-sleeved jacket ending, like the waists of women’s gowns, under the bust, and worn by women and children. It was a style that slipped into female fashions from a male version: a dress coat with the long ‘skirts’ cut off. The name derives from Lord Spencer, the garment’s supposed inventor though the origin stories differ. Either he tore the tails off his riding coat falling from a horse, or singed them off standing too close to a fire. However it happened, the lord preferred the freedom of a tailless coat and asked his tailor to make more. A new style was born. For women, a spencer was the perfect way to keep the upper body warm when fashion preferred exposed arms and décolletage. Like pelisses, they were made in every variety inventive dressmakers could concoct.

In March this year, we launched a series of podcasts called Chawton House Library Conversations. These are a monthly round-up of news, events and highlights, helping supporters stay connected with Chawton House Library, wherever they are. The podcasts have been made possible thanks to a generous donation from Sue Forgue.

The release of the first podcast, announced on International Women’s Day was greeted with the joy we hoped for, with one of our Twitter followers, a literature Professor in Italy, remarking ‘How wonderful! What a wonderful gift on #IWD2015!’

Just a few of the items featured so far include the scandalous tale of actress and muse, Susannah Cibber, an introduction to the world of nineteenth-century mental illness at Bedlam hospital, and interviews with book conservator, Caroline Bendix, and dress historian Hilary Davidson, who talks about Edward Austen, later Knight, and his portrait and suit. The diversity reflects the many interesting talks and activities that go on here! Anyone can listen to the podcasts by visiting our website.

Chawton House Library officially launched its new visiting fellowships at a special celebratory lunch on Sunday 8 March 2015. Guests included writers, editors and world-renowned scholars as well as our Trustees and Patrons.

Tours of the Library were followed by lunch in the Great Hall with tables named after different women writers in the collection. The meal itself took inspiration from the Knight Family Cookbook and included a particularly delightful ‘Everlasting Syllabub’, a dessert Jane Austen referred to in an unfinished epistolary novel, Lesley Castle, with the wonderful line describing one character: ‘her face as White as a Whipt syllabub.’

Lunch was followed by inspiring talks from Professor Ros Ballaster and Dr Helen Cole on their personal journeys to study women’s literature and how the Library has supported their work throughout their careers. Dr Cole, who was previously a lawyer, even warned guests ‘beware!’ of the influence of Chawton House Library, having come to the gardens on an open day with her children some years ago only to find herself signing up to the Chawton M.A. in Eighteenth-Century Studies at the University of Southampton that night!

To round off the event, our Founder, Sandy Lerner, gave a very special presentation of the first quill badge to Joan Ray, Chawton House Library Trustee and President of the North American Friends of Chawton House Library, who is the founder member of our Legacy Circle, generously pledging to leave the charity a gift of $100,000. As mentioned in a previous article, our new Friends programme includes a special quill badge for all supporters, modelled on this original version.
Left:
Our Executive Director, Dr Gillian Dow, with Trustees Len Bosack and Richard Knight.

Left to Right: Penny Mordaunt MP and newly appointed Minister of state for the Armed Forces, our Trustee Professor Joan Ray, the Rt Hon. Earl of Selborne, and our new Patron Professor Cora Kaplan.

Below Left:
Our executive Director, Dr Gillian Dow, with Trustees Len Bosack and Richard Knight.

Above Left:
Our Founder and Chairman, Dr Sandy Lerner, talks to Sandra Clark and the Rt Hon. Baroness Williams of Crosby. Sandra Clark, who has donated a number of special items to us, including Jane Austen first editions and original Regency dresses, flew over from Texas especially to attend the event.

Above Right:
Left to Right: Tamsin English, Commissioning Editor at Michael Joseph Publishing, Charlotte Mardon-Heath, Marketing Executive at Content Media Corporation, and Jonathan Beckman, Author and Senior Editor at the Literary Review.

Below Left:
Left to Right: Penny Mordaunt MP and newly appointed Minister of state for the Armed Forces, our Trustee Professor Joan Ray, the Rt Hon. Earl of Selborne, and our new Patron Professor Cora Kaplan.

Below Right:
Keith Arscott, our Development Director, the Rt Hon. Baroness Williams of Crosby and Pamela Birley, Chawton House Library Liaison Officer for the Society of Women Writers and Journalists (SWWJ).

Baroness Williams was delighted to see for the first time the trophy honouring her mother, Vera Brittain, which is on display here, along with other trophies and items of the SWWJ.
The intrepid travel writer, Maria Graham (née Dundas and later known as Maria, Lady Callcott, 1785-1842), experienced a major earthquake in Chile in 1822. Graham, who had a keen interest in geology, wrote a letter with detailed observations of the earthquake and its aftermath to Henry Warburton, who thought it worthy of publication in the *Transactions of the Geological Society* in 1824. This was the first article by a woman to appear in the journal and it was actually cited in Geologist Charles Lyell’s *Principles of Geology* (1830) as it supported his theory that earthquakes could cause the elevations of landmasses.

Graham found herself drawn into controversy, however, when another geologist, George Bellas Greenough, attacked this theory by publicly ridiculing Graham as a witness. Graham was incensed. According to her nephew, John Callcott Horsley, her husband and brother offered to fight a duel with Greenough, to which she responded ‘Be quiet, both of you, I am quite capable of fighting my own battles, and intend to do it.’ She then published a crushing response, *On the Reality of the Rise of the Coast of Chile* (1835). Soon after this, Charles Darwin corroborated Graham’s account when he observed the same phenomenon in 1835 in Chile during the second voyage of HMS Beagle.

There will be a music recital featuring readings from Maria Graham’s letters from India at the Library on 6 October at 6.30p.m. For further details and our full events programme, please see our website or call the office.

Did You Know?

Home to early English women’s writing

Maria Graham’s journal of her residence in Chile in 1822 is on display at Chawton House Library. The journal features illustrations of various scenes drawn by Maria Graham and later engraved by Edward Finden.

The Female Spectator is named after Eliza Haywood’s publication of the same name, which was published from April 1744 to May 1746. Haywood’s journal – which was a direct play on the existing *Spectator*, written by and for men – was the first magazine by and for women, and was widely read. Haywood was familiar with the challenges of life for women within a patriarchal system, and she wrote pragmatic advice on what kind of education women should seek, and on common difficulties such as how to avoid disastrous marriages and deal with wandering husbands.

The journal featured romantic and satiric fiction, moral essays and social and political commentary, covering everything from the craze for tea drinking and the problem of gambling, to politics, war and diplomacy, and the importance of science and natural history.

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Chawton House Library
Chawton, Alton
Hampshire
GU34 1SJ

T: 01420 541010
E: info@chawtonhouselibrary.org
W: www.chawtonhouselibrary.org

North American Friends of Chawton House Library
7230 N San Blas Dr, Tucson, AZ 85704-3135, USA

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