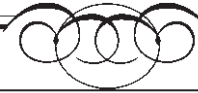


The Female Spectator

CHAWTON HOUSE LIBRARY



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CHAWTON CHRONICLES: A LETTER FROM THE CEO

In the last edition of *The Female Spectator*, I highlighted that a wonderful portrait of Edward Austen Knight had returned to Chawton House after an absence of fifty-seven years. Well, I am equally delighted to report on a similar development in respect of a splendid silk suit which is known to have been worn by Edward Austen Knight (it is even possible that it is the outfit which is illustrated in the famous Wellings silhouette with its depiction of a young Edward being presented to his adoptive parents, Thomas and Catherine Knight).



*William Wellings 1783 silhouette.
Depicting the adoption of Edward Austen by the Knights*

In recent years the jacket and trousers have remained in protective storage because of the delicate state of the fabric. Conservation of the material has, therefore, been high on our list of priorities as this will enable us to display the clothing as an integral part of the interpretation of the house and its history. Thanks to the generosity of the Esmée Fairbairn Trust, we are now in a position to undertake the necessary repairs to the suit and to commission an appropriate glass exhibition case. The suit will then form part of Chawton House Library's educational programme for schools, colleges and the general public who will be able to explore questions such as where was the suit made, where did the silk originate and how did the tailors of the day live and work? To assist with this learning opportunity we are planning to have a replica outfit made so that visitors will have the chance to closely inspect the material and the way in which it was put together – and indeed try it on (although only our youngest visitors will be able to mimic Edward Austen Knight's slender frame!). In order to facilitate this element of the project a further fundraising effort will be undertaken and

details will be available on the Library's website: www.chawtonhouse.org

In the meantime, you will see, elsewhere in this issue, a full report on the successful Sarah Fielding Conference which was held here in early November. The event is one of a number of recent and upcoming gatherings that benefit from the ambience of Chawton House which helps to promote academic research, new interpretations and, of course, the dissemination of knowledge. Similar activities are planned over the next few months: 'What Signifies a Theatre', organised by colleagues at Royal Holloway University of London, will include a performance of Frances Sheridan's *The History of Nourjahad*, as well as a symposium of talks on private theatricals in the long eighteenth century. A lecture series on the History of the Garden which has been instigated by the Hampshire Gardens Trust Research Group will take place early in the New Year.

With these new initiatives you can see that, despite the embracing of a rich heritage spanning more than four centuries, Chawton House is not bound by tradition. In its relatively recent guise as Chawton House Library, it provides creative space for individuals and organisations alike. The intimacy of its size and the pastoral quality of its location allow us to deliver a truly integrated approach to education where the arts and humanities, environment and ecology, creative writing, and heritage management (to name a few), combine to weave the inspirational mix that is Chawton House Library.

To ensure that this mix is sustained and delivered effectively requires superb staff and a vibrant, energetic and committed volunteer community. Chawton House Library is fortunate to have both and I would like to thank them for helping to make 2010 a year of demonstrable progress. Of course, we are also greatly indebted to our members and friends who continue to act as ambassadors and advocates for our programmes and activities. Without the support outlined above it would be impossible for us to make positive headway in the delivery of our exciting mission.

Many thanks to all, Happy Holidays, and very best wishes for the New Year.

Stephen Lawrence

The Female Spectator

Autumn 2010

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BRIAN CHARLES SOUTHAM

(15 September 1931 – 7 October 2010)

It was with great sadness that we heard the news of Dr. Brian Southam's death. A long-serving Patron of Chawton House Library, Dr. Southam watched the developments at the Library with interest.



Photograph reproduced
with the kind permission
of Brian Southam's family

Dr. Southam was known for his career in publishing, and his work on Austen, with scholarly monographs including *Jane Austen and the Navy* (2000, 2005). It is for pioneering work on Austen's manuscripts that he shall be best known to posterity. In one of his last publications, an essay for *A Truth Universally Acknowledged: 33 Great Writers on why we read Jane Austen* (ed. Susannah Carson, 2009),

Southam wrote of his encounter with Austen's 'Volume the Second': 'It was the sight of this book, my reading of it [...] that changed me from dutiful student into Janeite devotee, a transformation I never regretted'. Twenty-first century Janeite devotees can only imagine the excitement with which one might read 'Love and Freindship' and 'The History of England' at a time when scholarly work on Austen's manuscripts was just beginning. Back in Spring 1960, a reading of 'Volume the Second' involved not perusing the British Library's Add MS 59874, or looking at one of several recent scholarly editions, both online and in print. Instead, Southam read at Cold Blow Farm, while Mrs. Mowll (descended from Francis Austen) made welcome interruptions with family histories giving the manuscript's provenance. It is a scene worthy of Stella Dorothea Gibbons, beautifully told, and it reminds us of the importance of manuscripts and rare books in all scholarly research.

I first met Brian in November 2006, when he joined us at CHL for a talk by Deirdre Le Faye. The following morning, I was charged with driving both scholars and the 'Grandison' manuscript (the short playlet adaptation of Richardson's novel which Brian himself first authenticated as a work by Austen) down to Southampton for a conference commemorating Austen's move to Southampton in 1806. I was fully conscious of the weight of responsibility to the Austen community! Brian's last visit to CHL was for our 'New Directions in Austen Studies' conference in July 2009. On that occasion, he asked his usual probing questions: a follow-up note after the conference said how much he had enjoyed being a part of it. As a reader of *The Female Spectator*, Brian sent me frequent emails and letters: I shall miss his scholarly engagement with our work at Chawton House Library.

Gillian Dow, Chawton Lecturer

READING AND RE-READING IN SARAH FIELDING'S *THE COUNTESS OF DELLWYN*

Louise Curran is a PhD candidate at University College London, where she is working on Samuel Richardson's correspondence for her thesis. She was a Visiting Fellow at Chawton House Library in October and November 2009, researching Richardson's connections to women writers of the period. It was here that she read Sarah Fielding's novel *The Countess of Dellwyn* for the first time.

On 7 January 1749, an anonymous pamphlet, *Remarks on Clarissa*, was published. It was the first of many responses – both in manuscript and in print – to Samuel Richardson's recently published novel. The next day its author, Sarah Fielding, sent Richardson a letter in which she reflected with humility on 'daring but to touch the hem of [Clarissa's] garment'¹. In print she explains her motivation to write with less deference, outlining that she wishes to expose the folly of judgments made by readers who read the novel without 'an impartial and attentive perusal of the Story'².

Fielding's output as an author is formally various, ranging from the literary criticism of the *Remarks*, to novels including *The Adventures of David Simple* (1744), its two continuations (1747 and 1753), and *The History of the Countess of Dellwyn* (1759) and *The History of Ophelia* (1760), as well as a children's book, *The Governess* (1749), works of collaboration, such as *The Cry* (1754) written with Jane Collier (which styled itself on its title page 'A New Dramatic Fable'), a version of *The Lives of Cleopatra and Octavia* (1757), and a translation of Xenophon's *Memoirs of Socrates* (1762). An interest in impartial and attentive reading is, perhaps, what these generically diverse writings share.

With this in mind, I would like to consider *The History of the Countess of Dellwyn*. Ostensibly less formally inventive than her other works, the novel begins with the marriage of seventeen-year-old Charlotte Lucum to the elderly wheelchair-bound Lord Dellwyn. If the bald facts were not alarming enough already, the wedding ring is dropped an ominous three times before it eventually settles on its intended hand. The novel then flashes back, offering a historical sketch of Charlotte's story and laying bare the stratagems between Lord Dellwyn and Mr

Lucum which brought the marriage to pass, as well as tracing Charlotte's incremental steps towards vanity and a love of riches (especially sparkling diamonds) which led her to acquiesce to the proposal.

Fielding professed to have little interest in writing a long preface to *The Countess of Dellwyn* writing plainly to Richardson (who printed the novel), 'if it is necessary I must write a small Preface but I had rather not for I am quite weary'³. Eventually, however, she wrote an introduction that reflects thoughtfully on the potentialities of the mutating novel prose form. For Fielding, reading is not a passive act but one that requires mental attention: 'I have somewhere read an Observation' she writes in the 'Preface', 'that many Persons have endeavoured to teach Men to write; but none have taught them to read; as if Reading consisted only in distinguishing the Letters and Words from each other'⁴.

Unlike many of her contemporaries - those who warned of the perils of reading romance fiction – Fielding is not averse to the sheer pleasures of reading. Instead, she reserves her scepticism not for specific genres of fiction per se but for the inert minds of inattentive readers. She is alive to the comic satisfaction of association and identification, for example, when Mr Lucum, a politician manqué, is described in terms which recall Cervantes' *Don Quixote*: 'nor was the famous Knight of *La Mancha* ever bound stronger, in all the imaginary Whims of his own Invention' (*Dellwyn*, I, p.23).

The experience of reading Fielding's novels is to be persistently reminded of reading as an act of exercising judgment and, moreover, re-reading as a multi-layered interpretative act. One way Fielding draws attention to the relationship of negotiation between writer and reader is in her use of allusion. Fielding was a writer noted for her



Reflective reading in 1688: Frontispiece to George Savile, *The Lady's New Year's Gift* (London, second edition, 1688)

dense allusive style. A friend of Richardson's, Lady Bradshaigh, criticised the writer of *The Cry* for her 'excessive use' of 'verses, lines, scraps of plays, Farcies, songs'.⁵ Allusions to various writers, including Homer, Virgil, Ovid and Shakespeare (especially references to *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and *Othello*) are woven through the text. Associations which at first seem apparent are often dislocated in the course of reading, as when Charlotte is called 'perverse, stubborn, disobedient, undutiful, pitiful' by her father when she initially refuses marriage with Lord Dellwyn, which recalls Clarissa's treatment at the hands of the Harlowes before the allusion to the virtuous heroine breaks down: it is not Lord Dellwyn's lack of moral qualities that affects Charlotte so much but that he 'was highly disagreeable in her Sight' (*Dellwyn*, I, p.30-1).

References to reading are nearly always pointed. Fielding reserves her most ironic voice for characters such as the Iago-like Captain Drummond, who feeds on Charlotte's weaknesses and plots to bring her down, when she describes how 'Neither Divinity, Philosophy, Arts, or Sciences, had the Power of engaging his Attention to Reading: His Prey lay amongst the Living, and not amongst the Dead' (*Dellwyn*, I, p.282). This line, which might constitute a throwaway sketch in a lesser novel, is distinctly chilling in the hand of a writer sensitive to how characters read and the material fate of their books. While Lord Dellwyn and Mr Lucum negotiate the disastrous marriage the latter's copies of Plato and Aristotle 'moulder on the Shelf' (*Dellwyn*, I, p.29). Few readers of Homer and Ovid, cautions Fielding when Charlotte undergoes 'A Complete Metamorphosis, without the Assistance of any supernatural Power' and determines to marry Lord Dellwyn, stop to consider how marvellous stories of transformation might relate to 'the intricate Labyrinths of the human Mind' (*Dellwyn*, I, p.61).

The human mind as labyrinth is a leitmotif in Fielding's work. The mind is muscular; it needs to exert 'its Faculties' otherwise it 'shrinks into a dwarfish Nothing' (*Dellwyn*, I, p.148). Worldly knowledge and learning are one thing but the harder task for Fielding, and one which is at the heart of her writings in all their guises, is how to realise fully the relationship between thought and reflection. It is easy enough to read and enjoy books but to

think critically requires exertion. In the course of the novel, Charlotte is remembered as a child reading to her father. Part of the way in which Fielding expresses how much Charlotte Lucum has fallen is the comparison of this memory to her later behaviour when Charlotte's recollections of reading are used purely for performative purposes. When desperate she acts like a generic 'tragic Queen' and in a later attempt at transformation mimics the character of Calista in Nicholas Rowe's play *The Fair Penitent* (*Dellwyn*, II, p.31). Lord Dellwyn, on the other hand, has little time for bookish activities. He 'never condescended to read anything so trifling as *Shakespeare's* Plays; and, if he had perused them, there was no manner of Danger that he should know the Characters again in real Life' (*Dellwyn*, II, p.117-8).

In the piecemeal allusiveness of its form and the fictional self-reflexivity of the representation of its characters, *The Countess of Dellwyn* is a work that explores the ethics of reading in its broadest sense, how we read books and how we read ourselves and others. The novel presents a cautionary tale about the consequences of unreflective human imagination, one which is inherently sceptical of complacent reading. In this late novel, Fielding also hints at a darker suggestion concerning the limits of human understanding; that there are, too, 'intricate Labyrinths which no human Penetration can unfold' (*Dellwyn*, II, p.115).



Reflective reading in 1789: Engraving illustrating sonnet XII of Charlotte Smith's *Elegiac Sonnets*, (London, fifth edition, 1789)

¹ Letter from Sarah Fielding to Samuel Richardson, 8 January 1749, *The Correspondence of Henry and Sarah Fielding*, ed. Martin C. Battestin and Clive T. Probyn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p.123.

² Sarah Fielding, *Remarks on Clarissa [1749]*, ed. Peter Sabor (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1985), p. 3.

³ Letter from Sarah Fielding to Samuel Richardson, 14 December 1758, *Correspondence of Henry and Sarah Fielding*, p.149.

⁴ Sarah Fielding, *The History of the Countess of Dellwyn*, 2 vols. (London: A. Millar, 1759), I, p. xxxiii-xxxiv.

⁵ Letter from Lady Bradshaigh to Samuel Richardson, 3-22 March 1754, Forster Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum, FM XI, f. 90-95.

HOUSE AND ESTATE NEWS

Conservation Projects at Chawton House Library By Paul Dearn, Operations Manager

One of the essential aspects of Chawton House Library is ongoing conservation work. At the moment the Historic Parkland Review, and the implementation of the schedule of works which has resulted from the report's recommendations, is at the head of this process. While this conservation work will be taking place throughout the year and across the whole estate, there are two projects in particular that have been given a further boost with additional external sourced funding. Thanks must go to Ray Moseley, our Friends, Fundraising and Merchandising Administrator, who has worked hard to secure funds towards the following initiatives: the conservation and restoration of the Fanny Kemble portrait (including re-framing) and the conservation and display of Edward Austen Knight's coat and breeches.

Initial enquiries for a grant with the Heritage Conservation Trust, which is part of the Historic Houses Association, led to the allocation of £2350.00 towards the conservation and restoration of the Fanny Kemble portrait. This decision was taken only after the Head of Conservation at the National Portrait Gallery viewed the painting and made a number of recommendations to the Trustees of the Heritage Conservation Trust. At the moment I am planning for this painting to leave the collection in the New Year to start the repair process.

A consultative visit was made to Chawton House Library by Louise Squire, textile conservator, to view and to produce a report on the matching silk frock coat and breeches that once belonged to Edward Austen Knight. The detailed report highlighted the condition of the coat and breeches, proposed conservation treatment, recommendations for display and costs. Following on from this report an application was made to the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation which has, subsequently, awarded a grant of £8000 towards the conservation and display of the clothing, from the Trustees Area of Special Knowledge budget.

The support and generosity of both organisations in making separate awards to conservation projects at Chawton House Library is very much appreciated. If you wish to further support these and other worthwhile projects, please visit our website www.chawtonhouse.org where you will find a link to our charity page on Virgin Money Giving which lists the separate projects for which we are currently raising funds.

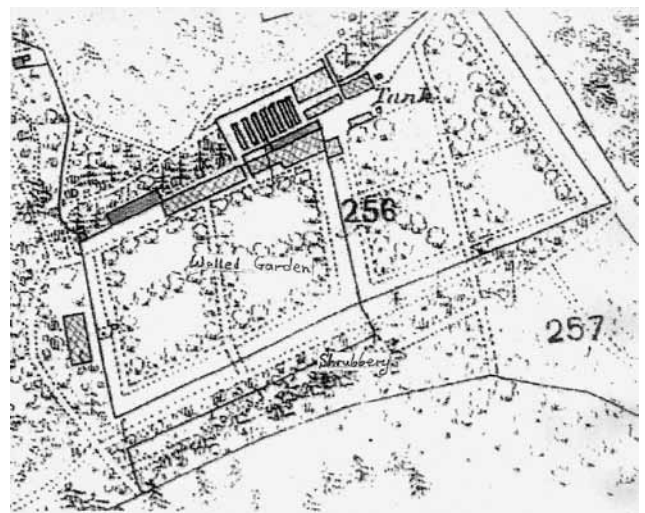
The Park And Gardens By Alan Bird, Head Gardener

The Adam Callander painting which hangs in the Oak Room at Chawton House depicts what was thought to be the naturalistic parkland as it was around 1780. Following the parkland survey by Kate Felus in 2009, we now suspect that the formal gardens were still in place at that time and that the landscape style was not implemented until around 1811; this was quite late bearing in mind that the first landscapes of William Kent and Charles Bridgeman were in place by the mid-eighteenth century. These findings were based on maps and documents in the archive.

It seems likely, therefore, that Jane Austen would have known the formal courts and parterres of the eighteenth century and she was probably witness to the transition from the formal to the landscape style. The parkland review has highlighted several areas of the estate and garden which can be developed. The parkland itself will receive a few improvements such as tree planting, coppicing and fence realignment. In the garden, an area of wilderness and scrub has spread engulfing the lawn and haha. This will be cleared to restore the historic view down the valley from the house.

Another lost feature of the nineteenth-century garden was the shrubbery which was located to the south of the walled garden. Nothing is known of the planting in the shrubbery other than that it contained a lot of laurel and hazel, all now grown into an impenetrable jungle, along with ash, hawthorn and brambles. Clearance work will start this winter and replanting will follow. The shrubbery originally contained a gravel circular path which will be rebuilt and, in the long term, will link up with a perimeter estate walk.

In the New Year I will be leading an estate walk where we can view all these projects. We will end up in the old kitchen where we can view the plans and enjoy a cup of tea and cake.



Walled Garden and shrubbery

CHAWTON HOUSE LIBRARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME

By Sarah Parry, Education Officer

Since the Library opened in July 2003 we have worked with Jane Austen's House Museum to provide an education service for schools and colleges studying Austen. More recently, we have also offered educational visits on other writers, aspects of the Library collections and the house. This is an area of our education programme that we plan to develop.

In 2007 Jane Austen's House Museum and Chawton House Library were awarded a Sandford Award from the Heritage Education Trust in recognition of our partnership and education work. The Austen visits begin with an introductory film and talk on Jane Austen's life and work, followed by an opportunity to see the Jane Austen's House Museum. After lunch, the groups visit Chawton House Library and find out more about the world that Edward Austen (later Knight) moved into when he became the heir of Thomas and Catherine Knight, who held the Chawton, Godmersham and Steventon estates at the end of the eighteenth century. The students are shown one of the Library reading rooms and material from the collection relevant to their studies. This is also an opportunity for us to introduce them to writers and works they might not be familiar with and to encourage them to find out more about our Library collections. The visit ends with a dancing session in the Great Hall. The students can wear replica Regency costume and it is usually at this moment that the aspiring Lydias and Wickhams and Elizabeths and Darcys make themselves known!

Since we opened, it has been gratifying to welcome back many tutors who bring students to visit us on a regular basis. We have recently worked with one such college to produce a bespoke visit based on Austen's *Northanger Abbey*. On the day, the weath-

er was dark, wet and windy and provided the perfect backdrop for introducing the students to some of our gothic "blue" books.

In addition to school and college students we regularly have visits from groups of undergraduate and postgraduate students. These visits are also tailored to the needs of each group and often include a seminar. We find out in advance the writers and works that the students are studying so that the Library material shown to them relates directly to their work. For many students it is the first time that they will have seen the novels they are studying in editions other than modern paperbacks. The context of being able to see exactly how a first, or early, edition of a text was produced and circulated and the style of printing employed contributes much to an understanding of books as material objects.

We have also worked with groups from branches of the University of the Third Age (U3A). For all educational visits our strong collection of paintings is another dimension that can be used to spark interest and curiosity about the periods, people and places portrayed in them and how they relate to the Library collections.

In the spring of 2011 we are planning an Open Evening for school and college tutors. This event will highlight the resources that Chawton House Library offers. Further details will be published on our website and in future editions of *The Female Spectator*.

For information on school and college visits please contact me by email: sarah.parry@chawton.net.

We are always happy to welcome new groups to Chawton House Library.



College visit dancing session at Chawton House Library

STORIES BEHIND THE PAINTINGS

By Jacqui Grainger, Librarian

This is the first in a series of occasional articles about the fine art, maps and prints in the collections at Chawton House Library. There are two collections of portraits: one of women associated with the main collection and those belonging to the Knight Collection. The portrait of Mary Robinson (1758-1800), attributed to John Hoppner (1758-1810) and belonging to the main collection, makes a huge impression on visitors as they enter the Great Hall because of its vivid colours. It portrays Mary Robinson as Garrick's Perdita in his version of Shakespeare's *A Winter's Tale*, a part she played in the 1778-9 season at Drury Lane. It was in this role that she was first seen by the Prince Regent, the future George IV, and subsequently became his mistress. The following passage is an extract from Hester Davenport's biography of Mary Robinson, *The Prince's Mistress: Perdita* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2006) about this period of her life:

Knowledge of the Prince in later life makes Mary's behaviour appear astonishingly foolhardy, but the Prince's image was not only untarnished then but bright with promise. Mary's rational self was wary, and for many weeks she refused any assignation: if she had truly been the scheming courtesan Miss Hamilton (and later historians) thought her, she would not only have hesitated, but grabbed what she could for the fear that the Prince would change his mind. But her vanity, always her Achilles heel, was flattered, and prudence was overmastered.



Portrait of Mary Robinson (1758-1800), attributed to John Hoppner (1758-1810)

Moreover, each letter exchanged with the Prince enmeshed her with him further. His later affairs, particularly that with Mrs Fitzherbert, show how relentlessly he pursued his quarry. Once Mary had nibbled the bait by attending the theatre, once she had replied to a letter, she was hooked if not yet landed.

The Hoppner portrait of Mary Robinson will be travelling to London in late 2011, where it will be on display as part of a National Portrait Gallery exhibition entitled 'The First Actresses: Nell Gwyn to Sarah Siddons', curated by Professor Gill Perry of the Open University. The exhibition will run between 20 Oct 2011 - 8 Jan 2012. Until then, however, visitors can enjoy the portrait in the Great Hall at Chawton House Library.

THE SHIRE HORSES

by Angie McLaren, Head Horseman

There is a lot to be said about working with animals. Our heavy horses are no exception.



Three of the horses, Harry Clarence & Saracen, are now at an age where we have to consider what work we put them to. They are not ready for retirement yet and they still enjoy working on the estate doing some timber extraction and harrowing the land. They give you so much for so little in return; it is very rewarding working with these horses.

On our Open Days the visitors love to get up close to these magnificent animals and now we have another addition to the estate, a new filly called Summer, who came to us from St Francis Rescue Centre. She now rules the roost alongside the boys and Charlotte, the other mare.

It would be lovely to see more of these horses working the land again; maybe in the future the horse will have its time again - I do hope I am around to see that.

ASPECTS OF HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT DURING THE LONG EIGHTEENTH CENTURY: THE INVALID'S DIETARY

Catherine Morley is an independent scholar based in West Vancouver. She was a Visiting Fellow at Chawton House Library in July 2010.

As a Visiting Fellow during July 2010, my research was directed at two topics that contribute to my overall interest in the everyday work of creating and sustaining home and family. My interest in the history of the invalid's dietary or feeding practices during illness relates to my background as a registered dietitian and is a part of a larger programme of research into the history of dietetics and the evolving practice of dietetics in Canada. The study of household linens (the sources and uses of textiles used in food preparation and storage, bathing, sleeping and dining) before these items were made in factories relates to my background as a textile artist. This article addresses work on the first of these topics.

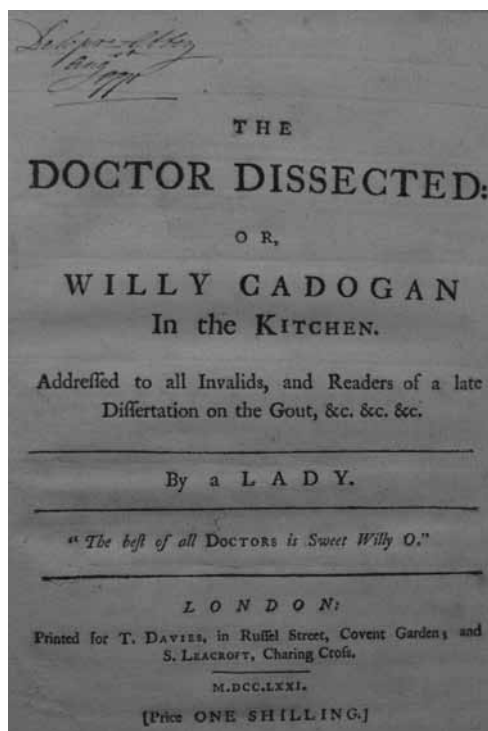
The standard diet progression in use today in health care settings in North America for people recovering from illness or surgery involves a transition from nothing by mouth, to clear fluids, full fluids, light or soft and finally regular food. While this progression supposedly advances from the easiest to more difficult-to-digest foods, these diet categories have never made sense physiologically. In 1991, a colleague and I studied the eating preferences of people who recently had general anaesthetics, and this revealed no physiological advantage to the Light Diet. We then discontinued the diet with no ill effects to patients and, in so doing, streamlined food services.¹ Access to the Chawton House Library collection allowed me to learn about sick-room feeding practices pre-dating those I have been able to study using cookery and dietetics training books in Canada dating from 1880. A list of the works I consulted at Chawton can be found at the end of this article. My interest was in learning how current feeding practices came to be, and why we retain them or not given the changing nature of human disease and our evolving understanding of nutritional care to manage different conditions. Findings from this study will inform future studies of what are taken-for-granted feeding practices.

The key differences to keep in mind about studying feeding practices for the sick in the eighteenth century and today are that the sick were cared for at home (unless they were very poor and went to institutions established for the care of the poor and infirm), that living with chronic disease is a twentieth-century phenomenon, and that we now

have a completely different understanding of digestive anatomy and physiology. During the eighteenth century, what are now chronic conditions (e.g. diseases of the heart, kidneys and lungs) were lethal. Feeding the sick was most often directed at treatment of infectious diseases, or to aid recovery from an injury, surgery or childbirth. Nutritional management of chronic conditions was unknown. Regarding digestion, the stomach was thought to be connected directly to the heart with no understanding of the contributions to digestion of the small and large intestines, liver, gall bladder and pancreas.

As I reviewed cookery books dating from 1690 to 1840, I wondered about the commonality of recipes (also known as receipts) such as beef tea, panada, and gruel, when these were used, the meaning of descriptors for foods or dishes (such as cooling, astringent or drying), and how people knew what recipes to use. Recipes were either entered (sometimes alphabetically) in handwritten books as they were obtained, such as the Knight family receipt book of 1793, or were grouped in printed books in sections about feeding the sick. In both types of books there were no instructions for the use of various dishes. I was puzzled. Following up on a whim that these recipes might relate to the humours (blood, phlegm, yellow bile, black bile) that I remembered learning about as an undergraduate, I reviewed books on medical management (such as Abernethy, 1827 and 1830), household management (such as the anonymous *New Female Instructor*, 1824) and advice to mothers (for instance Buchan, 1803 and Chavasse, 1843). I wanted to understand how 'medical men' were trained to give advice on diets to treat various conditions, and to understand what women were taught about the care of the sick as part of their duties of household management. While answers to my questions were never clearly laid out in any of the resources reviewed, the information I collected did suggest that the recipes and feeding advice related to efforts to manipulate the four humours.²

Until at least 1840, the belief was that all conditions were caused by imbalances of the humours. The humours were a combination of hot or cold, wet or dry: thus conditions were hot/wet, hot/dry, cold/wet, or cold/dry. All foods were considered cooling, warm-



The title page of an anonymous booklet of 1771 promising advice to 'all Invalids'

ing, drying or moistening. Depending on the nature of a condition, foods of the opposing nature were to be given. For example, for a condition considered to be hot and wet (for instance a fever), foods that were drying and cooling were advised. It is important to note that beliefs about the effects of a food on the humours did not relate to the physical qualities or composition of a food or ingredient, as we think of them today. For example, oatmeal was considered cooling, as was whey, as it promoted perspiration.³ Arabella Atkyns's *The Family Magazine* (London, 1741) was an excellent resource and detailed the qualities of foods as they related to their effects on the humours.

Keep in mind, however, that feeding to restore imbalances in the humours would follow a combination of bloodletting, laxatives, purgatives, and blistering (making open sores on large surface areas such as the chest, thighs or back by applying a piece of wool flannel spread with acid). This combination would result in severe dehydration and heart and kidney failure as the blood became increasingly thick and sluggish. I came away from this research with the view that to be too poor to afford the services of a physician might have been a good thing, a view advanced in Elizabeth Burton's *The Elizabethans at Home* (London, 1958). Various books admonished mothers for interfering with medical advice, indicating that children may have survived because mothers refused to follow treatments that they observed made a sick child even more sick.

My biggest challenge in conducting this research was letting go of what I have learned as a dietitian about food composition, and about the structure and function of the human body and how it uses food, and to try to understand eighteenth-century beliefs about feeding. I was astonished that these beliefs continued until nearly the end of the nineteenth century but also that, within a few decades, they were supplanted by ideas of how we think of the body today, how it functions and uses food, ideas connected to the birth of the profession of dietetics around 1905. I left Chawton House Library with many additional questions to explore. I think the beliefs about the effect of foods on the humours were the forerunners of transitional feeding practices in use today, practices that deserve more attention to determine whether they continue to have relevance. My plans now are to categorize and cross-reference the information I collected on eighteenth-century beliefs about the humours as they related to medical conditions and on advice about administering specific foods and dishes. I want to search the novels and letters of Jane Austen and her contemporaries for evidence of these beliefs in their writing. I am curious whether and how beliefs about connections between the humours and dietary practice existed outside

the sickroom and extended to everyday eating.

My sincere thanks to the Chawton House Library for the opportunity of a Visiting Fellowship, to the staff and volunteers for their enthusiastic reception of and support for my programme of study, and to JA-SNA members, family and friends who followed and commented on my blog (www.summerinchawton.blogspot.com) about these studies as they unfolded.

Works consulted include the following:

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¹ Karol Traviss and Catherine Morley-Hauchecorne, 'Light diet review at University Hospital', *Journal of the Canadian Dietetic Association*, Supp 53 (2) (1992), 232.

² See Elizabeth Burton, *The Elizabethans at home* (London: Longman Group, 1958).

³ Anonymous, *A new system of domestic cookery, formed upon principles of economy, and adapted to the use of private families. By a lady*, (second edition, Boston, MA: Oliver C. Greenleaf, 1807), p.205, p.207.



Engraved frontispiece to John Edward Watson, *The Housewife's Directory*, (London, [1825?]), the first section of which is devoted to 'instructions respecting diet'

A BIRTHDAY BOUQUET FOR SARAH FIELDING

By Linda Bree and Peter Sabor

Chawton House Library played host to some very special birthday celebrations on 5/6 November, in the form of a conference and entertainment held to mark the three-hundredth anniversary of the birth of the writer Sarah Fielding. The venue couldn't have been more appropriate, given its special associations with the later and greater writer Jane Austen, who might well have read Fielding's work, and the presence of the writings and portraits of many other illustrious women writers of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Sarah Fielding was born on 8 November 1710, and grew up in the lovely Dorset countryside seventy miles or so west of Chawton. She lived most of her adult life, however, in London, and then in Bath. She was thirty-three when her first novel, *The Adventures of David Simple* was published in 1744; it was an immediate success, further editions were produced through the eighteenth century, and it is still regarded as a significant milestone in the development of the novel, coming as it did shortly after her friend Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* and her brother Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*, and before their most important works, *Clarissa* and *Tom Jones*.

The success of *David Simple* launched Sarah's career as a writer: for the next twenty years she published regularly, one of the first genteel women to write for a living. One of her contemporaries wrote that she 'heartily pit[ied] her, constrain'd by her Circumstances to seek her bread by a method I do not doubt she despises'. But there is no evidence that Fielding despised her writing – indeed she seems to have relished the opportunity to try numerous different forms of creative expression.

She followed up *David Simple* with a sequel, *Familiar Letters between the Characters in David Simple and Some Others* (1747), and then in 1753 completed the trilogy with the spare and sad *David Simple: Volume the Last*. In between, she had published *The Governess* (1749), now widely recognized as the first full-length story written specifically for children, and also the first school story. And around the same time she produced at least two pamphlets offering extended reviews of contemporary works of literature, one on Samuel Richardson's great novel *Clarissa*, and one on a tragic drama of the time, William Whitehead's *The Roman Father*. Both these pamphlets were published anonymously: the authorship of the Whitehead pamphlet was only discovered recently, and it is tantalizing to think that Fielding might have written other critical pamphlets of this kind that we still don't know about.

In the early 1750s she was living with Jane Collier (who wrote *The Art of Ingeniously Tormenting* (1753)) in the heart of literary London, near Fleet Street, and the two friends collaborated on an unusual and innovative dramatic fiction, *The Cry* – Collier's commonplace book, recently discovered, draws a charming picture of the two working on their material as with different sections of a patchwork quilt. Shortly afterwards, however, as part of a series of personal tragedies including the death of her famous brother and

her three sisters, Jane Collier died; Fielding, clearly much affected, moved to a quiet existence in Bath, joining a network of intellectual and charitable women there, including the sisters Elizabeth Montagu and Sarah Scott, which lasted till her death in 1768. During this period there were two more novels, *The History of the Countess of Dellwyn* (1759), which treated the highly innovative subject of divorce, and *The History of Ophelia* (1760). All the while Fielding continued to blaze new literary trails: first with her historical biography *The Lives of Cleopatra and Octavia* (1757) and then with her translation from the Greek of Xenophon's *Memoirs of Socrates and Defence of Socrates* before his Judges (1762) – a translation still in print into the twentieth century.

The high point of the anniversary celebration of Fielding's life was an evening of entertainment rather less formal than the programme of many academic conferences. First there was a public lecture by Professor Isobel Grundy, of the University of Alberta. Professor Grundy, a Trustee of Chawton House Library, has long been a leading scholar of women writers of the eighteenth century and is a particular expert on the life and work of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu; here she drew a fascinating picture of the life and times of Sarah Fielding, Lady Mary's second cousin. Her talk was followed by a harpsichord recital of some of the music that would have formed a typical entertainment for mid-eighteenth-century social groups. Penelope Cave created the programme herself, playing music by Handel, Elisabetta de Gambarini, Thomas Chilcot and J. C. Smith, along with a commentary explaining their relevance to the subject of the conference; for many of the literary attendees the most interesting item in her recital was a performance of part of Elizabeth Carter's Ode to Wisdom in the setting sung by Clarissa Harlowe in Richardson's novel.

Before and after this evening's entertainment was a series of academic papers, in which an invited group of leading scholars explored familiar and less familiar aspects of Fielding's achievement. Looking outward, Jane Spencer talked about Fielding's enlightened role in the changing presentation of animals in literature; Gillian Dow drew some innovative comparisons between Fielding's work and that of her contemporaries in France; Candace Ward talked about economic and social imperatives including a link with the discourse of slavery; and Elizabeth Eger related Fielding's work to women's portraiture. Emma Clery set Fielding's writings in the wider context of the literary mood of the 1750s – which she described as a mood of pessimism and disillusion – while in an intriguing contrast Karen O'Brien explored the ways in which Fielding might have been aiming to present ideas of true happiness very similar to those offered by her friend James Harris in his own philosophical writings. Other participants offered close readings of particular works: Carolyn Woodward analysed the narrative structures of *The Cry*, April London explored Fielding's use of anecdote, and Christopher Johnson showed how broad and knowledgeable were her literary allusions, notably in *The Countess of Dellwyn*. A refreshing feature of the conference was its attention to the full range of Fielding's fiction, too often overshadowed by her first novel, *David Simple*: Fielding

was much more than a one-book wonder, and the speakers did a fine job of bringing her later, less celebrated writings to life. *The Lives of Cleopatra and Octavia* received particular and somewhat controversial attention in a number of papers, culminating in a bracing scrutiny by Claude Rawson of its place among presentations of the powerful figure of Cleopatra in the literature of the time.

Perhaps surprisingly, there was very little mention of Fielding's two most prominent friends and relatives: her eldest brother the writer and magistrate Henry Fielding, and her mentor and friend Samuel Richardson. But that was as it should be, since – as was pointed out in the closing round-table discussion led by conference organizers Linda Bree and Peter Sabor – the aim of the conference was to keep the focus firmly on celebrating the very substantial literary achievements of Sarah herself.

And it was this that made Isobel Grundy's remarks on the ways in which those achievements soon became obscured in the years after Fielding's death so very poignant for us:

'So what made this woman a writer? It wasn't just her permanent shortage of money? Did she dream of fame? and what sort of a mark did she leave behind her? I have found that she received quite a splendid one-hundredth birthday bouquet from another obscure woman writer. Sarah Green is remembered today (if she's remembered at all) for *Romance Readers and Romance Writers*, a novel published in Sarah Fielding's centenary year of 1810. It's a rare book: Chawton's copy is one of only three listed in scholarly libraries in the world. It's a book in which, as in *Northanger Abbey*, books are a staple of discussion. A character named Mrs. Kennedy, a rather flaky novelist, comically reveals her ignorance about "Mrs. Fielding". Mrs. Kennedy thinks Mrs. Fielding is a new writer, the latest, a discovery. Wrong. She thinks Mrs. Fielding is pretty and fashionably dressed. Wrong. She thinks Mrs. Fielding is uneducated. Wrong. Sarah Green obviously supposes that her readers will know better, and that these bloopers will take their opinion of Mrs. Kennedy down, down, down. The character who actually knows and praises the work of Sarah Fielding is the Rev. Edward Marsham, an uncle of the book's two heroines, who is both intelligent and benevolent. At her centenary, Sarah Fielding served as a touchstone: a well-read, good man loves her work; a flashy and worthless modern novelist pretends to know about her but hasn't a clue.

'She received a bouquet on her two-hundredth birthday too. It was a volume published by Everyman's Library in 1910: *Socratic Discourses by Plato and Xenophon*. Part of this volume is part of Fielding's final work. This Everyman was reissued again and again into the 1950s, and was

still selling well when I worked for J. M. Dent in the 1960s. There's a story from about that time which I may have garbled in details but which is true in outline. An undergraduate asked a classics don about Sarah Fielding, having heard that she'd translated Xenophon. Oh, I don't think so, said the don -- and reached down the translation from his or her own shelves, and behold, it was by Sarah Fielding! But her name is not on the title-page of the Everyman publication, only in the table of contents. Not the best bouquet in the shop.

'Meanwhile some loss seemed to follow every gain. Soon after the first centenary bouquet, one work of Sarah Fielding's, *David Simple*, was reprinted under Henry's name instead of hers, and another, *The Governess*, was re-written by the horribly Calvinist and evangelical Mary Martha Sherwood in horribly Calvinist and evangelical style. Sherwood replaced the inset stories (which she thought not "likely to conduce to juvenile edification") with something more implacably didactic and less fun. And just eight years after the second centenary, W. L. Cross (whom I've already mentioned) wrote that Henry Fielding's "love for his sister" was his "excuse" for admiring *David Simple*, and that a contribution by Henry to a work by Sarah "hardly ris[es] above" Sarah's own level. She made her mark; but it seems that she failed to leave her mark, reminding us of why women's fame has sometimes been called self-erasing.

'By the early twentieth century the custom was well ingrained of using women's writing, when it was mentioned at all, as a contrast that reassuringly confirmed the value of writing by great men. Sarah Fielding, in spite of her once high reputation and the continuing currency of her Xenophon translation, was just as badly in need of literary rescue as others of her sex. As cousin Lady Mary observed, "if there was a commonwealth of rational horses (as Dr Swift has supposed), it would be an established maxim amongst them that a mare could not be taught to pace."

I looked around for a 300th birthday bouquet. No help from Google. Easy, on the other hand, to confirm that the academic community now cherishes Sarah Fielding's work. Bouquets are not usually much their style, but I found one or two. The late Betty Rizzo, for instance, in her book *Companions without Voices*, wrote that Fielding left a picture of the eighteenth-century patriarchal family which is unique, and that she and her friends practised social altruism and effective subversion of established ways of thinking. But for Sarah Fielding's three-hundredth birthday, it is you yourselves, dear listeners, who are the bouquet.'



Frontispiece for Sarah Fielding's *History of Ophelia* published in 1760.

A podcast of Isobel Grundy's lecture can be accessed via this link: http://www.soton.ac.uk/scecs/newsandevents/2010/fielding_grundy.shtml

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

20th January - Evening Lecture

Dr. Caroline Warman & Dr. Suzan van Dijk
'Isabelle de Charrière 1740-1805: A Celebration'

16th February – Estate Walk

The estate walk, led by Alan Bird, Head Gardener, will take place on 16th February, 2011 at 2.00 pm. To book a place, please telephone Chawton House Library on 01420 541010. Places will be limited.

20th February - Snowdrops Open Gardens

The gardens of Chawton House Library will be open for the public from 10 am – 4 pm. Entrance fee: £3 adults and £1.50 for children.

4th March - Chawton House Library London Lecture co-hosted with the University of Notre Dame's London programme.

Professor Cora Kaplan
'I am black': Aesthetics, race and politics in women's

anti-slavery writing from Hannah More to Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

14th April - Open Day

The House and Grounds will be open to the public from 10:30 am and last entry will be 4:30 pm. Library Exhibition, Hampshire Regency Dancers, Shire Horse Demonstrations, Children's House Trail & Garden Trail plus children's activities. Refreshments & light lunches available in the Old Kitchen. Entrance fee: £5 for adults, £3 children.

All evening lectures begin with a wine reception and canapés at 6:30 and the lectures begin at 7 pm. Tickets: £10.00 (£7.50 for Friends and students). Tickets for other events may be priced differently.

To book tickets for any of the above events please telephone Corrine Saint on 01420-541010.

The Female Spectator

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MISSION

The Library's mission is to promote study and research in early English women's writing; to protect and preserve Chawton House, an English manor house dating from the Elizabethan period; and to maintain a rural English working manor farm of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

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