

The Female Spectator

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CHAWTON HOUSE LIBRARY



Chawton House

The Female Spectator is the newsletter of the Chawton House Library. The Library, to be located in Chawton, England, seeks to provide a self-contained research area and to establish a library for the study of the works of early English women writers (1600-1830). The Centre has been established under the auspices of the Leonard X. Bosack and Bette M. Kruger Charitable Foundation, founded through the generosity of Sandy Lerner and Leonard Bosack.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK AT CHAWTON HOUSE AND ITS ESTATE

by

Christopher K. Currie, BA, Mphil, LASIS, MIFM, MIFA

Since 1995, the author has acted as the archaeological advisor to the Chawton House Library. The work began by looking at the archaeological survivals in the estate's landscape. The original survey took our knowledge of the estate up to the year 1700, when landscape architects Sybil Wade and Cassie Knight took over the research. The initial archaeological survey highlighted a number of important points that had not been previously known about the estate.

A prehistoric presence in the south-east of the estate may have been identified. This took the form of a scatter of flint artifacts and waste flakes, indication of tool-making. These flakes and tools were made of the black flint characteristic of the Hampshire chalklands. It was a highly prized commodity until the appearance of metal tools. The Chawton flint scatter suggests that man was active on this land by the Neolithic period (c. 3000 BC). After this, there was little evidence of further activity, although it is likely that the land continued to be worked. Roman settlements existed less than two miles from the estate.

The late Saxon and early medieval manor only emerges in glimpses, and much of its history is uncertain and vague. What was startling was the discovery of a spell of royal documentation in the 13th and early 14th century. This was mentioned in Gilly Drummond's essay on the landscape in a previous issue of *The Female Spectator*, but before the archaeological survey of the estate, this had not been suspected. In fact, previous writers had made the specific comment that the manor had been of little consequence in the medieval period. How wrong that seems to have been. The evidence seems to suggest it was an important place for about a century. During this period the kings of England seem to have used the manor as a stopping-off point on journeys between London and Winchester. The manor may have been especially equipped to cater for the royal presence, and on a number of occasions the king sent barrels of his own wine to the manor before an intended visit.

The royal interest in Chawton seems to have begun in 1224. In this year the young king, Henry III (1216-72), directed that two oak trees from the royal forest at Alice Holt should be delivered to William St. John as a contribution towards

the manor house he was building there. Thereafter the king visited Chawton regularly until the barons' rebellion, led by Simon de Montfort, interrupted the peaceful royal progress around the kingdom in the mid 1260s. Thereafter the kings were much preoccupied by civil strife and external wars, and their visits to Chawton became less regular.

The historical survey gave a full list of royal visits to Chawton. We know of these visits because the kings held court whilst at Chawton, and signed their royal decrees from that place. These documents are preserved in the Public Record Office in London; specifically the Calendars of Close Rolls (CR), of Calendar Liberate Rolls (CLR), and Patent Rolls (PR). Lesser quantities of documents sealed at Chawton include Fine Rolls (FR), Chancery Warrant Rolls, Inquisitions *Post Mortem* (IPM) and privy seals. The earliest of these documents date from 1229, the latest from 1331. The greatest concentration was between 1230 and 1261, when Henry III visited Chawton at least nineteen times. The longest visit was by his son, Edward I. He was at Chawton and Farringdon between February 15th and March 6th 1292, almost three weeks. The St. John family were, at this time, amongst the royal family's most trusted friends. John St. John acted as the king's deputy in both Cascony and Scotland.

There were two deer parks recorded at Chawton in the time of the St. Johns. Ownership of a deer park indicated high status, as they were reserved almost exclusively for the upper classes of society. It is not known when the Chawton parks were created. They are first mentioned in the plural in an Inquisition *Post Mortem* on John St. John II in 1329, but there are hints for their creation at some time in the 13th century. In 1253 the king had granted Robert St. John the right to free warren anywhere on his own demesne at Chawton, together with the right to hunt with his own dogs in the royal forest for hare, fox and cat, but not deer. The latter allowance could be indication of a special favour, as hunting with one's own dogs in the royal forest was something normally granted only to trusted courtiers. At least one of the parks existed in 1295 when it is recorded that deer were stolen from it.

There are further hints that Henry III had special interest in Chawton. In a perambulation of the forests of Alice Holt and Woolmer given in the reign of Edward I (1272-1307), the jurors record that Henry III had expanded the bounds of the forest to include the woods in the villages of Chawton and neighbouring Farringdon. The purpose of this is un-

known, but it is possible that it may have been an attempt to curb hunting in the area, so that its quality could be maintained at a high level for royal use.

The only references to the parks in any detail come from relatively late documents. In an Inquisition *Post Mortem* on Hugh St. John of 1337, two parks are recorded. One of these contains pasture worth 18s per annum, and pannage worth 3/4d. The other has pasture beyond that needed for the deer

worth 5s and pannage worth 6/8d. There is a more detailed Inquisition of 1350 on Thomas de Aspele, husband of Hugh's widow, Mirabilla, who held the manor in dower. This states that there is a 'Great Park' of 1000 acres, worth 4d per acre, with pannage worth 60/- per annum, and underwood worth 100s per annum. The second park is called the 'Little Park.' This contains 100 acres of pasture worth 18d per acre, pannage worth 40/- per acre, and underwood worth 60s per annum. Richard le Chamberlain is recorded as the 'parker' of these parks.

The location of the parks seems to be in the north of the manor, north of the old Winchester Road. This was known as the 'pass of Alton,' and was once a notorious haunt of outlaws preying on the rich merchant caravans passing from Winchester to Guildford and London. Here are the earthworks of two apparent circuits of park pales. The Inquisition on John St. John II for 1329 refers to the parks as being 'by the ferry [pass] of Alton' and 'by the said manor.' The latter statement is odd, if it is to be taken literally, because it may suggest that the parkland south of the house on the site of

Homewood may be the smaller park. If this is so why do all later records, plus the earthworks of two 'pales' suggest two parks north of Winchester Road? This is a problem that has never been fully resolved.

With the failure of the St. John male line in the 1330s, and the increasing concentration of royal government in London from the later 13th Century, the manor declined into obscurity again until the Knight family's interest in the 16th Century. Unfortunately, the loss of a considerable portion of the Knight family papers makes many family traditions relating to the early site hearsay of doubtful reliability. One thing is certain, and that is that the medieval manor was unlikely to have been a minor place in the 13th Century. It is known to have had its own chapel, and one would have expected a substantial complex of buildings once existed to put up the king and his large retinue.



*Edward I: Detail of a statue from
Lincoln Cathedral
RCHME © Crown Copyright*

Already, a substantial foundation of a stone wall has been located about 50m north of the old stables. This was suspected as being an outer curtilage wall for the important medieval manor house suspected to exist at Chawton in the 13th Century. This was found during archaeological observations made when Southern Electric excavated service trenches around the Old Stables.

Later in the year, the removal of an old swimming pool 200m SSE of Chawton House enabled further archaeological recording to be undertaken. This obtained two good sections through former gardening horizons to be recorded. The earliest of these was a brick wall that cut into previous ground levels. This is shown on a plan of 1741. Brick size suggested it was built after 1650. Its lack of symmetry with the house suggested it was an addition to earlier gardens. Associated with it was the terminal of a long formal terrace extending the width of the south front of the house, and stretching 200m southwards to be cut across by the swimming pool. This was probably the main terrace of the gardens. Aligned with it was a gap in the brick wall that seemed to be an entrance to the walled garden.

At some time after 1741 the terrace was abandoned, and the ground built up to the line of the wall. The wall then seems to have been used as a revetment to built-up land behind it.

It is possible the wall was serving as a ha-ha in this phase. A plan of c.1810 shows the alignment the wall is on as a staggered line, and it is thought this represents the 'hidden'

boundary represented by the possible ha-ha. Between 1810 and the tithe map of 1839 the wall line is abandoned, the wall reduced to its lower courses, and buried beneath further dumping making a gentle slope in the land to the south. These later works were thought to relate to informal parkland landscaping being undertaken in the later 18th and 19th centuries. The sections reflect this sequence extremely well, and show a gradual movement from formal to increasingly informal landscaping over the period c.1650-1840. They include an insight into the development of the designed landscape during the years when Jane Austen lived at Chawton.

It is hoped that continuing archaeological work will add further to our knowledge of the long history of the Chawton estate.



Henry III. Detail of Effigy in Westminster Abbey by William Torel, about 1291. Photo: Warburg Institute

Reference:

C. K. Currie, *An archaeological and historical survey of the landscape of Chawton Estate near Alton, Hampshire to AD 1700*, report to the Centre for the Study of Early English Women's Writing 1995. Unpublished report April 1998 available from Chawton House Library.

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THE EARLY WOMEN WRITERS: LIVES AND TIMES

ELIZA HAYWOOD (c. 1693-1756)

by
Kirsten T. Saxton
Mills College

*Critics! be dumb tonight – no skill display;
A dangerous woman-poet wrote the play;
One, who not fears your fury, though prevailing,
More than your match, in everything but railing.
Give her fair quarter, and whenever she tries you
Safe in superior spirit, she defies you;
Measure her force by her known novels, writ
with manly vigour, and with woman's wit.
Then tremble, and depend, if you beset her,
She, who can talk so well, may act yet better.*

From the prologue of *A Wife to be Lett* (1723)

Eliza Haywood was one of the most celebrated writers of her day. She was a leading figure in a brilliant and competitive London literary scene that included writers such as Jonathan Swift, Daniel Defoe, Alexander Pope, Henry Fielding, and Samuel Richardson. She came resoundingly to fame in 1719 with the publication of part one of her first novel, *Love in Excess; or, The fatal enquiry* (1719-20) which until the publication of Richardson's *Pamela* in 1740, was one of the three most popular works of eighteenth-century English fiction, an honor it shared with *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and *Gulliver's Travels* (1726). After the publication of *Love in Excess*, Haywood wrote a novel roughly every three months during the 1720s. She turned primarily to non-fiction work during the 1730s and the first half of the 1740s, returning to fiction in the late 1740s. In 1751, her novel *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* was a stunning bestseller.

As well as being a prolific and acclaimed novelist, Haywood was also an actress, playwright, writer of conduct books, book-seller, translator, publisher and journalist – including a stint from 1744-46 as editor of the original *The Female Spectator*, the first English periodical written by a woman for women. She, with predecessors Aphra Behn and Delarivier Manley, was praised by contemporary poet/critic James Sterling as one of the “Fair Triumvirate of Wit”: the most popular, influential, and controversial women writers of the Restoration and Augustan ages.

Haywood's literary talent reaped her both rewards and reproach: she was lauded, commanded a huge readership, earned financial success and independence, and she also gained the disdain and malice of many of her male literary contemporaries, whose tendency to mock and deride her seems to have

less to do with her prose and more with her extraordinary sales. Despite her influence and success, Haywood, like so many other women writers, has been largely forgotten until very recently. After more than two hundred years of neglect, Haywood is finally receiving the attention due a writer whose name was, in the eighteenth century, “more than any other native fiction writer. . . identified with the novel.”¹

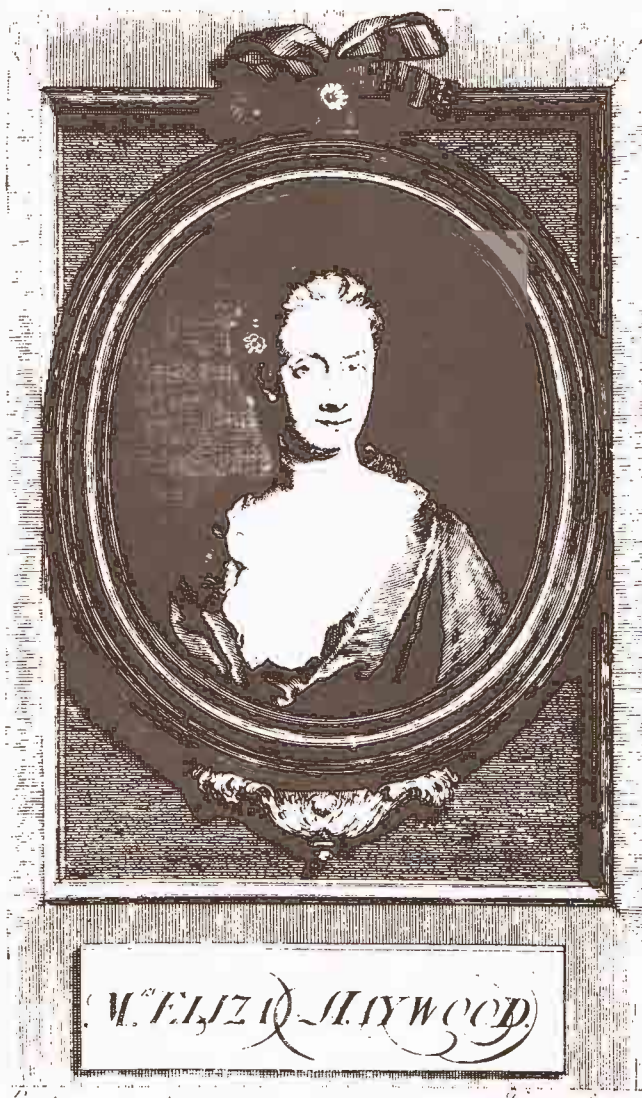
Haywood may strike some as a slightly vexed feminist foremother both because of her politics and because of the nature of her early writing. An ardent Tory, she believed in the concept of a natural elite, a ruling class whose innately higher moral and aesthetic values would lead England onward. Her anti-Walpole writings of the 1730s and her 1740s periodical, *The Parrot*, explicitly supported Tory causes. Haywood was also famous for the scandalous nature of her early novels. Known in her lifetime as “the Great Arbitress of Passion,” her steamy prose fictions shocked and titillated eighteenth-century audiences with legions of “unnumbered kisses. . . eager hands,” “Shrieks and Tremblings, Cries, Curses, [and] Swoonings.”

Little is known about her life. George Frisbie Whicher's 1915 study, *The Life and Romances of Mrs. Eliza Haywood*, which has provided the basis of her biography, has recently been proven inaccurate, leaving Haywood the woman a tantalizing and perplexing mystery.² Virginia Woolf once complained that all that was known about Haywood is that she married a clergyman and ran away; today we know that she did neither. She was likely born Eliza Fowler in about 1693, probably the daughter of London hosier, Robert Fowler. After leaving home, apparently against her family's wishes, she appeared on the Dublin stage as Eliza Haywood in 1715. It is unclear whom she did

actually marry or how the marriage ended; perhaps the contemporary story that her husband abandoned her was true, or perhaps he died, or caused her to leave him. Two letters in which she seeks literary patronage have recently come to light and are of particular interest for their reflection on her marriage. The first, probably written around 1721, refers to her “unfortunate” marriage that resulted in “the melencholly necessity of depending on my Pen for the support of myself and two Children, the eldest of whom is no more than 7 years of age.” The second, probably written around 1724, mentions “the Sudden Deaths of both a Father, and a Husband, and at an age when I was little prepar’d to stem the tide of Ill fortune.” Her two children were almost certainly both born outside of marriage: the first with Augustan writer Richard Savage, friend of Samuel Johnson, who later attacked her viciously in print, and the second with her companion of over twenty years, bookseller William Hatchett, with whom she shared a stage career.

Haywood was not only an important novelist, she was also a vital player in the heady world of British theatre. Her stage career began in 1715 in Dublin and continued uninterrupted until 1720, with the publication of *Love in Excess*. In 1723, she acted the lead in her own racy, successful comedy, *A Wife to be Lett*, a play cruelly satirized by Savage in *An Author to be Lett* (1729). In the 1730s she acted in six plays and was active in Henry Fielding’s Little Theatre at Haymarket. She and William Hatchett achieved great success with their adaptation of Fielding’s *Tragedy of Tragedies*: their popular opera, *The Opera of Operas; or, Tom Thumb the Great* (1733), ran for eleven nights. Her earlier attempt to gain the patronage of the Prince of Wales with her historical tragedy, *Frederick, the Duke of Brunswick-Lunenburgh* (1729), failed, probably because she had publicized a liaison of George II in one of her few explicitly political works, the pro-Tory *Secret History of the Present Intrigues of the Court of Caramania* (1727). Her stage career ended in 1737 with a benefit held for her at the Little Theatre the night before Walpole brought the Licensing Act before the Commons and closed the Haymarket.

As well as being an actress, dramatic adapter, and playwright, Haywood was also a theatre critic and scholar. Her compendium, *The Companion to the Theatre; or, The key to the play*, originally titled *The Dramatic Historiographer; or, The British theatre delineated*, ran to at least seven editions between 1735–56. In it she summarizes, glosses, and interprets (often radically) the most celebrated dramatic pieces of her age and critiques what she terms, “the Whole Business of this Representation.”



Haywood inaugurated the sphere of female-centred romance fiction, seduction tales written explicitly by and for women. In the early part of her career – the 1720s and 30s – her titles hint at her texts’ focus on seduction and peril: *The Injur’d Husband* (1722), *The Unfortunate Mistress* (1723), *The Fatal Secret* (1724), *Fatal Fondness* (1725), *The Double Marriage*, (1726), *The Mercenary Lover* (1726), and *Love-Letters on all Occasions* (1730). Rather than providing purely escapist stories of seduction, however, Haywood’s novels often subtly subvert and challenge reigning notions of gender, insisting that women’s active desire is natural and inevitable. Haywood’s carefully plotted and well-crafted novels may well have suffered from neglect because of their frankness about female sexuality. It is telling that the central work of her later didactic stage, *Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, has been widely reprinted while her more forthright fictions, such as *Fantomina; or, Love in a maze* (1725) have only become available within the past five years.

In the 1720s Haywood published about forty prose fictions, a number of translations, *Poems on Several Occasions* (1724), multiple plays, and two political “scandalous” memoirs. In the 1730s, she wrote many anonymous anti-Walpole pieces, and in 1736 published the political novel, *The Adventures of Eovaii*, a fictional attack on Walpole. In the 1740s, she wrote, printed, and distributed texts, including anonymous political works such as the pamphlet entitled, *A Letter from H—G—g, Esq. . . To A Particular Friend* (1749) which imagined the travels of Bonnie Prince Charlie following the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745. She was arrested and held in custody for some weeks but denied authorship and was never prosecuted. In the 1740s and 50s

she turned to more moralistic, didactic works, including novels and essays. Her 1744 novel, *The Fortunate Foundlings*, anticipates Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749), with which it shares many innovative narrative strategies, and marks her move from amatory to domestic fiction.

Haywood produced little fiction in the 1730s and critics have argued that this shift was the result of the biting satire Pope directed at her in *The Dunciad* (1728). Until recently, she was perhaps most famous for her infamous appearance in the poem, which positions her as a prize for which two publishers compete in a pissing contest: "See, in the circle next, Eliza plac'd/ . . . yon Juno of majestic size,/With cow-like udders, and with ox-like eyes." In his note to the lines, Pope condemns Haywood's "profligate licentiousness" and "scandalous book[s]," defining her as a "shameless scribbler[]" (*Dunciad*, ii. 149n). Pope was not alone: Fielding satirizes Haywood as "Mrs. Novel" in *The Author's Farce* (1730) and Savage described her in his 1725 poem, *The Authors of the Town*, as a "cast-off Dame," a "haggard Shrew" who should have become a washer woman rather than "pen luxurious Rants."

Haywood herself participated in her era's penchant for scathing satire, subtly sending up Savage and his new mistress in her scandal novel *Memoirs of a Certain Island Adjacent to the Kingdom of Utopia* (1725-26) and taking a swift gibe at Fielding with her mention of "F—g's scandal shop" in *Miss Betsy Thoughtless*. Yet the combatants were not evenly matched. Eighteenth-century society associated female authorship with inappropriate public display, sexual transgression, and the production of inferior texts. At a time when the only socially appropriate creation for women was procreation, Haywood's critics collapsed her sex and her texts in their attacks. Her unconventional life and fiction were each read as proof of her moral and aesthetic failure to embody proper femininity.

Haywood's move from amatory to didactic fiction was hailed as a moral conversion, but it is likely that Haywood's shift was a shrewd response to the fact that producing passionate romances no longer paid. By the mid-eighteenth century the market for hyperbolic romance had diminished and Haywood

responded to this shift in taste, abandoning romance for periodical writings which tended toward moral instruction and Richardson-inspired domestic fiction such as *Miss Betsy Thoughtless* (1751), *The Fortunate Foundlings* (1744), and *The History of Jemmy and Jenny Jessamy* (1753).

Haywood's response to fluctuating taste resulted in dividends for her literary reputation as well as her bank account. By the time of her death, Haywood's amatory fiction had become

an embarrassing sin of youth, atoned for by her later works, which are, according to her obituary in the *Whitehall Evening Post* "some of the best moral and entertaining Pieces that have been published for these many Years." However, Haywood's later work is not a passive capitulation, purely capitalist move, or repentant shift. Both her amatory and didactic fiction investigate and critique gendered power relations. *Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, for example, may be read as a sophisticated parody that calls attention to women's lack of self-jurisdiction in love and marriage and the often saccharine pathos of *Jemmy and Jenny Jessamy* masks an incisive look at the threat of sexual violence to women.

Other than a few letters, our only access to Haywood herself is through her prefaces and dedications. For example, in 1724, in a dedication to *The Fatal Secret*, she defends her amatory writing with the apology that, as a woman, she was

"depriv'd of those advantages of education which the other sex enjoy" and cannot "imagine it is in my power to soar to any subject higher than that which nature is not negligent to teach us." She is simultaneously self-deprecating regarding female intelligence and slyly and aptly locating any lack of women's capacity in the fact that, as Restoration poet Ann Finch wrote, women are "education's, more than nature's fools." Her dedication to *The Fair Captive* (1721) also masks trenchant critique with seemingly modest chagrin, stating that "many more Arguments than the little Philosophy [she is] Mistress of could furnish her wit, to enable [her] to stem that Tide of Raillery, which all of [her] Sex, unless they are very excellent indeed, must expect when once they exchange the Needle for the Quill."



Haywood has still not broken into our established literary canon. Her early works are grouped under the slightly suspect category of "amatory fiction" with its hints of lascivious, not quite top-drawer, literary production, and her later novels are often dismissed as overly didactic. However, after two centuries of neglect, Haywood is finally receiving long-overdue critical attention. The early to mid-1970s heralded a flurry of facsimile reprints of Haywood's work; by the 1980s her masquerade novels (particularly *Fantomina*) had garnered feminist critical attention. Finally, in the 1990s, modern critical editions of many of her texts are being produced, and her reprinted works have been included in collections by Norton, Blackwell, and Oxford. Essays on Haywood have been published in reputable journals; she often appears as the subject of conference papers, and the first collection of critical essays on her work, *"The Great Arbitress of Passion": Critical Essays on Eliza Haywood*, will appear in the near future.

Buried in an unmarked grave within sight of Poets' Corner at Westminster Abbey, where many of her male contemporaries are remembered, it seems fitting that Haywood herself should have the last word regarding the vagaries of reputation, women, and power. The following quotation from

The Injur'd Husband might well be read as a comment on the fate of Haywood's own texts and her exclusion from the table of "significant" eighteenth-century literature:

Reputation is so . . . finely wrought, so liable to break . . . and down we sink in endless Infamy. — Consider . . . the Reasons why Women are . . . debarr'd from reigning? Why, in all the Nations of the Earth, excluded from publick Management? Us'd but as Toys? Little immaterial amusement, to trifle away an Hour of idle Time with? (242)

After more than two hundred years, Eliza Haywood is no longer "debarr'd from reigning" and is gaining her due as one of the most important writers of early British fiction.



¹ Jerry C. Beasley, *Novels of the 1740s* (Athens GA, 1982) 162.

² Christine Blouch, "Eliza Haywood and the Romance of Obscurity," *Studies in English Literature* 31 (1991): 535-52.

NEW DIRECTIONS AT JASNA'S 19TH ANNUAL MEETING

by

Jeff Rotter

Northern California Region
JANE AUSTEN SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

The nineteenth annual General meeting of the Jane Austen Society of North America was held in San Francisco October 3-5, 1997. "Sanditon: The New Direction?" was the topic under discussion by plenary speakers Eileen Sutherland, Tom Hoberg, John Wiltshire, Steven Arkin and Marilyn Sachs. A plethora of breakout sessions dealt with every fact of *Sanditon*, from the fascinating question of who was the intended hero, to its ironic view of hypochondriacs and the commercialization of the seaside resort.

Keynote speaker Reginald Hill, famed British mystery writer, gave a delightful account of his meetings with Jane Austen. At Sunday's brunch, Sandy Lerner provided an update on the restoration of Chawton House and on the progress of the Centre for the Study of Early English Women's Writing. Judith French performed her acclaimed portrait of Jane Austen in "My Solitary Elegance."

Two highlights of the conference were the Regency costume exhibit and the Regency Ball. "The Stylish Miss Austen" featured historically accurate costumes for men and women from the early nineteenth century. The Regency Ball emphasized the country dances mentioned in the novels, demonstrated by the PEERS Historical Dance Troupe and danced by enthusiastic JASNA members, many in costume themselves.

Poster sessions covering the times and mores of Jane Austen's England were on exhibit. Antiquarian booksellers from San Francisco as well as dealers of unique and wonderful "Austenilia" were on hand. Attendees were also offered expeditions in and around San Francisco. The conference was full to bursting with wonderful things to see, hear and do.

THE HARDY COLLECTION

by
Stuart Bennett

Chawton Library Rare Books Consultant

In its largest-ever single purchase, the Chawton House Library recently acquired *en bloc* the J. C. Hardy collection of English prose fiction. Formed in England from the 1930s through the 1960s, the collection from its inception emphasized the by-ways of English fiction before 1830. Novels by major authors appear almost as an afterthought. The collection includes a fine copy of Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison*, one of Jane Austen's favorites. Henry Fielding is represented only by his wonderful and very rare parody of Richardson, *Shamela*.

Two aspects of the Hardy collection make it especially suitable for Chawton House purposes. The first is its chronological compass; only four novels out of a total of 826 were published after 1820. The second is that Dr. Hardy took a strong interest in novels written by women. Jane Austen's precursors and contemporaries are strongly represented, although the collection does not contain a single Jane Austen title – even in his time Jane Austen's first editions were comparatively expensive, and Dr. Hardy preferred lesser known authors anyway. The result is that, for example, a nearly complete run of Ann Radcliffe's novels sits on the shelves alongside a wonderful array of novels written by women for William Lane's Minerva Press, including a few titles unknown to Dorothy Blakey, the Minerva Press bibliographer.

Among the highlights of the collection are three of the rare *Northanger Abbey* "horrid" novels. Perhaps the most "horrid" of them all is Karl Grosse's *Horrid Mysteries*, and Francis Lathom's *The Midnight Bell* and Karl Friedrich Kahlert's *The Necromancer* also appear in the collection. The William Godwin novels in the collection include his first, *Damon and Delia*, of which the *New Cambridge Bibliography* says "no copy known." Gilbert Imlay's *The Emigrants*, also in the collection, may have been ghost-written by Mary Wollstonecraft. No fewer than 235 other novels in the collection are by identified women, and of the 201 anonymous titles, the Library has high hopes that future researchers at Chawton will begin to reveal that some of their authors were women.

Dr. Hardy was aware of the rarity of many of the books in his collection. As he wrote in the preface to the checklist of the collection published in 1982:

Two world wars hungry for pulp, have contributed to the severe mortality of what at one time were regarded as trivial or ephemeral titles, and which up to the early days of the present century were consigned as a last resort to the booksellers sixpenny box as their only chance of survival.

Subsequent bibliographical research and censuses such as *The National Union Catalogue* and *The English Short Title Catalogue* have confirmed Dr. Hardy's prognosis of "severe mortality." Several of the titles in his collection are unknown to the ESTC, and others are located in only one or two copies. Some of these novels Dr. Hardy was lucky enough to buy out of sixpenny boxes, but most of them came from major London booksellers at prices which collectors can now only dream about. He stopped buying in the 1970s when the novels he was used to buying in fine condition for five or ten guineas began to command a hundred pounds or more. As collectors and librarians now know, a hundred pounds was only the beginning...

CHAWTON HOUSE LIBRARY UPDATE

by
Kate Moulton
Chawton Librarian

The thirty-three boxes of books were neatly stacked in the corner of the room, all of them waiting for me. Unpacking books, under the best of circumstances, is a contortionist's exercise. Roughly translated, thirty-three boxes of books means days of lifting, twisting and stacking – not to mention the oceans of bubble wrap and the dust of old books in the air. I'll even confess that had this been any ordinary shipment for the Chawton House Library, excitement might not have been my prevailing emotion. But these were no ordinary boxes, and there was certainly nothing commonplace about their contents. I had been waiting five weeks for this shipment. The Hardy Collection had arrived at last, and the Bosack-Kruger Foundation is now thrilled to count these 826 novels among our holdings.

It's a truly impressive collection of works, many of which represent the only titles by certain authors that I have ever seen in the two years I have been working with the Chawton House Library. There are the two Penelope Aubin titles, namely *A Collection of Entertaining Histories and Novels*, and *The Life of Charlotta du Pont*. Aubin wrote in the early 1700s, and she was quite prolific, completing seven novels in the span of eight years. I have never read Aubin myself, but there

is an intriguing entry about her in *The Feminist Companion*, which describes one of her works as "reflecting strong moral intent and High Tory patriotism" and another as "suprizingly bawdy and flippant."

This enticing dichotomy aside, I had become interested in acquiring Aubin almost from the start of my tenure as Chawton's librarian, partially, I confess, because I had been warned by Stuart Bennett that her work is exceedingly difficult to obtain. I've leafed through any number of book dealers' catalogues, attending closely to the "A" section, but have never encountered anything by Aubin before. Indeed, according to the ESTC catalogue, our copy of *Charlotta du Pont* is the sole copy in the United States, the British Library housing the only other known copy. As intrigued as I am by Aubin as a writer, acquiring her work also became a symbol for me: proof that the Chawton Library has a truly formidable collection of women writers.

The acquisition of Aubin is certainly noteworthy, but perhaps as important to the collection are those peripheral works that arrived with the Hardy acquisition. I'm thinking primarily of William Godwin's *Damon and Delia*, an exceedingly rare novel published in 1784, which complements our existing copy of Godwin's *St. Leon*. We also acquired Godwin's *Italian Letters* along with *Damon and Delia*. The three works taken together may certainly prove useful to a scholar interested in Mary Wollstonecraft's life and work.

Then there are the 201 anonymous titles, which provide a unique opportunity for scholars. The Chawton House Library now owns just over 400 anonymous titles, which is surely fertile ground for any scholar interested in identifying authorship of unknown works, or perhaps in conducting a study of anonymous titles from a perspective of gender and style. Given the social climate and the limited opportunities available for women to publish prior to the 19th century, it is unlikely that the majority of anonymous titles from Chawton's period were written by women. The addition of the 201 Hardy titles offers an opportunity to expand the scope of research on the relationship between gender and authorial anonymity.

Although the rarity of certain works is immediately impressive, of equal importance is the manner in which the addition of the Hardy titles rounds out Chawton's existing collection. With the addition of Ann Radcliffe's *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*, *The Italian*, and *A Sicilian Romance*, we now possess all of her novels in first editions. Sarah Fielding's *The Lives of Cleopatra and Octavia* had eluded us, but now we count it among our holdings, along with *The Cry*, *The Adventures of David Simple*, *The His-*

tory of the Countess of Dellwyn, and *Familiar Letters Between the Principal Characters in David Simple*, all of which were previously acquired.

We have now also gained an opportunity to change and enhance the shape of the Chawton Collection as a whole, in a way perhaps not considered feasible prior to the purchase of the Hardy Collection. For example, with the Hardy Collection we acquired a dedication copy of the deliciously Gothic *The Tower*, a work by Sarah Lansdell, a Minerva Press novelist. Minerva Press works are scarce now, and with every addition of another title, the Chawton collection becomes better able to accommodate scholars interested in the Minerva Press. In turn, scholarly activity shapes the growth of the collection, and helps determine the goals of future acquisitions.

The contents of those thirty-three boxes more than justified the effort involved in unpacking them. The books themselves are in truly stunning condition, and it has been an absolute joy to have the opportunity to handle them. The Hardy titles have joined the rest of the Chawton Collection in our new location in Redmond, Washington, and we can now boast holdings in excess of 4,000 titles. I am in the midst of unpacking, unwrapping and arranging, and yes, it does still feel like a contortionist's exercise! But though I may be tripping over empty boxes, stumbling over tissue and wrap, and walking around with tape stuck to my feet, it's still entirely my pleasure.



Cathy Clarke and Kate Moulton unpacking the Hardy Collection



DIRECTOR'S REPORT

by

Agnes Moran

Executive Director

Leonard X. Bosack and Bette M. Kruger Charitable Foundation

Spring is here and we are starting construction! I am pleased to inform you that the Chawton House Library has passed the final hurdle and has received full planning consent. We received this consent in September and went out to tender in January. We have now completed the tender period, evaluated the responses, and are in the final stages of negotiating with a contractor. By the time you read this newsletter, I hope construction will have begun.

Phase I of the project includes the removal of the nineteenth-century wing, replacing the roof on the Jacobean wing, and beginning to restore the landscape to the views found in the Adam Callander painting from about 1780 (see right). We commence Phase I with equal parts excitement and trepidation. After surviving multiple British winters with our "temporary" tarpaulin roof, we have no idea what the contractor will find once he gets a good look.

As you are aware, an American based charity, the Leonard X. Bosack and Bette M. Kruger Charitable Foundation, has been the sole funding agent for the Chawton House Library project. We are looking to broaden the UK-based support for the Chawton House Library by submitting for partnership funding through the Heritage Lottery Fund. This funding is restricted to projects which have not begun construction. This means that we cannot begin new construction until they have come to their decision in September. Fortunately, they have very generously agreed to allow us to make the urgent repairs on the aforementioned roof.

I am pleased to announce that we are enjoying the partnership and support of a number of local organizations. We have started

planting trees along the A32 to act as a screen between the estate and the road. These trees will provide a very pleasant walk once they are established. I am happy to acknowledge the assistance of the Woodland's Grant Scheme in this venture. We have received some funding from Countryside Stewardship, which will assist us with the fencing and restoration of the pasture lands and the park. This work is already in progress as I write. As well, Hampshire County Council has been most helpful in the area of grounds restoration. They have come forward to help restore some of the coppicing areas on the estate as well as assisting with the repair of the roof.

So change, like spring, is in the air! The library has been moved from California to Washington. Unfortunately, (but understandably, given the choice between California and Washington winters!) Susan Maher, who saw us through the difficult planning stages of the project, chose not to move up with it. We will miss her and want to thank her for all her hard work bringing the project up to this point. We also have a new editor for *The Female Spectator*: Anne Hare, who did a wonderful job with the first four issues of the newsletter, has passed the pencil over to Deborah McLeod.

So here we are! New growth and change: the books out of their boxes at long last, scaffolding going up, and the sound of hammers in the air. We are even in the process of changing our name from *The Centre for the Study of Early English Women's Writing* – which many people found confusing and cumbersome – to the more direct and elegant *The Chawton House Library*. We're full of high hopes for the summer and look forward to having a great deal to report by the publication of the next issue of *The Female Spectator*.

The Bosack-Kruger Foundation and The Chawton Library are grateful to the following individuals and groups for their generous donations to the library:

Stuart Bennett

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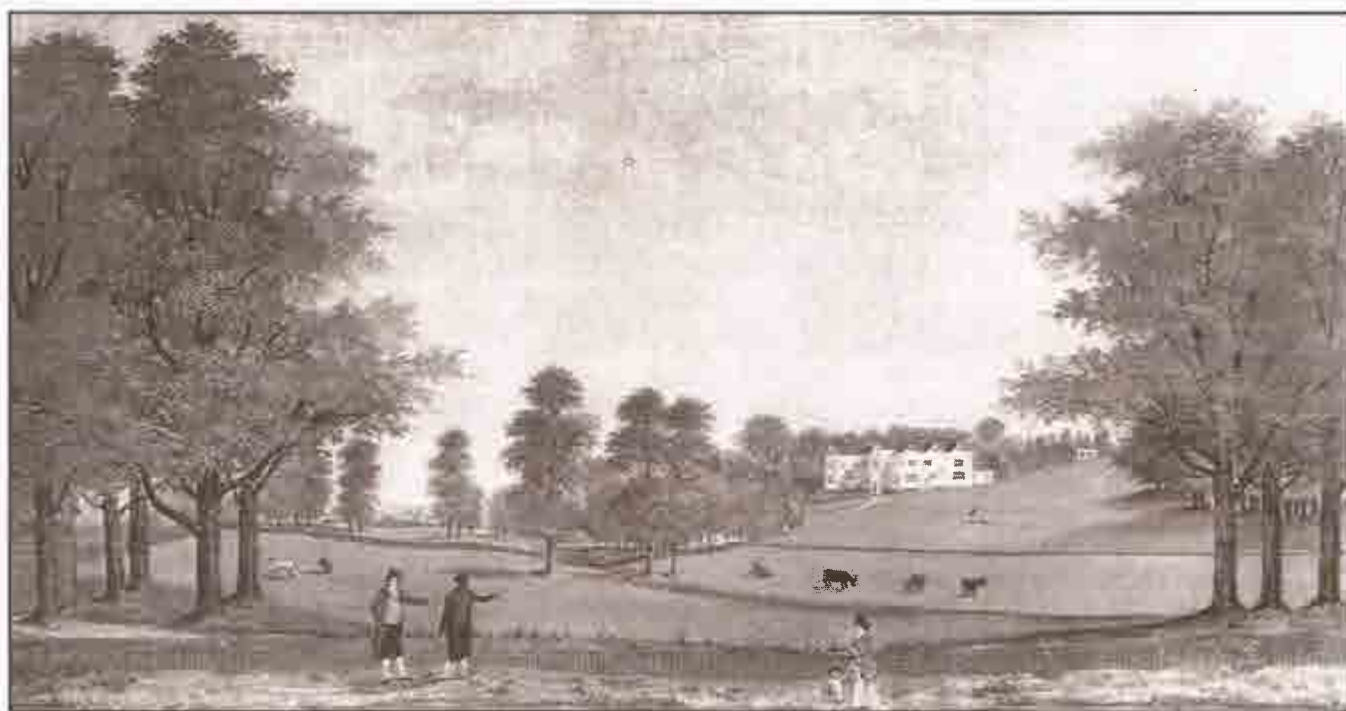
Neff Rotter

Barbara Ker Wilson

JASNA-Wisconsin (in memory of Joan Weise)



How the view in the Callander painting looks today – house and lawn hidden by trees and scrub.



*Chawton House from the southwest. Adam Callander, c. 1780.
From the Knight Family Collection, courtesy of Richard Knight.*

The Female Spectator

The Female Spectator is the newsletter of the Chawton House Library. If you are not on our mailing list but would like to receive future issues, please send your name and address (please print) with your request to be placed on the mailing list, to the address below. Please note that you need to write only once – your name will be kept on the mailing list for future issues. Address changes should also be sent to:

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We encourage your comments and suggestions.
Please send them to the editor at the above address.

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