The Female Spectator

The newsletter of Chawton House Library

VOL. 8 NO. 1 SPRING 2003

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A Note from the Editors

Welcome to the Spring 2003 *Female Spectator*, the first issue to be edited, produced and printed in the U.K. However, the USA is still well represented on the editorial board by Sandy Lerner, Kathy Savesky of the Bosack Kruger Foundation. Professor Isobel Grundy continues to contribute from Canada.

The Newsletter will continue to keep readers up to date with the restoration of Chawton House and the Library project and, with the opening of the Library and Study Centre looming ever larger, future issues will include information on the events programme. However, as you'll see in the following pages, we have introduced a few changes which we hope you will like.

Most notably we have taken the decision to produce issues that are broadly themed around a particular aspect of the project and Library book collection. Spring seemed an ideal time to focus upon gardening and landscape. The restoration of the landscape at Chawton has been, and continues to be, a mammoth project, and some of the many improvements that have transformed the grounds are outlined in a piece by Jane Alderson.

Landscape and garden design preoccupied the writers represented in Chawton House Library's holdings as much as it does those involved in the ongoing Restoration Project. As Sandy Lerner's essay on gardening books in the collection demonstrates, these works provide an invaluable context for reading many of the fictional texts in the collection, particularly those of Jane Austen.

Gardening and landscaping manuals are, of course, of intrinsic interest, too. Gilly Drummond's article takes up this issue in her outline of the various styles and personalities that influenced the eighteenth-century landscape and which, in many cases, can still be seen by the knowledgeable observer today.

Stephen Bending's piece focuses, more particularly, upon women's role in eighteenth-century garden design. In what will be a woefully familiar tale to readers of *The Female Spectator*, he shows how women gardeners have been unjustly written out of garden history. Let's hope his piece does something to redress the balance.

In addition to the themed content, *The Female Spectator* will provide occasional general interest pieces. Jennie Batchelor, recently appointed Chawton Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Southampton and co-editor of *Female Spectator*, has decided to introduce herself to readers in an article on women's magazines, including that of our namesake. At a time when the Project and the Newsletter are moving on, it seems appropriate to see where we've come from.

We hope you like the new issue and welcome any comments you might have on content and layout. Please take the time to fill in the questionnaire that accompanies this issue or, alternatively, please see the contact information on the back page.

Editors

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Final Curtain Falls on Restoration Drama

by Jane Alderson

I can't quite believe that's it 2003 and only a matter of months to our opening. There are so many things to tell you it's difficult to know where to begin.

People

I am delighted to be able to report that we have appointed a Librarian, Helen Scott. Helen joins us from University of East London where she was the Subject Librarian for Art and Design and Innovation Studies. By the time you read this Helen will have been with us for a few weeks and probably well into her first major task, unpacking the collection! (Notice how I just slipped that into the text? Read on for further information on the collection.)

We have also welcomed Dee Lawson to the team as Stable Manager. Dee is working hard to complete the fitting out of the stables in readiness for up to four rescued Shire horses. The Shires will be used to give carriage rides around the estate and working the land, predominantly for demonstration purposes.

Three further additions are Jill Penfold, my PA, Catherine Hawkey, the Assistant Housekeeper and Corinne Saint, the Administrator.

This is probably an opportune point to mention the departure of Kate Jackson nee Moulton, who has acted as Librarian for the collection during its years in Redmond, USA and who was latterly responsible for editing and producing *The Female Spectator*. Kate's last job was the wrapping and packing of the collection for dispatch to Chawton, the realisation of many years of planning which was no doubt tinged with sadness. Our thanks and best wishes are extended to Kate.

Restoration

What can I say? Adrian Thatcher deserves a mention for all the blood sweat and tears that he has expended over the last eight years. All his effort has come to fruition as we enter the final phases of the fitting out of Chawton House. Even without furniture, the rooms seem to have adopted their new personae.

Over the last few months the final phases of the restoration have been completed and here are a few highlights:

- The floors are now all back in place after the integration of the new services and fireproofing.
- A new staircase has been inserted in the servants' wing giving safe access to the upper floors.
- Final waxing of the paneling and great stair is underway.
- Bookstores completed including air conditioning, security arrangements and shelving.
- Air-conditioning installed in the ground and first floor library/reading rooms.
- CCTV and security systems installed on the ground and first floor.
- Voice and data communications network will be commissioned over the next month.
- Completion of the inner courtyard with the laying of York stone slabs, flints and bricks.
- The car park area in the North courtyard is being cleared and surfaced ready for final planting.
- Construction of rear/north entrance porch with the disabled access ramp.

THE OAK ROOM

During the demolition of the old north porch, a barrel-vaulted brick culvert was discovered extending underneath the existing kitchen and out into the inner courtyard, approx. 4ft high and 3ft wide, with elaborate stone quoins (corner stones). It had been severed and blocked at both ends but access was gained to record the extent of the culvert prior to rebuilding the north porch over the top. The culvert dates back to 1580s or possibly earlier.

The Book Collection

As I mentioned quite casually earlier in my report, the Library's book collection is now residing safely in Chawton House, currently in one of the two purpose-built, environmentally controlled, secure book stores. The collection travelled to the UK over four weeks in four separate consignments, and the arrival of the first shipment was quite emotional for everyone. It also served to focus the collective mind on the tasks still ahead!

Eventually, the bulk of the collection will reside on open shelves in the two invigilated library/reading rooms on the ground and first floors in Chawton House. The ground floor library, making use of the Victorian library shelving installed by Montagu Knight, is accessible to disabled visitors.

Against the odds

During this difficult transition period from restoration project to functional library and study centre, we are continuing to provide facilities, introductory tours and project overviews to various groups. In February, we welcomed a group from the local branch of the Needlework and Decorative Fine Arts Society (NADFAS), an enthusiastic group of sixty people who are keen to volunteer their help in preparing Chawton House for the opening and on an ongoing basis, ranging from helping to unpack the collection to cleaning the house and stewarding on open days. One Saturday in March we faced a major challenge: how to accommodate a group of forty members of the British Federation of Women Graduates for their AGM, comprising a business meeting, sit-down lunch, presentation, and tour of Chawton House and grounds. The main challenges: were lack of cloakroom facilities, one indoor and one outdoor toilet, no kitchen, temporary lighting, various pieces of furniture awaiting restoration/ reupholstering and builders still very much in evidence. The ladies soon entered into the spirit and, with no small thanks to Helen Nicholson, the housekeeper, who ably assisted by Jill and Ruth, conjured up a three-course lunch, the day was very enjoyable. So much so that the group has booked again for 2004!

In April, we are playing host to a group of children from the Grange Special School in Farnham who will be performing some Regency dances, in costume. Maintaining this theme, towards the end of 2003 we hope to be able to offer a Regency dance event for up to thirty people. We are also collaborating with the Corvey Project at Sheffield Hallam University to run a day conference on Madame de Stael's *Corinne*. The conference will be held at Senate House, London, and will take place on 1 November 2003.

Housekeeping

In addition to the changes to *TFS*, the web site has also been overhauled and should by the time of publication be live, offering a greater number of novels on-line, a discussion board and information on the project so far and our plans for the future. If you have any comments on any aspect of *TFS*, the website or the project in general, we would love to hear from you. Please see the contact information on the back page of this issue.

We are currently working on a limited programme of events for the second half of 2003, comprising lectures, workshops and, hopefully, a study day. The programme will be made available on the web site and in future editions of the *Female Spectator.*

I look forward to welcoming many of you to Chawton House over the coming months.

A magazine of her own?

by Dr Jennie Batchelor

While waiting for a recent doctor's appointment, I found myself flicking through various glossy and tabloid magazines. I am only an occasional reader of women's magazines, viewing them as expedient distractions from the pain and indignity of dealings with the doctor or dentist, rather than as wholesome entertainment. Apparently I'm not alone. Many of my friends disdainfully claim that they never read women's magazines, while a family member once tried to persuade me that she regularly bought a title that boasted of particularly lurid 'real-life' stories only for the crosswords.

But let's face facts. We might be frustrated by the contradictory messages women's magazines seem to send their readers - it's okay to be whatever dress size you are, but just in case you are too big, here's a review of some miraculous diet pills, and by the way, the clothes that we're advertising aren't available for anyone broader in stature than a coat hanger - but, women are, and always have been, voracious readers of periodicals and magazines.

As both readers, contributors and editors, women have played an instrumental role in the development of periodical print culture since its inception in the late seventeenth century. Establishing the number of women (or men, for that matter) who read magazines and periodicals in this period is, of course, problematic, not to say impossible. For example, estimated sales for one of the period's most popular and enduring publications, *The Lady's Magazine* (1770-1847), have been quoted as anything up to sixteen thousand copies a month in its heyday. The figure may well be a little generous. On the other hand, basing estimates of the number of readers on the probable number of copies sold is particularly problematic for magazines. A single copy might be read by the subscriber and any number of family members or acquaintances.

What is clear is that, from the outset, women were recognised as an influential constituent of the periodical-reading public. John Dunton's *Athenian Mercury* (1691-1697) acknowledged the 'Inspiring Charms' and 'Poetick Genius' of 'the Fair Sex', responding to letters apparently written by women. More famously Addison and Steele's *Tatler* (1709-1711) and *Spectator* (1711-1714) declared the amusement and edification of women as one of their publications' prime objectives. As the opening issue of the *Tatler* asserted, women should have felt themselves doubly

honoured by the publication. Giving with one hand what it took with the other, the *Tatler* not only promised to be of instruction and 'entertainment to the Fair Sex', but condescendingly suggested that the very 'Title of [the] Paper' paid homage to its female readers by commemorating one of their favourite and most time-consuming pursuits: idle gossip.

Addison and Steele's treatment of the fair sex may have been somewhat double-handed, offering access to such traditionally masculine discourses as politics while stressing woman's essential irrationality, but they could not ignore the female reading public. The market for a serial publication aimed specifically at women was identified as early as 1691. *The Ladies Mercury*, an apparent spin-off from Dunton's *The Athenian Mercury* adopted the same question and answer format, and reads as a less sober-faced precursor to the modern-day 'agony aunt' column. It contained supposedly genuine letters from male and female correspondents on such topics as love, sex before marriage, and friendship. *The Ladies Mercury* only ran to four issues and its superficially generous aim to bring 'Learning, Nature, Arts [and] Sciences' to 'that little Sublunary, Woman' soon proved specious. The women represented in the humorous, and possibly fictional, correspondence between editor and reader appear greedy, shallow, and sexually suspect. While this may not have been the most auspicious beginning for what would prove to become an enduring genre, the periodical's suggestion that male and female readers may have different concerns powerfully established the gender divide that would shape the future of the magazine industry.

***THE LADY'S MAGAZINE* 1780**

But it was not until the 1740s that a truly successful periodical produced for a predominantly female audience was published. In the years between the publication of *The Ladies Mercury* and our namesake, *The Female Spectator* (1744-1746), several titles which gestured towards a female audience appeared, including *The Female Tatler* (1709-1710), the *Spinster* (1714) and some which coined the recurrently popular title of *The Ladies Magazine* (1733, 1738-1739 and 1747). Essentially though, these publications paid little more than a rather disparaging lip-service to their female readership in their emphasis upon gossip, tattling and scandal.

In large part, women were better served at this time by predominantly male-oriented magazines which frequently alluded to a potential female audience (often imagined as the wives and daughters of their paying customers) in essays on morals, manners and fashion. In the July 1766 issue of the *London Magazine*, for example, a contributor courted the attention of women readers in an anti-fashion article entitled 'Remarks on Modern Female Dress'. Clearly feeling that his criticisms on the deleterious effects of fashion might cause his female readers to skip an article which condemns one of the few things they could possibly be interested in, the anonymous writer goes to some length to describe himself as a man of means, looks and good sense. Not coincidentally, he is also in search of a wife. Since the sole aim of a woman's life, as the article implies, was to obtain a husband, only the advice of an attractive marital prospect would be taken seriously.

Such gestures towards a female readership, while frequently condescending, point to a recognition of the powerful role that women played as consumers of the periodical press. But women would increasingly fulfil an important function as editors too. In her *Female Spectator*, Eliza Haywood boldly established herself within the precarious and frequently over-populated eighteenth-century periodical market by appropriating perhaps the most resonant icon of this respected and influential tradition: Addison and Steele's authorial persona, Mr Spectator. But Haywood's *Female Spectator* was to be no disinterested figure, observing the changing mores and manners of the nation and reporting upon such topics as politics, fashion and aesthetics for the moral and intellectual edification of his readers. Unlike her namesake, the female spectator's insights lay not in exemplary action or thought, but in past transgression.

In the typically lively opening to the first issue, Haywood's Spectator proclaims that she 'never was a Beauty' and is 'far from being young'. Like the heroines of

the author's popular, if rather scandalous, romances of the 1720s, the Female Spectator has 'run though as many Scenes of Vanity and Folly as the greatest Coquet of them all'. But in keeping with the mid-eighteenth-century's movement towards sentimental fiction, which emphasised feminine virtue, domestic integrity and a common humanity, the Female Spectator is a woman who, if not exactly penitent, has learned from mistakes and can use her acquaintance with 'other People's affairs' to teach others 'to regulate their own' (book I).

Addressing her own gender and with experience as her guide, Haywood's periodical was devoid of the mock-gallantry that sweetened the bitter pill of men's advice to women on their education, manners, behaviour and dress in such periodicals as the *London Magazine*. This is not to say that Haywood's periodical was not moralistic. The professed aim of the publication was that of a moral guide, after all. But Haywood strategically presented her gender as an asset that enabled her to write to her readers and correspondents without fear of the kinds of impropriety that might be levelled against men advising women on the dangerous of rakes, masquerade and fashion.

***THE LADY'S MAGAZINE* 1772**

In a tradition of feminist writing from Mary Astell (1666-1731) to Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), Haywood recognised the untenable double-bind that women were placed in when their parents and educators mistook ignorance for innocence. Though an *ingénue* might make a desirable wife, her ignorance of the dangers society posed to young women (so amply demonstrated in novels of the period) might make her vulnerable to precisely the kinds of moral and sexual corruption her ignorance was supposed to protect against. As such, Haywood vicariously brought the reader into 'safe' contact with the world of rakes, libertines, and masquerades from which her education secluded her in the form of anecdotal narratives and reader correspondence.

Though the periodical brinked the border of scandal and moral rectitude throughout its two-year monthly run, *The Female Spectator* largely managed to contain its more racy content within a conservative acceptance of marriage as the very 'Thing, on which the Happiness of Mankind so much depends'. Like Mary Astell, however, Haywood seems less concerned with endorsing marriage as the only desirable end of a woman's life, than in recognising it as *the* fact of her life, and, as such, something that she should be prepared for and able to make informed decisions about. If marriage was 'a Burthen', *The Female Spectator* promised to 'lighten' it for just sixpence an issue (book X).

Beyond its author's gender, what made *The Female Spectator* so innovative was its defiant assertion of a woman author's right to uniquely cater to the tastes of her female readership. Furthermore, in perhaps its most-enduring legacy, Haywood's periodical recognised, and helped to define, a set of specifically female concerns (dress, age, beauty and particularly the desirability of establishing a happy marriage) which still informs the women's magazine market even today. The greatest innovation in periodical print culture was still to come, however.

Charlotte Lennox's *Lady's Museum*, which ran monthly from 1760 to 1761 (she would collaborate with Hugh Kelly on the later of these issues) was a product of, and instrumental in, the development of the magazine as a miscellany rather than the essay-based periodicals of Addison, Steele and Haywood. Although she ran serial essays such as 'The Trifler', Lennox did not adopt an authorial persona, preferring instead to emphasise a multiplicity of topics, genres and voices in her publication. *The Lady's Museum*, as the scholar Kathryn Shevelow has noted, provided a veritable curriculum designed to educate readers not simply in the art of being a good wife, but in such diverse topics as geography and natural history. The already established author of the romance satire *The Female Quixote* (1752) also used the magazine as a forum to publish, serially, a new work of fiction entitled 'Harriot and Sophia', later published as the novel, *Sophia*, in 1762.

In the years that followed, many publishers would adopt the magazine format, often jostling for a place in this ever-growing market by targeting specialised groups of readers. For the scandal lovers, there was the *Bon Ton Magazine* (1791-1796), while devotees of fashion enjoyed the brief delights of *The Magazine à la Mode* (1777) or *The Fashionable Magazine* (1785-1786), both of which were actually much less concerned with fashion than their titles boasted. But it was ultimately thematic and generic diversity

that proved most appealing for female readers, as the success of the period's most successful and influential publication bears witness to, *The Lady's Magazine* (1770-1848).

Following in the footsteps of Lennox's *Lady's Museum*, *The Lady's Magazine* combined the function of moral arbiter with that of information source. In its opening 'Address' to its readers, it promised to 'render your minds not less amiable than your persons' through a monthly compendium of essays, short stories, letters, poems, a long-running 'agony aunt' column called 'The Matron' (1774-1791), domestic and foreign news reports, sporadic fashion reports, recipes for homemade cosmetics and cures for various medical ailments from cramp to 'hectic fevers', as well as embroidery patterns. The patterns alone recompensed consumers for the magazine's monthly sixpence fee, which, as the editor proudly announced, would cost 'double the money at the Haberdasher' (I, August 1770). But the reader's sixpence bought much more than mere patterns. Their monthly fee allowed them to subscribe to a particular feminine ideal that married moderate intellectual accomplishment with domestic integrity and financial prudence.

In the pages of *The Lady's Magazine* we can see, in embryonic form, the modern magazine's overburdened 'twenty-first-century woman'. *The Lady's Magazine* envisaged its readers as middling sort and leisured. Although she would not work for a living, the magazine's reader, like her more modern counterpart, faced the seemingly impossible task of simultaneously looking after her mind, body, finances, marriage and children. The magazine didn't pretend that balancing such concerns was easy.

The frontispiece illustration to the January 1780 magazine (p. 4) presented a young reader of the magazine as a woman torn between a life of folly (represented by the woman on the left) and wisdom (represented by the goddess Minerva on the right). Presuming she makes the smart decision to follow a life of wisdom rather than folly - and the illustration doesn't seem too certain that she will make the right choice at all - she still has a constant struggle to become the kind of ideal reader the magazine envisages. As the frontispiece illustration to the January 1772 edition (p. 5) graphically suggested, the path of virtue was precarious and beset with difficulties, but the rewards made the journey worth the effort.

Though the magazine's ideological assumptions that women should be attractive, faithful wives and mothers may seem prescriptive, we shouldn't read the magazine as an attempt on the publisher or editor's part to regulate femininity in the way that popular conduct books by the likes of Rev. James Fordyce and Dr. Gregory did. What made the magazine so uniquely successful was its reliance upon reader contributions for much of its content. Unlike the *Ladies Mercury* which seemed to offer women a voice through soliciting their contributions, only to mock that voice by characterising women as sexually voracious and shallow, the *Lady's Magazine* placed contributions by readers in issues which included extracts from such well-respected works as *The Spectator*. We might, cynically, view this enthusiasm for amateur contributions as an expedient way of lowering production costs - for amateur read unpaid. Indeed, the fact that contributors weren't paid often led the magazine into difficulties. Contributors of serial fictions often failed to send in chapters on time, or even stopped contributing altogether. The absence of a regular and reliable fashion reporter was also a recurrent source of complaint from both the editor and the magazine's readers.

Despite these problems, *The Lady's Magazine* was successful in establishing a literary community of reader-writers who did not passively accept the publication's implicit construction of a feminine ideal, but actively helped to shape it. Not all of these reader-writers were female and, as with the earlier periodicals, some of the reader contributions may well have been created rather than genuine. Nevertheless, it is clear that buying *The Lady's Magazine* was much more than a financial investment for many female readers, who invested their time and energy in writing for the magazine and engaged in dialogues with other contributors. An indignant contributor to the September 1782 edition, for example, was sufficiently provoked by a green-grocer's attack on fashionable dress in the previous issue to condemn him and all the 'other haughty masters of the creation' who attack the sex they ought to protect.

This is not to say that the magazine offered an unmediated view of reader opinion. Contributions could be rejected as well as accepted. The 'To our Correspondents' columns that prefixed each edition of the magazine frequently justified the exclusion of many contributions on the grounds that they were badly written or simply unsuitable. Editorial decisions may also have mediated the effect of some articles, too. Reports on the latest fashions were often, and apparently not unintentionally, placed alongside articles which condemned fashion's propensity to corrupt women, for example. Nevertheless, if the magazine sought to construct a feminine ideal, it also provided a forum though which the female reader might construct herself.

The legacy of *The Lady's Magazine* is enduring. Today, of course, magazines are subject to market forces and advertising pressures to a degree that their predecessors were not. These shifts have presented opportunities and challenges which have impacted greatly on the genre. But the *Lady's* combination of articles on travel, fictional stories, beauty tips, fashion reports and moral advice can still be witnessed as the stuff of many women's magazines today. So too is its mixed messages on such issues as beauty and fashion, and its emphasis upon the exhausting burden of being universally accomplished. Perhaps, however, the *Lady's* most resonant connection with magazines today is its strange combination of prescriptiveness and community: its Janus-faced status as both creator and mouthpiece of reader opinion.

We may love them, hate them, or love them while hating them, but magazines are, to an extent, the products of our own creation.

Improvements to the Chawton Landscape

by Jane Alderson

Chawton House's recorded history begins in the Domesday Survey of 1086, and its owners had royal connections from the thirteenth century onwards. The descendants of John Knight, who built the present Chawton House at the time of the Armada (1588), added to the building and modified the landscape in ways that reflected changes in politics, religion and taste. One such innovator was Jane Austen's brother Edward, who had been adopted by the Knights as a youth. Nearly two hundred years later, in the 1990s, another descendant, Richard Knight, succeeded and was forced to consider innovative ways to rescue Chawton House and restore the estate to its former glory. The Leonard X. Bosack and Bette M. Kruger Foundation established Chawton House as a UK registered charity in 1993 and secured a 125-year lease on Chawton House and its Estate, thus ensuring continuity of the Knight legacy. Richard Knight is now an active member of the Board of Trustees.

In keeping with the new role for Chawton House and Estate, as a library and centre for the study of early English women's writing, 1600-1830, the main focus of the restoration is the period of Jane Austen and her brother Edward Austen Knight. Therefore, the late eighteenth-century English Landscape garden is being restroed together with Edward Austen Knight's additions of walled garden, shrubberies and parkland. Also, even though their early twentieth-century date puts them outside the chosen restoration period, Edwin Lutyens' library and upper terraces are being retained and restored. Throughout the estate, locally-derived native trees and shrubs introduced to Britain prior to 1840 are being used as much as possible.

During the period 1763-1785, Chawton House's old formal gardens were swept away and replaced by the new English Landscape style. As Jane Austen noted in *Mansfield Park*, this particular improvement tended to be both revolutionary and destructive, producing a marked change in the garden's history. The essence of the new English Landscape style was that the house should be surrounded by parkland with Arcadian lawns sweeping right up to the walls of the house in a 'naturalistic' landscape. Views from and towards the house were very important and clumps of trees were placed, not only to avoid blocking views, but also to frame them. The grazing animals were an integral part of the landscape, keeping the grass short in the parkland with the impression that they could graze right up to the house, in reality they were contained by a ha-ha.

Today, the south lawn and the views from and towards the house have been reinstated as closely as possible to the view depicted in the 1780 painting by Adam Callander. The view to the south west us open, crossed by the ha-ha. To the south, lies the eighteenth-century wilderness. The lawn retains its informal character, as originally intended.

Moving round the south front of the house to the east, the Library Terrace is undergoing its transformation and, already, a door has been opened up from the terrace through to the Inner Courtyard. The library terrace was built between 1896 and 1910 by Montagu Knight, most probably 1905-06, as part of his programme of 'restoration'. The terrace was actually an Arts and Crafts addition and almost certainly influenced by Edwin Lutyens, and the beds will be planted in the style of Gertrude Jekyll, in keeping with the Arts and Crafts period.

A serpentine path leads from the top of the Library Terrace, moving up the lawn through recreated shrubberies, to the Upper Terrace, built in 1901, and was possibly designed by Edwin Lutyens. Gravel paths are not typical of the English Landscape period and were probably introduced by Edward Knight II. From here there is opportunity to admire the roofline of Chawton House, the view across the ha-ha or to continue across the terrace towards the wilderness and the walled garden.

In Jane Austen's time, the kitchen garden occupied the piece of land to the north of the Rectory. Prior to that the great walled garden was to be found on the land to the south of the church, presumably swept away during the conversion to the English Landscape style. Edward Austen Knight had formed the idea to build a new walled garden during his sister's lifetime, but his plans did not come to fruition until after her death in 1817. The walled garden was built in 1818-1822 as a kitchen garden with fruit trees on all the inner walls and on the outer sides of the south and east walls with a rectangle of apple trees alternating with soft fruits inside. The restoration programme for this area is major and requires funding and the support of volunteers. It is proposed to retain the existing layout of the walls, rebuild the glasshouses and potting sheds, replant the original varieties of fruit and use the central space for the production of vegetables, soft fruits, herbs and cut-flowers. All produce will be organically grown. The major clearance of vegetation, scrub, weeds, general debris and the remains of glasshouses and potting sheds has already been undertaken allowing the planting of additional fruit trees, in accordance with Edward Austen Knight's original planting scheme.

The wilderness dates from the seventeenth/eighteenth centuries, originally set out geometrically with trees planted in straight rows, a practice which was later discontinued, and survived the English Landscape improvements. The clearing of the wilderness is now complete and pathways have been cut through, seeded and lightly graded to enable easier access throughout this area.

Beyond the seclusion of wilderness and walled garden opens up the Park where the clumps of trees have been through many changes of landscape fashion and weather over the years. These old plantings have been supplemented by the addition of over ten thousand trees in an attempt to restore the Park to its former glory. From the Park, the walk up the Prospect Avenue towards the south door opens up one of the most stunning views of Chawton House on an autumn evening as the sun sets, giving a golden glow to the Boston ivy-covered façade.

Books on Gardening in the Chawton House Library

by Sandy Lerner

Any collection of writing which centers on the eighteenth century must necessarily provide an environmental context. For women's writing of this period, the logical focal point for this environment would be the home. However, in the eighteenth century, political and social movements encouraged the abandonment of the formal, geometric gardens of the Renaissance.

The Age of Enlightenment celebrated the understanding of the natural world, and unsurprisingly, a more natural ideal for the landscape. Dr Johnson, in 1755 does not have a definition of 'picturesque', but does define 'landscape as (1) 'a region; the prospect of a country', and quotes Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and (2) 'a picture, representing an extent of space with the various objects in it.'

As early as 1709, Lord Shaftsbury was embracing a 'passion of a natural kind' where wild rocks, water, and trees, 'appear with a magnificence beyond the formal mockery of princely gardens'.[1] Coupled with the enormous expense required by the upkeep of formal gardens and the new preoccupation with agricultural and horticultural improvements made possible through the new scientific method, the expenditure in money, land and labor in the upkeep of these 'anathemas to nature' yielded to writers such as Switzer, Pope, Addison, followed by Vanbrugh, Bridgeman, Brown and Repton. Such was the immediate and fanatical adoption of the new, 'natural' taste that Sir William Chambers wrote, 'the axe has often in one day laid waste to the growth of several ages; and thousands of venerable plants, whole woods of them, have been swept away, to make room for a little grass ... Our virtuosi have scarcely left an acre of shade, nor three trees growing in a line, from Land's-End to the Tweed'.[2]

All of this re-education left little room for either nature or original thought. Numerous books on how to define, detect and implement the new landscape with an eye to The Picturesque appeared to educate taste: Uvedale Price, *Essays on The Picturesque, As Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful; And, On the Use of Studying Pictures, For The Purpose of Improving Real Landscape* (1810); and, John Loudon, *A Treatise of Forming, Improving, and Managing Country Residences; And On The Choice Of Situations Appropriate To Every Class Of Purchasers* (1806).

The Age of Enlightenment lead also to new theories on food production: *The Gardener's and Botanist's Dictionary; Coen, Fruit, And Flower Garden* (1807); Francis Dukinfield Astley, *Hints to Planters* (1807); A. Lawson, *The Farmer's Practical Instructor* (1827); and, Thomas Green Fessenden, *The New American gardener: Containing Practical Directions on the Culture of Fruits and Vegetables; Including Landscape And Ornamental Gardening* (1828). Later, women were included in the canon, such as Barbara Hofland, *A Descriptive Account of the Mansion and Gardens of White-Knights* (1819); Mary Sabilla, *A Day in Stowe Gardens* (1826); and, Jane Loudon, *The Landscape Gardening And Landscape Architecture Of The Late Humphry Repton, Esq. Being his Entire Works on These Subjects. A New Edition With An Historical and Scientific Introduction* (1840).

All of this was not lost on Austen; in keeping with her singular parsimony of language, she indicates to us that Elizabeth Bennet certainly had 'all the masters that were necessary' and that Lizzy was an educated, modern woman when she exclaims 'the picturesque world would be spoilt by adding a fourth', and unites her and Mr Darcy in their raste and refinement in her description of Pemberley which includes, 'a stream of some natural importance was swelled into a greater but without any artificial appearance. Its banks were neither formal nor falsely adorned'. Pemberley, as Mr Darcy's s seat, must reflect his education and taste as Lizzy finds it a place, 'where natural beauty had been so little counteracted by an awkward taste'. Neither of these passages is casual in their wording – the picturesque is minutely defined and the landscape at Pemberley described is completely unnatural, but well-done in the new taste.

As with so many of the novels in the collection, the ephemera such as the books on gardening, landscape, horticulture help to provide a context with which to better understand the ethos of the novels and the viewpoints f the women who wrote them. And, in some cases, such an understanding can change the meaning of the text or add immeasurably to its appreciation.

For further reading: Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for The Picturesque. Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760-1800* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989); Roger Turner, *Capability Brown and the Eighteenth Century* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1985).

1Earl of Shaftesbury, *Characterticks, of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times, An Enquiry concerning Merit from The Moralists; A Philosophical Rhapsody of Men*, vol. 2, Treatise 5, pt. 3, section 2 (1758, first printed 1709), p. 255, quoted in Susan Lasdun, *The English Park: Royal, Private & Public* (London: Andre Deutsch Ltd., 1991), p. 80.

2 Sir A. W. Chambers, *Dissertation on Oriental Gardening* (London: W. Griffin, 1772), quoted in Lasdun, p. 94.

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Women, Gardens, and Eighteenth-Century Garden History

by Dr Stephen Bending

We have discovered the point of perfection. We have given the true model of gardening to the world; let other countries mimic or corrupt our taste; but let it reign here on its verdant throne, original by its elegant simplicity, and proud of no other art than that of softening nature's harshnesses and copying her graceful touch...

Perhaps it is no paradox to say, *that the reason why Taste in Gardening was never discovered before the beginning of the present Century, is, that It was the result of all the happy combinations of an Empire of Freemen, an Empire formed by Trade, not by a military & conquering Spirit, maintained by the valour of independent Property, enjoying long tranquillity after virtuous struggles, & employing its opulence & good sense on the refinements of rational Pleasures.*

Horace Walpole

Later eighteenth-century gardens have been variously characterized as the apotheosis of 'natural' design, the culmination of an 'English' tradition, a site for personal engagement with nature and the expansion of a feeling heart, a killing ground for elite gift exchange, or as a space asserting class solidarity by resisting the personal engagement of the individual.[1] Of late, these last have tended to prevail, but it was the words of Horace Walpole in the middle of the eighteenth century that were to have the most profound influence on the histories of English gardens which would be written over the next two centuries. Walpole claimed the landscape garden as a new and peculiarly English invention. For Walpole, the English landscape garden was the product of liberty and the aesthetic result of a political constitution that upheld the rights of the property-owning individual. If it became a commonplace to associate such gardens with a kind of freedom the English thought only they could know, we should also be aware that this style of gardening made its appearance in a century which saw an increasing emphasis on property rights and a legal system which, while adopting a rhetorical of individual liberty, was in fact removing many of the traditional rights of the poor.

A VIEW FROM THE TERRACE AT STRAWBERRY HILL

In this sense, we should recognize landscape gardens not only as aesthetic objects but as a metaphor for the power of the ruling class and its legal system. The appearance of landscape gardens was made possible, in part, by the removal of public rights-of-way, the enclosure of common land, the rise of a wage economy and an increasing rejection of a manorial system that asserted not only the rights, but the duties, of the landowner. Thus, over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the distance between those with property and those without grew ever greater. What this suggests, of course, is that we should be wary of those over-adulatory claims for the glory that is the English garden, and wary also of garden histories that repeat the self-serving rhetoric of an eighteenth-century elite.

In the next few pages I want to sketch out some of the different ways in which the history of the English landscape garden has been told since the eighteenth century and suggest some of the things that have been left out of such stories. As I've already suggested, for Walpole the history of gardens is a history of natural progression towards 'Nature', but as my opening quotations begin to illustrate, his account of the 'natural' is quite as much about politics, economics and empire as it is about trees and fields and things that grow. Despite this, it has tended to be Walpole's account of great men and great gardens that has continued to be repeated over the years.

The usual account would run something like this: early in the eighteenth century influential writers including Sir Richard Steele and Alexander Pope started to reject the French and Dutch styles of gardening which had been popular since the Restoration and the Glorious Revolution (Charles II introducing the one, William and Mary introducing the other). They wanted the removal of clipped hedges, parterres and geometrical layouts, and in their place a style of gardening that mirrored and drew into its bounds the natural beauties of the landscape. Thus, while Kip and Knyff's illustrations for *Britannia Illustrata* in the 1720s recorded the huge French-style geometrical layout of Badminton (in Gloucestershire) or the careful topiary and parterres of Southwick (in Hampshire), by the 1740s and

1750s it was the great show-gardens of Stowe and Stourhead which were in fashion, and by the 1770s and 1780s it was the innumerable works of Capability Brown and his followers which were spreading across the land. In the broadest of terms, this account remains true, but in recent years garden historians have sought to complicate the picture in a number of important ways.

One influential attempt to understand changes in design in the eighteenth-century garden came from John Dixon Hunt in his use of the terms 'emblematic' and 'expressive' which he drew from the garden theory of Thomas Whately's *Observations on Modern Gardening* (1770). Whately's work provides, along with its strictures on design, a somewhat scattered history of the English style and argues that the older style of English garden was "emblematic" while the new should be "expressive". Hunt, and later Ronald Paulson, expanded these terms into an explanation of the history of the English landscape garden. Following Whately's lead, they suggest a shift in the construction of landscape from a garden of learned inscriptions, classical statues and architectural references, to the creation of a space in which the visitor is not confined by such insistent devices and is left free to experience their own feelings and emotions in a landscape which merges nature and art.[2]

Within such a narrative, it has been customary to begin chronologies of the 'English' style with Pope and his garden at Twickenham, to trace the alignment of such gardens with the patrician culture of self-consciously literary production, and finally to consider the apparent rejection of such designs with the appearance of huge parkscapes such as Petworth (in Sussex) or Cadland (in Hampshire).[3] Thus, carefully arranged statues, temples, inscriptions and other architectural features appear to be replaced by the seemingly more austere and architecturally barren designs of 'Capability' Brown from the mid century onwards. In this account of garden history, emphasis shifts from intricately designed allegories that can only be understood by a classically educated elite, to the personal and subjective responses of a much wider audience. In these apparently 'expressive' gardens the visitor is free to wander, and free also to revel in their emotional response to the landscape without the intrusion of inscriptions or statues. This in turn is then linked with the rise of sensibility at about the same kind of time and with figures such as Henry McKenzie (author of *The Man of Feeling*) and Rousseau. One of the implications of this of course is that pretty much anyone can do it, and thus it has been suggested that the stripping away of iconographic detail and the insistence on a learned response, is an attempt by the elite to open up their landscapes to the ever-rising middle class.

Of late, however, this narrative of an increasingly democratised aesthetics, of the dominance of the feeling individual and the inevitable progress towards a 'natural' garden has been questioned in a number of ways. Thus, for example, in his book, *The Planters of the English Landscape Garden*, Douglas Chambers has shifted the chronology of the landscape garden's genesis back towards the middle of the seventeenth century and dethroned many of the originary 'greats' who appeared in Walpole's account, from Kent and Southcote through to Brown.[4] Instead of the rise of the 'natural' early in the eighteenth century, Chambers offers Virgil's *Georgics* as a sustaining myth for the garden and one supporting 'traditional' values as against a rising culture of capitalism. Similarly, Tom Williamson has carefully taken apart the possibility of a gradual transition from the unnatural to the natural, from the formal to the informal, by exploring the histories of individual gardens across the country. Not only did the 'formal' garden remain important at many sites well into the later eighteenth century, but the early eighteenth-century garden, he argues, can only be viewed as a precursor of the Brownian style in the most cursory of ways: it must be understood in terms of its own precedents and in the context of current social and political concerns rather than of those imposed several generations later.

One result of this new chronology is that Brown's originality is now being questioned in a manner reminiscent of his contemporary opponents. While the emblem/expression distinction gave to the Brownian landscape the power to affect mood, to invite emotive responses from its viewers, recent work has attempted to re-establish the vast number of park landscapes which appeared in the final decades of the century as broad, impersonal spaces volubly asserting the class identity of a landed elite at the expense of the individual. In the words of Edward Harwood, 'Far from privileging the self, the Brown landscape swamped it in a sea of gently undulating grassland and clumps of trees'. Thus, for Harwood, a Brown landscape denied the personality of the owner and provided only a 'class identification masquerading as taste'.

Interestingly, the most recent account of eighteenth-century gardens suggests that the key players in garden design were gentlemen, and in making this claim, Timothy Mowl asserts a view that chimes strikingly in some ways with Brown's detractors at the time and which was expressed most forcefully by the writer and politician George Mason. According to Mason, the contracting out of landscape design to a professional—to a man whose view is itself limited, contracted—must necessarily lead to failure. Only the landowner, the gentleman, has that independence which allows the enlarged view necessary to create a work of true genius. Mason's attack on 'Capability' Brown and his followers is by no means singular and Brown's admittedly similar landscapes were frequently criticized for just this reason. However, Mason's stress on the gentleman and his attack on the professional emphasises the acutely politicised nature of his criticism. What's at stake here is the ideal of the liberal artist and for Mason Brown offers nothing more than fashionable, but empty, park landscapes spreading across the nation to the detriment of true 'gentlemanly' values.

This partisan dismissal of landscape parks as empty fashion-following, of buying into a club, should of course alert us to the problems of making similar claims today. Indeed, what Mason stresses is not simply the class solidarity of gentry and aristocracy, but the differentiations which mark out the true gentleman from the mere purchasing power of money. What that stress on the gentlemanly might also suggest to us, however, is the

curious absence in all of these histories of women, and of women gardeners. Now there are obvious reasons for this in some respects, not least of course that women were rarely landowners. In general, with marriage came the transfer of property from the father to the husband and with it control of the estate; there were, however, exceptions. Flower gardens came increasingly to be associated with women as an extension of indoor domestic spaces, but more important for the present discussion, a number of women gardened on a large scale, creating their own landscaped estates either by buying in a designer like Brown or—more often than most histories suggest—designing for themselves and taking an active and sometimes physical role in the creation of their landscapes.

Many of these women occupied a difficult position in the social world: frequently widowed, separated, divorced or unmarried, such women challenged conventional accounts of landowning, landscaping and the language of retirement. The disgraced Lady Luxborough took to landscaping after separation from her husband, banishment to the Midlands, and a ban from visiting London or travelling on the Bath road; but even the eminently conventional Elizabeth Montagu had to wait until her husband died before she could hire Capability Brown to remodel her estate at Sandleford in Berkshire; and while Lady Caroline Holland was happy to give directions on planting at Holland Park and saw gardening as a happy interlude from politics and public life, her next-door neighbour, Lady Mary Coke, spent more than a decade of self-enforced gardening retirement after failing to get a divorce from the notorious libertine Lord Coke, the son of the equally notorious Lord Leicester.

What holds many of these concerns together is the problematic language of female retirement. There is obviously a strong tradition of retirement poetry going back to classical time, and it is a language that seems openly and conveniently available for those who choose the country life. There is, for example, any number of repeats of the 'Beatus ille' theme throughout the century. Pope at Twickenham is no doubt the most famous, but retirement poems were also written by women such as Ann Finch early in the century, Mary Chandler in the 1730s and Catherine Jemmat in the 1760s. At the same time, and despite this handful of women who write retirement poems, it appears more difficult for women to claim the tradition of retirement or at least to do so beyond quite specific confines, one of which is frequently the flower garden. Here, what tends to be championed is domestic moral worth. In this tradition, the *idea* of the flower garden as a moral site becomes difficult to disentangle from the physical flower garden in the social world, a garden equated here specifically with women, with a private female sphere set apart from the public world, and with a culturally defined range of respectable actions and attitudes.

However, when women turn to the creation of physical gardens, other issues may emerge. One reason for this is that owning a garden and designing it places women more clearly in the public domain. Certainly this is the case with Lady Luxborough, and if one compares conventional poetry about retirement—including her own—with her correspondence, the easy morality of praising someone's improvements is complicated by questions of commerce, income and social competition. But it is complicated also by an alternative tradition of retirement, and that tradition can be found in works like Sarah Scott's *A Journey Through Every Stage of Life*, and her more famous *Millenium Hall*.

In both these works, Scott articulates that utopian strand of women's writing which looks to the country house as a place of refuge, but also as a positive model for society in the face of an amoral commercial capitalism and what Gary Kelly would call courtly culture. Scott was, of course, a prominent member of the early feminist 'bluestocking' circle and she devoted much of her life to improving the lives of women and in particular supported the kind of secular women's communities described in *Millenium Hall*. The novel offers a utopian re-reading of the country house and claims the largely masculine territory of architecture and estate management for the female sphere. Scott gives us a positive vision of retirement as self-sufficient benevolence, and a model of sentimental, organic community to challenge the misguided values of contemporary society. Here, female retirement has both a moral and an economic usefulness in the social world. However, what destabilizes that retirement ideal is the larger literary tradition within which it exists.

From early in the eighteenth century, the theme of country retirement had been used by a number of women novelists in order to narrate the lives of 'fallen' women. In works such as Eliza Haywood's *The British Recluse*, retirement and penury are, if not a punishment, at least the only options available to women who step outside patriarchal traditions and values. And of course it's this model which Scott adopts for *Millenium Hall*. That is, there is a troubled engagement between retirement and disgrace: much writing about retirement seeks to offer it as a positive model of retirement *from* corruption. But if one turns to the tradition of women's fiction which has women in country retirement telling their stories, for all that the country and retirement is claimed as a place of resistance, and a challenge to the false morality of society, in some sense it is inevitably about failure in the public world, and the interest, of course, lies not in what these women do in dull country obscurity, but what they did to get themselves there in the first place.

Lady Luxborough is a case in point because she fits the scandal tradition in real life. Her alleged affair with the poet John Dalton led to separation from her husband, an enforced retirement from the social scene, and a sustained period of garden design; but it also resulted in a difficult relationship with the public world and a constant anxiety about what retirement might mean. While Scott finds a way of idealizing economic relations in a country estate, Lady Luxborough was frequently accused of reckless spending to adorn her estate, and her letters are full of her anxiety that even a simple urn to the dead poet William Somerville will lead to unfounded sexual innuendo. Part of the problem is that the garden is morally ambiguous because it can be read as a luxury in a rural setting, and another is that it is imbued with a gendered language which

links women, nature and sexuality. One further ambiguity is tha,t as a place of retirement, the garden is also a mode of public display, gesturing to one's place in the world and the face one puts on to meet the public.

What we may be seeing in a figure such as Lady Luxborough, then, is the difficulty for women of doing retirement by the book. Part of the reason for that, I'd suggest, is her own too close relationship with scandal narratives and the mixed messages of retirement as a publicly sanctioned mode. Moving beyond the confines of the flower garden, Lady Luxborough moves also beyond the complaisant moralizing of female domestic space.

If Lady Luxborough found her public face to be a problem, Lady Mary Coke spent much of her time maintaining an unwelcome retirement in Notting Hill and bewailing the lack of company. Her own scandal—a failed yet very public attempt at divorce—seems to have been long forgotten by all but herself. Despite this, it became in her mind the reason for her self-imposed retirement and a decade of gardening. Indeed, the garden appears to have been her consolation and she took an active role not only in designing but in planting, painting, weeding and pruning. She had her neighbour Lady Holland cut down trees to improve her views, she had her own special gardening clothes and she stayed out in all weathers until nightfall. What she also did, however, was live with the acute recognition that her garden was at once a diversion from melancholy and an opportunity for company; and while she noted in detail the praise she received from aristocratic friends, she regularly worked in the garden only to report that she saw nobody at all, and more than once concluded that 'retirement is never the effect of choice [and] never accompanied with happiness'.[5] Even Miss Pelham, her pet cow, made a break for it and sought company with a herd nearer London.

LADY MARY COKE

For Lady Luxborough and for Lady Coke, retirement led to gardening and gardening led to the return of a public audience. It also led to the crossing of boundaries both physical and cultural. While eighteenth-century women were increasingly linked with the safely domestic space of the flower garden, the large-scale venture of landscaping trespassed on apparently male territory. If we add to these examples Mrs Delany in Dublin, Frances Burney at Camilla Cottage, Lady Hertford at Percy Lodge, the Duchess of Marlborough at Blenheim, the Princess Augusta at Kew, Princess Amelia at Gunnersbury, and the 'Ladies of Llangollen' whose lesbian retirement in rural Wales led to scandal, gardening, and celebrity, then a rather different picture of eighteenth-century garden history begins to emerge. What all of this suggests, of course, is that if gentlemen dominated the gardening world, they were not the sole masters that some historians would make out. The success of garden histories that continue to tell us of great men and great gardens means that we still need to ask what eighteenth-century women thought gardens were for, how they designed, constructed, bought, justified, lived with, and made sense of their lives through them.

1 H. F. Clark, *The English Landscape Garden* (London, 1964), Christopher Hussey, *English Gardens and Landscapes, 1700-1750* (London, 1967); John Dixon Hunt, *The Figure in the Landscape* (London and Baltimore, 1976); Morris Brownell, *Alexander Pope and the Arts of Georgian England* (Oxford, 1978); Miles Hadfield, *A History of British Gardening* (London , 1979); Ronald Paulson, *Emblem and Expression: Meaning and Expression in English Art of the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1975), Robert Williams, 'Making Places: Garden-Mastery and English Brown', *Journal of Garden History*, 3:4 (1983), pp.382-385, Edward Harwood, 'Personal Identity and the Eighteenth-Century English Landscape', *Journal of Garden History* 13: 1-2 (1993), pp. 36-48.

2 John Dixon Hunt, 'Emblem and Expressionism in the Eighteenth-Century Landscape Garden', *Eighteenth Century Studies*3 (1971), pp. 294-317 and '"Urs Pictura Poesis, Ut Pictura Hortus" and the Pituresque', *Word and Image* 1 (1985), pp. 87-107; and Paulson, *Emblem and Expression.*

3 See, for example, John Dixon Hunt, *The Figure in the Landscape.*

4 For the standard work on Brown's landscaping, see Dorothy Stroud, *Capability Brown*, 2nd edn (London, 1975); see also Thomas Hinde, *Capability Brown, the story of a master gardener* (London, 1986).

5 *The Letters and Journals of Lady Mary Coke*, 4 vols (Edinburgh, 1889), II p.332.

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Hampshire's Regency Landscapes

by Gilly Drummond

Prince George, Prince of Wales, born in 1762 and the eldest son of George III, did not become Regent until 1811, the year in which *Sense and Sensibility* was published. He was only thirteen years older than Jane, and both were steeped in the cultural influences of the day; Jane with her sharp eye, and the Prince Regent as one of the greatest royal patrons of the arts since Charles I. The Prince succeeded as George IV in 1820 and died in 1830. As Victoria did not succeed her uncle, William IV, until 1837, the Regency period can be said to span roughly the period from the end of the eighteenth century to the 1830s.

No historic period can be set apart from what came before. This is particularly true of gardens and landscapes. As ever, design is influenced by changing tastes, by those who lead fashion and those who follow it, by the traditionalists and the modernists. For gardens, this often meant that provincial taste could be ten or twenty years behind the fashion leaders. It could equally be influenced by what was already on the ground and could be adapted, or by what was regarded as sacrosanct by the owner. This means that most historic gardens are a series of overlays; few are of one particular period, except where they have survived through fortunate accident or because they are sufficiently significant to have been deliberately researched, repaired and restored to their original design.

The Natural Style

To understand Regency landscapes, it is useful to look at the theory and practice of those who came before. From the 1760s until his death in 1783, the central figure was Capability Brown (1715-83). Gardener to the King, peers, politicians and bankers, he was the first to think of the scale of the whole landscape. His skill was to marry beauty with economy. Brown was born in Northumberland and apprenticed there during a period which saw significant improvements in drainage, water management, plantations and shelter belts. These developments, allied to the new sophisticated, intellectual appreciation of the beauties of Nature, provided the background for the best possible training.

A visit to Kirkhale will illustrate perfectly what influenced Brown's later work: the wide Northumbrian sky, the long views, the abundance of water, the need for shelter from the biting wind, and the need to accommodate grazing animals. His smooth, pastoral landscapes, his technical mastery of architecture, land and water levels, his manipulation of land to take advantage of the view, accompanied by an engaging personality and utter trustworthiness, were to put him at the forefront of his new profession. He was to be a lasting influence as the chief proponent of the Natural Style, called by Horace Walpole 'modern gardening'.[1]

Both the Grand Tour, undertaken by Edward Austen Knight during 1786-1788, and the classical landscapes painted by Claude Lorraine and Nicholas Poussin greatly influenced educated young men, well-versed in classical poetry. They wanted the classical buildings, and Arcadian landscapes they had seen abroad, on their own improved lands at home, and they had the money to do it. Imaginative and allegorical, the presiding deities or spirits of places, water nymphs and dryads, shrines and grottoes, temples to Venus, to Flora, to Apollo, and to the idea of the Memento Mori, invaded gardens; Claude's fanciful, medieval towers inspired garden buildings. The Georgians were not pretending to build real medieval castles, they were asking their friends to imagine medieval buildings and adapted the details in a light-hearted way as a change from the solemnity and splendour of Palladianism. Gothic and Chinoiserie were among the most delightful design undercurrents of the day.

One of the smallest Regency landscapes in Hampshire is Luttrells Tower, at Eaglehurst, near Fawley. The tower was designed by Thomas Sandby (1721-98), who became Deputy Ranger to the Duke of Cumberland in Windsor Great Park. The Duke was a splendid improver, building and damming Virginia Water, the largest piece of artificial water of its day, on which he had a fifty-ton hulk transformed into a magnificent 'Mandarin Yacht' flying a gilt locust from its main mast! This was Chinoiserie on a grand scale, along with Palladian bridges and rockwork in the Natural style. The Duke's mistress married Simon Luttrell who had the gothic tower built, they say, to manage his smuggling activities out of Stanswood Bay, opposite Cowes. Later, Eaglehurst belonged to the Earl of Cavan, who had fought on land in Nelson's famous battle of the Nile. He camped on the lawn each summer in his campaign tent and then built his house in similar style and laid out the grounds. The Egyptian campaign would bring crocodiles on furniture and even Napoleon's epic defeat in Russia would see eagles sitting on tops of mirrors or gazing placidly across neat lawns.

The Picturesque

The Napoleonic Wars put an end to the Grand Tour for a time, but the rise of watercolour sketching and the popularity of prints made tours and tourism in Britain a popular, gentlemanly pursuit. Earlier in the century, Alexander Pope (1688-1744) used artistic imagery in his translation of Homer's *Iliad* (eighth century BC) to bind together poetry, painting and gardening. His assertion that 'All gardening is landscape painting, just like a picture hung up' underpinned the picturesque style. The High Priest of the picturesque was a clergyman, the Rev. William Gilpin (1724–1804), but for him nature was the painter. The aim of his trenchant observations and descriptions of scenery were to enable tourists to make a critical judgement. He became the Vicar at Boldre in the New Forest and, in order to build a Poor School, published his tours from 1782, followed by a series of sketches of picturesque

scenery intended to endow it. He was enamoured with the picturesque quality, the 'roughness' of the trees and open lawns of the Forest and in 1791 published his *Remarks on Forest Scenery*, an account of the contribution trees make to the appreciation of picturesque beauty.[2] Jane Austen would use her knowledge of Gilpin's picturesque principles with exquisite irony in *Pride and Prejudice*, written in 1797 and published in 1813.

Ferme Ornée

In his *Ferme Orneé or Rural Improvements* (1795), the Southampton based architect and surveyor John Plaw (1745-1820) illustrated how farm buildings and their setting could be 'calculated for landscape and picturesque effects'.[3] Leigh Park at Havant, near Portsmouth, now the Sir George Staunton Country Park owned by Hampshire County Council, is a rare survival of the 'ferme ornée' or ornamental farm. Purchased by Sir George Staunton in 1820, and considerably extended, it is Hampshire's best example of a picturesque estate, beautifully recorded in an extensive series of watercolours and Staunton's own *Notices of Leigh Park* of 1836. Staunton was the leading specialist on China of his day, having been page to Lord McCartney on the first expedition from the King of England to the Emperor of China in 1792 and later a member of the East India Company. Influenced by *Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* (1816) by Humphrey Repton (1752-1818), he was also a passionate plantsman and builder of picturesque follies.[4] These included a Gothic Library to house his 3,000 books on China, a Chinese Fort flying the Imperial yellow flag, a Chinese boathouse, a Turkish tent, temples, a Palladian Bridge, picturesque cottages and lodges and many more. The walled garden contained sumptuous glasshouses. With the splendid help of the Heritage Lottery Fund, much of this nineteenth- century Pleasure Ground is currently being restored.

Cottage Orné

Ornamental cottages or 'cottage orné' had also become fashionable as retreats for gentlemen, often for hunting, shooting and fishing. Houghton Lodge, perched above the River Test near Stockbridge, originally with a thatched roof, has a beautiful circular Drawing Room, a blue-John chimney piece and trefoiled doorways and arches. Another example is at Bishopstoke, near Fareham, with a colonnade of rustic tree trunks and the remains of a prospect mount, which once had views across the Solent to the Isle of Wight.

In 1802, John Plaw wrote *Rural Architecture or Designs from The Simple Cottage to the Decorated Villa*.[5] Designs include a Cottage or Shooting Lodge, and a Hermitage. It is interesting to speculate if Jane Austen knew of this architect when she lived in Southampton. Her relation John Butler-Harrison had twice been Mayor of Southampton and would have been likely to know the architects of the day. The town had become a watering place with the discovery of a spa in 1750 and in 1810 had begun to reach its ' heyday [as] a place of resort and residence, with stucco terraces . . . and villas dotting the surrounding countryside'.[6]

HUMPHREY REPTON

Humphrey Repton

Verbal warfare periodically flared up between the supporters of the Natural Style and those with a passion for nature and the picturesque. The man who could best see the opportunities for elegant, picturesque improvements was Humphrey Repton, a water-colourist who diligently applied himself to the study of botany and planting to become a 'landscape gardener', his term. He was an admirer of William Gilpin but wisely paid great attention to both 'Character and Convenience' in creating landscapes for his cultured patrons.

His Red Books, with their paper overlays of improvements that could be lifted to show the existing landscape beneath, further illustrate the integration of the house and garden, which had became almost an extension of the drawing room. Terraces replaced ha-has, possibly to the relief of the ladies whose silk shoes cannot have had a happy time of it when sheep grazed up to the front door. The Red Book for Stratton Park, near Winchester, survives, but sadly little of the Regency landscape remains. Another for Herriard Park, near Basingstoke, in 1794 has not been located. Herriard had a seventeenth-century double avenue leading to Hackwood Park. Jane Austen may well have known of this avenue and of the Red Book of 1809 for Stoneleigh Abbey, inherited 1806 by her

mother's cousin, the Rev. Thomas Leigh. *Mansfield Park* (1814) and Mr Rushworth were presages of things to come.

The Villa Estate and the Development of the Gardenesque

Tastes and clients were now changing, the New Rich replacing the traditional landed patron, to a degree. Many of the established owners were quick off the mark with canals, coalfields, property development and new industries. They and their estates survived. However, Repton mourned in his *Fragments* that 'The sudden acquirement of riches by individuals, has diverted *wealth* into new channels; men are solicitous to *increase* property rather than to *enjoy* it; they endeavour to improve the *value*, rather than the *beauty* of their newly purchased estates'. [7] A Hampshire example of this kind of villa estate, often on the edge of towns, is Awbridge Danes, near Romsey, complete with lake and classical boathouse. The villa estate became smaller and smaller, and the urban garden was born.

A young Scotsman, John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843), would ride south to the rescue of taste, picturesque principles, and the laying out of town and urban gardens for detached and semi-detached houses, and garden cemeteries, including Southampton Cemetery. His arrival in London in 1803 coincided with the explosion of interest in plants and plant collecting. The Horticultural Society, first proposed in 1804, had a thousand members by 1820, becoming the Royal Horticultural Society in 1861. Subscribers benefited from the numerous plant expeditions all over the world. The plants had to go somewhere. The collecting mania gathered pace.

Loudon was an indefatigable author, publishing a considerable number of influential works. His magisterial *Encyclopaedia of Gardening* (1822, with a new edition in 1824) was aimed at those small villa owners.[8] In a previous book he had listed a range of different garden styles: Dutch, French, Italian, Chinese, Greek, Roman and modern British; gardens for spring, autumn and winter; bulb gardens, botanic gardens and, mercifully, the general flower garden. Aboreta, American gardens, Indian gardens, rose gardens and rock gardens, parterres and geometric gardens, Gothic conservatories, octagonal green houses, decorative seats and sculpture could be added. The lucky villa owner would be able to have them all. Gardening was to be an 'Art of Taste'.

The diminutive Crescent Garden, at Alverstoke, near Gosport, not far from Portsmouth, is perhaps the most enchanting restoration of a Regency garden in Hampshire. Designed by Thomas Ellis Owen in 1828, at the age of twenty one, the garden complements a classical crescent typical of Regency town planning. Angleseyville was a speculative development under the patronage of the Marquess of Anglesey, a hero who lost a leg at Waterloo. It was a small promenade garden, replete with shrubs, with views over the sea to the Isle of Wight. At its centre was a small neo-classical Reading Room, flanked by a Bath House on either side. This was demolished in 1950; the garden railings had already gone for scrap metal in World War II. The garden became 'open space'.

In 1989, a partnership between Hampshire County Council, Gosport Borough Council, the Hampshire Gardens Trust and English Heritage restored the structure of the garden, retrieving the lost layout from overgrown shrubberies, and replacing the anthemion-headed railings and the gravel walks. A local resident devised a central planting based on a design by Loudon in *The Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion.*[9] Today, thanks to the volunteer Friends of Crescent Garden who plant and maintain it to an impeccably high standard, the sheltered, shrubbery walk of hollies, bay, arbutus, and Portugal laurel are in order and under-planted with bulbs and flowers. Informal beds of flowering shrubs flow round the shape of the Reading Room, uncovered during an archaeological investigation. Climbing roses on Reptonian iron supports and seats of early nineteenth-century design and colour, together with an abundance of flowers, underpin the Regency character and provide 'a series of little scenes to beguile the walker with prospects and flowery climbers'.[10] An original planting of *Liriodendron tulipifera*, the 'Tulip Tree', introduced from North America c. 1688, reigns over all. The Crescent Garden and its Friends has become a model for the repair, management and maintenance of other historic town gardens.

1 Horace Walpole *Essay on Modern Gardening* (London, 1785).
2 William Gilpin, *Remarks on Forest Scenery and other Woodland Views, relative chiefly to Picturesque Beauty illustrated by Scenes of New Forest in Hampshire*, 2 vols (London, 1791).
3 John Plaw, *Ferme Orneé or Rural Improvements* (London, 1795).
4 Humphrey Repton, *Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening including Some Remarks on Grecian and Gothic Architecture, collected from Various Manuscripts in the possession of the Different Noblemen and Gentlemen for whose use they were originally written; The Whole Tending to Establish Fixed Principles In the Respective Arts* (London 1816)
5 John Plaw, *Rural Architecture; or Designs, from The Simple Cottage to the Decorated Villa* (London, 1802).
6 Nicholas Pevsner , and D. Lloyd, *The Buildings of England: Hampshire and the Isle of Wight* (London, 1967)
7 *Ibid.*
8 John Claudius Loudon, *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening; Comprising the Theory and Practice of Horticulture, Floriture, Arboculture, and Landscape Gardening in all Countries; and a Statistical View of its Present State, with Suggestions for its Future Progress in the British Isles* (London, 1822).
9 John Claudius Loudon *The Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion: Comprising the choice of a suburban villa residence, or of a situation on which to form one; the arrangement and furnishing of the house; and the laying out, planting and general managment of the garden and grounds* (London, 1836-38). This work first appeared in monthly instalments.
10 Wendy Osborne *The History of Alverstoke Crescent Garden* (Unpublished paper, 1997).

Gilly Drummond is a member of the Board of Trustees of Chawton House Library.

Chawton House Library

Friends

Chawton House Library Friends Association supports the work of a living estate where the study of early women writers expands our understanding of women's potential in a new century.

We need the vision, energy and commitment of all our Friends to make real changes in the physical and literary environment at the 'Great House' in Jane Austen's village of Chawton. Jane Austen's own social networks embraced a wide circle of family and friends. Our Friends Association harnesses the enthusiasm of today's readers, writers and social transformers in order to offer unique educational opportunities.

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During the set-up phase of the project we have been helped by a number of volunteers who have been involved in various areas such as the restoration of the landscape and unpacking the collection on its arrival in the UK. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact the Administrator for further information and an application form. We welcome volunteers of all ages and abilities with and without specialist knowledge. You don't need any particular skills, just enthusiasm and energy. We look forward to meeting you!

Website & Novels on-line

The website is the home of the Novels On-Line Project, an ongoing project offering full-text transcripts of some of the rarest books in the Chawton House Library collection. These texts, which explore such broad-ranging themes as satire, slavery, marriage, witchcraft and piracy, signal the rich texture and innovative character of women's writing in the period 1600 to 1830. Through bringing these little-known novels to a wider audience, it is hoped that, interest in these works will be stimulated amongst a new generation of readers, and critical scholarship of some of the more obscure texts and authors represented in the collection will be encouraged. Further information on Chawton House Library can be found at www.chawton.org.

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