The Female Spectator

The newsletter of Chawton House Library

VOL. 8 NO. 2 SUMMER 2003

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A Note from the Editors

This is it. As we write this short introduction paintings are being hung, furniture is being moved into place and rugs are being laid. When you read this, Chawton House Library and Study Centre will be open.

One of the biggest changes of the last three months has been our move from the outbuildings to the house itself. Working in this unique environment has made us all the more convinced of the value of studying early British women's writing in a period setting. For example, Jennie, who wrote her doctoral thesis on representations of fashion in eighteenth-century literature, has found that working in a lady's dressing room offers a whole new perspective on the issues she works on. And we can also confirm that trying to negotiate your way from one end of the house to the other has brought new meaning to the terrors of the Gothic novel.

Since we've all been reflecting on rooms and space in the last few months, it seemed fitting to devote much of the summer 2003 issue of the *Female Spectator* to the architecture of Chawton House. Mark Webber's article outlines the painstaking work that has been carried out at Chawton since his he became involved in the project in 1996. Edward Roberts shifts our focus into the more distant past to explore the early history of the house. Building on the work of Montagu Knight, who co-authored a book on the house and its owners with William Austen Leigh in 1911, this article shows how the very latest technology illuminates our view of the past. Christopher Currie's essay takes us still further back in time, detailing royal visits to Chawton House in the medieval period. In the final article in this issue, Jacqueline Reid-Walsh explores the importance of space and architecture in Austen's novels in her article on Elizabeth Bennet's visit to Pemberley in *Pride and Prejudice*.

We couldn't, however, publish this important issue of *The Female Spectator* without discussing the Chawton House Library Collection. Jane Alderson, in her opening piece for this issue, details some of our plans for the Library, Study Centre and other Library projects, and provides information on access to the works in the collection. Librarian Helen Scott, in her first article for the newsletter, delves deeper into the collection to offer a tantalising glimpse of some of the gems Chawton House Library holds through the lens of Jane Austen's fiction. While this is only a snapshot of some of the many thousands of items of interest the Library holds, it is clear that the collection is as rich and diverse as the literary landscape was in the period covered by the collection: 1600-1830.

We hope this persuades many of you to visit us. We look forward to seeing you at the Library in the very near future.

Editors

Jane Alderson
Chief Executive
Chawton House Library

Jennie Batchelor
Chawton Fellow
University of Southampton

Chawton Past and Future

by Jane Alderson

Believe it or not, by the time you read this edition of *The Female Spectator*, Chawton House Library and Study centre will be finally open. We will also be a matter of weeks away from our tenth anniversary. I have to admit that it is with a huge sense of relief that I find myself able to write the preceding two sentences. The last few months have been something of a rollercoaster ride, more familiar to the near neighbours of the theme park at Alton Towers in Staffordshire than Alton in Hampshire! Those of you who have followed our progress in the pages of the local and national press may well remember that at one stage the rumour mill envisaged a theme park at Chawton, presumably with a Jane Austen theme. It has always struck me as ironic that our Architects, Nichols Brown Webber, are actually the Architects responsible for the theme park at Alton Towers!

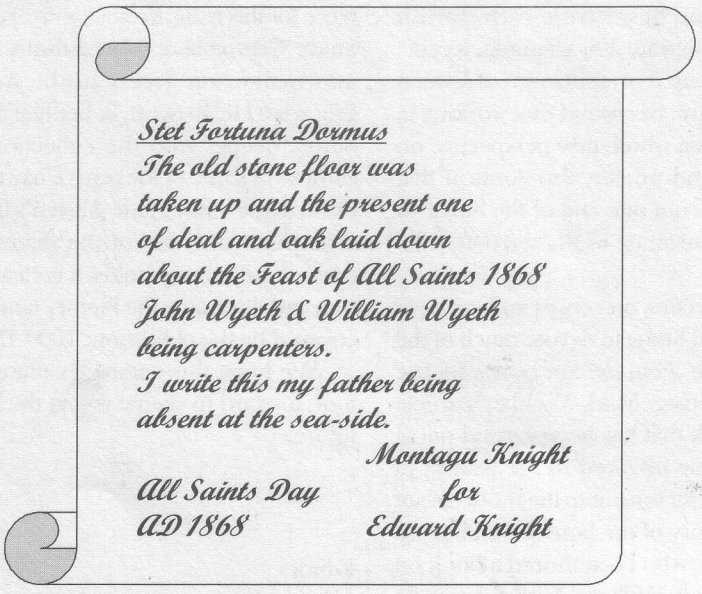
Open Gardens Suprise

In June we took part in the Chawton Open Gardens weekend, raising money for the village hall and St Nicholas' Church. This focused our collective mind on the garden and during the preceding week we could all be seen engaged in rather unfamiliar, earthy tasks, ably supported by our volunteers. Once again the weather was glorious and a steady stream of visitors made their way up the drive, many hoping for a glimpse in the house which was actually closed to visitors. One large group of people asked to meet the 'lady of the house' and I was duly introduced as most closely fitting the bill. The gentleman leading the group explained that his parents had met whilst in service at Chawton House, his mother working in the kitchen, his father as a carpenter, and that he had hoped to be able to see the old kitchen. I explained that the house was actually closed to visitors and took the group onto the library terrace to show them photographs taken in the old kitchen during the restoration process.

The group was so interested and enthusiastic that by now I was feeling a bit guilty that I could not actually take them into the house, but they did understand that it would cause problems if some people were seen to be allowed inside when others were not. I offered to take them around the house sometime in August, once we are open, and asked them to get in touch. To my amazement the gentleman whose parents had worked in the house told me his name was Wyeth and the group of people were all family members. Regular readers of *TFS* may remember a previous article when I described our discovery of a message in a bottle under the floor of the Great Hall.

On 1st November 2002 a message in a bottle was discovered under the floor in the Great Hall. The cork was extracted and the message removed in the presence of the Architectural Historian, Edward Roberts, on 6th November. The message bears the greater part of the Knight seal at the bottom. It is interesting that we actually discovered the message on All Saints Day, 2001, 133 years to the day after the message was written. The message is written on the back of a piece of parchment which was originally part of what appears to be a much earlier legal document, possibly seventeenth or eighteenth century.

The family name of the carpenters was Wyeth and I was speaking to the grandson of William, hence my amazement. It transpired that William Wyeth is actually buried in the cemetery at Chawton and the family had just been to put flowers on the grave. I am looking forward to welcoming the family back to Chawton House in August and hopefully finding out some more about the Wyeths.



Opening Our Doors

It is appropriate at this point to make a few comments about access to the Library and the opening. Chawton House is a charitable, working library and study centre and not a country house tourist attraction. The house and its furnishings on their own do not fall into the same category of interest as say Jane Austen's House, notwithstanding the fact that a constant stream of in excess of 30,000 visitors per year is not compatible with the primary function of Chawton House as a library and study centre. The furnishing and decor has been chosen as appropriate for the setting whilst being 'fit for purpose', thus the library and study centre is a living entity housed in a country house. The images on the following page hopefully give you an indication of the furnished rooms which are a far cry from the way they looked when I first joined the project four years ago. There has been no attempt to furnish the house with items from any one specific period. This is all set against a very appropriate backdrop of paintings of female authors and other interesting women from our period, 1600 to 1830.

Portrait of Mrs. Mary Robinson as 'Perdita'

We expect our client base to be varied ranging from academics, scholars and students in the field of women's writing of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, together with 'Janeites' and other literary interest groups such as the Burney Society, to individuals with a general interest in either women's writing or the period from 1600 to 1830 in general. In short, any interested person can use the library by first applying for a reader's pass and making an appointment.

There will be a programme of lectures, seminars, workshops, one and two-day conferences and other events, focusing on topics including dancing, cookery and gardening, and other activities relevant to the study of English life in that period. Some elements of the programme will be designed to interest academics and scholars whilst others will be directed at a more general audience.

We also have an active educational outreach programme and encourage schools to undertake projects and events at Chawton House. Even though we are striving to provide readers an opportunity to study the texts in the appropriate contextual setting, access to the collection of books is not limited to physical access at Chawton. Many of the books will be available via the Novels On-line project.

In addition to the operation of the Library and Study Centre we have a several rooms in the old servants' wing available for hire as meeting rooms, including the usual provision of tea and coffee, lunch etc. These facilities are quite separate from the Library and Study Centre facilities. We will also make the Great Hall and Dining Room available for hire for larger events when not being used for in-house events. Consideration has also been given to the use of the lawn for larger corporate events and weddings.

Speaking of events, a quick word about our opening conference on 15th, 16th and 17th July, As you are probably aware, this three-day international conference, 'Women's Writing in Britain, 1660-1830', is jointly sponsored with Southampton University and celebrates four centuries of women's contributions to literature. Over 200 scholars, students and enthusiastic readers of women's writing will gather at Winchester School of Art on 15th and 17th July and at Chawton House Library on 16th July to mark our official opening. Interest in this three-day conference was so great that many papers had to be turned down and many delegates turned away. Therefore, July 2004 will see the first, annual, two-day Chawton House Library Conference and the call for papers will be released in the next few weeks.

Opening Plans

This edition of *TFS* is being compiled against a backdrop of intense activity. Not only are we preparing for the opening conference, but also our press launch; events for all those who have been involved in the project over the last ten years; and the village and the Friends of Chawton House. Crockery and cutlery is arriving, marquees are going up, caterers are positioning tables, in fact there is as much activity now as there was at the height of the restoration project. Adrian Thatcher has made the mental leap from Restoration Project Manager to Estate Manager which has presented him with a whole new range of problems.

This is probably a good place to mention our stalwart

band of room stewards, volunteers from the Alton ADFAS (Association of Decorative and Fine Art Societies). Members of this group have proved themselves to be extremely versatile. They started off unpacking books with Helen Scott, the librarian, moved on to cleaning and preparing the house for the opening with Helen Nicholson, the housekeeper, and are now providing a pool of room stewards who will be strategically positioned around the house during our 'open house' hours. I'm sure that this group will prove invaluable in the years to come.

The Oak Room

Chawton House Library Welcomes Susie Grandfield

Since the last edition of *TFS* we have added another member to the team, Susie Grandfield, who has joined us as Public Relations Officer. Susie certainly hit the ground running, and we have had some great press and media coverage of our opening.

Results of the Questionnaire

There is just enough space to give you some feedback from the results of our recent survey. We received over 100 completed questionnaires, a very pleasing 6% return from readers who have been in receipt of *TFS* for an average of 6.3 years. An overwhelming 96% said they liked the format of *TFS*, with 86% feeling that the articles are just the right length. 61% want more illustrations and photographs and many commented that the quality of the images could be better. 40% plan to use the library and 51% hope to attend events. Interestingly, in this electronic age, only 22% had visited the web site. Your feedback on articles and particular areas of interest will be very useful in planning future issues of *TFS*.

The Ground Floor Library/Reading Room

'The Mind's First Luxury': an Introduction to the Chawton House Library Collection

by Helen Scott

Her next solicitude was to furnish herself with a well-chosen collection of books; and this employment, which to a lover of literature [...] is perhaps the mind's first luxury, proved a source of entertainment so fertile and delightful that it left her nothing to wish.

Frances Burney, *Cecilia* (1782), Book II, Chapter II

The Chawton House Library collection focuses on women's writing in English between 1600 and 1830, a period which produced a number of important women writers, including, of course, Jane Austen. The collection at Chawton is rich in first and early editions authored by both well-known and lesser-known writers, and represents all genres: prose, poetry and drama. The collection also provides a context for the literature of the period, to give readers an opportunity to discover more about the society in which these writers lived, and to increase and enrich our understanding of their work.

Consequently, the Library also has many factual books from the period, covering a wide range of subjects, including cookery, female conduct and education, gardening and landscape, art and architecture, medicine, grammar, travel, marriage, and dress. The Chawton collection provides an opportunity not only to study early, and in some cases rare, editions of the literature of the period, but also to access a wealth of evidence about the time in which these women were writing. A look at the world of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries via the novels of Jane Austen may serve to highlight some of the many areas of interest in the Chawton collection.

The Mirror of the Graces

Jane Austen is the most well-known and no doubt the most widely appreciated of the women writers of this period. Adaptations of her novels as stage plays, films and television drama have reached an even wider audience. Each adaptation of one of her much-loved books is usually greeted with much discussion about whether it's acceptable license to characterise Fanny Price as determined and confident, rather than shy and diffident, or to have Darcy emerging dishevelled from an impromptu swim. But Austen might have enjoyed, or at least appreciated, the dramatisation of her work – as a very young woman, Austen took the trouble to condense Samuel Richardson's lengthy novel *Sir Charles Grandison* into a short, amusing play. The original manuscript of this play is the prize of the Chawton Library collection. The collection also has a first edition of the original novel *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753-1754), in its extensive seven volumes, as well as other early editions of works by Richardson (who was a favourite author of Austen's), such as *Letters Written to and for Particular Friends, on the Most Important Occasions* (1741) *and A Collection of the Moral and Instructive Sentiments, Maxims, Cautions, and Reflexions, contained in the histories of* Pamela, Clarissa *and* Sir Charles Grandison (1755). Although the collection's primary focus is women writers, it also holds a substantial selection of works by male writers, in recognition of the fact that women were not writing in isolation from their male contemporaries, but were part of a larger literary landscape.

Performing plays was a popular form of entertainment in the Austen family home at Steventon Rectory when Austen was a girl. This experience of family theatricals is reflected in her novel *Mansfield Park*, when Tom Bertram and his friend Yates lead the rest of the family and their neighbours in staging a performance of *Lovers' Vows*, originally *Der Kinde der Liebe* by August Friedrich Ferdinand von Kotzebue, and adapted and translated from German into English by English playwright Elizabeth Inchbald in 1798. The Chawton collection holds a number of plays written by Inchbald who had seventeen plays performed in London in one year alone; editions of *The Widow's Vow* (1786) and *Such Things Are* (1788) are just two examples among many. The collection also has first and early editions of plays by many other women playwrights – some dating back to the late seventeenth century – such as work by Aphra Behn *The City Heiress; or, Sir Timothy Treat-all* (1682), Delariviere Manley, *The Royal Mischief* (1696), Susannah Centlivre, *The Perjur'd Husband* (1700), and many from the second half of the eighteenth century, including plays

by Elizabeth Griffith, *The Platonic Wife* (1765), *The Double Mistake* (1766), Frances Sheridan , *The Discovery* (1763), *The Dupe* (1764) and Charlotte Lennox, *Old City Manners* (1775).

Plays are not the only form of literature to feature within Austen's work. Reading in general is often important to Austen's characters. Edmund Bertram, in *Mansfield Park*, encourages and supervises Fanny Price's reading, because he knows that it 'must be an education in itself'. In *Northanger Abbey,* Catherine Morland prepares herself for adulthood by reading poetry, while Marianne Dashwood in *Sense and Sensibility* initially founds her intimacy with Willoughby on the discussion of novels and poetry. Poetry in the Chawton collection covers the range of the period, from Katherine Philips' *Poems by the Most Deservedly Admired Mrs Katherine Philips, the Matchless Orinda* (1678), Aphra Behn's *A Pindarick on the Death of our Late Sovereign* (1685) and *A Pindarick Poem on the Happy Coronation of His Most Sacred Majesty James II...* (1685), Anne Finch's *Miscellany Poems, on Several Occasions* (1713) and Elizabeth Rowe's posthumously published *Miscellaneous Works, in Prose and Verse* (1756), to Mary Wortley Montagu's *Poetical Works of the Right Honourable Lady M-y W-y M-e* (1768), Mary Russell Mitford's *Poems* (1810), Amelia Opie's *Poems* (1802), Mary Tighe's *Psyche; with Other Poems* (1811). This is just a small selection of the poetry in the collection.

As well as reading poetry, *Northanger Abbey*'s Catherine Morland is an avid reader of 'horrid' novels which make a strong impression on the heroine's mind. Catherine reads *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) by Ann Radcliffe during the course of the action, and she discusses various other gothic writers with her friend Isabella Thorpe. All Ann Radcliffe's novels are held in the Chawton collection, including first editions of *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) and *The Mysteries of Udolpho.* The collection also contains novels by other gothic writers mentioned in *Northanger Abbey,* including Francis Lathom's *The Midnight Bell* (1798) and *Italian Mysteries* (1820), a number of Regina Maria Roche's works, such as 1801, 1816 and 1835 editions of *The Children of the Abbey* (first published in 1798) and a first edition of *The Discarded Son; or, Haunt of the Banditti* (1807), as well as Eliza Parsons' novels *The History of Miss Meredith* (1790) and *Old Friend with a New Face* (1797).

Austen is not concerned only with the gothic genre in *Northanger Abbey.* At one point, she intervenes to defend the novel as a literary form and to signal her appreciation for the works of some of her fellow novelists. Novels by Frances Burney and Maria Edgewood are referred to as 'work in which the greatest powers of the mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour are conveyed to the world in the best language'. The Chawton Library's holdings of eighteenth and early nineteenth century novels are the focus of the collection. Examples include first editions of all four of Frances Burney's novels, as well as first and early editions of novels by Eliza Haywood, *The Rash Resolve* (1724), *The History of Jemmy and Jenny Jessamy* (1753), Charlotte Lennox, *The Female Quixote* (1752), *Euphemia* (1790), and *Hermione* (1791), Frances Sheridan, *The History of Nourjahad* (1767), Charlotte Smith, *Ethelinde* (1789), *Celestina* (1791), *Desmond* (1792), Maria Edgeworth, *Castle Rackrent* (1800), *Belinda* (1801), and *Helen* (1834).

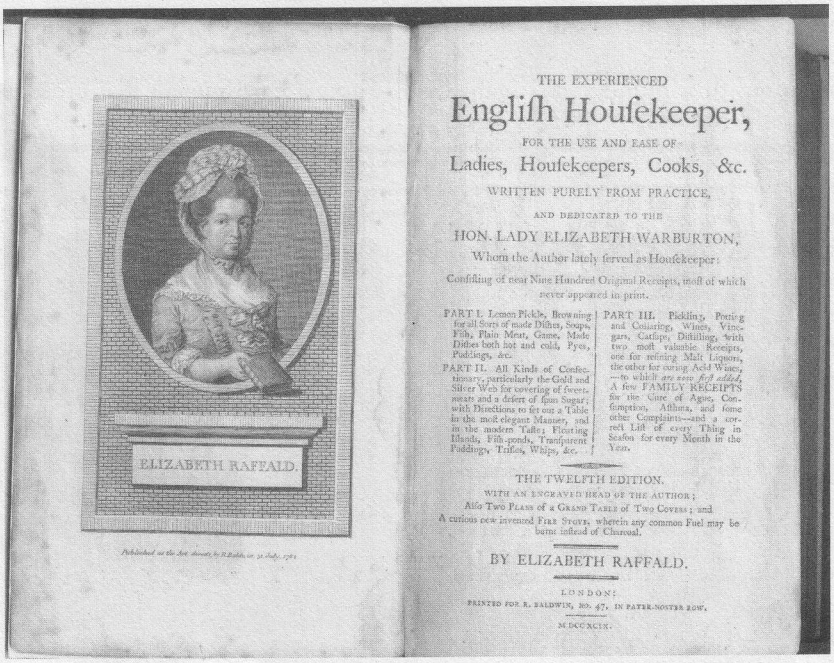
The Female Quixote (1752).
Illustration from
The Novelist's Magazine, 12 (1787)

All of Austen's novels centre on a heroine who negotiates a problematic path to eventually gain her chosen life partner. The heroines face various obstacles to happiness, sometimes of their own creation, sometimes not, which they must learn to endure or overcome. Consequently, Austen's work, like many novels of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, explores themes of female conduct and courtship. Female conduct was a great preoccupation of the eighteenth century, as illustrated by the amount of material published on the subject, often aimed at young women entering adult society – like the heroines of many novels of the period.

The Chawton collection holds many such publications; just a few examples are *Mentoria; or, the Young Ladies' Instructor: in familiar conversations on Moral and Entertaining Subjects*, by Ann Murry (1779), *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind, Addressed to a Young Lady* by Hester Chapone (1787), *Thoughts in the Form of Maxims Addressed to Young Ladies, on their First Establishment in the World*, by Isabella Carlisle (1789), *Mental Improvement for a Young Lady, on her Entrance into the World*, by Sarah Green (1793), and *Essays on Various Subjects, Principally Designed for Young Ladies*, by Hannah More (1810). There are even publications dealing specifically with the subjects of courtship: *The Science of Love; or the Whole Art of Courtship* (1792), and how to be a good wife, Ann Martin Taylor's *Practical Hints to Young Females, on the Duties of a Wife, a*

Mother, and a Mistress of a Family (1815). Interestingly, there are also works from the earlier part of the eighteenth century discussing more controversial aspects of marriage: *Some Considerations Upon Clandestine Marriages* by Henry Gally (1750) and *The Present State of Matrimony; or, the Real Causes of Conjugal Infidelity* (1739) are just two examples.

The smooth running of the household was an important part of the wife's role in Austen's time, and we are given glimpses of this throughout her novels. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Mrs Bennet is alarmed at the thought of Mr Bingley coming to dinner when there is no fish in the house; Mrs Norris in *Mansfield Park* considers the plentiful dinners which Mrs Grant serves in her house to be unnecessary extravagance (while the reader is alerted to the general apathy of Lady Bertram by the fact that she allows Mrs Norris to effectually take over the role of managing the Bertram household); the youth and inexperience of Georgiana Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice* are emphasised by her uncertainty in acting as the hostess of Pemberley. There was plenty of literature at the time to help ladies make good housekeepers: *The Compleat Housewife; or, Accomplish'd Gentlewoman's Companion* by Elizabeth Smith (1753), *The Lady's Complete Guide; or, Cookery in all its Branches* by Mary Cole (1791), *The Experienced English House-keeper, for the Use and Ease of Ladies, Housekeepers, Cooks &c* by Elizabeth Raffald (1799), and *The Family Friend, or Housekeeper's Instructor, Containing a Very Complete Collection of Original and Approved Receipts in Every Branch of Cookery, Confectionary, &c* by Pricilla Haslehurst (1802) are some examples from the Chawton collection.



The Experienced English Housekeeper (1799)

Appearance was also an important factor in women's lives. As Mr Collins tells Elizabeth in *Pride and Prejudice,* Lady Catherine de Burgh 'will not think the worse of you for being simply dressed. She likes to have the distinction of rank preserved'. The customs of dress and their significance can be seen in publications of the time. For ladies, one such example is *The Mirror of the Graces; or, the English Lady's Costume: combining and harmonizing taste and judgement, elegance and grace, modesty, simplicity, and economy, with fashion in dress; and adapting the various articles of female embellishments to different ages, forms, and complexions; to the seasons of year, rank and situation in life...* (1811), and for gentlemen, *The Whole Art of Dress!, or, the road to elegance and fashion, at the enormous saving of thirty per cent!!! being a treatise upon that essential and much-cultivated requisite of the present day, gentleman's costume* (1830); *The Art of Tying the Cravat: demonstrated in sixteen lessons, including thirty-two different styles* by H. Le Blanc (1828); and *Hints to the Bearers of Walking Sticks and Umbrellas* by Solomon Wright (1809).

By looking at the world of Jane Austen's novels and the experience of her characters, it has been possible to illustrate some of the strengths of the Chawton House Library collection, not only in terms of the creative literature of the time, but also the factual material that gives us so much context for the period. However, the areas mentioned are just some of the subjects covered by the collection - there are also contemporary travel accounts, letters, memoirs and biographies, books about grammar and vocabulary, books about botany, and many other subjects. It is worth noting that the Library has also has a selection of secondary material to support the primary collection, including recent literary criticism and biography. For those interested in the literature and the history of this period, the Chawton House Library collection is a newly-accessible resource waiting to be explored.

Note: the dates given for publications are the dates of the editions in the collection, therefore not always the dates when the works were first published.

Chawton House Library is open for use by members of the public, by appointment, from 22 July 2003. First-time visitors will need to apply for a reader's pass; please contact Helen Scott on 01420 541010 or helen.scott@chawton.net for further information.

Restoration Update

by Mark Webber

As the painters are adding the finishing touches to the House in preparation for the July opening, now is perhaps the time to reflect on just how massive a task it has been to undertake a restoration of this type.

Nichols Brown Webber have been involved with Chawton House as architects since 1996. When I first viewed the house in that year I saw a ruin, clad in large blue temporary tarpaulins. These 'temporary tarpaulins' over the south wing had in fact been in place for several years and had only been partially successful in keeping out the weather and vermin. The house was in an extremely sorry state of repair and was high on English Heritage's 'Buildings at Risk' register.

It had become home to a number of organisms including dry rot, wet rot, death watch beetle, various species of wood worm, crows and rodents. Elsewhere in the north range, water damage was particularly evident in the vulnerable valley areas.

Exposed roof timbers

Chawton House had not benefited from the fact that it had been extended over the centuries in a variety of styles. These extensions to the Elizabethan house in the period up to the Victorian era created a series of awkward valleys, junctions, and parapet gutters, something from which the original uncluttered Elizabethan design would not have suffered. These junctions had proved difficult to maintain over the years. With lead gutters blocked, leaking or overflowing it was only a matter of time before nature took hold and started the process of deterioration and decomposition.

Anyone who remembers the ceiling just off the tapestry gallery prior to building work back in 1996 will remember a large gaping hole with a series of totally rotten joists held together by a flimsy piece of plaster and a layer of wall paper. If this was all that you could see on the surface, what would it be like when the building was opened up? At this stage it looked like we would be in for a long and painstaking restoration.

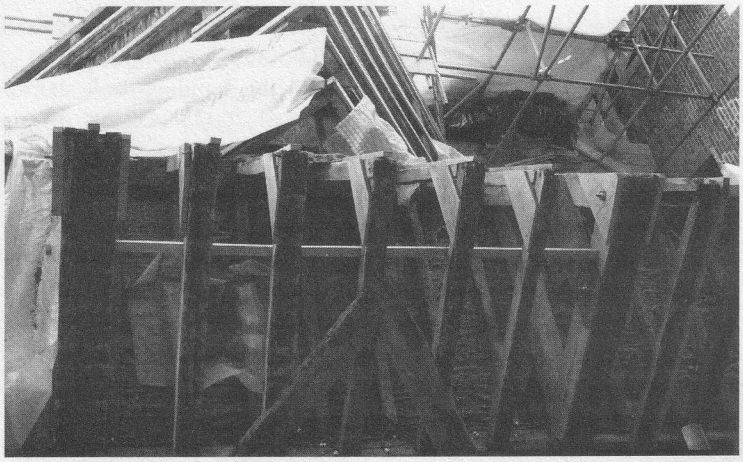
The process began with a digital measured survey, not a simple task given the complexity of levels and the maze of rooms in the various wings. Once completed, these plans formed the basis of the Listed Building application and the proposed plans were drawn up to show how the building might be used as a study centre. During 1996 a series of negotiations took place with Planning and Conservation officers, English Heritage, Building Control, the Fire Brigade and various interested parties. A compromise was reached to minimise the impact on the listed building, whilst meeting the needs of the new Library. For instance, a three-storey study centre would normally require high levels of fire-proofing and compartmentation in case of fire. If modern guidelines for new buildings had been applied to Chawton House much of the historic building fabric would have been lost and this was unacceptable to the authorities and ourselves.

Sensitive solutions were called for, ones which would not only maintain the historic fabric but also create a safe working environment that protected the occupants and building in case of fire. For instance, fibre optic lighting using pin pricks of light were proposed which would be carefully threaded into the ceilings and be barely visible. Comprehensive fire alarm systems were adopted to act as an early warning, which reduced the amount of fire upgrading required to walls and doors.

Lengthy discussions took place with English Heritage over the removal of the contentious billiard wing. Historical analysis was carried out and structural reports undertaken to justify why the wing should be removed. The main argument for the billiard wing removal was the poor quality of the Victorian design and the fact that it formed a carbuncle on the north side of the house. A slightly earlier late nineteenth-century addition, the servants' wing would remain as an example of the architecture of that period. By definition the listing of a building means that all parts of the building, including any later and less attractive additions, are listed as they form part of its history. Justification for the billiard wing's removal was approved and Listed Building consent obtained.

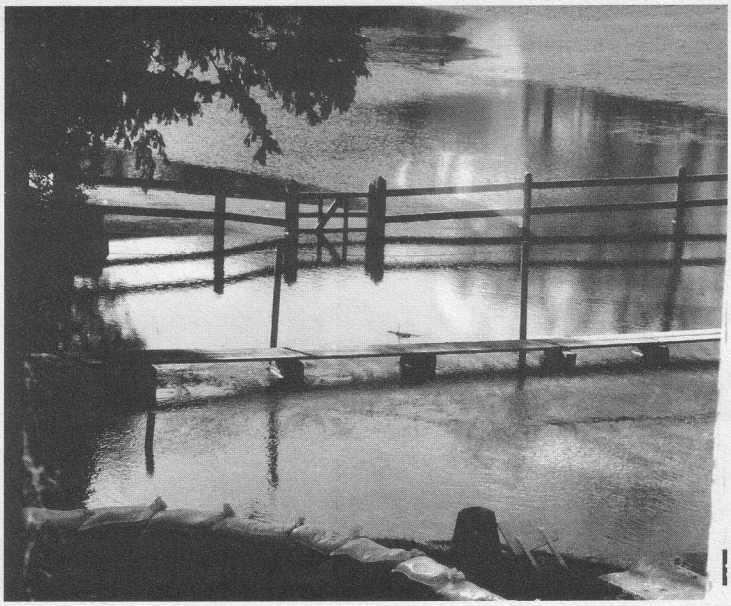
The approval process was not without contention. The application also included proposals for the wider landscape, including the restoration of the ha-ha to the south of the house. In the 1930s a swimming pool had been built which protruded above the original ground line and needed to be removed to restore the original slope down to the ha-

ha. Unfortunately, the pool had become derelict and overgrown, and badgers had at some stage moved into the bank below the pool. As the badger is a protected species, the local badger group objected to the proposals and it took over a year to convince English Nature that the sett was in fact an annexe and not occupied. Finally in early 1997 approval to remove the swimming pool was given and the diggers moved in - a welcome sight. The badgers remain contented elsewhere on the estate.



Apex repairs to the north range

Over the next year detailed plans were drawn up together with schedules for the repairs to the main elements of the building from walls, floors and roofs down to panelling, doors and windows. Much of the restoration could not be envisaged until the building was opened up to reveal the true extent of repairs. Phase 1 started in August 1998 when the south wing was wrapped in a giant temporary roof. This allowed the builder to remove the roof coverings without causing damage to the fragile interiors below. Over the next year every floor and roof joist was carefully checked and where necessary repaired or, at worst, replaced.



Flooding in 2000

The full extent of the damage caused by years of exposure to the elements under a tarpaulin roof was evident. Some timbers literally had to be hoovered out into skips. Whilst gangs of craftsmen worked on the south wing, at the north side of the house, the billiard wing was carefully taken down brick by brick and all the materials were stored for future use. This stock pile of bricks, stones, doors and doorknobs would be an invaluable source of materials for the subsequent restoration of the rest of the house.

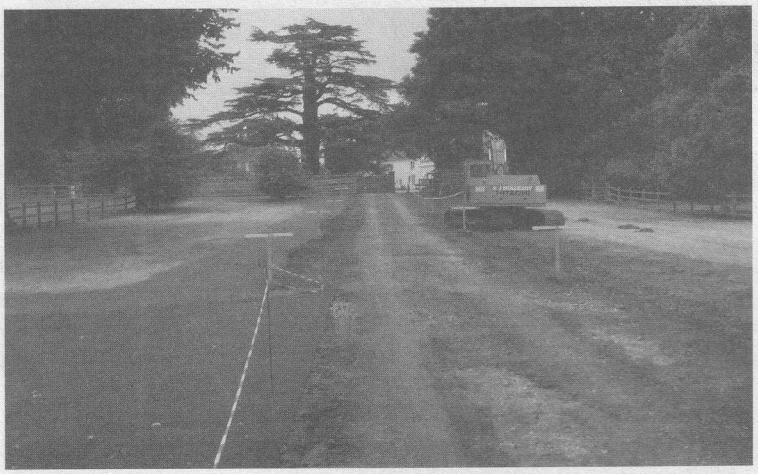
The removal of the billiard wing and two other Victorian additions in the inner courtyard did not go without problems. Asbestos was found in the old basement boiler house and its flue, which stopped work for a few weeks while it was safely removed. Demolition recommenced slowly to enable the archaeologist and the architectural historian to record the historical development of the building. Of particular interest in the inner courtyard was the discovery of the original splayed brick reveals of the much earlier Jacobean windows (1650) with their fixed leaded windows bricked up. Once again work stopped on site as English Heritage were called in to agree the design of the new window openings. Windows in the ground floor servants' passage were finally restored to the Jacobean design rather than to the proposed 1890s Montagu Knight design which had been shown on the Listed Building Application.

Although the inner courtyard elevations may now appear as a patchwork, the history of the building is evident for all to see. With the outbuildings restored to essential estate offices and workshops Phase 1 was completed in late 1999 and the temporary roof to the south front removed.

In 2000 work started on lowering the main drive to its 1820s level. At the same time, trenches were dug to lay the various services up the driveway for water, power, telecommunic-ations and foul and storm drainage; whilst open, the project archaeologist recorded the various layers and levels found. Later that year work started on the restoration of Chawton House Stables and the adjacent housekeeper's cottage. The works were dogged by one of the wettest winters for

decades and the Lavant stream rose and flooded the area around the stables. For several weeks Adrian Thatcher and his team, with pumps and sandbags, battled to keep the water level in the dell within inches of the ground floor of the Stables. A bridge had to be erected across the 'river' to allow access to the main house. Work progressed despite the weather. The original stone mullion cross windows to the symmetrical stable block were reinstated, based on the remaining evidence of the stone jambs. Much of the damage carried out by the former owners in the 1980s was reversed. Staircases with their modern spindly balustrades were replaced with substantial oak staircases more akin to the period of the building.

At the same time work on the main house was progressing with the restoration of the Pumphouse and Long Nursery to the east of the inner courtyard. Seeing water being pumped from the well by the restored machinery via electric motors (the original beam engine had long since been removed), was an exiting moment and a turning point in the project. At last life was beginning to return to the house. Only a few months earlier the main pump had been at risk of collapsing thirty feet into the well below as the timber supports had been almost totally eaten through by wet rot. By early 2001 the Pumphouse was completed below a newly refurbished peg tile roof.



Lowering the main drive

By January 2001 there was at least two-thirds of the house still to restore and a daunting task lay ahead. Much of a restoration project of this nature is about opening up and repairing the structure. The restorer of a house, just like a mechanic restoring a classic car, gets to a stage when he is left in despair with a chassis and a large box of bolts and bits, and is wondering how it will all fit back together.

For much of 2001 and 2002 during Phases 3 and 4, Chawton seemed to be at the chassis stage, stripped down to a skeleton beneath its temporary roof and surrounded by a compound of carefully labelled bits. At one stage a large container had to be hired just to store some of the floor boards, together with another container for doors. After the repairs to the timber floor joists and rafters had been completed and treated, the fireproofing was inserted along with miles of pipes and cables in rodent-proof protective conduits. A totally new heating system was installed, but re-using as many of the old cast iron radiators as possible. These were overhauled and pressure tested off-site and refitted. Some of the radiators are so heavy, they took three or four men to carry them. Gas, water, waste pipes, power and data cables were threaded through the complex timber and massive masonry structure with minimal affect on the historic fabric. Much of the cost of the restoration is now concealed beneath the floorboards as if nothing has happened.

As the building took shape once more towards the spring of 2003, specialist decorators were brought in to apply fire-proofing treatment to doors. They also treated and re-waxed the oak panelling for which Chawton obtained its Grade II listing. Conservators were used to preserve the Decoupage at the top of the Jacobean staircase. Specialist painters were used to reinstate the grained oak to match sections of softwood in with the original oak stair. The art of graining is an exquisite craft and when carried out well, is difficult to distinguish between grained oak and real oak.

As the 'box of bits' is now empty and the contractor's compound cleared, the last doorknob has been refitted and I wonder where all the effort has gone. It just takes a quick flick through the photograph album and a glance at the two filing cabinets of files on Chawton to realise what a massive undertaking it has been. Jane Alderson mentioned in the last issue what a magnificent job Adrian Thatcher has done as the restoration Project Manager. I can only reiterate what a superlative job Adrian has done to maintain the momentum of this project against all the odds. As the person on-site on a daily basis, Adrian has experienced a roller coaster ride of challenges and emotions and I congratulate him on seeing the project through to completion over the past seven years.

Thanks to Adrian and the efforts of hundreds of contractors, Chawton House is safely off the Buildings at Risk Register. Long may it remain so.

Nichols Brown Weber are an architecture practice based in Henley-on-Thames. Their works cover a wide spectrum of projects from schools, colleges and institutions, to larger-scale projects such as visitor centres, hotels and marina. Much of their business involves work to historic and listed buildings. They have recently completed the refurbishment of the Grade II listed Percival Library at Clifton College, Bristol.

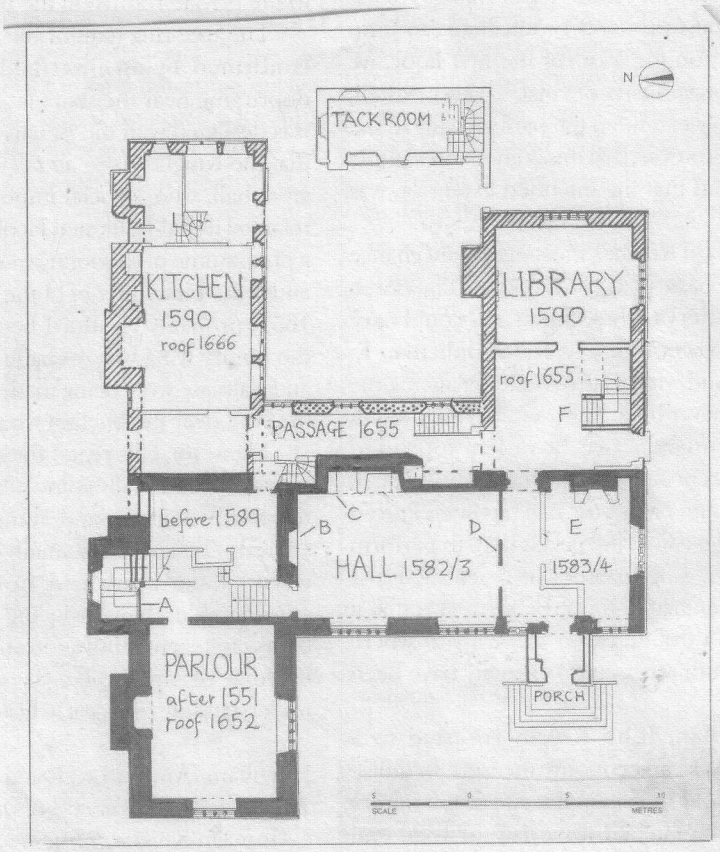
Many of their projects have received design awards from the Civic Trust, The Royal Institute of British Architects, the Council for the Protection of Rural England and the English Tourist Board.

Chawton House before Jane Austen

by Edward Roberts

The architectural history of Chawton House during the two centuries since Jane Austen's time has been extraordinarily well documented. This is largely thanks to Montagu Knight who co-authored (with William Austen Leigh) a book on the house and its owners.[1] The book was published in 1911 and, at about the same time, Montagu Knight wrote down his recollections of the changes made to the house since he was a small boy.[2] During a lifetime as an observant antiquarian, he had explored the fabric of the house and pondered its early history. His conclusions were well argued and are still worthy of consideration, but he could not, of course, have access to new evidence that has come to light during the last ten years.

This new evidence takes two forms. First, during the recent extensive restoration and repair of the house, the roof has been stripped, floorboards taken up and timbers exposed revealing features that, in some cases, have been concealed for centuries. This has given a wonderful opportunity to reassess the development of the house: an opportunity that the restoration Project Manager, Adrian Thatcher and I have done our best to exploit. Second, we have had the advantage of the recent development of dendrochronology, or tree-ring dating, and the help of one of its leading exponents, Daniel Miles of the Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory. Dan has tried to date every part of the historic core of the house and his discoveries have given us solid scientific evidence on the dates at which the structural timbers of the house were felled.[3] As timber was almost always used within a year or so of felling, we have the date, or near-date, at which key developments took place within the history of the house. (These developments are illustrated in the accompanying plan).



Floor Plan of Chawton House

John Knight inherited Chawton Manor in 1583 and began to build the present house almost at once ((Austen Leigh and Knight, p. 77). Timbers from the great hall were felled in the winter of 1582/3 and floor joists over the cellar at the south end of the hall (E on plan) were felled in 1583/4. Timbers from the room at the north end of the hall and from the parlour wing could not be dated as precisely, but were felled after 1551 and before 1589. Analysis of the stonework and roof timbers makes it almost certain that this wing and the Great Hall were constructed in the same building campaign and the fireback in the hall, inscribed 'I.K. 1588', is good evidence for the completion of the Hall and parlour range by that date. (This first building campaign is indicated with solid black on the plan.)

A great house at this date had to be largely self-sufficient and required a kitchen, pantry, buttery, bakehouse, brewhouse and other service rooms to provide for the needs of the family, guests and numerous servants. No service rooms built between 1583 and 1588 survive. So where were these necessary rooms? A probable answer to this question is that John Knight was utilising buildings from the medieval great house that is known to have stood on or near the site of the present house.[5] The cellar constructed of stone, lying beneath the space at the south end of the hall (E on plan) and extending under the library wing, may be remains of this earlier house. Unfortunately, no dateable features survive in the cellar, but it had been constructed by 1583/4 when the floor was made over it at E (see plan), and several years before the library wing was built in the 1590s. It is unlikely that the cellar would have been built only for its east part to remain open to the weather and it is perhaps more likely that it represents the basement, or undercroft, of the medieval house. John Knight probably used it as a temporary service wing while he decided where to erect his own service rooms.

Architects were rare in the late sixteenth century and it was not uncommon for house owners to develop a plan in

a haphazard manner. Certainly, John Knight seems to have changed his mind more than once on where to put the fireplace to heat his Grfiheat Hall. He began to build a chimney at the north end of the Hall (B on plan) but this was never used and lacks soot inside the unfinished flue. Then he built a large chimney along the east wall (C on plan) which was subsequently reduced in width when a third fireplace was built. Leigh and Knight believed that this third fireplace is the one that still survives and is the one referred to in a document dated between 1614 and Knight's death in 1622. They write, 'Now we hear of the purchase of the apparell of a chimney for the room appointed for a Hall', no doubt the existing stone frame of the fireplace (Austen Leigh and Knight, pp. 82-84).

It is probable that John Knight's stairs wound around a stair well (A on plan) and that alterations to these stairs to make a straight flight to the first-floor landing date to the eighteenth or early nineteenth century. But changes to the layout of the parlour must probably be attributed to John Knight himself. Here, on the joists of the first floor, we found evidence for a passage to a room that, if it ever existed, would have considerably extended the parlour wing to the west. It is more likely, however, that this is another example of a change of mind and that the intended extension was never built.

It is probable that John Knight's most significant change of mind concerned the basic plan of his house. The porch appears to have been a very early addition and could have formed the central projection of a typical Elizabethan E-plan house. A range and wing to the south, balancing the hall and parlour, were never built, however, and the present main front has, in consequence, a rather lop-sided appearance. This apparent change of plan may well explain why the screen at the south end of the hall has been moved so that visitors entering through the porch have to perform an awkward shift to one side in order to reach the cross passage. The only advantage of this arrangement is that it allows the creation of a usable room (E on plan) where access to a spacious south range may originally have been intended.

Instead of an E-plan, John Knight reverted to a courtyard plan, perhaps as an economy measure to utilise the foundations of the old house on the site of the library wing. Both this and the kitchen wing date to 1590 and completed the late sixteenth century house. (This second-phase building campaign is indicated by cross-hatching on plan). However, it is possible that the ground floor of the Tack Room to the east may also date to this period, although its upper storey is considerably later in style. John Knight then went on to build outbuildings: a stable block in 1593, a falconry or kennel for hunting dogs before 1617 and a dovecote, which is typologically of the same date.[5]

The documentary research of Leigh and Knight shows that internal alterations to the house continued to be made until the end of John Knight's life. Apart from his alterations to the fireplace in the Great Hall already alluded to, he intended in 1619 to make a partition in the Great Chamber (presumably the entire first-floor space over the great hall. Such a partition would have created the two rooms that now exist there and may have occasioned the making of the fireplace in the southern room of the two (Austen Leigh and Knight. pp. 84-85).

By the midseventeenth century, John Knight's house was becoming old-fashioned in plan and ornament. Important visitors could only be entertained in the parlour wing and in the first-floor chambers if they had first run the gauntlet of the servants at work in the Great Hall. Greater social segregation was required and this was achieved, in 1655, by constructing a passage along the east side of the hall to connect the kitchen and library wings (stippled on plan). This allowed servants to move freely about the house out of sight of their social betters. A winding stair at the north end of the passage led to a door that was formed by breaking through the junction of the parlour and kitchen ranges. At the same time, a fine new staircase to the library wing (F on plan) allowed the family and their guests to enter the house from a door in the south front and climb directly to the private rooms on the first floor.

The tree-ring date of the alterations to library wing is confirmed by an inscribed date of '1655' on a fine doorframe near the stairs (at F on plan). This doorframe was designed with the Renaissance ornament that showed that the Knights were *au fait* with the latest fashions. The great hall, whose social importance was now diminished, retained its old-fashioned Jacobean ornamentation. Finally, a programme of re-roofing was carried out during the 1650s and '60s. First the roof of the parlour wing was re-made in 1652, probably to afford better attic space. The roof of the library wing was re-made in 1655, when the doorway and staircase were being made below. And finally, in 1666, the roof over the kitchen wing was rebuilt.

Then, for 150 years, the old house was largely left in peace. Occasionally some new panelling was installed and the north staircase and some partitions may have been altered. This was essentially the house that Jane Austen would have known, a house that was to undergo considerable changes in the nineteenth century. Now, thanks to recent renovation and research, we have a clearer picture of the house as she knew it and a better understanding of its early history.

[1] William Austen Leigh and Montagu Knight, *Chawton House and its Owners* (London: Smith Elder, 1911).
[2] Montagu Knight, *Some Recollections of Changes made in the House at Chawton since I was a Small Boy*, (unpublished notes, 1910?).
[3] Edward Roberts, *Hampshire Houses 1250-1700: Their Dating and Development* (Winchester: Hampshire County Council, 2003) pp. 230-231.
[4] Pers. comm. Christopher K. Currie.
[5] Edward Roberts and P. Grover, 'Elizabethan riding stables at Chawton and their context' *Hampshire Studies*, 52 (1997), pp. 151-64.

Edward Roberts was formerly a lecturer in historical architecture at King Alfred's College in Winchester. He is now a researcher and author in architectural history.

Royal visits to Chawton, 1229-1331

by Christopher Currie

Although *The Female Spectator* has already summarised the discoveries about the royal visits to Chawton in the medieval period in a previous article, this short piece gives the bare facts for the first time.[1] Listed below are visits made by the kings, and a list of the wine that they had sent to the cellars there in preparation for the visits. The list of 'visits' is not derived from an actual statement such as 'today King Henry visited Chawton', but from royal writs signed by the king from that place. It is through these dated writs that we know a certain king was at Chawton on that date. It is possible that the kings stayed there more often but did not sign any writs whilst there. On that subject we will never know.

The reference in brackets after the date is the source from which the information has been taken. These are almost entirely Public Record Office publications such as the Calendars of Close Rolls (here abbreviated CR). A full list of abbreviations is given at the end of this article.
Royal documents dated at Chawton with references:

Henry III (1216-72)

October 26th 1229 (CR 1227-31; CLR 1226-40, 152)
March 27th 1230 (CR 1227-31, 311)
November 3rd 1230 (CR 1227-31, 453)
June 1st 1235 (CR 1234-37, 96)
February 1st/2nd 1236 (CR 1234-37, 237; PR 1232-47)
December 14th 1237 (CR 1237-42, 13-14)
December 28th 1237 (CR 1237-42, 18)
July 18th 1238 (CR 1237-42, 76)
January 29th 1245 (CR 1242-47, 285)
February 20th 1245 (CR 1242-47, 289; CLR 1240-45, 291)
December 30th 1247 (CR 1247-51, 21)
January 18th 1249 (PR 1247-58, 36)
October 27th 1250 (CR 1247-51, 342)
December 30th 1250 (CR 1247-51, 394)
December 29th/30th 1252 (CR 1251-53, 299; PR 1247-58, 169; CLR 1251-60, 95)
July 13th 1258 (CR 1256-59, 247)
October 5th 1258 (CR 1256-59, 330; PR 1247-58, 652)
October 1st 1259 (PR 1247-58, 44)
August 20th 1260 (CR 1259-61, 104; CLR 1251-60, 525)
May 30th 1261 (CR 1259-61, 387; CLR 1260-67, 40)
September 27th 1269 (PR 1266-72, 366-67; CR 1268-72, 81)
July 30th 1270 (CR 1268-72, 215)

Edward I (1272-1307)

February 15th/16th 1292 (Chancery Warrants 1244-1326, 31)
February 18th/19th/20th 1292 (CR 1228-96, 220-21, 258; PR 1281-92, 477-79; FR 1272-1307, 305-06)
February 23rd 1292 (Inq. Misc. 1219-1307, no 1584)
March 1st 1292 (PR 1281-92, 478)
May 12th 1302 (Gough 1900, 213, citing Privy Seals)

Edward was at Waverley Abbey near Farnham earlier on the 15th February. He was back at Westminster on the (evening of?) 6th March 1292. In between, when not recorded at Chawton, he was to be found at neighbouring Farringdon. He is recorded here later on February 23rd, 24th, 26th, 28th, March 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th 1292. This is probably the longest stay in the area by the medieval kings, a period of almost three weeks. He was briefly back at Chawton on 12th May 1302.

Both King Edward and John St. John were absent from England for long periods, so it is not surprising that fewer visits are recorded. King Edward conducted wars in Wales, France, and extensively in Scotland. John St. John acted as the king's seneschal in Gascony from 1293. He was temporarily in French captivity following the English defeat at Bellegarde on January 30th 1297 (Powicke 1962, 666). He was later Edward's lieutenant in Scotland from July 1302 until his death in September of the same year (Powicke 1962, 706-7). Powicke refers to John St. John as the king's 'trusted friend' (ibid.) The royal visits above may represent the few times that the king and the head of the St. John dynasty were in England at the same time? It might be some coincidence that St. John's appointment to both the above high offices occurred soon after a royal visit to Chawton.

Edward II (1307-27)

No direct record of visits, but a document of April 28th 1326 refers to a document signed by this king at Chawton on the Saturday after Hock Day (second Tuesday after Easter) 1326. The king was clearly at Chawton on this day, but the stay has gone otherwise unrecorded. This begs the question as to how many other unrecorded visits were made by the kings during the St. John family's ownership.

Edward III (1327-77)

November 19th 1331 (PR 1330-34, 216; CR 1330-33, 377)
The king was then at Guildford on November 20th
November 21st 1331 (PR 1330-33, 219; CR 1330-35, 415)
November 23rd 1331 (CR 1330-35, 408)

This episode can be treated as three separate visits over the period November 19th-23rd 1331. These are the last recorded royal visits. The last St. John of any note, Hugh St. John, had died before 1335, when the manor was in the king's hands through wardship (PR 1334-38, 214). Hugh's son Edmund died a minor, and the estate then passed in the female line to the Poynyngs. With the failure of the direct line of the St. John family, the close link with the royal family died with it, indicating that the link was a personal one. Another reason for the visits stopping was that the royal court was becoming less itinerant over the course of the later 13th and early 14th century. By the beginning of the 14th century, London had become firmly established as the centre for national government, and the

former capital at Winchester rapidly declined in importance.

Wine sent to Chawton 'to the king's cellars' during the reign of Henry III (1216-72)

It should be noted that the king often visited Chawton a short time after these deliveries (see above). On twelve occasions no visits are recorded after a delivery of wine. One suspects an unrecorded visit on these occasions (i.e. a visit made, but no documents issued from the manor). For example, no documents were issued from Chawton between December 1252 and July 1258, yet during that period six deliveries of wine are recorded, mainly between April 1255 and December 1257. That the quantities delivered during this period are above the average suggests they were not merely for topping up the king's cellar (22 tuns recorded from six deliveries, average 3.7, or if one allows that the misdirected six tuns recorded for Chawton in May 1255 never arrived, 16 tuns from five deliveries, average 3.2). The average from the other deliveries is 2.14 tuns (30 tuns from 14 deliveries).

Dec 11 1237, one tun from Winchester (CLR 1226-40, 301)
Dec 25 1237, three tuns from Winchester (CLR 1226-40, 303)
Jan 22 1246, two tuns from Southampton (CLR 1245-51, 22)
Jan 10 1247, two tuns from Southampton (CLR 1245-51, 102)
May 21 1247, two tuns from Southampton (CLR 1245-51, 124)
Nov 30 1247, two tuns from Southampton (CLR 1245-51, 154)
July 10 1248, two tuns from Southampton (CLR 1245-51, 192)
Nov 2 1248, two tuns from Southampton (CLR 1245-51, 208)
Feb 15 1249, two tuns from Southampton (CLR 1245-51, 220)
Nov 19 1250, two tuns from Southampton (CLR 1245-51, 315)
May 17 1251, two tuns from Southampton (CLR 1245-51, 353)
Feb 22 1252, four tuns from Southampton (CLR 1251-60, 29)
Oct 30 1252, two tuns from Southampton (CLR 1251-60, 83)
April 12 1255, four tuns from Southampton (CLR 1251-60, 206)
*May 20 1255, six tuns from Southampton (CLR 1251-60, 220)
Nov 18 1255, two tuns from Southampton (CLR 1251-60, 256)
May 18 1256, four tuns from Southampton (CLR 1251-60, 295)
Nov 3 1256, four tuns from Southampton (CLR 1251-60, 335)
Dec 15 1257, two tuns from Southampton (CLR 1251-60, 414)
July 12 1260, two tuns from Southampton (CLR 1251-60, 515)

* mistakenly delivered to 'Geydinton' 'that should have been carried to Chawton'.

[1] Christopher K. Currie, 'Archaelogical work at Chawton House and its Estate', *The Female Spectator*, 3:1 (1998), pp. 1-3.

Abbreviations used:

Chancery Warrants, *Calendar of Chancery Warrants* (London: HMSO, 1927).
CLR, *Calendar of Liberate Rolls*, 6 vols (London: HMSO, 1910-64).
CR, *Calendar of Close Rolls*, 60 vols (London: HMSO, 1902-63).
FR, *Calendar of Fine Rolls*, 22 vols (London: HMSO, 1911-62).
Inq Misc, *Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous*, 7 vols (London: HMSO, 1916-68).
PR, *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, 73 vols (London: HMSO, 1901-86).

Further Reading

Henry Gough, *Itinerary of King Edward the first throughout his reign, A.D. 1272-1307*, 2 vols (Paisley: Alexander Gardner, 1900).

The descent of the manor of Chawton

Following on from the raw data about the visits of medieval kings to Chawton, it is thought that readers might be interested in a chronological descent of the manor. Both Leigh and Austen (1911) and the *Victoria County History* give much of the information given here, but it tends to be scattered around making it difficult to pull out the information in a readily available form. Just in case you are interested in having a list of the owners of Chawton and their dates (where known), here is a simplified version of the manorial descent. Information not in the two above cited sources were researched by the author whilst writing the numerous archaeological reports produced about the conversion works. It is hoped that copies of these unpublished documents will form part of the Chawton archive in the library.

A point of minor interest for those whose historical attention does not stray beyond the Austen connection should note that Jane's brother, Edward, was not the first relation of the original Knight family to be required to change his name in order to inherit. The male line of the Knights had failed earlier, in 1679, when Sir Richard Knight died without male heirs and left the estate to Richard Martin, the son of his cousin, Michael Martin. This Richard changed his name to Knight to continue the illusion of an unbroken family succession. He also had no heirs, and passed the estate to his brother Christopher Martin, who also took the name Knight. In 1737 this happened again when Elizabeth Knight, the daughter of Christopher Knight (Martin), died without issue and left the estate to her cousin, Thomas Brodnax. He also took the name Knight. It was when his son, Edward, died without heirs in 1794 that Jane Austen's brother, Edward inherited the estate and was obliged to take the name. In fact, almost all the owners of Chawton between 1679 and 1794 there was a high proportion of owners who died without male issue, resulting in a lot of name-changing!

The following highlights the most significant events in the descent of the manor of Chawton.

Odo 1066, following the Norman Conquest, the manor passed to Hugh de Port

Hugh de Port *fl.* 1086

Henry de Port — Roger St. John

John de Port *fl.* 1167

Adam de Port — married — Mabel de Aureval

William de Port, took name of St. John *fl.* 1224

Robert St John *fl.* 1245

John St. John inherited 1275, died 1302, married Alice who held the manor in dower after John's death.

John St. John II inherited 1302, died 1329

Hugh St. John
died 1337

Edmund St John
died without issue 1347; male line of St. Johns extinct

Margaret
died 1361
her son John
also died this year

Isabel m. Luke de Poynings
succeeded to estate in 1362 and
passed it to her son Sir Thomas
Poynings in 1393

Thomas de Poynings
died 1429 & left estate to his daughter, Joan

Joan de Poynings, her son John Bonville inherited

John Bonville
died in 1494 & passed estate to his daughter Florence

Elizabeth Bonville m. Lord de la Warr
died 1554 leaving estate to de La Warr's
half brother, Leonard West

Leonard West sold estate to Thomas Arundel of Ewhurst, died 1568

Florence Bonville = m. Sir Humphrey Fulford
Conveyed estate to her sister, Elizabeth

Thomas Arundel's son sold to Nicholas Knight in 1578.

Sir Richard Knight left the estate to Richard Martin, the son of his cousin, Michael Martin in 1679. Martin took the name of Knight.

His brother Christopher succeeded in 1687 and also took the name Knight, but died without issue whereby it passed to his sister Elizabeth in 1702.

Elizabeth died without issue in 1737 and left it to her cousin Thomas Brodnax, who took the name Knight.

His son Edward (Brodnax) Knight died without issue in 1794 and passed it to his cousin Edward Austen, who took the name Knight.

Dates of ownership of Austen Knight branch of family as follows:

Edward Austen Knight 1794-1852
Edward Knight II 1852-79
Montague Knight 1879-1914
Lionel Knight 1914-31
Edward Knight III 1931-1987

The manor then descended to the present owner, Richard Knight.

Mistress of All She Surveys: Elizabeth Bennet Claims Pemberley As Her Own

by Dr Jacqueline Reid-Walsh, McGill and Bishop's Universities

In Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) when Elizabeth Bennet visits Pemberley with her relatives the Gardiners, as part of their trip to Derbyshire, it is in lieu of a planned trip to the Lake District where she had hoped to substitute romantic problems for picturesque sights of lakes and mountains. Part of their pleasure of the trip is to be the organised and sophisticated nature of their viewing and remembering, unlike other tourists who are disorganised and vague. As she tells her aunt, 'And when we do return [...] we will know where we have gone – we will recollect what we have seen' (p. 190).[1] When they make a side-trip to Pemberley as part of their shortened tour, Elizabeth and the Gardiners visit the estate as tourists with educated tastes. Although Elizabeth notes the limits of her art appreciation, she is a trained viewer of landscape and indeed it is for the beauty of the grounds and the woods that Mrs Gardner urges the side-trip–against Elizabeth's expressed wishes–not for the finery of the furniture, or the curtains. Elizabeth's ability to look at the landscape in a sophisticated way has been the subject of much criticism; what I would like to propose here is that Elizabeth is also a sophisticated cultural tourist in another way–she is adept at appreciating buildings as well as landscape and she has a keen understanding of interior space.

Architectural scholar Julius Bryant urges present-day readers to remember that, when we try to reconstruct period perceptions, it is important for us to note that both the owners and their educated visitors could read buildings as easily as literature, in terms of sources, mathematical proportions and classical motifs.[2] Although he is referring mainly to elite, classically educated, male tourists, architectural historian Dana Arnold avers that the polite education of gentlewomen which included drawing, maths, and the art of surveying, also prepared them to understand architectural principles (Arnold, p. 85). Elizabeth and her relatives are not aristocrats but gentlefolk of the middling class; however, I believe they possess the knowledge to appreciate Pemberley as an artefact, for we know that Mr Gardiner is gazing at the exterior and trying to date the building when they are interrupted by Darcy, the owner (p. 272). In this essay I examine Elizabeth's two visits to Pemberley, first as a tourist and then as a guest. In both cases, I examine her relation to the interior space and the rooms she visits. I argue that paradoxically while she is at the nadir of her hopes in terms of the romantic plot and repeats twice the wishful thought–'to be mistress of Pemberley would be something' 3/4 she is through her gaze and movement unknowingly laying 'claim' to the space as her own. [2]

Architecture critic and Jane Austen scholar Philippa Tristram considers the attempt to identify actual houses in Austen's fiction to be ultimately idle, but she does note that Austen's accurate (if brief) description of both the material building and the fictional use of space can be a 'revealing guide to the social topography of country houses'. She loosely dates Pemberley by the presence of its picture gallery to be either Elizabethan or Jacobean and notes that it, like its library, has been the work of many generations.[3] Notwithstanding Tristram's warning, a number of country houses have been suggested as the basis of Pemberley: for example, in a new edition of *Pride and Prejudice* (2002) for Broadview Press Robert P. Irvine suggests Kedleston in Derbyshire as a possible source. Chatsworth is mentioned several times as the source: for example, Henry Churchyard proposes this on his popular Jane Austen home page hosted by www.Pemberley.com. Much earlier in 1979, in the very first JASNA newsletter, Donald Green argued quite specifically that Chatsworth was the model for Pemberley.[4]

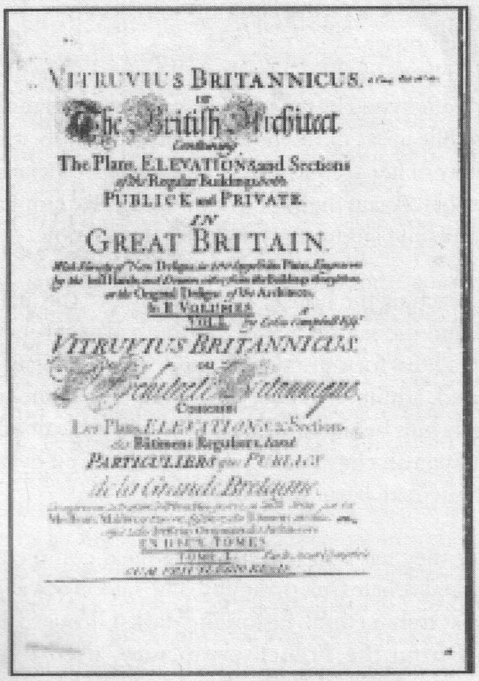
Chatsworth is mentioned as being one of the great houses in Derbyshire along the tour route taken by Elizabeth and her relatives the Gardiners, for the narrator states that they saw '[...] all the celebrated beauties of Matlock, Chatsworth, Dovedale or the Peak' (p. 264). This list comprises one beautifully-placed town, one beautifully-placed mansion almost as large as a small town, and two natural features. A little further on in this passage, in mentioning other tourist sites as being on the route of the party, the narrator distinguishes her text from that of a domestic tour guide: 'It is not the intention of this work to give a description of Derbyshire, nor any of the remarkable places through which their route thither lay: Oxford, Blenheim, Warwick, Kenelworth [sic.], Birmingham &c are sufficiently known' (p. 265). Pemberley therefore inhabits a fictional world that also contains other and even grander country houses like Blenheim and Chatsworth. The latter, almost a century and a half old, was exceptionally grand; its owner, the Duke of Devonshire, was one of the richest men in the kingdom, with an income many times that of Darcy. Yet it may well be a source, or one of many sources, for Pemberley: among the novel's quite extensive details of the approach to the house, the grounds and the interior, many would apply equally well to Chatsworth.

As was common in the period when respectable people of the middling classes or higher wished to visit a great house, Elizabeth and her party applied to the housekeeper. No appointment was necessary (Pevsner, p. 407). This was a continuance of the ancient tradition of hospitality to passers-by (Arnold, p. 23). On a tour route only certain public rooms were 'open to general inspection.' Austen suggests rather than describes the route through Pemberley: they are shown the hall, dining-parlour, a drawing-room with miniatures over its mantle-piece, a music room with a new piano; then they ascend a great staircase up to a 'spacious lobby', see an informal sitting-room, walk through a picture gallery and then see several principal bedrooms (pp. 267-72). On their return downstairs, a gardener gives them a tour of the property.

On Elizabeth's second visit, now as a guest of the owner, she visits only a grand saloon, which like the dining-parlour leads off the hall, but differs from it markedly, with windows open to the ground in the latest fashion (p. 286).[5]

The sparse description in Elizabeth's first visit to Pemberley is in keeping with her mood as she says 'she was tired of great houses; after going over so many, she really had no pleasure in fine carpets or satin curtains (p. 266). It emphasises the spatial relation of one room to another, and serves as a kind of verbal equivalent to an architect's plan, such as was made popular in folios such as *Vitruvius Britannicus* drawn by Colen Campbell in the early eighteenth century (1715-1771) (fig. 1). In this project he mapped out classical architecture in the British Isles and aimed, as he states in his introduction, to counter British travellers' fascination for things that are foreign by showing the masterpieces of the recent British re-invention of classical architecture. The folio is magnificent and the drawings beautiful in themselves. This book is significant in many ways, for it established a tradition for the visual representation of grand buildings, encouraged domestic tourism in Britain, and further encouraged the appreciation of architecture as a polite art. In terms of the mode of representation, rather than depicting the magnificent buildings in a context of verbal descriptions, they were depicted divorced from all context, as entities by themselves (Arnold, p. 13; p. 38). The volume provides elegant drawings of exterior views of the buildings on a flat spatial plane which allowed a more accurate rendering of architectural elements. The inclusion of ground plans, floor by floor, provides a sense of three-dimensional form (fig. 2).

Several years ago in the *Female Spectator* there was article by Mavis Batey relating how it had been discovered


VITRUVIUS BRITANNICUS, or
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Containing
The Plans, Elevations, and Sections
of the Regular Buildings, both
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Vitruvius Britannicus,
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Contenant
Les Plans, Elevations, & Sections
des Bâtimens Reguliers, tant
Particuliers que Publics
de la Grande Bretagne.
En Deux Tomes.
Tome I.

Fig. 1 Titlepage of *Vitruvius Britannicus*

that Jane Austen was privy to her brother's plans for improvements at Chawton House when he was altering it to live in it.[6] The focus of her article is Austen's knowledge of landscape design and her evident ability to read estate maps. She would therefore have had no difficulty in interpreting house plans as well, and almost no gentleman's library would have been without its copy of *Vitruvius Britannicus.* Its folio volumes, too large to carry far, would likely have had a position where they could be read in situ and were soon followed into print by portable handbooks containing a combination of perspectives and plans which were quite inexpensive by the end of the eighteenth century (Arnold, p. 41).

I would like to propose that Austen depicts Elizabeth as being knowledgeable of both landscape design and in reading architectural plans. The conventions of picturesque landscape viewing is apparent in the sophisticated manner in which Elizabeth looks at the views through the windows in each of the rooms for each view is like a landscape painting with the windows providing the frame.[7] I believe that an architectural point of view is also used in order to describe the interior of the house and that the three-dimensional aspect is enhanced by the description of Elizabeth moving in a leisurely manner through the rooms:

> They followed her [the housekeeper] into the dining-parlour. It was a large, well-proportioned room, handsomely fitted up. Elizabeth, after slightly surveying it, went to the window to enjoy its prospect. The hill, crowned with wood, from which they had descended, receiving increasing abruptness from the distance, was a beautiful object. Every disposition of the ground was good; and she looked on the whole scene, the river, the trees scattered on its banks, and the winding of the valley, as far as she could trace it, with delight. As they passed into other rooms, these objects were taking different positions; but from every window there were beauties to be seen (pp. 267-268).

The presentation of the interior can be seen to balance the description of the views through the windows. Mavis Bately, in her book *Jane Austen and the Landscape,* describes how the key elements of picturesque response, such as the framed view, variety and, most intriguingly for my interests, movement, are included in the way the aspects of the prospect are included in the various views out of the windows.[8] I consider that the shifting perspective of the different views out of the windows adds a sense of motion to the static description of the scene. Austen presents us with slices of a panoramic view, in the same manner as contemporary educational visual aids called variously polyoramas or myrioramas or chorioramas. (The Bodleian Library holds a number of these). These numbered rectangular cards were used to teach the user how to look at various landscape scenes.[9] The shifting view outside also recalls the magic lantern shows of the period, a precursor of the later panorama viewer. This act of viewing through a panorama viewer has been considered to be a way to lend a sense of power to the spectator in relation to what is viewed.[10] By analogy, I would like to

suggest that Elizabeth unknowingly asserts her right to Pemberley partly by the way she looks out the windows as she moves through the first floor of the house.

In her tour through the house, Elizabeth does more than look out the windows at the changing view of the grounds. While she ignores the conventional tourist interests (carpets, curtains, furniture) she does focus on a number of visual mementoes and both private and public works of art. For example, in the senior Mr Darcy's sitting-room she gazes on miniatures of both Mr Wickham and Mr Darcy as well as Miss Darcy. In the latter's own sitting-room upstairs she turns away from the art to look at Georgiana's own crayon drawings because they were 'more interesting and more intelligible' to her (pp. 268-69). Finally, in the picture gallery, she ignores the family portraits to gaze only on that of Mr Darcy:

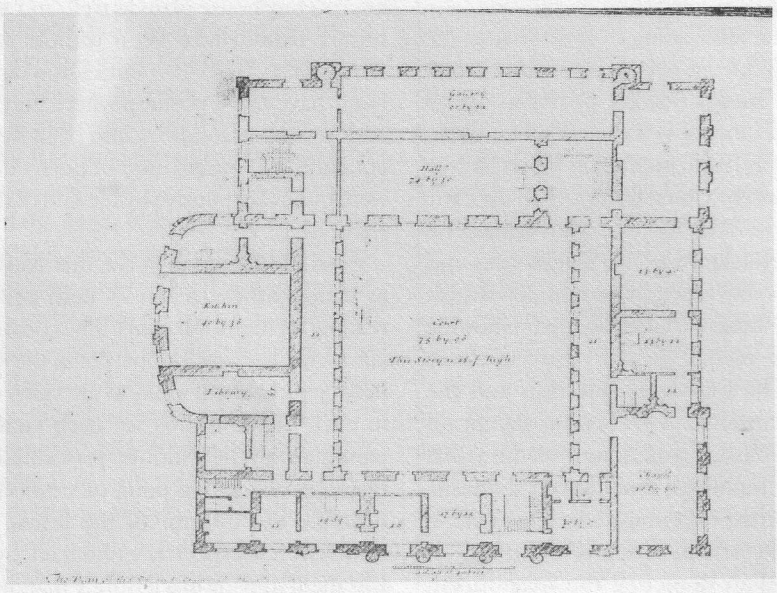

Fig. 2 The Plan of the Ground Floor of Chatsworth

> In the gallery there were many family portraits, but they could have little to fix the attention of a stranger. Elizabeth walked on in quest of the only face whose features would be known to her. At last it arrested her- and she beheld a striking resemblance of Mr Darcy, with such a smile over the face, as she remembered to have sometimes seen, when he looked at her. She stood several minutes before the picture in earnest contemplation, and returned to it again before they quitted the gallery. (p. 271)

The language used to describe the art pieces in Miss Darcy's room is that of clarity of reading, while the emphasis on Elizabeth's seeking out Darcy's picture in the picture gallery is that of personal connection. The description of Elizabeth's actions in the second floor gallery are revealing because her movement through the gallery seems to be emphasized as much as or more than the physical gallery itself. As mentioned earlier, the presence of the gallery is a way to label the type of house and to locate in a general period. What I am most intrigued by is the relation between the gallery and movement. Mark Girouard provides an interesting history of the gallery associated with Elizabethan houses, stressing how their original uses are all associated with walking or movement. He writes that sixteenth-century doctors prescribed daily walking as conducive to health and that galleries enabled this exercise (Girouard, p. 60 note 65, p. 100). They soon became splendid rooms, having little furniture but plenty of pictures and hangings on their walls so that the family had something to look at as they walked. He notes that portrait collecting became popular in this period and that second-floor galleries had the advantage of prospect. He remarks that these rooms also acquired other functions for masques, games and music (Girouard, pp. 101-102).

To Elizabeth, but not to her aunt and uncle, these visual objects depicting the Darcy family or by the Darcy family have meaning because of her special, or inside knowledge of the people depicted. Her unusual type of viewing is most evident in her 'earnest' gaze on the portrait of Darcy smiling: she seems to animate it so that he almost appears before her. It is fascinating that through this combination of knowledge and imagination Elizabeth seems to achieve on the emotional level a degree of access or entry into the private reaches of the house, way beyond her status as tourist. As will be seen this contrasts with her second official visit to the house.

This relative freedom of motion throughout Pemberley, although supervised by the housekeeper's eye and restricted in the public areas of the house, contrasts vividly with the immobility of her second visit. They are now official guests of the owner. Again the sophisticated language emphasizes the picturesque landscape outside of the window:

> On reaching the house, they were shewn through the hall into the saloon, whose northern aspect rendered it delightful for summer. Its windows opening to the ground, admitted a most refreshing view of the high woody hills behind the house, and of the beautiful oaks and Spanish chestnuts which were scattered over the intermediate lawn. (p. 286)

Here they eat a formal morning meal complete with servants and ornate fruit pyramids. The saloon was a formal room, as architectural historian Mark Girouard notes, deriving from the French aristocracy, used for state occasions (p. 129), and considered to be the 'ceremonial pivet' of a formal house (p. 162). It is a suitable setting for political machinations and thus well suited to Austen's

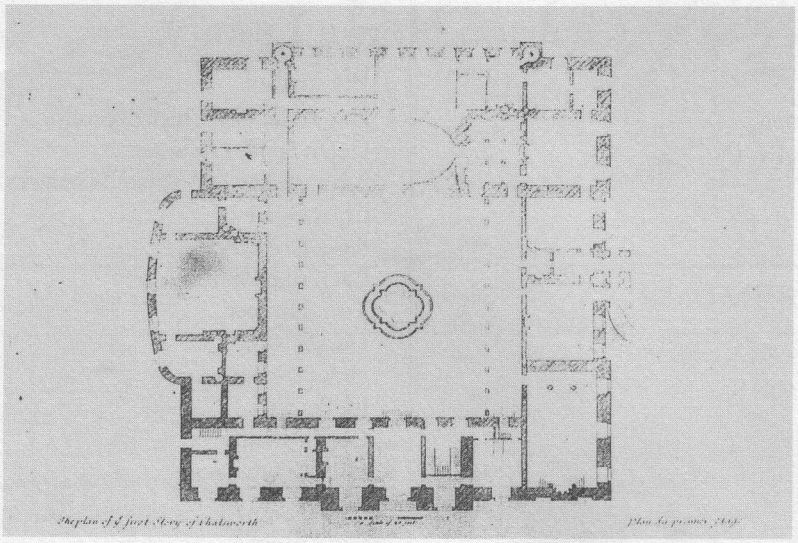

Fig. 3 The Plan of the First Storey of Chatsworth

purpose as Miss Bingley wages her campaign against Elizabeth. Elizabeth is constrained emotionally and restricted to this single room throughout the visit. It is ironic that what Girouard refers to as the 'axis of honour' or the degree of entry a guest obtained into the space of a formal house seems to function here to keep Elizabeth at a further distance when she is a guest (owing to her lower social position and inferior connections) than when she was a respectable tourist two days before.

I suggest, therefore, that Austen uses her knowledge of architectural plans in her representation of Pemberley, but that she animates these geometrical plans by having Elizabeth engage creatively with the space. Elizabeth is shown in free, dynamic motion throughout, stopping and then moving on slowly or rushing forward in a manner inappropriate in a tourist, appropriate in a denizen. The description of her moving through the space of Pemberley to explore its various rooms and to look out its windows animates the textual plan given in the novel.

Her actions could be related to the act of assessing space by taking measurements, often with foot or stride, as house-owners do in planning furniture or house guests do in planning a dance. I would like to propose, then, that the modes of representation Austen uses in the Pemberley sequence and her emphasis on Elizabeth's progress around the house enable her to depict Elizabeth 'claiming' her space at Pemberley. Austen makes Elizabeth do this unknowingly, when she is at the nadir of her hopes in terms of the plot line. Moreover, she makes Elizabeth 'claim' her space by interpreting and connecting with the images and mementoes of the past and present occupants. All these strategies lend a sense of embodied space to Pemberley so that it becomes a vital physical and social place of beauty. In a novel where Elizabeth is so associated with activity and movement it is only fitting that her walking through the rooms and grounds of Pemberley should be the precursor to her future relationship to the house and its master.

[1] Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), ed. by Tony Tanner (London: Penguin, 1972).

[2] Quoted in Dana Arnold, ed., *The Georgian Country House: Architecture, Landscape and Society* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1998), p. 11.

[3] Philippa Tristram, 'Jane Austen and the changing face of England', quoted in Dana Arnold, *The Georgian Country House*, pp. 140-141. This goes against the interpretation and dating by architectural historian Nikolaus Pevsner who in 1968 considered Pemberley a modern or Georgian house like Rosings. 'The Architectural Setting of Jane Austen's Novels', *Journal of the Warbourg and Courtland Institute*, 31: (1968), p. 420.

[4] In the 1995 BBC video the exterior scenes were shot at Lyme Park on the Cheshire/ Derbyshire border, while the interior was shot at Sudbury Hall.

[5] Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1978), p. 200.

[6] Mavis Batey, 'Jane Austen's Chawton Landscape: Fact and Fiction', *The Female Spectator*, 2:2 (1997), pp. 7-9.

[7] Isabel Allen, 'Creating Space out of Text: perspectives on domestic Regency architecture, or, Three essays on the picturesque', *Journal of Architecture*, 2: 1 (1997), p.67.

[8] Cited in Stephen, Clark, 'A Fine House Richly Furnished: Pemberley and the Visiting of Country Houses', *Persuasions*, 22 (2000), p. 201.

[9] The earliest I have seen to date is c. 1815. Personal communication Clive Hurst, Keeper of Rare Books New Bodleian Library, January 5, 2003.

[10] Walter Benjamin cited in Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcade Project* (Cambridge [MA]: MIT Press, 1989), p. 82.

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Mailing List Administrator
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