

The Female Spectator

CHAWTON HOUSE LIBRARY



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CHAWTON CHRONICLES: A LETTER FROM THE CEO

He left Chawton House in 1953 but now, fifty-seven years later, I am delighted to report that he has returned! Edward Austen Knight or, more accurately, the enormous portrait of him thought to have been commissioned in Italy during his 'Grand Tour', has come home.

For many years it was hanging in the dining room of the 'Great House'. Sadly it had to be sold off in the nineteen-fifties, but eventually it found its way to the Jane Austen House Museum in Chawton, where it remained until earlier this year. Then, thanks to the generosity of individuals and organisations, enough money was raised to have the picture lovingly restored by Dr Clare Finn (it has also been beautifully framed). Subsequently (and with the backing of the Director of the JAHM) the Jane Austen Society, which owns the work and whose efforts made the restoration possible, agreed that it should be made available to Chawton House Library on loan.

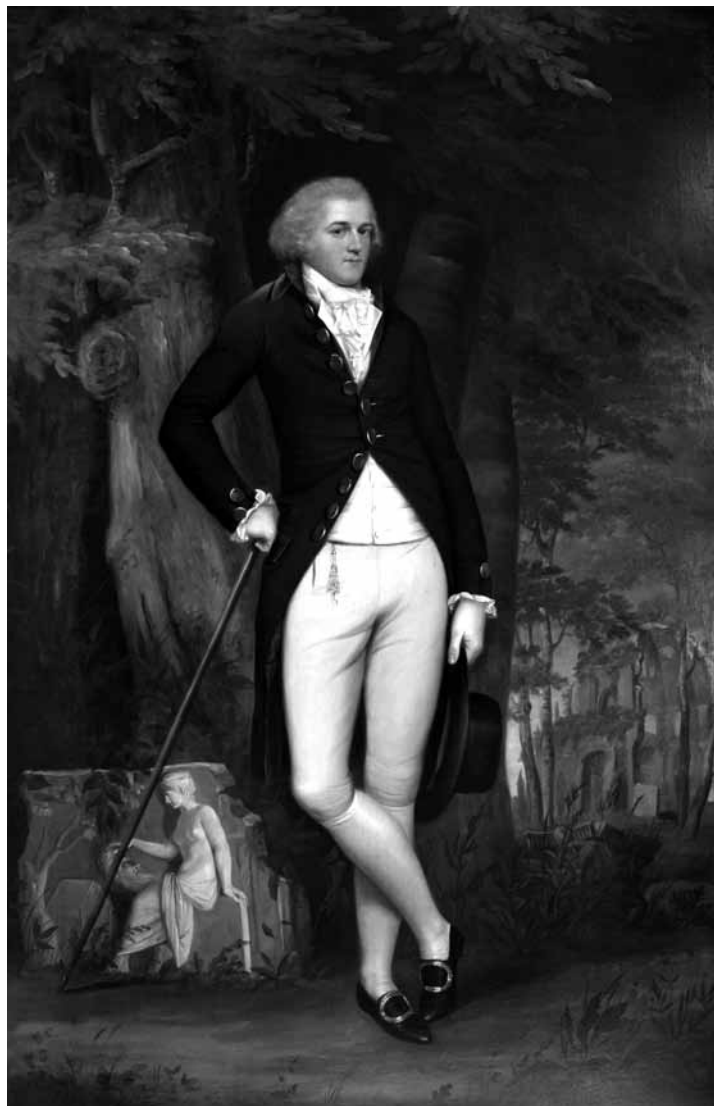
We are immensely grateful to all concerned and we hope that as many friends of the Library, along with members of the public, will come to enjoy a viewing of this important piece of Chawton's history. An official unveiling is being planned for December this year, in the week that marks the 235th anniversary of Jane Austen's birth.

There have, of course, been many other interesting and exciting initiatives over the past

few months. There has been a significant increase in the number of events being held – from conferences to weddings and from plays to open days – there has also been a significant international dimension to these activities. This has been very noticeable in the context of the Visiting Fellowship programme. In addition to scholars from the UK and North America, we have seen representation from many parts of mainland Europe (including Norway, Spain and Poland) and also from Australia and Asia. This expansion sits comfortably with the overseas alliances which we have been steadily developing. These include the forging of productive links with institutions such as the Uni-

versity of Notre Dame and with academic sponsoring bodies as far afield as China.

In a different area of endeavour, some of you may recall that in 2009, as part of the celebrations to mark the 200th anniversary of Jane Austen's arrival in Chawton, we launched a short story competition which was judged by the acclaimed author Sarah Waters. The twenty winning entries were published as an anthology entitled 'Dancing with Mr Darcy'. Such was the critical acclaim for the book that the American rights have been acquired by Harper Collins. The paperback (under the same title) is due out in the USA and Canada in late October 2010. Meanwhile, a follow-up competition will soon be launched – this time we are inviting



Portrait of Edward Austen Knight after conservation

The Female Spectator

Summer 2010

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Chawton Chronicles:

A Letter from the CEO
Stephen Lawrence **1**

‘Such a sprightliness of the
imagination, such a reach and
turn of thought’: Mary Astell and
Jane Austen **3**
Elizabeth Lenckos,
Former Visiting Fellow

House and Estate News **6**
Paul Dearn, Operations Manager

‘Out of the Wilderness’:
A New Rose Garden **6**
Alan Bird, Head Gardener

‘Girls playing Music’ **7**
Jane Girdham,
Former Visiting Fellow

Chawton House Library
Visiting Fellowships **10**
Sarah Parry, Archive &
Education Officer

Library News: Chawton House
Library Reading Group **11**
Jacqui Grainger, Librarian

Conference report: Rethinking
the Fall of the Planter Class **11**
Dr. Christer Petley,
University of Southampton

Dates for your diary **12**

stories inspired by the heroes and villains in Jane Austen’s novels.

Other developments of note include the completion of a Historical Parkland Review in collaboration with Natural England. The consultation document which has been produced provides a framework (technical and financial) for implementing improvements on the wider estate that reflect key planting, layout, circulation routes etc from, broadly, the period 1800 to 1840. The Schedule of Works outlined for the next two years includes the undertaking of further archaeological surveys in the Wilderness area adjacent to the main house.

Plans are also progressing for the erection of an eighteenth-century barn in Church Meadow. The structure, which was originally on the Sainsbury’s site in Alton, will provide a multi-purpose education and exhibition space. Specifically, it will enable us to considerably grow the work we undertake in the area of environment, ecology and sustainability.

Lastly, but by no means least, our links with local universities, especially the University of Southampton, continue to generate new projects and these provide real impetus for our academic outputs. Indeed, they have helped to increase the number of people using the Library and have promoted new lines of enquiry. Our Visiting Fellowship scheme is run in partnership with the School of Humanities at the University, who provide significant funding for the project. This enables Fellows to access the important resources in the Hartley Library. The Arts and Humanities Research Council Collaborative Doctoral Award examining illustration in the long eighteenth century is another fine example of the potential for meaningful co-operation between Chawton House Library and the University of Southampton. Moreover, the positive relationship with the Southampton Centre for Eighteenth-Century Studies has contributed to the increasing level of interdisciplinary work being undertaken at CHL.

This has just been a snapshot of recent goings-on. Most importantly, they exemplify the energy and commitment of our staff and trustees. It also augurs well for the future despite the current gloomy economic climate. Taking such a unique and inspiring project forward requires innovation, restructuring, rebuilding (sometimes literally) and careful planning. We are fortunate to have friends, members and volunteers in the UK and further afield who continue to support a wide range of ventures. We have an exciting vision at CHL and your participation and backing will help provide the critical resources necessary for achieving our exciting goals.

Stephen Lawrence

‘SUCH A SPRIGHTLINESS OF THE IMAGINATION, SUCH A REACH AND TURN OF THOUGHT’: MARY ASTELL AND JANE AUSTEN

Elisabeth Lenckos has taught in the Graham School at the University of Chicago since 2001, and is an active member of the Jane Austen Society of North America. She has published a book on Barbara Pym and is currently writing a book on Austen, as well as editing a collection of essays on Austen and aesthetics. She held a Visiting Fellowship at Chawton House Library in 2009-2010.

The Chawton House Library owns several works by a woman who was arguably the most intriguing seventeenth-century English woman philosopher, Mary Astell (1666-1731). A celebrated conversationalist and author of books on Platonism and religion, Astell also wrote about education, deportment, and marriage. Her style attests to a sense of humour and elegance of mind surprising in a ‘bluestocking’ that would find its equal a century later in the country’s most distinguished ‘lady’ novelist, Jane Austen. Since considerate behaviour and proper tone are central to Austen’s stories, it has been suggested by critics that advice literature such as Astell’s anticipated and even influenced Austen’s depictions of female conduct. In particular because Astell’s focus was not on social forms, but on the tenets of a female communal philosophy, and because the Platonist movement she helped sustain developed into the 18th Century cult of feeling that would be instrumental in shaping Austen’s outlook, it might be important to examine whether Astell’s system of thought is reflected in Austen’s novels. Such an investigation might also show Austen as more of a philosophical author than she is usually seen to be.

A Serious Proposal to the Ladies (1694) and *Some Reflections on Marriage* (1700), beyond offering Austen the opportunity to study the history of English manners, might have intrigued the novelist because Astell discussed the female condition at the dawn of the Enlightenment and examined the reasons why women had an essential, compelling need to adopt and maintain the social graces.¹ Astell argued that until ladies’ academies were founded, women would need to find intellectual fulfillment in friendship, love, or marriage; and so for them, practicing correct deportment was their way of ensuring that they would be able to interact in the company of fellow human beings. Astell intimated that the instruction she had to give

in matters of courtship did not aim at aiding women to achieve socially advantageous positions, but more importantly, to find intelligent inspiration in their personal relationships:

... [W]hat qualities must encline a woman to accept, so that our married couple may be as happy as that state can make them? This is no hard question; let the soul be principally considered, and regard had in the first place to a good understanding, a virtuous mind, and in all other respects, let there be as much equality as there could be. (*Mary Astell, Some Reflections upon Marriage*, 42)

Since the deplorable state of women’s education had not changed when Austen embarked on her writing career, Astell’s advice would still have seemed sound to her. More importantly, Astell’s way of thinking would have appealed to Austen, because a similar vein of aspiration – to create model ‘marriages of true minds’ for her heroes and heroines – flows through her narratives.

George Knightley, the hero of Austen’s 1815 novel *Emma*, famously says that, ‘Men of sense... do not want silly wives.’ Although he delivers this adage with the confidence of stating an indisputable fact, one may glimpse behind his words the anxious outline of the less assured author. Austen, in truth, knows no such thing, but reveals, through this proclamation of her leading man, her ambition to represent in her novels an ideal of egalitarian wedded partnerships similar to that proposed by Astell. A more mature interlocutor than Emma might have responded to Mr. Knightley that women of sense do not want ridiculous husbands, either. She would thereby have echoed Astell, who had this to say about the danger of marriage to a partner who was not one’s equal in intellect and disposition:

[A woman] need be very sure that she does not make a fool her head nor a vicious man her guide and pattern, she had best stay till she can meet with one who has the government of his own passions and has duly regulated his desires, since he’s to have such an absolute power over hers...

Some Reflections on Marriage, 33



One illustrator’s idea of Mr Knightley from Jane Austen’s ‘Emma’, here in conversation with Mrs Elton. This is one of a number of illustrations from Rosina Filippi’s ‘Duologues and Scenes from the novels of Jane Austen, arranged and adapted for drawing-room performance’, (London, 1895).

The spectre of unions marred by cerebral incompatibility haunted Astell's book on marriage as much as it would Austen's courtship fiction a century later, since wit, which Astell described as 'such a sprightliness of the imagination, such a reach and turn of thought, so properly express't, as strikes and pleases a judicious taste' (19), was a trait she treasured as dearly as did Astell. However, Austen was as intent as Astell had been on cautioning persons of sense against basing their relationships solely on perceived beauty, desirability, and eloquence, since these qualities might exist only in the eye of the mistaken loving beholders. In her novels, Austen would hint at the same commonsense suggestions proffered by Astell in her tomes on how to avoid unhappy matches. Men and women should not merely marry for money or to please their friends. They should not ignore signs of inconstancy or indifference in their future partners, nor be swayed by passion, but should use what Astell called 'judicious taste,' the reasoning faculty which determined whether a person truly merited love.

However, Astell also extended her definition of love beyond such rationalist tenets and questioned whether the emotional reaction resulting from our factual appreciation of personal value was indeed love. She implied that this feeling should more appropriately be understood as respect, while love sprang from our belief in a fellow human being's ability to change and to improve:

Love may arise from pity or a generous desire to make that lovely which is as yet not so, when we see any hopes of success in our endeavors of improving it, but honor supposes some excellent qualities already, something worth our esteem. (34)

Astell thus included in her philosophy of love the Platonist idea that desire signified the contemplation of the possibility to transform and perfect its object. In this passage, she clearly recreated the division of roles, derived from Plato's *Symposium*, between the lover, who perceived the awakening potential in the beloved, and the beloved, who was the receptacle of his attention and expectation. One may also divine the seeds of the tutor/pupil connection that was to become a frequent prelude to heterosexual love in eighteenth-century literature and forms one of the aspects of the relationship between Emma and Mr. Knightley in Austen's novel.

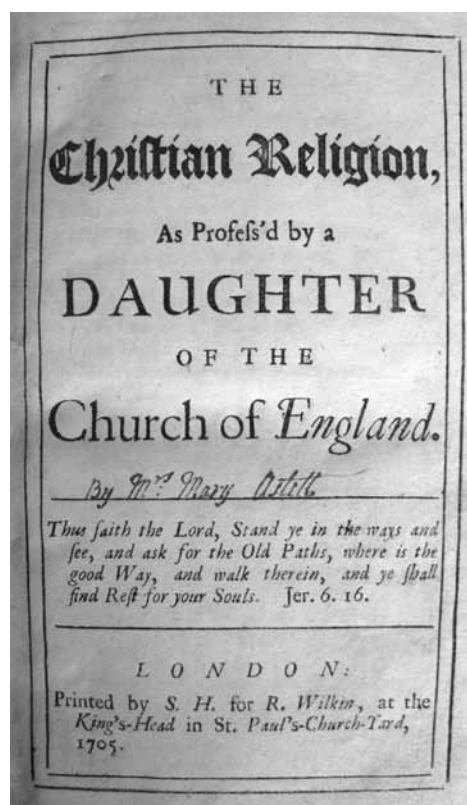
This passage is also reminiscent of Astell's *Letters Concerning the Love of God, between the Author of the Proposal to the Ladies and Mr. John Norris* (1695).² In this work, Astell asked probing questions

of the author of *The Theory and Regulation of Love* (1688), who insisted that only God was deserving of love, that friendship had to aim at a greater good, and that passion was vile.³ Although Astell agreed with Norris, she also revealed the cold inhumanity at the center of his virtue-based concept of love, acknowledging that 'it is difficult for me to love at all, without something of Desire' and that she was 'loath to abandon all Thought of Friendship' (45). Ultimately, Astell concurred that love was best transposed to the realm of devotion to the divinity, but not because erotic yearning was base: rather, she suggested that belief in God held greater potential for happiness than human companionship, because humans could be fickle, while an ideal remained a constant as long as one willed it so. Astell also courageously tackled the problem of unrequited love, the possibility of which was, rather unreasonably one might say, denied by Rationalists such as Damaris Masham (1659-1708), who suggested in *Discourse Concerning the Love of God* (1696) that reasoning logic prevented humans from experiencing the pain of rejection, since sensible men and women only loved when loved in return.⁴

Astell's correspondence is a cry from the thinking and feeling heart written in the wilderness of early enlightenment secularization. Her philosophy would have been interesting to Austen, because she suggested that despite their struggles with their supposedly more susceptible, passionate natures, women were as capable as men of channeling their supposedly ungovernable instincts into the pursuit of ideals. The notion that desire could be distilled into a philosophical stance, and that the pangs of yearning could be refined into introspection and self-examination, is definitely present in

Austen's novels. There is no absolute evidence that Austen read Astell. However, the crucial fact that we do not know the contents of her father's library (which, as the property of an Anglican clergyman, might well have contained the works of Astell), leaves room for speculation. Once the influence of Astell on Austen is deemed a probability, it allows for the reconsideration of the typical pattern that pervades Austen's novels and establishes that a woman in love must undergo a period of testing or atonement before she may love and live happily ever after.

In the case of Austen's lively, extrovert, active heroines, Marianne Dashwood in *Sense and Sensibility*, Elizabeth Bennet *Pride and Prejudice*, or Emma, their term of expiation is often deserved and even self-imposed; it originates in an error of judgment regarding the nature of love and the character of a lover and results in the revelation of the inevitable need to make



The title page to Mary Astell's 'The Christian Religion...' (London, 1705). A contemporary reader has inserted Astell's name as author.

amends. However, Austen's less dominant, introverted, contemplative heroines, Elinor Dashwood, Jane Bennet, Fanny Price in *Mansfield Park*, and Anne Elliot in *Persuasion* are not mistaken about the object of their love, and are sinned against, not sinning. Thus, the question arises why they would be subjected to the same process? What is the damage for which Elinor, Jane, Fanny and Anne must offer reparation?

The response might again be supplied by a comment from Mr. Knightley, who praises an 'open temper' as something 'a man would wish for in a wife.' The reason for his demand is clear: in Jane Austen's world, men and women must openly declare their love for each other in order to establish clear channels of communication. Only then can frank intercourse cut through the pretense of polite tittle-tattle to the heart of authentic talk and human connectedness. Reticence in this regard would be not only unnecessary but damaging proof of subterfuge and deception. However, the reason for the lack of candour exhibited by Elinor, Jane, Fanny, and Anne does not lie in their own dishonesty, but in the (albeit temporary) unreliability of their lovers.

When Edward Ferrars, Mr. Bingley, Edmund Bertram, and Frederick Wentworth reveal themselves as inconstant lovers, Elinor, Jane, Fanny, and Anne experience the threat of unreciprocated feeling feared by Astell and the disparity that she described between 'honor' and 'love.' Austen's women may no longer be able to 'esteem' their former partners, but they continue to trust in their reform and return. Thus, the time Elinor, Jane, Fanny and Anne are forced to spend in separation from their beloved is not devoted to their own expiation, but to holding aloft their ideal. Elinor refuses to think ill of Edward although she knows of his engagement to Lucy Steele; Jane continues to praise Mr. Bingley after he has left for London, Fanny persists in her admiration for Edmund in the face of his infatuation with Mary Crawford, and Anne's love for Frederick Wentworth intensifies despite his failure to return to her after he has made his fortune.

Austen's quiet heroines thus exhibit an awareness that the essential nature of reality lies in human consciousness, and they sustain the idea of the goodness of their lovers even though it is not yet manifest. In other words, Elinor, Jane, Fanny and Anne are Platonic lovers, idealists and imagists who, as Astell would say, are able 'to make that lovely which is as yet not so, when we see any hopes of success in our endeavors of improving it.' In Platonic thought, love for an individual leads to the appreciation of beauty, and life and creativity go hand in hand. Therefore, it is no coincidence that Austen's idealistic women are also her potentially most expressive personalities, who unload themselves cataclysmically at the conclusion of a novel, whether in a heartrending sob (Elinor), a stirring cry of relief (Jane), an ardent lecture on love (Fanny) or an eloquent declaration of love (Anne). In each instance, the outpouring of emotion comes as a revelation, but the act of communication turns into a veritable work of art in *Persuasion*, the story of Austen's most intelligent and romantic heroine.

In her conversation with Captain Harville, Anne Elliot reveals herself both to have mastered the dialogue and to have acquired the persuasive skills of the Romantic poet. Anne's loving courting speech, which she declaims for Captain Wentworth's hearing, finds its climax in the sentence, 'All the privilege I claim for my own sex... is that of loving longest, when existence or when hope is gone.' Hers is not a rational argument, stating the reasons why she 'honors' her beloved; rather, she attests to the powers of her loving imagination, which is able envision that her feelings for him will persist even in his absence and the event of his death. It is, so Anne knows, the very profession to make to a warrior sailor, and Captain Wentworth responds promptly with his own declaration of love, a letter that not coincidentally employs the same Platonic idiom.

Wentworth writes, 'You pierce my soul,' and his words strangely echo Astell's in *Some Reflections upon Marriage*, where she identified the kinship of the soul, the mind, and the heart, alongside equality, as the greatest assets of love. After their long separation, Anne and Captain Wentworth have the chance of realizing the kind of relationship imagined by Astell, and the same can be said for Fanny Price and Edmund Bertram, and to some degree for Jane and Mr. Bingley, and Elinor and Edward Ferrars. For Astell, as for Austen, common sense decreed that social motives would always be of consequence when men and women fell in love; but the philosopher, as well as the writer, although they lived almost a hundred years apart, would also insist that intellectual and spiritual accord should be the first priority of any couple bent on marriage, together with a willingness to inspire and to learn from one another.

Astell and Austen contemplated with dread the kind of marriages between couples whose partners saw no potential for growth and no scope in one another; and they wrote their books, each in their own genre, so as to enable women to realize the pitfalls of such unions and to create different alternative ideals of companionship in their lives. Astell was first and foremost a philosopher, but she wrote with such irony and insight about the social and devotional issues of her day that one can well imagine her being able to turn to novel writing. Similarly, Austen was above all a gifted writer, but able to develop in her novels a system of thought and ethics that allowed women to imagine an existence that answered not only to societal demands of propriety, but also to the claims of individual consciousness and cerebral fulfillment. Together Astell and Austen represent the first blossoming of English feminist philosophical writing.

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- 1 Mary Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (London: R. Wilkin, 1694) and *Some Reflections on Marriage* (London: John Nutt, 1700).
 - 2 Mary Astell, Letters concerning the Love of God, between the Author of the Proposal to the Ladies and Mr. John Norris, (London: Samuel Manship, 1695).
 - 3 John Norris, *The Theory and Regulation of Love. A Moral Essay. In Two Parts...* (Oxford: Henry Clements, 1688).
 - 4 Damaris Masham, *A Discourse concerning the Love of God*, (London: Awnsham and John Churchill, 1696)

HOUSE AND ESTATE NEWS

By Paul Dearn, Operations Manager

Having been in post as Operations Manager since mid-June, I feel already a strong attachment for this inspiring and wonderful place, set in the glorious Hampshire countryside. All team members, Trustees, fellow staff and volunteers, have been most welcoming and clearly have a common passion and commitment to what they do here. I came to Chawton House Library from the National Trust, where for the past sixteen years I had managed Polesden Lacey House, one of the top six 'flagship' properties in the National Trust.

I am delighted to be here and to be part of a dedicated team at Chawton House Library and to share all our treasures with our growing number of visitors, who are so vital to our future. The past months have seen a number of significant events, including Heritage Open Day which saw us welcome over 1100 visitors to the Estate; our fifteenth wedding celebration; and the eagerly anticipated return of the Edward Knight full-length portrait after careful conservation work and reframing, with the support of the Jane Austen Society, which will be unveiled in December.

It was a pleasure to welcome a considerable number of our volunteers to an afternoon tea party where we were joined by Jane Austen's House volunteers. I was delighted to have the opportunity to meet over 60 volunteers who have offered invaluable support to Chawton House Library. I am, over the course of time, looking forward to meeting many of you.

Finally, some news which I am sure will be no news to colleagues at Chawton House Library – to which I have a tangible care and commitment – but I do have another love, which is a 1972 US import VW campervan called 'Florence' which is now a very regular visitor to Chawton House Library.



A New Rose Garden at Chawton House

By Alan Bird, Head Gardener

In 1813 Jane Austen wrote to her brother Francis; in the letter she referred to the walled garden at Chawton as being poorly situated and that Edward wished to build a new garden beyond the house. The garden at that time clearly lacked some of the features we know today – the library terrace, the serpentine path, the rose garden, the upper terrace and the new walled garden, which was not built until after Austen's death. A rose garden was added around 1910 when the walled garden was subdivided. During 2008 we started to rebuild the rose garden using roses of the 18th and 19th century. Many of the original plant labels were still attached to the walls bearing the names of climbers and the dates when they were planted; these have been replanted where possible. The rose garden is part of the ongoing development of Chawton House as a library, study centre and organically-managed estate.



2009 was the bicentenary of Jane Austen's arrival in Chawton, so it seemed fitting to name it the Jane Austen Bicentenary Rose Garden. We were fortunate to receive a generous donation towards the cost of replanting the Rose Garden from Chris Shedd, to commemorate the life of his wife Jeanne (1958-2008). Now, one year after planting, the roses have reached full bloom. The picture here gives some idea of their abundance, but to get an idea of their glorious scent, you will have to pay a visit to Chawton House Library in person.

Chawton House Library holds several open gardens days throughout the year. Keep an eye on our website, or ask to be added to our mailing list for further details.

GIRLS PLAYING MUSIC: HOW DID THEY LEARN?

Jane Girdham is Professor of Music at Saginaw State University in Michigan. She is the author of *English Opera in Late Eighteenth-Century London: Stephen Storace at Drury Lane* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997). She was a Visiting Fellow at Chawton House Library in 2009-2010.

'Music and Drawing are accomplishments well worth the trouble of attaining, if your inclination and genius lead to either.'

Sarah Pennington, *An Unfortunate Mother's Advice to her Absent Daughters* ¹

Sarah Pennington's remark from 1770 is typical of the way eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century conduct books mention the role of music in a girl's education. The accomplishment is the performance, the skill of reading musical notation and playing the instrument. In Pennington's view it is not an essential skill, but one for the willing and talented young woman only. Many other conduct books and contemporary diaries indicate that some, perhaps many, girls were required to continue to learn, despite lack of ability or inclination. Maria Edgeworth, for instance, expresses regret for what she feels is too much time spent on music, ending dramatically with 'How often is the labour of years thus lost for

ever!'² Almost all conduct book authors are uninformative about how music should be taught. This is understandable because most are not musicians but educators who have acquired at most the same moderate skills in musical performance that they now envisage for their reading audience.

Because of the writers' own meagre skills, conduct books can have little authority in any discussions of how to learn music. Certainly the authors can offer an opinion on how much time they recommend for each area of education, but they cannot (and almost none do) discuss the actual teaching of music. They hardly ever mention composers, instructional books, or teaching techniques. Instead they limit themselves to whether the author considers accomplishments worthwhile at all, whether music should be compulsory or optional, the role of moderation in time management and level of skill, and the recreational role of music.

Increasing numbers of conduct books were published as the eighteenth century advanced into the nineteenth and more people developed educational ambitions for their children. In parallel with this increase in educational literature, music publishers printed instruction books for virtually every instrument available. These were intended for basic in-



From an anonymous album dating from c.1822 at Chawton House Library. Over the course of several years, the owner has carefully compiled a record of contemporary fashion by carefully pasting into her album fashion plates clipped from magazines.

struction in reading music, with fingerings for the instrument in question, simple tunes and exercises for playing and, sometimes, other information about playing technique. They are the opposite of conduct books in that they are written by musicians and are full of detailed factual musical information. In one respect, though, they have a similar weakness: teaching techniques are not mentioned. We can speculate on the reasons for this omission, particularly in instruction books written by men who were music teachers themselves. Two possibilities are that they did not want to give away their own secrets of success, or that they intended the books to be explained by a teacher. In particular the few pages of information about musical notation at the beginning would be intimidating to a beginner. As evidence that the information was far from self-explanatory, sometime governess and self-taught flageolet player Nelly Weeton admitted to not understanding key signatures, saying: 'I am rather at a stop respecting flats and sharps, for my book does not explain the use of those at the beginning of the tunes so I play all the notes natural.'³ The results would not have been pretty.

Only rarely do either conduct books or musical instruction books address compositional style or expression, and then never in any depth. Certainly such writings by English composers and aestheticians were available, although it is doubtful if many governesses, for instance, had copies at hand. One of the best known English theorists of the century was Charles Avison, who published his *Essay on Musical Expression* in 1752. In his first chapter he writes: 'If we view this Art in its Foundations, we shall find, that by the Constitution of Man it is of mighty Efficacy in working both on his Imagination and his Passions.'⁴ Far from expressing concern over performance skills or accurate notation, Avison concentrates on expressive quality: music swaying the listener's imagination and his emotions. When he moves to the elements of musical composition he is still concerned for expressivity: 'The first Error we shall note is, where the Harmony, and consequently the Expression, is neglected for the sake of Air, or rather an extravagant Modulation' (p. 14). An error in harmony, for Avison, is an error because the expressivity suffers. Finally, when he eventually addresses the performer, Avison instructs them 'to do a *Composition* Justice, by playing it in a *Taste* and *Stile* so exactly corresponding with the Intention of the Composer, as to preserve and illustrate *all* the Beauties of his Work' (p. 41). Again the focus is on the musical composition and its beauty, the one thing missing in the education of the mass of upper class musical amateurs.

For the modern scholar then, three disparate types of literature exist, with very little overlap. Conduct books generally position the role of music within a girl's overall educational activities; instruction books list the mechanics of reading and playing music without much explanation and without a practical plan for approaching the material; writers

on aesthetics address the powers of music at great length but no practical matters.

A few authors did publish books that help us to fill in the gaps, particularly by providing details about the process of learning musical skills in the early nineteenth century. Three books are exceptional in their detailed information, two of them held at Chawton House Library, the other readily available online. Two are conduct books, the anonymous *A Legacy of Affection, Advice, and Instruction, from a Retired Governess, to the Present Pupils of an Establishment for Female Education, Which She Conducted Upwards of Forty Years* and Elizabeth Appleton's *Private Education; or a Practical Plan for the Studies of Young Ladies. With an Address to Parents, Private Governess, and Young Ladies*.⁵ The last is an instruction book by Dorothy Kilner and Mary Pelham, *The Child's Introduction to Thorough Bass, in Conversation of a Fortnight, Between a Mother, and her Daughter of Ten Years Old*.⁶

A Legacy of Affection was written by a teacher who had retired by the age of seventy then published her views of education developed through forty years' experience. She writes a series of letters, reserving Letter 31 for 'Music and Sound' and 32 for 'Theory of Music'. These are both unusual topics for conduct books, and cover some basic acoustics. At the end of Letter 32 she turns to practical matters, naming her preferred instruction books, writing, 'the Instructions, Sonatinas, (Op. 36,) and Gradus ad Parnassum of Clementi, with Cramer's Studies, I have always preferred, as far as my influence had weight with the music-master' (pp. 120-21). Muzio Clementi and John Cramer were important figures in English musical life at the turn of the century, both foreign born and longtime London residents, with Cramer once a pupil of Clementi. The Clementi works are his *Introduction to the Art of Playing on the Piano Forte* (1801), the *Six Progressive Sonatinas* op. 36 (1797), and *Gradus ad Parnassum, or The Art of Playing on the Piano Forte* (1817-26). Cramer's *Studies* are the two sets of *Studio per il pianoforte* (1804 and 1810). These were all popular in the early nineteenth century; indeed Clementi's *Sonatinas* are still, two hundred years later, part of the young pianist's basic repertoire.

The author continues, 'in forming your ear and taste, it is of more importance than is commonly imagined to practise only from finished and scientific composition' (p. 121), which brings up a topic quite popular among writers of conduct books, that of developing good taste. Unlike others, this author addresses ways to develop taste by studying 'scientific' compositions, or music composed according to the proper rules of theory, by professional composers such as Clementi and Cramer. Finally, in Letter 45, 'Duties to Governesses, Teachers, and Masters', she explains how she encouraged pupils to borrow books from her library, because 'as much may thus be learnt, aye, and better learnt, than by formal instruction' (p. 153). Among her recommendations

are 'the Anas, as they are called, of Music, by Busby' (p. 153). Given that she then writes that 'it is absolutely semi-barbarous, not to be familiar with the anecdotes and history of favourite studies' (p. 153), this 'Anas' is most likely either Thomas Busby's *Concert Room and Orchestra Anecdotes* or his *General History of Music*. In either case, the notion of reading about music and musicians to avoid ignorance is a step further than any other writer of the time recommends. In summary then, this teacher of long experience is able to talk about musical acoustics and appropriate literature for the beginner, and demonstrates her understanding of the benefits of background reading, all topics rarely broached elsewhere.

The second conduct book in this brief survey is Elizabeth Appleton's extraordinary book *Private Education; or a Practical Plan for the Studies of Young Ladies*. Appleton spends an unprecedented 30 pages explaining how to teach children music, and in so doing allows the modern reader an insight into much that was normally left unsaid in instruction books of the time. After recommending the age of eight for beginning study, she says, 'It is the opinion of some professors that children should not touch the keys within less time than six or eight months from that in which they began the theory' (p. 136). On the one hand, it is hard to imagine any child's desire to play a piano surviving six months of theory first; on the other, it explains why most instruction books are able to give all the theory for reading notation in a page or two, since the teacher then spends months explaining and elaborating before the child starts to play.

Appleton is determined that she has a better plan for success. She describes two pedagogical tactics: first, 'music [is] then introduced with a smile to the little eager girl, and gently, familiarly, cheerfully talked over and explained, during five minutes at first, then fifteen, then thirty, every day for two months, [which] will completely prepare her for touching the piano-forte' (p. 137). A gradual build-up of time, a cheerful approach, and a shortening of time from six months to two, are certainly improvements. Then she discusses her choice of text which again is by Clementi. Instead of giving the child the whole book, she copies onto a piece of paper just the example needed, again reducing the intimidation factor, and describes methods by which she allows the pupil to discover new aspects of notation, rather than be told. She uses analogies with familiar ma-

terial to help the child understand new concepts. In the case of rhythmic note values, she uses money: 'this silver shilling shall be worth as much as two silver sixpences; and two silver sixpences are worth twelve pennies;' and so on, drawing parallels with the divisions of rhythmic values (p. 139). One of Appleton's most valuable contributions is her discussion of repertoire and in particular a table of concertos, sonatas, airs, and duets that an individual pupil might have in her repertoire (p. 161). This table, while not always as specific as we might like, includes works by Corelli, Haydn, Mozart, Pleyel, and Beethoven, as well as English composers. This book is indeed the 'practical plan' of its title, a rare one regarding music.

The Child's Introduction to Thorough Bass is an instruction book specific to one musical skill. Thorough bass was the term given to what we would now call realizing a figured bass, although by the early nineteenth century the term was used more broadly to embrace basic music theory including harmonic progressions. In the words of the authors, 'it is the science of music. It contains the rules for composition, and shows how harmony and melody are produced' (p. 9).

The book is unusual in several respects. First, it is written in the form of a dialogue between mother and daughter about music, which was possibly unique for its time. Second, thorough bass was not considered appropriate for many girls, especially those as young as those of six years old for whom the author considers the first six lessons suitable. Third, the authors spell out in detail the pedagogical devices they use to teach the young girls. Like Appleton, they clearly understood how to achieve success in learning.

The authors lay out the lessons, which they call conversations, day by day for two weeks, omitting Sundays. Their claim that a ten-year-old can cover all twelve lessons, and a six-year-old the first six, are quite reasonable if the children already having some background in reading notation and playing the piano. They claim to avoid all technical terms; although they do in fact use them where appropriate, they also avoid writing in a pedantic way. Their teaching experience shows through as each day the mother reviews the day's material before ending the session, then does so again at the beginning of the next day's lesson. She is constantly encouraging her daughter; she writes on the first Monday, 'You have been so good a little girl to-



Dorothy Kilner was also a prolific writer of children's fiction. A close look at the frontispiece to her novel *The Life and Perambulation of a Mouse* (c. 1785) reveals a mouse seated on the desk before the writer.

day in playing your piano-forte, I will, as an indulgence, begin to teach you thorough bass' (p. 9). Her daughter is encouraged to ask questions and is given exercises to demonstrate her understanding.

Like Appleton, the mother uses common parallels to explain musical phenomena. For instance, her way of explaining that the letters A to G repeat in each octave of the keyboard involves the days of the week: 'the octave of every note is nothing but the repetition of the note itself in a different pitch; or rather . . . the same sounds recur at the distance of a certain number of intervals, in the same way as the days of the week come in regular rotation' (p. 13). This is by no means an exceptional illustration. When explaining about the root of a chord, or as she calls it the 'fundamental bass', in particular the fact that the root of a particular chord never alters even though it may not always be the lowest note sounding, she refers to a series of books where the character 'Little Henry' is fundamentally the same child throughout but is dressed differently in each story.

In this book we have the rare opportunity to follow the learning process step by step, with a teacher who clearly understands how to explain new concepts to a young pupil, and how to help her understand them fully. In a side note, the composer Ralph Vaughan Williams, one of the greatest English composers of the twentieth century, started his studies with this very book when a very young boy in the late 1870s, with his aunt Sophy Wedgwood as his teacher.⁷

These three early nineteenth-century publications show a seriousness about learning music that contrasts with and is far more valuable to the modern scholar than the dismissive tone of many conduct books that simply consider a girl accomplished 'when she possesses all the agreeable talents of singing, playing, dancing, and making certain trifling articles of fashionable decoration'.⁸

1 Sarah Pennington, *An Unfortunate Mother's Advice to her Absent Daughters, in a Letter to Miss Pennington*. 5th ed. J. and H. Hughes, 1770, 43. Chawton House Library.

2 Maria Edgeworth and Richard Lovell Edgeworth, *Practical Education* (London: J. Johnson, 1798; rpt. New York: Garland, 1974), 524.

3 Nelly Weeton, *Miss Weeton's Journal of a Governess* (David & Charles Reprints, 1969), vol. 1, p.51.

4 Charles Avison's *Essay on Musical Expression with Related Writings by William Hayes and Charles Avison*, ed. Pierre Dubois (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p. 5.

5 References for these two texts as follows: London: Sir Richard Phillips and Co., 1827, Chawton House Library. London: Henry Colburn, 1815, Google Books online.

6 London: Baldwin, Cradock and Joy, 1819, Chawton House Library.

7 Michael Kennedy, *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980), p. 11.

8 J. L. Chirol, *An Enquiry into the Best System of Female Education* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1809), p. 304.

VISITING FELLOWSHIPS AT CHAWTON HOUSE LIBRARY

By Sarah Parry, Education Officer

In October 2007 we welcomed our first group of Visiting Fellows to Chawton House Library. The programme was planned by Dr Gillian Dow, our Chawton Lecturer, and we hoped it would become an important element of our work. Exactly three years later we welcomed our first group of Visiting Fellows for the current academic year, our hopes for the programme having been realised.

The Fellowships are sought after by scholars working on a wide range of themes relating to the long eighteenth century. An important element is our work with colleagues at the University of Southampton who have been generous and loyal supporters. Indeed, the Fellowships are now run in partnership with the University, benefitting from a substantial grant from the School of Humanities to help with our costs. We are not yet able to offer travel expenses, or indeed a stipend, but this is certainly something we would like to offer in the future.

Benefits of studying with us are the peaceful, rural setting and the accommodation offered to Fellows,

who stay for between one and two months. The Tudor stable block was converted to a comfortable house and provides a spacious base; commuting time from the Old Stables to the Reading Rooms is approximately two minutes! The relaxed atmosphere of the village of Chawton, the accommodation and Chawton House Library all contribute to the creation of a space in which Fellows can work without distractions yet within a comfortable and supportive environment.

As we look forward to the start of the 2010/11 academic year it is gratifying to realise how far the programme has developed. This year we had the largest number of applications to date and it is no exaggeration to claim that Fellows come from all over the world and that interest in the programme remains high. After their Fellowship ends many Fellows continue to support us by bringing students to visit, attending conferences and recommending the library to students and colleagues. We therefore have a wide and ever growing network of friends and their continuing support and interest is greatly appreciated.

Details of how to apply for the 2011/12 Visiting Fellowships will be published on our website in May 2011.

CHAWTON HOUSE LIBRARY

READING GROUP:

NEW SEASON 2010-2011

Jacqui Grainger, Librarian

The reading group convened again on Monday 20 September to discuss *Ashton Priory*, one of the rare texts in the collection. *Ashton Priory* can be accessed as part of the Novels-On-Line project <http://www.chawtonhouse.org/library/novels.html> or purchased as a paperback from Chawton House Library. It was an extremely lively session and we discussed whether it was a Gothic novel, the history of the Minerva Press, stock characters, Restoration comedy, and whether or not it was a morality tale.

The demand of the reading public for novels in the eighteenth century and the advent of Gothic and romance novels brought a need for libraries to be accessible to the general public. William Lane took advantage of this and opened a lending library in 1763 in Whitechapel, moving to Leadenhall Street in 1790 where he set up Minerva Press. Minerva Press



dominated the novel publishing business for the next fifteen years and *Ashton Priory* is one example of its output.

Ashton Priory, written in 1792 and published anonymously, is not a Gothic novel; it is melodramatic but it has no element of horror. Its stock characters are reminiscent of Restoration comedy and the novels of Henry Fielding, such as Sir Bevil Grimstone, an old fop well past his best, and the malapropisms of the tyrannical Butterfield matriarch. Money and society, female education and the promotion of meritocracy are the central themes woven around the romances of the young and the subterfuges of the covetous. The trials Charlotte and Eliza face result from the greed of others: Charlotte narrowly escapes a forced marriage to a licentious nobleman who has offered to 'buy' her from her guardian; Eliza, the erstwhile romantic novel reader, faced with the fragility of respectability when she is left destitute by her husband, evades prostitution. Eliza dies tragically, pun-

ished for the fanciful notions that she develops from her reading, and the well-balanced, irritatingly virtuous Charlotte is rewarded by marriage to the man she loves. She merits reward in this tale, as does her brother, members of the Sanders family, and the man who becomes her husband, George Danby. They all are hard working, socially responsible characters. The villains of the story: the avaricious, the lustful, the lazy, the conceited, have to change or lose status, die and face disgrace. We had to conclude it was a morality tale and an emphatically middle class one.

Over the year we will discuss several more of the books that form part of the Novels-On-Line project, including *The Castle of Tynemouth* by Jane Harvey and *Cava of Toledo; or The Gothic Princess* by Augusta Amelia Stuart.

RETHINKING THE FALL OF THE PLANTER CLASS

A conference report by Dr. Christer Petley

On 21 September Chawton House Library hosted a one-day international conference convened by Dr Christer Petley of the Department of History at the University of Southampton.

The theme for the day was 'Rethinking the Fall of the Planter Class in the British Caribbean'. It looked at those who owned slave-run plantations in Caribbean colonies like Jamaica, Barbados and Demerara. This group's decline from the position of power, political influence and opulent wealth that they seemed to occupy during the eighteenth century has been associated with the dismantling of slavery following abolitionist campaigning and the decline of the sugar economy across the British Caribbean during the nineteenth century. However, historians still disagree about the causes, timing and nature of the planters' decline. This conference brought a number of important new perspectives to the debate.

Speakers from the US, Jamaica, Trinidad, and the UK offered a series of vibrant papers that highlighted issues like the role of slave resistance in the planters' changing fortunes, the rising influence and wealth of some planters in Demerara and Trinidad, the planters' efforts to influence government policy during the slavery debates, and travellers' depictions of Caribbean slave societies. The panels each ended in productive and lively discussions, and there are plans in place to publish the proceedings of the event.

The conference was made possible thanks to funding by the School of Humanities, the Department of History, and the Centre for Eighteenth Century Studies at the University of Southampton; thanks also to the work of Sandy White and staff at Chawton House Library.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Donations Requested for Book Fair

Chawton House Library is holding its second book fair on Saturday 4th December between 10.30 am and 4.00pm. Donations of second-hand books of all genres are requested. All proceeds from the sale of donated books will go directly to support the charity, and enable us to expand our collection of early women's writing. All donated books should be in boxes or carrier bags. They can be dropped off at Chawton House Library in person, or posted to us. Please mark clearly that books are for the book fair. Thank you in advance for your support.

5-6 November

Sarah Fielding and Eighteenth-Century Women's Writing – An Anniversary Conference at Chawton House Library.

On the evening of 5th November a public lecture and reception will be followed by a concert of eighteenth-century music in Chawton Church. To book please call 01420 541010 or email info@chawton.net

25 November

Chawton House Library Fellows' Lectures

Dr. Will May (University of Southampton). Stevie Smith: the literary orphan.

14 December

Professor Barbara Benedict (Trinity College, Connecticut).

'Pleasure in a Good Novel': Gender, Genre and the Regency Reader.

To book tickets for any of the above events please call Corrine Saint on 01420 541010. All Fellows' lectures follow the same format and are the same price:

£10.00 (£7.50 for Friends & Students)

6.30pm Reception with complimentary glass of wine

7.00pm Lecture

Please note: these prices are for Fellows' Lectures only. Other events may be priced differently.

The Female Spectator

The Female Spectator is the newsletter of Chawton House Library, a British company limited by guarantee (number 2851718) and a registered charity (number 1026921).

MISSION

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

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