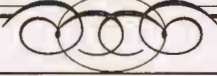


The Female Spectator

CHAWTON HOUSE LIBRARY



VOL. 2 NO. 2 WINTER 1997

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF EARLY ENGLISH WOMEN'S WRITING



Chawton House

The Female Spectator is the newsletter of the Centre for the Study of Early English Women's Writing. The Centre is to be located at Chawton House, former home of Edward Austen Knight, Jane Austen's brother. The Centre seeks to provide a self-contained research area, and to establish a Library, for the study of the works of early English women writers (1600-1830). The Centre has been established under the auspices of the Leonard X. Bosack and Bette M. Kruger Charitable Foundation, founded through the generosity of Sandy Lerner and Leonard Bosack.



Engraving of Chawton House, Alton, Seat of Edward Knight Esq., circa 1850.



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CHAWTON: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

CHAWTON PARK LANDSCAPE

THE THIRD IN A SERIES OF ARTICLES
DEPICTING ITS HISTORY, CONSERVATION, AND FUTURE



PLANS FOR RESTORATION

by

Cassandra Knight

On 27 September, we presented our preliminary plans for Chawton House, its gardens and farmlands. In this article, I share our plans for the garden and farmlands with you. Fortunately for all, the plans were reviewed by East Hampshire District Council on January 16 and approved with forthcoming minor modifications. Please refer to the master plan on p. 3. I will begin with the driveway area to the west of Chawton House and then describe our proposals for the gardens, parklands and woods.

THE DRIVEWAY AREA TO THE WEST OF CHAWTON HOUSE

The landscape has suffered much from storm damage and neglect. Our aim is to restore the historical landscape where there is good documentary and field evidence, focusing on the periods leading up to 1840, and particularly on the work of Jane Austen's brother, Edward Austen Knight. For the driveway area, we have various historical precedents including the engraving of circa 1850 (see p. 1) and the Callender gouache of circa 1780 (see p. 7). The engraving shows that the approach served Chawton House, the Old Manor and St. Nicholas's Church. Compare this engraving with my sketch (p. 5) to show our plans for this approach. This view is little changed today and is valued by the District Council as one of the jewels of East Hampshire.

From the Old Manor, there will be views into the meadows, and the proposed square forecourt in front of the Old Manor will improve the setting for this historic building. Over the years, the gravel surface of the drive has become degraded and has actually developed a kink near the Church. It will be straightened and resurfaced with gravel, and the edges of the driveway will be graded to allow for wheelchairs.

There will be a small area of reinforced turf on the southern verge of the driveway so that cars can drop off the elderly and disabled for church services, and equipment for church maintenance can be brought close to the Church. The field to the south of the driveway will continue to be parking area for the British Jane Austen Society Annual General Meeting in July. The gravel loop in front of Chawton House will serve as a convenient drop-off spot for visitors, and the grass will remain on either side of the driveway, which hosts a drift of fritillaries and daffodils in spring. The House itself will be planted with climbers and shrubs, and the yew trees will undergo a careful program of management to bring them back into life.

THE GARDEN TERRACES

On passing the south façade of the House, we find the Library Terrace, and further up the lawns, the Upper Terrace. The garden terraces are some of the youngest features in the garden, built in the first decade of this century. The brick upper terrace was built first to formalize a long grass bank and has a tile balustrade, a detail typical in this area of southern England and often used by the architect, Sir Edwyn Lutyens. An interesting mystery is that the tiles are a different size than those he normally used, and he is not known to have worked in this area at this time. Lutyens was working at Chawton House by 1905, and the details of the Library Terrace are more clearly his work. The value of these two terraces as convenient means to ascend the slopes, attractive stations for viewing the surrounding countryside, their fine workmanship and the absence of sufficient evidence for the landscape of an earlier period, all warrant their restoration. It is our intention to rebuild the terraces, and to plant shrubberies and climbing plants in the beds so that the formal brick work is less evident and the features visually blend in with the shrubberies and woodlands at the top of the lawn.

PROPOSED FUTURE HOME OF THE
CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF EARLY ENGLISH WOMEN'S WRITING
MASTER PLAN

The map is a detailed site plan of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. It features numerous buildings, roads, and green spaces. Key locations are marked with numbered circles (1-10) and descriptive text labels. The map includes the following labels:

- 1. Tubular plant museum
- 2. New force
- 3. Stations garden plant park
- 4. Pavilion for
- 5. Bureau of
- 6. Thick to
- 7. Clear vegetation
- 8. Bureau of
- 9. Thick to
- 10. Clear vegetation

The map also shows the 'University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign' and the 'University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign'.

6. UPPER TERRACE
7. WALLED GARDEN
8. FARM BUILDINGS
9. WILDERNESS
10. PARKLANDS



The existing main drive to Chawton House.

THE WALLED GARDEN

One of the qualities of the walled garden today is the element of surprise on its discovery! It is a secret garden, quietly brooding behind the house, a gift for those who take the effort to walk to the top of the hill. Historically, the walled garden was a kitchen garden, conceived by Edward Austen Knight during Jane Austen's lifetime. You may remember her letter of 1813 to Francis Austen, her sailor brother, who later came to stay at Chawton House: "Edward is planning a new kitchen garden. The present one is a bad one and ill situated, near Mr. Papillon's — he means to have a new, at the top of the lawn behind his own house. We like to have him improving and strengthening his attachment to the place by making it better."

Unfortunately, it was not until 1818, a year after Jane Austen's death, that Edward actually built the new walled garden. Imagine our delight finding the plant lists and specifications for the walls among papers deposited by Richard Knight in the Hampshire Record Office. William Cobbett gives good guidance to those setting out a kitchen garden in 1829: "if the gardener understand this much of geometry, he will do it without any difficulty; but if he only pretends to understand the matter,

and begins to walk backward and forward, stretching out lines and cocking his eye, make no bones with him, send for a brick layer, and see the stumps driven into the ground yourself."¹

Between 1911 and 1925, Montagu Knight took down a section of the west wall and inserted a wall, brick piers and wrought iron gates crossing the western third of the walled garden. This wall was constructed with materials from the original west wall, and a close examination of the materials used shows that the remaining chalk was used to construct the high, free standing wall on the Library Terrace. The gates are now in urgent need of repair and the space to the west of the inner wall is difficult to protect from deer and rabbits; wire mesh secured to the remaining section of the west wall shows the efforts that have gone into pest control in the past! Our intention is to carefully remove the inner wall and to use these materials to restore the west wall. We hope to restore the gates and place them in the center of the west wall, a probable layout that Montagu Knight had before he removed some of the west wall, thus achieving a central vista through the walled garden. The wilderness outside the walled garden will be designed so that the visitor continues to approach the walled garden with intrigue, surprise and enjoyment.

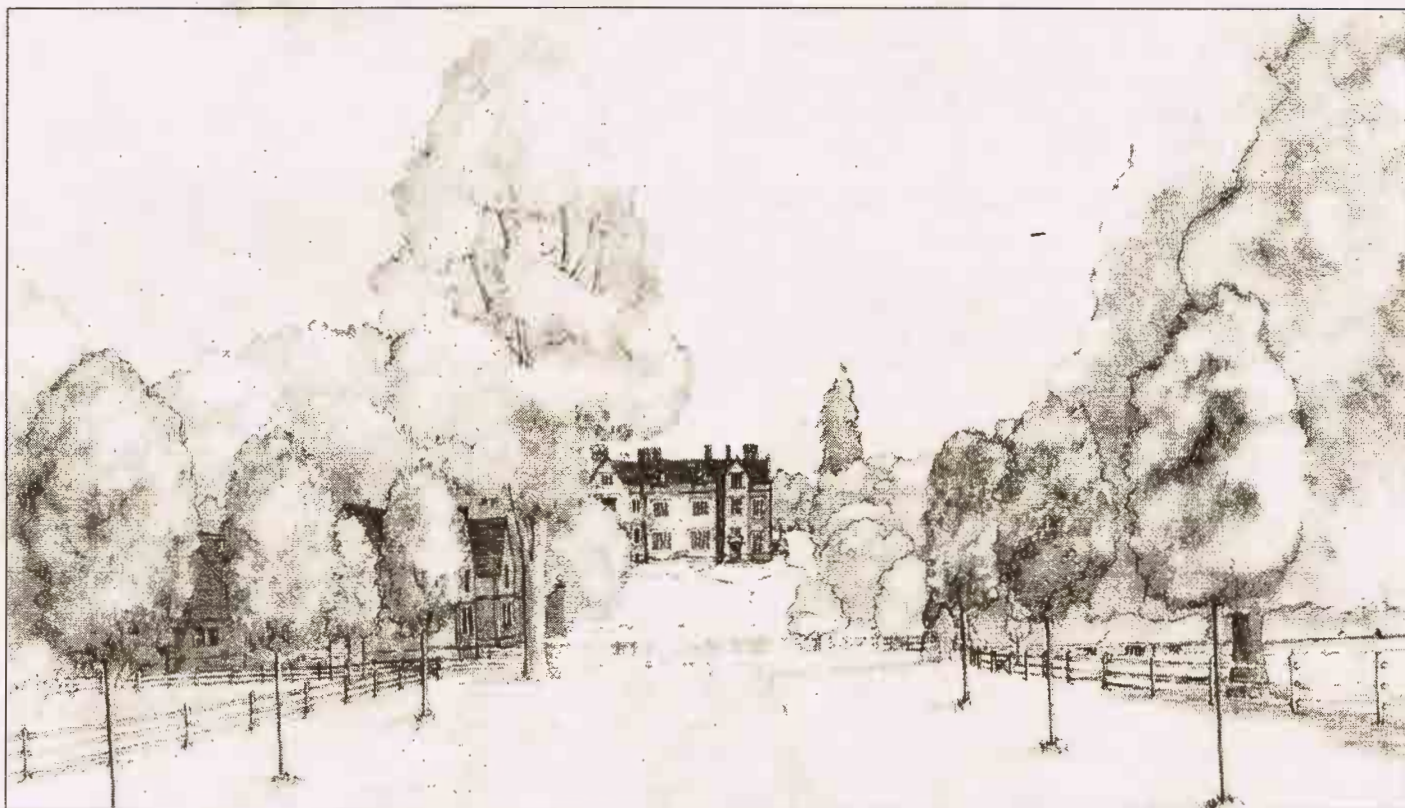
THE CALLENDER VIEW

From the Upper Terraces, we now look down the lawns, across an area of scrub to the Chawton Park Woods beyond. The scrub has grown up around a derelict swimming pool, built in 1935, on the garden side of the ha! ha!. Repton specifies that "We must ... so dispose a fosse, or ha! ha! that we may look across it and not along it. For this reason a sunk fence must be straight and not curving, and it should be short, else the imaginary freedom is dearly bought by the actual confinement, since nothing is so difficult to pass as deep sunk fence."² Our intention is to carefully remove the concrete structure of the pool, and to regrade the lawns so that they run smoothly down to the ha! ha!. This will open up views into the meadows and hills beyond. My first task is to screen the busy main road, and we plan to plant a coppice row against the road this season, with species that will not only grow dense quickly, but will also provide revenue for the estate in the long term. The footpath that Edward Austen Knight diverted now runs along the narrow verge of the main road, and we hope to provide a permissive footpath for public use along the coppice row so that as well as having a safer place to walk, people will be able to see Chawton House and lawns in their full glory, as depicted in the Callender view of circa 1780 and the Prosser engraving of 1833 (see p. 9).

THE PARKLANDS

Sandy Lerner has expressed a wish to restore Edward Austen Knight and his son's parklands to grasslands, thus increasing the estate's capacity for wildlife several fold! Many authorities have taken an interest in this objective. In the past five years, the Countryside Commission has been encouraging landowners to restore historic parkland under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, and this year, the scheme was handed over to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF), which is offering sizable grants. We hope to put together a Countryside Stewardship Scheme for MAFF. In the meantime, the land continues to be tenant-farmed.

Over the past three decades, the farm buildings at Chawton House have been sold and converted into dwellings. There is now a need for farm buildings to house livestock, food and farm implements on the Chawton House estate. Our intention is to locate a rescued barn for the end of the local road, in the position of the barn on the left-hand side of the Callender gouache, amongst the trees. The second rescued barn is proposed to tie in with the existing group of farm buildings, to the north of the Old Manor. The Old Manor has its own tennis court, located to the northwest. We hope to remove this tennis court and restore this area to pasture.



Sketch of the proposed main drive to Chawton House, by Cassandra Knight in association with Nichols Brown Webber, 1996.



An avenue of lime trees was planted in circa 1870, which extends from the gardens to River Field, half a kilometer further south. This avenue was badly damaged in the storms of 1987 and 1990, and it is our intention to reinforce it with clumps of tree planting, so that from the south door of the House, there is still a vista down the straight avenue, and from selected areas in the parklands, there are views between the clumps to Chawton Park woods. The views will be selected following a detailed survey of the health of individual trees.

THE WOODLANDS

Fanny Knight wrote in 1807, "the quantities of trees around the house (especially Beech), always make a place pretty."³ Our intention is to manage all the woodlands on the estate so that their landscape value is maintained — the silhouette of trees behind Chawton House is important, and careful replanting of some of the open areas in the these woodlands will ensure that these woodlands remain. Selective thinning of the less healthy younger trees will also take place so that in the long term, we will continue to have excellent timber on the estate. Each woodland is now being examined for its age structure, species mix and wildlife value. We are working closely with the woodland management authorities and are thankful to Hampshire County Council who have granted us forty percent of the costs to restore an area of hazel coppice in Noah Copse, an ancient semi-natural woodland with oak, sweet chestnut and ash standards. We hope to use some of the hazel coppice products on the estate and any timber that needs felling on the estate wherever possible. Many people are encouraged by our goals for the estate and are keen to help implement our proposals.

I hope that you have enjoyed reading about our preliminary proposals for the Chawton Park Landscape. Kim Wilkie writes in his essay in the *Journal of the Garden History Society* (Summer 1996): "Landscape history can be the basis for moving forward, rather than a conservative reaction which keeps us locked in the past."⁴ Gilly Drummond has given you a detailed insight into the history of the Chawton Park Landscape in the first two articles of this series; my role has been to explain our plans for the conservation and future for the landscape, and I look forward to charting the progress of design and implementation, taking into account the history, the stories and artifacts that we find that all make Chawton House and its landscape so popular and unique.

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1. W. Cobbett, *The English Gardener* (first published 1829), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980).
 2. H. Repton, *Landscape Gardening &c.* (London: T. Barnsley for J. Taylor, 1803).
 3. D. Le Faye, ed., *Jane Austen's Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).
 4. *Garden History* 24: 1 Summer 1996.



"Edward is planning a
new kitchen garden. The
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and ill situated, near Mr.
Papillon's—he means to
have a new, at the top of
the lawn behind his own
house. We like to have
him improving and
strengthening his
attachment to the place
by making it better."

— Letter from Jane Austen
to her sailor brother, Francis, 1813.

CHAWTON: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

JANE AUSTEN'S CHAWTON LANDSCAPE: FACT AND FICTION

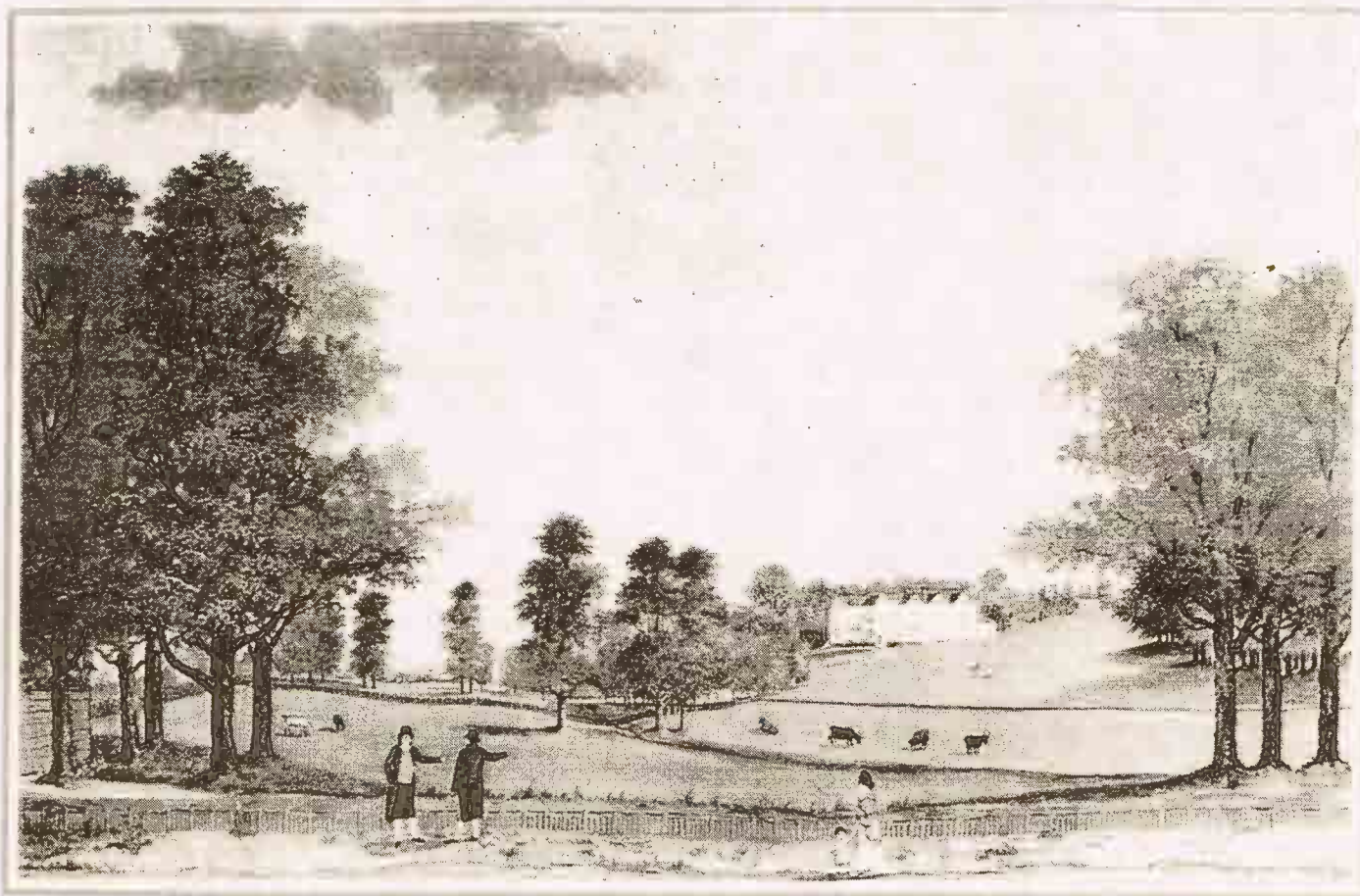
by

Mavis Batcy

The restoration of the Chawton landscape is of great literary importance as part of the familiar rural scene that inspired so much of Jane Austen's writing. At Haworth in Yorkshire, the visitor, having seen the parsonage where the Brontë sisters lived and wrote, walks out onto the moors behind to discover the wild, brooding landscape that fuelled their imaginations. The pilgrims to Jane Austen's house in Chawton walk out into a rather different workshop to see the delights of "housekeeping in a country village" and the landscape of

southern England so "sweet to the eye and mind" from which the novelist derived such satisfaction.

The reinstatement of the Callender view of Jane Austen's brother's Great House from the old Gosport Road will greatly add to this pleasure, especially if the proposed footpath within the estate boundary is made. It was the thought of having bunkers in this idealized landscape that caused such concern when a golf course was threatened in a previous hotel



Chawton House from the southwest. Adam Callender, c. 1780.

From the Knight Family Collection, courtesy of Richard Knight.

application. The present owner's dedication to the restoration of the House and landscape is indeed a cause for celebration.

When Edward Austen settled his mother and sisters in an estate house in the village in 1809, the Great House was still let to a tenant and, although they may have visited socially, the Austens would not have taken the liberty of walking off the footpath without permission; when Jane and Cassandra talk of walking in Chawton Park, they were referring to Edward's ancient parkland on the hill to the north of the Winchester Road. The Callender view of Chawton House set in its landscaped grounds was how they too looked admiringly at Edward's manor house until he repossessed it in 1812.

Edward stayed at the cottage when he came over from Godmersham twice a year to see his agent, Trimmer, and to take the rent audit. There would have been much discussion about what improvements should be made at the Great House when Mr. Middleton's tenancy ended. In 1811 Edward was considering rerouting a footpath through his home meadows as he asked Jane to look at an old estate map. This request accounts for Mr. Knightley's remark about looking at an old Donwell map before moving a footpath to be sure that it would not inconvenience the people of Highbury. Edward wanted to measure the footpath from Farringdon on the 1741 Chawton estate map to make sure that the diversion would not similarly inconvenience his neighbors. There was no question of his making a fashionable circuitous drive to the House from the Gosport Road as this would have made difficulties for access to the church from the village, especially for funeral carts.

Edward, who on the death of his adoptive mother in 1812 took the name of Knight, was like his sister's Mr. Knightley in *Emma*, a responsible landlord who knew that privilege in landed estates carried duties. Not surprisingly, the middle-aged Mr. Knightley, who took a personal interest in his estate, the state of the harvest, drainage, fencing and new seed drills, was Edward's favorite character. We find Edward Knight telling his eldest son that when he inherits, "he is always accountable to God for the use of his possessions" and his own estate improvements were always considered in this light.

To Jane Austen's great delight Edward and his family spent the whole summer of 1813 at Chawton House while Godmersham was being refurbished. She wrote to her brother Frank at sea of their great pleasure in having daily contact with the Great House and of Edward's plans to make a new garden at the top of the lawn behind the House. The new study of the estate shows, however, that the land on which the garden was to be laid out was still tenanted and

that the tenant farmer's arable field was still enclosed by a hedgerow called Knicker Kocker Row. Undoubtedly, the side which bordered the Chawton House lawns would have been made into the kind of ornamental shrubbery that the Austens had always favored.

At Steventon they kept some of the existing glebe field hedgerows and ornamented them into shrubbery walks, and in the same way in their Chawton home, where they found two or three little enclosures with hedgerows they added flowering shrubs, fruit trees and herbaceous plants to the thorns and evergreens. It was Gilpin's *Forest Scenery* that inspired this type of garden improvement, when he pointed to Nature's shrubberies around the forest lawns in the New Forest. Fanny Price enthuses about such an ornamental shrubbery in the rectory in *Mansfield Park*, which three years ago was "nothing but a rough hedgerow along the upper side of the field."

Landscape improvement is a key issue in *Mansfield Park*, particularly whether or not to employ a professional, like Repton, to come and plan it for you at five guineas a day. Jane Austen was writing her great country house novel in 1812 and 1813, the time of the improvement discussions at Chawton House. Edmund Bertram reflects Edward's view that although some places require a "modern dress," he does not want to put himself in the hands of an improver, but "would rather have an inferior degree of beauty of my own choice, and acquired progressively." Most of Edward Knight's land was tenanted farmland so that "acquired progressively" was especially pertinent to his improvements. However, when he repossessed the Great House, he relet several of the fields on an annual tenancy so that he could manage his estate on the principle of aesthetic husbandry; he planned to take the land back for greensward or tree planting and then return the remaining land to arable or pasture on a new lease as best fitted his overall landscape scheme.

The new archival study shows that only a small part of Edward's plans had taken place before his sister's death in 1817; the northeast corner woodland, which was already in the curtilage of the House, was replanted, and it may be here that we hear of Cassandra planting 64 trees on a cold March day in 1814. The plan for the new garden referred to by Jane in 1813 is found to be dated 1818, and it appears that the footpath diversion from the home meadows discussed in 1811 also took place in 1818. As Jane Austen knew full well, improvements and money go hand in hand and a look at Edward's circumstances will account for the delay.

In 1814, there was talk of a distant Knight relative claiming the Chawton property and in October a writ of ejection was



*Engraving of the south front of Chawton House by G. F. Prosser, 1833.
Courtesy of Peggy McClean*



formally served. While the threat of eviction was still upon them, Jane Austen began to write *Persuasion*, which opens ominously with the letting of Kellynch to a naval man by an owner who could not afford to keep up the ancestral home. Edward's misfortune, of course, had nothing to do with extravagance, as in Sir Walter Elliot's case, and at Chawton it would happily be her own sailor brother Frank who took on the tenancy. It was not until 1816, after costs of £15,000, that the law suit was settled and immediately afterwards came the news of Henry's bankruptcy, as a result of which Edward lost another £20,000. He needed all the income he could get from the tenanted land and the improvement "memorandums" he liked Jane to make for him were set aside.

The Prosser view of 1833 (above) shows how Edward's ideas of aesthetic husbandry were finally accomplished. The Callender view (p. 7), painted for the family, shows Chawton as landscaped by his adoptive father, Thomas Knight, in the manner of Godmersham with open views and clumped trees in the Brownian style. G. F. Prosser shows a more embowered Chawton House set in a picturesque parkland scene, eminently worthy to be included in his "picturesque views of the seats of the nobility and gentry" of Hampshire.

Mavis Batey, President of the Garden History Society, has just written Jane Austen and the English Landscape, published by Barn Elms Publishing, 93 Castelnau, London SW13 9EL and Chicago Review Press, 1996.

THE EARLY WOMEN WRITERS: LIVES AND TIMES
SARAH FIELDING (1710-1768)

by
Peter Sabor
Université Laval

*T*was FIELDING's talent, with ingenuous Art.
To trace the secret mazes of the Heart.
— Mary Scott, *The Female Advocate* (1774)

Mary Scott's graceful tribute in *The Female Advocate*, that intriguing poetic celebration of "Female Geniuses," points directly to Sarah Fielding's remarkable power as a psychological novelist: her fascination with the motivations of her characters, and the frequent disparity between what they practice and what they profess. Scott was, however, by no means the first to praise Fielding in such terms. In his preface to the second edition of *The Adventures of David Simple* (1744), Sarah's brother Henry likewise commends her "vast Penetration into human Nature, a deep and profound Discernment of all the Mazes, Windings and Labyrinths, which perplex the Heart of Man." Samuel Richardson, who printed three of Sarah Fielding's novels and advised her on literary matters, was also struck by the depth of her insights; in fact, the merits of Sarah Fielding constitute one of the few topics on which Richardson and Henry Fielding could ever agree.

Mary Scott's lines would have made a fine epitaph for Sarah Fielding. She was less fortunate in her actual memorialist, Dr. John Hoadly, author of the tribute inscribed on her monument in Bath Abbey (reprinted on p. 11). Not only does Hoadly celebrate her personal virtues at the expense of her writings, he also makes basic errors about her life. She was the third, not the second, of five daughters of Edmund, not Henry, Fielding, and was born not in 1714 but in 1710, in East Stour, Dorset. She was only seven when her mother, Sarah Gould, died, and through the subsequent marriages of her military father, Edmund Fielding, she would acquire three stepmothers, from all of whom she and her siblings were alienated. Her maternal grandmother, Lady Gould, sued for custody of the surviving children, four girls and two boys, winning her case after a bitter dispute with Edmund Fielding.

While their elder brother Henry went to Eton, Sarah, her three sisters, and their shadowy younger brother Edmund were brought up by Lady Gould in Salisbury. Here, Sarah attended a boarding-school, met her future literary collaborators, James Harris and Jane Collier, and was tutored in Latin and Greek by Jane's brother, Arthur Collier. After Lady Gould's death in 1733, Sarah may have spent some years with her siblings at the family home in East Stour. It was sold in 1739, with the proceeds

divided among the six Fielding children. Sarah's sisters Catharine, Ursula, and Beatrice, with whom she had lived for most of her life, all died within a seven-month period, between 1750 and 1751, and her brother Henry only three years later, in 1754. In the same year, after sending David Garrick the incomplete draft of a play (now lost) which was never published or performed, Sarah moved from London to Bath, where she lived for the remainder of her uneventful life.

Her principal source of income was her writing, supplemented by financial contributions from her half-brother, Sir John Fielding, and various friends, such as the wealthy Ralph Allen, Elizabeth Montagu, Montagu's sister Sarah Scott, and Scott's companion Lady Barbara Montagu. During her final years, Scott and her sister were making plans for Sarah to join them in a community at Hitcham, Buckinghamshire, a female utopia modelled on that described in Scott's novel *Millenium Hall* (1762), but Fielding's ill health made such a move impossible before her death in April 1768. No portrait of her is known to have been made, her physical appearance was not recorded, and there is no contemporary talk of any romantic involvements. Thanks to the recent retrieval and publication of her surviving letters, however, and to the gradual recovery of information about her family and friends, we now have fuller access to her life than at any previous time.

Although Sarah Fielding's authorial career extended for only eighteen years, from 1744 to 1762, she published at least ten works: eight novels, a critical treatise, and a translation. In addition, she probably contributed passages to two of Henry Fielding's novels — *Joseph Andrews* (1742) and *A Journey from this World to the Next* (1743) — and to some of his journalistic ventures, and may have been the author, or co-author, of the *Histories of Some of the Penitents in the Magdalen House* (1760). She never became a literary celebrity, but most of her works went through multiple editions and for several decades she was among the most popular of all English novelists. By far the most widely read woman novelist in England in the mid-eighteenth century was the editor of *The Female Spectator*, Eliza Haywood, whose novels went through some thirty editions between 1750 and 1769 — somewhat behind Sterne or Henry Fielding, but ahead

of any other writer, male or female. Second among women novelists was Marie Jeanne Riccobini, with seventeen editions of her novels translated from the French, and a close third was Sarah Fielding with sixteen.¹

Fielding's first and most celebrated novel, *The Adventures of David Simple*, went through many English editions, and was translated

into German and French. First published in London in May 1744, with a brief, apologetic Advertisement by Sarah Fielding, it was soon reissued in Dublin. A second edition, with a much fuller and bolder preface by Henry Fielding replacing Sarah's and a text also substantially revised by Henry, appeared in July 1744; this revised second edition has been the basis for all subsequent reprints, so that Sarah's original text is as yet scarcely known. *David Simple* was one of twelve best-selling novels published in cheap, sixpenny illustrated abridgements by R. Snagg in 1775-76, together with three by Henry Fielding and three by Samuel Richardson.² Another illustrated edition of *David Simple*, published in the *Novelist's Magazine* series in 1782 and reprinted in 1788 and 1792, contained four illustrations by Thomas Stothard, one of them engraved by William Blake at the outset of his career. The Blake engraving, reproduced on p. 12, shows David, the ever-benevolent man of feeling, approaching the bedside of the exhausted Valentine, who is attended by his sister (and David's future wife), Camilla, while their furious landlady reproaches her tenants for failing to pay their rent. Camilla will soon recount to David how the machinations of her appalling stepmother Livia have reduced brother and sister to this distressed condition: a passage displaying Fielding's acute awareness of the reprehensible pleasure taken by men and women alike in ridiculing and humiliating one another.

Given the popularity of her first publication, it is not surprising that Fielding published two sequels — following the precedents of Bunyan with *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Defoe with *Robinson Crusoe* and Richardson with *Pamela*. The first of these sequels, *Famil-*

iar Letters between the Principal Characters in David Simple (1747), containing substantial contributions by Henry Fielding and by James Harris, is an epistolary novel. It is thus disconcerting to find Henry Fielding declaring in his preface — with an obvious thrust at Richardson — that “no one will contend, that the epistolary Style is in general the most proper to a Novelist, or that it hath been used by the best Writers of this Kind.” *Familiar Let-*

ters is only loosely connected with the original novel, but it continues to explore human frustrations and failures, and contains some of Sarah Fielding's strongest writing, especially in its remarkable concluding chapter, entitled “A Vision.” First published by subscription, it was twice reprinted and translated into German, but there is no modern edition and it is Sarah Fielding's least-known work today. In 1753, Sarah Fielding published a final volume of *David Simple*, this time with a preface by Jane Collier. Unlike *Familiar Letters*, it is a true continuation of the original work, but much shorter, more compressed, and darker in tone. Cynthia, one of the strongest feminist voices in any of Fielding's novels, is removed to Jamaica for much of the latter work, and a series of appalling disasters befalls the extended Simple family. This relentlessly sombre work was reprinted only once in the eighteenth century, but its inclusion in Malcom Kelsall's edition of 1969 has created considerable recent interest.

Sarah Fielding's *The Governess; or, Little Female Academy* (1749), the first full-length children's novel in English as well as the precursor of numerous later school stories, was her second most popular work. It went through some twenty editions

in London, Dublin, and Philadelphia before 1804, and was translated into German and Swedish. Two modern editions have been published, one in 1968 with a comprehensive introduction by Jill Grey, and an excerpt, “The Story of Celia and Chloe,” is printed as the opening piece in the recent *Oxford Book of Children's Stories* (1993), although the editor, Jan Mark, finds the story's moral “deeply repugnant” (p. xii). Jill Grey also believes that “modern children would find it somewhat deficient



In this City lived and died
SARAH
Second Daughter of General Henry Fielding;
by his first Wife, Daughter of Judge Gould
Whose Writings will be known.
As Incentives to Virtue and an Honour to her Sex.
When this Marble shall be Dust.
She was born MDCCXIV and died April MDCCLXVIII.
Her unaffected Manners, candid Mind,
Her Heart benevolent, and Soul resign'd
Were more her Praise, than all she knew or thought,
Though Athens' Wisdom to her Sex she taught.
The Revd. Dr. John Hoadly, her Friend.
For the Honour of the Dead, & the Emulation of the Living.
Inscribes this deficient Memorial
of her Virtues and Accomplishments.

in excitement" (p. 81), yet my own six-year-old daughter, for one, took a keen interest in the story of the "cruel Giant Barbarico, the good Giant Benefico, and the pretty little Dwarf Mignon."

Less than a week after *The Governess* was first published, *Remarks on Clarissa, Addressed to the Author*, appeared anonymously. It was never reprinted or translated in Fielding's lifetime, and had to wait over two centuries first to be attributed to her and then for a modern edition to appear. It is, however, an astute and wide-ranging response to *Clarissa*, in which a group of disputants discuss what they regard as the novel's strengths and weaknesses. Richardson's critics have belatedly acknowledged its importance: Tom Keymer, for example, contends that it vies with Diderot's celebrated *Eloge de Richardson* "as the period's acutest published criticism of his writing."³ Many of the footnotes that Richardson added to the second and third editions of his novel, as well as the much-expanded preface and postscript, answer criticisms that Sarah Fielding had first raised and dealt with herself in *Remarks on Clarissa*. Richardson's influence on Sarah Fielding has often been discussed, but his debt to her in revising *Clarissa* is also substantial.

Fielding's most unusual and complex fiction, *The Cry: A New Dramatic Fable*, probably written in collaboration with Jane Collier, was published in London and in Dublin in 1754, a year after Collier's caustic *Essay on the Art of Ingeniously Tormenting*, but not subsequently reprinted or translated. Eighteenth-century readers — as the remarks of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Hester Lynch Piozzi, and some of Richardson's female correspondents indicate — could make little of this difficult, innovative work, but its experimental nature, crossing the boundaries between novel, essay and drama, has proved attractive to recent critics. Martin Battestin and Clive Probyn term it "a combination of allegory, philosophy (including a tough-minded critique of Shaftesbury's *Characteristicks*), feminism, and social satire," and note its "thematic concern for female self-definition." J. Paul Hunter, similarly, admires the depiction of Cyllinda, the novel's radical secondary heroine, as "a new woman of the 1750s — assertive, inquisitive, intelligent, learned, self-reliant, and strong,"

and contends that the novel's "representation of ordinary life in mid-century is in some ways more adventurous and searching than that of either Fielding's brother or her friend Richardson."⁴

The Lives of Cleopatra and Octavia, apparently drafted in 1748 when subscription receipts were printed, but first published by subscription only in 1757, went through a second edition a year later. It was Sarah Fielding's second venture in imaginative autobiography, the first being a narrative of Anne Boleyn, her prob-

able contribution to Henry Fielding's *A Journey from this World to the Next*. Mary Hays drew on Fielding's depiction of Cleopatra and Octavia and their part in Roman history for her *Female Biography* (1803), but, like *The Cry*, the *Lives* has found more sympathy with twentieth- than with eighteenth-century readers. Christopher Johnson, editor of an excellent recent edition, has shown that Fielding's use of historical sources is far more extensive than had previously been suspected, and describes the *Lives* as "perhaps the most imaginative work of classical scholarship produced during the Augustan age."⁵ Lucy Hughes-Hallett and Linda Bree both note that this is the first version of what Bree terms a "highly gender-conscious story" written by a woman, although Fielding's many borrowings make declarations about gender issues here problematic. A passage, for example, in which Cleopatra describes her river voyage to meet Mark Antony — and which Bree believes is a woman's deconstruction of Shakespeare's celebrated lines

in *Antony and Cleopatra* — is in fact taken almost verbatim from one of Fielding's male sources, Charles Fraser.⁶

Fielding's last two novels were better received by her contemporaries. *The History of the Countess of Dellwyn* (1759), which contains a remarkably substantial and ambitious critical preface, appeared in London and Dublin editions, was translated into German, and a lengthy excerpt, *Mrs. Bilson's Story*, was serialized in a London newspaper and a Newcastle magazine shortly after the novel's first publication. *The History of Ophelia* (1760) was, like *David Simple*, reprinted with illustrations in the *Novelist's Magazine* series, and translated into German and French. Set in Wales, featuring a strikingly naive young heroine, and anti-



Illustration by Thomas Stothard, engraved by William Blake, for a 1782 edition of *David Simple*.

pating Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) with a captivity scene in a fully Gothicized castle, this good-humored novel is lighter than any other of Fielding's writings.

Fielding's final publication, a translation from the Greek of Xenophon's *Memoirs of Socrates*, attracted over 600 subscribers on its first publication in 1762, was commended by both the *Monthly* and *Critical* reviews for its fidelity to the original, and went through four subsequent eighteenth-century editions. She received valuable help with parts of her translation, duly acknowledged in the text, from the classicist James Harris, who had previously provided similar assistance both to Henry Fielding and to Elizabeth Carter for her pioneering translation of the *Works of Epictetus* (1758), a publication that provided a significant precedent for a woman entering the masculine world of classical scholarship. Part of Fielding's work, her translation of the "Defence of Socrates," was used in at least two nineteenth-century compilations, and also included in an Everyman edition of *Socratic Discourses*, first published in 1910 and frequently reprinted.

The best-known, and most tantalizing, remark on Sarah Fielding by one of her contemporaries is by Samuel Richardson, who in December 1756 reread *Familiar Letters between the Principal Characters in David Simple*. Having found "many new beauties" in the work, Richardson exclaimed in a letter to the author:

What a knowledge of the human heart! Well might a critical judge of writing say, as he did to me, that your late brother's knowledge of it was not (fine writer as he was) comparable to your's. His was but as the knowledge of the outside of a clock-work machine, while your's was that of all the finer springs and movements of the inside.⁷

The anonymous "critical judge" preferring Sarah's psychological insights to Henry's more superficial understanding of human nature may well have been Samuel Johnson. In Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Johnson is said to have made a similar remark, in spring 1768, contrasting Richardson and Henry Fielding: "there was as great a difference between them as between a man who knew how a watch was made, and a man who could tell the hour by looking at the dial-plate." Johnson may have varied the terms of the comparison twelve years later, making sure that Henry Fielding came off worse in both instances. Another anonymous critic, the author of *Critical Remarks on Sir Charles Grandison, Clarissa, and Pamela* (1754), took a different stand, contrasting both Henry and Sarah Fielding favourably with Richardson. The critic describes Sarah as "the ingenious authoress of *David Simple*, perhaps the best moral romance that we have, in which there is not one loose expression, one impure, one unchaste idea; from the perusal of which, no man can rise unimproved" (p. 19). In 1785, Clara Reeve commended Fielding's novels in her history of prose fiction, *The Progress of Romance*, allowing the character Euphrasia to declare Sarah's writings in some respects superior to her brother's.

Such praise was still possible in the late eighteenth century, but would have been unthinkable for the next two hundred years. During the course of the nineteenth century, Sarah Fielding,

like almost all women writers before Austen and Burney, fell into ever deeper obscurity. Julia Kavanagh, the pioneering author of *English Women of Letters* (1863), did her best to revive her memory, but had to concede that even Fielding's most popular novel, *The Adventures of David Simple*, was by now "long forgotten" (p. 51). Another Victorian woman, Clementina Black, begins her essay on Sarah Fielding in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1888 by declaring that her once famous subject "is probably not known at this moment to a dozen readers," and refers to the translation of Xenophon only as one that Fielding "is reported to have made" (p. 485). The only nineteenth-century edition of *David Simple*, published in 1822, was mistitled *Adventures in Search of a Real Friend* and attributed to Henry Fielding. When the novel next appeared almost a century later, in 1904, it was in a series aptly named "Half-Forgotten Books."

Happily, after almost two centuries of neglect, Sarah Fielding's works are now being widely read and discussed once again. Editions of almost all her novels are either in print or in preparation. Her surviving correspondence, together with that of Henry Fielding, has been published in a richly annotated edition by Martin Battestin and Clive Probyn. My own forthcoming edition of *David Simple* will make Sarah Fielding's original text of that novel, unrevised by Henry Fielding, readily available for the first time since 1744. Doctoral students have produced at least eight unpublished dissertations on her writings. Her place in bluestocking circles and her role in the development of sensibility and sentimentalism have both been the subject of much recent debate. Linda Bree's fine new monograph in the Twayne's English authors series, which is, remarkably, the first ever book on Sarah Fielding in English, makes a compelling case for the originality and continuing significance of its subject. In the wake of revisionist studies such as this, Sarah Fielding is now becoming established not merely as the friend of the author of *Clarissa* or as the sister of the author of *Tom Jones*, but as a key figure in the history of the English novel.

Peter Sabor is Professor of English at Université Laval, Quebec. His publications on Sarah Fielding include an edition of *Remarks on Clarissa* (Augustan Reprint Society, 1985), and forthcoming editions of *The Adventures of David Simple* (University Press of Kentucky) and *The History of Ophelia* (Broadview Press).

1. See James Raven, *British Fiction 1750-1770* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1987), p. 14.
2. See Park Honan, "Richardson's Influence on Jane Austen," in Valerie Grosvenor Myer, ed., *Samuel Richardson: Passion and Prudence* (London: Vision Press, 1986), p. 173.
3. T. Keymer, "Jane Collier, Reader of Richardson, and the Fire Scene in *Clarissa*," in Albert J. Rivero, ed., *New Essays on Samuel Richardson* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), p. 142.
4. M. Battestin and C. Probyn, eds., *The Correspondence of Henry and Sarah Fielding* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. xxiv; J. P. Hunter, "Novels and History and Northrop Frye," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 24 (1990-91): pp. 236-37.
5. C. Johnson, ed., *The Lives of Cleopatra and Octavia* (Lewissburg: Bucknell University Press, 1994), p. 16.
6. See L. Bree, *Sarah Fielding* (New York: Twayne, 1996), pp. 110, 113; *The Lives of Cleopatra and Octavia*, p. 21.
7. See *The Correspondence of Henry and Sarah Fielding*, p. 132 and n. 16.



MEN, MOVIES AND MASSES AT JASNA's (JANE AUSTEN SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA) 18TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

by
Elsa A. Solender
JASNA President

Although "Jane Austen and Her Men" was the official theme of the eighteenth Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Jane Austen Society of North America (JASNA - October 11 to 13, 1996 in Richmond, VA), a persistent sub-theme — the phenomenon known as "Jane Fever" or "Jane-mania" — added extra electricity to the proceedings.

Before and after conference sessions — in coffee shops, restaurants, lounges and bedrooms — Janeites buzzed with questions about the films, mini-series, magazine articles and news stories inspired by their favorite author: "Who was the better Emma, Alicia Silverstone in *Clueless* or Gwyneth Paltrow in *Emma*?" "Was Emma Thompson too old to play Elinor?" "Laurence Olivier or Colin Firth: Who's your favorite Darcy?" "Did you see the piece on the front page of *The New York Times* 'Sunday News in Review'?" The one in *Newsweek*? *Time*?" Many speculated about how much longer the rage for Jane could continue.

JASNA's AGM is a hybrid happening that attracts established scholars, Regency masqueraders, amateur biographers, historians and literary critics — and a sprinkling of avid, articulate, mostly harmless Jane groupies who are usually as knowledgeable as the professors.

Last year, a thousand new enthusiasts joined JASNA, which currently boasts some 3,250 members in the United States and Canada (and some in Europe, the Middle East and Australia). Effects of the membership surge became apparent when the conference was oversold on the early registration deadline, disappointing scores whose checks were returned in the next few days and hundreds more who had delayed in applying. Local volunteers, directed valiantly by Carolyn Taylor, expected perhaps 450 to attend, but had to line up extra bedrooms for more than 600 registrants and guests. About 25-30 percent were first-timers.

Five plenary speakers explored the conference theme. Laura Tracy, psychotherapist, expert on women's issues and former professor of literature, appraised Austen's male characters for their "relational competency." Brian Southam, Chairman of Britain's Jane Austen Society, revisited his earlier findings on

Austen's use — and comic manipulation — of traits of the "ideal gentleman" portrayed in Samuel Richardson's novel, *Sir Charles Grandison*. In complementary presentations, Beverly Taylor and Susan Navrette (faculty members at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill) analyzed male "heartbreakers, caretakers and nestmakers." Taylor likened Austen's plots to dance figures; Navrette cited Alfred Hitchcock and Lord Chesterfield to demonstrate how "The Art of Pleasing is the Art of Deceiving."

A conversation between George Holbert Tucker, Virginia journalist/editor and a biographer of Austen, and Irene Collins, Honorary Senior Fellow at Liverpool University and author of *Jane Austen and the Clergy*, focused on biographical issues in the lives of the men in the Austen family circle, including two admirals, several clergymen, one country gentleman and a failed banker.

Eighteen breakout sessions over two hours tempted potential listeners with such intriguing titles as: "Male Whiners," "The Lady and the Sword," "Men's Fashions," and "Captain Wentworth, British Imperialism and Personal Romance." To relieve the inevitable frustrations aroused by having to choose a mere two tidbits from such a full plate of goodies, several popular speakers — including Jan Fergus, Deborah Kaplan and Susan Morgan — reprised their presentations in the second hour.

As always, the AGM featured banquets, breakfasts, contests, and sales of books and Austen memorabilia, including coffee mugs emblazoned with quotations from W. D. Howells (*She is a passion and a creed, if not quite a religion*) and E. M. Forster (*I am a Jane Austenite, and therefore slightly imbecile about Jane Austen*). Tours of the host city and its environs were optional activities. Outgoing JASNA President Garnet Bass recited one of the semi-official limericks composed annually by Irene Dias of Ohio. A sample:

*Our elegant, handsome, though vain,
Mr. Darcy, prompts this refrain,
Imbued with much pride,
Yet down deep inside,
The cream of the crop, I maintain.*

Other highlights were an exhibition of Fabergé jewels at the Richmond Museum of Art; a rousing performance by the UNC Men's Glee Club; a performance of *Sir Charles Grandison*, a play Austen wrote as a family entertainment with her niece, and the exhibition of the winner of an art competition, a patchwork quilt on the conference theme hand stitched over 500 hours by Catalina Hannan of New York.

In the closing event, Carol Shields of Winnipeg — Pulitzer Prize winning novelist and JASNA member — engaged in a dialogue with her daughter, Anne Giardini, an attorney and author. With Austenian irony and style, the mother-daughter team contrasted shallow psychological platitudes about the sexes in John Grey's trendy bestseller, *Men are from Mars, Women are*

from *Venus*, with Austen's unerring, remarkably up-to-date insights into the behavior of men and women.

Sunday night, after most people had departed, Paula Schwartz, a novelist from Annandale, Virginia, issued an informal, word of mouth invitation for a discussion of "The Movies" in her room. Expecting perhaps twenty to turn up, she had to engage a conference room to accommodate more than seventy whose appetite for "Jane Talk" was still unsated.

The revels resume in San Francisco (October 3-5) on the 1997 AGM's theme, "Sanditon: The New Direction?"



CHAWTON HOUSE LIBRARY UPDATE

by

Kate Moulton
Chawton Librarian

I have a ferocious case of book envy. That's how I knew I was in the right place when I came through the door to the library in Mountain View and immediately banged my shins on a box of books. "There are Sarah Fielding first editions in there," I muttered under my breath. "I can feel them." Even better, I suspected those Fielding's were cuddled up right next to some Aphra Behns, or maybe even a Fanny Burney or two.

Thus began my adventure as the new Librarian for the Chawton House Library. Before I start rambling about how pleased I am to be here, I want to thank Julia Huot and Gaye King for all the work they did for the collection. While I'm at it, I would also like to thank Professor Isobel Grundy, Chawton Library Director, for her invaluable advice, as well as Stuart Bennett, Chawton Library Consultant, for putting up with my interminable questions. I've learned a great deal from Stuart already. For example, a "contemporary half-calf red Moroccan" is a description of a book, not an order placed at a Los Angeles coffee bar.

To date, we have about 3,700 titles, all of them truly remarkable, either for their rarity, or simply because they are an intrinsic part of women's literary history. You all know about the Austen manuscript of *Sir Charles Grandison*. Now let me tell you about some of the other things we have to be excited about.

We recently acquired a copy of the second edition (1797) of Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian; or, the Confessional of the Black Penitents*. Stuart Bennett kindly supplied us with Charlotte Lennox's *Euphemia*, as well as a beautiful copy of Jane Collier's *The Art of Ingeniously Tormenting*, both of which were on our "wish list." I was thrilled to get a copy of *The Muses Library*, published in 1741. This work was edited by Elizabeth Cooper, and is the first English Miscellany to be compiled by a woman. Mary

Pix's *The Spanish Wives* is another recent and impressive addition to the collection. Isobel Grundy and I were also excited to get our hands on a curious manuscript by a young woman named Sarah Foster, published in 1807. Foster herself is an unknown, but her school exercise book, entitled *Dictates Given at Mr. and Mrs. Kemplay's Ladies' Boarding School*, provides us with an excellent example of the kind of work a young lady of Jane Austen's time would have been assigned at school.

For now, I am thoroughly occupied in unwrapping parcels from book dealers. As I unwrap layers of tissue paper and bubble wrap and search for space for our new acquisitions, I look forward to the day when the Centre is established at Chawton and we can all learn more from these long-neglected treasures.



DIRECTOR'S REPORT

by

Susan Maher
Director of the Centre

It is a pleasure to be able to announce that the Centre has received planning consent for the restoration, renovation, and repair (the three "r's") of Chawton House, along with its park and farmlands. The East Hampshire District Council approved our plan on a vote of 11 to 1 on January 16th. We will be receiving their modifications in the near future.

This whole process has taken much longer than any of us anticipated, and, in fact, we are still not ready to pick up a hammer. Far from it. The planning application paints a picture with very broad brush strokes, but the planning regulations for a listed building are painted with a very small brush indeed! In addition, we still have some concerns about several other issues pertaining to the landscape and our plans for the farm. Consequently, we will continue to work closely with our architects and the planners and will not proceed until we are certain of achieving all the goals of the Centre.

I would like to use this forum to thank our extremely hard-working English partners. Gilly Drummond has given more time and hard work to this project than we can possibly convey. Her thoroughness, thoughtfulness, and almost encyclopedic knowledge about gardens and this process continues to be invaluable. She takes phone calls from us at almost any time of day (and night), and I am certain her family thinks she now has a full-time job! Richard Knight has been a stalwart from the very beginning, and has more than once calmed the histrionics of several key players. His daughter, Cassie, and his son, Adam, have played important roles, and remained unflappable through several extremely trying meetings. Finally, Adrian Thatcher, the Project Manager, has proven over and over again to be exactly the right man for this job. Now that we have gotten past the first step, I feel more optimistic about our future.

The Female Spectator

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We encourage your comments and suggestions.
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