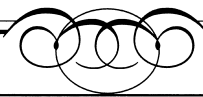


# The Female Spectator

CHAWTON HOUSE LIBRARY



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## THE MINERVA PRESS AND THE ILLUSTRATION OF THE LATE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY NOVEL

**H**elen Cole is a PhD candidate at the University of Southampton, where she also recently successfully completed the MA in Eighteenth-Century Studies.

In a recent issue of this publication, Holly Luhning used evidence drawn from the physical appearance of a book to chip away at a particularly enduring piece of received wisdom: the notion that the archetypal reader of fiction by early eighteenth-century novelist Eliza Haywood was of low social status.<sup>1</sup> The costly contemporary binding found on examples of Haywood's novels in the Chawton collection neatly contradicts this suggestion: these expensively-packaged volumes may themselves prove to be unusual or exceptional, but are nevertheless testimony to the fact that someone, somewhere, with money to spend and a library to fill, held these books in high regard.

In recent years, scholars have placed increasing weight on the evidence derived from the appearance of a book in its original physical form. Janine Barchas' *Graphic Design, Print Culture, and the Eighteenth-Century Novel* is a case in point, taking as its starting point the proposition that 'the eighteenth-century novel ... relies heavily upon its own physical presentation as a printed book to guide the reader in interpretation'.<sup>2</sup> This is an idea I am keeping in view as I set out on my own project, analysing the part played by graphic illustration in shaping the perception of fiction in the 1700s.

Many little-known eighteenth-century novels have become a fraction less obscure since the digital images of some 26 million pages of text published in that period became available through *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* ('ECCO'). Looking through a novel on ECCO, the feeling is of being as close to the book itself as is possible short of handling the real thing. Given the apparent faithfulness of the digital version to the original material, it is easy to regard the two as interchangeable, and just as easy to miss something important in the process. A natural first step when looking through a book on ECCO is to click on the title page, and yet that

title page is often unobtrusively labelled 'image 2'. Most researchers will be too intent on the text to notice this, let alone to pause and discover what 'image 1' might be.

In fact, image 1 may be a facsimile of a bookplate pasted into a book at some point in its life, or a facsimile signature of a long-ago owner, sometimes traced with care on the fly leaf,



*The frontispiece to Days of Chivalry (1797) bears no obvious relation to the novel's narrative*

## *The Female Spectator*

In this issue, two scholars who recently completed the University of Southampton's MA in Eighteenth-Century Studies share the fruits of their research using the Chawton collection, while the Library's news includes details of a major forthcoming conference and an exciting new acquisition for the library collection.

Winter 2009

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sometimes incised with vigorous strokes. Occasionally it turns out to be an engraved portrait: the reigning monarch perhaps, the author, or the alleged author. Sometimes, image 1 proves to be a frontispiece in the form of an engraved scene from the novel it prefigures. But what works for the text doesn't work quite so well for the frontispiece: not infrequently, the on-screen image is saturated in black, the figures difficult to make out, details of architecture, costume and facial expression lost. Using the English Short Title Catalogue (now online too), I can find out whether a novel is known to have a frontispiece or not; if the novel is reproduced on ECCO, then its digital facsimile will help me to check roughly what the illustration amounts to. To get beyond this, though, I have to turn to the books themselves, in their original form.

For my MA dissertation last year, I focused in part on the illustrations used in novels issued by one particular publishing house in the late eighteenth century – the Minerva Press, founded by William Lane. Before I could engage with the main critical assumption I wished to test, I encountered another which reminded me how important the evidence yielded by the physical book can be.

The Minerva Press, responsible in the 1790s for 'about one-third of all the novels published in London', turned out the sort of titles critics liked to characterise as ephemeral, suitable only to be read in haste and tossed aside ('buzzing insects', the *Critical Review* pronounced irritably).<sup>3</sup> This perception has proved so enduring that even Dorothy Blakey in her 1939 study of Minerva Press novels regarded them as historically interesting but of minimal literary value. Yet the physical appearance of some Minerva Press novels at Chawton House points to a gap in perception: critics may have dismissed this literature as ephemeral and disposable, but not all readers did. Lady Frances Anne Vane Stewart, for one, must have taken a different view as she gave instructions for her copies of *Munster Cottage Boy* and *Bridal of Dunamore* to be bound in the gilded and monogrammed green morocco which still makes a striking statement among the Chawton collection. Equally, someone in the family of the Earl of Granard was not ashamed to claim Minerva Press novels among his or her reading: the family's elaborate contemporary armorial bookplate has been carefully pasted into *The Vicar of Lansdowne*.<sup>4</sup>

If one critical commonplace can be cast in doubt this way, might it prove equally possible to dislodge some assumptions about illustrated fiction in this period, by looking closely at the books themselves? In recent years, scholars have tended to suggest that new novels were rarely issued with engraved illustrations. The costs associated with copper-plate engravings are assumed to have been prohibitive, so a publisher could be expected to wait to see how a new novel would be received before hazarding the cost of illustration for a subsequent edition, if any. By this way of thinking, he was particularly unlikely to lavish illustration upon fiction that might not 'last' – the sort of fiction for which the words 'Minerva Press' were regarded as shorthand in some quarters.

Yet Blakey's early study of the Press claimed (without marshalling a great deal of evidence) that 'engraved embellishment was definitely a part of Minerva policy'.<sup>5</sup> Writing in the 1930s, Blakey was of course working without the benefit of ECCO, easy access to the English Short Title Catalogue and, above all, easy access to a sizeable collection of Minerva Press novels concentrated in one collection, as at Chawton House. I wanted to find out first of all whether or not Minerva Press novels in the period 1770 to 1800 were commonly illustrated, and then to establish whether or not any patterns were discernible in the way the illustrations were used. Given that decisions about illustration almost invariably lay with the publisher at this time (with very little input, in general, from the author), I hoped to tease out something of the commercial thinking behind the way these illustrations were chosen and deployed.

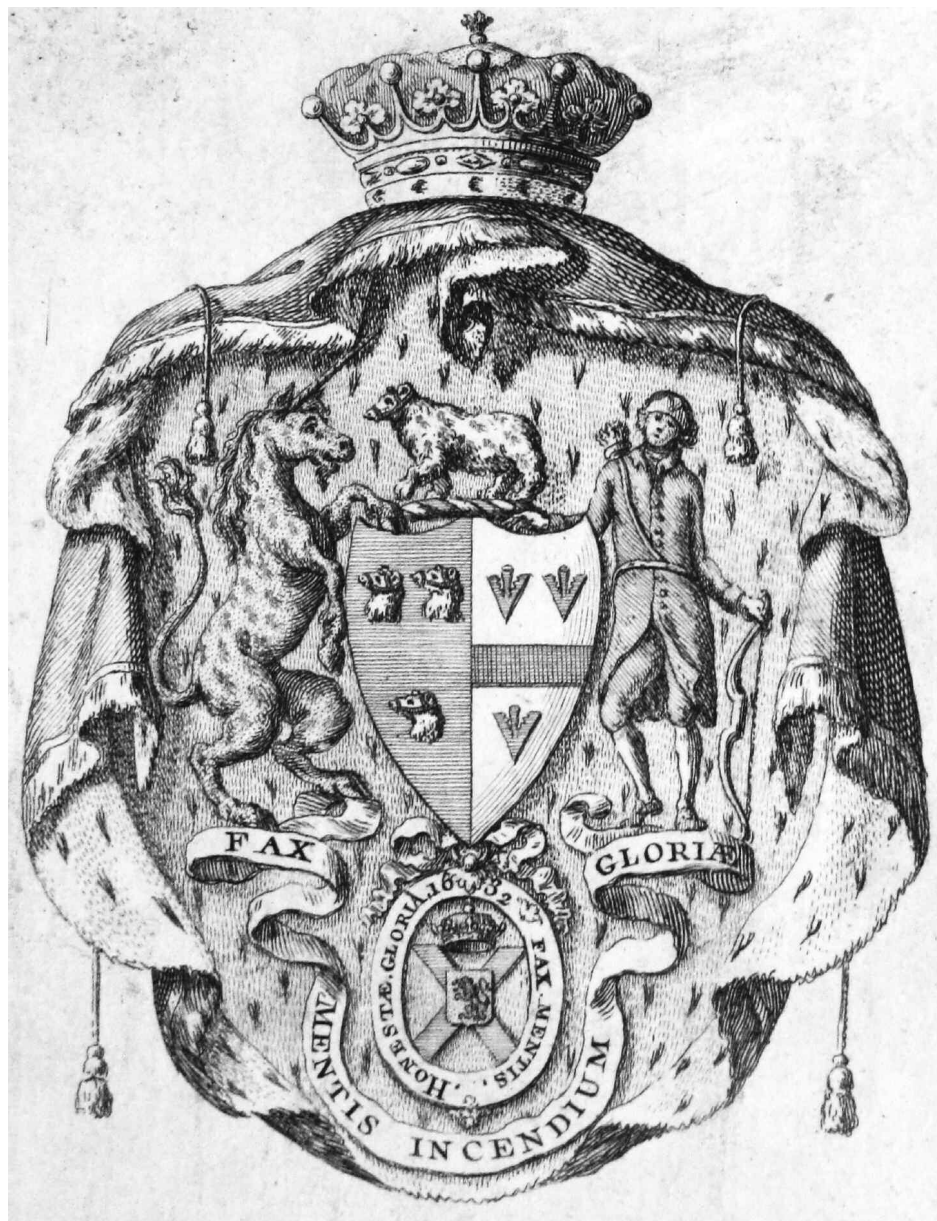
Armed with Blakey's bibliography of the Minerva Press (supplemented by Deborah McLeod in a doctoral thesis of 1997), I was able to establish how many (and which) novels published by Lane between 1770 and 1800 were illustrated, before looking at the content of the illustrations themselves. I soon encountered one of the frustrations of investigating books in this period: a novel might be listed in one collection as having a frontispiece, but another copy of the same novel held elsewhere might not, perhaps testifying to Dorothy Blakey's warning that 'as the Minerva frontispieces were all tipped in on plate paper, the chances of the illustration being dropped out by the binder were numerous'.<sup>6</sup>

One of the first Minerva Press titles I looked at in detail was *Days of Chivalry*, published anonymously in 1798. This is a tale which enticed its eighteenth-century reader with the exotic appeal of the distant past, yet it is graced with an illustration whose figures are entirely *à la mode*. The frontispiece, also unsigned and unattributed, features two young women in a garden, wearing the flowing gowns familiar from many a television adaptation of a Jane Austen novel. I was intrigued by the illustration: it bore no obvious relation to the text. Prepared in all likelihood for some other purpose, the engraving showed signs of having been customised for this

particular use, the swag bearing the novel's title rather clumsily added, for instance. Given its resemblance to a fashion plate, this image may originally have been exactly that.

*Days of Chivalry* was not alone among Minerva Press novels in receiving this particular illustrative treatment, and I began to come across other examples. It seemed that the pairing of a novel with an unrelated or very loosely related illustration depicting two women in conversation became something of a trope in Lane's publications during the 1790s. Four examples include *Femina*, *Netley Abbey* and *The Abbey of St Asaph* (all dating from 1795), and *The House of Marley* (from 1797). Like *Days of Chivalry*, each of these titles was published anonymously: their illustrations were likewise anonymous in design and execution. It may be that these images were commissioned or acquired as a set, to be used as and when required.

At the same time, illustrations of a quite different kind make



The armorial bookplate indicating that the family of the Earl of Granard originally owned Chawton House Library's copy of Regina Maria Roche's *The Vicar of Lansdowne* (1789)

an intermittent appearance in Minerva Press novels of this period. These depict scenes from the text and, in contrast to the 'fashion plate' images, seem to have been commissioned individually. They are again generally anonymous in design and engraving. These are the frontispieces that aim to set the reader's pulse running with a glimpse of the adventures that lie in store. Why did Lane make use of two very different types of image? Did he commission designers and engravers only for novels which in some way warranted them – texts he adjudged to be best-sellers, perhaps? Was it his default position simply to rummage among a set of plates engraved in advance, selecting one that decorated but could hardly be said to illustrate the text? I looked in turn at the novels of some of Lane's identifiable authors to see if an explanation would emerge.

The volumes which took their place on the shelves of Lady Vane Stewart and the Earl of Granard were among the later works of Regina Maria Roche, who had achieved a notable success with her third novel, *The Children of the Abbey* (1796). If hers is a familiar name today, it is in the context of a fleeting reference in *Northanger Abbey*: her fourth novel, *Clermont*, is among the list of gothic novels recommended by Isabella Thorpe to Catherine Morland. Both *The Children of the Abbey* and *Clermont* carry frontispieces featuring lovely and vulnerable heroines in attitudes of distress. Yet of the fifteen further titles by Roche that the Minerva Press went on to publish, none was illustrated. One possibility is that Lane spotted the potential of *The Children of the Abbey* straight away when offered the manuscript, and opted to do what he could to aid the book's prospects with an attractive frontispiece. It would then have been natural to commission an engraving for the author's next novel. The absence of illustration thereafter could mean that Roche's appeal was now sufficiently established to pre-empt the need for illustration as an inducement to buy or borrow her novels. Another possibility, however, is that a decline in Roche's commercial appeal precluded further expenditure on illustration.

For comparison, I focused on the publication history of two of Roche's near contemporaries, Anna Maria Mackenzie and Anna Maria Bennett. Mackenzie's roll-call of novels contains some titles with illustrations and some without, and again the rationale behind the publisher's policy seemed elusive. Among Lane's authors Bennett was perhaps the most consistently successful in terms of sales: if he reserved expenditure on illustration for his surest 'hits', it should follow that many of Bennett's popular successes – most particularly *The Beggar Girl and her Benefactors* and *Vicissitudes Abroad* (1797 and 1806) – are illustrated. But they are not. In fact, only the third of Bennett's novels, *Ellen, Countess of Howel* (1794) may have carried a frontispiece, and even this is uncertain.<sup>7</sup> There was simply no tidy pattern to the way in which frontispieces were distributed throughout the Minerva Press titles I examined.

William Lane was both practised and shrewd, but the fiction

that issued from his presses was a relatively recent phenomenon and he often had to make a difficult call when it came to illustrating them. The seeming unpredictability with which he made these decisions suggests something of an experiment: testing this, trying that. The technological advances that would revolutionise the graphic illustration in novels were just around the corner, but in the 1790s things still feel fluid: as yet, nothing was cast in stone when it came to the engraved frontispiece in contemporary fiction.

I'm now working regularly in the Chawton House Library, going back to the early years of the eighteenth century and piecing together the way that literary illustration evolved during the decades that preceded the Minerva Press. The more early romances, amatory novels, novels of sentiment and tales of sensibility pass through my hands, the more I hope to understand how writers, illustrators and above all publishers responded to and shaped readers' changing expectations of graphic images in the books they read. By the time I arrive at the late eighteenth century and encounter the Minerva Press once again, I hope to have greater insight into the factors that came into play each time William Lane weighed up whether and how to illustrate the latest manuscript to make its way off his presses and out into the literary marketplace.

<sup>1</sup> Holly Luhnig, 'Literary Status and Material Culture: Eliza Haywood's Early Books', in *The Female Spectator*, 12, 1 (winter 2008).

<sup>2</sup> Janine Barchas, *Graphic Design, Print Culture, and the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> *The English Novel, 1770-1829: A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles*, Peter Garside, James Raven and Rainer Schöwerling, eds., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), i, p. 79. The quotation from the *Critical Review* is taken from the review of Eliza Cleland (1788), CR65 (June 1788) p. 486.

<sup>4</sup> These volumes are in the collection of the Chawton House Library. All three are novels by Regina Maria Roche, published by William Lane and his successors: *The Vicar of Lansdowne* (second edition, 1800), *Munster Cottage Boy* (1820) and *Bridal of Dunamore* (1823).

<sup>5</sup> Dorothy Blakey, *The Minerva Press* (Oxford: University Press, 1939), p. 89.

<sup>6</sup> Dorothy Blakey, p. 89.

<sup>7</sup> Dorothy Blakey records a frontispiece to this novel, but it has not been possible to view it: neither the copy viewed by Deborah McLeod, nor the copy reproduced on Eighteenth Century Collections Online, nor the Chawton House Library copy (which appears to have been Bennett's own) includes an illustration.

## A 'CHAWTON EXPERIENCE': WOMEN AND EDUCATION IN THE *GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE* AND THE *ANTI-JACOBIN* (1797-1799)

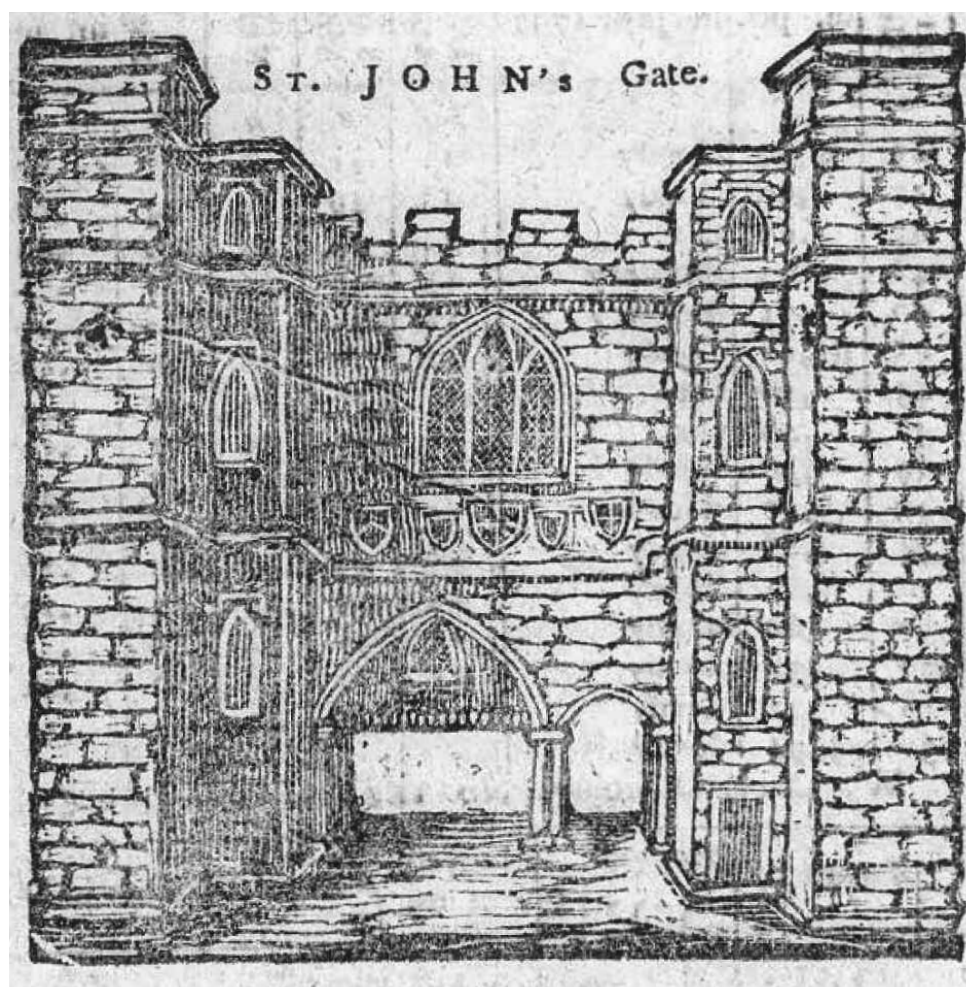
**H**aving previously successfully completed the MA in Eighteenth-Century Studies at the University of Southampton, Helen Loader is currently undertaking a PhD in the School of Education at the University of Winchester.

There can be relatively few Master of Arts courses that grant students access to documentary sources and surroundings quite as remarkable as those to be found at Chawton House Library. As a student enrolled on the Southampton University Eighteenth-Century Studies course, the well-documented collection of female conduct literature, novels, and pamphlets were as just as thrilling to a researcher of the history of women's education as they were to fellow students pursuing interests in Jane Austen and those conducting more general literary-based research. The tranquillity of the reading rooms and the beauty of the grounds engender a serenity and atmosphere that a brief narrative such as this cannot hope to capture, but all students who are lucky enough to have been, would undoubtedly agree that they were captivated by the 'Chawton experience'.

It may not necessarily have been the first place that a historian of women's education would look, but pursuing the Fellow of Chawton House, Dr Gillian Dow's, suggestion of embarking on a study of eighteenth-century review magazines was amply rewarded; some of the most intriguing insights into eighteenth-century views on a broad range of educational matters are secreted in the volumes of the *Gentleman's Magazine* and the *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*. Derek Roper's *Reviewing Before the Edinburgh* 1788-1802 remains the most comprehensive and well-established study of eighteenth century reviews.<sup>1</sup> It does not, however, cover the *Gentleman's Magazine* or the *Anti-Jacobin* on the basis that the reviews in these periodicals were not as comprehensive as their counterparts, the *Analytical Review*, the *Monthly Review*, the *English Review*, the

*Critical Review* or the *British Critic*. Whilst Roper's measured decision is undoubtedly valid, the longevity and scope of the material contained in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, in particular, provides opportunities of exploring relatively unexamined primary sources for scholars of both the eighteenth and nineteenth century. This is confirmed in William Stafford's recent publication about masculinity in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, which looks at the obituaries and debates about male conduct within the magazine, making use of Emily de Montluzin's database of authorship attribution.<sup>2</sup>

The printer Edward Cave (1691-1794) published the first monthly edition of his *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1731 from offices above the sixteenth-century gates at St John's Priory. It continued under various hands, including David Henry (1709-1792) and later, until 1868, John Nichols (1745-1826), using the fictitious editorial name of 'Sylvanus Urban, Gent'.<sup>3</sup> The *Anti-Jacobin* was founded by John Gifford and published between 1798 and 1821. It contains articles and reviews that were censored for any direct reference or allusion to support of the French Revolution. Most famously,



*St John's Priory, accommodating the offices where Edward Cave first published the Gentleman's Magazine*



it contains elaborate engravings by James Gillray (1756-1815), mocking well-known eighteenth-century supporters and sympathisers of the French. Roper further explains that he excluded the *Anti-Jacobin* from his book because he considered this periodical to be primarily an instrument of government propaganda. De Montluzin has also published an extensive anthology of the early contributors to the *Anti-Jacobin*<sup>4</sup> and argues that this neglect is ‘a sin of omission’ as the propaganda war provides an intriguing insight into the tensions and fears of the 1790s revolutionary epoch. Whilst it is difficult to gauge the influence they had, both of these eighteenth-century periodicals provide an extensive range of material for academic study on women’s education despite being predominantly intended for male readership.<sup>5</sup>

During the early stages of what started out to be a project to compile a database of educational texts mentioned in the reviews published in these two eighteenth-century magazines, it became clear that, firstly, the volume of entries and the number of issues that were published over many years would be impossible to tackle in a short study and, secondly, that much of the most revealing material lay in the obituaries, general letters, articles, and foreign business that made up the bulk of the substance of the magazines. The final project therefore produced a database for the two magazines for the

years 1798 and 1799 for the *Anti-Jacobin* and 1797, 1798 and 1799 for the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, consisting of entries that relate to a wide range of educational issues, such as systems, buildings, theories and pedagogy. These were categorised, as far as possible, into twelve main areas, and shown here in table 1. It is perhaps not surprising that references to the universities formed the largest section of entries in the magazines for the two years under consideration; however, it is less apparent why issues that directly concerned women and their education were the third most frequently mentioned category, forming 10% of the total entries in the database. The range of matters that were raised in connection with women and education within the two magazines is equally notable, but one of the most interesting was the dynamics between French culture, morality and women’s education.

As most eighteenth-century specialists would expect, comments regarding the unsuitability and danger presented to the female sex by the ‘Wollstonecraft school of thought’ are frequently published in the *Anti-Jacobin*. A review of *Maria, or the Wrongs of Woman* published in July 1798 attacks Wollstonecraft on account of her immorality, which is effectively the result of her treasonous sympathy with French philosophy. British society’s fears concerning the French

Revolution were frequently used as a backdrop to debates about what constituted an appropriate education for females, as well as to criticise the technical ability of female writers. This is discernable in several of the reviews and letters in the *Anti-Jacobin* magazine. In an article published in the August 1798 edition of the magazine, which discusses the novel *Walsingham: or, the Pupil of Nature. A domestic Story*, the author, Mary Robinson, is described as not being in the same class as Burney or Fielding, but ‘she still occupies a respectable situation among the inferior romance writers’. They criticise her obvious use of French philosophy in this book, and draw comparisons to Charlotte Smith. The book is about the foreign education of Sir Sidney Aubrey - who turns out to have been a girl all along. Walsingham has been educated by a clergyman and falls into bad company. The reviewer claims that Robinson should not have blamed the evils of debauchery and extravagance on Lords and Ladies but on her French philosophers’ influence -

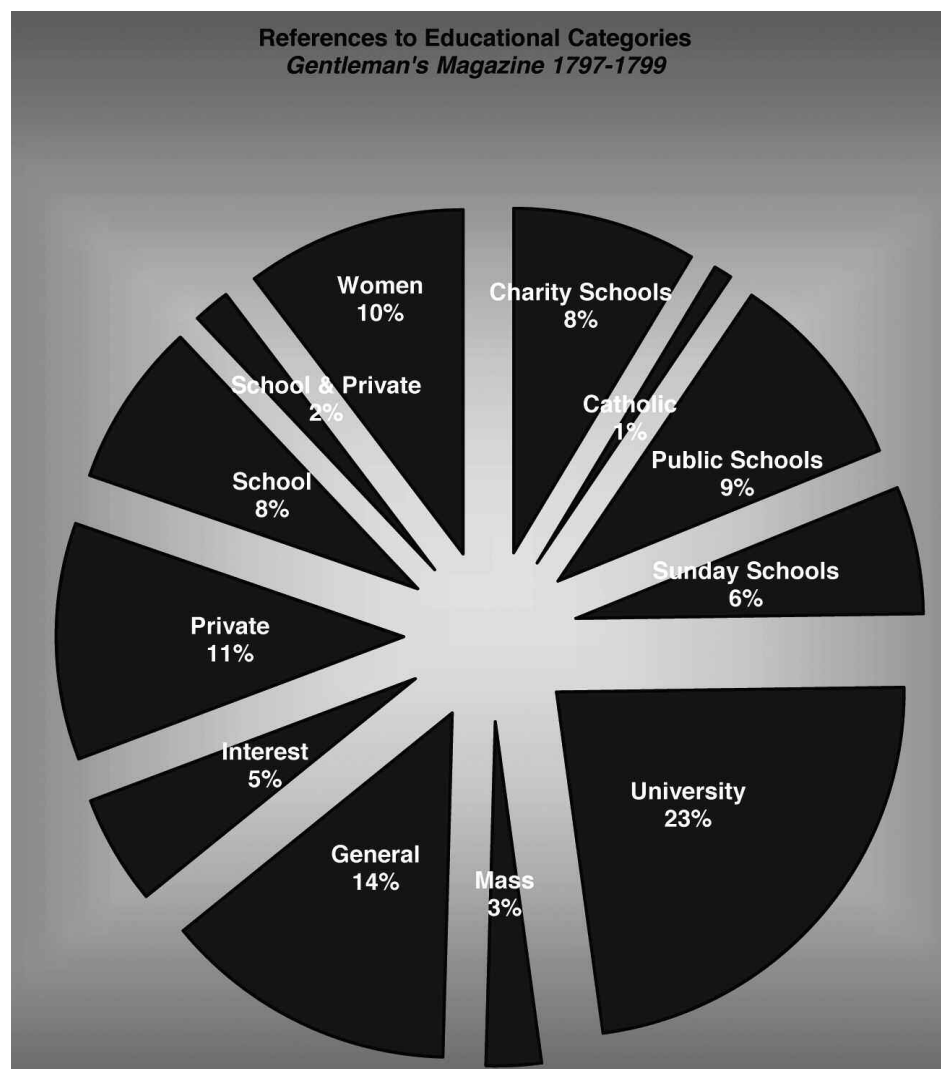


Table 1: References to educational categories in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* 1797-1799

Rousseau and Voltaire. The reviewer also considers that she ought to have read Blair's Sermons as they might have taught her 'plain precepts' and to make her 'suit her language to her subject'.

Wollstonecraft was also the subject of letters published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. In the March 1798 edition a letter entitled 'Remarks on the Life of Mrs Godwin' submitted under the pseudonym 'Philaethes' argues in defence of Mary Wollstonecraft and her achievements, but the association between educational capabilities of women writers and morality is also apparent in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. A review published in the April 1799 edition of *A Letter to the Women of England, on the Injustice of Mental Subordination; with anecdotes* advises readers not to have anything to do with the author, Anne-Frances Randell, who keeps bad company with the 'Wollstonecraft school of thought' concerning religious, political and moral ideas and women. The author was, in fact, Mary Robinson, who published many novels and poems at the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>6</sup> This review is symptomatic of the disparaging reviews women's texts often received; Robinson's work was not creditable on the grounds that it was not properly reasoned. A review of this text was also published in the *Anti-Jacobin* in June 1799. It is described as 'another poisonous text produced from the 'legions' of Wollstonecraft', and criticised her for her reasoning, language and character as well as her lack of philosophical scholarship. This gendered assumption that women could not reason as well as men was deeply imbedded in cultural assertions concerning women's capacities and often presented as an innate quality.

Reviews and opinions of texts concerning women and education were also more favourable when the subject matter dealt with the qualities that the reviewer considered to be supporting and

reinforcing these gendered assumptions. The August edition of the *Anti-Jacobin* provides an explicit example of what women were expected to aspire to in a review that highly recommended C. Browne's book, *A Treatise on Flower Painting; containing the most familiar and easy Instructions, with Directions how to mix the various Tints, in so clear and distinct a Manner that any Lady may learn to paint Flowers with Taste from Practice only*. The review of a text, *An Essay on the*



Mary Robinson's *A Letter to the Women of England ...* was considered by the *Gentleman's Magazine* to keep bad company with the 'Wollstonecraft school of thought' (frontispiece from Robinson's *Memoirs* (1801))

*Education of Young Ladies, Addressed to a Person of Distinction*, remarked that there were too few of these types of work around and highly recommended it to the readers. This book criticises the bad practice of 'broken English' practised by little children and explains how this should be stopped. This review is particularly telling as not only does it indicate that the problem of poor grammar and language was particular to females, it assumes that females were responsible for this situation and moreover, it was their duty to address and rectify the problem.

An even greater concern regarding the dangers and potential that reading novels had in corrupting a female's morals is evidenced in a letter submitted by 'EUSEBIUS' published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in November 1797. This writer considered that only the learned may risk the odd novel, and then only if they have nothing better to do. Obviously, this contributor felt that being female and learned were completely incompatible attributes, but it also, inadvertently, highlighted the difficulty women had in accessing education. Another letter entitled 'The adventures of Crita' published in the August edition of the *Anti-Jacobin* reinforces the notion that reading novels was dangerous, but warns that reading French material was more dangerous still. It relates a moralistic tale about a well-educated lady trying to reinstate her good name after being lead into terrible things by reading Rousseau and being associated with someone who had been expelled from Cambridge for reading Voltaire.<sup>7</sup>

A review of the material excluded from the magazines provides an equally interesting tool of analysis. Despite the fact that the references show an awareness of the ongoing debates about women's education at the end of the eighteenth century, it is not surprising that the link between university and gender is not mentioned, but it may be argued that the absence of discussion is just as revealing. It was a matter of great concern that women writers were inadequately versed in grammar, language and spelling in comparison to their male counterparts, but no mention is made of why this should be the case, the role of the publisher, or indeed how access to formal educational systems, such as the universities, could address this matter. The sheer scale of the variety of the material covered in the *Gentleman's Magazine* and the *Anti-Jacobin* may render any selection of material open to charges of being unrepresentative of either of the publications or indeed eighteenth-century literature as a whole. Stafford argues that it is outwith the bounds of possibility for any scholar to consider all eighteenth-century texts. Instead, he proposes that smaller individual studies can provide valuable sources from which broader conclusions can eventually be drawn. Even in a small study of the references taken from these two magazines it is clear that women were being discussed in male dominated magazines, although their attempts at writing were mocked. Educated women were considered dangerous to the fabric of a patriarchal eighteenth-century society but educated women who dabbled in French literature were even more of a threat.

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<sup>1</sup> Derek Roper, *Reviewing before the Edinburgh: 1788-1802* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1978).

<sup>2</sup> William Stafford, 'Gentlemanly Masculinities as Represented by the Late Georgian *Gentleman's Magazine*', *History* 93, no. 309 (2008); Emily Lorraine de Montluzin, 'Attributions of Authorship in the *Gentleman's Magazine* 1731-1868: An Electronic Union List', University of Virginia, <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/bsuva/gm2/index.html>.

<sup>3</sup> de Montluzin, 'Attributions of Authorship in the *Gentleman's Magazine* 1731-1868: An Electronic Union List'. This provides a detailed history of this publication.

<sup>4</sup> Emily Lorraine de Montluzin, *The Anti-Jacobins 1798-1800: The Early Contributors to the Anti-Jacobin Review* (Houndmills: MacMillan Press, 1988). This provides a detailed introduction and a history of this publication.

<sup>5</sup> William St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>6</sup> Mary Darby Robinson, *A Letter to the Women of England on the Injustice of Mental Subordination* <http://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/robinson/>.

<sup>7</sup> This was reputed to have been Charles Mandeville.





## LIBRARY BULLETIN

### New Directions in Austen Studies, 9-11 July 2009

As readers of *The Female Spectator* are well aware, in July 1809, Jane Austen moved to the village of Chawton in Hampshire with her mother and sister, and into a cottage owned by her brother, Edward Knight. Thus began the most productive period of Austen's literary career, as she substantially revised the manuscripts that would become *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Northanger Abbey* and composed *Mansfield Park*, *Emma* and *Persuasion*.

It is important for all of us at Chawton House Library to commemorate this bicentenary, and it was therefore decided that a conference should be organised, in addition to other events. Leading Austen scholars and specialists in women's writing of the period, and eighteenth-century culture more generally, readily agreed to participate, and the general call for papers including the following names was released: Linda Bree, Emma Clery, Deirdre Le Faye, Deidre Lynch, Isobel Grundy, Claudia L. Johnson, Juliet McMaster, Kathryn Sutherland, Janet Todd and John Wiltshire. Although Deidre Lynch has since regrettably had to withdraw her participation for work reasons, all other speakers are still looking forward to joining us in July.

The response to the call for papers has been extremely enthusiastic, and we are already set to welcome over 80 delegates presenting papers on all aspects of Austen's work. Graduate students will speak alongside experienced professors and published authors. There has of course been considerable interest from members of the Jane Austen Societies of different countries, some of whom will present their work. Speakers will be travelling from five continents and fifteen countries: a testament to Austen's global popularity. There are papers that focus on each of Austen's novels, the letters, and the juvenilia, and attention will be paid to the manuscripts, the first and subsequent editions.

Perhaps understandably, colleagues seemed to have been inspired by the unique nature of Chawton House Library to propose papers on Austen and other women writers: among other offerings, there will be thoughts on Austen and Mary Wollstonecraft, Austen and Mary Brunton, and an entire panel on Austen and Charlotte Smith. Austen and contemporary literature and culture is not neglected, and the conference will include several panels on Austen and film, Austen sequels and prequels, and the cult of Austen more generally. There will be an exhibition of works from the Chawton House Library collection, focusing on Austen's reading. The conference will also include a closing concert, entitled 'A Chawton Album: Music from the Austen Family Music Books', which will be recorded. Organised by colleagues from Music at the University of Southampton, this concert will help to situate Jane Austen's own music – copied and collected in albums held at the Jane Austen House and Museum at Chawton – within the broader context of family life, by including music collected by her mother, sister and sisters-in-law in the albums

they kept themselves and shared with Jane. The concert will link to a conference panel on domestic music-making that seeks to place the Austen family's activities within the thriving culture of amateur music-making in Britain circa 1809. In fact the richness and diversity of the papers presented will have something to offer all Austen scholars and lovers of Austen.

The conference dinner will be held in the refectory at Winchester Cathedral, and delegates will have a chance to tour the Cathedral beforehand. And there is room for non-speaking delegates to attend: please see the insert for details of how to register.

In short, this looks set to be an excellent event, both a celebration and a commemoration of the writer who, ultimately, was the inspiration for the creation of Chawton House Library as we know it today.

## Applications now invited for the Chawton House Library Visiting Fellowships

For the past eighteen months, readers of *The Female Spectator* have been used to seeing articles written by researchers who have used the resources at Chawton House Library. The Visiting Fellowships programme has made a real difference to the academic community at the library, and all the staff in the House and on the Estate have enjoyed meeting scholars from other areas of Britain, America and Canada and several European countries. Our Visiting Fellows welcome the opportunity to use the library collection, naturally, but they are also enthusiastic about the accommodation offered: the original Elizabethan Stables on the estate is now a luxurious residence, with comfortable bedrooms and a beautiful kitchen, study, and living room complete with grand piano. Our housekeeping staff make sure the entire house is as welcoming as possible, and a real home away from home.



*Chawton House Stables, where Visiting Fellows are accommodated during their residence at the Library*

From the initial two Visiting Fellows in residence back in October 2007, we decided to expand our programme for the 2008-2009 period to welcome three Visiting Fellows at any one time. From October 2009, we are pleased to announce that there will be four scholars in residence at the Library. This, we hope, will be of as much benefit to the scholars themselves as it is to us: many of our previous researchers have stressed that they have gained much from being able to exchange ideas with like-minded researchers.

So Chawton House Library is now inviting applications for one to three month Visiting Fellowships, to be taken up between October 2009 and the end of August 2010. The deadline for completed applications for these fellowships is 30 May 2009. All Fellows will be offered accommodation, as described above, as well as office space in the main Library building.

As before, the aim of these fellowships is to enable individuals

to undertake significant research in the long eighteenth century. In keeping with the mission of Chawton House Library and the special qualities of the library's collection, projects that focus on women's writing or lives during the period are warmly welcomed. Any proposal, however, that promises significant research on the long eighteenth century will be given careful consideration, and we hope to attract literary critics and historians, musicians and philosophers to the library.

The fellowships would be of particular interest to members of university and college faculties on leave from their institutions and graduate students for whom a stay at Chawton would be beneficial in completing the thesis or dissertation required for their degree. Previous Fellows have included both senior and junior faculty members, and of course many graduate students.

There are very few formal requirements. All Visiting Fellows would be expected to be in residence in Chawton for the duration of their fellowship, and will find the tranquility of the location especially conducive to their work. There are close academic links with the University of Southampton, and Visiting Fellows will be invited to present their work in progress at a seminar during their time at Chawton. The selection committee includes employees of Chawton House Library and Faculty members of the University of Southampton, who have recently founded a Centre for Eighteenth-Century Studies and run a successful interdisciplinary MA in eighteenth-century studies. For more information, see <http://www.soton.ac.uk/scsecs/>. Scholars may also wish to note that the library is a short train ride from the British Library, London, and the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

A typed letter of application including the preferred dates of study and a brief research proposal (not to exceed three pages), should be sent for the attention of the Chawton House Research Fellow, Dr Gillian Dow. The proposal should be accompanied by a curriculum vitae. The applicant should also arrange to have two confidential letters of recommendation sent direct to the Library. The library catalogue is online and can be accessed via the library website. For informal enquiries about the holdings in the collection, please contact the librarian Jacqui Grainger – [jacqui.grainger@chawton.net](mailto:jacqui.grainger@chawton.net) or Gillian Dow – [gillian.dow@chawton.net](mailto:gillian.dow@chawton.net).

Visiting Fellows will be expected to donate a copy of the manuscript or published work resulting from their stay at Chawton House Library to the library collection, and to publish a short article in *The Female Spectator*. We would welcome help from all readers of *The Female Spectator* in publicising our fellowship programme as widely as possible.

## 'A Choice Collection of Receipts': a new acquisition for the Library

Thanks to the generosity of the George Cadbury Fund, Chawton House Library was recently able to acquire a fascinating collection of manuscript notebooks dating from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The seven notebooks, together with an envelope of additional loose manuscript pages, form a collection of family recipe books originally belonging to three inter-related families (the Richardson, Pease and Gurney families) living in the north-east of England.

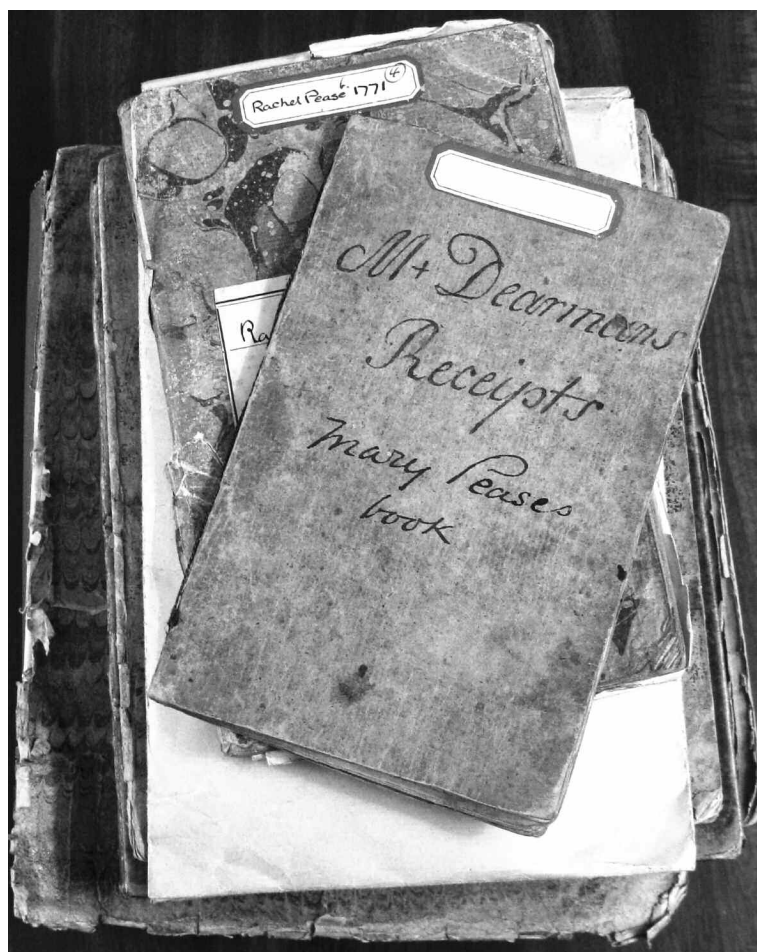
The earliest of the recipe books was compiled mostly by a Lydia Richardson (1710-1762) of Whitby, and was also added to by her daughter Mary. It is a vellum-covered notebook of about two hundred pages, and it begins with a painstakingly maintained alphabetical index of all the recipes contained in the book. The list under 'R' gives an example of the diversity of recipes; together with 'Rabbitts Potted', 'Red Cabbage Pickled' and 'Rasp Berry Wine', there is also 'Rickets, a Cure for Children', illustrating how, at this time, recipes for medicines and 'cures' were often collected and listed alongside cookery recipes.

Mary Richardson (1736-1821), Lydia's daughter, married Joseph Pease in 1763; the Peases were a prominent Quaker family in Darlington. As well as her additions to her mother's recipe book, there are more of Mary Pease's recipes in the form of a much smaller notebook, headed 'A Choice Collection of Receipts [Recipes]', and a collection of numerous loose sheets of paper of varying sizes, folded up and stored in an envelope, each holding the details of a different recipe. One small scrap, for example, notes: 'To prevent Sea Sickness a small bag of saffron wore on the stomach, when going to take a Sea Voyage', while another page details the recipe for 'Anodyne Drops or A Medicine for Spasms in the Stomach, or Pains either external or internal', which includes 'Spirits of Wine', ammonia, opium and samphire. The end result must be effective, as just 'A Tea-spoonful is a dose for a man or woman'.

Three more of the manuscript recipe books belonged to Rachel Pease (1771-1833), the daughter-in-law of Joseph and Mary Pease. One is divided into cookery and medicines, with medicinal recipes at the back of the book, including treatments for worms and whooping cough, amongst others, while in another book there is an intriguing recipe for 'Mock Turtle'; this involves 'a fine calfs head with the skin on', boiled and stewed with various ingredients, and finally garnished with the 'sliced ears [...] laid at the top of the dish'.

The final contributor to this collection was Jane Gurney (1757-1841), whose daughter also married into the Pease family. Her cookery book begins with a beautifully-written list of contents; in her case, she chose to divide the recipes by subject rather than list them alphabetically, and so there are sections of 'Meats, soups &c', 'Preserves and sweets' and 'Wine & Vinegar'. The contents of the book include everything from turnip soup to curried rabbit to ginger cakes, and more.

Looking at these manuscript recipe books provides a revealing glimpse into the life of these families; the books are real working copies, clearly well-used, carefully added to and thoughtfully organised to make them suitable for everyday use. It is wonderful to be able to add them to the Library's collection of recipe books from the long eighteenth century, which already includes around 50 published works and several other manuscript cookery books. Chawton House Library is very grateful to the George Cadbury Fund for making this valuable acquisition possible. The Library is always delighted to receive donations of relevant manuscript material for the collection, as well as donations towards the collection acquisitions budget in general.



*The Library's newly acquired collection of manuscript recipe books*



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Tuesday 7 April

**Study Day: 'A Resource against the tedium of life': Reflecting on the Eighteenth-Century Garden**

In this one-day symposium, experts reflect on conceptions of the eighteenth-century garden and what inspired it, drawing on resources from philosophy, musicology and literary studies.

With the support of the British Society for Aesthetics.

Thursday 16 April

**Easter Open Day**

House and Gardens open to the public. Entertainments include egg rolling and children's Easter themed fancy dress. Light refreshments.

10.30am - 4.30pm Entry £6, children under 14 free

**Free Wednesday Afternoon Seminars**

Chawton House Library is hosting free Wednesday Afternoon Seminars every month, at which Visiting Fellows currently in residence will present their work in progress. The next three seminar dates are 29 April, 13 May and 10 June, 2-4pm. Please see the library website for further details.

Thursday 30 April

**Fellow's Lecture: Singing Home and Family: Women's Sheet Music Albums in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain**

Sixteen of the Austen family music albums still exist; eight of these have recently arrived at Chawton House Library on loan. Professor Jeanice Brooks, University of Southampton, compares

the Austen volumes to those collected by Austen's contemporaries.

Thursday 28 May

**Fellow's Lecture: Professor Michèle Roberts**

Michèle Roberts, Emeritus Professor of Creative Writing at the University of East Anglia and the author of twelve highly acclaimed novels, will talk about her novels, poetry and biographical works.

Thursday 9 - Saturday 11 July

**Conference: New Directions in Austen Studies**

To celebrate the bicentenary of Jane Austen's arrival in the village of Chawton, Chawton House Library is holding a three day conference. Confirmed speakers include: Linda Bree, Emma Clery, Deirdre Le Faye, Isobel Grundy, Claudia L. Johnson, Juliet McMaster, Kathryn Sutherland, Janet Todd and John Wiltshire.

To book tickets for any of the above events please call the events manager, Sarah Cross on 01420 541010.

All Fellow's 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 Fellow's 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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