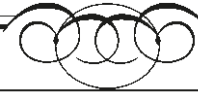


# The Female Spectator

CHAWTON HOUSE LIBRARY



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## CHAWTON CHRONICLES: A LETTER FROM THE CEO

2013 is off to a flying start! At the time of writing, with snow lying across the estate and gardens, the house is being geared up for an intensive period of filming with independent production group, Optomen. The company has been commissioned to deliver an authentic recreation of Jane Austen's Netherfield Ball for the BBC. With a hundred actors on site, a double decker catering bus, filming from early in the morning until midnight and the Stables set up as a Green Room, going to work entails, quite literally, walking on to a film set. Our colleagues Professor Jeanice Brooks and Dr Wiebke Thormalen at the University of Southampton are just two of the specialists ensuring the authenticity of the music, with reference to the Austen family music books. BBC2 will screen the programme in April. Entitled *Pride and Prejudice: Having a Ball at Easter*, it will be fronted by Amanda Vickery and Alastair Sooke. To coincide with this, we are planning to put on a private viewing in the Great Hall along with a range of presentations – details will be on our website over the next couple of months.

In my pre-Christmas message I highlighted that this year is a very important one for Chawton House Library. We are celebrating ten years since our formal

opening in July 2003, and also contributing to the widespread recognition of the 200th anniversary of the publication of *Pride and Prejudice*. We also plan to build on the many successes achieved in 2012 – including continuation of our fundraising and promotional campaigns.

Of course, any activities at CHL – whether they involve outside bodies or are self-generated – require the dedicated support of staff and volunteers. I am grateful to every one of them, particularly as there is an increasing demand on their time and skills. It is not possible to mention them all by name but I would like to wish our Director of Research, Dr Gillian Dow, all the best for her maternity leave which will start at the end of February. Gillian

plays a critical part in the instigation and delivery of the broad-based academic programme at the Library – this includes the regular evening lecture programme, our conference activities, and of course our increasingly popular visiting fellowship scheme. All of this will continue in Gillian's absence – and she will be returning for our July 4th-6th academic conference, as she explains in her own article in this issue. I am extremely grateful to colleagues at the University of Southampton for enabling Professor Stephen Bygrave to cover some aspects of Gillian's job for much of this year. Stephen has published widely on Romantic poetry; the Enlightenment; rhetoric; and the history of education. Stephen is well known to us all at CHL as, among other things, Series Editor (with Dr Stephen Bending) for the Pickering and Chatto Chawton House Library series.



*A Ball at Chawton House Library*

Looking ahead to the Spring, we are delighted to be involved with a ground-breaking theatrical event in the US: the world premier of 'Sense & Sensibility The Musical' at the Denver Center Theater Company. The connection with this production was established by the Chair of our North American Friends, Professor Joan Ray. I am really looking forward to attending

the first night, and we are fortunate enough to be receiving a donation from that evening's receipts courtesy of the organisers and the regional JASNA groups. In support of the venture, CHL is providing material for a month-long exhibition which will look at the influence of earlier women writers on the writing of Jane Austen. There will be a full report on the premiere in the next edition of TFS. This will be later than normal as we will be producing a bumper celebratory volume to coincide with the tenth anniversary of the Library in July / August. In the meantime, keep following us on Facebook, Twitter and at [www.chawtonhouse.org](http://www.chawtonhouse.org)

Enjoy the rest of this edition.

*Stephen Lawrence*

## *The Female Spectator*

Winter 2013

### Editors:

Academic: Gillian Dow

General: Sandy White

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## IAN BEVERIDGE – VOLUNTEER VOLUNTEER CO-ORDINATOR

Of all job titles, that of Volunteer Volunteer Co-ordinator is probably more descriptive than most, although spell-checker always prompts me to delete the repeated word.

I began volunteering at Chawton House Library in 2009 when I learned that there was a recruitment drive for volunteers which included House Guides; being an Alton Town Guide, I felt that I had something to offer. Following an intense three-month learning period culminating in the dreaded 'dummy' house tour with Sarah Parry, I was proud to join the band of dedicated and knowledgeable volunteer house guides. Not long afterwards, I offered my services to organise the volunteers for the open tours and events. Now word travels very fast indeed, and arriving at a volunteers' coffee morning soon after, I was greeted with hearty congratulations on my new role. It then dawned on me that this role was going to be a bit more challenging than I first thought.

Although I am retired, any people skills that I practised when I was employed are very much needed in this role. There are currently about 70 volunteers who give up their time freely and I have had to learn not only their names, but what their preferred duties are when they offer to help at events. And I am still learning.

There is quite a range of commitment levels. Some volunteers regularly help in the library or assist with the conservation programme, as well as helping at events and the house tours, whereas some are just happy to volunteer a couple of times a year and I am happy with that too. Many of the volunteers have told me that volunteering at Chawton House Library feels very special and I would agree with them.

So spell-checker – you are wrong! Do not delete that second 'volunteer' as volunteering is very rewarding and provides an invaluable benefit to society as a whole.



*Ian Beveridge*

# SANDFORD AWARD

By Sarah Parry, Archive and Education Officer

In 2007 Chawton House Library and the Jane Austen House Museum jointly received a Sandford Award in recognition of our education work. Sandford Awards are made annually to historic sites which offer educational programmes to schools. To ensure high standards the award is valid for five years, sites must then be re-assessed. As the educational programmes at both sites had grown since 2007 we decided to apply for the award individually when our re-assessment became due in 2012. Following a full day of judging we were delighted that both organisations received awards.

Jane Austen themed school visits are run in partnership between our sites. At the Museum, students have

an introductory talk about Jane Austen before spending time at both houses learning about the context of her life and work. When groups visit Chawton House Library they have an opportunity to visit one of the library reading rooms and view material from the collection which relates directly to the novel they are studying. Being able to read a little of *Fordyce's Sermons*, for example, always provokes a spirited discussion! The visits conclude with a dancing session in replica costume.



Sarah Parry, the Duchess of Marlborough and Pat Lyons [CHL Volunteer]. The Awards were presented by the Duchess of Marlborough at Blenheim Palace in November.

Chawton House Library also offers visits to university groups and school groups wishing to explore the library, house and landscape of the gardens and estate. Please contact Sarah Parry (sarah.parry@chawton.net) for further information or to discuss your requirements.

## THE ACADEMIC PROGRAMME; AND AN 'AU REVOIR'

Gillian Dow, Chawton House Library and University of Southampton

I arrived at the University of Southampton and CHL in September 2005, excited about being part of a new research institution with so much potential to facilitate research on women writers of the long eighteenth century. I look back on the past seven years with considerable pride at what we have achieved. The Novels-On-line project and the author biographies projects – well under way on my arrival – are still going strong. See our website for the recently added novel *The Imposters Detected: or, the life of a Portuguese* (1760) and for Daniel R. Mangiavellano's online biography of the Scottish playwright and poet Joanna Baillie (1762-1851). Our evening lecture programme, study-days, academic workshops, network meetings and large-scale conferences have a high profile internationally.

Speaking of conferences, in this, our ten-year anniversary year, we are delighted to be hosting the conference 'Pride and Prejudices: Women's Writing of the long Eighteenth Century', 4-6 July. When Jennie Batchelor (University of Kent) and I approached a range of scholars to host panels and roundtables, we had no idea how much interest this conference would attract. The landscape of

research has changed dramatically in the past decade: many women writers who were marginal in 2003 are now much less so, digitization projects have changed how we access their writings, and, from my own perspective, transnational approaches to British women writers – via translation studies – have a lot to offer in terms of reevaluating the literary marketplace of the period 1680-1830. We are now in the difficult position of having to select papers for presentation, with the certain knowledge that this will be a landmark event. Do look out for the final conference programme on the Southampton Centre for Eighteenth-Century Studies (SCECS) website.

Our visiting fellowship programme goes from strength to strength. The new call for applications for the 2013-2014 academic year can be found here: [www.southampton.ac.uk/scecs/research/chawton\\_fellowships.html](http://www.southampton.ac.uk/scecs/research/chawton_fellowships.html)

Do remember that these fellowships are hosted jointly by the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Southampton and by Chawton House Library. Successful applicants have library rights at the University, and become members, during their stay, of SCECS. Scholars in SCECS are always delighted to talk to potential applicants about their projects. And this is an appropriate

place to congratulate my colleague Professor Emma Clery, Director of SCECS, on her success in the Leverhulme Major Research Fellowship Scheme. This funds 3 years of research leave for Emma, for a project entitled 'Romantic Women Writers and the Question of Economic Progress'. We all look forward to hearing the results of her research – which Emma will disseminate in part via a monthly blog – and to corresponding events, including a conference and an exhibition, at CHL.

Finally, as Steve Lawrence announced in his article, I will be taking a very different kind of leave from end-February. My colleague Professor Stephen Bygrave will take up the academic reins at CHL, and will be in touch in the next, bumper, issue of *The Female Spectator*. In the meantime, this is an 'au revoir', as the French side of my family would say, not an 'adieu'. I hope to be fully back on board in 2014, as we look forward to the next decade of research and activity at CHL.

## THE HAMMOND COLLECTION

By Laura O'Keefe, Head of Cataloging and Special Collections, New York Society Library

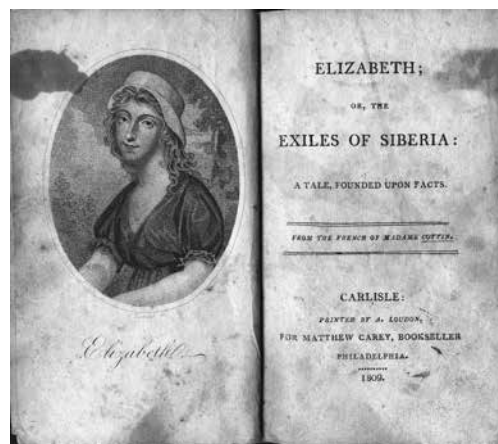
The New York Society Library, a membership library in New York City, has completed the online cataloging of its Hammond Collection, 1,152 works of fiction, drama, and other popular reading matter from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The numerous romantic and Gothic titles among them indicate that these volumes enjoyed a mostly female reading audience; the fact that many of them were also written by women may make them of particular interest to readers of *The Female Spectator*. The catalog records for them are viewable as a group with an author search for 'James Hammond's Circulating Library' at: <http://library.nysoclib.org/>

The collection was originally part of the James Hammond Circulating Library, which the nineteenth-century merchant James Henry Hammond operated out of his general store in Newport, Rhode Island. According to the bookplates found within the volumes, Hammond's was the largest circulating library in New England, with 'novels, tales, and romances' comprising most of its holdings. Several years after Hammond's death in 1864, his collection was dispersed. About two-thirds of the Hammond Library books came to the New York Society Library; regrettably, we do not know what became of the remainder of them.

Hammond items at the Society Library were published between 1720 and 1854, with the bulk of them dating from 1770 to 1825. Well-known writers include Mme. de Genlis, August von Kotzebue, Anna Maria Porter, and Mary Robinson. There is even a copy of the first American edition of Jane Austen's *Emma*, although it is in very poor condition. That favourite eighteenth-century literary genre, epistolary fiction, is well represented here, with

more than a hundred titles. The collection contains many Gothic novels, well over three hundred, with such appealing titles as *Veronica, or, The Mysterious Stranger*; *The Enchanted Mirror: a Moorish Romance*; and *The Three Monks!!!* Both genres can be found through subject searches under 'epistolary novels' and 'Gothic novels.'

About 170 works are from William Lane and the Minerva Press, including several that are not in Dorothy Blakey's bibliography. Dramatic works in the Hammond Collection range from musical farces to melodramas and tragedies. Elizabeth Inchbald and Joanna Baillie are among the playwrights, as are George Colman, Thomas Dibdin, and John O'Keefe.



Frontispiece and title page for an early American edition of Mme. Sophie Cottin's *Elizabeth, or, The Exiles of Siberia*

Though the Hammond Collection consists almost entirely of fiction and plays, it also includes a handful of religious and inspirational writings, some travel narratives, and biographies and memoirs. Among the latter are one by the actress George Anne Bellamy (*An Apology for the Life of George Anne Bellamy, Late of Covent-Garden Theatre / written by herself; to which is annexed her original letter to John Calcraft, Esq. advertised to be published in October 1767, but which was then violently suppressed*) (London: J. Bell, 1785).

One of the more exciting and unexpected results of this cataloging project was the discovery of about eight titles for which we seem to have the only known extant copy: *The History of Henrietta Mortimer* (London: Thomas Hookham, 1787); *The Countess of Hennebon* (London: William Lane, 1789); Tamary Hurrell's *Tales of Imagination* (London: J. Walter, 1790); *Castle Zittaw* (London: William Lane, 1794); Souza-Botelho's *Emilia and Alphonso* (London: R. Dutton, 1799); Sophia Fortnum's *The Victim of Friendship* (London: R. Dutton, 1801); A. Lafontaine's *Herman and Emilia*

(London: Lane, Newman, 1805); and *The Cottage Girl* (Philadelphia: Matthew Carey, 1814)

Founded in 1754, the New York Society Library is the oldest library in New York City, located on Manhattan's Upper East Side. While we are a membership library, our special collections materials

are available to members and non-members alike, and we welcome inquiries from prospective researchers. Our full address and contact information are: The New York Society Library, 53 East 79th Street, New York, N.Y. 10075, Phone: 212-288-6900, x240 or x242. Email: lokeefe@nysoclib.org

## TEN YEARS AND COUNTING: CAN WE COUNT ON YOUR SUPPORT?

*By Eleanor Marsden, Director of Development*

Ten of something can mean many different things. Jane Austen pays ten shillings for a copy of Dodsley's *Poems*, whilst a Mr Maitland's ten children dissuade her from 'setting her black cap' at him. Austen's creation Catherine Morland is one of ten siblings, whilst put-upon Fanny Price is chided that she may never meet a man with even a tenth of Henry Crawford's 'merits'. Ten-to-one are the odds given by Fanny Ferrars that the Dashwood girls won't need Robert's money, and ten minutes was the time spent by Mr Bingley visiting Mr Bennet's library.

Hopefully, through a personal visit to the collection or via our online collections and podcasts, you will have directly or indirectly spent much more than ten minutes with us at Chawton House Library! The number ten is, of course, now a momentous one for us, and significant in its link with Jane Austen, with 2013 being our tenth anniversary which we share with the bicentennial celebrations of *Pride and Prejudice*. Ten years: a decade of working with academics, scholars, the local community and visitors from all walks of life. We now have many hundreds of Friends around the world, and over a thousand followers on Facebook; over ten-thousand visitors now pass through our doors each year, and we are creeping up to nearly half a million hits on the new website per month. Numbers matter.

Our natural focus is the written word, and yet figures are important too. In ten years, we have built up not only an ever-increasing reputation, but we have also engaged many established and new minds with the possibilities inherent in the study of all that Chawton House Library has to offer. Our remit is to exist for public benefit, which means that we continually strive to put in place new initiatives, ideas, resources, and programmes, so that as many people as possible can benefit from the fabulous resources which we safeguard. The past decade has produced many flourishing partnerships between the Library and individuals, other organisations, trusts, corporates and the media, to name but a few. These relationships have been and will continue to be the bedrock of all that we can do, going forward.

Those individuals whom we have sought to bring on-board as partners include you. You have personally made a contribution to the survival of the charity over the past decade – and I want to thank you for that, on behalf of everybody here at the Library, past and present. However large or small your contributions, whatever format these take, we are nothing without you, our supporters. Numbers matter, and each one of you adds to a group which gives life to what we do. Thank you for believing in what can be achieved here. It is so important that the Library continues to exist and flourish, building its noteworthy collections and maintaining their precious setting. We all believe that – and now we need to both celebrate the past decade, and look ahead to the new opportunities around the corner.

There's no need for a mathematician to explain that things are tight these days. For a charity like Chawton House Library, we have come a long way – but we still need to increase our level of support to enable us to thrive, particularly now, when the Arts are being badly hit by the economic climate. Many of you have donated to our Christmas appeal, which has helped us to raise awareness of the continuing need for maintaining levels of support, and for which we are incredibly grateful. If you have not yet made a donation to our annual fund, please consider doing so over the next couple of months. An extra donation here and there, no matter how many digits in the number, does make a difference. Donations can be made to both CHL and our North American Friends counterpart online at [www.chawtonhouse.org](http://www.chawtonhouse.org). Click on 'Get Involved' to learn more.

A decade of success deserves to be celebrated, and celebrate we will, with some fantastic events and a number of exclusive opportunities. I was lucky enough to be one of the first post-graduates to study in the Library, and have followed its progress as a subsequent visitor and member of staff. It is a pleasure to be involved with an organisation that has such drive and constant potential, and there are many exciting possibilities on the horizon. But for now, take pleasure in the knowledge that you have helped us to make it to this point. The fact of the matter is: you count.

# SHAPING A LEGACY: ALICIA LEFANU'S MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF MRS. FRANCES SHERIDAN

By Marilyn Francus, West Virginia University, a Visiting Fellow in May 2012.

My work on Frances Sheridan (1724-1766) is part of a project on the impact of motherhood on professional women writers. Sheridan was a literary comet in the middle of the eighteenth century: in her six-year professional career, she wrote a blockbuster novel (*The Memoirs of Sidney Biddulph*), a hit play (*The Discovery*), and an oriental tale (*Nourjahad*) that had an afterlife as a play and a children's story well into the nineteenth century. I was intrigued: how did Sheridan pursue such a successful career while being the mother of four children?

I turned to the standard (and to date, only) biography of Frances Sheridan, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mrs. Frances Sheridan* (1824) written by her granddaughter, Alicia Lefanu. The title page signals that the professional and the familial coexist uneasily here: while this biography is invested in memorializing Frances Sheridan, her famous son, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, the playwright, orator, and politician (1751-1816), appears on the title page twice. His name appears *before* the titles of Frances Sheridan's works, signalling that her status as a parent is more important than her authorship—and if that point needed emphasis, Richard Brinsley's name is printed in a larger font. His name appears later on the title page (in an even larger font) to announce that *The Memoirs* includes remarks on a recent biography about him. The frontispiece echoes the title page, for there too Richard Brinsley's name appears under Frances Sheridan's portrait, in a larger font than the titles of his mother's works.

While this could be simply a matter of marketing, the title page and frontispiece prefigure the frequent displacement of Frances Sheridan from her own biography. As it turns out, there are two rivals for centre stage in Frances Sheridan's biography: her husband, Thomas Sheridan (1719?-1788), the actor turned stage manager, elocutionist, and educator; and her son, Richard Brinsley. Both men merit study in a biography of Frances Sheridan, but it often seems that Lefanu is more interested in defending Thomas and Richard Brinsley from their many detractors than she is in exploring their relationships with Frances Sheridan or their impact on her authorship. Occasionally Lefanu acknowledges that she is straying from her subject; after an extended discussion of Thomas Sheridan's interactions with David Garrick (99-108), Lefanu writes, "To return to the literary

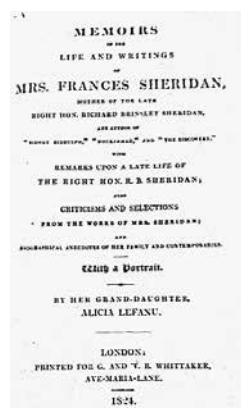
employments of Mrs. Sheridan....' (108) After Chapter IX (in which Frances Sheridan dies), the last two chapters of *The Memoirs* are dedicated to defending the Sheridan men, and their lives after Frances's death. Frances is mentioned on the last two pages (434-35), but she drops out of the narrative altogether after page 311. In essence, Frances disappears from nearly a third of her biography.

*The Memoirs* reveals itself as a project to shape the family legacy, its ambition extending far beyond the recuperation of Frances Sheridan's life. Yet while Lefanu's sustained defences of the Sheridan men displace Frances Sheridan, they also position her as the unassailable Sheridan, the one who can raise the reputations of all Sheridans, particularly the male ones who have a pesky tendency to attract criticism. In *The Memoirs*, Frances Sheridan is presented as a model of female virtue and domesticity. Based on available correspondence, Frances *was* a devoted wife—rejoicing in her husband's successes, and uncomplaining about his failures and the considerable debt that accumulated as a result. She was a loving mother, who enjoyed being with her children and educating them. Her contemporaries esteemed her as a gracious hostess and a good friend, and she won the respect and admiration of cultural luminaries like Samuel Johnson and Samuel Richardson.

Yet Lefanu's depiction of her grandmother's character complicates the understanding of her career. Lefanu suggests that Frances Sheridan only began writing out of financial need, as befitting a modest, domestic woman:

'While fortune smiled, Mrs. Sheridan had felt no inclination to court the favour of the public as a writer, and cheerfully sacrificed the gratification of vanity, which she might have obtained as the possessor of distinguished talents, to the duties and avocations to which, as a wife and a mother, she was more particularly called to attend. But on a reverse of circumstances, she could not but have felt pleasure on finding the riches and resources of her mind readily acknowledged and justly appreciated by Mr. Richardson,...' (87)

This statement is disingenuous, as Lefanu knew. Young Frances Chamberlaine had caught the attention of Thomas Sheridan by publishing verses and a pamphlet in his defence during a Dublin theatre controversy in 1743—publications that led to their courtship and marriage (22-25; 29-30). She had completed her first novel, *Eugenia and Adelaide*, at age fifteen (7),



Title page from Alicia Lefanu's *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mrs. Frances Sheridan*

and decades later she was still confident enough about her work to show it to Richardson, who read it and encouraged her to write more (86-7, 110). Frances Sheridan was an aspiring writer with ambitions of a literary career from her youth, not a matron who suddenly turned to authorship to save her family.

As Lefanu uses female conduct codes to reinscribe the motives for Frances Sheridan's authorship, so too she alters the shape of her grandmother's career.<sup>1</sup> Lefanu presents an extended summary of *The Memoirs of Sidney Biddulph*, the moral novel that first brought Sheridan fame, and her comments on the novel and its reception history overshadow the rest of Sheridan's career (110-94, 297-300). Arguably the emphasis on *Biddulph* is reasonable, given its international reputation and the ever-growing audience for novels since the 1760s. But the brevity of Lefanu's remarks on *The Discovery* (215-229)—and her perfunctory comments on *The Dupe* (235-238), the sequel to *Biddulph* (290-294), *Nourjahad* (294-296), and *A Trip to Bath* (301)—reveals Lefanu's desire to set an agenda regarding her grandmother's work, rather than reflecting her audience's knowledge or interest. For Lefanu, *Biddulph* links Sheridan's domestic and professional lives, and in doing so, justifies female authorship. Lefanu writes, 'A mind like Mrs. Sheridan's must have been particularly susceptible of maternal claims. In 'Sidney Biddulph,' she may be here supposed to give a transcript of her own feelings.' (49) As a novel of the triumph of virtue in distress, *Sidney Biddulph* reinforces Frances Sheridan's idealized character, as the virtuous domestic woman creates virtuous art—but it does so at the expense of Sheridan's other works and her status as an artist.

The reviews of *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mrs. Frances Sheridan* reflect Lefanu's shaping of the family legacy strongly, and in ways that she may not have fully anticipated. While Frances Sheridan's literary career elicited respect, it did not engage the reviewers' interest. Sheridan was deemed a 'superior authoress' (*The Gentleman's Magazine*, June 1824, page 533) and 'an able Novelist' 'possessed of more than ordinary talent.' (*The New Annual Register*, January 1824, page 10) But *Sidney Biddulph* was dated. As *The Monthly Review* remarked, 'Altogether, Sidney Biddulph, though not likely to regain her former popularity, or to resist the setting in of so many new tides of taste and new modes of composition as have prevailed since her days, is justly intitled a place in our

libraries....' (July 1824, page 258) *The Gentleman's Magazine* was blunt: 'Her Sidney Biddulph is a well-written novel, but of very vexatious operation upon the nerves of readers....The hero is a dupe, the heroine a victim....Both the sufferers are, however, honourable and conscientious people; and it is a real mortification when the unworthy thrive by means of such virtues. Sidney Biddulph is not, therefore, to us a pleasant novel; and though the unpleasant ones may be good medicine, yet who likes taking physic?' (533-34)

Sheridan's other writings were glancingly mentioned or ignored, as the Sheridan men attracted the attention of the reviewers. *The Monthly Review* declared that Frances Sheridan was remembered in 1824 only as the mother of Richard Brinsley Sheridan—and *The Memoirs* fail to provide new information about him: '...the name and the promise emphatically given in the title-page awakened some agreeable hopes of new and curious anecdote relative to that highly-gifted genius. We were disappointed.' (259) *The Literary Chronicle*, unusual for its comments on all of Sheridan's works, made the case that Lefanu was duty-bound to write *The Memoirs* for the sake of Richard Brinsley Sheridan: '...this work as an imperative duty which Miss Lefanu owed, if not to her grandmother, at least to her uncle, to vindicate his character from the misstatements and insinuations of his biographers.' (March 1824, page 177) After discussing Frances Sheridan's early years and *Sidney Biddulph*, *The Gentleman's Magazine* reflected upon Thomas Sheridan's career and his relationships with Johnson and Siddons, while noting in passing, 'we should have liked to see more of Richard Brinsley Sheridan...' (534) As *The New Annual Register* summarized: 'Wife and mother of two celebrated men, herself possessed of more than ordinary talent, Mrs. Sheridan certainly deserved some record of her memory; though her life, like that of most other women, passed in the same round of domestic duties and with little or nothing of adventure, is most interesting from its relation with the lives of others.' (10; emphasis added)

Lefanu's *Memoirs* illustrates many of the conventions and expectations of female biography in the early 19th century, and the challenges of writing a biography of an ancestor in an acclaimed family. Ultimately Lefanu reveals little about how Frances Sheridan managed her family and her career simultaneously, but her sources provide useful information, as the Chawton House Library facsimile edition (2012) makes evident. There is a need for a modern biography that retains its focus on Frances. But until such a biography of Frances Sheridan is written, Lefanu's *Memoirs* remains our best source, for with all its shortcomings—or perhaps because of those shortcomings—it illuminates the frameworks that shaped Frances Sheridan's career and her legacy.

1 For a more detailed analysis of the effects of gender expectations on the representation of Sheridan's character and career, see Anna M. Fitzer's 'Relating a Life: Alicia LeFanu's *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mrs. Frances Sheridan*,' *Women's Writing*, Volume 15 #1, pp. 32-54. My reading emphasizes the displacement of Frances Sheridan in *The Memoirs* more strongly than Fitzer's, but I concur with much of her analysis.

# HAPPY ENDINGS, OR, THE IMPORTANCE OF FIRST EDITIONS

By Gemma Betros, Australian National University,  
Visiting Fellow in June 2012

Everyone likes a happy ending. It makes all the troubles that precede it worthwhile. It also reassures us that happy endings are meant to be. We compare problems in novels with those in our own lives, and add their resolution to our database of evidence that all will work out in the end. One novel I read during my Visiting Fellowship at Chawton House Library however turned up an unexpectedly unhappy ending. *Adèle de Sénange, ou lettres de Lord Sydenham*, published in French in London in 1794, was the first novel of French author Adélaïde de Souza (1761-1836). Married to an elderly aristocrat, Madame de Flahaut—as she was then known—had emigrated to London in October 1792. Her husband had been imprisoned soon after her departure and she sought to provide for herself and her young son, the unacknowledged child of the notorious Talleyrand, through her writing.

*Adèle de Sénange* is a story of young love and its requisite obstacles, set in old régime France. It was an instant success in Britain: the author's friends promoted the book, while the novel's British hero and the culture he stood for held particular appeal for a society again at war with its rival across the Channel.<sup>1</sup> Its success soon spread. *Adèle de Sénange* looked back to a gentler time secured by a known moral, social, and political framework, offering a respite from the upheaval of the present. In France, where it was finally published in 1798, it reportedly sold 300 copies in a single week.<sup>2</sup> Translated into German, Italian, Swedish and Danish, it appeared in over twelve editions during the author's lifetime.

I had first read *Adèle de Sénange* in a modern reprint, and remembered it ending with Adèle's marriage to the handsome Lord Sydenham. Yet at Chawton House Library, reading the first edition of 1794, I turned a page to find the word 'FIN'... before the (still unhappy) couple had made it down the aisle. As Adèle withdraws to a convent following the death of her elderly first husband, the hero is left in despair. Fearing that Adèle's mother

might compel her to marry a rival French suitor, he laments, 'Ah! I will never be happy, either with or without her!' Readers are left to imagine for themselves what might happen next.

Why this abrupt ending? *Adèle de Sénange* is a two-volume epistolary novel, and three letters in the second volume of the Library's copy had been replaced inadvertently with letters from the first. Had the last letters of the novel been omitted in another printing mistake? The 1798 edition held in the Library showed that my memory wasn't at fault: it contains two extra letters in which the couple finally marry, and ends with Sydenham exhorting his correspondent to rejoice in his happiness. The 1821 edition, 'reviewed, corrected, augmented, and printed under the eyes of the author' as part of de Souza's collected works, likewise continues to this happy ending.



Portrait by Adélaïde Labille-Guiard, of the Comtesse de Flahaut and her son.

Copies of the 1794 edition in the Cambridge University Library and the British Library however bear the unresolved ending, which would seem to rule out a printing error...or provide evidence of a rather serious one. Further evidence of the prevalence of this ending comes from Isabelle de Charrière's novel *Trois Femmes* (1795-96) in which the characters read *Adèle de Sénange*, 'a charming new book' that 'everyone has read [and] everyone has admired'. One character is particularly 'struck by the last line: *I can live happily neither with nor without her*' (the French here deviates from the original).<sup>3</sup>

Scholar Brigitte Louichon states that de Charrière has 'somewhat distorted' de Souza's text, as this sentence, 'announced as the last, is not in reality the last of the novel'.<sup>4</sup> Yet the 1794 editions I consulted seemed to suggest otherwise.

An unhappy ending is not implausible. In de Souza's 1811 novel, *Eugénie et Mathilde*, the heroine dies of consumption, having renounced the love of her life in order to maintain her religious vows. More significantly, de Souza finished *Adèle de Sénange* shortly after her husband's execution in October 1793.<sup>5</sup> With few financial resources, and no end

1 Kirsty Carpenter, *The Novels of Madame de Souza in Social and Political Perspective*, ed. by Malcolm Cook and James Kearns, French Studies of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, 24 (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), p. 46.

2 Brigitte Louichon, 'Éditer un roman à succès (1800-1830)', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 14 (2002), 757-70 (p. 765).

3 Cited in Brigitte Louichon, 'Lire *Adèle de Sénange* de Madame de Souza: point de vue masculin, point de vue féminin', in *Féminités et masculinités dans le texte narratif avant 1800: La question du "gender"*, ed. by Suzan van Dijk and Madeleine van Strien-Chardonneau (Louvain: Editions Peeters, 2002), pp. 403-15 (p. 407). [translation my own]

4 Louichon, 'Lire *Adèle de Sénange*', p. 409, n. 15.

5 Carpenter, p. 41.



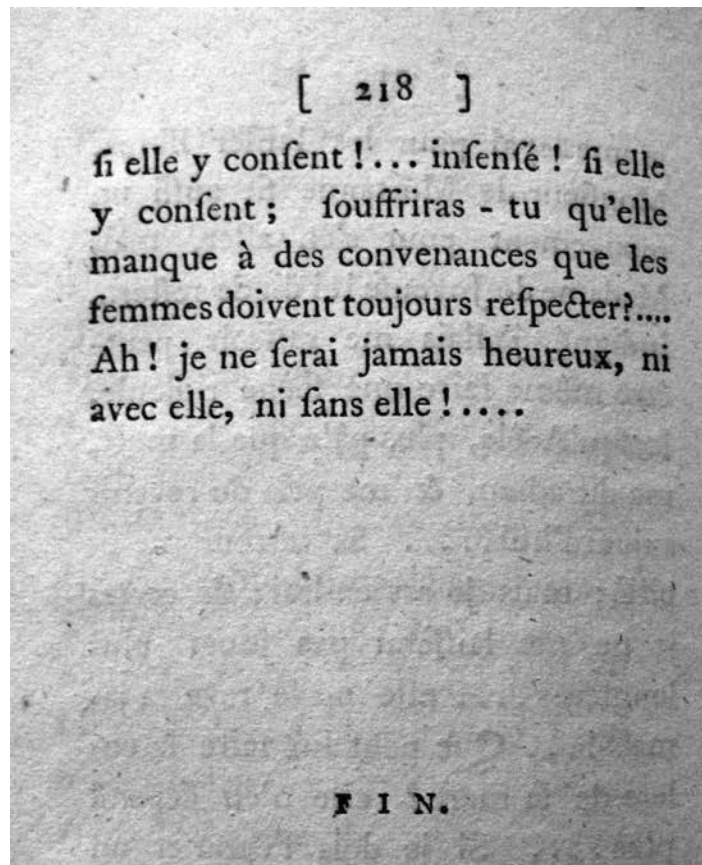
in sight to the Terror, an unresolved ending may have seemed better suited to the times and closer to the intention, expressed in the book's preface, to reflect the details of life as it was actually lived. The continuing rivalry between Sydenham and his French adversary may, in addition, have alluded to another ongoing challenge; one with considerably higher stakes.

If this was the author's intended ending, why and when was it changed? De Souza's movements as an émigré may provide further clues. In 1794 she left London for the Swiss town of Bremgarten and in 1795 moved to Hamburg. Could the author, again struggling financially, have hoped to increase sales of future editions through a more rewarding ending? There is evidence that François de Pange, who briefly set up a press for émigrés in the Swiss town of La Neuveville, considered publishing a second edition of *Adèle de Sénange* in 1794, 'although there seem to be no extant copies of such an edition. There were soon, however, four new editions published in 1795 (Tübingen, Cotta), 1796 (Hamburg, Hoffmann), and 1797 (Hamburg, B.G. Hoffmann and, in Italian translation, Berlin, August Mylius). While I have not yet been able to consult the 1795 and 1796 volumes, by the time of the two 1797 editions, the new ending was in place, although the texts differ slightly. The Italian translation also features a bewildering array of minor changes, which raises another possibility: could the modifications have been the work of a translator?

Although the 1796 and 1797 Hamburg editions were in French, the 1795 edition was a German translation by Therese Huber (1764-1829) publishing under the name of her husband, Ludwig Ferdinand Huber.<sup>7</sup> It is tempting to wonder if

6 Comtesse Jean de Pange, 'Comment fut imprimé le premier écrit politique de Mme de Staël', *Le Gaulois*, 15 June 1924, *Le Gaulois du Dimanche*, Supplément littéraire, p. 3.

7 Helene M. Kastinger Riley, 'Therese Huber', in *An Encyclopedia of Continental Women Writers. Volume One, A-K*, ed. by Katharina M. Wilson (New York: Garland, 1991), pp. 573-74 (p. 574).



Final page of the 1794 CHL edition of the novel *Adele de Senange*

Therese Huber, who moved to Switzerland not long before de Souza, played a role in the new ending. Katherine Astbury has revealed how, working on a translation of one of Isabelle de Charrière's novels in 1794, Huber requested and received permission from the author to continue the narrative. De Charrière had originally left a number of loose ends—perhaps, suggests Astbury, a reflection of the uncertainty of the period—but was under pressure from her publisher to resolve these by continuing the story.<sup>8</sup> Could something similar have happened with *Adèle de Sénange*?

Whatever the case, the different endings seem until now to have passed unnoticed

by scholars of de Souza's work.<sup>9</sup> Yet the original 1794 edition, with its unresolved ending, deserves attention, not least because it was in this initial incarnation that the novel met with such acclaim. *Adèle de Sénange* has been dismissed too often as a sentimental novel that shut out the events holding Europe in thrall. Returning to the first edition suggests that a more subtle reading is required. Exploring how *Adèle de Sénange* was published and read across Europe will further help us understand what made this particular work a transnational success.

8 Katherine Astbury, 'Translating the revolution: Therese Huber and Isabelle de Charrière's *Lettres trouvées dans des portes-feuilles d'émigrés*', in *Translators, Interpreters, Mediators. Women Writers 1799-1900*, ed. by Gillian Dow, ed. by Peter Collier, European Connections 25 (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), pp. 99-110 (p. 101).

9 See for example Carpenter, Louichon 'Lire *Adèle de Sénange*', Raymond Trousson, *Romans de femmes du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2000), pp. 555-66, Madame de Souza, *Adèle de Sénange*, ed. by Alix S. Deguise (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1995), pp. vii-xxvii, and Joan Hinde Stewart, *Gynographs. French novels by women of the late eighteenth century* (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), pp. 152-70.

# ELIZABETH HARTLEY AND THE FALL OF ROSAMOND AT CHAWTON HOUSE LIBRARY

By Alicia Kerfoot, *The College at Brockport, State University of New York, a Chawton Visiting Fellow in June 2012.*

In the introduction to his *Henry the Second; or, The Fall of Rosamond* (1773) Thomas Hull claims that the actress Elizabeth Hartley (1750/51–1824) was the ideal Rosamond Clifford. Rosamond was the mistress of Henry II, whom legend says he kept in a bower at Woodstock and buried in nearby Godstow Nunnery after Queen Eleanor murdered her. Hull claims that he decided to adapt Rosamond's story for the stage when Elizabeth Hartley appeared on the Covent Garden scene:

The happy *Suitability* [...] of her Figure, to the Description of Rosamond (as may be found in Dr. Percy's [...] Collection of old Ballads [...]) assisted by the Softness and Gentleness of her Demeanour, encouraged me [...] to make the Attempt; and the universal Aprobation given by the Public to her Appearance, Manner and Performance, on the first Representation of this Play, happily convinced me I was not singular in my Opinion.<sup>1</sup>

I stumbled across this description of Elizabeth Hartley while researching accounts of Rosamond at Chawton House Library last summer. I sat in the reading room with a copy of the third edition of Hull's play before me, while downstairs in the Great Room there hung a portrait of the very Elizabeth Hartley that Hull praises. Rosamond Clifford, her great beauty, her penitence, and her legend seemed to permeate the space of the library in that moment: not only because I could compare Hull's description of the actress as Rosamond with the artist's depiction of Hartley in the portrait, but also because Rosamond appears in so many other materials in the Chawton House Library collections. For example, the library holds Francis Grose's *Antiquities of England and Wales* (which contains a plate of Godstow Nunnery) as well as Elizabeth Helme's historical novel, *Magdalen; or,*



Chamberlin, Mason the elder (attributed to) 1727-1787  
Portrait of a Lady, probably Elizabeth Hartley. Copyright:  
Chawton House Library.

*The Penitent of Godstow* (1812). This is not necessarily surprising, since the tale of Rosamond was popular material far before the eighteenth century. In his article on Addison's *Rosamond. An Opera* (1707), Brean Hammond notes that romantic accounts of Rosamond 'were embroidered over a long period of time by the early chroniclers, and they had reached their final shape by the early seventeenth century'.<sup>2</sup> No matter the format, authors struggle to reconcile Rosamond's beauty, piety, and her sexuality.

Thomas Hull's *Rosamond* expresses her conflicted love for Henry and her desire to retire to a convent rather than continue as

Henry's mistress. Her transformation from virtuous daughter, to passionate lover, and back to virtuous (and now penitent) daughter emphasises her ability to navigate the relationship between body and soul. Lord Clifford complains of her initial transformation:

In vain her modest Grace and Diffidence  
Bore the dear Semblance of her Mother's Sweetness,  
And promis'd an unsullied Length of Days.  
She's lost, and the bright Glories of our Line  
Are stain'd in her Disgrace.<sup>3</sup>

Rosamond returns to the role of virtuous daughter when she agrees to retire to the nearby convent, but then becomes saint-like when she acts as an agent of repentance for the murderous Eleanor, who decides to enter a convent herself when she understands that her actions show 'the Faults she meant to punish slight, | Compar'd to her, and her atrocious Crimes'.<sup>4</sup>

Elizabeth Helme's 1812 novel insinuates that Rosamond's private repentance is of more worth than any residence in a nunnery; in this tale, Rosamond is held against her will in a French

1 Thomas Hull, *Henry the Second; or, The Fall of Rosamond*. The Third Edition. (London: Printed for John Bell, near Exeter-Exchange, Strand, and C. Etherington, at York, 1774), p. iii.

2 Brean Hammond, 'Joseph Addison's Opera *Rosamond*: Britishness in the Early Eighteenth Century', *ELH*, 73 (2006), 601-629 (p. 609).

3 Hull, p. 4.

4 Hull, p. 74.

convent. She explains to two novices: 'My good girls, your innocence misleads you; the fairest bodies do not always contain the purest minds—this unhappy form hath wrought my destruction'.<sup>5</sup> Rosamond argues that the stain is beauty itself, and the answer is not a bodily one, but one of individual repentance; however, her attempt to dismantle the alignment of bodily image with purity of mind does not necessarily succeed, since her spiritual identity relies on the suffering that her bodily beauty brings her. Rosamond cannot be one thing or the other: she must be both mistress and penitent in this account.

Perhaps it is the ease with which Rosamond can be mistress, nun, and saint in this legend that makes the tale so popular, and perhaps it is also this transformative power that audiences saw in Elizabeth Hartley when she performed the role of Rosamond. After all, Hartley was also treading a fine line between public perception, sympathy, and propriety. As the *Dictionary of National Biography* indicates, 'there is no record of a marriage to Hartley, and Mrs Hartley resumed her family name of White on her retirement from the stage in 1780'.<sup>6</sup> In an account of a 1774 performance of the play, *The London Chronicle* claims that Hull was vindicated in his belief that Hartley was the perfect Rosamond:

Mrs. Hartley [...] gave us in Rosamond every possible display of that most beautiful and unfortunate damsel. She preserved all through that soft simplicity of character which is supposed to have attended the unlawful love of Rosamond, and which the sympathizing tears of her auditors last night marked as natural and affecting. In short, as we said before, she looked, she felt, and was the beauteous Rosamond.<sup>7</sup>

In taking on the role of Rosamond, then, Elizabeth



Godstow Nunnery, Oxfordshire, from Francis Grose, *The Antiquities of England and Wales* (1773-1776). Courtesy of Chawton House Library.

Hartley embodies another transformation of the legendary penitent. As an actress, she successfully affects her audience in the role of Rosamond because she, too, must be both mistress and saint when she displays herself on the Covent Garden stage for the consumption of an admiring public. Indeed, others construct her as an object of transformation and sentiment, just as the figure of Rosamond was re-imagined. The number of narratives that Chawton House Library

alone contains of both Rosamond and Elizabeth Hartley suggests that part of what makes them both attractive figures is their ability to complicate the very categories of identity that they were meant to reinforce. I believe that it is this lack of distinction between the body of the actress, the mistress, and the penitent nun or saint that was so attractive to those who watched Hartley perform as Rosamond in 1774 and which continues to be intriguing to those who read of Rosamond and view Hartley's portrait at Chawton House Library today.

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5 Elizabeth Helme, *Magdalen; or, The Penitent of Godstow* (London: Printed by and for P. Norbury; and sold by C. Cradock and W. Joy, No. 32, Pater-Noster-Row, 1812), p. 69.

6 C. Conroy, 'Hartley [née White], Elizabeth (1750/51-1824)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12496>> [accessed 2 Jan 2013].

7 An Account of HENRY II. or the FALL of ROSAMOND, a new TRAGEDY, performed last Night at Covent Garden Theatre', *The London Chronicle*, 11-13 January 1774, pp. 47-48, in *17th-18th Century Burney Collection of Newspapers* <<http://find.galegroup.com/bncn/start.do?prodId=BBCN&userGroupName=unisoton>> [accessed 4 January 2013].

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### Evening Lecture: Thursday 28th February – 6.30 pm

Dr Abigail Williams - 'The Cheerful Companion': Uncovering a Lost History of Popular Reading in the Eighteenth Century.

The lecture will explore the varied world of eighteenth century poetic miscellanies, popular collections of verse, prose and music that were the main way in which many ordinary people consumed literature in the eighteenth century.

### Evening Lecture: Thursday 14th March - 6.30 pm

Christina Koning - 'Variable Stars' The life of Christina Herschel. Christina Koning's most recent novel, Variable Stars is about the eighteenth century astronomer, Caroline Herschel (16 March 1750 – 9 January 1848) who was a German-British astronomer and the sister of astronomer Sir William Herschel with whom she worked throughout both of their careers.

### Evening Lecture: Thursday 18th April - 6.30 pm

Simon Langton – Filming 'Pride and Prejudice' and Other Costume Dramas

To celebrate the 200th anniversary of the publication of *Pride and Prejudice*, Simon Langton will discuss directing the adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* starring Colin Firth and Jennifer Ehle in 1995, for which he was nominated for a BAFTA.

### Pride and Prejudices: Women's Writing of the Long Eighteenth Century

A conference to be held at Chawton House Library: 4th – 6th July 2013. For further information about the conference please visit the website: [http://www.southampton.ac.uk/scecs/newsandevents/conferences/womens\\_writing.html](http://www.southampton.ac.uk/scecs/newsandevents/conferences/womens_writing.html)

Registration fees can be paid at: [www.chawtonhouse.org](http://www.chawtonhouse.org) in the online shop.

All evening lectures begin with a wine reception and canapés at 6:30 and the lectures begin at 7 pm. Tickets: £10.00 (£7.50 for Friends and students). Tickets for other events may be priced differently.

To book tickets for any of the above events please telephone: 01420-541010 or email [info@chawton.net](mailto:info@chawton.net) Tickets may also be booked via the website: [www.chawtonhouse.org](http://www.chawtonhouse.org)

Information about all events at Chawton House Library can be found on the CHL website calendar.

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