

# The Female Spectator.

VOL.2 No.4, 2016



New and improved series

## The Future of Chawton House Library



**A**FTER MORE THAN 20 YEARS AS THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, DR SANDY LERNER HAS ANNOUNCED THAT SHE IS STEPPING DOWN FROM THE BOARD, AND TAKING ON THE HONORARY POSITION OF FOUNDING PATRON.

Sandy Lerner is a highly successful, innovative, and original entrepreneur. Her career highlights include co-founding Cisco Systems and starting the cosmetics company, Urban Decay, as well as more recent involvement in ethical and sustainable farming, in accordance with her strong interest in animal welfare. Sandy has been honoured by many universities and organisations around the world for her extraordinary philanthropy. In May 2015, she was presented with an honorary OBE for services to UK culture.

We are all immensely grateful to Sandy for providing the original vision – and the core collection of rare books – for Chawton House Library. Her drive to establish this unique charity to promote early women's writing in the village where Jane Austen spent the last years of her life has been inspirational. Sandy's financial commitment, and her unswerving dedication in terms of her own time, have given Chawton House Library a tremendous amount of support for over two decades.

Sandy has generously pledged to cover the costs of running the Library until the end of 2017, and to gift a final lump sum to contribute towards the annual running costs thereafter. Her intention is that we should use her generous support as a 'challenge' gift to raise matched funding to secure the future of the Library.

Dr Linda Bree, of Cambridge University Press, our interim Chair, writes:

*'What Sandy Lerner has done in establishing Chawton House Library is a magnificent thing, and what she proposes – as she turns her attention, after all this time, to her other interests – is typically generous. We will now need to work towards a sustainable future for the Library which will pay tribute to her vision, and the years of time, energy and expertise she put into establishing it.'*

With Sandy's departure from the Board, we face challenges that will demand creativity and commitment from our dedicated supporters. Building on the foundations of the last 20 years, we will continue to develop our international academic research profile, and the range of what we offer visitors to the house and the gardens. We must protect and preserve this significant literary heritage for years to come, but with the support of our Patrons, Friends and the wider public, we know we can secure our future. ●

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*Adopt a Book, or subscribe to The Journal of Louisa Lushington*



# Saying just what she \*\*\*\*\*



Portrait of Mary Robinson. Frontispiece to *Poems* (1791). Taken from an engraving by Joshua Reynolds

**D**r Susan Civale, a former Visiting Fellow, explores the way that astute women writers Mary Robinson and Elizabeth Gooch use asterisks in their memoirs to say more than might appear.

Mary Darby Robinson (1758-1800) came to prominence first as a beautiful London stage actress, and then as a national celebrity when she embarked on an adulterous love affair with the teenaged Prince of Wales, later King George IV. When he broke off the affair, she turned to her pen for a living, and spent the remainder of her days transforming her public image from sex object to writing subject, publishing poetry, fiction and non-fiction up to her death in 1800. She also wrote an autobiography, *Memoirs of the Late Mrs Robinson, Written by Herself* (1801), which was edited by her daughter Maria Elizabeth Robinson, and published the year after she died. The *Memoirs* was popular at the time of its publication and afterward (it was reprinted 10 times by the end of the Victorian period), though it received mixed critical reviews and there were doubts as to its reliability.

On the one hand, the *Memoirs* seems to be an 'Apology', a final attempt to rescue Robinson's

tarnished reputation and rewrite her life story as a tale of transgression and suffering. On the other hand, however, there are jarring shifts in tone (from the aspiring actress relishing her finery, to the long-suffering heroine of sensibility, and back again), conspicuous gaps in the narration of events (some episodes of her life, such as her 16-year relationship with Banastre Tarleton, get only a footnote), and structural inconsistencies (the first-person narration that begins in Volume 1 breaks off midway through Volume 2, only to be continued 'By a Friend', and then to be interrupted yet again by a letter to an unnamed acquaintance 'found' by the editor). These irregularities, omissions, and disruptions have long perplexed readers, fuelling debates about Robinson's level of involvement in producing the published version of the *Memoirs*, its veracity, and Robinson's motivations in writing it.

The most salient of these anomalies arrives when Robinson decides to leave her husband for the Prince of Wales: her 'fall' from chastity. In an emotionally and sexually charged, not to mention highly overdetermined, moment—and the one that the reader has been waiting for—Robinson's narration ceases entirely, and language is replaced by a series of 23 asterisks, spread over 3 lines, followed by a note that 'The Narrative of Mrs Robinson closes here'. On the next page begins the 'CONTINUATION By a Friend', a third-person narrator-editor who transitions into a more general reflection on Robinson's 'little known' virtues before alluding to the 'conflicts' and 'passions' she experienced at this pivotal time of her life.

The abrupt termination of the narrative and the circumlocutions of the 'Friend' who continues it are not so much hidden as highlighted by the insertion of the asterisks. Though often ignored entirely, or simply dismissed as 'accidental', the use of this typographical feature is most likely not an accident, but a graphic innovation borrowed from eighteenth-century fiction. Writers such as Jonathan Swift, Laurence Sterne, and Samuel Richardson are known to have experimented with 'printer's ornaments', visual markers such as flowers, dots, dashes, and asterisks, all of which can stand in for or supplement verbal text. The asterisk, in particular, is used by Sterne in *Tristram Shandy* (1759-67) to replace lewd content. At the same time that Sterne appears to censor out the immodest, however, he in fact not only draws

attention to it, but implicates the reader in doing so: the reader has to fill in the gaps.

Richardson, similarly, uses graphic markers to interrupt the letters of Pamela and Clarissa, heroines for whom the non-verbal symbol represents a range of emotions that are unexpressed, often because they are unacceptable. Again, the visual marker physically takes the place of what is not articulated by the character, requiring the reader to imagine the emotions felt, and therefore encouraging him/her to participate in them. Unfortunately, such typographical features are often omitted in modern editions of *Clarissa* and *Pamela*, so that we lose sight of the meanings they imply and overlook the ways that authors such as Richardson were anticipating and attempting to control readers' reactions to the novels.

However, little attention has been paid to the ways in which women's writing of the period incorporates similar effects. It is often assumed that women did not engage in this kind of typographical play because, unlike their male counterparts, they often used intermediaries, and did not have the same direct access to the printing house or contact with the booksellers. And yet the life writing of Mary Robinson, and that of her contemporary, Elizabeth Gooch, may indicate otherwise.

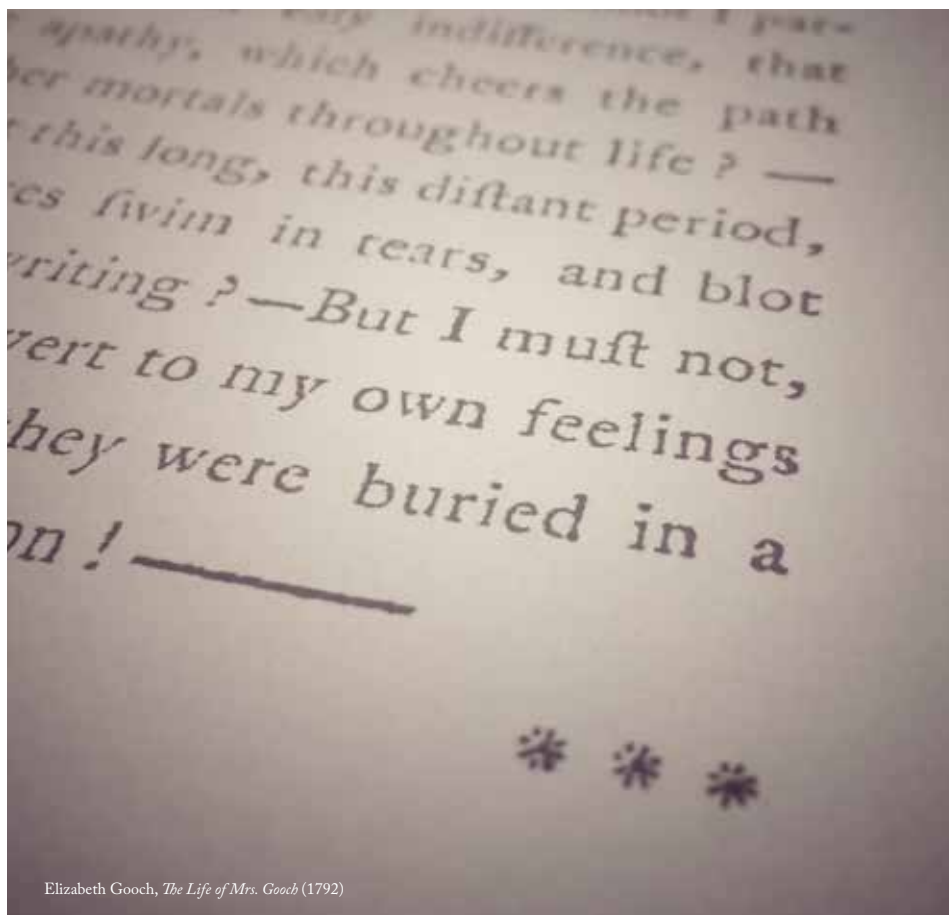
Actress and writer Elizabeth Gooch's memoir, *The Life of Mrs. Gooch* (1792), is a self-vindication protesting against injustices perpetrated against her (she says her husband falsely accused her of adultery), and defending her conduct. Gooch constructs herself as a heroine with a virtuous heart who became a victim of circumstance. She emphasises her sensibility by reflecting on the process of writing, and bemoaning the torrent of painful emotions it precipitates: 'Why cannot I write this page with composure? [...] why, at this long, distant period, do my eyes swim in tears, and blot what I am writing— But I must not, I dare not revert to my own feelings—would that they were buried in a long, long oblivion!----'. Directly after this outburst follow three small asterisks, and then on the next page 40 further asterisks replace the first four lines of text. The asterisks enact not only a visual interruption in the writing, the effect of the overwhelming emotion described in the previous paragraph, but also symbolise the disintegration of her mental 'composure'. The



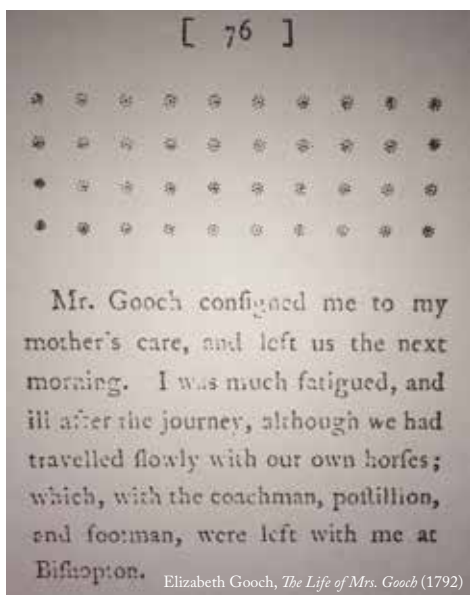
asterisks here signal psychological authenticity and heightened emotion and work to evoke the reader's sympathy.

Like Gooch, Robinson also uses asterisks at a key moment in her story to underline the depth of her feelings. The asterisks convey her genteel sensibility (she modestly throws a veil over her past shame), and thus elicit compassion. Yet they also have a titillating effect. Robinson's unwillingness to speak her emotions or to detail her transgressions fully leaves the reader to infer the thoughts, sensations, and actions that are concealed by the 23 asterisks. The asterisks highlight the illicit and erotic aspects of Robinson's story, which, in refusing to name, she invites us to imagine all the more.

Both Gooch's *Life* and Robinson's *Memoirs* therefore employ the asterisk to enhance their self-fashioning and to engage readers in ways that recall the graphic innovations of eighteenth-century fiction. However, while it has been documented that Swift, Sterne, and in particular Richardson, exerted control far beyond the manuscript phase and intervened in decisions about the printing of their books, it is not possible to know how much input Gooch or Robinson had in these kinds of decisions.



Elizabeth Gooch, *The Life of Mrs. Gooch* (1792)



Elizabeth Gooch, *The Life of Mrs. Gooch* (1792)

Typically, the author is at one remove from the printing (which was contracted out by a bookselling publisher), unless the publisher was the author, in which case the intervention could be much more direct. This was likely the case for Gooch, who published the book herself, in her lifetime, and probably dealt with the printer directly. It is possible that she not only approved the proofs but even made suggestions.

Robinson's *Memoirs*, by contrast, were published posthumously, by Richard Phillips, with the aid of Maria Elizabeth as editor. Robinson is therefore removed from the printing process, and could not have exerted direct control over the printing. Still, Robinson's first publisher, Bell, was a pioneer in book design and production, and her work for Stuart's *Morning Post* would

have given her knowledge of newspaper layout and its varied typographical effects. Robinson may have indicated to her daughter how she wanted the *Memoirs* to appear, but of course there is no evidence for this. However, regardless of who made the decision, the outcome is certain. The typographical features of Robinson's *Memoirs* and Gooch's *Life* suggest the ways in which women's life writing imported graphic techniques from fiction to establish sympathetic and engaging heroine-protagonists. Noticing these visual print features reminds us that by the end of the eighteenth century, the boundaries between life writing and fiction were often blurred, and the relationships between writers, printers, and publishers were complex and often collaborative. ●

Susan's book, *Women's Life Writing in the Long Nineteenth Century: Reputation and Authorship* (under contract with Manchester University Press) focuses on Frances Burney, Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Robinson, and Mary Hays, considering how the publication of women's 'private' lives, through diaries, autobiographies, letters and memoirs, influenced their literary afterlives.

<sup>1</sup>Mary Robinson, *Memoirs of the Late Mrs. Robinson, Written by Herself*, 4 vols. (London: R. Phillips, 1801), vol. II, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup>Robinson, p. 53.

<sup>3</sup>Christopher Flint, *The Appearance of Print in Eighteenth-Century Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 112-13.

<sup>4</sup>Christopher Flint, *Appearance of Print*, p. 136-37.

<sup>5</sup>Christopher Flint, 'The Eighteenth-Century Novel and Print Culture', *A Companion to the Eighteenth-Century English Novel and Culture*, Paula R. Backscheider and Catherine Ingrassia, eds. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), p. 360.

<sup>6</sup>Elizabeth Gooch, *The Life of Mrs. Gooch*, 3 vols. (London, 1792), p. 75.

<sup>7</sup>See Flint, *Appearance of Print* and Janine Barchas, *Graphic Design, Print Culture, and the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University).

<sup>8</sup>My thanks go to James Raven for explaining this process to me so clearly.

# Meet the new members of our team

## James MacBain, Chief Operating Officer

James MacBain, looking particularly fetching here, aged nine, started work with us in September 2016, and has taken on responsibility for operations. Prior to joining us, James spent six years running a Scottish Armed Forces Children's Education Charity, and his work there culminated in moving the head office from London to Edinburgh in April 2016 at the end of the charity's bicentenary year. Previously, James was a senior administrator for international matters at universities in the south of England for 15 years. Before that, James spent time working in Southern Africa, the continent of his birth, for various development charities.



## Jane Lillystone, Director of Fundraising

Jane Lillystone came to Chawton House Library, having been Head of Museums, Arts and Tourism at The Wilson, Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum. Jane originally trained as a museum curator, and has worked during the last 24 years across a wide range of arts, heritage and cultural organisations – with extensive experience in fundraising, communications and relationship building. Her most recent role has been working as a freelance planning and fundraising consultant – both in the UK and internationally – with specific experience in creative visioning, strategic planning and organisational development (including capital projects). Prior to this, she successfully delivered a multi-million capital development programme for Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum (now The Wilson), creating a new landmark building for Cheltenham and its environs (central to the town's regeneration plans), housing and displaying the Museum's world-class collections, and bringing to Cheltenham touring exhibitions of international quality.



## Kim Simpson, Postdoctoral Fellow



Kim Simpson joined Chawton House Library in September 2016 as the postdoctoral fellow. Her three-year post is shared between Chawton and the English department at the University of Southampton, where she teaches eighteenth-century literature. At Chawton, her role includes helping to put together the events programme, and she will also be taking on the editorship of *The Female Spectator*.

Kim joins Chawton from the University of Kent in Canterbury, where she completed her PhD on amatory fiction, an early eighteenth-century genre authored predominantly by women, including Aphra Behn, Delarivier Manley, and Eliza Haywood. She was herself a beneficiary of Chawton House Library's Visiting Fellowship programme in August 2012, where she completed work on the afterlives of amatory fiction in 1750s women's writing. Her current research project is on anonymous and pseudonymous fiction in the eighteenth century, and aims to make the case for the importance of unattributed prose fiction to the development of fiction in the eighteenth century. Kim's wider research interests include feminist theories; masquerade; the body; adaptation; and attribution. If you are on Twitter, you can follow Kim @AmatoryAnon

## Visiting Fellows

Our visiting fellowship programme continues to welcome scholars working in diverse areas from all around the world. We are currently hosting our last visiting fellows of 2016. Aia Hussein Yousef, a PhD student from Princeton University, is working on translation and prose fiction. Catherine Fleming, a PhD student from the University of Toronto, also works on translation, and is using her time at Chawton for research on a project entitled 'Rethinking Haywood's Reputation.' Professor Suzanne Schwarz is a Professor of History at the University of Worcester and is researching female subscribers to, and networks around, the Sierra Leone Company, 1791-1807.

In 2017, Dr Catherine Paula Han will take up her Nineteenth-Century Matters Fellowship. The fellowship is a joint initiative set up by two former visiting fellows, Dr Matthew and Dr Joanna Taylor, and funded by the British Association of Romantic Studies and the British Association of Victorian Studies. Its purpose is to support early career researchers who have completed PhDs but are not employed in permanent academic posts. During her fellowship, Catherine will be working on her monograph *Reimagining the Brontës: Readers and Reading in Contemporary Middlebrow Women's Writing*, and she has also organised a training day in public engagement for other early career researchers. Then in February, we will welcome two new fellows. Dr Emily Cock is a Research Assistant in Medical History at the University of Winchester, and she will be researching childhood disfigurement in eighteenth-century Britain. Dr Olivia Murphy is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in English at the University of Sydney, and she is researching the 'experimental discourse' of Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* whilst with us. We look forward to welcoming them all and hope their time at Chawton is both enjoyable and fruitful. ●





# An exciting new edited collection: *Women's Writing 1660-1830: Feminisms and Futures*

In January 2017, Palgrave Macmillan will publish a book that has its origins in Chawton House Library's tenth anniversary conference. 'Pride and Prejudices: Women's Writing of the Long Eighteenth Century', organized by Dr Gillian Dow and Professor Jennie Batchelor, was a major international conference held in July 2013, which drew together 190 speakers to reflect on all aspects of scholarship on women's writing in the long eighteenth century. Papers surveyed the achievements of the decade since the opening conference of Chawton House Library in 2003, but also mapped out new directions, and considered the work still to be done in the writing of women's literary history. The conversations, which addressed some of the most pressing questions and issues facing the feminist recovery project, gave rise to the chapters in this collection, which explore questions of value, feminism, naming, performance, professionalism, material culture, and nationality, amongst others.

This collection is about mapping the future of eighteenth-century women's writing and feminist literary history, in an academic culture that is not shy of declaring their obsolescence. It asks: what can or should unite scholars and readers devoted to the recovery and study of women's literary history in an era of big data, on the one hand, and ever more narrowly defined specialization, on the other? Leading scholars from the UK and US answer this question in thought-provoking, cross-disciplinary and often polemical essays. They collectively argue that eighteenth-century women's literary history has a future, and that feminism was, and always should be, at its heart. ●



Pride and Prejudices: Women's Writing of the Long Eighteenth Century, Chawton House Library, July 2013.

*'This is just the book we need now. Its essays will galvanize those who already care deeply about the era's groundbreaking women's writings, compelling us to think about what must come next. Just as importantly, Dow and Batchelor's fine collection promises to inspire readers who are new to the field's riches, complexities, and challenges.'*

~Devoney Looser, Arizona State University



# Chawton in Washington: JASNA

Helen and Jane at JASNA

The Jane Austen Society of North America (JASNA) AGM took place on 21-23 October in Washington DC this year. The theme was Emma at 200: “No One But Herself”, and we ensured that Chawton House Library was well represented there. On display in the conference hotel we had a special timeline of women writers, which was first unveiled at the 2015 AGM, and which continues to spark interesting discussion and debate. Our Executive Director Dr Gillian Dow gave a talk that took people on a virtual tour of the ‘Emma at 200’ exhibition which she curated this year at Chawton House Library, and which received glowing reviews from attendees. We also had a stall at the Emporium where we launched our brand new guidebook, and sold many other items, including books, notecards, magnets and other keepsakes related to Jane Austen and the many other inspiring women writers in our collection.

Particularly popular this year was our Adopt a Book programme. During the AGM, the total number of books adopted exceeded the 400 mark, with a significant boost from Linda Dennery who has generously pledged \$1,000 to the campaign, taking us another step closer to our target of 2,017 books by the end of 2017.

While in Washington DC, we held a special event for North American Friends of Chawton House Library at the Folger Shakespeare Library. This included a curator’s tour of the exhibition ‘Will & Jane: Shakespeare, Austen and the Cult of Celebrity’ with Professors Janine Barchas and Kristina Straub. We were delighted to see Chawton House Library’s unique ‘Sir Charles Grandison’ manuscript in pride of place at the start of the exhibition alongside Emma Thompson’s screenplay (complete with handwritten notes) for her 1995 film adaptation of Sense and Sensibility. Among the

many fascinating and often comical items on display were action figures, a bottle of gin which used a winking image of Jane Austen on its label, and of course that shirt from the famous BBC production of *Pride and Prejudice*.

Our congratulations to the co-chairs of this year’s JASNA AGM, Debra Roush and Linda Slothouber, and to all who had a hand in organising an excellent few days. We would like to thank Janine and Kristina for offering our Friends this wonderful glimpse behind the scenes of this fascinating exhibition. We would also particularly like to thank NAFCHL board members Deb Barnum, Linda Dennery, Bobbie Gay, Janet Johnson and Joan Ray, for their support during the AGM. ●





# Seduction and Celebrity: Mary Robinson in Greenwich

Chawton House Library is proud to be able to share some of its fascinating artefacts with audiences further afield. Whilst Austen's manuscript made its way to America, in October we also said goodbye to one of our most famous portraits: John Hoppner's beautiful depiction of Mary Robinson, often known as Perdita, in honour of her most famous role (1782). Robinson will be in The National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, London until April 2017, as part of their exhibition on Emma Hamilton. In October 2016, we went to see how she was settling in.

Emma Hamilton was Admiral Horatio Nelson's mistress. But the idea behind this fascinating and important exhibition is to show how much more Emma Hamilton was than this. Curator Quentin Colville takes us on a journey through the life of this truly remarkable woman. The exhibition charts her meteoric rise from humble origins to muse, artist, fashionable celebrity, and political confidante with considerable influence in Italy, and then her tragic fall into poverty and alcoholism eventually leading to her death in Calais, aged 49. It is an exhibition that considers Emma Hamilton on her own terms, and that brings to light her artistic ambition, her passion, and her robustness, in surviving as 'an extraordinary woman in a man's world.'

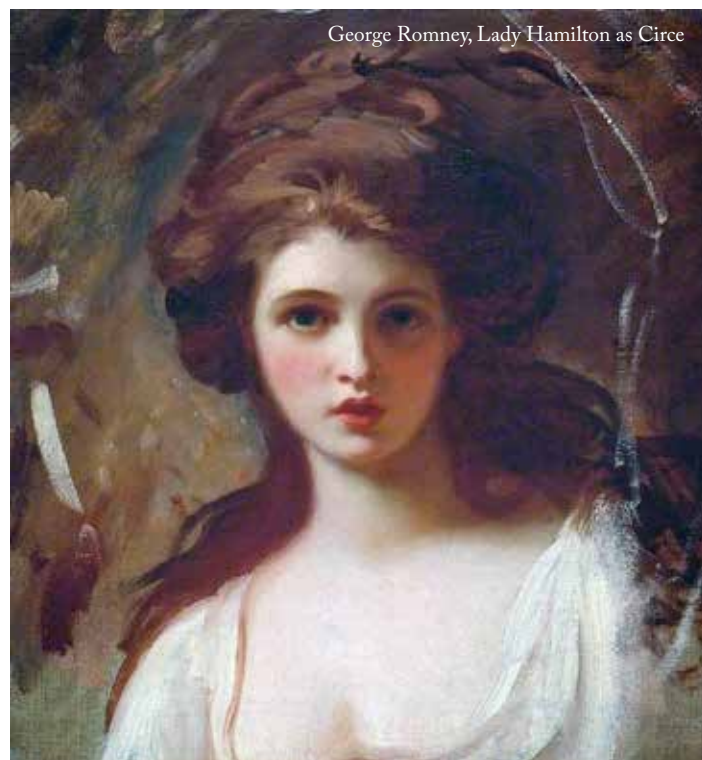
Born Amy Lyon in 1765, Emma was the daughter of a blacksmith and hailed from Ness in Cheshire. In the season of 1778-79, she was taken on as a maid to Mary Linley, the wardrobe mistress at Drury Lane Theatre, and would have had plenty of contact with the actresses there, of whom Mary Robinson was one. There are rumours about Emma dancing naked atop a table at Uppark, the estate of Harry Fetherstonhaugh. In 1782, she bore a child by him, also called Emma. Fetherstonhaugh's friend Charles Francis Greville became her next lover, and it was around this time that she became the muse of the painter George Romney, and changed her name to Emma Hart. Many of Romney's arresting portraits of her are on display in the exhibition, including Emma as Circe, Miranda, and Bacchante. The paintings, particularly when viewed together, demonstrate her elegance, intuition and versatility as a model as much as his artistic skill.

The next chapter of her story sees Emma cruelly 'given' to Greville's much older uncle, William Hamilton; Emma did not realise that she was being passed on until many months after she arrived in Naples. Hamilton doted on her, however, and in 1791, she became Lady Hamilton. During her time in Naples, drawing on her experience as a model, she developed an artistic form known as the attitudes, in which she went through a series of poses for audiences, representing figures from classical mythology. One of the highlights of the exhibition at the National Maritime Museum is a filmed recreation of one of these sequences, which really gives audiences a sense of the strange intensity of the form. In March 2017, the museum will host a life drawing evening, in which the model will tell Emma's life story in the same way that Emma herself went

through the attitudes. Emma's art drew the attention of satirists; Thomas Rowlandson mercilessly exploited the erotic potential of the attitudes in a satirical cartoon entitled 'Lady H\*\*\*\*\* Attitudes', which is on display in the exhibition, alongside other biting contemporary critiques.

As well as performance, Emma also had a head for politics; she developed a close relationship with Queen Maria Carolina, Marie Antoinette's sister, advising her during a period of political unrest in Italy, in which a French invasion seemed likely. She had met Admiral Nelson in 1793, but after his troops were victorious in defeating the French at the Battle of the Nile in 1798, she sent him an enthusiastic letter of praise. This was the start of a passionate love affair that both fascinated and scandalised the general public. The exhibition includes many of the letters between them, and gives a real insight into the profound relationship that many subsequent critics wrote off as inconsequential. In 1801, having moved back to England from Italy, Emma gave birth to a daughter, Horatia. Her husband William Hamilton died in 1803, but Nelson remained married to, although estranged from, his wife Fanny. He spent much of his time abroad in military service in the following years, and was eventually killed at the Battle of Trafalgar on October 21, 1805. Nelson's dying wishes that the government provide for his mistress and child went unheeded, and Emma fell into debt trying to maintain and preserve the house that she had lived in with him. Eventually, and after a spell in debtor's prison, Emma was forced to flee to France, where she died. Her daughter was brought up by Nelson's family, and lived a comparatively quiet life, having never officially been owned by her mother.

The paintings, caricatures, letters, costumes, and films that make up this exhibition successfully challenge the myth that Emma Hamilton was simply a woman in the background of important men's lives. Instead, she emerges as a multi-faceted, highly adaptable, talented and complex woman. We are delighted that our portrait, which depicts another such woman in Mary Robinson, could take its place in an exhibition dedicated to recovering a lost woman, in a way that speaks so closely to the research we do at Chawton House Library. The Guardian reviewed the exhibition very favourably, awarding it 5 stars and the comment 'No one in her time could resist Emma Hamilton, and nor will you.' We would have to agree, and if you're in London, it is definitely worth a visit. ●



George Romney, Lady Hamilton as Circe



# The year behind us, and the year ahead

Claire Harman gives a talk on Charlotte Brontë and Jane Austen, September 2016.

IT'S BEEN A PACKED AND PRODUCTIVE YEAR HERE AT CHAWTON HOUSE LIBRARY, AND AS WE APPROACH 2017, WE THOUGHT WE'D PAUSE TO LOOK BACK OVER 2016, AND THEN FORWARD TO WHAT'S AHEAD.

This year, we celebrated the bicentenary of the publication of Jane Austen's fourth novel, *Emma*. Our exhibition, 'Emma at 200: From English Village to Global Appeal', ran from March to September and covered the global, familial, literary, and social contexts of the novel, as well as exploring its reception history and its afterlives. The exhibition included rare first French and American editions of *Emma*, alongside Charlotte Brontë's famous letter about Austen, which came all the way from The Huntington Library in California. Part of the exhibition considered Austen's treatment of female accomplishments, and played host to the beautiful results of 'The Great British Stitch Off,' a challenge issued by Professor Jennie Batchelor (University of Kent) to stitchers of the world to embroider eighteenth-century patterns. The Stitch Off generated a short film, and also an embroidery workshop led by School of Needlework graduate Charlotte Bailey. Our second exhibition, "It" (is all about the) Books', which ran throughout October, was brought to us by artist in residence Angela Thames. Angela graduated from UCA Farnham in 2006 with a degree in fine art. Her books can be found in private and public collections in Italy, and at Oxford Brookes University and Bath Spa University, and work has been featured in exhibitions throughout the South East of England.

Four fascinating conferences took place in 2016, marking the bicentenary of Charlotte Brontë's birth in May, exploring women and Shakespeare in July, celebrating the work of Charlotte Smith in October, and thinking about the transatlantic garden in November. Our evening lecture series for the year was exciting and diverse, encompassing a range of canonical and non-canonical women writers, and topics as diverse as theatre management, the Napoleonic Wars, bluestockings, and *Frankenstein*. We enjoyed musical concerts, including a performance of music and poetry related to the Jerningham family in November. It was a busy year for the garden too, with the Elizabeth Blackwell herb garden opening in July.

The garden unites the exterior of the house with the contents of the library by drawing on Blackwell's own descriptions of medicinal herbs in her beautifully illustrated *Curious Herbal* (1737-39).

Next year looks to be just as exciting, with Visit England hailing it the year of literary heroes. 2017 marks the bicentenary of Austen's death, and our two exhibitions will reflect on her immense popularity, and consider the waxing and waning of literary reputations by exploring the work of two women writers whose fame far surpassed Austen's during their lifetimes. 'The "Incomparable" Eliza Haywood: naming, shaming, reclaiming' will run from March to June, and will take a look at the prolific early eighteenth-century writer, whose first novel *Love in Excess* (1719-20) matched *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) in popularity. From June to September, 'Fickle Fortunes: Jane Austen and Germaine de Staël' will consider Austen alongside her contemporary Germaine de Staël (who, like Austen, died in July 1817), a superstar of pan-European political, intellectual, and literary life. A three-day conference in July, 'Reputations, Legacies, Futures: Jane Austen, Germaine de Staël and their contemporaries, 1817-2017', will bring together international scholars to discuss the women who sometimes get left out of the conversation about eighteenth-century writers. We also look forward to public lectures on Hester Thrale Piozzi, Beatrix Potter, *Sanditon*, private theatricals in Austen's world, literary coteries, and Austen in Hollywood, as well as musical performances, Regency week embroidery workshops, the launch of Professor Emma Clery's new book *Jane Austen: The Banker's Sister*, and conferences on women writers as art critics, and the future of independent libraries. Snowdrop Sunday will see the garden reopen in February, and the first half of the year will afford ample opportunities for estate rambles and garden tours, and also treats such as a children's gardening workshop, an Easter weekend orienteering trail, and a summer plant fair. Look out for our new and improved website in early 2017, on which you can find more information about 2017 events. ●





# A note from our Learning and Visitor Manager



Following a successful first season of regular visitor opening hours in 2015, this year we increased our opening hours to every weekday afternoon in addition to being open 11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. on Sundays and bank holidays. We have been delighted by the response, and our visitors' book is full of inspiring comments such as 'Hidden gem', 'a glorious visit' and 'Volunteer staff – very friendly and knowledgeable.' We are particularly pleased that many visitors are either returning to us, or wish to return in the future. The additional opening hours in 2016 helped to increase visitor numbers, yet Chawton House Library and gardens still offer

visitors a sense of quiet and calm as visitors are encouraged to sit down at any time, browse some of the modern editions of library material on display, or just enjoy being in a working, historic building which has a strong sense of purpose as a library open to all. Looking ahead, we all very much look forward to welcoming our 2017 visitors to Chawton House Library, whether visiting for the first time or returning to see our new exhibitions and to enjoy the atmosphere once again.

Our visitors' book contains many warm and enthusiastic comments about our knowledgeable and diligent volunteers who do so much to make the Chawton House Library visitor experience extra special. Whether it is helping to look after visitors, working on the conservation and preservation of the books, working in the gardens, or helping with events such as evening talks or our annual fun ride, it is always a huge team effort. ●

Thank you to all our volunteers for making 2016 such a successful year. We simply could not open to visitors without all your enthusiasm, support and knowledge – thank you!

If anyone would like to join our volunteering team to help look after our visitors please contact Sarah Parry, Learning and Visitor Manager, for further information: [sarah.parry@chawtonhousetibrary.org](mailto:sarah.parry@chawtonhousetibrary.org)

# A Novel Holiday Season Gift

Adopting a book, or becoming a subscriber makes a perfect gift for bibliophile friends and family this festive period.

## ‘The Journal of Louisa Lushington’

SUBSCRIBE

Following the success of *The Duties of a Lady's Maid*, Chawton House Press will be publishing a transcribed copy of ‘The Journal of Louisa Lushington’ (1821–1822) with an introduction by Linda Slothouber. You can help us by becoming a subscriber – or purchasing a subscription for a friend – and take part in a tradition enjoyed by Jane Austen herself.

Jane Austen only had her name in print twice in her lifetime – on both occasions as a book ‘subscriber’. One can only imagine the pleasure this budding author had when seeing her name in print along with the great and the good of her day. Now you can join Jane by subscribing to Louisa Lushington’s journal. Although Louisa was in many ways a conventional young lady, living quietly within her family circle, the prominence of her family members gave her a prime view of social and political affairs. Her fascinating journal commences on 4 March 1821 with the family’s departure from Naples at the time of the Carbonari uprising and records their return to London just before the coronation of King George IV. The journal also describes a visit to Godmersham Park, where Louisa stayed with Edward Austen (later Knight) and his family. Of the younger Knights she said they have ‘admirable knack of inventing, & relating as facts, things which never did, or could have taken place, and this with the gravest faces imaginable...’ Perhaps they inherited their famous aunt’s ability to create stories!

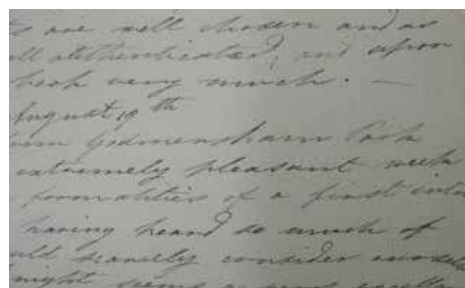
Louisa could be as acerbic as Jane Austen in her comments about other people. She dubs one lady at a ball ‘a cream-coloured horse dressed in a pink gown’ and gives one of her own dancing-partners the soubriquet ‘The Plague of Egypt,’ owing to

his habit of rattling on about ‘Jerusalem, Grand Cairo, mosques, temples, ruins, hieroglyphics, tombs, & the zodiac’ while waltzing.



Readers of Louisa’s journal will find amusement, but also much of interest concerning life in the Regency period in its pages. The meticulous chronicling of the Lushingtons’ journeys by land and sea shows that social prominence was no defense against dirty inns and troublesome horses. At the same time, it demonstrates the extent to which some English travelers created enclaves abroad that insulated them from local communities and unfamiliar ways.

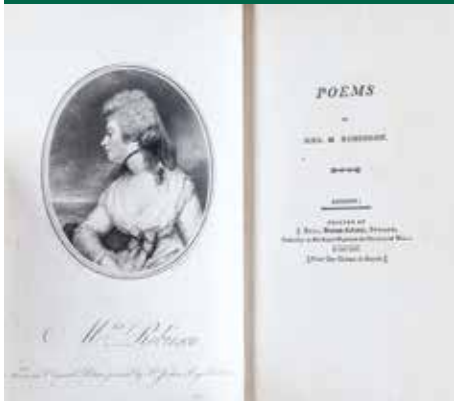
Chawton House Press will be publishing a transcribed copy, complete with a list of subscribers. To purchase a subscription, please visit our website. ●





# Subscribe or Adopt

ADOPT



*Hail! Goddess of persuasive art!  
The magic of whose tuneful tongue  
Lulls to soft harmony the wand'ring heart  
With fascinating song'*

Mary Robinson, *Poems*

First edition: 1791

Mary Robinson was an actress, poet, dramatist, novelist and celebrity figure, and the subscribers' list to this collection of poetry featured many royal subscribers, along with Sir Joshua Reynolds and R. B. Sheridan. This copy is bound and inscribed with the personal insignia of Victorian writer Violet Fane, pseudonym of Mary, Baroness Currie.

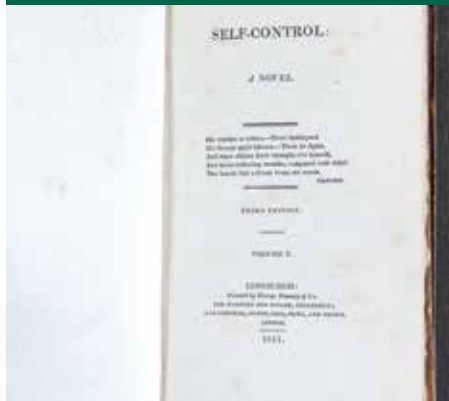
*'I am looking over Self-Control again, & my opinion is confirmed of its' being an excellently-meant, elegantly-written Work, without anything of Nature or Probability in it.'* ~ Jane Austen

Mary Brunton, *Self-Control: a Novel*

Third edition: 1811

When *Self-Control* appeared in the spring of 1811, six months before Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, it was Brunton's first novel, not Austen's, that was the sensation of the year; it was an overnight bestseller. A religious tale, graced by the appearance of a canoe chase at its close, our copy of *Self-Control* is the one that belonged to Jane Austen's brother, Edward, and was read by Jane herself.

ADOPT



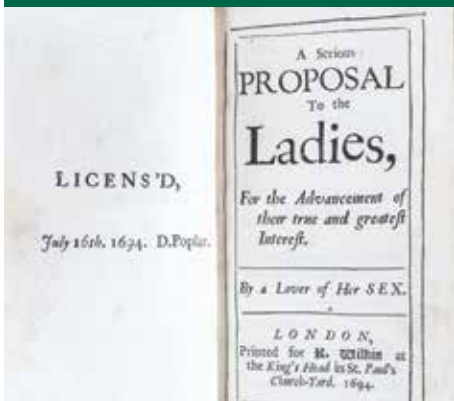
*'For since GOD has given Women as well as Men intelligent Souls, why should they be forbidden to improve them?'*

Mary Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies, for the advancement of their true and greatest interest. By a lover of her sex.*

First edition: 1694

Mary Astell (1666-1731) is frequently referred to as the first English feminist. *A Serious Proposal* was her first published work and argued in support of the education of women. By 1701 it had run to a further four editions. ●

ADOPT



Adopt a book, and you will be directly supporting the work of Chawton House Library and helping take care of more than 15,000 volumes – all accessible to use for research – in the Library's unique collection.

Pictured here is a small selection of some of the books we have on offer to adopt.

Our aim is to have secured 2,017 'adoptions' by the end of 2017 – quite a momentous year for bibliophiles everywhere – being the 200th anniversary of Jane Austen's death.

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## Did You Know?

**J**OHAN MURRAY was one of the most prolific publishers of the late eighteenth century, and he also provides a key to understanding eighteenth-century networks of women writers. As well as publishing Austen's *Emma*, a second edition of *Mansfield Park*, and her two posthumous novels, *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, John Murray II also published a number of other prominent women writers.

One was a French woman, Stéphanie-Félicité de Genlis (1746–1830). The book that Murray published was a historical novel translated into English as *The Duchess of Vallière. An Historical Romance. By Madame de Genlis* (1804). It was the story of Louis XIV's mistress Louise de la Vallière. The *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine* were less than kind to its subject matter, declaring that 'the Duchess of La Valliere was a harlot; and therefore unworthy the countenance of every virtuous woman.'

Genlis was a prolific writer working in several genres, including children's plays, conduct books, historical and romance novels, and even a survey of women writers, *De l'influence des femmes sur la littérature française* [On the influence of women on French literature] (1811). She was also an accomplished harp player; mistress of the Duc de Chartres (later guillotined); and as a Royalist, she was forced into exile during the French Revolution. She met the writer Frances Burney in person and her work was well known to Jane Austen – her *Adelaide and Theodore* (1782; English Translation 1783) is mentioned at the end of *Emma*.

In our next issue, find out more about John Murray's women writers, including Maria Rundell, Germaine de Staël, Helen Maria Williams, Felicia Dorothea Hemans, and Susan Ferrier. ●

Our heartfelt thanks go to Marion Roberts, Sybil Veeder and Dr Marie Nedregotten Sørbo for their generous contributions to our Adopt a Book programme. ●



Adélaïde Labille-Guiard,  
portrait of Madame de Genlis (1780)



The original *Female Spectator* made a bold statement in its day. © Chawton House Library

## Paying tribute to pioneering women

*The Female Spectator* is named after Eliza Haywood's publication of the same name, which was published from April 1744 to May 1746. Haywood's journal – which was a direct play on the existing *Spectator*, written by and for men – was the first magazine by and for women, and was widely read. Haywood was familiar with the challenges of life for women within a patriarchal system, and she wrote pragmatic advice on what kind of education women should seek, and on common difficulties such as how to avoid disastrous marriages and deal with wandering husbands.

The journal featured romantic and satirical fiction, moral essays and social and political commentary, covering everything from the craze for tea drinking and the problem of gambling, to politics, war and diplomacy, and the importance of science and natural history. ●

## An apology

We have recently installed a new database, which will make all of our administration much more streamlined and effective. We are very excited about the new system but we have been experiencing some teething problems, not least because we have had a staff changeover in the fundraising and communications team during the installation process. We sincerely apologise to those of you who have been contacted in error. Please bear with us while we are changing things over and do please contact us if you receive any communications that are amiss – we will rectify this as quickly and smoothly as possible for you. ●

In 2017, Jane Austen will become the face to the £10 note. Our supporters may be interested in the one-day interdisciplinary conference to be held at the Department of English at King's College London on Thursday 11 May, 2017. To view the Call for Papers, please visit the website: <http://www.womenmoneymarkets.co.uk/aim/>

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