2017 marks the bicentenary of the death of Jane Austen, who has become one of the world’s most famous and beloved authors. At Chawton House Library, we will be celebrating Austen’s life and work, whilst also reflecting on literary celebrity, the waxing and waning of reputations, and the women writers who may have been overlooked.

In February this year, Chawton House Library was delighted to welcome home a complete set of the first English editions of Austen’s six novels, after an absence of around 110 years. These volumes were generously donated by North American Friend of the Library Sandra Clark, who has previously donated several books to the collection, including a first edition of Frances Burney’s 1796 novel Camilla. The set, published by Richard Bentley in 1833, originally belonged to the Knight family in Chawton. Professor Janine Barchas describes the moment that she and Sandra Clark made this discovery:

‘Here was a family copy that had, miraculously, found its way to the shelves of a collector in Texas. That’s when Sandra smiled at me and said, “this one really should go home.”’

It was this collection that made Austen’s work accessible to a Victorian readership, ensuring her lasting, and indeed increasing, popularity in the modern day. This homecoming marks the beginning of a year in which Austen’s presence will be keenly felt in the Library, in Hampshire, and across the world. Along with first editions, manuscript material, and a personal letter written by Jane Austen and never exhibited before, these volumes will go on display as part of our summer exhibition.

On 20 March, Chawton House Library reopened its doors for the 2017 visitor season. We have already enjoyed several Austen-related events: an afternoon of talks on Austen’s final unfinished novel Sanditon, an evening talk from Professor Gillian Russell from the University of Melbourne on private theatricals in Mansfield Park, and a recital which included a miniature opera of Austen’s History of England, written when she was 15. The rest of 2017 promises more Austen, in the shape of talks, Regency week events, workshops, concerts, a book launch, and an international conference.

But Austen was not the most famous writer of her own time, nor was she the only famous writer who died in 1817. July that year also saw the death of Germaine de Staël, a writer who enjoyed phenomenal success and fame in her lifetime as a superstar of pan-European intellectual, political and literary life. Later this year, Dr. Gillian Dow will be curating an exhibition that will explore Austen’s remarkable popularity, but that will also put Germaine de Staël back on the intellectual map, showing how, in the two centuries since 1817, the reputations of these two women writers have re-aligned in astonishing ways. ‘Fickle Fortunes: Jane Austen and Germaine de Staël’ will open from 12 June to 24 September 2017.
On International Women’s Day 2017 we launched a new campaign on behalf of the many talented women writers who have been neglected and forgotten throughout history: #Women’sWrites.

2017 is a big year for Jane Austen; 200 years after her death, she will be featured on the £10 banknote. Many people are less aware that Jane Austen was one of a thriving community of talented women writers who have been neglected and forgotten throughout history: #WomensWrites.

Some of the writers featured in the Chawton House Library were famous in their time, but were then excised from our literary history, disappearing from mainstream publishing and popular culture. Others were never even published. We hold unique manuscripts – such as novels, journals and account books – of which give insights into women’s lives.

Why this is important today

A recent study published in the journal *Science* showed that girls as young as six believe that genius is a male trait due to the influence of gender stereotypes. We believe restoring these women writers to their rightful place in our literary heritage is an important step in redressing the balance. Please help us to spread the word so that these #Women’sWrites are appreciated and preserved long into the future. Join the campaign by sharing your own favourite quotes and facts about women writers, and follow our activities through our website and social media pages.

Naming, Shaming, Reclaiming: The ‘Incomparable Eliza Haywood’

The writer Eliza Haywood requested that after her death (which occurred in February 1756), correspondence relating to her life be destroyed. This did not prevent the rumours; Haywood as the runaway wife of a clergyman, Haywood as mother to illegitimate children, or Haywood as poverty-stricken hack forced to scribble for cash, are just some of the portraits painted of her – all subsequently disproved.1 The paucity of biographical records has been frustrating for those interested in Haywood’s life. What she did leave however, was text, and more. Some of the writers featured in the Chawton House Library were famous in their time, but were then excised from our literary history, disappearing from mainstream publishing and popular culture. Others were never even published. We hold unique manuscripts – such as novels, journals and account books – of which give insights into women’s lives.

The exhibition is part of the 2017 project into the battle over Haywood’s identity that took place between Haywood herself, her friends, foes, and literary descendants, this exhibition shows that the reforms narrative is overly simplistic. From the outset of her career, perhaps drawing on her knowledge of the stage, Haywood was a literary chameleon and an innovator, smashing genres together, masking political commentary with sex, desire with morality, and conduct advice with scandal. She refused categorisation in remarkable ways that demonstrate her professionalism, skill, and self-awareness.

The exhibition is part of the 2017 project at Chawton House Library to examine the reputations of women writers whose fame surpassed Austen’s in their own lifetime. Haywood was both well-known and popular – even infamous – in her own day, but today she is little-known outside of academic circles. She began her career on the stage, and published her first novel, *Love in Excess; or, the Fatal Enquiry* in 1719-20. Many of her early works took part in a genre now often called amatory fiction – seduction fiction often about a female protagonist, that explored the politics of sex and gender. Haywood was both highly praised and heavily criticised for this work, which sometimes bordered on improper in its depictions of passion. But Haywood wasn’t just writing about and sex and seduction. She was also writing political scandal novels. Books such as *Memoirs of a Certain Island* (1724-5) and *Adventures of Evasia* (1736) functioned as thinly-veiled political critiques of government and of contemporary political figures, and certainly played their part in inviting attacks on Haywood’s character. During and after her life, Haywood was often aligned with her amatory fiction in ways that ignore both the political and the ethical content of her work. In amatory fiction, she wrote about women’s ability to make and remake themselves, and to disguise themselves with both letters and clothing. These were strategies she employed in her own literary guises. In addition to actors and amatory writer, Haywood was a social commentator, satirist, novelist, playwright, periodical writer, mother, translator, publisher, and agony aunt. Some eighteenth-century critics chose to portray a career arc for Haywood based around the politics of sex and gender. Haywood was both highly praised and condemned. From the outset of her career, she took part in a genre now often called amatory fiction – seduction fiction often about a female protagonist, that explored the politics of sex and gender. Haywood was both highly praised and heavily criticised for this work, which sometimes bordered on improper in its depictions of passion. But Haywood wasn’t just writing about and sex and seduction. She was also writing political scandal novels. Books such as *Memoirs of a Certain Island* (1724-5) and *Adventures of Evasia* (1736) functioned as thinly-veiled political critiques of government and of contemporary political figures, and certainly played their part in inviting attacks on Haywood’s character. During and after her life, Haywood was often aligned with her amatory fiction in ways that ignore both the political and the ethical content of her work. In amatory fiction, she wrote about women’s ability to make and remake themselves, and to disguise themselves with both letters and clothing. These were strategies she employed in her own literary guises. In addition to actors and amatory writer, Haywood was a social commentator, satirist, novelist, playwright, periodical writer, mother, translator, publisher, and agony aunt. Some eighteenth-century critics chose to portray a career arc for Haywood based around the politics of sex and gender. Haywood was both highly praised and condemned.

With thanks to Professor Ron Dainton and Professor Roger Lanciale for loaning material for this exhibition, Vanessa Jackson for volunteering her time and energy to help on the project, Gillim Dow and Darren Bevin for their guidance, and the University of Southampton, for funding.


2 Patrick Braddock suggests 72 certain works in his 2004 *Biography of Eliza Haywood*, whilst Leah Orr puts this number at a more conservative 43. ‘The Basis for Attribution in the Canon of Eliza Haywood (1705-1748): A Closer Look’ (2009), 85-99.

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Life After Marriage: Haywood, Good Wives, and Jealousy

Eliza Haywood famously wrote about love, sex, and scandal, but throughout her career she also wrote about marriage and jealousy. Christine Blouch calls Haywood's 'late fiction' a novel about marriage, claiming that 'Haywood's traumas and how to avoid them, as well as how to negotiate a good one, constitute the major themes of Haywood's late fiction', but reading through Chawton's collection of Haywood's works reveals marriage to be a central concern not just at the 'end of her life but also her career.1 Her preoccupation with life after marriage sets Haywood apart not only from the scandal chronicles she herself wrote, but also from the later marriages, relationships, and misunderstandings, finally emerging avoided at all costs.

Alovysa appears to learn this lesson when D'Elmont confronts her. She promises never to be 'jealous' or 'doubtful of [her] happiness' and instead to believe that she retains her husband's affection, but only a few pages later she demonstrates her inability to follow through on her promise to trust him.2 Of course, she is right, and D'Elmont is indeed unfaithful to her, but in Haywood's conception of marriage, male sexual fidelity is unimportant. Indeed, in Haywood's later novel, when Jenny accidentally sends Jenny a love letter meant for another woman, Jenny assures him that she is not disturbed by it. Instead, she wishes he 'will either have no amours, or be more cautious in concealing them',3 as if the two possibilities are equal to her. Declaring her faith that he means nothing serious by his love affairs, Jenny tells her intended that she does not wish to know anything more than 'what you would have me', a telling contrast to Alovysa's burning desire to know the name of her husband's mistress.4 This trust eulogizes Jenny, transporting him 'almost beyond himself' and making him love her more, turning an event that could have ended their relationship into an affirmation of it.5

Alovysa discovers that jealousy is literally deadly, as her curiosity ultimately leads to her death at her husband's hands. In contrast, Jenny's refusal to give in to jealousy saves her marriage from the plot of the insipid Beline, and rescues her from the 'unjust and 'cruel' passion which Haywood insists 'destroys all the noblest principles of the soul' and 'inspires us with the most savage and inhuman sentiments'.6 Unlike Alovysa, who is driven to destroy lives and reputations by her jealousy, Jenny's steadfastness and ability to learn from vicarious experience proves that she, almost alone of Haywood's characters, is properly prepared to experience the pleasures of marriage.

Haywood's ideas about jealousy are hardly unique in the eighteenth century, but her focus on what happens after marriage is an important aspect of her works, and one that may stem from her connection to the theatre. Following a popular trend in Restoration drama, which could just as easily begin with a marriage and end with one, marriage is rarely the end of Haywood's stories. Whether her characters suffer brief, disastrous marriages like D'Elmont or Betsy Thoughtless, are trapped in marriage to someone unworthy of them, like The Injur'd Husband's Baron De Tortillere and The Double Marriage's Alathea, or struggle to maintain both their reputation and their secrets, like The Fatal Secret's Anadrea, Haywood's characters must survive marriage rather than simply reach the appearance of it as to be avoided at all costs.

2 Eliza Haywood, Love in Excess (London, 1729), II.23.
5 Ibid. III.58.
6 Haywood, The History of Jenny and Jenny Jessamy, III.58.
7 Ibid. III.60.
8 Ibid 229.
A Fond Farewell

Chawton House Library launches new ‘White Garden’ Terrace

Following on from last year’s new herb garden, Chawton House Library’s gardens are developing further with the launch of a new white garden this year.

The 2016 Herb Garden was inspired by one of the women writers in the Library collection – the botanist Elizabeth Blackwell – whose beautifully-illustrated A Curious Herbal (1737-39), a herbal guide for physicians, enabled the release of her husband from debtors prison.

Continuing with the theme of women writers, this year’s new development is the conversion of the Library Terrace to a white garden, inspired by Vita Sackville-West’s famous garden at Sissinghurst Castle in Kent.

Vita Sackville-West’s own work is not featured in the Library’s collection, which focuses mostly on women’s writing from 1600-1830. Nevertheless, paying homage to this award-winning writer links the garden to the house – not least because her work included a biography of Aphra Behn (1640-1689), one of the stars of the Chawton House Library collection.

The Chawton House Library white garden has been created in an area known as the Library Terrace, which also features tiling likely to be inspired by Edwin Lutyens, a friend of Montagu Knight and a regular visitor to the house.

Vita Sackville-West’s contribution to the garden is the conversion of the Library Terrace to a white garden, inspired by Vita Sackville-West’s famous garden at Sissinghurst Castle in Kent.

Garden Manager, Andrew Bentley (pictured left), says...

We are gradually developing the gardens so that they celebrate what is unique about Chawton House Library and that is the connection to women writers. It was a joy to design and develop the Elizabeth Blackwell Herb Garden and now I’m delighted to create a white garden inspired by Vita Sackville-West.

The Chawton House Library white garden has been created in an area known as the Library Terrace, which also features tiling likely to have been inspired by Edwin Lutyens, a friend of Montagu Knight and a regular visitor to the house.

A Fond Farewell

Sarah Parry, our Learning and Visitor Manager is moving on to an exciting opportunity at another historic house.

In mid March, we bid farewell to one of our longest serving members of the team. Sarah Parry, our Learning and Visitor Manager is moving on to an exciting opportunity at another historic house.

Sarah joined Chawton House Library in 2003 as a Library Assistant. She had the following to say about her time at the Library:

'I have many happy memories of past conferences and lectures, school and student visits, open tours, volunteer get-togethers and helping to look after the Library collections. I am particularly proud of our achievements in obtaining two Sandford Awards for our education work and, last year, accreditation to Visit England. Thank you to everyone for all the help, support and friendship over the years and I look forward to keeping in touch and returning to use the collections as a reader!' We wish Sarah the very best of luck in her future. She will be missed by staff and volunteers at the Library.

Visiting Fellowships

Since 2007, our competitive Visiting Fellowship programme – run in partnership with the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Southampton – has enabled those who wish to use our collections to stay on-site in our beautiful Elizabethan converted Stables. Ten years ago, the first visiting fellows arrived at Chawton House Library, we have built up a community of alumni across the globe.

In March, Gillian Russell (University of Melbourne) took up her Marilyn Butler Fellowship. She gave an evening talk about her research on private theatricals, as part of a project entitled ‘Making a Scene: Women Writing Private Theatricals, 1750-2004’. PhD student Allison Turner (University of Chicago) undertook work on her project, ‘The Salvaging Disposition: Waste and Plenitude in Eighteenth-Century British Literature.’

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The executive team and board of trustees – recently enhanced by new members from around the globe – have built up a community of alumni across the globe.

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Chawton at Cambridge

On the 27th January, the Librarian Darren Bevin gave a talk on Chawton House Library at Emmanuel College, Cambridge as part of their series of Special Collections Lectures. The lecture began by detailing the history of the building and the formation of the Library before exploring the activities that are carried out including exhibitions, conferences, research, book conservation and in-house publications. The event was well attended with an audience that included Dr David Pearson, a newly appointed trustee to Chawton House Library, and Mark Purcell from Cambridge University Library who is the keynote speaker at the Independent Libraries Conference to be held at Chawton House Library in June. Many thanks to Dr Helen Carron, Librarian at Emmanuel College, for hosting the event.

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Dates for the Diary

17-25 June is Jane Austen Regency Week in Alton and Chawton, Hampshire. For more information about events marking Austen’s bicentenary in Hampshire, please visit the Jane Austen 200 website: www.janeausten200.co.uk
Placing Charlotte Smith: Canon, Genre, History, Nation, Globe Conference

A report by Jacqueline Labbe, Elizabeth A. Dolan, and Val Derbyshire

Twenty-three investigative research papers, two recitals of original music, two ancestors, one new edition of Smith's Ethelinde, one potential new literary society and a beautiful setting were just some of the elements that comprised the Placing Charlotte Smith conference at Chawton House Library, 14-16 October 2016. This was the second conference to focus entirely on Charlotte Smith; the first took place at the University of Library, 14-16 October 2016. This was only the second conference to observe the 'astonishing upward curve in Smith publications. Between 2006 and 2009 there were 45 publications focused on Smith.'1 For Placing Charlotte Smith, Labbe returned to the MLA database and, using the same parameters (Smith as title keyword only, no dissertations), found that in the last ten years there have been 82 Smith publications. Or, to place it by decades: between 2000 and 2009, that 45 swelled to 87, and so far in our current decade we stand at 40. In other words, lots of people have found lots of very interesting things to say about Smith, they keep doing so, and over the period of the conference we were privileged to hear some of the very best new work. We would like to thank all the editors of Smith's works who have made sure they are now accessible for the greater ease with which we can read and understand her works.

In the opening panel, Rick Ness (University of Chicago) argued that Smith uses poetic apostrophe in the sonnets as a form of ventriloquism, increasing the distance between grief and consciousness. Samuel Rowes (University of Chicago) pointed out that the dissociative form of the poetic 'I' in the sonnets creates a counter-sentimental structure. Reading Smith's sonnets in conversation with John Thelwall's poetry and criticism, Mary Ann Myers (Bard McCallos College Holyoke) distinguished among strains of patriotism, cosmopolitanism, and nationalism.

Composer Ned Bigham (Viscount Mersey, and current owner of Biggar Park, Smith's childhood home) discussed his haunting and dark setting of Sonnet XXIII, 'Written at Biggar Park in Sussex, in August, 1799.' He played a recording of a performance by students in the University of Sheffield Department of Music along with a slide show of beautiful locations in the South Downs that inspired Smith's sonnet and its setting of it. He also shared commentary on the raison d'être behind his composition, including his sense of where the 'patrial trees' are planted on the property. Enriching our consideration of place, Ned offered a history of Biggar Park, complete with early maps and watercolours. He also shared a video address from a recent visitor to Smith's childhood home – Gretchen Bantock, an Australian descendant of Smith who has also shared a video address from a recent visitor to Smith's childhood home, Bignor Park, complete with early maps and watercolours. He offered an insight and advice on the possibility of starting a Charlotte Smith society. Sir Eldred Smith-Gordon, a descendant of Smith's son Lionel, provided insight and advice as did presenters and other Smith scholars in attendance. Delegates decided to establish a working group to investigate the idea further.

The next panel 'Market and Canon' featured Michael Garner (University of Pennsylvania) discovery of a thematic structure – ‘subcycles’ – emerging in early editions of the Elogean sennet, as well as his discussion of Smith's unusual decision to offer the fifth edition by subscription. Bethan Roberts (University of Lancaster) chronicled the translations of Smith), and her play The Oldest Menor House in the context of contemporary debates about educating women. The day ended with a convivial conference dinner held at the Alton House Hotel.

Ellen Moody, editor of a newly published edition of Ethelinde (Valancourt Books), opened the first panel of Saturday, 'National Places,' with a postcolonial reading of Ethelinde alongside Abdal Southee's The Map of Love and the poetry of Margaret Atwood. Elizabeth Edwards (University of Wales) mapped the Welsh settings in Ethelinde, Downard, The Banished Man, and What Is She?, demonstrating the significance of Wales to Smith as a place to conceal or retreat. Finally, Jane Hudson (University of Sheffield) argued that Smith's innovative use of regional dialect in her 1790 Letters of a Solitary Wanderer led to a surge of experimentation with dialect in subsequent works by Sir Walter Scott, John Galt, and Maria Edgeworth.

Orianne Smith (University of Maryland, Baltimore County) continued the exploration of Letters of a Solitary Wanderer into 'The Gothic' panel, analysing Smith's depiction of Obeah in 'The Story of Henrietta,' set in Jamaica. Turning to gothic folklore, Jenny McAvoy (Queen Mary University of London) considered whether Smith's most famous novel, The Old Manor House, could have been based on a real-life Hampshire ghost story. Mary Goings (University of Sheffield) traced the history of the vampire in English literature, in order to 'place' Smith's Mr. Vampire in Marsechn within the canon of English vampires.

Over lunch, Beth Dolan facilitated a discussion with delegates about the possibility of starting a Charlotte Smith society. Sir Eldred Smith-Gordon, a descendant of Smith's son Lionel, provided insight and advice as did presenters and other Smith scholars in attendance. Delegates decided to establish a working group to investigate the idea further.

The final panels of the conference addressed Desmond and Beachy Head. Grace Harvey (University of Lincoln) offered a reading of political friendship in Desmond: Jeremy Davidbeziner (University of Notre Dame) argued that Smith used geographical distance in Desmond and The Young Philosopher to schematize the limited perspective of male radicals. Katrina Röder (Paderborn University) posed a connection between the passions and social change in Celestina and Desmond. Beginning the panel on Beachy Head, Melissa Sadman (Cola College) argued that the poem's 'unruly natural objects' – particularly the fossils – convey the epistemological uncertainty incited by early nineteenth-century national history. Samantha Bont (Northwestern University) suggested that Beachy Head 'does' history in relationship to the unfolding present, represented by sound. Contextualizing the hermits in Smith's poetry within depictions of loneliness and solitude from the seventeenth century forward, Amelia Worsley (Amherst College) made a compelling case that Smith's Hermit figure is a parody of the lonely poet portrayed by Wordsworth and Coleridge.

The conference concluded with a lecture recital of ‘The Songs Cycles of Beauty Head’, set to music by Amanda Jacobs, and performed in St. Nicholas Church, Chawton. This beautiful musical setting of Smith's most complex poem emerged from a collaboration between Jacobs and Beth Dolan that began in summer 2013 at Chawton House Library. With piano accompaniment by Jacobs, musician soprano Janet Oates sang 13 of the 26 songs in the cycles, with Dolan providing a lecture.

On Sunday, many delegates participated in an optional excursion to three important places in Smith's life. The tour travelled first to Biggar Park, Sussex, Smith's childhood home. The group progressed to the grandeur of Petworth House (where Smith enjoyed/ended a somewhat troubled relationship with the third Earl of Egremont, George Wynnham), and concluded with a visit to St John's Church, Stoke near-Guildford, where Smith is buried. Local historian Carol Brown explained that Smith's family vault is currently inaccessible, likely located under a nineteenth-century church addition. However, her memorial plaque is visible within the church.

Within just one weekend, delegates covered an enormous amount of ground. In the closing lines of 'To My Lyre,' Smith appeals to her readers thus:

And as the time ere long must come
When I lie silent in the tomb,
Thou shalt preserve these mountainous pages;
For gentle minds will love my verse,
And pity shall my strains rehearse,
And tell my name to distant ages.'

This conference achieved what was arguably Smith's dying wish, and told her 'name to distant ages,' in addition to discovering new ways to continue telling her name to future ages to come.

The conference organisers, Jackie, Beth, and Val, would like to thank BARS and Lehigh University Press for their generous support, and Chawton House Library for all of their work in making this event possible.

Austen & Beyond: John Murray’s Women Writers

John Murray (1778-1843) 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. In our last issue, we introduced readers to Madame de Genlis. Here are a selection of some of the other women writers that he published:

Maria Rundell (1745?-1828)

In 1806, Murray published Maria Rundell’s New and Improved Domestic Cookery, which remained in print throughout the nineteenth century. The book played a big part in making Murray rich, enabling him to buy 50 Albermarle Street, where his publishing business was then based. The profit led to a breakdown of the relationship between publisher and author, however, with Rundell eventually suing Murray. Today, in addition to providing insight into women’s roles within the home, the book is also a rich resource for food historians, and some rather dubious recipes for us to try out: ‘To collar Calf’s Head. Scald the skin off a fine head, clean it nicely, and take out the brains. Boil it tender enough to remove the bones, then have ready a good quantity of chopped parsley, mace, nutmeg, salt, and white pepper, mixed well.’

Felicia Hemans (1793-1835)

Felicia Hemans published 19 volumes of poetry and two plays and coined the phrase ‘stately home’. Her collections included England and Spains; or, Valour and Patriotism (1808) and The Domestic Affections (1812). She started publishing with John Murray in 1816. He paid £70 for the copyright to a second revised edition of The Restoration of the Works of Art to Italy, A Poem, and in 1817, he published her Modern Greece, A Poem anonymously. Along with Byron and Shelley, Hemans was described by her husband in 1816, but she continued to balance family life and literary ambitions, publishing at an impressive rate and growing in popularity among her Romantic contemporaries. After her death, her poetry - enjoyed for its promotion of ‘domestic affections’ which was so crucial to Victorian ideals of family and femininity, and also for its evocation of English national pride - was widely used for educational purposes, both in England and the colonies.

Helen Maria Williams (1759-1827)

Helen Maria Williams was a poet, translator, and polemicist, who saw and documented the effects of the French Revolution. She was living in Paris in 1793, during the Reign of Terror, when she was arrested for her pro-Girondin (moderate) sympathies and imprisoned in the Luxembourg in 1794. She initially supported the French Revolution. She was living in Paris in 1793, during the Reign of Terror, when she was arrested for her pro-Girondin (moderate) sympathies and imprisoned in the Luxembourg in 1794. She initially supported the French Revolution. She was living in Paris in 1793, during the Reign of Terror, when she was arrested for her pro-Girondin (moderate) sympathies and imprisoned in the Luxembourg in 794. She initially supported the French Revolution. She was living in Paris in 1793, during the Reign of Terror, when she was arrested for her pro-Girondin (moderate) sympathies and imprisoned in the Luxembourg in 794. She initially supported the French Revolution.

Susan Ferrier (1782-1854)

Susan Ferrier was a Scottish novelist, who wrote three novels: Marriage (1818), The Inheritance (1824) and District (1833). Ferrier’s popular debut novel Marriage was published by William Blackwood (Edinburgh) and John Murray (London) in 1818. Ferrier was adamant that she must remain anonymous, claiming ‘I never will arouse myself [...] I could not bear the fusc of authorship!’ She did not allow her name to be attached to her work until three years before her death. Both didactic and satirical, Marriage warns young women against marrying down, and is similar to fiction written by Maria Edgeworth and by Jane Austen in its shrewd observation. Ferrier definitely admired Austen. Her second book, The Inheritance, begins as follows: ‘It is a truth, universally acknowledged, that there is no passion so deeply rooted in human nature as the pride of family’.

The book played a big part in making Murray rich, enabling him to buy 50 Albermarle Street, where his publishing business was then based. The profit led to a breakdown of the relationship between publisher and author, however, with Rundell eventually suing Murray. Today, in addition to providing insight into women’s roles within the home, the book is also a rich resource for food historians, and some rather dubious recipes for us to try out: ‘To collar Calf’s Head. Scald the skin off a fine head, clean it nicely, and take out the brains. Boil it tender enough to remove the bones, then have ready a good quantity of chopped parsley, mace, nutmeg, salt, and white pepper, mixed well.’

Murray also published Germaine de Staël (1766-1817), the star of our Summer exhibition. You can find out more about Staël in our next issue.

Did you know?

Mary Collier

‘The Poetical Washwoman’

Local historian and regular Female Spectator reader Jane Hurst responds to a previous Did You Know article on the poet Mary Collier:

On the end page of vol. 2, no.2, of The Female Spectator there was a Did You Know about Mary Collier who came to be known as the ‘The Poetical Washwoman’. She is of particular interest to Chawton House Library as she was living in nearby Alton on 20 October 1762. Luckily Mary wrote an autobiographical sketch as a preface to her Poems, on Several Occasions which was published the year that she died. Hence some details of her life are known although it is possible that some artistic license was used.

The Encyclopaedia of British Literature 1660-1799 has an entry for Mary Collyer/Collier where it is suggested that Mary was baptised in Ludworth near Midhurst in Sussex on 9 October 1688 having been born, as she herself wrote, ‘to poor, but honest parents’. After they died, she moved to Petersfield and worked as a washerwoman until the age of 63 when she decided to ‘go and take care of a farmhouse, near Alton, and there I staid till turned of Seventy, and then the infiniteness of age, reduced me incapable of the labour of that place’. Mary continued: ‘Now I have retired to a Garret (the Poor Poets fate) in Alton, where I am endeavouring to pass the relict of my days in Piety, Purity, Peace, and an Old Maid’.

It seems that she may have written at least one poem after moving to Alton – ‘On the Marriage of George the Third. Wrote in the Seventy-Second Year of her Age’. This suggests that Mary was about 71 in 1761 when George III married Queen Charlotte, and 72 when she died the next year.

She seems to have been married at least one poem after moving to Alton – ‘On the Marriage of George the Third. Wrote in the Seventy-Second Year of her Age’. This suggests that Mary was about 71 in 1761 when George III married Queen Charlotte, and 72 when she died the next year.

There seems to be no mention of Mary being a brewer in Alton. In fact, the town’s brewhery lay behind the Swan Inn and would probably have had an all-male workforce. However, at the end of her poem ‘The Woman’s Labour’, addressed to Stephen Duck, there is a reference to ‘our Mistress’ who ‘wants our Help, because the Beer runs low. Then in much haste for...’

Brewing we prepare, ‘...’ This suggests that she was a housekeeper who brewed beer for the household among other tasks when in the Alton area rather than in the brewhery trade itself.

The advertisement to the first edition of Mary’s poems was reprinted in W Minchin’s New Edition of 1820. Among those who signed a document certifying that Mary was ‘the Real Author of an epitope to Stephen Duck, called the Woman’s Labour’ on 21 September 1739 were three men whose families later had connections to the Austens: John Clement Esq., W. Clement and Thomas Bradley, who were from Petersfield as would be expected for 1739, although they did have property interests around Alton.

It seems quite likely that W. Clement was related to the Thomas Clement who came to Alton from Petersfield after marrying Jane White, niece of Rev Gilbert White of Selborne, in 1780. Thomas was an attorney and involved with the bankruptcy meetings relating to Henry Austen’s bank. One of the Clement daughters married Frederick Gray, brother of Henry Austen’s partner in the Alton bank, and another became Mrs. Benjamin Proctor of Chawton, who is mentioned in Jane Austen’s letters. Bedger Bradley, a descendent of the family of the same name of Petersfield, also came to Alton and leased property from Jane Austen’s brother Edward. With possible family connections, had Jane read any of Mary’s poems? *
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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* founded in 1711 by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele – 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 satiric 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. ●

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