

My Dear Cassandra.....

"Jane Austen can in fact get more drama out of morality than most other writers can get from shipwreck, battle, murder, or mayhem."

-- Ronald Blythe, English writer and editor.

Nov 15, 2008 Meeting

Our own member, Bob Stamp, will give a talk on Hanoverian and Stuart names in the novels - and his proposal that the assigning of Hanoverian names to flawed young ladies and Stuart names to the heroines reflects Jane's view of the family of George III.

We will also hear about the Chicago AGM from all the members who attended.

This is also our meeting for signing up volunteers for the TEA , the play, cakes, selling tea tickets, asking for raffle items etc.

September meeting

Thanks to three guests from the Edmonton Jane Austen Society who spoke at the September meeting. Beatrice Nearey, ably assisted by Sheila Dechant, gave an amusing illustrated talk about carriages and carts called "What Would Darcy Drive?" Jeanne Worton spoke about the history and manufacture of teapots, giving lots of examples from her own extensive collection. These gracious ladies not only entertained us, they provided door prizes to three lucky winners! Thanks also to Catherine Gardner for the delicious treats.

Jane Austen calendars

Liz Philosophos Cooper and JASNA Wisconsin Region have produced a wonderful calendar for 2009 called "A Year with Jane Austen". The months feature colour illustrations by C.E. and H.M. Brock produced for an 1898 edition of Austen's works. Actual events from Jane Austen's life are noted on the correct days and many other days are filled with dates and doings important to the characters in Jane's books. With gift-giving season in mind, we ordered 20 of these lovely calendars from Liz. They'll be on sale at the November meeting for \$12.00 each.

**If you do but one thing in 2009 – let it be “The Tea”
In years to come, it will be enough to say “I attended the TEA”
Jane Austen’s Tea,– the height of the season’s many events.**

Regency England: The Waltz

The introduction of the waltz brought open scandal to the ballroom floor. Born in Vienna, outrage and protest against this intimate dance stormed across Europe to England where ferocious moral affront greeted the new dance. A form of the waltz that had no scandalous close hold and featured an ‘Allemande’ and intertwining arm movements had been seen in English ballrooms since 1800. The very shocking and risqué “closed couple” waltz was a gliding dance very suitable to elegant footwear and highly polished ballroom floors. This indelicate dance quickly caught hold, and soon couples were waltzing in ballrooms all over England. The waltz received formal acceptance when it gained the Prince Regent’s blessing in 1816. This, however, didn’t stop The Times from condemning the unseemliness of the dance. Dire warnings were uttered and parents were urged to protect their daughters from this vile contagion. Despite the denunciations in press and pulpit, the waltz had come to London to stay. And it wasn’t so very licentious.

There was plenty of space between partners.

- *The Regency Companion* by Sharon Lauder milk and Teresa L. Hamlin (p.15)

Edmonton Club meetings

On October 25, the Edmonton Jane Austen Society held their annual general meeting. Natasha Duquette spoke on "Laughter over Tea: Jane Austen and Culinary Pedagogy" and the group also enjoyed their annual garage sale of Austen or English books and souvenirs. The next regular meeting will be at the Stanley Milner Public Library on November 22 when Nora Stovel will reprise her talk from the Chicago AGM, "Austen's Legacy of Love and Laughter to Carol Shields".

On December 13, the club will be celebrating Jane Austen's birthday with a tea in the Wedgwood Room at the Hotel Macdonald.

2008 JASNA TOUR TO ENGLAND

With Elizabeth Marshall and Linda Payne

We certainly had a great time on this year’s JASNA tour, “Jane Austen’s Great Houses in Fact and Fiction (July 17 – 26, 2008). While we were fascinated by the many beautiful and historic great houses and gardens we visited, we discovered that our favourite places were the sites of Jane Austen’s life. Here are just a few impressions of our outstanding days.

July 17: St Nicholas Church, Steventon: A tour bus moves through rural Hampshire: small green fields dotted with large oak trees and surrounded by stone fences and hedges, with sheep scattered on the green squares, ignored by the occasional groupings of cows. The bus turns slowly onto a trail so narrow that tree branches scrape each side. A car coming toward it wisely chooses to back up to a driveway to let the bus continue. It stops at a wide spot opposite a small, stone Norman church and passengers slowly disembark.

Suddenly, the church bells begin to peal and six or seven people emerge from the church and hurry toward the bus, extending their hands to welcome the passengers.

“Is there a special event going on at the church this afternoon?” a passenger asks.

“Most certainly there is!” is the reply. “You, our JASNA friends, have come for a visit.” The warm welcome, with smiles, conversation, tours and a short history lesson, is our first contact with the Jane Austen Society. It sets the tone for the days to follow in our encounters with our British counterparts, numerous tour guides and the general public as we make our pilgrimage to “Jane Austen’s Great Houses in Fact and Fiction”.

July 18: 8 College Street, Winchester: Late in the afternoon we file down a narrow, shaded street in the quiet city of Winchester. Beside the high stone walls of Winchester College we gaze in hushed awe at an unimposing yellow house with one bay window on the second floor. Behind those curtains is the room where Jane Austen died 191 years ago this very day. The occupants, a teacher at the college, his wife and sons, have graciously agreed to let us visit the house in exchange for a donation to a charity supporting needy Africans. Our guide, Elizabeth Proudman, reads us Cassandra’s description of her sister’s last moments. Tears well up for many of us. We all speak in hushed tones as the family suggests how the house was used by Jane, Cassandra and the one servant they had with them. They also point out features of the house, including a beam salvaged from a ship of the invading Spanish Armada in 1588. We are relieved to laugh and nod enthusiastically when a young son of the family, pulling on his soccer socks, earnestly reveals his hopes that Jane Austen slept in his room!

July 19: J A S Meeting at Chawton: An exciting day for any Jane Austen enthusiast! We’re off to Chawton—a lovely village made up of half-timbered cottages, some with thatched roofs, but most importantly, the location of Chawton Cottage. This plain brick house contains wonderful Austen artifacts that we’ve only read about: the pedestal table she wrote on, the topaz crosses given to Jane and Cassandra by their brother Charles, a piano similar to the one she practiced on before breakfast, letters by Jane, and the bedroom that she shared with Cassandra—now we’re really seeing them for ourselves.

We walk along the same road that Jane would have used to visit her brother Edward at Chawton Great House and join the large crowd for the annual J A S meeting. We have a chance to shop at various tents for Austen-related books and objects (meeting our friends from Steventon again), go to hear Clare Lamont of Newcastle University speak on “Living in Ruins: Jane Austen and the Monasteries” and then join the crowd to line up for tea. Amazingly well organized, we’re out on the grounds within minutes to begin mixing with our fellow Austen admirers. Any reputation of English reserve is undeserved today. It’s easy to talk about Austen, the speech, the tea, where we all come from, our tour and even their trips to Canada.

Then we stroll down to the Chawton St. Nicholas Church for Evensong and the end of a wonderful day.

July 20: Ibthorpe House: Most of this day is spent following in Jane’s footsteps as we visit a few of the houses she knew when she lived at Steventon. They are of various

sizes: the Vyne, an elegant, large mansion where Jane occasionally dined; Ashe House, where Jane could discuss books and other matters with Madame Lefroy and where she met Tom Lefroy; and Ibthorpe House, where Jane visited her friends the Lloyds. Ibthorpe House was the smallest of the three houses, and according to many scholars is probably the type and size of house Jane used as a model for the homes of her country squire families.

Ibthorpe House is the home that captured our hearts. It is a typical Georgian house: red brick with white trim, symmetrical and beautiful. Its incredibly friendly owners greet us as friends, making us feel welcome in their home. We move from room to room surrounded by family photos, the furnishings of the English country lifestyle and stories of Jane's visits to see the Lloyds—Mary, Martha and their mother, Mrs. Lloyd. We even get to see the bedroom where Jane Austen slept.

A wander through the gardens, a pleasant tea with homemade goodies—we get a sense of what being a houseguest might have been like for Jane. Today has been a chance to travel in beautiful, rural Hampshire, a chance to see her world.

July 22: Crowe Hall, Bath: Our instructions for this evening are: “This is the big night. Wear your spiffiest. If you want to wear Regency clothes, this is the night for the finery. We'll dine in splendid surroundings and photos will be galore!” Well, what should we expect?!!!

At the end of a maze of narrow streets bordered by impressively large houses, we make our way on foot down a hedge-lined lane to a real porte-cochere. A ‘butler’ and housekeeper welcome us to Crowe Hall, hand us glasses of wine and direct us to a magnificent garden. Besides the usual manicured shrubs and flowerbeds, it includes a marble pond and admirable statuary. In the distance, on a hill, we gaze at a representation of a Greek temple and admire the part of Bath that spreads over the surrounding hills. Our enthusiasm for Bath echoes that of Catherine Morland!

Before and after a delicious buffet dinner, eaten inside or on the terrace or in the sheltered ‘summer house’, we listen to a delightful concert of music of Jane Austen's day, supplied by a soprano (“Miss Cholmondeley”) and a tenor (“Mr. Featherstonehaugh”, who turns out to be none other than our tour company's director, Hugh Whittaker), accompanied at the piano by “Mr. St. John Stanton”, all in Regency dress. The delightful concert of music by Mozart, Hayden, Scarlatti and others, and the occasional poem by Jane's favourite, Cowper, is much enjoyed. Our host, an elderly Mr. Barratt, joins us. We stumble down the unlighted lane to the bus in a state of absolute euphoria. A night to remember indeed!

July 23: Stoneleigh Abbey: Today's trip to Stoneleigh Abbey, the home of Mrs. Austen's cousin, Reverend Thomas Leigh, is full of memories of Jane Austen's visit there in 1806. It is a magnificent house that impressed Jane so much that she used some of the things she saw here in her novels. We are taken around the house by the housekeeper (shades of Pemberley in Pride and Prejudice), see family portraits with

many Leigh family names that turn up in various Austen novels, visit the chapel which seems likely as a model for the chapel at Sotherton Court in Mansfield Park, and are told about a relation whose life may have been the inspiration for Anne Elliot in Persuasion. At Stoneleigh, we begin to understand how Jane adapted what she saw to form the characters, settings and incidents of her novels.

The tour was enhanced by our fellow travelers---all enthusiastic and knowledgeable JANEITES. Our admiration knows no bounds for the tour escort, Mary Lou White, and for the English guide, Elizabeth Proudman, an Austen Tour Specialist who also gave several background lectures during the tour. We understand that JASNA is considering another tour for next year. Our advice is to sign up as soon as you receive the tour brochure: this year's tour filled in three weeks. Enjoy!

Jane Austen Calgary Contacts:

Regional Coordinator : Jennifer Hamblin ~ 282-4065
Program Coordinator : Margaret Crichton ~ 284-4649

Mark your calendar for our next Meeting :

Jan 17, 2009 - the TEA, and, **March 21, 2009** next meeting.

Website: www.jasnacalgary.ca

Meeting place: Sunalta Community Centre, 10th Ave and 16th St SW

Newsletter Info : Ann Craig. Tel : 252-6795 Fax : 212-1480 email ancraig@shaw.ca