Newsletter of the
Jane Austen Society of North America,
Calgary, Alberta, Canada. September 20, 2008

My Dear Cassandra……

Jane Austen industries cranks on, and on and on, turning out products that merge in the mind into Northanger Sensibilities*, or* Prejudice Abbey *or* Pride and Persuasion Park.
- *Benedict Nightingale (British journalist and theatre critic)*

This meeting: September Meeting

Saturday September 20. Same time (2-4 pm) and place (Sunalta Community Centre, 10th Ave and 16th St SW). We welcome two members from the Edmonton Jasna: Beatrice is giving us a Power point presentation on Carriages of the the Period and Jeanne is bringing a collection of Teapots and giving their history.

Our Last meeting: May meeting

At the regular meeting on May 10, JASNA Calgary members were treated to a very interesting talk by Dr. David Oakleaf, Associate Professor in the English Department at the University of Calgary. Dr. Oakleaf examined Jane Austen's courtship plots in comparison with those of other women writers of the period. Thank you to Catherine and Helen Gardner for providing delicious refreshments.

Edmonton Gala

On May 24, the Edmonton Jane Austen Society held their gala, "Austen's Men", at the University of Alberta. Eight Calgary members attended and enjoyed interesting sessions by presenters Nora Stovel (brothers and sisters in Austen's life and books), Angela Young (men's clothing in Austen's time), Sheila Dechant (Austens's heroes, cads and bounders), and Beatrice Nearey (family life in Austen's time as portrayed by contemporary watercolour artist, Diana Sperling). All this plus a delicious lunch, two great coffee breaks and innumerable door prizes! Thanks to the Edmonton club for a wonderful day.

BBC Canada Shop Online

If you enjoyed the new productions of *Sense and Sensibility, Northanger Abbey, Persuasion, Mansfield Park* and the film biography *Miss Austen Regrets* shown on Masterpiece Theatre last spring, you may wish to acquire your very own DVD copies. The BBC Canada Shop Online (www.bbccanadashop.ca or 1-800-435-5685) carries these and many older BBC-produced film versions of Austen's books (including the Colin Firth *Pride and Prejudice* rebroadcast last spring).

JASNA photos on the Glenbow Archives website

Did you know that the Glenbow Museum Archives is the official repository of JASNA Calgary club records? Even though our club is just eight years old, our historical records (minutes, correspondence, newsletters, etc) are being safeguarded so researchers in the

future will have a more complete picture of local clubs and the literary interests of Calgarians. Recently, the Archives scanned four photographs from those stored with the JASNA Calgary collection and added them to their online photographic database. Have a look at: http://ww2.glenbow.org/search/archivesPhotosSearch.aspx (just put Jane Austen into the keyword/search box).

JASNA AGMs

If visiting Chicago this fall sounds like a fun idea, you may wish to take in the 2008 Annual General Meeting of the Jane Austen Society of North America. It's being held at the Westin Hotel, October 2-5 and the theme is "Austen's Legacy: Life, Love & Laughter."

For those who like planning ahead, the 2009 AGM will be held in Philadelphia, October 9-11, and has another great theme, "Jane Austen's Brothers and Sisters in the City of Brotherly Love." Check the JASNA website for more details: www.jasna.org .

Pride and Prejudice: One of the "50 Greatest Books"

Globe and Mail readers will know that the Saturday Books section has been running a feature called "The 50 Greatest Books". Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* was one of the first books honoured with this designation. Reviewer Joan Thomas made a great case with observations such as "The 18th-century novel was a baggy, sententious affair before Jane Austen gave it bones," "The vividness and complexity of the characters, as revealed through conversation alone, is electrifying," and "Elizabeth Bennet is a terrific heroine for any age. Witty, spirited and outspoken, she risks everything in being adamantly who she is."

News from the Edmonton Jane Austen Society

Speaking of Jane Austen's great book, the Edmonton Jane Austen Society is looking forward to two days of festivities in September in conjunction with the Citadel Theatre's production of *Pride and Prejudice*. In a recent e-mail, Edmonton club president Jeanne Worton extended an invitation to Calgary club members to get in on the fun. She writes:

As you probably know, The Citadel Theatre is putting on a stage version of Pride and Prejudice this fall. They have made a wonderful offer to us. On Sunday, September 21 they are having a "pre-show" performance and they have invited our members to attend for free. We may bring guests at half price, about $25.

They are also offering us a "pre-show chat," a chance to talk with members of the cast and crew, and the Citadel's restaurant, which usually isn't open on Sundays, will open just for us. The pre-show chat runs from 5 to 6 p.m., and the play starts at 7:30 p.m.

They said they would be willing to extend the same offer to your chapter if any of your members would like to attend. The person to get in touch with is Joshua Semchuk. His phone number is 780-428-2134, and his e-mail is: jsemchuk@citadeltheatre.com.

Appropriately, the Edmonton club's regular meeting the following Saturday, September 27 will feature readings from *Pride and Prejudice*. As usual, the club will be meeting from 2-4 in the Edmonton Room of the Stanley Milner Public Library. Calgary members visiting Edmonton are very welcome to attend. In October we will have Natasha Duquette speaking on "Laughter Over Tea. Jane Austen and Culinary Pedagogy." She is presenting this talk at the AGM.

Our Program Committee presents the following list of future programs..

As we get closer to the dates, more detailed information will be included in this newsletter.

Nov 15, 2008 - 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.

Jan 17, 2009 - the **TEA** - Catherine Gardner has agreed to chair this committee and we are going for the Good Companions Center again (really liked those tea cups!) and having scones and entertainment...

March 21, 2009 -Finding Jane Austen in the UK - lead speakers will be our members Judith and Deirdre who are doing the Grand Tour/Pilgrimage in October . This will be followed by an additional open forum from members re their ratings, tips, recommendations, experiences and chit chat about this great topic.
Also a business meeting re getting volunteers for the GALA.

May or June, 2009: a 10 AM to 3:30 GALA at Sunalta. We are going for some speakers (hopefully Juliet McMaster/and or Nora Stovel from U of A) and looking for contributions from our own members to give presentations on anything they fancy! Catered Lunch, Sunalta community center, dancing? card games? Insults and how they were delivered in the novels? income levels at the time? Proposed speakers : Nora Stovel on Siblings - she is working on a presentation for Philadelphia and Juliet McMaster on whatever she is working on.

Sept 2009 A Regency Show and Tell Fair: food fair pot luck and social - a bring a dish of something if you can and chat about it - white soup? gruel? cakes? anything anyone would like to present and discuss a bit? if you really don't cook come with a quiz or a craft or a review of one of the sequels or prequels...Regency costumes optional ...

The program committee responsible for all the hard work organizing these programs consists of: Margaret Crichton, Randi Lind, Sue Spooner, Catherine Gardner, Helen Gardner, Anne Marie Barnhill, Jennifer Hamblin and Elizabeth Marshal.
We thank you all.

The Seven Lives of John Murray, By Humphrey Carpenter

The history of the dynasty that published Byron, Jane Austen, Darwin – and Debo Devonshire

Reviewed by DJ Taylor

Sunday, 10 August 2008

'I want to ask your advice about a publisher for my autobiography... with which I have been tinkering for a year,' the erstwhile 'Bright Young Person' Brian Howard wrote to his friend Cyril Connolly just over half a century ago. 'Whose are yours? I feel Murray's are the most reassuring.' No book was ever written, but the would-be author's instinct was correct. For upwards of 150 years, the house of John Murray was a byword for books that combined a certain amount of gentility with decent sales. You would not find Ronnie Kray's memoirs on its list, but you might very well turn up something by the Duchess of Devonshire, more of whom anon.

The origins of the firm, as this book, subtitled 'The Story of a Publishing Dynasty', painstakingly reveals, were slightly more haphazard. The founding John Murray was a hard-drinking lowland Scot who headed south in the 1760s, set up as a Fleet Street bookseller-publisher (the 18th century saw no distinction between the two trades) and began by buying fractional shares in sure-fire best-sellers. His son, both more astute and less addicted to the bottle, built the business up, got in with Sir Walter Scott, founded the money-spinning Quarterly Review and made a fast friend of Byron, whose poem The Corsair sold a record-breaking 10,000 copies on publication day in 1814.

Like one or two of his descendants, all of whom took his name, John Murray II loved a lord, and several of his communications to Byron are quite saccharine in their obsequiousness. One talks of 'the misery I suffer at receiving a Letter from your lordship without one word of that kindness which has made all the former ones so dear'. There were difficulties with Lady Caroline Lamb, who hung around the office – now relocated to Albemarle Street at the heart of the fashionable West End – and who once walked off with her inamorata's portrait after forging a letter in his hand, but the firm seems to have regarded this an occupational hazard of dealing with quality.

Amid a riot of book-trade gossip, there are two wider points to be made about the first 100 years or so of Murray's existence. The first is how thoroughly the history of early 19th-century publishing reflects and symbolises the rise of the newly literate, acquisitive and consumer-conscious middle class, a process that enabled publishers to 'Get On In Society' (to quote from a later Murray author, John Betjeman) as rapidly as some of their customers. The second is the utter absence of anything resembling that publishing golden age which elegists occasionally invoke. Graft, filthy lucre and back-handers were always lurking behind the frontispiece: the first number of the Quarterly may have featured Scott on El Cid, but there was also space for a notice of Miss Owenson's Woman; or Ida of Athens, while another lady novelist, Alicia T Palmer, hearing that her Daughters of Isenberg: a Bavarian Romance was to be reviewed, sent the editor three pound notes by way of a sweetener.

On we hasten, with stops along the way for Lyell's Principles of Geology, Darwin's On the Origin of Species, Queen Victoria's letters and Axel Munthe's The Story of San Michele, an enormous best-seller from 1930, which stayed in print for the rest of the century. The late Humphrey Carpenter, a delightful and generous-minded man to whose memory I doff my cap, died while still at work on the manuscript of Seven Lives, and the later sections are, despite the best efforts of his editors, a touch perfunctory. The last 60 years of the firm – the years of Betjeman, Freya Stark, Dervla Murphy and some lucrative science textbooks – are wrapped up in a scant 40 pages. This is a pity, because Murray's final decade as an independent concern, prior to its purchase in 2002 by the kind people at Hodder Headline, offers a fine old cautionary tale about the world of modern publishing.

It is pretty generally known, for example, that the reason why John Murray VII sold out to the conglomerates is that the chain bookstores could no longer be bothered to deal with his sales force. On a similar note, I was recently told by a Murray insider that the cover of a forthcoming exchange of letters between Deborah Devonshire and Patrick Leigh-Fermor (yes, Murray still publishes this kind of book), a beautiful illustration by John Craxton, was rejected by the marketing department on the grounds that Waterstone's wouldn't stand for it. More could have been made of these idiocies. Meanwhile, to describe the book as 'gripping', as the back jacket does, is pushing it a bit.

D J Taylor's latest book is 'Bright Young People' (Chatto £20)

"Youtube" has a link to our Jane.

One of our members stumbled across a YouTube posting of *The Real Jane Austen*, a UK docudrama on Jane Austen's life that has never been aired in the U.S. It's narrated by Anna Chancellor -- Miss Bingley in the 1995 P&P and Jane Austen's great niece many times removed.
Here's the link to Part 1 of 8. Each part is about 7 minutes.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9pJgqesQgk

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Mark your calendar for our next Meeting : Saturday November 15, 2008
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