



# The Jane Austen Times



The Jane Austen Society of North America  
Puget Sound Region

*Imagination is everything—  
Miss Jane Austen.*

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## Jane Austen on the Stage

Book-It Repertory Theatre's 2009-10 lineup will include a new production of "Emma", October 20-November 22, 2009, at the Center House Theater, Seattle Center.

The Oregon Shakespeare Festival's 2010 lineup will include "Pride and Prejudice", February 21-October 24, at the Angus Bowmer Theater.

### Familiar Words from 1924

**From:** Elsa Solender

**Sent:** Friday, April 03, 2009 10:09 AM

Jane Austen friends, I was looking through a 1924 volume about Jane Austen, in the State Library of Massachusetts. (I name the library because it is probably the only book on Jane Austen in our collection, which is largely a law and government library. Who knows how we came to acquire it?) Anyway the book is Leonie Villard's *Jane Austen: a French appreciation* (London, 1924). M. Villard expressed an attitude that we in JASNA recognize:

"One does not perceive any striking beauty in reading through Miss Austen's books for the first time. There is just the pleasure of spending a few agreeable hours in the good company of happy people. Then, if we read them again--**and we always do read them again**--we see that the comedy of manners is at the same time a study of character." [emphasis mine]

By the way the chapter containing this passage is entitled "The psychology of Jane Austen." The original book is *Jane Austen: sa vie et son oeuvre* and was translated by Veronica Lucas.



## NEXT MEETING:

**June 14, 2009, 2PM**  
**Greenwood Library**  
**8016 Greenwood Ave. N**  
**206-684-4086**  
**See you there!!**

The Greenwood Branch is located at the intersection of Greenwood Avenue North and North 81st Street.



### Driving from the north (heading south):

- Exit from Interstate 5 at N. 85th St. (Exit 172)
- Drive West on N. 85th St. for 1 miles to Greenwood Ave. N.
- Turn left on Greenwood and go south for four blocks.
- The branch is on the left, on the southeast corner of Greenwood and N. 81st St.

### Parking

There is free covered parking under the building. Enter and exit the garage on 81st Street.

### Metro Bus Information

Served by Metro Bus Routes **5**, **48** and **355**

### A Note on the June Meeting

Our speaker at the June meeting will be John Lange of John Michael Lange Fine Books. Mr. Lange will be speaking on "The World of Fine Books About Jane Austen and Others."

## Book review

I must admit to being most opinionated in regard to the many Austen "spin-offs" currently being written and published. Some I dislike intensely; others I quite enjoy. I was pleased to discover a new novel out this month by Elizabeth Aston, who writes charming adventures of the Darcy and Bennet extended families. In Mr. Darcy's dream (Simon and Schuster, 2009), we meet Phoebe Hawkins (Georgiana's daughter) who has been disappointed in love. To avoid spending the season in London, she secludes herself at Pemberley, and is soon joined by Louisa Bingley (Jane's daughter) to plan a great ball. In the meantime, Mr. Darcy has grandiose dreams for a new greenhouse complex and hires a handsome young assistant, whose good friend is the former suitor of Phoebe. As in any comedy of manners, mischief and misunderstandings ensue, fueled by a scheming aunt and bumbling clergyman. With some difficulty, the 2 couples achieve their happy ending. Austen allusions abound, some more subtle than others, but Aston never lets them get in the way of telling her story. All 6 books in this series are highly recommended.

--Elaine Weeks

### Jane's Fame by Claire Harman: review

**Frances Wilson lauds Jane's Fame by Claire Harman, a witty account of the afterlife of Jane Austen's six great novels**

by Frances Wilson

The Daily Telegraph

Last Updated: 11:53AM GMT 27 Mar 2009

"I write only for fame," joked Jane Austen in 1796, before any of her six novels had been published. Dr Johnson, for whom "no man but a blockhead ever wrote, except for money", would have applauded such a triumph of sense over sensibility, but the idea of Jane Austen as an author with ambition is anathema to most of her readers. Jane's fame, Claire Harman shows in this witty examination of the spinster's rise to world domination, is built on the myth that she warbled rather than wrote, that scribbling for Jane was as natural as birdsong.

Austen is not one of those writers we think of as toiling over her craft; her male reviewers quickly decided that her quill, like her needle, was swift and neat. I certainly grew up with the image, whose origin can be found in the 1870 "myth-mongering" *Memoir of Jane Austen* by her nephew James Edward Austen-Leigh, of Aunt Jane in the sitting room in Chawton with a concertinaed cap crowning her head of curls and a secret smile playing

along her tiny mouth, fiddling with “small sheets of paper which could easily be put away, or covered with blotting paper” when somebody came in.

The popularity of this image, like that of the description Jane herself gave of her novels, as the work of a fine brush on a “little piece of ivory”, is that it shows her as modest and discreet, qualities we admire in a lady-writer. The truth, Harman argues, is rather different. First, there was no one from whom Jane needed to shield her writing because the Austens were a family of writers, and second, publishing mattered to them all a great deal.

Harman shows that Austen had “a highly developed consumer’s understanding” of her craft. The acres of academic debate generated by her work make it easy to forget that her plots – girl meets boy, girl loses boy, girl wins boy plus big house – are the staples of Mills & Boon and Silhouette Stories. We can now buy a Mr Darcy key-ring and an oil painting of Colin Firth in “That Shirt”, but the Austen industry has been catering to consumer tastes since Austen’s novels first appeared in print. The portrait in which she gazes with huge Princess Diana eyes from under her mob cap was, Harman explains, a made-over and airbrushed version of a sketch made by Jane’s sister, Cassandra, in 1810. Cassandra’s picture, in which Jane appears positively surly, conformed rather too closely to Mary Russell Mitford’s damaging description of the novelist as “a poker of whom everyone was afraid”. The doctored image of the poker which reached the public in 1869 was praised by a reviewer in the *Spectator* as expressing “refinement, playfulness, and alertness, rather than depth of intellect”.

Harman unpicks the cultural and sexual fantasies at the heart of Jane fandom with great skill, placing each of various editions, films and fanclubs in their historical context (for example, Austen’s appeal to a certain kind of Englishness guaranteed the success of the wartime film of *Pride and Prejudice*, starring Laurence Olivier, aka King Henry V, as Darcy). But the trajectory of Jane’s fame has been by no means steady or predictable: in 1866, a request appeared in *Notes and Queries* for the name of the author of a book mentioned by Macaulay: *Mansfield Park*.

The material Harman has deftly put together makes two things strikingly apparent: no reading of Jane, however seemingly wayward, is a misreading; and Austen’s major effect is to inspire good writing. Harman proves the point of Lionel Trilling’s insight that “the opinions which are held of Jane Austen’s work are almost as interesting, and almost as important to think about, as the work itself”. *Jane’s Fame* is threaded through with 150 years of these opinions – a potential death-knell in a book for a general readership – but there is not a dull sentence among them. Annabella Milbanke, later Lady Byron, saw instantly that the skill of *Pride and Prejudice* lay in its absence of the usual novelistic gimmickry. Jane Austen,

Milbanke reported, “depends not on any of the common resources of novel writers, no drownings, no conflagrations, nor runaway horses, nor lapdogs and parrots, nor chambermaids and milliners, nor rencontres and disguises”.

Another spot-on observation was made by the Archbishop of Dublin, Richard Whately (Austen is one of the few woman writers who appeals equally to men), who dared to suggest that her “heroines are what one knows women must be, though one can never get them to acknowledge it”. For evidence, witness that brilliant joke in *Pride and Prejudice*, where Elizabeth Bennet tells her sister that her love for Darcy dated from “my first seeing his beautiful grounds at Pemberley”.

Austen even brings out the best prose of those who dislike her novels. Charlotte Brontë thought *Pride and Prejudice* “a carefully fenced, highly cultivated garden, with neat borders and delicate flowers; but no glance of a bright, vivid physiognomy, no open country, no fresh air, no blue hill, no bonny beck”. Mark Twain went further: “every time I read *Pride and Prejudice* I want to dig her up and hit her over the skull with her own shin-bone”.

Claire Harman offers some killer comments of her own, such as her comparison of the first biography to be written of Charlotte Brontë with the first memoir of Austen. “If Mrs Gaskell’s stylistic model for her *Life of Charlotte Brontë* was the romantic novel, that of James Edward’s Memoir of Jane Austen was the form most familiar to him, the sermon.” Harman’s own literary model is Lucasta Miller’s *The Brontë Myth*, but the styles of the two books are as different as *Emma* is from *Jane Eyre*.

Jane Austen’s life, as her brother Henry wrote, “was by not any means a life of event”. As this satisfying study shows, the same cannot be said of her surprisingly active afterlife.

Jane’s Fame: How Jane Austen Conquered the World

by Claire Harman

384pp, Canongate, £20

Buy now at £18 from [Telegraph Books](#)

### **Rejected: 'One of the Greatest Mistakes in Publishing History'**

“In 1797, Thomas Cadell made one of the greatest mistakes in publishing history. A Hampshire clergyman had written to him, offering a three-volume novel for publication by a first-time author. Without a word of encouragement, Cadell declined the book, manuscript unseen, by return of post. Unfortunately for Cadell, the clergyman was the Revd George Austen, soliciting

publication on his daughter Jane's behalf, and the novel in question was an early version of *Pride and Prejudice*, recently voted the one book that the British nation can't do without."

--From Mark Bostridge's review of *Jane's Fame: How Jane Austen Conquered the World* by Claire Herman in the *Literary Review*.

-- submitted by Anne Repass



## Announcing: *Rude Awakenings of a Jane Austen Addict* by Laurie Viera Rigler

November 6, 2008 by [Laurel Ann](#)

### GREAT NEWS FOR JANEITES EVERYWHERE!

While snooping about on Amazon.com tonight, I had a wonderful surprise when I discovered that the title of Laurie Viera Rigler's sequel/parallel story to her popular *Confessions of a Jane Austen Addict* would be ***Rude Awakenings of a Jane Austen Addict***. I immediately wrote to Laurie who is traveling in Tennessee and confirmed my discovery sharing my excitement and enthusiasm for her new novel. Imagine my delight when I found the cover posted on her agent's web site. Announcing: *Rude Awakenings of a Jane Austen Addict* by Laurie Viera Rigler

<http://austenprose.wordpress.com/2008/11/06/announcing-rude-awakenings-of-a-jane-austen-addict-by-laurie...3/11/2009> Hurrah! Isn't it beautiful? Here is the blurb from Laurie's literary agent, Marly Rusoff & Associates, Inc.

*RUDE AWAKENINGS OF A JANE AUSTEN ADDICT* by Laurie Viera Rigler  
Publisher Dutton, June 2009.

The eagerly anticipated sequel/parallel story to *Confessions of a Jane Austen Addict*, Laurie Viera Rigler's debut novel, *Confessions of a Jane Austen Addict*, was a hit with fans and critics, and a BookSense and Los Angeles Times bestseller. Its open-to-interpretation ending left readers begging for more and *RUDE AWAKENINGS OF A JANE AUSTEN ADDICT*

delivers. While *Confessions* took twenty-first century free spirit Courtney Stone into the social confines of Jane Austen's era, *Rude Awakenings* tells the parallel story of Jane Mansfield, a gentleman's daughter from Regency England who inexplicably awakens in Courtney's overly wired and morally confused L.A. life.

For Jane, the modern world is not wholly disagreeable. Her apartment may be smaller than a dressing closet, but it is fitted up with lights that burn without candles, machines that wash bodies and clothes, and a glossy rectangle in which tiny people perform scenes from her favorite book, *Pride and Prejudice*. Granted, if she wants to travel she may have to drive a formidable metal carriage, but she may do so without a chaperone. And oh, what places she goes! Public assemblies that pulsate with pounding music. Unbound hair and unrestricted clothing. The freedom to say what she wants when she wants-even to men without a proper introduction.

Privacy, independence, even the power to earn her own money. But how is she to fathom her employer's incomprehensible dictates about "syncing a BlackBerry" and "rolling a call"? How can she navigate a world in which entire publications are devoted to brides but flirting and kissing and even the sexual act itself raise no matrimonial expectations? Even more bewildering are the memories that are not her own. And the friend named Wes, who is as attractive and confusing to Jane as the man who broke her heart back home. It's enough to make her wonder if she would be better off in her own time, where at least the rules are clear-that is, if returning is even an option.

You can also read a [preview](#) of the story line on Laurie's web site. I am so excited for this book and can't wait to read it.

Check out Laurie's first novel, ***Confessions of a Jane Austen Addict***.

Congratulations Laurie and best wishes!

Posted in [Austen Book Sleuth](#), [Austen-esque Authors](#), [Austen-esque Books](#) | Tagged [Austen Sequel](#), [Confessions of a Jane Austen Addict](#), [Jane Austen](#), [Laurie Viera Rigler](#), [Rude Awakenings of a Jane Austen Addict](#)

[www.austenprose.wordpress.com](http://www.austenprose.wordpress.com)



# Jane Austen Miniatures Available

As I know you are aware, Jane Austen is one of the UK's most famous authors; her books have been continually in print for nearly 200 years with all of them being made into major motion pictures over the last decade.

With a history as illustrious as Ms Austen's W. Britain prides itself on producing a highly detailed miniature figure series for Jane Austen enthusiasts, and the latest range our company features is the characters Jane Austen dreamt up all those years ago.

The Jane Austen collection is a series of highly detailed 1:32<sup>nd</sup> scale all metal hand painted figurines which depict the characters from Jane Austen novels. The first of these charming new figures portray all the main characters from the book 'Pride and Prejudice', a book that millions of Jane Austen fans the world over have come to love. There's the handsome Mr Darcy, the sweet Elizabeth Bennett and the sly Mr Wickham to name just three of the nine available figures, and to help collectors display this new series there is also the Red Lion pub facade.

Each figure comes in a striking 'window box' allowing the collector a clear view of the figure inside, the packaging itself is inspired by the original Austen novels and has the look and feel of a favourite old book.

This range is a must for all Jane Austen fans and the range has been seen and approved by the Jane Austen Centre in Bath, and when the figures become available in August this range will be stocked by them.

W Britain will also be attending the Jane Austen Festival in Bath to show off these beautiful figures.

You can view the products on our website – [www.wbritain.com](http://www.wbritain.com) and choose the USA site.

## Jane Austen :

### The Bermuda Connection

In 2000, members of the Jane Austen Society and the Jane Austen Society of North America held a conference in Bermuda under the motif 'Hands across the Sea' to celebrate the connections of Jane Austen's family with Bermuda, in particular the sailor brothers, Francis and Charles. The meeting was a great success and many have requested that a similar conference should be held. Details of the programme proposed for May 2010 are given here.

The conference is organised by 'Perram Events',

managed by Patrick Stokes. Distinguished lecturers including Professor Janet Todd, Professor Alistair Duckworth and Sheila Kindred will join us for the whole week, and will look at Jane Austen's writings from a transatlantic perspective, as well as examining the naval historical influences resulting from the stationing in Bermuda at different times of both of Jane's sailor brothers, Charles and Francis.

Charles Austen was in Bermuda from 1805 to 1810 in his first command, *HMS Indian*, an 18-gun sloop built on the island. In 1826 he returned to Bermuda as Captain of *HMS Aurora*.

Francis Austen, elder brother of Charles, was Commander-in-Chief, North Atlantic and West Indies Station with his flagship *HMS Vindictive*, based at Bermuda and Halifax, Nova Scotia from 1845 to 1848.

Bermuda provides the perfect location for the conference. The island, located in the crystal clear waters of the Gulf Stream, is well endowed with a rich history and fascinating natural beauty. The opportunity will be taken during the conference to explore and understand the story and ambiance of this unique location, against the backdrop of Jane Austen's sailor brothers' associations with it.

A visit to St George's will incorporate the Church of St Peter's, where young Captain Charles Austen married in May 1807 his beloved Fanny Palmer, daughter of Bermuda's Attorney-General.

During the stay in Bermuda, a visit to the Maritime Museum and the famous Commissioner's House will take place, with a reception during which an exhibition is planned of watercolours painted by Captain Michael Seymour and Lieutenant Herbert Grey Austen of *HMS Vindictive* in the late 1840s, during Admiral Francis Austen's period as Commander-in-Chief, North Atlantic.

For more information and a registration form, go to:

[http://www.janeaustensoci.freeuk.com/pages/bermuda\\_summary.htm](http://www.janeaustensoci.freeuk.com/pages/bermuda_summary.htm)



# *Twitter: Great works of literature shortened into tweets*

By Matthew Moore

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/scienceandtechnology/technology/twitter/5309001/Twitter-Great-works-of-lit... 5/12/2009>

Classics by Charles Dickens, JD Salinger, and Jane Austen are among the novels to have been boiled down to a sentence by bookish readers of the micro-blogging site.

Whilst the haiku-like brevity of the synopses will appeal to modern readers more accustomed to skimming their emails than working through a 600-word tome, literary purists may be put off by the internet slang.

Samuel Beckett's bleak play *Waiting for Godot* is reduced to "Vladimir and Estragon stand next to tree and wait for Godot. Their status is not updated."

The fuss surrounding the publication of D.H. Lawrence's novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in 1960 is summed up with the web acronym for websites that are not suitable for work: "Upper-class woman gets in on with gamekeeper."

Tim Collins, a writer who has collected some of his own potted summaries in a new book, said that while the compositions are intended to be tongue-in-cheek the platform opens up new possibilities for art and education.

"It's very easy to knock Twitter as something you use to twell the world what you ordered in Starbucks this morning, but it's more than that," he said.

"What it's really good for is live-blogging events as they take place, and that can work for historical events, too. Over Easter a church in the US re-created the death and Resurrection of Christ through tweets."

He said that the "hashtag" feature of the site, which allows users to engage all their friends in a mass brainstorm, was particularly useful for creative collaboration.

"Maybe we are only just beginning to appreciate the potential of Twitter as an art form," he said.

Mr Collins, whose *The Little Book of Twitter* is published this week, said it was ironic that the novel he had most trouble shortening was *Finnegan's Wake* by James Joyce, which is written in a stream-of-consciousness style that has much in common with many Twitter updates.

Some examples:

*Ulysses*

James Joyce: Man walks around Dublin. We follow every minute detail of his day. He's probably overtweeting.

*Great Expectations*

Charles Dickens: Orphan given £££ by secret follower. He thinks it's @misshavisham but it turns out to be @magwitch

*The Catcher in the Rye*

JD Salinger: Rich kid thinks everyone is fake except for his little sister. Has breakdown. @markchapman is now following @johnlennon

*Pride and Prejudice*

Jane Austen: Woman meets man called Darcy who seems horrible. He turns out to be nice really. They get together.

*Bridget Jones's Diary*

Helen Fielding: RT @JaneAusten Woman meets man called Darcy who seems horrible. He turns out to be nice really. They get together.

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