

My Dear Cassandra.....

“What calm lives they had, those people! No worries about the French Revolution, or the Napoleonic War’s - *Winston Churchill, on Jane Austen’s novels (Extract from “Jane Austen” by Natalie Tyler)*

It’s Tea time!

Yes, it time for our annual

“Jane Austen Tea”

January 17th, 2009

Good Companions Activity Centre

2609 – 19th Avenue S.W.

2:00pm to 4:00pm

Theme for our festivities “

“Ask Miss Austen”

Come and join us for lots of laughs, wonderful music,
first-class play, cake, cookies and, of course,
our world famous tea

Our November meeting

JASNA Calgary member Bob Stamp presented a very interesting talk at the November meeting on the significance of female names in Jane Austen’s writings. Bob has observed that Jane’s heroines tend to have English names (Elizabeth, Emma, Fanny, Anne) but their rivals tend to have Hanoverian names (Caroline, Augusta, Amelia (Mary), Louisa). He speculates that this reflects Jane’s dislike of the royal family, particularly the Prince Regent.

Jane Austen Survey results

Jennifer Hamblin summarized the Jane Austen Survey results at the November meeting. Surveyor Jeanne Kiefer heard from more than 4500 Austen aficionados in the course of her research. JASNA Calgary members were highly amused to discover that the “typical” Janeite is almost exactly as expected: a well-educated, well-travelled, middle-aged, tea-drinking, cat-loving female teacher or librarian who fell in love with Austen at an early age and loves *Pride and Prejudice* best of all! The most surprising revelation was that

eleven per cent of the survey respondents read all six novels EVERY YEAR! Full survey results are available at: www.janeaustensurvey.org

Lost in Austen

British Jane Austen fans enjoyed a four-part television miniseries last summer called “Lost in Austen”. According to a media blurb, the story revolves around Amanda, a modern day Londoner and ardent Jane Austen fan that suddenly discovers she has swapped places with Elizabeth Bennet - with disastrous results for the conventional plot of *Pride and Prejudice*! The series got great reviews and was rebroadcast on several Canadian channels over the fall (on VIVA throughout November and on W Network in late December). It doesn't seem to have had wide press here so many of you may have missed it, but it's been popular so hopefully will play again – or perhaps you can catch it over the internet if you possess the technological know-how! Judith Umbach will keep you posted on our website if she hears that it's playing again so please keep checking www.jasnacalgary.ca

The Laws and Customs of Marriage

Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act : The most profound effect on the wedding ceremony and the act of marriage was Lord Hardwicke's Act of 1753. In his bill any person solemnizing matrimony in any other than a church or public chapel without banns or license, should on conviction, be adjudged guilty of felony and be transported for fourteen years, and all such marriages should be void. Zealous opposition to the bill was led by Mr. Henry Fox but to no avail. Clandestine marriage had long been abhorrent to the Church of England. This attitude plus the desire of the upper classes to protect their children, who were the future of the family, from easily contracted marriages with unsuitable partners allowed sure passage of the bill. Too many heiresses had been lured away from their families by scoundrels. These clandestine marriages (especially of minors) were performed in rooms and taverns near the Fleet, a notorious debtor's prison on Farringdon Street. Defrocked and disreputable ministers, imprisoned for debt in the Fleet, earned the ready by performing surreptitious marriages. And until Lord Hardwicke's Act went into effect as law in 1754, such marriages were perfectly legal. The common people were outraged that this cheap and easy wedding ceremony was to be outlawed, but the quality had their way. If young men and women of the Polite World were allowed to easily meet and mingle, marriage had to be elaborately managed by church and state. The new law took effect on' Lady Day (March 25), 1754. A provision of the law was that a couple were directed to have banns published in the church on three successive Sundays preceding the solemnization of marriage. This was done immediately after the second lesson. If the couple lived in different parishes, the banns had to be proclaimed in each parish, and proof in the form of a certificate had to be supplied to the curate performing the marriage service. Of course, parental permission was required to post banns for minors under the age of twenty-one. Quicker marriages were available for those plump enough in the pocket to afford it. A special license could be obtained from the archbishop or his representative. These

licenses did away with the need to have the banns called, and therefore meant the ceremony could take place immediately. The couple could also choose the location and time of day to suit themselves rather than be confined to a church between the hours of eight and twelve in the morning. The Act also made destroying, forging, or falsifying with evil intent an entry in a marriage register a capital offense. Binding pre-contracts (betrothals being as serious as marriage) were done away with completely. Members of the royal family, Quakers, and Jews were exempt under the Act, but Catholics were not. The only legal marriage a Roman Catholic could contract under English law had to be performed by an Anglican. Mr. Henry Fox did manage to provide one big loophole for runaway lovers. Scotland was declared exempt from the new law. And so the romantic legend of Gretna Green was born!

from "The Regency Companion" Sharon Lauder milk and Teresa L. Hamlin p79

Edmonton Jane Austen Society

The Edmonton club celebrated Jane Austen's 233rd birthday in grand style on December 13 with a lovely tea in the Wedgewood Room of the Hotel Macdonald. Upcoming meetings include Patricia Goar talking about "What's in a Name?" on January 24 and Rev. Eileen Conway discussing "Jane Austen and the Clergy" on February 21. If you are visiting Edmonton, they would welcome your attendance at these meetings held at the Stanley Milner Public Library from 2-4 pm.

2009 Jane Austen Calendar

A few copies of the delightful Jane Austen Calendar by Liz Cooper and JASNA Wisconsin Region are still available for \$15.00 each. If you missed getting yours at the November meeting, please call Jennifer at 403-282-4065.

Jane Austen Calgary Contacts:

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

Mark your calendar for our next Meeting:

March 14, 2009

(Please note: this date has been changed from the 21st)

Website: www.jasnacalgary.ca

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

Newsletter Info : Ann Craig email ancraig@shaw.ca