Pride and Prejudice

A series of Talks and an Exhibition to commemorate the 200th Anniversary of Jane Austen’s Novel

at Godmersham Park

Saturday 7th September 2013

Official Programme

Brought to you by Godmersham Park Heritage Centre
(Exhibition will continue until 1pm on Sunday 8th September)

www.godmershamheritage.webs.com
A Short History of Godmersham Park

The current Godmersham Park House was built in 1732 by Thomas May Knight, a descendant of the Brodnax Family. On the death of Thomas Knight Junior in 1794 his Kent and Hampshire Estates passed to a distant relation, Edward Austen, a brother of Jane Austen. Shortly afterwards, Thomas Knight’s widow chose to leave Godmersham and make her home at Whitefriars in Canterbury leaving Edward, his wife, Elizabeth and their growing number of children to enjoy Godmersham. Elizabeth and Edward moved into the house in 1797 and, after Mrs. Knight’s death in 1812, Edward Austen changed his name to Knight as a tribute to his benefactors. Jane Austen was a frequent visitor and was particularly close to her nephews and nieces, often spending several weeks at a time with the family. Many Jane Austen experts believe that Godmersham Park was the inspiration for *Mansfield Park* whilst The Old Vicarage on the Estate is thought to be based on Mr. Collins’ Vicarage in *Pride and Prejudice*.

Godmersham passed out of the Knight family in 1874 when Edward’s son – also named Edward Knight – chose to make Chawton House in Hampshire his home. The Estate then underwent numerous changes of ownership until the 1930’s when Mr. and Mrs. Robert Tritton bought Godmersham Park. The House had fallen into some disrepair but, under the Tritton’s guidance, extensive restoration works were undertaken and the house was returned to its former glory. Shortly after Mrs. Tritton’s death in 1982, the Estate was sold to John Sunley and his family. The estate is still owned by the Sunley Family, but the House is now let by the family to the Association of British Dispensing Opticians (ABDO) and it is with their kind permission that the Godmersham Park Heritage Centre is hosting this very special weekend to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the publication of *Pride and Prejudice*.

You can also book tickets for our Screening of *Pride and Prejudice* (1940) at The Gulbenkian University of Kent Friday 6th September 2013

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Visit www.godmershamheritage.webs.com

For Tickets www.thegulbenkian.co.uk
In the mid-1990s, Darcy's wet shirt ushered in what critics called Austenmania. The 2005 Pride and Prejudice, starring Keira Knightley and Matthew McFadyen, meanwhile ushered in Austen Power. This illustrated talk will explore the appeal of such adaptations for contemporary audiences.

**Day 2 – Sunday 8th**

10:00am–1:00pm
Exhibition on Jane Austen, her books and the Knight Family at Godmersham. Plus visit the Godmersham Park Heritage Centre. Plus a Second-Hand Jane Austen Book Stall.
Programme of Events

Day 1 – Saturday 7th

10:15 a.m.
WELCOME:
Mrs Fiona Sunley, Chairman of Trustees, Godmersham Park
Heritage Centre

10:30 a.m.
Godmersham Park: Jane Austen’s Doorway to
Mr Darcy’s Georgian High Society
Professor Alfred P. Smyth, Emeritus Professor of Medieval History, University of Kent

11:30am – 12:30
Second Impressions and Pride and Prejudice
Dr. Sandy Lerner, Chairman of Trustees, Chawton House, Hampshire

1pm-2pm Lunch in The Orangery

2:30pm-3:30pm
[T]ruth: in his looks: Pride and Prejudice and Physiognomy
Dr. Jennie Batchelor, Reader in Eighteenth Century Studies,
University of Kent

4pm-4:30pm
“The hottest writer in show business”: Jane Austen on film and television
Prof. Andrew Higson, Head, Department of Theatre, Film, and Television,
University of York

Open All-day – Exhibition on Jane Austen, her Books and the Knight

Open All-day – Visit the Godmersham Park Heritage Centre.

Lecture Summaries

Godmersham Park: Jane Austen’s Doorway to Mr Darcy’s Georgian High Society
It is unlikely that Jane Austen would ever have written Pride and Prejudice
or any of her mature novels in the form that we have them, if her
brother, Edward, had not been adopted by a family which allowed Jane
sustained access to a lifestyle far above her own social reach. Little has
been published on the Knights of Godmersham who gave Edward Austen
their name, their wealth, and the lifestyle of a rich and powerful Georgian
gentleman.

Second Impressions and Pride and Prejudice
Jane Austen lived through the British industrial revolution, forty years of
unimaginably rapid and fundamental social change. By the end of Aus-
ten’s life, Britain had undergone a thorough metamorphosis from a feu-
dal, agricultural, barter economy to the world’s richest most technically
advanced cash-based capitalism. Also, by the time of her death, thirty
years of war with France would finally be at an end with the defeat of
Napoleon at Waterloo. Would Mr. & Mrs. Darcy just stand by and watch
their world change, or would they be participants in the new economy,
investors in new technologies, leaders in agricultural and social innova-
tions? And, finally, would they take the opportunity to go to Europe,
where as Mitterand said, "It is raining Englishmen."

[T]ruth in his looks: Pride and Prejudice and Physiognomy
Pride and Prejudice is famously about reading and misreading, and not
just books. Bodies, more than books, are routinely interpreted by Aus-
ten’s characters in ways that tell us as much about the observer as the
observed. Situating Pride and Prejudice in terms of contemporary under-
standings of physiognomy, this talk explores Austen’s humorous exploita-
tion of readers’ understanding of this popular pseudoscience to make us
all question, like Lizzie, how great a reader we really are.

“The hottest writer in show business”: Jane Austen on film & television
Austen’s novels have long been adapted for film and television, including the
1940 Pride and Prejudice, starring Laurence Olivier and Greer Garson.