

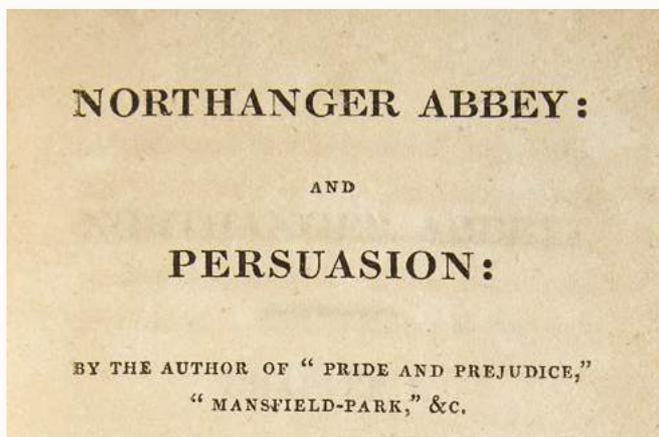
Annual Review for 2018:
Going from Strength to Strength

The purpose of this report is to summarise some of the highlights and key achievements at Jane Austen's House Museum during 2018. It sits alongside the formal published Annual Report and Accounts for the year which are submitted to the Charity Commission and can be viewed [here](#).

The Museum's displays centred on commemorating the bicentenaries of the publications of Austen's novels *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*. Two displays entitled *Family, Friendship and Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion and War* drew on items from the stored collection to illustrate the links between the author's life experiences, fictional characters and wartime era. New acquisitions for the collection included a replica of Jane Austen's pelisse coat, manufactured under licence from Hampshire Cultural Trust and Hampshire County Council, and 12 drawings by Chris Hammond made for the 1999 George Allen illustrated edition of *Sense and Sensibility*.

Dr Paula Byrne, the Museum's Ambassador for 2018, delivered the seventh annual T. Edward Carpenter Memorial Lecture, speaking on *Jane Austen and the English Comic Tradition*. This was the third lecture in the series to be held at the National Portrait Gallery. Further guest contributors to our public programme included fashion historians Amber Butchart and Dr Serena Dyer, writers Rebecca Smith and Diana Bretherick and trustee Professor Kathryn Sutherland. There were also drop-in events and talks delivered by staff and volunteers including for the national Festival of Quilts, the Larmer Tree Festival and the annual general meetings of the Jane Austen Society and the Jane Austen Society of North America, the latter held in Kansas City, Missouri.

We were delighted that Historic England recognised the national importance of Jane Austen's House Museum in their 2018 campaign *Irreplaceable: A History of England in 100 Places*. Our buildings continue to demand careful ongoing maintenance and the year's efforts included localised repairs to the bakehouse and windows, and investigatory works to the roof. The funds were drawn from our *Jane's Fund* appeal, which members of the public have continued to support most generously. Through the experience



Northanger Abbey and *Persuasion* first edition, title page



Replica of Jane Austen's pelisse coat, manufactured under licence from Hampshire Cultural Trust and Hampshire County Council



Original illustration by Chris Hammond for *Sense and Sensibility*

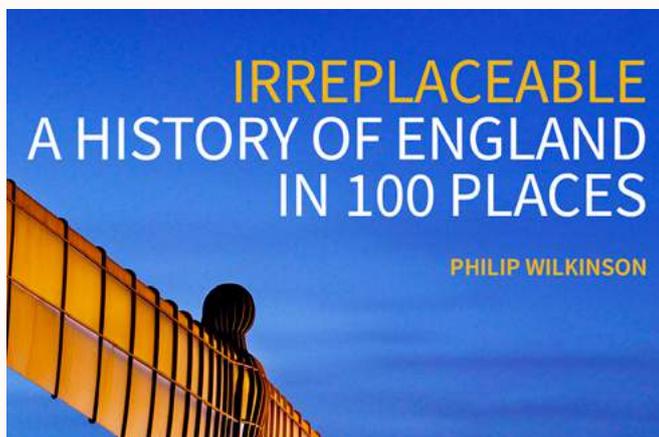
of these smaller works the Museum was able to develop its plans for a larger-scale programme of building repairs, redecoration and new displays.

2018 saw the completion of a number of activities associated with the previous year's bicentenary of Jane Austen's death. These included the unveiling of garden memorial seating and a wonderful community story quilt, which in August travelled to the Festival of Quilts. Other legacies of our 2017 activities saw the Museum continue to offer popular village walks and to run the second annual Young Writers' competition in partnership with Hampshire Cultural Trust.

The successes of 2017 were also reflected in our organisational health. We were thrilled to hear that we had once again secured Arts Council England Accreditation, showing that as a museum we meet national standards in how we are managed, how we care for the collections and how we provide services for our visitors and communities. Refinements to our organisational structure meant that by the close of the year we were in an even stronger position, having created permanent managerial positions to support the charity in the delivery of excellent visitor services and professional curating.

Another source of pride was the *Resilient Heritage* grant of £92,000 awarded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund up to 2020. This has enabled several business-development consultancies, the purchase of IT equipment, the delivery of training and the temporary appointment of a Trusts & Foundations Fundraiser. Other areas of our expenditure have been supported by generous grants and donations from bodies including the South East Museums Development Programme, the Ashley Family Foundation, Ecclesiastical Insurance, the Jane Austen Society of North America and the Jane Austen Society. Individual financial donations and in-kind contributions have also supported a number of our smaller projects and activities.

A total of 41,124 visitors came to the Museum in 2018. These included 2341 children visiting in family groups and 263 with their schools. We completed the trainee-hosting element of our *Collecting Cultures* project, again supported



Irreplaceable: A History of England in 100 Places, book jacket



Jane's Fund works to the roof of Jane Austen's House



Jane Austen's House Museum again awarded Museum Accreditation

by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and continued to offer a thriving volunteering programme, attracting six new recruits during the year.

This short summary provides only selected examples of the significant activity at Jane Austen's House Museum during 2018 and the huge support we have received while fulfilling the Museum's charitable aims. We remain enormously grateful to everyone who follows our work and to all those who contribute locally, from our staff and volunteers to our trustees, associated organisations and community partners. To them I would like to dedicate the following recent online review:

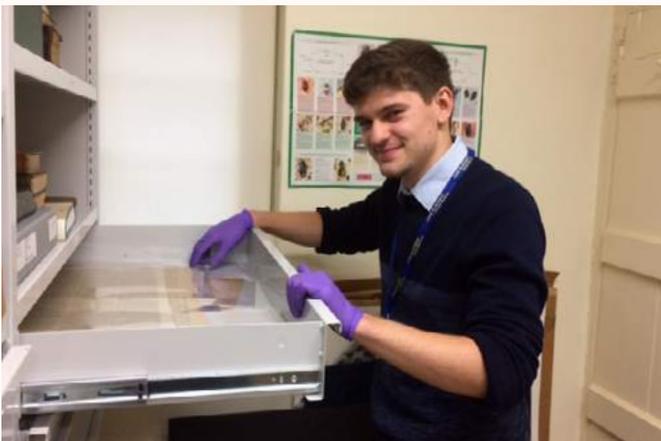
'I have wanted to visit Jane Austen's house in Chawton for years but despite living locally for over a quarter of a century have only just managed to do so! I was not disappointed. The bright sunny day helped to make this an excellent visit and the revelation that our tickets would be valid for a year was a pleasant surprise but credit must go to the charity that runs this historic monument for their guardianship of a perfect piece of English and literary history. They have done a superb job!'

In 2019 we look forward to welcoming even more visitors to Jane Austen's House Museum, to the organisation's seventieth birthday celebrations, and to further realising our mission to treasure, develop and promote the unique Jane Austen house, collection and setting, run inspiring visits and participation programmes and develop readership of Jane's work.

Dr Mary Guyatt
Director



Children enjoy dressing up in Regency-style clothes at the Museum



Tyler, our second *Collecting Cultures* Collections Trainee



Jane Austen's House in Autumn, 2018

JANE AUSTEN'S
HOUSE MUSEUM

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