



Writing Women

A Newsletter for the 18th- and 19th-Century British Women Writers Association

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Writing Women is the bi-annual newsletter for the 18th- and 19th-Century British Women Writers Association. Published in March and September.

Editor

Troy J. Bassett

Email

bwwa@ku.edu

Website

www.ku.edu/~bwwa

In Good Company: Fifteen Years Later

In 1991, we gave the first conference on Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century British Women Writers the lofty title “Reclaiming a Lost Tradition.” As graduate students at the University of Oregon, we hoped to create a venue that would expand our opportunities for conversation, critical engagement, and research on British women writers. Fifteen years later, the British Women Writers Conference has become a tradition in its own right, providing a supportive professional community for hundreds of graduate students, teachers, and scholars.

By comparison, the first conference seems rather primitive. With only seven months to plan and a budget of less than four thousand dollars, we advertised the conference through word of mouth, haphazard mailings, and handfuls of fliers left on nearly every blank surface at the MLA. E-mail was just becoming available, so we called our friends and mentors and wrote shameless fan letters to our scholarly heroines, inviting them to attend. Each day we anxiously awaited the mail, fearful that no one would apply. The steady trickle of applications turned into a flood, and our excitement turned to panic as we realized we would need to prepare for the arrival of over one hundred fifty scholars, teachers, and students in Eugene. The rest, they say, is history.

As the number of attendees has grown, the mix of loyal participants and new presenters evolves to incorporate established scholars and graduate students alike. The BWWA is now international in its scope, both in our participants and in the range of post-colonial and transatlantic topics incorporated into the program. Like the wider academy, we continually reshape and expand our definitions of the text, of interdisciplinarity, and of the subject. Yet our core objectives—to revise the canon, explore the agency of women in literary history, and provide a welcoming environment for professional development and scholarship—remain central.

Graduate students from universities all over the country (fifteen states down, thirty-five to go!) have organized the British Women Writers Conference, gaining with it a stronger understanding of their professional roles and of their scholarly legitimacy. Many graduate student organizers and presenters are now tenured professors, mentoring and initiating a new generation of graduate and undergraduate students into the world of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British women writers. Likewise, conference presentations have found their way into articles, periodicals,

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and books, as numerous acknowledgements attest. Publishers such as Broadview Press and Longman are not only represented at this conference but have listened to scholars and teachers advocating for greater representation of British women writers in their publications and textbooks. While we have further progress to make, we are encouraged by these substantial if incremental shifts in both the larger and individual academic communities in which we work.

Every year, your innovative work and academic activism inspire and amaze us. We go back to our home institutions with our scholarly and pedagogical fires stoked. In your good company, we forge new relationships between the figures we study and teach—and with the scholars and teachers who teach them. We are grateful for this professional community and for the sustained commitment of numerous conference organizers and attendees past and present. With your help, the British Women Writers Association has moved on—and moved online—with its own website, newsletter, calls for papers, and conference application process.

This year, we would particularly like to acknowledge Lisa Hager and Ariel Gunn and their fellow graduate students at the University of Florida, along with their faculty sponsors Pamela Gilbert and Judith Page. Their tireless and technologically savvy efforts will bring us together for another splendid conference in Gainesville. We look forward to hearing from some of the leading scholars in the field of British literature and culture. Talia Schaffer, Carolyn Steedman, and Lynn Vallone join an impressive assembly of past keynote speakers (which you can see listed on our website). Of course, we anticipate the book and art exhibits, delicious food (and wine!), and great conversations

with you.

As we look to the future, including the 2007 British Women Writers Conference at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, we invite your comments and suggestions for ways to continue the traditions begun by the first conference, especially in identifying sponsors for future conferences. But as always, we remain dedicated to maintaining a balance between different periods and different genres in order to have the fullest representation possible. We look forward to a vibrant exchange of ideas at what should be another wonderful British Women Writers Conference. We know you will find yourselves in good company in March. Welcome!

—Cindy LaCom (Slippery Rock University)
Pamela Corpron Parker (Whitworth College)

Travel Awards Presented for 2006

Each year, the BWWA presents travel awards to graduate students to assist them in attending the annual conference. The awards are based on the quality of the submitted abstract as well as distance and cost of travel to the annual conference. The three recipients of the 2006 BWWA travel awards are:

- Sara Davis (George Washington University) for her submission, “Postal Propaganda and National Identity in Austen’s *Emma*”
- Calley Hornbuckle (University of South Carolina) for her submission, “Charting Empires of Mind: The Stranger in the Poetics of Barbauld and Coleridge”
- Bryan Rasmussen (Indiana University) for his submission “Narrators, Nurses, and Knowledge: Victorian Feminine Social Epistemology”

Congratulations to all our recipients!

**Invitation to the 2006 BWWC:
University of Florida**

The Fourteenth Annual Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century British Women Writers Conference will take place at the University of Florida March 23–26. This year's theme, “(Re)Collecting British Women Writers,” encourages interdisciplinary approaches to writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with a special interest in issues related to archival scholarship and memory and how those issues manifest themselves in collections, exhibitions, and canons. More than one hundred scholars from the U.S. and abroad will be participating in the conference. The keynote addresses will be given by Talia Schaffer (CUNY—Queens College), Carolyn Steedman (University of Warwick), and Lynne Vallone (Texas A&M University).

The conference will also include two very exciting special exhibits. The Baldwin Library book exhibit will feature historic books from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British women writers and illustrators of children's books, including Kate Greenaway, Beatrix Potter, and Christina Rossetti. In addition, the Grinter Gallery will host a visual art exhibition. Focusing on the theme of gender bending, this exhibit will explore the transatlantic intersections between fin-de-siècle England and Florida, as the state came to prominence in its contemporary role as contact zone.

For more information about the conference, visit the conference website at <http://www.english.ufl.edu/bwwc>.

—Lisa Hager (University of Florida)

**Announcement of the 2007 BWWC:
University of Kentucky**

We are pleased to announce that the University of Kentucky's English department, College of Arts & Sciences, and the Lexington Community at large will host the Fifteenth Annual Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century British Women Writers Conference April 11-15, 2007, which we have entitled “Speaking with Authority.” Keynote speakers include Deborah Epstein Nord (Princeton University), Ann Ardis (University of Delaware), Sally Mitchell (Temple University), and Teresa Mangum (University of Iowa).

Centrally located, Lexington, Kentucky, with its active downtown and its close proximity to the university campus, will be an exceptional place to host the British Women Writers Conference. Attached to the famous Rupp Arena, the conference hotel is located in the middle of downtown Lexington, within walking distance of the university campus, attractive parks, local shops, and fine restaurants.

Because Lexington is recognized for being the “Horse Capital of the World,” we believe presenters should be able to experience this region's horse industry. Keeneland is a tradition in the southeast and Midwest regions, featuring horseracing at its finest. Only open during the months of April and October, Keeneland will be an enjoyable experience for presenters who arrive early on Thursday. We have also been in contact with the university's Guignol Theater so that they might produce a play relevant to the conference at this time.

Look for the call for papers to be posted soon on the BWWA website or contact conference chair Katherine D. Osborne at Katherine.Osborne@uky.edu.

—Katherine D. Osborne
(University of Kentucky)

New Publications by Members

We are pleased to announce the following publications by our members:

Jeanne Moskal (University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill) and Shannon R. Wooden (University of Southern Indiana) have edited a collection of essays entitled *Teaching British Women Writers 1750–1900* (Peter Lang, 2005) which features a number of essays written by BWWA members. The idea for the collection “[took] root” at the 1998 BWWC in Chapel Hill.

Donelle Ruwe (Northern Arizona University) has edited a collection of essays entitled *Culturing the Child 1690–1914: Essays in Memory of Mitzi Myers* (Scarecrow Press, 2005) and a special issue, “Re-Thinking Women’s Romanticism,” of *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* (volume 27, 2005).

Nan Sweet (University of Missouri—St. Louis) and Julie Melnyk (Central Methodist College) have edited a collection of essays entitled *Felicia Hemans: Reimagining Poetry in the Nineteenth Century* (Palgrave, 2001). They have kindly dedicated the book to the BWWA, “which provided the location of this project’s genesis and the inspiration for its completion.” Dr. Sweet has also published a chapbook of poems entitled *Mix of Securities* (Snark Publishing, 2005).

Congratulations to all of these members for their important work!

Davis Wins Joyce Hemlow Prize

Sara Davis, a Ph.D. candidate at George Washington University, won the Joyce Hemlow Prize for her essay, “The Silent Observant Miss Fanny: Repercussions of Narrative Position in Burney’s Early Journals.” The Hemlow Prize is awarded to the best essay written by a graduate student on any aspect of the life or writings of Frances Burney. Davis’s essay was originally

presented at the 2004 BWWC held in Athens, Georgia, and her revisions were based, in part, on “the lively discussion that followed the presenting of the paper.” The essay will be published in the upcoming issue of the *Burney Society Journal*. Congratulations!

From the Editor

After a hiatus of six years, the BWWA newsletter, *Writing Women*, is back in operation. The newsletter, in conjunction with our website <www.ku.edu/~bwwa>, serves to facilitate the mission of the BWWA by promoting the annual conferences, sharing information about our members’ research, and providing resources to study eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British women writers and their works.

The website features information about the BWWA, the call for papers and links for up coming conferences, an archive of the newsletters, and web-links of interest. Our gratitude goes to the Department of English at the University of Kansas for hosting the website.

The newsletter will appear twice a year, in March and in September, and will be distributed electronically as well as archived on the BWWA website. On going features will include information about the conferences, new publications by members, and news of interest to our members. We encourage all members to pass along information about conferences, publications, and awards so that they can be shared with everyone (shameless self-promotion strongly encouraged!). Submissions may be sent to <bwwa@ku.edu> by February 15 for inclusion in the spring issue and by August 15 for inclusion in the fall issue.

Finally, we would like to thank the previous editor, Donelle Ruwe, for her continued hard work and dedication to the BWWA.

—Troy J. Bassett (University of Kansas)