



# Writing Women

*A Newsletter for the 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-Century British Women Writers Association*

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## Invitation to the 2010 BWWC: Texas A&M University

We are pleased to invite you to submit abstracts for the Eighteenth Annual Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century British Women Writers Conference hosted by Texas A & M University in College Station, TX, from April 8-11, 2010. We envision that our conference theme “Journeys” will encompass a broad range of topics such as migration, travel, exile, border crossing, exploration, tourism, religion, travel writing, art, fantasy, children’s literature and more. We encourage interdisciplinary approaches to the theme as well as innovative treatments of the idea of journeying, which could be metaphorical or literal, literary or historical.

Our discussion of women’s journeys will begin on Thursday evening with an interdisciplinary plenary panel featuring Mary E. Fissell (Johns Hopkins University), Jillian Heydt-Stevenson (University of Colorado, Boulder), and Erika Rappaport (University of California, Santa Barbara). This panel will explore aspects of the conference theme from various standpoints and provide opportunities for interactive discussions between participants and panelists. We are excited to announce that our distinguished keynote speakers will be Kate Flint (Rutgers University) and Felicity A. Nussbaum (University of California, Los Angeles). We will also feature a roundtable entitled “Teaching and Researching in the Digital Age,” which will include Maura Ives (Texas A&M University), Betty Joseph (Rice University), and Lisa L. Moore (University of Texas, Austin) sharing what interests them most about working in the context of ever-expanding digital resources and tools.

On Friday, we will offer tours of Cushing Memorial Library, which houses British and Continental books from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a working reproduction of an eighteenth-century printing press, and extensive special collections—one of which is the science fiction and fantasy research collection, one of the largest of its kind, which includes first and very early editions of works such as Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*.

The conference will be held at the Hilton College Station and Conference Center, located one mile from the Texas A&M University campus. Within walking distance from the Hilton is a wide assortment of dining options for any budget. Home to Northgate Entertainment District, Historic Downtown Bryan, Messina Hof Winery and Resort, and numerous museums and libraries, such as the Brazos Valley African

American Museum, the Bryan-College Station district promises to keep our participants engaged and entertained.

Abstracts are due October 15, 2009. For more information, please visit our website <<http://www-english.tamu.edu/bwwc18>> or write to us at <[BWWC18@tamu.edu](mailto:BWWC18@tamu.edu)>. We look forward to seeing you in 2010!

—Meghan Parker  
Elizabeth Talafuse  
(Texas A&M University)

### **Report from the 2009 BWWC: University of Iowa**

Thanks to those of you who attended and presented at last spring's BWWC in Iowa City. We were surprised and delighted by your creative responses to our conference theme "Fresh Threads of Connection." Your presentations immersed us in the world of fashion and the world of war, connected literature with the professions of law and medicine, examined both correspondence between close friends and encounters across the globe, and connected British women writers with ancient texts as well as contemporary technology.

Thursday evening's plenary panel "Refreshing Conceptions of the Other" with Misty Anderson, Florence Boos, Shuchi Kapila, and Devoney Looser got the conference off to a rousing start as the speakers challenged us to make our research relevant and interesting to the public and also presented their own fascinating scholarship on religion, class, race, and age. At the Friday evening lecture, conference attendees witnessed an important piece of Iowa History in the making; the lecture was punctuated by cheers from a crowd outside celebrating an Iowa Supreme Court ruling that made same-sex marriage legal in Iowa. Lynda Joy

Sperling's talk, "The Tourist View: Victorian Women Abroad," presented interdisciplinary connections between art and literature about tourism while Alison Booth's keynote address "Recovery 2.0: Exhibiting Women's Collective Biographies" highlighted her work on women's collective biographies, including her digital project on women's lives.

Last spring's conference also include a theatrical performance on Saturday evening called "Celebrating Victorian Women's Lives: An Evening of Recitations and Music." The event began with a witty introduction by University of Iowa Professor Judith Pascoe. The performance itself was inspired by parlor recitations and home theatricals of the nineteenth century and featured poetry and music by Victorian women writers and composers. Highlights included a recitation of Christina Rossetti's "A Royal Princess" and a thrilling, tear-jerking performance of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point."

Much of the conference took place in the beautiful gold-domed Old Capitol building, which housed our exhibit "Fresh Threads of Connection: Mother Nature and British Women Writers," sponsored by the University of Iowa Old Capitol Museum. This exhibit featured ten eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British women writers and explored their unique relationships with nature. In addition to early editions of these authors' works, the museum displayed letters, portraits of the authors, and critical interpretations of passages from their work.

We are deeply indebted to our faculty advisor Teresa Mangum, without whom we would have been lost, and to the British Women Writers Association. We hope that you all enjoyed your visit to Iowa City (despite the bit of April snow some of you witnessed). We are also deeply grateful to all of you for making last spring's conference an

inspiring event, and we look forward to meeting you again at future BWWCs.

—Laura Capp  
Bridget Draxler  
Lynne Nugent  
Anna Stenson  
LeDon Sweeney  
(University of Iowa)

### **Announcement of the 2011 BWWC: The Ohio State University**

We are pleased to announce that the Nineteenth Annual Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century British Women Writers Conference will be hosted by The Ohio State University from March 31–April 3, 2011.

While we are still very much in the planning stages, we have several events and exhibits in the works that will help showcase our chosen theme: “Curiosities.” The concept of curiosity—in its dual meaning of intellectual pursuit and particular material objects—influenced the lives and work of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century women writers, and continues to drive our scholarship today. While the women of this period expressed curiosity about their world through endless arenas like science, politics, philosophy, travel, religion, and art, at the same time they became subjects and objects of inquiry themselves. Over the course of the conference, we will encourage a conversation about this “curiosity” in and of women’s writing, and the role it plays in our own work.

Along with the usual excellent lineup of daily panel sessions, each day of the 2011 conference will also be punctuated by special events: we will be featuring a series of formal speaker sessions, including a Thursday night plenary panel, Friday and Saturday keynotes, and roundtables focusing on various aspects of professionalization, all of which will be bookended by social and entertainment opportunities as well. No day will be without a full schedule of events for attendees to

enjoy: for example, Saturday’s keynote will be accompanied by a luncheon in the Westin hotel’s famed grand ballroom, followed by an evening on Ohio State’s beautiful campus, where we hope to host theatrical entertainment and an exhibit courtesy of our extensive Rare Books and Manuscripts Library. Additionally, these events will be held in our newly-renovated, state-of-the-art Thompson Memorial Library, which is located at the heart of OSU campus and surrounded by some of our university’s finest architectural and natural attractions.

The Westin Columbus Hotel, where we will be hosting the 2011 conference, is a historical landmark in Ohio’s capital city that boasts not only luxurious guest accommodations and a variety of meeting spaces, but also endless “curious” stories from its 112-year history that are sure to interest BWWC attendees. In addition to its own restaurants, including the literary-themed Thurber Bar (an homage to Ohio-native cartoonist and author James Thurber), the Westin is also close to numerous downtown dining, shopping, and recreation options. Furthermore, the Westin is mere blocks away from a number of other vibrant Columbus neighborhoods and attractions, from the historic German Village to the hip Short North arts district, all of which we will encourage conference attendees to experience.

We here at Ohio State are very excited to be hosting the conference and to be providing the forum for the exciting intellectual exchanges that the BWWC encourages. Look for our conference website to be up and running later this year and our Call for Papers to be posted in the spring, or feel free to contact Meghan Burke <burke.359@osu.edu> with any questions. We look forward to seeing you in Columbus in 2011!

—Meghan L. Burke and  
OSU Steering Committee

## BWWA Mugs Sale

As part of the BWWA's mission to support graduate student scholarship, we sold BWWA mugs as a fundraiser at the last two conferences. We are happy to report that all the mugs have been sold! Thank you to Lisa Hager for managing the sale and to all of our members who bought them. All of the money from the sale of the mugs will go directly to the BWWA Graduate Student Travel Award Fund.

## Call for Nominations

As part of the BWWA's ongoing mission to support, encourage, and recognize the important work being done on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British women writers, the board of the BWWA has created an award to recognize outstanding contributions to the study of British women writers. The award seeks to acknowledge, honor, and celebrate the various ways in which the recipient has contributed to the study of British women writers through teaching, mentoring, service, and scholarship.

This bi-annual award—called the Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century British Women Writers Association Award for Contributions to the Study of British Women Writers—will be given to the important individuals in our field in order to show our deep gratitude for their example and inspiration to all scholars. The first recipients were Pamela Corpron Parker and Cindy LeCom in 2008.

The BWWA is asking for nominations for the next recipient of this award. To nominate an individual, please submit a letter explaining how she or he best fulfills the spirit of the award and why she or he deserves to be recognized. Please send nomination letters to <[bwwa@ipfw.edu](mailto:bwwa@ipfw.edu)> by December 20, 2009.

## Survey on the Orlando Textbase

Orlando: Women's Writing in the British Isles from the Beginnings to the Present is an experiment in digital scholarship which has been warmly praised by all three of its academic reviewers so far—who, however, have all made suggestions, all different, for technological revision or tweaking. It contains the equivalent of more than 75 monograph volumes of information on more than 1,200 writers from Britain and beyond, interlinked with each other and with thousands of contextualizing events.

The way Orlando looks, feels, and acts right now is just one of a number of possible interfaces for these materials and we are researching its impact.

We are seeking responses from users to a 10-minute survey. We are interested in knowing the purposes for which you use Orlando and its ability to meet your needs. We want to gain insight into how you actually use Orlando. We want to know how it can or should be improved. No previous experience of Orlando is required. If your university library does not offer Orlando, we will give you access so you can experience it and let us know your views. Your confidentiality will be protected and you may withdraw from the study at any time. To respond to the survey, go to <<http://tinyurl.com/cpfzmqw>>.

Orlando is found through your library website or at <<http://orlando.cambridge.org>>. If you do not have access to Orlando through your university library, email <[orlando@ualberta.ca](mailto:orlando@ualberta.ca)> to request access.

Please share this invitation to anyone you think would be interested in participating in the study.

—Susan Brown  
Director, the Orlando Project  
<[sbrown@uoguelph.ca](mailto:sbrown@uoguelph.ca)>

## Book Announcements

The University of Georgia Press has recently re-issued Betty Rizzo's *Companions Without Vows: Relationships Among Eighteenth-Century British Women*. Contact the press for a copy to review or to purchase.

Amberley has published *The Diaries of Sarah Hurst 1759-1762, Life and Love in 18th century Horsham* edited by Susan C. Djabri. According to the publisher, the diaries, "create a vivid portrayal of the local town's people they also provide a fascinating insight into the social history of women, as they contain the intimate thoughts and feelings of a young woman and her relationships with the people around her."

Last, Cambridge University Press released this spring Cheryl A. Wilson's *Literature and Dance in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Jane Austen to the New Woman*. The book, written by a BWWA member, is the first full-length study of the relationship between literature and dance in nineteenth-century Britain.

## From the Editor

In a future issue, we will be featuring information about past conference co-chairs and committee members in a "Where Are They Now" article. If you were involved in a past conference, send us an update on your latest successes to <bwwa@ipfw.edu>.

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@ipfw.edu> by February 15 for inclusion in the spring issue and by August 15 for inclusion in the fall issue.