

## ARISTOCRATIC WOMEN

### The Social, Political and Cultural History of Rich and Powerful Women

**Part 1:** The Correspondence of Jemima, Marchioness Gray (1722-97) and her Circle

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## ARISTOCRATIC WOMEN

### The Social, Political and Cultural History of Rich and Powerful Women

**Part 1:** The Correspondence of Jemima, Marchioness Gray (1722-97) and her Circle

#### *Publisher's Note*

*"What is the history of rich, powerful and establishment women? Few people write it, so the question is rarely asked. Historians of power are usually male and concentrate upon men. And most historians of women chronicle the dispossessed and the rebellious. Moreover, there is still a tendency to assume that separate spheres was not just a powerful ideology, but also an accurate description of how the two sexes behaved. We ask very different questions about women in the past than we do about their men folk."*

#### LINDA COLLEY

Professor of History, Yale University in an article reviewing Stella Tillyard's *Aristocrats* in *The Sunday Times*, 17 April 1994

This new project concentrates on substantial and revealing clusters of correspondence between aristocratic women in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, enabling the social, political and cultural history of this landed elite to be studied.

Whilst their husbands may have held high political office and gained the lion's share of recognition at the time and posthumously, these women often wielded real financial power, were active in local social welfare, actively debated political issues and read widely. Ladies of leisure they were not.

Their influence as "the power behind the throne" is perhaps less important than their influence within their own peer groups. Fashions and trends pass from one member of the circle to another. New ideas are shared, marital lapses are judged and each acts as a sympathetic listener in an epistolary relationship. This project will help scholars to understand the development of taste in this period, as prints and paintings, as well as books read, concerts attended, and new plays seen are discussed in correspondence.

Part 1 of this project is based on the correspondence of Jemima, Marchioness Grey (1722-1797) and her circle: which included her daughters, Amabel and Mary, as well as the noted essayist, Catherine Talbot. It is drawn from the Wrest Park (Lucas) Archive deposited at the Bedfordshire County Record Office.

Brief biographies of the correspondents are given in the Introduction which follows, and the Extracts from the Correspondence give an idea of the range and content of the letters. Suffice to say that this is an unusually rich collection of long, descriptive letters discussing contemporary politics, social life, houses and gardens, country house life and life at court, reading and writing, travels, leisure pursuits, family life, medical problems, child-rearing and friendship.

1,832 letters and 9 volumes of transcripts provide scholars with an opportunity to examine the inter-relationships between the mother, her daughters and their friends.

Scholars will find that this is a marvellous source for studying topics such as taste, consumerism, patronage, household and estate management, education and reading, class and sisterhood, as well as giving primary documentation of the aspirations and activities of women in eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century England.

# Aristocratic Women, Part 1

**Part 1:** The Correspondence of Jemima, Marchioness Grey (1722-97) and her Circle

## *Introduction by James Collett-White, Bedfordshire County Records Office*

This project includes microfilm copies of a large corpus of letters written by women to women, thus bringing the eighteenth century to life from a woman's point of view. In it are answered a number of the questions students will inevitably ask about women's attitudes in this period.

The letters form part of the Wrest Park (Lucas) Archive deposited at the Bedfordshire Record Office, County Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP. The archive is substantial and the main focus of this project is to publish the exchanges of correspondence between Jemima, Marchioness Grey and her daughters as well as to her friend Catherine Talbot. It should be realised that a considerable number of letters written to women mentioned in this project (for instance, those by male correspondents) have not been microfilmed. Where these are referred to in the text the Bedfordshire Record Office (BRO) number will be asterisked. The archive is available for study at BRO during normal office hours.

### **Brief Biographies of the Correspondents**

#### **Jemima Grey and her two daughters**

**GREY, Jemima** (1722-1797)  
(Jemima (née Campbell), Marchioness Grey & Baroness Lucas)

A large proportion of the letters filmed here are to or from Jemima, Marchioness Grey. She was the daughter of John Campbell, later 3rd Earl of Breadalbane (1696-1782) and Amabel his wife (née Grey). By 1734 Jemima emerged as the likely heiress of the estates at Wrest Park, Bedfordshire), Burbage, (Leicestershire), Colchester, (Essex) and Crudwell (Wiltshire), belonging to her maternal grandfather Henry Grey (1671-1740) Duke of Kent. She was brought up by him with his two youngest daughters Mary and Anne Sophia (qv). At the Duke's London house at 4 St James Square, Piccadilly she met Catherine Talbot, who became an intellectual companion and lifelong friend.

At the onset of his last illness the Duke tried to ensure the continuity of the estate and the preservation of the Grey title. On 19 May 1740 he was granted a special remainder to make Jemima, Marchioness Grey on his death.

On 22 May 1740 she married Philip Yorke (1720-1790), eldest son of the Baron Hardwicke (later the 1st Earl of Hardwicke), Lord Chancellor and a member of the council of regency during George II's absence from the realm. On 5 June 1740 Jemima's father died and she became Marchioness Grey and inherited the bulk of his estate.

Philip Yorke was a man of scholarly and cultured tastes. He privately printed The Athenian letters (1741), co-written with his brother Charles, and was editor of several political collections including Walpoliana (1783). He had built a Persian altar at Wrest and employed Capability Brown to transform Wimpole. He was a friend of the earlier patrons of Gothick. Although he was an MP from 1741 to 1764 (1741-47 for Reigate; 1747-64 for Cambridgeshire), a Privy Councillor \*1760) and Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire (1757-1790) he did not shine on a wider stage. After his father's death in 1764 he became 2nd Earl of Hardwicke and was a minister without portfolio in Rockingham's short lived government in 1766. From the 1760s he was dogged by ill health. In his early years he was an inveterate traveller and his travel diaries have been published in the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society (BHRS) Volume XLVII pages 125-163. They can be contrasted with Jemima's letters describing many of the same places. Jemima became lifelong friends of Philip's sisters Elizabeth Anson, Margaret Heathcote and Mary Yorke his sister-in-law.

Jemima and Philip had two daughters, Amabel (1751-1838) and Mary Jemima (1756-1830). The letters between mother and daughters reveal the close friendship between them, as their children grew from infancy to adulthood. Jemima's later years were enriched by her role as grandmother to Mary Jemima's three sons. She died 11 January 1797.

Published Sources:

J. Godber's The Marchioness Grey of Wrest Park. BHRS Volume XLVII, 1968

**GREY, Amabel** (1751-1833)  
(Amabel (née Grey) Lady Polwarth, later Baroness Lucas and Countess de Grey)

Amabel was the elder daughter of Philip and 2nd Earl of Hardwicke and Jemima, Marchioness Grey. She married Alexander Hume-Campbell, Lord Polwarth (1750-1781) in 1772. On her mother's death in 1797 she became Baroness Lucas of Crudwell and the owner of her extensive estates. On 25 October 1816 she was created Countess de Grey.

She was brought up in her parents' houses, having a special affection for Wrest Park. During her marriage she lived in rented houses in Bedfordshire. Later she had a villa at Putney. She was an accomplished amateur artist, taught by Alexander Cozens. She did seven sketches of Wrest and Wimpole for Catherine the Great's dinner service. She also wrote fairy stories and translated Petrarch. In later life she became a noted collector. She ran the Wrest estate with the help of her nephew and heir Earl de Grey (1781-1859).

Her husband, apart from trying farming, had no paid occupation. His passion was for hunting but he did share his wife's cultural interests. His estrangement from his father saddened Amabel. The last part of his life was marred by ill health and he died in 1781 aged 30. The marriage was childless but Amabel was a devoted aunt to her sister's children. She died 4 May 1833.

**GREY, Mary Jemima** (1756-1830)  
(Mary Jemima (née Grey) Robinson)

Mary Jemima was the younger daughter of Philip, 2nd Earl of Hardwicke and Jemima, Marchioness Grey. She married

# Aristocratic Women, Part 1

Thomas Robinson, 2nd Baron Grantham in 1780. He was the eldest son of the noted diplomatist, Thomas Robinson, 1st Baron Grantham, who represented England in negotiations with Maria-Theresa and Frederick the Great. Like his father, Thomas was a career diplomat and his service included 3 years as commissioner of trade and plantations (1780-2) and 2 years as Foreign Secretary (1782-3). The marriage negotiations nearly foundered when it was discovered that Grantham had little assets other than his salary. Mary was given the choice and accepted him. They had three sons: Thomas Philip, b 1781 – later Earl de Grey and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 1841-4); Frederick John, b 1782 – later Viscount Goderich and 1st Earl of Ripon, who held many political posts from 1809 to 1846, including that of Prime Minister from 1827 to 1828, following the death of Canning; and Philip, b 1783.

She shared his enthusiasm for improving Newby Park in Yorkshire. Part of the alterations to the first floor were to create bedrooms for their three sons near their mother's. Unfortunately their marriage was short lived; Grantham dying 20 July 1786. She brought up the boys with the help of her brother-in-law Frederick Robinson and his wife. Advice was given by her mother and sister. Her letters are very child-centred and give a useful insight into child care at the end of the eighteenth century. Weaning, diet and later education are discussed exhaustively. Mary Robinson died 7 January 1830.

## Jemima, Marchioness Grey's Friends and Relations

**ANSON, Elizabeth** see YORKE

**GREGORY, Jemima**, daughter of David and Mary (née Grey) Gregory, was brought up with Amabel, Countess de Grey and was a constant correspondent of hers throughout her life, sharing her literary interests. She was employed as the tacker of George III's shirts in the Royal Household.

**GREY, Anne Sophia** (1730-1780) only surviving child of Henry Duke of Kent by his second wife. Although younger than Jemima she was a constant correspondent in later years. Despite opposition from her grandmother, she married John Egerton (1721-1787), who became Bishop of Durham in 1771. She died in 1780. Only two of her letters are in this series. The rest of her correspondence to Jemima Grey has the reference L30/9/32/1-63\*.

**GREY, Mary** (1719-1761) was the youngest daughter of Henry Duke of Kent by his first wife. She was brought up with Jemima Grey, who was her devoted friend and to whom he wrote constantly after her marriage. In 1743 she married David Gregory, who was Dean of Christchurch from 1756 to 1767. They had three sons and a daughter Jemima. Mary Gregory died in 1761. Jemima Gregory (qv) was adopted by Jemima, Marchioness Grey. The waywardness of the sons however was a constant theme in family letters.

**HUME-CAMPBELL**, Amabel see GREY

**HUME-CAMPBELL, Elizabeth**, 2nd wife of 3rd Earl of Marchmont, who had considerable estates in Scotland and one at Hemel Hempstead (Hertfordshire). The estrangement between her son Lord Polwarth and her husband could not be healed even during the former's last illness. She died 4 March 1797.

**MADDOCKS, Mary**, daughter of Isaac Maddocks, Bishop of Worcester 1743-1759. She married James Yorke (1730-1803) who held a number of clerical appointments including Dean of Lincoln, Bishop of St Davids, Bishop of Gloucester and from 1781-1808 Bishop of Ely. She wrote letters to Jemima Marchioness Grey with vivid descriptions of all the places that the Yorkes lived in. They had seven children, whose activities Mary chronicled from childhood to adulthood. She advised Mary Baroness Grantham how she should set up her nursery.

**TALBOT, Catherine** (1721-1770), author, was the daughter of the second son of the Bishop of Durham and niece of Charles Talbot, Lord Chancellor. She was born after her father's death. She and her mother formed part of the household of Thomas Secker (1693-1768), who was chaplain to George II, 1732; Bishop of Bristol, 1734 and Oxford, 1737; Dean of St Paul's, 1750; and Archbishop of Canterbury, 1758-1768. When he was Rector of St James Piccadilly Catherine met the Greys, who lived close by at 4 St James Square. Catherine shared with them their intellectual interests. Talbot's education was encouraged by Secker and she was described as making progress "equally rapidly in all arts". She was an accomplished artist, musician and linguist. She was especially interested in theology and also knew astronomy and geography. She was a great friend of Bishop Butler, Lord Lyttelton, William Pulteney, Earl of Bath, Mrs Montagu and Samuel Richardson (reading his *Sir Charles Grandison* before publication). Talbot acted as Secker's almoner and on his death in 1768 she inherited £13,000 from his will. Talbot was a contributor to Samuel Johnson's *Rambler*, but achieved fame with her *Reflections on the Seven Days of the Week* (1770) which went through 10 editions by 1784. She died of cancer in 1770.

Her vivid account of her visit to Wrest Park is written in code (L31/106\* and decoded transcript by J Godber).

Published Sources:

Dictionary of National Biography

Reverend Montague Pennington's *A series of Letters between Mrs Elizabeth Carter and Miss Catherine Talbot* 1741-1770 published 1809.

**YORKE, Elizabeth** (1725-1760) daughter of 1st Earl of Hardwicke. She married in 1748 George 1st Lord Anson, (1697-1762) Admiral of the Fleet and Circumnavigator, who had estates at Shugborough (Staffordshire) and Moor Park (Hertfordshire). Mrs Delaney's comments about her appears unjust: "She is a little coxcombical and affects to be learned". Jemima Marchioness Grey was devoted to her and her grief at her death comes across in a letter she wrote to Mary Gregory. Her letters to Jemima have not been microfilmed (L30/9/102/1-13\* and L30/9/3/1-116\*). She also became a friend of Catherine Talbot (see L30/21/1/1-10 on Reel 9).

**YORKE, Margaret** (1733-1769) sister of Elizabeth. She married Sir Gilbert Heathcote of Stocken Rutland, where she led an isolated life.

**YORKE, Mary** see MADDOCKS

## The Arrangement and Content of the Letters

### Reels 1-5

Letters to Jemima, Marchioness Grey

The letters to Jemima should be used with her letters in reply (L30/9A/1-9 (Reel 10), L30/11/122 (Reel 5), L30/13/9 (Reel 8) and L30/21/3 & 5 (Reel 9), Jemima's correspondents were either friends or relations who knew most of the other people in her set. The letters are therefore full of references to mutual acquaintances, especially to their health. Part of the year they lived in London and were involved in the political and court life of the capital. Often they had been brought up or visited Wrest park, the old house and great garden, seat of the Greys. Love for Wrest is a theme that echoes throughout the correspondence. They shared a common intellectual and cultural background in which it was understood that women would enjoy literature including history, books in foreign languages and, of course, novels.

Women's attitudes to their husbands and to bringing up children feature regularly in the letters.

Despite arranged marriages, Jemima and her two daughters were clearly fond of their respective husbands. The later letters reveal a warm and caring approach to children, in which nurses who were too old to have a romp were dismissed. While these general themes appear in a number of the letters, individual groups have their special interests and these will now be highlighted.

Mary Gregory's letters (L30/9/50/1-43) show her involvement in the restoration of Christchurch Deanery, Oxford. One of Anne Sophia's (L30/9/52/1-2) is an appeal to Jemima to help her in the difficulties of her engagement to her future husband. Jemima's daughter Amabel's letters (pre 1772, L30/9/51/1-18 and 1772-1796, L30/9/60/1-371) show her developing interests in art and her special love for Wrest. She gives a detailed description of her bridal tour to Scotland in 1772. Her letters are full of her husband Lord Polwarth's activities such as farming and hunting. His health increasingly predominates in the letters until his death in 1781. Amabel's comments on her sister's marriage negotiations shed an important light on how these were conducted. From 1781 Amabel's letters concentrate on Wrest, her sister's family and her father's health.

Her sister Mary Baroness Grantham's early letters (L30/9/54/1-18) date from when she was a child having a seaside holiday in Brighton. Letters when she was in her twenties refer to the famous Queen Charlotte's Bed embroidered by Mrs Pawsey at Silsoe. The letters after her marriage (L30/9/81/1-158) give a detailed picture of her short marriage and the bringing up of her children, including Thomas, the future Earl de Grey (Lord Lieutenant of Ireland 1841-1844) and Frederick, the future Earl of Ripon and Viscount Goderich (Prime Minister 1827-1828).

The two letters from Lady Marchmont concern the illness of her son, Lord Polwarth. The few items relating to Catherine Talbot include a couple of poems (one a translation from the Italian) (L30/9/87/1-4). The rest are believed to have been accidentally destroyed.

Mary Yorke's letters (L30/9/111/1-273) are much more substantial. The descriptions of the places she lived in with her pluralist husband such as Lincoln and St Davids are particularly vivid. Using her experience of bringing up seven children she gave her advice as to how a nursery should be run and what wages should be paid.

### Reels 5-7

Letters to Amabel Countess de Grey

These letters were written by Amabel's mother, sister and cousin. The themes mentioned in the introduction to the letters to Jemima recur. Literature, Wrest and Mary Baroness Grantham's children all figure prominently.

Jemima Gregory had been brought up with Amabel and seems to have been like a second sister. Her letters centre on their mutual interests, life at Court and her retreats at Esher and Petersham and her reaction to the death of her brother David are the highlights of this part of the correspondence (L30/11/122/1-41).

Jemima's letters to her daughter (L30/11/122/1-395) show the developing relationship of mother and daughter from Amabel's childhood through her widowhood to the trusted heiress of the Wrest Park estate. She was instructed by Jemima as to how the Pavilion at Wrest was to be repapered in 1773 and how Capability Brown should be handled. In the correspondence are details of a Royal Wedding and a Royal Christening, an elopement, and the American War of Independence. Jemima's letters of sympathy to Amabel during Polwarth's illness are especially noteworthy. The letters of her sister Mary have only been filmed prior to her marriage in 1780. The later letters have the reference (L30/11/240/1-294\*). The two sisters were obviously warm friends. Mary's love as a child of pets and her adult enthusiasm for musical evenings both feature.

### Reels 8-9

Letters to Mary Jemima Baroness Grantham

The letters to Baroness Grantham filmed here, mainly from her mother and sister Jemima, start when Mary was a small child and end in 1790 (L30/3/9/1-133). The 1780 letters, for example, include an account of a visit to Luton Hoo and elections in both Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire. Jemima commented on the death of Lord Polwarth and its effect on Amabel. After Mary had three children, the letters are full of reference to child care.

Amabel's letters to her sister (L39/13/12/1-117) after her marriage. The earlier ones have a reference (L30/13/12/1-114)\*. Highlights include the 1772 bridal tour, a visit to Wrest Park by Capability Brown and the illnesses of her husband and their father.

Two charming letters from Catherine Talbot to Mary as a small child round off this group. They are full of reference to cats and goldfish and written in a way to appeal to a child (L30/13/25/1-2).

### Reels 9-10

Letters to Catherine Talbot

# Aristocratic Women, Part 1

The bulk of Jemima's letters to Catherine are found on Reel 10 (L30/9a/3-9). Most of the letters of Reel 9 (L30/21/3/1-14) are of ephemeral nature but do include two travel diaries, copied into (L30/9a/6).

Amabel's letters show her interest in drawing and in literature, both of which enthusiasms she shared with Catherine.

Jemima's in-laws, the Yorkes, were also firm friends of Catherine. Elizabeth Anson shared Catherine's love of books. References to patronage at her husband's disposal reveals the important part she played in this role (L30/21/1/1-10). Margaret Heathcote's letters (L30/21/4) refer to her lonely life at Stocken. She sent some verses to Catherine for criticism.

On Catherine's death both Jemima, Marchioness Grey and Mary Yorke continued to correspond with her other (L30/21/5 & 6).

## **Reel 9**

Letters to Jemima Gregory

Amabel's letters in reply to those found on Reel 5 (L30/11/121/1-41) shed light on her attempt to get literary work published secretly for fear of being called "an authoress". References are made in the letters to George III's madness, the Gordon Riots and the American and French Revolutions.

## **Reel 10**

Transcripts of letters by Jemima, Marchioness Grey

After her mother's death in 1797, Amabel gathered together letters from the chief recipients of Jemima's letters: Mary Gregory, Catherine Talbot and Mary Yorke. The letters to Mary Gregory (L30/9a/1-3) and Catherine Talbot (L30/9a/3-9) cover the first twenty years of Jemima's marriage; Catherine's cover another ten and Mary Yorke's bring it up to 1775 (L30/9a/9). Through these letters an intimate portrait of an intelligent woman's daily pursuits and thoughts can be ascertained over a long period. The first two writers shared her love of books and her affection for Wrest Park. The travelling that Jemima did is particularly interesting when her comments are compared with those of her husband (see BHRS XLVII). Her growing children are often mentioned. Quite frequently she writes about her philosophy of life. The letters to Mary Yorke include one of 16 November 1772 describing the household intended to be set up by Amabel and the duties her housekeeper was to perform.

## *Extracts from the Correspondence*

The following brief extracts from a handful of the letters give a flavour of the style and content of the correspondence. Original spellings have been retained and omissions indicated.

### **Jemima, Marchioness Grey to Catherine Talbot, 1737 or 1738:**

*"We shall be such meer Book-Worms that 'twill be absolutely impossible to travel even from hence to London without continuing to get some shelves put up on the coach, and so turn it into a Library. Why Madam! I have several constant daily Friends! Whichcote is a standing dish for my breakfast, so is Catrou for my dinner, and I always sup upon De Shou...."*

### **Jemima, Marchioness Grey to Lady Mary Gregory, Sept 1742:**

*"I fancy you thought yourself privileged as an English Woman, & that the Figure we are making abroad induced you to take as much upon you at Home. Surely we are grown great heroes lately, I hope it won't end in being thought Bullies, we go fighting into all parts of the World and frightening Kings and Cities out of their Wits. I would rather hope that the Neighbourhood to Italy has inspired our Men with the Old Roman Spirit...."*

### **Jemima, Marchioness Grey to Lady Mary Gregory, Sept 1 1745:**

*"I am not at all in good Spirits at present – you see – the young Pretender's Standard is set up in the Highlands, that he stiles himself Regent of these Realms for his father, and that he has been joined by about three thousand Men. But yet I am not afraid for Ourselves here, I hope the Kings Troops which by the last Accounts were marching towards them will soon put an end to the Affair; but I am very uneasy about my Papa, he is much too near them at present, and should they move at all Southward is directly in their way, & to lye in the Route of a Parcel of Rebels is no desirable thing...."*

### **Jemima, Marchioness Grey – Catherine Talbot Wimpole, Sept 15 1748:**

*"....I must mentioned a grand Excursion we made from hence yesterday – whether you ever heard of the fame of Sturbitch Fair I don't know, but it is the Subject of Conversation for a Fortnight every year in this County, and One day of it is a sort of general meeting of the Gentry in the Neighbourhood. We therefore, though not very near neighbours, yet as appertaining or related to the Knight of the Shire, were to be carried thither by him.*

*All the family except my poor Lord Chancellor who was left alone in a solitary house, proceeded in the Morning to dine at Cambridge and go about a mile or two farther to the Fair after Dinner. – We enter'd upon a large open Plain, where are built Rows of extempore Houses or Booths made into very commodious Shops. Your first approach to it is through a pile of cheeses that strike the Smell at a considerable distance. A little farther your ear is saluted with a sound from a rais'd theatre...& the Eye is equally attracted by a Representation in Painting of the Dramatic Performance exhibited every Evening. Monsieur Arlequin, or, the Spanniard caught in his own Trap, concluding with a grand Firework & a magnificent Temple of Apollo – in Honour of the Peace... you proceed on through the Lines of Booths expos'd to all the Temptations for spending your money that the Civil Looks of the Inhabitants & the Variety of their Wares can offer. Here you may furnish yourself with everything that is necessary, convenient or ornamental for your Person or Family, - for the Fine Lady or the Country Housewife, - from a yard of Ribbon, to a ... Cart Horse, which stand in rows, poor animals tied to their posts and made the Rear of the Fair. ...*

*I agree with you entirely in your opinion of Clarissa. I don't know whether I mention'd the Impression it made upon me as I read it but was quite what you express, Her management is so injudicious after she is with Lovelace, that it is inconsistent with the Good Sense and Prudence she is suppos'd Mistress of, and seems to proceed from a greater mixture of Pride and Vanity than you expect in such a Character. The Story too & the situation she is drawn in, I think very unnatural and I am as angry as you with the Author for involving such excellent Qualities as her's, and such intentions of Acting right, in such Distresses. But I admire his Invention, the thousand little particularities she relates of her situation, the devilish cunning of Lovelace so perplexing to a mind like her's, and the justness and rightness of her sentiments engage me in the Book & make me love & pity her exceedingly..."*

### **Jemima, Marchioness Grey to Mary Yorke, June 1775/76?**

*"I wish I could give any more satisfactory Account relating to America than what you have already heard. It is certain that everything there wears the worst Aspect and the Colonies are all united in The Plan to throw off any Dependence on this Country, and may probably succeed in it. It seems to me the Plan was long ago laid and growing up amongst them as they encreased in Strength and Affluence... The Desire of Total Independence is Natural to all States, and every Argument they have used against a Superior Power over there would have held equally at all Times... the Americans have been assured by Englishmen that Resistance would succeed... We shall probably hear Nothing New till the other Regiments arrive, nor Do nothing more at Home till some fresh Bad Event happens."*

### **Jemima Marchioness Grey to Mary Jemima Grey, June 7 1777? (From the Hague)**

*"The Ladies...it seems come in the Evening in their full Court Dress, and go home again (such as chuse it) to drop their Hoops for Dancing. 'Tis well the Hague is not so large as London or the Time would be half spent in the Streets. His Excellency's Desert was ornamented with medallions of The King and Queen, the King on Horseback in the Middle, and the Confectioner lamented very much that some great Event had not happened in America, as either Conquest or Peace would have furnished him with Trophies to accompany it....*

*The Flowers I thank you for but really wished you had not robbed yourselves of the Roses. The American flower (I wish the country produced nothing worse) is new to me and I think pretty. If another Blooms I recommend to you to Paint it."*

### **Amabel, Lady Polwarth to Jemima, Marchioness Grey Southill, Saturday Night June 17th 1780**

"The taking of Charles Town, Dear Mama, has at last clear'd up a little the dark prospects of Great Britain, & it is just come at as lucky a Juncture for his M<sup>y</sup> & the Ministers as if they had chose it out for themselves, exactly at the time when they & the army reign'd triumphant, and the military were acknowledg'd the only Protectors of the Peace. But though this last Circumstance is not what pleases me best and though I dare not hope for the entire Conquest of America, yet still for the Honour of England we were made happy by this News. I thank my Sister for taking pains to convey it to us immediately, but we heard it as early as Thursday Night, which at first will perhaps surprize you. An Express had been sent down from the Post Office to Mr Cartwright, who very kindly & neighbourly indeed, sent a man over to us between nine & ten, with the very letter that Ld Clermont had wrote him. I did not know Ld Clermont had been so zealous, but he wrote like a Man most sincerely out of his wits for joy, & ended with a pious Ejaculation of God be prais'd! He says that Ld Lincoln hopes this Blow will crush the Rebellion, (which is pretty sanguine) & tells his Friend, this is immense news for you, dear Harry! I recollected the Carteret Property, but find by Burke's Book it is in North not South Carolina, and I fancy it will be long enough before Mr Carteret sees a shilling of it. But pray is the account true of poor Governor's Hutchinson's sudden Death. I suppose it must be true, as you had mention'd his being in a Decline, & his life must long have been a miserable one, but one is tempted to call it hard that he did not live a week longer, when this faint Ray of Hope for his Family, might have comforted his last Moments.

We are to have I see, a Supplement to the Gazette, but most likely of no great Consequence, as the ship sail'd four Days after the Town was taken. If these 7000 Men are really and truly Prisoners of War, the best use we can make of them is to release Burgoyne's unfortunate Army, but it would go a little against one to release Burgoyne himself at the Price of giving back General Lincoln, who was reckon'd amongst their best.

Young Mr Scott came down here Yesterday Morning full of little stories about the Rioters, the Troops &c, but nothing very new, nor likely to be new to you. Only he affirm'd that he knew a young officer who told somebody who told him, that this officer had seen French Money in a dead Riote's Pocket. But I fear that we shall never be able to bring it home to the French or the Americans (whom I more suspect) which would make the Riote's Crime more clearly Treason. I understand all the Doubts you mention and we have both consulted Blackstone, who very much favours the Idea that such an Insurrection amounts to levying War against the King, & a passage quoted in The Papers from Foster, is plainer still – the popular lawyers may deny it, but I have a strong notion that my Grandfather would have been of the same opinion, though my proof of it is a queer one. When I was a child I heard him say that pulling down Houses of a certain class which he nam'd, might be High Treason, and the odd jumble of ideas has kept that Expression in my mind. This Riot was at first directed against all Mass-Houses, which all is Blackstone's Distinction, & Ld P says really at last it was levell'd against all Houses, without any Epithet good or bad affix'd to them. But the Case of Lord G:G: who did not join in any of these Enormities, is very different, & if the Ministry attempt too much they may lose a Victory, which I once thought would have been as compleat though I trust not so fatal, as that of Charles the 2d. For to have the soldiers become popular in the City of London, and be cramm'd with good things by the Citizens: & the Name of a Mob be so detestable, was a great stroke at the furious part of Opposition. But I now see a Squabble begun between Ld Amherst and the City about disarming the Associations. I verily believe that the Westminster & London Associations of last summer were on the same plan as those dangerous ones in Ireland, & that Government wants to nip that Idea in the Bud. ...

Miss Gregory has wrote me a strong picture of the Terror that seiz'd all the Inhabitants of the St James Palace who firmly expected an attack both Wednesday and Thursday. She has at last gone out of Town to a lodging somewhere near Thistleworth I believe; though she does not name it. But I suppose whether at Richmond or London, you will inquire after her.

I own myself impatient for the result of private Negotiations. All that you mention of the Gentleman's conduct has been hitherto very proper and handsome. I fear the money transactions may create Difficulties and yet as matters have gone so far, methinks I should feel griev'd if the affair broke off on their account. For I fully subscribe to the Doctrine of a Foolish Vauxhall Song, which I dare say you did not mind, that told the Ladies, they must not expect in these times to meet Lovers by the Score, young, handsome, rich and all that was desirable, - with much more good advice which I have forgot.

I have scribbled a great deal, and yet not mention'd Ld Ps Health, which is pretty good. Our Love attends all our friends and our Duty to you both....

I remain  
Your most dutiful Daughter  
A Polworth

**Jemima, Marchioness Grey – Mary Jemima Grey, Sept 22 1787 Knaresborough:**

"Tis your turn now my Dear child in return for your letter of Tuesday last... I shall be very glad to return to you Both and hope to find you well. Your Papa is so at present & Drinks the water again, & having been at the Well with him for some mornings I can now bear witness to all former accounts of its being the most Detestable of all mixtures. It is as Salt I think as Sea-Water with the additional very bad Sulphur Taste and smell you have heard of & ought to be very Beneficial to make amends for its being so disagreeable. ...

I am glad Don Quixote has succeeded so well. What successor you can have found to him I can't imagine, none equal his distinguish'd merit, but as you had other Books to finish at Wrest, if you want one to help you of an Evening now you are got to Wimpole, you may look for Gil Blas, which has Wit & is Diverting, though in a different Style, & read it together as you did the other. I suppose the French must be there (which will be best) or a Translation, & you must study the Catalogue or look about till you find...."



## *Contents of Reels*

### REEL 1

L30/9/50/1-43

Mary Gregory, Christ Church, Oxford, to her niece Jemima, Marchioness Grey (1722-1797)  
(43 letters – 1750-1757 and nd)

L30/9/51/1-18

Amabel Grey (1751-1833, later Hume-Campbell/Polwarth) to her mother Jemima, Marchioness Grey (1722-1797)  
(18 letters – 1761-1767)

L30/9/52/1-2

Anna Sophia Grey (Egerton) to her niece Jemima, Marchioness Grey (1722-1797)  
(2 letters – nd)

L30/9/53/1-19

Mary Grey (Gregory) to her niece Jemima, Marchioness Grey (1722-1797)  
(19 letters – 1740-1741)

L30/9/54/1-18

Mary Jemima Grey (1756-1830, later Robinson) to her mother Jemima, Marchioness Grey (1722-1797) (18 letters – 1763-1779 and nd)

### REEL 2

L30/9/60/1-371

Amabel Hume-Campbell (1751-1833, Lady Polwarth, née Grey) to her mother Jemima, Marchioness Grey (1722-1797)  
(371 letters – 1772-1795) [First 230 letters, continued on Reel 3]

### REEL 3

L30/9/60/1-371

[Final 141 letters, continued from Reel 2]

L30/9/61/1-2

Elizabeth Hume Campbell, Countess of Marchmont [mother-in-law to Jemima's daughter Amabel] to Jemima, Marchioness Grey (1722-1797)  
(2 letters – 1778 and nd)

L30/9/81/1-158

Mary Robinson (Baroness Grantham, née Grey) to her mother Jemima, Marchioness Grey (1722-1797) (158 letters – 1780-1796)

### REEL 4

L30/9/87/1-4

Catherine Talbot (1721-1770) to Jemima, Marchioness Grey (1722-1797)  
(4 letters – nd [c1760])

L30/9/111/1-273

Mary Yorke of Lincoln and Northampton etc., to her sister-in-law Jemima, Marchioness Grey (1722-1797) (273 letters – 1762-1796 and nd) [First 200 letters, continued on Reel 5]

### REEL 5

L30/9/111/1-273

[Final 73 letters, continued from Reel 4]

L30/11/121/1-41

Jemima Mary Gregory, Petersham and Esher, to her cousin Amabel, Countess de Grey (1751-1833)  
(41 letters – 1778-1794)

L30/11/122/1-395

Jemima, Marchioness Grey (1722-1797) to her daughter Amabel, Countess de Grey (1751-1833) (395 letters – 1778-1794)  
[Letters 1-99, continued on Reel 6]

### REEL 6

L30/11/122/1-395

[Letters 100-299, continued from Reel 5]

### REEL 7

L30/11/122/1-395

# Aristocratic Women, Part 1

[Letters 300-395, continued from Reel 6]

L30/11/123/1-84 Mary

[Jemima] Grey (1757-1830, later Robinson) to her sister Amabel, Countess de Grey (1751-1833)  
(84 letters – 1765-1780)

## REEL 8

L30/13/9/1-133

Jemima, Marchioness Grey (1722-1797) to her daughter Mary [Jemima] Robinson, Baroness Grantham (1757-1830)  
(133 letters – 1763-1790 and nd)

L30/13/12/1-117

Amabel Hume-Campbell (1751-1833, née Grey, also Polwarth) to her sister Mary [Jemima] Robinson, Baroness Grantham  
(1757-1830)  
(117 letters – 1772-1814)

## REEL 9

L30/13/25/1-2 Catherine Talbot to Mary [Jemima] Robinson, Baroness Grantham (1757-1830)  
(2 letters – 1767 and nd)

L30/21/.... Various writers to Catherine Talbot (1721-1770) and to Mrs Talbot

1. Elizabeth Anson to Catherine Talbot, 1744-1759 (10 letters ) L30/21/1/1-10
2. Amabel Grey to Catherine Talbot, 1763-9 (12 letters) L30/21/2/1-12
3. Jemima, Marchioness Grey to Catherine Talbot, nd, and two travel journals, 1750 & 1763 (14 items)  
L30/21/3/1-14
4. Margaret Heathcote to Catherine Talbot, 1753-1759 and nd (7 letters) L30/21/4/1-7
5. Jemima, Marchioness Grey to Mrs Talbot, 1769-1789, and unidentified correspondent c1786 (6 letters)  
L30/21/5/1-6
6. M Yorke to Mrs Talbot, c1760 and 1770, (2 letters) L30/21/6/1-2

L30/23/1-114 Amabel Grey to her cousin Jemima Mary Gregory  
(114 letters – 1765-1794)

## REEL 10

L30/9a/1-9 9 volumes of transcript letters

Transcripts of letters from Jemima, Marchioness Grey to:

Volume 1 (p1) – Volume 3 (p57) Lady Mary Gregory 1740-1760  
Volume 3 (p61) – Volume 9 (p140) Catherine Talbot 1737-1770  
Volume 9 (p144 – p277) Mary Yorke

## *Arisocratic Women, Part 2*

The second part of this project makes available three separate letter sequences from Birmingham University Library.

First and foremost are the 1,764 letters (bound in 16 volumes) and 7 diaries of Charlotte Georgiana, Lady Bedingfield (formerly Jerningham) c1780-1833. These sources describe the life and experiences of the intelligent daughter of an important Catholic family from childhood, continuing through her schooldays and her marriage to her elder years. Highlights include the detailed recollections of a visit to Brighton with princess Louise of Saxe-Weimar, and the discovery of a friend's brother who has committed suicide:

*"...I ran to the door and pushed it with all my strength, to no purpose, and called to Him, but no answer was returned – the servants came up and two of them forced the door open with their feet, I rushed into the room and beheld the most terrible spectacle. He was sitting in an Arm-Chair covered with Blood and his throat severed and gaping hideously – without any symptom of remaining Life – Language has no words to Describe the poor sisters – the occasion perhaps Brings a degree of Tranquil Fortitude with it, For I found myself more prompt and able to act and assist, and soothe, and give Directions in this sudden calamity, than I thought I should be capable of:- this act of suicide was committed in a momentary derangement of mind with which he was inflicted for a short interval every day and which the Doctors said was diminishing and would gradually wear away – I never saw him in these moments of Alienation, But He said to me once when I called upon Him, `if you had come an hour sooner you would have heard me talking nonsense´ – not understanding what He alluded to for I was ignorant of this peculiarity of his complaint I said jocosely, `Do you think that would have surprised me?´ – He replied `I wish Jerningham I could be as merry as you´...."*

Charlotte writes with the same immediacy about visits to the opera and plays (including Mrs Siddons in `The fatal marriage´); being taught Italian and Geography; the latest fashions; portrait painting; childbirth and rearing; Anglo-French hostilities; health; Catholic views regarding Ireland; Mrs Fitzherbert and the Prince of Wales; schooling; Catholic emancipation; society at Bath; broken marriages; Madame de Stael; attempts to restore the monarchy in France; reading Mansfield Park; Bonaparte's surrender to the Duke of Wellington; travels; pregnancy; illegitimacy; and many other topics.

Secondly there is a small cluster of 22 letters, dating from 1791 to 1804, from Anna Seward, the `Swan of Lichfield´ - a noted poet and letter writer. Topics covered include `the qualities of a woman that ought to be possessed by a woman to be worthy of Colonel Dowdeswell´, a concert in Birmingham held in honour of Duncan's victory at Camperdown, and a discussion of the notion of democracy.

Finally, there are c155 letters, dated c1774-1805, concerning Charlotte, daughter of Grenville Leveson-Gower, Earl Gower and subsequently first Marquess of Stafford, and Lady Susannah Leveson-Gower (née Stewart). Health, the writings of Tom Paine; the pernicious effect of gossip; babies; William Pitt and contemporary politics; the threat of invasion by France, and sea bathing are all discussed.

Part 2: 11 reels of 35mm Silver-halide positive microfilm plus Guide **Available**

The Third Part will bring together the papers of the Ladies of Llangollen from the National Library of Wales.

## *Projects of Related Interest*

### **Women's Language and Experience, 1500-1940 Women's Diaries and Related Sources**

Editor: Dr Amanda Vickery, Lecturer in Modern British Women's History, Royal Holloway, University of London

*"The local record offices of Great Britain hold staggering quantities of manuscripts written by women. Only now is this vast resource being tapped. Women's own writings facilitate the exploration of a multiplicity of themes from the construction of identity to the composition of political communities, from the intimacies of emotional life to the structure of society."*

**Dr Amanda Vickery**

Scattered throughout the local record offices of England, Scotland and Wales are vital yet neglected sources for the study of women's history: Diaries, commonplace books, travel journals and letters which describe women's lives and experiences in their own language.

This new project brings together such sources for the first time and makes possible a general overview of the condition of women in Britain from 1500 to 1940. It will suggest answers to questions such as:

Did women actually conform to prescribed models of authority? How did women's aspirations and fantasies match up with their real lives? Did women employ the rhetoric of submission selectively, with irony, or quite cynically?

This project will encourage work by scholars across many disciplines including English, Politics, History, the Social History of Medicine, Social Policy and Women's Studies.

Subjects covered include:

- Sexuality, masculinity & femininity
- Courtship & marriage
- Household organization & authority
- Childbearing, childrearing & parenting
- Medicine & health
- Women's paid & unpaid work
- Informal & institutionalized charity
- Religion & ethical values
- Gentility, politeness & snobbery
- Tourism, taste & commercialized leisure
- Political culture & social structure
- Perceptions of female destiny
- Female education & professional aspirations
- Equal rights feminism

### **Part 1: Sources from the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire County Record Offices**

Part 1 comprises nearly 100 volumes describing the lives of 25 women, 1670-1922.

The earliest sequence of diaries (in 7 volumes) describe the life of Dame Sarah Cowper between 1670 and 1715. She pours forth her views on almost every subject, especially on marriage and fidelity:

*"Sunday, going early to Church, I chanced to be present at a wedding, the most melancholy sight one can see, and affects me strangely.*

*...To hear a simple woman promise to love without cause, and obey without Reason, is amazing...."* (Volume I, p268).

The 18th Century is particularly well covered. No fewer than 14 volumes describe the lives of Mary, Harriet, Charlotte and Anne Orlebar in the period 1751-1830. As well as their daily observations on their households, their children and their social lives, there is much of literary interest – including the poetry of Mary, their unofficial poet laureate, who commemorated important family events in verse.

Another volume of great poetical interest is the Commonplace book of Lady Anne Blount, marked on the spine as "Stella's works". A typical inclusion in this volume is *"To Sir Harry Blount on his saying he would not have a fiddle on my Lady's birth day"*, signed *"Stella"* but *"Pope"* is marked at the top.

Further 18th Century diaries include those of Mary, Countess Cowper (covering 1714-1720), Catherine Talbot (for 1745), Elizabeth Wheeler (for 1778, an excellent diary with outspoken political comments and notes on her reading) and an anonymous volume for 1720.

The manuscript autobiography of Frances Stackhouse covers her life from 1794 to 1881 and is especially valuable for her comments on her schooling, the birth of her daughter and her observations made when Humphry Davy, Sidney Smith and Joseph Banks visited.

Equally wide-ranging in subject matter are the musings of Frederica Rouse-Boughton (covering 1859-1864). As well as her gloriously illustrated travel journals, we cover her devotional volume, where she comments: *"I for my own part I think an immense deal of nastiness often lurks behind the 'respectability' of us 'ladies'...."*

# Aristocratic Women, Part 1

Two long diary sequences are those of Jane Johnstone (in 23 volumes, 1817-1840, with lengthy notes on the living conditions of labourers and servants, charity work, gambling and contemporary amusements) and Louisa Arrowsmith (in 17 volumes, 1818-1837, with much about her garden, the theatre etc).

The diaries of Adela Capel, aged 14, and Eliza Hope Stevens, aged 9 (by her governess) describe the education and upbringing of girls in the first half of the 19th Century. Both texts illuminate the construction of gender roles and the socialization of girls.

These are but a few of the highlights of a truly exciting collection that will open many fresh avenues for research.

## Part 2: Sources from Birmingham Central Library and Birmingham University Library

Part 2 covers the lives of a further 31 women in the period from 1744 to 1940 and broadens the project considerably.

The manuscript autobiography of Mrs Florry details her life and activities from 1744 to 1812. Her father was an ironmaster in Birmingham at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution and she had to take over and run the business when he died in 1788.

The journals of Mary and Martha Russell (family friends of Joseph Priestley), record impressions of the French Revolution, the Birmingham riots of 1791 and their travels in America between 1794 and 1801 (including their capture by French pirates en route).

Religious associations and campaigns constituted one of the few public arenas for privileged women. A clutch of diaries, 1838-1939, demonstrate the ways in which charity, missionary activity and early social work enabled women to exercise power and to lay claim to active citizenship.

Other valuable sources include the diary of a farmer's wife (1823-7), and the marvellous travel journals of Helen Caddick (1889-1914), enormously evocative of her age and class while recording the most extraordinarily adventurous travels for a middle-aged, middle-class woman of her time.

## Part 3: Sources from Suffolk County Record Office and Cambridge University Library

A further 23 women's lives, spanning from 1680 to 1943, are covered in Part 3, including those of Elizabeth Lyttleton (1680), Sophia Churchill (1777-1780), Maria Grey (1829-1848), and Juliet Goodlee (1884-1943). There are diaries describing the wives of surgeons and diplomats, journals of independent travellers and commonplace books collecting poetry, quotations and personal observations.

*Further parts of this project feature sources from the National Library of Scotland, the National Library of Wales, Essex Record Office, Somerset Record Office and many other libraries. **Parts 4 – 6 Available***

Women's diaries have fulfilled the roles of friend, confessional, scrapbook and analyst. Now they are offered as a revealing historical record.

*"The examination of women's manuscripts will enable scholars to engage critically with the categories, modes of explanation, and chronology of recent women's history. Feminist theory can be evaluated and developed by applying it to the range of empirical material offered in Women's Language & Experience."*

**Dr Amanda Vickery**

## Women, Education and Literature

### The Papers of Maria Edgeworth, 1768-1849

#### Part 1: The Edgeworth Papers from the Bodleian Library, Oxford

Both as an Educator and as an Author, Maria Edgeworth (1768-1849) deserves our attention. In [Practical Education](#) (1798) she demanded that the shackles should be removed from female education:

*"[A woman's] knowledge must be various, and her powers of reason unawed by authority...."*

With *Castle Rackrent* (1800) she played a prominent part in the development of the novel. For this is recognized as the first fully developed regional novel and the first true historical novel in English.

In her letters, her educational works and her novels, Maria Edgeworth displays a fine eye for the telling detail, an effortless narrative style and a clear concern for social issues.

Jane Austen was an admirer and sent her one of the first printed copies of *Emma*. Balzac, Chekhov, Gogol, George Sand, Thackeray and Turgenev were all influenced by her, and Sir Walter Scott acknowledged his debt to her in the Preface to his *Waverley Novels* in 1829.

Notwithstanding this, there has been no complete edition of her letters and work has only begun recently on an edition of her major writings. This project provides scholars with immediate access to the original manuscript records and will help those working on the new Pickering & Chatto edition. Drawing upon the two major Edgeworth archives at the Bodleian Library, Oxford and the National Library of Ireland, and also including important items from other scattered collections, it gives scholars access to a rich horde of her manuscripts and letters. These provide an important resource for the study of:

- Literary life & society, c1789-1850

# Aristocratic Women, Part 1

- Women's writing and women's reading
- New theories of education in the Enlightenment
- Female education
- Life in Ireland c1750-1850
- The writings of Maria Edgeworth
- The history of the novel

Given the highly collaborative nature of the literary and educational work of the Edgeworth family we have also included the correspondence and manuscripts of other family members – particularly her father, Richard Lovell Edgeworth (1744-1817). Inventor, educator, and writer, he was also the wealthy landlord of substantial estates in Edgeworthstown in County Longford, Ireland. Married 4 times, he was the father of 22 children of which Maria was the second eldest to survive. Radical and eccentric Richard Lovell Edgeworth brought up his children to be observant and inquiring and introduced them to the ideas of his friends such as Erasmus Darwin, Mrs Barbauld, Joseph Priestley, Sir Humphrey Davy and John Herschel.

Maria was thus privy to the intellectual, scientific and political debates that raged at the time of the Industrial Revolution in Britain and political revolutions in America and France.

During an illness, Maria came much under the influence of another friend of her father's, Thomas Day (1748-1789), humanitarian and author of the didactic novel, *Sandford and Merton* (1783-9). He was committed to Rousseau's theories for the education of women, particularly those outlined in *Emile*. But whilst this embodied a broad base of learning, it was also a schooling in submission, and Day was horrified when Richard Edgeworth encouraged Maria to be more free-thinking and to consider writing. Her precocious story-telling gifts began to emerge and in her letters and notebooks she started to assemble material for future writings.

Her first original publication was *Letters to Literary Ladies* (1795), a plea for female education, followed by several other educational works – *The Parents Assistant* (1796), *Practical Education* (1798), *Moral Tales* (1801) and *Early Lessons* (1801) – produced with her father and introducing story elements. It is in these works that Edgeworth's distinctive fictional voice begins to emerge.

However, it was *Castle Rackrent* (1800), *Belinda* (1801 – praised by the heroine of Northanger Abbey), *Leonora* (1806), *Tales of Fashionable Life* (1809 and 1812), *Cottage Life* (1811) and *Patronage* (1814) which brought her fame and she was lionized when she visited London in 1803, meeting among others Byron, Sydney Smith, Joanna Baillie and Crabb Robinson.

Maria Edgeworth published two further works – *Ormond* and *Harrington* (both 1817 – the latter involving the love of a Christian hero for a Jewish woman) – before her father's death. After that she concentrated on her father's *Memoirs* (1820) and her own writings ceased, save for *Helen* (1834) and her prodigious correspondence.

**Part 1** of this project is based on the holdings of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and falls largely into three categories: literary manuscripts; correspondence; and miscellaneous papers.

The literary manuscripts feature over 15 notebooks with draft passages for published and unpublished works; story plans, poems and notes on reading. There are also draft and fair copies of published works, anecdotes and outlines of plays.

Among the highlights are:

- *Enigma*, a poem by Maria Edgeworth
- Notes for *Harry and Lucy*
- Two notebooks compiled by Mrs Honora Edgeworth recording her children's responses to lessons and forming the basis of *Practical Education*
- Drafts of *On the Education of the Poor* in the hand of Maria Edgeworth
- Notes for *The parent's assistant*
- Two outlines for *Ormond*
- A fragmentary draft of *Harrington*
- An account of hawking for *Helen* together with a lost outline
- A notebook entitled '*Travellers & Popular Tales*'
- Notes for an unwritten novel about Ireland
- An outline of a story entitled '*The Life and death of a divorcée*'
- A copy of '*The Devil's thoughts*' by S T Coleridge, "as read by Sir Humphrey Davy"
- Two manuscript essays in the hand of André Morellet
- Lines written by Mrs Barbauld in her 80th year

The correspondence is equally rich and includes c2000 letters from Maria Edgeworth, with many more from other family members.

Correspondents featured include:

- Henry Addington
- Joanna Baillie
- Mrs Barbauld
- Lady Bathurst
- Erasmus Darwin

# Aristocratic Women, Part 1

- Sir John Herschel
- Archbishop William Howley
- Leigh Hunt
- Elizabeth Inchbald
- Edouard LaGrange
- J L Moilliet
- André Morellet
- David Ricardo
- William Roscoe
- Sir Walter Scott
- Thomas Spring-Rice
- Elizabeth Waller
- Richard Whateley

The correspondence is principally for the period from 1818 to 1849. Earlier correspondence is in the National Library of Ireland's section of the Edgeworth Papers (Part 2 of this project).

The miscellaneous papers contain much additional useful material for the biographer of Maria Edgeworth. Notably:

- Financial and Estate Papers
- Genealogical notes & pedigrees
- Drawings, silhouettes, daguerreotypes and photographs

Finally, there is a Calendar of the Edgeworth family correspondence in the Bodleian Library and the National Library of Ireland, compiled by Mrs Colvin.

The second part of this project, based on the holdings of the National Library of Ireland, mainly concentrates on papers prior to 1817. Maria's schooldays and family life are well documented, including her own reflections on the education and upbringing of women and consideration of works such as Rousseau's *Emile* and Locke's *On Education*. Views of contemporary literature include discussions of the writings of Austen, Mme de Stael, Franklin, Godwin, Erasmus Darwin, "Monk" Lewis, Scott and others.

The development of Maria Edgeworth's own writing can be traced through letters discussing the origins, preliminary versions, publication and critical reception of *Castle Rackrent* and other works.

Also covered are Richard Lovel Edgeworth's intellectual and business pursuits, the family's tour of Belgium and France and numerous literary manuscripts, including 4 volumes of family verse and the manuscript of Maria's *Memoirs of Richard Lovell Edgeworth Esq.*

A third and final part brings together further scattered sources concerning Maria Edgeworth from libraries in Britain and America. It includes the two volume manuscript of *Helen* – from the British Library; and over 50 letters from Birmingham University Library. Parts 2 & 3 will be covered by a separate Guide.

The publication of the Edgeworth papers is an important event for Literary Studies and will provide the raw material for many dissertations and long essays and Women's writing, Literary Society and Anglo-Irish literature.

## The Lady's Monthly Museum, 1798-1828

First appearing just 6 years after Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, this journal was in the vanguard of periodicals advocating female improvement.

Written by a "society of ladies" it asserted that "the acquisition of languages, simple mathematics, astronomy, natural and experimental philosophy, with history and criticism may be cultivated by the sex with propriety and advantage."

It is noteworthy for its original poetry and prose; criticism; fashion; and reader's letters. The 'Old Women' was a forerunner of today's *Agony Aunt* and responds to an interesting range of problems.

We offer a complete run of this journal from 1798 to 1828, when it was merged with *The Lady's Magazine*, with which it is instructive to compare it.

## A Women's View of Drama, 1790-1830

### The Diaries of Anna Margaretta Larpent in the Huntington Library, San Marino, California

Anna Margaretta Porter (1758-1824) was the daughter of Sir James Porter the diplomat. Like many young girls she was encouraged to keep a diary which started in earnest in 1773. In 1782 she became the second wife to John Larpent (1741-1824) who had been appointed Examiner of Plays in England in November 1778.

The Examiner of Plays was an extremely influential figure in the development of drama and was much more powerful than modern censors. All plays required licensing before performance and the Examiner had the sole power to issue the licenses.

Both husband and wife collaborated in the work with the result, according to L W Conolly's study of John Larpent in 1976, that Anna Margaretta Larpent became "*practically a Deputy Examiner*". Most valuably, she recorded her reading, her

# Aristocratic Women, Part 1

criticisms and her verdicts in her diary.

What survives is a remarkable record of the reading experiences of an intelligent woman from the late Eighteenth Century to the early Nineteenth Century. Furthermore, the record of a woman who was deliberately reading critically and expressing views on morality and propriety.

This was a period of great success for British Theatre, but also one of great turmoil. A period dominated by Sheridan, the Kembles, Sarah Siddons, and the Keans. A period in which tragedy was brought to new heights and Shakespeare was played with greater historical accuracy; but also a period in which spectacle became more important and in which melodramas were introduced. A fecund period for writers, the Larpents were faced with a mountainous pile of drama – good and bad – to read through.

Anna Margaretta Larpent was a champion and an admirer of Elizabeth Inchbald (1753-1821) who had made her play-writing debut in 1784 with *A Mogul Tale, or The Descent of the Balloon* and over 21 years wrote 20 comedies, farceas, and translations from French and German including the version of Kotzebue's *Lovers' Vows* (1798) the drama enacted by the Bertram Family in Austen's *Mansfield Park* and a play in which Larpent saw not *"the least Immorality."*

The diary also includes criticism of many other contemporary female dramatists as well as their male counterparts.

The diary sequence starts in 1790 and Larpent notes:

*"I observed much, talked little. As I grew older I wrote better – the employment delighted me, and gave spirit to all my occupations."*

Well indexed, the diary ends in 1830; providing more than 30 years of sustained dramatic criticism.

This unique source provides critical insights into the development of British drama, 1790-1830; the role of censorship; and changing values in society.

It also provides a window into the life and reading of educated society lady from the time of the French Revolution to the Age of Reform.

*"Live over my life in this book... praise me where you can. Condemn me where you must; But love me every where if you can"*