



For immediate release

JANE AUSTEN'S HOUSE MUSEUM LAUNCHES BICENTENARY COMMEMORATIONS WITH A REINTERPRETATION OF THE HOUSE INTERIOR FOLLOWING DISCOVERY OF WALLPAPER FRAGMENTS

Jane Austen's House Museum in Hampshire has launched its bicentenary commemorations by taking the first steps towards recreating the interior of the house as it was in Austen's day. The house, located in the village of Chawton, was Austen's home for the last eight years of her life and the place where she wrote or revised all her novels.

Following the discovery of a number of fragments of two Regency wallpapers in out-of-the-way corners of the house - dating from the early 19th century and the period in which Austen would have been living there with her mother and sister - the museum commissioned Hamilton Weston Wallpapers to reconstruct the patterns from these fragments and to create replica wallpapers. Specialists in historic and reproduction wallpapers, Hamilton Weston have used the same hand block printing processes that would have been used during the 19th century to create the designs.



[Above left: Fragments found on the inside of a shutter box in the Austen Family Room]

[Above right: The replica wallpaper hung in the Austen Family Room next to shutter box containing original fragments]

A centre element of the trellis design on the fragments found in the Austen's Family Room (above) initially proved a mystery to Hamilton Weston's architectural historian, Robert Weston. After thought and research, he realised that the pin print motif on the design was actually the stem of a rose bud but with the bud print omitted. In addition, the wallpaper had been hung upside down, potentially to disguise the missing bud. It was printed incorrectly, perhaps by an early 19th century apprentice to the trade, and, as the household were not rich, one theory is



that they purchased the design cheaply as a 'second' from the printers, as wallpaper was very expensive and heavily taxed from 1714 to 1836.

Both replica wallpapers are now hanging in the rooms from which the corresponding fragments came - the "Chawton Vine" design in the Drawing Room and the "Apprentice Ribbon Trellis" in the upstairs Family Room – for visitors to view when the house reopens on 3rd March. Both designs, as well as a third, the "Chawton Rosebud Moiré" which features the rosebud believed to have been the intended outcome, are available for purchase via the museum shop.

Jane's Fund

Hanging the replica wallpapers is an important first step towards recreating the interior of the house as it was in Austen's day. Further reinterpretation will be completed once vital building repairs to the Grade I listed house have taken place. Recent surveys have shown that fundamental repairs are required to ensure that the fabric of the house does not deteriorate further. To that end, and to mark 200 years since Austen's death, the museum has launched Jane's Fund, an appeal to restore and protect the house where she lived and wrote some of her most celebrated works. The aim is to raise £250,000 towards the first phase of exterior and interior building repairs, restoration and refurbishment of the house.



Pledging their support to Jane's Fund during this significant year are the museum's 2017 ambassadors; historian, author, presenter and Chief Curator at Historic Royal Palaces, **Lucy Worsley** whose new book, *Jane Austen at Home* is published in May, number one bestselling author **Joanna Trollope OBE** who grew up with Austen's works, and columnist, scriptwriter and bestselling author **Kathy Lette** who credits Austen with her wanting to become a writer.

For further information regarding Jane's Fund, please visit
<https://www.justgiving.com/campaigns/charity/jahm/janesfund>

Bicentenary Events

With funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the museum has built a programme of events and activities around the house and its artefacts.

For full details of the bicentenary events and activities programme as well as details of the 2017 exhibition, 41 Objects, please visit www.jane-austens-house-museum.org.uk

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Notes to Editors

About Hamilton Weston Wallpapers

Interior designer Georgina Hamilton and architectural historian Robert Weston have been specialising in classic interiors since 1981, when they founded Hamilton Weston to focus on reproduction wallpaper using their unique archive of historic wallpapers. Their beautiful period wallpapers now hang in stately homes and other heritage projects throughout the UK, as well as enhancing film and television sets, corporate buildings and private homes around the world.

For further information, please visit www.hamiltonweston.com

About Jane Austen's House Museum

Jane Austen's House Museum is an independent museum dedicated to the life and work of Jane Austen, one of the most popular and important novelists that England has ever produced. It is of international importance as the place where she spent the last eight years of her life and did the majority of her mature writing, completing *Mansfield Park* (pub. 1814), *Emma* (pub. 1816) and *Persuasion* (pub. 1818), and revising *Sense and Sensibility* (pub. 1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (pub. 1813) and *Northanger Abbey* (pub. 1818). A site of significant cultural relevance and a unique source of information on the life and works of Jane Austen, the house retains the charm of an East Hampshire village home.

For further information, please visit www.jane-austens-house-museum.org.uk

Registered charity No. 1156458

For Press Visits, Images and Interviews

For images, please visit <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/jfsypbn7k96iggy/AAAaCaiVEWVrhxlh-whvg&cDa?dl=0>

For press visits and interviews, please contact Amelia Harvell, Media & Development Manager at Jane Austen's House Museum on 01420 83262 or Amelia.Harvell@jahmusm.org.uk

The Museum will be open to the public daily from 3rd March from 10:30-16:30. Please contact Amelia to enquire about previews and filming opportunities outside of these hours.

Jane Austen in Hampshire

For further information about bicentenary events in Hampshire, please visit

www.janeausten200.co.uk

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