

Jane Austen's House Research Resources

The Jane Austen's House collection is made up of approximately 1000 objects including manuscripts, books, furniture, jewellery, paintings, ceramics, and textiles. Objects in the collection date from as early as the seventeenth century to as late as the twenty-first century, but the majority of objects date to the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century.

The collection comprises an exceptional number of highly personal objects connected to Jane Austen's domestic life and her career as a writer. Many objects are interlinked, helping to paint a complete picture of Jane Austen as a woman and a writer. Jane Austen left relatively few worldly possessions, so the collection is by its nature a small and select one; but in terms of its weight and interest, both academic and commemorative, it is exceptional.

The collection is classified in three categories: Objects, Books and Letters. These categories relate to the Museum's collection management system, conservation requirements and storage.

The collection comprises four subject strands:

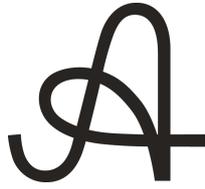
1. Items directly associated with Jane Austen and her close circle
2. Items associated with Jane Austen's social circle and her brothers' descendants
3. Items associated with the Austen industry
4. Period furnishings and set dressing

Objects in the first category include manuscript letters and music books, a small writing table, jewellery and other objects owned by Jane Austen, a patchwork coverlet, furniture from Austen's childhood home, first edition books with family provenance and a donkey carriage. They also include personal possessions of Jane Austen's immediate family, including hand written items, furniture and paintings.

Objects in the second category include jewellery, clothing accessories (e.g. mitts and baby bonnets), drawings, and furniture. These objects mainly date to the mid to late nineteenth century.

Objects in the third category include further early editions of Jane Austen's novels, late nineteenth century illustrations from Austen's novels, costume designs and other paraphernalia from theatre adaptations of the novels, and some late twentieth/early twenty-first century items relating to the Austen industry (e.g. film memorabilia from adaptations of the novels).

Objects in the fourth category include pieces of furniture and accessories (e.g. kitchen items) from the late eighteenth and nineteenth century (some are early twentieth



century) and are used to furnish the House in order to present a middle-class Regency home to visitors. These objects were accessioned in the early days of the Museum's collecting activity; today, items in this category are considered as handling or set dressing items; they may still be acquired but are not accessioned.

The museum holds a reference library of books related to Jane Austen including foreign translations and early and modern academic writing about Austen. This library does not form part of the museum's accessioned collection. These books are accessible to museum staff and volunteers, general visitors, and researchers.

Jane Austen's House does not at present have a searchable online database of our collection, but full listings can be provided to researchers on request. For an overview of the highlights of our collection, please visit <https://janeaustens.house/learn/the-collection/>