



The World of Jane Austen

Nigel Nicolson , Stephen Colover (Photographer)

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In addition to devising some of the most remarkable characters in literature, Jane Austen vividly depicted their world. An engaging mixture of biography and photographic study provides a glimpse into the houses and scenery that formed the "stage set" where her stories unfolded, from the author's own home and those of her friends to the countryside, seaside, castles, abbeys, and churches, and famed houses like Chatsworth and Chawton, considered the models for Pemberley and Rosings in *Pride and Prejudice*.

The World of Jane Austen Details

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Nell says

I enjoy "reading around the subject" of Jane Austen's life and times. This book makes it easier to visualize where she lived and what her life was like. I also dip into the Stephanie Barron series, which spotlights places Jane lived and visited (and this book was cited by Barron as one of her sources). When I win the lotto, I'll take the Jane Austen tour of England. What more to say except that this book was written for readers like me who want to learn more of the context of this period of British history.

JFN says

This was a useful book in that it traces the movements of Jane Austen throughout her life. If you know Austen, you know how greatly her living situation and environs impacted her -- not just in terms of what she wrote, but how and when she wrote. Interesting stuff. I feel like I know Jane better from reading this book.

The author makes good use of excerpts from Austen's letters and incorporates passages from her works to show the tremendous impression landscape made on our gal. And this is no small thing. Jane was intimately familiar with the rolling hills, country roads, farmland and villages of southern England, and she loved them. She is essentially OF them, and this book goes a long way toward illustrating that. The photography in this book is quite good. Lots o' pix of places Jane lived and stayed and visited, which is quite illuminating. Her world wasn't by any means a large one (she never left the island and, if I recall, never ventured further north than Staffordshire), but she really got around within and knew very well her own small milieu.

On the downside, this book is in desperate need of a map. I'm dying for a map of England that pinpoints the places Jane lived and stayed as well as the locations of her fictional homes in relation to one another -- Steventon, Godmersham, Bath, Southampton, Chawton, Pemberley, Hartfield, Mansfield Park, Barton Cottage, Norland, Kellynch Hall, etc., etc. How dope would that be? I could gaze at that map all day. Perhaps such a thing exists and I've yet to come across it, but even so, it's presence would vastly improve this book.

Also, I get the feeling the author of this book takes some interpretive liberties. If you've read more thorough or up-to-date biographies of Austen, you'll see what I mean. From everything else I've read, I gather that Jane was sharp -- and sharp tongued. Witty. Biting. Critical, though quietly and perhaps guardedly so. Nicolson's treatment of Austen glosses over this, painting more a picture of little more than a quiet lady who enjoyed a good long walk, and for that, I'm not sure I can forgive him.

Read this book, but only as a supplement to other works about Austen. Enjoyable. Informative. Three-and-a-half stars.

Oh, and our girl died 192 years ago this week, July 18, 1817. :(

aisha says

Lots of pictures of houses and estates that Jane Austen was familiar with in her lifetime. It is speculated that many of them were the inspirations for the houses described in her novels. Very interesting.

Lisa says

Interesting book to read if you like history and architecture and England!

Sophia says

Love the way this one made me feel immersed in Jane's world without drowning me in tediousness. There are maps, modern day pictures of the homes and places Jane has been, pictures of her family and others of her acquaintance, organized chapters that zero in on certain aspects of her life and legacy. The bibliography is impressive too in offering avenues of further research.

The pages are glossed and the photos and illustrations are sharp. Nice quick reference or lazy day perusal addition to an Austen lover's library.

Brian says

To tell the truth, I never did finish this book. I couldn't. The Nicholson family has always provided a solid read...but this one never was able to draw me in and hold my attention. I expect that I will try again. It may just not be the right time.

Mrunmai Kulkarni says

What do I say...amazing. Jane Austen is one of my favorite authors, and to get a glimpse into her world was a very - to use her own words - highly agreeable experience. The book made me start reading Northanger Abbey.

Kirk says

The photos are a delight. The text is entirely less so for me. Too many overreach statements...
