



# Writing Women

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

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## Looking Back on the First Conference; Looking Forward to the Twentieth

The British Women Writers Association was the brainchild of a group of graduate students from University of Oregon and University of Washington. In the fall of 1991, we were presenting papers at a regional British studies conference in Eugene, Oregon, and we kept showing up at the same panels—all of which were focused on women writers. We were energized by our forays into new arenas of feminist scholarship and eager to share our findings on (then) lesser-known figures, such as Aphra Behn, Fanny Burney, Amelia Opie, and Elizabeth Gaskell. Mostly, we were thrilled to discover academic peers who found these figures as fascinating as we did. We carried our enthusiasm out into the hallways, and we didn't want our conversations to end.

Throughout the weekend, Cindy Lacom and I began to ask ourselves, “Why don’t we convene a conference focused solely on British women writers?” We took this question to Richard Stein, who was then University of Oregon’s English department chair. With a \$2000 pledge of support and Dick’s encouragement to think beyond a single event, the First Annual Conference on Women Writers of the 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Britain was launched. The conference’s cumbersome title hinted at our hopes—that it would be the first of many such annual gatherings—and we couldn’t be more delighted to be celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual British Women Writers Conference at the University of Colorado at Boulder on June 7-10, 2012. Please join us!

Since that first sunny May weekend in 1992, the BWWC has been entrusted to one energetic, accomplished group of graduate students after another—and they are the real heroes of this story. Along with their faculty advisors, these dedicated individuals donated hundreds of hours and fretted over the myriad details that make a conference run smoothly. They took seriously the association’s charge to provide a hospitable space for “exploring the agency of women in literary history.” In doing so, they became a part of that history. I’m incredibly grateful for their shared commitment to the goals of the British Women Writers Association and inspired by their service to the broader academic community. In all its incarnations, the BWWC has carried out its mission to encourage important archival work on lesser-known women writers and invite divergent critical approaches to a broad variety of texts. Perhaps more

importantly, the conferences sustained and validated the work of those who traveled to contribute to the conversation on British women writers.

Over the past twenty years, I have reveled in the congenial community of emerging and established scholars who have attended the conferences. The BWWC punctuates my years and serves as a landmark in my academic life. Many of the earliest attendees are still a part of the BWWA; they have hosted the conference, served on the board, and become dear friends. Those early graduate students are now tenured professors who shape curriculums and encourage their graduate students to attend the conference. Many have made significant contributions to the field of British literary studies, feminist studies, and literary pedagogies. Their books, articles, special editions, and courses now constitute an important subfield in literary studies and have expanded the range of authors, genres, and critical approaches we study and teach. At the first conference, our strongest impulse was to continue the conversation about British women writers, and I'm overjoyed to still be a part of them.

—Pamela Corpron Parker  
President, BWWC

## **Invitation to the 2012 BWWC: University of Colorado at Boulder**

We are delighted to announce that the Twentieth Annual Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century British Women Writers Conference will take place in Boulder, Colorado, from June 7–10, 2012. We hope you will join us in the sunny foothills of the Rockies to commemorate the history of the BWWC and contribute to its continuing legacy of robust scholarship.

In honor of its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the next conference will focus on the theme of “Landmarks.” Rich in both physical and metaphorical significance, landmarks form loci by which we organize history and chart the development of individuals, nations, and cultures. We therefore invite papers that explore how women writers and their texts engage with an ever-changing geography that is both material and abstract. These conference papers could address the people, places, events, and texts that have made their marks on history, and/or the processes and implications of marking, mapping, reading, preserving, overwriting, or erasing. Likewise, we wish to investigate land as space and place, acts and effects of landing or arriving, marks of land upon people and cultures, geographical and imaginative landscapes, liminal no-(wo)man’s-lands, and the state of being landed (or not) with property. Please see the call for papers later in the newsletter.

This conference is hosted by the University of Colorado at Boulder, and will take place at the Millennium Harvest House hotel in the city of Boulder, nestled against the picturesque Flatiron mountain range approximately 50 miles northwest of Denver. More than just a thriving college-town, Boulder brings together scholars, aesthetes, athletes, foodies, nature-lovers, students, artists, travelers, and families into a vibrant community centered around the Pearl Street

Walking Mall (the hub for shopping, dining, and entertainment) and CU-Boulder's breathtaking campus. The conference commences two months later than usual this year to take advantage of Boulder's beautiful natural surroundings and sunny summer weather; at least one conference event will get us all outside making our own landmarks, so be sure to bring your hiking shoes!

For more information, including our full Call for Papers, please visit the conference website at <[bwwc2012.com](http://bwwc2012.com)>. You may also direct any questions to <[bwwc2012@colorado.edu](mailto:bwwc2012@colorado.edu)>.

Hope to see you there next June!

—Kelli Jasper, Kirstyn Leuner,

& Jill Heydt-Stevenson

University of Colorado at Boulder

### **Report from the 2011 BWWC: The Ohio State University**

We here at The Ohio State University were honored to host the much-loved British Women Writers Conference during the last weekend of March 2011, and want to thank all the attendees who joined us in Columbus. Some 230 scholars from across the United States and other parts of the globe met our challenge to consider the various roles of "curiosities" in women's writing with an overwhelming response, and offered exciting presentations on a variety of topics including detective fiction, scientific experimentation, poetic innovations, the occult, economics, and everything in between. Look for an upcoming issue of the journal *Prose Studies* to showcase some of the excellent work that came out of this year's meeting, all of which was insightful, thought-provoking, and overall represented the great originality, interdisciplinarity, and intellectual rigor that characterize our field today.

We also extend our sincerest gratitude to all our invited speakers, beginning with Thursday evening's plenary panel sponsored

by OSU's Project Narrative. Caroline Levine, Sandra Macpherson, and Robyn Warhol discussed the concept of "Feminist Formalisms," providing fodder for lively debate for the rest of the conference weekend. Sharon Marcus delivered Friday's keynote, entitled "The Double Lives of Sarah Bernhardt," during which she made a compelling argument for expanding our definitions of "authorship" by focusing on the 19th-century actress's autobiography and self-fashioning. On Saturday, Helen Deutsch's talk "Truth and Beauty: Women, Disability, and Literary Form" considered the work of 18th-century poets Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Mary Leapor alongside modern disability memoirs, and outlined a tradition of literature that presents embodied experience as a challenge to the "tyranny of the visual."

In addition to the traditional panels and invited speakers, the 2011 BWWC featured a number of other special events. On Friday morning we held a series of roundtables that addressed important aspects of professionalization, such as navigating the academic job-search, incorporating online databases into teaching, and publication strategies (a talk that attracted a standing-room-only crowd!). The conference also closed with an evening of entertainment at the Thompson Memorial Library, where participants browsed exhibits from OSU's rare book and costume collections on the main floor of the library. In keeping with the conference's theme, OSU's Special Collections presented these as "cabinets of curiosities," a series of displays that represent many of the arenas through which women of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries expressed curiosity about their world, including fiction, fashion, theater, science, travel and art. Then, while BWWC attendees enjoyed desserts, coffee, and tea on the library's 11th floor, the Times Past Vintage Dancers recreated a Regency-era ball,

complete with period clothing and live musicians.

The 2011 Planning Committee is deeply indebted to the many people whose tremendous generosity helped make the spring conference possible. We would especially like to recognize the OSU English department members—including our faculty advisors, Noah Comet, Clare Simmons, and Aman Garcha, and graduate student volunteers—for their tireless support of our vision for this BWWC, and for understanding the importance and meaning this conference has to hundreds of scholars nation-wide.

We hope that you enjoyed your visit to Ohio's capital city, and thank you all for making the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual BWWC such a resounding success. We look forward to seeing you all again at future BWWCs—especially in Boulder, CO!

—Meghan Burke, Eugenia Gonzalez,  
Lis Ravert, & Kara Spaulding  
Ohio State University

### **Call for Nominations: The BWWA Award for Contributions to the Study of British Women Writers**

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. Past recipients include Pamela Corpron Parker and Cindy LeCom in 2008 and Teresa Mangum in 2010.

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> by January 31, 2012.

### ***Aphra Behn Online: CFP and Request for Lead Web Builder***

The editors of *Aphra Behn Online: Interactive Journal for Women in the Arts 1640–1830* invite submissions for the second volume of this online annual to be published in March 2012. Submissions will be considered in four categories: scholarly articles, articles on pedagogy, book reviews, and essays on new media/women on the web. In all areas, work should be related to women in the arts between 1640–1830, including literature, visual arts, music, performance art, film criticism, and production arts. While Aphra Behn is our guiding figure, the journal encourages submissions on all women in the arts from all areas of the globe during this era.

Our second volume will feature essays on the question of open access. Issues of accessibility have come to the fore with the advancement of technology in the past two decades, issues that resonate widely across all fields and periods. Essays might consider various types of access (physical, gendered, racial, able-bodied, or class-based), various points of access (to power, to audiences, to voices, to technologies), or the implications of such access (what does it mean for a woman's body to be accessible? for women's writing?). How do we make the eighteenth century accessible to today's students in today's

classrooms, in today's world? How do we make eighteenth-century women accessible?

See <[www.aphrabehn.org/aphraonline/](http://www.aphrabehn.org/aphraonline/)> for general submission guidelines as well as specific guidelines for each journal section. Deadline is October 31, 2011.

In addition, the editors of *Aphra Behn Online* are seeking a Lead Web Builder and at least one volunteer to provide technical support for the journal. These people should have some experience with web-based technology, including web development and building websites with multimedia capabilities. If interested, please contact Lexi Stuckey (<[lexi-stuckey@utulsa.edu](mailto:lexi-stuckey@utulsa.edu)>) and the Editor, Laura Runge (<[rungel@chuma.cas.usf.edu](mailto:rungel@chuma.cas.usf.edu)>).

Writers Association group. This forum allows members to hear information about the conference and other members.

## From the Editor

Looking ahead, next year's conference in Colorado will be our 20<sup>th</sup> conference! In recognition of this event, we are soliciting members to reflect on your conference experiences. What are your favorite conference moments? How has the conference helped you professionally? If you were involved in a past conference, where are you now? Please send us your emails at <[bwwa@ipfw.edu](mailto:bwwa@ipfw.edu)> to include in next year's newsletters.

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](mailto:bwwa@ipfw.edu)> by February 15 for inclusion in the spring issue and by August 15 for inclusion in the fall issue.

## Join the BWWA on Facebook

If you are a member of Facebook (<[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)>), consider joining the 18th- and 19th-Century British Women



## CFP: The 20th Anniversary BWWC

# “Landmarks”

June 7-10, 2012 Boulder, Colorado

In 2012, the Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century British Women Writers Conference (BWWC) will commemorate its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary by focusing on the theme of “Landmarks.” Rich in both physical and metaphorical significance, landmarks form loci by which we organize history and chart the development of individuals, nations, and cultures. We therefore invite papers that explore how women writers and their texts engage with an ever-changing geography that is both material and abstract. These conference papers could address the people, places, events, and texts that have made their marks on history, and/or the processes and implications of marking, mapping, reading, preserving, overwriting, or erasing. Likewise, we wish to investigate land as space and place, acts and effects of landing or arriving, marks of land upon people and cultures, geographical and imaginative landscapes, liminal no-(wo)man’s-lands, and the state of being landed (or not) with property.

Please send a 500-word abstract to [bwwc2012@colorado.edu](mailto:bwwc2012@colorado.edu) by **January 15, 2012**. Panel proposals are also welcome. Papers should address the conference theme and apply it to 18th-century, Romantic, or Victorian texts.

Possible topics include:

- **Landmark Events and Ideas:** Historical moments; defining milestones; turning points; crises or victories; anniversaries; stages; experiments; memories or visions; aesthetic debates; scientific discoveries; technologies
- **Landmark Works:** Publication and reception; authorship or readership; emerging genres; histories or chronicles; canon formation; travel writing
- **Geographical Land Marks:** Historical or tourist sites; borders and national boundaries; high points and burials; property and ownership; memorials, monuments, museums; ruins and traces
- **Making Marks:** Print culture; media; diaries and personal writings; glosses, annotations, and marginalia; building, development, or enclosure; landscaping and gardening; architecture; fashion and costume design; cosmetics and tattoos; creating space and place; epitaphs, cemeteries, tombs
- **Reading, Interpreting, or Imagining Lands/Marks:** Physiognomy or phrenology; psychics; reading practices; sciences of navigation; distance and time; fictional worlds
- **Mapping/Preserving Marks:** Maps and cartography; emblems; classification systems; libraries, museums, collections
- **Marks of Land on People:** Farming and agriculture; gentility and nobility; industry; food and foodways; defining the local, national, imperial, native, or foreign
- **Contested Marks and Marks of Difference:** Stealing/transplanting landmarks; marks of faith or creed; religious practices; the supernatural; commerce, currency, credit; ownership; identity politics or marginalization