

# TRAVEL



## WORD TRAVELS FAST

**WANDERING SPIRIT:** "I began to get tired of staying in one place so long," Mark Twain once wrote. His restlessness inspired pages of journal entries from 19th century America and Europe. Edited by Terry Mort, *Mark Twain on Travel* (The Lyons Press, \$24.95) is a collection of those observations.

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ABOVE: Keira Knightley and Matthew Macfadyen star in "Pride & Prejudice," based on the novel by Jane Austen. —AP/FOCUS FEATURES/ALEX BAILEY BELOW: Jane Austen's home from 1809 to 1817 in Chawton, Hampshire, England. —STEVE HAGGERTY/FOR THE SUN-TIMES

# JANE AUSTEN COUNTRY



## 'Pride and Prejudice' movie inspires travelers to inhabit author's world

BY ANNE Z. COOKE

**B**AKEWELL, England — It is a truth universally acknowledged that a traveler in possession of a romantic nature and a ticket stub from the current movie "Pride and Prejudice" must be in want of a trip to England.

This is Jane Austen country as it never looked before, from the palatial splendor of its stately homes to the windswept moors and misty parklands of the Midlands. And with the witty Keira Knightley as Elizabeth "Lizzie" Bennet, Donald

Sutherland as her father and Matthew Macfadyen as Darcy, the story twists and turns to a heart-thumpingly happy ending.

If you're up for driving — traffic moves on the left side of the road — invent your own itinerary and take your time. Your options are endless, since all of the film was shot on location, in quaint Georgian villages, in Derbyshire and Lincolnshire and the Peaks District National Park.

But be prepared for company. Since 1870, when the first biography of Austen appeared, fans enthralled by English lit-



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# PRIDE

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## Film's locales reel in tourists

erature's most enduring love story have been tramping England's byways in search of the elusive author.

No matter that she wrote *Pride and Prejudice* 200 years ago. Or that modern readers find its late 18th century social conventions unnatural at worst and artificial at best. Even I, glued to the pages at age 12, recently found myself impatiently skipping whole paragraphs.

The first wave of readers looked for Austen in the villages where she spent her life: Steventon, where she was born; Bath, near Bristol, where her family moved when her father retired; Southampton after he died; Chawton, in Hampshire, where she lived at the end of her life; and Winchester, where she moved to be close to her doctor (she died at age 41 of Addison's Disease) and is buried.

But it was films — the 1940 movie and two BBC television

productions, from 1985 and 1995 — that turned Austen into an industry. Once viewers saw the Bennet family at home at Longbourn, and Lizzie dancing with Mr. Darcy, they yearned for more.

After the second BBC series aired, enshrining the famously handsome Colin Firth as the once and forever Darcy (see [www.austenblog.com](http://www.austenblog.com) for current opinion on the subject), viewers could hardly wait to climb onto a plane.

To its credit, the latest "Pride and Prejudice," directed by Joe Wright, breaks new ground with more nuanced characters and natural settings. No longer continually bedecked in ribbons and white lace, the Bennet sisters wear everyday cotton dresses more suitable for country girls whose home abuts a barnyard, bed sheets flap on the line and rain turns the roads to mud.

Fortunately, the film was

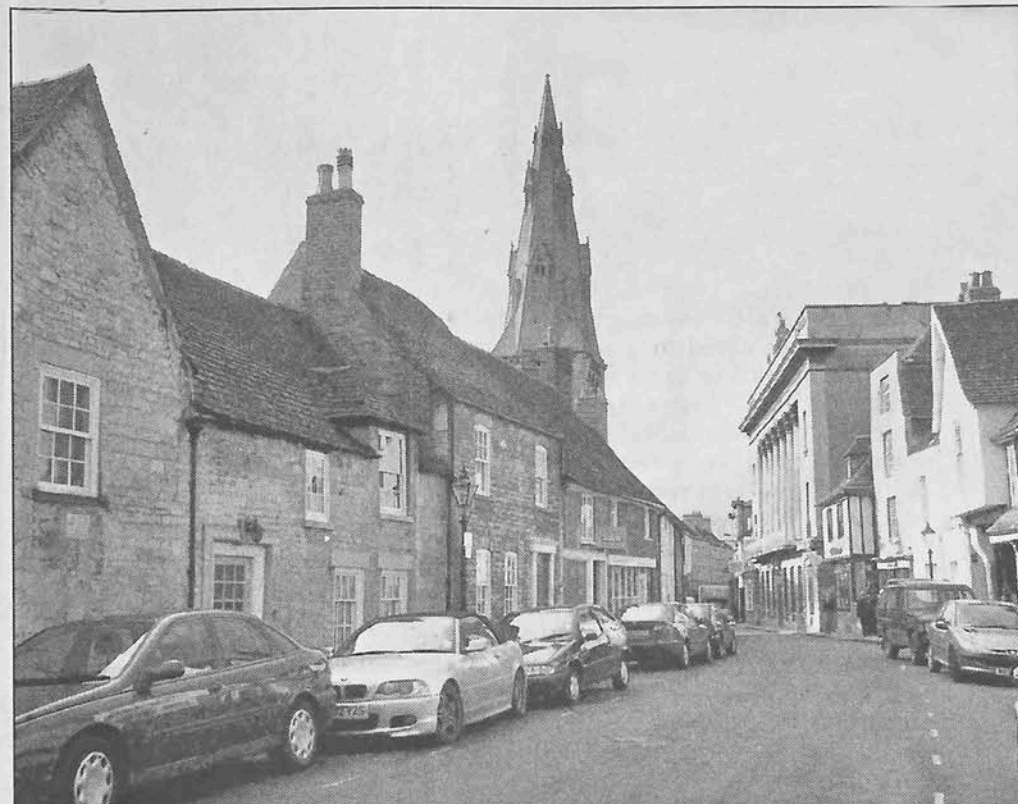


GREG GOOD/SUN-TIMES GRAPHIC

shot in two general areas: Derbyshire and Lincolnshire, in the East Midlands (on a map, look east of Liverpool); and southern England, between Bath and Salisbury. If you have difficulty locating these sites in an atlas, order the official "Movie Map" (see accompanying If You Go); it simplifies the planning. The Internet is also a good source of information, with a veritable wish list of tours and day trips offered by local companies.

What should you see in Derbyshire? Start at Chatsworth, a magnificent 16th century limestone house that appears in the film as Pemberley, Darcy's ancestral home. Owned by the duke and duchess of Devonshire, who live in one of the wings, the house is both museum and national treasure, decorated with murals, stuffed with portraits and antique furniture and surrounded by woodlands and gardens. Visitors can walk through the grounds and play in the cascading water feature, a happy reversal of the usual "look but don't touch" policy.

No wonder Lizzie is impressed as she and her aunt and uncle drive through the



St. George's Square, Stamford, Lincolnshire, is the village of Meryton in *Pride and Prejudice*.

—STEVE HAGGERTY/ FOR THE SUN-TIMES

park, beneath the trees and to the entrance. You will be, too. Inside, look for the black-and-white tiled floor in the Painted Hall (filmed from above) and the Sculpture Gallery.

For the Inn at Lambton and Lizzie's bedroom, go next to Haddon Hall, another family manor whose oldest portions date from the 12th century. Here the 14th century Banqueting Hall was used for the Inn, and the 16th century Parlor is Lizzie's bedroom. You might even meet the owner, Lord Edward Manners, who stops in on occasion to greet guests. Haddon Hall is open from April through October.

Remember the windswept cliff where Lizzie looks out over rocky peaks, purple heather and sheep pastures?

This is Stanage Edge, in the Peak District National Park, popular with hang gliders and rock climbers. Incidentally, North Lees Hall, whose lonely tower inspired Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, is visible far below the cliff.

And Lincolnshire's role in the film? Burghley House, a 15-minute drive from Stamford, was used as Rosings, the home of Lady Catherine de Bourg (played by Judi Dench). Palatial in size and design, Burghley House dates from the reign of the first Queen Elizabeth and is furnished with 500 years of treasures and furniture.

The gardens are open to the public and the cafeteria serves meals and snacks. Just for fun, ask for Harvey Pascoe, butler to Burghley's manager, Lady Victoria Leatham, who was also drafted to play butler to the film's Lady Catherine (Judi Dench).

The town of Stamford, famous for its classical Georgian architecture, is the site for scenes of Meryton, where the Bennet family shopped and where Lizzie's sisters flirted with Wickham. Stop at the tourist information office in the Arts Centre, on St. George's Square, and compare the "before" and "after" photos. For the 200-odd residents who got jobs as "walk-ons," the movie was a seminal experience.

The remaining film sites are in southern England. Several interior scenes were shot at Wilton House, in Salisbury, notably where Lizzie meets Darcy's sister. Netherfield, the house leased by Mr. Bingley — was shot at Basildon Park, a Palladian Mansion west of Reading, on the Thames River. We missed this one, arriving too late. But it is open to the public.

Unfortunately, the house with the most movie exposure, the one used as the Bennet's home, Longbourn, isn't open for tours. Groombridge Place, as luck would have it, was be-

tween owners and awaiting restoration, allowing the set designer considerable freedom to make changes.

Since then, the new owners have moved in and the house, in Tunbridge Wells, is private. But the gardens, also restored, are open from late March through October. You can walk over the grounds and your children will love the bit of wild woodland they're calling the "Enchanted Forest." Check the Web, [www.groombridge.co.uk](http://www.groombridge.co.uk), site for special events.

While searching for *Pride and Prejudice* one inevitably finds its creator. In Bath, east of Bristol, Austen is a celebrity, though her family lived here just five years. She and her sister attended dances at the Assembly Rooms and shopped on the High Street, scenes that made their way into her novels.

Look for her, too, at the Jane Austen Centre, at 40 Gay St. on Queens Square. A bookstore and tea shop, the center dispenses maps and sells books by and about her, gifts and souvenirs.

The journey comes full circle in Austen's house (now a museum) in Chawton, a cozy red brick house with white windows. Jane, her mother, sister Cassandra and a friend, Martha, lived here from 1809 to 1817, until she moved to Winchester to be near her doctor. And this is where she revised *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice*, and wrote *Mansfield Park* and *Emma*, and where she lived to see them published. *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey* appeared after her death.

Our search ended here, too, among family books, simple furniture, family portraits and exhibits of Jane's letters and needlework. But for some fans, the Austen journey is just beginning.

Anne Z. Cooke is a Marina del Rey, Calif.-based freelance writer.

## IF YOU GO

### AUSTEN COUNTRY

**GETTING THERE:** Why fly into the hurly-burly at London's airports when you can fly on Continental, Delta, Northwest and British Airways into Bristol's smart new international airport, a 45-minute drive from Bath? And Bristol is a good launch point for an Austen pilgrimage.

**STAYING THERE:** Get into the spirit and stay where the cast stayed.

In Derbyshire, Keira Knightley

and Matthew Macfadyen stayed at the Peacock at Rowsley (near Bakewell), a 16-room deluxe inn, charmingly restored, with an excellent dining room, large garden and prompt service. Phone 44(0) 1629 733 518 or e-mail [office@thepeacockatrowsley.com](mailto:office@thepeacockatrowsley.com); or visit [www.thepeacockatrowsley.com](http://www.thepeacockatrowsley.com).

In Lincolnshire, Macfadyen, Donald Sutherland and Judi Dench stayed at The George, a historic 16th century coaching inn with 47 elegant rooms, a pub and a traditional English dining room. at 71 St. Martins, in Stamford. Phone 44(0) 1780 750 750; or visit [www.george-hotelofstamford.com](http://www.george-hotelofstamford.com).

In Bath, revisit the Georgian era at the famous Royal Crescent Hotel, at number 16 in the very center of Bath's Royal Crescent. Enlarged and with a private garden at the rear, the 40-room hotel has an award-winning dining room and sumptuous spa. Call (888) 295-4710 (U.S.) or 44(0) 1225 823 333; or visit [www.royalcrescent.com](http://www.royalcrescent.com).

#### TRAVELING:

Call Visit Britain at (800) 462-2748 or visit [www.visitbritain.com](http://www.visitbritain.com). To request the "Movie Map," e-mail your request to [travelinfo@visitbritain.org](mailto:travelinfo@visitbritain.org).

Other Web sites include: [www.visitprideandprejudice.com](http://www.visitprideandprejudice.com)

[www.visitlincolnshire.com](http://www.visitlincolnshire.com)

[www.visitderbyshire.com](http://www.visitderbyshire.com)

[www.visitpeakdistrict.com](http://www.visitpeakdistrict.com)

[www.britishtours.com/prideandprejudice.html](http://www.britishtours.com/prideandprejudice.html)

[www.chatsworth.org](http://www.chatsworth.org)

[www.burghley.co.uk](http://www.burghley.co.uk)

[www.haddonhall.co.uk](http://www.haddonhall.co.uk)

[www.aetntravel.com/tours\\_details.asp](http://www.aetntravel.com/tours_details.asp)

[www.jane-austens-house-museum.org.uk](http://www.jane-austens-house-museum.org.uk)

[www.janeausten.co.uk/centre](http://www.janeausten.co.uk/centre)

[www.groombridge.co.uk](http://www.groombridge.co.uk)