

JANE AUSTEN'S KENT

A major part of Jane Austen's life experience was gained in Kent during prolonged holidays that afforded much happiness as well as inspiration and material for her novels. Jane's family were from Kent and many of her relatives lived in the county. She visited them here while still a young girl and it was later in Kent she gained detailed knowledge of the country-house life of her time.

Jane's paternal ancestry can be traced back through seven generations of yeoman farmers who had established themselves in the Weald of Kent over a period of two-and-a-half centuries. Jane's father, the Reverend George Austen was born in Tonbridge and spent his formative years in this ancient town on the River Medway. Our first knowledge of Jane herself being in Kent is when she was twelve-and-a-half and stayed for a month in the Sevenoaks home of her ninety-year-old Great Uncle.

Jane's brother Edward, born in 1767, was later adopted by distant Kentish cousins. This event was ultimately to provide Jane with great opportunities to explore the county and its social life. Francis, the oldest of Jane's two sailor brothers, met and married a Kentish girl whilst stationed in Ramsgate. This further extended Jane's opportunity for travel.

As well as being a guide to the Kentish places significant in the Austen family history, this book is also an exploration of the locations Jane knew personally. The journey takes us to pretty villages, pleasant market towns and the historic cities of Canterbury and Rochester. We visit great estates where Jane was a frequent and welcome guest; churches where she worshipped; venues where she danced and the turnpike roads along which she travelled recounting varying experiences at coaching inns.

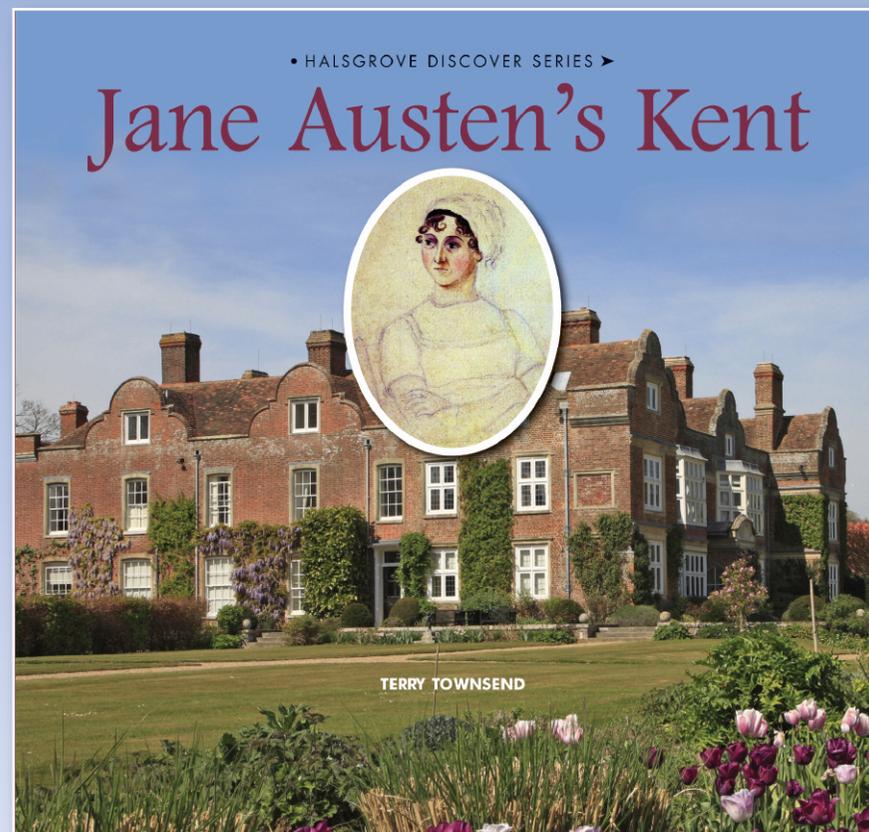
ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Retired graphic designer Terry Townsend has had a lifelong interest in English literary landscapes. This latest book is an unashamed celebration of his favourite novelist. Terry's previous books for Halsgrove are *Once Upon a Pint, a guide to the Literary Pubs & Inns of Dorset and Somerset*, *Kent Smugglers' Pubs*, *Jane Austen's Hampshire* and *Jane Austen and Bath*. He now lives in Dorset with his wife Carol and their cat Smudge.

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HALSGROVE TITLE INFORMATION



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Above: Two pages of Jane Austen's *History of England* with illustrations by Cassandra.



Above: The Great Stour adds attraction to the Canterbury scene as it flows under the High Street.



Grovehurst dating to the early 1600s was the home of the earlier members of the Austen family, many of whose graves can be seen in the churchyard of St Margaret's in Horsmonden.

Right: Jane set the fictional Pemberley in Derbyshire but she only had to raise her eyes and look out of her Godmersham window to see the type of landscape she was describing.



The Royal Victoria & Bull in Dartford High Street is the last remaining of the inns that Jane would have known.



Example of a double-page spread.

