

# Fall Meeting: BAUBLES, BANGLES & BEADS IN GEORGIAN ENGLAND

Approximately 100 members from the NY Metro Region and their guests gathered at the Helen Mills Theater on Saturday, September 12, for the fall meeting. After a welcome and announcements by Regional Coordinators Nili Olay and Jerry Vetowich, members played the "Jane Game" suggested by Gene Gill: "What jewelry would Jane Austen's characters be wearing today?" Since we couldn't move our chairs (the theater has built-in seats), we paired off in rows to discuss the question. The imaginative and funny results of the game are listed in a companion article.



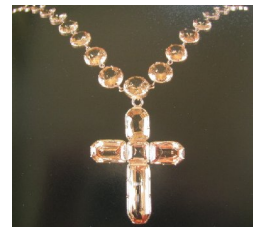
New York Metro's own Frederica Jaret, wearing Georgian jewelry, then presented an informative and entertaining talk, accompanied by beautiful slides, on "Baubles, Bangles & Beads in Georgian England."

We learned that very little Georgian jewelry has come down to us in its original form. The old-fashioned jewels were reset by people as poor as the Dashwoods or as rich as the Churchills because precious and even semi-precious gemstones were expensive, but workmanship was far less so. For example, six carats of diamonds for a bracelet might cost £50, while the gold and workmanship to create the bracelet would cost £5 (at a time when a curate could live like a gentlemen on £50 a year).



We also learned what a mid-18<sup>th</sup> century chatelaine looked like. It was used to carry keys, sewing kits, notepad and pencil, scissors, watches, seals, rulers, and compasses. After 1800 the watch and perhaps a seal were worn at the waist. Speaking of watches, Frederica pointed out that even servants carried watches. As we read in *Northanger Abbey*, "Isabella would not believe her own watch, nor her friend's, nor her brother's, nor the servant's till Morland's watch is consulted." The servants watches were not usually of precious metal and not purchased by themselves but were gifts from their employers.

Remember Fanny's amber cross – her present from William in *Mansfield Park*? Amber crosses were less expensive than the topaz crosses bought in 1801 for Jane and Cassandra Austen by their sailor brother Charles, who for £40 was able to buy both crosses as well as gold chains. William, of course, was just a midshipman, so his share of the prize money was much smaller than that of Charles, who was already a lieutenant.



A highlight of the meeting was the silent auction of an authentic Regency era ring that Frederica generously donated from her own collection. Elise Antreassian was the lucky winner.



A buffet of delicious sandwiches, cookies, and fresh strawberries and cream provided an opportunity to chat with old friends and to make some new ones.

*Lee Baling*