

PRESS RELEASE FROM CHAWTON HOUSE LIBRARY
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Britain's Hidden Heritage Revealed - Discover the paintings you own

The first complete catalogue of all paintings in public ownership in Hampshire will be published by The Public Catalogue Foundation next week. It is a broad and exciting collection of 2,402 oil paintings in 47 collections throughout the county from The Royal Naval Museum to Gilbert White's House, Hampshire County Council's Contemporary Arts Collection to The Gurkha Museum, Jane Austen's House to The Museum of Army Flying and, of course, Chawton House.

The Public Catalogue Foundation, based in the National Gallery, was set up to photograph and record all oil, acrylic and tempera paintings in publicly owned collections in the UK. This includes works in museums (both on display and in store) as well as paintings in council buildings, universities, hospitals, etc. It is estimated that there are over 150,000 such paintings in the UK. However, at any one time some 80% of these are hidden from public view.

The fine paintings at Chawton House Library depicted in the Hampshire Catalogue include the Knight collection of paintings comprising family portraits and landscapes, as well as very interesting Austen-related pieces. The oils in the collection focus on notable women including *Amelia Opie* (poet and novelist) by her husband John Opie, *Mary Robinson* (actress and novelist) by John Hoppner, *Catherine Macaulay* (historian) by Joseph Wright of Derby, *George Sand* (novelist) by F.J.B. Bizard and *Kitty Fisher* (famous courtesan and aspiring actress) attributed to Francis Coates.

The affordable colour catalogues are gradually being produced on a county-by-county basis with the Hampshire Catalogue being launched at Stratfield Saye House on 28th June. It has 372 pages with some 2400 colour reproductions: Hardback £35 and softback £20, available from all participating collections and bookshops and at www.thepcf.org.uk.

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