

## PRESS RELEASE

### *Pockets of History, a lecture at Chawton House*

Barbara Burman, Visiting Research Fellow, Winchester School of Art and the University of Southampton, will be speaking on a fascinating subject at Chawton House Library on Thursday 8 March.

*'A Linnen Pockett a prayer Book and five keys': the secret life of Englishwomen's pockets in the long eighteenth century*

A sudden theft of a woman's tie-on linen pocket with its contents took place in a street in Southwark in 1716 and provides the title for this talk. Starting with the testimony of the victim herself and the accused, the talk goes on to show how women and girls of all social backgrounds used tie-on pockets. Worn beneath skirts and petticoats, these pockets, though often charmingly decorated, were not expensive objects but they are rich in information and meaning.

By bringing together novels, diaries, letters, inventories, bills, court proceedings, prints and paintings, the illustrated talk shows the special importance of pockets in the everyday life of women. And by discovering what an extraordinary array of things women actually kept in their pockets a distinctive sense of social life can be recovered.

The talk is based on the findings of a unique national research project designed to bring this intriguing but forgotten pocket form back to public attention. The evening offers a preview of the project's new photographic survey of surviving pockets in museum collections around the country, many of them rare and fragile and never photographed before. In the context of an historic house, the talk reflects on the special contribution that material culture can make to our understanding of the past. There will even be a chance to wear a replica pair of pockets!

Reception with wine and canapés at 6.30pm, lecture at 7.00pm.

Tickets £15.00 and £10.00 for Friends and students, available from Corrine Saint on 01420 541010 or email [Corrine.saint@chawton.net](mailto:Corrine.saint@chawton.net)

(ENDS)

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For further information, please contact:

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