NAPOLEONIC ENCOUNTERS – THE WALDIES OF FORTH HOUSE, NEWCASTLE

By Peter Livsey

The Waldie family were in many ways typical of their times. Their wealth derived from the Industrial Revolution and from two generations of Scots making their fortunes on Tyneside. The next generation preferred a life of culture and landed status. But the extraordinary circumstances of the Napoleonic Wars led them into experiences and encounters that caused two of the sisters partially to redefine their identities. As well as painting or writing novels they also took a public role in writing on war and for new kinds of tourism.

A Newcastle Family

In the 1780s Forth House was a very desirable residence - a "large and commodious dwelling-house." (1) It was a redbrick building just outside Newcastle's City Walls between the Pink and Gunner Towers. Seven first-floor windows looked across the Forth to the hills beyond the Tyne. Five windows looked south-east along the line of the city walls, which had gardens on both sides. The walled grounds had a carriage access from near the old West Gate and a gate giving onto the Forth. The garden wall also separated the house from Forth Lane, which ran out from Westgate Street through a postern gate in the Walls. (2)

"The Forth, properly so called, is of a square form, enclosed by a low brick wall, within which is a broad gravel walk, shaded by two rows of lime trees, planted at equal distances." The trees later decayed and the green was trampled by its use as a parade ground during the long Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. Refurbished by the Corporation it was still, in the late 1820s, "certainly the most convenient and delightful promenade in the vicinity of the town." (3)

On the north side of the Forth were a tavern and a circus, later a riding school. One of the properties on the eastern edges was leased to Thomas Bewick, the engraver, whose partner Ralph Beilby had made a residence of the next tower of the City wall. Another property was that of Robert Rankin and his wife Ann. He owned one of the refineries down on the Close for sugar from Britain's slave colonies. They were visited there by their grand-daughter, Harriet Martineau, later a radical writer. Aged 7 she was told by her grandfather's barber why he was late that morning, not being able to come down Forth Lane because, "a star had fallen in the night, which it completely blocked up, beside Mr. Somebody's orchard. It was quite round and of the beautifullest clear crystal." These proprietors were all prospering businessmen from outside the traditional guild and Anglican elite. (4)

George Waldie was descended from an old family from the south of Scotland. His father, John Waldie of Berryside, was a solicitor. He married the daugh-

ter of a neighbouring family – the Ormstons. From them he inherited a house at Kelso and the nearby estate of Hendersyde. A branch of the Ormstons had settled in Newcastle. They were Quakers and had business connections with others in that community. George Waldie married his cousin Ann, the daughter of John Ormston, in 1779, when he was 23 and she was 32. Ormston and Lamb had a soap-making business in the Close and in 1777 its partners were two of the five founders of the Tyne Bank. George Waldie was already leasing a house in Benwell when his father died there in 1780. The Ormstons had a house on Westgate and George and Ann soon moved into Forth House, built by the Quaker grocer Thomas Doubleday on land leased from the Corporation. (5)

George Waldie was involved in the banking business - he was named as one of the guarantors of the Tyne Bank when it was wound up in 1816. He was also one of the owners of Sheriff Hill colliery on Gateshead Fell and, along with Humble Lamb, of Howden Pans colliery, two miles from Wallsend.(6) He also had an important involvement in the glass-making industry. In 1787 the Northumberland Glass Company opened a new works for crown glass in the village of Lemington, west of Newcastle upon Tyne, although its warehouse was more conveniently placed in the Close, near the Mansion House. The land at Lemington was leased to them by the Duke of Northumberland. It eventually had four large glass-making cones, of which only the largest, built in 1797, remains. The location of the works was ideal for local coal supplies, with the North Wylam to Lemington Point Waggonway running close to the works. It was also situated beside the River Tyne (prior to its rerouting in 1876) which made it easy to bring sand, alkali, and suitable clay for the melting pots to the works. (7)

In 1801 a guide to Newcastle noted, “In our account of the glass-works we accidentally omitted mentioning those at Lemington, where there are two houses for the manufacture of crown glass, belonging to the Northumberland Company, under the firm of ‘Waldie and Co.’ One of these buildings is said to be the highest conical glass-house, in the united kingdoms. The duties paid to government, for the Lemington glass-works, amount to about two thousand seven hundred pounds, every six weeks. Nearly one hundred workmen are employed in these two houses.” (8) George Waldie also continued to draw his wealth from land. He spent part of the year at Hendersyde, his Kelso estate, where he was planning a new house. He also owned the estate of Kingswood, near Staward Pele on the River Allen in Northumberland. (9)

In the 1780s Forth House was home to a growing family. The eldest, John Waldie, was born in Newcastle in 1781, as was his second sister Charlotte Ann in 1788. Maria Jane, William Jonathan and the youngest, Jane Ormston, born 1790, certainly spent much of their childhood there. (10) A Shetland pony, eight years old, arrived in 1786 at Forth House for the young John. He was named Hercules, but was rechristened Tom Thumb. He became everyone’s pet and would always follow any of the family about the gardens, or into the house, “like a spaniel.” (11)

Thomas Bewick also had a young family and according to his daughters, “The many little pleasures the family had enjoyed at the Forth never passed out of remembrance, and the kindness of the Waldies and other neighbours in times of sickness was not forgot.” George Waldie had much business stationery engraved by Bewick, and years later his children still ordered their bookplates and visiting cards from him. (12)

Later, George Waldie, his three daughters and their friend Elizabeth Chatto shared a pew at the Unitarian Chapel in Hanover Square. Their neighbours the Rankins, the lawyer James Losh and the Hodgson family, who owned the *Newcastle Chronicle*, were also members. The minister was the humane and active William Turner. He was the driving force behind the foundation of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1793. George Waldie was one of the first to join and remained a member all his life. (13)

Growing Up - John

In 1790 John Waldie entered the Reverend Turner's school, at his home at Barras Bridge, aged 9. He probably stayed for three years. The boys were mainly from mercantile families, or the sons of officers. Some were from Norway, sons of merchants. There had been some French boys too before the Revolution. Some of the foreigners, and a few boys from elsewhere in the north of England, were among the 4 to 6 boarders. The rest were day boys. There was a strong emphasis on mathematics and Latin. (14)

Among the 8 boys joining in the same year as John Waldie was William Fenwick of Earsdon, who would have a distinguished military career. He commanded the 34th Regiment in the Peninsula under Wellington. He lost a leg in desperate fighting at the Maya Pass in the Pyrenees, and finished as Lieutenant Governor of Pendennis Castle, a Companion of the Bath and holder of the Portuguese Order of the Tower and Sword. A number of other pupils would also serve, and some would die, in the army and navy in the long wars from 1793 onwards. (15)

Another new pupil, William Robert Bulman, was a product of Britain's expanding Empire. Described by the Reverend Turner as "a young man of colour," he was the 12 year old son of an Indian woman and Job Bulman, a doctor who made his wealth in India as, among other things, personal surgeon to the Nawab of Arcot. Bulman later married an English merchant's daughter in Madras and returned to build Coxlodge Hall and lay out "Bulman Village," now Gosforth. William Robert Bulman later studied medicine and returned to India. (16)

John Waldie, on the other hand, after a period of more formal schooling, went on to Edinburgh University in 1798. He was already fascinated by the theatre and his mother scolded him for spending all his money on going to plays. By 1800 he had graduated and was at work in the office of the Northumberland Glass Company in the shadow of the giant cones at Lemington, but without enthusiasm. He regularly attended the Theatre Royal on Moseley Street and contributed a few anonymous reviews to the press. He joined the Literary and Philosophical Society with his father. Then, the brief peace of 1802 -3 enabled him to visit the Continent, for 11 weeks in Holland, Brussels and Paris. This was ostensibly on glass business with his cousin, Joe Lamb, who had also been a pupil of Reverend Turner's, but the travel and the French theatre were much more of a draw.

Joseph Lamb continued in the glass and coal trade, and became Mayor of Newcastle in 1837. George Waldie's younger son, William Jonathan, also a Turner pupil, seems to have taken to the glass trade, and by 1812 had his own business in London. But John Waldie turned increasingly to the arts. He admired the great painters of the past; he had a good tenor voice; but his main interest remained the theatre. On his return from the Continent he bought a share in the Theatre Royal. He joined its committee and was actively involved with it, through various vicissitudes, while the stock company was managed successively by Stephen Kemble (1790–1806), William Macready (1806– 18) and Vincent de Camp (1818–1824). By 1809 he had more or less given up involvement in the family businesses. But he also recognized that the theatre offered no alternative public role as a critic or commentator. His "profession" would be as a knowledgeable amateur of the stage, a socialite, a collector, and the manager of the building of the new house at Hendersyde Park. More surprisingly, he also became a captain of the Kelso Volunteers. (17)

Growing Up – Jane and Charlotte

John was the eldest son. As the youngest daughter, Jane Waldie's education was somewhat different. The first five summers of her life were passed at the sea-side, at Tynemouth, where she "had great delight also, at that early period, in wandering about the Gothic and mouldering cloisters of the ruined abbey," hoping the monks would appear. In winter evenings she took part in devising and acting plays with her sisters and cousins. (18)

Jane Waldie was from infancy considered a beautiful child - "a little fairy." But she was also intelligent

and very observant. She picked up simple reading without instruction. She later ran through the whole catalogue of the local circulating library, trash and masterpieces alike. At five, having heard the solar system explained to her eldest sister, she could draw it as accurately as her mother on a slate, "pitying the inhabitants of Saturn, because it must be so dark and cold a world;" and observing, that "nobody could live at all in the Georgium Sidus " (George's Star – as only the British called Uranus).

Until she was 15 she only went to school during four months in winter as a day-scholar at a boarding-school at Newcastle. She then went for six months to a boarding-school in Edinburgh. It was run by a Miss Playfair whose brother, a Professor, noted Jane's brightness and originality. She seems to have had an aptitude for languages, acquiring French, Spanish, Italian and later Latin with very little formal instruction. Later, she commented regretfully, and probably modestly, "I must confess myself of that sex whose usual confined education in regard to ancient languages, would, of itself, render me wholly unfit to cope with them on classic ground." (19)

Her real love was painting. Before she was five years of age, she would "make pictures" with a stick on the wet sands at Tynemouth. She read what books she could; obtained a few lessons in design from a young artist of Kelso; and learned to mix and use oil colours from "a common sign-painter." She had lessons from an artist when she was at boarding school in Edinburgh, but the family view was that it did more harm than good to her style. Her skills of observation and sketching were particularly noticed. She was able to use them on a stay in 1807-1808, with her brother and sister, near St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall, and on the return journey through Wales. At some point she began to send paintings anonymously to the Royal Academy, where they attracted favourable notice.

In 1812 Jane's eldest sister, Maria Jane, met at Newcastle Richard Griffith, an up and coming geologist and engineer, who at the age of twenty-three had been unanimously elected F.R.S. of Edinburgh and now, aged 28, held a number of prestigious appointments in Ireland. They married the same year, at Hendersyde Park. When they returned to Dublin Jane went with them, but developed pleurisy, and was ill for a whole winter.

Less is on record about the education of Charlotte Ann Waldie, but her language skills and general cultural interests seem to have matched her sister's. She may also have had a health problem. In 1806-7 and again 1808-10 she spent months on Madeira, then well known for the treatment of tuberculosis. It was wartime but, after Trafalgar, the sea journey was considered safe. The Portuguese were at first neutral. Then, as Napoleon increased his pressure on them, they connived at a British military occupation of the island and by the time of Charlotte's second visit they were allies.

Charlotte had not joined the Literary and Philosophical Society, although women were admitted to use the library. But, throughout her times on Madeira she set up thermometers, took note of the weather every day, and sent her reports to James Losh, one of the Society's leading lights. (20) She also wrote a novel but abandoned it in 1814. She wrote to the *Monthly Review* to explain that it was too much like one of Maria Edgeworth's. (21)

The whole family assembled for the 1814 winter season in Newcastle. John had already been in Newcastle on 19th September for the annual Whig dinner commemorating the birthday of their late leader Charles James Fox. About 60 gentlemen assembled - "I sang *The Glasses Sparkle* with éclat." The highlight of the evening was a speech by Earl Grey, expressing hope for a just peace settlement, including international action against the Slave Trade, peace with the United States and political reform at home. Two days later John, Charlotte and Jane joined 700 people in St. Nicholas for the Oratorio. He went frequently to the Theatre Royal, socializing and renewing acquaintances, remarking of one, "He had a grudge against us since he and his wife had a quarrel with Charlotte at Newbiggin…At least we parted on good terms."

On 26th December, John Waldie, his sister Jane, his father, his brother-in-law Richard Griffith and "little Anna Maria," born at Hendersyde in October, went to their parish church, St. John's. "I was

happy to be her Godfather, mentally resolving not a complete acquiescence in all I am to profess…I am glad she is my Goddaughter. She behaved very well.”

On the 31st December he wrote, “Here ends this year of 1814. Perhaps the next may be more eventful, if I live to see the end of it. I have reason to be thankful that we begin it all together, and all well. I have had a great deal of amusement, but I have not been, as usual, of much use to anyone.” (22) But in 1815, with the long war over and Napoleon exiled on Elba, he was going to take his sisters on a visit to the Continent.

Six in a Boat

On a beautiful summer’s evening about 9pm on Sunday 11th June 1815, a small boat left the packet from Ramsgate, becalmed off Ostend, to be rowed ashore. One of the six passengers was an English merchant. The three other civilians were John Waldie, now 34, who had not been on the Continent since his visit 13 years earlier; and his sisters, Charlotte, 27 and Jane, 25, who had never been. The defeat of Napoleon the previous year had given them their chance. His recent return to the throne had not caused them to rethink the visit, since powerful allied armies were gathering to enter France again. Both sisters seem to have been determined to make up for lost time, to see everything and to keep a record like their brother, who had written a journal since his schooldays, extracting and polishing his account of his 1802 expedition. (23)

They had also followed the events of the last war with interest. Jane wrote, with no direct knowledge of the reality, “I believe I have a natural taste for everything connected with the art of war…I loved to hear of battles, and comprehended with the utmost facility those confused and difficult details of our victories in Spain, which the Duke of Wellington’s dispatches gave to the public, and which have puzzled the brains of many a grey-haired veteran.” (24)

The other two passengers were in fact veterans, although not grey-haired. One was Colonel Sir Neil Campbell of the 54th Foot, then 39 years old. He had served in the army for 18 years, joining as an ensign in the newly-formed 6th West India Regiment, and surviving several campaigns in the fever-ridden Caribbean. On the last, in 1809, as a Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel on the staff, he was present at the captures of Martinique and Guadeloupe. He commanded a Portuguese Regiment in Wellington’s army during the Peninsular War and was twice mentioned in dispatches. In February 1813 he was sent to Moscow by the British Government and accompanied the Russian army as it battled its way with its allies across Germany. Early in 1814, during the invasion of France, he was severely wounded in a cavalry charge by one of his own Cossack comrades who mistook him for a French officer and struck him to the ground. Knighted for his services, after Napoleon was defeated and had abdicated, he was chosen by the British Government to accompany him from Fontainebleau to Elba and given a diplomatic mission there and in Italy. In the following spring, while Colonel Campbell was at Florence, having left Elba for a few days on pressing business, Napoleon formed and carried out his plan of escape. Wrongly perceived as Napoleon’s gaoler, this brought Sir Neil public condemnation and hurtful accusations. With Napoleon now in northern France with his army, and the allies poised to invade, he was rejoining the 54th Foot, willing to serve in his old rank of major in Wellington’s army. (25)

The sixth passenger was another military man, Major Alexander Campbell Wylly, of the 7th Fusiliers. He had served with them at Martinique in 1809 and then in the Peninsula from 1810 to 1814, where he was wounded. From 1812 onwards he held staff appointments there, latterly with Sir Edward Packenham, one of Wellington’s top commanders. He went with Packenham to North America in the campaign against the United States, only to see his general defeated and killed at the battle of New Orleans. His successor sent Wylly home with the dispatches – “in which he was very honourably mentioned.” The renewal of war against Napoleon had brought a staff appointment to the Adjutant General’s department of Wellington’s army. (26)

It was the English merchant, familiar with Ostend, who got the party ashore in the dark, but Major Wylly who got them past the sentries. After a night's rest the military men pressed on to Wellington's headquarters in Brussels. The Waldies proceeded at a more leisurely pace to Bruges, and then by barge to Ghent. There they found the court of Louis XVIII, driven from Paris by Napoleon – "Bourbon beaux in gold epaulettes, and smart Flemish belles, in French fashions, laughing and flirting." They also saw the king, who bowed to them - "extremely unwieldy and corpulent, and gouty; and he looks very lethargic and snuffy, and it is really a thousand pities that an exiled and dethroned monarch should be so remarkably uninteresting a personage."

Brussels – The Call to Arms

On 15th June the Waldies proceeded from Ghent towards Brussels by carriage and it was late afternoon when they rattled in towards the western Porte de Gand. Along the way they had been surprised at how friendly the population was and how hostile to the French, since the view of them at home in England was the opposite. They saw the troops brought by the famous Duke of Brunswick to join Wellington's army, who were quartered just outside the city. Uniformed in black with a death's head badge, the cavalry with their black horsehair plumes seemed to Charlotte "like an immense moving hearse." But the scene inside the gate was cheerful and animated, filled with the varied uniforms of the infantry and staff of Wellington's Reserve who were billeted with the inhabitants. (27)

Brussels was crowded with British visitors, including the families of army officers, travellers and well-connected people seeking a cheaper social scene than London. (28) Nonetheless, Sir Neil Campbell had found the Waldies two pleasant rooms on the third floor of the Hotel de Flandre, one of the fine 18th Century buildings placed symmetrically around the Place Royale in the upper town, between the Parc and the street leading to the Namur Gate in the old fortifications.

Just a few minutes after their arrival the sisters, looking out of the window, saw Major Wylly among a group of officers in the Place Royale. He ran up to their room and exclaimed breathlessly, "Well, you are in for it. You will get it all now," and told them that the French had crossed the frontier and attacked the Prussian outposts at Charleroi. However, he thought it might be just a skirmish. He had been dining with the Duke when the news arrived and the latter was not convinced this was the main attack. He and his officers would still attend the ball that night at the Duchess of Richmond's residence. (29)

Although it was late, John and Jane went out to call on a friend. In their absence, Charlotte was surprised to receive a visit from Sir Neil Campbell, in full dress uniform. She gave him tea in her bedroom at nearly 11pm - "In England it would have been extraordinary enough, to be sure, but in Brussels it was nothing." He too had been at dinner with the Duke and gave the additional information that the French were upwards of a 100,000 strong. He personally (and he "had certainly reason to know something of Buonaparte" commented Charlotte delicately) thought that he would follow through with his "rapid, unexpected movements" and try to destroy the British and Prussians before the Austrians and Russians entered France from the east.

The sisters went to sleep but were awakened by the call to arms and the tumult of bugles and drums. At half-past two John hammered on their door to say that the French had taken Charleroi, were still advancing, and that the British army was to march at once. They must hurry to his room to say good-bye to their friend Major Llewellyn. (30)

Richard Llewellyn had joined the 28th Foot as a Captain in 1809 and sailed to join Wellington's army in the Peninsula. When news of heavy losses at the battle of Talavera reached England John Waldie wrote, "Lluellyn I reckon my first friend, and he, I think, must have been in the action. Heaven protect him." However, the 28th Regiment had only just reached Lisbon and was not in time for the battle. Richard Llewellyn won a silver medal at Busaco (27th September 1810) and another at the costly victory at Albuera (18th May 1811). When the remaining men of his 2nd Battalion of the 28th were transferred to the newly returned 1st Battalion, he did not take the chance to go home to recruit and transferred with them instead. He served with the 1/28th under Charles Philip Belson for the rest of

the war. He took part in two actions where the British launched successful surprise attacks – at Arroyo dos Molinos (28th October 1811) and the bridge of Almaraz (18th May). He was promoted brevet major in April 1812. (31)

In 1813 he received leave because of his wife's illness, and sailed from Lisbon on April 12th, but had only reached Dublin via Kinsale on 10th May. John Waldie and his sisters met him there by chance and he and John talked at length. He was troubled by his personal circumstances, not least making a decent arrangement for his Portuguese mistress, the need to extend his leave and his chances of further promotion. (32)

He returned to Wellington's army to be present at the surrender Bordeaux in 1814. By September 1814 he was at Cork, waiting to be sent to fight the Americans. Even after peace was signed with the United States the battalion was still assigned to Bermuda. But Napoleon's escape caused them to be taken off the transports to be sent to Flanders.

Now, still with the rank but not the command of a major, he was mustering with Wellington's reserve to march against the French while the rest of the scattered army concentrated south of Brussels. The sisters could hear his horse neighing and pawing the ground in the courtyard below as he took leave of his friends. They had last seen him in Roxburghshire before he returned to the Peninsula. "One who from childhood had been our friend and companion and whom we loved as another brother," said Charlotte; "…one brought up with us almost like our brother, whom we had not seen for years, and perhaps might never see more," were Jane's reflections. (33)

Sleep was now impossible and in the grey dawn they watched the troops assemble in the Place Royale below. Humour had not deserted them. Charlotte laughed at the contrast between the military bustle and the bewildered old peasant women passing on their carts to market. Jane wrote later of how the officers rushed from the Duchess of Richmond's Ball, abandoning their partners, "I fancy the scene would have been irresistibly ludicrous had the confusion which ensued been created by any other cause." But they also felt sorrow for the soldiers saying goodbye to their wives and children, and were proud to see the kilted highland regiments march out in the first sunlight to leave by the Namur Gate, "… for at this moment our hearts recognized them as our own countrymen," wrote Jane, adding, "But so were all the British army, and we felt it was impossible to be more anxious for one than another." By 7am the infantry – Sir Thomas Picton's 5th Division - were gone.

The Cannon of Quatre Bras

The Waldies were agreeably surprised to be rejoined at breakfast by Richard Llewellyn. With the troops due to halt at the village of Waterloo to cook and the fact that "no expectation was entertained of any engagement taking place today," he and his commander, now Sir Philip Belson, had hurried back to Brussels. He spent the morning with his friends. At one point Sir Neil Campbell appeared again. He told them that the Duke had left at 8am - "He never saw him in such high spirits." They heard that he expected to return for dinner, presumably sharing the view that there was still time to concentrate his army in time for a battle the following day. (34)

Eventually, Sir Philip called for Llewellyn and the sisters watched them ride out of the Place Royale. But, wrote Jane, "They did not set off, however, till past one; and, about an hour after their departure, what was our consternation when the sound of a heavy cannonade was heard in the direction the British army had taken, which, from the distinctness of the report, it was said could not be more than ten miles off! In addition to the alarm which we shared with others, we were in dreadful anxiety lest the friends who had parted from us so lately should not have joined the army before the action began, for we well knew they would never have survived the disgrace of being absent from their posts at

such a moment. Our wretchedness may be conceived." (35)

The sisters joined the crowd in the Parc listening to the gunfire and speculating on the distance. In fact on this hot 16th June they were hearing the guns at Ligny, twenty or so miles to the south-east, where the Prussian commander Blucher had chosen to confront Napoleon, and Quatre Bras, some fifteen miles to the south of Brussels, where the British were rushing piecemeal to the vital crossroads on his flank.

Llewellyn and Belson succeeded in joining the 28th in time to avoid disgrace. They arrived possibly after the regiment had first deployed and tried to drive back the French from their positions, but were in post to face the furious cavalry attacks of the late afternoon. The regiments of Kempt's and Pack's brigades had to receive them in open, undulating country. Llewellyn recalled that when they first formed square, "the surrounding remarkably tall rye concealed it in a great measure, in the first attacks, from the view of the French Cavalry until the latter came quite close upon it; but to remedy this inconvenience, and to preserve the impetus of their charge, the Lancers had frequently recourse to sending forward a daring individual to plant a lance in the earth at a very short distance from the bayonets, and they then charged upon the lance flag as a mark of direction." For a time the 28th formed a joint square with the Royal Scots and later alone. In ranks four deep they stood firm as the lancers, and later cuirassiers with upper body armour and long swords, tried to create a gap to break in, while on one occasion, Lieutenant Irwin, wounded while skirmishing out in front with the light company, crawled desperately to take refuge under the bayonets of the front two ranks. (36)

At one point, three sides of the square were simultaneously under attack. Sir Thomas Picton, the divisional commander, is said to have shouted, "28th Remember Egypt!" recalling the battle in 1801, when caught on that occasion in line, the regiment had fought off attacks from front and rear. Again the square held. By mid-evening the two sides had fought each other to a standstill. Llewellyn recalled, "Had it not been so closely followed by the…victory of Waterloo, perhaps the gallant exploits and unexampled bravery that marked that day would … have excited even more admiration than was actually associated with it." That the British, Netherlands and German soldiers of Wellington's army were sucked into a battle of encounter, with little artillery or cavalry support, might also have provoked more questions. (37)

At Brussels, the Waldie sisters were prey to anxiety and doubt. Even the verdant Parc where they paced oppressed Jane, "The evening before, when we had driven through the Parc on our entrance into Brussels, nothing could exceed the gaiety of the scene. Its alleys were then crowded with ladies, whose varied costume, mingled with the rich uniform of the British officers, glittered in the bright beams of the setting sun. Where was now this lively and brilliant company? Alas! many of the young and brave who, at the same hour on the preceding day, were unconsciously trifling with their fair companions, must, before this, have been called, 'with all their imperfections on their head,' to that bourne, whence no traveler returns." (38)

The lack of firm news was the problem. Charlotte recalled, "No authentic intelligence could be gained; and every minute we were assailed with most absurd and contradictory stories." She lost her temper with one of her countrymen who advised flight, as the British were retreating "in the utmost confusion." She told him "such a report deserved only to be treated with contempt; and that it must be false, for that the English would never retreat *in confusion.*" She noted that, "The man seemed a little ashamed of himself." (39)

They returned to their hotel only when the cannonade died away, about 9.30 pm. The good-natured Sir Neil Campbell had been looking for them, having been assured by a senior member of Wellington's staff that all was going well. It was the last time he was available to give them news. He was to join the army that night. In this he was "like many others who had no business there" wrote Charlotte sharply. But he was clearly strongly motivated to resume his old rank with his old regiment, as it hurried in from its quarters well to the west. Nor were the Waldies completely reassured, since Sir

Neil's informant had left the field as early as 5.30pm and four more hours of firing had followed. (40)

Panic

The night of the 16th – 17th was worse. An alarm just after midnight caused some English families to call for their carriages and leave. The sisters noted that the artillery was going south to the army and not north in retreat, and they managed to sleep, although Jane remained fully dressed. At six o'clock they were awakened to find the whole hotel a scene of panic. People were calling for, and even fighting for carriages. The coachman previously hired by John Waldie to go to Antwerp now flatly refused. While they argued furiously, an optimistic waiter went to find horses for them, but returned to tell Charlotte none could be had and that the French were very close to the city.

One of their friends arrived in haste from his lodgings. Having his own carriage and horses, he offered to leave his family's baggage and take one of them, but only if they left instantly. John and Charlotte both wanted Jane to go, as youngest and most delicate in health perhaps. But, Charlotte recorded, "she was inflexible. Nothing could induce her to go without us…" The friend hurried off to offer the place to another English lady, and the Waldies stood watching the stream of English carriages leave the Hotel de Flandre. (41)

At this point they were delighted to see Major Alex Wylly walk in from the Place, although his appearance startled both of them. Jane recalled, "His countenance; never shall I forget it; it was appalling. There was no fear; for this gallant young soldier had braved death in too many terrific forms to dread it now; but something too horrible for expression, yet wholly distinct from all personal considerations, was written there, that gave the most painful confirmation to our worst apprehensions. The slaughter of the preceding day had indeed been excessive; and though the enemy's attack had completely failed, and not an inch of ground had been lost; and although dispositions had been made for a fresh engagement, it was fearful to think of the situation of our handful of brave men, left to stand the brunt of the whole French army, unsupported by cavalry and artillery, and exhausted by their previous efforts." Even he, who had only left the army a few hours before, had to go out and check before he could completely dismiss the rumour of a French attack on the city. He was able to give them some idea of the battle at Quatre Bras and assure them that Llewellyn and Belson had rejoined their regiment and were safe. The Duke of Brunswick had been killed, leading his young, black-uniformed infantry to the attack. (42)

The sisters were soon horrified to see the wounded being brought in on carts. Hardened to such sights, and thinking her pallor was from a renewed fear of defeat, Major Wylly, "compassionately laying his hand upon my arm," assured Charlotte, "The wounded must come here at any rate – it has nothing to do with a retreat." Jane also recorded, "We saw several unfortunate Belgians brought on biers to their own doors, there to breathe their last. One melancholy figure remains strongly impressed upon my mind; an officer of Belgic cavalry, covered with a cloak, who attempted to sit his horse, but appeared quite unequal to the effort. Every moment his strength seemed to diminish, and his death-like countenance, haggard and streaked with blood, struck me forcibly, even among the thousands of wounded whom I saw that day. I watched him, as his horse slowly paced through the streets. It seemed to know its way, for its rider could not retain the reins in his nerveless hand, and they were hanging loosely from its neck. Suddenly, the animal stopped at the door of a house, and I saw the poor wounded man lifted off, and carried in. No doubt it was his home, and no doubt home-affections would watch over him; but I still see before me the pallid and agonized countenance, the bloody and almost lifeless form of this unhappy foreigner; although his sad condition was only one amongst many heart-rending spectacles that continually met our eyes." (43)

Refuge in Antwerp

Major Wylly advised them to leave if they could, since he was not sure the French could be held back in the present position. Their coachman now agreed to go to Antwerp and they prepared to set off.

They had not thought about breakfast, but seeing that Major Wylly was providently tucking into his own tray, they ordered coffee and bread and breakfasted in a window-seat on the stairs before heading north. On that sultry Saturday 17th June, the road and parallel canal were crowded and confusion reigned. The Waldies gave a ride in their carriage as far as Mechelen to two Belgian soldiers wounded in the previous morning's fighting at Quatre Bras. Later, they learned from Prussian walking wounded of Blucher's defeat at Ligny.

Charlotte again flared up when an officer she took for a German commented in French that he understood that some of her countrymen had behaved as brave men. "When did the English behave otherwise?" she snapped. The startled officer turned out to be British himself and had thought she was a local as she had been speaking French to the peasants.

As they approached Antwerp, the weather broke in a violent thunderstorm and torrential rain. To the south Wellington's retreating army plodded through it, with the cavalry fending off the French pursuit. But in the city there was no news.

The Duke of Wellington had ordered Antwerp placed in a state of siege, in case he had to fall back on it, but he had instructed that British families be admitted. The temporary community created in Brussels partly reassembled there. The Waldies found rooms at Le Grand Labourer in the Place de Maire, the largest open space in the city, near the cathedral and the Grote Markt. In one of the rooms the Duke of Brunswick's corpse was laid out. John Waldie went to see it, but the sisters did not want to join the crowd. However, still sitting up after midnight, listening to the rain, Charlotte heard the hammering as they closed the coffin. She went down with the daughter of the house and saw it, the room lit by tapers and guarded by two officers in the black uniform and plumes they had seen two days earlier riding into Brussels.

Another disturbed night brought the news of the British retreat, but by the morning of Sunday 18th June it was clear that this was not the result of a defeat, but a move to a more defensible position, and to maintain contact with the Prussians. As refugees continued to pour in, people wandered about the streets seeking news. From the hotel windows Charlotte saw "one compact mass of umbrellas" as anxious people crowded the great Place de Maire, "Ladies accosted men they had never before seen with eager questions without hesitation; strangers conversed together like friends, and English reserve seemed no longer to exist."

Once again negative news of what was happening south of Brussels began to spread, some apparently brought by British officers. Charlotte spent another anxious and sometimes sleepless night. She ventured out early on the morning of Monday 19th, on an errand, accompanied by the old valet from the hotel. Near the Malines Gate she encountered five wounded but joyful Highlanders, who had just heard the news sent by Wellington of a complete victory. She went with them as the valet showed them the way to the hospital. They were delighted to hear that she had a home by the Tweed, especially one who "cam' oot o Peeblesshire." (44)

"A Battle Won"

"My heart is broken by the terrible loss I have sustained in my old friends and companions and my poor soldiers. Believe me, nothing except a battle lost can be half so melancholy as a battle won." So wrote Wellington in a private letter. At Antwerp, throughout the 19th the news of the army's losses continued to come in. They included, among the senior officers, Sir Thomas Picton, commander of the division that included Belson's and Llewellyn's 28th Regiment, and several other generals. Those immediately around Wellington had also suffered heavily. Madeleine De Lancey was the newly-married wife of Wellington's chief of staff, Sir William De Lancey. She had stayed briefly at the Laboureur, before moving to an apartment, and was refusing to see anyone. The sisters heard that her husband had been reported dead. Charlotte could not get her out of her mind. (45)

In fact she was tormented by conflicting stories about his fate. Then, Jane recalled, "About eight in

the evening Mr. Hay of Duns Castle came to Antwerp. He came to break to Lady de Lancey the terrible news of her husband's death, but he was too late. She knew it already. He was half distracted; his younger brother in a regiment of light dragoons was missing; his horse had returned without him in a charge, and it was feared he was killed. Mr. Hay had been in the battle the whole day, and all that morning had been employed in searching the field for his brother's body, which had not yet been found, though they scarcely ventured to hope he was a prisoner…'Do not ask me', said he, 'who is killed or wounded; ask me rather who is not wounded or dead." (46)

Lady De Lancey also recalled their meeting: "When we were within a mile or two of Malines (Mechelen), the carriage stopped, and the servant said, "It is the Captain." I had drawn the blinds to avoid seeing the wretched objects we were passing. I hastily looked out, and saw Mr. Hay. When he saw me he turned his head away. I called out, "Mr. Hay, do you know anything?" He hesitated, and then said, "I fear I have very bad news for you." I said, "Tell me at once. Is he dead? " "It is all over." (47)

Captain William Hay of the 12th Light Dragoons met both these two lost souls in the days that followed. He knew them both well – Hay was a kinsmen and Lady DeLancey's family were neighbours. He was reluctantly returning on the orders of his temporary commander, who had got through the last few days with the help of the bottle, to bring forward any stragglers or recovered wounded. He reached the battlefield late on the 20th and in Waterloo village he went to the cottage where he had heard Sir William DeLancey was alive but mortally wounded. "How wholly shocked I was, on entering, to find her seated on the only broken chair the hovel contained by the side of her dying husband! An amiable, kind, and beautiful young woman, I had so recently left in the midst of her own delightful family, surrounded by every luxury, at that most trying moment in want of every comfort, and plunged in the deepest distress." Clinging to hope, she nursed her husband until he died a few days later. (48)

The following day In Brussels he encountered his namesake, "connection and intimate friend," William Hay of Duns Castle, whom he had already met two days earlier searching the battlefield. He had been Captain in the 16th Light Dragoons in the Peninsular War and had come over from England a few days before to see his old friends, and introduce his young brother, Cornet Alexander Hay, to the regiment. Mr. Hay was on the battlefield during the early part of the fight. Early on the 19th he revisited the field, to try to find some trace of his brother and was now back from Antwerp where the Waldie sisters had met him.

At dinner Captain Hay agreed to stop on the battlefield again on his way back to his regiment so that they could both make a further search. On Thursday 22nd June, "…the weather was hot almost beyond endurance, and the smell arising from the carcasses insufferable…Countless numbers of men lay stretched in death, and amongst them some thousands of wounded still unattended. Groups of peasants were parading over the whole plain in search of plunder. Most of the bodies were stripped. It was a sight I cannot, even at this distance in time, let my mind rest on without horror. Amongst those heaps of dead we looked in vain for Alexander Hay, turning them over and examining minutely one after another all about the place where he had last been seen." (49)

After three hours they gave up and headed south, his brother still hoping he had been taken prisoner. In fact, Cornet Hay's body was never identified. He had been killed late at night on the French position, while the 16th Light Dragoons were in pursuit of the enemy. His brothers and sisters placed a memorial tablet to him in the church in Waterloo village: "Sacred to the memory of Alexander Hay, Esq., of Nunraw, Cornet in the 16th Light Dragoons, aged 18 years, who fell gloriously in the Memorable Battle of Waterloo, June 18, 1815." (50)

Return to Brussels

In Antwerp, finally, the Waldies had news that Llewellyn and their other friends were safe. (51) Major Wylly had indeed survived unscathed, although the staff was hard hit and his own general badly

wounded. Sir Neil Campbell also remained with Wellington's staff throughout the battle. His old regiment, the 54th Foot, was part of a brigade placed, with another of Hanoverians and a Netherlands division, west of the main position in case Napoleon tried to manoeuvre around Wellington's right flank. They saw no action. (51)

The Waldies now felt free to visit the docks and the arsenal. The highlight for the romantic and military-minded sisters was the citadel. Charlotte wrote, "every part of the fortification was explained to us by a very good humoured, intelligent Irish officer, whose name I have forgot, but who seemed to be excessively amused by the (I fear) almost childish delight which my sister and I betrayed in seeing all the wonders of this wonderful place. Every thing to us was new and interesting. It was the first citadel we had ever seen: and to see with our own eyes, a real, actual citadel; nay, more, to be in one, was so very delightful, that we both agreed, if we had seen nothing else, we should have thought ourselves amply repaid for our journey to Antwerp.

This good natured officer contentedly toiled along with us, under the burning rays of a most sultry sun, round the whole fortifications, and pointed out to us where (and how) attacks might be made with success, and in what manner they could be resisted. The sight of the moat, the drawbridges, the ramparts, the bastions, and the dungeons; the sally-ports and gates, which communicate with the Citadel from the moat by long subterranean passages, so forcibly recalled to my recollection all that I had heard and read of battles and sieges in history and in tales of chivalry, that I could have fancied myself transported back into ages long since past, into the iron times of arms; and all that had before only existed in imagination was at once realized."(52)

In the harsh reality of the present the Waldies were unwilling to join those who wanted to visit the battle field immediately. Charlotte wrote in justification, "If, by visiting that dreadful scene of glory and of death, I could have saved the life, or assuaged the pangs, of one individual who had fallen for his country, gladly would I have braved its horrors; but for the gratification of an idle, a barbarous curiosity, to gaze upon the mangled corpses of thousands…No!" (53)

Instead, they left Antwerp for a fortnight's tour of Holland, as originally planned, John having been there in 1802. Jane enjoyed the visit, partly because the scenes reminded her as an emerging artist of the Dutch masters she had studied. She began to polish an account for her friends - "…we passed through the fair. No scene could be more entertaining. Puppet-shows, round-abouts, theatres; merry-andrews grimacing, fiddlers scraping, dancers jigging, monkeys chattering; singers, jugglers, and topers; beggars in every grotesque variety of attire; boys playing at all sorts of games; cooking, boiling, baking, frying, eating and drinking, going on every side; booths, stalls, shops, and criers; — altogether formed an exhibition such as the pencils of Teniers and Ostade alone can give any idea of. We seemed actually transported into one of their animated pictures; — the faces, the dresses, the gambols, the humours, all to the very life. After this merry scene, the celebrated tulip-beds of Haarlem, though called the garden of beauties, seemed to us very dull. Not so the wonderful organ of Haarlem, the finest in the world." (54)

Charlotte, however, felt that, the Dutch "make excellent merchants, but very bad companions. What Buonaparte once in his ignorance said of the English, is truly applicable to the Dutch,—" They are a nation of shopkeepers;" and they used to remind me very much of a whole people of Quakers." Even less charitably she concluded, "The Dutch are equally devoid of that acquired good breeding which distinguishes the well educated English, and that native politeness and winning courtesy which is so irresistibly engaging among the French and the Belgic people." She "bade it farewell without one feeling of regret…we left Holland, I hope, forever!" (55)

The Waldies spent time in Antwerp and Mechelen now that they could concentrate on the sights. As they journeyed south they enjoyed the countryside ripening to the harvest, and entered Brussels from the north in the early evening. Only the following morning, scanning the casualty lists in the British papers, did they find, to their horror, the name of Major Llewllyn among the severely wounded.

After camping in the rain on the night of the 17th–18th June the 28th Foot had taken position on the ridge in front of the village of Mont St. Jean, south of Waterloo. Kempt's brigade and the rest of Picton's division were on the allied left of the main road running south from Brussels to Charleroi, behind a crossroad and a hedge. A sandpit and the farm of La Haye Sainte in front were occupied by Rifles and light infantry. Late in the morning firing began away to the right as the French attacked the chateau of Goumont. Then their artillery opened a furious bombardment on the allied left-centre, which the troops lay down to avoid. The entire French Second Corps, which had not taken part in the fighting two days before, advanced in wide columns down the opposite ridge and up to the British positions.

At the last moment the British, Netherlands and Hanoverian regiments in line fired a volley into the heads of the columns and advanced. The British heavy cavalry filed through and rode into the French as they struggled to deploy. Sir Thomas Picton was shot through the head as he urged his men forward. Kempt took his place and Sir Philip Belson, whose horse had been shot from under him, took the brigade. Richard Llewellyn had come through the long years in the Peninsula unscathed. But either at this early moment of success at Waterloo, or in the long pounding of infantry advances, cavalry charges, sniping and artillery fire that followed, his luck ran out. He "was conveyed in excruciating agony, upon an old blanket, supported by the bayonets of four of his soldiers," to the first farmhouse in the village of Mont St. Jean, soon crowded with wounded officers. (56)

Nearly three weeks later the Waldies found him in Brussels still "in a state of extreme suffering and danger! the days of deep anxiety and individual grief that followed I pass over in silence. Nor can I bear to dwell upon the miseries it was our lot to witness; the still more excruciating and hopeless sufferings which we daily heard related, and the scenes of death and distracting affliction which surrounded us…The whole of our stay in Brussels was one unvaried scene of suppressed anxiety and watchfulness for the safety of Major Llewellyn, whose situation was most critical. Our time was spent in his apartment, in constant but fruitless endeavours to alleviate his sufferings, which neither skill nor care could mitigate, but which he bore with the most unshaken fortitude." (57)

So they remained as the allied armies advanced into France. Although the French did not seek another battle in the field, some fortresses still resisted. On 26th June Sir Charles Colville, commanding the British 4th Division, had reported to the Duke of Wellington, "My Lord.—Lieut. Colonel Sir N. Campbell (Major of the 54th regiment) having asked my leave to go to headquarters to request your Grace's permission to return to England, I beg leave to take the opportunity of mentioning, that I feel much obliged to him for his conduct in closing, in the town of Cambray, with the light companies of Major General Johnston's brigade, and in leading one of the columns of attack. The one which he commanded escaladed, at the angle formed on our right side, by the Valenciennes gateway, and the curtine of the body of the place. The Valenciennes gate was broken open by Sir N. Campbell, and draw-bridges let down in about half an hour." He later used his diplomatic skills to negotiate the retreat of a French force in front of Paris and was given command of a force of the Hanseatic Legion, sent by those northern ports to join the allied army. He had made every contribution he could to the second defeat of his country's enemy.

But ten years later he still chose to volunteer, against his family's wishes, for the post of Governor of Sierra Leone, where he died from overwork and fever. A hundred years later, Leonard Challis, seeking to work through his own experiences in the First World War, painstakingly recorded the careers of all the officers who served in the Peninsula. He still felt it necessary to enter at the end of Sir Neil Campbell's card the quote, "The man who let Boney go." (58)

Waterloo - Dark Tourism

Finally, Major Llewellyn began to recover. In London the *Gazette* had listed his promotion to Lieutenant-Colonel along with Major Wylly and others for their conduct at Waterloo. They were both also named by the Prince Regent as Companions of the Order of the Bath. On 15th July, "When we had at last the consolation of seeing him comparatively better, and felt assured that he was out of all imme-

diate danger, we dedicated one day to a visit to Waterloo."

They would surely have been unwise to go earlier. Charlotte knew enough about what was happening to write, "notwithstanding the most praiseworthy and indefatigable exertions, the last of the wounded were not removed from the field until the Thursday after the battle; and if we consider that there were at least 8000 British, besides the Belgic, Brunswick, and Prussian wounded soldiers, and an *incalculable* number of wounded French — we shall find cause for surprise and admiration, that they could be removed in so short a time." (59)

This seems to have been an optimistic view. Major Frye of the Ceylon Regiment, visiting the Continent on leave, was actually on the field on Thursday 22nd: "This morning I went to visit the field of battle… I felt sick in the stomach and was obliged to return. The multitude of carcasses, the heaps of wounded men with mangled limbs unable to move, and perishing from not having their wounds dressed or from hunger, as the Allies were, of course, obliged to take their surgeons and wagons with them, formed a spectacle I shall never forget." (60)

Even on 15th July the Waldies did not have to wait until they reached the field to be reminded of the cost of the victory of which Charlotte was so proud - "… the road between Waterloo and Brussels was one long uninterrupted charnel-house: the smell, the whole way through the Forest, was extremely offensive, and in some places scarcely bearable. Deep stagnant pools of red putrid water, mingled with mortal remains, betrayed the spot where the bodies of men and horses had mingled together in death." (61)

The party halted at Waterloo, where they were shown the houses in which Wellington's staff and senior officers had stayed on the night before the battle, with their names still chalked on the doors. They were aware of how many had been killed the following day or had died or survived operations in these same houses afterwards.

They saw the farmhouse at the southern edge of Mont St. Jean to which Major Llewellyn and other wounded officers had been carried. Then, after sending their carriage back to the village, they and other visitors were taken by an officer down the Charleroi road to the ridge defended by the allied army. They arrived at the point next to the crossroads where they knew Llewellyn had fallen wounded.

"On the top of the ridge in front of the British position, on the left of the road, we traced a long line of tremendous graves, or rather pits, into which hundreds of dead had been thrown as they had fallen in their ranks, without yielding an inch of ground. The effluvia which arose from them, even beneath the open canopy of heaven, was horrible; and the pure west wind of summer, as it passed us, seemed pestiferous, so deadly was the smell that in many places pervaded the field. The new turned clay which covered those pits betrayed how recent had been their formation. From one of them the scanty clods of earth which had covered it had in one place fallen, and the skeleton of a human face was visible. I turned from the spot in indescribable horror, and with a sensation of deadly faintness which I could scarcely overcome." (62)

Despite this sense of horror, throughout the visit Jane made sketches of the field and Charlotte gave her curiosity and eye for detail full rein. She noted how narrow the front was and how close to each other the two forces had begun the day. As to the appearance of the ground now "…the whole field was literally covered with soldiers' caps, shoes, gloves, belts, and scabbards, broken feathers battered into the mud, remnants of tattered scarlet cloth, bits of fur and leather, black stocks and haversacks, belonging to the French soldiers, buckles, packs of cards, books, and innumerable papers of every description." She picked up a bible in German – nearly two fifths of Wellington's army had German as a mother tongue. (63)

They walked down the main Charleroi road to see Napoleon's headquarters on the far ridge at La Belle Alliance, then by the field path diagonally back to the grounds of the chateau of Goumont, or Hougoumont as it was becoming known.

The playboy and dandy Ensign Rees Howell Gronow, whose battalion had fought on the open ridge to the east, went on the morning of the 19th June to see the chateau that his fellow Guards had defended. "Early on the morning after the battle of Waterloo, I visited Huguemont, in order to witness with my own eyes the traces of one of the most hotly-contested spots of the field of battle. I came first upon the orchard, and there discovered heaps of dead men, in various uniforms : those of the Guards in their usual red jackets, the German Legion in green, and the French dressed in blue, mingled together. The dead and the wounded positively covered the whole area of the orchard; not less than two thousand men had there fallen. The apple trees presented a singular appearance; shattered branches were seen hanging about their mother-trunks in such profusion that one might almost suppose the stiff-growing and stunted tree had been converted into the willow: every tree was riddled and smashed in a manner which told that the showers of shot had been incessant."

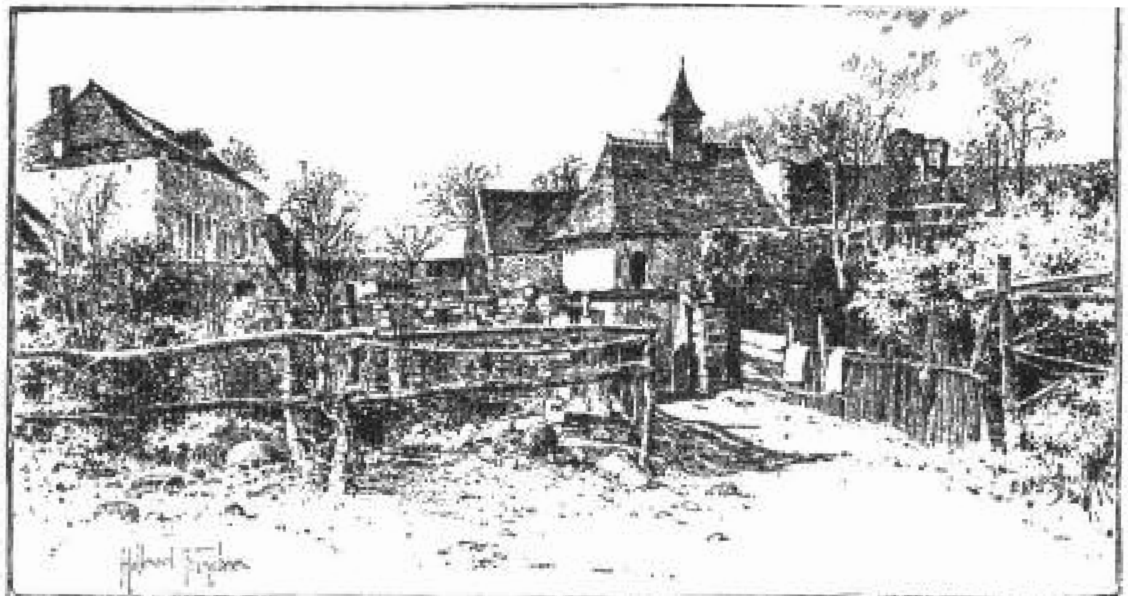
Entering the estate through its woodland Charlotte was also struck by how, "The trunks of the trees had been pierced in every direction with cannon-balls. In some of them, I counted the holes where upwards of thirty had lodged: yet they still lived, they still bore their verdant foliage, and the birds still sang amidst their boughs." (64)

She also saw where those dead Guardsmen, German allies and French had gone: "At the outskirts of the wood, and around the ruined walls of the Chateau, huge piles of human ashes were heaped up, some of which were still smoking." John Waldie also noted these in his journal, "…close to the Chateau was 2 immense heaps of rocks under which are numbers of dead bodies – chiefly of the regiments of the guards who bore the brunt of the attack on this position. There was such a quantities of dead bodies they were thrown into 2 great holes and were then burnt – so now two black hillocks of human dust mark this spot of destruction – and the stench was even now terrible." (65)

Charlotte examined these at close quarters. "The countryman led me to one of these piles within the gates of the court belonging to the Chateau, where, he said, the bodies of the British Guardsmen who had so gallantly defended it, had been burnt as they had been found, heaped in death. I took some of the ashes and wrapped them up in one of the many sheets of paper that were strewed around me." She explained it as an act of commemoration, "perhaps those heaps that then blackened the surface of this scene of desolation are already scattered by the winds of winter, and mingled unnoticed with the dust of the field; perhaps the few sacred ashes which I then gathered at Chateau Hougoumont are all that is now to be found upon earth of the thousands who fell upon this fatal field!"

Yet she had an eye for the prosaic as well as the uplifting, "At the garden gate I found the holster of a British officer, entire, but deluged with blood. In the inside was the maker's name,—Beazley and Hetse, No. 4, Parliament-street." She was also aware of such details as the German unit which had defended the wood – the Duchy of Nassau Regiment. (66)

Then as now, fellow-tourists were a source of irritation. "I could not be persuaded to go to see the skeleton of a calf



The ruins of Hougoumont from the woods.

which had been burnt in one of the outhouses of Hougoumont, and over which one of the ladies of our party uttered the most pathetic lamentations. It seemed to fill her mind with more concern than any thing else. At another time I might have been sorry for the calf; but when I remembered how many poor wounded men had been burnt alive in these ruins, it was impossible to bestow a single thought upon its fate." Unusually, Charlotte chose not to express her views. Unfortunately, "Finding that her sensibility obtained no sympathy from me, the lady turned to my sister, and began to bewail the calf anew, till at last wearied out with her folly, "out of her grief and her impatience," she exclaimed, " that she did not care if all the calves in the world were burnt, compared to one of the brave men who perished there." (67)

Some of the others returned directly to Mont St. Jean, but the Waldies went back to La Belle Alliance, where Charlotte spoke at length to Napoleon's local guide, ate a disgusting piece of rye bread that she was assured had been in the house during the battle, and "bought from the people of the house the feather of a French officer, and a cuirass which had belonged to a French cuirassier." As she toiled with it across the field in the hot sun she speculated on the feelings of the man who had worn it as body armour on the same journey, and how he would feel if he knew it had been carried off by an English lady.

She stood for some time, while Jane and John were sketching, taking a long final look at the field from the mound above the crossroads behind La Haye Sainte, beneath what was already being called "Lord Wellington's Tree." Then, the family walked back to Mont St. Jean, "lightened of the load of my cuirass, which a little girl, who before the battle had been one of the inhabitants of La Haye Sainte, joyfully carried to the village for half a franc" – clearly a girl after her own heart. There she voraciously devoured the bread and cheese that was all that the inn had to offer. (68)

"Buonaparte est pris!"

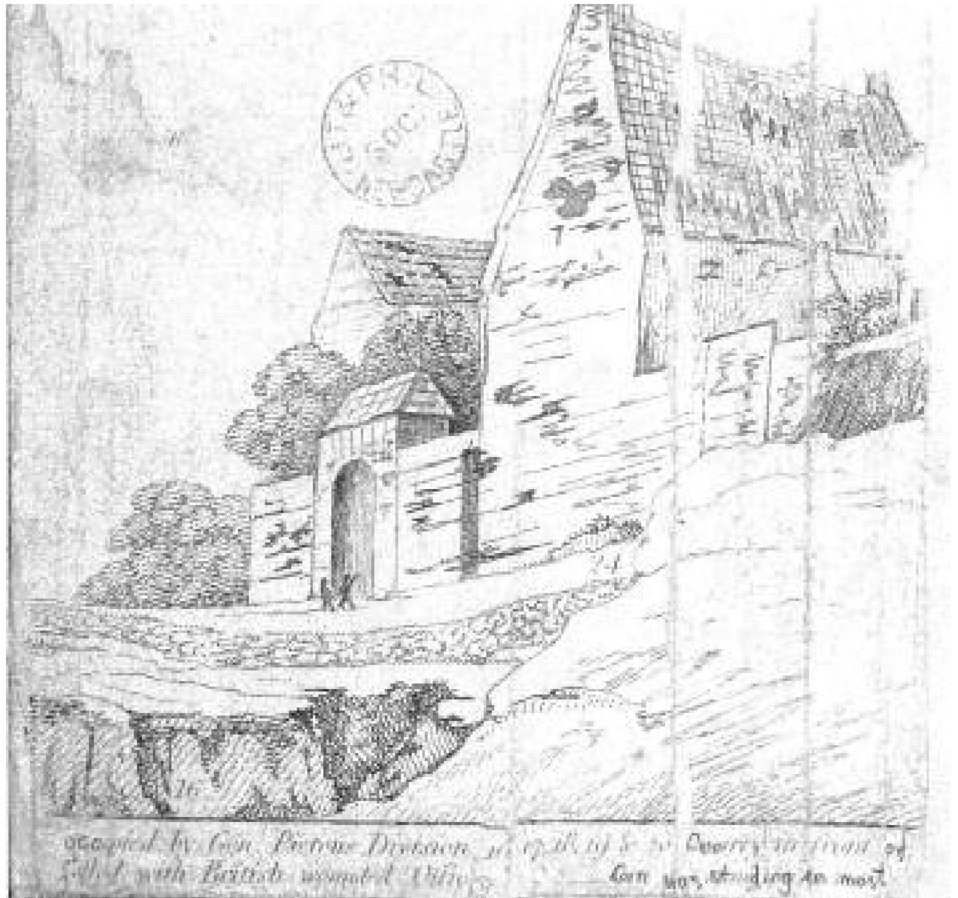
Four days later, as they sat at Llewellyn's bedside, the news was brought by a military acquaintance of Napoleon's surrender to the British. It was confirmed later by the owner of the house, "bursting into his room with a turbulence of joy, ill-suited to the suffering state of our poor wounded friend," shouting, "Buonaparte est pris!—il est pris!— c'est vrai—c'est bien vrai!"

The Waldies left Brussels the next day, the news and celebrations following them along the roads to Ostend. They landed at Margate six weeks after leaving. "In that six weeks the work of an age had been accomplished; an usurper had been dethroned ; a monarch had been restored; a kingdom had been lost and won; a war had begun and ended; peace had revisited the world; and justice—strict, impartial justice, had descended upon the head of the guilty. And all this was the work of England!" (69)

John and Jane shortly resumed their journey to Paris. In the Louvre Jane saw not only the masterpieces of its own pre-war collection, but those requisitioned by Napoleon from all over Europe and not yet sent back. She actually saw the horses of St. Mark's being lowered from the Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel by British sailors for return to Venice. Just before she and John left in mid- September she witnessed "the proud sight of a peaceful review of 65,000 British troops on the plains of St. Denis. The flags of the regiments which had fought at Waterloo were still torn and rent as when they quitted that victorious field. I saw the marks of that terrible cannonade, to which, at only a few miles' distance, I had listened with such fearful interest, in every triumphant banner that then waved over the subject plains of France. From watching the sick-beds of those who suffered in that tremendous conflict, I had been suddenly transported to the gayest capital in Europe, at a period of more than usual splendour, when the greater number of European sovereigns held their court in it, and their armies were encamped within and around it." (70)

In London, within two weeks of returning, Charlotte had produced, with two established booksellers, one a military specialist, *The Battle of Waterloo*. This contained a collection of official accounts and

other documents; maps; statistics; lists of killed and wounded officers; and honours conferred. But the first part was an 'Explanation of the Sketches' and 'Circumstantial Details prefatory to the documents, also to previous and subsequent events.' These were by "A Near Observer" and are Charlotte's first vivid account of what she had seen, heard and found out in those intense six weeks. She even describes the two French eagles captured on the field, which had been sent to London immediately after the battle. (71)



Even in this early account Charlotte gave a glowing, if garbled account of the service of her favourites: "The 28th Regiment formed into a square, repelled the furious attacks of the French Cuirassiers, whose armour inspired them with confidence and courage; still they could not stand the English charge with the bayonet, and again and again they were repulsed by the 28th Regiment, with immense loss: their Colonel, Sir Philip Belson, had four horses shot under him!"

The sketches referred to in her text, printed on August 12th, were announced on the title page as "A Panoramic Sketch of the Field of Battle." The text explained that the sketches were taken on the spot, from the summit of a perpendicular bank, immediately above the high road from Brussels running south. One folding plate represented the view forward, towards the French; the other the view back to the main British position. Ingeniously, "the two Plates join together at each end, as marked; (A joining to A, and B joining to B,) forming a complete circle or panoramic view of the Field of Battle."(72)

Thus, probably without her knowledge, Jane's sketches, with her sister's account, became part of the first and very popular guidebook to a battlefield that would attract thousands of British visitors. It went through ten editions in the next two years, constantly expanding with new documents and illustrations, but with the narrative and the panorama, in black and white and colour versions, at its heart. On February 7th 1816 John Waldie and his old teacher the Reverend William Turner both presented books to the newly-formed Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Turner's was a history of Hull; John Waldie's was his sisters' *Waterloo*. George Waldie donated both the 5th Edition, and the updated 7th Edition of his daughters' book to the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. (73)

Shadows of an Emperor

“From the moment I could read and reflect, it had been one of my most earnest wishes to visit Italy.” (74) So wrote Jane Waldie and in September 1816 she set off to go there with her sister Charlotte and her younger brother William Jonathan, now partner in Potts and Waldie, glass manufacturers of Queen Street, Cheapside. He had never been abroad and seems to have been taken ill in Paris. The sisters boldly proceeded down the Rhone to join their older brother John in Lyon. They went on to Marseilles, where Jane had an alarming encounter with a beggar and a knife. They wanted to proceed by sea, but had to take the long land route into Italy, crossing and recrossing the Apennines. At last their carriage neared Rome and both leaped out to run up the bank and see the skyline of the city. They saw all the main sights and then visited the other main cities - Naples, Florence, Venice, and Milan - before crossing into Switzerland.

One theme in their experiences was the continuing impact of Napoleon’s rule and defeat on the countries they passed through. They met a woman who had served disguised as a man at Waterloo. They heard Mass in Marseilles on the anniversary of Marie Antoinette’s execution, a commemoration designed to bolster the restored Bourbon Monarchy. But they also heard rumours of a second return of Napoleon, which they felt would be widely welcomed in Lyon. They laughed heartily at the story that he had exchanged places with Sir Neil Campbell, whom they knew well from their Brussels adventure. “Colonel Campbell being very tall and thin it could hardly be expected that anyone would take him for the Emperor, who was notoriously a figure of the reverse.” (75)

They were keen to see the place Napoleon landed near Cannes. Jane sketched and later painted the scene. They reflected on his career and fate. They also saw *L’Inconstant*, the boat on which he had returned from Elba. On the Lombard plain they strove to see anything of the battlefield of Marengo, the site of Napoleon’s first victory as ruler of France. They saw many artworks which had recently been returned from France. They were outraged to find the horses on St. Mark’s accompanied by an inscription crediting their return to Venice solely to the Austrian Emperor, trying to impress his new and reluctant subjects.

They sympathized with Napoleon’s wife, the Austrian princess Maria Louisa, whom they saw at the theatre in Parma, which she had been given as a Duchy, “Doomed ever to be the victim of state policy, she has been cruelly involved in the fallen fortunes of Buonaparte, yet finally separated from him for ever; and is now left an empress without an empire,—a wife without a husband,—a mother without a child!.” Her son by Napoleon, briefly Napoleon II and the hope of his followers, was being brought up by her family in Vienna. (76)

A highlight of the visit to Rome was an audience with the Pope. This was the aged Pius VII who had been dragged to Paris to legitimize Napoleon’s coronation in Notre Dame, although the new Emperor actually crowned himself, and then Josephine. The court painter, the former Revolutionary David, even altered history by showing the Pope’s hand raised in blessing. (77)

Their audience took place in a summer house, since ladies could not enter the Vatican. The Protestant sisters felt it was right to wear veils, make a low curtsey and kiss his hand, but not his shoe. “He spoke with cheerfulness on common topics; laughed, took snuff, and cut jokes about the weather—which was then very wet and cold; and said it was not so when he was a ragazzo: then there was summer in April, but now it was good for nothing but to sit over the fire. But, by far, the most interesting part of our long conversation regarded the invasion and occupation of Italy by the French. Upon these subjects he spoke with energy; some portion of bitterness mingling itself with the usual mildness of his manner. And surely, when we remember the injuries and indignities which, for a long series of years, the French and their ruler heaped on his devoted country, and spared not to himself—“One human tear may drop and be forgiven!”

To us his manners were extremely kind and flattering. He seemed pleased with our visit, and ex-

pressed a strong wish that we should repeat it. He complimented us, particularly my sister, on her excellent knowledge of Italian, assuring us it had given him additional pleasure that we had been able to converse with him in his native tongue, as he had a great dislike to French, which he was nevertheless frequently obliged to speak, from many of the persons introduced to him being ignorant of Italian. He accompanied us to the door when we took leave, bade us a kind farewell, and gave us his blessing." (78)

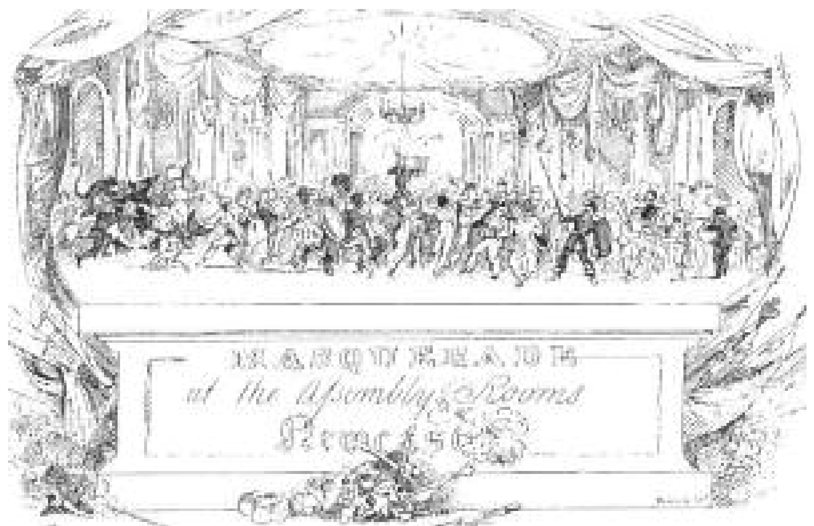
After their extensive Italian tour Jane returned with John by way of Paris. In the Louvre she had the curator arrange for the masterpieces to be brought to a private room for her to copy. This was to avoid her having to mingle with the public in the galleries – probably a wise precaution. In Rome she had noted, "At this time, I was the only lady who drew publicly... But I could never get sketched in peace. I had been persecuted by the rude curiosity of the Dutch in their cities and all but taken up for a spy on the coasts of Flanders; but I was never so constantly tormented as at Rome. Though always accompanied by servants, and frequently additionally guarded by friends, a troublesome mob regularly gathered about me the moment I commenced; and, if I could not have made rapid sketches, I should certainly have made none at all at Rome."

Of the two artists who shared the room with her and her servant she wrote, "Before this, I had no idea how very very much of children Frenchmen may become… I could not regard them as any thing better than kittens or monkeys." John dropped in on her between performances at the various theatres. Charlotte remained in Switzerland and then returned to Rome to continue her researches. (79)

While Charlotte was away her family seems to have sent the full version she had written of her experiences in 1815 to John Murray, the publisher. There may be some truth in this, although it was a convention of the day that authors were always forced to publish by their friends. Also, there seems to have been time to obtain a typically forceful preface from Charlotte before its actual publication, as *Narrative of a Residence in Belgium during the Campaign of 1815 and of a Visit to the Field of Waterlo*o, by "An Englishwoman." It was pacy, informative, and emotional; balanced heroism with horror; and was wildly patriotic. The gentlemen of the Literary and Philosophical Society in Newcastle chose to buy this book for their library themselves. (80)

It became the standard account of the British civilian experience of Waterloo. In 1848 Thackeray brought out *Vanity Fair*, with the most famous fictional description of the events in Brussels in 1815. The journals of Fanny D'Arblay had just been published by her niece. These contained a gripping account of Brussels during Waterloo, written eight years afterwards, initially for her son. Thackeray reviewed the book and may have used it. But the former Fanny Burney was married to a Royalist French officer far away in Trier, and her references are often to the French community. The scenes in *Vanity Fair* seem to owe more to Charlotte's mix of snobbery, hard-bargaining, courage and panic. (81)

The Waldie sisters were back in Newcastle by April 1819, both planning books on their Italian travels. They attended the Masquerade at the Assembly Rooms that marked the start of spring. This combined masks and fancy dress, many people reappearing in a second costume. Proceedings began at 9pm, when a party of "gypsies" set up camp in the middle of the floor and began to tell fortunes and mend things. At midnight, "after the greatest mirth and hilarity had prevailed," a bugle sounded for the removal of masks, when "highly diverting" discoveries were made. Along with the usual males in drag – Mr. Johnson as a Newcastle orange seller; Mr. Davidson as



a Dandy Lady – the following were notable: the Pilgrim was the dignified James Losh; the Country Bumpkin the wealthy Mr. Brandling; the Jew Pedlar Miss De Cardonell Lawson; the Quaker Miss Blakeney; the Chinese Lady Miss Heron. When Vanity removed her mask she was revealed to be Miss Jane Waldie, who had previously appeared as a hooded Italian Penitent. A Swiss Peasant from the Canton of Berne, previously an old Scotch Pedlar Woman, turned out to be her sister Charlotte. This was clearly a successful social occasion, but in troubled times. Mingling with Newcastle's elite were the officers of the 18th Hussars, some of them Waterloo veterans. Four months later the Waterloo veterans of a sister regiment would ride into a peaceful crowd of their own people in St. Peter's Fields Manchester, and write the "Peterloo Massacre" into history. (82)

Encounters with Celebrity - Byron

On 17th October 1816, John Waldie, travelling with Sir Philip Belson, Llewellyn's old colonel, and still dazzled by his first ever views of the Alps, had reached Saint Gingoulph, at the south-east corner of Lake Geneva. In one day he encountered ten English carriages en route to the Simplon Pass into Italy. Three drew his attention. "In the last was a gloomy looking, handsome and rather fat-faced man with his servant, whom I found was Lord Byron…he is very like the pictures I have seen of him. I thought he was something extraordinary. The servant had a cap oddly ornamented with brass. Lord B. had an English hat. He looked very melancholy and wretched." (83)

Byron was fleeing scandal and financial problems at home. But, on the way he was writing *Childe Harold* and sending back the Cantos to his publisher John Murray in London. He had set off in a replica he had had made of Napoleon's coach, captured after Waterloo and exhibited in London. He had stayed in Brussels and visited the battlefield, adding his name to the graffiti at the Chateau of Hougoumont. He sent Murray a brass cuirass (front and back), helmet (with plume) and a sword. He also dashed off the verses that were to become famous about the Duchess of Richmond's Ball, "There was a sound of revelry by night…" Byron focused on the Duke of Brunswick, (whose embalmed body John had seen in Antwerp) making an indelibly romantic figure of the black-uniformed and brooding prince – in fact a middle-aged man with a stare anyone might do well to avoid:

"Within a window'd niche of that high hall
Sate Brunswick's fated chieftain; he did hear
That sound the first amidst the festival,
And caught its tone with Death's prophetic ear;
And when they smiled because he deem'd it near,
His heart more truly knew that peal too well
Which stretch'd his father on a bloody bier,
And roused the vengeance blood alone could quell:
He rush'd into the field, and, foremost fighting, fell." (84)

By 1820, after dissipated but productive years in Venice, Byron was at Ravenna in pursuit of his married mistress, Countess Guiccioli. There John Murray regularly sent him packages of his other authors' publications. One included Jane's four-volume *Sketches of Italy,* a readable and light hearted description of her 1816-17 travels. Byron had already complained, "Why do you send me so much *trash* upon Italy – such tears etc., which I know *must be false*?" However, he soon skimmed Jane's book, perhaps going first to the Venice chapters in Volume 4.

He should have been pleased to find himself described as "our great living poet" and reference to a scene "so admirably described in the witty *Beppo* of Lord Byron." But his eye fell instead on a footnote on Page 159, where Jane had written, "I cannot but be flattered by finding, in some cases, a similarity between my own ideas and those since so admirably expressed by his lordship in *Childe Harolde* and *Beppo*. Except the above, I have not altered a single sentence I wrote while at Venice, though sensible that by so doing I lay myself open to the charge of plagiarism—a charge I can solemnly, and with the strictest truth, assert, would be wholly unfounded: nor can I have borrowed his ideas from

conversation, since I repeatedly declined an introduction to him while in Italy."

On September 8th Byron sent Murray a note which he wanted published at the end of his new play *Marino Faliero,* "without altering a word." This note was addressed to the author of the *Sketches*, "one of the hundred tours lately published." It said that it was impossible for him to have had any genuine offer of an introduction since Byron never accepted them, "Whoever made him such an offer was possessed of impudence equal to that of making such an assertion without having had it. The fact is that I hold in utter abhorrence any contact with the travelling English." Of a thousand such presentations pressed upon him, he had only accepted two, "and both were to Irish women." He went on "I should hardly have descended to speak of such trifles publicly, if the impudence of this "sketcher" had not forced me to a refutation of a disingenuous and impertinent assertion."

In his letter to Murray he asked him to "inform the author, that I will answer personally any offence to him. He is a cursed impudent liar." He added a PS – "You sometimes take the liberty of *omitting* what I send for publication: if you do so in this instance, I will never speak to you again as long as I breathe." On September 11th he added a further demand, "Last post I sent you a note as fierce as Faliero himself, in answer to a trashy tourist, who pretends that he could have been introduced to me. Let me have a proof of it, that I may cut its lava into some shape."

However, he appears to have persevered with the trash, since an embarrassing realization began to dawn on him. On the 29th he wrote again to Murray, "I open my letter to say, that on reading *more* of the 4 volumes on Italy, where the author says "declined an introduction," I perceive (horresco referens [I shudder to remember]) that it is written by a WOMAN!!! In that case you must suppress my note and answer, and all I have said about the book and the writer. I never dreamed of it till now, in my extreme wrath at that precious note. I can only say that I am sorry that a Lady should say anything of the kind. What I would have said to [one of the other sex] you know already. Her book too (as a *She* book) is not a bad one; but she evidently don't know the Italians, or rather don't like them, and forgets the causes of their misery and profligacy."

Still unable to stop digging, however, he picked on Jane's account of lending her veil to a young woman in the Pope's waiting room who was a "descendant of Lady M. W. Montague." Byron knew a lot about the late Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and admired her unconventional lifestyle. He sarcastically asked Murray to ask his author, who this descendant was "and by *whom?* By Algarotti ?" It was unlikely that Murray would put such an indelicate question to his young author. It was notorious that Lady Mary had unsuccessfully pursued the unresponsive diplomat Algarotti until she retired to live in Italy "with a variety of colourful escorts."

In the event, the original note duly appeared at the end of *Marino Faliero* when it was published in April 1821, and is to be found in subsequent editions. This may have been a result of the problems of long-distance communication, or Murray may have decided to let his childish genius stew. Byron wrote, on receiving his copy of the play in June, "..and pray, why did you add the note about the Kelso woman's *Sketches?* Did I not request you to omit it, the instant I was aware the *writer* was a *female?"* This was not his only grievance, which suggests that Murray's memory lapses may have been convenient, "...pray, why did you print the face of M.C. [Margarita Cogni, a former Venetian mistress] by way of frontispiece? It has almost caused a row between Countess G. and myself." (85)

This of course was a year after publication. The book's relative lack of success was for other reasons. Jane's friends blamed the way it was published - perhaps 4 volumes were too many. There were a number of such books around and they also felt the time of year might have been wrong. It was also the case that in the summer of 1820, Italy was stirring to revolt. Byron was involved in the conspiracy and wrote "…the Huns are on the Po; but if once they cross it on their march to Naples, all Italy may rise behind them." This was over-optimistic and the Austrians snuffed out the risings. (86)

Captain Watts, RN

Jane never wrote another book, but she had other interests. In 1817, on return from Italy she showed *View on the coast of Northumberland; rising gale*, and a painting of Rousseau's tomb, sketched in Switzerland. With these she declared her name for the first time. In 1819 she had herself included in a list of painters resident in London, using her brother's address in Cheapside and giving landscapes as her speciality. She exhibited her *Temple of Paestum* at Somerset House the same year, and her *View of Lake Albano, near Rome* at the Royal Academy in the following year.

Also in 1819, at the spa town of Harrogate, she had met Captain George Edward Watts, RN. He shortly arrived at Hendersyde to speak to her father, and they were married there the following year. They set up home at Langton Grange near Staindrop, County Durham. (87)

Her husband was a war hero. His early career reads like the story of the young Nelson, or the fictional Horatio Hornblower. He received 18 wounds, almost all in hand-to-hand combat. He boarded Spanish ships off Gran Canaria. He helped outshoot and capture a larger Danish frigate. Towards the end of the war he fought American ships in the Chesapeake and burned property along its shores.

In one dramatic incident in 1809 he took part in the capture of two small towns at the mouths of the Elbe and the Weser as part of Britain's support for the Fifth Coalition against Napoleon. He and the commander of the landing party decided there was time to chat to two local frauleins. "The window of their drawing room overlooked the main street of Ritzbuttle, and while diligently employed in playing the agreeable, I by chance looked out, and was surprised by the sudden appearance of two mounted dragoons, with drawn sabres, dashing down the street, closely followed by others. Accosting Lord George, who was busily engaged in conversation with Miss S- , I asked, ' where have those German dragoons come from?' He did not notice the question, and I repeated it. He then turned to look, and his eye glancing on the lengthening column, the truth flashed on his mind. He sprang on his feet, vehemently exclaiming ' we are surprised, the French are in the town, and we are all taken.' More appalling words never saluted my ears; nor was a delightful *tete-a-tete* ever more abruptly, or disagreeably interrupted. We sought instant safety in flight: he one way, I another."

One of the girls over-enthusiastically tried to hide Lord George in her bedroom, until he chose to leave in disguise. Captain Watts struggled through the foul mud of a stagnant ditch, crawled through a cornfield and reached the road outside town in a state that much amused the Jack Tars hurrying to his rescue. They then captured or dispersed the French force.

When Napoleon defeated the Austrians at Wagram, near Vienna, the Duke of Brunswick, who had led a unit of black-uniformed volunteers to support them, was excluded from the peace terms. Virtually an outlaw, he marched and fought his way across Germany to the Baltic coast where his exhausted troops climbed aboard the waiting British ships. Watts found himself, "looking at a slight advancing figure, about five feet five inches high, with a sun-burnt countenance, and light moustaches. He had a small foraging cap on his head, which, on my being introduced to him, he most courteously doffed. He was without his black jacket (the costume of his corps), his waistcoat thrown open, shirt-collar loose, throat bare, and wrists unbuttoned ; presenting altogether a figure so unheroic, that I took him for one of the humblest of his followers. Having conversed in French with him for a short time, he expressed a wish to repose himself. Captain Goate naturally offered to escort him to his cabin; but this he declined. Simply asking for a flag, in which he enveloped himself, and laid down on the deck, between two guns, with his cap for a pillow upon one of the quoins."

Such was the Duke of Brunswick. Six years later his black clad hussars would guard his coffin by candle-light in an Antwerp hotel, while it was Jane Waldie, Captain Watts' future wife, who slept the sleep of exhaustion upstairs. (88)

A Guidebook to Rome

Charlotte had also published a description of Rome, based on two years research. It was in the form of a series of letters but reads more like a modern guidebook than her sister's explaining each building in detail. The tone of the narration was carefully constructed to balance modesty with an emphasis on the value of the information given. Her introduction criticized other guides while loyally praising Jane's book – "Among the best of the few tours I have read is "Sketches of Italy," a work invaluable as a guide, and written with great spirit and talent." Like her sister she contrasted contemporary Italian society unfavourably with that of Britain. John Murray had not originally published it, but secured it for a subsequent edition. The book was successful and remained a standard work for years. (89)

The gentlemen of the Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society bought both sisters' books as soon as they came out. In 1843 the review of a new book on Northern Italy singled both of them out for praise, "The *Sketches of Italy,* written by Miss Waldie, and *Rome in the Nineteenth Century,* by her sister, the fourth edition of which was published in 1826, are works of very great merit, and written in a pleasing style. The remarks on the fine arts, in the latter production, disclose an intimate acquaintance with the subject, and a chaste and cultivated taste. To such a popularity had this work attained some dozen years ago, that it was then—as, indeed, it may be now—considered a kind of *vade mecum* [essential handbook]."

The same review made fun of the work of Marianna Starke for her matter of fact style and careful detailing of costs and services available. But it was she who gave John Murray's son the formula for his famous *Guides,* another step farther away from the Grand Tour than Charlotte's book. It was aimed at a new kind of traveller, probably with a family, who actually cared about what to expect on a day by day basis, and about where the money went. (90)

Charlotte was also married at Hendersyde Park in 1822, aged 34, to Stephen Eaton, a banker from Stamford. Over the next twelve years she produced five children and three novels, anonymous but ascribed to Mrs. Eaton. She drew on her recent experiences. Her first novel, *Continental Adventures,* published in 1826, opens with two young sisters (Caroline and Georgiana) listlessly reading a guidebook to Italy. It combines travel description with a fictional story.

Charlotte also shared her emotions with her readers in a style very different from that of her non-fiction. In the introduction she apologized for any imperfections, saying that she had had to spend more time in the nursery with her first baby than in the library with her novel. She was open about the shock of the child's death, "I loved my child better than myself. To have saved him I would (O how joyfully!) have made oblations of all my works, past, present and future – have buried my praise in the dust." (91)

Encounters with Celebrity - Scott

Charlotte decided to write to Sir Walter Scott, the most famous novelist of the day, for permission to dedicate her novel to him. Scott was no stranger to the Waldie Family. In 1824 in *Redgauntlet* he painted an attractive picture of a Quaker household. In a note in the book he says, "In my early youth I resided for a considerable time in the vicinity of the beautiful village of Kelso, where my life passed in a very solitary manner. I had few acquaintances, scarce any companions, and books, which were at the time almost essential to my happiness, were difficult to come by. It was then that I was particularly indebted to the liberality and friendship of an old lady of the Society of Friends, eminent for her benevolence and charity. Her deceased husband had been a medical man of eminence, and left her, with other valuable property, a small and well-selected library. This the kind old lady permitted me to rummage at pleasure, and carry home what volumes I chose." Scott was off school ill and staying with a relative. The lady who befriended him was Jane Ormston Waldie, mother of George Waldie,

who was then establishing himself in Newcastle and starting a family. She remained in the house on Bridge Street, inherited from her brother, a doctor, along with his library. Without pressing him, she put Quaker tracts in the young Scott's way, and even sent them to his parents. (92)

Scott himself visited Waterloo only two months after the battle, staying at the same hotels in Brussels and Antwerp as the grandchildren of his old friend. He wrote to his wife, "I have picked up some trifles on the field and bought others from the peasants particularly two fine cuirasses which I hope I shall be able to get home. I intend one for the Duke and will keep the other." (93) He also wrote a long poem on the battle which critics regarded as one of his few failures. An anonymous wag wrote:

"On Waterloo's ensanguined plain.
Full many a gallant man was slain,
But none, by sabre or by shot.
Fell half so flat as Walter Scott." (94)

Scott's publisher was John Murray who asked in 1817 if he had read Charlotte's new *Narrative*. Scott replied, "I have not seen Miss Waldie's book, which I take to be distinct from that on Waterloo. I know her father and grandmother well but am not acquainted with the young lady. Her account of Waterloo was extremely interesting."

In 1826 Charlotte chose to write anonymously when she requested permission to dedicate her novel to him. She received a polite refusal and clear evidence that, like Byron, Sir Walter automatically assumed the writer to be male: "Sir, I am favoured with your obliging wish to inscribe to me your *Continental Adventures* in terms which I should beg leave to decline as being infinitely beyond my merit. But besides I am placed in rather a delicate situation having on almost every occasion where choice was permitted me unless where particular friends were concerned felt it my duty to decline compliments of that sort." (95)

Charlotte published another novel the following year. *Vittoria Colonna* also draws on the recent past and begins with Napoleon's troops advancing on Rome. In 1831 she dusted off her abandoned first novel and published it as *At Home and Abroad: or, Memoirs of Emily de Cardonell*. It opens with news of the battle of Maida in 1806, with military details and numbers carefully noted. Charlotte wrote to Scott with greater confidence, asking whether he had got the copy sent to him by John Murray, "composed nearly twenty years ago on the banks of the Tweed." She went on, "I consider myself fortunate in having been born in the same age with you, and that I have known you, however slight and transient the acquaintance, I shall always think one of the proudest moments of my life…You may not know who it is that is writing to you – and that I was Chalotte Waldie of Hendersyde. My married name you may easily have forgotten." Scott replied, "I had no occasion for your kind letter to put me in remembrance of my early and kind recollections of your family which began with your excellent and kind old grandmother." He added as one author to another, referring to the current agitation for political reform, "I am afraid that you have not well chosen your turn for lighter literature, which is at present quite strangled by politics. But they must take turns around and I make no doubt the taste of folks will return for cakes and ale." (96)

After – Jane and Charlotte

Jane had only six years of married life. She exhibited regularly at the Northumberland Institution for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Newcastle, mainly subjects based on the sketches she had made on the Continent. In 1826 she gave birth to a son, but in July the same year she died, aged 36, apparently of a long-term condition, possibly an internal injury from her Italian journey. Her husband placed a table tomb above her grave in the south west corner of the churchyard at Gainford, Durham:

"Beneath this stone repose the mortal remains of JANE

wife of GEORGE EDWARD WATTS ESQ. Captain in the

Royal Navy and youngest daughter of GEORGE WALDIE Esq

of HENDERSYDE PARK N. B. Born 2nd March 1790 died the 6th July 1826.

Genius, talents and worth adorned her blameless life,

Gentleness Piety and resignation her early death

she lived admired and beloved She died honoured and lamented

And descended to the tomb hallow'd in the recollection

of all who knew her high moral worth and valuable acquirements."

A loving and well-written obituary was published in the London press, and widely quoted elsewhere. It had been, "prepared principally from communications with which we have been favoured by one of her friends; a lady, tenderly attached to her from infancy, and, we must be permitted to add, of congenial talent and virtues." Another well informed commentator had no doubt that this was Charlotte. It could also have been Elizabeth Chatto, who had shared the family's pew at Hanover Square Chapel and was a painter herself. (97)

As for John, nearly a year later he was at Covent Garden when, "I was quite upset by Braham's singing Deeper and deeper, and Waft her angels – both of these brought back the angelic image of my lost sister – alas! The void remains, and ever will." In her will she had requested that he be given one of her later paintings. Captain Watts complied and sent *Small View of the Bay of Cannes, and remains of the Roman Aqueduct of Frejus.* John commented, "This beautiful picture was sent to J. Waldie, after the death of Mrs Watts, by Admiral Watts, in consequence of her having bequeathed to him one of her later and finer works. J. Waldie was with his beloved sister when she took the original sketch in October 1816, but the picture was not painted till 1824. The scene is interesting as the landing-place of Napoleon on his return from Elba. It is painted with the rich and brilliant style of color, and harmony of effect, which characterised her later works." John treasured it along with 28 of her early paintings for the rest of his life. (98)

Charlotte was widowed early in 1834. As well as bringing up her four young children she immediately took her husband's place as senior partner at the bank. She "was always consulted in all matters of importance affecting the bank and is reported, on one occasion, to have stopped a run on the bank at Uppingham by the force of her remarks to the crowd clamouring for their money." In 1851 she gave her occupation to the Census takers as "banker", and knocked two years off her age. Her younger son she described as a landed proprietor. Her elder son shortly took over her role in the bank. (99)

In 1852 she republished her *Rome in the 19th Century.* She stated briskly in her new Preface, "THIS work, which was originally published in 1820, and in a very short time passed through four editions, has been out of print for nearly twenty years. Its republication was prevented at that time by circumstances of domestic affliction; and when at length the Authoress was able to revise it, so many new books upon Italy and Rome had appeared in the interim, that she considered her own must necessarily have been superseded; and she long resisted every solicitation to republish it. But apparently no work has yet exactly supplied its place, and the demand for it having steadily increased, a Fifth Edition has been urgently called for."

The following year she also republished her *Narrative* with the snappier title of *Days of Battle,* writing a new Preface; filling in most of the names of people left blank in the original; and adding a tribute to the Duke of Wellington, who had just died. Probably to catch the surge of nostalgia and patriotism, Booths also republished *The Battle of Waterloo* with a biography of Wellington at the front, but with the Waldie sisters' account and panorama still in place. The latter could be compared with a map of

the battlefield as it had become: with the woods of Hougoumont and Wellington's tree gone; and the appearance of the ridge altered as early as the 1820s by the movement of earth for the Lion Mound, commemorating the part in the victory of the short-lived union of Belgium and Holland.

Nearly 30 years after Charlotte's death, in 1859, aged 71, the *Narrative* was published again as *Waterloo Days* with the help of her son and with new explanatory notes. It has been used extensively since and was republished most recently in 2009 in a compilation with the accounts of Magdalene De Lancey and Juanita Smith entitled *Ladies of Waterloo*. (100)

In the 19th Century Jane was the more famous sister. She is referred to in Mackenzie's Newcastle *History* of 1827 as an "ornament" of the Hanover Street congregation. He and others attributed some or all of Charlotte's writings to her. Nearly 70 years after her death, Jane Watts was the only woman to have her own entry in Richard Wellford's *Men of Mark Twixt Tyne and Tweed.* Changing fashion, or the fact that nearly all her works were in private houses, has resulted in a loss of interest. Women's writing became more valued. Charlotte now has the entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, with Jane added briefly, and with some inaccuracy. Their shared experiences and their contribution to each other's achievements have been lost from the record. (101)

After - John

With his sisters married, John's connections with Newcastle weakened. He continued as a member of the "Lit and Phil" into the 1840s and subscribed to the publication of local books. But travelling and the collections it brought back to Hendersyde were now his passions. When his father died in 1826, it was understood he would sell Forth House. His mother was still there ("Ann Waldie, gentlewoman") in 1827, but she died in 1831. He was still leaseholder in 1830, but he must have sold shortly after. The area was changing - new streets, the railway station and the new Catholic Cathedral swept away the Forth and the City Walls. Without its own wall or grounds, and surrounded by newer buildings, the Waldies' former home was destined for commercial purposes. After a varied history Forth House was narrowly saved from demolition in 2004 and a vigorous local campaign obtained listed status for it. It is now (2010) a Chinese Christian Church. (102)

John lived the life of a settled bachelor, mainly at Hendersyde when he was in the United Kingdom. He was accomplished and charming, but apparently sometimes too much of a good thing. In 1825 Sir Walter Scott wrote to his son from Ireland, "I saw Waldie, brother of Mrs. Griffith whose obliging attentions frightened us from Mallow. He upbraided me for not visiting Kilcoman and other remarkables in its neighbourhood but I did not think it necessary to tell the real reason for our retreat."

The young and vivacious Elizabeth Stephenson spent the winters of 1829-30 and 1830 – 31 in Newcastle, with the family of the Reverend William Turner in Clavering Place. As Mrs, Gaskell she later used some of her experiences in her novels, particularly *Ruth.* In *Cranford* Miss Jenkyns recalls the Napoleonic invasion alarm in Newcastle in 1804. Elizabeth also met John Waldie, among the members of the Hanover Square congregation and their social circle. Later she wrote to her friend Harriet Carr, whose father managed the Bank of England on the corner of Clavering Place. "How is Mr. Waldie? Uninteresting wretch that he is – and you putting me, the very worst person in the whole world for keeping my countenance, opposite to the piano at Jesmond when he began "Amore che sorgerai."

These views were of course privately expressed. But in 1859 the formidable Lady Morgan published an autobiography based on her diaries and letters. Although not one to spoil a good tale for the truth, she gives a convincing picture of being bored and pestered for introductions, in Paris in the winter of1818, by one Mr. W_die. She relates how she told the Porter that she was never to be "at home" to Mr. W_die and never "out" to Baron Humboldt. But a subordinate servant was on duty and proudly announced "M. Valdie," while handing her a letter from Humboldt regretting that he had missed her.

“After such a contretemps one has nothing to do but die, to retire into a Convent,” she wailed, although she admits she got an incident for one of her novels out of it. John was mortified and wrote to the publisher with amendments he wanted made and a letter he wanted adding. But it was itself so long and convoluted and dropped so many names, that there was surely no hope of success. (103)

The Reverend William Turner kept track of his boys. He had seen the notice of William Jonathan Waldie’s early death in 1821. He noted of John, “A great traveller…and has an extensive library.” A godson found him eccentric and forbidding in old age, with his cheap wig and old fashioned clothes, but recognised that he had a respected place in the society of his elders. (104)

In 1859, just before Charlotte died, John published privately an updated catalogue of his collection. The virtual walk he described through his house was like a journey through his life, with references to family, childhood, loyal servants and echoes of Napoleon.

In the Lower Ante-Room were portraits of Charlotte and Maria Jane at Cullercoats in 1828; his father; and himself in the uniform of Deputy Lieutenant of the county in 1838. He noted, “In this room all the pictures are family portraits, excepting two large Landscapes by Mrs Watts, and in this room, and J. Waldie’s sitting room and bedroom, are contained all the family portraits, and all the pictures painted by Mrs Watts, and all the other modern pictures in J. Waldie’s possession.”

On a shelf in the large Drawing Room were, “a number of small Lachrymal Vases and fragments obtained at Pompeii, by Giacomo Smith, and given to him there by the director of the excavations, and sent by him to J. Waldie at Hendersyde Park, after he left him in 1838. The four Busts and four Columns were brought from Italy in May 1857, by J. Waldie, as a momento of his 9th winter, (most probably his last), spent in the Eternal City.” He also placed there, “a beautiful Statuary Marble Hand on a Basement of Statuary and Bigio Marble, of the Princess Pauline Borghese, sister of Napoleon the 1st, and taken from life by an artist long since dead. It was brought from Rome in 1857, by J. Waldie, as a remembrance of the great kindness shewn by her to him during all the winter of 1819-20 at Rome.”

In this room also, “On the Rosewood Table, on this side of the room, is placed a very small Stand for books, containing 17 volumes on various subjects, by Mrs Eaton and Mrs Watts, and the first printed catalogue of the objects of Art at Hendersyde Park” (John’s only publication). Some of the chairs, like the sofa in the Ante-Room, had been bought by George and Ann Waldie for the Drawing Room of Forth House in 1784.

Most of Jane’s pictures, and two by the family friend Elizabeth Chatto (Mrs. Potts) were in John’s Sitting Room. There also was the picture of a young Jane with her spaniel Fido, done by a French officer, prisoner at Kelso. On the book shelf, above the rosewood cabinet were the manuscript volumes of John’s Continental travels, which were, “copied in fair writing, by various hands, and are finely bound in Morocco, in 25 volumes.”

In his bedroom, “Between the fireplace and the window is a Mahogany Pier Table, above which is a Shelf for Books, containing 26 volumes, chiefly Travelling Guides, and Voyages and Travels. Inside the three glass doors of this Pier Table are contained 69 volumes of Manuscript Journals of the time of J. Waldie, without a day’s interruption, from the period of his attaining the age of twelve years and a half. The earlier volumes are merely pocket books, but there are above forty years of daily Manuscript Consecutive Journals.”

In the bedroom he also had small portraits of aunts, grandparents, nieces and his brother-in-law, and his brother’s and father’s dressing cases. There was a portrait of “Giacomo Smith, nearly ten years personal servant to J. Waldie, and much distinguished for his talent for music and taste in the fine arts,” and a miniature in water colors of Louis Favre, a Swiss and “eleven years servant to J. Waldie.” There hung also a likeness of Napoleon’s son the Duke of Reichstadt (briefly Napoleon II) and a

Sevres medallion of the Emperor Napoleon himself, in a black frame.

In the grounds was a final poignant memorial - to a childhood pet from Forth House, who spent an honourable retirement at Hendersyde:

HERCULES,

ALIAS THOMAS THUMB,

A Faithful Shetland Pony,

Who Died December 1812,

At Hendersyde Park,

In the 35th Year of his Age,

And 28th Year of his Service

To the Family of Waldie.

This Stone was Erected to

His Memory by his first

And much attached Master,

John Waldie,
In November 1813. (105)

On John's death in 1865, at the age of 83, Hendersyde and its treasures went to the family of his eldest sister, Maria Jane. They added her family name to their own and the Waldie-Griffiths were the local lairds until the baronetcy became extinct in 1933. Hendersyde went the way of many country houses in the 20th Century – demolished and its contents dispersed. The manuscript journals of John Waldie were sold through R.D. Steedman – "17 Saville Row, dealer in rare and choice books; libraries purchased" and until recently on Grey Street, Newcastle. They were bought by the University of California, Los Angeles and recently have been used extensively for the study of the European theatre of the period. Tucked in among them was Jane's manuscript account of her experiences in Brussels and Holland and later in occupied Paris, which she had provisionally titled *Journal of a Four Months Absence from England in the Summer of 1815.* She never published it, leaving it to her sister Charlotte to write the bestseller. There it rests, in a great city that when it was written was simply the Spanish mission of Our Lady of the Angels. (106)

Notes

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15. Turner's *Register*; Captain Lionel S. Challis, *Peninsula Roll Call* (http://www.napoleon-series.org/research under biographies html.); *The Gentleman's Magazine* (London, 1832) Vol. 102, Part 2, p 181.

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