More than any other period of British literature, Romanticism is strongly identified with a single genre. Romantic poetry has been one of the most enduring, best-loved, most widely read, and most frequently studied genres for two centuries and remains no less so today. This Companion offers a comprehensive overview and interpretation of the poetry of the period in its literary and historical contexts. The essays consider its metrical, formal, and linguistic features; its relation to history; its influence on other genres; its reflections of empire and nationalism, both within and outside the British Isles; and the various implications of oral transmission and the rapid expansion of print culture and mass readership. Attention is given to the work of less well-known or recently rediscovered authors, alongside the achievements of some of the greatest poets in the English language: Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake, Scott, Burns, Keats, Shelley, Byron, and Clare.

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THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO
BRITISH ROMANTIC POETRY

EDITED BY
JAMES CHANDLER and MAUREEN N. McLANE
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CONTRIBUTORS

currently editing Robert Southey’s letters and poems for the first Collected Edition. His collection of essays (co-edited with Kevin Hutchings), The Indian Atlantic, also published by Cambridge University Press, appeared in 2008.


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Contributors

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## CHRONOLOGY

1757  
William Blake born  
Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*  
Thomas Gray, “The Bard”

1759  
Robert Burns born  
Mary Wollstonecraft born  
Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*  
Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1759–67)

1760  
Accession of George III  
James Macpherson’s Ossianic *Fragments* published

1762  
Joanna Baillie born  
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* and *Emile*

1763  
Treaty of Paris ends Seven Years War  
Hugh Blair, *A Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian, the Son of Fingal*  
Christopher Smart, *A Song to David*  
James Macpherson, *Temora*

1764  
Ann Radcliffe (née Ward) born  
John Thelwall born  
Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*

1765  
Thomas Percy, ed., *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*

1766  
Oliver Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield*

1767  
Hugh Blair, *Heads of the Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*

1768  
Sterne dies  
Maria Edgeworth born

1769  
Napoleon Bonaparte born  
Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses on Art*

1770  
Captain James Cook lands at Botany Bay  
Thomas Chatterton’s suicide
Chronology

Ludwig van Beethoven born
Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel born
William Wordsworth born

1771
Walter Scott born
Dorothy Wordsworth born
James Beattie, The Minstrel (1771–4)
Henry Mackenzie, The Man of Feeling

1772
Mansfield Decision denies a legal basis for slavery in England

1773
Samuel Taylor Coleridge born

1774
Donaldson v. Becket reestablishes limits on copyright
Accession of Louis XVI of France
Robert Southey born
Goldsmith dies
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, The Sorrows of Young Werther

1775
War begun with American colonies
Jane Austen born
Charles Lamb born
Joseph Turner born
Richard Brinsley Sheridan, The Rivals
Robert Wood, An Essay on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer (posthumous)

1776
American Declaration of Independence
John Constable born
David Hume dies

1777
Thomas Chatterton, “Rowley” Poems (posthumous)
Sheridan, The School for Scandal

1778
Franco-American Alliance signed at the Second Continental Congress
Britain declares war on France
William Hazlitt born
Rousseau dies
Frances Burney, Evelina

1779
Britain declares war on Spain
David Hume, Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion
Samuel Johnson, “Prefaces” to The Works of the English Poets (1779–81)
William Cowper and John Newton, Olney Hymns
1781 Friedrich Schiller, *The Robbers*
Immanuel Kant, *A Critique of Pure Reason*
1782 Burney, *Cecilia*
Edward Cowper, *Poems*
Rousseau, *Confessions*
1783 American independence recognized at Peace of Versailles
Blake, *Poetical Sketches*
George Crabbe, *The Village*
1784 Pitt's India Act restricts the East India Company’s autonomy
James Leigh Hunt born
Johnson dies
Pierre Beaumarchais, *The Marriage of Figaro*
Capt. James Cook, *A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean*
Hannah More, *The Bas Bleu; or, Conversation*
Charlotte Smith, *Elegiac Sonnets*
Jacques-Louis David, *The Oath of the Horatii*
1785 Thomas de Quincey born
Thomas Love Peacock born
Cowper, *The Task*
Thomas Warton appointed Laureate
1786 Burns, *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* published at Kilmarnock
Mozart, *The Marriage of Figaro*
1787 Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade founded
American Constitution signed
James Johnson, *The Scots Musical Museum* (1787–1803, with anonymous contributions from Burns)
1788 George III’s first attack of insanity
George Gordon (later Lord) Byron born
More, *Slavery, a Poem*
Ann Yeatsley, *A Poem on the Inhumanity of the Slave-Trade*
Charlotte Smith, *Emmeline*
1789 Convening of the Estates General to deal with financial crisis in France; the Tennis Court Oath; the Bastille falls; Declaration of the Rights of Man
Jeremy Bentham, *Principles of Morals and Legislation*
Blake, *Songs of Innocence* and *The Book of Thel*
William Bowles, *Fourteen Sonnets Written Chiefly on Picturesque Spots during a Journey*
Charlotte Brooke, *Reliques of Irish Poetry*
Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*
William Lisle Bowles, *Fourteen Sonnets, Elegiac and Descriptive*

1790
Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*
Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*
Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men*
Henry James Pye appointed Laureate

1791
American Bill of Rights ratified
Church and King Riots aimed at Joseph Priestley's beliefs concerning religious toleration and his political radicalism lead to the destruction of much property, including Priestley's house
Mozart dies
Louis XVI captured at Varennes
Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*
Paine, *The Rights of Man*
Radcliffe, *The Romance of the Forest*

1792
Royal Proclamation against seditious writings issued by George III; *The Rights Of Man* banned and Paine charged with sedition
Continental allies invade France; September massacres; declaration of the French Republic; imprisonment of French royal family
Wordsworth in France
Percy Shelley born
Burns, “Tam o’ Shanter”
Charlotte Smith, *Desmond*
Samuel Rogers, *The Pleasures of Memory*
Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*

1793
Trial and execution of Louis XVI; France declares war on Britain; the Terror; execution of Marie Antoinette
Blake, *Visions of the Daughters of Albion and America: A Prophecy*
William Godwin, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*
Wordsworth, *An Evening Walk and Descriptive Sketches*

1794
Suspension of Habeas Corpus in England; reformers jailed without charges; Robespierre executed; end of the Terror; the Directorate established
Blake, *Songs of Innocence and Experience, Europe: A Prophecy, and The Book of Urizen*
Coleridge, “Monody on the Death of Chatterton”
Erasmus Darwin, *Zoonomia*
Godwin, *Caleb Williams*


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Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason*

1795

Thomas Carlyle born
John Keats born
Macpherson dies
Blake, *The Book of Los* and *The Book of Abania*
Coleridge, *Conciones Ad Populum*
Matthew Lewis, *Ambrosio, or The Monk*
More, *Repository Tracts* (1795–8)
Friedrich Schiller, *Letters on Aesthetic Education* and *On Naive and Sentimental Poetry*
Southey, *Poems*

1796

Attempted French invasion of Ireland
Robert Bloomfield, *The Farmer's Boy*
Burns dies
Burney, *Camilla*
Coleridge, *Poems on Various Subjects* and *The Watchman*
Mary Hays, *Memoirs of Emma Courtney*
Charlotte Smith, *Marchmont*
Mary Robinson, *Sappho and Phaon*
Southey, *Joan of Arc*
Thelwall, *The Rights of Nature Against the Usurpation of Establishments*

1797

Wordsworth and Coleridge become neighbours in Somerset, begin their historic collaboration
Burke dies
Wollstonecraft dies
Coleridge, *Poems*
Radcliffe, *The Italian*

1798

Irish Rebellion; French army lands in Ireland
The *Athenaeum* publishes fragments by founders Friedrich and A. W. Schlegel, and by Novalis, and Schleiermacher (1798–1800)
Baillie, *Plays on the Passions*
Coleridge, “Fears in Solitude,” “France: an Ode,” and “Frost at Midnight”
Wollstonecraft, *Maria, or the Wrongs of Woman*
Wordsworth and Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads* (published by Joseph Cottle in Bristol)
Wordsworth launches the poem “on his own mind,” a work that would be posthumously published as *The Prelude* in 1850

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Chronology

1799  French Directorate falls; Napoleon made First Consul
      Thomas Campbell, The Pleasures of Hope

1800  Act of Union with Ireland
      Cowper dies
      Anne Bannerman, Poems
      Edgeworth, Castle Rackrent
      Mary Robinson, Lyrical Tales
      Wordsworth and Coleridge, much expanded second edition of
      Lyrical Ballads

1801  George III refuses to support Catholic Emancipation; Pitt resigns
      James Hogg, Scottish Pastorals
      Southey, Thalaba

1802  Napoleon elected First Consul for life
      Erasmus Darwin dies
      Edinburgh Review begins publication; Francis Jeffrey christens
      the “Lake School of Poetry”
      William Cobbett begins the Political Register (1802–35)
      Bannerman, Tales of Superstition and Chivalry
      Coleridge, “Dejection: An Ode”
      Edgeworth, Belinda
      Amelia Opie, Poems
      Scott, Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border
      Wordsworth begins composition of what would become “Ode:
      Intimations of Immortality”

1803  Napoleon interns all British civilians in France; war resumed
      Erasmus Darwin, The Temple of Nature

1804  Henry Addington resigns; Pitt becomes Prime Minister
      Napoleon becomes Emperor
      Kant dies
      Blake, Milton and Jerusalem
      Edgeworth, Popular Tales
      Wordsworth completes the Immortality Ode

1805  Samuel Palmer born
      Scott, The Lay of the Last Minstrel
      Southey, Madoc
      Turner, The Shipwreck
      Wordsworth completes the thirteen-book version of what would
      later be called The Prelude

1806  Charlotte Smith dies
      Edgeworth, Leonora
      Sydney Owenson (Lady Morgan), The Wild Irish Girl
chronology

1807  Slavery abolished in England, but not in colonies; slave trade ended
Hazlitt, *A Reply to the Essay on Population*
Byron, *Hours of Idleness*
Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*
Charles and Mary Lamb, *Tales from Shakespeare*
Charles Maturin, *The Fatal Revenge*
Moore, *Irish Melodies*
Wordsworth, *Poems* (2 vols.)

1808  Hunt becomes editor of *The Examiner*
Goethe, *Faust* Part I
Felicia Browne (Hemans), *Poems, England and Spain*
Charles Lamb, *Specimens of the English Dramatic Poets*
Scott, *Marmion*

1809  Alfred Tennyson born
Charles Darwin born
*Quarterly Review* founded
Blake, *A Descriptive Catalogue*
Byron, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*
Campbell, *Gertrude of Wyoming*
Coleridge, *The Friend*
Wordsworth, *The Convention of Cintra*

1810  Scott, *The Lady of the Lake*
Percy Shelley, *Zastrozzi*
Southey, *The Curse of Kehama*

1811  Regency begins as George III is declared mentally unfit to rule
Luddite movement begins in response to mechanization of the textile industry
Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*
Barbauld, *The Female Speaker*
Hunt, “The Feast of the Poets”
Charles Lamb, “On the Tragedies of Shakespeare”
Scott, *The Vision of Don Roderick*
Percy Shelley, *On the Necessity of Atheism*
Mary Tighe, *Psyche* (privately printed 1805)

1812  America declares war on Britain
Robert Browning born
Charles Dickens born
Byron, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* (1812–18)
Crabbe, *Tales in Verse*
Chronology

Edgeworth, *The Absentee*

Percy Shelley, *An Address to the Irish People*

Edmund Kean’s first appearance at Drury Lane

Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*

Byron, *The Bride of Abydos* and *The Giaour*

Coleridge, *Remorse*

Hogg, *The Queen’s Wake*

Scott, *Rokeby*

Percy Shelley, *Queen Mab*

Robert Southey appointed Laureate

1814

Fall of Paris; Napoleon abdicates

Wars with America ended by the Treaty of Ghent

Austen, *Mansfield Park*

Burney, *The Wanderer*

Byron, “Ode to Napoleon Bonaparte,” *The Corsair*, and *Lara*

Hunt, *The Feast of the Poets*

Scott, *Waverley*

Percy Shelley, *A Refutation of Deism*

Southey, *Roderick*

Wordsworth, *The Excursion*

1815

Battle of Waterloo; Napoleon’s surrender and exile; Restoration of Louis XVIII

Byron, *Hebrew Melodies* and *Collected Poems*

David Ricardo, *An Essay On the Low Price of Corn and the Profits of Stock*

Scott, *The Lord of the Isles*, *The Field of Waterloo*, and *Guy Mannering*

Wordsworth, *The White Doe of Rylstone* and *Poems*

1816

Byron leaves England

Sheridan dies

Austen, *Emma*

Byron, *The Siege of Corinth*

Coleridge, “Christabel,” “Kubla Khan,” *Lay Sermons*, and “The Pains of Sleep”

Hunt, “Young Poets”

Maturin, *Bertram*

Peacock, *Headlong Hall*

Scott, *The Antiquary*, *The Black Dwarf*, and *Old Mortality*

Percy Shelley, *Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude; and other Poems*

Southey, *The Lay of the Laureate*

Wordsworth, “Thanksgiving Ode”

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chronology

1817
Jane Austen dies
The Shelleys join Byron in Italy
Blackwood's Magazine founded
Byron, Manfred
Coleridge, Biographia Literaria and Sibylline Leaves
Hazlitt, The Characters of Shakespeare's Plays
Keats, Poems
Scott, Rob Roy
Southey, Wat Tyler (pirated)

1818
Austen, Northanger Abbey and Persuasion
Hazlitt, Lectures on the English Poets
Keats, Endymion
Scott, The Heart of Mid-Lothian
Mary Shelley, Frankenstein
Percy Shelley, The Revolt of Islam, "Ozymandias"

1819
Peterloo Massacre occurs outside Manchester when a large public meeting calling for Parliamentary Reform is attacked by troops
Queen Victoria born
Walt Whitman born
John Ruskin born
Byron, Don Juan (1819–23)
Thomas Campbell, Specimens of the British Poets (7 vols.)
Hemans, Tales and Historic Scenes in Verse
Keats composes his Great Odes
John Polidori, The Vampyre
Scott, The Bride of Lammermoor, The Legend of Montrose, and Ivanhoe
Wordsworth, Peter Bell and The Waggoner

1820
Accession of George IV
London Magazine founded
John Clare, Poems Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery and The Village Minstrel
Keats, Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes, and Other Poems, and Hyperion
Peacock, "The Four Ages of Poetry"
Percy Shelley, "Ode to the West Wind" and Prometheus
Unbound, The Cenci
Scott, The Abbott, and The Monastery

1821
Greek War of Independence begins
Keats dies
Napoleon dies
Chronology

Baillie, *Metrical Legends of Exalted Characters*

John Constable, *The Hay Wain*

De Quincey, *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*

Hazlitt, *Table-Talk*


Scott, *Kenilworth*

1822 Matthew Arnold born

Percy Shelley dies

Byron, Hunt, and Percy Shelley publish in *The Liberal*

1823 Radcliffe dies

Hemans, *The Vespers of Palermo, The Siege of Valencia, and Other Poems, Tales and Historic Scenes* (2nd edn.)

Mary Shelley, *Valperga*

1824 Byron dies

Beethoven, Symphony No. 9 (Choral)

Hogg, *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*

Scott, *Redgauntlet*


1825 Barbauld, *Works*

Hazlitt, *The Spirit of the Age, or, Contemporary Portraits*

Laetitia Elizabeth Landon, *The Troubadour: Poetical Sketches of Modern Pictures and Historical Sketches*

1826 Mary Shelley, *The Last Man*

1827 Beethoven dies

Blake dies

Wordsworth, *Poems* (5 vols.)

Scott acknowledges authorship of the *Waverley* novels

1828 Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts permits Dissenters to hold official posts

University College London opens

Hemans, *Records of Woman with Other Poems*

Hunt, *Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries*

Carlyle, “Essay on Burns”

Coleridge, *Poetical Works*

1829 Honoré de Balzac, *Les Chouans*

Carlyle, “Signs of the Times”

Peacock, *The Misfortunes of Elphin*

1830 Death of George IV and accession of William IV

July Revolutions in France

Christina Rossetti born
Chronology

Hazlitt dies
Carlyle, “On History”
Charles Lamb, Album Verses
Palmer, Coming from Evening Church
Tennyson, Poems, Chiefly Lyrical

1831
Lord John Russell introduces a Reform Bill in House of Commons
Charles Darwin departs on the Beagle
Coleridge’s last meeting with Wordsworth
Benjamin Disraeli, The Young Duke
Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of History

1832
The Representation of the People Bill (First Reform Act) passes in Parliament
Scott dies

1834
Coleridge dies
Lamb dies
Thelwall dies