



## The Women's Print History Project

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### The Business of Gossip, *The WPHP Monthly Mercury*

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Music by Ignatius Sancho, "Sweetest Bard," *A Collection of New Songs* (1769), played by Kandice Sharren

Project Director: Michelle Levy (Simon Fraser University)

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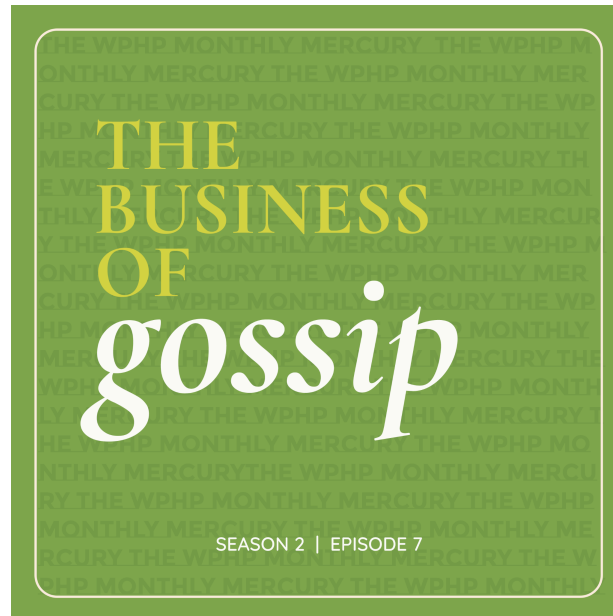
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DHIL



# The Business of Gossip

Kate Moffatt and Kandice Sharren



Dearest readers,

*Reputation is, as they say, everything. The lack of a reputation for some will be their ruin: a young lady if caught unchaperoned, a respectable name if a child is born out of wedlock, a young man if too reckless while gambling. But for others, it seems, no publicity is bad publicity.*

*One such businessman appears to be taking such an approach with his own reputation, indeed: a Mister H— C— has shocked and astonished society over the last thirty years, rising to the top of the publishing world only to fall to its depths in debts—and then regain his fortune once again. A veritable Phoenix, this Mr. H— C—.*

*It appears, however, that our Mr. C— has recently departed for Windsor, and rumours abound about what, pray tell, may have forced him to abscond: has new information surfaced about his parentage—are we finally to receive confirmation that his father is indeed Lord Lansdowne? Or perhaps even the Duke of York, as some insist? Did one of his agreements with an aristocratic author finally go dreadfully awry? Lady Morgan, as we all know, recently abandoned Mr. C— to take up with his rivals and former protégés, Messrs Saunders and Otley. A Mr. John Sutherland has been heard to declare the three of them “all vipers warmed in the Colburn bosom,” though we cannot, unfortunately, corroborate this statement. We can confirm, however, that Mr. C— responded, shall we say, indelicately. A young boy in short pants being denied his favourite sweet comes to mind.*

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*return to London by the Phoenix of the publishing world; what admittedly brilliant works might he bring us when he is next able to spread his wings?*

*Yours,*

*The Ladies of The WPHP Monthly Mercury*

In Episode 7 of Season 2 of *The WPHP Monthly Mercury*, “The Business of Gossip,” hosts Kate and Kandice follow the highly successful Henry Colburn, leading publisher of fiction in the early nineteenth century, across his three main business addresses in London—and in so doing, explore how the publisher prompted, encouraged, and engaged with gossip.

The source of much gossip himself, Colburn’s origins are unknown (although rumoured to be noble), his less-savoury business practices are disparaged by his partners (with good reason), and his reputation, even into scholarship until very recently, is extremely poor. Drawing on research from John Sutherland and Veronica Melnyk, this episode explores the timeline of Colburn’s 47-year career and how, exactly, certain narratives about him were established, and have since been corrected.

Featuring such authors as Sydney, Lady Morgan, Lady Caroline Lamb, and Letitia Elizabeth Landon, and such publishers and book trades members as Saunders and Otley, and Richard Bentley, we traipse through the landscape of Colburn’s publishing practice as it moved through London (and, briefly, Windsor), sharing what each new address wrought or signified for the publisher and what such considerations of business and gossip might tell us about the role of gossip in the book trades more generally.

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Season 1, Episode 10: “[A Brief History of Delarivier Manley](#)”

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[Byron, Lord](#) (person, author)

[Robinson, Mary](#) (person, author)

[Richard Bentley](#) (firm, publisher)

[Henry Colburn \[Conduit Street\]](#) (firm)

[de Staël von Holstein, Anne Louise Germaine](#) (person, author)

[Genlis, Stéphanie Félicité](#) (person, author)

Cottin, Sophie Ristaud (person, author)  
*O'Donnel: a National Tale* (title)  
*France. By Lady Morgan.* (title)  
Lamb, Caroline (person, author)  
*Glenarvon* (title)  
Henry Colburn [New Burlington Street] (firm, publisher)  
*English Fashionables Abroad: A Novel, in Three Volumes* (title)  
C. D. Burdett (person, author)  
*Flirtation, A Novel* (title)  
Bury, Charlotte Susan Maria Campbell (person, author)  
*A Marriage in High Life* (title)  
Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft (person)  
*The Last Man* (title)  
Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley [New Burlington Street] (firm, publisher)  
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- 00:00:00  [music playing]
- 00:00:10 Kate Moffatt  
(co-host) Dearest readers,
- Reputation is, as they say, everything. The lack of a reputation for some will be their ruin: a young lady if caught unchaperoned, a respectable name if a child is born out of wedlock, a young man if too reckless while gambling. But for others, it seems, no publicity is bad publicity.
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- Yours,  
The Ladies of *The WPHP Monthly Mercury*
- 00:02:02  [music playing]

- 00:02:11 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Hello, and welcome to *The WPHP Monthly Mercury*, the podcast for *The Women's Print History Project*! The WPHP is a bibliographic database that collects information about women and book production during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. My name is Kandice Sharren—
- 00:02:28 Kate Moffatt (co-host) and I'm Kate Moffatt—
- 00:02:29 Kandice Sharren (co-host) and we are long-time editors of the WPHP, and the hosts of this podcast. This season, we have some exciting special guests to interview, new research to share, and more stories to tell. Join us every third Wednesday of the month to learn more about the history of women's involvement in print.
- 00:02:47  [music playing]
- 00:02:57 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Last holiday season saw the arrival of a new, binge-worthy series, *Bridgerton*, an adaptation of Julia Quinn's Regency romances of the same name. It revolves around Lady Bridgerton and her eight alphabetically-named children as they enter the marriage market—and a gossip rag written by the anonymous “Lady Whistledown,” which shocks high society by having far more inside knowledge than anyone outside the ton should have, reporting on the scandals of the season as often as she relates who danced with whom at last night's ball. The first season of the Netflix series follows Daphne Bridgerton, the eldest Bridgerton daughter, through her London season.
- 00:03:32 Kandice Sharren (co-host) And her conjugal relations thereafter. I still can't believe I wasted eight hours of my life on that show [Kate laughs]. It's been a year and I'm still not over it. [both laugh]
- 00:03:45 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Whereas I was delighted for eight full hours—did you see the bright colours? The dancing? The sets and the costumes? Not to mention Lady Danbury! And the buttoning of Daphne's cuff!
- 00:03:58 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Gross. Just let me hate things in peace, Kate [Kate laughs]. Hating things brings me joy and it is the season after all.
- 00:04:04 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Well, loving things brings *me* joy! Especially because, aside from what I stubbornly still contend are brilliant sets and costumes [Kandice laughs], not to mention a magical overall energy to the series, it also prompted broad conversations about print and gossip in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England, and I'm thrilled about that.

- 00:04:23 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Fair enough.
- 00:04:25 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Given the centrality of print to the plot in the form of Lady Whistledown's dispatches, the WPHP team, naturally, had a series of hearty debates about the accuracy of its portrayal of how publishing worked. Would Lady Whistledown *really* have made money distributing her cheap print, or have travelled under the cover of night to supervise the printing of her latest pamphlet?
- 00:04:46 Kandice Sharren (co-host) The short answer to both of those questions is no! [Kate laughs]. While newspapers included gossip columns detailing the movements, parties, and fashion choices of members of high society, pamphlets like Lady Whistledown's, which named names and distributed itself for free as an early marketing tactic, weren't really a thing, in part because they would run the risk of bringing libel cases upon the heads of authors and publishers, should they be discovered.
- 00:05:12 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Right, like Kate Ozment mentioned in our episode on Delarivier Manley last year.
- 00:05:16 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Definitely, although the political and print landscape changed substantially in the hundred years between when Manley was writing and the Regency period, especially in terms of how many more people were engaging with print. So, this isn't to say that publications based on aristocratic gossip disappeared, they just became less political.
- 00:05:35 Kandice Sharren (co-host) The late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century saw the beginnings of modern celebrity culture; as Tom Mole has discussed, during this period the growth of print allowed images of figures, like Lord Byron and Mary Robinson, to be distributed more widely than ever before. One of the very significant publishers of this period, Henry Colburn, our mysterious H— C— [Kate laughs], took full advantage of print's potential to promote his publications.
- 00:06:01 Kandice Sharren (co-host) He also fed this new celebrity culture with novels that represented the back rooms of London high society—but Colburn himself was also the subject of gossip, speculation, and satire. His origins are murky; rumoured to be the son of either Lord Lansdowne or the Duke of York, he began appearing in imprints in 1806, listing his address as British and Foreign Library, 50 Conduit Street and New Bond Street.”
- 00:06:28 Kandice Sharren By the 1820s, he was one of the most prominent publishers of fiction, best known



- (co-host) for the silver fork novel, which represented scenes of aristocratic life. While a popular and successful publisher, his business practices attracted criticism and occasionally were the source of scandal. One of his main crimes was puffery!
- 00:06:49 Kate Moffatt Puffery?! [Kate laughs]  
(co-host)
- 00:06:52 Kandice Sharren [Kandice laughs]. What a great word, right? [both laugh]. So, basically, it just means  
(co-host) that he bought periodicals and then published positive reviews of his own books in them.
- 00:07:04 Kate Moffatt I love it! When literary historians have paid Colburn any further attention at all,  
(co-host) they haven't been kind: in reviewing the literature, Veronica Melnyk has demonstrated that most sources that deal directly with Colburn are strongly biased against him, and offer conflicting information, which can make it really difficult to parse fact from rumour.
- 00:07:24 Kate Moffatt His acrimonious split from business partner Richard Bentley in 1832 made matters  
(co-host) worse; Bentley complained prolifically about how Colburn was a terrible business partner, [Kandice laughs], and, until Melnyk's recent discovery of a number of surviving Colburn letters, it was Bentley's substantial archive that shaped scholarly understandings of Colburn.
- 00:07:44 Kate Moffatt And here we really need to acknowledge John Sutherland's 1986 article, Veronica  
(co-host) Melnyk's 2002 dissertation, and their co-authored book, *Rogue Publisher: The Prince of Puffers*, published in 2018, for offering a corrected, or at least more factual, narrative of Colburn's life and career. This episode draws very heavily on their work, as it was immeasurably useful in sorting out fact from fiction in conflicting sources. And it must be said that we enjoyed reading their lively works just as much as we enjoyed reading the very biased reviews of Colburn elsewhere.
- 00:08:16 Kandice Sharren [laughs]. Yeah, it would be remiss not to mention my personal favourite example of  
(co-host) academics hating Colburn, which is Roger Wallins's entry for him in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*. Even though it's a history of both Colburn *and* his partner for three years, Richard Bentley, and Colburn was the one who really founded the business in the first place, the entry gives Bentley pride of place, only listing Colburn in the timeline below the article's title, which is just Richard Bentley.
- 00:08:46 Kandice Sharren Melnyk describes this choice as "quite inexcusable [Kate laughs] when one considers  
(co-host) that their partnership represented just three years of Colburn's forty-seven-year


career.” And it also really editorializes on Colburn’s lack of literary taste, because he published things that people wanted to buy. Which is just terrible! I can’t believe that [Kate laughs]. What kind of literary publisher would have business sense?  
[both laugh]

- 00:09:16 Kate Moffatt (co-host) So, in today’s episode, we’re going to follow Henry Colburn’s career, examining his contributions to publishing at each of the three major addresses he operated out of, and one minor, but interesting, address, between 1806 and 1855. This actually mimics how we capture firms data in the WPHP: if they move during their careers, we create individual records for each location with the dates that they were active at that address. We also create a new firm record each time a partner joins or leaves the firm—as we did when Richard Bentley joined Colburn at New Burlington Street.
- 00:09:50 Kate Moffatt (co-host) While this can make things tricky when we attach firms to title records, it also means that one day we’ll be able to use this street level data to map more precisely where the titles in our database were published, as well as how frequently firms moved around—or stayed put. So, as we wend our way through London, we’ll consider the role of gossip and its connections to Colburn himself, his business, and the literature he published throughout his career.
- 00:10:15  [street sounds]
- 00:10:20 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Arriving at English and Foreign Circulating Library, Conduit Street.
- 00:10:27 Kate Moffatt (co-host) From 1806 until 1824, Colburn worked out of Conduit Street, where he published both books and periodicals, as well as operating a circulating library. It was here that Colburn really established himself in the book trades—we have 104 works in the WPHP attached to this particular address. In addition to publishing books, he also founded the *New Monthly Magazine and Universal Register* in 1814, and started the *Literary Gazette*, a successful weekly literary review, in 1817.
- 00:10:56 Kate Moffatt (co-host) As shown by Garside and Raven’s bibliography of the English novel, as many as half of the books he published here before 1815 were translations from the French, including novels by Germaine de Staël, Madame de Genlis, and Sophie Cottin. It was at this same address that he published his first ‘big’ author: Sydney, Lady Morgan, with her novel *O’Donnel* in 1814. He paid her £550 for the copyright, and £1000 for the copyright of her next work, a travel memoir about France.
- 00:11:24 Kate Moffatt This was the beginning of a long-standing relationship, and also a prime example of


- (co-host) a business practice that may have been the source of some of Colburn's rumoured financial woes: he was known for paying exorbitant sums to his star authors for works that may not have made enough money to actually keep him out of the red.
- 00:11:41 Kandice Sharren (co-host) It was also at this address that Colburn published Lady Caroline Lamb's *Glenarvon*, a roman à clef about her affair with Lord Byron, and this, if you ask us, is where things really start to get interesting. So, in 1812, Lamb and Byron began a quite short-lived affair after she wrote him a fan letter in response to *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.
- 00:12:02 Kandice Sharren (co-host) After Byron ended the relationship, Lamb's husband took her to Ireland, where she continued to carry on a correspondence with Byron. Upon her return to London, Lamb attempted to recapture Byron's interest through tried and true strategies such as dressing up as a page-boy, breaking into his house and writing notes in his books [Kate laughs], and attempting to slash her wrists with a broken wine glass at a party. These are all terrible strategies, and we do not recommend them! Also, none of them worked.
- 00:12:34 Kate Moffatt (co-host) No! [both laugh]
- 00:12:36 Kandice Sharren (co-host) A few years later, Lamb got her revenge by writing a novel with a very thinly disguised Byron as a character, which was published by Colburn. So, the highly public nature of the affair, but especially its aftermath, was fed by what has been termed 'Byronmania', which basically happened following the publication of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* in 1812, when Byron became one of the most sought-after literary celebrities in London.
- 00:13:04 Kandice Sharren (co-host) So, *Glenarvon* was published in 1816, shortly after Byron departed from England in the swirl of scandal that followed his separation from his wife. And, it was a hit, as it would be [Kate laughs]. Byron himself referenced its publication in a canto of *Don Juan*, detailing some post-breakup coping strategies. [Kate laughs]
- 00:13:27 Kandice Sharren (co-host) He says:
- Some take a lover, some take drams or prayers,  
Some mind their household, others dissipation,  
Some run away, and but exchange their cares,  
Losing the advantage of a virtuous station;  
Few changes e'er can better their affairs,  
Theirs being an unnatural situation,

From the dull palace to the dirty hovel:  
Some play the devil, and then write a novel.

- 00:13:54 Kandice Sharren (co-host) So, even though this scandal was incredibly public, the novel itself doesn't advertise its status as a roman à clef; the marketing strategy assumes that his audience is keyed into the gossip that was circulating through word of mouth, through manuscript, but also in various print media, including the society columns of newspapers and Byron's own poetry.
- 00:14:19 Kandice Sharren (co-host) John Sutherland has talked about how Colburn's strategy for marketing relied on mystery as much as disclosure. So he says: "The name of an author, or the amount paid, might be publicized (or ostentatiously withheld, if the author were—or could be suspected to be—noble, notorious or a high official)." In my dissertation, I talked about this in relation to Colburn's title page design. So if you look at the title page for the first edition of *Glenarvon*, it is strikingly stark. All it has is the title, the number of volumes, and the imprint, and some very, very minor, simple decoration.
- 00:15:02 Kandice Sharren (co-host) There is no author information, it's not being like "a novel about Lord Byron" [Kate laughs], there is nothing to suggest that this is anything but a totally typical harmless novel. Yet, despite the absence of this information, as Peter Graham explains, "its earliest readers purchased, perused, and condemned it not for fictions but for supposed truths - truths about Whig society, about the author and her husband, most especially about Byron."
- 00:15:32 Kandice Sharren (co-host) But even though the actual physical book itself reveals little, Lauren McCoy has noted how the circulation of information about the so-called truth of *Glenarvon* was, in fact, very public: keys to the characters weren't just circulated in manuscript, they were published in periodicals. Once the secret of the work had become common knowledge, which it did very quickly, the need to withhold any information about the contents was less pressing.
- 00:16:00 Kandice Sharren (co-host) So if you look at the the title page to the second edition of *Glenarvon*, we see that it doesn't replicate that stark silence of the first, instead, it includes an unattributed French epigraph describing the consequences of passion, and, it has a preface written by the author that makes a claim for the novel's *emotional* authenticity.  
[both laugh]
- 00:16:25 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Good for her!


- 00:16:26 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Right?! [both laugh]. None of this happened, but emotionally it did happen! [both laugh]
- 00:16:34  [street sounds]
- 00:16:39 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Arriving at New Burlington Street.
- 00:16:45 Kate Moffatt (co-host) In 1824, Colburn moved his business to New Burlington Street, where he worked alone for the next five years—we have 21 works attached to this address. Here, he continued his publishing prowess, releasing such titles as Samuel Pepys’ *Diary* in 1825, and Burke’s *Peerage* in 1826. During the 1820s, he became the most prolific publisher of fiction in London, publishing 104, or 12.6 percent of all new novels, and becoming primarily known for the silver fork novels that represented fashionable high life.
- 00:17:17 Kate Moffatt (co-host) In 1827 and 1828, we see a bunch of works attached to Colburn’s New Burlington Street record that are obviously, and quite delightfully, positioning themselves as silver fork novels through their titles. Take, for example, *English Fashionables Abroad: A Novel. In Three Volumes by C. D. Burdett*, or, *Flirtation, a Novel, by Charlotte Bury*, and, *A Marriage in High Life, Edited by the Authoress of Flirtation*, which, we would like to point out, doesn’t actually say it’s a novel, unlike the other two, which kind of implies it might be true!
- 00:17:54 Kandice Sharren (co-host) So, one of the things that really striking is that there isn’t really any visual difference between how *Glenarvon* appeared and how Colburn published these other novels, which, on the one hand, could mean that *Glenarvon* wouldn’t be distinguished from those other novels, except through outside sources, but which does also mean that Colburn’s other novels were, potentially, also secret histories.
- 00:18:19 Kandice Sharren (co-host) This possibility fuelled the generic shift that Colburn led towards the silver fork novel, a genre which, in the words of Edward Copeland, provides “a fictional *back story* for all those bits in the newspapers that everybody was reading about at the breakfast table or the coffee house: the stock market, bankruptcies, the occasional ‘matrimonial fracas’ in high life [Kate laughs], political speeches and, not least, classified advertisements, estate sales and auctions.”
- 00:18:48 Kandice Sharren (co-host) So, basically, the possibility that these backstories were not necessarily fictional offers an additional layer of excitement for readers of the silver fork novel, especially given that *Glenarvon* was far from the only roman á clef, or the only roman á clef

about Byron, or even the only roman á clef about Byron [Kate laughs], published by Henry Colburn, in circulation—in 1826 Colburn published Mary Shelley’s novel, *The Last Man*, which included coded much more positive representations of members of the Shelley-Byron circle.




- 00:19:27  [street sounds]
- 00:19:30 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Introducing Richard Bentley.
- 00:19:34 Kandice Sharren (co-host) In 1829, while working out of New Burlington Street, Colburn brought printer Richard Bentley into partnership with him. No one is one-hundred percent certain why, although scholars think it may have been due to Colburn’s debts with Bentley. Together, they started *Colburn and Bentley’s Standard Novels* series, which was a financial success and played an important role in keeping many canonical novels of the Romantic period in print, including *Frankenstein* and Jane Austen’s novels.
- 00:20:05 Kandice Sharren (co-host) In 1830, Colburn also began feuding with his long-time star author, Lady Morgan, after she published a book with his competitors, Saunders and Otley. Colburn responded, very maturely [Kate laughs], by republishing a bunch of his old Lady Morgan stock, and advertising it as “Lady Morgan at Half-Price!” [Kate laughs]. Sutherland and Melnyk summarize the fallout by saying, “Complicated lawsuits ensued, the publicity of which must have mortified Bentley.”
- 00:20:36 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Poor Bentley! [Kandice laughs]. The partnership between Colburn and Bentley broke down in 1832. The exact reasons for this split are also unknown [Kandice laughs], although finances, the original terms of the partnership agreement, and their personal attributes, which Sutherland and Melnyk describe as “temperamentally irreconcilable,” all appear to contribute to the dissolution.
- 00:20:58 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Separately, Melnyk writes of the breakdown, that “Under the fiendishly complicated terms of the partnership agreement and its final settlement (which no source claims to understand fully), Colburn was barred from publishing any new works within twenty miles of London—and could only publish his magazines and new editions of his old works in London through Bentley.”
- 00:21:18 Kate Moffatt (co-host) To get around these stipulations, Colburn was, well, kind of sneaky; and his sneaky actions were no doubt encouraged by what appears to be a very strong streak of rebelliousness in Colburn, who was not pleased at Bentley’s interference in and supervision over his remaining business. So Colburn began selling his unsold sheets

of earlier works as part of a *Colburn's Modern Novelists* series—does that title sound familiar to you? [Kandice laughs]—which he promoted as ‘new’ while *technically* following the rules of the agreement by only using earlier works, he also collected and published together a series of past articles from his periodical, *The New Monthly Magazine*.

- 00:21:58 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Bentley, who, it sounds like was a total stickler for the rules and who was determined to protect his business—found Colburn’s actions insulting [Kandice laughs] and against the spirit of the agreement, and it prompted a series of small legal actions against Colburn’s reprint works, which edged too close, Bentley felt, to being “new.” Melnyk delightfully writes that while “virtually none of Bentley’s many legal proceedings amounted to more than threatening documents . . . he continued to devote his time and money to showering them upon Colburn.”
- 00:22:32 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Listen, If this was a rom com, the sexual tension here would be off the hook. [both laugh]
- 00:22:39 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Enemies to lovers, when?! Finally, bored as a reprint publisher and with being semi-retired, according to Sutherland and Melnyk, Colburn “released a printing statement announcing that he would no longer be publishing his journals through Bentley’s firm,” and then he moved to yet another address—one that was a specific 21 miles out of London, to get around that pesky “20 mile” stipulation and enable him to release new works. [Kandice laughs]
- 00:23:07  [street sounds]
- 00:23:08 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Arriving in Windsor.
- 00:23:13 Kandice Sharren (co-host) In 1835, Colburn relocated to Windsor, 21 miles outside of London [Kate laughs], in order to return to selling his own new works again. In fact, Colburn was located in Windsor so briefly that we don’t actually have any titles in the WPHP affiliated with this address—although, for completion’s sake (and in case we do find some in the future) we have a firm record for it.
- 00:23:37 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Colburn’s brief Windsor foray, in which he followed the letter of an agreement rather than the spirit of it for his own benefit, is a prime example of why many of those writing about him have condemned him, and maybe a little bit why he’s so much fun for us to talk about. [Kate laughs]

- 00:23:53  [street sounds]
- 00:23:58 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Arriving in Great Marlborough Street.
- 00:24:04 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Shortly after Colburn’s exile to Windsor, he came to an agreement with Bentley that allowed Colburn to return to London proper. In exchange for paying Bentley £3500, Colburn was once again allowed to set up shop in London in 1836, this time in Great Marlborough Street, where he remained until his actual retirement in 1853. He died shortly thereafter, in 1855.
- 00:24:27 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Landon is a particularly interesting case—although she didn’t publish a book with Colburn until 1831, when her novel *Romance and Reality* appeared under the imprint of Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, throughout the 1820s she had a longstanding professional and personal relationship with William Jerdan, the editor of the Colburn-owned journal, *The Literary Gazette*.
- 00:25:03 Kandice Sharren (co-host) The *Literary Gazette* played a central role in developing Landon’s poetic career and in constructing what Adriana Cracuin describes as “the persona of heartbroken, beautiful femininity, and the conflicted status of ‘poetess.’” Between 1832 and 1835, she continued working with Richard Bentley, as well as one of Colburn’s other rivals, Saunders and Otley, before publishing *Trials and Traits of Early Life* with Colburn at his new Marlborough Street Address in 1836.
- 00:25:38 Kandice Sharren (co-host) The only work for children in Landon’s oeuvre, *Trials and Traits of Early Life* was an outlier, not just because it was a collection of tales for children but also because it eschews what Nicholas Mason terms “Landon’s visual turn” in the 1830s, in which images of Landon proliferated as part of an image management strategy to counter gossip about Landon’s affair with Jerdan, especially rumours about her illegitimate children. While Landon continued to publish in literary annuals put out by various publishers, her relationship with Colburn continued past 1836.
- 00:26:07 Kandice Sharren (co-host) The WPHP ends in 1836, so this is the last of her titles that we actually have in it, but she did also in the years following publish *Ethel Churchill* and *Duty and Inclination* with Colburn in 1837 and 1838, respectively. While Colburn certainly couldn’t have predicted Landon’s mysterious death in 1838 in what is modern-day Ghana, the pervasive rumours that she had been poisoned fit both *her* image as tragic poetess *and* complemented Colburn’s marketing strategy, especially his penchant for gossip.



- 00:26:51  [music playing]
- 00:26:59 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Henry Colburn never moved premises again, suggesting at least a geographical stability for the last almost twenty years of his business. Although his publishing reputation continued to be the subject of scrutiny: William Makepeace Thackeray, author of *Vanity Fair*, satirized Colburn and his business practices in his novel *Pendennis* in 1848.
- 00:27:18 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Reading about the many scandals of Henry Colburn left us gasping and laughing in equal measure [Kandice laughs]. You should have seen my face when I read that he got back at Lady Morgan by advertising her earlier works as “Lady Morgan at Half-Price” [Kandice laughs], or about how Colburn and Bentley were “temperamentally irreconcilable.” We thoroughly enjoyed reading about how these two grown men acted like toddlers throwing tantrums. [Kandice laughs]
- 00:27:45 Kandice Sharren (co-host) That the scholarship on Colburn was so coloured by Bentley’s archive for so long, and that the particular narrative it told became so pervasive, highlights the power that gossip, rumours, and vocal criticism have to shape how we understand historical figures and events, as well as how we engage with archival materials. Lady Caroline Lamb’s *Glenarvon* was not just revenge against Byron, although it was undoubtedly that. [Kate laughs]
- 00:28:12 Kandice Sharren (co-host) It was also, as Lauren McCoy argues, a way for her to reclaim control over the narrative and her identity within it *through gossip*. Even though Colburn’s reputation suffered from the rumours that resulted from his business dealings, he also, likewise, benefited from and encouraged gossip—turning it into a highly saleable commodity.
- 00:28:38  [music playing]
- 00:28:49 Kate Moffatt (co-host) This has been the seventh episode of Season 2 of *The WPHP Monthly Mercury*! If you’re interested in learning more about what we discussed today, we’ve compiled a list of suggestions for further reading and links to some relevant entries in the WPHP in a blog post that you can find at [womensprinthistoryproject.com](http://womensprinthistoryproject.com). You can also find us at @TheWPHP on Twitter and on Instagram @womensprinthistoryproject.
- 00:29:14  [music playing]
- 00:29:30 Kate Moffatt [outtakes, part 1] Clap clap clap clap. [both laugh]

(co-host)

00:29:34 Kandice Sharren Insert horse noises here!  
(co-host)

00:29:41 Kate Moffatt [outtakes, part 2] And Sophie Cottin; okay, I can do Sophie Cottin, that one's fine,  
(co-host) but Germaine de Staël—

00:29:46 Kandice Sharren It's just Germaine de Staël. Just think 'germanien' with one less syllable. It's okay to  
(co-host) anglicize it, I think.

00:29:54 Kate Moffatt [laughs]. Like geranium?! That's so—  
(co-host)

00:30:00 Kandice Sharren That's all [inaudible]  
(co-host)

00:30:02 Kate Moffatt That actually will work so it's fine. [both laugh] We're good. Okay.  
(co-host)

00:30:12 Kandice Sharren [outtakes, part 3] Do I put my poetry-reading voice on?  
(co-host)

00:30:16 Kate Moffatt [laughs]. Is it similar to my Lady Whistledown-reading-a-letter voice?  
(co-host)

00:30:31 Kate Moffatt [outtakes, part 4] [laughs]. I feel like this is equivalent to Taylor Swift writing songs  
(co-host) about her boyfriends.

00:30:37 Kandice Sharren [laughs]. It really is! [both laugh] Except Lady Caroline Lamb is Jake Gyllenhal in  
(co-host) this situation. Maybe? Or are they both Taylor Swift?

00:30:50 Kate Moffatt I think they might both be Taylor Swift. [both laugh]  
(co-host)

00:30:52 Kandice Sharren Everyone is Taylor Swift, no one wants to be Jake Gyllenhaal. [laughs]  
(co-host)

00:30:58 Kate Moffatt I don't blame them! [laughs]  
(co-host)

00:31:01 Kandice Sharren Although, realistically, Lady Caroline Lamb would be the one to have kept the  
(co-host) scarf. [both laugh]

00:31:06 Kate Moffatt It's true. [both laugh]  
(co-host)

00:31:10 Kandice Sharren [outtakes, part 5] Clop, clop, clop. That's my horse [both laugh]. I'm in a carriage,  
(co-host) Kate! [both laugh]

00:31:24 Kate Moffatt Okay!  
(co-host)

00:31:25 Kandice Sharren We're in a carriage, there's a horse drawing the carriage—I'm very confused. [both  
(co-host) laugh]