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# City set to celebrate 200 years after Austen

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After many years of reading and enjoying the works of Regency century author Jane Austen, Dunedin woman Jane Reynolds decided there was a lot more she could learn.

Inspired by a wave of international events marking "Jane Austen 200" — the 200th anniversary of Austen's death on July 18, 1817 — Mrs Reynolds has organised a mini Austen festival for Dunedin.

"I realised that there is an amazing amount of expertise here in Dunedin that I could tap into," she said.

Dunedin events will include a series of talks during September and October, culminating in the fourth Jane Austen Spring Ball on October 22.

"As a reader, I have always enjoyed the wit and liveliness of Austen's writing, but lately I have also been learning about what a transformative writer she was," Mrs Reynolds said.

"Many people say she was the first author to streamline and modernise the novel by taking out endless descriptions and adding witty dialogue."

Events will start on September 12 with a talk by University of Otago English



Jane Reynolds

to Jane Austen — her times, her life, her works, her legacy", will be held from 5.30pm at Burns 2 lecture theatre.

Dramatised readings of Austen by theatre and performing arts lecturer Hilary Halba and drama teacher Terry MacTavish will be held on September 19, from 6.30pm, at the University Bookshop.

Other topics to be covered include Regency Law and Medicine, Regency Fashion, and notable Regency Gals.

**Graceful period ...** Dancers and musicians gather at the end of the 2016 Jane Austen Ball. The 2017 ball will be held on October 22 during Jane Austen 200 commemorations.

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and linguistics senior lecturer Dr Paul Tankard. "An Introduction

Austen expert Prof Emerita Jocelyn Harris, of Dunedin, will give the keynote address on "The many faces of Captain Wentworth and the making of *Persuasion*" on October 17.

"We are very fortunate to have Prof Harris in Dunedin. Her insight into the world of Jane Austen is fantastic," Mrs Reynolds said.

In addition to speaking in Dunedin and at international conferences this year, Prof Harris has also released a new book *Satire, Celebrity, and Politics in Jane Austen*.

It was wonderful to see the enthusiasm many people had for Jane Austen's writing continuing, even 200 years after her death, Mrs Reynolds said.