

## Jane Austen on ITV - Northanger Abbey.

Monday, 26 March 2007

When I was at Charterhouse I read Mansfield Park and hated it. I called her Fanny Prig and slaughtered Austen in an essay for my English Lit teacher.

He was a brilliant man called Paddy Gardiner (went on to be a headmaster somewhere - anyone know what happened to him? I owe him a lot) who loved the essay but gently pointed out why Austen was so good. He suggested I try Northanger Abbey.

I loved that, of course - Catherine Moreland is a far feistier heroine - and went on to admire and enjoy Jane Austen.

Encouraged by Gardiner and others (Phillips, Gunning) I then got a Scholarship Level S-Level in Eng Lit and passed into Trinity Cambridge where I eventually had a rather poor Master of Arts in the subject.

It remains a great passion of mine and I owe it all to those fine, caring, supportive teachers.