

LONDON AND SOUTH EAST GROUP

Meetings during 2001 are as follows:

Saturday 12 May "The right of translation is reserved ": Mrs Gaskell and her overseas' publishers' - Alan Shelston.

Saturday 15 September 'Maids of Honour' – Hill Slavid.

Saturday 10 November Speaker: Edward Preston.

All meetings will be held at Francis Holland School, 39 Graham Terrace, London SW1W 8JF and will commence at 2pm. The dates in September and November have still to be confirmed by the school, Francis Holland School is a few minutes walk from Sloane Square underground station (Circle and District lines). Anyone who wishes may meet at 12 noon at Sloane Square underground station for a light lunch at the Royal Court Tavern, also on Sloane Square, prior to the meetings. Those arriving later than 12 noon should proceed directly to the Royal Court Tavern.

At some date during the year Edward Preston has kindly agreed to lead a literary walk through London. Details will follow later in the year
Dudley J Barlow.

South West Group will meet in Bath on Saturday 7 April

The speaker will be Professor John Chapple on : *The Pains and Pleasures of a Literary Editor*.

Arnold Bennett Country Trip

On Wednesday 20th June there will be an outing to Burslem: the Bursley of Arnold Bennett in *The Card*, *The Old Wives Tale* etc

Members of The Arnold Bennett Society will be our guides and there will be time to see the visitors' centre of Doulton Pottery. The coach will pick up in Knutsford and Macclesfield .

WEEKEND CONFERENCE AT BATH SPA UNIVERSITY

17-20 August.

LITERARY WOMEN: Friends and contemporaries of Elizabeth Gaskell.

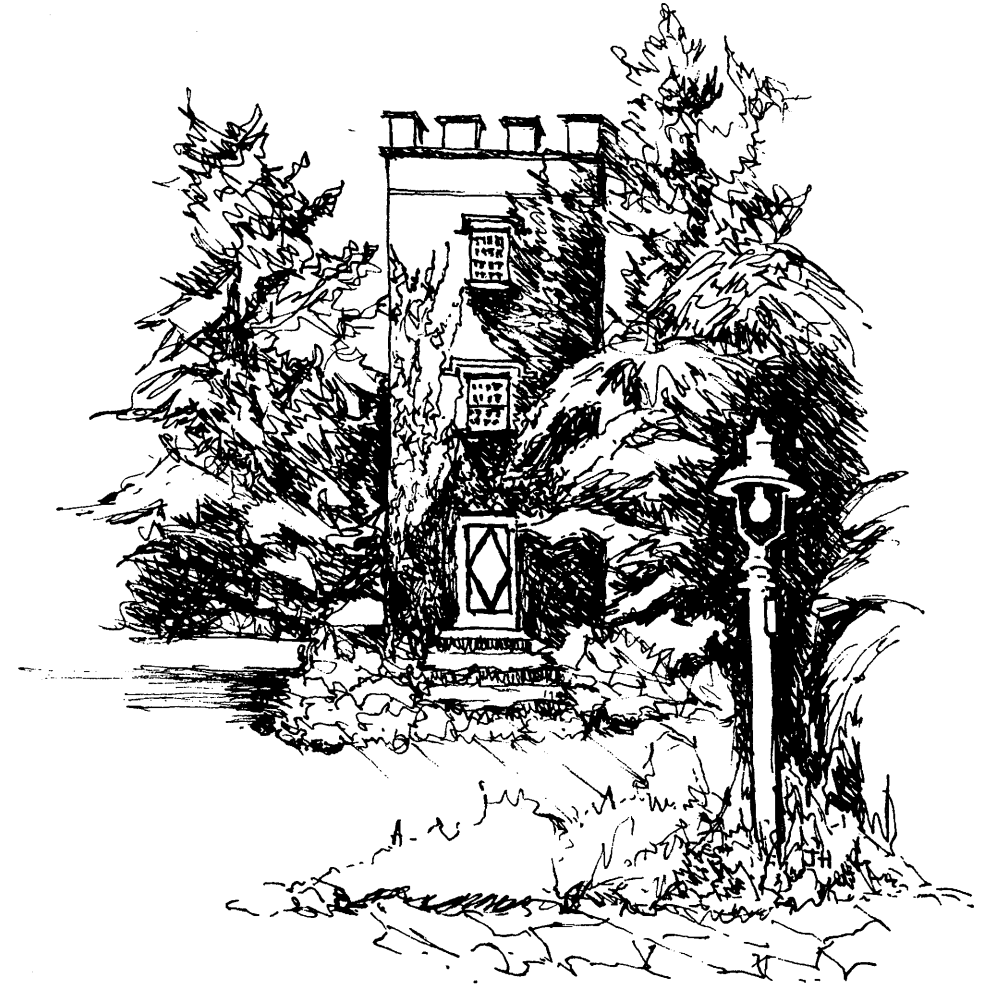
Full programme of lectures, visits etc

AUTUMN MEETING AT KNUTSFORD 29TH SEPTEMBER

THE READING ROOM HONOURS ELIZABETH GASKELL

The new public display in the great Round Reading Room within the British Museum features famous writers who have sat at the leather-covered desks under the great echoing dome. Among them was Elizabeth Gaskell, who obtained her Reader's ticket in 1860. All her books are on display with a brief introduction to her writing.

The Gaskell Society



NEWSLETTER

March 2001 - Number 31

Editor's Letter

The rhythm of our Gaskell year has been changed by the decision to hold our AGM meeting in the Spring at Cross Street Chapel; this date relates more closely to our financial year and we hope members may find Manchester easier than Knutsford to reach from a distance. Our first general meeting was held at Cross Street in April 1986 and I am almost certain that Barbara Brill was there. We are saddened by her recent death and pay tribute to her in this Newsletter.

We are looking forward to the Conference at Bath , 17-20 August ,when we will be assisted by members of our South West branch. We already have over eighty members booked so if you wish to join us please do not delay in booking.

You will find future events listed towards the back of this newsletter. In Knutsford our monthly meetings from October to May are well supported and give much pleasure. There are also group meetings in Manchester, London/S.E and Bath/S/W . If you cannot get to these meetings you might think about planning meetings in your area with help from the Society. Our home page also lists dates of meetings and other information : www.gaskellsociety@cw.c.net

In this Newsletter *The Gaskells* , *Popular Education* and *The Free Library Movement* is part of a paper read by Christine Lingard at a meeting in Manchester; a second part will follow in our next Newsletter. Professor Chapple traces for us some history of fairy stories and Professor Peter Skrine follows clues to a Punch pun with links to Catherine Winkworth .We welcome suggestions for talks at our future meetings, especially from prospective speakers; also items for the Newsletter.

Our trip to Rome in Gaskell footsteps will be either in spring or autumn 2002. Suggestions for group accommodation will be welcome.

SUMMER ACADEMY has a course at Manchester University

16-23 June on ***Wives , Daughters and Literary Sisters***

This is a wide ranging programme including visits.

Details from Summer Academy , Keynes College, The University, Canterbury, KENT CT2 7NP

Joan Leach

TRIBUTES TO BARBARA BRILL

Janet Allan

Barbara Brill was over seventy when I first met her. Characteristically, when most people would be considering taking life easy, she was involved in the considerable task of writing the first (and only) biography of William Gaskell. This was published in 1984 by the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society to coincide with the centenary of William's death. She was one of the principal guests at the Royal George in 1985 on the 175th anniversary of Elizabeth's death, and from then on was closely connected with our activities. Although she did not quite make her 90th birthday, I spoke to her a few days beforehand to discuss the lunch we were to hold in her honour. She had the same open, cheerful, kindly and intelligent approach that she had in 1984. We send our sympathy to all her family. She is much missed.

Alan Shelston

One of the pleasures of editing the *Gaskell Society Journal* was that every year, a little time after the appearance of each new issue, one would receive a letter from Barbara expressing her appreciation of its contents. I say 'a little time' since she made sure that she had had time to read everything that had been included. In a similar way, I came to look forward to the Manchester and Knutsford meetings, when I could always be sure of renewing our acquaintance. Whenever I saw Barbara she was smiling: it is, in fact, the only image I have of her. That Barbara was a true scholar in her own right I discovered when we worked together on an article on the Gaskells' reading, as reflected in the Portico lending books, which appeared in an early number of the *Gaskell Society Journal* (Volume 5, 1991). Most of the work for that article was Barbara's but typically she insisted that it appear under our joint names. Her affectionate 'Portrait' of William Gaskell remains the best source of information about him. To my lasting regret she did not live to receive the copy of Mrs Gaskell's *Further Letters* which John Chapple and I were to inscribe for her. When we were putting the volume together I remember being moved by a message Mrs Gaskell sent to a bereaved friend: 'May we see the Light in God's Light, when that time comes.' It is a typical example of her optimistic uncertainty. Those words seem to me not inappropriate to the spirit in which Barbara lived her life, and I think we can fairly apply them to her passing.

Irene Wiltshire

I was acquainted with Barbara Brill principally through the Portico Library where, just a few years ago, I heard her give a paper on Robert Louis Stevenson. I always found her to be a most charming and kindly lady, and so modest about her achievements. It was through a Portico mailing that I learnt the sad news, but I had for some time been aware of the part Barbara Brill played in the early years of the

Gaskell Society. The last time that I saw her was at the Society's AGM in September 2000. Even though she was full of years, few who saw her at that time would have been prepared for her death in November. The passing of Barbara Brill is a loss that is shared by all who knew her and by all who, like myself, were lucky enough to have met her.

Joan Leach

Barbara Brill was a Gaskell devotee long before the Society was formed, in 1985, when she became an enthusiastic founder member. Her wide literary interests, research skills and ability to communicate her enthusiasm were evident from the very first Newsletter when she contributed an article on *Annie A(ustin) and Fleeming*. Barbara was always interested in personal relationships between writers and other creative people, and how they interacted. A long time enthusiasm for Robert Louis Stevenson brought to her notice Fleeming and Annie Jenkin who were also known to the Gaskells (Newsletters 1 and 25)

In Newsletter 2 she described in *Job Legh and the working men naturalists* how her research into Victorian botanists coincided with her first reading of *Mary Barton*; drawing on her wide reading and research she adds much to our appreciation and understanding of Job Legh and his friends.

To a novice editor such as myself Barbara's thoughtful support was much appreciated; she would modestly tell me she was working on a line of research and offer it for the Newsletter, just at the right time and occasionally, when I had too little for an edition, she was able to supply material at short notice. You will all miss her contributions: who can replace her?

Many of us in the north and in London have enjoyed being *At Home with the Gaskells*. This was a script Barbara devised, mainly from Gaskell letters, for three readers. Barbara herself read a part when I first heard it, at the appropriate venue of Brook Street Chapel, at the inaugural meeting of the Society, 12 October 1985. Plymouth Grove Gaskell house and The National Portrait Gallery, the Portico and many other venues have also hosted readings. Only last year the text was published in book form by Teamband making it available for all to read.

Recently found letters from Kipling have been in the news and my first thought was, 'Barbara would be interested in that'. I know I am not alone in regretting her passing but having fond memories to keep.

Editor's Note: Barbara Brill's contributions to Newsletters are in Nos. 1,2, 4, 6,12,13,15, 22, 25, 28 and 29

THE GASKELLS, POPULAR EDUCATION & THE FREE LIBRARY MOVEMENT

Christine Lingard

Elizabeth Gaskell came to Manchester on her marriage in September 1832, the year of the Great Reform Bill. Hers was a time of change, nowhere more so than in the field of education. The working class was developing a thirst for knowledge and reading ceased to be the preserve of the upper classes. In Manchester she was witness to the birth of one of the most significant but unsung forces in this revolution - the Free Library movement.

A regular supply of books was essential to her, but she was definitely a borrower not a buyer. 'I can't get the last of hers in Manchester anywhere unless by purchase' she moaned when she couldn't get the latest title. Libraries were a solution. For her this meant the Portico where her husband became President in 1849, but a subscription was necessary for the loan of books. Shares in 1836 were £12 and the annual subscription £2 10s. Membership was restricted to men so she was forced to rely on her husband for the latest title. Even so she found British libraries superior to those abroad. 'They got dingy books from the Caen circulating library, and had no other books, I fancy. No wonder they hate living abroad.' She tried to find out if Mudie's circulating library had any intention of opening a branch in Paris so her friends could get English books more easily. Other Manchester libraries were the Athenaeum, Exchange and Foreign Library (St Ann's Sq). The first commercial Circulating Library opened in Ducie Place in 1765. Shares were ten guineas and the annual subscription 20s - beyond the means of most.

Provision of working class libraries up to then was haphazard. There had been several attempts to provide them over the decades. It could be argued that Chetham's Library, Manchester was an early example but the stock was learned and its appeal limited. Enlightened benefactors had founded libraries in individual localities. Rev Thomas Bray of St Botolph's (City of London) founded a network of 80 parish libraries here and in Maryland at the beginning of the 18th century. Out of this grew the SPCK. In 1787 Rev. William Turner established a library of 197 books in the vestry of Hanover St church, Newcastle. Though not confined to religious topics books were moral or philosophical e.g. Wollstonecraft's *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* and Clarkson's *Abolition of Slavery*. James Darbishire endowed a library in Dob Lane chapel, Failsworth where her father was once preacher. From 1803 Sunday School libraries played a leading part in disseminating books.

Mechanics Institutes were the next development. This is a vague umbrella term encompassing a wide range of institutions and it is impossible to generalise. Each was independent of the rest. Ideally they would have a library, museum, laboratory and would have space for public lectures, all under one roof, though it would be difficult to find many that offered everything. They differed in their constitutions, aims and activities, offering tuition in a variety of general subjects, such as phrenology, rather than vocational courses. Some were workers' co-operatives, others relied on patronage and the availability to women also varied from complete exclusion to active encouragement. Some found it useful to admit them for music and dancing. In Manchester in 1839 women constituted a fifth of the total audience at lectures. Not all Institutes were successful and by the 1860s most had been replaced by local authority colleges or eventually merged into more learned institutions. Manchester's became UMIST. Others sank without trace.

Libraries were an important part of the provision of the Mechanics Institutes. Access was sometimes restricted to full members – sometimes a subscription to the library alone was possible. Some had a reduced rate for women. The Brontë sisters walked four miles to borrow from the Keighley Institute where the librarian was a Miss Frances Mary Richardson Currer, suggestive of Charlotte's pseudonym Currer Bell.

The institutes are believed to have developed indirectly from the lectures given by George Birkbeck in Glasgow early in the century. The Glasgow Institute, which is generally regarded as the first, (though this is disputed) opened in 1823 with 1,000 members. William Gaskell was at University there (1820-5) so he would have witnessed events first hand. The Rev. Turner, with whom Elizabeth stayed prior to her marriage, was Vice-President of the Newcastle Institute in 1829. The Manchester Institute was founded at the Bridgewater Arms on 7th April 1824 by William Fairbairn the engineer and two others, and it opened in Cooper Street the following year and moving to Princess St. premises in 1853. Patrons included Joseph Brotherton (1783-1857), recently retired from the cotton trade in Salford and the banker Benjamin Heywood. At least a third of the first committee, including Heywood and Fairbairn, were Unitarians. Other Presidents or Vice-Presidents included Lord Francis Egerton, Richard Cobden, Mark Philips, MP John Dalton, the chemist, Rev John Robberds of Cross St. and various Schuncks and Schwabes. The list reads like a Gaskell dinner party – all were known to the couple personally.

This description is taken from James Wheeler's *History of Manchester* 1836:

A main public object of the Institution has been the delivery of courses of lectures, for which purposes there is an excellent and spacious theatre. There is also a useful and valuable library of 3595 volumes, which is greatly resorted to. All works are now admitted by vote of the Directors, but the great part of the existing library consists of donations. Attached to the library is a reading

room at which all the leading English and Foreign periodicals are taken. The institution is principally active in privately educating its operative members who by attending "evening classes" may be instructed in English grammar, writing, arithmetic, French, Latin, algebra, geometry, figure and flower drawing, gymnasia and vocal music. It has been remarked that though the payment is only 20s a year or about 4s 6d a week the annual subscribers are not composed of those classes for whom such Institutions were originally designed.

He was referring to the fact that only a third of members were mechanics. The rest were merchants, shopkeepers, clerks, schoolteachers, artists, ladies etc. for even these prices were too high. The Institutes were seen as fulfilling a social as well as an educational need. Heywood also provided a branch at Miles Platting in 1836 and said it had 'in an evening a blazing fire, red curtains, easy chairs, a capital cup of coffee, chess, pictures, to see if we can make it a match for the public houses.'

William Gaskell was a keen supporter. He lectured regularly not on religious subjects but on literature and his wife encouraged him greatly in this:

My husband has lately been giving four lectures to the very poorest of the workers in the very poorest district of Manchester, Miles Platting, on 'The Poets and Poetry of Humble Life'. You cannot think how well they have been attended, or how interested people have seemed. And the day before yesterday two deputations of respectable looking men waited on him to ask him to repeat these lectures in two different parts of the town. He is going on with four more in the winter, and meanwhile we are picking up all the 'Poets of Humble Life' we can think of. [GL12 Mary Howitt 1838]

He has 2 deputations today to ask him to repeat his lectures – one from the Teachers of the Sunday School & Senior Scholars – the other from the Salford Mechanics institution. Neither of them pay, which is a pity – but if the Manchester M. institution come – shan't they pay for all. [GL11 to Elizabeth Gaskell]

Unfortunately the text of the lectures has not survived. Perhaps they were similar to one he gave on Crabbe in Eccles in 1872, reported in the press as being very thorough and detailed. He is also known to have spoken on Burns and Hood. He continued his interest with the Frederick Maurice's Working Men's College in the 1850s.

Gaskell mentions the Mechanics in *Mary Barton* in the following speech by Margaret Jennings:

I will tell you all and about it. You see there's a gentleman lecturing on

music at th'Mechanics and he wants folks to sing his songs. Well, last night th'counter got a sore throat and couldn't make a note. So they sent for me. Jacob Butterworth has said a good word for me, and they asked me would I sing? So I'm to sing again o'Thursday: and I got a sovereign last night, and am to have half-a-sovereign every night th'lecturer is at t'Mechanics.

The experiences of Samuel Bamford, the weaver poet, whom Gaskell knew in old age, provide further illustration. Born in Middleton in 1788 he learned to write at the Methodist Sunday School then got a scholarship to the local grammar school. In between his political activities (he was imprisoned for his part in the Peterloo riots) he made his living in the silk industry. In 1813 a subscription library had been opened but as the membership was 20s and 10s for mechanics, it didn't last long and Bamford helped to found a Mechanics' Institution in 1825. They collected what books they could and opened a room once a week gratis. Yet even this was not a success and it failed according to Bamford because of the disruptive activities of Chartists.

Perhaps this is similar to what happened in Failsworth where Ben Brierley (aged 16), the future dialect poet helped found a Mutual Improvement Society in his local Sunday school. Activities included amateur theatricals. It was closed in 1845 when the evangelical vicar objected to both the theatricals and the Chartist activities of members. They resolved to reform and during the night plied the watchman with drink and removed floorboards from a room above to enter the schoolroom. They held classes in secret till arrested. Brierley was charged with libelling a local mill-owner but was let off with an apology.

To be continued

'PECCAVI'

Peter Skrine

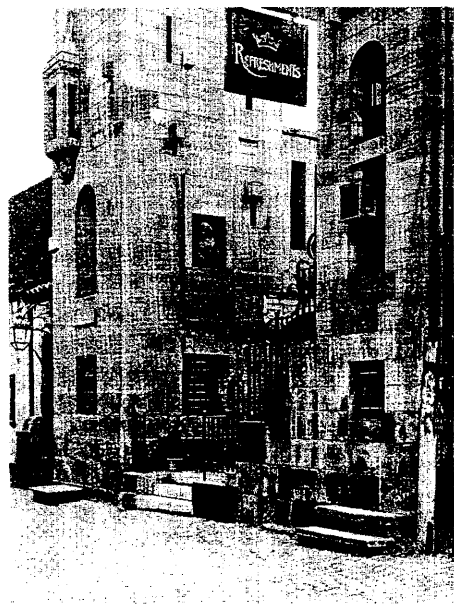
Many of you will have noticed the name of Catherine Winkworth in The Sunday Telegraph recently. It all began with the furore over the statues in Trafalgar Square. Ian Hislop, the journalist, stoutly defended General Napier's right to be there, but did so on rather shaky ground. Sir Charles Napier (1782-1853), a friend of Byron, made a name for himself as an enlightened and humane administrator in the Ionian Islands of Captain Corelli fame, and in the Indian province of Sind (now in Pakistan), his military annexation of which in 1843 he described as a 'very advantageous,

useful, humane piece of rascality'. Wellington admired him, and he was appointed commander-in-chief in India despite the East India Company's objections. As Roger Ellis tell us in his *Who's Who in Victorian Britain* (1997), there was no mourning for him amongst the evangelicals or the men of commerce, which was hardly surprising: among the many causes he championed was the plight of the broadloom weavers in Lancashire. 'Hell,' he said, 'may be paved with good intentions, but it is assuredly hung with Manchester cottons.' Though Mrs Gaskell only mentions his naval cousin, indirectly, in her letters, she must have been well aware of his existence.

But what did the Gaskells' young protégée, Catherine Winkworth, have to do with all this? According to Ian Hislop's follow-up in *The Sunday Telegraph* of 26 November 2000, it was she who made up the ingenious one-word intralingual pun Napier is said to have devised to communicate his victory to the world outside, 'peccavi' being Latin for 'I have sinned'.

This is not the first time this amusing controversy has arisen. Tucked into a file of Winkworth autograph letters in my possession is an old, undated cutting addressed to the Editor of *The Daily Telegraph* by Sir Patrick Cadell of Boar's Hill, Oxford. It supports the view that Sir Charles Napier never sent the message, and states that the original joke, which appeared in *Punch* in August, 1843, immediately after the capture of Sind, 'is believed to have been sent to *Punch* by Catherine Winkworth, then a girl of 14' whereas in Hislop's version 'the *bon mot* was actually coined by a 16-year-old schoolgirl,' Catherine Winkworth, who sent it to *Punch* in 1844, a year after the great victory. It is biographical fact that she was born on 13 September 1827. We also have her own word for it that she started to learn German with Mr Gaskell in August 1843, but she doesn't mention Latin lessons with him. Of 'peccavi' there is not trace in her sister Susanna's *Letters and Memorials of Catherine Winkworth*, privately printed in Clifton in 1883. According to Hislop, the archivists at the *Punch* library led him to an editorial note by a Mrs C. Mackintosh in the October number of a magazine called *East and West* for 1907, in which this lady stated that the pun was made up by Catherine Winkworth, her cousin. But there is no Mackintosh in the Winkworth family tree. The whole *canard*, Mrs Gaskell might say, is 'curious if true'.

The Gaskell Memorial Tower is a very visible reminder to all, and especially to visitors, of Elizabeth Gaskell's associations with Knutsford. It is a unique building and the focal point of King Street. The accompanying illustrations are from Ellis Chadwick's *Mrs Gaskell: Haunts, Homes and Stories* (1910 edition) On the side of the tower there is a bronze bas relief of the author (more of this in our next Newsletter) and above it is a list of her works which , strangely, does not include *Wives and Daughters*; as this list is in chronological order and there is a space at the bottom, we propose that the Society should make arrangements to have it added. It is included in the list noted by Ellis Chadwick which is otherwise



correct and in Watt's list for the mason, though this includes many more works for which there was not space. We are now in consultation with the local conservation officer about this project.

CHARLES PERRAULT, MADAME D'AULNOY, AND 'CURIOUS, IF TRUE'

John Chapple

Cinderella, The Sleeping Beauty, Little Red Riding Hood, Bluebeard and Puss in Boots are very familiar titles. All five tales were introduced to the literary world by a brilliant French stylist, Charles Perrault, in his *Histoires ou Contes du temps passé* in 1697. Elizabeth Gaskell remodelled them in 'Curious, if True' (1860), together with Perrault's Little Thumb, who is given his French name, *Poucet*. Elsewhere she alludes to the other two prose tales in Perrault's collection - *Les Fées* (The Fairies) and *Riquet à la houppe* (Riquet with the Tuft). Philip Yarrow

picked up brief allusions to the former (words issuing as pearls and diamonds from the mouth of the queen's younger daughter) both in *Mary Barton* (1848) and in *Wives and Daughters* (1864-66). *Riquet* is briefly mentioned in *Ruth* (1853), as we learn from Professor Yarrow's very useful note in the *Gaskell Society Journal* 7 (1993), p. 35.

Apart from the Perrault stories, *Beauty and the Beast* and *The White Cat* occur in 'Curious, if True'. Many literary versions of *Beauty and the Beast* are known. They rate a separate entry in the *Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales* (ed. Jack Zipes, 2000), which asserts that Madame Leprince de Beaumont's sophisticated, didactic version of 1757 for young people 'has become canonical in the modern world.' The *White Cat*, however, by Marie-Catherine Le Jumel de Barneville, baronne d'Aulnoy, printed in her *Les Contes des fées* (1697-8), is barely mentioned in the *Oxford Companion* under d'Aulnoy.

Nor does Gaskell say a great deal in 'Curious, if True' about the 'delicate, fair woman, dressed all in the softest white', Madame de Mioumiou, though she is neatly characterised by her 'little noise of pleasure', reminiscent of both 'the singing of a teakettle' and 'the cooing of a dove', and her likeness to Puss in Boots when rats and mice were heard scuttering behind the tapestry. In chapter 37 of *Wives and Daughters* we find that Mrs Gibson's 'cat-like nature purred and delighted in smooth ways, and pleasant quietness.'

The English translations of these stories (Perrault's often called *Tales of Mother Goose* and d'Aulnoy's *Tales of Mother Bunch*) are probably not very relevant. They were altered, censored and softened by translators like J.R. Planché in 1855, and in any case Gaskell could read the French originals. 'Company Manners' (1854) is especially rich in its allusions, associated with the *salon* figure of Madame de Sablé:

I can fancy her stewing sweetbreads in a silver saucepan, or dressing salad with her delicate, plump, white hands - not that I ever saw a silver saucepan. I was formerly ignorant enough to think that they were only used in the Sleeping Beauty's kitchen, or in the preparations for the marriage of Riquet-with-the-Tuft; but I have been assured that there are such things, and that they impart a most delicate flavour, or no flavour, to the victuals cooked therein; so I assert again, Madame de Sablé cooked sweetbreads for her friends in a silver saucepan; but never to fatigue herself with those previous labours. ... The perfection of waiting is named in the story of the *White Cat*, where, if you remember, the hero prince is waited upon by hands without bodies, as he sits

at table with the *White Cat*, and is served with that delicate fricassee of mice. By hands without bodies I am very far from meaning hands without heads. ... And, now I think of it, Madame de Sablé must have taken the *White Cat* for her model; there must evidently have been the same noiseless ease and grace about the movements of both; the same purring, happy, inarticulate moments of satisfaction, when surrounded by pleasant circumstances, must have been uttered by both. My own mouth has watered before now at the account of that fricassee of mice prepared especially for the *White Cat*; and M. Cousin alludes more than once to Madame de Sablé's love for 'friandises.' Madame de Sablé avoided the society of literary women, and so, I am sure, did the *White Cat*. Both had an instinctive sense of what was comfortable; both loved home with tenacious affection; and yet I am mistaken if each had not their own little private love of adventure - touches of the gypsy.

Though d'Aulnoy's hero prince was offered a choice of two *bisques*, one of young pigeons and the other of very fat mice, rather than a simple, delicate fricassee of mice, it seems possible that Gaskell was inspired to write her story, 'Curious, if True', by her recollection of d'Aulnoy's humorous yet imaginative recreations of folk stories. Perrault's stories are beautifully told and Gaskell has captured his irony and light cynicism. However, d'Aulnoy's longer narrative is quaintly whimsical and realistically knowing, wonderfully rococo in its proliferating details. There is the little orchestra of cats playing guitars with their claws, yowling in different tones and grimacing madly, or the cats and monkeys dressed as Moors and Chinese dancing a ballet. *La Chatte blanche* went hunting baby eagles on a splendid monkey whilst the prince decorously rode a child's wooden horse. She composed passionate verses and songs, all carefully preserved, but which cannot now be read because of the execrable writing of her secretary, an old cat. The flow of invention seems inexhaustible.

In the introduction to the tercentenary edition of d'Aulnoy's *Contes des Fées* (Paris 1997), Jacques Barchilon underlines their fantastic and marvellous nature. Marina Warner, in her comprehensive and learned study, *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers* (1994), is illuminating on the subject of d'Aulnoy's transformed heroines, empowered by their animal disguises 'to enter a new territory of choice and speech'; their apparent degradation works for rather than against them. But it is what Barchilon tells us of Madame d'Aulnoy that awakens powerful echoes in the mind of a biographer. We are informed that not much is known of her childhood, and that there are 'zones d'ombre sur plusieurs périodes de son existence.' Her life was very problematic (*both femme fatale and salonnière*, it appears), but apart from this, she was the mother of four surviving daughters, travelled widely and achieved literary success in Paris at about the age of forty.

Her nature was lively and playful. She could write her tales in the midst of noise and visitors. She loved telling stories, possessing a fertile imagination and a quite unstudious attitude to writing. She died in 1705, when she was about fifty-five years of age. It all sounds rather familiar.

Editor's Note.

Newsletter 26 has an article by Irene Wiltshire: 'CURIOUS IF TRUE': LE PETIT POUCKET AND TOM THUMB. A case of mistaken identity?

BOOK NOTES

Christine Lingard

Longman have reissued Michael Wheeler's *English fiction of the Victorian period, 1830-1890*, first published in 1985 and extensively revised in 1994, (£20.99). This is a standard work with excellent appendices, proving to be a comprehensive reference tool for information on a large number of authors, alphabetically arranged.

Two other books to look out for: *The Brontë Myth* by Lucasta Miller. Cape (£15.99). Just published and favourably reviewed in the press, this book analyses the treatment of the Brontës from Gaskell to the present day.

There is a new Everyman edition of *Ruth* edited by Nancy Henry and Graham Handley (£5.99). The back cover states: 'The most comprehensive edition available, with introduction, notes, selected criticism, further reading, text summary and a chronology of Elizabeth Gaskell's life and times'.

Ruth is also now available on tape from Stirling Audio of Bath (£56.35) read by Eve Matheson.

North and South is published in Wordsworth Classics (£1.50) with an introduction

Request for research help

I am looking to trace the provenance of a painting which may relate to Mrs Gaskell. I would like a couple of volunteers to do a few hours research in the County Records Departments which relate to Tilford in Surrey and Steepleton in Dorset. It is possible

that I might need someone near Preston, Lancs. to help at a later stage. If you think you may be able help and would like further details, please contact me at: Ruth@scibydes.fsnet.co.uk or phone 0115 921 4411.

Liz Rye

ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES REPORT

Committee member Kenn Oultram represented The Society at the ALS meeting in Birmingham on 17th February.

The secretary announced a membership now totalling over 100 societies. All are invited to send representatives to the AGM on 28th April.

Nominations have been received from the writer Susan Hill for the position of president and from Nicholas Reed (Edith Nesbit Society) for the position of chairman. Societies that have applied to host future AGMs include Arnold Bennett (2002), Dylan Thomas (2003), Graham Greene (2004) and the Marlow Society (2005).

A sub committee was appointed to formulate the subject and rules for a national essay competition which, it is hoped, will be launched later this year.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

AGM MEETING

At Cross Street Chapel, Manchester on Saturday 7th April

10.30 Coffee 11.00 AGM

followed by The Daphne Carrick lecture by Dr Josie Billington:

Wives and Daughters: From Screen to Page (or what only the Novel Can Do)

Lunch

2.15 Lecture by Dr Joanne Shattock:

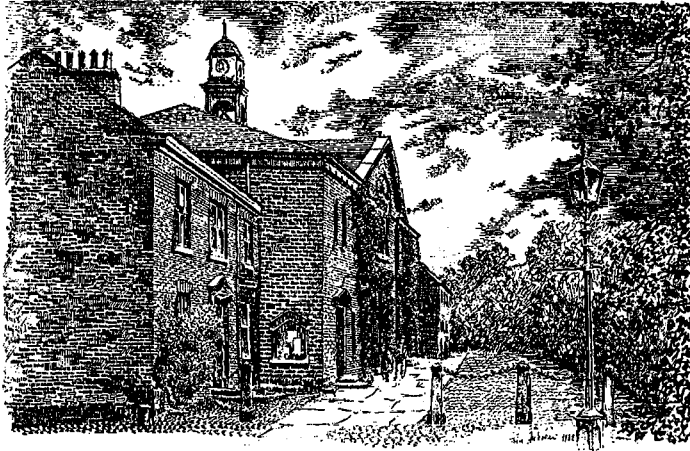
Biographies of Victorian Women Writers and how they influence our reading

Meeting closes about 3.45/4.00pm

ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES AGM

This is to be held in Ledbury on **Saturday 28th April** and will be hosted by The Friends of The Dymock Poets (Edward Thomas, Robert Frost, Rupert Brooke, John Drinkwater, Wilfred Gibson, and Lascelles Abercrombie). All previous AGMs have been held in Birmingham so it is hoped that members from affiliated societies will support this new venture which has an attractive venue and well planned programme. Tickets are £3 each: please apply to Joan Leach for booking details (SAE) or read more on our home page <http://www.gaskellsociety.cwc.net>

The Gaskell Society



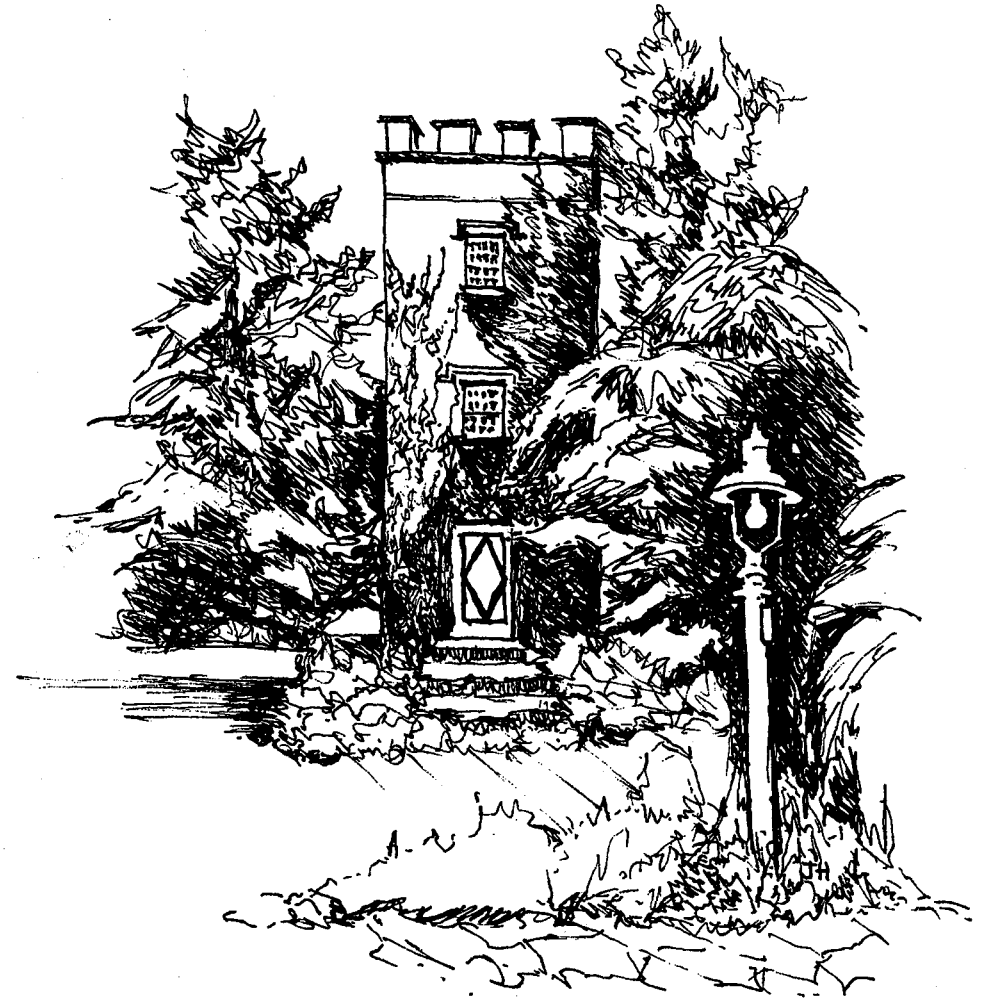
Moravian Church
Fairfield Settlement, Droylsden, Tameside.

THE GASKELL SOCIETY HOME PAGE has all the latest information on meetings.
<http://www.gaskellsociety.cwc.net>

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs. Joan Leach,
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NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2001 - Number 32

Editor's Letter

It was good to see so many members at our recent weekend conference in Bath, 112 of you, and many who had not attended previous events. With some experience of running weekend conferences for our members we succeeded in getting excellent speakers and a well-balanced programme in a pleasant venue. We are grateful to our members in the South West who helped so much at every stage to make this such an enjoyable event and to all who played their part in the programme. You will all be able to read some of the papers and a report in our next Journal. Several pamphlets were prepared for the event and can be obtained by post : details are given with the South West Group notice.

Our next conference in 2003 is likely to be in the north east, probably at Durham or Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

We are sorry to disappoint some of you with the news that we have had to give up plans for a visit to Rome in 2002. The trip we were planning worked out to be too expensive - £650 plus for four nights but there were other problems and we felt that it would be exhausting sight-seeing with a large group. For those who still hope to visit Rome we propose to collect a list of members who might like to combine in smaller groups. Anyone finding a holiday offer they liked could consult the list and contact others to discuss ideas. Write to me if you would like to have your name on such a list or if you have suggestions on tour offers or hotels. I have some details of tour companies which have been recommended to us, which we can give to members who are thinking of joining a tour or arranging their own trip. There is another way the Society hopes to assist would-be Rome bound travellers: we will compile a booklet of the Gaskells and their contemporaries in Rome and suggest visits for literary pilgrims.

However we DO still hope to offer you an overseas visit and this will be to Normandy and Brittany partly in the steps of Gaskell and Madame de Sévigné. This will be a coach tour, probably for a week near the beginning of September. We need to know how many of you are interested in this plan and especially how many single rooms would be needed so we can start looking for a hotel.

It may not happen for some time but we have just heard that BBC is working on a production of *North and South*.

We hope many of you will be able to join us at group meetings in Knutsford, Manchester, London and Bath or at the New Year Lunch on 15th January at Cottons hotel, Knutsford. Any member who is too far away to get to local meetings might consider starting a group in their area, perhaps by putting a notice in the local library or paper: the Society could give back-up support.

Plans for Plymouth Grove are progressing but funds are much needed.

Joan Leach

84 Plymouth Grove

Janet Allan

At our conference in Bath I gave a very short slide presentation about 84 Plymouth Grove, the house in which Elizabeth lived from 1850-65, and where her husband William and their two unmarried daughters lived between 1865-1913. At the beginning of July the Manchester Historic Buildings Trust applied for a Heritage Lottery Fund Grant to restore and convert the house, and I appealed for funds towards the development of this application. Members of the Society have now generously contributed over £2,000 towards this development funding and the fund raising which will be necessary. This is a most encouraging response and I would like to thank, again, everybody who has contributed. Anybody who has not already done so will find the donation form in this newsletter, and I hope I can persuade them to add to the total.

The result of the Stage 1 of the Heritage Lottery application will not now be known until about March 2002, nine months after our application was sent in, and if we pass Stage 1 there will be further development work before we can apply for Stage 2. It is unlikely now that we will know if we have been successful until early in 2003.

In the forthcoming months I will be giving a longer and more detailed talk about the project to members of the Society (the date to be announced) and have also been asked to talk to several other local organisations. I will be very pleased to hear of others who would be interested. Please get in touch with me at 10 Dale Road, New Mills, High Peak, SK22 4 MW, phone/fax 01663 744233 email janet@janetbook.fsnet.co.uk.

The Gaskells' Bequests

Janet Allan

Some time ago I decided to investigate Elizabeth Gaskell's will. However, careful searches both in Manchester and London, could find no trace of any such will. This was to be expected as married women at that time could not make independent wills. However, there were no Letters of Administration either, so there was no trace of Elizabeth's property. What happened to The Lawn at Holybourne near Alton, I wondered, the house which she was buying without her husband's knowledge? And how much money did she have? Also, when did the Gaskells buy 84 Plymouth Grove, which was rented in 1850 for £150 a year, but by 1913 belonged to Elizabeth and William's daughter Meta (Margaret Emily) when she died, and what happened to The Shelling, the house in Silverdale which Meta and her sister Julia had built?

Some of these questions are answered in the much later wills of William, Julia and Meta Gaskell, and in a copy of the deeds of 84 Plymouth Grove which I obtained recently.

William Gaskell's will dated 23 March 1876 left all his household effects to Julia and Meta, and divided the rest of his property equally between his four daughters. Florence pre-deceased him, dying in 1881, and thus after William died on 11 June 1884 his net estate of £46,103. 0s. 11d was shared by the other three sisters, Julia, Meta and Marianne (Mrs Holland). There is no mention of freehold property, and 'no leaseholds' is noted on the probate document.

Julia and Meta, having inherited £15,367 each from their father, lived on at 84 Plymouth Grove, the doyennes of Manchester society and very much involved in local charitable enterprises. As unmarried women they were able to control their own affairs, and both their wills make interesting reading.

Julia's will is dated 28 July 1905. In the event of her dying before Meta she left nineteen legacies, twelve of which were to local friends including Miss Anna Halle, Miss Taylor of St Jukes School Manchester, Miss Viola Joy and Miss Vera Hochstein, both at the Manchester Royal College of Music, and Miss Vernon at the Manchester Art Museum and University Settlement at Ancoats. Other bequests included Miss Alice Winkworth at Bristol, Mrs William T. Arnold of 4 Carlyle Square Chelsea, Mrs Frances Sleight, wife of the Vicar of Silverdale and Michel Devonassond, Guide aux Livets, Chamonix, Haute Savoie. Should she outlive Meta the list extends and includes £10,000 to Katherine Agnes Gregg to run a home of rest at the Shelling, the 'cottage' that she and Meta had built in Silverdale, for teachers from the Manchester High School for Girls, Governesses, Nurses from Ardwick or a convalescent home for children. Other legacies included £1,000 for the Benevolent Fund for Sick and Aged Governesses, £2,000 to Ardwick District Nurses Home, £1,000 to Ancoats Hospital, £500 each for the Unitarian Home Missionary College, the Domestic Mission, Manchester College Oxford, Christie Cancer Hospital, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and Manchester Art Museum. Mrs Jane Sanderson formerly Matron of the Kitchen for the Sick at Ancoats was to receive £50. Julia died before Meta, on 24 October 1908, so after the nineteen individual legacies the balance of her estate of £28,300.11s.11d went to her sister with whom she had lived all her life.

Meta died on 26 October 1913. The gross value of her personal estate was £50,223. 0s. 9d. Interestingly in her will, dated 13 March 1913, Katherine Agnes Gregg is only to receive £50 and there is no reference to the Shelling, but we find that on 19 December 1909, a little over a year after her sister's death, Meta had presented land and buildings in Swinton Avenue 'for the purposes of a home to be called The Memorial Nursing Home' to Louisa Potter, Thomas Arther Helme and others. The Trustees of this Home received £4,500 from Meta in her will. Presumably this replaced the Silverdale project. It is in Meta's will also that we find the question of

The Lawn at Holybourne is answered. The house had been kept in the family and after William's death the freehold was owned jointly by Marianne, Julia, Meta and Charles Crompton (their deceased sister Florence's husband). Meta left her share to Marianne.

Marianne also received £17,000 in trust for herself and her children. Other bequests underline the involvement of the Gaskells in the charitable and cultural life of Manchester. They include £1,500 to the Ardwick District Nurses Home, £1,000 to Ancoats Hospital, £1,000 to the University of Manchester, £1,000 to the Fox Coat Charity, £100 each to the Royal Manchester College of Music, Manchester High School for Girls, Manchester Royal Eye Hospital, the Unitarian Home Missionary College Manchester, the Ministers' Pension and Insurance Fund and the Benevolent Fund for Sick and Aged Governesses. £200 went to the Domestic Mission, the Manchester Art Museum, Manchester Grammar School (£100 for the Musical Society and £100 to the Sports Committee), and £300 to Brook Street Chapel Knutsford for the upkeep of the family grave.

Bequests to individuals included £1,500 each to Henry Llewellyn Davies and Crompton Llewellyn Davies, £500 to Elizabeth Gaskell Norton of Shady Hill Massachusetts (in a later codicil this was revoked and replaced by an annuity of £200) and £500 to Miss Lena Moxon of Morrah, Falmouth. Lady Anne Isabella Ritchie (daughter of William Makepeace Thackeray) received £300. There were numerous other small bequests. In addition to their wages, three of Meta's five servants received legacies of £100 and the remaining two got £50 each.

The wills of both sisters request that their executors destroy all personal papers, which were to be 'put together in a box or boxes'. How we wish now that this had not been done! Meta also left her mother's portrait by Richmond to the National Portrait Gallery, and to the Corporation of Manchester she gave among other things the portrait of William by Mrs Swynnerton, the bust of Elizabeth, and presentation plate given to William on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his ministry at Cross Street Chapel. The University of Manchester received William's 1878 presentation plate. All other possessions including 84 Plymouth Grove and the motor car were to be disposed of by her executors.

The deeds of 84 Plymouth Grove reveal that Meta and Julia bought the house for £3,500 on 24 January 1900. Included in the deal were 2 and 4 Swinton Grove, which are still standing, and 6 and 8 Swinton Avenue, the houses used for The Memorial Nursing Home which no longer exist.

So we now know more about the Gaskells' houses, and their wealth. The question posed by these discoveries is – how did the family become so wealthy? Did Elizabeth's books provide their very considerable fortune? Was William's income of £300 from Cross Street Chapel substantially augmented by his other duties? Or did inheritances help to increase the Gaskell bank balance? Perhaps other members of the Society can throw some light on this.

Bellingham

Muriel Smith

In Mrs Gaskell and Newcastle-upon-Tyne in the Gaskell Society Journal Vol.5 (1991), P. J Yarrow suggested that Mrs Gaskell had picked up the name Bellingham, used in *Ruth*, when she lived in Newcastle around 1830: it is the name of a small village in Northumberland. Alternatively, she could have encountered the name when staying with the Kay-Shuttleworths in 1850: there is a Bellingham Chapel in Kendal Parish Church. The Bellinghams of Levens Hall, Cumbria, belong to the same family as the Bellinghams of Northumberland Bellingham.

There is, however, a famous bearer of the name connected with a famous and very rare, indeed unique, incident, the assassination of a British Prime Minister. Spencer Perceval was shot by John Bellingham in the lobby of the House of Commons on 11 May 1812. Perceval was by profession a lawyer who had previously served as Solicitor-General and Attorney-General, that is, had been responsible for some of the wartime political prosecutions: this may connect with the almost universal satisfaction observed among the lower ranks of society over his death. He was also violently anti-Catholic at a time when the Catholic Question, the possible relaxation of the savage penal laws still on the Statute Book was a major issue in Parliament, connected of course with the Irish Question. However, it became clear that fears of revolutionary action were groundless: Perceval's death had nothing to do with politics. Bellingham was acting on personal motives: he had got himself into trouble in Russia and blamed the British Government, He was largely the author of his own misfortunes but that never stops a man from nursing a grievance.

BANK STREET UNITARIAN CHAPEL, BOLTON

Christine Lingard

On 5th June 2001 a group of Gaskell Society members visited this Chapel. Elizabeth Gaskell may well have been familiar with the Chapel herself as she was friendly with the Darbishire family who were associated with it but the family connection goes further back to her Holland ancestors. Because of what John Chapple calls the 'veritable cat's cradle' of Unitarian relationships Gaskell's connection with two of the Chapel's eighteenth century ministers Philip and John Holland is very complicated. Philip Holland was both her grandfather's cousin and his brother-in-law twice over making him also her great uncle.

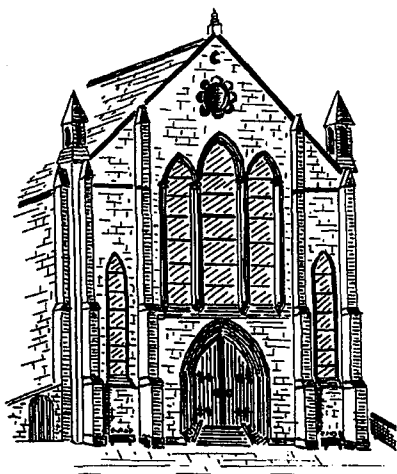
Philip Holland (1721-1789) was active as a trustee in founding the celebrated Warrington Academy and later minister at Bank St., where he was very popular. He established a boarding school offering tuition in Latin, Greek, Chemistry and Natural Philosophy. Short grammars and long exercise books, a few rules and many examples were in his opinion the best way to learn a language.

Pupils were attracted from a wide area. They included his nephew, William Turner (father of the Rev William Turner of Newcastle). This was a time when the Manchester-London coach was advertised as taking "barring accidents four and a half days". Turner sent letters to his son by means of the butchers who travelled from Yorkshire to the market in Bolton. The most famous of Philip's pupils were the sons of Josiah Wedgwood – John, Josiah and the 8-year-old Thomas (the pioneer photographer). Wedgwood took an active interest in his sons' education, and travelled on several occasions to Bolton.

But even this regime was not adequate to satisfy the boys' lust for education so he took them away to a school he founded himself at Etruria. He exchanged letters with Philip Holland showing his enthusiastic support for the American colonists. These were very troubled times. Wedgwood witnessed machine-breaking riots on one visit. The Wedgwoods later became connected by marriage to the Hollands and the Turners so the friendship must have been a close one.

Philip's nephew John (1766-1826) succeeded his uncle at Bank Street but was less successful. At one time during an anti-dissenter riot in the 1790s his effigy was carried through the streets and burned. He is important to us because he received his education at the Daventry academy in Northamptonshire. There he made friends with a fellow student from Berwick. It is probable that it was this friendship that brought William Stevenson to the North West. He took up the ministry at Dob Cross, Failsforth, from where he paid visits to his friend's relations at Sandlebridge, near Knutsford and met his future wife.

John Holland was also a teacher and maintained a notable library. He was described as a broken man whose mental powers were failing when he retired in 1820. With his brother he wrote fourteen textbooks that were widely used in the education of young women in the early part of the nineteenth century. Aspiring students might perhaps take heed of one of their salutary warnings:



"Another cause of sloth, is a vehement love of study and contemplation. Indeed, if we pursue valuable knowledge, in order to impart it to others, or to qualify ourselves for the right conduct of life, this far from deserving the name of sloth, that is one of the best and most notable employments in the world. On the contrary, if the sole end of our study be to fill our heads with useless notions, whatever pains we may take, it is no better than a specious kind of idleness, which if it be somewhat plausible, it is upon that account the more dangerous."

The GASKELLS, POPULAR EDUCATION & THE FREE LIBRARY MOVEMENT

Christine Lingard

In the last issue of the newsletter I discussed the role of the Mechanics Institutes and their libraries in meeting the demand for popular education but even these had limitations in that they were not free to users. Free libraries were the solution. Credit for their foundation is given to three men - Joseph Brotherton MP for Salford from 1832, a local man very much involved in the community, Swedenborgian, vegetarian and campaigner against the death penalty - William Ewart (1798-1869), also a liberal MP but with a more national reputation - who played a more significant role in the Gaskell story and Edward Edwards (1812-87) a Chartist - just the sort of man for whom libraries were intended - a former bricklayer, self-educated at Mechanics' Institutes. The campaign began in earnest in 1836 when Edwards wrote to the Select Committee on the Arts chaired by Ewart. The cause was taken up in the press. *Eliza Cook's Journal*, for one, published articles advocating them. In 1839 Edwards became assistant in the British Museum reading room under its great librarian Antonio Panizzi. It wasn't a happy relationship. Matters came to a head when he objected to Edwards' absences on behalf of his campaign and dismissed him.

A Select Committee was established under Ewart's chairmanship in 1849 with Brotherton as deputy. Members included Disraeli, still better known as a novelist, Monckton Milnes, famous for his literary breakfasts, and Sir Harry Verney, future husband of Parthenope Nightingale. Francois Guizot, French historian and exiled Prime Minister was a key witness. Gaskell recounts a social event (13th May 1849):

We cabbed it to Mr. Monckton Milnes... there were the House of Lords there, ...and Guizot, and Whewell, and Archdeacon Hare... We were very merry, and it was a very short two hours which every one had said is the proper number of hours to stay at breakfast. [GL45a]

This is in the middle of the period when the Select Committee was receiving evidence though it would be unwise to read too much into this.

The main fly in the ointment was Panizzi who questioned the statistics and wrote to the press in disapproval. Ewart won the day and introduced a bill in parliament. The Public Libraries' Act became law in 1850. It enabled towns with a population of over 10,000 to spend the product of a 1/2d rate on Libraries but not on books. These had to be donated or paid for by public subscription. In 1855 the limit was raised to one penny. The cardinal principal was that they should be free to all. The claim to have the first public library is made by several towns. In fact with a bit of linguistic variation they can all prove to be right. Some jumped the gun and used the Museums' Act of 1845 to open them. The first of all was Warrington (1848), second

Salford, Brotherton's constituency (1849) and third Winchester. Brighton passed a local act to enable them to open theirs in 1850. Several voted to adopt the act almost immediately but invariably there were delays before services were ready.

The honour of opening the first library under the act fell to Manchester in 1852. Liverpool followed the same year but Westminster, the first in London, was not opened till 1857. Edwards was appointed librarian. Subscription funds for both middle classes and workingmen were opened to pay for books. The building at Campfield, Deansgate was originally Robert Owen's Hall of Science, one of his public meeting halls for the discussion of his radical ideas. Engels was an enthusiastic member. The building was nearly destroyed by fire during protests in 1840. The Owenites however were the ones charged with sedition. The building was badly managed and regarded as a public nuisance. It was bought at a fraction of the original cost by Sir John Potter. Prince Albert was invited to perform the opening ceremony but declined and donated 18 books instead, including such riveting titles as *The Natural History of Deeside* and *On the Application of Water Glass in the Arts*. Total stock was 21,308 volumes - far bigger than the Mechanics' but quite small by modern standards.

The library opened for public inspection from 2nd to 5th June 1852. There were two ceremonies on 2nd September. The morning audience was limited to those who contributed a minimum of £5 (presumably they were allowed to bring guests) - the evening meeting to workers. At least half of the morning audience were women but only a fifth of the evening's. The list of speakers reads like a *Who's Who* of Victorian letters, so much so it proved to be a case of cultural indigestion. Edwards was there but took little interest as he was suffering from 'summer cholera'. Ewart however was on holiday. The Chairman Sir John Potter, presided. Speakers were the Earl of Shaftesbury, Bulwer Lytton, who in the 1830s was one of Gaskell's favourite authors, Dickens and Thackeray. Ironically next was Sir James Stephen, Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, whose son married Thackeray's daughter (he was the grandfather of Virginia Woolf). Dr Henry Vaughan who held the equivalent post at Oxford, Monckton Milnes, John Bright MP and some mayors made up the number.

Gaskell and the Winkworths were in the audience:

She (16 year old Meta) and I went down to the Royal Hotel & Joined the Dickens, Mr Charles Knight, and then went to the Free Library where we had capital places, close to the speakers. But oh! My usual complaint! The room despite its immense size & height was so close, & the speeches so long I could not attend & wished myself at home many & many a time, my only comfort being seeing the caricatures Thackeray was drawing which was very funny. He and Mr Monckton Milnes made plenty of fun, till poor Thackeray was called on to speak & broke down utterly after which he drew no more caricatures. We went at 1/2 past 9 & did not get out till 1/4 to 4, which was too much of a good thing. [GL 131]

Though Thackeray had lectured before (Brontë had heard his *English humorists* in 1851) he had only just decided to pursue this career in earnest to supplement his irregular income from writing and was very anxious about it, using it as a measure of his potential for such an undertaking. He was certainly eager to outshine Dickens, taking along his friend the American publisher Joseph Fields for support. He spoke confidently for about three minutes then completely froze and sat down without explanation. When at ease he was a fluent and entertaining conversationalist but he was prone to attacks of nerves. At the evening meeting he redeemed himself and was most entertaining in his references to French novels which he was *obliged to read*, but he hoped will *never be on the shelf of the library*.

The library opened for business on 6th Sept. There were two floors - reference and lending, with books only available from catalogues. The staff consisted of an assistant librarian, two porters, a clerk and a boy. The clerk on the princely salary of £26 p.a. was a W.H. Gaskell! This I trust was not a connection because he found the work so arduous and the hours so long that after reporting for duty in an intoxicated condition he was dismissed. He tried for a post at Salford but found himself in Lancaster gaol in debt to Edwards financially.

Henry Crabb Robinson, the *Times* journalist wrote in his diary in 1857:

The one thing that has eclipsed all others is the Free Library... in a large hall there were some thirty or forty men, working men perhaps, reading, not light and idle books. There was no impudence or impertinence or anything objectionable. There is a newsroom and this is not the most instructive reading, but it is with this and novels etc., that young men must begin.

Co-opted to the Committee was one of Manchester's greatest book men, the renowned after-dinner speaker James Crossley (1800-83) who died in his bachelor home by the side of and literally under an enormous mountain of books. He was associated with the Portico, Chetham's and the Athenaeum. Gaskell's letters to him are very formal, exchanging interesting information on Cheshire history, folklore and the like.

Crossley was the most remarkable and picturesque figure in Manchester. Enveloped in a long dark-coloured cloak, his white hair fell from his shoulders from beneath a broad-rimmed hat and his manners were those of days gone by. He loved old books, old wine, old friends, old times, and attributed his longevity to port, celibacy and never indulging in snuff and tobacco [Ellis]

He and Edwards compiled a list of books to facilitate the purchase of the initial stock. Regrettably no work by Gaskell was included but then neither was any by Jane Austen or the Brontës, but such recently published books as *Vanity Fair* and *David Copperfield* were. The committee interfered in the selection - among titles banned were *Moll Flanders* and *Roxanna*.

They went on a book-buying spree in Manchester, London, Liverpool and Bristol. They spent £3,200 instead of the allotted £2,600 on 14,000 books. The committee was not amused and Edwards' problems with them began. He was his own worse enemy and seemed to court controversy, regularly falling foul of them in his campaign for better hours, pay and leave and was censored for being absent from the reading room several times. He argued that these were for legitimate reasons - the intolerably long hours and also all manner of business that any librarian will tell you is par for the job. He objected to the extra workload the opening of branches at Ardwick, Ancoats and Hulme had brought. He was again called to answer charges in 1858. Potter had suffered the first of a series of strokes so the chair was taken by Cllr Harry Rawson, a man probably known to the Gaskells, though it isn't recorded, a Unitarian, publisher of several of William's sermons and the author of his obituary in a local paper. Once he accompanied Edwards to pass approval on his selection of books. Edwards was dismissed by the narrowest of margins.

Annual reports make interesting reading because they list the most issued titles. In 1857 in the literature category: *Dombey and son* (Dickens); *Tales of the landlord* (Scott); Burns' works (note centenary year); *Self control* (Mrs Brunton, 1814); *The Virginians* (Thackeray); *Sketches by Boz*; *Ivanhoe*; *Lalla Rookh* (Thomas Moore, 1813); *Pendennis*; *Mary Barton*; *Roland Cashel* (Charles Lever); *Last of the barons* (Lytton); Shakespeare's plays. 1860: *Jane Eyre*; *Smuggler* (GPR James); *Pilot* (Fennimore Cooper); *Tales of Ireland* (William Carleton, 1817); *Dombey and son*; *Daltons* (Lever); *Rookwood*; *Windsor Castle* (Harrison Ainsworth); *Mary Barton*; *Kenilworth* (Scott); *Vanity Fair*.

In 1855 the most issued journal was *Howitts'*, beating *Household Words* into second place. *Ruth* is in a list for the branches but I found no mention of *North and South*, possibly because it was issued in instalments. *Lizzie Leigh* is in the list for the Rochdale Rd branch in 1862 (a novel by Charles Reade was top) and at Hulme where *Shirley* headed the list. It is just as interesting to see what isn't there - nowhere could I find any mention of *David Copperfield*.

The radical movement in Manchester is invariably associated with the Potters. These are not the Lancashire Potters to whom Beatrix Potter belonged, but other Unitarian friends of the Gaskells from Tadcaster, Yorkshire, who had made money growing turnips. The first John Potter, a Cannon St. draper whose home was a meeting place of radicals e.g. his sons Thomas and Richard, John Shuttleworth, newspaper proprietor, (another regular caller at Plymouth Grove) and Mark Philips MP, all of whom campaigned for moderate parliamentary reform. 'Radical' Dick Potter (died 1844) became MP for Wigan and appears to have known William Gaskell's brother-in-law, William Robson. Sir Thomas Potter (1774-1845) remained in local politics and was first mayor of Manchester.

His son, Sir John of Buile Hill, Pendlebury was first chairman of the Libraries' committee.

Edwards was not initially impressed, considering that his father's prestige covered up many shortcomings. Engels was less polite:

Potter is a frightfully big and enormously fat creature, about forty-six years of age, with red hair and whiskers, three times mayor of Manchester, very jolly, has no brains, but a good deal of belly and backside.

Gaskell also referred to him as *Fat Sir John*. He seemed to have had difficulty in making decisions and came into conflict with Edwards several times, but it had been his recommendation to appoint him so he usually acquiesced to his demands, unlike Rawson whose dislike was more personal. Potter was a very sick man by the time of the final dispute and only appeared at the last meeting. He made the casting vote to dismiss him but was dead two weeks later. He was only 43. In *Further letters* Gaskell gives a detailed description of his illness to Monckton Milnes, suggesting she knew him better than I had been led to believe.

His sister-in-law Mary fainted on reading the account of the murder in *Mary Barton* because it reminded her of the murder of her brother Thomas Ashton of Pole Bank, Werneth near Hyde, in a dispute with the trade unions. He was found dead by the roadside on 3rd January 1831. The murderers were not found for three years when one turned King's evidence. Aged 12 at the time she was the last to see him before the attack. Gaskell denied knowledge to Potter:

I wish to give 'Mary Barton' and another little book to the Free Library. But before I do so I should like to make a private enquiry of you ... as to how far my giving these books would be distasteful to you. Of course I cannot be unaware of the opinions which you and your brother have so frequently & openly expressed... it appeared to me as if it would be an impertinence on my part to send the obnoxious book to any collection in which you took an interest ... Of course I had heard of young Mr Ashton's murder at the time when it took place; but I knew none of the details, nothing of the family, never read the trial (if trial there were, which I do not to this day know) and that if the circumstance were present to my mind at the time of my writing Mary Barton it was so unconsciously, although its occurrence, and that of one or two similar cases in Glasgow at the time of a strike were, I have no doubt, suggestive of the plot, as having shown to me to what lengths the animosity of irritated workmen would go. [GLI30 Aug. 16 1852].

Note the murder took place before she came to Manchester. Chapple suggests she was in Edinburgh. It was not reported in *The Times* though there were other papers.

The nurse followed Mr Carson to the servants' hall. There on the dinner table lay the poor dead body... The policemen looked at each other. Then one began and stated that having heard the report of a gun in Turner Street he had turned down that way (a lonely, unfrequented way Mr Carson knew, but a short cut to his garden door, of which Harry had a key); that as he (the policeman) came nearer, he had heard footsteps of a man running away

but the evening was so dark (the moon not having risen) that he could see no one twenty yards off. That he had even been startled when close to the body; by seeing it lying across the path at his feet... Mr Carson listened attentively never taking his eyes off the dead body. When they had ended he said, 'Where was he shot?' They lifted up the thick chestnut curls and showed a blue spot (you could hardly call it a hole, the flesh had closed much over it) on the left temple. A deadly aim! And yet it was so dark a night!

Compare this with an account from *The Stockport Advertiser* of 7th January 1831:

The victim of this cold blooded and diabolical act of assassination, who was in his 24th year, and remarkable for his kind and conciliating disposition and manners, had the management of a new mill at Woodley from whence he had just returned ... to spend an evening with a family near Stockport... the unfortunate gentleman had not proceeded on the public highway after quitting the private road more than 30 yards before he was shot, and it would appear that the assassins had awaited his approach sitting in a hedge bank on the roadside, which situation gave them the best opportunity of seeing or hearing the approach of their victim from his father's house down the private pathway. The breast was perforated at the edge of the bone by two bullets from a blunderbuss which passed out of the left shoulder blade, having taken an oblique direction upward...

The body was carried back to Pole-Bank in an armchair and laid out on a kitchen table.

One explanation is that she was familiar with Elizabeth Stone's *William Langshawe: the Cotton Lord*, a novel which otherwise may have been forgotten. The author was a member of the family who founded the *Manchester Chronicle*. One of her brothers James was the author of the *History of Manchester* quoted in the last issue and edited a volume of Manchester poetry containing two by William Gaskell as well as some by Charles Swain, Maria Jewsbury and Samuel Bamford.

Elizabeth Stone (born 1803) married Thomas Stone (died 1850) vicar of Wandsworth. She wrote two books on fashion and needlework edited by the Countess of Wilton of Heaton Park and at least one other novel *The Young Milliner*. Neither is in the British Library and it is difficult to ascertain whether all other books listed under "Elizabeth Stone" (which date up to the 1870s) are by one and the same person. In 1857, *God's Acre*, a mediocre book about cemeteries was advertised as her 'last book'. There was an appeal in the *Times* in 1856 for the next of kin of a Mrs Stone.

Her novels are important because they were the first by a Manchester resident to belong to that new literary genre 'the condition of England novel', of which Charlotte Tonna and Fanny Trollope were the first exponents. They provide a link with the more

accomplished novels of Gaskell. Joseph Kestner claimed that she probably did not read them but she must have been aware of them. They rely heavily on verbatim quotes from her brother's *History*. The murder comes as the climax of the novel and is accompanied with this footnote:

Let not my readers imagine that this awful incident has been invented for the notice. A few years ago a young cotton manufacturer of the highest respectability, and most excellent character, was murdered even so, and as we have described by order of the Spinners' Union.

Michael Wheeler points out several similarities with *Mary Barton*. Judge for yourself:

A crowd of people appeared and as they partly divided to enter the hall, Mrs Wolstonholme who had nervously pushed foremost, saw her eldest son, Henry, borne in by the men - a corpse.

Pass we this.

The ruffians, delegates of the secret committee of that union to which we have alluded had done their work well. This excellent young man - good man, a good brother, a kind master for he, and indeed his father also were beloved by every individual in their employ, and their factory was full of hands in full work, - had been shot by some coward, who stood close behind him; the weapon was loaded with slugs, one of which pierced his heart, the other his backbone, and the victim fell dead in a moment. The report of firearms brought people to the spot instantly, but no one was to be seen but the murdered young man; not a clue, not the remotest trace of the villains remained.

Mary Barton was published anonymously. At first Gaskell did all she could to conceal her identity:

By the way Emily was curious to know the name of the person who wrote 'Mary Barton' (a book she saw at Plas Penrhyn), and I am happy to be able to satisfy her Eve-like craving. Marianne Darbishire told me it was ascertained to be the production of a Mrs Wheeler, a clergyman's wife, who once upon a time was a Miss Stone, and wrote a book called the "Cotton-Lord" (GL30)

Was she deliberating trying to confuse by transposing the lady's married and maiden names? But many people guessed the truth including Mary Ewart and Guizot. Walter Sichel whose mother, a member of Manchester's German community, knew the Gaskells, claimed that the book was a profound secret from her husband which only came to light when a messenger from her publisher arrived at their home. Though, when she realised the subterfuge might prevent her receiving payment, she hastened to reassure her publisher:

I find everyone here has most convincing proofs that the authorship of Mary Barton should be attributed to a Mrs Wheeler, née Stone, an authoress of some book called the 'Cotton Lord'. I am only afraid lest you also should

be convinced and transact that part of the business which yet remains unaccomplished with her.. I do assure you I am the author. (GL 31)

William Ewart (1798-1869) was a personal friend of the Gaskells at least from April 1849 when he offered to take her round the Houses of Parliament. He was born in Liverpool, the son of a businessman who in 1809 stood godfather to the son of an associate - William Ewart Gladstone. They were not related but part of the same Liberal tradition. Ewart had been an MP since the age of 28 and gained a considerable reputation as a campaigner on causes ranging from Free Trade to the abolition of hanging in chains, reduction of the number of offences carrying the death penalty, and legalising of metric measures. He retained many connections with Lancashire (he succeeded Dick Potter as MP for Wigan) and was a friend of Cobden and on some of the same education committees as another Gaskell friend, Dukinfield Darbishire. His brother Joseph remained in Liverpool and shared yet another friend in James Martineau. In the 1840s he provided some of the cash for Harriet Martineau's trip to the Middle East. His career as an MP was undistinguished.

They were grandsons of a minister in Troguire, Dumfries. Their uncle Peter Ewart was an engineer associated with Matthew Boulton and Samuel Oldknow, the Marple manufacturer, and came to Manchester to install an engine at Quarry Bank. According to Gaskell, the business failed in 1830 and he died c1837. [GL421 a] In fact he was killed by a chain at the Woolwich dockyard in 1842. He was a prominent member of the Portico. Gaskell was distressed to hear that his son Lt Col John Ewart (1802-57), his wife Emma Fooks and baby daughter were killed at the siege of Cawnpore in the Indian Mutiny, leaving a son, Harry, with his aunts in Manchester. Imagine her anxiety when her own daughter had just engaged herself to an officer posted to India. The precise fate of the Ewarts is documented. Letters written by Emma Ewart are preserved in the British Library. One of them, written before they had suffered any physical harm, was among several printed in the *Times* in October 1857:

To my dear sisters [i.e. sisters-in-law] and ends: I cannot write any more, if we should be spared I hope we may have better news to give you before long. Kiss my darling H(arry) for us, and may God bless him. John sends his best love. I must not forget to thank Mrs G. for The Life of Charlotte Brontë which arrived in the midst of all this distress two or three days ago. If peaceful times should ever return we may hope to find pleasure in reading it as well as in writing to acknowledge it. Give my love to her, and tell her how strangely we are situated.

They had once been a lively family.

I wish the Ewarts knew how to rest & be quiet, for it will be rather provoking if all the good at Poulton is done away with by bustling so in Manchester and one of their parties was large, vulgar and overdressed.

Peter's daughters supported themselves by private means. Agnes (born c1815) and Mary (c1821 – 1901) were well known in Manchester, friends of Hallé and often mentioned in the connection of their social work. Gaskell recommends Agnes: -

she talks a great deal. She does really know a great deal (of the condition of factory girls) and her facts would be good and accurate; her opinions (I think) crude and uninformed, but expressed without the least shyness or reserve. [GL630]

It is not certain when they came to know the Gaskells, as she was inaccurate in her details about Peter Ewart. She is very formal in her first surviving letter to Mary (1848) [GL36], admitting the authorship of *Mary Barton*. In 1852 they were house hunting because another brother was about to be married. They rejected one in Hyde Grove in favour of one in Nelson St near Plymouth Grove. By which time they were on first name terms. At the same time William Ewart's young daughters were 'coming out' and he spent most of his spare time taking them to concerts and the theatre. (He was already a widower). Their tastes were very similar to Gaskell's and it was they who recommended that he read her novels. The friendship appears to have involved the whole family. William and his daughters visited him without her.

Meta had been hearing Papa's praises from Mr Ewart. 'My friend Mr Gaskell' for I hope he will allow me to rank me as a friend'. Meta referred to Papa's walks with Mr Ewart - 'Yes he is the most charming companion I know &c so Papa's ears ought to have been burning. [GL455]

She visited both his London house and his estate at Broadleas, Devizes, which he bought in 1852. She was there in 1856 writing *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* and in 1857. These working holidays were immensely enjoyable. She went there from Dumbleton where she had worked tirelessly, wearing herself out. At Broadleas she paced herself more:

So at Broad Leas (the Ewarts) I only wrote till lunch... I enjoyed Broad Leas for the most of my visit, perhaps owing to my not having the sick wearied feeling of being over-worked.. & Mr Gaskell being very jolly: & delicious downs Salisbury Plain, get at able in our afternoon drives great sweeps of green turf, like emerald billows stretching off into the blue sky miles & miles away, - with here & there a 'barrow' of some ancient Briton, & Wansdyke, & Silbury Hill, and the great circle of Avebury all to be seen, while the horses went noisily over the thick soft velvety grass high up above blue misty plains, and villages in nests of trees, & church spires which did not reach nearly up to where we were in our beautiful free air, & primitive world. [GL308]

Ewart encouraged a friend Ben Smith to take up a career in politics in the 1840s and his young daughter helped him on the hustings. This was the future Barbara Bodichon the artist and feminist best remembered as a benefactor of Girton College whom Gaskell admired but did not like. The two women were both friendly with the elder daughter, the other Mary Ewart (1831-1911), also a prominent feminist - despite being part of the 'opposition' so to speak. Mary campaigned on behalf of the rival

college Newnham - leaving £31,000 to them, in addition to money she gave them during her lifetime. As well as sharing Barbara's commitment to women's education she was an enthusiastic traveller, who enjoyed studying the art, history, flora and fauna of all the places she visited. *The calm, judicious Miss Ewart* as Gaskell described her when they disagreed over the authorship of *Adam Bede*.

By the end of her life she was telling Marianne:

Do go and see the Ewarts as much as you can. They were so good to me, and I do feel grateful to my children if they will pay attention to those whom I love.

William Ewart's career is all the more remarkable because he was left a widower early with a young family. His wife was his cousin. They shared two great aunts, the authors Sophia (1750-1824) and Harriet Lee (died 1851) who ran a school at Belvedere House, Bath. They were friends of Mrs Siddons, Sheridan and Mrs Radcliffe. The latter refused an offer of marriage from William Godwin. Their works include the play and the popular retelling of *Canterbury Tales*.

Further reading: Chapple and Pollard. The letters of Mrs Gaskell, new ed. 1997. [GL] Shelston. A. and Chapple, J.A.V. Further letters of Mrs Gaskell, 2000. Ashton, Owen and Stephens, Robert. The Victorian working class writer, 1999 Ellis, S.M William Harrison Ainsworth and his friends, 1911 Kestner, Joseph. Elizabeth Stone's 'William Langshawe: the Cotton Lord' and 'the Young Milliner' as condition of England novels. *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, vol. 67 Spring 1985 Munford, William. Edward Edwards, 1812-1888: portrait of a librarian, 1963. Penny rate: aspects of British public librarianship, 1951. William Ewart, M.P.: portrait of a radical, 1960. Tylecote, Mabel. The Mechanics' Institutes of Lancashire and Yorkshire before 1851, 1957. Ward, Andrew. Our bones are scattered: the Cawnpore massacres and the Indian Mutiny of 1857, 1996. Wheeler, Michael. Biography, literary influence and allusion as aspects of source studies. *British journal of aesthetics*, vol. 17, 1977 p. 149-60.

BOOK NOTES

Christine Lingard

Elizabeth Gaskell: Gothic tales; edited with an introduction by Laura Krantzler. Penguin Classics £6.99.

It is very regrettable that most of the recent editions of Gaskell's short stories have been allowed to go out of print. Oxford edition of *The Moorland Cottage* (edited by Suzanne Lewis) is the only other selection currently available in the UK, so this book is particularly welcome. It contains *Disappearances*, *The Old Nurse's story*, *The Squire's story*, *The Poor Clare*, *The Doom of the Griffiths*, *Lois the Witch*, *The Crooked Branch*, and *The Grey Woman*. The first piece, not strictly an original short story but a retelling of a Manchester 'legend' has not been reprinted since the Knutsford

edition. The stories are selected not only to illustrate her fascination with the supernatural but also to demonstrate her interest in the dual nature of women's lives.

The introduction (though the reader is warned to leave it till later not to spoil the plot) illustrates Gaskell's successful marriage of domestic duties and literary creativity. There are notes and a bibliography.

Gender, Power and the Unitarians in England 1760-1860.

Ruth Watts Longman, £19.99.

This is a sociological and historical study rather than a literary one but nevertheless provides interesting and important background to an understanding of how Elizabeth Gaskell's life and work exemplifies the aims and teachings of a sect which placed such importance on education. Many of members of her family including her father, husband, and daughter are mentioned as well as friends such as the Turners, Robberds, Greys, Martineaus and Carpenters.

David, Deirdre (editor). The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian novel.

Cambridge University Press, £13.95.

One of a series of comprehensive surveys intended for students – this book comprises a number of topic or genre based essays by different authors with a general introduction. Gaskell is mentioned in the essay on Industrial Culture and the Victorian Novel by Joseph W. Childers but not in Nancy Armstrong's essay on Gender. There is also a brief mention of *Mary Barton* in the chapter on Detection. (*Mary Barton* was one of the first English novels to include a detective.) There is an extensive bibliography.

South-West Group

Members who did not attend the Gaskell Society Conference at Bath Spa in August 2001 may like to purchase copies of one or more of the four booklets which were prepared specially for it by the South-West Group of the Society.

William Ewart: Radical and Philanthropist by Rosemary Marshall
This illustrated booklet, written by the Secretary of the South-West Group, is devoted to the career and achievements of the M.P. who was a good friend of William and Elizabeth Gaskell. His home, Broadleas, on the outskirts of Devizes, was the centre-piece of the Conference excursion.

George Eliot in Devizes by Peter Skrine

Could Devizes have been a model for Middlemarch? In 1843 Mary Ann Evans spent some weekends there at 'Sandcliff', a house near the market place. This booklet tells you what happened there and why it is significant.

'I hope to see you again: '

The Friendship of Catherine Winkworth and Charlotte Brontë

This booklet relates directly to Peter Skrine's paper on the Winkworth sisters and their friendship with Mrs Gaskell. It includes the full text of Catherine's letter to her sister Emily about her meeting with Charlotte Brontë, and Charlotte's one surviving letter to Catherine. Together they reveal a relationship that was unexpectedly close.

Literary Bristol. A mini-anthology compiled by Peter and Celia Skrine with the help of Maggie Lane

Containing passages from 12 authors associated with Bristol and Clifton from Pope to Pym, this 'walking tour in words' also includes a linking narrative, details of authors and a useful check-list of writers with Bristol and Clifton associations. These four booklets published by the South-West Group, are priced at £1.50 each (post free) and can be obtained from *Mrs Rosemary Marshall, 138, Fairfield Park Road, Bath BA1 6JT*. Cheques should be made out to *Gaskell Society South-West*. Also available are two small books by Maggie Lane: '*A City of Palaces: Bath through the eyes of Fanny Burney*' (including many references to Mrs Thrale) '*A Charming Place: Bath in the Life and Novels of Jane Austen*' £3.95 each post free, as above.

South West Group meets on November 17 at Bath Royal Scientific and Literary Institution, Queen Square at 2.00pm for 2.30. Lunch in the Francis Lounge for those who wish.

Mrs Marie Moss will be speaking on '*Christmas Storms and Sunshine*', a short story published in *Howitts Magazine*, before *Mary Barton*. Marie is an economist with a deep interest and knowledge in local history in the Manchester area, and a very entertaining speaker. You might like to read the story first. It can be downloaded from the web at <http://lang.nagoya-u.ac.jp/~matsuoka/EG-etexts.html>. The library staff should be able to help you or ask a schoolchild! The story comes to 8 sides of A4 paper.

LONDON and SOUTH-EAST GROUP

Meeting to be held at the Francis Holland School, 39 Graham Terrace, Chelsea SW1W 8JF

Saturday, 10 November : *Mrs Gaskell in the Magazine World* by Edward G. Preston, former secretary to The Dickens Fellowship

KNUTSFORD AND MANCHESTER MEETINGS

KNUTSFORD MONTHLY MEETINGS at St John's Parish Rooms will be held on the last Wednesday each month from 31 October, when we will be studying 'Ruth'. Lunch at 12.15 and the meetings finish about 3.15.

MEETINGS AT CROSS STREET CHAPEL

Manchester Writers

All these writers had connections with Manchester in the nineteenth century. Come and learn more. Talks to be held on 2nd Tuesdays in month, at 1.00pm, Cross Street Chapel, Manchester. The chapel will be open from 12.15 for those who wish to come early and partake of a sandwich lunch using the nearby Pret-a Manger or bringing their own; tea and coffee will be available.

9 October 2001

Thomas de Quincey by Barry Symonds

Lyrical Ballads, Mummies and Diabolic Factories : Thomas De Quincey leaves Manchester

Barry is an Open University lecturer and is editorial consultant for the new *Collected Works of De Quincey* (22 vols). Thomas De Quincey was born in Manchester in 1785 and is perhaps best known for : *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*. Come and learn more about him.

13 November 2001

Harrison Ainsworth by Steve Collins

The Lancashire Witches, was published the same year as *Mary Barton*, 1848. Ainsworth was a member of Cross Street Chapel so did the two authors meet?

Of his 39 novels, mainly historical, many were set in Lancashire. His vivid scene-setting and lively narrative made him a popular 19th century writer who produced his own magazine and edited others.

12 February 2002

Samuel Bamford by Morris Garratt '*Hymn to the Poor*' and radical writing

12 March 2002

Mrs Linnaeus Banks by Chris Makepeace *The Manchester Man*

All welcome. Admission £1.00 for non-members.

NEW YEAR LUNCH JANUARY 15TH

At Cottons Hotel. Speaker: Richard Booth, Hay-on-Wye bookseller. Details and booking form enclosed with newsletter

AGM and SPRING MEETING

Will be held on Saturday 23rd March at Cross Street Chapel, Manchester

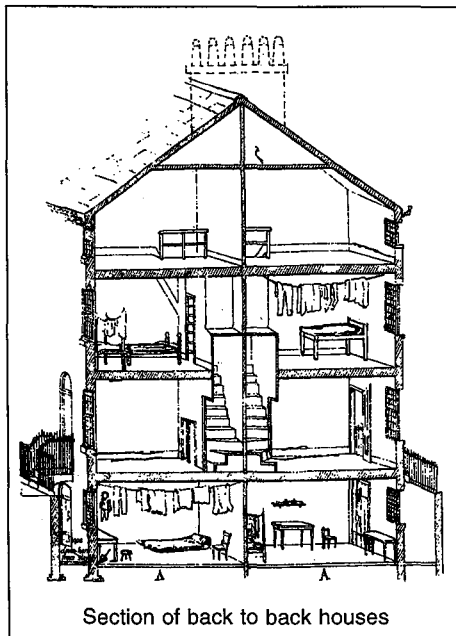
GROUP VISITS 2001

North West members enjoyed visits to the Moravian Settlement at Whitefield on 8th May and to Bolton's Bank Street Unitarian Chapel on 5th June. At both, chapel members welcomed us and told us of their history. Christine Lingard, in this newsletter traces the Holland connections with Bank Street.

On 20th June members of The Arnold Bennett Society guided us around Burslem - the *Bursley* of Bennett's fiction. The Alliance Of Literary Societies will hold its AGM in Stoke next year on 27th April to coincide with a weekend of events to celebrate the centenary of the publication of *'Anna of the Five Towns'*.

Terry Wyke conducted a 'Summer Perambulation : London Road to Ancoats' on Saturday 14th July. With the assistance of old maps Terry took us back in time to see the remains of back-to-back houses and cellar dwellings clustered around mills like Murrays' which still survives and which Elizabeth Gaskell recommended seeing to an unknown correspondent as one of

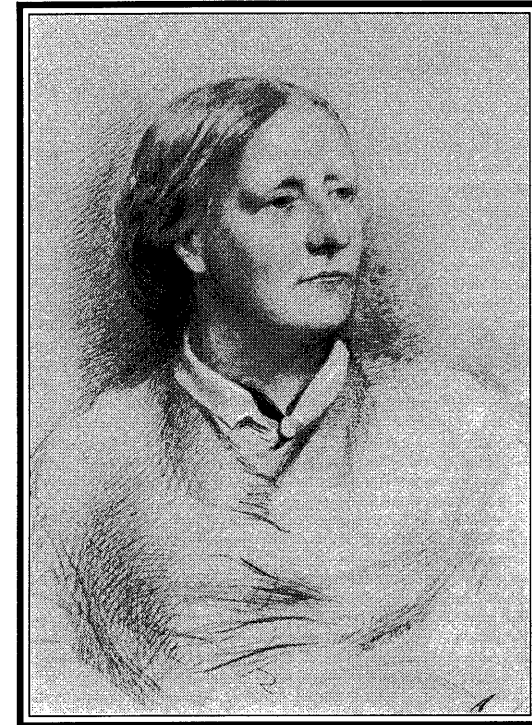
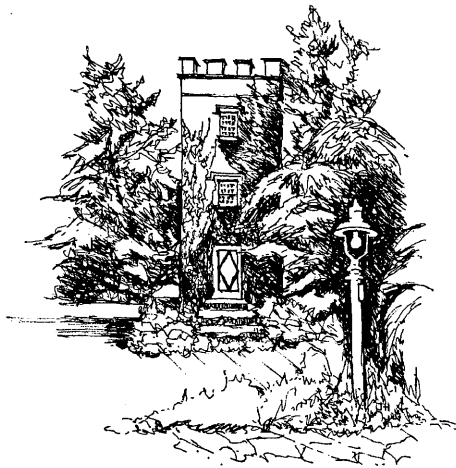
'the things best worth in Manchester . . . just off Ancoats Lane, everybody there knows Murrays'. You would there see the whole process of preparing & spinning Cotton, with the latest improvements in machinery . . . these works are very interesting, if you do not get a stupid, fine young man to show you over - try rather for one of the working men.' (GL 549).



Section of back to back houses

A sheet of the 1839 report of The Ministry to the Poor will remind members of the sixth chapter of *Mary Barton*: 'I was urgently requested to go into a cellar in which the greatest destitution was said to exist. I accordingly went; it was rather late in the evening, and as soon as I opened the door, I could just discover something rolled up the floor. As soon as I entered, the man began stirring the fire, which brought to light one of the most distressing, and I ought to perhaps to add, revolting scenes I ever witnessed. I saw a woman lying on a few bits of dirty sacking upon the bare flags, and herself almost in a state of nudity, and who had been delivered of a child only three or four hours. . . . The husband said that he had neither candle, food, nor money . . .'

The Gaskell Society



THE GASKELL SOCIETY HOME PAGE has all the latest information on meetings.
<http://www.gaskellsociety.users.btopenworld.com>

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs. Joan Leach,
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NEWSLETTER

Spring 2002 - Number 33

Editor's Letter

Joan Leach

Our programme for 2002 is quite a full one so please check dates in this issue and remember that you can also consult our home page for details (note change in address) this can be done at most libraries. Our group meetings at various venues have been well supported and most enjoyable; if you are not within reach of these you might think about forming a new branch in your area, with help from the Society. We would like to hear from potential speakers on Gaskell and related topics for any of our groups. We hope to continue our series on Manchester writers at Cross Street Chapel next autumn but need speakers; we have had excellent talks on Thomas de Quincey, Harrison Ainsworth, Samuel Bamford and Mrs Linnaeus Banks, some of which we may print.

Mrs Banks wrote to William Gaskell in September 1878, hoping to add him to her list of subscribers to her book of poems *Ripples and Breakers*. She reminds him that : *'Nigh half a century has flown since I stood first to be questioned in your Bible-class in the small chapel-room off Cross Street - and I am now 57. 'Mary Barton' was then unwritten and of my poems or my 'Manchester Man' there was no foreshadowing unless the books that I selected for reading from the library might be an index. I read all Miss Martineau's 'Illustrations of Political Economy' before I was 14 . . 'She notes that the proprietors of the Portico Library 'are designing to pay honour to you'*

Three unpublished Gaskell letters came up for sale on 9th November, 2001 at Phillips Auctioneers London and were bought by John Rylands Library and the Brotherton Library. One of them thanks the sender of tickets for two Hallé' concerts at which 'Mr Hallé 'played superbly'. Another letter (23 October 1854) is from Lea Hurst, the Nightingales' house in Derbyshire, where she was working on *North and South*, has interesting material on Florence Nightingale and the third letter is an invitation to 'Harriette', Marianne's friend, to visit Silverdale. More about these in future publications.

The Alliance of Literary Societies AGM is hosted this year by The Arnold Bennett Society celebrating of the centenary of the publication of *Anna of the Five Towns*. This is a weekend programme: on Saturday 27th April commencing at 10.00am with the AGM at 11.00, at The George Hotel, Burslem and continuing on Sunday 28th. There is a full programme of walks, talks, films and visits. The final event is a talk by Roy Hattersley, vice-president of the Society, at 2.30pm. It is possible to opt for any single event or part of the programme. The Gaskell Society will be represented. A special B&B rate had been arranged with The George Hotel, Burslem (£50 double £40 single)

If interested send an SAE to Joan Leach for details.

The Folio Society is to publish an illustrated edition of *Wives and Daughters*.

Knutsford is soon to have a long awaited, new library where, we hope, the Gaskell collection will be more accessible. In clearing the cellars a plaque has been found which reads:

This tree, a scion of the mulberry tree growing in Shakespeare's great garden at New Place, Stratford-upon-Avon, was presented to the Knutsford Urban District Council by the Trustees and Guardians of Shakespeare's birthplace in memory of Mrs Elizabeth Gaskell recalling her associations with Stratford-upon-Avon where she spent two years as a pupil at Avonbank School.

Unfortunately there is no date given but I am told that the tree was there in the 1950's and may be pre-war.

Consulting the current custodian of New Place I am told that their tree still flourishes AND that we can purchase a three foot scion of it to plant again in Knutsford. I am hoping that the trustees of Brook Street Chapel will agree to let the Gaskell Society plant it there.

On the Trail of Madame de Sévigné

John Chapple

As early as 1855 Elizabeth Gaskell had asked her French publisher Hachette for a copy of a book on the life and writings of Madame de Sévigné (1626-96). In March of 1862 she told George Smith that she had begun to write a memoir herself, and later that year in May she went to Paris to pump Hachette for information and beg for useful introductions. Though the city was 'abominable; noisy, hot, close, smelling of drains – and – perpetual cooking &c', she held her nose and visited 'every old house in Paris that she lived in', made a list of relevant books and gathered a 'splendid collection of all the portraits of herself, family and contemporaries'.

In 1651 Madame de Sévigné had retired to her country house in Brittany, Les Rochers near Vitré, at the age of twenty-five, after her husband had been killed in a duel over a lady known 'la belle Lolo, qui n'était pas une vertu'. Les Rochers became the next item on Gaskell's research agenda. Towards the end of May she went by rail with Meta and her friend Isabel Thompson to explore the ancient town of Vitré, finding it very like Chester, 'with wooden colonnades supporting the first floors of the houses' over the pavement. After exploring the town, the three of them went jolting along to Les Rochers in a little market cart, with their sketch books and drawing materials on a spare seat.

Arriving at the château, she was enchanted: 'No one has ever said half enough of its

beauty', she wrote. On rising ground a few kilometres from the old town stood 'a vast picturesque pile ... with 13, (that I *counted*) towers, of all sizes & shapes' (*Letters*, p. 926). Les Rochers is indeed much larger than, say, Haworth Parsonage. But it's no size at all in comparison with some of the grandiose châteaux of the Loire or the massive pile near Angoulême of Sévigné's friend, the epigrammatist La Rochefoucauld. Later, Gaskell was to liken it to some of the larger castles in Scotland (*French Life*). Dating from earlier centuries, Les Rochers had come into the possession of the Sévigné family in 1410. By about 1600 its ancient tower had been joined by a short range of more domestic buildings, crowned by steep roofs, pointed towers and chimney stacks. Standing a little apart from them, allowing a way through into the buildings of the inner courtyard, is the chapel Madame de Sévigné had built in the early 1670s. If you seek her monument just look around this elegant little classical building, roughly contemporary with Wren's St Paul's.

Nowadays, Les Rochers is in private hands, but there is an excellent visitors' centre at the entrance. One then walks a short distance by a row of dark trees up to a geometrical parterre, its formal design picked out by narrow beds of colourful, highly scented flowers – nicotiana, heliotrope and the like. The old tower contains a small but fascinating museum, dominated by the full-length portrait in a gilded wooden frame of the young Madame de Sévigné, dressed in rich and glowing silks and brocades, embellished with jewels, ribands and flowers, looking far more alert than the languorous *Beauties* painted by Sir Peter Lely for the court of Charles II. Outside, the semi-circular wall enclosing the main gates of the garden might be the cause of a strange phenomenon: at certain points a mere whisper is clearly audible at a distance. What struck Elizabeth Gaskell, however, is the fact that the whole complex is 'high up on a plateau of ground, with 30 miles of sunny champaign country lying below', visible over the low stone wall to one side. She could see for miles, 'till it all melted into the blue haze of distance'.

The museum on the ground floor of the old tower, Madame de Sévigné's chapel, the garden and the park with its long allées are all open to visitors; the rest of the château is kept private. But there is so much else to fascinate in this part of Brittany. In *French Life* Gaskell gives a good deal of attention to Vitré. Its ancient castle, flamboyant Gothic and Renaissance church, curious mediæval houses, inns and bustling street life make it a wonderful place to explore. Even the railway station is interesting, 'smart and new and in apple-pie order', Gaskell reported. Today, its regular, streaky-bacon facade reminds us of Rugby school. Fougères, too, though she skips over it in her accounts of her pilgrimage, is well worth a visit. It was, she wrote in those days, 'very curious & very filthy'. The central site, however, is spectacular, its old castle one of the largest in Europe. There is a 'circuit littéraire' leading one to places associated with Chateaubriand, Hugo and Balzac. As one might expect, tourists abound.

In her early life Elizabeth Gaskell had found reading Sévigné's *Letters* as exhausting as reading Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison*. (They both wrote at almost inordinate length.) Why did she become so very interested in this aristocratic lady and the intellectual circles she moved in? Both women, it has been noted by Philip Yarrow, 'had been brought up by affectionate aunts and uncles, both were devoted mothers, and both were great letter-writers' (*Gaskell Society Journal* 7, 1993). Gaskell's interest in the influential part women had played in French history and culture had also developed remarkably in the intervening years. Madame de Sévigné had associated with Madame de La Fayette, Mlle de Scudéry and other free spirits of the time. As one might expect, Sévigné's brilliantly extemporised letters both echo her living voice and recreate her present life and times with humour, sense and sensibility. Yarrow argues cogently that Madame de Sévigné was in many ways Gaskell's seventeenth-century equivalent. Alain Jumeau agrees wholeheartedly: 'they were, so to speak, twin souls' (*Gaskell Society Journal* 13, 1999), and quotes Virginia Woolf's speculation that Sévigné might have been a great novelist in the twentieth century. The truly sad thing is that Elizabeth Gaskell never lived to accomplish what might have been a remarkable study of a major French female author, a work to place beside her *Life of Charlotte Brontë* and informed by the kind of historical imagination she was to display in *Sylvia's Lovers*. But her short pieces on French life contain the only record of her research of any substance. No manuscript of the memoir she began seems to have survived.

I owe thanks to our member Véronique Baudouin for information. Also, *Qui êtes-vous, Madame de Sévigné* is an attractive, well illustrated booklet by Jacqueline and Roger Duchêne, obtainable at Les Rochers.

The Gaskells' Shawls

Janet Allan

The photograph of Elizabeth Gaskell in 1864 shows her wearing a beautiful and ornate Paisley shawl. It was only recently that we began to realise how fond she was of shawls, and how hers have been treasured over the last hundred and twenty-seven years. Good shawls were very expensive –there may be no direct references to their value in Gaskell's works, but in *Vanity Fair* Thackeray describes Amelia Sedley being forced to sell her Indian shawl 'It was a very fine and beautiful web: and the merchant made a very good bargain when he gave her twenty guineas. . . ' a great deal of money in 1848 for a second-hand article.

The shawl in the photograph has not been found, but seven others have come to light in various parts of the country which are said to have been hers or her family's.

One has an elegant blue and lavender Paisley design on a cream background, which you could imagine being worn in the cool of the evening over a light summer dress. Another has a predominately red centre with an elaborate border, and a third has an emerald green centre with a rich red edging. There is one with a light all-over pattern of small motifs in red and other colours, and a tufted border. Two more are Italian Mezzari, which are very large shawls of block-printed cotton with patterns similar to the pottery 'Indian Tree' design which we are still familiar with today. These are dated between 1850 and 1860 and manufactured in Genoa. It is possible that they were purchased on the 1863 trip to Italy. They may have belonged to Elizabeth's daughter Meta, as they were presented to the School of Art in 1934 'in memory of Miss M.E. Gaskell'. The last shawl is different again, in cream silk twill with a woven pattern.

Besides these complete shawls there are two garments made out of shawls – an ample jacket of jacquard-patterned wool, made from a Paisley shawl of about 1862, with a black fringe, and 'smallish' dressing-gown made from one half of a Paisley shawl of 1850-60, with pieces from another shawl used for the collar and cuffs. These are in different locations so I have been unable as yet to compare them, but one wonders if they were both cut from the same shawls? As the photograph shows, Elizabeth was not 'smallish' by 1864, so perhaps the dressing gown was for one of her daughters?

William Gaskell's bust in the Portico Library shows him wearing a shawl, as men sometimes did in the nineteenth century. William felt the cold and probably wore one. The actual garment is lost, but we have it permanently reproduced in stone.

A Centenary Event and a Bi-Centenary Proposal

Janet Allan

In the centenary year of Elizabeth Gaskell's birth, on 19 February, 1910, the sixteenth annual meeting of the Bronte Society was held, not at Haworth but in the large hall of the Athenaeum in Manchester, with the Vice-Chancellor of the University in the chair. It was a notable meeting. The address on 'The Brontë Family in relation to Manchester', which dealt mainly with Elizabeth Gaskell's friendship with Charlotte Brontë and the subsequent *Life of Charlotte Brontë*, was given by the Dean of Manchester, the Rt. Rev. J.E.C. Welldon.

In the discussions which followed, Mrs Leo Grindon read a letter from Mr Clement

Shorter 'suggesting that there should be a statue in Manchester in memory of Mrs Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë. "What a fine thing it would be" she remarked, "to have a twin statue linking them both together in the Plymouth Grove direction". It was also suggested at the meeting that the house at 84 Plymouth Grove should be preserved in memory of both writers. Nearly a hundred years later we are looking forward to the bi-centenary of Elizabeth Gaskell's birth. I hope that before then the house will have been restored.

We are now reviving the idea of a statue and consulting with the Brontë Society about the project. More news in the next Newsletter.

(My thanks to Christine Lingard at Manchester Central Library and to Ann Dinsdale at the Brontë Parsonage Museum for press cuttings and information)

HELP PLEASE!

Elizabeth Rye

I am investigating a painting which I believe is of Mrs Gaskell. The portrait is dated 1851 and is by Herbert L. Smith. (I wrote a brief article about this painting, *GSN* (No5) in 1981. I found an intriguing paragraph on page 237 of *Mrs Gaskell and her Friends*, by Elizabeth Haldane, which may provide a clue about the painting's origin:

Oddly enough, there was a movement to have a portrait of Mrs Gaskell painted by Watts later on [after Jan 1850] but the scheme did not mature, though he was anxious to undertake the work.

Does anyone know where Elizabeth Haldane found this information?

I think Mrs Gaskell would have been uncomfortable with the idea of a subscription to honour her philanthropy. 'I am more & more convinced that *be good & doing good* comes naturally, & need not be fussed and spoken about.' (Letter 123, 13th May 1852). I suspect the 'scheme did mature', because a philanthropist stepped in and commissioned the portrait, privately and discreetly.

It would be very helpful to know what group of people was interested in honouring Mrs Gaskell with a portrait. If you can help at all please email me on ruth@scibydes.fsnet.co.uk.

P.S. Oddly enough, the family that originally sold the painting in 1974 has an interesting connection to both Mrs Gaskell and the philanthropist who I believe commissioned the painting. More later!

Samuel Laurence 1812-1884

Joan Leach

Many of you will know the pastel portrait of Elizabeth Gaskell by Samuel Laurence, reproduced on the cover of this newsletter and available as a postcard* There had been some confusion about the date of this portrait as shading under the artist's signature makes 1854 & 5 a possible reading but 1864 & 5 is, I believe the correct one. The figure 5 is a faint addition so there must have been two sittings. Perhaps the earliest reproduction of this portrait was in *The Knutsford Edition of Cousin Phillis* (1906) published by Smith and Elder. Did they own the portrait? It is dated there as 1864-5 when it was almost certainly in the possession of Meta and Julia Gaskell. But it is not the only Laurence portrait of the author.

Gaskell Letter 555 (Chapple and Pollard) is addressed to :

My dear Mr Lawrence, (sic)

Sept. 12th (1864)

... I should have not the least objection to Mr Smith's becoming the possessor of your likeness of me; indeed it would be pleasant to feel that I was hanging on the walls of so kind a friend - When I am next in London I hope that I (and my cap) may be able to give you another sitting . .

A footnote adds that the portrait was 'now in the possession of Mrs. E. M. Gordon of Biddlesden Hall, Northants'. She was a descendant of George Smith, publisher. The Brotherton Library, Leeds has the MSS of *Sylvia's Lovers* from the same source but knows nothing of the whereabouts of this portrait of Elizabeth Gaskell in a bonnet or cap as she calls it. The picture looks as if further work might have been intended. Annette B. Hopkins (1952) reproduced this in her biography.

It seems likely that the better known Laurence work was done at a second sitting(s) later that year and into 1865, perhaps when she was in London in April. This is the version still owned by her descendant, Mrs Trevor Dabbs.

It was used for the dust jacket and frontispiece for Winifred Gérin's biography of Gaskell (1976) when 1854 is given as the date but the post card reproduction made for The Brontë Society gives 1864/5 on the advice of J. G. Sharps.

Samuel Laurence travelled to America, with the encouragement of Thackeray, in 1854 and was based there until 1861, thus he could not have been working on a Gaskell portrait in 1855, which should convince any who doubt the dating of the Laurence pastel portrait. The confusion is compounded by the shading under the artist's signature which makes the third number look like a 5 instead of 6 and the added 5 is faint.

*by kind permission of Mrs Trevor Dabbs

Caroline Holland (1835-1909) John A.V. Chapple

'Took very much to Cousin Coo – as he does to most of his lady cousins...'; we read in *Private Voices: The Diaries of Elizabeth Gaskell and Sophia Holland*, page 95. There is nothing odd about this October 1838 glimpse into the childhood life of the little boy who grew up to become Marianne Gaskell's husband, Thurstan Holland, but the editors of his mother's diary were unable to identify this favourite cousin. We also find that Elizabeth Gaskell once wrote that 'Mr Honest Netherlands', presumably Henry Holland, was at Knutsford in 1847 with 'Coo, & Gertrude'. Chapple and Pollard could then do no more than speculate without evidence that 'Coo' was perhaps a copyist's error for 'Cor'. (See *Letters*, 1966, page 826, from typescript; *Further Letters*, page 33).

However, Mr David Holland, a descendant of Sir Henry Holland, is kind enough to inform me in a private letter that 'Cousin Coo' was the daughter of Sir Henry's second wife, Saba, herself the daughter of the famous wit Sydney Smith. Mr Holland notes that Henry's manuscript journal substantiates Caroline Holland's presence at Dumbleton in 1838, whilst Saba's manuscript, "Anecdotes of my darling little Coo", shows that Caroline was again there in August of the following year.

On her father's death in 1873 Caroline inherited her father's house in London. It became a pied-à-terre for her many relations. And according to the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, it is to Caroline's *Notebooks of a Spinster Lady* (1919) that we owe the attribution to Queen Victoria of one of the most famous of all put-downs: 'We are not amused'.

From *The Bookseller*

A directory called *Contemporary Writers* has spotted a promising talent on the Manchester University Press list. She is Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell, author of *The Further Letters of Mrs Gaskell*. The directory has sent her a flattering missive. "Congratulations on your publishing success. Members of our staff have requested that your name be added to our selection of prominent and emerging authors for inclusion in *Contemporary Writing*", the letter informs Mrs Gaskell (1810-1865). Inviting further information for 'Sidelights' in which authors are invited to comment informally on their writing career: "Tell us about yourself – what is your primary motivation for writing? Describe your writing process. What inspired you to write on the subjects you have chosen?"



Samuel Laurence exhibited as a portrait painter at The Royal Academy from 1836 until 1882 when he showed a drawing of George Eliot. He had close relations with many eminent literary men of his day particularly G.H. Lewes and Leigh Hunt. He worked in oils as well as chalk and crayon and many of his portraits were engraved. Gaskell noticed one of Tennyson, alongside Richmond's portrait of Charlotte Brontë, at the Haworth Parsonage (GL 167). This was made in 1844 the same year as one of Carlyle writing at his desk. To complete our knowledge we would like to trace the portrait of Elizabeth Gaskell in a bonnet and get a better copy made. Can you help us? *Early Victorian Portraits* R. Ormond (1973) lists this as being in the collection of Frank Miles. We hope in a later publication to follow the history of late photographs of our author.



BOOK NOTES

Christine Lingard

Some new books due in 2002:

Chastity and transgression in women's writing: interrupting the Harlot's progress, 1792-1897 by Roxanne Eberle. Palgrave, £45.

A modern interpretation of representations of prostitution and the position of women in nineteenth-century writing; in addition to Elizabeth Gaskell, who dealt with the subject directly in *Ruth* and to some extent in all her novels, this study discusses some less familiar writers such as Amelia Opie, Mary Hays and Sarah Grand.

The Victorian Novel by Francis O'Gorman (in the *Blackwell Guides to Criticism* series). Blackwell £14.99

Intended for the general student, this guide discusses the critical response to the major Victorian novelists – the Brontës, Dickens, Eliot, Gaskell, Thackeray, Trollope, Hardy and James – and addresses major themes such as gender, genre, politics and language.

Understanding Jane Eyre by Debra Teachman. Greenwood Press, £33.50

A literary analysis of the novel embracing commentary and extracts from primary sources such as *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, with suggestions for teachers.

Thomas and Jane Carlyle by Rosemary Ashton. Chatto and Windus, £25.

The biographer of George Henry Lewes now turns her attention to one of the most influential couples in Victorian London. Thomas Carlyle was one of the first to write in praise of *Mary Barton*, and Elizabeth Gaskell was entertained at their Chelsea home.

THE LONDON AND SOUTH-EAST GROUP

2002 PROGRAMME

Saturday 11 May

'Letters from America: Elizabeth Gaskell, John Ashton Nicholls and Fredrika Bremer'
– **Alan Shelston**

Saturday 14 September

'Flannel waistcoats and long sleeves': Motherhood and Matrimony in Elizabeth Gaskell' – **Sylvia Burch**

Saturday 9 November

'A Question of Trust: The Relationship between Elizabeth Gaskell and Patrick Brontë' – **Dudley Green**

All the meetings will be held at the Francis Holland School, 39 Graham Terrace, London SW1W 8JF and will commence at 2pm. Francis Holland School is a few minutes walk from Sloane Square underground station (District and Circle lines).

Anyone who wishes may meet at 12 noon at Sloane Square underground station for a light lunch at the Royal Court Tavern, also on Sloane Square. Those arriving later than 12 noon should proceed directly to the Royal Court Tavern. If further information is required please contact Dudley J Barlow. (Tel: 020 8874 7727)

SOUTH-WEST GROUP

PROGRAMME

13th April:

Ian Gregg has had to postpone his rehabilitation of Elizabeth Gaskell's stepmother but we hope to welcome him to Bath in 2003. Details of the speaker for this date will be circulated soon. 2.00 p.m.: The Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution.

17th-19th May:

Visit to Penzance, the home of Maria Branwell. We are being welcomed by our members in Penzance, led by Mrs Sheila Burlton, and anyone interested should get in touch as soon as possible. This is a very flexible holiday, with members going by train – cost £20 for a super apex return from Bristol or less if you have a railcard – and staying in a small hotel near the sea front in room with ensuite facilities for £20 pp bed and breakfast. The weekend could include a visit to the Eden project. Telephone Rosemary Marshall, 01225 426732.

18th August: Sunday tea party with gentle literary entertainment.

23rd November:

'Elizabeth Gaskell: Escape from the city': 2.00 p.m. at the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution. Speaker: Gwen Clarke. Come to Bath and do your Christmas shopping.

All queries to Rosemary Marshall, 01225 426732.

GENERAL MEETINGS IN THE NORTH WEST

The AGM meeting will be held at Cross Street Chapel on Saturday 23rd March at 11.00am. Afterwards Dr Frances Twinn will speak on: *Meteorological Accuracy in the Provincial Novels of Elizabeth Gaskell*. Our usual caterers will provide a buffet lunch and we will reconvene at 2.15 when Janet Allan will give an illustrated talk: *Oh! What a House! 42, Plymouth Grove*.

Monthly meetings continue in Knutsford on the last Wednesdays in the month until May when on Monday 27th we will have a coach trip to Macclesfield to follow links

between Gaskell's friends and Unitarian families. We will leave Knutsford at 11.00am to visit King Edward Street Unitarian Chapel with guide, Mrs Forester. After lunch in the town we will meet again at 1.45 pm to visit N. T. Hare Hill Gardens, formerly belonging to the Brocklehursts, where rhododendrons and azaleas should be at their best, Lea Hall; home of the Gaskells' niece Lily Greg; then on to Bollington for The Mount and other Greg sites.

Cross Street Chapel, Manchester, 9th April

Chris Makepeace has agreed to lead *a Manchester Man walk*, the subject of his talk on 12th March, meeting at Cross Street Chapel at 1.00pm. The walk takes approx. one and a half hours

OUTING TO LICHFIELD on Saturday 29th June

John Chapple will be our guide to the Town with its Samuel Johnson, Erasmus Darwin and Wedgwood associations.

At our Autumn Meeting in Knutsford on September 28th Jenny Uglow, our Vice-President, has agreed to speak on: *Erasmus Darwin, the Lunar Society and Elizabeth Gaskell's upbringing*.

**The Lunar Men* is the title of Jenny's latest book, to be published by Faber in September.

Knutsford Literature Festival will be held from 28th September to 6th October

Trip to Brittany 12- 19 September

We regretted disappointing those of you who would have joined a trip to Rome but the logistics of that venue defeated us. Instead Brittany is an attractive alternative. Following Gaskell and Mme de *Sevigne trails and other literary connections, flying from Stansted airport and staying at St. Malo.

Local History Week, 4-12 May 2002.

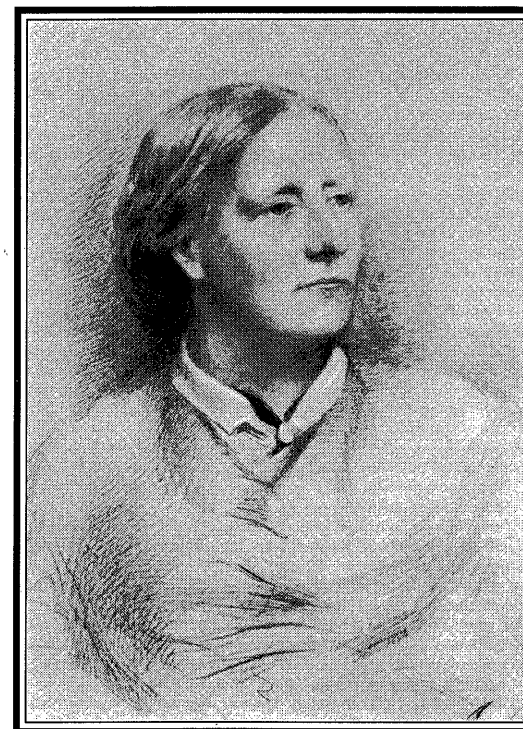
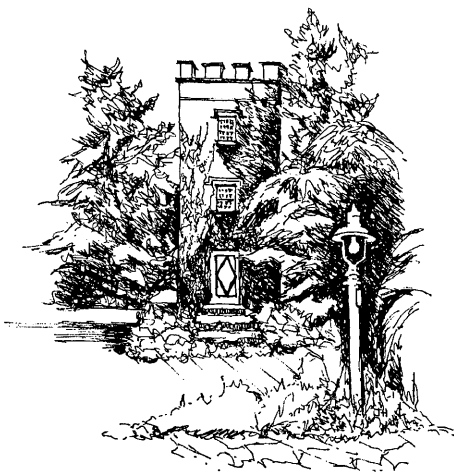
'Local Histories and Communities in North West England'

The Manchester branch of the Historical Association in collaboration with English Heritage North West Region and the Manchester Centre for Regional History at Manchester Metropolitan University is planning a day conference at Manchester Metropolitan University on Saturday 4 May. The cost will be about £10 per person. This will be a prelude to a series of activities – historical walks and visits, schools' events, museum and archive exhibitions – during local history week.

The society will be taking part, with a talk in the morning of 4 May, an exhibition and in the afternoon a Gaskell Walk led by Terry Wyke. There will also be Knutsford activities in the course of the week.

More details, times etc will be available nearer the time.

The Gaskell Society



THE GASKELL SOCIETY HOME PAGE has all the latest information on meetings.
<http://gaskellsociety.users.btopenworld.com>

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs. Joan Leach,
Far Yew Tree House, Over Tabley, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 0HN.
Telephone - 01565 634668 E-mail: joanleach@aol.com

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NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2002 - Number 34

Editor's Letter

Joan Leach

As I write this the Commonwealth Games are taking place in Manchester. One of the competitors from the Maldive Islands, who were entertained in Knutsford, told me he had lived at the Plymouth Grove house while a student at Manchester University. My part of the welcome to them was a sanding but it was washed away by heavy rain before they arrived! For a description of sanding see Letters pp 28 - 29. I did not have the temerity to invite the Maldivian to contribute to our restoration fund but I wondered about all the international students who used Plymouth Grove and might respond to our appeal. English Heritage is working closely with The Gaskell Society to restore the house, possibly as a study centre.

Members will have been saddened to learn of the death of Professor Arthur Pollard, President of The Gaskell Society for its first seven years. In his tribute to him John Chapple tells of Arthur's work in so many different fields and we know how much he will be missed by so many who, in common with our members, will be thankful for his life.

Details of our programme of events in Knutsford, Manchester, London and Bath can be found at the back of this Newsletter and, if you should happen to mislay it you can check on our home page: <http://gaskellsociety.users.btopenworld.com>: this can be done easily at most libraries.

Make a note in your diary for the 2003 conference at Durham, 1-4 August and AGM meeting in Manchester on 5 April.

The Alliance of Literary Societies held the AGM at Burslem on 27 April hosted by The Arnold Bennett Society with a varied weekend programme. Next year the Dylan Thomas Society will host the event in Swansea on the 26 April with further events on 27th. The ALS has a home page at www.sndc.demon.co.uk. I can supply a copy of The ALS Newsletter if desired. (SAE)

An exhibition at The Walker, William Brown St, Liverpool: *The Earl and the Pussycat* continues until 8 September when Kenn Oultram hopes to convene an inaugural meeting for those interested in forming the Lear Society - How pleasant to know Mr Lear!

Phone 01606 891 303 (day) or 01606 781731 (evenings).



Gaskell Society members at ALS AGM at Burslem 27 April 2002
L to R: John Yellowlees, Pat Barnard, Jean Yellowlees, Kenn Oultram,
Janet Allan, Lynda Stephens and Robin Allan.

Obituary Arthur Pollard

The Gaskell Society has recently suffered the sad loss of one of its founder members, Arthur Pollard, who died on 2 June 2002. As a former President of the Society, and a valued speaker, he was known to many of us.

Born at Clitheroe, Lancashire, on 22 December 1922, he was educated at its Royal Grammar School. After war service abroad and a First in English at Leeds University, he took a B.Litt. at Lincoln College, Oxford in 1953. In his academic career he progressed to become Director of General Studies in Arts at Manchester University, leaving on appointment as Professor of English at the University of Hull in 1967. He was a consulting professor of the University of Buckingham, which made him an honorary D.Litt. in 1982. He retired from Hull as Professor Emeritus in 1984.

This distinguished career by no means exhausted his energy and talents. Besides his university duties as a Professor and Dean of Arts, 1976-78, he was a Chairman of Examiners for the Manchester Joint Matriculation Board at A-level for 25 years, a Conservative politician particularly active in educational affairs at both local and national level, a Reader in the Church of England for no less than 50 years and a member of Synod from 1990 to 2000. In the 1990s he successfully took two degrees in Theology, a B.D. at London and a B.Th. at Hull, and was made an honorary LL.D. by the University of Lincolnshire and Humberside in 1999. After the death of his first wife in 1970, he married Phyllis Pattinson, who survives him, together with two sons of the first marriage, John and Andrew.

Throughout his life he was a prolific author of books and pamphlets. Politics led him to consider novelists like Anthony Trollope and W. M. Thackeray, religion to contemplate the learned defender of the Anglican tradition, Richard Hooker, and the Evangelical leader, Charles Simeon. In 1960 he gave a lecture on the novels of Mrs. Gaskell to mark the 150th anniversary of her birth and invited me to join him in editing her letters, which he greatly admired. Annette Hopkins had made excellent use of Gaskell's major correspondence with the publisher George Smith, the correspondence with Charles Norton had been published by Jane Whitehill in 1932 and Aina Rubenius had quoted from a number of the letters. Fortunately these were serious scholars; others had been deplorably cavalier in their treatment of the known texts. Also, many important letters had not been discovered, especially the early, intimate family correspondence owned by Marianne Gaskell's grand-daughter, Mrs. Trevor Jones.

Collaboration between the editors was ideal, as was the invaluable assistance freely given by a pertinacious young graduate student, Geoffrey Sharps. Whilst Pollard sought out and transcribed some hundreds of manuscripts in a small, neat hand, my main task was to crouch at the centre of the web and analyse material as it came in. However, when I came to check all the transcriptions against the original manuscripts in this country, I was amazed to find how exceptionally accurate he had been. The edition of Mrs. Gaskell's letters is therefore far more complete and faithful to the originals. No more than a handful of transcriptional errors have ever been found, thanks also to the double-checking of copy-texts by Ursula Pollard and Kate Chapple and the help with preparation for the press provided by those recorded in the acknowledgments.

Arthur Pollard was able to publish his sensitive and balanced *Mrs Gaskell, Novelist and Biographer* in 1965 on the anniversary of Gaskell's death, though *The Letters of Mrs. Gaskell* had to wait another year when material turned up at a late stage. In this context the admirable patience of the staff of Manchester University Press should not pass without notice.

The personal kindness Arthur Pollard displayed both to me and my family was utterly characteristic. Many younger colleagues at Manchester and Hull, too, are grateful for his aid and encouragement, and for the academic and publishing initiatives he devised in such unexpected fields as Commonwealth literatures in English, for example. The Gaskell Society can only be thankful that the works of the author we celebrate should have attracted his intelligent, energetic attention at an early stage of his career.

John Chapple.

WILMOTS

Christine Lingard

This year is the 500th anniversary of the King's School in Macclesfield. At the time of Elizabeth Gaskell's visit to the town in 1852 the school was still situated a few yards away from the chapel in King Edward Street where she attended service but it is another link which concerns me here — with one of its longest-serving headmasters, the Rev. Darwin Wilmot (1845-1935). In one of the earliest issues of the *Newsletter* Janice Kirkland enquired about a house Gaskell stayed at in December 1852, which she referred to simply as Hulme Walfield. Her hosts were a Mr. and Mrs. Wilmot whom she had met at Capesthorpe. She appears to have been impressed. 'This house is a large one & full of people; it stands just above Congleton and must be very pretty in fine weather', she wrote [GL 144].

Directories identify it as Daisy Bank, which was on the outskirts of Congleton rather than in the hamlet of Hulme Walfield a mile or so further north. The house unfortunately has been demolished but if you take the A34 northwards out of Congleton towards Capesthorpe you can locate the site. Just before the fork for Macclesfield at the Grove Inn you will see on the left hand side of the road a red brick house somewhat older than its neighbours that was possibly a lodge to the estate. If you walk round the avenues behind you can still indeed get an impression of the view over the town.

Mr. Wilmot was Edward Woollett Wilmot (1808-1864), fifth son of Sir Robert Wilmot, a Derbyshire baronet, and his second wife Emma (born in Lichfield c.1820, died 1898), daughter of Sir Francis Sacheverel Darwin of Breadsall Priory, Derby, who was a first cousin of Charles Darwin. The Wilmots were related by marriage to many of the leading industrial families of Derbyshire and Cheshire including Mrs. Davenport herself, the Arkwrights, the Strutts and the Ryles of Macclesfield. Edward was agent on the Capesthorpe estate and mentioned several times in the estate papers. The 'VD' mentioned in Mrs. Gaskell's letter is probably her Manchester friend Vernon Darbishire who was embarking on a career in agriculture. Wilmot would have been a useful contact as he was a skilled agriculturalist. He had previously worked for the Duke of Newcastle at Clumber Park, Nottinghamshire (1839-1848).

In 1857 the couple moved to Buxton to a similar position with the Duke of Devonshire. Wilmot proved to be one of the most successful agents the Duke employed. During his tenure of office he improved sanitation and oversaw the arrival of the Savings Bank and the Railway. He was a major benefactor of the new church at Burbage (1861) where he is buried. The couple held annual New Year's Balls in the Assembly Rooms for about two hundred of the professional people of the town, regular oyster suppers and other parties for the townsfolk. I wonder if it was he who arranged the Gaskells' trip to Chatsworth in 1857. Her journey there was made via Buxton.

The friendship was particularly strong between their children. In 1859 she wrote to Marianne: 'Julia is *very* unhappy about Cherry coming. She says you never write to her or Flossy, but are always ready to write to Dar & Fanny Wilmott &c &c' [GL 448]. There were five Wilmot children — three boys (the youngest, Reginald, only a six-month baby at the time of her visit to Hulme Walfield), and two girls, Fanny and Emma (married 1866). Fanny was Flossy's guest in Manchester early in 1861. Her mother is worried that she might be bored, as they were considered too young to go sightseeing alone. They would have been about 18 at the time. Fanny did not marry and in 1881 was living with her mother in Friargate, one of Derby's grandest streets. Marianne was a bridesmaid in April 1861 in Buxton, possibly to a son of Edward Wilmot's first marriage, who married in that year the daughter of Dr William Robertson, Buxton's leading specialist in water treatment. Is this the Lily Robertson whose wedding her mother urged Marianne to go to in February 1861? [GL 484] Marianne was again in Buxton later in the year.

Darwin, the eldest son, was born in 1845. He was always referred to as Dar in the letters. He started his education at King's (then known simply as the 'Grammar School') before going to Winchester. In 1859 he was a fellow guest of Mrs. Lyall during the Gaskells' visit to The Close. 'I don't know if I told you that we asked Mrs Lyall to ask Dar to dinner one day & I kept Dr Moberly's [*the headmaster*] note in reply to send to Mrs. Wilmot, as though it says little that little is so nice. Mrs. Lyall says she will try & ask him again pretty often to her usual 2 o'clock dinner as that gives the boys the liberty of going out of bounds which they enjoy' [GL 484b].

After Oxford Darwin was ordained and became a teacher at Rossall School before returning in 1876 to become headmaster of his old school — a post he held for thirty-four years, to 1910. He was a chaplain to the local battalion and wrote a history of the school. His most celebrated pupil, Hewlett Johnson, Dean of Canterbury (nicknamed the 'Red Dean' for his championing of communist states and Marxist policies in the 1930s), wrote in his autobiography: 'I must have been fully twelve or thirteen before I went to school in Macclesfield Grammar School. I remember being much impressed by the austere look of the headmaster's study, part by the bright candlesticks on his desk and the gold watch at his waist. He was the Rev. R [sic] Wilmot the heir it was said to a baronetcy.'

This latter fact is possible. Though he was quite distantly related to the baronet, it is possible that descendants may succeed to the title if the baronet fails to produce an heir. The young couple who married in 1861 did not have any children.

Langham, Michael. *Buxton: a people's history*, Carnegie, 2001, gives more details of Wilmot's career in Buxton.

In Pursuit of Madame de Sévigné

Muriel Smith

John Chapple, in Newsletter No. 33, tells how Mrs. Gaskell collected material for a projected, never executed, memoir of Marie de Rabutin Chantal, Marquise de Sévigné, and, as early as 1855, had asked Hachette for a book on the subject.

She was in Paris in February of that year (Letter 230) and met the Duc de Broglie and his sister-in-law Madame de Staël: they were the son-in-law and daughter-in-law of the Madame de Staël. He was of the Académie Française, as were the distinguished guests that Mrs. Gaskell met in 1865 *chez* Madame Mohl: Guizot, Montalembert and Mignet (Letter 564). This was just after Jules Barbey d'Aurevilly had been publishing *Les 40 Médailles de l'Académie* in instalments in the satirical *Nain Jaune* ("Yellow Dwarf") during September and October 1863, bookforming them in 1864. (In December of that year the government of Napoleon III had the *Nain Jaune* closed down.) The Académie Française, Barbey declared, is an asylum for Ministers whose incurable Orleanism has left them unemployed and unemployable since the fall of King Louis-Philippe in 1848. But of that Mrs. Gaskell is unlikely to have been aware.

In 1862 (Letter 509b) she had headed for Brittany, to Vitré to see the Hôtel de Sévigné, Madame de Sévigné's town house, and on to her country house, Les Rochers. This has a chapel built by Madame de Sévigné in the 1670s and Mr Chapple remarks 'if you seek her monument, just look around this elegant little classical building'. Quite so. The current owners of Les Rochers, whilst keeping most of it private, naturally exploit the Sévigné connection, with a museum in the old tower and visits to the chapel and grounds.

Madame de Sévigné, however, has an actual monument in another part of France altogether: a plain stone slab giving simply her name and dates, in the chapel of the Château de Grignan, the home of her son-in-law the Comte de Grignan, where she died in 1696. There is also a terrible nineteenth-century statue of her in the main square of Grignan. It is in the province of Dauphiné, on the left bank of the Rhône, not very far north of Avignon. Mrs. Gaskell must have passed quite close in 1857 on her way to Rome via Paris and Marseille (Letter 342).

Another place connected with Madame de Sévigné is the château of her cousin and correspondent Roger de Rabutin, Comte de Bussy. Bussy-Rabutin, as he is generally known, had been elected to the Académie Française at the beginning of 1665 and had the election ratified by Louis XIV. A few months later, there was trouble over his scandalous *Histoire Amoureuse des Gaules*, which was circulating in manuscript. It particularly offended the Prince de Condé, the King's cousin, and Bussy-Rabutin was that year awarded thirteen months in the Bastille, followed by twenty-seven

years of exile on his estates. Bussy-le-Grand in Burgundy (population 382) contains Bussy-Rabutin's château, which is of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and is open to visitors.

The *Histoire Amoureuse des Gaules* was published as a Garnier-Flammarion paperback in 1967: it includes a very disobliging account of Madame de Sévigné.

Good Dog Fanny and Tuft the Canary, with other Stories, all True

John Chapple

Every now and again somebody notices what appears to be a forgotten book. An occasional catalogue lists Mrs Gaskell's *History of Good Dog Fanny and Tuft, the Canary, With other Stories, all True*, published with a coloured frontispiece in London, Edinburgh and New York by T. Nelson and Sons in 1881. We know that Elizabeth Gaskell wrote stories for children. Could some of them have turned up after her death and been sent to press by a descendant or an admirer? *History of Good Dog Fanny* is a rare book, but copies can be found in the British Library and Cambridge University Library. The style of life depicted in these stories, if not the precise details, certainly seems familiar. The teller is prosperous enough to travel abroad, to France and Italy. On one occasion she takes a Paris holiday lasting no less than two months in the Spring, whilst Dicky the canary is left behind with Cook. There is a French cat called Minet, a large dark grey Persian, which reminds us that in May of 1854 our Mrs Gaskell wrote to her youngest daughter Julia about a similar creature,

Do you know that we are going to have a little kitten sent us from Paris, with long hair, and a very pretty face, and is called Cranford, can you guess why? It is called an Angola or a Persian cat; and Minnie has seen it's mother!

But the little flurry of excitement soon dies down when one comes across a reference to the time when the baby Prince Imperial was christened, followed by a mention of his death in the Zulu wars. Eugène Napoleon, Prince Imperial, son of Napoleon III, was born in 1856 and killed fighting with the British Army against the Zulus in 1879. It is just possible that somebody found and updated stories by Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell, but Boston Public Library contains a letter written on 12 March [1881] from Ingersley, Macclesfield, which transmits a Mrs. Gaskell's compliments to the Editor of a periodical, *The Queen, The Lady's Newspaper*. This was a large-size and rather splendid journal, full of engravings and lady-like information of many kinds. (Admirers of Amanda Vickery's splendid book, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, Yale U. P., 1998, will know what *that* includes.) In her letter Mrs. Gaskell calls attention to a misprint in a favourable review of the book printed on 'to-day Saturday March 12th', p. 263. The review itself was short but very sweet:

A dozen tales for children, charmingly told, in words that will be thoroughly understood by little folk, while their attention is riveted by the subject-matter. Mrs. Gaskell must be ranked among the very few who know both what and how to write for intelligent children of a very early age.

Unfortunately, the title as printed in *The Queen* for 12 March 1881 was slightly wrong, so she writes,

Her son's favourite and intelligent dog was named Fanny, not Nanny. Mrs. Gaskell is much pleased by the Editor's favourable critique, and will be obliged by his inserting it again in next Saturday's Queen, with the title of book corrected, for Fanny had a large circle of acquaintances and friends. The money received for the copyright, was devoted to a Children's Hospital, but this is of course a private affair.

The editor made a simple correction of the title only in the next issue, squeezing it in the bottom corner of page 287. More generally, one can say that an attractive hypothesis has been ruined by an inconvenient fact.

And who was this Mrs. Gaskell of Macclesfield? Library Catalogues, usually so informative, do not identify her. Fortunately, the 1881 British Census records John Upton Gaskell of Ingersley Hall, Rainow, Cheshire, and his wife Margaret E. Gaskell, aged 67. *Burke's Landed Gentry* (1921) has an entry for 'Gaskell of Ingersley Hall', which informs us that John Upton Gaskell was the son of Thomas Gaskell, who died in 1851. Margaret Emily Gaskell was the daughter of Samuel Grimshawe of Errwood Hall, Derbyshire. She had been christened in Manchester Cathedral on 15 July 1813 (International Genealogical Index) and died on 13 Feb. 1887. A daughter, Anne Theodora Gaskell, aged 36, was at home when the census was taken in 1881. Their son, John Francis Upton Gaskell, born in 1852, had married in 1877. No connection with our Elizabeth Gaskell has yet been found, but the old hall and its summer house of c. 1815, White Nancy, on the top of Kerridge Hill overlooking Bollington, must surely have been known to her.

I am happy to acknowledge the assistance of Ellen M. Oldham of Boston Public Library by courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library. I am also most grateful to Richard Renold for all the information in the last paragraph above.

Note:

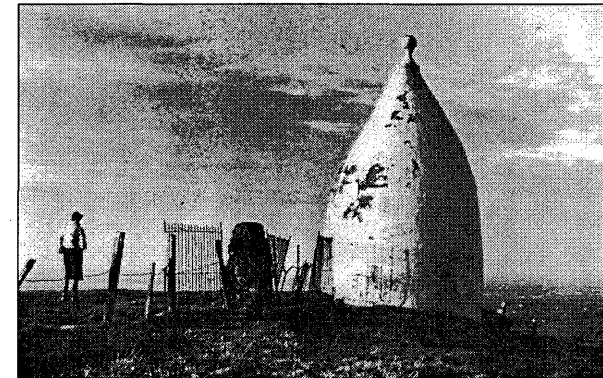
I recognized the name Grimshawe of Errwood Hall (Margaret Emily Gaskell was born Margaret Emily Grimshawe): Errwood Hall is in Derbyshire (just), in the Goyt Valley, in the hills behind Bollington. The Grimshawes were Roman Catholics, with their own chapel at Errwood (which makes a christening in Manchester Cathedral a slight puzzle). But they had a Spanish governess, so continental travel might have been part of their lifestyle. John Chapple says that, according to the 1881 Census,

Margaret Emily was born at Mill Banl (for Mill Bank), Cheshire. It is likely that Mill Bank was in Bollington, since Samuel Grimshawe came from there and had Errwood built in about 1820 or 1830. Errwood Hall is a ruin now — knocked down in 1930 when the Goyt valley below it was flooded to make a reservoir.

There were Gaskells in Rainow, not far away from the Goyt Valley, since the seventeenth century at least. A friend of a friend is researching the history of Ingersley Hall and may have a family tree for the Gaskells; I hope to see it. Ingersley was sold by Anne Theodora Gaskell; in more recent years it was a Salesian College.

Mary Syner.

Ed.: The Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire Vol 108 (1956) traces the history of the Gaskell family from Lawrence who purchased Clifton Hall, Lancs in 1654. From his second son descended Robert Clive's (of India) family and the Milnes -Gaskells; Richard Monckton-Milnes, Lord Houghton, was of this line; I was asked about provenance of The Gaskell Arms at Much Wenlock and found it linked to this branch. There is no certain proof but it is likely that William Gaskell's family descended from Adam, the third son of Lawrence Gaskell. No links have been found with the Gaskells of Ingersley Hall.



White Nancy, built by John Gaskell in 1817, possibly to commemorate Wellington's victory at Waterloo. Used as a summer house it had a round stone table inside and one theory about the name is that Nancy was the lead horse in the eight-strong team which hauled it to the top. The door has been blocked up. It stands on the boundary between Bollington and Rainow. John Gaskell built Ingersley Hall c 1775.

MANCHESTER BOTANISTS.

In Gaskell Newsletter No. 2 (August 1985) Barbara Brill wrote about the Manchester botanists and considered their relationship to *Job Legh* in *Mary Barton*. Barbara, as a thorough researcher, had looked for the graves of Edward Hobson (1782-1830) and his friend James Crowther, (1768- 1847) who had made a special request to be buried next to him in the graveyard of St George's Church, Hulme. Barbara had failed to find the graves but recorded the plaque to Hobson inside the church.

Now the church is being transformed into twenty-five luxury flats, including one in the tower. Dr Anne Secord of Cambridge, who is including a chapter about the real-life botanists and *Job Legh* in a book she is writing, had more success than Barbara in finding the graves and has ensured that they are preserved on a grassy bank. The plaque will be kept in the former church.

Crowther's grave-stone reads:

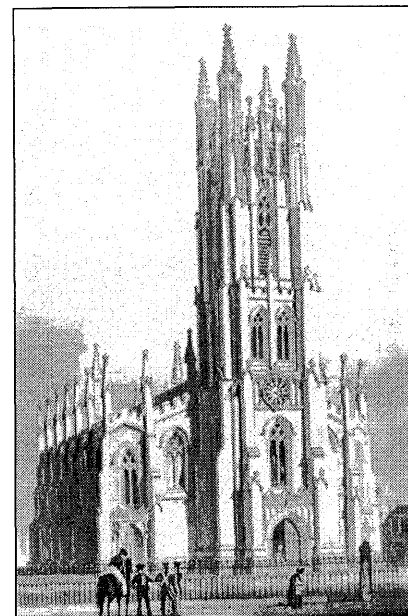
*And oft he roamed the ravine deep
To gain the plant esteemed as rare,
And pac'd the plain and scal'd the steep
Regarding neither toil nor fare.
For loved he nature in her storms
And in her soft and sunny hours
Admir'd her in her countless forms
But studied most her race of flowers.*

After reading about the gravestones (in a local newspaper) and Dr Anne Secord's work I was able to contact her to ask how she had succeeded in finding them. She replied:

'From textual sources I knew that Crowther had asked to be buried next to Hobson and that Hobson's grave was at St George's. . . I asked the Local Studies Librarian at Manchester Central Library whether St George's still existed and he told me that the graveyard was still intact but that he had noticed that after years of neglect it had recently been cleared of overgrown shrubs, etc. However, like Barbara Brill, I was not able to find the gravestones because they were laid flat on the ground and, as it turned out, over the years had been 'buried'; by a light cover of earth and grass. Because I was absolutely sure that the graves were there my husband (who had finished research he was doing in Liverpool and was with me) offered to hunt more thoroughly. Using an old slate that had dropped from the church roof to dig around a bit, after several hours he uncovered the first part of Hobson's grave - and then had to dig hard to uncover the rest and Crowther's next to it. (the graveyard

is surrounded by busy roads, so passing motorists began yelling at him thinking he was a vandal!) Anyway, after he had uncovered the graves and photographed them he found that someone had closed off the graveyard and put barbed wire over the entrance thus blocking his way out. Luckily the man who had done this work was still in his van and was very surprised to see a hot and muddy figure emerge from the graveyard. It turned out that this was the last day the place was open before a Manchester architecture firm and English Heritage were going to start work on converting the church.'

Ed: When Anne was told that the Church was to be redeveloped she petitioned the Bishop of Manchester to have the two gravestones saved at the site. Some of us visited the graveyard on one of Terry Wyke's walks.



BOOK NOTES

Christine Lingard

After a quiet winter there have been a number of new books expected this summer. Already available:

O'Gorman, Francis: *The Victorian novel*, Blackwell £14.99

A student's guide to the major Victorian novelists including Gaskell, the Brontës, Dickens Eliot, Hardy and Thackeray, analysing the critical response over the last one hundred years within a narrative framework.

Elliott, Dorice Williams: *The angel out of the house: philanthropy and gender in nineteenth-century England*, University of Virginia Press, £29.50.

A discussion of philanthropic discourse in the work of George Eliot, Elizabeth Gaskell, Hannah More and Anna Jameson, and the crucial role it played in defining gender roles.

And expected during the summer:

Clapp-Intyre, Ailsa. *Angelic airs, subversive songs: music as social discourse in the Victorian novel*, Ohio University Press, £41.95.

A detailed analysis of the use and importance of folk-songs, hymns and concert music in the works of Gaskell, Eliot and Hardy.

Archibald, Diana C.: *Domesticity, imperialism and emigration in the Victorian novel*, University of Missouri Press, £29.95.

An intriguing discussion of the dilemma facing women: whether to fulfil their imperial duty and go to the colonies or 'remain an untainted idol beside an English hearthside'. Gaskell, Dickens, Trollope, Thackeray, Charles Reade and Samuel Butler are treated.

Later in the year we hope there will be a new biography of Gaskell from Shirley Foster, promised from Palgrave for November. Do enquire in your bookshop about forthcoming titles. It could influence the number of copies of the book printed. Janet Allan has produced a list of books we have in stock and can supply by post. The list is available with SAE to Hon Sec. or see our home page.

NORTH WEST GROUP

North West members enjoyed a trip to Lichfield on 29th June, especially enjoyable as John and Kate Chapple, now living there, had helped with the planning and met us for our guided walk. The Cathedral with its attractive close, the Erasmus Darwin Centre and Samuel Johnson's birthplace gave us much to admire.

On 27 May Marie Moss arranged a pleasant tour linking Gaskell associations around the Macclesfield area, including King Edward Street Unitarian Chapel (1690); The Mount, home of Samuel Greg the younger and his mill workers' cottages, library and reading room. Marie will write about this in a future Newsletter.

A second tour on 14 August will include Dam Head House, Mobberley, where the Hollands first settled in Cheshire, Dean Row Chapel, Sandlebridge and the Apprentice House at Styal Mill where Peter Holland was attendant doctor.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

MANCHESTER AT CROSS STREET CHAPEL

8 October 2002 — Robin Allan on *Beatrix Potter*.

12 November 2002 — Alan Shelston on *Dickens and North-West England*.

11 February 2003 — Heather Sharps on *Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth*.

11 March 2003 — Peter Skrine on *Readers of Goethe in Manchester, with particular reference to the Gaskells*.

All talks start at **1.00.pm** with tea and coffee available at the chapel beforehand; a sandwich lunch may be purchased at nearby Pret-à-Manger.

KNUTSFORD MEETINGS AT ST JOHN'S CHURCH CENTRE

(A few minutes walk from the Railway station)

We shall be studying *Sylvia's Lovers* in our Knutsford meetings this year, following our usual pattern of a buffet lunch from twelve o'clock onwards, and a talk/discussion starting at about half past one on the last Wednesday in the month: dates are: **30 October, 27 November, 29 January, 26 February, 26 March and 30 April**. Oxford World's Classics edition *Sylvia's Lovers* is recommended but any edition can be used.

All welcome, at either series of meetings, or better still, both!

LITERATURE COURSES IN THE NORTH WEST

At the Methodist Church, Beach Road, **Hartford, Northwich**.

WEA course of 6 monthly meetings on the first Fridays in the month commencing 6 September

The Novels of Elizabeth Gaskell

Tutor: Elizabeth Williams, committee member of The Gaskell Society and leader of monthly Knutsford meetings.

For further information: Tel 01606 882418

At Holy Trinity Parish Centre, Hoghton St, **Southport**

Tutor: Dr Sue Garner-Jones (Society member)

20 meetings from Monday 7 October, 1.00-3.00pm

This course will attempt to examine the complex and intimate relationship between mothers and sons in four diverse novels: Dickens' *David Copperfield*, Elizabeth Gaskell's *Ruth*, George Moore's *Esther Waters* and D H Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*. For further information phone 0151 794 2538 quoting course no. SP068-679

If members notify us of similar course or events likely to interest our members details can be posted on our home page: www.gaskellociety.users.btopenworld.com

Manchester Literary Club which has met regularly since 1862 is a club rather than a society. It is open to everybody interested in literature and those engaged in literary or artistic pursuits. Papers on literary subjects are read at meetings and then discussed informally.

Meetings are held at The Friends' Meeting House, Mount Street Manchester; monthly on Mondays from 7- 9pm. Phone 0161 434 5818 for details.

GENERAL AUTUMN MEETING 28th September, 2002

This meeting will be held at the Methodist Church, Princess Street, Knutsford beginning at 12 noon.

Our former President, Geoffrey Sharps will speak about two Gaskell scholars of 1920's and 30's: Gerald DeWitt Sanders, and Stanton Whitfield whom Geoffrey met and later he was entrusted with the Whitfield Collection which is now housed in **Knutsford's new Library** which you might choose to visit on the morning before the meeting. There is a fine display of Gaskell illustrators.

Buffet lunch will be provided at a cost of £10. Pay on the day

This meeting begins a little later than usual as the Church has a coffee morning until 12 noon which members may choose to join.

At 3.00pm the Society's Vice-President, Jenny Uglow will speak on:

Erasmus Darwin, the Lunar Society and Elizabeth Gaskell's upbringing

Some of us were fortunate enough to visit Erasmus Darwin's house at Lichfield recently and are looking forward to reading Jenny's Book: *The Lunar Men: Friends who made the Future*, due to be published in September and available at the meeting.

Jenny's talk is also on the programme for **Knutsford Literature Festival**, tickets cost £5 but Gaskell members do not pay for a ticket, instead use the Society's booking form.

Tickets for non-members are available at Jardine's Book Shop, 73 King Street, Knutsford Phone 01565 653622.

The Festival runs from 27 September to 8 October.

On Sunday morning, 29 September, Elizabeth Gaskell's birthday, we will lay flowers on the grave at Brook Street Chapel at 10.30, before morning service which will also be Harvest Festival, at 11.00am. We will look at the Holland family graves and check the progress of the mulberry tree planted in March.

You may be interested in the **Festival event** in the afternoon 2.30pm at The Little Theatre:

Emily Dickinson and I: The Journey of a Portrayal

This is the true story of an actress's struggle to write a one-woman play about her literary heroine the American poet, Emily Dickinson. A one-woman show written and performed by Edie Campbell. See Festival programme for booking details.

Gaskell Society *South-West: Excursion to Penzance*

Friday May 17th – Sunday May 19th 2002

We were very struck by the fact that we had members apparently so far away, and thought it would be very worthwhile to pay them a visit. Travel arrangements were made and ten members prepared to travel down on Friday May 17th, some of us even venturing to go by train. Nothing could have prepared us for the kindness with which we were received by Sheilagh Burlton and her small group of Gaskell members, most of them also members of the Bronte Society, very suitable as Charlotte Brontë's mother was born and brought up there.

Chapter 3 of Mrs. Gaskell's "The Life of Charlotte Brontë" takes on a whole new meaning when one has visited this pleasant prosperous seaside town where there is evidence of the Branwell family everywhere. She quotes from Dr. Davy who says that "there was only one carpet and there was not a single silver fork" in the whole town. The same source tells of the superstitious beliefs of the uneducated people and Mrs. Gaskell suggests that hearing these stories, perhaps from Aunt Branwell, could have strongly influenced the imagination of Charlotte and her sisters.

We stayed in a comfortable little hotel where Sheilagh came to meet us on Friday evening to tell us about the programme she had arranged. She had also arranged an evening meal for us at a nearby restaurant and came with us.

On Saturday, we were taken on a tour of Penzance including Mrs. Brontë's birthplace, the Assembly rooms in the Union Hotel (very like those in Knutsford) where the news of Nelson's death was first announced and Penlee, the home of John Richards Branwell, which is now a very modern museum. We particularly liked the small exhibition of work by the Newlyn School of painters. Sheilagh also took us to the Morrab Library, a subscription library founded at about the same time as Manchester's Portico Library. The Curator took us round and answered questions and it was extremely difficult to get the South-West Group to move on. The afternoon was free and fine, and many took the opportunity to visit St. Michael's Mount, only 4 miles round the coast. The day ended with a buffet supper given for us and the Penzance group by Sheilagh Burlton where Marie Moss spoke briefly about our

pleasure and gratitude for the welcome we had received. She also spoke about the progress of Plymouth Grove and the Knutsford Literary Festival.

On Sunday we separated; some visited the Eden Project – what an amazing place. Marie and Derek Moss went on with their holiday in St. Ives. Thank you for coming, Marie, it was much appreciated. Others made their way home. We all had a very pleasurable and interesting time and were very touched by our welcome. We hope to welcome some of the Penzance members and friends to our Autumn meeting on November 23rd.

Rosemary Marshall.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

August 18 Summer tea party at the home of Kate and Alex Crawford, Norton St. Philip. (Everyone is welcome but do let me know. R.M.)

November 23. Gwen Clarke will speak to us on “Elizabeth Gaskell: Escape from the City” at 2.30 p.m. at the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution, Queen Square, Bath.

THE LONDON AND SOUTH -EAST GROUP

All meetings will be held at the Francis Holland School, 39 Graham Terrace, London SW1 8JF and will commence at 2pm. The school is a few minutes walk away from Sloane Square underground station (District and Circle Lines). Members who wish to meet for lunch should be at the underground station at 12 noon for a light lunch at The Royal court Tavern, on Sloane Square or join the group there. For further information please contact Dudley Barlow 020 8874 7727.

Saturday 14 September

‘Flannel waistcoats and long sleeves’:

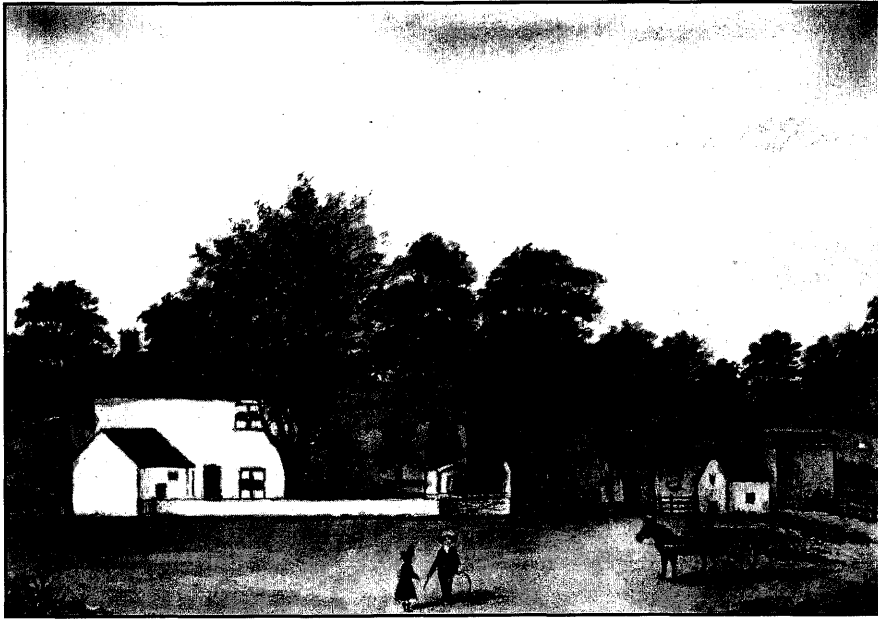
Motherhood and Matrimony in Elizabeth Gaskell

Saturday 9 November

‘A Question of Trust’:

The Relationship between Elizabeth Gaskell and Patrick Brontë

The Gaskell Society



Home Farm at The Mount, Bollington



THE GASKELL SOCIETY HOME PAGE has all the latest information on meetings.
<http://gaskellsociety.users.btopenworld.com>

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs. Joan Leach,
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NEWSLETTER
Spring 2003 - Number 35

Editor's Letter

Joan Leach

As I gather together the items for this Newsletter it seems that 2003 will be a lively year for our members. Programmes are offered for branch members in Bath, Knutsford, London and Manchester. We hope to arrange a meeting in Edinburgh with a view to forming a Scottish branch.

The AGM meeting will be held at Cross Street Chapel, Manchester on 5th April. Following the AGM Louise Henson will speak about: *New Perspectives on Gaskell and Science*. In the afternoon we will have a compilation of the life and letters of Catherine Winkworth and will sing some of her hymns, translated from the German. A glance at the indexes for Gaskell letters will tell you how close they were to the Winkworth family and what a gap there would be in our knowledge if Catherine had not been such a faithful correspondent and valued Elizabeth's letters enough to preserve them.

She is not forgotten in Alderley Edge, Cheshire, where the family once lived. As part of the programme for its 150th anniversary, St Philip's Church held a service of evensong celebrating Catherine as a hymn writer. She worked in the Sunday School and was district visitor to 40 families.

Our weekend Conference in Durham, 1st – 4th August, promises well, with excellent speakers and various events. A group will visit the Whitby and Scarborough area *Sylvia's Lovers* country from 15th – 18th September.

In this newsletter we have a report of the trip to Brittany in the footsteps of Gaskell and Mme de Sévigné, written for us by members Jean Hockenhull and Sheila Stephenson. Perhaps those who were not fortunate enough to go on this trip, so ably organised by Christine Bhatt, will be able to follow the trail some other time – or at least in imagination.

In the summer North West members enjoyed three afternoon trips around Gaskell's Cheshire; one of these, in the Macclesfield area, was arranged by Marie Moss, who has written an account of the Gregs' farm at Bollington. We hope it may be possible to produce a booklet for other members to follow these routes and associations. You will find reports and meeting details of the various branches towards the back of this Newsletter.

Member Marjorie Cox, who lives in Bowdon where the Gaskells visited for country air, has researched a fascinating piece of social history in *Mrs Gaskell and the 'Climbing Boys'* and in *The Frozen North: some links with Sylvia's Lovers* Christine Lingard gives intriguing insights into the background history. Thank you to all our contributors.

Speakers List

It would be very useful if potential speakers would let me know what subjects they can offer for talks to members at our various branches. If you have been to a talk or course which you enjoyed, please let me have some details.

Mrs. Gaskell and the 'Climbing Boys'

Marjorie Cox

Some years ago I wrote about the life of William Wood of Manchester and, during twenty years of retirement, of Bowdon. My main interest was his tireless campaign to stop the use of 'climbing boys' to sweep chimneys, a life's work which originated when, in the mid-1820s in Manchester, he witnessed the death of a boy in a chimney fire. In the course of my research I was always puzzled that I could find no evidence that Mrs. Gaskell's tender-heartedness and social conscience had ever involved her in this philanthropic cause, the more so as Manchester, the scene of two well-publicised deaths of boys on industrial premises in 1847 and 1850, was known for the use of this illegal as well as inhumane practice by some of its sweeps.

I combed the large volume of Mrs. Gaskell's letters edited by J.A.V.Chapple and Arthur Pollard but to no avail. However, to my delight, the *Further Letters of Mrs. Gaskell*, edited by John Chapple and Alan Shelston, casts a welcome light on the problem and exonerates Mrs Gaskell. One of her letters (pp.83-5), dated 10 March 1853, is in reply to a letter from her friend Mrs Mary Rich, and the first item is as follows:

...First of all about the chimney-sweeps. I have spoken about it everywhere, and so has Mr. Gaskell, and we have threatened to turn informants, and receive the sum of £10 on every such conviction [i.e. of a sweep for using boys, contrary to the Act of 1840]. It is one of those cruelties which people's consciences seem dead to, and it is very difficult to attack them in any way save through their pockets.

As an editorial note observes, informants, then the only way of initiating prosecutions, were to receive half the fine imposed on convicted sweeps; in fact, Mrs Gaskell over-estimated the amount, as the maximum fine was £10. The awkwardness for informants was underlined by William Wood in 1853 to the House of Lords Select Committee, when he pleaded that the police should have a duty of laying information against sweeps, saying 'it is very unpleasant for individuals to have to inform against their neighbours'. This awkwardness was compounded by the existence of an apparent financial reward, although in fact sweeps often chose to go to prison for a short term rather than pay the fine, so that the informant was not compensated for expenses in bringing the case. Like Mrs Gaskell, William Wood recognised the difficulty of reaching the consciences of householders and housewives, and even experienced personally the reluctance of his wife to change

her ingrained belief that the chimney was better cleaned by a boy.

Both the date of Mrs. Gaskell's letter and its recipient are significant. The year 1853 was an important one in Lord Shaftesbury's repeated efforts to make the enforcement of existing laws effective throughout the country. He had already, in 1840, secured an Act tightening up the previous Act of 1834 by making apprenticeship under sixteen years of age and 'climbing' under twenty-one years illegal. This should have been the end of 'climbing boys', since by that age a 'boy' would be far too large, but sadly, though effective in such places as London and Bath, the new Act was not properly observed or enforced in industrial and country districts. After fruitless efforts in 1851 and 1852, Shaftesbury, in May 1853, secured the referral of his proposal to a Select Committee of the House of Lords. There he called fifteen witnesses, including Wood, to give evidence of violations of the law and its lax enforcement by the authorities. Despite cogent evidence, this initiative also failed, and effective legislation, involving the police, did not come until 1875. Mrs. Gaskell's letter is evidence of an effort to rouse public opinion at a crucial time in the 1853 campaign and also offers a glimpse into one aspect of its network.

It was no accident that the Gaskells had been moved to action by Mrs. Mary Rich. She, the widow of Claudius John Rich of the East India Company, was a member of the Wedgwood family circle, and from the 1830s lived with Hensleigh Wedgwood, grandson of the great Josiah Wedgwood I, and Hensleigh's wife, Frances. Both Mary Rich and Frances Wedgwood were daughters of Sir James Mackintosh, lawyer and historian, the former by his first marriage and the latter by his second, so that they were half-sisters. Staffordshire, where the Wedgwoods had their home and their business, resembled Manchester in the defiance of the law on 'climbing boys' and in its lax enforcement by magistrates; the county had the added disadvantage that its press was less independent than Manchester's and rarely reported such cases. In 1855, however, the Hanley and Shelton Chimney Sweeping Association was set up to prosecute sweeps who used boys and to promote sweeps who used 'machines' – the jointed rods, topped with brushes. The moving spirit of this Association was Francis (Frank) Wedgwood, a brother of Hensleigh and thus related to Mary Rich; he was secretary and treasurer and the Minutes bear witness to how active he was. Incidentally, it was he who later paid warm tribute to William Wood for his efforts for the cause in North Staffordshire.

Mrs. Gaskell may possibly have been aware of the plight of 'climbing boys' earlier, through another friend, the Quaker William Howitt, author and publisher. In 1838 she had sent an early essay to him, which he had included in his *Visits to Remarkable Places* published in 1840; in that year, on a visit to Heidelberg, she and her husband had met the Howitts, who were spending three years in Germany.

When they returned to England in 1843, she kept in touch with them and may, perhaps, have seen Howitt's 1842 book, *The Rural and Domestic Life of Germany*, in which he remarked on the fact that 'you never see boys employed as chimney-sweeps, sweeping by climbing is totally unknown'.

It is pleasing to discover evidence that the Gaskells did share in this humanitarian campaign. The Wedgwoods, relations of Mrs Gaskell, were Unitarians too, but members of different denominations were united in the cause of 'climbing boys': Quakers played an important role, Wood had been an active Methodist and became a Congregationalist, while Shaftesbury was a devout Anglican. Denominations could however be divided on the issue, as William Gaskell's own congregation at Cross Street Chapel was. Prominent among its members were John and Thomas Potter, leaders of the Manchester community of industrialists and Free-Traders. A witness, summoned by Shaftesbury to give evidence before the Select Committee in 1853, was W.J. Neale, a London barrister who was secretary of The Climbing Boys Society. Neale quoted a letter of 1850 from Sir John Potter J.P., then Mayor of Manchester, in reply to an invitation to join the Society. In declining the invitation, Sir John claimed to 'deprecate, as much as any one, the cruelties which have been and are still practised in some (I hope few) instances towards climbing boys', but maintained that the flues 'in very many of the best houses in England', 'though not in the least dangerous', were such as to make the use of a sweeping machine impossible. He could 'not think it reasonable that in such cases proprietors should be compelled by Act of Parliament, at a very serious cost, to pull their residences in pieces'. The language in which Sir John couched his letter was urbane and he even professed esteem for the Society's 'humane and charitable motives'; he was himself, in other respects, a noted philanthropist. His language was very different from that of the magistrate who rebuffed William Wood with the reply, 'Lads must be had to sweep chimneys, I can't help what the law is'; none the less, underneath, Potter expressed the same opposition to the total abolition by law of sweeping by climbing. Machines could and did sweep virtually all chimneys as they stood in London and other towns, but in industrial towns with factories as well as dense housing and in country areas, the will to use them was absent. Sir John Potter stood on the letter of the law; the clause in the Act of 1840 which regulated the size and construction of chimneys and flues applied to *new or rebuilt* ones. In contrast to him, the Duke of Wellington, who had not favoured the Bill which became law in 1840, was one among many owners of large houses who accepted the fundamental aim of the Act and had their *existing* chimneys and flues altered where necessary to suit machines. The Gaskells' principled stand on 'climbing boys' in 1853 must have intensified the strained relations with Sir John Potter which had begun after the publication of *Mary Barton*; the Potters believed, though she strongly denied it, that Mrs Gaskell had, in her novel, deliberately revived memories

of the murder in 1831 of Thomas Ashton, brother of Mrs Thomas Potter, the sister-in-law of Sir John. (See *Letters*, pp.195-6, and *Further Letters*, p.173.)

Notes:

1. I am grateful to the editors of *Further Letters of Mrs Gaskell*, John Chapple and Alan Shelston, for permission to quote from the letter to Mrs Rich, and to Alan Shelston for information about the Wedgwood family.
2. For William Wood, see Marjorie Cox, 'William Wood of Bowdon: Champion of "Climbing Boys"', *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, Vol. 91.

A Note on Elizabeth Gaskell's Visit to The Mount

Marie Moss

In a letter to William and Mary Howitt written in May 1838, Elizabeth Gaskell recalls the happy days of her youth spent with young friends in the park at Tabley, where on a summer's day which turned to rain, two musical sisters, 'Mary and Ellen Needham from Lenton near Nottingham', sang ballads from Shakespeare in the echoing old hall. The Howitts lived in Nottingham during their early married life and in mentioning the sisters by name Elizabeth was probably aware that the socially active Needham family would be well known to William and Mary. Her letter concludes 'How I wish my dear husband and I could afford to ramble about the country this summer, the sun is shining so brightly. But we are not the richest of the rich (my husband is a Unitarian minister) and moreover, I have two little girls to watch over' (1).

The following month, June 1838, Mary Needham married Samuel Greg II and came to live in Bollington, Cheshire, where the Greg dynasty had acquired an early water-powered cotton mill and Samuel was engaged in establishing a model industrial community in the valley of the river Dean. Samuel and Mary started married life at 'Turner Heath', a large house adjacent to the Bollington/Macclesfield road, and it was here that he conducted his Saturday evening tea parties, designed to give the cream of his employees the opportunity to experience and develop the social graces. He also built a day school, library and baths for his workers, before planning a larger and more gracious home for his growing family. Building work on 'The Mount', which stood above but just out of sight of his 'happy valley', started in 1845 and the family moved there in September 1846.

Meanwhile a branch of the Manchester-Birmingham railway had reached Macclesfield in 1845, and a second line which linked Manchester with the Potteries via Macclesfield

was completed in 1849. It therefore became much easier and cheaper for Elizabeth to escape Manchester's grime by paying short visits to her old friend who, as a young mother herself, would welcome and care for the Gaskells' little girls.

It is not known whether Elizabeth ever stayed with the Gregs at 'Turner Heath', but she certainly took advantage of the ease of travel provided by the expanding local railway network to spend time with Mary and Samuel at 'The Mount' in early November 1849 (2). She took Florence, then aged seven, with her, but on arrival found a cot at her bedside made ready for the baby Julia and much disappointment in the household because 'Baby is not here'. Shy at first, Florence soon made friends with the younger Gregs, 'the eldest not five', and next morning was eager to scamper off to the 'famous nurseries' to be dressed by the family nannies. Elizabeth wrote home to Marianne and Meta before setting off with the Gregs for luncheon at Capesthorpe, starting her letter before breakfast, but finding a moment to add a late postscript:

I have just heard what Florence is to do today; and it is so pleasant I must tell you. She is now putting on her things to go down with Alice, Herbert, Katie (2 years old to-day) & the Baby to the Farm to get some cream; which then they are to come back & churn themselves; then they dine and then have little tea in the nursery, with their own butter. Flossy is in high glee, and thoroughly at home.

In 1849 the Home Farm for the Gregs' estate was a much older property located below the sloping gardens near to the mill and the valley bottom. It is now a private house with the single-storey dairy, shown at a right angle to the main building, now converted to a kitchen and the outhouses incorporated into a separate dwelling. When the Knutsford group visited the site in May 2002 it was difficult to visualise the farm as it had been when Flossy and the little Gregs trooped down to get their cream.

Since then the owners have kindly removed an amateur nineteenth-century water-colour from its frame and made a colour photocopy for us which is reproduced on the back cover in black and white. The children in the foreground sharing the hoop are too well dressed to be farm or mill children, and could well number amongst the large brood of children and grandchildren who always found fun and loving care in the home of the motherly Mary Greg.

Notes:

1. J.A.V.Chapple and Arthur Pollard, *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell*, No.8.
2. *Ibid.*, No.21; date amended in John Chapple and Alan Shelston, *Further Letters*, p.46.

The Frozen North: some links with Sylvia's Lovers

Christine Lingard

There are a number of clues to Gaskell's interest in the search for the Northwest Passage which may have a bearing on the origins of *Sylvia's Lovers*. It is generally accepted that she took her description of the whaling from William Scoresby, whom she met at Auchencairn on Solway Firth in 1855. (*Letters*, No.267a) There were two William Scoresbys – the father (1760-1829), Captain of a whaler which reached a record latitude of 81° north in 1806; and the son (1787-1857), who abandoned the sea to take holy orders and wrote *An Account of the Arctic regions with a description and history of the northern Whale-fishery* (1820). Gaskell's accounts of the dangers of icebergs and of Robson falling into the icy waters closely follow this book, which the Gaskells borrowed from the Portico Library more than once.

Scoresby was very influential. At that time the only sea route westerly to the East Indies was by the perilous Cape Horn – a journey hazardous not only for its length and physical discomforts but rendered even more dangerous by the Napoleonic Wars. Prospects of a northerly route were still attractive. The search had been suspended not just because of the war but also the severe ice. Scoresby's reports that the ice had shrunk prompted a renewal of interest. Several expeditions set out in the 1820s, most notably those of Sir Edward Parry (1790-1855) and Sir John Franklin (1786-1847). Parry went even further north. He is now almost forgotten but in his day was a national hero. He is interesting because of his Cheshire connections. His wife Isabella was the daughter of Lord Stanley of Alderley and he spent a lot of time at Nether Alderley Rectory, the home of her uncle, the Rev Edward Stanley. His eldest son was born there. The Stanleys were well known to the Hollands and Gaskell herself was a good friend of Mrs Stanley. Gaskell's uncle Peter Holland was the Stanley family doctor and there are references to Parry in the writings of his son Sir Henry Holland. Gaskell must surely have been familiar with his achievements.

Franklin's disappearance in 1847 was a sensation. Over forty expeditions were dispatched to find him. When official interest waned Lady Franklin raised the finance for an expedition herself. The fate of the party was rarely out of the news and rumours of cannibalism gripped the nation. Though traces of them were found in 1850, their deaths were not confirmed till 1859. The story was the subject of a play by Wilkie Collins, *The Frozen Deep*, which Dickens and a number of amateur actors presented at the Free Trade Hall in August 1857, but there is no evidence that any of the Gaskells saw it. She was in Manchester at the time working on revisions to *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*. The scenery was the work of the

distinguished marine painter Clarkson Stanfield, a former impressed sailor, whom she met in 1859 at the start of her research (*Letters*, No.429a)

William Gaskell borrowed books about Franklin from the Portico Library. Women were barred from borrowing so we can only speculate on whether they were for her. But in 1859 on a second trip to Auchencairn, when she first mentioned her contract for *Sylvia's Lovers*, she was trying to get hold of William Elder's *Life of Elisha Kent Kane*. Kane (1820-57) was an American explorer who led an expedition to find Franklin in 1854. She was not impressed: 'I don't like American biographies. Dr Kane's life is *murdered*'. Which implies some familiarity with the subject. (*Letters*, No.394)

Further evidence of this interest may be found in the catalogue of books from Plymouth Grove offered for sale on the death of Meta Gaskell. It includes *Franklin's Journey to the Coppermine River* (see bibliographical note). Franklin made two voyages to this area of Northern Canada. The first expedition set out in 1819 to chart the Arctic coast. A second trip in 1825 covered a wider area. The surgeon on both voyages was John Richardson (1787-1865), an Edinburgh doctor who had seen active service in 1807. His third wife was Mary, daughter of Mrs Eliza Fletcher, an elderly friend of Gaskell's father from Edinburgh who had retired to Lancrigg, Grasmere. She is well known to Gaskell scholars as the basis for Margaret Dawson in the linking passages of *My Lady Ludlow and other stories*. Gaskell made several visits to her and another daughter, Mrs Davy, and the visits were reciprocated. They often got in touch with one another in their fundraising activities. On one occasion Mary was dubbed 'Lady (North Pole) Richardson'. (*Letters*, No.56)

On its return in 1821 the party got into difficulties and was gradually depleted as man after man succumbed to the elements. Often their only food was lichen scraped from rocks or boiled shoelaces. They were obliged to divide. Franklin went in search of rescue while Richardson stayed put with the injured. They were suffering from cold, exhaustion and starvation – their legs swollen with oedema. They lost their last canoe and had to build a raft. Richardson attempted to swim across the river in temperatures of 37° Fahrenheit (3° Celsius) with a line attached to his waist to launch it but in his weakened state he nearly died. The group included a number of Iroquois Indians and at least one able seaman – John Hepburn (born 1787).

Meanwhile as their situation worsened one of the Indians was acting strangely. He returned with meat but as one of the party was missing suspicions grew. When another was found dead the rest began to fear for their lives. Richardson personally shot him dead. Hepburn had offered to do it but Richardson took responsibility. The relationship between the two men was strong. Richardson called him 'A man who by his humane actions and devotedness had so endeared himself to me, that I felt more anxiety for his safety than my own'. It was a year before they began the return to England where the deed was declared the justifiable act of a commanding officer.

Though there is little in their circumstances that matches the exploits of the fictional Philip Hepburn, I feel there are certain parallels in the bond which can develop between enlisted man and officer in the face of extreme adversity. In the only mention of Franklin in her letters Gaskell refers to the godless country in which he disappeared – significant, as Richardson had justified his actions by the fact that his victim was pagan. (*Letters*, No.108a)

John Hepburn was a very religious man. He was an experienced seaman who had been held prisoner by the French during the War. A great storyteller, he whiled away many an evening hour with his tales. He belonged to a lowland clan from Haddington. A cousin founded the Smeaton Hill station near Ballarat in Victoria, Australia. In the 1830s Franklin was Governor of Van Dieman's Land (Tasmania) and Hepburn entered his service as a kind of major-domo but proved to be more a friend than a servant. He had experience dealing with convict boys transported to the colony. When Franklin disappeared in 1847, the first expedition to take supplies was led by Richardson. In 1852 Hepburn joined the crew of Lady Franklin's expedition, at her insistence, even though by then he was well into his 60s. An act of Charity maybe, but such was the trust they had in him.

Mrs Fletcher was horrified by the treatment of casualties brought back to Portsmouth from the Crimea in 1855. 'Boiling with indignation' was her phrase about the callous way they were left to fend for themselves – ill, filthy and nowhere to go. This is the essence of Chapter 41 of *Sylvia's Lovers*; Philip Hepburn too landed at Portsmouth and wandered for days before reaching Winchester. This situation was covered in the press at the time, though probably over-sensationalised. Gaskell could have read it there but Mrs Fletcher did include the story in her autobiography. While this was not published till 1875, I wonder whether she showed the manuscript to Gaskell, a professional author, for advice?

There are several small points of detail that suggest a link with *Sylvia's Lovers*. For instance, Gaskell mentions the activities of the press gangs extending as far inland as Tadcaster (*SL*, Chapter 22). Tadcaster was Mrs Fletcher's hometown and she kept up links with the area throughout her life. She also knew York and was interested in the assizes (her husband was a judge), but I think it is stretching the point to suggest she was familiar with the case of William Atkinson who was tried and executed in York in 1793. Her maiden name, Dawson, is also used in *Sylvia's Lovers*.

The Fletchers were famous for their story telling sessions. She was very proud of her son-in-law and always eager to talk about him, as testified to by Tennyson in 1850. Mrs Fletcher spoke of Sir John 'con amore'. Mrs Tennyson (Emily Sellwood) and Richardson's second wife (Mary Booth, died 1845) had been cousins. They were nieces of Franklin, from Lincolnshire. Mrs Tennyson was anxious for any information of her missing uncle. Richardson took up an appointment at the Naval

Hospital, at Haslar near Gosport, but retired to Lancrigg, which he inherited on his mother-in-law's death. He was also a naturalist writing books about the flora and fauna of the Arctic – a sort of northern Roger Hamley. He sent specimens collected on his travels to his friend Charles Darwin and spent a lot of time laying out gardens at Lancrigg. He is best known today for the plants he introduced into this country.

The temptation to ascribe this as a source is hampered by the dates. Most of Gaskell's acquaintance with the Fletchers predates *Sylvia's Lovers* by several years. Mrs Fletcher died in 1858, Sir John in 1865, and I am not certain whether Gaskell actually met him. Lady Richardson and Mrs Davy both outlived her. The last mention is to Mrs Davy in 1859 when Gaskell supplies an introduction for Charles Bosanquet. She had not seen her for two years (*Letters*, No.439a). It may simply be a case of a distant memory kindling an interest and leading to her to find her sources elsewhere. Unless anybody knows any different!

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Manchester Botanist?

Jane Wilson, a curatorial assistant at The Museum of Garden History* and a member of the Society, writes:

With reference to the article on Manchester Botanists in the autumn *Newsletter*, we have, in the Museum collection, a jug with an image of a nineteenth-century botanist on it. The jug was made by Doulton at Burslem some time after 1882, at a factory which they took over in that year. The original factory was called Pinder Bourne and a number of their early designs were kept in production by Doulton, of which this was one; it may therefore date back possibly to the 1850s. We have always felt that the portrait must be based on a real person but have been unable to find out whom. (Doulton are unable to help beyond what I have already told you.) Of course he might be based on a botanist local to the Potteries rather than Manchester but he is a wonderful character with his open vasculum, book, lens and flower in his cap, and must have known or corresponded with the Manchester botanists. If anyone can make any suggestions as to his identity we should be so pleased to hear from them. Personally, I always call him Job Legh!

Acknowledgements to The Museum of Garden History, Lambeth Palace Road, London SE1 7LB, tel: 020 7401 8865.



The Gaskell Trip To Brittany

Sheila Stephenson and Jean Hockenhuil

Elizabeth Gaskell tells in her letters that she set out for Brittany in 1862, accompanied by Meta and Isobel Thompson, with 'a mixture of the ideas of sea, health, rocks, ferns and Madame de Sévigné in our heads' (*French Life*). Our party of thirty-five Gaskell members set out with similar ideas; well, perhaps not so much the ferns, more the wonderful fish restaurants and patisseries. Christine had provided us with a full and informative itinerary before we set off, so we had a lot to look forward to. We were not disappointed. The weather was perfect and we enjoyed warm summer sunshine for the whole visit.

After an effortless journey we arrived outside the walls of St. Malo just as the lovely medieval buildings of the town were switching on their lights. The *Hotel France et Chateaubriand*, the birthplace of Chateaubriand, which was our base, overlooked a main square of the 'Intra Muros' area.

FRIDAY, 13th SEPTEMBER.

Our first full day began with a guided tour of St. Malo. Our guide, full of infectious enthusiasm, began by telling us that St. Malo was named after a Welsh monk called Maclow, which didn't sound very Welsh but then it was a long time ago, the sixth century in fact; he set up a Bishopric very close to the rock where the walled town now stands. Our guide took us on a tour of the ramparts and towers which safeguard the old town, taking great pains to assure us that the town had had a chequered history over the centuries and that the English were not the only ones to pursue imperialistic designs on the port. We heard about the Corsairs, a title that somehow seemed more romantic than mere pirates, who had plied their trade along this coastline and indeed given the area its soubriquet 'The Corsair city'. It was difficult to imagine that more recently, in 1944, enemy bombing had destroyed 75% of the area, as it had been so painstakingly restored.

We returned to the hotel for a talk by Professor Chapple on Chateaubriand, and after first telling us that he knew very little about him, he proceeded to set him in the literary context of his time and tell us about his popularity with the 'salon society' of the day; and so to Mrs Gaskell via Madame Recamier and to Madame Mohl and the Rue du Bac (which we had visited whilst in Paris).

The afternoon and evening were free to explore the interesting streets and buildings around the area, and there were certainly plenty of those; to finish off the first full day, we had the difficult task of selecting which one out of the many fish restaurants and crêperies to choose for our evening meal.

SATURDAY, 14th SEPTEMBER.

Our first full day excursion was by coach to Avranches, situated in the beautiful region between the Norman headland of Champeaux and the Breton Pointe du Grouin. It would appear from Mrs Gaskell's brief reference to Avranches (*Letters*, No.509b) that the town was not as attractive then as it is now: 'On the next morning by a carriage of the country to Pont Orson, where we breakfasted & thence to Mt. St. Michel, — that night to Avranches; where we staid 2 days, kept by the rain & a laudable desire to wash our clothes'. We, however, stopped at the Jardin des Plantes (the Botanic Garden) with its brilliant displays of flowers and shrubs and superb vantage point overlooking the Mont St. Michel Bay. We were not able to see the Mont as it was shrouded in the morning mist, a happy chance as it turned out, as our kindly driver made a detour on the way back and we were able to get within walking distance of the rock.

Arriving at Avranches for a brief stop many of the group climbed the winding path to visit the eleventh-century monument that indicates the original location of the Cathedral's west door. The Cathedral itself was destroyed during the French Revolution and never rebuilt; it is the place where Henry II made public penance in 1172 for the murder of Thomas à Becket. Fanny Trollope's son Adolphus, writing in 1840 in his book *Summer In Brittany*, tells us of Henry's attempt to justify himself before many of his nobles and the Papal Legate by declaring with his hand on the Bible that - "I swear that I neither ordered nor wished the murder of my Archbishop. When I heard of it I was extremely grieved" - Wonder if they had spin-doctors in the 11th Century!

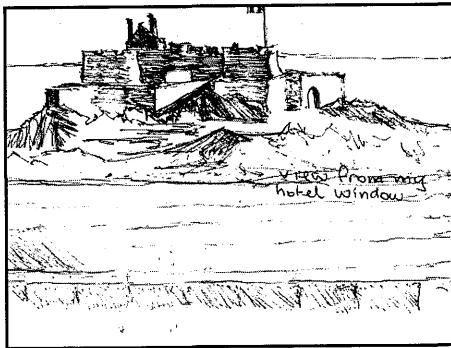
We drove on to Coutances and, as usual, it was first stop lunch. A large and pleasantly situated café overlooking the main square served us well and we were able to enjoy our lunch and at the same time watch the guests and bridal party arrive for the civil ceremony at the Hotel de Ville. Paying the bill for our meal caused a few problems as the proprietor apparently had not yet come to terms with euros and was still reckoning in francs but, soon sorted, we moved on to visit the Cathedral; a truly magnificent building that was completed in 1274 and has remained basically unaltered ever since. Its twin towers and the octagonal lantern dominate the surrounding area. Inside the cathedral was the outcome of over 900 years of continuous worship by the people of Coutances with ancient stained glass, medieval tiles showing the fleur de lys, emblem of the French Royal family, and many ancient effigies and monuments. It was lovely to see that the church is still in active use in the present day as flowers and orders of service were being set out ready for the religious part of the wedding ceremony that we had just seen in the town square. Sadly, there was no time to wait for the service as we had to get on the coach for our promised visit to Mont St. Michel. On the way we read more extracts

from *Summer in Brittany*, where Trollope describes in graphic detail his traumatic journey to visit the Mont, which was only accessible by a causeway at low tide. Seemingly, the guide they had booked could not be roused from his bed at 9a.m. as he had only been in it since 4a.m., so they had to find another one in a hurry. They eventually located one who agreed to take them but fell asleep on the journey and left the horses to find the way; perhaps he too had been out the night before. Trollope continues 'I thought it advisable that our guide should be awake.... I commenced very perseveringly jerking my elbow into his ribs but could get nothing out of him except "pas de danger" and then the brute snored again'. After a hair-raising time when the carriage and horses almost disappeared into the sands, local fishermen were able to pull them free with ropes. Anyway, no such problems with our guide, a perfect model of sobriety and efficiency! And after a walk to the bottom of the Mont and lots of photo-taking we were shepherded back onto the coach to complete our journey back to the hotel in time for dinner.

After dinner Christine gave us a talk about Madame de Sévigné, the seventeenth-century épistolière who was such a prolific correspondent and whose life Gaskell was researching; we were able to hear a very few extracts from some of the 1700 letters to her daughter reflecting the social history of the reign of Louis XIV.

SUNDAY, 15TH SEPTEMBER.

Our first free day. Early in the morning, when the causeway was clear, a group of enthusiasts crossed to a small island to visit the grave of Chateaubriand, others went to mass at the cathedral and some, following the advice of Friday's guide, Josephine, acquainted themselves with the numerous sights of interest in the town. From the moment of our arrival I realised St. Malo was an artists' paradise, so I used my free time filling my sketch book with buildings and views that attracted me. Our hotel was situated 'Intra Muros' and from my bedroom on the second floor I looked down on the old city walls and beyond to an island fortress proudly displaying the Tricolour.



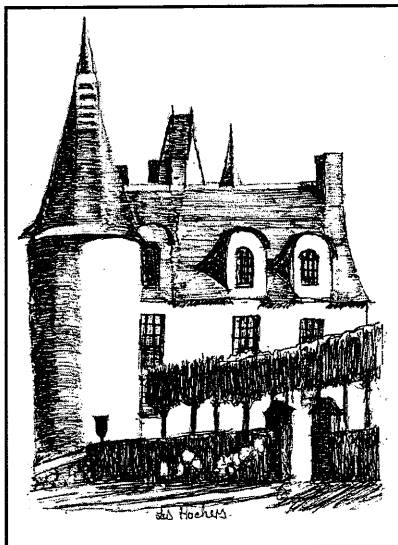
A walk round the wall was a favourite attraction for visitors and I spent an hour or two observing and recording the great variety of people indulging in this activity. I lunched at 'La Licorne' in the main square and then wandered up to the cathedral and admired the beautiful rose window through which the setting sun fired the glass into a glorious kaleidoscope of colour which made patterns on the old stone walls. Across the square was a 'Salon de Thé', where I observed an elegant French lady whilst I drank rose-scented tea and ate a slice of delicious rhubarb tart.

Returning to the hotel through narrow streets of art galleries and historic houses I met other members of the party enthusiastic about their afternoon in Dinard where they had walked, taken tea and in some cases visited art exhibitions. Two people had returned to Mont St. Michel by bus and explored the abbey.

MONDAY, 16th SEPTEMBER.

A very important day, for we were to follow in Mrs Gaskell's footsteps to the house where Madame de Sévigné spent her happiest hours. Whilst en route a letter from Mrs Gaskell to Catherine Winkworth was read to us. This gave an account of her journey in 1862 with her daughter Meta and a friend to 'Les Rochers'. I listened to her description of the countryside with its woods and little farmyard scenes, a truly pastoral setting, and, looking out of the window, felt that, apart from the state of the roads and our mode of transport, little had changed in the intervening years. We came to Vitré with its pink and white striped railway station in mid-morning. Our guide conducted us to the castle where we had a most interesting tour followed by a meander through the narrow streets looking at the old houses and eventually to the cathedral dedicated to Our Lady, a lovely building that had two pulpits, one internal and one on an outside wall. From there we went on to view the town house of Madame de Sévigné, which is in a sadly neglected state and about to be converted into apartments. Rather disheartened about this we took leave of our guide and went off in search of lunch. Four of us ate a delicious, reasonably priced meal at the 'Taverne de l'Ecu'. Back in the coach we drove through countryside displaying the early autumn colours, to 'Les Rochers'; the estate entrance was too narrow for the coach so we got out and walked to a building which now serves as ticket office, shop and small museum. From there we crossed to a grassy path bordered by a wood and eventually, just as Mrs Gaskell and her party had experienced, saw ahead an exquisite little chateau. By the entrance to the gardens our guide related the history of the building and the small chapel which Madame de Sévigné had had built in honour of one of her uncles who had been a benefactor.

The party then had a guided tour of the house, but I, following Meta's example, sat in the garden and sketched. We returned to St. Malo by the motorway route at the end of a very busy day.



TUESDAY, 17th SEPTEMBER.

Another day when we made our own plans. Time for a second visit to somewhere, an opportunity to get to know more of St. Malo or just to drink a *citron pressé* whilst lazing in the sun. It was market day in the area so a few people went to a nearby town where there was a large market.

WEDNESDAY, 18th SEPTEMBER.

This was the last excursion of our holiday and a chance to relax with a two and a half hours' sail along the River Rance to the medieval town of Dinan situated on its banks. We were told that the tidal forces of the estuary have been harnessed for the world's first tidal power station producing more than 600 million kWh of electricity a year and is the most popular site of scientific interest in France. The market town of Dinan is encircled by the ancient city walls and ramparts that give it its defining characteristics and is set at the top of a steep hill overlooking the port. A 'petit train touristique' is provided to take visitors from the quayside to the town but, sadly, only runs in the summer season so there was nothing for it but to start climbing.

The town has been designated a protected site and is a wealth of picturesque streets with pillared and timbered houses and much evidence of its past commercial importance included tradesmen's houses similar to the Shambles in York.

THURSDAY, 19th SEPTEMBER.

We had a free morning on the last day and an opportunity to have a last wander round St. Malo and buy our souvenirs and postcards before departing for the flight home. Everyone agreed that it had been a super holiday, thanks in no small part to Christine Bhatt, who had given so much time to organising it and ensuring that everything ran smoothly. For myself I have a happy jumble of memories: of a chateau with 'witches hat' turrets, half-timbered houses, slate-roofed, that lurched in all directions onto cobbled streets, magnificent cathedrals and of course the crêpes. The only sadness was that there was no book. Elizabeth Gaskell obviously loved the region and wrote enthusiastically about it in her letters and in 'French Life'. It would have made a wonderful story.

The Alliance of Literary Societies AGM

Saturday 26th - Sunday 27th April: hosted by The Dylan Thomas Society of Great Britain at The Dylan Thomas Centre, Swansea.

Last year several members of the Gaskell Society enjoyed a similar event hosted by The Arnold Bennett Society. This year, it promises to be a fascinating weekend with a varied programme, held in this attractive area to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Dylan Thomas' death. The Alliance of Literary Societies' homepage is at www.sndc.demon.co.uk.

BOOK NOTES

Christine Lingard

A few books to look out for this year:

Women's Voices in the Fiction of Elizabeth Gaskell (1810-1865)

by Marianne Camus of the University of Besançon, Edward Mellen Press, due January 2003, £74.95.

The author intends to study to Gaskell's work as a whole, avoiding the usual division between condition-of-England and other more intimate books, and to provide a discussion of her feminism.

Women, work and representation

by Lynn Mae Alexander, Ohio University Press, £34.95, due January 2003.

The condition of the seamstress was something of a cultural icon in the 1840s and 1850s, not only in literature by such authors as Dickens and Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, but also in painting. Concern arose not only for the young girls' physical welfare but also for their morals, as they were often sent a long way from home and left to their own devices in their spare time: a situation that is particularly relevant to *Ruth* and concerned Gaskell not only in her fiction but in her personal life and philanthropic work. This study looks at the subject in general.

A new edition of *Lois the Witch*

with a foreword by Jenny Uglow is promised from Hesperus Press at the end of June, £6.99.

Faithful Realism: Elizabeth Gaskell and Leo Tolstoy: a comparative study

by Josie Billington of Chester College, Bucknell University Press, \$43.50.

This book, published in June 2002, includes information on which the author has addressed the Society and published in the *Journal*, namely the importance of the rewriting of *Wives and Daughters*.

Elizabeth Gaskell: A Literary Life

by Shirley Foster, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, £15.99.

The aim of the Literary Lives series is to offer 'stimulating accounts of the literary careers of the most admired and influential English-language authors. Volumes follow the outline of the writers' working lives, not in the spirit of traditional biography, but aiming to trace the professional, publishing and social contexts which shaped their writing'. Shirley's book fulfils all these aims, making it an excellent addition to Gaskell studies. The book is aimed at students, but its usefulness is certainly not confined to them. It will be fully reviewed in the next *Journal*.

Note:

Graham Handley, series editor for the Everyman Elizabeth Gaskell series and regular contributor to the London and South-East meetings of the Gaskell Society, has been commissioned by Palgrave/Macmillan to write a 'Chronology' of Elizabeth Gaskell in their Author Chronology Series. He would like to hear from any Gaskell enthusiast who has firm dates not listed in the *Letters* or biographies, and from anyone who could lend him a copy of *Letters and Memorials of Catherine Winkworth*, ed. Susanna Winkworth and Margaret Shaen, 2 vols, privately printed, Clifton 1883-6. He hopes to complete the Chronology by the late summer, and can be contacted by email: graham@pentonhouse.co.uk or by letter to Dr. Graham Handley, Penton House, 18 High Street, CHESHUNT Herts EN8 0AE. Tel: 01992632399. Any expense incurred will be paid.

Gaskell Society North-West

Meetings at Manchester and Knutsford have been well attended.

On the last Wednesday in the month at St. John's Church Centre, Knutsford: meetings begin with buffet lunch. This year, *Sylvia's Lovers* has been the theme, with discussion and talks on naval history (by Christine Lingard) and on the historical novel (by Elizabeth Williams).

At Cross Street Chapel: subjects have had a Manchester connection: Beatrix Potter, Dickens and North West England, Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth.

At the New Year Lunch at Cottons Hotel, Knutsford, we were fortunate to have with us Bob Barnard, chairman of The Brontë Society who spoke to us about the problems of writing a biography of Emily Brontë.

The three local outings we took in Gaskell's footsteps, on 27 May, 14 August and 16 October made us realise that it is time we put this together in print so that others may explore the associations at their leisure. The four Unitarian Chapels all have interesting histories.

June 4th 2003:

Summer outing to Wirksworth, with George Eliot connections, and Well Dressing at Tissington.

Future dates:

Knutsford meetings: 26th March, 30th April 2003 and May 28th

Cross Street Chapel, 11th March 2003:

the topic will be 'Readers of Goethe in Manchester, with particular reference to the Gaskells', by Peter Skrine.

Forthcoming Events

5th April 2003:

AGM meeting at Cross Street Chapel, Manchester

10.30: Coffee

11.00: AGM

11.45: Talk by Louise Henson: 'New perspectives on Gaskell and Science'

Louise completed her PhD on Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell and Victorian Science at The University of Sheffield in 2000 and has published many articles in this area (including a two-part article in the latest and the forthcoming volumes of our *Journal*). She is one of the editors of the forthcoming volume *Culture and Science in the Nineteenth Century Media*. She is now working on an online version of The Old Bailey Proceedings, 1670-1834, for the Humanities Research Institute at The University of Sheffield.

1.00: Lunch

2.15: Catherine Winkworth (1827-78) A compilation of her life and letters which will include singing some of her hymns

The meeting ends at 3.30p.m. approximately.

1st - 4th August 2003:

Durham Conference on the theme of Elizabeth Gaskell's early years, especially at Newcastle, and *Sylvia's Lovers*.

Gaskell Society South-West

We were very pleased to welcome Gwen Clark from Oxford to our meeting in November. Gwen's subject was "Elizabeth Gaskell: Escape from the City" and, by close reference to the novels and letters, she showed us how, although Mrs. Gaskell enjoyed all the social and cultural life of Manchester and London, she was never so happy as when she was on holiday or staying with friends in the country. We had a comprehensive discussion about how far she would have enjoyed Hampshire on the grounds that living in the country is very different from enjoying a holiday, but Gwen pointed out that London would be very accessible for visits. In the evening, a group went to see *The Rivals* at the Theatre Royal, as a follow-on from some play-reading which we enjoyed at the August country tea, hosted by Alex and Kate Crawford in their garden at Norton St. Philip. I was rather worried in case Mrs. Gaskell would not have approved, but Kay Millard assured us that the Unitarians enjoyed drama and that many Unitarian churches had their own drama groups.

In January, twelve of us met in Fairfield Park Road, Bath, for a New Year Supper, after which we played card games found in Jane Austen's novels. These were very jolly round games and it was clear how Henry Crawford would have enjoyed helping Fanny. I was like Lady Bertram, and found it hard to understand!

Forthcoming Programme

Saturday, 5th April

Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution, Queen Square, 2.00 for 2.30:
Mrs. Kay Millard will speak on "Elizabeth Gaskell and Coleridge". Mrs. Millard is Secretary of the Bath Unitarian Fellowship and we always appreciate the depth of her knowledge and understanding. During May we hope to arrange a trip to Nether Stowey.

Sunday, 17th August, 3.00 p.m.

The Summer Tea at Murhill House again, kindly hosted by Janet and David Cunliffe-Jones.

Saturday, 22nd November

Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution, Queen Square. Dr. Ian Gregg will speak on "The Second Mrs. Stephenson", including some new material. Dr. Gregg is directly descended from Mrs. Gaskell's stepmother, and we look forward to seeing her in a new light.

Gaskell Society London And South-East

Saturday 10th May

'The Web of friendship between women writers in England and America in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries' – **Jane Silvey**

Saturday 13th September

Title to be announced – **Shirley Foster**

Saturday 8th November

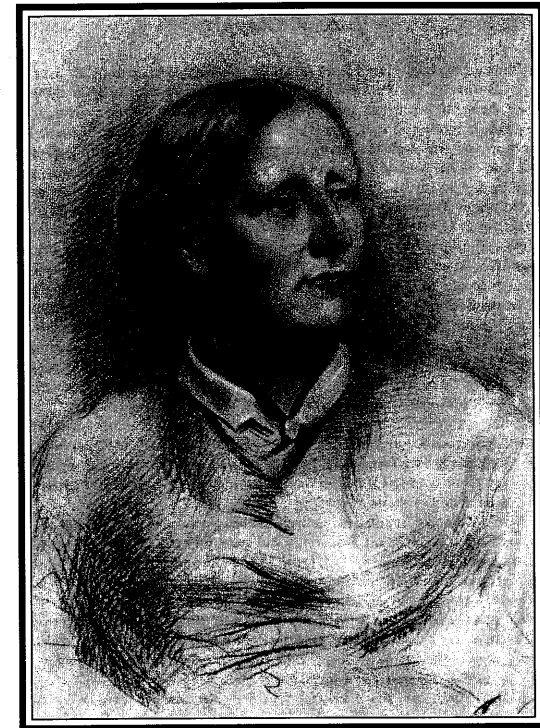
'Elizabeth Gaskell and Manchester: a difficult relationship' – **Gwen Clarke**

All the meetings will be held at the Francis Holland School, 39 Graham Terrace, London SW1W 8JF and will commence at 2pm. Francis Holland School is a few minutes' walk from Sloane Square underground station (District and Circle lines).

Anyone who wishes may meet at 12 noon at Sloane Square underground station for a light lunch at the Royal Court Tavern, also on Sloane Square. Those arriving later than 12 noon should proceed directly to the Royal Court Tavern. During the summer a Literary Walk will be led by **Sylvia Burch**. Details will be sent out later in the year. If further information is required please contact Dudley J Barlow.

(Tel: 020 8874 7727)

The Gaskell Society



THE GASKELL SOCIETY HOME PAGE has all the latest information on meetings.
<http://gaskellsociety.users.btopenworld.com>

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs. Joan Leach,
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NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2003 - Number 36

Editor's Letter

Joan Leach

Our 2001 Bath Conference, with the help of our SW members, was such a resounding success that we were apprehensive about being able to live up to it at Durham this year. We can now report that members present from 1 - 4 August at Collingwood College enjoyed the whole experience and several are saying, 'Here's to the next time'.

We are greatly indebted to our excellent team of speakers, who found time among their other commitments and vacations to join us. You will be able to read Mary Kuhlman's report on the conference in the next Journal together with several of the papers.

It is wonderful to have members meeting and renewing friendships on these occasions in true Gaskellian tradition. We are grateful to Janet Allan and Jean Alston who made planning trips to Durham and Newcastle and Christine Lingard who ran the book stall, other committee members who contributed to the success and all who came to Durham. The whole programme of papers and events was well balanced and our venue suited us perfectly.

In this issue we hope you will enjoy reading Marie Moss' article about Elizabeth Gaskell and Macclesfield. The Society hopes to publish a booklet on Gaskell's Cheshire associations. Christine Lingard links our recent visit to Whitby with other literary echoes. The Knutsford group studied *Sylvia's Lovers* last season and some members will join a trip to East Yorkshire in September to follow the trail. John Chapple gives us further notes on Gaskell Letters and Muriel Smith writes on Elizabeth Gaskell and the American Civil War which will link up with our American theme at the Autumn meeting on 27 September.

Group notices are towards the back of the Newsletter, including forthcoming events. Please let me have addresses of any non-member literary friends who might like to attend a Gaskell day in Edinburgh when we hope to raise enough interest to form a group.

Elizabeth Gaskell was fond of gardening so she might have approved on the Royal Horticultural Society's show at Tatton Park, alias Cumnor Towers. What she would have thought of herself in the form of a teddy-bear style figure in green box topiary, skirted by bedding plants, with picnic basket, model mill, a quill pen and book in flowers? This was commissioned by Knutsford Town Council and won a silver prize.

And What of Sylvia?

Christine Lingard

A recent enquiry about illustrated editions of *Sylvia's Lovers* reminded me of a tenuous link between one of the least known members of Gaskell's family and Peter Pan!

When George Smith wanted an illustrator for the first illustrated edition of *Sylvia's Lovers* (first published in 1862), he decided on an unknown young artist on the staff of the *Cornhill Magazine* - George Du Maurier. The illustrations were not acknowledged but they made his reputation. Du Maurier thought that some pictures of Whitby would most suitably depict the novel - unknowingly hitting on the true setting of the book, which is referred to as 'Monkshaven' in the text. He was enchanted by the novel and it remained a life-long favourite, so much so that he called one of his own daughters Sylvia.

With *Sylvia's Lovers* at last out of the way, in 1863 Elizabeth Gaskell could turn her attention to more personal matters - the marriage of a daughter. Not the eldest, Marianne, for whom 'domestic activity will be her forte', or even the 'independent' Meta, already unlucky in love, but twenty-year-old Florence, the third daughter - the least frequently mentioned of the quartet 'who has no talent under the sun; and is very nervous, and anxious'. In fact she proved to be the only daughter to marry during her mother's lifetime.

Her choice of husband was a distant relation of her father - Charles Crompton, a lawyer, whom she had met the previous year. He was by ten years Florence's senior, and Gaskell's first verdict was: 'He lacks imagination enough to be what one calls spiritual' but later she called him 'sweet tempered'; on another occasion: 'his father & mother both say he has not given them a moment's uneasiness since his birth in any way. He has almost perfect health, & perfect temper; I should have said not clever; but he was a 4th wrangler at Cambridge and is a Fellow of Trinity, and is getting on fast very fast in his profession; so I suppose he has those solid intellectual qualities which tell in action, though not in conversation.'

He was the eldest of the seven children of a judge. His nearest sister Mary, just a year younger than himself, appears to have been a formidable character. She was married to Rev John Llewellyn Davies (1826-1916), Vicar of Kirkby Lonsdale, a religious writer, contributor to *Macmillan's Magazine*, and a follower of the Christian Socialist, Frederick Maurice; he was also associated with John Ruskin at the Working Men's College, where he taught mathematics. While in London he had so enraged Queen Victoria with a sermon against Imperialism that she arranged for his transfer to a Cumbrian parish as far away from London as possible.

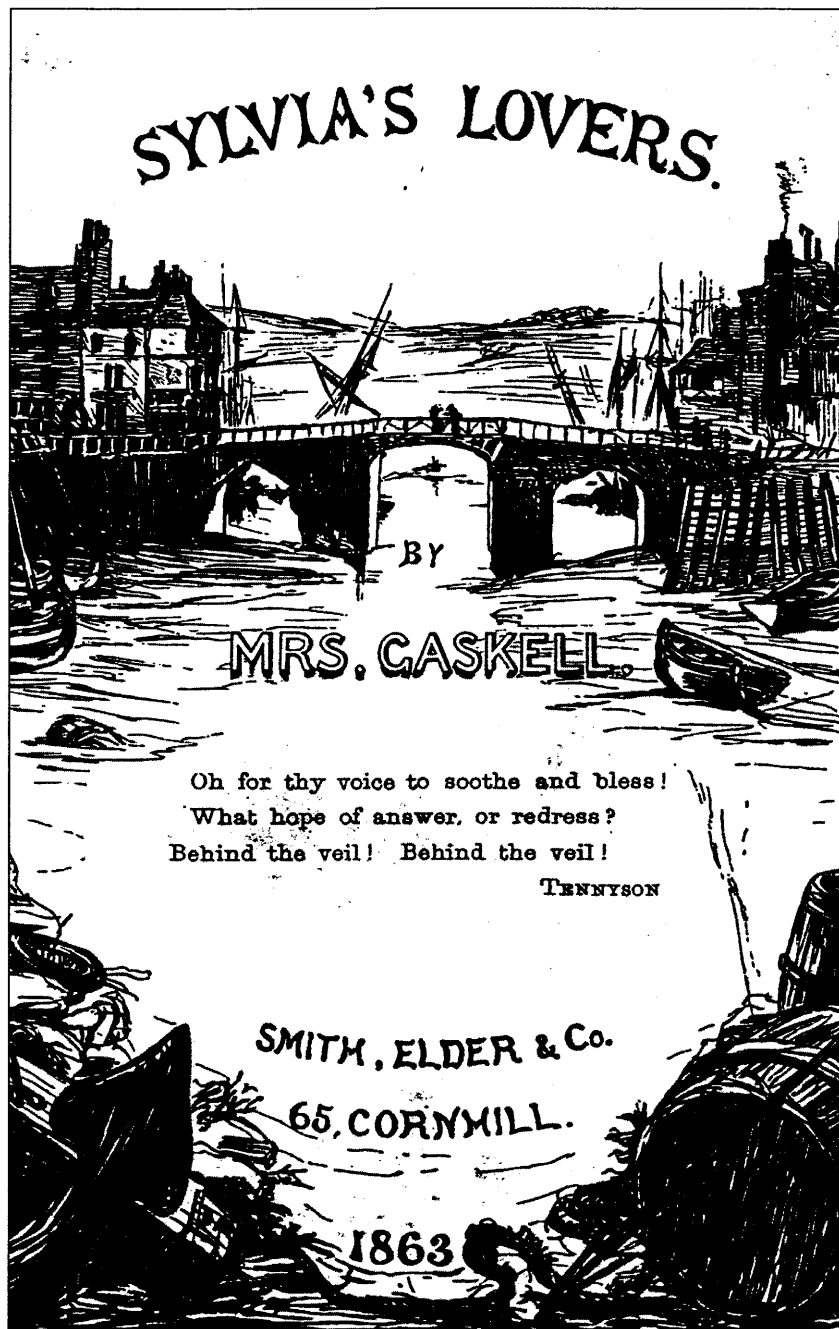
His sister was the renowned Sarah Emily Davies, of Girton College fame. It is reported that in thirty-six years of married life Mary Davies never once attended a single one of her husband's sermons.

Charles and Florence set up home in London and, despite her mother's description of their modest means, acquired a prestigious address at Oxford Terrace overlooking Regent's Park. It was a useful stopping-place for mother on her frequent trips to the capital. Charles was indeed moderately successful in his career. In December 1888 he was elected Liberal MP for the Leek division of North Staffordshire, but these were tumultuous times and in the following year the Liberal party split over the controversial Home Rule for Ireland issue. In July 1889 he stood again, this time as a Gladstonian Liberal in favour of Home Rule, but was defeated by the same Conservative candidate. Little is known of Florence's life after her mother's death and she died at the age of thirty-nine in 1881. She had no children.

Charles must have taken a great interest in one of his nephews, Arthur Llewellyn Davies (1863-1910), and on his own death ten years later, he left him three thousand pounds in his will. This was enough for the young man, also a lawyer, to marry his fiancée Sylvia Du Maurier at last, in 1892. Sylvia by now was an enchanting young woman, beloved by her mother-in-law Mary. But happiness was short. Arthur died of cancer at the age of forty-seven, and within the year Sylvia too succumbed to the same disease, leaving five young orphan boys. These were the very same 'lost boys' to whom J.M. Barrie told his stories of Peter Pan. He had already met the eldest boy George (then aged five) playing in Kensington Gardens, while walking his dog there. A great deal has been written about this relationship and the story has been televised. At first Arthur was concerned about the influence on his sons but he came to respect Barrie. It is thought that he is the basis for Mr. Darling.

Further reading: Andrew Birkin, The Lost Boys (Constable, 1979).

Ed: *Although George Du Maurier's title page illustration is clearly of Whitby, others are of characters in the story with no identifiable Whitby background, in the copy in the Whitfield Stanton Collection in Knutsford Library.*



Elizabeth Gaskell and Macclesfield

Marie Moss

It was Professor R. H. Tawney who famously told a conference of medieval agrarian historians that what they needed in their search for sources was not more manuscripts but stronger boots. Well-shod Gaskell scholars need no reminding of the value that fieldwork can contribute to their knowledge of Elizabeth's life and work. With pleasure and profit we have followed her footsteps across the United Kingdom and some countries of Europe, but it is important that our enquiry does not ignore the evidence on our doorstep. Elizabeth spent much of her early life within a small area of north-east Cheshire, and even after her marriage, before fame and a modest degree of fortune enabled her to travel more widely, she found relief from the pace and grime of Manchester life by returning to the people and places of her early years.

With this in mind the 2002 summer excursions of the Knutsford group concentrated on an exploration of Elizabeth's - and thereby the Holland's - Cheshire, and our previous winter study of the text of *Ruth* made Macclesfield (a possible model for Eccleston) an obvious starting point. Writers of fiction must invent from what knowledge they have, so we set out to discover something of the Macclesfield Elizabeth would have known in the first half of the nineteenth century, and to consider to what extent a knowledge of the physical, social and economic landscape of Macclesfield may have influenced her writing.

Macclesfield became one of the earliest factory towns in England, when the throwing of silk was adapted to large-scale water-powered production in the eighteenth century. The town had also been an important market and service centre since the granting of its medieval charter, and the rapid increase of population and prosperity promoted by the twisted-silk button trade, and the later silk goods trade, prompted a retail revolution which had made the town, by the early nineteenth century, a regional focus for shopping and other pleasure pursuits. Members of the Holland family of both Sandlebridge and Dam Head, like the rest of north Cheshire's gentry and squirearchy, would have turned to Macclesfield for goods, services and entertainment, and Elizabeth must have been a frequent visitor as a young girl. Her well known delight in fabrics would have been satisfied and possibly nurtured by the wide range of drapers, mercers, milliners and haberdashers who stood the market or had shops in the town. Their hierarchy was dominated by number 9 Market Place, the high-class woollen-drapers owned by the Swanwick family, which catered for the carriage trade and attracted the custom of the Davenportes of Capesthorpe, the Stanleys of Alderley and Lord Stamford of Dunham Massey, with a dazzling stock of quality cloths, laces, buttons and buckles drawn from throughout the country and the wholesale houses of London.¹ Frances Davies,

daughter of the Headmaster of Macclesfield Free Grammar School (later King's), which educated a number of the Hollands, was a frequent customer here, purchasing handkerchiefs and ribbons, 'peaue satten' and ten yards of 'Puie poplin' sent especially from London in December 1819. Frances would have been known to Elizabeth Stevenson even before her infamous involvement in the abduction of the young Cheshire heiress Ellen Turner, which she plotted with her stepson Edward Gibbon Wakefield in 1826. Elizabeth refers to this scandal in a letter to Harriet Carr written in 1831. 2 As successful shopkeepers, doctors and mill-owners, members of the Swanwick family became well established amongst those living as gentlemen in north-east Cheshire, and Elizabeth acknowledges familiarity with 'Mr. and Mrs. Swanwick (of Alderley)' in a letter to Marianne in which she recalls her meeting with them at the wedding breakfast of Mary Robberds. 3

During the 1820s and early 1830s the superintendent of Swanwicks' emporium was a Mr. Hill. At the time of his death in 1833 he lived in a typical artisan house of the period less than a hundred yards from the shop in Brunswick Terrace, a house we thought worth looking at for the features it shares with the chapel-house, the fictional home of Mr. Benson, a man likewise in possession of social status above his income. The house has three stories with an enclosed hallway, front and rear parlour and front and rear bedrooms on each upper floor. The small walled back garden faces south-east allowing the morning sunlight to fill the back living room and giving to the back bedrooms a view to the line of hills, above which the moon rises, points on which Gaskell was especially precise in her narrative.

To the east of Macclesfield the hills which flank the Derbyshire dome rise abruptly from the Cheshire Plain and their proximity makes their presence strongly felt in the town. In similar fashion the hills, which Gaskell describes as Ruth travels to Ecclestone, are never absent from her story.

"It is not much further now," said Miss Benson, apologetically, to Ruth. "...We have about eighteen miles of plain, and then we come to the moors and the rising ground, amidst which Ecclestone lies."...

A low grey cloud was the first sign of Ecclestone; it was the smoke of the town hanging over the plain. Beyond the place where she was expected to believe it existed, arose round, waving uplands; nothing to the fine outlines of the Welsh mountains, but still going up nearer to heaven than the rest of the flat world into which she had now entered."

Knutsford was part of this flat world as Macclesfield and Ecclestone were not. From her window Ruth watched the moon light the hilltops on her first night in the town, and Bellingham observed them white-topped with snow as she later lay dead in the cold little room. Again, it was to the hills that Jemima fled when reeling from the shock of the milliner's revelation of Ruth's past:

...Jemima did not go towards home, but to the direction of the outskirts of the town, on the hilly side...Soft white clouds had come slowly sailing up out of the west; the plain was flecked with thin floating shadows, gently borne along by the westerly wind that was waving the long grass in the hay fields into alternate light and shade.

The topographical detail and the meteorological accuracy with which the prevailing westerly winds blow the clouds from the direction of the plain to cast the first shadows over the contentment Ruth had found in Ecclestone, suggest that Gaskell was drawing on a knowledge of a strongly pictured location for the fictional landscape of her small industrial town, one well matched by the geography of Macclesfield.

The coach which brought our members from Altrincham and Knutsford set them down in King Edward Street (formerly Back Street) which joins Jordangate at the north-west corner of Market Place. Here have survived a number of fine eighteenth-century houses which were built by the Macclesfield well-to-do and - to quote Gaskell - 'such of the county families as content themselves with the gaities of a provincial town', in this case Cheshire landowners and long time near neighbours of the Hollands, such as the Davenports, the Thornycrofts, and the Norburys. The increasing industrialization of the town after the mid-century diminished the appeal of such properties for seasonal residence and they were gradually put to other use. Sir Peter Davenport, a forebear of Elizabeth's Capesthorpe friends, had early disposed of his mansion to the Free Grammar School after it had become tainted by the occupation of The Young Pretender on his march south; by Elizabeth's life-time most of the other grand houses were occupied by attorneys, publishers, banks and medical practitioners, as they are today. Parts of old Manchester had experienced the same processes of change: Lower Mosley Street in particular had seen much conversion to commercial use, and it was a socio-economic phenomenon which captured the imagination of Gaskell and found expression in her writing. The opening pages of *Ruth*, albeit set in 'an assize town in one of the eastern counties', are devoted to an acknowledgment of the changing town landscape and the sensitive response of the romantic young seamstress to the fading splendour of her inappropriate surroundings.

Macclesfield's Unitarian Chapel lies obscured from sight behind these old buildings which line King Edward Street. The only approach to it is by a narrow passage, known locally as an 'entry', but undoubtedly a '*cul-de-sac*', as Gaskell describes the access to Benson's chapel in *Ruth*. Built in 1689, it is very similar in design to the Cheshire chapels at Brook Street, Knutsford and Dean Row, Wilmslow, but whereas they are made of brick, the Macclesfield chapel is built with local Kerridge gritstone, which is readily darkened and stained by atmosphere and weather as Gaskell suggests. The roofline is long and low and two outside staircases, located at each



King Edward St, Macclesfield. *The white portico conceals the entrance to the passageway leading to the concealed Unitarian Chapel.*

end of the rectangular walls, give access to the upper gallery. Victorian photographs, brought out for our visiting party, show the stone walls, once heavily hung with ivy which almost covered the windows and in sunlight could certainly have cast a tracery of shadow on white-washed walls within. The open space, which originally surrounded the chapel, was commercially valuable and had mostly been sold off by the end of the eighteenth century, some of it by the Rev John Palmer at the time of his doctrinal break with a large section of his congregation in the 1760s. However, when Elizabeth attended a service there in 1852, the Minister, John Wright (later joint editor, with William Gaskell, of the Unitarian Herald), had gardeners in his employ to care for the chapel exterior, so it is possible that 'a lilac-bush or two, a white rose-tree, and a few laburnums' were at that time growing in the chapel yard. There is however no burial ground, and we judged that the position of this chapel within a few yards of the market place could never have been near the 'outskirts of the town'.

The chapel in Macclesfield had its origins in the strength of Dissent, which flourished, notwithstanding fear of persecution, in the nearby hill villages in the seventeenth century. Original documents show that the initiative for its building came from Mr. William Stonehewer of the Hollins in Sutton and Mr. Humphry Higginbotham of Rossin Chase at the upper end of Sutton, a village which lies some two to three miles into the hills above Macclesfield. Both are described as 'London merchants', which means that they handled the London end of Macclesfield's silk button and twist trade and would have been known to members of the Holland family in the same trade.

They made the initial and largest of the subscriptions which quickly raised the £250 building cost and funded a pew for the elders and deacons to sit in and another to be given into the keeping of Mr. Joseph Stonehewer 'for the advantage of Suttin People sitting in it as He might see fitting'. The pews are still distinguished by the names of these benefactors today. Gaskell seems to have been aware of this background when she reflects on Benson's congregation which

consisted of here and there a farmer with his labourers, who came down from the uplands beyond the town to worship where their fathers worshipped, and who loved the place because they knew how much those fathers had suffered for it.

The Holland family name occurs several times in the early records of Macclesfield chapel. William and Daniel, the younger sons of John Holland of Dam Head, Mobberley, a confirmed Dissenter, are listed as original pew holders. Unable to inherit the family farm, they lived and worked in Macclesfield as chapmen (factors for silk twist and buttons) and were joined there by their father when he retired.⁴ While there is no evidence that Adam Holland, the third minister at Macclesfield, was a relative, there were dissenting ministers in every generation of Elizabeth's Cheshire predecessors who would have been visiting preachers. Her great-uncle Peter Holland, a founder of the Warrington Academy, was present in 1765 to witness the ordination of the eccentric Reverend John Palmer, a former Warrington student, to whom Aunt Lumb or possibly Aunt Abigail was entrusted for schooling.⁵

For much of the nineteenth century the chapel was known locally as Brocklehurst's chapel, after the wealthy patron who was its principal support. John Brocklehurst (1718-1791) made the successful transition from silk chapman to silk manufacturer and founded a dynasty, which dominated silk production in Macclesfield until the late twentieth century. In 1816 John Brocklehurst II took over a failing bank in premises directly in front of the chapel and it was here, in a long unopened safe, that the seventeenth-century documents relating to the founding of the chapel were discovered in the late twentieth century, giving confirmation of what Gaskell had earlier known of its origins. John Brocklehurst III (1788-1870) was a contemporary of Elizabeth's. Like Gaskell's invention 'Mr. Bradshaw', he was not only the principal manufacturer in the town and a Dissenter but also an ardent Whig with political ambitions. He was elected M.P. for Macclesfield in the first elections of 1832 and represented the town for thirty-six continuous years. The Brocklehursts' chief rivals for the town's economic, social and political leadership were the Ryle family, manufacturers who owned a great deal of land within and around the town. John Ryle II inherited a fortune of a quarter of a million pounds, and gained Macclesfield's other parliamentary seat, with forty more votes than Brocklehurst. Ryle was an orthodox Tory and protectionist, a creed which enjoyed the support of the town's Tory newspaper *The Courier*. The Brocklehursts financed a new Whig paper called *The Herald* and for a while the rivalry between the two publications and their

supporters was as fierce as that Gaskell observed between two politically opposed newspapers in a small town in her short story Christmas Storms and Sunshine. In 1827 the *Courier* reported a call for all working men to boycott 'any shopkeeper, publican, hairdresser or other person who shall take in the *Herald*', when that paper opposed the interests of the self-employed artisan weavers.

The Ryles, like the Brocklehursts, were bankers. They took over the town's first bank in 1800 and did well for some years, opening a Manchester branch in 1821. The banknotes of the *two banks were familiar currency* in the district until injudicious investment caused Ryle's bank to fail in a spectacular crash in 1841.

Bank failures were of course not uncommon, and readers of Gaskell will be aware of the consequences the failure of a country bank could have for such as Miss Matty. John Ryle shared Miss Matty's honourable sentiments and tried to do the best he could for his creditors. For twenty years he made payments at intervals towards the settlement of the Bank's debts: his five-pound notes, headed 'Macclesfield and Cheshire Bank' and with successive payments noted on the back, are still to be found in the town. Of Ryle it was said, 'nature intended him for a country gentleman, and if her design had been fulfilled, as a country gentleman he would have shone'. He was perhaps not unlike the 'rich silk manufacturer of Macclesfield', whom Mary Howitt noticed at a country-house gathering in 1854 - 'a fat, jolly Conservative, whose work-people are emphatically hands and who thinks "Mary Barton" a dangerous, bad book'.⁶

Brought up in the Whig tradition, John Brocklehurst III became a progressive Liberal and supporter of Free Trade but, while recognizing the value of the removal of protection for the necessities of life, he knew that the exposure to competition, which the Cobden Treaty would accomplish, would not be in the interest of Macclesfield's silk industry. Henry Winkworth, whose family enjoyed an intimate friendship with the Gaskells, was caught on the horns of the same dilemma. The Winkworths moved from London to Manchester in 1829 and lived for a time in Oxford Road near to the Gaskell family before moving to Alderley Edge in 1850. Winkworth had a warehouse in York Street, Manchester, which had to be replaced after its destruction by fire in 1844, and manufactured silk at the Victoria Mills, Macclesfield, in partnership with James and Daniel Proctor. In her *Memorials Of Two Sisters*, Susanna Winkworth writes

My father, true to his Free Trade principles, had worked with Mr. Cobden and others in promoting this treaty; indeed, if I remember rightly he was a commissioner for the silk trade. But in this case he was decidedly a martyr to his principles; for this treaty gave a blow to the English trade from which it never recovered, and my father was one of those most greatly affected by it.

In the late 1850s the decline of trade was already causing large-scale

unemployment in Macclesfield and in January 1858 Catherine Winkworth wrote to her sister Emily

Papa is busy about the terrible distress in Macclesfield; has been over there twice looking into the matter himself, and is out this afternoon with Mr. Jackson collecting for the relief fund... Papa's own mill and two of Mr. Brocklehurst's have been working three to four days a week all through, but that is a bare subsistence for the hands, and the other mills have nearly all been stopped. Two began partially this week, and one thinks this state of things cannot last much longer. 7

It is interesting that Catherine did not hesitate to use the term 'hands', which so offended Mary Howitt, when speaking of her father's labour force.

Matters did not improve for the Winkworths: a first half-year profit in 1858 turned into a second half-year loss and the family were forced to spend their capital. During the slump which followed the enactment of the Cobden Treaty in 1860, Brocklehurst's mills were kept going at a loss to the firm of £70,000. John Brocklehurst is reported as saying, 'I have made my money in Macclesfield and I will spend it to the last sixpence before I will see the work-people starve'. Henry Winkworth did not have such deep pockets and he had no honourable recourse but to give up his business and his large Alderley house. In recent years the Victoria Mills, the earliest dating from 1823, were threatened with demolition and the properties had fallen into very bad repair. In the event the projected by-pass stopped short of the site and they have been wonderfully restored for present day use. Our visiting party was, therefore, able to go down to the Bollin valley to where the use of water-power drew early mill construction, to view the two buildings much as Elizabeth Gaskell would have known them.

In this area the spaces between the oldest mills were crammed with labourers' houses during the first phase of industrialization and the district gradually lost caste to become, by the 1840s, Macclesfield's Irish quarter, as the insanitary lodging-houses were woefully overcrowded by the multiple occupancy of recent immigrants. In 1849 two government health inspectors made a survey of the town preparatory to establishing a local Board of Health. Their preliminary report found these over-crowded quarters in the lower town a breeding ground for disease. In one court they reported that several Irish families were living in a two-roomed house, and in this group alone there were 24 persons suffering from fever. These findings were given tragic consequence by severe cholera and typhus epidemics which visited the town in the winter and spring of 1849, for which the Irish were widely blamed. In locating the origins of the typhus fever, which brought death to Ecclestone and to Ruth, in 'the low Irish lodging-houses' where 'it was so common it excited little attention', Gaskell was echoing a commonly-held view and one which was authenticated by the official report of the Macclesfield Board of Health published in 1853. ⁸

Elizabeth Gaskell had many friends amongst those working to improve public health in Macclesfield at this time. Sir John Stanley and the Rev Edward Stanley, as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of The Board of Guardians, collected a mass of comparative statistics relating to health in the town and the neighbouring country districts, together with the cost of maintaining the poor. These statistics were embodied in the famous *Report of the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain*, issued in 1842 by Edwin Chadwick. This was at once the first great national survey, and the chief stimulus and starting point of the Victorian public health movement, which both Elizabeth and William Gaskell were anxious to support. Active propaganda and further reports followed, one of which, *Grainger's report on the origins and spread of cholera*, was enclosed with a letter to Elizabeth from Edwin Chadwick in 1851.⁹ In Macclesfield, John May, acting clerk to the Poor Law Union, kept up the pressure with an annual record of public health statistics for the town and the Rev Edward Stanley gave a series of lectures on sanitation and cleanliness. These efforts were supported by Mrs. Caroline Davenport, who allowed the grounds of Capesthorpe Hall to be used for a two-day garden party, organized by John May in 1850 in aid of Macclesfield's Public Baths and Washhouses. Gaskell contributed an offprint of two of her short stories, *The Sexton's Hero* and *Christmas Storms and Sunshine*, to be sold in aid of the fund; William Gaskell supported the work of the Rev Edward Stanley as an occasional speaker for Macclesfield's Useful Knowledge Society.

After our visit to the lower town, our party left Macclesfield for Hare Hill Gardens, where azalea and rhododendron walks originally laid out by the Brocklehursts are now being restored by the National Trust. In Prestbury we paused to look across a field towards Legh Hall, a house set back from the Prestbury-Wilmslow road near to the cross at Mottram St. Andrew. In the late nineteenth century this became the home of the Gaskells' niece, Susan Elizabeth Gaskell, on her marriage to Walter Greg, son of Samuel Greg II, whom Elizabeth Gaskell knew as a little boy at Bollington. It seems probable that this is the 'Lea Hall' at which Elizabeth and William stayed in September 1851, the night before the wedding William conducted for Emily Winkworth and William Shaen at Dean Row Chapel. The proximity of the house to the chapel, less than four miles, would have suggested it as a suitable place for the well-organized Elizabeth to request lodging for the night. She was later to regret her foresight when it turned out that the Winkworths had other plans for their transport to the ceremony. Her hosts were Mr. and Mrs. Hervey, with whom by chance she travelled on a train journey to Macclesfield in 1849. They left the train at Prestbury while Elizabeth stayed on to Macclesfield where she could hire a Fly to take her to the home of the Gregs in Bollington. On parting the Herveys insisted on seeing her before her return to Manchester and arranged to send transport over for her to spend the day with them before she left.¹⁰

Bollington was the last destination on our tour of the Macclesfield area. Here it was

possible to visit The Mount, the marital home of Elizabeth's childhood friends, Samuel and Mary Greg (née Needham) and to tread some well-authenticated footsteps. The house was built in 1845, on high ground above the mill and cottages where Samuel Greg had hoped to establish a Utopian industrial community. Mrs. Gaskell and her daughter Florence stayed at the house in November 1849 and although it is now a nursing home there is much about it which has not changed since their visit. We were able to see the staircase Elizabeth and Florence descended, delayed by a button which had to be restitched to Florence's slipper, and therefore late for tea taken informally with 'the two eldest little things at home playing about'. We saw the original main entrance and the drawing room; upstairs there are still bars at the windows of the 'famous nurseries' where Florence joined the little Gregs in celebrating Katie's second birthday with butter the children had made with cream from the farm. When Elizabeth, with Meta and Florence, came back to stay at the Mount the following May, the children were thoroughly at home, Meta mounting and riding the pony brought to meet her, and Florence 'as happy as happy can be with Alice'. On this occasion the party attended Sunday service at King Edward Street Chapel and were made very tired by the hilly, hot and dusty three-mile walk into town. On both these visits and on others, Elizabeth combined her trip to Bollington with time spent with her good friend Mrs. Davenport at Capesthorpe Hall, but the children were not usually included in the Capesthorpe country house parties. Here Gaskell was introduced to a wide range of house-guests. Some like 'our two nice clergymen', Mr. Weigall of Holy Trinity Church, Macclesfield, and Mr. Osborne, Principle of Rossall School but formerly of King's School, whom she met there in February 1852, drew her closer to Macclesfield life. She came greatly to admire the Rev Weigall for his Benson-like devotion to 'our manufacturing population' and for the reasons he gave her for refusing her help towards a better living.¹¹ Mrs. Davenport was soon to remarry and for everyone's entertainment brought down her wedding finery. This display included six Indian shawls, 'the lowest priced one 90 guineas...*oh dear!* they were so soft and delicate and went into such beautiful folds'.¹² A scene Gaskell was graphically to recall in the opening chapter of *North and South*.

There was not time for our party to journey on to Capesthorpe, although properly it should have been included in our itinerary of Gaskell's Macclesfield, so for our last visit we dropped down Moss Brow, to Greg's 'Happy Valley', where the mill at Lower Houses is still in use, although not for cotton spinning. The workers' terraced cottages which Greg improved for their comfort have been further modernized, and their allotments have been developed in recent years for modern housing, obscuring the view the mill-workers once had of the mill clock. The old home farm together with the Sunday School and Reading Room which Samuel Greg provided for the education of the mill-workers and their children have also been adapted for residential use. Greg's was a well-intentioned attempt to make a mill community a

vehicle for social change. He shared his first Bollington home, Turner Heath, with his work force, inviting respected workers to Saturday evening tea parties with conversation, music, reading and games, in an effort to know them better and share with them his values, but the huge financial losses the business incurred crushed the experiment. Only the Greg fortune and the efforts of Greg's more business-like brothers saved the firm and kept the labour force from want. Greg's 'stinging grief' at his failure spoke to Elizabeth Gaskell as eloquently as the strong words of criticism directed, by William Rathbone Greg and others, at the 'one-sided' philosophy of Mary Barton. It shook her confidence in her ability to write, as many urged that she should, on 'the other side' of the question. 'I believe that there is much to be discovered yet as to the right position and mutual duties of employer, and employed', she told Lady Kay-Shuttleworth in her own defence.¹³ However when she came to write her next industrial novel, *North and South*, some of the ideas of Samuel Greg found expression, and the difficulties and infinite anxieties of the mill-owning class were affirmed in a stronger voice.

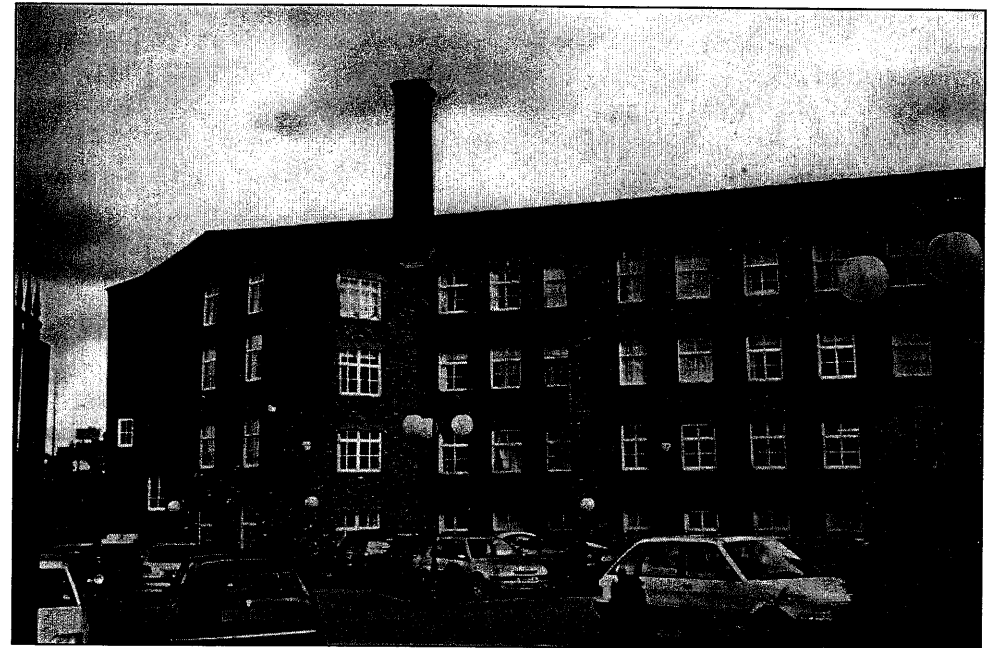
In truth our short pilgrimage around mid-nineteenth century Macclesfield did not wear out much shoe leather, but in this varied social and physical landscape and in the evidence of Elizabeth Gaskell's association with it, there was much to send us back to re-read with well-rewarded pleasure her letters and works of fiction.

Notes:

The evidence for their custom is a fragment of a Day Book recording credit sales for December 1819. The Rev Edward Stanley was the most frequent customer (6 calls), the Stamfords the biggest spenders (£54 11s 7d); Miss Davenport purchased 'Pelise Cloth' and paid for the making up of four cloaks for charity, and Mr. Walter Davenport also bought grey cloaking for charity and fabrics for a jacket for his 'Keeper'.

- 2) John Chapple and Alan Shelston, *Further Letters of Mrs. Gaskell* (Manchester, 2000), p.10.
- 3) J. A. V. Chapple and Arthur Pollard, *The Letters of Mrs. Gaskell* (Manchester, 1997), no.126.
- 4) Gaskell shows her knowledge of the legislation introduced to arrest the decline of Macclesfield's button trade in *Sylvia's Lovers* (Penguin Classics, ed Shirley Forster, p. 51) 'Silk weavers has been petitioning Ministers t'make a law to favour silk buttons', complains Daniel Robson.
- 5) John Chapple, *Elizabeth Gaskell, The Early Years* (Manchester, 1997), p.137. Information on the Holland family was kindly supplied by Christine Lingard.
- 6) Mary Howitt, *An Autobiography*, vol. II, ed. Margaret Howitt (London, 1889), p.106, letter of 21 May 1854.

- 7) *Memorials of Two Sisters* (London, 1908), ed. Margaret J. Shaen, pp.173-4.
- 8) *First Annual Report Macclesfield Local Board of Health, 1853*. Ms. Copy, Macclesfield Town Hall, pp. 81-2.
- 9) *Letters Addressed to Mrs. Gaskell*, John Rylands Library, 1935, ed. R. D. Waller, p.14.
- 10) *Letters of Mrs. Gaskell*, nos. 21, 101, 100a; and *Further Letters*, p. 46.
- 11) *Letters of Mrs. Gaskell*, no. 104; and *Further Letters*, pp. 62, 165, 167, n.3.
- 12) *Further Letters*, p. 62.
- 13) *Letters of Mrs. Gaskell*, no. 72a.



Victoria Mills, Macclesfield. The section shown dates mostly from 1823; onto this section Winkworth and Proctor added an extension for power-loom weaving, in 1837.

Editing Elizabeth Gaskell's Letters

John Chapple

One of my earliest academic tasks was to transcribe ninety folio leaves, closely written circa 1575 by the musician Thomas Whythorne in a very singular 'new orthography' he had devised. The manuscript was also badly worn in places, so immense care was taken in preparing it for the press. Nevertheless, a postgraduate student, whom I had myself taught to read Elizabethan Secretary hand, was able to correct my transcription of one clearly written word.

Even perfectly correct readings can seem doubtful. Shirley Foster suggests that Jane Whitehill's 'home' might be preferred to Chapple and Pollard's 'Rome' in a letter Gaskell sent to Charles Norton on 19 January 1860: *'Sometimes I dream I am in America, but it always looks like Rome, when I know it is not.'* (See Elizabeth Gaskell: A Literary Life, 2002, pp.132, 187, n.12.) Conjectural readings are by their very nature plausible, but there is no doubt that 'Rome' is the correct reading of the actual manuscript. Nor does it seem likely that Gaskell herself made a simple mistake. The context also shows that America is represented by 'cities' as well as 'country' and 'forests'; the immediately-following reference to Norton's European courier, François Boggia, indicates that her mind had briefly reverted to the joyous days she had spent in Rome in the spring of 1857. Norton picked this up in a postscript to his reply on 7 February 1860: *'Three years ago we met in Rome!'*

The editors of Elizabeth Gaskell's letters, however, unfortunately missed one important fragment. Shirley Foster rightly notes (p.190, n.63) their omission of Gaskell's judgment on *Sylvia's Lovers*, quoted from a lost letter by A.W. Ward in his introduction to volume 6 of the Knutsford edition: *'It is the saddest story I ever wrote.'* Are there any more overlooked snippets out there? An Autolycus wanted.

Here we go round the mulberry bush

It was about two years ago that I was asked if I remembered a mulberry tree growing in the grounds of Knutsford Library, I didn't and no one else I asked did either, but when the cellars of the old library were being cleared ready for a move to the new library (which houses the Whitfield collection so well) a metal plaque was found. This recorded the gift to Knutsford of a mulberry tree by the trustees of Shakespeare's Birthplace Trust. I am holding this plaque in the accompanying photograph.

I wrote to Stratford upon Avon to ask if they had any record of when this had happened but none could be traced; however I was told that we could purchase another scion of the tree. It is now thriving in the garden of Brook Street Chapel and we intend to mark it with a new plaque.

The Gaskell Mulberry

THIS TREE IS A SCION OF
THE MULBERRY TREE GROWING IN
SHAKESPEARE'S GARDEN IN NEW PLACE,
STRATFORD UPON AVON,
IT WAS PLANTED BY PROFESSOR JOHN CHAPPLE,
PRESIDENT OF THE GASKELL SOCIETY,
ON 20 MARCH 2002 IN MEMORY OF
ELIZABETH GASKELL'S TWO YEARS
AT SCHOOL IN STRATFORD UPON AVON

IT REPLACES AN EARLIER TREE DONATED BY
THE SHAKESPEARE BIRTHPLACE TRUST TO
COMMEMORATE BOTH WRITERS



20 March 2002. At the tree planting: Chapel members with Knutsford Town Mayor, George Walton and Gaskell Society members, including President John Chapple, resting on his spade, and Chairman Janet Allan (third from the right). Taken by Elizabeth Williams, sadly we neglected to get a photo of the whole group because we expected the local paper photographer to do it but he arrived too late.

Elizabeth Gaskell and the American Civil War

Muriel Smith

On Monday 10 June 1861 (Letters, No. 488), Elizabeth Gaskell wrote a very prompt answer to Charles Eliot Norton, headed:

'Dining-room in Plymouth Grove, breakfast things not as yet removed, your letter came at breakfast.'

On the Sunday, she and Meta had been talking of their American friends:

'then we talked over your politics, and could not understand them;...I understood 'the Union' to be an expansive, or contractive contract. Expansive (as being capable of including more than the original thirteen United States) it has proved itself to be. But it seems to me that...its power of expansion involved that of its dissolution (or contraction as I have called it above) if need were.... You included (by your annexations) people of different breeds, & consequently different opinions...; the time was sure to come when you could not act together as a nation; the only wonder to me is that you have cohered so long. And yet you say in this letter 'I do not feel sure that under any circumstances the right of secession could or would have been allowed'...altogether I (average English) cannot understand how you (American) did not look forward to 'secession' at some time not very far distant.... I should have thought (I feel as if I were dancing among eggs), that separating yourselves from the South was like getting rid of a diseased member, (possibly there are cases where amputation is a more impatient & consequently a more cowardly thing than the slower process of trying to bring the leg back to a healthy state). We have a proverbial expression in Lancashire 'Good riddance of bad rubbish' that I thin I should have applied to the Southern secessions.

The first shot of the war, that carried away the Stars and Stripes at Fort Sumter, was an unfortunate mistake; as with the Charge of the Light Brigade, 'someone had blundered'. Major Anderson, commanding Fort Sumter, had reported to Washington on 5 March 1861 (the day after Lincoln's inauguration) that unless reinforced he could not hold out for more than a few weeks. Lincoln decided to re-provision the fort but not reinforce it. When Beauregard demanded its surrender, the provisions were still on the way. Anderson replied that if he did not receive either them or specific instructions from Washington he would surrender on 15 April. Then on 12 April the shot rang out across the bay of Charleston. Certainly the gunners were not aiming at the flag, or they would never have hit it first go.

When the Constitution of the United States was declared to be in force, 13 September 1788, the right of secession was generally assumed, and the states of

Virginia, Rhode Island and New York made it an express condition of ratification. There were two cultures, agricultural and industrial, and neither half of the Union regarded itself as unbreakably bound to the other, given sufficient cause to part. Lincoln, however, denied the right of secession: he was in the hands of the people who had supported his election in return for the promise of jobs in the Cabinet. His last words, in the last debate before the war began, were:

And open Charleston as a port of entry, with their ten per cent tariff! What then becomes of my tariff?

Charleston was exporting slave-grown cotton to be spun and woven in Manchester by free workers paid as little as possible and turned off at any downturn in the business. Boston, concurrently, imported West Indies molasses and turned it into rum, which was shipped to West Africa and sold to African traders in exchange for fellow Africans (if not actually fellow-tribesmen) who were to be shipped across the Atlantic as slaves. Any air of moral superiority assumed in Lancashire or Massachusetts was hardly justified.

Meanwhile, Elizabeth Gaskell is showing a good grasp of American history and is, moreover, stating the South's case and supporting Jefferson Davis, without, apparently, having any idea that she is so doing.

BOOKSTALL NOTES

Members who were at the Durham Conference will have enjoyed Christine Alexander's talk on 'Elizabeth Gaskell and Victorian Juvenilia', which will also appear in the next volume of the Journal. But copies of Juvenilia Press titles, by a number of famous budding authors, failed to arrive on our bookstall. We now have the following books, very interesting and handsome they are, for a modest £5 each, including p&p:

Jane Austen:

*Jack and Alice • Love and Friendship • Lesley Castle
The History of England • Frederick & Elfrida*

Charlotte Bronte:

*My Angria and the Angians • Tales of the Islanders Vol 1
Tales of the Islanders Vol 2 • Tales of the Islanders Vol 3*

George Eliot:

Edward Neville

Philip Larkin:

Incidents from Phippy's Schooldays

Anna Maria Porter:
Artless Tales

We are also ordering copies of the handsome Hesperus Press paperback edition of *Lois the Witch*, with an excellent foreword by Jenny Uglow, which will shortly be available at £5, including p&p.

Please send your orders for these and any other books on our booklist (which is on the website or I can send you a printed copy), to me, **Janet Allan**, at:

10 Dale Road, New Mills, High Peak, SK22 4NW

Tel: 01663 744233 and email: janet@janetbook@fsnet.co.uk.

BOOK NOTES

Christine Lingard

Lois the Witch, with an introduction by Jenny Uglow (Hesperus Press, £6.99) is now available in bookshops.

A number of volumes containing Gaskell's short stories are currently available: *Oxford book of Victorian Ghost Stories*, edited by Michael Cox and A. R. Gilbert, containing *The Old Nurse's Story*, first published in 1991, is now published in paperback (Oxford University Press, £9.99).

The Oxford book of English Love Stories, edited by J. A. Sutherland, containing *The Heart of John Middleton* (OUP, £9.99) and *The Oxford book of Victorian Love Stories*, edited by Kate Flint, containing *Right at Last*, are also now available in paperback.

Two titles of critical analysis continue the current interest in industry and literature: *Figures of Finance Capitalism* by Borislav Knezevic, Routledge, £50, was published in February. It aims to provide a reading of middle-class misgivings about a class system still dominated by a patrician élite, taking its illustrations from texts by Dickens, Gaskell, Thackeray, and Macaulay.

Patent inventions: intellectual property and the Victorian novel, by Clare Pettit of Newnham College, Cambridge (Oxford University Press, £45, due in January 2004) 'shows how novelists Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot participated in the debates over the value and ownership of labour in the 1850s, such as patent law and the married women's property law'.

The Lunar Men: The Friends who made the Future: 1730-1810 by Jenny Uglow is now available in paper back. Faber at £9.99

THE LITERARY NORTH WEST - THE CROSS STREET CHAPEL TALKS

This winter we are continuing our successful series of Tuesday lunch-time talks on literary figures in the region, interspersed with a little festive cheer. As usual they will start at 1 o'clock, but you are welcome to join us beforehand for sandwiches bring your own or buy them next door at Pret-a-manger) tea and coffee available in Cross Street Chapel's dining room.

Tuesday 14 October, 1pm Gaskell.

'Escaping an adominable, wicked world'. Gaskell, Wilkie Collins and sensationalism in *The Cornhill Magazine* by Marie Cairney.

We welcome a new face on the Gaskell scene with an intriguing title to her talk: Maria Cairney is a postgraduate student of Alan Shelston's at the University of Manchester.

Tuesday 11 November, 1pm.

Elizabeth Raffald and the making of Manchester by Hannah Barker.

Elizabeth Raffald was the Mrs Beeton of her day. Her book *The Experienced English Housekeeper*, made her name on a national scale. In late eighteenth century she was also famous for producing Manchester's first town directories which mapped the phenomenal commercial growth of the city. This talk explores the life of Elizabeth Raffald and her place in the transformation of Manchester. Hannah Barker is senior lecturer in history at the University of Manchester. She has published several books on the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century political press.

Tuesday 9 December, 1pm Cross Street.

Carols for Gaskellians.

To open the festive season we have a carol service arranged by Alan Myerscough of the Cross Street Chapel staff, who so ably assisted in our presentation on Catherine Winkworth's hymns earlier in the year.

Tuesday 6 January 2004, 1pm.

Edwin Butterworth of Oldham (1812-48): a window on early industrial Lancashire by Dr. Michael Winstanley.

During his short life, Edwin Butterworth published numerous local history books, visited every parish in the county as Edward Baines's research assistant for his four- volume history of Lancashire, and sent regular reports to Manchester newspapers on events in his home town of Oldham. This talk assesses the man and his work through his surviving manuscripts and his publications. Dr. Winstanley is a lecturer in the History Department at Lancaster University.

Tuesday 10 February.

Frances Hodgson Burnett by Ann Thwaite.

Tuesday 9 March.

Howard Spring by Barbara Frost.

Howard Spring's books on Manchester were best-sellers, and many of us remember with pleasure, *Fame is the Spur*, *Shabby Tiger*, *Rachel Rosing*, *My Son My Son* and *The Houses in Between*. We have persuaded Barbara Frost, Blue Badge Guide and long-time supporter of the Gaskell Society, to talk to us about the author and (probably) the Manchester he wrote about.

The Knutsford meetings are on Wednesdays October 29, November 26, Jan 28, Feb 25, March 31 and April 28 at St. John's Parish Rooms, Church Hill at 12.15 for lunch. Studying *North and South*.

The Gaskell Society South West

Activities this half- year.

We have had a very interesting year so far in the South-West. As we are not too far from the Quantocks, we thought that a closer acquaintance with The Romantic poets Coleridge and Wordsworth would be a worthwhile topic. We knew that Mrs. Gaskell enjoyed the poetry of both writers. In 1836, she wrote from Sandlebridge describing herself sitting in the corner of a field studying Coleridge and Wordsworth in such an idyllic situation that "One can't think of anything but poetry and happiness." At our April meeting at BRLSI in Queen Square Bath, Kay Millard spoke to a very appreciative audience on "Elizabeth Gaskell and Coleridge", concentrating on shared Unitarian ideals.

As they developed in the 19th century. Those wishing to know more will find a succinct and scholarly account of the development from the doctrine of Necessity to the "cloudy transcendentalism" of Coleridge in Jenny Uglow's biography, page 6. We were most indebted to Kay, Chairman of the Bath Unitarian Fellowship for her scholarly talk.

This led to a mini visit to the Quantocks in May, when seven members stayed overnight in Alfoxden House, now a lovely hotel, and visited Coleridge's cottage in Nether Stowey, walked though the scenery described in some of his poems. Mr. Tom Mayberry, Chairman of the Friends of Coleridge, join us for dinner and gave us a wonderful talk on the relationship between the Wordsworths and Coleridge, illustrated by excellent slides. When he had gone home, we read "The Ancient Mariner" aloud in the room in which Coleridge was said to have read it for the first time to William and Dorothy!

Our thanks are due to Marie and Derek Moss who visited Nether Stowey earlier in the year, invited me down for the day and showed me where everything was,

including the Hotel which we would never have found otherwise. We did so much in 24 hours, including being introduced to "Chocolate Lumpy Dumpty Pudding" which must be the most delicious and calorific dessert ever, and did you know that Coleridge walked from Nether Stowey to Bristol to change his library books?

Sunday August 17th was another delightful tea party at the Cunliffe-Jones house overlooking the Frome valley, where we sat in the shade, ate a sumptuous tea, admired the view and read our favourite pieces from Mrs. Gaskell's work. It has been a lovely year so far.

Congratulations to Peter and Celia Skrine on their latest grandchild.

Forthcoming Event

On November 22nd, we are looking forward to welcoming Ian and Mary Gregg, when Ian will speak to us on the rehabilitation of his ancestor, ECG's step-mother. Knowing Ian, this will be a very good experience.

Rosemary Marshall

London and South East Group

Meet at The Francis Holland School, 39 Graham Terrace, near Sloane Square, 13 September at 2.00pm.

Shirley Foster: *Violence and deconstruction in Gaskell short stories*

8 November.

Gwen Clarke: *Elizabeth Gaskell and Manchester: a difficult relationship*

Further details from Dudley Barlow 020 8874 7727 or e-mail.

AUTUMN MEETING IN KNUTSFORD AT ST. JOHN'S PARISH CHURCH ROOMS SATURDAY 27 SEPTEMBER, 2.00PM-4.30 APPROX.

Dr. Jane Silvey will speak on:

'It all began with Jane Eyre': the complex trans-atlantic web of women writers.

Afternoon tea at 3.00pm, provided by Cross Town WI at £3.50 each, followed by: *Trans-atlantic friendships*: Readings from letters of Elizabeth Gaskell, Charles Eliot Norton and others arranged by Joan Leach.

Brook Street Chapel will be open for visits from 11.30- 12.30. Upstairs some of the Chapel's library books for Sunday reading will be displayed including those donated by Aunt Lumb. Don't forget to look at the mulberry tree and the Gaskell grave with flowers for Elizabeth's birthday (29 September). Members will be welcome at Brook Street Chapel's harvest festival on 28 September.

As part of Knutsford's Literary Festival Joan Leach will lead a walk:

Discover Knutsford's Cranford Days on **Sunday 5 October at 11.am** from **Jardines Book shop on King Street (£2).**

On **Saturday 4 October** *Mr. Dickens is coming* by Gerald Dickens, great, great grandson of the author. Using extracts from novels, diaries and letters he re-creates Dickens on stage. Festival programmes are available at libraries etc and bookings can be made at TIC, Toft Road, Knutsford WA16.

Tel: 01565 632611 Web page: www.knutsfordlitfest.co.uk

There will be a linked exhibition at The Heritage Centre where Knutsford's Millennium Tapestry is also on display.

Please make a note in your diaries of the A.G.M. in Manchester on **Saturday 3rd April 2004.**

Unitarian College Manchester 1854-2004

In connection with the forthcoming 150th anniversary of the Unitarian College Manchester a commemorative volume is to be published in May 2004, entitled "Unitarian to the Core: Unitarian College Manchester 1854-2004." The work will primarily be of interest to alumni and supporters of the College, but there will be much of interest to Gaskell enthusiasts, particularly because William was the co-founder of the College with John Relly Beard. It will be an illustrated, hardback, subscription edition with names of subscribers printed in the volume where we receive orders in time.

**Send Joan Leach an SAE for a flyer or check our home page for details.
Cost £20 plus postage.**

Details and order form by e-mail from joyce.ashworth@lkh.co.uk or by post from:
The Administrator, Unitarian College, Luther King House, Brighton Grove,
Rusholme, Manchester M14 5JP.

The Gaskell Society

A grand day out at Dunham Park, June 2003.



THE GASKELL SOCIETY HOME PAGE has all the latest information on meetings.
<http://gaskellsociety.users.btopenworld.com>

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs. Joan Leach,
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NEWSLETTER

Spring 2004 - Number 37

Editor's Letter

Joan Leach

Our first event of 2004 was a very pleasant New Year Lunch in Knutsford when Dr. Mary Summers gave us a talk on *Education, marriage and parenting seen through the eyes of Anne Brontë and reflected in the writings of Elizabeth Gaskell*. Our SW group, too, had a social meeting and they are planning a short visit to Oxford in June staying overnight at the Harris Manchester College. A North West group will be visiting Stratford-upon-Avon and area for its Gaskell and literary associations, staying in Worcester for three nights from July 3rd to 5th. We have recently discovered several letters in the Elgar Birthplace Museum from Meta to Mrs. Elgar: the Elgars were due to visit Manchester for a performance of *The Dream of Gerontius* and might have stayed at Plymouth Grove if all had gone to plan. We are also planning day trips to Liverpool and Lancaster.

Dudley Barlow who has done sterling work as secretary of our London SE group has moved to York and we are grateful to Frances Twinn for taking over.

I was intrigued to read in the N.T. North West News that Elizabeth Gaskell's *Life in Manchester: Libby Marsh's Three Eras* was partly the inspiration for a 'Grand Day Out' in June 2003 for school children from two Cheshire Schools. They dressed in their Sunday best in Victorian costume, including home made shawls and skirts, and sailed by canal barge to Dunham Park where they sang factory songs, had a picnic and played traditional games.

The sad incident of the Chinese cockle pickers drowned in Morecambe Bay may have reminded members that Elizabeth Gaskell knew the treacherous conditions and wrote about them in *The Sexton's Hero* (1847), which was reprinted as a sixpenny pamphlet, with *Christmas Storms and Sunshine*, to be sold for the benefit of Macclesfield Public Baths and Wash-houses. If you do not have a copy you can read or download it from Mitsu's web page: <http://www.lang.nagoya-u.ac.jp/~matsuoka/EG-etexts.html>.

There has been a series of letters recently in *The Times Literary Supplement* about a portrait owned by Elizabeth Rye, who was told that it was of Elizabeth Gaskell; she has been diligently researching it. We have noted this in earlier *Newsletters* but feel members will like to follow the debate here. Also in this issue John Chapple follows the connections between Tennyson and Gaskell, Frances Twinn considers Gaskell's depiction of Haworth church yard in *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*.

My apologies are due to Marie Moss for unsatisfactory numbering of footnotes in the last Newsletter due to problems at our printers' and my failure in proof reading.

Elizabeth Gaskell and Tennyson¹

J.A.V.Chapple

The woods decay, the woods decay and fall,
The vapours weep their burthen to the ground,
Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,
And after many a summer dies the swan ...

I do not suppose that members of the Tennyson Society expect me to indulge myself now in the great pleasure of reading *Tithonus* aloud. As a member of the Gaskell Society, I have come to speak of the close relationships between two Victorian authors who were in some ways very different from each other.

They were close contemporaries - Tennyson born in 1809, Elizabeth Gaskell in 1810. She was a novelist and writer of short stories. He was the complete poet. He once confessed to Emily Sellwood that 'of all horrors, a little country town seems to me the greatest...' (*Tennyson Letters*, I.171). Elizabeth Gaskell, brought up in Knutsford, was the author of *Cranford* and *Wives and Daughters*. For her, the writing of letters, no matter how busy or ill she was, never ceased. He once declared, 'You know that I would any day as soon kill a pig as write a letter' (quoted in Ricks, *Tennyson*, p.209n). And on another occasion he wrote, 'Gossip is my total abhorrence' (*Tennyson Letters*, I. xxviii). She begged her young friend Harriet Carr for 'every little, leetle particular [and also] gossipry, and scandal'. Letters were as important to her ... as tobacco was to Tennyson.

As far as we know, she does not refer to his first true volume, *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* (1830). She might just have heard of Tennyson, if her highly successful cousin in London, Dr. Henry Holland, was the doctor whose opinion was canvassed after Arthur Hallam had died in Vienna in September 1833 (*Tennyson Letters*, I. 93). The recently discovered letters to her friend Harriet Carr show that Tyrolese, Swiss and Spanish songs, Spurzheim on Phrenology, Mrs. Trollope on America and Bulwer's novels were her delight when she was young. In 1832 she married a Unitarian minister in Manchester, William Gaskell. He was also a teacher and lecturer, who joined with her in studying earlier poets such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Crabbe and Byron. 'Poets and poetry of humble life' became their special subject.

On a deeply human level, however, Elizabeth Gaskell and Tennyson were at one with the rest of humanity. She wrote very little poetry indeed, but there is a private sonnet in 1836, 'On Visiting the Grave of my Stillborn Little Girl':

Thee have I not forgot, my firstborn, thou
Whose eyes ne'er opened to my trustful gaze,
Whose suff'rings stamped with pain thy little brow...

Tennyson and his wife were to suffer in the same way with their own first-born, in April 1851:

Little bosom not yet cold,
Noble forehead made for thought,
Little hands of mighty mould
Clenched as in the fight which they had fought.
He had done battle to be born
But some brute force of Nature had prevailed
And the little warrior failed...

This, too, was a private poem that remained unpublished in their lifetime.

At last, in 1838, Tennyson's poetry makes an appearance in Gaskell's correspondence. In a rather high-flown letter to that very literary couple, William and Mary Howitt, she writes, 'The dog-rose, that pretty libertine of the hedges with the floating sprays wooing the summer air, its delicate hue and its faint perfume, is unlucky. Never form any plan while sitting near one, for it will never answer.' Such self-consciously poetical prose! (Quite uncharacteristic of this liveliest of letter-writers, I should note.) We are not surprised when she goes on to evoke the 'deserted old halls' she had seen in Lancashire and Cheshire. 'Do they not remind you of Tennyson's "Deserted House" - "Life and thought are [have] gone away", &c.' (*Letters*, no.12, p.32).

Published in Tennyson's 1830 volume, this is not a brilliant poem when compared with the heart-rending stanzas of *In Memoriam* 7, 'Dark house, by which once more I stand / Here in the long unlovely street ...'. But it is a poem that was admired by that tough egg whom Tennyson called 'Topsy Kit' (suppressed), and 'Crusty / Rusty / Musty / Fusty Christopher', that is, Professor John Wilson.² Its religious borrowing from 2 Corinthians - the earthly house transformed into a mansion incorruptible - would have appealed to Mrs. Gaskell, whose belief in an afterlife was strong rather than troubled or faintly trusting.

I do not think they ever met, though there was a near miss about April 1849. Tennyson told Mary Howitt that he would have to postpone his meeting with 'the authoress of that fine book *Mary Barton*' (*Tennyson Letters*, I.299). Quite suddenly she had become more than a wife, mother and simple lover of literature. She too was an author, of a very successful first novel, though I doubt very much if she bothered as much as Tennyson did about errors of the press. 'I was with the unlucky author when the proof reached him' claimed Locker Lampson. 'He gazed at it with horror and gave a very prolonged and remarkable groan, which not having been set to music, I cannot do justice to here' (Hagen, p.51). William Gaskell used to look after such little matters for his wife.

She was bold enough to ask John Forster to beg Tennyson for a copy of his poems, as a present for Samuel Bamford, 'a great, gaunt, stalwart Lancashire man, formerly hand-loom weaver'. (Bamford, unable to afford a copy of his own, used to learn the poems by heart whenever he had a chance.) Tennyson turned up trumps, and on 7 December 1849 Mrs. Gaskell was able to send Forster a triumphant account of tracking down Bamford as he came out of 'a little old-fashioned public house' in Manchester, presenting him with the volume and leaving him in the middle of the road reading aloud, of all things, 'The Sleeping Beauty'. Of course, in some danger of being run over. (*Letters*, no.59; *Tennyson Letters*, l.307-9, 314 n.)

In about July 1850 Elizabeth Gaskell was overwhelmed by *In Memoriam*. She found it 'a book to brood over - oh *how* perfect some of them are - I can't leave them to go on to others, and yet I must send it back tomorrow. By dint of coaxing, however, I've got Wm to promise he'll *give* it to me, so I sing Te Deum' (*Letters*, no.73). The manuscript underlining of 'give' is interesting, but we might also notice the use of the Latin title, *Te Deum*. The Unitarian who once wrote, 'I do not like the putting in, D V. [*Deo volente*] but it is always in my heart' (*Further Letters*, p.157), evoked a more Catholic tradition when greatly moved.

In August of that year Mrs. Gaskell met Charlotte Brontë for the first time in the Lake District. This was the famous occasion when Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth proposed to drive over to Coniston - they 'very cozy' in a carriage with 'Sir James on the box' - and introduce them to Tennyson, but had turned back when it began to rain. 'I held my peace, and bit my lips', Elizabeth wrote crossly (*Letters*, nos.75 and 79, at pp.124, 130).

As for Charlotte Brontë, 'She and I quarrelled & differed about almost every thing', Mrs. Gaskell told Charlotte Froude, '- she calls me a democrat, and can not bear Tennyson - but we like each other heartily...' (*Letters*, no.78). Charlotte had actually given up reading *In Memoriam* half-way through, she told Mrs Gaskell in a follow-up letter of 27 August, distrusting 'this rhymed and measured and printed monument of grief. What change the lapse of years may work - I do not know - but it seems to me that bitter sorrow, while recent, does not flow out in verse' (*Charlotte Brontë Letters*, II. 457). 'She calls me a democrat, and can not bear Tennyson'. The collocation is intriguing. Had Elizabeth Gaskell attempted to defend Tennyson as speaking for all of us, for humanity, in *In Memoriam*? And we remember that neither Tennyson nor Gaskell had published their private poems of grief.

By 27 August 1850, Elizabeth Gaskell had her own copy of *In Memoriam*, which she promptly plundered in chapter 6 of *The Moorland Cottage*, published on 14 December that year. She quotes the poem (XCVII. 33-6) directly, to express Frank Buxton's trust in Maggie, whose 'faith is fixt and cannot move, / She darkly finds him

great and wise, / She dwells on him with faithful eyes, / "I cannot understand - I love". The sale catalogue (lot 430) of the Gaskell's house in Manchester shows that on 22 November 1852 her husband William also gave her a first edition of Tennyson's 'Ode on the Duke of Wellington'. I can't quite work out what significance this might have.³

It is wonderfully easy, however, to appreciate my next instance of the connection between the two authors. When in 'A Love Affair at Cranford' (*Household Words* on 3 January 1852), an aging Miss Matty tremulously met the lover of long ago whom she had been discouraged from marrying, Mr. Thomas Holbrook, he proved to be a devotee of Tennyson, quoting from 'The Gardener's Daughter' the lines about the cedar's 'dark-green layers of shade' and the blackness of ash buds. Besides this, the emotions expressed in the poem could hardly be more appropriate in this particular context. You will surely remember these lines:

Behold her there
As I beheld her ere she knew my heart,
My first, last love; the idol of my youth,
The darling of my manhood, and, alas!
Now the most blessed memory of mine age.

The literary allusion intensifies, for those who can bring it to mind as they read, the everlasting love and nostalgic emotion involved.

Just as pertinently, Mr. Thomas Holbrook, *yeoman*, went on to read from 'Locksley Hall', a poem in which Tennyson wrestled with his doomed love for Rosa Baring and the *superbia* of the Tennyson D'Eyncourts. But with the tact of a prose realist Mrs. Gaskell makes Miss Matty fall asleep during what we could believe was an impassioned reading. In her youth Miss Matty did not have the strength to resist the disapproval of her father the rector and her sister Deborah. It was ultimately more likely and, despite the irony of this allusion to 'Locksley Hall', more touching, that she would wear something resembling a widow's cap after Mr. Holbrook's unexpected death and keep the volume of Tennyson's poems he had given her beside her Bible.

We can conclude, I think, that Elizabeth Gaskell's general sensibility was attuned to Tennyson's, even in part created by him. His poetry comes to her mind with talismanic force, as when in a letter of December 1857 to Charles Eliot Norton she reminds him of 'that exquisite dreamy Torcello Sunday, - that still, sunny, sleepy canal, - something like the Lady of Shalott - tho' how, why, & wherefore I can't tell' (*Letters*, no.384, at p.489).

Fortunately, Professor Marion Shaw, in her study of the fatal return theme in *Sylvia's Lovers* and *Enoch Arden* (*Gaskell Society Journal* 9), has teased out more subtle literary relationships between the two Victorian authors.⁴ Perhaps I should have adopted that more terse new form, the e-mail. The poet who even in his teens was well acquainted with advances in science, and who later was able to envisage 'airy navies grappling in the central blue', became Poet Laureate. Prophetically, perhaps, when wishing to travel incognito in Cornwall in 1860, he suggested that 'Mr. Poelaur would be a good name to direct to me by' (quoted, Ricks, p.232). Lower case, no spaces and no proper punctuation nowadays, of course: mrpoelaur@verseserve.co.uk. That might even arrive on the screen of Andrew Motion. To become Poet Laureate confers a kind of pleasing immortality, I imagine.

Endnotes

¹ Tennyson Society, Memorial Service Address, 2000. Reprinted, with acknowledgements, from the *Tennyson Research Bulletin* 7, 4 (November 2000).

² John Jump, ed., *Tennyson: the Critical Heritage* (Routledge, 1967), p. 59.

³ [Ed. note] Perhaps William gave Elizabeth a copy of 'Ode on the Duke of Wellington' on 22 November 1852, to console her for missing the awesome occasion of his funeral. She wrote to a friend: 'Mr. Chapman [her publisher] wrote a polite invitation to me to come and see the Duke's funeral from his shop window (a sight I should dearly have liked,...)' (*Letters*, no.137, dated ? October 1852). Her daughter Marianne took her place instead and was requested by her mother to write her 'a particular account, *not* so much of the Duke's funeral, as of Mr. Mrs. [*sic*] Chapman & their ménage & children. Everybody here is going into mourning.' (*Letters*, no.140)

⁴ Saverio Tomaiuolo has recently stressed the importance of *Sylvia's Lovers* for Tennyson (*Tennyson e il senso del narrare*, Pescara 2003, pp.152-58). Gaskell Sale Catalogue, lots 553 and 555 show 'Enoch Arden', 1st edn 1864, and 'Idylls of the King', 1859.

Books

J.S. Hagen, *Tennyson and his Publishers* (Macmillan 1979)

Christopher Ricks, *Tennyson* (Macmillan 1989).

The Poems of Tennyson, ed. Christopher Ricks (Longman, 1969).

The Letters of Alfred, Lord Tennyson, ed. C.Y. Lang and E.F. Shannon (3 vols, Clarendon Press 1981-87).

The Letters of Charlotte Brontë, ed. Margaret Smith (2 vols, Clarendon Press, 1995, 2000).

Haworth through unfamiliar eyes

Frances Twinn

The Life of Charlotte Brontë appeared in two volumes in 1857. The frontispiece in each of the volumes in many ways represents the subject of the biography. Volume 1 opens with Richmond's portrait of Charlotte Brontë; Volume 2 interestingly contains a drawing of the immediate environs of Haworth Parsonage, Charlotte's home.¹ This pen-and-ink drawing is attributed to Elizabeth Gaskell who, like most Victorian women, would have been taught to draw. Therefore she would have executed the view 'with the eye of the amateur painter'.² She was determined to illustrate the biography with 'the old wild place' and, in the end, she wrote to George Smith saying,

I send you a sepia drawing from a sketch of mine of Haworth Parsonage...³

However, like her fiction and elements of the biography, the drawing seems to have been a combination of observation and imagination.

Her drawing indicates a rather bleak view of a landscape dominated by a churchyard. This is surely testimony to Gaskell's preoccupation with the deaths which bedevilled Charlotte's life (and perhaps her own). Interestingly the tombstones are a combination of the prostrate and the vertical. There are about forty-five upright gravestones in the drawing. It is not possible to count the number of horizontal ones as they are not so clearly delineated, although there appear to be more than forty-five. If her memo to George Smith, her publisher, is anything to judge by, Gaskell had a clear picture in her mind of the churchyard for she wrote,

The gravestones in Haworth Church Yard, are FLAT, not many head-stones; and not a tuft of grass between.⁴

Ironically the drawing conflicts with the biography which it seeks to illustrate. Gaskell's authorial comment that 'the graveyard is terribly full of upright tombstones'⁵ is followed at a much later stage in the book by a quote from Jane Arnold's account of her visit to Haworth. She wrote more accurately of the churchyard as

a dreary, dreary place, literally paved with rain-blackened tombstones (*The Life*, p.363)

The drawing has few buildings other than those associated with the church and the parsonage. Gaskell listed these as the 'Sexton's Shed, School-house, Sexton's (tall) House (where the Curate lodged), and the Church'⁶ when she sent her 'sepia drawing' to George Smith. As might be expected, the church and the parsonage have prominent positions.

The stone wall 'keeps out the surrounding churchyard'⁷ by delimiting the garden which is depicted by the shrub and bushes adjacent to the wall. The garden can be clearly seen as a buffer zone between the house and churchyard and must have been a godsend given the health hazard posed by the bodies buried just beyond the wall. Just as the foreground is dominated by gravestones, so the background is dominated by treeless hills which are, presumably, moorland-clad although the vegetation is not clearly delineated. The parsonage appears somewhat dwarfed by the hills which rise quite steeply behind the house, certainly more steeply than they do in reality. Wilks' caption to the engraving in his volume on the family observes,

Mrs Gaskell allowed herself a romantic but telling exaggeration of the desolate prospect facing the parsonage children⁸

I am sure there is a romantic element but I would argue too, that her perception of this environment stemmed from unfamiliarity. Indicative of Gaskell's unfamiliarity with this landscape is her exclamation found in the biography,

Oh! Those high, wild, desolate moors, up above the world, and the very realms of silence. (*The Life*, p.439)

I have argued elsewhere that the exclamation 'represents a sharp intake of breath and a frisson of emotion as she re-captured the memory of her first encounter with these moorland expanses around Haworth'.⁹ The drawing is her visual representation of that unfamiliarity because for Gaskell those moorlands loomed large in her mind when she thought of Charlotte's home environment.

Disappointed with the photographs commissioned for the biography, Gaskell wrote to George Smith,

They give an idea of wildness and desolation but not of height (*sic*) & steepness, and of the sweeping lines of the moors beyond.¹⁰

She was determined that her view should prevail, for she continues,

I should like an engraving of the wild old place, and I think perhaps this would be better than the Photograph.¹¹

Arguably Gaskell's drawing distorts the reality - which is the gradual rise to a plateau of the moorland surface; but, unlike a photograph, the drawing is a product of the creative imagination and must reflect something of Gaskell's personal perception of the home of 'her dear friend' Charlotte Brontë. The latest Brontë Parsonage Museum souvenir guide highlights Gaskell's perception by juxtaposing a photograph taken before 1878, a contemporary photograph and her own engraving.¹²

It is evident from a comparison of these photographs with Gaskell's drawing that hers was a function of both mental image and artistic licence rather than the reality of the scene.

Notes:

- ¹ Walter E. Smith, *Elizabeth Gaskell: A Bibliographical Catalogue* (Los Angeles: Heritage Bookshop, 1998), p.106.
- ² An observation made by Professor Andrew Sanders in conversation, 30 Aug. 1999.
- ³ John Chapple and Arthur Pollard, eds, *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell* (Manchester: MUP, 1966), no.339, p.443.
- ⁴ *Letters*, no.343, p. 445.
- ⁵ Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (Oxford: OUP, 1996), p.12.
- ⁶ *Letters*, no.339, p.443.
- ⁷ Gaskell, p.12.
- ⁸ Brian Wilks, *The Brontës* (London: Hamlyn, 1975), p.32.
- ⁹ Frances Twinn, 'The Landscapes of Elizabeth Gaskell's Writing', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Durham, 1999.
- ¹⁰ *Letters*, no.338, p.442. Interestingly, in his poem 'Haworth Churchyard April 1855', Matthew Arnold emphasizes the moorland and the lonely bleakness of the group of buildings. Clearly, Gaskell's perception was shared by others.
- ¹¹ *Letters*, no.339, p.443.
- ¹² Ann Dinsdale and Kathryn White, *Brontë Parsonage Museum. A Souvenir Guide* (Haworth: The Brontë Society, 1998), pp.9-10.



Gaskell's Works now searchable via new Hyper-Concordance

Nancy S. Weyant

Concordances have long been essential reference tools for literary scholars engaged in textual analysis. They are a valuable aid for any analysis of writing style, imagery, or themes, as well as a useful way to quickly locate particular passages within a given text. On December 28, 2003, the one-hundredth anniversary of the death of George Gissing, fellow Gaskell Society member Mitsuhara Matsuoka unveiled his hyper-concordance for the works of a range of Victorian authors, including Elizabeth Gaskell. This addition to the resources available to the Gaskell scholar is most welcome.

The complete collection of concordances for all 31 nineteenth-century authors resides on the Victorian Literary Studies Archives webpage (<http://victorian.lang.nagoya-u.ac.jp/concordance/>). The hyper-concordance for Gaskell can be accessed from a link on the first page of the Gaskell Web (<http://www.lang.nagoya-u.ac.jp/~matsuoka/Gaskell.html>) or directly by using the Gaskell Concordance's unique URL: <http://victorian.lang.nagoya-u.ac.jp/concordance/gaskell>. Upon selecting a specific author from the Archives or upon clicking on the link from the Gaskell Web, you are presented with a dropdown box from which you select a particular work. In the case of Gaskell, if you select "Short Stories", you are then presented with a third dropdown box that lists all of the individual stories. After selecting a specific work, the program allows you to limit or refine your search by specifying that your word or phrase be case-sensitive or non-alphabet-character sensitive (which allows you to search for numbers, types of punctuation - alone or in conjunction with particular words - or symbols such as £) as well as to specify the "head length" and "tail length" (the letters before and after your word or phrase - in other words the textual context for the word or phrase for which you are searching). If you enter no specific term or phrase and click on the "Search" button, two boxes display below. One posts the total number of text lines, the total word count and the number of unique words; the other enumerates all unique words and the number of occurrences of each. If you enter a specific word or phrase, three boxes display below: the same line and word profile of the individual work, each occurrence of the specified word or phrase searched and the full text of the work in question. Each line of the text is numbered, and the line number for each occurrence of the word/phrase displayed serves as a link to its location in the full text at the bottom of the screen. According to Mitsu, the scanned texts are from the Knutsford edition, enhanced by reference to later editions during proofreading.

The ease and speed with which the texts of Gaskell's works can be searched is truly amazing and exciting. For example, it took me less than two minutes to confirm that the words "book" and "books" appear 20 times in *Mary Barton*, 19 times in *Ruth*, 36 times in *Cranford*, 52 times in *North and South*, 43 times in *Sylvia's Lovers*, 53 times in *Cousin Phillis*, 101 times in *Wives and Daughters* and 168 times in *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*. Likewise, it took me less than ten seconds to identify the exact line in *Cranford* (line 5028) on which my e-mail signature quotation ("I'll not listen to reason...") appears. The implications for future Gaskell research and scholarship are significant.

As any visitor to the Gaskell Web knows, Mitsu's computer skills are exceptional. His introduction to the Concordance profiles the program used (C++), identifies "Windows 2000/XP and the latest Microsoft Internet Explorer as the best and quickest way to view the Hyper-Concordance website", and gently notes the need for patience on the part of Macintosh users. This Hyper-Concordance is a wonderful example of how technology greatly enhances our access to literary texts. Everyone who uses computers for their Gaskell research should bookmark this concordance for easy access. Gaskell scholars and librarians alike owe a debt of gratitude to Mitsu Matsuoka.

Mrs Gaskell and Miss Fergusson: a new connection

Alan Shelston

While working in the John Rylands University Library recently I came across a further link between Elizabeth Gaskell and her governess, Barbara Fergusson. Readers of the *Newsletter* will remember that a cache of letters to Miss Fergusson dating from 1847 was included in *Further Letters of Mrs Gaskell*, and that following that date she seemed to have disappeared from our immediate view. While working on the early editions of *Cranford*, however, I discovered that the Library's copy of the so-called 'Second edition' - in fact a second impression of the first edition of 1853, and published in the same year - bore the inscription on its front end-paper: Barbara B[?] Fergusson, with the kind love and affectionate remembrance of E.C. Gaskell/ Plymouth Grove./Sept 29. 1853. This seems not to have been recorded formally, although when I showed it to Carol Burrows, archivist at the library, she said that she had been aware of it, and she kindly gave me a photo-copy.

This clearly confirms that Mrs Gaskell retained her affection for Barbara Fergusson and that she remained in contact with her for some years after she left her employment at Plymouth Grove.

An account of what is known about Miss Fergusson, by Dr. Jean Lindsay, was published in *The Gaskell Society Newsletter* 29, February 2000



A Gaskell Portrait?

Members with long memories and carefully filed *Newsletters* might remember this portrait, dated 1850 or 51, and an article about it in *NL* 5 (1988) by the owner, Elizabeth Rye, (then E Jacobi) who bought it at an antique fair in 1987. She added a plea for help with research in *NL* 33.

She was told on buying the picture that it was of Mrs Gaskell and another dealer added that it had come from the family of Mary Warner in 1974. Her researches into the artist, who might have commissioned the portrait and why , and the family who owned it have been extensive and are ongoing.

Ms. Rye succeeded in finding a descendant who confirmed that the Warner family had owned it. Mary Warner was an actress who died young and in debt in 1854, leaving three children who were charitably educated with assistance from William Charles Macready and Angela Burdett-Coutts. Ms. Rye believes that the link between the latter, known as a benefactor, and Mrs Gaskell may be significant. She has recently had an article published in the *Times Literary Supplement* (21.11.03) about the provenance of the picture¹ and wrote:

As I had suspected her association with Miss Coutts and knew that Mrs. Gaskell's work often involved children, I wondered whether she might have been involved in this case? Though the name Warner is not mentioned in Mrs. Gaskell's letters, Mrs. Gaskell had two meetings with Macready shortly before and after the date of Mrs. Warner's death. And only three weeks after Mrs. Warner's death, in October 1854, a letter from Mrs. Gaskell to a Mrs. Ouvry provided the details requested of a private school for girls in Hampstead. Mrs. Ouvry was the wife of Miss Coutts's solicitor. Could this information have been for the benefit of Mrs. Warner's daughter, Ellen, who was thirteen when her mother died? It seems possible that the heavily committed Miss Coutts might have given a portrait of Mrs. Gaskell to Ellen in order to encourage her to contact her if she had any problems.

This is an interesting chain of circumstances, but it has to be said that there is no proven link between Miss Burdett-Coutts, and the artist Herbert Smith, who was mainly known as a copyist. There are some similarities in pose and features between this portrait and those known portraits of Elizabeth Gaskell, but many members will probably agree with another *TLS* correspondent, Anne Kindersley, who wrote:

My doubts about Herbert L. Smith's sitter begin with her hair and go on to her clothes. Mrs. Gaskell was only forty in 1850; she was unlikely to have had glossy white hair [ed: one of the last known photographs of her, dated about 1864, shows her with brown hair]. She was a good looking and elegant woman who took great care with her clothes ... [she] would not have been seen dead in the dowdy, elaborate outfit that Herbert L. Smith painted. ... The blue-and-white tippet (not shawl) the frilly collar and cuffs, and the voluminous black dress are quite alien to her simple and becoming style.

Professor Angus Easson voiced similar doubts in his letter to *The Times Literary Supplement* (2.1.04)

I was intrigued to see Elizabeth Rye's 'Portrait of a Lady: An Unattributed Portrait of Mrs. Gaskell?' (21 November 2003), since some time ago Ms. Rye spoke to me about it by phone. She was understandably excited about

the possibility of Herbert L. Smith's watercolour being a portrait of Mrs. Gaskell, though I was doubtful about the connections that she needed to establish between sitter and the picture's presumed subsequent owner, Ellen, daughter of the actress Mary Warner. Ms. Rye also needed to show that Ellen was given it by Angela Burdett-Coutts. While continuing to admire Ms. Rye's enthusiasm and research and her discretion in still not insisting upon the sitter's identity, I am now, having read her essay, deeply sceptical about both the proposed connections and the sitter's identity.

First, there is the likeness itself. Anne Kindersley (letter, 5 December 2003) reacted interestingly to the sitter's clothes and noted the grey hair, unlikely in a woman of 40, though Kindersley accepts that 'the face is right'. Along with the clothing and the hair colour, I would add that I am not convinced that the face is 'right'. True, portraits necessarily involve subjective elements, both in their execution and in the viewer's response: W. Thomson's lively miniature of Elizabeth Gaskell in 1832 suggests a rather slimmer, more flighty subject, than David Dunbar's bust of 1829, while George Richmond's drawing of 1851 clearly exhibits his notorious idealisation of his subjects. But looking at Dunbar, Thomson (perhaps the facial shape closest to Smith's sitter), Richmond, and Samuel Laurence's pastel of 1854, ²the impression is of Mrs. Gaskell as a woman with a marked chin, full lower face, and a nose prominent even to beakiness, indented at the top and suddenly pointed. Smith's portrait has an elongated face, chin rounded but neither the prominent lower cheeks nor projecting nose.

Second, in constructing her argument, Ms. Rye links Mrs. Gaskell with Dickens and Angela Burdett-Coutts, suggesting that Burdett-Coutts commissioned the portrait - and by implication, gave it at some considerable time later to Ellen Warner: Smith's picture is dated 1850/51 and Burdett-Coutts only undertook to provide for Ellen's education in 1853. It may be enough to underline that while Mrs. Gaskell's concerns link her to Dickens's and Burdett-Coutts's work at Urania Cottage, both in sympathy and practically, her direct contact with Burdett-Coutts was so slight that a commissioned portrait must seem unlikely. Indeed, a portrait of Burdett-Coutts, as generous benefactor, might have been a more obvious gift to Ellen Warner than a portrait of Mrs. Gaskell.

Third, and more particularly, Ms. Rye does propose a direct link between Mrs. Gaskell and Ellen Warner, when she suggests Mrs. Ouvry - perhaps the wife of the solicitor, Frederic Ouvry - wrote to Mrs. Gaskell about a possible school for Ellen Warner. The Hampstead school, where Mrs. Gaskell's eldest daughter, Marianne, had been educated, was Unitarian. Why should Burdett-Coutts, a committed Anglican (she built, for example, St. Stephen's, Rochester Row) think of sending Ellen Warner, who

presumably was an Anglican and certainly married a Church of England clergyman, to a Unitarian school? We only have Mrs. Gaskell's reply to Mrs. Ouvry, but to read it (*Gaskell Letters*, ed. Pollard & Chapple, pp.802-03), calls in doubt that placing a pupil in the school is at issue at all. Mrs. Gaskell writes that she can 'answer for the safe, though it might be a busy, place, if she did apply'. It being 'a place', with its busyness, and to be applied for, suggests that this is an opening for a servant, a point strengthened by the rest of the letter, about a servant whom Mrs. Gaskell is taking over from Mrs. Ouvry. That Ellen Warner here links Mrs. Gaskell and Mrs. Ouvry surely doesn't survive scrutiny.

I fully understand the wish to give a portrait an identity. But even more than Elizabeth Rye, who wants to suggest but tactfully does not insist that her picture is of Mrs. Gaskell, I must doubt that the sitter has been identified and decline to accept it is Mrs. Gaskell.

The possibility of establishing whether or not the portrait is of Mrs. Gaskell by using techniques of computerised imaging, comparing the new portrait with those that have been authenticated, is currently being investigated.

¹ Elizabeth Rye is still researching the various links. Her article from the *TLS*, and requests for help in research, can be found on the 'Alliance of Literary Societies' web page <http://sndc.demon.co.uk/erye.htm>.

² *Members* might like to compare the Smith portrait with the Laurence of Mrs. Gaskell which was on the cover of our last few Newsletters. *NL* 33 gives reasons for dating the Laurence pastel portrait as 1864 rather than '54.

Alliance of Literary Societies AGM 24th April

This will be hosted by The Graham Greene Birthplace Trust at Berkhamsted, linked to a Spring Centenary Weekend. For info e-mail: secretary@grahamgreenebt.org

The Trollope Society is holding a one-day conference on Saturday 24th April at The Institute for English Studies at London University. This is to coincide with the forthcoming BBC production of *He Knew He was Right*. Contact no.020 7862 8675

The Arnold Bennett Society has a one-day conference on 12th June at Staffordshire University's Stoke-on-Trent campus info. from: l.ashwell@staffs.ac.uk

The Martineau Society has its 10th annual conference in Birmingham 2-4 July. Info from Alan Middleton: alan@ajmidd.demon.co.uk.

The North West Group

Knutsford meetings at St. John's Parish Church room: North and South themes. March 31 and April 28. Lunch at 12.15. Trips to Liverpool and Lancaster for Gaskell/Literary links. Dates to be arranged. Autumn meeting September 25.

The Gaskell Society Postal Bookstall

Here is the complete Gaskell postal bookstall list. These books are on our bookstall at major meetings of the Society, and can be sent by post at other times. The prices are given against each title. The books are hardback unless stated otherwise. In some cases there are only one or two copies remaining. To order please contact Janet Allan, 10 Dale Road, New Mills, High Peak, SK22 4NW; phone: 01663 744233; email: janet@janetbook.fsnet.co.uk.

UK orders: cheques should be payable to The Gaskell Society. Please add postage of £3 for volumes costing £10 and over: those less than £10 are sent post free.

Anne Brontë: educating Parents by Mary Summers; Highgate Publications, 2003, paperback £9.95

Artless Tales by Anna Maria Porter; Juvenilia Press 2003, paperback £5

At home with Elizabeth Gaskell by Barbara Brill; Teamband, 2000, £2.50 paperback

The Brontës; High Weaving Heather, a selection of poems; Phoenix 1996, paperback 60p.

Cousin Phillis and other Tales by Elizabeth Gaskell; World's Classics, Oxford University Press, 1981 paperback £3.99.

Cranford, a reading of the complete text by Prunella Scales. 3 Tapes. Cover to Cover £25.

Cross Street Chapel in the time of the Gaskells by Geoffrey Head. Cross Street Chapel, 1999, £1.

Edward Neville by Marianne Evans (George Eliot) Juvenilia Press, 1995 paperback £5.

Elizabeth Gaskell a biography, Winifred Gérin, Oxford University Press 1976, secondhand copy £10.

Elizabeth Gaskell, a habit of stories by Jenny Uglow; Faber and Faber, 1993, £12.50.

Elizabeth Gaskell, the Early Years by John Chapple; Manchester University Press, 1997, £19.

Elizabeth Gaskell: a Literary Life by Shirley Foster; Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, paperback, £14.

'Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton*: a novel of 1848?' by Angus Easson. Offprint from the *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society* vol 86, 1990. £2 paperback.

Emily Brontë by Robert Barnard; The British Library, 2000, £11 paperback.

The Experienced English Housekeeper by Elizabeth Raffald; Southover Press 1997, £15.

Further Letters of Mrs. Gaskell, edited by John Chapple and Alan Shelston; Manchester University Press, 2000, hardback £38.50, paperback 2003, £12.50.

Gaskell Society Journals vols 1-15, and 17, 1987-2001, 2003. Gaskell Society. Paperback, £6 each. Volume 16, 2002 with index to vols 1-16, £9.

A History of England by Jane Austen; Juvenilia Press, 2003 paperback, £5.

Knutsford and Elizabeth Gaskell, Gaskell Society, 2000, £2.50 paperback.

Incidents from Phippy's Schooldays by Philip Larkin; Juvenilia Press, 2002, paperback £5.

The Letters of Mrs. Gaskell, edited by J.A.V. Chapple and Arthur Pollard, 1997, reprint, Manchester University Press, £13.50 paperback.

The Life of Charlotte Brontë edited by Clement K. Shorter; 1930 reprint, second-hand £5.

Love and Friendship Jane Austen; Juvenilia Press, 2001 reprint, paperback £5.

'*Mary Barton*' by Elizabeth Gaskell, edited by Angus Easson. Ryburn, 1993, £12.

Mrs. Gaskell's Observation and Invention by John Geoffrey Sharps; Linden Press, 1970, £15.

Private Voices: the diaries of Elizabeth Gaskell and Sophia Holland, edited by J.A.V. Chapple and Anita Wilson, Keele University Press, 1996, £8.

The Reverend William Turner; dissent and reform in Georgian Newcastle-upon-Tyne by Stephen Harbottle; Northern Universities Press, 1997 paperback, £17.50.

The Story so far: Manchester Academy of Fine Arts from 1859 to 2003 by Sheila Dewsbury; Manchester Academy of Fine Arts, 2003, paperback, £8.95.

Tales of the Islanders by Charlotte Brontë; Juvenilia Press, 2001-3, 3 volumes, paperback, each £5.

William Gaskell by Barbara Brill. Illustrated. Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society, 1984, £5.

Wives and Daughters: a reading of the complete text by Prunella Scales. 8 Tapes. Cover to Cover, £55.

The Society also sells postcards, notelets, badges and paperweights on the bookstall.

Book Notes

Christine Lingard

Making of the Victorian novelist: anxieties of authorship in the mass market by Bradley Deane (Visiting Professor of English, Northwestern University, Chicago); Routledge £45.

An original discussion of the social and cultural pressures to which Victorian novelists were subjected, including chapters on Walter Scott's *Waverley*; Dickens' *Pickwick*; Henry James' *Princess Casamassima*; the final chapter is "Veiled women in the marketplace of culture: authorships and domesticities in Gaskell and Eliott."

Fiction, famine and the rise of economics in Victorian Britain and Ireland (Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth-century Literature & Culture) by Gordon E Bigelow, Cambridge University Press, £45.

Continuing the current interest in socio-economics and the novel, this book deals with the interest in economic subjects displayed in general by Victorian novelists and in particular by Dickens and Gaskell (chapter 5 - 'Toward a social theory of novels of Elizabeth Gaskell'), and argues that such literature had a profound effect not only on public opinion but also on the development of political economic theory itself. It compares their writing to contemporary descriptions of the Irish potato famine.

For Jane Austen Fans

We are delighted that Jane Alderson, C.E.O. of the **CHAWTON HOUSE LIBRARY, HAMPSHIRE** is coming north to give a presentation about the centre's important work.

The event, which is being hosted by "The Bookworm's Club" at the **NORTH MANCHESTER SYNAGOGUE, BURY, LANCASHIRE**, will be on **SATURDAY 20TH MARCH 2004 at 8.00 p.m.** We are sure that as members of a highly regarded literary society, you would not want to miss the opportunity to meet Ms. Alderson and to learn more of the work being accomplished at Chawton, once the home of Jane Austen's brother, Edward.

We hope also to see representatives of libraries, along with academics and students from local colleges, at the meeting, as well as members of reading and writer's groups. Mr. Ivan Lewis, M.P. for Bury South and a Minister in the Department of Education, will open the event.

We are asking only £3.00 entrance to the event, simply to cover Ms. Alderson's travel expenses. For further info. consult: Natalie Wood, 55 Ajax Drive, Sunny Bank, Bury, Lancs. BL9 8EE Tel/Fax - 0161 796 8018.

AGM Meeting at Cross Street Chapel, Manchester

on Saturday 3rd April 10.30 for 11.00am

Programme

10.30 Meet for coffee

11.00 AGM

12.00 (approx)

Dr. Leonard Smith, editor of *Unitarian to the Core: Unitarian College Manchester, 1854-2004* and Geoffrey Head, chairman and past president of the college, will speak about the origins of the College, the Gaskells part in it, its students and history.

1.00-2.15 Buffet lunch

2.15 The Daphne Carrick Lecture by Dr. Ann Secord:

Elizabeth Gaskell and the Working-Class Naturalists of Manchester.

In Elizabeth Gaskell's novel *Mary Barton*, with its ambitious suggestions for the improvement of class relations in Manchester, a pivotal role is played by a working-class naturalist, Job Legh. Gaskell could place such importance upon Legh because she had carefully drawn his fictional character from published accounts of impoverished Lancashire artisan naturalists. This talk explores how the philanthropic context in which these accounts were produced, and the cultural context in which artisans actually practised their science, contributed to Gaskell's creation of one of our most enduring images of the Victorian working-class naturalist.

Anne Secord was trained in the history of science at London University. She worked as assistant editor of *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin* for the first seven volumes and is currently an Affiliated Research Scholar in the Department of History and Philosophy of Science, Cambridge University. Her research and writings focus on popular, particularly working-class, natural history in nineteenth-century Britain. She has a forthcoming book *Artisan Naturalists*, which will be published by University of Chicago Press in 2005.

The meeting is expected to close at about 3.30 / 4.00pm

Summer events

We are planning a visit to Liverpool, (probably late May early June) to trace Gaskell associations. Our guide will be John Tiernan who read a paper on the subject at our Durham conference.

IN early September we will have a similar trip to Lancaster. Please indicate on the form if you would like further information and whether you prefer a mid-week or weekend date.

As we go to press Friends of Plymouth Grove is being inaugurated.

The Gaskell Society South-West

On Monday, January 12th, fourteen very local members met for our annual New Year Supper - this is a very social occasion, given a little intellectual respectability this year by a Shakespeare Quiz, which was much harder than we realised. Janet Cunliffe-Jones emerged as a worthy winner.

On Saturday, April 17th, Professor Christine Alexander, Professor of English Literature at the University of New South Wales and presently spending a year as a Distinguished Fellow at Cambridge University, is coming to speak to us on 'A Study of Victorian Juvenilia with special reference to the Brontës and Elizabeth Gaskell'. I know she impressed everyone at Durham and we are looking forward to her visit. The event is being run jointly with the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution. Money donated by Waterstones was organised by Ian Wallace, late Professor of German at Bath University.

Then on Saturday, May 22nd, we are looking forward to hearing Professor Barbara Hardy, from the University of Oxford, speaking on 'The Art of the Novella: exemplified by *Cousin Phillis*'. Professor Hardy tells me that *Cousin Phillis* is her favourite Gaskell book and she intends to develop the theme of 'intricate simplicity'.

June 23rd - 24th is the date of our visit to Oxford, where we shall stay in Harris Manchester College, dine in Hall and visit as many of the places enjoyed by Mrs. Gaskell as we can. Gwen Clarke is bearing the brunt of the organisation of this jaunt and we are sure that it will be a good successor to our trips to Penzance and the Quantocks.

Everyone is of course welcome to any of these events. For more details, ring Rosemary Marshall tel: 01225 426732, or e-mail rosemarymarshall@yahoo.com. Best wishes to everyone in the Gaskell heartland from the South-West Branch.

The London and South-East Group Programme for 2004

Saturday, 15th May

"A Dark Night's Work" Reconsidered' - Dr. Graham Handley

Saturday, 11th September

'Editing the Brontë Letters' - Margaret Smith

Saturday, 13th November

'Mme de Sévigné - Gaskell's Eternal Woman' - Howard Gregg

Meetings are held at the Francis Holland School, 39 Graham Terrace, London SW1W 8JF, starting at 2 p.m. Tea and biscuits follow the talks. It is necessary to ring the bell to gain access, for security reasons. Francis Holland School is a few minutes walk from Sloane Street Tube Station (District and Circle Lines).

It has been traditional for some members to meet for a light lunch at the Royal Court Tavern, which is next to the tube station. We meet from 12 noon onwards.

As you may know, Dudley Barlow is moving to the north of England and I have taken over the organisation of this branch of the Society. Please feel able to contact me if you would like further information about the meetings themselves or the arrangements. I hope that the programme appeals and that you will be able to come to the meetings. I look forward to seeing you during 2004.

Frances Twinn, 85 Calton Avenue, London SE21 7DF (tel: 020 8693 3238); email: frantwinn@aflex.net.

International Conference Manchester Centre for Regional History, Manchester Metropolitan University

Elizabeth Gaskell and Manchester: Identity, Culture and the Modern City 19 - 21 July 2005

CALL FOR PAPERS

Elizabeth Gaskell is the nineteenth century's most important novelist of industrial society. Her era was of considerable intellectual importance in the making of the modern world. This conference seeks papers which explore Gaskell's intellectual and cultural context. It will explore how such literary legacies also influence the construction of place identities and inform cultural regeneration. It occurs at a particularly appropriate time, as Manchester applies for world heritage status.

Possible themes for papers include but are not limited to the following:

- Gaskell and other nineteenth-century literary figures and movements
- Manchester's cultural and literary significance before and beyond the nineteenth century
- Literary representations of the industrial north-west
- Sense of place in the changing city: the social and the built environment
- Rewriting the post-industrial (and postmodern) city
- Insiders and outsiders: migrant cultures and urban identities
- Official and unofficial narratives of the city

Contributions which are comparative or interdisciplinary in nature or which address other aspects of the conference theme are welcome, as are exhibitions and multi-media presentations.

Send abstracts of papers (200-400 words) or suggestions for panels on particular themes and topics to Dr. Craig Horner, Administrator, Manchester Centre for Regional History, Department of History and Economic History, Manchester Metropolitan University, Geoffrey Manton Building, Rosamond St. West, Off Oxford Rd., Manchester M15 6LL. Email: c.horner@mmu.ac.uk
Conference web site: www.mcrh.org.uk/gaskell

Deadline; 30th September 2004 - Please note that paper presenters will still need to register for the conference and pay the registration fee.

The Gaskell Society



Members at Anne Hathaway's Cottage, Shuttery

THE GASKELL SOCIETY HOME PAGE has all the latest information on meetings.
<http://gaskellsociety.users.btopenworld.com>

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs. Joan Leach,
Far Yew Tree House, Over Tabley, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 0HN.
Telephone - 01565 634668 E-mail: joanleach@aol.com

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NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2004 - Number 38

Editor's Letter

Joan Leach

It was an emotional day for committee members and especially for our chairman, Janet Allan, when we met at 84 Plymouth Grove for the first time with the key in her possession. It has been nine years from Janet starting negotiations with Manchester University to the Manchester Historic Buildings Trust taking possession. This is a milestone but the road is a long one. Now we are busy planning an open weekend for Heritage Days 11th and 12th September, when we hope to see many members and friends. We are grateful to our US members for their fund raising efforts and especially to Nancy Weyant who has made a major contribution of her royalties and helped to organise collections. Thank you to those who have enrolled as Friends of Plymouth Grove.

Our home page lists forthcoming events and also has a list of books available by post; the address is on the back page.

BBC has completed filming of *North and South* and screening is provisionally scheduled for November. On a visit with her local history study group to Queen Street Mill and Textile Museum at Burnley member Hilda Holmes was surprised to find BBC filming there in a cloud of cotton dust but had to tell the team that Mrs. Gaskell did not actually take her readers into a mill. BBC have also filmed in Edinburgh where they transformed the Travelling Light shop on William Street into a Victorian drapers'; as the street is still cobbled it takes on a Victorian ambience once double yellow lines and parking meters are removed. Our members in Scotland are planning an inaugural meeting in Scotland to be held in Edinburgh on 26th and 27th November.

This Newsletter has reports of various group visits which you may be able to follow at some time. Marie Moss writes about her experiences with our SW group in Oxford and NW members enjoyed a three day trip to Stratford-upon-Avon and Gaskell associations which Janet Kennerley recaptures for us. We also had a trip to Liverpool.

Dudley Green pays his tribute to Brian Hechle, a faithful member we could ill afford to lose: we will remember him at our first Manchester meeting on 12th October. We send our sympathy to our Japanese members on the death of Professor Asahi, whose translation of *North and South* will be published on the day of their joint meeting with The Dickens Fellowship, on 3rd October, at which Alan Shelston will speak. Our good wishes for this meeting.

On a personal note may I thank members for their support and sympathetic messages on the death of my husband, Chris, on 26th June. Knowing that this came as a release from suffering helps to sustain me, together with the memories of our 44 years together. He will be remembered, too, for his writing; though his works are out of print Boston University keeps his archives.

Brian Hechle

In the autumn of 1995, soon after my retirement from teaching, I decided to take advantage of my new-found freedom and to come to the Society's monthly lunch-time meetings at Knutsford. When I mentioned my intention to Joan she told me that there was a gentleman from Liverpool who was thinking of coming to these meetings who would be glad of male company! This is how I first met Brian Hechle and we became firm friends at once. Apart from our love of literature we were very dissimilar. Brian was precise, bordering on the pedantic, and meticulous in his actions and movements. Always well-dressed in a delightfully matching outfit, he was a keen gardener and a skilled cook. It is to his credit that he tolerated my impetuosity, my disregard for the refinements of food and clothing, and my dashing here and there in pursuit of my latest objective.

We were constant companions on all Society holidays and activities. I used to ring him the evening before to check the arrangements and when I arrived I would always be greeted by a wave from Brian who would have kept me a seat. At conferences there would be a knock on my door at the pre-arranged time every morning for us to go down to breakfast. We did everything together. He seemed to value my friendship and I hope it gave him pleasure. He certainly helped me in my shyness at meeting people. It's so much easier when there are two of you. I also feel that his friendship was a great privilege, for he was a very reserved man. I think the Gaskell Society can be proud of the way in which they brought Brian out as a person. He became a most loyal member and whenever any outing was announced he would turn to me and say 'Are you going?' He took great delight in being a member of the Gaskell family and he seemed to blossom in the context of this society.

At meetings he was always readier to listen than to speak, but when he did make a contribution it was always significant and illuminating. He was also very sensitive over other people's feelings. Whatever doubts he might have had about the arrangements for a meeting or about the quality of a talk, he reserved them for a quiet word with me afterwards. He was also his own man. On several occasions when I said that I had not appreciated a talk, Brian would tell me what good qualities he had found in it.

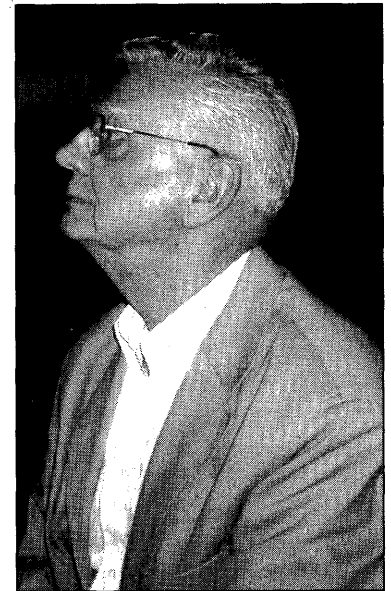
Brian was a very thoughtful, conscientious man, careful in everything he did, but never boring in his attitude. When abroad he was always observant of the rules for crossing roads, although in Belgium I did once manage to get him to move against a red light, which I took as a great triumph! He also had his own rules about eating. He normally did not have lunch, although he made an exception for the Knutsford

meetings, and usually had his main meal in the late afternoon. At Manchester meetings I always used to ask him as he sat drinking his coffee, 'What are you having for tea today?', and he would describe some exotic dish for which he had just been buying the ingredients. He was also an avid gardener and no visit to Knutsford would be complete without a visit to Fryers Garden Centre. We used to talk to Jean Hynd about her garden and on one day last autumn Jean kindly invited us to lunch to see the garden. We had a lovely time and were planning with Jean to come back sometime this summer, but sadly that is not to be.

One of Brian's greatest qualities was his respect for, and care of, the disabled. He had spent most of his life teaching blind children at the Royal School for the Blind in Liverpool and a concern for the well-being of the disabled never left him. He was always willing to be of assistance where there was any need. When, on our journey to Paris, Robert Atkinson had not turned up at the airport and we were getting anxious, who should volunteer to stay with Joan at the check-in till the last minute but Brian? And when, during our visit to Belgium, there was the need for someone to sit with Robert who was feeling tired, it was Brian who immediately said to me, 'You go on, I'll stay'. This was typical of his approach to life. He was the kindest and gentlest man I have known. In the Society he always seemed to know if someone had a bereavement, or was out of work or needed some other special consideration, and he would have a quiet word with me so that I would know the situation.

Brian was a devout churchman and I always knew that I was not to ring him between 6 and 8 on Sundays because he would be at Evensong. He was also a regular contributor to his church magazine, often reviewing books which he thought would be of interest. He was very careful over taking on more obligations in his retirement and it is to the credit of the Gaskell Society that it won Brian's wholehearted support and commitment. I greatly enjoyed being with him and I am missing him terribly. My one compensation is that I think that it was in our company and on our activities and holidays that some of his happiest moments were spent.

Dudley Green



Elizabeth Gaskell and Tennyson: a footnote

Alan Shelston

This short comment is offered as a footnote to John Chapple's illuminating discussion of Elizabeth Gaskell's affinity with Tennyson in the last Newsletter. In his article Professor Chapple adduced a number of instances when Mrs. Gaskell had quoted from Tennyson's poetry. In this note I want to draw attention to an occasion when she may have actually removed some lines of the Laureate's from one of her works.

The first instalment of Gaskell's *North and South* appeared in Dickens's *Household Words* on 2 September 1854. It had no chapter titles or chapter mottoes, but the *Household Words* text was preceded by a stanza from Tennyson's poem 'Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue' which concludes 'But for some true result of good/ All parties work together.' These lines, and indeed the complete stanza, are an appeal for social cohesion and thus reinforce the social theme of the novel. However they do not appear in the two-volume first edition of *North and South*, nor do they in any later edition that I have seen. It is clear from a comparison of the *Household Words* text and that of the first edition that Gaskell took the opportunity of the short time available to her between the completion of the serialization in *Household Words* and the publication of the first edition to make a number of revisions. We know that Dickens had a considerable editorial influence on the *Household Words* text and the inference that may be drawn from this is that Gaskell was now presenting her novel as she wished it to be. That being so we can perhaps assume that it was Dickens who was responsible for including the quotation from Tennyson's poem in the first place, and Gaskell who was responsible for removing it.

As I have said, Tennyson's lines are appropriate to the industrial theme of *North and South*. It is arguable however that this may have been more Dickens's priority than Gaskell's. Dickens undoubtedly accepted *North and South* for his journal because of the social agenda that it promised. In this it followed his own *Hard Times* which had preceded it in the pages of his magazine. The consideration of an appropriate title in fact went on for some time after Gaskell first submitted manuscript to Dickens, and is detailed in the correspondence between them. On 2nd July 1854 Dickens wrote to Gaskell: 'Margaret Hale is as good a name as any other; and I merely referred to its having a name at all, because books usually have names, and you had left the title of the story blank.' But later (27th July) he writes: 'North and South appears to me a better name than Margaret Hale. It implies more, and is expressive of the opposite people brought face to face by the story.' It may also be to the point that the issue of *Household Words* that preceded the publication of the

first instalment of *North and South* carried a story with the title 'Margaret.' Be this as it may, it was Dickens who seems to have given Gaskell's novel its distinctive title, drawing on an observation in Chapter 8 by the workman Higgins to Margaret Hale, Gaskell's heroine - 'North and South has both met and made kind o' friends'.

But for Mrs. Gaskell, in her correspondence to friends at the time, the novel was always 'Margaret' - i.e. the story of its heroine - and when she revised the novel for volume publication much of her attention was given to filling out the later part of Margaret Hale's story in a way appropriate to the theme of her self-development. In particular she added a new chapter, Chapter 46, where Margaret returns to Helstone with Mr. Bell, and she expanded and re-divided the London chapters that follow. The effect of this was first to bring Margaret as a returning native back to her emotional roots - but only to learn that natives can never return - and then to emphasise her sense of personal uselessness, having left Manchester - and Mr. Thornton - behind her. The reader is thus prepared more effectively for the emotional moment when Margaret and Thornton are able to declare their love for each other in the final chapter.

Undoubtedly the way that *North and South* developed, after the chapters of industrial conflict, took it further and further from Dickens's priorities, and will have played its part in his increasing frustration with his contributor. By October 1854 he was 'alarmed by the quantity of North and South'. Writing to his sub-editor, Wills, he complained that 'Mrs. Gaskell's story, so divided, is wearisome in the last degree'. His comments are not without point. The sequence of deaths running from chapters twenty-eight to forty-eight (Bessy Higgins, Mrs. Hale, Boucher, Boucher's wife, Hale himself, Mr. Bell) makes for gloomy reading, as does the somewhat remorseless analysis of Margaret's guilt and anxiety about the lie she has told which she believes to have lost her Mr. Thornton's good opinion. Certainly the story as it turned out was a long way from the kind of uplifting material for which *Household Words* was originally devised. Dickens's relations with his favourite contributor were never the same again, despite the fact that she continued to contribute to his periodical throughout the decade.

Without a manuscript or the relevant correspondence we cannot say with certainty who was responsible for the inclusion of Tennyson's lines at the outset of *North and South*. But it may well be that, for all her admiration of Tennyson, Mrs. Gaskell may have felt that they gave her novel an emphasis that, as on several other occasions, she seems to have resisted. This is not to devalue her commitment to ideas of social justice, but it does suggest an increasing commitment to the importance of her heroines. In *Mary Barton* and *Ruth Hilton*, Mrs. Gaskell had already shown her

interest in the potential of strong female characters. The commitment to psychological and emotional analysis reflected in her treatment of Margaret Hale, if an unwelcome development for Dickens, was anticipated by her presentation of her heroine in *Ruth*. It leads on to her portrayal of Sylvia Robson, of Phyllis Holman and of Molly Gibson, to go no further, in the later works.

Samuel Holland and Liverpool

Christine Lingard

In May 2004 the Society enjoyed an interesting trip to Liverpool and the Wirral. Gaskell was familiar with the city from her youth, and made several visits to her uncle Samuel Holland and his sons Charles and Samuel. Samuel Holland senior (1768-1851) was a successful businessman whose many interests included lead and copper mining and quarrying in North Wales, ship-owning and the Herculanum Pottery in Liverpool. This was a major manufacturer of quality bone china which existed till 1841 and whose wares are still highly collectable to this day. In this latter enterprise he was in partnership with his cousin John Holland of Dam Head Farm, Knutsford and Michael Humble, a Liverpool businessman. They were also involved in corn milling, ochre grinding, flint grinding, and supplying agricultural produce to the Merseyside area. They sold hemp, rope, oil, corn, hogshead staves, sail canvas and ships' chandlers' materials. He became a very wealthy man.

But why did this young man from rural Cheshire choose to pursue his business interests in Liverpool nearly thirty miles away? Living where he did he could have just as easily entered the textile industry. There was a small silk industry in Knutsford and he had a cousin who was involved in the cotton industry in Manchester only 12 miles away. The family were also acquainted with the Greg family whose cotton mills were at Styal, near Wilmslow. Or he could have moved the twenty miles south to Stoke-on-Trent, the centre of the pottery industry. Josiah Wedgwood knew Knutsford well as he was related to the Stringers, a local family of artists. John Holland of Dam Head tried to get his nephew an apprenticeship with Wedgwood. By the time Samuel had embarked on his career the links were even stronger as the two families were by then linked by marriage. Two of Samuel's brothers married daughters of Josiah's sister and her husband, Rev. William Willetts.

Michael Humble, a Unitarian, came originally from Bradford but later bought an estate at Bawtry, near Doncaster. He was a friend of the Lumb family of Wakefield - Samuel Lumb married Hannah Holland, Samuel Holland's sister. The marriage was not successful and she returned to Knutsford and undertook the upbringing of her motherless niece Elizabeth. Humble also had family ties with Knutsford - with the Whittakers, who were good friends of the Lumbs. He is recorded as having

interests in Liverpool shipping as early as 1789 and in some of his ventures was joined by Samuel Holland. He was a tough customer but very wealthy and generous. One of the Whittakers describes being entertained at his home where they dined off a 200lb turtle specially shipped from Liverpool to Bradford.

Holland's earliest business ventures seem to have been in the slate industry in North Wales and he had dealings until 1819 with Lord Penrhyn, a quarry owner in the area who was related by marriage to Rev Oswald Leycester, vicar of Toft near Knutsford. His son Edward Leycester adopted the name Penrhyn on receipt of an inheritance. Later the family was to become connected with the Stanleys of Alderley Park, some six miles from Knutsford. Peter Holland, one of Samuel's brothers, was doctor to the Stanleys and there is evidence in Gaskell's letters that the acquaintance between the two families lasted for many years. Samuel Holland's home Plas Penrhyn was owned in the 20th century by Lord Stanley's grandson, Bertrand Russell.

Humble's interest in pottery may have stemmed from his relationship to the firm of Humble and Green & Co., manufacturers of Leeds pottery, another celebrated ware. The two men acquired interests in a modest Liverpool earthenware firm in 1796. They moved to the Toxteth site in about 1800 and the name Herculanum, reminiscent of Wedgwood's Etruria, indicates the aspirations of the company. Samuel's interest in the company does not seem to have lasted long after 1806.

It is also interesting to note how many of Holland's activities mirror those of the Macclesfield firm of Roe and Company (Macclesfield is about twelve miles from Knutsford.) It is probable that Gaskell's aunts Hannah (later Mrs. Lumb) and Abigail, who were Samuel Holland's sisters, received part of their education from the eccentric minister of the town's King Edward Street Unitarian Chapel, Rev John Palmer, and a cousin Rev Philip Holland sponsored Palmer in his inauguration so it is not inconceivable that the Holland brothers were also familiar with the town.

Charles Roe (1715-1782) founder of this company was the leading figure in the industrial revolution in Macclesfield in the eighteenth century and there are several memorials to him in the town, not least the mighty Christ Church, which he had built in 1775. He was born in Castleton, Derbyshire, the son of the Vicar. Interestingly his maternal grandfather was the Rev Kettelsby Turner, the last minister of the established church in Knutsford whose services were patronised by the Holland family before they became Dissenters.

Roe lost his father early and came to Macclesfield to be with his brother who was vicar there. He is first recorded in the silk button trade in the 1740s and he built a silk mill, so becoming a key figure in the industry for which the town is famous, but sensing a shift in the market around 1758 he turned to the business of smelting

copper at works on Macclesfield Common. His earliest supplies came from the ancient Alderley Edge mines nearby. The problems of transporting goods at that time were major and Roe instigated a campaign to build a canal running East to West from Macclesfield to join the River Weaver at Witton near Northwich, and thence to the Mersey and the Irish Sea. The route was to pass through Nether Knutsford at the foot of Adam's Hill (perilously close to Brook Street Chapel!). A public meeting was held at the George Hotel, King Street on 12th December 1765 and the scheme received enthusiastic support from the local business community.

The scheme failed however because of opposition from the Duke of Bridgewater whose business interests lay with supplying Josiah Wedgwood in the potteries with coal. He preferred a canal running North to South which was duly built. (The present Macclesfield canal was a Telford enterprise of the 1830s). Consequently, the following year Roe opened a smelting works in Liverpool under the managership of his son William (1746-1827) and eventually, as the Alderley supplies dwindled, the copper industry in Macclesfield was abandoned and is now only commemorated in street names. In the 1780s the company moved to a larger site on the banks of the Mersey in Toxteth, on land leased from Lord Sefton, but soon decided to transfer their operations to South Wales. This is the site that was acquired in 1800 by the Herculaneum Pottery Company.

Around 1763 Charles Roe acquired copper works in the Parys Mountains on Anglesey, which the company worked for over 20 years. They also mined at Penrhyn Dhu and the Llyn Peris near Llanberis on the Llyn peninsular, though neither was profitable. By 1811 Samuel Holland was also mining copper and lead in this area as well as quarrying slate. This industry was to be developed even more extensively by Samuel Holland junior who also had interests in the Festiniog Railway.

In 1779 William Roe was living in Duke Street, Liverpool where the Herculaneum Company later had its showrooms and where Samuel Holland junior was born in 1803; in later years he lived in Queen's Square and eventually returned to Macclesfield. He and his business partners were also ship owners. John Johnson, the manager of Roe's warehouse in Manesty's Lane, Cornhill, had a quarter share in the *Delamere* along with Michael Humble. This ship was to be burnt by the Russians in the Baltic in 1795. Roe, Johnson and another Macclesfield man Christopher Shaw sold a ship called the *Lucy* in 1795 to Thomas Losh of Whitehaven. John Chapple states that "the firm of Humble and Holland sent the potters Wedgwood and Byerley a neat little advertisement for their 'unexceptionable good vessel, copper bottomed and armed,' the fast-sailing *Lucy* which they intended should join the next convoy to the Mediterranean." I have not however proved that this is the same vessel. Holland's involvement in the shipping business was highly colourful. This was the time of the Napoleonic Wars, remember, and there is

evidence of a little privateering. There is obviously a lot more to be found out about him and I should be grateful for any more information.

Further Reading

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Visit to Liverpool

On 22 May members enjoyed a visit to Liverpool for its Gaskell associations with member Ann Jones as our guide. We started at Toxteth Old Chapel which has an interesting connection with Elizabeth Gaskell.

Richard Mather went to Liverpool as a young school master in 1611 and after completing his degree at Oxford was ordained in 1619, probably by the Bishop of Chester. The chapel at Toxteth was built for him though not consecrated as it was outside parochial boundaries. Mather was a controversial preacher and after being suspended for disobeying church law he sailed for Massachusetts in 1634. His grandson, Cotton Mather, who was involved in the Salem witch trials, supplied Elizabeth Gaskell with the pseudonym for her early work: Cotton Mather Mills, perhaps indicating an early fascination with this history which she later used in *Lois the witch*.

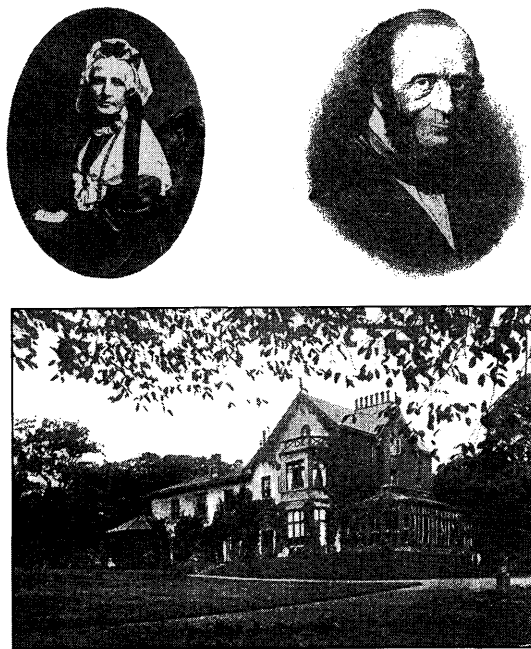
Toxteth Chapel continued to serve its dissenting congregation including Samuel Holland's family. One of our knowledgeable members spotted a memorial to Jeremiah Horrox, 1639, who was the first to recognise the transit of Venus across the sun, which was observed again this June.

Our guide then took our coach through Liverpool to see the fine civic buildings, including the Law Courts and to Pier Head and The Albert Docks where Mary Barton

was rowed out to Will Wilson's ship to beg him to prove Jem's alibi. We can only speculate how Elizabeth gathered the details of Liverpool docks and tides and the ship *The John Cropper*. I spotted in Macclesfield Courier for Feb 10th, 1827 'By the *James Cropper* which arrived in Liverpool on Sunday we have received the New York papers to the 20th of Jan.' Perhaps the Liverpool Hollands were business colleagues of the Cropper family: James was a leading force in the abolition of the Slave Trade.

We crossed the Mersey by tunnel rather than boat to the Cheshire side where Elizabeth Gaskell had stayed with Aunt Lumb at Branden Street, Woodside in 1831 and some of her earliest letters were written from there. Though we did not identify this house we were able to visit Liscard where Charles Holland lived with Elizabeth Gaskell, William's sister and their nine children. Now known as Vale House it stands in pleasant grounds overlooking the Mersey and serves the community in many way such as lunch clubs, classes and playgroups. We were welcomed with freshly baked scones and tea and only regretted that the band was not performing at the rotunda in the garden.

Elizabeth would have been pleased to find the house so well used.



Liscard Vale House

Friends of Plymouth Grove: Update

Janet Allan

The membership of the Friends is steadily growing, and in the last three months we have raised over £1750. Until the restoration starts the owners of the house, Manchester Historic Buildings Trust, have to find the money for running expenses, and we will be looking at ways to give us this essential core funding.

The capital cost of the restoration itself will be in the region of two million pounds, and the Trust is to apply to the Heritage Lottery Fund for about half of this. We already have £400,000 promised in matching funding, but will have to set up a major fund-raising programme to raise the balance.

Heritage Open Days, 11th and 12th September

We hope that you will be able to pay us a visit when the house is open for Heritage Open Days on Saturday and Sunday, 11th and 12th September, from 10a.m.- 4p.m.

The house is in need of total refurbishment, as you will appreciate. You will be able to see its present condition and our plans for the future. There will be displays about its history, the restoration project, Elizabeth Gaskell and her family, short slide presentations about Plymouth Grove and the neighbourhood, and a bookstall. There will also be refreshments.

Please come if you can. There is very limited parking in front of the house, and access to the ground floor is by five steps. Our plans for the restoration include full disabled access.

American members aid to Plymouth Grove appeal

A group of American Gaskell scholars and enthusiasts have banded together to make a collective contribution to the fund to renovate 84 Plymouth Grove. When a neighbour of Nancy Weyant's returned from a semester in London with a copy of the Guardian announcing the £2.2m restoration project for the property, Nancy made the decision to contribute the royalties from her latest annotated bibliography of Gaskell scholarship to the fund. She also contacted Janet Allan with the idea of spearheading an initiative to solicit contributions from American members of the Gaskell Society. Arrangements were made to have members send their contributions to Nancy who, in turn, will send a single check for the total amount to

Lucy Magruder, American secretary for the Society. Lucy will deposit the collective contribution in the Society's bank account. Nancy will report the names of the contributors to Janet Allan. The plan is to have the donation arrive in time to serve as a "Birthday Gift" for Elizabeth Gaskell. Contributions received by Nancy after September 1st, 2004 will likewise be forwarded to Lucy. All members are reminded that there is a form that individuals can use to make individual contributions. It is available on the Gaskell Web at:

http://gaskellsociety.users.btopenworld.com/index_page0011.htm

The Oxford Visit 23-24 June 2004: A Personal View

Marie Moss.

We drove down to Oxford in torrential rain as the weatherman forecast the deepest summer depression since D-Day was postponed, but the unremitting gloom brightened the minute we crossed Magdalen Bridge. Academics in colourful doctoral robes of scarlet, purple, green and blue were gathering for the University garden party, sheltering their mediaeval velvet caps and best-dressed wives under large golfing umbrellas. This was certainly very 'un-Manchester'. No wonder Elizabeth Gaskell loved it.

When Elizabeth visited Oxford in 1857 and 1860 the issue of allowing Fellows who were also Professors to marry was dividing the colleges. As we turned our car in Jowett Walk we recalled Gaskell's disappointment when the Balliol man was denied the privilege by a rather dodgy postal vote rigged by Dr. Pusey, to outwit Elizabeth's Cheshire neighbour and rising Oxford star, Arthur Stanley. 'Now Mr. Jowett would like to marry, this is well known to his friends, not anybody in particular, but to have a home, for he is a very affectionate man,' Gaskell reported to Charles Eliot Norton, indulging her motherly concern and detailing the internal politics she so relished being in the thick of.

The hosts for our visit, organized by the Gaskell Society South West, were Harris-Manchester College, but for the most part our group was to be housed in the newly built University Club, a building of glass and steel at the cutting edge of technology. First impressions suggested that it was a building without a door, but once we had been trained to perform a sequence of button-pushing and card-swiping manoeuvres, access to our rooms was achieved. Here we found walls and bed linen of such startling whiteness that only a single black chair defined the space and encouraged entry. We hurried down the street to take tea in the more familiarly comfortable surroundings of Manchester College's Victorian Gothic.

Rosemary Marshall welcomed the assembled group and Gwen Clarke reminded us of the pleasures Elizabeth had packed into her short visits to the city and of the many friends she had there ('dinner at Queens, Ch. Ch. Balliol etc etc, & breakfasts & lunches every-where'). Her activities were too numerous for us to duplicate but more than sufficient to provide an enjoyable selection for our programme. After tea we climbed the broad stone staircase to the splendid college library where the collection has constantly been enriched by acquisitions from other libraries, as institutions for theological training have gradually reduced in number. The computerized catalogue system partly obscured the grandly-seated figure of James Martineau, but behind his restful pose the large Warrington window clearly defined the features and familiar names of that famous academy, Priestley, Turner, Dalton, Aikin, Barnes, Barbauld *et al.*, lighting the room with glorious stained glass. The librarian, Sue Killoran, had forsaken the University garden party to tell us something of the library's history and contents, and to our delight had laid out for inspection some manuscripts from the Robberds' Collection. These included a letter from Elizabeth written in characteristic haste to her old friend, Mary Robberds, in 1861, touching on the subject of the education of pauper children. (reproduced in *Further Letters*, p. 225). The Principal of Harris-Manchester, the Rev. Ralph Waller, returned from the sodden lawns of Magdalen in time to greet us as we came down from the library and he drew our attention to the exceptionally fine Chapel windows designed by Burne-Jones and executed by W. Morris & Co. Much less enigmatic than the PRB decoration of the Oxford Union where Gaskell found herself 'trying to understand the meaning of the paintings, - and in a little measure understanding'.

After cocktails (Pimms actually) and a leisurely dinner in Hall, our group of twenty or so retired to the Senior Common Room, not for dessert and port, but for entertainment in Gaskell Society tradition. Cynthia Baron, a S.W. member now living in Cheltenham, made us laugh with a Lancashire accented rendering of the Battle of Hastings. This monologue is not from the oeuvre of Manchester working class poets admired and encouraged by William Gaskell, but they would certainly have enjoyed it in the Poet's Corner of the Sun Inn as much as we did. Afterwards Caroline Jackson-Houlston, senior lecturer in English Literature at Oxford Brookes University, directed our thoughts to the pathos and serious purpose which lie close to the surface of Gaskell's light comic writing in Cranford.

Next morning breakfast was served in a first floor 'long room' of the University Club, with windows wide open on to balconies overlooking New College cricket ground. The sun was shining, the sky was blue and the breakfast menu was to die for. Elizabeth remembered breakfast at Arthur Stanley's as the highlight of her first visit to Oxford and my husband felt that 'full English' with black pudding gave promise of being the most memorable of his. A visit to New College was planned for the morning. If not from 'kitchen, cellar and buttery to the muniment chambers', then as

much as we could see. Our visit was expected, but the College had overlooked the fact that they were officially closed to visitors to allow preparation for a Ball. All was resolved; we were allowed to creep around at will, so long as we kept clear of the hectic activity and most importantly avoided personal injury. So warned, our discreet party strode over kilometres of cable which encircled the quads, circumvented mammoth marquees which covered the lawns, crept stealthily behind staging large enough to host The Three Tenors and a full orchestra, and dodged countless cases of champagne being chain-ganged from pallet to party. A recording was taking place in the Chapel, so even here we negotiated several tons of technology to admire the glass and carving, while a puzzled soprano attempted to run through her scales. Doubly puzzled because Gwen, thinking her of our number had signalled to her to be quiet! In the kitchens we found the warm welcome which Gaskell's celebrity called forth. The characterful head chef celebrated our interest and conducted us with exhaustive commentary around his historic domaine, as the aromatic smell of herb-roasted peppers and steam from the bain-marie rose above our heads to escape through the lofty mediaeval ceilings.

There was time by late morning for a long restful lunch taken at the Turf Tavern (of Morse fame) or by the more bookish at Blackwell's. The Tavern quickly filled up with students wearing their examination 'sub-fusc', i.e. boys with white winged collars and white bow-ties, the girls (and how Gaskell would have approved of them) with black ties, carrying their mortar-boards. Two such came tethered together with ribbons supporting balloons announcing 'Engagement'. With a coterie of followers they raised their glasses to the end of 'finals' and the start of their future together.

An extended tour of the Bodleian was our agenda for the afternoon and we duly met our guides under the magnificent fifteenth-century vaulted ceiling of the Divinity School. This was built as the University's first examination school and oral examinations continued here until the nineteenth century. One of our group surprised the guide by telling him that she sat 'Schools' in this hall in the 1940s when wartime emergencies pressed the Bodleian and its underground storage areas into a variety of uses. The thrilling upper storey, with its galleried shelving and deep hush of scholarship, was added to accommodate Duke Humfrey's Library. Only three of these original volumes still survive in the collection, which later flourished because of the energy and talent of Sir Thomas Bodley (born 1544). Bodley was a man who shared with Gaskell the capacity of 'stirring up other men's benevolence', achieving much by networking his friends in academia and public life. There was opportunity to visit the Radcliffe Camera where Elizabeth was rushed up to the roof for the 'splendid view of towers and pinnacles' and to pop into the University church of St. Mary's, where she confessed 'I extremely liked the sermon - I a sermon hater'. The subject was 'faith and good works'.

That evening we had tickets for The Oxford Playhouse, and after a day spent in Gaskell footsteps it was impossible not to be aware of the parallels between the plot of Shaw's *Candida*, and life at Plymouth Grove. The Reverend James Mavor Morell, popular Christian Socialist clergyman, ever in demand for sermons and lectures to working men's clubs, is adored by young spinsters who hang on his every word, (Winkworths?), and cared for by his self-sacrificing wife, Candida, on whom falls the full burden of home and family. A sacrifice resented by the sensitive young poet she has befriended (Charles Eliot Norton perhaps?), who must do the honourable thing; suppress his affection and distance himself from her!

We had left the University Club, which had multiple TV screens, filling up for the England v. Portugal vital quarter-final. When we returned from the theatre it was overflowing with excited fans re-charging their glasses for extra time. Had England succeeded in the penalty shoot-out, like Gaskell we too might have danced until four in the morning, but it was not to be. The crowds of Oxford youth dispersed disconsolately, silence descended, sleep was possible and there was another fine breakfast to look forward to (No wonder 'Oxford' serves as an adjective to marmalade!).

Grateful thanks are due to Rosemary Marshall, Gwen Clarke and the S.W. team and to all who made our Oxford visit such a pleasure. Elizabeth Gaskell wrote to Edward Hale 'I like the society in Paris very best of all; and then Oxford'. I find if you travel with The Gaskell Society the best is always with you.



Members of the South West group in the Hall at St. John's college

Visit to Worcester and Stratford-upon-Avon

5th - 8th July 2004

Janet Kennerley

The sun was out to greet us as over thirty members set out by coach from the usual Macclesfield and Knutsford locations and we soon seemed to arrive at Hanbury Hall, near Worcester, for our first interesting visit of the day.

Hanbury Hall and Gardens, now in the care of The National Trust, was completed in 1701, and is a beautiful example of an English gentleman's country home, containing the Watney collection of fine porcelain and Dutch flower paintings. We all enjoyed the stunning reconstructed formal gardens set in delightful parkland, in perfect weather. Some members took advantage of the Batricar from the visitor-reception up to the forecourt of the house while others took quite energetic walks to the orangery, mushroom house and 'snobs tunnel' in the grounds, but everyone felt we had made an excellent start to our short holiday. It was one of the stops not directly linked to Elizabeth Gaskell, as far as we are aware at present, but she would certainly have known it existed and may have deliberately used the name of Hanbury in 'My Lady Ludlow'.

Our next visit of the afternoon was to Boughton House, near Worcester, where Elizabeth Gaskell stayed with the Isaac family, and from where she wrote important letters relating to *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*. Edward (1806-75), son of Swinton Colthurst Holland, married Sophia Isaac of Boughton (1813-51) in 1832. Their son Thurstan married Marianne Gaskell. Sophia's brother, John Isaac, married Edward Holland's sister, Charlotte. The property is now the Clubhouse to the Worcester Golf Club, and we received a warm welcome. We were most fortunate that the previous Club Secretary had just vacated the rooms upstairs which meant that we were able to view much more of the property than expected. We wondered which rooms Mrs. Gaskell had occupied. I felt that she had probably enjoyed the lovely views across to the Malvern Hills, as she wrote her correspondence to her publisher, George Smith, for example, during July and August of 1856. In June 1854, she wrote to Marianne: 'the Isaacs (want me to go) to Boughton but home I must be by the end of next week' - just like us in fact! As we enjoyed a very welcome cuppa in the Clubhouse lounge, two portraits of the parents of Sophia and John looked down upon us and how I wished they could talk!

We arrived at our accommodation for the next three nights - the Bank House Hotel, Bransford, near Worcester (four members who had travelled independently joined us here) - in good time to settle in and freshen up for dinner, which was followed by a very lively talk by Laura Kranzler. Her enthusiasm for 'Gothic Tales and ECG' kept most of us awake for the rest of the evening!

On Tuesday morning, the sun was shining brilliantly again as we set out for Shottery, to visit Anne Hathaway's Cottage. Members enjoyed the delightful garden here also, and thought of Mrs. Gaskell's stay with her Worcestershire cousins during the spring of 1849. It is said that she sank back into the cushioned existence of the 'very pretty, really old-fashioned cottage' at Shottery as yet unidentified, which could have been the home of her cousin Catherine (sister of Charles Holland) and her husband Richard Greaves.

We moved on to Clopton House for a short stroll to view this old house (now turned into luxury apartments), the subject of Elizabeth Gaskell's first prose publication. Some of our members did get a brief glimpse of the much older black and white wing to the rear of the property, but not before seeing quite a lot of the brown and white parts of a gentleman sunbathing nearby! Unfortunately the Chairman of the Residents' Committee who had agreed to show us round was not at home, but another neighbour kindly helped out. She showed us through the main entrance where we saw 'the wide shelving oak staircase', and then into a very pretty inner courtyard to view the chapel window (both mentioned by Gaskell). This location provided an ideal spot for a group photo!

Our next destination on this hot afternoon was Stratford-upon-Avon where we were at liberty to visit Shakespeare's Birthplace, Hall's Croft, Nash's House and New Place Garden (where Shakespeare's mulberry tree grows, from which a scion was planted in Brook Street Chapel's graveyard in Knutsford). Several people ventured as far as the Holy Trinity Church and adjoining Avonbank Gardens, the site of Avonbank School, now demolished, which was run by the Byerley sisters from 1824, after the move from Barford.

In spite of a weather forecast to the contrary, Wednesday was cooler but still a very pleasant fine day for the short journey from our hotel to The Elgar Birthplace Museum. The country cottage where Edward Elgar was born in 1857 still has a very simple, rural feel to it, while the modern Elgar Centre opened in 2000 provides a superb display area and modern facilities. Everyone seemed to enjoy this fascinating insight into the life, music, family and friends of one of England's greatest composers, and we looked ahead to the day when Plymouth Grove will be open to visitors in a similar way! Special arrangements had been made for us to view letters written in a very fussy style from Meta Gaskell to the wife of Edward Elgar containing details of an anticipated visit to Plymouth Grove in 1902, which after all had to be cancelled! It is hoped that further research into the diary kept by the Elgars can be done to ascertain whether later arrangements were made. We wondered if Meta's 'troublesomeness' might have put them off the idea! After coffee, we had a short drive through the pretty village of Powick, and spotted the stone gateposts of 'Powyck Court' - all that now remains of the residence once

occupied by a son of Edward Holland. We enjoyed free time in Malvern to visit the Priory Church with its fine windows, excellent collection of medieval tiles and the sixteenth-century tomb of Sir John Knutsford and his wife, which Knutsford historian, Joan, particularly wanted to examine (Ed: I have since our visit directed the Nutsford family from N.Z. to see it).

The last visit of the day was to Dumbleton Hall, former home of Edward Holland. Set in the beautiful Worcestershire countryside, this impressive mansion is now a superb hotel, with magnificent oak-panelled lounge and views over several acres of gardens and woodlands. Rebuilt in the mid-nineteenth century using Cotswold stone, the Hall was home to Edward's fourteen children, including Thurstan, who became the husband of Marianne Gaskell only after a very long engagement following her mother's sudden death in 1865. On Edward's death in 1875 it had to be sold, but I couldn't help thinking of Marianne's visits to Dumbleton and what a change of scenery from her own home in Plymouth Grove in Manchester. We enjoyed tea in the Hall before a brief visit to the local church where we found various family graves, including some of the Wedgwood family who were cousins residing at the Rectory. Wednesday had been my favourite day so far, rounded off with another enjoyable dinner, concluding with the appearance of a candle-lit cake for Joan as we all sang 'Happy Birthday'. After blowing out her candles (we didn't count how many!), Joan kindly produced a video for us to watch of Ken Russell's black-and-white version of the life story of Elgar, as first shown by the BBC about thirty years ago - a pleasant and fitting end to a perfect day.

Thursday was the final day of our trip, but the drizzle did not dampen our spirits as we left the hotel to visit a superb fifteenth-century cruck-beamed tithe barn at nearby Leigh which is the largest surviving agricultural building of its type in the country. We all thought it was worthy of a stop, being the nearest place of historical and architectural interest before moving on to Worcester. Here we had an opportunity to visit the Cathedral (where sharp-eyed members noticed a memorial to some of the Isaacs family of Boughton who died in the First World War), the Commandery, the Royal Worcester factory, museum and shopping complex, and the lovely National Trust property of Greyfriars. Lynda Stephens and I wandered through the town as far as the Guildhall, a superb building of 1721-3, and wished we had dined in the Assembly Room there which is one of the most beautifully decorated Italianate rooms in the country.

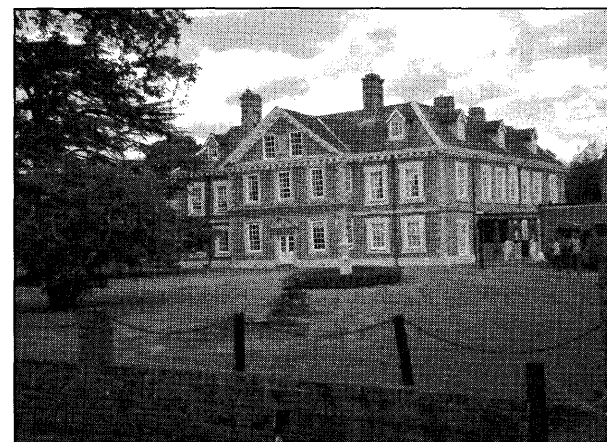
By this time, the rain had cleared up and we were later able to enjoy a walk in Barford, where the young Elizabeth Stevenson went to the school run by the Byerley sisters before it moved to Stratford. Unfortunately, Barford House is looking rather dilapidated these days, but as building work is about to take place to convert it to apartments, we were asked to view from the outside at the front only. We wandered

back to St. Peter's Church where we were met by the vicar and churchwarden. Elizabeth would have been taken to this church as a young schoolgirl, but we heard that although the tower had remained unaltered, she probably would not have recognised the interior, which had been altered during the mid-nineteenth century. In 1820, Katharine Byerley gave up teaching when she married William Stevenson's friend and new brother-in-law, Anthony Todd Thomson, who was also the doctor who had been present at Elizabeth's birth! This wedding took place at Barford Church.

Sadly, it was soon time to begin our journey home, but not before a final delicious tea with scones - and some people had several - at the De Mountford Hotel in Kenilworth. We had a splendid view of Kenilworth Castle before joining the new toll section of the motorway. I thought of the contrast between our comfortable return trip in a modern coach, using our mobile phones to let our families know of our progress, and those travels of Elizabeth Gaskell as she went at a much more sedate pace to all the places of such interest to us in the Gaskell Society nowadays!

Many thanks indeed to Jean and Hugh for their meticulous preparation for this trip, to Joan for all she does behind the scenes to keep us informed of interesting and relevant points, to Christine Lingard for her research into fascinating links with other authors, and to Barry, our driver, for his skill and courtesy.

Editor's note: Elizabeth Gaskell was an enthusiastic tourist with Meta: '... we have done Warwick and Kenilworth Castles; first walking[,] 2nd in the carriage'. I intend to read Sir Walter Scott's *Kenilworth* which got her 'in a scrape' as Mrs. J. J. Tayler was 'shocked at such a subject of conversation on a *Sunday*' with the Sunday School girls. (*Letters*, no.32)



Book Notes

Christine Lingard

Anny: a life of Anne Thackeray Ritchie by Henrietta Garnett; Chatto & Windus, £18.99.

A new biography of William Makepeace Thackeray's daughter Anne Isabella Ritchie; an author in her own right and a link between the age of Dickens and the London of the Bloomsbury group. Her sister married Leslie Stephen, who by his second wife was the father of Virginia Woolf. Anny was still regarded as part of the family and was an honorary aunt to the future novelist. Her connections are fascinating and included no less than Meta and Julia Gaskell and she was entertained in style at Plymouth Grove with a lunch of pheasant jelly, Apollinaris water and champagne. The book is illustrated with line drawings from the diaries of Anny, her father and sister Minny. The author, herself a great-niece of Virginia Woolf, has been able to draw on a lot of new material.

A house to let by Charles Dickens; Hesperus Classics £6.99. This is in fact a compilation volume originally published in 1858 which includes chapters by Wilkie Collins and Elizabeth Gaskell's *Manchester Marriage*. It is a rare opportunity to read one of her stories in its original context.

The idea of music in Victorian fiction by Nicky Losseff (University of York) and Sophie Fuller (University of Reading); Ashgate £47.50.

Due in July, this is a series of eleven essays by various authors. It includes a chapter entitled 'The voice, soul and poverty in *Thyrza* (Gissing) *Mary Barton*, *Alton Locke* (Kingsley) and *A Child of the Jago* (Arthur Morrison)'. Nicky Losseff discusses the character and function of Margaret.

An Elizabeth Gaskell Chronology

by Graham Handley is to be published in November

Pre-publication endorsements:

'Dr. Handley has provided an invaluable chronology for all devotees of Elizabeth Gaskell. This essential volume facilitates our understanding of individual works in terms both of her total literary output and of relevant contemporaneous cultural, social and political events. It richly enhances our appreciation of the diverse sources and resources which went into the making of a delightful correspondent, a gifted biographer and an author of memorable novels and tales.' - J. G. Sharps, author of *Mrs. Gaskell: Observations and Invention*.

'This chronology of the daily course of Elizabeth Gaskell's life illustrates to the full the remarkable range of her interests and activities. The absorbing detail of a crowded and fascinating life is revealed for us by Graham Handley's work.' - Alan Shelston, Gaskell scholar and co-editor of *The Further Letters of Mrs. Gaskell*.

Hardback 138mm x 216mm November 2004 1403902135

288 Pages •\$55.00 (\$80.00) ISBN 1-4039-0213-5

URL: <http://www.palgrave.com/products/Catalogue.aspx?is=1403902135>

Victorian Literary Quiz Book

We have had a book sent to us for review, entitled *Victorian Literary Trivia* - 640 Questions and Quotations from Jane Austen to Oscar Wilde, compiled by Kelley A Dickenson. This obviously includes Elizabeth Gaskell, and most of us should have no problems with questions such as "Who was married to a Unitarian minister?" or "What was the name of Molly's stepmother in *Wives and Daughters*?" On the other hand, do you know which author was arrested for participating in a traditional snowball fight, or whose mother submitted her teenager's stories to a magazine without his or her knowledge? I didn't, but if you know the answers to those, you'll probably find the questions in this book generally too easy. The fifteen authors referred to in the questions are helpfully listed at the front, along with their works, and none are particularly obscure, although I offer my congratulations to anyone who can remember all the details of every book they read. Can you remember (instantly) who the perpetual curate of Hoggstock was?

The questions seem to be a balance of the familiar, the "Oh dear, I should know that", and the more obscure. If you were entertaining guests with an interest in Victorian Literature or going on a very long plane journey it could be useful, but at £9.75 it seems quite expensive. Anyone who is interested should contact Kelley A. Dickenson at 425 Lakeshore Drive, Madison, MS 39110, USA, or by Email at Kelley@victorianliterarytrivia.com. And by the way, it was Robert Louis Stevenson who threw the snowballs, and Rudyard Kipling who sent off his stories to a newspaper.

Elizabeth Williams

Autumn Meeting

25th September at Knutsford, St. John's Church room, 2.30pm

The theme will be the editions of Gaskell's works and the role of editors.

Professor John Chapple will consider the 1906 Knutsford edition, the first complete edition, and its editor A.A.Ward.

Professor Angus Easson, as advisory editor and Dr. Josie Billington, as editor of *Wives and Daughters* will talk about their work for the Chatto and Pickering Edition, due to appear in 2005 and 2006.

After a cream tea it is hoped that members will walk down to Brook Street Chapel for the dedication of the plaque at the mulberry tree and to lay flowers on the Gaskell grave.

North West Programme

Monthly meetings at St. John's Church Rooms, Knutsford will be on Oct 27th, Nov 24th, Jan 26th, Feb 23rd, March 6th and April 27th. Buffet lunch is at 12.15 finish about 3.00pm.

This season we will be studying *Wives and Daughters*. At the first Meeting on October 27th Christine Lingard will talk about scientists in the novel and Joan Leach about the local background.

The New Year Lunch will be on Wednesday 12th Jan. Further details later.

Meetings at Cross Street Chapel, Manchester

All are welcome to these monthly meetings at 1.00pm on Tuesdays. You may like to come earlier to have a sandwich lunch, perhaps from nearby Pret-a-Manger.

OCTOBER 12th

This meeting will commence with a short memorial tribute to Brian Hechle.

Speaker: Robin Allan on **The Theatre in 19th Century Manchester**.

NOVEMBER 9th

Art in 19th Century Manchester with Sheila Dewsbury, author of the history of the Manchester Academy of Fine Art, and Gaskell Society chairman, Janet Allan with slides.

DECEMBER 7th

Speaker: Terry Wyke, senior lecturer in social and economic history at MMU: **Mrs. Gaskell's Manchester Men**.

Followed by a short service of traditional carols after a sherry and mince pie.

FEBRUARY 8th

Speaker: David George, MMU lecturer in Industrial History (retired).

An illustrated lecture on **The industrial background to Elizabeth Gaskell's Manchester novels**.

MARCH 8th

Speaker: Dr. Julie-Marie Strange on **Popular religion, class and ethnicity** in Manchester. Dr. Strange is a lecturer in Manchester University Department of History.

APRIL 9th

A.G.M.

The Gaskell Society South-West

Saturday November 20th, 2.00 p.m. for 2.30

"Elizabeth Gaskell's Manchester" - Janet Allan, Chairman of the Gaskell Society. This should be of great interest both to those who believe that civilisation stops at Watford, to ex-pats nostalgic for their northern roots and of course to students of 19th century history.

Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution, 16 Queen Square, Bath.

Rosemary Marshall, 138 Fairfield Park Road, Bath BA1 6JT.

Tel: 01225 426732 Email: rosemary_marshall@yahoo.com

The London and South-East Group

Saturday 11th September: Editing Brontë Letters by: Margaret M Smith

Saturday 13th November: Gaskell's Eternal Woman by Howard Gregg

For further details contact: Frances Twinn, 85, Calton Avenue London SE21 7DF

Tel: 020 8693 3238 Email: Frantwinn@aflex.net

Inaugural Scottish Meeting

A seminar for Gaskell society members is planned for Friday 26th November with an afternoon and evening talk.

This will be followed by a Saturday morning meeting after which members are invited to join The Carlyle Society AGM and pre-Christmas party.

The seminar will take place in the Centre for Lifelong Learning at 11 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh.

Accommodation can be arranged in a number of B&B houses within walking distance.

The conference fee and all the details will be available soon. Please send an S.A.E. to one of the addresses below if you are interested:

Mrs. H. James, Wind Rose Cottage, Barbour Road, Kilcreggan, Argyll & Bute, G84 0LB or Mrs. M. Sutherland, 7 Lennel Avenue, Edinburgh, EH12 6DW.

The Visual Life of Elizabeth Gaskell

The Visual Life of Elizabeth Gaskell by Tat Ohno (vers. 2) is now available at the following site. The film is 56-minute long (still developing), and divided into six parts from VLEG2_1 to VLEG2_6. Two editions (low and high) are ready, so choose the appropriate one for your computer. Some Gaskell Society members including Joan briefly appear in the film. I sincerely hope they don't mind it! To view the film, you may need a free copy of Real Player 10 (<http://www.real.com/?lang=en&loc=us>).

http://dist.dc.kumamoto-u.ac.jp/campus/kouza.php?next_KamokuTantouCD=69

The Gaskell Society



THE GASKELL SOCIETY HOME PAGE has all the latest information on meetings.
<http://gaskellsociety.users.btopenworld.com>

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NEWSLETTER

Spring 2005 - Number 39

Editor's Letter

Joan Leach

This will be a memorable year for us and we hope many of you will join us at our Manchester Conference, hosted jointly with Manchester Metropolitan University, from 19th to 21st July. The programme offers a wide variety of papers from speakers homing in from all parts of the globe, and special events, including guided walks and dinner at Manchester's Victorian Town Hall: the architect, Alfred Waterhouse, also designed the Natural History Museum and Knutsford's market hall. You can find details of the conference on the internet, at www.mcrh.mmu.ac.uk/gaskell.

The long anticipated BBC TV production of *North and South* aroused mixed feelings in member viewers and others, as you will see from Elizabeth Williams' collected reviews and comments. It has encouraged readers to go back to the book and, I am told, stimulated a revival of cravats as a fashion item!

The BBC's next project will be a great contrast and will show Elizabeth Gaskell's talents as a humorist. It is to be called *CRANFORD CHRONICLES*, because it is an amalgam of three Gaskell works: *Cranford*, *Mr Harrison's Confessions* and *My Lady Ludlow*, though *Cranford* was the starting point and is at the heart of it. The three books have been closely interwoven, so all the major and minor stories are threaded together for a four-part series. Expect some surprises!

It is the result of three years' enthusiasm and work by Susie Conklin and Sue Birtwistle, who worked together on *Wives and Daughters* and *Pride and Prejudice*. Sue Birtwistle will produce it, and the script is written by Heidi Thomas. Jenny Uglow has acted as consultant throughout. It is hoped that filming will start in a few months' time.

There are two recent publications by Gaskell members to be noted: Dr. Graham Handley's *Elizabeth Gaskell Chronology* (Palgrave) will be much appreciated by students of Elizabeth Gaskell's life and works. It not only summarises the letters succinctly but collates them with her life and contemporary literary events. Graham has done us the honour of dedicating his work to Frances Twinn, our London and S.E. group secretary, and The Gaskell Society.

Alan Shelston's Norton edition of *North and South* has plenty of extra material to answer any questions you might have after watching the TV version or re-reading the book, and is a most attractive paper back. Both will be reviewed elsewhere.

We are looking forward to a trip to the Lake District, staying at Grasmere, from 2nd to 5th May 2005, following the literary trail of the Gaskells, Wordsworth, Harriet

Martineau and others.

You receive notice of all our major events in the Newsletter and can also check on the home page: <http://gaskellsociety.users.btopenworld.com> but there are times when we may want to arrange an extra visit or tell you about an event in the North West. There are many members who are not able to participate in such events for various reasons, so to save expense on postage we will create a North-West mailing list. Please will you fill in and return the form enclosed with this Newsletter, or sign up at a meeting.

Scientists in Wives And Daughters

Christine Lingard

In *Wives & Daughters* Gaskell created the character of Roger Hamley, younger of the two sons of a country squire, and recently graduated from Trinity College, Cambridge. He shows a fascination with natural history, never happier than when walking alone or making scrupulous records of the specimens he has gathered, and during the course of the book he undertakes a journey to Africa to collect specimens for a museum.

There is no doubt that Gaskell had Darwin in mind when she sent Roger on his voyage of discovery. She says so in a letter to her publisher in 1864, outlining the plot of her proposed novel. Initially she had planned to send him round the world too, but modified her plot, sending him to Abyssinia and the Cape. But the character is more complex and it is evident that there are other sources for her inspiration.

Gaskell described Darwin as her cousin. This is not strictly the case. He was a cousin of some of her Holland cousins who were descended from Rev. William Willett, husband of Josiah Wedgwood's sister Catherine. Darwin was the grandson of Wedgwood. Gaskell's cousin, Edward Holland of Dumbleton Hall, in particular was a friend of the Darwins and there are several references to this branch of the family in Darwin's correspondence. But there is only one recorded meeting between Gaskell and Darwin - at a party for the birthday of Julia 'Snow' Wedgwood.

But it is claimed that the character of Roger Hamley emerged during a visit she made to Manor Place, Edinburgh early in 1864. Her host was George Allman (1812-1898), Professor of Natural Philosophy at the University. Allman, an Irishman born in Cork, married in 1851 Emily, sister of the Gaskells' solicitor William Shaen, the man charged with clearing up the mess caused by the publication of *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*. Shaen in turn was married to one of the Winkworth sisters. Gaskell described Allman as an old friend, having known him since his marriage:

[he] is the most charmingly wise and simple man I ever met with. I mean he is full of deep thought & wisdom & knowledge and also like a child for unselfconsciousness, and sweet humility ... They have no children; but their happiness seems perfect, even without. (*Letters*, No. 546)

Allman was a prolific writer of scientific papers if not books. His speciality was marine biology - in particular gymnoblastic hydrozoa (jellyfish). All his works were meticulously illustrated and are believed to have had an influence on Thomas Huxley. They remained standard for many years. He was also actively involved with setting up the Edinburgh Natural History Museum. Being totally absorbed in his work, he appears to have had few outside interests, rarely travelled and hardly fits the bill as the dashing romantic hero of fiction: but Gaskell would have been able to observe his method of working at first hand, as she could not with Darwin.

Both these men were experienced scientists with well-established reputations. She did not know either of them as students, so I should like to offer another suggestion for a model. Marianne Gaskell had a long-standing affection for her second cousin Thurstan but his parents opposed marriage, not because of consanguinity but on financial grounds. His father Edward Holland had twelve children to divide his fortune between and Thurstan would have to earn his living. In her disappointment in 1861, Marianne left to spend the winter in Rome, where to her parents' dismay she came under the influence of Cardinal Manning. Whether their prejudice was as strong as Squire Hamley's - he 'held all Roman Catholics in dread and abomination something akin to our ancestors' hatred of witchcraft' - is a subject for debate. Marianne made the return journey via Dumbleton where she renewed her acquaintance with Thurstan. While on a family visit to London that summer Thurstan's younger brother Fred took lodgings nearby and helped to make 'plans'. After a trip to Eton and the boat races when they tried to watch fireworks over the river in the rain Marianne and Thurstan were as good as engaged. A huge family row ensued.

In the previous year Gaskell had secured for Fred a post as curate at St Andrew's, Ancoats, one of the poorest areas of Manchester. In a letter to her cousin Effie Wedgwood in December 1862 (quoted by Jenny Uglow), Meta Gaskell, after expressing her distress at the rift, says of Fred: 'I am so full of the Dumbletonians and Fred - He is much the best and agreeable too!'

Frederick Whitmore Holland graduated from none other than Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1861 (Thurstan had studied law at the same place but unlike that other son of a country squire - Cynthia Kirkpatrick's Mr Henderson who only played at being a barrister, Thurstan had to do the job of barrister in earnest). Fred was ordained the same year and spent the next four years in Manchester - a period

when Meta suffered a good deal of ill health and depression, but kept busy ministering to the poor during the cotton famine.

Some time in 1861, as well as graduating and taking up his post, Fred managed to fit in a trip to Sinai. This isn't as lengthy an undertaking as it sounds. The Suez Canal had been opened in 1860 expressly to take steamships to Australia, so this area was becoming more frequently visited. According to the diary of a Macclesfield lady, Marianne Brocklehurst, the steamship from Brindisi to Egypt in 1873 took only four days.

Not very much is known about Holland's first trip - who accompanied him or who financed it - but in 1865 he was there again. This is the year that *Wives and Daughters* was being serialised in the *Cornhill Magazine*. Geoffrey Sharps quotes Marianne as saying that her mother did not have a firm plot when she started but the story developed as she wrote. Fred arrived in Suez in February. One can only speculate on how long the trip was in the planning. This time there are some accounts of his activities. He visited the ancient Egyptian turquoise mines at Wady Mughara and left his companions, to wander solitarily in the desert finding archaeological relics, copying hieroglyphics and surveying mountains.

In 1866 he was part of an officially-sponsored expedition to chart the area. Fred's trips were all of a geographical or archaeological nature but requiring detailed recording of data with all the precision of the scientist. He gained a bit of a reputation in geographical circles. On his return to England in 1865 he became Vicar of All Saints', Evesham, not far from Dumbleton, and in his final years was headmaster of Evesham Grammar School. His adventuring spirit continued to the end. He died at the relatively early age of 41 from heart disease, while on a mountain in Switzerland.

There may be nothing more to this than a mother's ambitions for her daughter. We will probably never know the truth but I think you will find there are a lot of characters in *Wives and Daughters* who may be drawn from life, so why not?

Chapple, J.A.V. & Pollard, Arthur, eds, *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell* (Manchester University Press, 1997 reprint).

Papers of the Royal Geographic Society, April 23 1866.

Sharps, John Geoffrey, *Mrs Gaskell's Observation & Invention* (Linden Press, 1970).

Uglow, Jenny, *Elizabeth Gaskell. A Habit of Stories* (Faber & Faber, 1963)

Elizabeth Gaskell and Dickens in All the Year Round

Deborah Wynne

Alan Shelston's interesting discussion in the last Newsletter, outlining the relationship between Gaskell and Dickens during the period when *North and South* was serialised in *Household Words*, prompts me to add a few comments about the development of this relationship when Dickens became editor of *All The Year Round*. Alan Shelston indicates that Gaskell may have felt pressurised to make changes to *North and South* to suit Dickens's requirements, while on the other hand Dickens considered Gaskell to be intractable and unaware of the demands of weekly serialisation. However, despite these tensions, the 'back-to-back' serialisation of two important 'social problem' novels in the pages of *Household Words* constitutes one of the most significant moments in Victorian publishing history. What is less well-known, however, is that this 'double act' was resumed in 1859 when Dickens established his new weekly magazine, *All The Year Round*.

Dickens inaugurated his new magazine with the serialisation of *A Tale of Two Cities* and he chose a three-part short story by Gaskell, *Lois the Witch*, to run with the novel's climactic later instalments between 8th and 22nd October 1859. In many ways *Lois* and *A Tale* were as well-matched thematically as were *North and South* and *Hard Times*. Dickens's historical novel depicts the violent events of the French Revolution of 1789, while *Lois the Witch* is based on the Salem witch trials of the 1690s. Gaskell's gloomy yet powerful novella, in which the teenage heroine is executed as a witch, was positioned by Dickens alongside those instalments of *A Tale of Two Cities* which depict Darnay on trial in France and the dramatic discovery of Dr. Manette's 'forgotten' letter. The effects of this pairing of *A Tale* and *Lois* must have been particularly exciting for readers of *All the Year Round* who were able to turn immediately from Dickens's representation of history to Gaskell's equally powerful rendering of the past.

The story of the serialisation of *A Tale* and *Lois* has a further twist, however, for the ending of Gaskell's narrative, which depicts the innocent, condemned Lois comforting her fellow prisoner, Nattee, the Native American servant, as they are both led to the gallows is a foreshadowing of Sydney Carton's attempt to comfort the French seamstress as they make their final journey to the guillotine at the end of Dickens's novel. This scene in *A Tale of Two Cities* appeared a few weeks after *Lois* had completed its serialisation. It is feasible that Dickens, having read Gaskell's moving account of Lois's execution, was inspired to borrow the detail of the main protagonist comforting a weaker companion for his own famous scene. Although

readers of *All The Year Round* were treated to two dramatic executions within the space of four weeks, few would have been aware that Gaskell was the author of *Lois the Witch*, for Dickens imposed a policy of anonymity on his contributors while retaining the right to sign his own contributions. Indeed, it may have been Dickens's insistence on Gaskell's anonymity that led her to arrange for her next serialised novel, *Wives and Daughters*, to be published in *The Cornhill*, where her name was prominently displayed.

Book Notes

Christine Lingard

The year 2005 should prove to be an important one in Gaskell scholarship with the publication in the summer of the first volumes of new Pickering & Chatto edition of the complete works of Gaskell - a prestigious and scholarly project which will introduce a number of unfamiliar works of Gaskell as well as new readings of the text and new editing. More in future journals and newsletters.

Elizabeth Gaskell Chronology by Graham Handley. Palgrave Macmillan, £55. This is a long established series which has covered all the major British authors and will prove a valuable reference tool. It treats the Gaskell story systematically and chronologically. Graham Handley is a prolific author on Elizabeth Gaskell and a member of the Society.

The Pre-Raphaelite Art of the Victorian Novel: Narrative Challenges to Visual Gendered Boundaries by Sophia Andres. Ohio State University Press, \$89. An interdisciplinary study of painting and literature, coupling Victorian novels with painters and revealing new links and influences between the two genres. It concentrates on Gaskell, Wilkie Collins, George Eliot and Hardy. It includes full colour illustrations.

Medical women and Victorian fiction by Kristine Swenson. University of Missouri Press, \$39.95. A comparison of the medical women (both doctors and nurses) in *Ruth*, *The Woman in White* and other books with their real life counterparts, this book offers a new insight into the problem of the prostitute in Victorian culture and society.

Educating the Proper Woman Reader: Victorian Family Literary Magazines and the Cultural Health of the Nation by Jennifer Phegley. Ohio State University Press, \$39.96. A discussion of the influence of women on contemporary literary taste, analysing their reading habits and showing how literary magazines such as *The Cornhill*, *Belgravia* and *Victoria* catered for them, and illustrating the role played by

fiction writers such as Mrs Braddon, Dickens, George Eliot, Gaskell, Thackeray, Trollope and Mrs Oliphant in this.

The Moral of the Story: an Anthology of Ethics through Literature, eds Peter and Renata Singer. Blackwell Publishing, £17.99. An extensive collection of extracts from literature demonstrating the treatment of ethics. An extract from *North and South* is used in the section on 'Work Ethics'.

North and South on BBC TV

The following are a selection of comments on the recent television adaptation of *North and South*.

From Gaskell Society members:

'I think the important thing about adaptations is that they should be judged for what they are, and not simply in terms of fidelity to the original. If the director wants to leave material out, or invent material, that's fine by me. According to this principle I had no problems with Mr Darcy's wet shirt. But it does have to be in the spirit of the original, or at least of the period, and that is where so much of *North and South* fell down. To take the most obvious example, Margaret would hardly have gone out to dinner, in company she didn't know, in a dress that Nell Gwynne might have found too revealing. Neither would she have gossiped about her friendship with Thornton with Bessy and her sister.'

'Part of the adaptation I felt was powerful and excellent. I found the scene in the silent mill, in the last episode for example, deeply moving, underlining visually (which is what television can do so well) the reality of Thornton's loss. I felt that the Margaret/Thornton relationship was handled with great sensitivity apart from the lack of respect for 19th-century conventions in the final kiss! Still that's what they really felt for each other. The beating-up in episode one was unfortunate, as it was quite out of character with Gaskell's - and the BBC's - interpretation of Thornton.'

'What the director, or the designer, did not understand was the visual contrasts Gaskell uses throughout the novel which are a gift for TV... Lots of close-ups and too few establishing shots, which an actress friend of mine assures me are to save money.'

'I found it too melodramatic, too mid-Victorian Romantic - sadly lacking in the subtlety of Gaskell.'

'Many people who have not read the book will now do so. I have had conversations with people from a wide variety of age-groups who will now read and enjoy Gaskell for the first time.'

'For me, the adaptor's greatest transgression lay in the distortion of character. Margaret - she of the thousand pouts - seemed to drift endlessly through the series

in a state of utter bewilderment ... Mr Bell - a man-about-town - positively leered at Margaret.'

'All those chubby workers who looked as if they had never missed a meal or contracted TB. Surely there are some thin extras around? What about a few Big Issue Sellers?'

'What a pity that it was confined to four episodes, as the ending was condensed and inaccurate.'

'Production beautifully photographed but ... quite unhistorical.'

'I was very impressed and thought it excellent'.

'..."sexed-up" for a modern audience.'

I was so disappointed with the casting of the main characters... but I found the minor characters very engaging.'

'Margaret was convincing - but I hated her hat!'

'Mr Thornton was very good-looking and easy to watch.'

From the press:

'For the life of me I cannot imagine what some Tristram saw in Mrs Gaskell's *North and South* that made him imagine this weirdly arch, mawkishly patronising and hopelessly dated story about the divide between 19th-century rural and industrial England would have any conceivable interest as a television drama'. A. A. Gill in *The Sunday Times*.

'... the longing for a 100 per cent proof hit of excitement, mystery and passion has an outlet... John Thornton ...played smoulderingly by the previously little-known Richard Armitage, as a blue-eyed, dark-haired stunner, the Darcy *de nos jours*... Historical accuracy can go hang when you are imagining yourself in Margaret's place.' Anne Ashworth in *The Times*, reporting on the female public's reaction.

'Visually this was terrific - especially Margaret's first astonished glimpse of the inside of a textile mill: the air so thick with cotton that it looked as if she'd stumbled into an Arctic blizzard. The supporting roles too are very well done: Tim Pigott-Smith as Margaret's ineffectual father and Lesley Manville as her shell-shocked mother.' John Preston in *The Sunday Telegraph*.

'John Thornton (Richard Armitage), strides, a Mephistophelean shape, through the perpetual snowstorm of his cotton mill. Dark and thunderous, he seems to be forever grinding a ruthless tooth. Margaret (Daniela Denby-Ashe), a marmoreal beauty with great, astonished eyes, is an attractive heroine. Kind, clever, decided, doggedly optimistic ... Under the bludgeoning of fate, her bonnet is knocked only slightly askew.' Nancy Banks-Smith in *The Guardian*.

'Author's in-laws owned sailcloth business in Buttermarket Street.' Headline in the *Warrington Guardian*.

'In many ways, as Welch [Sandy Welch, who adapted the novel for this production] points out, Mrs Gaskell succeeded in "having it all" where later, more emancipated generations of women failed. "She managed to have a happy marriage and lots of

children at the same time as bringing out a book every year and having a fulfilling intellectual and social life. At the end of her life she travelled to Italy, where it is rumoured she took a younger lover.'" Article in the *Radio Times*. [Ed.: Not entirely accurate!]

From the internet:

The following comments were sent to the BBC website by members of the public. There is also a message board devoted to *North and South*, which had received 13846 messages (all favourable, and some starting interesting discussions) while the message board devoted to all the soap operas had received a total of 2002.

'My Sunday nights will not be the same without my weekly fix of *North and South*.'

'It was a lovely, lovely ending. But I just wish that the producers had used the ending in the book. Anyway - thank you BBC, for cheering up these cold winter nights with some real smouldering passion!'

'I speak as an average teenager - for a television drama to have coaxed me into a bookshop to buy a book written over 150 years ago - well, it's impressive! I thought the production was fantastic - the costumes, locations, the script and screenplay...and the acting! I have found the entire series gripping!'

'Up until the final scene everything was just great then disaster struck! What was Sandy Welch thinking of when she wrote the last scene?'

'Wonderful! The re-written final scene was one of the most moving bits of drama I have watched for years.'

'I was crying solidly for the last 15 minutes! I can't believe it's over. I definitely prefer Mr Thornton to Mr Darcy...it's the smouldering looks! Mmmm!'

'I've not enjoyed a programme so much since the BBC's *Pride and Prejudice*.'

Editor: We are much indebted to Elizabeth Williams for collecting all these items and to members who helped.

A Forgotten Wedding Custom

Jenny Uglow writes:

A week or so ago, I had a query from Natasha McEnroe, who is Curator at Dr. Johnson's house in London, saying "You know in your book on E Gaskell she is bogged down labelling all her clothes prior to getting married - why were they being labelled with the initials of her maiden name? Am I correct in assuming that it is bad luck to sign your married name (or initials) before you are actually are, maybe that was why?" I immediately thought I had got it wrong, then remembered that my grandmother's trousseau - of which some bits are still here - was also labelled with her maiden name. So Natasha looked further, and found an old *Dictionary of Superstitions* (1948):

A more active superstition is that which forbids the use of the married-name-to-be before the wedding day. If anyone addresses an engaged girl by it, or if she writes it down for the pleasure of seeing what it looks like, she may never bear it in fact. At one time, this idea extended even to the marking of clothes and house-linen in advance; they had to either be left unmarked until after the wedding, or marked with the girl's maiden name.

Editor: Dr. Josie Billington is to read a paper at our Manchester Conference entitled 'A commodity of good names: Elizabeth, Mrs, or ECG'.

A Visit To Japan

Alan Shelston

Last year I had the great good fortune to be invited by the Gaskell Society of Japan and the Dickens Fellowship of Japan, to speak at a specially organized joint meeting of the two societies. When I mentioned this invitation to friends they expressed surprise - how can the Japanese be interested in an English novelist? However, Gaskell Society members have good reason to know of the interest shown in Elizabeth Gaskell and her work by Japanese scholars and enthusiasts, and in fact there is a wide interest in nineteenth and twentieth-century literature in English generally in Japan. The Dickens Fellowship there, under the presidency of Professor Takao Saijo is both long-standing and very active, and other nineteenth-century British authors, like the Brontës, George Eliot and Thomas Hardy, are held in high esteem. Where Gaskell is concerned this interest perhaps originates from the fact that the distinguished Gaskell scholar A. Stanton Whitfield taught for a considerable period in Niigata, Japan, earlier in the twentieth century, while the establishment of the Japanese Gaskell Society, hard on the foundation of our own society, gave added impetus to the study of her work. Since that time many of Gaskell's works have been translated into Japanese, and now Japanese scholars and critics are producing their own critical commentaries and biographical studies. One has only to consult the Japanese society's website (<http://www.soc.nii.ac.jp/gaskell/index-e.html>), established by our old friend Professor Mitsuharu Matsuoka - surely the best of its kind - to see how this tradition of Gaskell scholarship has been sustained. Equally we have been privileged in England to receive many Japanese students of Gaskell in Knutsford and in Manchester, when they have visited this country. The link is a strong one, and likely to continue so.

The main event of my visit was the Dickens-Gaskell lecture at Nishinomiya, a location between Kobe and Osaka, where I endeavoured to satisfy all parties by speaking on the subject of the publishing relationship between Mrs Gaskell and Dickens. The lecture was chaired by Professor Matsuoka, himself a Dickens as

well as a Gaskell specialist. This was a great personal pleasure to me, since I have very good memories of the year Mitsu spent with me in Manchester when I supervised his thesis. Along with another Gaskell and Knutsford friend, Professor Tatsuhiru Ohno, Mitsu had been responsible for much of the organization of the visit: indeed without his efforts on our behalf it could never have taken place. At the reception after the lecture my wife and I were delighted to meet Professor Yuriko Yamawaki, founding President of the Japanese Society, and another friend known to Gaskell lovers through her Knutsford visits. She was accompanied by the Secretary of the Society, Mariko Tahira, who does so much to sustain the Gaskell tradition.

Our hosts had arranged two further lectures, the first at Jissen Women's University in Tokyo, where Professor Yamawaki had a long and distinguished career, and where we were entertained by Emeritus Professor Akiko Suzue, who has translated *Sylvia's Lovers* into Japanese, and the second at Kobe Women's University, where the English department was headed by Professor Yoshiko Hiyashi. These lectures were extremely enjoyable occasions, not least on account of the enthusiasm of the students, who were brave enough to try out their English both with questions and in informal discussion. Much in Japan was different, but students are the same everywhere - especially the keen ones, and of these there were plenty.

But as well as the lecture programme we extended our visit to include an exciting tour that took in the mountain resort of Hakone, Tokyo itself, the historic site at Nikko, where Professor Hidemitsu Togo, whom I first met some years ago at Knutsford, was our guide, and finally Kyoto, famous for its shrines and temples. Hakone was spectacular, with a range of volcanic mountains, and sulphur springs gushing up below us. Had I seen the video of the cable-car crossing high over the site that Mitsu sent us afterwards I might not have embarked on it! It was here that Mitsu arranged for us to stay at a beautiful Japanese hotel, with a room of great serenity, complete with its own hot tub on the balcony - an especially Japanese experience. The room was positioned to provide a fine view of Mount Fuji, provided that atmospheric conditions allowed. Tokyo was quite different - a very modern city with skyscrapers and brilliant neon lighting at night; we saw it from the fifty-fourth floor of a skyscraper where Akiko Kimura (another Knutsford visitor) and Tomoko Kanda had taken us for dinner. Later we were shocked by mild earth tremors in our hotel - our hosts assured us that it was nothing, and indeed that they slept through these things. Nikko, a World Heritage site, gave us a lovely day, with excellent weather and an extended visit through its various shrines and temples. Little parties of Japanese schoolchildren were being taken round in their distinctive baseball caps - yellow for one group, red for another; things like this reminded us again that in Japan one should not always think of difference. It was so good to renew our acquaintance with Hidemitsu Togo, who if memory serves me right first floated the

idea of our going to Japan when he came to Knutsford some years ago - if that is the case, we had very good cause to be grateful to him. Finally Kyoto - and one more weather scare because a typhoon was threatened. It did indeed rain very heavily, and we had only a short visit, but we were able to visit its beautiful gardens and shrines, and we had the bonus of watching a traditional Japanese wedding, apparently quite a rare event. At the airport we had one last evening with Mitsu before our early morning departure.

It is difficult to do justice to the kindness of our hosts throughout our visit. If Mitsu and Tat Ohno deserve special mention for their organisation of our itinerary - and everything went like clockwork, or perhaps I should say, like a bullet-train - they organized a team of helpers who simply could not do enough for us. We could never have managed such a journey on our own, and we shall always be grateful to them. We went to Japan not knowing what to expect, and we came back having made many new friends, some of whom will be contributing to the Gaskell Conference in Manchester later this summer. That, I hope, will give us a chance to renew our acquaintance, and to repay at least some of their kindness.



Alan Shelston (on the right) at a reception for the Gaskell Society & Dickens Fellowship of Japan.

Lancaster Visit

Mary Clark

On a bright September day, over forty Gaskell Society members enjoyed a visit to the Ruskin Library of Lancaster University and the city of Lancaster. Elizabeth Gaskell knew the artist and philosopher John Ruskin and had a profound admiration for his writings, especially the seminal work *Modern Painters*. She also had a number of associations with the city of Lancaster itself. Samuel Gaskell, who was her husband William's brother, was the Resident Medical Superintendent at Lancaster Asylum from 1840 to 1849. She had a long-standing friendship with James Langshawe and his wife Emily, who was a niece by marriage of the Knutsford doctor, Peter Holland. Mrs Gaskell visited Lancaster on several occasions and recorded that on a hurried visit in 1857 with her daughter Meta, they had 'cold beef, bread and beer' at the King's Arms Hotel, which was the establishment where Charles Dickens stayed during visits to Lancaster.

The Ruskin Library is a splendid new building opened in 1998 and housing an outstanding collection of manuscripts, books, drawings and watercolours by Ruskin in optimum conditions and with the latest research facilities for scholars. The Curator, Stephen Wildman, gave us a guided tour of the reading room, with its view out over Morecambe Bay, the art galleries and the archive room, where we were able to appreciate some rare editions of Ruskin's work. Mr Wildman's immense knowledge and enthusiasm for his subject made me want to return to spend more time there.

After lunch in Lancaster, we were free to visit a range of buildings in the historic centre of the town. The Castle is an impressive building, with its stone keep dating from the 12th century, and is still in use as a Court and Gaol - fortunately none of our members was incarcerated by mistake! Near the Castle, the Priory and Parish Church of St Mary's was founded in 1094 and has fascinating fourteenth-century misericords; it is the church where Mrs Gaskell's friend, James Langshawe, is commemorated in the church porch added in 1903. The Cottage Museum is an eighteenth-century artisan's house, saved from demolition and restored by the City Council in the mid-1970s. Now furnished as it would have been in the early nineteenth-century, it is a tiny, cramped house on five levels - we had to mind our heads as we went up and down the stairs. The Judges' Lodgings, a superb 17th-century town house, reputedly the oldest in Lancaster, was magnificent in comparison, with its splendidly restored period rooms, featuring furniture by the Gillows of Lancaster and a Childhood Museum. We all appreciated tea and cream cakes in the tearoom at the end of the afternoon. Our last glimpse of Lancaster, from the M6, was of the austere buildings of the Lancaster Asylum, where Samuel

Gaskell was Medical Superintendent, and which is now Moor Hospital.

We owe our thanks to Janet Kennerley for her meticulous organisation of the visit, her thorough research and detailed documentation. Thank you, Janet, for a most interesting day.

Editor: Elizabeth Gaskell and Emily Langshawe, née Sharpe, had known each other from childhood days in Knutsford and exchanged visits over the years. In 1857 Emily stayed at Plymouth Grove for few days after visiting Knutsford. Away from home on one occasion Elizabeth wrote to Marianne: 'If the little Langshawes come over get buns'. Elizabeth wrote, after Marianne had visited them in Lancaster, that: I do think Mr and Mrs Langshawe are charming and as you say he is so thoroughly good, and true and kind' (*Letters*, No. 198a). He was a doctor and probably like his father and grandfather before him, was organist at the parish church and all the family were involved in music. When the Gaskells were buying a piano 'Uncle Langshawe was to have "the trade reduction of price"'. An obituary in the local Lancaster paper dated March 1893 records that Emily was

an enthusiastic supporter of the Lancaster Choral Society, founded by her brother, the late Mr E Sharpe, and sang for many years at the concerts. She also displayed a lively interest in the management of the Girls' Blue Coat school and was very diligent as a district visitor.

'E. Sharp' was the Edmund who many years earlier had been tipped out of a hand-cart while riding with Elizabeth and had suffered a broken arm, which Peter Holland set. He was an architect noted for 'pot churches' - so named from his use of terracotta; his architectural firm became Paley and Austin, who built many noted Northern churches.

LANCASTER GRAND THEATRE

Tuesday 19th - Saturday 23rd April at 7.30pm

Jane Eyre

'Willis Hall's creative adaptation, originally staged at the Crucible Theatre, Sheffield, has retained all the familiar passionate qualities of Charlotte Bronte's classic novel.

Monday 25th - Thursday 28th April at 7.30

Lancaster Royal and Lancaster Girls Grammar Schools present

North and South: a musical

'With a large, talented cast, performing exactly 150 years after the original novel was published, this promises to be a very special production.'

www.lancastergrand.co.uk or phone 01524 64695 for tickets.'

84 PLYMOUTH GROVE

Work continues on the Lottery application and on the upkeep of the house.

Open Days

The house is now open every first Sunday in the month, from 12 - 4 pm. There will be a bring-and-buy bookstall, refreshments and displays.

Friends of Plymouth Grove

We now have over 100 Friends of Plymouth Grove, and a programme of events, fuller details of which have been sent to members. Do join us!

Sunday, 27 February 2005, 11 am. - 1.30 pm:

LITERARY LUNCH, PLYMOUTH GROVE STYLE

Anthony Burton, Chairman of Trustees, The Charles Dickens Museum, will give an illustrated talk on 'Writers' House Museums: their attraction and purposes'. This is to be followed by a buffet lunch. There will be a charge of £6 per head to help with fund-raising.

Saturday, 2 April 2005, 12 noon - 3 pm:

SPRING LUNCH WITH WILLIAM AND ELIZABETH GASKELL

Please come and bring your friends! Leicester Warren Hall, Bexton Lane, Knutsford will be our venue. It has been used by both the Literary festival and the Gaskell Society. The food is traditional, there is a nice bar and ample car parking. After lunch Delia Corrie (whom many of you will remember reading from Elizabeth's letters at Plymouth Grove) and her colleague Charles Foster will present *At home with Elizabeth Gaskell*. Cost: £18 per head.

For more information, contact: Janet Allan, 10 Dale Road, New Mills, High Peak, SK22 4NW; tel: 01663 744233, or: Elizabeth Williams, 15 Cawley Avenue, Culcheth, Warrington, WA3 4DF; tel: 01925 764271.

General Meetings

On Saturday 9th April, the Annual General Meeting at Cross Street Chapel.

10.30 for coffee:

11.00 Annual General Meeting.

11.45 approx. Alan Shelston will deliver The Daphne Carrick Lecture: The Eagle and the Dove: Dickens. Elizabeth Gaskell, and the publishing culture of the Nineteenth Century

1.00 Buffet Lunch

2.15 Visitors at Plymouth Grove introduced by Joan Leach, Robin Allan and others

3.45/4.00 approx. Finish

On **1st October**, the Autumn meeting at Knutsford will celebrate our twentieth anniversary with a special programme.



Autumn meeting 2004

From left to right: Joan Leach, Josie Billington, Angus Easson, Alan Shelston, John Chapple and Janet Allan. Thanks to Tat Ohno for the photo.

North West group

Meetings at Cross Street Chapel, Manchester:

Tuesday 8th March, 1.00pm (bring your own sandwich lunch 12.15):

Dr. Julie-Marie Strange: 'Popular religion, class and ethnicity'

£2 members, £3 non-members

Knutsford meetings at St John's Church Centre:

Wednesday 16th March: Speaker: Professor Angus Easson: *Secrets in Wives and Daughters*

Wednesday 27th April: Final discussion on *Wives and Daughters*

Wednesday 25 May: Visit to Over Peover Hall, which has some features of Hamley Hall. £8 to include entrance and Tea. List, cars etc to be arranged at Knutsford Meetings, or contact Joan Leach.

The London and South East Group

PROGRAMME FOR 2005

Saturday 14th May: 'Who exactly were Mrs Gaskell's friends, the Winkworths?' by Professor Peter Skrine

Saturday 10th September: 'George Eliot and Mrs Gaskell: Mutual fascination between two sister writers, and a common interest in their two greatest novels' by Dr. Brenda McKay

Saturday 12th November: '*Cranford*: Mrs Gaskell's most radical novel?' by Caroline Jackson-Houlston.

Meetings are held at Francis Holland School, 39 Graham Terrace, London SW1W 8JF starting at 2pm. Francis Holland is a few minutes walk from Sloane Square tube station which is on the District and Circle lines. It is necessary to ring the security bell in order to gain access to the building. Someone will answer the door!!

During the course of 2004 **sandwich lunches** prior to the meeting at the school were introduced. By common consent these will continue. Lunch (which consists of sandwiches, cake and a cold drink) will be provided and tea and biscuits will follow the meeting. Lunch and tea afterwards give members an opportunity to have a chat and get to know one another. Everyone is very welcome to come for lunch anytime after 12.45pm. It is not necessary to let me know in advance although it is helpful to have some idea of numbers!

Contributions for lunch and tea will be collected at the meeting for which a nominal charge of £2 is made.

A **bookstall** has been established to raise money for Plymouth Grove. If you have unwanted books that you think other members might like to buy please bring them along. You need not take them home again. They can go into store until the next meeting!

I hope that the programme appeals and I hope to see you during the course of 2005 at some or all of the meetings.

Fran Twinn

The South-West Group

PROGRAMME FOR 2005

Thursday 5th May: Visit to Clevedon, including the Poets' Walk to St. Andrews Church where there is a Memorial to Arthur Hallam. In the afternoon there will be a visit to Clevedon Court (National Trust), where our group will be given a tour by a dedicated guide. (Tennyson's 'In Memoriam' was a great favourite with Mrs. Gaskell: *Letters*, Nos. 73, 79).

Saturday, 2nd July: Mrs. Joan Leach, with two other readers, will give her lively presentation of the Winkworth sisters. Professor Peter Skrine will add his unique view of the Winkworths in Bristol. Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution, Queen Square, Bath. 2.00pm for 2.30pm

Sunday 12th August: Summer Tea by kind invitation of Kate and Alec Crawford, at Norton St. Philip.

We hope to arrange a visit to Knutsford to coincide with the Autumn Meeting on **1st October**. There should be a chance for South West members and friends to see some of Mrs. Gaskell's Cheshire and make a visit to Plymouth Grove.

All members and friends are very welcome. For more details, contact Mrs. Rosemary Marshall on 01225 426732 or email rosemary_marshall@yahoo.com.

Group Meetings in York and Edinburgh

Joan Leach

After enjoyable meetings in Manchester and Knutsford I often have regrets that more members are prevented from joining us by reason of distance. When Rosemary Marshall moved from Cheshire to Bath she missed our meetings, so, with encouragement from Professor Peter and Mrs Skrine from Bristol, the South West group was formed.

The London and South East group started from an annual meeting held in November; Richard Beckley consulted members about more regular meetings and Dudley Barlow agreed to act as group secretary. Recently Dr Frances Twinn has taken on this task. Dudley and Howard Gregg have moved to Yorkshire; we were considering getting together with other Yorkshire members when The Jane Austen Society, Northern branch, invited our members to join them at a meeting in York on 20th November 2004. The speaker was Dr. Joanne Shattock of Leicester University, who is also a member of our Society and editor of the forthcoming Pickering & Chatto edition of Gaskell's works. She spoke on 'Jane Austen and Elizabeth Gaskell: Lives and Letters'. The two societies have members in common and it was a pleasure to meet at The King's Manor. York is accessible and offers many attractions so we plan to follow this up with a Gaskell meeting: if a regular group results from this we might consider Leeds as an alternative meeting place. A date has been fixed for Saturday 21st May at The Meeting House, Friargate, York, probably with a buffet lunch. Yorkshire area members will be mailed with further details, or send an SAE to Joan Leach. Further details will be on the homepage.

Edinburgh

Elizabeth Gaskell had several links with Scotland particularly through her father, and from her own visits to Edinburgh we have the first and last portraits of her. She admired the Scottish accent which she attributed to Dr. Gibson in *Wives and Daughters*: perhaps she had in mind her cousin, Sir Henry Holland, who had studied medicine at Edinburgh University. The Society has several members in Scotland who would like to participate in Gaskell events but too few at present to form a group. With assistance from Professor Ian Campbell, editor of the Carlyle Letters and a good friend to our Society, we shared a day with The Carlyle Society. Braving railway problems five members travelled from Cheshire, almost as a diplomatic mission: myself, Elizabeth Williams, Mary Syner, Sheila Stephenson and Janet Kennerley.

On the morning of 26th November members from both Societies met at The Centre for Continuing Education, Edinburgh University, for a Gaskell morning. After I outlined Elizabeth Gaskell's Edinburgh and Carlyle associations, Elizabeth Williams gave an introduction to Gaskell's life and works; then Dr Brian Ridger considered how Gaskell collected and used information for *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*. We look forward to reading more of this in Brian's work on the writing of biographies.

During the buffet lunch Professor Paul Kerry of Brigham Young University, Utah, arrived from America just in time to deliver his paper for the Carlyle Society afternoon, after a brief AGM.

He read a paper 'On history again': how history is interpreted for us by historians and especially Carlyle. I wonder how much of Carlyle's historical writings the Gaskells read. We concluded a lively day with an informal Christmas party.

We hope to follow this up with a seminar at the same venue on Victorian writers.

Residential Course on Gaskell and Brontë theme

Jackie Wilkin (University of Manchester part-time tutor) will be giving a 24-hour course to University Adult Programme students at Chancellor's, the University's Residential Conference Centre in Fallowfield, from 2pm on **Saturday 21 May to Sunday 22 May**. The course finishes after lunch on the Sunday. Cost is £79.50 for accommodation plus approximately £18 for course fee. A £10 deposit will be needed for residential students (cheques made out to 'The University of Manchester') with the balance due in April. Copy of the programme and day student cost (depending on whether lunch is required) from: Jackie Wilkin, Room W.213 Humanities Bldg. (Lime Grove); E-mail: jackie.wilkin@manchester.ac.uk; Tel. 0161 275 3079 (Voicemail: leave a message).

The Charles Lamb Society

has much pleasure in inviting you to
THE ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES WEEKEND
in London on 21st and 22nd May 2005

Programme of Events

Saturday, 21st May

Swedenborg Hall

10.00 am Coffee

10.30 Welcome and introduction to Charles and Mary Lamb

11.00 Alliance of Literary Societies annual general meeting

12.30 pm Lunch

2.00 Guided walks around Lamb's London
or visit(s) to local museum(s) of relevance to the Lambs

4.00 Tea at Swedenborg Hall

4.30 'Lamb's Tale or My Gentle-hearted Charles' - a One-man Play in Two
Acts, based on the life of Charles Lamb, written and performed by G.
Leslie Irons

At Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese

7.30 Drinks, 8.00 Dinner

Sunday, 22nd May

Sunday will be given over to a visit to the Lambs' delightful cottage and their graves
at Edmonton in North London. Details to be announced.

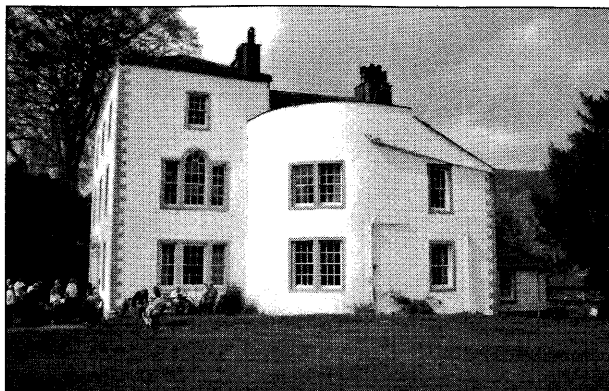
General Information

Venues: Swedenborg Hall is at 20-21 Bloomsbury Way, London, W1. It is located
on the south side of Bloomsbury Square, just along from St George's Church,
Bloomsbury (the 'artists' church', by Hawksmoor). The entrance to the Hall is around
the corner to the right from the Swedenborg House shopfront.

Meals: coffee and tea are courtesy of the Charles Lamb Society. Lunches and
dinner will need to be paid for individually. If you have any special dietary needs
please tell us.

Travel: We shall assume that everyone will travel by public transport. Although
there is car parking close to Swedenborg Hall it is extremely expensive.

While it is not essential to book in advance for any of the weekend events, apart
from the dinner on Saturday evening, it would assist us to have an indication of
numbers, especially for the coach on Sunday and for those guiding the walks. If you
would like to attend any weekend events, please contact The Charles Lamb Society,
ALS, BM-ELIA, London WC1N 3XX as soon as possible, or go through the website
named above (www.allianceofliterarysocieties.org) and look for 'Charles Lamb
Society AGM' where all details and an application form can be found.



Greta Hall, home of Southey and Coleridge



**The Old Grammar School at Hawkshead
where Wordsworth and his brother were pupils**

THE GASKELL SOCIETY HOME PAGE has all the latest information on meetings.
<http://gaskellsociety.users.btopenworld.com>

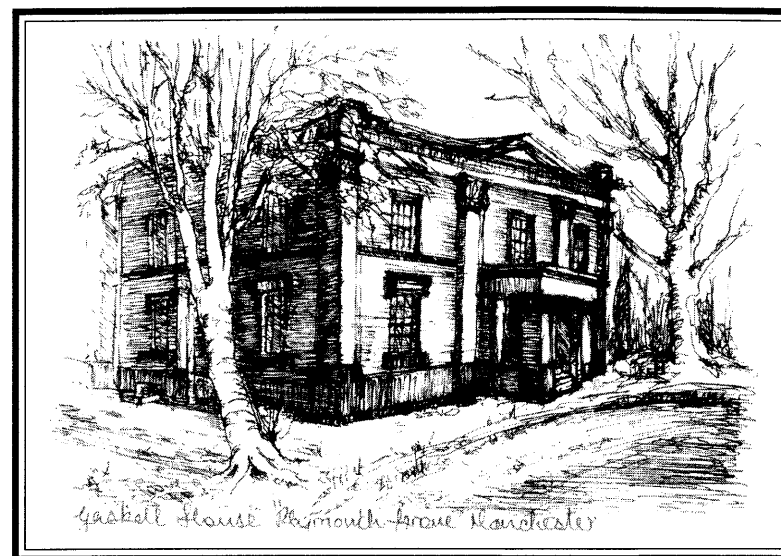
If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs. Joan Leach,
Far Yew Tree House, Over Tabley, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 0HN.
Telephone - 01565 634668 E-mail: joanleach@aol.com

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Membership Secretary: Miss C. Lingard, 5 Moran Crescent, Macclesfield SK11 8JJ

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The Gaskell Society



NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2005 - Number 40

Editor's Letter

Joan Leach

The highlight of our year has been the Manchester Conference at which Gaskell members, from the UK and overseas, were joined by other delegates; you can read some members' comments in this Newsletter and will be sure to hear more in future Journals. We are grateful to all at Manchester Metropolitan University who worked to make this such a success.

Congratulations are due to Jo Pryke, our Journal editor and her team for being chosen in August as the journal of the month, by The Council of Editors of Learned Journals. With this accolade Jo feels it is time for her to retire as editor and will work with Frances Twinn who will take on the task after the next issue.

Talking of accolades I must express my thanks to those members who sponsored me for the award of an M.B.E which was a lovely surprise and a great honour. You can read about how this was achieved. I will soon be getting a 'summons' to go to Buckingham Palace to receive this and have recently had my 'warrant' for the award.

The Gaskell Society of Japan are to be congratulated on completing their translation of Gaskell novels by the end of this year. We hope they will attract new Gaskell readers. I am delighted that to have been invited to visit their Society next June.

Our trip to the Lake District in May was most enjoyable and we are grateful to Mary Clark for writing an account of our visits so that some of you may like to follow our footsteps. Robin Allan was with us on this trip and members will be sorry to know that he has been dangerously ill but is out of intensive care and recovering. We wish him well. Our next venture in group travel may be a trip to Rome next September. Please consult our home page (address is on back cover) if you have not received details of this or other events.

William Gaskell's 200th anniversary on 24th July did not pass unobserved for Cross Street Chapel held a fine commemorative service and provided birthday cake. In the afternoon Terry Wyke led a city centre walk to re-discover buildings and sites known to the Gaskells. Alan Shelston has also written on the Manchester background and we hope to print a booklet on this theme using funds from Brian Hechle's bequest to our Society. Please make a note of forthcoming meetings. AGM for next year will be 8th April at Cross Street Chapel and we are to have our New Year Lunch there on 10th January with a programme from North-West film archives.

News has just come to us about a new event to be launched at Whitby: The 1st Caedmon Literary Festival will be from 23-28 April 2006 with a varied programme. There will certainly be a Gaskell input with a *Sylvia's Lovers* theme. The organisers aim to draw 'artists and writers to this cradle of English Literature on the East Coast just as nearly 2000 years ago it drew kings, scholars and more to the great Synod of Whitby in 664 AD.'

The Cober Hill Conspiracy

Chapter 1

Elizabeth Gaskell and her daughters were able to keep the secret from William Gaskell of the purchase of a new family house in Hampshire. Following in this tradition some Gaskell Society members were also entrusted with a secret in September 2003.

With her usual expertise Joan Leach had organised a visit to Cober Hill near Scarborough - a lovely Centre which is perfectly located for exploring Whitby and the surrounding areas linked with *Sylvia's Lovers*. Joan had been looking forward to returning, following a previous Gaskell Society visit some years earlier which she had also organised. Unfortunately the ill health of Joan's husband Christopher prevented her second visit. As we sat round the dinner table feeling very fortunate to be in such a lovely location - Cober Hill is within walking distance of the cliffs above Cloughton Wyke - three members discussed with two Committee members how sorry we were that Joan had not been able to join us. The discussion continued around Joan's activities for the Gaskell Society and the Committee members related Joan's achievements in and around the Knutsford area. These included extensive connections with the Knutsford Heritage Centre, the Knutsford Literature Festival and lecturing on local history. As far as we could tell Joan must have turned down an honour in recognition for all her voluntary work. The Committee representatives were certain that this was not the case but in response to a request that the Gaskell Society Committee pursue an honour for Joan, the task was promptly entrusted to the non-Committee three although the support of the Committee was assured. The plot was hatched.

On returning from Cober Hill the first stage of the process was to find out through the Internet how the procedure worked. A site named 'Ask the Prime Minister' proved to be useful. It later became clear where Prime Minister Blair had stolen the idea - 'Ask Joan Leach' on the Knutsford Heritage Centre's web site had obviously been his inspiration. The Society's Manchester meetings at Cross Street Chapel were ideal for updating the conspirators. By November 2003 the promised support from Committee Members increased our number by three so our hopes of containing the secret were high.

Once the necessary letters of support together with the nomination had been provided (which resulted in three more conspirators) the process was set in motion in March 2004. The hardest part was trying to be patient! We discovered that the whole procedure can take as long as eighteen months and the recipient of the

honour is the only person who is notified of the outcome. A conspirator gathering information found that the greatest hurdle to overcome was trying to contact the Knutsford Heritage Centre without Joan's knowledge. In the end this was overcome by the adoption of the traditional fictional private detective's idea of using an alias and telephoning when Joan was actually in view at Cross Street Chapel.

Many Manchester meetings later, an AGM, a visit to Worcester in July 2004, another AGM (and one more conspirator) and the Society's visit to Grasmere in May 2005 passed and the conspirators remained in the dark as to the outcome.

Chapter 2: Joan Leach

Our trip to the Lake District in May was a memorable experience which I thoroughly enjoyed (see Mary Clark's report in this Newsletter). I arrived home, tired and gasping for a cup of tea, to find a large pile of post which I thought I would tackle the next day; however as I flipped through it one letter stamped '10 Downing Street' demanded attention.

It was telling me that I had been awarded an MBE and would I reply, by return, to acknowledge my acceptance. What a wonderful surprise! However I could not share my excitement because my official instructions were that no-one was to be told until 12 hours before the announcement of the Queen's Birthday Honours list on 11th June. The MBE was to be listed as: Joan Leach, *Secretary of The Gaskell Society: for services to Literature and the Community of Knutsford*. I decided that Janet Allan, our Chairman, must know something about what had happened behind the scenes so I let her know, trusting that she would contact others who needed to be told.

A few days before the Honours list was due to be released I was at a committee meeting for Knutsford Literature Festival with Marie Moss a Gaskell committee member who was then going abroad for a holiday so I thought it permissible to drop a hint about the forthcoming announcement; then she told me a little about all that had been done for me. I am really touched by the faith in me which so many have evinced and regard it as an accolade to The Gaskell Society. The *Manchester Evening News* gave it a mention after the announcements and our local Knutsford papers had a field day.

Many are the congratulations I have received, ranging from flowers and delightful cards to thumbs-up from passing cars...I have not, at present, been told of the date for my visit to Buckingham Palace but hope a few Gaskell members will accompany me. And I am filing offers of hats to borrow!!

Thank you all for your friendship, support and encouragement.

Manchester Conference Reviewed

Elizabeth Gaskell and Manchester: Identity, Culture and the Modern City
sponsored by the Gaskell Society and the Manchester Centre for Regional History
at Manchester Metropolitan University, 19-21 July 2005

This conference was attended by 130 delegates including a number from overseas. The wide range of papers read and varied events made this event was an outstanding success as you will gather from these comments by delegates:

Robert Poole
Reader in History
St Martin's College
Lancaster

Last week's Gaskell conference was one of the most enjoyable I have ever attended. It was made so very largely by the informed enthusiasm of the Gaskell Society members, and I just had to join. What you have achieved is quite remarkable - congratulations.

Mary Haynes Kuhlman, Ph.D.
Department of English
Creighton University
Omaha, Nebraska 68178 USA

Message posted on the Gaskell Correspondence page:

Our recent conference "Elizabeth Gaskell and Manchester: Identity, Culture and the Modern City", sponsored by the Gaskell Society and the Manchester Centre for Regional History at Manchester Metropolitan University, was so excellent and so enjoyable (to me, but I'm CERTAIN to others) that I just have to use this list to broadcast a THANKS and a REPORT.

THANKS first, last, and long after to the committee who planned and worked at this event and particularly Craig Horner and Melanie Tebbutt of Manchester Metropolitan University.

I would also thank every single person who attended and thus contributed to the fine audiences, insightful discussions, and friendly conversations. I might list various attendees and committee members and presenters that subscribers to this list already know - people like Janet Allan, Mary Syner, Joan Leach, Mary Clark, Christine Lingard, John and Kate Chapple, Brian & Elizabeth Williams, J. Geoffrey and Heather Sharps, Tat Ohno, Jenny Uglow - but no, I'll stop there today, but I wish to thank so many MORE people, many of whom readers of our messages or of the *GS Journal* know whose presence contributed to the conference's success.

REPORT: just a quick summary of the impromptu summing-up remarks of keynoters & organizers in a final summing-up session, including Alan Shelston, Linda K. Hughes, Alan Kidd, Martin Hewitt and Melanie Tebbutt: they spoke of Gaskell's 'diversity' (range of genre, theme, etc.), her connection to the wider culture, complexity of her relationship to Manchester, her emerging stature as a major author, 'visiting' as a mode of knowledge, and the delight of conference organizers and delegates in bringing literature and history together in an event that really lived up to the conference's title.

Alan Shelston
Manchester University

Various things stood out for me from the conference - the quality and diversity of the contributions; the responses to them; the coming together of specialist academics and wider readers; the appropriateness of the various supporting events; the conjunction of the two themes 'Gaskell' and 'Manchester', plus the fact that this never acted as a constraint on wider considerations; above all the atmosphere of friendship and cooperation that existed.

A message from two of our Japanese delegates, Professor Masaie Matsamura and Tomoko Kanda who gave papers at the conference:

Congratulations on the great success of the conference. We were honoured to read our papers at such a wonderful conference. The time we spent there was made thoroughly enjoyable by the courtesies extended to us from Japan, by the conference committee members, presenters, and attendees. Many thanks to the lecturers and presenters for the excellent and highly informative lectures and papers, and deepest thanks to the committee members for everything you did for the conference. And our heartfelt thanks to every fellow Gaskellian with whom we enjoyed talking. We also would like to express special thanks to Alan Shelston and Joan Leach, for their efforts to develop a deeper friendship between the Gaskell Society and the Gaskell Society of Japan. Again, our thanks for a very pleasant and enlightening experience. It will be always our fondest memories of your country.

Elizabeth Gaskell and Dickens in All the Year Round

Deborah Wynne

Alan Shelston's interesting discussion in the last Newsletter, outlining the relationship between Gaskell and Dickens during the period when *North and South* was serialised in *Household Words*, prompts me to add a few comments about the development of this relationship when Dickens became editor of *All The Year Round*. Alan Shelston indicates that Gaskell may have felt pressurised to make changes to *North and South* to suit Dickens's requirements, while on the other hand Dickens considered Gaskell to be intractable and unaware of the demands of weekly serialisation. However, despite these tensions, the 'back-to-back' serialisation of two important 'social problem' novels in the pages of *Household Words* constitutes one of the most significant moments in Victorian publishing history. What is less well-known, however, is that this 'double act' was resumed in 1859 when Dickens established his new weekly magazine, *All The Year Round*.

Dickens inaugurated his new magazine with the serialisation of *A Tale of Two Cities* and he chose a three-part short story by Gaskell, *Lois the Witch*, to run with the novel's climactic later instalments between 8th and 22nd October 1859. In many ways *Lois* and *A Tale* were as well-matched thematically as were *North and South* and *Hard Times*. Dickens's historical novel depicts the violent events of the French Revolution of 1789, while *Lois the Witch* is based on the Salem witch trials of the 1690s. Gaskell's gloomy yet powerful novella, in which the teenage heroine is executed as a witch, was positioned by Dickens alongside those instalments of *A Tale of Two Cities* which depict Darnay on trial in France and the dramatic discovery of Dr Manette's 'forgotten' letter. The effects of this pairing of *A Tale* and *Lois* must have been particularly exciting for readers of *All the Year Round* who were able to turn immediately from Dickens's representation of history to Gaskell's equally powerful rendering of the past.

The history of the serialisation of *A Tale* and *Lois* has a further twist, however, for the ending of Gaskell's narrative, which depicts the innocent, condemned Lois comforting her fellow prisoner, Nattee, the Native American servant as they are both led to the gallows, is a foreshadowing of Sydney Carton's attempt to comfort the French seamstress as they make their final journey to the guillotine at the end of Dickens's novel. This scene in *A Tale of Two Cities* appeared a few weeks after *Lois* had completed its serialisation. It is feasible that Dickens, having read Gaskell's moving account of Lois's execution, was inspired to borrow the detail of the main protagonist comforting a weaker companion for his own famous scene. Although

readers of *All The Year Round* were treated to two dramatic executions within the space of four weeks, few would have been aware that Gaskell was the author of *Lois the Witch*, for Dickens imposed a policy of anonymity on his contributors while retaining the right to sign his own contributions. Indeed, it may have been Dickens's insistence on Gaskell's anonymity that led her to arrange for her next serialised novel, *Wives and Daughters*, to be published in *The Cornhill*, where her name was prominently displayed.

Elizabeth Gaskell and the Isle of Man

Peter Skrine

Elizabeth Gaskell's associations with North Wales and the Lake District are well known, but what about the Isle of Man, visible on clear days from both these favourite holiday haunts of hers? She mentions it seldom, and her references to it have attracted little attention. Yet, astonishingly enough, the Isle of Man is mentioned no fewer than eight times in her first novel, *Mary Barton*. These allusions are all connected with Will Wilson, Mrs Wilson's foster-son, and play an integral part in the creation of suspense as the events of the narrative are followed through. As such, they are of no particular consequence except insofar as they help to conjure up a sense of space. Margaret's singing of the old canzonets she has lately learnt, and its effect on the 'handsome, dashing, spirited' sailor-lad Will Wilson in Chapter 13 lead to Will's offer to bring Job Legh a live Manx cat. 'A what?' exclaims Job. 'I don't know its best name,' says Will humbly, 'but we call 'em just Manx cats. They're cats without tails.' In spite of all his knowledge of natural history Job has never heard of such animals. But Will's offer is quite genuine, since he intends to see his mother's friends on the island before joining his ship, so as a further inducement he adds: 'They look so queer ... Especially when you see 'em walking a roof-top, right again the sky, when a cat, as is a proper cat, is sure to stick her tail stiff out behind, like a slack-rope dancer a-balancing; but these cats having no tail, cannot stick it out, which captivates some people uncommonly.' Further on in the novel, Will, now in much less buoyant mood, comes to say good-bye to Mary, and in doing so reveals more of his insider's knowledge by telling her he must be off because he promised his uncle - and he specifies 'my mother's brother, him that lives at Kirk-Christ beyond Ramsey in the Isle of Man that we would go and see him and his.' This topographical detail is more telling. How did Elizabeth Gaskell come to know that Kirk-Christ is the name of a parish in the North-West of the island? In fact Kirk Christ Lezayre was in those days the parish in which the small fishing port of Ramsey was located.

Elizabeth Gaskell visited the Isle of Man only once, as far as we know, and little importance has been attached to her visit: the island is not even mentioned in the

index to Jenny Uglow's expansive biography, though she mentions the visit in some detail on p. 360.ⁱ It took place in late August 1854, and the only evidence for it are the letter she wrote to her daughter Julia, containing the news 'We have seen two Manx cats without tails and uncommonly ugly they are', and a shorter one to her daughter Marianne.ⁱⁱ Neither letter is dated or carries an address, but she does tell Marianne that 'there is scarlet fever in Ballaugh,' the place which Meta, with whom she was holidaying, had 'set her heart upon, 8 miles from here', a detail which indicates she is writing from Ramsey, which *The People's and Howitt's* journal had described as a 'very pretty place' in 1849. What this scanty documentation also tells us is that the weather was uncharacteristically bad for the time of year, so plans had to be altered and they ended up staying somewhere where the arrival of small children soon after them caused some irritation. However, the letter to Julia also tells her that 'there is not a dirty little cottage by the road-side but what has its fuchsia growing as high as the roof', a detail which rings true to anyone familiar with the Island today. Ballaugh, fuchsia and real Manx cats. Beyond these sparse facts there is only speculation.

Or are there echoes of this Manx experience in 'French Life', the fascinating piece Elizabeth Gaskell published anonymously in *Fraser's Magazine* ten years later in April/June 1864? Here she recalls staying at an inn in Avignon, where, gazing at the flying sparks of a fire which one of her daughters was poking, she is reminded of a story heard long ago in Ramsey, in the Isle of Man. 'We were questioning a fisherman's wife ... about the Mauthe Doog of Peel Castle, in which she had a firm belief,' she writes. This is an obvious allusion to one of the Isle of Man's best-known legends, that of the 'black dog', or 'moddey dhoo' in Manx, which is said to haunt the picturesque ruins of Peel Castle. From this, the conversation turns to fairies. 'Are there any on the island now?' she asks. 'Gravely, of course, for it was a grave and serious subject with her, the fisherman's wife replies, 'None now. My brother saw the last that ever was in the island. He was making a short cut in the hills above Kirk Maughold, and came down on a green hollow ... He heard the larks singing up above; but this time he heard a little piping cry out of the ground.' He looks more carefully, and finds 'a fairy ever so weak and small, crying sadly. Her own people have left her behind all alone, and she is faint and weak.' Well-meaningly he picks the crying fairy up to take her home as a plaything for his children. But when he opens his hand to tell her he is doing this for her own good, he finds he has crushed her to death. 'So, as he said, there was no use bringing her home in that state; and he threw her away; and that was the end of the last fairy I ever heard of in the island.' Gaskell's 'folktale' sounds authentic, almost as if told in a true Manx voice, yet it does not seem to have a Manx source and is quite different in tone from authentic Manx folktales. Perhaps she created it for her daughters when their holiday was over and they had come home on the 'Manx Fairy', a smart iron vessel which came into service with the Ramsey Steam Packet Company in 1853, prompting intense

'fairy' mania, or later still, when they heard about the misfortunes which soon befell the elegant but unlucky steamer, and inspired a thirteen-year-old Ramsey girl called Margaret Kermode to write an elegy which ends with the lines:

She is gone, she is gone! She will never return
Fare well to thee, bright little fairy.ⁱⁱⁱ

Notes

- i. In the text of her biography of Elizabeth Gaskell Jenny Uglow refers to a 'hilarious account' sent by Meta to Marianne, but mentions no source. See *Elizabeth Gaskell. A Habit of Stories*, p. 360.
- ii. *Letters*, nos. 208 and 209.
- iii. Constance Radcliffe, *Shining by the Sea. A History of Ramsey 1800-1914* (Douglas, 1989), p. 67. The young author of this poem was a great-great-aunt of the author of this article.

John Ashton Nicholls in Boston

John Chapple

John Ashton Nicholls (1823-1859), the lively son of two members of the Cross Street congregation, toured America between 29 August 1857 and 21 February 1858. In Boston he saw the 'Faneuil Hall, so celebrated in the revolution'. The next day, 1 November, he made another kind of historical pilgrimage to see the Federal Street church, 'a nice, clean-looking, old-fashioned place'. This was where the great American Unitarian William Ellery Channing (1780-1842) used to preach. The inward and spiritual nature of his eloquence had confirmed James Martineau in his break with the rationalistic tradition of Joseph Priestley. But Channing's influence amongst British Unitarians extended far more widely, even amongst traditional ministers, as we see from the many copies of his publications in the Gaskell Sale Catalogue of Books (1914). Nicholls attended a Federal Street service in November 1857, taken by Dr E. S. Gannett (1801-1871), Channing's co-pastor and eventual successor. It was 'an excellent discourse', but it had its unexpected side.

He wrote to his mother:

The pulpit was very wide, and the minister sat down, quite away from the desk, during the singing, performed by the choir, and not joined in by the congregation, who all sat still and listened. I do not like that way; I prefer to hear the voices of all united.

Three or four times during the sermon the minister coughed, cleared his throat, and leaning to one side, gave a good genuine spit out, so I presume, must have been

furnished with a spittoon, which article I saw was in all the pews; fancy, at the end of a beautiful passage, a climax in the divisions of the sermon, the preacher spitting out, and then wiping his mouth with his handkerchief? What should we say if Mr. Gaskell did so? I will ask him, when I see him, how he would feel under similar circumstances. It disgusted me, and I hoped, in my mind, that Dr. Channing did not spit in the pulpit, yet I fear the practice is universal in places of worship. There are nearly twenty Unitarian churches here, our body being the largest and most influential in this city.

(*'Letters from America', In Memoriam. A Selection from the Letters of the Late John Ashton Nicholls*, edited by his mother and privately printed, 1862.)

Sadly, this mischievous young man died not long after his return from America. William Gaskell delivered one of his finest funeral sermons about him at Cross Street on 15 September 1859. We also know now, from *Further Letters*, (pp. 203-5) that it was Elizabeth Gaskell who wrote a description of his deathbed for his travelling companion, John Rotherham, on behalf of the stricken mother.

The Alliance of Literary Societies

The 2005 AGM weekend in London 21/22 May was hosted by The Charles Lamb Society with an excellent programme. There are now 109 member societies.

The 2006 AGM weekend will be in Bath, May 13/14 hosted by The Jane Austen Society.

It was sad to hear of the death of Giles Hart, Chairman of The H.G. Wells Society, who was killed on the No. 30 bus on 7th July. He was a "prominent British support of the Solidarity movement in Poland throughout the 1980s, especially when Poland was under martial law. His obituary in the Times demonstrates Mr Hart to have been an exemplary person who will be missed greatly. He came to many of the A.L.S. A.G.Ms

For info. on ALS: <http://www.allianceofliterarysocieties.co.uk>

There are details of many literary events and societies including Gaskell. You might like to read the newsletter of the ALS here.

A forgotten wedding custom and Jane Eyre

Ian M Emberson

I was interested to read Jenny Uglow's short article 'A Forgotten Wedding Custom', with its reference to the superstition that it's unlucky for a bride-to-be to label her things with her married name before the wedding, and that if she does so, she may never bear that married name (Newsletter 39, p. 9). After reading it I wondered if there was an echo of this in Chapter 25 of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (Volume 2, Ch.10 in some editions). On the eve of her wedding to Mr. Rochester, Jane writes of '....my trunks, packed, locked, corded, ranged in a row along the wall of my little chamber....', but adds: 'The cards of address alone remained to nail on: they lay, four little squares, on the drawer. Mr. Rochester had himself written the direction, "Mrs. Rochester, - Hotel, London", on each. I could not persuade myself to affix them, or to have them affixed. Mrs. Rochester! She did not exist...'. If Jane is obeying the ancient superstition, her obedience is in vain, for the next day the wedding service is interrupted by those terrible words: 'The marriage cannot go on: I declare the existence of an impediment'.

The Lake District in the footsteps of Elizabeth Gaskell

Mary Clark

From the early years of her marriage, Elizabeth Gaskell had a long association with the Lake District and Morecambe Bay on its southern fringe. In 1836, she stayed at Grange-over-Sands with her infant daughter Marianne and from 1843 onwards spent many summer holidays at Gibraltar Farm and Lindeth Tower in Silverdale, and then at Mrs Preston's Mill Brow Farm, up from Skelwith Bridge. Her letters show all of her immense enthusiasm for the Lake District, with its busy social and literary scene. Through the good offices of Wordsworth's son-in-law, Edward Quillinan, she met, to her delight, the 'sage of Rydal Mount' shortly before his death, and visited also the Arnolds of Fox How, the Davys of Lesketh How and Mrs Elizabeth Fletcher of Lancrigg, as well as Harriet Martineau at The Knoll, the house which she had built on the edge of Ambleside. So it was fitting for a group of almost forty Gaskell Society members to spend four days in the Lake District in early May visiting so many of the places associated with Gaskell and her friends, as well as with the Lakeland poets whom she so greatly admired. We were based at the Prince of Wales Hotel on the shores of Grasmere Lake, within a stone's throw of Wordsworth's Dove Cottage.

On our first day, we headed north to Morecambe and from Hest Bank looked out across the treacherous sands of Morecambe Bay, the setting for 'The Sexton's Hero'. In Silverdale, we visited the farm where Gaskell often stayed, in a 'queer pretty crampy house', as she described it in a letter to Charles Eliot Norton. In a drawing-room at the top of Lindeth Tower she wrote a considerable part of *Ruth* and from the roof, it was easy to recall her description of the shimmering sands of the Bay where the Bradshaw daughters played so joyously, but which seemed much more threatening at Ruth's fateful meeting with her former lover Bellingham. A few miles away, we were able to visit the Sheiling, the late Victorian house built for Gaskell's unmarried daughters, Meta and Julia.

With Gaskell's profound admiration for Wordsworth, it was appropriate that in the evening we should have a lecture given by Dr Pamela Woof of the University of Newcastle, who is the leading authority on Dorothy Wordsworth. In her lecture Dr Woof concentrated on Dorothy's relatively little known early life, with great erudition but also immense sensitivity towards her subject. The following morning we headed for Cockermouth to visit the Wordsworth House, a fine Georgian town house, the birthplace and childhood home of William and Dorothy Wordsworth. It has recently been refurbished by the National Trust, to reflect the family home and garden as it would have been in Wordsworth's day. After visiting Crosthwaite church, near Keswick, where are the graves of the poet Southey and Canon Rawnsley, a founder of the National Trust, we went on to Greta Hall, an imposing square white house set up from Keswick, in which Southey, Coleridge and their families had lived in the early nineteenth century. The present owners gave us a warm welcome and we enjoyed a home-baked afternoon tea. To round off the day, we joined the Wordsworth Society for an evening reading of poetry and prose by the Scottish poet Kathleen Jamie. I felt that her feeling for place and the sensitivity of her recollections were not too remote from those of Elizabeth Gaskell herself.

On the following morning, we headed for Hawkshead to see the Grammar School attended by William Wordsworth and his brothers. In the schoolroom, where William had carved his name on his desk, there was still the atmosphere of the rigorous discipline of those schooldays, though we were fascinated to learn that the boys were each allowed two pints of small beer with their dinner. In the afternoon, we took to minibuses to negotiate the narrow roads leading to a variety of houses with Gaskell associations. We visited Briery Close, where, as a guest of Sir James and Lady Kay-Shuttleworth, Gaskell first met Charlotte Brontë, famously describing her in a letter to Catherine Winkworth as 'a little lady in a black silk gown' who 'came up & shook hands', though she was evidently quite overcome with shyness. The house has been extended and radically altered in Victorian times and more recently, with the impressive gardens being designed in the early years of the twentieth century, but the glorious view across Windermere to Coniston Old Man remains exactly as

Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë would have known it. Townend Farm, Troutbeck, owned by the National Trust, is much as it would have been in the seventeenth century - a solid stone and slate house. It belonged to the same family of wealthy 'statesmen' farmers, the Brownes, from 1626 to 1943, and its collection of books, papers, furniture and domestic implements was largely accumulated by the family. It seemed a rather grander version of the 'stateswoman' Mrs Preston's Mill Brow Farm, where Gaskell often stayed and of which she wrote in a letter to a young friend, Charles Bosanquet, that 'the family [had] lived in that house and on that land for more than 200 years'. Gaskell no doubt had Mill Brow Farm and the Prestons much in mind in her short story 'Half a Life-Time Ago' and its precursor 'Martha Preston'. In 'Cumberland Sheep-Shearers' also, Gaskell describes the solid stone farmhouse, with its great bed-chamber and 'houseplace', and all the excitement of the annual sheep-shearing festivity. Lancrigg, in Easedale, which is now a vegetarian hotel, was the home of Mrs Elizabeth (Eliza) Fletcher, found for her by Wordsworth. Mrs Fletcher had been the wife of an Edinburgh attorney and had a wealth of friends prominent in the intellectual, artistic and political life of the city, and was known to Gaskell's father, William Stevenson, at the turn of the century and to Elizabeth herself when she visited Edinburgh shortly before her marriage. Gaskell's memories of Mrs Fletcher's 'salon' may have inspired her collection of short stories, 'Round the Sofa'. Mrs Fletcher's son, Angus, was the sculptor of Wordsworth's bust in Grasmere church and of Dorothy Wordsworth's gravestone.

Outside the formal programme, a few of us were privileged to be invited to visit The Knoll, the house which Harriet Martineau built on the edge of Ambleside and where she established her small model farm. The house, half of which is now owned by Barbara Todd, who edited the recent edition of Martineau's 'A Year at Ambleside', seems to have changed little in outward appearance from Martineau's time, when Gaskell visited her, seeking information for *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, and it was fascinating to look down and still see the boundaries of Martineau's farm.

In the evening, after the earnestness of the day's pursuits, we had a little gentle relaxation in watching the BBC *Omnibus* programme on Elizabeth Gaskell and seeing the members of the Gaskell Society Committee following in her footsteps in Rome and elsewhere.

On our final morning, we visited Cartmel, with its fine Norman priory, where we caught the end of the Ascension Day service, and then Lindale, where the characters of 'The Sexton's Hero' had their home. We went on to Levens Hall, where the BBC filmed *Wives and Daughters*. In Kirkby Lonsdale, on a dank and rainy afternoon, only a brave few followed up the Ruskin connections, while the second-hand bookshops and the tearooms seemed to do a brisk trade. On our way home, through the Lune valley, we paused briefly at Cowan Bridge, where Charlotte

Brontë and her sisters attended school and which was to be Lowood School in *Jane Eyre*. We recalled how movingly Gaskell described the scene: the burbling river, the garden which the girls had tended and the sad, deserted dormitory. From the coach, we had a fleeting glimpse of Burrow Hall, where Gaskell stayed with the Alcocks when she visited Cowan Bridge; they rented the house from the Fenwick family: Mrs Alcock was the sister of Dr Robberds.

While the Lake District has changed greatly over a hundred and fifty years, for a few brief days we were able to feel all of its beauty and its spirit, so dear to Elizabeth Gaskell and her friends, and to the Lakeland poets. Our thanks are due to all those who so generously opened up their houses to us, to Alan, our coach driver, and especially to Joan Leach and Jean Alston for all their detailed research and the excellent organisation of the tour. Thank you, Joan and Jean, for a most memorable trip.



Lake District Trip - Members outside The Shelling

Plymouth Grove

The house was open the day before the Manchester conference, and we welcomed new and old friends to a performance in the drawing room of 'Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë' by the InterTheatre team. This raised £500.

The regular open days are on the first Sunday of the month, from 12-4. The house will also be open during the national Heritage Open Days, on 10 and 11 September from 10-4. As well as refreshments, exhibitions, tours and our bring-and buy bookstall, there will be special childrens' activities and a local corner for people who have memories of Plymouth Grove and its neighbourhood. We welcome visitors and volunteers.

Fundraising is crucial, and much needs to be done. We have had some successes. English Heritage have awarded £17,650 towards general upkeep and a further grant of £19,000 has been applied for. The Local Mayor's Charity Fund have given £1000, and the Manchester Guardian Charitable Trust £500. Our application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a £50,000 Project Planning Grant has been submitted.

You can help by joining the Friends of Plymouth Grove, and by organising fundraising events. Please do!

In the autumn Greater Manchester Cares will provide a team of 45 volunteers to paint and clean the house and the Cultural Regeneration Partnership for Inner Manchester plan to convert the lower ground floor for short term leasing and community use.

Book Notes

Christine Lingard

Voice and the Victorian Storyteller by Ivan Kreilkamp (Assistant Professor of English at Indiana University) in the series, Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth-century Literature and Culture, Cambridge University Press, £45. This demonstrates the way in which Victorian culture represents the human voice, from political speeches and governesses' tales to staged performances, and shows that the printed word did not supersede audience interest in oral story telling; with discussion of Charlotte Brontë, Browning, Carlyle, Dickens, Disraeli and Gaskell.

The Idea of Music in Victorian Fiction, edited by Nicky Losseff and Sophie Fuller in the series, Music in Nineteenth-century Britain. Ashgate, £57.50. A collection of eleven critical essays, including 'The voice, the breath and the soul; song and poverty in *Thyrza* (Gissing), *Mary Barton*, *Alton Locke* (Kingsley) and *A Child of the Jago* (Arthur Morrison)' by Phyllis Weliver, which discusses various aspects of the function and depiction of music in Victorian fiction.

The Carlyles, John Ruskin and Elizabeth Gaskell by their contemporaries: third in the series of 'Lives of Victorian Literary Figures', general editor Ralph Pite. Pickering and Chatto, 3 volume set, £275. Gaskell volume edited by Valerie Sanders. An anthology of articles and criticism dating from 1866 to 1932 on a group of authors for whom London as a centre was a pressing concern; Gaskell, though living and working away from the capital, retained her contacts with its literary world. There are extracts from Henry James, Matthew Arnold, Harriet Martineau, Mrs Oliphant and Anne Thackeray Ritchie.

Femmes et Filles: translated by Béatrice Vienne. Paris, Cahiers de L'Herne, 2005. A welcome indication of the international reputation of Elizabeth Gaskell, this translation of *Wives and Daughters* fills a gap identified by our French members.

Voices from the Past by Jean M. Wright. Privately published, 144 pages and 130 photographs, £15 + postage, from 1a Hall Hill, Bollington, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK10 5ED. Jean Wright inherited from her husband's family a fascinating collection of letters and memorabilia which she draws on for this amply illustrated book, partly in colour, of family photographs and Victoriana. The narrative is also filled out by recollections of Martha Ann Wright (1868-1969) who lived a full century in this Cheshire manufacturing community. Of special interest to our members is the material on the Gregs of Bollington and the village life supported by Lowerhouse Mill. Martha Ann's mother served as lady's maid at The Mount to Miss Agnes Greg, who went from Quarry Bank, Styal, to live with her brother Samuel and his family. The letters of this period are revealing social history, as are letters from family who emigrated to New Zealand and Canada - a course of action at one time considered by Samuel Greg himself when Elizabeth Gaskell was a house-guest at The Mount (*Letters*, no.114). The surviving material, mainly letters, is not used to tell the family story chronologically but follows individual family members' lives through their letters: this is sometimes repetitive or confusing: more linking annotation might have helped.

ANNUAL SUPPLEMENTS TO

Elizabeth Gaskell: An Annotated Guide to English-Language Sources TO BE ADDED TO GASKELL WEB SITE

<http://lang.nagoya-u.ac.jp/~matsuoka/EG-Society.html>

Nancy S. Weyant

Even in the age of "camera-ready" manuscripts and "print-on-demand" publishing, there are a variety of realities that impact the currency of any published bibliography, especially, an annotated one. In addition to the time required to locate, acquire, read and write the annotation, there is a time-lag of anywhere between six months and three years between the publication of a scholarly work (be it a journal article or a book chapter) and the indexing of that work in one of the many electronic databases. Furthermore, some book chapters are not separately indexed anywhere. To date, I

have identified almost 175 sources published since 2001 that conform to the criteria for inclusion in my two previous bibliographies. Because the next decennial bibliography won't be considered for publication for another seven years, I contacted Mitsuharu Matsuoka and proposed that I create comprehensive annual supplements that can be added to his Gaskell Web. (He not only graciously accepted my offer; he facilitated my having a separate web page to which he will provide a link. The supplements for 2002 and 2003 should be available by October 1st. Any sources for those years that subsequently come to my attention will be added as discovered. The annual supplements will not have annotations. (I do plan on a third book and Scarecrow Press is not likely to be interested in publishing something that is freely available on the Internet.) However, if the title does not clearly identify the work(s) discussed, that information will be added to enhance the value to anyone seeking to identify ALL the publications discussing a particular Gaskell work. I will add the 2004 supplement as soon as the electronic databases catch up with indexing that year. I am pleased by this collaboration between myself and Mitsu and hope the improved bibliographical control of works about and by Elizabeth Gaskell proves an asset to Gaskell scholars.

The Yorkshire branch of The Gaskell Society

Dudley J. Barlow

With the support of the Gaskell Society Committee a meeting was held in York in May to discuss the formation of a Yorkshire Branch of the Society. A letter had been sent to all members living in the county or within easy travelling distance. There was a good response and the meeting was attended by twelve members, two non-members and two Gaskell Society committee members. A further ten members were unable to attend but expressed support.

Considerable enthusiasm was shown and it was agreed that a Yorkshire Branch should be formed. York was felt to be the most central point for us to meet and the Quaker Meeting House in Friargate to be a suitable venue. We hope to meet four times each year. In order to cover expenses we decided to ask members to contribute £3 per meeting attended and non-members to contribute £4. I was asked to make the necessary arrangements.

Saturday, 12 November: Brian Spencer (Editor of the *Transactions of the Yorkshire Dialect Society*): 'Mrs Gaskell and the Dialect of Whitby'.

The meetings will commence at 2.00pm, though the room will be available from 12.30pm so that those who wish may bring a picnic lunch. Tea and coffee will be provided at lunchtime and again with biscuits at the close of the meeting.

Several of our members are also members of the Jane Austen Society, Northern Branch, and we look forward to a close and friendly contact between the two groups.

All members of the Gaskell Society able to attend our meetings are warmly invited to do so. Further details, if required, from Dudley J Barlow, 6 Kenlay Close, New Earswick, York YO32 4DW. Telephone: 01904-750 366.

North-West Group Programme

Saturday 1st October: Autumn Meeting

This will be a special meeting to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of The Gaskell Society at St Vincent's Church Hall, Knutsford (near Tatton Street Car Park).

- 10.30am for Coffee
11.00: Welcome, introductions and appraisal of The Gaskell Society's first twenty years
11.30: 'Elizabeth Gaskell's Cheshire': illustrated talks by Joan Leach and Marie Moss
12.45: Buffet Lunch
2.30: At Knutsford's Little Theatre:
Elegant Economy: presented by The History Workshop

Members will be welcome at Brook Street Chapel's morning service at 11.00am, after the laying of a commemorative flowers on the Gaskell Grave at 10.45am.

Monthly meetings at Knutsford Parish Church Rooms will be held on the last Wednesday of each month, except December. 26 October, 24 November, 26 January, 23 February, 23 March, 27 April.
The book for study is *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*.

Buffet Lunch is served from 12.15 at a cost of £7.50 which includes room-hire expenses etc.

Meetings at Cross Street Chapel, Manchester

Lunch time on Tuesdays (not always the 2nd Tuesday) at 1.00pm. Tea and coffee available from 12.15. Bring sandwiches or buy from Pret a Manger, next door.

A series of talks on 'Women of note' known by Elizabeth Gaskell:

18 October: 'Elizabeth Gaskell's "Eternal Woman": Mme de Sévigné' by Howard Gregg

8 November: 'Harriet Martineau at Ambleside' by Barbara Todd

6 December: 'A Christmas Miscellany' with carols and mince pies

10 January: 'The North West on Film' by Marion Hewitt of the N.W.Film Archive followed by lunch

7 February: 'Queen Victoria as a woman of letters' by Dr. Deborah Wynne

14 March: 'Florence Nightingale' by Dr. Aled Jones

The South-West Group

On Monday 17th January Celia Skrine led a preliminary trip to Clevedon to plan a visit later in the year, suggested by Mrs. Gaskell's admiration for Tennyson's 'In Memoriam'. Arthur Hallam is buried in St. Andrews Church, Clevedon, and Tennyson made several visits. Even in January Clevedon is a pretty little seaside town and it was wonderful to get some sea air as we went to the church along the Poet's Walk. On Thursday May 5th, ten Gaskell members met at the Beach Cafe and made the walk to the church with its cliff-top graveyard. Celia had arranged for the church to be opened so we were able to see Arthur Hallam's memorial tablet imagined by Tennyson....

And in the dark church like a ghost
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

We sat in the graveyard and read Mrs Gaskell's account of Samuel Bamford's feelings about Tennyson and some verses from 'In Memoriam', and went back to a good lunch. In the afternoon we went on to beautiful Clevedon Court, home of the Elton family. Hallam's mother was the favourite daughter of the Rev. Sir Abraham Elton, and Tennyson stayed there in 1850. Thank you to Peter and Celia Skrine for organising this memorable day.

We all enjoyed having Joan Leach's visit to Bath on July 2nd when she gave the South-West group her readings of letters between the Winkworths, Charlotte Brontë and Elizabeth Gaskell. (Peter Skrine's characterisation of Catherine Winkworth was much admired!) The letter in which Charlotte Brontë, by then Mrs. Nicholls, described her fall from her horse in Ireland provoked some speculation about why Mrs. Gaskell made no reference to the incident in her biography. My own feeling is that she did not wish to revive or make public any painful memories for Arthur Nicholls who may have blamed himself for not realising that Charlotte was trapped under the horse. The event was preceded by a pleasant lunch at the Francis Hotel where we made the acquaintance of some new members, including Mr. Tom Murray who had come by train from Exeter.

Sunday August 14th is the annual Summer Tea hosted by Kate and Alex Crawford

in Norton St Philip. Their house is called Valley View and with good reason. We sit in the sun and read poetry and eat cake and drink tea - what could be better?

A small group is planning to come to the Autumn meeting at the beginning of October, staying at Radbroke Barn. While making arrangements with the Proprietor I mentioned that we had lived in Alderley Edge for 20 years. 'Oh you poor things', was his reply. If anyone wants to join us, do get in touch as soon as possible. (email to rosemary_marshall@yahoo.com or phone 01225 426732).

London and South-East Group

Meetings are held at Francis Holland School, 39 Graham Terrace, London SW1W 8J, a few minutes walk from Sloane Square tube station. Sandwich lunch at 12.45 (£2 only) and meeting at 2 pm. Contact Frances Twinn 85 Calton Ave; London SE21 7DF Tel. 020 8693 3238 email Frantwinn@aflex.net

Sat 12 November:

Cranford: Mrs Gaskell's most radical novel?

By Caroline Jackson-Houlston

Invitation to Carlyle Society Meeting in Edinburgh on 24th September

Gaskell members are invited to join the Carlyle Society at their meeting on 24th September 2005, when the subject will be: "The 'Dark Expounder' and the 'Melodious Voice': Thomas Carlyle and Elizabeth Gaskell on Chartism", a paper by Maurice Milne.

The Meeting will be held at 11 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh, at 14.15 p.m.

Mary Barton: the Opera

An obituary in The Times of the British composer Arnold Cooke, who died recently in his 99th year, noted the fact that 'during the late 1940's and early 50's he laboured on his only full length opera: *Mary Barton*'. Unfortunately 'it has yet to be staged'. Cooke was a prolific composer, and was a professor at the Royal Manchester College of Music in the 1930's which was where, presumably, he discovered Mrs Gaskell's novel. It is not clear whether the score still exists; if it does perhaps one of our more musical members might like to explore the possibilities. A. J. S.