

The Gaskell Society



Members at Anne Hathaway's Cottage, Shottery



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

Hon Treasurer: Brian Williams, 15 Cawley Avenue, Culcheth, Warrington, Cheshire WA3 4DF

Membership Secretary: Miss C. Lingard, 5 Moran Crescent, Macclesfield SK11 8JJ

ISSN 0954 - 1209

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.

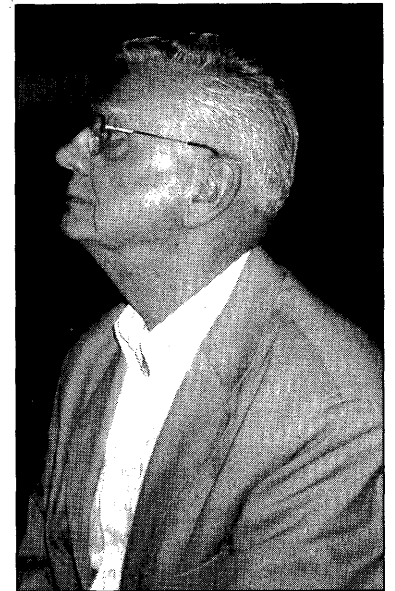
Brian was a very thoughtful, conscientious man, careful in everything he did, but never boring in his attitude. When abroad he was always observant of the rules for crossing roads, although in Belgium I did once manage to get him to move against a red light, which I took as a great triumph! He also had 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

Chaloner, W.H., 'Charles Roe of Macclesfield', *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, Vol. 62.

Chapple, J.A.V., *Elizabeth Gaskell: the early years*, 1997.

Craig, Robert & Jarvis, Rupert, 'Liverpool registry of merchant ships', *Chetham Society*, 1967.

Rae, Pamela, *Turtle at Mr. Humble's: the fortunes of a mercantile family, England and America 1758-1837*, 1992.

Moss, Marie, 'Elizabeth Gaskell and Macclesfield', Gaskell Society Newsletter no. 36 Autumn 2003.

Memoirs of Samuel Holland [junior] one of the pioneers of the North Wales slate industry, edited by Sir William L. Davies, 1952.

Smith, Alan, *The illustrated guide to the Liverpool Herculaneum Pottery, 1796-1800*, 1970.

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*.

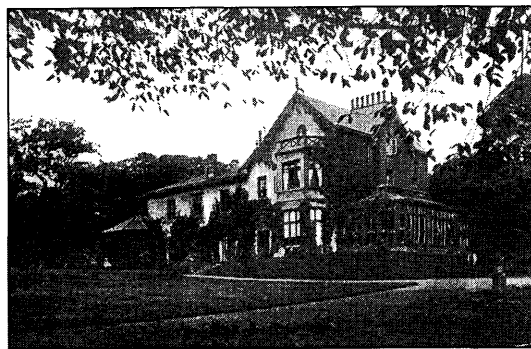
Toxteth Chapel continued to serve its dissenting congregation including Samuel Holland's family. One of our knowledgeable members spotted a memorial to Jeremiah Horrox, 1639, who was the first to recognise the transit of Venus across the sun, which was observed again this June.

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.

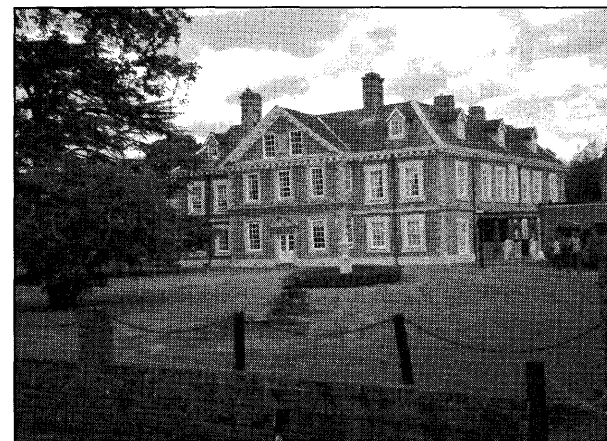
By this time, the rain had cleared up and we were later able to enjoy a walk in Barford, where the young Elizabeth Stevenson went to the school run by the Byerley sisters before it moved to Stratford. Unfortunately, Barford House is looking rather dilapidated these days, but as building work is about 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