



The Gaskell Society



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NEWSLETTER

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Editor's Letter

Joan Leach

Members will be saddened to learn of the death of Geoffrey Sharps in hospital at Scarborough on 6th January. Those of us who knew him will miss his genial presence at our events and meetings. Although in poor health he was able to attend our 20th anniversary meeting, assisted by Heather, when we shared memories of our first meetings in 1985. Geoffrey had been a constant supporter and encourager ever since our inception. In this Newsletter John Chapple has written an obituary and other members have added their memories and tributes. Alan Shelston's obituary of Geoffrey will follow in the Journal.

I had occasion recently to look at the Whitfield collection in Knutsford Library, there as a result of Geoffrey's efforts. I found there letters from Gaskell biographer Annette B. Hopkins: : *Elizabeth Gaskell: Her life and Work* (1952) from the time when Knutsford was celebrating the 150th anniversary. There was mention of starting a Society then but it had to wait another 25 years!! A letter to Geoffrey from A.B. Hopkins thanks him for pointing out some errors and a page of corrections, with acknowledgment to Geoffrey, appeared in the next edition of her book. (1971)

Thank you to all who sent me cards and congratulations on the award of the MBE. I regard it as a tribute to The Society and our joint success. On 8 December I went to Buckingham Palace accompanied by Elizabeth Williams, Frances Twinn and Ann Waddington. It was a splendid occasion, and awe-inspiring to walk through the Palace gates and into the red and gold galleries. Fran Twinn has captured the thrill of the event for you in her account and she also crowned our day by hosting, with her husband Ian, a delightful dinner party for 15 members. Thank you to all who were involved in any way.

Christine Lingard has collected details of translations of Gaskell works over the years and continents and also extracted from the OED words ascribed as 'first use' by Elizabeth Gaskell, more of these another time.

We are looking well ahead to our next conference, which will be at Christ Church University, Canterbury, from Friday(teatime) 27 July to Monday (after breakfast) 30 July, 2007. The University has en-suite accommodation and is conveniently situated for the town. We are fortunate to have several members there who will be able to help us in planning the conference. The proposed theme is: Gaskell, Darwin and Dickens: the scientific and cultural background to their work.

John Geoffrey Sharps (1936-2006) and Gaskell Studies

John A.V.Chapple

I first met Geoffrey in Manchester during June 1961 when Arthur Pollard and I, both lecturers at the university, were preparing a collected edition of the widely dispersed letters of Elizabeth Gaskell. The boy who had gained a scholarship to Sir John Deane's ancient grammar school at Northwich, who excelled in both arts and sciences and was a fine tackler when playing Rugby there (one is delighted to learn from his school friends, John Tasker and Kenn Oultram) had truly remarkable energy, drive and pertinacity. He had gained an MA in English in the University of Edinburgh and was completing his Oxford BLitt thesis on Gaskell. At this time he was also engaged in studies for his DipEd (1962) and MEd in Psychology at Queen's University Belfast (1963). Arthur Pollard and I were experienced in research, but we soon recognised Geoffrey's very special qualities: single-mindedness, stubborn integrity, a desire to be comprehensive combined with total generosity in sharing the results of his investigations. Our statement in the introduction to *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell* (1966) that it 'would have been immeasurably poorer without his help' was heart-felt.

In 1964 his BLitt thesis was accepted at Oxford and became the foundation of his *Mrs. Gaskell's Observation and Invention*, which appeared in 1970 after he had joined the staff of North Riding College of Further Education, Scarborough, in 1964, lecturing at first in English and Educational Psychology but concentrating on the latter from 1967 until his retirement in 1987.

There has been a fashion in recent years for massive bio-critical studies of single authors, some merely assembled from secondary sources. Few of them can match Geoffrey's Gaskell study for its many personal discoveries and thoroughly investigated texts and contexts. Relentless pursuit of detail can be wearisome, but his book is so full, so meticulous and so accurate that sections have never been superseded as essential sources of information and analysis. He used to maintain that he had said all he had to say in this major work, but in fact his Gaskell discoveries continued and were made known to those interested, though he rarely published them.

His amusing laying of the *Dublin University Magazine* ghost of 'The Half-Brothers', which 'vampire-like' obdurately refused to die, did appear as 'a resurrectionist note' in the *Gaskell Society Journal* for 1994. The Japanese scholar Tat Ohno also recalls that in September 2003 he announced the news that the authentic Gaskell

story with that title had appeared first in an obscure provincial publication. This discovery never saw print under Geoffrey's name. Fortunately it was communicated to and acknowledged by the editor of Volume 3 of the new Pickering edition of the *Works of Elizabeth Gaskell*. His own Gaskell collection became perhaps the largest in private hands; it was liberally made available to serious researchers. He both responded to and initiated scholarly contacts. The list of his correspondents was world-wide and their grateful acknowledgements of his assistance are very many.

Gaskell studies were not for Geoffrey an abstract, desiccated pursuit. His description of Elizabeth Gaskell fits him with uncanny aptness too: '... she was always ready to remind her readers of historical associations, to link present observations with memories of the past' (*Mrs. Gaskell's Observation and Invention*, p. 465). Our Honorary Secretary treasures her copy of this extraordinary book, inscribed 'To Mrs Joan Leach: In gratitude for a memorable tour of Mrs Gaskell's Knutsford on Sunday 29 September 1985, 175 years after the birth of the authoress.' He used to appear with an old leather bag bulging with books, which he then asked their authors to sign. He later presented many of them to friends and admirers of Elizabeth Gaskell, adding his own graceful inscriptions.

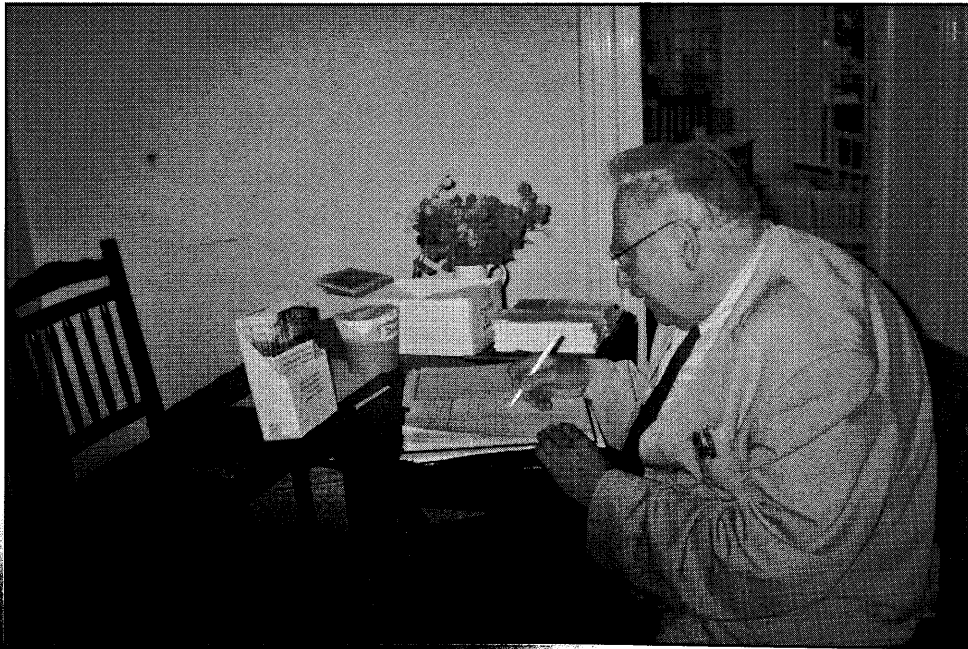
He would speak of older writers like Mrs Chadwick as if he had known them personally. He befriended pre-war writers on Gaskell like A. Stanton Whitfield or the American scholar Mrs Jane Whitehill, happy to arrange for me to meet her when she came to England some years ago. He was an active member of the Brontë Society and his association with the universities at which he had studied was lifelong. These came to include Hull University, where Pollard and I had joined the staff and Mrs Heather Sharps obtained her BPhil in English (1974) with a successful dissertation upon that notable Victorian Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth. About 1990 both Arthur Pollard and Geoffrey took the BTh at Hull via the part-time route, their intellectual stamina quite undiminished by age. Typically, Geoffrey was very pleased to learn that the set of grammar tapes he used to tackle his rusty New-Testament Greek had been created by Christopher Strachan, a member of the Classics department and a great friend of mine.

His special genius probably flourished most in the Gaskell Society. He was present as a member of the steering committee at its first meeting in 1985, and later served a term as President. He attended almost all meetings and conferences. At many of them he spoke, always calmly, judiciously and courteously, though there were powerful depths of passion for justice and accuracy beneath the surface. His gift for personal relationships within the Society never flagged. He also delighted in

meeting and encouraging new members, younger scholars and visitors from overseas.

We all retain memories of him sitting in the front with his tape-recorder, creating a sound archive of our meetings. Who can forget the Society's visit to Whitby when he led us around the places associated with *Sylvia's Lovers*, his panama hat raised high upon a stick as we straggled through the curious holiday crowds? Like William Gaskell he was especially fond of puns. This visit produced a joyously outrageous series - *Dracula* had brought its author '(for whom much was at stake) undying fame' ... here is 'yet more of my humour in the *jugular vein*' ... 'well, *fangs* for the memory!' Admiration for Geoffrey's learning was accompanied by affection for his outgoing, generous nature.

In more recent years, as his health deteriorated sadly, Heather's loyal support enabled him to travel and attend our meetings in his old enthusiastic way. It is fitting that our Honorary Secretary should find the quotation about Charles Kingsley that best expresses our feelings about John Geoffrey Sharps: 'How shall we ever replace him? Who can be to us what he has been?'



Memories and tributes to John Geoffrey Sharps

From Nancy S Weyant, librarian and bibliographer:

I met Geoffrey and his remarkable wife, Heather, when I attended my first Gaskell Conference - at St. Hilda's College in Oxford in 1995. My first Gaskell bibliography had been published the previous year. During that year, I made the decision to join the Gaskell Society and subsequently made the decision to attend the Conference. The second day I was there, Geoffrey gave a post-dinner speech in which he traced the role of Americans in Gaskell bibliography and gave me a very generous compliment as part of that tradition. I was stunned! I didn't even know he knew who I was. It turned out that he had brought his copy of my book so I could autograph it for him. *Again*, I was stunned! We librarians are a modest group, in general. He then wanted to interview me about how I became interested in Gaskell. He taped it!

But Geoffrey was also a purist. About three months after the Conference, I received a letter from him, pointing out about a half-dozen mistakes he had found - but also apologizing for communicating them to me. He had been so generous and so supportive, I felt that somehow I had failed *him*. I had hoped to include corrections in the subsequent volume but that was *not* part of the contract with Scarecrow.

Geoffrey and I have corresponded over the last decade. When my second volume came out, I sent him a gift copy. True to form, he checked it for errors. *Much* to my delight, he responded that he had not yet found any, but that he *would* keep looking. When I went to the Conference in Manchester last summer, he purchased a *second* copy of my book and again wanted me to sign it. I smiled and (of course) did so. In 2003 when I went to England for the Durham Gaskell Conference, I stayed with Graham Handley and his wife. Graham loaned me a copy of a BBC program on Elizabeth Gaskell that included multiple scenes with members of the Gaskell Society. Geoffrey was one of the participants - clad in one scene at Whitby in shorts! I treasure that tape too.

In shorts or in his linen sports jacket, Geoffrey was very much a type of British scholar that we Americans can not seem to replicate. Geoffrey was, as I said a gentleman and a scholar - a rare scholar with encyclopaedic knowledge. More importantly, he was a scholar who thrived on encouraging young (and not-so-young) Gaskell scholars. I shall miss him.

From Dr Irene Wiltshire:

For several years my copy of *Mrs Gaskell's Observation and Invention* was seldom out of reach, and it continues to be a good reliable friend. Yet when I think of Geoffrey Sharps I recall more than his meticulous scholarship. My personal recollections of

Geoffrey fall into three categories: the Committee Man; the Listener; and the Humorist.

The time I served on the Gaskell Society Committee coincided with the last few years of Geoffrey's Presidency. Throughout this time he was assiduous in attending, not just the AGM, but ordinary committee meetings held in Manchester, or Knutsford. Most committee members lived in Cheshire but Geoffrey lived in the North-East of England so the meetings involved him in an arduous cross-country journey of more than three hours in each direction. The then Chairman of the Society, John Chapple, had an onerous enough journey, driving from Hull on the East Coast via the Trans-Pennine motorway, but, en route, he would collect Geoffrey, who had already travelled by train from Scarborough. Following the meetings, the two would race back across the Pennines so that Geoffrey could catch a suitable train home. All of this was done in a spirit of immense geniality.

When listening to speakers at conferences, and other events, Geoffrey developed his own technique. He would often choose to sit on the front row with his tape recorder switched on. As the temperature rose he would appear to take a cat-nap, eyes closed and chin on chest, but at the appropriate moment he would stir and change over the tape in the recorder. Having accomplished this essential task, he would then sink into a deeper repose, and at times appear to be in danger of falling off his chair. Such a catastrophe never happened and I am sure all those lectures were given an encore back home in Scarborough, before the tapes were carefully stored.

When in jocular mode, Geoffrey could be a humorist par excellence. Some years ago a Gaskell Society event involved a walk in Manchester city centre, led by Terry Wyke from Manchester Metropolitan University. The weather was inclement to say the least; nonetheless, Geoffrey travelled, apparently alone, by train from Scarborough to participate in this walk. Along the way, Terry showed us the site of one of the Gaskells' early homes in the city. Geoffrey recalled the time just before the property was demolished, and how, with scholarly interest, he had knocked on the door of this house and ingenuously enquired of the householder if he (Geoffrey) might 'come in and look round'. The reply apparently was in the negative and the door was firmly closed. We can all sympathise with any reluctance to admit strangers into our homes, but if only this particular householder had been acquainted with Geoffrey, he may well have been a little more welcoming, and then what tales we would have heard.

Geoffrey is now in that place of rest to which we are all destined. When our turn comes to apply for admission, will he encourage us to 'come in and look round'? I think the answer will be in the affirmative.

From Akiko Suzue, President-Elect of The Gaskell Society, Japan:

I am saddened to learn that Geoffrey Sharps has passed away. I met him at the Durham Gaskell Conference, 2003. During that period he was very kind to me. I talked about my translation of *Sylvia's Lovers*, just completed, and he had given me insightful advice. I was also impressed by the devotion of Mrs Sharps to him. I shall miss the feeling of togetherness I enjoyed at the conference and I shall cherish the memory of our association of that summer.

From Mitsu Matsuoka:

Professor of English at Nagoya University, Gaskell Society web master

The members of The Gaskell Society of Japan extend profound condolences to Mrs. Sharps, with warm affection and gratitude for his scholarly achievements. I myself was deeply shocked to hear that Professor Sharps had passed away. It was at the 1996 AGM held at the Royal George that I had the honour of meeting him. I looked up to him for his conscientious study of Gaskell. We greatly appreciated not only his outstanding contribution to the Gaskell Society but also his warm personality. It is still really hard to believe we shall never see him again.

From Tatsuhiro Ohno:

Associate Professor of English Literature, Kumamoto University

In hearing the sad news about the demise of Geoffrey Sharps, I am wondering if I could share my four memories about him with those who knew him.

1. In return for my complimentary copy of the first Japanese translation of *Sylvia's Lovers*, he sent me a copy of his book in which the following dedication was written: "To Tatsuhiro Ohno, Translator of *Sylvia's Lovers*, From John Geoffrey Sharps, Another Admirer of This Novel, Scarborough, North Yorkshire, 10 March 1998". I was moved by his kindness to an obscure Gaskellian in the country of the Far East.

2. After listening to his speech at Cober Hill Centre, Cloughton, 17 September 2003, about his discovery of the book in which "The Half-Brothers" was first published (cf. Sharps, p. 311) and about the correct publication date of *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* - 25th March 1857, not 27th - I asked him to publish the outcome of his research; he replied "Yes. Probably in the Newsletter". When we met in Knutsford, 25 September 2004, I made an inquiry about his paper; he said, "It will be published in the Journal". I had a chance to talk with him about his long-expected paper at the Manchester conference on 19 July 2005; his reply was "I haven't written it yet". Has the opportunity to have his discovery published gone forever?

3. In his letter dated 25 January 2005, he kindly wrote, "I can now congratulate you upon your very scholarly Journal article on *Ruth*, well argued and supported by a wealth of references: you are certainly most knowledgeable about earlier Gaskell contributions as well as recent ones. I found your statistical analyses indeed impressive." No word can express how much I was consoled by his remark, since I had long been depressed by unfavourable criticism of my methodology.

4. He did me the honour of attending my presentation at the Manchester conference on 20 July 2005. His comment of "Well done" was one of the precious rewards for my preparation.

Geoffrey Sharps was pleased to know the tradition of Gaskell study begun by A. S. Whitfield in 1929 was still continuing in our country. As a Japanese Gaskellian, I would like to do my best to keep this tradition, which is probably the very thing he would expect us to do.

Ed. I am grateful to our Society and The Gaskell Society of Japan for organising a visit to Japan for me from (May 31 to 8 June) when I will talk about Knutsford and Cheshire in the life and works of Elizabeth Gaskell; I first became a Gaskellian from growing up with Gaskell Avenues and Cranford cake shops! and wanting to know about the town in her time.

From Dr. Larry K. Uffelman:

Professor Emeritus of English, Mansfield University PA

Like others who have written to comment on the death of John Geoffrey Sharps, I feel a sense of loss even though I hardly knew the man. I met him but once, at a conference in London when I presented a paper on *North and South*. He and his wife sat in the front row looking up at me and, I think, tape-recording my talk. Although this might have been scary, it wasn't. He chuckled in the right places and introduced himself at the end of the session as we drifted toward coffee cups. Later we had a brief conversation at the end of which I produced a copy of his book and sought his autograph. Of course I'd used his book many times before then and have continued to do so.

Later we had an exchange of letters which had more to do with our respective grandchildren and our efforts to learn German than with anything Gaskellian. Of course I didn't know him as well as many of the rest of you, but I found him warm, congenial, and supportive. In short, I liked him a lot.

Recollections of Plymouth Grove

Susan Hartshorne of New Earswick, York, writes that for nearly 20 years she and her late husband were resident in Hulme Hall, the University Hall of Residence in Manchester, close to the Gaskell House in Plymouth Grove. During that time she attended many functions when the House was a hostel for international students run by the University International Society.

Before her marriage Susan had lived even nearer, in the same house in which her grandparents, Dorothy and Edward Vipont Brown had lived. Her grandparents were friends of Meta and Julia Gaskell. In his 'Reminiscences' written many years later her grandfather wrote:

'We also came to know the Misses Gaskell (Miss Meta and Miss Julia), daughters of the authoress, who lived in Plymouth Grove. I had been pleading for a District Nurse for Gorton¹ at a meeting in the Town Hall, and Miss Gaskell wrote to offer her help in getting one. When my efforts were crowned with success, the sisters gave me a beautiful bound volume of *Mary Barton* inscribed by them, which I still treasure on my shelves.'

In her grandmother's contemporaneous journal on 3 October 1900, she wrote:

Then we went to Miss Gaskell's At Home in the afternoon, and shook hands with Richter²! It was a never-to-be-forgotten opportunity! They are *charming* ladies.

Ed. In an undated letter to Mrs Elgar, Meta sends reviews from *The Manchester Guardian* and *The Courier* of a performance of Elgar's Ode³ - and adds: 'In leaving the concert last Thursday, Dr Richter said to me - "Oh, it was magnificent - the Elgar - It is fine! It is fine!"

Mrs Elgar's diary records their visit to Liverpool in October 1901 for the premiere of the first two *Pomp and Circumstance* marches when Meta and Julia were at the dinner before the concert. In March 1903 her diary recorded: 'We had prepared to go to Manchester by the 10.17 train to stay with the Miss Gaskells for the grt. performance of *Gerontius* that evening but late in the PM Mr Forsyth telephoned that it was postponed till 12th Coates being ill. Much disappointment in Manchester, it was to be the great event & every seat was sold out in that Munimence Hall.'

The Gaskells had been involved in Manchester's music since the days when Hallé's man tuned their piano; further research will show Meta and Julia's work with the Royal Northern School of Music.

1. He was a G.P.
2. The famous conductor
3. 'The Ode' may have been Coronation Ode op. 44 with Land of Hope and Glory as the last movement.

Gaskell In Translation:- A Summary

Christine Lingard

There can be no doubt that Gaskell was a success in her lifetime, a success by no means confined to these shores; she was read all over Europe - something that really amazed her. A major reason for this was the growth of the railways. The travelling public was seen as a lucrative market for book-selling and two international publishers in particular exploited this. In Leipzig from 1837 Baron Christian Bernhard Tauchnitz (1816-95) produced his Copyright Edition of contemporary authors in vast quantities. It included English and American authors in the original language. He made the unprecedented move of entering into contracts with authors and they were all fully recompensed. In all he published twelve Gaskell books, including two volumes of short stories. *A Dark night's Work* was given a volume of its own, much to her surprise as she didn't think it warranted it. Excluded were *The Moorland Cottage* (possibly her only flop), the short story 'Crowley Castle', and *Round the Sofa*, maybe because she had sold the rights to Sampson Low for a quick £100. She later regretted this and described him as 'rascally' for trying to pass the stories off as new. (*Letters*, no.414)

Tauchnitz editions often appeared simultaneously with the British and occasionally preceded them. The one exception was *Cranford*, which did not appear till 1867. Gaskell had sent him a copy as early as 1854 but in 1862 she was forced to write to him: 'I cannot help wishing that sometime or other you would collect *Cranford* out of *Household Words*, and publish it in your Series. Many of my friends, and several people who are unknown to me, have expressed their great wish to be able to purchase it abroad' (*Further Letters*, p. 245).

By contrast the Paris publisher Louis Hachette et Cie published English titles translated into French in two successful series - *Bibliothèque de chemins de fer* and *Bibliothèque des meilleurs romans étrangers*. He held a tight rein over translation rights in France and was known to have blocked several ventures. Gaskell had a contract with him for one and a half francs per page but had to badger him to publish *North and South*. A delay of three years ensued before it was done and she was on the verge of withdrawing the option. Nevertheless no other publisher issued her works in France during her lifetime, at least in book form. *Cousin Phillis* appeared in *Revue de deux mondes* and some of the short stories in other magazines. Grassart broke the monopoly with *Wives and Daughters* (1867) and in 1877 *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, the only book Hachette had not issued. Hachette continued to produce editions of her work until 1890. Their relationship is revealed in their letters. She recommended a number of British authors as suitable for translation. [*Further Letters*, p.126]

During the past year I have been searching out Gaskell translations and it is fascinating to see how widely her work has spread. We can also get an insight into Gaskell's business acumen in her letters to publishers. In 1929 Clark S. Northup appended an extensive bibliography to Gerard DeWitt Sanders' biography. It includes many translations but is far from complete. With the exception of French editions he seems to have restricted his research to the British Library and ignored a lot of interesting developments in other parts of Europe. The first translations of Gaskell in fact were Dutch. *Mary Barton* appeared as early as 1849, and all her novels (except *Wives and Daughters*) and a number of short stories including *Lizzie Leigh* were translated in her lifetime. There were several publishers involved in Amsterdam, Middelburg, Utrecht and Haarlem, though the translator was often the same - C.M. Mensing. Dickens also used this translator without much success. He complained about the poor typography.

These books are extremely rare - the only references to them are in the catalogue of the University of Amsterdam. They are not available in the National Library of the Netherlands. Dutch publishers were small family businesses incorporating a bookshop. Print runs were extremely small, so one wonders if her books suffered the same problems as Dickens'. There is little available in the Netherlands today but in the 1980s several of her short stories were included in anthologies with works by other British women authors, e.g. Jane Austen. One of the most important early studies of Gaskell was by the Dutch scholar Johanna van Dulleman (1924).

Scandinavia soon followed and early translations are to be found in Denmark and Norway. These are comparatively more common. Swedish translations are much rarer, which may seem surprising considering the links Gaskell had with that country. Her good friend Mary Howitt translated from Danish and Swedish and she met Frederika Bremer, the Swedish novelist, who admired her work. The Swedes are natural linguists and many educated people may well have read her works in the original.

Translations of *Ruth* appeared in 1853, *North and South*, under the title *Margareta eller norra och södra England*, in 1856 and *Mr Harrison's Confessions* in 1866. There could well have been an edition of *Mary Barton*, subtitled *En berättelse ur lifvet i Manchester*, in 1854 but I have not yet found a location for this. One of the most important of Gaskell scholars, Aina Rubenius, was Swedish and recently Gunnel Melchers has done some remarkable work on dialect.

Germany was the first foreign country Gaskell visited and she made two other visits there. Though her husband was a noted German scholar she professed to having little knowledge of the language. She writes however of the fondness the Germans had for her work and of several deals with publishers, none of which appear to have come to fruition - for instance, a translation of *Cousin Phillis* in 1864 (*Letters*, no.

557). The first German translation came in 1851, not 1849 as Peter Skrine claimed. He has confirmed that a translation of *Mary Barton* thought to have been published in Grima in 1849 was a cataloguer's error. *Ruth* however provoked a great deal of interest. There were two different translations published in Leipzig and Stuttgart in 1853, as well as the Tauchnitz edition in English. Dr Gottlob Fink (1807-77), translator of the Stuttgart edition, also translated from Swedish, Medieval French and Italian. *Cranford*, *Sylvia's Lovers* and *Wives and Daughters* soon appeared, as well as several of the novellas. Surprisingly I can find no record of *North and South* ever having been translated into German, though in November 1857 she gave permission for a Mrs Taylor to translate it (*Letters*, no. 378). She had had problems with Hachette over the French translation.

North and South was originally serialised in *Household Words*. Sales of the magazine dropped while she was writing it and Dickens didn't like the book at all. He wrote to his editor Wills: "Mrs Gaskell's story, so divided, is wearisome in the last degree". One wonders if his views filtered through to the Continent. Several German translators were not acknowledged. She asked George Smith to send a copy of *Sylvia's Lovers* to "Frau von Schmidt, a German friend, who thinks she has the power of translating one of my books early" (*Letters*, no. 501), and refers to "Monsieur Mohl's neices [sic] - who translated *Sylvia's Lovers*, will translate *Wives & Daughters*, after Madame Mohl has read it" (*Letters*, no. 557). They were Ida von Schmidt Zalierov, wife of a Hungarian Count in the Austrian army, and Anna Helmholtz, wife of a distinguished German scientist. I have no evidence that these translations were ever published. *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* didn't appear in German till 1995. The Germans are very proud of her story, *Six weeks in Heppenheim*, and credit her with promoting the local wine trade. Austria produced a number of school editions early in the twentieth century and the most recent German translations were issued in Zürich.

France was a country that Gaskell loved. She made regular trips to Paris where she met several of her translators, usually at the salon of Mme Mohl in the Rue du Bac. The most famous was Mme Louise Swanton-Belloc, translator of *Cranford*, an Irish woman married to a Frenchman and a personal friend of Maria Edgeworth (who recommended *Mary Barton* to her unaware that it was written by a kinswoman of her neighbour Miss Holland). There is in the Central Library, Manchester, a copy of *Pierre et Pierette* by Georges Sand, a personal autographed gift to Gaskell from Louise Swanton-Belloc. Her son married the English feminist Bessie Rayner Parkes, who was a friend of George Eliot and who also knew Gaskell, and her grandson was the poet Hilaire Belloc. Her translation of *Cousin Phillis* contains a biographical introduction.

There are several mentions of translators in letters to Hachette:

I am very glad to learn that you like the translation of Mlle [Octavie] Morel's [of *Mary Barton*] better on further inspection. To me she was recommended by Mme Geoffroy St Hilaire but when I became personally acquainted with her, I became interested in her for her own sake. [*Further Letters*, p. 134]

(She however translated little else.) Henriette Loreau (born 1815) who shared the translation of *North and South* with Mme Henriette L'Espine, was a prolific translator who corresponded with Darwin. Her other projects included Dickens, Charlotte Brontë and books about Burton, Stanley and Livingstone. She may well have been the wife of a scientist herself: 'If Madame Loreau be the lady I had the pleasure of meeting at your house last year I am sure she would translate it well' (*Further Letters*, p. 188).

Gaskell probably met the Guizot sisters too:

I was not aware that the only translation of 'Ruth' with whose existence I am acquainted was by either Mme Henriette or Pauline de Witt. I knew that they had translated portions of 'Mary Barton' (*Further Letters*, p. 134)

These two are easily confused and I am not sure every bibliographer has got them sorted. The two daughters of Louis Philippe's Prime Minister François Guizot were Henriette (1829-1908), a novelist in her own right (translated by Mrs Craik), who married the Dutch diplomat Conrad de Witt, and Pauline who married his brother Cornélis.

Guizot fled into exile in England after the 1848 revolution and met Gaskell at one of Monckton Milnes' breakfasts on her first visit to London as a 'celebrity'. He returned to France and became a historian. She mentioned him in her essay *French Life*. His output was prodigious. Henriette edited his works. A Swedish encyclopaedia claims that Pauline died in 1874 but *Lizzie Leigh* and two stories by Mrs Craik appeared in *Trois histoires d'amour par deux femmes* in 1882. A possibility is that this Mme de Witt was Pauline's daughter Madeleine, married to Henriette's son Cornélis Henry.

There was nothing new in France, apart from some versions of *Cranford*, until comparatively recently. Caroline Arnaud bemoans the decline in interest in France - no translation of Gaskell's work had been available at the time of her article. I am pleased to say that this has been addressed. The year 2004 saw a new translation of *Wives and Daughters* and a revised edition of *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, which first saw light of day in Belgium in 1945, has been republished in Monaco.

Interest in Gaskell in other Mediterranean countries did not come till the twentieth century. Francesco Marroni states that the first Italian translation was a poor translation of *Cousin Phillis* serialized in 1929. This is not strictly the case. There was a volume of short stories, *Racconti inglesi*, published in Milan in 1868 with

Lizzie Leigh and stories by Dickens and Wilkie Collins. But they have more than made up for it in recent years with Professor Marroni himself at the forefront. The Italians have a love of the supernatural - there are no fewer than five translations of *The Old Nurse's Story*. They have still to enjoy *Sylvia's Lovers* and *Wives and Daughters*.

Interest in Spain is almost as great, even though the Society has few contacts with Spanish academics. It blossomed in 1926 with the merger of the firms Espasa brothers (founded in Barcelona 1860) and Calpe (Compañía Anónima de Libería y Publicaciones Españoles, founded in Barcelona 1910) to form one of the country's most respected academic publishers. This resulted in a major venture to make available translations of foreign literature in Spain. Calpe already had *Cousin Phillis* on its list and others followed, though *Ruth* has never been translated into Spanish. After the Civil War the firm moved to South America. Offices were established in Buenos Aires and Mexico City and the books were reissued there in the 1950s. In Panama a volume with both *Cranford* and *Pride and Prejudice* was published in 1960, using an existing translation. A less scrupulous publisher, Editorial Diana, brought out a pirated translation of *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* in Mexico City in 1950 with the title *Tormentas de pasión: la vida de las Brontë*. Recently there has been interest in the shorter works with translations of *Lizzie Leigh*, *Lois the Witch* and *A Manchester Marriage*. *Clopton House* is available on the Internet. Portugal too has editions of *Cranford*, *Mary Barton* and *The Moorland Cottage*. Another Portuguese translation of *Cranford* by the well-known Brazilian author Rachel de Queiroz was published in Rio de Janeiro in 1946.

Less well documented is the availability of her work in Russia. In 1857 she breakfasted with Dean Arthur Stanley, just returned from Moscow. She wrote to Charles Eliot Norton:

He told me something I liked to hear, & so I shall tell it to you. In Moscow he had seen a good deal of a priest of the Greek Church, - a pure Muscovite - but a very intelligent man. Speaking of forms of religion in England this priest was so well acquainted with the position of dissenting ministers with regard to their congregations that A S was surprised, & enquired where & how he got his knowledge. 'From an English novel, 'Ruth.' (*Letters*, no. 384)

And in 1858:

I am receiving *such* nice letters in *English* - from a Russian girl with an unpronounceable name, living many leagues South East of Odessa, - she wrote to me about Miss Brontë's life, but we go on very pleasantly, as harmonious *strangers* can do after all, more confidentially than inharmonious acquaintances. (*Letters*, no. 401)

While these people would most likely have read her work in English courtesy of Tauchnitz they could have read them in Russian. One man responsible for this was none other than Fyodor Dostoevsky. He was a great admirer of her work, and in 1861 commissioned the serialization of *Mary Barton* in *Vremya* (Time), the revolutionary periodical he founded with his brother Mikhail. The translator has been identified as Elizaveta Grigor'evna Beketova, grandmother of another famous Russian poet, Aleksandr Blok. In 1864 they began the serialization of *Ruth* but only one episode appeared, as the magazine was forced to close. Bibliographies also list translations of *North and South* (1857) published anonymously, *Cranford* (1867) and *Wives and Daughters* (1867) but little else is recorded about these publications. It was not till 1936 that another Russian translation of *Mary Barton* appeared.

There has been over the years a peppering of translations throughout the rest of Eastern Europe before and after fall of the Iron Curtain. Hungary led the way with *Mary Barton* in 1876 and *Cranford* (translated by the Bishop of Transylvania) in 1889. The latter has long been popular in the country. The 1957 translation (which comes back to English as 'Hick Town') has been reissued several times. There followed: Poland (*Cranford*, *Mary Barton*), Finland (*Cranford*, *Lizzie Leigh*, *Sylvia's Lovers*), Yugoslavia (*Cranford*, *Mary Barton*), Czechoslovakia (*Mary Barton*), Estonia (*North and South*), Roumania (*Cranford*, *Mary Barton*, *North and South*), Bulgaria (*Cranford*), Slovenia (*Cousin Phillis*), Turkey and most recently Greece (*Christmas Storms and Sunshine*, *Cranford*, *Cousin Phillis*). The latter are particularly welcome as we now have several Greek members in the Society.

In Asia the considerable interest in Japan is well known thanks originally to Stanton Whitfield who encouraged several translations in the 1920s. Due to the efforts of Professors Tatsuhiro Ohno and Yuriko Yamawaki all Gaskell's novels are now available in Japanese translation. It is particularly difficult to research books not in Roman script. However because many online library catalogues are presented in tabular form with proper names and numbers retained in the original you can find titles even though you may not be quite sure exactly what they are! Examples of such entries are to be found in Chinese and Korean collections. Middle Eastern and Southern Asian languages are even more difficult to access. Simplified editions in English of *Cranford* have appeared in India and Iran (with introduction in Farsi).

Gaskell is not unknown in the Arab world - a thesis on *Gaskell's attitude toward women's work* was presented to the King Fahad University, Riyadh in 1996. As the result of my research I have compiled a provisional file of 309 references to books from non-English speaking countries, including English editions and corrections to mistaken statements in circulation. I have not been able to examine every copy. Nevertheless I can state that Gaskell has been translated into twenty-four languages. *Cranford*, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* and *Mary Barton* are by far the most

frequently translated. Next comes *The Old Nurse's Story*, one of the first choices for anthologies of classic ghost stories. Looking at the 1945 map of Europe, the only country from mainland Europe larger than Luxembourg not to have published Gaskell is Albania. She is truly an international figure.

Arnaud, C., 'Gaskell studies in France', *Gaskell Society Journal* 13, 1999, pp.112-6.

Chapple, J.A.V. & Pollard, A., eds, *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell* (Manchester University Press, 1966), cited as *Letters*.

Chapple, J.A.V. and Shelston, A., eds, *Further Letters of Mrs Gaskell* (Manchester University Press, 2000), cited as *Further Letters*.

Johnson, C.A. 'Russian Gaskelliana', *Review of English Literature*, vol. 7, July 1966, pp.39-52.

Marroni, F., 'Gaskell studies in Italy', *Gaskell Society Journal* 1, 1987, pp.41-7.

Northup, C., Bibliography in Sanders, G. DeWitt, *Elizabeth Gaskell* (Yale University Press, 1929).

Skrine, P.N., 'Fanny Lewald and Mrs. Gaskell', *Gaskell Society Journal* 4, 1990, p.56.

Yamawaki, Y., 'Gaskell studies in Japan', *Gaskell Society Journal* 13, 1999, p.138.

Letters relating to The Life of Charlotte Brontë

Joan Leach

The Horsfall Turner collection of letters, which the Brontë Society acquired in July 2001, includes two letters to Ellen Nussey with a Gaskell interest. Both were written about the time of the publication of *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, one by William Gaskell, the other by Marianne.

Marianne's letter is dated February 12, 1857, the day before she set off for Rome with her mother and Meta.

She writes to Ellen:

I am very glad indeed that you enjoyed your visit here. I was so pleased to get to know you, first because you were dear Miss Brontë's friend but now because you are yourself dear Miss Nussey.

I had a very pleasant visit to Liverpool, on Saturday we went to see the Great Britain and had a most grand lunch on board her. I quite longed to be going a voyage in her every thing looked so comfortable and homey . . .

Mama sends her love, she is sorry ,very - that Miss Wooler objects to her name being mentioned but it is too late now, as the copies are struck off, also Mama says about Mrs Sedgwick she must take the consequence as it is too late to alter that also . . . When we come home I shall write, and tell you our adventures, and we will have a grand talking over when you come to see the exhibition.

Believe me to remain (with united love from all)

Yours affectionately

Marianne Gaskell

In the third, revised edition of *The Life*, Miss Wooler's name has been replaced by Miss W-.

When Marianne writes '*Mama says about Mrs Sedgwick she must take the consequences*', presumably she means that her mother expects to take the consequences of naming the lady in *The Life*, but she is not identified in the text. Was this a last-minute change, perhaps among the 'one or two matters' mentioned by William in the following letter. Alan Shelston notes that she was Mrs Sidgwick (not Sedgwick) and was Charlotte's first employer. ECG writes '*I intend carefully to abstain from introducing the names of any living people*' (Penguin edn, p.186), but she gives a very critical account of the family in the *Life*, Vol 1, Ch 8. See also *Letters*, no. 266, and Juliet Barker, *The Brontës*, pp. 309-12)

William's letter is dated March 24th 1857:

My Dear Miss Nussey

I don't wonder at your having begun to think that the Life was never coming; but it is now, I see, announced for tomorrow and I hope you will receive your copy close on the heels of this. After Mrs Gaskell left, Mr Smith grew nervous about the references to Newby's dealings, and one or two other matters, and begged me to rewrite a few bits here and there; but these were done more than a fortnight ago, and the delay, I believe, has been occasioned by the engravings. I think you will be pleased by the likeness, of which he sent me a proof about ten days back. I could not judge so well of the Haworth view, never having been there and once thought of sending it to you, and should have done, but for the loss of time to which this would have led.

William tells Ellen the news he has had from the travellers of their delays from the 'Scirocco' wind and the bursting of the ship's boiler, then their arrival in Rome and seeing the Carnival.

Since then they have been doing as people do in Rome - driving out to princely villas, with gardens full of flowers, and hedges full of camellias - seeing old churches - attending complines at St Peter's, seeing the Coliseum lit up at night, and visiting it by day, and awaiting to do ditto by moonlight - and going to receptions at this palace and that. The friends they are with are kindness itself and urge me to come too; but I am tied faster by the leg than ever. Mrs Stowe is in town and they have met her several times. Dr Manning, Aubrey de Vere, and some other perverts are among their visitors and Meta writes, 'We are all being prayed for in different churches - that is for our conversion or reception into catholicism. Don't they wish they may get us!'

Flossy and Julia are pleased to be remembered, and send their love. They are dear good little girls, and I'm only sorry I can see them but at meal times and in odd waiting moments.

He concludes that he writes in haste, has several other letters to write and will not have a moment tomorrow.

William's use of the term 'perverts' is interesting, as the meaning has changed somewhat. I am indebted to Alan Shelston for the following references:

The word 'perversion' meant in the 1850s 'conversion' from the Church of England, apostasy': Robert Lee Woolf, *Gains and Losses* (1977); Edward Conybeare, *Perversion, or the Causes and Consequences of Infidelity* (1856).

William and Elizabeth were upset when Marianne, on a second visit to Rome in 1862, came under the influence of Cardinal Manning and seriously considered converting. William set about a course of reading and discussion with her but Elizabeth doubted the wisdom of this and wrote to W. W. Story, who been host to Marianne in Rome:

I fear his extreme dislike & abhorrence of R. C.-ism; & thinking all the arguments adduced by its professors 'utterly absurd', makes her more inclined to take up its defence... (GL, no. 507).

Shortly after this Marianne's engagement to her cousin Thurstan Holland meant she had other matters to attend to.

Thanks to The Brontë Society for permission to quote from Horsfall Turner Collection. BS XV

Gaskell Society Members at Buckingham Palace

Fran Twinn

Under grey leaden skies and drizzling rain, Joan, Elizabeth, Ann and I met outside the imposing wrought iron gates of Buckingham Palace yesterday, 8th December, 2005, at 10am.

Joan looked wonderfully elegant in shades of brown and dusky pink. Her head was crowned with a pretty small-brimmed hat, de rigueur for an important occasion in such splendid surroundings. We made our way across the huge, windswept, gravel expanse that fronts the Palace watched by curious tourists. Looking back I paused to wonder whether we resembled decorative animals in a zoo!

Under the arch and into the inner sanctum of the smaller quadrangle away from interested eyes we relaxed somewhat. A warm welcome met us as we ascended the red carpet and entered the public apartments. Everything on these public occasions runs like clockwork. Attendants were on hand everywhere to welcome, direct and make us feel at ease. A trip to the 'Ladies' was essential, if only see the old-fashioned water closet with its wide mahogany seat and chain. These must be unique to the Palace and other stately homes in this day and age I think!!

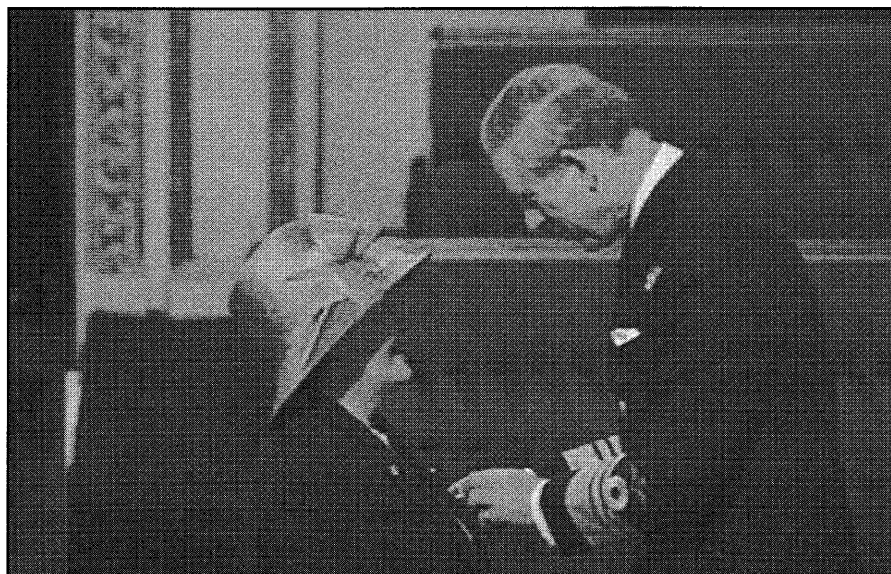
The investiture was held in the ballroom where state banquets and major parties are held. Whilst we waited for the proceedings to begin we were able to feast our eyes on the exquisite, enormous cut-glass chandeliers, wonderful paintings and sheer grandeur of the room which was as awe-inspiring as the ceremony itself. To watch the Prince of Wales speak personally to each of the one hundred people left us all in a state of admiration. He knew (before Joan could say anything) that she represented the Gaskell Society and their short exchange centred on the television adaptations of her novels (yes, he has seen and enjoyed them!) and Joan's disappointment about the Cranford Chronicles. [shelved by BBC TV]

For those few moments as the 'recipients' ascend the shallow steps to receive their honour the royal focus is on them entirely. What struck me most forcibly was the fact that until the recipient had bowed or curtsied for the second time and moved away, the Prince did not look away. He then picked up the next medal and continued.

Of course it is nerve-racking for those receiving an honour but for those of us spectating the treat was the wonderful mixture of the formality of the perfectly orchestrated ceremony combined with the orchestra of eight who serenaded the whole proceedings from a balcony above our heads. There's no 'canned' music in Buck House!!

I cannot really convey how proud and privileged we felt to be able to share in Joan's achievement and her 'big day'. Discouraged from applause at the opening of the ceremony, all we could do was smile broadly and hug ourselves as she received the silver medal backed by its rose pink ribbon. I am sure you will be able to see it on display eventually and Joan is threatening to buy a miniature to wear opposite her Gaskell Society badge, on her other lapel - a lovely idea, I think.

Finally the day was capped by a celebration supper when fifteen of us gathered in spite of London Transport problems to drink a toast to Joan and hear about the day. We had an enjoyable, happy, convivial evening: Gaskell would have approved! It was a chance to meet outside our Saturday afternoon meetings, maybe something we should do more often!



Mrs Gaskell and the OED

The Oxford English Dictionary credits Elizabeth Gaskell as the first author to use these words in the English language:

1. bingy, a. 1857, Mrs. Gaskell, *Charlotte Brontë* (1857) l. 70 - said of milk: in the incipient stage of sourness.
2. breadlines. 1863, Mrs. Gaskell, *Sylvia's Lovers*, xxxix: daily breadlines: fellowship in earning or partaking of 'daily bread'
3. butterless, a. 1859, Mrs. Gaskell, *Round the Sofa*
4. butty 2. 1855, Mrs. Gaskell, *North & South*, II, xi: a slice of bread and butter
5. caustic, verb. 1852, Mrs. Gaskell, *Letters* 1 Oct, 852 6, trans: to treat with a caustic
6. Connemara. 1861, Mrs. Gaskell, *Letters* 26 Dec, 67 8
7. cwm. 1853, Mrs. Gaskell, *Ruth* l. Vii, 170
8. dinnery, a. Mrs. Gaskell, *Curious if True*: characterized by dinner or dinners.
9. drip-drop, n. 1848, Mrs. Gaskell *Mary Barton* ix
10. earlyish, a. and adv. 1838, Mrs. Gaskell, 17 July, 18 12: We set off earlyish 4 o'clock say
11. écossaise. 1841, Mrs. Gaskell *Letters*, 43
12. Eng. Lit. 1850, Mrs. Gaskell *Letters*, 25 Jan.
13. frab, v trans. 1848, Mrs. Gaskell *Mary Barton* iv. 15: to harass, worry
14. gaum-like, a. 1863, Mrs. Gaskell, *Sylvia's Lovers* II. 21: having an intelligent look.
15. Hallé. 1852, Mrs. Gaskell, *Letters*, 7 Dec, 217 17: we have 3 Hallé tickets for Thursday
16. instinctly, adv. 1855, Mrs Gaskell, *North & South*, xxii.
17. jettatura. 1855, Mrs. Gaskell, *The Accursed Race*: the evil eye; bad luck.
18. piggism. 1852, Mrs. Gaskell, *The Shah's English Gardener*: piggish behaviour
19. quiller, n.2. 1853, Mrs. Gaskell, *Ruth*, II. Vii: one who quills material, esp. into the form of a ruff.
20. repp. 1860, Mrs. Gaskell, *Right at Last*: textile fabric (of wool, silk, or cotton) having a corded surface.
21. repaper, v. 1854, Mrs. Gaskell, *North & South*, I. v, 23
22. retraite. 1860, Mrs. Gaskell, *Letters*, 27 Aug: en retraite, in retirement or seclusion.
23. rive gauche. 1862, Mrs. Gaskell, Jrnl. Feb. in *Fraser's*, 25.
24. saucerful. 1852, Mrs. Gaskell, *Cranford*, viii, 26.
25. schismatism. 1859, Mrs. Gaskell, *Round the Sofa*, 223.
26. scrubble, v. c1854, Mrs. Gaskell, *Letters*, 274: it will cost two guineas, and so I must scrubble up money for that.

Sylvia's Lovers

Joan Leach

Meta Gaskell sent this letter to Thomas Seccombe, who had written the introduction to a new edition of *Sylvia's Lovers* in 1910, illustrated by M. V. Wheelhouse.* The date of the letter obviously brought poignant memories to Meta. Seccombe had written in his introduction:

'Those at home were preparing tea in the drawing room, to the accompaniment of an early winter fire, and Mrs Gaskell was discussing some project for the immediate future, when, in the middle of a sentence, she leaned forward, suddenly fell and succumbed to heart seizure 'without a moment's warning'.

This is not an inaccurate description, hardly a 'mistake' but Meta felt the full details should have been told, especially for the relevant coincidence that her last, unspoken words would have been, '...when I am dead'.

Thomas Seccombe was a literary scholar and biographer. From 1891-1900, when the *DNB* was completed, he was assistant editor. His own entry in the current edition says, 'His kindness and courtesy made him a favourite with contributors'. He contributed over five hundred of the biographies himself, specialising the eighteenth century, and wrote prefaces to works of Boswell, Borrow, Gissing, Goldsmith and Smollett.

John Chapple adds:

'I have photocopies of two letters in Geoffrey Sharps's collection, from Meta to TS dated 16 January 1911 and 24 January 1911. Both praise the *Sylvia's Lovers* introduction, and there is a list of corrections - I think for a second edition if one came to be. This does not contain ECG's last words but 24 January letter does say there was no tea in the drawing room at Holybourne.' Also Geoffrey had a card Meta sent from the Sheiling, 9 September [1910], in particular asking if he (Seccombe) was going to 'interpolate those words of mine about Mrs Lumb in your "*Sylvia's Lovers*".' [Does Meta mean she had sent ECG's 'more than mother' words?]

In his introduction Seccombe wrote:

Of this aunt she writes, 'She was my dearest friend - my more than mother - whose bodily appearance was a fit shrine for her pure and chastened spirit'.

Princeton University Library also has a few letters from Meta to TS: 10 February 1913; 10 July no year; and no date at all, but acknowledging receipt of his *Wives and Daughters*.

1. In *Mrs. Gaskell, Homes, Haunts and Stories* by Ellis H Chadwick the 'tea' incident is changed between 1910 and 1913 edition.

Yours most sincerely M. E. Gaskell

1.

84, PLYMOUTH GROVE,
MANCHESTER.

12 Nov. 1910.

Dear Mr. Seccombe,

It is 45 years today
since my most dear
Mother fell dead, with-
out a moment's warning,
and it has entered
into my heart to write

3. the press-cuttings that
I get through Durrant
It is perfect - quite
except for one mistake
for which I blame my-
self entirely. How I
could have been so care-
less as to let it pass,
I cannot conceive.
The last words spoken
by my Mother were
quoting to my brother-

2. to you and thank you
once more for your
wonderfully beautiful
Introduction to the new
Edition of "*Sylvia's
Lovers*".

How it has been ad-
mired and praised,
I have learnt through

4. - in - law something that
his father, dead just a
fortnight before, had
said, and it is a pathetic
coincidence that if she
had finished the sentence,
the next words would have
been "when I am dead" -
How often I have thought
during the last few weeks
of what grief you have
been enduring for the
loss of one so dear as your
Mother - Aunt -

Two Books about the Brontës

Elizabeth Williams

Ian Emberson, *Pilgrims from Loneliness: an interpretation of Charlotte Brontë's 'Jane Eyre' and 'Villette'*. The Brontë Society, 2005, pp. 150. Paperback, £9.95, ISBN 1-903007-10-0.

As the title indicates, this book deals with *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*, taking us through each novel incident by incident, and examining some of the references in the light of Charlotte Brontë's life and reading. At the beginning of the book Ian Emberson describes it as an interpretation of the novels 'in terms of their underlying mythology, and the basis of that mythology in Charlotte Brontë's early reading'. He is particularly interested in connecting the novels with *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Paradise Lost*, and examining the links with Biblical and classical reading which might lead to a deeper understanding of both of Brontë's novels. This is an ambitious enterprise and as he says himself, at the end of a discussion of *Jane Eyre*'s paintings, 'The possibilities... are endless'. There are references to art, to literature and to music, and a number of interesting connections are noted, deepening one's own understanding and appreciation. Echoes of one novel in the other are mentioned, as well as the fact that '*Villette* is a cry of pain: *Jane Eyre* is an affirmation', and he explains this in terms of the different circumstances of the author's life at the time of composition. Thus the title comes to cover *Jane Eyre*, *Lucy Snowe* and Charlotte Brontë herself, if in very different ways.

The book would be particularly useful to anyone needing to study the novels for exams, as the recounting of episodes and the lengthy quotations act as a clear revision aid, while the speculation about interpretation and the sources of ideas encourages thought and understanding. Ian Emberson has obviously thought long and hard about these novels, and the book encourages us to do the same.

George Sowden, *Recollections of the Brontës*. Angria Press, 2005, pp. 12. Paperback, £3, ISBN 0-9521693-5-5.

This pamphlet is a reprint of four articles which originally appeared in *The Hebden Bridge Parochial Magazine* in 1894 and were discovered by Ian and Catherine Emberson in the course of their research. George Sowden was the younger brother of Sutcliffe Sowden, who officiated at the wedding of Charlotte Brontë and Arthur Bell Nicholls, and although he honestly admits that his acquaintance with the Brontës was slight, he and his brother were close friends of Mr Nicholls. For this reason it makes an interesting balance to Elizabeth Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë* - the rather remote figure of Mr Nicholls presented by Gaskell becomes 'the gentlest and most affectionate of men' and we have a description of how he and the writer, meeting after a separation, astonished the company when they 'rushed into each

others arms and (after the old scriptural usage) embraced and kissed one another'. There are interesting glimpses of Charlotte and Branwell Brontë, as well as Mr Brontë in his 'stupendous' necktie - 'how it was constructed I could not imagine'.

The pamphlet is very short, but gives the sense of genuine memories, written with an honesty that makes the reader wish that Sowden had written more. It is available from the Brontë Parsonage, from good booksellers or, with an extra charge of 30p for postage, directly from the publishers, Angria Press at 1 Highcroft Road, Todmorden, OL14, 5LZ.

84 Plymouth Grove - The Gaskell House

Saturday 1st April: 2.15 pm: Talk by Professor Michael Rose (doors open at 2.00: **Across the Class Divide - Philanthropy and the Gaskells in Victorian Manchester.** £5.00 incl. light refreshments; (£3.50 Students).

Sunday 2nd April: Open Day 12 noon - 4 pm

Sunday 7th May: Open Day 12 noon - 4 pm including Plant Sale

Sunday 4th June: Open Day 12 noon - 4 pm

Other Events for 2006 are at the planning stage including the exciting news that **the actress Gabrielle Drake has agreed to perform her one-woman production as Elizabeth Gaskell 'Dear Scheherazade'** - venue etc to be confirmed.

At Cross Street Chapel Manchester

AGM meeting Saturday 8th April

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 10.30 | Coffee followed by AGM at 11.00 |
| 11.45 - 12.45 | The Daphne Carrick lecture will be given by Dr Maurice Milne, Emeritus Professor of Humanities, Richmond American International University. On the theme:
<i>The Dark Expounder and the Melodious Voice: Gaskell and Carlyle on Chartism</i> |
| 1.00 - 2.15 | Buffet lunch with service |
| 2.15 | Dudley Green on: <i>The Letters of the Reverend Patrick Brontë</i> .
Dudley's newly published book will be on special offer to members on the book table. |

Close about 3.45

North West Group

Knutsford meetings continue with the study of The Life of Charlotte Brontë.

Wednesdays - 29th March, 26th April.

Wednesday 17th May we will visit Oakwell Hall and The Red House for their Brontë associations.

In July we hope to visit Ashbourne (for Samuel Johnson and Holland connections) and Hope House Costume Museum and Restoration Workshop at Alstonefield.

NB. if you are not a member of the Knutsford group but would like information, when available, please let Joan Leach know.

Cross Street Chapel, Manchester.

Tuesday 14th March: Florence Nightingale by Dr Aled Jones.

History Day School at The Portico Library, Manchester.

Saturday, 25th March.

On Library History in the North West, organised by Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society.

Fee £12 or £18.50 with lunch.

The Yorkshire Branch of the Society

Programme, 2006:

Saturday 13th May: 'Household Words: The first three editions', by Elizabeth Williams, Chairman of The Gaskell Society

Saturday 9th September: 'Knutsford and Cheshire in Mrs Gaskell's Life and Works', by Joan Leach, Secretary of the Gaskell Society

Saturday 18th November: Speaker: Dudley Green, editor of the recently published *Letters of the Reverend Patrick Brontë* and member of the Gaskell Society Committee.

All the meetings will be held at the Friends Meeting House, Friargate, York, and will commence at 2pm. The room will be available from 12.30pm for those who wish to bring a picnic lunch. To cover expenses a contribution of £3 is requested from members of the Gaskell Society and £4 from non-members.

London and South East Group

Meetings are held at The Francis Holland School, 36 Graham Terrace, a few minutes walk from Sloane Square tube station. 12.45pm for sandwich lunch, meeting begins at 2pm.

Email: Frantwinn@aflex.net or phone for info. 020 8693 3238

Saturday, 13th May: The title of Professor Barbara Hardy's talk will be: 'The Green World in Elizabeth Gaskell's fiction'.

South West Group

Last year's programme was as usual: our New Year Supper, a visit to Clevedon organised by Celia Skrine where we read some of Tennyson's "In Memoriam" outside the church where Arthur Hallam is buried. "Oh how perfect some of them are" was her comment (*Letter* 73). In July we loved welcoming Joan Leach and enjoyed her talk on Mrs. Gaskell's relationship with the Winkworth sisters. Alex and Kate Crawford entertained us to tea in their scenic garden in Norton St. Philip in August - some delightful new members and their husbands came to this event.

A small group went to the Autumn Meeting in Knutsford and were made very welcome at the 20th Anniversary celebrations. It was a particular privilege to hear Geoffrey Sharps speak to us for the last time. It was with great sadness that we heard of his death on January 5th. What a lovely man!

There was a very full programme of events including morning service at Brook Street Chapel and a visit to Plymouth Grove, which was a surprisingly big house with spreading grounds. It was easy to see both why she loved it so much and also why she felt slightly guilty about it. There is a lot to do but the team has the restoration very well in hand.

Events this year:

April 8th Flat 4, 97, Sydney Place, Bath, the home of Mrs. Joan Chandler at 2.30. We shall be discussing *Ruth* and the relevance of its attitudes to modern readers.

May 17th A group visit to Tyntesfield, the amazing home of the Gibbs family, which is being restored by the National Trust.

August 13th 3.30 - 5.00 (approx): Tea at Murhill House, home of David and Janet Cunliffe-Jones.

November 4th (provisional date): Talk by Dudley Green, a leading member of the Brontë Society, who has just finished editing the letters of Patrick Brontë. Dudley has visited us before and it will be a great pleasure to hear him again.

Any queries to Rosemary Marshall, 138, Fairfield Park Road, Bath, BA1 6JT
Tel: 01225 426732 e-mail: rosemary_marshall@yahoo.com

Alliance of Literary Societies

AGM at Bath, 13th and 14th May 2006

You will find information about the Bath meeting, including accommodation, on the web at www.sndc.demon.co.uk. or SAE to Joan Leach

Saturday 13th May:

10.00am: Coffee followed by AGM.

12.00am: 'She was come to be happy: Jane Austen and Fanny Burney in Bath': by Maggie Lane with readings by Angela Barlow.

2.30pm: Options: Guided walks, visit to Jane Austen Centre or to 4, Sydney Place.

7.00pm: Assemble at The Redcar Hotel for dinner, followed by: 'Jane Austen and Character: an actor's view', by Angela Barlow.

Sunday 14th May:

Members of the Bristol and Bath Jane Austen Society will be available to accompany delegates to sites in Georgian Bath: the Pump Room, the Assembly Rooms (which contain the Museum of Costume), St Swithin's church, The Georgian Garden, 1 Royal Crescent, etc.

12.30pm: Farewell lunch.

Whitby Caedmon Literary Festival

22nd - 28th April

A varied programme for which by The Gaskell Society has sponsored two of our members as speakers.

Wed 26th April 7.00pm

Dr Shirley Foster on *Elizabeth Gaskell, Whitby and Sylvia's Lovers*

Dr. Marion Shaw - *Gaskell and Religion in 18th century Whitby*

On the same day there will be a literary lunch with Kate Fenton as guest speaker.

Tuesday 25th April 8.00pm

Performance Robin Ellwood and co: *George Hudson and Whitby*: an evening of story telling about the railway coming to Whitby in the 19th century and life as a navvy, in costume , to include a supper.

There is a book fair on Thursday 28th and a Sylvia's Lovers walk 10.00 - 12.30pm.
Phone 01947 810819 for programme details or SAE to Joan Leach.

The Gaskell Society



**Gaskell Society of Japan members
after a tea party on 3rd June at Jissen Women's School**

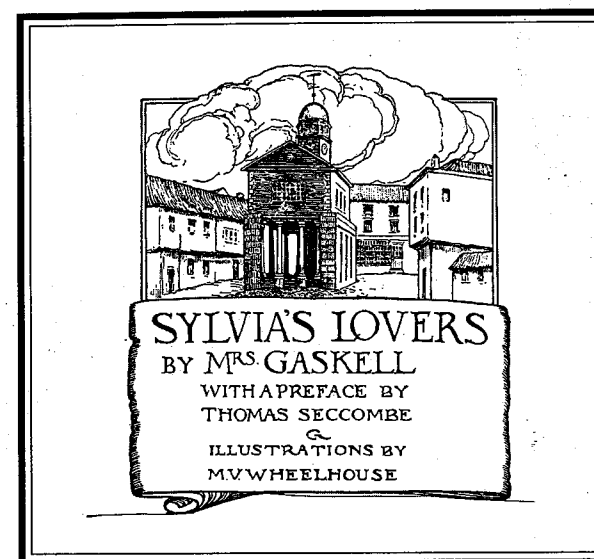
THE GASKELL SOCIETY HOME PAGE has all the latest information on meetings.
<http://gaskellsociety.users.btopenworld.com>

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

Autumn 2006 - Number 42

Editor's Letter

Joan Leach

This Newsletter is a little delayed by the late circulation of the Journal. You can read something about activities in our various groups and it brings you notice of future events which we hope some of you will be able to attend.

Our programme for the Canterbury Conference, next July, is not yet finalised but there is some information in this newsletter to whet your appetite. You will see that the programme and events will be wide ranging and the venue delightful.

September will be a busy month in the Manchester region with the production of *Mary Barton* at the Royal Exchange which runs until 14th October and Gabrielle Drake's brilliant one - woman performance *My Dear Scherherazade*, 14-16 September. We are greatly indebted to her for giving us a special performance, in Knutsford, on 15th October, to raise funds for the Gaskell house at Plymouth Grove. You can help to swell funds by reminding people that the house is open on the first Sundays in the month from noon to 4pm, teas are served and there is fine selection of second hand books on sale; plants, too, on the 2nd October.

We hope you will enjoy reading about our various activities, Jean Alston organised for us a most interesting trip to Ashbourne and Derbyshire. My trip to Japan to speak at a general meeting in Tokyo to our members was a wonderful experience that I am happy to share with you. I was privileged to be shown something of their fascinating artistic and historic culture and the fish diet suited my arthritic knee. It remains to be seen how the Italian food in Rome will affect it; you will have to wait until our next Newsletter to hear about our visit in Gaskell footsteps.

Members of the Brontë Society visited Plymouth Grove on 5th June. They first visited Manchester in February 1910 when they held their AGM at the Atheneum. They were addressed by Bishop Welldon, Dean of Manchester, who drew largely on the letters from Charlotte to Elizabeth Gaskell that had been lent to him by Meta. He and other speakers emphasised the need for preserving such mementoes of the Brontës as Manchester now possessed and notably the house of Mrs Gaskell. The Society did not visit it on that occasion. It was recalled that Patrick Brontë had come to Manchester for an operation on cataracts. At one time there was discussion about a statue of our two authors.

Many of you will have seen the photograph of Florence Nightingale, recently rediscovered and now on display at the Nightingale Museum at St Thomas Hospital, at Lambeth, London* (until November). It shows her at the age of 38, sitting in the

garden of the family home at Embley, Hampshire and looking thin despite the voluminous crinoline. She shunned fame after her return from the Crimea and only seven other photos are known. Elizabeth described her in similar pose 'with her head a bent a little forwards one hand lying in repose on the other on her knees (Letters 217) She was writing to her friend Emily Shaen and told how her doctor brother-in-law Sam, had been 'carried off his feet' on meeting her, though before he saw her 'he called her my enthusiastic young lady and irritated me by speaking very contemptuously of her as *well-meaning etc.*' Elizabeth had met Florence at Lea Hurst, the Nightingales' Derbyshire home where she wrote part of *Ruth*.

*For information: www.florence-nightingale.co.uk or phone 020 7620 0374.

My Visit to Japan

Joan Leach

Soon after The Gaskell Society was inaugurated in October 1985, our first president, Professor Arthur Pollard, told me that there was an interest in Japan in the writing of Elizabeth Gaskell and suggested that I should contact Dr Yuriko Yamawaki in Tokyo. She became our first Japanese member and in September 1987 spoke at our second AGM about Gaskell's works in Japan. Dr Yamawaki's interest had led her to visit Knutsford some years earlier but she and I did not meet then. It might be said that she was the Gaskell ambassador to Japan and with her enthusiasm and encouragement the Gaskell Society of Japan was formed and has worked so consistently to promote knowledge of Gaskell's works by their translations.

Dr Yamawaki was kind enough to invite me to visit The Gaskell Society of Japan some years ago but family circumstances made this impossible until this year, when I was delighted to accept the invitation - though in some trepidation about travelling so far with my very limited experience. Through the generosity of the Gaskell Societies here and in Japan all arrangements were made for my visit, from 30th May to 8th June, to meet members and to speak at the Regular Meeting on 3rd June at Jissen Women's School, Shibuya, on *Knutsford and Cheshire in Mrs Gaskell's Life and Works*.

Mrs Gaskell called Knutsford her 'dear, adopted native town' but I was born there and grew up knowing Gaskell landmarks such as the Memorial Tower, and the house where she grew up on Gaskell Avenue and her burial place in Brook Street Chapel graveyard. As a local historian I have researched the links between the town and Mrs Gaskell's life and works. I have collected pictures which I enjoyed showing to members in Japan, though there had been some difficulty in finding a slide projector for me as they are now becoming obsolete; but I am backward in mastering technology and in England slides are still used in talks to groups and Societies.



Group in Japan

I am particularly indebted also to Mrs Mariko Tahira, until recently secretary of the Society, Mrs Akiko Suzue, now President of the Society, Mrs Hisako Nagase, secretary, the committee and all those who made plans for me, arranged a varied and fascinating programme and those who were my guides. It was a special pleasure to be welcomed and cared for in the homes of Professors Hidemitsu Tohgo, Mitsuharu Matsuoka and Tatsuhiro Ohno.

The itinerary gave me great pleasure in seeing so much of Japan in a short time and I will be sharing my experiences by speaking to UK members and various other groups. I am grateful to have received gifts which are in the fine style and traditions of Japan and these I will enjoy showing when I give talks.

On 31st May, landing at Narita International Airport after my Air France flight via Paris, I was met by Professor Hidemitsu Tohgo who took me to his home in Saitama City. I was impressed by my first experience of rail travel in Japan. Hidemitsu and I had first met in 1983 when he came to Knutsford, not because of its Gaskell connections, but to meet my writer husband, Christopher. We were pleased to meet him, and his wife, Tomoko, on other occasions and it was good to renew our friendship at his home and to enjoy such fine hospitality with Japanese food and lifestyle, including my first visit to a sushi bar. Bathing at the hot springs was also a

novel experience for me and my only regret was that I could hear but not see the singing frog in the river valley!

Hidemitsu and I went on to Tokyo, which we saw from a tour bus skirting the Imperial Palace, and then joined a welcome celebration party of a splendid Chinese dinner on the evening of 2nd June, hosted by Dr Yuriko Yamawaki. We were all happy to share this evening with Yuriko and remember all she has done for our Gaskell world. Such a variety of dishes and I almost mastered the chopsticks! It was so good to meet some members again and those I had only exchanged e-mails with. From the hotel rooftop Ms Akiko Kimura showed me Tokyo's night scene with the tower lit up and next morning with Ms Kyoko Imamura showed me more of Toyko, including the iris garden.

After the meeting at Jissen Women's School Professor Mitsu Matsuoka took me to his home in Nagoya. We visited the Tokugawa Art Museum where there is a replica of the scroll of the Gengi: the original can only be shown every ten years because of its frail condition. Nagoyua is home to Toyota and also a splendid castle. The Meiju-mura museum had fascinating buildings dating from about 1850 onwards, reconstructed in a park setting; these including homes of Lafcadio Hearn and Natsume Sosek, writers who played such an interesting role in links between Western and Japanese literature. It was a surprise to note that the engine of the steam train carrying tourists around the park had been made in Manchester! I enjoyed the ride by shinkansen train from Nagoya to Kyoto where I was met by met by Ms Fumie Tamai and taken to the splendid Shin Miyako Hotel. My guides for the next day in Kyoto were Ms Akiko Nakajima, and Mr Oomaie. We visited the splendid Sanjusangen-do with its 1,000 standing Buddhist - style images founded in 1164 and completed in 1266; and the beautiful Temple of the Golden Pavilion. I am now reading the novel by Yukio Mishima which is set there.

Ms Ishizuka arrived early on 6th June to take me by bus to Itami airport on my way to Kumamoto airport where Professor Tatsuhiro Ohno was to meet me. We had a nerve-racking journey as there were traffic delays but all was well in the end. At the Kumamoto Middle School I stood in the classroom once used by Lafcadio Hearn. Professor Ohno and his wife, Yuka, took me to the lovely Suizenji Gardens and the spectacular Mount Aso, where there is the world's largest caldera. I was happy not to experience the earthquake which happened near the area a few days later.

I am grateful to him, Professor Mitsu Matsuoka and other members who took fine pictures for me to remember and relive my tour. It was a special pleasure to be welcomed in the homes Hidemitsu and Tomoko Tohgo, Mitsu and Mio Matsuoka and Tat and Yuka Ohno. Thank you to all who introduced me to the culture and delights of Japan.

Visit to Ashbourne, Alstonefield and the Hope House Costume Museum, 5th July 2006

Thirty members and friends set off from Congleton, Knutsford and Macclesfield. We were well on time, arriving at St Oswald's Church, Ashbourne, as the clock struck 11.00. Church members generously allowed us to use their parish room facilities and prepared coffee and biscuits in return for a contribution to their church appeal fund. We were met in Ashbourne Church by Ruth, who had retired to Ashbourne but had been a Derbyshire resident for much of her life. Ruth appropriately began her talk with a reference to Gaskell. Named 'Ruth', she had been given a copy of the novel during her teenage years. She claimed to have then gone on to enjoy Gaskell's other works.

In Ashbourne Church, we were pleased to see an engraving of Captain Frederick Holland's home, Ashbourne Hall, as it would have been in his day. There was also a plaque in appreciation of his life and his contribution to life in the town. St Oswald's is described as 'one of the grandest churches in Derbyshire'. Its many fine features include: a Tree of Jesse window by Kempe, 1902; a pre-Raphaelite window designed by Christopher Whall, 1904, commemorating the Turnbull sisters of Sandybrook Hall; and exceptionally fine tombs and effigies, dating from 1372, of the Cokayne and Bradbourne families. However, probably the finest effigy is of Penelope Boothby, aged 5 years, who is said to have spoken four languages. Penelope died in 1791; this fine white marble tomb was the work of Thomas Banks. She was the daughter of Sir Brooke and Lady Boothby of Ashbourne Hall, who had disagreed on how to deal with her illness and, in their distress, had refused to communicate with each other after her death.

From Ashbourne, we travelled to Hartington, an old Derbyshire market village, where some of us sat by the village pond and others ate lunch in one of the various cafés. After Hartington, we made a short visit to Alstonefield Church, famous for its very early oak pulpit and box pews, and for its connection with Charles Cotton and Isaac Walton.

Hope House, Alstonefield, the beautiful seventeenth-century home of Notty Hornblower, was to become a very enjoyable highlight of the day. Her museum of finely restored fashion clothing, covering several centuries, is situated in the barn close to the house. As well as individual costumes, there were 'stage sets' of groups, such as Miss Marple and Hercule Poirot in a set from an Agatha Christie novel.

Tea, consisting of large scones, cream, jam and Victoria sponge, was served in

Notty's fine, early Derbyshire stone home. We were able to see her tastefully furnished guest bedroom and Victorian-style bathroom.

We were very fortunate that the occasional rain showers, forecast for the area, seemed to miss us by a mile or so. We saw the clouds on occasion but never the rain. On our return journey, our driver was tempted to drive through the Manifold Valley; however, we managed to warn him of fragile narrow bridges and divert him to Warslow and to the Ashbourne-Leek road home.

Just another enjoyable and successful day with Gaskell friends.

Jean Alston

Lost Property?

At the end of the outing to Alstonefield, a bag was left on the coach, containing a pair of Flyflot sandals and a polythene box; would the owner like to phone Mary Syner on 01625 583622 to recover them?

Cranford Houses

Joan Leach

As a Knutsfordian by birth and growing up in the town I have been long acquainted with Elizabeth Gaskell; in childhood days I ate cakes from the Cranford Cake shop, bought aspirins at The Matty Pharmacy and often walked down Cranford and Gaskell Avenues. I share with Elizabeth Gaskell a great affection for the town, which led her to recreate scenes and people she knew in childhood.

As a local historian I was fascinated by finding links between characters, events and settings in fictional *Cranford*, *Wives and Daughters* and other works, and their real life counterparts. The parallels seem to have been acknowledged by her contemporaries, including the Rev Henry Green, minister of Brook Street Chapel, who wrote in his *Knutsford: Its History and Traditions*:

Cranford which in my judgement, while depicting life in almost any country town, is specially descriptive of some of the past and present social characteristics of Knutsford. I know that the work was not intended to delineate this place chiefly or specially, but a little incident within my own experience will show the accuracy of the pictures as applied to our town.

He wrote that when he had lent the book to an elderly lady she returned it to him saying,

'Why, Sir! That Cranford is all about Knutsford; my old mistress, Miss Harker, is mentioned in it; and our poor cow, she did go to the field in a large flannel waistcoat, because she burned herself in a lime pit.'

Note the name 'Miss Harker', who became Cranford's Miss Barker. The sale of her house contents included a large milk-cooler.

The *Manchester Guardian* obituary of Elizabeth Gaskell, 14th November 1865, noted that the

greatest work and that for which she will be longest known, is her *Life of Charlotte Bronte*. In the earlier editions of this now standard work, some personal references were made which created much discussion, and which were omitted from subsequent editions. A similar feeling had been occasioned at an earlier period in Mrs Gaskell's literary career, for in sketches entitled 'Cranford', which appeared in *Household Words*, she had drawn portraits rather too accurately of some living personages.

If there was some feeling in Knutsford about Mrs Gaskell's fictional portraits being identifiable as Knutsford residents no evidence of this is now to be found; perhaps if her own relations recognised themselves any objections they had were not made public.

Linking actual buildings with fictional counterparts was less controversial and when post cards became popular there was a series of scenes from *Cranford*. One of these shows Mrs Jamieson's house as Brook House, which stood below Brook Street Chapel. It was a large, rambling house, probably late seventeenth century in origin with Georgian additions, a walled garden and a stable block; it was demolished after suffering wartime occupation. It was certainly Knutsford's most aristocratic house, having been, from about 1780-1803, the home of Lady Jane Stanley, daughter of the 11th Earl of Derby. She was a strong-minded spinster lady who suggested for her epitaph 'A maid I lived and a maid I died, I never was asked and never denied'. A relation from the Stanleys of Alderley family wrote,

It is a pity that she sometimes has a roughness of manner that conceals from those who are unacquainted with the valuable qualities of her heart. Her vivacity, memory and strength of body and mind are wonderful. She is very poetical too and such a connoisseur of painting, statues etc.

Many of such items she bequeathed in the longest will I have ever seen. She also left legacies to many ladies, mostly single, who might have been her protégées in the style of the fictional Lady Ludlow

Henry Green described how Lady Jane Stanley had walked the pavements with her gold - knobbed cane and reproved those who did not 'give her the wall' by rapping

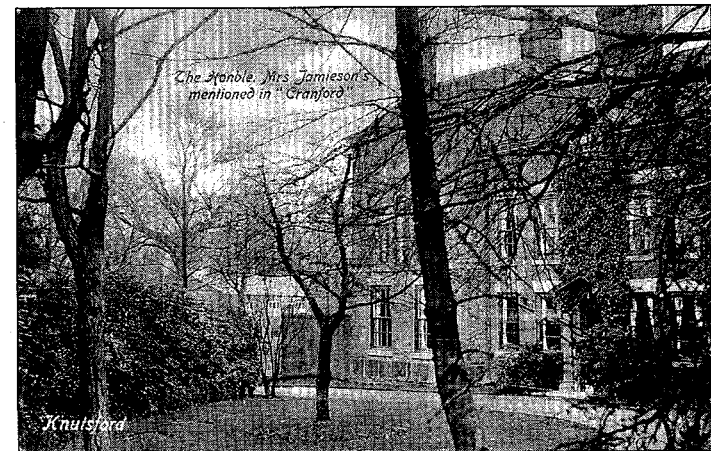
them on the shoulder with it: *My Lady Ludlow* behaved in a similar manner. Lady Jane had paid for the pavements to be laid, stipulating that they should not be wide enough to accommodate 'linking', that was courting couples walking arm-in-arm. The charity money she left in her lengthy will helped to maintain the paths and roads for many years and part of it still provides for patriotic flags to be flown, as her will decreed.

Lady Jane's religious principles and prejudices were shared by Lady Ludlow who deplored the Baptist baker. Lady Jane was well known in the town for her acts of charity, but when an aged silk weaver, no longer able to walk to Macclesfield, appealed to her for assistance she refused at first because he was a Methodist, then relented when she found him staunch in his principles too. Her sedan chair makes an annual appearance at Knutsford Royal May Day Festival.

Mrs Gaskell would not have known Lady Jane Stanley but her aunt and other relations would tell her about this redoubtable lady who seems to be a twin to Lady Ludlow, but whose house in that story bears no resemblance to Lady Jane's. In *Cranford* there is reference to Lady Jane's house. When Mrs FitzAdam came to live in the town she

had taken a large rambling house which had been usually considered to confer a patent of gentility upon its tenant, because, once upon a time, seventy or eighty years before, the spinster daughter of an earl had resided in it...the Earl's daughter, Lady Jane, had a sister, Lady Anne...

The Cranford ladies' doubts about Mrs FitzAdam's gentility were partly dispelled by the status that her occupation of this house conferred.



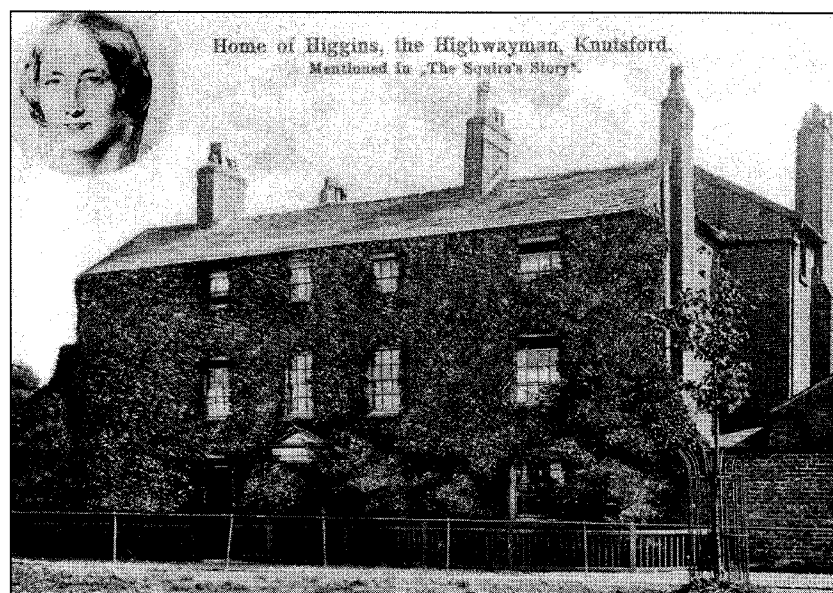
Brook House, once Lady Jane Stanley's Home

That the postcard defines it as *Mrs Jamieson's house* is not surprising as she was *the* aristocrat of Cranford who dictated the social mores, so local tradition ascribed to her the most aristocratic house. But in *Cranford* her house is described as on a street that

ran right before the house, which opened out upon it without intervening garden or court. Whatever the sun was about he never shone on the front of that house'.

Mr Mulliner's head, with powdered wig, could be seen from the road as he read the St James Chronicle, a fact that irked the ladies who were waiting their turn for it. This house must have been Heath House on Gaskell Avenue and possibly the real life Hon. Mrs Grey, resident there in Elizabeth Gaskell's early years, was a model for Mrs Jamieson. It also had a history as the home of Edward 'Highwayman' Higgins, whose story was related by Henry Green and adapted by Elizabeth Gaskell for 'The Squire's Story'. Mrs Legh, another scion of an aristocratic family, followed Lady Jane as tenant of Brook House; she left money in her will for an annual dinner for the Ladies Benefit Society.

Henry Green's *Knutsford Its Traditions and History* grew from a series of lectures he gave. Elizabeth Gaskell made several enquiries on his behalf. It was published in 1859 by Smith and Elder and has had several reprints since.



This house fits the description of Mrs Jamieson's house in *Cranford*

BOOK NOTES

Christine Lingard

Cranford & Selected Short Stories with introduction and notes by John Chapple. Wordsworth Classics. £1.99

One of the most welcome of publications as many of Gaskell's shorter works have been out of print for some time. As well as *Cranford* this edition contains 'Mr Harrison's Confessions', 'The Doom of the Griffiths', 'Lois the Witch', 'Curious if true', 'Six weeks at Heppenheim' and *Cousin Phillis*, and, unusually for Wordsworth editions, it contains notes and an interesting introduction by Professor Chapple.

Ed: We hope to have copies to sell at group meetings and at Plymouth Grove

William Gaskell's Poetry and Poetry Lectures by Irene Wiltshire, first published in the *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society* 101 (2005), has been issued as a separate pamphlet and is available from Janet Allan, 10 Dale Road, New Mills, Derbyshire SK22 4NW.

This is an important piece of research which provides a valuable insight into a figure who deserves to be assessed on his own merit not just as the husband of a great novelist.

The Oxford Companion to the Brontës compiled by Christine Alexander and Margaret Smith, Oxford University Press, £14.99

A useful A-Z sequence reference work which is a valuable contribution not only to Brontë studies but also to Gaskell. Originally published in 2003, it is now available in paperback.

The Idea of City in Nineteenth-century Britain edited by B.I. Coleman, Routledge, £80, due November.

A reissue of the book originally published in 1973. A collection of extracts and quotations concerning urban matters from such authors as Gaskell, Dickens, Ruskin, Engels, Morris and H.G. Wells.

Nineteenth-Century Narratives of Contagion by Allan Conrad Christensen, Routledge, £80. A discussion of the reaction to disease, health, nursing and the hospital environment with particular reference to Dickens' *Bleak House*, Gaskell's *Ruth* and Zola's *Le Docteur Pascal*.

The Ideas in Things: Fugitive Meaning in the Victorian Novel by Elaine Freedgood, University of Chicago Press. Due November, \$26. Taking mundane materials, the author explores the social background to their production and the political implications they reveal, such as mahogany furniture and slavery in *Jane Eyre* and Negro head tobacco in *Great Expectations*. Chapter Two is entitled 'The Vicissitudes of Coziness: Checked Curtain and Global Cotton Markets' in *Mary Barton*.

Gaskell production on the Continent still continues to flourish with translations of *North and South* in Spanish: *Norte y sur*, Alba Editorial, 30 Euros; and French: *Nord et Sud*, Fayard, 25 Euros; and *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* has now been translated into Latvian: *Šarlotes Brontë dzīve*.

Mrs Gaskell and the OED (Part 2)

Christine Lingard

The *Oxford English Dictionary* credits Elizabeth Gaskell as the first author to use these words in the English language

27. shopper, *n.* 1860, Mrs Gaskell, *Letters*, No. 476, 27 Aug 1860 - one who frequents a shop or shops for the purpose of inspecting or buying goods.
28. slummocky, *a.* ?1861, Mrs Gaskell, *Letters*, No. 484, 28 Feb 1861 - slovenly, untidy. Hence slummockiness.
29. slushing, *ppl. a.* 1863, Mrs Gaskell, *Sylvia's Lovers*, X. That slushes or splashes, *spec.* pertaining to or designating a viscous oil or grease used to protect bright metal surfaces, when paint or other fixed coatings cannot be used.
30. softy, *n.* 1863, Mrs Gaskell, *Sylvia's Lovers*, II. A weak-minded or silly person; a simpleton, noodle, gull.
31. squiffy, *a.* ?1855, Mrs Gaskell, *Letters*, No. 273. 'Curious enough there is a Lady Erskine, wife of Lord E, her husband's eldest brother living at Bollington, who tipples and "gets squiffy" just like *this* Mrs. E'.
32. sticky, *verb trans.* 1865, Mrs Gaskell, *Wives and Daughters* XXXV. To smear with something sticky.
33. sweet Nancy. 1848, Mrs Gaskell, *Mary Barton* VIII. The pheasant-eyed narcissus, *narcissus poeticus*, esp the double variety.
34. unbeknownst, *a. or adv.* 1848, Mrs Gaskell, *Letters*, No.30, 11 November 1848.
35. uncleaned, *ppl. a.* 1854, Mrs Gaskell, *North and South*, I.x.
36. unnative, *v.* 1855, Mrs Gaskell, *North and South*, XLI.
37. villino ?1863, Mrs Gaskell, *Letters*, No. 527, 16 July 1863. A small (rural, suburban or urban) house in Italy.
38. yo 1848, Mrs Gaskell, *Mary Barton* I.vi. In mod. Use, repr. dialect pronunciation of *you*, *your*, esp. in Black Country English.

Note from Mary Syner: I looked up some of these in the *Letters* and found that 'slummocky' occurs there as 'slammocky-as-to-figure' (though the OED does give slammocky as an alternative spelling). If Mrs Gaskell puts quotation marks around 'gets squiffy', she must have regarded it a questionable usage herself: perhaps she had only recently come across it. In the *Letters*, 'unbeknownst' is printed with the last three letters (nst) in italics, so it seems that Mrs Gaskell underlined the ending of the word: again, perhaps she wondered whether she was correct in adding those

letters - the OED offers 'unbeknown' and 'unbeknowns' as alternatives. It seems that Mrs Gaskell was, as we might expect, an experimenter in language use!

Visit to Plymouth Grove on Monday 5 June 2006 by Members of The Brontë Society.

As part of the events for their AGM weekend the Brontë Society was fortunate to gain access to the house of Elizabeth Gaskell in Plymouth Grove, Manchester. The house is currently being cared for by the Manchester Historic Buildings Trust and, although work is only in the planning stage, we were delighted to go into a house which features in Charlotte Brontë's correspondence and also in the letters and biographies of Elizabeth Gaskell herself.

Despite the house having last been used as a university hall of residence the atmosphere in the beautiful drawing room was moving. We could almost see Elizabeth at work there, coping with the many interruptions she had before she could start her real day's work. We were delighted with the talk given to us by Mrs Janet Allan, Chairman of the Manchester Historic Buildings Trust, and also with a skilled theatrical performance, based on correspondence, of the relationship between the two women. Between the two we were treated to the best lunch of the weekend, which was organised by members of the Gaskell Society. We are tremendously grateful to have had this opportunity and look forward to the final refurbishment of the house, which will certainly be another visit for us.

Coreen Turner

Brontë Society Council member and Chair of the Membership Committee

Recent events at Plymouth Grove
Ann Waddington

'Thank you from the North Texas Visitors'

'I can't thank you enough for the wonderful memories you made for us at the Gaskell House. The lunch, the talk and slides, the house were all wonderful. But best of all was seeing the dedication the group has to Gaskell herself! I will think fondly of 84 Plymouth Grove often, especially when I am teaching one of her novels. Thank you again'.

The above tribute was paid by Sandra Spencer of the University of North Texas and addressed to Janet Allan. The visit had been organised by the University as part of their country-wide tour this Summer. In addition to a lecture by Janet the students met the writer and poet Jackie Kay at Plymouth Grove. Jackie Kay will return in October to read her own short story as part of the Manchester Literary Festival

when the BBC will record for radio specially commissioned short stories in the Dining Room in front of an invited audience.

Other Groups have visited this year and included the 'local' visitors from the Bramhall History Society and the Tameside Local History Forum. In June The Bronte Society returned after a gap of ninety-six years.

At the beginning of April the first of what is hoped to become a regular feature at Plymouth Grove took place. Professor Michael Rose gave a Talk 'Across the Class Divide: Philanthropy and The Gaskells in Victorian Manchester' to a packed Drawing Room. Due to the speaker's enthusiasm and his involvement of the audience in questions afterwards this was an occasion full of atmosphere. To look around the Drawing Room and notice the present Minister of Cross Street Chapel provided an instant thought of William Gaskell in the same room discussing the same subjects.

Topics for 2007 have already been chosen by the Speakers who have been kind enough to volunteer their services. The first of these events will take place on Saturday 17 March 2007 when Ann O'Brien will speak about Meta Gaskell. Full details of the Talks will be available nearer the time. The Talks are open to non-members of the Friends and it is hoped that they will result in an increase in the membership and widening of the interest in the preservation of the Gaskell House.

Members were lured to The AGM in April by the promise of a Victorian Tea afterwards. Thanks are due to all the Friends who volunteered to bake a Victorian recipe. These recipes were provided by Olga Shipperbottom who also gave a talk on the subject.

Involvement with the local community continues and the House was open to visitors during the Swinton Grove Park Fun Day on Saturday 6 July. The quiet sanctuary it provided on the day was appreciated by the families who attended.

At the moment the House looks a little forlorn as the garden needs a lot of attention. It is hoped that by the time the English Heritage Open Days on 9 and 10 September take place everything will look welcoming. A new Banner will be in place across the front of the House as a regular feature. Heritage Banners will also advertise those Open Days. It must not be forgotten that without the hard work from all those who volunteer their services at Plymouth Grove none of the events and Open Days would take place.

The house is open every Sunday from 12 noon until 4 pm. and has a large selection of second hand books on sale. On the 1st October there will also be a plant sale.

The next GASKELL CONFERENCE, *27-30 JULY 2007*

The Society's next conference will be held at Christ Church University, **Canterbury**, from **27th to 30th July 2007**. The general theme is the religious and scientific background to three writers, Gaskell, Dickens and Charles Darwin. We have (so far) four distinguished speakers: Dame Gillian Beer from Cambridge, on Darwin; John Beer, who is Emeritus Professor at Cambridge and will speak about the Romantic period; Professor Andrew Sanders, who has just retired from Durham University and has spoken to us before, on Dickens and science; and Professor Elisabeth Jay, who has also spoken to us before, on Gaskell and religion. Jenny Uglow will be there, and John Chapple, and so will our President, Alan Shelston.

Christ Church University is just outside the walls of Canterbury but within easy walking distance of the centre and the cathedral. Its facilities will be good: the lecture rooms are modern, you can choose en-suite accommodation or the cheaper bed-only-shower-down-the-corridor type; all our meals will be in their dining-hall (self-service mostly), and tea and coffee will be provided. We shall have to move between buildings (sleep in one, eat in another, attend talks in another) but the campus is self-contained and easy to negotiate. Canterbury is full of interest and all of it easily reached; a great deal of the centre has been pedestrianised. You will have two free afternoons: we are arranging a visit to Down House, where Charles Darwin lived, and this will be done on Saturday **and** on Sunday afternoons, as only half the party can go at one time (the car park can accommodate only one coach at a time); the other half will have the afternoon free to explore Canterbury - with a guided walk if wanted. Down House is an attractive large house with a splendid garden, and has been arranged to show both Darwin as a working writer and scientist and as a family man: and in upstairs rooms there are displays about his work: the mixture of information and instruction is similar to that in Erasmus Darwin's house in Lichfield.

Travel

The University campus has only limited parking for cars. As it is impossible to drive into the centre of the city (because within the walls it is mostly pedestrians only), we recommend that everyone who can should come by public transport; once you are there, you really will not need a car. For those who live in the North West, we are thinking of providing a coach on Friday 27th July from the Knutsford/Manchester area - a coach which will stay with us and take us to Down House and bring the north-west party home again on Monday 30th July, making a stop at an interesting place on the way back. For those making their own way there by train, there are two stations in Canterbury, Canterbury East and Canterbury West; which one you arrive

at depends on whether you started from London Victoria or London Waterloo East (Waterloo East is accessible from the main Waterloo concourse). But both stations are within walking distance of the College, though it might take about 15 minutes. There are taxis available at either station.

The cost of the conference itself will be in the region of £315 (this is for ensuite accommodation; for a non-en-suite room, it would be £270). This may seem expensive compared to the last conference in Manchester, but that one was subsidised for Society members (by a grant from English Heritage which the organisers, MMU, were fortunate enough to obtain). For those going and returning by coach the cost of travel will be in the region of £30, if we can get at least 35 people to use the coach. The fewer who do, the greater the cost will be, so do consider it - it will certainly be the easiest way to make the journey from the North West.

We do think that the facilities at Canterbury will be good and that we have some prestigious speakers: we hope that you will support this conference - and come and have a good time!

Society Events in the North-West

The Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester, is to stage *Mary Barton* from 6th September to 14th October. The programme says 'Fast-paced, epic and exciting, Rona Munro's adaptation presents a panorama of Manchester life from the mill-owners' new prosperity to the thousands of ordinary working people living and dying in their factories'. North-West members have already been notified about this (and the events given below), but for anyone who is interested in this production the Box Office is on 0161 833 9833 or at www.royalexchange.co.uk

There is to be a special Meet the Director event in connection with *Mary Barton* on Tuesday 26 September from 2-4 p.m. This is by invitation to Gaskell Society members, Friends of Plymouth Grove and Friends of the Royal Exchange. The charge per person will be £6. This covers the cost of coffee/tea and biscuits, plus a donation to the Friends, all of which goes to the Theatre. There will be a raffle, with the proceeds split between the Theatre and Plymouth Grove. No tickets will be required but we need to know numbers and to have payment in advance; cheques should be made out to 'The Royal Exchange Theatre Co. Ltd.' And sent to Janet Aslan, Friends Organiser, Royal Exchange Theatre, St Anne's Square, Manchester M2 7DH.

Gabrielle Drake in *Dear Scheherazade*

Elizabeth Gaskell is the subject of a one-woman show, using extracts not only from the novels and short stories but also from her wonderful letters.

Gabrielle Drake, who has created this show and is giving a few performances of it in the Royal Exchange's Studio Theatre during the run of *Mary Barton*, is very generously giving a special performance at Knutsford's Little Theatre, Queen Street, Knutsford, in aid of Plymouth Grove's restoration fund; this will take place on Sunday, 15th October at 2.00 p.m. Tickets cost £18 (£15 concessionary). If you would like to book, please contact Joan Leach; cheques should be made payable to 'Manchester Historic Buildings Trust'.

North West Group

At Knutsford, meetings are held at St John's Church Rooms, on the last Wednesday in the month, beginning on 25th October (then Nov 29, Jan 31, Feb 28, March 28). The book for study this year will be *Mary Barton*, under the expert guidance of Elizabeth Williams.

If you have not already got a copy you are recommended to buy the OUP edition 2006, edited by Shirley Foster; and reviewed in the Journal (p.137)

At Cross Street Chapel, Manchester, At Cross Street Chapel, Manchester, there will be a series of talks on social and philanthropic aspects of Victorian Manchester, on the Tuesdays at 1.00 p.m. Members may choose to meet for a sandwich lunch before the meeting; bring your own or buy them from Pret-a-manger next door. The cost of meetings is £2 to members and £3 to visitors.

10 October 2006: Geoffrey Head: '*Cross Street Chapel's social and philanthropic role in Manchester*'.

Geoffrey is a retired Civil servant and Chairman of Cross Street Chapel Trustees. He was former Treasurer and President of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian churches and served in many other capacities. He is author of a number of studies of Unitarianism in the Manchester area.

14 November 2006: Alan Fowler: '*The Cotton famine and relief*'

Alan has 36 years experience of lecturing at Manchester Poly. now the Metropolitan University, on economic and social history of the region. He has served on the committee of the Economic History Society and has recently published *Lancashire Cotton Operatives and work 1900-1950*.

13 December 2006: The Minister Rev John Midgley will conduct a carol service

13 February 2007: Terry Wyke: '*Mingy Mancunians: Charity in Cottonopolis*'.

Terry Wyke teaches social and economic history at Manchester Metropolitan University. His interests include the history of Manchester, including the writings of Elizabeth Gaskell.

13 March 2007: Professor Alan Kidd: '*Rich lives, poor lives in the first industrial city*'. Alan lectures at MMU, working with the Manchester Centre for Regional history and is co-founder of the Manchester Region History Review. He is author of the recently published *Manchester : A History* (Carnegie Press).

The Yorkshire Branch of the Society

Programme, Autumn 2006

Saturday, 18 November: 'Speaking for himself: the letters of Reverend Patrick Brontë'
Speaker: Dudley Green, Editor of the recently published Letters of the Reverend Patrick Brontë and member of the Gaskell Society Committee.

Saturday 10 February : Speaker Howard F.Gregg

All the meetings will be held at the Friends Meeting House, Friargate, York, and will commence at 2pm. The room will be available from 12.30pm for those who wish to bring a picnic lunch. To cover expenses a contribution of £3 is requested from members of the Gaskell Society and £4 from non-members.

London and South East Group

Meetings are held at The Francis Holland School, 36 Graham Terrace, a few minutes walk from Sloane Square tube station. 12.45pm for sandwich lunch, meeting begins at 2pm. It is necessary to ring the security bell in order to gain access to the building. Someone will answer the door! After the meeting there is tea, biscuits and cake.

Email Frantwinn@aflex.net or phone for info. 020 8693 3238

Saturday, 11th November: Professor Angus Easson, Research Professor of English in the School of English at the University of Salford

His subject will be:

Secrecy and Revelation in *Wives and Daughters*

Angus has indicated that he likes to have audience dialogue and is happy for you to make comments as he goes along so again you may wish to be refresh your memory of the text. It makes it all more worthwhile. Hence the homework!!

Saturday, 10 February: Mrs Joan Leach, Secretary of the Gaskell Society, 'A visit to Japan and literary links'

Joan will talk about her recent experiences in Japan which she visited on behalf of the Society and where she went to a general meeting, gave a paper and met and visited many Japanese academics and our members.

Saturday, 12 May: Dr Brenda McKay, 'Dramatising Mrs Gaskell'; Discussion, with excerpts from TV adaptations from the novels'

Brenda has given this presentation to other groups and has found it to be popular. We have been treated to adaptations of Gaskell's novels in the past few years and I know everyone has views about the BBC interpretation of her writing. This will be an opportunity to listen, watch clips and offer opinions!!

South West Group

November 4th: Bath Royal scientific and Literary Institution, 16-18 Queen Square 10.00 "Always at My Post" Dudley Green will give us an insight into the life of Patrick Brontë as revealed in his letters which Dudley has just published.

11.15 Dr. Tom Winifrith of the Brontë Society will speak on "The Brontës and Religion", with special reference to Mrs. Gaskell

12.15 Finger Buffet lunch

To cover expenses we ask for £4 from Gaskell and Brontë members and £5 from non-members

January 8th New Year Supper at 138, Fairfield Park Road . "Bring and Share". Let me know if you would like to come nearer the time. R.Marshall

Saturday March 31st 99, Sydney Place, Mrs Joan Chandler.

"Mrs. Gaskell and the Roman Experience" Members £2 Non Members £3

Any queries to Rosemary Marshall, 138, Fairfield Park Road, Bath, BA1 6JT
Tel: 01225 426732 Email: rosemary_marshall@yahoo.com

Autumn Meeting

Saturday, 30 September at St Vincent's Catholic Church Hall, Knutsford.

10.30 a.m for coffee.

11.00 a.m. Michael Rose, Professor (retired) of 19th-century History at Manchester University, Chairman of the Friends of Manchester Regional History Centre: 'Across the Class Divide. Philanthropy and the Gaskells in Victorian Manchester'.
Buffet Lunch 12.30 approx.

2.00pm. Joan Leach will give an illustrated talk on her visit to Japan and the literary links.

There will be a book stall. Cost £10, to include buffet lunch, to be paid on the day.

Sunday 1st October

The Gaskell House at Plymouth Grove will be open, with a plant sale

Saturday 11th November

Book Sale at Plymouth Grove

Further information or booking;

Joan Leach 01565 634668 or email: joanleach@aol.com

The Gaskell Society



Tomb designed and sculpted by William Wetmore Storey for his wife, Emlyn, at the English Cemetery where Keats and Shelley are also buried.



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, Chester Road, Tabley, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 0HN.
Telephone - 01565 634668 E-mail: joanleach@aol.com

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NEWSLETTER

Spring 2007 - Number 43

Editor's Letter

Joan Leach

We are looking forward to a lively programme for 2007 and especially to our conference at Canterbury, when we will have more than 100 members attending. Our groups, meeting in Knutsford, Manchester, London, Bath and York offer opportunities to share Gaskell lectures and social events.

We hope you will enjoy in this Newsletter reading about the trip to Rome following Gaskell footsteps and we are grateful to Peter Skrine for his account of our activities. We felt we were recapturing some of the pleasures Elizabeth Gaskell had found in Rome; she had some trouble getting there because a ship's boiler burst: we had problems at airports because of increased security measures but we felt that Rome welcomed us.

Some of you will have heard the news that BBC is starting to film *Cranford Chronicles* in April. We were disappointed when this was shelved a couple of years ago but now the funds have been secured to go ahead with this classic drama series of five one-hour episodes. The script has been carefully devised by combining *Cranford* with parts of *Mr Harrison's Confessions* and *My Lady Ludlow*. It will have humour, drama and pathos with Judi Dench playing the role of Miss Matty.

The idea for the series originated with Sue Birtwistle who also produced *Wives and Daughters*. Sue grew up in Northwich so knows the Knutsford and Gaskell setting. Sadly *Cranford* days cannot be reconstructed in Knutsford so filming will be in the Cotswolds and London. Even the Royal George with its old assembly rooms is no more. Only this week I had an e-mail from a couple in Australia planning to return there to celebrate their wedding night of 40 years ago and were puzzled as to why they could not find it on the web.

Sue Birtwistle tells me a great deal of trouble is being taken to be true to Gaskell's writing and that with Jenny Uglow on board as advisor they feel it as near as they can get to Gaskell's approval.

BBC will be filming for 14 weeks with a post-production schedule of 18 weeks.

You may like to get a copy of the Wordsworth edition of *Cranford and other Stories* with introduction and notes by John Chapple. This includes *Mr Harrison's Confessions* and other stories. Good value at £1.99. It will be available at meetings, Knutsford Heritage Centre and Plymouth Grove or you may order it from your bookshop.

This year is the 150th anniversary of the publication of Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë*. The Brontë Society will have linked events and our Autumn meeting on 29th September at Knutsford will retrace the Gaskells' year of 1857.

We look forward to seeing many of you at our Canterbury conference, July 27-30, or you may like to visit North Wales with us. Details are at the end of this Newsletter.

John Geoffrey Sharps

From Heather Sharps:

I, and my son and daughter, Paul and Rosalind, wish to thank all who wrote appreciative tributes (in the Spring 2006 *Newsletter*) to my late husband, John Geoffrey Sharps, who died on 6th January. Alan Shelston's tribute in the *Manchester Guardian* will also be remembered. They acknowledged, movingly, Geoffrey's scholarly work and devoted activity in the Gaskell Society, for the promotion of Gaskell studies and for the recognition of Elizabeth Gaskell as an important and influential novelist and biographer. Such appreciation has been a consolation to us who cannot adequately express how deeply he is missed. Finally, we shall always be grateful for the numerous letters of condolence which conveyed kind thoughts and wishes.

Geoffrey and I first met in 1963 at The Queen's University of Belfast shortly before Geoffrey graduated Master of Education and I, Bachelor of Arts in English (Honours). Two years later we were engaged, and in 1966 we married in Belfast. Our marriage lasted for thirty-nine years. Our interests and pastimes were the same: respectively, English Literature and Education, travel, the theatre and the cinema.

We assisted each other greatly in our careers: Geoffrey encouraged me in my teaching of English and Modern Languages (to adolescents and adults), as well as research on Sir James P. Kay-Shuttleworth. In fact it was Geoffrey who suggested that it would be worthwhile to carry out a study of Sir James' novels and some of his other works. Part of this research was ably supervised by Professor John Chapple of the University of Hull and part by Professor John Hordern and Dr. Frank Felsenstein of the University of Leeds. I helped Geoffrey in his career as lecturer in Psychology under the Leeds Institute of Education (in chauffeuring him to numerous schools where he had to supervise and inspect the quality of the students' teaching); in proof-reading the manuscript of his book on Mrs Gaskell, and assisting him to have

it published. Furthermore, we were hosts to a number of Gaskell scholars from the United Kingdom and abroad. In fact Geoffrey introduced me to Mrs Gaskell, and that is why I became a founder member of the Society and have written on the relationship between Mrs Gaskell and Kay-Shuttleworth as well as on the similarities and differences in their works of fiction. In my Hull dissertation I also compare his fictional works with Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley*.

Geoffrey stipulated that I, as his sole executor, should donate most of his collection firstly to the John Rylands Library of Manchester where a large part of *Gaskelliana* already resided; secondly to the Brotherton Library at Leeds (which possesses the manuscript of *Sylvia's Lovers*), and thirdly to the Manchester Central Library, which specialises in foreign translations of works originally written in English. Christine Lingard, a staunch member of the Gaskell Society, welcomed this last donation with enthusiasm. I also gave a number of copies of Elizabeth Gaskell's books to Plymouth Grove (a gesture greatly appreciated by Janet Allan). I am sure Geoffrey would have wanted me to do this.

Finally I must convey my gratitude to the following for their advice and assistance in the administration of Geoffrey's collection: Walter Smith, friend and excellent bibliographer of Elizabeth Gaskell's works; and our long-standing archivist friends, Dr David Iredale and Alyne Slasor.

Last but certainly not least, I wish to thank Frances Baker for her infinite patience and thoroughness in finalising the organization and transportation of the material to the John Rylands Library. Of great importance to me too, is the gratitude of Chris Shepherd, the admirable archivist of the Brotherton Library at Leeds University, who regarded it a privilege to be able to choose important volumes of Elizabeth Gaskell's works which would add interest and value to the Library's collection. I thank also stalwart members of the Gaskell Society, Janet and Pauline Kennerley of the North West Branch, who last year transported copies of my husband's book, *Mrs Gaskell's Observation and Invention*, as well as a large number books designated for the Manchester Central Library and Plymouth Grove.

If, in the future, there is an Elizabeth Gaskell Exhibition in Manchester, part of the collection may be put on display. My family and I wish to keep, as well as some of the author's books, her Wedgwood teapot and copy of the Book of Common Prayer (dated 1865); but we would be willing to 'lend' these items for use at an exhibition.

Geoffrey was a family man too, a loving father and eventually grandfather. Unfortunately the last years of his life were dogged by ill-health - pulmonary fibrosis, heart failure and cellulitis. However he remained cheerful, despite having to be attached to an oxygen machine for fifteen months before he died. The following

tribute from the Book of Remembrance in Woodlands Crematorium in Scarborough expresses most fittingly his family's emotions:

*Sharps, John Geoffrey
Worthy of Remembrance
As a husband, father, grandfather, scholar and lecturer,
also for his integrity, generosity and kindness.*

Editor: So many of us have continued to miss Geoffrey but are cheered by happy memories. In our next *Newsletter* Frances Baker, keeper of collections at John Rylands Library, will write about their work and the Gaskell collection.

Many of Geoffrey's books were bought by book dealer C.W.Hawley who has a large range of Gaskell and other 19th century writers. He offers our members a 10% discount. He can be contacted by email clh@clhawley.co.uk or phone 01756 792380.

Garibaldi at Caprera

Alan Shelston

In 1862 Elizabeth Gaskell wrote a 'Preface' to the English translation of Colonel Candido Augusto Vecchj's memoir of Garibaldi, *Garibaldi at Caprera*. This was a piece of occasional journalism on her part, and presumably a commission by the publisher, Macmillan, for whom she published nothing else. Although she later referred to her 'editing' of the book this exaggerates; there is nothing of hers to the project except her short introduction. The copy of the work held in the Stanton Whitfield collection in Knutsford Public Library, however is a rather special one, since on one of its front end-papers, opposite Whitfield's elegant book plate, there has been fixed a letter from Vecchj himself, protesting about the inadequacy of the translation. The volume itself is a presentation copy, as this letter indicates. As well as Vecchj's letter, it has a few pencilled annotations, probably by Stanton Whitfield, identifying both the anonymous translators of the volume, and perhaps also the person to whom it has been sent. The letter is in Vecchj's Italian and his handwriting makes for some difficulties of transcription. The opening dedication 'Alla signora Roberts' and date, and the closing address, 'Villa Spinola' (Vecchj's house in Genoa) are in a different hand. My suggested transcription and translation are as follows:

Alla signora Roberts
Ai 12 Marzo 1862

Vi offro la traduzione di un mio povero scritto. La penna inglese maltrattò la

italiana, in modo che io non vi riconosco più i miei pensieri. Interi periodi tolti. Frasi cancellati. Racconti spezzati. Spente le vampe dell'anima mia. Graditilo com' è.

Villa Spinola
C Aug. Vecchj

[To signora Roberts

I offer you a translation of a poor work of mine. The English pen mistreated the Italian in such a way that I can no longer recognize my thoughts there. Complete sentences removed. Phrases taken out. Stories broken up. The flames of my inspiration extinguished. Be good enough to receive it as it is.

Villa Spinola
C. Aug. Vecchj]

As I have indicated, the translators were not identified when the volume was published. However a pencilled annotation on the title-page under the words 'Translated from the Italian' identifies them as 'L. and M. Ellis', and this is confirmed by Allibone's *Dictionary of English Literature and British and American Authors* (1891). Vecchj is perhaps less than kind to their efforts, since the narrative reads fluently enough in English. The other significant annotation is on the inside back cover of the volume; it too is in pencil and it draws attention to a reference to a 'Captain Roberts' on page 49 of the volume - could he be the husband of the lady to whom Vecchj sent the volume, perhaps in recognition of his services to his hero?

Garibaldi at Caprera gives an account of the time when Garibaldi, exiled from the mainland of Italy during the Risorgimento, established a home on the island of Caprera off the north Sardinian coast. Garibaldi passes over his residence at Caprera in his autobiography saying only that 'during the period between my arrival in Genoa in May 1854 and my departure in February in 1859 for the Italian mainland from the island of Caprera - where I had acquired a small property - there is nothing of interest to relate.'¹ But it was here that he lived the simple life, before returning to conduct his successful campaigns in Sicily and on the mainland, in the struggle for Italian nationhood. Candido Augusto Vecchj (1830-1869) is described by Gaskell at the opening of her account as 'one of Garibaldi's closest companions in arms'.² For his part Garibaldi relates in the autobiography that the plans for the great expedition to Sicily, which initiated the final stages of the Italian struggle, were prepared 'in Augusto Vecchj's Villa Spinola [at Genoa]'. (p.85) Prior to that, like Garibaldi himself, Vecchj had been living in exile in France. Vecchj later wrote two accounts of the Risorgimento, *La Italia: storia di due anni 1848-9 (1851)* and *La vita e le geste*

di Giuseppe Garibaldi, apparently published posthumously in 1910. Incidentally he should not be confused with his long-lived son, Augusto Vittorio Vecchj (1842-1932), who followed in his father's patriotic footsteps, and produced works of maritime strategy and naval history, sometimes under the pseudonym of Jack La Bolina.

Vecchj's account of life at Caprera fills in the gap left by Garibaldi's own account of his life. He tells with some pride of the place that he held in Garibaldi's affections, of the trust placed in him as his leader's secretary and amanuensis, and of the simplicity of life on Garibaldi's small estate. He offers examples of the generosity of his hero's behaviour, and of his affection for his children, and also of the evidence he receives of the admiration for Garibaldi that came from abroad. Amongst the correspondence he had to deal with were 'glowing pages from the fair-haired daughters of Albion, begging for autographs and locks of the hero's hair' (p.56) Gaskell, herself a keen collector of autographs, would not perhaps have gone so far. But the Italian struggle for independence from Austria raised considerable enthusiasm throughout Europe in the 1860s, and this she would seem to have shared. In her Preface she writes of how Garibaldi's 'valour and his patriotism' had 'opened out for [Italy] the prospect of a fresh career of glory' (p.ii), and *Garibaldi in Caprera* appeared contemporaneously in German and in Dutch translations as well as in English. Advertisements in the English translation refer to a number of similar works which celebrate the Italian cause, for example Henry Lushington's *The Italian War*, 1848-9, a work whose title anticipates Vecchj's own study of the same years. Mary Thwaite, who compiled a hand-list of the Stanton Whitfield collection, has associated the project with Gaskell's interest in Italian affairs, initiated by her visit in 1857.³ This perhaps stretches a point, since in a letter to Henry Morley she would seem to disown her contribution: 'the task of editing the book was imposed on me by force, not adopted of my own free will.' But Vecchj's work, with her help, took its place amongst the many works at that time which promoted the Garibaldi legend and endorsed his place in the drive for Italian nationhood.

Notes:

1. Giuseppe Garibaldi, *My Life*, 1932, trans. Tim Parks (London 2004), p. 53. Further references in the text.
2. 'Preface' to *Garibaldi in Caprera*, 1862, p. i. Further references to this volume in the text.
3. Mary Thwaite, 'Gaskell in Italy (1)', *Gaskell Society Journal* 4, 1991, p. 61. Mary Thwaite was a founder member of the Gaskell Society and a distinguished librarian who took a particular interest in the Stanton Whitfield Collection.

The collection of A Stanton Whitfield, one of the founders of modern Gaskell scholarship, is housed in Knutsford Public Library. It contains a number of first and early editions of Gaskell's works, together with important secondary material. A

handlist, prepared by Mary Thwaite, accompanies the collection, which can be consulted by arrangement with the librarian, Mrs Jackie Heaton. I should like to thank Mrs Heaton for her assistance in the preparation of this article, and on other occasions AJS.

The Gaskell Society Visit to Rome 18 September - 24 September 2006

Peter Skrine

It had poured with rain the day before, but the Gaskell party arrived in sunshine which lasted all week. Clearly Elizabeth Gaskell was smiling on our visit and ensuring that we, in 2006, would see the Rome she knew and loved 149 years ago, and where she was so happy. Our visit started on the morning of 18 September. By mid-afternoon we had all settled in at the Hotel Lancelot, a delightful, well-run hotel quietly tucked away in prime position close to the Colosseum; by dinner Anthony Coles, our expert cicerone throughout our visit, had already taken us on our first sight-seeing expedition to the basilica of San Clemente, close by, with a recently discovered temple of Mithras underneath it and splendid mosaics inside it; it has been entrusted to the Irish Dominicans since 1677, and the merry-making in our hotel soon told us that the Irish connection flourishes still; a charming young couple from Cork were getting married there next day and were promised a papal blessing at St. Peter's provided they still had on their wedding clothes. Their happiness and the champagne they kindly shared with us helped take a weight off Rosemary Marshall's mind: her suitcase had failed to arrive, and she had to make elegant do with her husband Tony's shirts until it was traced and returned thanks to the hotel manageress's help. By evening many of the group were ready to take an evening stroll to the Colosseum: for many these moonlit walks were the highlight of the visit.

For others Day 2 turned out to be the day to remember. The morning was spent visiting St Peter's, for which we had the benefit of Father Thomas Wood, a parish priest from Liverpool, as our mentor. His inspirational three-hour guided tour of the great church revealed the extraordinary craftsmanship which went into its construction, and the lessons, divine and human, which its stones can tell us. We didn't experience the pomp and circumstance that Elizabeth Gaskell and Catherine Winkworth witnessed in April 1857, but the sight of a new ambassador to the Holy See and his wife being solemnly escorted down the vast nave by Swiss guards in their blue, yellow and red Renaissance uniforms, gave us, too, something to remember. The afternoon took us even closer the Rome Elizabeth Gaskell knew: the Trevi Fountain and then Via San Isidoro, with its associations with her Roman friends, Emelyn and William Wetmore Story, the American sculptor whose very last

work, an angel weeping over his wife's grave, we were to come across in the Cimitero degli Stranieri along with those of Keats and Shelley on the last day of our visit. Such chance encounters brought home her intense fondness for the friends she made during those Roman holidays.

Nothing we did under Anthony's guidance was a waste of time or energy. On Day 3 many of us went to see the Sistine Chapel, while others chose to walk through Rome's ancient Roman centre, past the Forum of Trajan, to the church of San Pietro in Vincoli and Michelangelo's great statue of Moses. The afternoon added further dimensions to our experience of Elizabeth Gaskell's Rome: the Spanish Steps, the tiny room in which Keats died, and the famous Babington Tearooms close by, survivors from the late Victorian age, then on to the Pincio, the Victorians' favourite promenade, and thence, via the Via Babuino in which Catherine Winkworth stayed, to the Anglican Church, where the Rev. Jonathan Boardman, author of *Rome: A Literary and Cultural Companion* (2000), and his wife entertained us to refreshments in the cool green shade of its secluded garden.

Day 4 gave us the delightful opportunity of seeing two of Rome's finest churches: Bernini's masterly Sant' Andrea al Quirinale and Borromini's delightful San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, ideal preparation for our visit to the Palazzo Barberini - where the Storeys were living when Elizabeth Gaskell paid her second visit to Rome in 1863 - and where we had the rare delight of being almost the only people admiring its fine collection of paintings. The afternoon brought us to the end of our stay in Rome itself. Via the Protestant cemetery already mentioned, and the vast basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, we moved on to the second phase of our stay: Palazzola, a former monastery high up above Lake Albano, now run as a retreat by the venerable English College. No contrast could have been more delightful. The space, the silence, the light, and the views of hill and lake across towards Castel Gandolfo, where Pope Benedict XVI was residing, seemed like a painting. We recovered quickly from our physical and mental Roman exertions and on Friday happily set off for Castel Gandolfo and on to Frascati with its memorial to Cardinal Stuart, brother of Bonnie Prince Charlie, restored with money donated by our late Queen Mother; then followed by an evening enlivened by a lecture on Mrs Gaskell in Rome given by Dr. Enrichetta Soccio, who came all the way from Pescara to be with us, accompanied by her husband Paolo and her pretty baby, Larissa. On Saturday the Appian Way, a descent into the Catacomb of St. Calixtus, discovered in 1849, and a stroll along to the tomb of Cecilia Metella took us vividly back to the more distant past that had also attracted the attention of Elizabeth Gaskell and her Roman friends. Home again to Palazzola, a rest, dinner, and two interesting papers, one by Christine Lingard on the Wetmore Storys, the other a timely reminder by Janet Kennerley that it is in Gaskell's neglected yet fascinating *A Dark Night's Work* that we find her Roman experiences surfacing most vividly.

Sunday, 24 September, brought us to the end of our Roman holiday. It started with an optional Mass in "our" chapel at which Celia, my wife, was prevailed on to play the organ, and at which all present gratefully sang two of Catherine Winkworth's masterly hymn translations: "Praise to the Lord" and "Now thank we all our God" - a truly fitting conclusion to a week during which we had enjoyed so many beautiful and memorable sights sure in the knowledge that Elizabeth Gaskell had seen them too. Appropriately, our stay in Rome, so ably led by Anthony Coles, ended with a visit to the Villa Borghese and its sun-drenched gardens. It was to visit this very spot that she had invited Catherine Winkworth to join her and Mr. Norton for a drive on 4 April 1857. The day after, the heavens opened, the underground was flooded, and more rain fell in Rome than is normal for the entire month of September. Even the Trevi Fountain overflowed. As Madame de Pompadour observed, 'après nous le déluge'.



Charles Elliot Norton had an apartment near here

Antonio Gallenga

Christine Lingard

With the Gaskell trip to Rome still fresh in our memory I thought I would take the opportunity to discuss another Italian of her acquaintance, the almost forgotten novelist, Antonio Gallenga (1812-1895). Though there is only one recorded meeting in July 1855 (*Letters* 251 and 252), Gaskell certainly knew his Manchester-born wife, Juliet Schunck, whose funeral William conducted in 1855, and they shared many friends and acquaintances.

Gallenga (also known as Luigi Marriotti) was an émigré from Parma, and a controversial character - a journalist (foreign correspondent on *The Times*) and author of lurid melodramatic novels and short stories, such as *The Blackgown Papers* of 1846, full of gothic sentimentality, though they did draw attention to the wretched conditions endured by Italian boys brought to Britain as professional beggars. He was a naturalised British subject. His *The Invasion of Denmark* (1864) is to be republished in June by Helion.

He had spent some time in America, where he knew Longfellow, and in London had courted the company of the intellectual society from the 1830s - the likes of Lord Lytton (who offered him the post of secretary), the Carlyles, Robert Browning (long before he became famous), Lady Byron and Mrs Jameson. He gave Dickens Italian lessons and when the latter went on a tour of Italy he took letters on Gallenga's behalf to his political friends there. In 1842 they were on the same ship crossing the Atlantic for America when they were hit by a hurricane. Dickens was confined to his cabin for four days with seasickness. He wrote:

[I] was long troubled with the idea that he [Gallenga] might be up, and well, and a hundred times a day expecting me to call upon him in his saloon.... I don't think I ever felt such perfect gratification and gratitude of heart, as I did when I heard from the ship's doctor that he had been obliged to put a large mustard poultice on this gentleman's stomach. I date my recovery from the receipt of that intelligence.

Gallenga was involved in the movement for the unification of Italy, having in his youth offered his services to murder the King. He publicly attacked the Italian patriot Joseph Mazzini after the Italian Wars. (Mazzini had been in London for a time in the 1840s, running a school at Hatton Garden). He met his wife when he came to Manchester in 1846, to lecture on Dante on the recommendation of Henry Crabb Robinson. (It is not recorded if Gaskell attended, despite her interest in the author, but possibly not, as in September of that year she was busy giving birth to her

daughter Julia). Juliet Schunck was 16 years her husband's junior when they married in 1847. Mazzini was convinced he had married her for her money (£500 a year with a prospect of £1,000). Gallenga zealously protected his private life and all references to her are tender, but he is not totally reliable - there is no firm evidence either way about their relationship. Juliet was only 39 when she died of scarlet fever. After her death he soon had another lady friend though it was three years before he married again (a different lady but also Protestant - the widow of a grandson of Robert Raikes of Sunday School fame). A lot of people found him untrustworthy, including Robinson: 'I succeeded in getting Gallenga into the Athenaeum Club by great exertion and was made ashamed of my success by the development of his character. Gallenga later secured a lectureship at London University. Juliet's son Romeo returned to Italy and her grandson gave the Palazzo Gallenga in Perugia to the nation to become the Italian University for Foreigners.

Juliet was the daughter of the Frankfurt-born businessman Martin Schunck (1789-1872), a member of the Cross Street congregation. His interests were in shipping and importing textiles. Martin was educated in Switzerland. He came to Manchester from Malta in 1808 after a military career, and opened his first office in George Street. He was a trustee of Cross Street Chapel, a share-holder of the Portico Library to which he regularly brought foreign visitors, chairman of the Schiller Anstalt (a German library), and on the committee of Manchester College, holding more important civic positions than Salis Schwabe (another German to whom he was related by marriage), principally because he was not Jewish.

His ancestors had originally been Dutch. He had travelled widely in Europe and met the foreign correspondent Henry Crabb Robinson, a friend of Wordsworth, whose diaries are full of anecdotes about celebrities of the time. They also appear to have known Geraldine Jewsbury and Tottie Fox well. His son Edward Schunck (1820-1903), who was a talented scientist with an interest in the chemical properties of dyes, was a friend of Jane Carlyle.

Further reading:

Toni Cerutti: *Antonio Gallenga. An Italian writer in Victorian England* (London: Oxford University Press for the University of Hull), 1974.

The Sorrows of Young Philip

Ian M. Emberson

One aspect of literary criticism which has received too little attention in my opinion, is the problem of characters who have got into the wrong novels. Think of poor Philip Hepburn, and his courtship of the wayward Sylvia Robson. He gives her a copy of *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, and how does she respond? He finds out on his next visit to Haytersbank, when he sees it shelved alongside *The Complete Farrier* - unread and upside-down. Now if only Philip could somehow have wriggled out of the pages of *Sylvia's Lovers*, and crept into *Cousin Phillis*. There he would present the book to Phillis Holman. Imagine how her beautiful thoughtful eyes would have devoured every word - prior to translating it into Greek, and reading it to her father at two o'clock in the morning - just before he got round to praying for his enemies.

Come to think of it, young Werther could have done with a bit of help himself. Supposing Emma Woodhouse had wandered into Goethe's novel, and, with more luck at match-making than she ever had in the Jane Austen version, had distracted the hero's gaze from the already-married Lotte, and fixed him up with some cute, bright-eyed, unattached young maiden? They could then have lived happily ever after, and the book renamed *The Joys of Young Werther*.

But there are snags to all this. Just consider what might have happened if Bertha Rochester, during one of Grace Poole's moments of inebriation, had slipped stealthily out of *Jane Eyre*, and slithered into the pages of *Pride and Prejudice*. Poor Elizabeth! Imagine her returning from the honeymoon, and waking up in the middle of the night to a sound of screaming from the room above, and a realization that Mr. Darcy had a mad wife in the attic! It doesn't bear thinking about. Really the characters are best left firmly imprisoned within their original covers. They cause enough trouble as it is.

84 Plymouth Grove

Manchester Historic Buildings Trust, the owners of the building, are working hard towards getting a foot on the lottery ladder. This has meant the commissioning of an Options Appraisal, now nearly complete, which has looked at all possible uses of the building. It will be followed by a Project Planning Grant Application, which will hopefully give us £50,000 towards yet more studies which must be done before the main application is compiled. Meanwhile work continues on the house. At a working day in January, with both Trustees and Friends, the kitchen was reorganised, all the

ground floor windows were cleaned, inside and out, much unwanted material was cleared ready for dumping in a skip, and the partition round the staircase was removed revealing the entrance hall in its proper proportions.

Help is coming from many quarters, and we are specially pleased to have an international team of students from Manchester Business School who are at present masterminding the design of a Gaskell House website.

After a busy autumn the Friends of Plymouth Grove are now preparing for a busy Spring, with regular open days on the first of each month and special events, starting with **Ann O'Brien's talk on Meta Gaskell on 17 March** (£7.50 including an Italian meal), to be followed by a **Crimea Day School on Saturday 28 April** (£15 including lunch).

Hilda Holmes is taking the bookings for these on 0161 487 2593 and as space is limited this must be done in advance. The bookstall flourishes and we have just taken delivery of 10,000 new publicity leaflets! We are to be represented at the International Women's day event at Manchester Town Hall. Later events will include the popular plant sale in May.

BOOK NOTES

Christine Lingard

Ethics and the English Novel from Austen to Forster by Valerie Wainwright, Ashgate, £50, due in March.

A study of ethical thought in the novels of Austen, Gaskell, Dickens, Hardy and Forster, and the influence of a number of leading philosophers such as Kant and John Stuart Mill. There is also mention of lesser-known figures such as the Unitarian minister Edward Tagart, who was a friend of the Gaskells.

Some notable reissues: In May, Hesperus are reissuing *Cousin Phillis* with an introduction by Jenny Uglow, at £6.99 (paperback).

The second edition of Patsy Stoneman's *Elizabeth Gaskell* is available from Manchester University Press at £15.99.

The audio publisher CSA world is releasing a four-CD set, *The Best of Elizabeth Gaskell: an abridgement of Mary Barton* read by Maggie Ollerenshaw, and *North and South* read by Jenny Agutter. Approximate running time 5 hours, due in July.

The same company has on its list two of Gaskell's short stories: 'The Half-brothers' on *Classic Women's Short Stories*, vol. 1 and 2, read by Harriet Walter (with stories by Winifred Holtby, Katherine Mansfield, Virginia Woolf, Edith Wharton and others); and 'Right at Last', read on a 4-CD set, *Best of Women's Short Stories*, and also on *Classic Women's Short Stories* vol. 3 (2 CDs).

Manchester Regional History Review

Joan Leach

The Manchester Regional History Review, Volume 17.ii, follows a theme of the literary culture of nineteenth-century Manchester and its region.

This issue has four articles covering periodical publications. Terry Wyke and Michael Powell write of Leary's *History of the Manchester Periodical Press* which has been a major research resource. Leary's record was wide-ranging, from newspapers to magazines, trade publications and directories, beginning with *The Manchester Weekly Journal* of 1719. He also tried to identify proprietors, editors and contributors. This comprehensive work failed to find a publisher so is available only in two MS versions; plans are in hand to publish a complete version. Bradshaw's *Manchester Journal* had high aspirations to produce a quality, well-illustrated weekly magazine covering art, science and literature at a cost of a penny-ha'penny. Bradshaw, better known for his rail timetables, with his partner Blacklock, aimed to celebrate Manchester's achievements as a productive, dynamic town proud of its history. Mary Howitt was a contributor, but like Howitts' *Journal* it was doomed to financial failure. Other articles include *Ben Brierley's Journal*, the most long-lasting of the local magazines; *The Cotton Factory Times 1885-1937*; *Nineteenth-Century Theatre in Manchester* and *William Harrison Ainsworth*. Christine Lingard has contributed a useful account of The Language and Literature Library at Manchester Central Library.

For more details contact: [http:// www.mcrh.mmu.ac.uk/pubs/mrhr.htm](http://www.mcrh.mmu.ac.uk/pubs/mrhr.htm)

AGM Meeting on Saturday March 31st, 2007 at Cross Street Chapel, Manchester.

10.30am Coffee

11.00am AGM

11.45am approx. The Daphne Carrick Lecture by Dr Patsy Stoneman:

The Battle for Gaskell: Elizabeth Gaskell's Literary Reputation

Patsy Stoneman is an Emeritus Reader in English Literature at the University of Hull. The second edition of her critical biography of Gaskell has just been published and her talk will revolve around the afterword that she added to that volume.

1.00pm Buffet Lunch

2.15pm approx. A trans-atlantic friendship: Readings from the letters of Charles Eliot Norton, the Gaskell family and John Ruskin.

London and South East Group

Programme for 2007-8

Saturday May 12th: Dr Brenda McKay, 'Dramatising Mrs Gaskell: A presentation and discussion with clips from TV adaptations of North and South and Wives and Daughters.

Brenda has given similar presentations to other groups and has found the formula to be popular. We have been treated to adaptations of Gaskell's novels in the past few years and I know everyone has views about the BBC interpretation of her writing. This will be an opportunity to listen, watch the clips and offer opinions!!

Saturday September 15th: Jo Pryke

Jo is the immediate past editor of the *Gaskell Society Journal*. She will talk about parallels between Dorothy Whipple's writing and that of Gaskell. She is actively engaged in researching this idea and will present her thoughts at the meeting. The title of the talk is yet to be finalised. Homework will be set!! To read some of Dorothy Whipple's work - several of her novels are published by Persephone Books.

Saturday November 10th: Dudley Green, 'Always...at my post'. The letters of Patrick Brontë.

Dudley Green has been an active Gaskell Society Committee member and member of the Brontë Society and recently has edited Patrick Brontë's letters. (Published 2005). He will talk about the letters with particular reference to the relationship between Patrick Brontë and Gaskell over *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*.

Saturday February 9th: Dr Patsy Stoneman, 'The Battle for Gaskell': Elizabeth Gaskell's critical reputation'.

Patsy Stoneman is an Emeritus Reader in English Literature at the University of Hull. The second edition of her excellent critical biography of Gaskell has just been published and her talk will revolve around the afterword that she added to that volume.

Saturday May 10th: Dr Graham Handley, 'Mrs Gaskell and 'Scenes of Clerical Life'

Graham will talk on George Eliot's *Scenes of Clerical Life*, the warm response of Mrs Gaskell to them, and then go on to consider Gaskell's scenes of clerical life

in her own fiction both before and after George Eliot's were published.]
Perhaps we should read the book before then.

Dr Fran Twinn, 85 Calton Avenue, Dulwich, London SE21 7DF Tel:020 8693 3238
Fax: 020 8299 4088. Email frantwinn@aflex.net

North West Group

Knutsford Meetings at St John's Church Rooms, 12.15 for buffet lunch:

25th March: Professor Angus Easson on Self Help in Mary Barton

25th April: Last session on Mary Barton

21st May: Visit to Capesthorpe Hall and Cousin Phillis country. Details to be confirmed.

9th June: We are planning a day to visit Samuel Bamford country around Middleton to discover his story. There will be a guided walk of Middleton and a visit to the church with Bamford grave and memorial, and lunch at the Old Boar's Head. Tour escorted by several Bamfordologists.

The Yorkshire Branch of the Society

Future meetings:

Saturday 23 June 2007: "The Likeness of a Kingly Crown": John Milton's influence on Charlotte Brontë'.

Speaker: Ian Emberson

Saturday 27 October: 'Regionalism in the novels of Mrs Gaskell and Kay-Shuttleworth'.

Speaker: Heather.Sharps

Meetings are held at The Friends Meeting House, Friargate, York YO1 9RL and will commence at 2 p.m. The room will be available from 12.30 p.m. for those who wish to bring a picnic lunch. To cover expenses a contribution of £3 is requested from members of The Gaskell Society and £4 from non-members.

Enquiries to: Dudley J Barlow, 6 Kenlay Close, New Earswick, York YO32 4DW
Tel: 01904 750366. Email: dudleybarlow@hotmail.co.uk

South-West Branch

Our next meeting will be on March 31st at the home of Mrs. Joan Chandler, 97, Sydney Place, Bath. 3.00p.m. - 5.00 p.m. Celia Skrine and Rosemary Marshall will be showing pictures of the Rome experience and discussing how it furthered our knowledge and understanding of Mrs. Gaskell's love of the city.

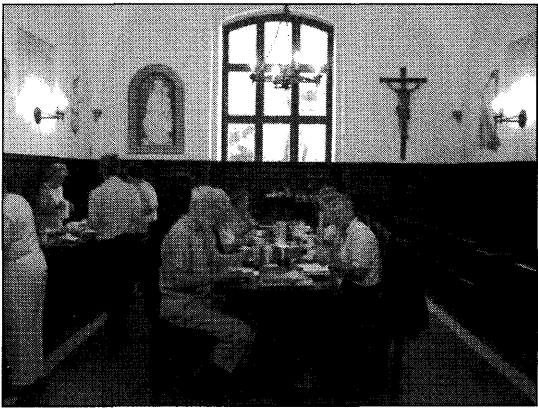
In the pipeline are visits to Tyntesfield and Bowood House where Joseph Priestley's study can be visited. There will again be a Summer Tea in August. Details will be sent to S-W members soon but anyone else is very welcome. Enquiries to Rosemary Marshall 01225 426732
e-mail rosemary_marshall@yahoo.com

Alliance of Literary Societies AGM meeting is to be hosted by The Tolkien Society at St Hilda's College, Oxford on 19th and 20th May.

North Wales Autumn Visit.

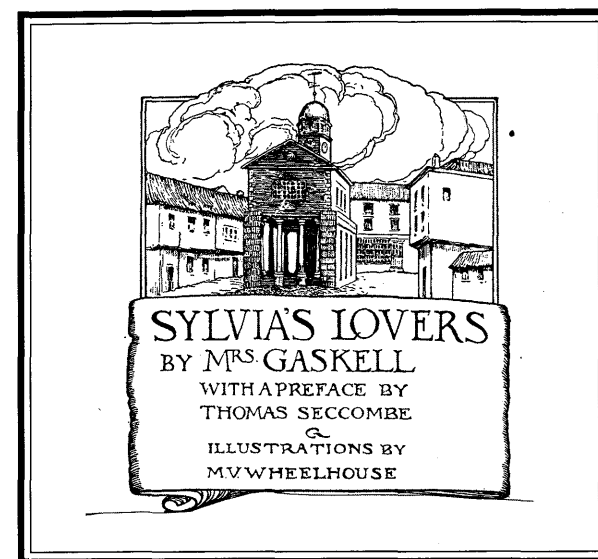
We thought of a day trip to Wales for our North West members but decided that we had so much to see that a two night/three day tour would be best. We plan to stay at Bangor University which has the single en-suite rooms we need. Elizabeth Gaskell spent her honeymoon in North Wales and went to Bangor Cathedral in 1853. We hope to follow the Gaskell's honeymoon route, family connections with the slate industry, Gaskell's Welsh stories etc.

The dates will probably be from 11th-13th September. The plan is for a coach to leave from Macclesfield, Knutsford but other members could be picked up at Chester station. Please let us know if you are interested either by sending an SAE or your email address to joanleach@aol.com.



The dining room at the Palazzola

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 2007 - Number 44

Editor's Letter

Joan Leach

The Society's conference at Canterbury at the end of July will be long remembered by all participants as an excellent event, indeed the organising committee, though inspired to start thinking of the next conference, wonder how we can live up to this standard. The programme worked out so well with excellent speakers and we can look forward to reading some of the papers in the next Journal.

We hope members will support the various branches in the forthcoming events. At the autumn meeting in Knutsford on 29th September we will be celebrating the 150th anniversary of the publication of *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* and the Gaskell's year of 1857, the year of the Art Treasures Exhibition. Manchester City Art Gallery has arranged an exhibition: *Art Treasures in Manchester: 150 years on* which will run from October 6th to January 27th. Some of us will make a group visit in November.

Ann O'Brien has researched and written for us in this newsletter the history of the Exhibition and Pat Barnard arranged a fine exhibition at Plymouth Grove showing the artistic links and will talk about this at the autumn meeting. John Rylands Library also has an exhibition until 14th November.

We are grateful to Fran Baker, assistant modern literary archivist at John Rylands Library for writing about Geoffrey Sharps collection which has been added to their archives. Some of our members will have a special tour there in January.

We bring you news of progress at Plymouth Grove and hope some of you will be able to participate in the events. The website www.thegaskellhouse.org gives details about these and how to become a Friend of Plymouth Grove.

Our homepage is currently being re-designed: www.gaskellsociety.co.uk.

I think you will all have seen news of BBC's forthcoming production of *Cranford* to be screened in November. Script writer Heidi Thomas has told us about her involvement and she will also speak at Knutsford Literature Festival on 14 October. (Tickets sold out).

We had thought of revisiting HEIDELBERG next year as this was our first overseas visit and was much enjoyed; however we have met with problems in finding a suitable hotel with sufficient single rooms at a reasonable cost. We are sorry to disappoint those who hoped to go with us but the trip will not happen. For any of you who choose to visit that area, at any time in the future, we could supply information on the Gaskell links.

We hope, instead, to plan a visit to Berwick-upon-Tweed and Scotland to follow Gaskell and other literary links.

The Papers of J.G. Sharps

Fran Baker

As Heather Sharps reported in the Spring issue of the Newsletter, her husband indicated that he wished most of his pre-eminent Gaskell collection to go to the John Rylands University Library (University of Manchester), to be made available to scholars, students, other readers and visitors. We are delighted that Mr Sharps considered the Rylands to be an appropriate home for his collection, and very grateful to Mrs Sharps for arranging the transfer of his papers - and for donating further material to the Library in her own right.

As the custodian of our Gaskell manuscript collections, I had a most enjoyable visit to Scarborough in April 2006, when Heather Sharps allowed me privileged access to her husband's Gaskell collection as well as providing me with lunch and (as a first-time visitor) an informative tour of the sights. The Sharps Gaskell collection has been credited by John Chapple as being perhaps the largest in private hands, and on close examination it became clear that I was looking not just at this extensive Gaskell collection, but at J.G. Sharps's own archive in its entirety - including much correspondence, as well as photocopies of research resources, manuscripts and typescripts of his own writings, papers relating to the Gaskell Society, and more. His archive and collection are inextricably linked; the correspondence, for instance, sheds light on the provenance of the books, manuscripts and other items that Mr Sharps collected over the years. He stored his papers carefully, meticulously labelling envelopes and packages with notes of their content, and my survey of the collection was further assisted by the work of Dr David Iredale and Alyne Slasor, archivist friends of the Sharps family who had already undertaken some appraisal and organisation of the papers. I hope to give some indication here of the archive's content and significance as a resource for Gaskell researchers and enthusiasts.

J.G. Sharps - like Gaskell herself - was well known as a voluminous correspondent, and although exact figures will not become clear until it is fully catalogued, the archive includes at least 2,500 pieces of correspondence, dating from the 1950s to 2005. Correspondents include literary societies, publishers, booksellers, libraries, museums, Gaskell collectors and those with a general interest in her work. Most significant are the Gaskell scholars past and present - whom initially Mr Sharps sought out for information, and who subsequently turned to him as an authority on Gaskell and her work. A cross section of scholars represented in the archive includes: Miriam Allott; Richard D. Altick; Barbara Brill; John Chapple; Dorothy Collin; Annette B. Hopkins; Coral Lansbury; Arthur Pollard; Gerald DeWitt Sanders; Robert L. Selig; Joanne Shattock; Alan Shelston; Walter E. Smith; Kathleen Tillotson; Jane Whitehill (née Coolidge); A. Stanton Whitfield; and Edgar Wright.

Much of the correspondence relates to Mr Sharps's exhaustive research - both his hunt for accurate facts about Gaskell's life and work, and his efforts to track down previously unknown primary sources from all over the world. He was engaged in his Gaskell research and correspondence from as early as 1959, and his findings fed into his Oxford BLitt thesis (awarded in 1964 and converted to an MLitt during the 1970s); this in turn formed the foundation of his encyclopaedic work, *Mrs Gaskell's observation and invention: a study of her non-biographic works*, which remains an indispensable resource for Gaskell scholars. Manuscript and typescript drafts of his thesis are included among his papers, as are drafts and proofs of his book.

Mr Sharps's efforts to track down and acquire important primary sources were highly successful, as reflected in the quality of his Gaskell collection. He became acquainted with the pioneering Gaskell scholar, A. Stanton Whitfield, from whom he acquired important papers, including four holograph Gaskell letters and another letter dictated by Gaskell. From the same source came over 30 holograph letters either sent to, or collected by, Whitfield; the latter category includes letters written by the historian E.A. Freeman, and the literary scholars Ernest de Selincourt and George S. Gordon among others.

Another highly significant group of manuscripts reflects Mr Sharps's interest in Gaskell's early life. These were purchased from Mrs Ethel Smith whose husband, when alive, wrote to the editor of the *Manchester Guardian* about the manuscripts in his possession. These letters, some of which are fragmentary and rather fragile, include: part of a lively letter from Marianne Lumb to her mother, Hannah (Gaskell's aunt and 'more than mother'), which dates from 1811 and gives an insight into their life in Knutsford; another letter to Hannah from Gaskell's brother John, dating from 1825; and a series of four incomplete, and two complete, letters to Gaskell from her brother, dating from 1825-28, shortly before his disappearance from her life forever.

Complementing these manuscripts are five even earlier letters which were given to Mr Sharps by Miss J. Carter. Dating from the 1790s, these include four letters from Gaskell's paternal aunt Dorothy Stevenson (Miss Carter's great-grandmother) to another brother - probably Robert - which make reference to the birth of Gaskell's older brother John, and offer a tantalising glimpse of Gaskell's mother, about whom little is known.

Also closely related are a series of typescript transcripts of letters, purchased by Sharps from the widow of Joseph Torry Lancaster. These include not only over 80 letters by Gaskell - which are thought to have some authority as sources, and were used as copy text for missing holograph letters by the editors of *Gaskell's Letters* - but also further letters to the young Elizabeth Stevenson from her brother, her father, and her former schoolteacher Jane Byerley.

These letters all provided valuable source material for John Chapple when writing *Elizabeth Gaskell: The Early Years* (1997), and were also drawn on by Jenny Uglow in her biography - just two examples of Mr Sharps's well-known generosity in sharing his collection and his discoveries with other scholars. His close association and work with other scholars is evident from his archive, which includes: correspondence relating to, and galley proofs of, *Elizabeth Gaskell: A Portrait in Letters* (1980), on which he collaborated with John Chapple; galley and page proofs of the Chapple and Pollard *Letters* volume; the typescript of an unfinished biography of Gaskell by Jane Whitehill; the typescript of, and notebooks relating to, A. Stanton's Whitfield's 1929 biography; and a typescript of Graham Handley's 2005 publication, *An Elizabeth Gaskell Chronology*.

Some of the gems of the archive can be found among the original manuscripts acquired by Mr Sharps. In addition to the items already discussed, the collection includes: a further 11 holograph Gaskell letters (all of which have been published in either the *Letters* or *Further Letters* volumes); Gaskell's holograph transcription of a ballad by the famous seventeenth-century royalist James Graham, First Marquis of Montrose; a letter to Gaskell from Richard Cobden; three letters written by Ellen Nussey (one to Gaskell, and two to Charlotte Brontë's widower, Arthur Bell Nichols, dating from 1855 when Gaskell was researching her biography of Brontë); a six-line manuscript verse signed by William and Mary Howitt, and dated September 1840 at Heidelberg (where Gaskell met them for the first time); a letter from William Gaskell to Manchester novelist Mrs Linnaeus (Isabella) Banks; and 14 letters (including six from Meta Gaskell) sent to the literary scholar and biographer, Thomas Seccombe, who edited some of Gaskell's novels for the Everyman library in the early twentieth century.

Mr Sharps also acquired some significant publications which he treated as part of his manuscript collection rather than storing them with his library. This material includes two Christmas numbers of Dickens's periodical *All the Year Round*, preserved in perfect condition in their original paper wrappers, rather than the volume format in which we so often encounter them today. There are also a number of copies of *"My diary": the early years of my daughter Marianne* (privately printed by Clement Shorter in 1923), and one of only 25 privately printed copies of Clement Shorter's *Letters on Charlotte Brontë* by Mrs Gaskell (1915).

The scale of J.G. Sharps's research and the breadth of his reading are reflected in a large number of photocopied journal articles, critical works and news cuttings, including some he tracked down from obscure publications - thus creating an invaluable reference resource for future researchers.

Of course Mr Sharps played a prominent role in the Gaskell Society from its foundation onwards, and maintained an active involvement even during his final illness. Naturally, then, the activities of the Gaskell Society are well-represented in his archive, which includes: notes for Society talks he gave; photographs taken at events; copies of the Newsletter and Journal; correspondence with members and officers relating to activities; and copies of agendas and minutes.

As well as Gaskell scholars, students and enthusiasts, J.G. Sharps also numbered other significant individuals among his correspondents - Lord Shuttleworth and Sir Walter Bromley-Davenport, for example - and twentieth-century literary figures as diverse as Valentine Ackland, Michael Horovitz, Daphne Du Maurier and John Lehmann.

The Rylands was also given the privilege of being able to select from Mr Sharps's outstanding library early editions of Gaskell's works not already represented in its collections. Armed with Walter E. Smith's indispensable bibliography, and acting on the advice of Julie Ramwell, our Assistant Keeper of Printed Books, I was able, with Mrs Sharps's permission, to choose volumes which have augmented the Library's holdings of Gaskell first editions from just 14 to 23. A high proportion of these are in their original bindings, whereas most of the Library's existing early editions had been rebound. These volumes will therefore be of some bibliographical interest, and - along with the inclusion of some Tauchnitz and other early editions - will be of considerable value to those researching the textual history of Gaskell's works.

Taken as a whole, the J.G. Sharps archive and book collection provide an invaluable research resource for Gaskell scholars, and have greatly enhanced and augmented the Rylands' existing holdings of Gaskelliana. However, their interest is not limited to those studying the life and work of Elizabeth Gaskell. A recent review of the Rylands' archive and manuscript collecting policy identified the principal subject strengths of the Library's holdings, and the J.G. Sharps papers build on many of these areas, including: Language and literature in English - notably the history of the nineteenth-century novel and belles lettres, biography and life writing, and textual criticism; the history of the book, printing and publishing; the history of collecting; biography and life writing; local history; and Religious Nonconformity, particularly Unitarianism in Manchester.

The book collection has now been accessioned, and is currently with our cataloguing department where it will be added to the Library's online book catalogue. The archive has been accessioned, an overview of it added to our Guide to Collections, and it is now in the process of being box listed. Every effort will be made to ensure that researchers can access material in the archive, within the usual restrictions of Copyright and Data Protection law. One postgraduate student has

already been working on the archive, and I plan to use items from the collection in a forthcoming seminar focusing on the literary history of Manchester, being organized by the University's Centre for Continuing Education, as well as a Cranford study day being run by the Centre next year. The collection will also be featured in a Gaskell-themed event for the public being run by Manchester's Blue Badge Guides later this year.

Finally, I would also like to acknowledge Heather Sharps's generosity to the Library in her own right. When undertaking her important research into the fiction of James Kay-Shuttleworth, Mrs Sharps made extensive use of the Rylands' Kay-Shuttleworth papers, and last year she donated to the Library six published works by or relating to Kay-Shuttleworth, which support and complement the manuscript material.

(Fran Baker, who spoke at the Conference in 2005, is Assistant Modern Literary Archivist at The John Rylands University Library.)

Visit to Bamford country 9th June, 2007

Adrienne Stennett

Samuel Bamford (1788-1872) was known to Elizabeth and William Gaskell through his poetry (some in broad Lancashire dialect, a special interest of William's) and through his writings. His autobiography, *Passages in the Life of a Radical*, published in 1842, recorded his experiences in the radical reform movement a generation earlier, particularly the Peterloo Massacre. Elizabeth quotes from Bamford's poem 'God Help the Poor' in *Mary Barton* and, knowing his love of Tennyson's poetry, she begged a signed copy from the poet for him.

Gaskell members gathered at the attractive stone-built Middleton Grammar School where Samuel had been a pupil. We enjoyed two very interesting talks with slides, one by Morris Garratt who gave us a glimpse of old Middleton in Bamford's lifetime, and one by Robert Poole who told us about his activities and achievements.

Born in 1788 to a muslin weaver Bamford knew from a child his father's interest in radical political ideas. He had read Tom Paine and supported the French Revolution. Not only that, his father had started a local radical group and at the same time left the Methodist church. While still a boy Bamford read *The Iliad*. This inspired him and began in him a lifelong love of poetry. He and his wife as silk weavers suffered poverty and he became secretary of the local campaign for parliamentary reform. He assembled the men to attend the Peterloo rally in 1819 but gave strict instructions that there was to be no provocation or bad language, and no one was to take a weapon of any kind, nor any sticks. All turned out in their

Sunday clothes, the men wearing a laurel leaf in their hats, some carrying laurel branches symbolising peace. In spite of these efforts Bamford spent a year in Lincoln Gaol.

A collection of Bamford memorabilia was displayed for us in Middleton Library. We dined in the Sessions Room at the Old Boar's Head Inn where Bamford had delivered lectures, then visited St Leonard's parish church, rebuilt in 1513, which Bamford had written about. We crossed the road to the Old Burying Ground to his grave. The inscription bears testimony to his courage and dedication to his cause, telling that '... for promoting a reformed Commons House of Parliament and repeal of taxes on food he was twice arrested on charges of high treason, was five times taken in custody before the Privy Council, he was on five different occasions escorted in chains or manacles to various and distant parts of the country he stood trial of ten days and conducted his own defence ...' Here Paul Booth recited for us Bamford's dialect poem, 'Tim Bobbin's grave'. We also saw the handsome obelisk memorial with a medallion portrait erected in his memory in 1877.

Local historians Heather Mawhinney and Brian accompanied us to the site in Blackley where Bamford's beloved cottage stood, high on a hill in a beautiful spot with views over Boggart Hole Clough. Here Elizabeth Gaskell had brought her gift of Tennyson's poems. We returned home in sunshine after a very enjoyable and enlightening day.

A letter from Bamford, probably to William Gaskell

Robert Poole

The Society's outing to Middleton on 9 June saw copies of a previously unseen letter to William Gaskell from the weaver and writer Samuel Bamford. Written from Bamford's home at Blackley on 26 June 1846, it reads as follows:

Revd Sir

At the request of the committee of the literary section of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society I am engaged in copying the glossary of Lancashire words and phrases which I forwarded to the society, and also some words supplied by other parties.

Mr [Vanbergue?] drew my attention to some marks which you had made in the margin of the MS which I sent in and said it was the wish of the Committee that I should consult you as to their meaning. I perceive that the names of places and one or two other words are marked thus ^, that several repetitions are marked thus – , and that certain pencil notes explain themselves. The first seems to indicate what

you suppose to be superfluous words, the second repetitions, and the third corrections in spelling.

As I shall be very happy in attending to any suggestion from you would you oblige by a note saying whether or not I am right in so construing your marks.

I am Revd Sir,

Your Obedt Humble Servant

Samuel Bamford

The identification of the 'Reverend Sir' as William Gaskell is not certain, but the circumstances make it very likely. Bamford was at this time well known in Lancashire as a working man poet and author of the memoir *Passages in the Life of a Radical* (1839-42), dealing with the 'Peterloo' period of the radical reform movement, 1816-21. William Gaskell's interest in vernacular poetry and dialect brought him into contact with Bamford, a practitioner of both, in the late 1830s or early 1840s.

We know from William Gaskell's *Two Lectures on the Lancashire dialect* (1854) that in the 1840s the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society had begun to compile a glossary of Lancashire dialect, when 'a pretty large collection of words was obtained, chiefly through the aid of Mr Samuel Bamford' Bamford handed a full manuscript glossary to the Society in 1843 (there is a copy in the John Rylands Library) but the project then appeared to lapse.

This new letter shows that the glossary was being prepared for publication in 1846, almost certainly by Gaskell. He seems to have annotated Bamford's manuscript for publication; perhaps it floundered because of the ensuing trade depression. Part of the glossary went into Bamford's own 1850 *Dialect of South Lancashire*, and it was drawn upon in Gaskell's *Two Lectures*. Both these works were published after the success of *Mary Barton*, whose dialect in turn owed much to both men.

How has the letter come to light? After Bamford's death in 1872 some of his papers and effects came into the hands of his friend James Dronsfield of Oldham, a blacksmith turned journalist with good connections to the publishing and newspaper world, including the Lit. and Phil. of which he was a member. Two Bamford letters, including this one, passed through the hands of a manuscript dealer formerly based in Oldham, and have finally been tracked down after years of patient inquiry by Brian Leicester, a Bamfordologist from Middleton. They are now back in Bamford's native Middleton.

Ed. Christine Lingard has been able to identify the gentleman mentioned in the Bamford letter ; she writes:

He is listed in Lit and Phil publications as:

F Eugene Vembergue

He was librarian of the Society from 1831, and wrote a couple of articles on ancient languages. He was born in Paris c. 1801.

He is listed in the 1851 directory as Professor of Languages, 55 Cottenham St., Chorlton on Medlock though according to the census he was living in Gloucestershire by then. (Directories are always a bit out of date by the time they get to press).

There are many other renderings of his name. His first name was Francis, Frances or Francois and after he left Manchester all variations of his surname begin with W. Frances Eugene Wembergue died in Cheltenham in 1879. Francois Eugen Wemberque (with Q) was married in London in 1849 to Julia Friclot. He doesn't appear to have had any children, though given his age at the time of marriage this is not surprising.

His wife Julie Friclot (or Frielot) was a teacher in Chorlton in 1841 living near James Herford and his daughters Caroline and Emma. Emma Herford was visiting the Vembergues in 1851 and 1861 was with her sister. They were born in Worcestershire. The Charles Herford who married Mary Robberds and Edward Herford the coroner were from Birmingham.

I think she may have taught the Gaskell girls. *See Further Letters of Mrs Gaskell* page 34 (1847):

'Mondays and Thursday they will have an hour's french lesson here from Mme Frielot; a very good teacher who sets a good deal to be done in her absence; but is so kind and spirited that all her pupils are fond of her.'

LITERARY EXERCISES.

SAMUEL BAMFORD

Respectfully informs the inhabitants of Middleton and the adjacent townships that, on the Evening of

WEDNESDAY NEXT,

At the Assembly Room, Boar's Head Inn, Middleton,

HE PURPOSES

READING AND RECITING

Extracts from his own works, and those of other Authors.

He will also, if required, enter into statements as to when he ceased being a handloom weaver; what employment he next adopted, when he ceased that employment, why he ceased it. Why he removed to London, the nature of his employment there, why he ceased to be so employed, with correspondence relative to the same. His present engagements, his future prospects, and various other matters.

The Doors will be open at half past Seven, the Exercises will commence at Eight. TICKETS: Platform One Shilling, Front Seats Six pence, other seats Three pence. Tickets may be had at the above Inn, of Mr. Wm. Jones, Rhoads, and at the Printer's.

7th July, 1850.

T. HILLS, PRINTER AND BOOKBINDER, MIDDLETON.

The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition

Ann O'Brien

In his novel, "Coningsby", Disraeli referred to Manchester as "as great a human exploit as Athens". While today such a comparison may elicit a wry smile, in the nineteenth century it did not seem so strange; even Thomas Carlyle called Manchester "as sublime as Niagara, or more so". Unfortunately the more typical descriptions of Manchester which emanated from the writings of commentators such as Engels and Alexis de Tocqueville focused on the appalling living conditions of the poor; they paid little heed to the cultural side of Manchester life. True the slum housing was appalling, but in contrast, many of the public buildings such as the Portico Library, the Exchange and Charles Barry's Royal Manchester Institution were of real architectural merit. Even many of the warehouses were built not simply in utilitarian fashion but in the palazzo style.

Cultural life in Manchester not only manifested itself in its architecture but also in its numerous cultural and philosophic societies; they reflected the growing concern of the middle classes about the lives of the poor. Whilst societies, such as the Provident Society, were formed to alleviate the material distress of the poor the Royal Manchester Institution for the Promotion of Literature, Science and Art from its inception was interested in education. Thus one of the prime motives of the Art Treasures Exhibition was to enrich the lives of the masses.

The story of the Art Treasures exhibition began in early 1856, when Thomas Fairbairn son of the engineer, William Fairbairn received a paper from J.C. Deane, commissioner for the Dublin Great Industrial Exhibition of 1853, and his friend Peter Cunningham. They had read "Treasures of Art in Great Britain", a book written by Gustav Friedrich Waagen, a distinguished art historian: Dr Waagen had remarked that the art treasures in the United Kingdom far surpassed those in all the collections in Europe. Unlike In Europe, however, where there were many art galleries displaying their national treasures, in the U.K. most of these collections were in private hands. Deane and Cunningham "thought of the grand idea of bringing the elite of these works into view under one roof for the edification of their fellow men". They believed that the owners would look favourably on loaning their works of art if such an intention was made known to them and suggested to Fairbairn that Manchester would be a suitable location.

Fairbairn, who had been a commissioner at the Great Exhibition of 1851 enlisted the help of a group of his friends and with their support a meeting was called in the Town Hall on March 28th 1856 with a group of influential merchants and manufacturers, to discuss this suggestion. It was decided to go ahead with the proposal to hold an Exhibition of Art Treasures of the United Kingdom in Manchester

in 1857, Fairbairn and some of his friends organised a guarantee fund and within a month £60,000 had been raised, soon increasing to £74,000. The next step was to obtain royal patronage and this was readily given by the Queen and her consort, Prince Albert. An executive committee was set up and Thomas Fairbairn was elected chairman.

It was decided that the Exhibition should take place away from the grime of the city and a spot was found just two miles away on a piece of land in Old Trafford, adjoining the Botanical Gardens. At that time it was leased to the Manchester Cricket Club and, despite many protests they were swiftly evicted. However, they soon found a suitable alternative just a short distance away and this remains the home of the Lancashire County Cricket Club which was formed from the Manchester club. The railway line to Altrincham ran close by the site so a new station was constructed - now the Trafford Bar station on the Metrolink line.

The actual building was mainly constructed of wrought and cast iron, timber and glass; with a brick entrance façade and a barrel-vaulted roof, which was 104 feet high. There were some critics who compared the exterior to "three steam boilers, side by side but the interior was palatial. The use of so much glass made it light and airy. Dr. Waagen wrote "With the exception of the Palais de Beaux Arts in which the works of art were exhibited in the Paris exhibition of 1855.

Following the support from the royal family many more of the aristocracy and gentry were encouraged to give their support both in lending the "cream of their collections and fortunately there were not many who took the Duke of Devonshire's view; he is reported to have said "What in the world do you want with art in Manchester? Why can't you stick to your cotton spinning?" He was one of the very few members of the nobility who did not lend works to the exhibition. He did not even visit until the last day but so impressed was he that he later gave a banquet and ball at Chatsworth as a tribute to the organisers.

The Exhibition itself was divided into ten major sections ranging from Old Masters to photography, with smaller sections devoted to tapestry, furniture and armour, a section which apparently, was particularly popular with the working classes who visited. Paintings were hung in chronological order, at the suggestion of Prince Albert and Waagen, so that they would show the progression of art from primitive to Old Masters.

Of course promotion of the British school of art was a key component of the exhibition and one of the aisles was filled with modern British art. Visitors were given the opportunity to see the most avant-garde of the British work - the paintings of the Pre Raphaelites - Millais's "Autumn Leaves", now in Manchester City Art Gallery,

was praised as "a perfect miracle of intense colour". There was unanimous admiration for Henry Wallis's "Chatterton" which was so popular that "it needed two policemen for its protection from the crushing crowd".

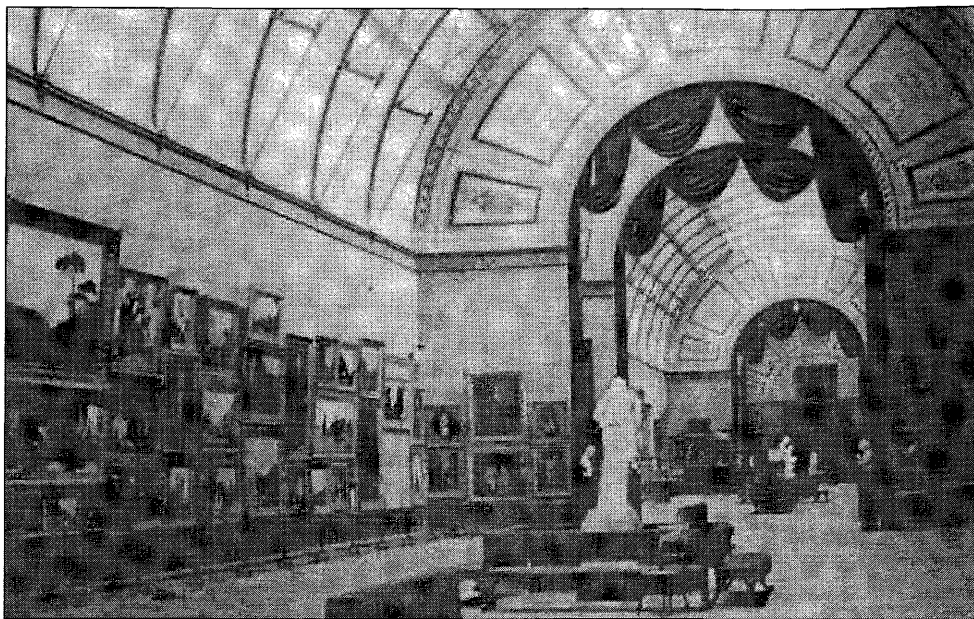
And, of course one cannot write of the Art Treasures Exhibition without mentioning, one of the highlights of the Exhibition, the Hertford collection. The fourth Marquis of Hertford, sent forty-four paintings from his vast collection to the Exhibition among them works by van Dyck, Gainsborough, Rembrandt, Reynolds, Rubens and Velasquez; this collection entirely filled one gallery.

On 5th May 1857, less than eighteen months after the idea was first mooted, the exhibition was opened by Prince Albert; he was representing the Queen, who was unable to be there as she had just given birth to Princess Beatrice. Thousands turned out to welcome the Prince and in July the Queen herself came to see the Exhibition along with three of her children.

The Exhibition was a huge success, more than 1,300,000 visitors came by road or rail in the five and a half months that it was open. On a single day the show was seen by the Duke of Wellington, the Bishop of Oxford, Florence Nightingale and the painter, David Roberts. Of course Mrs Gaskell made a number of visits, accompanying the guests who filled her house for almost the whole duration of the exhibition. Her daughter, Meta, who was an amateur artist herself, was given special permission to go in one day, before the Exhibition opened, in order that she might make a water colour sketch of "A Woman Drinking" from Murillo's painting, "Moses Striking a Rock" for the Gaskell's friend, Lady Hatherton. It is a mark of how well respected the Gaskell family were for Meta to be allowed to do this, as the making of copies of any of the works in the exhibition was strictly forbidden.

As well as the great and the good who flocked to the Exhibition both from this country and from overseas, the lower classes came along in their thousands and, despite the fears of some, behaved themselves. Admission, normally one shilling, was reduced to 6d on Saturday afternoons to encourage them to come and families were able to picnic on the lawn outside if they did not want or could not afford to use the refreshment tents. Many generous employers in the region brought along their workforce, at their own expense. One such was the firm of Messrs Horrocks, Miller and Company of Preston, who hired two trains to bring 2,500 employees. Thomas Cook ran "Moonlight" trips from Newcastle which left at midnight, arrived in Manchester in time for breakfast and returned in the evening. Fifteen hundred people took advantage of these trips.

It is regarded by some as the most significant event in the history of art in the nineteenth century. Not only did it encourage those who sought to establish an



expanded National Gallery, to look to the Manchester Exhibition for an example of how this should be done; it also paved the way for other galleries to be set up, both in London and in the regions. In Manchester itself the following year saw the inception of the Manchester Academy of Fine Arts but it was to be another twenty-four years before Manchester City Art Gallery was established and, interestingly Julia Gaskell was one of its early supporters.

There was, however, one immediate benefit to the citizens of Manchester, the orchestra which had entertained visitors throughout the exhibition and won such plaudits from all who heard it was due to be disbanded. Its young conductor, decided to take a risk and engage the orchestra at his own expense. It became the Hallé Orchestra which entertains the Manchester audiences today, just as it did in 1857 and that conductor was the friend of the Gaskells, Charles Hallé.

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Encyclopedia.com

Elizabeth Gaskell's Guests To The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition

Pat Barnard has arranged a fine exhibition at Plymouth Grove tracing the various artistic links and the visitors who came to the Gaskells and will speak about this at our Autumn meeting.

Mrs Harriet Beecher Stowe was the first of the Gaskell's visitors at the beginning of June 1857, after Elizabeth and Mrs Stowe had returned from Rome where they had met.

Elizabeth wrote to Charles Eliot Norton on 3rd June 1857:

'...When will you come to us? I have not yet been to the Exhibition, having had too much to do in other ways, but Meta says it is charming and exceeds her expectations. Mrs Stowe comes to us today for one night and tomorrow I shall go for the first time with her. (GL 349)

A month later she wrote again to Norton:

'...However you must come to us as soon as you are well; even if we have to find a night's lodging for you - which I hope won't be the case.

Ruskin Lectures Here On the 10th and 13th - on our exhibition. It will be worth hearing.(GL 360)

And on Sept 28th:

'... Meta really did get up this morning to a seven o'clock breakfast, and went, before I was down, to the exhibition to try and make a water-colour sketch of the Murillo study - a woman drinking, for Lady Hatherton . . . There comes a ring - there comes a caller! - Our house has been fuller than full, day and night since you left, and this last fortnight it will be fuller than ever, as everyone will want to see the Exhibition before it closes. I am very fond of all the people who are coming; but so worn out that it is hard work to lash myself up into properly hospitable feelings.'

Marianne said yesterday 'Oh! Are you not tired of being agreeable! I do so want leisure to sulk and be silent in; and really after long hard hot days at the Exhibition showing the same great pictures (GL 374)

Their visitors had included publisher George Smith, M. and Mme. Mohl, Florence Nightingale and her sister, Ellen Nussey and Eliza Fox whom Elizabeth told, on 26 August, that she had nineteen people still due to come to Plymouth Grove.

Mary Barton as a school prize

Anthony Coles, who was our guide to Rome, sent us this from *The Tablet* archive 100 years ago. [The Tablet, 29 June 1907.]

The London County Council has been debating the question whether or not *Mary Barton* is a suitable prize book for school children. In spite of some spirited speeches in defence of Mrs Gaskell's well-known novel, it was eventually decided that it should be struck out of the list of prizes. The speakers who supported this decision were naturally anxious to make it clear that they did not condemn the story as a bad book. For a general censure of this kind would only serve to show their incompetence as moralists or literary critics. But it was justly argued that a book may be excellent in itself and yet treat topics that render it unsuitable for young readers.

It may be observed that this discussion is but a particular phase of the general question of the censorship of books - a subject which has given rise to a voluminous literature and has excited considerable prejudice against ecclesiastical authorities. But however little the modern world may like the censorship exercised by the Church, its underlying principle is tacitly admitted even in unlikely quarters. Only the other day we found an organ of the most liberal form of Nonconformity putting its readers on their guard against the subtle and insidious publication *An Alphabet of Saints*.

The Tablet, 29 June 1907.

Report from Plymouth Grove

Ann O'Brien

There is an air of optimism at Plymouth Grove these days, as we have learned that in less than 12 months time work will begin on making the building 'safe and sound'. This will be achieved by underpinning the walls at one corner, replacing what Elizabeth Gaskell called 'the pestilential drains', putting on a new roof and doing other essential work. This is, of course, dependent upon having the necessary funds in place. The total cost of all this work will be approximately £650,000. Of this £280,000 is already available, and funding applications for a further £200,000 have been sent off. This means we still have to find another £170,000, so you see we need all the help we can get! Your support in our fund-raising activities at the house

is a vital part of this. Of course if anyone has any other ideas for generating further income or knows of any other sources where we might obtain further funding, do please feel free to contact Janet, Elizabeth or Joan.

So far this year we have had a very successful series of fund-raising events at the house. In March there was a talk on Meta Gaskell, the second of the Gaskell daughters and the last remaining Gaskell to live in the house. She and her younger sister Julia went on to become much loved and respected members of Manchester society. The talk was followed by a delicious Italian buffet provided by the Friends.

This was followed in April by the 'Crimea Day', when we had extremely interesting talks by Alan Shelston on the effect that the war had on the life of the Gaskells, Major Robbins who spoke about various incidents in the war and Therese Meehan who gave us an insight into the little-known role of Irish nurses in the Crimea.

Both these events were over-subscribed (we are only allowed 60 people in the house at any one time, this includes speakers, helpers etc.); the lesson is therefore, do book early for any of our future events, if you want to be sure of a seat!!

The May Open Day included another highly successful Plant Sale when people were able to pick up pre-ordered plants and were also able to buy other plants brought in by members from their own gardens.

There were also a number of visits by private groups, among others, the Birmingham Victorian Society and a Unitarian Group; there are further group visits already booked in for this year but we are always pleased to welcome any other groups if you know of any who may be interested.

Finally I would like to mention our programme of events for the autumn: the Open Days will continue on the first Sunday of each month until December. On the first Sunday, September 2nd, and on the following Saturday 8th and Sunday 9th the Heritage Open Days, there will be a poster presentation, 'Artistic Links - An Artistic Trail', when Pat Barnard will be on hand to explain and discuss any points that may be raised.

We have another of our popular Plant Sales on our October Open Day (7th). Wallflowers, pansies and cyclamen may be ordered in advance for collection on the day. All are good quality plants at reasonable prices. For further details and orders, phone Hilda Holmes on 0161 487 2593. Other plants which members bring in from their own gardens will also be on sale. Contributions of plants always welcome!

On Saturday 20th October there will be a talk by Professor John Pickstone from the University of Manchester, entitled 'Manchester Medicine and Science in the time of the Gaskells'. The talk will not presume any knowledge of science or history - 'it will gently explore a world which was newly constructed, and to which Manchester was

then crucial'. This will be followed by afternoon tea (cost £7.50, pay on the door but please book in advance - phone Hilda Holmes, as above). Talk at 2.30pm, doors open 2pm.

To celebrate the diversity of life in Manchester we are making Sunday 4th November an International Open Day (12 - 4pm). We hope to have some international dishes to sample as well as our usual delicious refreshments, our new exhibitions and ever-popular book shop. If you haven't been before, do come and see us. Gaskell Society members are always especially welcome!

Then in December we have another Christmas entertainment - 'A Christmas Miscellany', with Delia Corrie and Charles Foster, and carol singing. This will be followed by a glass of mulled wine and mince pies (cost: £7.50, pay on the door, but please book in advance - phone Hilda Holmes on 0161 487 2593). Doors open 12pm, entertainment begins at 3pm.

To conclude, as you see, we have a wide range of events and we are always grateful for your support. Many thanks to those who have come to our previous events, we look forward to seeing you at Plymouth Grove again; and to those who haven't been before, you will find a warm welcome there when you do come.

The 2007 AGM of The Alliance of Literary Societies

Janet Kennerley

The AGM of the ALS was held in Oxford on 19th May 2007 at St Hilda's College, Cowley Place. There were approximately 45 people attending, including two other members from the Gaskell Society. Quite a large proportion of societies in membership of The ALS were represented. My travelling companion, Lynda Stephens, was also wearing her 'Arnold Bennett Society' hat! (It may be worth reminding Gaskell members that anyone in membership of a society which subscribes to the ALS is entitled to attend this annual event, usually held in May.)

The host this year was The Tolkien Society and the weekend's events were ably co-ordinated by Trevor Reynolds.

The "Vernon Harcourt Room" was well signed as our meeting venue from St Hilda's main gate and a welcome cup of coffee awaited our arrival. The President of the ALS, Aeronwy Thomas, daughter of Dylan Thomas, was also enjoying the weekend with us and chatted to delegates prior to the start of the AGM at 11 am.

The main part of the meeting was taken up with several new appointments. The Chairman for the past 3 years, Nicholas Reed, handed over to Linda Curry, and

Rosemary Cullen stepped down after many years as ALS Secretary but she is willing to continue running the website. Julie Shorland stays on as Treasurer. There are some new members on the ALS Committee, including myself, replacing Joan Leach who has served The Gaskell Society for many years in this role. A hard act to follow!

It was pointed out that ALS Committee Meetings are held twice yearly in the Birmingham area which has proved central for those attending and also less expensive than London. Costs seem to be rising constantly, but it was suggested that the subscription rates are very modest and could be raised slightly from April 2008.

The Richard Jefferies Society will host the 2008 AGM weekend, provisional dates being 17/18th May in the Swindon area.

Looking ahead, it has been suggested that the 2009 AGM will be held in Dublin, possibly during June of that year. The Gaskell Society has already offered to host the 2010 ALS Weekend, this being the bicentenary year of Elizabeth Gaskell's birth.

There was much discussion about the new style Journal of the Alliance of Literary Societies to replace the Newsletter, entitled 'ALSo'. Volume 1, 2007, has as its theme 'Censorship and Copyright', edited by Linda Curry and R. Healey. Joan Leach and I both have copies for reference. Further copies may be purchased via the ALS at £7 each. However, it is also available for member societies in electronic format from the ALS website :-www.allitsoc.org.uk (notice the triple 'L')

There was a plea for contributions for the 2008 edition of 'ALSo' when the theme will be 'Literary Tourism', e.g. acquiring and maintaining a literary heritage site, what to do with a heritage site and how a society has promoted its author. Plymouth Grove may feature in this.

Comments or suggestions may be sent to l.j.curry@bhamac.uk

Once the AGM business was complete, we had two interesting talks. David Doughan spoke about 'Women, Tolkien and Oxford', followed by Mrs Pat Reynolds who was an expert on the 'Publishing History of *The Lord of the Rings*'.

We dispersed to find our own lunch before meeting up again for a leisurely walking tour of Tolkien's Oxford (plus others), enjoying the somewhat unexpectedly beautiful weather.

Dinner was attended by about 24 members at Rewley House, at the Department for Continuing Education in Wellington Square. This concluded with an impromptu poetry and singing session in the lovely inner courtyard - our two friends from Dublin, Desmond and Michael, and Aeronwy's husband, Trevor, showing their expertise in these skills. This was a delightful conclusion to a busy day.

The next day we were invited to visit 'The Oxford Story' in Broad Street where we experienced a "journey" through 900 years of Oxford University's history.

A memorable weekend - do consider attending the ALS event in May 2008!



ALS members at Oxford

The BBC and Cranford

We are looking forward to the BBC's presentation of *Cranford*, to be shown in November. Script-writer Heidi Thomas, who will give a talk at Knutsford Literary Festival on 14 October, explains her involvement:

I was commissioned to write the scripts for *Cranford* in August 2002! Sue Birtwistle, the producer, approached me with her idea to create an entirely original drama based on three novellas by Elizabeth Gaskell - *Cranford*, *'My Lady Ludlow'*, and *'Mr Harrison's Confessions'*. I was familiar with only the first of these three works, but fell completely for the world of Knutsford as depicted there. I am fond of that period of history in any case, but my interest was increased by the fact that (having grown up in Liverpool) I settled after my marriage in the small market town of Saffron Walden, in Essex. I saw many parallels between the two towns and it helped make *'Cranford'* feel very real and vivid.

The series was originally to be 6 one-hour episodes in length, and it took a full 18 months of work to get the scripts to the point where they were ready to be filmed. Shooting was due to take place in the spring of 2005, but at that time the BBC did not have the financial resources to make such a large scale production, and even though we reduced the number of episodes from 6 to 5, we had to wait a while before appropriate funds and casting were in place.

Book Notes Christine Lingard

Two reprints of *My Lady Ludlow* have been issued in the last year, though copies already seem to be in short supply according to Amazon, the Internet bookseller. Dodo Press at £7.99 and Echo Press at £5.99. These should be particularly welcome as the book will be included in the projected BBC serial *Cranford Chronicles*.

Round of stories by the Christmas fire, edited by Charles Dickens. Hesperus Press, £6.99, due November.

A reprint of the original Christmas number of *Household Words* in which Gaskell's ghost story *The Old Nurse's Story* was first published. This modern edition is edited by Melissa Klimasewski.

Masculinity and the English Working Class: Studies in Victorian Autobiography and Fiction, by Ying Lee. (Criticism and Cultural Theory Series). Routledge, £60, due July 2007. A treatment of masculine characters in autobiography and in the fiction of Dickens, Gaskell and Kingsley.

A Brontë Encyclopedia by Robert Barnard and Louise Barnard. Blackwell, £55, due July 2007. An A-Z review of people, characters, topics and places in the Brontë story, by a former chairman of the Brontë Society, who is also a member of the Gaskell Society. Over 2,000 entries include literary judgements and treatment of the unfinished works and juvenilia.

Servants and Paternalism in the Works of Maria Edgeworth and Elizabeth Gaskell, by Julie Nash of University of Massachusetts at Lowell. Ashgate Press, £45, due November, 2007.

Offers a new reading of *Castle Rackrent*, *North and South* and *Cranford* by studying characters who were at the same time expected to be invisible but were privy to the intimate secrets of their employers. The author was a speaker at the 2005 Gaskell Society Conference in Manchester.

North West Branch

Meetings at Cross Street Chapel, Manchester are held on the second Tuesday in the month at 1.00pm. Members may meet at the chapel from 12.15 for a sandwich lunch, (bring your own or buy from Pret-a-manger next door to the Chapel). Meetings cost £2 for members, £3 for non-members.

Tuesday, 9 October: 'The Domestic Interior in the Victorian novel', by Dr Jane Hamlett, whose book *Material Relations: middle-class domestic interiors and the family in England, 1850-1910*, will be published by Manchester University Press in 2009.

Tuesday, 13 November: 'The Growth of Manchester's Victorian Suburbs' by Professor Alan Kidd of the Manchester Centre for Regional Studies at MMU.

Tuesday, 11 December: Christmas Carol Service.

Tuesday, 12 February 2008: 'Parks for the People: Municipal Parks in Manchester 1890-1912' by Carole O'Reilly, Senior Lecturer in Media and Culture Studies at Salford University.

Tuesday, 11 March 2008: 'Reporting Manchester in 1848: Perspectives on Cottonopolis' by Terry Wyke Lecturer in Economic and Social History at MMU, author of *Public Statues in Greater Manchester*.

Knutsford meetings are held at St John's Church hall, on the last Wednesdays in the month. Buffet lunch is from 12.15pm. Cost £7.50.

The course book for the next season is *Cranford and other Stories*, Wordsworth p/b edition.

October 31: Joan Leach on the Knutsford background to *Cranford*, *Mr Harrison's Confessions* and *My Lady Ludlow* (to be combined in the BBC series)

November 28: Elizabeth Williams on the TV *Cranford* and *Mr Harrison's Confessions*

January 30: TV *Cranford* and *My Lady Ludlow*

February 27: 'The Doom of the Griffiths'

March 26: 'Lois the Witch'

April 30: 'Lois the Witch' and 'Curious if True'.

London and South East Branch

Saturday November 10th 2007: Dudley Green, 'Always...at my post'. The letters of Patrick Brontë.

Dudley Green has been an active Gaskell Society Committee member and member of the Brontë Society, and recently has edited Patrick Brontë's letters. (Published 2005). He will talk about the letters with particular reference to the relationship between Patrick Brontë and Gaskell over *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*.

Saturday February 9th 2008: Dr Patsy Stoneman, 'Wives and Daughters from page to screen: what does it mean to "adapt" a novel?'

The session will involve a close reading of specific passages.

Patsy Stoneman is an Emeritus Reader in English Literature at the University of Hull. The second edition of her excellent critical volume of Gaskell has just been published. She has made an extensive study of the translation of the Brontë works into other media so she is well qualified to look at Gaskell in this way too.

Saturday May 10th 2008: Dr Graham Handley, 'Mrs Gaskell and *Scenes of Clerical Life*'.

Graham will talk on George Eliot's *Scenes of Clerical Life*, the warm response of Mrs Gaskell to them, and then go on to consider Gaskell's scenes of clerical life in her own fiction both before and after George Eliot's were published.

Perhaps we should read George Eliot's novel before this meeting!

Dr Fran Twinn, 85 Calton Avenue, Dulwich, London SE21 7DF
Tel: 020 8693 3238 Email: frantwinn@aflex.net

South-West Branch

Saturday, November 4th, at 2 for 2.30 p.m, Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution, 16-18 Queen Square, Bath:

Dr and Mrs Boyd Schlenther will be talking about Mrs. Gaskell's American connections, including the importance of Unitarianism in the 19th century.

Mrs Rosemary Marshall, 138 Fairfield Park Road, Bath BA1 6JT; tel: 01225 426732
Email: rosemary-marshall@yahoo.com.

Yorkshire Branch

Saturday 27th October: 'Regionalism in the novels of Mrs Gaskell and Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth' by Heather Sharps

At the Friends Meeting House, Friargate, York

Meetings will commence at 2 p.m. The room will be available from 1.00 pm for those who wish to bring a picnic lunch. To cover expenses a contribution of £3 is requested from members of The Gaskell Society and £4 from non-members.

Enquiries to: Dudley J. Barlow, 6 Kenlay Close, New Earswick, York YO32 4DW
Tel: 01904 750366 Email: dudleybarlow@hotmail.co.uk

Visit to the John Rylands Library, Wednesday, 9th January 2008

Members are invited for a guided tour of the newly redeveloped and extended building with information about its history, the architecture, the redevelopment project etc, and a 'close-up session' - essentially a chance to see and discuss some Gaskell-related items from the collections. The tour lasts an hour and a half. Numbers are limited to 20 but we plan to have one tour at 10.30 and a second about 2.15pm, having lunch for both groups at 12.15pm in the new restaurant. The cost will be £14.50.

Make a note in your diary for 2008 AGM at Cross Street on April 5th.

The Gaskell Society



*Knutsford, Cheshire
Looking up King Street from the foot of Adams Hill*

R.D. White del. 1846

*Knutsford, Cheshire
Looking up King Street from the foot of Adams Hill*

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2008 - Number 45

THE GASKELL SOCIETY HOME PAGE has all the latest information on meetings.
<http://gaskellsociety.co.uk>

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs. Joan Leach,
Far Yew Tree House, Chester Road, 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

ISSN 0954 - 1209

Editor's Letter

Joan Leach

The last few months have kept Gaskell workers busy following the popularity of BBC's Cranford. Our home page was almost overwhelmed with 'visitors'. Do make sure you have the correct address: www.gaskellsociety.co.uk so that you can use it to check news, dates and events. Plymouth Grove events were overbooked but helpers coped brilliantly and raised money for funds as Ann O'Brien tells us in her report. Further events are planned.

Groups of visitors are also booking to visit Knutsford as the Cranford original. Some Knutsfordians were disappointed that the town was not used for filming but it would have been logistically impossible. The general opinion of the TV series was that it made good TV, with a brilliant cast, but left those of us who know the works so well, with reservations...My Lady Ludlow was the least known work of the three incorporated, and not easily obtainable until recently. When you read it you will see how little of the story was used. Gaskell's portrayal of the lively, busy-body Miss Galindo, for example, was denied her humourous character on TV. We offer you a few opinions of the series. I noticed the BBC paperback reached second on the best seller' list.

Some members enjoyed a trip to North Wales in September tracing Gaskell links and our forthcoming trip to Scotland in July is almost fully booked.

Looking further ahead we have booked our next conference for 17-19 July 2009 at Penrith, The University of Cumbria. It has a compact campus, en-suite accommodation, friendly, and helpful staff, together with reasonable costs. Its situation offers us many options.

September 29th, 2010 will be the bicentenary of Elizabeth Gaskell's birth. Plans are already in hand in Japan to mark the event and we will be hosting the Alliance of Literary Societies AGM together with other celebratory events.

You will see from the reports that our groups enjoy their meetings and events. Please study the calendar.

The 300 year old Brook Street Chapel, Knutsford, so well loved by Elizabeth Gaskell, has plans to improve access, to preserve their historic site and provide better visitor facilities. Our Society helps to maintain the Gaskell grave there and the mulberry tree we planted from a scion in Shakespeare's garden at Stratford-upon-Avon, where Elizabeth went to school, is flourishing.

Mary Holland and Anne Marsh Caldwell

John Chapple

The family history website of J. J. Heath-Caldwell (www.jjhc.info) contains a wealth of information about his ancestors, especially the novelist Anne Marsh-Caldwell. Elizabeth Gaskell certainly knew her work, for she listed Anne's name in a letter of mid-March 1853 to Louis Hachette immediately after the names of the Brontë sisters:

Mrs Marsh Eastbury Harrow near London

This lady has written about thirty novels, one or two of which are very good, three or four tolerable, and the rest forgotten as soon as read. She writes for money and writes far too quickly. Her first novel was published among [missing text... anonymously] about 20 years ago, and is very fine and dramatic. It is called 'The two Old Men's tales'. 2 vols Seven or eight years afterwards she wrote 'Emilia Windham'.

The tone might seem a little cool, but this is a long, summary letter and Gaskell had promised Hachette that she would be very frank, even about the novels of writers whom she knew personally, trusting to his complete discretion.

Anne Marsh, née Caldwell (1791-1874) was actually a relation of Elizabeth Gaskell through her cousin Dr Henry Holland's marriage to Anne's sister, Margaret Emma Caldwell (1792-1830). Anne's husband, formerly a rich banker, had been ruined in 1824. They moved to Boulogne and Anne later began writing to help support their family. Eight children were born between 1818 and 1828, one dying as an infant in 1824. Her work was popular and much admired by the Wedgwoods. (In later life she estimated that she had gained some £5000 by her novels.) On the death of her father in 1841 Anne inherited enough money to purchase the estate of Eastbury Park in Hertfordshire, but her only son died tragically in 1846 at the age of twenty. Not long after this, in 1849, her husband died and she was left with no less than six surviving daughters to support. However, on the death of Anne's brother in 1860 she inherited the family estate of Linley Wood and changed her name to Marsh-Caldwell.

Mr Heath-Caldwell has been generous enough to send me a disk of Anne Marsh-Caldwell's photograph albums. Amongst a great number of photos there are a few usefully labelled 'Miss Holland Knutsford 1863', 'Mr Holland', 'Rev. F.J. Holland 1865', 'Honble Mrs G. Holland 1869', 'Arthur Holland 1869' and 'Arthur Holland RN 1871'. The photo of Mr Holland is of a drawing or engraving, possibly of Peter Holland (1766-1855) of Knutsford, similar but not identical to the well known portrait reproduced in *Elizabeth Gaskell: The Later Years* (Manchester U.P., 1997). Exact identification of the other photos may be sought through close family connections.

Anne Marsh's sister, known as Emma, had married Elizabeth Gaskell's first cousin, Dr Henry Holland (1788-1873), son of Peter, in Audley Church on 8 October 1822. Henry and Emma had four children, Henry Thurstan (1825-1914), who was to become Viscount Knutsford, Elinor (1826-1829), Francis James (1828-1907), later a canon of Canterbury Cathedral, and Emily (1824-1908). Sadly, little Elinor died in August 1829, and was soon followed by their mother, on 2 February 1830. Emma's other sisters had all died young, apart from Mrs Anne Marsh and Mrs Hannah Eliza Roscoe (1785-1854).

There is a good deal of evidence to show that Henry Holland was close to his sister Mary (1792-1877), especially through the part she played both during Emma's final illness and after her death. The unexpected discovery of a letter from Mary Holland to Mrs Mary Robberds in Manchester evokes the pathos of a dying mother and the three little children. Dated 10 September [1829], it was sent from The Priory [Roehampton].

As far as localities go, I have certainly led an odd life this year; and seem likely enough to go on doing so - last Sunday but one I slept at Hampstead, Monday in Brook St, Friday at Margate, Saturday in London again, and Sunday at this place. Here we are & remain till the 29th, and then to seek out another country residence... I was very unhappy, from my anxiety about Emma, who was very unwell with a spasmodic attack during Henry's absence in Ireland.... Emma has been better the last week both in health and spirits; our trip to Margate, which was made by steam, certainly did her much good, was very agreeable indeed. Our party consisted of H & E, Mr & Mrs Marsh & Moi. ...Emma looked very much better for the fine air we breathed for so many hours, & her spirits are much more generally comfortable & composed. Henry has again left us, having set out on Tuesday last for a second excursion, to Bretagne & La Vendée. His former one (to Connemara) did him a great deal of good, and gave him much amusement and pleasure...

Emma and I like being here very much, we are perfectly quiet, but we have plenty of books, & the children. More especially my darling Franky. Then in this showery weather it is a great thing to have a nice garden & grounds to turn into when there is a dry, or sunny gleam: & to conclude, anything is better, to me at least, than being in London...

Somehow or other it does not seem to me that I am writing copper plate: this is owing partly to my being very much tired, & partly to my being very sleepy...

(MS, Manchester College, Oxford)

Brook Street of course was Henry Holland's London residence, whilst The Priory, Roehampton, was the even more splendid villa that had been purchased by Henry's late uncle Swinton Colthurst Holland in 1819, and in early 1828 willed to his son Edward Holland (1806-1875) of Dumbleton. After Emma's death Mary Holland actually took over the care of Henry's family until his second marriage to Saba Smith in early 1834.

We know from a Maria Edgeworth letter of December 1830 that the children were happy. 'Mrs Marsh' is almost certainly the novelist Anne Marsh (née Caldwell), Emma's sister. Mary Holland's nephew, 'darling Franky', is of course Francis James, destined to become a famous London clergyman. He married Mary Sibylla Lyall, to whom we owe the wonderful descriptions of aunts Mary and Lucy Holland in their old age, quoted by A. W. Ward in his introduction to the Knutsford Edition of *Cranford*.

Mr Heath-Caldwell has been kind enough to send me a disk of Anne Marsh Caldwell's photograph albums. Amongst a great number of usefully labelled photos there are a few of particular interest: 'Miss Holland Knutsford 1863', 'Mr Holland', 'Rev. F. J. Holland 1865', 'Honble Mrs G. Holland 1869', 'Arthur Holland 1869' and 'Arthur Holland RN 1871'. The photo of Mr Holland is of a drawing or engraving, very likely of Peter Holland (1766-1855), surgeon of Knutsford, similar but not identical to the well known portrait reproduced in *Elizabeth Gaskell: the Early Years* (Manchester U. P. 1997). The 'Honble Mrs G. Holland 1869' was probably Charlotte Dorothy (c. 1818-1897), daughter of 1 Baron Gifford, who married George Henry Holland (1816-1891), son of Swinton Colthurst Holland. 'Arthur Holland RN 1871' has not yet been identified.

For us, 'Miss Holland Knutsford 1863', taken by R. Wingfield of Worcester in 1863, is of great interest. Could this lady in a splendid dress be the oldest Holland sister of a family at one time 'not intended for an ornamental or pleasure-taking race'? Some forty or more years before, travelling in the Lake District and later to Barmouth in Wales, Mary, Bessy and Lucy had joked about their appearance of shabby gentility in comparison with the fine ladies they met. But in the interval their father Peter had died, leaving Mary a great deal of money and property. Both elegant and inelegant economy were by 1863 well in the past.



Miss Holland, Knutsford 1863

The BBC and "Cranford"

Malcolm Pittock

The BBC adaptation of *Cranford* was a disgrace: that is why I have used inverted commas in the title. I feared the worst when I discovered that "*Cranford*" was actually an adaptation of three quite different stories: *Cranford* itself, *My Lady Ludlow* and *Mr Harrison's Confessions*. Consequently I did not watch the first episode, but curiosity got the better of me and I saw the remaining four. My fears were confirmed. "*Cranford*" did a serious disservice to Elizabeth Gaskell, as the universally favourable reviews unwittingly demonstrated. The adapter took advantage of the fact that *Cranford* is little read today compared to the situation as it was some thirty or forty years ago, and *My Lady Ludlow* and *Mr Harrison's Confessions* are now read only by specialists and Gaskell enthusiasts. So the viewers had no means of knowing what parts were in some sort adaptations of

material found in *Cranford* and what were taken from the other two stories. And to make things worse the three stories have nothing to do with one another: *My Lady Ludlow* has no geographical or temporal relationship with the world of *Cranford*, being set in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, and though the Duncombe of *Mr Harrison's Confessions* is yet another version of Knutsford and the elder Miss Tomkinson is a preliminary sketch for Deborah Jenkyns, the tale is a slight and inferior piece involving farcical misunderstandings of the sort that could never occur in *Cranford*. Only the death of Walter from croup strikes a discordant note. Moreover in *Mr Harrison's Confessions*, marriage is viewed as normal: in *Cranford*, by Miss Pole in particular, marriage is looked on as anti-social.

The adapter then had to keep three distinct story lines going and contrive to make connections between them. But this involved further distortion. To make the connection between *Mr Harrison's Confessions* and *Cranford*, Mary Smith had to become short-sighted so that she could be prescribed spectacles by Jack Marsland, Mr Harrison's friend; and the two Miss Tomkinsons become involved in the plans of Miss Matty's friends to rescue her financially. Similarly Miss Pole and Mrs Forrester are at hand to dye Mrs Rose's hair (though this incident is entirely made up on the basis of a mere hint in *Mr Harrison's Confessions*). The connections made between *Cranford* and *My Lady Ludlow* were even more strained and required even more invented material by the adapter. Thus Lady Ludlow gives garden parties to which everyone from *Cranford* comes (in the novella she merely puts on a meal for her tenants). Further, though Mr Horner the steward does die (even his name was altered by the adapter) he does not die as the result of being mortally wounded in the company of Captain Brown by a blasting explosion involved with the building of a railway, so that even Mr Harrison's surgical skill cannot save him. There is of course no reference to the building of any railway in any of the three stories (and thus no necessity to try to get Lady Ludlow to sell any part of her land to the railway company.) A railway through Cranford has already been built at the commencement of Elizabeth Gaskell's story, for it is a train that kills Captain Brown. But in this adaptation Captain Brown survives and is actually employed by the non-existent railway company. Similarly in true romantic style, Jessie Brown does not get married early on to Major Gordon and have a daughter named Flora, but has to wait until the last episode for such a marriage to be in prospect. But then while in "*Cranford*" Major Gordon comes to claim Jessie when he learns of Captain Brown's death, in "*Cranford*", since Captain Brown does not die, Major Gordon is made to break with Jessie not once but twice.

I've picked out only some of the major distortions involved, but minor distortions were continuous. Thus in "*Cranford*" when Miss Matty meets Holbrook again after so many years, he is still romantically interested in her and proposes marriage, but in *Cranford* Holbrook, whatever he felt in the past, now feels only friendship towards

Miss Matty: Miss Matty's enduring love is one-sided. Similarly interesting and significant episodes (such as those involving Signor and Signora Brunoni, aka Mr and Mrs Brown) were dropped to make way for material interpolated from elsewhere. "*Cranford*" was trite and sentimental and the last episode reminded me of the ending of a Hollywood film of yesteryear. *Cranford* is, however, not sentimental at all and Elizabeth Gaskell makes much of the Cranford ladies' unattractive traits: their ignorance and snobbery. In "*Cranford*" the Honourable Mrs Jamieson was not 'fat and inert', let alone 'dull, pompous and tiresome', as Elizabeth Gaskell describes her. It is perhaps significant that of the three stories, *Mr Harrison's Confessions* was the fiction which suffered the least distortion in adaptation. But then it was the story which was the least worth adapting.

The BBC has made decent recent adaptations of *Wives and Daughters* and *North and South*, as well as *Jane Eyre* and *Bleak House*. But these works are too widely read to make the distortions which marred "*Cranford*" acceptable. But I have noticed before that when a work is no longer familiar, like Sheridan Le Fanu's *Wyvern Mystery* or *Lady Audley's Secret*, TV adapters feel free to distort the text as much as they please (Lady Audley, I seem to remember, emerged as some kind of feminist heroine). Even the role of Marion Halcombe was distorted in an adaptation of *The Woman in White* some years ago - though one would have thought that the novel was well enough known to protect it against such freedoms.

Let us hope that when *Sylvia's Lovers* is adapted, as surely it must be for it is Elizabeth Gaskell's most telegenic novel, the BBC or whoever makes a much better job of it than was made of *Cranford*.

Editor: Although the BBC's *North and South* was more faithful to the text there were some infidelities. It was completely out of character for Mr Thornton to strike one off his mill hands, and kissing on a railway station and appearing in shirt sleeves were not consistent with Victorian life-style.

With regard to the railway, in *Cranford* it is described as '*in a neighbouring town and had been vehemently petitioned against by the little town*'. Knutsford did not have one until 1862 and it was not welcome even then.

Elizabeth Williams collected opinions from the Knutsford Group after "*Cranford*" was televised and below is a selection of (anonymous) comments:

'I was pleased that many people I knew who had never either heard of or read any Gaskell novels really enjoyed it and had withdrawal symptoms afterwards.'

'The adaptation of *Cranford* was not *Cranford* the book...Judi Dench's Miss Matty is not Elizabeth Gaskell's Miss Matty. However, taken on its own terms this television adaptation was a great success - a quality presentation with high standards of production, setting, costume etc, against which the manufactured drama was played with great sensitivity.'

'My main objection was that it was over-melodramatic. The number of people who have said. "Wasn't it sad?" I don't read *Cranford* for a good cry.'

'The visual aspect was the main concern...Is it possible to convey the nuances via a TV production?'

'This production was remarkable in that many men viewed it enthusiastically.'

'Better not to have read the three books first; just enjoy the TV production.'

'Main disappointment lay in the interior sets, which were pokey and inappropriately humble, or in the case of Lady Ludlow, over-grand.'

'Pity they lost the sixth instalment - we saw hardly anything of Peter.'

'Some of the acting caricatured the characters, especially Miss Pole.'

'Its mass popularity puts it almost beyond criticism. It should be good for getting Gaskell to a wider audience.'

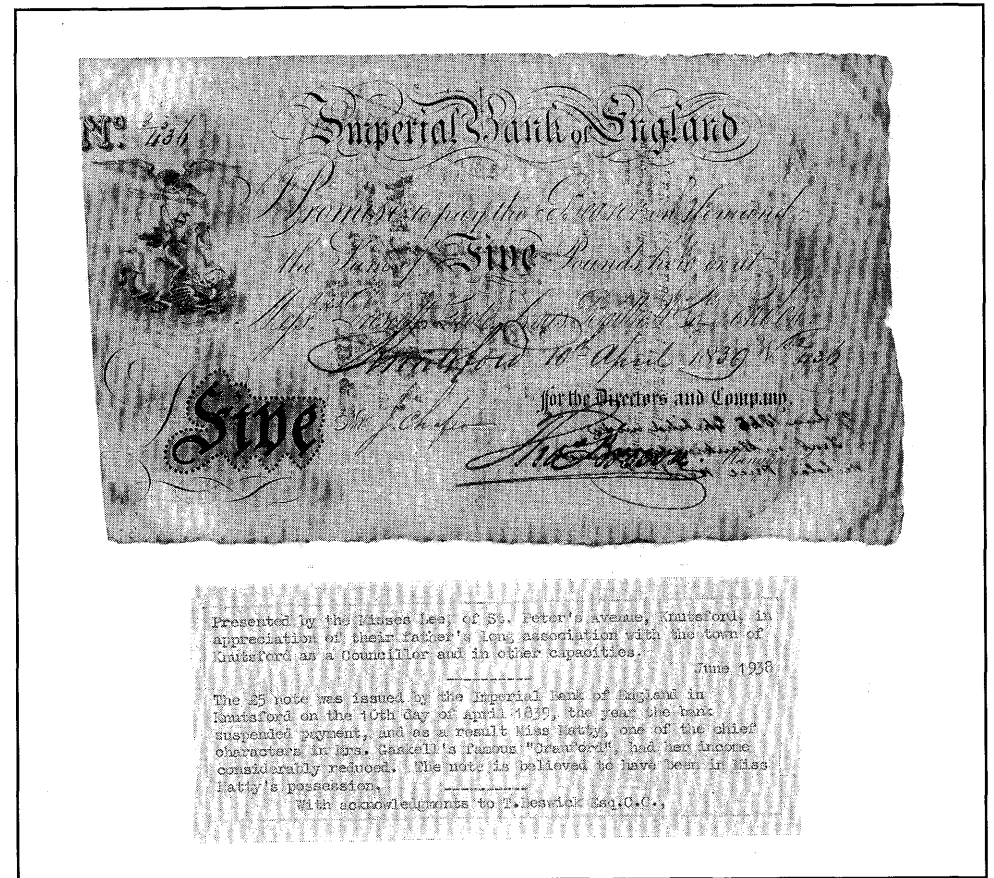
'Judi Dench was excellent as Miss Matty but close-ups revealed plucked eyebrows - not a period feature. The series had pace and variety.'

'My husband and daughter had not read the book and did not notice the joining of different stories.'

'Everyone was far too clean, not a speck of dust on their clothes.'

'*Cranford* and *Mr Harrison's Confessions* went reasonably well together, but *My Lady Ludlow*, set much earlier, seemed out of place.'

'One mustn't carp, for this adaptation brought pleasure to millions of people who knew nothing of Elizabeth Gaskell.'



For many years this bank note was on display in Knutsford Library

Gaskell and Music

Christine Lingard

The year 2008 sees celebrations in Manchester to mark the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Hallé Orchestra, so this gives me the opportunity to discuss Elizabeth Gaskell's concert-going and musical tastes. References to song and music in her writing and letters are too numerous to mention. Her love of music dates back to her schooldays at Avonbank School, Warwickshire. Music and dancing were on the school's curriculum. Both a grand piano and a harp were available for the use of the pupils. Music manuscript books, mostly in her own hand,

dating from this period are preserved in the Manchester Central Library. The earliest is inscribed, June 15 1825, when she was 15 years old, and they continue into the early years of her marriage. They show a love of both the classics - Mozart, Beethoven, Rossini and Haydn are well represented - and traditional folk songs with a particular interest in Scottish and Tyrolean songs. Dance music is also very popular, and there is evidence of familiarity with the most up-to-date dance steps. There are also a few compositions of her own, which, in the opinion of John Chapple, are only moderately competent.

Manchester was a good place to continue her interest. There had been a concert hall there since 1801. Major music festivals were held in the town in 1828 and 1836, and Gaskell is definitely known to have attended the former, when the great Italian soprano, Angelica Catalani performed, alongside such local talent as Jacob Butterworth and Deborah Knyvette. Terry Wyke has pointed out references to these singers in *Mary Barton*, and the influence of the latter on the character of Margaret Jennings. The 1836 Festival was overshadowed by the death of the Spanish-born soprano, Mme Malibran, at the age of 28. Elizabeth was certainly familiar with her work. Her *Retour de la Tyrolienne* is included in the music manuscript books. Gaskell's kinswoman, Emma Wedgwood, future wife of Charles Darwin, attended these concerts and was greatly impressed by the singer. As Emma lived in Staffordshire, we can only speculate whether she stayed with the Gaskells on her visit.

Some of the leading composers of the day came to the city. Felix Mendelssohn played at a concert in 1847. His wife was a relation of one of the Gaskells' German friends, Charles Souchay of Withington Hall, and in August 1848 Frederic Chopin performed at the Concert Hall. He was invited to this country by one of his former pupils, Miss Jane Stirling, niece of the art collector, Sir William Stirling Maxwell, and spent much of his visit in Scotland. An invitation to come to Manchester was afforded by Herman Leo, a German calico printer. He stayed with the Gaskells' good friends, Salis and Julie Schwabe at Crumpsall House, though there is no record as to whether the Gaskells attended the concerts. Ironically both composers died within a short time of their visits to Manchester. Chopin was already very ill at the time and the concert was a great ordeal for him.

It was the Revolution of 1848 that had caused the exodus from France. Chopin had suffered greatly as a result. Herman Leo was also responsible for bringing another French-based musical exile to Manchester - the German-born pianist, Karl Halle, later to be known as Charles Hallé, whom he had heard play in Paris. The Hallé Orchestra itself, as Ann O'Brien shows in the previous issue of this *Newsletter*, evolved from a group of musicians that Hallé gathered to perform at the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857. Dickens was very impressed by them.

Hallé enjoyed a great reputation as a performer on the pianoforte, as this review in *The Times* of May 4th 1854 testifies:

Another complete and well-deserved success was achieved by Mr Charles Hallé, whose performance of Beethoven's incomparable Concerto in E flat was an exhibition of piano playing of the highest class. M.Hallé's superb reading...and the profound sensation it created...

He was an extremely busy man and it is difficult to appreciate how much he crammed into his schedules - performance, practice and teaching - especially when you realise he had little knowledge of the English language when he first arrived. Many of his early notebooks are written in French.

He was attracted to Manchester by the lucrative income he could acquire from private pupils. There were many wealthy cultured businessmen in the city, with families eager for tuition. He was soon invited to take over conducting the concerts at the Gentleman's Concert Hall (on the site of the Midland Hotel in Peter Street) and consequently revitalised the musical life of the city, with a regular series of concerts. Notebooks, preserved in the Henry Watson Music Library (Manchester Central Library), record, in his own hand, that Mrs Gaskell had two subscriptions every season from 1852 to 1856 (when the records stop), which is confirmed by her letters.

Hallé was regularly accompanied at these events by the violinist, Alfredo Piatti and the cellist, Wilhelm Molique, two of the most distinguished musicians of the day, whose lives are well documented. A typical concert programme consisted of:

Hummel - Quintet in D minor Op 78

Beethoven - Piano sonata

Mozart - Quartet in G minor

Chopin - Nocturne

Mendelssohn - Caprice

Songs by Leopold Spohr and Mendelssohn

It was at a concert in 1850 that the German novelist, Fanny Lewald saw Gaskell and described her as:

a beautiful woman between 30 and 40 years old...Her appearance gives such an impression of ability and completeness, that the vigorous powers of perception and the unity of talent of such a woman are striking.

In 1862 a twenty-year-old composer, Arthur Sullivan, caused a sensation in London with his incidental music for Shakespeare's *Tempest*. In January 1863 he attended an equally successful performance in Manchester, with Hallé at the piano. He wrote:

We went to the - 'Gentlemen's Concert' in the evening: very classical and, ergo very slow - Hallé, Molique, Piatti. Reeves &c. Then I was taken to a ball and shown about like a stuffed gorilla! Mrs Leisler is the name of the hostess... I stood about the room in easy and graceful postures conscious of being gazed upon; walked languidly through the lancers, and then talked a good deal to Mrs

Gaskell the authoress, and at half-past 2 was in bed.

Gaskell came to know Hallé well enough to declare:

Thank you much for your autograph letter, I had no idea you could write - I thought you left that to baser clumsier fingers. [GL 610]

They engaged the services of one of his staff to tune the grand piano that dominated the drawing room of their home at Plymouth Grove.

She records in her letters that her daughter, Marianne, a skilful musician with a fine singing voice, received tuition from Hallé in 1852. (She had begun her music tuition under Emily Winkworth). This is a little puzzling. From the beginning of 1851 to 1854 (when she was twenty years old) she was a pupil at Mrs Lalor's school in Hampstead. It is not impossible that these lessons took place in London. Hallé, though he now had his own house in Greenheys, Manchester, maintained a home in Mansfield Street, London. The Henry Watson archive (which is not complete) includes a record of a Miss Gaskell of Plymouth Grove receiving eight lessons between November 1860 and January 1861, as did such friends as Harriet Schwabe, Miss Scott, Miss Greg of Lancaster and Miss Green of Knutsford. For this they each paid a guinea a lesson (£1 5p). This list also contains many distinguished London clients, such as Princess Mary of Cambridge, Lady Verney (sister of Florence Nightingale) and Miss Wedgwood of Cumberland Terrace (could this be Snow Wedgwood?).

While in London Marianne also received tuition from another future knight, the composer, William Sterndale Bennett, but this was probably in singing. She had apparently found her previous teacher, Signor Pergetti, difficult. Her mother is constantly encouraging her to practice Beethoven and Bach: 'practising ill and carelessly only confirms you in bad habits' [GL 90].

Marianne, whose attraction to Archbishop Manning and the Catholic faith was to cause her parents so much concern in 1861, had shown an interest in High Church music for many years: 'Marianne is practising gorgeous Litanies to the Virgin with Mrs Froude' [GL 55] in 1850, and 'I wish you could here MA sing. It is something really fine; only at present she sings little but Italian and Latin Mass music' [GL 90].

The Schwabes' Crumpsall home was a very musical household. Haydn's pupil, the now elderly, Chevalier Sigismund Neukomm, a composer in his own right, was almost a permanent houseguest. Another artiste Mrs Gaskell met, in consequence, was the Swedish soprano, Jenny Lind, whose husband and accompanist, Otto Goldschmidt, was the son of Mrs Schwabe's cousin. In 1847 and twice in 1848 she performed at sell-out concerts in aid of the Manchester Infirmary (tickets costing a guinea each much to Gaskell's horror). She was a houseguest of the Schwabes at Christmas and, despite a stipulation that there be no music, entertained her fellow

guests around the Christmas tree (still a novel innovation in Britain). Later she visited their home on Anglesey, and was moved to song by the beauty of the scenery. Goldschmidt was also a good friend of the Winkworths and provided musical settings for their book of hymns, *Lyra Germanica*, in collaboration with Marianne's former teacher, Sterndale Bennett. Gaskell heard them perform *Elijah* at the Exeter Hall in 1862:

& meanwhile we almost alone in the waiting room, fell head and ears in love with Mr Otto Goldschmidt, who was waiting for his wife to change her dress: so pleasantly, & goodly, and gentlemanly. [GL, 509b]

A love of music was inherited by all the daughters. Meta, the second daughter, was equally as accomplished as her older sister and there are numerous references to her love of music in her mother's letters. Years later, when still living at Plymouth Grove with her sister Julia, she numbered Elgar amongst the callers, (letters from Meta are preserved at the Elgar Birthplace Museum, Lower Broadheath, near Worcester). They also continued their friendship with Hallé.

It is hoped much of the music that the Gaskells enjoyed will be included in a concert at Alderley Edge, Methodist Church on 26th April 2008 in aid of the Plymouth Grove Restoration Appeal.

Further Reading

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The Green Letters

Joan Leach

Henry Green was the minister of Brook Street Chapel, Knutsford, from 1827 to 1872. Like William Gaskell, he had trained at Glasgow University and the two families were close friends. Descendants of the Green family have kept letters from these days; thirteen from Elizabeth Gaskell to Mrs Mary Green have been printed in

Further Letters of Mrs Gaskell and there are several more discovered lately. The family collection has letters between members of the Green family and also some from Julia and Florence. The Green daughters ran a small school in Knutsford that Florence attended and possibly Julia, too.

Son, Philip Green, caused anguish to his parents by becoming Roman Catholic; this was a problem narrowly averted later by the Gaskell family when Marianne wished to do the same after being influenced by Cardinal Manning while on a visit to Rome. Philip followed a successful career as a judge in India so many of the letters were to and from him.

Isabella Green wrote to her brother Philip, 3rd December 1865, just after Elizabeth's Gaskell's sudden death.

Mother and Ellen went on Monday to see the Gaskells. They saw Marianne & Julia who seemed pretty well & to like talking of their dear Mother. They say her death was caused by the breaking of the medulla oblongata which is the upper part of the spinal chord and it becomes very brittle in people who have gout, as you know, she had several times. Meta is very well but she will be the one to feel the loss most I think, she and Mrs Gaskell were so constantly together. Florence came to Manchester with them but went back last week, she is very much upset. She had felt Mr Justice Crompton's death [October 30, 1865; her father-in-law] very much indeed and had not in the least got over that when this greater sorrow came. They had not intended to go to live at Alton now as Mr Gaskell could not leave Manchester for two or three years but they were getting it ready & it was to be let. Mrs Gaskell said to Julia "I don't expect ever to come & live here, but it will be ready for all of you" and early this year she said to Mrs Deane that she did not expect to live thro' the year. But then people often have presentiments like this, which are forgotten when they don't come true. *

Although moving into the house must have tired Elizabeth she was heard to say that she had never felt better, so her death came as a great shock. William liked the house and at first thought of living there; and though they never did, the house at Alton was still in the family's possession in 1913 and mentioned in Meta's will.

In a letter to his mother, dated March 11th 1856, Philip discusses the great acclamation Florence Nightingale received on her return from the Crimea, while the dedicated work of the Catholic Sisters of Mercy had been less widely acknowledged. Mary Stanley, of the Alderley family in Cheshire, who accompanied a group to the Crimea, caused controversy and distress to her family, including her brother Dean Arthur Stanley, by being accepted into the Roman Catholic Church. This was widely discussed in Cheshire.

*Acknowledgements to Miss Jean Jamison for permission to quote this letter.

A Transatlantic Friendship: Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlies Eliot Norton

Elizabeth Schlenther with Boyd Schlenther

Elizabeth Schlenther's talk about this book was given in November 2007 at the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution to a very appreciative audience. It covers a wide range of topics from the difference between abolitionists and anti-slavery supporters in America to the attack on the Trent which nearly brought the U.S.A. into armed conflict with Great Britain. Elizabeth Gaskell's many American friends included the artistic Wetmore Storys who looked after her in Rome and Charles Adams, the American Ambassador, and his wife Abigail, and she refers to them frequently in her letters.

It has been published by Peter and Celia Skrine as *The Gaskell Society South-West Occasional Paper No 4*. It can be obtained by sending £2 with an A5 sae (24p 2nd class) to Prof. Peter Skrine, Birchwood House, Kempe's Close, Long Ashton BS41 9ER. The booklet will also be available at S-W meetings.

Book Notes

Christine Lingard

The DVD of the television series of Cranford is due for release on 12.2.2008, recommended price £19.00 from BBC, but shop around, there are special offers. Due on 17.3.2008 is a boxed set of the *Elizabeth Gaskell Collection with Wives and Daughters and North and South* (six discs in all) - recommended price £59.

BBC Bloomsbury have published a paper back with the three stories from the TV series and Penguin have a similar edition. There have been several reprints of other Gaskell paper backs. Nonsuch Press have issued *Cranford* with Hugh Thomson illustrations (£6.99) and *Cousin Phillis* with M.V.Wheelhouse illustrations (£5.99) They plan others in the series including *Round the Sofa*. These are attractive, chunky books.

The Professional Ideal and the Victorian Novel: the Works of Disraeli, Trollope, Gaskell, and Eliot by Susan E. Colon (Baylor University, Texas). Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. £40; contains a chapter on 'Professional Frontiers in Elizabeth Gaskell's *My Lady Ludlow*'.

Virginia Woolf and the nineteenth-century domestic novel by Emily Blair, Solano Community College, Albany State University of New York. Hardback £40, paperback £12.50; includes a chapter on 'The wrong side of the tapestry: Elizabeth Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters*', which contrasts Gaskell and Oliphant's treatment

of domesticity with that of Virginia Woolf. This is interesting in the light of Woolf's criticism of Gaskell's excessive use of domestic detail.

Recommended by member Doris Ker:

Recollections of a Sussex parson by Rev Edward Boys Ellman, 1815-1906, Rector of Berwick, East Sussex. Available from Mrs L Hallums, 2 Roman Close, Bishopstone, Seaford, East Sussex BN25 2SW.

She writes "Although superficially it appears utterly unsuitable, I found it so illuminating in regard to the Victorian Anglican's view of Dissenters. There are several references to Dissenters in the Community, all of which reveal Anglican suspicion and allow one to understand why Meta was keen for her mother to enlighten Charles Bosanquet (GL405), and also the anguish of the young clergymen on discovering the Gaskells were Dissenters." The book has many amusing accounts depicting rural life and the impact of absentee clergy.

Friends of Plymouth Grove

Since the last newsletter there have been some new developments concerning the renovation of the Gaskell house. The Trust has looked again at the original plans for repairing the drains and underpinning the walls and have decided to aim for the complete restoration package of £2.3m - or as much of this as we can raise the money for. To this end, Janet asks that as many people as possible write letters of support* for the restoration of the house; this will convince the various funders of the demand for use of the house, both as a community resource and a vital part of Manchester's cultural heritage as well as being a fitting memorial to Elizabeth Gaskell and her family.

In November we were delighted to welcome Elizabeth Gaskell's great-great-granddaughter, Rosemary Trevor Dabbs, and her daughter, Sarah Prince, to 84, Plymouth Grove; it was their first visit and they were thrilled to see the house of their famous ancestor. They were in Manchester to present the Elizabeth Gaskell Prize to the Women Asylum Seekers Together, at the Manchester Women of the Year Awards held at Manchester Town Hall.

Fund raising is, of course still of vital importance so I am pleased to report that the various autumn events have raised a considerable amount of money. The Open Days, especially the Heritage Open Days, saw an increasing number of people through the doors and all expressed their delight at seeing the house, which even in its un-restored state is a beautiful building with many original features still intact. The book shop, in the capable hands of Christine Lingard, continues to do great business and has proved to be a major source of income on our open days.

We had a full house again for Professor Pickstone's interesting and informative talk on "Manchester Medicine and Science in the Time of the Gaskells". The Lord Mayor of Manchester and his daughter, the Lady Mayoress, honoured us with their presence at our very successful International Open Day in November. Then our Christmas Event, also a full house, saw the return of those two very good (and talented) friends of the house, Delia Corrie and Charles Foster, who entertained us with a "Christmas Miscellany", interspersed with some audience participation in the form of carol-singing. This was followed by our now traditional mince pies and mulled wine, so a good time was had by all!

I have possibly saved the best till last - our spectacularly successful "Cranford Day". Following on from the recent outstandingly popular B.B.C. production of *Cranford* we felt that we should capitalise on this renewed interest in Gaskell and have a special Open Day to show off the house where she did most of her writing. The day comprised two halves: first a regular open day but with two slide shows - 'Knutsford in Cranford Days', given by Joan Leach of course, and 'Manchester in the Time of Elizabeth Gaskell', given by our own Janet Allan, while Elizabeth Williams took visitors around the upstairs of the house. People were queuing at the door before we opened and it was non-stop all afternoon! Then for the second half of the day, once again Delia and Charles returned, this time to give a performance of "At Home with the Gaskells". Needless to say this was hugely enjoyable - as was the Victorian Tea served afterwards, with "Mrs Gaskell's Fruit Cake" being particularly popular - thank you, Pat!

Around 400 people visited that day - possibly more - and almost £1,300 was raised. "At Home with the Gaskells" was so over-subscribed that we had to put on a repeat performance, with the Victorian Tea, of course - and that too was over-subscribed! A further £400+ was raised at this event. There is going to be yet another performance on May 22nd, this time at Altrincham Girls Grammar School - details have yet to be confirmed.

Obviously we are hugely indebted to Delia and Charles for giving their time and talent to the cause of the restoration of 84, Plymouth Grove. Our thanks also to those who support us by their presence at the various events and of course to all who contribute in any way to their success.

Future events:

Open Days on the first Sunday of the month beginning Sunday 2nd March, 12-4 p.m., which will include the Cranford and Manchester slide shows as given on the Cranford Day, tours of house, book shop, displays and refreshments.

Saturday 15th March An illustrated talk by Ann Brooks about Villa Gardens, like the one which originally surrounded the house. Talk begins at 2.30 (doors open 2p.m)

Followed by tea/coffee and cakes etc. Cost £7.50. Booking essential. Phone Hilda Holmes (0161) 487 2593 and pay on the door.

Saturday April 26th at 7.30 p.m.: "Music for the Gaskells" - nineteenth-century music and song performed by the highly-regarded Opus 5 at the Methodist Church, Alderley Edge. Tickets £10. Booking opens March 1st - early booking advised. Phone Hilda Holmes, as above, or Judith Rees, 0156 5832 562.

We are indebted to Judith for arranging this fund-raising event through her husband, Rod, who is a member of the group.

Elizabeth Williams adds:

I'm sure that you all know that a group led by Janet Allan has been working hard to try to raise funds to save Elizabeth Gaskell's home in Plymouth Grove, Manchester. It's a lovely house, but needs more than 2.3 million pounds spending on it. The next few months are crucial, and something which would help would be lots of letters of support. Wherever you live you can write - letters from around the world might help to convince the appropriate authorities that Gaskell was a figure of some importance. And if you are in the area, please do come and see the house - it's open on the first Sunday of the month from 12.0 till 4.0, or can be opened up specially in particular cases.

If you are willing to help (and please do) then send a letter saying that you are in favour of the project to Janet Allan, Chairman, Manchester Historic Buildings Trust, c/o 10 Dale Road, New Mills, High Peak, SK22 4NW.

Or email her at janet@janetbook.fsnet.co.uk

We should be very grateful for support.

All information about the house is at present to be found on www.gaskellsociety.co.uk link 84 Plymouth Grove.

Ann O'Brien

The Alliance of Literary Societies

This year's AGM of the ALS plus a weekend of activities is to be hosted by The Richard Jefferies Society on 17th & 18th May 2008 at Coate near Swindon in Wiltshire. Richard Jefferies (1848-1887) was born at Coate Farm and spent his childhood exploring the local fields, woods and Coate Water, keenly observing nature that formed the inspiration for most of his writing.

The busy programme starts with the Annual General Meeting itself after registration and coffee from 10.30 to 11am, at the Holiday Inn, Marlborough Road, Coate, Swindon. After the lunch break, there is to be a lecture entitled 'The Life and Thoughts of Richard Jefferies', followed by a visit to the local Jefferies Museum to include a short film produced by the Society showing local places associated with this writer,

guided tour, refreshments at the museum and raffle. There is an evening meal at the Holiday Inn which must be ordered and paid for in advance at a cost of £22 per person for 3 courses plus coffee/tea.

From 10am on Sunday 18th May, a literary treasure trail is planned to explore the North Wiltshire countryside which will include visits to places associated with other local writers.

Janet Kennerley has general details on this interesting weekend (telephone 01477 571525 evenings or email janetkennerley@hotmail.com). However, firm bookings have to be completed and sent to Linda Curry, Chairman of the ALS by 1st April, at 59 Bryony Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 4BY.

Please note that attendance at the AGM, the talk and film, and participation in the treasure trail are free of charge. The Holiday Inn can offer accommodation at a rate of £60 single and £70 double including breakfast. To secure a room telephone 01793 817082 quoting the booking reference 'Richard Jefferies Society'. There are however other B&Bs in the area bookable via the Swindon Tourist Information Centre.

Janet Kennerley

North West Group

Meetings are held on the **last Wednesday of each month** at St John's Church Rooms, Knutsford. Talks and discussions led by Elizabeth Williams are preceded by buffet lunch at 12.15. Cost £7.50.

March - 'The Doom of the Griffiths'.

April - 'Lois the Witch' and 'Curious if True'

On **May 22 (or 29)** we plan to visit Tabley House and after a tour of the house and the Chapel, with a short talk about Lord de Tabley as a Cheshire poet, we will have a cream tea. Cost about £7 (to be confirmed).

A trip to Liverpool is planned for **4th or 18th June** to visit Ullet Road Unitarian Church which has Holland family memorials, Sefton Park Palm House and Sudley House which has a fine art collection, with Holland family and other dresses on display.

Yorkshire Branch

Saturday, 31st May: a seminar discussion on Sylvia's Lovers will be introduced by Shirley Foster.

At The Quaker Rooms, Friargate, at 2 p.m., but the room will be available from 1 p.m. A £5 contribution is requested towards costs.

Saturday November George Smith Prince of Publishers by Joan Leach
A summer visit to Laurence Sterne's House, Shandy Hall, at Coxwold, is planned.

Enquiries to: Dudley Barlow, 6. Kenlay Close, New Earswick, York YO32 4DW
Tel 01904 750366 Email: dudleybarlow@hotmail.co.uk

The Gaskell Society South-West

We had a very congenial New Year supper here in January. It was particularly good to see Ian and Trudi Wallace who have moved to Clevedon and to get to know two new Bath members – Ann Thoresby-Parker and Elizabeth Carlson. We also discussed the programme for this year so here it is:

Saturday April 5th: 'Is there a conflict between Elizabeth Gaskell's "warring members" (GL 69) and the Victorian etiquette book?'

Talk by Mrs Gwen Clarke M.A. (Oxon) at Flat 4, 97, Sydney Place, Bath, by kind invitation of Mrs Joan Chandler. 3.15 – 4.30.

Wednesday May 7th: Visit to Bowood House and Gardens, home of the 9th Marquess of Lansdowne. Elizabeth Gaskell came to visit Bowood while she was staying with the Ewarts in Devizes but, as she says, 'We have been to call at Bowood today, as our friends are acquainted with Lord Lansdowne, and we wanted much to see so famous a house. But unfortunately he is just gone to Brighton to try and ward off an attack of gout.' November 13th 1857 (GL 380)

Joseph Priestley, a minister in the 18th-century Unitarian church, who was tutor to the sons of the 1st Marquess, discovered oxygen gas in the laboratory at Bowood on August 1st 1774.

Entry to House and gardens: £7: Entry to Rhododendron Walks £3.75.

There is a very comprehensive guide to the house and gardens £2.50 which I can get for you in advance.

Sunday August 17th Summer: Tea at the home of Dr. and Mrs Boyd Schlenther, 14, Vellore Lane, Bath BA2 6JQ 01225 331763. 3.00- 5.00 pm. Brief readings on 'summer in the City' (prose or verse).

Saturday November 8th: 2.00 for 2.30. Crypt of St. Michael's Church, Northgate, Bath. Details later.

Please let me know if you would like to come to any of these events and I will send you more detailed information. *Rosemary*

Any queries to Mrs. Rosemary Marshall, 138, Fairfield Park Road, Bath BA1 6JT
Tel: 01225 426732 E-mail: rosemary_marshall@yahoo.com

The London and South-East Group

We had an excellent meeting on 9th February. Patsy Stoneman spoke about adapting the novel (*WD and Cranford*) for the screen. She made specific points, for instance, costume, showed up a clip of Molly's dress when her father returned from honeymoon and then asked us to describe what we had seen, what we thought about it, and then built on what we contributed to make her point. I think everyone loved this approach. She also looked at *Cranford*. We discussed the portrayal of Miss Matty and Patsy kept coming back to the critical analysis of the text as against the screen. She opened our eyes to the nuances and effects via the medium that manipulated our response without us realising it. The general feeling was that she offered a critical analysis of the screen adaptation in the way that we would normally analyse a text, rather like the critical appreciation of a painting. It was revelatory and intellectually stimulating. Not only that, but the way in which she had put together the DVD meant a seamless movement from one clip to the next.

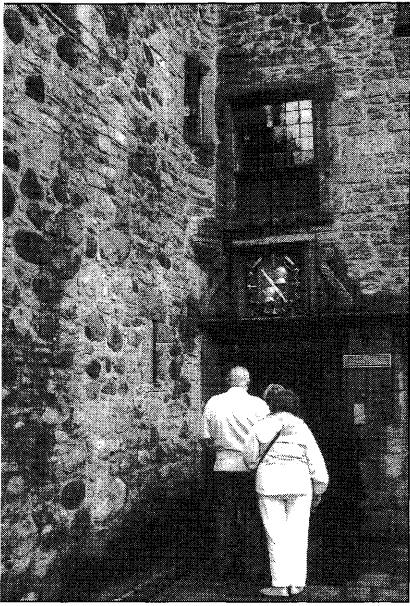
Our next meeting is May 10th: Dr Graham Handley is due to speak on 'Scenes of Clerical Life' - Gaskell's not George Eliot's! Although I think he is going to start by reference to George Eliot.

Next year's programme seems to be finalised now. It is an autumnal session of two meetings with talks given by members. I am going to repeat the talk I give to the George Eliot Fellowship in May entitled 'From *Monkshaven to Middlesmarch the Provincial Landscapes of Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot*'. Gwen Clarke will give the talk in November: title to be announced. Then in February, Fran Baker is coming, and in May 2009, Shirley Foster. Neither of these titles is yet finalised but we have a nice combination of members and visitors.

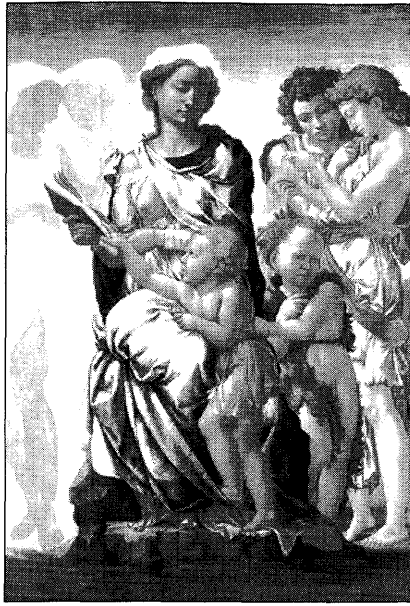
We are flourishing it seems with members coming across the channel from Paris and Brussels, a regular nucleus of loyal members who come every quarter. Also we now have a number of elderly members some of whom are finding the journey into Central London difficult but we seem to have between 20 and 25 on a regular basis.

Dr Fran Twinn, 85 Calton Avenue, Dulwich, London SE21 7DF
Tel: 020 8693 3238; email: frantwinn@aflex.net

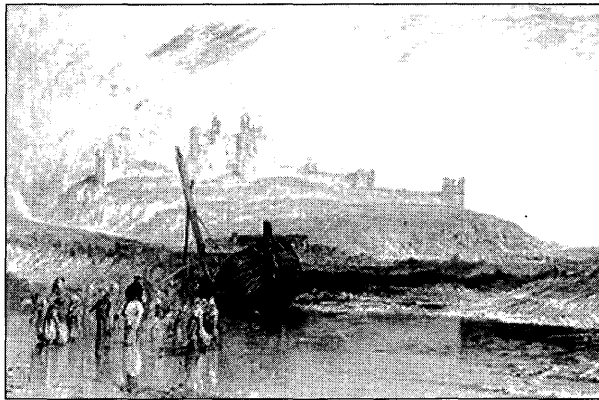
The Gaskell Society



The Gaskell Society visit to Stenhouse Mansion on 9th July. The inscription over the door reads: Patrick Ellis 1623. *Blest be God for all his gifts.* Photo by Janet Kennerley



The Madonna and Child with Saint John and Angel by Michelangelo.



Dunstanbrough Castle: a favourite Turner painting.

THE GASKELL SOCIETY HOME PAGE has all the latest information on meetings.
<http://gaskellsociety.co.uk>

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

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Knutsford, Cheshire
looking up King Street from the foot of Adams Hill

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2008 - Number 46

Editor's Letter

Joan Leach

We regret that the 2008 Journal is a little late this year but we hope to mail it at the beginning of October.

In this newsletter Fran Baker, Assistant Modern Archivist at the John Rylands University Library, the University of Manchester has written for us a report on the Green and Jamison archive letters, recently acquired by the library. *Recollections of a Victorian gentlewoman* by Marie Moss gives us fascinating links with the Gaskell world and Ann O'Brien reviews The Art Treasures Exhibition: 150 years on. Our trip to Scotland in July is reported by Jean Alston.

The hard working committee of Plymouth Grove Trust and the Friends of Plymouth Grove have held enjoyable and successful fund raising events during this year and hope members will continue to support their efforts. Ann O'Brien in her report has listed future plans.

Our groups in London, Bath and York continue to offer a variety of talks and events. Dudley Barlow, after organising our London group for a number of years, retired to York and helped to launch the York group, however he must now hand over this responsibility and we hope a successor will volunteer. We are grateful to Dudley and his colleague Howard Gregg for all their efforts.

We are working on plans for the bi-centenary year of Elizabeth Gaskell's birth in 2010: both here and in Japan there will be special publications and events. The John Rylands Library is planning an exhibition and events from August to December, 2010. The Alliance of Literary Societies will hold its AGM in Knutsford 15 - 16 May. In 1982 BBC screened *Cousin Phillis*, we would be grateful if anyone can trace a copy of this.

For 2009 we are planning the next conference at the Penrith Campus of The University of Cumbria with a theme of Gaskell in the Lake District with its many literary associations.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2009

Make sure you have the conference date ringed: 17 - 19th July

The AGM meeting at Cross Street Chapel, Manchester will be on 28th March.

Autumn meeting in Knutsford 27th September.

Papers of the Green & Jamison Families

Fran Baker

In the Spring issue of the *Newsletter*, Joan Leach wrote about the Green Letters, a collection of correspondence generated by members of the Green family of Knutsford, who were contemporaries of the Gaskells. Mary Green was a good friend and correspondent of Elizabeth Gaskell, and her husband Henry was minister of Brook Street Unitarian Chapel in Knutsford. The Greens had four daughters of similar ages to the Gaskell girls, with whom they were great friends; they also had a son, (John) Philip, and their family like the Gaskells suffered the early death of a child - Alice died in 1842 at the age of four or five.

These Green letters form a part of the larger Jamison Family Archive: the youngest Green daughter Isabella (who was a year older than Florence Gaskell) married Dr Arthur Jamison in 1875. Arthur died in 1900 but Isabella lived on until 1937, when she died at the grand age of 96. The family archive passed down to Isabella's descendants, ultimately coming to rest at the home of Miss Jean Jamison in Bristol. In June this year, Miss Jamison sold the archive - on behalf of the Jamison family - to the John Rylands University Library (University of Manchester). We were delighted to be able to purchase this archive with the assistance of generous grant aid from the MLA/V&A Purchase Fund, the Friends of the National Libraries, and our own Friends of the John Rylands. It forms another major addition to our Gaskell collections.

For Gaskellians, the highlight of the archive will be 16 holograph letters written by Elizabeth Gaskell. Thirteen of these, sent to Gaskell's close friend Mary Green, have been published in the updated edition of Chapple and Shelston's *Further Letters*. These substantial letters are full of news about Gaskell's own writing, reflections on the work of other writers, news of her family, references to the Green girls, and reports on her travels, hectic domestic life and the activities of mutual friends. She discusses the difficulties she was experiencing with the composition of *Ruth* in 1852, confides her concern about how people will react to the novel, and expresses her relief when she hears the response of Mary and Henry Green to the novel:

Your letter was such a relief (first) & pleasure afterwards. I had fancied from what Miss Mitchell had said of what Mr Green had said that both you & he wd be shocked... I felt almost sure that if people would only read what I had to say they would not be disgusted, - but I feared & still think it probable that many may refuse to read any book of that kind.

She also makes reference to her intense and exhausting work on *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* in 1855; in one brief note she refers to '[u]pwards of 300 letters to read through / copy what is worth in 2 days'. Later she reports on a trip to Birstall to see 'one of dear Miss Brontë's friends' (Ellen Nussey) and to visit locations associated with Brontë's life.

Gaskell also offers solace to her friend when Mary's son Philip decides to move to India in 1860, in order to further his career in the Law. Empathising with Mary's distress at her son's imminent departure, she suggests that Philip, like her own daughter Meta in the past, does not understand 'what the pain of absence *really* is'.

The archive also includes three further letters from Gaskell which have not previously appeared in print. These were sent to Isabella Green, whom Gaskell had referred to as 'a little abomination' in a letter sent to Barbara Fergusson in 1846 (which is also held at the Rylands). Gaskell later revised her opinion of the five-year-old Isabella, who grew up to become a talented amateur artist. One of Gaskell's letters refers to [Edward] Whelan, a stonemason and sculptor who worked with sculptor Thomas Woolner and architect Alfred Waterhouse in the design of the Manchester Assize Courts (constructed during 1859-1864), contributing a series of carved capitals. It seems that Gaskell was acting as an intermediary between Whelan and Isabella Green, who had promised to produce a design for one of the capitals; Gaskell refers to a recent visit from Whelan, who enquired whether Isabella had received some photographs from him, and is very anxious to receive her design.

In addition to the letters from Gaskell herself, there are also 15 letters from Florence Crompton (née Gaskell) and nine letters from Julia Gaskell - all sent to Isabella Green. Florence's letters date from 1864-1874, and are full of family news, details of meetings and exhibitions attended, as well as containing some discussion of politics and reform. In 1864 she mentions a forthcoming breakfast to be held in honour of Garibaldi, with whom her mother and sister Meta had taken tea the previous day; she reports on attending the mass Reform Demonstration in London on 11 February 1867, and on seeing the Queen open Parliament in the same month - commenting that '[a]s the Queen came back there was a distinct hiss and I never saw her so badly received'.

Julia's letters, dating from 1866-1873, are lengthier and fuller than her sister's. They contain lively descriptions of activities and mutual friends, references to her reading matter and travels, as well as much discussion of social and political events in Manchester, London and elsewhere. In 1866 she describes the Social Science lectures she has attended and writes about Barbara Bodichon and female suffrage; in 1867 she discusses the Fenian trials taking place in Manchester, and in the same year refers to her interest in Jamaica (when legal proceedings began against Governor

Edward John Eyre over his role in the suppression of the Jamaican Uprising of 1865).

Some of the letters sent between members of the Green family shed further light on the Gaskells. In the last issue of the *Newsletter*, Joan Leach quoted from Isabella's letter about Elizabeth Gaskell's death, the effect of this on her daughters, and Gaskell's strange presentiment that she would not live through 1865. As friends of the Gaskell daughters, the Green girls and their brother Philip also make references to visits exchanged with the Gaskells over the years and report on their activities; for instance, there are references to two of Marianne Holland (née Gaskell)'s children who were born deaf and dumb, and were to attend the school of William Van Praagh, an early pioneer of lipreading. Philip Green writes to his mother on 30 May 1857 about a letter published in the *Times* on behalf of Elizabeth Gaskell in relation to her biography of Charlotte Brontë. This was, of course, her well-known public retraction over her treatment of Branwell Brontë's dismissal from his post as tutor in the employment of Mrs Lydia Robinson (later Lady Scott) and the allegations she made about their relationship. Lady Scott's solicitors accepted this apology, and Philip concludes '[s]o I hope ends what might have been an extremely awkward affair for Mrs Gaskell', going on to offer his own opinions on the matter.

Even without its Gaskell interest the archive is a goldmine for researchers, and the Greens emerge through their papers as a family worthy of attention and study in their own right. The core of the archive comprises around 450 letters between the Green siblings and their parents spanning a fifty-year period, with the majority of the letters dating from the 1850s-1870s. These letters form a complex web of correspondence, as letters were circulated among the family beyond their direct recipients - for instance, Isabella's accounts of a trip across America in 1872 were forwarded to numerous family members in the UK before being sent on to her brother Philip in India.

The letters touch on a vast wealth of subjects. Travel figures highly, with letters sent home from trips to Paris (including an account of a visit to Madame Mohl's salon), Marseilles, various locations in Belgium and the Netherlands, Rome, Naples, Alexandria and Cairo; also included are Isabella's fascinating accounts of her American visit. There is some discussion of politics, current affairs and world events; Philip, for instance, reports on seeing an exchange between Palmerston and Gladstone in the House of Commons in April 1856, and reference is made to the assassination of Abraham Lincoln in 1865. Religion, art and literature are discussed, and correspondents write about Knutsford acquaintances and society, as well as social events like parties and balls, and customs such as May Day festivities and well-dressings. The whole minutiae of daily life is represented here, from fashions to house decorating to medical treatments. We can also follow major family events

like engagements, marriages, births and deaths. The family suffered a series of losses in the early 1870s: Mary Green died in 1871; Philip's first wife Theresa died the following year; the Rev. Henry Green died in 1873; and Mary Green's elderly mother, who lived with the Greens in Knutsford, died in 1874 - after a long decline and apparently suffering from dementia. Philip's sudden and tragic death in an earthquake in Naples in 1883 (three years after he had suffered a serious stroke) is also documented in the correspondence.

The archive also includes some incoming letters sent to Green family members by other friends and acquaintances - most significantly from Madame Mohl, as well as some letters from John Ruskin relating to attempts to find a drawing master for the school in Knutsford run by the Green daughters. There are some further family papers, including sermons by Henry Green, and correspondence relating to later generations of the family - in particular letters (some dating from as late as the 1920s) sent to Evelyn Jamison, daughter of Isabella, who pursued a successful academic career as a historian at Oxford University.

The Library is indebted to Sarah Tanner, a descendant of the Green family by marriage, who has done an enormous amount of research into the family and produced extremely useful transcripts of much of the correspondence, all of which has been made available to us. We must also thank Joan Leach for initially drawing the archive to our attention, and of course to Jean Jamison for choosing the Rylands as a home for her family papers; the archive will form a valuable resource for researchers both present and future.

Fran Baker is Assistant Modern Literary Archivist at the John Rylands University Library, The University of Manchester.

Editor:

Henry Green, a contemporary of William Gaskell at Glasgow University, was minister of Brook Street Chapel, Knutsford, from 1827 to 1872. The Green and Gaskell families had so much in common that made them close friends: Henry baptised the eldest Gaskell daughter, Marianne, in 1834, and William baptised the eldest Green daughter Emily in 1828.

Henry has an honoured place in the town for his book, *Knutsford: Its Traditions and History, with reminiscences, anecdotes and notices of the neighbourhood* (1857). Elizabeth Gaskell shared his interest and helped in collecting material. Green was a Latin scholar and published an edited facsimile of Whitney's *Emblems* and also a book on Euclid. He ran a night school for a time and frequently gave talks and lectures. At his successful boarding school, amongst the nineteen pupils listed in 1851 was Clement Wedgwood; Sir William Fairbairn's son and Alfred Holt of the Liverpool shipping family also attended. When Henry retired the daughters adapted the school to take girls; Florence and Julia were pupils.

The Green daughters frequently visited the Gaskells at Plymouth Grove, especially for music lessons, concerts and lectures such as Thackeray's, and joined them on holidays at Silverdale, so it is fascinating to learn, from the Green letters, more about them all in later years.

Henry Green subscribed himself in records as 'dissenting minister', and the surviving chapel library books have bookplates for Brook Street 'Presbyterian' Chapel. His was not a narrow faith. He generously lent his slide collection for an entertainment at the opening ceremony of the Wesleyan Chapel in 1865, and Brook Street Chapel was 'lent' for the Congregational Church members to complete their foundation-stone-laying ceremony.

Notes from the Exhibition: Art Treasures in Manchester: 150 years on

Ann O'Brien

Earlier this year, Manchester Art Gallery closed its doors for the last time on its hugely successful exhibition, *Art Treasures in Manchester: 150 years On*. In less than four months over 72,000 people visited it - over a third more than originally anticipated - and this figure excludes the many school parties that attended. Of course this contrasts with the 1.3 million who saw the original exhibition, but then this time there were no enterprising travel companies running day trips to see it and no paternalistic factory owners treating their employees to a day out at the exhibition. We are not in any case comparing like with like. In 1857 this was an entirely new venture, supported by Manchester business-men, encouraged by Prince Albert, and with all the pictures and artefacts lent without charge and without insurance. Such expenditure would be far beyond the reach of any gallery today. Even if it were possible to raise the money, logistically the task just would be too great, not least because so many of the major works have by now gone abroad. Whereas nearly all of the earlier exhibits came from private collections, this time there is only one painting lent from such a source

In 1857, 16,000 exhibits were housed in a purpose built, though temporary, building in Old Trafford. Even though no such extravagance was possible this time, the organisers still achieved a superb display. There were echoes of the Old Trafford building in the (imitation) filigree iron-work arches, incorporating the intertwined letters M A T (Manchester Art Treasures), leading into the alcoves of the exhibition rooms. Decorating the walls of the alcoves was wall-paper which was an exact copy of the original. Flanking both sides of a huge mural of the Great Hall were two suits of armour, which cleverly indicated the size of the hall - all very impressive!

The curators gathered together exhibits from art galleries throughout the country - Italian Old Masters, portraits by Reynolds and Lawrence, landscapes by Turner and Constable, Pre-Raphaelite paintings, water-colours and art photography as well as medieval ivories, majolica, Venetian glass and Chinese and Sevres porcelain.

Both the Liverpool galleries were well represented, as well as smaller local galleries such as those in Bury and Preston. It was good to see, too, that the Victoria and Albert Museum had repaid its debt to Manchester, by lending many items from the Soulages Collection (as well as other items) - this was the collection that the 1857 committee had bought. They were planning to keep it for a gallery which they had hoped to establish in Manchester, using the profits from the exhibition. Sadly this amounted to only £304, so Manchester had to wait another twenty years for its own gallery. In the meantime, Henry Cole, director of the Kensington Museum (later to become the Victoria and Albert Museum), managed to persuade the Board of Trade to allow him to purchase the collection at a rate of £2000 a year! This exhibition has also enjoyed royal patronage - a number of exhibits were from the Royal Collection, although I doubt if Prince Philip was quite as enthusiastic a supporter as was Prince Albert!

In all there were 168 works of art in the present day exhibition, ranging from gold pendants from Etruria (800B.C.-500B.C.) to the work of the 'Modern Masters', many of whom were still living - and still painting - in 1857. Taking pride of place was a painting that caused great excitement in 1857, *The Madonna and Child with Saint John and Angel**, an unfinished work which had only recently been attributed to Michelangelo; as its first public showing after this attribution was in Manchester, it became known as *The Manchester Madonna*. The most popular painting in 1857 was *Chatterton*, and although it was prominently displayed again, this time there was no need for any policeman to guard it! *see back cover

A number of paintings were very evocative of the times: *A letter from the Colonies*, painted in 1852, reminds us of the emigration boom of the 1840s, as it shows a concerned family reading a letter from someone close to them, who has moved overseas. It was lent then by James Eden, the proprietor of Bolton Bleach works - a good indication that not all the industrialists of the area were philistines! *Hindoo Temples at Bindrabunder*, painted by Thomas Daniell, would have been particularly poignant for many visitors, as the Indian Mutiny had begun in May 1857 and was to last for over a year: in fact the organisers of the exhibition closed it for the day on 7th October, as this had been declared a day of mourning - *A National Day of Humiliation*.

Adding interest to this exhibition was one display which asked visitors to choose their favourite painting. *April Love*, painted by Arthur Hughes, one of the youngest of

the Pre-Raphaelites, was voted the winner - and indeed it is a beautiful painting; the vibrant blues of the girl's dress and shawl contrast with the muted brown of the tree bark and green tones of the carefully detailed ivy leaves. The second favourite was Turner's *Dunstanborough Castle** - Turner was the best represented artist in 1857, and remained so in 2007/8 though the 24 paintings and 80 water colours and 150 engravings were now, reduced to one painting and three watercolours, all belonging to Manchester Art Gallery. Another choice, as befits a nation of dog lovers, was Sir Edwin Landseer's *Dignity and Impudence*, the delightful study of Grafton, the bloodhound, and Scratch, a West Highland terrier, the pet dogs of Landseer's patron Jacob Bell. Landseer had 23 paintings in the 1857 exhibition, the highest number for any living artist. *see back cover

In the display cases were beautifully decorated china, glass and metal-work from all over Europe and of course, China. Among the more quirky exhibits were a pot-pourri bowl which had once belonged to Madame de Pompadour and Lucrezia Borgia's mirror! A more poignant exhibit was the *Foundling Hospital Vase*, which was lent to the 1857 exhibition by the Foundling Hospital; the hospital provided the first public gallery of British art, as many contemporary artists donated works to decorate the hospital.

Even more poignant in today's exhibition was *Portraits of Insane Women*, in the extremely interesting photographic display. It is difficult to forget the haunting look of bewilderment on the women's faces. On a brighter note, among the other photographs were a number showing the Victorian interest in botany, as well as the more usual portraits and scenic views. The most controversial photograph at the time was *Two Ways of Life*, which, when later exhibited in Scotland, had one half of the picture covered up because many of the models were nude. However, although the photograph was heavily criticised at the time, it managed to attract wealthy buyers of the few prints available, one of those buyers being Queen Victoria!

The more recent exhibition was made all the more enjoyable by some features which did not appear in the 1857 exhibition. Among these were two musical installations: one where visitors could listen to songs that were popular at the time, including *The Manchester Exhibition Polka Gallop* and *The Manchester Art Treasures Polka*, and another where they could hear some of the music which was performed at the first exhibition by (Sir) Charles Hallé and his small orchestra, as well as the words originally spoken by Hallé himself.

Another interesting feature - one of many - was the inter-active display of the many fine Victorian buildings in the Manchester of 1857; on the wall was a street map of Manchester city centre as it is today, numbers marking the positions of the Victorian buildings and by pressing a button on the monitor it was possible to see what any

particular building looked like in 1857. It was interesting to see how many of these buildings survived and though some had had a change of use, they looked virtually the same.

Just as one of the aims of the first exhibition was to educate as well as to entertain, so too there was an educational element to this exhibition. At the entrance there were wall-boards setting the scene, in words and pictures, of Manchester as it was in 1857. It was not only a city of fine Victorian buildings; it was also a city where people lived in the most appalling conditions. The organisers did well to remind us of this.

Art Treasures in Manchester: 150 years on was a huge success, not only in the number of visitors it attracted but also in giving Manchester such an enjoyable exhibition and a wonderful taste of that earlier triumph.

References

Art Treasures in Manchester: 150 years on, Tristram Hunt and Victoria Whitfield, Manchester Art Gallery, 2007.

My thanks to Meg Parnell of the M.A.G. for all her help.

The Recollections of a Victorian Gentlewoman

Marie Moss

A book-title accidentally spotted, *Elizabeth Anne Galton 1808-1906*, above the sub-title *A Well-connected Gentlewoman*, prompted the thought that the connections of this long-lived lady might conceivably extend to a contemporary of her youth, Elizabeth Stevenson. Interestingly, this proved to be the case.

Elizabeth Anne was the eldest of nine children of Samuel Tertius Galton, a prosperous Birmingham banker who, unnerved by the contagious bank failures of the mid-1820s, gradually ran his business down and retired in 1832 to Leamington Spa. Samuel joined the Church of England when he married but came from an old Quaker family prominent in the commercial life of Birmingham for three generations. He was related to a number of influential people, mostly Quakers, including his mother's family, the Barclays, and via a network of marriages, the Lloyds, Frys, Gurneys, Hoares and Hanburys. Elizabeth Anne's grandfather, Samuel Galton Jnr F.R.S. (1753-1832), a man of broad scientific interests, was a member of

the Lunar Society, which often met at his house. It was Galton's butler who nicknamed the group 'the Lunatiks'. Galton was a generous friend to Joseph Priestley, with whom he had been a student at Warrington, and after the Birmingham Riots helped him with gifts of money and demonstrations of his esteem.

Elizabeth Anne's mother was Violetta, the eldest daughter of Dr Erasmus Darwin by his second marriage. Darwin was also a leading spirit in the Lunar Society and, in the biased if loyal view of his granddaughter, it was he who 'originated all the ideas that Charles Darwin had time and talent to work out'. Charles Darwin was of course cousin to Elizabeth Anne and she frequently stayed with his family, Dr Robert Darwin and Aunt Susan (née Wedgwood) at their home in Shrewsbury, with its pretty garden sloping down to the River Severn. She also loved to visit her Grandmother Darwin at Breadsall Priory, near Derby. 'Happiness Hall' Elizabeth called it - 'the most pleasant cheerful house I ever was in'. Here she mixed with many aunts and uncles, including the two natural daughters of Erasmus Darwin, who had set up a school in Ashbourne 'where my Mother and Aunts (the Sitwells) and most of the young girls in Derbyshire were educated'.

Elizabeth's own education started early: 'I could read well at three years old and could write at five'. At six she started to learn French with a tutor, and German and music with her mother. Every morning before breakfast she was taught arithmetic by her father and she was joined in these lessons by the two daughters of their washerwoman, Sarah and Harriet Bromley. 'Harriet Bromley had a marvellous memory for mental arithmetic, and at ten years old she once multiplied a line of thirty figures in her head mentally, I could never do more than three'. Samuel Galton also taught his children Natural Philosophy. He had an orrery, solar microscope, pantograph, camera obscura, magic lantern and a large telescope to spice up their lessons. It is perhaps not surprising that when Elizabeth Anne was sent away to school at the age of ten she found the experience disappointing.

She writes:

In February 1818 I was sent to school at Miss Byerley's, at Barford near Warwick. There were six Miss Byerleys who taught. Their father married a Wedgwood, a sister I think of the great potter. I was at the school for a year, but was often sent home on account of my eyes, which were often inflamed. I did not learn much at the school, because I was too forward for the lower classes and too young for the upper ones. I never learnt arithmetic or geography after my Father taught me, as I knew more than any of the girls, and my parents wished me to spare my eyes. Marianne and Sarah Priestley, granddaughters of Dr Priestley were at Barford with me and were my particular friends.

John Chapple suggests that the Byerleys' school had begun to falter while at Warwick and was not at its best during the early years at Barford, to where it removed in 1817. Its most prosperous days were at Avonbank, Stratford. Elizabeth Anne was quickly withdrawn and spent much of the following year in a darkened room with 'constant leeches round my eyes'. There is evidence that her friends the Priestley sisters remained to become contemporaries of Elizabeth Stevenson when she joined the school in 1821. Sarah Priestley contributed an arrangement of a French song to Elizabeth's music book and in 1826 Jane Byerley sent Elizabeth news of the two girls in the belief that they had all been at the school together.

Elizabeth Anne's account continues:

I was at school with Anne, Susan, and Agatha, the three daughters of Mr Charles Lloyd of Bingley, and through Mrs C Lloyd my third cousins. They were day scholars and lived in Barford with their Grandfather, Mr Whitehead, and I often spent my half-holidays with them. Mr Whitehead had another daughter, Mrs Greaves, mother of the Mr Greaves we knew here of Barford and The Cliff, Warwick.

This happy recollection is in contrast to Mrs Gaskell's light-hearted claim that she was 'five years at Miss Byerley's and never drank tea out of the house *once*', and remarkable in that these hospitable Barford families were well known to the Holland family and were to become connected with them by marriage. Mary Whitehead became the wife of John Greaves of Radford Semele by Warwick, a Quaker banker with investments in stone quarries and lime and cement works. One of their sons, John Whitehead Greaves, developed slate quarries alongside those of Samuel Holland at Ffestiniog, and in 1835 joined Samuel in working an iron-stone quarry near Abersoch. In 1838 another son, Richard, married Samuel's sister. This was Gaskell's cousin Kate, whom Elizabeth recorded as fording the dangerous quicksands of the Tratte to church in 'wedding dress white chip hat, orange flowers pale lavender satin pelisse trimmed with swansdown'. Richard Greaves was living at Shottery at the time of his marriage and it is more than likely that he and Kate were the hosts to Elizabeth Gaskell and her Knutsford cousins when they stayed at Shottery in April 1849 after the hectic London lionising of the author of *Mary Barton*. An account transmitted by Augustus Hare, and quoted by John Chapple, claims that the party went to 'dine at Mr Greaves at Radford, the father of Mr R. Greaves'. Shortly afterwards Kate and Richard moved to The Cliff, Warwick.

Elizabeth Anne didn't return to school until she was fourteen, and then she was sent for two years to Bath, to a school kept by the five Misses Fournier. On 'coming out' at seventeen, her parents took her travelling and in the years which followed she

was embraced by her extended family in the manner of the time, spending long periods in residence with relatives and friends. She was a great favourite of her Aunt Gurney who lived in St James's Square in London, and it was she who insisted on sending for her trusted doctor when Elizabeth Anne was unwell in 1842.

I had been very out of health for some time, and my Aunt Gurney was anxious I should consult Dr Holland which I did. He was a most agreeable man, quite a Courtier in manner, full of anecdotes etc., and a very clever man. He was related to my cousins, the Darwins of Shrewsbury, and called me his cousin. I saw him several times, and if he wished me to continue the same medicine, he would give me a useful prescription for a cough or something else in return for the fee.

The charm of Gaskell's cousin Dr Henry Holland was legendary and it clearly stayed long in the memory of this patient. The following winter Elizabeth Anne was back with her Aunt, helping to nurse her Uncle Hudson Gurney whose death was 'hourly expected'. She recalls that Sir Henry Holland came at least once every day and Mr Young the surgeon slept every night in the house; the prudent housemaid changed his room every few days 'to keep the beds aired'. Aunt Gurney's faith in Henry Holland was amply justified. After several months her husband recovered, to live a further twenty years, dying at the age of ninety-one. The health of Mr Young, who was used to air the damp beds, is not recorded.

Elizabeth Anne also lived well into her nineties and towards the end of her life used her diaries, letters and family papers to augment the memories which she set down in the 'Galton Book', now in the Galton Laboratory at University College, London. She also dictated reminiscences to her daughter. Andrew Moilliet, a direct descendant of her sister Lucy, has skilfully edited these sources to produce a fascinating volume of recollections. They include eye-witness accounts of national events (Elizabeth Anne was present at Queen Victoria's Coronation and watched her Jubilee celebrations in 1897), homely anecdotes of men of outstanding achievement (James Watt, Matthew Boulton, Robert Owen, etc.) and useful, as well as delightful, insights into middle-class family life in the nineteenth century.

Sources:

Andrew Moilliet, *Elizabeth Anne Galton (1808-1906). A Well-connected Gentlewoman*. Published by Leonie Press, Hartford, Cheshire, 2003. Copies can be obtained by cheque (£10.99 + £1.75 p&p) to Andrew Moilliet, 27 Maple Rd, Bramhall, Stockport SK7 2DH. I am grateful to Mr Moilliet for permission to quote from his book.

John Chapple, *The Early Years* (Manchester, 1997).

Jenny Uglow, *The Lunar Men* (London, 2002).



Elspeth Smellie entertains the Gaskell Society on Tuesday evening, July 8th 2008 at the Tontine Hall, Peebles, Scotland. Photo by Adrienne Stennett.



At the National Library of Scotland. Joan Leach and Dudley Green read Gaskell letter (GL339) about Haworth. Photo by Katharine Solomon.

Tour in Scottish Lowlands, 7 - 11 July, 2008

Jean Alston

Forty or so members and friends visited the Scottish Lowlands, once again to follow Elizabeth Gaskell's family history and literary experiences and contacts. The Tontine Hotel, Peebles, proved to be a good location and base for our outings. An early arrival on Monday allowed some to follow the town trail of fine buildings and river side walk; our only opportunity to enjoy Peebles during the tightly packed itinerary. Our after-dinner talk was about Sir Walter Scott and his home Abbotsford, in preparation for the Wednesday visit.

Tuesday's drive was to Berwick-upon-Tweed, where Elizabeth's paternal ancestors had lived and where her father, William, grew up. A tour of the Town Hall introduced us to the nineteenth-century building which had housed meetings of the Freemen; William Stevenson and his son John were both Freemen. The city gaol was situated on the top floor with splendid views, rather than the dungeon situation which is more usual. The bastions of the town were built on the instructions of Elizabeth 1st and remain in good order today. Many of our party enjoyed walking the bastions and thought of young William Stevenson whose mother complained that he played truant to run about the walls. Perhaps like us he appreciated the excellent views of the river and sea, and the coast around Lindisfarne to the south. We gather, from a number of writings, that the Stevenson boys were greatly influenced by Berwick's River Tweed and North Sea location and that two of William's younger brothers were at sea during the wars with France. William, after a successful education, pursued farming, scientific writing and other more sedentary occupations.

Melrose was our location for Wednesday's visit. The tour of Abbotsford was greatly enhanced by our excellent guide Roderich who clearly loved and was well-versed in his subject. Sir Walter Scott was a prolific writer and his publications would have greatly influenced Elizabeth Gaskell and her contemporaries. Abbotsford was located well above the river and several members walked to Abbots Ford itself, discussing the place and its likely function in history. The estate was extensive and included fine walled gardens for our enjoyment. Melrose Abbey, National Trust walled gardens and several tea rooms provided warm relaxation for the afternoon.

Thursday was the day for Edinburgh. A house of partly mediaeval origin known as Stenhouse Mansion was visited by some of the group. Elizabeth Gaskell's parents, may have farmed from this building (see *The Early Years* by John Chapple) It is now owned by the NT for Scotland and used by Historic Scotland as a conservation centre.

A tour of the National Library of Scotland had been arranged for the afternoon. We were in for a treat! Some of Gaskell's letters were provided for our perusal - and we were actually allowed to handle and read them. I, for example, had letters relating to the Brontë biography which referred to Mary Taylor's involvement in trade after she went out to New Zealand and kept a shop there.

Our day for returning home was Friday but we were not to be denied another important visit. New Lanark was the creation of David Dale and Robert Owen and was coeval with and similar to Quarry Bank Mill, created by Samuel Greg in the eighteenth century. However, the New Lanark river and valley were somewhat grander than those at Quarry Bank and I believe the social structure was organised on more cooperative principles. We were permitted to visit Robert Owen's House, a mill worker's house, the village store and the school. I was interested to learn that no child began work before the age of ten and would have received up to seven years education before that time. Part-time education continued after the age of ten. Restoration of the mill had begun in the early 1970s and seemed to have retained much of the authentic character and atmosphere of its creators.

During all the above visits, the weather was fine and sometimes warm. We are indebted to Ian Campbell for his welcome and introduction to Edinburgh, Joan Leach and Janet Kennerley for arranging the tour and to Elizabeth Williams for her help with planning the journey times. This was, yet again, an informative and enjoyable break for Gaskell members. Indeed, we had a splendid tour.

Editor:

Elizabeth had an affection for Scotland which shows in her work: Dr Gibson in *Wives and Daughters*, for example, had a Scottish accent and in *Cranford*, Major Gordon and Jessie Brown marry and live in Scotland. Elizabeth Gaskell had an early experience of Scotland when she stayed in Edinburgh over two winters as a young lady: a portrait and bust of her date from this visit.

After William Stevenson married Elizabeth Holland on 1st of December 1797 they tried farming at Saughton Mills, also known as Stenhouse, near Edinburgh.* Here they were friendly with James Cleghorn, who as an expert in agriculture, advised them. He was also a friend of Burns who addressed a letter to him, 'Mr Cleghorn, farmer. God bless the trade!' and later wrote, 'Congratulations to Mrs Cleghorn. I should much like to see the little angel.' Elizabeth's unusual middle name was a tribute to these friends and perhaps in memory of a child they had lost.

An advert in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* of 20th January 1797 was for 'two farms to let at Saughton Mills, apply to Mrs Cleghorn' In spite of the Cleghorns help farming yielded little success and the Stevensons moved into Edinburgh where William did some tutoring and they ran a lodging house, moving several times.

Elizabeth Gaskell visited Edinburgh in 1855 and probably stayed at Peebles for a few days, perhaps meeting Robert Chambers there. She wrote to him in March 1859 after reading his *Domestic Annals of Scotland* that it 'warms up all my Scottish blood - and makes me wish heartily that our four girls could see something of Scotland'; she reminded him of their visit three years before and asked for his help in arranging a holiday on the west coast.

She wrote to Ellen Nussey that '*Edinburgh, compared to London, is like a vivid page of history compared to a dull lecture on political economy*'. (GL 624)

Her final visit to Scotland was in 1864 when she and Meta stayed with Dr. Allman, Professor of Natural History, who was married to Louisa Shaen; and here the last portrait we have of her was taken in an Edinburgh studio.

Reading *Elizabeth Gaskell The Early Years* by John Chapple greatly enhanced our visits to Berwick-upon-Tweed and Edinburgh. *see back cover

Friends of Plymouth Grove

Ann O'Brien

The six months since the last report have been full of activity for all involved with Plymouth Grove. The open days on the first Sunday of every month have continued to have a steady flow of visitors, numbers not reaching the dizzy heights of our Cranford Open Days (to the relief of all concerned, I think!) but, nevertheless, providing much needed income, especially from the book-shop sales. We have also had a number of different groups in during the week, including a visit from our good friends at the Brook Street Unitarian Chapel. All our visitors continue to be very impressed with the house itself as well as with the talks, given mainly by Janet, and of course with the refreshments.

In March we had the first of our special events at the house, when Ann Brooks gave an illustrated talk on Villa Gardens and whetted our appetites for what we hope will eventually be created at Plymouth Grove, once the restoration has been completed. Then in June we had a most informative and entertaining talk, 'In the footsteps of William Gaskell', given by our good friend, John Midgley, the recently retired minister at Cross Street Chapel. Mr Midgley linked the work of William Gaskell with the work of Unitarians today, showing how, then as now, Unitarianism is an all-inclusive and non-judgemental religion.

One of our most successful events took place not at the house, but in the Methodist Church Hall in Alderley Edge: this was the immensely enjoyable musical production

'Music for the Gaskells', performed by Opus 5. Everyone present agreed that this was indeed a night to remember. We are hopeful that the performance may be repeated, at a different venue so that many more may enjoy it.

Delia Corry and Charles Foster once more entertained us with their now famous, in Gaskell circles at least, 'At Home with the Gaskells'. This time it was held at Altrincham Grammar School for Girls and it was good to see people not usually at Plymouth Grove events coming along to see what we have to offer! Both these events served as good publicity for the house, as well as generating much needed funds. Our thanks to Opus 5 and, once again, to Delia and Charles.

Here are details of our forthcoming programme, to which all members of the Gaskell Society are, as always, most welcome:

Autumn Events: As usual, the house will be open from 12-4 p.m. on the first Sunday of the month; then on

Saturday, September 13th and Sunday 14th: Heritage Week-end when the house will be open from 10-4 p.m. On both days there will be displays, Gaskell presentations, memories corner, videos, drop-in children's activities, bookstall, short slide lectures and refreshments. Admission free.

Sunday 28th September: 'Mary Barton's Manchester' - an illustrated talk by the eminent architect and architectural historian, John Archer. This talk will focus on the town's streets and buildings which would have been so familiar to Mary and her family. This is sure to appeal to many interested not only in Gaskell but also in the local history of Manchester, so early booking is recommended. This could be a good way to round off the week-end for those attending the Gaskell Autumn meeting in Knutsford on Saturday 27th September. Doors open at 2 p.m for the talk to begin at 2.30. To book, phone Hilda Holmes (0161) 487 2593. £7.50, including afternoon tea in the drawing room where Elizabeth Gaskell wrote *Cranford*.

Sunday 6th October: 12-4 p.m. Open Day and Plant Sale: plants may be ordered in advance. All are good quality plants at reasonable prices. Please come and buy, and do bring us plants from your own garden for sale on the day. Further details from Hilda Holmes (0161) 487 2593.

Sunday 9th November: 'My Lady Ludlow - a dramatised reading'. This costumed event presents Elizabeth Gaskell's little-known short story (part of which was used in the recent televised 'Cranford'). Delia Corrie will be our Lady Ludlow, with Mary Wright, Vin Tuohy, Chris Burton and Joan Hill. Adaptation by Robin Allan. Again, this event is sure to be popular, following the T.V. adaptation, so book early. Doors open at 2 p.m., performance begins 2.30 p.m. £10, including afternoon tea. Pre-booking essential - phone Hilda Holmes (0161) 487 2593. (Pay on the door.)

Sunday 7th December: 12 – 2 p.m., Open Day (n.b. early closing on this day). Usual exhibitions, tours, bookstall (free).

2.30 p.m: The Grace Darling Singers' Christmas Music & Reading. Enjoy their performance and sing some favourite carols, followed by seasonal refreshments. Pre-booking essential, phone Hilda Holmes (0161) 487 2593. £7.50. Pay on the door.

We would also like to bring to your attention a Day School to be held at the Friends' Meeting House, Mount Street, Manchester (just off Albert Square), on **Saturday February 21st 2009.**

'An Underrated Victorian: Sir James P Kay-Shuttleworth: Medicine, Cholera, the Poor Law, Education and Fiction'

Cost £20, including tea and coffee. Lunch available locally. To book ring Hilda Holmes (0161) 487 2593, and send payment to her at 8 Peter Street, Hazel Grove, Stockport, SK7 4BQ. (Cheques payable to Manchester Historic Buildings Trust.)

So you see we have a full and varied programme, with something which we hope will appeal to everyone. We thank Hilda for taking all our bookings - I'm sure you know her phone number off by heart now! We are always pleased to see anyone who wishes to help, either at any of our regular Sunday Open Days and/or any of our other events, either on Sundays or during the week. We have a number of groups visiting in the next few months and we would welcome you with open arms if you could spare the time to help at just one of these events or visits. Please contact Ann Waddington (email ann@waddington26.fsnet.co.uk) and she will give dates when we need help. Of course we continue to be grateful to all those who have helped in the past.

Finally, can I repeat Janet's request that you write to her, stating your support for the restoration of the home of Elizabeth Gaskell? It will be of enormous help when the trustees are seeking funding if they can show that there is a large body of people who want this project to succeed. If you haven't already joined the Friends of Plymouth Grove, please give it some consideration - the minimum donation is only £5 a year and for this you get two newsletters and, of course, Friends' events. I would like to emphasise here that being a friend need not take up any more of your time than filling in the form and writing the cheque or card number. While we welcome help it is by no means obligatory; we need as many friends as possible, so please think about it. Christine Lingard is also Membership Secretary of the Friends of Plymouth Grove so contact her if you would like to join us! (email: lingardgsms@aol.com)

*Janet Allan, Chairman, Manchester Historic Buildings Trust, c/o 10 Dale Road, New Mills, High Peak, SK22 4NW. Email: janet@janetbook.fsnet.co.uk
The new web-site for Plymouth Grove is at www.elizabethgaskellhouse.org

THE 2008 AGM OF THE ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES

Report by Janet Kennerley

This year's AGM of the ALS was held at the Holiday Inn, Coate, near Swindon in Wiltshire, and was superbly hosted by The Richard Jefferies Society. The hotel was conveniently opposite Coate Farm, birthplace of this author in 1848, which now houses the Jefferies Museum.

Lady Treitel, Vice-President of the Society, gave us a delightful welcome and told us briefly of the life and work of Jefferies and his association with the local rural area, known at "Jefferies Land" which is constantly under pressure from planners and builders due to creeping urbanisation. Despite development however, many of the scenes of his countryside, as yet, still exist and those who wish can experience them – as delegates were invited to do later on during the ALS weekend. During his tragically short life, Jefferies wrote many books about the local people and natural history, particularly fascinating for their chronicles of the last days of a rustic community before mechanisation drove workers off the land. His work has been a major influence on many writers including Edward Thomas, W H Hudson, Henry Williamson, D H Lawrence, Arthur Ransome and John Fowles. He has been described as a many sided genius and major studies of mysticism have anthologised his work and discussed his ideas largely portrayed in "The Story of my Heart". He wrote one of the great novels for boys, "Bevis", as well as several highly original novels for adult readers including "Amaryllis at the Fair" and "After London". Jefferies' writing is heavily influenced by his years spent at Coate and there is a strong autobiographical element to many of his books and essays. However, the author believed that his literary career would be better served living nearer London, so after his marriage in 1874 to a local girl, the young couple and their son moved to Surbiton in 1877, but he died 10 years later at Goring-by-Sea in Sussex.

The AGM was chaired by Linda Curry (John Clare Society) with approximately 40 delegates in attendance, including the President, Aeronwy Thomas. We were told that there are now 99 member societies of the ALS, of which 20 were represented. A new website has been set up at minimum costs and secretarial expenses were low, probably due to the fact that there has been a vacancy since the last AGM. Fortunately this post has now been filled by Anita Fernandez-Young (Dickens Fellowship).

The second volume of the ALS Journal "ALSo..." is now available, with Literary Tourism as the theme. (Joan Leach and Janet Kennerley have limited copies –

please ask if you are interested.) Free electronic copies are available to members – contact Linda Curry at the following email - l.j.curry@bham.ac.uk. In this 2008 edition, Joan Leach's excellent article "Knutsford as Cranford" can be found on page 25 to 30, which I hope will give readers from the member societies of the Alliance of Literary Societies a tempting taste of what we have to offer when The Gaskell Society hosts the AGM weekend during May 2010.

The Arts & Humanities Research Council is planning a project under the title "Beyond Text" researching into Literary Societies and their effect on the enlarging the reading repertoires of members and the function of literary societies in general. The Council is calling for the setting up of workshops to consider pairs of authors, e.g. the representative from the Virginia Woolf Society was keen to match Arnold Bennett with Virginia Woolf. The proposal is not for an academic exercise, but an appeal to ordinary readers and an encouragement to all societies regardless of membership levels to collaborate. Applications for funding can be sent to the Arts & Humanities Research Council. The ALS Journal's theme for 2009 will be "Beyond Text". If any society member is interested in contributing an article, please contact Linda Curry (as above). More detail on this theme is including in the front part of the 2008 Journal. "ALSo .. " is distributed to all member societies and beyond and is an excellent opportunity to highlight a particular writer (required by 1st November 2008 please).

A request was granted for £100 from ALS funds towards a plaque for the Croydon home of D H Lawrence where he wrote "Sons and Lovers" in 1908.

After the lunch break, the group were invited to reassemble at the Jefferies Museum across the road from the hotel, where we watched a short film produced by the Richard Jefferies Society showing local places associated with the writer. A walk was then led around the immediate countryside including Coate Water.

About 20 members stayed on for dinner at the Holiday Inn. The evening's entertainment included recitations and impromptu singing while Aeronwy Thomas delighted everyone with some information about her recent American tour including a piece of her own composition and then another one written by her father, Dylan Thomas, which she recited - a most enjoyable close to an interesting day.

For the few who had stayed over until Sunday, the hard working members of the Richard Jefferies Society, under the guidance of John Price and Jean Saunders, had organised a fascinating Literary Treasure Trail, an opportunity to explore the North Wiltshire countryside and places that Jefferies immortalised in his works. We enjoyed Liddington Hill, Chisledon Church, Burderop House & Park, Burderop Downs and Woods, and Gamekeeper's Cottage at Hodson. Welcome refreshments were

available at the Museum until we had completed as much as time would allow – an excellent weekend.

There is uncertainty about next year's AGM venue. It had been hoped that this could take place in Dublin during June 2009, but as yet, this is still to be confirmed. The Gaskell Society looks forward to being the host in Knutsford on 15/16th May during Gaskell's special bicentenary year during 2010. It is worth reminding Gaskell members that anyone in membership of a society which subscribes to the ALS is welcome to attend this annual event. I am always pleased to pass on details.

Book Notes

Christine Lingard

Patrick Brontë; Father of Genius by Dudley Green. Nonsuch Press, £20.

Not even the most fervent Gaskell enthusiast would deny that her portrait of Charlotte Brontë's father in her biography of her friend was, to quote the Archbishop of Canterbury in his introduction to this book, 'a vivid but misleading picture'. Dudley Green has attempted to redress the balance in this scholarly biography, which makes full reference to documentary sources. It provides a welcome addition to his recent edition of the letters of Patrick Brontë. Though I might add that despite her unsympathetic account to her last visit to the old man (p. 329) Gaskell wrote, on a flyleaf preserved in the Manchester Central Library:

I visited Haworth in November 1860, and found Mr Brontë, as clear and strong in intellect as ever, although confined to bed by advancing age. He was full of interest in Italian politics, and of admiration of Garibaldi, and spoke to me, and my family with tender and affectionate interest. E.C. Gaskell. May 3rd 1861.

Interestingly there is also a new biography of the other man in Charlotte's life - her husband, Rev. Arthur Bell Nicholls:

Mr Charlotte Brontë: the Life of Arthur Bell Nicholls by Alan H. Adamson. McGill-Queen's University Press (Canada), £15.

Also published this year:

Private Sphere to World Stage: from Austen to Eliot by Elizabeth Sabiston. Ashgate, £50.

Including an essay - 'The iron of slavery in her heart: the literary relationship of Elizabeth Gaskell and Harriet Beecher Stowe'.

Reading the nineteenth-century novel: Austen to Eliot by Alison Case and Harry E. Shaw. Blackwell, £50; also available in paperback, £5.90.

A useful analysis of novels that are uniquely representative of the time period, including the work of Austen, Eliot, Scott, Thackeray, Gaskell, Dickens, Trollope, Braddon, and the Brontë sisters. For students and teachers.

Romantic Echoes in the Victorian Era, edited by Andrew Radford and Mark Sandy. Ashgate 2008, £55.

A collection of essays with extensive coverage ranging from Byron, Keats and the romantic poets to Swinburne, Hopkins and Oscar Wilde.

It includes an essay, 'Mr. Osborne's secret: Elizabeth Gaskell, *Wives and Daughters*, and the gender of Romanticism' by Vincent Newey.

Due later this year:

The Lure of Illustration in the Nineteenth Century: Picture and Press by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor. Palgrave Macmillan, £45, due December.

A history of periodical literature and illustration in the nineteenth century with 56 illustrations, including a discussion of Dickens' periodical editing. It also includes an essay by Joanne Shattock, 'Elizabeth Gaskell - journalism and letters'.

Family Likeness: Sex, Marriage, and Incest from Jane Austen to Virginia Woolf by Mary Jean Corbett of Miami University. Cornell University Press, £45, due November.

Shows how Victorian attitudes to marriages between relations differed from today, and why such marriages were more attractive to Victorian women than those to a stranger. The Brontës, George Eliot, and Elizabeth Gaskell are also discussed.

Mr. Langshaw's Square Piano by Madeline Gould. Corvo Books; 64 Duncan Terrace, London N1 8AG £13.99 Reviewed by Helen Smith.

This book is much more than the biography of one Broadwood serial no. 10651, made in 1807 which the author acquired at auction in 2004 and subsequently had restored. This volume covers social history in Britain and its colonies in the 18th and 19th centuries, the development of the piano from the harpsichord onwards in London and on the continent, the Langshaw family in Lancaster and elsewhere, as an adjunct to the author's meticulous researches into the history and provenance of her own square piano.

The book covers such a wide spectrum that it could have formed a more condensed volume on the Langshaw family: their background, education and music-making; and also a sequel on Broadwoods in Britain and abroad, combined with the author's theories on social history as reflected through piano ownership in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Madeline Goold writes very fluently although with occasional repetition. She uses humour and imagination now and again to enliven rather dry letters. On occasion the content can be turgid. However it is written with feeling and compassion and at times is deeply moving. The book is well illustrated, has an extensive bibliography but no index. This recent book will entertain anyone with interests in archives, pianos and in particular, Broadwoods. Of special interest to the Gaskell Society are references to Francis Sharpe, "organist and society music teacher of Knutsford, Cheshire", Emily Sharpe, née Langshaw, and also to Mrs. Gaskell and her beloved Cranford."

Footnote: Readers who enjoy this book may also like "The Piano Tuner", a novel by Daniel Mason (Picador, 2003).

Autumn General Meeting

At the Methodist Church, Princess Street, Knutsford
Saturday 27th September 2008

Meet at 10.30 a.m. for Coffee.

11.00 a.m. **Patsy Stoneman:** 'Adapting novels for TV : the BBC's production of Cranford', illustrated with film-clips on DVD.

Patsy lectures in English at Hull University and specialises in the adaptation of Victorian novels for stage and screen. She is author of *Jane Eyre on Stage 1838-1882*.

Lunch 12.30 - 2.00 p.m. approx. £10 (pay on the day)

2.15 p.m. approx. 'Gaskells, Langshaws and family networks', an illustrated talk by **Tim Austin**.

'I do think Mr and Mrs Langshaw are charming', wrote Elizabeth in 1854.

'New' Gaskell letters from her to Emily Langshaw and between their daughters reveal their friendships.

Tim Austin, a descendant of the Sharpe, Whittaker and Langshaw families, all known to Elizabeth, will give a talk exploring these families and their links with Knutsford.

Book with Joan Leach, on 01565 634668, or at joanleach@aol.com

Sunday 28 September, 10.45 am At Brook Street Chapel, Knutsford, flowers will be laid on the Gaskell grave.

11.00am Harvest Festival service

After the service a ploughman's lunch will be served in the schoolroom at a cost of £5 2 p.m. for 2.30 p.m. at 84 Plymouth Grove:

'Mary Barton's Manchester': an illustrated lecture by John Archer, architect and architectural historian.

Pre-booking essential: phone Hilda Holmes (0161) 487 2593. £7.50. Pay on the door.

London and South East Group

Saturday November 8 2008: Gwen Clarke: 'Elizabeth Gaskell and the Victorian Conduct Book - Respect or Rebellion?'

In the nineteenth-century girls & young women - especially young wives - were bombarded with literature concerned with what was perceived to be the correct way to behave, hence the conduct or etiquette book. Did these publications influence Gaskell at all - either in her life or in her work? Gwen will seek to discover the answer by examining some of the conduct books, together with examples from Gaskell's letters & fiction.

Saturday February 14 2009: Fran Baker: 'Intimate and Trusted correspondents: the Gaskells and the Greens'.

Fran, who is an archivist and in charge of the Gaskell Collection at the John Rylands Library, University of Manchester, will consider the correspondence of the Green family - Mary Green was a friend of Gaskell and their daughters were good friends too.

Saturday May 9 2009: Shirley Foster: 'Character and Environment: Freedom and Enclosure'.

Shirley will lead a discussion on Sylvia's Lovers.

She will talk for about 25 minutes and then there will be a discussion based on some selected passages which she will indicate in advance. More homework!!

Saturday June 6 2009

3 - 5.30 pm or thereabouts

A Tea party in the garden (weather permitting!!) at 85 Calton Avenue Dulwich London SE21 7DF.

Bring your favourite reading about the summer or gardens or any seasonally appropriate reading. It does not have to be Gaskell! Weather permitting we shall have tea first followed by our readings in the garden. You don't have to read but your reading would be welcome.

Yorkshire Group

September 20th 2008, 2.00 p.m., at the Friends Meeting House, Friargate:

Joan Leach: 'George Smith, prince of publishers'.

Details from Dudley Barlow on 01904 750366 or at dudleybarlow@hotmail.co.uk

Dudley is retiring as group secretary so we hope another member will take on this role which is not too arduous, mainly arranging 2 or 3 meetings a year.

North West Group

Cross Street Chapel. Manchester

Held on the second Tuesdays in the month at 1.00pm. The chapel will be open from 12.15 with tea and coffee for those who bring sandwiches

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| October 14 | Manchester to Liverpool by train in 1834
by Bernard Champness |
| November 11 | A Matter of Wonder: travelling by train
in the Victorian novel by Alan Shelston |
| December 9 | Christmas carol service conducted by the minister
Revd Jane Barraclough |
| February 10 | Stolen Childhoods: Victorian child workers in
cotton and other trades by Sue Wilkes |
| March 10 | Robert Owen in Manchester by Alan Kidd |

Knutsford, St John's Church Hall

Meetings are usually held on the last Wednesday of each month:

29th October, 3rd December (the room is not available for 26th November), 28th

January, 25th February, 25th March, and 29th April

Talks and discussions led by Elizabeth Williams are preceded by

buffet lunch at 12.15. Cost, £7.50

Alan Shelston will give an introductory talk on *Cousin Phillis* at the October meeting.

Followed by discussion on the novella at the meeting on 3rd December.

We are using the Wordsworth edition of *Cranford and Other stories*. Knutsford Heritage Centre and Plymouth Grove have copies for sale.

A New Year event will be held at the Leicester Warren Hall in Knutsford on Wednesday, 7th January. Gillian Stapleton of The History Wardrobe will present *Jane Eyre: The well-dressed governess*. Tea will be served. Booking details later.

The Gaskell Society South-West

Programme for November 2008 - August 2009

Saturday November 8th 2.00 for 2.30pm. St Michael's Church Crypt (opposite Waitrose.) Members £2, Visitors £3.00 including coffee etc before the meeting begins

"Did Elizabeth Gaskell read Jane Austen?"

This will take the form of a debate comparing the attitudes of both authors to marriage, family life, religion and the place of women in society. There will be plenty of opportunity for the audience to participate. Visitors very welcome.

Monday January 14th 7.00pm. New Year Supper "Bring and Share" 138, Fairfield Park Road, Bath BA1 6JT Rosemary and Tony Marshall
Tel. 01225 426732

Saturday April 5th. 3.00 pm. Flat 4, 97, Sydney Place. Bathwick, Bath BA2 6NE by kind invitation of Mrs. Joan Chandler. Visitors very welcome.

"Dramatising Elizabeth Gaskell" by Gaskell scholar Dr. Brenda McKay followed by tea and biscuits. Members £2 Visitors £3.00

Sunday August 16th The Summer Tea - 3.00 for 3.30
(The topic for brief readings of poetry and prose will be "Children in literature")

Any queries to Mrs. Rosemary Marshall
138, Fairfield Park Road, Bath BA1 6JT
Tel: 01225 426732 E-mail: rosemary_marshall@yahoo.com

Linda Curry, Chair, Alliance of Literary Societies

You might be interested to learn that the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust offers opportunities for British Citizens to travel overseas to undertake study projects related to their trade, profession or particular interest. These fellowships are open to applicants of any age and from all walks of life, irrespective of academic or professional qualifications. In 2008, the average grant was £5,300 to cover an overseas visit of 4 - 8 weeks (a minimum of 4).

Applications must be in by 14 October 2008. More detail is available from their website at www.wcmt.org.uk, or you can email them at office@wcmt.org.uk or phone them on 020 7584 9315.

The Gaskell Society



Knutsford - Cheshire
Mrs. L. Holland, 1846

R.R. West, 1866

*Knutsford, Cheshire
looking up King Street from the foot of Adams Hill*

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2009 - Number 47

THE GASKELL SOCIETY HOME PAGE has all the latest information on meetings.
<http://gaskellsociety.co.uk>

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs. Joan Leach,
Far Yew Tree House, Chester Road, 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

Editor's Letter

Joan Leach

2010 will be the bicentenary of Elizabeth Gaskell's birth and we are making plans accordingly. The Charles Darwin bicentenary has aroused a lot of interest and we hope to use the year to increase our own profile.

We are delighted to tell you that The Dean of Westminster has agreed to our request for a memorial to her, in the commemorative window near Poets' Corner. We hope to hold a dedication ceremony at Westminster Abbey near to her birth date at the end of September 2010. We will keep you informed of plans and hope you will support an appeal for donations later.

As I write this we are preparing for the conference at Penrith in July and look forward to having some seventy of you with us.

You will read in Ann O'Brien's report about Plymouth Grove that the house is now closed for building work but the programme of events continues and helps to raise money.

We are grateful to Christine Lingard for sharing with us in this issue her researches into Elizabeth Gaskell and the Theatre, following her previous paper on Gaskell and Music. Nancy Weyant, ever alert to Gaskell items through her work as librarian at Bloomsburg University, Pennsylvania, tells us about a newly found Gaskell letter. The Brontë Society too has recently acquired a letter relating to Elizabeth's hobby of autograph hunting.

In the Spring Newsletter Fran Baker wrote about the Jamison/Green letters bought by The John Rylands University of Manchester Library. Remaining in the Green family archives are watercolour pictures and family albums. In one of the albums there are carte de visite photos of Julia, Florence and her husband Charlie Crompton but of great interest to us is one labelled 'Mrs Gaskell. You can study it in this newsletter.

The 300 year old Brook Street Chapel, burial place of Elizabeth and William Gaskell, Julia and Meta, Aunt Hannal Lumb and many of the Holland family now has a web page: www.brookstreetchapel.org

Several enjoyable events have helped in raising funds but more is still needed before work can begin on improving access, providing a lift and exhibition space.

Please remember that our home page has details of meetings, events and the latest news: www.gaskellsociety.co.uk

Gaskell And The Theatre

Christine Lingard

My recent article on Gaskell and music received a lot of interest, so it seems appropriate to follow on with a survey of Gaskell and the theatre. A study of her books and letters indicates a good knowledge of drama, but how much of this was acquired from patronage of the theatre? It dates from an early age. Her family did not share the puritan disapproval of the theatre. In 1836 she wrote:

We have been a very large party this summer, and amongst other spirited actions of our lives, got up a play; I say 'we' though I did not take any part in it, but I was present at all the planning &c. it was the 'Rivals'; and was admirably performed really; considering that with one exception, it was the first appearance of any one on the theatre. Most of the performers kept up their characters during the 'drawing room' part of the evening and Lucy Holland for some days was 'great' as Mrs Malaprop, making some really capital travesties of words. [FL, pp. 19-20]

A perusal of the catalogue of books in Plymouth Grove sale (1913) does not reveal a great interest in the theatre. It includes editions of Shakespeare, Nathaniel Lee, and Philip Massinger, the French authors (Marivaux and Molière-), the Germans (Goethe and Schiller) and the Greeks - Aristophanes, Sophocles, and Euripides. Surprisingly, considering there is little biography in the entire collection, there was an 1826 book of biographical anecdotes, *Reminiscences of Michael Kelly of the King's Theatre and the Theatre Royal Drury Lane*. Michael Kelly (1762-1862) was an author, singer, musician and friend of Sheridan, Kemble and Siddons; he also owned a wine shop.

On a number of occasions when Gaskell refers to going to the theatre we cannot be certain that she was going to a dramatic performance. On her visits to Oxford, she probably went to lectures. There is little evidence of an interest in theatre-going before 1850. This may not be entirely due to the lack of evidence surviving from this period. As a young mother she may have been too busy. In the 1840s the theatre was at a low ebb in Manchester. There were fewer theatres then than there had been a generation earlier. Apart from a couple of music halls the only two theatres were the Theatre Royal, in Spring Gardens, and the Queen's Theatre, round the corner in Fountain St. The former burnt down in 1844 and a new building was opened by the celebrated director, James Sheridan Knowles, situated between the Free Trade Hall and the Gentleman's Concert Hall in Peter St. A wide variety of productions were presented but the staple diet was melodrama.

Many leading actors of the day came to Manchester. William Macready is discussed below; Henry Irving made his first appearance as Hamlet at the Theatre Royal in 1864. Helen Faucit, one of the greatest actresses of her day, was another who first appeared at the Queen's in 1845. She continued her career after she married the judge, Sir Theodore Martin. There is passing mention of Gaskell having missed her in November 1854; but that was a social occasion. Interestingly, she was appearing as Imogen in *Cymbeline*, which is the Shakespeare play most frequently quoted by Gaskell in her novels.

Once her identity as an author became known, Gaskell went to London and was lionized. She dined with Dickens; the guests included the former actor and contributor to *Punch*, Douglas Jerrold:

a very little almost deformed man with grey flowing hair, and very fine eyes. He made so many bon-mots, that at the time I thought I could remember; but which now have quite slipped out of my head.... [Jane Carlyle told her stories about her Scottish servant.] Miss Fanny Kemble called in a hat & a habit, and when Mrs C., spoke to the servant about bringing Miss K. in, unannounced, the servant said 'I did not know if it was a Mr or Mrs.' - [GL, 45a, pp. 827-9]

She met Kemble on a few occasions, including a performance of Mendelssohn's *Overture to A Midsummer Night's Dream* to which Kemble added the vocal readings.

Dickens himself was fascinated by the theatre. As a young man he regularly attended playhouses of all kinds and watched plays irrespective of quality. He seriously considered a career as an actor. In 1847 he played the part of Captain Bobadil in Jonson's *Every man in his humour*. The cast included John Forster, George Cruikshank (the illustrator), Clarkson Stanfield (the artist) and several of Dickens' friends from *Punch* - Mark Lemon, John Leech, Henry Mayhew and Mayhew's father-in-law, Douglas Jerrold. The play came to the Theatre Royal in Manchester in July 1847. Macready saw the play in London although he normally hated amateur productions. He was impressed by some of the performances, with the exception of Jerrold, but found it tedious.

Another literary figure, who also fancied his chances as an actor, appeared in the play - George Henry Lewes. He came again to Manchester in February 1849 to lecture on philosophy at the Athenaeum - to very small audiences, according to one attendee, Elizabeth Gaskell. Within the month he was back, having persuaded a professional company to give him the part of Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, a character he tried to play with sympathy. Gaskell confirms she was unable to attend. There is no mention of his own play, *The Noble Heart*, which he brought to the theatre later that year.

In the meantime the company led by Dickens was engaged to stage three performances of Jonson's play at Knebworth House, home of Lord Lytton (Edward Bulwer-Lytton, one of Gaskell's favourite novelists). Lytton was very impressed. With Dickens, he was inspired to form the 'Guild of Literature and Art', an ambitious project designed to help authors in need. Lytton agreed to write a play for them, to tour the provinces with to raise money for its enterprises. This play was *Not So Bad As We Seem*, and it was performed before the Queen at the London home of the Duke of Devonshire with great success. The sets were designed by Joseph Paxton. The Queen wrote in her Journal:

All acted on the whole well...Dickens (the celebrated author) admirably, and Dr Jerrold a funny little man who writes in *Punch*, extremely well... The dresses and scenery were beautiful.

The Duke of Wellington, who was also in the audience, was not so impressed. He left after the second act. It toured to the Free Trade Hall, on 11 February 1852 and this time Gaskell was in the audience:

Yes! we went to see the Amateurs; we asked Mr Forster & Dickens to stay here, but they could not. Mr F came up however to call, & told us they expected to gain 1000£ by these 3 nights (2 at Liverpool, where he was not going to act.) He said the play was very heavy, and so it was. He gave me private admission for any friends, so I took the Winkworths & we escaped the crowd. We sat right under the very much raised stage, on the front row, and I think I got Braidized for I had such a headache with looking up. The play is very very long too - 3 hours & a half, & they omitted 1 scene. And very stupid indeed. The farce was capital. Dickens was so good, & Mark Lemon, - D Jerrold was not there and Mr Forster was sadly too long over his very moral sentences in the play.
[FL, p. 64]

Later that year, she had another opportunity to see them. Catherine Winkworth records:

The next day Charles and Catherine Dickens and Georgina Hogarth called very early, and invited the Gaskells down to watch the 'Amateurs', who were performing Boucicault's farce *Used Up*, J.R. Planché's *Charles XII* and Dickens' own *Mr Nightingale's Diary*.

This time Elizabeth avoided a crick in the neck, telling Marianne: 'Papa & I went behind the scenes to see the play and had tea there, which was a very luxurious way of seeing it' [GL, No.131, p.197]. There was an audience of four thousand at the Free Trade Hall on 4th September. The *Manchester Guardian* called Mr Nightingale the most perfect of the night. The cast also included Wilkie Collins and John Tenniel.

In 1857 the Guild made another tour to Manchester. The date coincided with the opening of the Art Treasures Exhibition and so Dickens was able to give favourable reports of newly formed Hallé Orchestra. The play presented was Wilkie Collins' *Frozen Deep* - a dramatization of the fate of the explorer, John Franklin, who disappeared in the 1840s trying to find a route to the East via the Northwest Passage. This play is famous today because Dickens employed professional actresses. These included Ellen Ternan, who was to become his mistress. The cast included Wilkie Collins, Mark Lemon and the artist Augustus Egg. The sets were designed by Clarkson Stanfield. It was presented at the Free Trade Hall on 21st and 22nd August. There is no record that any of the Gaskells attended. Her house was full of guests attending the Exhibition.

A later visit to the theatre was in May 1860: 'instead about 4 Anne B came to say ...& after that wd call for us & take us to the play ' [GL, No.465, p.614]. This was *Dead Heart* by Watts Phillips (1825-74). It starred the great actor manager Ben Webster & Sarah Woolgar (Mrs Alfred Mellon) in one of her finest performance. The play had been written in 1857. It concerned a tale of self-sacrifice in the French Revolution leading to substitution at the foot of the guillotine. Ben Webster showed it to Dickens and it must have made an impression. Two years later *A Tale of Two Cities* appeared.

Theatre-going at this time had been given respectability by the patronage of the Queen. Gaskell saw her on a number of occasions - the first time at a gala presentation at St James' Theatre of the comic opera *Fra Diavolo* by Daniel Auber in 1849 [FL, p. 42]. She also records seeing her in February 1851. This letter to Marianne is a little confusing. One would be mistaken in thinking that it was at a performance starring Macready:

I do not suppose you can get to see Mr Macready for 10s. I heard before I left London that all the tickets were to be a guinea; and I don't think it is worth more than 10s at any rate. I did not see the Queen. Our box was right over her head. She is to be 'in state' at the benefit. No notice was taken of her that night any farther than that all eyes were directed towards the royal box, because she did not come in state. [GL, No.90, p.143]

But a perusal of newspapers reveals that on Saturday 15 February 1851 the Queen was present at the Princess's Theatre, at the farewell performance of George Bartley, as Falstaff in *Henry IV*. Bartley (1782-1858) was a celebrated comic actor, who had worked with Charles Kean and Sheridan.

We do not know what she saw. There was a lot to choose from. Stanford's Paris Guide (1858) lists 22 theatres, music halls and opera houses. Perhaps she saw one by Molière, whose *Le médecin malgré lui* is referred to in *Curious, if true*. [1860]. He was a favourite of Mme Mohl who loved the theatre. It offered her welcome release in times of stress. She also watched much lighter offerings: 'There's a new play, *Montjoie*, by Octave Feuillet, much talked of. I must find out whether there are any scènes scandaleuses before I can take my niece of sixteen, just out of her village...'.

That year Dickens records being enchanted by Mme Jeanne Sylvania Arnould-Plessy, who had frequently appeared in the French plays in London and he also saw *Demi Monde* by Alexandre Dumas Fils in 1855.

The leading Paris theatre was the Théâtre Français, which at the time of Gaskell's visit in 1855 was presenting *La Czarine* by Eugène Scribe, a story of Peter the Great and his wife, Catherine. Scribe was one of the most popular and entertaining of French playwrights of the time, penning over 200 plays - as well as librettos and musical pieces. The play starred Rachel, in the last new role she undertook. It was described as a colourless and pointless role and soon closed. The experience was all the more bitter because her greatest rival, the Italian actress Adelaide Ristori (1826-1906), triumphed later in season.

In 1860, following an appearance in *Phèdre* in front of the Racine family in Paris, Ristori embarked on a tour of the Rhineland including Hanover and Wiesbaden. Gaskell got an opportunity to see her while staying in Heidelberg:

& then we went to the 4 o'clock train to Mannheim; meeting all the world at the station... Performance did not begin till 6 so we wandered about in the Park... Well! we went to see Ristori at last! and anything more magnificent I never saw. But I am not going to bore you by raptures. Miss Kell kept wishing to see her 'in repose' - 'in a quieter character'... [GL, No.475, p.626]

I cannot trace what the play was. She was accompanied on the tour by the French playwright Ernest Legouvé, (1807-1903), who was working on his play *Beatrice* for her. Her greatest German role was in Schiller's *Maria Stuart*.

Gaskell had always shown an interest in German drama though she did not read the language:

Yes! I have read Carlyle's W[ilhelm] M[eister] once or twice, - & thought it wonderfully clever & suggestive, & disagreeable & I remember the Hamlet criticism particularly; the oak in the vase &c but surely Hamlet 'fat & scant o' breath' is in Hamlet's self, & that style of fat suggests fairness [FL, p.117] (dated 27 October 1854)

And also the Passion plays staged every ten years at Oberammergau, which Mme Mohl had seen: 'I read them an account of the Ammergau Play, out of the London Guardian that Mr Maltby lent me; & I think they will both go to one of the Sept'r Representations' [GL, No.475, p.627].

And there were also amateur performances: '...but I find that Miss Brontë [sic] would rather enjoy going to the Amateur Performance' [FL, p. 85]. The Manchester Shakespearean Society staged *Twelfth Night* in the Theatre Royal in aid of the Manchester Free Library on Monday 25 April 1853, a production which was panned by the critics. Many of the performances were inaudible.

Gaskell's works soon attracted attention from dramatists themselves. In 1866 the prolific Irish playwright Dion Boucicault (possibly the only English playwright of the 1850s whose work is still performed today) wrote *The Long Strike*, a version of *Mary Barton* and *Lizzie Leigh*. It concentrates on the strike, the murder, and the trial. His wife played the part of Mary, renamed Jane, and the author himself appeared in the comparatively small role of the sea captain. It was staged at the Lyceum in London and in New York. Angus Easson considers it a feeble piece. However it was a success. The Times (2 December) noted John Barton, played by Ben Webster, as 'one of those strongly marked characters in the delineation of which he is almost without a rival'. The play was reduced from four acts to three for later productions. It was staged at the Grand Opera House in Toronto in 1878. The comedian John (Jolly Jack) Langrishe included it in his repertoire at Deadwood, South Dakota, the same year.

GL = The Letters of Mrs Gaskell, edited by J.A.V. Chapple and Arthur Pollard, 1966
FL = Further Letters of Mrs Gaskell, edited by John Chapple and Alan Shelston, 2000

Gaskell Portrait Gallery

This portrait (overleaf) is taken from the Green family photograph album and has 'Mrs Gaskell' written on the back together with a studio photographer's details: *Faedo and Temporal, Plainpalais, Geneve*.

Member Tim Austin has traced other carte-de-visite by this photographer to a collection in Penn State Library, USA, where they are dated from 1860 onwards.

Jean Jamison, who has kindly given us permission to reproduce the photo, tells me that the album was annotated by her Aunt Evie, who lived into her 90s, and was a clever lady who had been librarian of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, so would not be likely to put names to pictures unless she was certain.



The album also has pictures of Meta, Florence and her husband, Charlie Crompton. Perhaps the foreign studio setting accounts for this rather odd pose with Elizabeth knitting. She was holidaying with family in Switzerland in 1864 (GL 558) at 'Pontresina and Glion (up above the Lake of Geneva). . ' working hard on Wives and Daughters.



For comparison of Gaskell portraits there are two by Samuel Laurence. The dating of these was considered in Gaskell Newsletter no.33.

In GL 555 Elizabeth wrote:

Sept 12 1864

My Dear Mr Lawrence(sic)

I should have not the least objection to Mr Smith [her publisher] becoming the possessor of your likeness of me...When I am next in London I hope that I and my cap) may be able to give you another sitting...

This must be that portrait which cannot now be traced. A.B. Hopkins reproduced it in her biography of 1952.

But did Laurence also make the better known drawing at that time? This is now in the possession of Mrs Trevor Dabbs, and came to her via Marianne, but the reproduction used here comes from Smith and Elders' Knutsford Edition of 1906 Vol. V and seems to have then been in the possession of the Smith family. A. B Hopkins did not know its whereabouts when she wrote in 1952.



Mrs. Gaskell by Samuel Laurence, said to have been painted about 1864.



This picture is of the bronze medallion plaque that is on The Gaskell Memorial Tower in Knutsford, made by Cavaliere Achille D'Orsi, Professor of Fine Arts in the Royal Academy at Naples, according to Ellis Chadwick,* who added that it was designed from one of the last photographs of her, taken in Edinburgh..

* Mrs Gaskell: Homes, Haunts and Stories (1913 edition)

A newly-discovered letter of introduction returns to England

Nancy S. Weyant

In March, 2008, my weekly review of literary treasures offered for sale on eBay revealed a letter addressed to "My Dear Mrs. Arnold" penned by "E. C. Gaskell". While I had read both volumes of Elizabeth Gaskell's letters as well as letters subsequently published in assorted periodicals, all of my reading of her correspondence had been of letters neatly typeset in very readable form or exceedingly limited samples of her handwriting reproduced in books I own. I had no real first-hand experience of examining original examples of her handwriting. Fortuitously, the Massachusetts seller had included a photograph of the entire letter in his posting. I immediately sent the link of those images to both John Chapple and Alan Shelston, asking if it seemed authentic to them. Following multiple e-mails with them and with Fran Baker, I submitted an unchallenged bid and acquired the following letter¹ which is now archived in the Gaskell Collection of the John Rylands Library of the University of Manchester:

Plymouth Grove
Manchester
Friday, May 25

My dear Mrs Arnold,

The bearer of this note is a very dear and kind friend of ours, who is going to stay with her husband for a few days at Low-wood, and is most anxious to see you, and to visit the home of Dr Arnold. I have ventured to give her this note of introduction at her request, because I know you would be gratified, could you [have\] heard her, as I have done, express her reverence for your husband. I was so sorry to miss the call you paid me, while I was away; and Mr Gaskell tells me he met the Bishop's carriage, close to our house; but he had no idea that you were in it, or he would gladly have turned back.

In great haste, believe me dear Mrs Arnold to remain
Yours affectionately

E. C. Gaskell.

This previously unknown letter contributes in a small way to extending our understanding of the relationship between its author and its recipient. Even though the original envelope is missing, the references to Low-wood and to Dr. Arnold within the text leave no doubt that the recipient is Mary Penrose Arnold, widow of Thomas Arnold (historian, education reformer and headmaster of Rugby School). While there are multiple references to Mrs. Arnold within Gaskell's letters to others, there is only one letter to Mrs. Arnold in either of the two published collections of those letters.² That 1859 letter is one expressing stunned sorrow upon reading in the Times about the death of the Arnolds' son William. The details in that communication speak to the nature of their relationship as women and the quality of the interactions with other members of their families. In the above letter, the reference to what appears to be an unscheduled visit by Mrs. Arnold substantiates that which is documented more explicitly by the 1859 letter and the multiple references to the Arnolds in other correspondence. These two women seem to interact with some regularity, though not great frequency. Certainly Gaskell was comfortable enough with Mrs. Arnold to introduce others to her and the 1859 letter documents that their children interacted as well. That said, my research (greatly augmented by help from John Chapple, Graham Handley and Alan Shelston) has allowed me to make the following comments on this brief letter of introduction.

The first thing of note is that two basic details are missing in the text itself. No year is provided and the "bearer of this note" is not identified by name. In fact, there is absolutely nothing factual that suggests anything about the identity of the "bearer of this note" beyond her marital status and her admiration of Dr. Arnold. It may be that the emergence of the letter in the United States reflects the nationality of the bearer but suggesting so would be undocumented speculation. It is possible that a reference to or an enumeration of guests at either the Gaskell home or the Arnold home might point to the bearer's identity but for now, the bearer's name will remain unknown. As for the missing year, lacking a full date within the letter, one must turn to clues in the text to determine exactly when the letter was written. Though the letter cites no specific year, by identifying May 25th as a Friday, Gaskell herself narrows the possibilities. My perpetual calendar identifies only three years after Gaskell became an established author and a regular visitor to the Lake District that have May 25th on a Friday: 1849, 1855 and 1860. Because she references Plymouth Grove as her address and because the Gaskells did not move to Plymouth Grove until June in 1850, 1849 is simply not a possibility. To determine which of the remaining two years is the most likely, I again turned to the text. Gaskell refers to her absence when Mrs. Arnold made a call at Plymouth Grove, though she fails to provide any reason for that absence. A review of Gaskell's activities during the first five months of 1855 and the first five months of 1860 as recorded in Graham Handley's Chronology,³ document, respectively, an extended planned absence (about a week in London followed by about six weeks in Paris followed by more than a

week in London again) and a protracted absence that kept her in Winchester in February and March. It was while she was in Paris in 1855 that Charlotte Brontë Nicholls died, though she did not learn of that passing until she returned to London. Given that Gaskell and Brontë had visited Mrs. Arnold at Low-wood when the two of them first met, it seems a little unusual to me that if the letter was written in 1855 Gaskell would make absolutely no reference to her friend's death even though the primary purpose of the letter was to introduce "a dear and kind friend". Doing so would have opened a second connection for discussion - an opportunity for Mrs. Arnold and the bearer of the letter to discuss Dr. Arnold AND an opportunity to discuss Charlotte Brontë. Gaskell does not do this. Her absence from home in 1860 was unexpectedly longer than planned because she was ill and remained in Winchester until well enough to travel. This absence occurred in February and March, some two months before Gaskell penned her letter. Although Gaskell makes no reference to suggest that Mrs. Arnold's visit had been paid while she was in Winchester, an illness does not seem a topic likely to be addressed in detail or even as an aside in a letter of introduction. For that reason, I think 1860 is the more likely year.

The letter closes with what I find to be a rather curious statement about William Gaskell and the bishop. I have been told by both John Chapple and Alan Shelston that the "bishop" in question was James Prince Lee, the first Bishop of Manchester. Lee's relationship with the Arnolds went back decades. Volume 11 of the Dictionary of National Biography notes that Lee had served as a master at Rugby from 1830-1838 when Thomas Arnold was headmaster. Interestingly, both the DNB entry and most of the thumbnail biographies of Lee I have located in print or in electronic format comment on the fact that he was despotic and his pedagogical or schoolmasterly manner was an irritation to his clergy. As a Unitarian minister, William Gaskell was not one of "Bishop Lee's clergy". Furthermore, I could find nothing that directly addressed William Gaskell's opinion of Bishop Lee. I recognize that I am participating in some "reading between the lines" and a little speculation as I explore the closing sentence but I do find myself wondering if William Gaskell's choice not to return to the house reflects his opinion of the Bishop and if this closing sentence constitutes a subtle, second-hand apology to a woman who was a respected and dear friend of the family. Certainly such speculation is irrelevant to the primary purpose of the letter but I find the issue an interesting one to contemplate. I should note, however, that though I mention this, I must leave it to others more versed on the character of and relationship between these two religious leaders of Manchester and with better access to primary documents than I to properly explore this topic.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Mrs. R. Trevor Dabbs for granting me permission to publish this letter.

I continue to appreciate the gracious assistance of John Chapple, Graham Handley and Alan Shelston. Their commanding knowledge of Elizabeth Gaskell's life and works, as well as Victorian England in general, is a constant wonder to me.

Notes:

1. I wish to thank John and Kate Chapple for their assistance in interpreting the punctuation and the case of individual letters for this transcription.
2. John Chapple and Alan Shelston, *Further Letters of Mrs. Gaskell* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 196.
3. Graham Handley, *An Elizabeth Gaskell Chronology* (Houndsmill, Basingstoke and NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

Editor's note: William and Elizabeth Gaskell both knew Bishop James Prince Lee. Elizabeths' opinion of him and Mrs Lee can be found in GL 70.

Skelwith

Christine Lingard

The Preston family provided the Gaskells with several servants. Elizabeth lodged at their home, Mill Brow, at Skelwith, Loughrigg, near Grasmere, on several occasions including 1849, and 1857. The family had been recommended to her by Wordsworth and the Arnolds. Wordsworth described Mrs Preston as a stateswoman. Gaskell was very fond of the house and describes its 'dear charming' farm-kitchen with warming pans on the wall and spurs hanging beside the crockery on the dresser.

She recommended the Prestons to friends who were visiting the area, among them Charles Bosanquet:

...she is worth knowing, as a fine true friendly sensible woman; if you liked to lodge there and she would take you in I am sure you would be comfortable, & well cared for - N.B. She would make you change your stockings if you got your feet wet, and such like motherly and imperative cares...

Wordsworth said once of the Prestons that they were a 'Homeric family'. I am sorry to say the father sometimes drinks. I say it because you perhaps ought to be told or else when sober he is a fine simple fellow. Mrs Preston's family have lived in that house and on that land for more than 200 years, as I have heard. They have no ambition but much dignity....

Mrs Preston came to visit the Gaskells in Manchester in December 1851:

Who do you think we have staying with us? Mrs Preston from Skelwith; who has never been in a town larger than Kendal before. Kendal reminds me of Lancaster [a town which ECG was very fond of]

One of her daughters, Eleanor was very headstrong and had taken a job in London. The family had heard very little of her for several months, and there was great fear of her being seduced. Gaskell was fully aware of the dangers, as she demonstrated in her novel *Ruth*, and this was confirmed in her letters to Miss Hannah Kay, sister of Sir James Kay Shuttleworth. Eleanor's sister, Margaret, was sent to London to fetch her home. The full details of Eleanor's story are not known but as you will see her life was very short.

Margaret Preston (Mrs Knowles) looked after them in Silverdale. She was employed as a maid at Plymouth Grove but by 1854 she had taken over as cook. She was described as 'sensible and spirited, not a very good temper'. Will Preston, her brother, was an outdoor man - 'easy temper easily persuaded'. He joined them in 1852 and lived over the stable: 'passionate usefulness', 'imperious temper'.

They are buried in Grasmere churchyard under the following inscription:

In memory of Thomas Preston of Mill Brow, Loughrigg, died March 17th 1878 aged 78 years. Jane His wife, died Oct. 23rd 1868 aged 69 years. William their son d. December 17th 1861 aged 37 years. Eleanor their daughter died April 25th 1860 aged 29 y[ears].

Margaret Knowles and her husband Roger Knowles moved to Newby Bridge with their family.

See Gaskell Letters (Chapple and Pollard, editors) 92, 111, 182, 184, 362a, 439a.

A Model for Lady Ludlow

Joan Leach

The BBC's production of *Cranford* incorporated parts of Elizabeth Gaskell's novella *My Lady Ludlow*, picturing her as autocratic but basically benevolent, her prejudices reinforced by the horrors of the French revolution with its agitation for social change. It is to be hoped that the BBC production has encouraged members and others to go back to the original story as so much of it did not fit into the *Cranford* frame. For example, Lady Ludlow had a fraught relationship with the newly appointed evangelical vicar as she was high church Tory but this part of her story could not be included in the BBC script because there was the Vicar from Mr Harrison's *Confessions*: Sophie's Hutton's father.

As a local historian I have a special interest in the character of Lady Ludlow as it seems to me that Elizabeth Gaskell was drawing on local sources. Lady Jane Stanley is still a legend in the town although she died in 1803, so Elizabeth would only have heard the stories about her from the family. The sedan chair carried annually in the May Day procession is believed to have been hers. She was the great aristocrat, daughter of the 11th Earl of Derby, and, like Lady Ludlow, she carried a gold-knobbed walking stick, chiefly as a status symbol. She made use of it if her stately progress along the street was impeded and would rap the erring pedestrian on the shoulder to remind him to give way to a lady; Henry Green relates this story in his history of Knutsford. She had pavements made in Knutsford to protect the ladies' dresses from dirt and mud, and left money in her will to have them maintained. She also left money to maintain the flag pole on the church and provide flags to be 'hoisted upon particular occasions upon the steeple of the parish church'. The flag was a demonstration of loyalty. Lady Jane Stanley's fund is still administered as a charity.

Lady Ludlow took into her household young ladies of gentle birth but impoverished circumstances. Lady Jane Stanley may have done the same as in her lengthy will she left legacies of between £50 and £500 to twenty- one ladies, mostly spinsters. This will, dated 1800, is the longest I have ever seen, on five sheets measuring 21" x 16" and six more sheets of 16" by 12" written in her own hand, and several more pages of codicils. Many small items of family memorabilia -pictures, rings, cameos and coins - are all carefully labelled. Niece Harriet Legh, for example, received a 'double guinea piece, also a smaller piece of gold which my late father carried above sixty years in his pocket it will be found folded up and wrote upon to that effect . . a mourning ring with her aunt Mary Stanley's hair under a crystal.' Lady Ludlow asked Margaret Dawson to help her sort items saved in the 'curious old drawers of her bureau ... locks of hair carefully ticketed . . and locketts and bracelets with miniatures in them'. There was also £7,500 shared between eight hospitals.

Lady Ludlow scorned the dissenting Baptist baker. There is a story told in the Knutsford Methodist church history, of an old silk weaver who had become too old to walk to and from Macclesfield, 11 miles from Knutsford. When he asked Lady Jane for aid she told him firmly that she was a church lady and could not help him, a Methodist. When he replied that he had been converted by them and could not leave them she relented, finding he was true to his faith.

The Vicar, Mr Gray, in My Lady Ludlow is a puzzle because the vicar of Knutsford from 1809-24 was Rev. Harry Grey, who was of aristocratic birth but evangelical and not popular; he did not join the gentry in their hunting or card games and was strict enough to have the church bell rung at 9 p.m. and go round the inns to turn out the drinkers. He certainly instituted a Sunday school and trained girls to sing in the choir but he arrived after Lady Jane's death. It seems odd that Elizabeth Gaskell did not give her character another name.

Lady Jane was firmly against Sunday Schools. These had been promoted by Robert Raikes since 1780, so that children could read their Bibles and catechism, but doubts arose in the reaction to the French Revolution; the workman might also read Tom Paine's Rights of Man instead. Lady Jane did include the Sunday School in her will, sharing £100 with four other charities. Her less wealthy successor at Brook House, Mrs Legh of a local gentry family also left money to the Sunday School and girls' choir.

Lady Ludlow sent six bottles of malmsey wine to the ailing Mr Gray. The last item in final bequest in Lady Jane's long will was:

Whatsoever quantites of spruce beer may be remaining in my cellars at my death may be sent to Mrs Catherine Naylor who will, as I have requested her, distribute it occasionally in the manner I have done for the relief of such poor neighbours whose case may require that fine restorative'.

I have a hand-written recipe for spruce beer from a herbalist's book but it needs essence of spruce, so can anyone can direct me to a supply?

Friends of Plymouth Grove

Ann O'Brien

Autumn was, as usual, a busy time for the Gaskell House. We had the Heritage week-end in September and the regular open days on the first Sunday of each month, all introducing more people to Manchester's neglected treasure. The first talk of the season, Mary Barton's Manchester, was given by John Archer and proved so popular that it had to be repeated in January.

Another successful plant sale in October was followed in November by a dramatised reading of My Lady Ludlow, splendidly adapted by our own Robin Allan. The ever-popular Delia Corrie, playing Lady Ludlow, was joined by Mary Wright, Vin Tuohy, Chris Burton and Joan Hill, taking a variety of other roles. This was such a success that plans are already well in hand for a repeat performance (see 'Future Events').

The final, extremely successful, Open Day at the house took place on December 7th, and was followed by a very enjoyable Carol Concert given by the Grace Darling Singers. The festivities over, the house closed its doors to the general public for the last time in its present unrestored form. When we open the doors again we hope to have the rooms on the ground floor re-created, as much as possible, as they were in the time of the Gaskells. The lower ground floor will be refurbished for community use, and on the first floor there will be conference rooms.

The first stage of the restoration has already begun, with the removal of the dry rot; this rather mundane work has, however, resulted in some exciting finds. When the book-shelves in William Gaskell's study were removed, six layers of wallpaper were revealed. Also revealed, in the outer hall, was a stone- flagged floor. As work progresses we hope many more clues may emerge to help in the task of restoring the rooms as authentically as possible. Of course all this depends on continued success in fundraising.

A good start to the new phase of holding events 'off-site' took place on Saturday, 17th January, when a repeat of John Archer's talk on Mary Barton's Manchester again attracted a capacity audience, this time at the Y.H.A. This was followed, on Saturday 21st February, by an enormously successful Study Day on An Underrated Victorian: Sir James P. Kay Shuttleworth. As one member of the audience wrote afterwards, "The speakers were varied and their topics interesting; I certainly know more about Kay-Shuttleworth than I expected to learn." They were all enthusiastic and engaging and it was an enjoyable day. It also proved financially very rewarding and, although final figures are not yet available, it has raised well in excess of £1000. And, perhaps just as importantly, it brought the plight of the house to the attention of many of Manchester's and the North's intellectual élite, many of whom joined the Friends of Plymouth Grove at the end of the day.

Future Events:

There are two other events on our calendar, before our next major fund-raiser. The first of these is the Manchester Histories Festival at Manchester Town Hall on Saturday, March 21st. The Gaskell Society and the Friends of Plymouth Grove will each have a stall in the Banqueting Hall, so do come along and see us. Help on both stalls would also be appreciated.

Saturday, 18th April is the date of the Manchester Heritage Buildings Trust/ Friends of Plymouth Grove A.G.M. It will begin at 2.30p.m. at the Community Space, Guide Post Square, Devonshire Street, Ardwick. Tea/coffee and our usual, delicious home-made cakes will follow. Cost £2.50; pay on the door.

On Saturday 9th May, at 2.30p.m. in Manchester Cathedral Visitor Centre, Cateaton Street, M3 1SQ, The Travel Journals of Robert Hyde Greg. A talk by Allan and Beryl Freer about Robert Hyde Greg's extensive travels in Scotland, Spain and Portugal, France, Italy and even as far as the Ottoman Empire. He was the second son of Samuel Greg, founder of Quarry Bank Mill, Styal, and became one of Manchester's leading textile manufacturers; he also played a prominent part in the intellectual life of the city. This has proved a very popular talk when given elsewhere, so early booking is recommended.

Tickets £7.50 including tea and cake, may be obtained from Mrs Hilda Holmes, 8, Peter Street, Hazel Grove Stockport SK7 4BQ (Phone in the first instance, tel. 0161 487 2593). Cheques to be made payable to The Manchester Historic Buildings Trust. Please enclose an S.A.E.

Two more treats in store:

Saturday 13th June: A coach trip to Silverdale, calling on the way at Gawthorpe Hall, where we will have lunch. Then on to Silverdale where there may be an opportunity to visit places connected with the Gaskells, if time allows. Then, in the Gaskell Memorial Hall, afternoon tea at will be followed by a repeat performance of the highly successful dramatised reading from *My Lady Ludlow* which had its premiere performance at Plymouth Grove (see above). Not to be missed! There will be more details on this when we have finalised our plans and they will be on the Plymouth Grove website: elizabethgaskellhouse.org and in the next Friends' newsletter.

Saturday 5th September: Music for the Gaskells in St. John's Parish Church, Buxton. A repeat performance, by Opus 5, of their acclaimed concert first given in Alderley Edge last April. If you missed this the first time round, be sure to come to this performance, you won't be disappointed! More details to follow, as above.

So, you see, despite the fact that the house is closed, we are continuing to run as varied a programme as possible, with a number of events we feel sure will appeal to our valued supporters. We still have a substantial amount of money to raise, to fund the restoration, and the sooner we have those funds, the sooner we will be able to re-open the house and show it off in a manner befitting both its literary and historical importance.

Book Notes

Christine Lingard

Penguin books are reissuing a number of editions of Gaskell novels at £6.99 - Cranford, edited by Patricia Ingham; Mary Barton, edited by Macdonald Daly, and Wives and Daughters, edited by Pam Morris. Amberley Press are bringing out an uncritical edition of *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* in March.

Also due to be published this Spring:

Literary Tourism and Nineteenth-century Culture, edited by Nicola J. Watson, Senior Lecturer at the Open University. Palgrave Macmillan, £45.

It aims to provide 'fascinating insights into the reception of, amongst others, Petrarch, Shakespeare, Burns, Byron, Wordsworth, Scott, Letitia Landon, Hawthorne, Dickens, Gaskell, Hardy, Stowe, Haggard and Kipling by British and American tourists'.

The Social Problem Novels of Frances Trollope, general editor Brenda Ayres. Pickering and Chatto are issuing a critical annotated edition of the four novels of one of Elizabeth Gaskell's forerunners in the genre of the social problem novel - The Life and Adventures of Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw; The Vicar of Wrexhill; The Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy; and Jessie Phillips. Michael Armstrong (edited by Christine Sutphin, Professor of English at Central Washington University), published in 1840, makes an interesting comparison with Mary Barton.

In a correction to my preview of Romantic Echoes in the Victorian Era, edited by Andrew Radford and Mark Sandy, (Ashgate Press) in the Autumn 2008 issue of the Newsletter, the chapter on 'Mr. Osborne's secret: Elizabeth Gaskell, Wives and Daughters, and the gender of Romanticism' is by James Narjarian.

Brontë-related poems

Ian Emberson has just published a collection of nine poems relating to the Brontës - their lives, writings and the landscapes associated with them. Entitled 'Mourning Ring', it is illustrated on every page by the author. It is available from the Brontë Parsonage Museum gift shop, or from Angria Press, 1, Highcroft Road, Todmorden, OL14 5LZ at a cost of £3, plus £1 postage and packing (£2 overseas). Ian can also be contacted by telephone at 01706 812716, or by Email at ianemberson@aol.com

HELP REQUIRED WITH STORAGE

Is there anyone who could help with the storage of back copies of the Journal and a few other bits and pieces? These have accumulated over the years and are overflowing from the various cupboards, spare rooms etc, which various members of the committee have offered in the past. If anyone is fortunate enough to have space to spare, we should be so grateful to move some boxes into it. This would ideally be in the North West, near to Knutsford or Manchester, but if we get desperate enough, perhaps we could share things around!

If you can help, please contact Elizabeth Williams at BDandEMW@aol.com or on 01925 764271.

AGM Meeting

**will be held at Cross Street Chapel, Manchester
on Saturday 28th March 2009**

10.30am: Assemble for coffee 11.00am: AGM
followed by The Daphne Carrick Lecture, given by Fran Baker (archivist at the John Rylands Library, working on the Gaskell Collection):
Intimate and Trusted correspondents: The Gaskells and the Greens
Henry Green and William Gaskell were colleagues and had both taken degrees at Glasgow University. Henry was minister at Knutsford's Brook Street Chapel for some 45 years. He, his wife and four daughters were close friends of the Gaskells.

2.15pm: Alan Shelston on: 'The problems and rewards of editing Cranford and North and South'.

Finish about 3.30pm

North West Group

Meetings are held on the last Wednesday of each month from October to April at St John's Church Rooms, Knutsford.

Talks and discussions led by Elizabeth Williams are preceded by buffet lunch at 12.15. Cost, £7.50

March 25 Six weeks at Heppenheim and Cousin Phillis

April 29 Elizabeth Gaskell's Cheshire: an illustrated talk by Joan Leach

May 20th

There will be a visit to Shrewsbury for a guided tour of Darwin links. Later in the year we will also visit Maer village where Emma Wedgwood, Charles Darwins' wife, grew up and where they were married. If you are not a member of the North West group and would like to join us on either of these trips please let Joan Leach know.

London and South East Group

Saturday May 9 2009: Shirley Foster: 'Character and Environment: Freedom and Enclosure'

Shirley will lead a discussion on Sylvia's Lovers.

She will talk for about 25 minutes and then there will be a discussion based on some selected passages which she will indicate in advance. More homework!!

Saturday June 6 2009, 3 - 5.30 p.m. or thereabouts: A Tea party in the garden (weather permitting!!) at 85 Calton Avenue, Dulwich, London SE21 7DF. Bring your favourite reading about the summer or gardens or any seasonally appropriate reading. It does not have to be Gaskell! Weather permitting we shall have tea first followed by our readings in the garden. You don't have to read but your reading would be welcome.

South West Group

Our next meeting is on 4th April, 3.00 p.m. at Flat 4, Sydney place by kind invitation of Mrs Joan Chandler:

Brenda McKay will speak on "Dramatising Mrs. Gaskell"

Yorkshire Branch Group

19 September at York. Shirley Foster will lead a discussion on Cousin Phillis.

Alliance of Literary Societies News

Web page: www.allianceofliterarysocieties.org.uk

New Member Societies

We are delighted to welcome the Kenneth Grahame Society, the Thackeray Society, the Francis W H Newman Society, the T S Eliot Society, the Thomas Traherne Society, the Joseph Conrad Society and the Reade of Ryedale Society. We hope to welcome their representatives at the AGM next year, which will be held in Knutsford, marking the bicentenary of Elizabeth Gaskell's birth.

AGM and Literary Weekend

The Alliance of Literary Societies' AGM 2009 will be held in Dublin on Saturday 13th June. The formal meeting will be held that morning, and will be accompanied by speaker(s) on Dublin's literary heritage. We look forward to meeting the Dubliners Literary Circle on their home turf and enjoying the famous Irish hospitality. Consult the web page or send SAE to Joan Leach.

The Gaskell Society



Knutsford - Cheshire
New Super-Holland print c.1945

R.N. Thorne Ltd 1966

*Knutsford, Cheshire
looking up King's Street from the foot of Adams Hall*

THE GASKELL SOCIETY HOME PAGE has all the latest information on meetings.
<http://gaskellsociety.co.uk>

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs. Joan Leach,
Far Yew Tree House, Chester Road, 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

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NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2009 - Number 48



Elizabeth Sharpe
(See Photos In Geneva page 11)

Editor's letter

The weekend conference at Penrith held in July is now a happy memory for the delegates who enjoyed the excellent papers, and excursions that continued the literary Lake District theme. BBC's *Cranford* will be in the news again with repeats of the first series leading up to two new episodes around Christmas. Ruskin would have been pleased to find Captain Brown is playing a fuller part than he did in the original version of *Cranford*: as Gaskell explained to him, she had only meant to write a short story and it was only Dickens' pleading with his 'dear Scheherazade' that more chapters were added. Parts of *The Moorland Cottage* have been incorporated in the latest episodes. There will also be a half hour documentary showing Knutsford and Plymouth Grove.

In the Spring Newsletter we printed a picture thought to be of Elizabeth Gaskell: this caused some controversy; now Tim Austin has solved the mystery and shares with us pictures from family archives - sadly none of Elizabeth Gaskell.

At the end of this Newsletter we have included a diary for 2010 but please note that there may be later changes and updates which will be posted on our home page www.gaskellsociety.co.uk.

Elizabeth Gaskell 2010

Alan Shelston

2010 will mark the bicentenary of the birth of Elizabeth Gaskell, and there will be a number of events at various venues in Manchester, Knutsford and elsewhere. The year will open with a one woman show by the well-known actress, Gabrielle Drake, on the 8th January: this will take place in the theatre of MMU. The Portico library will hold an exhibition of Gaskell books and materials beginning on 31st March. On the evening of April 8th there will be an informal talk by Alan Shelston on issues of Gaskell biography, arising from the publication (scheduled for February) of a condensed biography he has written for Hesperus Press to mark the bicentenary year. Also in April at the Portico there will be a reading in costume of Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Bronte by Intertheatre.

The John Rylands University Library is similarly planning an exhibition of books, manuscripts, and other Gaskelliana: this will begin on 15th July and continue until 28th November. Also at the Rylands there will be formal lectures by Professor Pamela Corpron Parker, from the United States (5th August), Jenny Uglow, whose *Elizabeth Gaskell: a Habit of Stories* is one of the great modern biographies, (16th September) and by Alan Shelston on Gaskell and her Publishers (14th

October). On a different note the Rylands are also planning two history workshops, and musical events relating to the folk songs of the Gaskell period.

The Gaskell Society will be heavily involved in all of these celebrations, with lectures, seminars, working days and outings. Details will be advertised later, but two events in their programme stand out. First, it is anticipated that the exterior renovation of the Gaskell house at Plymouth Grove will have been completed.

Secondly, on 25th September, Elizabeth Gaskell's name is to be added to a stained glass window in Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey. This reflects the efforts of a group of members of the Gaskell Society.

Full details of these and other events will be publicised nearer the time.

Elizabeth Gaskell's Paternal Grandparents

John Chapple

I

It is always a pleasure when new information becomes available. A posting by Karen Bell on the gaskell-I mailing list drew attention not only to Joseph Stevenson of Berwick's will dated 28 September 1795 (Prob 11/1325) but also to the will of his wife Isabel, née Thomson (Prob 11/1439), both significant enough to be proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury and now available online in the National Archives. Isabel's older brother was John Thomson, an ancestor of Karen Bell, to whom I am grateful for assistance in the preparation of this article. I must also thank Linda Bankier of the Berwick Record Office, and my wife.

We know that far from being a splendid post-captain in the Royal Navy, Joseph had only been made lieutenant at his last promotion in 1757. It is perhaps unexpected to discover how much real and personal estate he had been able to gain and invest. To his first son William, father of Elizabeth Gaskell, he left £400 stock in the three percent consolidated bank annuities and £100 in the four percent. (According to Boyd Hilton in the *New Oxford History of England 1783-1846*, the yield on three percent consols trading at £83.75 was 3.6 percent in 1791; in 1799, it was 5.1 percent trading at £59.17). Moreover, Joseph's daughter Dorothy and the three younger sons, Joseph Thomson, Robert, and John Thomson [sometimes Cansfield sic] Turner, were each to receive the same. Joseph Thomson Stevenson, who became a Ship Master, was also to have his father's silver hilted sword and steel pocket pistols.

To his wife Isabel he left the interest on the sum of £350 for the term of her life; the money was then to revert to the five children, 'share and share alike'. Isabel also

received a life interest in property in Palace Street, Berwick, occupied by Margaret and Esther Stevenson (TS21/140, lease dated 25 May 1795). On Isabel's death this property would revert to the five children as tenants-in-common, together with Joseph's library. Finally, 'all the Rest Residue and Remainder of my Estate and Effects whatsoever and wheresoever I do give and bequeath unto my said dear wife Isabel Stevenson...'. The executors were Isabel, his first son William, and John Constable. The will was proved in London on 31 May 1799, after Joseph Stevenson's death on 14 February 1799.

To give some idea of the value of money at that time, in 1798 Coleridge was generously allowed an annuity of £150 per year by Thomas and Josiah Wedgwood. He had been thinking of accepting a post as Unitarian minister at Shrewsbury in order to provide a home and regular income for his family.

Manuscript letters preserved by Geoffrey Sharps show that Dorothy, who had recently married a George Landles or Landells of Berwick, wrote to a brother in London (probably Robert) on 29 December 1798, criticising William for plaguing their mother Isabel Stevenson about money. This was at a time when Joseph Stevenson was evidently in failing health. Though William could not have begun farming at Saughton Mills before late 1797, just before his marriage to Elizabeth Holland on 1 December in that year, he was presumably already in financial difficulties. News of Joseph Stevenson's death, 'an event that has long been daily to be looked for', was announced in a letter from a family friend dated 15 February 1799. The children would have received a substantial inheritance, though John Thomson Turner Stevenson (b. 21 February 1780) would have to wait till he was twenty-one. The money does not seem to have been enough to save William's farm, if we may judge from the fact that he was teaching in Edinburgh by 1801.

Dorothy Landles died in February 1805, aged thirty-one. The will of her mother Isabel, made on 21 January 1806, the day before her death, and proved on 27 February 1806, takes account of this but has some surprises. Isabel devised to trustees, William Wilson and John Miller Dixon, all her 'Messuages Burgages or Tenements Garden Tan Yard and Skinnery with the appertenances situate on the East side of Rotten Row' and all her other real and personal estate. She wished them to sell and then 'pay off and discharge the sum of seven hundred pounds now due and owing to Beatrix White and others Tutors of Alexander Cleghorn'. These names connect this debt with the farm at Saughton Mills that had been advertised for sale by the widow of Robert Cleghorn (see GSJ 8, 1994, pp. 51-52) on 28 January 1797.

William's name does not appear elsewhere in Isabel's will, nor does that of his youngest brother, John Thomson Turner Stevenson. The latter was not involved in a lease to Thomas Hall made by Isabel and her children on 10 May 1799 (TS21/142),

so perhaps he was the brother that descendants believed had died in a French prison during the war. Otherwise, the trustees were to see that Joseph Thomson Stevenson, Robert Stevenson and the three children of Dorothy, Mrs Landles, should receive equal legacies.

II

By 1820 William Stevenson's son John, on a visit to Berwick, had been presented with his grandfather's sword and dagger and his late Uncle Robert's pistols. He and his father seem to have kept up the connection with the remaining Stevensons, with interchange of letters and visits, until Elizabeth was in her late teens, but then the curtain falls. During the 1820s her sea-going brother John had written to her and Aunt Lumb letters amounting to some 13000 words, full of news and gossip about his cousins and the election at Berwick, his father and the second family at Chelsea, but mainly exotic details of his own voyages to Calcutta and Rangoon. The letters must have been the subject of exceptional interest at Knutsford and no doubt at Elizabeth's school. But the failure of Smith and Elder to accept John's book ensured that by the summer of 1828 he had decided to stay in India. He disappeared completely from her life — and from our knowledge, too, unless he was the free merchant listed in Calcutta in 1831. Then after the impoverished death of her father on 22 March 1829, there came a rupture with her stepmother ('perfectly destitute' in 1833) and half-siblings. It lasted for about twenty five-years, and even afterwards contact was minimal.

When Elizabeth Gaskell had achieved an assured maturity and national fame, she made slight connections about 1853-54 with Stevenson descendants who had moved south (*Elizabeth Gaskell: Early Years*, pp 222-3). They include that chameleon archivist and historian, her first cousin Joseph Stevenson (1806-1895). A man important enough to be recorded, like her, in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, he was in succession a Presbyterian minister, librarian and keeper of records to the dean and chapter at Durham, a married Church of England clergyman at Leighton Buzzard (when she was in contact with him), an editor of the Rolls Series, a Roman Catholic priest and ultimately, for many years, a Jesuit.

Elizabeth obviously put well behind her the tragedies of her youth and the connections with the family on her father's side still living in Berwick. She immersed herself in the easy life at Knutsford, London and Dumbleton led by Aunt Lumb and the prosperous Hollands before committing herself fully to marriage and her own family. But Graham Handley notes in his *Chronology* how often in her fiction a lost character returns. Dreams like those of Mrs Hale for the absent Frederick (*North and South*, I. 14), surely betray Elizabeth Gaskell's own the painful, suppressed memories of her brother John.

Charles Allen Du Val / C A Duval

Artist & Photographer

1803 -1872

Nicky Clark

Some years ago I was reading a biography of Elizabeth Gaskell, when I came across an illustration — a reproduction of a portrait of the three oldest Gaskell daughters, Marianne, Meta and Julia, done in Manchester in 1845. My eye was caught by the name of the artist: 'C A Duval'. It so happens that my maiden name was Duval. I did not know much about my father's family, except that they came from Manchester, my grandfather's and great-grandfather's first names were Charles, and my great-grandfather was a photographer. I wondered therefore whether 'C A Duval' could be related to me.

Over the next year or so I occasionally did a little internet research on C A Duval and found that he seemed to have taken photographs of many well-known people in the Manchester area. I also took the opportunity to button-hole any Gaskell experts I met at meetings, to ask whether Elizabeth Gaskell was known to have commented on the experience of getting the portrait done, or any mention of the name Duval in her correspondence. I acquired the Chapple & Pollard collection of Gaskell's letters — but there was little from 1845 and no mention of Duval in the letters, and no-one seemed to know anything about him.

Earlier this year I was contacted by a cousin, Alan Duval, who told me that he had been doing some research into various branches of his family and was about to start on the Duvals. I told him about the portrait, and sent him a photocopy and he promised to keep me informed.

A few weeks later he rang me in some excitement, having been contacted through a genealogy web-site by someone called Tom Askey, the husband of a Duval half-aunt of Alan's and mine, whose existence we had not known about previously. Tom had told Alan that he had prepared for his wife, children and grand-children a 'little book' about the family history of the Duval family, which he would be happy to send to Alan. In the meantime he gave Alan quite a lot of information.

It appeared that 'C A Duval' was the professional name of Charles Allen Du Val, who was our great-great-grandfather, and who in his day was a very successful artist and photographer. He had done portraits of the leaders of the Anti-Corn-Law League, the Manchester MPs Cobden and Bright, Daniel O'Connell, and Joseph Burch, the inventor, and had exhibited at the Liverpool Academy and the Royal Academy.

Tom also told Alan about Charles Allen Du Val's nephew, another Charles (or Charley) Du Val, who became a very successful music-hall entertainer and had taken his one-man show on tour in a number of other countries, including South Africa, where he had become caught up in the Boer War and ran a newspaper for the local citizens during the siege of Pretoria. And — Alan mentioned casually — one of Charles Allen Du Val's sons, Edward James, another artist, had married someone called Emma Gaskell in 1864. He gave me the details of when and where the marriage had taken place and I ordered a copy of the marriage certificate from Manchester Register Office.

I then treated myself to a day at the National Portrait Gallery, where the archivist showed me the 'cartes-de-visite' photographs in which C A Duval had specialised, and also photocopies they had on file of many of his portraits in oils and pastels.

Back on the computer, I found an obituary of a famous chemist (well, famous to those who know about chemists): Frederic Kipping, in which it was stated that not only was Mr Kipping a grandson of the artist Charles Allen Du Val but that he had married his cousin who was herself a grand-daughter of Charles Allen Du Val, and her name was Lily Holland. Of course, when I saw the name Holland, I wondered whether there could possibly be a connection between Lily Holland and therefore the Du Val/Duval family and Elizabeth Gaskell, whose mother's maiden name had been Holland.

At this stage I e-mailed Joan Leach and asked her three things: (1) Did she or any of the Knutsford or Manchester Gaskell Society members know anything about C A Duval, the painter of the Gaskell girls' portrait? (2) Did she know who Emma Gaskell was and whether she was connected to William Gaskell? And (3) — bit of a long shot — might Lily Holland be connected to Elizabeth Gaskell's Holland relations?

Joan came back to me very quickly. (1) She knew the portrait well, the original of which hangs in the Portico Library, but knew nothing about C A Duval other than what she had found in the *National Dictionary of Biography*. (2) She thought Emma Gaskell was very unlikely to be related to William Gaskell; and (3) the Holland connection was interesting.

The marriage certificate arrived and it was clear that Joan was right — Emma's father was a 'warp-sizer' — no doubt the author of *North and South* would have known exactly what that was — I only know it's a job in a cotton mill. More convincingly, her name on the certificate was spelled GASKILL not Gaskell. So my hopes of finding a link between my family and that of Elizabeth Gaskell were dashed there.

However, Joan soon contacted me again — Yes, she said, your family is connected with Elizabeth Gaskell. 'Lily Holland was the daughter of Florence Du Val who

married William Thomas Holland in 1861'. That was very exciting, but I wasn't actually much the wiser — who was Florence Du Val? And who was William Thomas Holland?

Back to Alan, who told me that Florence was the 5th child of Charles Allen Du Val — and back to Joan, who sent me a family tree and more information about the Hollands — and now I think I can say with confidence that **Elizabeth Gaskell's great-great-uncle was the great-great-grandfather of the man who married my great-great-aunt Florence**. A fact about which I am quite ridiculously delighted.

As a postscript, I would mention that not long after this I was in touch with Tom Askey, who very kindly sent me his 'little book' on the Duval Family (which turned out to be anything but 'little', having 148 pages and numerous illustrations). I emailed him to thank him of course, and was delighted to find that he much admires Elizabeth Gaskell, and considers that *Cousin Phillis* is a much better book than *Cranford* (which happens to be my own opinion too).

The two final paragraphs of Tom's e-mail to me on 7 April read:

I was archivist at Chatsworth for many years, and while there I often exhibited a treasured letter from Charlotte Brontë to Elizabeth Gaskell. The 6th Duke of Devonshire (1790-1858) knew many literary figures of his day — there are Dickens letters, one from Leigh Hunt, and a lovely one from Thackeray with an account of what happened afterwards to Becky Sharp and a pencil drawing of her in old age.

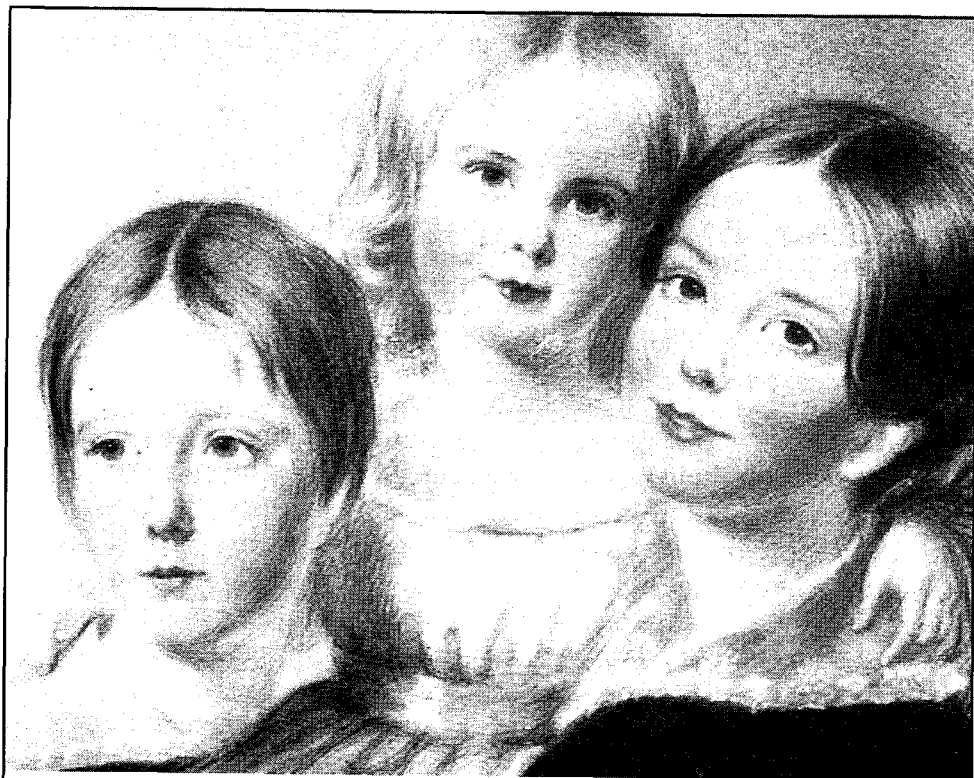
The Duke never met Charlotte Brontë. He knew Elizabeth Gaskell and she gave him the letter. Although it's many years now since I saw it, I recall it describing a delightful family scene at teatime in Haworth parsonage. I don't think it's ever appeared in print.

There's an amusing story about how the duke met Elizabeth Gaskell. (I've never seen it in any document, but it's traditional in the Cavendish family). Elizabeth Gaskell was staying with friends at Rowsley and she decided to visit Chatsworth. Now Chatsworth has always been open to visitors. Anyone having the temerity to knock on the door would be shown around by the housekeeper, and if you went on a Thursday you were given dinner. When Elizabeth Gaskell arrived the Duke himself was in residence (a rare event, as he much preferred Hardwick) and he was delighted to meet her. She was invited to stay for several days as his guest. Which was wonderful, but alas she had only the clothes she was wearing. So secretly she sent a message down to Rowsley to have some more clothes sent up so that she wouldn't constantly appear in the same dress.

I do not know whether the letter from Charlotte Brontë to Elizabeth Gaskell has in fact appeared in print, but there is a letter from Elizabeth to daughter Marianne, written from Chatsworth, that certainly bears out her anxiety about clothes on the visit.

One question still remains in my mind: how well did the Gaskells know the Du Vals? William and Charles Allen were both members of the Portico Library and the Manchester Literary & Philosophical Society, but was there anything more than a slight acquaintance? I do not suppose I will ever find out, but would love to hear if anyone comes across any possible clues.

Nicky Clark's email address: nickyclark100@hotmail.com



Meta, Florence and Marianne
1845. Pastel by Duval

The Death of Elizabeth Gaskell

Dr John Ross

Jenny Uglow, in her biography, relates how well Elizabeth Gaskell had been looking in church on the afternoon of Sunday, November 12th 1865 and that she had a happy early evening with her family when she suddenly stopped speaking and fell forward with a slight gasp into the arms of her daughter Meta and did not recover. There was no post-mortem. Her death certificate recorded the cause of death as 'disease of the heart'.

This diagnosis could certainly be correct as there is no mention of any feature which could suggest an alternative. There is no mention of any pain. Pain usually accompanies occlusion of blood vessels (coronary arteries) in the wall of the heart, a common cause of sudden collapse and death, but not always. Sudden change in the rhythm of the heart can cause collapse and death without pain.

There are a number of recorded comments and observations which make speculation about her health and alternative causes of death of interest.

Three weeks after Elizabeth's death, Isabella Green, daughter of a close friend of Elizabeth, in a letter to her brother Philip, dated December 3rd 1865, wrote that Elizabeth's daughters had said that 'her death was caused by the breaking of the medulla oblongata [sic] which is the upper part of the spinal cord [sic] and it becomes very brittle in people who have gout, as you know [sic], she had several times'. This is a remarkable and impossible diagnosis – the medulla oblongata is an important soft hind part of the brain continuous with the spinal cord and can be damaged by severe trauma but is certainly never brittle or breakable. It has no connection with gout and there is nothing in Elizabeth's history to suggest that she ever had gout. True gout is usually easily recognised and arthritis and aches and pains of all sorts were often called gout in those days. It is unbelievable however that, even 130 years ago, any doctor would have given relatives such a bizarre diagnosis. Who gave it to the daughters?

In the same letter Isabella Green wrote '...early this year she [Elizabeth Gaskell] said to Mrs Deane [a cousin] that she did not expect to live thro' the year.' What caused her to say this? Had someone made a diagnosis and given her a poor prognosis or had she herself noted an abnormality which she associated with a poor prognosis? There is no mention, in Jenny Uglow's biography, of any symptoms which could result from a physical disorder with a poor outlook. She does once mention Elizabeth having a 'weak heart' but gives no symptoms or evidence for this and no record of anyone mentioning it. There are accounts, throughout her adult life, of 'oft unwell', 'unwell on and off all the year', 'often ill', 'deadly feelings of fatigue', 'depression', 'weakness helped by medicinal brandy', 'low and convalescent

and there were episodes of back pain, dizziness, headaches and fainting and chest infection. Most of these upsets could have been related to exhaustion, overwork or worry to which she admitted. None of these troubles could have led her to speak of a limited life when she was aged fifth-four. A cousin who heard about her sudden and unexpected death wrote that 'she had always wished and spoken of her wish to die a sudden painless death like this'; but this does not indicate that she had any knowledge of any disorder which might allow this wish.

Elizabeth had been writing, for the last eighteen months of her life, *Wives and Daughters*, which was published serially in the *Cornhill Magazine* from August 1864 to January 1866. It is very interesting that, in this great novel she relates that Osborne Hamley, the young son of the squire, was diagnosed as having an aneurysm of the aorta by the conscientious and talented Doctor Gibson. Dr Nicholls, the much respected county physician, did not agree but Osborne did die rather suddenly and presumably Elizabeth meant this to be considered due to rupture of the aneurysm, a recognised result of the disorder. In a letter dated 3 May 1864 she had outlined her plan for the novel and mentioned that Osborne 'breaks a blood vessel and dies'.

It is surprising that Elizabeth used this disorder as a cause of Osborne's death; one would not expect many lay people in the mid-nineteenth century to have known about it. She may indeed have been hinting at its uncommon and little known occurrence when she wrote that Gibson was asked by his daughter what Osborne died of and he replied 'Something wrong about the heart. You would not understand if I told you'.

Did Elizabeth learn about aortic aneurysms from Sir Astley Cooper (1768-1841) the famous surgeon who was the world authority on these abnormalities in the early nineteenth century? He is the only actual doctor mentioned by her in *Wives and Daughters*. She relates that Gibson had once been invited to dine at the Towers, the seat of the local aristocracy, and to meet Sir Astley Cooper 'the head of the profession'. Why did Elizabeth choose *him* to appear in her book? She did have several doctors in her family, some 'well connected' (Sir Henry Holland, a cousin of hers, was Physician-in-Ordinary to Queen Victoria) and she possibly met Sir Astley, who impressed her by talking about his work and aortic aneurysms.

Aneurysms are dilatations, swellings, in blood vessels caused by deterioration in their wall structure and less commonly by disease. Aneurysms of the aorta are most commonly found in people over sixty years of age and would be most unlikely in someone of Osborne Hamley's age. Nowadays they may be found on X-ray or scanning before any symptoms occur; in Sir Astley Cooper's time abdominal aneurysms could only be diagnosed when they were large enough to be felt. Half of all persons with an untreated abdominal aneurysm die of rupture within five years. There may be no symptoms until the aneurysm is large enough to cause pain.

If Sir Astley did tell Elizabeth about aneurysms, he would certainly have told her about the inevitability of rupture and death. This would have led to her writing that Mrs Gibson told Gibson that she had heard Dr Nicholls saying 'If he had got an aneurism of the aorta his days are numbered', when she overheard the two doctors discussing Osborne.

Is it possible that Elizabeth thought that her days were numbered because she had an abdominal swelling that was an aneurysm, and that she was correct — as it ruptured and caused her sudden death? I do not think so; there is no mention of pain at the time of her death and this is almost always present with a rupture, and severe.

The most likely cause of sudden death without pain or other significant symptoms is a severe change in heart rhythm, so we can accept the death certificate; but why did Elizabeth expect to die that year?

I am most grateful to Joan Leach and Fran Baker of the John Rylands University Library Manchester for their help and information, and to Dr Henry Connor for comment.

PHOTOS IN GENEVA

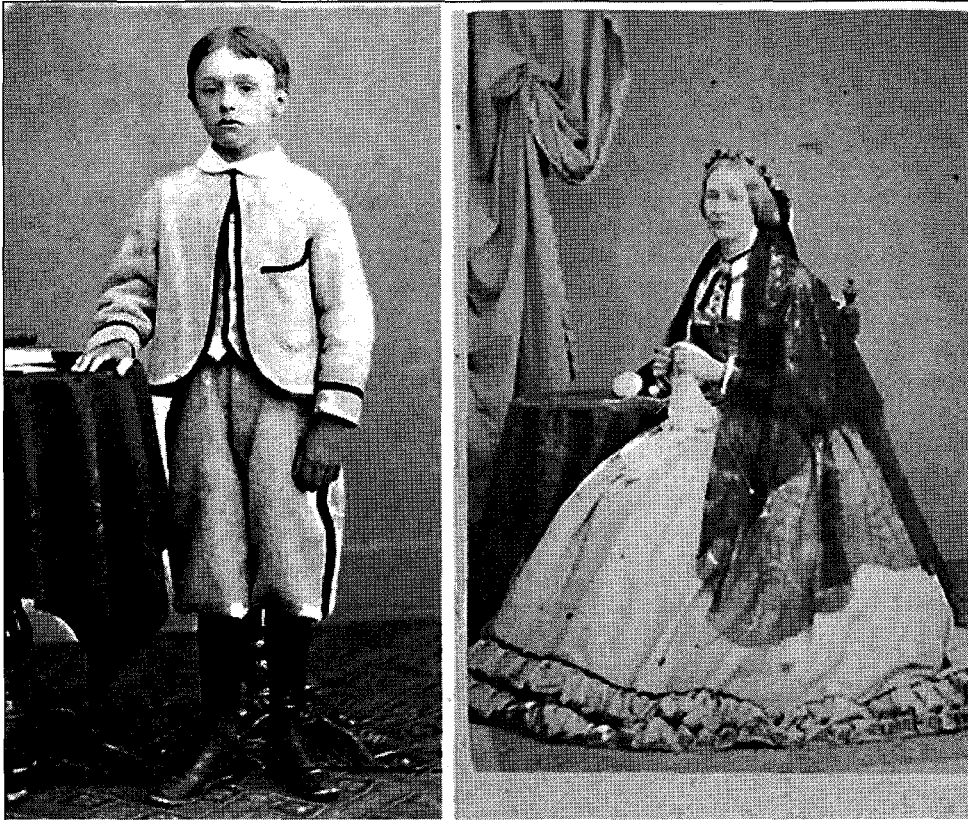
Tim Austin [1]

In the Spring Newsletter of the Gaskell Society attention was focused on a carte-de-visite image from the Jamison Archive [2] which was thought to be of Elizabeth Gaskell.

In the family photograph albums of the descendants of Emily Sharpe and James Pearson Langshaw [3], the same image has been found and is clearly identified on the back, in Emily's hand, as Susan Deane, taken in 1863 in the studio of the photographer Faedo at Plainpalais Geneva. In the same albums there are also to be found photographs of Elizabeth Sharpe and her third and youngest son Alfred [4] taken in the same studio in the same year. These two photographs and that of Susan are attached to this article.

Susan Deane was the second wife of Richard Deane, Knutsford doctor and partner of Peter Holland (Susan's father and the uncle of Elizabeth Gaskell), and his second wife Mary Whittaker.

Emily Sharpe was the third child (of four) and second daughter of Francis Sharpe, organist at Knutsford Parish Church, and his wife Martha Whittaker, younger sister of Mary. Emily's older sister was Marianne Sharpe, the first wife of Richard Deane. Their elder brother was Edmund Sharpe, husband of Elizabeth and the father of Alfred.



Alfred Sharpe & Susan Deane
The same pattern can be seen in all three photos

Thus the two wives of Richard Deane were first cousins, and of course Susan was a first cousin of Elizabeth Gaskell. Elizabeth regarded herself as a half-cousin of the Sharpe children [5], not quite genealogically accurate but they did have an uncle and aunt in common.

These are but the barest of facts of a long story. Many elements of this story were presented to the 2008 Autumn Meeting of the Gaskell Society at Knutsford. For this article it seems worth recounting some information on the life and origins of Richard Deane, which may provide pointers as to how he came to know and then to marry his two wives.

Richard Timothy Deane was born in Northwich in 1805, the son of Samuel Deane and his wife Jane Hancock [6]. Samuel was a doctor then practising at Northwich,

where his doctor brother James was also in practice. James had at one time been House Surgeon at the Manchester Workhouse and also surgeon to the Altrincham (Poor Law) Union [7]. We already know that Samuel had been apprenticed in 1796 to Peter Holland. Peter Holland himself had been apprenticed to Dr Charles White of Manchester in 1783, whose family had long been friends of the Whittaker family in Manchester. Going back three generations it is possible that the Deane and Holland families were distantly related.



Elizabeth Sharpe
1863

In May 1871 Elizabeth Sharpe wrote a letter to her first cousin Mary Green, a month before Mary's death in June at Knutsford [8]. This letter shows that the two cousins were in contact.

Edmund Sharpe and his family left Lancaster in 1856 to go to Wales for a few years until 1863, when they moved to Geneva until 1866. Susan Deane and her family were probably visiting the Sharpes in Geneva when her photograph was taken there in 1863. She visited Switzerland again in 1866 — as evidenced in a letter of Isabella Green, youngest daughter of Henry and Mary, to her brother John Philip in India written on June 3 1866: 'the Deanes...are going to Switzerland in a week or two'. This visit may again have been to the Sharpes; but during the year they had gradually returned to Lancaster, and were probably all home there by the late summer.

Acknowledgements:

Particular thanks for help with this research, over many years, go to John Hughes, author of the historical study of Edmund Sharpe shortly to be published privately, in the bicentenary year of his birth on 31 October 1809. Thanks also are due to Sarah Tanner and Jean Jamison, and to Fran Baker, Gaskell Archivist at the John Rylands Library, for their great generosity and help in allowing me early and easy access to the material of the Jamison Archive; and not least to Joan Leach for first telling me about it.

Notes:

- [1] Great-great-grandson of Emily Sharpe and Pearson Langshaw.
- [2] Jamison Archive: Family history material descended from Isabella Jamison née Green, youngest daughter of Rev. Henry Green and Mary Brandreth. Now in the John Rylands Library, Manchester.
- [3] Family History material collected by Emily and Pearson Langshaw, preserved and enhanced by their descendants and now in various places. Significant collections are: on gift in the Austin Paley Archive ms. LM 86/129 in Lancaster Museum, mainly images; and on deposit in the Austin Langshaw Archive, Rare Books and Archives, Lancaster University, mainly written material, including 'new' letters of Elizabeth and Florence Gaskell. The photograph albums are currently retained by the family.
- [4] He became Sir Alfred Sharpe in 1903; after serving as a British colonial administrator he became Commissioner of the British Central Africa Protectorate in 1896, and then in 1907 the first Governor of Nyasaland, the two countries now known as Malawi.
- [5] *Elizabeth Gaskell, The Early Years*, John Chapple, MUP, 1997; page 196 and note 3, page 212; written by Elizabeth Stevenson, ES Oct 1831, in last MS music book; "...[manuscript duet quadrilles]....they are written by a half-cousin of mine..." — refers to Edmund Sharpe.
- [6] The Knutsford Hancock family was related by marriage to the Knutsford Wright family.
- [7] Guildhall Library London: London and Provincial Medical Directory; 1847.
- [8] Jamison Archive: Letter of Elizabeth Sharpe to Mary Green, May 19 1871. Letter has black border on the front page in memory of Jane Langshaw née Fletcher, Elizabeth's older sister, and wife of Pearson's older brother John, who had died in April.

Progress at 84 Plymouth Grove

Janet Allan

On 7 September our builders started work on restoring the outside of the Gaskells' home in Manchester, at the cost of three quarters of a million pounds. This includes stripping off the old roof, dealing with dry rot, repairing all the windows, shutters and exterior doors, replacing stonework, replacing the cement render with lime render all over the outside of the building, and making sure that what Elizabeth called the 'pestilential drains' are replaced. It will be March before all this work is done, and after that we hope very much that the ground floor can be made habitable again. We hope to welcome many people there during the bi-centenary year.

Many of you have helped in this first phase by sponsoring restoration of features of the house. A very grateful thank you!

The next stage of the project is our application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the money to restore the interior and convert the building to its new uses - Gaskell heritage rooms, community spaces, conference and educational activities and hopefully a Gaskell archive.

Our application will hopefully go in at the end of November and the entire cost will be about two million pounds, of which we are asking the Lottery for one million. We hope that we will be successful in restoring 'Manchester's neglected treasure' to full life once more.

THE 2009 AGM/WEEKEND OF THE ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES ACADEMY PLAZA HOTEL, DUBLIN

13/14th June 2009

Report by Janet Kennerley

This year's AGM and Weekend of the ALS was held in Dublin, organised by members of the ALS Committee, assisted at the event by members of the Dubliners Literary Circle, who had organised a most interesting set of talks and play readings prior to the start of the AGM about famous Irish writers — Joyce, Yeats, Beckett and George Bernard Shaw, to name just a few.

The Chairman of the ALS, Linda Curry, welcomed delegates to Dublin, announcing that sadly, the ALS President, Aeronwy Thomas, was unable to attend due to illness and that she would be stepping down. We were all asked to think about who might be asked to replace her.

The Chairman had represented the ALS at a European meeting of literary organisations in Berlin in February 2009, organised by the German equivalent of the ALS (ALG). Attendees came from a mixture of literary societies, museums and houses. She explained that it had been an excellent opportunity to see how literary organisations operate in Europe and to establish a network of mutual benefit, perhaps opening up opportunities for funding in the future.

The new Secretary of the ALS, Anita Fernandez-Young, was congratulated on her work. After a year of operating without a Secretary, Anita volunteered to fill the role at the 2009 AGM and has so far produced two Newsletters which have been well received by member societies. Whenever possible, these are to be sent out electronically to save expense.

We were asked to think of ways in which we could raise the profile of the ALS with a view to obtaining funding. At present the only income is by annual subscriptions and the raffle at the Annual Meeting. The ALS did not want to raise subscriptions at the moment as it was hoping to encourage new membership but prompt payment would be helpful. We were asked to think about what the ALS could do for your society.

The Treasurer reported that she had been successful in obtaining payment of some outstanding subscriptions but the overall profit was slightly down with a balance of around £3,000 in the bank. Expenses are always kept to the minimum with increased use of email whenever possible. It was agreed to set up a special fund of £100 annually for Chairman's expenses following the meeting in Germany.

The ALS Journal "ALSo" had been delayed this year due to lack of suitable articles but it was reported that this should be available shortly.

The Election of Officers and Committee 2009-2010 took place en bloc as follows:-

Chairman Linda Curry (*John Clare Society*)
Secretary Anita Fernandez Young (*Dickens Fellowship*)
Treasurer Julie Shorland (*Jane Austen Society*)
Editors Linda Curry and Robin Healey (*Charles Lamb, Wyndham Lewis*)

Committee:

Frieda Barker (*Marlowe Society*), Angela Crow Woods (*Brontë Society*)
Helen Newman (*Richard Jefferies Society*), Don Lee (*Philip Larkin Society*)
Kenn Oultram (*Daresbury Lewis Carroll Society*)
Thelma Thompson (*Shropshire Literary Society*)
Janet Kennerley (*Gaskell Society*), Marty Smith (*Johnson Society, Lichfield*)

It was decided that no changes were necessary at present to the ALS Constitution but that it would be useful if this could be available on the website.

It was an ideal opportunity to promote next year's AGM/weekend which will be held in Knutsford on 15/16th May 2010. Please make a note in your diary. The Gaskell Society looks forward to hosting this event during our special year celebrating 200 years since Elizabeth Gaskell's birth.

Looking further ahead, it was mentioned that it may be possible to hold the 2011 event in Edinburgh. The Johnson Society of Lichfield offered to host the 2012 AGM.

At the close of the AGM, there was a raffle of prizes kindly donated by those attending which in some way represented their own society.

After the lunch break, we reassembled for a pleasant trip to the National Library of Ireland to visit an exhibition of W B Yeats. We were also shown the Reading Room.

In the evening, 47 people, many representing the Dubliners Literary Circle, enjoyed a Formal Dinner in the hotel. Once again, we entertained ourselves with favourite readings, quotations and poetry, even a song – an enjoyable close to a very busy day.

For those staying over the weekend, Desmond O'Malley, Chairman of the Dubliners Literary Circle, lead a historic walk around the Georgian buildings and other significant literary landmarks of the city, which ended at the Dublin Writers' Museum.

Finally, before catching our flight back to Manchester in the early evening, a small group of us walked to the National Gallery to view the paintings by the brother of W B Yeats, said to have inspired his friend, Samuel Beckett to write "Waiting for Godot".

BOOK NOTES

Christine Lingard

Romanticism, revolution, and language. *The Fate of the Word from Samuel Johnson to George Eliot* by John Beer, Emeritus Professor of English at the University of Cambridge (whom many will remember from the 2007 Canterbury conference). Cambridge University Press, May 2009. Traces how the French Revolution influenced the English language and challenged the basic philosophy of many English writers, leading to the establishment of the Romantic Movement. This is illustrated in the works of authors ranging from William Blake to George Eliot. Other authors discussed include Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Wordsworth, William Hazlitt, and Jane Austen. Chapter 10 is entitled *Languages of memory and passion: Tennyson, Gaskell and the Brontës*.

Mobility and modernity in women's novels, 1850s-1930s: women moving dangerously, by Wendy Parkins, Senior Lecturer in the English Department at the University of Otago, New Zealand. Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

A discussion of women's mobility in a wide range of novels from 1850 to 1930, dealing with urban as well as rural settings. It includes some twentieth-century authors not often discussed in comparison to their nineteenth-century forebears, including Elizabeth Bowen, Vernon Lee and Stella Gibbons. In particular it discusses *Adam Bede* and *North and South*.

Literary remains: representation of death and burial in Victorian England, by Mary Elizabeth Hotz, State University of New York Press.

Places the treatment of death and burial in nineteenth century fiction in its historical context, with an introduction on Edwin Chadwick and burial reform. As well as Thomas Hardy and Charles Dickens, the book discusses representations of death in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* and *North and South*, with concluding remarks on *Dracula*.

BRUSSELS BRONTË GROUP ANNUAL BRONTË WEEKEND

Friday 23 April to Sunday 25 April 2010

Provisional programme- updated information will be posted on our website.

2010 is the bicentenary year of the birth of Charlotte Brontë's first and most famous biographer, Elizabeth Gaskell. We have organised a talk on her by Gaskell expert Angus Easson and, in complete contrast, a meeting with writer Jude Morgan whose fictional biography of the Brontës, *The Taste of Sorrow*, came out in 2009. Jude Morgan is the author of many works of historical fiction including *Passion*, inspired by the lives of the Romantic poets Byron, Shelley and Keats.

Saturday 24 April

On the Brussels trail: Elizabeth Gaskell and The Life of Charlotte Brontë. A talk by Prof. Angus Easson

Meeting with writer Jude Morgan, author of the fictional biography of the Brontës *The Taste of Sorrow* (2009). Jude will talk about the researching and writing of the novel and answer questions.

Sunday 25 April 10.00: A guided walk around Brontë places in Brussels.

Updated information on <http://www.thebrusselsbrontegroup.org>

Non-members are welcome. Registration is essential for all events. Contact person for information and registrations: Helen MacEwan at helen.macewan@ec.europa.eu

Weekend Course

At Burton Manor, Cheshire, March 19-21

Jackie Wilkin will lead a course on *The Knutsford Novels: Cranford and Wives and Daughters*. Contact for details: j.wilkin@talktalk.net

North West Group

KNUTSFORD MEETINGS are held at St John's Church hall, on the last Wednesday in the month, studying Gaskell short stories. Buffet lunch is from 12.15pm. Cost £8.

MEETINGS AT CROSS STREET CHAPEL are held on the second Tuesday in the month at 1.00pm. Members may meet at the chapel from 12.15 for a sandwich lunch. Meetings cost £2 for members, £3 for non-members.

8th December

Christmas Carol service conducted by the minister, Jane Barraclough

9th February

Elizabeth Gaskell and the 19th Century Jewish cultural scene by Susan Fox

9th March

The Irish in Manchester by Mervyn Busteed

London and South East Group

Saturday 13th February 2010

The Life of Charlotte Brontë reconsidered

With Alan Shelston

Alan Shelston is President of the Gaskell Society and although now retired from Manchester University is busier than ever with Gaskell interests and is currently writing a biography of Gaskell for the centenary year in 2010.

Meetings continue at Francis Holland School at 2pm with a sandwich lunch from 12.45pm.

Further information from

Dr Fran Twinn, 85 Carlton Avenue, Dulwich, London SE21 7DF

Telephone: 020 8693 3238

E-mail: frantwinn@aflex.net

Yorkshire Group

At the Friends Meeting House, Friar Gate, York

Meetings will commence at 2 p.m. The room will be available from 12.30 p.m. for those who wish to bring a picnic lunch. To cover expenses a contribution of £5 is requested. Contact : shepleysmiths@tiscali.co.uk

South-West Group

Programme for November 2009 - August 2010

Saturday, November 21st, 2009, 2.30pm at BRLSI, 16-18 Queen Square, Bath: Dr Gillian Ballinger of the University of the West of England will speak on *North and South* and the 'condition-of-England novel'.

Tea/Coffee will be served after the talk, £2.00 to members; £4.00 to non-members

Monday, January 11th, 2010, 7.00pm: New Year Supper 'Bring and Share', at 138 Fairfield Park Road, Bath BA1 6JT by the kind invitation of Rosemary and Tony Marshall. Tel: 01225 426732.

Saturday, February 13th, 2.30pm: Discussion group at Elizabeth Schlenther's, 14 Vellore Lane, Bath, BA2 6JQ, on Mary Barton. (Tel: 01225 331763)

Saturday, March 13th, 2.30pm: Discussion group at Bren Abercrombie's, 12 Mount Road, Lansdown, BA1, to continue the discussion on Mary Barton. (Tel: 01225 471241)

Any queries to Mrs Elizabeth Schlenther, 14 Vellore Lane, Bath, BA2 6JQ
Tel: 01225 331763

**This diary for the GASKELL BICENTENARY YEAR 2010
may have additions or alterations and will be updated as necessary.**

JAN. 8	Gabrielle Drake one woman show 'My dear Scheherazade' at Manchester Metropolitan University Theatre
MARCH 31	Opening of the Portico Library Exhibition (runs until 29 April)
APRIL 8	Launch of Alan Shelston's new Gaskell Biography, Portico Library
13	Evening performance of <i>Elizabeth Gaskell</i> and <i>Charlotte Brontë</i> , Portico Library
17	Gaskell Society AGM at Cross St. Chapel, Manchester
23-25	Brussels Brontë Weekend
MAY 14-17	Brook St. Chapel Flower and Costume Festival with Victorian high tea in the garden

MAY 15-16 Alliance of Literary Societies AGM in Knutsford with optional trip to the Gaskell's House, 84 Plymouth Grove on the afternoon of the 16th

JUNE 9 Sheffield University study day

JULY 15 Exhibition on Elizabeth Gaskell opens at John Rylands University Library of Manchester

22 Special viewing of the exhibition for the Gaskell Society with a talk by Fran Baker

AUGUST 5 at JRL: Professor Pamela Corpron Parker on *Gaskell* and autographs

14 at JRL: History Wardrobe performance: *Elegant Economy*

SEPTEMBER Tatton Park: exhibition on Elizabeth Gaskell's Cheshire, costumed readings and talks

5 Penny Farthing race round Knutsford Moor

14 Knutsford Library: Talk about the Whitfield Collection

16 at JRL: Talk by Jenny Uglow *Country and City*

18 at JRL: by History Wardrobe: *Clothes of Cranford*

24-26 WESTMINSTER ABBEY dedication of window in Poets' Corner and related events

29 Talk by Elizabeth Williams at Brook Street Chapel: *The life and works of Elizabeth Gaskell*, followed by lunch and walk around Knutsford

OCTOBER 3 Commemorative service at Brook Street Chapel and wreath laying. Refreshments

5-9 Victorian Music hall Knutsford Little Theatre (to include *Old Poz*) Knutsford Literature Festival approx two weeks

14 at JRL: *Gaskell and her publishers* by Alan Shelston

NOVEMBER 28 John Rylands exhibition closes

The Gaskell Society



Brook Street Chapel

THE GASKELL SOCIETY HOME PAGE has all the latest information on meetings.
<http://gaskellsociety.co.uk>

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs. Joan Leach,
Far Yew Tree House, Chester Road, 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

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NEWSLETTER
Spring 2010 - Number 49

Editor's Letter

Joan Leach

We hope you are all ready to celebrate the Gaskell bicentenary. Many of the events are in the Manchester and Cheshire areas but there are others elsewhere and we hope members will stimulate interest their own areas. For up-to-date information please consult our home page www.gaskellsociety.co.uk; there is also a web page at www.elizabethgaskell.co.uk and a leaflet will soon be available for the North West programme: all these will give booking details. The Portico Library exhibition: Elizabeth Gaskell- *A Writer's Life* will be shown in April (excluding 2nd and 5th). The library, where William was Chairman for 30 years is well worth a visit and the exhibition will feature some rarely seen items.

Tabley Old Hall where Elizabeth enjoyed picnics as described in *Mr Harrison's Confessions*, is now a ruin on an island in Tabley Park. I hope to conduct a guided walk on 10th April. Booking information is on www.tableyhouse.com or contact me on joanleach@aol.com.

We hope members will support us, and act as hostesses too, for the AGM of The Alliance of Literary Societies in the 15th and 16th of May. Our representative on the committee, Janet Kennerley, has organised an excellent programme. Brook Street Chapel will be a colourful attraction as a flower festival will coincide with the ALS event. It is a great pleasure to meet members of other literary societies and they are looking forward to coming to Knutsford and Plymouth Grove.

Our groups in London, Bath and York continue with their programmes and hope members will support them. If you live near an area with Gaskell connections that has not yet organised a bicentenary event you might consider taking some action.

In this issue there are details of a Gaskell Study Day at Sheffield University on 9th June: early registration is recommended. A garden Party at Heathwaite, Elizabeth's childhood home, on 12th June from 2pm to 4pm will also need early booking (Email: patbarnard@live.co.uk) to avoid disappointment.

You will have received information about the AGM on 17th April at Cross Street Chapel and our Westminster Abbey window dedication ceremony on 25th September and watch out for many other events to be held in the autumn. We hope to see many of you at these events.

Christine Lingard has written for us about the Gaskell's London connections from her extensive researches. Some of us will visit Chelsea and other places she knew, in September.

You may be interested in an obituary of Elizabeth from The Manchester Guardian of 14th November 1865 and a copy of her death certificate.

Akiko Suzue, retiring President of the Gaskell Society of Japan sends us this information: The Society of Japan has three plans to commemorate Gaskell's 200th anniversary. The first one, publication of an Elizabeth Gaskell Study, is already launched. Many members of our society contributed to it, so that it should come to be one of the best Gaskell Study of the world to commemorate her bicentenary. The book will be published on Gaskell's birthday.

Another plan is The Gaskell Exhibition under the auspices of Jissen Women's University. Versions of Gaskell books, translations and studies will be exhibited in late September to early October around our AGM period. Now we are considering to borrow a dress and hats of mid Victorian period from Bunka University Museum. But it requires some money. I wonder if any of you has your great great grandmother's dress in your closet!

Our third plan is to make our AGM a commemorative one. It is most welcome if someone would take DVD or video of the ceremony at the Poet's Corner, and show it at the meeting Prof. Suzue will conclude the meeting with the lecture "On the topos of Elizabeth Gaskell."

Elizabeth Gaskell's London

Christine Lingard

During this special bi-centenary year members may well be visiting London and may want to find some of the places that Elizabeth Gaskell visited. She was born at Lindsey Row, now known as no. 93 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, near Battersea Bridge, in 1810 — a plaque marks the house; but within a few weeks the family moved round the corner to no.3 Beaufort Row [1] before being taken to Knutsford to spend the rest of her childhood in the care of her beloved Aunt Lumb. This house is no longer standing. Elizabeth's two half-siblings were baptised, not in a Dissenting chapel, but at nearby St Luke's, often referred to as Chelsea Old Church, where her mother had been buried in October, 1811. This church is still in use but has been extensively rebuilt after war damage. Elizabeth returned to Chelsea during the last years of her father's life (he died in 1829) and recorded the time in a famous letter to Mary Howitt in 1838:

Long ago I lived in Chelsea occasionally with my father and stepmother, and very, very unhappy I used to be; and if it had not been for the beautiful, grand river, which was an inexplicable comfort to me, and a family of the name of Kennett, I think my child's heart would have broken. [GL, 616]

However she must have retained some affection for the area, for in May 1849 she wrote 'And then to Chelsea to see the old place once more'; seven years later she stayed at Parham Place, off the King's Road, when introducing her two younger daughters to the capital. Other visits in the years before her marriage were to family. Her mother's brother, Swinton Holland, a banker, lived at Norfolk St, Park Lane. This street has been renamed Dunraven St, and substantially rebuilt. Here she got to know several of his Wedgwood and Darwin relations. It remained the home of his widow Anne and two of her daughters, Charlotte & Louisa. Susan Darwin preferred Charlotte to Louisa. Another cousin, Sir Henry Holland, son of her Uncle Peter, had an even more prestigious address: no. 25 Lower Brook St, Mayfair, in keeping with his role as doctor to the royal family. His wife Emma died of cancer in 1831 leaving a young family. His sisters, Lucy and Bessy, moved in to help until he remarried.

Once her identity as an author was revealed Elizabeth's visits to the city became frequent; sometimes she stayed in inadequate lodgings, such as the little, dusty, noisy rooming-house in Panton Square (off Haymarket), especially for longer trips when she did not wish to inconvenience people. But she had numerous friends who were always willing to entertain her. Her first hostess was a former Manchester friend, the infamous Mrs Tayler (who had the 'impromptu baby' in Blackpool). They had moved to no. 27 Woburn Square. Another early visit was a pleasurable Christmas (1850) spent at the home of her literary mentors, William and Mary Howitt, then living at no. 28 Avenue Rd, St. John's Wood, where they sat around a roaring fire telling ghost stories. [2]. Their neighbours included an associate of William's, Edward Tagart, minister of Little Portland St. Chapel, who numbered Dickens among his congregation. There are numerous references to this family in her letters around this time, though she found the atmosphere in their home cold. It was on a visit to the Tagarts that she met the Shakespearean editor, Mary Cowden Clarke:

We found a charming, brilliant-complexioned, but quiet-mannered woman; thoroughly unaffected, thoroughly attractive-so modest that blushed like a girl when we hazarded some expression of our ardent admiration of her "Mary Barton" [3]

Many of her friends lived in grand Georgian houses in the vicinity of Hyde Park or Regent's Park. These elegant terraces, designed by John Nash, were named after the ducal titles of the Prince Regent's brothers. Hensleigh Wedgwood, brother of

Mrs Charles Darwin, and Hensleigh's daughter Snow, lived at no. 17 Cumberland Place (since renumbered), her new friend Tottie Fox lived at no. 3 Sussex Place, and further along at no. 13 lived Alfred Austin, a civil servant, who did much to alleviate the effects of the cholera epidemic in Manchester. His daughter Annie spent some time at Plymouth Grove and met her future husband, Fleeming Jenkin, an engineering apprentice, there. He became a Professor at Edinburgh University and is known for his friendship with Robert Louis Stevenson.

Cousin Louisa was married at the age of 47 to Robert Croft, Vicar of Hillingdon, and lived at no. 18 Clifford St, Regent St, which is now Buck's Club, the haunt of P.G. Wodehouse and the like; at no. 8 Hyde Park Gardens was another Manchester friend, Lady Coltman, and the judge Sir Charles Crompton lived at no. 89 Oxford Terrace, Hyde Park. Lady Caroline Crompton was the daughter of a Liverpool merchant and a member of one of those bewildering inter-connected Unitarian families. Several of her sisters or their families are mentioned in Elizabeth's letters - Mrs Noble of Silverdale, Mrs John Shuttleworth (wife of the radical Manchester newspaper owner), and Mrs Charles Booth among them. Mrs James Booth (née Jane Noble), the latter's cousin and sister-in-law, and wife of a future Secretary of the Board of Trade, was eager to play host at no. 39 Hyde Park Square in 1853 - 'such a charming person'.

Other regular hosts included William Ewart, the radical politician, at no. 6 Cambridge Square, Hyde Park; he also entertained her at Broadleas, his home near Devizes. Her great friend, Mrs Davenport of Capesthorpe, re-married to Lord Hatherton, had her London home at no. 42 Berkeley Square; William Shaen, her solicitor, who was married to Emily, one of the Winkworth sisters, at no. 8 Bedford Row, Holbein; and Maria James, the wife of the judge, William Milbourne James, a student with William at Glasgow University, at no. 47 Wimpole St.

MA. & I agree that yours is one of the 3 houses we like best to stay at [FL, p.123]

Her newly found fame brought Elizabeth many invitations from the literary circuit, especially the celebrity breakfast; in particular the poet, Samuel Rogers at St. James Place, who entertained her in May 1849:

... poor old man; he looks so very old, and feeble ... though he again showed us some beautiful things - ornaments for the head, ears, neck dug out of Etruscan, Pompeian, & Egyptian tombs; some were as elegant as anything that is made now. [GL, 47]

There was also the politician, Richard Monckton Milnes (Lord Houghton), in Pall Mall;

... we cabbed it to Mr Monckton Milnes' ... There were the House of Lords there, Miss Holland says; but independently of the Lords, there was Guizot, and Whewell, and Archdeacon Hare. We were very merry, and it was a very short two hours which every one had said was the proper number of hours to stay at breakfast. [GL, 45a]

This was followed by her first visit to Dickens' home, for dinner, 'making ... a rich day'. This would be in Tavistock Square, though this house is no longer standing:

We were shown into Mr Dickens' study... It is the study where he writes all his works; and has a bow-window, about the size of Uncle Holland's drawing room. There are books all round, up to the ceiling, and down to the ground; a standing-desk at which he writes; and all manner of comfortable easy chairs. Anne [her cousin] sat between Carlyle & [Samuel] Rogers, — I between Dickens & Douglas Jerrold. Anne heard the most sense, and I the most wit... [GL, 45a]

Her first meeting with Carlyle was disappointing, especially as he had spoken so appreciatively of Mary Barton. The invitation had come from Jane Carlyle, without consulting him. Emily Winkworth, who accompanied her, was disgusted that she was kept waiting for an hour in the drawing-room with Mrs Carlyle looking out at the garden, where 'her great rude husband was walking backwards & forwards in a dirty Scotch plaid smoking', and where he was sent out to four times, and wouldn't come in. At last Mrs C. went out to him herself, — 'but it was no use, and she came back looking so mortified'. [4] Carlyle lived in Cheyne Row, Chelsea, very near to her birthplace. The house is open to the public.

Years later she visited William Makepeace Thackeray at no. 2 Palace Green Rd, opposite Kensington Gardens (now the Israeli embassy). His daughter Anne Ritchie described the occasion:

Once, only a year before, Mrs. Gaskell had come with one of her daughters to see us in my father's house, and I can just remember her talking to him in the big dining-room at Palace Green; looking up laughing, inquiring, responding, gay, yet definite, such is the impression I have of her presence. Nor do I forget the motherly letter, full of truest warmth and expression of feeling, in which, after our father's death, she invited us to stay at Manchester, to come to that home in Plymouth Grove in which, for years, and years to be, such true hospitality, such life-long friendship, awaited me and mine. [5]

There numerous other people for social occasions — too many to name. Among them, the geologist Sir Charles Lyell in Harley St, Leigh Hunt (formerly a neighbour of Carlyle in Chelsea) at no. 16 Rowan Rd, Hammersmith, Dante Gabriel Rossetti,

then living near Blackfriars Bridge (his later home was at the other end of Cheyne Walk); Charles Kingsley at Chelsea Rectory, and John & Effie Ruskin at no. 163 Denmark Hill, Herne Hill (April 1855). She went to hear Frederick Maurice preach at Lincoln's Inn.

Some visits were just for business — her publishers Chapman & Hall had offices in Park Lane, and George Smith in Corn Hill. There were plenty of occasions to become a tourist, often using Peter Cunningham's Handbook of London past & present, as a guide. The energetic Lady Anna Coltman (née Duckworth) was very keen to keep her busy.

... Ly Coltman plans to take me to the Zoological Gardens ... and Kensal Green Cemetery. At 4 we are to go with the Dean of Hereford, and the Dean of Salisbury (for a good Unitarian Ly Coltman knows a mighty number of Deans) (GL, 156a)

She visited Hampton Court in 1856 (her guidebook is preserved in Manchester Central Library), and Kew. William Ewart offered to show her the Houses of Parliament, though it is not clear whether she took him up on the offer, and there was always time for art galleries, theatres, shopping (Baker St Bazaar) and tea (Chapter Coffee House).

Elizabeth was just as keen to see the other side of life and made several visits to charitable institutions, though most of these are no longer to be seen. In 1851 she went to the Convent of the Sisters of Mercy at Bermondsey:

Bermondsey is a very bad part of London; and these Sisters have been established about 11 years, and have done a good deal of good and established a great large school. [GL, 100]

She went to see her friend, James Pillans Wilson, at Mr Price's candle factory, a benevolently run company which provided a Christian Society, and rewarded the boy employees with games of cricket & outings; and to see Mr Nash's reformatory schools, or ragged schools, at Westminster:

[he] was a clerk and has given up his life and his time to reforming criminals for some years past. Sending out as many as 100 every year to the Colonies; [GL156a]

And she even went to Tothill Fields Prison (near Westminster Cathedral) in May 1849 to see 'the silent associated system of which our dear Mr Wright thinks so highly'. [GL, 47]

She ventured into the suburbs, evidently being familiar with Putney & Wimbledon, where she spent a lot of time trailing round looking for lodgings. Friends to visit there were the Christian Socialists — Thomas Hughes & J.M.F. Ludlow and their families, who shared a house at The Firs, Ridgway, William Rathbone Greg, and her rarely mentioned cousin, George Holland, at Gayton Lodge. Hampstead was also in reach even if it proved difficult. She once wrote to the critic, Henry Morley:

Did you ever hear how Mrs Wedgwood & I toiled & broiled in search of the very mysterious place where you live...and just as we must have been in sight of the New Hampstead Road, had to turn back for our time was up... [GL 278]

She was more successful visiting George Smith, Clarkson Stanfield the artist, and the Tagarts, who had moved there. Marianne Gaskell went to school at Holly Lodge.

Her two married daughters later had homes in London. Marianne lived at Lansdowne Rd, Wimbledon. A memorial was dedicated to her husband Edward Thurstan Holland in All Saints Church. Florence started her married life with her in-laws but later lived at no.13 Cromwell Place, South Kensington. She continued the family tradition of hospitality. Henry James was a guest on more than one occasion:

and also [dined] with Mrs Crompton again, and took out her sister Miss Meta Gaskell (the Nortons' friend), a most pleasing, amiable, sympathetic woman. [6]

Further reading:

[GL] Chapple, J.A.V. & Pollard, Arthur. The letters of Mrs Gaskell, [new ed], 1997.

[FL] Chapple, J.A.V. & Shelston, Alan. Further letters of Mrs Gaskell, 2000.

[1] Chapple, J.A.V. Elizabeth Gaskell: the early years, 1997.

[2] Lee, Amice. Laurels and rosemary: the life of William and Mary Howitt, 1955.

[3] Clarke, Mary & Charles Cowden. Recollections of writers, 1878.

[4] Uglow, Jenny. Elizabeth Gaskell; a habit of stories, 1993.

[5] Ritchie, Anne Thackeray. Blackstick papers, 1908.

[6] Edel, Leon (editor). Henry James: letters, volume II, 1875-1883, 1975.

A Tale of Two Centenaries: Elizabeth Gaskell and Lev Tolstoy

Dr Katherine Jane Briggs

A literary centenary stimulates new interest in the life and works of a famous author; and prompts us to consider the significance of their novels for the present day, as

well as their influence on other writers. This year marks the bicentenary of the birth of Elizabeth Gaskell; and also the centenary of the death of Tolstoy, one of the most significant Russian writers of all time. The links between these two events may appear tenuous at first sight, but a chain of reference may be established within the context of world literature.

Much of my research has been centred on the influence of one writer on another, and the ways in which writers in England and Russia promoted the Christian social gospel of compassion for the poor and oppressed. Writers such as Elizabeth Gaskell, George Eliot, Charlotte Bronte and Charles Dickens all drew attention in their novels to the lives of poor people in their own country, as did Tolstoy, Turgenev and Dostoevsky in theirs – at a time when modes of communication were very different from what they are today.

My work explores the relationship between public work and influence, and private faith and spiritual development, through female characters created by all these 19th-century authors, in which they portray the experience of women in terms of their relationships and work, and conflict with personal and institutional evil. A modern novelist, Howard Jacobson, says: 'Novels matter, in my view, because they show how each individual life feels to the person living it.' To enter into another person's understanding of self, we need what writers and teachers call the 'sympathetic imagination' – the attempt to stand and walk in the shoes of another person.

In the context of cross-cultural understanding, it is also essential to consider questions of translation from one language to another – and to consider how a Russian lady in St Petersburg came to be offered a novel by an English lady from Cheshire as a suitable subject for translation by a marginally disreputable journalist like Dostoevsky – and why she agreed to do it.

Ed. Dr K J Briggs will speak on this topic in the afternoon of the AGM meeting to be held at Cross Street on 17th April.

Vernon Lushington: Mrs Gaskell's 'Cousin V'

In the 1860s Elizabeth Gaskell was concerned about the plight of the Manchester cotton operatives who were suffering from lack of work because of the blockade of imported cotton which resulted from the American Civil War. She arranged for an assistance fund to be set up and sought help in collecting funds in London. One of those who came to her assistance was the lawyer Vernon Lushington. Mrs Gaskell and Lushington became good friends, with Lushington often visiting the family at their home in Plymouth Grove where a room was kept for him when he was in

Manchester on legal business. In one of her letters Mrs Gaskell referred to Lushington as 'Cousin V'.

Little has been known about Lushington until the recent emergence of an important but little-known archive of Lushington correspondence and diaries. These were made available to historian David Taylor whose interest in the Lushingtons stretches back many years. David Taylor has been helping to catalogue the archive and is currently researching for a thesis on Lushington for a PhD at Roehampton University.

Lushington moved in a remarkable circle of friends, which included the Pre-Raphaelite painters, Charles Darwin, George Eliot, William Morris, Thomas Hardy, George Gissing and many more household names from the second half of the nineteenth century. Through his friendship with Leslie and Julia Stephen, Lushington's three daughters became friends of Virginia Stephen (better known as Virginia Woolf), who used Kitty Lushington as the model for her 'Mrs Dalloway'.

* David Taylor will give the Daphne Carrick Lecture after the AGM on 17th April at Cross Street. He is a local historian living in Cobham, Surrey, which is where the Lushington family had their summer residence. He is an archivist for the Cobham Park estate and has written many books and articles on various aspects of local history. He is well known as both writer and speaker and was, last year, invited to give a short lecture tour in the USA based on his work on the Lushingtons.

A Brontë letter: Correction

In the Autumn Newsletter no. 48, a letter from Charlotte Brontë to Elizabeth Gaskell about a visit to Chatsworth, is mentioned, suggesting that it may never have appeared in print. Margaret Smith, editor of *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë*, points out that the letter has in fact been published. Dated 27 August 1850, it appears in *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë*, Vol. II (OUP 2000), pp. 456-8, and also as early as 1908 in Clement Shorter's *The Brontës: Life and Letters*, London 1908 Vol. II, pp. 163-4.

Also in the previous Newsletter, Dr John Ross considered the cause of Elizabeth Gaskell's death. This inspired Christine Lingard to send for a copy of the official death certificates for Elizabeth Gaskell and for her daughter, Florence, who died at the early age of 38. Elizabeth's death is recorded as 'Heart Failure'.

But Florence's, dated October 5th 1881, gives the cause of death as: '*Found dead. Poisoned by an overdose of chloral hydrate accidentally*'.

This sedative drug, often taken as a sleeping draught, was addictive but as it had an unpleasant taste it seems unlikely that an overdose could be taken 'accidentally'.

The Death of Mrs Gaskell reported

A member kindly sent me a clipping from *The Guardian* which was a reprinting of the paper's report of Elizabeth Gaskell's death, dated 14 November 1865:

Last evening the melancholy intelligence reached the city of the death of Mrs Gaskell, the wife of the respected minister of the Unitarian Chapel, Cross Street . . .

Her death was very sudden, and that there could have been no expectation of so speedy a termination of her life work, nor even a thought of danger, is shown by the fact that Mr Gaskell preached in his own chapel on Sunday, and was at home when the news of her decease reached him . . . (a few details of her life are given) With the modesty of no doubt in her own gift she issued her first work, May Barton, anonymously in 1848. It attracted great interest from the fact that its scene was laid in this neighbourhood. Another of her popular novels was North and South, in which the painful details of a strike in the manufacturing districts were narrated with great vigour). But the greatest work, and that by which she will be longest known, is her 'Life of Charlotte Brontë', of which it has been said that no biography has equalled it since Boswell's Johnson. In the earlier editions of this now standard work some personal references were made which created much discussion, and which were omitted from subsequent editions. A similar feeling had been occasioned at an earlier period of Mrs Gaskell's literary career, for in sketches entitled Cranford, which appeared in Household Words, she had drawn portraits rather too accurately of some living personages . . . (then follows a mention of the Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857 and her distinguished visitors) Her conversational powers were of no mean order, and she was at all times an important acquisition to the social order. Of late years she has travelled much abroad but her inspiration was always found in English life and character. Her death leaves a blank that will not easily be filled

Exciting times ahead at Brook Street Chapel

The Chapel and the Gaskell Grave are places of pilgrimage for Gaskell enthusiasts from all over the U.K. and the world. The popularity of the B.B.C. filming of "Cranford" and the subsequent programmes has vastly increased interest in Gaskell.

The Chapel itself is reached by steep stone steps and cobbled paths which elderly and disabled people find impossible to manage and so, more than five years ago, the committee decided to improve the access to the Chapel, the Gaskell grave and to the tranquil garden at the rear of the Chapel.

Columns:-	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
No.	When and where died	Name and surname	Sex	Age	Occupation	Cause of death	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar
216	Twelfth November 1865 Hollybourn	Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell	Female	55 Years	Wife of William Gaskell Unitarian minister	Disease of the Heart Certified	Ann Hewin Present at the death Hollybourn	Fifteenth November 1865	W. Gaskell Registrar

Columns:-	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
No.	When and where died	Name and surname	Sex	Age	Occupation	Cause of death	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar
192	5 th October 1881 13 Cromwell Place Wensington	Florence Elizabeth Crompton	Female	38 Years	Wife of Charles Crompton Barrister	Found dead Poisoned by an overdose of Chloral Hydrate Accidentally	Certificate received from Thomas Bramah, Medical Coroner for Middlesex Inquest held October 1881	Fourteenth October 1881	S. A. Hume Registrar

The project sounded simple enough but the Chapel's Grade 1 status and the ancient yew trees meant that there were many restrictions to overcome. The architect came up with an ingenious plan that solved the access problem but left us with another problem — how to pay for it! For the last few years the Chapel members have fund raised themselves, applied for grants and been blessed by generous donations from benefactors until finally, in January, the work began.

So what is happening?

- 1 A lift is being installed in the schoolroom to enable disabled people to reach the newly installed first floor.
- 2 The new room will exit to a level wheelchair-friendly path which leads to the Chapel.
- 3 The gravestones by the Chapel are being levelled and a viewing platform is being built which will overlook the Gaskell grave.
- 4 The garden will be reached via slightly stepped gravestones.
- 5 New toilets and other facilities will be installed.

What next?

- 1 The new room will be developed into an exhibition centre dedicated to Elizabeth Gaskell.
- 2 There will be other temporary displays, eg. important Knutsford characters etc
- 3 The Chapel will be open regularly for visitors and tourists.
- 4 Interpretation of the history of the Chapel will be introduced in the gallery.
- 5 Work closely and co-operatively with Knutsford Heritage Centre.

What does this mean for Brook Street Chapel and Knutsford?

- 1 Everyone will be able to reach the Chapel.
- 2 The overall facilities including the main hall will be good and so other local organisations can use the premises for meetings, workshops, readings, rehearsals, concerts etc.
- 3 It will be open for people wishing to find out about the Chapel and its history
- 4 It will be a focal point for Gaskell enthusiasts.
- 5 We hope that local people will be encouraged to come to Brook Street Chapel and find out for themselves what a wonderful friendly place it is and to enjoy its unique beauty
- 6 It will be a tourist attraction.

Emily White 1925-2010

Her many friends in the north-west were very sorry to learn of the sudden death, on January 31st, of Emily White, a long-standing member of The Gaskell Society.

Emily was born in Macclesfield on 17th March 1925, the only child of a Manchester manufacturer of water-proofed cloth. She lived for most of her life in Prestbury and was educated locally before becoming a pupil at Manchester High School, where Meta Gaskell was still celebrated as a benefactor on Founder's Day. Aged seventeen, Emily gained a place to read P.P.E. at Lady Margaret Hall and was fortunate in being able to stay at Oxford for 3 years to complete her Honours Degree. At this time women had to leave their studies on reaching the age of twenty to be called up for war service. Even so, like all students, Emily had to contribute five hours a week 'war-work', scrubbing floors and picking potatoes on the College hockey field, sacrificed for the duration to the 'Dig for Victory' campaign. Emily played in goal for the second varsity hockey team and in her final year was awarded a tennis blue, contributing to a celebrated away win against Cambridge.

After Oxford Emily trained as a Housing Manager, a career which, before the welfare state, embraced many elements of social care. She worked in Chester, London and Manchester before leaving to join the Manchester and Salford Council of Social Service, as assistant secretary, in 1955. Her job there was to promote co-operation with and between voluntary organisations and to identify gaps in social provision and innovate projects to meet these needs. The many-faceted voluntary social scene gave Emily full scope for her ideas and administrative skills, and her valuable work led to her appointment as the first woman General Secretary to the Council in 1964, and the award of OBE in 1976. In the 1970s Emily joined the social development department of the recently created Warrington New Town as a principal officer and was promoted to Head of Community development before her retirement in 1982.

On retirement, Emily enrolled immediately for a local history diploma at Manchester Polytechnic and for her dissertation subject chose 'Women in public service in early 20th-century Macclesfield'. Her favourite research tool was her tape-recorder, with which she interviewed the daughters and granddaughters of the leading 'platform people' of that time. One such pioneer of women's causes was Susan Elizabeth Gaskell, always known as Lily, a niece of the Gaskells and friend of Meta and Julia, who came to live in Prestbury on her marriage to Walter Greg. Emily presented a paper on the work of this public-spirited heir to the Gaskell tradition at a meeting of the Manchester Lit. and Phil. Society, which was later published in their Transactions. She also published a number of short histories of local churches and historic church schools and a biography of Joan Gaddum OBE. Emily's concern for others did not cease with retirement. Some twenty years ago she helped to form Age Concern in Cheshire and was still president of Age Concern Cheshire and a trustee of Age Concern East Cheshire at the time of her death.

Emily gained great pleasure from her love of music and after her move to Kerridge played the organ for the local church and sang with the Bollington Festival choir, but

at the end of a working life spent largely in committees, she was now most happy out of doors. She was Lady Captain, and later Lady President of Prestbury Golf Club, as her mother had been, and won more than her share of trophies. She loved her garden and rambling the hills with her dog or local walking groups. In old age she continued to take strenuous walking holidays in the mountain ranges of Europe and on a recent African safari holiday took over the controls of a light aircraft to fly over Victoria Falls. She valued the company of the friends she made in the Gaskell Society at our Knutsford meetings, and particularly enjoyed the conferences, holidays and day trips which offered that wonderful mixture of learning and outdoor activities for which her appetite never diminished. Some will remember her striding the Lakes in the footsteps of Shirley Foster at our last conference.

A Service of Thanksgiving held for Emily at St Peter's Church, Prestbury, on 17th February, brought together a large congregation, expressive of the affection of her many friends and the respect earned by her lifetime's work making things better for others, wherever she saw the need.

The Alliance of Literary Societies

Kenn Oultram

Following a phone call from Joan Leach I agreed to accompany her, on 30 April, 1988, to the Birmingham and Midland Institute to support the setting up of an Alliance of Literary Societies (ALS). The inspiration came from Kathleen Adams, who retired as secretary of the George Eliot Fellowship in 2008 after forty years in office. Her husband Bill was later to become secretary of the ALS, and the Coventry-based couple are today vice-presidents of the Alliance.

A follow-up meeting in Birmingham on 8 October 1988, attracted a capacity audience to the BMI lecture theatre, and the appointed officers were: Joseph Hunt, Chairman (Francis Brett Young Society), Herbert Woodward, Secretary, and John Bates, Treasurer (both of The Dickens Fellowship, Birmingham branch). I volunteered and was appointed newsletter editor (a position I held for 10 years) and Joan was elected as a committee member; a position presently held by Janet Kennerley.

Annual meetings at the BMI, in those early years, featured presentations by member societies with readings, including some from the relevant author's work by the actor Gabriel Woolf, the ALS's first President. The Alliance is currently set to appoint a new president, following the death last year of Aeronwy Thomas, the daughter of Dylan Thomas, who supported the ALS with enthusiasm and charm.

Latterly ALS annual general meetings have been hosted by various societies in locations as diverse as London, Oxford, Stoke-on-Trent, Swindon, Bath, Swansea, Ledbury, Berkhamsted and (last year) Dublin. The 2011 event will be hosted by The Johnson Society in Lichfield, with a provisional date of 14/15 May; while the following year the honour falls to the Dickens Fellowship on the occasion the bicentenary of the great man's birth.

Finally, the progressive ALS has achieved international recognition by affiliating to the ALG, a Berlin-based organisation funded by the German government, which embraces European literary societies and related museums. Annual conferences have been held in Berlin and Budapest, when the ALS delegate has been its Chairperson, Linda Curry (The John Clare Society). She hopes that the ALS will ultimately be hosts.

Ed. Kenn Oultram, is one of our founder members and served on the committee for sixteen years. He recently completed forty years as secretary to the Lewis Carroll Society (Daresbury).

The Alliance of Literary Societies

**The Gaskell Society welcomes the
ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES
to the AGM and Weekend Event
Saturday 15th May – Sunday 16th May 2010**

PROGRAMME (may be subject to change)

Saturday 15th May – The Methodist Church, Princess Street, Knutsford

10.30 am **Registration and Coffee** – (£2 if not staying for lunch)

11.00 am **Welcome & Introduction** by The Gaskell Society
followed by **Annual General Meeting of the ALS**

12.15pm approx. **Buffet Lunch** (optional) - £10 including tea/coffee

1.45pm **"Elizabeth Gaskell – Her Life and Works"**
- talk by Elizabeth Williams, Chairman of The Gaskell Society

2.30pm **"Mrs Gaskell & Knutsford"**
- talk by Joan Leach MBE, Hon. Secretary, introducing:-

3.00pm **"A Cranford Walk around Knutsford"**
(lasting approximately 1.5 hours)

7.00/7.30pm **Dinner** – The Cottons Hotel, Manchester Road, Knutsford
(must be pre-booked – 3 courses plus coffee £27)

Sunday 16th May – Brook Street Unitarian Chapel, Knutsford

10.00am Coffee followed by illustrated talk by Joan Leach MBE:-
“Mrs Gaskell’s Cheshire”

10.45am Laying of wreath on Elizabeth Gaskell’s grave

Various options – possibly:-

11am-12 noon Morning Worship at Brook Street Unitarian Chapel

Visit to 84 Plymouth Grove in Manchester – subject to building works
(former home of Rev & Mrs Gaskell and family)

Opportunity to explore ECG’s Cheshire – e.g. Tabley House and/or
Tatton Park (halls open 2pm) Capesthorpe Hall, Peover Hall, Styal
Mill.

Please note this weekend is open to any member of a society affiliated to the ALS,
but only one delegate from each society can vote, if necessary, at the AGM. This
annual event, held over a weekend at a venue associated with one of our member
societies, is an opportunity to learn about a particular author, whilst socialising with
members of a wide range of literary societies.

This year’s venue will be Knutsford in Cheshire. Mentioned in the Domesday Book
of 1086, Knutsford has a long, rich and varied history. The town is known as being
the childhood home of author, Elizabeth Gaskell, born in London during 1810 as
Elizabeth Cleghorn Stevenson, an outstanding novelist of the early Victorian era.
Following her mother’s death a year after her birth, the young Elizabeth was brought
to Cheshire to live with her late mother’s sister, “Aunt Lumb” at “Heathwaite House”
in what is now known as Gaskell Avenue, Knutsford. She married the Unitarian
Minister, Reverend William Gaskell, in 1832 at Knutsford Parish Church, and then
lived in Manchester. From 1850, the Gaskell family home was at 84 Plymouth Grove
in the Manchester suburbs, currently undergoing a major restoration project to
return this literary house to its former glory. However, Elizabeth Gaskell was fond of
her childhood home town and immortalised Knutsford in many of her works,
especially “Cranford” which is considered a charming portrayal of the town in
Victorian times and of its mainly female population.

Today, Knutsford is a popular tourist destination, with its eclectic mix of unique
Italianate architecture, quaint cobbled streets and grand buildings. It is also a
bustling commuter town with a lively shopping centre full of specialist shops,
boutiques to antiques, interior design centres and art galleries. From “Top Street”

(Princess Street) to “Bottom Street” (King Street) there are many delightful
attractions for visitors to explore, along with numerous restaurants, cafes and pubs.
There is access to open heathland and the attractive parkland surrounding the
mansion at Tatton Park is at the end of King Street.

Knutsford is justly regarded as one of the most attractive towns of its size in
Cheshire – with a story to tell around every corner!

Janet Kennerley

BOOKING FORM

To secure your place at the above event, complete this form and return with your
remittance payable to “The Gaskell Society” by **31st MARCH 2010** please to:-

Mrs Joan Leach MBE, Honorary Secretary, The Gaskell Society,
Far Yew Tree House, Chester Road, Tabley, Knutsford, Cheshire. WA16 0HN

Name(s):

Address:

Telephone: Email:

I/We wish to attend the ALS Annual General Meeting on 15th May 2010.

£10 per person – for the day, inclusive of 2 course buffet style lunch
and coffee/tea

OR £2 per person – for the day without lunch but including morning coffee/tea
(This may be paid on the day)

£27 per person – Formal Dinner at The Cottons Hotel, Manchester Road,
Knutsford (3 course set meal incl. coffee, vegetarian option)

I/We enclose remittance – please make cheques payable to The Gaskell Society
as follows:-

Total: £

If you would like to visit Plymouth Grove on Sunday 16th please ask Joan for
details.

Gaskell Study Day at Sheffield

As part of the Bicentenary celebrations, the University of Sheffield's School of English is holding a Study Day on the topic of 'Gaskell's Longer Short Fiction', on 9th of June 2010. The main speaker will be Professor Joanne Shattock, who will deliver a paper on 'Elizabeth Gaskell and her Readers: from Howitt's Journal to the Cornhill'. There will also be postgraduate speakers, and Alan Shelston and Shirley Foster will lead a round-table discussion.

Draft Programme:

11.30 a.m.	Coffee and Registration
12.00	Main speaker
1.00-1.45 p.m.	Buffet lunch
2.00-4.00 p.m.	Postgraduate papers and round-table discussion
4.00 p.m.	Tea and departure

The cost of the day will be £7.50, to be paid in advance.

Please indicate by 31 March if you would like to attend. There is no official booking form; replies and cheques (made out to the University of Sheffield) should be sent to Dr Shirley Foster at either The School of English, University of Sheffield, Jessop West, 1 Upper Hanover Street, Sheffield S3 7RA, or reply to: s.foster1@sheffield.ac.uk. Please be sure to include a contact address.

BOOK NOTES

Christine Lingard

Elizabeth Gaskell by Alan Shelston. Hesperus Press Ltd £7.99. This concise biography by the President of the Gaskell Society is a welcome addition to the acclaimed Brief Lives series. This book will be launched at the Portico Library, Manchester on 8th April.

Victorian servants, class, and the politics of literacy, by Jean Fernandez, (University of Maryland, Baltimore County). Routledge Studies in Nineteenth-century Literature, £70.

Discusses the development of mass literacy, and the class structure, illustrated in particular by the role of the servant in Victorian literature. It includes a chapter on 'Oral Pleasures: Repression and Desire in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) and Elizabeth Gaskell's "*The Old Nurse's Story*" (1862)'. Mary Wollstonecraft, Catherine Crowe, Wilkie Collins and Robert Louis Stevenson are also discussed, as well as some unfamiliar diary writers.

Also due for publication this Spring:

Cousin Phillis and Other Stories, ed. Heather Glen (Oxford World's Classics) OUP, £8.99.

Contents: Lizzie Leigh; Morton Hall; My French Master; Half a Life-Time Ago; The Manchester Marriage; Cousin Phillis – a group of stories that have been out of print for some time.

The Moorland Cottage. Hesperus Classics, £7.99. This novella, which was a special Christmas publication in 1850, provided some of the material for the 2009 television adaptation of Cranford.

The Penguin Book of Ghost Stories: from Elizabeth Gaskell to Ambrose Bierce, edited by Michael Newton, Penguin Classics, contains The old nurse's story, £10.99

Two new audio productions are also due to be released:

Wives and Daughters by Elizabeth Gaskell (Audio CD) Naxos AudioBooks; Unabridged edition read by Patience Tomlinson, £75 (available on Amazon for £37.50) Abridged edition, £15.

Cousin Phillis by Elizabeth Gaskell (Audio CD) Naxos AudioBooks; Unabridged edition read by Joe Marsh, £14.

A Report on progress at Plymouth Grove

Janet Allan

Work on the exterior of the house should be completed in April, later than expected due to the unexpectedly bad winter. It will be a transformation from the dingy 'Pink House' we have known for so long with beautiful covering of lime plaster, restored windows and doors, new handrails and front steps, and a lot of interior structural work as well. We are very grateful to our major funders, who together contributed three quarters of a million pounds for this. They include English Heritage, the Bowland Trust, Biffa and the Oglesby Trust, but also to so many individuals who have sent us donations totally over nine thousand pounds.

Our application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the work on the interior is going to their regional committee on 11 March. By the time this reaches you we hope that we will have been awarded the first stage of a million pound grant.

If you are a member of the Friends of Plymouth Grove, you can have your preview at our AGM on 8 May at 2pm. The house will be open for the ALS on Sunday 16 and our first public open day is on Sunday 6 June, 12-4pm.

Our forthcoming events include:

Wednesday 31 March- Friday 30 April, 9.30-4.30, Monday-Friday excluding Easter.
Portico Library, 57 Mosley Street, M2 3HY *Elizabeth Gaskell Exhibition*

On Thursday 8 April, 6.30pm Alan Shelston will talk about writing his new biography of Elizabeth Gaskell, when we hope that three generations of Elizabeth's descendents (including the Trust's Patron Mrs Rosemary Dabbs) will be with us and on Tuesday 13 April there will be an InterTheatre performance of Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Bronte. Book with the Library for these events, 0161 236 6785

Tuesday 25 May starting at 9.00 *Visit to St Deiniol's Library,*

The Library was founded by Gladstone in the picturesque village of Hawarden, It has an outstanding collection of over 250,000 items, specialising in Theology and Victorian Studies. Travel by coach (starting opposite Chorlton Street bus station). This tour is shared with the Portico Library. Cost £20 includes travel, coffee or tea and cake on arrival and tour of the library. You can order lunch individually in the library cafe. Please book with Hilda Holmes on 0161 487 2593.

Wednesday 16 June, 7 for 7.30 *Dear Scheherazade,*

Gabrielle Drake's one-woman show on Elizabeth Gaskell, postponed from January because of the bad weather, will be performed at MMU's Capitol Theatre in the Mabel Tylecote Building, All Saints, M15 6BH. Tickets are £15 including refreshments. Book via the Box Office on 0161 247 1306. Space is limited so book

North West Group

Knutsford meetings are held at St John's Church hall, on the last Wednesday in the month from October to April. Buffet lunch is from 12.15pm. Cost £8

A selection of Gaskell stories from *Tales of Mystery and the Macabre* (Wordsworth edition) will be studied and discussed with Elizabeth Williams. The Crooked Branch, The Grey Woman etc.

London and South East Group

Saturday, 8 May 2010: Professor Marion Shaw: 'Neither beginning, middle, nor end': a discussion on *My Lady Ludlow*.

This will follow the pattern of this year's May meeting. Marion Shaw will introduce Gaskell's work and then a discussion will ensue.

Professor Shaw is Emeritus Professor of English Literature at Loughborough University, with special interests in Tennyson and Elizabeth Gaskell.

Homework!! It might be advisable to read or re-read the work before the meeting!!

Meetings continue at Francis Holland School at 2pm with a sandwich lunch from 12.45pm.

South- West Group

Saturday, 13th March, 2.30 p.m: Discussion group at Bren Abercrombie's, 12 Mount Road, Lansdown, BA1. To continue the discussion on *Mary Barton*.
(Tel: 01225 471241)

Saturday, 24th April, 2.30 p.m: at BRLSI, Dr Frances Twinn, editor of the Gaskell Journal, will speak on: 'From Monkshaven to *Middlemarch* - the Provincial Landscapes of Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot'.
Tea/Coffee will be served after the talk. £2.00 to members; £4.00 to non-members.

August, date to be announced: Summer tea at Kate and Alec Crawford's, Norton St Philip. Tel: 01225 331763.

Any queries to Mrs Elizabeth Schlenther, 14 Vellore Lane, Bath, BA2 6JQ.

Yorkshire Group

Saturday, 1st May at the Friends Meeting House, York, 2.00p.m.

David Taylor will give a talk on "**Vernon Lushington, Mrs Gaskell's Cousin V**". Lushington was a lawyer who helped Mrs Gaskell when she set up an Assistance fund for the Cotton Workers during the Cotton Blockade. He became a firm friend, so much so that a room at Plymouth Grove was put aside for his work whenever he was in Manchester. The talk will cover their friendship and also Lushington's friendship with other famous names of the time such as George Eliot, Thomas Hardy and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

Saturday, 9th October at the Friends Meeting House, 2.00p.m.

Janet Allen will give a talk on "**Plymouth Grove**". Janet's talk will cover the time the Gaskells lived in the house, and also the progress of the work being carried out on the house today.

In addition to the above, in this bicentenary year the Group has established links with the **Unitarian Church in York** and several events are planned to take place in the Church:

22nd May: a talk on "**Unitarianism**" by **Adrian Lovett** (Chairperson of the Church).

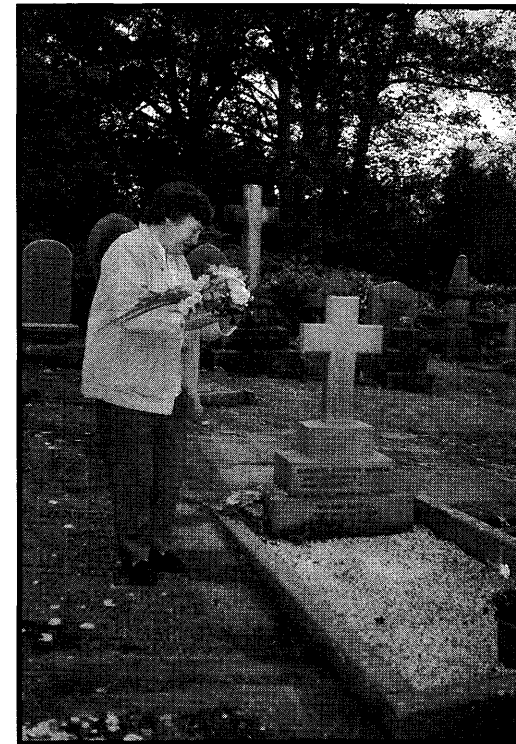
10th September: "**Elizabeth Gaskell**", a talk by **Elizabeth Williams** (Chairman of the Gaskell Society).

Date to be arranged: "**Manchester New College in York**", a talk by **Adrian Lovett**.

For further details of all the above, contact Kate Smith at shepleysmiths@tiscali.co.uk.

Meetings will commence at 2 p.m. The room will be available from 12.30 p.m. for those who wish to bring a picnic lunch. To cover expenses a contribution of £3 is requested from members of The Gaskell Society and £4 from non-members.

The Gaskell Society



25th September 2004

Joan Leach puts flowers on Elizabeth Gaskell's grave, Brook Street Chapel

THE GASKELL SOCIETY HOME PAGE has all the latest information on meetings.
<http://gaskellsociety.co.uk>

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs. Helen Smith,
11 Lowland Way, Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 9AG.
Telephone - 01565 632615 E-mail: helenisabel@ntlworld.com

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

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

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NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2010 - Number 50

Joan Leach

Janet Allan

After most of this Newsletter had been compiled Joan was taken ill and is now undergoing radio-therapy, before she had a chance to complete her Editor's Letter. I know that on hearing this sad news everyone will be sending their very best wishes to her. We hope very much that she will be with us on 25 September at Westminster Abbey, when Elizabeth Gaskell will be installed in Poets' Corner.

As usual the newsletter has been typed by Mary Syner and I have just finished off the 'tops and tails'.

"Such happy days as my schooldays were": Elizabeth Gaskell and Warwickshire

Dr Elizabeth M. Cox

Elizabeth Gaskell's enthusiasm for the places and history of Warwickshire, where she attended school for five years, is conveyed most effectively in her own words. On August 18, 1838 she opened a long letter to Mary Howitt, primarily about Cheshire customs, with the following paragraphs about Warwickshire:

I am very glad indeed Mr Howitt thinks of going to Clopton; and one of my reasons for wishing to write soon is that I may beg him thoroughly to explore the neighbourhood (that of Stratford-on-Avon). As a schoolgirl I could not see much, but I heard of many places that I longed to know more about; and yet I can only give you glimpses of what those places were. I know there was a mysterious old farmhouse near Clifford, which had been the family mansion of the Grevilles, and where Sir Fulke Greville, the servant of Queen Elizabeth, the counsellor of King James, and the friend of Sir Philip Sidney, was born and bred. [...].

Then there is an old curious seat of the Marquis of Northampton, who married Miss Clephane, Sir W. Scott's friend, Compton Winyates, near Edgehill, and someway connected with the history of the battle. Shottery, too, where Ann Hathaway (she hath a way) lived, is only a mile from Stratford. Charlecote, of course, is worthy of a visit, though it was not out of that park that Shakespeare stole the deer. I am giving but vague directions, but I am unwilling to leave even in thought the haunts of such happy days as my schooldays were.

Gaskell's interest in Warwickshire and her recollection of details are remarkable given that, by the time she wrote this letter, she had left school and the county twelve years earlier. The letter also provides an unmistakable indication of her fascination with historical incident, family lineage and mystery which were to become such important themes in her published fiction, particularly her short stories and tales.

Gaskell's memories of her time in Warwickshire, where she spent some of her formative years, are clearly happy ones. In the autumn of 1821, when she was just eleven years old, she left Knutsford to attend a girls' boarding school in the village of Barford, a couple of miles south of Warwick. The school was run by the Byerley sisters (relations of Josiah Wedgwood) and provided Gaskell with 'one of the best educations available to girls' in the nineteenth century. Indeed the school educated a number of women who became well known in their day, and in 1830 when she was

aged ten, Florence Nightingale visited the school. In May 1824 the sisters moved their school from Barford to Avonbank, an eighteenth-century mansion situated near the River Avon and Holy Trinity Church in Stratford-upon-Avon. Gaskell remained a pupil at the school until sometime in the first half of 1826. Sadly most of the school was demolished in 1866, but two original buildings still stand in the Avonbank public gardens, one of which may have been the schoolroom.

William Stevenson, Gaskell's father, selected the Byerleys' school in Warwickshire for his daughter despite existing family associations with schools in Bath and Liverpool. The choice may have been influenced by a connection between Gaskell's stepmother, Catherine and her sister-in-law, Katharine Thomson (formerly Byerley), who had taught at the school before her marriage. The education provided by the sisters supported, whilst it also gently challenged, the social expectation that their pupils' future lives would be confined to the domestic sphere, as wives and mothers. Indeed, Katharine Thomson, who married the brother of Gaskell's stepmother, was a prolific published author whilst also bringing up their many children. Gaskell may have found a role model in Katharine. Many years after she had left school, Gaskell is believed to have received literary advice from her regarding her first full-length novel *Mary Barton* (1848).

Readers of The Gaskell Society Newsletter will know that the connection between Gaskell and her time at school in Shakespeare's Stratford-upon-Avon has been commemorated by both the Society and the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. In March 2002 Professor John Chapple, then President of the Gaskell Society, planted a mulberry tree in the garden of Brook Street Chapel. The tree is marked by a plaque that reads:

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.

Interestingly Gaskell sought out family connections and the peacefulness of rural Warwickshire in May 1849. *Mary Barton* had been published anonymously in the previous October and had been met with a mixed reception and, indeed, a degree of anger by some Manchester manufacturers. Gaskell's identity as the author was quickly exposed and in mid-April 1849 she escaped to London, where she was treated as a celebrity, being invited to dinners with writers such as Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray and Thomas Carlyle. On leaving the social whirl of London she stayed in Shottery for just under a week, rather than returning directly to

Manchester. It is thought that she may have stayed in the home of one of her cousins, Kate Greaves (née Holland) and her husband Richard, the latter being from a Warwickshire Quaker family. She wrote two letters recounting her visit, one of which was to her daughters, Marianne and Margaret Emily (Meta), dated May 17, 1849, written when she had just arrived in Shotton. According to this letter Gaskell did visit the 'old curious seat' of Compton Wynnyates this time, as well as Warwick Castle. Her second letter, sent to Eliza (or Tottie) Fox later that month (dated May 29, 1849), contains a vivid and evocative description of the sensory impact of the surroundings on her:

... a very pretty, really old fashioned cottage, at Shotton ... near S. on Avon; a cottage where one's head was literally in danger of being bumped by the low doors, and where the windows were casements: where the rooms were all entered by a step up, or a step down: where the scents through the open hall door were all of sweet briar and lilac and lilies of the valley: where we slept with our windows open to hear the nightingales' jug-jug, and where the very shadows in the drawing room had a green tinge from the leafy trees which over hung the windows.

Gaskell's prose captures the essence of Shotton as it still is today and has echoes of the significance she later bestowed on the image of houses adorned with the 'mother's flowers' in her fictional works, such as *Ruth* (1853) and 'Lois the Witch' (1859). In *Elizabeth Gaskell: The Early Years*, John Chapple quite rightly concludes a discussion of Gaskell's family and social connections in Warwickshire and North Wales with a comment that highlights the importance of these two regions for her in both her life and her art:

Exact identities are doubtful, and more research needs to be done, but the links between Warwickshire and North Wales compose a kind of delicate web in which people and incidents were caught up from a very early stage in Elizabeth's writing career.

Gaskell drew upon her Warwickshire experiences in a number of her fictional works. Critics believe that her first published story, a Gothic tale entitled 'Clopton Hall' (1840), was based on an essay she had written while at Avonbank following a visit to a fellow pupil's nearby home. This piece was published by William Howitt in the third chapter of his *Visits to Remarkable Places*, entitled 'Visit to Stratford-on-Avon, and the Haunts of Shakespeare'. Gaskell's later novella 'My Lady Ludlow' (1858) is a meditation on Lady Ludlow's sense of personal loss arising from social change, and is set in the Barford countryside. The village of Barford also provides an important

setting for her Gothic short story 'Lois the Witch', a disturbing account of the fate of Lois Barclay in the witch trials in Salem, Massachusetts in 1692. Lois moves from Barford to Salem following the death of her parents. Her memories of her former life in Barford and her hopes of a future marriage to Hugh Lucy, the Barford miller, ensure that the village remains an important presence throughout the story. Her recollections of 'peaceful Barford' provide her with emotional comfort whilst she suffers the hostility of her adopted family and the wider Salem community. Gaskell represents Barford as a morally better place than Salem and so it acts as an important counterpoint to the hysteria and horror that takes place there.

A further Warwickshire connection is to be found in the letters exchanged between Gaskell and George Eliot (1819-1880), although they were never to meet in person. Gaskell's admiration for *Scenes of Clerical Life* (1858) and *Adam Bede* (1859) was so great that on June 3, 1859 she initiated correspondence with the woman who has become Warwickshire's most revered nineteenth-century female novelist. In her first letter to Eliot, Gaskell clearly believes that the unknown author she admires is a man, and she playfully claims that the generally held belief in London that she (Gaskell) is the author of *Adam Bede* is correct. A number of Gaskell's subsequent letters to friends and acquaintances show her gradually overcoming her resistance to the fact that not only was the author of these fine works a woman, but she was also Mary Anne (Marian) Evans, who was living with (but not married to) George Henry Lewes, a man whose morals Gaskell evidently mistrusts. Gaskell's justified admiration for Eliot's work spread ultimately to admiration for the woman, and this feeling was clearly reciprocated, as demonstrated by Eliot's replies. Gaskell wrote a letter to Eliot's publisher, John Blackwood, telling him that she enjoyed the depictions of the Warwickshire countryside in *Adam Bede*. However, most gratifying for Gaskell must surely have been that Eliot told her that she had read Cranford whilst writing *Scenes of Clerical Life* and *Mary Barton* when writing *Adam Bede*.

Gaskell's connections with Warwickshire spanned her entire life, encompassing her schooldays in Barford and Stratford-upon-Avon in the 1820s, her spirited letter to Mary Howitt in 1838, her visit to Shotton as an established author in 1849, and her relationship with George Eliot in 1859. Her experiences in Warwickshire are known to have influenced her fictional work, and more research may uncover further treasures.

1 Letter to Mary Howitt, August 18, 1838, *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell*, edited by J.A.V. Chapple and Arthur Pollard (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1966), no.12, pp.28-33, at p.28.

2 John Chapple, *Elizabeth Gaskell: The Early Years* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p.238.

- 3 Chapple, *Elizabeth Gaskell: The Early Years*, 236-246; Jenny Uglow, *Elizabeth Gaskell: A Habit of Stories* (London: Faber and Faber, 1993), pp.34-39, 44-46. A watercolour painting of Avonbank, The Byerleys' School for Young Ladies is included in both Chapple, *Elizabeth Gaskell: The Early Years* and Uglow.
- 4 The Literary Warwickshire website, www.literarywarwickshire.com, includes some information about the school as well as photographs of the preserved buildings.
- 5 Chapple, *Elizabeth Gaskell: The Early Years*, Chapter 13; Uglow, pp.34-39, p.182.
- 6 'Here we go round the mulberry bush,' *The Gaskell Society Newsletter* 36 (Autumn 2003), pp.16-17.
- 7 Uglow, pp.214-228.
- 8 Chapple, *Elizabeth Gaskell: The Early Years*, pp.322-23.
- 9 Letter to Marianne and Margaret Emily Gaskell, May 17, 1849, *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell*, no.47, pp.79-80.
- 10 Letter to Eliza Fox, May 29, 1849, *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell*, no.48, pp.80-82, pp. 80-81.
- 11 Uglow, p.476.
- 12 Chapple, *Elizabeth Gaskell: The Early Years*, p.324.
- 13 Laura Kranzler, introduction to *Gothic Tales* by Elizabeth Gaskell (London: Penguin Classics, 2000), p.xi; Uglow, p.37; Chapple, *Elizabeth Gaskell: The Early Years*, p.243.
- 14 'Clopton Hall', (1840) in *The Works of Elizabeth Gaskell*, edited by Joanne Shattock, Volume 1 (Pickering and Chatto, 2005), pp.37-41.
- 15 Gaskell, 'My Lady Ludlow' (1858), in *My Lady Ludlow and Other Stories*, edited by Edgar Wright (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp.1-210.
- 16 Gaskell, 'Lois the Witch' (1859), in *Gothic Tales*, edited by Laura Kranzler (London: Penguin Classics, 2000), pp.139-226.
- 17 Gaskell, 'Lois the Witch', p.223.
- 18 Uglow, pp.462-67; J.A.V. Chapple, assisted by John Geoffrey Sharps, *Elizabeth Gaskell: A Portrait in Letters* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), pp.135-38.

Dr Elizabeth Cox is planning to run a series of courses on the works of Elizabeth Gaskell in the Stratford-upon-Avon, Leamington and Warwick areas. The courses will be open to anyone who would enjoy exploring Gaskell's life and works in a relaxed atmosphere. **If you would like further information about the courses please send an expression of interest to her at blaina@tiscali.co.uk**

Archibald Stanton Whitfield 1899-1974

Philip Ray

Archie was born on 5th January, 1899, in Walsall, Staffordshire, the only child of Thomas and Tilley Whitfield. Thomas owned a tobacconist and stationer's shop. Archie was educated at a private school called Willow House before transferring to Queen Mary's Grammar School for the full four-year course from January 1911 to December 1914; he was regarded as a bright boy though not physically strong. He therefore did not seek employment immediately after leaving the Grammar School, but occupied himself in private study. This included enquiries to the Bodleian Library and the Salt Society relating to various families he found interesting. He also wrote to the British Museum about coins and Roman soldiers, and to Lady Petrie, the Honorary Secretary of the British School of Archaeology in Egypt. In May 1915, the local paper published a short article in which he pointed out that Oak Apple Day, 29th May, celebrated King Charles II's birthday, not his escape after the battle of Worcester, which happened later, in September.

An improvement in his health enabled him, in the Michaelmas Term of 1915, to take up an appointment as a library assistant at Birmingham University, which he held for one year. Here he met Professor Raymond Beazley, who was impressed by his scholarly interests and proposed his election to the Royal Historical Society in May 1916, at the age of seventeen. He was rejected for military service in November 1916, on health grounds, but worked for the South Staffordshire Regiment in the recruitment office until February 1919. In October 1919 he entered Exeter College, Oxford, to read History, but transferred to English after one term. During the Easter vacation of 1921 he gave a public lecture on 'Thomas Hardy: the artist, man and disciple of destiny'. This was well received and he decided to try to get it published. Grant Richardson of Leicester Square agreed to publish it for fifty pounds. He then went on holiday to Portugal and Madeira, coming back at Christmas to find his forty-eight-page book on sale in the shops, price five shillings.

In 1922 he transferred to the B.Litt. research degree at Oxford, and in January 1923 he visited Professor Charles Herford in Manchester: it is clear that he was researching the life and work of Mrs Gaskell. Further visits to the Rylands Library and to Dorothy Holland, a descendant of Mrs Gaskell, confirm this. In November 1923, in London, he gave a lecture on Mrs Gaskell. He had meetings in 1925 with Professor Herford and Bryan Holland, grandson of Mrs Gaskell, to whom he lent a copy of his lecture. He went to a party given by the Hollands in December, according to his diary. This may have been a celebration on the completion of his thesis, as he was examined on it in February and awarded the degree of B.Litt on 13th February 1926. He sought to publish his thesis, which had been complimented

by the examiners, as a book. Professor Herford accepted Archie's dedication to him, as he was 'probably one of the few who remember Mrs Gaskell'.

Archie failed to get a fellowship at St John's in 1927, and failed to land posts in the Colonial Service for which he applied, but his book, *Mrs Gaskell: her Life and Work*, was accepted by Routledge for publication just as he was offered a post teaching English in Japan. This meant that he had to rely on two friends to read the proofs and see the book through the press in 1929, and they are thanked in the Preface.

Archie stayed for three years at the Niigata High School for Girls, teaching English; during this time he contributed to the *Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*, and published '*The Sexton's Hero and other tales*', with his introduction. This brought Mrs Gaskell to the attention of Japanese students of English. He travelled back to England overland through Russia in the summer of 1931, after he had accepted an appointment as Lecturer in English Literature at the Imperial University in Tokyo. In September he returned to Japan via Canada. On this second visit, he lived in Tokyo and contributed to the following publications: *A History of English Literature*, published by the Hokuseido Press in 1934, *The Complete Lafcadio Hearn Lectures*, and in 1932, '*Malachi's Cove*' and *other tales* by Anthony Trollope. Unfortunately he had an attack of pleurisy in the spring of 1932, and further ill-health in winter 1933-4 led him to decide to return home for the English summer. He did not return to Japan.

Until the war in 1939 he did no academic work but built himself a house, which he engagingly named 'Wuthering Depths', on the estate in Wales where his family used to holiday; he enjoyed entertaining his friends there, among his Japanese treasures and memories. When war broke out, he was found unfit for a commission in the RAF, but accepted a commission in the Royal Artillery, then moved into the Education Corps. After an accident in the black-out, he was invalided out of the army in March 1942; he had injured his back and was subsequently in much pain. He spent the remainder of the war working for the Ministry of Information (1943-4) and the Central Council for Adult Education in H.M.Forces (1944-5), lecturing on Japanese life and culture.

After several spells in hospital he was saved from academic inertia by the appearance of an Oxford student, Geoffrey Sharps, who was researching Elizabeth Gaskell in 1959, just in time to celebrate the 150th anniversary of her birth. When the minister at Knutsford, the Rev. Albert Smith, appealed to Archie for some contribution to an exhibition, he sent a collection of works and a letter signed by Mrs Gaskell. Because of his ill-health, Geoffrey Sharps transferred the books for him. This was the beginning of the Stanton Whitfield collection now housed in the Public Library in Knutsford. He also made a contribution to the upkeep of the Unitarian Chapel.

In 1970 Archie gifted to the Merioneth County Council an area of sixty-one acres of sand dunes, including access to a mile of beach, for public use: this now forms part of a nature reserve in the care of Snowdonia National Park. In his will, four years later, he gave a thousand pounds to his old school and his oil painting, 'The Virtues' after Correggio, to Walsall Art Gallery; and £8,000 to the Royal Historical Society which funds an annual prize for an author's first book on history. His collection of books, later sold at Christie's for £1,290, included first editions of Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution* (1790) and Henry Fielding's *Amelia*. The books were shared by Geoffrey Sharps and one other. Two thousand pounds were left to his former college, together with his papers on Thomas Hardy. Other bequests were made to charity and the residue was to be divided between Exeter College and Jesus College, Oxford. He may well be regarded as benefactor, booklover, collector and scholar.

Papers related to his life and work are available at the John Rylands Library, Manchester, and the County Record Office, Dolgellau.

Philip Ray is the great nephew of Archibald Stanton Whitfield.

Alliance of Literary Societies

**The Gaskell Society host the
Annual General Meeting at Knutsford, 15-16 May 2010**

This being the bi-centenary of Elizabeth Gaskell's birth, it was only appropriate that the Gaskell Society should be our hosts for this year's AGM at Knutsford, the town where Elizabeth Gaskell grew up and which she made known to thousands of readers as 'Cranford'. A lovely spring morning, the kind that Mrs Gaskell was so good at describing, saw representatives of the following societies meet for registration and coffee at the Methodist Church Hall: Jane Austen; Arnold Bennett; John Betjeman; William Blake; the Brontës; Lewis Carroll; John Clare; Charles Dickens; Dubliners' Literary Circle; Elizabeth Gaskell; Kenneth Grahame; Richard Jefferies; Samuel Johnson (Lichfield); Charles Lamb; Leamington Spa Literary Society; Wyndham Lewis; Christopher Marlowe; Edith Nesbit; Anthony Powell; Barbara Pym; Arthur Ransome; Romany Society; Siegfried Sassoon; Shropshire Literary Society; Edward Thomas; Leo Walmsley; Mary Webb; Virginia Woolf. We then assembled in the main body of the church where we were warmly greeted by Alan Shelston, President, and Janet Kennerley, on behalf of the Gaskell Society.

At the conclusion of the business side of things we were more than ready for the delicious buffet waiting for us; the opportunity to chat to friends, swap notes on our respective authors and browse through the bookstall. Books were also provided for the raffle which raised welcome funds for the ALS. There then followed a most interesting and entertaining talk on Elizabeth Gaskell's life and works by Elizabeth Williams, Chairman of the Gaskell Society; it was the kind of talk that certainly made one want to find out more about the somewhat contradictory personality of Elizabeth Gaskell.

After this excellent talk, Joan Leach, MBE and Hon. Sec., spoke about Mrs Gaskell and Knutsford — another very entertaining talk serving as a prelude to her taking us on a 'Cranford Walk around Knutsford'. We began at Heathwaite, the attractive Regency home of Aunt Lumb, where the young Elizabeth was brought up; the wonderful deodar cedar at the back of the house would probably have sheltered Elizabeth while she was sketching or writing. The tour ended appropriately at Brook Street Chapel, the Unitarian chapel where William and Elizabeth are buried along with other members of their family. It was especially loved by Elizabeth and serves as the model for the chapel described in *Ruth*. Courtesy of the Knutsford and District Flower Club, the church was holding a flower festival in honour of its famous author, each lovely arrangement sensitively illustrating one of her novels. In the gallery we were also able to read of the chapel's history and its ministers. Outside, a lovely memorial wreath had been laid on the Gaskell grave; later this year there will be another wreath-laying ceremony at Westminster Abbey, when the name of Mrs Gaskell will be recorded in Poets' Corner, a proud moment for all members of the Society.

The tradition of after-dinner readings took place at Cottons Hotel, and there was no shortage of readers. Julie Shorland read from Jane Austen, Janet Kennerley from Mrs Gaskell, Deborah Fisher from Barbara Pym and Siegfried Sassoon; Michael Murray of the Dubliners' Literary Society recited by heart from the writings of James Joyce and W B Yeats, while Julian Barnard read some of his own poems on William Blake.

And last, but certainly not least, our Secretary, Anita Fernandez Young, dressed as Queen Victoria, gave her usual bravura performance with readings from *Pickwick Papers*; it will be interesting to see how she tops this performance next year!

On Sunday we heard another informal and light-hearted talk by Joan Leach on Mrs Gaskell's Cheshire, after which we split into two groups, one attending Morning Service at Brook Street Chapel and another going to visit the former home of the Gaskells at Plymouth Grove.

A Grade II listed building, 84 Plymouth Grove is literally under wraps, being encased in a cocoon of corrugated iron as it undergoes major renovation. The house has been acquired by Manchester Historic Buildings Trust, who are hoping to raise over £2m to complete the project. Even in its somewhat dilapidated state, we could see the tremendous potential for bringing the house back to the condition it was in when the Gaskells lived there. It really must have been the most wonderful place to live in. Structurally, it has been found to be in better condition than many modern houses; the pitch-pine woodwork is mainly intact, as is the elaborate cornice decoration, and the large and airy sash windows are now working smoothly. We gathered in the Gaskells' former drawing-room, where Janet Allan, Chairman of the MHBT, gave us a lively and interesting account of the history of the house, both in the time of the Gaskells and in subsequent years. Like many old houses that have survived the years, its history is somewhat chequered, its last tenants being university students. It was built in 1838, the Gaskells took up residence in 1850, and, to quote Mrs Gaskell, 'It certainly is a beauty'. Janet showed us slides of the house as it was in the Gaskells' time; a photograph of the drawing-room in 1897 will serve as a valuable guide when it comes to restoring the room to how it once was. The last Gaskell to live in the house was Meta, one of the Gaskells' two unmarried daughters, who died in 1913. Meta was an artist of considerable talent judging by the sensitive profile of her mother. What times and people the house must have seen; the Gaskells were excellent hosts and entertained on a regular basis. William Makepeace Thackeray, Harriet Beecher Stowe, John Ruskin, Charles Dickens and Charlotte Brontë were just some of their guests. In keeping with their Unitarian ethos of service and education the Gaskells were instrumental in the building of a new library, and their daughters in founding the Manchester High School for Girls.

We wish the MHBT well in this tremendous undertaking and look forward to seeing 84 Plymouth Grove returned to the magnificent house it must have been when Elizabeth and William were in residence.

It had been a most enjoyable weekend. The weather had been kind, our hosts even more so; if only William and Elizabeth could have joined us.... but who knows, perhaps they did. Special thanks to Alan Shelston, Joan Leach and Janet Kennerley for making all the arrangements and for ensuring that our visit was a happy one. Thanks also to Elizabeth Williams and Janet Allan, and indeed to all those who worked very hard behind the scenes.

On a personal note, I would like to thank Ann O'Brien and Ann Waddington for making arrangements to get me to Piccadilly in time to get my train.

HELEN D NEWMAN

ALS Committee member and member of the Richard Jeffries Society.

CONFERENCE, 2011

Among all the excitement of 2010, we are planning the conference for 2011. Please put the date in your diaries - 22 - 25 July. We will be staying at Norton Park, Sutton Scotney, a few miles outside Winchester and a more luxurious venue than we have enjoyed in the past. It is part of the Q Hotel Group and stands in 54 acres of grounds. However, we have managed to negotiate a good rate, and expect that the cost for those of you wanting single rooms will be in the region of £325, and for those of you prepared to share twin rooms will be about £280.

We have yet to work out the details, but we shall be sending out more information and booking forms later in the year. The theme of the conference will be Elizabeth Gaskell and other women writers, and we shall be only a few miles away from Alton, which of course is near to both the house where Elizabeth Gaskell died and to Jane Austen's house. We look forward to seeing many of you there.

An Italian Bicentenary Event

Elizabeth Gaskell has always had her enthusiasts in Italy; Francesco Marroni, Professor of English Literature at the Victorian and Edwardian Research centre at Pescara University has long been one of our vice-presidents, and Gaskell studies feature prominently at his institution. They too will celebrate the bicentenary with a two-day 'Convegno', to be held on 30th September and 1st October, with the title 'Elizabeth Gaskell and the Art of the Short Story'. Our president, Alan Shelston, will be giving a paper and chairing a session. Some papers will be in English, but the majority are likely to be in Italian. Should any Society members wish to attend they should **contact Alan (alan@shelston.freemove.co.uk)** who can provide more information. It will be an agreeable occasion but it should be said at this point that funding cannot be provided.

Brief Lives: Elizabeth Gaskell

Alan Shelston's biography of Elizabeth Gaskell in the 'Brief Lives' series, published by Hesperus Press, is now expected later in the year. There have been many delays since the acceptance of the manuscript, but the book has been advertised for advance orders on Amazon, and should soon be available via the Society and local bookshops, at its price of £7.99. It focuses on Gaskell's life as much as on her work, as is the priority of the series, which already includes excellent 'brief lives' of Jane Austen and Charles Dickens. It was anticipated that the book would be available in time for the earlier events of the bicentenary year, but Alan hopes that we are now coming to the end of what has been a very protracted publishing process.

Gaskell Collection, Manchester Central Library

The Central Library, Manchester is to undergo a major refit and development, along with the neighbouring extension to the Town Hall. The work is expected to take at least three years. In the meantime temporary premises are operating at Elliot House, Deansgate, where lending services will be maintained. Unfortunately most of the reference stock will not be available during this period. However arrangements have been made for the Library's Gaskell Collection (formerly in the Language and Literature Library) to be housed at the Greater Manchester County Record Office. This includes MS items, books belonging to the Gaskells, editions of William & Elizabeth Gaskell's works, monograph biographies, criticism, and newspaper cuttings. It does not include general criticism dealing only partly with Gaskell, nor the vast collection of Victorian periodicals. Though I no longer work for Manchester Public Libraries I have retained indexes and may be available to give some general advice on what might be available. **(Christine Lingard lingardgms@aol.com)**.

The Local Studies library however is operating on the second floor of the building and is offering a considerable increase in the amount of the material available on the open shelves.

City Library, Elliot House, 151 Deansgate, Manchester M3 3WD (at the junction with Lloyd Street). Disabled access from Jackson Row. Telephone number 0161 234 1983, E-mail libraries@manchester.gov.uk Please consult the website for up to date information www.manchester.gov.uk/libraries.

Greater Manchester County Record Office, 6 Marshall St., New Cross, Manchester M4 5FU; tel: 0161 832 5284; email: archives@gmcro.co.uk; web page: www.gmcro.co.uk.

Christine Lingard

BOOK NOTES

Christine Lingard

The American slave narrative and the Victorian novel by Julia Sun-Joo Lee, Oxford University Press, £40. This work argues that Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Thackeray's *Pendennis*, two of Gaskell's works, Dickens' *Great Expectations* and works by Stevenson integrated into their text generic elements of the slave narrative. It devotes two chapters to Gaskell — female slave narratives in *The Grey Woman & My Lady Ludlow*, and the return of the 'unnative' in *North and South*.

Performing masculinity, edited by Rainer Emig (Leibniz University in Hanover), and Antony Rowland (University of Salford). Palgrave Macmillan, £55. This work discusses where the twentieth-century phenomenon - the male heart throb typified by David Beckham - originated, using a variety of media such as ballet and cricket as illustration. Examples in literature range from Byron and Oscar Wilde to Martin McDonagh's play, *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, and the novels of Michael Ondaatje. It contains a chapter by Gerald Siegmund on 'Industrial heroes: Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë's constructions of the masculine'.

Reading for the law: British literary history and gender advocacy by Christine L. Krueger, in the Victorian Literature and Culture Series, University of Virginia Press, £35. This work uses examples of witchcraft to demonstrate the relevance of literary history to feminist jurisprudence, discussing realism, evidence, and historical justice in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Lois the Witch*. Other authors discussed are Sir Matthew Hale, Francis Hutchinson, Mary Wollstonecraft and Charles Reade.

Beyond the Bonnets!

**Sunday, 12 September at 12.30pm at
Cross Street Chapel, Cross Street, Manchester.**

A talk and a celebration of Elizabeth Gaskell's life in words and images, exploring her connections and networks with Unitarians nationally, her own religious views, and her opinions on the various Unitarian developments and tensions of her day.

It will be presented by the **Rev Dr Ann Peart**, Vice-President of the Unitarian General Assembly and recently retired principal of Unitarian College Manchester, who has researched the lives of Unitarian women.

Autumn Bicentennial Events

Here is a reminder of the many events in the calendar from September onwards:

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|-------------|---|
| September | <i>Exhibition on 'Elizabeth Gaskell's Cheshire' at Tatton Park, Knutsford.</i> |
| September 1 | <i>Delia Corrie performs 'An Afternoon with Mrs Gaskell' at the Harris Museum, Preston, as part of their 'Industrial Revolutionaries' exhibition programme.</i> |

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|--------------|---|
| September 4 | <i>The Grace Darling Singers perform hymns and songs of the Gaskells' time at the John Rylands Library.</i> |
| September 14 | <i>Talk about the Whitfield collection at Knutsford Library.</i> |
| September 16 | <i>6.00 pm Jenny Uglow talks on 'Country and City' at the John Rylands Library.</i> |
| September 18 | <i>11.00 History Wardrobe perform 'The Clothes of Cranford' at the John Rylands Library.</i> |
| September 25 | <i>Dedication of window in Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey.</i> |
| September 29 | <i>11.00 am Elizabeth Williams talks on 'The Life and Works of Elizabeth Gaskell' at Brook Street Chapel, followed by optional lunch at 'La Belle Epoque' and Knutsford walk.</i> |
| October 2 | <i>2.00 pm History Wardrobe perform 'The Clothes of Cranford' at the Harris Museum, Preston</i> |
| October 3 | <i>Commemorative service at Brook Street Chapel with wreath-laying, refreshments and walk.</i> |
| October 6 | <i>Marie Moss gives talk on 'Elizabeth Gaskell and Cheshire' at Tatton Hall.</i> |
| October 5-9 | <i>Victorian music hall at Knutsford Little Theatre (to include Old Poz).</i> |
| October 8 | <i>Talk at Tatton Hall by Fran Baker and Ed Potten of the John Rylands Library.</i> |
| October 11 | <i>Elizabeth Williams talks on 'The Life and Works of Elizabeth Gaskell' as part of the Wellington Literary Festival, Shropshire.</i> |
| October 14 | <i>6.00 pm Alan Shelston talks on 'Gaskell and her Publishers' at the John Rylands Library - BOOKING ESSENTIAL.</i> |
| October 17 | <i>Gaskell tour around Manchester as part of Manchester Literary Festival.</i> |
| November 28 | <i>John Rylands exhibition closes.</i> |

Contact details:**Portico Library** - 0161 247 1306**John Rylands Library** - 0161 306 0555**Harris Museum, Preston** - 01772 906874Events at **Brook Street Chapel**, Knutsford, contact Beulah Cornes, 01565 632673

A Report from Plymouth Grove

Janet Allan

We have now completed the structural repair of the house and the outside of the house has been transformed from a crumbling pink wreck to an elegant villa. We also have a new roof and new drains, and all the exterior woodwork restored or replaced. It is truly a triumph of our builders Mather & Ellis and our architect, Peter Hadfield of the Bernard Taylor Partnership.

Lottery development grant awarded

Our application to Heritage Lottery Fund for one million pounds has passed its first stage and we have received £148,200 for working up the detailed plans for the big two million-pounds worth of work which will enable us to open up the whole house to the public, with a multiplicity of uses. We have already selected our team to do this.

There was a celebration at the house of our achievements and an announcement of the HLF grant on 23 July, when the speakers were Jennifer Latto, Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund's North West Regional Committee, our Patron Sir Neil Cossons, and Henry Owen-John North West Regional Director of English Heritage.

Improvements to the Ground Floor

Besides the new heating system and kitchen which have already been installed we are working to brighten up the ground floor. The exhibition from the Portico has now been installed. Some rooms have already been redecorated by the Probation Service, and the William Gaskell bookshelves have been replaced so that our bookstall will return to its proper home. There is a lot of new stock so it is well worth paying a visit.

2010 events

Amidst scaffolding and skips, a packed AGM of the Trust was held in the Dining Room on Saturday 8 May.

Our first Open Day on 6 June had 100 visitors plus enchanting harp music played by the professional musician and Gaskell enthusiast Anna Christensen.

Our **Open Days** continue for the rest of the year on the first Sunday of the month from 12-4pm. As before we only have access to the ground floor.

Sunday 3 October Open Day and Plant Sale

Anna Christensen will be with us again with her harp, plus our traditional bring and buy plant sale. Please bring cuttings or plants from your own gardens for sale and buy some winter bedding from us. **Details from Hilda Holmes, on Sunday 5 September Open Day or on 0161 487 2593 or hilda.ibrahim@hotmail.co.uk.**

Sunday 5 December Open Day 12-4pm followed by Christmas Entertainment led by Delia Corrie and Charles Foster. Price £7.50 including seasonal refreshments. Cheques to Friends of Plymouth Grove. Please book with Margery Schofield, 202 Moston Lane East, New Moston, M40 3QH 0161 681 1439. No tickets will be issued.

Meetings at Cross Street Chapel, Manchester

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday in the month at 1.00pm. Members may meet at the chapel from 12.15 for a sandwich lunch. Meetings cost £2 for members, £3 for non-members.

Tuesday 12 October Ann O'Brien on Meta Gaskell. Ann O'Brien, Chair of the Friends of Plymouth Grove, worked on Meta Gaskell's life at the University of Manchester.

Tuesday 9 November Ed Glinert on **Mary Barton's Manchester** Ed is a Blue Badge Guide who has a detailed knowledge of the city in Elizabeth Gaskell's time.

Tuesday 14 December Ann Peart on **Unitarian networks of William and Elizabeth Gaskell** plus some Christmas Cheer.

Tuesday 8 February **Manchester Lit & Phil** **Peter Barnes**, an Honorary Secretary of the Lit & Phil. Peter has been making a special study of the early years of the society and its influence on education.

Tuesday 8 March Emma Marigliano on Portico People. The Portico's Librarian will tell us about some of William Gaskell's contemporaries and others.

North West Group

Knutsford meetings are held at St John's Church hall, on the last Wednesday in the month, starting on October 27th. Buffet lunch is from 12.15pm. Cost £8.

Studying on October 27th - *The Grey Woman*.

Subsequently, a selection of short stories from 'Cousin Phillis and other stories', ed. Heather Glen (Oxford's World Classics) will be studied: Lizzie Leigh, Morton Hall, My French Master, Half A Lifetime Ago, The Manchester Marriage.

AGM 9 April 2011 - At Cross Street Chapel (to be confirmed).

London and South East Group Programme for The Bicentenary Year 2010-2011

As usual there will be four hugely varied meetings in the coming academic year one of which will be a meeting with a difference. Our September meeting will be the Bicentenary celebrations in Westminster Abbey. Otherwise we shall have our usual three speaker/discussion meetings at Francis Holland School. In November we are privileged and honoured to be able to welcome the Rev Dr Ann Peart to speak to us. She is currently the Vice-President of the Unitarian General Assembly in Great Britain and will become the President next year. In February Ann Brooks, who is an expert on Victorian gardens, is coming to tell us what she has in mind when she takes on the task of restoring the garden at the Gaskell House in Plymouth Grove.

Next May, Professor Barbara Hardy, Emeritus Professor of English at London University has agreed to share her original ideas about *North and South*.

I feel we are very fortunate that we have such an interesting programme and that each one of these speakers is happy to give up her time to come to London to meet and speak to us.

Saturday September 25 2010 - 3pm

Westminster Abbey celebration and dedication of the Gaskell window in Poets' Corner.

Tickets will be sent well in advance of the event which is preceded by the afternoon service and followed by drinks at Westminster School. Booking is essential and members already know about this via mailings. Please check the Society website or contact the membership secretary, Christine Lingard for further details.

Saturday November 13th 2010

Rev Dr Ann Peart will speak about Gaskell and Unitarianism

Ann Peart is a Unitarian Minister, Vice President of the Unitarian General Assembly of Great Britain and was previously Principal of the Unitarian College in Manchester. As yet I do not have a title for her talk but the theme was requested by a number of members who expressed an interest in learning more about the religion with which the Gaskells were involved.

Saturday February 12th 2011

Dr Ann Brooks will speak about the plans for the restoration of the garden at the Gaskell House, Plymouth Grove, Manchester. Ann's doctorate was about the Manchester Botanic Garden so she is an expert in the field.

Ann writes of the restoration project:

An examination of the 1848 ordnance survey map of Longsight, Manchester shows that the garden at Gaskell house and its neighbours exhibited many features of the villa gardens and give a basic outline we can use. I am also examining Elizabeth Gaskell's novels and letters for references to plants that would be suitable to include in the planting and design of the garden. This will be a fascinating insight into both the genre of Victorian gardens and a chance to share in Ann's plans for the future garden at the Gaskell House, as it is now known!

Saturday May 14th 2011

Professor Barbara Hardy will lead a discussion on 'Elizabeth Gaskell: Dreams and Visions'.

Barbara Hardy is Emeritus Professor of English Literature at the University of London. She will certainly refer to *North and South* and *Sylvia's Lovers* and will let me know nearer the time which other stories we need to have read!

The form of this meeting will continue the pattern of the last couple of years when the speaker gives an introduction to texts and a topic/theme of their choice and we have the opportunity to discuss as well as listen.

The meetings will follow the pattern of previous years. A sandwich lunch will be provided from 12.45pm onwards and tea and cake is available after the meeting that begins at 2pm and usually lasts in the region of an hour or so.

A bring and buy bookstall is available so please bring and buy. Proceeds go to the restoration of the Gaskell House.

We meet at Francis Holland School for Girls, a two-minute walk from Sloane Square. The Tube station is served by the District and Circle lines, or it is not a long walk

from Victoria Station. Access is via a doorbell in Graham Terrace please press the bell that is marked 'Reception' and someone will open the door for you. There are security reasons for this type of access. Please feel free to bring friends who might be interested, membership of the society is not a prerequisite for attendance at meetings. We charge £4.00 in these days of austerity and endeavour to provide lunch, tea and some intellectual stimulation for the afternoon!

Fran Twinn, 85 Calton Avenue, Dulwich, London SE217DF. Tel: 020 8693 3238.
E-mail: frantwinn@aflex.net

South- West Group

Sunday, 1st August. Summer lunch at Kate and Alec Crawford's home, Norton St Philip, 1.00 pm.

13th November 2010. The Gaskell Society South West will hold a Study Day in celebration of the Bicentenary at the BRLSI, Queen's Square, Bath. Speakers will include Alan Shelston on Gaskell's biography of Charlotte Brontë; Boyd Schlenther on '*Lois the Witch*' and the Salem witch crisis; and Janet Allan and Ann Brooks on Plymouth Grove house and garden. The day will begin at 10:00 am and finish about 4:30 pm. The cost will be £6 for the full day for members of the Gaskell Society and BRLSI, £8 for non-members. Coffee and tea will be included.

February/March 2011. Discussions on *Ruth* to be held at members' homes.

Any queries about the programme to Mrs Elizabeth Schlenther, 14 Vellore Lane, Bath, BA2 6JQ (Tel: 01225 331763).

Yorkshire Branch

11th September. Elizabeth Williams will give a talk entitled 'Cranford and Beyond, the divided life of Elizabeth Gaskell', at The Unitarian Chapel, St Saviourgate, York YO1 8NQ, beginning at 12 noon. **(Please note new time, date and venue.) For further details and directions see www.ukunitarians@hotmail.co.uk**

9th October, at The Friends Meeting House, York, at 2.00 p.m. Janet Allan will give a talk on 'Plymouth Grove - Then and Now'.

For further details contact Kate Smith at shepleysmiths@tiscali.co.uk.