



The Gaskell Society



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ISSN 0954 - 1209

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2006 - Number 41

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.

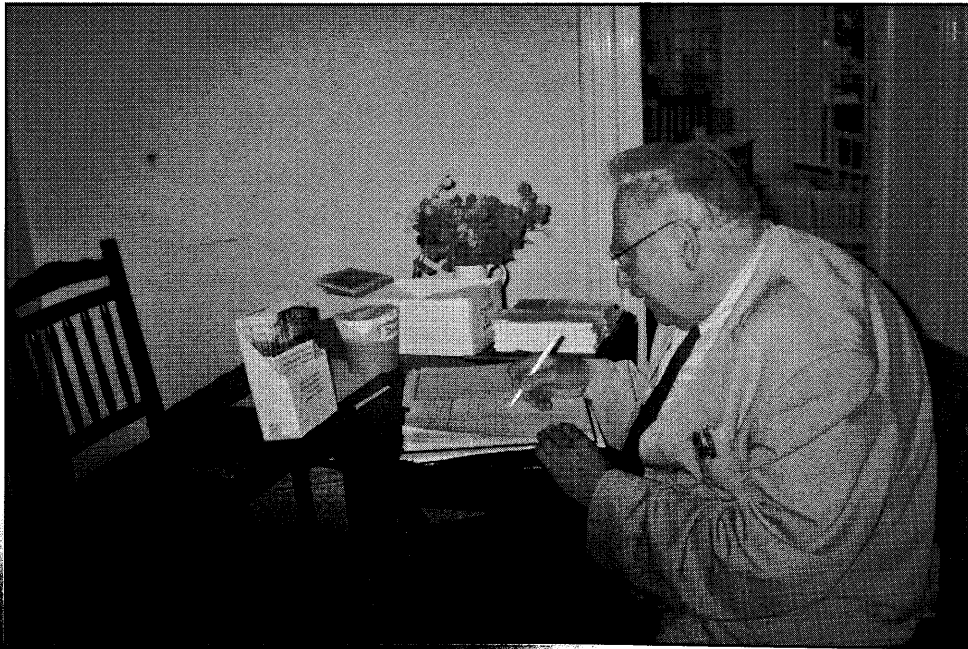
He would speak of older writers like Mrs Chadwick as if he had known them personally. He befriended pre-war writers on Gaskell like A. Stanton Whitfield or the American scholar Mrs Jane Whitehill, happy to arrange for me to meet her when she came to England some years ago. He was an active member of 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 Zaliarov, 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!!

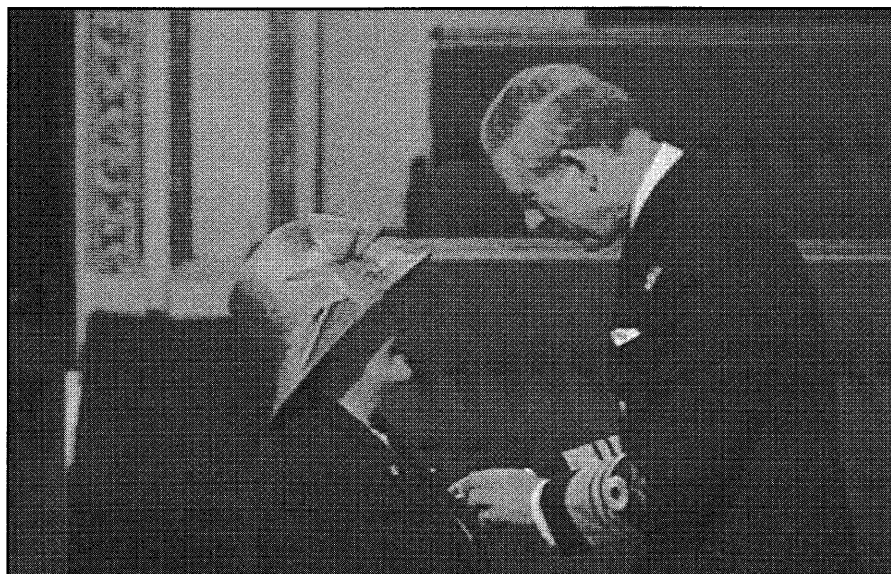
The investiture was held in the ballroom where state banquets and major parties are held. Whilst we waited for the proceedings to begin we were able to feast our eyes on the exquisite, enormous cut-glass chandeliers, wonderful paintings and sheer grandeur of the room which was as awe-inspiring as the 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.