

# 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](mailto: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**

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](http://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 29<sup>th</sup>, 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](http://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... anony]mously 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 29<sup>th</sup>, 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.'

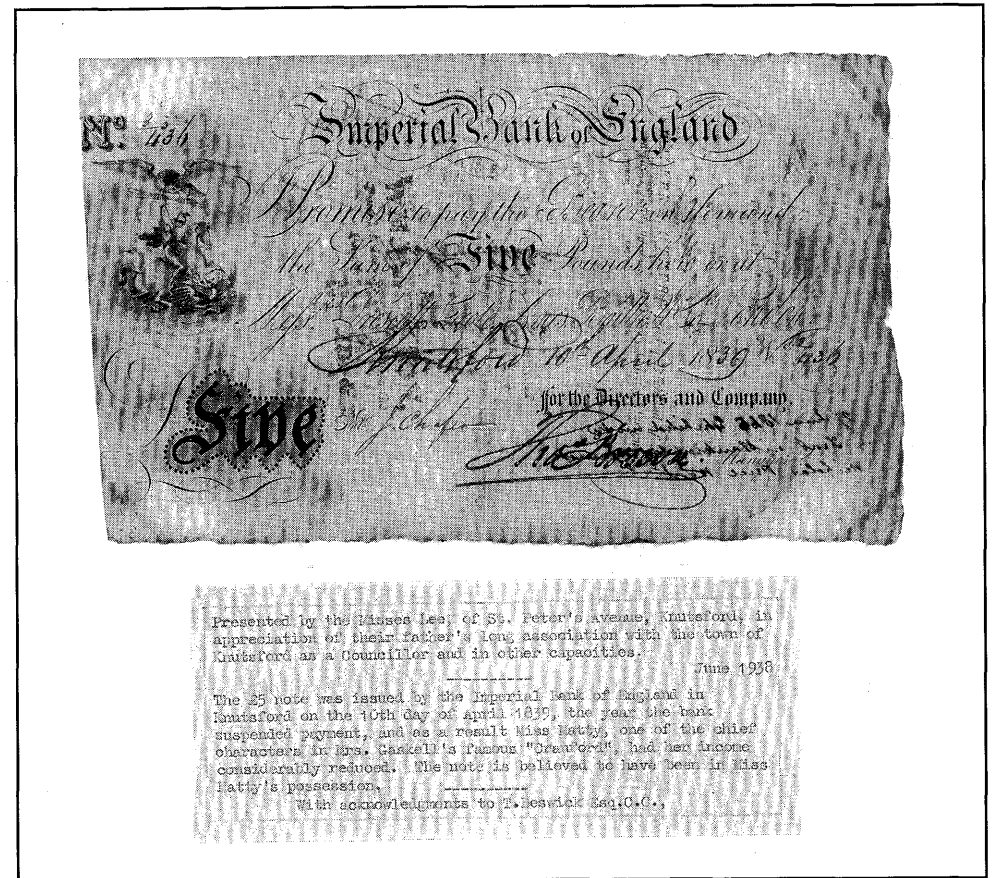
'Judi Dench was excellent as Miss Matty but close-ups revealed plucked eyebrows - not a period feature. The series had pace and variety.'

'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 150<sup>th</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 26<sup>th</sup> April 2008 in aid of the Plymouth Grove Restoration Appeal.

#### Further Reading

*Letters of Elizabeth Gaskell*, edited by J.A.V. Chapple and Arthur Pollard, Manchester University Press, 1966. [GL]

Brookshaw, S. *Concerning Chopin in Manchester*. Privately printed Manchester, 1951. Chapple, J.A.V. *Elizabeth Gaskell – the early years*. Manchester University Press, 1997. Chapple, J.A.V. 'Elizabeth Gaskell's first music book', Gaskell Society Newsletter, no. 25, March 1998, pp.8-12.

O'Brien, A. 'The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition', Gaskell Society Newsletter, no. 44 Autumn, 2007, pp. 10-13.

Rigby, C. *Sir Charles Hallé; a portrait for today*. Manchester: Dolphin Press, 1952. Skrine, P. 'Fanny Lewald and Mrs Gaskell', Gaskell Society Journal, no. 4 1900, pp.52-6.

Wyke, T. 'The culture of self improvement: real people in Mary Barton', Gaskell Society Journal, no.13, 1999, pp.85-103.

## *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, 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 11<sup>th</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 22<sup>nd</sup>, 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 26<sup>th</sup>** 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 1<sup>st</sup> - 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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto: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 5<sup>th</sup>:** '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 7<sup>th</sup>:** Visit to Bowood House and Gardens, home of the 9<sup>th</sup> 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 13<sup>th</sup> 1857 (GL 380)

Joseph Priestley, a minister in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Unitarian church, who was tutor to the sons of the 1<sup>st</sup> Marquess, discovered oxygen gas in the laboratory at Bowood on August 1<sup>st</sup> 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 17<sup>th</sup> 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 8<sup>th</sup>:** 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 9<sup>th</sup> 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 10<sup>th</sup>:** 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 *Middlemarch* 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