

The Gaskell Society



*Knutsford - Cheshire
New Super-Holland print c.1945*

R.N. Thorne del. 1906

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

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

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NEWSLETTER

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Elizabeth Sharpe
(See Photos In Geneva page 11)

Editor's letter

The weekend conference at Penrith held in July is now a happy memory for the delegates who enjoyed the excellent papers, and excursions that continued the literary Lake District theme. BBC's *Cranford* will be in the news again with repeats of the first series leading up to two new episodes around Christmas. Ruskin would have been pleased to find Captain Brown is playing a fuller part than he did in the original version of *Cranford*: as Gaskell explained to him, she had only meant to write a short story and it was only Dickens' pleading with his 'dear Scheherazade' that more chapters were added. Parts of *The Moorland Cottage* have been incorporated in the latest episodes. There will also be a half hour documentary showing Knutsford and Plymouth Grove.

In the Spring Newsletter we printed a picture thought to be of Elizabeth Gaskell: this caused some controversy; now Tim Austin has solved the mystery and shares with us pictures from family archives - sadly none of Elizabeth Gaskell.

At the end of this Newsletter we have included a diary for 2010 but please note that there may be later changes and updates which will be posted on our home page www.gaskellsociety.co.uk.

Elizabeth Gaskell 2010

Alan Shelston

2010 will mark the bicentenary of the birth of Elizabeth Gaskell, and there will be a number of events at various venues in Manchester, Knutsford and elsewhere. The year will open with a one woman show by the well-known actress, Gabrielle Drake, on the 8th January: this will take place in the theatre of MMU. The Portico library will hold an exhibition of Gaskell books and materials beginning on 31st March. On the evening of April 8th there will be an informal talk by Alan Shelston on issues of Gaskell biography, arising from the publication (scheduled for February) of a condensed biography he has written for Hesperus Press to mark the bicentenary year. Also in April at the Portico there will be a reading in costume of Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Bronte by Intertheatre.

The John Rylands University Library is similarly planning an exhibition of books, manuscripts, and other Gaskelliana: this will begin on 15th July and continue until 28th November. Also at the Rylands there will be formal lectures by Professor Pamela Corpron Parker, from the United States (5th August), Jenny Uglow, whose *Elizabeth Gaskell: a Habit of Stories* is one of the great modern biographies, (16th September) and by Alan Shelston on Gaskell and her Publishers (14th

October). On a different note the Rylands are also planning two history workshops, and musical events relating to the folk songs of the Gaskell period.

The Gaskell Society will be heavily involved in all of these celebrations, with lectures, seminars, working days and outings. Details will be advertised later, but two events in their programme stand out. First, it is anticipated that the exterior renovation of the Gaskell house at Plymouth Grove will have been completed.

Secondly, on 25th September, Elizabeth Gaskell's name is to be added to a stained glass window in Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey. This reflects the efforts of a group of members of the Gaskell Society.

Full details of these and other events will be publicised nearer the time.

Elizabeth Gaskell's Paternal Grandparents

John Chapple

I

It is always a pleasure when new information becomes available. A posting by Karen Bell on the gaskell-I mailing list drew attention not only to Joseph Stevenson of Berwick's will dated 28 September 1795 (Prob 11/1325) but also to the will of his wife Isabel, née Thomson (Prob 11/1439), both significant enough to be proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury and now available online in the National Archives. Isabel's older brother was John Thomson, an ancestor of Karen Bell, to whom I am grateful for assistance in the preparation of this article. I must also thank Linda Bankier of the Berwick Record Office, and my wife.

We know that far from being a splendid post-captain in the Royal Navy, Joseph had only been made lieutenant at his last promotion in 1757. It is perhaps unexpected to discover how much real and personal estate he had been able to gain and invest. To his first son William, father of Elizabeth Gaskell, he left £400 stock in the three percent consolidated bank annuities and £100 in the four percent. (According to Boyd Hilton in the *New Oxford History of England 1783-1846*, the yield on three percent consols trading at £83.75 was 3.6 percent in 1791; in 1799, it was 5.1 percent trading at £59.17). Moreover, Joseph's daughter Dorothy and the three younger sons, Joseph Thomson, Robert, and John Thomson [sometimes Cansfield sic] Turner, were each to receive the same. Joseph Thomson Stevenson, who became a Ship Master, was also to have his father's silver hilted sword and steel pocket pistols.

To his wife Isabel he left the interest on the sum of £350 for the term of her life; the money was then to revert to the five children, 'share and share alike'. Isabel also

received a life interest in property in Palace Street, Berwick, occupied by Margaret and Esther Stevenson (TS21/140, lease dated 25 May 1795). On Isabel's death this property would revert to the five children as tenants-in-common, together with Joseph's library. Finally, 'all the Rest Residue and Remainder of my Estate and Effects whatsoever and wheresoever I do give and bequeath unto my said dear wife Isabel Stevenson...'. The executors were Isabel, his first son William, and John Constable. The will was proved in London on 31 May 1799, after Joseph Stevenson's death on 14 February 1799.

To give some idea of the value of money at that time, in 1798 Coleridge was generously allowed an annuity of £150 per year by Thomas and Josiah Wedgwood. He had been thinking of accepting a post as Unitarian minister at Shrewsbury in order to provide a home and regular income for his family.

Manuscript letters preserved by Geoffrey Sharps show that Dorothy, who had recently married a George Landles or Landells of Berwick, wrote to a brother in London (probably Robert) on 29 December 1798, criticising William for plaguing their mother Isabel Stevenson about money. This was at a time when Joseph Stevenson was evidently in failing health. Though William could not have begun farming at Saughton Mills before late 1797, just before his marriage to Elizabeth Holland on 1 December in that year, he was presumably already in financial difficulties. News of Joseph Stevenson's death, 'an event that has long been daily to be looked for', was announced in a letter from a family friend dated 15 February 1799. The children would have received a substantial inheritance, though John Thomson Turner Stevenson (b. 21 February 1780) would have to wait till he was twenty-one. The money does not seem to have been enough to save William's farm, if we may judge from the fact that he was teaching in Edinburgh by 1801.

Dorothy Landles died in February 1805, aged thirty-one. The will of her mother Isabel, made on 21 January 1806, the day before her death, and proved on 27 February 1806, takes account of this but has some surprises. Isabel devised to trustees, William Wilson and John Miller Dixon, all her 'Messuages Burgages or Tenements Garden Tan Yard and Skinnery with the appertenances situate on the East side of Rotten Row' and all her other real and personal estate. She wished them to sell and then 'pay off and discharge the sum of seven hundred pounds now due and owing to Beatrix White and others Tutors of Alexander Cleghorn'. These names connect this debt with the farm at Saughton Mills that had been advertised for sale by the widow of Robert Cleghorn (see GSJ 8, 1994, pp. 51-52) on 28 January 1797.

William's name does not appear elsewhere in Isabel's will, nor does that of his youngest brother, John Thomson Turner Stevenson. The latter was not involved in a lease to Thomas Hall made by Isabel and her children on 10 May 1799 (TS21/142),

so perhaps he was the brother that descendants believed had died in a French prison during the war. Otherwise, the trustees were to see that Joseph Thomson Stevenson, Robert Stevenson and the three children of Dorothy, Mrs Landles, should receive equal legacies.

II

By 1820 William Stevenson's son John, on a visit to Berwick, had been presented with his grandfather's sword and dagger and his late Uncle Robert's pistols. He and his father seem to have kept up the connection with the remaining Stevensons, with interchange of letters and visits, until Elizabeth was in her late teens, but then the curtain falls. During the 1820s her sea-going brother John had written to her and Aunt Lumb letters amounting to some 13000 words, full of news and gossip about his cousins and the election at Berwick, his father and the second family at Chelsea, but mainly exotic details of his own voyages to Calcutta and Rangoon. The letters must have been the subject of exceptional interest at Knutsford and no doubt at Elizabeth's school. But the failure of Smith and Elder to accept John's book ensured that by the summer of 1828 he had decided to stay in India. He disappeared completely from her life — and from our knowledge, too, unless he was the free merchant listed in Calcutta in 1831. Then after the impoverished death of her father on 22 March 1829, there came a rupture with her stepmother ('perfectly destitute' in 1833) and half-siblings. It lasted for about twenty five-years, and even afterwards contact was minimal.

When Elizabeth Gaskell had achieved an assured maturity and national fame, she made slight connections about 1853-54 with Stevenson descendants who had moved south (*Elizabeth Gaskell: Early Years*, pp 222-3). They include that chameleon archivist and historian, her first cousin Joseph Stevenson (1806-1895). A man important enough to be recorded, like her, in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, he was in succession a Presbyterian minister, librarian and keeper of records to the dean and chapter at Durham, a married Church of England clergyman at Leighton Buzzard (when she was in contact with him), an editor of the Rolls Series, a Roman Catholic priest and ultimately, for many years, a Jesuit.

Elizabeth obviously put well behind her the tragedies of her youth and the connections with the family on her father's side still living in Berwick. She immersed herself in the easy life at Knutsford, London and Dumbleton led by Aunt Lumb and the prosperous Hollands before committing herself fully to marriage and her own family. But Graham Handley notes in his *Chronology* how often in her fiction a lost character returns. Dreams like those of Mrs Hale for the absent Frederick (*North and South*, I. 14), surely betray Elizabeth Gaskell's own the painful, suppressed memories of her brother John.

Charles Allen Du Val / C A Duval

Artist & Photographer

1803 -1872

Nicky Clark

Some years ago I was reading a biography of Elizabeth Gaskell, when I came across an illustration — a reproduction of a portrait of the three oldest Gaskell daughters, Marianne, Meta and Julia, done in Manchester in 1845. My eye was caught by the name of the artist: 'C A Duval'. It so happens that my maiden name was Duval. I did not know much about my father's family, except that they came from Manchester, my grandfather's and great-grandfather's first names were Charles, and my great-grandfather was a photographer. I wondered therefore whether 'C A Duval' could be related to me.

Over the next year or so I occasionally did a little internet research on C A Duval and found that he seemed to have taken photographs of many well-known people in the Manchester area. I also took the opportunity to button-hole any Gaskell experts I met at meetings, to ask whether Elizabeth Gaskell was known to have commented on the experience of getting the portrait done, or any mention of the name Duval in her correspondence. I acquired the Chapple & Pollard collection of Gaskell's letters — but there was little from 1845 and no mention of Duval in the letters, and no-one seemed to know anything about him.

Earlier this year I was contacted by a cousin, Alan Duval, who told me that he had been doing some research into various branches of his family and was about to start on the Duvals. I told him about the portrait, and sent him a photocopy and he promised to keep me informed.

A few weeks later he rang me in some excitement, having been contacted through a genealogy web-site by someone called Tom Askey, the husband of a Duval half-aunt of Alan's and mine, whose existence we had not known about previously. Tom had told Alan that he had prepared for his wife, children and grand-children a 'little book' about the family history of the Duval family, which he would be happy to send to Alan. In the meantime he gave Alan quite a lot of information.

It appeared that 'C A Duval' was the professional name of Charles Allen Du Val, who was our great-great-grandfather, and who in his day was a very successful artist and photographer. He had done portraits of the leaders of the Anti-Corn-Law League, the Manchester MPs Cobden and Bright, Daniel O'Connell, and Joseph Burch, the inventor, and had exhibited at the Liverpool Academy and the Royal Academy.

Tom also told Alan about Charles Allen Du Val's nephew, another Charles (or Charley) Du Val, who became a very successful music-hall entertainer and had taken his one-man show on tour in a number of other countries, including South Africa, where he had become caught up in the Boer War and ran a newspaper for the local citizens during the siege of Pretoria. And — Alan mentioned casually — one of Charles Allen Du Val's sons, Edward James, another artist, had married someone called Emma Gaskell in 1864. He gave me the details of when and where the marriage had taken place and I ordered a copy of the marriage certificate from Manchester Register Office.

I then treated myself to a day at the National Portrait Gallery, where the archivist showed me the 'cartes-de-visite' photographs in which C A Duval had specialised, and also photocopies they had on file of many of his portraits in oils and pastels.

Back on the computer, I found an obituary of a famous chemist (well, famous to those who know about chemists): Frederic Kipping, in which it was stated that not only was Mr Kipping a grandson of the artist Charles Allen Du Val but that he had married his cousin who was herself a grand-daughter of Charles Allen Du Val, and her name was Lily Holland. Of course, when I saw the name Holland, I wondered whether there could possibly be a connection between Lily Holland and therefore the Du Val/Duval family and Elizabeth Gaskell, whose mother's maiden name had been Holland.

At this stage I e-mailed Joan Leach and asked her three things: (1) Did she or any of the Knutsford or Manchester Gaskell Society members know anything about C A Duval, the painter of the Gaskell girls' portrait? (2) Did she know who Emma Gaskell was and whether she was connected to William Gaskell? And (3) — bit of a long shot — might Lily Holland be connected to Elizabeth Gaskell's Holland relations?

Joan came back to me very quickly. (1) She knew the portrait well, the original of which hangs in the Portico Library, but knew nothing about C A Duval other than what she had found in the *National Dictionary of Biography*. (2) She thought Emma Gaskell was very unlikely to be related to William Gaskell; and (3) the Holland connection was interesting.

The marriage certificate arrived and it was clear that Joan was right — Emma's father was a 'warp-sizer' — no doubt the author of *North and South* would have known exactly what that was — I only know it's a job in a cotton mill. More convincingly, her name on the certificate was spelled GASKILL not Gaskell. So my hopes of finding a link between my family and that of Elizabeth Gaskell were dashed there.

However, Joan soon contacted me again — Yes, she said, your family is connected with Elizabeth Gaskell. 'Lily Holland was the daughter of Florence Du Val who

married William Thomas Holland in 1861'. That was very exciting, but I wasn't actually much the wiser — who was Florence Du Val? And who was William Thomas Holland?

Back to Alan, who told me that Florence was the 5th child of Charles Allen Du Val — and back to Joan, who sent me a family tree and more information about the Hollands — and now I think I can say with confidence that **Elizabeth Gaskell's great-great-uncle was the great-great-grandfather of the man who married my great-great-aunt Florence**. A fact about which I am quite ridiculously delighted.

As a postscript, I would mention that not long after this I was in touch with Tom Askey, who very kindly sent me his 'little book' on the Duval Family (which turned out to be anything but 'little', having 148 pages and numerous illustrations). I emailed him to thank him of course, and was delighted to find that he much admires Elizabeth Gaskell, and considers that *Cousin Phillis* is a much better book than *Cranford* (which happens to be my own opinion too).

The two final paragraphs of Tom's e-mail to me on 7 April read:

I was archivist at Chatsworth for many years, and while there I often exhibited a treasured letter from Charlotte Brontë to Elizabeth Gaskell. The 6th Duke of Devonshire (1790-1858) knew many literary figures of his day — there are Dickens letters, one from Leigh Hunt, and a lovely one from Thackeray with an account of what happened afterwards to Becky Sharp and a pencil drawing of her in old age.

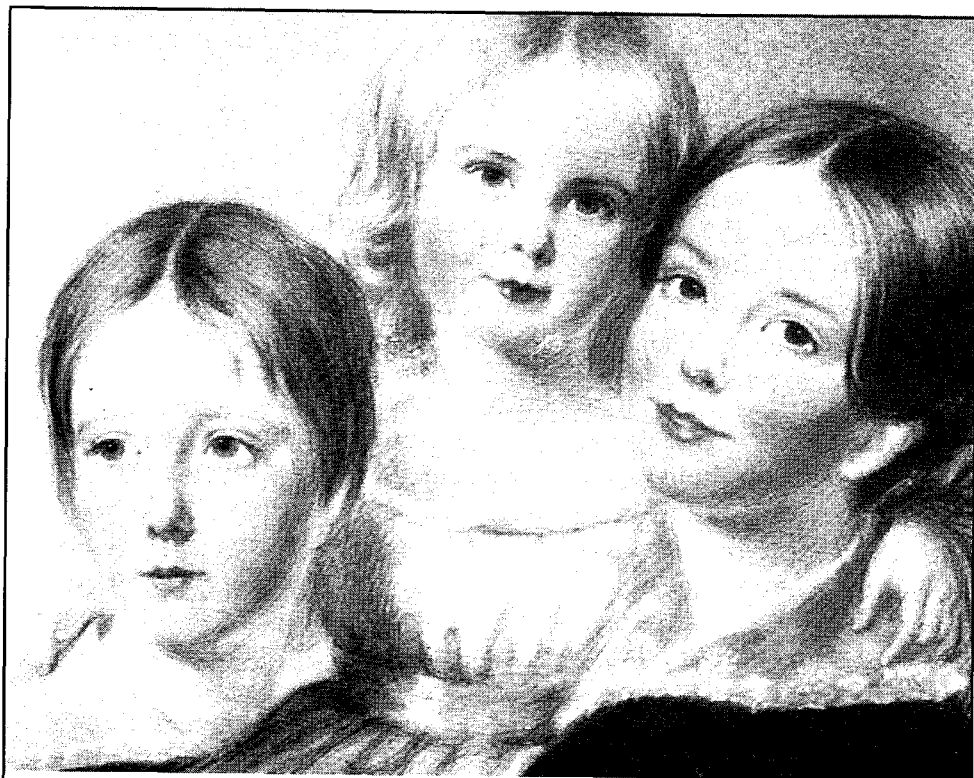
The Duke never met Charlotte Brontë. He knew Elizabeth Gaskell and she gave him the letter. Although it's many years now since I saw it, I recall it describing a delightful family scene at teatime in Haworth parsonage. I don't think it's ever appeared in print.

There's an amusing story about how the duke met Elizabeth Gaskell. (I've never seen it in any document, but it's traditional in the Cavendish family). Elizabeth Gaskell was staying with friends at Rowsley and she decided to visit Chatsworth. Now Chatsworth has always been open to visitors. Anyone having the temerity to knock on the door would be shown around by the housekeeper, and if you went on a Thursday you were given dinner. When Elizabeth Gaskell arrived the Duke himself was in residence (a rare event, as he much preferred Hardwick) and he was delighted to meet her. She was invited to stay for several days as his guest. Which was wonderful, but alas she had only the clothes she was wearing. So secretly she sent a message down to Rowsley to have some more clothes sent up so that she wouldn't constantly appear in the same dress.

I do not know whether the letter from Charlotte Brontë to Elizabeth Gaskell has in fact appeared in print, but there is a letter from Elizabeth to daughter Marianne, written from Chatsworth, that certainly bears out her anxiety about clothes on the visit.

One question still remains in my mind: how well did the Gaskells know the Du Vals? William and Charles Allen were both members of the Portico Library and the Manchester Literary & Philosophical Society, but was there anything more than a slight acquaintance? I do not suppose I will ever find out, but would love to hear if anyone comes across any possible clues.

Nicky Clark's email address: nickyclark100@hotmail.com



Meta, Florence and Marianne
1845. Pastel by Duval

The Death of Elizabeth Gaskell

Dr John Ross

Jenny Uglow, in her biography, relates how well Elizabeth Gaskell had been looking in church on the afternoon of Sunday, November 12th 1865 and that she had a happy early evening with her family when she suddenly stopped speaking and fell forward with a slight gasp into the arms of her daughter Meta and did not recover. There was no post-mortem. Her death certificate recorded the cause of death as 'disease of the heart'.

This diagnosis could certainly be correct as there is no mention of any feature which could suggest an alternative. There is no mention of any pain. Pain usually accompanies occlusion of blood vessels (coronary arteries) in the wall of the heart, a common cause of sudden collapse and death, but not always. Sudden change in the rhythm of the heart can cause collapse and death without pain.

There are a number of recorded comments and observations which make speculation about her health and alternative causes of death of interest.

Three weeks after Elizabeth's death, Isabella Green, daughter of a close friend of Elizabeth, in a letter to her brother Philip, dated December 3rd 1865, wrote that Elizabeth's daughters had said that 'her death was caused by the breaking of the medulla oblongata [sic] which is the upper part of the spinal cord [sic] and it becomes very brittle in people who have gout, as you know [sic], she had several times'. This is a remarkable and impossible diagnosis – the medulla oblongata is an important soft hind part of the brain continuous with the spinal cord and can be damaged by severe trauma but is certainly never brittle or breakable. It has no connection with gout and there is nothing in Elizabeth's history to suggest that she ever had gout. True gout is usually easily recognised and arthritis and aches and pains of all sorts were often called gout in those days. It is unbelievable however that, even 130 years ago, any doctor would have given relatives such a bizarre diagnosis. Who gave it to the daughters?

In the same letter Isabella Green wrote '...early this year she [Elizabeth Gaskell] said to Mrs Deane [a cousin] that she did not expect to live thro' the year.' What caused her to say this? Had someone made a diagnosis and given her a poor prognosis or had she herself noted an abnormality which she associated with a poor prognosis? There is no mention, in Jenny Uglow's biography, of any symptoms which could result from a physical disorder with a poor outlook. She does once mention Elizabeth having a 'weak heart' but gives no symptoms or evidence for this and no record of anyone mentioning it. There are accounts, throughout her adult life, of 'oft unwell', 'unwell on and off all the year', 'often ill', 'deadly feelings of fatigue', 'depression', 'weakness helped by medicinal brandy', 'low and convalescent

and there were episodes of back pain, dizziness, headaches and fainting and chest infection. Most of these upsets could have been related to exhaustion, overwork or worry to which she admitted. None of these troubles could have led her to speak of a limited life when she was aged fifth-four. A cousin who heard about her sudden and unexpected death wrote that 'she had always wished and spoken of her wish to die a sudden painless death like this'; but this does not indicate that she had any knowledge of any disorder which might allow this wish.

Elizabeth had been writing, for the last eighteen months of her life, *Wives and Daughters*, which was published serially in the *Cornhill Magazine* from August 1864 to January 1866. It is very interesting that, in this great novel she relates that Osborne Hamley, the young son of the squire, was diagnosed as having an aneurysm of the aorta by the conscientious and talented Doctor Gibson. Dr Nicholls, the much respected county physician, did not agree but Osborne did die rather suddenly and presumably Elizabeth meant this to be considered due to rupture of the aneurysm, a recognised result of the disorder. In a letter dated 3 May 1864 she had outlined her plan for the novel and mentioned that Osborne 'breaks a blood vessel and dies'.

It is surprising that Elizabeth used this disorder as a cause of Osborne's death; one would not expect many lay people in the mid-nineteenth century to have known about it. She may indeed have been hinting at its uncommon and little known occurrence when she wrote that Gibson was asked by his daughter what Osborne died of and he replied 'Something wrong about the heart. You would not understand if I told you'.

Did Elizabeth learn about aortic aneurysms from Sir Astley Cooper (1768-1841) the famous surgeon who was the world authority on these abnormalities in the early nineteenth century? He is the only actual doctor mentioned by her in *Wives and Daughters*. She relates that Gibson had once been invited to dine at the Towers, the seat of the local aristocracy, and to meet Sir Astley Cooper 'the head of the profession'. Why did Elizabeth choose *him* to appear in her book? She did have several doctors in her family, some 'well connected' (Sir Henry Holland, a cousin of hers, was Physician-in-Ordinary to Queen Victoria) and she possibly met Sir Astley, who impressed her by talking about his work and aortic aneurysms.

Aneurysms are dilatations, swellings, in blood vessels caused by deterioration in their wall structure and less commonly by disease. Aneurysms of the aorta are most commonly found in people over sixty years of age and would be most unlikely in someone of Osborne Hamley's age. Nowadays they may be found on X-ray or scanning before any symptoms occur; in Sir Astley Cooper's time abdominal aneurysms could only be diagnosed when they were large enough to be felt. Half of all persons with an untreated abdominal aneurysm die of rupture within five years. There may be no symptoms until the aneurysm is large enough to cause pain.

If Sir Astley did tell Elizabeth about aneurysms, he would certainly have told her about the inevitability of rupture and death. This would have led to her writing that Mrs Gibson told Gibson that she had heard Dr Nicholls saying 'If he had got an aneurism of the aorta his days are numbered', when she overheard the two doctors discussing Osborne.

Is it possible that Elizabeth thought that her days were numbered because she had an abdominal swelling that was an aneurysm, and that she was correct — as it ruptured and caused her sudden death? I do not think so; there is no mention of pain at the time of her death and this is almost always present with a rupture, and severe.

The most likely cause of sudden death without pain or other significant symptoms is a severe change in heart rhythm, so we can accept the death certificate; but why did Elizabeth expect to die that year?

I am most grateful to Joan Leach and Fran Baker of the John Rylands University Library Manchester for their help and information, and to Dr Henry Connor for comment.

PHOTOS IN GENEVA

Tim Austin [1]

In the Spring Newsletter of the Gaskell Society attention was focused on a carte-de-visite image from the Jamison Archive [2] which was thought to be of Elizabeth Gaskell.

In the family photograph albums of the descendants of Emily Sharpe and James Pearson Langshaw [3], the same image has been found and is clearly identified on the back, in Emily's hand, as Susan Deane, taken in 1863 in the studio of the photographer Faedo at Plainpalais Geneva. In the same albums there are also to be found photographs of Elizabeth Sharpe and her third and youngest son Alfred [4] taken in the same studio in the same year. These two photographs and that of Susan are attached to this article.

Susan Deane was the second wife of Richard Deane, Knutsford doctor and partner of Peter Holland (Susan's father and the uncle of Elizabeth Gaskell), and his second wife Mary Whittaker.

Emily Sharpe was the third child (of four) and second daughter of Francis Sharpe, organist at Knutsford Parish Church, and his wife Martha Whittaker, younger sister of Mary. Emily's older sister was Marianne Sharpe, the first wife of Richard Deane. Their elder brother was Edmund Sharpe, husband of Elizabeth and the father of Alfred.



Alfred Sharpe & Susan Deane
The same pattern can be seen in all three photos

Thus the two wives of Richard Deane were first cousins, and of course Susan was a first cousin of Elizabeth Gaskell. Elizabeth regarded herself as a half-cousin of the Sharpe children [5], not quite genealogically accurate but they did have an uncle and aunt in common.

These are but the barest of facts of a long story. Many elements of this story were presented to the 2008 Autumn Meeting of the Gaskell Society at Knutsford. For this article it seems worth recounting some information on the life and origins of Richard Deane, which may provide pointers as to how he came to know and then to marry his two wives.

Richard Timothy Deane was born in Northwich in 1805, the son of Samuel Deane and his wife Jane Hancock [6]. Samuel was a doctor then practising at Northwich,

where his doctor brother James was also in practice. James had at one time been House Surgeon at the Manchester Workhouse and also surgeon to the Altrincham (Poor Law) Union [7]. We already know that Samuel had been apprenticed in 1796 to Peter Holland. Peter Holland himself had been apprenticed to Dr Charles White of Manchester in 1783, whose family had long been friends of the Whittaker family in Manchester. Going back three generations it is possible that the Deane and Holland families were distantly related.



Elizabeth Sharpe
1863

In May 1871 Elizabeth Sharpe wrote a letter to her first cousin Mary Green, a month before Mary's death in June at Knutsford [8]. This letter shows that the two cousins were in contact.

Edmund Sharpe and his family left Lancaster in 1856 to go to Wales for a few years until 1863, when they moved to Geneva until 1866. Susan Deane and her family were probably visiting the Sharpes in Geneva when her photograph was taken there in 1863. She visited Switzerland again in 1866 — as evidenced in a letter of Isabella Green, youngest daughter of Henry and Mary, to her brother John Philip in India written on June 3 1866: 'the Deanes...are going to Switzerland in a week or two'. This visit may again have been to the Sharpes; but during the year they had gradually returned to Lancaster, and were probably all home there by the late summer.

Acknowledgements:

Particular thanks for help with this research, over many years, go to John Hughes, author of the historical study of Edmund Sharpe shortly to be published privately, in the bicentenary year of his birth on 31 October 1809. Thanks also are due to Sarah Tanner and Jean Jamison, and to Fran Baker, Gaskell Archivist at the John Rylands Library, for their great generosity and help in allowing me early and easy access to the material of the Jamison Archive; and not least to Joan Leach for first telling me about it.

Notes:

- [1] Great-great-grandson of Emily Sharpe and Pearson Langshaw.
- [2] Jamison Archive: Family history material descended from Isabella Jamison née Green, youngest daughter of Rev. Henry Green and Mary Brandreth. Now in the John Rylands Library, Manchester.
- [3] Family History material collected by Emily and Pearson Langshaw, preserved and enhanced by their descendants and now in various places. Significant collections are: on gift in the Austin Paley Archive ms. LM 86/129 in Lancaster Museum, mainly images; and on deposit in the Austin Langshaw Archive, Rare Books and Archives, Lancaster University, mainly written material, including 'new' letters of Elizabeth and Florence Gaskell. The photograph albums are currently retained by the family.
- [4] He became Sir Alfred Sharpe in 1903; after serving as a British colonial administrator he became Commissioner of the British Central Africa Protectorate in 1896, and then in 1907 the first Governor of Nyasaland, the two countries now known as Malawi.
- [5] *Elizabeth Gaskell, The Early Years*, John Chapple, MUP, 1997; page 196 and note 3, page 212; written by Elizabeth Stevenson, ES Oct 1831, in last MS music book; "...[manuscript duet quadrilles]....they are written by a half-cousin of mine..." — refers to Edmund Sharpe.
- [6] The Knutsford Hancock family was related by marriage to the Knutsford Wright family.
- [7] Guildhall Library London: London and Provincial Medical Directory; 1847.
- [8] Jamison Archive: Letter of Elizabeth Sharpe to Mary Green, May 19 1871. Letter has black border on the front page in memory of Jane Langshaw née Fletcher, Elizabeth's older sister, and wife of Pearson's older brother John, who had died in April.

Progress at 84 Plymouth Grove

Janet Allan

On 7 September our builders started work on restoring the outside of the Gaskells' home in Manchester, at the cost of three quarters of a million pounds. This includes stripping off the old roof, dealing with dry rot, repairing all the windows, shutters and exterior doors, replacing stonework, replacing the cement render with lime render all over the outside of the building, and making sure that what Elizabeth called the 'pestilential drains' are replaced. It will be March before all this work is done, and after that we hope very much that the ground floor can be made habitable again. We hope to welcome many people there during the bi-centenary year.

Many of you have helped in this first phase by sponsoring restoration of features of the house. A very grateful thank you!

The next stage of the project is our application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the money to restore the interior and convert the building to its new uses - Gaskell heritage rooms, community spaces, conference and educational activities and hopefully a Gaskell archive.

Our application will hopefully go in at the end of November and the entire cost will be about two million pounds, of which we are asking the Lottery for one million. We hope that we will be successful in restoring 'Manchester's neglected treasure' to full life once more.

THE 2009 AGM/WEEKEND OF THE ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES ACADEMY PLAZA HOTEL, DUBLIN

13/14th June 2009

Report by Janet Kennerley

This year's AGM and Weekend of the ALS was held in Dublin, organised by members of the ALS Committee, assisted at the event by members of the Dubliners Literary Circle, who had organised a most interesting set of talks and play readings prior to the start of the AGM about famous Irish writers — Joyce, Yeats, Beckett and George Bernard Shaw, to name just a few.

The Chairman of the ALS, Linda Curry, welcomed delegates to Dublin, announcing that sadly, the ALS President, Aeronwy Thomas, was unable to attend due to illness and that she would be stepping down. We were all asked to think about who might be asked to replace her.

The Chairman had represented the ALS at a European meeting of literary organisations in Berlin in February 2009, organised by the German equivalent of the ALS (ALG). Attendees came from a mixture of literary societies, museums and houses. She explained that it had been an excellent opportunity to see how literary organisations operate in Europe and to establish a network of mutual benefit, perhaps opening up opportunities for funding in the future.

The new Secretary of the ALS, Anita Fernandez-Young, was congratulated on her work. After a year of operating without a Secretary, Anita volunteered to fill the role at the 2009 AGM and has so far produced two Newsletters which have been well received by member societies. Whenever possible, these are to be sent out electronically to save expense.

We were asked to think of ways in which we could raise the profile of the ALS with a view to obtaining funding. At present the only income is by annual subscriptions and the raffle at the Annual Meeting. The ALS did not want to raise subscriptions at the moment as it was hoping to encourage new membership but prompt payment would be helpful. We were asked to think about what the ALS could do for your society.

The Treasurer reported that she had been successful in obtaining payment of some outstanding subscriptions but the overall profit was slightly down with a balance of around £3,000 in the bank. Expenses are always kept to the minimum with increased use of email whenever possible. It was agreed to set up a special fund of £100 annually for Chairman's expenses following the meeting in Germany.

The ALS Journal "ALSo" had been delayed this year due to lack of suitable articles but it was reported that this should be available shortly.

The Election of Officers and Committee 2009-2010 took place en bloc as follows:-

Chairman	Linda Curry (<i>John Clare Society</i>)
Secretary	Anita Fernandez Young (<i>Dickens Fellowship</i>)
Treasurer	Julie Shorland (<i>Jane Austen Society</i>)
Editors	Linda Curry and Robin Healey (<i>Charles Lamb, Wyndham Lewis</i>)

Committee:

Frieda Barker (*Marlowe Society*), Angela Crow Woods (*Brontë Society*)
Helen Newman (*Richard Jefferies Society*), Don Lee (*Philip Larkin Society*)
Kenn Oultram (*Daresbury Lewis Carroll Society*)
Thelma Thompson (*Shropshire Literary Society*)
Janet Kennerley (*Gaskell Society*), Marty Smith (*Johnson Society, Lichfield*)

It was decided that no changes were necessary at present to the ALS Constitution but that it would be useful if this could be available on the website.

It was an ideal opportunity to promote next year's AGM/weekend which will be held in Knutsford on 15/16th May 2010. Please make a note in your diary. The Gaskell Society looks forward to hosting this event during our special year celebrating 200 years since Elizabeth Gaskell's birth.

Looking further ahead, it was mentioned that it may be possible to hold the 2011 event in Edinburgh. The Johnson Society of Lichfield offered to host the 2012 AGM.

At the close of the AGM, there was a raffle of prizes kindly donated by those attending which in some way represented their own society.

After the lunch break, we reassembled for a pleasant trip to the National Library of Ireland to visit an exhibition of W B Yeats. We were also shown the Reading Room.

In the evening, 47 people, many representing the Dubliners Literary Circle, enjoyed a Formal Dinner in the hotel. Once again, we entertained ourselves with favourite readings, quotations and poetry, even a song – an enjoyable close to a very busy day.

For those staying over the weekend, Desmond O'Malley, Chairman of the Dubliners Literary Circle, lead a historic walk around the Georgian buildings and other significant literary landmarks of the city, which ended at the Dublin Writers' Museum.

Finally, before catching our flight back to Manchester in the early evening, a small group of us walked to the National Gallery to view the paintings by the brother of W B Yeats, said to have inspired his friend, Samuel Beckett to write "Waiting for Godot".

BOOK NOTES

Christine Lingard

Romanticism, revolution, and language. *The Fate of the Word from Samuel Johnson to George Eliot* by John Beer, Emeritus Professor of English at the University of Cambridge (whom many will remember from the 2007 Canterbury conference). Cambridge University Press, May 2009. Traces how the French Revolution influenced the English language and challenged the basic philosophy of many English writers, leading to the establishment of the Romantic Movement. This is illustrated in the works of authors ranging from William Blake to George Eliot. Other authors discussed include Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Wordsworth, William Hazlitt, and Jane Austen. Chapter 10 is entitled *Languages of memory and passion: Tennyson, Gaskell and the Brontës*.

Mobility and modernity in women's novels, 1850s-1930s: women moving dangerously, by Wendy Parkins, Senior Lecturer in the English Department at the University of Otago, New Zealand. Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

A discussion of women's mobility in a wide range of novels from 1850 to 1930, dealing with urban as well as rural settings. It includes some twentieth-century authors not often discussed in comparison to their nineteenth-century forebears, including Elizabeth Bowen, Vernon Lee and Stella Gibbons. In particular it discusses *Adam Bede* and *North and South*.

Literary remains: representation of death and burial in Victorian England, by Mary Elizabeth Hotz, State University of New York Press.

Places the treatment of death and burial in nineteenth century fiction in its historical context, with an introduction on Edwin Chadwick and burial reform. As well as Thomas Hardy and Charles Dickens, the book discusses representations of death in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* and *North and South*, with concluding remarks on *Dracula*.

BRUSSELS BRONTË GROUP ANNUAL BRONTË WEEKEND

Friday 23 April to Sunday 25 April 2010

Provisional programme- updated information will be posted on our website.

2010 is the bicentenary year of the birth of Charlotte Brontë's first and most famous biographer, Elizabeth Gaskell. We have organised a talk on her by Gaskell expert Angus Easson and, in complete contrast, a meeting with writer Jude Morgan whose fictional biography of the Brontës, *The Taste of Sorrow*, came out in 2009. Jude Morgan is the author of many works of historical fiction including *Passion*, inspired by the lives of the Romantic poets Byron, Shelley and Keats.

Saturday 24 April

On the Brussels trail: Elizabeth Gaskell and The Life of Charlotte Brontë. A talk by Prof. Angus Easson

Meeting with writer Jude Morgan, author of the fictional biography of the Brontës *The Taste of Sorrow* (2009). Jude will talk about the researching and writing of the novel and answer questions.

Sunday 25 April 10.00: A guided walk around Brontë places in Brussels.

Updated information on <http://www.thebrusselsbrontegroup.org>

Non-members are welcome. Registration is essential for all events. Contact person for information and registrations: Helen MacEwan at helen.macewan@ec.europa.eu

Weekend Course

At Burton Manor, Cheshire, March 19-21

Jackie Wilkin will lead a course on *The Knutsford Novels: Cranford and Wives and Daughters*. Contact for details: j.wilkin@talktalk.net

North West Group

KNUTSFORD MEETINGS are held at St John's Church hall, on the last Wednesday in the month, studying Gaskell short stories. Buffet lunch is from 12.15pm. Cost £8.

MEETINGS AT CROSS STREET CHAPEL are held on the second Tuesday in the month at 1.00pm. Members may meet at the chapel from 12.15 for a sandwich lunch. Meetings cost £2 for members, £3 for non-members.

8th December

Christmas Carol service conducted by the minister, Jane Barraclough

9th February

Elizabeth Gaskell and the 19th Century Jewish cultural scene by Susan Fox

9th March

The Irish in Manchester by Mervyn Busteed

London and South East Group

Saturday 13th February 2010

The Life of Charlotte Brontë reconsidered

With Alan Shelston

Alan Shelston is President of the Gaskell Society and although now retired from Manchester University is busier than ever with Gaskell interests and is currently writing a biography of Gaskell for the centenary year in 2010.

Meetings continue at Francis Holland School at 2pm with a sandwich lunch from 12.45pm.

Further information from

Dr Fran Twinn, 85 Carlton Avenue, Dulwich, London SE21 7DF

Telephone: 020 8693 3238

E-mail: frantwinn@aflex.net

Yorkshire Group

At the Friends Meeting House, Friar Gate, York

Meetings will commence at 2 p.m. The room will be available from 12.30 p.m. for those who wish to bring a picnic lunch. To cover expenses a contribution of £5 is requested. Contact : shepleysmiths@tiscali.co.uk

South-West Group

Programme for November 2009 - August 2010

Saturday, November 21st, 2009, 2.30pm at BRLSI, 16-18 Queen Square, Bath: Dr Gillian Ballinger of the University of the West of England will speak on *North and South* and the 'condition-of-England novel'.

Tea/Coffee will be served after the talk, £2.00 to members; £4.00 to non-members

Monday, January 11th, 2010, 7.00pm: New Year Supper 'Bring and Share', at 138 Fairfield Park Road, Bath BA1 6JT by the kind invitation of Rosemary and Tony Marshall. Tel: 01225 426732.

Saturday, February 13th, 2.30pm: Discussion group at Elizabeth Schlenther's, 14 Vellore Lane, Bath, BA2 6JQ, on Mary Barton. (Tel: 01225 331763)

Saturday, March 13th, 2.30pm: Discussion group at Bren Abercrombie's, 12 Mount Road, Lansdown, BA1, to continue the discussion on Mary Barton. (Tel: 01225 471241)

Any queries to Mrs Elizabeth Schlenther, 14 Vellore Lane, Bath, BA2 6JQ
Tel: 01225 331763

**This diary for the GASKELL BICENTENARY YEAR 2010
may have additions or alterations and will be updated as necessary.**

JAN. 8	Gabrielle Drake one woman show 'My dear Scheherazade' at Manchester Metropolitan University Theatre
MARCH 31	Opening of the Portico Library Exhibition (runs until 29 April)
APRIL 8	Launch of Alan Shelston's new Gaskell Biography, Portico Library
13	Evening performance of <i>Elizabeth Gaskell</i> and <i>Charlotte Brontë</i> , Portico Library
17	Gaskell Society AGM at Cross St. Chapel, Manchester
23-25	Brussels Brontë Weekend
MAY 14-17	Brook St. Chapel Flower and Costume Festival with Victorian high tea in the garden

MAY 15-16 Alliance of Literary Societies AGM in Knutsford with optional trip to the Gaskell's House, 84 Plymouth Grove on the afternoon of the 16th

JUNE 9 Sheffield University study day

JULY 15 Exhibition on Elizabeth Gaskell opens at John Rylands University Library of Manchester

22 Special viewing of the exhibition for the Gaskell Society with a talk by Fran Baker

AUGUST 5 at JRL: Professor Pamela Corpron Parker on *Gaskell* and autographs

14 at JRL: History Wardrobe performance: *Elegant Economy*

SEPTEMBER Tatton Park: exhibition on Elizabeth Gaskell's Cheshire, costumed readings and talks

5 Penny Farthing race round Knutsford Moor

14 Knutsford Library: Talk about the Whitfield Collection

16 at JRL: Talk by Jenny Uglow *Country and City*

18 at JRL: by History Wardrobe: *Clothes of Cranford*

24-26 WESTMINSTER ABBEY dedication of window in Poets' Corner and related events

29 Talk by Elizabeth Williams at Brook Street Chapel: *The life and works of Elizabeth Gaskell*, followed by lunch and walk around Knutsford

OCTOBER 3 Commemorative service at Brook Street Chapel and wreath laying. Refreshments

5-9 Victorian Music hall Knutsford Little Theatre (to include *Old Poz*) Knutsford Literature Festival approx two weeks

14 at JRL: *Gaskell and her publishers* by Alan Shelston

NOVEMBER 28 John Rylands exhibition closes