THE GASKELL SOCIETY HOME PAGE has all the latest information on meetings.
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The Gaskell Society

Miniature portrait of Elizabeth in 1832, by William John Thomson of Edinburgh

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2011 - Number 51

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Editor's Letter

Helen Smith

2010 has been an exciting and eventful year for the Gaskell Society. Exhibitions, entertainments, feasts and festivals have all contributed to the junketings throughout the year. Elizabeth Gaskell entered Poets' Corner in time for her 200th birthday.

Knutsford celebrated 29th September with traditional sanding, bell-ringing, lecture at Brook Street Chapel followed by lunch at the Belle Epoque Brasserie beneath the Gaskell Memorial Tower and then a Gaskell walk.

On the following morning, Joan Leach died. Tributes appear in this Newsletter and have been published elsewhere. Our founder, Joan, has been the galvanising force behind the Gaskell Society for 25 years. In November 1865 The Manchester Guardian ended its obituary of Elizabeth Gaskell with the sentence: "Her death leaves a blank that will not easily be filled." In some respects these simple words could be applied to our dear friend Joan.

To end on a more positive note, 84 Plymouth Grove has now replaced the "pestilential drains" and continues to improve. The biography of Elizabeth Gaskell (in Hesperus Brief Lives series) by our President Alan Shelston was published in late November: ECG in a delightful nutshell, a fitting grand finale to the bicentenary year.

And so now, in this year of 2011, it's back to "pairritch and auld claes" as they say in Scotland. (Ask ed. for translation if required).

Many thanks are due to all who have contributed to the Newsletter. I personally should especially like to thank Mary Syner for her helpful advice and encouragement as well as her most useful and expert keyboard skills.

Joan Leach

Our Honorary Secretary from 1985 - 2010

Joan Leach founded the Gaskell Society in 1985, following celebrations for the 175th anniversary of Elizabeth Gaskell's birth. Many people had thought that Elizabeth Gaskell deserved to be better known as a writer, but typically Joan acted on this thought, and called a meeting. From that first Knutsford meeting with thirty-three people present, she built the society up into an worldwide organisation with almost six hundred members.

The success of the Society was to a large extent down to Joan's knowledge, energy and hard work. Newsletters were produced, then a journal, and the first conference was held in conjunction with the Brontë Society in Ambleside in 1990. Fired with

her usual ambition, Joan organised a conference exclusively for Gaskell Society members the following year. This was in Scarborough, and it was so successful that more were arranged, and now conferences happen every two years, attracting members from all over the British Isles, as well as from overseas. Typically, Joan knew them all, and was concerned for their welfare, and generally they responded to her concern and took care of each other. An eminent academic once described the society as 'The very *nicest* of literary societies', and if that was the case, it was largely due to Joan. But as well as some highly respected academics, Gaskell Society members include ordinary readers who simply enjoy the books, and some who have just enjoyed *Cranford* on the television. Joan managed to cater for them all.

Her knowledge of local history was unrivalled, and she was always quick to pick up interesting links between the books and the area, to do the necessary research and to lead walks and trips around places with Gaskell associations. As the Society grew in numbers, and branches were established in London, Bath and York, the scope for trips grew. Joan, like Mrs Gaskell herself, was an intrepid traveller, and eventually led groups who followed their writer not just to locations all over Britain but also overseas, to Heidelberg, Paris and Rome. On her return she would instantly start planning the next event. Her energy made some of her younger committee members feel tired, but it was impossible not to respond to her enthusiasm.

In 1987 she went to Kansas, to participate in a conference in commemoration of Queen Victoria's jubilee, promoting the Society in the process. In 1988 the Gaskell Society of Japan was inaugurated, following a visit to Knutsford by Professor Yamawaki, and in 2006 Joan travelled to Japan as a guest of this society, giving talks and enjoying wonderful hospitality. Links were also established with Italy. Jenny Uglow's excellent biography of Elizabeth Gaskell, published in 1993, is dedicated in part to the Gaskell Society. In the *Cambridge Companion to English Literature*, published in 2007, Susan Hamilton describes the success of the Gaskell Society as 'staggering'. She adds, 'The society initiated the BBC's 1999 production of *Wives and Daughters*, the success of which led to the BBC's production of *North and South* in 2004'. Since then, of course, we've had the major success of *Cranford*. And this all happened because of Joan's determination, persistence and perceptiveness. In 2005 her hard work was acknowledged by her being awarded the MBE, in recognition of her services to literature and to Knutsford.

It was a great sadness that she was unable to get to Westminster Abbey, to join two hundred other members of the Society in the dedication of the window in Poets' Corner on September 25th. A member from overseas who was there wrote: 'How beloved Joan was was very clear to me when so many of those I met expressed their concern about her and sadness that she was not able to be present... I heard of the Gaskell Society in 1987 and visited Manchester and Knutsford where she met and showed me round with all the warm friendliness and enthusiasm which obviously characterised her life. I joined the Society there and then, and have ever

since enjoyed the journal and newsletter, often with more than a touch of envy that I was not able to participate in the astonishing array of activities recorded therein.'

Amazingly, Joan's determination enabled her to share in some of the celebrations in her beloved Knutsford on the actual bicentenary of Elizabeth Gaskell's birth — 29th September. With the aid of a wheelchair and the new lift at Brook Street Chapel she was able to attend a talk in the morning. She entered to a round of applause and left to a standing ovation. As she drove away, she was able to hear the bells of the Parish Church ringing in celebration of the bicentenary, something which she herself had arranged. She died early the next morning. She will be desperately missed.

Elizabeth Williams

* * * *

From the Rev Jean Bradley, minister at Brook Street Chapel:

Joan Leach, her final weeks.

I have only recently moved back to Knutsford, for I was born and bred in what then seemed to be an unassuming market town with its family bakers, butchers and clock repairers. I can remember the local characters and the feeling that we all knew everyone else in the town. When I cast my mind backwards and forwards over the years, thinking first of my childhood and then of the occasional visits to see family, I realise how many changes have taken place in the town. There have been changes in property, in the ownership of shops or businesses and a great increase in the number of people living in Knutsford. However, one thing never seemed to change — and that was the sight of Joan Leach on her bicycle. In the early days the traffic cannot have been too bad but almost to the end of her life Joan determinedly continued to cycle through the dreadful traffic of the twenty-first century. She was as much a part of the Knutsford scene in her day as any of the characters in Cranford were in theirs.

Joan had contacted me through her sister to say that she wasn't well and would like to see me. As Minister of Brook Street Unitarian Chapel, I was aware of Joan's passion for Knutsford in general and Elizabeth Gaskell in particular and I knew she was very fond of our 'ancient chapel'. So when I visited Joan at her home, I was very saddened to hear that she had been diagnosed with a terminal illness. Joan was incredibly brave and logical. She didn't know how long she would retain her mental faculties and asked me if I would help her in planning her funeral.

Although this was a rather distressing experience for Joan in some ways, I think it also gave her peace and helped her to accept her situation. So for eight weeks (with the exception of one week when I had a cold) I visited her every week, firstly at her home and then at Tabley House where she was so wonderfully cared for. We planned both the crematorium service and the Service of Appreciation of her life, the latter of which was held at her beloved Brook Street Chapel. She chose seven

people whom she wished to speak, as well as the hymns and music. She was a truly courageous woman.

While Joan was so poorly, all the celebrations for the two hundredth anniversary of Elizabeth Gaskell's birth were taking place, many of which Joan herself had helped to organise. Unfortunately she was too weak to attend many events but she managed to come to the celebration of Elizabeth Gaskell's birthday at the Chapel. I believe that somehow she found strength for that occasion, for only hours later she died, recalling what a happy day she had had.

Joan wished to have the crematorium service first, which gave her son Martin and the family some privacy for their own personal mourning. Joan was so well known through the Gaskell Society and elsewhere that the family might have felt overwhelmed if they had entered the Chapel first, to find so very many people who loved Joan and yet were unknown to the immediate family.

As one would expect, the Chapel was full when we gathered to celebrate her life. It was a time of sadness but also of sincere appreciation of all that Joan meant to us. She was a good wife and mother, a loving sister, an enthusiast for all things to do with the Gaskells, who encouraged and created new enthusiasts, and a dear friend to so many people throughout the world. For my own part, I was privileged to help Joan at a very difficult time and to be able to facilitate all the kind offers of help towards the preparation of her funeral. For this I feel truly blessed.

Rev Jean Bradley

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Happy Memories of Joan from Katharine Solomon of Wimbledon:

Durham Conference, 2003: Joan keeping her audience spellbound with the story of the four little robins, part of a presentation about conduct-books.

Manchester Conference, 2005: Joan proudly showing us Tabley House Chapel; later, remaining cheerful when the coach broke down on the return journey.

Canterbury Conference, 2007: Joan masterminding a complex dramatic presentation about the Holland family.

Scottish trip to Peebles, 2008: at Altrincham bus garage, Joan telling a bus-driver to move his bus so that the Gaskell Society coach could get through. In Edinburgh, studying Elizabeth Gaskell's original manuscript letters in the Scottish National Library.

Penrith Conference, 2009: Joan bringing to life the beautiful church of St Kentigern at Crosthwaite; the next day, at Lake Coniston, coping seamlessly with the non-appearance of our chartered boat to Ruskin's house, and enjoying the Brantwood hillside garden.

From George Hauton, a former member of the Society from Lincolnshire, author of Where the Wild Wind Blows: he expressed his 'sadness and shock at the death of Joan', adding: 'Joan was always so kind to me on my visits to Knutsford, and even though I was an "outsider" to your unique society, she always found the time to chat to me, no matter how busy her schedule'.

* * * *

From Janie Briggs of Heathwaite (Aunt Lumb's house and childhood home of ECG), recalling Joan:

"What a gracious lady — whom we had the pleasure of seeing conducting tours round our garden."

The Gaskell Garden Party was held in this fairytale garden on 5 June 2010. Our thanks to Janie and her family for sharing the magic of the garden with us on such a happy sunny day.

* * * *

From Pam Griffiths: Knutsford Memories

Joan on her bicycle or conducting her Cranford walks was a common sight in Knutsford over the past 25 years. Her enthusiasm for her subject was infectious and her knowledge on all things Knutsford was unsurpassed. Her determination to achieve her goal, whether by enlisting the assistance of a passing policeman or, in the early days, by striding out into the main A50 Toft Road, to halt the traffic herself, for the safe passage of her walkers, was so typical of Joan. It was so very Cranford and so very Joan. She will be sorely missed.

* * * *

From Dudley Green:

It was through my interest in Mrs Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë* that I first came to the Gaskell Society. At that time Joan Leach was virtually the only member whom I knew. She was very kind to me and would ensure that I was not left on my own. This was one of her great traits and she did it for every newcomer. When, on my retirement from teaching in 1995, I decided to take advantage of my new-found freedom and come to the Knutsford lunch meetings, she told me that there was a gentleman from Liverpool who was thinking of attending, who would be very glad to see another man! On my arrival she introduced me to Brian Hechle and we became inseparable friends until Brian's sudden death at Easter 2004.

As I got to know more about the Society my admiration for Joan's qualities increased. The time she devoted to its activities seemed unbounded. If one wished to go on any event the instructions invariably were: 'write to the Hon Secretary, Joan Leach, Far Yew Tree House, Over Tabley, Knutsford, Cheshire WA 16 OHN.' I got to know that address better then my own! How richly Joan deserved her MBE! But, although she was the chief organiser of most events, she never appeared dictatorial and seemed to me to be a born leader. She had the gift of creating

a friendly atmosphere at any meeting, making all feel welcome. Her sweet personality, however, concealed a firm determination that everything should be done in the best way possible. If she felt that some course of action was right, she would quietly but determinedly ensure that that was what was done.

I have many happy memories of the foreign tours which she arranged. My first trip was to Paris in 1998, where she ensured that we marked the opening stage of our pilgrimage by visiting the grave of Madame Mohl in the remarkable Père Lachaise Cemetery. Later I recall a small group of us enjoying a delightful outdoor lunch with Joan in a quiet corner of a Paris square. I also remember the Italian restaurant just round the corner from the hotel, which we visited on more than one occasion, where the waiter showed his appreciation of our custom by his extravagantly amorous advances to Joan — all of which she took in good part! Other trips were to follow —Brussels, Brittany, Rome — these I look back on as some of the happiest holidays of my life. Joan was always great company and such fun to be with. Other members helped in the organisation of these trips but I think all would agree that Joan was the centralising force, who made the experience so enjoyable. On any visit Joan always shouldered responsibility for all the party. I well remember her waiting at Manchester Airport until almost the last minute before departure for a member who had been unavoidably delayed.

In all her activities Joan was motivated by a deep love of Mrs Gaskell and her works. She was a keen researcher and determined in her approach. When I wrote my biography of Patrick Brontë I was concerned whether she might be upset by my critical account of the rather unfavourable letter which Mrs Gaskell wrote after her last meeting with Mr. Brontë. Joan did not say much at the time, but later she came back to me and drew my attention to a subsequent letter Mrs Gaskell had written which showed considerable sympathy for Mr Brontë, one which I had missed in the *Further Letters of Mrs Gaskell*. I am very glad that I was able to put the record straight by inserting a reference to this letter in the notes of the paperback edition of my biography.

It was always good to get a phone call from Joan. She occasionally rang me up to get a Brontë perspective on some matter. Although I mainly saw her at Society events, I was delighted when she accompanied my brother and myself to a recording of *Mastermind* at the BBC Studios in Manchester. I also felt very honoured when she inscribed my copy of her history of Knutsford: 'For Dudley, from a fellow historian, Joan Leach'. That was an accolade which gave me a feeling of great pride. I treasure the last card I received from her, discussing the dramatic presentation which she had written for the Westminster Abbey ceremony. She had asked me to read the part of A.E. Housman. She told me to feel free to alter it in any way and ended: 'See you at the Abbey. Love, Joan'. Sadly that was not to be.

Joan devoted many years of her life to the founding and running of the Gaskell Society and she was integral to its success. She meant so much to all of us that since her death I find that, whenever I attend a Society function, I instinctively look out for her and then come sadly to the realisation that she will not be there. Others

are now carrying on the work which she began and it is a great tribute to her that she has left the Society in such good shape. Her greatest memorial is surely the Gaskell Society itself. I think that it can be said of Joan Leach, as of Sir Christopher Wren and St Paul's Cathedral, *'si monumentum requires, circumspice!'* — 'If you are looking for her memorial, look around you!'

* * * *

From Shirley Foster, reminiscences of Joan:

Writing about Joan is difficult, if only because it is almost impossible to say anything that others have not already said. Joan, as we all know, was not only the instigator of the Society, but its life-blood, producing the Newsletter, arranging events and outings, liaising with other organisations, contributing to meetings. The list is endless, as is our debt of gratitude to her.

But I'd like here to mention a couple of things which have a more personal resonance for me. Joan's willingness to help in all kinds of ways was notable, and I myself experienced this on two particular occasions. The first was when I participated in the 'culture' portion of the TV antiques show, Flog It. I was interviewed on Gaskell, in the garden of her Knutsford residence and in the Unitarian chapel, and spoke about her experiences connected with the town. Joan took the trouble to come over on her (battery-operated!) bicycle – which impressed me greatly – to fill in details about Knutsford, little known to me, for the BBC producers. She took no credit for this and was not mentioned in the programme, but her unobtrusive help and support was typical of her self-effacing generosity.

The other instance of this – rather more trivial, but still characteristic – concerns a question I raised at one of our Gaskell meetings. I commented on how many characters in Victorian novels died of 'brain-fever' and remarked that I'd never really known what this mysterious ailment was. A few days later Joan sent me an e-mail attaching a Wikipedia entry on the disease (apparently an inflammation of the brain). Again, her readiness to assist, unasked, was typical of her. It is these small personal touches, as well as the more obvious achievements, that we will all miss so much.

* * * *

From Christine Bhatt, former committee member who organised the trip to Brittany in 2002, fond and lasting memories of Joan:

A year or so after moving to Knutsford in 1984, I joined the Gaskell Society, on the basis of a vague memory of having read *Cranford* in my school days. My leisure reading in the intervening years had mainly comprised French, or occasionally German, literature. I began to take my mother to the Gaskell meetings. Her interests were not literary, but rather more practical: she loved visiting stately homes and gardens, flower arranging and painting. We were two unlikely members of the Gaskell Society and may well have dropped out, but for one thing, or rather, one person: Joan. Everyone knows what a phenomenal memory was hers and how

generously she shared her knowledge, but I shall always remember how she used her gift to give a warm, personal welcome to every member of or visitor to the Gaskell Society.

* * * *

From Pat Heath:

I first met Joan over 30 years ago through our love of local history. For a long time we worked together at Knutsford Heritage Centre (Joan was involved with my appointment as Manager in the late 1990's) and then as volunteers at Tabley House Museum. Joan loved Tabley — both she and her husband Chris had taught there when it was a school. She also chose to spend her last days at Tabley House Nursing Home.

Contacts with Joan have been many and varied; she involved me in numerous activities over the years, including sanding and helping with her local history walks and talks. Several members of Knutsford Lions, myself included, worked with Joan on the development of the "Lions Museum in the Street" project — her knowledge of local history as always was invaluable.

Involvement with Joan also led to my membership of the Gaskell Society and the Literature Festival. She will be greatly missed by numerous Knutsford organisations and the local community as well as her many friends.

(Ed: We should like to thank Pat Heath, who has been tending and adorning the Gaskell grave with flowers and plants supplied by her daughter Meryl, who is a florist.)

* * * *

From Masuko Adachi, of the Gaskell Society of Japan:

On the morning of 29th September 2010, it was raining in Knutsford. In rain I left the hotel for Brook Street Unitarian Chapel to listen to the memorial talk by Elizabeth Williams, Chairwoman of the Gaskell Society, on 'The Life and Works of Elizabeth Gaskell'. On the way I dropped into a bookshop, and bought a book by Mrs Joan Leach, Honorary Secretary of the Gaskell Society, entitled *Knutsford: A History*. I had really wanted to get one during my stay in the UK this time.

The pews were full on the ground floor of the Chapel. I took a seat on a pew close to the Communion Rail. Just before the talk began, Joan came into the Chapel in a wheelchair, accompanied by her son and her nurse. All the members and I, too, welcomed her with great applause. Joan's wheelchair reached the pew in the inner part of the centre of the Chapel, looking up to the high pulpit. Involuntarily I stood up and went up to her. Fifteen years had passed since I had seen her last. "Masuko!" she said in a low voice. She recognized me! I put my hands on hers. The old strength had gone but was replaced by a gentle softness.

At the beginning of her talk, Elizabeth, turning her eyes upon Joan, praised and

thanked her for her amazing achievements in founding and developing the Gaskell Society, calling her, like Gaskell, 'a remarkable woman'. I, seeing Joan replying to it with a tender smile during a second round of applause from the attendees, had an impression that she, in ill health, looked pretty well.

Listening to Elizabeth's talk, I returned in my reflections to the summer of 1995, fifteen years before. During that summer vacation, I visited places noted in connection with Gaskell. Five years had passed since I had begun to work on her and her literature seriously. I had come to feel like confirming with my own eyes the places where she had lived and walked, and the places which she had used for models in her novels. In addition, I had wanted to join the Oxford Conference at St Hilda's College for the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Gaskell Society, which was to be held on 25-28th August that year. I wrote Joan a letter, explaining my plan. She sent me back a very kind reply immediately.

Joan gave me so much generous advice by letter, fax and telephone: "Stay with Mr Barlow and Howard in London, with Mr and Mrs Pleydell in Knutsford, with Mr and Mrs Sharps in Scarborough, and at the Silverdale Hotel in Silverdale. This member will guide you around in Wales, another in Manchester. . . ." She mentioned so many names of helpful members of the Gaskell Society.

Thanks to Joan and the other members, I could visit all the places that I had wanted. In truth, I went to more places than I could have imagined! In Knutsford, Joan herself guided me to 'Heathwaite' where Gaskell had been reared by her aunt Lumb, and its backyard, where as a child she had read and played under the big cedar in summer. Joan also took me to Tatton Park, the model of the huge garden owned by the family of the Earl of Cumnor in *Wives and Daughters*, then to Sandlebridge, where Gaskell's grandfather had run a farm, and lastly to Dunham Park, one of the scenes in "Libbie Marsh's Three Eras." I also joined the Sunday Outing led by Joan, and saw Over Peover Hall, which is thought to have been the model of Squire Hamley's family Manor House in *Wives and Daughters*. I used some of the photos that I had taken at that time for the sixth volume of *The Complete Works of Elizabeth Gaskell, Wives and Daughters*, which (then) Professor Hidemitsu Togo, of Keiogijuku University, Tokyo, and I co-translated into Japanese.

In Scarborough, Heather Sharps guided me to the grave of Anne Brontë and to Whitby, the model of Monkshaven in *Sylvia's Lovers*. I could understand well the situations of the three main locations featured in the novel, namely, the fishing harbour, the shopping streets and the farming land. In Windermere, I entered Briery Close with its front gate unbolted by chance at that time, and was enjoying a walk alone in the beautiful spacious garden overlooking Lake Windermere, when I was suddenly talked to by an elderly woman. She turned out to live in the part of the mansion where Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë had met for the first time. The drawing room she invited me to enter had an air of Victorian substance but a warm atmosphere around, too. Here Elizabeth welcomed Charlotte with the kind of fondness one might show a younger sister. Charlotte took to Elizabeth immediately,

not influenced by the world's view of her. Picturing to myself the two women feeling thus for each other, my heart filled with deep emotion.

In Silverdale, the mistress of Gibraltar Farm happened to be at home, and I was allowed to enter Lindeth Tower, and climbed the steep narrow staircase to the second floor. There I imagined Gaskell writing *Ruth*, sometimes looking out of the window, now hidden from the sight of Morecambe Bay by tall trees, but which used to overlook the shining, silver sea. I felt a mysterious connection between this woman farmer and Ruth when I heard from a neighbour that she was rearing her daughters by herself, in a sense, in a situation partly resembling Ruth's. On the way back to the hotel, I happened to ask a couple whether they knew anything about Gaskell. They responded, "Actually, friends of ours live in 'The Sheiling.' Do you want to see it?" Immediately I answered, "Yes, of course", because I had learned that Meta and Julia, Gaskell's unmarried daughters, had had the house built for friends of their mother to stay and enjoy their holidays. The couple drove me there. The resident couple showed me all around the inside, including the drawing room with a fireplace surrounded with William Morris ceramic tiles, and served me tea and cookies in the Victorian-styled, old-fashioned kitchen. When I shared these experiences with Joan, she said in great surprise, "Such lucky things rarely happen to us in the UK. But you, from Japan, have seldom come here, and were blessed with such luck!"

The last part of my tour in the UK was to attend the Oxford Conference at St Hilda's College. On the final day, I participated in the Cotswold tour visiting Dumbleton House near Evesham. This house which was owned by Gaskell's cousin, Edward Holland, is now used as a hotel. We saw the inside of this gorgeous house, and took a walk in the huge garden, then enjoyed afternoon tea in the tea room.

After coming back from my trip to the UK, I decided to write a biography of Gaskell from my Japanese perspective and in the Japanese language. At that time Gaskell was not so well-known in Japan as she is now. The famous book written by (then) Professor Yuriko Yamawaki at Jissen Women's University, Tokyo, had become difficult to obtain. It was also hard for me to present orally about Gaskell in all her glory, from birth to death, during my class of English Literature at Notre Dame Seishin University, where I work as professor. How often I wished there were a biography of Gaskell which could help students know her with pleasure and ease!

However, it did not take me much time to realize that writing a biography was not an easy task. Every day I fought with voluminous materials, nearly giving up many a time! It was Joan's great help offered to me at that time and the unforgettable remembrances of the members I had met during my trip that supported me, and kept me from the depths of despair. It took me six years to complete the book, and finally it was published in April 2001, after the change of centuries. I gave my book the title *Elizabeth Gaskell: Her Life and Work*. In this book I used many photos I had taken during my trip so as to have it understood visually as well. Professor Toyohiko Tatsumi formerly of Sophia University, Tokyo, to whom I owe much in the study of English literature, commented, "You have taken rare photos, haven't you? Especially, the ones of The Sheiling and Dumbleton House."

Listening to Elizabeth's talk, I was also reflecting on those things, when her talk came to the end. Elizabeth, having finished her paper, came up to Joan, held her hands and sat down beside her. I took a photo of Joan, Elizabeth and the other members sitting on the pew, never dreaming that it would be Joan's last portrait on earth.

Afterwards, I joined the dinner at La Belle Epoque, and then the 'Knutsford Walk'. When I paid my first visit to Knutsford 15 years ago, I was given a booklet Joan had written called *Sanding: a Knutsford Custom*. The booklet states: "It was only in Knutsford that sanding was part of the wedding celebrations and other special occasions." It also mentions that people in Knutsford celebrated the marriage of the young couple, William and Elizabeth Gaskell, by strewing coloured sand on the ground before the houses on their wedding day in 1832. One of my purposes for my trip this time was to witness the sanding custom. Joan was going to lead the 'Knutsford Walk', but she was replaced by another member. We came to 'Heathwaite', and saw sanding done on the road all along the hedge of the front yard. You could read "H O M E OF E L I Z A B E T H G A S K E L L" drawn in white sand, and see six big lilies drawn in red, white, blue and yellow sand round the white letters. The rain had stopped and I stood there for some time, flipping the pages of Joan's booklet in my mind, and thinking that it had also been Joan who had led me to the good fortune of my encountering the phenomenon of 'sanding' on Gaskell's 200th birthday.

It was on the next day, 30th September, that I received the sad news of Joan's passing. On this day Ann Waddington and Ann O'Brien showed me around Manchester. In the evening Ann O'Brien invited me to supper at her house. After supper we relaxed on the sofa. She opened her personal computer on her lap and checked emails. One of them communicated Joan's sad news. I repeated the question "why, why, why?" in my mind, remembering her figure in the Chapel.

Joan had written to me in her email dated 22nd May, 2010, "The events on 29th September will be popular . We hope to have sanding done in the town as it was for the Gaskells wedding and the church bells will ring out at midday." (sic) Her spelling perhaps expressed how tired she was. Nevertheless, she sent me many emails, and saw to it that I contacted Janet Kennerley and Helen Smith in Knutsford, and the two Anns in Manchester.

In spite of her illness Joan realized her resolution to share the talk in Brook Street Chapel on the actual bicentenary of Gaskell's birth. In this Chapel, Gaskell had worshipped in her childhood, and learned a firm belief in God, then practised love by modelling after Jesus, and the lessons of service and hope. Joan went on a journey to heaven where Gaskell is in peace, after seeing the sanding and hearing the church bells ringing for Gaskell's bicentenary celebration.

Mrs Joan Leach loved Gaskell very much, and Knutsford so much as to be called "Mrs Knutsford". What do you suppose Joan and Elizabeth, those two "remarkable women", are talking about now, resting in the same graveyard?

Joan Leach and **Elizabeth Williams with Society members, enjoying the Garden Party at Heathwaite on 5 June 2010**

Time for tea at Plymouth Grove, July 2010.
Front row (l. to r.): Sarah Prince (née Dabbs), Mrs. Dabbs, Janet Allen
Back row: Andrew Prince, Christine Lingard, Gloria Gaffney, Joss Hill

Gaskell Society members congregate outside Westminster Abbey on 25 September

Before the Dedication at Westminster Abbey.
Vivienne Young, Pam Griffiths, Janet Kennerley, Lynda Stephens

2010

2010 was the year in which everything happened: the celebration of Elizabeth Gaskell's bicentenary; the completion of the restoration of the exterior of 84 Plymouth Grove, and then, desperately sadly, the death first of Mrs Rosemary Dabbs, a lady in direct line of descent from Elizabeth Gaskell's daughter Marianne, and whom many of us had the pleasure of meeting at the exhibitions at the Portico and John Rylands Libraries, and then of Joan Leach, co-founder and inspirational member of our Society for the quarter-century of its existence.

Rosemary Dabbs had always taken an interest in the Society's activities. I first knew her through her generous response to the requests John Chapple and I needed to make from time to time to publish material of which she held the copyright. I used to be concerned about troubling her, but her replies were always kind and positive. In 2010 she readily provided precious family mementoes for display. That she should make the long journey from Devon to Manchester twice during the year was remarkable, but when you met her, anxieties on that score disappeared. To lose her was a great sadness: we send our sympathy to Sarah Prince and her family. Sarah stood in for her mother at the Westminster Abbey ceremony, thus carrying on the family tradition of working with the Society.

Joan Leach did so much to ensure the success of the bicentenary year that it was a double tragedy that her illness meant she could not be at Westminster for the crowning moment. Joan died on the day following the annual Knutsford celebrations of Mrs Gaskell's birthday. She had made what can only be described as a triumphant appearance in the town on that day and her death in a room that overlooked the Cheshire landscape at Tabley somehow sealed a life given in large part to Gaskell and to Knutsford. Of Joan it is really very difficult to say more, but mention of Tabley brings back a personal memory. Some years ago I was invited to speak there about the estate's associations with Elizabeth Gaskell. Apart from an extended chapter in *Mr Harrison's Confessions* these are fairly slight, but I remember Joan's taking me to see the site of the old hall at Tabley, just visible as we peered through the trees. It was a history lesson, as walks in Cheshire with Joan invariably were, and I remember so well both the range of her knowledge, and her affection for an environment that she had known since childhood. Joan's great achievement lay in the Society that she created: a society held together by friendship and by knowledge.

* * * * *

It was of course both a demanding and a rewarding year: events after all do not organize themselves and it was remarkable to see how it all came together. As well as the Society's own programmes we had the Exhibitions, already mentioned, lectures at the Rylands, and events at Plymouth Grove where the work done by Janet Allan and her team might in itself have seemed tribute enough. There were day schools and garden parties, and Gabrielle Drake's one-woman show and then, attracting members world wide, the dedication of the memorial window at Westminster Abbey on the 25th September. The week-end devoted to this allowed

us to renew our friendships from overseas, notably from the United States and Japan.

Elizabeth was taken to Chelsea, to Sheffield, to Huddersfield, to Bath, and to Brussels, and to Pescara, where Professor Marroni, our vice-president, devoted a research conference to her work which will result in a collection of essays on the tales and stories (all in English); well, she was always an enthusiastic traveller. Meanwhile I was urging my publisher to bring out my long-delayed 'Brief Life' before the year ended. If as a man I sometimes felt, as Joan's favourite Gaskell quotation puts it, 'so much in the way', I can only pay tribute to the commitment of all of our members: I can think of no other similar group that could have achieved so much. I have some experience of literary societies, all of them testimonies to the fact that literary scholarship and indeed the love of books, does not lie only in the domain of the universities. But I have to say that I know of no other society quite like our own.

* * *

A propitious year then, despite our sadness. And the date of the bicentenary year reminds us that Elizabeth Gaskell, invariably referred to as a Victorian, was born under the reign of George III in the year when Jane Austen was completing her first published novels, and grew up during the period of their publication. The connection is to the point since our summer conference this year is to be held at Winchester, a city with many Jane Austen associations, and in whose cathedral she lies buried. The subject of the conference is 'Elizabeth Gaskell and women writers', and Jane Austen is just one of the writers who will come under discussion. So no sooner had we said good-bye to 2010 than we realized that 2011 would need to be organised. And with a number of new appointments to our various posts, the AGM promises to be an active one. We shall be breaking new ground by holding it in the public rooms of Manchester Cathedral: we shall hope to see you there.

Alan Shelston

Una Box,
who died 14 November, 2010, aged 71 years

Una was born and grew up in Childwall, Liverpool. She trained as a nurse at the Liverpool Royal Hospital, qualifying in 1961. She came to work in Manchester and to reside in Hazel Grove in 1964, where she lived for the next 46 years. She spent her working life devoted to patient care and was still registered with the RCN and was an NHS employee when she died. She had four sons and fourteen grandchildren.

I came to know Una when she joined a U3A walking group in 1999. She loved the great outdoors and the bonhomie that walking together engenders.

When Una realised in 2005, or so, that she was affected by Rheumatoid Arthritis,

knowing that walking was going to become difficult and that she was a reader, I suggested that she should join the Gaskell Society. Little did I know that she would become so committed to the Gaskell Society. She attended Manchester meetings whenever possible and became an active worker for the Plymouth Grove house, being described, on occasion, as "always in the kitchen".

Una went to Rome with the Gaskell Society and particularly appreciated the friendship of Ann O'Brien and Joan Leach. She was devastated to hear of Joan Leach's illness, only to have the same diagnosis for herself a few weeks later. By September, when we travelled to Westminster Abbey, Una's cancer was very advanced. However, with great tenacity, she participated in all activities and was delighted to be sitting with Hilda Holmes in seats at the front of proceedings during the dedication. When Ann, Hilda and myself visited her in St Ann's Hospice, Una's almost final words were "Didn't we have a great time in London". She made her mark but her contribution is also a tribute to members of the Gaskell Society who made her so welcome.

Jean Alston

A glimpse into the preparations for the memorialisation of Elizabeth Gaskell in Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey on 25 September 2010.

In 2002 an approach was made to the then Dean of Westminster by the Gaskell Society requesting a place in Poets' Corner to coincide with the bicentenary of the author's birth. Unfortunately, due to the illness of the Dean, this approach did not get beyond the initial application. In 2008 Elizabeth Williams, Chairman of the Society, asked the Committee to consider another application and following the formation of a sub-group of fellow Committee members — Ann, Christine, Elizabeth, Janet (Allan), Joan and Pam — I telephoned the Personal Assistant to the 38th Dean of Westminster, The Very Reverend Dr John Hall.

I could not have received a warmer response, which resulted in exactly the expert advice and guidance we needed. The honour of a place in Poets' Corner is the gift of the Dean and each Dean has his own requirements. A letter providing the reasons for the request was required. I was advised that there was no need to name supporters of the application and it was confirmed that Dr Hall would carry out all his own research. The letter was needed as soon as possible to ensure that if the Dean agreed to consider the request it was important not to miss the next meeting of the Abbey's Fabric Committee which oversees all additions to the magnificent building and only meets twice a year.

The letter — which included an appeal for Elizabeth Gaskell to join her great friend Charlotte Brontë, her editor Charles Dickens and her contemporary George Eliot

— was sent in August 2008, and a reply from the Dean was received the following month from which we were delighted to learn that our request would be carefully considered. The Dean stated that *'I feel it incumbent on me to be absolutely sure, in view of the length of the history of the Abbey and the hopes we all have for its continuing existence over many hundreds of years, that the people who are memorialized will continue to invoke positive reaction from our visitors'*. There was also an offer that should the outcome not be a positive one the Dean would allow a celebration in the Abbey to mark the bicentenary.

The sub-group concentrated its activities during the waiting time on making tentative plans regarding a suitable hotel in London which could meet the needs of the estimated number of members of the Society who would want to attend. An application was made to the BBC about their programme, *Songs of Praise*, as it seemed an appropriate opportunity for it to visit Knutsford and Manchester. Another member of the Society — Pat Barnard — agreed to approach the National Portrait Gallery regarding the Gallery marking the bicentenary by mounting a special display. On 28 February 2009 a reply was received from the Dean in which he confirmed his agreement to the addition of Elizabeth Gaskell's name to the window overlooking Poets' Corner. The preparations, including those for hotel accommodation, were able to be stepped up following the wonderful news and the date of Saturday 25 September 2010 agreed by the Dean. An approach was made to have a link from the Abbey's website to the Gaskell Society's website. This was agreed and also permission given to use the image of the window. Within the Abbey, further details of the actual Service moved to become the responsibility of the Receiver General under whose authority the Minor Canons oversee the details. An example of a previous Ceremony was provided and based on this, the sub-group considered commissioning a piece of music for the occasion. Unfortunately we were later informed that no music would be allowed on 25 September 2010 and we concentrated on approaching those who could be available to take part in the Ceremony. We were particularly delighted that Mrs Rosemary Dabbs*, the author's great-great-granddaughter, agreed to lay the wreath.

During this time we were informed that the BBC had not agreed to the inclusion of Elizabeth Gaskell's bicentenary in a *Songs of Praise* programme and the National Portrait Gallery declined to mount a special display. However, Pat Barnard continued her efforts to persuade the Gallery to mark the bicentenary in time for the memorialisation in Poets' Corner. She was rewarded by the Gallery's confirmation that from 6 September 2010 the delicate 1851 chalk drawing of Elizabeth Gaskell by George Richmond would be returned to display alongside Richmond's 1850 portrait of Charlotte Brontë.

As the length of the Service was now known to be approximately thirty minutes, consideration was given as to how the special occasion could be extended either before or after. From the wonderful response from the Members it was clear that a location would be needed for over 100 people. In this connection an approach was made to Westminster School to see if there was any remote possibility they could

agree to hire out a room where we could meet after the Ceremony. I happened to telephone with the unusual request during their half-term but instead of being rejected it was suggested that I telephone the Secretary to the Bursar in the following week. Once again the request was received with great interest by the Secretary who told me that she had just finished reading one of the author's novels. It was agreed that the Bursar would be approached and on behalf of the Head Master gave his agreement. The wonderful outcome allowed almost 200 of the Society's members to meet after the Ceremony in another historic location and enjoy refreshments and readings from Elizabeth Gaskell's letters given by Miriam Margolyes.

During the preparations it was clear that Elizabeth Gaskell's name acted like a passport which allowed entry to uncharted areas. I am confident that the Dean's condition will be met and that her place in the window in Poets' Corner will continue to "invoke positive reaction" from visitors to Westminster Abbey.

Ann Waddington

** Editor's note: Mrs. Dabbs was in hospital on 25th September and her daughter Sarah (now Mrs. Prince) laid the wreath.*

London Weekend, 24-26 September 2010

On the morning of Friday 24 September, we left a very blustery and overcast Knutsford. We were expertly driven through rain on the motorway to reach the recently refurbished (for its centenary in 2009) Strand Palace Hotel in an even chillier London.

Before dinner we were able to visit the National Portrait Gallery to view Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë in the George Richmond portraits (thanks to Pat Barnard for arranging this), and also many oil paintings of their literary and artistic friends in the same gallery.

Saturday dawned, much as Wordsworth had viewed it eight years before ECG was born:

> "The beauty of the morning…
> All bright and glittering in the smokeless air."

After breakfast our coach drove us round Regency London (the area where Florence Gaskell lived after her marriage to Charles Crompton). Christine Lingard pointed out many sights of architectural and literary interest.

We returned to our hotel for lunch and re-assembled at 2 p.m. to be driven to Westminster Abbey. Gaskellians were seated in the South Transept within sight of the Window. Choral Evensong was an uplifting and moving experience with afternoon sunshine flooding the Abbey. Elizabeth Gaskell was mentioned in the course of the service.

The Dedication of Elizabeth Gaskell's window in Poets' Corner was immediately

after Evensong. The Dean spoke of Elizabeth Gaskell; Elizabeth Williams read from the New Testament and Jenny Uglow, biographer of ECG, made pertinent remarks with light touches of humour. Sarah Prince, great-great-great-granddaughter of ECG laid a wreath of carnations and, appropriately, lilies.

After the brief ceremony we tripped through the cloisters to Westminster School for refreshments and chatter. Alan Shelston introduced Miriam Margolyes who very entertainingly read from *The Letters of ECG*. We left the Abbey with the West Front basking in the evening sun.

About one hundred and forty people gathered for an excellent dinner at the Strand Palace Hotel. Afterwards, in an entertainment devised and largely written by Joan Leach, ECG's companions, Kit Marlowe, Robert Herrick, Oscar Wilde, A E Housman and Fanny Burney came to life to welcome ECG (Sarah Prince sporting her great-great-great-grannie's shawl) to her new lozenge-shaped home in the window.

Sunday was again rather damp, chilly and blustery as we set off for Chelsea. Christine Lingard pointed out ECG's birthplace, formerly Lindsey Row, now 93 Cheyne Walk, with its memorial plaque obscured by a fig tree and vine leaves. We sauntered through blue plaque-land and visited 24 Cheyne Row, the home of Thomas and Jane Carlyle, (now National Trust) with original furniture, very early photographs and remarkably fertile garden. Some of us lunched on the King's Road and observed yet more blue plaques en route back to our coach and long return journey to the North.

Our sincere thanks are due to the very many society members who were able to step in and take over when Joan was no longer able to continue her preparations for our celebratory visit to London. Special thanks to Christine Lingard, Pam Griffiths, Ann Waddington and Ann O'Brien.for their unstinting efforts for the success of this week-end.

We very much appreciated that so many of our distant members from as far afield as Tokyo and San Francisco were able to join us for the London celebrations of the ECG bicentenary: "a real doings" as they say out West, according to our Californian member. Our grateful thanks to all.

(A north-westerly perspective on the week-end's proceedings by country cousin, Helen Smith of Knutsford.)

CAN YOU HELP?

1. Our Treasurer wishes to stand down at the end of 2011.

Brian Williams has held the Society's purse strings since 1994 for which we are eternally grateful.

Would someone be willing to undertake this role?

2. We are looking for space to store several boxes of Society literature (comprising back numbers of The Journal, Newsletter, books). Does anyone (preferably living in the North-West) have spare space and willingness to accommodate these boxes?

Please contact a member of the Committee if you are able to help with either or both of these problems.

3. We are looking for a Web Manager to maintain and develop the Society's website and to provide information for the technical consultant to keep the site updated. Anyone interested in this role should be computer literate, as well as having good administrative skills and a keen interest in developing the website with a view to widening the appeal of the Gaskell Society.

If you feel that you can help, please contact Judith Rees on judithrees@yahoo.co.uk or by telephone 0161 941 3001 for more information.

Thank you.

Corrigenda to Autumn Newsletter 2010

1. '"Such happy days as my schooldays were": Elizabeth Gaskell and Warwickshire'

Our sincere apologies to Dr. Elizabeth M. Cox. The numbers linking the text to references at the end of the article (pp.5-6) were inadvertently omitted.

If any readers who cannot work this out would like to see the correct version, Dr. Cox will be happy to supply this in a Word document. Contact blaina@tiscali.co.uk

2. 'Archibald Stanton Whitfield 1899-1974'

Philip Ray is the fourth cousin of Archibald Stanton Whitfield and not the great-nephew, as we stated. Philip Ray was Academic Registrar at King Alfred's College, Winchester (now the University of Winchester) until he retired in 1987.

Our apologies for incorrectly relating these two gentlemen.

Friends of Plymouth Grove: Update

Janet Allan

Work is continuing on our application to the Heritage Lottery and we have received the detailed reports and budgets which help us to envisage the house as it will be when opened to the public, with a recreated garden, restored interior, and all modern facilities. It is a wonderful, but expensive, vision, and we now need to turn it into reality with some serious fundraising.

Open Days continue on the first Sunday in the month, from 12-4; those on 3 April and 1 May will include a special exhibition on William Gaskell presented by

students from Manchester Metropolitan University. Knutsford Library has now kindly presented us with their excellent exhibition on Gaskell's illustrators (prepared by Cheshire Record Office) which is also on show. We have many other group visits at other times and the Friends are extremely busy. The AGM of the Trust will be held at the house on Sunday 10th April at 2 p.m., the day after the Gaskell Society's AGM. A Summer Soirée will be held on Wednesday 25th May at 7p.m., when our excellent presenters Delia Corrie and Charles Foster will be joined by the harpist Anna Christensen with her golden harp. Cost £12 including refreshments. Do please join us! Bookings through Margery Schofield, 202 Moston Lane East, M40 3QH, cheques payable to Friends of Plymouth Grove.

Book Notes

Christine Lingard

The Moorland Cottage, London: Hesperus, 2010. £7.99

One of Gaskell's earliest but lesser known novellas, originally published as a Christmas book in 1850. The publisher describes it as 'The precursor to and arguably the template for George Eliot's '*The Mill on the Floss*'.

The Penguin book of ghost stories: from Elizabeth Gaskell to Ambrose Bierce, edited by Michael Newton. Penguin Classics, 2010. £10.99

A new selection including the most popular of Gaskell's short stories, 'The Old Nurse's Story'. This book also includes stories by some very unfamiliar authors such as Fitz-James O'Brien, Mary Wilks Freeman and Lafcadio Hearn, as well as more familiar names such as Dickens, Stevenson, Kipling, Edith Wharton, Amelia Edwards, Margaret Oliphant and W.W. Jacobs.

The Cranford Companion, by Sue Birtwistle and Susie Conklin. Bloomsbury, £20.

An account of the making of the recent BBC television series, lavishly illustrated with photographs from the programme. It includes pictures of all cast members, some taken informally behind the scenes. Jenny Uglow has written a chapter placing the book in its historical setting, and Heidi Thomas, the screen-writer, contributes a chapter entitled 'Miss Pole's Advice to a Lady Living Abroad'. Posy Simmonds has provided an illustrated map of the village.

Tuberculosis and the Victorian literary imagination, by Katherine Byrne, lecturer in English at the University of Ulster. Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth-century Literature & Culture, no 74. Cambridge University Press. £55.

A discussion of the depiction of one of most deadly and devastating diseases in a number of nineteenth-century literary works, especially *North and South*, Charles Dickens's *Dombey and Son*, and Henry James's *The Portrait of a Lady*, as well some neglected works by Charles Reade and Mrs Humphry Ward. Another chapter suggests that the vampire myth of Bram Stoker may have had its origins in consumption. There are appendices quoting contemporary factual publications on the disease and its gender distribution.

Two new translations of 'Mr Harrison's Confessions' are now available - in French: 'Les confessions de Mr Harrison', translated by Béatrice Vierne. L'Herne [Paris], 2010, and in German: 'Mr Harrison's Bekenntnisse: Erzählungen'. Manesse Bibliothek [Zurich], 2010. Alice Reinhard-Stocker (Afterword), Andrea Ott (translator).

For those of you interested in the international reputation of Elizabeth Gaskell there is a notable following in Poland, especially since the screening of the TV serialization of North and South. There are two sites: http://forum.northandsouth.info/index.php which contains translated extracts, and http://gaskellnorthsouth.blogspot.com/, which includes an article on some nineteenth-century magazine translations.

THE ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES

Janet Kennerley

The 2010 AGM and Literary Weekend of The Alliance of Literary Societies (ALS) was hosted by The Gaskell Society last May in Knutsford; it included a trip to Plymouth Grove. It was good that so many representatives from other societies were able to attend and that there was plenty of support from our own members – grateful thanks to all those who were willing to lend a helping hand. There was an excellent report by Helen Newman, a member of the Richard Jefferies Society, who also serves on the ALS Committee, which appeared in the Gaskell Newsletter No. 50 – Autumn 2010. I am pleased that the ALS Committee members recorded that they thought the Gaskellians had done a wonderful job of making the weekend a success.

This year it is another Society's turn to organise the annual event. The 2011 AGM and Literary Weekend will be held on 21st and 22nd May and will be hosted by the Johnson Society of Lichfield. This beautiful cathedral city in Staffordshire was the birthplace in 1709 of the great lexicographer, author and wit, Dr Samuel Johnson. The Johnson Society was established in 1910, but he is far from the only literary highlight that Lichfield has to offer. The city also has links with Erasmus Darwin (grandfather of Charles), David Garrick and Philip Larkin, to name but a few.

The Alliance of Literary Societies Newsletter of Winter 2010-11 contains further details of the weekend's programme, accommodation list and a booking form. In addition to the annual meeting and lunch on Saturday 21st May, there is to be an afternoon tour of Philip Larkin's Lichfield, or free time to explore the city, followed by an evening reception at the Johnson Birthplace Museum prior to Dinner at a local restaurant, then a short talk by the new ALS President, Jenny Uglow. The next day, Sunday 22nd May, further tours in Lichfield have been organised for those members who are able to stay for the weekend. If you have not already received an electronic copy of the ALS Newsletter and would like to have this information, please contact Janet Kennerley who will send it to you – janetkennerley@hotmail.com

You may also like to visit the ALS website as follows:
www.allianceofliterarysocieties.org.uk

The Annual General Meeting 2011

The Gaskell Society AGM will be held on Saturday, 9th April from 10.30 a.m., in the Manchester Cathedral Visitor Centre (10 Cateaton Street, Manchester M3 1SQ). All members are welcome.

North-West Group

Knutsford meetings are held at St. John's Church Rooms on the last Wednesday in the month. Buffet lunch (cost £8) is available from 12.15pm. The short stories continue to be the focus of our studies:

30 March, 2011: 'Morton Hall'

27 April, 2011: 'My French Master'

Yorkshire Group 2011

I am sorry to announce that there will be no further meetings of the Yorkshire Group. Support for the group has fallen to such a degree that meetings were running at a financial loss. Reluctantly therefore it was decided that there was no choice other than to close the group.

On behalf of Dudley Barlow, Howard Gregg, Teresa Smith and myself I would like to thank those members who have attended meetings in the past and also to thank the members of the National Committee who were a constant support to us.

Thank you and Best Wishes,
Kate Smith, shepleysmiths@tiscali.co.uk

The Gaskell Society South-West

Saturday, 19 February 2011, 2.30 p.m: Discussion group on *Ruth*, at Elizabeth Schlenther's, 14 Vellore Lane, Bath, BA2 6J (Tel: 01225 331763). £3 per person. Tea and Coffee to be provided.

Saturday, 19 March 2011, 2.30 p.m: Discussion on *Ruth* to continue at Bren Abercrombie's, 12 Mount Road, Lansdown, Bath, BA1 5PW (Tel: 01225 471241). £3 per person. Tea and Coffee to be provided.

Saturday, 9 April, 2011, 2.30 p.m: at BRLSI, Queen Square, Bath. Prof. Peter Skrine, Chairman of the Gaskell Society South-West, will speak on: "'We are so comfortable and the place is so lovely': Elizabeth Gaskell in Germany". £2 to members of BRLSI and the Gaskell Society South-West. £4 to all others. Refreshments will be available at an additional cost of £1.

Sunday, 4 September 2011. Gaskell Summer Social event. Place and time to be announced.

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

The London and South-East Group

Saturday May 14th 2011: Professor Barbara Hardy will lead a discussion on 'Elizabeth Gaskell: Dreams and Visions'. Barbara Hardy is Emeritus Professor of English Literature at the University of London.

A sandwich lunch will be provided from 12.45pm onwards and tea and cake is available after the meeting that begins at 2pm and usually lasts in the region of an hour or so. A bring and buy bookstall is available so please bring and buy. Proceeds go to the restoration of the Gaskell House. We meet at Francis Holland School for Girls a two-minute walk from Sloane Square. The Tube station is served by the District and Circle lines or it is not a long walk from Victoria Station. Access is via a doorbell in Graham Terrace please press the bell that is marked 'Reception' and someone will open the door for you. There are security reasons for this type of access.

Please come feel free to bring friends who might be interested, membership of the society is not a prerequisite for attendance at meetings. We charge £4.00 in these days of austerity and endeavour to provide lunch, tea and some intellectual stimulation for the afternoon!

Any enquiries to Dr Fran Twinn, 85 Calton Ave, Dulwich, London SE21 7DF;
phone: 0208693 3238; fax 0208299 4088.

Autumn Meeting

The Autumn Meeting will be held in Knutsford, at the Methodist Church, on Saturday 24 September 2011. Further details to be announced.

A Notice from the President of the Gaskell Society of Japan

"Dear our Gaskell members

Thank you so much for your deep sympathy and concern over to our disaster; earthquake, tsunami and the explosion of nuclear reactor which might have bereaved over ten thousand lives. Pandemonium was reigning over Japan for a while as we have never experienced such a huge disaster before. But it is very lucky to tell you all Japanese Gaskell members are safe and some members, living at the disaster area, could escape safely.

We are regaining our calmness little by little, however, we are facing difficult situation...aftershocks, the explosion of nuclear reactors , or power cut, in a disaster area and the northern part of Japan and Tokyo area ,as you might know by news report. However, we will help one another and accept every difficult situation calmly as Cranford ladies did. I do believe we will surmount this hard situation soon.

We appreciate your encouragement by various ways- on internet or mail soon after this earthquake. We could have much comfort by your warm encouragement.

Again I'd like to express my gratitude to your deep sympathy to Japanese members for our disaster.

President of the Gaskell Society of Japan

Mrs Mariko Tahira"

We thank Mariko for this message.

We are continuing to think of our friends and their compatriots in Japan, and send our condolences and sympathy at this tragic time.

Ed.

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

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs. Helen Smith, 11 Lowland Way, Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 9AG.
Telephone - 01565 632615 E-mail: helenisabel@ntlworld.com

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

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

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The Gaskell Society

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2011 - Number 52

GASKELL 20 QUESTIONS QUIZ

1. What was the address of Elizabeth Stevenson's London birthplace?
2. **In which month and year did she die?**
3. What was the second name of ECG's daughter, Julia?
4. **Who was the music teacher to the Gaskell family at Plymouth Grove?**
5. Name 4 other names which appear with ECG in the window of Poets' Corner.
6. **What was the cause of death of ECG's son, William?**
7. Which of ECG's novels finish with these words – "That woman!" ?
8. **In "North & South", where is Captain Lennox's regiment stationed?**
9. What was the name of Aunt Lumb's daughter?
10. **Which continental city is featured in "Dark Night's Work" ?**
11. Which publication was Mr Davis reading in "The Squire's Story" ?
12. **Which word did ECG use to describe the drains at Plymouth Grove?**
13. By what name did William Gaskell call his wife?
14. **Where was ECG when she wished she had a book to write instead of just a letter?**
15. What did Lizzie Leigh want her baby to be called?
16. **Which ECG novel has a link with Winchester?**
17. Name 3 doctors who appear in ECG's fiction.
18. **Which surname does ECG use in both "Wives and Daughters" and "The Half Brothers" ?**
19. Which short story by ECG begins with this line – "Mr & Mrs Openshaw came from Manchester to settle in London."
20. **Which ECG biographer has recently become the President of The Alliance of Literary Societies?**

Janet Kennerley prepared this quiz for our New Year lunch held at The Cottons Hotel near Knutsford on 12 January 2011. Members who were unable to join us on that occasion may like to pit their wits against this quiz now. No prizes. Answers will appear in the Spring Newsletter 2012.

"The centenary of Mrs Gaskell falls on this 29th of this month, and should not be passed unnoted. "Cranford" and in lesser degree "Mary Barton" still have their admiring readers, though the author is far less powerfully imaginative than her friend Charlotte Brontë, and even in quiet realism is never rated with the incomparable Miss Austen. But she did produce one piece of work that grips the reader with a sense of unmistakable and, in passages, tragic reality, - her biography of Charlotte Brontë. If ever living word fell from writer's pen, such may be found in that remarkable life of a remarkable woman". Found in The Dial - Chicago - Sept 16th, 1910 - page 172.

Editor's Letter

Helen Smith

Welcome to this, our 52nd Newsletter and a very warm welcome to our new Chairman, Ann O'Brien and to our new Secretary, Pam Griffiths, who were elected at the AGM in April.

The Winchester Conference brought together almost 90 members from home and overseas to share in our love of Mrs. Gaskell and to explore the surrounding countryside. (We now also understand Mrs. Gaskell's desire to live in rural Hampshire!) Janet Cunliffe-Jones has written an excellent summary of the conference so that the many members who could not join us can see what they have missed.

We have decided to instigate a Joan Leach Memorial Lecture to be presented annually at the autumn meeting in Knutsford. The inaugural lecture will be given by Professor James Drife on 24 September 2011.

To all who have contributed to this Newsletter, I offer my grateful thanks. Very special thanks to Neil Morrison, the Scottish artist now living in Manosque, Provence, for creating the new young Mrs. Gaskell for our front cover. Many thanks are also due to my brother, David Robinson who lives in Alberta, Canada for his drawing of Winchester Cathedral on the conference brochure.

And for the finished product, we thank Rebecca Stuart at Lithotech Print.

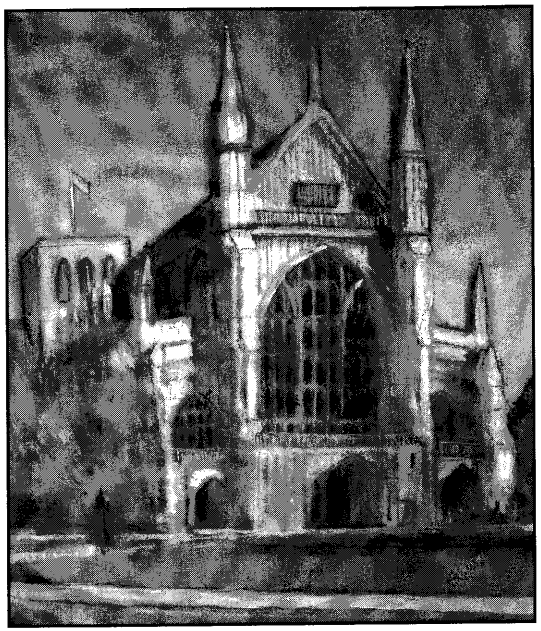
Thoughts of Chairman Ann

Ann O'Brien

It was lovely to meet so many of you at the recent conference - and what a successful conference it was - one of the best ever, as a conference veteran told me. Certainly the quality of the speakers and the unaccustomed luxury of the accommodation were highlights of the week-end and the visits added to our enjoyment. It was a fitting tribute to all who worked so hard over the last two years.

I don't know if this last figure surprises you - it really does take that long to organise such an event, and so, very soon we shall have to start planning the next conference! We would therefore like to ask for your help: if you have any suggestions for the venue, topics or speakers, we would like to hear them. Indeed any ideas are always welcome, not only for conferences but also for meetings.

As you will no doubt have realised, if this conference took two years to organise, Joan Leach must have played a major role in the early stages. During my opening remarks at the conference, I mentioned that although, sadly, this was the first conference without Joan, I was sure she was with us in spirit. Well, I like to think this was proved to be the case. Let me tell you why: while visiting Winchester Cathedral, our new secretary, Pam (Griffiths), a close friend of Joan's, found herself in the second-hand bookshop there. Browsing among the books on the shelf, she espied a book called "The Great Book Raid" .... By a certain Christopher Leach, the book dedicated to his wife, Joan and their two sons. (With apologies to Elizabeth Gaskell) Curious but true!!



Gaskell Society Conference 2011

Janet Cunliffe-Jones

The first thing to say is how very enjoyable the Conference was, with excellent talks, a pleasant venue, well-organised outings, and interesting and friendly people to meet.

An introduction to Winchester, and its literary associations was given by ***Elizabeth Proudman***, Winchester blue badge guide and vice-chair of the Jane Austen society.

Winchester, a Roman town, is set on the Itchen, a clear chalk stream. It was once the capital of England, under King Alfred - who had parts of the Bible translated into Anglo-Saxon. Much later, Isaac Walton fished in the Itchen, and Elizabeth Montague, the "Queen of the Blue-stockings" lived in the town - but the two most famous literary events came in the early 19th Century. Jane Austen came to Winchester when her illness became severe, and died there in 1817. Two years later, John Keats spent some autumn weeks in the town, enjoying a brief respite of beautiful autumn weather, and wrote there his ode To Autumn. Later visitors or residents included Charlotte Yonge and Trollope, who based The Warden on the hospital of St Cross.

Alan Shelston, President of the Society, spoke after supper the first night, on The Letters of Jane Austen and Elizabeth Gaskell.

Gaskell, a Victorian novelist, grew up under the Regency, and George IV. Austen's

novels were published during the first decade of Gaskell's life, but though she read them later, there is no evidence that she did so in her youth.

Shelston referred mainly to the letters Gaskell wrote as a young, unmarried woman - often to her friend, Harriet Carr. The tone is gossipy, and often flirtatious. Both her letters and Austen's show how little such young women had to do, often opening with an elaborate way of saying – "I'm writing because I've nothing else to do." In Emma the heroine's troubles stem largely from her not having enough to occupy her bright and eager mind. Writing these letters, however, gave Austen and Gaskell practice in narrative technique, and character description.

Saturday, July 23rd

Dr. Bill Hutchings, spoke about Eighteenth Century Fiction by Women Writers.

Early novelists were creating a new form, which expresses what it is to be an individual. They explored the relation between the world of outer reality, and other people, and the interior world of thought and feeling. Women writers were central to this development, where realistic fiction intersects with readers' own experience.

A useful hand-out gave well-selected quotations to illustrate Dr Hutchings' argument.

"[The novel] is, or ought to be, a picture of supposed but natural and probable human existence," and again, "the hero and heroine are neither plunged in the depths of misery nor exalted to *UNhuman* happiness," wrote Fanny Burney, who blended good and bad in her characters.

These writers reflected the concern of eighteenth century philosophy with the relation of body and mind, and led on to the modern - and even modernist - novel.

The Female Quixote (1752) by Charlotte Lennox provides often hilarious examples of characters who cannot connect their self-image with the real world.

In *Evelina* (1778), *A Young Lady's Entrance into the World*, Burney opposes country and city, innocence and experience. She illustrates different social levels in London with subtle differences of dialogue.

The novel developed the device of soliloquy. Burney merged soliloquies with the voice of the narrator, a technique known as "free indirect style".

"Left now to herself, sensations unfelt before filled the heart of Cecilia. All that had passed for a while appeared a dream; her faculties all seemed out of order . . . But when at length her recollection more clearly returned, and her situation appeared to her such as it really was, divested alike of false terrors or delusive expectations, she found herself still further removed from tranquillity."

Burney, said Hutchings, was central to the map of the development of the novel.

Of all the excellent talks in the conference, this one by Dr Hutchings was, for me, the very best - showing how writers, mainly women, developed the novel in the eighteenth century to be the dominant literary form it became in the nineteenth.

The next talk, on Domestic Comedy in Austen and Gaskell was by ***Emma Karin*** Brandin, and delivered in impeccable English by this Swedish lecturer.

Domestic comedy has been seen as gentler and more subtle than that of male writers such as Dickens, and therefore sometimes dismissed as inferior - or at least weaker. But women lived in a world of limitations, and comedy was a vehicle for their "thinly disguised rage" (Regina Barreca Untamed and Unabashed). Comedy was a means of exploring the complex stories of women. Women writers were sensitive to subtleties of speech. Brandin gave examples of Austen's use of dialogue, from the notorious pun of Mary Crawford (a character drawn, perhaps, from the earlier tradition of restoration comedy) about "rears and vices" to Mr Elton's gushing admiration of Emma's portrait of Harriet, in a scene in which every person's speech reflects their character and preoccupations.

In *Cranford,* the apparently naïve narrator, Mary Smith, tells us her father says Miss Matty's ways in her shop "would not do" in the world, and adds, "I fancy the world must be very bad, for . . . in spite of [my father's] many precautions, he lost upwards of a thousand pound by roguery only last year."

Molly Gibson develops irony as a defence against her stepmother, Mrs Gibson: "I was always of such an affectionate, sensitive nature. I remember a little poem of Mr. Kirkpatrick's in which he compared my heart to a harp-string, vibrating to the slightest breeze."

"I thought harp-strings required a pretty strong finger to make them sound," said Molly."

Professor Avril Horner: **Women writers and the Gothic tradition.**

Professor Horner made it entertainingly clear that the Gothic is NOT realistic fiction.

In 1764 of *The Castle of Otranto* by Horace Walpole, with its wildly unrealistic plot, won instant fame. A cartoon showed a group of women open-mouthed at a late night reading - but library records show that men read gothic too - as Henry Tilney has done in *Northanger Abbey.*

Characteristics of the genre include: a young and vulnerable heroine; pursuit by an older man; issues of property and inheritance; an exotic setting - usually in Southern Europe; a building, usually old; pictures; extremes of feeling. Anti-Catholic prejudice is shown in the settings in southern, Catholic countries.

Supernatural events occur or are suggested. Some writers, "Monk" Lewis, or Harrison Ainsworth, appear to believe in such events; others, such as Ann Radcliffe,

offer realistic explanations. Radcliffe also ensures that virtue is preserved.

The genre is extremely open to parody - *Nightmare Abbey, Castle Rackrent*, and, above all, *Northanger Abbey.*

Does Austen's famous defence of the novel here include the Gothic? It does not appear the Isabella Thorpe's reading has improved her mind or moral judgement.

Northanger Abbey shows darker elements in 'real life' - General Tilney is not a villain, but his behaviour is really unpleasant. Some gothic characteristics, we see, can and do appear in realistic novels, up to the present.

Sunday July 24th

Dr Catherine Spooner: **The Northern Gothic**

Early gothic writers set their novels in southern Europe (Catherine Morland reflects that events she has read of would not happen in England), but Henry James noted that Victorian writers brought gothic elements closer to home.

Dr Spooner talked of a specifically Northern - or even Lancashire - Gothic, and argued that Gaskell's biography of Charlotte Brontë represents Haworth as a gothic location. The Brontë's servant, Tabby, was a source of folk tales. The term 'folklore' had been coined in 1846 and interest in local legends linked to interest in the super-natural. Rural areas were seen to be backward, and were sometimes presented by a more sophisticated narrator, such as Lockwood.

Gaskell's *The Poor Clare* (1856) is complementary to the Biography. It is set in the Trough of Bowland, and the action takes place in 1718, when witchcraft was still officially believed. Yet Gaskell's treatment is nuanced. The Catholic priest is shown as kinder than the Protestant - and the Poor Clares in Antwerp are seen sympathetically. Gaskell always shows realism in presentation of place.

Dr Shirley Foster:

The family was idealised in Victorian England - with Victoria and Albert and their many children as a central image. The English liked to believe their country was especially distinguished for its family life, the home a haven from the world of business. Some contemporaries, however, were aware that the image was flawed - that the home could be a place of confinement and oppression.

Novels both reinforce and question the image.

Barbara Dennis:

Charlotte Yonge (1823 – 1901) has been credited with creating this idealised image; she had only one brother, and never married, but saw family life with uncles and aunts, and many cousins. She came early under the influence of Keble, of the Oxford Movement, and religion was central to her views.

She is more traditional in her many articles, preaching duty, obedience to lawful authority, and self-sacrifice, than in her novels which often show families without parents; sibling relationships become the most important; the sanctity of the family must be preserved, dissidents expelled.

Gaskell is one of the few novelists who was also a wife and mother, but her own upbringing was not orthodox and her novels show few orthodox families. She portrays dysfunctional families, questions the importance of lineage, and criticises paternal authority, yet she also shows alternatives, and that nurturing love does not come only from blood parents. In *Ruth*, and many short stories, she portrays different groupings. This openness may have come in part from her Unitarian background.

Margaret Lesser: **Gaskell and the translators.**

This was a specialised subject - but the talk was given with much wit and verve. Elizabeth Gaskell knew French well, and dealt directly with the French publisher Hachette; English writing was popular in 19th century France.

It was interesting to know that while George Eliot wrote, of translation, that it was "treason to literature to encourage incompetence", Gaskell recommended people - women - who she thought needed work.

Because of pressure of time, the Conference Review Panel was called off, and the Conference ended in style on Sunday night with a brilliant dramatic - and Gothic - reading of *The Grey Woman*, devised by Robin Allan and performed by Delia Corrie.

Each afternoon there was a choice of outings:

On Saturday we went to Jane Austen's home at Chawton, and on to Holybourne, where we were able to peer at The Lawn, the house Elizabeth Gaskell bought at the end of her life, the scene of her sudden death, and to visit the parish church.

On Sunday we visited Winchester, and the beautiful hospital of St Cross - a probable model for St Sepulchre's in Sylvia's Lovers. On a lovely summer afternoon, the Abbot's Garden was very beautiful indeed, and the walk back into Winchester along the Itchen was that which Keats often took when staying in the town in 1819.

"There are the most beautiful streams about I ever saw", he wrote, " - full of trout."

The Conference venue, a large hotel outside Winchester, was very comfortable, though long walks between rooms were a problem for a few. The only other problem was that there seemed to be too few staff to serve meals and coffee quickly to a large number. This was the main reason why we tended to run late on the programme. However, the small swimming pool was a delight - some conference members enjoyed it several times over the weekend.

As I belong to the South-West Group, centred in Bath, I welcomed the chance to meet members from the main society in and around Manchester, and put more faces to names! I very much enjoyed hearing northern voices - having lived for many years in the north of England myself!

Beau Geste

PS Margaret Lesser left us with a riddle which would have been solved had the final review panel not been cancelled. Margaret now reveals 'le mot juste':

The riddle in English, you'll remember, was:

'What would Majesty be without its externals?'

Answer: 'Nothing but a jest.'

Louise Swanton Belloc's lateral-thinking solution was:
'Que serait UN R0I sans son extérieur?'

Answer: 'Rien qu'un 0 (= zéro).'

(Ed.:Merci beaucoup, Margaret.)

With Gaskell in Naples

Alan Shelston

Readers of our journal will be familiar with accounts of Gaskell studies in Italy. These are very much attributable to the work done by academics and students under our vice-president Professor Francesco Marroni at the Centro Universitario di Studi Vittoriani e Edouardiani at the University of Chieti-Pescara. I have attended a number of conferences there, and have sometimes arranged for its members to visit Manchester, and I have always been impressed by their work.

A number of scholars from the research centre have been appointed to academic posts in Italy, and early this summer I was invited by my good friend and colleague there, Dottoressa Raffaella Antinnuci, to contribute to a conference at the Parthenope University of Naples. The theme of the conference was the perception of Naples in the eyes of writers and travellers from abroad: there were papers on the responses of authors past and present - Dickens and D.H. Lawrence for example - on graphic artists, and on the musical traditions of Naples: speakers spoke in Italian or in English as they wished.

I had agreed to speak on Gaskell (in English). As far as we know, Gaskell, unlike Dickens, never visited Naples. J.G. Sharps suggested that she might have found

time to do so in her Italian visit of 1857. I would never carelessly contradict such an authority, but in fact the 1857 visit is very well documented. Gaskell would seem to have spent most of her time in Rome, later writing that "It was in those charming Roman days that my life, at any rate, culminated". She travelled homeward via the northern cities of Perugia, Florence and Venice. 1820 it took Keats a week to make the journey by carriage from Naples to Rome. Keats was then a dying man, and things would perhaps have improved by the time of Gaskell's Italian ventures, but there was still no railway between Rome and Naples when she was there. It seems very unlikely that she would have ventured south. Her passport - still available - shows no sign of a visit to the kingdom of the two Sicilies, of which Naples formed a significant part. However, books about Italy - a good number of them in Manchester's Portico Library - were many at the time of the Risorgimento. Gaskell's knowledge of the city would almost certainly have come from her reading.

In 1863 Gaskell published an essay with the title of 'An Italian Institution' for Dickens's journal *All the Year Round.* The 'institution' referred to was the Camorra, and the Camorra were famous, then as now, as a Neapolitan version of the mafia. If this was a surprising topic for the author of *Cranford*, that in itself was a starting point for me.

The conference was held in the Villa Doria d'Angri, an elegant nineteenth century villa at Posillipo, high up and overlooking the Bay of Naples. In the entrance hall a plaque told us that Wagner had written *Parsifal* while staying there. It is now a conference and meeting centre for the university. Across the water, Vesuvius loomed up through the sunny mist. We were told several times that the longer the interval between eruptions the more severe the eruption when it came: the last one had been in 1944, so the Neapolitans were constantly expecting a spectacular event. Nevertheless the slopes were covered with small houses, built there illicitly since building on Vesuvius is officially banned. I had recently been reading Gillian Darley's new book, *Vesuvius*, with its accounts of the intrepid ascents made by Dickens and other nineteenth century travellers. We were able to see the ruined city of Herculaneum during our stay.

The conference opened with a splendid sequence of slides of early paintings and drawings of Naples shown by an ex-BBC correspondent, Charles Lister. My own paper was scheduled for the same morning. It focused on Gaskell's authorship of 'An Italian Institution' in the context of the unification of Italy in 1861 (Gaskell's essay appeared in 1863). In my paper I followed a lead in J.G. Sharps's *Mrs Gaskell's Observation and Invention*. Sharps points out that amongst the books recorded as having been at Plymouth Grove during this period was a work entitled *La Camorra; Notizie Storiche* written in Italian but by a Swiss author, Marco Monnier. When I compared this book with Gaskell's essay it became clear that she had read this work. I was asked about Gaskell's competence in Italian: she was probably taught the language at the Miss Byerleys' school. More than that though, in Cousin Phillis she shows her heroine struggling with Dante - something

which I suspect may reflect personal experience: she herself read Dante and eventually came to quote Dante from the original with confidence. *All the Year Round* shows how strong interest was in the Italian political situation at the time, and this was an interest that Gaskell clearly shared.

As I have said, there was a range of interesting papers at the conference, and there was also some good discussion. Poor Dickens got into trouble for his very forthright account of Naples in his *Pictures of Italy*, English commentators on the region at this time often emphasized the beauty of the bay and the magnificence of the volcano, contrasting them with the city's squalor. Dickens spent the best part of a year in 1844-45 in Italy and he had some scathing things to say about Neapolitan poverty, which he attributed to the power of the priesthood who, he wrote, taught the poor nothing but how to beg. Naples is a densely populated city and its urban sprawl, then as now, made it one of the largest in Europe: if it is a very vibrant city its social problems, again then as now, were inevitably extensive.

The conference over we were free to explore the city. It is, of course, notorious for its danger and its dirt, but these seemed less in evidence. As we left, brand new rubbish wagons were clearing the streets. Rubbish is the source of much of the modern Camorra's wealth so it is not clear who was controlling the operation but the white wagons had a certain symbolic appropriateness. A recent BBC programme suggested that you cannot spend a month in Naples without having come into contact with the Camorra. That is probably so, but you are unlikely to be aware of it. Anyway it seemed to me safe to give a paper on the Camorra in its home city, and no-one so far has come knocking at the door.

The Camorra has been in existence for some hundreds of years although its origins lie obscurely in the past. Bourbon rule in the 1840s and 50s turned it into a revolutionary organisation, although 'organisation' is perhaps not the right word. One of its features, sustained until now as Roberto Saviano's book and subsequent film, *Gomorrah* makes clear, is that there is no apparent organisation as such; rather are there anonymous groups, each with its own capo who infiltrate every activity in the city. In her account of its activities Gaskell wrote: "It is a system of black-mail, so extended and organized as to apply to every walk in life, and every condition of human industry" and by Saviano's account this description still stands. As Saviano has shown, the concentration on the workplaces of the poor are what supports its authority to-day, but the revolutionary impetus of the 1850s having been superseded by the unification of Italy, the activities of the Camorra would seem now to have become exclusively criminal.

In my paper I referred to other writings about the Italian situation in 1862, and their implications for Gaskell's article. The 1850s and 60s were a crucial decade for Italy's emergence to nationhood and there are a number of indications of her interest in Italy at this time. She wrote a short introduction to a work by Colonel Vecchi, secretary to Garibaldi, *Garibaldi in Caprera*, a copy of which, with a letter

by its author, rests in the Gaskell collection in Knutsford public library. In *Cousin Phillis* Edward Holdsworth has been an engineer on Italy's new railway system: this is accurate both chronologically and geographically, and there are a number of other Italian references in the story. A *Dark Night's Work* has its heroine make a journey by sea from Italy which replicates aspects of Gaskell's own voyage out. Elizabeth Gaskell was a traveller in Italy, but one very much on the northern side of that north/south divide which is still sustained in Italy to-day. When, as she wrote to Charles Eliot Norton, she looked back to "those wonderful Italian days" we have to admit that it is unlikely that she would have been thinking of Naples and its politics as she called Italy to mind.

Cranford in Crewe

Helen Smith

How delightful to have a refreshingly straightforward stage version of *Cranford* (adapted by Martyn Coleman and first produced in 1951), presented in Crewe by Ian Dickens Productions International Ltd., at the start of their national tour (spring 2011).

The action takes place entirely in Miss Matty's parlour in 1830 and 1831. All actors appear to enjoy their roles. Miss Matilda Jenkyns gains considerably in stature as her tribulations mount in the course of the action. The gentle retiring younger daughter of the late Rector and meek sister of the indomitable though now deceased Deborah develops into a strong-minded independent woman capable, as a share-holder, of defending the bank (The Town and County Bank) and herself able to cope with bankruptcy. Martha (Alicia Grace Turrell), the gauche maidservant, becomes a young lady of integrity and an excellent wife, mother and landlady. Miss Pole (Karen Ford), Miss Barker (Paula Stockbridge) and Mrs. Forrester (Susan Skipper) make their entrances and their exits. Mary Smith (Isla Carter) gently and unobtrusively manipulates and co-ordinates the activities of Cranford.

The Hon. Mrs. Jamieson (Hildegard Neil) gets her come-uppance with gout. As expected in the town of Amazons, the two male characters make but rare appearances. Even they come up trumps in the end. Finally snobbery is stifled; the goodness of human nature and justice prevail. Everyone appears to live happily ever after in this fairytale world of Cranford. A few characters of the original book are missing: "poor Peter", the Misses Jenkyns' missing brother; Signor Brunoni, Captain Brown and daughters. Rather surprisingly, these persons are remarkably inconspicuous in their absence.

Recorded Schubert (Unfinished Symphony, Arpeggione Sonata and other chamber works) provides a useful prelude and incidental music of the authentic period which fades out as the action gets underway.

The gentle irony and humour with the genuinely funny ways of "elegant economy" in Cranford come over so well in this stage performance. On the evening we attended (14 April) it was most unfortunate that the audience at the Lyceum in Crewe was rather thin and took a little time to tune in to the slightly whimsical atmosphere of Cranford.

Elizabeth Rosemary Trevor Dabbs
8 July 1922 – 28th September 2010

Sarah Prince

It is now one year since I, accompanied by my mother Rosemary, opened the exhibition 'Elizabeth Gaskell - A Connected Life', at the John Rylands Library in Manchester to celebrate Elizabeth Gaskell's bicentenary; and what a year it has been. This exhibition drew on the connections of Elizabeth Gaskell through her writings and prolific correspondence with family and friends, with examples of those connections exhibited, both past and present, demonstrating her influence in her lifetime and how those alive are inspired by her life and work.

Now I have been asked to write something about our ancestral connection and specifically about my mother, Elizabeth 'Rosemary' Trevor Dabbs, née Jones, and Elizabeth Gaskell's great great granddaughter, who died on 28th September 2011, the day before Elizabeth Gaskell's 200th birthday.

Rosemary was born in Radyr, just outside Cardiff, on 8th July 1922, the only daughter of Clifford Trevor Jones and Daysie Jones (née Holland), Elizabeth Gaskell's great granddaughter. The simplest family tree runs like this: 201 years ago on the 29th September 1810 'Elly' (as William called her) was born in London. Most of the rest of her story is well documented, but her eldest child Marianne married Edward Thurstan Holland and gave birth to William; William married Evelyn Isdell and they had an only child Margaret Evelyn Averia (known as Daysie), my grandmother, who too had an only child: Rosemary. William was the only one of Marianne's children to marry, and since then there has been only one child born in each generation until 1958 when I was born to join my brother.

What comes to my mind when thinking this through is how tantalisingly close my mother was to having known someone who knew Mrs Gaskell. Her mother (Daysie), who died in 1990, stayed with Meta and Julia at 84 Plymouth Grove. She went up with her 'Nanny' and stayed for several days in around 1900. She didn't remember very much about it except that they were 'very frightening'; but how lucky we are to have photographs of the drawing room of Plymouth Grove and to be able to identify pieces of furniture in that room that we have lived with all our lives. She also stayed with Marianne in Bromsgrove and remembers the artist ... who painted the picture of Marianne in old age.

Rosemary stayed in Malvern as a child with Marianne's children, Uncle Brian and Aunt Enie, and remembers morning prayers in the dining room, where the staff filed in and sat on one side of the room whilst the Holland siblings and my mother sat on the other for the proceedings.

My mother grew up in Radyr in a house fascinatingly full of wonderful items of furniture, beautifully and lovingly polished, which included a rather large and overpowering credenza in the sitting room. Stored within this rather grand piece of furniture was the most fascinating collection of Gaskell artefacts that were treasured, but at the same time almost taken for granted in their existence. Any curator will be horrified to know that her letters that were kept in the credenza (these are now on permanent loan to the Brotherton Collection at the University of Leeds) were casually stored in a brown envelope and there was no restraint on getting them out and having a good browse!

She attended school in Devon (Poltimore College) which recently featured in the BBC Restoration programme and was 'finished' in Switzerland. On returning from there, the Second World War broke out and she joined the ATS driving an Austin K2 ambulance initially in the UK and then after D-Day in France, Belgium and Germany. She returned to England to work in a bank and then with MI5. She met Jack through a mutual friend when they both got involved as Wardrobe Mistress and Stage Manager for the Baltic Amateur Dramatic Society.

When Rosemary married Jack Dabbs, in 1952, she wore Elizabeth Gaskell's wedding veil, a tradition which has been carried on by a least four generations of Gaskell female descendants. This requires the planning of the whole ensemble to show off the veil to its greatest advantage. She also enjoyed the spectacle of us using Elizabeth's teapot at my daughter Eleanor's 21st birthday tea in 2009.

Following marriage and the birth of two children, Tim in 1954 and Sarah in 1958, she settled down to life in Wimbledon, as a full-time mother, wife and supporter of Jack who was a shipbroker in the City. As this stage in her life, my grandmother Daysie was still very much in charge of all things Gaskell and whilst my mother had an interest she was not active in events. In 1960, Daysie helped to celebrate Gaskell's 150th celebrations with events in Knutsford, and a detailed scrapbook of those events remains as a record.

I think Rosemary inherited many qualities from her ancestor; one of the principal ones being hoarding. This has proved to be a blessing as she grew up amongst these treasures of Gaskell life and we have in more recent years had an opportunity, because of the interest that they engender, to become more familiar with them. One must remember that until perhaps fifteen to twenty years ago Mrs Gaskell did not have the wide publicity and following that she now attracts. But thankfully the hoarding habit appears to have been a most useful one, in that it gave Rosemary some insight into Elizabeth's belongings and life and the opportunity to share these items with others. Another quality that I feel Rosemary shared with Mrs Gaskell

was quiet determination: since being widowed in 1987 she lived independently and quietly, supporting her charities, attending church, being neighbourly but never making a fuss or demanding attention.

My mother was thrilled with the wider awareness of Elizabeth Gaskell's work that became so much more prominent in recent years, largely due to the efforts of Joan Leach, the Gaskell Society, the restoration of Plymouth Grove and the popularisation of her work through film and television. She was very pleased and proud to be invited to become a patron of Plymouth Grove and gave generously towards the restoration project. She had in recent years several opportunities to visit the house both before and after the work and to see for herself the progress. Some of her photographs of life in the house in Meta's and Julia's time have enabled those working on the restoration to understand what it looked like at that time.

More recently she was honoured and excited to attend the première of the Cranford series in London, Alan Shelston's talk and the exhibition at the Portico Library, and the exhibition at the John Rylands Library last year. She had hoped to visit Heathwaite but, owing to a change of date, was unable to do so. Whenever we were in the area, we would stop in Knutsford and look at the Gaskell Memorial Tower and pay a visit to Brook Street Chapel. She was also delighted to be able to lend items to these exhibitions, following in the footsteps of her mother Daysie who lent items to the Knutsford Museum for Mrs Gaskell's 150th anniversary.

Rosemary made a great effort to correspond with all those who enquired of her for information regarding the Gaskell family, including John Chapple, Jenny Uglow, Barbara Brill and Alan Shelston to name but a few. She was always very happy to help students and scholars in their research, both from this country and abroad from as far afield as Russia and Japan.

It was with much regret that, owing to illness, she was unable to attend the service in Westminster Abbey last September. We had made arrangements for a very special weekend in London and she was insistent that the rest of us should attend. I was able to visit her in hospital on the Sunday evening and show her the Order of Service and the article in The Independent. This was the last time I was to see her. The extraordinary events of that week are now known to all, with Mrs Gaskell's bicentenary the following day, followed the next by the death of Joan.

Now I am faced with the onerous task of being responsible for one twig of the family tree and am very thankful I have two wonderful daughters Eleanor and Imogen to become the adjoining twigs through what appears to have become a tradition of female lineage in this family.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone from the Gaskell Society and Plymouth Grove who expressed their words of comfort during my mother's illness and their subsequent condolences. I have a very full archive of recent events which will take me a while to collate ... but will be hoarded!

Elizabeth Gaskell's Encounters with the Internet Technology of the 21st Century

Nancy S. Weyant

Elizabeth Gaskell lived and wrote in an era of dramatic scientific and technological developments. Readers of her fiction and her correspondence encounter numerous examples of the transformative impact of nineteenth-century technology on the lives of individuals and society as a whole. As dramatic as those developments were, readers of works by and about Gaskell, and Gaskell scholars writing on her life and works during the last quarter of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first century, have likewise experienced dramatic changes brought about by computer technology. As a librarian and a Gaskell bibliographer I have actively tracked with interest the impact of electronic access to the works of Gaskell, to critical analysis of her writing, and to the ever-growing presence of Gaskell on the Internet.

In 1966 when I began my work on my Master's degree in Library Science at Wayne State University, the chair of the Department, Dr. Robert E. Booth, after welcoming the entering class, informed us that, on some levels, he felt sorry for us. He noted that in our course-work we were going to be required to master all the traditional paper sources required to be effective librarians upon graduation but within ten years, we were going to have to adapt *all* those skills to a new research world - a world defined by computer technology. Dr. Booth was correct. Exactly 10 years later, in 1976, I accepted a job at Bucknell University after taking five years off from my career as a librarian until my son began school. In those intervening years, computers had invaded libraries and redefined both how librarians provided reference assistance and how scholars conducted research.

When I began my MA in 1981, writings by Elizabeth Gaskell, like those of all authors, were accessed by reading versions printed on paper or listening to versions recorded on audio tapes. Biographies, bibliographies and critical analysis (books, book chapters, and journal articles) were similarly still being published in paper. At the same time, however, researchers interested in identifying 'new' sources on Gaskell found themselves having to straddle two worlds. To locate literary criticism, they were dependent on both traditional paper indexes such as the *Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature*, the *Year's Work in English Studies* and the Modern Language Association's *Annual Bibliography* as well as a core of new bibliographic databases that were rapidly becoming standard tools for research. Some of these research tools had paper equivalents while others 'lived' only in the online world. The challenge for scholars was made more complex because subscribing to and even accessing the bibliographic databases was costly. Unfortunately, this transformation of *how* research was conducted coincided with an economic slump that challenged libraries' ability to afford the new technology that was transforming research. Both libraries and individual scholars found themselves

challenged by the fiscal realities of this 'brave new world' of electronic access to information. And then came the Internet!

While the history of the Internet reaches back to the post-Sputnik era of the early 1960s, its impact on scholarly research didn't really begin to be broadly felt until the 1990s. The blend of computer technology, the concept of a personal computer on every desk, and an ever-growing number of 'websites' that included scholarly information, popular information, and business information combined to dramatically change both the volume and the nature of information readily available on Elizabeth Gaskell. Just as technological advances in Gaskell's lifetime had both positive and negative qualities, so too the technological advances in our time, most notably the Internet, have both positive and negative qualities.

In 2003 at the Gaskell Conference at Durham, I made a presentation profiling 'A Decade of Gaskell Scholarship, 1992-2001.' In that talk, I reported that conducting a simple keyword search of "Elizabeth Gaskell" on the Internet using several different search engines generated between 6,856 and 34,118 'hits'. By the time I reported on patterns of scholarship from 2002-2007 at the Canterbury Conference in 2007, these numbers had jumped from 67,400 to 309,000. Today, that same search generated between some 556,000 and 1,020,000 'hits'. Following the links takes one to a wide range of reputable information sources: Gaskell's works themselves, plot summaries, biographies, photographs, literary criticism, conference presentations, offerings of thousands of bookstores, announcements of completed theses and dissertations focusing on Gaskell, and vita for faculty teaching courses that include works by Gaskell or writing on Gaskell. Most recently, there has been an infusion of thousands of Gaskell-related 'blogs', online diaries that either discuss or briefly comment on Gaskell or on individual works by her. To date, virtually none of these are devoted exclusively to Gaskell. Some of these are created by major literary scholars; most by a wide range of individual enthusiasts: high school students, college students or adults reading Gaskell for the first time or viewing one of the BBC dramatisations of *Cranford, North and South* or *Wives and Daughters.*

As an academic librarian (albeit retired) and a Gaskell bibliographer (still active) who maintains my own website only partially devoted to Elizabeth Gaskell (http://www.nancyweyant.com), I spend a significant amount of time tracking Gaskell's presence on the Internet. It has allowed me to identify new Gaskell scholars and Gaskell enthusiasts from over twenty-five countries. It has helped me learn of works in progress or new publications by faculty who post their vitas on their college's or university's websites. It has helped me identify in a timely way new books issued by the publishers most prominent in Gaskell scholarship by regularly checking publishers' websites. The Internet, in short, has complemented the electronic databases available to me that give me access to the more traditional form of scholarly publishing: journal articles, book chapters and books, enhancing my ability to identify more scholarship devoted to Elizabeth Gaskell.

Chairman Ann O'Brien and Secretary Pam Griffiths
enjoy lunch together at the Knutsford meeting, 27 April 2011

Samuel Johnson looks down on Gaskell Society members et al. at ALS Lichfield, May 2011

Conference outing to the Hospital of St. Cross, Winchester, 23 July 2011

Wedding Day
for Mr. & Mrs. Dabbs, 1952
(N.B. Veil belonging to ECG)

Mrs. Dabbs with Mrs. Gaskell
at the Portico Library, April 2010

Disturbingly, however, the Internet can also take one to hundreds of web sites that **sell** term papers. YES - one can now purchase book reports, term papers, theses, dissertation proposals and EVEN entire dissertations on the works of Elizabeth Gaskell. Some of these businesses soften their sales pitch with the spurious suggestion that buying one of their well-written papers will help you write a better paper on your own. (RIGHT!) Others are more forthright. These entrepreneurs use phrases such as "Written by our experienced writers", describing their "product" as "high-quality, custom written and research-based term papers" while claiming to employ "writers holding PhD and Master's degrees, along with writing experience of no less than 25 years, to work upon your term papers." Another posts this claim: "For nearly a decade, we've written hundreds of doctoral-level thesis papers and dissertations for research - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week - on incredibly intricate topics. Our 'Elizabeth Gaskell' researchers are highly-educated specialists with impeccable research and writing skills who have vast experience in preparing doctoral-level research materials. Equipped with proper tools, statistical software, and sources of reference, we write dissertations and theses that are one-of-a-kind, innovative, accurate, and up-to-date. In addition to regular libraries, our professional researchers have access to online, member-only research libraries that contain millions of books, journals, periodicals, magazines, and vast information on every conceivable 'Elizabeth Gaskell' subject. And remember, we can research ANY topic, of ANY length, at ANY level, for virtually ANY delivery date - guaranteed!" The cost of these term paper mills vary but the one that specializes in theses and dissertations has a rate of "only" $18/page IF they can have more than 30 days to write it. If you need a paper no longer than 15 pages, you can have it in 24 hours for $35/page. This same site talks about its "respect for the customer" and its "academic integrity". Having attended a college with an honour code and having applied that concept to all aspects of my life, I find myself bristling at this latter phrase. Clearly they are comfortable passing the concept of academic responsibility on to the "respected customer". I acknowledge that I am a bit of an academic élitist. I also am not naïve. Term papers have been bought, sold and recycled on college campuses for decades. Nonetheless, I am saddened by the blatant abuse of the academic process in general and by Gaskell's inclusion in particular. *

Elizabeth Gaskell embraced the positive aspects of the scientific and technological developments of her day while exposing the negative fallout from those developments. I am certain she would similarly embrace the way in which the Internet has united both scholars and enthusiasts interested in her life and writings (albeit with some embarrassment) and adapt her strong communication skills to the Internet by maintaining her own 'blog'. Similarly, I am certain she would be disturbed by this entrepreneurial theft of her literary legacy that circumvents the integrity of the educational system. I am certain she would apply her skills as a teller of stories and write to expose this negative aspect of the Internet.

* Much of this paragraph was included in my newsletter, posted through my website.

A Dear Good Valuable Friend

Christine Lingard

Elizabeth Gaskell is often credited with being one of the first women writers to successfully combine a career with a full home life. She wrote of the problems of juggling the demands of a minister's wife, parochial work and mother to four daughters, with her writing. Cynics would point out that none of this would have been possible without a houseful of servants. The 1861 census for 46 Plymouth Grove lists a lady's maid, a waiter and three other housemaids. There would normally have been a cook as well but the post was vacant at the time - not an unusual occurrence - her letters reveal a number of occasions when this was the case. The family also made use of an outdoor man to look after the animals and garden, and a woman came in to do the laundry.

There was certainly chaos when the status quo was upset. Once, when the nurse was in London supervising Marianne on a shopping expedition, one of the maids was on compassionate leave, visitors were expected and the washerwoman hadn't turned up, she wrote in desperation to her daughter:

Oh dear! poteration [confusion] take the house. – Moreover we can't get a bit of butter; - our butter woman won't come, why we can't make out. Please bring us some butter from London - really, I mean it;...Tell Hearn all her wits are wanted in this desolate, servantless, headless, washerwomanless, company full household. [L478].

Normally the house ran like clockwork. The credit for this lay with the nurse - the redoubtable Hearn. (Use of surname was indicative of rank and prestige in the hierarchy of servants). Ann Hearn first came to work for the Gaskells about 1842, the time when they moved to Upper Rumford Street and was initially employed as a nursemaid to the three youngest children but took on more general duties when they older. It was Hearn who registered her mistress's death, the male members having returned to Manchester to break the sad news to her husband.

She is a dear good valuable friend [L570] Gaskell wrote in 1865, and in 1858:

Hearn is going to...Venice, Yes! Our own old dear English Hearn!... She has had a good number of distressing events in her family, & lost all her savings during this past year, & she had been but in languid spirits, which we have been afraid were affecting her health. A week or two ago Meta was going sketching, & took Hearn to sit with her; not as chaperone, for we are too primitive here to require such articles,- but by way of giving Hearn a little fresh air, & merry talk. Meta came in, & said 'Do you know Mama the summit of Hearn's ambition is to go to Paris...there came a letter from a very good kind, & also very wealthy lady in Manchester, asking me if I could recommend her a respectable lady's maid for travelling...She [Hearn] quite jumped at the idea,- 'if we could but spare her.' [L401]

And so Hearn went to Europe. She later accompanied the family on their second visit to Heidelberg, as well as many trips in this country. In the early years she slept with the babies, and could be trusted to take them without their parents to places such as to Bowdon. She was also responsible for the training and recruitment of the other servants. Her duties were varied:

[Hearn] and Elliott talk of going over to see A Cheshire someday soon; if they can find a gap of time between pig-killing, painting & visitors [L415].

When the eldest daughter Marianne was nominally left in charge while mother was away, she was always expected to consult Hearn, who was certainly confident enough to express her own opinion on the girls:

Hearn holds up her hands over yr green frock, and proposes you should be dressed in leather. [L117].

But who was this treasure? How did she come to work for the family? Gaskell, not for the first time, is contradictory. When in 1859 Hearn took an extended holiday in the West Country Gaskell twice named Devonshire as her native shire but on other occasions said that she came from Cornwall. For instance when trying to trace the words of the traditional Cornish ballad 'But Forty thousand Cornish boys will know the reason why':

One of our servants, who comes from Cornwall, tells me it was a much longer song when she used to hear it from the miners in her youth. She lived near Penryn, which is the Trelawny country. [L125].

Even her death has proved hard to track down. The General Register Office Index has transcribed her age as 51 rather than 81. She died in a lodging house in Buxton in January 1892, probably undertaking treatment at the spa. Her will gives her address as 84 Plymouth Grove and Meta and Julia Gaskell as her executors (replacing her first choice - their brother-in-law, Charles Crompton, who had died in the interim). She left a remarkable £413, including books, jewellery and trinkets.

Census and parish records confirm that she was baptised in Bodmin in February 1812 the daughter of William Hearn and Mary Hocking, who came from the nearby village of Cardinham. Her father was a publican and probably died at the age of 42 in 1822 when Ann was 12. On the 1841 census Mary Hearn is listed as a nurse at Calleynough Farm on the outskirts of Cardinham. The only Ann Hearn listed on that census was a laundress in Bodmin, but that person is five years younger than one would expect. (Ages on the 1841 census are rounded to the nearest 5 years.) I cannot explain the reference to Penryn, which is nowhere near Bodmin. Her cousin Elizabeth Isabella Hocking was in service at Littleham, near Exmouth, Devon, which would probably account for the confusion about her native shire. It is not impossible that she left Cornwall to be with her sister.

This sister, Elizabeth Hocking, was at least twelve years her senior, and an illegitimate daughter of her mother. She married John Ogle Curtis, from Boston, Lincolnshire,

at St. Pancras' church London, in 1825. Their first child, John, was born the following year and baptised at Hinde Street Wesleyan Chapel, Manchester Square. By 1830 they were living in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire where two daughters Mary (who probably died in childhood) and Elizabeth were born. In 1836 Curtis was appointed headmaster of the new school opened by the Unitarians in Lower Mosley Street, Manchester. This was the year when Charles, son of Rev John Gooch Robberds, senior minister at Cross Street Chapel, took up his first position as a Unitarian minister in Mansfield. Is this just a coincidence or did Mr Curtis recommend the position to him? Alternatively, he may have been the one who recommended Mr Curtis to his father.

Another daughter, Sarah, was born in Manchester and by the end of the 1840s Mary Hearn had also come to live with the Curtises at White Street in the suburb of Hulme, about a mile from Upper Rumford Street where the Gaskells were still living. Gaskell made enquiries about her health as early as 1848. By February 1850 she was described as dying, and Hearn had already had three weeks leave to help nurse her. The household was consequently 'at sixes and sevens' in her absence. Mrs Hearn died on 13th April at the age of 72. The cause was bronchitis. Hearn returned to work and immersed herself in the move to Plymouth Grove.

Mr Curtis was a respected figure in the Unitarian community. His school replaced the crowded old schoolrooms in the cellar of Lower Mosley Chapel. Only thirty children attended his first class. By 1847 there were four hundred pupils, both girls and boys, in the school, each paying 4 pence a week. He was also paid an extra £10 a year to establish a Sunday School, employing a number of volunteer teachers including Gaskell herself, who taught the children in her own home. He also started evening classes for adults, a forerunner of Mechanics Institutes, and taught English (he was particularly interested in the English language and the origin of words), Geography and Drawing himself. A number of his pupils underwent training as teachers.

When one of the Gaskell's servants was seduced it was Mr Curtis who was sent to ask the father to marry her. Given his own wife's origins he would have been a sympathetic choice for the task. We can only speculate how much all this fed into the novel *Ruth*. In 1857 he succumbed to the same disease as his mother-in-law and had to take several periods of leave. He went to St. Bees in Cumberland in October but died at the age of 55 the following month. William Gaskell conducted the funeral service. (Curiously Letter 136a in which Gaskell described a visit to Seascale in Cumberland has been speculatively dated as October 1857.) This is one of Hearn's family tragedies that Gaskell alluded to. Others included the death in 1855 of her uncle Richard Hocking who ran a grocer's shop opposite Bodmin's ancient parish church, and his son in 1858.

There are other occurrences of the name Curtis in Gaskell's Letters and it is now possible to clarify some of these and rectify some errors. In Letter 119, dated Tuesday Ap 14. Gaskell wrote:

I received a letter yesterday from Mrs John Curtis (formerly Miss Crossley) at Heidelberg, in great anxiety as to the fate of three or four little orphan children of her cousin, Mr Robert Salter, who was drowned in the Mersey near Cheadle about a fortnight ago…the relations, who, it seems, are justly incensed by Mr Robert Salter's conduct.

She was worried that the children may have to go into a workhouse. This letter has been dated as 1852 on the grounds that 14 April was a Tuesday in that year. The Stockport Advertiser reported the inquest in 1856 when the 14th was a Monday. Who hasn't made such an error with dates? An open verdict was recorded on Salter, a civil engineer. The nature of his misconduct remains a mystery. What is now known is that John Curtis was Hearn's nephew, born in London. He married Ann Crossley at Bolton register office in 1849, and may have been a cashier, living near his father in 1851. Ann is recorded as a widow in 1861, though I have not been able to verify the date of her husband's death. It may have taken place abroad.

It is also now possible to identify this Mrs Curtis with the Annie Curtis mentioned in Further Letters. In 1857 Gaskell was contacted by the German lexicographer, Jacob Grimm, (of folk tale fame). Gaskell wrote in reply and it was Annie Curtis whom she asked to translate the letter into German. Annie was a governess and as Gaskell's letter proves, had spent time in Heidelberg. The Curtises were known to the Schwabes, a family of wealthy German-born calico printers, who had relations in that city. In 1861 Annie was living with her mother-in-law and sisters-in-law in Hulme.

Hearn spent the rest of her life at Plymouth Grove. By the time of her death she had little family of her own. Her sister had died in 1882 at the home of her unmarried daughter Elizabeth, who ran a school in Birkdale, near Southport. Her other niece Sarah, married Frank Taylor, a member of a Bolton cotton spinning family, a leading Unitarian and later a magistrate, famous in the town for the promotion of education. Sarah also died childless in 1889, as did her cousin Elizabeth. Despite her frequent bouts of depression she stayed with the Gaskells and they became her family. Though we may never know her full story, Ann Hearn played a not insignificant part in the Gaskell's story, and deserves to be recognised.

Further reading:

Cross Street Chapel Schools, Manchester, 1734-1942, by Lester Burney, 1977.

Letters of Mrs Gaskell, edited by J.A.V. Chapple and Arthur Pollard, 1997 edition. (letter numbers quoted in square brackets).

Further letters of Mrs Gaskell edited by John Chapple & Alan Shelston, 2000.

Two Encounters with ECG

Doreen Pleydell

I was born and brought up in a London suburb. At the age of 11, because I did not pass the scholarship exam, I attended a Central School, halfway between an elementary and a grammar school. There we had an inspiring English teacher who instilled in me a love literature which as lasted all my life.

Our first 'set book' was *Cranford* and immediately I was transported to a world so different from that of dull Ilford where I lived. I loved all the quirky characters, the small society and above all, the kindliness of people one to another. I wished with all my heart that I could live in such a place.

Later I read many essays, articles about Mrs. Gaskell, but no actual novels. I knew of course that Knutsford was the real Cranford, but what an incredible piece of good fortune to find myself actually living in the town of my dreams!

This was many years later after the war years, marriage, children and many moves around the country. After fifty years of living in Knutsford I can still look at it through rose-coloured spectacles. Yes, I know the traffic is horrendous, the roads and pavements badly maintained, the aircraft noise almost insupportable - I could go on. If you believe that a place has a spirit, then Knutsford has a spirit of kindness. Mrs. Gaskell felt it - not in the bricks and mortar, but the way people look out for each other, are kind to each other - or so I've always found. The only time I'll leave it, I hope, is when I'm carried out in a wooden box!

The second, very brief, encounter with ECG was in Florence, many years ago. John and I were looking round the beautiful Uffizi art gallery, but it's possible to get cultural indigestion (and besides, my feet were hurting!). I was resting my weary limbs in the café when three people entered and asked if they might join me - husband, wife and their son. As they were carrying an English guidebook, I started to talk to them in English. They weren't British but Swedish and ran a bookshop in a provincial town in Sweden. They told me they were very keen on Victorian literature, profoundly hoped they could go one day to the Lake District (for Wordsworth) and to Haworth, as they much admired the Brontës. "Ah" I exclaimed, "then possibly you'll have heard of Elizabeth Gaskell, who wrote *The Life of Charlotte Brontë."*

"Yes indeed, *Cranford* is one of our favourite books. A new translation has just appeared called 'Cranford: an ideal village'". When I explained that I actually lived in Knutsford, they could hardly believe it and fell about my neck with delight. "To think" exclaimed the wife, "that we have met a lady who actually lives in Cranford." I tried to explain that Knutsford is no longer a "dear little country town". Nevertheless they continued to admire ME - I'd never been so flattered in my life!

We parted like old friends and wrote to each other once or twice but gradually lost touch. I still remember the Uffizi though, not for the pictures, but for that Brief Encounter.

Happy 20th Birthday!

Fran Twinn

The London and SE Branch of the Gaskell Society is 20 years old this year: it was founded in 1991 by a small loyal group of 10 who wanted to consider, 'aspects of Mrs Gaskell's life and works that interested us individually'.

The first meetings took place at Francis Holland School close to Sloane Square thanks to another founding member, Jane Wilson, then Deputy Headmistress at the school. (Sadly, she has since died prematurely and as a group, we donated several volumes to the school library in her memory and as a token of gratitude.)

At the inaugural meeting of ten it was Dudley Barlow who graciously agreed to run the branch, and effortlessly and efficiently continued to do so for 12 years until he retired to Yorkshire in 2003. At the outset, when Francis Holland was not available, meetings were held in other venues. Olive Bridge offered hospitality in her delightful house close to Sloane Square but, on other occasions, the meetings became peripatetic. My abiding memory remains of a meeting on September 3rd 1994 which was held at the Central Baptist Church in Bloomsbury. I do not remember much about either the talk or the venue but because the rain was relentless and torrential I arrived soaked to the skin!! I shall never forget it but the weather that afternoon did not deter me, as I took over from Dudley in 2003 and continue to enjoy the quarterly meetings hugely.

Gradually over the 20 years the number of members has fluctuated but regularly there are over 20 at meetings and sometimes it can be over 30!! Of the founding members only Sylvia Burch remains a regular attendee. She is to be congratulated on her long standing loyalty to the branch and the society. Sadly death, and removals to other parts of the country, have taken their toll on those others who were there at the first meeting. However, Francis Holland has become the regular venue where we are made very welcome by the headmistress and looked after royally by the caretaker; we are all very thankful for this central and well-connected location.

Over the years the informal lunches somewhere in the vicinity before the meeting have been replaced by a sandwich lunch at the school followed by tea and cake after the formal part of the afternoon. Usually the meetings take the form of a talk by a visiting speaker, which is sometimes illuminated by slides, or now, by PowerPoint presentations; on occasions we have a led discussion about one of Gaskell's works but the focus of the afternoon is always an aspect of Gaskell's life or work in the tradition of the original aims of the founding group. Talks range from literary criticism of texts to aspects of Gaskell's life (a favourite with members) to places with which she was familiar and about which she wrote. For instance, we now know more about the plans for the future planting of the garden at Plymouth Grove; her web of friendships both here and across the Atlantic, more about Vernon

Lushington, her Cousin 'V'; the use of flowers in her writing and more about the relationship between *The Moorland Cottage* and *The Mill on the Floss.* These, and many other subjects, have been intellectually stimulating, entertaining and have enriched our knowledge of this great Victorian woman writer.

In addition there have been visits to Holybourne and Crix, a literary walk around Southwark and a summer tea party. The branch is flourishing; a bring and buy bookstall enables us to make modest but frequent contributions to The Gaskell House fund and it is to be hoped that we can continue to flourish for the next 20 years.

I should like to thank Dudley and all the founding members who had the foresight to recognise the need and potential for a branch of the Gaskell Society in this part of the world. We all appreciate the commitment and enthusiasm of those early members and, I hope, we can carry forward their approach into this century, 200 years after Gaskell's birth.

Thank you

Elizabeth Williams

At our AGM in April, I retired as Chairman of The Gaskell Society, and was overwhelmed to be presented with a magnificent Victorian pendant. It's a moonstone, surrounded by amethysts and seed pearls, and mounted in gold, with a gold chain. As if this wasn't enough, I was also presented with a copy of Walter E. Smith's bibliographical catalogue of early editions of Elizabeth Gaskell's writing, which enables me to dream of acquiring a library of early editions. I don't feel that my thanks on the occasion were adequate (I was so stunned) and would therefore like to thank you all very much indeed for such wonderful generosity. I was informed that I could always exchange the pendant for another one, but nothing would persuade me to do that. It's far too lovely. That and the book are two perfect gifts.

The editor has asked me to write about my experiences as Chairman in the last six years, but I have problems because so much happened in that time. The last three years in particular were hectic, but I think that we can all be proud of what we achieved - the many meetings, the special events, the conferences and the never-to-be-forgotten commemorative event at Westminster Abbey in 2010.

Much of this activity owed its inspiration to Joan. Having nourished the society from its birth, she was always eager to see us doing more and more, and her ambition and hard work were the driving forces behind many of our finer moments. She seemed to have the same sort of energy as Elizabeth Gaskell (maybe it's something in the water in Knutsford) and never spared herself in organising events and outings for members. Planning events with Joan was always exciting - the challenge was to persuade her that you can't fit six events and 200 miles of travel

into one day. She commanded immense personal loyalty, and although there were occasions when the committee decided that they just couldn't do any more, these were few. So when, in the middle of our most hectic year ever, that of Elizabeth Gaskell's bicentenary, it became obvious that Joan was very ill, many of us were concerned for the society. How could we manage without Joan?

The simple answer is that we did. I'm not sure how, but somehow we carried on, and all the planned events happened. This was partly because we were inspired by our memories of Joan, but also because we had a determined and hard-working committee, and enthusiastic and loyal members. The bicentenary events all happened and there were no major disasters. This year's conference was as well-attended and successful as ever, and it was a delight to see a mixture of old friends with those who had never attended a conference before, all getting on well with each other. It was a very positive indication of our ability to survive.

We shouldn't be complacent however - all societies are having problems finding new recruits (especially active ones) and we are no exception. So if you think that you can help in any way, please let us know. We need a new treasurer, and a new minutes' secretary. I was fortunate in the level of support I received, and Ann O'Brien, our new Chairman, is going to need that same level of support. I was very lucky in the people I worked with, and I was continually struck by what very nice people our members are. So I shall end as I began, with a very big thank you to you all. And please carry on helping!

Friends of Plymouth Grove: Update

Janet Allan

The Roof

Many of you will have heard about the theft from our new lead-covered roof, which was discovered by two members of the Friends who found water running down the stairs. Very prompt action was taken and we now have a watertight temporary covering of roofing-felt, which hopefully will last until we raise the major funding to put on a (unstealable) steel roof. Generous donations have helped to we are grateful to everyone for this.

The Lottery Application

We are busy putting together the full application to the Heritage Lottery Fund, having completed the first stage of reports so that an accurate costing can be made. You can see these reports at the house. They include detailed recommendations on the Gaskells' paint colours, wallpapers, furnishing, garden layout, the restoration and conversion of the entire house and opening it up to the public.

Before this becomes a reality we need to raise over 2.5 million - hopefully over 2 million from the Lottery and £500,000 from ourselves. We are halfway to this

target, with £221,000 already promised. Applications for £200,000 more in the pipeline (no guarantee we will get these however!). You can help by sponsoring a length of the beautiful cornice, a step on the Gaskells' front stairs the restoration of a newly-discovered flagstone or some of the roof.

Friends' Activities

As always the Friends have been very busy not only with Open Days but with specialist groups and events. Our youngest recruit is 7-year-old Noah, who with other children from the Grove Village Improvement Team helped to do a grand clearance of the garden and plant the myriad pots of flowers which now stand at each side of the front steps. One of our oldest visitors was a 82-year-old from Texas, on a tailor-made literary tour. She had read many of Gaskell's books and enjoyed an afternoon tea in the dining room. We have had a very successful William Gaskell exhibition, researched and created by students from MMU, and an excellent tour of Victorian paintings at Manchester Art Gallery. Our enchanting Summer Soirée was much enjoyed, and our trip to Oakwell Hall and the Red House gave a fascinating insight into an early nineteenth-century house and garden.

Requests

We are still collecting china teasets, small teapots and embroidered tablecloths. Give them a good home! We also need rugs in traditional designs and an old-fashioned carpet sweeper.

We have a reputation for good food and would like to produce our own cookbook. Please send your recipes to Joss Hill on josshattie62@btinternet.com

Autumn Events

As this Newsletter goes to press we are still putting the final touches to our programme, including booking details. However please note the following in your diary.

Open Days: (admission £1): 12pm - 4pm, on Sundays - **4 September, 2 October, 6 November and 4 December.**

Heritage Open Days: (admission free) 12pm - 4pm **Saturday and Sunday, 10 and 11 September.** Volunteers needed! Please contact Joss 0161 248 6226.

Greenheys Development Thursday 29 September (THE birthday!): Mosscare Housing are officially opening their 65-home estate, including Elizabeth Gaskell Square and Mary Barton Fields. 84 Plymouth Grove will also be open on that day - details to follow.

Musical Delights from Opus 5: **Friday 7 October 7pm.** A fundraising concert at Alderley Edge Methodist Chapel (tickets £10).

Tour of Ford Madox Brown Exhibition at Manchester Art Gallery: 11.30 am, Wednesday 2 November, lead by the curator Julian Treuherz (cost £8 plus exhibition entry of £8/£6 unless your are a Friend of the gallery)

Christmas event, Saturday 10 December: A Christmas Carol.

Book Notes

Christine Lingard

Cozzi, Annette, Assistant Professor of Humanities and Cultural Studies at the University of South Florida. *The discourses of food in nineteenth-century British fiction. Palgrave Macmillan*, £52.50.

Readings of discourses about food in a wide range of sources, from Victorian novels by authors such as Dickens, Gaskell, Disraeli and Hardy to parliamentary speeches, royal proclamations, and Amendment Acts. It considers the cultural politics and poetics of food in relation to issues of race, class, gender, regionalism, urbanisation, colonialism, and imperialism in order to discover how national identity is constructed.

Freedgood, Elaine, Professor of English at New York University. *The ideas in things: fugitive meaning in the Victorian novel.* University of Chicago Press, originally published in 2006 and now reissued in paperback, £19.50.

Discusses the hidden darker meaning of familiar objects in three novels Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton*, and Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations.*

Marroni, Professor Francesco, Vice President of the Gaskell Society. *Victorian disharmonies: a reconsideration of nineteenth-century English fiction*; translated from the Italian - Disarmonie vittoriane. John Cabot University Press: distributed by University of Delaware Press, £31.50.

A collection of literary essays including *Cousin Phillis*: illness as language, The cursed hearth: desire and deceit in the short stories of Elizabeth Gaskell. There are also essays on Dickens' *A tale of two cities:* and the guillotine, Wilkie Collins, George Gissing, and Thomas Hardy's *Jude the obscure.*

Fernandez, Jean. *Victorian servants, class, and the politics of literacy.* Routledge studies in nineteenth-century literature, University of Maryland, £80. First published 2009.

Using a wide range of fiction and non-fictional sources including diaries and autobiographies concerning servants this book discusses the development of mass literacy and its affect on class structure. Books discussed include Mary

Wollstonecraft's *Maria, or, The wrongs of woman*; Catherine Crowe's *Susan Hopley, or, The adventures of a maid servant*; Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*; Elizabeth Gaskell's *The old nurse's story;* Wilkie Collins' *The moonstone;* and R.L. Stevenson's *The strange case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.*

The widow and wedlock novels of Frances Trollope general editor, Brenda Ayres Pickering & Chatto, the collected novels of the early nineteenth novelist who is often said to have influenced Elizabeth Gaskell, by the publisher of her own collected works.

Mary Barton; Cover to Cover, read by Juliet Stevenson, £22. Unabridged audio recording on 14 CDs, released in July.

Alliance of Literary Societies AGM 2011

May 21st - 22nd

Hosted by The Samuel Johnson Society, Lichfield

Lynda Stephens

The venue for this year's AGM and literary weekend was the Cathedral city of Lichfield, birthplace of the lexicographer, author and wit, Dr Samuel Johnson who was born in 1709.

When we arrived at the Guildhall we were greeted by Marty Smith of the Johnson Society who directed us up to the oak-wainscoted hall. Delegates were busy setting up their author stalls with promotion leaflets and books for sale or just for reference. Around 30 societies were represented by their enthusiastic advocates. These included Gaskell, Dickens, Jeffries, Beddoes, Walmsley, Thirkell, Bennett, Carroll, Caldicott, Brontë, Pym, Sassoon, Trollope, Larkin, Clare, Austen and more.

We saved our seats by putting some belongings on them only to find our friends from the Arnold Bennett Society sitting there on our return - we didn't react as Samuel Johnson did on his visit - he left his seat for a moment and returned to discover someone had taken it. Without a word, he picked up the chair and its occupant, threw them into the pit of the theatre and went on calmly watching the performance. We just sat on the row behind!

The meeting was preceded by a welcome from the Mayor and then an introduction to the Johnson Society by their Chairman, Peter Barrett.

The new ALS President, Jenny Uglow was welcomed. There were two changes to the committee: Janet Kennerley resigned and Janet Allan was elected.

The subject of the next issue of the ALSo Journal is 'Fashion in Literature'. Anyone considering writing a piece should contact Linda Curry at l.j.curry@bham.ac.uk.

We enjoyed a buffet lunch in the hall, meeting old friends and new before going on a guided tour of Philip Larkin's Lichfield with Don Lee of the Larkin Society.

At 6pm there was a reception; we had a glass of wine and we met up with members of the Johnson Society, who entertained us with readings at the Birthplace Museum and bookshop. We had a photo session with the Town Crier who doubles as Samuel Johnson and then left for our dinner venue.

After an excellent meal Jenny Uglow talked about the importance and enjoyment of bringing the different societies together and we were treated to readings by several of our party, and it was perfectly ended by Janet Kennerley of the Gaskell Society reading from the first chapter of Cranford in which Captain Brown championed Dickens and Miss Jenkyns preferred Dr. Johnson!

At 11am on Sunday we met again for a very interesting tour of the Birthplace Museum by local playwright, David Titley. After lunch we went to the Cathedral Close and the Bishops Palace, which now houses the Cathedral School, and here we heard about the life of the poet Anna Seward.

Afternoon tea was served at Chapters, and we all said our 'goodbyes' and promised to meet up again next year on the 12th May in Nottingham, when the AGM will be hosted by the Dickens Fellowship.

Summer Evening Meetings of The Gaskell Society in Knutsford

May & June 2011

Janet Kennerley

During May and June we held two summer evening meetings at Brook Street Unitarian Chapel Schoolroom. These proved popular. Members and guests enjoyed reading and listening to excerpts from Gaskell's works and letters. During the interval, when drinks and light refreshments were served, we were able to view the recently opened Upper Gaskell Room. This contains display panels of 'Gaskell's Cheshire' from last year's Bicentenary event at Tatton Park, and other items of interest reflecting her childhood in Knutsford. During May, some members and guests were able to look round the old Unitarian Chapel, thanks to Rev Jean Bradley bringing her key. At the later meeting, members were able to see the newly laid memorial stone to Joan Leach, now at the foot of Elizabeth Gaskell's grave, in the beautiful garden surroundings.

My thanks to all who participated and assisted in any way, especially to Brook Street Chapel members for allowing us to use their splendid facilities.

There will be a third and final evening meeting for this year at Brook Street on Wednesday 14th September at 7.15pm with the theme 'Crime, Cops and Courts' in Mrs Gaskell's writing. Please do come along with a suitable reading or just listen if you prefer. For catering purposes, it would be helpful if you would let me know beforehand if you will be attending - **email: janetkennerley@hotmail.com or telephone: 01477 571525.**

Forthcoming Events

Autumn Meeting to be held at Knutsford Methodist Church
24 September 2011:

- 10.15 Coffee
- 11.00 Dr. Craig Thornber: Uncle Peter and Cousin Henry
- 14.00 Professor James Drife: A Gynaecologist looks at Mrs. Gaskell (Joan Leach Memorial Lecture)

25 September 2011: 11.00 Harvest Festival at Brook Street Chapel, Knutsford, preceded by laying of wreath at Gaskell grave.

AGM

AGM 14 April 2012: Cross Street Unitarian Church, Manchester

The Gaskell Society South-West

Our summer social event will be held on Sunday, **the 4th of September**, at Boyd and Elizabeth's home, 14 Vellore Lane, Bath. It will begin at 12.30 and will be a 'bring and share' lunch. Veronica Trenchard will organise arrangements as to what to bring, and members are welcome to invite a friend or partner.

Our next meeting will be held on **Saturday, 15th October**, at 2.30 pm at BRLSI, Queen Square, Bath. Elizabeth Williams, past president of the Gaskell Society, will speak to us on Elizabeth Gaskell and Dickens' *Household Words*. We look forward to welcoming her back to Bath. The event will cost £2 to members of BRLSI and the Gaskell Society, £4 to all others. Refreshments will be available for an extra £1.

Our discussion groups will again be held in February and March next year. Details will be available closer to the time.

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

London and South-East Group

As usual there are four meetings this year. In November, instead of the usual meeting we shall join King's College, London for a Gaskell Day conference.

Saturday, 10th September.

The Gospel according to Gaskell: The Ideal family as flawed: a father's sin in *Lizzie Leigh*. Tracy Vaughan.

Saturday, 12th November.

Victorian Afterlives. A day conference at Kings College London KCL Strand Campus in The Council Room. 9.45am to about 4.30pm.
£12.00 to include coffee lunch and tea.

Saturday, 11th February 2012.

Science Liberality and Good Taste: The Manchester Botanic Garden and its founders. Dr Ann Brooks.

Saturday, 12th May 2012.

Domestic Arts in *Mary Barton* and *North and South*. Alison Lundie.

The meetings will take place at Francis Holland School, Graham Terrace SW1.
- 2 minute walk from Sloane Square tube station (District and Circle Lines).
- 10 minute walk from Victoria.

The formal meeting begins at 2pm but you are welcome to join us for a sandwich lunch anytime from 12.45pm onwards. *Please ring the bell marked 'Reception' by the main door in Graham Terrace and someone will let you in.* After the talk, tea and cake.

In addition there is a Bring and Buy bookstall in aid of The Gaskell House, Plymouth Grove, Manchester. I would urge you to bring books in September please so we can refresh the stall.

You are warmly invited. We ask for a contribution of £5.00 for the afternoon to include everything.

Further details from:

Dr Fran Twinn, 85 Calton Ave, Dulwich, London SE21 7DF;
phone 0208 693 3238. Email frantwinn@aflex.net

The North-West Group

14 September, 7.15pm

Brook Street Chapel: 'Crimes, Cops and Courts'

28 September

To Warrington: Cairo St. Chapel, Art Gallery, Police Museum

Knutsford meetings are held at St. John's Church Rooms on the last Wednesday of the month. Buffet lunch available (£8) from 12.15pm.

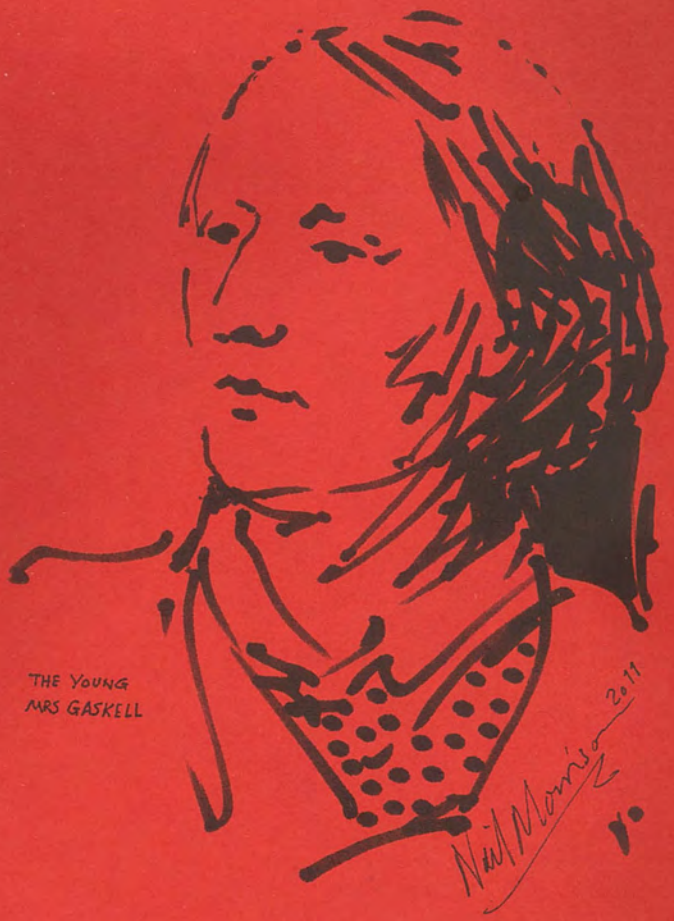
We continue to study the short stories:

26 October	Half a life-time ago
30 November	Manchester Marriage
11 January 2012	New Year lunch at The Cottons (on A50 just north of Knutsford)

Manchester Meetings: to be held at Cross Street Chapel on the 1st Tuesday of the month from October to March, excluding January. Lecture at 1pm.

4 October	Howard Gregg on Trollope
1 November	Anita Fernadez-Young on Dickens
6 December	Shirley Foster and Jo Pryke discuss The Moorland Cottage and The Mill on the Floss.

The Gaskell Society



NEWSLETTER

Spring 2012 - Number 53

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

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs. Helen Smith,
11 Lowland Way, Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 9AG.
Telephone - 01565 632615 E-mail: helenisabel@ntlworld.com

Acting Treasurer: Alan Parker, 17 Mead Close, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 0DU

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

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Editor's Letter

Helen Smith

A very happy and healthy New Year to all our readers.

A number of matters must be mentioned in this letter. Firstly, Janet Allan has been awarded MBE (for services to Heritage in the North-West) in the recent UK New Year Honours List. Janet was Chair of The Gaskell Society (1999-2005). Janet was responsible for saving 84 Plymouth Grove from demolition. And Janet is the indomitable and indefatigable force behind the search for funding and refurbishing the Gaskell House.

We have not forgotten dear Joan (also MBE), whose ashes now rest at the foot of the Gaskell grave. A young crab apple tree (malus evereste: with white blossom in May, followed by yellow fruits in autumn) flourishes as a constant reminder of her at the former council offices on Toft Road in Knutsford. The Joan Leach Memorial Lecture and the Joan Leach Essay Prize have now been instigated.

Mr. Dickens, Mrs. Gaskell's junior by 17 months, now enters his bicentenary year. Mr. Dickens ignited the literary career of the anonymous author of Mary Barton who was later to become his "dear Scheherazade". Our President Alan Shelston writes a moving tribute in the opening article of this newsletter, to the "Great Inimitable".

We are deeply indebted to Brian Williams for his sterling work as Treasurer of the Society for almost 20 years. Now, Alan Parker has agreed to take on these duties; and a recent member, Catherine Westwood is aiding us with the website. We are most grateful to both Alan and Catherine for undertaking this work.

We continue to welcome new members from home and abroad (including a young lady "with an unpronounceable name" from near Ekaterinburg). We thank Christine Lingard for continuing her outstanding work as Membership Secretary.

On 11 January of this year, 41 members from the North-West enjoyed a delicious New Year lunch at Cottons organised by Janet Kennerley. Afterwards we were entertained by soprano Rosie Lomas (who has recently graduated from the Guildhall School of Music) and pianist Katarzyna Kowalik (trained in Warsaw and now a post-grad at the Guildhall in London) in a recital of Lieder and arias by Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Schumann. Rosie, unaccompanied (but in tune and in time!), sang "Jock o' Hazeldean" (recalling the humorous incident from Cranford) and "A North country maid up to London has strayed" (recalling how she has sometimes felt as a student in London). We wish Rosie and Katarzyna every success in their future careers in music.

Dates for diaries: AGM at Cross Street Unitarian Church, Manchester, on 14 April 2012

Autumn general meeting will be held in Knutsford on 29 September 2012.

Plans are shaping up for a trip to US 12-19 September 2012 (back in time for the 29th). Further details from Nancy Weyant, sculpt02@ptd.net

Work has begun on the next conference, 19-22 July 2013, to be held at Stratford Manor Hotel, a Q Hotel near Stratford-on-Avon, in Warwickshire, England.

I should like to thank all who have written for this Newsletter. Special thanks are due to James Drife and to Craig Thornber who delivered the lectures at our Autumn General Meeting in Knutsford on 24 September 2011 and who have now taken time and trouble to summarise their talks for the Newsletter.

Last and most certainly not least, we give our thanks to Rebecca Stuart for all her good work and meticulous care at Lithotech Print in Knutsford.

PS Deadline for the next Newsletter is 31 July 2012.

Dickens Bicentenary

Alan Shelston

Where births and deaths, if not marriages, were concerned, the second decade of the nineteenth century was a significant one for the Victorian novel. Elizabeth Gaskell was born in 1810, Dickens in 1812, Trollope in 1815, Charlotte Brontë in 1816 and Emily in 1818, George Eliot in 1819 and Anne Brontë in 1820. There must have been something in the water. The decade also saw the death, in 1817, of Jane Austen: things dying, and things newborn. The result in our century has been, and will continue to be, a sequence of bicentenaries. The memory of the Gaskell celebrations in 2010 is still fresh, and now we hand our Olympic torch to the Dickensians - appropriately, given the strong connection between these two great writers.

When I googled the Dickens Fellowship I found nearly fifty separate branches from all over the globe. The Fellowship was founded by a group of enthusiasts more than one hundred years ago. Mr Pickwick features in a number of their branch titles, for example that of the Pickwick Bicycle Club of Waterlooville, whom one hopes are still pedalling away. In the United States Dickens seems to be remembered in all of the principal cities. He would have appreciated the irony of that. He is memorialized all over the globe, and no doubt the various branches will be organizing their own events.

Perhaps Dickens would also have appreciated the irony of following Elizabeth Gaskell. He famously admired *Mary Barton* so much that he feasted its author in London and expressed his delight when she agreed to initiate his *Household Words* project with her story *Lizzie Leigh*. However he soon found her intractable to his editorial influence and 'there is no English writer whom I would more desire to enlist' was to become 'do something with Mrs Gaskell, if anything can be done with that lady.'

The story of this semi-parting of the ways is a complicated one. Dickens, for all the spontaneity of his energy and imagination was an extremely disciplined editor and novelist. He sustained his uninterrupted output over a quarter of a century. Word limits were there to be observed, narratives to be planned and deadlines to be met. Gaskell's methods were different. A beginner when he first recruited her she tended to work out her stories as she wrote them, and was unsuited to the serial processes that had made Dickens's career. Dickens was delighted with *Cranford* but *North and South*, which succeeded it in *Household Words*, was another matter altogether - for Dickens this was to be a novel exclusively devoted to its industrial theme, whereas for its author it became the story of the mental and emotional development of its heroine. She complained that he was not allowing her to conclude the novel as she wanted, and she effectively re-wrote the final chapters for the novel's publication in volume form. But there was also a personal dimension to Elizabeth's increasing distancing of herself from her sometime patron. Dickens was a difficult man to place socially and she was not the only Victorian to find him difficult. On one occasion she wrote of 'the splendour of Mr Dickens' house' and says that she has heard that 'the Dickens have bought a dinner-service of gold plate' - it was a joke of course, but there is at least a suggestion here that Dickens is getting above himself. Matters were made irreparably worse by Dickens's very public separation from his wife. It was at about this time that Elizabeth dismissed *Household Words* as a 'Dickensy' periodical and to one correspondent she seems to have deliberately misrepresented the number of times her work had appeared in it. Nevertheless she continued to write for *Household Words* and after its closure for its successor, *All the Year Round*. While her work did appear less frequently in her later years, overall she remained Dickens's most prolific and most valued contributor.

To happier things: independently of each other these two writers produced increasingly substantial work until the days of their deaths. Gaskell's *Sylvia's Lovers, Cousin Phillis* and *Wives and Daughters* are the culmination of her achievement. Times were changing as both of these great novelists died with their final works uncompleted. In particular provincial realism was replacing metropolitan melodramatics. The young Henry James, who wrote a very generous obituary review of *Wives and Daughters*, said of Dickens's late novels that '*Bleak House* was forced, *Little Dorrit* was laboured and *[Our Mutual Friend* was] dug out, as with a spade and pickaxe'. The *Cornhill* was taking precedence, socially as well as culturally, over Dickens's publications. Thomas Hardy, who would be the newcomer, was busy destroying the draft of his first novel *The Poor Man and the Lady* in 1868, three years after Gaskell's death and two before the death of Dickens. Just as their birth dates were close, so were the dates of their deaths. The light now shines through Elizabeth's commemoration window in Poets' Corner onto the simple black marble tomb with just his name and dates of his birth and death. A memorial service will be held this year on the first of these, 7th February 1812. For me Dickens is the Shakespeare of the novel. No-on else can equal the fecundity of his characterization and the energetic comic inventiveness and ultimate seriousness of purpose that he

embodies. It is so right that he, and the novelist whose achievements more than justified his early encouragement, for all their differences should be memorialized together.

Planning for the Dickens bicentenary is well under way. A major exhibition is currently being held at the Museum of London (9 December 2011 to 30 June 2012). (Details of this and other London events are given at www.museumoflondon.org.uk/dickens) The BBC has already produced a new adaptation of *Great Expectations*. Amongst the most ambitious of the projects is a plan originating in the University of Buckingham, under Professor John Drew there, to make all of *Household Words* and all of *All the Year Round* available online, free of charge to anyone who wishes to consult them. Details are available on www.djo.org.uk for anyone interested. This splendid project will be of great use to Dickensians and Gaskellians alike, given Gaskell's contributions to both journals: there could be nothing more fitting as a lasting tribute to the occasion.

A gynaecologist looks at Mrs Gaskell

James Drife, MD FRCOG

Emeritus professor of obstetrics and gynaecology, University of Leeds

It is an honour to be invited to give the first Joan Leach Memorial Lecture to the Gaskell Society. If Mrs Leach is watching us now (as I'm sure she is) she may well be thinking that the title of this talk is an anachronism. The medical specialty of gynaecology did not exist in Mrs Gaskell's time and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists was founded 64 years after she died. Obstetrics, however, (the part of the specialty concerned with pregnancy and childbirth) is much older than gynaecology and there have been "man-midwives" in England since the 17th century. In this lecture I shall look at the world of Mrs Gaskell from the viewpoint of an obstetrician and gynaecologist, as my practice involved both parts of the specialty before I retired. I shall begin by looking at Mrs Gaskell's own medical history, then discuss medicine as it was in her time, with particular reference to women as patients and doctors, and end with some thoughts on how obstetric issues affected her work.

Mrs Gaskell's medical history

Let us imagine that Mrs Gaskell has come to my clinic as a new patient. One of a doctor's privileges is being allowed to ask very personal questions. We divide them into sections - the past medical history, the family history, and so on - to build a picture of the patient's background. I shall begin with the obstetric history.

Obstetric history

Mrs Gaskell had seven full-term pregnancies, which today would qualify her as a "grande multipara" – a term applied to a woman who has had more than four babies. From the fourth birth onwards the risks of pregnancy steadily increase, and

a grande multipara is a high-risk patient. We do not know whether Mrs Gaskell had any miscarriages. Statistically, one in six pregnancies miscarries but on the other hand her known pregnancies followed one another in fairly quick succession. She married at the age of almost 22 and her first child, a stillborn daughter, was born about ten months later. Marianne, her oldest surviving daughter, was born a year after that, and her next daughter, Margaret, three years later. This was to be expected. In the era before contraception, the first pregnancy would occur soon after marriage, a stillbirth would quickly be followed by another conception, and when a live baby survived there would be a gap before the next pregnancy because breast-feeding suppresses ovulation and is a natural contraceptive.

Mrs Gaskell grieved for her first, lost daughter. In keeping with the custom of the time, the dead baby was not given a name. Attitudes towards stillbirth have changed only recently. When I was a young doctor our usual advice was denial: "Just have another baby". The Victorians lost many of their children and we tend to assume they became inured to it but Mrs Gaskell did not forget, although she appeared to put the event behind her. Jenny Uglow (to whose excellent biography I am indebted for its medical details) records a touching sonnet, "On Visiting the Grave of my Stillborn Little Girl", in which Mrs Gaskell makes it clear that the dead child had been laid beside her, not whisked away, and she had vowed to visit "thy small nameless grave" even when she had more children to look after.

Her fourth pregnancy also ended sadly, with the delivery of a son who died soon after birth. Little seems to be known about that pregnancy: presumably she busied herself with her two little daughters. Florence, her third daughter, was born five years after Margaret, and two years later she had a second son, William, who died when just over nine months old. Her grief must have been almost unbearable. Her husband, as is well known, suggested that she take up writing to help her cope. Two years later she had one more daughter, Julia, and then her childbearing came to an end. She was only 36 years old. Why did she never conceive again? There is no obvious medical reason for her sudden infertility, and the average age at menopause, then as now, was 50. (During the 20th century the age of puberty fell but the age of the menopause did not change.). Either the Gaskells began using some form of contraception or, more likely, they decided to cease marital relations. At an age when many a modern career woman is starting a family, Mrs Gaskell's childbearing years, and probably her sex life, were over.

Family history

Her decision to stop having babies before turning 40 may be linked to her family history. Her own mother married at 26 and had eight pregnancies in 14 years. Only two of the children - the first and the last - survived. Mrs Gaskell's brother was twelve years older than she was, and her mother died at the age of 40, when Elizabeth was only 13 months old. She was one of several authors who never knew their mothers: for example, Leo Tolstoy and Charlotte Brontë lost their mothers early in life. Virginia Woolf was 13 when her mother died, and I think bereavement

at the time of puberty leaves the deepest scars of all.

Mrs Gaskell's father died at the age of 59, after a stroke. Doctors pay attention to family history because many conditions have a genetic component, and of course Mrs Gaskell also died of cardiovascular disease, at the age of 55. Today when a check-up reveals high blood pressure, raised cholesterol or signs of angina, action can be taken and life may be prolonged by decades, but in the 19th century nothing could be done to prevent history repeating itself.

Her brother, John, died either abroad or at sea when he was aged 30. This has no medical significance for Mrs Gaskell but his last letter to her includes a premonition of his death and, as Jenny Uglow puts it, "the figure of the sailor in peril moves through her fiction with the power of a recurring dream".

Medical history

I think her medical history falls into three phases. Until the age of 38, she seems to have been very well. She must have been, to have seven pregnancies in 14 years and to combine the roles of mother and minister's wife. The second phase began in 1848, when during the preparations for publication of her first major work, *Mary Barton,* she fell dangerously ill with measles. Over the next five years she was often ill with migraine, neuralgia and lassitude, and used the common remedies of the age, including opiate drugs and rest at the seaside. She was advised to move south, away from the smoke of Manchester. Even in retrospect, it is hard to know how serious these illnesses were. Measles in adults can be lethal but does not have hidden long-term complications. Some of her symptoms were brought on by stress (for example, when she read critical reviews of *Ruth*) but some may have been the first signs of her fatal heart trouble.

In the last five years of her life we can detect a third phase. When she was 50 she was confined to bed for several weeks with severe bronchitis, and at 55, she broke down while visiting Paris. On returning she collapsed again and spent three weeks in bed, but she seemed to recover, and her death, from a heart attack, was sudden and unexpected. Even during this final phase, however, some of her illness seems to have been caused by stress - for example when she heard that Marianne was considering converting to Roman Catholicism. With hindsight, though, it seems that her health was beginning to fail some years before she died.

Medicine in Mrs Gaskell's time

By today's standards, medicine in the mid-nineteenth century was primitive. The contrast with the sophistication of the arts, particularly literature, is striking and slightly embarrassing to me as a doctor. Nevertheless, medicine was beginning to take major steps forward. *The Lancet* (the name means window as well as scalpel) was founded in 1823 and soon became a forum for free and frank exchanges among medical men (all doctors at that time were male). Among them was James Young Simpson, an obstetrician who happened to be an exact contemporary of Mrs Gaskell.

A celebrated contemporary

Simpson was born near Edinburgh in 1811 and died there, aged 59, of cardiovascular disease. He became professor of midwifery at the age of only 29 and a few years later, when he heard about the introduction of ether in America, he set out to discover a better anaesthetic agent. On the 4th November 1847 he and three colleagues inhaled chloroform, which famously put them to sleep. Four days later he administered it to a patient (a doctor's wife) in labour. She was delighted. Simpson's discovery transformed women's experience of childbirth but pain relief in labour was controversial and some denounced it as being against God's will. In 1853, however, John Snow administered chloroform to Queen Victoria for the delivery of her eighth child. In 1866 Simpson became the first Scottish doctor to be knighted and later his statue was erected in Princes Street. Like Mrs Gaskell, he had prodigious energy, was unafraid of controversy, achieved great success and became unwell in his fifties. Unlike her, he received official recognition: novelists in those days, whatever their gender, were not honoured by the state.

Women in medicine

I mentioned that all doctors were male but this began to change during Mrs Gaskell's lifetime. The story of the first modern-day female medical graduate is a bizarre one, as she masqueraded as a man throughout her life. James Miranda Barry was an innovative doctor, carried out the first caesarean section in the British Empire in 1826, and was discovered to be female only after her death. When Florence Nightingale heard this, she commented, "I should say she was the most hardened creature I ever met throughout the army".

The first woman on the British medical register was Elizabeth Blackwell, who had emigrated from Bristol with her family and in 1849 became the first woman to graduate in medicine in the USA. She returned to Britain when the Medical Register was being introduced in 1858, after which the General Medical Council changed the rules to prevent more women from registering. Then, in 1865 (the year of Mrs Gaskell's death) Elizabeth Garrett Anderson became the first woman to gain a medical qualification in Britain and was finally admitted to the Medical Register in 1876. Popular as well as determined, in 1908 she succeeded her husband as mayor of Aldeburgh, becoming England's first woman mayor.

Mrs Gaskell was of course aware of the various political campaigns for women's rights but gave them, in Jenny Uglow's words, only "qualified support". She encouraged her daughter Margaret to become a nurse but did not get involved in that early campaign for women to be accepted into the medical profession: it did not become a major battle until long after she died.

Women as patients

Medical attitudes to women patients were equally unenlightened but in the first half of the 19th century there was little that doctors could offer male or female patients. During Mrs Gaskell's lifetime effective treatment did arrive, in the form of surgery,

once anaesthesia made it became possible for surgeons to open the abdomen. Ovarian cysts can sometimes grow to an enormous size and one of the first abdominal operations was their removal by "ovariotomy". Britain's first ovariotomy was carried out in Manchester by a Dr Charles Clay (alarmingly, in 1842, five years before anaesthesia.) With chloroform, the era of surgical gynaecology had arrived, and in 1863 Europe's first successful hysterectomy was performed - again by Dr Clay in Manchester. Simpson happened to pass through Manchester soon afterwards and took the operative specimen to Edinburgh.

The wave of enthusiasm for surgery was shared by many women as well as doctors. In France, Jean-Martin Charcot, "the Napoleon of the neuroses", demonstrated the condition of "hysteria", thought to originate in the womb, and in Britain it was believed that removal of normal ovaries could bring psychological benefits. No doubt in some cases (such as severe dysmenorrhoea) it did, but I feel the excesses of gynaecological surgery in those early days are too unpleasant to enumerate in detail. I think they were accepted because they offered women an alternative, albeit drastic, to suffering in silence.

Later advances

Before Mrs Gaskell's time, the only medical schools in Britain were in London, where there were two, and Scotland, which had four. The wealth of the industrial revolution had brought new hospitals to the north of England (Manchester Royal Infirmary was founded in 1752) and in the 19th century they were followed by new medical schools - in Newcastle in 1825 and Manchester in 1874. New medical schools appeared in London at the same time, but England's oldest universities took many years to follow suit. Cambridge did so in 1882 but Oxford did not establish an undergraduate medical school until 1946.

This meant that the north-south divide, that subject about which Mrs Gaskell wrote, was reversed, at least as far as gynaecology was concerned. Besides Dr Clay's trailblazing in the 19th century there were, in the 20th century, Marie Stopes, who worked in Manchester University before becoming a pioneer of family planning, and William Blair-Bell, the Liverpool professor who founded the British (later Royal) College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in 1929.

A gynaecologist reads Mrs Gaskell

I am no literary critic but I would like to discuss two medical aspects of Mrs Gaskell's work. One relates to her first novel, *Mary Barton,* and the other to her great non-fiction work, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë.*

Maternal mortality

The first major event in *Mary Barton* is the death of Mary's mother in childbirth. While in labour at home, she took "fearful bad", with cries of agony that "resounded in the little court in the stillness of the night". A neighbour took over from the terrified Mary while John Barton ran for the doctor, who arrived too late. He checked the

body and told John "You must go downstairs. This is a great shock, but bear it like a man." Having diagnosed the cause of death as "some shock to the system", he "grieved for the man; and, very sleepy, thought it best to go.. [and] let himself out." Having lost her own mother, Mrs Gaskell must have found this scene difficult to write. From a medical point of view it does not quite ring true. Death in labour can occur suddenly but more often it is distressingly slow, accompanied by bleeding or fever or coming at the end of a labour that has lasted for days. Unlike today's writers Mrs Gaskell spared herself and her readers the grim clinical details, but her account has deadly emotional accuracy. As far as I know, this is the only maternal death in any of her books. Having recalled in fiction what must have been one of the defining events of her own life she moved on and never returned to it.

Maternal death has been an interest of mine - not, I hasten to say, because it happens often in Leeds but because I spent 17 years on a national panel examining such cases. The UK Confidential Enquiry into Maternal Deaths is a long-running project to identify avoidable factors and make recommendations for improving care. It has published triennial reports since the 1950s and, we believe, saved many lives. Today the risk of maternal death in Britain is around 1 in 10,000 pregnancies, but in the 19th century the figure was I in 250. At a time when a woman commonly had ten or more pregnancies this meant that around one in 30 women died as a result of pregnancy.

The tragedy was no respecter of social class. In 1797 Mary Wollstonecraft died of childbed fever ten days after giving birth to a daughter who later became Mary Shelley. In 1817 Princess Charlotte died two days after giving birth to a stillborn boy who would have been heir to the throne: instead, the crown passed to Queen Victoria. In 1865 Isabella Maysom ("Mrs Beeton") died at the age of 29 after her third pregnancy: she had already completed her monumental *Book of Household Management.* Country churchyards record the deaths of less famous women, often with the poignant inscriptions, such as this verse dating from 1829:

"30 years I was a maid
13 months a wife
4 Hours I was a mother
And then I lost my life".

Infection accounted for about half the cases. Puerperal sepsis, or "childbed fever", was mainly due to the streptococcus, an organism that 10% of people carry in their nasal passages, making it impossible to eradicate. Louis Pasteur identified it in 1864 - one of medicine's great leaps forward - but identification was not enough. What was needed was treatment, and antibiotics did not become available for another seventy years. In 1935 German chemists developed sulphonamides, and when these were brought to England the maternal death rate began to fall rapidly. This fall continued during the second world war, despite the bombing and food rationing, and once penicillin also became available, puerperal sepsis all but disappeared.

This is one of medicine's great success stories but the benefits are still restricted to developed countries. In the third world, maternal death rates are similar to those that prevailed in England in Mrs Gaskell's day and indeed for many years afterwards. For us post-war "baby boomers" it is a sobering thought that only ten years before we were born, a woman's risk of death in childbirth was still at mid-Victorian levels. How quickly we forget, and take medicine's miracles for granted.

The death of Charlotte Brontë

The same thought is prompted by the death of Charlotte Brontë. Unlike Mrs Gaskell she had already achieved worldwide fame as a novelist before she had her first pregnancy. Like many obstetricians visiting the Haworth parsonage I was struck by the sight of Charlotte's little dress and tiny shoes, preserved there. She was around 4'9" in height, and she was 38 years old when she married her Arthur Nicholls, her father's curate. A few months later she began what we would now recognise as a high-risk pregnancy and suffered severe vomiting.

Morning sickness is a well-known symptom of pregnancy and usually improves after the third month, but sometimes it is severe and amounts to "hyperemesis gravidarum". This causes dehydration which, if left untreated, can be fatal, and the remedy nowadays includes an intravenous saline infusion. When I was teaching medical students in Leeds I would point out that today Charlotte would be brought to Airedale Hospital and it might be a newly-qualified houseman who saved her life with this routine procedure.

It is possible that tuberculosis also contributed to her death but it seems clear that the immediate cause was her pregnancy. Nowadays hyperemesis is seen infrequently, and in the past it may have had a psychological component. Sometimes the woman, deep down, did not really want to be pregnant, and Freudians interpreted the vomiting as a subconscious attempt to get rid of what was inside her. The condition could deteriorate, despite intravenous hydration, and the final complication was liver failure. The only way to save the woman's life was to terminate the pregnancy. This drastic option was well recognised in the textbooks of my youth, but has disappeared from recent books, probably because a woman can now request termination of an unwanted pregnancy. The 1967 Abortion Act legalised abortion if there was a risk to the physical or mental health of the woman or her existing children.

Mrs Gaskell mentions Charlotte's pregnancy with delicacy. After the vomiting had continued for some time a doctor was called and "assigned a natural cause for her miserable indisposition: a little patience and all would go right". (It was not until the end of the century that the idea of antenatal care developed.) The sickness continued and Mrs Gaskell records that "a wren would have starved on what she ate during those last six weeks". She became weaker and eventually "a low wandering delirium came on: and in it she begged constantly for food and even for stimulants. She swallowed eagerly now: but it was too late." Charlotte died murmuring a prayer for God to save her.

Had her pregnancy continued, her chances of survival would have been slim. She must have realised this but her letters show she was content to accept God's will. There is no sign that she considered ending her pregnancy. Termination was illegal but was widely practised nonetheless. *The Lancet* and the *British Medical Journal (BMJ)* carried reports of doctors being prosecuted for procuring abortion, and commented that these cases were the tip of the iceberg. The last resort for poorer women, living in appalling conditions in Britain's cities, was infanticide, perhaps with the help of a midwife. There was no legal requirement to register stillbirths until 1873. The *BMJ* reported in1869 that abortions were easily obtained in England, and that there were "mill-ponds, in the neighbourhood of factories, that have been made the receptacles for many a new-born child".

The back issues of *The Lancet* and *BMJ* are now available on the journals' websites, and an electronic search reveals that the problem of unwanted pregnancy, far from being a taboo subject, was discussed with increasing frequency from the late 19th century onwards, with a growing view that abortion should be legalised. This idea came long after Mrs Gaskell's time. I wondered whether, being the wife of a minister, she was never told about the illegal trade in abortion or whether she knew about it but realised that it was not a subject for discussion outside the pages of medical journals. She endured criticism for writing about "fallen women" and defended herself, commenting after *Ruth* was published that: "It has made them talk and think a little on a subject which is so painful it requires all one's bravery not to hide one's head like an ostrich." Mentioning abortion, however, would certainly have been a step too far.

Note added after the lecture: My question about how much Mrs Gaskell knew was answered by the President of the Society during the discussion after my talk. Mrs Gaskell's letters show that she, perhaps more than anyone, knew the risk that Charlotte was taking but that she did not know about Charlotte's pregnancy until it was too late. I am grateful to Elizabeth Williams (via Helen Smith) for sending me a copy of her letter of 12 April 1855 to John Greenwood of Haworth (no. 233 of "The Letters of Mrs Gaskell", ed. JAV Chapple and Arthur Pollard) in which she wrote:

"How I wish I had known!
I do not wonder at your reluctance to write, when you feared it might be construed into 'meddling', and it is no use regretting what is past; but I do fancy that if I had come, I could have induced her, - even though they had all felt angry with me at first, - to do what was so absolutely necessary, for her very life. Poor poor creature!"

Epilogue

May I say again how grateful I am for the invitation to give this special lecture. When Helen Smith first suggested it, I thought it was foolhardy to accept the challenge of talking about Mrs Gaskell to the Gaskell Society. My wife, however, pointed out that our house is full of her work and suggested that I start with *Cousin Phillis*, which she assured me was quite free from gynaecological or obstetric complications. I followed her advice and found myself spellbound by Mrs Gaskell's skill as a writer,

her perceptiveness about the details of life around her, and her deep insight into human nature. My admiration for her has increased hugely, and I hope this brief sketch of the medical context of her work may help in a small way to enhance your appreciation of this remarkable woman.

Uncle Peter and Cousin Henry

Craig Thornber

Peter Holland was born on 30 June 1776, the eldest of nine children of Samuel Holland of Sandlebridge and Great Warford and his wife Ann Swinton. One of the daughters, Elizabeth, married William Stevenson and their daughter, also named Elizabeth, became Mrs. Gaskell on her marriage to the Rev. William Gaskell. It seems likely that Mrs. Gaskell took as the model for Mr. Gibson, (the country doctor in *Wives and Daughters)* her uncle, Peter Holland.

Peter's first marriage was to Mary, the daughter of the Rev. William Willetts of Newcastle in Staffordshire. Mary's mother was a sister of Josiah Wedgwood. Peter and Mary had seven children, three of whom died in infancy. Mary died in 1803 and in 1808 Peter married Mary Whitaker of Manchester. The couple had three children, including Susan, who married her father's partner, Richard Timothy Dean. The family lived for a time in King Street, Knutsford and the site is marked with a blue plaque. Until the year 1858 there were three medical professions in England. The physicians worked mainly in London; they were university-educated but had no practical experience. They were required only to learn the writings of Hippocrates and Galen and acted as lifestyle advisors. Surgeons and apothecaries qualified by apprenticeship and some people qualified in both. Apothecaries provided most of the medical service outside London especially for the middle and lower classes. In 1858 these three professions were combined and a medical registry was published showing approved practitioners.

Peter Holland was apprenticed to Charles White of Manchester on 5 December 1783, when he was 17. Charles White was an eminent surgeon and obstetrician. He was one of the founders of the Manchester Infirmary and published recommendations on the treatment of women in labour and after childbirth.

Peter then moved to practise in his home town of Knutsford. He is known to have had three apprentices including Samuel Dean in 1796. He developed a large practice and became the family doctor to the Leicesters of Tabley, the Stanleys of Alderley, the Egertons of Tatton, the Langford-Brookes of Mere and the Greys of Dunham Massey. In addition, he attended the Gregs and their Apprentice House at Quarry Bank Mill, Styal.

In an article in the *British Journal of Industrial Medicine*, Robert Murray described Peter Holland as a pioneer of occupational medicine. The earliest recorded occupation health service in England was at Samuel Greg's Quarry Bank Mill. Greg employed Peter Holland to examine apprentices before they were employed. By

1795 Peter Holland was treating the Greg family and was retained with an annual fee of 12 guineas for the care of the apprentices.

From 1804 to 1845 each visit of the surgeon was entered in a daybook. This may have been in response to Sir Robert Peel's Health and Morals of Apprentices Act of 1802. Peter Holland made notes on the cases in shorthand and left instruction for the treatment in longhand. Robert Murray was able to discover the nature of the shorthand. It was a system published by Jeremiah Rich in 1642 and adapted by Philip Doddridge, the writer of the hymn *Christians Awake*. Doddridge was associated with the founding of the Warrington Academy and Robert Murray suggests that Peter Holland may have been a pupil there.

Among the treatments listed are blisters, purges, poultices, laudanum (an alcoholic solution of opium), bleeding with leeches, powdered chalk with cinnamon, green mixture, antimonial wine (possibly tartar emetic) anodyne pills, and that standby of the Georgian Period, Dr. James' powders.

Peter Holland's connection with the Leicester family is known from accounts which survive at the Cheshire County Record Office. The first mention of Peter Holland is in 1794 as a partner of Daniel Howard and there is a full set from 1821 to 1826 inclusive. Probably as a result of his connection with Sir John Fleming Leicester, Peter Holland was appointed in 1803 as the surgeon to the Earl of Chester's Yeomanry Cavalry of which Sir John was Colonel.

Holland and Dean was the name given to the medical practice in the 1834 edition of Pigot's Directory of Cheshire. Richard Timothy Dean was the son of Samuel Dean, who had been Peter's apprentice. Richard married as his second wife, Peter Holland's daughter Susan on 10 April 1844. They had two sons who died in infancy and Richard died aged 46 in January 1851 leaving his wife with a new baby, Mary. Peter Holland himself died on 19 January 1855.

Henry Holland was born on 27 October 1788. As a boy he visited his maternal grandmother, Catherine, in Newcastle-under-Lyme and her brother, Josiah Wedgwood. He also came in contact with Josiah's grandson, Charles Darwin, his second cousin with whom he had a life-long friendship.

His early education was at a private school in Knutsford. In 1799, at the age of 10 he was sent to study with the Rev. W. Turner of Newcastle-on-Tyne for four years. It was this trip to the North-East and the visits he did while there which awakened his interest in travel. While there he attended short courses in Chemistry and Electricity which awakened his interest in science.

In 1803 he was moved to the school of Dr. Estlin near Bristol where his education was mainly in the classics and here he first met Richard Bright, who trained in medicine and described what we now call Bright's Disease.

In 1803, when 15, he spent Christmas at Stoke Newington near London with Dr. Aikin, his sister and daughter, Lucy. This was Henry's first trip to London and made

a big impression. On completion of his studies at Bristol, he returned to Knutsford on foot, having formed a plan to see Tintern Abbey.

Initially his ambition had been to go into a mercantile profession and he was articled to a company in Liverpool. He was allowed to spend two sessions at Glasgow University to further his education. Henry soon became involved with interesting and influential people, often some years his senior, and one useful contact led to another. While at Glasgow, he won a prize for translation of *Oedipus Tyrannus*, which he put down to lack of competition as other students were not interested in verse.

As a result of his experience at Glasgow, he decided to study medicine at Edinburgh and obtained a release from his post in Liverpool. In the six months before he could take up the course he obtained a post writing a County Report on Cheshire for the Board of Agriculture. He obtained this post through the good offices of Sir John Stanley of Alderley and travelled the county earning £200 for his report.

Later in 1806, when just 18, he went up to Edinburgh. He travelled to Iceland in 1810 with Sir G. Mackenzie and Richard Bright. At the end of his course at Edinburgh, he presented a thesis on the diseases of Iceland, in Latin. He took his degree in 1811 having spent two winters in London Hospital Schools at Guy's and St. Thomas's. When he qualified he was still three years too young to join the College of Physicians and so travelled for 18 months in Portugal, Spain, Sicily, Greece and Turkey and published a book on his observations.

Everywhere he went he seems to have had introductions to the most senior levels of society. He met Ali Pasha in Turkey and Ibrahim Pasha in Cairo. In 1813 he reached Athens and met Charles Cockerell, the archaeologist and later the architect of Birmingham Town Hall. On account of his travels at a time when journeys were restricted by the Napoleonic War, he was invited to dine at Holland House and Lansdowne House and extended his contacts with the upper échelons of Regency Society.

Through meeting the courtiers Keppel Craven and Sir W. Sell in Athens, he was recommended to be physician to the Princess of Wales. In 1814, he spent a year in Germany, Switzerland and Italy in attending her. He met the royal families of Spain and Holland, European nobility and travelling British nobility. In Berne the party met the Empress Maria Louisa, wife of Napoleon; while in Florence, they met Countess Albany, widow of the Young Pretender, Charles Edward Stuart.

Henry Holland spoke good Italian which served him well. He met Pope Pius VII in Rome and visited the galleries of the Vatican with Antonio Canova. The Princess's party met the King of Naples, Marshal Joachim Murat. While there they learned of the escape of Napoleon from Elba and the Princess was ordered home by sea. Henry Holland travelled home via Genoa, Milan, Venice, Trieste, Vienna, Dresden, Berlin and Hamburg with a short excursion into Hungary.

Henry had a short trip to France and Holland after the Battle of Waterloo where he witnessed the Duke of Wellington demonstrate with 30,000 men a manoeuvre of the Battle, saw Austrian engineers removing the Venetian Horses from the Louvre and met Antonio Canova supervising the recovery of some of Napoleon's loot including Greek marbles. In Paris he dined with the widow of Antoine Laurent de Lavoisier, now the wife of British scientist and engineer, Benjamin Thomas, Count Rumford. There he met several famous scientists including Gay-Lussac, La Place, John Jakob Berzelius and Claude Louis Berthollet.

When the Princess was tried in the House of Lords in 1821, Henry Holland was called as a witness and later that year he was one of the physicians attending her when she died aged 53.

These early travels set the scene for much of Henry's later life. Each year he put two months aside for travel and everywhere he went he was able to move in the highest levels of society based on his extensive network of contacts. He visited all the capitals of Europe at least once, went twice to Russia, eight times to North America, and also to Constantinople, Damascus, Jerusalem, Cairo and Algeria.

He began in practice first in Mount Street and then in Brook Street, Manchester. In 1837 he was appointed one of HM Physicians Extraordinary and became the same to Prince Albert after their marriage. He was at Windsor Castle for the last three days of Prince Albert's life.

In 1852, Henry became Physician in Ordinary to the Queen and in April 1853 became a baronet. He was a physician for six Prime Ministers - Canning, Aberdeen, Peel, Melbourne, Sidmouth and Palmerston. As a Fellow of the Royal Society, member of the Athenaeum and president of the Royal Institution, he knew leading scientists such as John Dalton, Michael Faraday, Humphrey Davy, Sir Joseph Banks, Henry Cavendish and Thomas Malthus. He was an honorary member of the Royal Academy and knew Sir Thomas Laurence and Henry Fuseli as well as several authors including Sir Walter Scott, Southey, Wordsworth, Fanny Burney and Maria Edgeworth.

Although the fact is not mentioned in his autobiography, Henry Holland married first Margaret Emma Caldwell with whom he had two sons, Henry and Francis, and two daughters, Emily and Elinor; the latter died in infancy. After Margaret died he married Saba the daughter of the celebrated wit, the Rev. Sydney Smith, with whom he had two daughters Caroline and Gertrude.

In 1863, when he was 75, he went to advanced posts of the Federal Army in Virginia. He met Lincoln, and the Secretary of War sent an Adjutant-General to conduct him to the Army of the Potomac. There he met General Meade who had been victorious at Gettysburg. In his 82nd year he made a trip to the USA and died just after a trip to Russia.

In addition to his autobiography, Henry Holland wrote many papers for the

Edinburgh Review and Quarterly Review on science and literature.

A Brief Bibliography

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Ford Madox Brown: Pre-Raphaelite Pioneer

Pat Barnard

Exhibition at Manchester Art Gallery (ended 29 January 2012)

Julian Treuherz (formerly director of The Walker Art Gallery and Lady Lever Art Gallery) welcomed us all as The Friends of Plymouth Grove to a tour of the Ford Madox Brown exhibition, which he had curated and for which he was acting as our guide on Wednesday November 2nd 2011. He gave us a brief introduction.

Ford Madox Brown (of English parentage) was born and brought up in France and educated at the Art Schools in Bruges, Ghent and Antwerp. Nevertheless he was seen as the archetypal English artist. Although never officially part of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, he very much influenced them and they influenced him.

Why should we, as followers of Elizabeth Gaskell, show any interest in Ford Madox Brown? Did they meet? There is no evidence that they did actually meet but they certainly had friends and acquaintances in common and would have been aware of many of the same people. Perhaps they did meet--perhaps you know! Here are some of those friendships and acquaintances:

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

Throughout FMB's artistic career Dante Gabriel Rossetti's close friendship, advantageous to them both, was able to overcome many difficult times between them. Rossetti due to a lack of TIN frequently borrowed money but was not over-anxious to repay when situations changed! His prolonged overnight stays rising late and expecting breakfast could be exasperating. However, Rossetti's mother took Lucy, FMB's daughter by his first marriage to live with her family, probably to avoid the drinking bouts of Emma, FMB's second wife. A fondness and closeness between the two families is obvious. Lucy goes on to marry William Rossetti, Dante's brother.

Elizabeth recalls in one of her letters meeting Rossetti at a party 'where she had a good deal of talk with him, excepting times when ladies with beautiful hair came in when he was like a cat turned into a lady who jumped out of bed and ran after a mouse------He is not mad as a March Hare but hair-mad.'

John Ruskin

FMB reports in his diary - 'Rossetti says Ruskin is a sneak and loves him, Rossetti, because he is one too and Monroe because he is one too and Hunt he half loves because he is half a sneak, but hates Woolner because he is straightforward and me because I am too. He adored Millais because Millais was the prince of sneaks but Millais was too much so, for he sneaked away his wife and so he is obliged to hate him for Too Much of his Favourite Quality!!

An English Afternoon (now considered to be one of FMB'S masterpieces) engendered a quarrel between the two men as the following entry in diary illustrates and for which FMB paid a heavy price (spelling as in diary!)

While staying at Rossetti's "Enter to Us" Ruskin, I smoke, he talks divers nonsense about art, hurriedly in shrill flippant tones ----I answer him civilly--- then resume to my coat and prepare to leave. He then says "Mr Brown will you tell me why you chose such a very ugly subject for your last picture" ------your picture at the British ex. What made you take such a very ugly subject, it was a pity for there was some nice painting in it." FMB satisfied that Ruskin meant impertinence replied contemptuously "because it lay out of my back window" -----Ruskin seemed by this time in high dudgeon".

The antagonism resulted in complete lack of patronage from Ruskin. The other Pre-Raphaelites gained much by Ruskin's interest.

Elizabeth in her letter 562 is so pleased that Ruskin likes Cranford.

There are many examples of correspondence between them.

She appears to take the opposite side to FMB in the Effie Ruskin, John Everett Millais scandal.

Catherine Winkworth, a very longstanding friend of Elizabeth, translated from the German Lyra Germanica, an anthology of hymns. Three of FMB's religious productions were used for illustrations, Abraham and Isaac, The Entombment, and another version of the Entombment.

Thomas Carlyle was one of FMB's heroes sharing many of his radical views. FMB invited him to model as a Brain-Worker in the painting Work. This is FMB's great masterpiece, bought by Manchester Art Gallery and the site of which in Hampstead can now be easily recognised.

Elizabeth is greatly consoled by Carlyle's letter praising her work and, when feeling overwhelmed by some of the criticism engendered by Mary Barton, re-reads his letter!

Frederick Denison Maurice, founder of The Working Men's College and Queen's College for the education of women, particularly governesses. Elizabeth writes---- "I am sure he has more influence over the more thoughtful portion of the English

Stewart Gardiner, Mayor of Knutsford, plants a crab apple tree

"in memory of Joan Leach MBE to recognise her contribution to Knutsford"

as Joan's son Martin and sister Shirley, and others, look on.

17 Sept 2011.

Gaskell Society members surround the tomb of "darling Willie who now sleeps...in the dull chapel-yard at Warrington", on a sunny Wednesday in September.

Delia Corrie and Sarah Prince at Greenheys on 29 Sept 2011.

Katie Lomas and Katarzyna Kowalik our recitalists at Cottons, New Year lunch. 11 Jan 2012.

New look at Greenheys.

people than anyone I know." His principles form the foundation of Christian Socialism. FMB invites him to pose for the other Brain-Worker in Work and also includes a poster on the left of Work advertising The Working Men's College. Charles Kingsley, also, a Christian Socialist was known to both FMB and Elizabeth.

Alfred Waterhouse, architect, was acquainted with both Elizabeth and FMB. Waterhouse goes on to become the architect of our magnificent Town Hall in Manchester; and FMB designs and paints the 12 frescoes in the Great Hall which, sadly, Elizabeth would have been unaware of, as they were completed after 1865.

Elizabeth Gaskell, as we know, visited The Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857 in Manchester many times, taking with her the house guests from Plymouth Grove. Jesus Washing Peter's Feet and The Hayfield (at this stage owned by William Morris) painted by FMB were being exhibited.

One feels they must have met. Meta, with her talent and interest in Art, must have seen FMB's paintings displayed in Liverpool and perhaps have spoken of FMB. It is certain that FMB and William Gaskell met when the murals were being painted in the Town Hall and FMB entered and entertained the society of the time in Manchester. That is a research topic for another time!

Finally, the exhibition and accompanying catalogue were a treat and provide much to ponder over. FMB recognised the divisions of society and, through his most famous painting, appreciated the toil of the working man.

Elizabeth Gaskell would have thoroughly approved!

Editorial footnote: The exhibition moves from Manchester to the continent where it will be on display in Ghent from 25 February until 3 June 2012.

Death in Leamington Spa?

Christine Lingard

It is always satisfying to take one of the mysteries contained Elizabeth Gaskell's letters and follow the fascinating trail which it leads you. One such case is that of Miss Sarah Taylor revealed in this letter of September 1854:

Then again Sarah Taylor (Miss Boyce's niece) is so ill I fear Meta (who is gone to enquire) will bring word of her death from brain fever at Leamington. Mrs Allen has been telegraphed for home from Venice. Poor Harriet and Marianne are at home - waiting for telegraph messages all by themselves! [L209a]

A perusal of death records for that quarter finds no one of that name dying nearer to the Warwickshire spa than Birmingham, nor did any one die in Manchester, in the event she had returned home. It is therefore probable that she survived her ordeal but with one of the commonest surnames in the country I despaired of ever identifying the lady.

That is until I discovered a book *Guardian, biography of a newspaper* by David Ayerst and the family tree on the endpapers revealed the answer. Sarah (c1837-94), Harriet (1838-1910), and Marianne Taylor (1840-1910) were the three children of the second marriage of John Edward Taylor, founder of the *Manchester Guardian.* His first wife had died in 1832 leaving three young children. He searched around for another wife, eventually marrying the children's governess, Miss Harriet Boyce, a native of Tiverton, Devon. She invited her unmarried sister Ann Dunsford Boyce to come and live with them. This is the Miss Boyce who is mentioned in Taylor's will:

knowing that I do that she is highly esteemed and regarded by my children by my first marriage and these latter warmly love their younger sisters, it is my earnest wish…that…they will all live together as a united family.

Sophia, the only daughter of his first marriage, married Peter Allen, who became a partner in the newspaper and so, if the date of Gaskell's letter is accurate, she was on her honeymoon at the time of her sister's illness.

Needless to say, Sarah did survive, and though she didn't have a particularly long life, she married in 1865 and had five children. Her husband Frederick Jevons and his two brothers married the three Taylor sisters. They came from Liverpool and were grandsons of William Roscoe (1753-1831), the historian and political pamphleteer. Her sister Harriet's husband, William Edward Jevons (1835-1882) was the most distinguished of the three, achieving something of a reputation in academic circles. He had spent a considerable time in Australia, where he had taken some pioneering photographs, before coming to Manchester to live with his aunt, Mrs Henry Roscoe (another Gaskell acquaintance) in Dickinson Road, Fallowfield. He became professor of moral philosophy at Manchester University, but later moved to London. He is regarded as the father of political economy, and was an adviser to several prime ministers. When he died in 1882, Meta and Julia Gaskell contributed 6 guineas (£6.30) to a memorial fund to establish a scholarship in his memory.

John Edward Taylor had come from a distinguished Unitarian family with several associations with the Gaskells. Though educated as a Quaker (under John Dalton) he had reverted to the Unitarian church and became a trustee of Cross Street chapel. His first wife was his cousin, Sophia Scott. The Scott and Taylor family trees were as intertwined and as complicated as the Hollands. His brother-in-law Russell Scott was a Unitarian Minister and an assistant of Rev John Relly Beard at High Street Chapel, Manchester. C.P. Scott, the most celebrated early editor of the paper was his nephew. Taylor died in 1844, and his second wife the following year, before Gaskell became a published writer. Very few letters survive from this period so it is not possible to gauge the strength of their friendship but she was definitely acquainted with his talented son, Russell Scott Taylor, an early editor of the paper, who died in 1848 of typhoid at the age of 27. He had been a pupil of William Gaskell and Francis William Newman, brother of the future cardinal, when he was a tutor in Manchester to the children of another family friend Samuel Dukinfield Darbishire.

The *Manchester Guardian* had been founded in 1821 and was only a twice-weekly publication until 1855. Initially Taylor had had financial backing from a local cotton agent, John Shuttleworth (1796-1864) but they disagreed and he bought the rival *Manchester Gazette*. Shuttleworth (no relation to James Kay-Shuttleworth) and his wife Elizabeth Noble, a member of a noted Lancaster Unitarian family, remained close friends of the Gaskells and are mentioned many times in her letters. They used to come to Plymouth Grove from their home at the Wilton Polygon, Crumpsall in their personal carriage. Gaskell records his unfortunate end!

I am afraid Mr S. is sinking. He was in bed…& taking little but champagne. [L540]

The Guardian remained the Gaskell family's newspaper of choice despite its review of *Mary Barton*, in February 1849, which can only be described as mixed:

This tale is beautifully written; the characters introduced are graphically delineated; the events are so interestingly interwoven and the groundwork is so artistically constructed that whoever reads the two first chapters is sure to read the whole story…the only fault of the book is that the authoress has waived gravely against the truth, in matters of fact either above her comprehension, or beyond her sphere of knowledge…it is a libel on the workmen of Manchester…it is a libel on the masters, merchants and gentlemen of this city who have never been exceeded by those of any other part of the kingdom in acts of benevolence and charity both public and private.

The bulk of the review, which is unsigned, goes on to point out a number of inaccuracies and is particularly disapproving of the dialogue. Interestingly it states that the author of the book was the wife of a dissenting minister in the city.

In later years Ayerst mentions the two Gaskell daughters:

There they kept open house for generations of Guardian men. One of them was once asked whether 'it would look' - here they hesitated - 'at all "unbecoming", or "just a shade too unconventional" for two maiden ladies to provide cigars for the men after dinner.'

And I should be grateful if anyone can explain this intriguing footnote on page 76:

In the interval [after the death of the first Mrs Taylor] he had been engaged to Miss Gaskell, a cousin of the novelist's husband, who finally refused him partly because he wanted to retain his existing governess in charge of the children.

So there is probably a lot more to the relationship between Gaskell and the Guardian than we know.

Further reading

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Guardian, biography of a newspaper, David Ayerst [1971]

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Controversy at Cross Street
Was George Eliot guilty of plagiarism?

Shirley Foster

Was George Eliot guilty of plagiarism? That was the question addressed by Jo Pryke and Shirley Foster at the Society's December meeting in Manchester, when they discussed the notable similarities between Gaskell's *The Moorland Cottage* (1850) and Eliot's *The Mill* on the Floss (1860).

These similarities were first noted by Swinburne in his essay of 1877, 'A Note on Charlotte Brontë', in which he accused Eliot of failing to acknowledge her 'palpable and weighty and direct obligation' to the older novelist. Later critics have taken up his observation and have suggested that Eliot must have known *The Moorland Cottage,* to the extent that she replicated various aspects of it in her own work, including the name of the heroine, the sibling relationship and the use of the environment. There is, however, no 'hard historical fact' to prove that Eliot had read the novella, or that she had borrowed from it. Indeed her biographer, Gordon Haight, states categorically that she 'had never seen' *The Moorland Cottage.*

The two women were, of course, aware of each other's writings. Gaskell envied Eliot's creative talents and wrote to her expressing how 'humbly' she admired her fiction. Eliot, for her part, makes reference to *Cranford, Mary Barton* and *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* in her Journal, and mentions Gaskell in her *Westminster Review* article of October 1856, 'Silly Novels by Lady Novelists', marking her out from the myriad of contemporary female writers who are capable only of 'feminine fatuity'. She also told Gaskell that reading her novels had shown her 'that my feeling towards Life and Art had some affinity with the feeling which had inspired *Cranford* and the earlier chapters of *Mary Barton*.' But nowhere is there an indication of her having come across *The Moorland Cottage*; if, indeed, it came to her attention when she and Lewes were reading literature for inclusion in the *Westminster Review's* 'Belles Lettres' section - a listing of contemporary writings - mention of it did not find its way into the pages of the journal. It can perhaps be argued that after the success of *Mary Barton*, and then, later, *Cranford*, other works by the same author would have been seized on eagerly by her admirers. And of course George Eliot was a voracious reader. But until we find any definite evidence that she did in fact know *The Moorland Cottage*, textual evidence (possibly the product of unconscious assimilation) can be the only grounds for suggesting that the earlier text provided a partial template for the latter. Furthermore, coincidence in the use

of names, and cultural and social phenomena of the age in elements such as family structures and the role of the law, must also be considered as relevant to the question of influence. Without more firm knowledge, we cannot accuse Eliot of plagiarism.

Moorland Cottage

Jo Pryke

I would argue that common sense suggests it is very probable that Eliot did read *The Moorland Cottage* and, as she found its plot and characters congenial to her own concerns and developing techniques, it was laid down in her memory, supplying, albeit perhaps unconsciously, significant material for her novel. Perhaps one could call it 'unwitting plagiarism'. Many details of internal evidence make it difficult to believe that there is *no* connection between Gaskell's novella and Eliot's novel.

The very titles announce a use of place common to both works. The central importance of Dorlcote Mill is obvious, while Gaskell's moorland setting, in particular the thorn-tree above the cottage, is crucial for the characterisation of Maggie and her relationship with her lover, Frank. At the watery crises which end both stories, (when both brothers are drowned), childhood scenes crop up in striking parallel. On the deck of the burning ship Frank, taking Maggie in his arms: 'was as calm and composed as if they sat beneath the thorn-tree on the still moorlands, far away.' Maggie Tulliver also finds peace, similarly linked to the shared rural scene in the past: 'brother and sister had gone down in an embrace never to be parted: living through again ... the days when they had clasped their little hands in love, and roamed the daisied fields together.'

The use of other typical realist techniques is also strikingly similar. At the opening of both books, a geographical and historical guide personally conducts the reader into the scene, setting the story to become within living memory. Moreover, both ensuing narratives turn on the importance of memory, and on the influence of the past in the present.

Most obviously, the family dynamics are the same in crucial ways, (though the individual characters of the two Maggies and their brothers are different). Each Maggie has a brother who, the favourite of his mother, domineers over her on grounds of her sex, and is given education denied to her, for which she is equally, if not better qualified. She feels the injustice of both this and of his assumption of superiority but, at least in childhood, defers to him. Both mothers are weak and foolish, dominated by 'what people will think', their only strong emotion being love for their sons. Each makes clear to her Maggie that she is a disappointment. Each Maggie's father is/was more loving to her than her mother is/was to Maggie. Each Maggie, with short, straight dark hair, has an affectionate (and important) relationship with a kind, pretty girl with fair hair in ringlets. Both Maggies grow up to be beautiful in a distinguished, dignified way.

Finally, the 'moral agenda'. The role of the law, in upholding morality, is questioned in the structure of each plot. The rigid, legalistic positions of the lawyer hired by Mr Buxton in *The Moorland Cottage*, and of Lawyer Wakem, pursuing his legal rights without mercy, are contrasted with a more compassionate and forgiving morality.

Thematically, the influence of education on morals is paralleled. While Tom Tulliver and Edward Browne both have a formal education, they do not have a moral one. The crucial results are clearly emphasised. The educational privilege accorded to boys, and the adults it produces, are criticised in both books. In contrast, Maggie Browne receives moral training from Mrs Buxton, teaching self-sacrifice and courage in her stories of women in the past, while Maggie Tulliver takes up Thomas à Kempis, advocate of self-abnegation. The results show a crucial contrast between the two Maggies when forced to choose, in a final parallel, between lover and brother. Maggie Browne, a typical self-directed Gaskellian heroine, refuses to give up her lover for the sake of her brother, while Maggie Tulliver does so.

Maria Andreanszky 1910 - 2011

Stella Luce

Aged one hundred at her death in June 2011, Maria Andreanszky was a committed member of the Gaskell Society for almost two decades. She joined the London and South East Group in 1992, shortly after it was founded by Dudley Barlow. It delighted her to find that her late mother's doctor, Ian Gregg, was a member of the Society and had a family connection not only to Anthony Todd Thompson, the surgeon who attended at Elizabeth Gaskell's birth, but also to the Byerley sister who ran the school at Stratford-upon-Avon where Elizabeth Gaskell was a pupil.

Maria grew up in Budapest in a Hungary economically challenged after World War One and cheated of true democracy by Admiral Horthy's right-wing control. Before training as a corsetière, Maria was secretary to an artist and drawn into a circle of avant-garde intellectuals intent on contact with the West. Among them she developed her knowledge of art, a respect for intellectual rigour and a leaning towards England as home to a culture of freedom.

In the Second World War Maria fearlessly helped with an underground paper and aided endangered Jews. She faced the German, then Russian, occupation of her city and confinement to the cellar of her requisitioned home. She craved the mental and spiritual freedom that she was sure could be found in the UK. By 1947 Communism was tightening its grip in Hungary, but Maria had secured the necessary visas for uncertain travel across war-weary Europe to a housekeeper's post in Britain. It was a move she never regretted.

Three years later, now able to speak English, Maria moved to London to join, and later manage, the corsetry department at Dickins and Jones. She acquired British nationality and could savour the freedom so dear to her. She took classes at the City Literary Institute covering an impressive range of the arts, and she had occasional trips abroad. Science, she hoped, would find answers to the over-population and despoliation of the planet. Well-read, she wore her knowledge lightly. Maria was still attending Gaskell Society lectures at the age of ninety-nine. Her interest in others and lively sense of humour never left her.

Spiritually, Maria joined the Quakers in their silence-based worship. Among them she was a loved, supportive, wise and influential figure. Her belief in Guidance never faltered. The memorial gathering held in November, 2011, was a fitting celebration of Maria's inspirational gift for life and generosity of spirit towards her many friends.

Visit to Warrington 28 September 2011

Philip Morey

Warrington. Usual hot summer weather. A cloudless blue sky. It's 10 o'clock in the morning and already the temperature is nearing 20C as a faithful band of Gaskell devotees gathers outside the County Police Office, where we are greeted by retired PC Peter Wroe, curator of the Museum of Policing in Cheshire.

Stepping back across the road, we admire the impressive late Victorian building, with a dash of Art Nouveau apparent in stained glass windows and the brick façade. It was built in 1901 to replace Warrington's police station which had become far too small: a great influx of workers occasioned by the construction of the Manchester Ship Canal in the 1890s had led to demands for vastly increased cell-space in the town.

The Museum, which is housed on the ground floor of the fully-operational police

station, was opened in 2007 for group visits, by appointment. As its name implies, its collections relate to all the police forces which at any time have been part of the County of Cheshire, itself of course subject to boundary changes. We have Peter Wroe to thank in large part for its existence. After he retired he began to organise items for display in Warrington, and persuaded former colleagues and their families to donate objects they might have collected. Since the 1960s Cheshire Constabulary had been amassing a rather haphazard collection of police-related artefacts at the Force Training Centre in Crewe, which was not open to the public. When this display was closed in 2004 its exhibits were transferred to Warrington so as to create a formal Museum - a registered charity run by volunteers.

Particularly remarkable is the range of materials assembled. Documents include not only crime records, photographs and newspaper cuttings but also letters, 'Wanted' posters and forged bank notes. For instance, a pre-First World War notice displayed in the local trams - 'DO NOT SPIT: fine £2 (£5 for a repeat offence)' - stressed the importance of the campaign to prevent the spread of TB. On the one hand, there are exhibits of murder weapons (including various gentlemen's walking sticks with blades hidden inside), on the other hand, nineteenth-century police pistols and truncheons, and post-war constables' uniforms. The evolution of policing can be traced from an original Victorian police cell to a 1960s CID office and a 1980s police car. There is a wealth of memorabilia: coats of arms of the various independent police forces, medals, personal memoirs and scrapbooks plus an online catalogue and family history section. It is a credit to the curator and his team that so many facets of law and order in rural and urban Cheshire over the last 150 years has been preserved, researched, and thoughtfully displayed.

On the five minute walk from the Police Museum to the Cairo Street chapel we were able to pause and admire the resplendent Golden Gates which guard the entrance to the park surrounding Warrington's Palladian gem, built in 1750 as a private mansion for the Patten family. It is a grade I listed building that Warrington Borough was fortunate enough to acquire as its Town Hall in the nineteenth century. It is well worth a detour, but we had no time to visit it.

On arriving at the chapel we were greeted warmly by Revd. Lynne Readett, Minister both of the Cairo Street and of the Unitarian chapel in Wigan. She was keen to point out the blue plaque on the wall outside which you can easily miss as you walk up Cairo Street. It commemorates the chapel's most famous minister, Philip Pearsall Carpenter (1819-1877), who campaigned tirelessly to improve public sanitation in the town and founded the Industrial School at Cairo Street to give orphan boys the chance to learn a trade. Active in temperance and anti-slavery movements, he emigrated to Canada in 1865 where he continued his public health campaigns until he sadly succumbed to typhoid. Interestingly, he is equally famed as a conchologist. In 1855 he bought a vast collection of unsorted shells and spent the rest of his life describing and classifying them, publishing his results in learned journals, and donating his complete collections to public institutions here and in North America.

We were able to picnic alfresco in the welcome sunshine or shade of the chapel grounds (one of our number had had the foresight to bring a sunhat), with tea and cake kindly provided by Lynne. At the far end of the grounds is the graveyard where the Gaskells figure prominently. The main surprise is that 'darling Willie' is buried in a vaulted tomb the size of a family grave. It lies next to that of William Gaskell senior and his wife Margaret, who died in 1819 and 1850 respectively. Inside the chapel Lynne gave us a brief survey of the origins and development of this sizeable building, remarkably light and well furnished, which in 1745 replaced a smaller dissenting chapel constructed only 40 years previously. Cairo Street (formerly Sankey Street) chapel was extensively repaired and re-aligned in the 1860s when the gallery was removed and the pulpit placed at the front. Famous past members of the Cairo Street congregation include Joseph Priestley, Anna Letitia Barbauld, and the industrialist Frederick Monks, owner of the town's prominent wire-works who presented the Golden Gates to the Borough. (Until very recently Warrington Rugby club was known as the Wires.)

When asked how a present-day congregation of 16 could maintain the building in such a good state of repair, Lynne explained that the recent refurbishment of the organ, vestibules and Victorian woodwork was financed largely by endowments and legacies. In the future, sale of the two adjoining properties, the Sunday School and the Industrial School - both now dilapidated - would enable the chapel to continue in existence. Next on the list for refurbishment are the wrought-iron entrance gates to the chapel burial ground which came from the house lived in by Joseph Priestley at Academy Place. Lynne reminded us that the chapel is open to the public during National Heritage Weekend, on the Sunday afternoon of which there is an Academy Service and Lecture - this year the subject was the life and work of Pearsall Carpenter.

And so to our last port of call, the Museum & Art Gallery, sited a couple of minutes' walk away past the Georgian buildings of Palmyra Square, in Warrington's Cultural Quarter. The Museum, the oldest public museum in the North-West, is located above the Central Library, the first rate-supported public library in the country (1848) which moved to these larger, well-preserved premises in Museum Street in 1857.

Our enthusiastic and knowledgeable young guide Francis took us on a detailed tour which comprised an Ethnology gallery (complete with dinosaur and Egyptian mummy) whose objects had been kept in their 1930s display cases, the Roman room (with the rare Actor's mask), as well as two refurbished galleries and the new WREN Gallery for Contemporary Art and Crafts which have only recently opened. The 'Window on Warrington' led us through Medieval Warrington and its Friary, the arrival of Cromwell during the Civil War, and the 18th Century town as seen in Donbavand's painting of 1772 and in a model of the Warrington Academy. (The original 600-tonne Academy building was moved on 'floatpads' up Bridge Street in 1981 as part of a road-widening scheme, converted into a commercial property and subsequently extended.) The historical survey of Warrington culminated in the

section devoted to the town's diverse industrial heritage: glass making, pin making and tanning followed by wire working, chemicals and brewing, with an emphasis on the everyday lives of the workers involved. At the end we were free to explore the new Art Gallery which has a permanent collection of mainly Victorian and early twentieth century paintings together with a space to showcase the work of local artists.

Whether you were familiar or unfamiliar with Warrington it was a fascinating day out. We are indebted to Janet Kennerley for organising it.

GASKELL 20 QUESTIONS QUIZ: THE ANSWERS

1. What was the address of Elizabeth Stevenson's London birthplace?
   Old Lindsey Row, Chelsea

2. In which month and year did she die?
   November 1865

3. What was the second name of ECG's daughter, Julia?
   Bradford

4. Who was the music teacher to the Gaskell family at Plymouth Grove?
   Charles Hallé; and also Henry Burnett (brother-in-law of Charles Dickens)

5. Name 4 other names which appear with ECG in the window of Poets' Corner.
   Fanny Burney, Robert Herrick, A E Housman, Christopher Marlowe (Oscar Wilde also makes an appearance)

6. What was the cause of death of ECG's son, William?
   Scarlet fever

7. Which of ECG's novels finishes with these words - "That woman!"?
   North and South

8. In "North & South", where is Captain Lennox's regiment stationed?
   Corfu

9. What was the name of Aunt Lumb's daughter?
   Marianne

10. Which continental city is featured in "Dark Night's Work"?
    Rome

11. Which publication was Mr Davis reading in "The Squire's Story"?

Gentleman's Magazine

12. Which word did ECG use to describe the drains at Plymouth Grove?

Pestilential

13. By what name did William Gaskell call his wife?

Lily

14. Where was ECG when she wished she had a book to write instead of just a letter?

Chatsworth

15. What did Lizzie Leigh want her baby to be called?

Anne

16. Which ECG novel has a link with Winchester?

Sylvia's Lovers

17. Name 3 doctors who appear in ECG's fiction.

Messrs Gibson, Donaldson, Morgan & Harrison
(That adds up to 4 by my reckoning. Ed.)

18. Which surname does ECG use in both "Wives and Daughters" and "The Half Brothers"?

Preston

19. Which short story by ECG begins with this line - "Mr & Mrs Openshaw came from Manchester to settle in London."?

The Manchester Marriage

20. Which ECG biographer has recently become the President of The Alliance of Literary Societies?

Jenny Uglow

Our very sincere thanks to Janet Kennerley who prepared this quiz for our New Year lunch held at Cottons near Knutsford on 12 January 2011. More thanks are now due to Janet for supplying the answers.The Editor recommends that any member who failed to gain 100% in this quiz should immediately re-read the complete works of ECG.

Greenheys Opening Event

Helen Smith

On Mrs. Gaskell's 201st birthday (29 September 2011, should any member have forgotten) Mosscare Group arranged an opening event for the Greenheys Scheme, a new housing development in Moss Side, Manchester. Gaskell Society committee members were invited to and welcomed at this happy occasion.

The sun shone on the old redbrick terraces and on the new, asymmetrically shaped, stylish terraces built in different shades of new brick, with interesting railings and colourful panels. After a delicious buffet lunch in the garden at Cardinal Court and speech of welcome from the Chief Executive of Mosscare Group, Rob Ferguson, we all strolled from Moss Lane East to the new development at Elizabeth Gaskell Square.

Dressed in Victorian garb (which included Mrs. Gaskell's shawl), Delia Corrie read the moving paragraphs from the opening of Mary Barton:

"There are some fields near Manchester, well known to the inhabitants as 'Green Heys Fields,' through which runs a public footpath to a little village about two miles distant ……there runs a tale that primroses may often be found, and occasionally the blue sweet violet on the grassy hedge bank."

Sarah Prince now owner (or guardian) of the shawl which had belonged to her great-great-great-grannie Gaskell, gave a brief speech contrasting the opening lines of the novel with how things are now. Before an audience of various colours and creeds, many of whom are now residing in the new houses, Sarah unveiled a grey plaque commemorating Mrs. Gaskell. A flurry of cameras, presentations of bouquets in dazzling sunshine… and it was all over.

Long may they live
Happy may they be
Blest with content,
And from misfortune free.

This charming verse known to ECG from childhood and still used in the sanding ceremonies in Knutsford, echoes our wishes for the residents of Moss Side as redevelopment and refurbishment continue in the area.

Book Notes

Christine Lingard

The following new books will be reviewed in detail in a future issue of the *Gaskell Society Journal*:

Oxford history of the novel in English, vol. 3: The nineteenth century novel, 1820 - 1880, edited by John Kucich and Jenny Bourne, Oxford University Press.

Giving Women: alliance and exchange in Victorian culture, by Jill Rappoport. Oxford University Press, discusses the effects of altruism and acts of charity of Victorian authors such as Gaskell, Browning and Rossetti.

Split subject of narration in Elizabeth Gaskell's first person fiction by Anna Koustinoudi. Lexington Books. Anna is from Greece. You may remember her at the Manchester Conference.

Two volumes from the series - Studies in nineteenth-century: literature and culture, edited by Gillian Beer, Cambridge University Press:

Shock, memory and the unconscious in Victorian fiction, by Jill Matus which includes a chapter: Dream and trance: Gaskell's *North and South* as a "condition-of-consciousness" novel.

and

Tuberculosis and the Victorian imagination by Katherine Byrne, of the University of Ulster which includes a chapter Consuming the family economy: disease and capitalism in Charles Dickens's *Dombey and Son* and Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South.*

The 'invisible hand' and British Fiction, 1818-1860: Adam Smith, political economy, and the genre of realism by Eleanor Courtemanche of the University of Illinois (Palgrave Studies in Nineteenth-Century Writing and Culture) Palgrave Macmillan, which discusses the influence of Smith on George Eliot and Gaskell.

Also

The text of a dramatization of *Cranford* by Campbell Kay has been published by Phoenix Press in association with Nottingham Arts Theatre. This play was produced at the theatre in 2009 and is not the version that toured to Crewe and Buxton in 2010 and 2011,

Interest in Gaskell still continues in Europe. Recent translations include:

In Germany: Cranford - translated by Johanna Ellsworth, Gebundene Ausgabe published by Von Nikol Verlag.

In Spain: La casa del páramo (with introduction) - a translation of Moorland cottage by Marta Salis, published by Alba, Barcelona.

In Serbia: Veštica Lois - a translation of *Lois the Witch* by Milan Miletić, published by Rad in Belgrade. This is the first translation of Gaskell published in Belgrade since its split from Yugoslavia.

And a number of titles in Hungary:

Phillis - a translation of *Cousin Phillis* by Miklós Molnár *and*

Édesek és mostohák - a translation of *Wives and Daughters* by Ginda Leyrer, both published by Lazi in Szeged, the third city of Hungary, where Lajos Kossuth the nineteenth century patriot who impressed Gaskell on his visit to Manchester in 1851 began his campaign; *and:*

Észak és Dél - a translation of *North and South* by Zsuzsa Rakovszky published by Artemisz in Sopron near the Austrian border.

Editor adds: Fallen Angel by member and author George Hauton - Charlotte makes a return to Haworth: fiction, fantasy and fact.

The Gaskells' House Report

Janet Allan

An exciting few months lie ahead of us. Our major bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund is due to be submitted at the beginning of March and we have already raised a creditable £360,000 in match funding - with another £90,000, we hope, in the pipeline. If we get the grant, work should start by the end of the year.

The garden is greatly improved, thanks to many volunteers aged 7 to 80, from near and far, including Ardwick, Manchester and America. The daffodils which we planted in front of the house are now poking their tips through the earth, and with forget-me-nots and wallflowers will make a goodly show.

We look forward to seeing you at the events in the house.

Besides the usual first Sunday in the month openings from 12 - 4, these are:

Sunday, 26 February 11am. - 4pm. Manchester Histories Festival special open day £1 admission.

Saturday, 24 March 10.30am. - 3.30pm. Dickens Study Day. To celebrate Dickens's bicentenary, in partnership with the Dickens Fellowship, we have three talks: Alan Shelston on Dickens in the North-West; Elizabeth Williams on Gaskell and Dickens; and Veronica Walker on Dickens's children. Coffee, tea and an excellent lunch will be provided. Cost for the whole day, £20. Please book in advance. Tickets £20 from Hilda Holmes, 8 Peter Street, Hazel Grove, SK7 4BQ. Please send sae.

Saturday, 31 March 2pm. The AGM of the Manchester Historic Buildings Trust, owners of the house. All subscribing Friends are entitled to come, and to vote. We will be able to update you on our latest news.

Saturday, 5 May 2pm. The Moorland Cottage. A costumed reading of Robin Allan's adaptation of the Gaskell short story, performed by Delia Corrie, Charles Foster and four drama students from the School of Theatre at Manchester

Metropolitan University. Tickets, including tea and cakes, £10 from Hilda Holmes, 8 Peter Street, Hazel Grove, SK7 4BQ. Please send sae.

Sunday, 27 May 6 for 6.30pm. A string trio from the Hallé. We are delighted to have three very distinguished players to perform in the room where Charles Hallé taught the Gaskell Daughters. Gina McCormack, violin (member of the Fibonacci Sequence), Catherine Yates, viola (Section Leader of the second violins of the Hallé) and Nicholas Trygstad, (Principal Cello in the Hallé.) More details of their programme later. Tickets, including canapés and a complimentary glass of wine £10 from Hilda Holmes, 8 Peter Street, Hazel Grove, SK7 4BQ. Please send sae.

As usual we are very grateful to the Friends and volunteers because without you, nothing would have been possible.

Alliance of Literary Societies

The ALS AGM 2012 will be hosted by The Dickens Fellowship in Nottingham on 12 May.

Forthcoming Events

Annual General Meeting

Saturday, 14 April 2012, 10.30am.
Cross Street Unitarian Church, Manchester

Suzanne Fageance Cooper, author of The Model Wife: Effie, Ruskin and Millais, will deliver the Daphne Garrick Lecture. More details to follow

The Gaskell Society South-West

Saturday, 25 February 2012, 2.15pm.
Discussion group at Elizabeth Schlenther's, 14 Vellore Lane, Bath, BA2 6JQ, on Sylvia's Lovers (Tel: 01225 331763) £3 per person. Tea and coffee to be provided.

Saturday, 24 March 2012, 2.15pm.
Continuing our discussion group on *Sylvia's Lovers* at Bren Abercrombie's, 12 Mount Road, Lansdown, Bath, BA1 5PW (Tel: 01225 471241) £3 per person. Tea and coffee to be provided.

Saturday, 21 April 2012, 2.30pm.
At the BRLSI, Queen Square, Bath, we will have an illustrated talk by Robin Allan: *Every Story Needs a Picture*.

The nineteenth century was the golden age of the illustrated novel, and this talk will examine the artists' work in famous novels by Dickens and others, including George Cruikshank, Gustave Doré and George du Maurier and Birket Foster, both of whom illustrated Elizabeth Gaskell. Members are invited to bring their own illustrated volumes to display.

£2 to members of the BRLSI and the Gaskell Society South-West; £4 to all others. Refreshments will be available at an additional cost of £1.

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

London and South-East Group

Saturday, 11 February 2012
Science Liberality and Good Taste: The Manchester Botanic Garden and its founders.

Dr Ann Brooks who was so illuminating last year about the plans for the garden at Plymouth Grove is kindly coming again to share her prodigious knowledge about Manchester in Gaskell's time, to discuss Unitarianism in the city which was connected with the Botanic garden and she may add something about the Manchester Art Treasures exhibition of 1857 which Gaskell visited. Something for everyone here!

Saturday, 12 May 2012
Domestic Arts in Mary Barton *and* North and South

Alison Lundie, a founding member of the London Gaskell Reading group, who is currently studying for a Ph.D. at Roehampton is coming to enlighten us about the domestic arts in Gaskell's work, the subject of her thesis. Her talk will focus on shawls and needlewomen in Mary Barton and North and South especially.

The topic of objects in Victorian fiction and the whole idea of the domestic arts is the current line of literary research so we are very fortunate in being kept up to date with these academic themes and trends by having Alison this year.

On a Saturday tba in October 2012

Elizabeth Williams : Mrs. Gaskell and gossip.

Domestic Arrangements

The meetings will take place at Francis Holland School, Graham Terrace SW1 (2 minutes' walk from Sloane Square tube station (District and Circle Lines) and a 10 minutes' walk from Victoria).

The North-West Group

Knutsford meetings are held in St. John's Church Rooms on the last Wednesday of the month. Buffet lunch available (£8) from 12.15pm.

29 February 2012
My Lady Ludlow

28 March 2012
Elizabeth Williams will continue work on *My Lady Ludlow*

25 April 2012
More Lady Ludlow if required, or a short story, if time permits

Manchester Meetings:
to be held at Cross Street Chapel on the 1st Tuesday of the month from October to March, excluding January. Lecture at 1pm.

7 February 2012
Revd. Alex Bradley: The Crisis of Faith in the 19th century

6 March 2012
Professor Richard Pearson: William Makepeace Thackeray

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

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs. Helen Smith, 11 Lowland Way, Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 9AG.
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The Gaskell Society

Tabley Old Hall
by Sir Richard Colt Hoare

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2012 - Number 54

Editor's Letter

Helen Smith

STOP PRESS NEWS see page 40

A very warm welcome to Shirley Foster, our new President, elected at the AGM in April. Shirley has been an active member of the Society for many years and we are delighted to inaugurate her as our very first Madam President.

On the same day we had to bid a fond farewell to Alan Shelston as he passed the reins to Shirley. However we hope that, now released from presidential duties, Alan will be able to devote more time to research and to writing for the Newsletter. Thank you, Alan, for all you have done over the years for the Society.

Welcome also to the four new members of the committee and sincere thanks to the four members who have retired from the committee.

9 UK members will be linking up with 11 American members across the pond to explore some literary sites in the Massachusetts area, 12-19 September. (Mrs Gaskell herself cherished a notion of visiting the United States but did not live to achieve this.) Connections with Charles Dickens and Charles Eliot Norton will be traced in the Boston area. One of our American members, Nancy Weyant, is working hard to organise this study tour. A report of the transatlantic trip will appear in the next Newsletter.

Closer to home, on an early summer's day, Jean Alston led an amazing outing to Derbyshire and Jean has herself submitted a full report for this Newsletter.

We are sorry to have lost dear Mary Syner, a real stalwart of the Society and the very soul of discretion. (Without her help, advice and encouragement, I should never have embarked on the editorship of the Newsletter. She also came to my rescue on occasions when I managed to get lost at conferences.)

Very long-standing members John and Doreen Pleydell celebrated their Platinum (yes, that is 70th!) Wedding Anniversary in April of this year. When I called to see them just before the event, John was caught in the act of reading *My Lady Ludlow* on his Kindle. Our warmest congratulations and our best wishes for good health to the very happy couple.

On a very positive note, the hard toil of Janet Allan MBE and her team has finally been rewarded. We look forward to the restoration of the Gaskell House in the now not so distant future.

Reminders for 2013:

AGM 13 April and Conference 19-22 July

The conference sub-committee is already hard at work to achieve the high standards we have come to expect at our biennial conferences.

And now the 150th anniversary of the death of ECG is fast approaching. Does anyone have any ideas for celebrations?

Please remember not to forget to write for the Newsletter. The subject must be strictly Gaskellian in nature. I look forward to receiving articles, short or long, by e-mail, snail mail or by airmail and "even the typed and the printed and the spelt all wrong". Deadline for the next Newsletter is 31 January 2013.

To all who have written for this Newsletter and to W H Auden, I give heartfelt thanks. Our appreciation and thanks go to Rebecca Stuart of Lithotech Print in Knutsford for the finished product.

Presidential Address

Dr Shirley Foster

It is a great honour to be invited to become President of the Gaskell Society, following on, moreover, from such illustrious predecessors. Mrs Gaskell herself never presided over the charitable organisations with which she was involved, that role being reserved for men, but she was something of a committee woman, and certainly managed to organise herself and her daughters in the running of home and local affairs (most notable, perhaps, is her engagement with the relief work during the Cotton Famine and Distress in Lancashire, caused by the American Civil War). Ordering the diverse strands of her life showed what might be called today her administrative flair.

I have no intention of trying to organise the Gaskell Society, nor to chivvy its members into doing charity work, literary or otherwise. Having the sort of fun that Mrs Gaskell always so enjoyed (convivial gatherings, interesting discussions, and good eating) is, after all, one of our main purposes. But I recognise the huge effort that the committee puts into making such things happen and run so smoothly, especially since Joan's death, and I shall do my best to support and promote their admirable labours. I would also urge all members to consider offering their talents to help us continue to sail along so well. We are now deeply into the new electronic age, and our Society, too, is involved in this revolution, with our website, e-mail communications, and the likelihood of our *Journal* going online at a future date. All this will widen our influence in the literary and academic arenas, and will, we hope, bring in more members to carry on Gaskell scholarship and enthusiasm for her writings.

So it is an especially exciting time for me to be President, and I look forward to a bright future for us all, even in this period of unpredictability for the humanities and

literary societies in general. Let's all raise a glass to Mrs Gaskell (who **did** drink, despite her horror at smelling like a public house in front of the very proper Charles Bosanquet, after she had taken rum and peppermint for a headache), and hope for many more years of celebrating Mrs Gaskell and her work.

NB Cri de coeur from Madam Editor: Delighted as we are with our new President, we are however still seeking a Minutes Secretary and a Treasurer. Do not be afraid and hide your talents. Please contact any member of the committee if you are able to help. **YOUR SOCIETY NEEDS YOU.**

An Appreciation of Alan, now Former President, Shelston

Elizabeth Williams

Alan Shelston, who stood down as President of the Society at the last AGM, served us in that capacity for seven years. But his connection with the Society goes back much further than that and his interests are wide.

As a boy in London, he attended Latymer Upper School in Hammersmith. This was followed by national service as an officer in the RAF, a post which apparently involved counting pigs in Norfolk. He later went to King's College, London, where he took a first in English and then produced a Master's thesis on Mrs Gaskell.

Alan came north in 1966 when he gained a position at Manchester University, where he remained until his retirement as a senior lecturer in 2002. The year 1985/86 was spent teaching at the University of Missouri, which he thoroughly enjoyed. American students are apparently much more willing than British ones to ask questions, and his enthusiasm about this reveals a man who genuinely enjoys interaction with students. When he came back to Britain in 1986, he was met by a reception committee consisting of Joan, Arthur Pollard and John Geoffrey Sharps, asking him to start a Journal for the Gaskell Society. We all know that it was not easy to say no to Joan, and Arthur Pollard was apparently an even more forceful personality. The first number of the Journal, edited by Alan, appeared the following year - the first of eleven issues which he was to edit. It says much about him that he still feels indebted to that group of people who got him involved, as well as to John Chapple, his predecessor as President, with whom he edited *Further Letters of Mrs Gaskell.*

Other publications include editing works by Gaskell, Dickens, Henry James, Hardy and Carlyle, as well as writing *The Industrial City 1820-70* jointly with his wife Dorothy, and producing *Biography* as part of the Methuen Critical Idiom series. In 2010, to mark Elizabeth Gaskell's bicentenary, Hesperus Press brought out *Brief Lives: Elizabeth Gaskell* written by Alan. He is an Honorary Fellow of the John Rylands University Library and an Honorary Professor at the Victorian and Edwardian Research Centre at the University of Chieti-Pescara in Italy. He has

lectured in Italy and Japan as well as giving talks to a variety of groups in the Gaskell Society and beyond, within the UK.

And there are other activities. He and Dorothy have three sons and four grandsons, so can be relied upon for tips on entertaining small boys. He paints, and the results are impressive. Although not a church-goer, he enjoys hymns. He says that he learned about his understanding of poetry from his exposure when young to the language and structures of hymns, something that many modern students lack. He has a splendid collection of books, and is interested in illustration, on which he has given talks. He is an active member of the Portico Library. He never stops researching, as is evidenced by the number of papers he continues to publish, and he was recently in London to investigate the poetry of Elizabeth Holland, Elizabeth Gaskell's sister-in-law.*

He says that he has gained a great deal from his involvement with the Society, and feels that literary societies make a tremendously important contribution to the study of literature, attracting the true enthusiasts, academic and non-academic, each of whom can learn from the other. We have certainly been fortunate in his continuing willingness to be involved. I am sure that I speak for us all, when I thank him wholeheartedly for all that he has done for us.

* The fruits of this research can be read on page 17

Mary Syner: a personal tribute

Alan Shelston

Mary Syner, who has died after a long illness, was a colleague and friend of mine in the English Department at Manchester University and then, again as colleague and friend, in the Gaskell Society. Mary was a senior secretary at the university; she also had a BA and an MA, in Mediæval History, which she had acquired, also at Manchester, as a mature student in the History Department. Extremely efficient as an administrator, she always kept up her academic interests, and this she was able to continue when she became involved with the Gaskell Society. At the university she handled the students with wisdom and with skill, as indeed she did the staff, often a more difficult proposition; to me in particular her help became invaluable.

She was instrumental from the start in the preparation of the Gaskell Society Journal; last Christmas she wrote to me: 'I have lots of good memories too [she was by then very ill]; I often wonder how we managed to create the early Journals on a typewriter!' Well, she was her own answer to that one.

Editing for her was not simply a matter of tidying up the punctuation; with the acuteness that was the result of her historical training she would suggest developments and sometimes deletions to my wider flights of editorial fancy. Mary was quietly and clearly incisive in her judgment of people as well as ideas, not always a common quality in universities, then or now, and she was a very human person to work with.

We both retired from the university in the early years of this century. Mary stayed on with Professor Donald Scragg, to work on an AHRC funded research project in the field of Anglo-Saxon language. In that respect her interests went back in time rather than forward: she never lost her love of the early period. At the same time she found she could devote more time to the Society, by involving herself, in particular, in the organisation of its biennial conferences, where she became invaluable. When she knew that she was suffering from a serious illness she moved to the South of England, first to a house of her own and then to live with her son Christopher and his family. Never nervous of technical novelty, she used a Kindle to replace the books whose pages she found difficult to manipulate and, as she once explained, for the pleasure she got from reading to her grandchildren.

Three generations of Mary's family gathered with friends and colleagues at Mary's funeral at Redditch, once her home town. The chapel where the service was conducted surprised those who had not seen it before in that it was bathed in light coming from a huge framed plain glass window at what Philip Larkin calls 'the holy end'. Through the panes of this window on a clear day in early spring we could see the outline of the distant hills beyond. It was difficult to grieve in such surroundings, easier to remember and give thanks.

Mary Syner was a modest and a truly remarkable person, and her qualities were an influence on all who knew her.

Life before the Gaskell Society

Doreen Pleydell

The Gaskell Society was founded in 1985, but before that time there had been great interest in Mrs Gaskell's life and work. In 1960, the 150th anniversary of Elizabeth's birth, a ball was held in the Assembly Rooms at the Royal George, together with performances of *Lois the Witch* at the Little Theatre and an exhibition of Gaskell memorabilia in the Unitarian Chapel Schoolroom.

At that time, there was a Knutsford Society which later became the Knutsford Civic Society. A small committee grew from that - we met in Aunt Lumb's house in Gaskell Avenue. Our task was to arrange various events connected to Mrs Gaskell - we went to Townley Hall near Burnley for instance, and to Rufford Old Hall in Lancs. But the main event was an annual lunch held at the Angel Hotel at, or near, Mrs Gaskell's birthday. This was a dressy affair - hats were worn!

As nowadays, speakers were invited: one year Brian Redhead, the broadcaster, came (What happened to *The Manchester Guardian* was his theme). On another occasion we invited the Editor of Cheshire Life.

We were particularly keen to have Olive Shapley, the Editor of Woman's Hour. On the radio she sounded an attractive person and a good speaker. Accordingly our secretary, Elsie Graver, wrote to ask if she would be willing to come. Olive Shapley replied that she would be delighted and that her fee would be £20. In those days £20 was a vast sum, far more than our committee could afford. Elsie Graver wrote back explaining this, adding that "As you know, the ladies of Cranford have to practise 'Elegant Economy'" so regretfully, we should have to cancel our invitation. Olive Shapley was so amused by this that she was willing to reduce her fee to £5, the talk was given: satisfaction all round!

The Gaskell Society as it is today, was started in 1985 and at first took very tentative steps towards becoming today's very successful organisation.

A committee was formed of which I was a member. My job was to act as hostess for the committee meetings, as our house on Ladies' Mile was deemed the most suitable venue...

Editor adds: Doreen claims that her memory of those early days is now rather shaky and that she does not think chronologically. She has given me permission to finish off this article.

Well, many early notables spring to mind: some intimidating, some reverential, some boring, some adoring, but all united in their worship of Elizabeth Gaskell. Today we remember these very active early founders with respect and great affection.

On a very wet July afternoon, I called to pick up Doreen's article and had tea chez Doreen and John. Doreen enquired about the set book for next session (they had been on their Platinum Honeymoon in Shropshire and had missed the last meeting in April). When informed that it was *Ruth*, Doreen revealed that she had reached the stage in life when she doesn't enjoy doom and gloom any more. However she would take *Cranford* to her Desert Island. (That should bring some light relief to Doreen after The Bible and the complete works of Shakespeare.)

'That unfrequented stone hall': Elizabeth Gaskell and Tabley Old Hall

Sarah Webb

Among the many delights of her Cheshire youth Elizabeth Gaskell looked back fondly on visits to Tabley Old Hall, just outside Knutsford. Tabley Old Hall was the original home of a local gentry family, the Leicesters of Tabley, and was situated on a picturesque moated island site with a backdrop of ancient oaks and a chapel nestling in its shadow. It was abandoned by the Leicesters in 1767 for their new Palladian mansion, Tabley House. In contrast to its 'plain, substantial' replacement, the Old Hall always charmed and delighted its guests. Although it is likely that she visited its grander usurper, Elizabeth Gaskell preferred to leave an account of the Old Hall, rather than Tabley House, revealing its enduring powers of attraction.

Her brief memoir is reproduced in Joan Leach's revised *Knutsford and Elizabeth Gaskell:*

> Near the little, clean, kindly country town, where as I said before I was brought up, there was an old house with moat within a park called Old Tabley, formerly the dwelling place of Sir Peter Leycester, the historian of Cheshire, and accounted a fine specimen of the Elizabethan style.... Here, on summer evenings did we often come, a merry young party, on donkey, pony or even in a cart with sacks swung across - each with our favourite book, some with sketch books, and one or two baskets filled with eatables. Here we rambled, lounged and meditated; some stretched on the grass in indolent repose, half reading, half musing, with a posy of musk roses from the old-fashioned trim garden behind the house, lulled by the ripple of the waters against the grassy lawn, some in the old crazy boats, that would do nothing but float on the glassy water, singing, for one or two were of a most musical family and warbled like birds, 'Through the Greenwood' or 'A Boat, A Boat unto the Ferry' or some such old catch or glee. And when the meal was spread beneath a beech tree of no ordinary size (did you ever notice the peculiar turf under beech shade?), one of us would mount up a ladder to the belfry of the old chapel and toll the bell to call the wanderers home. Then, if it rained, what merrymaking in the old hall! It was galleried, with oak settles and old armours hung up, and a painted window from ceiling to floor. The strange sound our voices had in that unfrequented stone hall! (Leach p.4-6)

This account was utilised in *Mr Harrison's Confession* (1851) and there was, as Esther Chadwick suggested in *Mrs Gaskell Haunts, Homes, and Stories,* something of Tabley Old Hall in the creation of Hamley Hall in *Wives and Daughters*.

Since 1927 Tabley Old Hall, undermined by the local brine pumping industry, has slowly collapsed. The Leicester Warrens (as they had become) rescued as much as possible and left the building to be colonised by the elements. Now the only substantial part that remains is the twisted and broken brick façade, hidden by ivy and just about kept upright by the aid of wooden props until it finally gives way. Elizabeth Gaskell's joyful account of her visit seems to awaken what is left of the Hall from its slumbers and help it rise, however momentarily, from its decay.

Tabley Old Hall, or more properly, Nether Tabley Old Hall was, as Mrs Gaskell wrote, 'an old house' the ancestral home of the Leicesters from the fourteenth century. Unlike the Hamleys, the Leicesters of Tabley, being merely Norman in origin, could not trace their ancestors back to the Heptarchy. John Leycester (d.1398) built the original timber-framed hall but it was the Cheshire historian Sir Peter Leicester (1614-1678) who improved it so sensitively creating the beautiful house so admired by visitors. For a man so attached to the authenticity of historical records the house he produced was built to deceive the eye. His symmetrical E-shaped east front seemed to have three stories. In reality there was only a ground and first floor and the circular windows above looked into the rafters. Visitors only had to wander round to the back of the Old Hall to find a very different looking building – no battlements and three jutting wings overlooking a garden.

Sir Peter had built his private chapel partly so that he would never have to listen to nonconformist preachers again as he had had to during the Commonwealth. As in his old chapel at Brasenose College, Oxford, (the model for this one), worshippers were seated by sex (men on the south and women on the north); and there was a pre-Reformation statue of St Peter. The tower and spire were added by Sir Peter's grandson, Sir Francis Leicester, and it was only because of the latter that the Old Hall was still in existence and Elizabeth Stevenson was able to see it. With only one surviving daughter, Sir Francis was anxious for the future of his Tabley estate. When he died in 1742 his will, later confirmed by the Court of Chancery, directed that the Old Hall always had to be kept in good order, and if an heir neglected this requirement they forfeited the entire estate.

In the Regency period the Old Hall was in the care of Sir Francis's great-grandson Sir John Leicester. Sir John must have given a general permission to Dr Holland, Elizabeth Gaskell's uncle, to enjoy the Old Hall whenever he, or his friends and relations, liked. The unfrequented Hall seems not to have been of much interest to Sir John who was busy attending King George IV, directing the Cheshire Yeomanry and creating his own collection of modern British art. This was in contrast to the mid-Victorian period when the Old Hall was more widely known and locals, ramblers and those coming by train, wished to see it in increasing numbers. By the Edwardian period the then owner Eleanor, Lady Leighton Warren fought assiduously against

day trippers and succeeded in reducing them to single figures. Although Mrs Gaskell's account recorded the Old Hall before the heritage tourists, they were moved and interested by the same things as she was.

The Gaskell description intrigues because it implies that the Old Hall was entirely unoccupied. Other later accounts recorded that retired Tabley servants were lodged there and acted as guides; some were garrulous entertainers and others let visitors roam at will. In exchange for shelter and a little dole, these occupants kept the Hall secure, rooms tidy and free from dirt and vermin, lit fires to keep damp at bay and threw open windows and let the air circulate. Perhaps while some of the Holland party sang 'Hark, hark the lark at Heaven's gate sings' and 'Blow, blow thou winter wind' from the gallery delighted aged retainers listened from the shadows. In *Mr Harrison's Confession* the farmer and his wife seemed to act the part of custodians and hosts for the Duncombe party.

How the party got over to the island is itself curious. The illustration* by Sir Richard Colt Hoare shows an impressive stone bridge but this was removed by a later generation (possibly Sir John or his son) and its fabric used to build a new boathouse. What had replaced it by the end of the nineteenth century was a wooden bridge. From the bridge (of whatever material) a path of flags followed the edge of the island, over the neatly clipped lawn, and then turned at right angles to give a dignified approach to the entrance porch.

On either side of the porch stood ionic columns, lions sat on their tops, and at the apex of the arch was the Leicesters' shield. The stone flags continued into the screens passage, cold beneath their feet, and the light changed as someone closed the 'battlemented front door ... a thing of beauty which the artist or the lover of the picturesque must contemplate with delight' (Newns p4). On the right-hand wall were 'dagger or spear marks in the plaster' but their history was hard to decipher. 'Various theories have been advanced to account for the marks; one of them is that they were made by bolts from crossbows shot across the lake.' Or perhaps they were 'signs of an attack by Parliamentarians during the Civil War' (Newns p4).

Light came into the passage from the left through the two arches into the Great Hall but the visitors had several choices of how to explore. At the end of the screens passage was a room that looked over the garden. On the right-hand side of the passage were three doors – probably the doors leading to what had been the ancient kitchens. The first (nearest the porch) led into a pretty sitting-room, the second on to a staircase and the third into the kitchen. The draw, as Mrs Gaskell indicated, was the Great Hall.

The stone flags, set diamond-wise, continued from the passage into the Great Hall. This space was dominated by the great bay window, sometimes called the oriel window. Elizabeth Gaskell's slight exaggeration that it was a 'painted window from ceiling to floor' reveals its magnificence as it was 'emblazoned [with] the Leycester pedigree in stained glass' (Newns p.5). In addition there were portraits of English

**The illustration is reproduced on the cover of this newsletter.*

monarchs, an older slightly cruder set and a more sophisticated group paid for by Sir Francis Leicester in the 1730s. Then there were panels of glass engraved by family members or visitors over time. One poignant message was engraved by Sir Francis's daughter Meriel in the 1720s on her first marriage: 'Tabley I must leave with grief'. Alas, there is no evidence that Elizabeth Stevenson was allowed to engrave her name on a pane there. The Great Hall rose to forty feet in height, a 'lanthorn' hung from its apex, and it was panelled in oak probably grown on the estate. The 'old armours hung up' were certainly from the Civil War when the Leicesters had been for King Charles I. Sir Peter Leicester 'came under the Parliamentary vengeance he was imprisoned, but eventually allowed to compound for the Tabley Estates for the sum of £778 18s. 4d.' (Newns p13).

One of Mrs Gaskell's omissions was the exuberant and still brightly painted Jacobean fireplace, almost opposite the large window. Mr Harrison noted 'the glorious wood fire in the wide old grate ... and a huge black kettle stand on the glowing fire' (Gaskell 1995 p209). It celebrated the marriage of Sir Peter Leicester's parents although it was created a few years after the event in 1619. There is a great armorial centrepiece with the arms of the Leicesters combined with those of the Mainwarings of Peover, but this is overshadowed by wooden statues of Lucretia stabbing herself and Cleopatra pressing asps to her breasts. Beneath their feet huntsmen chase large hares across the fireplace while Adam and Eve, as terms, support the whole edifice. The frieze at the top has a mermaid, merman and a child with an hourglass interpreted as 'Truth conquering Corruption and discovered by the light of Learning and Time' (Newns p5) and an owl and dove perched at each corner.

Although Elizabeth Gaskell mentioned the oak settles the whole building contained 'valuable articles of furniture' many of 'which have been there in all probability since the earliest days of the Hall' (Newns p4). When the Leicesters left for Tabley House in 1767 they took the best of the heirlooms with them but abandoned the majority of the antique pieces behind at the Old Hall as they thought them old and outdated. This meant that the Hall resembled a house where time had almost stopped; there was china in the kitchen, chairs to be sat on, beds to be lain in and pictures on the walls. The experience must have been a little disconcerting and rather reminiscent of the dislocated feeling in her short story *Curious, If True.*

Without a housekeeper or cicerone to guide the way, Elizabeth Stevenson was able to explore this house in a way she could not, for example, at nearby Tatton Park, Toft Hall or Peover Hall (the latter two also perhaps inspirations for Hamley Hall). The staircase at the end of Great Hall climbed to the gallery where members of the party sang. The walls of the staircase bulged slightly as it was old and weak and in the late Victorian period would need a brick buttress on the outside to steady it. There were two bedrooms off the gallery (on either side of the Great Hall's chimney stack) and these were quite small. Further on, beyond what was called the minstrel's gallery, was the older wing of the Hall and this contained bedrooms too with those on the west side overlooking the garden.

Although inventories exist from over four centuries, it is quite perplexing to match them to the plans of the Old Hall; rooms changed names and those taking the inventories assumed that people reading them would always know where they had been standing. One bedroom, for example, contained: Jacobean bedstead, velvet top and bottom valance and a velvet bedspread, Elizabethan chair, walnut Queen Anne Bureau, powder stand with a blue and white bowl, walnut dressing table, needlework table, rush light holder, old engravings on the walls and a piece of old Brussels carpet (Tabley Old Hall Inventory 1916 pp19-21). The surviving Tabley inventories are perhaps given life by Elizabeth Gaskell's later description of Molly's room at Hamley Hall:

> All the furniture in the room was as old-fashioned and as well-preserved as it could be. The chintz curtains were Indian calico of the last century — the colours almost washed out, but the stuff itself exquisitely clean. There was a little strip of bedside carpeting, but the wooden flooring, thus liberally displayed, was of finely-grained oak, so firmly joined, plank to plank, that no grain of dust could make its way into the interstices. There were none of the luxuries of modern days; no writing-table, or sofa, or pier-glass (Gaskell 2000 p63).

When Molly opens her window and gazes out, what she sees could almost be what those gazing through the lattice windows of the Old Hall would have seen with Tabley Mere in the background.

> A flower-garden right below; a meadow of ripe grass just beyond, changing colour in long sweeps, as the soft wind blew over it; great old forest-trees a little on one side; and, beyond them again, to be seen only by standing very close to the side of the window-sill, or by putting her head out, if the window was open, the silver shimmer of a mere, about a quarter of a mile off. On the opposite side to the trees and the mere, the look-out was bounded by the old walls and high-peaked roofs of the extensive farm-buildings (Gaskell 2000 p62-63).

The 1918 guide to the Old Hall wrote of the 'old-world herb and flower garden, a real quiet retreat.' Visitors were informed that it was 'the accepted opinion that this garden has been here since the Hall was built' (Newns p7). Richard le Gallienne listed 'Wild Thyme, Star of Bethlehem, Wormwood, Spikenard ... Balm of Gilead, Rue, St James' Wort, Black Helebore, Balm for the Warriror's Wounds, Borage' (Le Gallienne p276) and of course there was also Mrs Gaskell's 'posy of musk roses from the old-fashioned trim garden behind the house'.

In the old wing was a secondary staircase back to the ground floor and the screens passage. The small room at the end of the screens passage contained much of what was left of the Old Hall collection of paintings. There were Hanoverian royal portraits and a *Mediterranean Seascape with Galleys* by Kasper van Eyck, then interpreted as a painting of the Spanish Armada. The other popular painting was a Jacobite contrivance 'for drinking the forbidden toast' to King Charles II while he was in exile. The picture was laid on a table and a glass set down on its centre 'into which glass the distorted features were reflected back in their normal expression

... the object being, for Jacobite squires, to be able to introduce at their banquets a portrait of the King at a time when to possess an ordinary portrait of him might lead to dangerous consequences' (Newns p8).

Although some of the party brought books with them, there were a few books still in the Old Hall for the curious to read, either here or in other rooms. It had once contained two important libraries. The earlier belonged to Sir Peter Leicester and was what he used to research and write his *Historical Antiquities* published in 1673 while the second was that of his grandson Sir Francis a minor local bibliophile. Both collections had been removed to the new Tabley House but one small part of Sir Francis's library, his collection of bound seventeenth century pamphlets, was left behind. They were not recognised as important until the late 1890s, when they were rescued from obscurity and damp and taken to Tabley House. An earlier reader, such as Elizabeth Stevenson, perusing their pages on an indolent summer's day, would have been drawn into the struggles and raging political debates of the seventeenth century and the terrifying religious struggles to be found in *Lois the Witch*. But the draw of 'the old crazy boats ... on the glassy water' was perhaps too much and putting the book down the visitor, casting a glance back at the old red-brick Hall, would be drawn to join those singing on the moat.

For those people intent on adding a further tour to the excellent *Knutsford and Elizabeth Gaskell*, Elizabeth Gaskell and Tabley Old Hall is a more difficult but nonetheless fascinating prospect. After the island was undermined by subsidence in 1927 Mr and Mrs Leicester Warren rescued as much as was salvageable. St Peter's chapel was moved brick by brick and erected by the side of Tabley House, a quite amazing architectural feat. A room was built connecting the Chapel to the House and this was decorated with items rescued from the island – the Chapel rafters, the painted panes of glass and Jacobean fireplace from the Great Hall - and it was called the Old Hall Room. After the University of Manchester acquired the Tabley Estate, in the 1970s, and opened the state rooms of Tabley House to the public the Old Hall Room became its tearoom. Here on summer afternoons come merry parties, young and old, although they no longer arrive by donkey, pony or cart, and lounging over their tea and cakes they can meditate on that lost 'unfrequented stone hall'.

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Editor: The following review is reproduced from The Morning Post, Thursday, September 29, 1910

MRS GASKELL, Haunts, Homes and Stories.

By Mrs Ellis H. Chadwick. Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons.

This being the centenary year of Mrs. Gaskell's birth, an interesting attempt to portray the gracious matronly presence of a very distinguished woman, of what we now call the Mid-Victorian Era, has been made by Mrs. Chadwick to make amends for the regrettable fact that no complete or satisfactory biography can be written, owing to the prohibition privately conveyed to the loving and obedient children.

One who vividly remembers the famous authoress of "Mary Barton" and "Cranford" and who was privileged on one occasion to enter deeply on a subject very near to Mrs. Gaskell's heart and conscience, is very glad of the opportunity to add a contribution to the story of those old days, being entrusted with the unlooked for privilege of reviewing the present book.

The editor and those who possess all the private family records are confronted with the initial difficulty of attempting to convey Mrs. Gaskell's thoughts and opinions by constant reference to the utterances of the people who throng her remarkable fictions. These are, of course, substantially true; Mrs Gaskell never paltered with her own convictions, and was remarkably clear in expressing them. She never would or could have dramatized a Dinah Morris, and captured a generation of readers by evoking an apostle of what George Eliot at that epoch of her life regarded as a creed outworn. But while fully admitting that the utterances of her good people do reflect Mrs Gaskell's own thorough goodness, it is disconcerting to find such fine sentences protected by inverted commas, and the image of another speaker confusing the memory of the author's gracious self. This is but the statement of an inevitable result.

Elizabeth Stevenson was born and bred up amidst Puritan associations, and the two years of her life as a schoolgirl were spent at Avon Bank, in Stratford, in the house of the Misses Byerley, great-nieces of Josiah Wedgwood, the famous potter. Two other inmates were granddaughters of Dr. Joseph Priestley, brought from America to England in infancy after the death of the famous old philosopher. They were contemporaries of the girl who was to become so famous in literature, and the three women who emerged from that school to play strenuous parts in the future (and one of whom survived to very great age) bore emphatic witness to the lasting impressions of an ideal sincerity in word and deed communicated by the teachers of their youth.

Mrs. Gaskell married young, and became the wife of a Unitarian minister, whose father had been a student at the Warrington Academy in company with the sons of

Josiah Wedgwood, and in friendship with the Aikins and the daughter who became Mrs. Barbauld, and whose poetic genius remains to us in one poem often quoted to this day. It contains the famous expression in reference to our happy dead: "Say not Good night – Good morning."

Up to the year 1850 the household of the young minister and his wife was carried out on the serene lines of peace and righteous economy so familiar to those who can remember the Puritan ideal. It was blessed with young children, and one precious infant, the only boy, was taken away, leaving a memory which no lapse of time could weaken. This little soul seems to have remained in Mrs. Gaskell's future years as a permanent visitant in his mother's heart and imagination. He is referred to with undying love and yearning, and it was owing to his death that she seems first to have sought occupation in the use of her pen. She planned and executed her first novel in the silence of her own heart, and when at last it was published it was under the assumed name of Cotton Mather Mills. The title was the simple one of "Mary Barton", and it is no exaggeration to say that it took the reading world by storm, and shook the conception of capitalistic power to its foundation. It raised an angry storm in the world of wealth, and a passionate yearning in the world of poverty. The use and the terrible responsibilities of riches were never again unquestioned. It was truly the first nail in the coffin, an articulate wail from the Hungry Forties, and the controversy then openly suggested is unabated today. Mrs. Gaskell's name was soon brought forward as the author of "Mary Barton" and she became not only a noted writer but the personal friend of that group of great geniuses who enlivened the Fifties with a glow which still lingers, and is one of the best items in our national assets of today.

Few looking on Mrs. Gaskell's dignified form and handsome features in those years of the early Fifties could have imagined that fifteen more years were to close her career of personal influence. Yet so it was. She wrote eight books of varying importance, of which "Ruth" was, perhaps, the least effective, because it warred against the peculiar reserves of the epoch at which it appeared. Yet it certainly aroused strong feeling at the time and the two main issues were hotly discussed. One concerned the falsehood, which to modern ears would sound so harmless, regarding the supposed widowhood of the heroine, which falsehood was painfully allowed by the very holy minister who rescues her and the boy Leonard; and the other pertaining to the initial tragedy of the seduction. When memory recalls the hot discussion as to the propriety of the subject at all, it seems as if our old England had oddly slipped away from the heroic heights of "Clarissa Harlowe"! "Ruth" is the one book in which Mrs. Gaskell seems to have felt that she could not possess a free hand, and yet it was on this one subject that on one unforgettable occasion she was heard to speak with fearless decision and wonderful tenderness. Where a woman was to be absolved and a man condemned for unspeakable wickedness Mrs. Gaskell's verdict left no room for doubt.

Turning to quite another subject she showed in "Sylvia's Lovers" how she could handle tragedy. The poignant effect of the culprit's resignation of his life made to one reader an absolute impossibility of a second perusal. Finally the book entitled "Wives and Daughters" with its last unfinished chapter interrupted by the hand of death, is thought by some to be the very crown of Mrs. Gaskell's achievement. She herself had a strange presentiment that if ever she was immortalised it would be through "Cranford". She said that so many had spoken to her of that book. It was "understanded of the people" with its mingling of tenderness and humour, and it will probably be reprinted as long as our language lasts.

As a critic "sixty years after" it remains to speak of the profound sincerity and appreciation shown in "The Life of Charlotte Brontë". Mrs. Gaskell drew a picture of the three sisters which is as true a work of art as any Rembrandt. "There are devotees of the Brontës who will travel miles to walk over the ground which the Brontës trod, often with a copy of Mrs. Gaskell's "Life" in their hands rather than a Brontë novel". And the colours of that picture will remain undimmed. Who that stood by the side of that aged father in his loneliness after Charlotte's death, and received his grave salute, and his permission to visit the empty room where Charlotte's portrait was all that remained of her, could doubt the penetrating truth of her friend's description. "I did so try to tell the truth," wrote Mrs. Gaskell to one of her correspondents after the "Life" was published. "I weighed every line with my whole power and heart so that every line should go to its great purpose of making her known and valued." And, moreover, "It is to Mrs. Gaskell that we are indebted for the record of the religious and ethical side of Charlotte Brontë's character." The elder woman understood the younger, and did her best to portray her, and that feat was immortal, and nothing of a later time can ever replace it. "People may talk as they will about the little respect that is paid to virtue, unaccompanied by the outward accident of wealth or station ... but all the better and more noble qualities in the hearts of others make ready and go forth to meet it on its approach; provided only it be pure, simple, and unconscious of its own existence." The nobility of Charlotte Brontë shines out in the pages written by her friend, against all that adverse criticism which has long died away. We may say with John Milton –

For if virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her.

B.R.B.

Editor thanks Janet Kennerley for typing this out at midnight on 29 September 2011.

London looks at Charlotte and Elizabeth: "The Life of Charlotte Brontë" - A Reading Day

Katharine Solomon

In March 2012, members of the London branch of the Brontë Society spent a day reading *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* by Elizabeth Gaskell. We met in the beautiful hall of the Concert Artistes Association near Covent Garden; sixteen of us sat around a long table, each with our own copy of the work. In turn we each read a pre-selected extract. The day was co-ordinated by Jenny Dunn, who had chosen the extracts; she introduced each of them, and chaired the discussion after each reading.

We started the day with a discussion about Elizabeth Gaskell's motives in treating the life of Charlotte Brontë in the way she did. We felt that Gaskell had been concerned to rescue her friend from the charge of "coarseness". We considered what the word meant to the Victorians, and whether *Jane Eyre* was correctly considered coarse.

Our readings started with Mrs Gaskell's impression of the "character of the people of Haworth"; they seemed to her to have a degree of self-sufficiency "rather apt to repel a stranger". We discussed whether she was right to perceive Haworth as remote and wild, or whether we should rely on a modern biographer's description of it as a well-populated semi-industrial area.

We moved on to an extract from the early years of the Brontë family. We read about Mr Brontë's alleged rages, his burning of coloured leather boots and his cutting up of his wife's silk dress. Mr Brontë was not happy with Mrs Gaskell's portrayal of him, and we considered whether Mrs Gaskell had been over-influenced by a report from a former servant. Mrs Gaskell contrasted her account with a much more favourable story about Mr Brontë seeking his young children's opinions, giving them the opportunity of speaking freely from behind a mask.

We read about the food at Cowan Bridge School, "Lowood" in *Jane Eyre*. There was a distinct contrast between Mrs Gaskell's comparatively benign account of the prime mover, Mr William Carus Wilson, and Charlotte's violent reaction to the school and to "Mr Brocklehurst" in particular. We moved on to Roe Head School, where Charlotte made two lifelong friends, whose correspondence provided much material for Mrs Gaskell's biography; she found that quoting Charlotte's own words was often more effective than her own narrative could have been.

We read the letter from the Poet Laureate, Robert Southey, written in 1837 after Charlotte had sent him some of her poems. The well-known sentence in Southey's letter, "Literature cannot be the business of a woman's life, and it ought not to be." proved to be misleading when read as part of the whole letter, which was kind and not entirely discouraging.

Two years later, Charlotte received her first proposal of marriage. Gaskell does not name the gentleman, except to say he was a clergyman, and by implication, the brother of a friend. We read Charlotte's letter about the episode, describing her "kindly leaning" but lack of "intense attachment". Mrs Gaskell comments on Charlotte's acceptance that marriage was not for her, but no obvious alternative presented itself – she was not a natural teacher of children.

So we come to Brussels – a critical period for Charlotte. Mrs Gaskell had visited Brussels and met M.Héger, and had been shown extracts from Charlotte's intense letters. But she only described, very unrevealingly, a "silent estrangement" between Charlotte and Madame Héger.

Back in Haworth, we read the account of Emily's final weeks in 1848 and her agonised death. Anne's more tranquil death followed only a few months later. Mrs Gaskell's narrative power conveyed the sadness of both these deaths, so different and yet both heart-rending.

We came to Mr Nicholl's first proposal of marriage, which was unsuccessful. Both Charlotte Brontë's and Elizabeth Gaskell's powers of description were fully deployed in the account of Mr Nicholl's proposal: "He made me, for the first time, feel what it costs a man to declare affection when he doubts response."

Finally, in order to show that Charlotte, like Elizabeth Gaskell, had to deal with unfavourable criticism, we read her hurt letters to G H Lewes after his review of Shirley. First Charlotte sent a short, angry note, then a more considered but still reproachful letter. Both Lewes and Mrs Gaskell considered that Charlotte's tone was "cavalier", but then none of us enjoys criticism. *Villette* excited some interest from female readers and we read Charlotte's reaction to a fan seeking more details about Paul Emanuel.

The day ended all too soon: we had only been able to read a limited number of extracts from this wonderful book, but we had been forcibly reminded of its excellence.

The Two Elizabeths

Alan Shelston

A little known volume of poems has recently come to light via a catalogue of the antiquarian bookseller, Charles Cox of Launceston, Cornwall. (Catalogue no.63). The book is entitled *Poems and Translations*; its author is referred to as Elizabeth Gaskell Holland. It has no publisher's imprint and no date.[1] Elizabeth Gaskell Holland was the sister of William Gaskell and thus the sister-in-law of Elizabeth the novelist. She enjoyed a long life, living from 1812 to 1892, during the course of which she bore ten children, including a pair of twins. What particularly took my eye in the description in the catalogue was its reference to a poem the then Elizabeth Holland wrote on the marriage of the then Elizabeth Stevenson to her brother.

This seemed to me a potentially interesting Gaskell find, but the book itself was surrounded by an element of mystery.

'Dearest Lizzie' with her five eldest children in 1845

In his catalogue Charles Cox describes the book as 'her (ie Elizabeth Holland's) only book' and this would certainly seem to be the case. He goes on to say that there are only two copies known in addition to the one he has for sale; one of these is held by the Women's Library at London Metropolitan University and the other is in North Carolina. There are other copies, I believe, in the possession of the Holland family. I have checked the Women's Library copy, and I must thank the librarian there for giving me access to it.

The volume itself was very attractively bound in dark green leather, with an elegant border of intertwining clover leaves in gold leaf. Its end papers give no indication of date, publisher or printer; there is no contents page but there are 310 pages of poems and translations. Most of the poems are relatively short, and some of them related to figures in Elizabeth Holland's family at various points in their lives. Some are dated over a period of a long life. Otherwise there are poems in a very Victorian mode about nature, the divinity, children, death – often these themes are interlinked – while the hundred pages of translations (mostly from the German) follow similar themes. It would be nice to be able to say that they show a genuine poetic talent, but in all honesty, apart from a facility for simple rhyme schemes, the talent, where it existed, was a very predictable one: Elizabeth Holland was mistress of the rhetorical cliché. Versifying was then seen as an accomplishment for young women, much as were drawing and musical performance. Did Elizabeth Holland learn her German from her brother William, as did Catherine Winkworth, the hymnodist whose *Lyra Germanica*, translations of German hymns, were published in two series, in 1855 and 1858?

[1] I am reliably informed that it was printed by the Women's Printing Society Ltd of 66 Whitcombe Street, London, WC, but their imprint does not appear on the copy I consulted.

The absence of any reference to publisher or date raises interesting problems: when, by whom, and under what circumstances, was this volume published? The first poem in the book, a dedication to Elizabeth Holland's unnamed son, is dated 1828, and the last 1890; her style never changes. In the Women's Library copy there is a pencilled signature on the fly-leaf: 'Edith H. Norton'.[2] This was the married name of one of Elizabeth's daughters, born in 1845, but again the signature is undated. All of this - the beauty of the binding, the anonymity of the publisher, the family centred content of many of the poems and above all the very few copies of the book now in existence suggests that the book was privately printed towards the end of Elizabeth Holland Gaskell's life as some kind of family tribute or memorial, perhaps for her eightieth birthday, which would have fallen on 21 September 1892; she died however on 8 March of that year. The fly-leaf signature on the copy I inspected suggests that it was kept in the family at least during the next generation, but after that its history disappears. It remains to consider the wedding poem written by one Elizabeth for the other. It reads as follows:

On the Marriage of E. C. S [Elizabeth Cleghorn Stevenson]
August 30th, 1832

Nay, blame her not for those dew-like tears,
She is leaving the home of her early years,
She is going to one that she knows not of,
With him to whom she has plighted her troth.

Nay, blame her not, 'twas a happy home,
One that she'll dream of in years to come —
The home where her childhood footsteps roved
The dwelling of all that she ever has loved

What though no dearly loved father is there
To mourn for the darling he watched with such care,
Though her mother, alas! in the damp grave is sleeping,
Yet one there is now in her loneliness weeping —

The one who has loved and cared for her when
She was motherless, friendless; oh, never again
Will she meet with affection so pure, so sincere,
As beams in that eye though 'tis dimmed by a tear.

Weep on aged mourner — no gay laugh to-morrow
Will playfully strive to beguile thee of sorrow,
No footstep be heard lightly bounding along,
No sweet voice to warble thy favourite song.

And the bridegroom so joyous that bears her away,
Does he chide his young bride for those sad tears to-day?

[2] *Professor Chapple tells me that Edith married a merchant. John Norton, of Norbiton, Surrey in 1875. They had 5 children.*

Ah no! he remembers the moment too well
When he bade his own home and loved inmates farewell.

Then blame her not; soon again she will smile,
And the flow'ret transplanted will wither awhile,
And the young bird transported to some foreign clime
Will droop and remember its home for a time.

It has to be said the Lizzie's poem to Elizabeth is a somewhat lugubrious affair: it is weighted towards the sadness involved in leaving the single state as much as welcoming the joys of marriage. This was perhaps a not unconventional view in the Victorian period: for inexperienced young women the entry into marriage might well seem forbidding. George Eliot's Celia Brooke expresses this anxiety in *Middlemarch* when she asks her sister Dorothea about her wedding journey with her gloomy husband and this may not have been entirely a special case. Elizabeth Gaskell's delight in her own marriage in her early letters is a refreshing corrective. One wonders what she might have thought of a wedding tribute in which her dead parents 'mourn' from the 'damp grave' and in which her surrogate mother, Aunt Lumb, is cast as an 'aged mourner'. One should say, perhaps, that the lines in tribute to Aunt Lumb confirm her importance in Elizabeth Stevenson's early life. Anyway they express the closeness of these Holland and Gaskell networks. We have Elizabeth's word that Aunt Lumb, 'my more than mother, expressed surprise that so serious a man as William would have taken a fancy to 'such a little giddy thoughtless thing' as she, and she herself joked that she was about to learn 'obedience' from her prospective husband. (*Gaskell Letters,* p1; *Further Letters* p19) As we know the 'young bird' was not transported to droop in some foreign clime after her marriage: she spent a month in North Wales discovering the delights of matrimony. (*Gaskell Letters*, pp2-3)

Elizabeth Holland, affectionately referred to by Elizabeth Gaskell as 'Lizzie', kept house for her brother in Dover Street in Manchester before he married. The two Elizabeths would have met often during these pre-wedding months, and they continued to correspond in the early years of the Gaskell marriage; from all the evidence they valued their mutual acquaintance. Elizabeth wrote excitedly to Lizzie from North Wales about 'this obstreperous brother of yours' (*GL*, p2) where the Gaskells went on their wedding journey and there is a sequence of early letters which reveal the closeness of their relationship. Two long later letters show that this continued into middle life. (*GL* nos 145, 424) where unstated family issues are alluded to.

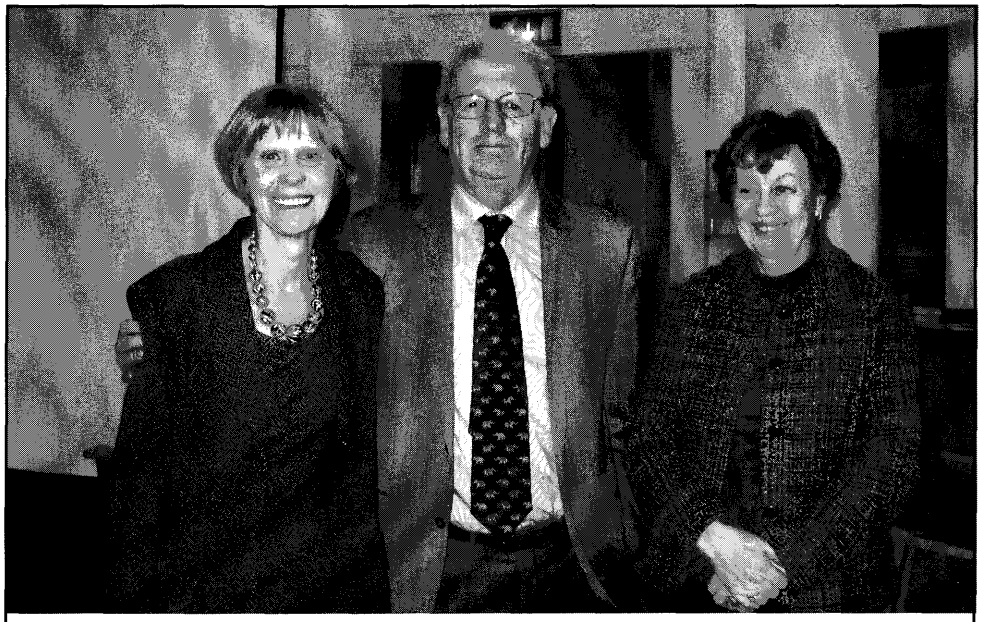
Lizzie married Charles Holland in 1838 and a long letter from Elizabeth Gaskell at that time clearly responds to anxiety on Lizzie's part about the prospect of her own marriage. It would seem that she has suggested that the marriage should wait. 'I would not have the engagement much prolonged', Elizabeth Gaskell replies, 'you will always (put it off for 20 years) [sic] have a month of nervousness at last to go through — a feeling of awe on entering a new state of life, and quitting old habits and old places &c, — but you only put off the evil time by delaying your marriage.'

The 'new state of life' may seem intimidating but she argues that 'you will gain more knowledge of his tastes and habits in a week living in the house with him, or in a day married to him, than by years of pop [sic] visits...where the joy of seeing you swallows up ... any individual peculiarity of character' (*GL*, pp36, 35, 19 August 1838). This sounds very much like the voice of experience.

Lizzie did not postpone her marriage, and she lived for a much longer time than her mentor. During that time she continued to write her poems, all much of the same kind on typically Victorian subjects. A delightful family portrait, showing her with five of her children playing in the drawing-room with their toys, exists in the possession of the Holland family. There are also portraits of her as a young woman and in later life, again in the possession of the family I am grateful to Professor Chapple and to the Holland family for access to copies of these materials. Unlike Elizabeth Gaskell's, all of Lizzie's children survived; nevertheless in her several poems about babies she invariably emphasises their vulnerability. Nature is given heavily Romantic significance: its features figure prominently as evidence of the divine. The poems are often self-questioning and they fill in some of the details of her family associations. For her translations, mostly from the German, she seems to have chosen poems similar in their subject-matter to her own; again a beneficent view of nature predominates. Her poems, by their very typicality, tell us much about Victorian attitudes, and much indeed about this Elizabeth who outlived her husband and lived on until the final decade of the century.

The Holland family were widespread through Lancashire and Cheshire — so much so that it is not always easy to sort out the connections between its various members. They became established in the Unitarian networks of the eighteenth century and most of them increased in prosperity in the nineteenth. Elizabeth Gaskell's mother was a Holland, and her eldest daughter Marianne, married another. It is a nice twist that Elizabeth Gaskell's first intentions were to write verse, one poem of which commemorated the grave of her first unborn child, and that the husband with whom she had written some early verse should have been the brother of another Gaskell poet who would one day connect the Gaskell and Holland families via marriage. While one Elizabeth was to abandon verse and become famous as a novelist, the other worked away consistently at her poetry which nevertheless remained a private affair. There is no record of what either of them thought of each other's literary achievements.

Mrs Charles Holland, neé Elizabeth Gaskell (aka Lizzie) 1812-1892, in 1870

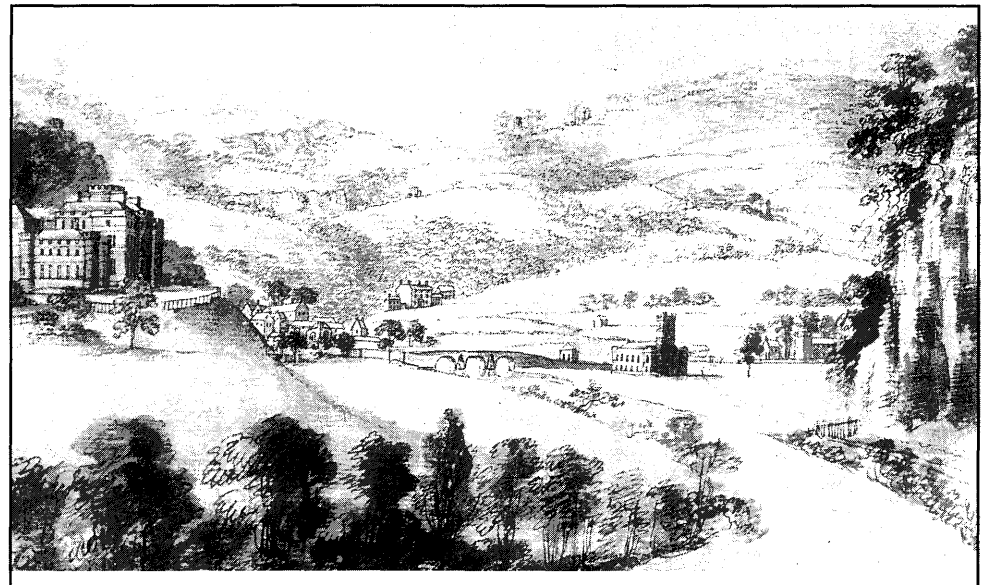


Alan, now Former President, Shelston
flanked by (R) Chairman Ann and (L) Secretary Pam, after AGM, 14 April 2012

Doreen and John Pleydell were married on 18 April 1942.

Here they are, 70 years later, enjoying their garden between April showers.

Lea Hurst with high turret where ECG toiled over North and South in 1854;
and visited by members of the Gaskell Society, 30 May 2012



Willersley Castle, Derbyshire, also visited by ECG; and the Gaskell Society.
Cromford Church and Canal Wharf on right
(from an early 19th century drawing supplied by Christine Linguard)

What a single word can do

Alan Shelston

Dr Johnson, in the Preface to his edition of Shakespeare, was scathing about the process of writing notes. Of the efforts of a fellow-editor, he wrote, 'the writing of notes is not of difficult attainment.' But the annotation of literary works can often be a frustrating business; all the more if one reflects on the possibility that most readers will pass over most notes. However they have their uses. Some years ago I was asked to edit *Mary Barton* for the new paperback in Everyman's Library. I was very conscious of the authority of Angus Easson's major edition of the novel (Ryburn Publishing, 1993). It is very authoritatively annotated and I did my best to limit my borrowings: however there was one occasion when I turned to it for enlightenment, and found the solution not there.

Chapter 8 of *Mary Barton* concludes with the singer, Margaret Jennings, who is losing her sight, singing a ballad the first line of which is 'What a single word can do'. The theme of the song is that a single word can on occasion transform an entire situation, and the song itself is unattributed. I was unable to discover who has written it. Easson passes over this item, and in private conversation he told me that it had not proved possible to trace its origin. This, as far as I could tell, was indeed the case, and my edition went to press with an admission of failure.

Somewhat later, though, and too late for inclusion in the edition, I found the answer quite by chance when working on Elizabeth Gaskell's unpublished correspondence. I was checking a letter in a file of correspondence held in the Library of the Wordsworth Centre at Dove Cottage, at Grasmere when I turned to the preceding page and found a letter from William Gaskell to an autograph seeker written to him after Elizabeth's death. Enclosed with the letter was a second sheet giving the two stanzas of Margaret's song exactly as they appear in the novel. The correspondence reads as follows:

Plymouth Grove
Jan 24th 1867

Dear Sir,

I have had so many claims on my time that, I am obliged to confess, your note was laid aside with some others and forgotten. I send a short song of mine which was inserted in "Mary Barton," and which has been thought worth setting to music by two or three different hands [.]

In haste
I am, dear Sir,
Yours faithfully
Wm Gaskell

A. Vogue Esq.

There was then an enclosure in William Gaskell's hand, on a separate sheet, giving the two stanzas of the *Mary Barton* poem:

What a single word can do!
Thrilling all the heart-strings through,
Calling forth fond memories,
Raining round hope's melodies,
Steeping all in one bright hue –
What a single word can do!

What a single word can do!
Making life seem all untrue,
Driving joy and hope away,
Leaving not one cheering ray,
Blighting every flower that grew –
What a single word can do!

We know little of William's correspondent: the 1861 census records an 'A. Vogue' as having been born in France but now living in Northamptonshire. William's letter to him is directed to a London address, but in fact there is an earlier letter to him from Elizabeth herself to a Nottingham address in which she apologises for delay in response to an earlier request for an autograph. This letter is included in Further Letters (p262) and is dated 8th March 1864. Vogue is not registered in the 1871 census: perhaps by this time he had returned to France, or possibly died.

It could be argued that little of this matters in any material way. But that is not entirely so: apart from confirming the tendency of Victorian enthusiasts to seek autographs — a practice that Elizabeth herself indulged in — it extends our awareness of her husband's involvement in her early work, and also his post mortem willingness to respond to an enquiry related to it. Dr Johnson erred, I think, provided that is, that editors get it right.

I am grateful for the assistance of the staff at The Wordsworth Trust, Dove Cottage, Cumbria for allowing me access to the correspondence referred to in this article [Stanger ms 2/104, 1-6] and for the permission of the Curator, Jeff Cowton, to reprint it.

A brief account of illustrated editions of Elizabeth Gaskell's works

Emma Marigliano

The mid-eighteenth century is widely acknowledged as the hey-day of Victorian book illustration. From the popular press to pamphlets, from volumes of instruction and information to works of great literature - pictures interpreted the words. Many authors had their own favourite illustrators; think of Hablot K Browne (otherwise

known as 'Phiz') and you think of Dickens; mention John Tenniel and you connect him with Lewis Carroll, Tennyson – willing or otherwise – attracted the artistic imagination of the pre-Raphaelites. There was no shortage of illustrators and illustrations for the Victorian novel, that's for sure. The publishers, in particular, quickly realised that a picture spoke a thousand words and, consequently, commissioned artists and illustrators to speak them.

One therefore has to wonder why the descriptive and dramatic tales that Elizabeth Gaskell wrote were so rarely adorned by the illustrators of the day. In fact there were no illustrated editions of her work until the very end of her career with the serial publication and illustration of *Cousin Phillis* and *Wives and Daughters* in the 'Cornhill Magazine'. As far as her novels were concerned it was her publisher, George Smith, of Smith, Elder, who decided to commission George du Maurier.

Elizabeth Gaskell was known to have made a very brief remark just once on du Maurier's illustration in a letter to George Smith, the publisher, dated 10th December 1863. "I like the illustrations to *Sylvia* much – but I must end." (Chapple and Shelston, p266, quoted in Recchio, p77, 2009, Ashgate Publishing). George du Maurier (1834-1896) and, briefly, Myles Birket Foster (1825-1899) were the only illustrators within her lifetime.

The serialisation in the Cornhill Magazine of *Cousin Phillis* and *Wives and Daughters* between 1863 and 1866 was the first time that Gaskell's fiction was illustrated whilst the first novel to be illustrated was *The Moorland Cottage* which was published as a Christmas Book in 1850 with Birket Foster's illustrations.

Du Maurier illustrated *Sylvia's Lovers* (1863), *Cranford* and *Dark Night's Work* in 1864; *Lizzie Leigh* (see right), *The Grey Woman* and *Cousin Phyllis* in 1865, *Wives and Daughters* in 1866 and *North and South* in 1867. *Cranford* had appeared in Dickens's 'Household Words' in serial form between 1851 and 1853 and *North and South* between 1854 and 1855 but neither title was illustrated at this time.

There is no evidence in Gaskell's correspondence with her publishers to suggest any plans on her part for illustration of her novels. Thomas Recchio, on this basis, assumes that her late fiction and the production of illustrated editions of her early work were driven by her publisher's concerns (2009). Given the

small number of du Maurier's illustrations for *Sylvia's Lovers* and *Wives and Daughters*, Recchio goes on to suggest that George Smith commissioned the illustrations to help sell Gaskell's books at a crucial time in the marketplace, setting her on a par with Dickens's serial publications and Chapman and Hall's novel publications.

Hugh Thomson (1860-1920) illustrated Cranford in 1891, about 25 years after Mrs Gaskell's death. It was so popular that it set off a stream of illustrated editions between the United Kingdom and America throughout the 1890s and the first 20 years or so of the 20th century. Recchio points out the stylistic differences between du Maurier and Thomson's illustrations, charging the latter with producing 'a set of visual stereotypes in the service of a cultural narrative that evokes a nostalgic sense of national identity, a literary definition of what it is to be English.' (2009)

Thomas Heath Robinson (1869-1950), brother to Charles and the fantastically inventive William, illustrated *Cranford* at the close of the century in 1896 and, stylistically, did not depart dramatically from the pattern of his predecessors. T H Robinson had illustrated a number of fantasy and fairy tales and although he went on to apply himself to more realistic art, such as *Cranford* and *Hawthorne's Scarlet Letter*, he never entirely left whimsy as this can be seen in just a few of the *Cranford* illustrations (see figure on left for instance).

The first few years of the twentieth century saw another prolifically talented pair of siblings, Harry (H M Brock [1875-1960]) and Charles (C E) Brock [1870-1938], try their hand with *Cranford* although Charles was more inclined towards Jane Austen's works. It could be seen in these later interpretations that the drama that du Maurier had conveyed in his much more graphically heavy illustrations had been lost, somewhat, along the way. Nevertheless, not much more was changing, stylistically and the generally stereotypical illustrations hardly moved on.

In 1914 E H New (Edmund Hart New [1871-1931]) provided some illustrations for an edition of *Cranford* published by Methuen. New submitted a number of illustrations for George Musgrave's translation of Dante's *Inferno* around this time and, as he favoured pen and ink sketches of the geography of literary works, the illustrations for Dante tended towards Florentine locations in particular. New adopted the same style for Cranford, and the novel was a departure from his usual 'guide book' illustrations (*The English Lakes* and *Oxfordshire*, for instance). His sketches for *Cranford* were probably taken from those he produced for George Payne's *Mrs Gaskell and Knutsford* which, as Recchio suggests, effectively turned the novel into a guidebook of Elizabeth Gaskell's girlhood home (pp76-77).

E H New affords an almost irrelevant diversion, serving mainly to introduce the change of approach heralded by the twentieth century. It may be no coincidence that a more marked departure from the same-old-same-old was due to the advent of a spate of women illustrators on the scene which continues to this day. Mention here is made of a few more prominent names. M(ary) V Wheelhouse (fl 1895-1947) was better known as a painter and illustrator of children's books but, in fact, she took to Gaskell's works in a big way. *Cranford* seems to have been the favoured title for the majority of illustrators, except for George du Maurier who was selected to illustrate a number of novels and tales. Wheelhouse, however, was a popular and prolific illustrator and counted amongst Elizabeth Gaskell's works *Cousin Phillis* (1908), *Cranford* (1909), *Sylvia's Lovers* (1910) and *Wives and Daughters* (1912). Colour illustrations were being applied more frequently to the Gaskell illustrated editions and Wheelhouse's designs picked up details of furnishings and wall and floor coverings as they had never been seen before. Costume design had a more three-dimensional quality to them because of the colour and gardens took on a new life and the children seemed to jump out of Kate Greenaway's nursery.

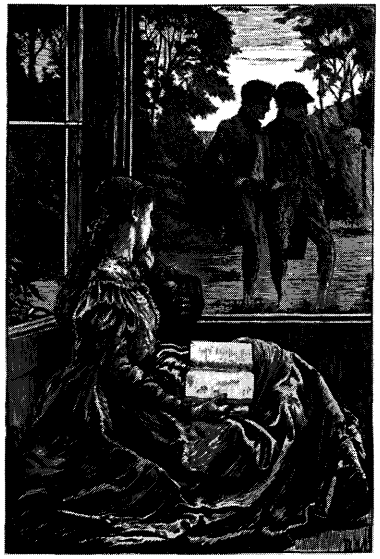
In the same year as E H New's rather pedestrian guide book (1914), another edition of *Cranford* was published which continued to emphasise the feminine touch that Elizabeth Gaskell's work had hitherto lacked. One can't help wondering if she would have been more pleased with this change of style than she appeared to be over du Maurier's faithful illustrations. Sybil Tawse (fl 1900-1940) painted portraits, designed posters and illustrated books in line and colour. She chose colour for the *Cranford* illustrations and, although the influence of Thomson and the Brocks is evident in the design of the costumes her attention to detail and accuracy in historical context and setting is all her own. There is a warmth and homeliness in her painterly illustrations that turns the characters into individuals with personalities that the reader could better relate to. This was probably lacking in previous interpretations, including those by Wheelhouse. At the same time Tawse was able to project a theatricality that the moment requires (see figure above).

We must travel some considerable years now to one of the more distinctive illustrators of Mrs Gaskell's works, even though *Cranford* is, again, the choice of title – whether the artist's or the publisher's. Joan Hassall (1906-1988) was the daughter of John Hassall and her wood engravings added a style and elegance to many classic works of literature, including those of Gaskell, Brontë and, in particular, Jane

Austen. Not surprisingly, the Folio Society commissioned this superb draughtswoman to illustrate all of Austen's works, and a subsequent Folio set included not only the earlier wood engravings but also later scraperboard versions of Jane Austen's novels. She was obviously extremely well regarded by the Folio Society because they asked Hassall to illustrate Gaskell's *Cranford* (1940) and her inimitable and fresh approach to the line and style of these designs is immediately recognisable. There is quality almost of caricature of some of the characters and the meticulous line and detail of the illustrations display a skill and dedication to her art that is unmistakable. Miss Jenkyns' earnestness, as she reads Dr Johnson's *Rasselas* to Captain Brown is worthy of Rowlandson. Joan Hassall also collaborated with Margaret Lane in a book based on Elizabeth Gaskell's biography of Charlotte Brontë.

Our final, and probably most recent illustrator is another female who has chosen to return to the line-drawing style of earlier illustrators. Having illustrated Wilkie Collins and Anthony Trollope for the Folio Society, Alexy Pendle was asked by them to illustrate Elizabeth Gaskell also. Pendle hails from the East coast of England but, after attending the Central School of Art and The Institute of Education, London University, she went to live, briefly, in the Middle East before she emigrated, in 1976, to the USA and now lives in Boulder, Colorado. She has taught drawing and painting for many years and has illustrated numerous books. She was delighted receive this commission from the Folio Society as Elizabeth Gaskell is one of her favourite authors.

Her style retains a distinctly romantic element but is more reminiscent of du Maurier's than might at first be thought. There is evident inspiration from this earliest of illustrators to the latest (see the comparisons in the two illustrations from *Wives and Daughters*, du Maurier on the left and Pendle on the right).



Though this has been a brief account of the more noteworthy British illustrators of Elizabeth Gaskell's works, it is clear that Mrs Gaskell has not inspired a great many artists. Her works, however, continue to inspire visual interpretation with more recent theatre and television adaptations, growing to great acclaim. These mini-series have captured the interest and imagination of creator and audience alike far more than the illustrations; and the actors have conveyed the wit and the passion of Elizabeth Gaskell with originality - perhaps more successfully even than the illustrations so far seen.

References:

Thomas Recchio, *Elizabeth Gaskell's* Cranford*; a publishing history*, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2009, Farnham

Alan Horne (ed), *The Dictionary of 20th Century British Book Illustrators*, Antique Collectors' Club Ltd, 1999, London

Elizabeth Gaskell, *Cranford*, illustrations by A V Wheelhouse, 1909

Elizabeth Gaskell, *Cranford*, illustrations by Joan Hassal, The Folio Society, 1991, London

Emma Marigliano is Librarian of The Portico Library, Manchester.

Casa Guidi, Florence

Pauline Kiggins

Casa Guidi, in Piazza S. Felice, Florence, is an apartment primarily remembered in connection with the poets Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. On their first wedding anniversary, 12 September l847, the couple had watched from Casa Guidi as the crowds below, assembled from many regions of the not-yet-unified Italy, surged towards the courtyard of the Pitti Palace to rejoice together at the granting by the Austrian Grand Duke Leopold II of Tuscany the right to form a civic guard, an event which signalled political change and the first stirrings towards unification. It had been an event that thrilled the Brownings, especially Elizabeth.

The apartment in Palazzo Guidi became home to Robert and Elizabeth and there, on 9th March 1849, their son Robert Wiedemann (later known by his self-chosen nickname Pen, or Penini) was born. Elizabeth Barrett Browning died in Casa Guidi on 29th June 1861.

After expressing the wish to have Casa Guidi recreated as it had been during his parents' time there, and preserved in their memory, Pen Browning bought the whole of the palazzo in 1893, but all was sold again in 1912 after Pen's death. However, although Pen did not see it fulfilled, his wish was remembered and carried out many years later. In 1971 the apartment was acquired by the Browning Institute based in New York. Restoration work was started, using as a guide the painting by Mignaty commissioned by Robert after his wife's death and before he and Penini left Florence. Eventually the Institute realised that restoration was beyond its resources. The apartment was sold and is now owned by Eton College. At the end of 1990, the Headmaster, Dr Anderson, proposed that the Landmark Trust might support the school in the use of this property. (The Landmark Trust is an independent charity, founded in 1965, with two main aims, the first, to rescue worthwhile buildings and their surroundings from neglect; the second, to promote the enjoyment of these places and make them available for short breaks or longer holidays. Most of Landmark's properties are in England, Scotland or Wales, but there is also one in the USA and there are four in Italy. I have mentioned the Landmark Trust here with this account of its aims, because of the interest I believe Gaskell Society members have in the preservation and use of buildings with interesting histories!) When not being used by Etonians, Casa Guidi is available for private bookings.

A stay in Casa Guidi is a magical experience on many levels. Situated in the Oltrarno district, (south of the river on the other bank from the immediate centre round the Duomo and Battistera) along the Via Maggio and almost opposite the Pitti Palace and the Boboli Gardens, it is an ideal location, within easy walking distance of central Florence, over either the famous Ponte Vecchio or the Ponte Santa Trinita.

In her biography, *Elizabeth Gaskell: a habit of stories*, Jenny Uglow mentions two

visits to Casa Guidi intended to be made by Mrs Gaskell as the party was travelling homewards through Florence, after their memorable stay in Rome in 1857. Uglow covers the visits in a single paragraph, as follows:

(Elizabeth Gaskell) arrived in Florence. Robert Browning paid a long call as soon as they arrived and Elizabeth took Katie Winkworth to meet his wife. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, however, scarcely spoke a word and Elizabeth desperately filled the silences by telling long stories about Charlotte Brontë, with Katie acting as chorus and the Brownings' friend Isa Blagden stopping the gaps [-----]. Even Katie was driven to admit the evening was 'not particularly brilliant'. Elizabeth and Charles (Eliot Norton) tried to call again before they left, but the news of Mr Barrett's death had just reached the Casa Guidi; his daughter was devastated and would see no one. [i]

So it seems that Mrs Gaskell's experience with both of the Brownings was rather strained and difficult. In Letter 421 of Chapple and Pollard, Mrs Gaskell writes of the Brownings to Tottie Fox: "I liked her better than him; perhaps for the reason that he fell asleep while I was talking to him." Perhaps the second visit planned with Charles Eliot Norton to Casa Guidi, might have been more successful. But it was not to be - their timing was so unfortunate. The glimpses we get of the interwoven lives of these 19th century writers are fascinating, and are made so much more real when pictured in the places where they actually happened. Walking into Casa Guidi seems like stepping back in time: the drawing room and main bedroom in particular, have been recreated as they were when Mrs Gaskell visited.

Photograph of the drawing room at Casa Guidi, Florence, Italy, furnished by the Landmark Trust to look as it was at the time of Robert and Elizabeth. A painting of the room, commissioned by Robert Browning after his wife's death in 1861 was used to recreate the colour scheme, furnishings and fabrics, while some of the items seen in the room are actually the originals.

[i] *Uglow, Jenny, Elizabeth Gaskell: a habit of stories, (London, Faber and Faber, 1993) p.425.*

Away From It All

Christine Lingard

The major subject of the problems faced by Elizabeth Gaskell, in juggling the demands as the wife of a busy minister and the mother of four lively daughters, and also as a successful writer, is well-documented. For her, home and family always came first but her publishers and editors were always imposing deadlines for her latest work. While we may have a romanticised image of her writing at the table in the dining room of Plymouth Grove, her solution was more likely to get away from it all. Frequent visits to friends and relations were often an excuse to get some time to devote to her latest project. Much of *North and South* for example was written at the Nightingale home at Lea Hurst near Matlock.

This was particularly the case when she embarked on *Sylvia's Lovers*. This was a mammoth project, comprising three volumes to be published by Smith Elder. She had first met the former Arctic explorer, Dr William Scoresby in Dunoon as long ago as 1855 and got underway on the book after a visit to Auchencairn, on the Solway Firth, in 1859. Her exploratory trip to Whitby where she did most of her research took place in November 1859. Work was well underway in 1862 when the blockade put on exports of cotton from the United States during the American Civil War caused the cotton mills of Manchester to fail. Thousands of mill workers were made destitute and the Gaskell women were among the many middle-class Manchester women who rallied to the call to organise sewing circles and soup kitchens.

This had taken its toll on their health, Meta's especially, and all work on the novel was suspended. In order to catch up Gaskell took herself and her daughter Meta away for a month in September 1862 to a town on the south coast of England: Eastbourne in Sussex. Though a fishing village of some antiquity, its reputation as a sea-bathing resort was relatively recent. It had long been overshadowed by its grand neighbour, Brighton, the favourite haunt of the Prince Regent. Despite its Georgian appearance, it was not until the 1850s that work began to turn it into a serious rival, and this was still on-going at the time of her visit.

The long sea-front at Eastbourne, which consists almost exclusively of hotels, was developed by the 7th Duke of Devonshire, who had inherited land in the town from his mother's family. This duke was not the one who entertained Elizabeth at Chatsworth in 1857 but his cousin, previously known at the Earl of Burlington, who succeeded him in 1858. His statue can be seen in nearby Devonshire Place. The front is divided into several terraces known as parades. The Gaskells' lodgings were at 35 Marine Parade, the section to the east of the pier. (Though this had not yet been built at the time of their visit). Number 35 (almost at its eastern end) is one of the most modest buildings in the terrace, consisting only of two bays and only the simplest of metal work decoration. It was run as a lodging-house for many years by William Cummins. The Queen's Hotel, which later dominated this parade, was not completed till 1870.

Despite being so busy Elizabeth and Meta had time for sight-seeing. It is generally believed that it was during this visit that Mrs Gaskell got the idea for another piece – a short story (one of seven) entitled *How the First Floor Went to Crowley Castle*, that was contributed to *Mrs Lirriper's Lodgings*, the extra Christmas number of Dickens's *All the Year Round* of 1863. This is a Gothic story describing a ruined Norman castle within easy reach of Brighton and its neighbouring church, where the family was commemorated with ancient brasses.

As Geoffrey Sharps explains there are several possibilities in the neighbourhood, most notably Pevensey Castle, built shortly after the Battle of Hastings by William's first half-brother on site of a Roman fort near to the point where the Conqueror landed. Originally on the coast the bay has silted up and it had long been a ruin. It is now administered by English Heritage, but neither of the local churches fit with the description in Gaskell's story.

There was another castle in the area at Herstmonceaux (sometimes spelt Hurstmonceaux), although it wasn't Norman. Built in the 1440s by the Fiennes family, it was more of grand manor house than a fortification. It had been in ruins since the end of the eighteenth century and partially dismantled. It has now been restored and for many years it was the home of the Royal Observatory. Now it is a conference centre and the grounds and gardens are open to the public. Nearby All Saints church contains tombs and brasses of the Dacre family dating from the sixteenth century and this church fits the bill. It would have been of interest to Gaskell for other reasons. Several members of the Winkworth family had visited it and a former rector was known to her – Julius Hare, Archdeacon of Lewes, who was active in the campaign of Charles Kingsley to alleviate the lot of tailors and seamstresses.

35 Marine Parade Eastbourne where ECG wrote and Meta rested in Sept 1862

Whatever the case, there is no local legend that could have furnished the plot. As usual Mrs Gaskell has skilfully mixed fact with imagination, to create a unique story. It is unfortunately one of her rarer stories only reprinted in the Knutsford edition of 1908 and in the Pickering & Chatto edition of 2006. The manuscript is in the collection of the Manchester Central Library.

Further reading:

Sharps, J G *Mrs Gaskell's observation and invention: a study of her non-biographic works*. 1970.

Gaskell - Nightingale Tour, 30 May, 2012

Jean Alston

On Wednesday, 30 May, thirty-four members of the Gaskell Society and friends enjoyed a day in the Peak District. Participants joined the coach in Manchester, Knutsford and Macclesfield, and were fortunate to have warm dry weather, a comfortable coach and an excellent driver.

The tour began with a short stop at Ashford in the Water, where we enjoyed coffee and delicious home-made biscuits at the Riverside House Hotel. The sheep dip and bridge on the River Wye, and tympanum and virgin lanterns in the church would surely have been appreciated by Mrs Gaskell. Did she travel near this location by coach at any time? She would travel principally by train when she went to the Nightingale's home in 1854 but may have used a combination of the two. One can well imagine that the Arkwright family would visit Ashford when they used their coach for outings in Derbyshire.

Our next stop was Cromford to learn about the influence of Sir Richard Arkwright; some members enjoyed the factory tour while other strolled by the canal, enjoying the mallard and coot with young, and the hawthorn bushes and trees in full blossom.

Clive Tougher, who has studied the Nightingale family and buildings, joined the coach in Cromford and led some of the groups into Willersley Castle Hotel. This building was commissioned by Sir Richard Arkwright and on completion was lived in by his three sons. The hotel is now a location for Christian Guild Holidays but retains many of the architectural features that ECG would have enjoyed when she visited the Arkwright family in 1854. We were shown a remarkable three story oval atrium and original Georgian staircase which Elizabeth would have appreciated; she would also have enjoyed walking in the gardens and observing the river below and spectacular limestone outcrop on the rise beyond. In a letter from Lea Hurst to daughter Marianne in 1854 she referred to Mr and Mrs Arkwright:

> They were sorry I had not spoken to them on Sunday at church & sent to ask me to lunch there yesterday, & were very friendly and agreeable.

From Willersley Castle we travelled up the hill to the village of Lea. Clive pointed out Riverside House on our left, which was owned by Florence Nightingale's aunt, and where Florence spent many years in her later life.

We had all been looking forward to seeing Lea Hurst and had fortunately been given permission to visit the garden by the Kay family who had recently acquired it. Lea Hurst is a fine stone building originating in Jacobean times. It was purchased in 1771 by Peter Nightingale II and in 1822 was inherited by William Edward Shore (Peter's nephew, who changed his name to Nightingale). William Edward was father of Parthenope and Florence Nightingale. The house was extended and redesigned by William during the following two years.

However, it is reputedly described by Florence Nightingale's mother as not a very large house as it had only fifteen bedrooms. Elizabeth was invited to stay in the house when demands of visitors and family at Plymouth Grove were preventing her from meeting deadlines imposed by Charles Dickens who was awaiting her serial contributions of *North and South* for the journal *Household Words*. During her stay at Lea Hurst, Elizabeth wrote several letters including one to her daughter Marianne, in which she wrote:

> the gardener and his wife ...will live in one part, far far away, & I shall have all the rest of the large place to myself, i.e. two rooms downstairs and a room & a balcony high up at the top... all to myself

To Catherine Winkworth, she wrote:

> It is getting dark. I am to have my tea, up in my turret - at 6. And after that I shall lock my outer door & write. I am stocked with coals, and have candles up here; for I am a quarter of a mile of staircase & odd intricate passage away from every one else in the house.

Janet Kennerley read excerpts from the letters, as we sat or stood around in the garden of Lea Hurst, examining the building and enjoying the views that ECG had appreciated when she stayed there.

Although we were reluctant to leave Lea Hurst, we eventually walked back to the village of Lea, where Clive had arranged that we should visit the Florence Nightingale Memorial Hall. This village hall was built in 1932 on land donated by the Nightingale Estate. The villagers have made it a centre for Nightingale studies and, on the wall, there are maps showing locations of battles and events of the Crimean War, and other collections relating to Florence Nightingale. We were invited to have afternoon tea at this hall on a future occasion.

Our final stop was at Lea Hall. This is the Nightingale ancestral home and where the family lived as it built up its fortune (on lead). It was built in the 17th century and bought by Thomas Nightingale in 1707. The newer Georgian front was added by Peter I in 1754. It was inherited from his son, Peter II, by Florence's father in 1822, the year after Florence was born. Florence lived at Lea Hall during her early years

and enjoyed walking from there to the nearby church at Dethick. Lea Hall is now one of the properties owned by Nicola and Peter Bunting, who have several Derbyshire country houses and furnish them with antique furniture appropriate to their age and architecture. These beautiful houses are available for Peak District holidays. We were provided with 'mountains' of delicious scones, butter, cream and jam by the resident caretakers at Lea Hall and could make ourselves at home in many of the rooms, garden and large patio. The weather continued to be warm and pleasant for the whole day.

Again, we were reluctant to leave but duly boarded our coach for the return from Nightingale country to Gaskell country. Once again, we must thank the Gaskell reputation for the opportunity to visit so many interesting and pleasant locations.

Editor adds: And **WE** must thank Jean for organising such a wonderful day. It would appear that Jean has control even over the weather.

Book Notes

Christine Lingard

Elizabeth Gaskell: the Life of Elizabeth Gaskell in Photographs by Tatsuhiro Ohno. Ohsaka Kyoiku Tosho, Osaka. ISBN 978 -4-271-21014-6

Members who have been on Society holidays and outings in the last ten years may remember Professor Ohno of Kumamoto University with his camera and tripod. The result is this book consisting of 502 of his colour photographs illustrating numerous places in the United Kingdom associated with Elizabeth Gaskell including places mentioned in her writing. The book is chronologically arranged annotated with quotations (in English) from the letters and other writings. It is particularly useful in establishing the current condition of the places mentioned.

The Selected Letters of Charles Dickens, edited by Jenny Hartley. Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0-19-859141-1

The British Academy Pilgrim edition of the Complete Letters of Charles Dickens encompassing twelve volumes includes over 14,000 letters was edited by a number of distinguished academics, including Professor Angus Easson, so it is useful to have 450 of the most interesting in a single volume, and revealing his work as writer, publisher, editor and family man. The work includes seven of his letters to Elizabeth Gaskell outlining their difficulties in producing *North and South* in instalments for *Household Words* in 1854. The book contains the same detailed textual notes as the original.

Letters of Mrs Gaskell's Daughters, 1856-1914, edited by Irene Wiltshire, available in hard copy and as an E-book (PDF and Kindle) from Humanities Ebooks, Tirril Hall, Penrith CA10 2JE, http: humanities-ebooks.co.uk ISBN 978-1-84760-204-6

Elizabeth Gaskell's two eldest daughters Marianne and Meta were their mother's confidantes and their letters include useful extra information illuminating events in her life but all four continued to lead interesting lives after her death, and deserve to be better known in their own right. Correspondents include Charles Eliot Norton and members of the Wedgwood family. A lot of Meta's correspondence dates from the 20th century and deal with the establishment of the Gaskell Collection in Manchester. The book contains copious footnotes. Dr Wiltshire, a former membership secretary of the Society, is still remembered for the regular meetings she conducted in Knutsford.

Please note that the Gaskell Collection in the Manchester City Library has now been added to the library's online digital catalogue. A link to the catalogue has been placed on the Gaskell Society web page. The Library itself is still closed pending extensive renovation and is due to reopen in 2013 but the collection is available at the Greater Manchester Record Office. (The website gives directions.) The temporary library at Eliot House, Deansgate has a good collection of background material in its Manchester room.

The collection contains an extensive range of Gaskell editions, including some early translations, major monographs and biographies including some doctoral theses, books from Gaskell's personal library, cuttings and periodical articles as well as an extensive range of material by and relating to William Gaskell. To browse the collection it is advisable to do undertake a keyword search including the word Gaskell Collection in addition to the term you are interested in.

Editor adds: I was delighted to receive recently from Masuko Adachi a copy of her latest book published in March 2012 (not yet available in English translation): A Study of Elizabeth Gaskell's fiction: exploring themes and techniques. (ISBN 978-4-7553-0266-4) Masuko covers the six novels and seven of the Novelle and short stories. Quotes are given in the original English as well as in Japanese translation. There are photographs of Knutsford, Silverdale, "Heppenheim" and elsewhere. This is a beautifully produced hardback. Masuko is now Emeritus Professor at Notre Dame Seishen University, but she will continue to do some part-time teaching. We wish her a very happy retirement.

Cranford makes a cameo appearance in *The Heather Blazing*, by Colm Tóibín.

Alliance of Literary Societies AGM Weekend

12-13 May 2012

Lynda Stephens

This year's ALS weekend was hosted by the Nottingham Branch of the Dickens Fellowship. We gathered at the Mechanics Institute for coffee before being welcomed by Rosemary Longland, Chairman of the Nottingham Branch and also by Joan Dicks of the International Dickens Fellowship. Rosemary told us that they have a tradition of reading the books out loud at their monthly meetings and this year it is *A Tale of Two Cities*.

The Fellowship is very active in this bicentenary year and they are particularly proud of the permanent legacy of the work done by the University of Buckingham in putting all of the journals online to be freely available at djo.org.uk.

Anita Fernandez Young gave Michael Eaton's presentation of Dickens's Screen Heritage and recommended imdb.com as a resource for films. There was a 1922 film about the London locations in the books.

Karen Mersiowsky of the D H Lawrence Society showed us a film of her researches in Eastwood into Lawrence's home and family. She had interviewed elderly residents and recorded their insights.

We had a pleasant lunch and a chance to meet some of the other delegates, all of whom were enthusiastic about their own authors and keen to advertise upcoming events.

It was announced at the AGM that next year's event will be hosted by the Barbara Pym Society and will be held on the first weekend in June at St Hilda's College Oxford. In 2014 it will be in Canterbury with the Christopher Marlowe Society; in 2015 hosted by the Trollope Society and in 2016, by the Brontë Society.

We had an enjoyable dinner followed by the traditional readings, Janet Kennerley of the Gaskell Society read the letter in which Mrs Gaskell wrote of a train journey during which she read some of a Dickens novel over a gentleman's shoulder and regretted that he wasn't a quicker reader.

On Sunday morning we met at D H Lawrence's birthplace museum in Eastwood for a fascinating tour led by a well-informed guide.

We said our goodbyes and journeyed back to Cheshire through the delightful Derbyshire countryside. Another excellent ALS weekend.

Exciting News from 84 Plymouth Grove

Janet Allan

We now have the go-head! £1,851,800 has been awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, with a further £500,000 in match funding raised by the Manchester Historic Buildings Trust ensures the future of the House.

The announcement was broadcast on television, press and local radio on 13 June, when Professor Hannah Barker from Heritage Lottery Fund met representatives of the Trust and the Gaskell Society at the House.

We will have a restored and converted House – the garden setting and the ground floor as they were in Elizabeth Gaskell's time, the lower ground floor with sympathetically restored kitchen and servants' hall, new toilets, and a connecting lift. Upstairs the large original bedrooms will be available as conference, exhibition and office spaces, with a new staircase connecting it to the rear. There will be sensitive interpretation (sponsored by the Gaskell Society), research material, a book collection and hopefully the best home-made cakes in Ardwick! The money will also pay for a house manager and audience development post for five years, and the success of the house will depend upon them and upon our team of volunteers from near and far.

Work is due to start in September on the disabled ramp and damp-proofing the basement. Our architect and his team are currently preparing detailed plans for the main work, and we hope the builders will be on site by February. Completion is planned for early 2014 when the whole house will be open to the public.

It's taken a long time and we could not possibly have achieved this remarkable result without the dedication and commitment of many people. So thank you all, and please come and see us when we reopen!

Forthcoming Events

Autumn General Meeting

Saturday 29 September, 2012, at the Methodist Church, Knutsford

10.30am Tea and coffee

11am Alison Lundie will deliver the Joan Leach Memorial Lecture
A Woman's Touch: Domestic Arts in the Work of Elizabeth Gaskell

12.30pm approx. lunch

2pm Tracy Vaughan
The Gospel According to Gaskell: Flawed Family and a Father's Sin in Lizzie Leigh

3.30pm approx. finish.

Cost £12.50 to include lunch

Annual General Meeting

Saturday 13 April, 2013, at Cross Street Unitarian Church, Manchester. Further details TBA in next Newsletter.

North-West Group

Manchester Meetings

Gaskell Society Meetings at Cross Street Unitarian Church
held on the first Tuesday of the month (October to March excluding January) Street at 1.00pm.

The Chapel will usually be open at 12 o'clock so that you can bring your own lunch This session's meetings, including lunch will be held in the Percival Room.

The theme for the meetings is **Victorian Contemporaries.**

Tuesday October 2, 2012, Barbara Hardy on George Eliot's novel Middlemarch

Tuesday November 6, 2012, Geoff Thomason on Charles Hallé

Tuesday December 4, 2012, Professor Angus Easson on "*Christmas stories*".
A look at the Christmas stories (not always very "Christmassy") that Dickens wrote in 1850s and 1860s for his magazines

Tuesday February 5, 2013, Ian Emberson on 3 Quartets: the Rossettis, the Mendelssohns and the Brontës.

Tuesday March 5, 2013, Dr Patsy Stoneman on Charlotte Brontë and her relationship with Elizabeth Gaskell and the marked differences between them.

Knutsford Meetings

Meetings are held on the last Wednesday of the month (October to April excluding December) in St John's Church parish rooms, Knutsford, Cheshire.

An excellent buffet lunch is served at 12.15 (£8, pay on the day), followed by a talk and discussion, led by Elizabeth Williams at 1.30pm. Meetings end about 3pm.

The meetings will start again on 31 October 2012 when the work to be studied will be ***Ruth.***

The Gaskell Society South-West

Sunday, 2 September 2012, 12.30 pm
Bring and Share lunch at Bren and Nick Abercrombie's, 12 Mount Road, Lansdown, Bath, Tel: 01225 471241. All members and partners welcome.

Please phone Kate Crawford to tell her you can come (Tel: 01373 834353). Food and drink will be organised by Veronica Trenchard (Tel: 01225 852155).

Saturday, 10 November 2012, 2.30 pm
At the BRLSI, Queen Square, Bath, we will have a lecture by Professor Michael Wheeler, Visiting Professor at the University of Southampton. His topic will be *One of the Lost Continents: religion in nineteenth-century fiction*. Professor Wheeler has had a distinguished career as an academic at Lancaster University where he masterminded the project to build the Ruskin Library.

He then moved on to Hampshire where he served as co-director of the Chawton House Library. He is now an independent scholar and lecturer as well as a Visiting Professor at Southampton.

Discussion Groups

We will hold our discussion groups again in 2013, on **Saturdays, 23 February and 23 March, 2.15 pm**, and the book will be *North and South*.

The groups will again be held in homes, the first at Elizabeth Schlenther's, 14 Vellore Lane, Bath, and the second at Bren Abercrombie's, 12 Mount Road, Lansdown, Bath. The cost will be £5 for both sessions.

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

London and South-East Branch

Sandwich lunch will be available from 12.45pm. Meetings begin at 2pm; tea and cake will be served after the meeting. Usually the formal part of the meeting finishes about 3.30pm for those needing to catch trains.

Venue: Francis Holland School, Graham Terrace, London.

The entrance is via doors on Graham Terrace, please ring the bell marked 'RECEPTION' loudly to gain entry. For security reasons the door must be locked until opened from inside.

The school is a three minute walk from Sloane Square tube station (on the District and Circle lines) and about a 15-20 minute walk from Victoria. There are also buses from Victoria. (Please check running of the tubes as they often carry out engineering work at weekends).

Book Stall: We have a 'bring and buy' book stall (proceeds for the renovation of the Gaskell House in Manchester). Please bring unwanted books and buy replacements.

Meetings are £5.00 (including everything) payable on the day. You are warmly invited. All meetings are held on Saturdays.

Further details from Dr Fran Twinn frantwinn@aflex.net

Saturday, 13 October, 2012, Elizabeth Williams: **Elizabeth Gaskell and Gossip**

Saturday, 9 February, 2013, Ann Brooks: **The Portico Library and the Gaskells' connections**

Ann (and Bryan Howarth who may join us) became volunteers at The Portico,

Manchester, in 1985 and Ann continued to serve for 20 years. They are the co-authors of the official history of the library, *Boomtown Manchester 1800-1850 The Portico Connection. A History of the Portico Library and Newsroom.* (The Portico Library, 2000).

Saturday, 11 May, 2013, Carolyn Lambert: **Sex, Stability and Secrets: Artefacts and rituals in Elizabeth Gaskell's fiction.**

Carolyn will share the fruits of her PhD research.

Saturday, 14 September, 2013, Alison Lundie: **Domestic Arts in *Mary Barton* and *North and South.***

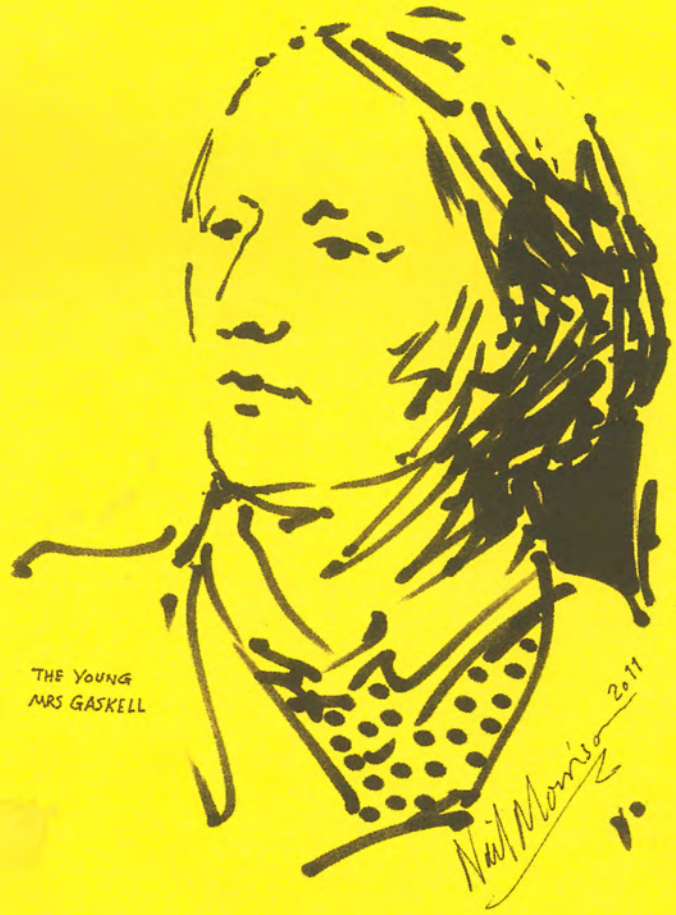
Alison, a founding member of the London Gaskell Reading group, is studying for a PhD at Roehampton. Her talk will focus on shawls and needlewomen in *Mary Barton* and *North and South.*

Academy Service

Sunday, 16 Septetember 2012, 3 pm
Dickens Bicentenary: "Dickens's Correspondence with Elizabeth Gaskell".

This event at Cairo Street Chapel, Warrington, will be a service of hymns and readings with the address given by two members of the Dickens Fellowship in full period costume.

The Gaskell Society



NEWSLETTER

Spring 2013 - Number 55

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

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs. Helen Smith, 11 Lowland Way, Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 9AG.
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Membership Secretary: Miss C. Lingard, 5 Moran Crescent, Macclesfield SK11 8JJ

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Editor's Letter

Helen Smith

Enclosed with this Newsletter is information about the AGM (13 April) and the Conference (19-22 July). Please read, digest carefully and then send your replies to Christine Lingard by 31 March.

The US study tour in September 2012 leaves us quite breathless. Christine Bhatt leads us through the adventures and shows us the sights of this visit in her comprehensive report. Fortunately all the Brits returned safely and in time for the Autumn General Meeting in Knutsford on Mrs Gaskell's 202nd birthday.

Back in Knutsford we have been busy studying *Ruth* under the skilful and expert guidance of Elizabeth Williams and we have celebrated the New Year with a lunch at Peover Golf Club (We do not believe ECG played golf!) on Wednesday 16 January. After we had indulged in more than adequate sustenance, Shirley Foster entertained us with tales of Mrs Gaskell and food. Gourmand and gourmet Mrs G was certainly not 'clemmed', and how ostentatious many of the wealthy Victorians were in their greed and conspicuous consumption. Our thanks to Shirley for permitting her talk to be printed in this Newsletter.

http://www.lang.nagoya-u.ac.jp/~matsuoka/EG-Newsletter.html

At this Japanese website the contents of all Newsletters from number 20 (August 1995) to date are listed. This is a very useful, and possibly not generally known, tool. The first 19 Newsletters also contain items of interest but must be searched, when located, individually.

Often I invite friends and members to write for the Newsletter. The most frequent reply to this heart-felt plea is: "I don't know what to write about" or, "What shall I write about?" (Other members do produce the goods, for which most grateful thanks). May I suggest some possible topics for your consideration:

- Mrs Gaskell and the Brothers Grimm
- Mrs Gaskell travels to Silverdale
- Mrs Gaskell visits Florence
- Mrs Gaskell and Warrington
- Mrs Gaskell: Dover Street, Upper Rumford Street and Plymouth Grove
- Mrs Gaskell and servants
- Miss Stevenson in Knutsford

The scope is endless: please exercise the imagination and start writing. Fortunately you do not need to ask your daughters to sharpen your quills although our children may well prove to be helpful with technology. And snail mail is also accepted.

As I trot along the cobbles in Red Cow Yard to discuss the printing of the Newsletter with Rebecca, I often wonder if Elizabeth, hand-in-hand with Aunt Lumb, may have toddled along this very path 200 years ago. We shall never know.

As ever, I wish to thank everyone who has written for this Newsletter; please continue to do so and I look forward to contributions from new authors. Our thanks to Rebecca Stuart at Lithotech Print in Knutsford for her hard work and patience in producing our Newsletter.

Happy New Year to all our readers! We are really looking forward to meeting many members at the Conference (19-22 July) which, we hope, will be the highlight of the Gaskell Year.

Just desserts for Shirley Foster and Alan Shelston? New Year lunch

Elizabeth Gaskell and Food

Shirley Foster

Having just enjoyed an excellent lunch with all of you, I thought it might be appropriate to this occasion to consider some aspects of Mrs G's relationship with food, both how it featured in her own life, and also its function in her writings.

From her letters, we gain the impression that she enjoyed her food, took note of what she and others consumed, and was ready to complain if she didn't have enough to eat. Her relish for the luxuries of country fare is evident in a letter from Sandlebridge of May 1836, in which she describes 'cream that your spoon stands

upright in, & such sweet (not sentimental but literal) oven-cakes and fresh butter' (6). This contrasts with her grumble, many years later when they were living at Plymouth Grove, that, with a houseful of guests they can't get enough butter: the butter woman doesn't come, and, with their own cow, they can make only about 4lbs a week, 'at the *very* outside' (636). One also suspects that the Manchester butter was not as good as that from Cheshire. The problems of planning menus and having enough food prepared for the many guests who came to Manchester is a frequent topic. Such concerns, she claims, also exercised her when she was away from home. She notes how difficult it is to get provisions in 'wild' Silverdale (505), adding that there is no bread nearer than Milnthorpe (her guests apparently had to make do with shrimps on their own for tea). At Auchencairn, where she stayed in July 1859, there is a similar difficulty with basic foodstuff: there is plenty of meat available 'but potatoes [are] a delicacy not to be purchased nearer than Castle Douglas, nine miles away' (565), There is, though, a note of self-irony in these complaints; she probably enjoyed 'roughing it' – or, rather, giving her correspondents the impression that she was doing just that.

Gaskell, it seems, was usually hungry. After she and William had walked over to Pendleton, to see their American friends, the Bradfords, she was delighted that they were offered 'such a supper' (18), fuelling them for dancing and their walk back to Manchester in the early hours of the morning. For her, restrictions on food intake were particularly disagreeable. She describes a visit to a Miss Nancie Smith, for instance, where they have 'a very scanty lunch' (600). One place where this was an especial problem was at the Paris house of her friend Madame Mohl ('Clarkey'). Mohl was a kind and lively woman who wanted her guests to enjoy themselves, but it seems that she and her husband, Julius, had little appreciation of healthy English appetites. On a visit in 1855, Gaskell describes how she and Meta go to a 'great soirée got up in my honour', which, although fun, failed to provide adequate sustenance:

> [...only] cups of rich chocolate and cream cakes, which made Meta wish she could have kept either her good dinner or her good tea to another day, for she is perpetually hungry. We hardly ever have more than twice to eat in the day. Breakfast, tea and bread and butter. *Then* 6 o'clock dinner, and *nothing* whatever after, not even when we go to [the] theatre. (333)

Ten years later, things haven't improved, as is clear from Gaskell's description to Emily Shaen of their daily diet chez Mohl: they have breakfast coffee at 8.00; then a second breakfast around 11.00 – cold meat, bread, wine and water, and sometimes an omelette, 'what we should call lunch, in fact, only it comes too soon after my breakfast, and too long before dinner for my English habits'. Dinner at the Mohls' is at 'six sharp' – 'Soup, meat, one dish of vegetables and roasted apples are what we have in general'. Afterwards, everyone falls asleep, then 'at eight exactly M Mohl

wakes up and makes a cup of very weak tea for Mme Mohl and me, nothing to eat after dinner; not even if we have been to the play'(750). Sometimes after dinner she goes to an evening party, where she enjoys talk and listening to music, and 'I come home hungry as a hawk about one a.m.' (751). Presumably she then spent a restless night, kept awake by her rumbling empty stomach! Though her tone here is light-hearted, she attributes a fortnight's illness and weakness to 'the real want of food and lowness of diet' in Paris (753).

As well as telling us about Gaskell's own attitudes, references to food and eating in the letters also help to give a picture of the diet and eating habits of an average middle-class Victorian family; they give, too, glimpses of higher social class habits (as I shall show, details of the diet of the poor are chiefly found in Gaskell's fiction). The magnificent supper that she and William enjoyed at the Bradfords' produces a naïve admiration as well as bodily gratification: 'I suppose the Bradfords are very rich, - for [there were] wine and grapes, and pines, and such cakes my mouth waters at the thought, and ducks and green peas, and new potatoes and asparagus and chickens without end, and savoury pies, and all sorts of beautiful confectionery' (18). This is clearly 'how the other half lives'. (Among other things, if the Bradfords grew their own pineapples they would have need a hotbed and a heated glass house, items of some expenditure). Again, the provisions prepared for the Shaens' Christmas dinner at Crix, in December 1847 – 40lb sirloin of beef and two turkeys, for ten in the parlour and thirty-two in the servants' hall – gives some idea of the prosperity of this well-to-do Unitarian family. Gaskell notes more extravagance on a visit to the Behrens at Worleston, where dinner consisted of 'turtle soup, green peas (at half a guinea *a quart*), iced pudding, ducklings, chickens, lamb etc. etc.' (546). In contrast, references to the Gaskells' meals suggest a simpler, less ostentatious diet: lunch could be ham sandwiches and beer (William also eats sandwiches on the train), and one quickly prepared tea included 'eggs filled with anchovy, à la Mrs Shadwell [wife of their friend Col. Shadwell]' (652). Boiled sole is offered for dinner to the children and Old William (not WG), not apparently wholly to the latter's liking (839). Of course, Gaskell had a cook who actually prepared the food, even if she herself chose it. On the rare occasions when she cooked, the result was perhaps less than perfect: she mentions frying ham and eggs at home, and setting fire to the fat in the pan so that someone had to rush out into the garden with it. She adds humorously: 'The toast was not so first-rate. We were like thorough cooks and only did the best dish well' (857).

Gaskell's experiences of eating abroad (in addition to the Mohls) are also referenced in the letters. Foreign travel was of course much less common than it is now, and Gaskell's response to unfamiliar diet is surprisingly tolerant. Unlike William, who disliked foreign food 'like poison' (506) [1], she was prepared to find at least some enjoyment in difference. On her first visit to Germany, she itemises the oddities of lunch (lasting an hour and a half) at Frau von Pickford's: 'soup, boiled meat and potatoes, sausages and pancakes (no bad mixture), RAW pickled fish and kidney

beans or peas stewed in oil, pudding, roast meat and salad, apricot or cherry open flat tart about one and a half yards round, desert cakes, apricots, wild strawberries, coffee' (44). Apart from the raw fish, and perhaps the curious order of courses, the meal seems to have met with her approval – though surely she must have been struck by how much the Germans eat! She experiences another strange foreign meal in Paris, where she goes to 'a real Russian dinner'. Her reactions are mixed: 'First soup made of mutton, and sour kraut, very nasty and horrible to smell. Then balls and rissolles very good; fish, rice, eggs and *cabbage*, all chopped up together, and cased in bread. Then caviar and smoked fish handed round with bread and butter. Then sweetbreads done in some extraordinary fashion, then eels, chopped up with mushrooms, lemon juice and mustard. Then roti of some common sort; then gelinottes or Russian partridge, which feed on the young sprouts of the pine trees, and taste strongly of turpentine. Then a sweet soup, ball of raisins and currants like plum-pudding, boiled in orange-flower water'. That was probably all, she says, adding demurely, 'it was all I took at any rate' (751). There was also far too much food at a dinner she went to in Heidelberg, including large amounts of soup, baked potatoes with no butter, cabbage which she left untouched (probably more sauerkraut), passable sausages, unacceptable beef, and – surprisingly – a good rice pudding. More to her taste was the (this time adequate) food she and Julia had at a French hotel in Dieppe in October 1865. Here, they could have breakfast (coffee, bread and butter) in their own room, lunch (chocolate, cold meat, bread and butter, Neufchatel cheese and grapes) in the salle-à-manger whenever they liked; and a table d'hote dinner of soup, fish, two meats, pudding and desert' [sic] (778). All this was nine francs inclusive, obviously a bargain.

Given Gaskell's interest in food, and also the fact that almost all her writing belongs to the genre of social realism, it is not surprising that we find many references to eating and customs associated with it in her work. As with the Letters, such details provide the social historian with valuable information about contemporary behaviour. Further, though, they can be used as part of the mechanics of narration, a means of illuminating character or furthering the plot. In many of the novels and short stories, local names for foodstuff – for example, 'clap-bread' – tell us of regional differences and specialities. The immense meat pie that is the supper dish for the Holman household in *Cousin Phillis* gives an indication of what a prosperous Cheshire farmer would offer his workers after a hard day in the fields. In one of Gaskell's early short stories, *Christmas Storms and Sunshine* (1848), she tells us what two lower middle class couples might buy for their Christmas meal: the slighter better-off pair choose turkey and sausages, while the other pair make do with roast beef; they also have plum-pudding or mince pies (both choices are consumed when the couples are reconciled and share their celebration meal). *Cranford*, of course, provides delightful details of eating habits among the respectable middle class and gentry. Oranges are special, but are too messy be eaten in public (and distastefully associated with a certain action associated with young babies); tea-time treats include Savoy biscuits and seed-cake; Betty Barker

(who wants to impress) offers scalloped oysters, potted lobsters, jelly and 'little Cupids' (macaroons soaked in brandy – was the name itself partly their attraction?) for supper; bread-jelly is an invalid food. Mr Holbrook belongs to an earlier generation, so when Miss Matty and Mary go to lunch with him, they are presented with two-pronged forks with which to eat peas. Interestingly, too, Holbrook himself adverts to the current custom in which '"folks begin with sweet things, and then turn their dinners topsy-turvey"', whereas he sticks to his father's rule of broth, followed by suet pudding, followed by meat (similar to the Yorkshire habit of eating Yorkshire pudding before the roast?). And of course much of the humour of the novel derives from the clash between the characters' healthy appetites and their 'gentility' which forbids them showing a vulgar interest in food.

One of the texts that most interestingly pictures local eating habits is the 'factional' piece, *Cumberland Sheep Shearers* (1853), which describes the meal offered to the narrator and her family at a prosperous Lake District farm. Hot and weary from their walk up from Keswick, they are presented with a huge tea which includes berrycake (puff-pastry filled with gooseberries), currant bread, plain bread and butter, hot cakes with honey and cheese, green and black tea with sugar and a little 'rich yellow fragrant cream'. The poor children have 'sweet butter' (rum butter) forced on them to put on the 'clap-bread' or oatcakes, a substance which the narrator says 'is altogether the most nauseous compound in the shape of a dainty I ever tasted'. They are also not given enough milk, because the farmer's wife thinks visitors should have 'grocer's stuff' rather than ordinary farm produce – a common misreading of tastes. In contrast to these sweet things, the main meal for the shearers, seventy in all, consists of 'rounds of beef, hams, fillets of veal, and legs of mutton bobb[ing], indiscriminately, with plum puddings, up and down in a great boiler', while ovens disgorge endless berry-pies and 'rice-puddings stuck full of almonds and raisins'.

There are various instances of Gaskell's more symbolic use of food in her fiction, but I have time here to mention only two examples. *Mary Barton* uses social realism to reinforce its message of the sufferings of the poor and the ills of social inequality. At the opening, when times are relatively good, we see the Bartons and their guests enjoying the luxury of eggs, Cumberland ham, bread and tea with milk and rum; when conditions have deteriorated, they often go hungry or eat merely a little bread (butter is very expensive), with perhaps a scrap of cold bacon. One of Gaskell's direct interpolations in the novel concerns the overall weakening effect – psychological as well as physical - of hunger. When Margaret has started to do well with her singing, she offers Mary a sovereign to buy food for her and her father, and the narrator alerts readers to the Lancashire saying that 'food gives heart'; as she shows, there is a world of difference between having something to eat (even the very basic of foodstuffs) and having nothing. The contrast between the poor and the well-off in this respect is also used to further the plot. John Barton's anger at the sight of a wealthy woman buying food for a party – 'haunches of venison, Stilton

cheeses, moulds of jelly' – while his son lies dying of starvation at home both validates his outrage at this social inequality and hints at the coming violence which such resentment will generate. Similarly, the rather obvious contrast between the ghastly cellar in which Davenport lies dying and the plenty in the Carsons' kitchen, where the cook is preparing breakfast as Wilson goes to get an infirmary order, stresses the huge gulf between the 'two nations'. Gaskell highlights the contrast by stressing the good smells, and the lavishness of expenditure and consumption (Mrs Carson has said that she can't afford more than 2/6 a pound for salmon, and demands cold partridge, a well-buttered roll and coffee with cream for her breakfast).

One other, rather more subtle, symbolic use of food consumption is to be found in the early pages of *Wives and Daughters*. Here it is an indicator of character, as well as foreshadowing future events. When Molly is inadvertently left behind at the Towers' fête, Clare (Mrs Kirkpatrick) is instructed by Lady Cuxhaven to take her some food. Molly however is too faint and ill to eat, and passively allows Clare to eat it instead:

> Molly...leant back, picking languidly at the grapes, and watching the good appetite with which the lady ate up the chicken and jelly, and drank the glass of wine. She was so pretty and so graceful in her deep mourning, that even her hurry in eating as if she was afraid of someone coming to surprise her in the act, did not keep her little observer from admiring her in all she did. (Penguin, 17)

The narrative viewpoint is skilfully manipulated here – Molly is cast as the 'little observer', but most of the passage replicates her consciousness – in order to indicate, without direct commentary, Clare's selfishness and deceit, traits which will surface much more during the novel and cause Molly much distress. Here, the contrast between the delicacy of the food itself and the greed with which Clare devours it, is used to excellent effect. Later, too, Molly's slight resentment at Clare's failure to own up to Lady Cuxhaven that it is she, not Molly herself, who has eaten the lunch, subtly reinforces the older woman's innate deviousness. Her refusal, too, to allow Mr Gibson to eat bread and cheese when he returns from his rounds, because cheese is 'vulgar', indicates her false sense of 'gentility' which impacts upon her behaviour as a whole.

Much more remains to be said on this topic, but I hope that this has given some idea of its fruitfulness for future research.

NB Numbers in brackets refer to page numbers in *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell*, Chapple and Pollard.

[1] She was always anxious about William's eating habits while she was away: she tells the elder girls' governess, Barbara Fergusson, that he must have egg beaten up with milk and sugar in the morning; meat or eggs for tea, 'Kidneys, sweet breads and such tit bits – and fowls by way of variety, and devil the legs etc' (FL, 31-2)

George Richmond 1809 -1896 and his portrait of Elizabeth Gaskell

(bequeathed by Meta to, and now in store at, the National Portrait Gallery)

Pat Barnard

George Richmond belonged to a family of artists. In 1831 he married Julia Tatham, the daughter of the architect Charles Heathcote Tatham at Gretna Green and of their 15 children, their son William Blake Richmond became a painter, sculptor and designer. From this, it will be ascertained that George was a follower of William Blake! However it was through portraiture that he made his living, and, of course, of special interest to members of the Gaskell Society he made chalk portraits of Elizabeth Gaskell and of Charlotte Brontë!

Letter 100 to Marianne Gaskell 13th July 1851:

> Wednesday I did not go to Richmond, it was too bad a day for him to draw - Tuesday [Thursday?] a long piece of Richmond again, I think it is like me; I hope Papa will think so but I am most doubtful ....

George Richmond, Elizabeth Gaskell, 1851
© National Portrait Gallery, London

Letter 115 to ?George Richmond February 24th [?1852]:

> Dear Sir,
> I must plead indisposition as an excuse for not sooner having written to tell you that some time ago my husband placed £31-10s to your account at Masterman's; he says you will know where the bank is so I daresay my having forgotten the more exact address will not signify. With many pleasant recollections of the time I passed in your studio, I believe to remain
> Yours truly, E. C. Gaskell

Letter 166 to John Forster Sept 1853:

> Visit to Haworth - in the sitting-room - there was her likeness by Richmond given to her father by Messrs Smith & Elder.

Letter 241 to George Smith, May 31st 1855:

> Dear Sir,
> I believe you have a copy of Richmond's portrait of Miss Brontë. I want to know if there is any probability of its ever being engraved; or if you would ever object to a daguerreotype being taken from it at future for my own self. I can not tell you how I honoured & loved her.

At the request of the Gaskell Society, and for the 200th anniversary of the birth of Elizabeth Gaskell, the National Portrait Gallery retrieved from storage the two portraits of Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë and displayed them with accompanying titles. (Pastel drawings are subject to deterioration in the light of day so are now back in storage but arrangements may be made to see them. The Gallery also has some interesting papers associated with ECG in a box called Elizabeth Gaskell Sitter Box of which Gaskell Society member Marjorie Darlington has copies)

The portrait of Elizabeth was positioned along one corner of a room with that of Charlotte Brontë alongside the adjoining wall. Charles Darwin's portrait in oils (still on view) was in the same room.

Perhaps you know whether William approved of the drawing! I know most of us were enchanted by this pastel and in my view it is the best portrait of her, but did Elizabeth herself think so? I wonder!

Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot :

siblings, spoilt dogs, cream-jugs, torn dresses, farm labourers, the judgment of Solomon, and the outward gaze

Barbara Hardy

As she gained her position as the greatest woman novelist of her day, even challenging the position of the dominant men, Dickens and Thackeray, George Eliot may have had reasons for feeling what Harold Bloom has called 'the anxiety of influence', not only as the common *jalousie de métier* but with the extra pang of sisterly emulation. Elizabeth Gaskell was her most successful woman rival, born ten years earlier, first established in popularity and talent; like her beginning under cover of a male pseudonym, like her turning nostalgia into art, like her blending

pathos and fun, but unlike her emerging into a stable social position as writer, married woman and mother. The mention of Gaskell in Eliot's anonymous essay *Silly Novels by Women Novelists*, first published in the Westminster Review, 1856 [1], before George Eliot the novelist came into existence, is often cited, but the brief comment merely brackets Gaskell with Harriet Martineau, very much her inferior as a writer, and Currer Bell, who was dead, as excellent women novelists 'treated as cavalierly as if they had been men'.

Gaskell and Eliot have been often associated in the discussion of *The Moorland Cottage* (1850) and *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), because of some obvious resemblances, and also perhaps because Eliot denied knowing the book when Swinburne accused her of plagiarism in his hostile *Note on Charlotte Brontë* (1877). *The Moorland Cottage* is not one of Gaskell's best stories, inferior to *Mary Barton*, *Cranford*, *Ruth*, and *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, which Eliot and Lewes read, and its lack of depth have been an extra reason for Eliot's irritated disclaimer, if this was disingenuous or if she recalled what she had forgotten. Gordon Haight asserts that Eliot had never seen Gaskell's book, apparently accepting her own word (*George Eliot: A Life, p. 525* [2]).

Gaskell had earlier written an amusing letter about happily accepting the authorship of *Adam Bede* – she laughed at herself in a way Eliot never did, because Eliot could joke, but not about her art – though the gossipy and intrusive part Gaskell played in the Liggins scandal is less admirable. Eliot had replied amicably to Gaskell's famous letter expressing admiration and rueful regret that she was not 'Mrs Lewes', saying she knew her writing showed an affinity with the feeling that inspired the early chapters of *Mary Barton* and *Cranford*.

Jo Pryke is persuasive in the conversation with Shirley Foster published in the last but one number of this Newsletter [3] when she says 'common sense suggests that Eliot probably had read *The Moorland Cottage*, opting for unconscious rather than conscious plagiarism' but she makes some points I find less convincing. She argues that the environment and symbolism of *The Mill on the Floss* derive from *The Moorland Cottage* and its surrounding nature, but this ignores the influence of Wordsworth: 'The Thorn' has its special link with Maggie Brown's sacred place, the knotty thorn-tree on its mound, and the poet is a strong presence, explicit and implicit, in the work of both novelists. (Gaskell and Eliot shared not only this love of the English poet, but a profound and informed affection for Dante, whom they both read in Italian and used subtly, though differently, in *North and South*, *Cousin Phillis*, *Felix Holt*, *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda*.) Though Wordsworth was a beloved model for both novelists, their common emphasis on memory need not be attributed to his insistence on the faculty in the patterns and passions of life and poetry. Gaskell's *Cranford* is a nostalgic and loving tribute to the Knutsford of her nurturing, and Eliot pointed out the sources of *The Mill on the Floss*, her own most autobiographical novel, not in a mill and a dangerous river, but in the personal

places of a 'brown stream' where she fished with her brother, and the attic in Griff House (still there) from which, like Maggie Tulliver, she looked out at distant horizons. She did not need the stimulus or influence of Wordsworth's or Gaskell's insistence on memory, given the bitter personal circumstances of her own severance from place and family, starting with the estrangement from her father when she lost her Christian faith, and culminating in the complete break with her family after she confessed her relationship with Lewes. The emphasis on emotional and social continuity is there, in personal and particular, lamented and analysed, before she read Gaskell. Neither Pryke nor Foster, who mentions 'family structures', considers the autobiographical origins of *The Mill on the Floss*: its story of the preferential treatment of the boy and the siblings' troubled relationship, has a well-documented origin in Eliot's life and is less the story of Maggie and Edward Browne than that of Mary Ann and Isaac Evans. We can read the sources in George Eliot's letters and the reminiscences she shared with her husband John Cross, which he warmly and minutely recorded in his biography. Finally, the name Maggie seems to me weak rather than strong evidence: were Eliot guilty of plagiarism, Maggie is the last name she would have chosen for her heroine. What it suggests is that Gaskell's story struck a chord in her mind, resulting neither in copy nor *hommage* but a fascinating unconscious echo.

There is no doubt about the resemblance in the sibling relationship and the drowning, and it is not the only example of a plot in which Eliot seems to be remembering Gaskell. *Ruth* and *Adam Bede* both tell the story of a young woman who is seduced and deserted by a man of higher class, contemplates drowning herself in a pool, and gives birth to a child. In *Middlemarch* Dorothea's inherited fortune is small compared to Margaret Hale's but it also enables her to marry the man she loves. One is tempted to suggest that Eliot is re-writing Gaskell, but these resemblances are broad and less interesting than more particularised small echoes.

My first example is the similarity of two domestic dramas, in Chapters VII and VIII of *Cranford* (1853) and Chapter VII of *Amos Barton, Scenes of Clerical Life* (1856), their common properties a jug of cream and another of milk, their chief characters two small spoilt dogs, Lady Jamieson's Carlo, and the Countess Czerlaski's Jet, with their lady owners. Carlo appears when Lady Jamieson insists on taking him to Miss Barker's party, where he arrives panting and rushing round his mistress, is addressed as 'poor ittie doggie' by his hostess, swallows 'chance pieces of cake', and barks with a loud snapping bark; then in a less hospitable gathering at home where 'the poor dumb creature' lies on the rug, barks ungraciously, and laps his saucer of cream which 'he knew quite well ... constantly refused tea with only milk ... so the milk was left for us'. The hungry visitors wryly observe 'the gratitude evinced by his wagging his tail for the cream which should have been ours'. Eliot's Jet also gets cream poured by a fond owner, when the maid Nanny has forgotten the jug of breakfast milk, and is bidden to get more cream, speaks out and

happily precipitates the departure of the unwelcome guest. Carlo has a small comic role, sympathetically developed when he dies; Jet is a plot-mover. Eliot's outspoken Nanny is very Gaskellian, more individual and assertive than Eliot's usual servants, who with a few other exceptions, like Denner in *Felix Holt* and Tantripp in *Middlemarch*, are subdued in behaviour, speech, and fictional role. Names are re-cycled: if the Bartons' Nanny echoes Miss Barker's Nancy in *Cranford*, another Nanny turns up later as a housemaid at the Towers in *Wives and Daughters* (1865). As for milk and cream, the dairy-wise Eliot has her own expertise: butter-making plays an erotic role in *Adam Bede*, and cream is a prominent object in the first chapter of her published fiction, in *Amos Barton*. It is a psychological as well as a social marker, as Mrs Patten's niece pours it into 'fragrant tea with a discreet liberality', Mrs Hackit abstemiously declines it, and the Reader is informed of its merits at some length. Eliot must have found Gaskell's dog-milk-cream image-chain congenial, perhaps inspirational, and Carlo and Jet are resonantly related in one of those concatenations which fascinated the ground-breaking Shakespearean image-analyst Caroline Spurgeon, who pointed out the personal and social significance of the repeated spaniel-fawning-sweetmeat image chain, itself coincidentally related to Gaskell's and Eliot's shared distaste less for small spoilt dogs than for their silly owners.

In Gaskell's story *Lizzie Leigh* (its first part published in Dickens's *Household Words* in 1850, then the whole in a volume with other Gaskell stories in 1853) there is a domestic scene with some resemblance to one in *Adam Bede* (1859). In the first chapter Anne Leigh, like Lisbeth Bede, is mourning her husband's death; she has suffered from his hard-hearted refusal to forgive their 'fallen' daughter Lizzie, but recalls early happy days, like Lisbeth who has suffered from her husband's drinking and Adam's inflexibility. Mrs Leigh has two sons, Will stern and inflexible, the younger Tom delicate and gentle, in some ways like Adam and Seth. Anne comes down from the bedroom where her husband's body is laid out to find that her sons have 'the tea-things' ready, boiled the kettle, and 'done everything in their power to make the house-place more comfortable for her'. In Chapter 10 of *Adam Bede* Lisbeth comes from the chamber of death to find the place disordered but Seth making a fire 'that he might get the kettle to boil, and persuade his mother to have a cup of tea'. He tells her he wants to put some 'things away, and make the house more comfortable'. The situation is similar and so are some words, for instance 'house' and 'comfortable'. There is no question that Eliot's scene and novel are larger and more complex, her language, affective form and ideas more original, sustained and profound than Gaskell's, but there are affinities, echoes and multiple associations - what John Livingstone Lowes in *The Road to Xanadu*, his seminal study of Coleridge's reading and sources, called 'hooked atoms' (1927).

In Chapter 2 of *Ruth* (18) there is a crucial episode in which the looped garland of a ball-dress is torn during a dance, and the dancer withdraws to have it mended by Ruth, in attendance as a milliner's apprentice: the effect of Ruth's beauty and

dignity on the lady's partner, Bellingham, who watches the repair, precipitates the love-affair and the main plot. The occasion is echoed in Chapter 11 of George Eliot's *Silas Marner* (1860) where the waist of Nancy Lammeter's is torn as she dances with Godfrey Cass, and her sister Priscilla does the repair, telling Godfrey brusquely that his presence makes no difference to her. Again, the scenes, characters and function are completely different, but here too the scene is pivotal to the plot: for Godfrey this is a moment of commitment as he recklessly decides to follow his feelings for Nancy, in spite of his secret marriage. And in each case there is a man attending an intimate occasion, a woman mending another woman's dress, a tear, the interruption of a dance, a subtle erotic charge, and some delicate symbolism.

That surely unconscious use in *The Mill* of the name Maggie is confirmed by another striking coincidence of name and character. [4] A character called Timothy Cooper makes a small but important appearance in Gaskell's narrative gem, the novella *Cousin Phillis* (1863-4), and another of the same status and name turns up in Eliot's epic of provincial life, *Middlemarch* (1871-2). The two characters share a name, and a vocation. Gaskell's farm labourer figures in a small sub-plot, as a character who is a thorn in the flesh of Holman, Phillis's father, the not always tolerant Christian minister, whose resentment shows itself in an amusing scene where he explains that he'd like to change the marital bedroom to one where Timothy's incompetence, a 'daily temptation to anger' (Part II), won't be visible from the window. Timothy's stupidity kills a fine Ribstone Pippin when he tips a load of quicklime against its trunk, but he redeems himself in the eyes of master, narrator and reader as he keeps the noisy market-day carts from disturbing Phillis in her sickness, dryly commenting to the narrator Paul, in his only speech, "I reckon you're no better nor a half-wit yourself" (Part IV).

Eliot's Timothy Cooper is a slow though not stupid farm labourer, but unlike his predecessor, who makes several appearances and in a sense develops, if not in himself then in the image he presents to the reader, is an even more important nonce character. He makes his bow once, in his single and impressive speech, when the railway survey comes to Middlemarch, and a minor but significant and historical truthful and representative riot is stirred up by dubiously motivated *agents provocateurs*, involving Fred Vincy, who finds his vocation, and Caleb Garth, who finds unexpected opposition in Timothy, who is not one of the rioters:

> "Somebody told you the railroad was a bad thing. That was a lie. It may do a bit of harm here and there, to this and to that; and so does the sun in heaven. But the railroad's a good thing."
>
> "Aw, good for the big folks to make money out on", said old Timothy Cooper, who had stayed behind turning his hay while the others had been gone on their spree; - "I'n seen lots o' things turn up sin' I war a young un – the war an' the pe-ace and the canells, an' th'oald King George, an' the Regen', and the

new King George, an' the new un as has got a new ne-ame—an' it's all been aloike to the poor mon .... This is the big folks's world, this is. But yo're for the big folks, Master Garth, yo are."

Timothy was a wiry old labourer, of a type lingering in those times ... having as little of the feudal spirit, and believing as little, as if he had not been totally unacquainted with the Age of Reason and the Rights of Man. Caleb was in a difficulty known to any person attempting in dark times and unassisted by miracle to reason with rustics who are in possession of any undeniable truth which they know through a hard process of feeling, and let it fall like a giant's club on your neatly-carved argument for a social benefit which they do *not* feel. (LVI) Each Timothy is called 'Tim' by the gentry, and Eliot's character echoes three words of Gaskell's: 'yo're', 'sin' and 'clem'. The two are minor characters – Gaskell's the centre of a sub-plot, Eliot's an impressive nonce-character – but once we imagine their omission, they turn out to be indispensable to finer meanings. Eliot, a less overtly political novelist than Gaskell, uses the name of a Gaskell character for a powerful political encounter, a single speech and a moment without which the great novel would lose something vital, the statement of that 'undeniable truth', the one radical criticism of the worthy Caleb, and his work for Dorothea's land-rights, as a 'Master's Man'. Of course Eliot was influenced by Gaskell here (as perhaps also in her mentions of the railway and the canal-system) and the influence led to a coincidental choice of name which she would never have used had she not been using it unconsciously. Had she not used it, no-one would have perceived the slight, delicate, subtle link between the two novels and novelists. His author, who would have been most fascinated by the second Timothy and recognised his name, died before *Middlemarch* was published.

The coincidence of the two Timothys draws attention to politics, and to the creative imagination of our two novelists, which brilliantly invented the nuanced and humane presence and pressure of minor characters, possessing their individual centres of self. Why always Dorothea? asks the narrator of *Middlemarch*, turning to the less sympathetic Casaubon. Gaskell and Eliot ask it also – not arrestingly and explicitly -- of a smaller presence: Why not also Timothy Cooper? The coincidence of naming draws attention to the affinity between two great novelists. and should be welcomed by those Gaskell admirers who have some justification for feeling and thinking that their novelist has been under-privileged in literary reputation, especially when compared to her more conspicuously celebrated sister and rival. It is one of several echoes I have noticed over the years, not while researching this subject but reading with other subjects in mind. Some are unconscious memories, some coincidences, others common tropes – we may argue about categories - but all show similar preoccupations and affinities, in details more eloquent of influence than the more obvious plot resemblances.

My last conjunction belongs to a trope found in earlier and later painting - for instance, Vermeer and Caspar David Friedrich - and earlier fiction - for instance, Jane Austen. [5] In *Ruth*, *North and South*, *Wives and Daughters*, *The Mill on the*

Floss and *Middlemarch* there are many scenes where characters, almost always women, look out of a window or in one case, from a beach, out to sea, in a gaze which is morally and psychologically resonant. This outward look links *North and South* and *Middlemarch*, both psychologically and socially wide-ranging and profound works.

In *North and South* Margaret is shown in a long sequence of visions, which culminates in a successful acceptance of the world that is larger than her own existence and which stimulates her to subdue her self. [6] Gaskell's Unitarian vision sometimes suggests God or a Creator: on the beach at Cromer, Margaret looks at the sky, hears 'the psalm' of the waves, and decides to take her fortune into her own capable human hands (Chapter 49), and the emphasis is secular. But in a scene written later, and inserted as the final paragraph of Chapter 48 in the second edition of the novel, she looks from the window of her old Harley Street nursery, a sacred place where she now repents untruthfulness and prays to renew her youthful vows to live 'sans peur et sans reproche', as her night sky – perhaps a little strangely – shows 'faint pink reflections of earthly lights on the soft clouds which float tranquilly into the white moonlight', and the emphasis is on the act of prayer. In this revised version the new London scene obviously makes the whole image-set more concentrated and more sacramental in emphasis, picking up earlier religious imagery, like 'dome', the circles of Dante's Inferno, and making the later 'psalm' and perhaps even the 'east', more resonant, but the human consequence is always prominent.

In Chapter 50 a man replaces the woman, and the moral emphasis is entirely secular: after a sleepless night of conflict and crisis, John Thornton opens a shuttered window, to experience a 'ruddy dawn', where the emphasis is on sunrise but also on a east cold wind informing him that the weather will not change for his commercial convenience. Like Margaret's but more practically, though picking up resonance from the previous scenes, his outward gaze stimulates and symbolises the subjugation of self.

So does Dorothea's. Dorothea's habitual view is from her sacred place, the boudoir in Lowick which has a westerly outlook on to the grounds and trees of Lowick Manor, but on the last occasion she looks east, from her bedroom, after a night of vigil and struggle, to see 'the bending sky' and 'the pearly light' on a world beyond her own domain, on the road a man carrying a burden, a woman and child, in the field 'perhaps the shepherd with his dog': 'the largeness of the world and the manifold wakings of men to labour and endurance'. The agnostic's emphasis is humanist and secular: any religious implication in its eastward view is wide, in this novel appropriately reminding us of many mythologies. Eliot's presentation of her heroine's creative outward look is the culmination of a more clearly and systematically patterned sequence than that in *North and South*, and her final vision is more eloquently expanded as climax and culmination than Gaskell's, though with a similar theme of personal tradition and sacrament.

Ruth and Molly Gibson also share the outward look, but without such affinities with Eliot, though Molly has one image in common with Dorothea – another hooked atom. Eliot's revision of the imagery and the meanings of scenes and images from *North and South* for *Middlemarch* is confirmed by an elaborate and striking simile Eliot is unconsciously recalling from *Wives and Daughters* (1865). Molly Gibson's conquest of her barely articulate jealousy of Cynthia's attachment to Roger Hamley, as he lies 'ill and unattended in ... savage lands' is compared to that of the real mother in King Solomon's judgment, (Kings, Bk.1. Chap. 3. 16-18), who pleaded, 'O my lord! give her the living child, and in no wise slay it .... Let him live, let him live, even though I may never set eyes upon him again!' (Chap. XXXVII). In Dorothea's night vigil the comparison is repeated as she sees two images of Will Ladislaw, 'the bright creature whom she had trusted' and 'a living man towards whom there could not yet struggle any wail of regretful pity, from the midst of scorn and indignation and jealous offended pride': 'two living forms that tore her heart in two, as if it had been the heart of a mother who seems to see her child divided by the sword, and presses one bleeding half to her breast while her gaze goes forth in agony towards the half which is carried away by the lying woman that has never known a mother's pang' (Chap. LXXX). Eliot's image and Dorothea's emotion are more violent and complex than Gaskell's, but the second author is unconsciously re-imagining her predecessor's Biblical simile from one novel, seven paragraphs before she unconsciously elaborates and deepens the dawn symbolism from another. (If we compare Gaskell's experience of maternal pangs with Eliot's childlessness the echo sounds an extra poignancy.)

Gaskell was a more prolific and uneven writer than Eliot, *The Moorland Cottage* and *Lizzie Leigh* simpler and cruder fictions than *The Mill on the Floss* and *Adam Bede*, but I propose that *North and South*, *Cousin Phillis* and *Wives and Daughters* played a part in the making of Middlemarch, and stand comparison with it.

Notes:

1 Reprinted in Selected Critical Writings, p. 319, ed. Rosemary Ashton, World's Classics, OUP, Oxford, 1992

2 OUP, Oxford, 1968

3 'Controversy at Cross Street. Was George Eliot guilty of plagiarism?' and 'Moorland Cottage', The Gaskell Newsletter, pp. 23-25, No. 53, Spring 2012

4 I discuss this more fully in 'The Two Timothy Coopers', The George Eliot Review, pp. 25-27, No. 35, 2004

5 See 'Perspectives on Self and Community in George Eliot: Dorothea's Window', ed. Patricia Gately, Dennis Leavens & D. Cole Woodcox, Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, Queenston, & Lampeter, 1997

6 I discuss aspects of this subject in 'Two Women: Some Forms of Feeling in 'North and South', The Gaskell Journal, pp.19-29, No. 25, 2011

Margaret Emily Gaskell

Ann O'Brien

This year marks the centenary of the death of Margaret Emily (Meta) Gaskell, Elizabeth Gaskell's second daughter. Meta was born on 7th February 1837.

Shortly after Meta's birth Elizabeth's "more than mother" Aunt Lumb suffered a severe stroke. Elizabeth hastened over to Knutsford with baby Meta, to look after her aunt. Staying in lodgings, she spent most of the day with Aunt Lumb, returning to the lodgings only to feed Meta. After eight weeks of suffering, Aunt Lumb died, leaving Elizabeth devastated.

Despite such an inauspicious beginning, Meta seems to have thrived. She was baptised by William Turner on September 28th. (He was the Unitarian minister with whom Elizabeth had stayed in Newcastle-on-Tyne, for three winters before her marriage and with whom she maintained a close friendship.)

We have only fleeting glimpses of Meta as a baby; comparing her with Marianne, Elizabeth writes that Meta is 'far more independent than Marianne was at her age... she is very affectionate, but not so sensitive as MA was...'. Six months later a little more is revealed about Meta, as her mother writes, 'She is a more popular character: very lively, enjoying a joke...but she is passionate and wilful, though less so I think than she was.'

Meta's upbringing was typical of the Victorian middle class, the girls helping with household duties. Writing to Elizabeth Holland, Elizabeth tells her that after their lessons it falls to Meta to 'fold up Willie's clothes - Meta is so neat and knowing, only handles wet napkins *very gingerly*'. Then after tea, when the two younger children, Flossy and Willie, have been put to bed, Elizabeth read to Marianne and Meta while they 'sew, knit or (do) worsted work.'

Education followed the traditional pattern: at first, the girls were educated by a governess. Eventually Elizabeth became so dissatisfied with education provided by their governess, Barbara Fergusson, that she decided to organise it herself.

She brought in teachers, one to teach French and another to teach arithmetic and writing, while their father was to teach history and natural history. Meta was to have music lessons from their friend Rosa Mitchell (Marianne was already receiving piano lessons from Emily Winkworth). She arranged for both girls to study drawing at the School of Design. Elizabeth planned to give them 'dictation and grammar lessons.....and make myself as much as possible their companion and friend.' This indeed she did, as on her frequent trips, both in this country and abroad, her daughters often accompanied her; they also helped her both in the running of the household, and, as they grew older, by acting as her secretaries.

It is recognised that Meta was the most intellectual of the daughters. In a letter to Anne Robson, Elizabeth writes 'Meta ...is so brim-full of...I don't know what to call it, for it is something deeper, and less showy than talent' and goes on to describe Meta's musical ability and her artistic gifts and how she is able to able to appreciate any book that her mother is reading. Charlotte Brontë sent Ruskin's *The Stones of Venice* for Meta and her mother to read 'and find some passages to please you.' In fact there was quite a correspondence between Charlotte and Meta in addition to that between Charlotte and Elizabeth (Meta was only 14 years old at the start of this friendship!)

In 1850 Marianne was sent away to school in London; this was the first time the sisters had been apart for so long. Elizabeth wrote to Marianne 'Meta cried sadly last Sunday because you did not write to her'. It is evident that there was a close and loving relationship between the two girls, which lasted throughout their lives.

Two years later Meta was sent away to Rachel Martineau's school in Liverpool (Rachel was the younger sister of Harriet Martineau), eminently suitable for this gifted young girl. Susanna Winkworth wrote of it as being '... the most admirably-managed of any school I have ever known, --with regard to the thoroughness of the intellectual training imparted'. There were lessons in Latin, maths and history as well as music lessons, given by Mr James Hermann, the leader of the Liverpool concerts.

Visits to the Lakes reveal Meta's early love of walking. On one such visit, before she started at Miss Martineau's school, the family and friends paid a three day visit to the Yorkshire Dales; Meta and her father walked fourteen or fifteen miles across the hills to Airedale. Walking was a lifelong passion later to be shared with younger sister Julia.

Meta was not entirely devoted to intellectual pursuits and outdoor leisure: she also enjoyed the same social life as any girl of her age and class. She loved going to parties and balls both in London and at home in Manchester. Elizabeth writes to Eliza Fox that the military presence in the city meant that they are invited to 'more [balls] than I like, as Miss Meta and one of the officers are a little too thick in the dancing line, 8 times in one evening being rather too strong - and drawing down on the young lady a parental rebuke!'.

In February 1857 the family, minus Papa, had a wonderful holiday in Rome, taking in the sights and a full social life, with most of Roman society. On this holiday they met Charles Eliot Norton, with whom Meta corresponded regularly until his death over fifty years later. Meta also met Captain Charles Hill and so began the most traumatic period in her life. Catherine Winkworth, in her letters to her sisters back home in England, relates how Captain Hill often accompanied the Gaskell party on their sight seeing trips. Meta was swept off her feet by the dashing captain and only a month after their return to Manchester, her engagement to Captain Hill was announced. The wedding was planned to take place the following year, but after discovering that her fiancé had gambling debts and was not the honourable man she had believed him to be, Meta broke off the engagement. The effect on her was devastating. She was consumed by doubts as to whether she had done the right thing and her health suffered accordingly. However, she continued to devote herself to her work in helping the poor of Manchester and also to teaching at the Sunday school.

Meanwhile Elizabeth decided to take her daughter first to Silverdale, and then, when she had enough money, abroad, 'out of the clatter of tongues consequent on her breaking off her engagement'. At the end of September 1858, Elizabeth took Meta, Marianne and Florence, to Heidelberg where they stayed and met many interesting people who lived there. Meta and Florence had German lessons and Meta, spent much of her time sketching. By the time they reached home, in December they had been away for six months. The long holiday had achieved its purpose and Meta was much improved. Furthermore, a meeting and ensuing friendship with Charles Bosanquet had, according to her mother 'done much to restore her faith in *man*kind which Captain Hill had shaken.'

The following year Meta kept herself busy, 'with almost too many interests.... working at Greek and German; practising, drawing, teaching at the Ragged School, has a little orphan boy to teach French to, reads with Elliott every night, etc. etc. and has always more books she [is] wanting to read than she can get through.'. She spent more time travelling, though this year she did not go abroad; she visited Dumfries, London, Gloucester, Canterbury, Whitby and finally, after Christmas, Edinburgh.

In May 1860 there was an extended holiday, sketching in the Pyrénées, with a middle-aged relative, Catherine Darwin, sister of Charles Darwin. Her interest in painting and sketching led to painting lessons given by John Ruskin and friendships with other artists such as Holman Hunt and Rossetti. This was also the time when Meta considered becoming a professional artist and decided against but continued to be an enthusiastic and talented amateur.

She continued to devote herself to social work and in the great distress caused by the cotton famine of the early 1860's she worked tirelessly to alleviate the suffering of

the poorest victims. This eventually led to a breakdown in health, with problems relating to headaches and severe backache, believed by Elizabeth to be as much mental as physical.

Despite her bouts of poor health, Meta took an active role in the negotiations for the purchase of the house in Hampshire which Elizabeth was buying as a retirement home for herself and William. Meta also helped in buying the furniture for the new house. It was a devastating blow for Meta when her mother died so suddenly, in her arms, in that very house. After this Meta suffered a brief breakdown in health but two weeks later she was able to write to Charles Norton, telling him of the circumstances surrounding her mother's death. Undoubtedly her strong religious beliefs helped her deal with her grief. In her letter she wrote 'For me it has changed the face of this world for ever, but thank God, one feels every day more sure that this world is but a threshold of the future where there will be no more sorrow or parting.'

Meta and Julia now devoted themselves to taking care of their father, who survived his wife by nineteen years. Whilst he continued the work of his ministry at the Cross Street Chapel, and his various other educational activities, his daughters continued to teach at the Mosley Street Sunday School and to help the poor of Manchester.

After their father's death, using the royalties from Elizabeth's books, they were able to support many charities, including the Unitarian College, Manchester College, Oxford and particularly the sick and needy of Manchester. The Manchester and Salford Sick Poor and Private Nursing Institution was a charity close to the hearts of both Meta and Julia, and for thirty-five years Meta served on its committee. Among their many gifts to the people of Manchester was a recreation ground created on a piece of land opposite their home in Plymouth Grove.

Meta was a member of The Association for Promoting the Higher Education of Women, which raised funds to establish the Manchester High School for Girls and records show that she was a generous subscriber. She became a foundation governor at the school, serving on many committees, including those which dealt with matters of art, literature and scholarship. (She also served on the North of England Council for the Education of Women, which was campaigning for women to be admitted to higher education. Her interest in education extended to Owens College, later the Victoria University of Manchester, to which she made regular donations as well as giving items from her parents' collections. In her will she made further donations to the University.)

When Julia died suddenly in 1908, Meta was heartbroken. Julia had been her constant companion since the death of their mother. Gradually, over the next five years Meta's health deteriorated, although she continued to fulfil her obligations

to the various committees on which she served. When she died, in 1913, there were many who mourned her passing. Although Meta was not as famous as her parents, for the people of Manchester her death was a source of great sorrow. There were numerous tributes in the newspapers of the day. Perhaps this from *The Daily Chronicle* best describes the high regard in which Meta was held: 'Many Englishwomen of our time have earned wider fame, but few have lived more remarkable or more fruitful lives than Miss M.E. Gaskell'.

Belonging

Doreen Pleydell

There's an old Scottish Music Hall song, 'I belong to Glasgow, good old Glasgow town'. When I first heard it, it set me thinking of what 'belonging' means. One can belong to an organisation, such as The Gaskell Society; that doesn't mean that one is owned by the organisation, but that one willingly is a member of it.

Belonging in some respects implies possession. In the Anglican marriage service, one is required to 'forsake all others and cleave only to him/her as long as ye both shall live.' The husband and wife belong to each other. Sadly, that wish is very often broken not because of infidelity, but owing to the wish to be independent - the feeling that one has lost one's independence by marrying. There is more divorce now than ever; could it be that marriage is a prison to escape from. In Ibsen's play A Doll's House, Nora has the courage to leave her husband, and less courageously, her children too.

I've been watching the TV programmes on Queen Victoria and her children. It's amazing to what extent she was able to exert power over her daughters - how she arranged their marriages and wished to control every aspect of their lives. (Nowadays she would only mourn as they go their own way.)

Even before the Second World War parents, especially fathers, had great control over their children. In my own case, my father decided that I should enter the Civil Service, because, as he said "If you don't marry, you'll get a pension at 60." It didn't occur to me to rebel.

Children certainly belong to their parents, but from a very early age wish to be independent, to think for themselves. They still belong to a family though, just as Mrs Gaskell belonged to hers. When one possesses an object, one can do so

Happy Birthday Mrs Gaskell!

Tracy Vaughan (L) and Alison Lundie, our speakers at the Autumn General Meeting in Knutsford, 29 September 2012

On the threshold... Members of Manchester Historic Building Trust, Friends of Plymouth Grove and Gaskell Society members assemble at 84 Plymouth Grove for the Heritage Lottery Fund annoucement, 13 June 2012

without a feeling of guilt. I possess a rather lovely vase - it simply belongs to me and I don't feel guilty about owning it.

Until very recently it was thought that the world was organised entirely for the human race - that we could do as we liked, without thought that other species might have a claim on it - the trees, animals, plants, insects, even the very earth itself. We are only just beginning to realise that we were mistaken, that if we continue on the same course, there will soon be no civilisation as we know it. Is it too late to change our ways?

What about belonging to a place? Elizabeth Gaskell was brought up in Knutsford, and apart from the time spent at boarding school, Knutsford was her home until she married. Then smoky Manchester became her home, but was she ever as attached to it as she was to Knutsford? Certainly she said that she always felt better when visiting "the dear little country town where I grew up."

The last line of the music hall song runs like this - 'When I've had a couple of drinks on a Saturday, Glasgow belongs to me!" I belong to Knutsford, just as did Mrs G but I can't say "Knutsford belongs to me!'

Former President, Professor JAV Chapple remembers...

In 1959 I joined the staff of the English Department at Manchester University as an assistant lecturer. Professor Frank Kermode asked me if I was then working on anything in particular. I was not, so he gently suggested that I should use my Yale experience with manuscripts (mostly from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, in fact) to join with my senior colleague Arthur Pollard in collecting and editing the widely scattered letters of Elizabeth Gaskell. At that time, she was generally known for little more than *Cranford* and *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, despite the efforts of A. W. Ward, Mrs E. H. Chadwick, A. S. Whitfield, Clement Shorter, Ross D. Waller, David Cecil, Winifred Gérin and Raymond Williams, together with books by overseas enthusiasts, Gerald DeWitt Sanders, Jane Whitehill, Aina Rubenius, A. B. Hopkins, Coral Lansbury, Edgar Wright and Enid Duthie.

Arthur Pollard discovered that too often Gaskell manuscript letters had been badly transcribed. Also, though many letters from her had survived in early printed

sources, some of them had been grotesquely mangled in ways that only became fully apparent when we were fortunate enough to find the original manuscripts to set beside them for close comparison. A number of Gaskell manuscripts seem to have been destroyed or had vanished without leaving a trace. We found that owners and holders of letters from Elizabeth Gaskell were exceptionally generous in allowing us access to unpublished material. Marianne Gaskell's descendant, Mrs Trevor Jones, gave us permission to publish without hesitation. Her own group of 51 letters was especially valuable, as one might have expected. The late Rosemary Dabbs and her daughter Sarah Prince (née Dabbs), continued this gracious tradition.

In those days, Geoffrey Sharps, an energetic, pertinacious young graduate student, was preparing his Oxford BLitt thesis on Gaskell. He helped us enormously. Manchester University Press supported us without stint, bringing out *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell* in 1966, a year later than we had hoped would be possible. The accuracy of every text in some 900 closely set printed pages had been double checked by Ursula Pollard and Kate Chapple. No more than a handful of transcriptional errors of manuscript material have been noted. The dating of texts, my special responsibility as the spider at the centre of the organisational web, was less successful, even though I sedulously recorded the various watermarks and embossed designs in their paper. 'Sunday morning before breakfast' and the like were fences at which I fell more often than perhaps I should have done.

Geoffrey's BLitt thesis was accepted at Oxford. His *Mrs Gaskell's Observation and Invention* (1970), is an inexhaustible record of his truly remarkable knowledge, still a treasure trove of unexpected, detailed information and learned commentary. That between us we had created a solid foundation for future historians, biographers, critics and commentators is shown by all those who drew upon our work and continue to do so. The letters we printed - vital, perceptive and amusing records of a busy life - justified Arthur Pollard's confidence in their quality. Not only do they display one of the most attractive personalities of the Victorian period, they allow numerous insights into the social history of her age and illuminate many controversial aspects of Gaskell studies.

More letters continued to surface after publication, but eventually Arthur and Geoffrey were sadly no longer with us. Fortunately, Alan Shelston was able to join me in preparing *Further Letters of Mrs Gaskell* (Manchester UP 2000) to take account of the many unexpected letters that reviews and publicity brought forth. The paperback reissue in 2003 even contains a few extra letters, but we recognise that the flow of material, though diminished, is never-ending. More will appear in print.

In 2007, The Gaskell Society commissioned a reprint of my favourite book, a labour

of love: *Elizabeth Gaskell: A Portrait in Letters* (1980), a selection with commentary, checked by Geoffrey Sharps. *Private Voices: The Diaries of Elizabeth Gaskell and Sophia Holland* (Keele University Press, 1996) is the fruit of another collaboration I had with an American scholar, Anita Wilson. Mrs Rosemary Dabbs and Mrs Portia Holland willingly allowed us access to the fascinating manuscripts that recorded the upbringing of Elizabeth and Sophia's children when they were little. Gaskell's diary, as Anita Wilson points out, was her first sustained piece of writing. The appendices contain relevant contextual material from similar manuscript sources, especially writings by Mary Robberds and William Turner.

On 12th October 1985, 175 years after Gaskell's birth, Joan Leach inaugurated 'The Gaskell Society' at a meeting in Brook Street schoolroom. About 45 people were present, including Barbara Brill, Tessa Brodetsky and three members of the Brontë Society. John Nussey, great great nephew of Ellen Nussey, wrote an account of this first meeting. (*Gaskell Society Newsletter* 1, March 1986). In the following April of 1986, a formal meeting at Plymouth Grove elected Professor Arthur Pollard as President and Professor Francesco Marroni as Vice-President. Joan Leach became our Secretary, Dr Ken Whalley Chairman and Geoffrey Sharps Vice-Chairman. A committee was formed: Mary Thwaite, Kenneth Oultram, Mrs I Stevenson, Mrs B Kinder and Miss M Leighton (GSN 2, August 1986).

As a busy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (1985 -1988) during a fraught time for Hull University, I missed the inaugural meeting of the Gaskell Society. I did, however, manage to contribute an article to *The Gaskell Society Journal* 1 (Summer 1987), edited by Alan Shelston with Janet Allan as his deputy. Later, I became a more regular attender at the always stimulating and enjoyable meetings of the Gaskell Society. I continued to publish books, reviews and articles upon Elizabeth Gaskell, her family, her Unitarian faith (see *The Cambridge Companion to Elizabeth Gaskell*, ed. Jill L Matus) - and her fiction, which I had not read in its entirety. My *Cranford & Selected Short Stories*, with notes and introductions (Wordsworth Classics 2006) is an example.

A visiting fellowship at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, a grant from the Leverhulme Trust and the support of hundreds of individuals enabled me to publish *Elizabeth Gaskell: the Early Years* (MUP1997). It is fittingly dedicated to Joan Leach and Geoffrey Sharps, and could not have been accomplished without the support of my wife and children.

Retirement to Lichfield in 2000 combined with increasing age now makes my attendance at Gaskell events elsewhere more problematic. Here, too, on the market square is the birthplace of Samuel Johnson. Years ago I published an article on a unique copy of Johnson's Proposals for *Printing the History of the Council of Trent* [1738], found by Moses Tyson in Manchester University Library. More recently, I edited Johnson's *Life of Dryden* for the Yale Edition of the Works of

Samuel Johnson, volume 21 (2010). I am honoured to have been chosen as President of the Lichfield Johnson Society for this year. My address on Shakespeare and Johnson will be published in its *Transactions 2012*. In the Cathedral Close is the house where Erasmus Darwin lived for a time and entertained members of the famous Lunar Society, the lunaticks. Both houses are vibrant centres of cultural activity, as members of the Gaskell Society know from a visit they made to Lichfield last year. My interest in science, stimulated by Arthur Pollard, who had commissioned me to write *Science and Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (1997), challenged me to disentangle the connections between the Willets, Wedgwood, Darwin and Holland families for GSJ 21 (2007).

I have in all likelihood neglected to mention significant members of the Society or distinguished speakers at its meetings. I offer profound apologies to those I should have noted. Do I really recall that a friend, Julian Savory, sang to us once? In this country, Mrs Heather Sharps, John and Doreen Pleydell, Bill Ruddick, Philip Yarrow, Christine Lingard, Irene Wiltshire, Mary Syner, Brenda Colloms, Brian and Elizabeth Williams, Jo Pryke, Janet Kennerley, Marie Moss, Jean Alston, Frances Twinn, Dudley Barlow, Howard Gregg, Rosemary Marshall, Dudley Green, Graham Handley, Ian Campbell, Stephen Gill, Angus Easson, Michael Wheeler, Andrew Sandars, Patsy Stoneman, Marion Shaw, Terry Wyke, Jenny Uglow, Joanne Shattock, Josie Billington, Fran Baker, Barbara Hardy, J R Watson, Malcolm Pittock, John and Gillian Beer come vividly to mind as I write. How could I have failed to notice Lucy Magruder, Nancy Weyant, Mary Kuhlman, Jill Matus and Walter E Smith across the Atlantic; Yuriko Yamawaki, Mitsuharu Matsuoka and Tatsuhiro Ohno in Japan; Mariaconcetta Costantini, Anna Enrichetta Soccio and Renzo D'Agnillo in Italy? Then there are our translators on German visits, Peter and Celia Skrine; Caroline Arnaud, Christine Bhatt and Véronique Baudouin on French ones. How the dull brain perplexes and retards!

Nevertheless, I believe that the drive and determination of Joan Leach, Arthur Pollard and Geoffrey Sharps will inspire the Society they created with the willing assistance of so many others as it goes forward under its new President, Shirley Foster.

Editor adds: John and Kate Chapple joined the weekend of celebrations in London September 2010 when ECG was unveiled in Westminster Abbey. The Editor has not sighted him since but snail mail communication led to the creation of this article. Many thanks to John for this and for his stalwart help and support to the Society over the years.

A Tale of Two Elizabeths

Editor: Readers will remember Alan Shelston's article on the two Elizabeths in the Autumn Newsletter. Now Ann Elizabeth Sachs, (née Holland) great-granddaughter of Elizabeth (younger sister of Rev William Gaskell) and Charles Holland (cousin of ECG), takes up the tale of two Elizabeths:

I was very interested to read Alan Shelston's article on The Two Elizabeths in your Autumn Newsletter.

I am the great-granddaughter of Charles Holland, who married the Rev William Gaskell's sister, Elizabeth Gaskell, known within the family as Eliza or Lizzy. My father, Leonard Menzies Holland (1885-1967), was the son of Walter Holland, who was one of Elizabeth and Charles Holland's ten children. My grandfather, Walter Holland, became the senior partner of the shipping firm Lamport and Holt in Liverpool, which was involved with trade to South America. He died in 1915, aged 73. I was told that he was much affected by the loss of many friends who were on the inaugural voyage of the Titanic in 1912 and by the outbreak of the Great War, especially when his four sons (including my father) joined the army.

Like most children, I did not ask many questions about my father's family, but I was always told that we had a strong family connection with Mrs Gaskell, as Charles Holland was her cousin. I like to think that Mrs Gaskell would have been instrumental in introducing her cousin Charles to Eliza and encouraging the romance. I see that Charles and Eliza did not marry until 1838, six years after Mrs Gaskell's own marriage in 1832. I was delighted to read that the two sisters-in-law were good friends and many letters were exchanged between them.

I have a copy of *Poems and Translations*, published privately by Elizabeth Gaskell Holland and see that most of her poems were dedicated to members of the family, including the poem on the marriage of Elizabeth Cleghorn Stevenson to the Rev William Gaskell on 30th August 1832, mentioned in Alan Shelston's article. There is also a particular poem entitled 'Willie', which may have been written on the tragic loss from scarlet fever of Mrs Gaskell's son William in 1845. I understand it was after William's death that her husband the Rev William Gaskell suggested to his grieving wife that she should start writing.

I give the last verse below:

Then may blessings attend thee for evermore,
May peace and love on thy path be shed,
May no sorrow blight thy beauty bright,
No pain or grief shade thy gladsome life,
May angels guard thee my darling boy,
And for ever watch o'er thee with love and joy.

Of course, I am prejudiced but I think the poems are quite wonderful. I particularly like the first poem entitled 'To My Children' with the final line 'Take these feeble lines of mine, and love them for my sake',

Elizabeth Gaskell Holland died in 1892 aged 80. She spent her last few years in London leading an active and social reforming life to the end. Her obituary in The Inquirer of 2nd April 1892 mentioned, among the many tributes, that she campaigned fearlessly for recognition of the equality of the sexes, from a strict sense of justice, which implies she was an embryonic suffragette. The education of women for the medical profession was one of the schemes nearest to her heart. She was buried in the Ancient Chapel, Toxteth, Park, Liverpool.

Supplementary information

Charles Holland, born 1799 and died in 1870 aged 71. He returned to England from South America around the 1830's and continued his business career in trade until he retired in 1855. He was an ardent supporter of the Reform Bill and fought for the principles of Free Trade and the repeal of the Corn Laws. He was amongst the first to join the Financial Reform Association becoming President in 1865, an office which he held until his death. He was one of the Founders of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce and was elected President in 1856.

I quote from the History of the family of *Holland of Mobberley and Knutsford* complied by Edgar Swinton Holland: 'Charles Holland's name will be remembered especially with the measures for the application of limited liability to partnerships, and also in connection with the reform of the banking and currency system in this country.' - which seems very relevant today! He was invited to stand for Parliament in the 1860 election but had to decline 'owing to a weakness of the throat'.

From the Inquirer 2 Apl 1892

MRS CHARLES HOLLAND

LAST month took from amongst us another of those gifted women to have known whom makes us feel with Longfellow that

"Our hearts in glad surprise

To higher levels rise."

With deepest regret we record the death of Elizabeth Gaskell, the widow of Charles Holland, of Liverpool, who passed away swiftly and peacefully on March 8, in her

eightieth year. At eighty she died young, for nothing seemed to have grown old about her but the love of many friends.

Mrs Charles Holland
née Elizabeth Gaskell, aged 25

Her father, William Gaskell, of Warrington, was a member of one of the oldest Presbyterian families of the North of England. She inherited his strong Nonconformist views, and derived from them all through her life a strong sense of comfort and religious support. She was sister to the Rev William Gaskell, the well-known minister at Cross-street, Manchester, whom she resembled in the unaffected charm of manner which expressed the harmonies of a mind alike gentle and earnest, formed by nature and attuned by culture to be in all its utterance a part of this world's spiritual music. Like her brother, she had a grace of person, and was brilliant in conversation, although never talking for effect. Her wit and wisdom were always humanised by kindly sympathies and dignified by an unswerving adherence to the cause of truth and justice. Mrs Holland's power of fascination enabled her to find the good side of all who knew her, and to fill her life with the love of many friends. It made her at once the guide and cherished centre of her large family circle.

Brought up in a stronghold of Unitarianism, Warrington, Elizabeth Gaskell sought as a girl to spread her principles, and taught in the Sunday-school of the Old Cairo-street Chapel, showing even then the same large-hearted sympathy with the poor and the ignorant that" characterised her after years. She received a thoroughly classical education, which confirmed in her an intellectual and poetic tendency, and raised her high above the level of what then was thought to be the sufficient culture of woman's mind. The classical authors, both Latin and Greek, were even to the end of her life a constant source of ever-recurring pleasure. Her marriage with Mr Charles Holland of Liverpool, one of the pioneers of the Anti-Corn Law League, was entirely happy. There was between husband and wife a unity of religious and political opinions, and her fidelity to the home duties of wife and mother called forth in her the fullest energies of life. When settled near Liverpool, Mrs Holland con¬stantly interested herself in benevolent objects. One of these was the starting and carrying on of a club or drawing-room for working-men and their wives to come to of an evening; another was the superin¬tendence of a district nurse among the poor in their own homes, a charity which at that time was in its earliest infancy. She

also helped to found a cottage hospital in the low populous district of Seacombe, and while she fulfilled in the highest sense of the word her duties as a wife and mother she found time for lettered ease, and numbered among her intimate friends Hawthorne, Barry Cornwall, Professor Morley, and her sister-in-law, Mrs Gaskell. The intercourse with such minds encouraged the literary and poetical side of her nature. She translated a great deal of poetry from German authors, and wrote and published many original poems.

At this time of her life the friendship and ministerial services of the Rev. W. H. Channing influenced her strongly to work for the good of humanity. She threw her whole heart into the growing labours of the time to secure for women their right place in life. And when, after her husband's death, she settled in London she helped those who were foremost in all work tending to give women freer scope for the development and use of all their powers. Her outspoken fearless demand for a recognition of the equality of the sexes, from a strict sense of justice, has often helped the wavering to stand firm by their opinions.

The education of women for the medical profession was one of the schemes nearest to her heart. For this Mrs Holland worked indefatigably, and notably assisted the medical school for women and the building of the New Hospital for Women, both with influence and money. One of the most touching tributes to her memory was a lovely wreath sent by the medical staff and the Committee of the New Hospital for Women to be laid on her coffin. Mrs Holland was also a promoter and warm supporter of the Victoria Coffee Hall, afterwards converted into a memorial to Samuel Morley. She also founded a scholarship for the study of lunacy in memory of her brother, Mr Samuel Gaskell, who had instituted many benevolent reforms in the asylums while Commissioner in Lunacy.

But we have said enough to suggest what no words can adequately tell. On March 12 she was laid in the little graveyard of the Ancient Chapel, Toxteth Park, Liverpool, and over her will be placed the words she loved,—

" He giveth His beloved sleep."

Editor: The Inquirer is a Unitarian newspaper which has been published fortnightly since 1842. It claims 'to reach parts of the mind and soul that other papers cannot reach'.

Gaskell study tour to Boston, September 2012

Christine Bhatt

'We dare not hope ever to be sufficiently people at large with regard to time and money to go to America, easy and rapid as the passage has become.' Thus wrote Elizabeth Gaskell to John Pierpoint, Unitarian minister of Hollis Street, Boston in 1841. How fortunate were the Gaskell members who were able to make this trip and even more easily and rapidly than Mrs Gaskell would have been able to do. Landing just after sunset, as I did, the lights of the city, enhanced by the multi-coloured landing lights of the runway, gave Boston a fairy tale aspect.

The hotel which Nancy Weyant had chosen for us with the help of Boston friends, the John Jeffries House Hotel, was perfect. It was situated on the edge of the historic Beacon Hill area of Boston, within walking distance of good restaurants, grocery stores and even the harbour from where we took the boat to Salem on our fifth day. The hotel was a red-brick building, originally constructed in 1909 as housing for nurses at the local Eye and Ear Infirmary. It had a very homely, comfortable, lived-in air, breakfast was simple but plentiful, and coffee was permanently on tap, most welcome after a long day. There were eleven society members from the UK, most of whom gathered for afternoon tea American style (with wine and cheese) on the afternoon of the arrival day, September 12.

Nancy, drawing no doubt on her expertise as a librarian and bibliographer, had done a thorough and efficient job of forwarding to members of the group a very detailed itinerary, together with relevant websites, which ensured that we were all, potentially at least, well-prepared for what was to come. However, even Nancy, at the end of our first morning walking the Black Heritage Trail confessed that "I didn't know I didn't know that much". We were led by a member of the National Park Service, whose astonishingly detailed knowledge of Boston's 19th century African American community unfolded a history most of us knew little of. We began our tour at Augustus Saint Gauden's *Robert Gould Shaw and the Fifty-fourth Regiment Memorial*. This fine bas relief in bronze was, according to our guide, the first example of a realistic portrayal of African Americans in American art. In a letter to Gaskell dated 23rd April 1863, Charles Eliot Norton writes of Colonel Shaw: 'He is a fine young man; exceedingly well fitted to fill so responsible a position, and full of the true spirit of a soldier and a believer in the equal rights of man.' Elizabeth Gaskell knew Mrs Shaw and wrote to her to express her sorrow on hearing of Robert Shaw's death in action. We finished our walk at the African Meeting House, which served as an institutional haven during the nineteenth century for Boston's community of free African Americans and the self-emancipated arriving via the Underground Railroad Network.

On the afternoon of this first day, we had a guided tour of the Freedom Trail, led by

our costumed guide Mercy Otis, in character as America's first woman playwright. Her brother James, whose grave we visited in the Old Granary Burying Ground, was a patriot of the Revolution. Other famous graves included those of Samuel Adams, a signatory of the Declaration of Independence, Paul Revere and Judge Samuel Sewall, one of the Salem witch trial judges. Among well-known Boston landmarks, we passed the Omni Parker Hotel, the oldest surviving hotel in US, where Charles Dickens once stayed.

After a long and very warm day, spent mostly on our feet, we were delighted to gather at a convivial Italian restaurant, chosen by Nancy and only 15 minutes' walk from the hotel. On our return to the John Jeffries, the evening was rounded off in a suitably literary fashion by the reading of a poem by Roseanna Prince, written by her late father Frank, who was Professor of English at Southampton University, where a recent memorial exhibition had marked the hundredth anniversary of his birth.

Our third day began early with a coach to Hartford, where we were to visit the Harriet Beecher Stowe Centre and tour the Mark Twain House. In a letter to Grace Schwabe in 1853 Elizabeth Gaskell writes of Harriet that she is 'short and American in her manner, but very true and simple and thoroughly unspoilt and unspoilable'. In an echo of Gaskell's situation, we learnt that Harriet came to write *Uncle Tom's Cabin* at the age of 41, following the death of her eighteen month old son. By 1860 the book had sold over three million copies and had fuelled the fires of the abolitionist movement. We were very fortunate to be given access to a special collection of Harriet's documents during this tour, which included a letter from Gaskell, editions of *Cranford*, a sketch of Rome and watercolour of the Alps (by Harriet) and a volume of signatures collected by the Duchess of Sutherland while Harriet was touring England to garner support for the abolitionist movement. The Mark Twain house contrasted strongly with the Harriet Beecher Stowe residence, being much grander and more elaborate and we learned that the designer had been a church architect.

After lunch at the Japanese restaurant at the Mark Twain house, we continued by coach to Storrs, where we were to visit the University of Connecticut library to view an exhibition of editions of *Cranford*, organised by Thomas Recchio. Unfortunately, our coach driver took the scenic route, so that we were late arriving at the campus, which was set in beautiful parkland. We had an extensive tour of this very pleasant campus before locating the library, but by the time we arrived Professor Recchio and his students had departed, having decided, in our absence, not to let the afternoon tea laid out for us go to waste. As true Gaskellians, we did not let this deter us from a thorough perusal and appreciation of the many beautiful editions of *Cranford* left on display for us.

A very long and interesting day saw us back at the hotel to make our own

arrangements for the evening from the many good restaurants in the vicinity, a pattern repeated each evening but the last, when we once more gathered as a group.

After two very warm days, Saturday morning dawned a little cool and wet, but by the time our coach brought us to Lexington, the rain had stopped and the sun appeared. In Lexington and then Concord, our costumed guide, Masha Tabor, gave us a very detailed and lively introduction to the events in April 1775, which led to the American Revolution. In Concord the homes of Louisa May Alcott, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Nathaniel Hawthorne have been maintained and are open to visitors. We could also visit the Concord Museum, which proudly displays the lantern which hung in the steeple of Boston's Old North Church on the night of Paul Revere's famous ride. Sadly, there was not time to visit more than one or two of the venues available and some of us had rather a brisk walk to get back to the coach in time to be whisked on to the Sleepy Hollow Cemetery. We climbed up to the 'Authors' Ridge' section of this beautiful, peaceful, tree-shaded ground and saw the graves of Louisa May Alcott, Hawthorne, Emerson and Thoreau, among others. Our final visit on this packed trip was to Walden Pond, where we could squeeze, one or two at a time, into Thoreau's tiny cabin. After such a full day, not everyone was energetic enough for a further sortie, but a small group of adventurers was led by an American member to the 'Cheers' bar, where a table was found for us, as if by magic (it was a Saturday night) and we ate fish and chips and drank beer, presided over, perhaps appropriately, by a painting of Lord Byron.

Sunday was a lovely sunny day for the hour long boat trip to Salem. In spite of the Witch History Museum, the Witch House and the Salem Witch Trials Memorial, Salem was far from being a gloomy place. Before setting out to explore Salem, Mary Kuhlman gave the group a brief, insightful talk on *Lois the Witch*. Some members later met up with Mary and Tom in the Chestnut Road area of Salem, where Tom pointed out the significant architectural features of the beautiful houses on this tree-lined road.

Though the visit to Salem was, for many, one of the highlights of our trip, we had another treat in store on Monday, when we made the relatively short journey to Cambridge, to visit America's first rare book and manuscript library in the Houghton, at Harvard University. We were to view part of the wonderful collection given to the university by Amy Lowell. A special display featuring Gaskell first editions and her correspondence with Norton was laid out for us by Leslie Morris, but the whole of the display was truly stunning. Among the Gaskell documents were early editions, including a German version of the story *A Dark Night's Work*, which, interestingly, is entitled *A Night's Work*, a letter to Ruskin, mentioning *Cranford*, the diary of Marianne's first years and Henry James' copy of *North and South*. It was interesting and amusing to see Harriet Martineau's rather acerbic annotations of her copy of *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*. Other parts of the display included such

gems as a manuscript signed in 1523 by Michelangelo, a manuscript poem by La Fontaine, signed "Pour Mlle C" and a drawing by Sir William Hamilton of the recent eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 1793. In the beautiful, wood-panelled entrance hall to this library were to be seen many volumes, mainly religious tracts, by Cotton Mather.

Our afternoon venue, though a total contrast to the graceful buildings and beautiful surroundings of Harvard, was an elegant, modern construction set in a green, open space overlooking the harbour. The interior was spacious, calm, but crammed with history: it was the John F Kennedy Library and Museum. Here, ancient manuscripts were replaced by the full panoply of modern technology, with newsreel and audio recordings of momentous events.

Members pose at the JFK Center

Our last full day took us to the mill city of Lowell, much of which is now a designated Historic Park. By 1850 almost six miles of canals coursed through this city, which drove the waterwheels of forty mill buildings. Our trolley tour took us alongside a stretch of these canals and we could have been forgiven for thinking we were in Manchester or Salford. At the Boott Cotton Mills Gallery, we were exceptionally fortunate in being able to view the special exhibition on Dickens, co-curated by Diana Archibald, who was on hand to explain and guide us through this fascinating display. Among much else, we saw the portrait of Griff, the raven, and a letter from Dickens to William Macready, in which Dickens refers to America as the 'land of freedom and spittoons'. He visited Lowell during his American tour of 1842 and was particularly impressed with this booming, industrial town.

On the evening of this last day, we gathered in a private room in one of Boston's best known fish restaurants for an excellent meal, which began with a fantastic clam chowder. At the end of the meal, Ann O'Brien, on behalf of the group, thanked Nancy most heartily for our truly wonderful visit to Boston and presented her with an illustrated publication on homes of American literary figures. Not to be forgotten was Nancy's friend Violet, who was a constant presence and marshalled us with quiet efficiency. We hope she liked the mug from the JFK Museum.

Since every hour of this trip was precious, on the morning of departure day our coach took some of us to the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Space does not permit the recounting of the wonders of this museum, but details can be found online for anyone contemplating a trip to Boston. For those of us fortunate enough to have made the journey, the experience will linger long in the memory.

Nancy at the helm

Elizabeth Gaskell and Rome

Robin Allan

My first encounter with the work of Elizabeth Gaskell was through my love for Charlotte Brontë. When I realised that the author of Charlotte's biography had lived in Manchester, I determined to visit her house.

I moved to the north in 1973. Working off the Oxford Road I discovered that I was not far from Mrs Gaskell's house on Plymouth Grove. It was then International House and a home for foreign students at Manchester. I saw the nursery window where the Gaskell children had scratched their initials and was touched by the faded beauty of the building.

For the first time I read Elizabeth's great novels and some of her letters: letters which astonished me with their liveliness and vibrancy, so different from the stuffy pomposity of her contemporaries. The relationship between Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë, who had stayed with Elizabeth in this very house, led me to consider a dramatised play-reading based on their correspondence. So *Charlotte Brontë and Elizabeth Gaskell* was performed, often, in the drawing room at Plymouth Grove. We have also taken it to the Buxton Festival Fringe and many other venues.

Since then I have adapted some of Elizabeth's short stories, including *My Lady Ludlow* (2009) performed at Silverdale, the little town near the Lake District loved by both Mrs Gaskell and her daughters. In 2011 our redoubtable professional actress Delia Corrie presented *The Grey Woman* at the Gaskell Conference near Winchester, and this year she again acted, along with her professional colleague Charles Foster, and acting students from the School of Theatre at Manchester Metropolitan University, in my adaptation of Elizabeth's *The Moorland Cottage*. The versatility of this author, her work veering from domestic and political or social issues, her love of the macabre or even the sensational, made her a stimulating template for adaptation, and, of course, her letters were a constant delight.

My most recent adaptation, *Elizabeth Gaskell and Rome*, is based not on her fiction but on the letters written by herself, her family and friends. When Elizabeth Gaskell's American friend Mrs Story wrote to her in 1856 inviting her to stay with her and her husband in Rome, Elizabeth wrote back:

> My Dear Mrs Story, May I first thank you for all the kind help you have given us, and then accept your charming invitation to spend the first few days with you in – Rome. We are really and truly coming to Rome!!!!!!

The six explanation marks reveal the impetuosity of the writer – the childlike

excitement and emotional openness of the woman, which comes through in all her work. When in Rome she met Charles Eliot Norton (1827-1908), a young American scholar who had met John Ruskin and was studying art in Italy; he later became Harvard's first Professor of Art History.

Elizabeth and her daughters Marianne and Meta, along with their friend Catherine Winkworth, were profoundly influenced by the charm and artistic knowledge of the young American, who became a constant companion during the short time that they spent in Rome. He also accompanied them on their slow journey homewards and at last parted company with them in Venice. Was there any romantic attachment between the young American and the author seventeen years his senior? Of course there was attraction; who would not be attracted by the attentions of a stimulating companion such as Charles Eliot Norton, and the light, colour, music and art of springtime in Italy, after the pall of smoke surrounding Manchester, and after the painful gestation of her devoted life's work to honour her dear dead Charlotte Brontë. The nineteenth century was obsessed with other matters such as religion and morality, while the 20th and 21st centuries' infatuation with sex would have surprised Elizabeth Gaskell and her contemporaries. Her devotion to Norton and her family's delight on hearing of his engagement and marriage and later of the birth of his children, adds to the sense of bondage between the families. Meta Gaskell's devotion to Charles Norton after her mother's death is evident in her letters to him (revealed in *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell's Daughters*, ed. Irene Wiltshire, HEB Humanities-Ebooks, 2012).

The warmth of this friendship I hope is evident in the story that is told in these letters. Delia Corrie again plays Elizabeth Gaskell and the part of Charles Eliot Norton is taken by Charles Foster, while Ella Burton, who plays Meta Gaskell, acts as narrator.

We intend to present the piece as a dramatised play-reading, with many illustrations, at the August celebration of Mrs Gaskell's life in Knutsford and at different venues during the summer months of 2013. Watch this space.

Constant Moyaux (1835 - 1911)
- View of Rome from the Artist's Room at the Villa Medici 1863

Book Notes

Christine Lingard

Mary Barton has now been published in the Wordsworth edition at a recommended price of £1.99. ISBNs: 1840226897: 978-1840226898

The growth of technology now means that a number of Gaskell's shorter novels and stories which have been out of print are now available though not in edited scholarly editions. Kindle publications include *The Half-Brothers; Lizzie Leigh, Dark Night's Work; Manchester Marriage* (in the anthology *Victorian Short Stories: Stories of Successful Marriages*); *Doom of the Griffiths; Old Nurse's Story* (in the anthology - *The Lady Chillers: classic ghost and horror stories by women authors - 15 complete stories by Victorian and Edwardian mistresses of the macabre.*) It is possible to obtain these titles in paperback.

Interest in Gaskell in Europe continues to be strong. There are now translations into French of *Cousin Phillis – Ma Cousine Phillis* by Béatrice Vierne, with photographs by Véronique Chanteau. L'Herne, ASIN: B008AX788G and *Mr Harrison's confessions* by the same translator *Les Confessions de Mr Harrison*. Seuil.

From Spain comes the first ever translation of *Ruth* into Spanish: Coleción Tesoros De Época. ISBN: 978-84-938972-4-6; as well as *Sexton's Hero* and *Christmas Storms and Sunshine - El héro del sepulturero, seguido de Tormentas y alegria navideñas.* Jose J Olañeta (editor) Centellas ISBN 978-8497167482 ; and a translation of Charles Dickens' Christmas anthology for *All the Year Round - Mrs Lirriper's lodgings. La señora Lirriper* by Miguel Temprano García: Alba Editorial which contains Gaskell's rare short story *Crowley Castle*.

There are also two academic studies available in French which make mention of Gaskell. *Le Pasteur anglican dans le roman victorien. Aspects sociaux et religieux*, by Louis J. Rataboul. Didier erudition, 2208032640 [The Anglican clergyman in the Victorian novel, which deals with *North and South*, *My Lady Ludlow* and *Cranford* in particular] and *Poésie et identité féminines en Angleterre: le genre en jeu* (1830-1900) by Fabienne Moine, which discusses *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* and Gaskell's poem *On Visiting the Grave of my Stillborn Little Girl*. L'Harmattan (Kindle and paperback ISBNs 2296114148: and 978-2296114142).

Academic studies:

Atonement and self-sacrifice in nineteenth-century narrative by Jan-Melissa Schramm, (Fellow in English at Trinity Hall College, Cambridge); Cambridge studies in nineteenth-century literature and culture, no. 80. ISBNs 110702126X; 9781107021266. Contains the essay 'Standing for the people: Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell and professional oratory in 1848', which explores the conflicting

attitudes of the Victorian novel to sacrifice, as shown in the fiction of novelists such as Dickens, Gaskell and Eliot, at a time of Chartist protest, and national sacrifices made during the Crimean War.

Giving women: alliance and exchange in Victorian culture by Jill Rappoport. Oxford University Press, ISBNs 0199772606; 9780199772605. Discusses gifts made by Victorian women at a time when property rights were nonexistent to show how this defines contemporary culture; with reference to Charlotte Brontë, Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh*, and Christina Rossetti's Goblin Market. She also mentions a number of literary, political and Salvation Army pamphlets, and includes a chapter: 'Conservation in Cranford: sympathy, secrets, and the first law of thermodynamics.'

Literature and authenticity, 1780-1900 - essays in honour of Vincent Newey (Emeritus Professor, University of Leicester) edited by Michael Davies: Ashgate, ISBNs 0754665992; 9780754665991. Contains the essay: 'The authentic voice of Elizabeth Gaskell', by Joanne Shattock, editor of the Pickering Chatto edition of the Works of Elizabeth Gaskell.

Queer Others in Victorian Gothic: transgressing monstrosity by Gothic literary studies by Thomas Ardel, (City College of San Francisco). University of Wales Press, ISBNs 9780708324646 (cased) 9780708324653 (pbk.) (Originally published by the University of Chicago.) Includes a chapter 'Escaping heteronormativity: queer family structures in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Lois the witch* and *The grey woman*'. This book explores intersections in nineteenth-century British literature of sexuality, gender, class and race using gothic horror, in the works of authors such as Wilkie Collins, Elizabeth Gaskell, Sheridan Le Fanu, Florence Marryat and Vernon Lee.

Rewriting the Victorians: theory, history, and the politics of gender: Women, feminism and literature, edited by Linda M. Shires, (Professor of English Stern College, Yeshiva University, New York). Routledge library editions, vol. 12. ISBNs 0415521734, 9780415521734. Contains 'The "Female Paternalist" as historian: *Elizabeth Gaskell's My Lady Ludlow* by Christine L. Krueger. This collection of essays, both feminist and historical, analyses power relations between men and women in the Victorian period, and is influenced by Marxism, sociology, anthropology, and post-structuralist theories of language and subjectivity.

Victorian unfinished novels: the imperfect page, by Saverio Tomaiuolo. (Lecturer in English Literature and Language at Cassino University, Italy). Palgrave Macmillan, ISBNs 1137008172; 9781137008176 . Contains 'Becoming Ladies and Gentlemen in W. M. Thackeray's *Denis Duval* and Elizabeth Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters*.'

Women and literary celebrity in the nineteenth century: the transatlantic production of fame and gender, by Professor Brenda R. Weber, (Indiana University).

(Ashgate series in nineteenth-century transatlantic studies), ISBNs 1409400735; 9781409400738. A discussion of biography in particular *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, and stresses the physical frailty of Charlotte's body in contrast to her genius.

Writing Britain: wastelands to wonderlands, edited by Christina Hardyment. British Library Publishing Division, ISBNs 0712358749; 9780712358743; (hbk.) 0712358757; 9780712358750 (pbk.) published to accompany the exhibition *Writing Britain: wastelands to wonderlands*, May 11-Sept. 25, 2012 at the British Library, featuring Elizabeth Gaskell's industrial northern towns.

The Gaskells' House Report

Janet Allan

On 13 June last year the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) awarded just under two million pounds for the restoration and conversion of 84 Plymouth Grove, a triumphal end to our long campaign to rescue the House which started in the 1990's. Professor Hannah Barker, a member of the HLF's Manchester committee, joined members of the Manchester Historic Buildings Trust and the Gaskell Society in the celebration on the steps of the Gaskells' Manchester home.

Work on the first stage, the construction of the disabled ramp and improvements to the servants' quarters in the basement, will be completed in February. The second stage, the main works, will start in March.

By late 2014 the whole house should be open to the public for the first time. We should have a beautified but friendly ground floor, much as it was in the Gaskells' time, with their drawing room and dining room, William's study (the bookcases appropriately filled) as a resource centre. Downstairs the original kitchen will become a tearoom, also selling books our established tradition. Next to it the servants' hall will become a meeting room, there will be a modern kitchen, loos and a lift. The bedroom floor, which contains some very large rooms, will become meeting rooms or offices. The garden setting will be in the style of the 1850s, when the family moved in.

The transformation has already started. Members of the Friends saw the work going on in the old kitchen, which now has its original flagged floor rescued and restored, and got a sense of the spacious lobby entrance. The outlines of the flower beds and carriage sweep in the front of the building, together with the changes in gradient up to the front steps, give an exciting glimpse of what is to come. And the disabled ramp, tucked discretely at the side of the building, will be of great use without spoiling the overall impression.

In 2012 the Friends were very active and we have had concerts, dramatic presentations, a day school and many specialised visits and tours. But our job is not over! Although we cannot use the House during the conversion, we are planning events and excursions, and working with Victoria Baths on their Open Days. The Baths have also very kindly agreed to store those things, including books and our beloved tea sets. A newsletter will be issued shortly, and we are revising and updating our website so please follow the story!

Annual General Meeting 2013

Saturday 13 April, at Cross Street Unitarian Church, Manchester. All members are welcome.

10.30am Coffee and tea

11am Dr Margaret Lesser will deliver the Daphne Carrick Lecture:
Mary and William Howitt: A New Look

12noon AGM

1pm Buffet lunch

2.15pm Sarah Webb: **A love affair of long ago: Margaret Leicester (1847 - 1921)**

Autumn General Meeting

Saturday 28 September, Knutsford Methodist Church. Further details TBA.

North-West Group

Manchester Meetings

Gaskell Society Meetings at Cross Street Unitarian Church held on the first Tuesday of the month (October to March excluding January) Start at 1.00pm.

The Chapel will usually be open at 12 o'clock so that you can bring your own lunch.

This session's meetings (including lunch) will be held in the Percival Room.

The season continues with the theme **Victorian Contemporaries**.

Tuesday February 5, 2013, Ian Emberson: 3 Quartets: The Rossettis, the Mendelssohns and the Brontës.

Tuesday March 5, 2013, Dr. Patsy Stoneman: Charlotte Brontë and her relationship with Elizabeth Gaskell and the marked differences between them.

Knutsford Meetings

Meetings are held on the last Wednesday of the month (October to April excluding December) in St John's Church Centre, Knutsford.

An excellent buffet lunch is served at 12.15 (£8, pay on the day) followed by a talk and discussion, led by Elizabeth Williams at 1.30pm. Meetings end about 3pm.

We are continuing to study *Ruth* until the last meeting of the season on 24 April 2013.

A summer outing will be arranged, probably in May.

The Gaskell Society South-West

Saturday, 23 February 2013, 2.15 pm. Our first discussion group of the year will be held at Elizabeth Schlenther's house, 14 Vellore Lane, Bath, and the topic will be *North and South*. There are still places available, so Elizabeth should be contacted as soon as possible if you wish to come. A fee of £5 will cover both sessions.

Saturday, 23 March 2013, 2.15 pm. The second discussion group, a continuation of the first, will be held at Bren Abercrombie's house, 6 Vellore Lane, Bath. (Please note the change of address.)

Saturday, 20 April 2013, 2.30 pm. We look forward to a lecture by Ann Brooks, one of our members and an expert on the Portico Library in Manchester. She and a colleague, Bryan Haworth, wrote the official history of the library. Her topic will be: 'A behindhand place for books': The Portico Library Manchester and the Gaskell Connection. The lecture will take place as usual at the BRLSI, Queens Square Bath, and there will be a charge of £2 for members of the Gaskell Society and the BRLSI and £4 for non-members.

Our Bring and Share lunch will take place in late summer, and there will be more details about that at a later date.

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

London and South-East Branch

Sandwich lunch will be available from 12.45pm. Meetings begin at 2pm; tea and cake will be served after the meeting. Usually the formal part of the meeting finishes about 3.30pm for those needing to catch trains.

Venue: Francis Holland School, Graham Terrace, London.

The entrance is via doors on Graham Terrace, please ring the bell marked 'RECEPTION' loudly to gain entry. For security reasons the door must be locked until opened from inside.

The school is a three minute walk from Sloane Square tube station (on the District and Circle lines) and about a 15-20 minute walk from Victoria. There are also buses from Victoria. (Please check running of the tubes as they often carry out engineering work at weekends).

Book Stall: We have a 'bring and buy' book stall (proceeds for the renovation of the Gaskell House in Manchester). Please bring unwanted books and buy replacements.

Meetings are £5.00 (including everything) payable on the day. You are warmly invited. All meetings are held on Saturdays.

Further details from Dr Fran Twinn frantwinn@aflex.net

Saturday, 9 February, 2013, Ann Brooks and Bryan Howarth: The Portico Library and the Gaskells' connections. Ann and Bryan became volunteers at The Portico, Manchester, in 1985 and Ann continued to serve for 20 years. They are the co-authors of the official history of the library, *Boomtown Manchester 1800-1850 The Portico Connection. A History of the Portico Library and Newsroom.* (The Portico Library, 2000).

Saturday, 11 May, 2013, Carolyn Lambert: Sex, Stability and Secrets: Artefacts and rituals in Elizabeth Gaskell's fiction. Carolyn will share the fruits of her PhD research.

Saturday, 14 September, 2013, Alison Lundie: Domestic Arts in *Mary Barton* and *North and South*. Alison, a founding member of the London Gaskell Reading group, is studying for a PhD at Roehampton. Her talk will focus on shawls and needlewomen in *Mary Barton* and *North and South*.

On a Saturday TBA in November 2013, Janet Allan: Developments in the renovation of the Gaskell House in Plymouth Grove

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

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs. Helen Smith, 11 Lowland Way, Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 9AG.
Telephone - 01565 632615 E-mail: helenisabel@ntlworld.com

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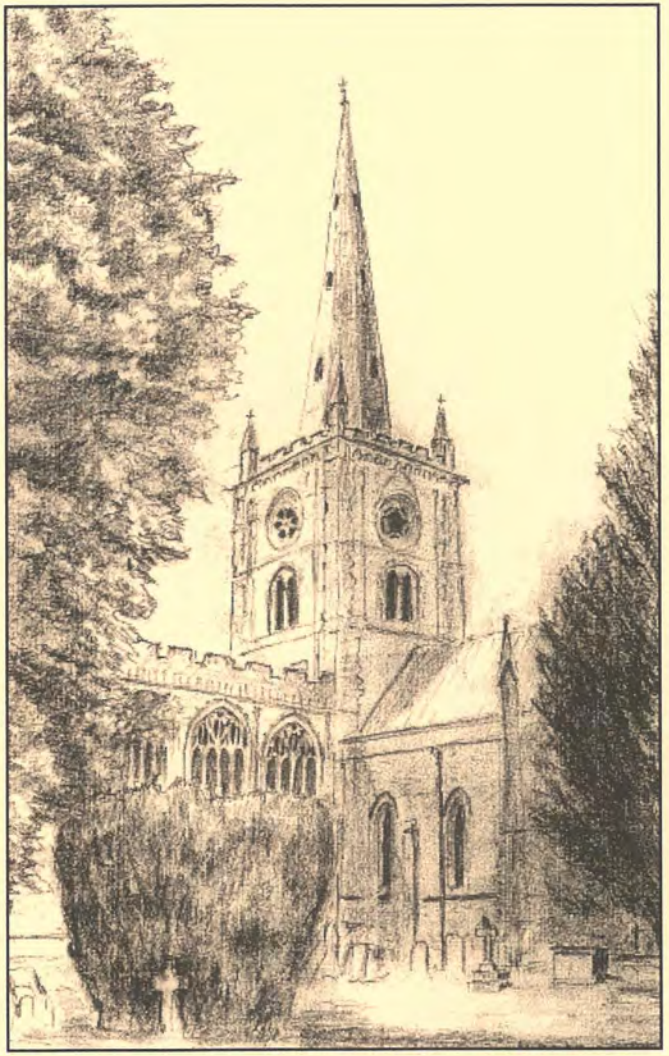
The Gaskell Society



NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2013 - Number 56

Editor's Letter

Helen Smith

Welcome readers and writers to our 56th Newsletter. We are hotfoot from the Conference, which has definitely surpassed our previous record for success; and now we really are fired with even more enthusiasm for Mrs Gaskell, for her life and especially for her works. As soon as the euphoria subsides, we shall start planning the next biennial Conference for 2015, 150 years after the death of Mrs Gaskell.

We should also like to welcome new member Dr John Ross (who wrote an article on Mrs Gaskell's death in Newsletter no 48).

However we are very, very sorry to report the deaths, in May 2013, of two of our members: Margaret Birchall (aged 96); and Hilda Holmes (considerably younger), a stalwart of the Society and a tireless worker for the Friends of Plymouth Grove. We shall certainly miss them and we extend our sympathy to their families.

The summer outing for North-West members was to Chatsworth (last visited by the Society in 1992). This event took place on 22 May and proved to be another action-packed day very much in the Joan Leach tradition. En route, the party visited Buxton, death place of "our dear good valuable friend" Hearn, aged 80 in 1892, after 50 years of service to the Gaskell family. (See Christine Lingard's article on Hearn in Newsletter no 52.) Many thanks are due to Pam Griffiths for organising this trip and to Christine Lingard for her invaluable research and extensive knowledge which she happily shares with us all.

Knutsford is celebrating Mrs Gaskell in August. The Heritage Centre, King Street, and the Schoolroom (on Adams Hill) of the Brook Street Chapel are hosting events and holding exhibitions. This is a joint venture with Knutsford Heritage Centre, The Gaskell Society and Friends of Plymouth Grove. By the time this Newsletter is sent out, these will be past events.

For the smooth running of the Society's finances, we must again express our thanks and gratitude to Brian Williams for going that extra mile in his role as Treasurer. We are now very happy to give a warm welcome to our new Treasurer Clive Heath. We are also delighted that Celia Crew has become Minutes Secretary.

Important date for diaries: AGM Saturday 12 April 2014, Cross Street Chapel, Manchester

A correction! Professor Barbara Hardy has pointed out to me that she promoted the Honourable Mrs Jamieson to Lady Jamieson in her article in the Spring Newsletter. The Editor (Lady Helen!) apologises for failing to spot this error before publication.

To all, and especially new, writers who have contributed to this Newsletter I offer my grateful thanks. Please continue to write and encourage others to do so, "when inclination prompts and leisure permits" as Charlotte Brontë wrote so invitingly to ECG in 1850. Many thanks are due to my brother David Robinson in Canada for his cover drawing of Holy Trinity in Stratford where ECG along with other pupils from the school run by the Misses Byerley worshipped (and where the Bard is buried). As ever, we owe thanks to Rebecca Stuart of Lithoprint for her meticulous work and care in printing the Newsletter. Deadline for next Newsletter: 25 January 2014.

Joan Leach Memorial Essay Prize

The biennial Joan Leach Memorial Essay Prize for Graduate Students is running again, to showcase some of the newest research being undertaken in Gaskell Studies. The deadline for entries is January 10th, 2014. Entries will be judged by members of the journal's editorial board, and the final decision will be made from a shortlist by a leading scholar in Gaskell Studies. The winning essay (and impressive runners-up) will be published in the 2014 Gaskell Journal. Please see journal website for more details: www.gaskelljournal.co.uk

The Gaskell Society Conference 19-22 July Stratford Manor Hotel, near Stratford-on-Avon

Helen Smith

He was not of an age, but for all time. Ben Jonson, of Shakespeare, 1623

In the prologue before dinner on Friday, former Director of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and author of *Thanks to Shakespeare*, Roger Pringle enthralled us with tales of writers who had visited Stratford over the last few centuries. An early visitor was the actor David Garrick in 1769, and one of the most recent was Carol Ann Duffy (British Poet Laureate), who likened Stratford to Bethlehem. Of the many notable visitors to the town, were Keats (place of abode, "everywhere"), Sir Walter Scott, Tennyson, Edward Fitzgerald, Dickens (several times but not for the Tercentenary in 1864), Thomas Hardy, a huge host of Americans, including Henry James, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Jefferson and Adams (later to become Presidents of the USA); Yeats, Rupert Brooke, et al: some inscribed the walls of the Birthplace, others signed the visitors' book and others declined to sign at all. The Gaskell Society follows in good company.

After dinner Geoff Holman, the actor from Knutsford, brought to life the practicalities of performing Shakespeare. Geoff taught us much, with humour and anecdotes

which spiced up the evening. Geoff pointed out to us how Shakespeare himself wished his plays to be performed as Hamlet advises his players in Act III scene ii "...but let your own discretion be tutor: suit your action to the word, the word to the action..." Delia Corrie as Lady Macbeth joined Geoff, in the role of Macbeth, for the few lines of intense drama just after the murder of Duncan. And so to bed, eventually, perchance to dream of iambic pentameters and trochaics - Macbeth had not murdered our sleep.

Business began in earnest at 9.00am sharp on Saturday. The Conference was now in possession of the Amazons.

Professor Michèle Cohen (of Richmond American International University in London) addressed us on "A mother's dilemma: where best to educate a daughter, at home or at a school?"

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there was no standard curriculum for girls (unlike boys, who were taught Classics). Should girls be taught at home by mother as governess "intended by nature" or at school; followed by promotion to "a dignified marriage"? ECG feared she was "becoming a lazy mother" by sending Marianne to school. In general girls studied a very wide range of subjects, from globes to orthoepy, albeit at a rather superficial level. Good habits were considered of more importance than academic learning.

Professor Ruth Watts (University of Birmingham) spoke on "A liberal education for women: Elizabeth Gaskell, her educational ideals, practice and networks".

Professor Watts approached the subject from the perspective of Unitarians with their rational religion and concentration on action, not mysticism. Joseph Priestley believed in association of ideas and favoured environment rather than heredity. Joseph Wright advocated learning in the family. Girls had to obtain 'polish'. Professor Watts reminded us that Molly Gibson (in *Wives and Daughters*) and Margaret Hale (in *North and South*) became intellectual companions to their fathers and Ruth herself was a prime example of Mrs Gaskell's principles.

After the break for coffee, Dr Mary Summers gave the third and final lecture of the morning: Anne Brontë's approach to education, parenting and marital relationships in Victorian times.

At first Aunt Branwell and Patrick Brontë educated the girls at home and then Eliza and Maria went off in 1823 to Crofton Hall which proved to be too expensive. The two older girls with Charlotte and 6-year old Emily then moved on to Cowanbridge (immortalised as Lowood in *Jane Eyre*) which led to the deaths of the 2 eldest girls. Charlotte eventually taught at Roehead where Anne joined her as a non-paying pupil in 1831.

Anne had many theories about education and child-rearing: she believed in kindness and joy when children are good and showing disappointment and sadness when they were not good; a trusting relationship was essential between parents, or in loco parentis, and children. Discipline was required for Branwell: "reason with him, then whip him." Poor Branwell eventually succumbed to his addictions to opium and rum.

Some interesting questions were posed to these three excellent and really riveting speakers before lunch. This discussion was chaired by Rosemary Marshall of the South-West of England Group.

In the afternoon, we departed by coaches for Barford to see, from the exterior, the house where some of the six Misses Byerley ran their school. We sauntered through the very English village to St Peter's Church where we were warmly welcomed by Barford Heritage Group and Revd David Jessett, Rector of St Peter's, led a short service. A small booklet had been written in our honour by Ann McDermott.

We then proceeded to Stratford - Shottery to visit Anne Hathaway's Cottage set in an English country garden basking in English sun and swarming with visitors from around the globe.

And then the Conference Dinner. Chairman Ann O'Brien welcomed us all to the Conference and mentioned all from abroad by name. After an excellent meal, Ann O'Brien and Elizabeth Williams brought us all up-to-date on the refurbishment of the Gaskell House in Plymouth Grove.

Sunday morning began with Sister Rosemary Kolich (Assistant Professor of English at the University of Saint Mary in Leavenworth, Kansas) in a very moving (and appropriate for Sunday) lecture: Prophetic imagining; the Gospel according to Elizabeth Gaskell.

Delia Corrie read from relevant passages of Mrs Gaskell's letters. Rosie spoke of women's role and fulfilment and we were totally drawn into her spell. Rosie explained how Mrs Gaskell empowers her characters to act through Scriptures. "Forgive them for they know not what they do": this occurs many times in the works and most movingly when John Barton dies in Mr Carson's arms: the creation of a Pietà - the man of sorrow supporting the dying man - creating a powerful religious image.

Dr Valerie Fehlbaum (English Dept, University of Geneva): 'A woman's no business wi' being so clever'- George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*.

Although Valerie claimed to be a Gaskell neophyte, she excelled herself in this

fascinating lecture on George Eliot, a 'dark blue stocking'. Mr Evans recognised and nurtured his daughter's exceptional talents from a young age. We were of course relieved that George Eliot did not include Mrs Gaskell's works in her 1856 *Westminster Review* article "Silly novels by lady novelists". Valerie analysed the novels of George Eliot and as Valerie herself now well-accustomed to the author's 'preachiness' was able to point out, sympathy is a leitmotif in George Eliot.

Our final lecture was given by Professor Valerie Sanders (Professor of English and Director of the Graduate School at the University of Hull): 'My school-days! What recollections!' Gaskell's contemporaries recall their education.

As a specialist in Victorian women's writing, autobiography and family studies, Val covered recollections of home education, school environment and self education with frequent quotations from authors' memoirs. Continental boarding schools provided a less stultifying education than governesses and English schools: the Queen Olga School in Stuttgart sounded much more exciting for Ménie Muriel Dowie.

After a brief question session with the morning's lecturers chaired by Mary Kuhlman (Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska) we adjourned for lunch.

Sunday afternoon outing whisked us off to the Vale of Evesham and Dumbleton: Church and Hall: set in a beautiful landscape with lake, black swans and immense cedars. The Hall, (where ECG, as guest of her cousin Edward Holland, wrote part of *The Life* in 1856) now functions as an hotel where we relaxed over a cream tea and heard Professor Adrian Phillips narrate the history of the fine house.

After dinner we were somewhat relieved that music no longer remained "a small kind of tinkling symbolising the aesthetic part of a young lady's education" as George Eliot satirised.

Rosie Lomas a graduate of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama accompanied by Katarzyna Kowalik (Artist Fellow at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama) entertained us with Mrs Gaskell's music. Rosie opened the recital with an unaccompanied song (words by Burns) "Oh my love is like a red, red rose". The young ladies continued with folk songs and classical works from Schumann, Haydn and others. Rosie spoke between items and placed them in context in Mrs Gaskell's works: a very fitting epilogue to the week-end's activities. President Shirley Foster had final word in her vote of thanks and presentation to the young recitalists.

PS En route back to the North-West we visited Clopton Hall (ECG described this fine seat to William Howitt who then incorporated it in *Visits to Remarkable Places*, 1840), now converted to flats in private ownership; and Baddersley Clinton, a mediaeval moated manor owned by the National Trust.

Many thanks are due to the Conference Sub-committee for all their very hard toil over the last two years to make this Conference operate like clockwork. We are more than grateful to Jean Alston for organising the outings and the weather, in addition to engaging Rosie Lomas and Katarzyna Kowalik to entertain us on Sunday evening.

Hotel staff and coach drivers deserve to be commended for their assiduity and skills in dealing with us all. Our thanks to all who contributed to this week-end.

Elizabeth Gaskell and Shawls
Creative Artistry and Identity

Alison Lundie

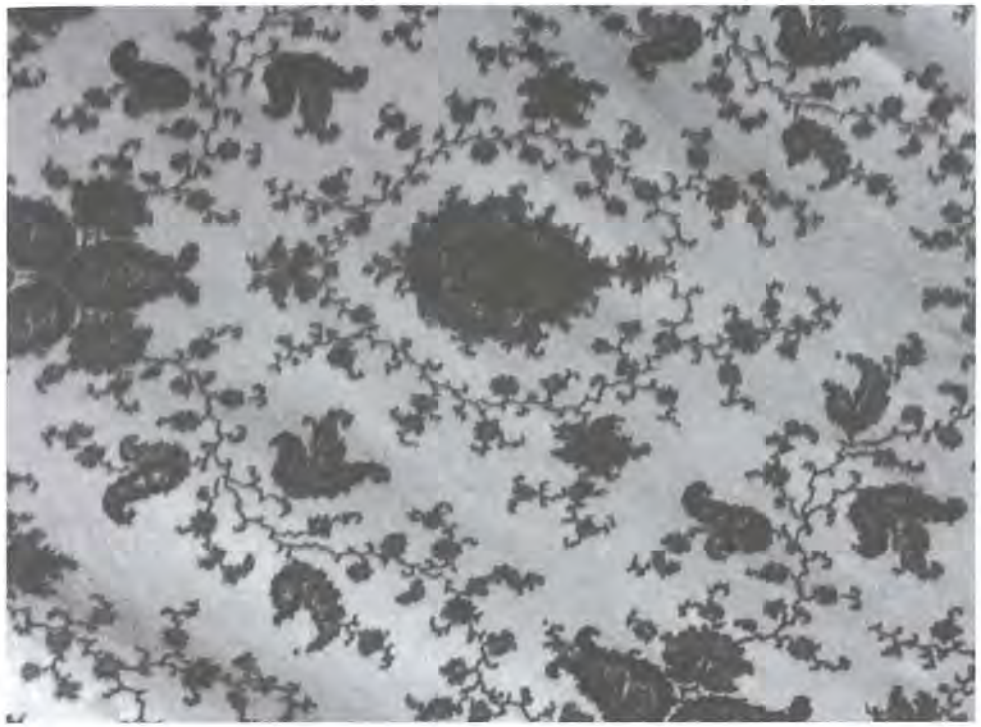
In the nineteenth century women's dress from bonnets, caps, hats, gloves, morning dress, afternoon dress and evening dress was a vast and motile world of continual change according to the fashions of the day. Every item of dress, including the specific fabrics and colour of clothing were considered to be a display of selfhood and a code for judging character. One particular item that might be overlooked because of its apparent simplicity as an accessory is the shawl.

In the 1840's and 1850's, regardless of social class, from the aristocracy to the middle and working classes, the shawl had established itself as the desired and revered garment in a woman's wardrobe. "Shawls began to be appropriated by all women, from the wealthiest aristocrat to the humblest kitchen maid, as beautiful, exotic and practical adjuncts to feminine dress" (4). The favoured and sought-after Paisley shawl had its origins in the importation of Indian shawls, originally admired for splendour of colour and woven with the luxuriously soft pashmina wool of the Himalayan goat. The newly acquired Jacquard power-looms in the 1830's enabled fast production, and designs that impressively displayed the ambition to produce an imitation of the Indian shawl in the traditional Paisley design.[1]

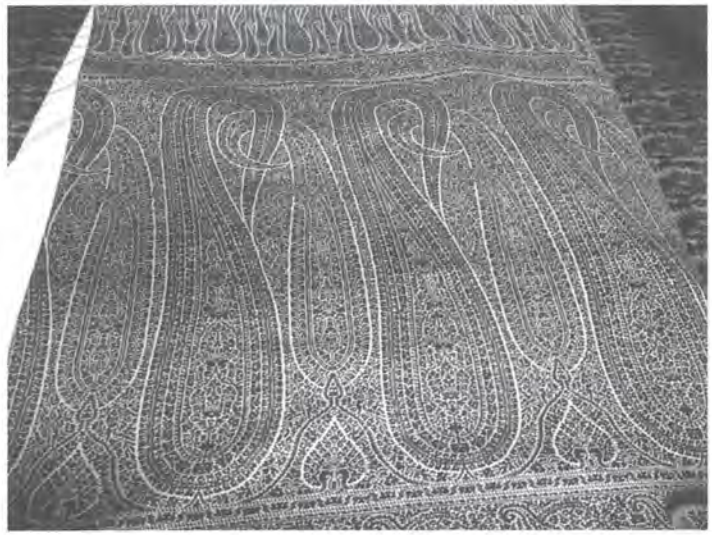
There are four shawls in existence that belonged to Elizabeth Gaskell. These have been passed down through the family line to her descendants. The obvious care that Mrs Gaskell must have taken with these shawls is testament to at the very least the high esteem in which they were held.

I am indebted to Sarah Prince for her kind generosity in an invitation to see and photograph these exquisite shawls, and in providing an historian's description of the materials, patterns, colour and dimensions of the shawls.

Printed cashmere shawl decorated with arabesques and foliage, 155 cm square.

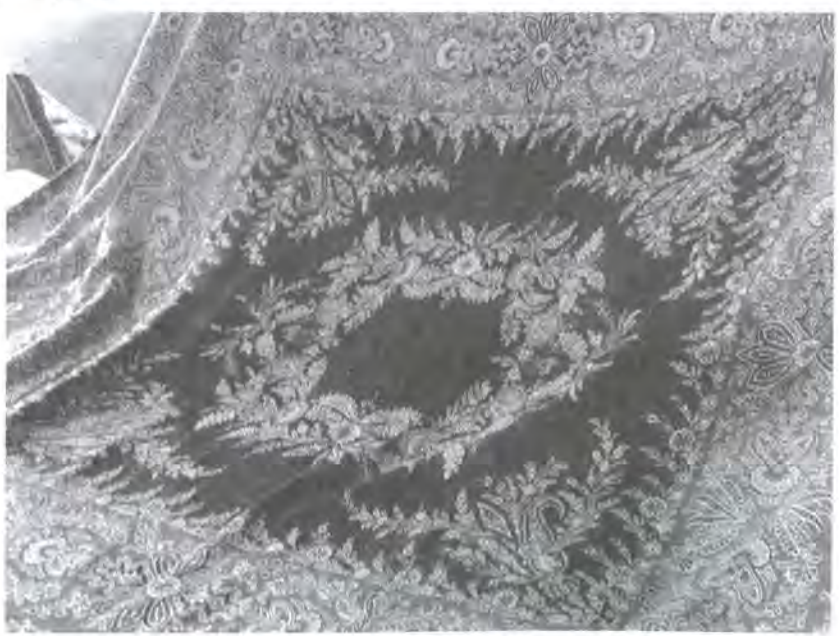


Paisley shawl with a border of blue arabesques, 153 x 312 cm.



Victorian printed shawl, the central square reserve with a garland of leaves surrounded by bands of stylised foliage and on a red ground, 152 x 147 cm.

Paisley shawl with a central black reserve, within a broad border of arabesques, 173 cm square.



It is the intricate and variegated patterns and blending of colours, the detailed attention to produce what can certainly be described as a work of art that we can see when looking at these shawls. But it is also the condition of the shawls and the brocade surrounding them that is particularly striking. Although a precise historical date to distinguish between the shawls does not exist, we can be certain, particularly in view of the Paisley design, that they would be dated somewhere between the 1830's and early 1860's. Were they possibly gifts, like Gaskell's description of the Indian shawl in *North and South*. Mrs Shaw explains the origin of her daughter Edith's trousseau, "she has all the beautiful Indian shawls and scarfs the general gave to me" (7). Or perhaps Gaskell purchased them herself, because we know from her letters that she was fond of shopping for shawls and she describes her shopping expedition to Marianne and Meta. Going "to look at black shawls for you, MA & Meta, at Moore and Butterworth's – silk barège *scarf* shawls, 35s – grenadine *shawls* ditto – (like E. Marslands) cashmeres embroidered 3 guineas – I inclined to the barèges much; but we left it for you to choose" (487). Either way it is interesting to speculate on these existing shawls' origin. The cherished shawls are now protected in layers of acid proof paper. They are subsequently enfolded in heavy cotton and kept away from light to resist any deterioration to the fabric and colour.

The shawl is just one item in a massive collection of garments that we encounter in Gaskell's novels. But its frequent appearance implies that there has to be some underlying meaning. On many occasions when the mention of a shawl appears in Gaskell's novels it tells us of an aspect in a character's personality. In *Cranford*, Miss Matty's appearance in "such a thin shawl! It's no better than muslin. At your age Ma'am you should be careful" (77) suggests the characteristic trait of regression in her personality. Dressing in a shawl that befits a young woman is an attempt to recapture a return to her youth and restore her loving relationship with Holbrook. But there is also the luxurious "large, soft, white Indian shawl" (102) described by Miss Matty and this tells us of both character and culture. The Indian shawl was often given as a gift, deriving from 1798, when Napoleon and his army returned from Egypt with Indian shawls as presents for their womenfolk. The Indian shawl in *Cranford* is also a gift sent from Peter to his mother. It is then a symbol of generosity, a generosity of feeling from Peter, as Miss Matty explains it was "just what my mother would have liked". The generous feeling extends when Miss Matty repeats her father's words concerning the shawl. "She shall be buried in it," he said; "Peter shall have that comfort; and she would have liked it" (102). But also and crucially this shawl is an emblem of the generosity that extends between the ladies of Cranford. The setting up of a shop for Miss Matty, and particularly Miss Matty's open-handed liberality in distributing sweets to the children. In *Cousin Phillis*, the absence of a shawl to cover Phillis's body, "Phillis had nothing on but her indoor things – no bonnet, no shawl" (269) suggests an aspect of self-development in her character. Until this point we know that Phillis had been forced by parental restriction to dress in a manner that would suppress her growth into womanhood.

Dressed in clothing that reminds us of the conventionally de-sexualised woman of the era we are informed that Phillis "so old, so full grown as she was wore a pinafore over her gown" (226). When Phillis refuses to dress in the conventional manner of bonnet and shawl she demonstrates a move toward erotic self-development, expressed in the pivotal scene when Phillis and Paul are caught in a thunder shower. It is notable that *Mary Barton* begins with an intricately detailed and rich description of the shawl, which markedly arrests the reader's attention and requires explanation.

"Groups of merry and somewhat loud-talking girls, whose ages might range from twelve to twenty, came by with a buoyant step. They were most of them factory girls, and wore the usual out-of-doors dress of that particular class of maidens; namely a shawl, which at midday or in fine weather was allowed to be merely a shawl, but toward evening or if the day were chilly, became a sort of Spanish mantilla or Scotch plaid, and was brought over the head and hung loosely down, or was pinned under the chin in no unpicturesque fashion." (6)

It is the feminine realm of display that asserts itself when Gaskell introduces the women factory workers. This is the display of a particular type of shawl that would have been of natural interest to the female reader.[2] The fundamental point that clearly appears is that these women are represented as possessing creative talent. They demonstrate skill in using their hands to adjust the material of the shawl in the creative process of fashioning the garment to the design of a "Spanish mantilla". It is an interesting analogy because placing this in an historical context we know that the mantilla was introduced by Queen Isobel of Spain, and the garment was composed of luxurious fabrics particularly lace and silk. Most importantly would be the image of complete sophistication that these working class factory women demonstrate if seen through the eyes of a Victorian woman reader. In mentioning the mantilla there is the suggestion that the women are artistically arranging their hair over combs, this being a form of dress associated with middle class womanhood. This is certainly a considerable elevation in status for the factory woman worker. During the nineteenth century in fiction and non-fiction it was the euphemism "hands" that became the recognised description of the factory worker. "Hands" is a term that suggests a metonymic dismissal of an individual's identity, and an aspect of industrial dehumanisation. Gaskell's concern is to humanise the factory workers, and this is particularly clear in the image of the women factory workers' hands that demonstrate their creative talents. They are women who share comparable skills to those attributed to the middle class woman in showing their familiarity and expertise in the popular domestic art of working with the hands.[3] This is a skill that Gaskell would confirm again in *North and South* when the women factory workers express their expert knowledge concerning Margaret's dress and choice of fabric. They would "even touch her shawl or gown to ascertain the exact material" (67).

"For the apparel oft proclaims the man"(12) Isabella Beeton, in *Mrs Beeton's Book*

of Household Management informs her nineteenth century reader, suggesting that in this era clothing was understood to be a form of language that communicates identity. In considering the various designs, fabrics, colour and colourlessness of the shawls encountered in *Mary Barton*, I will suggest that the shawl can be read as a key symbol appertaining to traits in a character's identity. It is the contrast in Esther's choice of the design and colour of her shawls that implies both an intention to redeem her, and also an unmistakable, powerful aspect of good in her identity. When John Barton encounters Esther on the streets, Gaskell presents a detailed description of the fabric of Esther's shawl. Her shawl is composed in the material "barège" (124) a semi-transparent material that can naturally be interpreted in line with the fine thin semi-transparent cotton of her "muslin dress", as an accessory to her trade as a streetwalker by drawing attention to her body. Although the barège shawl was a garment thought to be of middle class attire, the barège shawl is also in this episode a garment that Gaskell associates with an immoral aspect of Esther's identity, and not least in Esther's choice of the suggested gaudy colours "the gay-coloured" material Esther favours. But it is when Esther exchanges her barège shawl for a "plaid shawl, dirty and rather worn to be sure, but which had a kind of sanctity" (236) that an aspect of her character more suitably fitting to the role she performs in the narrative emerges. The plaid shawl was a practical outdoor garment, and the plaid is often thought of solely in terms of the pattern of the material. Rather than functioning as an item of adornment it was in general a shawl that was used to protect the body from external conditions, explicit for instance in *The Moorland Cottage*, when Maggie's brother Edward returns home in wet clothing following a rain storm and Maggie in an effort to prevent Edward's increasing chill "brought her old plaid to wrap around him" (71). The plaid shawl also functions as a protective garment in the characterisation of Esther. In an era that considered to even touch the skin of a streetwalker was tantamount to contamination, Esther performs her final deed of protection. Enveloped in the widths of material, which were often a feature of the shawl, Esther places a barrier, a form of cordon sanitaire around her body to prevent any touch and thus a spread of infection to Mary. Certainly when Mary attempts to kiss her aunt goodbye "her aunt pushed her off with a frantic kind of gesture, stating 'Not me. You must never kiss me. You!' (242). In considering Esther's continual mission of protection toward her child, and as a "watcher" (159) continually roaming the streets in an attempt to watch over and protect Mary, Esther's selection of a plaid shawl with its capacity for protection is well suited in keeping with the positive aspects of her identity. It is a shawl that crucially, as Gaskell tells us, has the quality of "sanctity", the holiness that we interpret in Esther's good deeds for others.

It is Mary's redemption from self-absorbed vanity that is apparent in her choice of a modest shawl. We are presented with Mary's choice between two unmistakably different types of shawl. One of which Sally Leadbitter owns and offers to Mary in the expectation that Mary will be attracted to the design of the garment and accept it. Not unexpectedly, in keeping with Sally's paramount desire to attract attention

she offers Mary the most favoured garment in her possession, the "black watered scarf" (276). But Mary selects her "old plaid shawl" (276). In contrast to Mary's probable choice of the "black watered scarf" in her earlier life, Mary's decision to opt for the practically designed plaid is entirely appropriate in Mary's consideration, because it reflects a new aspect of her identity. It is the developing characteristic trait of a practical consciousness that she expresses in her comment to Sally when she states, "How can I think of dress at such a time? When it's a matter of life and death to Jem" (276).

In a minimal but perfectly apt comment on choice of clothing, Margaret informs Mary that in attending her debut as soloist she wore her "white shawl" (94). The design of this shawl is omitted any description because the emphasis is on "white". Recognising in the colour "white" the reflection of a radiant light, Margaret's choice is appropriate with her holy role in the narrative. She is described as "angelic" and "an angel from heaven" and "an angel of peace" (175,193,280). There are many occasions when Margaret puts her angelic role into practice. Not only does she purchase the expensive material bombazine to make mourning dresses as a personal gift to the Ogden family, but also insists on Mary accepting a "golden sovereign" (94) to help toward feeding herself and her father after the contents of the Barton home are pawned. The interests of others are always a concern for Margaret, and she proceeds on her errand of mercy to assist the exhausted Mrs Wilson in caring for the dying Alice. But perhaps it is Margaret's selfless loyal devotion to her grandfather Job Legh that might be considered as the epitome of her angelic goodness. When Margaret puts on her "white shawl" it reflects light and this is the light of holy goodness that is a leading trait in her identity.

Notes

1 Pamela Clabburn, *Shawls* (Buckinghamshire, England: Shire Publications Ltd, 2002), pp. 4-11.

2 Harriet Martineau in *Household Words* vol.v. ed. Charles Dickens (London: Wellington Street North, 1852), pp. 552-556.

3 Marjorie Henderson and Elizabeth Wilkinson, eds. *Cassell's Compendium of Victorian Crafts* (London: Macmillan Publishing Co.,Inc., 1977).

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The Seamstress

Christine Lingard

Sewing is a traditional activity of women of all classes and consequently something to which most can relate. Molly Gibson on arrival at Hamley Hall unpacks her clothes and her worsted work. Mrs Hamley approves: "Ah! You've got your sewing like a good girl."

Gaskell's knowledge is shown in her advice to a young mother who wanted a career in writing:

> As well as having always some kind of sewing ready arranged to your hand, so that you can take it up at any odd minute and do a few stitches. I dare say at present it might be difficult to procure the sum that is necessary to purchase a sewing machine; and indeed unless you are a good workwoman to begin with you will find a machine difficult to manage. But try, my dear, to conquer your 'clumsiness' in sewing; there are thousand little bits of work, which no sempstress ever does as well as the wife or mother who knows how the comfort of those she loves depends on little peculiarities which but she [who] cares enough for the wearers to attend to...[L515]

The plight of professional needlewomen was a different matter. Like today's sweatshop workers they were on the bottom rung of the employment ladder, suffering appalling hardship. 106,000 seamstresses are listed on the 1841 census. After a two-year apprenticeship, usually living on the job, and paying a premium of up to £35 for the privilege, a journeywoman received £15-50 a year depending on how much accommodation was offered. Hours were usually 8am to 11pm sometimes working all night to meet a deadline for an order. As little as 20 minutes were allowed for dinner, other meals being taken as they worked. Conditions were unhealthy. There was a marked lack of ventilation in case valuable fabrics were damaged. Small fibre-particles irritated the lungs. Dusting was discouraged to keep the circulation to a minimum. The death rate from lung disease was high. Of 52 milliners and dressmakers, whose deaths were recorded in the London Metropolitan Union area in 1841, the average age was 28. 33 died of lung disease.

Though Gaskell would have met girls when off duty, she was only likely to have seen their working environment on a prearranged visit such as the one she made to the Schwabe's factory, near Middleton. Few of her middle class readers would have had even that opportunity. Seamstresses, however, were just that bit closer to personal experience. They were to be found all over the country, as everyone needed clothes.

Libbie Marsh was a seamstress, as too was Mary Barton. John Barton was determined that his daughter should not follow him into the mill and tramped around trying to find her a position – but he couldn't afford the premiums. Mary was more determined and found a job herself, but was able to live at home. Later through the character of Margaret Jennings we learn of the hardship. Eye problems were another common concern. Margaret was going blind:

> Th'only difference is that if I sew a long time together, a bright spot like th'sun comes right down where I'm looking; all the rest is quite clear but just where I want to see...Plain work pays so bad and mourning has become so plentiful this winter I were tempted to take any black work I could; and now I'm suffering for it. [Chapter 5]

It was also the profession of Ruth Hilton:

> Mrs Mason was particularly desirous that her work-women should exert themselves tonight for, on the next, the annual hunt-ball was to take place. For many were the dresses she had promised should be sent home 'without fail' the next morning; she had not let one slip through her fingers, for fear if she did, it might fall into the hands of a rival dressmaker.
>
> She could not sleep or rest. The tightness at her side was worse than usual... but then she remembered the premium her father had struggled hard to pay, and the large family younger than herself, that had to be cared for, and she determined to bear on. [Chapter 1]

Gaskell was concerned not only with physical conditions but also the temptations which the girls encountered. Some argued that their position was worse than factory girls because there was less regulation and their exposure to luxury products encouraged dissatisfaction. Young girls were often long distances from home. Though weekly hours were long they didn't work on Sunday, unlike domestic servants who were also in this situation. Employers often took no interest in them. No dinner was cooked or fires lighted in any rooms to which they had access. They were left to their own devices. The risk of prostitution was high.

The image of the needlewoman became a cultural icon. There was a whole body of fiction on the subject. Most has sunk without trace but Gaskell couldn't have failed to be aware of it. First was John Galt's short story *The Seamstress* (1833). In poetry too – Thomas Hood's *The Song of the Shirt* is the most famous example. It was inspired by real life reports of needlewomen pawning their work. Charlotte Tonna (1790-1846), whose *Helen Fleetwood* is often described as the beginning of the social problem genre, wrote *The Wrongs of Women* (1844) – a collection of four documentary stories quoting verbatim from *The Second Report of the Children's Employment Commission*. One told of a needlewoman who dies and whose sister succumbs to prostitution:

> The pain, sir in my chest is constant. I must stoop, because it seems to relieve the great pain in my shoulder-blades; but the stooping makes my breath shorter. Palpitation of the heart comes on if I only change my attitude or speak: a mist is over my eyes, and a choking in my throat and very great sickness... there is such a headache! Grievous racking pain in the limbs, and you may see my right shoulder-blade is growing out.

Dickens took up the cause, on the recommendation of the sanitary reformer, Thomas Southwood Smith, in his short novel *The Chimes*, based on a true incident of a seamstress who tried to drown both herself and her baby. She was charged with attempted murder. A death sentence was commuted to seven years transportation, after a public outcry. In *David Copperfield* Little Em'ly was a dressmaker, as were Little Dorritt and Kate Nickleby. In *Alton Locke* Charles Kingsley has his hero visit the garret of a seamstress:

> There was no bed in the room, no doubt. On a broken chair by the chimney sat a miserable old woman fancying that she was warming her hands over the embers which had long been cold, shaking her head, and muttering to herself, with palsied lips, about the guardians and the workhouse; while upon a few rags on the floor lay a girl, ugly, small-pox marked, emaciated, her only bedclothes the skirt of a large handsome riding-habit, at which two other girls, wan and tawdry, were stitching busily, as they sat right and left of her on the floor.

Two forgotten novelists, with whom Gaskell was acquainted, also tackled the issue. Elizabeth Stone (1803-56) of Manchester was the novelist, whom she claimed was the author of *Mary Barton* when trying to preserve her anonymity. Her brother, James Wheeler, published an anthology of poetry including William Gaskell's verse. Her novel *William Langshawe* described a mill owner whose son was murdered by some of his workers. Though Mrs Gaskell denied it, this may have inspired *Mary Barton*.

In 1840 Stone wrote an extensively illustrated history of fashion, edited by the Countess of Wilton of Heaton Park, Manchester. Another novel, the *Young Milliner* contrasted the lives of workers with that of their rich clients. The preface sets out her aims:

> Fashionable ladies, individual kind and good and exemplary, - are collectively the cause of infinite misery to the young and unprotected of their own sex. Of the existence even of this misery, they are, it may well be believed, scarcely aware; of its frightful extent, utterly unconscious...Should this narrative meet their sight, it is hoped that its appeal will not be in vain.

This rare novel, despite its long-term failure, was reviewed in London journals:

> It was very bitter – it was almost unbearable. Sometimes, in the earlier part of the season, she had stood to her sewing throughout the night and had thereby been enabled to repel the advances of sleep more effectively: but this she could no longer do, her ancles [sic] swelled...On Sunday morning about ten o'clock she retired to bed, after being (for it had been a dreadfully busy week) at work for upwards of seventy hours consecutively...

The other author is Eliza Meteyard (1816-79) of Shrewsbury. The only recorded meeting with Gaskell was a dinner with the Howitts in 1850. She is now only remembered for her monumental, though unscholarly biography of Josiah Wedgwood. She eked out a living writing fiction to support her siblings, using the pseudonym Silverpen to conceal her gender. Though justly deserving criticism the biography made a lot of information available for the first time. Her stories were published in *Howitt's Magazine*, along with *Libbie Marsh*. One tale *Lucy Dean, the noble needlewoman* was serialized in the popular feminist magazine, *Eliza Cook's Journal*. The heroine was typical to type – lonely garret, spluttering candle, wintry moon, and prostitute sister:

> untying the parcel she had brought she laid the two unfinished shirts on the table...'you see, ma'am,' she continued 'so much was taken off the last job of waistcoats, owing to the fault you found with the match of the stripes, that but sixpence was left me for bread and rent, and, as even my last candle end was burnt out tonight, I have brought those in the hope that you will let me have a trifle as my need is sore.'

The answer to her heroine's problems was emigration, as it was for Pasley, the 16-year-old dressmaker, in whose fate Gaskell showed an active interest. She was in Manchester's New Bayley prison for prostitution in 1850. On Tottie Fox's recommendation, Gaskell involved Dickens and his friend, the philanthropist, Angela Burdett Coutts. They arranged passage for her to the Cape. This incident is generally seen as the inspiration for *Ruth* though the outcome is different.

Irish born Julia Kavanagh (1824-77) cared for an invalid mother, and earned a living writing fiction and biographies, forestalling Gaskell's plans for a book about Madame Sevigné, with one on French women of letters. She died in Nice, ten years before her mother. William borrowed her *Rachel Gray* from the Portico Library. This novel in which the heroine, again a needlewoman, is credited with having influenced the writings of George Eliot.

In 1850 Gaskell forwarded two Christian Socialist pamphlets by Charles Kingsley to her brother-in-law, William Robson, of Warrington.

> They are anxious to obtain a circulation among the working-classes for these tracts, and it is they that have instituted the Co-operative Tailors' Society, and who hope to form a similar Society for Needlewomen. [L67]

Kingsley was the only Christian Socialist to express his views in fiction. *Alton Locke* was influenced by Henry Mayhew's report *London Labour and the London Poor* based on a series of interviews with poorly paid and unemployed tailors and needlewomen. Controversially many of the East End tailors interviewed said that women had cheapened the trade. It caused public indignation. A stream of the letters to the press followed, for example, one pointing out the double standards of a famous American novelist currently visiting Britain.

> In the East End dressmakers performed 16 hours of work irrespective of season with 40 minutes allowed for eating... Workrooms in which 10 or 12 of them are employed in making a dress for Mrs Beecher Stowe, the champion of the black slaves of America. [Times 1853].

As Gaskell abandoned the social-problem novel, the burgeoning Women's Movement took up the cause. She had been exposed to this group since coming to London in 1849. It was the literary editor William Howitt, who found a publisher for *Mary Barton*. His home was a perfect environment for Gaskell to pursue her religious, artistic and social interests. His wife, Mary was a feminist. She gathered around her a number of younger women with like interests – her daughter, Anna and her friend from Art School, Tottie Fox, who formed a special bond with Gaskell, Adelaide Procter, author of *The Lost Chord*, who visited Plymouth Grove, Jessie Boucherett, a product of Avonbank school like Gaskell, Emily Faithfull, founder of the women's Victoria Press, Bessie Rayner Parkes, great granddaughter of Joseph Priestley, and Barbara Bodichon (née Leigh-Smith) whom Gaskell "admired but did not like".

Generally known as the Langham Place Group, they were actively involved in the unsuccessful campaign to present the Married Women's Property Petition to Parliament in 1855. Married women's earnings were by law automatically the property of their husbands and they had no right to them. Mary Howitt was the secretary and collected most of the 20,000 signatures herself, with the help of 18-year-old Octavia Hill (of National Trust fame) pasting the sheets together. They thought it propitious to secure the support of as many respectably married women as possible. By then Gaskell's reputation was sufficiently high, so with Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Jane Carlyle, her name was at the top of the list. She was pleased to oblige – it was her only overtly feminist act.

One of the first feminist articles on the cause of the seamstresses was a plea by Anna Jameson (1794-1860) in *Sisters of Charity, Catholic and Protestant and the Communion of Labour*. She called for Protestant women to adopt the charitable activities of Catholic sisterhoods. Jameson belonged to an older generation of more moderate feminists, and took the younger ones under her wing – 'her nieces' as she called them. Known principally as an art historian and travel writer she had both popular and critical success. One of several books she gave to Gaskell was her *Commonplace Book*:

> [I] peep in, and read a sentence and shut it up to think over it's [sic] graceful suggestive wisdom in something of the gourmet spirit of a child with an eatable dainty...I do like your book – I liked it before – I like it even better now. [L219]

Another gift was the tract – *The Communion of Labour: a Second Lecture on the Social Employment of Women* which placed emphasis on the need of women to lead useful lives, and have the opportunity to earn their own living. In her younger days she had been governess in Dublin to the children of Lord Hatherton, who married Mrs Davenport of Capesthorne. Though not intimate acquaintances, they exchanged a number of letters. It is evident that Gaskell valued the older women's opinion highly and sent her a copy of her latest book for approval, which was forthcoming.

Bessie Rayner Parkes (1825-1923) came from a Unitarian family in Coventry. Her great uncle had married one of the Byerley sisters of Avonbank School. Her daughter claimed that Gaskell had taken her mother to Haworth. She was definitely entertained at Plymouth Grove. A gift from Bessie of her poetry is in the Manchester Central Library collection, along with the gift from Anna Jameson. She was devoted to Mary Merryweather (died 1880), a Quaker nurse – a friendship which survived Bessie's conversion to Roman Catholicism. Gaskell was familiar with her charitable activities:

> her management of Mr Courtauld's girls is the most successful I ever heard of – [L630]

She managed the girls' school founded by Samuel Courtauld at his silk factory in Halstead, Essex for 14 years from 1847, established a night school, a factory kitchen, a hostel for working girls, a nursery for mothers to leave their babies and a sick fund. The project failed for lack of support. Girls resented the restraint of the hostel and the mothers preferred to leave their babies with friends. Perhaps it was antipathy to 'do-gooders' that was the problem.

The Courtaulds were shareholders in *The English Women's Journal*, the magazine founded by Bessie with Leigh-Smith. Matilda Hays was co-editor. This 1865 letter probably refers to the journal and would therefore be written to her:

> Dear madam, I have received a letter from Miss Parkes this morning in which she tells me of your kind wish that I should contribute to the Magazine that you propose to start. I am, however, unable to promise this as my time will be very fully occupied during the next year or so. [L568]

Perhaps there is more to her refusal. She had not responded to Eliza Cook's request for her to contribute to her feminist journal. Bessie's friend Mary Ann Evans (George Eliot) was also reluctant, pleading pressure of novel writing. She disapproved of another of Bessie's projects, *The Waverley Journal*, declaring the

writing was not up to standard. Quality journalism was more important than the 'woman-only' tag. She was equally dismissive of *The English Woman's Journal*. 'It is middling' she wrote. Did Gaskell feel the same?

Bessie abandoned her cause after her marriage to Louis Belloc, whose Irish born mother Louise Swanton had translated several of Gaskell's books into French. She was the mother of Hilaire Belloc.

The English Woman's Journal contained several articles on the lot of seamstresses. Bessie was critical of many of the philanthropists, calling for the foundation of associations of women, similar to those in New York. Other articles were contributed by Ellen Barlee (1826-93), who with aristocratic patrons, founded the Institution for the Employment of Needlewomen in Lamb's Conduit Street, London, designed to cut out the middleman and get the full profit for the women' efforts. She placed regular appeals in *The Times*. Jenny Lind gave a concert on her behalf. Gaskell wrote in 1861:

> I shall be very glad to make Miss Barlee's acquaintance and when I next go to London...I will call on her, or try to see her in a way most pleasing to her and you. I am very interested in her paper for the Report – having seen something of the kind of work at York St., Westminster, under Miss Stanley's auspices. I fancy Miss Barlee must be well acquainted with this as Miss Stanley shares the Army contract for shirts and until recently I have been the means of her purchasing the calico here in Manchester. Owing I believe to the undermining of the former contractors, difficulties have arisen in procuring the description of shirting, - difficulties which, possibly Miss Barlee has met with as well.

Hon. Mary Stanley (1813-79), was the sister of Arthur Stanley, Dean of Westminster. This aristocratic Cheshire family had known the Hollands for decades. She had been a friend of Florence Nightingale, but they became estranged when she converted to Roman Catholicism. Bishop Manning prevailed on her to take a second contingent of nurses to Scutari, but she proved to be unsuitable for the task and soon returned. A.J. Munby, a lecturer at the Working Man's College described her thus:

> Behind a counter, also full of shirts in progress, sat Miss Stanley, stitching away at a wristband...She is the Hon Miss Stanley, who was with Miss Nightingale in the Crimea: and here she now sits, day by day, looking after the making, by poor needlewomen at their own homes of some thirty thousand soldiers' shirts per annum. A quiet self devoted woman of forty or so; slight and worn, with traces of past beauty in her calm & ladylike and unpretending face. A woman worthy of deep respect; and of a certain desideratum too, when one looked at her busy hands – thin, uncared for, dignified by no wedding ring. [L494a]

The early 1860s period in Manchester is known as the Cotton Famine, when the

American Civil War cut off this important source of cotton. There was great hardship. Ironically the provision of sewing circles was seen as a means of relief. She wrote to David Grundy, vice-chairman of the Sewing Circles Committee.

> Marianne and Meta are so sorry to see the thin poor clothing they go out in, to receive their parish money...& we think if you would kindly let us have a few fents & scraps of cloth we could manage a cape or cloak apiece for Xmas Day...you once gave us a grand beautiful bundle of woollen slag, and therefore we ask you to give us more. But I know two or three poor women to whom I should be glad to give the employment of making up even such small scraps of woollen stuff, - and poor old women shivering to the Union in a warm bombazine petticoat, & calico gown & shawl equally worn, won't be particular if they have a covering of many colours, so that it is warm. [L606]

In 1862, Barlee published the findings of a visit to one circle set up in City Road, Hulme by William Birch, a young clerk still in his twenties. Within a year there were 3,000 women employed in a network of circles, paid 8d a day with lunch included (potato hash on the day of the visit). Unwanted clothing was also collected and distributed, and pawned clothing redeemed. In 1859 Gaskell had expressed reservations about sewing circles.

> I think a sewing club is an error – good for the people whh [sic] sew, as it is self denying on their part, but not for doing half a quarter so much good to others as might be done by the same amount of self-denial. The best mode of administering material charity seems to me by giving employment and taking thought in adopting the kind of employment and in helping to find out who can do it. If you cut out the work, gave it to poor women to do for a moderate payment and then either gave the ready-made clothes yourselves or sold it at cost price to be given by others to the poor who needed it I should say it was far better wiser and more noiseless. [L424]

Yet the Gaskell women were tireless in their efforts for the relief of victims. Work on *Sylvia's Lovers* was set aside.

> Last autumn and winter was such hard work – we were often off at nine, - not to come home till 7 or ½ past, too worn out to eat or do anything but go to bed. The one thought ran through all our talk almost like a disease. Marianne worked quite as hard, if not harder than Meta...but Marianne did not think about it all as Meta...but Meta laboured day and night in weighing and planning and thinking...– the pressure on the brain was telling on the spine. [L526]

In the end the experience was dispiriting. She feared that in the long run more harm was done than good.

It is interesting that many of these descriptions of philanthropy are included in

letters to Janet, Lady Kay-Shuttleworth, of Gawthorp Hall. Estranged from her husband from 1853 she spent her time at health resorts here in Britain and on the continent, but never returned to Lancashire. Most biographers fail to expand on her character, but if her replies to Gaskell's letters (which haven't survived) are of equal stature she was a woman of intelligence and compassion. Perhaps she was one of those titled people who provided financial support for charities but directed her activities from her sofa, as a semi-invalid, (there was a period of a year when she never left her bedroom), but then so did Florence Nightingale.

This issue was certainly a major one that concerned Gaskell at all times of her career. I certainly feel there is still a lot more to be learnt about her charitable activities.

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The Connection between Elizabeth Gaskell, Charles Eliot Norton and Autumn Leaves by John Everett Millais

Pat Barnard

For those of us who treasure the painting Autumn Leaves by Millais and who are also members of the Gaskell Society this connection is very exciting!

Millais painted Autumn Leaves in the orchard of his first marriage home Annat Lodge in Perth. I found the site which is now a small cul-de-sac of attractive houses.

Effie (Euphemia) wife of Millais, and former wife of John Ruskin, chose the girls for the painting. The two girls on the left are Effie's younger sisters Sophie and Alice. Sophie is holding a bunch of leaves which are dropping into the garden wicker basket held by Alice.

Effie then had problems finding some girls pretty enough. There was nothing to suit in Mr Murdoch's school and the girls at the School of Industry (for orphans) were all so ugly except for Matilda Proudfoot! She is wearing the brown cotton dress and cape of the school and her brilliantly red hair glows against the background, with the peak of Ben Vorlich in the distance. Isabella Nicol was found sitting over the fire and watching with great interest two pears roasting in the room of an invalid named Kitty Fox whom Effie had been visiting for 12 years. Mrs Nicol came in to tidy the room and in return Isabella was being taught to read by Kitty.

Charles Eliot Norton wrote to Elizabeth Gaskell on 24/7 1857 that during a walk he had met her daughters (with I think, Hearn) and the scene had reminded him of the painting Autumn Leaves by Millais.

The original hand-written letter is to be found in Box 21 of the Tatham-Worthington collection in the Rylands Library. Tatham-Worthington were the solicitors to Meta Gaskell and other members of the family. The well-worn fragile letter was found amongst the papers. This was on display for the 150th anniversary exhibition of the Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857 in the Rylands library.

Editor adds: Autumn Leaves (oil on canvas, measuring 104.3 x 74cm and first exhibited in 1856) is now exhibited with the Pre-Raphaelites on the first floor of Manchester Art Gallery.

'Such a life': Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë

Patsy Stoneman

A shortened version of a talk given to the Gaskell Society at Cross Street Chapel, Manchester, on Tuesday, 5th March, 2013

'Scheherazade' was Dickens' name for Elizabeth Gaskell and Jenny Uglow writes that 'she could not help turning lives into stories'.[1] It was certainly as a good story that she first encountered Charlotte Brontë.

When *Jane Eyre* was published under the pseudonym 'Currer Bell', in October, 1847, it caused a sensation. Everyone who could read wanted to read it, and of course Gaskell agog with curiosity about the author. Two years later, *Shirley* was published 'by Currer Bell, Author of Jane Eyre', and Gaskell was still in the dark, begging Tottie Fox to find out 'who wrote Jane Eyre and Shirley'.[2] Less than a week later, however, she was able to gloat over Catherine Winkworth about 'Currer Bell (aha!, What will you give me for a secret?) She's a she – that I will tell you – who has sent me 'Shirley'.[3]

By early in 1850 the secret of Charlotte Brontë's identity was generally known,[4] and the two women finally met at the Kay-Shuttleworths' Lake District home in August, 1850. Gaskell was genuinely drawn to Charlotte. 'She and I quarrelled and differed about almost everything,' she writes, 'she calls me a democrat, & can not bear Tennyson – but we like each other heartily... and I hope we shall ripen into friends'.[5] It was Charlotte's life which fascinated Gaskell, and as soon as she returned home, she dashed off letter after letter.[6] 'Such a life as Miss B's I never heard of before', she writes, sweeping on not only to describe what she herself had seen and heard, but also to repeat the ill-founded gossip passed on to her by Lady Kay-Shuttleworth, much of it derived from a disgruntled servant dismissed from the Brontë household.

In these letters Gaskell conjures up Brontë's bleak moorland home, the early death of her mother and the eccentric ways of her 'strange, half-mad' father. She paints Charlotte's audacious journey to Brussels and rushes on to the success of *Jane Eyre*, so rapidly followed by the deaths of her brother and sisters – all in a typical Gaskell torrent of emotive detail.[7] Charlotte, for her part, writes to Ellen Nussey that Gaskell 'is a woman of the most genuine talent – of cheerful, pleasing and cordial manners and – I believe – of a kind and good heart'.[8]

The two women also wrote to one another, and Charlotte visited the Gaskells' home in Manchester three times in the early 1850s.[9] They continued good friends, and when Gaskell's *Ruth* and Brontë's *Villette* both appeared in January 1853, Charlotte wrote, 'I daresay we shall not be able wholly to prevent comparisons... but we need not care: we can set them at defiance: they *shall* not make us foes: they *shall* not mingle with our mutual feeling one taint of jealousy: there is my hand on that: I know

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you will give clasp for clasp'.[10]

Indeed the friendship was not damaged, and in September 1853 Gaskell finally visited Charlotte at home in Haworth, again writing long letters describing Charlotte's warm welcome, together with the odd behaviour of her father, Patrick Brontë, who took his meals alone and handled 'a deadly little pistol'. She was now able to describe at first hand how 'the wind goes piping and wailing and sobbing round the square unsheltered house in a very strange unearthly way' and how Charlotte's conversation was filled with 'the wild, strange facts of her own and her sisters' lives'.[11]

Gaskell's busy life meant that though she took a lively interest in Charlotte's marriage to Arthur Bell Nicholls, further visits were deferred, so that it was a great shock when, in March, 1855, she received a letter from John Greenwood, the Haworth stationer, informing her of Charlotte's death. 'I can not tell you how VERY sad your note has made me', she wrote. 'My dear dear friend that I shall never see again on earth! .... I loved her dearly, more than I think she knew. I shall never cease to be thankful that I knew her: or to mourn her loss'.[12]

Charlotte's death stirred up a new storm of interest in her life, not all of it sympathetic. In June, *Sharpe's London Magazine* published what Juliet Barker, the Brontë biographer, calls 'a gossipy article... which, with salacious glee, related a series of lurid anecdotes about Charlotte's life and gave a grim portrayal of her home and father'.[13] The article stung Charlotte's life-long friend, Ellen Nussey, who urged Charlotte's father and husband to take action. 'I wish', she writes, 'that Mrs Gaskell, who is every way capable, would undertake a reply and would give a sound castigation to the writer. Her personal acquaintance with Haworth, the Parsonage, and its inmates, fits her for the task'.[14]

'The great irony', Juliet Barker comments, 'is that Mrs Gaskell was actually responsible for the article' – not that she wrote it herself, but that it 'quoted extensively from the [...] letters she had written from the Lake District in 1850 after her first meeting with Charlotte'.[15] By 1855, however, Gaskell saw Charlotte as a dear friend rather than as a source of sensational tales, writing to George Smith, who was publisher to both women, saying 'I can not tell you how I honoured & loved her.... Sometime... I will publish what I know of her, and make the world... honour the woman as much as they have admired the writer.' Gaskell was imagining writing something perhaps 'years hence',[16] but only days later she received a formal request from Patrick Brontë 'to publish a long or short account of [Charlotte's] life and works, just as you may deem expedient & proper'.[17]

Gaskell rose to the occasion, albeit with misgivings. 'I never *did* write a biography', she writes to a friend, 'and don't know quite how to set about it; you see you have to be accurate and keep to facts; a most difficult thing for a writer of fiction'.[18]

Nevertheless she set herself a programme of research which was possibly unprecedented for a biography of that time. She had access to the hundreds of letters which Charlotte had written to Ellen Nussey, but she also travelled to almost every place where Charlotte had lived, and interviewed as many people as possible who had known her.

Her absolute priority was to 'make the world... honour the woman', and in defence of her friend she was fearless – even foolhardy – in exposing the Clergy Daughters' School at Cowan Bridge, the original for Lowood in *Jane Eyre*, and the perfidy of Lydia Robinson (later Lady Scott), the woman who, she believed, had seduced Charlotte's brother Branwell. 'Do you mind the law of libel', she writes to George Smith ' – I have three people I want to libel – Lady Scott (that bad woman who corrupted Branwell Brontë) Mr Newby, & Lady Eastlake'.[19] Newby was the unscrupulous publisher who held the manuscripts of *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey*, and tried to exploit the success of *Jane Eyre* by suggesting that they were by the same author. Lady Eastlake wrote a notorious review of *Jane Eyre* suggesting that if it were written by a woman, it must be 'one who has, for some sufficient reason, long forfeited the society of her own sex'.[20]

Like several other critics, Eastlake found Charlotte's writing 'coarse', meaning 'indelicate' or 'improper', and Gaskell tried to head off this kind of criticism by stressing the hardship of Charlotte's life, in the process painting Patrick Brontë as an eccentric tyrant and Branwell as abject in his lack of self-discipline. She also concealed the fact that Charlotte had fallen in love with a married man. In May, 1856, Gaskell followed Charlotte to the Pensionnat Heger, in Brussels, where she had spent two years learning French and German, and Charlotte's teacher, M. Heger, showed Gaskell the desperate letters which Charlotte had written to him after leaving Brussels. 'Day and night', she had written, 'I find neither rest nor peace. If I sleep I am disturbed by tormenting dreams in which I see you always severe, always saturnine and angry with me.... If my master withdraws his friendship from me entirely I shall be absolutely without hope; if he gives me a little friendship – a very little – I shall be content – happy, I would have a reason for living - for working'.[21] Gaskell kept the secret, writing not a word to suggest Charlotte's obsession.

Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë* was published in March, 1857, but she was obliged to make extensive revisions to a third edition, published in August, to pacify the various people who felt themselves to have been libelled. Modern scholars voice a different objection to the biography – that it puts an over-romantic emphasis on the Brontë children's melancholy childhood, Patrick's reclusive eccentricity and Branwell's dissipated worthlessness. Yet Elizabeth Gaskell was probably the best biographer that Charlotte Brontë could have had.

The book was stunningly original. There was no outstanding biography of a woman writer which might stand as a model for Gaskell's work, and she wrote a new and

unique kind of memorial, in which Charlotte's private trials and emotions took equal place with her public life. And if Gaskell occasionally 'plays to the gallery' in recording the difficulties of such a life, it is her story-teller's skill which renders the story memorable. As Patrick Brontë said to an objector, 'Mrs Gaskell is a novelist, you know, and we must allow her a *little* romance, eh?... But the book is substantially true, sir, for all that'.[22]

There were, however, aspects to Charlotte's life which Gaskell could not or did not know. She seriously misrepresented Patrick Brontë. She only met him twice – once before, and once after Charlotte's death – and confessed to being 'sadly afraid of him in my inmost soul',[23] This trepidation meant that she was reluctant to apply to him for information, and that he had no opportunity to deny some of the bizarre behaviour which she attributed to him. Patrick's response to her stories demonstrates, as Barker puts it, his 'self-deprecating sense of humour' and 'his remarkable forebearance'.[24] 'I do not deny' he writes, 'that I am somewhat excentrick. Had I been numbered amongst the calm, sedate, *concentric* men of the world, I should not have been as I now am, and I should, in all probability, never have had such children as mine have been'.[25] Despite all the trouble it had caused, his opinion of Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë* was 'that it is every \way/ worthy of what one Great Woman, should have written of Another, and that it ought to stand, and will stand in the first rank, of Biographies, till the end of time'.[26]

It is Juliet Barker, among the modern biographers of the Brontës, who has done most to rehabilitate the figure of Patrick Brontë, showing that far from being an eccentric recluse, he was actively involved in social reform, and took a deep interest in the education of his children – indeed, he was remarkable for his time in giving his daughters access to uncensored reading. He was remarkable in many ways. Born in the north of Ireland in 1777 in considerable poverty, he raised himself by his own efforts to become a minister in the Church of England.

At each stage of his early career he was caught up in scenes of potential danger. In 1798 the punitive massacres by which the British army suppressed the rebellion of United Irishmen gave him a life-long horror of insurrection, which Charlotte came to share. As a student at St John's College, Cambridge, in an England in a ferment over the Napoleonic wars, Patrick aligned himself with law and order, striking out his Irish name, 'Prunty', and registering himself as 'Brontë', in homage to Lord Nelson, newly created 'Duke of Brontë'. He drilled under the young Lord Palmerston, and eagerly followed the Peninsular campaigns (1807-14) of Arthur Wellesley, later the Duke of Wellington. As a curate in West Yorkshire, he witnessed men from his parish take part in Luddite attacks.

Patrick undoubtedly spoke of these experiences to his children, and also encouraged them to read current journals, all of which meant that Charlotte Brontë was much less isolated from the world than she sometimes suggested. The 'little

books' which she and her siblings wrote as children were hardly childish in tone, since they copied their format and their preoccupations from the regular journals of the day, particularly *Blackwood's Magazine*. Gaskell did read some of the 'little books', but she was clearly bewildered and a little alarmed by them. 'They are the wildest & most incoherent things' she wrote to George Smith. All of them, she noted, 'purport[...] to be written, or addressed to some member of the Wellesley family'.[27] Indeed, the young Charlotte had followed her father in adopting as heroes first Arthur Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington, and then a fictionalised version of his son, also Arthur Wellesley. In the stories she created with her brother Branwell, these heroes establish an imaginary country called Angria in West Africa, and here Arthur's brother, Charles, becomes Charlotte's regular mouth-piece, appearing in one story after another as a cynical, frivolous man about town.

Although this work is normally described as 'juvenilia', Charlotte was quite grown up before she abandoned the Angrian saga. Heather Glen's recent anthology, *Charlotte Brontë: Tales of Angria*[28] includes five of Charlotte's 'novelettes' written when she was in her early twenties, and Glen demonstrates that the social milieu of this writing derives from the so-called 'silver fork' novels of the 1820s and 30s. Readers who are only familiar with Charlotte's later work will be astonished at the jaunty, dissipated tone and racy slang of novelettes like 'Stancliffe's Hotel' (1838) and 'Henry Hastings' (1839).

It was a wrench for Charlotte to give up the over-coloured world of Angria, but she recognised that if she was to gain an audience outside her own family, she must address the world in its everyday form. In *The Professor*, therefore, she took as her hero and narrator a man who would 'work his way through life as I had seen real living men work theirs – that he should never get a shilling he had not earned – that no sudden turns should lift him in a moment to wealth and high station'. Ironically, publishers rejected it because they 'would have liked something ... more consonant with a highly wrought fancy'.[29] The irony is the greater in that *The Professor* derives from Charlotte's time in Brussels, the most 'highly wrought' period of her life, and it was to keep sentiment under control that she adopted a male persona with something of the worldly Angrian tone.

Jane Eyre, by contrast, speaks openly not only of its heroine's emotional deprivation as an unloved orphan, but also of her indignation at her lot. '"Unjust! – unjust!"', Jane's reason cries to her as a child,[30] and as a lonely governess she protests that women 'suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer'.[31] Jane is notably anxious about the prospect of marriage, even to her beloved Rochester, and resists the status of a 'kept woman', whether inside or outside marriage. Their final union comes about only when their economic, physical and emotional standing has been equalised by her inheritance and his disability. Margaret Oliphant, writing in 1855, credited Charlotte Brontë with having created a new kind of relationship between men and women, in which their

'furious love-making' is 'but a wild declaration of the "Rights of Woman" in a new aspect'; she finds Jane Eyre 'a dangerous little person, inimical to the peace of society'.[32] It is an aspect of Charlotte's writing which Gaskell does not emphasise, and it is possibly the novel's intense self-centredness that left the Unitarian uneasy.

In *Shirley* (1849), Charlotte did attempt a wider social scene, and though she distanced her new novel by setting it in the past, in the Luddite years 1811-12, these events offered clear parallels to recent Chartist activity. She was therefore dismayed when, well into her new work, she read Gaskell's *Mary Barton*, which deals specifically with a Chartist hero in contemporary Manchester. *Shirley*, however, is a very different book from Gaskell's impassioned account of working-class suffering. The main male character is not a working man but an exiled Belgian manufacturer, Robert Gérard Moore, the master of Hollow's Mill, and Charlotte's treatment of the workers themselves is almost dismissive.[33] Their local spokesmen are worthless men[34] while the more serious demagogues are 'strangers: emissaries from the large towns'.[35] Only one worker, William Farren, is treated seriously,[36] and, like Dickens' Stephen Blackpool, he is shown as a special case.

The social problem which attracts Charlotte's passionate engagement, in fact, is not that of industrial workers but that of unmarried women, represented by Caroline Helstone. Caroline contemplates the life of old maids in her district and concludes that the place allotted to them 'is to do good to others, to be helpful whenever help is wanted'. This is 'a very convenient doctrine for the people who hold it' but, she asks, 'Is this enough? Is it to live? Is there not a terrible hollowness, mockery, want, craving, in that existence which is given away to others, for want of something of your own to bestow it on?'[37] This protest might be a response to many of Gaskell's short stories, where single women find fulfilment through caring for other people's children. Charlotte's faith in the possibilities of marriage itself had also waned since *Jane Eyre*. Although Caroline does marry Robert Moore in the end, Charlotte does not imagine the reciprocal married life which Gaskell foresees for Margaret Hale in *North and South*.[38]

Charlotte's last novel, *Villette* (1853), returns to the theme of single women. It is one of the most intense representations of loneliness ever written, and although Gaskell found it to some extent 'morbid', she acknowledges that 'it reveals depths in her mind, aye, and in her *heart* too which I doubt if ever any one has fathomed. What would have been her transcendent grandeur if she had been brought up in a healthy & happy atmosphere no one can tell.' Gaskell attributes Charlotte's 'morbidity' to 'her life of monotony and privation of any one to love',[39] and Thackeray went further, writing that 'rather than have fame, rather than any other earthly good or mayhap heavenly one she wants some Tomkins or another to love her and be in love with'.[40]

Yet Charlotte does not deserve this patronising tone. In a letter to Ellen Nussey, she is precise: 'The evils that now and then wring a groan from my heart – lie in position – not that I am a *single* woman and likely to remain a *single* woman – but because I

am a *lonely* woman and likely to be *lonely*'.[41] Charlotte's need to escape solitude was complicated by her fear that marriage comes at the price of lost independence. *Villette* ends with its heroine established in a successful single life, while her promised husband may or may not have perished at sea.[42] Charlotte's triumph here is to use fiction to give her heroine two rewards which in reality she feared were incompatible – on the one hand the precious consciousness that for one other human being she was the 'dearest, first on earth',[43] and on the other hand, the equally precious gift of 'scope and work'.[44]

Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë were very different women. Gaskell was a generally happy, optimistic wife and mother, member of a hopeful and rationalistic community, courageous in the defence of the suffering poor but sure that a woman's destiny, whether married or single, lay primarily in the care of others. Brontë by contrast felt impotent when faced with large social problems but was radical in claiming 'scope and work' for single women. While craving the acknowledgement of love, she was dubious about the married state and (with the exception of Gaskell's daughters) disliked children. What drew the two together was perhaps their mutual recognition that, in the words of Wordsworth, whom they both admired, 'we have all of us one human heart'.[45]

1 Jenny Uglow, *Elizabeth Gaskell: A Habit of Stories*. London: Faber & Faber, 1993, p.249.

2 J. A. V. Chapple and Arthur Pollard (eds), *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell*. MUP, 1997, No.55, p. 90.

3 *Gaskell Letters* No. 57, p. 93.

4 Juliet Barker, *The Brontës*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, [1994] 1995, p. 627.

5 *Gaskell Letters* No. 79, p. 129.

6 to Catherine Winkworth, to Charlotte Froude, to Tottie Fox, and to two unknown recipients.

7 *Gaskell Letters* No. 75.

8 Margaret Smith (ed), *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë*. 3 Vols, Oxford: Clarendon, 1995 - 2004, Vol. 2 p. 450.

9 Alan Shelston, *Elizabeth Gaskell*. London: Hesperus Press, Brief Lives series, 2010, p. 67.

10 *Brontë Letters*, Vol. 3 p. 104.

11 *Gaskell Letters* No. 166, pp. 243-7.

12 *Gaskell Letters* No.232, p. 336.

13 Barker, p. 780.

14 Quoted in Barker, p. 780.

15 Barker, p. 780.

16 *Gaskell Letters* No. 241, p. 345.

17 Quoted in Barker, p. 782.

18 Quoted in Uglow, p. 397.

19 *Gaskell Letters* No. 314, p. 418.

20 Elizabeth Rigby (Lady Eastlake), *Quarterly Review*, December 1848, Vol lxxxiv, pp. 153-85; quoted in Miriam Allott (ed), *The Brontës: the Critical Heritage*.London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974, p. 111.

21 *Brontë Letters* Vol I, p. 379.

22 Quoted in Uglow p. 429.

23 *Gaskell Letters* No. 166, p. 245.

24 He even laughed over the scandalous article in *Sharpe's Magazine*. Barker, pp. 781, 803.

25 Quoted in Barker, 803.

26 Quoted in Barker, p. 808.

27 *Gaskell Letters* No. 297, p. 398.

28 Heather Glen (ed), *Charlotte Brontë: Tales of Angria*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2006.

29 Charlotte Brontë, *The Professor* [1857]. Ed. Margaret Smith and Herbert Rosengarten. Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2008, p. 3.

30 Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* [1847]. Ed. Margaret Smith, Intro. Sally Shuttleworth, Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2008, p. 15.

31 *Jane Eyre*, p. 109.

32 Margaret Oliphant, 'Modern Novelists – Great and Small', *Blackwood's Magazine lxxvii* (May 1855), 557-9; in Allott, *The Brontës*, 312.

33 Charlotte Brontë, *Shirley* [1849]. Ed. Herbert Rosengarten and Margaret Smith, Intro. Janet Gezari, Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2008, p. 53.

34 *Shirley*, pp. 114-6, 532.

35 *Shirley*, p. 322.

36 *Shirley*, p. 117.

37 *Shirley*, p. 149.

38 *Shirley*, p. 541.

39 *Gaskell Letters*, No 154, pp. 228-9.

40 Quoted in Barker, p. 719.

41 *Brontë Letters*, Vol 3, p. 63.

42 Charlotte Brontë, *Villette* [1853]. Ed. Margaret Smith and Herbert Rosengarten, Intro. Tim Dolin, Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2008, p. 496.

43 *Villette*, p. 491.

44 *Shirley*, p. 330.

45 Gaskell quotes this line from 'The Cumberland Beggar' in *North and South*, p. 419.

Elizabeth Gaskell and Honoré de Balzac

John Greenwood

Alas, I am no Gaskell specialist but a recent article from a Gaskell specialist has encouraged me to take up Helen Smith's invitation in her Editor's Letter in the last issue of The Gaskell Society Newsletter (Spring 2013 – No.55) to submit some item on Gaskell. The article, appearing in the same Newsletter, is by Barbara Hardy: "Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot" (pp 9-16). She considers the kind of influence Gaskell (as the earlier writer) had on Eliot. The article begins by referring to the

Jo Pryke/Shirley Foster talk on the possible plagiarism of Gaskell's *The Moorland Cottage* (1850) by Eliot in her *The Mill on the Floss* (1860). Hardy then goes on to consider further resemblances, such as *Ruth* and *Adam Bede*, then *North and South* and *Middlemarch*. Hardy is surely right in rejecting blatant plagiarism but accepting that "there are affinities, echoes, multiple associations" (p.12). There is "the affinity between the two great novelists... several echoes...unconscious memories, some coincidences... all show similar preoccupations and affinities " (p.14). This most stimulating article justifiably concludes with the assertion that "*North and South*, *Cousin Phillis* and *Wives and Daughters* played a part in the making of *Middlemarch*, and stand comparison with it" (p.16). I am reminded of a similar assessment made by Patricia Thomson in her *George Sand and the Victorians* (1977) where she deals with (among many other English 19th century novelists) the close connection between Sand's *Mauprat* (1837) and Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* (1849) : "The parallels and connections are there in profusion and I have little doubt that *Mauprat* formed part of the literary experience on which Emily Bronte drew. The fact that she was able to produce a totally different and much greater book simply emphasises her remarkable powers of assimilation and transformation as well as her originality and creative power." (p. 89)

In short, a creative artist in painting, music , literature and other art forms is aware of, and often draws on, previous work in that particular art form, which is quite definitely not plagiarism. Very shortly after reading the Hardy article I read (I confess for the first time) Gaskell's *The Manchester Marriage*, written in 1858. My first impression was how similar in many ways it was to Balzac's *Le Colonel Chabert*, written first in 1832, then an enlarged version in 1835. The most obvious similarity between the two short stories is the common theme of the returning husband (a soldier in Balzac, a sailor in Gaskell) after many years to his wife and home. What kind of a reception will he get? Is he making true or false claims? Is he really who he claims to be? Of course, this theme is as old as the hills. Ulysses is welcomed back by faithful Penelope, after 20 years of resisting marriage offers, while Agamemnon is killed on his return by his wife Clytemnestra for having sacrificed their daughter Iphegenia. In France in the 1820s there were many accounts (often in fictional form) of the difficulties experienced by soldiers who fought under Napoleon but were ostracised under the restored Monarchy. Rebecca West's first novel, *The Return of the Soldier* (1918), is a very moving and sensitive account of the effect of a returning shell-shocked casualty on three women very close to him. In our own time Vietnam and Iraqi veterans from UK and USA have had similar treatment. Furthermore, Gaskell herself often uses the theme of the loss or absence and then return of a husband, lover or brother, e.g. Peter in *Cranford*, Frank Wilson in *The Manchester Marriage*, Frederick in *North and South*. Nevertheless, I was intrigued by the possibility that Gaskell had read and was influenced by *Le Colonel Chabert*, for not only is the common theme *one* of a returning husband, but also in both works the situation involves a wife who remarries when she thinks her absentee husband is dead, only for the first husband

to reappear years later; thus, the wife enters into a bigamous situation. After all, Gaskell did know French, there were quite a few dramatisations of *Chabert* over the years and Gaskell could have seen the play at a Paris theatre on one of her many visits when she stayed with her friend, Madame Mohl. Does she mention this in any of her letters?

In both works the preliminary exposition is fairly long so that the reader is in no doubt as to the problem. In *Le Colonel Chabert*, Chabert recounts to a sympathetic lawyer, called Derville, his adventures as a successful soldier under Napoleon, whom he worships, only to be thwarted when he returns to claim his wife and property; whereas in *The Manchester Marriage* Gaskell narrates briefly the first marriage between Alice and Frank, then a much longer - and amusing - portrait of Alice's second husband, Mr Openshawe. It is made quite clear by both writers that now the story is ready for action. Gaskell actually concludes this first section with a one-sentence paragraph: "This was the previous history of the Lancashire family who had now removed to London". Another similarity is the fate of the two first husbands: Frank commits suicide and Chabert ends up a pauper in an asylum, thus allowing the second marriage to survive in both stories.

However, by the time I had finished reading Gaskell and re-reading Balzac I had changed my mind about the possible influence Balzac had on Gaskell. In spite of the similarities mentioned (and others) my reaction was that either Gaskell had not read the Balzac story or, if she had, she had deliberately ignored its most important aspects; and in my view this was a pity. The difference lies mainly in the treatment of the various characters. In Balzac the main characters are

i. Chabert, the returning first husband;
ii. La comtesse Ferraud, his wife and wife of le comte Ferraud;
iii. Derville, the lawyer representing both Chabert and his wife.

Le comte Ferraud, the second husband, plays a very minor role and never meets Chabert. Derville acts as the go-between in this very tricky situation, trying to establish a compromise solution, satisfactory to both parties. He arranges meetings between Chabert and his wife who therefore have the opportunity to discuss in detail their respective positions and to judge each other's motives and personalities after so many years. Chabert's feelings for his wife change from still loving her and hoping to "regain" her when he first re-appears in Paris to finally (after many face-to-face confrontations) despising her and realising her true personality, i.e. a selfish worldly socialite. There is , as usual with Balzac, superb dialogue, often bitterly satirical, indicating a negative outcome. Derville tries to bring reason and compromise to the problem, but fails - though provides ample input to the intractable situation. To Chabert's simplistic "no problem" attitude, Derville warns him : "Things just aren't like that in the judicial world... It's your word against theirs, and they have two children and you have none." Thus Balzac produces

an in-depth treatment of a known social and personal problem. As so often with Balzac, the personal, public, financial and judicial sides of life are all of a piece. In Gaskell's story the main characters are

i. Mr Openshawe, the second husband;
ii. Norah, the loyal servant

Alice, wife of the two husbands, and Frank, the first husband, play minor roles. In fact, Alice is kept out of things by her second husband, Mr Openshawe, so that she will be saved anxiety and remorse. Frank appears briefly at the Openshawe's house while only Norah is there, so the first husband never sees his wife nor his replacement. Thus Gaskell does not allow any direct contact between the principal parties, no discussion, no attempt at resolving an admittedly insoluble problem. Norah's main concern, while showing sympathy for Frank ("... the desolation of the poor man who had so lately gone forth in lonely despair"), is to get Frank out of the house before Alice and her second husband return. Instead of developing a situation where this very real problem of an unintentional bigamous second marriage could be thrashed out, if not resolved, Gaskell focuses (very successfully in itself) on the character of Mr Openshawe, the typical self-made and hard-working Manchester businessman in contrast to the "fine lazy people" of London. Gaskell is able to convince the reader by the end of the story that Openshawe has become a changed man, now much more sensitive, less confident but more humane as a result of discovering two things : Norah, the servant, is honest and no thief; and Frank has committed suicide. Fine, but I feel Gaskell, having set up the specific situation of a bigamous marriage resulting from the return of the first husband, fails to tackle it head on, as Balzac did.

My point has been that I feel in this case, if Gaskell had indeed read the Balzac story, she has not followed the "affinities and echoes" mentioned in the Hardy article. However, she wrote *The Manchester Marriage* in 1858, and only 5 years later in 1863, appeared *Sylvia's Lovers* where her study of a not exactly similar but allied situation was so superbly treated. Balzac would have been proud of her!

'Trawling Private Accounts out to the Public Gaze': Answers and Problems

Angus Easson

Last December, fittingly at Plymouth Grove, Irene Wiltshire introduced her invaluable edition of the Letters of Mrs Gaskell's Daughters. In the lively discussion afterwards, despite Meta Gaskell's objections to "our private accounts" being exposed to public gaze in Mrs Chadwick's Homes, Haunts, and Stories

(Wiltshire, ed., p.249), the ever-interesting topic was raised and pursued: where did the money come from that allowed Meta and Julia to "keep house" at Plymouth Grove after their mother's death in some style (pheasants, and champagne on the side) - and indeed not only keep house but, looking to further questions, build a cottage, the Sheiling, at Silverdale, and buy in 1900 for £3,500 not only the freehold of Plymouth Grove, but also four properties adjacent to it for charitable purposes (Janet Allen, "The Gaskells' Bequests", GSN, Autumn 2001, p.4).

A number of answers were offered during the Plymouth Grove meeting: profits from the Warrington sail-making manufacture that the Gaskell family was engaged in (see Barbara Brill, William Gaskell: A Portrait, 1984, p.3); posthumous royalties from Elizabeth's works; from the rent of The Lawn at Holybourne. There were also, though I think no one mentioned them, shares that Elizabeth had, for example, in the Katherine Dock, the dividends from which she was, in August 1865, anxious to hear of ("I want them sadly"), taken up as she was with her grand scheme of house-buying (Gaskell Letters, p.936).

Certainly, it is clear that William Gaskell was well-to-do if not wealthy by the end of his life. Meta provides evidence about the sail-making, noting that £400 or £500 a year had been inherited by William from the business (Wiltshire, p.249; Meta in 1910 is noting corrections to Mrs Chadwick's Homes, Haunts, and Stories). Janet Allen, in her important "The Gaskells' Bequests" (GSN, Autumn 2001, pp.2-4), shows that in his will William, after leaving all his household effects to Meta and Julia, divided the rest of his property equally between his four daughters. On his death in 1884 his net estate was declared as £46,103 (and odd pence), and was divided, since Florence had died on 1881, three ways, Meta and Julia each inheriting £15,367 (Allen, p.3). The sum is surprising if we only think of William's stipend, astonishing even, however difficult to convert into modern terms. Still more surprising, perhaps, are the estates of Julia and Meta. In 1908, Julia left, after nineteen legacies had been paid, £28,300 to Meta (Allen, p.3). Eight years later, Meta's estate was valued at £50,223.

William's will had made no mention of freehold property, "and 'no leaseholds' is noted on the probate document" (Allen, p.3), yet Meta's will makes clear that The Lawn had been kept in the family and that the freehold was owned jointly by Marianne, Julia, Meta, and Charles Crompton as the widower of Florence (Allen, p.4). William Shaen reported, within days of Elizabeth's death, that William Gaskell "wishes as far as possible to carry out just what [Elizabeth] has planned, and has taken to the place" (quoted Jenny Uglow, Elizabeth Gaskell, 1993, pp.610-11; letter dated 15 Nov 1865). So whether William's will failed to mention freehold possession or whether he had already settled the freehold on his daughters, The Lawn and any rent from it, remained in the family.

We will come back to The Lawn by way of another suggestion made in that

discussion last December. Royalties were mentioned. Early in her career, at least, Gaskell had preferred to sell copyrights rather than rely upon royalties. If more wary later about the possible returns from reprints, from selling early proofs to American publishers, from translations, and from Otto Tauchnitz's English language editions, for sale only on the Continent, she sold copyrights to George Smith of Smith, Elder, her publisher from *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*. Indeed *Wives and Daughters*, as serial and volume issue, was to go some considerable way towards buying The Lawn. The whole issue for Gaskell of payment and copyright could still be explored. The evidence about royalties after Gaskell's death, though, is thin and they would probably not have been all that spectacular. Smith, Elder was acquired by John Murray, and its archive which might bear examination for royalty payments, is now in Edinburgh.

All this, though, raises another question, a puzzle I have thought about from time to time, but not yet resolved. Notoriously, until the 1870 Married Women's Property Act (with further acts in 1882 and 1893), a married woman's income and earnings were not hers but her husband's. The necessary legal provision, if a woman about to marry was to keep control of her money or property, was a trust set up before the ceremony and agreed to by both prospective partners. Charlotte Brontë did this, so that Nicholls could not touch any of her money (Juliet Barker, The Brontës, 1994, pp.755-6) - such agreements or provisions are exploited by Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*, in Sir Percival Glyde's machinations against Laura.

Legally, all Gaskell's earnings belonged to William - she laments at one point that William "composedly buttoned up" £20 earned for *Lizzie Leigh*, though he promised to let her have some for the Refuge (GL, p. 113). Actually, as was often the fact, William, like other husbands, at a time when married women, noticeably in literature and journalism, were increasingly earning significant sums, allowed his wife to have free use of her money, even if much clearly went into the everyday expenses of the household. The law and the practicalities of everyday life are often adrift. Nonetheless, in the house-buying scheme, William Shaen was holding £600 "towards the nest egg for the house" (GL, p.740; 6 December 1864). Gaskell expected £1,000 from *Wives and Daughters*, or more likely £1,600, since it was to appear as serial and volume, whereas *Sylvia's Lovers*, only in volume issue, paid £1,000 (GL, p.967).

But, and it is a big but, even if Gaskell could enter into contractual agreements with her publishers and these stand, because not challenged by husband or law, how did she buy The Lawn? From at least 1864 she was planning to buy a retirement home for herself, William, and unmarried daughters. By December 1864 she could lament already having let the East Grinstead house "slip through my fingers" (GL, p.740). Shaen held money for the purpose, Smith was to pay well for *Wives and Daughters*. The Lawn was to cost £2,600, the gap of £1,000 was made up by an "equitable mortgage" advanced by Smith (GL, p.774).

Gaskell always refers specifically to herself, in intention and in fact, as buying the house. Once The Lawn was bought, she set about finding a tenant. Yet, she could not herself legally buy a house or take out a mortgage or set up a tenancy agreement. It would beside be risky (to put it no more strongly) to enter into agreements open to legal challenge. William might be content as things stood at home, but involve third parties and they could well question Gaskell's status or at least reveal what she was up to.

So what went on? A "mortgage" with Smith, though without legal validity, could depend upon the trust and friendship established since the Brontë biography, but a house sale, involving strangers - the original owner, lawyers, others who might know and question the status of the new "owner" - was a legal transaction and therefore liable to upset. Yet Gaskell was confident in her plans. Since William Shaen was involved, he as a lawyer presumably knew both pitfalls and possible solutions. It may be, though I have no evidence, that Shaen himself bought the house on the understanding that it was Gaskell's (might this be regarded in law as a conspiracy?). Certainly, the house passed without question to William on Gaskell's death.

So out of craddies raised at Plymouth Grove last December some answers can be provided - and yet, more craddies remain. What did the royalties amount to after Gaskell's death? and more urgently perhaps, how, legally, was The Lawn bought? The Land Registry (now on-line) or the title deeds might provide clues, answers, or a dead end. I hope though that some alert researcher may pursue these questions - and hope that answers are found.

The Uncertainty of Endings

Alan Shelston

Elizabeth Gaskell invariably had trouble with her endings. In *North and South* she fell out with Dickens when she asked for more instalments to build up the approach to the coming together of Margaret Hale and Mr Thornton, for her a priority equal to that of the novel's industrial agenda. For Ruth Hilton, of course, there could be no happy ending, so she is made to sacrifice herself nursing Mr Bellingham, her erstwhile lover, in a cholera epidemic. In *Sylvia's Lovers* Gaskell adopted Charlotte Brontë's recurrent pattern of a pair of contrasting lovers for her heroine, Sylvia Robson: the final pages complete a sequence of deaths which is the only way in which this 'saddest story I ever wrote' can be concluded.

These things are never easy. Most of the Victorian novelists had difficulty at some point in providing a satisfactory 'sense of an ending', as the critic Frank Kermode called it. In *Jane Eyre* for example it is usually assumed that when Charlotte Brontë

records her heroine's triumphant cry 'Reader, I married him!' that will be the end of the matter: Edward Fairfax Rochester, the brooding monster of the early part of the novel, is now domesticised – maimed and blinded in fact – and Jane will achieve both domestic happiness and independence in looking after him. But the last words of *Jane Eyre* are not the ones uttered by Jane at this triumphal moment but those of the missionary St John Rivers, dying far away in India, who has written to Jane informing her of his impending death: 'Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus!' Is Mr Rochester aware that Jane is still carrying on a correspondence with the other man in her life? In *Villette* Lucy Snowe's lover and potential husband Paul Emmanuel never makes it back home, being apparently lost at sea, an ending to which Patrick Brontë objected. Men in Charlotte's novels are never safe; in her fiction Charlotte was expert at having the cake and the halfpenny.

George Eliot called the last book of *Middlemarch* 'Sunset and Sunrise' and she opens her final chapter ('Finale') in *Middlemarch* with the observation that 'every limit is a beginning as well as an ending.' But after giving a short account of the future lives of her characters - 'Dorothea has a little boy', etc - she concludes the complete novel with a reference to 'the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs', after which, in the first edition, come the words 'The End'. Throughout her novel her readers have paced themselves through the beginnings and ending of chapters, as we all do, and of individual 'books' - eight of the latter in all. These are not accidental: every one has been worked out by the author and to be aware of them is an essential part of the reading experience. Now the element of finality is absolute. One further example, and then I turn to Gaskell's novels. Dickens, in *Great Expectations* contrived a famously ambiguous ending, when Pip, his first person narrator, tells us of his future with Estella in the final sentence: 'I saw no shadow of another parting from her.' Well, did Pip and Estella live happily after? Or was there a parting, with its shadow to come, unanticipated by Pip at the point of uttering that final sentence?

Gaskell's difficulties in concluding her novels remained throughout her career. In *A Dark Night's Work* the plot is manipulated so that a loyal servant, who has been blamed for a murder that he has not committed, may escape the shame of the gallows. For *Cousin Phillis* she supplied her publisher, George Smith, with two endings to choose from: a long one involving Phillis, now grown to adulthood, looking after her widowed mother, supervising the supply of clean water to the village (Gaskell at this time had trouble with the drains at Plymouth Grove) and adopting twin orphans. Gaskell would have preferred this version but it would have required a further instalment. In her letter to Smith outlining all this she wrote 'on the other side you will find the ending that I suppose *must* do if you want it to end this year.' Smith did want it to end that year, and so we have the ending as it now stands with Phillis's final statement: '...we will go back to the peace of the old days. I know we shall; I can and I will.' (*Further Letters*, pp. 259-60) Gaskell was disappointed, but Phillis's words, however courageous, are a statement of intent, and such is

the subtlety of the story that she may well speak more in hope than in certainty. I certainly prefer the ambiguous ending as we have it: it acknowledges the fact that we cannot tell what the future may hold. I am reminded of Henry James's conclusion to his novella *Washington Square*, where another vulnerable young woman has been betrayed by a lover: 'Catherine, meanwhile, in the parlour, picking up her morsel of fancy-work, had seated herself with it again — for life, as it were.' I am reminded too of Meta Gaskell's breakdown and recovery after the collapse of her engagement to Captain Hill. In life, as in literature, it was 'for life as it were'.

But it is a recent re-reading of *Wives and Daughters* that has led me to these random thoughts. In this final case of course the novel was effectively terminated by the death not of any of its characters, but of its author. Elizabeth Gaskell had only a few pages to write when she so suddenly died. This was a fear that threatened all producers of instalment fiction. As one of Gaskell's obituarists wrote: 'it is an odd thing, surely, to think how many readers, who begin to read any novel in numbers, must die before the word "finis" is written at the door.' (cit.,Linda K. Hughes, *Victorian Publishing and Mrs Gaskell's Work* p. 33) This must apply even more to the author. Anyway, an ending was supplied in those few pages by Frederick Greenwood, her editor at the *Cornhill Magazine*. Greenwood wrote that 'it is useless to speculate upon what would have been done by the delicate strong hand which can create no more Molly Gibsons' but this is somewhat contradicted by his own strong argument for the marriage of Molly Gibson and Roger Hamley after Roger's return from Africa. This has always satisfied readers of the novel and it follows the thrust of the narrative. But those who saw Andrew Davies's adaptation for the BBC some years ago will remember his marvellously inventive solution whereby Molly was shown in a fetching pair of jodhpurs looking out with Roger over the sunlit African plains. Davies clearly thought that after so long a story Molly, not to mention his audience, needed more for this most likeable of Gaskell's heroines than a life as a dutiful wife tidying Roger's scientific papers so he deliberately chose the romantic route. But there remains a further possibility. *Wives and Daughters* is subtitled 'an every-day story.' And it is characteristic of the every-day that it should be unpredictable: Gaskell's tragic death alone should remind us of that. The final illustration of the novel is entitled 'The last turning': it shows Roger looking back in the pouring rain to give one last wave to Molly as he departs on his African journey. In forecasting a happy ending Greenwood wrote with considerable confidence, saying that 'we *know* that Roger Hamley will marry Molly, and that is what we are most concerned about '(my italics). But Africa was a dangerous place, particularly in the nineteenth century: as Doctor Spooner was said to have remarked of a clergy widow in Oxford: 'Poor dear lady, her husband was eaten by missionaries.' Roger's mission was a dangerous one and it is certainly legitimate to remember that there must be a frisson of anxiety created by that last illustration. That of course is to confuse the logic of literature with the possibilities of life, but that has always been the problem for the realist novel. It is a staple, incidentally in French cinema, where the recent film *In the House* played endlessly - the appropriate term

- with the issue. Oscar Wilde once wrote that 'anybody can write a three-volume novel. It merely requires a complete ignorance of both life and literature.' This goes some way to resolving the problem, but so too does the uncertainty of endings.

Book Notes

Christine Lingard

North and South. New edition with afterword by David Stuart Davies, London: Collector's Library, 2013.

Female gothic histories: gender, history and the gothic by Diana Wallace.

Gothic literary studies, University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2013. Available as hardback and ebook: 9780708325759

A wide ranging study of gothic and historical fiction from the eighteenth century Sophia Lee's The Recess to Vernon Lee and Daphne du Maurier and Victoria Holt, from the early twentieth century to the contemporary novelist Sarah Waters. It contains an essay - Be-witched and Ghosted: Elizabeth Gaskell's Gothic historical tales.

Transnational Gothic: literary and social exchanges in the long nineteenth century, edited by Monika Elbert (Montclair State University, USA) and Bridget M. Marshall, (University of Massachusetts, Lowell, USA), Ashgate, 2013. Also available electronically 9781409447719 (PDF) 9781409473480 (ePUB)

A collection of essays discussing the treatment of the Gothic by a wide range of unusual British and American authors such as Mary Rowlandson and Bram Stoker, Frances and Anthony Trollope, Louisa May Alcott, Elizabeth Gaskell, Theodore Dreiser, Rudyard Kipling, and Lafcadio Hearn, as well as the actors Edmund Kean and George Frederick Cooke on their American tours.

Romanticism, Revolution and Language: The Fate of the Word from Samuel Johnson to George Eliot / John Beer Emeritus Professor of English at the University of Cambridge. Cambridge books online, Cambridge University Press, 2009 and also ebook 9780511720055

A collection of essays on the repercussion of the French revolution on English literature - both poetry and fiction especially Languages of memory and passion: Tennyson, Gaskell and the Brontës. It also deals with Hazlitt and Jane Austen.

Down the Belliard Steps : Discovering the Brontës in Brussels by Helen MacEwan. Brussels Brontë Editions, 2012 ISBN 9780957377202

This book arises out of Charlotte and Emily Brontë's links with Brussels, and tells the story of the foundation and development of the Brussels Brontë Group – written with much enthusiasm, lavishly illustrated and very readable.

Charlotte Brontë by Patsy Stoneman, Emeritus Reader in English, University of Hull and Vice-President of The Brontë Society. (Writers and their work series) Tavistock: Northcote House, 2013. ISBN 9780746308561

This succinct volume covers a brief biography, analyses the novels and concludes with the chapter, "Readers and reproducers".

North and South [DVD] Starring Rosalie Shanks, Patrick Stewart, Robin Bailey, et al. (2013)

Keeping in Touch

Jean M Layton

On a chilly morning in May a group of Friends of Plymouth Grove met at Manchester Art Gallery for a tour of some of the treasures of the Gallery's collection of Chinese artefacts. (It was to have been a tour of the Silver, but that is a different story).

This was part of the Keeping in Touch strategy - a means for Friends of Plymouth Grove to meet whilst the Gaskell House is closed for renovation, and we have Pat Barnard to thank for arranging it all.

Our guide took us up to the exhibition hall on the second floor with the collection of artefacts from all countries, and many centuries.

The room was once a small theatre and still retains some of the original features. It is painted in pale cream and filled with beautifully lit display cases. We stopped at several of these where our guide picked out eight items that represented Chinese art and craft through the ages.

The first item was a libation cup, made out of rhino horn, beautifully carved and coloured, and the last one a life sized carving of a goddess made out of a single piece of wood. So relaxed she looked, one leg across the other and with a small child at her side. Although was not particularly old, it had a timeless quality. In between we were shown fine examples of enamelling, glassware, pottery and a magnificent ivory tusk from Canton, beautifully carved and depicting the story of one of the sources of Chinese wealth – the production of tea. My absolute favourite though was a large blue and white ceramic ginger jar illustrated with charming little children at play.

We all admired the wonderful craftsmanship of the Chinese, producing fine items through the ages, so far ahead of the western world. One of the questions asked though, was: "How did these items get here? How did seventeenth & eighteenth century (and earlier) items from China come to Manchester?" Most of them, we were told, came from wealthy Manchester business men, private collections bequeathed to the Gallery, but it still begged the question, who was importing them, were there agents involved?

We did learn a little of the donors though, notably the Blair brothers who between them collected 40000 assorted objects. These were offered to the Gallery when the last brother died. Sadly it could only accept about 400. Other benefactors mentioned were bankers, businessmen and industrialists, reflecting not only the wealth of the city in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century but also the generosity of it citizens.

Once again grateful thanks to Pat Barnard for organising the visit with her usual quiet efficiency.

Idyll and Reality: a Weekend with George Eliot
13-15 September 2013

Readers might be interested to know that Howard Gregg is due to lead a weekend discussion group entitled 'Idyll and Reality', and relating to George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* and Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters*.

This will take place 13th to 15th September 2013. Accommodation is at The Green Man Hotel in Old Harlow, Essex. The weekend will start with dinner on Friday evening followed by a lecture given by Howard.

We then have discussion sessions and readings from the two books, with Saturday afternoon free. The weekend concludes after Sunday lunch.

Fees, which include full board, are: single £268; shared twin or double £228 per person. Non-residents pay £145. A free taxi service will collect participants from Epping underground station.

More information from 01992 572510, e-mail: johnmarilyn2000@yahoo.co.uk or by post: Marilyn Taylor, Wansfell College 2, 17 Amesbury Road, Epping, Essex CM16 4HZ.

Autumn General Meeting

Saturday, September 28, 2013 Methodist Church, Knutsford.

10.30 am	Tea and coffee
11.00 am	Elizabeth Williams will give the Joan Leach Memorial Lecture: *Elizabeth Gaskell and Gossip*
12.30 pm (approx)	Lunch
2.00 pm	Dr Sandie Byrne : Elizabeth Gaskell in Context
3.30 pm (Approx)	Finish

Cost £12-50 to include lunch (£5 without lunch)

Sunday September 29 (203rd Birthday of ECG)

10.45 am	Placing of flowers on the Grave at Brook Street Chapel
11.00 am	Service Brook Street Unitarian Church

North-West Group

Manchester Meetings
The Manchester meetings will be held at 1.00 pm on the first Tuesday of the month (October to February excluding December) in Cross Street Chapel, Manchester (across from The Royal Exchange). The Chapel will usually be open from noon for lunch (bring your own, coffee available) in the Percival Room where the lectures will be given at 1.00 pm.

Tuesday, October 1, 2013
Ron Thorn: The Diary of Tryall Holcroft
Ron is Honorary Librarian of Macclesfield Silk Museums.

Tryall Holcroft was a contemporary of Elizabeth Gaskell and a real life John Thornton. This 200,000-word diary, 'being a brief account of remarkable transactions and changes occurring to him through life' is a view into the world of a mid-19th century, Manchester-based textile manufacturer.

Tuesday, November 5, 2013.
Anthony Dawson: William Gaskell and the Crimean War.
Anthony was a post-graduate researcher at the University of Leeds 2010-2013

(graduating with an M.Res.) studying the perception of the Crimean War from soldiers' letters sent home. His interest in Gaskell stems from studying the Crimean War as seen on the "home front" particularly by the churches - and, especially the Unitarian response.

Tuesday, December 3, 2013
Bill Hutchings: Jane Austen

Bill is a National Teaching Fellow and a Research Fellow at the University of Manchester. He is a regular lecturer for the Jane Austen Society and a specialist on eighteenth century poetry. We can look forward to an entertaining lecture and discover whether Gaskell ever read Jane Austen!

Tuesday February 4, 2014
Christine Musgrove: Mrs Gaskell, Art and Manchester

Christine is an art historian (Edinburgh University) with extensive experience as a teacher in Higher Education

Tuesday March 4, 2014
Elizabeth Williams: Fanny Trollope

Elizabeth is a former F.E. lecturer, who regularly gives entertaining Gaskell-related talks to the Society and elsewhere. She also leads the discussions at the Knutsford meetings. Fanny (Frances) Trollope, mother of Anthony Trollope was a novelist in her own right.

For further information about events held at Cross Street Chapel is available visit the website: http://cross-street-chapel.org.uk

Knutsford Meetings
These meetings held in St John's Church Centre will resume on Wednesday 30 October and continue on the last Wednesday of each month (excluding December) until April. Buffet Lunch (£8, please pay on arrival; if not having lunch, please pay £2) available from 12.15 with literary talk and discussion led by Elizabeth Williams at 1.30. We shall be studying *Sylvia's Lovers.*

The Gaskell Society South-West

Sunday, 1 September 2013, 12.30 pm. Bring and Share Lunch at Kate and Alec Crawford's house, Valley View, Norton St Philip. The arrangements for this will be made soon. Please 'phone Elizabeth Schlenther for more information.

Saturday, 12 October 2013, 2.30 pm. Elizabeth Williams, Vice-Chairwoman of the national Gaskell Society, will speak to us on 'Gaskell and Gossip' – a most intriguing topic. Elizabeth has been with us before, so we know we have a good afternoon in prospect and very much look forward to her being with us. The lecture will take place at the BRLSI, Queens Square, Bath, and there will be a charge of £2 for members of the Gaskell Society and the BRLSI and £4 for non-members. Coffee and tea will be available after the lecture.

Our book for discussion in February and March next year will be Mrs Gaskell's *Biography of Charlotte Brontë*. The dates for the discussion groups will be announced nearer the time.

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

London and South-East Branch

Saturday, 14 September, 2013. Alison Lundie: 'Domestic Arts in *Mary Barton* and *North and South*'

Alison Lundie, a founding member of the London Gaskell Reading group, is studying for a PhD at Roehampton. Her talk will focus on shawls and needlewomen in *Mary Barton* and *North and South*. Objects in Victorian fiction and the idea of the domestic arts are a current academic theme.

Saturday, 9 November, 2013. Janet Allan: A progress report on The Gaskell House 84 Plymouth Grove

As you will be aware the house is currently closed for renovation and development thanks to Janet's successful efforts to secure a lottery grant. We have already heard from Ann Brooks about her plans for the garden; this time we shall learn more about the house!

Saturday, 8 February 2014. Dr Ann Brooks: the Gaskell Marriage

Ann Brooks and Bryan Haworth (who came with Ann this year to speak about the Portico Library) have researched a paper and have some ideas about the Gaskell marriage. As we all enjoy biography this subject will make an interesting afternoon.

Saturday, 10 May 2014. Dr Fran Twinn: 'Writer', 'tiger parent', 'shopaholic', 'socialite' and 'control freak': the many 'Me's' of Elizabeth Gaskell.

Fran will speak and then lead a discussion. She is aware there are many other aspects to Mrs Gaskell's personality but she will focus on these and hope that in discussion members will be able to contribute others!

Sandwich lunch will be available from 12.45 pm. Meetings begin at 2 pm and tea and cake will be served after the meeting. Usually the formal part of the meeting finishes about 3.30 pm for those needing to catch trains.

Venue: Francis Holland School, Graham Terrace, London.

The entrance is via doors on Graham Terrace, please ring the bell marked 'RECEPTION' loudly to gain entry. For security reasons the door must be locked until opened from inside.

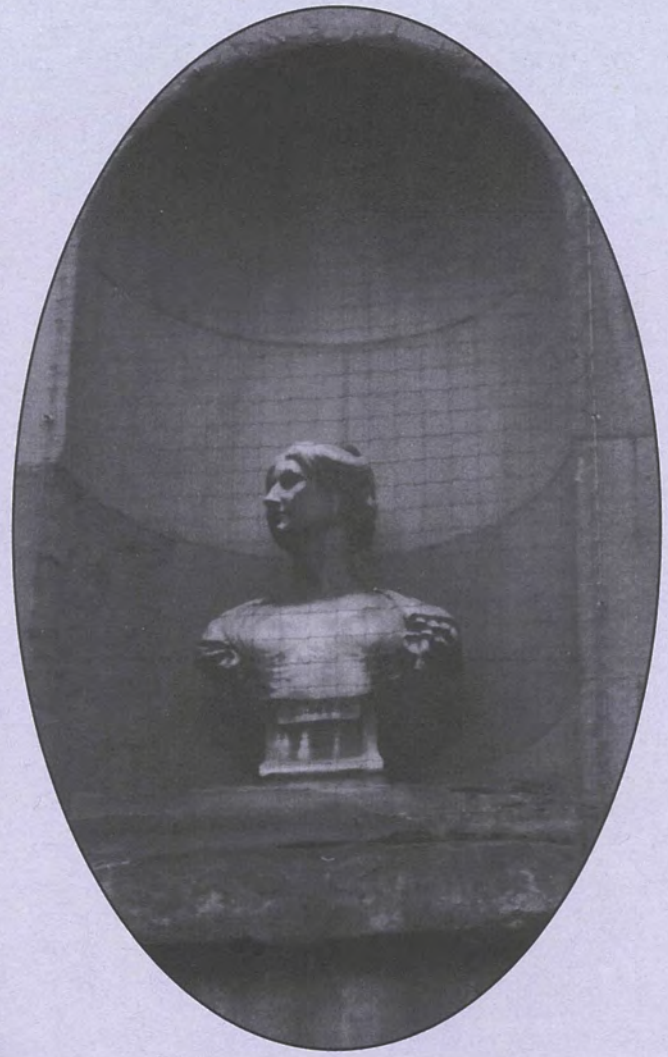
The school is a three minute walk from Sloane Square tube station which is on the District and Circle lines and about a 15-20 minute walk from Victoria. There are also buses from Victoria. (Please check running of the tubes as they often carry out engineering work at weekends).

Book stall: We have a 'bring and buy' book stall the proceeds of which go to the renovation of the Gaskell House in Plymouth Grove Manchester. Please bring unwanted books and buy replacements!!

Meetings are £5.00 payable on the day.

Notes

The Gaskell Society



NEWSLETTER

Spring 2014 - Number 57

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

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs. Helen Smith, 11 Lowland Way, Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 9AG.
Telephone - 01565 632615 E-mail: helenisabel@ntlworld.com

Treasurer: Clive Heath, 39 Bexton Lane, Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 9BL

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

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Editor's Letter

Helen Smith

Happy New Year to one and all, and a very warm welcome to our Spring 2014 Newsletter.

On 15 January we held the New Year lunch at The Cottons (a hotel to the north of Knutsford). After an excellent lunch (which ECG herself would have relished!) Nick Redman (former archivist with Whitbread Brewery and member of the Arnold Bennett Society) entertained us with tales of whalebones (used for umbrellas and corsets in the past; gateposts and fences in tree-less areas of the world). Thanks to Greenpeace and the invention of plastic, whales are no longer hunted for these purposes and their bones are well-documented in four books by Nick who has travelled the world to photograph these very bones. (Many thanks are due to Janet Kennerley for her highly successful organising of this event.)

And now to the whaling community of Monkshaven (Whitby): with help from Elizabeth Williams we are learning to appreciate the details and intricacies of *Sylvia's Lovers* ('the saddest story I ever wrote') at our monthly meetings in Knutsford. We are still sadly aware that it will all end in bitter tears. Fiction / faction, now popular again in the twenty-first century, is strongly in evidence in this powerful nineteenth century work. The heavy hand of the Old Testament is more apparent in this novel than in any other work by Mrs Gaskell.

Exciting news on the Internet front: The Gaskell Journal is going online, but fear not: we shall all continue to receive our paper copies. To learn more, do please read the article by Nancy Weyant in this Newsletter. Incidentally there are no plans for the Newsletter to enter the cyber-age.

There are plans afoot however for a study tour in Italy to include Florence, Siena and elsewhere in mid-September. For a taster, do read Christine Lingard's article later in the Newsletter. For further details, please contact Ann O'Brien (e-mail: Ann O'Brien [annbobrien@hotmail.com]; snail mail: 5 Warwick Court, Firswood, Manchester M16 0JG). This study tour will be organised by Anthony Coles organiser of, and guide for, the highly successful educational visit to Rome in 2006.

Work has also started on the Conference for 2015. The dates will be Friday 17 - Monday 20 July 2015 and the venue, Cober Hill (post code YO13 0AR) which is situated on the Yorkshire coast between Whitby and Scarborough. The planned theme of this event is the year 1865 which, as every good Gaskellian knows, is the year of Mrs Gaskell's death.

We have heard the sad news of Robin Allan's death on 5 January of this year. Robin was a gentleman of considerable charm, a man of letters, an artist, an actor and a

skilful adapter (of works by ECG which some of us remember Robin and others perform at 84 Plymouth Grove), but most of all, Robin was a humane and kindly human being. We shall miss him. To Janet and family we extend our deepest sympathy.

We are also sorry to report the recent death of Brenda Colloms. Brenda was a popular guest speaker at the Knutsford AGM in the days when it was held at the Royal George. Professor JAV Chapple recalls Brenda and her work in the early stages of the Society in his article in Newsletter No 55.

Manchester Historic Buildings Trust, which owns the Gaskell House in Plymouth Grove, informs us that restoration work is progressing well and the re-opening is on schedule for later in the year.

A correction. The Editor apologises for an error in the Conference Report in the last Newsletter. Celia Crew introduced the speakers on the first morning (20 July) and Gwen Clark chaired the questions and discussions which followed. On Sunday 21 July, Rosemary Marshall introduced the speakers and Mary Kuhlman chaired the question session which followed the lectures.

And so, thank you to all who have written for this Newsletter. It is exciting to have our first venture into verse, by poet member, Rosemary Donaldson. Please continue to write in prose, or in verse if so inspired. We tend to have a bias towards North West England, but we should love to hear from members in Japan, USA, and Europe as well as here in the UK. As ever, we give grateful thanks to Rebecca Stuart for all her hard toil at Lithotech, her family's printing firm here in Knutsford.

Next deadline: 21 July 2014.
Front Cover: Mrs. Gaskell on her Memorial Tower, Knutsford.

Asya and Phillis : Comparisons and Contradictions

Ian M Emberson

'Small is beautiful' according to the economist Schumacher, and a similar consideration seems to apply to certain writers – in particular Ivan Turgenev and Elizabeth Gaskell.[1] It is of course a sweeping generalisation, but the shorter their writings, the more perfect they become. Both devoted much energy to the novel, yet none of their works in this genre appear to be quite without blemishes. Take things down a scale and we come to the novella, and here they both showed a mastery which it would be difficult to equal.

How do we define a novella? There have been various attempts based on such things as the number of words. Obviously any definition will be somewhat vague. All that can be said is that the novella is a hybrid between the novel and the short story,

and its relative brevity imposes certain limitations. There may be some portrayal of setting, in both space and time, but the lavish use of background beloved by such novelists as Sir Walter Scott, is clearly out of the question. Likewise there is unlikely to be anything in the nature of a sub-plot. Most novelle have a relatively simple story-line, and focus on the activities of a small number of characters. In this essay I want to investigate how Turgenev and Gaskell adjusted to these limitations, and in particular to compare two of their novelle: Ivan Turgenev's *Asya*[2] and Elizabeth Gaskell's *Cousin Phillis.*[3]

In both novelle the setting is important in itself, and symbolical of the whole emotional feeling of the story. *Asya*, although written by a Russian, is actually set in Germany – by the banks of the Rhine. The hero and narrator, who is only identified as N N, is living on one side of the great river; his friend Gagin, and Gagin's half-sister Asya, live on the other. The narrative is punctuated by crossings and recrossings via the ferry – akin to the fluctuating emotions of the three main participants. Hope Farm, the setting for most of *Cousin Phillis*, is located somewhere in rural England – we don't know exactly where.[4] It has once been an isolated spot, but all that is being changed by the coming of the railway. It penetrates the erstwhile peaceful countryside, just as Edward Holdsworth is about to penetrate the tranquil world of Phillis Holman's emotions. Afterwards things can never be quite the same. The young girl has had her feelings churned up to the point of a life-threatening fever: the peace of the woods and fields has likewise been shattered by the puffing rhythms of those infernal engines.

The plots of the two novelle are likewise very similar, in that nothing much happens. No one is murdered, seduced, or driven to suicide. The narratives are almost entirely concerned with emotions - primarily the emotions of the two heroines. Thus Asya falls in love with N N much as Phillis falls for Edward Holdsworth. And in both cases the impediments to fulfilment don't lie in outside forces, but within their own personalities. The two heroes are by no means inconsiderate rogues – far from it, but they lack resolution – they cannot grasp the opportunity when it arises. Their feelings are fickle and inadequate. The heroines are capable of much stronger emotions – but their ultimate fate is one of emptiness – with the merest hint of recovery on the last page of *Cousin Phillis.*[5]

But the heroines' backgrounds constitute one of the great contrasts in the two novelle. Asya is illegitimate – no doubt with all the stigma attached to this in the mid -nineteenth century.[6] Her half-brother Gagin seems to be the only person who now takes a protective interest in her – although her late father certainly did. She is insecure. Briefly she is capable of wild gaiety – as when she runs around the old castle watering the wild flowers which have taken root in its crumbling walls. But it is a fragile gaiety – the least twist of fortune will destroy it. Phillis on the other hand is emotionally secure – in fact too secure. Being the only surviving child of her parents' marriage, all their love and ambition is lavished on her. Furthermore they

cannot realise that she is now a woman. This last is a common theme in literature. Charlotte Brontë touches on it in *Villette* with the relationship between Paulina and her father. But the dilemma is quickly resolved, and by the end of the chapter entitled 'Sunshine', Paulina is sitting on a bench in the Bois l'Etang with her father on one side, and her lover (Dr John) on the other.[7] Not so with Phillis Holman. The overprotective kindness (particularly of her father) proves to be cruelty in disguise. The conflict cannot possibly end in a happy conclusion.

There is also something of a contrast when it comes to the application of detail – *Asya* using this ingredient of story-telling far less than *Cousin Phillis*. There are a few examples: the little statue of the Madonna, with a child-like face and a crimson heart stabbed through and through with swords on her exposed breast; there are also the descriptions of the vineyards and of the student revelry – likewise the ruined castle with its crooked trees and cracked masonry overgrown with ivy, a perfect romantic background for this realistic tale. But the predominant visual image left on the reader's mind is of the River Rhine; in the early evening with the flaxen-headed urchins scrambling over the sides of a grounded boat; when the ships glide slowly down-stream with slack sails; and as the strains of a waltz played by the town band greet N N's ears (p.21). Or later on when the moon has risen and its beams play over the great river and 'the wind dropped as if folding its wings and died down; and a fragrant nocturnal warmth rose from the ground' (pp.27-28). The details may be scant - but they are always telling and significant.

By contrast *Cousin Phillis* is lavish in its use of detail. This extends to all aspects of the narrative: dress (the heroine's childish pinafore – eventually discarded); furniture (the white hard-wood dresser on which Paul's father draws his plan of a turnip-cutting machine with a charred stick – much to Cousin Holman's consternation); and personal appearances ('the bright colour of Phillis's hair, as the afternoon sun fell on her bending head'). But more memorable than any of these are the minutiae of farming life – no doubt gleaned from Elizabeth Gaskell's memories of Sandlebridge. The story is slow moving – but it never stops. Its steady adagio pulse is always guiding the reader forward to the next dilemma – and this moving forward passes through a series of delightful but realistic vignettes of agricultural life. Thus Ebenezer Holman (who is both farmer and minister) rises at three, prays in his room, calls the men to milking, gives the horses and hogs their feed, and writes his food orders for man and beast (pp.230-231). When it comes to gathering in the last load of hay, Paul goes out to the field which has two holly bushes in the middle, and finds : 'a heavily laden cart ; one man on top of the great pile ready to catch the fragrant hay which the others threw up to him with their pitchforks; a little heap of cast-off clothes in a corner of the field (for the heat, even at seven o'clock, was insufferable), and a few cans and baskets, and Rover lying by them panting and keeping watch' (p.268). All this is not just colourful decoration, neither is it some attempt at portraying a rural idyll. One feels that the men will sweat and curse as they load up the hay (and not just the men, for Betty

the maid is out there helping). Then they will go home with their hands cut and calloused from the hard day's work.[8]

And that word 'work' brings us to the greatest contrast of all in the two novelle. What is the source of income for the main characters in *Asya*? The matter is left vague. Presumably they have one, since there is no mention of starvation. But their activities seem quite unrelated to earning their bread and butter. N N appears to do precious little except mooch around observing life. Asya does a little needlework, and that is all. The idea of going amongst strangers as a governess doesn't enter her thoughts. As for Gagin, he is an artist – in his own opinion at any rate. His activities are described thus:

> Gagin was in one of those fits of frenzied artistic ecstasy which suddenly descend upon amateurs, when they fancy that they have contrived, as they express it, to 'catch nature in the moment of flight'. He stood before his canvas, dishevelled and paint-stained, and nodded to me almost savagely. Then, having given a sweeping flourish to his paint brush over the canvas, he stepped back, narrowed his eyes, and once more fell upon the picture (p.54).

Thus Gagin pretends to be a worker.

How different is *Cousin Phillis*! There is no pretence at being a worker here – every character, major or minor, is the genuine thing. The work of the farm has already been touched on. It embraces everyone – at times Betty and Phillis are out there in the fields working alongside the men. Even the leisure time activities sound like feats of labour. Reading Virgil in the original isn't the obvious way to relax after a hard day's work – yet Latin is apparently saved for the evening as a sort of treat!

However agriculture isn't the only labour portrayed in *Cousin Phillis* – there is also the building of the railway. We don't get so much detail about this – perhaps simply due to Mrs Gaskell's lack of knowledge. But it is always there in the background. Paul, the narrator of *Cousin Phillis*, bears some resemblance to N N the narrator of *Asya* – they are both rather dreamy observers of life, and a trifle spineless. But at least Paul earns an honest living, whilst his friend and superior, Edward Holdsworth, is clearly the go-ahead entrepreneurial type.

So – we have these two novelle, published within six years of each other, the one by the Russian aristocrat, the other by a middle-class Unitarian Minister's wife. Very different backgrounds – but the products of their pens have so much in common. This comes out most markedly in the exquisite depiction of their heroines. One feels them physically. When N N waltzes with Asya his 'hand retained the sensation of contact with her slender waist for many hours, and it was long before I could forget the sound of her rapid breathing so near me, the dark, still, half-closed eyes in the pale face, so vivid in its frame of curls' (p.52). Paul of course never gets his hand

around Phillis's waist. He can only appreciate her as would a bystander, when she dashes out in the storm to save Holdsworth's theodolite from damage.

> Before we could have any warning, she had rushed out of the shelter and collected various things .... She came running back, her long lovely hair floating and dripping, her eyes glad and bright, and her colour freshened to a glow of health by the exercise and the rain (p.271).

No doubt every literary genre has its own especial possibilities. Ivan Turgenev and Elizabeth Gaskell could adjust to limitations, and thereby display their most perfect skills at story-telling. In *Asya* and *Cousin Phillis* they do it with a sort of Mozartian grace – fleshing out what Henry James called 'the beautiful and blest novelle'.9

1. The purpose of this essay is to make comparisons, not to infer influences. How ever perhaps one should mention that there was a vague link between Turgenev and Gaskell via Mary Mohl. See Jenny Uglow Elizabeth Gaskell: a Habit of Stories (London: Faber and Faber 1993) p. 531.
2. All references are to Asya / First Love / Spring Torrents translated by Ivy and Tatiana Litvinov (Moscow: Progress Publishers 1974).
3. All references are to Elizabeth Gaskell Cranford / Cousin Phillis ed. by Peter Keating (London: Penguin Books 1986 reprint).
4. It seems fairly safe to assume that Gaskell was thinking of Sandlebridge. See Joan Leach In Cousin Phillis Country The Gaskell Society Newsletter No 7 March 1989 pp. 2-6.
5. Apparently this was not Gaskell's original intended ending. See her letter to George Smith of 10/12/1863 – reprinted with a brief introduction by John Chapple in The Gaskell Society Newsletter No 17 February 1994 pp.12-13. See also Brenda Collins Second Thoughts on Cousin Phillis in The Gaskell Society Newsletter No 16 August 1993 pp. 2-12.
6. For the background to this see David Magarshack Turgenev : a Life (London: Faber and Faber 1954) p. 130.
7. Charlotte Brontë: Villette (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1998 reprint) p. 545.
8. For a further discussion of Gaskell's use of the novella, and the links with Turgenev see Barbara Hardy Cousin Phillis : the Art of the Novella The Gaskell Society Journal Vol. 19 2005 pp. 25-33.
9. Henry James, The Art of the Novel (New York: Scribner 1962) p.220.

Editor adds: Unfortunately Ian Emberson died suddenly on 4 November 2013. Ian had been elected to the Gaskell Society Committee at the AGM in April 2013 and he had proposed the vote of thanks at the Cross Street Chapel meeting on 1 October 2013. Earlier in the year Ian had himself given one of the Cross Street lectures; entitled 'The Three Quartets', in which he discussed the four children in each of the three multi-talented families, the Mendelssohns, the Rosettis and the Brontës.

Ian was a talented artist, a Pennine Poet and had been Music Librarian in Huddersfield until retirement.

Ian met his wife Catherine at the Gaskell Society. As a couple they came faithfully to Cross Street meetings. We shall certainly miss Ian and we very much hope Catherine will feel able to continue to support the Society.

We extend our deepest sympathy to Catherine.

Gaskellians

Rosemary Donaldson

We belong to an auspicious society,
Reading books, mostly, of Gaskell variety.
We began with all due sobriety
Mary Barton and *Cranford* of some notoriety
Much read by all local folk,
Read by past generations of gentlemen too,
Lords Stanley, Egerton and Stamford
To name the select few.
So... Let Us Get Reading Now...
Cranford... Cranford... Cranford!

Some Gaskell novels are of social reform,
They must **NOT** sit on shelves, bookcases to adorn.
Our social consciousness we are seeking to swell
As we ponder **these** books we now know rather well.
We **HAVE** to read about Ruth, a seamstress forsooth,
Who has fallen quite down in her innocent youth.
Her salvation to gain, she will rise once again
In full grace, Upon Death. Whilst at rest, Behest,
To us, in Trust, and for the world at large
LOOK! Her singular bequest - **The noble lad Leonard.**
Akin to Ruth, Leonard gradually matures into
One Pillar of Goodness, and Truth.

North & South is the next book to read,
Ideas from her mind, via her pen, sow the seed.
Heal divisions between mill-owners and workers
Let's get rid of the shirkers! In this book
ECG seeks to bond humankind
Into manifest oneness:
Through a sensitive fingertip, her own singular penpoint
Records each and every pulse- beat, of,
John Thornton and Margaret Hale.
Their heart rates quicken harmoniously...
An awakening awareness spans the novel's frond.
From a developing friendship...Lovers must unite.
Within the workplace; Mill owners and workers,
No shirkers! No shirkers!
As one heartbeat, all in rhythm, Masters and Workers somehow should
Strive together for the common good.

We now approach Whitby.
Contours of coastline Come into view, from whence came
The historical novel, *Sylvia's Lovers.*
Yes, Indeed, The saddest book she ever did write,
With hardly a chink of light in sight.
Whalebones guard many doorways, then, as now,
Press Gangs were ashore, and...so,.. so much more!
Kinraid sent a message.
For selfish gain, Philip deceived Sylvia.
Alas! Poor Sylvia received no message.
Must I read again and again of that lie served with knowledge?
Of the pain, of the pain, which ensued from that lie?
Deceit is as a tourniquet tight
Squeezing,.. squeezing.. out truth from joyous life
Any possible beauty stunted in fright.
No use, a dam, as a barrier, deceit is rife,
Arresting all, save sad, emotional, strife.
Dank Darkness does the deceiver send, all through
This wrench of a book, from beginning to end.

Let us move ourselves on into the day,
Free ourselves from, 'The saddest story I ever wrote' and
Travel into a microcosm of the whole human race
As portrayed by a Minister's wife. Only a Minister's wife
Could produce the wholehearted joy, her book,
Her own Masterpiece, *Wives and Daughters.*
It is, in a sense, 'The Last Post', her life's work encapsulated .
Each of so many characters illuminated in discerning brightness.
More clearly lit than the world usually permits us to see.
We meet Molly Gibson. She is unselfish, enduring, patient and kind
A more deserving character in a novel, you never will find.
Eventually, Molly won Roger's love, her own heart's desire,
She was placed in that novel, like a parable of sorts, us to inspire.
For all time, in no way stark, the mark has been made.
Go to the Knutsford Gate of Tatton Park
Touch **THOSE** stones as you walk through **THAT** archway.
Look through a magnifying glass at the sandstone grains
The story and detail of that archway will never come asunder
At The British Library it is forever held, with its unique ISBN number.
So, We Gaskellians must quicken our pace,

And bring Mrs Gaskell to the whole human race.
As many as possible must learn of her being.
She gave her creative life force to us all in her books

Heartfelt thoughts, in so many tracings, on paper, making impressions, No less than an ECG, Electrocardiography, in tracings of heartbeats.
The initials are the same, Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell, ECG,
Every energy force comes from the source, every book from a nib.
Only Connect to Elizabeth's Centre of Gravity and Reach out Everywhere.

And, in conclusion, taking the famous Gaskell quote; "I am myself, and nobody else, and can't be bound by another's rules" (Which is exactly why the above poem does not rhyme, sorry folks!!)

The Power of Fiction

Doreen Pleydell

The other week I was in the kitchen while John my husband was in the sitting room listening to an audio tape of *Sylvia's Lovers*. I had not been listening as I find the story too tragic to bear. When John joined me, I asked him a simple question. Instead of answering, he looked at me as if he didn't recognise me, He was like a sleepwalker and I then realised that he was still in the land of fiction, in Monkshaven with Sylvia, Philip and the story's other characters. It took John some time to come back to reality.

In many discussions of novels, plays, and television programmes, we talk about characters as if they are real people. The better the story, the more powerfully it's painted. I wonder why this should be - is it because our lives are so humdrum that we need the escape into fantasy? 'Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow, creeps in this petty pace from day to day.' For some people Macbeth's words may be very true.

Some of us need our weekly fix by way of television soaps. Whether *Eastenders, Coronation Street* or the other favourites, each episode is eagerly awaited and nothing must stand in its way. *The Archers* on the radio was one of the first modern soaps: using one's imagination by listening is more rewarding than just watching a screen.

Since Victorian times it has been so - the readers of Dickens's *Household Words* awaited each story eagerly, very cleverly put in serial form. No wonder he was so annoyed with Elizabeth 'My dear scheherazade' Gaskell when she failed to deliver each weekly episode!

Some of Dickens's readers even attempted to influence the course of a story. When he was working on *The Old Curiosity Shop* some of his readers wrote to plead 'Don't let Nelly die!' They must have been very disappointed when he did!

Perhaps it is only escapism, but lovers of fiction gain huge enjoyment from their immersion in another world - long may it be so.

To Tuscany with Murray

Christine Lingard

Visiting Italy was one of the most exciting experiences of Elizabeth Gaskell's life. In 1857, with the manuscript of *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* finally dispatched to the publisher, she packed her bags and embarked with daughters, Marianne and Meta, and her friend Catherine Winkworth, via Paris, Avignon and Marseilles, on the short sea voyage to Rome. Here she renewed her acquaintance with the American art critic, Charles Eliot Norton, who accompanied them on the rest of their holiday, through Umbria, Tuscany to Venice, which was idyllic. It was to be a lasting friendship, not just for Elizabeth but for Meta too. She repeated the journey in 1863 with Meta and Julia, spending longer in Tuscany than in Rome.

Less is known about the time spent in Tuscany than the other places visited. The journey between Florence and Venice was made by train, but much of the rest was by road, requiring several overnight stops, allowing splendid opportunities for sightseeing. Though we don't have complete details of their itinerary there are enough clues to piece it together. In Rome they hired, for 65 Scudi, their own private vetturino – the driver of a vetturo, a four horse carriage for four people inside and two outside – to take them to Sienna (as the Gaskells usually spelled it), staying 'at half-barbarous places' as Meta described them to Sara Norton, half a century later. They went via Ronciglione, (near Lago di Vico), Viterbo, an Etruscan centre with the 12th century cathedral of San Lorenzo; Cortona, one of the oldest hill towns in Tuscany and San Quirico (near Pienza).

And so to Florence – there is no record of their sightseeing or visits to any of the great galleries, though for this culturally minded family it would have been the main purpose of the visit. It was also the home of Dante, a poet greatly admired by both Gaskell and Norton. We do have accounts of a round of social engagements. The city was a Mecca for Britons and Americans. She took tea with Lady Charlotte Locker, Isa Blagden, the eccentric friend of the Brownings, Charlotte Cushman, the actress, and Emma Stebbins, the American sculptor. The Gregs of Styal and Lady Stanley of Alderley were also there. But the highlight, in 1857, was to be received by Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning at their apartment, Casa Guidi, near the Pitti Palace. The two women had a mutual admiration for their respective books, *Aurora Leigh* and *Ruth* and had exchanged correspondence, but the meeting, as described by Catherine Winkworth, proved difficult:

> I really only *saw* Mrs Browning, for she scarcely spoke...Mrs Gaskell talked chiefly about Miss Brontë, in which I acted chorus.

The poets Walter Savage Landor, and Arthur Hugh Clough (cousin of Florence Nightingale), and the sanitary reformer Thomas Southwood Smith, friend of Dickens and grandfather of Octavia Hill, were other expatriate Britons whom she may have encountered.

For her second visit, she took advice on etiquette from a Mrs Sargent. Was this the American lady whose son, born in the city in 1856 was to become one of the greatest portrait painters of the Edwardian age, - John Singer Sargent? They took lodgings in the Casa Sandrelli, (which I have not yet located) but her compatriots were in much grander accommodation – the Brights were staying at the Hotel Grand Bretagne, a hundred room establishment on the Lung'Arno with at view of the Ponte Vecchio, much favoured by Ruskin. They were also able to meet the Trollopes. The elderly novelist, Frances Trollope, her travel writer son Thomas and his wealthy wife had a richly decorated residence in the Piazza del'Independenza, known as the Villino Trollope. Her more famous younger son, Anthony was impressed by, but not envious of, its opulence.

For both their visits they made use of Murray's celebrated guide book. This is not only helpful for sightseeing but endorses Meta's opinion of the local accommodation:

> Chiusi, where there is a tolerable inn (but where, in consequence of the cheating propensities of the owner, it is necessary to come to an understanding as to prices beforehand)...Orvieto (Inn Locanda, dell'Acquila, where the coach stops, and near the gate, indifferent; there is said to be a better one, belonging to the same proprietor.)

Her copy of the 1861 edition of the *Guide for Travellers of Central Italy* (which unfortunately does not include Florence) is preserved in the collection of the Manchester Central Library. Tucked in the back pocket are number of interesting manuscript notes: a list of art teachers and ateliers in copper-plate handwriting (probably for the art-loving Meta's benefit), a check list of essentials for the journey – 'passeport [sic], straw slippers, and chocolate', the address of a blacksmith and that of a Rev John McNab, a Unitarian minister from Ayrshire who was buried in the Protestant cemetery in 1870, who could provide English lessons.

Most interesting of all is a route from Rome to Siena that William had written out for them, with many artistic and archaeological treasures including:

> Civita Cavelane, Spoleto, resting at Terni, or Narni, Foligno, Assisi to S. Maria dei Angela & Perugia not forgetting Spello (for frescoes), one day at least at Perugia, to Chiusi, Citta della Pieve, the Etruscan museum at Porsenna; from Chiusi to Ficuli by rail, carriage to Orvieto, Sienna, in particular the Church of St. Maria della Neve, (for a picture by Matteo dei Sienna), the Church of S. Domenico (St. Catherine painting), and choir books in the library, Duccio.

This is an intensive and exhausting itinerary. They were concerned that they would not be able to include it all. Elizabeth was particularly anxious to see Perugia. With the help of a Mr Charles Perkins, an American, they were able to organise their plans successfully and Meta confirms that they managed to see Assisi. But it was Orvieto and its magnificent gothic cathedral, started in 1290, that impressed them most. Norton sent them a copy of his book *Notes of Study and Travel in Italy*, which they made much use of. Giovanni da Pisa who executed the bas-reliefs on the façade and the frescoes come in for particular attention. This is a surprising choice. Luca Signorelli's altar piece of the Day of Judgment is a dramatic composition, regarded as the first depiction of the nude figure in art and could well have offended some. It was a great influence on Michelangelo's altar piece in the Sistine Chapel, a point that was not lost on Meta:

> How very beautiful Orvieto is! I think we cared for the Gior da Pisas more than anything on our journey - The Signorellis are magnificent too. How much of M. Angelo and Raphael are drawn from their masters.

When looking at the choice of painters they intended to see, it is easy to detect the influence of John Ruskin. The great Victorian art critic was highly regarded by both Elizabeth and Charlotte Brontë. Norton wrote that he had once asked her to name her 'desert island book' and she replied *Modern Painters*. He is known for championing a group of young Victorian artists, now known as the Pre-Raphaelites, who aimed to emulate a style of art practised in the fifteenth century by painters such as Perugino and Pinturricchio, the original pre raphaelites. He particularly disliked the work of the Renaissance master, Raphael, whose work Elizabeth Gaskell had been keen to see in Rome, especially the Deposition in the Borghese Gallery.

Siena was the most important port of call en route. In Murray's Guide there are faint pencil marks indicating some of the works of art in the Istituto delle Belle Arte, especially those by Duccio di Buoninsegna, the foremost Sienese painter of the thirteenth century. He was a particular favourite of Elizabeth. She had encountered his work in the 1857 Art Treasures Exhibition in Manchester and had berated Norton for not mentioning him in his accounts of the Exhibition.

Ruskin loved Siena, preferring it to Florence, though there was much he loved in that city, and spent a lot of time sketching and copying its art treasures.

> This town is worth fifty Florences: larger and more massy buildings in *general*...A noble square with a delicately carved fountain in white marble [by Jacopo della Quercia]...[The Cathedral] is, the most striking church I have yet seen in Italy.

Their host in Siena was the American sculptor, William Wetmore Story, who had also entertained them in Rome. During the summer months he rented a villa, two miles from the city centre, where he is also known to have entertained William Gaskell in 1864. His daughter described it:

> In the late fifties the Villa Belvedere Marciano, near Siena, became for five years our summer house. From the terrace garden, looking across a valley of olives and vines, we could see the grim square Villa Alberti where the Brownings lived.

Further reading

Chapple, J.A.V. & Pollard, A. (eds) The letters of Mrs Gaskell, 1966.
Evans, J. & Whitehouse, J.H. (eds) The diaries of John Ruskin, 1958.
Johnston, I. The life, manners & travels of Fanny Trollope: a biography, 1979.
Uglow, J. Elizabeth Gaskell: a habit of stories, 1991.
Wiltshire, I. (ed) Letters of Mrs Gaskell's daughters, 1856-1914, 2012.

Nineteenth-Century Education: Parity for the Sexes?

Angus Easson

The 2013 Gaskell Conference focused on women's education in Gaskell's time and on towards the twentieth century. Only once, that I remember, and that in discussion, was the question raised of equal education for girls with boys. Equality of education, we do well to remember, is one thing; quality, in terms of what boys were getting and by what means, quite another. The field of education widened considerably in the nineteenth century for both girls and boys, but certain images remain dominant, of private schools and, exclusively for boys, public schools. To look at the educational experience of three Victorian literary figures and at the most successful of all novels about public school life, is to exclude much else in the field and in people's experience, but may serve to show how lucky girls were to escape some aspects of Victorian education and how the very concepts of what education might be have changed.

In looking briefly, at Charles Dickens, Anthony Trollope, anfd William Makepeace Thackeray, we can see how private school could be run by the unqualified and how public schools were appallingly inadequate as places of education. It is necessary, of course, to take account of both the family circumstances of these three writers and their exceptional talents in representing their experiences, but they all reveal what boys' education could be and how undesirable for boys, let alone girls.

Dickens (1812-70) never went to public school, though his father, chronically in debt and something of a fantasiser, led him to expect schooling that would lead to university and specifically Cambridge. John Dickens, unable to cope financially, was imprisoned for debt, while Charles, far from being educated, was sent to work in a blacking factory. Even when things were on a more stable footing, the

education Dickens received was inadequate. This is not a question of the Yorkshire schools, to which Dickens travelled to gather material for his grotesquely comic attack on Dotheboys Hall in *Nicholas Nickleby*. But anyone, qualified or not, could set up a school, and Dickens was sent, with the family on a steadier footing, to Wellington House Academy in Mornington Place, since gone under the railway (John Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens*, 1872-4, ed.J.W.T.Ley, 1928, p.39). The school was kept by a Welshman, Mr William Jones, whose tombstone, still to be seen in the churchyard of Old St Pancras Church, a little north of St Pancras Station, sets out 'The inflexible integrity of his character and the social and domestic virtues which adorned his public life' (*A Walk in the Past: A Churchyard Tour of St Pancras Old Church*, published by the church). Jones, though, was characterised by one of Dickens's fellow pupils as 'a most ignorant fellow, and a mere tyrant: whose chief employment was to scourge the boys' (Forster, p.43), while Dickens himself in 1857 described him as 'by far the most ignorant man I have ever had the pleasure to know', the school being 'a pernicious and abominable humbug altogether' (*The Speeches of Charles Dickens*, ed. K.J.Fielding, 1960, pp.240-1). Creakle and his school in *David Copperfield* are drawn largely from Jones and Wellington House Academy. In educating his own children, Dickens showed a certain eclecticism. True, his eldest son, Charley, was his father's surrogate in going to Eton, though afterwards more practically he went to Germany to learn the language. Amongst the boys, some went to the private school of Mr Brackenbury, a clergyman, infinitely superior to Jones; one was prepared for a cadetship in the Indian Army, another went into the navy, and one was trained at an agricultural college, reminders of alternatives to public school for boys in the nineteenth century.

If Dickens hankered after the public school he never went to, both Anthony Trollope and Thackeray, who did go to public schools, spoke of them and of preliminary education at private schools with a mixture of disgust and outrage. Anthony Trollope (1815-82) wrote on his *Autobiography* (1883; ed. David Skilton, 1996) that his boyhood was 'as unhappy as that of a young gentleman could well be', arising from 'a mixture of poverty and gentle standing on the part of my father' (p.7). Trollope senior, a man ambitious for his children but hopeless in his own affairs, had been at Winchester and New College, Oxford, and was determined these were the destination of Anthony and his brothers. Fortunately for some of the family, his wife, Frances Trollope, was of tougher stuff, taking off to America, where she set up a store, and capitalised on return by publishing *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832), an immense success, followed by other travel writings and novels. Meanwhile, Trollope senior, having abandoned his law practice, bought a farm near Harrow (in which he failed miserably), and at seven years Anthony was sent to Harrow School, where he endured the humiliations of a day pupil at a largely boarding school. Once, Trollope encountered the headmaster in the street, a man wont to flog the boy constantly, and who yet seemed not to know him: "Perhaps", Trollope remarks wryly (or slyly, since the man would be more familiar with Trollope's rear when flogging him), "he did not recognise me by my face" (p.9).

At twelve Trollope went to Winchester, where much of the tuition of the younger boys was in the hands of older boys (as elsewhere: the masters at public schools then seemed to have had as little as possible to do with the boys). One such older boy was Trollope's elder brother, who 'as a part of his daily exercise...thrashed me with a big stick' (p.11). Anthony was returned to Harrow, where he learnt nothing 'for I was taught nothing' (p.14), a statement marginally contradicted later when he stated that 'no attempt had been made to teach me anything but Latin and Greek, and very little attempt to teach me those languages' (p.17). He had no memory of lessons in writing or arithmetic, and certainly was taught neither French nor German. Girls at decent school or under tutors might gain some knowledge of history, literature, music, drawing, composition, a modern foreign language - not all girls, of course, but their education was wider and more interesting than Winchester's or Harrow's at this time. Trollope might note that he was a fair Latin scholar, but 'the knowledge which I have, I have acquired since I left school' (p. 18) - what public schools impressed on him was snobbery between social classes, inferiority of day boys to boarders, no teaching, constant flogging.

Unlike Dickens's false expectations from his financially feckless father or the consequences to Trollope of his father's agricultural incompetence, Thackeray suffered not from parental neglect, but rather from separation (sent home from India by his parents) and the general savagery of education in England, however well-meaning his parents and relatives. In the *Roundabout Papers*, essays written 1860-62 for the *Cornhill Magazine*, Thackeray recalled the 'cruel smart' of separation between parent and a child despatched to school ('On Two Children in Black'). More bitter are the glimpses of his own schooldays - 'consigned' to a school of which his 'deluded parents' had heard a favourable report, but 'governed by a horrible little tyrant' ('On Letts's Diary'); humiliated at public school as 'the Doctor' held you up 'to public scorn before the class, and cracked his great clumsy jokes upon you' ('Thorns in the Cushion'); and whipping by the schoolmaster ('On Screens in Dining-Rooms'). Thackeray went to Charterhouse ('Slaughterhouse' in his fiction), where Dr Birch and Dr Swishtail were supreme, and where he noted in a letter of 1847 the chief good he got 'was to learn to hate bullying & tyranny' {*Letters and Private Papers*, ed.G.N.Ray, 1945, II, 284). Thackeray's most detailed analysis of the evils of public school comes in *A Shabby Genteel Story* (1840), in the character of Mr George Brown (ch.2), whose father thought he would benefit from acquaintance with the great and sent him to Eton, 'at cruel charges upon a slender purse'. How much ruin has been caused 'by that accursed system which is called in England 'the education of a gentleman'. Selfishness, sporting activities, Latin hexameters and a smattering of Greek plays: what else has been learned? If your father is a grocer, to despise him, and 'to forget...the ties and natural affections of home.'

In the light of these experiences, *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857; 1898 reprint), Thomas Hughes's paean of praise for public schools in general, Rugby in particular,

above all Rugby under the guidance of Thomas Arnold, 'The Doctor' (1795-1842; headmaster 1828-42), can be read aslant, yet not merely maliciously, from Hughes's intention. Concerned with public schools, 'those much abused and much belauded institutions peculiar to England' (p.50), Hughes did recognise that they might prove either 'a noble institution for the training of Christian Englishmen, or a place where a young boy will get more evil than he would if he were turned out to make his way in London streets' (p. 136). Despite warnings to his son, Squire Brown seems unconcerned about consigning his son to a place where, if 'schools are what they were in my time, you'll see a great many cruel blackguard things done, and hear a deal of foul bad talk' (p.59).

Tom's arrival at Rugby is the opportunity to describe its physical conditions, which prove cold, dark, with cramped studies, and a school hall that is used for all classes simultaneously as well as for meals. Rugby, at Tom's introduction, is a place where physical exercise, football, cricket, and boxing, is exulted. Tom's friend East indeed boasts of the casualties at football: two collar bones broken already that year, a dozen 'fellows' lamed, and last year, a broken leg (p.79) - the football match itself, closer to a vulgar brawl than anything comprehensible from Hughes's description, involves most of the school on the pitch simultaneously.

And what of the teaching? Hughes declares that the 'object of all schools is not to ram Latin and Greek into boys, but to make them good English boys, good future citizens' (p.52), and most of that work must be done out of school hours. Except at classes and chapel, the Rugby masters are conspicuous by their absence - and the syllabus consists largely of ramming Latin and Greek into largely indifferent boys. Tom, aged 11 or 12, is in the Lower Fourth, a class of 40 boys aged 9-15, and their texts are some portion of Livy; Virgil's Bucolics (or Pastorals) - singularly uninteresting to the age group; and the *Hecuba* of Euripides. Later references are no less limited - part of Thucydides; Homer's *The Iliad*; and *The Clouds* and *The Knights* of Aristophanes. All works are 'ground out in small daily portions' (p. 131), of about sixteen or twenty lines, 'prepared' the night before. The only boy with any appreciation of literary quality is George Arthur, who is deeply affected by Helen's lament over the dead Hector (*Iliad*, bk.24). Apart from getting through their sixteen or twenty lines, the other exercise the boys have is 'the vulgus', a short composition in Latin or Greek verse on a subject, set three times a week (114 pieces during the school year), traditionally cribbed by the boys from versions passed down from year to year. There is no sign of modern history, geography, a modern language, modern literature (though Tom does read *Don Quixote* for his own amusement), mathematics, or science - some or all of which middle-class girls might have an acquaintance with (however slight). The only exception we see is Martin, who delights in natural history and conducts chemical experiments in his study, with explosive results. And Martin is marked out as 'one of those unfortunates who were. ..(and are...still) quite out of their places at a public school' (p.204). No hint is given as to what form of education *would* suit Martin, though his departure to voyage to the South Seas, of

which we learn nothing more, is not unreminiscent of Darwin on the *Beagle* and Gaskell's Roger in Africa.

To read or reread Hughes's novel can be immensely enjoyable, if only to take issue with a great deal that he claims or shows. His praise of Arnold is lavish, yet 'The Doctor' makes no pedagogic changes, in teaching method or syllabus, and oversees more closely the old system rather than rooting it out and replacing it with something better. To set Trollope and Thackeray against Hughes is to see their misery and educational deprivation shadowed in Tom Brown's schooling.

While the focus here has been largely on boys' experience of public schools, we should remember the increasing emphasis on education in the nineteenth century and the great variety - grammar (day) school; ragged schools; church schools; special institutions to prepare for the army, Indian service, the navy, agriculture; working men's institutes; University extension courses. And in all this, questions of equality of education for men and women became increasingly a matter of concern - girls' school established; University extension; University education (see, for example, H.G.Wells's *Ann Veronica*, published 1909 but reflecting the 1880s). But on the issue of equality, this sketch may serve as a reminder again that it is not just equality that is at stake in education, but its nature and quality.

Editor notes: Last winter we studied *Ruth* in detail with our able tutor and mentor Elizabeth Williams. By popular demand Elizabeth has now researched further and written up the fruits of her labours for the benefit of us all. Thank you Elizabeth.

Ruth and the Governess Question

Elizabeth Williams

The governess was a stock figure in Victorian fiction - one estimate is that between 1814 and 1864, 140 novels were written featuring governesses [1], the best known of these being *Jane Eyre*, by Charlotte Brontë, and *Agnes Grey* by her sister Anne. According to Katharine West fictional governesses fell into six categories - The Downtrodden, The Valued Friend, The Strict Instructress or Dragon, The Self-Seeking Adventuress, The Villainess and the Snob-Exhibit [2]. But it's the figure of The Downtrodden that loomed largest in fiction, and this seems to have been the case in real life as well.

The plight of the governess was a direct result of the problem of the 'redundant woman'. WR Greg wrote in 1862 'There is an enormous and increasing number of single women in the nation....a number which.... is indicative of an unwholesome social state, and is... productive ... of much wretchedness and wrong. There are

hundreds and thousands of women....scattered through all ranks, but proportionately most numerous in the middle and upper ranks – who have to earn their own living, instead of spending and husbanding the earnings of men...who are compelled to lead an independent and incomplete existence of their own.' He went on to estimate that in 1851 'there were, in England and Wales... 1,248,000 women in the prime of life... who were unmarried.' [3]

Greg suggested emigration as a solution to this problem, and even calculated the number of vessels required. It is interesting that he commented that female servants did not constitute part of the problem and went on to explain that this was because, 'They are in no sense redundant... they are fully and usefully employed... they fulfil both essentials of woman's being; *they are supported by and they minister to men.* We could not possibly do without them.' Mr Bradshaw in *Ruth* would undoubtedly have agreed.

There were few recognised ways for the redundant middle-class woman to earn a living without forfeiting the precious status of a lady. Ruth is a person whose status is debatable – her father is a respectable but failed farmer and her mother a curate's daughter. But the fact that she is apprenticed to a dress-maker, as is Kate Nickleby in *Nicholas Nickleby*, means that her guardian recognised her as being above the rank of a working-class girl who could have become a servant. Sewing was a desirable female skill, expected of all classes. So was nursing (although only within a circle of family and friends until the advent of Florence Nightingale) and so was teaching. These were all supposed to involve skills which came naturally to women. In the course of Mrs Gaskell's novel *Ruth* is involved in all three of these occupations.

If a woman decided to support herself by becoming a governess she could preserve her status as a lady, as her main function was to inculcate her young charges with suitably lady-like ideas of behaviour. The ideal governess came from a family with aristocratic connections which had fallen on hard times. In *Shirley*, by Charlotte Brontë, a rich young woman is reported as remarking, 'The daughters of tradespeople, however well educated, must necessarily be underbred, and as such unfit to be inmates of our dwellings, or the guardians of our children's minds and persons.' [4]

This gives us an idea of what was required in a governess among those with aspirations to be regarded as genteel. We could easily become enmeshed in discussions of the Victorian class system, where Mr Bradshaw (in trade) would never have been regarded as gentry, but this does not detract from the fact that he would have wanted a governess who was instantly identified as being 'the better sort of person'. To quote Katherine Hughes: 'A governess was concerned with the social and moral development of her pupils, as well as the simply academic, and her qualifications were not merely of the academic variety but were

rather part of her birthright as a lady.' [5] Hyacinth Kirkpatrick, in *Wives and Daughters*, has gained and retained posts on the basis of her superficial but genteel charm and is acutely aware of what is done in the better sort of household. Her academic qualifications are relatively unimportant; it is her ability to play the lady that counts. So we can see what a compliment Mr Bradshaw is paying to Ruth in offering her the role of a nursery governess and taking her into his family.

Charlotte, Anne and Emily Brontë all worked at different times as governesses and school teachers, and none of them were happy. Anne Brontë gives a vivid account of the unhappiness of the governess's life in her novel *Agnes Grey*, emphasising the loneliness. A governess could not mix with the servants because she was above them in status, but nor, unless she was exceptionally lucky, would she be expected to become part of the family. She gives an account of Agnes Grey going to church with her employer's family. 'As none of the before-mentioned ladies and gentlemen ever noticed me, it was disagreeable to walk beside them, as if wishing to be thought one of them, while they talked over me....It was disagreeable too, to walk behind and thus appear to acknowledge my own inferiority, for in truth, I considered myself nearly as good as the best of them.' [6]

This loneliness is emphasised in an article by Lady Elizabeth Eastlake entitled '*Vanity Fair, Jane Eyre* and the Governesses' Benevolent Institution', which appeared in the *Quarterly Review* in December, 1848. In it Lady Eastlake describes the governess as a 'bore' to ladies and gentlemen and adds, 'the servants invariably detest her, for she is a dependent like themselves, and yet, for all that, as much their superior in other respects as the family they both serve. Her pupils may love her, and she may take the deepest interest in them, but they cannot be her friends.' Often the children were encouraged to see the governess as a social inferior, and this was not helpful when she tried to discipline them. In *Agnes Grey* Anne Brontë writes of the children spitting into the governess's workbag and throwing her writing desk out of the window.

The Brontës were not the only ones to write about downtrodden governesses. Jane Austen has Jane Fairfax in *Emma* describing her future prospects as a governess as a branch of the slave industry, although Emma's beloved Miss Taylor in the same novel has had much more the experience of the valued friend, becoming a member of the family in an even more complete way than Ruth does. Nonetheless, only Mr Woodhouse fails to recognise that Miss Taylor is much better off once she has become Mrs Weston. Dickens features the governess as a downtrodden figure in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, where Tom Pinch's sister (another Ruth) is exploited and treated with contempt by her employers.

Jane Eyre of course found Mr Rochester – a highly unlikely scenario in real life. The most that a real governess might aspire to was to marry the curate, but this was a rare piece of good fortune, and many of them carried on until they were too old or ill

to find work and then found themselves totally destitute. Kathryn Hughes states that servants and Governesses formed proportionately the largest occupational group in lunatic asylums [7], the victims of overwork and inadequate pay. And the pay was low, with the majority of governesses receiving between £35 and £80 per year [8], out of which they would probably be expected to pay for their own laundry, medical care and travel. Their position in the family meant that they were expected to dress well, and this was not cheap. Nursery governesses such as Ruth were sometimes offered no salary beyond bed, board and travelling expenses, and yet such posts attracted many applicants, who would be expected to work long hours. They might have had to share a bedroom with children, meaning that they were never off duty, and could be expected to spend their evenings doing needlework for the family.

Employers could get away with this sort of thing because there were simply too many women in the market place. If no Prince Charming came along, another dream of salvation was starting a school. Both the Brontë sisters and Charles Dickens's mother did this – plans were laid, brochures distributed and their homes made ready to receive boarders – but no pupils came. There were just too many schools.

So we can see that Mr Bradshaw is extending a genuine favour to Ruth when he offers to employ her as a governess. When we compare her terms of employment with those of our stereotypical downtrodden governess, they seem very favourable indeed. It is clear that she is paid a salary, and Mr Bradshaw's love of patronising others means that it will probably be a generous one. Ruth mixes freely with the family, is offered affection and respect, and is free from undue interference in her duties. Mothers were particularly prone to intervening between the governess and her charges, often stemming from a fear of being supplanted by the governess in the children's affections, but Mrs Bradshaw's weak and passive nature means that Ruth is remarkably free to use her own judgement and to form natural and affectionate relationships with the children. If Charlotte Brontë's unhappy experiences came from a combination of difficult employers and an inappropriate temperament, we can see that Gaskell gives Ruth the good fortune to find reasonable employers while possessing a character that enables her to become valued within the Bradshaw family.

Mr Bradshaw is in many ways an unattractive character, but I think that readers of the time would have related to his fury at the discovery of Ruth's past far more easily than we do. As I hope I've shown, he extends a genuine favour, or even a privilege to Ruth when he offers her the job of nursery governess to his younger daughters. Also, when we consider just what the job signified, we can see how entirely Gaskell is challenging the ideas of the time by putting Ruth into a position that identifies her as lady-like. One of Katharine West's six categories of fictional governesses is that of the Snob-Exhibit. We can find one of these in the figure of Miss Wirt in 'A Visit to Some Country Snobs', chapter XXV of Thackeray's *Book of Snobs*. Miss Wirt plays

the piano magnificently and tells admiring visitors about one piece of music, 'When I lived with the Dunsinanes, that was the dear Duchess's favourite... It was while hearing Jane play that, I remember, that dear Lord Castletoddy fell in love with her; and, though he is but an Irish Peer, with not more than fifteen thousand a year, I persuaded Jane to have him.'

Mr Bradshaw may not have had ambitions to employ a Miss Wirt, but he certainly wanted someone who had qualities of gentility. The quality of the governess reflected the status of the family, and to discover that the moral and social development of the children had been entrusted to an unmarried mother would have been unacceptable to most Victorian households, even if they weren't as fiercely righteous as Mr Bradshaw. It is Ruth's becoming a governess that makes Mr Benson increasingly aware of the consequences of his lie. The first he knows of it is after his sister has accepted the post on Ruth's behalf. His perturbation at the news hinges on the fact that while he has chosen to accept Ruth into his household and to protect her from the outside world with a lie, Ruth is now moving back into the outside world under the shelter of that lie. She is entering a family home (that holy of holies to the Victorians) and taking a position which is theoretically reserved only for women of the highest moral integrity.

Mrs Gaskell encourages us to mentally reject Mr Bradshaw's arguments when he discovers the truth about his governess and accuses her of contaminating his innocent girls. It's easy to disagree with him now, but when the book was written such feelings on the part of the reader would have implied that the fallen woman could be redeemed to the point where she was fit to be the guardian of children's innocence. The governess was right at the heart of society, responsible for children who their ambitious parents would perceive as the ladies and gentlemen of the future. Such responsibility brought power, and this is why the bad governess was a creature to be dreaded. You may remember that two of the six categories of fictional governess were those of women who exploited their positions for their own ends – The Female Adventurer and the Villainess. We could think of Becky Sharp in *Vanity Fair* as an example of the first, or of Lady Audley or Miss Jessel in *The Turn of the Screw* as the second - all parents' nightmares. To Mr Bradshaw it must seem that those nightmares have come true and that he has been harbouring an unscrupulous adventurer. Nowadays, just as insecure, we are justifiably neurotic about child abuse and anyone dealing with children has to be vetted.

In Mrs Gaskell's time the concerns were different, but even so, allowing a stranger access to one's home and children was a worrying prospect. Childhood is a time of innocence, but also a time when habits of mind and behaviour are taught, and a time of vulnerability. The absence of caring adults is a major factor in Ruth's downfall, and her own defence is, 'I was so young'. It is significant that when Richard's dishonesty is discovered, Mrs Bradshaw sits weeping in the nursery; Richard was innocent in his nursery days. If he'd had someone like Ruth as a

governess, would he have been better? Leonard, the bastard, is presented as the hope for the future because he has been trained in love and care. *Ruth* can be perceived in many ways as a novel about education.

It's also a novel about gentility – a term that has become debased but which should relate to some innate purity and graciousness. Ruth's lady-like air and dignity are stressed throughout the book, and indeed, as I've mentioned, it is these that inspire Mr Bradshaw to employ her in the first place. The fact of Ruth's becoming a governess, that token of a family's respectability and gentility, poses a very difficult question – can the fallen woman be forgiven to the extent of gaining a place as the guardian of innocence? Posing the question was a courageous gesture.

1. Kathryn Hughes, The Victorian Governess (London and Rio Grande: The Hambledon Press, 1993), p. 2.
2. Katharine West, A Chapter of Governesses (London: Cohen and West, 1949), p. 13.
3. W R Greg, Why Are Women Redundant? (London: Trubner, 1862)
4. Charlotte Brontë, Shirley, (London: The Folio Society, 1968), p. 285.
5. Hughes, p. 40.
6. Anne Brontë, Agnes Grey, (London: The Folio Society, 1969), p. 93.
7. Hughes p. 163.
8. Hughes p. 155.

Lionizing Elizabeth Gaskell: The Gaskell Journal Goes On-line

Nancy Weyant

As many members of the Gaskell Society know, for over two years, officers of the Society, the editor of the *Gaskell Journal* and several members of the Editorial Board of the *Journal* have been engaged in a dialogue regarding the benefits of contracting to have the articles published in the *Journal* included in one or more full-text journal databases. Last summer, the Society entered into an agreement with ProQuest, an electronic publisher, to have them provide full-text access to the *Journal*. The title of the publication in which *Journal* articles will be made available is *Literature Online,* popularly known to college and university students as *LION*. When and how did making journal articles available via computer happen? More significantly, what are the benefits gained, to The Gaskell Society and to future Gaskell scholarship, by our entering into this agreement with ProQuest? Hopefully, this article will provide the answers.

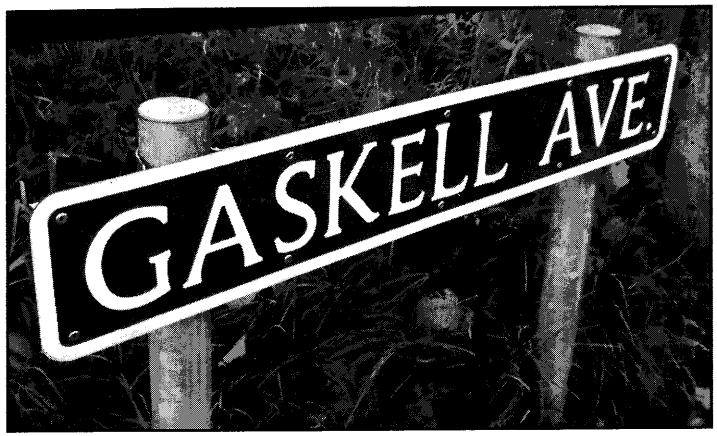
In an article I wrote for the Autumn 2011 issue of the *Newsletter*, I traced the ever-growing presence of Elizabeth Gaskell on the Internet. She continues to have a strong presence in cyberspace. Among the tens-of-thousand Internet sites on Gaskell, there are free copies of ALL of Gaskell's works, plot summaries of her

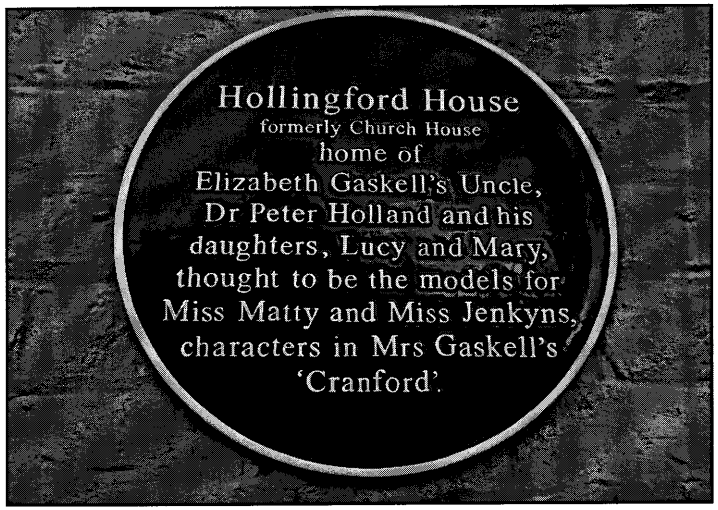
novels and short stories, biographies of varying lengths, photographs, references to PhD dissertations and MA theses, vita of Gaskell scholars and blogs by Gaskell scholars and enthusiasts alike. There are commercial sites as well: sites that will sell you new and used copies of her works; mugs, magnets, bookmarks, and Christmas ornaments with quotes from her writings; and, sadly, businesses that will even sell you term papers, theses and dissertations on Gaskell's life and works. While the immense volume of information on the Internet has triggered discussions about the possible benefits of creating two tracks of Internet information (popular/commercial and scholarly), that division has not yet happened. Until the issue of whether there *should* be multiple Internets is resolved, scholars (both established and neophyte) will continue to be dependent on one or more commercial electronic publishers to help them identify articles on specific topics.

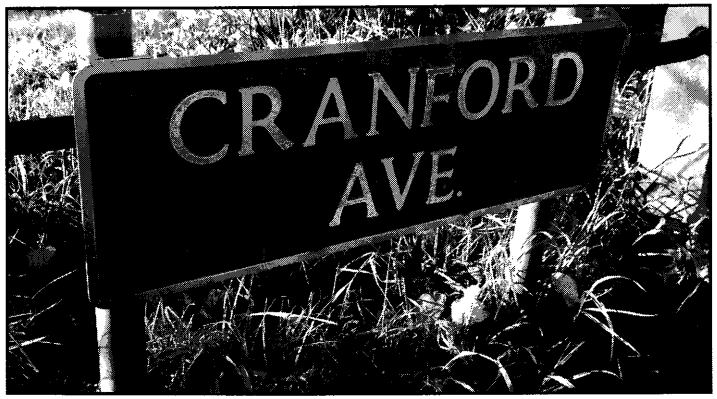
Furthermore, while there are a number of electronic journals that are just 'published' on or accessed via the Internet, the vast majority of scholarly journals continue to be published in paper by major academic publishing houses, universities and, societies OR are published in paper by these entities and electronic versions with the electronic version being marketed by an established, fee-based database vendor. From its inception in 1987 through 2013, *The Gaskell Society Journal, The Gaskell Journal* since 2008, has been published just in paper. However, beginning in 2014, articles published in all past and future volumes will be available in both paper and electronic formats. Members of the Society will continue to receive the paper version and anyone authorized to use one of the hundreds of libraries that subscribe to Literature Online (LION) will have access to the electronic version of our Journal. To understand the implications for our Journal and our Society, it might be useful to review the evolution of electronically accessible journals.

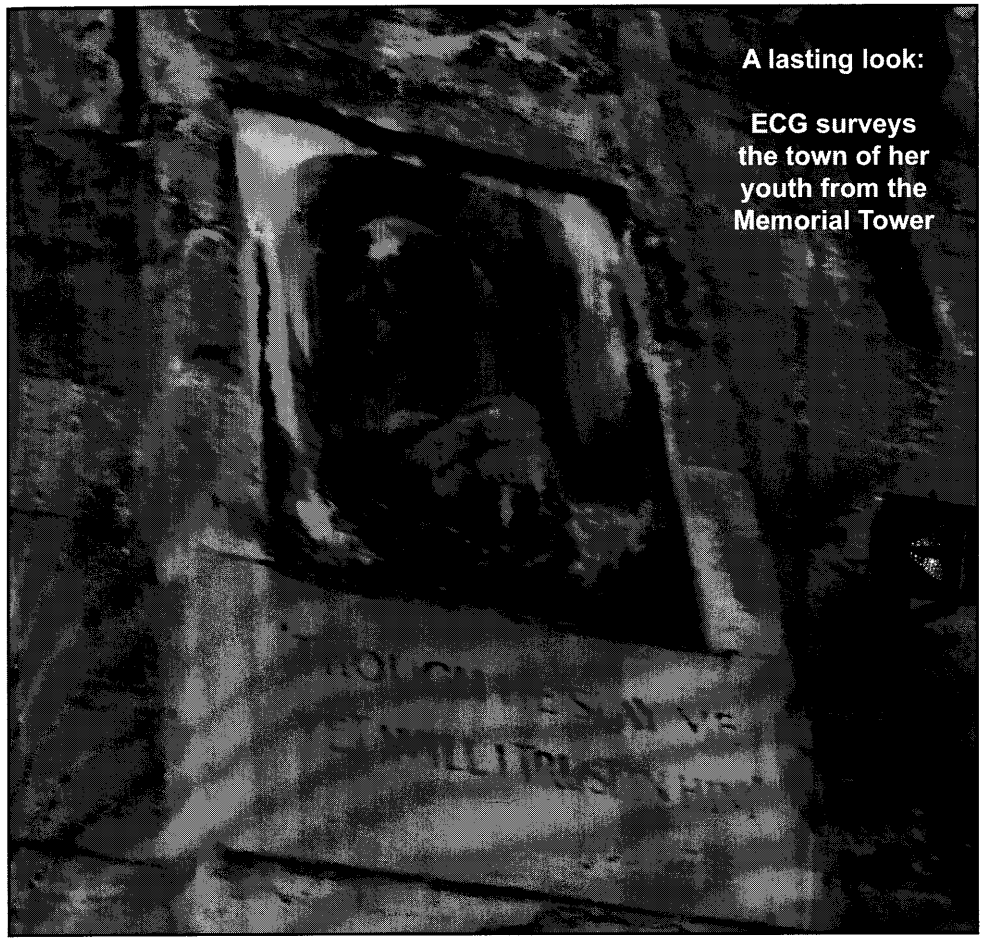
One of the challenges faced by the vendors of electronic databases that emerged in the 1990s was that the publishers of the long-established paper indexes (like the MLA International Bibliography that indexes The Gaskell Journal) understandably wanted to control how their indexes were computerized. Additionally, researchers found that while electronic indexes dramatically increased the speed with which they could identify what had been published, the traditional way of actually acquiring the article or book chapter itself if their library did not own the item continued to be a time-consuming process. Accordingly, a new group of fee-based indexing services emerged – indexes that did not have paper antecedents but rather began as online indexing services. Because an ever-growing number of magazines and journals had begun using computers to produce their paper versions, the publishers of these new indexes saw that they had the opportunity to use the computer versions that were being used to create the paper versions to transform not just how researchers learned about a publication but also how they could actually acquire articles in that publication. Simply they approached the publishers of the magazines and journals they were indexing and negotiated agreements to include the articles themselves in their indexes.

Signs of the times in Knutsford



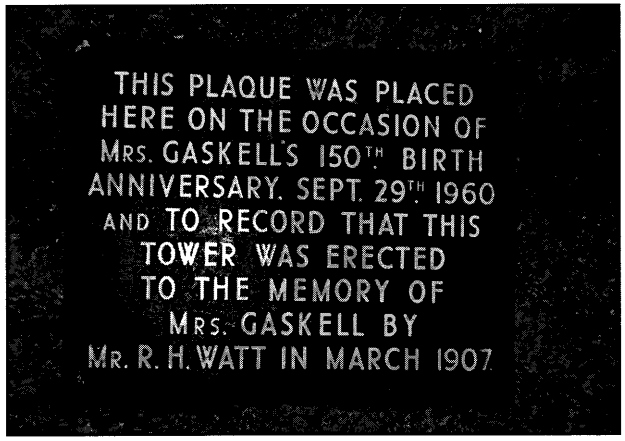






A lasting look:

ECG surveys the town of her youth from the Memorial Tower



THE ERA OF FULL-TEXT JOURNAL RETRIEVAL HAD ARRIVED!

This new publishing model had a major impact on researchers and on libraries. Full text databases quickly became staples of undergraduate research around the world. Academic libraries enthusiastically embraced them for several reasons. By subscribing to one or more of these, they greatly enhanced access to articles in two ways. First, they allowed for both precise subject searching as well as what is called 'keyword' searching. For example, one could enter 'Lois the Witch' as a subject phrase and locate articles that focused primarily, if not exclusively, on that work OR one could enter that title as a keyword phrase and any article that mentioned it, even just tangentially, would be quickly identified. In short, it became much easier to identify virtually EVERYTHING written on a topic or an author or a work. Secondly, and more significantly, if the publisher of the magazine or journal had contracted to have their articles accessible full-text, a simple click on the appropriate link would result in the immediate display of the entire article and, upon scanning the article, give one the option of immediately printing that article. Dependency on inter-library loan to obtain that article was therefore eliminated – a reality appealing to students, independent researchers, faculty and library directors alike.

Lastly, libraries choosing to subscribe to one or more of these full-text databases reduced the costs of processing the paper versions of newspapers, magazines and journals and the cost of providing shelf space for those ever-expanding publications. Everyone seemed to benefit by embracing full-text databases.

Certainly, one question to be asked is: WHAT exactly is the benefit to the publishers or sponsors (notably societies like ours) of the journals that agree to allow one of the electronic database publishers to provide instant access to their articles? Firstly, monetary remuneration is part of the agreement – not enough to significantly alter the solvency of the issuing entity, but some financial remuneration, nonetheless. Secondly, and in many ways more importantly, it increases the exposure of the journal AND the sponsoring society to a greatly expanded number of scholars. Many scholarly journals are published in BOTH paper and online formats. Significantly, single-author focused journals (like ours) tend to be published either just in paper or, where the author is considered a significant figure, published in both paper and online formats. Clearly, Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell is no longer constrained by David Cecil's characterization of her as a 'minor author' whose writings are determined by her gender.

By contracting with ProQuest to include the articles published in The Gaskell Journal in LION, the Society's officers have strengthened the exposure of both the Journal and our Society to new generations of Gaskell scholars and enthusiasts alike.

Who was Louy Jackson?

Jenny Keaveney

Louy Jackson is mentioned more than twenty times in Mrs Gaskell's letters between 1856 and 1863. First described as 'Meta's friend' and then as 'a very dear young friend of mine', Louy visits the Gaskells and is visited by them, travels to Germany with them, writes letters – but remains little more than a name. The story behind this name is fragmented but not without interest and incident.

Louisa Victoria Jackson (often referred to as 'LVJ' in Gaskell's letters) was born in 1838, the youngest child of Henry Augustus Jackson, an officer in the 5th Dragoon Guards, and his wife Mary. She and her sister Anna Maria were pupils at Rachel Martineau's school in Liverpool, where their aunt, Jane Noble Pilkington, was a teacher. Meta Gaskell joined this school in 1853 and the three girls became 'great friends'.

All the information about Louy that we learn from Mrs Gaskell herself comes from one letter, in which she describes the terrible blow that struck the family in 1856:

> Meta is in London: she has been there ever since Feb 1st. She went to see two girls who had lost both father and mother in one fortnight; they were great friends of Meta's, who had also received much kindness from Colonel & Mrs Jackson. The latter was dying of cancer, the former was a strong handsome healthy man. But he dropped down dead in the street just a fortnight before his poor wife died after five years illness; and the only brother (an artillery officer) was ordered out to the Crimea the same week..... They are adopted by the Dean of Canterbury and are gone there now1.

A tragic story – but that last, almost throwaway, line leaps out at us: 'They are adopted by the Dean of Canterbury'. As minors, then aged 17 and 19 respectively, Louy and Anna Maria would have needed the protection of a guardian – but why such an august personage as the Dean of Canterbury? The Deanery at that time was occupied by Dr William Rowe Lyall: Clive Dewey[2] has described his custom of promoting his relatives to desirable posts in the Church of England, but mentions no such penchant for adopting orphaned young ladies.

There is, inevitably perhaps where Dr Lyall was concerned, a family connection, revealed in a letter written some years later by Philip Green, the son of the minister at Brook Street Chapel:

> I had a very pleasant visit to Canterbury ... Meta Gaskell gave me a letter of introduction to the Miss Jacksons whose mother was as perhaps you know a Miss Pilkington and niece of the first Mrs Dr Brandreth.[3]

The Dean's wife, Catherine Lyall, was a daughter of that Dr and Mrs Brandreth, making her Mrs Jackson's first cousin. It is, in fact, probable that it was she who took the initiative to offer a home to the sisters, since the Dean himself had been an invalid for a number of years, following a stroke in 1852.[4]

Louy kept in contact with Meta after her removal to Canterbury, staying with her, Elizabeth and Florence in Heidelberg for nine weeks in 1858 and being absorbed into family life on a visit to Plymouth Grove the following March:

> Meta and Louy are working hard at the dining-room table mending your [Marianne's] pink gown.[5]

In April 1859, Louy reached her twenty-first birthday and immediately celebrated her coming of age by taking 'the spirited step of engaging a great part of a furnished house' in the St Dunstan's area of Canterbury[6]. Elizabeth and Meta visited her here the following month, an added attraction of the visit being that Louy was now resident in the parish of Elizabeth's cousin Francis Holland. Philip Green's visit, mentioned earlier, took place in July of the same year when the Jacksons were able to use their Cathedral connection to gain him privileged access:

> [The Miss Jacksons] were very kind & obliging in shewing me the cathedral which I should not have been able to see completely on the Sunday had not Louisa Jackson procured the key for me and conducted me through.[7]

We do not know how long Louy enjoyed her independent living but by 1861 she appears to have moved to Winchester with Mrs Lyall. This must have been somewhat dreary, if Elizabeth's account of a visit spent 'sitting in a warm back drawing room with blinds down all the day long, and seeing no one, and no newspapers coming, and no letters'[8] is typical of life with the elderly widow. It cannot have been a congenial role for Louy who, as we shall see, was an energetic and enterprising woman, and she may even have suffered from depression during this period:

> L.V.J. is much altered 'selon moi' ... so quiet and indifferent about life in general and Gaskell's [sic] in particular.[9]

Following Mrs Lyall's death in 1863 Louy disappears from the Gaskells' story for a number of years. Since her correspondence is likely to have been chiefly with Meta, that inveterate destroyer of letters, it is unsurprising that no records seem to remain from this period. It is again a Green family letter that picks up Louy's story, in this case to Philip from his sister Isabella:

> H Brandreth & Louisa Jackson are to be married on the 8th June ... He comes from his living in Norfolk in the middle of every week to see her (in Derbyshire

> by a night train and back the same way), & she thinks it so bad for him & his parish that they are going to be married directly.[10]

Henry Brandreth was Louy's second cousin, the son of Mrs Lyall's brother Thomas Shaw Brandreth. He had taught mathematics at Eton and Rugby for five years before entering the Church in 1867 and had just been appointed to his first parish.

The wedding took place in Alton, Staffordshire and appears to have been quite a grand affair: it was conducted by the Dean of Bristol (John Pilkington Norris, another cousin of Louy's, the news of whose own marriage was communicated to Charles Eliot Norton by Elizabeth)[11] and Louy was attended by six bridesmaids, including Meta Gaskell.

Following a honeymoon in Switzerland the newlyweds returned to Henry's parish of Dickleburgh, a village in rural south Norfolk, where they would remain for the next thirty years.

Henry Brandreth was an ardent teetotaller and temperance campaigner and devoted much time and effort to keeping his flock out of the local hostelries by providing alternative diversions for them. One of the earliest of these, and the one in which he persisted the longest, was a reading room: his vision of this was set out in verse in the parish magazine:

> A public-house, without the drink
> For sober recreation
> Where you may smoke, or read, or think
> Or join in conversation
> Discuss with loyal English hearts
> The prospects of the nation
> Or take a book and sit *apart*
> In silent meditation[12]

While many such reading rooms were set up for similar purposes during the latter half of the nineteenth century, Henry's proposal does recall the initiative for a similar project in Gibraltar taken some ten years previously by Louy's brother Pilkington, which had received support from Elizabeth Gaskell and Florence Nightingale:

> I am in all the depths of perplexity at having a young artillery officer (whom I never saw,) writing to me from Gibraltar asking ME! to make a selection of books & periodicals to the value of 5£ for a 'soldiers reading-room' there which he has established at his own risk in order that they may have some place besides 'wine shops' in which to read news, play at draughts &c, &c.[13]

The Dickleburgh reading room opened in 1874 but did not have the beneficial effects that Henry Brandreth had hoped for. The rectory was situated too far from

the village for him to be able to visit the reading room regularly and some of the villagers took advantage of this lack of vigilance to make use of the facility for less wholesome pursuits than those for which it was designed. When the Rector learned that 'games were being played for money and for beer'[14] at the reading room, it was closed down.

During these early years at Dickleburgh, Louy was preoccupied with her family. The Brandreths' first child, Catherine Lois Rosalind, was born just under a year after the wedding (the first child, as Henry proudly noted, to have been born at the Rectory for 160 years) and christened on Whit Sunday, the church being 'very beautifully decorated with hawthorn for the occasion'.[15]

By 1875 Rosalind (as she was known) had been joined by two brothers, Ashton Byrom and Ernest Henry Augustus, but tragedy was to strike Louy once again.

> 'Last year', Henry wrote in the parish magazine, 'we might have been envied for three fine children; but we lost our eldest son, who was peculiarly dear to us for the sweet patience with which he had always borne all the treatment ... to set right the lame foot with which he was born. [Then] the whooping-cough attacked both our remaining children; and pneumonia, or inflammation of the lungs, having followed in the little boy's case, he lay at the beginning of April without much hope of recovery [and] on the morning of the 16th he was taken to better things'[16].

Ashton had been two years old when he died: Ernest died two days before his second birthday.

Just as the loss of Mrs Gaskell's son had driven her to begin her career as a writer, the deaths of Ashton and Ernest may have given Louy the impetus to begin a new venture which was to occupy her for the rest of her time at Dickleburgh, and beyond.

This began when three young children in the parish were orphaned and, to keep them from being taken into the workhouse, an orphanage, Rose Cottage, was founded in the village. Although the records state that it was founded by both the Brandreths, Henry always refers to Rose Cottage and its sister home, Lee Cottage (opened in 1885), as 'Mrs Brandreth's Homes' and Louy took an active role in the management of both homes. Initially the homes were run privately and independently and although in 1888 they were transferred to the Waifs and Strays Society this did not diminish her involvement. Louy continued to have responsibility for their management and also as secretary and 'chief spirit' of the local committee, maintaining an untiring interest in the homes and taking a very practical role in their management, including sourcing such essential items as blankets, a sewing machine and umbrellas through appeals to the readers of 'Our Waifs & Strays' magazine.

Despite the name 'cottage', both homes were quite substantial buildings housing around twenty children, all girls, whose ages ranged from as young as three years old up to fifteen. They attended the village school and, outside school hours, were trained in housework, needlework and laundry, with the aim of preparing them for a career in domestic service[17].

This may sound as though the homes were merely grimly utilitarian vocational training schemes, but the reality seems to have been gratifyingly different. Louy's philosophy was that 'loveless surroundings' had a 'deadening effect' on children, who would 'eagerly ... respond to love and care'[18] and the regular reports of the Waifs & Strays Society demonstrate how this was put into practice. One of these notes 'how eager the children were for a kind word or look from Mrs Brandreth ... they evidently looked to her as their best earthly friend'.[19]

Other reports give an insight into the activities of the home – days out at the seaside in Lowestoft, with buckets and spades and goat-cart rides provided, the dolls, toys and rocking horse available for the children and some positively Dickensian descriptions of Christmas festivities:

> At twelve o'clock the doors of the playroom were thrown open and the crowd of eager children admitted. The Christmas-tree – covered with flags, ornaments and crackers - was brilliantly lighted and placed in the centre of a perfect wall of toys, dolls, work-boxes and scrap-books. After the singing of some pretty carols, the distribution of the presents began .... Great was the excitement and pleasure depicted on all the faces as dolls and toys were distributed ... each child received no less than four gifts.
>
> We had roast beef, plum-puddings, and rice-puddings for dinner. After dinner, we all played a great many games, had oranges, and had some crackers; at five o'clock we sat down to a beautiful tea ... tarts, buns, fancy biscuits, cake, and gingerbreads, and went to tea with the caps on which came out of the bon-bons, and we all sung after we had finished tea ... two of the girls dressed up in 'Father Christmas' clothes and when the children saw them they did really scream.[20]

These festivities were not only for the forty-odd girls resident in the two cottages but children from the local Union were also invited, leaving 'with their pinafores full of presents'.

Girls who had moved on could, and frequently did, return to the cottages for holidays or 'when in need of care or rest' – during the Brandreths' last summer at Dickleburgh twenty girls returned to visit - and Louy's interest in her protégés continued even after she left the village. A number of letters in the archives of the Children's Society relate to Louy's meeting with 'E', a former resident of Rose

Cottage, in 1904 and her efforts to obtain medical assistance and respite care for 'E' through appeals to Edward Rudolf, the founder of the Waifs and Strays Society.[21]

By this time, Henry Brandreth had resigned his living at Dickleburgh. He and Louy had moved to Cambridge at the end of 1899, where Henry died in 1904. Louy then took up residence in Essex, where she was living with her daughter Rosalind at the 1911 census and where she died in 1915.

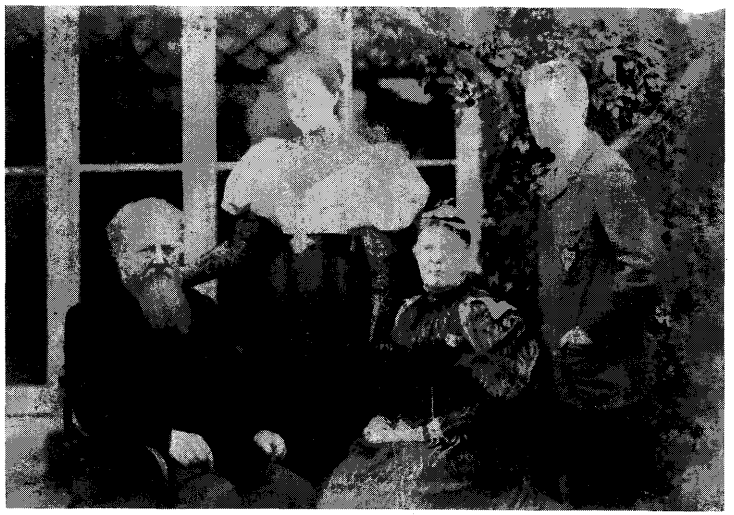
A valedictory piece written for 'Our Waifs and Strays' magazine in 1900 asserted that 'To those who have known Dickleburgh and Rose Cottage the names of her husband and herself will always be connected with the memory of the village and Home'.[22] Rose Cottage ceased to be a children's home in 1912 but the Brandreths are indeed still remembered in Dickleburgh. They left another memorial to the village on their departure: an 'iron house', moved from the Rectory to a site opposite Rose Cottage to serve as a reading room. The villagers seem to have been no more receptive to this than to Henry's initial efforts but the building was appreciated and put to use for other purposes: as a snooker club, table tennis club, cinema, village hall and community centre. Despite falling into disrepair in the 1980s, the building was rescued and restored by the Dickleburgh Village Society and today houses an archive of photographs and documents illustrating the history of the village.

Louy Jackson may have played only a minor role in the Gaskells' lives, and it has only been possible to flesh out a few details of her own life: she remains a somewhat shadowy figure. However, these details are enough to show a strong and determined woman in her own right and one whose life had a positive and lasting impact on over a hundred children.

I am grateful to Brian Baker for arranging access to the Dickleburgh reading rooms and archive, especially the parish magazines.

1. Further Letters p.156
2. The Passing of Barchester, Hambledon Press, 1991
3. Green-Jamison letters JPG/203, 12 July 1859
4. Benjamin Harrison: Charity Never Failing – a sermon preached on the death of WR Lyall 1857
5. Letters, 422, March 1859
6. Letters, 424a, 20 April 1859
7. Green-Jamison letters JPG/203, 12 July 1859
8. Letters, 457, March 1860
9. Letters, 484a, March 1861
10. Green-Jamison letters, JA/1G/16/1871
11. Letters, 418, March 1859
12. Dickleburgh parish magazine, February 1876
13. Letter 443, October 1859
14. Dickleburgh parish magazine, June 1877
15. Green-Jamison archive, Mary Ellen Green, 31 May 1872
16. Dickleburgh Parish Magazine, May 1877
17. http://www.hiddenlives.org.uk/homes/DICKL02.html

18. Our Waifs and Strays, March 1895, p. 43
    http://www.hiddenlives.org.uk/cgi-bin/imgfind.pl?pageno=43&project=hiddenlivespub&refid=1895_I
19. Our Waifs and Strays, September 1894, p.135
    http://www.hiddenlives.org.uk/cgi-bin/imgfind.pl?pageno=135&project=hiddenlivespub&refid=1894_I
20. Our Waifs and Strays, February 1899, p. 4
    http://www.hiddenlives.org.uk/publications/waifs_and_strays/188902_I_1.html
21. http://www.hiddenlives.org.uk/cases/case6351.html
22. Our Waifs and Strays, March 1900, p.53
    http://www.hiddenlives.org.uk/publications/waifs_and_strays/1900_I_45.html



Louisa, née Jackson, and Henry Brandreth with Roland and Rosalind in the late 1890s.

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Elizabeth Gaskell and Thomas Glover

Pauline Kiggins

A good head and good heart are always a formidable combination. But when you add to that a literate tongue or pen, then you have something very special

Nelson Mandela

Mrs Gaskell's 'good heart' prompted her in her busy lifetime to many kindly acts aimed at helping people in need. We know already about her charitable work in Manchester during the 'Cotton Famine' her appeals to fellow novelist Charles Dickens (and, through him, to Angela Burdett-Coutts) for help in assisting stricken women in need of moral and material support. I now outline some recent research (inspired by references in Mrs Gaskell's Letters), which has brought to light the

instance of another charitable act, set in motion by a 'good heart' and managed by a 'good head'.

This story begins at a holiday tea party in the summer of 1858.

In a letter to Charles Eliot Norton, written on 25th July 1858, Mrs Gaskell wrote (coming to the end of a six-week stay in Silverdale)

> Oh we are getting so sorry to leave Silverdale. [...] Last Tuesday we had a party of boys & birds & girls... We had a tame magpie and a tame jackdaw (/ the latter/ belonging to a little dwarf-child we picked up on a wild common one night) said dwarf - and three children of a drowned fisherman. The birds fought for precedence but the children were very good & nice, - not flippantly clever like town children, but solidly-thinking with slow dignity. The birds sate at tea on the heads of their respective owners, occasionally giving a plug or a dig with their beaks into the thick curly hair in a manner which / should not have liked, but it did not seem to disturb the appetites of the owners. It was very funny, & picturesque in the old quaint kitchen here.

Mrs Gaskell's 1858 reference to the 'three children of a drowned fisherman' is the key to the story. The eldest of the three was called Thomas Glover, as we find out from a letter that has survived as a fragment only - its recipient unknown. In it Mrs Gaskell is appealing for help to enable her to find work for Thomas Glover.

Her letter reads:

> I am afraid I cannot give the exact dates but I will put down as much as I can remember about Thomas Glover (,) (I have added the comma to aid the sense) and the clergyman at Silverdale - (The Revd Alfred Hadfield, Silverdale nr. Lancaster) would send every particular, and would. I am sure, speak very highly of the boy.
>
> His father was a fisherman, drowned by the coming up of the tide on the sands five or six years ago. He left a widow, 3 children, two girls besides Thomas, who must now be 14. Mrs (altered word) Glover is very much respected & liked. She has had a hard struggle to live - 'has been welly hungered to live many a time' - but owing to the kindness of Peggy Hatton, a washerwoman, she has pulled through, though she is often hard put to it in the winter, when there is much less to do. A gentleman whose name I forget offered to pay for Thomas's schooling and he has profited well by the privilege. He writes well, is a great way on in arithmetic: and is generally an intelligent, quiet and gentlemanly boy, - with a kind of thoughtful dignity about him, that comes, I should think, from his having been his mother's confidant & comforter during all her hard days. About Silverdale there is very little work, even of an agricultural kind, people

> live on fish, and their potatoe grounds in a kind of primitive fashion; and there is nothing much done in the winter; and low wages in the summer. Besides the boy's talents & acquirements fit him to be something more than a labourer; and I want him to earn money somehow, so as to be able to help his mother. Apprenticeship costs money, & though that might be got over yet there would be his living to be found all the time he was an apprentice. I should be very much obliged to anyone who would help him to employment, & I feel pretty sure that he would do me credit.

The next written reference to Thomas Glover of which we are aware was probably written in August 1859. (Letter 439a), Mrs Gaskell was writing to a fairly 'new' friend, Charles Bosanquet, (planning to visit 'the Lake Country' for the first time, from his home in Northumberland). In the middle of her letter recommending people and places to visit, Mrs Gaskell breaks off and writes:

> That reminds me! I have been laying traps all over England for a place for Thomas Glover this year past - and I have 'bagged' two places for him last week. One agricultural, one Manchester. And he is here, staying with us for a week, in order that I may find out which will suit him best - and I feel so grand having a choice when so long I have been a beggar.

It is interesting to note that she refers without explanation to 'Thomas Glover', which implies that Mr Bosanquet would have known straight away whose story she was telling.

From this date on, I have found only two further incidental references to Thomas Glover and one of these confirms that Thomas did pursue the plan for a 'place' in Manchester. In March 1860, just over six months after Thomas had stayed with the Gaskells at Plymouth Grove, Mrs Gaskell wrote from Cambridge Square in London to Marianne at home in Manchester in response to news that just received concerning the sudden death of Mr Jackson (employed by the family to look after the garden and the animals).

> We are so shocked and sorry to hear about poor Jackson. [...] I am so sorry and cannot think what will be best to be done for poor Mrs. Jackson. Tommy Glover I suppose had better go and live with the Moore's. (Ruth Moore, the dressmaker to the Behren's mother. Hannah B. knows all about them.

It would seem that Tommy had been living with the Jacksons but in the upset of the bereavement would now change his lodgings. A further letter to Marianne, who was obviously still looking after the household in her mother's continuing absence, instructs 'See about Tommy's dinner' probably a reminder to feed the Gaskell pony (also called Tommy).

In reading through the Chapple and Pollard collection of the letters I finally came again upon Letter 376a - a letter from Mrs Gaskell in Seascale to Marianne. This letter contains a fascinating account of the failure of the travellers to find accommodation in Silverdale, after they had left Manchester without making prior arrangements. When I had read it before, I had been struck by the slightly unusual name of 'Glom'.

> Then we went to Mrs Glom who said Arnside town Farm was full & repeated what she had sent word through Tommy about every place being engaged.

It suddenly dawned on me that 'Mrs Glom' could be a misreading of 'Mrs Glover', and of course the 'Tommy' named would have been Tommy Glover! Several other points arise here. Firstly, I suggest that there is no such place as 'Arnside town Farm' and that this place-name should have read 'Arnside Tower Farm'. (Type this name into Google and some lovely photos are available). But this misnomer, added to the previous one, would seem to emphasise the difficulties in getting a correct reading of the original. A further and most interesting point arises, out of all this, with reference to the dating of the letter. The editors had obviously found this a problem, as the lengthy footnote shows. But the above sentence does open up a couple of scenarios. One point to be made is that if Chapple and Pollard's date, 1857, was correct this would seem to suggest that the Gaskells had known Tommy Glover and his mother quite well in the summer before the above-mentioned tea party in the kitchen, which took place in 1858. It may suggest that Mrs Glover worked as a washerwoman for the Gaskells during their stay at the Tower House, Silverdale, and that is how she and her children came to be known to the visitors. But could it be that Tommy had actually passed on the message from his mother, about the lack of accommodation in Silverdale, when he himself received it in answer to a query that Mrs Gaskell had earlier asked him to make when he wrote to her? This implies that Tommy had been with the Gaskells in Manchester, and put the date to 1859 or later.

There is no further mention of Thomas Glover in the Letters. We now know that Thomas was only twelve years old when he left home in 1859. Mrs Gaskell died suddenly in 1865, only six years after she had invited him to Plymouth Grove. Did the Gaskells maintain a relationship with Tommy Glover after the death of Mrs Gaskell? It is likely that they did. We do know that Marianne, the eldest daughter, had been charged by her mother with looking after the practicalities of his care. In consideration of the well-known philanthropy of the Gaskell daughters in Manchester, they may well have helped him over many years. Meta and Julia were the two sisters whose love of Silverdale prompted them to build a second home, The Shieling, there later. They may perhaps have kept in contact members of Tommy's family in Silverdale.

So - what did become of Tommy? On-line census and other records have made

it possible to find some facts. I have gone right back to details of his father, John Glover, and will now report them here, beginning at the year 1819.

John Glover, son of Thomas and Frances Glover, was baptised on 7th February 1819 beside the ancient font of St. Bridget's Church in the village of Bridekirk (north of Cockermouth in the county of Cumberland, now known as Cumbria).

The census of 1841 shows John Glover as the eldest of six. He was a bachelor still living with his parents, one brother (a mail cart driver) and four sisters in Main Street, Kirkby Lonsdale. John's father, Thomas, is recorded as an agricultural labourer and John as a carpenter.

John is next shown in the records to be living in Over Kellet, Lancashire, where on 28th May 1846 at St. Cuthbert's Church he married Eleanor Bolton. His occupation is described as joiner.

In 1847 their first child was born. At his baptism on 18th July at St Cuthbert's they named him Thomas James and this is the Thomas Glover later befriended by Mrs Gaskell.

By the time of census, in 1851, John Glover is dead, Eleanor is a widow and the family is fatherless.

John had been buried on 28th May 1850 (the fourth wedding anniversary of John and Eleanor Glover). There were now two children - Thomas, aged three, his younger sister and a third child was on the way.

John's death was registered in Ulverstone, (written then with a final 'e') across the sands on the other side of Morecambe Bay. An inquest had taken place over the sands too, at the Kent's Bank Hotel, close to the scene of the tragedy in the Bay: verdict 'Accidentally drowned'.

By the time of the 1851 census on 30th March John's widow is to be found with her three children (the baby was six months old, born four months after her father's death). They were living with Eleanor's older sister and the sister's daughter in North Road Preston. In the 'Occupation' column of the census Eleanor (or Ellen, as she here named herself) had written 'Parish relief. Servant', and her sister Jane named 'House Servant' as her occupation.

By 1861 Thomas Glover was living in Chorlton-upon-Medlock as the lodger of Samuel Oaks and his wife. There were five Oaks children. Mr Oaks was a groom. By this time Thomas is aged 13 and is recorded as being an office boy.

In the same census of 1861 Thomas's mother, Ellen, is recorded as living back

with her own mother and father (the Boltons) and one daughter, (Jane Eleanour) in Silverdale. Ellen's occupation is noted as 'Laundress'.

At the age of 23, in 1871, Thomas was still living in Chorlton-upon-Medlock as one of the two lodgers of widow, Mrs Worthington and her son, another Thomas. Thomas Glover's occupation is notes as 'Commercial Clerk'.

By the time of the 1881 census Thomas, aged 33, is living in Ardwick, Manchester, with his wife Harriet, son Frank of 6 and daughter Ethell of 3. Thomas still has his occupation recorded as 'Commercial Clerk' but now qualified by the words 'Leather' and a second word, probably 'Skins'.

Ten years later, in 1891, the family has moved to Rusholme and is living at 12, Slade Grove. Son Frank had already begun work as a commercial clerk, and Thomas now describes himself as 'Manager leather factor Agent'.

Before the 1901 census there had been another house move, to 17 Rushford Avenue, Levenshulme. Both children are still living at home with their parents, and Thomas, now 53, describes his occupation as 'Hide/Fur & Leather Factor'. He had it recorded that he is working on his 'Own Account'.

Thomas died in 1909.

I shall add a brief word about the leather industry. When Thomas Glover arrived in Manchester to begin work in 1859, there were many different manufacturing industries offering employment. He became involved in the leather trade and this may possibly have a link to the accident involving his father. The following information comes from a booklet called A Morecambe Bay Tragedy written by Simon Williams. The occurrence was widely reported in the press in the following week. The account in 'The Standard', London, dated May 29th 1850, read:

> Melancholy Accident and Loss of Life at Morecambe Bay
>
> Several families resident in Manchester have been thrown into great distress by the tidings of a most painful and fatal occurrence, at Morecambe Bay. [...]
>
> A large party of ladies and gentlemen had left Manchester to spend the Whitsuntide holidays at a watering place in the neighbourhood of Morecambe Bay, and on Friday morning a boating party was formed to cross the water from Silverdale to Grange, consisting of five gentlemen, five ladies, and two manservants. The names of the ladies I have not ascertained, but the gentlemen were Mr. John Morris, solicitor, Manchester; Mr. North, land and building agent, and Mr. North, jun., his son; Mr. Alfred Coats (son of Mr. Coats, late cotton merchant, and now resident in Plymouth-grove), and Mr. Porter, also of Manchester.

> In the afternoon, Mr. Morris and Mr. North, sen. returned with the ladies to Silverdale, crossing the sands at low tide in a car, but the gentlemen determined to wait till the tide served in the evening, and recross the Bay in the boat. It would be high water at 11 o'clock, and it is supposed that the gentlemen attempted to cross the water at that time. Their friends, however, at Silverdale, remained in painful suspense till the following morning, without tidings of them, and at daylight intelligence was brought them of the boat having been found capsized on the sands, with the dead bodies of Mr. Coates, Mr. North, jun., and Mr. Porter lying near it. It is said that there were two other bodies near it.

Unlike the above article, the article in the June 1st issue of the local newspaper, the 'Lancaster Gazette', does report the names of the boatmen, although there seems to have been some confusion about the number of children in each family. The article reports:

> Smith, Mr Morris's servant, was a man 28 years of age, and has left two children and a wife far advanced in pregnancy. Glover, a joiner, who resided at Silverdale, has left a wife and three children. We understand both parties were entirely dependent upon the deceased, and consequently by this sad bereavement are thrown unprovided for upon a merciless and cold unfeeling world.

This last comment was taken up subsequently by various agencies, including Mr Morris of Know Hill Lodge, Silverdale (and Plymouth Grove, Manchester), the gentleman from whose house the boat trip had originated. Morris wrote:

> Smith and Glover have left widows and five small children comparatively destitute. A few benevolent persons are assisting to raise a fund for them by subscription, may I beg the favour of your assistance through the medium of your widely circulated paper. The Rev. A. Hadfield, the incumbent of Silverdale, has kindly consented to act for them, and will along with myself, John Hewitson Esq., Thomas Rodick, sen., Esq., J.P., of Challen Hall, Thomas Rodick, jun., Esq., of Moor Cain Cottage, Arnside, Robert Rodick, Esq., of Woodclose, Arnside, gladly receive the smallest subscription on their behalf.

On June 29th 1850 the 'Lancaster Gazette' reported:

> We are happy to be able to announce that the sum now collected for the use of widows and orphans of the men who drowned at Kent's Bank, a few weeks ago, amounts to nearly £80. The Rev. A. Hadfield shortly proposes calling a meeting of the principal subscribers to decide upon the manner it ought to be laid out, to be of most advantage to those for whom it has been so liberally subscribed.

When in 1858 Mrs Gaskell was trying to 'find a place' for Thomas, she wrote,

referring to Thomas's earlier years, 'a gentleman whose name I forget offered to pay for Thomas's schooling'. Her comment is intriguing. Could it have been one of the gentleman named above who had stepped in to support his education? Perhaps she had not forgotten the name but was choosing not to reveal it. Perhaps money to assist with Thomas's schooling may have been part of that fund subscribed for the families. With regard to his subsequent employment, could any of the Manchester men whose own lives had been affected by the tragedy, have been instrumental in pointing Thomas towards the leather trade in Manchester? One of the other victims had been the young Alfred Jackson Coats, who, it was reported, was in the 'Manchester leather trade'. Had Mrs Gaskell known, or known of, these families who came from Plymouth Grove? (Morris himself died at Know Hill Lodge in 1854.)

In the final analysis, Mrs Gaskell's intervention on Thomas Glover's behalf seems to have been a bold move. It appears to have been successful in starting him out on a respectable career which would have been considerably more remunerative than anything he could have achieved if he had followed in his grandfather's or father's footsteps as an agricultural labourer or as a joiner. She appears to have thought carefully about it, (using her 'head' as well as her 'heart'!), and to have considered the young boy's abilities and aptitudes, and recognised the steadiness and application that he did go on to show in his future years. He appears to have worked regularly and he founded a family of his own.

Thomas's mother Eleanor (or Ellen as she was known) was from the Bolton family. There are members of that same Bolton family still living in Silverdale today, and Mr Michael Bolton, (b.1958), is currently researching his family tree. Michael's great-great-great grandfather was James Bolton (1779-1863) who was married to Jane Burrow (1786-1864). James and Jane had eleven children, of whom Eleanor was the 9th.

Michael's great-great-grandfather was Richard, (third child), so an older brother of Eleanor, who died in 1872.

I would like to thank Michael Bolton, Simon Williams, and Jenny Ager for helping with my research.

A Distant Connection

Pam Griffiths

Last year at this time I was in New Zealand (NZ) on a visit to my three-month-old granddaughter and her parents in Auckland. However on hearing that my trip would include a brief visit to Wellington, my dear friend, Janet Kennerley, set me - what would prove to be a delightful challenge - to find: the location of the shop built

by Charlotte Brontë's dear friend, Mary Taylor; and the street named in honour of Mary's brother William Waring Taylor, who had been a successful businessman in Wellington.

The day before my departure from Manchester, Janet had delivered a large envelope containing reading matter for the journey to aid my quest. The homework had begun!

Since meeting at Roe Head School, Mary Taylor, Ellen Nussey and Charlotte Brontë had been close friends who regularly visited each others' homes after leaving school in 1832. Mary's family lived at Red House, Gomersal, West Yorkshire (visited on a Gaskell outing with Joan Leach several years ago) Charlotte used the Taylor family as a model for the Yorke family in *Shirley*. Mary seems largely to have approved of Brontë's portrayal. The family are said to be 'peculiar, racy, vigorous, of good blood and strong brain'.

After Mary's father died in debt in 1840, the Taylor family broke up. Mary considered moving to NZ where she believed she would fare better. (According to Charlotte Brontë, Mary 'cannot and will not be a governess, a teacher, a milliner, a bonnet-maker nor a housemaid!'). Mary's youngest brother William Waring Taylor arrived in Wellington in 1842. Mary reached Wellington in 1845. By then Mary had already spent several years studying music, French and German, as well as having done some teaching, in Belgium and Germany. Charlotte approved of her decision to emigrate but described her personal loss: 'To me it is something as if a great plant fell out of the sky.' They were never to see each other again.

Mary would have been attracted by the idea of more freedom of movement in a new colony. After initially living with her brother in a house in Herbert Street Te Aro, Mary bought a house in Cuba Street which she let for 12 shillings a week and she managed to earn some more money by teaching the piano. Fearing that Mary's circumstances were worse than they actually were, Charlotte sent £10 with which Mary bought a cow and started cattle trading! Mary was also writing articles for English magazines (none of which appears to have been published); and she referred to writing 150 pages of a novel, *Miss Miles*, and to another novel which she hoped would revolutionise society (this material may have appeared in later articles on the position of women).

In 1849 Mary's cousin Ellen Taylor joined her in Wellington. With financial help from Mary's two brothers in England, the two women built a small house of two storeys on the corner of Dixon Street and Cuba Street. They decided to open a drapery and clothing shop at the front of the house while they lived at the back and above. Mary enjoyed all the manual work involved. The necessity of work for women as a guarantee of independence was one of the central beliefs of Mary's life. The shop expanded from a drapery, listed in 1853 as a 'principal store', to a major Wellington department store in the 1990s.

After only two years in NZ, Ellen Taylor died of tuberculosis. Having nursed her cousin through this fatal illness, Mary was deeply grieved by the loss of her dear friend and companion, but she continued alone with the shop which was proving to be very successful. Mary extended the premises and engaged an assistant. Relatives and friends supplied goods from England and Mary appears to have been the first person to import a sewing machine to Wellington.

Some years later the shop was becoming less profitable and Mary began to consider leaving NZ. The shop had served its purpose as a means of providing Mary with financial independence which a middle-class woman could not have done in England. After 15 years, in 1860, Mary sold the shop to her assistant and returned to Yorkshire where she spent the rest of her life. She published feminist articles and her feminist novel *Miss Miles* appeared in 1890. Mary died at the age of 76 in 1893.

And where does Mrs Gaskell fit in this tale? After Charlotte's early death in 1855, Mary Taylor heard from Ellen Nussey that a biography of Charlotte was planned. Mary was then able to supply Mrs Gaskell with a lively account (in letters) of her friendship with Charlotte. Mary wrote to Ellen 'Mrs Gaskell seems far too able a woman to put her head in such a wasp nest as she would raise about her speaking the truth of living people. How she will get through it, I can't imagine.' When the biography was finished, Mrs Gaskell wrote to her publisher George Smith: 'I ought to send a copy to Miss Mary Taylor, Wellington, New Zealand'.

After the publication Mary was supportive of Mrs Gaskell's narrative. She wrote to Ellen Nussey, 'Mrs Gaskell seemed a hasty, impulsive sort of person and the needful drawing back after her warmth gives her an inconsistent look...As to the mutilated edition that is to come, I am sorry for it. Libellous or not, the first edition is all true.'

I was able to find the site of the shop and, with help from a knowledgeable taxi driver, I also found Taylor Street (near the Wellington cable car). Mission accomplished, I pondered and reflected on the time and patience required for sending and receiving communications in the mid-nineteenth century (about six months). How fortunate we are today to have air travel, email and Skype. Thank you, Janet, this has been the best ever homework!

Mary Taylor

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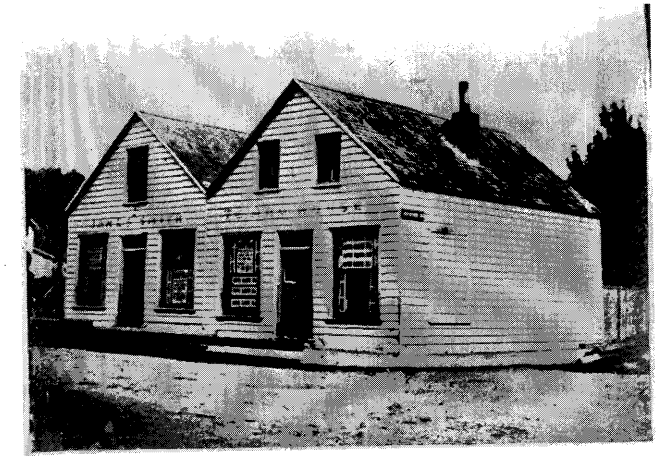

The Shop

Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand

Ref: 1/2-003732-F

Book Notes

Christine Lingard

Francesco Marroni. Come Leggere: Jane Eyre. Edizioni Solfanelli (Chieti).

Professor Marroni, Vice-President of the Gaskell Society, has written an important study of Jane Eyre. The book is in two sections – the first a biographical study of Charlotte Brontë, with extensive textual notes making much use of *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*. There is also particular reference to Charlotte's juvenile writings. The second section is a detailed analysis of Jane Eyre.

Sylvia's lovers. Oxford University Press, 2014. First published in the World Classics edition in 1982 the novel has now been reissued in the same series with notes and introduction by Francis O'Gorman, Professor of Victorian Literature and head of the School of English at the University of Leeds.

Editor adds: When on holiday in France last October, I acquired *Les Amoureux de Sylvia* in a new translation by Françoise du Sorbier,(Fayard 2012) This version was made from Oxford World's Classics, OUP 1982

At the front of this volume I observed:

Du même auteur:

Cranford. L'Herne, 2004
La Sorcière de Salem. Corti,1999
Lady Ludlow. Ombres, 1999

Charlotte Brontë: biographie. Editions du Rocher, 2004
Femmes et Filles. L'Herne, 2005
Nord et Sud. Fayard, 2005
Confessions de M. Harrison. L'Herne, 2010
Ma cousine Phillis. L'Herne, 2012

This twenty-first century revival in translations of Madame Gaskell is a very different picture from that presented by Caroline Arnaud (The Gaskell Society Journal Vol 13 1999) when 'no translations of her works whatsoever [are] ... currently available for the time being'.

Alliance of Literary Societies

The 2014 AGM of the ALS will be hosted by the Christopher Marlowe (1564-93) Society in Canterbury, May 31-June 1.

Further details may be viewed on the ALS website.

All Gaskell Society members are automatically members of the Alliance of Literary Societies (which was founded in 1973 and now has 125 member societies).

Gaskellians may recall that the Gaskell Society hosted the ALS AGM week-end in Mrs Gaskell's bicentenary year 2010.

Forthcoming Events

Annual General Meeting

Saturday, 12 April 2014 at Cross Street Unitarian Church, Manchester, M2 1NL

All members are welcome

10.00 am Tea and coffee (NB early start time)

10.45 am AGM

12.00 noon David Sekers will deliver the Daphne Carrick Memorial Lecture on Hannah Greg, a woman of compassion, courage and conviction, and her circle from Mrs Gaskell's perspective.

David was Museum Director at Quarry Bank Mill, Styal and has recently published A Lady of Cotton: Hannah Greg, Mistress of Quarry Bank Mill.

1.00 pm Buffet Lunch

2.30 pm Geoff Scargill on Sir Edward Watkin, a contemporary of Mrs Gaskell, known as 'the nearly man of Manchester!'

Geoff, a former teacher at Chetham's School of Music, is a well-known public speaker in and around the Manchester area.

Autumn Meeting

Saturday, September 27, 2014
Knutsford Methodist Church
Further details TBA

North-West Group

Manchester Meetings
These meetings are held at Cross Street Unitarian Church. The lecture begins at 1.00pm and we usually have a (bring your own) picnic lunch there beforehand.

Tuesday, February 4, 2014
Christine Musgrove: *Mrs Gaskell, Art and Manchester*
Mrs Gaskell's novel *North and South* contrasts life in southern rural Hampshire with working life in industrial Manchester. Her concerns, as described in the novel, were mirrored in the rise of a new social realism in art.

This lecture will compare the issues raised in *North and South* with those expressed by Mrs Gaskell's her artistic contemporaries.

Christine Musgrove has a MA in art history from the University of Edinburgh. She is an experienced lecturer in higher and adult education.

Christine has curated exhibitions and organised study tours at home and abroad, and is currently a MANCENT lecturer.

Tuesday, March 4, 2014
Elizabeth Williams: *Fanny Trollope*
Fanny (Frances) Trollope, mother of Anthony Trollope was a novelist in her own right.

Elizabeth is a former FE lecturer, who regularly gives entertaining talks on Mrs Gaskell to the Society and throughout the UK. She also leads the discussions at the monthly meetings in Knutsford.

Knutsford Meetings
Meetings are held on the last Wednesday of the month (October to April, excluding December) in St John's Church Centre, Knutsford. An excellent buffet lunch is served at 12.15 (£8, pay on the day). At about 1.30pm Elizabeth Williams addresses us and then leads the ensuing discussion. Meetings end about 3pm.

These meetings resume on 29 January when we shall continue to study *Sylvia's Lovers.*

A summer outing is planned for May. Further details TBA

The Gaskell Society South-West

Saturday, 8 March 2014, 2.15 pm
We will hold our discussion group on Elizabeth Gaskell's biography of Charlotte Brontë. This year there will be only one session, and it will be held at Elizabeth Schlenther's house, 14 Vellore Lane, Bath. Please note there will be a charge of £4 for the session, and numbers will be limited to 12 participants. Please phone Elizabeth (01225 331763) if you would like to come.

Saturday, 12 April, 2014, 2.30 pm
Dr Patsy Stoneman will come to talk to us on 'Such a life...Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë.' Dr Stoneman is a well-known expert on Gaskell, and we very much look forward to her lecture.

It will also tie in very well with our discussion the month before – a further reason for pleasure at her coming.

Details about the summer lunch party, held either in August or September, will be forthcoming when definite plans are made.

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

London and South-East Group

Saturday, February 8, 2014
Dr Ann Brooks: the Gaskell Marriage
Ann together with Bryan Haworth who came with her this year to speak about the Portico Library have researched a paper and have some ideas about this marriage. Knowing how much we all enjoy biography I thought this subject would make an interesting afternoon.

Saturday, May 10, 2014
Dr Fran Twinn: 'Writer', 'tiger parent', 'shopaholic', 'socialite' and 'control freak': the many 'Me's' of Elizabeth Gaskell
Fran will speak and then lead a discussion. She is aware there are many other aspects to Gaskell's personality but she will focus on these and hope that in discussion members will be able to contribute others!

Sandwich lunch will be available from 12.45pm.

Meetings begin at 2pm and tea and cake will be served after the meeting. Usually the formal part of the meeting finishes about 3.30pm for those needing to catch trains.

Venue: Francis Holland School, Graham Terrace, London.

The entrance is via doors on Graham Terrace, please ring the bell marked 'RECEPTION' loudly to gain entry. For security reasons the door must be locked until opened from inside.

The school is a three minute walk from Sloane Square tube station which is on the District and Circle lines and about a 15-20 minute walk from Victoria. There are also buses from Victoria. (Please check running of the tubes as they often carry out engineering work at weekends).

Book stall: We have a 'bring and buy' book stall the proceeds of which go to the renovation of the Gaskell House in Plymouth Grove Manchester. Please bring unwanted books and buy replacements!!

Meetings are £5.00 payable on the day.

Notes

The Gaskell Society

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2014 - Number 58

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

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs. Helen Smith, 11 Lowland Way, Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 9AG.
Telephone - 01565 632615 E-mail: helenisabel@ntlworld.com

Treasurer: Clive Heath, 39 Bexton Lane, Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 9BL

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

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Editor's Letter

Helen Smith

'And summer's lease hath all too short a date'

As it was in the sixteenth century, so is it now. Welcome to the Autumn Newsletter! Important reminders and dates for diaries:

There are still places available on the Italian study tour: 'In the Footsteps of Mrs Gaskell', 20-25 September 2014. Details from Anthony Coles: email him on arctc@btinternet.com or write to 18 Maresfield Gardens, London NW3 5SX.

The Autumn Meeting will be held as usual in Knutsford Methodist Church on Saturday 27 September. On the following day, Society members are welcome at the Brook Street Unitarian Chapel morning service at 11 o'clock. Flowers will be placed on Mrs Gaskell's grave before the service. (Booking form for the Autumn Meeting is enclosed with this Newsletter.)

2015 AGM will take place on Saturday 18 April.

The 2015 Conference will be held at Cober Hill (post code YO13 0AR) 17-20 July. Some excellent speakers have already been engaged. Final details and booking forms will be sent out with the next Newsletter.

Exciting news on the home front! Manchester Historic Buildings Trust, the owner of 84 Plymouth Grove, plans to re-open the former home of the Gaskell family in an official event on Thursday 2 October. The House will also be open on Saturday 13 September as part of the Heritage Open Days week-end. Some of us have already visited the renovated house. After the twenty-first century eye adjusts to designed (fitted) carpets, wallpaper in a different design, chintzy soft furnishings, we can easily slip back into the mid-nineteenth century. Once the boudoir grand (a Broadwood, on loan, I believe) and more furnishings are installed, the house will be ready for visitors to call upon Mr and Mrs Gaskell. (How very different from the current fashion for minimalism and informality). Ladies, please remember your bonnets.

Cri de coeur from Geoffrey Scargill who gave the afternoon lecture on Sir Edward Watkin (1819-1901) 'the nearly man of Manchester' at the AGM on 12 April. In the memorabilia he brought for us to look at, was a small booklet which had belonged to Edward Watkin in childhood, entitled *The Cries of London* or *London Cries*. It was in a small brown envelope. This has not been seen since that day. If any member who attended the AGM knows anything about this missing booklet please get in touch with Geoff on either 0161 432 6992 or 07970 877636.

Correction to page 42 in the last Newsletter: the street in Wellington named after William, the brother of Charlotte Brontë's dear friend Mary Taylor is Waring Taylor Street. The Editor apologises for misinforming the readership.

To all who have contributed in any way to this Newsletter, may I express my sincere thanks. We shall include an article about Marianne, a report on the Italian Study Tour, in the next Newsletter, and much more if YOU will but write. I shall happily suggest subjects if you are in doubt as to what to write about (better grammar than this please!); no one has yet taken up my offer to ghost-write.

To Rebecca Stuart at iPrint, as ever, our most grateful thanks for the finished product and for her patience in the, at times, painful process.

Next deadline: 22 January 2015

Primitive, Cheap and Bracing: the Gaskells in the Alps

Christine Lingard

In 1851 Albert Richard Smith climbed Mont Blanc. Champagne was drunk, a quadrille danced and the 'Marseillaise' sung on the summit. Back in London he staged a lavish magic-lantern show. Audiences were enthralled by his accounts of following in the footholds carved by his young guide, Michel Devouassaud, while enjoying chocolate brought to them by St. Bernard dogs! It was tremendously popular. The young Edward Whymper, most celebrated of Victorian climbers, was one influenced by it. It was the beginning of the Victorian fascination with mountaineering. Between 1854 and 1869 – 'the golden age' - 39 alpine peaks were climbed for the first time, all but eight of them by British parties. The Alpine Club, the world's oldest, was founded in 1857.

It is not known whether any of the Gaskells saw the production, but they had long had an interest in Switzerland. Manuscript music books compiled by Elizabeth Stevenson at school included Swiss and Tyrolean songs, which were fashionable in the 1820s. She annotated one: 'a song or rather National Air of the Swiss – it is forbidden to be played by the French as it caused the desertion of the Swiss Guard.' Her choice of costume for a fancy dress ball was a Bernese shepherdess. Despite his dislike of foreign diet her husband went on a walking holiday in Switzerland in August 1855. No details are known except a mention of the French resort of Chamounix [sic].

In April 1860 a tonsillectomy forced daughter Meta to decline an offer from 'a middle-aged lady friend' to go on a two-month sketching tour to the Pyrénées and

Pampluna [sic]. New arrangements were made – so instead of accompanying the rest of the family to Heidelberg:

> On the 6th of May Meta set out for Paris, Lyons, Avignon, Nice, Mentone, over the Col di Tenda, Turin, Val d'Aosta, [Arona] Maggiore, Orta & Varallo, Lugano, Val Anzasca, over the Simplon, La Vallée, Lake of Geneva, Champèry, [sic] & Diaberets, Thun, Grindelwald & home by Berne, Strasburg, Nancy[,] Paris. There! You can imagine her route, taken with an oldish Miss Darwin (sister of Mr Chas Darwin) in quiet respectable luxury, stopping where they liked, - and sketching. *<Letters p630>*

> It made a great impression – on her return Meta is found engrossed in Tyndall's *Glaciers of Switzerland*. Her mother first visited in 1863, on the return from Italy 'via Verona...Milan, Bellinzona... Inn at top of St. Gothard, [Schweizer-Hof], Lucerne, and then the 18½ hour train journey via Bâle to Paris'. *<Letters p702>*

1864 was a year of great stress for the family. Gaskell was under pressure from George Smith, publisher of *The Cornhill Magazine*, for the next instalment of *Wives and Daughters*. The engagement of her eldest daughter Marianne to her cousin, Thurstan Holland, was the cause of friction in the family. His father was threatening to stop his allowance if the marriage went ahead. Meta was still suffering from the strain of her tireless efforts during the cotton famine. She yearned for 'glacier-air' – it had done her so much good in 1860 – so a visit to Switzerland, where they could live 'au pension', was decided on. Even so her mother had to ask Smith for a £100 advance to finance the trip. William borrowed *A Summer Tour in The Grisons and Italian Valleys of The Bernina* by Mrs Henry Freshfield, from the Portico Library, and their plans were made:

> Last autumn I dare say you know, she [Florence] and Charlie and Thurstan too for that matter, went with us to Pontresina in Switzerland. We had but very little money to spend so our object was to go to cheap healthy places and live there without moving about, and for me to settle to my writing whilst there. We found our two places, Pontresina and Glion (up above the Lake of Geneva) where we lived for 3-4 a day and I think never did such a party go to Switzerland and travel about less. We never saw Mt Blanc nor the Jung frau nor Monte Rosa nor the Matterhorn nor Vevay (4 miles from us at Glion), nor Lausanne, Geneva, Interlacken [sic], Lauterbrunnen, etc., etc. *<Letters p559>*

Glion is described by *The Rough Guide to Switzerland* as 'an eyrie of a village perched among fields of narcissi directly above Montreux, with jaw-dropping views over the lake and the Rhône'. The area had been popular with British tourists since Byron's visit to the Castle of Chillon in 1816. It was still undeveloped in Gaskell's time – no large hotel till 1869. Pontresina is in the Upper Engadine valley, near St. Moritz. Gaskell described it as '6,000 feet above the level of the sea – primitive,

cheap and bracing'. It has long been popular with foreign tourists. Hans Christian Andersen was there in 1862. Other visitors have included Tennyson, Richard Wagner, Matthew Arnold and Arthur Sullivan. A regular visitor, Mary Taylor, friend of Charlotte Brontë, described the friendliness of the locals in her book *Swiss Notes*.

Most visitors stayed at the grand Krone (Crown) Hotel. The Gaskells preferred the more modest family run Hotel Steinbock. The holiday however did not have its desired effect. Meta's health did not improve.

> There she had a very bad attack of headache,- (bewildering, whirling headache is the kind–) and a Mr (later Sir John) Erichsen a great famous London surgeon (University College Hospital) was staying in the hotel, & prescribed for her with such good effect that she has continued under his care. <*Letters p744*>

Marianne North, in her book *Recollections of a Happy Life* (1894), wrote of travelling to Pontresina in 1864 with her father and sister, Catherine, where they stayed in 'that paradise for Alpine climbers The Old Crown Inn'. She continues:

> Mrs Gaskell was also at Pontresina at that time and had taken a quiet room outside the village to work peacefully. There she finished a great part of her last story *Wives and Daughters*... She was very beautiful and gentle with a sweet-toned voice and particularly well formed hand.

Marianne (1830-90) was a celebrated botanical artist who travelled extensively. There is a gallery devoted to her work in Kew Gardens. She was half-sister to Lady Kay-Shuttleworth, whose husband had introduced Gaskell to Charlotte Brontë. Her sister Catherine (1837-1913) married John Addington Symonds (1840-93), whose many books include *Renaissance in Italy*. 'Mr Symonds took the Newdigate, & a double first, but he might be dull for all that; only he is not', said Gaskell. He wrote in his *Memoirs*:

> Well, I set off alone, early in August 1864, to overtake the Norths, I was going in search of Catherine... on the morning of 10 August, I found myself at the Hotel Krone (then only a modest inn...) Loitering in the entrance before lunch, I met Catherine... And every day we walked together... There is a bridge above the stream at Pontresina; and this became our meeting place; and here, one afternoon, when snow was falling in thin flakes, I asked her to be my wife... We were married in Hastings on 10 November 1864.

Hence Gaskell's delight on 6 December 1864:

> Do you know two very clever people have made one? i.e. John Addington Symonds who took no end of honours at Oxford, - is witty, clever, really brilliant, - and Catherine North, daughter of the M.P. for Hastings even more full of genius. <*Letters p739*>

She was innocently unaware that the wedding was a sham – designed to hide his homosexuality and was not happy.

The Alps became a favourite destination for Meta and her sister Julia – including the 1871 Oberammergau Passion Play. You have only to look at the list of paintings in Plymouth Grove to see their love of lakes and mountains. And when they built a holiday home in Silverdale, what style of architecture did they choose? – a Swiss Chalet. It is evident that many of these trips were energetic:

> *What* a trouble one's travelling trousseau is! Good gracious, how tired I am of planning skirts and bodies and panniers, each of which is to combine rightly with all the others – And then boots are such a plague! <*Meta - July 1871*>

It is notable how many of their friends were climbers. An early member of the Alpine Club was Stephen Winkworth, as regular a visitor to Plymouth Grove as was his sister, Catherine, who ended her days in Geneva. His wife, Emma Thomasson, was the first woman to climb the Jungfrau. Presidents of the Club included Virginia Woolf's father, Sir Leslie Stephen (1832-1904) and Mrs Freshfield's son, Douglas (1845-1934), who had accompanied her on her travels. He also climbed in the Caucasus, with another member of that celebrated family of French guides, François Devouassoud. In the 20th century came John Norman Collie (1859-1942) son of Selena Winkworth. Leslie and Douglas had something else in common – they were both brothers-in-law of Thackeray's daughter, Anne Ritchie (1837-1919), a good friend of the Gaskells, – Leslie married her sister, Minny – Douglas, her husband's sister, Augusta. Leslie apparently knew Thurstan Holland. Lady Ritchie writes of a visit from Gaskell just after her father's death: 'Our conversation was interrupted by Leslie Stephen and Thurstan Holland coming arm and arm into the garden'.

Meta's obituary states that they were the first ladies to cross the Moming Pass, a difficult but not dangerous pass linking Zermatt to Zinkel, which is rarely attempted. This cannot be verified. They certainly weren't the first. Lucy Walker had that honour, in 1865, only a year after Stephen Winkworth had been prevented by illness from joining Whymper's successful attempt. Leslie Stephen did refer to Meta as a 'brilliant performer', after he had taken her on a 12-hour walk over a glacier pass, and was impressed by her endurance. Whymper's *Scrambles in the Alps*, graphically describing avalanches en route, was one of Meta's most treasured possessions, and finally, Michel Devouassoud, guide du Lirets, Chamonix, received £25 in her will.

Acknowledgment

I am grateful to Mrs Diane Conrad, whose husband's grandfather, Claud Saratz, was a member of the family which owned the Hotel Steinbock in the 19th century, for supplying much of the information and the picture of the Hotel. She will be

organising an exhibition in 2016-17, on Pontresina's distinguished 19th century British visitors and the church they built. Full details will be given when available. For further pictures see www.hotelsteinbock.ch.

Further Reading

Bicknell, John W. (ed.) Selected letters of Leslie Stephen, vol. 1, 1864-1882, 1987.
Chapple, J.A.V. Elizabeth Gaskell: the early years, 1997.
Chapple, J.A.V. & Pollard, Arthur. (eds.) The letters of Mrs Gaskell, 1997.
Grosskurth, Phyllis. (ed.) The Memoirs of John Addington Symonds: the secret homosexual life of a leading nineteenth-century man of letters, 1984.
Ritchie, Anne Thackeray. Blackstick Papers, 1908.
Wiltshire, Irene. (ed.) Letters of Mrs Gaskell's daughters, 1856-1914, 2012.

Corrections

Edwin Stockdale

Charlotte Brontë's existence becomes divided into two parallel currents – her life as Currer Bell, the author; her life as Charlotte Brontë, the woman. There were separate duties belonging to each character – not opposing each other, not impossible, but difficult to be reconciled.

Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (1857)

Elizabeth writes in her dining-room,
doors closing and opening around her.
She carries on, undisturbed.

Catch the Midland Railway to Keighley,
take a trap over the moors to Haworth –
church, graves and parsonage dominate the skyline.

Some pages flow untouched;
others are heavily scored,
insertions scribbled on the back.

Charlotte paces the parlour
as frost curls its iron fist at the casement.
She's indelible under moonlight.

Elizabeth closes her manuscript
in a firm fast hand,
hardly a word erased.

On a day of hawthorn blossom
Charlotte marries, watched by tree sparrows
beneath the rim of those hills.

Railways

This article is written to celebrate the naming of a railway engine after Elizabeth Gaskell, by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rt Hon George Osborne, MP at Manchester Piccadilly station, 28 March 2014.

The Naming of the Train

Alan Shelston

Elizabeth Gaskell's adult life virtually coincided with the early years of the British railway system. In October 1830, when the first passenger railway train went on its celebratory journey from Liverpool to Manchester, Elizabeth, then a young woman of 20, was familiar with both cities. She liked 'Liverpool and the Mersey and the accent and the people very much' as her letters to her friend Harriet Carr make clear. Manchester was less attractive but it was, as she said, where her work with her husband called her to be.

As the railway system expanded so the Gaskells made increasing use of it. Following the success of the line between the two cities lines were established along the Lancashire coast and through central Lancashire to the north, and the family took advantage of them. Thus Elizabeth writes to Mary Howitt in 1838 after a stay at Rivington 'This morning we were off at half past 8 for Bolton, home per railroad (Gaskell Letters, p.19); in the same letter she makes her famous reference to Mrs J J Tayler's 'impromptu baby at Blackpool... Bathing places do so much good.' The new railway lines allowed bathing places on the Lancashire coast and then North Wales to develop rapidly in the 1830s. In 1846 she takes the children to Poulton-le-Fylde to get them away from the threat of an outbreak of scarlet fever. In 1858 we find her giving instruction to a friend about how to reach Silverdale: 'Meta has looked out your Liverpool trains... leaves L'pool 4-10 p.m./Reaches Preston 5-15/leaves Preston 5-18/ Lancaster 6-14.. I think you take your ticket to Lancaster; then to Carnforth (two stations beyond –) then change trains for our dear little Silverdale – where you arrive 5m. to 7.'

Regular visits to London and to the south of England through the 1840s and '50s were facilitated by the gradual expansion of the system nationwide: as the railway network expanded so too did Elizabeth's social connections, although for some time travel to London from Manchester involved switching between the services

of two companies and a journey of more than five hours. The merging of the London and Birmingham railway with the Grand Junction and the Manchester and Birmingham railways in 1846 made the journey easier, but not as straightforward as Charlotte Brontë's direct journey from Leeds to the capital in 1849 would be. Events like the 1851 Great Exhibition drew Elizabeth to London, as did her daughter Marianne's schooling there from 1850. Fortunately by then the quality of the carriages had improved from the original use of converted horse-drawn road vehicles, but it was not until 1888, long after Elizabeth's death, that a direct line of the GWR would significantly reduce the journey time from Manchester to London.

The rapid expansion of the railway system quickly facilitated the movements of individuals throughout the country in the mid-nineteenth century. It was also of great benefit to the novelists. Dickens travelled from London to Birmingham by stagecoach in 1839, but returned to London by train a few weeks later. Gaskell, Dickens, Braddon, later Hardy, all have novels in which railway travel figures as an instrument of plot; Margaret Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* reads at times like *Bradshaw's Railway Guide*. For the novelists, reference to the railway is always an expression of mood. Such reference is invariably intensely dramatic; railway journeys in Victorian novels are rarely relaxed. In *North and South* the Mr Hale and his daughter make their way 'on the little branch railway', towards the gloom of Milton-Northern (the fictional city standing for Manchester) as if to a prison sentence. In what is perhaps a glancing reference to the massive viaduct at Stockport Elizabeth writes that 'they were whirled over long, straight hopeless streets of regularly built houses'; the viaduct, built of 11 million bricks and completed in 1840, was not far from the Gaskell home in Plymouth Grove. (Ch 7) Later in the same novel the heroine's brother, unjustly pursued by the law, escapes from pursuit late at night from an isolated railway platform of which he is the single occupant: the scene is predictive of the similar use of such circumstance by the film directors of the next century.

Cranford, somewhat surprisingly given its reputation, begins with the violent death of Captain Brown as he tries to snatch a child from the path of an oncoming train. Despite Cranford's reputation as Knutsford fictionalised, this idea must have been an invention by Elizabeth Gaskell: there was no station at Knutsford at the time when she wrote her novel. For that Knutsford had to wait until 1862. In *Cousin Phillis*, written a decade later than *Cranford* and another Cheshire story with a strong autobiographical dimension, the engineering work under the supervision of Mr Holdsworth is more efficiently conducted. Holdsworth has been involved in railway building in Italy, a detail which is also factually accurate, since British engineers did work on the developing continental systems at this point in time. But Elizabeth's most successful fictional account of railway travel is surely to be found in that first novel, *Mary Barton*, written when the novelty of her early Manchester-Liverpool journeys, could still have been in her mind. Here she takes her heroine on a visit to Liverpool to save her lover from certain death as he stands in the dock

accused of murder. For Mary it is a desperately anxious mission, and she regards it with very mixed feelings: 'Common as railroads are now in all places and especially in Manchester, Mary had never been on one before; and she felt bewildered by the hurry, the noise of the people, and bells, and horns; the whiz and the scream of the arriving train.' Nevertheless, and despite her anxieties, 'The very journey itself seemed a matter of wonder.' Mindful perhaps of the various illustrated accounts of the journey that had appeared, like I. Shaw's Views of the most interesting scenery on the line of the Liverpool and Manchester railway, first published in 1831, Elizabeth goes on to describe the beauties of 'Chat Moss and the picturesque old houses' that can be seen from the train: The whole chapter is an example of how rail travel opened the landscapes of the mind. (Ch 26)

I end on a personal note. Attending Gaskell meetings in Knutsford I always enjoy my short ride on what is known in our family as 'The Chester Flyer.' And as we trundle along I take in the view over the green Cheshire plain - Hale, Ashley, Mobberley, Knutsford. Edward Thomas remembered Adlestrop: 'Yes. I remember Adlestrop. The name.' Well I remember Mobberley - the name. For Gaskell followers to have the named train on that line has something very appropriate about it. May the flyer long continue its stately progress – until it is beyond Knutsford at least.

John Geoffrey Sharps B Litt, M Ed, MA, B Th

Heather Sharps

Many Gaskell Society members have shown an interest in my late husband's life and achievements, so I shall outline his academic career which was varied and stimulating. He was born in Cheshire in 1936 and died in Scarborough in 2006 aged 69. During the last years of his life, he suffered from lung trouble; one lung had virtually collapsed and he had to use an inhaler constantly. However his mental faculties were always clear and alert.

I met Geoffrey at the Queen's University of Belfast at the end of my four years of study there (mainly English Language and Literature, with French and German subsidiary). A fellow student introduced me to Geoffrey, who in turn, invited me to accompany him to the graduation ball. I accepted his invitation, and, as a result, we met on several occasions before the 'big' event. We found that we had a lot in common (we were both 'only' children, we also enjoyed good literature, the theatre, the cinema and sight-seeing). Geoffrey had a number of university degrees; an MA in literature from the University of Edinburgh; a B Litt from Oxford - this degree included Elizabeth Gaskell's works; and when I first met him, he was about to be awarded an M Ed. Furthermore, when he 'retired' from academic life, he studied and qualified with a Bachelor of Theology from the University of Hull. The main drawback was the distance between us when Geoffrey returned to his home in

Cheshire. We corresponded frequently by letter and made many 'phone calls, but despite the distance we met on about four occasions per year from 1963 and 1966.

Shortly after graduating, I was fortunate enough to be appointed to teach English, French and German in a grammar school in Belfast (1963 until 1967). Geoffrey and I married in Belfast in 1966, and a year later, I joined him in Scarborough where I held a teaching post for two years. Geoffrey lectured in a College of Education in Cheshire until he went to Scarborough where he lectured and taught at a Teacher Training College (Psychology and Education) under the auspices of the University of Leeds. I joined him in Scarborough in 1967 and was fortunate to find a 'good post' in the Scarborough High School for Boys. After two years I was encouraged by Geoffrey to apply for a teaching post as Head of English in Hunmanby Hall, a Methodist Girls' Boarding School. I taught there for two years, but I found driving strenuous, as shortly after joining the staff of the school I had an unfortunate road accident, which caused constant stress on my part. For this reason, I taught for only two years at the school.

Geoffrey stayed diligently at the North Riding College in Scarborough, until he took early retirement and so he could be fully immersed in the Gaskell Society. We were fortunate to be able to attend many meetings of the Society, and we often travelled over the Pennines to the John Rylands Library and Plymouth Grove. Geoffrey introduced me to every facet of Elizabeth Gaskell's life and work - most of her novels, her family situation and the Unitarian connection. Geoffrey's proximity to Knutsford and other towns and villages (as well as Manchester) obviously influenced his choice of author.

One of his most memorable 'colleagues' or 'mentors' was A Stanton Whitfield, who wrote the foreword for Geoffrey's book. He encouraged Geoffrey in every way he could. He had a 'quirky' sense of humour: for instance, his house in Wales was known as 'Wuthering Heights'.

In addition to revealing her Cheshire background, Elizabeth Gaskell displays a great knowledge of human nature - humour, tragedy, atmosphere good and bad. Geoffrey was a dedicated scholar; he was knowledgeable about his subject and generous in his praise of others who held Mrs Gaskell in high regard. It is through Geoffrey that I came to value Elizabeth Gaskell's insight and gift for story-telling.

Editor adds: Geoffrey and Heather Sharps always made a forceful presence at meetings during the first twenty years of the Gaskell Society's existence. I vividly remember Geoffrey with his puns (variable in quality but always abundant in quantity) and his tape recorder (what an aural archive!). We are delighted that Heather comes over from Scarborough to join us when she can.

Fortunately Geoffrey's masterpiece, *Mrs Gaskell's Observation and Invention: a study of her non-biographic works* is still available. This is an invaluable reference tool for all Gaskell scholars. If any of our members have not yet acquired a copy, this work is available from Mrs Heather Sharps, Sarda Lapis, 25 Cornelian Drive, Scarborough, North Yorkshire, YO11 3AL at a bargain price of £5 for Gaskell Society members.

The Murillo Trail of 'Woman Drinking'!

Pat Barnard

In the year 2007 Manchester Art Gallery hosted a splendid exhibition Art Treasures in Manchester: 150 years on. 1857 saw a unique Mancunian achievement with the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition (MATE) being the largest temporary display of art ever mounted in the world.

We know from her letters that Elizabeth Gaskell was busy hosting friends attending the exhibition. The following letters posed an interest in one of the paintings: 'Woman Drinking' and what was it?

1. From The Further Letters, Tuesday September 22nd 1857 to William Stirling

> My dear Sir,
>
> Lady Hatherton has asked one of my daughters to make a sketch for her in water colour of your Murillo 'Woman Drinking'. She went accordingly, yesterday, but was very properly refused (now one thinks of it) to make even a small imperfect sketch without your written permission. May she have it? Meta Gaskell by name, - fond of drawing but not likely to endanger the value of your painting by anything like too faithful a replica.
>
> Yours very truly
>
> E C Gaskell

William Stirling was the leading expert on Spanish art at the time. His interested started in 1840-41 when he toured Spain with George Holland. George Henry Holland, Gaskell's cousin was an exact contemporary of William Stirling at Trinity College Cambridge so it is highly likely that this is the George Holland who accompanied William Stirling.

Letter 373, September 26th 1857 to Mr Deane (one of the organisers of MATE)

> Mrs Gaskell presents her compliments to Mr Deane and begs to inform him that Miss Meta Gaskell has received permission to copy any of Mr Stirling's

pictures that she wishes. She therefore begs to remind him of his kind promise to admit her and the friends staying at her house, who come from a distance tomorrow(Sunday), and as it would be pleasanter for Miss Gaskell to copy before the Exhibition is open to the Public, Mrs Gaskell would be extremely obliged to Mr Deane if he would allow her daughter to have permission to enter at 8 o'clock.

Letter 374 September 28th 1857 to Charles Eliot Norton

-----Meta really did get up this morning to a seven o'clock breakfast, and went, before I was down, to the Exhibition to try and make a water-colour sketch of that Murillo Study-- a woman drinking,---for Lady Hatherton, who asked Meta to do it for her.------

From The Further Letters October 10th (1857)

My dear Sir,

I seem to myself to have been very ungrateful in not having sooner thanked you for your very kind permission to allow Meta to copy your ' Woman Drinking'. I suppose I have a fresh afflux of obligations to you, now I see how successful she has been. She finished her copy yesterday. Thank you very much.

2. Manchester Art Gallery was approached to throw some light on this painting. We were investigating with the title 'Woman Drinking' by Murillo and nothing came up in the research.

3. Dr Waagen (director of the Royal Gallery of Pictures, Berlin) wrote a book *Art and Artists in England* which was a source for The Art Treasures Exhibition. I searched through the volumes at The Portico Library but the mystery remained intact. Emma Marigliano suggested an on-line search but all to no avail. We were searching under 'Woman Drinking'!

   It was suggested that Cheetham's Library may assist.

4. An appointment with Cheethams Library was made indicating our request in advance so that when Ann Waddington and myself arrived, volumes associated with MATE were ready for our perusal. Sitting in the seats once occupied by Engels and Karl Marx we had something of a eureka moment! There was reference to Woman Drinking - detail of Moses Striking the Rock. (The reference did not include a copy of the painting.) However was this the 'Woman Drinking' that Meta had been asked to make a copy of?

5. A hand-out provided by Professor Matsaie Matsumara of the Art Treasures Exhibition 150 years on, did not provide titles but noticed one was of a woman drinking. I emailed the Professor in Japan and he confirmed that this was the

detail that Meta had been asked to copy and that *any library would have a copy of it!!!!*

6. Few weeks later Bramhall library managed to loan a book on Murillo, with relevant painting, from Southend-on-Sea. I later, via Amazon, was able to purchase the Royal Academy of Art Exhibition Catalogue 1983 on Murillo which also included Moses Striking the Rock.

   Photos were taken of the painting ready for poster presentation on The Art Treasures Exhibition 150 Years On, For Plymouth Grove Display.

   Of course although the detail was now established further interest in Murillo and why the detail was important to Lady Hatherton intrigued, so read on!!

7. Murillo was commissioned to execute paintings on the theme of Mercy in 1670 as found in the Gospel according to Matthew (chapter 26 verse 35,36) for The Hospital of la Caradid, Seville.
   (a) Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes. I Was Hungry And Ye Gave Me Meat.
   (b) Moses Striking the Rock. I Was Thirsty and Ye Gave Me Drink.
   (c) Abraham and the three angels. I was a Stranger and You Took Me In.
   (d) Return of the Prodigal Son. I Was Naked and You Clothed Me.
   (e) Christ healing the paralytic. I Was Sick and Ye Visited Me. (Now in the National Gallery London)
   (f) The Liberation of St Peter. I was in Prison and Ye Visited Me.

8. Why was Lady Hatherton interested in the detail Woman Drinking? Lady Davenport was a friend and admirer of Cobden, before and after her marriage to Lord Hatherton. In 1853 ECG wrote to Cobden:

   I saw Mrs Davenport just before her marriage. She showed a packet of congratulations, and then said 'I think I would have given half of these up for a line or two from Mr Cobden.' Your picture hangs up among her 'heroes' in her bedroom.

Christine Lingard provided the following information. Richard Cobden spent 14 months touring the continent with Salis Schwabe and came back a fervent admirer of Murillo. It has been suggested but not confirmed that the Schwabes brought back several copies of Murillos.

Could it be that Lady Hatherton commissioned the copy for Cobden to add to his collection, as an intermediary or as a gift?

Copies of The Works of Mercy are in the Palace of Aranjuez near Madrid. These were created for the 300th anniversary of the painter's death. Marshall Soult took

most of the original Works of Mercy during the Napoleonic era. Christ Healing the Paralytic is now in the National Gallery London.

Perhaps you already knew all this and know where the water-colour sketch is now housed. Is it with descendants of Lady Hatherton or Cobden or even the Gaskells??

I, too, have now become a fervent admirer of Murillo and hope to visit the Palace of Aranjuez but would hope at some stage to visit Seville *on an artistic tour!*

A Very Modern Marriage

Ann Brooks and Bryan Haworth

(This article is based on a talk given by the authors to the London Gaskell Society in February 2014.)

[Note: In text: L refers to Chapple and Pollard eds., *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell* (Manchester, 1966); F.L. refers to John Chapple & Alan Shelston eds., *Further Letters of Mrs Gaskell* (Manchester, 2003, paperback edition]

Though Elizabeth Gaskell is well known, she was half of a very unusual couple for the times in which they lived. It has been said that it is 'not easy to understand Gaskell's relationship to William'.[1] Part of the difficulty is that none of the letters between the two has been preserved, and very few of William's at all. Their family and friends would have expected a traditional marriage dedicated to family, the Unitarian church and its incumbent social responsibilities.

On their marriage Elizabeth must have seemed an unlikely prospect for a Minister's wife. It was said of her that 'she had scandalously proved to be a good waltzer' at a party given by the Sydney Potters.[2] She herself seemed sceptical as she wrote to Harriet Carr on 3 May 1832 '... and the day before yesterday another friend of mine has *wedded* (for really *'married'* is becoming too common a word.)'. (F.L. p. 17) Later on 8 August she wrote again with talk of 'wedding-gowns' and added 'I fancy to learn obedience is something new - to me at least it is.' (F.L. p. 19) Aunt Lumb commented 'Why Elizabeth how could this man ever take a fancy to such a little giddy thoughtless thing as you'! [3] For William it seems to have been a *coup de foudre*. On 27th March 1832 he wrote to his sister saying: 'You can't imagine how lonely I feel without her. I must get over to Knutsford again next week! for one day at least! I am now writing with her rings [?ring] on my fingers ... And with her likeness lying before me, if likeness it can be called.'[4]

Were they really so incompatible? They certainly had very different upbringings - the country versus the town.[5] William was born in Warrington in 1805 into a notable

Unitarian family, and spent the rest of his life in various towns and cities. Graduating from Glasgow University, he trained at Manchester College, York, and was appointed assistant minister at Cross Street Chapel, Manchester in 1828. In contrast Elizabeth's experience was much less settled. Elizabeth was born in London in 1810. Her mother died a year later whereupon her aunt, Mrs Hannah Lumb, took her to live in Knutsford, Cheshire. From age 11, she was educated in Warwick and then Stratford-on-Avon. Aged seventeen she returned to London to live with her father who died two years later. The next two years were spent in Newcastle-on-Tyne with the family of Rev William Turner, a Unitarian Minister. This was to be the connection that brought her to Manchester and William.

When the couple settled into their new life, William's ministerial duties continued as before but for Elizabeth it must have been a considerable readjustment. As to her new role she would have had plenty of advice to call on. For example the Rev Turner had written to his daughter on her marriage listing the duties of the wife of a Unitarian minister.[6] These appear daunting today. 'She must not engage in the gaieties of the day but should be grave ... sober and faithful in all things. She must meet her husband's expectations, be discreet, respectable in appearance, affect frugal housekeeping with no needless expense for herself. The family must set an example for religious duties and actively participate in educating the lower classes of the congregation. She should be cheerful and have no meddling gossiping habit'. This was in contrast to the views of her father, William Stevenson, on the role of women, expressed in *The Westminster Review*, January 1826. 'When women are regarded and treated as they ought to be, then will manners be what they ought to be; and what is of greater moment, both sexes will co-operate, though by different means, towards the advancement of society in knowledge and happiness.' He continued that women should 'bestow their approbation only on those men who regard and treat them as equal to themselves in their capacity for knowledge and usefulness.' [7] She seems to have successfully combined these conflicting pieces of advice. She actively engaged in William's work as a Minister's wife together with caring for their growing family. In pursuit of both 'knowledge and happiness' she began to follow her own literary interests as was shown by their joint poem discussed below.

The contemporary descriptions of conditions in Manchester make grim reading:

> There was ... Bear-baiting, dog-fighting, pitch battles of men leading to drunkenness, fighting, obscenities, and misery. ... The dram-shops, Tom and Jerry shops [low class beer-houses], and public houses swarm the Lord's Day over and overflow at night by the addition of these gamblers, and multitudes of females, lost to all sense of shame, and totally destitute of every virtue that makes a woman lovely and respectable ... the depravity of large numbers in Manchester exceeds aught I ever saw before; and the Police use but little power to prevent it.

This is an extract from the 1833 *Report of the Ministry to the Poor*, by The Manchester Domestic Mission Society.[8] *A History of the Society* describes William as a man 'so much honoured and beloved, one who, in later years, together with his talented wife, wielded an enormous influence for good in Manchester and the surrounding district ...'.[9] They captured this world in the poem written together, and published in the January edition of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 'Sketches Among the Poor, No. 1.', 1837.[10] Throughout the marriage they were both involved in educational and charitable work including teaching at Lower Mosley Street Sunday School and at the Manchester Unitarian Sunday School.

Both William and Elizabeth continued to have work published after 'Sketches Among the Poor'. His commitment to education for the workers was summed up by a verse in one of his many hymns:

Child of labour lift thine head
Think not meanly of thy state
Let thy soul be nobly fed
Thine shall be a noble fate.

William had handwritten the hymn into his personal copy of his friend John Relly Beard's, *A Collection of Hymns for Public and Private Worship* (London and Manchester, 1837).[11]

He had specific requirements whilst writing, no scribbling while moving around the house as Elizabeth did. William required peace and quiet when teaching, composing his sermons and conducting church business. The family were forbidden to disturb him at such times. At Plymouth Grove he had his own large, sacrosanct study though now he had an outside door for visitors. So total was his seclusion that his wife's existence was doubted by at least one student.[12] William published *Temperance Rhymes* in 1839. Elizabeth sent a copy to John Pierrepoint in June 1841, pointing out Wordsworth had commended the work and Mary Howitt had said 'This is true poetry'. (F.L. p. 24) Elizabeth herself wrote, 'You blame me for not having told you of my husband's poetical talents ... I have the same feeling of modesty in praising my husband that [I] should have in praising myself.' (F.L. *ibid.*) At the same time Elizabeth was an anonymous contributor on local customs to Howitts' *Rural Life in England*, 2nd. ed., 1840.[13] They then published her piece 'Clopton Hall' in *Visits to Remarkable Places*, also in 1840.[14] That Elizabeth had never stopped writing is supported by a request from Mary Howitt in 1849. She wrote asking for an emergency piece of work, suggesting to Elizabeth '... I presume it is already written and is one of the *many* manuscripts which lie in a certain drawer.' [our italics][15]

In October 1844, a son William was born. On holiday in Ffestiniog in August the following year he died after contracting scarlet fever. Both William and Elizabeth

were devastated and William, as an antidote to her grief, encouraged her to consider writing a novel. William's response to the tragedy becomes understandable in the light of what is known of both their writing lives. William's suggestion, that writing could act as a solace for grief, was the key to unlocking her literary talent in a new and unrestricted direction. William continued to act as her editor and agent. He sent further examples of her work to *Howitt's Journal*; two stories were published in 1847 and one in 1848.[16] Her first novel, *Mary Barton*, was published anonymously by Chapman and Hall in London 1848 but Elizabeth was soon acknowledged as the author. Local opinion differed, some feeling she had slighted the mill owners and manufacturers. The *Manchester Guardian's* review commented: 'It sinned generally against truth in matters of fact either above the comprehension of the authoress or beyond her sphere of knowledge.'[17] Another review complained of her 'morbid sensibility to the condition of the operatives'.[18] Elizabeth began her practice of leaving Manchester whenever a book was published to regain her strength.

William was a strong support throughout all this and his role continued through her authorial career. His knowledge of dialect was renowned and his wife recognised this, and his help, by including his series of essays on the subject as an addendum in her 1854 edition of *Mary Barton*. He also acted as translator from the French of two stories in *Household Words; Bran* (pp. 179-81, Oct. 22 1853) and *The Scholar's Story* (pp. 32-34, Christmas 1853) He can also be credited with help in her research. Records in The Portico Library's Borrowing Book show that between November 1859 and May 1860, he accessed three books by William Scoresby on Whale fishing and the Arctic regions. Elizabeth could not take these out herself as women could not be members.[19] Also in 1859, Walter White's *A Month in Yorkshire* (London, 1858) was in William's possession; chapter twelve is titled Whitby. It was in 1859 that Elizabeth Gaskell visited Whitby when researching her material for *Sylvia's Lovers* (Published 1863). He was especially protective after the furore about *Ruth* (1853) and most importantly dealing with the threat of libel after the publication of *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (1855). William succeeded in fighting off the libel action while Elizabeth and her daughters enjoyed their now famous holiday on the continent.

It was on this tour that Elizabeth met Charles Eliot Norton in Rome, an encounter which has since generated much heat and little light. In her letter to Norton on her return she wrote of the hectic life of Manchester and contrasted it with 'Oh! the delicious quiet and dolce far niente of Italy!' But she was also concerned for William; *'I wish you could persuade him to go to America with you ...* He wants change and yet hates leaving home.'(L. 349 3 June 1857) In all her correspondence to him, she addressed him as My Dear Mr Norton, friendly but formal. In July 1857, when he was unable to visit them she wrote: 'We *are* so sorry - all of us and each of us separately - sorry for your not coming .... No! Now you won't see Flossie and Julia nor Hearn.' (L. 360 p. 459) It is perhaps significant that Norton also began a correspondence with her two eldest daughters after the holiday in Rome. In offering

them the friendship of an art expert on the peregrinations around Rome, he was a fascinating companion to them all. Did she see him simply as a young and intelligent friend and knowledgeable guide? She wrote to him on 25 October 1859 'If good intention were deeds it's about five months since you ought to have heard from me.' (L. 444 p. 579) Time perhaps in which she could reflect on her holiday, though through this time he continued to correspond with the girls. On 9 January 1860, in a letter relevant to this discussion, she wrote to Norton that 'It is perhaps strange to write to you; but I am so perfectly sure you understand me that I have no scruple in doing it; and you will never refer I am sure to anything in your replies, which I tell to you, as to a *brother* of my girls.' (L. 453 p.598) Could this thirty year old have brought a thought of what it would have been like if her son William had lived? Her last letter to him was in September 8, 1865, addressed jointly to him and his wife Susan; William was in Scotland, and she told him confidentially in detail about buying her house in Hampshire - a trustworthy friend indeed. (L 583 p. 774)

Perhaps their holiday arrangements are the one area which is most surprising for a modern reader. For many years they travelled separately as well as together. As a Minister of Cross Street Chapel, William had a month-long paid holiday in August each year, a time he had used to holiday away from Manchester, often in Europe, walking with friends. Elizabeth comments in a letter to the Storys in 1861, 'He cannot meet with a companion (his own women kind wd any of them, be thankful to go with him, but he says he needs 'entire freedom from responsibility ...).' (L. 490, p. 659) This seems cold on both sides and yet in the same letter she was at great pains to make sure he would be well treated. 'It is your bright charming *companionship* I want for him so that if he has a lodging near you it is everything, and he is only too simple in his tastes and wants and wishes.' *(ibid.)* But this was not the whole picture. A different scene emerges when we see him holidaying with the family. One of their favourite holiday destinations was Silverdale on the edge of Morecambe Bay.[20] On 4 May 1852, she wrote to Marianne who had asked to take a friend, Miss Banks, 'I find Papa does not like the idea of having a *stranger* in the house in holiday time when you know when he likes to play pranks, go cockling etc. etc. and feel at liberty to say or do what he likes. I think you may fancy how Papa would feel constrained and obliged to be proper.'(L. 122a, p. 850) She continued this theme in the letter to the Storys quoted above, '.... he is very shy, but very merry when he is well, delights in puns and punning and very fond of children.' (L. 490, p. 660)

It is clear that Elizabeth had total access to her earnings. It should be remembered at this time that any money earned by a wife was, by law, considered her husband's property. William seems to have had no inclination to exercise his rights in this matter. The letter dated 8 September 1865 confirms this when she confided in Norton the details of the purchase of her house in Hampshire. 'I have not money enough to pay the whole two thousand pounds; but my publisher (Smith and Elder) advanced the one thousand pounds ... and I hope to pay him off by degrees. Mr Gaskell is *not to know till then.*' (L. 583, p. 773)

One final comment is perhaps called for. William has always been portrayed as the stiff, unbending Minister but as Elizabeth illustrated in many of her letters he had another side to his nature. He possessed a sense of humour, demonstrated by Elizabeth's descriptions of their family life. Perhaps, also, by his response to another seeming rumour - William's involvement with one of the Winkworth sisters whom he tutored. In 1851 Susanna Winkworth had published a greatly respected translation of *Niebuhr* and Elizabeth felt she herself snubbed by Susanna as a result. In a letter to Eliza Fox c. May 1852 Elizabeth wrote that '...S.W. is so funny and cock a hoop about *Niebuhr*, she snubs me so, and makes much love to William he says 'my life is the only protection he has - he *knows* she would marry him. I wish you could hear him thus in a meek fatalist kind of way.' (L.124, p. 190) Surely an ironic comment that amused them both. In one of the only scraps of his surviving correspondence, William wrote to Marianne after a train journey 'my three fellow passengers like true Englishmen never opened their lips or the windows ...'.[21] If only more of his letters had survived they might have revealed more of his playful nature.

When considering the couple's marriage, it is notable how busy each of them was, both together and separately; Elizabeth with family, house, charities, writing and travelling; William with his ministerial duties and public activities.[22] From the start of the marriage their reported level of domestic and social work activity was remarkable. They were surely both people born with exceptional levels of energy. This allowed them to embark on a scale of activity that for many people was, and is, inconceivable. Could this have been the factor that drew them together? William recognising in the free-spirited young woman, the same intelligence, drive and energy that he himself possessed. The letters demonstrate their continuing devotion to the family and each other. In 1846, in a letter to Miss Barbara Fergusson (their governess) from Southport, Elizabeth showed concern for William, 'Just a line to ask you how you think Mr Gaskell *really* is.' William had fainted in church on the Sunday. There followed detailed instructions on how to look after him; '*Milk* I think he likes best for a constancy; and not too much bread in it; but *always* to take something up. I wish you would make Marianne attend to taking an egg beaten up with a little warm milk and sugar every morning ...'. She added 'I would much rather come home.'(F.L. p.31) Her visit to Southport shows William's concern for her as he had sent her to the coast to rest during the latter stage of her new pregnancy after baby William's death. They were a very close and loving couple and all the evidence suggests this pervaded the whole marriage despite their seemingly divergent lives. In effect this can be regarded as a very modern marriage even though Mrs Gaskell was proud to be Mrs Gaskell and Mr Gaskell was proud to have such a wife.

1 Bonaparte, Felicia, *The Gypsy-Bachelor of Manchester*, (Charlotteville and London, 1992), p. 264
2 Chapple, John, *Elizabeth Gaskell, The Early Years* (Manchester,1997), pp. 413-4
3 Chapple, *ibid.*, p. 419
4 Chapple, *ibid.*, p. 453
5 See: Brill, Barbara, *William Gaskell 1805-84 A Portrait* (Manchester Literary and Philosophical Publications Ltd., 1984); Uglow, Jenny, *Elizabeth Gaskell A Habit of Stories* (London, 1993

6 William Turner to Mary Robberds, Newcastle, 29 January 1812, Appendix III, Chapple, J.A.V., and Wilson, Anita, *Private Voices The Diaries of Elizabeth Gaskell and Sophia Holland*, p. 115. This advice was not just confined to Unitarians. 'Hints to a clergyman's wife or female parochial duties practically illustrated (London, 1832) was dedicated to the Rev Charles Bridges M.A., Vicar of Old Newton, Suffolk. The clergyman's wife is counselled that 'Let none be able to say that private or personal feelings influenced any part of her conduct', p. 10

7 See: Review by William Stevenson, Article III, 'The History of Chivalry, or Knighthood and its Times by Charles Mills Esq. Author of the History of the Crusades 2 Vols., 8 vo. 1825' in *The Westminster Review Vol. V. 1826 Jan - April* (London, 1826), pp. 59-101, extract pp. 80-81.

8 Perry, Rev. Herbert E., *A History of the Manchester Domestic Mission Society, 1833 -1933* (Manchester, 1833), p. 7-8. The Society, established on January 1st, 1833, was one of the many charitable organisations that the Gaskells were connected to. William became Secretary in 1838 (a post he held for the rest of his life).

9 *Ibid.* p. 8

10 *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, January 1837, pp. 48-50. See also: Uglow, Jenny, *Elizabeth Gaskell: A Habit of Stories* (London: Faber and Faber, 1993), p. 101

11 Brill, Barbara, *William Gaskell 1805-84 A Portrait* (Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society, 1984) p. 49

12 The student, George Fox, thought Gaskell was a myth because they never saw her. See: Smith, Leonard (ed.), *Unitarian to the Core* (Unitarian College, Manchester, 2004), p.61.

13 See: George A. Payne, *Mrs Gaskell A Brief Biography* (Manchester, 1929), p. 40

14 See: Chapple, J.A.V., and Wilson, Anita (eds.), *Private Voices The Diaries of Elizabeth Gaskell and Sophia Holland* (Keele, 1996), p.46, fn. 32

15 Uglow, Jenny, *Elizabeth Gaskell: A Habit of Stories* (London: Faber and Faber, 1993), p.173

16 'The Sexton's Hero', *Howitts Journal, No. 2*, 1847 and 'Christmas Storms and Sunshine', *Howitts Journal, No. 3*, 1848

17 Uglow, Jenny, *Elizabeth Gaskell: A Habit of Stories* (London: Faber and Faber, 1993), pp.215-218, p.224

18 Quoted in Briggs, Asa, *Victorian Cities* (London, 1963), p. 103

19 See: Foster Shirley, 'We sit and read and Dream our time away': Elizabeth Gaskell and the Portico Library', *The Gaskell Society Journal*, Volume 14, (2000), pp. 14-23

20 See: 'Silverdale Tower - Elizabeth Gaskell's Lancashire Inspiration' at http://lancashire.greatbritishlife.co.uk/article/silverdale-tower

21 Uglow, Jenny, *Elizabeth Gaskell: A Habit of Stories* (London: Faber and Faber, 1993), p. 612

22 1100 people gathered for a soiree at Manchester Town Hall on 10 October 1878 to honour William Gaskell's fifty years work for the city. Each organisation he had belonged to were allowed five minutes to make their contribution. Eleven charitable and religious societies and churches took part and they did not include The Portico Library and The Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society. See: *Manchester Guardian*, 11 October, 1878; Cross Street Chapel Archives, October 1878.

In Praise of the Independent Singleton

John Greenwood

Towards the end of her article on Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë in a previous Newsletter[1], Patsy Stoneman deals with the situation of the unmarried or single woman. In this article I intend to develop this topic by referring to a few novels and short stories of the 19th century. My choice is obviously arbitrary and readers will no doubt have their own preferred works to refer to. Stoneman focuses on Brontë's *Shirley* and *Villette*, stressing the precarious and lonely situation of

such women; however, Stoneman is careful to point out (by quoting Brontë herself) that the problem is not so much being single as being lonely.

By the end of the 19th century the position of women (both married and unmarried) had radically changed from the situation in, say, the 1850s, though there was still much to be done. In a recent review of a book on the literary and cultural life of Victorian clubland the reviewer writes: '... a large number of women-only clubs flourished in the 1890s... These homes-from-home, such as the *Pioneer*, the *Alexandra*, and the *Empress*, offered the lady-shopper respite from the bustle of Oxford Street, and provided the sporting or culturally-minded lady with opportunities to enjoy her favourite pursuits and ... to make independent professional connections. The Victorian gentleman may have searched for 'a room of his own' ... but by the end of the century clubs enabled women, too, to escape from domestic confines.'[2]. Needless to say, such facilities were restricted to those women with money and time at their disposal. What was called the 'Woman Question' became the women's liberation movement from the early 20th century onwards. Olive Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm* (1883) was probably the first literary work in England to focus on the *New Woman* figure. Other writers like Meredith, Shaw and Gissing soon followed, and in 1909 Wells published *Ann Veronica*.

Just to take three articles from the *Guardian* in 2013, much has changed (even since the early 1900s, let alone the mid-1800s) in attitudes and activities in the field of Women's Lib. For example:

(i) ...in a single weekend in October (2013), you could have attended a feminist freshers' fair in London, the North East Feminist Gathering in Newcastle, a Reclaim the Night March in Edinburgh, or a discussion between different generations of feminist activists at the British Library.[3]

(ii) Times have never been better for single women. Long gone are the days when they needed a man to pay the bills and protect them, with a social status dependent on their spouse....There are single people of all ages out there going about their business and enjoying themselves, and the word spinster has been pretty much outlawed.[4]

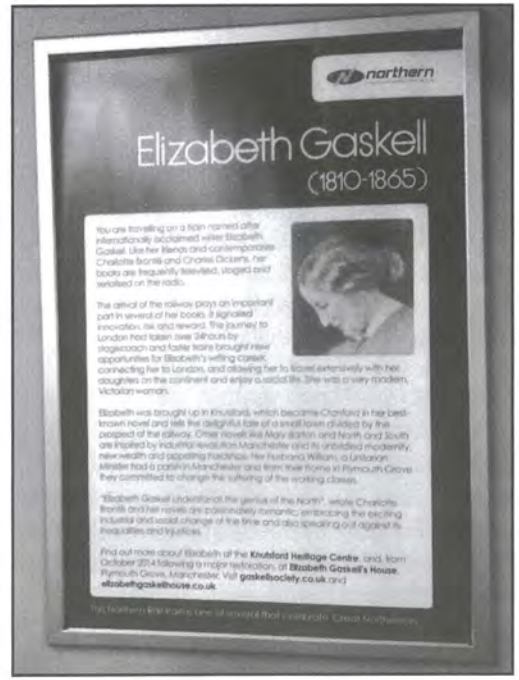
(iii) Bridget Jones was at least a singleton again, but it was still disappointing that a character who had always been defined by her status as a single woman could only be truly happy when attached to a man.[5]

(iv) Why must the character who is a single woman also be the one who is a failure and obsessive and increasingly odd? It is not as if the single woman is a statistical oddity; the census reveals that the number of single-person households is on the rise. Are the women in these flats and houses all desiccated or loopy or permanently furious or desperately sad? Does the

'Good choice of name'

Tatton MP George Osborne concludes his remarks as he unveils the train's name.

Manchester Piccadilly, 28 March 2014



The Inside Story

NB. Portrait of ECG by daughter Meta

Members of the Gaskell Society and railway buffs gather on Platform 11, at Manchester Piccadilly to celebrate the naming of a train.

thought ever occur that some of them might be happy and fulfilled, with jobs that they love and an understanding of the term family that may extend beyond the word husband or baby?[6]

The typical portrayal of a single woman in 19th century novels was negative; a sad and lonely figure, such as an unappreciated governess or a withdrawn aunt. However, without benefiting from the re-assurance arising from the situation now prevailing, as indicated in the quotations above, there are interesting examples of single women depicted by 19th century novelists as independent and determined to make their own decisions. I have chosen four works by Gaskell: *Ruth* (1853), *Half a Life-Time Ago* (1855), *Sylvia's Lovers* (1863) and *Cousin Phillis* (1863) and one by George Gissing: *The Odd Women* (1893).

The heroine Ruth shows an independence of mind and will on two crucial occasions. The first is when she is confronted by Bellingham, now using the name of Donne, in North Wales. As well as being in a seemingly weak social position with little prospect of any escape from it, and also still unable to obliterate completely her former feelings for him ('His voice retained something of its former influence. When he spoke, without her seeing him, she could not help remembering former days.' [7]), she counters his very tempting offer of marriage and acceptance of Leonard as his legitimate son and heir:

> I will save Leonard from evil. Evil would it be for him if I lived with you... I do not love you. I did once....I could never love you again... We are very far apart... You shall have nothing to do with my boy, by my consent, much less by my agency... If there were no other reason to prevent our marriage but the one fact that I would bring Leonard into contact with you, that would be enough.[8]

Such a forthright rejection of her former lover and father of her child shows admirable independence and resolution as to what she thinks is her duty to herself as well as to her son, but it is at a price:

> Oh! If I had not spoken so angrily to him – the last things I said were so bitter – so reproachful! – and I shall never, never see him again![9]

The second occasion when she shows strong determination to have her own way, in spite of much opposition by her doctor, Mr Davis, is her decision to nurse Bellingham, who has caught the dreaded fever raging in the town:

> I don't think I should love him, if he were well and happy – but you said he was ill – and alone – how can I help caring for him?... He is Leonard's father... but let me go – I must go.[10]

And, of course, go she does, saving Bellingham but not herself. A sad and even

unacceptable ending to most readers, but in her situation as a single woman she must surely feel relieved, highly satisfied, at her independent decision.

Two years later (1855) Gaskell wrote the short story *Half a Life-Time Ago*. There are certain parallels between this story and *Ruth*. Both heroines have to make extremely difficult decisions which are, in their view, necessary and just, even if painful. The heroine, Susan Dixon, has survived the typhus fever that raged in the village, and so has her brother, William, but 'his speech became slow, impeded, and incoherent. People began to say that the fever had taken away the little wit Willie Dixon had ever possessed, and that they feared that he would end in being a 'natural', as they call an idiot in the Dales.'[11] Susan loves and is engaged to Michael, who unfortunately cannot bear Willie and often mistreats him. Furthermore, Susan promises her mother on her deathbed that she will always look after her brother. When Willie asks her whom she prefers, she quite rightly admonishes him: "You should not ask such questions. They are not fit for you to ask, nor for me to answer."[12] However, she immediately re-assures her brother that he has nothing to worry: "Lover nor husband shall come betwixt thee and me, lad."[13] Susan has the courage and intelligence to confront Michael with the problem in the hope that she can persuade him to help her by accepting joint responsibility for Willie when they marry. To her dismay he refuses, so she has to decide between brother and lover:

> "Thou wilt not bide in the same house with him, say'st thou? There's no need for thy biding, as far as I can tell. There's solemn reason why I should bide with my own flesh and blood, and keep to the word I pledged my mother on her death-bed; ... If thou marry me, thou'll help me to take charge of Willie. If thou doesn't choose to marry me on those terms - why, I can snap my fingers at thee, never fear... Willie bides here, and I bide with him."[14]

Like Ruth and her son Leonard, Susan has made her stand independently; she knows her duty towards her brother is paramount. But again, like Ruth's decision, it is at an enormous personal cost, for (unlike Ruth's changed feelings towards Bellingham, she still deeply loves Michael) she is greatly tempted to regret her brave decision:

> Then she would wonder how she could have had strength, the cruel, self-piercing strength, to say what she had done; to stab herself with that stern resolution, of which the scar would remain till her dying day. It might have been right; but as she sickened, she wished she had not instinctively chosen the right. How luxurious a life haunted by no sense of duty must be! And many led this kind of life; why could not she? O, for one hour again of his sweet company! If he came now, she would agree to whatever he proposed.[15]

However, the very next sentences Gaskell writes are: 'It was a fever of the mind.

She passed through it, and came out healthy, if weak. .... She acknowledged to herself that he [Willie] was to be her all-in-all in life.'[16] Susan is fully aware of the consequences; she will remain a single woman. On the death of Willie, 'there was no one to love her. Worse doom still, there was no one left on earth for her to love.'[17]

In the persons of Ruth and Susan, Gaskell has thus created two personalities who, while not at first revealing any particular strong traits of character (so unlike Sylvia with her unforgiving nature often openly expressed) are placed in a most unenviable dilemma, requiring them to make their own independent decision. Neither turns to friend or family for advice at the crucial moment; both realise the consequences of their decisions. They act courageously as independent single women just as much as the New Women or the Feminists of 20th and 21st century novels.

As to Sylvia Robson in *Sylvia's Lovers*, her experience is far more complex than that of either Ruth or Susan. I mention her in order to contrast her with the other two. While to a certain extent she shared their 'singlehood' status by being denied union with the man she loved (Kinraid) and abandoned by the man she reluctantly married (Hepburn), she lacked their independence of action. After Philip Hepburn's disappearance she is uncertain what to do apart from vague 'notions of the possibility of a free country life once more', so she goes to Jeremiah Foster for advice: 'She was too much a child, too entirely unaccustomed to any independence of action, to do anything but leave herself in his hands.'[18] She also lacks their confidence in making a decision: 'After she had learnt that Kinraid was married, her heart had still more strongly turned to Philip...But across all this relenting came the shadow of her vow... How should she decide? What would be her duty, if he came again, and once more called her 'wife'? She shrank from such a possibility, with all the weakness and superstition of her nature.'[19] By the end of the novel there is surely much sympathy and understanding for Sylvia's plight, but she is not the strong independent 'singleton' we find in Ruth and Susan.

In *Cousin Phillis* we read the sad story of the unrequited love of Phillis for somebody who declares to a friend his love for her, yet goes off to work in Canada and there marries somebody else. This leaves Phillis devastated, but resigned to fate. Throughout the story Gaskell depicts Phillis as very passive, rarely taking the initiative. Holdsworth, the man she secretly loves, describes her thus: "Love her! Yes, that I do. Who could help it, seeing her as I have done? Her character as unusual and rare as her beauty! ... God keep her in her high tranquillity, her pure innocence... She lives in such seclusion, almost like the sleeping beauty."[20] On discovering her love is hopeless, she is deeply grieved but says nothing. The narrator advises the servant Betty: "Don't let us show her we guess that she is grieving; she'll get over it the sooner,"[21] and later he comments: 'Yet all I could do now was to second the brave girl in her efforts to conceal her disappointment and keep her maidenly secret.'[22] So a very different personality to Ruth and Susan, it

seems. However, right at the end of the story Betty (a typical Gaskell creation: no-nonsense but sensitive servant like Gaskell's own Hearn) gives Phillis a piece of her own mind: "Now Phillis! We ha' done a' we can for you, and the doctors has done a' they can for you, and I think the Lord has done a' He can for you, and more than you deserve, too, if you don't do something for yourself. If I were you, I'd rise up and snuff the moon."[23] In a letter to her publisher Gaskell proposes a more detailed conclusion, rather than the rushed one submitted to reach a deadline. She outlines a plot which shows Phillis much more active, determined and independent as a single woman: typhus fever in the village; putting into practice engineering skills she learnt from Holdsworth by draining the village to get clean water; and adopting two child orphans (similar to Susan Dixon's action at the end of *Half a Life-Time Ago*). So potentially, Phillis joins this happy breed of single women who have few of the advantages later singletons will benefit from.

To conclude, I now jump forward to 1893 with the publication of George Gissing's *The Odd Women*. During this interval of three decades much had changed in England for the single woman. In Gaskell's time, when it was estimated there were about 50,000 single women in England, it was possible for the 'spinster' (often unfairly ridiculed as 'old maids' in literature as well in real life) to find protection, for example, in large families where she could help out with domestic duties. By the 1890s this number is estimated to have risen to almost one million in London alone. So the marriage market had become much more competitive. Two of Gissing's *Odd Women* represent the situation of educated but impoverished unmarried genteel women who struggle to maintain respectability (indeed, one of them hides an alcoholic problem). Their sister, Monica, enters into a disastrous marriage for financial reasons - a not uncommon occurrence at the time. However, it is the characters of Rhoda Nunn and her friend, Mary Barfoot, who are Gissing's main concern. These two Odd Women do not seek their future as financially and socially secure wives but as competent and hopefully successful women following feminist aims. They set up a business school in London for training women to participate in public life. A major element of the plot is the conflict for Rhoda between this activity and her love for Mary Barfoot's cousin, Everard Barfoot. This conflict of interest seems to me as tense and painful as that experienced by Gaskell's Ruth and Susan and with the same decision taken, however painfully, to opt against marriage but for an independent single life:

> Will! Purpose! Was she not in danger of forgetting these watchwords, which had guided her life out of youth into maturity? That poor creature's [Monica] unhappiness was doubtless in great measure due to the conviction that in missing love and marriage she had missed everything. So thought the average woman, and in her darkest hours she too had fallen among those poor in spirit, the flesh prevailing. But the soul in her had not finally succumbed. Passion had a new significance; her conception of life was larger, more liberal; she made no vows to crush the natural instincts. But her conscience, her sincerity should

not suffer. Wherever destiny might lead, she would still be the same proud and independent woman, responsible only to herself, fulfilling the nobler laws of her existence.[24]

As confirmation of her having taken the right decision in rejecting Everard, Rhoda exclaims on the final page of the novel, when asked if her work is successful: 'We flourish like the green bay-tree. We shall have to take larger premises. By-the-bye, you must read the paper we are going to publish... Miss Barfoot was never in such health and spirits - nor I myself. The world is moving.'[25]

My intention in writing this article was to refute Thackeray's cynical and supercilious remark '*Is the single woman destined to misery?*' Rather, I would agree with Harriet Martineau's comment when reviewing Brontë's *Villette*: 'All the female characters, in all their thoughts and lives, are full of one thing...love. It is not thus in real life. There are substantial, heartfelt interests for women of all ages, and under ordinary circumstances, quite apart from love.'[26] And we must never forget that the trait of independence in a person is not to be confused with either selfishness or irresponsibility. I have already referred to Cousin Phillis' decision to adopt two orphans in Gaskell's alternative ending. Susan Dixon 'took Michael Hurst's [her former fiancé] widow and children with her to live there, and fill up the haunted hearth with living forms that should banish the ghosts.'[27] Gissing ends his novel with Rhoda sharing the responsibility for looking after Monica's baby. Gaskell and Gissing have so much in common as novelists that it puzzles me why he is not as well known and read as she is – but dealing with that puzzle needs another article!

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F E Bache: a Brief Life

John Chapple

In a letter of 22 November 1852 Elizabeth Gaskell suggested to Marianne that 'Helen Tagart & perhaps Ed. Bache with her ... or Emily Shaen' might help choose a piano at Broadwood's. Francis Edward Bache (1833-1858) was a musical prodigy - violinist, pianist organist and composer - the son of an important Unitarian minister in Birmingham. He was also friends with an employee of John Broadwood & Sons, A J Hipkins. Hipkins, a distingished authority on keyboard instruments, was trusted to tune the Broadwood pianos used by Chopin on his visits to England.

Helen Tagart was the wife or perhaps the daughter of a prominent Unitarian minister in London, Edward Tagart, a friend of Dickens. Emily Shaen, née Winkworth, had not long before married William Shaen, the Gaskells' lawyer and close friend, William Gaskell himself officiating at the ceremony.

Samuel Bache (1804–1876), Francis Edward's father, was the minister of the Unitarian 'Church of the Messiah' in Broad Street, Birmingham. He had been educated at Manchester College, York in 1826–9. William Gaskell, who had entered the college a year before, would have been a fellow student in the modest and learned Dissenting College just outside Monkbar.

Three of Samuel's seven children were notably musical: Francis Edward, Walter and the youngest daughter, Constance. Constance, who outlived both Francis and Walter, published a memoir in 1901, entitled *Brother Musicians: reminiscences of Edward and Walter Bache* (available on openlibrary.org) and dedicated to A J Hipkins.

Amongst the truly remarkable applied art collections in Birmingham City Art Galleries is a stained glass window rescued from Samuel Bache's church when it was eventually abandoned in the cause of city development. The window is a Victorian Gothic memorial to Francis Edward Bache. The money to pay for it had been raised by a performance of Mendelssohn's once popular oratorio *St Paul*, on 1 October 1863 (BM, p. 101).

F E Bache, a pupil of Sterndale Bennett, became an organist, teacher and composer of piano pieces in London, Leipzig, Dresden and Paris. In his sadly short career he even managed to publish a number of musical items. Some years ago Hyperion recorded Howard Shelley and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra playing a piano concerto by Bennett and one by Bache (CD67595). Though Bache's concerto may never have been performed in his lifetime, it is flowing, tuneful and fresh, with brilliant passages for both soloist and orchestra.

Bache's hectic life, full of original promise, was afflicted by poor health. In January 1856 he went to Algiers to alleviate the symptoms of consumption, but the heat drove him away in April. By December he was settled in Rome (BM, p. 91), where he joined the artistic circle of English and American friends that included Catherine Winkworth, Mrs Gaskell and two of her daughters, Marianne and Meta. Catherine Winkworth stayed with Emma Shaen, an invalid, the Gaskells in the Via Sant'Isidoro with the sculptor William Wetmore [sic] Story and his wife Emelyn. As we know from Gaskell's nostalgic letters to Emelyn Story, it was a supremely happy time. But when Catherine Winkworth came to hear Bache play, she thought that though he played beautifully, he looked 'wretchedly ill' (S Winkworth, ed. *Letters and Memorials*, I.121). In fact, he had not long to live.

The Roman climate and houses 'with their marble floors and absence of fires' became too cold for him. Despite a successful concert in April that gained him £60 net, in May he fled back to his home in Birmingham. A stay in Torquay for the winter, where once again he managed to give a successful concert to a crowded audience in February 1858, did not result in a cure. He returned to his home in Birmingham and arranged a farewell concert. In this he was too weak to play, so a friend had to take his place at the piano. Bache died a few days later, on 14 August.

Left:

Two portraits of F E Bache

Elizabeth Gaskell and Henry James

Alan Shelston

In heaven there'll be no algebra,
No learning dates or names.
There's only playing golden harps
And reading Henry James.

(Popular rhyme cited by admirers of Henry James)

Less than six months after the untimely death of Elizabeth Gaskell in September 1865, a review of her interrupted final work, *Wives and Daughters*, appeared in the American journal, *The Nation*. It was written by the young and upcoming novelist, Henry James, who was then cutting his teeth as a reviewer. Gaskell's novel had first appeared in serial form in the United States in a less distinguished magazine, *Littel's Living Age*, and was finally published there in two volumes only a few days after her death

The publication of British fiction in the United States was a consequence of a process whereby new novels published in England were rushed across the Atlantic for immediate publication by one of the various competing publishers in the major American cities. Where novels were concerned instalment publication obviously helped the process since copy could be printed month by month in anticipation of the work's completion. All of Gaskell's novels, her *Life of Charlotte Brontë* and a number of her stories attracted American publishers; she herself once wrote that she was considering publishing only in America. She was of course an Amerophile, with a number of American contacts, but Meta Gaskell was relieved when her mother gave up this idea. Dickens complained of piracy by American publishers, but in fact on occasion he had received quite considerable sums for the publication of his work in America. As in England the circumstances surrounding the completion of *Wives and Daughters* must have presented problems for the publisher but these seem to have been surmounted. James's article appeared in the American journal *The Nation* on 22nd February 1866, the two volume edition of the novel having been published by Harper & Brothers of New York on February 2nd of that year.

James's reviewer's teeth, were already very sharp. Reviewing Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend*, for example, also in *The Nation* and at the same time (21 December 1865), he attacked Dickens's latest works with vigour: '*Bleak House* was forced,' he wrote, '*Little Dorrit* was laboured; the present work is dug out with a spade and pickaxe.' If the acknowledged master of English fiction was to receive this kind of treatment what hope might there be for Elizabeth Gaskell's more restrained and provincial art?

But *Wives and Daughters* was to be a different story. In his reviews James always wrote for effect and he begins his article with fulsome praise for Gaskell the author: 'There is no sign of haste and immaturity about any of her novels... her word-painting was perfect of its kind.' He expresses his admiration for *Cranford* (nevertheless defining it as 'a work of quite other pretensions') and then praises the distinctive realism of what he admits is a very long novel: 'we are on speaking terms with all the personages of "Wives and Daughters," we can see the Gibsons and Hamleys, and Brownings, as well as if we had called upon them yesterday.' James clearly knows his Gaskell; he follows his opening remarks with a résumé of her work and argues that 'Mrs Gaskell's genius ... was so obviously the offspring of her affections, her feelings,, her associations' that he concludes that her 'genius' was little more than a peculiar play of her personal character.' The writer, in other words was the woman and she herself was exceptional. The article is part criticism, part obituary and, as Dr Johnson remarked, 'in lapidary inscriptions a man is not upon oath.' However James's hyperbole comes out of his knowledge of the novels: the only work about which he has reservations is *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* where 'her fine qualities, of affection, of generosity of sympathy of imagination' betray her into a 'want of judgment.'

When James goes into detail about *Wives and Daughters* his comments become more specific and in one respect more surprising. 'The book is very long 'and of an interest so quiet that not a few of its readers will find it dull.' Furthermore 'even a very well-disposed reader will be tempted to lay down the book and ask himself of what possible concern to him are the 'clean frocks and the French lessons of little Molly Gibson.' However these are the details that 'have educated him to a proper degree of interest in the heroine'. In other words the very quietude of the novel's provincialism is the key to Molly's 'homely *bourgeois* life.' and that is true also of those 'strongly marked, masculine middle-aged men' like Doctor Gibson and Squire Hamley, who are 'so forcibly drawn as if a wise masculine hand had drawn them'. James had no inhibitions about gender distinction. He would later review George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, and praise it for the intellectual power of its organisation and its characterisation. *Wives and Daughters* though is a very different case: it inspires affection for the world and the characters Gaskell has created, rather than the rigour of organisation that is at the core of George Eliot's 'study of provincial life'.

In a later essay, his 'Preface' to his novel *The Portrait of a Lady*, James wrote of the way in which Victorian novels focussed upon their heroines, 'the wonder being how absolute, how inordinately [they] ... insist on mattering.' He listed examples: 'Hetty Sorrel and Maggie Tulliver and Rosamond Vincy and Gwendolen Harleth' – all of them from George Eliot as it happens. And the drift of his argument in his essay on Mrs Gaskell is that the reader becomes over-familiar with Molly who, while unquestionably lovable, lacks the complexity, as distinct from the affection, normally to be encountered in a fictional heroine: 'it may be said that no young lady is a heroine to one who, if we may so express our meaning, has known her

since she was "so high."' The argument is specious, but James, who was himself to write novels where the analysis of character and situation can fairly be said to arrive at the point of inertia, turns his admiration of Mrs Gaskell's skills to a character who has the complexity of interest and motive that he is seeking, and that is Cynthia Kirkpatrick: 'Molly Gibson, we repeat, commands a slighter degree of interest than the companion figure of Cynthia Kirkpatrick.', he writes, whereas Molly's clean frocks and French lessons apparently leave him with nothing to add. But Cynthia's mother, Hyacinth Clare, is 'the best drawn character in the book: Touch by touch, under the reader's eye, she builds herself up into her selfish and silly and consummately natural completeness.' When it comes to the men they are 'less successful than her women,' while Osborne Hamley is 'a much more ambitious figure than Roger' - i.e. ambitious on his creator's part – 'and ambitious as the figure of Cynthia is ambitious'.

When we consider Gaskell and James together there are some surprising similarities. In their lives both enjoyed the privileges of country house week-ends in fine houses. Both became Italophiles; both had a liking for ghost stories: as Miriam Allott once suggested, Gaskell's 'Old Nurse's Story' can be said to anticipate James's more powerful 'The Turn of the Screw'. They both focussed their novels on 'frail vessels' – that ironic Jamesian term for the heroines who bore the brunt of the story. And it is the frailty of the vessels that both exposes and fortifies them. Ruth Hilton, Sylvia Robson and Phillis Holman are examples from Gaskell, while James gives us the heroines of the early novellas, Daisy Miller and the Catherine Sloper of Washington Square, both of whom have a limited knowledge of the world and are thus vulnerable to the carelessness of attractive and more experienced young men. Catherine Sloper, immured in her father's house in Washington Square, is heiress to a fortune. Disregarded by her father she is initially a somewhat timid young woman when, rather like Phillis Holman, she is surprised by the entry into her life of a more worldly young man, Morris Townsend. Townsend however abandons her when he realises her father will never grant him access to her wealth. In stories such as these the heroines are acted upon rather than acting for themselves and the moral outcomes depend upon how they respond rather than on the choices that they make. Gaskell was uncertain how to end Phillis Holman's story after Holdsworth has left for Canada; in *Washington Square* James deliberately left his heroine 'for life, as it were' after a final meeting with the lover who has deserted her, a phrase as telling as Hamlet's 'the rest is silence.' Or to come back to the novel form it is as if Captain Wentworth had NOT returned to claim Anne Elliot, and had left her bereft, like her Victorian sisters. Marriages famously conclude novels, but Elizabeth Gaskell and Henry James seemed on occasion to have taken a more dry-eyed view of human relationships.

Henry James did not take up permanent residence in England until after Gaskell's death and so would not have known her personally. Like Elizabeth, he too proved to be a prolific letter-writer and in 1878 he wrote to his sister Alice, 'I have gone on

dining out ... with Mrs Crompton, daughter of Mrs Gaskell [and] with Leslie Stephen etc.' Stephen, who was to become editor of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, was accompanied by his future second wife 'the charming woman, (Mrs Duckworth by name) who had 'by a miracle, consented to become, matrimonially, the receptacle of his [i.e. Stephens] ineffable and impossible taciturnity and dreariness.' The Duckworth family, possessed of a cotton fortune, were known to the Gaskells and as Stephen's second wife Mrs Duckworth would become stepmother to Virginia Stephen, aka Woolf. There is some irony in the fact that the daughter famously described by her mother as a child as having no talent should have made these distinguished literary connections. And in a later letter we learn that in the same year Meta, who as we know had many years previously been left 'for life as it were' by a faithless lover, joined James and Florence at dinner and proved herself to be 'a most pleasing, amiable, sympathetic woman.' Their mother would surely have looked down on them with approval.

Works Consulted

R. P. Blackmur, ed, *The Art of Fiction*, (James's Prefaces) 1935
The Letters of Mrs Gaskell, ed. Arthur Pollard and J.A.V. Chapple, 1966
Henry James, *The House of Fiction: essays on the novel*, ed. Leon Edel. 1957
Walter E Smith, *Elizabeth Gaskell; a bibliographical catalogue*, 1997
The letters of Henry James (5 vols), ed Leon Edel, vol.2, 1974-84

Book Notes

Christine Lingard

Interdisciplinary perspectives on aging in nineteenth-century culture, edited by Katharina Boehm, Anna Farkas, and Anne-Julia Zwierlein of Regensburg University, Germany. Routledge studies in nineteenth-century literature.

A study which provides frameworks for the understanding of old age that continue to be influential today. It aims to bring about fresh readings of texts by Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, Anthony Trollope, Thomas Hardy, Henry James and others.

British women writers and the short story, 1850-1930: reclaiming social space by Kate Krueger. Professor and Coordinator of Women and Gender Studies at Arkansas State University. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

A discussion of traditional feminine occupations, as depicted in a wide range of nineteenth and twentieth century short stories. Chapter one is entitled 'The Spinster Re-Drawing Rooms in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Cranford*'. It also discusses the stories of Rhoda Broughton, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, George Egerton, Charlotte Mew,

Evelyn Sharp, Barbara Baynton, Katherine Mansfield, Virginia Woolf, and Jean Rhys.

Giving women: alliance and exchange in Victorian culture by Jill Rappoport, Associate Professor of English at the University of Kentucky. Oxford University Press, first published in 2012, and now reissued.

A discussion of altruism and charity giving in the Victorian age. Chapter 3 discusses Conservation in *Cranford*.

Mr Harrison's Confessions: a new reprint, Hesperus Classics

Gaskell Study Tour to Worcester, Bromyard and surrounding areas - 20 to 22 May, 2014

Jean Alston

The purpose of this study tour was to visit the area in which Marianne Holland, the Gaskells' eldest daughter, spent her later years. Her husband, Thurstan Holland, died in 1884, at the age of 48, (also the year of William Gaskell's death). During their married life, Marianne and Thurstan, apart from a short spell at 9 Woburn Square, Bloomsbury, had lived at 1 Sunnyside Wimbledon. By the time of Thurstan's death, Marianne had given birth to seven children, only three of whom survived to adulthood. Our study tour also considered the three grown up children: William Edward, Florence Evelyn and Bryan Thurstan, who all spent their later years in the areas of Bromyard, Worcester and Malvern.

Twenty-four members and friends of the Gaskell Society joined the tour. We began with a visit to Hanbury Hall, Droitwich, where we listened to an introductory talk, toured the William and Mary period hall, and had lunch. Our next call was at Boughton House (now Worcester Golf and Country Club), home of the Isaac family in the 19th Century and where Gaskell and her children visited cousin Charlotte, who had married John Whitmore Isaac. Marianne would have visited Boughton House on several occasions and was later to marry Thurstan, Charlotte's nephew, and son of Sophia (née Isaac), who had married Edward Holland of Dumbleton. We believe we were able to identify portrait paintings of Thurston's (Isaac) grandparents.

In December 1850, a letter from Elizabeth, headed *Boughton House near Worcester* to Lady Kay-Shuttleworth, describes her plans for Marianne's education at a Mrs Lalor's school in Hampstead, and in August, 1856 she wrote to George Smith from Boughton about various aspects of the biography *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*. From Boughton House, we travelled to the Bank House Hotel, where we were to enjoy excellent, newly refurbished accommodation and very good food.

After dinner, many members read from Elizabeth Gaskell's letters and also from those of her daughters. The selection of letters and newspaper extracts referred to Gaskell's management of Marianne as a child, her choice of education for her as a teenager and her concern when Marianne expressed her doubts about the Unitarian faith. The newspaper cuttings described a garden party held by Marianne at Birchyfield and a mishap when her daughter Florence escaped serious injury by jumping from the carriage as the horses became out of control and galloped towards the town of Bromyard. We were later able to see the New Road hill and Queen's Arms Hotel where the horses had eventually crashed through the windows.

Wednesday, 21 May, proved to be a beautiful warm and sunny day when we visited the areas where Marianne persisted in her enjoyment of rural life, which must have been very similar to that of her maternal grandparents in Sandlebridge, Cheshire. We first visited the Church of St Mary Magdalene at Alfrick, where Michael Hood, Churchwarden, showed us Marian's burial record, written in September 1920. This is a beautifully located church with early features such as a twelfth century window and barrel-shaped roof. Unfortunately, there is no evidence of Marianne's grave as most grave inscriptions have been eroded with time.

From the church, we travelled to nearby Alfrick Court, where we were given a very warm welcome by the present owner Maria Fitch. This is a most beautiful house, with fine garden and currently about ten acres of land. The 1911 Census shows Marianne, aged 76, living at Alfrick Court with Florence Evelyn (39) and Bryan Thurston (35), accompanied by a cook, a waitress, two housemaids, a kitchen maid, a groom, a retired governess (visitor) and a six year old boarder.

Alfrick Court

Our lunchtime visit was to Lower Brockhampton NT Estate, where we were given a tour of the moated grounds and a specially arranged preview of more rooms of this 14/15 century manor house (to be opened to the general public later in the year). There was a reference to Dumbleton, which will give us a further task if we attempt to establish links between Lower Brockhampton and Dumbleton Hall, where Thurstan grew up.

The visit to Birchyfield, Avenbury, near to Bromyard, was to the farm occupied by Marianne before she moved to Alfrick Court. Mrs Sue Stephenson, the present owner, welcomed us and allowed us to walk in the garden and field where Marianne had held her garden party to raise funds for the Bicentenary Fund of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in 1901. The house had been built in the 1830s and members commented on several features which are similar to those in the Gaskell house at Plymouth Grove. The report from Birchyfield in the *Bromyard News and Record*, 20 April 1899 about Marianne's daughter Florence and her carriage escapade had been read by us the previous evening at the hotel.

The remainder of the day was spent in Bromyard, where Marianne's family's household shopping and outings would have taken place. Members were able to visit the church and identify many buildings of very early architecture; very little demolition and replacement of buildings had occurred in the last few centuries in Bromyard town centre. A coach drive over Bromyard Down, with a pause for views and short downland walks to observe the magnificent scenes so familiar to Marianne and her children, completed the day's outing.

Thursday, 22 May, our last day, was filled with further visits. We began at Leigh Court Tithe Barn (a few miles from both Boughton House and Alfrick) built in 1340s for the tithes of the monks of Pershore Abbey. This is the largest tithe barn in England with a nine cruck oak structure which would surely have been known to Marianne and family and probably to ECG herself. We then travelled to Kempley, where we visited the two village churches. St Mary's was built early in the 12th Century and has Norman frescoes. It was sobering to realise that the frescoes, still in very good condition, were completed sixty four years after William the Conqueror arrived in England. A mile away in the same village is the Arts and Crafts Church of St Edward the Confessor, built to replace St Mary's, now under the guardianship of English Heritage, where only occasional services are currently held. The new church has contributions from Gimson, Ashbee and Barnsley, all Arts and Crafts designers of considerable repute.

After lunch in Ledbury, we travelled back to Cheshire and Greater Manchester. We had enjoyed our stay in an excellent hotel, had been very fortunate with the weather, had benefited from the good companionship that the Gaskell Society always manages to engender, but we were rather tired and ready for home - until the next Gaskell foray!

Editor adds: Many thanks to Jean for organising this amazing study tour with her usual good humour and weather. To Christine Lingard we offer many thanks for her meticulous research. And thanks are also due to Pam Griffiths for her efficient administration.

A Note of Thanks from Rosemary Donaldson

Rosemary would like to thank everyone for the beautiful flowers that were delivered personally by Pat Heath on Sunday 25 May. These flowers are much appreciated by Rosemary following her untimely accident of the previous week whilst on a short Gaskell study tour. Rosemary had ample opportunity to study Worcestershire Royal Hospital where she received excellent care. Rosemary is now recuperating at home.

Editor adds: Rosemary goes off on a study tour and returns plastered. Well, well! We send Rosemary our very best wishes for a successful recovery after the double fracture to her right arm.

Alliance of Literary Societies, AGM Canterbury 30 May-1 June 2014

Janet Allan

The ALS AGM week-end was hosted by the Marlowe Society in Canterbury.

The sun shone on the sixty people who gathered together at The King's School, Canterbury (as old as the Cathedral itself). Marlowe was a chorister at the Cathedral; later he went to the School and then on to Cambridge. His literary output, including seven plays, contrasts with his a very dodgy life as a spy which ended in his death in a tavern brawl – unless this was a sham and he actually escaped to the Low Countries and pretended to be Shakespeare.

Those of us who had come from afar met on Friday night to enjoy a drink with our President, Jenny Uglow. On Saturday morning we all assembled for a welcome by the Marlowe Society's Chairman George Metcalfe, followed by former Chairman Valerie Colin-Russ who spoke on the colourful life of Marlowe. Professor Richard Wilson then delivered a lecture on 'The Work and Genius of Christopher Marlowe'. A short walk in the sun took us to the statue of a scantily clad (but classical!) female outside the Marlowe Theatre. Here three colourful wreaths were laid by the Sheriff of Canterbury Mr Austen, Christopher Miles on behalf of the Society, and Tim Armstrong for the School. This combination of intellectual and physical exercise

left us in need of the excellent buffet lunch, which was followed by a commendably brief ALS AGM.

During the afternoon the Archivist, Peter Henderson, had arranged a display of the School's Walpole Collection of English Manuscripts, which included MSS from Charlotte and Emily Brontë, Ellen Nussey's description of Charlotte Brontë, a watercolour by Thackeray of Becky Sharp with Jos Sedley, and autographs by Wilkie Collins, T.S. Eliot, John Betjeman, Nelson, Dylan Thomas et al. Keith Carabine gave us a very interesting talk about another Canterbury resident, Joseph Conrad.

After a suitable interval we met for dinner at The Parrot restaurant, in an upstairs room of what may have been a Kentish longhouse in the time of Marlowe. An excellent meal was followed by the traditional readings from various members.

The following day we had a special mention at the 11 o'clock morning service in the Cathedral. Other delights included the Museum with exhibits on Marlowe, Conrad and Mary Tourtel, the creator of Rupert Bear, a river trip, the Canterbury Tales Experience or coffee and cake in the sun.

The whole weekend was a delight and I must record special thanks to the Marlowe Society, in particular, to their Membership and Social Secretary, Frieda Barker, who had worked so hard to make everything flow smoothly. She certainly deserved the bouquet which was presented to her at the dinner!

NB ALS AGM 2015 will be hosted by the Trollope Society in York, 30-31 May.

A Week-end with Mrs Gaskell and Mr Dickens 12-14 September 2014

Howard Gregg will be leading a discussion group on two historical novels: *Sylvia's Lovers* and *A Tale Of Two Cities*.

Venue: The Green Man Hotel, Old Harlow, Essex. From Friday 12th evening until after lunch on Sunday 14th.

Cost: single room: £300; shared twin or double: £260 pp; non-resident £175.

To book or for more information please contact: Marilyn Taylor, 17 Amesbury Road, Epping, Essex CM16 4HZ, tel: 01992 572510
e-mail:johnmarilyn2000@amesbury17.eclipse.co.uk

Forthcoming Society Events

Autumn Meeting

Saturday, September 27, 2014 Methodist Church, Knutsford.

10.30am Tea and coffee

11.00am Fran Twinn will deliver the Joan Leach Memorial Lecture: The Many 'Mes' of Mrs Gaskell

12.30pm approx. Lunch

2.00pm Geoffrey Scargill: Father and son, Absalom and Edward Watkin

3.30pm approx. finish

Cost £15 to include lunch, (£5 without lunch)

Sunday September 28

10.45am Placing of flowers on the Gaskell Grave at Brook Street Chapel

11.00am Service at Brook Street Chapel

North-West Group

Manchester Meetings
The Manchester meetings will be held at 1.00pm on the first Tuesday of the month (October to March excluding January) in Cross Street Chapel, Manchester (across from The Royal Exchange).

The Chapel will usually be open from noon for lunch (bring your own, coffee available) in the Percival Room where the lectures will be given at 1.00pm.

Tuesday 7 October
Robert Poole: *The Pendle Witch Trials*

Tuesday 4 November
Paul Ross: *Attitudes of Victorian travellers and explorers towards Africa and Africans*

Tuesday 2 December
TBA

Tuesday 3 February
Karen Laird: *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*

Tuesday 3 March
Simon Rennie: *Ernest Jones and Chartism*

The Gaskell Society is running a day school on *Mary Barton* at 84 Plymouth Grove (written in 1847 before the Gaskells moved there) on Saturday 8 November. Angus Easson, Alan Shelston and Mike Sanders will deliver lectures.

After lunch, poet Edwin Stockdale and balladeer Jennifer Reid will offer entertainment.

Details of this and the following event will soon be on the new website: www.elizabethgaskellhouse.co.uk

Before this major day there will be a book launch on 14 October. Carolyn Lambert author of *The Meanings of Home in Elizabeth Gaskell's Fiction* (Victorian Secrets, 2013) will sign her book in the Gaskell home.

Knutsford Meetings
These meetings held in St John's Church Centre will resume on Wednesday 29 October and continue on the last Wednesday of each month (excluding December) until and including April.

Buffet Lunch (£10, please pay on arrival; if not having lunch, please pay £3) available from 12.15 with literary talk and discussion led by Elizabeth Williams to follow, at about 1.30. Meetings end around 3.00.

In October we shall be studying *A Hard Night's Work*.

After this small 200 page volume, we shall move on to *The Moorland Cottage* followed by *Libbie Marsh's Three Eras*, if time permits.

New Year Lunch
Wednesday 14 January 2015. Further details TBA.

Annual General Meeting

Saturday 18 April 2015, Cross Street Unitarian Church, Manchester. Further details TBA

The Gaskell Society South-West

Sunday, 7 September, 2014, 12.30 pm
We will hold our Summer Lunch party at the home of Boyd and Elizabeth Schlenther, 14 Vellore Lane, Bath, and as usual it will be a Bring and Share event.

If you wish to come, please phone Veronica Trenchard (01225 852155), who will confirm your booking and ask you what you would like to bring.

Saturday, 15 November 2014, 2.30 pm
We welcome back to Bath Elizabeth Williams, Vice-Chairwoman of the national Gaskell Society, to talk to us about Fanny Trollope, another interesting Victorian author. The meeting will be at the usual venue of the BRLSI, Queen's Square in Bath, and we look forward to seeing as many of you as possible there.

The cost will be £2 for members of the Gaskell Society and the BRLSI and £4 for all others. Coffee and tea will be available after the lecture.

As a 'taster' for next year, our book for discussion in February will be *Cranford* and the date will be announced later.

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

London and South-East Group

Saturday, September 13, 2014
Train Trip to Plymouth Grove to see Mrs Gaskell's newly refurbished home.

Saturday November 8, 2014
Dr. Rebecca Styler Editor of the Gaskell Journal. 'The Maternal Image of God 1840 to 1920'. The talk will reflect Mrs Gaskell's work.

Saturday February 7 2015
Dr. Ann Brooks and Bryan Haworth. 'The other side of Manchester.' Ann and Bryan will put Manchester in a social context. Their research has focused on Manchester so they are knowledgeable about the city in Mrs Gaskell's time.

Saturday May 9, 2015
Dr Irene Wiltshire. 'The letters of Mrs Gaskell's daughters 1856 -1914'. These

letters have been compiled and edited by Irene and were published in 2012 by Humanities – Ebooks. She will talk to us about her work and the letters.

Venue: Francis Holland School, Graham Terrace, London
This is the provisional programme for 2014-2015. Domestic arrangements will be as usual.

Notes

The Gaskell Society

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2015 - Number 59

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

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs. Helen Smith, 11 Lowland Way, Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 9AG.
Telephone - 01565 632615 E-mail: helenisabel@ntlworld.com

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Editor's Letter

Helen Smith

Welcome to Spring 2015 Newsletter and a Happy New Year to one and all.

It will be one hundred and fifty years in November since the death of Mrs Gaskell. And it is the year of our biennial Conference, to which we hope to welcome many from home and from abroad. Details of this major happening and of the AGM are enclosed with this Newsletter. Please peruse, digest and reply.

Thinking of the home front, we are all thrilled and really excited that Mrs Gaskell's house has re-opened – it really has ... 'It certainly is a beauty.' Congratulations to Manchester Historic Buildings Trust which owns the building and to all who have contributed to this re-creation. Mrs Gaskell would be amazed at the central heating, electric lights, wonderful drains and even a lift. She would probably be deafened by the traffic passing outside and the screeching ambulances with blue flashing lights as they speed to A&E at the nearby hospital.
(See www.elizabethgaskellhouse.co.uk for full details of opening hours and events)

We thank Janet Kennerley for organising the New Year lunch on 14 January, at Cottons, just north of Knutsford, the same popular venue as last year. After an exceptionally fine meal, Rosemary Donaldson recited four choice extracts from Shakespeare which were probably known to Mrs Gaskell. Christine Lingard then entertained us with amusing reminiscences from the Society's first 29 years. Many thanks to Rosemary and Christine.

It has been suggested that the Gaskell Society with its branches and many members world-wide might hold simultaneous (time zones permitting) tea parties on Saturday 14 November 2015 which is the Saturday closest to the actual anniversary of Mrs Gaskell's death on 12 November 1865. Do please bear in mind the Cranford principle of elegant economy, and no vulgarly ostentatious rivalry between branches will be tolerated. Seed-cake and Savoy biscuits should be appropriate fare on these occasions. No further guidelines will be issued.

> ... all that live must die,
> Passing through nature to eternity.

In early October 2014 Marjorie Cox died after a short period in a nursing-home. Marjorie was a fine academic historian who always preferred research to teaching and a talented violinist who greatly enjoyed playing chamber music. Marjorie contributed to the Newsletter in the past. She had long been a leading light in her local history society and was very much liked, and will be very much missed, by all who knew her. Our condolences to her family-in-law as she no longer had any living blood relations.

On 23 October 2014 Doreen Pleydell reached the end of her very long and very active life. I am deeply moved that she dictated the article for this Newsletter only four days before her death in hospital.

Doreen and her husband John were regular attenders at all Gaskell events since the Society began in 1986. Doreen served on the Committee (hosting the meetings), entertained members from home and overseas and had latterly become a regular contributor to the Newsletter. We shall sorely miss Doreen with her pertinent remarks at the Wednesday meetings, and at all times we shall miss her positive, forward- and outward-looking attitude to life. We send our deepest sympathy to John and to the family. We look forward to John's continuing presence at our local meetings.

The words written by William Gaskell for his dear wife's memorial (which survived the air attack in 1940) in Cross Street Chapel (which did not survive) ... [she was] 'endeared by her rare graces of mind and heart to all by whom she was known' could equally be applied to our departed friends.

To all alive or dead who have contributed to this Newsletter, I offer grateful thanks. Please keep writing. Christine Lingard has written an article on Marianne for the Autumn Newsletter and there will also be a report of the Conference. As ever, we appreciate Rebecca's painstaking diligence at iPrint down the cobbles in Red Cow Yard here in Knutsford.

Deadline for Autumn Newsletter: 22 July 2015.

Charitable Works

Doreen Pleydell 19 October 2014

In 1862 it was the height of the American Civil War between the North and the South. As a consequence, the flow of raw cotton supply to England was interrupted. Many people in the cotton industry in the North West of England were without work. With no welfare support, people risked destitution, even starvation, so Mrs Gaskell decided to act. A prolific letter writer, she did not hesitate to ask both friends and acquaintances for help. She approached Charles Dickens with a request to be put in touch with Angela Burdett-Coutts, a famous philanthropist. He duly obliged. She gave generously.

Elizabeth also called upon her friends to assist in more modest ways. They were asked to provide cloth to make cloaks to protect the unemployed workers from the winter chill.

When the American Civil War ended the cotton trade resumed and the workers were re-employed. Mrs Gaskell's attention moved to other pressing social issues.

Editor adds: Doreen was on oxygen in Macclesfield District General Hospital, when she dictated this article to her son-in-law, David Rushforth. Doreen died peacefully four days later. RIP dear Doreen.

Domestic Medicine: with Some Notes about Mercury Treatment

Angus Easson

'There was a tailor had a mouse
(Hi teedle tum tum teedle)
They lived together in one house...
The tailor thought his mouse was ill...
He gave him part of a blue pill...'

So the tailor of Ramsey treated his mouse (who died); so Elizabeth Gaskell treated one of her ducks, which, cured, went 'quacking about like a respectable, well-behaved fowl' (*Letters*, p.l88; hereafter, all simple page refs are to *Letters*). What were blue pills and what was another popular medication of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, calomel? Both pills and power are probably familiar names to modern readers of the literature of the period and the present investigation is prompted by Elizabeth Williams's talk on Mrs Frances (Fanny) Trollope, mother of Anthony. Referring to Fanny's husband, Anthony Snr, Elizabeth touched on his treating severe headaches with calomel (described by his son, Thomas Adolphus, in his autobiography, *What I Remember*, 2 vols, 1887) and briefly outlined calomel's nature – based on mercury, as were blue pills. Both were dangerous if taken incorrectly (they were often self-ministered), as Mrs Gaskell observes of a mutual acquaintance, who having been overdosed, passed into salivation (a common result of mercury) and her complexion entirely ruined.

Up until the 1860s at least, when drugs began to be more strictly controlled, many medicines and medical ingredients were readily available and many households prepared their own pills and draughts and lotions and ointments, often with ingredients, which today are unused or regarded with a certain horrid fascination. Domestic Medicine was taken for granted and guides, both medical and domestic, gave directions for preparation and use. Widely known was William Buchan's *Domestic Medicine*, first published in 1769, reaching a fifteenth edition by 1797, though seen as decidedly old-fashioned by the 1850s when Dickens gently mocks it in *Little Dorrit*: when the Meagleses are abroad, their housekeeper sits in

the window with Buchan's volume, but never reading a word (ch.16). For the mid-century, decidedly more reliable was Thomas Andrew's encyclopaedic *Domestic Medicine and Surgery* (1849). How *domestic* such medical aids were is underlined by Isabella Beeton's *Book of Household Management* (1861), which includes sections on nursing and nurses, medical advice ('The Doctor') with a list of drugs necessary to carry out instructions, and what to do in cases of poisoning from such 'domestic' items as arsenic, opium, prussic acid, and mercury.

What was the domestic medicine of the Gaskell household like? And did they resort to blue pills or calomel? Reading the letters, necessarily the main source of information, might well give the impression that the chief enemies were stomach upset and related problems of indigestion, 'liverishness' (William 'not well with his liver'; p.635), and bowels – the results in part at least of diet and a sedentary life. Mrs Gaskell herself refers to taking 'little doses of medecine', pills, and a tonic (all unspecified; e.g. pp.594, 906-7, 938). More particularly she refers to the rum and peppermint given her by a friendly girl in a Mannheim confectioner's shop as good for the headache (p.519), with the subsequent embarrassment of trying not to breathe rum over Charles Bosanquet. Not that she was adverse to alcohol as a remedy or consolation. When Meta was about to have her tonsils out and the doctor had recommended she have 'a glass of sherry at one o'clock' (p.919), her mother adds 'I think Mrs Gaskell will have one too'. Sherry was often used to boost cookery: Mrs Beeton will note that a glass of sherry improves a recipe and Mrs Gaskell in 1865 was pleased Hearn seemed very well: she was giving her sherry every day, twice (p.781). In a different way, Meta's health contributed to Mrs Gaskell's getting a good night's rest, 'owing to Meta's b—y bottle!!' (p.755), a bottle clearly for brandy, Mrs Gaskell thinking she needed more of the 'mysterious fluid' to replace Meta's store. Less heady was Mrs Gaskell's advice to an unknown lady correspondent to take a cup of hop-tea every morning (p.694).

Out and about, visiting, Mrs Gaskell clearly carried supplies, since having some with her, she could dose Mrs Littlewood's daughter with a Gregory Powder: another proprietary medicine of the period – calcined magnesia (compare our Milk of Magnesia), powered rhubarb, and ginger – a gentle laxative and 'stomachic' given in doses of one to four teaspoons 'in a little peppermint water' (Thomas Andrew: entries in *Domestic Medicine* are alphabetical). Specific remedies that Mrs Gaskell used herself sound more disturbing: she and Meta both in 1860 were '*scarified* raw' by mustard plaisters (p.603). More disturbing because of poisonous qualities are Mrs Gaskell's use of aconite and of prussic acid. Aconite or monkshood (Andrew has it first in 8 finely etched and hand-coloured plates of poisonous plants), 'virulent as a poison', says Andrew, though used in the cure and relief of several diseases. Mrs Gaskell followed a process that Andrew describes for tic doloureux, she recommending it also for neuralgia in the form of an ointment – attributed by Andrew to Dr. Turnbull – Mrs Gaskell calls it viratria ointment ('viratria' is unknown to Andrew and the *OED*). Mrs Gaskell was recommended it by her

physician cousin, Henry Holland: a pin's head quantity on flannel rubbed externally on the skin where 'the agonized nerve shoots up'; she also had it rubbed on her temple (pp.250-1). The 'pin's head' suggests the caution necessary in using aconite. Yet more disturbing given its reputation is Mrs Gaskell's reference to prussic acid.

In 1860, suffering from a dreadful headache brought on by thunder, she had needed to lie down and have 'my prussic acid medicine made up' (p.912). Prussic acid, or hydrocyanic acid, is 'one of the most powerful poisons derived from the vegetable kingdom' (Andrew), notorious for its use in detective fiction and the smell of bitter almonds by which even the amateur sleuth can identify it. And yet, says Andrew, 'this most virulent poison, in the hands of a skilful physician, may be the means of snatching many a victim from an untimely grave' (Andrew, under 'hydrocyanic acid'). Mrs Gaskell's headache did not place her on the brink, but Andrew has no mention of its use for headaches, though he sets out possible uses in consumption (T.B.), cholera, and a range of less desperate illnesses, as asthma, whooping cough, hiccups, indigestion and tic doloureux. 'Affections' of the nervous system, under which headaches might be classed, could be treated by prussic acid, but no directions are given in Andrew's *'Domestic Pharmacopeia'*, since he insists it should only be prepared for medical use by a professional. Thunder, as a cause of headache, is well known and one might also note Mrs Gaskell's sensitivity, not excessive surely, to paint smells when Plymouth Grove was being redecorated, to the foul drains of the house, and most noticeably to the depressive effect, experienced particularly in Manchester, of darkness and cloudy skies (p. 745), perhaps an early example, under Manchester smoke, of SAD.

Mrs Gaskell was necessarily concerned about her children's health and we find her pressing Marianne to keep up with her steel (or iron) pills (p.297), often recommended as a strengthening pill in cases of chlorosis (the 'green sickness'), associated with female debility, including flatulence and dyspepsia, at the onset of puberty. The pills, which had iron filings as the active ingredient, were clearly preventative for Marianne, rather than cure. Meta was more of a problem or else we have more evidence from the letters. Besides tonsils and the mustard plaisters already mentioned, her mother made her take aloetic pills (p.518), a laxative made up from aloes (the Barbadoes and the Cape aloes were used only by veterinary surgeons and farriers; the Socotorine aloes for humans). By 1865, Meta was suffering severely from a painful back, which constantly threatened to bring on bouts of hysterical crying (p.741). She was prescribed meat and bitter beer, while in late 1864, at Brighton, warm sea-water douches were tried (p.744).

And so back to mercury treatment, in the domestic resources, whether for mouse, duck, or humans. Mercury was widely used and indeed until late in the nineteenth century was the chief remedy for syphilis – Restoration comedy has numerous 'sly' jokes linking spitting and the disease, since mercury brings on salivation. Indeed,

it was often suggested by later observers (no doubt a mark of their boldness!), of anyone recorded to have taken mercury in any form that syphilis was the reason. So Keats was said to be a sufferer, but while he undoubtedly took mercury in some form, it was used for a range of conditions (see W.J.Bate, *John Keats*, 1963, p.219 & fn, for a brisk refutation of the slur). Nor has anyone suggested Charlotte Brontë was syphilitic, though she declared she had a 'sharp medical discipline to undergo', clearly calomel or the blue pills. This was for 'derangement of the liver' (*Life of Charlotte Brontë*, ed. Easson. 1996. p.398) and various stomach disorders. Calomel was commonly used as a 'corrective' or 'alterative' for stomach and bowels: hence the importance of mercury-based remedies in the domestic pharmacopeia.

What then were calomel and the blue pill? In both cases the active ingredient is based on mercury, as an oxide or chloride, since pure mercury, the liquid metal, could not be taken directly. Calomel, as Isabella Beeton notes in her section on the domestic pharmacopeia, was a 'heavy white powder, without taste, and insoluble in water' (para.2658), administered in small quantities, often combined with other purgative medicaments, such as rhubarb. (How small is a small quantity? Andrew recommended, as an anti-bilious medicine, 3 to 5 grains, small indeed when 680 grains make one ounce.) Blue pills were based on mercury beaten (Andrew admises) with conserve of roses, so that the metal oxidises, and the pill then made up with 'pill mass', a variable non-active ingredient to give the pills solidity. Both calomel and blue pill were regarded as 'alteratives' for stomach and bowel disorders, settling disgestion, with mild laxative effects.

In both forms they were in general domestic use (the nearest modern parallel might be aspirin or paracetamol), often presumably with little understanding of their effects, despite warnings. Andrew cautions against the salivation that might result from too frequent or over-dosing, as with Mrs Gaskell's acquaintance. Blue pills, at hand for mouse or duck, were presumably amongst the remedies for stomach and bowels in the Gaskell household. Which leads back to Anthony Trollope Snr and his headaches. Dr Andrew deals, under Headache, with varieties of the condition, including the Nervous. Nervous headaches arise, he suggests, from a sedentary life, particularly amongst advocates, barristers, clergymen, and maiden ladies. For these classes of people, lack of exercise combined with want of a proper diet, often to dire effect. Andrew's various recommendations, apart from exercise and proper eating, include 'mercurials' – calomel or blue pills. Hence the failed lawyer and failed farmer, Trollope Snr, brooding on his wrongs and his sons' educational short-comings, developed nervous headaches and so had recourse to calomel. In what doses he took it or how frequently is unknown, but he is more than likely to have over-dosed, and in the end, without any real occupation, seeing his unreasonable aspirations for his sons frustrated, without exercise, the effects are likely to have been adverse rather than beneficial.

Endnote: A friend, to whom I mentioned this article, said that his mother in the 1940s used to dose him with calomel pills, for liverishness.

Elizabeth Gaskell and Charles Thurstan Holland – another Liverpool connection

AJ Larner

Elizabeth Gaskell was a descendant of the Holland family through her mother, Elizabeth (1764-1812). The wide ramifications of the Holland family extended to Liverpool, in the shape of her maternal grandfather Samuel Holland (1734-1816), as has been documented by Christine Lingard.[1] It also encompassed relatives qualified in the medical profession, including her maternal uncle Peter (1766-1855) and, perhaps most notably, his son and Elizabeth Gaskell's cousin Henry (1788-1873), later Sir Henry Holland, 1st Baronet,[2] from whom she may on occasion have received medical advice, for example for the treatment of headaches with sal volatile.[3]

In my work as a doctor in Liverpool, with an interest in medical history, I was fascinated to learn of Dr Charles Thurstan Holland (1863-1941), whose portrait by Copthall hangs in the Liverpool Medical Institution (where I currently hold the position of Honorary Librarian). Knowing something of Elizabeth Gaskell,[4,5] and of her Thurstan Holland relatives, perhaps most notably Edward Thurstan Holland (1836-1884) who married her eldest daughter Marianne (1834-1920), it seemed to me inevitable that Charles Thurstan Holland must be related to the author, and so it has proved to be, albeit the relationship is a distant one.[6]

Their common ancestor would appear to be John Holland of Mobberley (1656-1712/3). He was the father of sons, John and Thomas, both born in 1690 and possibly twins. John Holland (1690-1770) was the father of Samuel Holland, Elizabeth's maternal grandfather. Thomas Holland (1690-1753) initiated a line of Thomas Hollands (born 1725/6, 1760, and 1794), the latter being the Reverend Thomas Crompton Holland (1794-1861), who was the father of William Thomas Holland, the father of Charles Thurstan Holland.[6] Hence, Charles Thurstan Holland's great-great-great-grandfather was the great-great-uncle of Elizabeth Gaskell.

Charles Thurstan Holland was born in Bridgwater, Somerset, and trained in medicine at University College in London, qualifying in 1888. He became a general practitioner in Liverpool, based in fashionable Princes Street, and also worked as one of the senior assistants to Robert (later Sir Robert) Jones (1857-1933), an orthopaedic surgeon who held a free Sunday clinic in Elson Street. It was here that Thurstan Holland's interest in X-rays, which was to shape his whole subsequent career, first developed. [7]

Robert Jones was consulted about a boy who had shot himself in the hand. When the pellet could not be detected on surgical probing, the possibility of using the

new-fangled X-rays was considered, and the help of the head of the physics department at the University of Liverpool, Oliver Lodge (1851-1940), was solicited.[8] Thurstan Holland was present when the X-ray was undertaken on 7th February 1896, locating the bullet embedded in the third carpo-metacarpal joint, as subsequently reported in *The Lancet* on 22nd February.[9] From this beginning, Jones purchased X-ray apparatus and asked Thurstan Holland to operate it, initially from quarters in the basement of the Royal Southern Hospital in Liverpool, moving to the Royal Infirmary in 1904 where Thurstan Holland stayed until his retirement in 1923. In 1896 alone, Thurstan Holland undertook 261 clinical radiological examinations, as well as, on 23rd October 1896, that of a mummy bird. This took a three-minute exposure and Thurstan Holland apparently said that it was 'a relief to have something to examine that would keep still and which was not frightened by our apparatus, the sparks, and so on'. This study effectively initiated the application of radiological techniques to the study of ancient antiquities.

During the First World War Thurstan Holland held the rank of Major in the Royal Army Medical Corps, and was Consultant Radiologist to Western Command. His very first radiological experience proved useful, as he developed a depth finder to assist in the radiological detection of bullets in injured soldiers.

Thurstan Holland had a distinguished career in radiology, publishing over 100 papers in the national and international literature, twice serving as president of the Roentgen Ray Society (1904 and 1916) and then of its successor society, the British Institute of Radiology in 1929. He was President of the first International Congress of Radiology in London in 1925. Some of his radiological apparatus is on display at the Victoria Museum, Brownlow Hill, in Liverpool.

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Victorian Women Novelists, Gossip and Creativity

Brenda McKay

In a paper on Elizabeth Gaskell and Gossip, as yet unpublished but delivered to the Gaskell Society, Elizabeth Williams concludes: 'I could never refute the idea of Mrs Gaskell as a gossip – her letters provide far too much evidence to the contrary' (p10). This is a sentiment with which one readily agrees. But, as Mrs Williams also shows, a love of 'news' and 'stories' (though occasionally malicious) is bound up with the art of story-telling. This art of course requires other ingredients, like accurate research and imaginative reconstruction. Mrs Gaskell's female peers also were much addicted to gossip as, arguably, most creative writers are. On hearing that Tottie Fox was about to marry an unknown man in Italy, Mrs Gaskell wrote to her much-loved friend's father: 'My dear Mr Fox,/ ... *Do be a woman* and give *all possible details*...[;] my, our curiosity CAN'T [wait]... [Y]ou can't write enough'.[1]

In this letter Mrs Gaskell concedes her passion for unconstrained, easy chat about persons and social incidents, especially about someone well-known to her – all food for the imagination. She also suggests, half-jokingly, that scandal is a female aberration, and that Mr Fox needs to 'be a woman' to relay very detailed information; Mrs Gaskell here nods playfully to the myth of women being, quite simply, gossips – an attitude quite prevalent among many educated men roughly between 1770 and 1900. This bias implied that education should be closed to women, since whereas intellectual men were 'by nature' philosophers, women would taint philosophy and rigorous thought into back-biting.

Heaven forbid that we should buy into this misogynist myth! After all, the pleasures of gossip are hardly altered by gender or cultural background. Nevertheless, this paper – to be presented in instalments due to lack of space – will show that almost all these accomplished Victorian women writers enjoyed 'talk' (just like their male counterparts): George Eliot, Charlotte Brontë, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Jane Welsh Carlyle and Harriet Martineau: and the last two were certainly the most spiteful. We revere certain writers as icons, and don't like mean comments about them. We shall, however, look at some of these, since bitters are said to be wholesome. And why, we might well ask, did Jane Carlyle think, bizarrely, that Mrs Gaskell was actually a 'dangerous' distorter of information?

Of course each wrote many available details about female (and male) writers, whom they would have seen either as role models, competitors, or irritating imitators. But it must be stressed that all these women were also exemplars of 19th-century earnestness, eager to do good and contribute to the wealth of humanity. So far from matching the myth that 'educated' women debased intellectual discourse, I hope to show that lapses into aggressive tongue-wagging was – at times – a process by which scandal, related eagerly, led to guilt and consequently to re-assessment, and a new engagement with details in an attempt at understanding human action.

Gossip could crystallise into art. Or, occasionally, it led simply to guilt followed by retraction, or quarrelling such as happened when Charlotte Brontë fell out permanently with Harriet Martineau over the latter's public criticisms of *Villette* as (frankly) too obsessively erotic – this despite earlier vows of 'eternal friendship' (*G.L.*, p.96). George Eliot could write pleading letters to friends begging for discretion after indulging in gossip – for instance about Agnes Lewes, her beloved partner George Henry Lewes's legal wife. And typically, Mrs Gaskell wrote after a letter containing racy details about the 'very vain' Effie Gray (who took steps to annul her marriage to Ruskin on the grounds of non-consummation; Ruskin himself 'forgave her many scrapes in Venice'): 'Oh! Mr Forster, if you don't burn my letters as you read them I shall never forgive you!' (*G.L.*, p288). This particular letter – which Elizabeth Williams quotes in detail, and shows to be nuanced with shifts in tone and attempts to be fair, and even sympathises with Effie's difficult situation – nevertheless ends thus: 'She [Effie] really is very close to a charming character; if she had had small pox she should have been so. I'm sure you'll not repeat what I've said...' (ibid). This is a *bon mot* worthy of Thackeray's comment that Becky Sharp would have been a good woman on £10,000 a year. As Mrs Gaskell conceded to a correspondent in March, 1860: 'I still consider you as a perpetual fount of literary gossip; for which I feel rather thirsty, having had none for a long time' (*G.L.*, 604). Naturally Mrs Gaskell was aware of the dire consequences of indiscretion – as she shows in *Wives and Daughters*, when Mrs Gibson is found to have been listening behind the door to her doctor husband's confidential discussion with a patient, and doesn't have the intelligence to quite grasp that she has done wrong by repeating what she had heard.

There were times when gossip could be extremely judgemental, in line with narrow, strict 'Victorian morality'. One might wonder who was behaving *least* ethically: the victim or the gossip? Some artists were deeply wounded by cruel talk; but, as Charlotte Brontë commented in her Preface to the Second Edition of *Jane Eyre* after some poison darts had been shot at her by reviewers, 'Conventionality is not morality. Self-righteousness is not religion, [....] and appearance should not be mistaken for Truth'. Gossip is itself on occasion misused in an attempt to whitewash acts of malicious aggression as in the case of Miss Rigby's notorious review of *Jane Eyre*. Certainly, also, scandal could cement friendships between women, especially when they shared the same prejudices; piquant information also bonded people even when it cut across a wide spectrum of social attitudes. Awareness that gossip could stereotype – and only told one version of a story, which in itself was impossibly crude and condemnatory – certainly was an element that sparked creativity in these artists. Bare facts that were rigid and conformist were in fact insufficient to give a rounded picture. Creative thinking and empathy were needed to delineate the whole anecdote comprehensively.

Like Shakespeare himself, many of these women writers also, of course, utilized older histories, or tales in current circulation. That most stately of novels, *Sylvia's Lovers* (1863), was a combination of topographical study, research, interviews,

gossip, and a myth-making project, all going back in historical time, and transmuted by the novelist's fecund imagination into a fine work of art. The narrator intimates as much about the complexity of narrative in the concluding Chapter, 45: '[T]he memory of man fades away. A few old people still tell you the tradition of the man who died in a cottage somewhere about this spot, – died of starvation while his wife lived in hard-hearted plenty not two stones-throw away. This is the form in which popular feeling, and ignorance of the real facts, have moulded the story. Not long since a lady went to the Public Baths ..., and had some talk with the bathing woman; and, as it chanced, the conversation fell on Philip Hepburn and the legend of his fate'.

> "I knew an old man when I was a girl," said the bathing lady, "as could niver bide to hear the wife blamed... [H]e used to say as it were not fit for me to be judging; that she had her own sore trial, as well as Hepburn hisself."

To what extent this itinerant narrator is Mrs Gaskell herself, and how factual such pictures are, we can never be certain; they may be disingenuous inventions of the author's, to give her story verisimilitude. What Mrs Gaskell would definitely have heard on her visit to Whitby were details about the 1793 riots in that town – a public outburst of rage at the tragedies caused to families by the harsh practices of the Press-gang. As a consequence, an old man of 70, William Atkinson, was hanged by judicial process at York castle – an event which Gaskell used in *Sylvia's Lovers*. Mrs Gaskell in fact lodged with old Atkinson's descendants while in Whitby. The daughters of the family remembered 'with distinctness their grandmother, Mrs Huntrods,... being closeted day after day with Mrs Gaskell at 1 Abbey Terrace', for the novelist to ascertain all she could about the affair, so certainly some elements of these chats were put into the story: Mrs Gaskell's gregariousness and ability to be class-mobile benefited her greatly in such encounters.[2] Mrs Gaskell also applied to the Admiralty for accurate information about attacks on the Press-gang's headquarters and did research in the British Museum. She also chatted to a well-known Whitby character, 'Fat old Fish Jane' (ibid). This mixture of gossip, painstaking research, the author's private, unknown and *personal* experiences, and imagination tells us something about the creative process; and the *modus operandi* used here was certainly also utilized for research into Charlotte Brontë's *Life*. Of *Sylvia's Lovers* George Eliot wrote that she hoped it was 'finding a just appreciation. It seems to me of a very high quality, both in feeling and execution'.[3]

A similar reinterpretation from local narrative, embroidered by the imagination from local myth, came to George Eliot as inspiration for her 'difficult' novel, *Romola* (1863). This historical romance, set in late 15th-century Florence, has a particularly exceptional, even remarkable character, Eliot's 'Macchiavel', Tito Melema, who brings the novel into great vividness whenever he appears. Tito's role in the book is that of a beautiful, amiable young man's psychology – his slow descent into corruption and evil, until he inflicts terrible betrayals on his adoptive

father and everyone else he comes into contact with. The germ of his story derived from a narrative of 'noble vengeance' told to Eliot by an old German general, which she recorded in her Journal:

> A man of wealth in Rome adopted a poor boy he had found in the street. This boy turned out a great villain and having previously entered the church managed by a series of arts to possess himself of a legal title to his benefactor's property, and finally ordered him to quit his own house, telling him he was no longer master. The outraged man killed the villain on the spot. He was imprisoned, tried, and condemned for murder. When in prison he refused to have a confessor. He said, "I wish to go to Hell, for he is there, and I want to follow out my revenge."[4]

The novel itself ends where the adoptive son, having been stalked by his betrayed and abandoned father for years, is captured by the old man near the river. Exhausted by age and suffering and intense excitement, the old man himself dies after strangling his son. The two are found dead, inseparable, with the father's hands still clutching his son's throat and neck. In her Journal Eliot wrote: 'Killed Tito in great excitement!'[5] The Nemesis is here completed.

About 6 years earlier, Mrs Gaskell had been profoundly moved by her reading of Eliot's *Scenes of Clerical Life* (1857) and *Adam Bede* (1859). She experienced disquiet at the news, after much ramification of rumour, that the writer was actually the 'notorious' Marian Evans, about whom there was considerable scandal (as 'a translator of atheistic books from German, the open lover of the already-married George Henry Lewes, and the erstwhile Editor of the radical *Westminster Review*'). But Mrs Gaskell ultimately re-assessed her initial, rather hostile views on Eliot; and, agog for information, wrote to George Smith, lamenting the family's 'isolation from the usual sources of gos[sip]':

> Curiosity comes before friendship ... send us PLEASE a long account of what she [George Eliot] is like &c &c &c &c, – eyes nose mouth, dress &c for facts, and then – if you would – your impression of her , – which we won't tell anybody ... Oh! Do please comply with this humble request (G.L., 586-7).

To Eliot, Mrs Gaskell had written a few admiring letters, finally writing:

> Since I have heard, from authority, that you are the author of [Clerical Scenes and Adam Bede], I have read them again; and I must, once more, tell you how earnestly fully, and humbly I admire them. I never read anything so complete, and beautiful in fiction, in my whole life before. I said 'humbly'... because I remembered Dr Johnson's words (*G.L.*, 592).

Dr Johnson's words had been addressed to Hannah More, a writer whose

unremitting, fulsome flattery provoked him: 'Dearest lady, consider what your flattery is worth, before you bestow it so freely.'[6]

Though perhaps writing, in part, tongue-in-cheek to Eliot, Mrs Gaskell still self-effacingly places herself, metaphorically, at the feet of a woman she considered a literary giant. This is too modest. As Barbara Hardy has justly asserted, '*North and South*, *Cousin Phillis*, and *Wives and Daughters* played a part in the making of *Middlemarch*, and stand comparison with it'.[7] Mrs Gaskell added that she rated Eliot's novella, *Janet's Repentance*, above all – a work of fiction somewhat controversial when it first appeared. In some respects based closely on knowledge of and gossip about people Eliot knew in her youth, it is about a wife-beating, drunken lawyer, and his noble wife's desperate efforts to overcome her own alcoholism – a theme that alarmed Eliot's publisher, Blackwood. The redoubtable Harriet Martineau was pleased to proclaim this work as pervaded with 'a moral squalor as bad as Dickens's ugliness'.

Those familiar with the large-hearted tolerance of Eliot's novels might be surprised at her occasional severity of judgement and mordant wit when turning to her fine journalism, written mostly before she embarked on fiction-writing. Also, the letters written before the self-conscious days of her fame, but after her abandonment of the Calvinist Evangelicalism which blighted her youth, are often extremely lively. To a correspondent she wrote about the novelist, playwright, abolitionist and religious fanatic, Hannah More (who had annoyed Dr Johnson):

> I am glad you detest Mrs Hannah More's letters. I like neither her letters nor her books, nor her character. She was that most disagreeable of monsters, a blue-stocking – a monster that can only exist in a miserable state of society, in which a woman with but a smattering of learning or philosophy is classed along with singing mice and card-playing pigs' (G.E.L., 1, 245).

The point made – delineated with more sophistication in her later essay, 'Silly Novels by Lady Novelists' – is that incompetent writings by badly-taught women increased prejudice against female education as well as against women as artists, who in consequence tended to be judged 'incapable by nature' and not quite 'respectable'; worse, 'to have written well – for a woman'. Initially resentful of Calvinist writers like More, who had adversely influenced her when young, Eliot had come to enjoy 'the bracing air of independence', once liberated from being 'chained to the wretched giant's bed of dogma' on which her soul 'had been racked... ' (*G.E.L.*,1; 125,162). The freed, still youthful Eliot tended to react angrily toward some authors of an extreme religious bent, though she was to gain poise and objectivity after a time.

An excellent and denunciatory article which provoked some talk was written by Eliot in January, 1857, on the 18th-century poet Edward Young, much of whose verse she, as a pious girl, had learnt by heart. We might now call it *tabloidesque* because

of its sensationalist opening, followed by dramatic re-assessment of Young. The imagery is always powerful, and the piece is characterized by considerable depth. It is part of the controversy over religion and agnosticism typical of its time, which preoccupied the Victorians as much as sex has done in our own age, and was a species of gossip despite its finished elegance. It would have interested Mrs Gaskell, who as a Unitarian was tolerant of dissent of various kinds, and she noted that Eliot was the translator of Strauss.

Young's belief that decency ends with the abandonment of religious belief ('virtue with immortality expires') was an idea that infuriated Eliot. She writes: 'If it were not for the prospect of immortality, he [Young] considers, it would be wise and agreeable to be indecent, or to murder one's father; and it would be extremely irrational in any man not to be a knave'.[8] This article reconsiders, in a spirit of controlled rage, his character: 'an unmistakable poet' with 'a real spark of promethean fire' (*ibid*, 338) – who sees religion as a stepping-stone for worldly ambition: he feels 'something more than private disgust if his meritorious efforts in directing men's attention to another world are not rewarded by preferment in this'; he clothes 'his astronomical religion and his charnel-house morality in lasting verse, which will stand, like a Juggernaut of gold and jewels, at once magnificent and repulsive' (338); he 'believes in cambric bands and silk stockings as characteristic attire for "an ornament of religion and virtue" ' (ibid). Boswell had thought Young's *Night Thoughts* 'a mass of the grandest poetry human genius has ever produced' (cited in ibid, 335): Eliot considered it vicious rhetoric, 'a clay compounded chiefly of the worldling and the rhetorician' – written by a known rake but, exceptionally, 'a pious and moralizing rake' (*E*, 340). The critique of this mixture of the 'sychophant and the psalmist' is interesting alike for its astute analysis of the dark, self-betraying, *unconscious* subtexts in his poetry and, rather unusually for its time, it's a plea for the humane treatment of animals, whom Young refers to superciliously as 'the brutes'. It is a precursor of the self-deceived men in Eliot's fiction whose religious fervour cloaks unscrupulous self-interest. It also anticipates the delightful depictions of 'animals enjoying life' characteristic of the later fiction. According to J.W. Mackail, Eliot's 'able and acrid' essay 'dealt what was for a time a fatal blow to [Young's] reputation' (cited in ibid, 335).

On a more mundane level, Eliot had a strong aversion to royalty, and when she mentioned kings and queens it was in a tone of ridicule: Victoria was 'our little humbug of a queen' and George I was simply a 'royal hog', and she is scathing about Young's 'lunatic flattery of George ... , attributing that royal hog's late escape from a storm at sea to the miraculous influence of his grand and virtuous soul...' [*E*,344]. 'Certainly our decayed monarchs should be pensioned off; we should have a hospital for them, or a sort of Zoological Garden, where these worn-out humbugs may be preserved. It is but justice that we should keep them, since we have spoiled them for any honest trade. Let them sit on soft cushions and have their dinner regularly' (*GEL*, 1, 252-6). Such sentiments were unlikely to inspire high art,

although some rather cruel fun is had at the expense of the invading French King's feet in *Romola*, on both of which he had 6 toes instead of 5, and his soldiers had to wear misshapen shoes and thus run around very clumsily during the 1496 invasion of Florence, to keep the King in countenance, until his curious abandonment of his role as 'the new Charlemagne' and his about-turn back to France. The parallel with Louis Napoleon, described at the opening of 'Brother Jacob' as an 'idiot', is clear. Mrs Gaskell, by contrast, was neutral about royalty.

Thus it can be shown that idle gossip didn't prevent women from 'considering serious deliberations'. They could transmute tales and scandal into fine writing. They certainly, also, acted and wrote generously on behalf of others most of the time. And, via chatter, a little blood-letting was very likely essential to the corporate body's health.

[To be continued. Next time we shall consider, amongst other things, why Jane Carlyle so disliked Mrs Gaskell – why she'd write: '[I] can't usually *be at the trouble* to hate people ..., but... it was with a sensation wonderfully like pleasure, that I heard [of]... a prosecution commenced against Mrs Gaskell [by Lydia Robinson]'.

Notes:

1. J.A.V. Chapple & Arthur Pollard (Eds.), *Letters of Mrs Gaskell*, p.540; emphasis added. Further references to be noted in text as G.L.
2. I am indebted to the late John Geoffrey Sharps for this information. See also *Mrs Gaskell's Observation and Invention* (London: Linden Press, 1970), 373-8.
3. Gordon S. Haight (Ed), *Letters of George Eliot* (London: Yale U.P., 1954-78),11 vols, VI, 79. Referred to in the text as G.E.L.
4. Cited in Gordon S.Haight, *George Eliot: A Biography* [1968] (Middlesex: Penguin, 1985), 352.
5. Ibid, 365.
6. James Boswell, *Life of Dr Johnson* [1791] (O.U.P.,1980), 1328.
7. Barbara Hardy, 'Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot', *Gaskell Society Newsletter*, 55, 2013, p. 16.
8. 'Worldliness and Other-Worldliness: the Poet Young' in Thomas Pinney (Ed.), *Essays of George Eliot* (Columbia U. P., 1963), 338. Referenced as E in the text

The Gaskell Broadwood Piano of 1853

Tim Austin

On 22 November 1852 Elizabeth Gaskell wrote to her eldest daughter Marianne, 'Polly':

> My dearest Polly,
> ...we are going to get a piano at Broadwood's. Who are we to get to choose it? ...

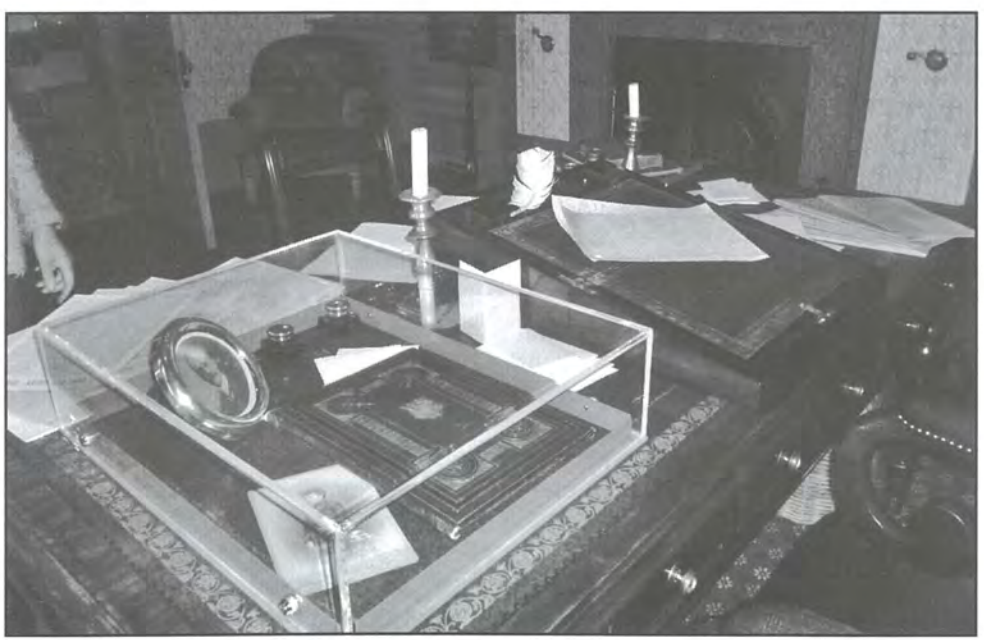
84 Plymouth Grove in 2014

The drawing room

Through the dining room mirror

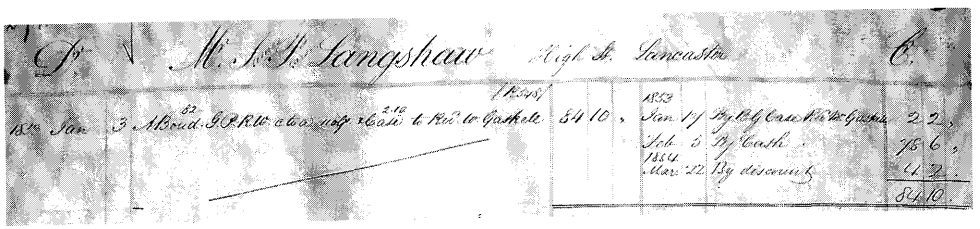
A corner of the drawing room

Mr Gaskell's Study



Later, at the end, she writes: ' ... Papa wishes Mr Bennett wd choose our piano, but as your Uncle Langshaw is to have the trade reduction of price, he might not like to do it ...'

This letter of Elizabeth sets off the order of the Broadwood piano (Boudoir Grand) which, based on the company records, was made soon after. The account record of the trade buyer shows an order entry for 3 January 1853, with the main payment being made on 5 February.



Account record

The customer is given as the Revd W Gaskell and the cost to the Gaskells was 110 guineas with an extra £2 10s for a case, with the trade buyer receiving a commission of about 28%, giving an overall income to Broadwood's of £84 10s.

The trade buyer was indeed 'Uncle' Langshaw, James Pearson Langshaw, of Lancaster, then a surgeon, but who was also an organist, and had been an organist at the Lancaster Priory Church, like his father John and grandfather John before him (overall from 1772-1835). The two Johns had been commercial 'friends' of Broadwood's for some time, possibly initially personally when the first John had lived and worked in London from c1745 to 1772, and then later when his son John had trained there from 1778 to 1784. The first surviving record of Langshaw business is on 4 October 1784. The Langshaw account was Broadwood's first dedicated piano business conducted through an individual organist musician outside London (*country friend*). (John Broadwood had joined Burkat Shudi as a journeyman in 1761, becoming a partner in 1771 as 'Shudi & Broadwood'. The firm became 'John Broadwood & Son' in 1795 and 'John Broadwood & Sons' in 1808).

Elizabeth and William were friends with Pearson through his wife Emily Sharpe who was a childhood and long-term friend of Elizabeth from their Knutsford days, and still in the 1850s a regular correspondent. Emily and Elizabeth – by different family branches – were 'nieces' of Dr Peter Holland. Their children were also friends and they all met up from time to time at Manchester, Lancaster and Silverdale. Emily stayed at Plymouth Grove, for example, in April 1851.

Marianne and her family in Worcestershire

Jean Alston

On 20-22 May, 2014, twenty four members and friends of the Gaskell Society visited the areas of Alfrick and Avenbury near Bromyard, where Marianne and her three grown-up children had lived. The details of this visit are reported in The Gaskell Society Newsletter Number 58. Although we were shown a record of Marianne's burial at Alfrick, there was no apparent evidence of the grave. Indeed, most of the graves that remained had little or no legible lettering.

Following the visit, on a morning in August, Mr Michael Hood, Churchwarden, telephoned me to say that the grave had been found. After our visit, Mr David Fowler, Editor of the Parish Magazine had written a report and stated that there was no evidence of Marianne's grave. Mrs Joyce Cooper, David's neighbour, contacted him to say that her mother had shown her the grave and that she was able to locate it. The grave was, in fact, next to the porch where we had all been standing but was obscured by ivy, valerian and other growth, as well as the script being obscured by lichen.

On 18 September 2014, accompanied by Hugh Clow an able photographer, I once again visited Alfrick Church. We were met by Michael and Bridget Hood, David Fowler and Joyce Cooper who had helped to locate the grave. Joyce also possessed several parish magazines which had records of Marianne and her family's involvement in the area. With enlargement and greater contrast of photographs, the lettering on the grave is deciphered as follows:

> To the memory of Marianne widow of E Thurstan Holland of Wimbledon and daughter of Rev Wm and Mrs Gaskell of Manchester who died at Alfrick Court on September 17 1920 aged 86.
>
> Thine eyes shall see the king in his heaven

(The Gaskell Society Committee has asked permission to place a commemorative plaque next to the grave, so that the record of Marianne's death will not be lost to future generations.)

The Parish Magazines from the 1890s revealed much further information. They reported that Marianne, William, Florence and Bryan had lived at Grove Hill, Suckley prior to the move to Birchyfield, Bromyard and that they were very active and appreciated in the parish.

Christmas 1893 is recorded in the January 1894 magazine as follows:

> A very pleasant evening was spent at Suckley School Room on Christmas Day. Mrs Holland kindly presided at the pianoforte and under her able direction her Bible Class sang a number of carols in a very spirited manner, while Mr and

> Miss Holland assisted, the first in playing a violin solo and the second in joining in several songs ...The Suckley Brass Band performed several pieces.

William Edward was living at Grove Hill, Suckley when he married Florence Evelyn Blanche Isdell on Wednesday 21 August 1895. There is evidence that the bride was the sister of one of his college friends.

The Parish Magazine records as follows:

> ... members of the Suckley Cricket Club presented the captain, Mr William E. Holland, Grove Hill, with an electro-plated stand, four cups and spoons and a toast rack.

Hearty cheers were given for Mr Holland and his bride.

The family was to leave Grove Hill in September 1895. The Rector, R. N. Kane, stated the following:

> I am very sorry to have to announce that Mrs Thurstan Holland with her family are leaving Suckley at the end of the present month. They will not remove very far off, their future residence being in the neighbourhood of Bromyard, but not the less shall we miss their kind co-operation in all matters for the good of the Parish. Among these we may especially mention the Mothers' Meeting at Bachelor's Bridge, the Bible Class at Grove Hill on Sunday evenings during the winter months, and the Children's Services at the Schoolroom. Many in the Parish have also experienced very great kindness from Mrs Holland and her family in many other ways and I am certain that I am only expressing the feeling of Suckley generally when I say how much we shall all miss them ...

Marianne did not abandon Suckley. On December 30th 1995, although living at Birchyfield, Bromyard, she superintended the production of two plays *Silent Woman* and *The Area Belle* and acted as prompt on the evening.

The 1901 Census records Marianne, Florence and Bryan living at Birchyfield, Avenbury near Bromyard and William and his wife living at Froome Bank in Bromyard town. However, by 1902, Marianne, Florence and Bryan are recorded through the Parish Magazines to be well established at Alfrick Court. (Alfrick Court is approximately three miles from Grove Hill, Suckley.) In August 1902, at the celebration for the Coronation of Edward VII, Mrs Holland, of Alfrick Court gave ready consent for use of the granary, where there was ' ... a dinner for men, a meat tea for women and tea for children'. In 1903, Mrs Holland gave a donation of one guinea to the Clothing Club.

In 1905, before Holy Communion in Alfrick Church, a new oak reredos carved by Mr William Holland, a gift of Mrs Thurstan Holland and new altar rails, were dedicated by Rev. L. A. Fisher. The reredos and altar rails were admired during the visit of the Gaskell group in May 2014. However, we were not aware that the splendid carving had been carried out by Elizabeth Gaskell's grandson.

December 26, 1905 'Children at Alfrick School were entertained to tea by Mrs Holland. After tea each child was given a dip in the bran tub for excellent toys and ornaments given by Mr Bryan Holland. A happy afternoon and three cheers were given to Mrs Holland and Mr Bryan Holland.'

December 28, 1905 'Two concerts were given for wiping off the £5 debt incurred in furnishing the club room. Amongst those who gave assistance were Mrs Thurstan Holland and the Misses Holland.' (It is likely that, as well as Florence, the other Miss Holland was William's daughter Margaret (alias Daisy).

In 1909 the 'First Garden Fete was held at Alfrick Court. Miss Holland Secretary (Florence?) Amongst the stall holders, Mrs Thurstan Holland, Mr and Mrs W. Holland and Miss Daisy Holland.' (David Fowler, who is currently assisting us, suggests that the 1909 Garden Fete was the beginning of what is now Alfrick Show and which in 2014 attracted 4,000 visitors.)

Also recorded by the Rector R. H. Kane, 1910 'Mrs Thurstan Holland has become the Ruri-Decanal for the Deanery of Powyke.'

Records show that Marianne died whilst living at Alfrick Court and that she was buried at Alfrick St Mary Magdalene Church. In her will, she left £14,206/4/6d. Probate to her two sons, William and Bryan and to Francis Clayton Forde Esq.

In 1921, after Marianne's death, Bryan and Florence purchased Harrow Cottage, a house built in 1851 as a lodging house for visitors to the area. The views from this western side of the Malvern Hills are extensive and look out across the county of Herefordshire. The address is now 223 West Malvern Road, Malvern.

1927 18 May William Edward died whilst living at 17 Burghley Road, Wimbledon, leaving £15,734/15/7d

1933 20 January Bryan Thurstan Holland died, whilst living at Harrow Cottage, leaving £15,577/18/5d

1942 15 June Florence Evelyn Holland died, also at Harrow Cottage, aged 69, leaving £11,366/11/1d

I am informed that there is 'a small handful' of people living in West Malvern who remember Miss Holland.

There is the beginning of a literary trail in Malvern and surrounding area. The people concerned look forward to adding reference to Elizabeth Gaskell and her family. Boughton House (Worcester Golf and Country Club) was, of course, the home of Elizabeth Gaskell's cousin Charlotte; Elizabeth and her children visited Boughton House quite frequently and part of *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* was written there.

Italy in the Footsteps of Elizabeth Gaskell

Christine Bhatt

Steps of many kinds there were in abundance for the hardy group of Gaskellians who travelled to the hill towns of Tuscany and Umbria in September 2014; but, if Elizabeth had Mr Charles Perkins (vide letter 541a), we had Anthony Cole. Not only did Anthony shepherd us with firm yet kind efficiency through a packed schedule, but he kept us well supplied with a variety of sweets, including some delicious chocolate 'Bacios' from Perugia, each containing a 'bon mot', like an Italian fortune cookie.

Thanks to Christine Lingard, we all had a copy of the route from Rome to Siena, which William had written out for the family and Christine had transcribed (vide Newsletter Spring 2014 'To Tuscany with Murray'). Elizabeth's itinerary was even more exhausting than our own, though we cannot know in detail everything that she and her daughters saw. We do know she possessed a copy of Charles Eliot Norton's *Notes of Travel and Study in Italy*, which contains quite a long piece on Orvieto, our last port of call. Gaskell's copy of Murray's handbook has marks in the margin of several pages, which may possibly have indicated artists whom Elizabeth was keen to see and include the names of Sodoma, Signorelli, Beccafumi and Pinturicchio. It is impossible, however, to know for certain when these marks were made and by whom.

Including Anthony, 18 of us gathered at Rome airport to take the coach to our base in Assisi. The first part of our journey was via the autostrada, not the old, slow road, which Elizabeth would have taken. We travelled north along the Tiber valley, past Terni, mentioned by William and where St Valentine is buried, then up the mountainside into Umbria, the green heart of Italy. We passed fields of sunflowers, their black heads now drooping in the early autumn sunshine; would Elizabeth have seen them in their bright brilliance earlier in the year, when she was here? She would probably not have stayed long enough to see the hedges of pyracantha with their bright red leaves and yellow berries… and most certainly not the fields of solar panels!

Though small, our group was split, in order to be accommodated in two of the modest hotels of Assisi, but we took our meals together in the large refectory-style dining room of Hotel La Rocca. The food was tasty and abundant, reflecting the fact that we were in Italy (lots of pasta), near Trevi, (a centre of olive oil production) and Norcia, (famous for salami). We needed such hearty sustenance in order to be ready to set off each morning at 8.00 or 8.30am into the surrounding regions.

The second day of our visit we explored Perugia, where William recommended spending a day at least. Regrettably, we had only half a day, since in the afternoon we took a local bus from Assisi to the nearby Basilica of Saint Mary of the Angels, mentioned by Elizabeth, where St Francis and his friends first lived for a time.

Our very efficient guide to Perugia, Rita, enabled us to make the most of our short visit: we marvelled at the deep Etruscan well, the Etruscan gateway, the wonderful stone fountain, surrounded by sculptures depicting seasonal activities throughout the year and the Piazza Italia where a fine sculpture of Vittorio Emanuela II looked down on us from horseback. We even found time for a brief visit to the Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, where one of the richest collections in Italy is housed. We made a point of viewing Duccio di Buoninsegna's 'Madonna and Child', Duccio being a favourite of Elizabeth's (vide Newsletter Spring 2014, 'To Tuscany with Murray').

Anthony had arranged a particular treat for us in the evening. A short walk brought us to the home of Roy Grant, a retired Englishman, living in Assisi, whose interests are medieval history and art. In his wonderful grotto of a home, built into the city walls, we listened to his telling of the story of St Francis, with a glass of wine in hand and exotic canapés on the table. Then we were allowed to examine the artefacts and paintings cramming his small dwelling. Many were suitably 'pre-Raphaelite', including a simple wooden crucifix, dating from 12th century.

On our way to Siena on the third day, we travelled along roads bordered by lavender and rosemary, passing by Lake Trasimeno, the fourth largest in Italy. Siena is one of many well-defended hill forts built by the Etruscans. Our enthusiastic guide to Siena, Maria Alberta Cambi, was a native of the city and keen to show us as much as possible. We learnt that Siena was famous for its banking families. We admired the vast and beautiful square, the Piazza del Campo, where the Palio takes place twice a year. Siena was a republic from the late eleventh century until 1555 and governed by the leaders of nine companies, each of whom had their own symbols. Everywhere one could see the flags and symbols of these companies, including the rhinoceros, porcupine and eagle, and there is still great rivalry between them. Maria took us to the Church of San Domenico, which holds the relics of St Catherine. We saw the fresco by the Siennese artist Francesco Vanni, who had met St Catherine around 1380. Was this the painting recommended by William? We also saw a painting of the Virgin and Child by Matteo di Sienna, dating from 1479. Maria explained that his work showed the first signs of a more natural style. Matteo is also mentioned by William. Our next stop was the Duomo, where we were very fortunate to find the beautiful marble floor uncovered. It is only open to view for two months of the year, since the building is very much in use as a church for the rest of the year. The magnificent carved pulpit, supported by lions, is by the same Nicola Pisano who carved the Great Fountain in Perugia in 1278, which we had already seen.

We could not, however, view the Maesta nor the stained glass window by Duccio, which Elizabeth would surely have seen, as they have now been moved to a museum. We did see the music books or 'choir books', large enough to be seen by many singers in the choir at once, and the frescoes by Pinturicchio. At the end of a very full day, we were somewhat revived by an almond 'dolce Toscana', distributed by Anthony in the coach on our way back.

After breakfast the next day, we walked through Assisi to the Basilica of Saint Francis, where one of the friars, our wonderful American guide, Michael, pointed out the main features of the lower and upper basilicas. The lower church was completed in 1230 and its side walls were frescoed in about 1270 by the so-called Master of St Francis. It was built in the Romanesque style and richly decorated with pictures or designs covering every inch. It was hard to take it all in, but Michael drew our attention to the famous picture of the Madonna and Child with St Francis standing to one side, by Cimabue. Climbing from the lower into the upper basilica with its soaring roof, high Gothic windows and a rose window facing almost due east to let in more light, we could imagine the wonder early pilgrims must have felt. After such spiritual delights, we were free to spend the rest of the morning wandering around Assisi to find excellent shops selling pastry, leather goods, wild boar salami and items made from olive wood, or to visit other churches or museums in the town.

After lunch our coach drove us to the church of Rivotorto, built over the site where St Francis first tried to settle. Nearby was the beautifully kept Commonwealth War Cemetery, its graves separated by marguerites in full bloom, which were attracting delicate blue butterflies. Elizabeth Gaskell's coach would have followed this, the main road in her time.

We travelled us on to Spello, one of the smaller towns, where we were to visit the church of Saint Maria Maggiore to view the recently restored fresco cycle of 1501 by Pinturicchio. There was an interesting floor in the chapel, laid with tiles from Deruta, but an unusually large throng of visitors meant we had little time to take it all in.

In the evening, we were treated to a pizza supper at the Pizzeria Il Duomo in Assisi, where there seemed to be an inordinate amount of cream on the desserts. Some of us may well also remember the deep fried olives.

On Wednesday, our coach took us to the ancient Tuscan city of Cortona, one of the most important city states of the Etruscans. Important for us too, as it was the home of Luca Signorelli, whom we know the Gaskells admired. Our guide, Lisa Bidini, took us first to the church of St Margaret, where the body of the saint in her funeral sarcophagus was on display. The solemnity of the occasion was broken by the appearance of a small dog running into the church and watering the altar flowers, before running out again, obviously completely at home. Our final visit was to the Diocesan museum where we saw the painting of the Deposition by Signorelli and a beautiful Annunciation by Fra Angelico.

Our planned ferry trip to Isola Maggiore on Lake Trasimeno was abandoned since it had begun to rain in the afternoon. This gave us further opportunity to explore Assisi or time to prepare for our evening entertainment. After dinner, the group presented Anthony with a card and a leather document case, with our thanks for a wonderful tour of this beautiful region. Some of us then contributed readings, mostly

with an Italian theme. Janet Kennerley began with an appropriate extract from *A Dark Night's Work*, relating to the heroine's visit to Rome. Carolyn Lambert gave us a very enticing preview of her new book on the meanings of home for Elizabeth Gaskell. Gwen Clarke had already read the book and heartily recommended it. Gerard McCreesh amused us with three of his own poems and Christine Bhatt recited Wordsworth's poem 'On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic'. Jacqueline Tucker quoted the beginning of *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (Cortona is mentioned here). Finally Helen Shay recited her own expressive and lyrical poem dedicated to 'dear Scheherazade'.

Our final day dawned and we had yet to see the Duomo of Orvieto. 'With the exception of the Cathedral of Siena, there is no church in Italy in which the Italian Gothic appears in freer development of beauty than in this' (*Notes of Travel and Study in Italy* by Charles Eliot Norton). Our guide to the Duomo was Chiara Furiani, who explained the story of the miracle of Corpus Christi in 1263, which led to the building of the first structure in 1290. We had come to see the Cappella di San Brizio, the chapel which Fra Angelico was commissioned to decorate. In 1447 he had completed two of the eight sections of the vault, he was then summoned to Rome and did not return to Orvieto. In 1490, Luca Signorelli was called in to complete the work. Chiara pointed out to us two figures in black in the frescoes, depicting Fra Angelico and Signorelli. Artists were, for the first time, beginning to include themselves in their work.

Gaskell Society members in front of the Orvieto Cathedral, Umbria

After our visit to the Duomo, we enjoyed a convivial lunch, sitting under large umbrellas, fortunately, as there was a sudden heavy shower before the meal had ended. This gave us a good excuse to linger over our pork and truffles or shrimps and calamari, washed down with fine Orvietan white wine.

On our return to Rome airport, while trying to find the centre of Ronciglione so that we could follow Elizabeth's route more closely, our helpful coach driver found himself well and truly stuck. He had to reverse uphill, guided by two local men. We held up the traffic for some time, though no-one seemed to mind. ECG would have approved!

North and South: an Experience

Helen Shay

Please forgive the informal and personal tone of this, my first article for the Newsletter. (For the next Newsletter, I have been asked to write upon the legal situation regarding copyright in the nineteenth century, for which I shall don my lawyer's hat and – given the nature of the topic – am likely to be apologising instead for being over-turgid.)

The impetus for offering this account arose from conversations during last autumn's excellent tour 'In the Footsteps of Mrs Gaskell' to Assisi, when it was suggested that it might be of interest to members. I have been in the Society for nearly twenty years (having a lifetime love of Elizabeth Gaskell's work, being originally a student of Alan Shelston at Manchester University when I took English as my first degree and fell in love with her writing). It therefore seemed natural to offer to present an event for York's inaugural '*Festival of Ideas*' in 2013 – which happened to be on the theme of 'North and South' – based on Mrs Gaskell's book which ultimately took that title and which has always been my favourite novel. It is with as much delight that I now recount the experience – a sheer labour of love – to members.

The initial approach for this came through the University of York, where I currently work, via its Centre for Lifelong Learning, with whom I teach some drama-writing and who are keen to see their tutors represented in the Festival. In 2014 for the 'Order and Chaos' theme, I presented an evening featuring women's WW1 poetry. The Festival is a mixture of renowned speakers and smaller events, such as my own. At the 2013 Festival our President, Dr Shirley Foster, was amongst the former, alongside Heidi Thomas who dramatized *Cranford* for the recent TV series, and it was good to see the work of Elizabeth Gaskell featuring so prominently.

Because I have worked with several local actors around York, I knew that there was a pool of very able readers available and also a talented director, with whom I

had worked before. Therefore I decided to present a dramatized 'nutshell' version of *North and South.* Whilst I do not profess to be an Andrew Davies, it was hard to resist the temptation of an opportunity to work with Mrs Gaskell's wonderful text, which has in any event an insuppressible dramatic quality of its own, especially in her dialogue. Unfortunately Richard Armitage was unavailable to reprise his role as John Thornton, but I knew I would be well-served by my group of local actors.

I therefore set about telling the basic story of the book through several pivotal scenes, which especially illuminated the theme. One which had to be included was Margaret Hale's initial meeting with John Thornton and details such as the concern over the wallpaper at the family's new home in Milton Northern, which Gaskell uses so tellingly to convey character and environment. Similarly the tense first meeting with Mrs Thornton and the climactic scene at the mill during the strike had to be featured, along with other major incidents. I connected each scene read by the actors with interlinking narrative which I delivered in order to give an overview and also to touch upon relevant biographical links to Elizabeth Gaskell, until we reached the final happy ending, when Margaret's love for John can no longer be held back.

One of the most difficult aspects in the process of scripting this event was deciding on elements from the novel which had to be left out, when they are all deserving of dramatic exploration. However, 'Poor Frederick' had to be kept to one side, along with his troubles during his naval career, due to time constraints. I was loathe to do so, as it's a fascinating part of the novel and the theme of the lost brother seems so essential to the author. Having read with great interest and enjoyment recently Carolyn Lambert's *The Meanings of Home in Elizabeth Gaskell's Fiction*, I have come to realise even more the importance of this theme. However, as the event was to span no more than two hours, it was a case of needs must.

I was also keen to add an addendum to the presentation in the form of a completely new scene written by me, which looked at how a modern-day Margaret Hale and John Thornton might meet. In this, my own Margaret was transformed into a social work student from Hampshire, studying at a northern university, who goes on placement and meets her supervisor, the more older and more experienced John Thornton – a tough northerner who is a little cynical and taken aback at her idealism and outspoken vigour. This scene was used to touch upon modern issues relating to the north-south divide and to contrast with the situation in Victorian times. As the Festival happened to take place just after the demise of Margaret Thatcher (whose legacy in the North still causes controversy), the scene had an additional contemporary resonance.

The event concluded with an audience discussion session, in which many salient points were raised, such as the reversed situation today where the north is seen to lack the amenities of the south whereas in Mrs Gaskell's time it became the wealth engine of the country at the forefront of technology. The changing role of women

was also discussed, particularly regarding social attitudes to Margaret protecting John from the angry strikers and also in relation to the relationship between Margaret and Bessie Higgins.

Great feedback was received, perhaps also helped by the handing round of Pontefract cakes (to represent the North / John Thornton) and Parma Violets (which seemed appropriate for the South / Margaret's softer influence). The event had a form of dress rehearsal in that it was first presented at a dinner in Langwith Senior Common Room at York University, and then later to an audience of about a hundred at the Festival. (It might be possible to restage it in future, if anyone could suggest a suitable event.)

Book Notes

Christine Lingard

Gli Innamorati di Sylvia, Jo March, 2014. A new translation of *Sylvia's Lovers* into Italian by Mara Barbuni, with an introduction by Francesco Marroni (Vice-President of the Gaskell Society.)

Novel craft: Victorian domestic handicraft and nineteenth-century fiction by Talia Schaffer, (Professor of English at Queens College and the Graduate Center of the City of New York) Oxford University Press, 2014 originally published 2011

A collection of essays exploring how the handicraft movement serves as a way to critique the rapidly emerging industrial capitalism of the nineteenth century taking as its examples Elizabeth Gaskell's *Cranford*, Charlotte Yonge's *The Daisy Chain*, Charles Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend*, and Margaret Oliphant's *Phoebe Junior*.

Odd women? Spinsters, lesbians and widows in British women's fiction, 1850s-1930s by Emma Liggins. (Senior Lecturer in English, Manchester Metropolitan University). Manchester University Press

A comparison of representations of spinsters, lesbians and widows in British women's fiction and autobiography from the 1850s to the 1930s, who previously had been marginalised. Women writers such as Charlotte Brontë, Elizabeth Gaskell, Ella Hepworth Dixon, May Sinclair, E.H. Young, Radclyffe Hall, Winifred Holtby and Virginia Woolf, began to feature such women as central characters.

Learning how to feel: children's literature and emotional socialization, 1870-1970. Ute Frevert [and others]. Director at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development Oxford University Press A collection of essays by twelve authors, which explore the ways in which children and adolescents learn not just how to express emotions that are thought to be pre-existing, but actually how to feel.

Chapter 1 is entitled 'Mrs Gaskell's Anxiety.'

The informed air: essays by Muriel Spark; edited by Penelope Jardine. New York: New Directions

A new collected edition of the essays of the distinguished Scottish novelist who died in 2006. It includes her essay on Mrs Gaskell and several essays on the Brontës – Emily Brontë — The Brontës as teachers – and My favourite villain: Heathcliff.

Book Review

Helen Smith

Aventurine, by Edwin Stockdale (Red Squirrel Press, 2014, £6)

Aventurine is a slim volume of poems skilfully crafted by our young member Edwin Stockdale.

Mr Stockdale writes in unrhymed stanzas and uses the present tense. His language is minimalist but beautifully picturesque. He captures an atmosphere of serenity in his verse which we need in the bustle of the 21st century.

The essence of the opening of *Sylvia's Lovers* is contained in 'Monkshaven'.

'Snowdrops' distils *Ruth* into deeply moving vignettes. As in the original novel, nature colours the stanzas which vary in shape and number of lines. This is the saddest and longest of the poems.

'Stile' glimpses the beginning of *Mary Barton* and the sense of foreboding hangs over the whole poem

> Weighted clouds loom over the indigo sky.

'Corrections' (published in the last Newsletter) pinpoints the different writing modes and very different lives of Mrs Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë.

Jane Eyre is recreated in a charming and powerful sequence of verses set in landscapes of northern England. The crisp choice of language sharpens our senses:

> Jane takes the night air,
> black as a murder of crows.
> A nye of pheasants skulk
> in the bushes.

The concluding verse in this collection 'Gardens of Menabilly' links the Brontës, and Daphne du Maurier as the ghost of Rebecca emerges through the rusted gates of Menabilly (Manderley).

This is an enthralling volume for lovers of poetry and the nineteenth century authors whose works feature in the verses. Without prior knowledge of the works, the lines could almost stand alone as poetry of nature. I most warmly commend this volume to all our members and congratulate Edwin on this enchanting, engaging and moving volume.

~ Forthcoming Events ~

Gaskell Society Annual General Meeting

Saturday 18 April 2015, Cross Street Unitarian Chapel, Manchester
Please see enclosed leaflet for details and application form.

Conference

Friday 17 – Monday 20 July 2015, Cober Hill, YO13 0AR
Please see enclosed leaflet with details and application form

Autumn General Meeting

Saturday 26 September 2015, Knutsford Methodist Church
President Shirley Foster will deliver the Joan Leach Memorial Lecture on Elizabeth Gaskell and American Friends. Further details TBA

North-West Group

Manchester Meetings
These are held in Cross Street Unitarian Chapel, which will open at 12 noon for a bring-your-own lunch, followed by talk at 1.00pm.

The next two meetings 3 February (Karen Laird: *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*) and 3 March (Elizabeth Williams: The Fallen Woman in Literature and Life) will complete the winter season.

The Manchester meetings will resume on Tuesday 6 October. Thereafter on the 1st Tuesday of November, December, February 2016 and March 2016) Speakers and subjects TBA

Knutsford Meetings
These meetings are held in St John's Church Centre on the last Wednesday of the month, ending on 29 April and resuming on 28 October.

Buffet lunch available from 12.15. Elizabeth Williams will speak and lead the discussion afterwards. *The Moorland Cottage* is the work to be studied.

The Gaskell Society South-West

Saturday, 21 February 2015, 2.15 pm: We will hold our discussion group on *Cranford,* and there will be only the one session. It will be held at Bren Abercrombie's house, 12 Mount Road, Lansdown. The cost will be £3 per person, and we ask that the fee be brought on the day. Numbers will be limited to 12 participants. Please phone Bren on 01225 471241 to book your place.

Sunday, 22 March 2015, 3.00 – 5.00 pm at St Mary's Church Hall, Bathwick
By popular demand, we will have another literary quiz with homemade cake and tea. The quiz will cover the years 1800 to 1920, and as last year, there will many many categories and much fun! The cost will be £7.50 per person, and we request that you bring the money on the day. Parking will be available. Please phone Elizabeth Schlenther on 01225 331763 if you would like to book a place.

April Meeting: There will be a meeting in April, but the date and talk are still being organised. More details TBA

Summer Lunch: Details TBA
Queries about any of our events to: Elizabeth Schlenther, 14 Vellore Lane, Bath, BA2 6JQ, Tel: 01225 331763 or via email: eschlenther@googlemail.com

London and South-East Group

Saturday 7 February 2015
Dr Ann Brooks and Bryan Haworth: 'The other side of Manchester'. Ann and Bryan put Manchester in a social context. Their research has focused on Manchester so they are knowledgeable about the city in Mrs Gaskell's time.

Saturday 9 May 2915
Dr Irene Wiltshire: The Letters of Mrs Gaskell's Daughters 1856-1914. These letters have been collected and edited by Irene and were published in 2012 by Humanities – Ebooks.

Venue: Francis Holland School, Graham Terrace, London
Domestic arrangements as usual.

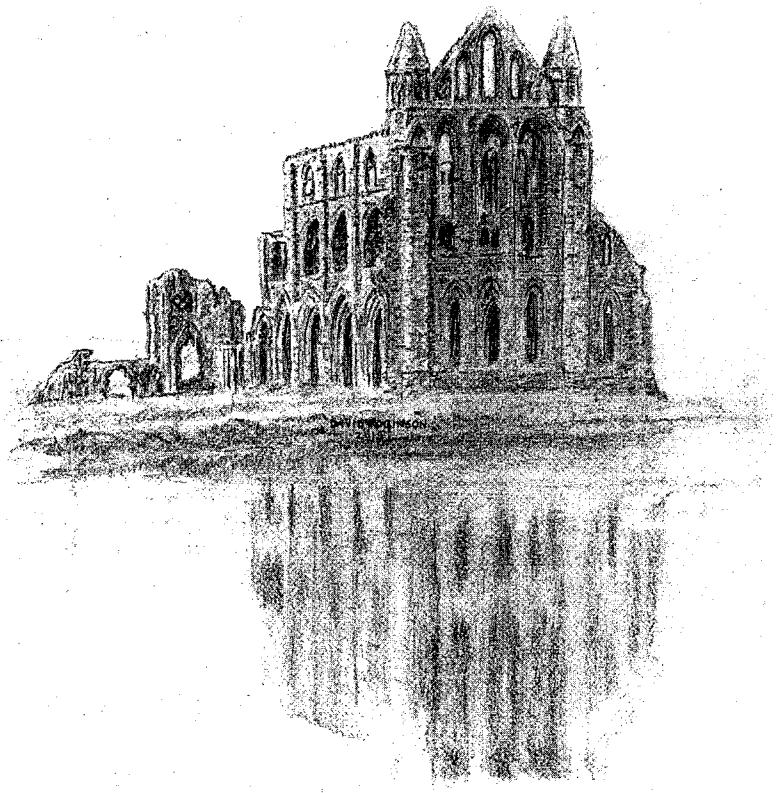
Alliance of Literary Societies Annual General Meeting

The ALS AGM will be hosted by the Trollope Society in York, 30-31 May.

All Gaskell Society members are welcome.

(See website www.allianceofliterarysocieties.org.uk)

The Gaskell Society



NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2015 - Number 60

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

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs. Helen Smith,
11 Lowland Way, Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 9AG.
Telephone - 01565 632615 E-mail: helenisabel@ntlworld.com

Treasurer: Clive Heath, 39 Bexton Lane, Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 9BL

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

ISSN 0954 - 1209

The Gaskell Journal Joan Leach Memorial Graduate Student Essay Prize 2016

Deadline for submissions: 10th February 2016

The Gaskell Journal invites submissions from PhD and MA students for its biennial Graduate Student Essay Competition.

The winning essay (6,000-7,000 words) will offer an original contribution to Gaskell studies, and will be published in The Gaskell Journal. Its author will receive £200 from the Gaskell Society, and a complimentary copy of the Journal.

Essays will be judged by members of The Gaskell Journal Editorial Board, with the final decision being made from a shortlist by a leading scholar in Gaskell studies.

Please send submissions to the Editor, Dr Rebecca Styler: rstyler@lincoln.ac.uk.

For stylesheet and application details, see: www.gaskelljournal.co.uk

Editor's Letter

Helen Smith

Here we are on a high and hotfoot from the Conference – the best ever! Welcome to the Autumn Newsletter.

Our new website in glorious technicolour is now up and running:
www.gaskellsociety.co.uk

This is the same address as before. We hope all members will be able to have access to it by some means.

The AGM held on 18 April was conducted with alacrity and efficiency by President Shirley Foster. Kate Smith and Helen Smith left the Committee. Carolyn McCreesh was elected to the Committee and all other serving members and officers were re-elected. Journal Editor Rebecca Styler delivered the Daphne Carrick lecture and gave us fresh insight into the divine image of God in female form. After lunch Frank Galvin (who has taken over from Janet Allan as Chairman of MHBT, the owner of 84 Plymouth Grove) traced the refurbishment of the Gaskell home and the redevelopment of the garden.

The Autumn Meeting in Knutsford on Saturday 26 September (see enclosure) will welcome our President, Dr Shirley Foster, to deliver the Joan Leach Memorial Lecture on Elizabeth Gaskell and her American Friends. After lunch Dr Robert Poole will speak about Mrs Gaskell, Mr Dickens, Samuel Bamford and the Preston Strike (1853 - 54).

On 30 June, Professor Mitsu Matsuoka's critical anthology honouring Mrs Gaskell on the sesquicentenary of her death, was published: *Evil and Its Variations in the Works of Elizabeth Gaskell: Sesquicentennial Essays* (Osaka, JP: Osaka Kyoiku Tosho, 2015). This volume is in English and Shirley Foster has written the preface. (Available to Gaskell Society members for £20, 33% discount from Grayswood Press – copies are now travelling over to Europe by sea.)

Another sesquicentennial book is *Place and Progress in the Works of Elizabeth Gaskell* (Ashgate, 2015) edited by Lesa Scholl, Emily Morris, and Sarina Gruver Moore. This is also a critical anthology of essays to commemorate the sesquicentenary of the death of ECG.

The North West group is eternally grateful to Elizabeth Williams for her patient and inspirational teaching as she takes us through the complete works of Mrs Gaskell. Next season Elizabeth will guide and help us as we study and interpret *Wives and Daughters* (published in parts in *The Cornhill Magazine* in 1864 and 1865, and then in 1866, in book-form by Smith, Elder and Co). Thank you, Elizabeth, for all your hard work on our behalf.

NB Change of venue for the Knutsford meetings on the last Wednesday of the month. We shall be meeting at the Brook Street Chapel Hall, formerly known as the School Room, on Adams Hill within yards of where the mortal remains of Elizabeth, William, Julia and Meta lie.

We are very happy to welcome several new members to our Society. Two have even co-authored a short message for this Newsletter. However it is with sorrow that we have had to bid a final farewell to Muriel Shepherd, née Holland. Muriel was a keen member of our Society and also of the National Trust, and was a regular attender at our monthly meetings in Knutsford. She enjoyed the study tour to Worcestershire in May 2014. A Manchester graduate in geography she pursued a career in teaching and became head teacher at Stand Grammar School for Girls (now Phillips High School and comprehensive). Finally before retirement, Muriel worked at Peel College, Bury. And now, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, RIP Muriel.

Members may have observed in *The Independent* (Monday 13 July 2015) that Dr Jeremy Parrott has revealed that he now owns Dickens's own bound volumes of *All the Year Round*. This revelation was made in a lecture at the annual conference of the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals at Ghent University. Dickens himself has marked in the margins who wrote what. Mrs Gaskell now has two new articles on French song and poetry which had previously been attributed to the critic, Henry Chorley.

To all who have written for this Newsletter, very warm thanks. Please continue to contribute to our biannual publication. I should in particular like to thank my brother, David Robinson in Canada, for his pencil drawing of Whitby Abbey which is the cover illustration. Without members, the Society would flop; without writers, there would be no Newsletter. And as always, many, many thanks to Rebecca and family at iPrint in Red Cow Yard, tucked away in central Knutsford.

Next deadline: Monday 25 January 2016 (Burns Night)

The Gaskell Society Conference
17-20 July, Cober Hill, near Scarborough

Helen Smith

What a stunning rural setting within sight of the German Ocean (aka the North Sea)! We arrived on a glorious summer's afternoon. We were 85 in number and hailed from Canada, France, Greece, The Netherlands, the USA and the UK.

Professor Angus Easson (Emeritus Professor of English, University of Salford) Whitby and Scarborough: Nests of Singing Birds (title adapted from Dr Johnson)

Angus set the Whitby scene. He re-created for us the early religious establishment south of the watering place on the Esk, reminded us of the Synod of Whitby 664 when the date of Easter was established (in Northumbria) and very eloquently brought the poet Caedmon back to life for us. Angus then transported us to the 'Queen of watering places' (though 'not worth a guinea' according to Sheridan!) where Edith Sitwell (1887- 1964) was born to ultra-eccentric parents at their home Wood End (now Scarborough Art Gallery). Osbert and Satcherell followed. Both wrote extensively. Osbert's autobiography appeared in 6 volumes (1945-1962). Angus ended with a recording of Façade recited by Edith and sung by Peter Pears with William Walton's witty music (premiered privately in 1922).

After dinner **Dr Jean Alston** established us in 19th century Whitby at 1 Abbey Terrace (a 'new build' by George Hudson who financed the railway) where Mrs Gaskell, Julia and Hearn spent some 10 days chez Mrs Rose in November 1859, 'We do nothing but go out.' Mrs Gaskell also found time to write letters, absorb local colour and research the area for her next book, *Sylvia's Lovers.* Jean also showed us the Sitwell family portrait by John Singer Sargent painted in 1900.

Then **Dr Hugh Clow** brought us into the age of photography with atmospheric early photographs by Frank Sutcliffe (1853-1941) of the whaling town of Whitby.

On Saturday we awoke to sunshine and bird sound, if not birdsong, from sparrows, gulls, wood pigeons and the resident peahen.

After breakfast **Professor John Sutherland (Lord Northcliffe Emeritus Professor of Modern English Literature at UCL)** entertained us with a tour d'horizon of Victorian fiction (he has read 2,000 Victorian novels!) peppered with glimpses of facts and anecdotes from the 20th century.

Professor Francis O'Gorman (Professor in the School of English, University of Leeds) *Sylvia's Lovers* and the Histories of Loneliness

> ... though I go alone
> Like to a lonely dragon ... (Coriolanus)
>
> I wandered lonely as a cloud (To Daffodils)

These lines by Shakespeare and Wordsworth refer to the state of being one, and of being alone. That is not the intense inner agony of the soul experienced by the dying, sad and lonely men in the ballads written during and after the American Civil War. (Francis claims this meaning of the word 'loneliness' was first recorded in the OED in 1844.) The word and the feeling have developed together. Francis

emphasised the psycho-geography of Haworth, Lucy Snowe's longing for companionship in *Villette*, the sense of loneliness in great cities isolated in a bedsit.

We cheered up after a break for coffee in the sunshine.

Dr Karen Laird (Writer and researcher in Victorian literature) Searching for Anne Brontë

Anne died in Scarborough in May 1849 and in 2011, the Brontë Society gave her a new tombstone with corrected wording.

Karen listed the 5 stereotypes of Anne:

1 The littlest sister, 'considered the baby well into adulthood'.

2 St Anne, self-effacing, self-denying, long-suffering and rather didactic.

3 The Governess as in *Agnes Grey* (written before Jane *Eyre*)
This is creative non-fiction. Poor Anne struggled and was burnt out as a teacher after 4 years. She wrote for therapy.

4 The Romantic Poetess

I will not mourn thee, lovely one

This verse was written after the death of her lover Revd William Weightman (1814-1842), her father's curate, who died of cholera.

5 The Radical Novelist
The author of *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* wished 'to tell the truth'.

Before lunch, questions to the panel were raised: on 'coarseness', Rousseau, loneliness, le flâneur, desert fathers, early Christians etc.

After lunch we were divided into 2 groups: one for Scarborough and the other for Whitby. On Sunday the groups swopped places.

Jean Alston and Hugh Clow had prepared maps and notes for us all. They had done much reconnaissance work and must be commended on their accurate timing as well as their meticulous research. Thank you, Jean and Hugh.

The group I joined visited Scarborough on Saturday. We visited Woodend, the home of the Sitwell family, now Scarborough Art Gallery. Within the house there is a replica of the Library at Renishaw, the Derbyshire home of the Sitwells. Our

second stop was at Anne Brontë's grave with its two gravestones and the outstanding panorama over the bay. An emotional moment for many of us.

We then moved out of Scarborough and through the beautiful Ryedale valley with stunning clear views over the Yorkshire landscape. We had tea at Downe Arms Hotel (where we glimpsed a wedding in full swing) in the village of Wykeham.

Afterwards we visited Brompton-by-Sawdon where, in All Saints Church in the year 1802, William Wordsworth married Mary Hutchinson. (We looked at a copy of their marriage certificate.)

We returned to Cober Hill for a delicious Conference Dinner. Afterwards we adjourned to the lecture theatre for readings from *Sylvia's Lovers* outlining the basic plot and final tragedy.

And so to bed.

Up betimes to rain.

Professor James Drife (Emeritus Professor at the University of Leeds) Coming to a Medical Conclusion

With tremendous humour and aplomb, James whisked us through the literature and history of the 19th century and then spent time on medicine. (He believes Mrs Gaskell suffered from high blood pressure. The first sphygmomanometer was not invented until 1881 - too late, alas, for Mrs G.)

Pasteurisation, antisepsis, chloroform and Queen Victoria (for her 8th and 9th children), 1st ovariotomy (1842) 1st hysterectomy (1863) puerperal fever (main cause of death: I in every 200 births; today I in every 10,000 births) all were covered.

Dr Carolyn Lambert (Associate Lecturer at the University of Brighton) Death and Variations in Elizabeth Gaskell's Fiction

Carolyn followed on very naturally from James and medical matters. Carolyn emphasised the role of death as a creative destruction and as a destabiliser. Mrs Gaskell compiled her diary as a memento for Marianne in case she herself did not survive. Evangelism prescribed a model for a good death. Unitarianism aimed for perfectibility in this life. William Gaskell maintained a rational approach to death and loss.

Carolyn had counted the deaths in *Mary Barton* – a member of the audience added another.

Dr Josie Billington (Deputy Director of the Centre for Research into Reading, Society and Literature at the University of Liverpool) *Wives and Daughters*: on not Concluding

Josie opened her lecture by reminding us that Frederick Greenwood (Editor of *Cornhill Magazine*) had finished *Wives and Daughters* with the predictable ending. Josie pointed out the similarities between *The Moorland Cottage* (character groupings) and *Wives and Daughters*. This produced a renewed beginning. Josie also drew a comparison with Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons*. Mrs Gaskell was completely at home with the minutiae of everyday life. Josie argued that *Wives and Daughters* is the epitome of practical inconclusiveness. Josie issued us with hand-outs to show us how to observe multiple thoughts and moods through close analysis of the text.

In the question session which followed, Angus Easson mentioned that Tristram Shandy had been delivered by forceps.

These scant summaries do not do justice to the outstanding, thought-provoking and stimulating lectures we heard in the course of the week-end.

By Sunday afternoon the rain had ceased and we sallied forth in sunshine. Whitby looked its very best. We started at the Abbey and entered the squat and higgledy piggledy St Mary's (the model for St Nicholas in *Sylvia's Lovers*) with its box pews and triple-decker pulpit. Outside we examined the Cross of Caedmon, an Arts and Crafts creation of 1898. We descended the 199 steps into downtown Whitby bustling with trippers. With the aid of our maps we could follow in the steps of Sylvia, Charley and Philip. We could ascend to Abbey Terrace and stand on the very steps where Elizabeth entered her lodgings. Later we returned to our coach and travelled slightly inland to visit the models of Moss Brow and Haytersbank (thanks to historian Jackie Tucker for her help with that).

And so we returned to Cober Hill for another excellent meal.

While we were gallivanting round the literary haunts of North Yorkshire, James Drife had been at Scarborough Railway Station to collect a friend (yes, yet another of these professors!) Walter Nimmo who had travelled down from Edinburgh. They had re-arranged the lecture theatre as a cabaret venue and had been getting their act together.

And what an amazing show they put on for our grand finale. We would have happily laughed all night. Never before has the Gaskell Society been reduced to tears of laughter. James creates the lyrics and Walter created the music which he plays on his guitar and ukulele and mouth organ at the same time. We look forward to a return visit.

En route back to the North West we visited Coxwold where Lawrence Sterne (1713-1768) was vicar for some years. Here we received further entertainment and much information (isothermal glazing etc) from **Patrick Wildgust, Curator at Shandy Hall.** On our arrival Patrick met us at the church where he gave us a brief history, showed us Sterne's grave (moved up from London and with a new tombstone, not unlike Anne Brontë's). We then entered the church where Patrick showed us Sterne's memorial - Alas poor Yorick - in the porch and then performed, from the pulpit, John Wesley's preaching instructions and one of Sterne's sermons without too much 'hand babbling'. Some of us then had afternoon tea for lunch and the others followed on an hour later. We toured Shandy Hall and admired the garden. No one asked if Mrs Gaskell had read *Tristram Shandy*.

This has been an outstanding Conference in every way. To all who have contributed we owe a huge debt of thanks. Cober Hill was an excellent venue with charming, helpful and caring staff. Jean even maintained her control over the weather. Our coach drivers were courteous, caring and careful at all times.

A Post-Conference Note

Pat and Harry Ellis

Driving from coast to coast to our Conference at Cober Hill, we were reminded that we are never far from Mrs Gaskell.

Now that we have relocated from Prestbury in Cheshire to Arnside next to Silverdale in Lancashire we are glad to have managed a few of the monthly meetings at Knutsford and we thoroughly enjoyed seeing the wider Gaskell group at Cober Hill.

Here in Arnside, the local news mentions the Gaskell Hall in Silverdale frequently for it is the hub of many events including a coffee morning in aid of different charities every Saturday of the year. We were introduced to such an event on our 'first' Saturday by fellow Gaskellian Pauline Kiggins and we were amazed to find the hall heaving with people buying books and bric à brac and drinking delicious coffee.

All our visitors enjoy the tour to see Lindeth Tower (where the Gaskells stayed) which we are able to describe in detail as we had all enjoyed our exclusive visit to it en route from Penrith to Knutsford after the 2009 conference.

It is gratifying to find how many of the local people enjoy hearing about Elizabeth Gaskell. Now that we live here it is easy to understand why both Elizabeth and William enjoyed their retreat and how inspirational Elizabeth found the many stories which abound about the travellers who crossed the sands at Morecambe Bay.

Lair

Edwin Stockdale

'There was no breakfast to lounge over; their lounge was taken in bed, to try and keep warmth in them that bitter March weather, and, by being quiet, to deaden the gnawing wolf within.'

Elizabeth Gaskell, *Mary Barton* (1848)

'Ben Davenport's down wi' the fever,
and ne'er a stick o' fire
nor a cowd potato in the house.'

Women from their doors toss household slops
into the gutter, overflow, stagnate.
Heaps of ashes are stepping-stones.

Pick a way down steps slimed,
the muddy wall opposite.
Broken window-panes stuffed with rags.

Thick clammy air, foetid stench.
Four little children roll on the brick floor
like mops soaking up oozing moisture.

John Barton runs home, pawns
his belongings for five shillings:
his better coats, his one red-and-yellow silk handkerchief.

Returns with meat, a loaf of bread, candles, kindling.
Davenport lies on mouldy straw tossing
fro and to, covered by a thin piece of sacking.

Goes down London Road brilliantly lit
by gas. Almost in the country he reaches
Mr Carson's house to beg for an Infirmary order.

'Davenport – Davenport; who is this fellow? I don't know the name?'
'He's worked in your factory better nor three years, sir.'
'Very likely; I don't pretend to know the names of the men I employ.'

Leaves with an outpatient's-order
and five shillings, dashes
to Berry Street, opens the cellar-door.

Davenport's flesh sunk, features prominent,
bony, rigid. His face clay-coloured;
eyes open, begin to glaze.

Elizabeth Gaskell (1810-65) and the Medical World

J H Ross

Summary

Elizabeth Gaskell had several relatives who were doctors, two of whom became well known, and she met many practitioners and specialists. This led to interesting portraits of doctors in her novels and also leads to speculation as to why she includes some real individuals and certain diagnoses and why she gave herself a poor prognosis.

Introduction

In her excellent biography, Jenny Uglow[1] portrays the popular mid-nineteenth century authoress Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell (née Stevenson) as a very active wife and mother, emotional, intensely conscious of the depressed community around her, ready to befriend others and giving advice and practical help wherever possible; all this whilst writing six novels, numerous short stories, novellas and works including *The Life of Charlotte Bronte*. More than one thousand of her published letters[2,3,4] indicate she was in touch with a remarkable number of well-known and prominent persons in the mid-Victorian era including politicians, authors, scientists, artists and academics and she was capable of discussing their activities with them.

Her contacts with and comments on the medical world are interesting and her depiction of doctors in her novels particularly so; novelists can portray their characters as more true to life and as more honest representations of people than biographers and autobiographers who may omit adverse features. This was a time when doctors working as general practitioners were not considered 'upper class' and their capabilities were much varied.

Elizabeth Gaskell had medical contacts from an early age. There were two doctors in her family, an uncle, her mother's brother, Peter Holland and his son Henry Holland. Each was distinguished in his profession.[5]

Uncle Peter Holland (1766-1855)

Peter practised in Knutsford, Cheshire, and is considered a pioneer in occupational medicine. He was employed to examine apprentices at a mill in Styal, Cheshire (and paid 12 guineas a year). This was the earliest recorded example of a commercial activity providing a health service. Elizabeth sometimes accompanied him on his rounds and must have learned much about general practice. Uglow wrote that he was an irascible man[1] and that he was accused of 'odious sneering' at those who could not answer back.[1]

Cousin Henry Holland (1788-1870)
Henry was at school in Bristol with Richard Bright, and then they both became medical students together in Edinburgh. In 1810 Sir George Steuart Mackenzie[6] (1780-1848), a well- known mineralogist and the first to show the connection between diamonds and carbon, invited the pair to go to Iceland in 1810. They spent three months there collecting botanical, zoological and geological specimens and in the following year Bright wrote *Travels in the island of Iceland during the summer of the MDCCCX*. This included details of diseases, music, religion and education in that country as well as descriptions of their specimens. Bright made many of the drawings. He became a well-known Physician at Guys and was the first to describe glomerulonephritis.

Henry, at the end of his medical course in Edinburgh, presented a thesis in Latin on the diseases of Iceland. He then travelled extensively He met some royal courtiers and must have impressed them and subsequently became Physician to William IV and in 1837 was appointed one of Queen Victoria's Physician Extraordinary to Queen Victoria. He cared for Prince Albert before his death and for many prominent people including six Prime Ministers. Uglow considered him a terrible snob and compulsive traveller and did not think Elizabeth liked him much.[1]

Brother-in-law Samuel Gaskell
Elizabeth's brother-in-law, Samuel Gaskell was a General Practitioner; he was said to have been a cheerful man and a good friend to many. Elizabeth makes no comment about his work in her letters but surely he told her about his work.

Mr Harrison's Confessions
Elizabeth Gaskell's only publication that wholly concerns a doctor is the novella *Mr Harrison's Confessions*,[7] published in 1851. Charles Harrison relates his experiences as a young doctor when he became attached as a partner to a cousin of his father, Mr Morgan, who had a country practice in Duncombe (fictional). Morgan is represented as 'an honourable, kind-hearted, fidgety, meddlesome old bachelor' who expects doctors to be smart and well behaved 'as befits a learned profession' but is very caring of his patients, Morgan gave Harrison 'hints' about doctors' manners, saying 'The great Sir Everard Home used to say "A general practitioner should either have a very good manner, or a very bad one. In the latter case he must be possessed of talents sufficient to ensure his being sought after".'[7] Then, inexplicably he says 'Abernethy is a case in point'.

Why did Mrs Gaskell refer to Sir Everard Home (1756-1832)? Home was said to have been a brilliant surgeon at St Georges Hospital, author of many papers and books and who in 1808 became Sergeant Surgeon to the king. He married a sister of the famous surgeon John Hunter. However he was considered a 'vain and duplicitous charlatan despised by his peers' because of suspected plagiarism of Hunter's work. He described, in several papers for the Royal Society, the fossil

ichthyosaur discovered at Lyme Regis in 1812 by the simple girl Mary Anning. He was thought to have been very mean for failing to give any credit to her for finding it and for her careful cleaning and preparation of the specimen.[8] Abernethy presumably refers to John Abernethy (1764-1831) who became a surgeon at St Bartholomew's. It has been said that his lectures attracted crowds but his eccentricity and rude manners contributed to his celebrity.[9] Why did Elizabeth choose to refer to these two not very admirable men who had died twenty years before she wrote this story?

Elizabeth Gaskell also mentions Sir Astley Cooper (1768-1841), surgeon at Guys Hospital, in her novella; Harrison, who had been a student at Guy's Hospital, casually said something about him to Morgan and, within days, people in the town were saying that Harrison was a favourite pupil of Sir Astley's and might be retained by him to assist in his duties to the Royal Family. This completely untrue rumour was initiated by Morgan who wanted to display Harrison as an outstanding assistant. Unlike Home and Abernethy, Sir Astley was entirely respectable and famous for his work on aneurysms He carried out the remarkable operation of tying the abdominal aorta to reduce an aneurysm in 1817. In 1820 he removed a sebaceous cyst from the head of King George IV and in 1827 became President of the Royal College of Surgeons.

Wives and Daughters
Elizabeth Gaskell's most detailed portrayal of a doctor is that of Mr Gibson in *Wives and Daughters*[10] (published serially from August 1864 to January 1866 and in one volume in 1866 after her death in 1865). He could well represent all that she hoped a good practitioner should be and he certainly has none of the reported characteristics of her Holland medical relatives, their snobbery and bad tempers. But she did write a rather strange comment about him - 'He was not jovial ... [he was] sparing of his words, intelligent and slightly sarcastic. Therefore he was perfectly presentable'.[10]

Gibson, an Edinburgh graduate, came to the little town of Hollingford as partner to Mr Hall and later takes over the practice. He is a great success professionally and more accepted 'in society' (that is by Lord and Lady Cumnor and their friends) than Hall; perhaps this was because he not only had 'a genteel appearance and elegant figure' but because it was rumoured that his father 'must have been some person of quality'. Lady Cumnor invited Gibson, while he was still a partner, to dinner in order to meet Sir Astley Cooper, 'the head of the profession'.[10] Hall was also invited but could not accept because of gout and he never recovered from his disappointment. Hall usually ate in the Cumnors' housekeeper's room whereas Gibson, later, could lunch with the gentry any day, not that he often did as he was not interested in 'social gratification'.

Mrs Gaskell certainly represented Gibson as conscientious, always available to

his patients and with good medical knowledge – characteristics which she hoped to see in all the profession. She wrote about him 'He had rather a contempt for demonstrative people, arising from his medical insight into the consequences to health of uncontrolled feeling' – a commentator on the novel has pointed out that this was a widely accepted medical tenet stressed in *The Principles of Physiology* (1834) by Andrew Combe (1797-1847) a Scottish Physician and Phrenologist who was consulted about many cases of insanity and nervous disease.[10] (Phrenology is 'the detailed study of the shape and size of the cranium as a supposed indication of character and mental abilities').

Gibson's patient with the most interesting condition was Osborne Hamley, the local squire's son. He complained of ill health and Gibson was worried about him when he first saw him but it is not clear why. He did just say that he 'did not like his looks or his pulse'.[10] He was seen again by Gibson and Dr Nicholls, the much respected county physician.[10] Gibson's wife overheard their discussion and that Gibson had diagnosed 'an aneurism [sic] of the aorta'[10] and that Nicholls said 'his days are numbered'. Osborne died suddenly soon afterwards. Gaskell had written to her publisher George Smith (1824-1901) on 3 May 1864[2] saying I 'have made up a story in my mind' and she gave a good outline of *Wives and Daughters*, mentioning 'Osborne breaks a blood vessel and dies'. Few lay people can have known about aneurysms at that time. It is unlikely that she had read about them in a medical journal and perhaps she had met Sir Astley and learned about them from him; she mentions him twice in her novels but not in her many letters.

Squire Hamley at the side of the body of his son Osborne who has died with a ruptured aortic aneurysm.

From *Wives and Daughters*, edition of 1912.

Cranford

Mrs Gaskell portrays Mr Hoggin in her novel *Cranford*[11] (the name of the town thought to represent Knutsford where Elizabeth grew up) as a typical 'general practitioner' her day – not 'upper class'. His patients consider him capable, hard-working and pleasant-looking but some ladies there agreed that 'As a gentleman, we could only shake our heads over his name and himself and wished that he had read Lord Chesterfield's Letters in the days when his manners were susceptible of improvement'.[11] Lord Chesterfield[12] (1694-1773) was an active parliamentarian, considered by some as selfish, calculating and contemptuous. In 1774 his son's widow published more than 400 of his letters in *Letters to His Son on the art of becoming a Man of the World and a Gentleman.* It is not surprising that Hoggin's patients were amazed when they heard he was going to marry the widowed Lady Glenmire.

Ruth

Other doctors are portrayed sympathetically in Mrs Gaskell's novels but they appear only briefly. Mr Lewis, in *Ruth*,[13] is the most interesting, a kind man notable for his adoption of the illegitimate son of the heroine Ruth who had been seduced by one of the gentry. Poor Elizabeth Gaskell was much criticised for her portrayal of kindness to the 'innocent fallen girl'.

Gaskell's death[14]

Uglow relates how well Elizabeth had been looking in church on the afternoon of Sunday 12 November 1865 and how she enjoyed a happy early evening with her family but then suddenly she stopped speaking and with a slight gasp fell forward into the arms of her daughter Meta and did not recover. There was no post-mortem and the death certificate recorded the cause of death as 'disease of the heart'. There was no mention of pain by those present and a sudden cardiac arrest is most likely.

Three weeks after the death, Isabella Green, the daughter of a close friend of Elizabeth Gaskell, in a letter to her brother Phillip dated 3 December 1865,[15] wrote that Elizabeth's daughters had said 'her death was caused by the breaking of the medulla oblongata which is the upper part of the spinal chord [sic] and it becomes very brittle in people who have gout, as you know, she had several times'. It is not known who gave this bizarre diagnosis 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'. This is strange since she was aged fifty five and had had no symptoms or definite evidence of a disorder with a poor prognosis although there are mentions in letters and biographies of 'a weak heart', 'unwell on and off all the year', 'deadly feelings of fatigue', 'depression', 'weakness helped by medicinal brandy' and of episodes of back pain, dizziness, fainting and chest infection. All these conditions could have been associated with overwork and worry to which she admitted but not to a life with death at the age of 55 years. There

is no mention of exertion restricted by chest pain suggesting angina. She did have frequent headaches, probably migraine, as did three of her four daughters and she often describes them occurring in her literary characters.[16]

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'[17] It is possible that she had met Sir Astley Cooper whom she mentioned in two novels and learned about aneurysms and their associated fatality from him and so later thought she had an aneurysm to foretell her early death.

Epilogue

Elizabeth Gaskell had close contacts with some well-known doctors and her family practitioners. Her portrayal and evaluation of the profession, as it was in the nineteenth century, is therefore of interest. Her mention in a novel of two real doctors said to be eccentric and who died some years before she wrote the book, is curious. Her inclusion twice of Sir Astley Cooper in two novels and her use of the diagnosis of an aneurysm may indicate that she met him but there is no reference to him in her large correspondence.

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Marianne

Christine Lingard

Marianne Gaskell, known as Polly or Minnie, was born at Dover Street, Manchester on 12th September 1834, the eldest surviving daughter of Elizabeth Gaskell (the first daughter had been stillborn). She was the longest lived of the four daughters and the only one to have a family. She is well known to Gaskell scholars as the recipient of the majority of her mother's family letters. Her younger sisters had destroyed most of their correspondence.

From the age of six months, her mother kept a diary of her development and care. Most of her early education was undertaken at home by her parents and a series of governesses. She was particularly fond of music, and was taught piano by Charles Hallé, and singing by Sir William Sterndale Bennett. At the age of sixteen she was sent to a private school at Holly Hill, Hampstead, run by two sisters, Mrs Marianne Lalor and Miss Ruth Banks. At home she was often left to run the house when her mother was away and gave lessons to her younger sisters and to the servants.

In 1861 she went to Rome to spend the winter with a friend. There was great concern over her interest in the Roman Catholic Church and Cardinal Henry Manning. The following year she expressed her religious dilemmas with Charles Eliot Norton:

> Unitarianism does seem to me not fully to embrace all that the Bible teaches us - it seems to me that Unitarianism tests everything too much through reason, and leaves nothing to Faith...since I came home I have been reading with Papa, as yet only the reasons against, Catholicism not reasons for Unitarianism.

For the rest of her life Marianne was an active member of the Church of England.

It was now evident that she had formed an attachment to her second cousin, Edward Thurstan Holland. Thurstan was born in 1836 at Dumbleton Hall, Gloucestershire, the eldest son of Edward Holland, MP for Evesham. He was educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge and was currently reading for the bar at Lincoln's Inn. There was, initially, great opposition to this union, particularly from Edward, who was afraid that his wealth would be dissipated when divided up between his thirteen children, and was determined that his son should marry 'money'. He threatened at one time to cut off his allowance if they continued their relationship.

The couple persisted but did not marry until 14th August 1866, the year after her mother's death. Their first home was 1 Sunnyside, Wimbledon, but in 1874 they moved to 9 Woburn Square, Bloomsbury, which was closer both to Thurstan's chambers in Lincoln's Inn and to several philanthropic housing projects he was involved with in the Covent Garden area – Bennett's Court, Drury Lane and Thurstan and Holland Buildings, Newton Street, Holborn for example.

Married life could not have been easy. In eleven years she gave birth to seven children but only three of them – William Edward 'Willie' (1867), Florence Evelyn (1871), and Bryan Thurstan (1875) survived to maturity. Agnes Sylvia (1870) and John Ottys (1877) died as babies. In addition, the two eldest, Willie and Margaret Elizabeth 'Daisy' (1868) were born profoundly deaf – a consequence, it is thought, of the close kinship of their parents. Daisy (aged seven) and her two year old sister Julia Dorothea (1873) died of whooping cough, within twenty four hours of each other in February 1876. Willie, however lived a full life. He died in 1927 at the age of sixty, having married Florence Evelyn Isdell in Wimbledon in 1896, and had a daughter. He is described on the 1901 Census as 'of independent means' and on the 1911 as an 'amateur wood carver'. His work can be seen in Alfrick church. He has descendants living today.

In December 1876 Marianne put her unhappy memories of Bloomsbury behind her and returned to her 'beloved Wimbledon' – Cotswold, Lansdowne Road, but tragedy continued when in September 1884, the same year as his father-in-law, Thurstan died suddenly, aged 48. The couple were well regarded in the community. He was a benefactor of the local hospital and founded the St. Michael's Club for Friendless Girls. At All Saints' Church, Wimbledon, where he was a member of the church extension fund a memorial window was dedicated to him in 1893. Designed by the leading stained glass artist Charles Kempe and costing £200 it was paid for by Marianne. Thurstan Avenue was named after him. He left £18,193 13s 7d.

In 1891 the household included an 'adopted' daughter, Ethel Cockburn, (aged 20) whose family were in India. She married and died in Kenya at the age of 35. There was also a sicknurse but no indication is given of which of the family needed her services or whether this prompted the family's move to the country. Worcestershire was an area familiar to Thurstan from childhood. His mother, Sophy, was the daughter of the banker, John Whitmore Isaac, of Boughton House, near Worcester, now a golf club. Family links are extremely complicated. Mrs Isaac was Charlotte Holland, the sister of Edward Holland, senior. Elizabeth Gaskell often combined a visit to Boughton with a visit to Dumbleton, and found peace and solitude there to continue her writing. The walk from Bransford Bridge to Powick Bridge along the banks of the River Tene, which was a favourite of Edward Elgar, probably inspired her to include descriptions of the Malvern Hills in *Wives and Daughters*. She was also there in 1856 when working on *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*.

The family is first recorded at Grove Hill, Suckley in 1893 but they moved to Birchyfields, Pencombe Lane, Avenbury, on the outskirts of Bromyard, in September, 1895. This is a Grade II stucco house of the 1830s, which was owned and extended by Frederick Robertson Kempson, one of Hereford's leading architects. He may have continued to own the house even when Marianne was a tenant. In 1901 her daughter, Florence and a friend, escaped injury by jumping clear

of their carriage when the horses took fright and ran out of control all the way down into Bromyard, crashing through the window of the Queen's Arms Inn.

Marianne was very active in charity work, especially those organisations concerned with the care of the deaf and dumb. She was a member of the governing body of the Training College for Teachers of the Deaf, founded by Sir Benjamin Ackers, MP in 1878 in Ealing. She was deputed to examine the oral work of the schools. Willie (aged 12) was living in Ealing in 1881 – probably in lodgings to enable him to attend a local school for the deaf as a day boy. She also supervised examinations at St John's Institution for Deaf and Dumb at Boston Spa (Yorkshire) and in 1895, participated in an inspection of the West of England Institution for the Deaf and Dumb.

Marianne moved to Alfrick Court, another Grade II building with parkland, three miles west of Worcester and in the same parish as Suckley, in 1902 and spent the rest of her life there with her other children. There were seven servants. The friendship with the Cockburn family continued. Ethel's niece, Katherine Sinclair, spent a lot of time at Alfrick, as her parents were in Zanzibar. She referred to Marianne as her grandmother.

Later she married Sir William Codrington, Lord Lieutenant of Rutland. The friendship may have started in Malta. Thurstan's stepmother, Fanny Hunter, was a native of Malta. Ethel's grandfather, John Cleugh, Archdeacon of Valletta, conducted the funeral of his half-brother Henry, in 1870. There are many references in Parish magazines to Marianne's musical activities - she gave music lessons at Suckley - and to her charity work - in 1896 she hosted a garden party at Birchyfields for inmates of the local workhouse, and in 1901 a Garden Meeting. She organised concerts to wipe out the debt incurred in furnishing the club room, at Alfrick.

Marianne died on 7th September 1920, just short of her 86th birthday and eight years after her sister, Meta. She is buried in a prominent position near to the entrance of Alfrick church. She left £14,206 4s 6d. Her younger son, Bryan, a stock broker, wrote two novels - *A Certain Man* and *A Vagrant Tune*. He lived with his sister at Harrow Cottage, West Malvern, and died in 1933 aged 59. Florence died, unmarried, in 1942 aged 69. They are buried in St James's churchyard, Malvern.

Further Reading

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Murder in Mrs Gaskell Country
Hyde, Cheshire 1831

J P Lethbridge

In 1831 Hyde was a Cheshire cotton-spinning town, near the Lancashire border. Its population of about seven thousand had more than doubled since 1821. Before the Industrial Revolution it was just a village. A leading family was the wealthy cotton mill-owning Ashtons. Samuel Ashton, who had a brother, Thomas Ashton senior, lived at Pole Bank, Hyde; and had two sons and a daughter. James Ashton, the oldest son, managed Apethorn Mill, Hyde. Thomas Ashton junior, twenty-three, managed Woodley Mill, Hyde. Their sister Mary Ashton was twelve.

On the evening of Monday 3 January 1831 most of the Hyde Ashtons were preparing to attend the twenty-first birthday party of a Mr Barlow whose sister was James Ashton's fiancée. Thomas Ashton junior, who was not going to the party, left home at half six that evening, to collect some documents from Apethorn Mill. At about a quarter past seven that evening two Apethorn Mill workers, William Taylor, a joiner, and George Wagstaff, a mechanic, who had left work at seven, found Thomas Ashton junior's body lying back down in Apethorn Lane. At first they thought it was a drunk but then realised it was a corpse.

A Hyde surgeon, William Tinker, was called and the victim's body was taken home. Surgeon Tinker's post mortem showed that the victim had been shot in the chest. There was one entry wound and two exit wounds. At Hyde on Wednesday 5 January 1831 the Knutsford, Cheshire, Coroner, John Hollins, held an inquest into Thomas Ashton's death. Six witnesses testified. Three men had been seen acting suspiciously near the scene of the murder and three men, who had recently been sacked by James Ashton, for Trade Union activities, linked to a strike wave, which had affected the Ashtons' Ashton (sic) Lancashire mills but not their Hyde mills, had been arrested. The inquest returned a verdict of murder by person or persons unknown. The three suspects had good alibis, there was no real evidence against them and they were released.

Samuel Ashton offered a £500 reward for information as to who the killers were, his brother Thomas Ashton senior put up £500, and the other local master cotton spinners another £500. These rewards totalled £1,500, about £300,000 in our terms. They were supported by a government decree that anyone involved in the killing, except those who actually fired the fatal shots, who turned evidence, would be pardoned.

On Wednesday 25 May 1831 James Jones, eighteen, awaiting trial in Manchester Gaol, for stealing a shirt, testified to a magistrate that Thomas Ashton's murderer was Thomas Trotter, a middle-aged tailor, with a wife and five children. Thomas

Trotter was brought before a magistrate on Monday 30 May 1831. The magistrate's hearing was adjourned that day to collect further evidence and resumed on Wednesday 1 June 1831. James Jones's evidence showed his ignorance of the circumstances of the murder and Trotter was freed. It looked as if the murder would never be solved despite the efforts of the local police backed up by help from London's Metropolitan Police set up in 1829.

On Wednesday 19 March 1834 James Garside, twenty-five, pleaded guilty at Derby Assizes, to stealing a spindle box, (a box for storing cotton spinning spindles), at Whittle, northwest Derbyshire near the Cheshire border. On Monday 24 March he was sentenced to eighteen months in gaol i.e. eighteen months from when he was tried with no parole or remission. Hoping to escape serving his sentence he confessed he was an accomplice in Thomas Ashton's murder; and that the killers were two brothers William and Joseph Mosley from Marple near Stockport.

The Mosley brothers were arrested. In May 1834 William Mosley, a canal boatman with a long criminal record, named as the killers, James Garside and Joseph Mosley, aged thirty-four, a self-educated labourer, who was regarded as the best scholar in the village. The authorities decided that William Mosley's story was the more credible. James Garside and Joseph Mosley were tried at the Chester Summer Assizes on Wednesday 6 August 1834. The judge was James Parke a Liverpool merchant's son. The prosecution was led by Matthew Davenport Hill who was assisted by James Baldwin Brown, and John Horatio Lloyd whose granddaughter was to marry Oscar Wilde. Joseph Dunn defended James Garside but Joseph Mosley insisted on defending himself.

The main prosecution witness William Mosley described how James Garside and Joseph Mosley had murdered Thomas Ashton by shooting him with a large horse pistol and a smaller pistol at point blank range, hence the one entry wound but two exit wounds. Fifteen witnesses supported his evidence.

James Garside in his defence merely said that "If you've come to take away my life do it". Joseph Mosley blamed the killing on his brother and Garside who he alleged had been paid £10, (about £2,000 today), by shadowy figures linked to the Trade Union movement, to kill the victim's brother James Ashton, the original intended victim; and said that William Mosley had been intimidated and bribed into turning evidence while in Chester Gaol. A fellow prisoner was called and supported this allegation but another prisoner refused to support it and the prison governor denied any wrongdoing.

The judge then summed up. The jury took seven minutes to convict James Garside and Joseph Mosley of murder and they were condemned to death. The task of hanging them was given to the Chester City Sheriffs but they refused, arguing that since Chester's separate Palatinate County Assizes had been abolished in 1830,

the execution should be conducted by the Cheshire County Sheriffs. The Cheshire County Sheriffs countered that hangings were the Chester City Sheriffs' responsibility. The executions were delayed until the matter could be resolved.

On Saturday 16 August 1834 Samuel Schofield, aged twenty-four, was committed to Chester Gaol. He was charged on William Mosley's evidence with having paid Garside and the Mosley brothers their £10 blood money. The authorities hoped he would name higher Trade Union figures such as John Doherty an Irish born cotton mill workers' union leader and political radical as famous in his day as Arthur Scargill once was.

In October 1834 word reached the police that James Garside had borrowed his horse pistol from a Mr Jones, aged twenty, of Marple, and had returned it after the murder. Jones was questioned and admitted he had lent Garside his gun thinking it was for a legitimate purpose. The gun matched its description in William Mosley's evidence. No action was taken against Jones but this discovery was widely publicised it being held as proving the two condemned men's guilt.

The two condemned men were taken to London and on Thursday 27 November 1834 were publicly hanged in front of Horse-monger Lane Gaol. In March 1835 the Grand Jury at the Chester Spring Assizes found no true bill against Schofield i.e. there was no case against him that could be put to a jury. With little publicity he was freed. Later that year a law was passed that Cheshire executions were the City of Chester Sheriffs' responsibility. William Ashton never got his reward it being ruled he was too closely involved in the murder so must be content with escaping the gallows.

The novelist, biographer, short story writer and poet Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell's first novel *Mary Barton: a story of Manchester Life* was published anonymously in October 1848. It compared the comfortable lives of the rich and the desperate conditions for the poor against a background of Chartism, strikes, murder and prostitution. Its plot centres on John Barton a decent and kindly working class man who has been driven mad by poverty and the loss of a son to malnutrition, and his wife in childbirth. He has become an opium addict aggravating his poverty. He borrows a gun from his surviving daughter Mary's fiancé Jem Wilson, and shoots dead Harry Carson a spoilt and arrogant wealthy Cotton King's son. His aim is showing a Cotton King what it is like to lose a child.

Unknown to John Barton, Harry Carson was trying to seduce Barton's only surviving child Mary Barton. The police arrest Jem Wilson, a skilled craftsman, inventor and foreman, and learn that his gun was the murder weapon. Jem Wilson is unwilling to betray his prospective father-in-law and seems doomed. After melodramatic scenes including a frantic chase after a boat leaving Liverpool for the Isle of Man, Jem Wilson is proved innocent and acquitted but loses his job. He marries Mary Barton and they emigrate to Canada where they do well in a new country.

Mr Carson senior eventually realises John Barton is the murderer. He confronts the dying John Barton and threatens him with the law. Barton pleads with him to allow him to die at home and Carson eventually repents, Barton dying in his arms. To quote a review by Charles Kingsley, the Christian Socialist clergyman, in Fraser's Magazine, the rich should read Mary Barton because: Do they want to know why poor men, kind and sympathising as women to each other, learn to hate law and order, Queen, Lords and Commons, country party and corn law leagues all alike - to hate the rich in short? then let them read *Mary Barton*.

Mary Barton was partly based on the Thomas Ashton murder. If Joseph Mosley was guilty he may well have had much in common with John Barton. James Garside and William Mosley had in contrast past criminal records but we cannot know if they were natural criminals or were driven to crime by poverty. The resemblance between the two murders was close enough that Thomas Ashton's sister Mary who by 1848 was twenty nine and married to Thomas Potter, of a well-known Manchester family, fainted on reading the book. In a letter dated 16 August 1852 Mrs Gaskell apologized to Mary Potter née Ashton's brother in law Sir John Potter for any personal distress the book had caused.

Mary Barton was savagely attacked by the mainly Liberal Manchester manufacturers Mrs Gaskell had criticised for callousness towards the poor. Their then organ The Manchester Guardian, the present day Guardian, was particularly hostile. Mrs Gaskell's identity soon became known but she refused to apologise for saying what she thought. She went on to write five more novels and much else.

Hyde is today part of Greater Manchester and is no longer in Cheshire. It has a population of more than thirty thousand and has very few buildings that were there in 1831. Other notable Hyde murderers have included Ian Brady and Myra Hindley of the 1965 Moors Murders; and Dr Harold Shipman who murdered hundreds of his elderly patients.

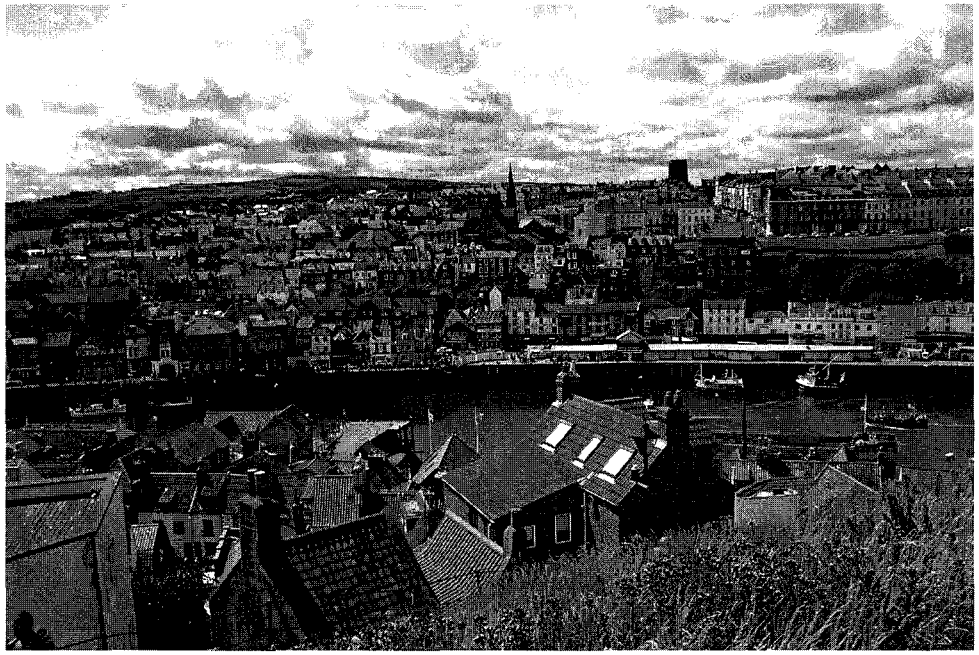
Thomas Ashton's first cousin, another Thomas Ashton, was born in 1818 and was twelve when his cousin and namesake was murdered. After studying chemistry at Heidelberg University, Germany, he became a leading Manchester master cotton miller. He was noted for his paternalism even when this involved considerable financial sacrifice for instance he kept his mills working during the cotton famine caused by the American Civil War when the US Navy blockaded the Confederate ports; backed improved working class education and helped found Manchester University; and generously supported poor relief schemes. He married an American woman Elizabeth Gair and they had nine children. He died in 1898 aged seventy-nine.

Thomas and Elizabeth Ashton's oldest son Thomas Gair Ashton was created the 1st Baron Ashton of Hyde in 1911 having been a Liberal MP for Hyde from 1885 to

Conference 2015

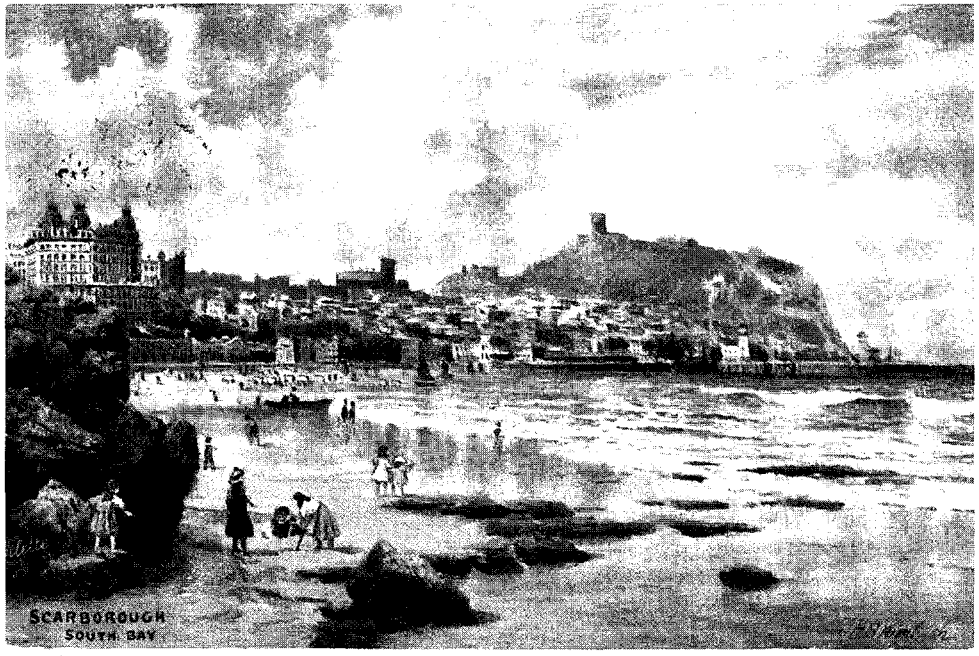
Before breakfast at Cober Hill

St. Mary's, Whitby (St. Nicholas, Monkshaven)



Whitby

Scarborough more than 100 years ago...



1886, and Luton from 1895 to 1911. The current 4th Baron Ashton of Hyde is this Thomas Ashton's great-grandson; and thus the murder victim Thomas Ashton's first cousin four times removed.

Mrs Gaskell's novels are still in print and much has been written about her. She vividly showed what poverty does to human beings but was sceptical about Chartist campaigns for democracy, and socialist plans for changing society, believing that if everybody were made equal some people would soon get ahead at others' expense. Her solution was for rich people to care about the poor and as important to be seen to care. As for her failing to go deeper, she was savagely criticised by her own class as it was, for even exposing the problem at all.

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Editor adds: Mr Lethbridge sent this article to me earlier in the year. Apart from minor editing, I decided to leave it as he wrote it.

Gaskell and Sand: Two Unlikely Soulmates

John Greenwood

At first glance it would seem that Elizabeth Gaskell and George Sand had very little in common. How can a respectable wife of a Unitarian minister in Victorian England, herself a devout believer, with four equally respectable daughters, and the writer of *Cranford* have any similarities with a French writer who was separated from her husband, and known to have had a scandalously large number of lovers and who wore men's clothes in public, often smoking a cigar? Some readers will have seen Merle Oberon as George Sand and Cornel Wilde as Chopin in the 1945 film 'A Song to Remember', which focused on such a risqué image of Sand. Yes, she did indeed scandalise many of her contemporaries and she enjoyed shocking French public opinion under the restored monarchy. However, thanks to research over many years on these two nineteenth century writers, similarities can indeed be established. As early as 1906, Ward wrote:

> George Sand, the great French novelist, whose later works, including her autobiography, appear to me in certain ways - above all in their large-heartedness - to resemble Mrs Gaskell's later writings.[1]

In her own time George Sand's novels from 1832 onwards were eagerly read by discerning English readers like the Carlyles, G H Lewis, George Eliot and John Stuart Mill. Lewis wrote in the *Westminster Review* in 1852:

> For eloquence and depth of feeling, no one approaches George Sand.

and Mill eulogised:

> There is not in all modern literature anything superior to the prose of George Sand, whose style acts upon the nervous system like a symphony of Haydn or Mozart.

Elizabeth Barrett even wrote a sonnet, entitled *To George Sand: A Recognition*, with the opening lines:

> True genius, but true woman! dost deny
> Thy woman's nature with a manly scorn,
> And break away the gauds and armlets worn
> By weaker women in captivity?

Of course, it was not only Sand as a French writer who was so admired by English readers. There was even a bookshop in the Burlington Arcade, named Jeff's, which sold only French books, such was the influence of French novels on English readers and novelists. Showalter argues that from the 1840s English women writers tended to be followers of either Jane Austen or George Sand. By the 1860s George Eliot was considered in the Austen camp and Charlotte Brontë in the Sand camp because Eliot was 'studied, intellectual, cultivated' and Bronte 'had chosen volcanic literature of the body as well as of the heart... the spontaneous artist who pours forth her feelings.'[2]. Is it possible to place Gaskell exclusively into one of these camps? I doubt it.

I have found recently much pleasure and insight in reading the collected letters between Sand and Flaubert.[3] These letters increased enormously my understanding of Sand as a person and writer, leading a very busy life. Furthermore, I kept on seeing similarities between Sand and Gaskell, as revealed in their published letters. Chapple, Pollard and Shelston[4] were responsible for collecting well over 500 letters by Gaskell, whereas their counterpart in France, Lubin[5], managed to publish about 20,000 letters by Sand. In their respective introductions to the letters they have similar observations. Chapple and Pollard claim the main value of the Gaskell letters is as a record and insight into Gaskell as a person - her basic kindness, decency and vitality, not forgetting her curiosity about

life and people – and as a reflection on the tone and style of so much of her writing:

> The great attraction of Mrs Gaskell's correspondence is that it reveals her so clearly as that many-sided person that she understood herself to be... [s]he is her natural impulsive self, blessed with an animation that catches the tones of genuine conversation and runs easily into living speech.[6]

Sand's letters reveal a similar fluency and openness which are so much part of her novels and short stories. In an interview Lubin comments:

> She wrote eight to ten letters a day, often more. They reveal an attentive mother, a generous friend, a woman curious about life and other people. In her letters the tone is close to conversation: simple, spontaneous, now passionate, now dramatic. Change of tone is constantly there; in the same letter she can switch from the serious to the colloquial and end with a childish joke.[7]

Then there is the famous sigh from Gaskell: 'a great number of mes'.[8] Both Gaskell and Sand had to cope with so much else than writing novels and short stories. Stoneman[9] and Foster[10] are but two Gaskell scholars who mention the hectic situation, dealing daily with her commitments as a wife and a mother of four daughters, parish work as the wife of a Unitarian minister in central Manchester, and as a leading Manchester citizen with her husband, receiving many distinguished visitors. No wonder she at times expresses near-panic in fulfilling all these commitments. Perhaps she would have found comfort if she had known that George Sand would give vent to a similar busy, sometimes stressful, situation in many a letter, e.g.

> enjoying the marvellous winter, gathering flowers, making dresses and mantles for my daughter-in-law, costumes for the marionettes, cutting out scenery, dressing dolls, reading music, but above all spending hours with little Aurore... [n]ot alone enough in Nohant, with the children whom I love too much to belong to myself, and at Paris, one does not know what one is, one forgets oneself entirely for a thousand things.[11]

Ten years earlier Gaskell complains:

> I have so much to say ...[a]nd people **will** come from north and south, and east and west, wanting to speak to me this morning...[D]on't think I'm gone crazy if this letter is very much without method.[12]

So Gaskell and Sand have very similar real life situations, with their family commitments being a major item.

Both express much relief from their busy daily lives in their experiences of Italy. Sand writes in her autobiography:

> Venice was indeed the town of my dreams, and all that I had imagined beforehand about it was less than the reality, both in the mornings and in the evenings, both during the peace of sunny days and the dim light of the storms.[13]

Gaskell writes in a letter:

> It was in those charming Roman days that my life, at any rate, culminated. I shall never be so happy again. I don't think I was ever so happy before. My eyes fill with tears when I think of those days, and it is the same with all of us. They were the tip-top point of our lives.[14]

However, they do both find time to write many interesting letters to friends and acquaintances, though they deal with the actual writing in different ways. One has the impression - nay, she mentions it herself frequently - that Gaskell snatches any spare moment of the day to jot down something before having to put pen down and see to some domestic matter ('It is so hard to me to write a proper letter'), so that 'she was never wholly free from anxieties, even guilt, about her writing'.[15] Sand, on the other hand, established a routine for writing, usually late at night when all was quiet, thus more time and a better ambiance for reflection.

Receiving at home or visiting distinguished public figures as well as corresponding with them on a regular basis was taken for granted. For instance, Balzac, Flaubert and Turgenev were very much at home at Sand's chateau in Nohant (Chopin even more so!), while Gaskell would mention as quite normal mixing with leading intellectuals whether in Rome, Paris, Oxford or Manchester. Another area Sand and Gaskell share in their correspondence is a fairly prolonged concern for matters of national, even international, importance. In Gaskell's letters to the American Charles Norton the topic is the American Civil War, while Sand's focus in her letters to Flaubert is on the Prussian invasion of France and the Paris Commune in 1870-71. During the four years of the American Civil War (1861-65) Gaskell reveals in her letters her deep concern about the conduct of the war itself and its serious repercussions for the Lancashire cotton economy, deprived of American cotton imports. Sand despairs of the catastrophic situation in and around Paris: 'I think this war is infamous. Men are ferocious and conceited brutes. France and Prussia are cutting each other's throats for reasons that they don't understand. One sees nothing but poor peasants mourning for their children who are leaving. What disorder, what disarray in that military administration. We have reached the point this evening of knowing that we are beaten.'[16]

Turning to their novels and short stories, it would require much more than this short article to do justice to so many similarities. A few examples will hopefully encourage readers to discover more similarities. The first novel of each writer had a sensational effect on the relevant reading public and put each writer on the literary map.[17] Both faced harsh and unfair criticism from quite a few professional

critics as well as from the general public. Accusations of being 'a dangerous book' were made against Sand's *Indiana* because it dealt with the oppressive and unjust position of women in marriage. In reply, Sand insisted she depicted (like a mirror) the actual situation and nothing more. She even claimed that she had no wish to denounce marriage per se nor to abolish it. As she wrote in the 1842 Preface to *Indiana*: 'The injustice and cruelty of the laws which govern the existence of the wife in marriage, in the family and in society.'[18] In *Mary Barton* Gaskell was accused of being too pro-worker and too anti-employer, though, like Sand, she based her account of the Manchester poor and working class on what she experienced in her daily life. In both these first novels the writers deal with the male-female relationships, seduction or the threat of it, the marriage choice and self-definition by the heroine. Society, in both novels, is portrayed as treating men and women differently, the double-standard factor. Both heroines illustrate a woman's right to make her own decisions: Indiana rejects her marriage as a child-wife to a cruel husband and chooses a lover (even if he is a rogue) and Mary rejects the advances of an irresponsible lover and acts decisively to save Jem, her true love, from a murder conviction and her father from exposure to a murder.

Sand's earlier novels of the 1830s which impressed English, as well as French, readers so much were followed in the 1840s by shorter novels or novellas, known in French as *les romans champêtres* (rural stories). These were based on the Berry region in Central France where she spent more and more of her time as she grew older, and thus less time in Paris. She had inherited the chateau at Nohant – still a wonderful place to experience the Sand ambiance. As in Gaskell's short stories with a rural setting, those written by Sand rarely dealt only with idyllic, unrealistic situations.[19] Whereas other French contemporary writers focussed on the lives of town folk, Sand exploited her deep knowledge of and sympathy for village/country folk in her *romans champêtres*. She had no illusions about them.[20] As a child she would mix and play with children from all social classes, and when she became châtelaine at Nohant, she was as caring to the servants as Gaskell was in Plymouth Grove. Loyal but outspoken Gaskell characters like Dixon in *A Dark Night's Work* or Betty in *Cousin Phillis* have their counterparts in Sand's work.

Reading the novels and short stories of both writers leaves the reader in no doubt that they took a feminist stand. However, both refused to be active participants in the contemporary feminist movements. Direct action in this field was not their preference. For Sand, especially from the 1848 Revolution onwards, it was through the struggle within the home and marriage itself that sexual equality would be achieved. Strongly influenced by her Unitarian beliefs, Gaskell's answer to male dominance was through love and reason, care for and solidarity with others. Of course, there were many differences between the two novelists, both in their lives and in their writings. For example, Sand had no sense of sin or guilt in her treatment of sexual relationships between men and women (*Jeanne* is a good

example here), whereas Gaskell, in spite of enormous sympathy for Ruth's predicament, still maintained that Ruth had sinned in her relationship with Bellingham. Nevertheless, there is, as this article has attempted to show, so much that these superb women writers of the 19th century had in common.

Notes and References

1 A.W.Ward (ed.1906): Knutsford Edition of the Works of Elizabeth Gaskell, available in the Portico Library.

2 E.Showalter (1978): A Literature of Their Own (Virago Press) p.104.

3 S.P.Sherman (ed. & trans. 2008): The George Sand – Gustave Flaubert Letters (Quill Pen Classics).

4 Chapple & Pollard (1966): The Letters of Mrs Gaskell (Manchester U P).
Chapple & Shelston (2000): Further Letters of Mrs Gaskell (Manchester U P).

5 G.Lubin (ed. 1964-94): Correspondance de George Sand (Garnier).

6 Chapple & Pollard. Introd.p.xxiii and Chapple (1980): Elizabeth Gaskell: A Portrait in Letters (Manchester U P).

7 A-M de Brem (1997) : George Sand : Un Diable de Femme (Gallimard) pp.82-3.

8 Chapple & Shelston, Introd. p.xv.

9 P.Stoneman (1987): Elizabeth Gaskell (Harvester Press) pp.37-8.

10 S.Foster (2002): Elizabeth Gaskell: A Literary Life (Palgrave Macmillan) Introd.pp.1-5.

11 Sherman, Letters C111 & XL11.

12 Chapple & Pollard, Letter 384.

13 G. Sand (1854-5) : Histoire de ma Vie.

14 Chapple & Pollard, Letter 375.

15 Chapple & Pollard, Letter 384 and Foster, p.58.

16 Sherman, Letters CLXX1 & CLXX111.

17 I am indebted to Helen Smith for drawing my attention to an interesting M.A. thesis in Knutsford Public Library: M.A. Mader : George Sand, Mrs Gaskell and 'Heroinism' (1981).

18 George Sand (1842): Indiana, Preface reproduced in B. Didier (ed.1984) : G. Sand: Indiana (Gallimard).

19 See Gaskell's shrewd comment in her biography of C. Brontë : 'The idea of the mistress and her maidens spinning at the great wheels, while the master was abroad, ploughing his fields, or seeing after his flocks on the purple moors, is very poetical to look upon; but when such life actually touches on our own days, and we can hear particulars from the lips of those now living, there come out details of coarseness... of irregularity and fierce lawlessness that rather mar the vision of pa toral innocence and simplicity' - E. Gaskell : The Life of C.Brontë (Oxford World Classics,1996) p.17. Such views are echoed in Margaret Hale's advice to Higgins (who was considering looking for work in southern rural England) in *North and South*.

20 G. van den Bogaert, editor of Sand's La Petite Fadette (Flammarion, 1967), states: 'Sand paints them as they are, with no indulgence, determined in work and defending their interests. They don't easily let themselves become emotional. Neither are they well-informed. They believe in all superstitions. Sand knew this clearly, so that she was saved from any idyllic absurdities.'

Gaskelliana for the Twenty-First Century

Fran Baker

The John Rylands Library at the University of Manchester has been marking the 150th anniversary of Elizabeth Gaskell's death with a number of exciting new initiatives focusing on our Gaskell holdings.

Over the years, we have digitised letters and individual pages from the Gaskell manuscripts that we hold – for talks and presentations, exhibitions, and in response to requests from researchers. More recently, a project run under the auspices of the newly-established John Rylands Research Institute[1] has led to some much larger-scale digitisation work, with the result that all four of the Gaskell manuscripts held at the Library have now been digitised in their entirety.

The Research Institute was founded to bring together researchers and curators to work on innovative collection-based projects. One of the first projects to be funded by the Institute was 'The Gaskells at 84 Plymouth Grove, Manchester', a proposal submitted by Professor Helen Rees Leahy, Director of the Centre for Museology at the University. Helen was also the Curatorial Consultant for Elizabeth Gaskell's House, being responsible for developing displays and interpretation following the purchase of the House by Manchester Historic Buildings Trust.

While this project had various different strands, Helen was keen to exploit the potential offered by digital technology to bring Gaskell's manuscripts to a wider audience, particularly to visitors who make the journey to Gaskell's home at Plymouth Grove. Utilising the expertise of the Library's Centre for Heritage Imaging and Collection Care, a major digitisation project was launched, and our in-house professional photographers have produced high-resolution digital images of every manuscript. Amongst these is the manuscript of *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, which reveals in a very material way the difficulties Gaskell encountered in researching and writing the biography of her friend: there are hundreds of crossings out and insertions; letters of Charlotte's were copied into the text by Gaskell's daughters; William Gaskell's hand also features in an editorial role (as well as contributing half a page of the text himself at an early point in the book). By contrast, her fiction manuscripts – particularly those of the short stories – are very clean, reflecting Gaskell's remarkable ability to simply sit down and write without subsequently making major revisions or fair copies. Her habit of composing her works in the midst of her bustling household is well-known, and one of the Library's other collections includes an anecdote about this: Isabella Jamison (formerly Green), who was a friend of the Gaskell daughters, remembered how her older sister Ellen was allowed to practise piano at the Gaskells' home when she was a girl; Isabella commented in her memoirs that 'Mrs Gaskell also used the room to write in & my sister used to wonder much what she was writing'.[2]

These digital manuscript volumes have been created in the form of book-reader objects, meaning that visitors to Plymouth Grove can 'virtually' flick through some of Gaskell's manuscripts in the very house where they were written.

Along with these manuscripts, the Library has digitised the first two published versions of Gaskell's short story 'The Crooked Branch', which appeared in Dickens's journal *All the Year Round* as 'The Ghost in the Garden Room' in 1859, only appearing under its better-known title when Gaskell herself included it in a collection of short stories the following year. This means that the manuscript can be compared with its first two editions, revealing some of the cuts and alterations that its editor (Charles Dickens) imposed on Gaskell's original version of the text.

By the end of this project, we had accumulated such an extensive corpus of digitised material that we decided to pull together all of our Gaskelliana to create a new digital 'Gaskell Collection' in our online image library, LUNA.[3] As well as the literary manuscripts, this includes correspondence which reveals the stories behind Gaskell's work. There are the letters she received from Charlotte Brontë, as well as the letter she obtained from Brontë's friend Mary Taylor in which Charlotte describes the memorable trip she made to London with her sister Anne in 1848 in order to reveal their true identities to publisher George Smith. There are letters from Dickens, Gaskell's irascible publisher; letters she received from other writers like George Eliot and Harriet Beecher Stowe; and some of the prized signatures and letters from famous people that Gaskell acquired for her own autograph collection (Wordsworth's being prominent among them). The Gaskell Family have permitted the Library to photograph some of the items in their own private collection, and these are also included in our online collection – so now people from all over the world can, at the click of a button, view Gaskell's passport, a portrait of Hannah Lumb, and some artwork by Gaskell's daughter Meta.

Any further Gaskelliana photographed by the Library will be added to this digital collection, which we hope will form an internationally significant resource for anyone with an interest in Gaskell's life and works.

Whilst digital reproductions can provide enhanced access to original documents and early editions, they can never quite capture the magical aura of the originals, particularly when handwriting is involved. In addition to the digital work, we therefore decided to exhibit some physical items from the collections to mark anniversary year. Between March and September, the two 'World Literature'-themed display cases in our Rylands Gallery are devoted to Gaskell. In keeping with the theme of Gaskell's House, the display includes a copy of the auction catalogue listing every single item from the house which was sold off in 1914 after Meta's death. Our particular copy of this catalogue comes from John Geoffrey Sharps's large collection;[4] it is special because it belonged to someone who was present at the sale and penned in an additional item by hand as Lot 377 – an 'exquisite

paisley shawl' which was in the Drawing Room but was not included in the printed sale catalogue. Anyone who has seen the displays at Elizabeth Gaskell's House will know of Gaskell's fondness for paisley.

We are also exhibiting an inkstand – not the well-known ivory-inlaid inkstand from the Library's collection which has been on loan to the House, but an altogether plainer wooden one.[5] We will never know whether Gaskell herself ever used it, but it was certainly purchased at the 1914 sale: a note on the base indicates that it was bought by John Harland, who was a member of the Mosley Street Sunday School in which the Gaskells took a great interest – and it was subsequently donated to the Library.

Alongside these items we are displaying a rather humble-looking sheet of notes which was serendipitously discovered behind a bookshelf at the House itself and placed on deposit with the Library by Manchester Historic Buildings Trust.[6] Written by William Gaskell, these 'Hints on English Composition' reflect his work as an educator and his interest in language, as well as recalling the grammatical and other corrections that appear in his hand on his wife's literary manuscripts.

We were also keen to showcase some relatively new acquisitions which had never been seen by the public before, so have included a letter that we purchased in 2013 which illustrates Gaskell's philanthropic interests: writing to Henry Somerset in 1860, she refers a poor woman of her acquaintance to Mr Rickard, a workhouse manager in Manchester, in the hope of getting her some poor relief to supplement her small income.[7] Another small but somewhat unusual acquisition is also on display: in 2013, we were alerted to a lone envelope which was being offered for sale by a bookseller. It had been spotted by David Southern, Managing Editor of *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle*, who quickly realised its relationship to an item in the Rylands' collections, namely the famous letter from Thomas Carlyle to the anonymous author of *Mary Barton*, in which he praised the novel as a book 'deserving to take its place far above the ordinary garbage of Novels'. The letter came to the Library as part of Meta Gaskell's bequest and was never accompanied by an envelope. Fortunately, we were able to purchase the envelope,[8] meaning that after more than 160 years and a journey which will probably never be known, it was finally reunited with its original contents!

Another new acquisition we are unable to display physically because of its light sensitivity is a carte de visite photograph of Elizabeth Gaskell, which is tentatively dated to 1864.[9] However, this will be made available for all to see in our digital Gaskell Collection. Cartes de visite were hugely popular from the late 1850s, being exchanged between friends and visitors, and displayed in albums. The portrait on our new carte de visite comes from the same session as the other photograph of Gaskell that the Library has held for many years; taken by Alexander McGlashon of Edinburgh, it shows Gaskell in one of her many paisley shawls.

Finally, one of our Conservators, Laura Caradonna, is undertaking a project to rehouse over 300 of the letters in the Gaskell Collection. These are the letters that were sent to Gaskell or her husband by a range of luminaries, along with Gaskell's autograph collection, all of which came to the Library from Meta Gaskell. They were loose on their arrival at the Library, and were subsequently mounted in five volumes. Although this probably reflected best practice at the time, over the years letters have become partially detached from their mounts, others have become completely loose, and yet others were deliberately removed for inclusion in exhibitions. If a researcher only wishes to see a single letter from the collection, it means an entire volume of letters must be issued each time, putting the other letters at unnecessary risk.

Laura is encasing each letter in its own conservation-grade polyester sleeve, and they will be held in five ringbinder boxes reflecting their current division into volumes.

Once this part of the project is complete, we will address further volumes in the collection, such as the letters sent to Gaskell by Charlotte Brontë. These are also mounted in a volume, but we believe them to have been bound before their arrival at the Library – potentially by the Gaskell family. They therefore have an interest as historic artefacts in a way that the Library-bound volumes do not, so we will need to address the challenge of preserving them to 21st-century standards, whilst ensuring that their integrity, and the original binding, is retained.

We are running two collection encounters for Gaskell Society members in November, at which I will be showing some old favourites from the collection as well as some of our more recent acquisitions. This will also provide an opportunity to find out more about the conservation project from Laura.

Our projected Gaskell-related activities for the future include undertaking some further work with Professor Rees Leahy on the history of the house at Plymouth Grove - including its pre- and post-Gaskell occupants, which may form the basis of a display in the future.

As ever, the legendary J G Sharps laid some groundwork in this area: his archive contains papers - including some beautiful photographs - of the Harper family, who moved into the house after Meta's death, and this is complemented by a small accession of material the Library acquired separately some decades ago from a relative of the Harpers. There were at least two Harper daughters, one of whom (Lilian) was a professional actress, and the other (Constance) a musician; aptly, Constance played the harp, and was the first professional female musician to join Manchester's Hallé Orchestra. The house at Plymouth Grove therefore became home to another generation of creative and talented women. Elizabeth Gaskell would surely have approved.

1 See http://www.jrri.manchester.ac.uk/.
2 Isabella Jamison's memoirs, p. 19, Papers of the Jamison Family, Box 5/3.
3 See http://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet/Gaskell2~91~1.
4 Papers of J.G. Sharps, Box 28/2.
5 Gaskell Collection, VDA.3.
6 Accession 2013/48.
7 Accession 2013/15. Published as letter no. 467 in Chapple and Pollard (eds), The Letters of Mrs Gaskell (Manchester: Mandolin, 1997).
8 Accession 2013/2.
9 Accession 2013/42.

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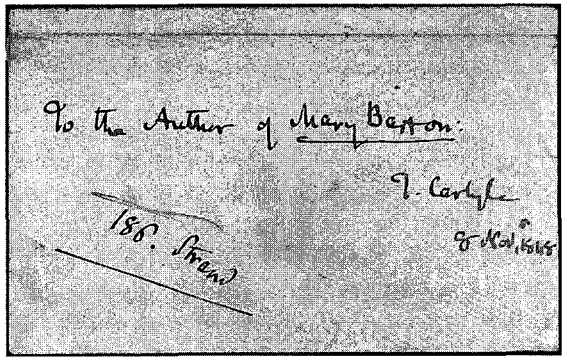

Envelope addressed by Thomas Carlyle

Carte de visite photograph of Mrs Gaskell

A message received on 8 May 2015 from two new members who are sisters

It is a truth universally acknowledged that ladies in possession of a favourite author must be in want of a Literary Society.....

And so it was that my sister and I, both devotees of Jane Austen and Mrs Gaskell, and members of the Jane Austen Society for many years, came to join the Elizabeth Gaskell Society and thus attend our first AGM at Cross St. Chapel on 18th April 2015.

The Elizabeth Gaskell Society was not entirely unknown to us as our good friend from the Jane Austen Society, Jackie Tucker, had always sung its praises whenever we met her at Austen events and kept urging us to join. She listed the vital ingredients that go into making a good literary society – excellent discussion groups and local events, a conference with renowned speakers at an agreeable hotel, pilgrimage trips in the footsteps of the author and delicious lunches! We were won over and decided to take the plunge and not only join but to dive straight into the Scarborough summer conference in pursuit of *Sylvia's Lovers*.

But the first hurdle was the AGM; would we be welcome, would we get on with the Gaskellites, would the buffet lunch live up to expectations? Well; yes, yes and, most definitely, yes!! What a lovely time we had and can only say thank you very much to everyone for making us so welcome. The members were so friendly, the speakers so interesting and stimulating and the lunch so utterly delicious!

We are looking forward to meeting up again at the conference in July.

Best wishes to all,

Christine Grocott & Judith Bottriell

Editor adds: We must let these New Gaskell Girls know that we prefer to be known as Gaskellians. We welcome them warmly nonetheless. They did come to the Conference.

Time for Some Light Relief: 'Gaskell' on the Silver Screen

Christine Lingard

For anyone interested in Elizabeth Gaskell and her friends you may want to consider a film as an alternative to reading a book. Here are a few suggestions with less obvious connections, in addition to adaptations of Brontë novels.

Glory 1989
With Oscar winning performances from Denzel Washington and Morgan Freeman, this is the true story of Colonel Robert Gould Shaw (Matthew Broderick) who was killed commanding the only contingent of black troops at Fort Wagner, Charleston Bay, in the American Civil War, 1863. Mrs Gaskell wrote a short appreciation of him for Macmillan's Magazine later that year. Not for the faint hearted.

Creation 2009
The story of Darwin's writing of The Origin of the Species, and his devotion to his precocious daughter Annie, (Martha West) whose death, at the age of thirteen, nearly wrecked his marriage. Gaskell was excited to meet in him in 1851, writing: It's not the Poet Laureate, but it is a cousin, not seen for years, and who has been around the world since, who has volunteered to come up 15 miles to see me. Charles Darwin (Paul Bettany) was in fact the cousin of her cousin Sir Henry Holland. He became the inspiration, in part, for Roger Hamley in Wives and Daughters. The child was treated in Malvern by Dr James Gully (Bill Paterson) who also treated Meta. His own daughter, Susannah, a school friend of Marianne Gaskell, was invited to stay at Plymouth Grove - But Susy's [troubles] are peculiar, & really need confiding to someone, as she has no mother.

Scott of the Antarctic 1948
Starring John Mills as the Polar explorer. One member of his crew was Lieutenant (later Commander) Henry Pennell, (Bruce Seton) Thurstan Holland's nephew who remained at base and did not progress to the Pole. He survived only to die in the Battle of Jutland in 1916. In his only memorable scene in the film he entertains his colleagues with a tongue-twisting monologue. London members may also fondly remember the late Jane Wilson, whose kinsman, Dr Edward Wilson (Harold Warrender), also perished with Scott.

Finding Neverland 2004
J M Barrie (Johnny Depp) entertains the young Llewelyn Davies brothers with stories that became Peter Pan. The boys were nephews of Gaskell's other son in law, Charles Crompton, who being childless himself was very fond of them. Their mother (Kate Winslet) was the daughter of George du Maurier, the first illustrator

of Sylvia's Lovers, who loved the book so much that he called her Sylvia. The film contains some inaccuracies especially including the portrayal of Sylvia's mother (Julie Christie).

Effie Grey 2014
Elizabeth Gaskell's opinion of Effie Grey (Dakota Fanning) the estranged wife of John Ruskin (Greg Wise) and her affair with John Everett Millais (Tom Sturridge) is well documented. They had attended the same school. Gaskell defended Ruskin. Effie's champion was Lady Eastlake (Emma Thompson), the critic of Jane Eyre, whom Gaskell wanted to libel. The film is liable to divide modern audiences as much as the original affair did the Victorians.

The Invisible Woman 2013
Adapted from the book by Claire Tomalin, this is the story of Dickens (Ralph Fiennes) and his relationship with Nelly Ternan (Felicity Jones). The film includes several characters known to Gaskell, such as Mark Lemon (Richard McCabe), Wilkie Collins (Tom Hollander) and Mrs Dickens (Joanna Scanlan). The couple met in Manchester during the production of his play, *The Frozen Deep*. On another occasion he paid a visit to Mrs Gaskell. 'On Wednesday Mrng Mr & Mrs Dickens, & Miss Hogarth came to call before 10!' she recalled. Meta Gaskell also remembered the event: He once called, rather flashily dressed.

Miss Potter 2006
William Gaskell, when a widower, became a surrogate grandfather to Beatrix Potter (Renée Zellweger), the young daughter of his friend, Rupert Potter (Bill Paterson). They regularly holidayed together and there are several photographs of them together. Beatrix wrote movingly of his last days, having visited him shortly before his death. She also recalled her father being taken aback when visiting the Gaskell daughters at Plymouth Grove – 'They had become exceedingly stout!'

The Duchess 2008
The story of the disastrous marriage of Lady Georgiana Spencer (Keira Knightley) and the Duke of Devonshire (Ralph Fiennes) who was only interested in producing an heir. This baby eventually succeeded to the title and in 1857 entertained Elizabeth Gaskell, in a wheel chair, at his home, Chatsworth House in Derbyshire. He talked incessantly she recalled.

The Innocents 1991
This film, starring Deborah Kerr and Michael Redgrave, was adapted by Truman Capote from *The Turn of the Screw*, a short story by Henry James. There have been several critics who have pointed out similarities with Gaskell's most popular ghost story, The Old Nurse's Story. He was very complementary about her: 'Mrs Gaskell's genius was so composite as a quality, it was obviously the offspring of her affections, her feelings, her associations.'

The AGM and Literary Weekend of the ALS 30 May 2015

Janet Kennerley

The venue for this year's event was York and the meeting took place at King's Manor, in the Huntingdon Room. We were told that this was built as a hunting lodge for Henry VIII, but in more recent times it had been used as a school and then was taken over by the University.

Delegates were welcomed by Anita Fernandez-Young, Secretary of the ALS, who explained that she was standing in for the Chairman, Linda Curry, who was disappointed not to attend due to medical reasons.

Anita pointed out that the ALS was in a new phase of its history, now being entirely 'virtual', but any societies still needing printed information would still be able to receive it. She posed the question to the representatives of various literary groups – 'What can the ALS do for your society?'

Michael G Wilkinson, Chairman of the Trollope Society, welcomed everyone to York, and pointed out that his society is this year celebrating 200 years since the birth of Anthony Trollope in Bloomsbury, London. In his address, 'Time and Mr Trollope', he mentioned how excited the Victorians had been about reading, that most authors wrote within their own time, but so many have now faded away from public awareness. Nowadays, writers need to compete with TV, cinema and computers. He thought that Anthony Trollope's establishment of his characters, both male and female, and his treatment of politics, for example, are still recognized now in everyday life. Like his mother, Fanny Trollope, Anthony was remarkably industrious. He travelled all over the world and never lost an opportunity to write, producing 47 novels, 5 travel books, 2 plays, 3 biographies and an autobiography, translations, short stories, reviews essays, periodical articles and lectures. His bicentenary this year is being celebrated worldwide and also, his associations with the Post Office. He was responsible for the introduction of the first pillar boxes, which initially were green, but were later changed to the more familiar red to enable them to be seen more easily.

Howard Gregg, Convenor of the York Trollope Society Seminar Group, and also a member of the Gaskell Society, spoke about 'Anthony Trollope in Yorkshire'. Howard pointed out that Trollope travelled worldwide – but had many links with Yorkshire. He was working for the Post Office in Ireland in 1842 when he met his future wife, Rose Heseltine, who was from Yorkshire, and they married in 1844 at Rotherham. Her father was a bank manager, and Rose was baptized as a Unitarian. They had two sons and lived in various places during their marriage, but Rose was always very supportive to her husband in his literary career. She was considered

to be a stable influence on him and helped in forming some of his female fictional characters. Anthony Trollope stood as Liberal Candidate in the 1868 Election at Beverley in Yorkshire, but it was a very corrupt area and he lost. His political experience is reflected in his writing, especially *Ralph the Heir* of 1869. He was very fond of the Bolton Abbey area which he described as 'the prettiest spot in England'.

Before lunch, members of the York Group entertained the meeting with readings from Trollope's writings, which gave us an insight into his many-sided character – construction of the plot, acquainting the reader with his characters, becoming intimate with the reader, several clerical portraits and lovely location descriptions.

The 2015 AGM of the ALS took place after lunch, and delegates were asked to stand when the name of their society was announced. There were 70 names on the Delegate List, and 8 were members of The Gaskell Society.

Once again, the Secretary acted as Chairman. The main items of interest arising were that the ALS Newsletter is now circulated electronically and each member society should appoint someone to receive this in order to cascade it to other members as required. Likewise, the ALS Journal is available as an e-version, and therefore more easily and widely distributed, avoiding postal expense. The theme for the 2016 Journal will be 'Literary Scandal' and articles of 1,000 words are requested on any aspect of this wide-ranging subject by the end of February next year.

Jenny Uglow has been President of the ALS over recent years but has now resigned, so suggestions were invited for her replacement.

Thelma Thompson, a long standing ALS Committee member has resigned as the Shropshire Literary Society has been disbanded. It was also announced that Janet Allan of the Gaskell Society has resigned. There was a request for names to fill these vacancies – meetings are held twice yearly in Birmingham with travel expenses paid.

Campaigns

Janet Kennerley pointed out that Plymouth Grove, now known as Elizabeth Gaskell's House, was officially reopened in the autumn of 2014, and recommended a visit. The house was viewed before restoration in 2010 by delegates when the Gaskell Society hosted that year's AGM and Literary Weekend.

Anita Fernandez-Young said that Gad's Hill, the only house which Charles Dickens owned, is currently on the market, having recently been used as a school. Future plans for this property are uncertain.

Elaine Peake, representing the George Eliot Fellowship, told the meeting of their

plans to create a community literary heritage space at Griff House, near Nuneaton, where George Eliot grew up as Mary Ann Evans. Griff Preservation Trust has been set up to administer the George Eliot Visitor Centre.

Next year's ALS annual event is to be hosted by The Brontë Society, date to be confirmed but probably in May 2016 – see ALS website for further details: www.allianceofliterarysocieties.org.uk

Janet's Notes: Just a reminder – any Gaskell Society member is welcome to attend the AGM of the ALS. It is an enjoyable opportunity to meet other members from societies around the UK and perhaps a chance to visit somewhere different and learn about other authors and areas associated with them. The ALS consists of over 100 societies representing 50,000 readers.

Anthony Trollope 1815-1882 was a favourite writer of Mrs Gaskell – 'I wish Mr Trollope would go on writing *Framley Parsonage* for ever. I don't see any reason why it should ever come to an end.'

'I do not think it probable that my name will remain among those who in the next century will be known as the writers of English prose fiction.' (Anthony Trollope, *An Autobiography*)

... both the above quotes used in The Trollope Society's membership application form!

~ Forthcoming Events ~

Autumn General Meeting

Saturday 26 September 2015, Knutsford Methodist Church
Please see enclosed leaflet for details and application form.

Annual General Meeting 2016

Saturday 2 April 2016 Cross Street Chapel, Manchester
Further details TBA in Spring Newsletter

North-West Group

Manchester Meetings
These are held on the first Tuesday of the month (NB No meeting in January) in Cross Street Unitarian Chapel, which will open at 12 noon for a bring-your-own lunch, followed by talk at 1.00pm. (More details on website)

6 October
Mike Rose: Across the Class Divide.
Philanthropy and the Gaskells in the 19th Century

3 November
Diane Duffy: March of Progress in the works of Anna Eliza Bray (1790-1883) and Elizabeth Gaskell *(1810-1865).*

1 December
Michala Hulme: Grim Manchester
Michala is an historian and genealogist. She is currently working towards a PhD.

2 February 2016
Anthony Burton: The Gaskells and the Intellectual Life of Manchester
Anthony Burton spent most of his working life as a curator at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London and was also a Trustee of the Charles Dickens Museum in Bloomsbury.

He is now a volunteer and a Trustee at Elizabeth Gaskell's House.

1 March 2016
Lynne Allan: The Gaskells and The Portico
Lynne is Chair of The Portico Library and is a skilled and experienced teacher of English Language Literature and Creative Writing.

Knutsford Meetings
These meetings are held in Brook Street Chapel Hall, Adams Hill, on the last Wednesday of the month, from 28 October until 27 April. (NB No meeting in December)

Buffet lunch available from 12.15. **Elizabeth Williams** will speak and lead the discussion afterwards. *Wives and Daughters* is the work to be studied.

New Year lunch 13 January 2016. Further details TBA

The Gaskell Society South-West

14 and 15 September Manchester Trip
The South-West Group will be making a 'pilgrimage' to Plymouth Grove on Monday afternoon, the 14th of September. We will be going by train from Bath that morning and will stay overnight so that we can visit the Portico Library the following morning.

Arrangements have been circulated to all members and any further information can be had from Elizabeth Schlenther (see below). This will take the place of our usual summer lunch.

Saturday, 17 October, 2.30 pm at the BRLSI, Queens Square, Bath
This promises to be a special meeting in several ways. Gillian Ballinger from the University of the West of England, Bristol, will be speaking to us on: **Novel to Television – adopting *Wives and Daughters.*** She promises some clips from the TV series as part of her talk.

Afterwards we will have a tea in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of Elizabeth Gaskell's death in 1865. We hope as many members as possible will be able to come for this special occasion.

Dates have not been set yet for our discussion groups next winter, but the book will be *Cranford* and the sessions will again be at members' homes.

Queries about any of our events to: Elizabeth Schlenther, 14 Vellore Lane, Bath, BA2 6JQ, Tel: 01225 331763 or via email: eschlenther@googlemail.com

London and South-East Group

Saturday 12 September 2015
Dr Julia Allan: *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* and an extraordinary friendship

Saturday 7 November
Dr Rebecca Styler: The image of the maternal in the works of Mrs Gaskell
Venue Francis Holland School, Graham Terrace, London

Domestic arrangements as usual.

Sesquicentennial Events

19 October
Nick Channer will discuss his book, *Writers' Houses* (at 84 Plymouth Grove)

21 October
Jon McGregor: Victorian Letters (at 84 Plymouth Grove)

6 November, 2-3pm
Collection Encounters, John Rylands Library, Deansgate, Manchester

14 November
Tea party at Knutsford Heritage Centre

15 November
Commemoration service at Brook Street Unitarian Chapel, Knutsford

26 November, 2-3pm
Collection Encounters, John Rylands Library, Deansgate, Manchester

Please check website for further details of these events.

THE BRONTË SOCIETY

CALL FOR PAPERS

THE 2016 BRONTË BICENTENARY CONFERENCE:
"...the business of a woman's life..."
Charlotte Brontë and the Woman Question

The Brontë Society is pleased to announce that the conference will take place on Friday, Saturday and Sunday 19 – 21 August 2016 at the Midland Hotel in Manchester

In 1837 Charlotte Brontë wrote to the Poet Laureate, Robert Southey, for advice on a literary career. He replied that 'literature cannot be the business of a woman's life: & it ought not to be'.

Our conference in 2016, the first of the three Brontë bicentenaries, takes up the challenge of what might be the 'proper business of a woman's life'. The many facets of this subject present a wide range of possible papers both academic and literary, including:

Women's position in English culture and society in the nineteenth century
Contemporary writing on 'The Woman Question'
Charlotte Brontë's own writings on the matter
Her relationship with other women writers
Her literary reputation
Her influence on later feminist movements.

THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER WILL BE
Professor Germaine Greer

The conference weekend will include an optional excursion to The Gaskell House, the home of Charlotte's friend and biographer, Elizabeth Gaskell, which has recently been opened to the public.

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Abstracts for papers (no more than 300 words) should be sent by
28 February, 2016, to:
The Conference Organizer, The Brontë Society
The Brontë Parsonage Museum, Haworth, Keighley BD22 8DR
Successful speakers will be notified by 31 March, 2016.