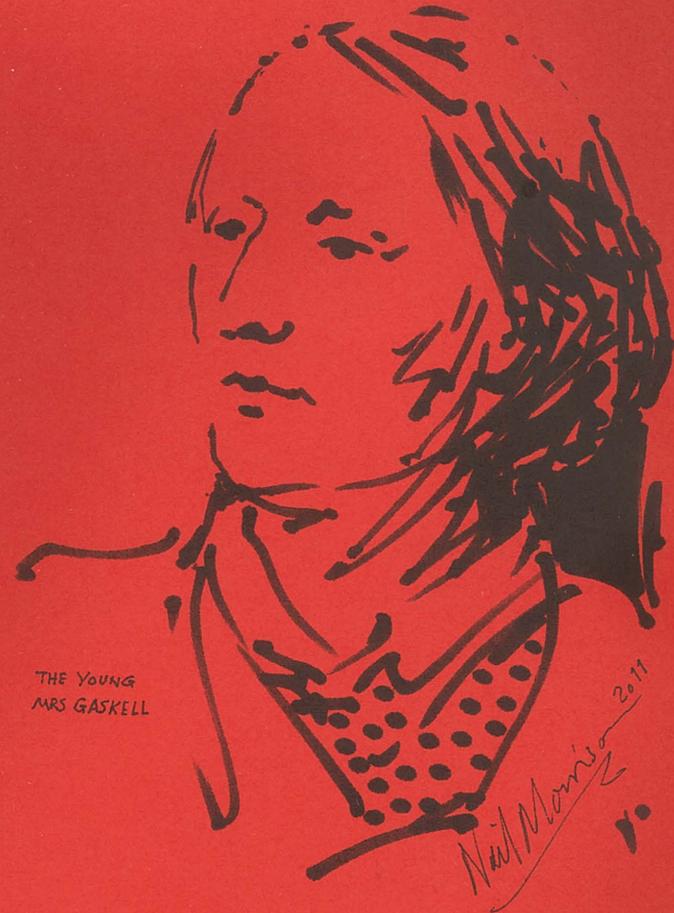


The Gaskell Society



THE YOUNG
MRS GASKELL

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

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NEWSLETTER
Spring 2012 - Number 53

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-one 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 ovariectomy was carried out in Manchester by a Dr Charles Clay (alarming, 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 1 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 in 1869 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.

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A History of the Family of Holland of Mobberley and Knutsford, edited Wm. Fergusson Irvine, Ballantyne Press, Edinburgh 1902

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.



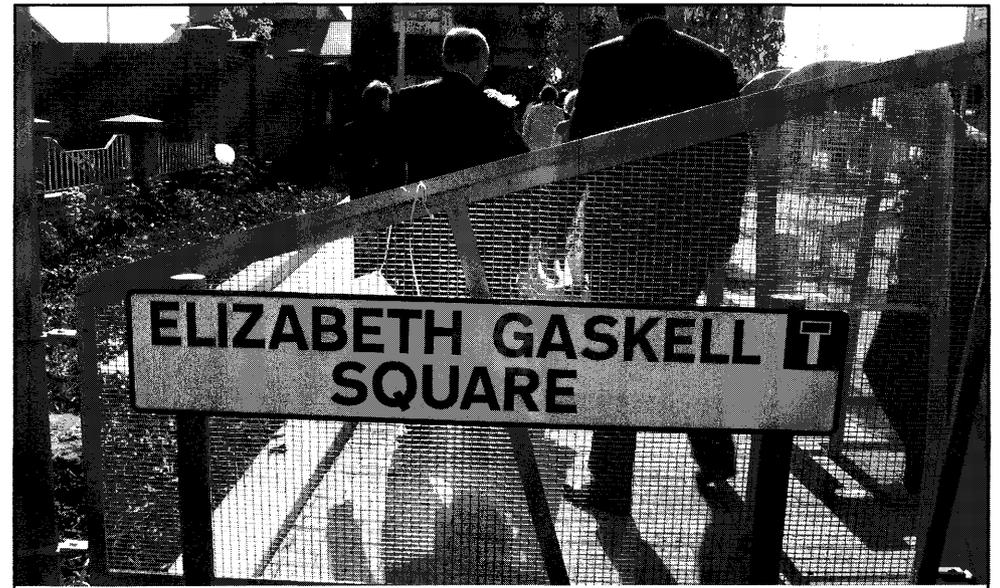
**Delia Corrie and Sarah Prince
at Greenheys on 29 Sept 2011.**



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



**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.**



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

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

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

C.P. Scott of the Manchester Guardian, by J.L. Hammond, 1934.

Elizabeth Gaskell the critical heritage, edited by Angus Easson, 1992 [contains the *Manchester Guardian* review]

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) Mosscares 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 Mosscares 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 distantthere 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:

Phyllis - a translation of *Cousin Phyllis* 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