

The Gaskell Society



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

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ISSN 0954 - 1209

NEWSLETTER
Spring 2016 - Number 61

Editor's Letter

Helen Smith

The sesquicentenary of Elizabeth's death is now over. Welcome to 2016 and to the Spring Newsletter.

The highlight of the sesquicentennial celebrations was for me the afternoon at John Rylands Library Deansgate. Under the watchful eye of Archivist Fran Baker and Laura Caradonna, Collection Care Team Leader, we were permitted to look at and even touch the foolscap MS of *Wives and Daughters*. Other items on display included a rather recriminatory letter from Mr Dickens to Mrs Gaskell, the oval miniature (water colour on ivory) of young Elizabeth, photographs of Elizabeth in later life, and items from the Geoffrey Sharps collection. Fran brought these to life (metaphorically speaking) for us, and Laura enlightened us about the science of paper and inks and showed us an oak gall or oak apple (used for many centuries in ink production).

On 13 January we celebrated the New Year by lunch at The Cottons. Soprano Rosie Lomas with accompanist Andrew Burr created the post-prandial entertainment. Rosie sang folk songs, (including 'Oldham Weavers' like Margaret in *Mary Barton*), art songs, Shakespeare's Sonnet 104 set to music for Rosie by Dominic de Grande, and operatic arias which she interspersed with facts and fiction from Mrs Gaskell (of whom Rosie has tremendous knowledge and understanding). At all times, Andrew accompanied her sensitively and sympathetically on a Yamaha keyboard. Our thanks to Carolyn McCreesh and Jean Alston for organising this happy event for the 53 members who were able to come.

Important dates for diaries:

**AGM: Cross Street Chapel, Saturday 2 April 2016.
Please see enclosure for details.**

**Autumn General Meeting: Knutsford Methodist Church, Saturday 24
September 2016. Further details TBA.**

**Conference 2017 will be held 21-24 July.
Venue: Portsmouth. Further details TBA.**

Members will remember Christine Lingard's article 'Primitive, cheap and bracing: the Gaskells in the Alps' (Newsletter no 58, Autumn 2014). Christine has more news of Mrs Gaskell, Pontresina, and an exhibition: 'Nineteenth-century British visitors and their church in Pontresina'. This exhibition will open in mid-December 2016 and run until the end of October 2017, in Pontresina, near St Moritz in Switzerland.

Elizabeth Gaskell features prominently in this exhibition as she spent time in the village in 1864 when she was working on *Wives and Daughters*. Further information about the exhibition will appear in the next Newsletter.

We are delighted to welcome several new members, including one from France and another from India, our first member in the Subcontinent. One new member is distantly related to Mrs Gaskell – at least, they share an ancestor, one Holland from Mobberley. However it is with sadness that we report the loss of two members. Jean Hockenhull died in the autumn. Jean was a long-standing member who in earlier years had been 'artist in residence' on study tours at home and abroad. Her drawings illustrated the Newsletter on several occasions in the past. Jean did not have a family. RIP Jean. John Stretch a recent member who attended the Knutsford meetings over the last year died suddenly in October. John, a clubbable and likeable man, an Oxford graduate, with a multitude of cultural interests and compiler of questions for University Challenge (a BBC2 quiz in the UK), had been living for a few years in Knutsford (not far from Heathwaite, Aunt Lumb's house). Our condolences to John's family. RIP John.

At the Conference last summer, several members informed me that they read the Newsletter from cover to cover. (I did not put them to the test, but, perhaps rather immodestly, I felt highly complimented.) As ever, I am most grateful to all who have written for this Newsletter. I am happy to receive articles at any time, and not just as the deadline looms. For the finished article, our warm thanks to Rebecca and her family who run iPrint down in Red Cow Yard here in Knutsford. They have been printing the Newsletter since the year 2000.

Cover illustration: the silhouette of young Elizabeth is from the Elizabeth Gaskell Family Collection. I thank Sarah Prince for permitting its use.

Deadline for Autumn Newsletter: 20 July 2016

A report from Great (times 3) Granddaughter Sarah Prince

The 150th Anniversary or the more interestingly named sesquicentenary, as I was reliably informed, of Elizabeth Gaskell's death was commemorated in many ways across the week of 9-15th November 2015 with bell ringing, tea parties, press events and gatherings.

In a somewhat Cranfordesque delight of confusion I found myself spending Thursday 12th November driving between the John Rylands Library and Elizabeth Gaskell

House, not quite sure where I was supposed to be for what or when and having to miss the opportunity to be in Knutsford on the day, due to logistics. The confusion was due in part to a hereditary desire to please everyone and a certain amount of miscommunication from various elements of the fourth estate. There was an expectation of meeting the BBC at the John Rylands Library to 'launch' a recently re-discovered silhouette of ECG created before her marriage and another meeting scheduled with them at 84 Plymouth Grove. I conclude it was the BBC's disorganisation and not mine. But everyone met up satisfactorily eventually.

The exciting re-discovery of this silhouette has subsequently been authenticated with the initiation and support of the John Rylands Library and digital image expert Ray Evans, who in his main role as an expert witness, uses digital technology to establish identities, particularly from CCTV images most frequently to assist the Crown Court in obtaining successful prosecutions. In this instance he had compared the silhouette with the angles on Thomson's beautiful watercolour of ECG that is so well known. Together with confirming clear lines of similarity of her head, neck and chin he concluded that added to its provenance the silhouette is ECG.

The silhouette can also be seen at the John Rylands digital archive at <http://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet/Gaskell2~91~1>



Other events that were arranged, co-ordinated and enthusiastically undertaken with sell-out attendance, included a tea party at the 84 Plymouth Grove, the weekend prior to the anniversary. This by all accounts was a great success and very much enjoyed. The bell ringers of Knutsford had arranged a peal for the morning of Saturday 14th November. I had the very great pleasure, together with husband Andrew and elder daughter Eleanor, of being invited to Knutsford Heritage Centre on Saturday 14th November for a fully booked tea party kindly hosted by Val Bryant of Knutsford Heritage Centre and The Gaskell Society's Ann O'Brien and Pam Griffiths. Very wet and bedraggled from the persistent downpours that accompanied our stay in Manchester we arrived at a fully packed visitor centre to be welcomed to tea and delicious home-made cakes. Delia Corrie and Charles Foster then entertained us to a delightful rendition of 'Life with the Gaskells' written by Robin Allan.

On Sunday Gaskell Society members together with local dignitaries joined Jean Bradley Minister of Brook Street Chapel who was so thoughtful in her choice of words. Flowers were laid on ECG's grave followed by a moving and poignant service to celebrate the life, family, work and legacy of ECG, each of the speakers taking one aspect of her life to illustrate. Hymns written by William gave a framework to this celebration and ensured that he was not left out. We emerged from the chapel to slightly drier weather and a welcome cup of coffee in the church hall.

Mrs Gaskell's Sesquicentenary Tea Parties

South-West:

On the afternoon of Saturday, 17th October, members and friends of the Gaskell Society South-West gathered at the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institute to celebrate the life of Elizabeth Gaskell. The afternoon began with a lecture by Dr Gillian Ballinger from the University of the West of England on 'Novel to Television: Adapting *Wives and Daughters*'. Accompanied by clips from the TV adaptation, the talk provided lots of interesting and well-researched information about how the production happened and how it compared with the novel itself. Lively discussion after, along with Gill's being mobbed by eager members during tea, was the proof, if needed, of the interest in what she had to say. Our tea, which consisted of cucumber sandwiches and egg and cress sandwiches, as well as a splendid cake with Elizabeth Gaskell's name and dates on it, would surely have been approved by her, and the fact that our speaker's subject was the book she was about to finish at the time of her death, made the occasion very much of a piece. An excellent time was had by all who were able to attend, and we are grateful to everyone who made the party possible.

London meeting November 14th 2015

Thanks to the enthusiastic members and excellent speakers, our London meetings are always rewarding and thoroughly enjoyable. For our second meeting of the year, we commemorated the 150th anniversary of the death, and celebrated the life and writing, of Elizabeth Gaskell.

We had a special cake and tea after an interesting well-delivered and beautifully-illustrated talk by the Editor of the Journal, Rebecca Styler. She shared her current research into the female image of God in 19thC literature with special reference to works such as *Lizzie Leigh*, *Cranford* and *Ruth*. Her original interpretation of these selected works demonstrated how great a writer Mrs Gaskell was. The whole afternoon of warmth, conversation and shared interests was an appropriate tribute to Elizabeth Gaskell on this special occasion.

A bumper attendance has resulted in a £50 donation to her house in Plymouth Grove. Thank you to everyone for supporting our bookstall so enthusiastically and generously. This meeting symbolised all Mrs Gaskell stands for today.

Knutsford:

Timed simultaneously with the London gathering was the tea party held on the wettest imaginable Saturday afternoon in Knutsford. The bells of St John's Church (where the Gaskells were wed in 1832) rang out a quarter peal that morning. After a delicious tea with home-made cakes all served on bone china (thanks to Brook Street Chapel for lending it), Delia Corrie and Charles Foster transformed themselves into Elizabeth and William to perform 'At Home with the Gaskells', using mainly the words of ECG herself with a little help from the late Robin Allan. Many thanks to all who created this tea party and to those who organised the tea parties throughout the country.

On Sunday 15th November at Brook Street Chapel Revd Jean Bradley conducted a commemorative service in honour of Elizabeth Gaskell. Gaskell Society committee members outlined Elizabeth's life and Sarah Prince (whose husband Andrew and daughter Eleanor were also in the congregation) spoke from her perspective as a descendant of ECG. Sarah had earlier placed a wreath on the Gaskell Grave. All four hymns were written by William Gaskell, and organist Alan Myerscough (Chapel Keeper at Cross Street) played on Brook Street Chapel organ, tunes known to the congregation and chosen to be appropriate for the words of William's hymns. RIP ECG

Silverdale:

At three o'clock on the afternoon of 14th November fifty people gathered for tea at the Gaskell Memorial Hall in the centre of Silverdale. The people of Silverdale are very proud of the Gaskell family's connections with their village. Before and after tea the two Gaskell Society members present, Pauline Kiggins and Elizabeth Williams, spoke respectively about Mrs Gaskell's love of Silverdale as a retreat from

Manchester, and about the house in Manchester from which the family came. These two short talks were complemented by a brief addition from Mr Michael Bolton, chairman of the Gaskell Hall Committee. Michael told of the planning, development and naming of the Hall – members of his own family had been its builders – and Michael said the records noted that among the guests at the opening in February 1931 were Mr Bryan Holland and Miss Holland two of Marianne and Thurstan Hollands' children, and thus grandchildren of Mrs Gaskell.

The tea – much appreciated – was served by Georgina Moon, from the Gaskell Hall Committee, and her friend Angela Richards, both of whom had entered wholeheartedly into the occasion by appearing in period costume. They had borrowed these costumes from the Silverdale Village Players – the same organisation (and still going strong!) for which the Hall had originally been planned, and whose very first production, at the opening of the Hall, had been an adaptation by local writer William Riley, of Mrs Gaskell's *Cranford*.

Donations at the end of the party, amounting to £200, were sent as a contribution towards the upkeep of Elizabeth Gaskell's House.

Holybourne:

Meanwhile down in Hampshire, The Lawn (scene of the death) Holybourne, which ECG purchased secretly in 1865, also celebrated the sesquicentenary.

The house, now run by a national charity, Friends of the Elderly, as a care home, enjoyed a week of Victorian-themed activities. Children from the local primary school dressed in Victorian garb to entertain the residents. Visiting speakers discussed Mrs Gaskell and the Victorian period. The week culminated in a Victorian high tea. At Holy Rood Church where Mrs Gaskell worshipped on her last morning, the bells were rung to honour Mrs Gaskell (and Armistice Day). In 2009 eight new bells cast at Whitechapel Bell Foundry were hung – bell number two is inscribed and dedicated: Elizabeth Gaskell 1810-1865.



Martha Hewett, a third year undergraduate at Manchester University has been awarded the Gaskell Society Sesquicentennial Essay Prize.

The prize was presented at The Portico Library on 20 October by Andrew Davies (who adapted *Wives and Daughters* for television almost 20 years ago.)

Our warmest congratulations and all best wishes for the future to Martha.

Marriage in *Wives and Daughters* and *Mansfield Park*

Martha Hewett

Mansfield Park and *Wives and Daughters* show a strong tendency towards the analysis of marriage, challenging the figure of the idealised wife through the conflict of conservatism versus modernity. Jane Austen and Elizabeth Gaskell present conventional nineteenth century marriage plots, set within the rural gentry's form of bourgeois society, whilst challenging the conventional marriage idea of women being their husband's property, bound to their roles within the domestic realm. Although *Mansfield Park*, was published a decade before the dawning of the Victorian era, Austen confronts the image of a woman's traditional place within marriage by highlighting the significance of female desire. Austen's observations of women and her ability to dramatise the 'eruption of fear and hatred into the relationships of everyday social life' have gained critical acclaim, although perhaps suggesting the narrative limitations for an eighteenth and nineteenth century female writer. However, *Mansfield Park*, by dealing with the complexities of Mary Crawford's character and experience, emphasises Austen's heightened awareness of an era of social change beginning to unfold. The notion of a modernised conception of marriage is developed in Gaskell's serialised novel, which compares the Victorian first wife to the modernised second within Victorian domestic ideology, initiating conflict within established social structures.

Mansfield Park explores the conventions and motives of marriage through four studies of love in contrasting situations; dynastic marriage, companionate marriage, elopement and adultery. Austen seemingly relishes depicting those who challenge conservative traditions as immoral and troublesome; however, as this essay will demonstrate, her parody-rich approach suggests a sense of irony at the heart of her critique of characters blighted by stunted sensibility, whilst using her more 'troublesome' characters to develop the idea of modernity. Although their behaviour is questionable, the Crawford and Bertram offspring seek a fresh new social order. The consequences of certain forms of misconduct are far from desirable, yet there is a didactic dimension to the journey they undertake.

Maria Bertram's dynastic match to Mr Rushworth sets the marriage plot in motion. Although theirs is a match well balanced in terms of respectability as defined by their social class, Austen develops the strength of female desire within a tepidly affectionate, and ultimately loveless marriage. A conventional marriage in the sense of financial security, Maria's contempt for her fiancé is tolerant at best, and their match is coincidentally, most favoured by the detestable Mrs Norris. Here, Austen mocks the tradition of women marrying for elevated financial and social positions by awarding this relentlessly mercenary character 'all the credit' for 'bringing Mr Rushworth's admiration of Maria to any effect'. Although economic and social

elevation are traditionally the primary motives for a marriage, Maria challenges such long-established convention with Mr Crawford. Maria chooses desire over expected social conduct, undermining the traditional nineteenth century wife who is bounded to their husband.

The conflict of social expectation with Maria's desire for modernity is presented in the trip to Sotherton, where Austen uses the change of setting to represent the disturbance of social and moral conduct. A passage foreshadowing the action within the novel, Austen uses Freudian symbolism of Crawford and Maria entering the gate marked 'out of bounds' to imply a forthcoming sexual tryst, whilst the action within the disused chapel, 'fitted up for the purpose of devotion' (69) mocks the doctrinal conventions of a marriage. By placing Crawford beside Maria and Rushworth at the altar in an 'ambiguous tangential position', Austen enables such an image to 'foreshadow the sinister role he will play in the marriage'. The chapel setting continues to generate tension, this time between Mary and Edmund, who represent opposing sides of old order versus the new. Edmund represents the religious and the conservative, whilst Mary projects a sense of urban modernity. Austen presents figures of fluid, social mobility as those who undermine and abandon doctrinal, social order, and the final sense of irony is achieved through Julia, who brilliantly declares that 'nothing in the world could be more snug or pleasant' (71) than a marriage made in the midst of such tension.

Julia's elopement with Mr Yates allows Austen to explore the opportunistic approach to marriage, which flies in the face of the social expectations common to Mansfield Park's elder generation. Julia's decision to marry Mr Yates is convenient and beneficial, finding a sense of stability in the midst of Maria's troubles. As the author writes, Julia has 'very little idea of ever accepting him; and, had not her sister's conduct burst forth as it did.' Austen transforms Julia's nature, replacing pettiness with a sense of humility and reform, as she eventually arrives back in Mansfield Park with Mr Yates, 'humble and wishing to be forgiven', and her marriage a 'less desperate business' (371) than initially conceived. Julia, therefore, may be seen as the underdog who achieves success. She applied logic and reason to the question of elopement, escaping the 'increased dread of her father and of home', recognising the 'greater severity and restraint' that would be imposed upon her in the aftermath of Maria's scandal and choosing to hastily 'avoid such immediate horrors at all risks' (466). Although Julia recognises that without the motivations listed, 'Mr Yates would not have succeeded' (466), and therefore the reason behind her choice to marry is opportunistic and perhaps, a little selfish, there is a sense of joy in Julia's abandonment of Mansfield Park's solemnities, and a sense of personal transformation in returning out of personal choice.

Maria, Julia and Tom Bertram challenge the conservative, country-rooted code of conduct set forth by their parents, allowing themselves to be seduced by the cosmopolitan vices introduced by the Crawfords. Sir Thomas Bertram regards his

daughter's social misconduct, despite 'all the cost and care of an anxious and expensive education', as a result of deficiency in 'acquirements of self-knowledge, generosity, and humility' (372). The importance of education in underpinning moral behaviour has been used consistently by Austen: however, the idea of religious belief entwined with a social order based in tradition is set in place again when Sir Thomas declares that although 'they had been instructed theoretically in their religion', his daughters' rebellious, romantic endeavours stem from the fact that they were 'never required to bring it into daily practice' (372).

Mansfield Park has been classed as a novel of 'moral and ideological commitment', and although there is a recurrence of the conflict between religious thought and the desire of modernity, Austen explores the destabilisation of religious belief through Mary Crawford. Representative of London's vices, Mary makes no secret of favouring her modern approach to social order, illustrated by her dismay towards Edward becoming a clergyman. She remarks on the irrelevance of holy practice in authorising conduct on the broad scale: 'How can two sermons a week [...] govern the conduct and fashion the manners of a large congregation for the rest of the week' (74). Mary's challenge of religious importance refutes Edmund's response: 'We do not look in great cities for our best morality' (75). Austen highlights the social stagnation within Edmund's opinion as he shows difficulty in perceiving ethical and social order outside of Mansfield Park, presenting us with opposing attitudes of the rural gentry and the urban. This is further developed in Mary's cynical discussion of marriage: 'there is not one in a hundred of either sex, who is not taken in when they marry' (46). Although highly pessimistic, this honest observation of marriage is not without supporting evidence, the relationships within the Mansfield Park spectrum certainly giving some justification to Mary's idea that a bond of marriage determines a loss of self. Although Mary is an unlikeable character, Austen produces a figure of modernity who does not manipulate the illusory sense of order within nineteenth century narrative. Mary separates Austen from the Victorian conventions of 'glossing over the contradictions, the inequalities, concealed in the institution of marriage'.

Wives and Daughters offers a modernised conception of marriage and challenges domestic ideology through comparing the Victorian middle-class first wife to second figures of social mobility: Clare Kirkpatrick and Aimée. Both are given an edgier sense of authority within the domestic realm, previously inhabited by Mary Pearson and Mrs Hamley. Gaskell separates herself from the 'illusory central stability the Victorian novel sought to preserve' through her second wives, putting distance between herself and the nineteenth century conventions of familial conformity. The memorialised, domestic first wife holds great centrality within the novel, just as 'Wives' holds the prioritised positioning within the title. In contrast to *Mansfield Park*, which presents figures of modernity as a disturbance of social order, Gaskell applies this to the first wives, who hold the 'power to unsettle and disrupt the chronological unfolding of the novel's story'. The protest against modernity by certain characters creates a damaging impact, stunting social mobility

and prevents their capacity to achieve 'an evolutionary growth within the family unit'. Gaskell's first wives, Mary Pearson and Mrs Hamley, are staple figures of Victorian domestic ideology. Mary is described admiringly – she was 'pretty, bonny [...] good and sensible' – while Mrs Hamley, the first wife of Hamley Hall, was 'gentle and sentimental; tender and good' (41). Despite warm introductions, the novel's descriptions of central figures seem limited, with the narrator going on to say that Mary was 'nothing more' than a 'cheerful presence' (44). Such dismissive characterisations are suggestive of the hollow role of the Victorian housewife and go some way to developing Gaskell's critique of the nineteenth century 'ideal' wife. Nancy Armstrong declares conventional narrative is necessary for a 'discursive construction of an ideal middle-class female.' Armstrong could be seen as rebutting Gaskell's presentation of the lower-classed second wife. However, Gaskell astutely takes Armstrong's desire for a 'well-regulated domestic sphere with a woman at its centre', by using the wives within the domestic sphere as her central focus.

There is conflict between Mary's memorialisation and Clare's authoritative command as she attempts to tackle the domestic realm created by Mary, beginning with Molly's bedroom. Molly refuses such desire for change, as it was her 'own mamma's before she was married' (183). Gaskell evokes a sense of stagnation through the first wives' immortality, and despite them comfortably fitting the ideals of Gaskell's audience she provides 'a strong critique of the feminine ideal and its function' within the Victorian period, where it was inconceivable to acknowledge a wife outside of her domesticated role.

Gaskell challenges the conventional, dynastic match by undermining the strength of Mary and Mrs Hamley's marriages. Mr Gibson fails to consider Mary in his recollection of great love, speaking of 'Poor Jeanie', and 'how I did love her!' (49). The significance of Mary's position in marriage is lowered again when we are told 'his wife – good, sensible, and beloved as she had been – was not his second; no, nor his third love' (143). This descent through the romantic hierarchy puts forth the idea that Mary's previous position within the core of Mr Gibson's world was bounded by a lacking presence of social modernity, rather than that of everlasting, idealised love. The Hamleys, although happy in their companionate match, have an ambiguous bond: theirs is 'one of those perplexing marriages of which one cannot understand the reasons' (42). However, once Mr Hamley is left a widower, the reasons for his marriage to Mrs Hamley become clear when he is shown to be incapable of maintaining the domestic structure built by his wife and becomes 'deficient in manners, and in education' (251). Mr Hamley is at fault for his wife's ill-health, having deprived her of 'all her strong interests' (43) and the companionship of those who shared them. This sacrificial idea of marriage echoes the observation made by Mary Crawford in *Mansfield Park*: namely that losing a sense of self is guaranteed within a marriage. Although the Hamleys enjoyed a companionate marriage, Gaskell assumes and evokes the debilitating nature of a husband's superiority.

Gaskell's first wives represent an 'old story of middle-class marital stability' and the author overturns such narrative tradition by pursuing a marriage based on a 'contractual arrangement that could make home a site for constructive familial energy'. Clare challenges the longevity of the Gibson's state of mourning, asking Molly: 'Don't you think sentiment may be carried too far?' (183) Gaskell creates a 'socially productive rather than destructive' figure, longing for a sense of social advancement that is extremely needed within the confines of Hollingford. Aimée, Osborne Hamley's 'mysterious wife' (233), represents a figure of continental modernity. Although not a replacement for Mrs Hamley in the literal sense, Aimée trespasses into her domestic realm. Similarly to Clare, she has independently supported herself and therefore marries into a social ranking to which technically speaking, she does not belong. Aimée is presented as an autonomous, cultural figure developed through Osborne's poetry, only receiving her tangible position within Hamley Hall when Osborne writes his final poem, 'The Wife'. Gaskell uses this final sonnet to place Aimée in the primary position of female institution, and therefore accommodating her as the first wife of Hamley Hall. Promoting a fluid structure of modernity, Aimée and her son walk 'backwards and forwards as often as they like' (641), representing a social and physical mobility unattainable by the first wife of Hamley Hall.

The representation of modernity within the constraints of the nineteenth century marriage plot makes these novels a daring success. To read *Mansfield Park* as anything than a mockery of marital conventions is to deny Austen talent for parody. *Mansfield Park* separates Austen from her previous sparkly accounts of bourgeois existence. Both novels are fairy tales set in an atmosphere of social protest and burgeoning female desire, exposing outdated conventions that have been left to fester. Gaskell abandons the outdated ideology of domesticity, breathing fresh air into the depths of stunted social development. Although the endings are not quite as explosive as one would hope, with the air of provocative social change dampened slightly by another marriage, Gaskell paved way for social empowerment amongst wives in later fiction, as did Austen through her creation of Mary Crawford, who rightly pronounced: 'Every generation has its improvements.' (70)

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Translating Elizabeth Gaskell: Sylvia, Molly, and the Italian Readers

Mara Barbuni

My first encounter with Elizabeth Gaskell dates back to 2002, when a dear friend gave me a copy of *North and South* as a Christmas present. I liked the book so much that two years later, at the end of my MA in English studies at the University of Venice (Italy), I decided that I would write my degree thesis on the works of Gaskell.

After long consideration I chose as the subject of my thesis Gaskell's historical novel *Sylvia's Lovers*, because on reading it I was fascinated by its 'amphibiousness', its time and space setting, its depiction of the conflict between the individual and the law, and the intense description and exploration of its characters' personalities.

I got my degree in 2005, but after that I simply found myself incapable of giving this beautiful novel up: how could I say goodbye to Sylvia and Charley and leave Monkshaven forever? I thought that the author herself seemed to ask never to forget her story, when in chapter 45 she had the bathing woman tell about 'Philip Hepburn and the legend of his fate'. When I browsed the catalogues of the Italian libraries and discovered that no Italian edition of the novel existed, I felt that there was a way not to put the book back on its shelf: I would translate it into my language.

I started to translate the novel with no aim to publish it, only as a sort of exercise in style; many years passed; at last, in 2013 I got into contact with a brave independent Italian publishing house which had offered the Italian public the very first edition of *North and South* in our language. The publishing house, based in Città di Castello, near Perugia, is called Jo March (www.jomarch.eu), and is owned and administered by two excellent young women who have decided to devote their lives and skills to the re-discovery of true jewels of the literature in English with the purpose of made them available for the Italian readership. After a long email exchange, Lorenza Ricci, Valeria Mastroianni (the owners of Jo March) and I agreed that the adventure of printing an Italian edition of *Sylvia's Lovers* must be undertaken and I started to revise and re-elaborate my translation for the publication.

The toughest task was to rework on the dialogues of *Sylvia's Lovers*, especially those involving Sylvia's father, Daniel Robson. His way of speaking and his lengthy tales of sea and whaling (with all its 'technical' words) were, I confess, a true challenge for me. Some passages, being full of elisions and misspellings, were just hard for me – a non-native speaker of English – to understand. Here is one example:

"There's three things to be afeared on," said Robson, authoritatively: "there's t' ice, that's bad; there's dirty weather, that's worse; and there's whales theirselves, as is t' worst of all; leastways, they was i' my days; t' darned brutes may ha' larnt better manners sin'. When I were young, they could niver be got to let theirsels be harpooned wi'out flounderin' and makin' play wi' their tails and their fins, till t' say were all in a foam, and t' boats' crews was all o'er wi' spray, which i' them latitudes is a kind o' shower-bath not needed" (ch. 9).

As far as the language is concerned, at the beginning I wanted to render the Yorkshire dialect with one of the variations of Italian – that is, my dialect, that of North-Eastern Italy – but in the end I thought it better to use standard Italian, so that the novel could be easily read all through the country. The big question remained, however: how could I let the readers understand that Daniel and the other uneducated characters of the novel spoke a special kind of language, which was extremely important to preserve in order that the story maintained its social and historical peculiarity? I opted for a 'down-to-earth' language, avoiding too long or sophisticated words and inserting anacoluthia and grammar mistakes.

The difficulties I had with the idea conveyed by the word 'press-gang', with the songs, the recipes, and the games mentioned in the novel I resolved by writing some footnotes to help the readers' understanding. I sometimes had to break Gaskell's long sentences by a full point or a semi-colon, to make them more appealing for a modern readership.

I found the translation of the depiction of Monkshaven and its surroundings easy and truly delightful. I read Gaskell's words, I tried to visualise the space described and only after seeing it I felt confident enough to translate the text into Italian. Indeed, when I visited Whitby in summer 2014 I was astonished at the authenticity of Gaskell's representation of the town: walking up and down the streets, loitering in the Market Place, watching the sea from the hill where the Abbey stands... it was like being inside the story, waiting for Sylvia or Charley to appear at the turn of a path.

The book was issued in May 2014 with the title *Gli innamorati di Sylvia* and an Introduction written by Prof Francesco Marroni (whom I thank again here). It was presented at the 'Salone del Libro di Torino', the most important Italian event in the field of reading and publishing, and was read and reviewed by lots of bloggers. I tried to keep up with their posts and comments and found out that the most frequent impression the readers had after closing *Sylvia's Lovers* was of surprise. They were used to the Gaskell of *North and South* (*Nord e Sud*, which has been selling incredibly well in Italy since its publication in 2011) – the industrial scene, the classical love plot, the happy ending – and the tragic story of Sylvia, so bright at the beginning and so dark in the end, almost deprived of any light of hope, left most of them confounded, some even taken aback.

Sylvia is generally regarded as a difficult character to understand and to identify oneself with. Some readers have judged her weak, weepy, naïve, and superficial; for someone the change of her attitude towards Philip at the end of the book is too quick to be believable. Sylvia is surely not as intelligent as Phillis Holman, or as strong as Molly Gibson, or as proud and fascinating as Margaret Hale: some people have justly argued that her character is so different from the other Gaskell's girls because she is uneducated and because the tragedy which hits her is simply too overwhelming to allow her to mature into an admirable woman. On the other hand, one reader has written on her blog that Sylvia does experience a metamorphosis, so much so that she becomes a symbol of womanhood and in general of humanity, because she suffers desperately, and in her life private stories are inextricably meddled with public History. Often is the strong and incorruptible Hester Rose considered the true heroine of the book; many have highlighted the poignant complexity of Philip's personality, whereas other readers have stated that this story has no heroes at all.

Even those who have not particularly enjoyed the novel ('It's too sad,' 'It's difficult to digest,' 'the ending is frustrating,' they wrote) have appreciated its greatness. The representation of the socio-historical and geographical context is universally praised: some followers of my blog, seeing the pictures I had taken in Whitby, declared themselves to be astonished at the accurateness of Gaskell's topographical descriptions. Someone said the characters are so fully explored that each one of them can be a protagonist. The novel has been defined a 'compendium of wisdom' and a 'manual of life' and *Sylvia's Lovers* has been said to boast all the requirements to be considered a masterpiece. A blogger has written that the characters' feelings are so well depicted that one is 'emotionally exhausted' after reading it: Gaskell is an 'unforgiving' narrator, because in this book she digs deeply inside the darkest corners of our souls. The review of the novel published on the website of 'ANSA' (the leading news agency in Italy) defined it 'a story of many plots and many unsaid truths. [...] A story of the humble, where the events are unpredictable and change the people profoundly'.

As I said above, in 2011 Jo March issued the first Italian edition of *North and South*, which had – and still has – a huge success. The readers literally fell in love with it and when the dubbed version of the BBC mini-series starring Richard Armitage and Daniela Denby-Ashe, was aired on 'LaEffe' (the TV channel owned by Feltrinelli publishing group), the sales of the novel rose dramatically, and so did the interest of the Italian readership for its author. When I opened a website (in Italian) containing some information on Gaskell (www.elizabethgaskell.jimdo.it), the Facebook page related to it reached over 500 'likes' in a very short time.

After the publication of *Gli innamorati di Sylvia* the situation of the Italian editions of Gaskell's novels was this: *Cranford* had been translated in 1950 and 1995 (a new edition appeared in spring 2015), *Mary Barton* in 1996; *Mia cugina Phillis* in 2001;

Vita di Charlotte Brontë in 2006, *Ruth* in 2011 (a new edition appeared in summer 2015). As far as short stories are concerned, Italian readers could enjoy: the collection *Storie di bimbe, di donne, di streghe* (1999); *Il castello di Crowley* (2002); *La donna grigia* (1988); the collection containing *Il fantasma nella stanza del giardino*, *La maledizione dei Griffiths* and *Sei settimane a Heppenheim* (1989); a collection bearing the title *Le stanze dei fantasmi* (2014); the essay 'Una razza maledetta' (2013); *Il matrimonio di Manchester* (2013, published by Jo March in the collection *La casa sfitta*); *Morton Hall* (2010); *Il gentiluomo* (1964); and the very rare *I fratelli uterini and Luigia Leigh*, dating back to the second half of the nineteenth century.

To sum up, the last of Elizabeth Gaskell's novels which remained unavailable in Italian was her very last one, *Wives and Daughters*. The publishers and I were much surprised to discover that no one seemed to have ever attempted to translate it. Surely the task was appalling: 60 chapters, over 600 pages (Penguin edition), and the risky prospect of offering the readers an unfinished novel. But nothing could stop us from the enterprise: Gaskell's last work, perhaps her masterpiece, deserved an Italian translation. Were we reckless or courageous? Ai posteri l'ardua sentenza. I finished the translation by the end of 2014, after several months of hard work. I found the job a little easier than *Gli innamorati di Sylvia*, due to the greater regularity of the language and the absence of dialects, but I have to admit that sometimes the novel appeared to me never to come to an end!

Besides some details, such as idioms or descriptions of clothes or card games, the most complicated task was to render the English personal pronoun 'you'. My impression was that the whole story told in *Wives and Daughters* was sustained by a fragile and precise network of social relationships, the details of which could not be misinterpreted and translated in the wrong way.

Italian has three sets of pronouns to address a person: 'tu', 'lei' or 'voi'. 'Tu' is a sort of 'thou', generally used for family members, friends, and children – or with anyone else, in situations of high emotional involvement (as *Vocabolario Treccani* says). 'Lei' is the commonest courtesy form and 'voi' (the English 'you') is a courtesy form still used only in some regions of Italy. Undoubtedly, most Italian readers – including me – prefer the use of 'voi' in the translations of English works of the nineteenth century and before. Recently, the Italian dubbing of BBC *Emma* (starring Romola Garai), in which 'lei' was used instead of 'voi', gave rise to several protests by the public. I decided then that in my translation of *Wives and Daughters* the courtesy form would be always 'voi', but I still had some doubts: for what characters and relationships had I to use 'voi' and when was instead the familiar/friendly 'tu' preferable? After some thought, I decided I would try to balance social status and emotional sphere. Some characters in *Wives and Daughters* are obsessed by etiquette: Mrs Kirkpatrick-Gibson, Lady Cumnor and Mrs Hamley certainly are. Others, like the Miss Brownings, Molly, Cynthia, and the Hamley boys, always conduct themselves properly (at least in public). In other cases, the respect

of etiquette is very flexible: Mr Gibson is a 'free spirit' and decides his own way of behaving, and Squire Hamley can be very attentive to social rules – because his 'family dates from the Heptarchy' (ch. 6) –, but sometimes his passionate soul leads him to disobey them.

Therefore, this is how I acted in my translation: Mrs Hamley addresses the Squire with 'voi', whereas he uses 'tu' with her; similarly, Dr Gibson addresses his wife with 'tu' and is addressed by her with 'voi'; Lord and Lady Cumnor address each other with 'voi'. Molly and Cynthia are addressed with 'tu' by their parents, but they use 'tu' with the natural parent and 'voi' with the stepparent. Squire Hamley addresses Roger, the younger son, with 'tu' and Osborne, the heir, with 'voi' (eventually he calls him sir); obviously, however, after Osborne dies and Molly tells the Squire the story of his son's secret marriage, the old man cries: 'Oh, Osborne, Osborne, avresti dovuto dirmelo! [...] Avresti dovuto fidarti del tuo vecchio babbo!' (the subject of both verbs is 'tu').

The Italian edition of the novel, with the title *Mogli e figlie* and an Introduction by Prof Marisa Sestito, was issued in May 2015 and presented at the 'Salone del Libro di Torino'. It was reviewed by bloggers and social network commentators, most of whom declared that they had been looking forward to reading in Italian the last work of Elizabeth Gaskell. In particular, some of them had seen the BBC mini-series starring Francesca Annis and Justine Waddell and were curious to compare Andrew Davies's script with the book. Many appreciated our choice to insert the translation of the Cornhill Editor's Note, which explains the end of the story, so that the novel, although unfinished, is not truly 'incomplete'.

One of the most praised aspects of the book was, like in *Gli innamorati di Sylvia*, its capacity to physically evoke the setting, with colours, smells and sounds which seem to remove the readers from present time and transport them back to the past. Hollingford is defined 'Arcadian' and its rural environment is considered the perfect place for harmony to be restored and for human goodness to triumph. All the commentators focus on the centrality of family in the novel. One blogger appreciates Gaskell's 'maternal' hand in the description of the relationships between parents and children and husbands and wives. Another praises her talent in representing with ease and delicateness the complexity of the Victorian world, always hovering between glory and misery, economic success and social injustice, scientific progress and the sacredness of traditions. The characters of *Mogli e figlie* are regarded as its highest achievement. The minor ones are said to be 'extraordinary', such as Lady Harriet or the Hollingford gossips (who remind many readers of Jane Austen's characters). Mrs Gibson is defined by someone 'a masterpiece', and Cynthia is judged 'fascinating', 'modern', 'wonderful', and according to a blogger she is 'one of the best realised characters of Victorian literature'. Many readers have confessed that they shed a tear on the scene of Osborne's death and on Molly's sufferings after Roger's leaving for Africa. One

blogger declared she had read *Mogli e figlie* in one breath, because 'like from Harry Potter, I can't tear myself away from Elizabeth Gaskell'.

With this article I wanted to demonstrate that in her beloved Italy Elizabeth Gaskell has nowadays many admirers. However, as evident from the reviews and comments I quoted and made reference to, I must underline that no 'big' newspapers have publicised this new and important cultural phenomenon. The publishing houses which recently printed the translations of her works are mostly independent ones, and the spread and circulation of Gaskell's stories is almost exclusively due to blogs and social networks.

I think Elizabeth would have liked it.

William & Elizabeth Christine Lingard

I have been asked several times why I have never written about William Gaskell. There are two main reasons. First I don't understand the theology, or at least not well enough to explain it simply to others, and I am also wary of the thorny subject of his relationship with his wife. The subject has been discussed many times – as recently as 2014 by Ann Brooks & Bryan Haworth in this Newsletter, but I should like to add some extra points to the debate. I do not subscribe to the theories of a 'romance' with Charles Eliot Norton, but I was prepared to accept the idea that their relationship had cooled, even if it was only the natural consequence of ageing. I thought of him as a kind man, genuinely fond of his wife but preferring quieter pursuits to her tireless whirl of travel and socialising. She certainly took him for granted running off to Italy once she had completed *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, leaving him to sort out the threats of litigation that ensued. He was also a useful source of books from the Portico Library, from which she, as a woman, was barred. I have now revised my opinion. In one of the few of his letters to her that survives he writes to her in Germany:

I shan't be sorry when you are all on English ground again. Can you give me any idea when it is likely to be? I ought to fix when I am going to Scotland, as the Potters are getting their beds filled, and my holidays are slipping away. What I said to Mr P. was that I would be with them at the beginning of August ... I don't see how you can be here by that time ... [Rutgers library]

He was obviously missing her.

They are known to have taken separate holidays. Elizabeth Gaskell claimed that it was because he was so concerned for the wellbeing of their daughters that he did

not like leaving them alone, [GL p129] so they were never both away from home at the same time. She also declared 'Mr Gaskell dreads foreign diet like poison.' [GL p506] She described some of his holiday pursuits to Marianne, 'I find that Papa does not like the idea of having a stranger in the house in holiday time when you know he likes to play pranks, go cockling etc. etc.' [GL p580]

But maybe he was just a workaholic. His wife was very concerned:

I have worried Mr Gaskell, by assuring him he shall have no peace or comfort at home, into going away. He has fixed to go away next Monday, & looks better already with the prospects of a change, in which he now indulges himself. He will form no plans, but bachelorize off comfortably guided by the wind of his own daily will; but he faintly purposes to be in London, -& at the opening of the Crystal Palace. You cannot think what a relief this is to me. All last week I was stupid with anxiety, & the want of power to influence him. [GL p282].

But she was surprised to find that Mrs Potter's invitations included her 'but if she has he has never told me of it'. [GL p759]

I am not sure that she fully understood him. She thought him 'very shy, but very merry when he is well, and very fond of children.' [GL p660] According to Jenny Uglow he made dreadful puns and relaxed with the Police Gazette. He was terribly fussy about his personal comfort:

He has a capital appetite & generally sleeps like a top at nights. He keeps his study terribly hot; but then he likes it; and I sometimes fancy it is because he can't regulate the warmth of other houses that he dislikes so much leaving home. [GL p759]

But she was mistaken in thinking that she could persuade him to retire and move to the house she had secretly bought in Hampshire. In the early years of her marriage she declared that she was more open with Sam, her brother-in-law, than she dared to be with William.

In 1862 she revealed to William Wetmore Story the reason why she was so upset about Marianne's interest in the Roman Catholic Church:

I was anxious to keep it from Mr Gaskell. When I learnt from your letter how serious it was, I am thankful to you for telling us, and for telling it to him... I fear his extreme dislike & abhorrence of R.-C.ism; & thinking all the arguments adduced made by its professors 'utterly absurd', make her more inclined to take up it's [sic] defence thinking it unjustly treated. [GL p687]

William was more pragmatic. Marianne said 'Since I came home I have been reading with Papa, as yet the only reasons against Catholicism, not reasons for

Unitarianism'. [Wiltshire p43] She remained an active member of the Church of England for the rest of her life. John Chapple claimed that his published sermons and writings contain nothing 'so extreme' about Roman Catholics.

Elizabeth was also horrified at the prospect of her brother-in-law, William Robson, a noted abolitionist, bringing the freeborn black activist, Sarah Remond, to Plymouth Grove:

Wm is even more vehement against the false course he thinks they are adopting (by stirring up English opinion as an agent,) than I am; so please don't send Miss Remond here. [GL p530]

I am not so sure that William would have objected. In 1862 he wrote:

The Brahmin convert (Joguth Chundra) Gangooly is to be here...He preached in Liverpool last Sunday, and seems to have produced a very favourable impression there. [Rutgers library]

He was a man of great intellect and varied tastes. He knew Ancient Greek, and a little Italian. He gave tuition in German to the Winkworth sisters and others. He was fastidious with detail, correcting every spelling mistake and grammatical error in his family's writing. His lectures to Mechanics Institutes on the Poets of Humble Life were very popular. His wife feared his 'procrastination will prevent his doing justice to it'. [GL p20] His Temperance Rhymes were admired by Wordsworth. Several of his hymns are still sung today. One of his students, Adam Rushton, in his *Memoirs of a Factory Boy*, described his lessons 'To hear Mr Gaskell read and pronounce Greek was a delicious pleasure'.

His Two Lectures on the Lancashire Dialect, were included in the 5th edition of *Mary Barton*. Elizabeth acknowledged the importance of dialect to this novel. The lectures were much in demand. They must have impressed the committee of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (of which he was an enthusiastic member). They asked him to write a paper for their meeting in Liverpool in 1854. Elizabeth arranged for their publication, along with reports from the Manchester Guardian. Her letter to John Forster reveals as much about her meticulous attention to detail as it does about his modesty:

Mr Gaskell, who said... that 'he did not like Mr Chapman to be put to any expense on his account,'...As to preface or appendix I don't think Mr Gaskell cares one straw; whichever you wise London people think best, we, provincials, must submit to...I had to go off myself on Friday to the Guardian office,...they told me they were 'out of print'...Mr Gaskell writes short hand, I can't read it, or I would copy it out for Mr Chapman, as Mr Gaskell is too busy to do it himself, -so, please would it be better to send the copies you have...to Bradbury &



Foolscap MS, now bound, of *Wives and Daughters*



**Treasures at
John Rylands Deansgate**



**Fran Baker, Aya Yatsugi and Laura Caradonna among the Archives
at John Rylands Deansgate, Manchester, 26 November 2015**

Evans; (the printers)...or to first return those copies to Mr Gaskell, who would correct them...will you give directions to omit all the little newspaper falsifications, at first, about the 'lecturer', 'numerous audience', & plunge off into the lecture itself—giving a separate paragraph to each word...I will do anything to save time... [GS p279]

William tried to interest his wife in the British Association and took her, and their daughters, to their meetings – in Glasgow in 1855 and Cheltenham in 1856. They went there from Dumbleton – one of the rare occasions that they took a holiday together. She admitted that she found scientific language difficult:

[Marianne] enjoyed her visits in Scotland, more than the Scientific Association meeting itself, and so did I, I must confess. Scientific Language is quite new to me, and yet some knowledge of it is required to understand all the papers, except indeed those read in the Statistical Section. [FL p149]

I am puzzled, however, by this letter dated May 13 1852 (especially when you realise that William was used to speaking in public):

Your poor Papa lives in dread of the British Association, in W[hit] Week!! If he does not go to London it is because he's frightened away by it. Speechmaking, public-meetings and such noisy obtrusive ways of 'doing good' are his dislike, as you know; but oh! he is so good really in his own quiet way, beginning at home and working outwards without noise or hubbub...It is so funny, Papa's fright of that great form of the British Association. [GL p187]

The 1852 meeting was held in Belfast. There had not been a meeting in London since 1831 nor was there another during her lifetime. Meetings took place in August or September not May. Perhaps he had been asked to go to London for a 'trial run'? On a lighter note he is known to have enjoyed fishing, and made Flossy two kites. They had great fun flying them together. [Uglow] He prepared exhaustive lists of medieval paintings that they might view in Tuscany. He even played whist:

Oh Bob! [his brother] What glorious games at whist you & I & Willie will have when you come with an independent dummy who shall play as he likes. [GL p5]

He was aware of his wife's fondness for the macabre. He sent her newspaper accounts of two celebrated murder cases that gripped the nation – that of a schoolmaster who had flogged a seven year old boy to death, but was sentenced to only four years' penal servitude; and the case of Constance Kent, who was put in prison at Devizes, on suspicion of having murdered her half-brother. She was later imprisoned for life despite public reservations about her guilt. You may have been heard of this case. It formed the basis of the best-selling novel of 2005 – *The Suspicions of Mr Whicher*, by Kate Summerscales. [Rutgers library]

A very complex character indeed – what do you think?

Further reading:

Letters of Mrs Gaskell, edited by J.A.V. Chapple & Arthur Pollard, New ed. 1997. [GL]
Further Letters of Mrs Gaskell, edited by J.A.V. Chapple & Alan Shelston, 2000. [FL]
Letters of Mrs Gaskell's Daughters, 1856-1914, edited by Irene Wiltshire, 2012. [Wiltshire]
Letter. William to Elizabeth Gaskell [Rutgers University Library, New Jersey] summarised by J.A.V. Chapple. Gaskell Society Newsletter, No.14 August 1992, p.8-12. [Rutgers]
Brooks, Ann & Haworth, Bryan. A very modern marriage. Gaskell Society Newsletter, No.58. Autumn 2014
Chapple, J.A.V. Elizabeth Gaskell and Roman Catholicism. Gaskell Journal vol. 20 2006 page 23.
Uglow, Jenny. *Elizabeth Gaskell: a habit of stories*. 1993

The Legal Background to Copyright in Elizabeth Gaskell's Time

Helen Shay

When researching this piece on the copyright situation that Elizabeth Gaskell faced during her career, I became intrigued by the complex legal background of those times. It also struck me that law tended to intrude often upon Gaskell's life (just as it regularly makes an appearance in her work) notably via the libel threat on initial publication of *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* and maybe even also towards the end of her life, when the elaborate Victorian conveyancing system would have influenced purchase of 'The Lawn'. After all, we know how frustrating house buying can be even nowadays, after significant intervening land law reform. (The latter may perhaps be material for further research and a future article, partly inspired by the excellent talk we had at the 2015 conference upon medical matters delivered by that man of many talents, Professor James Drife. His speculation over Gaskell's exact cause of death in particular left me wondering whether stress, in which legal processes might well contribute, could also be involved.)

As a practising solicitor who has worked with intellectual property and written a *Guide to Copyright* for writers (Little Brown ISBN 978-1-84528-321-6) it has been enlightening for me to look into the difficulties encountered by Victorian authors. In modern times under UK law, writers have automatic copyright with no requirement to register with any agency (unlike the situation with trademarks or patents). Unfortunately for Gaskell, legal protection that existed then for her was severely limited.

To understand her situation and the background in which Gaskell had to operate, the origins and development of copyright need to be appreciated. The idea emerged of the individual self, including creativity, in Ancient Greece, though of course other

cultures played a part, such as Jewish Talmudic law which also recognised authors' moral and economic rights. However, when works used to be copied by hand with relatively few texts generated, rights were rarely tested. Roman book sellers sometimes paid authors for first access but writers were often paid nothing. Copyright mainly developed post-Caxton with efforts by church and government to control the output of printers, as invention of the printing press allowed many copies of works and rapid circulation of ideas – including works of dissent. The first English copyright was issued to the man who succeeded Caxton in 1518. Such privileges were termed 'monopolies' (not abolished until 1623 when letters patent tended to be granted to publishers). In 1557 the English Crown sought to stop seditious books by chartering the Stationers' Company. Legislation aimed to regulate the book-trade, though allowed importation of foreign books to widen learning. The Star Chamber set out to curtail 'dyvers contentyous and disorderlye persons professinge the arte or mystere of pryntinge or selling of books'. Right to print was restricted to two universities and twenty-one London printers. The poet Milton was one of the first to challenge restrictions, arguing for freedom of expression. The Licensing Act of 1662 established a register of licensed books, but this lapsed in 1695 leading to relaxation of government censorship.

In 1709 came the landmark Statute of Anne (named after the then queen). It required owners of rights to register with the Stationers' Company and established principles of authors' ownership of copyright with a fixed term of protection for fourteen years (renewable if the author was alive upon expiration). Nevertheless the benefits were minimal because to be paid, authors tended to have to assign copyright to booksellers or publishers. Furthermore the Statute of Anne never applied to American colonies where authors' copyrights proved inadequate, with English novels shipped across the Atlantic and copies smuggled across European borders by pack animals. During Gaskell's lifetime, there was no legal requirement that a book be strictly of American manufacture, so books destined for the US market might be typeset in Britain with plates or already printed sheets shipped to America. A book assembled from such sheets could be pirated by another American publisher, even though in theory 'trade courtesy' was supposed to prohibit this. In a way, such practices were the 'illegal file-sharing' of their own era, to draw a loose analogy with what musicians/the music industry has suffered during our own internet age.

Threatened by cheap American imports, British publishers became protectionist and sought to compensate for Yankee violations of copyright by advocating customs duties on unauthorised re-prints. Yet publishers continued to suffer. John Murray between 1843 and 1849 put out several volumes of 'Colonial and Home Library' but rock-bottom prices of American books ruined the scheme. For a long time, the best way for a British author to secure any American copyright protection was to have an American citizen serve as a collaborator by writing a preface and registering the book in Washington under the collaborator's name up.

In Britain, legal cases started which led to thirty years of wrangling known as the battle of the booksellers over whether printed ideas could be owned and whether there was any common law right to copyright. Supporters of such 'perpetual copyright' argued that without it scholarship would cease and authors would have no incentive, if they could not leave rights to their descendants. Opponents argued it amounted to a monopoly making books less affordable and preventing the spread of Enlightenment thinking. The general historical background also influenced views. After the revolution, the French had advocated à tous la liberté approach and the universal granting of each man his copy. By contrast, Americans after their own revolution developed a nationalistic and protectionist attitude – an approach which was ironically mirrored in some ways by the British publishers, who so attacked the Americans for their practices. These ideologies inevitably clashed. British publishers wanted protection for their copyrights (bought from budding authors such as Dickens and Gaskell) in order to compete with piratical Yankee publishers, while British authors themselves simply desired to have their rights in intellectual property acknowledged the world over, as in the French model of copyright. Eventually the House of Lords established that rights in copyright were determined only by what statute decreed. This was a good thing in some ways, opening the market for cheap reprints of classics like Shakespeare and Chaucer and breaking the dominance of London booksellers to allow more competition.

Gaskell witnessed other pioneering legal developments in her lifetime with the first international copyright act in 1838 (although the term 'copyright' itself first came with that act's revision in 1844). Gaskell herself benefitted from the implementation of the Copyright Act 1842, introducing the 'life-plus' principle for copyright protection and adopting a forty-two year period from the date of publication or life of the author plus seven years, whichever was longer. It made registration the only prerequisite to bringing an infringement action and decreed that the British Museum was to receive a copy of any book printed in the United Kingdom within three months of publication (forerunner of the present deposit copies system).

However, nineteenth century English copyright continued to be a controversial area of law, said to be 'destitute of any sort of arrangement, incomplete, often obscure' according to a Royal Commission on Copyright. Even after Parliament passed the 1842 Copyright Act there were calls for further clarification of the law. The increasing American piracy of English works and Canadian trade in unauthorised American copies added to the problems. To address these issues, the government assembled the Royal Commission on Copyright in 1875, which included Anthony Trollope and produced a report, dismissing any calls for copyright abolition. The Royal Commission, described by Mathew Arnold as 'a great battle', was significant in the subsequent development of the law and an example of great nineteenth century reform moves. It is a shame that Gaskell did not live to see this.

The American situation remained difficult throughout Gaskell's lifetime. Because

American copyright law applied only to American publications, European authors were unable to profit from the publication and sale of their works at extremely low prices. The 'cheap books' movement spread rapidly fuelled by small upstart American publishers (gaining momentum after the Civil War) and eroding the 'courtesy principle' of gentlemanly price-fixing – a type of informal net book agreement – adhered to by the large, established publishers. It was Gaskell's literary colleague, Charles Dickens, who tackled the problem and in 1843 braved the paddle-steamer to arrive in Boston to a rapturous reception, only to find that the welcome died down when he raised the subject of international copyright. He reminded the Americans of Sir Walter Scott dying in penury, with not 'one grateful dollar piece' coming to his assistance. The American press turned against Dickens, saying it wanted 'no advice upon this subject'. Undaunted, Dickens went onto Washington to press his point (though was apparently appalled by the habitual chewing of tobacco, with even a 'spit box' beside the President's chair in the White House).

Therefore although he may have taxed Gaskell personally at times, Dickens was a force for good when it came to authors' rights. However it was the younger author that he to some extent took under his wing, Wilkie Collins, who was to be the real activist, becoming an early council member of the newly-emerging Society of Authors. He objected to how circulating libraries of the time such as W H Smith, published novels in three volumes at a price more than average people could afford, so not reaching the 'unknown public' that he referred to in his 1858 essay in Household Words. Enraged by his own publisher's sloppiness (such as referring to Millais as 'Willais' in the frontispiece to one of his novels), Collins joined the growing protest against publishers' restrictive practices. Dickens convinced Collins (as he did Gaskell) of the benefits of magazine serialisation. Collins began to realise that he could use a range of copyrights, leasing publishers the right to print a number of copies but retaining actual copyright to offer elsewhere for other uses and periods. In this, he showed more commercial acumen than Gaskell (though perhaps incentivised by his having two mistresses and offspring plus an opium habit to support). He was also one of the first authors to hire an agent. Collins spotted that many novels were turned into plays without permission and for profit, later declaring that 'the stupid copyright law of England' would allow any scoundrel with paste and scissors to steal novels and stage them. He therefore astutely made dramatic versions of his novels, often just to establish copyright in the theatre version as well – something which Bram Stoker also did later with *Dracula*. (This did not prevent eventual plagiarism via the film *Nosferatu* but assisted in the legal battle over it, which might otherwise have left his widow in a far worse position). Like Dickens, Collins begrudged the pirate practices of US publishers, whom he claimed sold 120,000 copies of *The Woman in White* without making him any payment. Together they campaigned against this, supported by some American writers like Mark Twain who lobbied their government to address the unfairness. This led eventually to the Chace Act of 1891, when at last the United States agreed

to stop sanctioning literary piracy and also joined the international copyright union in 1896.

Meanwhile on the continent, the battle for authors' rights was continuing. In 1878, authors, artists, publishers, academics and other interested parties, led by Victor Hugo, formed the Association Littéraire et Artistique Internationale (ALAI) and advocated the artist's right to their work as a property right requiring protection for a hundred years from the date of publication with no formalities required and with foreign artists to be dealt with the same as nationals. Reciprocal accords with other countries eventually led to The Berne Convention in 1886, sadly too late for Gaskell to rejoice on how it considerably improved an author's lot.

Berne required member states to provide protection for literary, scientific and artistic productions and included the principle of national treatment that each member gives citizens of other member states the same rights given to its own citizens (in a similar way to principles governing the EU today). It also led later to copyright protection lasting for a minimum of the author's lifetime plus fifty years independent of any formality such as registration. (This lasted until a European Directive in 1993 to harmonise the terms of protection to the longer period of life of an author plus 70 years for literary and artistic works, to take into account modern longer lifespans as life plus 50 years did not cover the author and two generations of his descendants.) Berne also enshrined limits and exceptions, such as permissible usage of quotes from published works for teaching purposes and news reporting. The legal position we have today developed from these innovations and still retains much of the same basic structure.

Therefore Gaskell certainly lived in interesting legal times and witnessed important improvements to the position of authors. However – as in so many ways – she died too soon and before the changes matured into our modern framework that, whilst not perfect, has brought much more copyright security to writers.

Editor notes: President Shirley has abridged the Joan Leach Memorial Lecture, which she delivered at the Autumn Meeting in Knutsford on 26 September 2015, into the following essay.

American Visitors to the North Shirley Foster

Elizabeth Gaskell's views on America and Americans have been well documented, from the evidence of her letters and other writing, as well as her reading. But what about the responses to England of the Americans themselves? It is especially

illuminating to examine what some of the Transatlantic visitors to the North-West, who can be associated – albeit in some cases only peripherally – thought of the region in which Gaskell lived and worked. Manchester and Liverpool were not much lingered over by the average New World tourist, who was far more eager to get to cultural and historical ‘honey-pots’ such as Stratford, Warwick, Oxford and London, than to explore the immediate vicinity of landing (the most common port of entry at this time was Liverpool). For those who did stay in the area, encounter with the industrial north often abruptly destroyed romantic preconceptions of ‘Our Old Home’. Such an assault on expectation demanded revisioning not only of the tourist experience but also of the relationship between the Old World and the New.

Sara Jane Clarke (pen-name ‘Grace Greenwood’), was a writer, reformer and journalist, and a friend of the Hawthornes, whom Gaskell may have encountered in Rome among the expatriate Americans she met there. Greenwood came to Europe in 1852 as a reporter for the New York Times, and is an example of a visitor whose brief, superficial exposure to this region did not include experience of the ‘other’ England of factories and slums. In her *Haps and Mishaps of a Tour in Europe* (1854), it is the novelty of the foreign which most attracts her on her first sight of Liverpool: although she sees the city in drizzle and ‘under a cloud of coal smoke’, she enthusiastically declares that there is plenty here for ‘sea-wearied eyes’¹ to enjoy. She notes the differences from a United States sea-port, including ‘a vastly greater number of docks, vessels, police officers, ragged boys, red-faced men, barefooted women, and donkey carts’ (6). The deprivation implied by ragged children and women too poor to buy shoes passes over her in her delight in the general scene, a tableau of foreign picturesqueness. For the rest of her brief stay in Liverpool, Greenwood visits the city’s notable buildings, such as St George’s Hall and the beautiful Hope Street Unitarian Chapel, but spends more time in Woolton, then a separate village outside the city and one of the most prosperous parts of south Liverpool, enjoying the hospitality of an affluent local resident. She also visits Seaforth Hall, ‘belonging to a wealthy manufacturer of Liverpool’ (9) – probably the chemical engineer James Muspratt – and admires its fine views, conservatories and hothouses, pictures and statues. Clearly she left the city with no idea of the suffering and deprivation within it.

Harriet Beecher Stowe paid an extended visit to Britain in 1853. Gaskell first met her that year in London and invited her to stay at Plymouth Grove – a visit which appears not to have taken place. In June 1857, however, on her second visit to Britain, she did come to Manchester; Gaskell gave her hospitality and took her to the Art Treasures Exhibition. Stowe, like Greenwood, had little chance of seeing what went on in the northern urban areas, despite her knowledge of industrial distress gleaned from the works of Dickens, Kingsley and, perhaps, *Mary Barton*. On her first trip in 1853 she had a very tight and specific itinerary – to propagate abolitionist sentiment in England and Scotland, through anti-slavery societies – and had time to visit only the conventional tourist spots. Her two later

visits were similarly constrained geographically and temporally. Again like Greenwood, her much longed-for first sight of England incorporates a rosy view of Liverpool. In her *Sunny Memories of Foreign Lands* (1854), she notes that the people who come to greet her at the dock-side all look very healthy, but she is immediately whisked off to Dingle, on the banks of the Mersey, where her host, John Cropper, lives. Delighted with all the novelty around her, she is prepared to find merit in everything: Speke Hall is eminently attractive, the servants at the Croppers’ seem of a superior class, and, when she is introduced to children from the local ragged school, ‘[they]...were anything but ragged, being tidily dressed, remarkably clean, with glowing cheeks and bright eyes’². Four days later, she left Liverpool. Her impressions of Manchester on her 1857 visit are not recorded or lost.

Another of Gaskell’s American acquaintances, Edward Everett Hale, writer, abolitionist and Unitarian minister, who corresponded extensively with her, also had a brief sojourn in the north-west. In 1859, he came on a flying visit to Europe, recorded in his *Ninety Days’ Worth of Europe* (1861). He, too, landed in Liverpool, and was also delighted with it, challenging the common notion that it is not a city worth lingering in:

I wonder that it ever gets disrespectfully spoken of, as if there were nothing to see. I suppose there are not many lions; but there are what are as good as lions – shrimps, Spanish grapes, beggars playing at coach-wheel, red-coated post-boys, police-men with shiny hats, and, in short, all that world of details, which are all new as one lands, as if they were lions, newer, indeed, because they are never shown in menageries.³

Just like Greenwood, he takes in all the variety of the scene before him and turns it into an aesthetic image; beggars are part of the whole picture, not objects for social commentary. Hale also visited Manchester, spending a few days at Plymouth Grove at the end of December, after his tour of mainland Europe, but little is recorded of his impressions here.⁴ Towards the end of his book, noting that the printer has told him it is already too long, he states, ‘I should be glad to speak of Manchester, where I was so much at home; and of Liverpool, where I was at home again. Where, indeed, is one not at home in England?’ He also tells us ‘I spent Christmas at Manchester, my first Christmas under the mistletoe. Late at night, on the 28th of December, I left Liverpool for Ireland’ (194). As with the other visitors discussed so far, he had no time to linger in the region.

Charles Eliot Norton needs no introduction as an American visitor to England. A close friend and correspondent of Gaskell’s after the development of their friendship in Rome in June 1857, he too came to Manchester, in mid-July, partly to see the Gaskells and partly to visit the Art Treasures Exhibition. Though his printed correspondence does not record his experiences here, his article in the *Atlantic Monthly*, reviewing the Exhibition, gives a most interesting insight into what he

thought about the city, exemplifying an American response to such urban ugliness (and of course Norton had only recently left the beauties of Rome). The Exhibition was held at Old Trafford, then sited outside the city, and Norton foregrounds the contrast between his immediate surroundings and the further-off landscape. The article begins with Norton's referencing a newspaper illustration of Manchester, representing 'a thousand tall factory chimneys rising out of a gray mist, and surmounted by a heavy drifting cloud of smoke'.⁵ What he sees is essentially the same, as he looks back from the entrance to the Exhibition, and to him it is a scene of almost Gothic horror: an alternative art-work of brick walls, chimneys and warehouses, in which Nature is parched and scorched by 'the feverish breath of forges and furnaces' and industry murmurs with 'the voice of the restless, hard-working, unsettled spirit of gain'. For him, Manchester is a wholly negative environment, offering 'no single object upon which the eye or the imagination can rest with pleasure.' (33)

Norton's antipathy towards industrial Manchester was largely due to its failure to please the eye. Other American observers were affected far more, in social and emotional terms, by what they saw. One of the most notable Americans of his day, Ralph Waldo Emerson, came to Britain in 1847-8, to give a series of lectures. His itinerary spanned Liverpool, Manchester, Preston, Rochdale, Nottingham, Derby, Huddersfield, Leeds, Bradford, Halifax, Sheffield and Newcastle, as well as several Scottish cities. His lectures in Manchester may have been attended by Gaskell, and a review of three of them, in *Howitt's Journal*, 11 December 1847, has been attributed to her; the authorship, however, is by no means certain. On his rapid progress between Mechanics' Institutes and literary societies across the North, Emerson usually stayed in prosperous middle-class suburban homes. But he could not avoid encountering the environmental despoliation to be found in the manufacturing north of England, where, as he noted, 'the sheep are black (from smoke), and the trees black, and the human spittle black'⁶; he also saw the human degradation produced by such rapid industrial growth. Emerson was noted for his somewhat dispassionate and spiritualised approach, but in Manchester, where the contrasts between the buildings 'on a scale of size and wealth out of all proportion to ours' (x,178) and the glaring poverty in the city streets are inescapable, a personal resonance shocks him and unlocks his feelings:

Ah perhaps you should see the tragic spectacles which these streets show, these Manchester and Liverpool streets, by day and night, to know how much of happiest circumstance of safety of dignity and of opportunity belongs to us so easily that is ravished from this population....I cannot go up the street but I shall see some woman in rags with a little creature just of Edie's age and size, but in coarsest ragged clothes, and barefooted, stepping beside her, and I look curiously into her Edies [sic] face, with some terror lest it should resemble mine...Bid Ellen and Edie thank God that they were born in New England...and I hope they and theirs will not stand barefooted in the mud on a bridge in the rain all day to beg of passengers.⁷

Of all the Americans discussed so far, Nathaniel Hawthorne had the widest and most extended experience of English life. He was consul in Liverpool from 1835-8, and again from June 1859 to July 1860, and also travelled throughout the country. There are various links between Hawthorne and Gaskell: in Liverpool he became acquainted with the well-known Unitarian, Henry Bright, whose sister was a friend of Marianne's; here he was also friendly with Charles Holland, the eldest son of Gaskell's Uncle Samuel Holland; like many of the other Americans, he came to Manchester for the Art Exhibition, in July 1857; he was also in Redcar, finishing his novel, *Transformation*, in November 1859, at the same time that Gaskell was in Whitby, researching for *Sylvia's Lovers*, and Bright suggested a meeting between them. Remarkably, however, these links never produced personal contact.

During his consulship, Hawthorne, like Dickens in London, roamed endlessly around the seedier city districts, and was deeply affected by what he saw. He was both fascinated and disgusted, as is evidenced in some of his earliest impressions of Liverpool; there is something almost pathological in his observations on the city's poorest inhabitants:

The people are as numerous as maggots in a cheese; you behold them, disgusting, and all moving about, as when you raise a plank or log that has long lain on the ground, and find many vivacious bugs and insects beneath it.⁸

Hawthorne's general impression of Manchester – more superficial than his experience of Liverpool – is that it is not worth visiting: 'It is a dingy and heavy town, with very much the aspect of Liverpool, being, like the latter, built almost entirely within the present century' (XXII,36). During his stay here, for the Art Exhibition, he found some amusement in watching the bustle of traffic, but he found Stretford Road, where his lodgings were, 'even with its little grass-plots and bits of shrubbery under the front windows...as ugly as only the English know how to make it' (XXII,339). Even here, though, Hawthorne's acute awareness of his surroundings made him a sensitive observer, as is shown in his account of a block working-class wedding in Manchester Cathedral, where he finds the sight of 'the women with their poor, shabby shawls drawn close about them, faded untimely, wrinkled with penury and care; nothing fresh, virginlike, or hopeful about them...the saddest thing we have seen since leaving home, though funny enough if one likes to look at it from the ludicrous point of view' (XXII,201).

Hawthorne's account of his visit to the West Derby (Liverpool) workhouse is one of the most unsettling passages in his reminiscences. On this visit, a horrible diseased child takes a fancy to him, and he cannot conceal his disgust and horror: the 'imp', a 'little, sickly, humor-eaten fright...followed me, holding two of my fingers (luckily the glove was on) and playing with them, just as if (God save us!) it were a child of my own' (XXI,412-3). Appalled and revolted, Hawthorne nevertheless feels a kind of moral responsibility: 'If it were within the limits of possibility – if I had ever done

such wickedness as could have produced this child...I wished I had not touched the imp; and yet I should never have forgiven myself if I had repelled its advances' (413). Interestingly, in *Our Old Home* (1863), Hawthorne's published account of his English experiences, he distances himself from the incident, by referring to himself in the third-person as 'our friend'; his horrified response has become objectified, as he turns his gaze on himself as well as on the child.

As we have seen, the deprivation and social malaise that some Americans encountered in the north-west confirmed their sense that America, the Promised Land, was blessedly free from the kinds of turmoil and degradation found in the old country. Hawthorne, for example, says of Liverpool, 'One sees incidents in the streets, here, which would not be seen in an American city' (XXI,53), and Emerson expresses the same optimism. But for many observers, there was also always the awareness that what they had seen in England could foreshadow a less than rosy future for America. Julia Bradford, wife of the American Samuel Dexter Bradford (good friends of the Gaskells) most succinctly voices this unease in her review of Mary Barton in the *Christian Examiner* of March 1849: 'What true American but must shudder at the thought of the rural scenes, which now gladden the heart of every denizen of New England, being transformed into a busy, toiling, suffering, manufacturing region, subject to such fearful distress as is caused by the alternations of trade in the manufacturing districts of England?' (132). Cities such as Liverpool and Manchester are a warning to the United States.

- ¹ Grace Greenwood, *Haps and Mishaps of a Tour in Europe*, Boston: Ticknor, Reed and Fields, 1854, p.5.
- ² Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Sunny Memories of Foreign Lands*, 2 vols., Boston: Phillips, Sampson, and Company, 1856, I,27.
- ³ Edward Everett Hale, *Ninety Days' Worth of Europe*, Boston: Walker, Wise & Company, 1861, pp.9-10. 'Lions', of course, refers to notable people or places.
- ⁴ As with Stowe, personal reasons may have restricted his comments. He sent a copy of *Ninety Days* to Gaskell, who, in a letter of 22 April [1861] thanks him: 'you can't think how we English always like to know what you Americans think of us & Europe' (*Further Letters*, p.222).
- ⁵ Charles Eliot Norton, 'The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition', *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 1, November 1857, p.33
- ⁶ *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Merton Sealts Jr., Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1965, X, 193.
- ⁷ *The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Ralph L. Rusk, 6 vols, New York: Columbia University Press, 1939, III, 442-3. Ellen and Edie were Emerson's daughters; the letter is addressed to his wife.
- ⁸ Nathaniel Hawthorne, *English Notebooks, The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, XXI and XXII, eds. Thomas Woodson and Bill Ellis, Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1997, XXI, 26

Book Notes

Christine Lingard

Channer, Nick. *Writers' Houses: Where Great Books Began*. Robert Hale ISBN: 978-0719806643.

A sumptuously illustrated & detailed description of writers' houses open to the public, including Elizabeth Gaskell's house in Plymouth Grove, Manchester.

Harman, Clare. *Charlotte Brontë: A Life*. Viking ISBN: 978-0241963685.

Published to commemorate her bicentenary this year 2016. It is also available as a digital audio book.

Dancy, J. Ross. *The Myth of the Press Gang: Volunteers, Impressment and the Naval Manpower Problem in the Late Eighteenth Century*. Boydell Press. ISBN: 978-1783270033.

I am grateful to member Judith Robinson of San Francisco for recommending this detailed history of 18th century naval history which provides useful background to *Sylvia's Lovers*.

French Songs

Christine Lingard

There was a great deal of press coverage in the summer about some articles in Dickens's periodical *All the Year Round* previously attributed to Henry Chorley which have now been re-ascribed to Elizabeth Gaskell. These are two very lengthy reports in February 1862 entitled 'Select Committee on French Songs', which include accounts of several Basque and Provençal folk songs and legends. Their interest is very specialised but they reflect Gaskell's deep knowledge of the subject because she has included the British equivalent of many of the tales described. It is a theme that occurs in several of her stories especially *Curious if True*.

They also reflect on an often overlooked aspect of her career namely her journalism. She contributed several factual articles to periodicals over the years – in fact her first solo appearance in print was an account of the legendary story of Clopton Hall near Stratford. While in Paris she found much suitable material for her *Columns of Gossip from Paris* published in the *Pall Mall Gazette* in March 1865. The article on French Songs recalls a contribution she made to *Household Words* (volume IX p25) in 1854 entitled *Modern Greek Songs*. It begins:

I have lately met with a French book which has interested me much; and, as it is now out of print, and was never very extensively known, I imagine some account of it may not be displeasing to the readers of "Household Words." It is called "Chants Populaires de la Grèce Moderne, par C. Fauriel." M. Fauriel is a Greek, in spite of his French name, and the language in which he writes.

Charles Fauriel (1777-1844) was in fact French but spent many years in Greece as a diplomat. He became the lover of Mary Clarke better known to us as Madame Mohl, Gaskell's hostess on many of her visits to Paris. Several of his friends, mentioned in the article were either known to Gaskell personally or are mentioned in her writing. They include Jean-Jacques Ampère (1800-64) the philologist, François Guizot (1787-1874) the protestant historian, who spent a lot of time in England and whose daughters translated Gaskell's works into French, Augustin Thierry (1795-1856) another historian who also entertained her in Paris and the Italian novelist Alessandro Manzoni (1785-1877), whose novel *I Promesi Sposi* is mentioned in *Cousin Phillis*.

~ Forthcoming Events ~

North-West Group

Manchester Meetings

At Cross Street Unitarian Chapel from noon onwards when coffee is available but bring your own lunch if you wish. Lecture begins about 1pm. (Only one more for this winter season and then 2016-2017 season will begin on Tuesday 3 October 2016.)

2 February 2016

Anthony Burton: The Gaskells and the Intellectual Life of Manchester
Anthony spent most of his career as a curator at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and was also a Trustee of the Charles Dickens Museum in Bloomsbury. Anthony is now a volunteer and Trustee at Elizabeth Gaskell's House.

1 March 2016

John Greenwood: Elizabeth Gaskell's reaction to George Eliot, a new novelist.

Knutsford Meetings

At Brook Street Chapel Hall, Adams Hill on the last Wednesday of the month ending on 27 April.

Lunch from noon onwards and then we shall continue to study *Wives and Daughters* with Elizabeth Williams. Professor Angus Easson will speak to us on 30 March. Angus edited Oxford World's Classics *Wives and Daughters*.

After the summer these meetings will resume on Wednesday 26 October 2016.

Summer Outing to Renishaw Hall, the Derbyshire home of the Sitwell family.
Details TBA.

Gaskell Society Study Tour 31 May – 2 June 2016

We shall stay at the Bank House Hotel, (Bransford WR6 5JD) which lies between Worcester and the Malvern Hills. The major events of the study tour are:

A morning visit to Madresfield Court, a Grade 1 Listed manor house, which has a 12thC great hall (rebuilt in 1593) and an Arts and Crafts chapel. Evelyn Waugh was a frequent visitor there and it provided the inspiration for *Brideshead*. It was the designated 'safe house' for the royal family in the second world war.

A visit to Alfrick Church, where the grave of Marianne Gaskell has now been identified. We shall probably arrange readings or short service in Alfrick Church.

A visit to Wightwick Manor will probably be arranged for our return journey.

The timing is determined by NT opening days. The cost will be £212 for shared accommodation; £282 for single room occupancy. These prices include hotel, coach and entry to Madresfield Court (£12 per person). The coach will pick up passengers in Manchester, Macclesfield and Knutsford.

We need to make immediate reservations. Please secure your place by sending £30 per person, payable to The Gaskell Society, to: Jean Alston, 57 Westholme Close, Congleton, CW12 4FZ

The Gaskell Society South-West

New Year Lunch, 9 January at Brasserie Blanc, Bath

Twelve members enjoyed a two course lunch together in a cosy nook of local restaurant Brasserie Blanc. After lots of good talk and putting the world to rights, we wished each other a Happy New Year and went our separate ways.

Saturday, 13 February, Discussion Group on *Wives and Daughters*

The first of two discussion afternoons will be held at Kate and Alec Crawford's house, 21 Priory Close, Combe Down, Bath at 2.15 pm. Numbers will be limited to twelve as usual, and there will be a fee of £3 for the meeting. Please phone Kate (01225 837557) if you would like to join us. There will be refreshments.

Saturday, 12 March, Second Discussion Group on *Wives and Daughters*

The second discussion afternoon will be held at Bren and Nick Abercrombie's house, 12 Mount Road, Lansdown, Bath, again at 2.15. If you come to both meetings, you need pay only £5 for the two; otherwise, it will be £3 for one meeting only. Kate Crawford is the contact person for this group too, telephone as above.

There will be an April lecture at the BRLSI, Queen's Square, Bath, but arrangements are not yet complete for that. Please contact Elizabeth Schlenther, 14 Vellore Lane, Bath, BA2 6JQ (Tel: 01225 331763 or via email: eschlenther@googlemail.com) for information on this or any of our other events.

London and South-East Group

6 February 2016

Marianne Burton: Ghosts at the table: missing family in *North and South* and *Lizzie Leigh*.

Marianne is an expert on the 19thC novel, a published, shortlisted poet, a former city executive and friend of Barbara Hardy. It will be a pleasure to introduce her to the society.

7 May 2016

Professor Marion Shaw: Marion will speak on aspects of *Sylvia's Lovers*

Marion is an Emeritus professor and has written widely on Elizabeth Gaskell as well as a number of other 19thC writers. She is an expert in the period.

The meetings are held at Francis Holland School for girls, 39 Graham Terrace London SW1W 8JF. The venue is a three-minute walk from Sloane Street tube station, which is on the District and Circle line.

They begin at 2pm and usually last about an hour. Each talk is followed by questions, and then tea is served. Before the meetings a sandwich lunch is available and everyone is welcome any time after 12.45pm.

At each meeting there is a bring-and-buy book stall in aid of The Gaskell House in Manchester so please bring books for sale as the bookstall always needs refreshment.

The afternoon costs £5, which includes lunch and tea. Please contact me if you need more details.

Dr Frances Twinn, 85 Calton Avenue, Dulwich, London SE21 7DF
020 8693 3238 frantwinn@aflex.net

Alliance of Literary Societies

The ALS AGM and Literary Weekend will be held in Haworth, 20 - 22 May 2016.

The Brontë Society is organising and hosting this event in the bicentenary of Charlotte's birth (born 21 April 1816).

A Conference in Sheffield

Auf den Spuren Georg Weerths: England, Deutschland und die Welt / On the Trail of Georg Weerth: England, Germany and the World, University of Sheffield, 11-13 July 2016.

The sketch-writer, novelist, poet, businessman and communist Georg Weerth, who was born in Detmold in 1822 and died of malaria in July 1856 in Havana, Cuba, wrote and published comparatively little, but experienced much that reflected directly the transitions and conflicts of his age. His commercial involvements in the international textile trade for German companies led him to the Rhineland and Hamburg, to Belgium, to London, to the industrial North of England, around southern Europe, and finally out into the wide world and throughout North, South and Central America; and his political commitments as an associate of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, a member of the Bund der Kommunisten and other socialist groups, and a friend of Karl Marx and particularly Friedrich Engels, saw him at the heart of German and northern European revolutionary politics in the crucial decade of the 1840s. His literary and semi-literary output, simultaneously socialist and romantic in outlook and tone, and with echoes of, among others, Heine, the writers of German romanticism, Dickens and English workers' poetry of the era of Chartism, is a delicate, witty but also heartfelt focus of German and English styles and concerns of his time.

To mark the 160th anniversary of the month of Weerth's death, the Department of Germanic Studies, School of Languages & Cultures, University of Sheffield, will stage a conference under the title *Auf den Spuren Georg Weerths: England, Deutschland und die Welt / On the Trail of Georg Weerth: England, German and the World*, to take place in Sheffield, not far from Weerth's main English home in Bradford, Yorkshire, on Mon-Wed 11-13 July 2016. The organisers are Prof Michael Perraudin (University of Sheffield) and Weerth's biographer, Dr Uwe Zemke (formerly University of Salford). The conference will be held in German and English. The conference will be accompanied by some relevant cultural activities: a trip will be organised to Little Germany in Bradford, locus of the German-owned textile industry which brought Weerth to England.

We hope to combine this with a visit to nearby Haworth, home of Weerth's contemporaries the Brontë sisters, and the prize-winning Brontë Parsonage Museum.

Further information is available from:
m.f.perraudin@shef.ac.uk and u.j.zemke@gmail.com

Evil and Its Variations in the Works of Elizabeth Gaskell Sesquicentennial Essays

Edited by Mitsuharu Matsuoka

Osaka, JP: Osaka Kyoiku Toshō, 2015, xxv+538 pages.

Published in 2015 to mark the sesquicentennial of Gaskell's death, this volume is a critical anthology of contributions by 32 scholars from 16 countries. Re-evaluating her works as an integral part of the Victorian literary canon, it addresses the theme of evil through a multitude of international perspectives.

The book's table of contents is listed in the following link:

<http://grayswoodpress.web.fc2.com/gaskell-sesquicentennial.pdf>

This volume with a published price of £30 can be ordered from Grayswood Press with a 33% discount for Gaskell Society members. The final discounted price is £20. We are offering free shipping for all orders within the UK. For all overseas orders please add £2.50 as a contribution to the postage. The book is a high quality publication with sewn pages and colour dustjacket. University faculties and libraries have the option to send an official order to Grayswood Press who will send the book together with an invoice.

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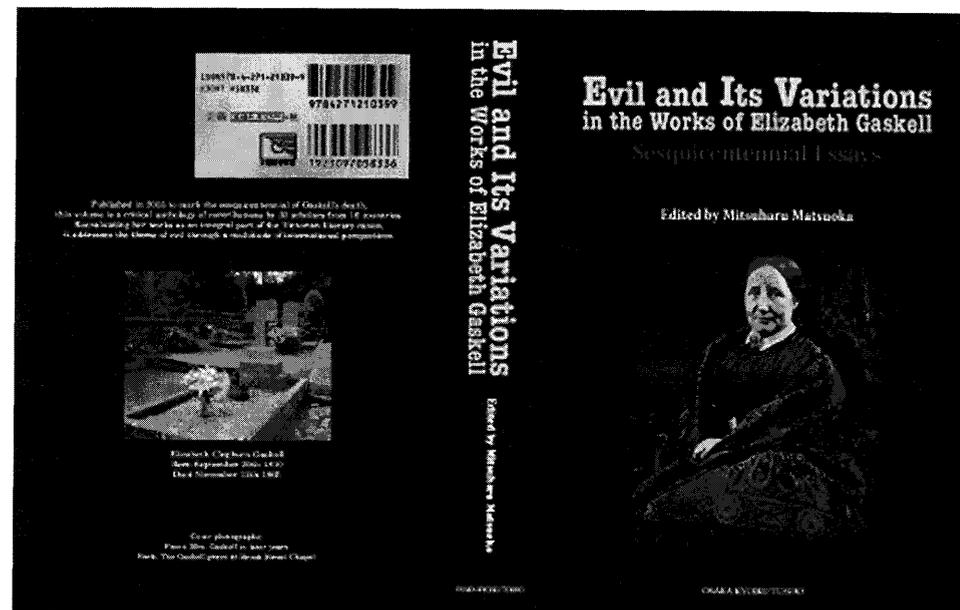
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