

Program for 2020

Saturday 14th March (AGM) Jacqueline Kent

A Possible Life With Rochester or Heathcliff:” The Tenant of Wildfell Hall”

Anne Brontë’s best known novel quietly subverts some of the romantic stereotypes promoted by her sisters, Charlotte and Emily. Award winning biographer, Jacqueline, examines one of the earliest feminist novels in English.

Saturday 9th May Christine Alexander

Exploring Juvenilia: the Brontës and other early writers

This talk will look at features of early writing in an attempt to provide insight into what led particular children to become authors and why we might find it worthwhile to read their juvenilia. In particular, the talk will focus on aspects of the material culture of selected children.

Saturday 4th July Susannah Fullerton

The Governess in Victorian England

Anne Brontë’s first novel is a moving and grim depiction of the life of a governess in Victorian England. It was also a plea for change – governesses needed to be treated more kindly, and usually desperately needed financial security. In Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* there are memorable scenes showing Jane’s lowly status as a governess when Rochester’s house party is held. And of course the Brontë sisters all knew from personal experience what it was like to be one of “the breed of governesses”. Susannah Fullerton discusses the position of governess and the ways in which the Brontës depict governesses in their fiction.

Saturday 12th September Carolynn Everett

The Temperance Movement in Victorian England

In November 1834 Branwell Brontë was a founding member of the Haworth Temperance Society and at this meeting he was appointed secretary. However after the break-up of his affair with Mrs Robinson he became heavily dependent on alcohol and this contributed to his early death. Carolyn, a senior member of the Salvation Army, will give a brief history of the ‘Sally’s’ and will explain where this organisation fitted into the Temperance movement in Victorian England.

Saturday 14th November Cindy Broadbent

The Birth of Childhood and “Agnes Grey”

Prior to the nineteenth century, children were considered to be half-formed adults rather than as comprising a separate section of society. Indeed many children had to grow up quickly when they were sent out to work as young as seven. The abolition of child workers, and the rise in the middle class, led to an increasing focus on the years of childhood. Commercially produced toys, and books written especially for children, began to be produced. In this talk, Cindy will discuss this change, and will relate it to Agnes’s dealings with the children in *Agnes Grey*.

**Saturday 5th December Christmas Lunch 11.30am for 12 noon
Cellos Restaurant, Castlereagh Boutique Hotel**