

ABA Meetings for 2024

The Australian Brontë Association meets in Sydney five times a year. Meetings are held at the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel, 169 Castlereagh Street (near Park Street) at 10:30am, though we serve morning tea from 10:00am. Those who wish to do so, have a light lunch together at a nearby cafe after the meeting. At each meeting, a paper on some aspect of the Brontës' life and work is presented. There is a meeting charge of \$5 (members) and \$10 (non-members).

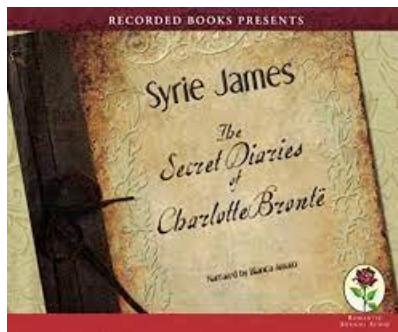
Saturday 9 March 2024, Christine Alexander

THE BLAVATNIK HONRESFIELD LIBRARY: BRONTË MANUSCRIPTS “SAVED THE NATION”

The Blavatnik Honresfield Library is a collection of books and manuscripts of exceptional historical and literary importance which includes rare editions by the Brontë sisters. Formed by the Lancashire mill owner William Law (1836–1901) in the late 19th century and put up for sale in 2022 it was purchased for the nation by the Friends of the National Libraries with the support of the Blavatnik Family Foundation. Christine Alexander will discuss insight into the treasures of the former “lost” Law Collection and her experience in gaining private access for some thirty years.

Saturday 27 April 2024, Syrie James

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS IN CHARLOTTE BRONTË’S NOVELS



Syrie James from Los Angeles is the author of thirteen novels that have been translated into twenty languages, including the award-winning *The Secret Diaries of Charlotte Brontë*. She will discuss the many ways in which Charlotte Brontë drew from her personal experiences and the people in her own life when writing her acclaimed novels *Jane Eyre*, *Shirley*, *Villette*, and *The Professor*.

Saturday 13 July 2024, Sophie Frazer

“THE ORB OF MY LIFE IS NOT TO BE SO ROUNDED”: THE AMBIVALENCE OF THE BILDUNGSROMAN IN CHARLOTTE BRONTË’S VILLETTE

Charlotte Brontë’s final, desolate novel *Villette* (1853) is a narrative of exile and displacement: one woman’s flight from her home in England to an indeterminate future in a foreign city. A distinctly phenomenological novelist, in *Villette* Brontë maps the affective crisis of displacement onto the transmogrifications of sensory

life. Avowedly ambivalent about her progress in the world, protagonist Lucy Snowe disavows material success and even, at times, acts with nonchalance about her very survival. In this way Brontë emphasises both the temptations and perils of conforming to the conventional plot of female development, eschewing marriage for her heroine in preference for an enigmatic and suitably indeterminate conclusion. In this paper I will read the phenomenal character of Brontë's narrative of oscillation between worldly success and the banality of insignificance, tracking the emotional expressiveness of the sensing body to bring out the loss inherent in Lucy's escape from the confines of a conventional female *bildung*.

Saturday 14 September 2024, Stephanie Russo
EMILY BRONTË, BIOFICTION AND FILM

Emily Brontë is not only one of the most famous novelists in English history; she is also the subject of novels, television series and films in her own right. However, while novelists write into the gaps of the historical record, the notoriously enigmatic and fanatically private Emily is a particular difficult subject for biofictions. In this talk, I trace how a wide range of novelists and screenwriters have represented Emily Brontë's life, writing career and death over the past century. I focus, in particular, on the persistence of the belief that there must have been a secret romance that holds the key to deciphering *Wuthering Heights*.

Saturday 9 November 2024, Chris Browne
COLLECTING THE BRONTËS

Chris Browne has been a book collector for more than fifty years and during that time has put together a personal library of around 15,000 books. His main interests are early 19th and 20th century English literature and the history of English publishing and printing. Accordingly, he has collected first, early, illustrated and interesting editions of his favourite authors, which include the Brontës. Chris's talk will naturally focus on his own collection of books by and relating to the Brontës from the twin perspectives of both an avid reader and an ardent collector. He will talk about his personal favourites, early editions, illustrated editions and some items of special interest. He will also give his personal reasons for collecting and reading the works of the Brontës, and will reflect on why they are still very relevant today.

Saturday 7 December 2024, 12 noon
CHRISTMAS LUNCH AT CELLOS RESTAURANT,
CASTLEREAGH BOUTIQUE HOTEL, TOGETHER WITH
MEMBERS OF THE NSW DICKENS SOCIETY