

The Australian Brontë Association Newsletter



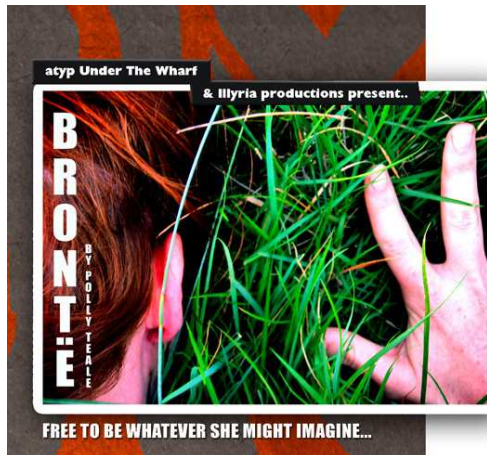
Issue No 25

Jul 2010

THEATRE PARTY FRI AUG 6th

The deadline for bookings for our Theatre Party on 6th August has now passed. However, if you have not yet booked and would like to join us, send \$20 per ticket to **Michael Links,**

3 Greylum Place, Gymea Bay NSW 2227 by Monday 2nd August. Cheques should be payable to **The Australian Brontë Association.** These tickets will be subject to availability.



BRONTË BY POLLY TEALE

PREVIEWS:
Thurs July 22 and Fri July 23 @ 8pm

RUNNING:
Mon to Sat nights
July 26 - August 7 @ 8pm

VENUE:
atyp Studio 1 The Wharf
Pier 4/5 Hickson Rd, Walsh Bay

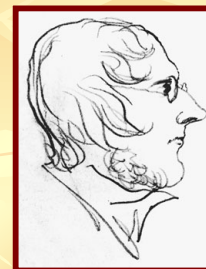
Under the Wharf is an initiative of the
Australian Theatre for Young People (atyp)

BRANWELL BRONTË AND PORTRAITURE

On 8th May 2010, Adrienne Bradney-Smith built upon the excellent talk on Branwell given some time ago by Sarah Burns. Adrienne focussed on his painting and she gave several reasons why he did not succeed, “but the main reason for his failure to succeed as a professional artist was his inability to diversify, perhaps because of an unwillingness to compromise, in a provincial environment which demanded a variety of skills.” The full text Adrienne’s talk will appear in the next issue of our journal, *The Thunderer*.



Branwell Brontë and Portraiture



THE BRONTËS LEAD US BACK TO US

Mandy Swann

Sometimes I find it curious that literary societies exist, that we as members of the Australian Brontë Association gather together to discuss the novels and the lives of three dead women (and occasionally their dead brother, father, mother and aunt). I find it curious that a culture of now is fascinated by a dead century, the Victorian century. In the several years I have been the membership secretary to the Australian Brontë Association, I have often wanted to ask the question: what is it about the Brontës that attracts so much interest? This year I made bold to ask several of our members.

The Brontë family is often perceived to be especially intimate, particularly the child-family of Charlotte, Branwell, Emily and Anne. Rodney Pyne observed: “only in their own company, perhaps striding around the table on one of their winter-time ‘walks’, did they seem to be truly themselves.” In the company of the Brontës it seems we as members of the Australian Brontë Association also become ourselves. Significant moments in our lives are defined by reading Brontë novels or experiencing the Brontës through film, weekends away and as part of teaching and learning. Michelle Cavanagh describes a memorable experience of the Brontës in just this way. The passage below is Michelle’s account of a weekend in which the literature of the Brontës becomes linked friendship, personal enjoyment and escape from the quotidian, as well as studying the novels brought to life through plays, artifacts, inspiring discussions, song and good food and wine.

The year which solidified my Brontë connection was 1985. It was in November that year that I attended a Sydney University Continuing Education Brontë weekend at Mt Victoria. Prior to the weekend seminar I’d re-read Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* and Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights* and for the first time I read Anne Brontë’s *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. And what an exciting weekend it turned out to be!

The youngest of my six children was only 23 months old so just going away for a weekend with a couple of girlfriends to indulge my love of literature was a treat in itself. I recall Dr Penny Gay giving a lecture on *Jane Eyre* which introduced me to some of the complexities of the novel. Following the morning tea our lecturer was none other than the ABA patron Dr Christine Alexander who spoke about Charlotte Brontë’s juvenilia during which a copy of one of Charlotte’s miniature books was passed around the room. A delectable lunch was followed by a lecture on *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. By late afternoon we were enjoying a play reading of *Adrienne Lecouvreur* a French farce Charlotte Brontë had attended during one of her visits to London. Many willing amateur actors amongst us joined the professional actor Barbara Phillips to help make this an entertainment well worth watching.

The evening meal for all the Brontëphiles in attendance was a dress up affair as we enjoyed re-enacting Christmas dinner at *Wuthering Heights*. The Victoria and Albert kitchen staff did a fine job of masquerading as the Gimmerton band, ‘playing’ on some of the pots and pans and singing carols after we’d eaten dinner. We were treated to a fine rendition of *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen* before they headed back to the kitchen and some more chores! But the evening wasn’t over once we’d wined and dined! It was off to the salon to be entertained with some

mid nineteenth-century songs and piano recitals given by Robert Gay together with a fine flautist. Back in our beds later that night, exhausted but happy, I read to my two room-mates from *The Illustrated Brontës of Haworth* by Brian Wilkes before we finally called it a night.

The following day, refreshed and breakfasted we were back for another two hour lecture and discussion on *Wuthering Heights* conducted by Derek Peet. Then we all piled into a bus for a journey on the ‘Yorkshire moors’ culminating in a visit to ‘Gimmerton Kirk’ to search for the graves of Cathy and Heathcliff — in reality it was just out of the village of Hartley on the road to the Jenolan Caves. Needless to say after such a wonderful weekend it was somewhat of a shock to arrive home and find myself back in the twentieth century again! It was that weekend in November 1985 when my Brontë love affair began — long may it continue!

The Brontës are even linked with some of our origins and childhood memories. Born in Scarborough, Michelle Cavanagh also reflects:

I’ve had an association of sorts with the Brontës ever since I first saw the light of day as I was born in Scarborough, the Yorkshire seaside town where 94 years earlier Anne Brontë had died. Eight years after my birth the last of my siblings arrived, a sister Charlotte who was named after Charlotte Brontë.

For Betty Stark, *Jane Eyre* revives a sunny day in 1937:

I was sitting on the door step in the sun, it was 1937, I was about 11 or 12. I read *Jane Eyre* up to the point where Jane was finishing at Lowood. I was a little young to appreciate the adult stage of Jane’s life, but when I was a little older I picked it up again and read it from cover to cover. I fell in love with Mr. Rochester, and I still am! It was a very old edition of the book, which had been acquired by a thrifty aunt of mine. It was a school prize awarded to a friend of hers. Aunt Dot had borrowed it, and it remains in my possession. It is still my favourite book.

Betty is certainly not alone in her love of Mr Rochester (I think we might all be in love with him). Rodney Pyne remembers his sister and her friends in the 1960s “all madly in love with Mr Rochester”. Many of our members link reading the fiction of the Brontës with definitive moments of professional and personal development. Rodney Pyne recalls his first “contact” with *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre* on the television screen in the 1950s, an experience which later developed into what he describes as his deeper appreciation of the texts themselves when he had to teach them.

My serious attention to the Brontës only came with having to teach the novels. Still somewhat confused about my Catherines, I enjoyed teaching *Jane Eyre* much more. The high point was teaching the 3 Unit level English course, with its option, “The Novel of Awakening”, in the 1980s and 90s. Here, *Jane Eyre* was studied with Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening* and Jean Rhys’ *Wide Sargasso Sea*. This was my first honest attempt to examine a Bronte novel in some depth and I grew to appreciate for the first time the masterpiece that *Jane Eyre* was and is. I

remember devoting a whole lesson to one or two paragraphs at the very beginning of the book, where Jane has been shut away in the Red Room and is sitting behind the curtains reading Bewick's *British Birds*. I realized that this was more than just story-telling. This was literary creation of the first order.

Many of our members admire the Brontës for their efforts to get published and because their lives are generally viewed as isolated and filled with suffering. Betty Stark refers to their "undaunted" approach as they "pursued their literary ambitions" and their "urge to create". Rodney Pyne also admires the transformative power of their creativity: "we are fascinated by the contrast between the brevity and sometimes wretchedness of their lives and the amount of fine material they were able to produce". Kathleen Fernandes reflects:

I admired their creative spirit and tenacity in submitting their manuscripts for publication, despite many rejections. Their willingness to assist those who were poor or sick and their compassion for each other.

The Brontës allow the reader to escape into another world, a world experienced as both fictional and real. Rodney Pyne remarks:

What isn't compelling about the Brontës' fiction? Though perhaps not all to the same degree, these seven novels pick you up and carry you off to the uplands of the imagination. It is this ability to transport the reader out of the mundane and into the highly-charged and windswept that compels me to return time and again to the Bronte novels. The characters are unique and often other-worldly and the settings they inhabit never seem to turn stale. The plots teeter on a fine edge between the awfully real and the almost impossibly credible unreal. When I'm reading the Brontës, I feel that I'm in the company of great minds with great artistic abilities. Take another look at Jane Eyre behind the curtains reading Bewick and find yourself swept up in the utterly sad loneliness of Jane, in the bleakness of her mind and situation. Charlotte Bronte must have revised and rewritten this passage –and all of "Jane Eyre" – with such empathy and energy and understanding and, in this episode, determination to make it evoke the situation of all unhappy, unloved children.

Kathleen Fernandes aptly characterises the enduring appeal of *Jane Eyre* which is shared by so many of our members. The character of Jane in childhood and womanhood is almost an archetypal female *bildungsroman*, or moral and psychological coming of age narrative. Kathleen Fernandes notes:

Jane Eyre was my favourite. I revelled in the use of language and the bonding which grew between Jane and Mr Rochester. She was such a strong, yet humble person, not only did she endure his black moods, but she also suffered appalling treatment by sadistic orphanage staff as a child. Both she and Mr Rochester's deep sadness and isolation struck a chord with me. Themes of betrayal, secrecy and romance permeate this wonderful story. Despite adversity, there is hope.

I also asked our members about their perceptions of the Victorian era and most comment on the dichotomies they see as inherent to the era as well as the sureties the Victorian period has come to embody against what is viewed as the instability of contemporary life. It seems that the contradictions of the Victorian era are haunting, Kathleen Fernandes remarks on the

dualities of Victorian manners, the “bonnets, ringlets and soirees in the parlour. The costumes, stately homes, the balls, village and town life, horse drawn carriages”, and “the often harsh living conditions of the working class” — the “abuse” suffered by servants and the hypocrisies of Victorian “society”. Betty Stark describes the Victorian and particularly the female Victorian’s “combination of innocence, purpose and courage displayed in the face of all sorts of frustrations”. Rodney Pyne comments on what he calls the “seriousness and certainty” of the Victorian period:

We dwellers in the 21st Century try to avoid taking life seriously. Our experiences of the 20th Century have all but demolished any idea that life has a purpose or that any principles can be applied with certainty in the way we live our lives. The Victorians seemed to have an underlying surety that God was in His heaven and all was right with the world. We have lost that secure sense of being on the ‘right path’ in life. The Victorians were bold enough to write, usually, with conviction. They hadn’t seen the Somme or Vietnam, the gulags or Belsen. They were, in general, comfortable and positive. They had an underlying sense that life was certainly meaningful and that it contained unlimited possibilities. By contrast, we in the twenty 21st century feel swept along by events which are often well beyond our control.

For myself, I read Jane Austen, Charles Dickens and the poetry of the Romantics on the sunlit porches of my childhood. I did not study the Brontës at school or at university until I chose Charlotte Brontë as the subject of the final chapter of my PhD. I first read the collected works of Charlotte, Emily and Anne during a period of illness during my first year as an undergrad (strangely the Brontës were not part of the first year syllabus). One after another I read them, they drew me into the sinews of their language and the odd combination of familiarity and Otherness I continue to experience in the presence of the world and characters they created. In Rodney’s observations about the Victorian Period, he noted that in some ways our contemporary lives lack the certainties he felt the Victorians possessed, quoting Macbeth he said:

For many of us, life is “full of sound and fury, signifying nothing”. Jane might have been unhappy, even distressed, behind the curtain in the Red Room but she felt and knew that things could be improved and that she had better set about taking her future in her own hands. Like her fellow Victorians, she was inexorably awakening to life’s possibilities and her own personal rise to selfhood. It is this sense of the possibilities life offers that draw us to the Victorians.

Rodney makes an excellent observation and many share his view. Contrarily, I suggest that the power of the fiction and culture of the Victorian period is not the oppositional world they represent for us; rather, it is the combination of familiarity and Otherness they embody, the way they take us away from contemporary life into a different world and at the same time bring us right back, revealing the aspects of ourselves, and human society more broadly, that never change.

THE MATHEMATICAL WORLD OF EMILY BRONTË – PART 1

Very few of Emily Brontë's manuscripts have survived. The manuscript of *Wuthering Heights* has been lost. There are a few diary papers, and a page of geometrical drawings. These were first published in 1962 in the Brontë Society transactions volume 14, no. 2, opposite page 49. It is signed and dated 'September the 9th 1837' and is in the Brontë Parsonage Museum (MSS 1717c).

Having spent a whole lifetime teaching mathematics at university I am drawn to Emily for her sense of logic and pattern. She is commonly considered to be the Brontë sister who was most "off with the fairies" whose imagination broke the confines of ordered thought as she communed with nature on her romps across the moors. But the more I get to know her as the one having a strong innate mathematical ability.

The structure of *Wuthering Heights* was extremely well planned. Others have pointed out that she scattered sufficient chronological detail throughout the novel that make it possible, as a clever logic puzzle, to reconstruct the entire chronology.

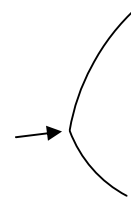
Emily was the only one of the sisters to learn Latin, along with Branwell. Latin was considered good training for the brain – especially the logical areas. I have pointed out in other places the way that *Wuthering Heights*, far from being a novel that celebrates Nature and the great outdoors, spends surprisingly little time outside either of the two houses that dominate the novel. Moreover, Emily displays a great awareness of the architectural detail of the houses and the number of references to roofs, chimneys, doors, windows, hasps, staples, hinges and locks is enormous. Some might say that she had a masculine mind, indeed Mr Héger did. But such sexist language is not allowed these days and, anyway, I have taught so many girls who are talented mathematically to link mathematical talent with the masculine sex.

I have often said, that if Emily was alive today, it would be she who would be the webmaster of www://brontesisters.org.uk, the family website. (No, don't look it up. Emily hasn't set it up yet.)

This page of diagrams show that Emily was working from a book as each diagram is referenced by a problem number. I would love to know what book it was that she had beside her. It wasn't Euclid, and there is no mention of a proof, so I doubt that it was a geometry textbook. Yet it seems far too technical to have been a drawing manual for artists. My guess is that was a manual of technical drawing for architecture students!

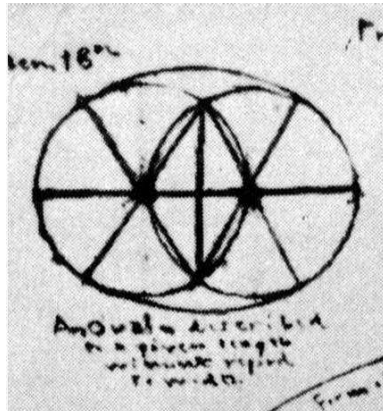
Problem 18th gives a construction for an oval. This was an elongated circle, though not an ellipse. It consists of two arcs of one radius joined by two more arcs of a greater radius. The trick is to have them join so that the oval is smooth. Mathematically this means that there has to be a single tangent at every point, but roughly speaking it means there are no "bumps" or corners. Here are two circular arcs where this is not the case. There is a corner at the point indicated.

The way to make it smooth is for the line joining the centres of the two curves passes through the point where they join. This is because the tangent to a circle at a point is at right angles to the radius at that point.



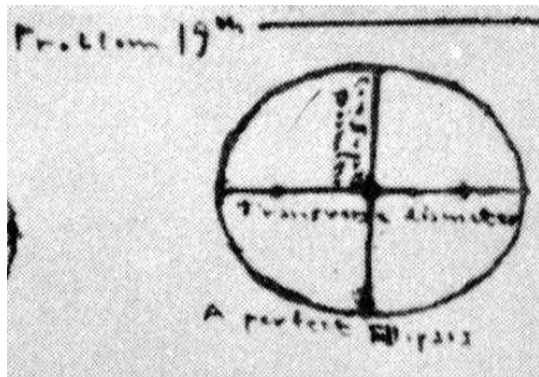
The method of construction, as illustrated by Emily's diagram, is as follows. Draw a circle with radius r and draw a horizontal diameter. Take the right end of the diameter as centre and draw a circle that passes through the centre of the first circle. This gives you two overlapping circles. Draw lines joining the points where the circles cut to the respective circles. Now draw circular arcs, with those points of intersection as centres. Since the line joining

the centres pass through the points where the arcs join, the oval will be smooth.



Emily's description reads *An oval ? described on a given length ?? to width.*

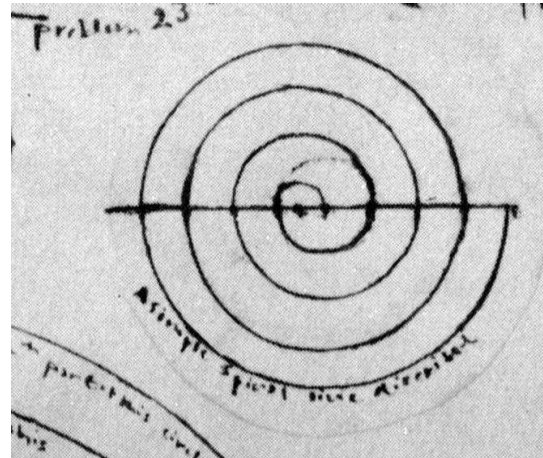
Problem 19th is described by Emily as *A perfect ellipsis*. No construction is shown, but two points on the *transverse diameter* are marked. (I can't quite make out the words that run vertically, but my guess is *conjugate diameter*.) These are clearly the foci of the ellipse. It is well-known that a perfect ellipse can be drawn by the "string and pins method". You draw the transverse diameter, mark the centre, and place two points on this diameter, equidistant from the centre. These points will be the foci (plural of focus). Now you place a pin in each focus and lay a loop of string, of a certain length, around the pins. You then place your pencil inside this loop and pull tight, so that the loop forms a



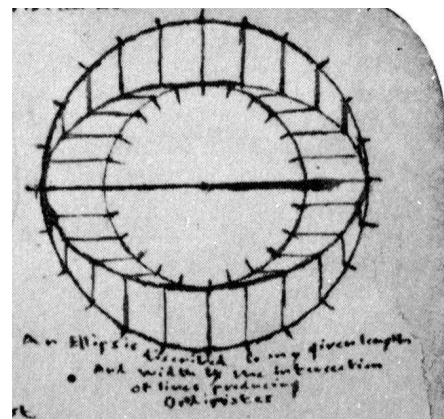
triangle with the two foci and the pencil being at the corners. Now you move the pencil, keeping the string tight the whole time, and the curve traced out will be an ellipse.

Problem 23rd is an approximation to an Archimedean spiral. In a true Archimedean spiral the radius increases continually. This approximation consists of a series of semicircles where the radius stays constant on each. But, since the centres all lie along the horizontal axis, the curve will be smooth.

Emily's description reads *A simple spiral ? ?*.



Problem 20th gives an accurate construction for an ellipse. The construction starts with one circle inside a larger circle. The circumferences are divided into equal-sized parts, the same number of parts for each circle. Emily used 24 parts, and there are easy construction methods for doing this (not shown). For each point on the inner



circle, go horizontally, while at the same time you draw a vertical line from the corresponding point on the outer circle. Where these lines meet you get a point on the ellipse.

So this will give 24 points on the ellipse, and one draws, freehand, the ellipse through them. The reason why this gives a true ellipse involves some trigonometry. It is not clear whether Emily understood why this construction worked or whether she was simply following a “recipe”.

Emily’s description reads *An ellipsis described to any given length and width by the intersection of lines producing ordinates.*

For those who can still remember their high-school trigonometry the following is an explanation.

The equation of an ellipse is $\frac{x^2}{a^2} + \frac{y^2}{b^2} = 1$ where a, b are the semidiameters. (If a = b the ellipse is a circle.)

Now the parametric equation of an ellipse is $x = a \cos\theta$, $y = b \sin\theta$ because if you substitute these

into left hand side of the equation you get $\cos^2\theta + \sin^2\theta$, which we learn is always equal to 1. As you vary θ , the point $(a \cos\theta, b \sin\theta)$ moves around the ellipse. Suppose that $b < a$. We draw an inner circle of radius b and an outer circle of radius a. The points on the inner circle have the form $x = b \cos\theta$, $y = b \sin\theta$ and the points on the outer circle have the form $x = a \cos\theta$, $y = a \sin\theta$. In taking the points of intersection of the vertical and horizontal lines we are, in effect, taking the x from the outer circle and the y from the inner circle, giving the points $(a \cos\theta, b \sin\theta)$ which all lie on the ellipse.

That’s probably enough mathematics this time! In part 2, I will describe other constructions performed by Emily, including another exact construction for a “true ellipsis”.

BOOKS THAT CHANGED ME

In the *Sun Herald* of Sunday 20th February 2010 the author, Emily Maguire, had an interesting choice of books. Foremost was *Jane Eyre*.

“I first read *Jane Eyre* when I was about 11 and although my life was very different to Jane’s I related to her emotional hunger and was attracted to her honesty and gustiness. I’ve since reread the book at least a dozen times. Still, when I read the scene where heart-broken Jane asks herself “Who in the world cares for you?” and then responds, “I care for myself. The more solitary, the more friendless, the more unsustained I am, the more I will respect myself,” my spine straightens and I can’t help punching the air.

Her other choices were Virginia Wolf’s *A Room of One’s Own*, John Donne’s *Songs and Sonnets*, Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary* and Vladimir Nabokov’s *Invitation to a Beheading*.

When asked what she was reading in the *Herald* of Saturday 3rd July, Emily still included *Jane Eyre*. “I go back to her again and again; it’s the first book I remember having a huge influence on me.”



Emily is a Sydney author and essayist who has written three novels and a nonfiction book, *Princesses and Pornstars: Sex, Power, Identity*. Her most recent book is *Smoke in the Room* (Picador, \$29.99).

We are delighted that Emily has agreed, subject to us finding a suitable date, to give a talk to the Australian Brontë Association in 2011 – a contemporary author’s views on *Jane Eyre*.

Also, in the *Books That Changed Me* section of the *Sun Herald*, the Australian children’s author, Belinda Murrell, included *Wuthering Heights*. Her latest book is *Locket of Dreams* (Random House \$15.95). She says, “the history of the three Brontë sisters has always intrigued me – living their isolated and tragic lives on the wild and blustery moors of Yorkshire, writing amazing novels. For many years, my sister and I imagined we would be



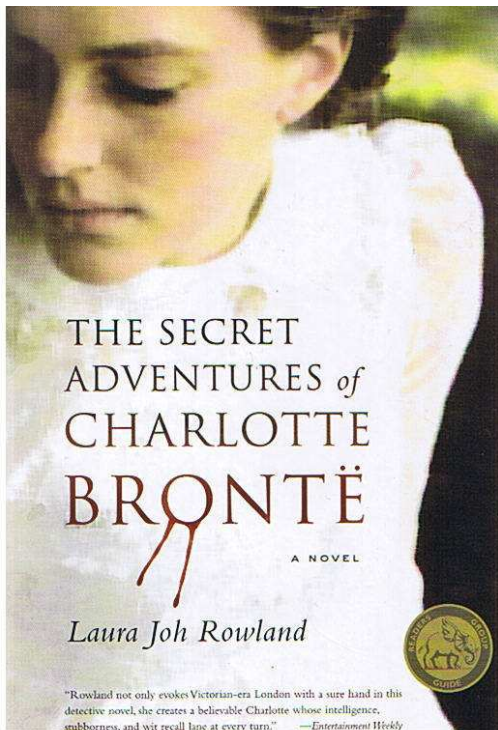
modern-day Brontë sisters creating fantasy worlds and writing masterpieces. With its dramatic themes of passion, tragedy, destructive love and a twist of the supernatural, *Wuthering Heights* has always

been my favourite Brontë book. As an adult I travelled to Haworth Parsonage in Yorkshire to pay homage to these inspiring sister authors. By the way, my daughter is called Emily Charlotte.”

THE SECRET ADVENTURES OF CHARLOTTE BRONTË

Laura Joh Rowland, Published by The Overlook Press, New York, 2009.

I wonder why there are so many books that purport to reveal some dark mystery in the life of Charlotte Brontë. No one has ever published *The Confessions of Jane Austen*, or *The Crimes of Charles Dickens*. Yet I have, on my bookshelves, *The Crimes of Charlotte Brontë*, *The Confessions of Charlotte Brontë*, *The Secret of Charlotte Brontë*, *The Secret Diaries of Charlotte Brontë* and now *The Secret Adventures of Charlotte Brontë*. It almost seems that this has become a distinct genre!



Now several of these are acknowledged by their authors as fictitious, though they are presented as if they are

genuine historical documents, written by Charlotte, or one who knew her. Mostly they are well-researched and are consistent with what is known about Charlotte's life, even if the events are often quite far-fetched and are not always consistent with her character.

In *The Secrets of Charlotte Brontë*, Rowland begins with a perfectly genuine incident in Charlotte's life, namely the letter from George Smith asking her to explain the rumour that the Bells were one person. Charlotte and Anne travel to London to exhibit their separateness, though Emily refuses to go.

It was on this journey that something happens that has hitherto been kept secret! They share a compartment with a strange, enigmatic and beautiful woman, who appears to be very nervous. They tell her where they will be staying, if she needs any help. Once in London they meet George Smith, who of course is amazed at their revelation that they are three women, not one man. But he is very hospitable and invites them to meet his mother and sister. On returning to the Chapter Coffee House, where they were staying, Charlotte hears cries, investigates down a dark laneway, and witnesses the murder of Isabel White, the woman they had met on the train.

Charlotte is interviewed by the police, who weren't very interested, and also by John Slade from the Foreign Office, who seemed to be very interested in the case. From that moment Charlotte, and indeed her whole family, are caught up in an adventure that involves a plot to bring Britain to its

knees. She becomes a governess to the Royal children, in an attempt to foil a kidnapping plot. The plot succeeds and she is taken along with the royal children. She finds herself on a steam boat to China where, after escaping death by a whisker and jumping into the sea to rescue young Bertie and the young Victoria, she is rescued by the heroic John Slade.

Of course a nearly successful attempt at kidnapping the Royal children has to be kept secret, which is why you have never read about this in the history books. Rowland goes to some trouble to make the adventure plausible. On the day that Charlotte is supposed to have accompanied the Royal family to Balmoral on the yacht *Victoria and Albert*, Queen Victoria and her family were indeed doing just that, as described in one of her letters. She did indeed write from Balmoral a few days later at the time that the kidnapping was supposedly taking place, but she wrote to the King of the Belgians that “the children are very well and enjoying themselves much”. Well, she’s not going to tell him that they have just been kidnapped. Unfortunately for the veracity of the tale, Charlotte was writing from Haworth at the time!

It might seem that the events are so unbelievable that it would be a difficult book to read. But it is quite well written, and it didn’t take long for the momentum of the story to take over. I found it easy to ignore the thought “it couldn’t have possibly happened”. In fact the only time I stopped with a jolt was when Charlotte and Ellen Nussey were poring over a diary they found, written by Isabel White. It was written in tiny print in the margins of a copy of *The Sermons of the Reverend Charles Duckworth*.

As is well known, Charlotte’s eyesight was poor and so she had to let Ellen read it out to her. But, I screamed to myself, Charlotte was short sighted and had no trouble with tiny writing. Wasn’t her Juvenilia written in miniscule print? No, Charlotte’s problem was seeing in the distance, even in the near distance. It would

have been Ellen who might have trouble reading the small print. Yet the short-sighted Charlotte, when floundering in the sea with her spectacles somehow managing to stay on her face, she was able to see the children’s heads bobbing up and down in the distance.

The events may be out of the ordinary, but the personalities are familiar. Branwell is his usual inebriated self, though he does rise to the occasion when he and his family are locked into the cellar of the parsonage. He bribes the guards with a bottle of whisky he has secreted there “in case of emergency”, laces their drink with some laudanum that he happens to have about him, and escapes to raise the alarm. Emily is self-centred as usual and refuses to cooperate with any plan that might take her away from Haworth. However she overcomes her hatred of being anywhere except Haworth and agrees to apply for a post in a school that is implicated in the intrigue.

Charlotte, who has been looking for the sort of love she wrote about in *Jane Eyre* finds it at last in John Slade. Some parts of the novel would be at home in any “bodice-ripper”.

“Our lips met, his warm and firm upon mine, in the kiss that I had longed for all my life. My eyes closed as powerful sensations of pleasure ... it seemed that our souls and thoughts fused.”

Fortunately for Arthur Bell Nicholls who, in the story, shows early signs of being attracted to Charlotte the romance with Slade is doomed. He is sent by the foreign office to Russia and Charlotte cannot bear to be so far from her family.

All this might make the book sound ridiculous. True, you have to be in the right frame of mind to read it. I took it away with me to the Southern Highlands and found myself reading it till 2am wondering what would happen next. I enjoyed so much that my heart leapt when, on entering Berkelouw’s Book Barn in Berrima, I saw on the shelves the sequel, *The Further Adventures of Charlotte Brontë*.

For all its simplicity as an exciting thriller, there are some moral complexities

concerning the Opium Wars. Charlotte is torn between her patriotism to her own country and her disgust on learning what the British had been doing in China. If you love

the Brontës and are engaged by thrillers, you will enjoy this book.

Don Bell

BRONTË BIOGRAPHIES FOR BUSY BEGINNERS PART 2: CHARLOTTE

In the early 1980s I presented a six part series (not four as I said last time) of radio broadcasts for radio station 2SER. These short radio scripts, written together with Julie Bromhead, give the main facts for those newer ABA members who may not have had time to read any of the book-length biographies. In this issue we meet Charlotte.

Christopher Cooper

CHRISTOPHER: In this second program on the Brontës we're going to be looking at the life of Charlotte. A lot of what we know about Charlotte comes from her correspondence with Ellen Nussey. Julie, what sort of person do you think Ellen must have been for her to have been such a good friend of Charlotte Brontë?

purely on a mundane level, their friendship, but I think she was very important to Charlotte.

CHRISTOPHER: Sort of day to day gossip, comings and goings in the parsonage and that sort of thing?

JULIE: Yes.

JULIE: Ellen was a very simple girl, a very kind type of girl. They met at Roehead school when they were both sixteen. They were both extremely homesick at the time that they met and they comforted each other, and later Ellen visited the parsonage and kept beautiful letters of her experiences with the family and how she felt about them and the parsonage and we wouldn't know as much as we do about Charlotte Brontë if it hadn't been for Ellen Nussey.



CHRISTOPHER: The school where they met, that wasn't the school that Maria and Elizabeth died in?

JULIE: No, that was the Cowan Bridge school where Charlotte went to when she was six years old. It was run by the Reverend Carus Wilson, who was a very controversial figure.

CHRISTOPHER: Yes, he was somewhat of a fire and brimstone ...

CHRISTOPHER: But she didn't influence her in her writing or her creative ...

JULIE: He was a tyrant. Anyone who has read the Reverend Carus Wilson's little pamphlets, called *The Children's Friend*, can't help but agree that his conception of the right kind of tuition for children was totally and horribly wrong.

JULIE: Charlotte gave Ellen no indication of her 'world below' as she called it. It was

CHRISTOPHER: He had this idea, didn't he, that the most important thing was that the little girl trusted her life and that her salvation was sealed, and once that happened, whether she lived beyond that point was not so relevant and there were a lot of deaths in that school, weren't there?

JULIE: Yes, he seemed to revel in death. His stories were all about little children dying. One such story is about a little three-and-a-half year old boy who, when he was asked should he prefer life or death, replied, "Death for me – I am fonder of death". Apart from his readings of death and hell for little children he also had a belief that his older girl pupils should be constantly reminded of their humble position. He thought that this would make them aware of their position and give them humility.

CHRISTOPHER: There was a lot of controversy about that school. This was supposedly the school Lowood which Charlotte wrote about in *Jane Eyre* and yet ..

JULIE: Yes it was unfortunate for the Reverend that Charlotte happened to be such an astute little girl, and was watching everything he did while she was there. She watched her two elder sisters die, and also in the two years that the Brontë's were at Cowan Bridge school, twenty-eight children out of the seventy who were originally enrolled were taken away. It seems too many to be purely coincidence.

CHRISTOPHER: The other controversy that surrounded part of Charlotte's life was her time in Brussels and her relationship, such as it was, with Monsieur Héger.

JULIE: Yes, Charlotte persuaded her aunt Branwell to give Emily and herself some money to go to Brussels to improve their education and while she was there she fell in love with her French master, Monsieur Héger. He was really her projection of her fantasy world. He was the Duke of Zamorna incarnate. He was small, dark and dramatic

and, unfortunately, married and the love affair didn't flourish.

CHRISTOPHER: Well, it more or less went on in her mind.

JULIE: Well it was a fantasy. Charlotte's letters to her master, when she came back to England, they really gave her away. It's no wonder Mrs Gaskell glossed over the experience in her *Life of Charlotte Brontë*. She's known to have held up her hands in horror and said, "those letters!" when asked about them.

CHRISTOPHER: Charlotte really poured out her soul in those letters, didn't she?

JULIE: Yes, the letters make very sad reading. Monsieur is known to have carelessly scribbled one of the letters, the name and address of his shoemaker. It appears he didn't take the affair seriously at all.

CHRISTOPHER: No, and his wife found out about this communication ...

JULIE: Yes, when the letters were originally made public in 1913, the Hégers did remain honourable towards Charlotte. They waited until her husband had died before they made the letters available to the public. The letters were found to be torn, and stitched together, and there's a tradition in the Héger family that Madame Héger had found the letters in the master's wastepaper basket and sewn them together. Perhaps she thought they might be interesting, or useful. We don't really know.

CHRISTOPHER: So that's why she didn't throw them out altogether.

JULIE: Oh yes, she kept them.

CHRISTOPHER: So what then happened after Brussels?

JULIE: Well, Aunt Branwell died and Charlotte and Emily returned to the parsonage at Haworth. Emily refused to go back to Brussels and Charlotte decided to go back for a little while, but Madame Héger made her life very unpleasant and eventually Charlotte returned as well, and after this stage Charlotte, Emily and Anne began to publish their works.

CHRISTOPHER: All three girls, Charlotte, Emily and Anne were at home, with the poet's pen. This song is a setting for one of Charlotte's poems.

SONG: We take from life a little share ...

MALE NARRATOR: Life, she says, is a little space redeemed from toil and care. A trifle morbid, perhaps, but in a world in which it was quite normal to have lost two sisters and a mother by one's teens, Death had to be looked at squarely in the face. All one hoped for is that 'haply Death unstrings his bow and sorrow stands apart, and for a little while we while we know the sunshine of the heart'.

SONG (continued)

FEMALE NARRATOR: One evening in the autumn of 1845 Charlotte accidentally discovered a notebook in which her sister Emily had been copying some of her poems. Honour must always be paid to Charlotte for her conviction that the poems were quite out of the ordinary. Emily, of course, was furious at this intrusion on her privacy. It took hours to soothe her, days to convince her that such poems merited publication. Meanwhile Anne quietly produced some of her own productions, which Charlotte estimated to be sweetly sincere. She then added some of her own poems, and the Brontës decided to bring out a volume, at their own expense, using pen names, but retaining their own initials: Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell. The publishing venture remained a secret. The volume duly appeared. Copies were sent to the chief newspapers, and one or two of them

reviewed the book. Emily's poems were regarded as the best. The critic of *The Athenium*, to his eternal honour, wrote of Ellis Bell's 'evident power of wing'. But, in spite of this, and the expense of two pounds on advertising, the volume was a complete failure, only two copies being sold. But to see one's words in print is a great stimulus to any writer. The three sisters now each began, or perhaps continued, at any rate completed, a novel.

MALE NARRATOR: "Girls, do you know that Charlotte has been writing a book, and that it is much better than likely?" Such was the surprise of the Reverend Patrick Brontë, after Charlotte had pressed on him a copy of *Jane Eyre* and to reassure him, several reviews, both favourable and otherwise. But, success had not come immediately to Charlotte. Fewer masterpieces of prose can have had a rougher treatment than the novels of the Brontës. The manuscripts returned to the parsonage with a wearying regularity, until at long last the rather doubtful firm of T.C. Newby agreed to publish Emily and Anne's novels. Charlotte, disappointed, but not disheartened, had still to wait a little longer. And then a Mr Williams, reader with the firm Smith, Elder and Company in Paternoster Row, London, gave Charlotte a ray of hope. He did not hesitate to return the manuscript of her novel, *The Professor*, but sent with it a letter which promised careful consideration to another work from the same pen, and thus, *Jane Eyre* was born. Charlotte, writing later to Mr Williams, expressed her feelings about her quest to find a publisher as well as gratitude that fate had seen fit to provide her with a career.

CHARLOTTE: Lonely as I am, how should I be if Providence had never given me courage to adopt a career, perseverance to plead through two long, weary years with publishers, till they admitted me. How should I be, with youth past, sisters lost, a resident in a moorland parish where there is not a single educated family. In that case I should have no world at all. The raven,

weary of surveying the deluge, and without an ark to return to, would be my type. As it is, something like a hope and motive sustains me still.

MUSIC

FEMALE NARRATOR: *Jane Eyre* received immediate, resounding success which it has maintained ever since. Its enduring success rests on its literary quality, but one of its aspects, which stimulated sales, was the measure of adverse criticism it received. For this book, with its plain heroine, plain like its author, was a novel such as the world had never seen before. It was unconventional. There was a frankness about its views on life, as illustrated by its characters, which jolted the rather prim circles in which novels circulated at the time. Thackeray was one man who admired it, and a second edition, in January 1848, was dedicated to him. The central figure in *Jane Eyre* suggests Charlotte herself and these words, spoken by Jane, could very well be from a page in Charlotte's own diary.

JANE EYRE: Women are supposed to be very calm, generally. But women feel, just as men feel. They need exercise for their faculties and a field for their efforts, just as their brothers do. They suffer from too rigid a constraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer and it is narrow minded to say that they should confine themselves to making puddings or knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags.

FEMALE NARRATOR: While the literary world was in an uproar over *Jane Eyre*, Emily and Anne's novels, after many problems with their publisher, were released. Immediately confusion set in. Rumours abounded that *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey* were earlier works by the celebrated author of *Jane Eyre*. No doubt the firm of T.C. Newby did not at all mind these rumours circulating and, indeed, when Anne's second novel, *The Tenant of Wildfell*

Hall was released, they reported that they had sold the American rights of a new book by the author of *Jane Eyre*. Charlotte's publishers were, quite justifiably annoyed and wrote to her, insisting that the confusion over the surname "Bell" be cleared up at once. Horrified at the hint of underhanded dealing on their part, Charlotte and Anne decided at once to make the journey to London and make their separate identities known. On July 7th 1848, Charlotte and Anne, alias Currer and Acton Bell, presented themselves to Mr Smith of Smith, Elder and Company. After the first stunned surprise that their best selling author was a woman, Messers Smith and Williams acted gallantly. The two women dined at Smith's home and were presented to his mother and sisters, taken to the opera and to hear a celebrated preacher, spent Sunday evening with W.S. Williams' family, visited the Royal Academy and the National Gallery on Monday and returned to Haworth on Tuesday, utterly exhausted. Charlotte was now firm friends with her publisher, boxes of books coming regularly to Haworth from Cornhill, and correspondence becoming frequent.

MALE NARRATOR: For the next two years Charlotte's life was a blend of solitude and society. At home the solitude of the parsonage was such that the tick of a clock could be heard all day long. In London, where the Smiths received her regularly, Charlotte was feted and honoured by the literary world. Within eight months she lost, not only her wayward brother Branwell, but also her beloved sisters Emily and Anne. Her novel *Shirley* was written in the midst of tragedy, which very few people are called on to bear in a lifetime. After the publication of *Shirley* in August 1849, the reviews poured in and the liveliest years of her celebrity followed. During this time she tasted success and experienced a little of the pleasures of the world. They were also the years when solitude, sickness and despair recurred like a refrain. Charlotte was extremely shy and lacked the beauty and conversational ease which would allow her to join in the society

of the London literary world, and accordingly Anne Thackeray, the novelist's daughter, has left us this account of Charlotte, with her great kindling eyes and tiny body on one of her London visits.

ANNE THACKERAY: It was a gloomy and silent evening. Everyone waited for the brilliant conversation which never began at all. Miss Brontë retired to a sofa in the study, and murmured a word now and then to our kind governess, Miss Truelock. The room looked very dark. The lamp began to smoke a little. The conversation grew dimmer and more dim. The ladies sat, still expectant. My father was too much perturbed by the gloom and silence to be able to cope at all. Mrs Brookfield, who was in the doorway by the study, near the corner in which Miss Brontë sat, lent forward with a little commonplace, since brilliance was not to be the order of the evening. "Do you like London, Miss Brontë?" she said. Another silence, a pause, then Miss Brontë answers "Yes ... and no", very gravely.

MALE NARRATOR: Unfortunately we do not have an account from Charlotte of this evening, but it seems clear that, surrounded by a group of experienced society ladies, Charlotte was driven even further into herself than was normally the case. Her character, as Thackeray himself observed, "was extremely honest, and she had an independence of thought which she maintained in all its integrity. George Smith, her publisher, maintained that strangers often felt afraid of Charlotte. He found her to be quiet and self absorbed, often giving the impression that she was engaged in observing and analysing the people she met, not an endearing quality in a guest.

MUSIC

FEMALE NARRATOR: A most important event occurred in 1850. Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth, a medical and educational reformer, drove to Haworth from his mansion in Gawthorpe, Lancashire, to urge Charlotte

to accept an invitation to Gawthorpe as his guest. Charlotte did not want to go, but Mr Brontë, impressed by the social standing of the Shuttleworth family, insisted on acceptance. The visit itself was a bore to Charlotte, but it led her to a meeting with Mrs Elizabeth Gaskell, a meeting most fortunate for English literature. What would we do without Mrs Gaskell's letters, so rapid, so long, so lively, dashing off to her friends the great news of having actually met Currer Bell, the author of that slightly shocking best seller, *Jane Eyre*, who was really Miss Brontë, a curate's daughter, and what an altogether surprising little person she found her to be.

MRS GASKELL: I was shown into a pretty drawing room, in which were Sir James and Lady Kay-Shuttleworth, and a little lady in a black silk gown. She came up and shook hands with me at once. I went to un-bonnet etc, and came down to tea. The little lady worked away and hardly spoke, but I had time for a good look at her. She is, as she calls herself, underdeveloped, thin and more than half a head shorter than I, soft brown hair, eyes very good and expressive looking, of the same colour, a reddish face, a large mouth and many teeth gone, altogether plain, the forehead broad, square and overhanging. She has a very sweet voice and rather hesitates in choosing her expressions, but when chosen they seem admirable and just befitting the occasion.

MALE NARRATOR: Later, as the friendship blossomed, Mrs Gaskell visited Haworth. Charlotte, as we know, had already entered that unspeakably lonely and melancholy phase when she was so solitary and depressed that she found it difficult to communicate with anyone. Alone in the parsonage, with old Mr Brontë who was more often than not shut up in his study, the house was as quiet as a tomb. Mrs Gaskell brought a rare ray of warmth and light into Charlotte's life. Charlotte found it not only possible to *communicate* but to *confide* in her new friend.

MRS GASKELL: We were so happy together. We were so full of interest in each other's subjects. The day seemed only too short for what we had to say and hear. We generally had a walk before tea, which was at six. At half-past eight, prayers, and by nine o'clock all the household is in bed except ourselves. We sit up together till ten, or past and, after I go, I hear her come down and walk up and down the room for an hour or so.

MALE NARRATOR: That restless pacing up and down no doubt told Mrs Gaskell more than any of the confidences. She wrote:

MRS GASKELL: That slow, monotonous, incessant walk, in which I am sure I should fancy I heard the steps of the dead following me. She always said she could not sleep without it and that she and her sisters talked over the plans and projects of their whole lives at such times.

MUSIC (slow and mournful)

FEMALE NARRATOR: Charlottes's publishers began pressing her for another novel in the year 1851. They refused, still, her first novel, *The Professor*, even if rewritten, but they urged her to take her time over a new novel. So Charlotte began *Villette*. At last, in November 1852, she posted the manuscript to Smith, Elder and Company. Of payment, £20 was to come to Charlotte and the rest, like her other earnings, was to be invested. In December she received her money which, in her own words, was "in a cover without a line". This cold reception upset Charlotte very much and she was further distressed to find that she was only to receive £500 in all for the novel. Charlotte had repeatedly warned her publishers that the materials available to her for fiction were not abundant and Messers Smith and Williams were no doubt startled to discover that Charlotte had drawn much on the characters of themselves and their families in portraying certain persons in this new novel. In addition, Charlotte had opened

her heart entirely to her Belgian experiences, and the emotion portrayed in *Villette* was at once, its strength and its downfall. The reading public received the novel with a burst of acclamation, but now that Charlotte had purged her emotions of her experience in Brussels, and her love for Monsieur Héger, she felt the exhaustion of this use of her creative energy more keenly than ever. Publishers are busy people and the next book on their list is naturally their highest priority. If an author produces nothing for a year or two they are apt to lose interest in that author.

MALE NARRATOR: The publicity about the author of *Jane Eyre* was over and viewed from Haworth Charlotte's prospects appeared a complete blank. It was probably this desolation which led her to accept, though not very enthusiastically, a new venture.

FEMALE NARRATOR: Charlotte had long been aware of constraint and awkwardness in the behaviour, in her presence, of her father's curate Arthur Bell Nicholls. One evening in December 1852 she heard Nicholls take leave of her father, and then after a pause, tapped furtively on her parlour door. She guessed what was coming, but had not imagined for an instant how strong the Irish curate's feelings for her were. Charlotte's account of the subsequent courtship, and eventual engagement given in her letters to her friend Ellen Nussey, could not be bettered by the finest novel in the world.

CHARLOTTE: In fact, dear Ellen, I am engaged. I am still very calm, very inexpectant. What I taste of happiness is of the soberest order. Trust to love my husband, I am grateful for his tender love for me. I believe him to be an affectionate, a conscientious, a high-principled man and if with all this I should yield to regrets that fine talents, congenial tastes and thoughts are not added, it seems to me I should be most presumptuous and thankless. Providence

offers me this destiny. Doubtless then it is best for me.

FEMALE NARRATOR: This, from the creator of those great lovers, Jane Eyre, Caroline Helstone and Lucy Snowe has an almost unbearable pathos, but still there is little doubt that Charlotte's marriage, however brief, was a happy one. Mr Nicholls turned out to be a possessive, companionable husband, full of good works and pastimes, which he expected Charlotte to share.

CHARLOTTE: My dear Ellen, I am writing in haste. It is almost inexplicable to me that I am so often hurried now, but the fact is whenever Arthur is in I must have occupations in which he can share, or which at least will not divert my attention from him. Thus a multitude of little matters get put off till he goes out, and then I am quite busy.

MALE NARRATOR: One such 'little matter' was the beginning of a new novel. At the close of 1854 Charlotte Nicholls sat with her husband by the fire listening to the

howling of the wind about the house. She suddenly said to her husband, "if you had not been with me I must have been writing now". She then ran upstairs and brought down, and read, the beginning of a new tale. The novel, *Emma*, was never completed. By January 1855 Charlotte had fallen desperately ill. A doctor was summoned and confirmed that she was pregnant and that, although her illness might be long, it was not dangerous. Charlotte however continued, without remission, with agonising nights of sickness and progressive emaciation until on Saturday 31st of March 1855 she died. The fragment of the novel she had begun before her death was published in the Cornhill Magazine in 1860. The opening sketch of *Emma* was of a plain little girl, dumped by a trickster father on a genteel girls' boarding school and abandoned without resources. The fragment, short as it is, shows a great deal of intensity and power and could, for all we know, have surpassed *Jane Eyre* had Charlotte lived to improve and finish it.

SOLEMN MUSIC

TENANT IS BOOK OF THE YEAR 2010

The Tenant of Wildfell Hall is our Book of the Year for 2010. In the November meeting about six of our members will be presenting short studies on parts of the novel. We have three volunteers so far, and we need three more.

The idea is to select a passage of one to two pages from the novel and, in about 10

minutes, remind us of how that passage fits into the story. Then read the passage as one might in a bible study, interrupting the reading with commentary. You might explain obscure words or comment on Anne's choice of words etc. Please contact Christopher Cooper (chris@maths.mq.edu.au or 9804-7473) if you are willing to take part.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

The 2009 report of the Brontë Society, presented at the Annual Meeting in June, in Haworth, gave an account of the ABA activities last year. The Brussels group reported that their annual weekend focussed on Emily Brontë with a concert by Veronica Metz who sang settings of some of Emily's poems. Stevie Davies spoke about *Emily Brontë and the Mother World* and Brussels

member, socio-linguist Philip Riley, gave a talk on *The Brontë Sisters' 'strong language'*. A milestone in 2009 was arranging for the cleaning of the plaque on the site of the Pensionnat Héger.

In the USA there was a visit to the Harvard University's Houghton Library to view the extensive Brontë collection, including several "little books". The London

and South East Group celebrated Anne Brontë's birthday in St Paul's Cathedral, viewed the Brontë portraits at the National Portrait Gallery and visited Sir John Soane's

Museum. Rebecca Fraser spoke to the Irish Section on *Charlotte Brontë and Monsieur Héger*.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË - STOCKBROKER

Ars Technica quotes from the real Charlotte Brontë talking about her railway shares: One of the reasons why the boom of the 1830s has been ignored, argues Odlyzko, is because it was overshadowed by the British "Railway Mania" of the 1840s, in which a host of investors lost their shirts,

among them computer pioneer Charles Babbage, Charles Darwin, and the novelist



Charlotte Brontë, soon to recoup her losses with the success of her novel *Jane Eyre*. "The business is certainly very bad – worse than I thought and much worse than my father has any idea of. In fact the little railway property I possessed ... scarcely any portion of it can with security be calculated on." In other the portion of the earnings from her books that she had set aside for the future had mostly disappeared.

(The quotation comes from a letter Charlotte wrote to George Smith on October 4th, 1849.)

The Mineral Traffic, as mentioned below, is alone sufficient to provide a dividend of 5 per cent. on the entire Capital. The guaranteed Traffic as shown below is only about half the output of the Guaranteeing Collieries.

Kirkcaldy & District Railway Compy.

Incorporated by Special Acts of Parliament 4th and 5th Feb., 1847, Section 153, and 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st, 32nd, 33rd, 34th, 35th, 36th, 37th, 38th, 39th, 40th, 41st, 42nd, 43rd, 44th, 45th, 46th, 47th, 48th, 49th, 50th, 51st, 52nd, 53rd, 54th, 55th, 56th, 57th, 58th, 59th, 60th, 61st, 62nd, 63rd, 64th, 65th, 66th, 67th, 68th, 69th, 70th, 71st, 72nd, 73rd, 74th, 75th, 76th, 77th, 78th, 79th, 80th, 81st, 82nd, 83rd, 84th, 85th, 86th, 87th, 88th, 89th, 90th, 91st, 92nd, 93rd, 94th, 95th, 96th, 97th, 98th, 99th, 100th, 101st, 102nd, 103rd, 104th, 105th, 106th, 107th, 108th, 109th, 110th, 111th, 112th, 113th, 114th, 115th, 116th, 117th, 118th, 119th, 120th, 121st, 122nd, 123rd, 124th, 125th, 126th, 127th, 128th, 129th, 130th, 131st, 132nd, 133rd, 134th, 135th, 136th, 137th, 138th, 139th, 140th, 141st, 142nd, 143rd, 144th, 145th, 146th, 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(BRONTË CONFERENCE 2011)
**THE MISSES BRONTË'S
 ESTABLISHMENT**
**FOR A LIMITED NUMBER OF YOUNG LADIES
 AND REFINED GENTLEMEN**
 Fountaindale Grand Manor (was Ranelagh House) at Robertson



**The date has yet to be decided, but
 will probably be September or
 October 2011.**

The theme will be the **Brontës and Education**. It will include talks on education in the time of the Brontës, their own education at Cowan Bridge, Roehead and Pensionnat Héger. There will also be some mini-lessons in the style of the Victorian classroom. Christopher Cooper will give a lesson on how Emily drew ellipses, Christine Alexander will give us a geography lesson, perhaps focussing on Africa that

inspired the Brontë's fantasy worlds. Marloesje Valkenburg will teach us a little French as it might have been taught in the Pennsionat. We are employing a Drawing Master, Linley Davis, who teaches life drawing at TAFE. We welcome other suggestions and offers. If you would be prepared to give a very short, 10-15 minutes lesson that would be appropriate to the Miss Brontës academy please contact Christopher Cooper.

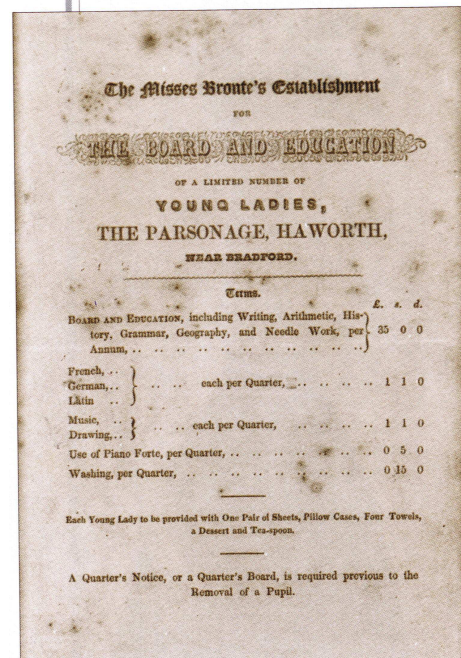
Terms

BOARD AND EDUCATION, including Writing, Arithmetic, History, Grammar, and Needle Work, per Annum £35.0.0


French	} each per Quarter £1.1.0
German		
Latin		
Music	} each per Quarter £1.1.0
Drawing		
Use of Piano Forte, per Quarter 5s.0d		
Washing, per Quarter 15s.0d		

Each Young Lady to be provided with one Pair of Sheets, Pillow Cases, Four Towels, a Dessert and Tea-spoon.

A Quarter's Notice or a Quarter's Board, is required previous to the Removal of a Pupil.

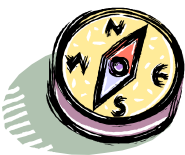


PROGRAM FOR THE REST OF 2010


Meetings indicated by  are held at the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, 280 Pitt St Sydney (just around the corner from Town Hall station), with a meeting charge of \$4. We are currently meeting on the 1st floor. Just check with the sign near the lift on the ground floor. Meetings officially begin at 10:30am but we serve morning tea before the meeting as well as afterwards.

 **Saturday 18th SEPTEMBER: Graham HARMAN**

SOMETHING REAL LIES BEFORE YOU



Charlotte Bronte introduces *Shirley* by promising the reader: “Something real lies before you”. But what does “real” mean? The subject matter of “Shirley” is indeed more down-to-earth than that of more high-flown and romantic works. However, our normal expectations about “reality” are profoundly disoriented within the compass of this novel, as we rapidly find ourselves enmeshed in conversations between the characters, the author, and the reader, as well as in Charlotte’s own conversations with herself. Using parallel illustrations from the world of art, this talk explores the slippery relationships between fiction; reality; fiction about reality; and fiction about fiction.

 **Saturday 13th NOVEMBER:**

DECODING THE TENANT OF WILDFELL HALL

A number of members have been asked to select a passage of one to two pages and, in about 10 minutes, remind us of how that passage fits into the story. They will then read the passage as one might in a bible study, where explanations of obscure words, references to what might have been common knowledge at the time, comments on Anne’s choice of words etc are given throughout. Please contact Christopher Cooper (Christopher.Cooper@mq.edu.au or 9804-7473) if you are willing to take part.



**Saturday 4th DECEMBER: COMBINED CHRISTMAS LUNCH
(12 for 12:30)**

We will be joining with the NSW Dickens Society at the Castlereagh Hotel, Castlereagh St, Sydney.

FROM BBC SPORT, DURING A LIVE CRICKET COMMENTARY

Still raining, it’s not looking good to be honest, the cane fields beyond the Providence Stadium look bleaker than the moors in *Wuthering Heights*.



NEW EMAIL ADDRESS FOR CHRISTOPHER COOPER

They’ve reorganised email addresses at Macquarie University. It’s now

Christopher.Cooper@mq.edu.au .

Please send me contributions to our next newsletter, by the end of October.