

The Australian Brontë Association

Newsletter

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Hitting the Heights!

On Friday, 6 August 2010, 10 ABA members took their seats Under the Wharf at the Sydney Theatre Company to watch *Brontë*, a play by Polly Teale, by the Australian Theatre for Young People.

The stage was covered in books. They formed props, becoming stepping stones, newspaper reviews, letters, furniture and tombstones. They were stacked up, knocked down and even thrown across the room sending those in the front row ducking for cover.

The play explored the development of Charlotte, Emily, Anne and Branwell through their lives and stories, both juvenilia and the characters of the girls' later novels. We saw the power of their imagination and the interaction between the siblings and their father as children through to the trials of their young adult lives which was at times heartbreaking.

A fourth female character in the play alternated between the heroine Cathy and mad Bertha Mason. Members may remember Teale's earlier play *After Mrs Rochester*, in which Jean Rhys, author of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, tells her story through her alter-ego, Bertha.

Brontë is interspersed with various scenes as each author writes them: a scene between Helen Graham and her alcoholic husband; Cathy's death; Mr Rochester's revelation to Jane about his wife, and their reconciliation.

The actors performed their roles well, with perhaps the exception of Arthur Bell Nichols who followed Charlotte around like a lovesick puppy rather than the man we know he was.

It was an entertaining evening providing a glimpse into the domestic and literary lives of the Brontës.

Sarah Burns

Editorial – and a new editorial team

We are fortunate in having two additions to the editorial team for the *ABA Newsletter* and the *Thunderer*. Annette Harman will become the Editor and Helen Malcher has agreed to handle the production side, formatting and arranging the layout. This will allow your President to concentrate on being President, as well as producing some of the material.

But one of the purposes of the *Newsletter* is to provide a forum for the ideas of the membership. This means that **we need your input**. The Dickens Society prides itself in only publishing material written by its members. We do not have such a strict policy, because often we come across items that deserve to be better known. But if we did adopt such a strict policy we would hardly have a newsletter at all. I cannot believe that the members of the Dickens Society are more creative than the Brontë members, especially as they are by and large the same people!

So please let us have your contributions. It can be something you have found in some publication or on the net, or a thought that has occurred to you while reading one of the novels. Or maybe you can think of some topic and search the internet. The contributions do not need to be several pages long. As every editor knows, short items are very useful in filling odd gaps and make the layout so much easier. Even a couple of sentences can be quite useful.

Several of you responded to Mandy's request for feedback on how you came to love the Brontës, and she wove them together into a very informative article in the last newsletter. So we might ask Mandy to do this again some time, with a different focus. In the meantime do not wait to be approached! Send your contributions to the Editor, Annette Harman at harmans@bigpond.com. Short items can be in the body of the email. Larger items should be in Word format if possible. If you have not got access to Word, but we will cope with almost any format – even handwritten items. Just hand them to Annette at a meeting.

Material for the mid-year 2011 *Newsletter* should reach Annette no later than 30 June. Because we have no June or July meetings next year (due to your President being overseas attending the Brontë Society AGM) the mid-year *Newsletter* will not be published till early August. But do not wait till June. Get writing over the Christmas holidays! *Please!*

New Literary Society

by Christopher Cooper

A new literary society has been formed in Sydney. No, don't get out your diaries to enter the meetings, because there will be none. You can't even become a member! It is, in fact, an umbrella organisation of all the literary societies in Sydney and so its members are the existing literary societies themselves.

Every good idea has the right time to work, and when its time has come many people get the same idea at the same time. About ten years ago the Dylan Thomas Society tried to set up such a joint organisation but the idea failed through lack of interest. Over the years there have been some one-off efforts to promote cooperation between the societies. Most notable of these was the JASA lunch a few years back to which the other societies were invited, and their leaders gave brief presentations on what they did. A few years ago the DH Lawrence Society invited the rest of us on a steam train outing to Robertson for a Christmas in July. And of course the Brontë Association has combined with the NSW Dickens Society on many occasions.

A couple of years ago I suggested to Susannah Fullerton that she call together the other societies for the purpose of forming an umbrella organisation. With her involvement in most of the societies I felt that she was the natural person to do this. She liked the idea but she was too busy. Then, this year, the Kipling Society floated the idea of a joint publicity event. While the ABA committee felt that they could not support it in the form that was proposed, it inspired me to revisit the idea of a joint literary society so I went back to Susannah.

Susannah agreed to chair an inaugural meeting and eight of the societies each sent representatives. Meanwhile, as a completely independent initiative, the Dylan Thomas Society invited four representatives from each other society to a reception at the British Consulate. The current Consul General has a degree in literature and maintains a strong interest in the area. This was intended as an opportunity to test the waters again but events had moved so quickly that it ended up being a celebration of the formation of the 'LitSocSyd'.

The societies that have formed the Literary Societies of Sydney are: The Jane Austen Society of Australia, The Dylan Thomas Society of Australia, The NSW Dickens Society, The Rudyard Kipling Society of Australia, The Australian Brontë Association, The DH Lawrence Society of Australia, The Anthony Trollope Group of Australia, The Sydney Passengers (Sherlock Holmes Society). The Byron Society of Australia came in later, and will be linked to our web site. The NSW Shakespeare Society have not joined us.

A brochure has been prepared that publicises the various societies and provides contact details. These will be given to individual members, and placed in libraries, WEA, SMSA, libraries, bookshops and other suitable places. A website, www.litsocsyd.net, provides links to the various member Societies. We plan to have a 'what's on' segment for major events on that website.

I am very grateful to one of our members, Helen Malcher, for implementing the above two activities. Helen is very active in the Jane Austen Society as well as being a member of several other of the literary societies. In fact she probably has more links with the Sydney literary societies than anybody else except for Susannah Fullerton, so it is very appropriate that she has taken on the task with such enthusiasm. So while I am happy to accept the honour of having got LitSocSyd off the ground, along with Clive Woosnam of the Dylan Thomas Society, it will be Helen who deserves much of the credit.

LitSocSyd will be financed by the various societies on a project by project basis, so the ABA will be contributing under \$100 to the cost of the brochure. What will be needed are volunteers to place small bundles of the

brochures in their local libraries or bookshops, or perhaps to hand them round to the members of any book club they belong to. **So please be in touch if you can help** with this aspect.

No joint events are envisaged at the moment, but who knows what the future might bring. A joint weekend conference, with a suitably broad focus, would be an exciting possibility.

The Third Generation of the Book **Christopher Cooper**

I have just bought myself an e-Book. As a lover of technology I have tried to read text on a screen for many years, but this is the first time I've had a device with which I have felt comfortable to read an entire full-length book.

It's a *Kobo Reader*, marketed by Borders Bookshop, and at \$199 it seems to be the cheapest on the market. It is also the most basic, but I found that I did not need all the bells and whistles of the more expensive e-Readers, such as the *Kindle* or the *Ipad*.

The Kobo has a 5 inch screen, small but quite adequate, with 16 levels of grey. It only displays books in ePub format or in PDF. There are free PDF creators that can convert plain text (such as you might down-load for free from the Gutenberg web site) to PDF.

But the *Kobo Reader* comes with 100 classic novels already loaded in the ePub format and, from the Borders website or other sites, you can obtain thousands of other books in this format. Some out-of-copyright books are free, or cost only a couple of dollars and a recently published book that would cost \$45 in paperback might only cost \$15 to download.

Now I am a bibliophile from way back. I love a book with pages, and a cover, and a slipcase, and perhaps even marbled endpapers and an integrated silken bookmark. I love the feel and appearance of a good binding and crisp clear type on good quality paper. I love to be surrounded by bookcases with thousands of nicely bound books. How will it be when I have to sit in an empty room with just a chair and an e-Reader?

Electronic books will never replace the book printed on paper. But there are some

advantages that mean that no well-equipped library should be without one. More and more out-of-print books are appearing as e-Books. A leather bound classic might be preferable to reading it on a screen, but if that is the only way it is available then that is better than nothing.

The Kobo, and many of the more expensive e-Readers, use a technology called 'e-ink'. I do not quite know how it works, but it is far better for reading than an LCD screen. It also uses far less power, so you can use an e-Reader for a couple of weeks before it needs recharging.

Electronic readers mark the third stage in the evolution of the book. The first stage was the scroll (as illustrated here), or papyrus roll. Of course writing existed before then but I doubt that you would have read a whole novel on stone tablets.

We take the codex book for granted. A codex book, with pages that one can flip through, was a remarkable invention. It changed the act of reading far more than the invention of printing or the innovation of the paperback. The revolution of the codex occurred around the first century AD and the early Christians were early adopters and the early Church did a lot to promote it.

The scroll is good for ceremonial reading but for personal use it leaves a lot to be desired. Ideally a scroll should be rewound after it is used, otherwise it might unwind all over the floor. But then when you want to continue reading it would take you several minutes to find where you were up to.

Imagine looking up a telephone number on a papyrus phone directory scroll. By the time you found the number it would have been quicker to walk across the city to speak to the person in person!

A crowded peak-hour train full of commuters reading scrolled newspapers would be a real disaster. And imagine if the church hymn book was on a scroll. 'We'll now sing hymn number 368.' Ten minutes later everyone has found it, except for Mrs Kelly whose hymn scroll has accidentally unrolled and now stretches underneath several rows of pews!

I wonder who invented the book-mark. With a codex a book-mark comes in very handy but with a scroll it would be rather useless.

The electronic book retains many of the advantages of the codex book including, as they do, an electronic bookmark. In fact the ability to search the text for a particular word or phrase is something that gives e-Books an edge over an ordinary book.

On the other hand the traditional codex book gives you instant feedback as to how far you have progressed. There is always a sense of satisfaction with a book when you reach that point where the 'read' exceeds the 'unread' in thickness. Of course it would be a simple matter to provide a meter at the top of the screen to achieve the same purpose, but it is not quite the same.

A big draw-back with current e-Books is that they only display a single page at a time, whereas with a normal book you see two pages at once. Thus there is much more page turning with the e-Book. But I predict that it will not be long before two-page displays appear on the e-Book market.

Scrolls have all but disappeared. They are still used in Jewish synagogues but I am sure that at home the Jewess will read her Torah as a codex book, oblivious to the fact that at one time the codex was identified with the early Christians.

Books come in all shapes and sizes. Their covers are important symbols of what they contain. Coffee-table books need to be large to display their pictures adequately. Some books have exquisitely textured covers. I have seen a copy of *The Jungle Book* with a cover that appeared to be made of woven leaves and I have a cover that claims that it was made of recycled elephant dung! (I had a lot of explaining to Australian Quarantine when I tried to bring that back into Australia!) And I doubt if I will ever see an electronic pop-up book!

Books, as we know them, can serve many purposes other than containing material to be read. For a start they can be stacked to form a stool. Try that with your e-Reader. Books can be stacked on one's head to improve one's deportment. They can be used as a primitive motion picture viewer. I remember, as a child, drawing little pictures of a man doing calisthenics in the margins of successive pages. By flipping the pages he would come to life.

A codex book can be used as an improvised filing cabinet to store special letters or other flat objects. It can be used to press flowers and we have all, at times, used large books in a stack to apply pressure to some newly glued object.

Jane Eyre discovered that books can become a weapon – remember John hurling the copy of *Bewick* that she had been reading, giving Jane a nasty bump on her forehead. I doubt he would have done this with an e-Book, and if he had tried to throw a scroll it would have unrolled before it reached her.

Books can be used to write in – something that is difficult to do with an e-Book. In *Wuthering Heights* Lockwood comes across Catherine's diary written in the margins of her books. A book also provides a way of displaying one's repugnance with the contents. Lockwood read that Heathcliff had 'riven the spine off *The Homet of Salvation*'. What would be the use of burning a Kindle, just because it contained, in its memory, the text of some proscribed text?

No, for all its simplicity, the codex book was a wonderful invention. It is such a versatile medium. Electronic books will certainly become common-place, but as a supplement rather than a replacement to the type of book that we all love, whether it is a bettered, dog-eared paper-back or a leather bound, gilt-edged tome.

From the Life of Patrick Brontë's Family

At our September 2010 meeting, Carmel Nestor shared this Brontë snippet with us. Her research has indicated that it may well be factual.

Carmel Nestor

Patrick Brontë was the son of Hugh Brunte, an Irishman who was a highly respected story teller. He was talented but barely literate so it was impossible for him to translate his thoughts into the written word. The talent which Hugh had was that of a great story teller who could tell a story in such a way that his audience was enthralled. He was a great entertainer and Patrick grew up listening to his

father's tales and observing the reactions of his audience.

Hugh seems to have had the rare faculty of believing his own stories even when they were purely imaginary: and he would sometimes conjure up scenes so unearthly and awful that both he and his hearers were afraid to part company for the night.

Hugh told a tale of his childhood, about his adoption by a man who was himself adopted into the family. The story may or may not be true. In the area of the mountains of Mourne where Hugh lived, truth and fiction dance a jig with each other, but the point is that the tale was known to Patrick

And one could well imagine that Patrick would have told the story many times to his own children as it was really his own life story

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In the year 1710 the grandfather of Hugh Brunty, a cattle dealer, made a journey to England. At this time there was a lively cattle trade between Ireland and England and there was a regular packet boat sailing between Warrenpoint in County Down and Liverpool. Old Hugh Brunty, who had his own farm somewhere near Newry, was a regular passenger on these voyages. His business was to act as a middleman – between the farmers in the area where he lived and the busy cattlemarket in Liverpool. Apparently he was very good at his job and was popular, which indicates the way in which he conducted his business.

Hugh was married with three children at the time he made this particular voyage to Liverpool. This journey was important for two reasons: 1) he took his wife with him although he had never done so before – ships were old, had very little accommodation and the cattle were stowed on deck, and women were considered bad luck on ships in the open sea. 2) The trip over was uneventful but on the return the crew discovered a child hidden in the hold, dirty and wrapped in rags.

It was a male child, with dark hair and skin and was thought to be a gypsy. It was thought it could be diseased so there was a general cry to throw it overboard, and this might have happened if it had not been for Mrs Brunty. Mrs Brunty cared for the child till the

ship reached Warrenpoint, and told the Captain that the boy was healthy and his dark colouring suggested he was Welsh.

When the ship docked the Captain played a trick on Mrs Brunty and asked her to take the child to the Port Authority as he was busy. She happily complied. Hugh was involved with his stock and so was unaware of this. The harbour master would have nothing to do with the child as there were no facilities in Warrenpoint for unwanted children and there was a tax to pay for the carriage of these children to the nearest refuge, in Dublin. He was adamant that his office would not pay. He said that he had done his duty by conveying the stowaway to the next port of call. Beyond that he had no further responsibility. Mrs Brunty suggested the child be returned to Liverpool but the Captain refused.

Hugh Brunty when called for was furious with everyone, especially his wife, and saw no reason why he should pay. He already had three children to feed. The local minister was called in but could not negotiate with anyone. Finally Mrs Brunty decided that she would take the child home with her. On the way she decided she would name him Welsh.

And so a dark haired, swarthy skinned boy came to the Brunty household to live among children who were fair or red haired and he was to be regarded as their brother.

Strangely Hugh Brunty came to love Welsh more than any of his own. As Welsh grew up he was singled out by the father because he had a natural affinity with horses. The other children had no interest in the cattle business, so more and more Welsh accompanied Hugh on his trips. He was good at mingling among the farmers and gathering scraps of information that enabled Hugh to make some astute bids. Welsh revelled in the excitement of the cattle markets.

The business prospered but the boys in particular were jealous and detested Welsh. He accompanied his father on the trips to Liverpool and gradually took over most of the work as Hugh began to fail in health, but until the very end Hugh always handled the money. Welsh resented this at times but Hugh retained absolute control.

On one trip to Liverpool Hugh became ill and on the return trip home he died. Welsh accompanied the body home and then it was found that there was little money on him. There were no records either.

Welsh was accused of stealing and all the resentment and hatred of the brothers came out. Welsh was ordered to leave and the entreaties of the sisters and mother was to no avail so he did – alone in the world.

Now Welsh had made a deathbed promise to Hugh about which he informed the family so he was invited to the home. The promise was that he would stand by the family and run the business for the benefit of all.

The eldest brother refused to believe him and said that until he returned the money he was not welcome in the home. He attempted to point out that he was the only one who could run the business.

He wanted to become a legal member of the family and he wanted to marry the daughter, Mary. Such was the fury of the brothers that as Welsh left he said ‘I swear to you all that Mary will be my wife and the day will come when this house will be mine.’

Welsh did not continue in the cattle business. The brothers made an attempt to continue but they soon failed. Two went to England, found work and sent money home to their mother and one went south, married, had a family and died young.

Welsh found employment as a sub agent in estate management. Sub agents acted on behalf of absent landlords and this put him in the position of being able to keep an eye on the Brunty farm. He had secretly maintained his contact with Mary. Eventually he overcame her fears and they married in secret. Immediately he took his wife to the Brunty farm. When it became known that Mary's mother and sister would continue to live there opposition melted away.

Soon the brothers in England heard about the marriage and came home. The brother who had gone south was not interested. They confronted Welsh and attacked him but Welsh had taken the precaution of having the agent's men on hand.

The brothers were charged with trespass and assault. They were sentenced to hard labour and it was thought that later they were transported to an overseas colony. They were never heard from again.

The brother in southern Ireland died leaving several children and Mary persuaded Welsh to adopt one. They chose the boy called Hugh.

Welsh's life now took a downward plunge and he was bad tempered and harsh towards the child. Young Hugh's life was made worse by the old servant Gallagher – tall, gaunt and sanctimonious. He terrified Hugh.

Hugh had two consolations in his life. One was Aunt Mary who taught him to read and write and the other was his dog – a yellow coloured mongrel whose name was Keeper.

When Hugh was 16 he ran away and began a new life. Eventually he met Alice and for religious reasons they eloped. They went on to have 10 children, the eldest son being Patrick.

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Up to this point we have to accept Hugh's version of his early life. All we know about Welsh comes from Hugh.

Emily would have been familiar with this story and there are a few versions of it and many parallels with *Wuthering Heights*. One point I found really interesting was the name of the dog 'Keeper' I consider this as proof that Patrick did tell his family stories of Ireland.

It would be interesting to research all the people in Emily's life whom she wove somewhere into the fabric of *Wuthering Heights*.

Research about this came from Dr William Wright who researched his *The Brontës in Ireland*. He interviewed many people who remembered their fathers telling stories about these times. Many had fathers who remembered Hugh, Patrick's father.

Reference: John Cannon, The History of the Brontë Family: from Ireland to Wuthering Heights

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# NEWS in brief

## *Our visiting speakers for 2011*

**Rowan McAuley (September meeting)** is a children's author who is conducting an excellent Bronte course at WEA. She will discuss the confusions and obfuscations in the narration of *Villette*. Rowan has published many children's books, including several titles in the Go Girls series.

**Emily McGuire (April Meeting)** is an author who has read *Jane Eyre* 13 times and gets something new out of it each time, according to an item in the *Sun Herald* some time ago. She will discuss her personal responses to the work.

**Cindy Broadbent (November meeting)** Cindy's background is in Yorkshire, and in linguistics, and she will examine Emily's use of a strong Yorkshire dialect in the servant Joseph in *Wuthering Heights*, making comparisons with old English and old Norse.

## *Our inhouse speakers:*

**Christopher Cooper and Christine Alexander (February meeting)** join to discuss Bewick's *History of British Birds*, and the influence it had on the Brontës' art.

**Mandy Swann (May meeting)** will discuss Romanticism and its impact on the Brontës

**Note that we have had to raise the Meeting fee to \$5**

# NEWS in brief

## ***Buy your own ABA Badge***

We have arranged with EZY Engraving to make ABA badges for anybody who would like their own. We will continue to provide the ones we have always had but we ask that you leave it behind at the end of each meeting.

However if you buy your own you will be able to keep it at home, and maybe wear it at other

literary events. The standard type is a rectangle of plastic, engraved with your name and the ABA logo, with a pin at the back, costing \$5.

The magnetic version has a similar plastic rectangle but has a magnetic back. It comes with a small magnetic piece. By placing the two pieces on either side of your clothing the badge can be kept in place without making a pin hole in your clothing. This version costs \$6.50.

## ***Judi Dench as Mrs Fairfax***

Judi Dench briefly mentions her role as Mrs Fairfax in *Jane Eyre* 2011 in *The Times*. She has just returned from filming a new *Jane Eyre* in which she plays the housekeeper. Isn't that character rather wicked? 'No, she wasn't very wicked ... alas,' says Dench, somewhat forlornly. 'That was the housekeeper in Rebecca.' Not only have I mistaken evil Mrs Danvers for the more benign Mrs Fairfax, but so had Dench, probably because she didn't bother to read the script. Which is her usual working method. She never reads the parts sent to her, and turns up at rehearsals with the play unopened, which would be unforgivable in anyone less talented.

*From the Brontë Blog*

## ***The Duke of Windsor Review of Jane Eyre***

I read somewhere that one of the Duke of Windsor's lady friends, before he married Mrs Simpson, offered him a copy of *Jane Eyre* to read. He soon gave it back saying, 'I just couldn't get into that Bronte book. It was boring and totally lacking in interest.' I forget where I read it and cannot find any reference to it on the web, so it might be apocryphal. If anyone else has a reference could they let me know. *Life Cover May 1950*

**Marloesje Valkenburg**

# NEWS in brief

## ***The Unmasking of Life's More Mysterious Stars***

*Abridged from an article by Troy Lennon in the Sydney Daily Telegraph 25 August 2010.*

Throughout history there have been people who, for one reason or another, have concealed their identities. Sometimes the cover was blown by nosy people, at other times the secrets were kept for years, even beyond death.

Some concealed identities have been literary figures. When sisters Charlotte, Emily and Anne Brontë began their literary careers with a book of poetry, they chose the male pseudonyms Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell, fearing that works by women would be shunned. The pseudonyms carried over to their novels, including Charlotte's *Jane Eyre*, Emily's *Wuthering Heights* and Anne's *Agnes Grey*.

In 1850 after Emily and Anne died, Charlotte wrote a foreword to an anthology of the sisters' works revealing who the real authors were and dispelling rumours that they were all one person's work.

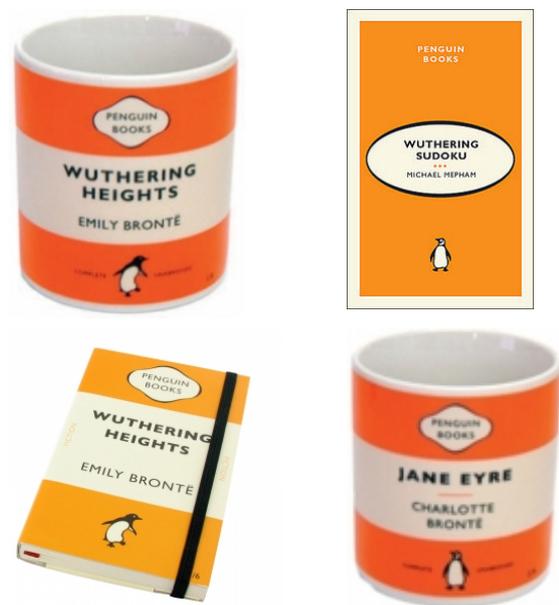
American Stephen King, having established himself as an author in the early 1970s, wanted to know whether readers would accept some of his earlier work. Publishers told him that writers should limit the number of books they release since they could saturate the market. But he convinced them to publish his novels under a secret identity, Richard Bachman. The first book, *Rage*, was published in 1997. More books followed with a fictitious biography and a photo of his literary agent's insurance agent on the dust-jacket. People began to remark on the similarities with the work of King.

In 1985, bookstore clerk Steve Brown discovered and revealed that the books had been registered in King's name. A 1985 announcement said that Bachman had died of 'cancer of the pseudonym'

*From the Brontë Blog*

## ***Penguin Paraphernalia***

Penguin Books has found that you can do a lot more with the Brontë novels than just have people read them. As well as publishing several of the Brontë novels in their classic orange paperback series they now market mugs, notebooks, even Brontë puzzles!



The mugs sell for about \$25. Just the thing for literary enthusiasts – good value, good quality and made in the UK. You can get *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*, as well as more obscure novels like *Pride and Prejudice*!

The notebook, as notebooks go, is rather pricey at \$20, and contains not a single word of the novel. It might be cheaper to make notes in the margins of your own copy of *Wuthering Heights*, just as Cathy did with her own books.

*Wuthering Sudoku*, is a companion title to *Murder on the Sudoku Express* – there are cheaper ways to get your Sudoku! I found all the above items at the Children's Bookshop in Beecroft, in Sydney, though I'm sure all the larger bookshops will carry them.

**Don Bell**

# NEWS in brief

## ***Charlotte Brontë letter returns to Haworth***

An important and moving letter written by Charlotte Brontë has returned to Haworth and will go on display for the very first time at the Brontë Parsonage Museum.

The letter is dated 18 October 1848 and was written in the brief interval between the death of her brother Branwell on 24 September, and that of her sister Emily on 19 December. This was one of the darkest periods of Charlotte Brontë's life, and work on her second novel, *Shirley*, had faltered. She writes:

My book – alas! is laid aside ... both head and hand seem to have lost their cunning; imagination is pale, stagnant, mute – this incapacity chagrins me; sometimes I have a feeling of cankering care on the subject – but I combat it as well as I can – it does no good.

The black-bordered letter was written to William Smith Williams, the sympathetic reader at her publishers. It was part of the James L. Copley Library, based in California, and was purchased by the Brontë Society at Sotheby's in New York earlier this year.

Ann Dinsdale, the Collections Manager for the Brontë Parsonage Museum says, 'The letters written to William Smith Williams are amongst the most significant of all Charlotte's correspondence. This particular letter has remained in a private collection in America for many years and it is wonderful to be able to make it available for the first time.'

The letter will go on display at the museum until the end of the year.

*From the Brontë Blog*

## ***Charlotte's Glass Dress***

The British Glass Biennale 2010 has exhibited an awarded piece, *Charlotte's Dress*, by Lisa Sheppy, inspired by Charlotte Brontë. The Biennale is the UK's major exhibition of contemporary glass in association with the

Worshipful Company of Glass Sellers and the International Festival of Glass. This is the UK's top contemporary glass showcase and featured work of over 80 of the country's leading glass artists with £11,500 in prize money being awarded.

Mrs Sheppy's piece, entitled *Charlotte's Dress*, went on to win the Student Award. Judge John Whiteman said: 'Lisa's winning piece is of an incredibly high standard for the student award; it is well thought out and technically very strong whilst telling a great story with humour and personality.'

Mrs Sheppy, who works from a studio in her Worcestershire home, is currently involved in a project at the Brontë Parsonage Museum which is where inspiration for *Charlotte's Dress* came from.

*From the Brontë Blog*

## ***Brontë in Love***

**By Sarah Freeman**

*Adapted from The Telegraph and Argus.*

*Published Sept 2010, £14.99*

The love affairs and infatuations that inspired Charlotte Brontë's novels are revealed in *Brontë in Love*, which explores the romantic longings dominating the famous writer's life and work. The book is described as a beautifully written portrayal of Charlotte and her inspirations. Sarah Freeman set out to dispel myths that have surrounded Charlotte for the past 150 years. She has always had a passion for Charlotte.

The publisher, Great Northern Books, said Sarah related how the teenage Charlotte wrote torrid romances. A spokesman said:

She developed a dangerous obsession with her fictional hero, the Duke of Zamorna. By the time she was 23 she had rejected two proposals of marriage, one from a man she had known for only a couple of hours, and believed that only true love could conquer all.

# NEWS in brief

Not for another 15 turbulent years, with another proposal and two passionate affairs were her childhood dreams finally extinguished. On June 29, 1854, she walked into her father's church and of her own free will married a man she didn't love.

*Brontë in Love* highlights just how deeply Charlotte's own life was intertwined with her novels. It shows how relationships with her married tutor Monsieur Héger and later her publisher George Smith inspired novels *The Professor* and *Villette*. Charlotte's most famous novel *Jane Eyre* allowed her to let passion and romance right all the wrongs in her life.

Much of the source material for *Brontë in Love* comes from the letters Charlotte wrote to friends and lovers. Best-selling novelist Joanne Harris described the book as truly fascinating. She said: "This important and touching story will appeal to admirers of Charlotte Brontë."

*From the Brontë Blog*

## ***The canary at the heights***

Just in case you don't subscribe to *Cage & Aviary Birds* the following item from that publication may be of interest.

A canary belonging to a long-time contributor to *Cage & Aviary Birds* is set to star in a new blockbuster movie, it has been revealed. When Yorkshire canary breeder Brian Keenan was approached by Ecosse Films to supply a Yorkie [a breed as well as a place] for a new production of *Wuthering Heights*, he jumped at the chance. Bafta-winning director Andrea Arnold is working in partnership with Film4 and the UK Film Council to develop a big-screen adaptation of Emily Brontë's classic tale of doomed romance.

Mr Keenan explained that Ms Arnold prefers to film entirely on location and aims for as much local flavour and authenticity as possible. "So the obvious choice of canary for *Wuthering Heights* just had to be a Yorkshire in a genuine show cage – nothing else would do," he said.

"The canary will be involved in filming for about four weeks, but it is not a speaking part.

That would have required a budgie, which was just not on!" *Wuthering Heights* is scheduled for cinema release in about 18 months' time.

*From the Brontë Blog*

## ***The Brontë Vault to open***

*From The Telegraph and Argus.*

A church with a crypt containing the bodies of famous literary sisters Charlotte and Emily Brontë is facing a huge repair bill of up to £1.25 million. Parishioners at Haworth Parish Church, in Church Street, have started a fundraising drive to replace the leaking roof and carry out other major refurbishments. As part of the major works, the Brontë crypt – sealed since the late 19th century – may be re-opened to visitors, said the vicar, the Reverend Peter Mayo-Smith.

It is something that we want to explore to enhance the visitor attraction and allow people to come and see it,' he said. "There are one million tourists per year and Haworth is one of the most visited heritage sites in the world, so what we want to do is give the visitors an even better experience.

The church, known as St Michael and All Angels, is instantly recognisable because of its prominent position in Haworth. It is famous internationally because of its links with the Brontë family – the Reverend Patrick Brontë, father of the literary sisters, was vicar at a church on the site. His successor, the Rev John Wade, demolished and rebuilt the church in 1879. He sealed the crypt where the bodies of Charlotte, Emily, Branwell and their father are buried.

The first phase of work will include replacing the boiler system, which is expected to cost £60,000, and repairing the historic organ for £55,000. The roof will cost up to £500,000 to repair and £15,000 is needed for a new system for the historic clock to chime again.

*From the Brontë Blog*

# NEWS in brief

## ***First Edition Wuthering Heights Sold for £163,250.***

Described as 'very rare' by London auctioneers Sotheby's, it was expected to fetch between £50,000 and £75,000. The three-volume edition was once owned by Rev Nathaniel Micklethwait, who lived at Coltishall Hall. It was bought by a US dealer. *Wuthering Heights*

### ***Part 3: Emily***

*In the early 1980s I presented a six part series 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 Emily.*

**Christopher Cooper**

**MUSIC:** Chopin

**EMILY:**

No Coward Soul is mine,  
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled  
sphere  
I see Heaven's glories shine  
And faith shines equal arming me from fear.

O God within my breast  
Almighty, ever-present Deity  
Life, that in me hath rest  
As I Undying Life, have power in thee,

Vain are the thousand creeds  
That move men's heart, unutterably vain,  
Worthless as withered weeds  
Or idlest froth amid the boundless main.

To waken doubt in one,  
Holding so fast by thy infinity  
So surely anchored on  
The steadfast rock of Immortality.

With wide-embracing love  
Thy spirit animates eternal years  
Pervades and broods above  
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates and rears.

Though Earth and moon were gone

wasn't the only Brontë book going under the hammer. Here are the rest of the results:

Lot 17 - *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*: £85,250

Lot 18 - *The Professor*: £2,500

Lot 19 - *Villette*: £9,375

Lot 20 - *Jane Eyre*: passed in.!!!

Lot 21: *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey*:  
**£163,250 !!!** *From the Brontë Blog*

And suns and universe ceased to be  
And thou, wert left alone  
Every existence would exist in thee,

There is not room for death  
Nor atom that his might could render void  
Since thou art Being and Breath  
And what thou art may never be destroyed.

**CHRISTOPHER:** If Emily Brontë had never penned another line apart from this poem we should know as much about her character as we do from the myriads of other poetry she wrote, from her novel *Wuthering Heights* and from the countless biographies that have been written about her. For *No Coward Soul is Mine* says it all about Emily.

That she was a space sweeping soul, to use her own phrase about a philosopher, there is no doubt. Her thoughts on life, death, immortality, imagination, liberty, deity and nature had a depth of vision comparable to that of Wordsworth or Shakespeare. She saw the universe as a whole and her vision comprehended the lark, the woolly moor-land sheep, the snowy glen, the nature of being and God himself as one great harmony. Nor can her thought be termed speculative; she writes with a majestic, almost casual certainty. Minute observations of nature are given as much importance in Emily's writing as the magnificent themes of God and nature. She says what she means in the simplest, hardest-hitting way that she can.

**JULIE:** Emily Brontë is often thought to be a profoundly mysterious figure – a tragic genius

## *Brontë Biographies for Busy Beginners - Part III – Emily*

who lived a short, monotonous and unhappy life and suffered almost a martyr's end. This thought cannot persist for long though after a short study of her work. She, of all the Brontës, did not suffer. Charlotte and Anne may have lived in loneliness and Charlotte, at least, complained long and bitterly about it while Anne merely hinted. But Emily never knew loneliness, for to her the isolation of Haworth meant solitude; and there is a difference. The cultural isolation of the lonely moor-land village was for Emily significant, for it also meant physical isolation. Beyond Haworth Parsonage, for Emily at least, lay infinity. To Emily, inaccessible, enigmatic, Haworth was a hermitage of her very own and the last thing she wanted was an escape. As Charlotte recorded, she was never happy among strangers, she was homesick at school and when she was away she yearned for the solitude of the moors as passionately as Charlotte longed to see the Wonders of the World.

She appears certain that the only condition placed upon Emily's happiness was that she remain at Haworth, as if she was one of those rare creatures who cannot live outside their own territory; she craved the restrictive and sustaining closeness of the Parsonage almost as if she had been born into the World against her will, and Haworth were a womb. Charlotte wrote after witnessing Emily's decline when she went to become a pupil at Miss Wooler's school at Roe Head...



**CHARLOTTE:** The change from her own home to a school, and from her own very noiseless, very secluded but unrestricted and un-artificial mode of life, to one of disciplined routine was what she failed to endure. Her nature proved too strong for her fortitude. Every morning, when she woke, the vision of home and the moors rushed on her and darkened and saddened the day that lay before her. Nobody knew what ailed her but me. I knew only too well. In this struggle her health was quickly broken, her white face, attenuated form and failing strength, threatened rapid decline. I felt in my heart she would die if she did not go home and with this conviction obtained her recall.

**CHRISTOPHER:** Compare that description to the happy light-hearted picture Emily gives in her own words in her diary:

**EMILY:** It is past twelve o'clock. Anne and I have not tidied ourselves, done our bed work or done our lessons. We are going to have for dinner boiled beef, turnips, potatoes and apple

## *Brontë Biographies for Busy Beginners - Part III – Emily*

pudding. The kitchen is in a very untidy state. Tabby just said on my putting a pen in her face ‘Ya pitter potterin’ there instead of pilling a potato’. I answered ‘O dear , O dear, O dear. I will directly.’ With that I get up, take a knife and began pilling.

**CHRISTOPHER:** And again in Ellen Nussey’s letter to Mrs Gaskell.

**ELLEN NUSSEY:** In fine and suitable weather delightful rambles were made over the moors, and down into the glens and ravines that here and there broke the monotony of the moor-land ... Emily especially had a gleesome delight in these nooks of beauty – her reserve for the time vanished. One long ramble in those days was far away over the moors to a spot familiar to Emily and Anne which they called ‘The Meeting of the Waters’; it was a small oasis of emerald green turf, broken here and there by small clear springs; a few large stones served as resting places ... Emily, half reeling on a slab of stone played like a young child with the tadpoles in the water, making them swim about, and then fell to moralizing on the strong and the weak, the brave and the cowardly, as she chased them with her hand.

**MUSIC** ( Happy)

**JULIE:** Most of Emily’s life from her childhood until her death is a complete blank. The most determined and indefatigable of Brontë specialists have never really got at her as they have to her sister, Charlotte. She gives them nothing to go upon and the contemporaries of the Brontës, preoccupied with Charlotte, do not give very much. For one thing she never had, in her life-time, Charlotte’s dangerous, provocative celebrity. And she had something that Charlotte didn’t have, a reticence, an inaccessibility that kept her immune.

Thus while we know more of Charlotte’s life than we really have any business to, we hardly

know anything about Emily’s. It was a life in which hardly anything happened. You can number its events on your fingers. Her birth on July 30th 1818; the deaths of her sisters Maria and Elizabeth; of her mother; of her black cat Tom; of her brother Branwell; three short, painful periods of exile at Dewsbury, in Halifax, in Brussels; the publication of her poems in 1846, of *Wuthering Heights* in 1847; her death on December 19th, 1848. That is literally all.

Of course, there have been innumerable theories about Emily. Most of them would have amazed and some disgusted her. She has inspired cults as extravagant as the neglect of her contemporaries was blind; yet she founded no school; neither *Wuthering Heights* nor her poetry has had successors. And the reason for this lies surely in a fact that Charlotte knew – her material was solely the vision of her meditations. Her concern was less with the world about her than with the abstract and the philosophical, though she would not have expressed it in that way. Her preoccupation was less with men and women of whom she knew little than with God and the soul and the problem of good and evil. In her preface to *Wuthering Heights*, Charlotte wrote:

**CHARLOTTE** I am bound to avow that she had scarcely more practical knowledge of the peasantry amongst whom she lived than a nun has of the country people who sometimes pass her convent gates. My sister’s disposition was not naturally gregarious; circum-stances favoured and fostered her tendency to seclusion; except to go to church or to take a walk on the hills, she rarely crossed the threshold of home. Though her feeling for the people around was benevo-lent, intercourse with them she never sought; nor with very few exceptions, ever experienced. And yet she knew them; knew their ways, their language, their family histories, she could hear of them with interest, and talk of them with detail, minute graphic and accurate; but *with* them she never exchanged a word.

## *Brontë Biographies for Busy Beginners - Part III – Emily*

**CHRISTOPHER:** The experiences which formed Emily's unique personality are really out of our reach, almost beyond our understanding. We can never know what they were or what it was that so early turned her imagination inwards and caused her to refuse the ordinary demands of life, as no doubt she did refuse them. In Emily's case this turning inward was also accompanied by a capacity for passion as well as genius and where these three attributes are found with the force in which Emily possessed them there must of course be some means of release. The escape which Emily found in childhood, her land of Gondal, served so well as a release that in time it served her emotionally as well. Her experience, passionate and innocent, lay in a world which she alone controlled and which was therefore safe. She demanded nothing that she herself could not satisfy. It is from states of mind like this that the recluse, the stoic and the hero are made; also the mystic whose ecstasy lies in complete communion with God ... and Emily Brontë contained elements of all these. This compulsory necessity to rely on herself for everything, and the rest of the world for nothing, was to cause her sisters great and unhappiness at the time of her death; it was also responsible for those mysterious longings which led to some form of mystical experience. There seems little doubt that Emily, alone at night in the little closet-like bedroom which had once been the children's study but was now her secure retreat, did reach something of a mystical union with God or as Emily put it, the Unseen, the Invisible – a messenger of Hope – she avoids conventional religious terms and seems to feel that the spirit of her communion is too huge to be pinned down to any one name.

**EMILY:**

He comes with western winds, with evening's  
wandering airs,  
With the clear dusk of heaven that rings the  
thickest stars;  
Winds take a pensive note, and stars a tender  
fire,

And visions rise and change which kill me with  
desire.

Desire for nothing known in my maturer years,  
When joy grew mad with awe at counting  
future tears;  
When if my spirit's sky was full of flashes  
warm,  
I knew not whence they came, from sun or  
thunderstorm.

But first a hush of peace, a soundless calm  
descends,  
The struggle of distress and fierce impatience  
ends;  
Mute music fills my breast – unuttered  
harmony  
That I could never dream till earth was lost to me.

Then dawns the invisible, the unseen its truth  
reveals;  
My outward sense is gone, my inward essence  
feels,  
Its wings are almost free, its home, its harbour  
found;  
Measuring the gulf it stoops and dares the final  
bound.

Oh, dreadful is the check, intense the agony,  
When the ear begins to hear and the eye begins  
to see;  
When the pulse begins to throb, and the brain  
to think again,  
The soul to feel the flesh and the flesh to feel  
the chain.

Yet I would lose no sting, would wish no  
torture less,  
The more that anguish wracks the earlier it will  
bless,  
And robed in fires of Hell, or bright with  
heavenly shine,  
If it but herald death, the vision is divine.

**CHRISTOPHER:** The poem does not stand alone – it is buried deep within the Gondal saga. It seems by the way in which the stanzas suddenly leap to life in the midst of quite

## *Brontë Biographies for Busy Beginners - Part III – Emily*

ordinary verse that they are inspired by nothing less than inner knowledge. They are more than the mere adventures of one of the Gondal heroines ... there is a force, a vigour about them which is quite different from the rest of the poem within which they are contained.

There can be no doubt that Emily was a mystic – no doubt that she, or her genius, reached the vision of ultimate reality, the supreme experience. Of her happiness none can doubt. As M Masterlinck said of her

If to her there came nothing that passes  
in love, sorrow, passion or anguish, still  
did she possess all that abides when  
emotion has faded away.

Mysticism apart, the inner experience of Emily Brontë was incomparably rich and inexhaustibly eventful.

**MUSIC:** Liltng, dreamy.

**JULIE:** And it was out of that inner experience that Emily wrote *Wuthering Heights*. Emily had far less ability as a writer of fiction than Charlotte and far MORE genius. The latter was right when she stated that *Wuthering Heights* was 'hewn in a rough workshop, with simple tools, out of homely materials' but for all this the novel stands alone. It is a masterpiece of fiction with the dominant theme throughout (as in Emily's poems) being the 'excess of soul over body'. This, of course, was not the effect produced on the minds of most critics when the novel first appeared. Its author was spoken of as someone of primitive mind, the incidents and persons in the book as too coarse to be attractive.

The critic in *The Athenaeum* stated that the book was no doubt true to life as it is lived in some remote nooks and crannies of England. This, I feel obliged to say, is a gross error. There are no nooks and crannies in England where life is lived as it was at *Wuthering Heights*! Dante Gabriel Rossetti said,

It is a fiend of a book – an incredible  
monster. The action is laid in Hell only

it seems that places and people have  
English names there.

This is closer to the truth but still falls short of the mark because the action of *Wuthering Heights* was not laid in hell but in Emily's mind and may have had some other existence besides ... somehow a mixture of Earth, Heaven AND Hell.

When the elder Catherine cries out in Lockwood's dream 'Let me in, Let me in, it is twenty years, I have been a waif for twenty years' she is not crying out from a shadowy world of spectres and hauntings. She is crying out from wandering homelessness ... a waif spirit in the world that Emily Brontë made so real to herself that she was able to make it real to her readers in a way that few writers have ever equalled.

**CHRISTOPHER:** So the author of *Wuthering Heights* was acclaimed as a legendary figure of gloom and darkness. Mrs Gaskell, Charlotte's biographer, was impressed chiefly with Emily's stern, heroic qualities ... her courage, her unapproachable reserve and her inflexibility. She tells how Emily gave a drink of water to a mad dog, was bitten and then scorched the wound with a red-hot iron, how she would box the ears of her own mastiff, Keeper, if he slept on the snowy, white counterpanes of the Parsonage; she records somebody's statement that Emily 'never showed regard for any human creature' and she dwells on her passionate resistance to death. Everywhere Emily is portrayed as unhappy, tragic — and this is like

## *Brontë Biographies for Busy Beginners - Part III – Emily*

saying that ‘she never showed regard for any



*Keeper drawn by Emily Brontë*

human creature’ when we know for a fact that she showed more kindness and tolerance to her brother Branwell than any other member of the family at the Parsonage and that she was devoted to her sister Anne. There is a note in her diary that sheds light on her contentment and serene happiness when the other Brontës were in the midst of their various emotional entanglements and fantasies. You gather from the note that Charlotte and Branwell are glooming about the Parsonage as usual:

**EMILY:** I am quite contented for myself ... seldom or never troubled with nothing to do and merely desiring that everybody could be as comfortable as myself and as undesponding and then we should have a very tolerable world of it.

**JULIE:** The power of *Wuthering Heights* was not recognized in Emily’s lifetime. Scarcely a year after its publication Emily Brontë was dead. She caught cold at the funeral of her brother, Branwell, in September 1848 and after this she never went outside the door of the Parsonage again. Consumption developed almost immediately and, after an agonising three months when she refused to see a doctor,

refused to rest, insisted on performing her domestic duties, resented any expression of sympathy, she was torn from life on December 9, 1848. To Charlotte, we must give the last word, for her description of Emily’s final days on earth have never been bettered by any biographer.

**CHARLOTTE:** My sister Emily first declined. The details of her illness are deep branded in my memory, but to dwell on them, either in thought or in narrative, is not in my power. Never in all her life had she lingered over any task, and she did not linger now. She made haste to leave us. Yet, while she physically perished, mentally she grew stronger than we had known her. I looked on her with an anguish of wonder and love. I have seen nothing like it; but, indeed, I have never seen her parallel in anything. Stronger than a man, simpler than a child, her nature stood alone.

**MUSIC** Sad Haunting. Oh of course ‘The Death of Nelson’.

As music fades...

**CHRISTOPHER:** No Coward soul is mine,  
No trembler in the world’s storm troubled  
sphere

I see heaven’s glories shine

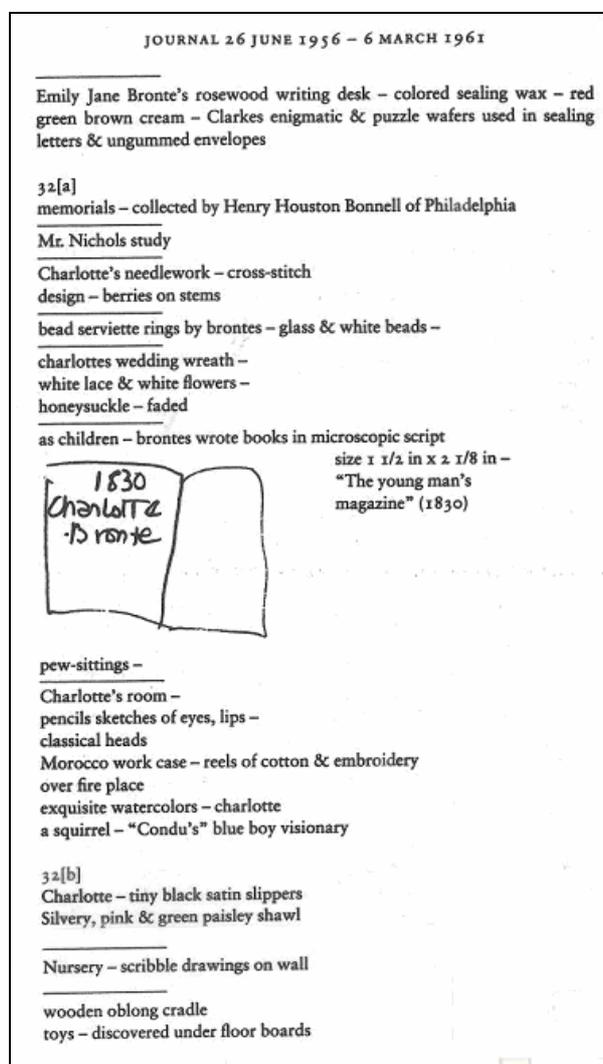
And faith shines equal arming me from fear.

## Sylvia Plath & Wuthering Heights

At the November meeting, Sarah Burns shared with us this poem by Sylvia Plath, named after Emily Brontë's work.

Sylvia Plath, American poet, novelist and short story writer, married fellow poet Ted Hughes in 1956, having met him at Cambridge. Following a long struggle with depression and the breakdown of her marriage, Plath committed suicide in February 1963, at the age of 30.

Her journals survive, and some extracts relating to the Brontës follow<sup>1</sup> showing Plath recording precise descriptions (from Haworth), creating writing ideas, poems, reading notes and drawings related to the Brontës.



Appendix 10 Journal 26/6/56 to 6/3/61<sup>1</sup>, *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath*, Ed by Karen V Kukil. Anchor Books, USA, Oct 2000.

## Wuthering Heights

Sylvia Plath

The horizons ring me like faggots,  
Tilted and disparate, and always unstable.  
Touched by a match, they might warm me,  
And their fine lines singe  
The air to orange  
Before the distances they pin evaporate,  
Weighting the pale sky with a soldier color.  
But they only dissolve and dissolve  
Like a series of promises, as I step forward.

There is no life higher than the grasstops  
Or the hearts of sheep, and the wind  
Pours by like destiny, bending  
Everything in one direction.

I can feel it trying  
To funnel my heat away.  
If I pay the roots of the heather  
Too close attention, they will invite me  
To whiten my bones among them.

The sheep know where they are,  
Browsing in their dirty wool-clouds,  
Grey as the weather.  
The black slots of their pupils take me in.  
It is like being mailed into space,  
A thin, silly message.  
They stand about in grandmotherly disguise,  
All wig curls and yellow teeth  
And hard, marbly baas.

I come to wheel ruts, and water  
Limpid as the solitudes  
That flee through my fingers.  
Hollow doorsteps go from grass to grass;<sup>∞∞</sup>  
Lintel and sill have unhinged themselves.  
Of people the air only  
Remembers a few odd syllables.  
It rehearses them moaningly:  
Black stone, black stone.

The sky leans on me, me, the one upright  
Among the horizontals.  
The grass is beating its head distractedly.  
It is too delicate  
For a life in such company;  
Darkness terrifies it.  
Now, in valleys narrow  
And black as purses, the house lights  
Gleam like small change.

## *Programme for 2011*

Meetings indicated by  are held at the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, 280 Pitt St Sydney, just around the corner from Town Hall station, (usually on Level 1). **Meeting charge is \$5.** [Note the increase.] Meetings begin at 10:30am with morning tea from 10am.

 **Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> February: Christine Alexander & Christopher Cooper**

### **The Brontës and Thomas Bewick's *History of British Birds***

Christopher will talk about Thomas Bewick's life and work and will show a short video. Christine will speak of the influence of the book on the art work of the Brontës – their drawings and paintings. The talk will be illustrated and also include reference to *Jane Eyre* and other writings by Charlotte and Branwell.

 **Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> April: Emily McGuire**

### ***Jane Eyre – A Book for Life***

Novelist Emily Maguire has read *Jane Eyre* more than a dozen times since the age of eleven. In this talk, she describes her deeply personal response to the book and how the text itself seems to change as the reader changes.

 **Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> May: Mandy Swann**

### **Charlotte Bronte and Romanticism**

Mandy examines the influence of the Romantic movement on the Brontës

**Friday 5<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> August WEEKEND CONFERENCE**

### **The Miss Brontës Academy for Refined Ladies and Distinguished Gentlemen Fountaindale Grand Manor & Renalagh Gardens, Robertson NSW Brontës and Education.**

There will be talks on education at the time of the Brontës, on their own education at Cowan Bridge, Roehead and the Pensionnat Héger in Brussels and their plans for an educational establishment at Haworth. There will also be a number of mini-lessons in the Victorian style. You can learn to draw ellipses like Emily, learn a little French from one of Charlotte's 'devoirs', learn about the geography of Africa, the land that inspired the Brontë Juvenila. Learn to write copperplate or to draw from still life under the direction of our Drawing Master.

For an Ensuite Premium room the cost will be \$350 for single occupancy or \$325 per person for dual occupancy. For a Heritage Premium room (shared bathroom) the cost will be \$325 for single occupancy or \$275 per person for dual occupancy.

 **Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> September: Rowan McAuley**

### **Who Are You Miss Snowe?**

A discussion about the dead ends, obfuscations, red herrings and misdirections in the narration of *Villette*. Rowan has published many children's books, including several titles in the *Go Girls* series. She recently gave an excellent course on the Brontës at the WEA.

 **Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> November: Cindy Broadbent**

### **Emily Bronte's use of Yorkshire dialect in *Wuthering Heights***

#### **'Eye up—sit ye dahn and open yer lugs!'**

In this talk Cindy examines the linguistic links between the Yorkshire dialect of the servant Joseph, and Old Norse and older forms of English. Cindy is a freelance writer and has written for the *Good Weekend* and various airline magazines. She is currently the international correspondent for the magazine of the Australian Museum in Canberra.

**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> December: Combined Christmas Lunch (12 For 12:30)**

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