



The Australian Brontë Association

Newsletter

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is with pleasure that I write at the end of my first year as President following the retirement of Christopher Cooper. We have welcomed 11 new members and our change of venue has proved to be very successful with many members and guests joining speakers and the committee for lunch after each meeting.

Our meetings have been informative, entertaining and well attended. In March Christine Alexander gave a fascinating talk on Charlotte Brontë and the Bible, illustrated by images of John Martin's biblical paintings. Will Christie delighted us in June with his talk on *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. Susannah Fullerton took us on a literary tour of London in the footsteps of Charlotte Brontë in August and Michelle Cavanagh gave us an insight into the Brontës and food in October after which we partook in her homemade Yorkshire Parkin.

I would like to thank the ABA Committee members for all their enthusiasm and hard work behind the scenes, and particularly to Christopher Cooper for his invaluable provision of AV services at our meetings, and to Christine Alexander, our Patron.

A special thank you to Catherine Barker and Susannah Fullerton for their support, encouragement, guidance and friendship throughout the year.

Thanks also to you, our members, for your attendance, support and camaraderie. One of the joys of being a member of ABA is meeting new friends who share a love of the Brontës and their work.

We have an interesting and varied program planned for 2013 which we are sure you will enjoy and look forward to seeing you at our AGM in February.

Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Sarah Burns

NEW BRONTË PORTRAIT

Following much debate, a mystery portrait has been confirmed by the National Portrait Gallery to be of the Brontë sisters by Edward Landseer.



The watercolour purporting to be of the three Brontë sisters was sold at auction on 24 May 2012 for £14,000, after its initial sale had been cancelled to allow for further research into the piece. The work was originally due to sell in Northamptonshire, UK at the end of April, but was withdrawn from the sale after a collector came forward with information relating to a similar piece by Sir Edwin Landseer, one of the 19th century's greatest artists.

This was the third previously unknown portrait claimed to be of the Brontës in a matter of months to be auctioned by JP Humbert Auctioneers. In December 2011 a small bonneted study of Emily (below right), believed to have been painted by John Hunter Thompson of Bradford around 1840, was sold for £23,836 and a second portrait sold for £4,600 (below left).

Ahead of the sale, Jonathan Humbert commented, 'I am amazed that this second painting has turned up on our doorstep. One unknown portrait of Emily Brontë is luck but two in two months is quite remarkable!' The Brontë Society is dubious about the claims.

On the latest discovery, he added: 'We just had one and then with all the media interest someone came into us with the second and now we have a third one, which is by far the most important painting.'

The picture is said to have 'appeared' two months after a sale of 300 19th century paintings and watercolours from three Devon farmhouses. Having paid £150, Mr James Gorin von Grosny went to collect what he thought was an informal picture of the three Russell sisters, the youngest of whom was reputed to be Landseer's illegitimate daughter. However, that picture couldn't be found and he was offered a refund or another picture of three sisters. The provenance of the latter is a mystery and how it turned up in a country sale 20 miles from the Russell sisters' home is unexplained.

There has been much discussion by experts and Brontë enthusiasts since the BBC broke the news of Mr Gorin von Grosny's purchase in August 2009. Web sites such as the Brontë Blog and Echostains make for interesting reading between the vendor, fans and skeptics.

After extensive research, the watercolour of the three sisters has now been attributed by a team from the National Portrait Gallery, who have confirmed its link to both Landseer and

the renowned literary sisters. 'We have spent quite some time trying to establish a link between Landseer and the Brontës and after cross referencing with other known pictures by Landseer, we are confident that this picture is as important as we hoped.' Mr Humbert said. He added that the picture was 'exciting and important' and that four years of research had established '10 sound evidential reasons that this is of the Brontë sisters'.



The work is signed EL and dated 1838. Landseer is known to have visited his friend,



John Nussey, at Bolton Hall in Yorkshire that year and Nussey's sister, Ellen, was a great friend of Charlotte Brontë, which could have led to a meeting. The portrait depicts a brooch and bracelet believed to have been worn by the sisters.

A sketch of a woman's leg, apparently with a 3 inch scar below the knee, was discovered on the back of the portrait. It has been suggested that Emily had a similar scar, after she fell on the moors. Mr Gorin von Grozny asserted that this sketch ties in with a painting by Charlotte of a shepherdess with the same scar below the knee, arguing that it may have been a self-portrait. 'Lycidas', based on 'Solitude at Dawn' by Johann Henry Fuselli, appears in *Art and the Brontës* by Christine Alexander and Jane Sellars, and features on the cover.

Trying to learn more about the portrait and its provenance has been fascinating. Hopefully one day more details of how the three sisters came to be painted by one of the most important artists of their time and where the picture has been until now will be revealed.

Sarah Burns

WUTHERING HEIGHTS

Film, directed by Andrea Arnold (2011)



Andrea Arnold's new film version of *Wuthering Heights* captures the aesthetic essence of Emily Brontë's novel. Marked by plenty of sublime windswept moor imagery, the film also highlights the dirty, flea-bitten nature of the Earnshaw home.

The use of black actors, Solomon Glave as the younger Heathcliff and James Howson as the older Heathcliff, is brilliant. The actual cultural and racial identity of Heathcliff in Brontë's novel is

the subject of scholarly debate and supposition – usually Heathcliff is portrayed as a Gypsy child off the streets, but key to the novel is that Heathcliff is miles below Cathy in the social pecking order of class-obsessed 19th century England. When set in a period in which the slave trade was *not* a distant memory, racial difference makes the social gulf between Cathy and Heathcliff even more insidious and cruel.

As always in film versions, the focus is on the love story – if it can be called that – between Cathy and Heathcliff. The action stops with Cathy's death and there is no Mr Lockwood framing the narrative. But Arnold concentrates on the middle narrative, and the film is thus slow going and excruciatingly boring at times.

A big emphasis is placed on the violence inherent to the attraction between Cathy and Heathcliff, an emphasis that is quite gruesome at times and includes a necrophilia scene. The young Cathy, played by Shannon Beer, licks Heathcliff's wounds and the pair engage in an erotically charged sado-masochistic mud fight. As in the novel, the violent attraction between Cathy and Heathcliff is less passionate than it is disturbing and repulsive, as both are shown to take a visceral delight in hurting each other physically and emotionally.

This *Wuthering Heights* is challenging viewing – it is certainly not a 'date' film – but definitely worth a look.

Reviewed by Mandy Swann

Congratulations to Dr Mandy Swann, Research Associate, School of the Arts & Media, UNSW, and ABA Vice President, who has had two papers accepted for publication: – Shelley's Utopian Seascapes" will be published in *Studies in Romanticism*; and her article entitled, "The Destroying Angel of Tempest: the Sea in *Villette*" will be published in *Brontë Studies*.

WHO'S READING THE BRONTËS?

In the *Sun-Herald* on 9 September, under 'Books that changed me' author, and commercial airline pilot, Helene Young listed *Jane Eyre* as one of her five. Australian writer Kathy Lette, when recently asked her top five novels, mentioned *Wuthering Heights* as number 3 (From the Brontë Blog).

The Times interviewed JK Rowling and asked which writer she would like to have to dinner: 'I discounted Jane Austen, who is on some days my favourite author of all time, because I think she'd be a bit scary. Was it Emily Brontë who said she had a mind like a small pair of scissors?' [It was actually Harold Nicolson who described Jane Austen's mind like a very small, sharp pair of scissors.]

George Lucas' *Star Wars* saga is likened to the Brontës' imaginary worlds by *The Chronicle of Higher Education*: 'In his epochal six-film *Star Wars* saga, he fused ancient hero legends from East and West with futuristic science fiction and created characters who have entered the dream lives of millions. He constructed a vast, original, self-referential mythology like that of James Macpherson's pseudo-Celtic Ossian poems, which swept Europe in the late 18th century, or the Angria and Gondal story cycle spun by the Brontë children in their isolation in the Yorkshire Moors.' (*Camille Paglia*)

Kate Willis in *The Independent* tries to find classic book inspiration for new fashion collections: *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë - 'Say goodbye to neon brights and colour-blocking, as next season you'll be seeing your wardrobe in black and white. And maybe grey. Quakerish governess Jane 'Plain' Eyre would certainly approve of this obsession with minimalist chic. When Mr Rochester tries to dress her up in satin and lace party frocks she insists on keeping her dour grey-and-black uniform. A way of asserting her independence as well as her sense of identity, in case "I shall not be your Jane Eyre any longer, but an ape in a harlequin's jacket – a jay in borrowed plumes". Roland Mouret, Céline and Stella McCartney obviously agree. Their pared-down, monochrome looks for spring/summer 2013 are severe, simple and devastatingly cool. Better stick last summer's lime-green lace dress in the attic and hope there's an accidental fire."

OVENDEN WIND FARM

The Brontë Society in the UK has submitted a representation to Calderdale Council objecting to the planning application made by Yorkshire Wind Power Ltd in respect of Ovenden Wind Farm. In August ABA members were advised of the proposal by the energy giant E-On to erect nine enormous wind turbines at Ovenden, four miles from Haworth. They will be twice the height of Nelson's Column and will tower over the Worth Valley – easily visible from Top Withins.

Sally McDonald, Chairman of The Brontë Society Council wrote: 'We know that some members of the Society do not dislike wind farms, but we hope all members will dislike the impact on the area this one would have – and will want to register an online individual objection.

ABA member in the ACT, Ros Russell, wrote in response:

This is appalling news. In Haworth last year there was already one huge wind turbine visible from the village, which is sufficient interruption, in my view, to an internationally significant cultural landscape. While I am sympathetic to the need to achieve greater renewable energy resources for Britain, this should not be at the expense of a cultural landscape of great significance to the worldwide community of Brontë enthusiasts, and those who value the preservation of wild landscape areas. Clearly legal judgements have already created a precedent for valuing culture over renewable energy, which is gratifying in this period of economic rationalism.

It is a shame that the Brontë Moorland is not on the UK World Heritage list - that would give it some protection against this type of development. But World Heritage inscription is a lengthy business and the damage will have been done by the time it is assessed, if this goes ahead, and the cultural landscape would be irretrievably compromised in any case.

Ros Russell



Top left: Top Withins - How the picturesque Thornton Moor in West Yorkshire looks now. Top right: not so picturesque. Above: How Thornton Moor may look in the future.

YORKSHIRE PARKIN

Following her talk on the Brontës and Food at our October meeting, Michelle Cavanagh shared her home made Yorkshire Parkin with ABA members.

Parkin is essentially the Northern English form of gingerbread. Different parkins are characterised by where they are made and Yorkshire Parkin, one of the most famous, is made using oats. Yorkshire Parkin is eaten on Bonfire Night, 5 November, celebrating the famous failure of Yorkshireman Guy Fawkes to blow up the Houses on Parliament in 1605.

Michelle has kindly offered to share the recipe with anyone interested. A copy will be available at the next meeting.

HOW I MET CHARLOTTE

BRONTË IN PARIS

Late last year a miniature book, written by Charlotte at the age of 14 was auctioned by Sotheby's. It went for £690,000 and was bought by the Musée des Lettres et Manuscrits, outbidding the Brontë Parsonage Museum.

It holds a story set in Glass Town and contains a scene that is the forerunner of the scene in *Jane Eyre* where Bertha Mason sets fire to Thornfield Hall. The tiny book measures 4cm by 6cm and contains 4000 words on 19 pages.

I heard about the sale and was disappointed, like the Brontë Parsonage Museum, that it had gone 'abroad'. But then I forgot about it until, on the recent Literary Tour of Northern France with Susannah Fullerton I found myself in the Museum of Letters and Manuscripts. But the penny didn't drop as to what was in store. It was only when I saw a large glass case containing the tiny manuscript that I realised that here I was. If the manuscript had not 'gone abroad' who knows when I would have got around to seeing it!

A little mystery remains to be answered. When I saw a news video on the web about this acquisition I noticed that the little book was inside a glass pyramid, like the one at the Louvre. But when I saw it the glass case was square. I wonder why it had been changed?

Christopher Cooper



Top: The tiny Juvenilia text on show at the Musée des Lettres et Manuscrits,
Middle: A closeup of the text in its new case - beautifully displayed.
Bottom: The glass case, highly suitable for the Glass Town Story, keeping the treasure safe.

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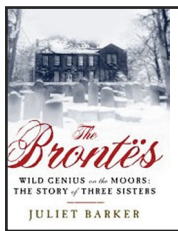
## NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following people who have joined the ABA during 2012:

Wendy Blencowe  
Abigail Hall  
John & Faye Hope-Allan  
Jen Kirkby  
Bill & Jacqueline King  
Catherine Shannon

We hope you enjoy your membership.

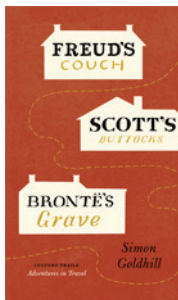
## NEW BOOKS



### BIOGRAPHY

#### **The Brontës - Juliet Barker**

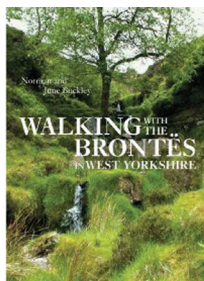
A new, updated edition of this landmark biography is now available



### TRAVEL

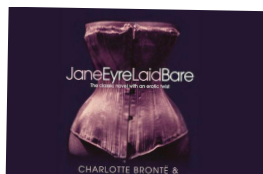
#### **Freud's Couch, Scott's Buttocks, Brontë's grave – Simon Goldhill**

Goldhill's Victorian pilgrimage (by train and foot) to five of Britain's essential literary locations, including the Brontë Parsonage at Haworth



#### **Walking with the Brontës in West Yorkshire – Norman and June Buckley**

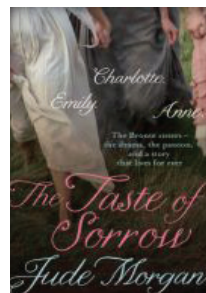
Follow in the footsteps of the Brontës as Norman Buckley unites the typical features from walking guides with Brontë history.



### FAN FICTION

#### **Jane Eyre laid bare – Eve Sinclair**

Charlotte Brontë's classic novel has been given an erotic twist.

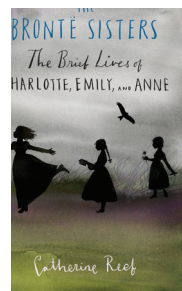


#### **The Taste of Sorrow –**

#### **Jude Morgan**

'The ultimate family story': The drama, the passion, and a story that lives for ever... Once upon a time there were three sisters, bound by love and suffering, growing up in wild isolation in a lonely house on the moor.

Their story will astonish you: their passionate, dangerous closeness; their struggle against the world; their determination to rise above the fates of their parents and their other lost sisters, to become more than the world ever thought they could be. You don't know their story, but you think they do. They were the Brontës.'



#### **The Brontë Sisters – Catherine Reef**

From *The Secret Writer* blog: In this sometimes heartbreaking young adult biography, Catherine Reef explores the turbulent lives of these literary siblings and the oppressive times in which they lived. Brontë fans will also

revel in the insights into their favorite novels, the plethora of poetry, and the outstanding collection of more than sixty black-and-white archival images.

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MEMBERS' SURVEY

Thank you to all who participated in the 'Survey for Brontë Enthusiasts' during the year.

- * The novel most were first introduced to was *Jane Eyre*, primarily at school.
- * Enthusiasm for the Brontës came through reading of the novels, watching the films and learning about the lives of the Brontës themselves which, as one member described, are 'as good as fiction!'
- * The passion portrayed by all the sisters in their novels was remarked on, with specific mention given to Charlotte whose character portrayal and plot development is 'peerless' and Emily is 'unique and breathtaking'.

NEWS FROM YORKSHIRE

The future of the Brontë birthplace is currently reaching the newspapers in the UK.

The *Yorkshire Post* reports that, a campaign has been launched to buy the birthplace of the Brontës and restore it to its former glory. The house in Market Street in the village of Thornton, Bradford, was the birthplace of Charlotte, Emily, Anne and their brother Branwell before the family moved to Haworth. [You might remember some years ago Christopher Cooper reported that the house was up for sale. It's now back on the market.]

Once run as a museum, the house is now unoccupied and thought to have suffered from flooding – but villagers are keen to see its place in the lives of the famous literary family secured for future generations.

Thornton and Allerton councillor, Valerie Binney, who is among those spearheading the campaign, said: 'It's our heritage. Patrick Brontë and his wife lived in that house – he was the vicar of Thornton. We think if we can bring it back to how it was it will regenerate Market Street. If we could get someone to back us and buy it we could then find someone to be the curator and maybe live there – you could get someone who is really interested in the Brontës.'

In the late 1990s the house was bought and restored by the novelist Barbara Whitehead who opened it up as a museum before having to sell the property in 2007. Councillor Binney said: 'When Barbara Whitehead had it we had volunteer guides and opened it up two or three times a week and had lots of tourists coming to see the Brontës' birthplace. We want to bring it back to how it was because it is very good for the village. I would say it would not cost more than £150,000 to buy. It's not a fortune by today's standards.'

The newly-formed Brontë Birthplace Trust (2012) hopes to attract enough funding to buy the property. Christine Went, heritage and conservation officer for the Brontë Society, said: 'We are very much in support of any viable attempt to buy and restore the building. As a charity, we cannot involve ourselves with other charities other than moral support but we certainly wish the group well.'

The *Telegraph* and *Argus* also covers the story:

Councillor Binney said last night's meeting was to discuss ways of getting people interested in buying the property. She said: 'We want to raise the money to buy it and bring it back as it should be, the Brontë birthplace for tourists. It would be marvellous if we could raise enough money to buy it. It is such a shame it was sold to someone who then rented it out. We are in the early stages of trying to get funding. It's quite something to have a house where the Brontës were born in the village, and is something worth preserving.'

Michael Stewart, a writer who lives close to the museum, said: 'When Barbara Whitehead ran it as a museum we had coachloads of Japanese, American and European tourists coming to have lunch in the village and the place was booming. She restored the house to how it was when the Brontës lived there in 1815.'

Anyone interested in the property should contact Councillor Binney on 0011 44 7730

DONATIONS TO ABA

Thank you to Debbie Williams for donating a copy of *Jane Eyre* for our Christmas Raffle and to Mona Shaw for donating books and other items which have been added to the ABA Library.



July 2012 - A press release from the Brontë Parsonage Museum:



**The Brontë Parsonage
Museum & Brontë Society**



New Charlotte Brontë letter at Parsonage Museum

An important letter has returned to the Brontë Parsonage Museum, 150 years after Charlotte Brontë wrote it there. It betrays her sympathy for poor governesses.

Miss Mary Holmes was a struggling writer and musician originally from Gargrave, North Yorkshire, who wrote to Charlotte for advice on her book. She worked as music teacher to the daughters of novelist William Thackeray, author of *Vanity Fair*, and he had already kindly found someone to review the book in a national newspaper, as well as offering to help pay for it to be privately printed. Thackeray passed on Charlotte's address so that Miss Holmes could send it to the now-famous Haworth author for some advice – they came from villages just 20 miles apart.

Charlotte's response, dated 22 April 1852, and sent from the Parsonage in Haworth, was friendly and encouraging – which was not always the case: the author of *Jane Eyre*, by now a bestselling literary star, could be dismissive of fellow authors seeking advice. Either she was keen to do Thackeray a favour, though, or she spotted genuine talent in Miss Holmes's work, for she wrote that the book: 'seems to [me] very clever and very learned. You erred in telling me to skip the first chapters; I am glad I disobeyed the injunction'.

Miss Holmes has clearly mentioned in her letter to Charlotte that she has worked as a governess. Charlotte replies: 'You are right in supposing that I must feel a degree of interest in the details of a Governess-life. That life has on me the hold of actual experience; to all who live it – I cannot but incline with a certain sympathy; and any kind feeling they express for me – comes pleasantly and meets with grateful acceptance'.

This is, of course, the same Charlotte, who, in 1839 wrote to her friend Ellen Nussey about life as a governess: 'I will only ask you to imagine the miseries of a reserved wretch like me – thrown at once into the midst of a large Family – proud as peacocks and wealthy as Jews.' Charlotte herself had not always had a favourable response when writing to the literary stars of the day for advice. The poet laureate Robert Southey famously wrote to her: 'Literature cannot be the business of a woman's life, and it ought not to be'.

Brontë Parsonage Museum Director Andrew McCarthy commented on the new acquisition: 'In 1852 Charlotte was riding the crest of her success; life was very different from when she too had been a struggling governess. Of all the Brontës Charlotte was probably the most ambitious; a letter such as this gives a quick glimpse into what it meant for her to have achieved the fame she had sought for so long.'

The letter was purchased from an auction at Bonham's in London on 12th June 2012. It will be displayed at the Brontë Parsonage Museum from early 2013.

During the annual winter closure, the museum will be redecorated so that it looks more like the famous sisters' home than ever before when it reopens in February. An exhibition titled *Heaven Is a Home: The Story of the Brontës Parsonage* will follow in March.

BRONTË-INSPIRED GARDEN WINS GOLD CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW 2012



Wild but gentle; Chelsea's take on the path (now signposted in Japanese) to the Haworth moors.

A Brontë inspired garden won the gold medal at this year's flower show. The Brontës' Yorkshire Garden features elements of the moorland characteristic of the Pennine Moors which surrounded them. The designer said it aimed to convey the emotional essence of the place that inspired the sisters. The garden is based on a particular location often visited by the sisters, where a bridge now known as the Brontë Bridge crosses a moorland stream. The CEO of the Leeds-based group behind the garden said: "The Brontës' Yorkshire Garden will showcase to the world the wild and wonderful landscape of Yorkshire as a source of inspiration for some of the finest literary works of fiction."

The garden is based on a particular location often visited by the sisters.

MEMBERSHIPS DUE

Membership subscriptions are due, and payment will be accepted at the Christmas luncheon on 1 December and at the first meeting 2 February 2013, or cheques can be posted to the Treasurer Michael Links at 13 Greygum Place, Gympie Bay, 2227.

- \$30 standard membership
- \$40 two members at the same address
- \$25 for members of the UK Brontë Society
- \$20 for fulltime students, concession card holders and overseas members
- \$15 for regional NSW and interstate members

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DUKE OF BRONTE

Thank you to Patricia Stebbings-Moore for finding an article published in the July edition of History Today entitled 'Sicily's British Occupation'.

July 2012 was acknowledged as being the 200th anniversary of the short-lived 'English' constitution in Sicily. During the Napoleonic Wars the island was continuously occupied by Britain for nine years from 1806 to 1815 with a force of more than 15,000 men. During this time there was a real possibility that Sicily could have become another British colony, as did Malta in 1814.

Sicily had been ruled from Naples by a branch of the Spanish Bourbons since 1734. The island came into Britain's sights following the outbreak of war with France in 1793. Pitt the Younger wanted a strong naval presence in the Mediterranean and valued an alliance with the kingdom of Naples and Sicily for its fleet.

When Napoleon invaded Naples in 1798, King Ferdinand IV of Naples (III of Sicily and after 1816, first of the Kingdom of Two Sicilies) fled to Palermo on Admiral Nelson's flagship; it was the King's first visit to Sicily in 40 years. Nelson was rewarded with the title Duke of Bronte and a huge estate on the island, which remained in the family of his descendants until 1981.

The King's stay on this occasion was brief, as a treaty with Napoleon in 1801 allowed him to return to Naples the following year. However, the recurrence of war compelled the royal family to seek refuge once again in Palermo in February 1806.

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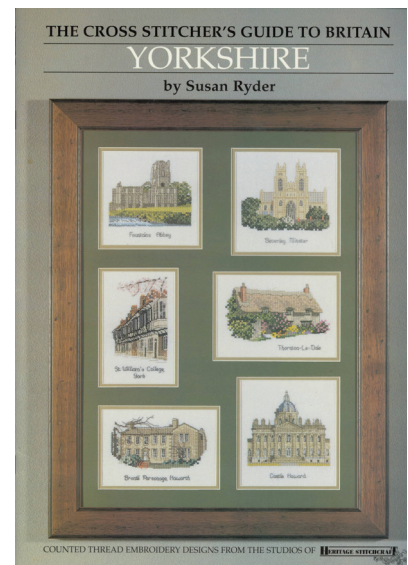


*Horatio Viscount Nelson, KB, Duke of Bronte.*


### THE CROSS-STITCHER'S GUIDE TO YORKSHIRE






As an avid embroiderer and collector of cross-stitch patterns old and new, I was delighted to receive this pattern book from Meghan Hayward in October. Members who are interested in viewing these or other Brontë-related samplers and patterns, or learning more about the history of the Brontë samplers compiled by our former Treasurer, Ann Lock, please let me know.

**Sarah Burns**



## 2013 MEETING PROGRAM

 This symbol indicates meetings held at the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel, Level 1, 169-171 Castlereagh Street, Sydney, between Park and Market Streets, just up from Town Hall Station. Meeting charge is \$5. Morning tea from 10am. Meeting begins at 10.30am.

-  **2 Feb**     **Dr Christopher Cooper – Was Charlotte Fair in Depicting Cowan Bridge School as Lowood in Jane Eyre?**  
When *Jane Eyre* was first published many people recognised the infamous Lowood School as the Cowan Bridge Clergy Daughters' School that Charlotte and her sisters attended. Then when Mrs Gaskell wrote her biography of Charlotte in 1857 the whole world knew of the connection. This sparked a debate in the *Leeds Mercury*, the *Halifax Guardian* and other publications. In the red corner, defending Mrs Gaskell, was Arthur Bell Nicholls. In the blue corner defending the Reverend Carus Wilson was his son, and also Sarah Baldwin, a former pupil. We will begin with watching the Lowood scenes from a film version of *Jane Eyre*. This will be followed by dramatised readings of the letters to the editor. You can then make up your own mind as to whether or not Charlotte's likening Lowood to Reverend Carus Wilson's school was fair.
-  **6 April**     **Dr Michael Giffin – Jane Eyre as Bildungsroman**  
There is a relationship between the novel that explores the heroine's development (Bildungsroman) and the intellectual, cultural, moral, and political spirit of the age in which she lives (Zeitgeist). Jane Austen's definition of maturity is more neoclassical and influenced by Locke's Enlightenment definition of human understanding. Charlotte Brontë's definition of maturity is more romantic and influenced by Hegel's post-Enlightenment definition of human relationships. This talk looks at *Jane Eyre* as Bildungsroman within the Hegelian Zeitgeist of Brontë's age.
-  **1 June**     **Dr Robert Dingley – Was Heathcliff Black?**  
'Oho! I declare he is that strange acquisition my late neighbour made, in his journey to Liverpool – a little Lascar, or an American or Spanish castaway.' – Mr Linton, Ch 6, *Wuthering Heights*.
-  **3 Aug**     **A/Prof Anne Collette – Melancholia in Charlotte Brontë's Life and Work**  
Details TBA
-  **5 Oct**     **Rowan McAuley – Saving St John – The importance of the alternative romance story in Jane Eyre.**  
Everyone is aware of the great romance between Jane Eyre and Rochester. Yet she has an alternative suitor in the second half of the novel – St John Rivers. Although she chooses Rochester she devotes the last page of 'her' novel to St John. And why does Brontë give so much space to exploring this other man during Jane's estrangement from Rochester?
- 7 Dec noon**     **Christmas Lunch with the NSW Dickens Society**  
Venue TBA

**Members are strongly encouraged to submit pieces for this, their Newsletter.**