



The Australian Brontë Association

Newsletter

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A DEATH AND A BIRTH

by Catherine Barker RN

With the birth of the new Royal baby imminent, we are reminded that during her early pregnancy the Duchess of Cambridge suffered from the same complaint as did Charlotte Brontë who subsequently died from the effects of the condition which we now know as *Hyperemesis Gravidarum*.

Many women suffer from morning sickness in early pregnancy, but *Hyperemesis Gravidarum* is a much more extreme form, and fortunately is much rarer. Whereas morning sickness may affect up to 80% of pregnant women, it is estimated that only 0.3 – 1.5% of pregnant women suffer from *Hyperemesis Gravidarum*. This illness derives its name from the Greek words for excessive (*Hyper*) and vomiting (*Emesis*), and the Latin term for a pregnant woman (*Gravidarum*).

Symptoms include intractable nausea and vomiting which then lead to dehydration. There is great physical and emotional stress and if left untreated, the condition leads to malnutrition for both mother and unborn child. It usually occurs during the first trimester of pregnancy i.e. 8 – 12 weeks, and disappears by the start of the

second trimester but in some cases can continue until birth. It is thought that Charlotte was about 16 weeks pregnant when she died. The cause of this illness remains unknown other than a



hormonal imbalance due to pregnancy, but why this should affect some women and not others is unclear. A genetic disposition and previous health conditions are possible factors. Like her siblings,

Charlotte never possessed robust health, and her slight frame, the evidence for which may be seen in the size of her dress on display at Haworth, undoubtedly lacked the stamina to withstand an illness of this nature.

Charlotte and Catherine received very different medical care and it is sadly interesting to compare their treatments. Whereas Catherine was immediately admitted to a top London hospital for treatment, Charlotte was nursed at home by “the tenderest nurse”, her husband Arthur Bell Nicholls. She was



kept as comfortable as possible whilst food and fluids were urged upon her. Mrs Gaskell reported that a friend had commented “A wren would have starved on what she ate during those last six weeks”.

At times Charlotte did manage to take small quantities of beef tea and spoonfuls of water or wine, but by the end she was not even able to tolerate plain water. “My sufferings are very great – my nights indescribable – sickness with scarce a reprieve” she wrote to her friend Amelia Taylor. It is no wonder that her husband wrote that she died of ‘exhaustion’ when after a three month struggle she finally succumbed on 31st March 1855.

Some 158 years later, treatment has drastically altered with the increase of medical knowledge. Nowadays the condition is treated as a medical emergency because of the potential effects of severe dehydration – an



accompanying weight loss, electrolyte imbalance, vitamin deficiency and eventual liver damage. Sufferers today are admitted to hospital where as well as anti-emetic drugs to aid the extreme nausea, rehydration is administered via an intravenous drip. Small liquid meals are then usually given, and if tolerated, are followed by a light bland diet until the patient is eating and drinking normally again. Extra nutritional supplements may also be administered to help amend the deficiency.

If only such treatment had been available in the mid Victorian era, the tragedy of Charlotte’s early death could well have been avoided. So amidst the celebrations that will accompany the birth of the next heir to the throne this July, spare a thought for poor Charlotte and her own unborn Brontë heir.

WHAT’S ON IN THE BRONTË WORLD IN 2013

In January and February there was an exhibition at the University of Leeds, *Visions of Angria*, where rarely seen manuscript material, written by Branwell Brontë from the Brotherton Library Special Collections, were exhibited. They were illustrated by students from the Leeds College of Art’s Visual Communications course.

At the end of January the University of Leeds hosted *Re-Visioning the Brontës*, a conference in conjunction with the exhibitions ‘*Wildness Between the Lines*’ (Leeds College of Art) and the aforementioned ‘*Visions of Angria*’. The conference explored the recent ‘re-visioning’ of the Brontës through critically examining artistic responses and interpretations of their work.

The big event of 2013 in the Brontë world was the new exhibition at the Brontë Parsonage Museum which opened on March 23, *Heaven is*

a Home: the Story of the Brontës’ Parsonage whose focus is on the house itself after recent and extensive research. The Parsonage will be redecorated in order to make it look as close as possible like the place the Brontë family knew and – mostly – loved.

Another exhibition will take place soon in Brussels at the Musée des Lettres et Manuscrits, *Charlotte Brontë in Brussels* (June 18-August 4). It will show Charlotte Brontë’s letters to M. Heger, lent by the British Library.

Finally in September (11th to 14th) the Literary Juvenilia Conference in Durham will include our patron, Christine Alexander as one of its key speakers. Though distance prevents most of us in Australia in participating in these exciting events it is nice to know that Christine is able to keep us in touch with what is happening in other parts of the world.

BOOK REVIEW: DOWN THE BELLIARD STEPS: DISCOVERING THE BRONTËS IN BRUSSELS

Helen MacEwan

Brussels Brontë Editions (3 Sep 2012)

ISBN-13: 978-0957377202

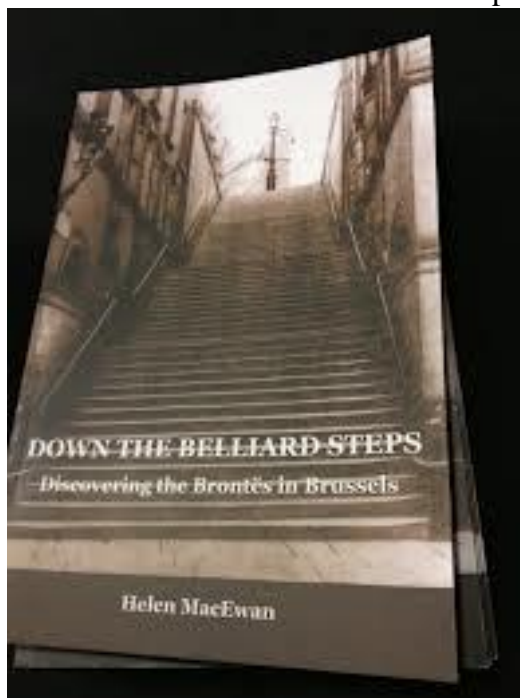
Review from Brontë Blogspot

Whenever I stand in such a place in the Brussels of today, there is always a feeling of incongruity and surprise at the thought that the Brontës were here.

So writes Helen McEwan and such will be the experience of anyone who has followed on the footsteps of the Brontës anywhere, even in Haworth, where it is a given. But it is true that the Brontës are so closely associated with Haworth, Yorkshire and England that we often forget that Charlotte and Emily lived abroad for a while. It is easier to remember in Charlotte's case, with her many letters from there, her unforgettable infatuation with M. Heger and the influence on her prose, both in the style, partly due to M. Heger's own lessons, and her plots, particularly *The Professor* and *Villette*. It is easier to forget, however, in Emily's case. As far as we modern readers can tell, not a trace of influence is left in her one novel or in her poetry. Brussels, then, serves as a good metaphor for what we know of each sister and how they approached and how we approach their respective works.

As Helen McEwan, founder of the Brussels Brontë group, points out, most biographies tend to treat the Brussels stay as a parenthesis. And while this may be true for Emily, for Charlotte it was a catharsis. We all rightly flock to Haworth and surrounding places in Yorkshire to

find the Brontës. Some may even venture into London for a quick look at a few landmarks (many of them no longer extant, though) but fewer even set foot in Brussels. There's of course the fact that a large part of the Brussels the Brontës knew, particularly the Pensionnat on the Rue d'Isabelle and most of the Isabelle quarter, were wiped out at the beginning of the 20th century. This would seem like a problem but as Helen MacEwan will help you see throughout her book, part of the appeal of the Pensionnat is precisely that it has vanished yet



lives on so vividly in the pages of *The Professor* and *Villette*. If it had been preserved as a museum like the Parsonage, today it would probably be sandwiched between a Carrefour Express and an EXKI self-service restaurant in a Rue d'Isabelle changed beyond recognition.

And while it sounds a little like cold comfort to us, we still see what she means.

Down the Belliard Steps is an enjoyable, cosy read that feels more like a chat with a Brontëite friend than an actual read. Actually, the

topic of friendship and connection through the Brontës is a running theme in her book: finding people with whom you can discuss the Brontës endlessly face to face is something many of us have experienced but can't get tired of. It is actually how the Brussels Brontë Group came to be: through Helen's wish for like-minded people in Brussels. Throughout the book, Helen MacEwan and her fellow members touch on topics that will be near and dear to every Brontëite's heart. It's mainly about all things Brussels: from how the Brussels Brontë Group was born and how it grew, to profiles on the first members, to books on the Brussels-Brontë connections, to commemorative plaques, to

guided walks, to events and to research. It even tells how the latest devoir by Charlotte Brontë, which surfaced in early 2012 was discovered. It also includes many pictures, both modern and historical, Brontë-inspired art, Brontë-related documents, etc. But the basic concepts: surprise at walking in the Brontës' footsteps, amazement at how these long-deceased women can still bring together people from all sorts of backgrounds and nationalities, how close and

how relevant they still feel today, despite the much-changed surroundings, is something every Brontëite will find enjoyable.

Down the Belliard Steps is an all-encompassing Brussels experience without leaving your comfortable sofa. A side-effect, though, is the urge to book a trip to Brussels and immerse yourself in it all.

THE MYSTERIOUS AND NEFARIOUS CHARLOTTE BRONTË

by Christopher Cooper

I have a special section, in my Brontë bookcase, for biographies of Charlotte that have sinister overtones. The most shocking of all is *The Crimes of Charlotte Brontë*, by James Tully. Then there are *The Secret of Charlotte Brontë* by Frederika MacDonald, *The Confessions of Charlotte Brontë*, by John Malham-Dembleby, *The Secret Diaries of Charlotte Brontë*, by Syrie James and *The Secret Adventures of Charlotte Brontë* by Laura Joh Reynolds. There seems to be a whole genre consisting of books that have turned Charlotte Brontë into a sinister and mysterious woman.

And a *passionate* woman. There is the book *Charlotte Brontë and the Mysteries of Love* by Elizabeth Imlay. Many mainstream biographies suggest that Charlotte and passion were synonymous. The biography by Lyndall Gordon is *Charlotte Brontë: A Passionate Life* and the one by Margaret Crompton is called *Passionate Search*.

What was it about this prim and proper daughter of a Church of England minister,

living a sheltered life in a remote Yorkshire village, that has inspired books like these? I've never heard of a book called *The Crimes of Elizabeth Gaskell* or even *The Confessions of Mary Shelley*. Syrie James wrote a similar book about Jane Austen and all she could come up with for a title was *The Lost Memoirs of Jane Austen*. "Lost Memoirs" suggest mere carelessness while "Secret Diaries" suggests Charlotte had something to hide. So was Charlotte a passionate and secret woman who maybe was guilty of some illicit passion or even some darker crime?



Let's begin with the earliest of these books. *The Secret Life of Charlotte Brontë* was published in 1914 following the publication of Charlotte's letters to Monsieur Heger. These had recently been donated to the British Museum by his son and

consisted of several letters written by Charlotte to her teacher after she had left Brussels. They had been torn up and discarded by Monsieur Heger, only to be stitched together and kept by Madame Heger!

The book is in two parts. The first part discusses the letters and tackles the question of the nature of Charlotte's relationship with Monsieur Heger. The second part consists of the author's reminiscences of her own schooldays at the Pensionnat some twenty years later. Monsieur Heger was still teaching there and Macdonald's memories throw some light on the nature of the man.

Charlotte wrote to Mr Heger several times after she returned to Haworth but only got one perfunctory reply – the sort of note that one would write to any ex-pupil. Her letters, as she waited in vain for a reply to her previous letters became increasingly passionate. The letter dated 8th January 1845 is quite intense.

Day and night I find neither rest nor peace – if I sleep I have tormenting dreams in which I see you are always severe, always saturnine and angry with me –

Forgive me then Monsieur if I take the step of writing to you again – How can I bear my life unless I make an effort to alleviate its sufferings?

I know you will lose patience with me when you read this letter – You will say that I am over-excited – that I have black thoughts etc. So be it Monsieur – I do not seek to justify myself, I submit to all kinds of reproaches – all I know – is that I cannot – that I will not resign myself to the total loss of my master's friendship – I would rather undergo the greatest bodily pains than have my heart constantly lacerated by searing regrets. If my master withdraws his friendship from me entirely I shall be absolutely without hope – if he gives me a little friendship = a very little – I shall be content – happy. I would have a motive for living – for working.

Monsieur, the poor do not need a great deal to live on – they ask only the crumbs of bread which fall from the rich men's table – but if they are refused these crumbs – they die of hunger – No more do I need a great deal of affection from those I love – I would not know what to do with a whole and complete friendship – I am not accustomed to it – but you showed a little interest in me in days gone by when I was your pupil in Brussels – and I cling to the preservation of this little interest – I cling to it as I would cling on to life.



Did you ever feel this way about any of your teachers? It's not uncommon for a young girl of 15 to get a crush on a teacher. But a couple of months after leaving school it is all but forgotten. Charlotte, however, was no impressionable teenager. She

was 26 when she met Monsieur Heger, 28 when she left, and she was feeling the pain of a perceived loss of his affection some 12 months afterwards.

There is no doubting that those who describe Charlotte as "passionate" are not exaggerating. Of course from a modern perspective it is easy to conjecture that Charlotte and Monsieur Heger must have been having an affair. Only a physical relationship could awaken such passion. But we cannot look at it through modern eyes.

In today's world we can't conceive of any level of relationship, between a man and an unrelated woman, other than an uncomplicated friendship on the one hand and a full on physical relationship on the other. This makes it difficult to understand types of relationships that have existed throughout history but are absent in today's world. For example the whole idea of "courtly love" is a closed book to most modern readers.

On the one hand there is no doubt that Monsieur Heger had a strong regard for Charlotte, even to the extent of affection. All his other pupils were young silly girls whereas Charlotte was a mature woman, and what's more, a woman with a powerful intellect. It is not surprising that he had long and deep conversations with her. It is not surprising that she inspired jealousy on the part of Madame Heger, who insisted that her husband ask Charlotte to leave.

But in such a close community, with the ever watchful Madame Heger knowing all that went on in the school, it is inconceivable that there would have been the opportunity for an affair. Besides, men are able to compartmentalise their feelings and there is no suggestion that Charlotte supplanted his wife in his affections. It was just that he could talk to Charlotte at a level that was not possible with his wife.

On her side, Charlotte blossomed in having a man take an interest in her. But there again her feelings toward him were primarily on an intellectual level. True, it would have been somewhat different had they both been of the same sex. Yes, it is true that the intellectual was tinged with a little bit of the sexual, but that is to use the word in its broadest sense. She admired the masculinity of his mind and he admired her passionate outlook on life. The thought of physical contact would have been far from their thoughts.

It was a somewhat curious relationship however. You could even say that they engaged in S & M, but not at the physical level. He didn't chain her to her bed and whip her – things they say excites sexual desire. But, by her own admission, he was very severe with her, bordering on verbal cruelty. Yet she seemed to enjoy it and it seemed to excite sexual desire in her, though again I am using the word "sexual" in the widest sense.

She went out of her way to be where he might accidentally come upon her and she loved to touch objects that he had touched. Yet I believe

that the most direct physical contact they had with each other was to brush past one another in the corridor.

Prior to the publication of the letters there was a controversy in the world of Brontë scholars. There were those like Mr Clement Shorter, the leading Brontë scholar of the time, who claimed that Charlotte's letters to Monsieur Heger were those that any enthusiastic woman might write to a great man. The other camp declared that where there is smoke there must be fire, and contended that there is evidence in *Villette* that the relationship was a full blown affair.

Mrs Gaskell had played down the "affair" in her *Life of Charlotte Brontë*. Certainly she had not read Charlotte's letters, but Macdonald claims that she knew more than she was telling. But by the early 20th century there were rumours that Charlotte and Monsieur had even intended to run away together!

In sending the letters to the British Museum, after his father's death, Mr Paul Heger, Constantin Heger's son, wrote to the curator to explain why the family had chosen to give the letters. They wanted to set the record straight. His letter was reproduced in *The Times*.

"Sir, In the name of my sisters and myself as the representatives of the late Monsieur Heger, I beg to offer the British Museum, as the official custodian on behalf of the British People, the Letters of Charlotte Brontë, which the great Novelist addressed to our Father. These four important Letters, which have been religiously preserved, may be accepted as revealing the soul of the gifted author whose genius is the pride of England. We have hesitated long as to whether these documents so private, so intimate, should be scanned by the public eye. We have been deterred from offering them sooner, by the thought that, perhaps, the publicity involved in the gift might be considered incompatible with the sensitive nature of the artist herself. But we offer them the more readily, as they lay open, the true significance of what has hitherto been spoken of

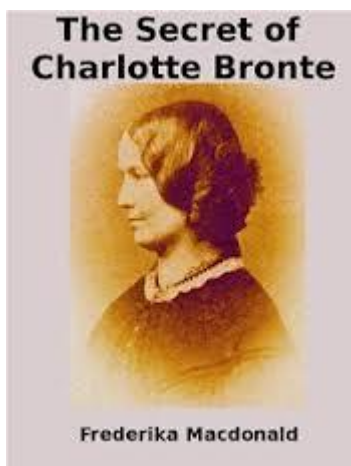
as the “Secret of Charlotte Brontë,” and show how groundless is the suspicion which has resulted from the natural speculations of critics and biographers; to the disadvantage of both parties to the one-sided correspondence.”

Even after the letters appeared Clement Shorter wrote that “there is nothing in the letters of hers, published now for the first time, that any enthusiastic woman might not write to a man double her age, who was a married man with a family, and who had been her teacher”.

Clearly Mr Shorter was no mathematician since he believed that twice 28 is 35. Heger was only 7 years older than Charlotte and she was 28 when she left the school. Moreover, the use of the phrase “any enthusiastic woman” suggests that Charlotte was one of those tiresome women who run after somebody whom they consider “great”. Later, Charlotte wrote to many famous men on the subject of literature but none of them with what Shorter would call “enthusiasm”.

Twenty years after Charlotte left the Pensionnat d’Isabelle, Macdonald was a pupil there and thought highly of Monsieur Heger, but their relationship was quite ordinary. In fact there is no hint of any other pupil-teacher relationship with Monsieur Heger as having any suggestion of passion.

No doubt theirs, Charlotte’s and Constantin’s, was a quite special relationship, neither platonic nor romantic, but lying somewhere in between. Between the letters P and R there lies the letter Q. Could the Brontë-Heger relationship be describes as “quixotic”, meaning over idealistic – not taking practicalities or consequences into account? Not quite, but perhaps it does come close. Few of us have had such a powerful, enigmatic relationship and so we cannot see it through our own experience.



John Malham-Dembleby wrote *The Confessions of Charlotte Brontë* and this was published privately by his wife in 1954. Why the word “confession” is used is a mystery to me because nowhere does the author claim that Charlotte confesses to misleading the public – the “crime” he accuses her of.

The author claims that all the Brontë juvenilia, all 7 novels and all the poetry were written solely by Charlotte. She was the genius in the family. Emily and Anne were fairly ordinary and Branwell was retarded! He is referred to as “mentally subnormal and ludicrously illiterate”! However by “illiterate” he doesn’t quite mean that Branwell was unable to write at all. Indeed it is claimed that Charlotte used him as her printing press and arranged for him to copy out some of her juvenile writing and attach his own name to it.

Many spurious hoaxes have been bolstered by their providing answers to certain mysteries. Not that this book could be called a “hoax”. The author seems to be convinced of his claims and has worked hard to research the evidence.

We must be careful to keep an open mind and to consider the possibility that even a little of what he says might be true.

Why Branwell was never sent to school is to my mind a mystery. Patrick managed to scrape together enough money to send the girls away to school – for a couple of years at least. But at a time when education of daughters was deemed to be far less important than that of sons Branwell was kept at home. Of course if he was mentally subnormal that would explain it.

Yet there is ample evidence that Patrick taught Branwell Latin and Greek at home. A more credible reason would be that Branwell was an epileptic, or suffered from some physical ailment that prevented him being educated elsewhere. We don’t know.

Another piece of evidence was Branwell's boast to his drinking friends that he was the author of *Wuthering Heights*, reading portions that he claimed were in his own hand. If he was Charlotte's amanuensis, and if Charlotte was the real author of *Wuthering Heights*, that would explain this incident.

However the evidence in the book is more substantial than this. Most of the book is devoted to a textual analysis of the juvenilia, the novels and the poetry with many similarities listed. Also many of the incidents in her sisters' novels are said to mirror those in Charlotte's life – events such as those that occurred when she was governess to the White family.

I don't know the juvenilia particularly well but reading the sections where one text is laid side by side with another, in two columns, I find the comparisons unconvincing. True, there are similarities, such as between a juvenile work of Charlotte's and one of her sisters' novels. But an elementary knowledge of statistics shows how apparent coincidences can appear in random events. Besides, it would not be surprising for children in a family who shared their literary endeavours to be familiar with the same incidents and turn of phrase as their sisters.

This suggests a question that has just occurred to me. Identical twins are supposed to lead lives that are uncannily similar. Does anyone know of two published authors who are identical twins? If so, how similar are their writings?

On the other hand a family who spent a great deal of time together, and who were brazen enough to devise pseudonyms to fool the public, might have cooked up the game of "let's be four separate authors". After all, literary hoaxes were well known at the time. There was the poet Ossian who supposedly wrote poetry in

an ancient Gaelic language more than a thousand years ago. This literature was "discovered" and "translated" by James Macpherson. It became wildly popular and was translated into many European languages. But controversy grew through the early years of the 19th century until it was finally shown to be a hoax.

The poems, as well as the fact that they were fake, was well known to the Brontë children and they (Charlotte alone if you believe Malham-Dembleby) referred to Ossian in Branwell's (or should that be Charlotte's) Blackwood Magazine of June 1829.



I think it is quite possible that among the rich output of the four Brontës there is some poem that has been wrongly attributed. But to conclude that Charlotte wrote it all stretches belief.

Now we move from the "crime" of a literary hoax to some real crimes! In a book, that in some editions is called a novel, James Tully accuses Charlotte of murder! *The Crimes of Charlotte Brontë* has a structure similar to *Wuthering Heights* in that there

is an outer and an inner narrator. The outer narrator is Charles Coutts, a lawyer, who received a parcel containing a manuscript purporting to be written by Martha Brown, at one time a servant in the parsonage.

Martha claims that Charlotte poisoned Emily and Anne in order to keep all the royalties for herself. Oh why did she play the game of pretending that Emily and Anne wrote some of her novels! It would have been so much simpler to claim that she wrote them all!

After they were dead, and Charlotte married Arthur Bell Nicholls, he attempted to murder her on her honeymoon. You see he was

secretly in love with Emily and he found out about Charlotte's dastardly deeds.

It sounds so far-fetched as to be laughable. Yet it is so well written and so well researched you find yourself coming to think that it might actually be true. Tully weaves many, many real incidents into the fabric of his story to bolster its credibility. For example, on her honeymoon, Charlotte was horse-riding and the horse bolted. There was a serious possibility she would be thrown off. Nicholls, who was supposed to be riding beside her, mysteriously disappeared for the crucial couple of minutes. That incident is fact, recorded in one of Charlotte's letters. The interpretation that Arthur arranged for her to have a wild horse, and that he moved away when he saw there might be trouble is, of course, all Tully's own!

Needless to say no Brontë scholar is fooled by this and some have enjoyed it as a well-written hoax. But the danger is that the uninformed could easily read it and believe that all this really happened.

The next two novels make no pretence of being true. *The Secret Diaries of Charlotte Brontë* flesh out the standard biographies with many incidents of Syrie James' own making. She doesn't claim them to be true, but she has woven them into the historical biography and these extra incidents and dialogue are consistent with what is known by historical evidence. Needless to say, Charlotte is innocent of any crime!

The Secret Adventures of Charlotte Brontë by Laura Joh Reynolds takes Charlotte to London where she gets caught up in helping a doctor to improve the lot of the insane.

Poor Charlotte! You have been the subject of so many unfortunate speculations – literary hoaxes, adultery, murder ... Even your close friendship with Ellen Nussey has prompted some to see elements of lesbianism. These, of course, are people who are ignorant of the times in which you lived, when "intercourse" simply meant "writing letters".

On or about the 20th February 1837 Charlotte wrote to Ellen after hearing that Ellen was to go to London for a time to visit her brother.

I read your letter with dismay, Ellen, what shall I do without you? Why are we so to be denied each other's society? ... I long to be with you because it seems as if two or three days or weeks spent in your company would beyond measure strengthen me in the feelings which I have so lately begun to cherish. ... Why are we to be divided? Surely, Ellen, it must be because we are in danger of loving each other too well; of losing sight of the Creator in idolatry of the creature.

Such outpouring of affection between females in the Victorian times was not uncommon and carried no suggestion of anything improper. All it signifies here is what we have known all along, that Charlotte was a passionate woman, and moreover a woman who perhaps craved more affection than she got. In her letters she hints of demons that haunted her. Her writing probably provided a temporary easing of her unhappiness.

Then she married her father's curate, a man whose unromantic nature had caused her, in the past, to find him faintly ridiculous. He was no Rochester, no Monsieur Paul Emmanuel who could sweep her off her feet with his saturnine nature. He was just a good man, steady and faithful. How boring! But she came to love him. She came to marry him. And from her letters we gather that for the first time in her life she was truly happy.

Her writing suffered – not because he discouraged her but because she no longer had the emotional emptiness that needed to be lessened by the act of writing. It is a truth universally acknowledged, but by no means always true, that a great writer must be a tortured, unhappy soul, driven by the demons within to create a world of imagination. Perhaps this is the great secret of Charlotte Brontë – that she was unhappy inside, even when fame and some fortune came her way. Her unhappiness did not result from the loss of

her siblings, though these tragedies weighed heavily upon her. No, she had a passion that lay unrequited – a fire within her, that burnt within her soul. Then she found herself able to

embrace the ordinary and began a new life as wife and potential mother. What a tragedy that this happiness was plucked out of her hands after such a short time.

BOOK REVIEW: *CATHERINE*

April Lindner

**Publisher: Poppy / Little, Brown Book Group
(January 1, 2013)**

ISBN: 978-0316196925

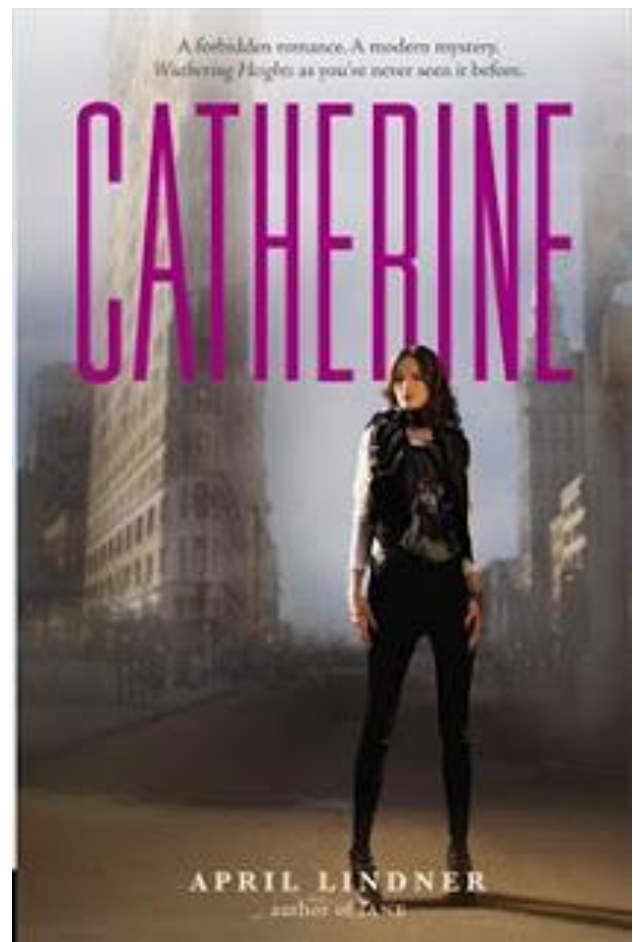
From the Brontë Blogspot

This is a forbidden romance – a modern mystery – *Wuthering Heights* as you've never seen it before.

Catherine is tired of struggling musicians befriending her just so they can get a gig at her Dad's famous Manhattan club, The Underground. Then she meets mysterious Hence, an unbelievably passionate and talented musician on the brink of success. As their relationship grows, both are swept away in a fiery romance. But when their love is tested by a cruel whim of fate, will pride keep them apart?

Chelsea has always believed that her mother died of a sudden illness, until she finds a letter her dad has kept from her for years -- a letter from her mother, Catherine, who didn't die: She disappeared. Driven by unanswered questions, Chelsea sets out to look for her -- starting with the return address on the letter: The Underground. Told in two voices, twenty years

apart, Catherine interweaves a timeless forbidden romance with a compelling modern mystery.



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DID EMILY LIKE CATS?

This is a free translation, from French, of part of Emily's answer, written as a *devoir* written at the age of 21 while she was at school in Brussels.

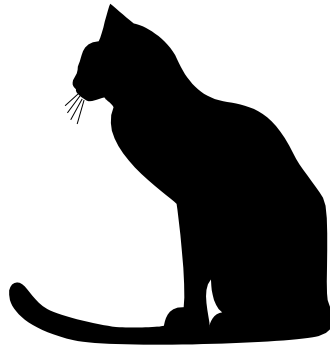
A cat is an animal that has more human feelings than almost any other being. We cannot compare favourably with the dog — he is infinitely too good. But the cat, although he differs from us physically, is extremely like us in disposition.

It is true that some would say that the resemblance is close only to the lowest human being and that their traits of detestable in humans are disputing the limits which reply that if hypocrisy, characteristic only of base

Our education perfection and the others from condemning them we

A cat, serving his misanthropy under an

instead of snatching what he desires from his mistress's hand, he approaches in a caressing manner, rubs his pretty little head against her and sticks out his paw with a touch as soft as down. This act finished, he resumes the character of Timon. Such finesse in a cat we call hypocrisy, but in ourselves we give it another name — politeness — and any person not using it to disguise his true feelings would soon be driven from society. (continued on page 12)



hypocrisy, cruelty and ingratitude, equally odious in the cat. Without such people might place on our affinity, I cruelty and ingratitude are the people, this category includes us all.

develops one of these qualities to great thrive without having to be fertilised. Far embrace all three characteristics.

own interests, sometimes hides his appearance of most endearing gentleness;

MICHAEL CAINE AS HINDLEY IN *WUTHERING HEIGHTS*

The actor, now known as Sir Michael Caine, was born Maurice Joseph Micklewhite, but when he got his first break in acting he adopted the stage name Michael Scott. He was cast as the drunken Hindley, in a 1953 stage production of *Wuthering Heights*.



Some time later, when he had an agent, he rang him from a phone booth and was told he had the offer of a minor film role. Asked whether he wanted to stick with "Scott" he looked across the road to a cinema that was playing the *Caine Mutiny* and decided on "Michael Caine".

DARK DEEDS IN HAWORTH CHURCHYARD

The hunt is on for three ancient gravestones that were stolen from the Haworth Churchyard right outside the Brontë Parsonage. The Churchwarden, Steven Stanworth, said he was sickened by the theft and hoped the stone would eventually be recovered. The local community have raised £700 to pay for security cameras in the graveyard. Police have recovered 50 slabs at an address in Northcliffe

Avenue, Thornton, following information on the theft of flags in November. A 21-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of the theft of stone from the graveyard and remains on bail.



EMILY ON CATS

(continued from page 11)

“But,” says some delicate lady who has murdered half a dozen lap dogs by sheer affection, “the cat is such a cruel beast he is not content to kill his prey, but torments it before its death; you cannot bring this accusation against us.”

Pretty near, Madame. Your husband, for example, likes hunting very much, but foxes are scarce on his land; he would not be able to enjoy the sport often if he did not manage his resources after a fashion. When he runs an animal to its last breath, he pulls it from the mouths of the dogs, and saves it to suffer the same ordeal two or three more times, ending finally in death.

I have seen you yourself hug your child warmly when he brought you a beautiful butterfly crushed between his cruel little fingers.

Cats’ ingratitude is another name for shrewdness. They are able to judge our favours at their true value because they discern our motives which prompt us to give them, and even if these motives are sometimes good, no doubt they still remember that they owe all their wretchedness and bad qualities to the great ancestor of the human race, for surely cats in Heaven were not mean.

TOURING HAWORTH BY WHEELCHAIR

From the Brontë Blogspot <http://bronteblog.blogspot.com/>

Those who have been to Haworth will appreciate how difficult it would be to move around the village in a wheel chair. The difficulty of accessibility for disabled visitors in Haworth was raised at a meeting, in January, of the Brontë Country Tourism Partnership, an organisation that promotes tourism in Haworth and the Worth Valley.

Concern over the situation for tourists with mobility problems was expressed late last year by Johnnie Briggs, who runs the Brontë Walks tour company. He said the seriousness of the situation was illustrated to him when a woman in a wheelchair took part in one of his tours round Haworth’s historic attractions.

“It took four of us to move her around and showed just how difficult it is for anyone in a wheelchair to move from one place to another

in the village,” he said. “The wheelchair had to be picked up and carried for parts of the tour. It was an uncomfortable experience for this woman.



Barry Thorne, a councillor for the Parish of Haworth, Cross Roads and Stanbury, has spent years campaigning for a better deal for people with disabilities. He agreed that accessibility is a problem in the village.

“Partly it’s because of the nature of Haworth,” he said.

“A lot of it is heritage buildings and then there’s the slopes, the cobbles and steps leading into shops. Putting ramps everywhere wouldn’t work. This would need a survey to see what can and can’t be done, but whatever you do isn’t going to be perfect. I’ve seen people having difficulties here before. There are obstacles just about everywhere.”

ANNE'S GRAVE

For some years Anne Brontë's grave in Scarborough was sadly neglected. Being on a hill near the sea it has weathered badly and the inscription has become barely legible. Some years ago there was a proposal to replace it by a replica and to store the original at the Parsonage. Indeed a replica was made but there was such opposition from the Brontë Society membership the switch never took place.

Now an "interpretive plaque" has been made which will accompany the gravestone. It is made from slate which should protect it from weathering. It reads:

Anne Brontë
novelist and poet
The original headstone reads
Here Lie the remains of Anne Brontë
Daughter of the Revd P Brontë
Incumbent of Haworth Yorkshire
She died Aged 28 May 28th 1849

The text contains one error
Anne Brontë was aged 29 when she died

This plaque was placed here in 2011
by the Brontë Society



Michelle Cavanagh, and her sister, at Anne's grave

BOOKS THAT CHANGED ME

spotted by Sarah Burns

In the Unwind section of the Sun Herald 7 April 2013 edition, under **Books that changed me** SJ Bolton - a British author of five critically acclaimed thriller novels - cites Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. "I loved this book when I was very young and it is possibly the reason why, years on, I write Gothic mysteries in which

romance and suspense intertwine like ribbons in the wind. Atmosphere, mystery, a love story and the most compelling hero in literature, this book had everything for me and is, rather than *Wuthering Heights*, the true Brontë masterpiece. This book inspires my style.

BRONTË BIRTHPLACE TRUST GAZUMPED

An attempt by the Brontë Birthplace Trust to buy the 1802 house where Charlotte, Branwell, Emily and Anne were born has floundered after it was gazumped by a private buyer, who may turn it into a bistro. The terraced house in Thornton, West Yorkshire – 72/74 Market Street – in which the children were born and raised from 1815 to 1820 before the family moved to Haworth, has been sold for £120,000. The trust wanted to convert it into a Brontë museum,

bookshop and cafe, but the plan collapsed when Bradford Council decided not to help it buy the property. The trust's chairman Steve Stanworth says: "It's come as a big shock. We're disgusted that the council felt unable to help us to save the property for the community and Brontë lovers worldwide". However Mr Stanworth pledges fundraising will continue "so we're in a stronger position next time it comes on the market".



The **BOOK CLUB**

ABC1 First Tuesday of every month 10pm & the following Sunday 4.30pm

On 7 May 2013, Jennifer Byrne gave an update on the voting: "It's the Battle of the Brontë Sisters".

Who will win? We encourage you to vote for your favourite classic and look forward to the outcome in July.

ANITA DESAI ON WUTHERING HEIGHTS



The famous Indian novelist, Anita Desai, was in Sydney recently for the Sydney Writers' Festival. She has won several international literary prizes as well as being shortlisted for the Booker prize three times. Her latest collection of short stories, *The Artist of Disappearance* was published in 2011.

In an interview she was asked what got her into writing all those years ago. Her reply was "reading *Wuthering Heights*".

What's your
FAVOURITE
classic?

Send us the title and author
of your favourite novel:

✉ bookclub@abc.net.au

or

🐦 [@thebookclubabc](https://twitter.com/thebookclubabc)

or

📘 [/thebookclubabc](https://www.facebook.com/thebookclubabc)

We'll review the most
popular classic on
The Book Show in July.

The Australian Brontë Association

Annual Report 2nd February 2013

	Balance as at	17/03/12	\$1,853.75 cr
<i>Plus: Receipts</i>	Badges		\$38.00
	Meetings		\$580.10
	Membership		\$1,445.00
	Annual Dinner (Profit)		\$191.00
	Bank Interest		\$6.25
			\$2,260.35 cr
<i>Less: Payments</i>	Lindfield Print - Printing Newsletters & Thunderer		\$871.20
	Name Badges		\$41.00
	Parking		\$42.50
	Photo Frames		\$19.98
	Piano Hire		\$27.50
	Stationery		\$86.56
	Cash Box		\$37.78
	Postage		\$101.40
	Room Hire		\$800.00
	Gifts		\$83.00
	Speaker's Lunch		\$22.80
	Web Page		\$89.91
			\$2,223.63 dt
New Members	Anne Lock Account		\$500.00
	Balance as at	02/02/13	\$1,890.47 cr

Signed

*Michael Links
Treasurer
02/02/13*

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

At our first meeting on 2 February 2013, we welcomed two new Committee members – Stephanie Rigby and Marloesje Valkenburg. After the AGM, Christopher Cooper led a debate questioning whether Charlotte Brontë was fair in depicting Cowan Bridge School as Lowood in *Jane Eyre*. Thank you to Christopher, Marloesje, Stephanie, Chester Porter, Graham Harman and John Hope-Allan for entertaining us in what those present described as one of our best meetings.

In April Michael Giffin explored *Jane Eyre* as bildungsroman within the Hegelian zeitgeist of Charlotte's life, which gave us much to discuss and think about. Michael's first e-book "Female Maturity from Jane Austen to Margaret Atwood" is now available:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00B2XMFUM>

Congratulations to our Vice President, Mandy Swann and her husband Patrick on the birth of their daughter Zoë Rose on 3rd April.

Dates for your diary:

7 December 2013: Christmas lunch with the NSW Dickens' Society at Cello's Restaurant, The Castlereagh Boutique Hotel

7-9 November 2014: Weekend Conference with the NSW Dickens' Society
Theme: "North & South"
Venue: Blue Mountains NSW

Further details will be provided later in the year.

We look forward to seeing you during the year and hope you will join us for lunch after the meetings.

Sarah Burns

FROM THE AUSTRALIAN REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BRONTË SOCIETY

The annual report of the Brontë Society contains reports of the regional groups in London and the South-East, Scotland, Ireland, Australia, Belgium, Canada and the USA. Of these groups we in Australia, centred in Sydney, and the Belgian group, centred in Brussels, are by far the most active. As Australian representative I sent a report of our many activities in 2012.

Among other matters to be discussed at the AGM in Haworth in June is an item of potential interest to those of us in Australia. Hitherto the annual membership of the Brontë Society was much more expensive for overseas members, particularly those outside of Europe. This was justified on the grounds that overseas postage is more expensive. On the other hand overseas members are much less able to benefit from the many activities the Society carries out. As a result, with the overseas membership rate

being raised each year, there are very few Australian members.

If the proposed charges are passed we overseas members will pay the same as those in the UK. These are £12.50 for students, £18.50 for senior citizens and £25 for adults. With the Australian dollar being high at the moment membership is much more affordable. Perhaps now is the time to consider joining the UK society as well as the ABA. Keep in mind that much of the membership fees goes towards the upkeep of the Parsonage and the purchase of Brontë memorabilia.

Finally, I hear that in 2014 the Tour de France will have a segment in England, and on 6th July it will pass through Haworth.

Christopher Cooper

ANOTHER UNPUBLISHED DEVOIR BY CHARLOTTE BRONTË

Every so often a Brontë object or document so rare and precious comes up for sale that it's hard to believe it could end up anywhere but here at the Parsonage. Late last year a document in faded brown ink fluttered out of a book whose owners had never before suspected its existence. Closer inspection revealed it was addressed to 'M. Heger', and, anticipating that it might be something very special, its owners took it to a London agent for identification.

The document turned out to be something very special indeed. The handwriting was that of Charlotte Brontë, and the document revealed as a *devoir* - French homework Charlotte had been assigned by her teacher Constantin Heger.

The generosity of generations of donors has ensured the Brontë Parsonage Museum, Haworth, once home to the world's most famous literary family, is now the world's biggest collection of Brontëana. The Brontë Society exists to maintain the Parsonage and its very special collection of documents, manuscripts

and Brontë possessions. Sometimes, however, we need help to purchase something we feel we cannot afford to let go. Charlotte's *devoir* is, without doubt, one of those very special items.

Never before published, the essay, titled *L'Amour Filial* - 'The Love of a Child for Parents' - is full of insights into Charlotte's interior world, and sheds light on a formative time in her life. But we do need your help, so that the Brontë Society can acquire this important document. If you can afford to help us keep it in this country and in Haworth, where it surely belongs, by giving financially, whether a little or a lot, we have a chance of bringing it home to the Parsonage.

Thank you,
Professor Ann Sumner
Executive Director
The Brontë Society

BRANWELL AND JOHN LENNON



Some people have claimed that John Lennon is Branwell reincarnated. There certainly is a likeness!

NEW MEMBERS since the last Newsletter

Ron Fogarty
Jo Henwood
Robyn Scott

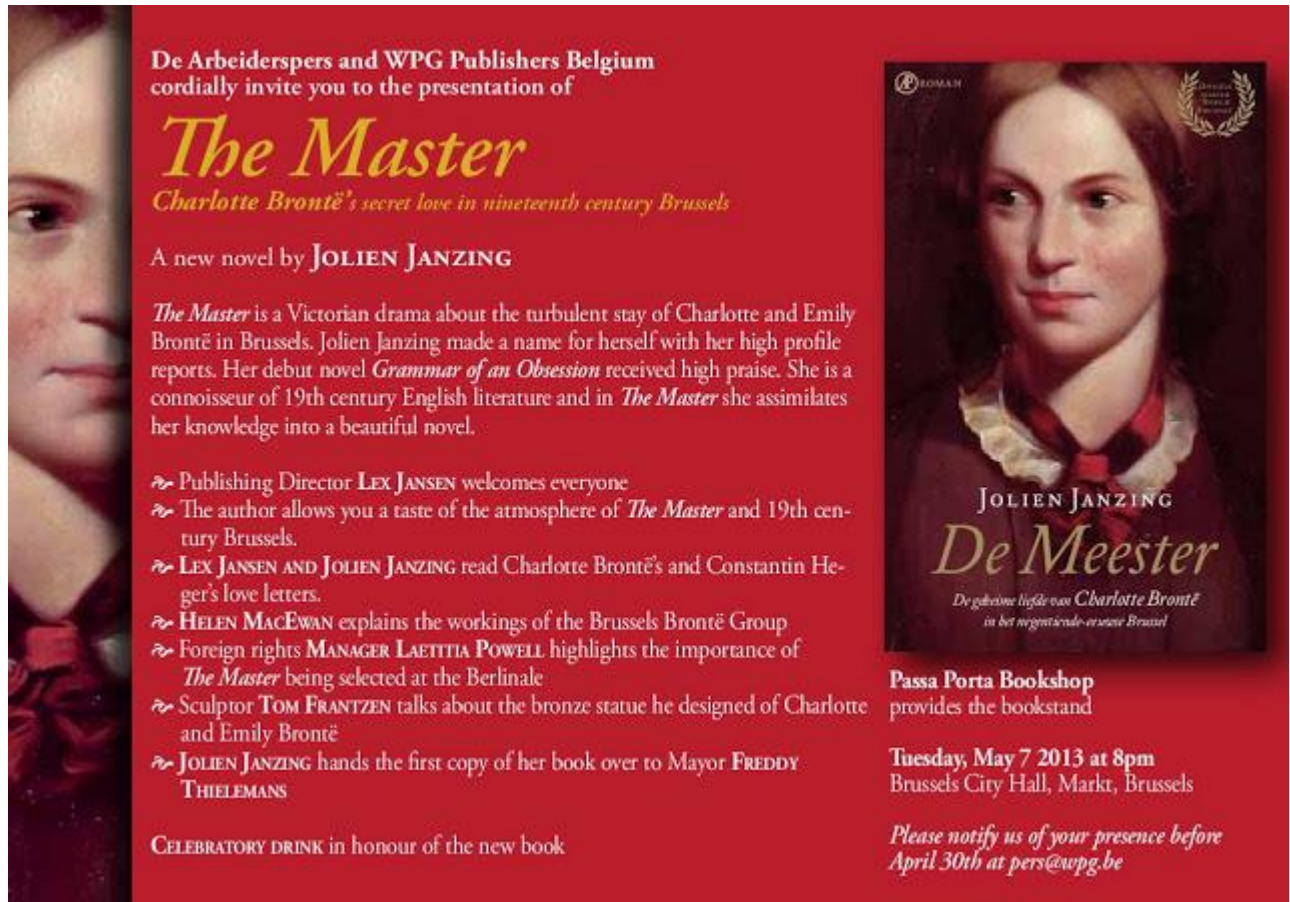
CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOME

I have taken over as editor of the ABA publications. I would like to acknowledge the great work that Helen Malcher and Annette Harman have done over the last few years. In particular I hope my layout skills come somewhere near the high standard set by Helen. But good layout is of no use without good contributions. (continued next page)

BRONTË NOVEL IN DUTCH ... AND ENGLISH TOO

A novel by a Dutch writer describes the “turbulent stay of Charlotte and Emily Brontë in Brussels”. You have missed the book launch

but you would be more interested in purchasing a copy than you would have been to travel to Brussels for the launch.



De Arbeiderspers and WPG Publishers Belgium cordially invite you to the presentation of

The Master


Charlotte Brontë's secret love in nineteenth century Brussels

A new novel by **JOLIEN JANZING**

The Master is a Victorian drama about the turbulent stay of Charlotte and Emily Brontë in Brussels. Jolien Janzing made a name for herself with her high profile reports. Her debut novel *Grammar of an Obsession* received high praise. She is a connoisseur of 19th century English literature and in *The Master* she assimilates her knowledge into a beautiful novel.

- ~ Publishing Director **LEX JANSEN** welcomes everyone
- ~ The author allows you a taste of the atmosphere of *The Master* and 19th century Brussels.
- ~ **LEX JANSEN AND JOLIEN JANZING** read Charlotte Brontë's and Constantin Hege's love letters.
- ~ **HELEN MACEWAN** explains the workings of the Brussels Brontë Group
- ~ Foreign rights **MANAGER LAETTIA POWELL** highlights the importance of *The Master* being selected at the Berlinale
- ~ Sculptor **TOM FRANTZEN** talks about the bronze statue he designed of Charlotte and Emily Brontë
- ~ **JOLIEN JANZING** hands the first copy of her book over to Mayor **FREDDY THIELEMANS**

CELEBRATORY DRINK in honour of the new book



Passa Porta Bookshop provides the bookstand

Tuesday, May 7 2013 at 8pm
Brussels City Hall, Markt, Brussels

Please notify us of your presence before April 30th at pers@wpg.be

TWO BRONTË CONFERENCES IN 2014

As well as our own conference on *North and South*, to be held in the Blue Mountains on 7th -9th November 2014 the Brontë Society are holding a Brontë Conference on 29th – 31st August 2014. It will be held at Warwick University in England and the theme will be *The Brontës and the 'Condition of England'*. The area will cover major national concerns in the time of the Brontës that would have had an impact on the family. These concerns include the development of the railways, the controversy over home rule for Ireland, the abolition of slavery, the Catholic emancipation, law reform and the Chartist movement.

BRONTË CONTRIBUTIONS WANTED

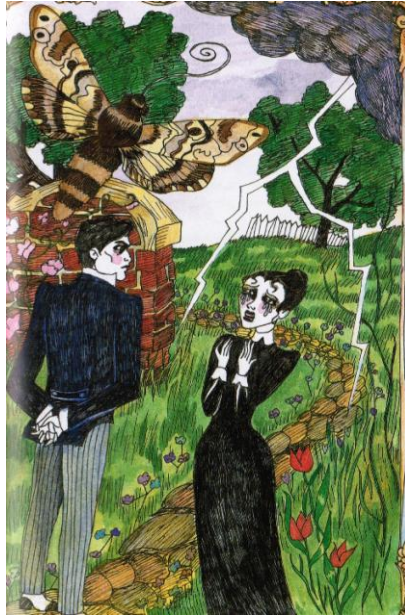
(continued from page 17)

We particularly want original contributions. It doesn't have to be an in depth article. We also welcome contributions in the “spotted by” category. If you come across something in the newspapers or magazines, or on a Brontë blog, you can send it to us.

Contributions can be sent to me by email, either within the email, or as a Word attachment, at christopher.cooper@mq.edu.au. Alternatively you can send me a typescript that I can scan, to Christopher Cooper, 31 Epping Avenue, EASTWOOD NSW 2122, or you can hand it to me at an ABA or Dickens meeting.

SOME ILLUSTRATIONS FROM VARIOUS EDITIONS OF JANE EYRE

Can you guess what is happening in each?



PROGRAM FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2013

3 Aug Professor Robert Dingley – Was Heathcliff Black?

‘Oho! I declare he 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*.

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: Cello’s Restaurant, 4th floor at the Castlereagh Hotel, 169 Castlereagh St Sydney
Christmas Lunch with the NSW Dickens Society**

BRONTË –DICKENS CONFERENCE 2014

Dates: 7th – 9th November 2014

Location: Blue Mountains – the exact location has not yet been determined

Theme: NORTH AND SOUTH

VALE PAT BALL

We were saddened to hear that Pat Ball passed away recently. She had been ill for some time but very few people knew of this. She was 84. Pat was a long time member of the Australian Brontë Association, as well as The NSW Dickens Society, the Jane Austen Society of Australia and the Kipling Society. Patricia was also a very active member of the Society for the Study of Early Christianity. She was widely travelled and was a member of several of Susannah’s literary tours.



Pat Ball (centre, in white) at a literary event.

She was married to George Bell, who kindly supplied us with a few details of her life. They would have been married for 58 years in July. They met in New Britain in PNG in 1954 and married in New Ireland in 1955, where George was a Royal Papuan New Guinea patrol officer in PNG area until 1962. Pat was specialist theatre nurse in Rabaul.

Pat resumed nursing and went to Macquarie University where she completed an Arts degree. She was an only child but she leaves behind three sons and three grandsons, as well as her husband George.