



The Australian Brontë Association

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THE BRONTËS SISTERS WERE BORN IN A DELI

From the Daily Mail 4th April 2014

Millions of book lovers have made a pilgrimage to the Parsonage Museum in Haworth, known around the world as the home of the Brontë sisters. Now the owner of a modest three-bedroom cottage six miles away aims to rival it as the ‘true birthplace’ of the famous literary family.

The cottage was shut up for years following the failure of a birthplace museum on the tourist trail. It was let as private rented accommodation until it came back on the market last year. The historical home had been rented as bedsits to tenants in search of cheap accommodation but the plaques commemorating the births of the four gifted children outside the faded front door were barely noticed.

After the last tenants packed their bags the landlord put the property on the market last year. The Brontë birthplace trust was formed by local villagers to save the property and turn it back into a museum again.

But this scheme failed after Bradford Council decided it could not afford to buy the property. Amid fears it would be turned back into flats, businessman Mark de Luca and his wife Michelle spotted the near-derelect property believing it to be an



unpolished tourism gem. He renovated the home which was suffering from damp and flooding and has turned it into a deli where visitors can look round the Brontë’s private quarters.

The cafe is due to open up in May following an extensive renovation. Among other features, visitors will be able to inspect the very hearth where all three sisters were born. It also boasts the built-in writing desk where Patrick Brontë wrote his first sermon – about the Battle of Waterloo.

The Grade II listed cottage in the West Yorkshire village of Thornton was built in 1802. Patrick Brontë, his wife Maria and their first two children, Maria and Elizabeth, moved there in 1815 and it is where Charlotte, Emily, Anne and Branwell were all delivered in front of the fireplace in 1816, 1818, 1820 and 1817 respectively. But five years after making it their home, the family moved to the Parsonage at nearby Haworth – which has claimed the spotlight in the Brontë story ever since.

The new owners, both 29, sold their cottage in the village to buy the Brontë



home. They snapped it up as a repossession for £120,000 and then spent another £30,000 doing it up. The couple already had a track record, having converted a Grade II listed building around the corner into a hair salon.

But it was cheap because the old timber windows were rotten, the roof was leaking, and the wallpaper was falling off the walls – which were riddled with rising damp. The old scullery at the rear of the property had flooded through the back door with waste from the overflowing drains.

The second bedroom where the younger Brontës slept has become the drawing room, though it still has the built-in wardrobe used by the children. The third bedroom used by the Brontë children's nurse serves as a study while the downstairs scullery has become their private kitchen.

The rest of the downstairs rooms, including the drawing room with the famous fireplace, have been laid out as a delicatessen and coffee shop with room

for 35 people. A counter and open kitchen serving cakes, sandwiches, and pastries has been created in one of the front extensions built in the 1900s as a butcher's shop.

The couple hope the trendy décor will attract of a new generation of Brontë fans who previously may have regarded the sisters' writings as a touch highbrow.

Mr de Luca added: 'We want to make the Brontës cool and trendy. The Brontë Society meetings and events at Haworth seem to attract mainly older people. 'The original idea of a museum is great – but you do not really get to sit there and enjoy reading a Brontë book or a newspaper.'

Brontë Society Chairman Sally McDonald said: 'The birthplace in Thornton is hugely important in the Brontë story. 'In the bicentenary year of 2016 the world's attention will turn to all places linked with Charlotte Brontë. 'Some years ago former Brontë Society member, Barbara Whitehead, bought and tried to restore the house but sadly it proved just too big a project. 'It is a pity the Birthplace Trust's hopes of turning the house into a museum were pipped at the post but it wasn't to be and it is heartening to hear the new owners are keen to sympathetically retain the history.'

Patrick Brontë wrote of his time in Thornton: 'My happiest days were spent



there. This is where the family was complete. In Haworth, he said, he felt like 'a stranger in a strange land'.

VALE

MARLOESJE VALKENBURG

Died 24th January 2014

Many members of the Australian Brontë Association attended the funeral of Marloesje Valkenburg on 4th February this year. She was born in Holland but came to Australia quite young. She trained as an opera singer as well as a teacher of French, Indonesian, Science and Mathematics.

She was the sister-in-law of the previous president, Christopher Cooper, and was a founding member of the ABA. Over the years she used her dramatic gifts for the benefit of the association with readings, dramatic performances and vocal performances. For many years she assisted her sister, Elisabeth Cooper, with the morning teas and more recently she was an ABA committee member.

Here is Marloesje at her 60th birthday party in 2007 and at breakfast at La Maison at a Brontë weekend, sitting with Bev Edmonds.

In 2006 she invited members to her home where she showed her extensive doll collection, and spoke about the history of dolls and their connection with the Brontës. The following article was published in 2007.



DOLLS AND THE BRONTËS

Marloesje Valkenburg

Many of the earliest dolls were made entirely or partly of wood and those of the sixteenth century differ little from those in ancient Egypt. There were 'stump' dolls about 5 or 6 inches high, carved complete with a skirt, like ninepins. Others had the head and body carved from one piece with jointed arms and legs, connected by wooden pegs. And others had only the head and shoulders carved from wood, connected to a rag body.

Central Europe had abundant forests in the sixteenth century and most of the dolls of that period were made there in places such as Oberammergau, Nuremberg and South Tyrol. The more elaborate wooden dolls were treasured and handed down from generation to generation and were often specifically mentioned in wills. For example an English will of 1548 mentioned a wooden headed doll with the head slightly carved, with a protruding nose and with carved eyes and mouth. This doll



was bequeathed to the granddaughter with the request that it be passed on with the estate.

A wooden doll believed to have been played with in Holyrood Palace in the late 17th century had a large wooden head with painted eyes and with beauty spots painted on the face, large hands and jointed legs and arms.

Some wooden dolls had painted eyes, but as the century progressed most of them had glass eyes. The eyebrows and eyelashes were painted with stylized dots. Sometimes the hands were cloth, sometimes of wood. The torsos were either square or pointed – the latter being a later variation.

In the early 19th century wooden dolls began to have the heads covered in plaster, with the features moulded rather than carved.

If you take a bundle of rags and tie it around, near one end, you make a crude head. Another tie can make a waist. All over the world rag dolls have been made in homes, loved to bits, and then vanished.

Faces have been made by stiches, paint or even tar, but although rag dolls are usually such jolly things they have a curious history, for some of their ancestors were used as hex dolls by witches. In the seventeenth century one unfortunate deranged woman living near Boston was found to have a large collection of torn and disfigured rag dolls and she was executed as a witch. It was believed that the dolls represented the children in the village and that by ill treating the dolls she was trying to harm the village children.

By the eighteenth century most children had some kind of home-made rag doll to play with. Poor children had rag dolls crudely made from discarded rags. Wealthy children played with beautiful cloth dolls with carefully embroidered features and elaborate dresses. Doll manufacturers began to mass produce rag dolls in the late 1800s and there are numerous patents concerning rag dolls. In 1893 Ida Gutsell made patterns for rag dolls which were printed on a piece of material, designed to be cut out and sewn together and stuffed. Mademoiselle Renée de Veraine made a rag doll with two faces, one smiling and one crying. The unwanted face was covered with a little cap. A variation on this idea is the Little Red Riding Hood doll (you can still buy these) where it can be Riding Hood herself, the grandmother or the wolf, depending on how it is arranged.

Wooden and wax dolls were expensive to produce and so, to bring dolls within reach of the majority of the population, doll makers experimented with papier mâché. These were made of mashed and pulped paper which could be moulded in a press. A model of the doll would be made in carved wood or clay and then coated with shellac. This would be completely surrounded by clay. When hard this would be cut away in two pieces – one for the front of the head and one for the back. Paper pulp would be inserted between the two halves and then they were pressed together.

By 1810 papier mâché heads were being mass produced in Sonneberg in the state of Thüringen in Germany. They were strong and light to hold and, although crude at first, better ones gradually became more popular. The doll heads, complete with the yoke, would then be sewn or glued to soft bodies of rag or kid.

Composition refers to a substance made from finely ground material mixed with glue. Strictly speaking it includes papier mâché but generally refers to later dolls made from a mixture of wood pulp and glue. They were often referred to as “indestructible” dolls though they can be damaged quite easily. In 1907 the ingredients for some French dolls’ bodies were listed as “old cardboard, old gloves, old rags and gum tragacanth”. Each doll

manufacturer had his own “secret” formula for composition but few of the products of the recipes have successfully withstood the ravages of time.

Bisque is a ceramic material with a hard matt surface. Bisque heads may be pressed or poured into moulds. The pressed ones are usually rough on the inside and are not of uniform thickness. They are generally earlier than the poured heads, most of them having been made prior to 1890. Bisque heads were often produced in factories that made other ceramic products. However doll parts had to be fired in different kilns.

Bisque heads were popular as early as the 1860s, and no doubt some were made before then. They were produced primarily in Europe, mainly in Thur, Bavaria, Bohemia, Paris and Limoges.

Before 1880 most bisque heads were the shoulder type, with or without a swivel neck. Many of these had moulded hair or even moulded bonnets. Some dolls after 1880 were all bisque. Some were jointed – others were stiff (the stiff ones are called “Frozen Charlottes”).

Most bisque heads are fired both before and after the colour is applied. However Otto Zeh, in 1898, obtained a patent for painting the heads and then covering them with a transparent lacquer to eliminate the second firing.

Dolls are classified according to the materials from which the heads are made so that although leather bodies were common enough, dolls with leather heads – the true leather doll – are quite rare. At first the leather used was coarse sheepskin, the doll body being merely a bag shape. The upper arms were loosely attached to the torso, but the forearms and hands were beautifully made and gave the appearance of the doll wearing long kid gloves.

Many of us have visited waxworks like Madame Tussauds. Her life-size models of famous people were made of solid wax, cast in a mould, and had inset hair and glass eyes. It is reported that she studied the heads of victims of the guillotine to learn her anatomical skills. But wax figures of prominent people were made long before this. Throughout medieval Europe full-sized figures, replicas of notable people, were made of wax and placed in churches and chapels. Later, as wax was expensive as well as heavy, these figures had wax faces and hands only, the bodies being frameworks of canes and wood over which the clothes would be placed. Cellini, the sixteenth century Italian craftsman, made wax figures, and the country of Spain also excelled in realistic effigies with natural colouring with glass eyes.



During the seventeenth century there is mention of wax dolls made in Augsburg. It was the fashion for a rich lady whose baby had died to have it copied full-size in wax, and this would be dressed in baby clothes and kept in a cradle. Small votive figures and dolls were made of solid wax in moulds, but later the heads and limbs were hollow. The parts were joined to wooden bodies which eventually gave way to bodies of stuffed material.

Wax was also used as a thin layer on wood or on composition, usually being spread over the head and yoke and then tinted, but with the passing of time

the wax was often cracked.

In 1701, Dr Claver Morris of Wells visited London, and while there he purchased a doll for his baby daughter Molly, “a Wax Baby with an invention to make it cry and turn its eyes”.

Daniel Defoe, writing from Paris in 1722, reported in the Daily Post: “the Duchess of Orleans made a present to the Infant Queen of a wax Baby, Three Foot High, with diamond earrings, a necklace of pearls, and diamond cross, with a Furniture of Plate for a toilet, and Two Indian chests full of linen, and several sorts of cloaths for the baby, the whole for that Princess to play with”.

At first wax dolls had wooden bodies, but by the 1760s many had stuffed bodies. Some of these were stuffed with very coarse straw, the stems being pushed down into the limbs. Wax over composition was used in 1784 for many dolls with stuffed bodies.

A shop in Bond Street, London, sold dolls, clowns and soldiers and in 1797 a wax doll was bought from this shop as a gift for the daughter of George IV. Portrait dolls of Queen Victoria in her coronation robes had heads and arms of wax, stuffed leather bodies and wooden legs. Others of 1840 show her in her wedding gown.

Pedlar dolls had wax faces which were either ‘white’ or ‘black’, some with wooden legs, some with mere sticks. Wax dolls were not so popular in the USA as in England, partly owing to the climate, but they became more popular in the 1830s.

In 1851 Charlotte Brontë visited the Great Exhibition in London. She probably saw the dolls exhibited by Augusta Montanari. Madame Montanari won a gold medal at this exhibition for her wax dolls. The jury report read: “The display of this Exhibitor is the most remarkable and beautiful collection of toys in the Great Exhibition. It is a series of dolls representing all ages, from infancy to womanhood, arranged in several family groups ... The dolls have hair, eyelashes, and eyelids separately inserted in wax ... The dolls are adapted for children of the wealthy rather than general sale, undressed dolls sell from 10 shillings to 5 guineas – dressed dolls are much more expensive. One of these dolls was a wax doll based on Queen Victoria’s four year old daughter, Princess Louise. Also, one of her dolls had muslin stretched across the wax face, with small holes pierced so that the eyes might show through. Madame Montanari’s son, Richard was also a doll maker and he too employed this technique.

Small wax dolls, about 24cm long were sold at the Ascot races in 1849. These dolls had wax heads, inset eyes, hair wigs, and arms of blue leather. Dressed in muslin trimmed with lace and ribbons, one of these dolls is now in the Cuming Museum in Southwark.

If dressed in a hat, sometimes a wax doll had just a fringe of hair on a strip of braid wound around the head. Others had real hair inserted in groups or singly.

The Anglo-American author, Frances Hodgson Burnett – she wrote *Little Lord Fauntelroy* – describes dolls in many of her books. In the book she wrote about her own childhood, *The One I Knew The Best of All*, she mentions a wax doll. “At night this doll had her wire pulled and her wax eyelids drawn down”. She also describes the wax dolls of her youth as having black or brown rows of dangling curls sewn on a little black skull cap, or stuck on with mucilage. Only the face and neck were of wax, with a smooth round face, a dab of wax for a nose, red paint for a mouth, eyebrows were two arches of brown paint, the eyes were of black or blue glass with no pupil, and the wax eyelid pulled down over them by means of a wire which came out of the side. The calico body was stuffed with sawdust, the arms and legs dangled, the lower arms being covered with pink, blue, yellow or green kid.

Wax dolls don’t do well in hot climates unless special precautions are taken. Nor do they like travelling by air. If wax dolls are transported by air the faces may sometimes become covered with minute cracks caused by the reduced air pressure. It has been suggested that ardent collectors should always go by sea when travelling with their wax dolls!

Some dolls were made of gutta-percha in 1823. This material was soft and pliable but it was not until 1839, when Charles Goodyear discovered the technique of vulcanising

rubber, that it became popular for dolls. Thomas Forster took out a patent in England in 1844 for moulded rubber heads. In 1858 many patents for rubber dolls were lodged. Baucular made gutta-percha heads that, when squeezed, could alter their expression. He called them 'grimacing dolls'. The doll making company, Bru, made a jointed rubber doll in 1878. Another doll maker, Miller, inserted wire in the bodies of rubber dolls to allow the doll to be bent and to remain in that position.

Some manufacturers claimed that rubber dolls were good for infants to use when cutting their teeth. In 1855 Hecht had the idea of inserting metal whistles into rubber dolls. Of course these whistles could come loose and pose a choking hazard so mothers would remove them. Many rubber dolls from this period have a hole where once there was a whistle.

Solid rubber dolls are very cumbersome and even hollow ones are heavy. Moreover, over time, their 'skins' become an unattractive grey colour. They are unbreakable and should have survived in large numbers but fewer early rubber dolls have survived than their more fragile sisters.

Celluloid was used for dolls as early as 1862. This is a substance made to imitate ivory, china etc, but as it contains camphor and gun-cotton it is highly inflammable and even burns in water. Moreover celluloid is easily dented and goes yellow with time, so it is not a suitable material for dolls. Nevertheless it was used for about 60 years, at first only for the head or head and yoke but later for whole bodies.



A talk on Jane Austen and dolls would be very short. The only reference to dolls in her novels was in *Northanger Abbey* where she describes Catherine Morland as somebody who would much prefer to play cricket than play with dolls!

According to *European and American Dolls* by Gwen White, Charlotte had about 21 dolls, which would have made her quite a collector. But I don't recall seeing any in the Parsonage Museum and I couldn't find any reference to dolls in a quick search



of the standard biographies, so I wonder where she got this from. According to Gwen White, the chief doll in Charlotte's collection was a large wooden doll that was presented to her as a prize for hemming her first handkerchief. I'm a little bit cautious in accepting these facts since she goes on to say that Charlotte would have been about five at the time of winning this prize and that this would make it about 1828. In 1828 Charlotte was in fact 12 years old. Christine Alexander says that this is the first she's heard of Charlotte's doll collection, so it's probable that White was confusing Charlotte Brontë with some other Charlotte.

In the days before mechanical and electronic toys, that almost play by themselves, a



toy was a springboard for the imagination. Indeed one doesn't have to go back too far in history to find a time when toys were just ordinary objects that happened to be lying around and which could be breathed into life. A corn dolly is just a sheaf of corn that has been gathered up and made to look like a person. By the time of the Brontës, childhood was just beginning to be discovered as a separate stage of life and simple toys could be bought. We all know what came about as a result of the set of wooden soldiers that Patrick brought back for his children!

Wooden soldiers are not normally considered to be dolls but like dolls they represent people and so they allow much richer possibilities for the imagination than, say, a toy cart or a spinning top. But a doll allows an even richer experience than a wooden soldier because, while you can talk *about* a wooden soldier and chronicle his exploits you can talk *to* a doll. A doll can be a companion, which is especially important for an only child.

Of course Charlotte wasn't an only child but somehow she instinctively knew what it felt like to be one. In *Jane Eyre* she describes the way young Jane felt about her doll.

When tired of this occupation, I would retire from the stairhead to the solitary and silent nursery: there, though somewhat sad, I was not miserable. To speak truth, I had not the least wish to go into company, for in company I was very rarely noticed; and if Bessie had but been kind and companionable, I should have deemed it a treat to spend the evenings quietly with her, instead of passing them under the formidable eye of Mrs. Reed, in a room full of ladies and gentlemen. But Bessie, as soon as she had dressed her young ladies, used to take herself off to the lively regions of the kitchen and housekeeper's room, generally bearing the candle along with her. I then sat with my doll on my knee till the fire got low, glancing round occasionally to make sure that nothing worse than myself haunted the shadowy room; and when the embers sank to a dull red, I undressed hastily, tugging at knots and strings as I best might, and sought shelter from cold and darkness in my crib.

To this crib I always took my doll; human beings must love something, and, in the dearth of worthier objects of affection, I contrived to find a pleasure in loving and cherishing a faded graven image, shabby as a miniature scarecrow. It puzzles me now to remember with what absurd sincerity I doated on this little toy, half fancying it alive and capable of sensation. I could not sleep unless it was folded in my night-gown; and when it lay there safe and warm, I was comparatively happy, believing it to be happy likewise.

I suppose Jane must have been lucky that Aunt Reed even allowed her to have a doll. But then it was a "faded graven image, shabby as a miniature scarecrow", probably a simple wooden doll – nothing like Georgiana's wax doll from Paris, dressed in all the latest fashions.

Bessie had now finished dusting and tidying the room, and having washed her hands, she opened a certain little drawer, full of splendid shreds of silk and satin, and began making a new bonnet for Georgiana's doll.

Jane's doll had nowhere to live except in Jane's bed. But Georgiana's miniature dolls lived in a magnificent dolls house – a dolls house that Jane was not allowed to touch.



Having spread the quilt and folded my night-dress, I went to the window-seat to put in order some picture-books and doll's house furniture scattered there; an abrupt command from Georgiana to let her playthings alone (for the tiny chairs and mirrors, the fairy plates and cups, were her property) stopped my proceedings; and

then, for lack of other occupation, I fell to breathing on the frost-flowers with which the window was fretted, and thus clearing a space in the glass through which I might look out on the grounds, where all was still and petrified under the influence of a hard frost.

I wonder if Jane left her doll behind at Gateshead or did it go with her to Lowood, or even to Thornfield Hall? Probably it was the only doll she ever owned – unlike Adèle. Adèle had a “*best wax doll*” so no doubt she had several, not to mention dolls made of wood, leather, bisque and porcelain.

Having seen Adele comfortably seated in her little chair by Mrs. Fairfax's parlour fireside, and given her her best wax doll (which I usually kept enveloped in silver paper in a drawer) to play with, and a story-book for change of amusement; and having replied to her "Revenez bientôt, ma bonne amie, ma chere Mdlle. Jeannette," with a kiss I set out.

Not only did Charlotte write about actual dolls she also allowed her characters to describe somebody as “a doll”. Blanche Ingram thought of Adèle as “a little doll”.

"Mr. Rochester, I thought you were not fond of children?"
"Nor am I."
"Then, what induced you to take charge of such a little doll as that?" (pointing to Adèle). "Where did you pick her up?"

And Jane, herself, felt that she was being treated like a doll by Rochester when he wanted to dress her up in fine clothes.

I never can bear being dressed like a doll by Mr. Rochester

Let's move on to *Villette*. Here Charlotte goes to great lengths to describe little Polly's doll. Again this is a special doll that comforted an only child. And this doll even has a name.

Repairing to the drawing-room – in which calm and decorated apartment she was fond of being alone, and where she could be implicitly trusted, for she fingered nothing, or rather soiled nothing she fingered – I found her seated, like a little Odalisque, on a couch, half shaded by the drooping draperies of the window near. She seemed happy; all her appliances for occupation were about her; the white wood work-box, a shred or two of muslin, an end or two of ribbon, collected for conversion into doll-millinery. The doll, duly night-capped and night-gowned, lay in its cradle; she was rocking it to sleep, with an air of the most perfect faith in its possession of sentient and somnolent faculties; her eyes, at the same time, being engaged with a picture-book, which lay open on her lap.



'Miss Snowe,' said she in a whisper, 'this is a wonderful book. Candace' (the doll, christened by Graham; for, indeed, its begrimed complexion gave it much of an Ethiopian aspect) – 'Candace is asleep now, and I may tell you about it; only we must both speak low, lest she should waken.



Her lip trembled. I hastened to disclose the fact of a letter having been received, and to mention the directions given that she and Harriet should immediately rejoin this dear papa. 'Now, Polly, are you not glad?' I added. She made no answer. She dropped her book, and ceased to rock her doll; she gazed at me with gravity and earnestness.

Tiny Polly could herself be described as a doll, and that would be a compliment. But Charlotte's characters were often less flattering when they describe someone as a doll.

'The Colonel-Count!' I echoed. 'The doll – the puppet – the manikin – the poor inferior creature! A mere lackey for Dr. John: his valet, his foot-boy!

'Dr. and Mrs. Bretton were at M. de Bassompierre's this evening?'

'Ay, ay! as large as life; and missy played the hostess. What a conceited doll it is!'

It's not quite clear to what extent Lucy Snowe was being sarcastic when she likens De Hamel to a doll.

I believe I could have picked out the conquering De Hamal even undirected. He was a straight-nosed, very correct-featured little dandy. I say little dandy, though he was not beneath the middle standard in stature; but his lineaments were small, and so were his hands and feet; and he was pretty and smooth, and as trim as a doll: so nicely dressed, so nicely curled, so booted and gloved and cravated he was charming indeed.

When Dr Graham suggested to his mother that a certain young lady might become her daughter-in-law Mrs Bretton made no secret of her jealousy.

'You will bring no goddess to La Terrasse: that little château will not contain two mistresses; especially if the second be of the height, bulk and circumference of that mighty doll in wood and wax, and kid and satin.'

What doll references are there in *Shirley*? Harriet is described as one who would not be treated like a doll.

Hannah was his favourite. Harriet, though beautiful, egotistical, and self-satisfied, was not quite weak enough for him. She had some genuine self-respect amidst much false pride, and if she did not talk like an oracle, neither would she babble like one crazy; she would not permit herself to be treated quite as a doll, a child, a plaything; she expected to be bent to like a queen.

And Jessy is described as a doll.

Jessy, with her little piquant face, engaging prattle, and winning ways, is made to be a pet, and her father's pet she accordingly is. It is odd that the doll should resemble her mother feature by feature, as Rose resembles her father, and yet the physiognomy -- how different!

When Martin claims that all women are dolls he is not being at all complimentary.

'I'll say the same then. I mean always to hate women. They're such dolls; they do nothing but dress themselves finely, and go swimming about to be admired. I'll never marry. I'll be a bachelor.'

Shirley complains that all men think of women as mere decorative dolls.

'If men could see us as we really are, they would be a little amazed; but the cleverest, the acutest men are often under an illusion about women: they do not read them in a true light: they misapprehend them, both for good and evil: their good woman is a queer thing, half doll, half angel; their bad woman almost always a fiend.

To Caroline, playing with dolls is but a childish occupation. She would have had no sympathy with the enthusiastic collectors of this world who are never too old to play with their dolls.

'Pooh! mere nonsense! I'll not hear of governessing. Don't mention it again. It is rather too feminine a fancy. I have finished breakfast, ring the bell: put all crotchets out of your head, and run away and amuse yourself.'

'What with? My doll?' asked Caroline to herself as she quitted the room.

Dolls get a mention in *The Professor*. Crimsworth is glad that Zoraide Reuter is no mere doll. (Once again Charlotte doesn't simply use the word "doll" but she mentions some of the materials with which dolls of the day were made.)

... the idea of marrying a doll or a fool was always abhorrent to me: I know that a pretty doll, a fair fool, might do well enough for the honeymoon; but when passion cooled, how dreadful to find a lump of wax and wood laid in my bosom, a half idiot clasped in my arms, and to remember that I had made of this my equal – nay, my idol – to know that I must pass the rest of my dreary life with a creature incapable of understanding what I said, of appreciating what I thought, or of sympathizing with what I felt!

Now what about Emily? In her own childhood she probably had more time for the animals around the Parsonage than a lifeless piece of wood or leather. Her only two uses of the word "doll" in *Wuthering Heights* describe a character unfavourably, as being effeminate. Nelly Dean tells Heathcliff that compared to him Edgar Linton is quite a doll.

And now, though I have dinner to get ready, I'll steal time to arrange you so that Edgar Linton shall look quite a doll beside you: and that he does. You are younger, and yet, I'll be bound, you are taller and twice as broad across the shoulders; you could knock him down in a twinkling; don't you feel that you could?'

Then little Hareton is described by Nelly as a "moaning doll".

My master kept his room; I took possession of the lonely parlour, converting it into a nursery: and there I was, sitting with the moaning doll of a child laid on my knee; rocking it to and fro ...

But Anne must have played with dolls. At least, in *Agnes Grey*, she describes Mary Ann's dolls and her accessories.

When the room and books had been shown, with some bickerings between the brother and sister that I did my utmost to appease or mitigate, Mary Ann brought me her doll, and began to be very loquacious on the subject of its fine clothes, its bed, its chest of drawers, and other appurtenances; but Tom told her to hold her clamour, that Miss Grey might see his rocking-horse, which, with a most important bustle, he dragged forth from its corner into the middle of

the room, loudly calling on me to attend to it. Then, ordering his sister to hold the reins, he mounted, and made me stand for ten minutes, watching how manfully he used his whip and spurs. Meantime, however, I admired Mary Ann's pretty doll, and all its possessions; and then told Master Tom he was a capital rider, but I hoped he would not use his whip and spurs so much when he rode a real pony.

... with a feeling of unusual repose, I sat by the fire, putting the finishing stitches to a frock for Mary Ann's doll ...

It may be that Anne had not seen the very lifelike bisque dolls that had begun to be made in France and Germany. Uppermost in her mind seems to have been the painted wooden dolls with their rather unnatural colouring. In *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* Milicent Hargrave and Helen are discussing Mr Huntingdon's complexion. Milicent thinks it's too red but Helen replies indignantly:

It is not red at all. There is just a pleasant glow, a healthy freshness in his complexion – the warm, pinky tint of the whole harmonising with the deeper colour of the cheeks, exactly as it ought to do. I hate a man to be red and white, like a painted doll, or all sickly white, or smoky black, or cadaverous yellow.

NEW FILM ABOUT THE BRONTËS

From the *Keighley News*, 4th April 2014

An actor who starred in the Harry Potter films has been chosen for a major role in a multi-million pound film exploring the lives of the Brontë sisters. Matthew Lewis, who played the part of Neville Longbottom in the eight Harry Potter films, was selected for a new biopic called *The Brontës*. He will portray the sisters' troubled brother, Branwell.

In October of last year, Yorkshire-based Clothworkers Films revealed an estimated budget of £10 million for the production about the famous literary siblings – Charlotte, Emily and Anne. The company has said the film will be the world's first English-language project of its kind. The two-hour feature is due to be released on April 21, 2016 – exactly 200 years since Charlotte Brontë was born.

Mr Lewis's involvement was announced recently by the film's director, David Anthony Thomas. Mr Thomas said: "I'm really excited to be working with Matthew Lewis on *The Brontës* film. Matthew will be playing the role

"Matthew has been my Branwell since we first started production, and I'm delighted role."

As well as his role in who was born in Horsforth, is the character Jamie Bradley in a called *The Syndicate*.

More recently he has been part 42, a comedy drama series disposal unit in Afghanistan.



first choice to play working on the he's agreed to play the

Harry Potter, Mr Lewis, also known for playing five-part TV series

of the cast of *Bluestone* about a British bomb His role as Branwell

will see him getting to grips with a character who struggled to find a niche in life, despite being a capable scholar and a published poet.

Branwell worked as a portrait painter, a tutor and a railway clerk, but his health was badly affected by his dependence on drink and opium. He died in 1848, aged just 31, and is interred in the family vault in Haworth.

Mr Thomas, who is himself a lifelong Brontë fan, said despite the many bleaker elements of the family's story, his film will also celebrate their resilience and success. He added he wants the film to be faithful to history, while being accessible to audiences unfamiliar with the Brontës' work.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Australian Brontë Association 2014

Brought forward from 28/1/13		1788.47
Receipts		
Bank Interest	4.30	
Donation	10.00	
Name Badges	43.00	
Meeting – Admission	720.00	
Membership	1275.00	2252.30
Expenses		
Blue Mountains Cultural Centre booking	23.75	
Castlereagh – Room Hire	1000.00	
Printing	227.50	
Postage	88.30	
EZY Engraving Name Tags	41.00	
Gifts for Speakers etc	200.72	
Stationery	37.13	
Parking	25.50	
Speakers Lunches	97.50	
Christmas Dinner Deposit	150.00	
Conference 2014 Deposit	500.00	
Literary Societies of Sydney	91.00	
Raffle Expenses	66.00	2548.40
Account Balance at 1/2/14		1492.37

Michael Links, Treasurer

GOOGLE CELEBRATED CHARLOTTE'S 198th BIRTHDAY



THE BEWICK BIRTHPLACE – CHERRYBURN

By Huon Mallalieu, from *Country Life* January 22, 2014 – spotted by Sarah Burns

“Each picture told a story; mysterious often to my undeveloped understanding and imperfect feelings, yet ever profoundly interesting.” Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* was enchanted by the woodcut illustrations in Thomas Bewick’s *History of British Birds*, as generations have been since the first volume was published in 1797.

As Jenny Uglow says in her biography: “Bewick is a rare artist in that he speaks directly both to adults and to children, who respond at once to his small scenes.”

They are indeed miniature miracles. It is worth taking a magnifying glass to them and the original blocks to catch the tiny details. The ancient craft of wood-engraving was moribund when Bewick (1753 – 1828) took it up during his apprenticeship to Ralph Beilby in Newcastle. Beilby was much more interested in working on metal, regarding wood as coarse, which indeed it had been until adopted by a natural master.

Born the son of a farmer and small mine manager at Cherryburn on the south bank of the Tyne, 11 miles from the city of Newcastle, Bewick was as obsessive a draughtsman as he was an enthusiastic student of nature. His refinement as an artist may surprise, but not the touches that indicate the harshness, as well as beauties, of Regency country life.

Although his *History of British Fishes*, to follow *Quadrupeds* (1790) and *British Birds*, was never finished, he published or illustrated many other works

and undertook other engraving work, including banknotes.

Until he was 14, he had enjoyed an open-air existence with his seven siblings around Cherryburn, romping, playing truant and fishing when not helping on the farm. He returned often throughout his life.

Although he wrote of Cherryburn House, it was not at all grand and his brother William built a new, larger house across the yard in the 1820s. The old building was gradually used for farming purposes and one end was pulled down. Luckily, the remnant survived and Bewick’s son Robert made careful drawings of the interior, which have informed a faithful restoration since the Thomas Bewick Birthplace Trust acquired the estate in 1982. In 1989, it won a museum award for ‘achieving most with the smallest resources.’

The National Trust, which took over the property in 1991, continues to acquire and show Bewick’s works, re-create an experience of 18th century rural life, preserve the landscape as an amenity and provide facilities for research into the history of engraving. Cherryburn’s house and grounds host events as well as the permanent display and printing demonstrations on original hand presses. Outside, the paddocks with animals and exotic birds, such as rheas, and the garden walk offer views across the Tyne Valley.

Cherryburn is open from mid February to the beginning of November, but is closed on Wednesdays except in July and August. (001144 1661 843276;

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/cherryburn)

TOUR DE FRANCE COMES TO HAWORTH

Only a month to go to the start of the Tour de France. The Grand Depart 2014 will focus the eyes of the world on Yorkshire – from Leeds to London. On Day 2, Sunday 6 July, The Tour climbs up out of Keighley and rides through Haworth, the location of the Brontë Parsonage.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

We have a wonderful program this year and our first two speakers have enthralled members with their energetic and fascinating papers.

In February Chester Porter QC explained the legal aspects of *Wuthering Heights*. Just how did Heathcliff get away with it?

In April we explored the depths of *Paradise Lost* with Dr Beverley Sherry showing us how to hear and see Milton's Satan with readings from the text and illustrations by John Martin and others.

Plans are well underway with the NSW Dickens Society for our "North & South" Country Weekend in the Blue Mountains. If you haven't booked yet, we encourage you to do so and look forward to seeing you there.

The Penguin Book Club/Google Hangouts continue to entertain all who participate and view the discussions either live or at leisure. The link to the video for Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* is: <http://youtu.be/h0Mc4TYNxac>. Mrs Gaskell's *North and South* will be discussed on 24 July.

The debate as to who is the Queen of English Literature – Jane Austen or Emily Brontë, conducted in London on 26 February, can be seen on YouTube or the Intelligence Squared website: www.intelligencesquared.com. The next literary combat to be held on 22 June 2014 will be to determine the King of English Letters – Shakespeare v Milton.

Thank you to all those who have corresponded with the committee and myself throughout the year. We appreciate your feedback and any suggestions for activities, talks or events are most welcome.

Sarah Burns

2014 - NEW MEMBERS

Brian Beergah Larry Billington Gary Corkill	Tian Harris Christine Kemp Jane McKenzie	Dorothy Matsos Louise Owens Zorica Rapaich
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2014 COMMITTEE

President:	Sarah Burns	Membership Secretary:	Annette Harman
Vice President:	Mandy Swann	Editor:	Christopher Cooper
Treasurer:	Michael Links	Committee Members:	Michelle Cavanagh
Secretary:	Carmel Nestor		Stephanie Rigby

Our Patron is Christine Alexander, UNSW

FROM JUST WILLIAM TO JANE EYRE

From the Weekly Telegraph 23-29 April 2014, spotted by Catherine Barker

Sue Townsend, the creator of Adrian Mole and his diaries, the publication sensation of the 1980s, recently died. Her obituary was interesting in that it was revealed she did not learn to read until she was aged eight. She was no scholar and left school at fifteen. 'But belatedly, the internal, secret world of books played a central part in her existence. Having started on Richmal Crompton's *Just*

William, she quickly graduated to *Jane Eyre*, and from there to Dostoevsky. "*Jane Eyre* was the first book I read right through, non-stop," she said. "It was winter, freezing cold, and I remember seeing this thin light outside and realising it was dawn. I got dressed reading, walked to school reading and finished it in the cloakroom at lunchtime. It was riveting".

Program for the second half of 2014

Date	Details
2 Aug 10.30am	<p>Cressida Green (Postgraduate Student at the University of Sydney) Phantom Rivalry in <i>Shirley</i></p> <p>The romantic rivalry that appears to lie at the heart of Charlotte Brontë's <i>Shirley</i> is eventually revealed to be a misunderstanding on the part of the characters and a misdirection on the part of the narrator. But rivalry once seen can't be unseen, and the spectre of this phantom rivalry casts an indelible shadow over our understanding of the relationship between the novel's two heroines. What does Brontë mean by figuring these women as intense faux-rivals?</p>
4 Oct 10:30am	<p>Lee O'Brien – Macquarie University – Why Lockwood?</p> <p>Lee will explore the process of narration of <i>Wuthering Heights</i>.</p>
31 Oct – 2 Nov	<p>ABA/Dickens Weekend – North & South – Waldorf Leura Gardens Resort, Leura</p> <p>Focussing on the different cultures of the north and south of Victorian England as depicted by the Brontës and Charles Dickens, with reference to Mrs Gaskell, whom Charlotte and Charles Dickens both knew.</p>
29 Nov Noon	<p>CHRISTMAS LUNCH WITH THE NSW DICKENS SOCIETY Cellos at the Castlereagh Hotel Cost to be announced</p>

BOLLYWOOD WUTHERING HEIGHTS



This year's Lord Mayor's Parade in Bradford will have four distinct parts, representing in turn black-and-white film, colour film, Bollywood and cinemas. This costume, specially designed for the event by local artist Morwenna Catt, promises to be one of the highlights.

The elaborate headdress depicts the story of Brontë classic *Wuthering Heights* as if adapted into a Bollywood film, and features sheep and brooding moors as well as the lovers Heathcliff and Catherine.

CHARLOTTE ON THE TUBE

Spotted at Wimbledon tube station. *I try to avoid looking forward or backward and try to keep looking upward.* – **Charlotte Brontë**

