



# The Australian Brontë Association

Newsletter

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## WAS THIS THE ROOM WHICH INSPIRED CHARLOTTE?

by Catherine Barker



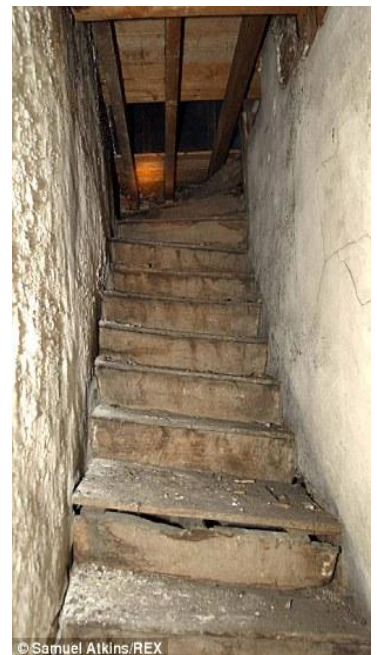
I was interested to read in the UK *Sunday Telegraph* 10/8/14 of a probable link between a newly restored stately home in North Yorkshire and Charlotte Brontë in an article entitled *Was this Secret Attic behind the Tale of Mrs Rochester?*

Whilst carrying out renovations to Norton Conyers as part of a £500,000 conservation project, a hidden attic room was discovered behind a secret staircase. There was a local story about a madwoman who was shut up here in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and Charlotte Brontë would have heard this tale when she visited in 1839 and was reported as having been “very taken” with the attics. Norton Conyers is also believed to have helped inspire Charlotte in her depiction of Thornfield Hall when

she was writing *Jane Eyre*, eight years following her visit.

The owners of the property, Sir James and Lady Graham, whose family have lived there since 1624, were aware of the fact that there was probably a further attic room in existence but had not succeeded in locating it until work began. A very narrow staircase was discovered behind panelling which led to the garret, in the furthest corner of the extensive attics, nicknamed Mad Mary’s room.

The newly discovered attic will be opened to small pre-booked groups of visitors when Norton Conyers re-opens to the public in July 2015.



The Hidden Staircase



Norton Conyers – the Inspiration for Thornfield Hall?

# Jane Eyre as a Missionary

by Jean Porter

I was recently reading the memoirs and various accounts of my great-great-grandfather, Walter Oke Croggon. He and his wife Mary were missionaries on the island of Zante (Zákynthos), which is one of the Ionian Islands off the coast of Greece. They were ardent Cornish evangelical Methodists sent out by the Wesleyan Mission Society in the early 19th century. As I read, it struck me that he sounded just like St John Rivers in his articulate piety and burning missionary zeal.

Mary's life and death gave me a glimpse into the role of the early missionary wife even with the challenges in climate and sanitation being so different in the various countries.

Had Jane herself any idea what sort of life she would have had as St John's wife? She was a realist and certainly expected to die. This was certainly accurate as the early missionaries died in droves. My great-great-grandmother Mary died on Zante and is buried there. She died after an operation described in vague terms, certainly without anaesthetic. Thankfully, it proved less painful than expected. It was possibly gynaecological as she had had many children, of which only one survived — a girl, who ultimately came to Australia as the wife of a missionary to 'the heathen of Victoria'. Mary suffered bouts of ill health after losing each child, described by her husband as 'times of great affliction'. She was well looked after by the regimental doctors from the English troops stationed on Zante at this time. However she was far from home and family, and must have been very lonely.

Jane does not mention childbirth as one of the problems she faced when contemplating the loveless embraces of St John. She would certainly be only too aware of the result. He makes it quite clear that theirs would be a physical as well as a spiritual union and retained absolutely until death. She shudders at the power he has over her to the marrow of her being.

Jane seemed to think, as did Diana and Mary, that it would be the heat that would kill

her. According to Diana, it appears that Calcutta (today known as Kolkata) was to be her destination. Therefore heat certainly would have been a problem and coupled with unrelenting work would lead to exhaustion and collapse. St John talks about the 'Society', which must have been the Anglican Church Missionary Society. This was founded in 1799 with William Wilberforce as one of its founding members. Calcutta was one of its strongholds in India at the time, and was controlled by a local committee with considerable independence from London. Many critics believe that the character of St John was inspired by the missionary Henry Martyn, who attended St John's College with Patrick Brontë. He also travelled to India alone, his fiancée having refused to go with him. He died at the age of 31 of a fever (possibly malaria) after a life of unremitting work. It is interesting that Mary and Walter's second child, who died in infancy, was named Henry Martyn Croggon. It seems to show considerable ecumenical dialogue amongst the Protestant societies, and I can imagine how the wives could have supported each other.

Jane does not mention dying of disease, which was a real possibility. Emily, the wife of James Long (an Anglican missionary in Calcutta), died of amoebic dysentery in 1867 on a voyage home on leave. She had been a missionary for nineteen years and ran a vernacular school for girls in Thakurpukur — then a hamlet a day's journey from Calcutta. In that place there was also cholera, dengue fever and plague.

Jane would know her main duties would be in teaching, as St John spelled it out quite specifically. She would be a conductress of Indian schools and a helper amongst Indian women. She was ideally suited to the job. She was well educated, highly intelligent, efficient, and hard working. St John had closely observed her conscientious work at the village school, and her willingness to learn another language. He knew that she could reach the

women as he could not — especially in a place like India where the upper caste Hindu and Muslim women were confined in separate quarters called ‘zenanas’. These women were the ones with influence in their communities. The lower caste women could be made welcome in her home. A friendly Hindu observer once told a London Missionary Society missionary:

*We do not greatly fear your schools; we need not send our children. We do not fear your books as we need not read them. We do not much fear your preaching, we need not listen. But we dread your women and we dread your doctors. For your doctors are winning our hearts and your women are winning our homes, and if our hearts and homes are won, what is there left of us?*

There was no question of confining these early missionary wives to the home. St John went further and was horrified at the thought that Jane would waste her talents on household joys and private studies, and that if she wouldn't marry him, she could go as a helper to another missionary's wife. So much the better, now she was rich. His idea of the role of an independent woman seems to be well in advance in the thinking of that time. Jane of course had other ideas!

Mary Croggon, even with her poor education at a village school where she was taught only to sew and the basics of reading and writing, admirably fulfilled her role as a missionary wife. In Walter's memoirs he approvingly writes that at the village prayer meetings, she exercised her talents in prayer, expressing herself scripturally and fervently. I imagine extensive Bible reading would have been an education in itself.

Straight after their marriage in 1823, they went on a mission to some English ironworkers in France. She taught girls in Sunday School, raised funds for their mission work, and visited the sick and dying.

In 1826 they were on their way to Zante. Why Greece? This was part of an idea of a Mediterranean mission, with the main prize of course being Palestine. They were to

evangelise the Jews, Muslims and ‘superstitious Christians’. As most of the population of Zante was Greek Orthodox, I imagine the latter was their object.

She opened a school for the Greek girls, as there was none in Zante. She taught sewing and engaged teachers for reading and writing. This uneducated lady taught herself enough Greek to be understood by the girls, and translated St Matthew's gospel from the original Greek to English as a way of teaching English — and of course the gospel.

When she died in 1830, there was an enormous outpouring of grief. She and Walter were highly successful secular teachers, but their main purpose of evangelising the people was a huge disappointment. In fact the whole Mediterranean mission was closed in 1834 — Malta being the last.

In Walter's memoirs, at one point he discusses the faults he found in his otherwise blameless wife. He mentions at first her parsimony, but he mostly dwells on her wicked temper and general irritability over which she sheds ‘many bitter tears’. His faults are not mentioned.

It is not hard to imagine Jane being watched and checked by her husband in this fashion. After all he had already shown his gratuitous distaste for her excitement at the news of her uncle's will and vainly tried to check it. She was well aware of that ‘ever watchful blue eye’.

How long could she have put up with it? She herself describes what could have happened:

*I never in my life have known any medium in my dealings with positive, hard characters antagonistic to my own, between absolute submission and determined revolt. I have always faithfully observed the one, up to the very moment of bursting, sometimes with volcanic vehemence into the other.*

We can only speculate! How thankful we can be that the timely intervention of the supernatural saved Jane from making a terrible mistake.

# VALE BERYL WINTER

by Christopher Cooper



**Beryl as we knew her**

Those who have been members of the ABA for a long time will remember Beryl Winter. She was born in 1919 and spent her earlier childhood years in Yorkshire, before coming to Australia with her parents as a young girl. She joined the ABA not long after it was formed. By then she was in her eighties, having just completed a Masters degree in Women's Studies at UNSW where her supervisor was our patron Christine Alexander. In recent years her mobility was badly affected and she had to stop coming. She died on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> July and the funeral was held on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> July. Elisabeth and I and Michael Links attended.



We only knew Beryl as a strong-minded, sharp witted, lady of advanced years. But, as often happens at funerals, we learnt a lot more about her younger years from the eulogies. In her younger years, she and her husband were very much involved in the trade union movement and it was interesting to hear that her passing was mentioned in

federal parliament with a short tribute being given by Anthony Albanese.

As a young woman Beryl had two great passions – drama and horse riding. At the funeral we were shown some rather glamorous pictures of her acting in a play. But what really delighted me was the story, told by her daughter Bronwyn, of how Beryl came to be passionate about horse-riding. Apparently her sister had done some modelling and was asked to model a Berlei bra while on horseback. But when it came to do the photo shoot Beryl's



**Beryl in her younger days**

sister was too nervous to get up onto the horse, so Beryl did the modelling instead! She enjoyed being on horseback so much that she learnt to ride and over the next few years she competed in equestrian events in many country shows.

Beryl was especially interested in the Brontë juvenilia and in 2003, at our country weekend in Katoomba, she gave us a talk on this subject. Beryl also won third prize in an international writing competition run by the Jane Austen Society of Buenos Aires on a subject related to both Jane Austen and the Brontës. We published it in our newsletter and it is reproduced in this issue.

## 2014 - NEW MEMBERS

Brian Beergah  
Larry Billington  
Gary Corkill  
Kathleen Fernandes  
Tian Harris  
Christine Kemp  
Sabine Klust  
Julie McKenzie  
Dorothy Matsos  
Patrick Morris  
Louise Owens  
Philip Peters  
Zorica Rapaich

# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

In the second half of 2014 we continued discussions on our book of the year, *Wuthering Heights*, in June with Graham and Annette Harman drawing on parallels between Emily Brontë's novel and Shakespeare's *King Lear*, and in October Lee O'Brien from Macquarie University exploring the process of narration in her paper "Why Lockwood?". In August, Cressida Green from Sydney University looked at rivalry in *Shirley*, particularly with regard to the novel's two heroines. All the speakers this year have given us much to think about and stimulated us to re-read the novels with new eyes.

Our "North and South" Country Weekend in the Blue Mountains in October, held in conjunction with the NSW Dickens Society, was an outstanding success. All who attended enjoyed the talks, venue, meals and the opportunity to spend time with old friends and new.

Thank you to all our wonderful speakers, members of the organising committee and both societies, and the following companies who generously sponsored our conference: The Brontë Society, Dickens Fellowship, Juvenilia Press, Yorkshire Tea, Abbey's Bookshop, Google Australia, Worldwide Printing Solutions, Geranium Cottage Nursery & Café, and Camellia Grove Nursery

Congratulations to all the winners –

*Louise's Friday Night Quiz*: Susannah, Fullerton, Brigitte Lucey, Marivic Mooney, Catherine Barker, Malvina Yock, Mark and Anne Burns.

*Lucky Door Prize* (kindly donated by Tian Harris): Elisabeth Cooper

*Raffle*: Catherine Barker, Sandra Beare, Anne Bowman, Rae Goth, Graham Harman, Brigitte Lucey, Terri McMillan, Carmel Nestor, Caroline Spratt and Helen Yardley.

*Auction* – Google Tablet: Michelle Cavanagh

Our thoughts now turn to planning suitable celebrations for the Brontë bicentenaries starting with Charlotte in 2016, Branwell 2017, Emily 2018 and Anne 2020.

We look forward to seeing you in 2015 for another year of great speakers and topics exploring the novels and poems of all the Brontës. With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Sarah Burns

## MEMBERSHIPS DUE

Membership subscriptions are due. Payment will be accepted at the Christmas luncheon on 29 November and at the first meeting on 7 February 2015. Cheques or confirmation of payment by EFT can be posted to the Treasurer, Michael Links at 13 Greygum Place, Gympie Bay NSW 2227.

\$40	standard membership
\$55	two members at the same address
\$30	for members of the UK Brontë Society
\$30	for full-time students, concession care holders and overseas members
\$20	for regional NSW and interstate members

**ABA Website:** [www.ausbronte.net](http://www.ausbronte.net)

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Our Patron is Professor Christine Alexander, University of NSW

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# WHAT JANE AUSTEN MIGHT HAVE SAID OR WRITTEN IF SHE HAD READ *JANE EYRE* OR *WUTHERING HEIGHTS*

by Beryl Winter

One aspect of both *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* stands out is religion. This essay will reveal the way in which each writer employed these references to enhance the experiences of her characters and suggest how Jane Austen might have reacted and commented verbally or in writing.

**Jane Eyre:** The various quotations of the Bible, and the concentration throughout the story on religion versus love, would have engaged Austen's attention. For example, in Volume I, Chapter V, during Jane Eyre's conversation with the seriously ill Helen Burns, the latter says to Jane: 'Love your enemies ...', quoting from the New Testament, St Matthew 5:44. Helen was responding to Jane's resentment and bitterness towards Mrs Reed's treatment of her.

Jane suffered, as did all the children at Lowood School, from the cruelty and deprivation they experienced from Mr Brocklehurst. She tells that 'the fifth, sixth and seventh chapters of the aforementioned 'St Matthew' were required to be repeated each Sunday evening until the children collapsed from utter weariness.

In Volume I, Chapter XV, while walking with Jane subsequent to Jane's engagement as governess and tutor to Adèle, Rochester's ward, Rochester explains that Adèle was the daughter of a French opera dancer, Céline Varens, whom he believed loved him totally but who betrayed him. Asking Jane whether she likes Thornfield, Rochester says: 'I wish to be a better man than I have been; than I am; "as Job's Leviathan ... but straw and rotten wood" (Job 41: 26-27).

Among the many references to the Bible and to individual love, one important instance occurs in Volume III, Chapter VI, in a conversation between Jane and St John Rivers, the subject being his love for Rosamond Oliver and his dedication to 'reason' and not 'feeling'. Rivers says: 'So much has religion done for me ... pruning and training nature. But she could not eradicate nature: nor will it be eradicated "till this mortal shall put on immortality".' (I Corinthians 15:53)

These remarks appear to indicate that Rivers has chosen 'reason' or 'nature', rather than 'feeling'. He wants Jane to marry him, not for love, but as his helpmate. She is therefore torn between 'reason' and

'love' (or feeling), and finally chooses 'love' for Rochester.

However, Jane Eyre's decision would have raised the question in Austen's mind: 'Was not Jane Eyre still succumbing to 'reason', while allowing 'feeling' to affect her decision? Rochester, it appeared, now needed Jane Eyre, so Austen might have voiced her view that 'reason' predominated in the end.

**Wuthering Heights:** A reading of the first three chapters of Emily Brontë's novel might have caused Jane Austen some trepidation. Mr Lockwood, presenting himself as the new tenant of Thrushcross Grange, is met by the owner, Heathcliff, who is far from pleasant.

Wuthering Heights, now also owned by Heathcliff, is a dark and forbidding house presenting a Gothic atmosphere both physically and spiritually. It is situated in a remote area of the Yorkshire Moors, lonely, wild and frequently exposed to tumultuous, stormy weather, as the choice of 'wuthering' included in the title – a local description of the climatic conditions at the Heights – suggests.

Reading of Mr Lockwood's nightmare, the spectre at the window and Heathcliff's impassioned plea to it to 'come in ... Catherine, at last!', Austen would have recognised, and written of, the belief in ghosts and spiritualism which frequently prevailed over conventional religious teaching.

She would not have been unaware of the various references to conventional religion and the Church throughout: for example, in Chapter XXX, Mrs Dean, the narrator, explains to Zillah, a servant: 'Joseph and I generally go to Chapel on Sundays; the Kirk has no minister now, and they call the Methodists' or Baptists' place, at Gimmerton, a Chapel.'

At the impending death of Heathcliff Nelly Dean urges him to send for a minister to explain how he has 'erred from the precepts of the Bible ... how unfit [he] will be for its Heaven.' Heathcliff's response is that he wishes to be buried 'in the precincts of the Kirk ... no minister need come ... I have nearly attained my Heaven.'

This individual attitude being close to her own religious belief, Austen would have recognised that Nature itself was the spiritual eternity that Catherine and Heathcliff sought, that Heathcliff's cry, on

learning of Catherine's death: 'I know that ghosts have walked on earth ... be with me always ... take any form – drive me mad! Only do not leave me in the abyss ... I cannot live without my life! I cannot live without my soul!' (Chapter XVI), could indicate a belief in God and eternal life after death, but rather a belief in spiritualism and communication between the dead and the living.

There can be no doubt that Austen would have voiced her belief that *Wuthering Heights* represented

the writer's own love of nature, that life and death are a continuing cycle of which death is only a new beginning.

Austen would have also recognised in Catherine Earnshaw the private person who, in many ways, resembled herself. And Austen would have said that Catherine's desire, and love for, nature and the wild moors, was in a sense a camouflage for physical love which could also be interpreted by a belief in spiritualism.

## HEATHCLIFF THE OUTSIDER

by Christopher Cooper

At the recent Country Weekend we discussed good/bad men and bad/good men. Mandy Swann took us on a fascinating journey through this territory. There is no doubt in my mind that Heathcliff is bad/bad with few redeeming features. Yet he has sex appeal. What is it with his type of badness that makes him so attractive?



Hindley is also bad with no redeeming features, yet the Hindley Earnshaw fan club has very few members. So what is the difference between Heathcliff's and Hindley's badness?

The problem of evil has fascinated philosophers and religious thinkers since the days of Adam and Eve. Is evil something we are born with – original sin – or does it arise from our environment? Evil can sometimes be identified as a reaction to something bad that happens in one's childhood – the paedophile who was molested as a child. But many children from good homes drift into evil ways for no apparent reason.

Jane Eyre's cousin, John Reed, had all the benefits of a good home. He wanted for nothing materially and his mother doted on him. You

mightn't agree with Mrs Reed's method of parenting but I don't think I would blame John's nastiness on his mother. Some people just seem to be born nasty.

Hindley Earnshaw didn't seem to suffer as a child. So was his badness something he was born with – something in his genes? Emily Brontë makes no attempt to explain his badness and so paints him quite unsympathetically. On the other hand she paints Heathcliff as one who, once old Mr Earnshaw died, was treated very badly by Hindley. Above all he was treated by Hindley as an outsider and a desire for revenge took root.

I recently saw a performance by the English National Theatre of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and it made me think that Frankenstein's creature and Heathcliff have a lot in common. They are both outsiders and in both cases there is the suggestion that there is some innate goodness that turns to hate as a result of rejection.

Like the Shelley's creature, Heathcliff had no roots. He was supposedly found wandering the streets of Liverpool. Probably he had no recollection of his birth family. It was as if he had just dropped out of the sky. Unlike the creature, Heathcliff was at least given a name, though that had to serve as both first and family name. He was never allowed to be known as Heathcliff Earnshaw.



Now there is no conclusive evidence that Emily had read *Frankenstein*. But Shelley's novel was published in 1818, the year Emily was born, and was republished several times. It caused quite a sensation and so Emily surely must have heard

about it and knew something of the plot, even if she had never read it.

In *Brontë Studies* of July 2004 H. W. Gallagher (interestingly a consulting surgeon) makes a case for Emily having been influenced to some extent by Frankenstein. He refers to the fact that Isabel calls Heathcliff a monster and Nelly Dean asks 'is he a ghoul or a vampire'. Perhaps, like Satan, he was cast out of heaven as a fallen angel.

Cathy dreamed once that she went to heaven but it did not suit her. "I was only going to say that heaven did not seem to be my home; and I broke my heart with weeping to come back to earth; and the angels were so angry that they flung me out into the middle of the heath on the top of Wuthering Heights; where I woke sobbing for joy."

Gallagher also points out that Emily uses a similar narrative device to Mary Shelley. In each case there is a narrator is an incidental observer who plays

very little part in the events of the novel but who relays the narrative of the protagonists. In *Wuthering Heights* it is Lockwood and in *Frankenstein* it is a traveller on a ship that sails into the Arctic regions.

Another possible influence on Emily, in terms of the dehumanising effect of being an outsider, is Walter Scott's novel *The Black Dwarf*. Here the dwarf, because of his repugnant physical appearance, lives on the edge of a town and because he is shunned by society his heart shrivels and he becomes a hateful creature.

So why are we fascinated by Heathcliff, but are merely disgusted by Hindley? I believe it is because Heathcliff is single minded and oozes passion. We seem to respond to the passionate individual even if we don't appreciate what they are passionate about. Hindley is just self-centred an morally weak and is therefore uninteresting.

## THE CONDITION OF ENGLAND

Findings from the groups at the workshop at the Country Weekend  
compiled by Annette Harman

- \* 1832 1st Reform Act - The Condition of England Question both Whigs and Tories were concerned.
- \* 1833 Factory Act designed to regulate children, women's and men's working hours underground.
- \* "Condition of England" phrase first used by Thomas Carlyle 1839 to describe working class.
- \* Rise of the middle class throughout the century - Two Nations Rich and Poor.
- \* Dickens' literary techniques were marked by profuse linguistic creativity ranging from satire, caricature, theatre, use of class idiom, realism, autobiographical elements, serialisation, melodrama, humour, pathos, first person narrator, pace, description and strong social conscience.
- \* *Jane Eyre* was well read, acceptance of social structure, misfortunes of ordinary men and women, servants. Position of governesses in family, women's lack of legal rights compared to men.
- \* More women alive than men throughout the nineteenth century.
- \* North and South divide between workers' conditions in the north and south of England. Strikes and their impact. Irish Labour problems.
- \* 1870 Education Act - National Regulation of Primary Schooling.

## COUNTRY WEEKEND PHOTOGRAPHS

(More on the back page)





# COCKTAILS FOR BRONTË LOVERS



The following cocktails inspired by the Brontës were included in Tessa Smith McGovern's *Cocktails for Book Lovers* and have been reproduced for your enjoyment.

**Anne Brontë** – In *Agnes Grey*, Sir Thomas Ashby, husband of Lady Ashby, formerly Miss Murray, drinks “bottles of wine and glasses of brandy”.

## **BRANDY EGGNOG**

1¼ oz milk	½ oz simple syrup*
1 oz brandy	1 egg yolk
Ground cinnamon	

\* Simple syrup is equal parts sugar and water. Boil until sugar dissolves and allow to cool.

Pour all ingredients except ground cinnamon into a cocktail shaker with ice cubes. Shake well. Strain into a stemmed cocktail glass. Dust cinnamon on top and serve. Serves 1.

**Charlotte Brontë** – when *Jane Eyre* arrives at Thornfield, the home of the absent Mr Rochester, to become governess to Adele Varens, Mrs Fairfax, the housekeeper, offers her a little hot negus, a mulled wine popular in Victorian times.

## **NEGUS (MULLED WINE)**

1 pint port wine	1 orange wheel (slice)
1 quart water	Cinnamon stick
¼ lb sugar	Star anise
Juice of 1 lemon	Grated nutmeg

Put the wine into a pitcher. In a saucepan, bring water to a boil. Add the sugar, lemon juice and grated nutmeg. Pour the boiling water into the jug, stir and add the orange wheel, cinnamon stick and star anise. Serves 9-10.

**Emily Brontë** – In the beginning of *Wuthering Heights*, Mr Lockwood, the story's narrator and Heathcliff's tenant at nearby Thrushcross Grange, arrives at Wuthering Heights. Heathcliff commands Joseph to bring up some wine, and insists that Lockwood join him in a drink.

## **HEATHCLIFF'S CRUSH**

1 oz Madeira wine	Splash of orange juice
1 oz berry vodka	Raspberries and blueberries
2 oz Elderflower Presse	Ice

Mix Madeira, vodka and Elderflower Presse in a glass with ice. Add a float of orange juice, and raspberries and blueberries for garnish. Serves 1.

# NORTH AND SOUTH COUNTRY WEEKEND 2014

On Friday, 31<sup>st</sup> October 65 members and guests of the **Australian Bronte Association** and the **NSW Dickens Society** attended a weekend conference at the Waldorf Leura Gardens Resort in the Blue Mountains, NSW. Attendees travelled from Sydney, Moree, Wollongong and Canberra.

Named 'North & South', the weekend cleverly linked the Brontë sisters of the north and Charles Dickens of the south of England. Screenings of the *North & South* film, based on Elizabeth Gaskell's book, on Friday and Saturday evenings was an inspired consolidation of the theme.

The conference started on Friday afternoon with a welcome by our presidents Sarah Burns (ABA) and Michelle Cavanagh (NSW DS), dinner at the resort and then a Brontë and Dickens-related quiz.

Susannah Fullerton opened Saturday's events with her compelling talk **Elizabeth Gaskell and her links to both the Brontës and Dickens**. Our very own Londoner, Catherine Barker, followed with a wonderfully apt talk about **Dickens; Man of the South** and then our very own lady from the north, Michelle Cavanagh, spoke about **The Brontës; Women of the North** in a stimulating speech. Mandy Swann led the audience through a thoughtful debate about **Good Bad Men and Bad Good Men; Rochester & Heathcliff, St. John Rivers & Edgar Linton** which really made us contemplate the men in the Brontë and Dickens novels. Jenny Gribble discussed the fascinating Lazy Tour of Dickens and Friends in her talk on **South to North; the Lazy Tour of Dickens and Friends**.

After lunch Annette Harman gave an active group work-shopping session on **The Condition of England** and Jo Henwood gave a passionate talk on **Orphans in Fact and Fiction** linking to Australia. Afternoon tea was followed by **A Dramatic Interlude** by Christopher Cooper and friends which were two clever plays inspired by the works of

Dickens and the Brontë sisters. I gave a talk **It was the best of times, it was the worst of times; Literature and the Industrial Revolution** which was followed by a delicious dinner at the Olive Tree Restaurant at the resort.

Sunday morning started with a fascinating talk by Sarah Burns on **Branwell's Railway Days** followed by Malvina Yock's talk on **Dickens and the Staplehurst Rail Crash** which was powerful and insightful.

We then moved to The Blue Mountains Cultural Centre in Katoomba for Susannah Fullerton's talk on **Jane and David** where she compared and contrasted Charlotte Brontë's and Charles Dickens' characters in an informed and riveting way. A casual lunch followed at the Cultural Centre and completed the weekend celebrations.

The variety of talks combined with raffles, Regency Fair, sales of Juvenilia Press and the group work on Dickens' jigsaw added to the enjoyment of the weekend.

Christopher Cooper was the reliable and very patient 'Mr Technology' throughout the weekend and Brigitte Lucey was a careful listener who combined quick wits to personalise her vote of thanks after each presenter spoke.

Geoffrey Usher gave a wonderful vote of thanks in his clever Limerick for Michelle Cavanagh and Sarah Burns:

'The success of this weekend residential  
Owes much to two persons presidential.  
To say Thanks to Michelle  
And to Sarah as well

It was thought that chocolates were essential?.

Congratulations to the Country Weekend Committee; Sarah Burns, Michelle Cavanagh, Catherine Barker, Christopher Cooper, Carmel Nestor and Helen Yardley for organizing a wonderful weekend of literature, books and friendship.

**Louise Owens**



## THE AUSTRALIAN BRONTË ASSOCIATION

The Australian Brontë Association meets in Sydney several times a year. Meetings are held at the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel (near Town Hall Station) at 10:30am, though we serve morning tea from 10:00am. Those who wish to do so, have a light lunch at the hotel. At each meeting, a paper on some aspect of the Brontës' life and work is presented. There is a meeting charge of \$5 (members and non-members).

### 2015 Meeting Program

DATE	DETAILS
7 Feb 10:30am	<b>ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING</b> <b><i>Shirley &amp; The Luddite Movement</i> – Dr Andrew Shields</b> Andrew will explore the social, political and cultural history of Victorian Britain and examine how Charlotte Brontë used contemporary events as a background for her novel.
28 March 10:30am	<b>The Depiction of Trauma and its Effect on Character Development in the Brontë Fiction – Dr Patrick Morris</b> The novels written by the Brontë sisters remain popular today and as authors they are highly regarded for their ability to express powerful emotions in their characters. Patrick will analyse the portrayal of trauma in the form of child abuse and domestic violence in three key texts: <i>Jane Eyre</i> , <i>Wuthering Heights</i> and <i>The Tenant of Wildfell Hall</i> . The authors' intuitive understanding of trauma, both in its realistic depiction and its effect on character development is detailed with reference to modern psychological insights and recent literature on the psychological impact of trauma.
6 June 10:30am	<b>A close reading of Emily Brontë's poem "To a Wreath Snow"</b> <b>Dr Ryan Twomey – Macquarie University</b>
1 Aug 10.30am	<b>Jenny Maclennan</b> <b>Topic TBA</b>
3 Oct 10:30am	<b>Medical Mishaps and Maladies in the Brontës' novels</b> <b>Dr Vasudha Chandra</b>
28 Nov Noon	<b>CHRISTMAS LUNCH WITH THE NSW DICKENS SOCIETY</b> Cello's Restaurant, Castlereagh Boutique Hotel

# COUNTRY WEEKEND 2014

