



The Australian Brontë Association Newsletter

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THE BRANWELL BRONTË EXHIBITION AT THE PARSONAGE

from bronteblog.blogspot.com

The tragic figure of the Brontë brother has been much vilified and occasionally vindicated by his contemporaries (like J.B. Leyland or Francis Grundy) or modern biographical revisionism (Winnifred Gérin or Daphne DuMaurier's biographies). His vindication has not always been in his



best interest, such as the times when he claimed to have written *Wuthering Heights*. These comments have tended to create an image of Branwell as a delusional fool rather than as a misunderstood genius.

Still under the influence of Sally Wainwright's *To Walk Invisible* production (which in a way has fixed an image of Branwell as a kind of tragic Deus ex-machina of the work of her sisters), the Brontë Parsonage has devoted this year's exhibition to restoring his presence, achievements and delusions alike, in the Brontë canon. This is achieved through recreating Branwell's room in the Parsonage and by highlighting certain key Branwell items from the Parsonage collection.

Simon Armitage, a Yorkshire poet like Branwell, is the creative partner of the exhibition. He has

curated several objects of the Parsonage collection and he has explored his personal response to the items through a series of poems which will be published shortly.

The recreation of Branwell's room in the late 1830s is particularly convincing. Grant

Montgomery, production designer of *To Walk Invisible* and Simon Armitage have contributed to the recreate the ominous and dense atmosphere of the room and redesigned Branwell's Studio – the room that connects the original Parsonage with the Exhibition Room.

An unmade bed, a bottle of ink (or maybe liquor?) is spilt on the floor. There are poems in different stages of composition everywhere and a wide selection of his drawings, including his famous self-portrait, hang on the wall. The room is dimly lit and a recording of a reading of the poem that he sent to Wordsworth can be heard. This was read by young students from Beckfoot Oakbank School. The room's chaos is particularly striking when compared with the neatness of the rest of the rooms.

DEATH AND *WUTHERING HEIGHTS*

by Christopher Cooper

Wuthering Heights is very much a novel of death. It reminds me of Hamlet, although in that case most of the bodies lie on the stage in the final scene, while in *Wuthering Heights* the deaths take place steadily throughout the novel, much like they did in the Haworth Parsonage. What is quite remarkable is that *Wuthering Heights* is a tale of widowers. There are five men who survive their

So, from the very beginning, he bred bad feeling in the house; and at Mrs. Earnshaw's death, which happened in less than two years after, the young master had learned to regard his father as an oppressor rather than a friend, and Heathcliff as a usurper of his parent's affections and his privileges; and he grew bitter with brooding over these injuries.

Mr Earnshaw: chapter 5

But the hour came, at last, that ended Mr. Earnshaw's troubles on earth. He died quietly in his chair one October evening, seated by the fire-side. Miss Cathy had been sick, and that made her still; she leant against her father's knee, and Heathcliff was lying on the floor with his head in her lap. I remember the master, before he fell into a doze, stroking her bonny hair – it pleased him rarely to see her gentle – and saying, “why canst thou not always be a good lass, Cathy?” And she turned her face up to his, and laughed, and answered, “why cannot you always be a good man, father?”

But as soon as she saw him vexed again, she kissed his hand, and said she would sing him to sleep. She began singing very low, till his fingers



wives while young Catherine is the only widow. (To be precise, Mr and Mrs Linton died within days of each other and we're not told who died first.) Given that women are generally expected to outlive their husbands this is quite remarkable. But I suppose it seemed quite natural to Emily, whose father was a widower for most of his life.

NAME	DATE	CAUSE	AGE
Mrs Earnshaw	Apr 1773	unknown	40s
Mr Earnshaw	Oct 1777	unknown	40s
Frances	June 1778	consumption	about 19
Mrs Linton	Oct 1780	fever	40s
Mr Linton	Oct 1780	fever	40s
Cathy	Mar 1784	childbirth	18
Hindley	Sep 1784	alcohol	27
Isabella	Aug 1797	fever	31
Edgar	Sep 1801	fever	39
Linton	Oct 1801	consumption	17
Heathcliff	Apr 1802	starvation	35

Dates are based on the chronology by A. Stuart Daley, Brontë Society Transactions vol 21, page 169.

Mrs Earnshaw: chapter 4



dropped from hers, and his head sank on his breast. Then I told her to hush, and not stir, for fear she should wake him. We all kept as mute as mice a full half-hour, and should have done so longer, only Joseph, having finished his chapter, got up and said that he must rouse the master for prayers and bed. He stepped forward, and called him by name, and touched his shoulder; but he would not move: so he took the candle and looked at him.

I thought there was something wrong as he set down the light; and seizing the children each by an arm, whispered them to 'frame up-stairs, and make little din – they might pray alone that evening – he had summut to do.'

"I shall bid father good-night first," said Catherine, putting her arms round his neck, before we could hinder her. The poor thing discovered her loss directly – she screamed out – "Oh, he's dead, Heathcliff! he's dead!" And they both set up a heart-breaking cry.

Frances: chapter 8

When we got to Wuthering Heights, there he stood at the front door; and, as I passed in, I asked, "how was the baby?"

"Nearly ready to run about, Nell!" he replied, putting on a cheerful smile.

"And the mistress?" I ventured to inquire; "the doctor says she's –"

"Damn the doctor!" he interrupted, reddening. "Frances is quite right: she'll be perfectly well by this time next week. Are you going up-stairs? will you tell her that I'll come, if she'll promise not to talk. I left her because she would not hold her tongue; and she must – tell her Mr. Kenneth says she must be quiet."

Poor soul! Till within a week of her death that gay heart never failed her; and her husband persisted doggedly, nay, furiously, in affirming her health improved every day. When Kenneth warned him that his medicines were useless at that stage of the malady, and he needn't put him to further expense by attending her, he retorted, "I know you need not – she's well – she does not want any more attendance from you! She never was in a consumption. It was a fever; and it is gone: her pulse is as slow as mine now, and her cheek as cool."

He told his wife the same story, and she seemed to believe him; but one night, while leaning on his shoulder, in the act of saying she thought she should be able to get up to-morrow, a fit of coughing took her – a very slight one – he raised her in his arms; she put her two hands about his neck, her face changed, and she was dead.

Mr & Mrs Linton: chapter 9

Old Mrs. Linton paid us several visits, to be sure, and set things to rights, and scolded and ordered us all; and when Catherine was convalescent, she insisted on conveying her to

Thrushcross Grange: for which deliverance we were very grateful. But the poor dame had reason to repent of her kindness: she and her husband both took the fever, and died within a few days of each other.

Cathy: chapter 16

About twelve o'clock that night was born the Catherine you saw at Wuthering Heights: a puny, seven-months' child; and two hours after the mother died, having never recovered sufficient consciousness to miss Heathcliff, or know Edgar.

Next morning – bright and cheerful out of doors – stole softened in through the blinds of the silent room, and suffused the couch and its occupant with a mellow, tender glow. Edgar Linton had his head laid on the pillow, and his eyes shut. His young and fair features were almost as deathlike as those of the form beside him, and almost as fixed: but HIS was the hush of exhausted anguish, and HERS of perfect peace. Her brow smooth, her lids closed, her lips wearing the expression of a smile; no angel in heaven could be more beautiful than she appeared. And I partook of the infinite calm in which she lay: my mind was never in a holier frame than while I gazed on that untroubled image of Divine rest. I instinctively echoed the words she had uttered a few hours before: "Incomparably beyond and above us all!" Whether still on earth or now in heaven, her spirit is at home with God!

Hindley: chapter 17

The end of Earnshaw was what might have been expected; it followed fast on his sister's: there were scarcely six months between them. We, at the Grange, never got a very succinct account of his state preceding it; all that I did learn was on occasion of going to aid in the preparations for the funeral. Mr. Kenneth came to announce the event to my master.

"Well, Nelly," said he, riding into the yard one morning, too early not to alarm me with an instant presentiment of bad news, it's yours and my turn to go into mourning at present. Who's given us the slip now, do you think?"

"Who?" I asked in a flurry.

"Why, guess!" he returned, dismounting, and slinging his bridle on a hook by the door. "And nip up the corner of your apron: I'm certain you'll need it."

"Not Mr. Heathcliff, surely?" I exclaimed.

“What! would you have tears for him?” said the doctor. “No, Heathcliff’s a tough young fellow: he looks blooming to-day. I’ve just seen him. He’s rapidly regaining flesh since he lost his better half.”

“Who is it, then, Mr. Kenneth?” I repeated impatiently.

“Hindley Earnshaw! Your old friend Hindley,” he replied, “and my wicked gossip: though he’s been too wild for me this long while. There! I said we should draw water. But cheer up! He died true to his character: drunk as a lord. Poor lad! I’m sorry, too. One can’t help missing an old companion: though he had the worst tricks with him that ever man imagined, and has done me many a rascally turn. He’s barely twenty-seven, it seems; that’s your own age: who would have thought you were born in one year?”



Isabella: chapter 20

I said Mrs. Heathcliff lived above a dozen years after quitting her husband. Her family were of a delicate constitution: she and Edgar both lacked the ruddy health that you will generally meet in these parts. What her last illness was, I am not certain: I conjecture, they died of the same thing, a kind of fever, slow at its commencement, but incurable, and rapidly consuming life towards the close. She wrote to inform her brother of the probable conclusion of a four-months' indisposition under which she had suffered, and entreated him to come to her, if possible; for she had much to settle, and she wished to bid him adieu, and deliver Linton safely into his hands. Her hope was that Linton might be left with him, as he had been with her: his father, she would fain convince herself, had no desire to assume the burden of his maintenance or education. My master hesitated not a moment in complying with her request: reluctant as he was to leave home at ordinary calls, he flew to answer this; commanding Catherine to my peculiar vigilance, in his absence, with reiterated orders that she must not wander out of the park, even under my escort he did not calculate on her going unaccompanied.

Edgar: chapter 28

He died blissfully, Mr. Lockwood: he died so. Kissing her cheek, he murmured, - 'I am going to her; and you, darling child, shall come to us!' and never stirred or spoke again; but continued that rapt, radiant gaze, till his pulse imperceptibly stopped and his soul departed. None could have noticed the exact minute of his death, it was so entirely without a struggle.

Whether Catherine had spent her tears, or whether the grief were too weighty to let them flow, she sat there dry-eyed till the sun rose: she sat till noon, and would still have remained brooding over that deathbed, but I insisted on her coming away and taking some repose. It was well I succeeded in removing her, for at dinner-time appeared the lawyer, having called at Wuthering Heights to get his instructions how to behave. He had sold himself to Mr. Heathcliff: that was the cause of his delay in obeying my master's summons. Fortunately, no thought of worldly affairs crossed the latter's mind, to disturb him, after his daughter's arrival.

The funeral was hurried over; Catherine, Mrs. Linton Heathcliff now, was suffered to stay at the Grange till her father's corpse had quitted it.

Linton: chapter 30

At last, one night she came boldly into my chamber, and frightened me out of my wits, by saying, “Tell Mr. Heathcliff that his son is dying – I'm sure he is, this time. Get up, instantly, and tell him.”

Having uttered this speech, she vanished again. I lay a quarter of an hour listening and trembling. Nothing stirred – the house was quiet.

“She's mistaken,” I said to myself. He's got over it. I needn't disturb them; and I began to doze. But my sleep was marred a second time by a sharp ringing of the bell – the only bell we have, put up on purpose for Linton; and the master called to me to see what was the matter, and inform them that he wouldn't have that noise repeated.

I delivered Catherine's message. He cursed to himself, and in a few minutes came out with a lighted candle, and proceeded to their room. I followed. Mrs. Heathcliff was seated by the bedside, with her hands folded on her knees. Her father-in-law went up, held the light to Linton's face, looked at him, and touched him; afterwards he turned to her.

“Now – Catherine,” he said, "how do you feel?”

She was dumb.

“How do you feel, Catherine?” he repeated.
“He's safe, and I'm free,” she answered: “I should feel well – but,” she continued, with a bitterness she couldn't conceal, “you have left me so long to struggle against death alone, that I feel and see only death! I feel like death!”

Heathcliff: chapter 34

“You are aware, Mr. Heathcliff,” I said, “that from the time you were thirteen years old you have lived a selfish, unchristian life; and probably hardly had a Bible in your hands during all that period. You must have forgotten the contents of the book, and you may not have space to search it now. Could it be hurtful to send for some one – some minister of any denomination, it does not matter which – to explain it, and show you how very far you have erred from its precepts; and how unfit you will be for its heaven, unless a change takes place before you die?”

“I'm rather obliged than angry, Nelly,” he said, ‘for you remind me of the manner in which I desire to be buried. It is to be carried to the churchyard in the evening. You and Hareton may, if you please, accompany me: and mind, particularly, to notice that the sexton obeys my directions concerning the two coffins! No minister need come; nor need anything be said over me. I tell you I have nearly attained MY heaven; and that of others is altogether unvalued and uncovered by me.”

“And supposing you persevered in your obstinate fast, and died by that means, and they refused to bury you in the precincts of the kirk?” I said, shocked at his godless indifference. “How would you like it?”

“They won't do that,” he replied: “if they did, you must have me removed secretly; and if you neglect it you shall prove, practically, that the dead are not annihilated!”

He solicited the society of no one more. At dusk he went into his chamber. Through the whole night, and far into the morning, we heard him groaning and murmuring to himself. Hareton was anxious to enter; but I bid him fetch Mr. Kenneth,

and he should go in and see him. When he came, and I requested admittance and tried to open the door, I found it locked; and Heathcliff bid us be damned. He was better, and would be left alone; so the doctor went away.

The following evening was very wet: indeed, it poured down till day-dawn; and, as I took my morning walk round the house, I observed the master's window swinging open, and the rain driving straight in. He cannot be in bed, I thought: those showers would drench him through. He must either be up or out. But I'll make no more ado, I'll go boldly and look.'

Having succeeded in obtaining entrance with another key, I ran to unclose the panels, for the chamber was vacant; quickly pushing them aside, I peeped in. Mr. Heathcliff was there – laid on his back. His eyes met mine so keen and fierce, I started; and then he seemed to smile. I could not think him dead: but his face and throat were washed with rain; the bed-clothes dripped, and he was perfectly still. The lattice, flapping to and fro, had grazed one hand that rested on the sill; no blood trickled from the broken skin, and when I put my fingers to it, I could doubt no more: he was dead and stark!

And death is the note on which the novel ends. Not a death as a torment, or even a tragedy, but as a part of ongoing life, with peace and serenity.

My walk home was lengthened by a diversion in the direction of the kirk. I sought, and soon discovered, the three headstones on the slope next the moor: the middle one grey, and half buried in the heath; Edgar Linton's only harmonized by the turf and moss creeping up its foot; Heathcliff's still bare.

I lingered round them, under that benign sky: watched the moths fluttering among the heath and harebells, listened to the soft wind breathing through the grass, and wondered how anyone could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth.

BACK COPIES OF PUBLICATIONS NEEDED

The State Library wants a copy of all our publications. I am missing numbers 22, 23, 24, 33 and 34 of the newsletters, and Thunderer numbers 1, 9 and 12. If you have any of these that you can spare please send them to the Editor, Christopher Cooper.

FROM THE “NEW” PRESIDENT

Although there are exceptions, a president that has taken on the job with some reluctance does better than one who has sought it. I won't elaborate on this as far as American Presidents are concerned, but neither of the presidents of the Australian Brontë Association sought their position. In both cases there had to be a fair amount of persuasion.

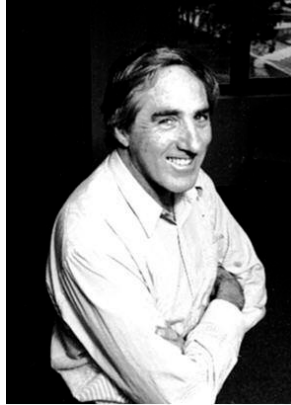
As the founding president of the ABA I remember a meeting at the home of Susannah Fullerton where a group of Brontë enthusiasts met to set up the association. When it came to choosing a founding president there was great silence. Then I noticed everyone looking at me. Susannah would have been a natural, but unfortunately for us she was already president of the Jane Austen Society of Australia.

I agreed to become the first president, but expected to be able to hand over to someone else after a couple of years. This was not to be, and many later I found myself still president. Then came a year in which I felt I could no longer continue. A few years earlier I had persuaded Sarah Burns to join the committee. She was hesitant at first, and if she had known that not long after she would become the president, I'm sure she would have refused. One gets sucked into these things.

But it is true to say that if Sarah had not agreed to take over as president, the association would probably have folded up. I am happy to say that the ABA has flourished under her leadership. She introduced a few innovations of her own, but the transition was quite smooth. Her vision for what the association should be is much the same as my own.

She had the vision, and the knowledge that a president should have but, where she was much better than I, was in her meticulous attention to detail. Rarely did anything get overlooked. At first she was hesitant in getting up and chairing meetings, something I was quite comfortable with as a university lecturer, but she quickly developed confidence in this area. On behalf of us all I would like to thank Sarah for her leadership.

At the beginning of 2016 I remember ringing Sarah from Wellington in NZ. I was standing at the site where Mary Taylor, one of Charlotte's school



friends, had set up a shop. I was on a cruise, and felt refreshed and invigorated and I assured her that I was happy to step back into the president's role. At the AGM earlier this year the association expressed a vote of confidence in me by electing me president. The truth is that there were no other contenders. My commitment is that I am prepared to continue until 2019. But in 2020 either the association will be disbanded or there will be a new

president. I will then be almost 80. However I will be prepared to support the association beyond that. The Brontës are in my blood.

As with the previous transition, this one will be smooth. I have no plans to radically change the nature of the association. My vision of the group is essentially the same as Sarah's. We are a group of Brontë enthusiasts who want to learn more about them, their writings and their world. But we also want to have some fun. We are not a group of academics, though some of us are, and our speakers are expected to give talks rather than deliver papers. On the other hand we don't shy away from difficult or serious topics. We have acquired the reputation of being the most academic of the three societies, Austen, Dickens and Brontë. I'm not sure that this is quite accurate, but while many of our talks are light and entertaining, some are quite deep and thought-provoking. Above all we are a family, and provide an opportunity for members to make friends with like-minded people. This is made easier by our being the smallest of the three societies.

With my approaching retirement at the end of 2019, let me assure people on the committee that they do not run the risk of being pressured into becoming president. On the other hand let me encourage you all to consider the possibility. You don't need to have all the right qualifications at the start – you can grow into the job. This is what happened with both myself and Sarah. And it would give me great pleasure to be able to step down *before* 2019. Whenever the next president takes over I will continue to give my support.

Christopher Cooper

HEATHCLIFF AND THE TIME MACHINE

by Christopher Cooper

Long before Einstein formulated his theory of relativity, H.G. Wells anticipated one of the consequences of Einstein's theory by 'inventing' a time machine. The theory of relativity predicts that time slows down as you travel faster. So if you travel by plane and return you will be younger than you would have been if you had stayed at home. This is one of the benefits of travel!

Under normal circumstances the difference would be minute. But if you travelled to the nearest star at just under the speed of light, and returned, you might be about 8 years older while the world you left behind may have advanced many hundreds of years.

Einstein's theory therefore allows for time travel into the future, but not back again. The music hall song "I'm My Own Grandpa" therefore would appear to break this rule, though it *is* possible with a series of unusual marriages.

H.G. Wells anticipated Einstein by imagining that time in two parts of the universe can be independent. So the concept of somebody going off and returning after three years to find himself significantly older than he would have been had he remained is imaginatively possible, even if not physically so.

Long before H.G. Wells, Emily Brontë was playing about with independent time scales. Heathcliff runs away and returns after three years, significantly older than he ought to have been!

Emily has left many chronological clues, from which it is possible to reconstruct a consistent chronology. This happened in such and such a year, or so many years after such an event, or when so and so was a certain age. I believe that she did this on purpose, embedding a logic puzzle for her readers. She was like that. Her logical brain was noticed by Monsieur Heger, and several writers have reconstructed the chronology from her clues.

But there is one glaring anomaly, and I'm quite sure that this wasn't a mistake. According to her clues Heathcliff was about 12 when he ran away, and was about 22 when he returned three years later. This might account for him having become so rich in such a short space of time!

When Mr Earnshaw brought him home from Liverpool he could have not been much more than 3

years old. He could walk, but Mr Earnshaw carried him under his greatcoat for at least part of the journey. We are given the impression that his family did not notice Heathcliff at first, until Mr Earnshaw sat down and opened his greatcoat. Nelly relates that at this time Cathy was barely 6 and Hindley was 14. This would make Cathy about 3 years older than Heathcliff.

Nelly tells us that when Cathy was bitten by a dog, at Thrushcross Grange Isabella was 11, a year younger than Cathy. So Cathy would have been 12. Hareton was born 6 months later, so let's say that Cathy was 13, which would have made Heathcliff 10 years old.

Heathcliff runs away when Hareton was 2, so Heathcliff was only 12. I know that we somehow get the impression that he was about 16, but if that were so, Mr Earnshaw would have been hiding a 7 year old under his greatcoat.

Cathy marries Edgar when Hareton was about 5 making her about 18. Nelly tells us that this was 'eighteen years ago' that is eighteen years before Lockwood's first visit. Now when he meets Heathcliff, Lockwood estimates that Heathcliff was about 40, which would mean that he would have been about 22 when he returned, six months after Cathy married Edgar. So Heathcliff ran away at the age of 12 and returned three years later aged 22. He must have found a time machine!

If you believe that Heathcliff ran away at the age of 16, which might seem more reasonable – after all he was showing signs of being jealous of Edgar over the number of times she was seeing him – that would make him a toddler of 7 under Mr Earnshaw's greatcoat and so 19 when he returned. It is not only amazing that a young lad of 16 could make his fortune in three years, but it would have meant that he was only 32 or 33 when Lockwood met him and yet thought he was 40.

Another surprise that we might get from studying the chronology is how relatively young Nelly is. She is often depicted as a mature aged lady, but she was the same age as Hindley, which would make her 8 years older than Cathy and so 27 years older than young Catherine. So when Lockwood meets her for the first time she would have been only 44.

BOOK REVIEW

Celebrating Charlotte Brontë:

Transforming Life into Literature in Jane Eyre

by Christine Alexander and Sara L Pearson

Published by The Brontë Society in honour of Charlotte Brontë's bicentenary year.

This book, which is jam packed with information like the first edition of *Jane Eyre*, published by Smith, Elder and Co in 1847 is divided into three volumes. It will be of great value to both those who are very familiar with the novel as well as those who may not have even read it.

Helpfully, before the authors begin to examine the novel itself, we are treated to a map of the north of England with the areas of Yorkshire shaded and all the areas mentioned in the text highlighted with red dots.

The page facing the map contains a Chronology of Significant Events in Charlotte Brontë's Life. From then on the book is divided into the relevant Volumes and Chapters; each chapter explained in a way as to familiarise the reader with the novel's format which is interspersed with various words from the novel itself. Half way down the first page of Chapter One it is a delight to read the first sentence of the novel; *There was no possibility of taking a walk the day....the cold winter wind has brought with it clouds so sombre, and rain so penetrating, that further out-door exercise was not out of the question.*

Each chapter includes various drawings and paintings done by the Brontë children which relate to details in that particular chapter. Along with these are photos of the various books from which Charlotte Brontë would have sourced information relevant to the text, all of which gives the reader more of an understanding of the social mores of the

time.

It is such a pleasure to leaf through the pages of this book which also includes photographs of various articles of clothing worn by Charlotte Brontë as well as some early photos taken in an around Haworth where the Brontë family lived.

Even for those who've never read *Jane Eyre* this book has much to offer as Charlotte Brontë drew so much on her own life in her writing. For example, in Volume One, Chapter 10 begins by explaining that the chapter "... is built on Charlotte Brontë's experiences as a schoolteacher and private governess and her acquired accomplishments." And in Chapter 5 of Volume Two, which details Rochester's secret occupant – the "madwoman" in the attic – we're shown photographs of an actual attic in Norton Conyers, North Yorkshire where legend suggests that a "madwoman" was hidden there, something which Charlotte Brontë would have been aware of.

Finishing with Chapter 12, Volume Three which begins with those famous words "*READER, I married him. A quiet wedding we had: he and I, the parson and clerk, were alone present.*" before we are given an in-depth explanation of the final chapter is enough to encourage anyone who enjoys 19th century literature to have this book on their coffee table to delve into at their leisure. The authors of this well researched book are to be congratulated.

Michelle Cavanagh

SYMMETRY IN *WUTHERING HEIGHTS*

by Christopher Cooper

Emily had a man's mind – so said Monsieur Heger. These days we'd be more politically correct and say that she had a logical mind. As a mathematician I would say that she had a mathematician's mind.

It is a myth that mathematics is all about numbers, Leave that to the accountants! Mathematics is about patterns, and structure and symmetry.

For many years I have said that, despite *Wuthering Heights* being my favourite novel, if I had to spend the day with one of the Brontë sisters, I would choose Anne. Charlotte, I said, would be too prickly, and Emily would be too strange.

But I have now come to the realisation that Emily would be my number one preference. True, she was never the life of the party, and she was difficult in social situations. But, on a one-to-one basis I think that Emily and I would have got on rather well. She had the logical mind of a mathematician and, as one myself, I can relate to it. True, she had no advanced training in mathematics – but she had the aptitude. I have written previously on Emily as a Geometer, discussing some geometrical constructions she once made.

Now symmetry is one of the central concepts of mathematics and Emily uses symmetry to great purpose in *Wuthering Heights*.

To begin with there is symmetry of time. There are two generations and the exact midpoint of the novel comes as Cathy is buried, marking the transition from one part of the story to the next. Apart from Heathcliff, only the servants, such as Nelly Dean and Joseph span the entire novel.

Next there is the symmetry of place. Far from being a novel about the wild moors nearly all the action takes place in the two houses. In fact it has been said that the real

heroes of the novel are in fact the houses, Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. They remain unchanged while the characters ebb and flow between them.

The symmetry here is a symmetry of contrasts. The house, Wuthering Heights, represents the wildly uncivilized culture of rural Yorkshire, while Thrushcross Grange represents the more genteel culture of London.

The distance between these two houses is four miles, which just happens to be the distance between the Haworth Parsonage and Keighley, a distance Emily would have walked many times. Could it be that Haworth is Wuthering Heights, while Keighley is the more civilized Thrushcross Grange? Four is also a convenient number to divide by two with the Thrushcross Grange park gates being exactly half way between the two houses.

I have seen several stage performances of the novel. The fact that most of the action takes place in the two houses makes it very easy to stage. One side of the stage can represent Wuthering Heights and the other can be Thrushcross Grange. One performance I remember featured fireplaces at each end of the stage – a rustic one for Wuthering Heights and a more ornate one for Thrushcross Grange. With the lighting focussed on one or the other it was clear at each moment which house we were in.

There are four cases where characters go off stage – and in the novel we don't follow them. Hindley goes away to college and comes back married. Heathcliff is absent for three years, where we do not know. Isabella runs away to London and again we know nothing of what happens there, except that she gives birth to Linton

and, years later, she dies. Finally, when Isabella is dying, Heathcliff responds to her request for him to come to see her.

The other thing that makes it like a stage play is the economy of characters – just thirteen family members in all. Compare this with *War and Peace*, or even

Jane Eyre. Note that $13 = 4 + 6 + 3$, these numbers being the numbers in the three generations.

In the beginning we have the two houses and the two married couples who lived in them. This is the first generation.

THE FIRST GENERATION

Mr Linton

Mr Earnshaw

Mrs Linton

Mrs Earnshaw



THRUSHCROSS GRANGE

WUTHERING HEIGHTS

As the novel opens we meet the second generation. Each of the two original couples has two children – a boy and a girl. The Lintons have Edgar and Isabella and the Earnshaws have Cathy and Hindley.

Actually, something that people often forget, there was a third child in the Earnshaw family, Heathcliff Earnshaw – not the gypsy boy but a another son, who died as a child and whose name was then appropriated to the urchin Mr Earnshaw found in Liverpool.

Why Emily found it necessary to mar the symmetry by introducing this unnecessary character is something I don't understand. Perhaps she had an Islamic instinct in not wanting it completely symmetric, the way Persian carpet weavers believe that they have to break the symmetry in one or two places so as not to rival God's perfection. No, I don't think that this is what motivated her to do this, but you try to come

up with a better explanation. We'll just pretend that this earlier Heathcliff didn't exist.

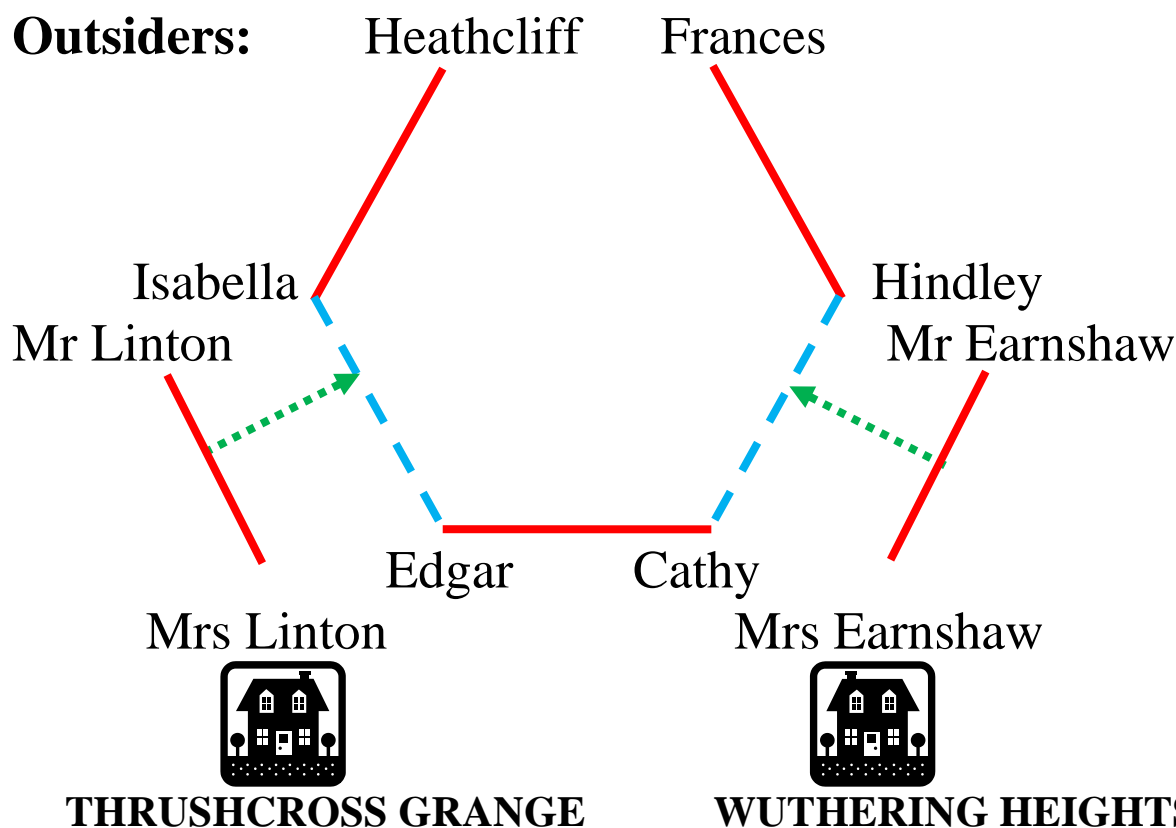
Then the household of Wuthering Heights acquires two outsiders. Early on in the story, Heathcliff is brought to Wuthering Heights and many years later, Frances comes as Hindley's bride.

These outsiders have each come from offstage – we don't learn anything of their families, or their places of birth.

In the next generation, Frances marries Hindley and, somewhat later, Cathy marries Edgar. Over this period the first generation, Mr and Mrs Linton and Mr and Mrs Earnshaw, exit the stage in the undertaker's coffins. Heathcliff goes away and on his return he marries Isabella.

So adding these three married couples of the second generation we have the following.

THE SECOND GENERATION



Here the solid lines represent marriage, the dotted lines represent parenthood while the dashed lines represent brother and sister relationships.

Of course Cathy and Isabella swap from one side of the stage to the other, but we get a tidier picture if we leave them where they began. There is a constant movement of the characters between the two houses and it is an interesting exercise to plot the comings and goings of the characters between the two households. I managed to find 25 separate compositions of these two households. Years ago at one of our weekend conferences, we acted out the ebb and flow and it nearly made us giddy with the constant movement.

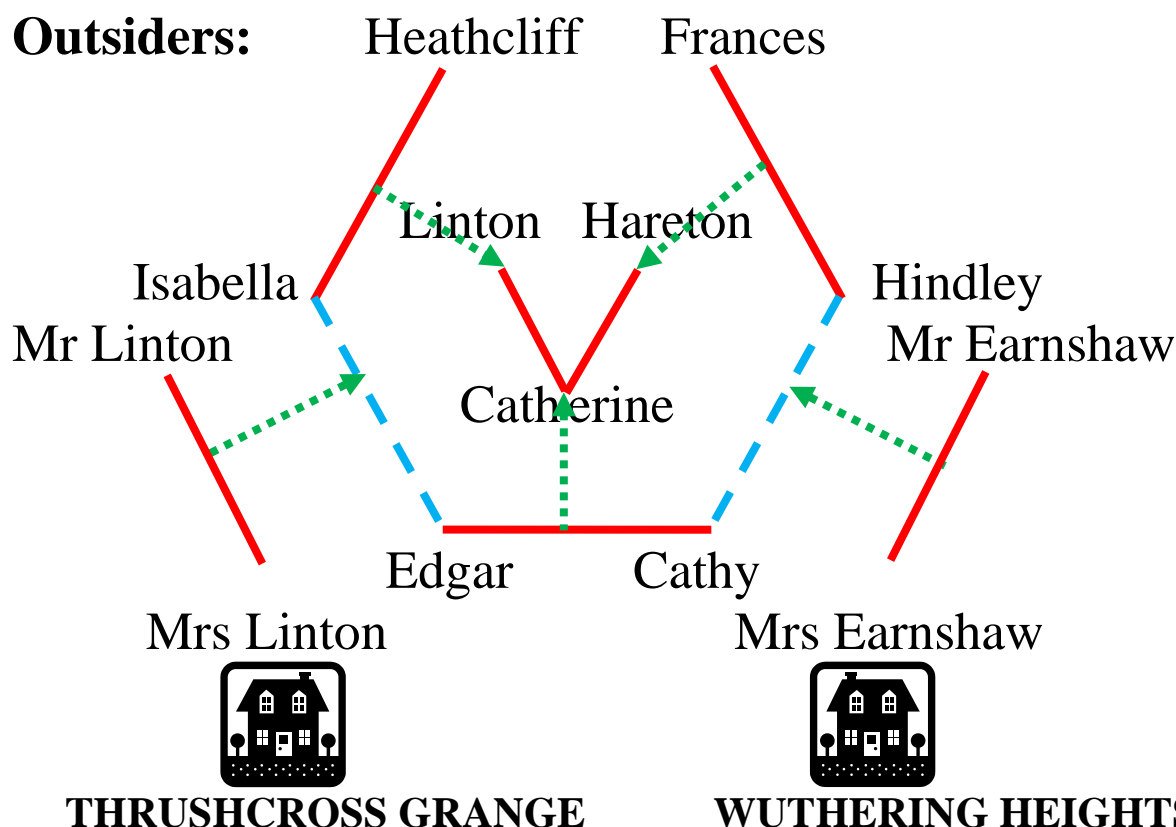
So we have three married couples in the second generation, and each of these marriages results in just one child – two boys and a girl.

Cathy and Edgar produce young Catherine, Hindley and Frances produce Hareton while Heathcliff and Isabella produce Linton. These are the third generation.

And so we come to the third generation. When they grow up, Catherine is forced to marry Linton. After he dies she develops an interest in Hareton, who Heathcliff has taken under his wing after Hindley died. She teaches him to read – something that Heathcliff, has neglected to do.

Under her influence, he grows from being an uncivilized yokel to a sensitive young man. They do not marry within the confines of the novel but it is expected that they will soon after the novel closes. So the complete picture of all three generations is the following.

THE THIRD GENERATION



Now I don't imagine that Emily drew such a diagram in planning the novel, though something like it must have been in her mind. The symmetry is just too perfect. It is known that she consulted an almanac in planning the chronology. In fact I believe that she must have written out a chronology of the events and then planted just sufficient clues for the logically minded reader to reconstruct it. Years ago I solved this puzzle and came up with a comprehensive chronology. Then I discovered that several other people had done the same.

The first to do this was Charles Percy Sanger, in 1926. The most comprehensive chronology, with details of how it was constructed, was by Paul Thompson. You can download it as a PDF document at:

www.wuthering-heights.co.uk/downloads/chronology_of_wuthering_heights.pdf

Finally, if we rub out the characters in the order of their demise we first remove the first generation. Then we go around the hexagon, in order. Frances, then Hindley and Cathy. Isabella and Edgar are the wrong way round, with Isabella dying before Edgar.

Then we move into the third generation before going out again to finish off the second generation. This leaves, at the end of the story, just young Catherine and Hareton, as the promise for the future, as well as Nelly, the other two servants, and Lockwood.

NEW MEMBERS SINCE THE LAST NEWSLETTER

Isabel DEEBLE, Mary BOOTH-PATTERSON, June BOOKER

2016 FINANCIAL REPORT

Membership

	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	PROFIT/LOSS
Membership Fees	2,850.00		
Bank Interest	4.80		
Book Sales	86.60		
Donation (Dickens Plate)	60.00		
Printing		1,188.00	
Stationery		431.63	
Postage		176.00	
Book & CDs		78.37	
Greeting Cards		20.80	
TOTALS	3,001.40	1,894.80	1,106.60

Meetings

	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	PROFIT/LOSS
Admission – Members	835.00		
Castlereagh - Room Hire		1,200.00	
Speakers Gifts		417.84	
Speakers Lunches		103.70	
TOTALS	835.00	1,721.54	-886.54

Charlotte Conference & Dinner

	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	PROFIT/LOSS
Conference	4,908.50	3,198.45	1710.05
Dinner	3,040.00	2,739.00	301.00*
TOTALS	7,948.50	5,937.45	2,011.05

* A deposit of \$300 was paid in the previous financial year, so the actual profit was \$1

Christmas Lunch

	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	PROFIT/LOSS
Lunch fees	5,175.00		
Raffle Tickets	508.00		
Lunch costs Castlereagh		4,945.60	
Harpist		200.00	
Lunch for Harpist × 2		130.00	
Parking for Harpist		17.50	
TOTALS	5,683.00	5,293.10	389.90

Name Badges

Name Badges	110.00	80.50	29.50
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SUMMARY OF PROFIT ON EACH ACTIVITY

Membership	1,106.60	Account Balance at 05/02/16	2,637.87
Meetings	-886.54	Profit	2,650.51
Charlotte Conference & Dinner	2,011.05	Account Balance at 05/02/17	5,288.38
Christmas Lunch	389.90		
Name Badges	29.50		
TOTAL	2,650.51		

Program for the Rest of 2017

The Infernal World of Branwell Brontë

26 June 1817 – 24 September 1848

The Australian Brontë Association meets in Sydney five 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).

Mon 26 June Branwell Brontë Bicentenary Dinner

A dinner to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Branwell Brontë and the 180th Anniversary of his election as Secretary of the Masonic Lodge of the Three Graces, Lodge Street Haworth.

The dinner will be held in the Adams Room of the NSW Masonic Club, that is, the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel, 169 Castlereagh Street Sydney.

Cost, for the 2 course meal plus entertainment, is \$65 for members and \$70 for non-members. Drinks are at your own expense.

Sat 5 August Branwell Brontë & Friends – introduced by Christopher Cooper

Branwell's friends were both famous and infamous, ranging from prominent literary and fine arts men to mill owners, boaties and those who worked on the railways and, of course, Mrs Robinson. Various members of the ABA will represent these friends as they sit in the snug of the Black Bull a year after Branwell's death.

Sat 7 October Humour in the Brontë Novels – Christopher Cooper

(We expect the previously advertised talk on Gypsies in Europe to be given in 2018.)

We don't normally think of the Brontë novels as being humorous, and indeed they are generally much darker than, say the novels of Jane Austen. Yet all three Brontë sisters demonstrated that they can be very funny when they want to be. We will investigate the history of humour, before focussing on the few very funny episodes in the Brontë novels.

Sat 2 December ABA/Dickens Christmas Lunch in the Grand Dining Room of Cello's, Castlereagh Boutique Hotel. Details will be announced later.

A FREAKY FAMILY!

In her book, *My Angria and the Angrians*, written when she was 18, Charlotte introduced a character called Patrick Benjamin Wiggins – an obvious caricature of Branwell. Patrick is asked by Lord Charles Wellesley what his sisters' names are.

“Charlotte Wiggins, Jane Wiggins and Anne Wiggins.”

“Are they as queer as you?”

“Oh, they are miserable silly creatures not worth talking about. Charlotte's eighteen years old, a broad dumpy thing, whose head does not come higher than my elbow. Emily's sixteen, lean and scant, with a face about the size of a penny, and Anne is nothing, absolutely nothing.”

“What! Is she an idiot?”

“Next door to it.”

MASTER MASON BRANWELL BRONTË



The Lodge of the Three Graces was founded in 1792 at the Seven Stars Inn at Barnoldswick. In 1806 it moved to The Black Bull Inn in Haworth. Then in 1833 the members rented a room in what is now known as Lodge Street.

Branwell became a member on February 1st 1836, at the age of nineteen. He attended the meetings regularly. From June 12th 1837 to December of that year, he acted as both Secretary and Organist. The latter meant playing the piano. Around the same time he was Secretary of the Haworth Temperance Society where his father was the President.

The lodge moved to Mill Hey in Haworth in 1907 where it still stands.

A Rose Bowl that was said to have belonged to Patrick Brontë was presented to the lodge on 6th April 1936 to celebrate the centenary of Branwell's being elevated to the rank of Master Mason.



BRANWELL HAD TICKETS ON HIMSELF

Branwell certainly thought very highly of himself. In a letter to the poet Wordsworth he wrote “Surely, in this day, when there is not a writing poet worth a sixpence, the field must be open, if a better man can step forward. He believed that he was that “better man”.

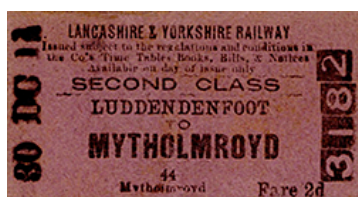


But he also issued tickets on the Manchester and Leeds Railway. The Sowerby Bridge station opened on 5th October 1840. In preparation, Branwell Brontë was Assistant Clerk in Charge of the station in August 1840 on a salary of £75. He was promoted to Stationmaster at Luddendenfoot Station on 1st April 1841, with a salary of £130. But he was preoccupied with his writing and became sloppy in his accounting. Also he would often go off drinking in the town, leaving a porter named Watson in charge. An audit of the accounts showed a deficit of 11

pounds, one shilling and sevenpence. It is thought that Watson had stolen this money, but Branwell had to take responsibility. So on 31st March 1842 he was dismissed, and he had to pay for the missing sum.

Luddendenfoot was one station beyond Sowerby Bridge in the direction away from Bradford. The line was originally run by the Manchester and Leeds Railway. It later became part of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, and later became incorporated into the London, Midland and Scottish Railway before finally becoming part of British Rail.

The line still operates but the present Sowerby Bridge Station is 600 metres from the original one. This was a result of a fire in 1978 that resulted in most of the buildings being demolished in 1980. The present station is unstaffed. The former ticket office building survived the fire and was opened in 2008 as a bar called the Jubilee Refreshment Rooms. The Luddendenfoot Station closed in September 1962 and the area is now an industrial park.



All of us remember the cardboard tickets that were once used on Australian railways. Prior to the 1840s tickets were handwritten, often leading to delays. Thomas Edmonson invented the pre-printed cardboard tickets with serial numbers. The line on which Branwell worked was only the second line in Britain to use these.