



The Australian Brontë Association Newsletter

Issue No 47

July 2021

Website: www.ausbronte.net

Email: ausbronte@gmail.com

THE LOST CHAPTERS OF *WUTHERING HEIGHTS*

By Christopher Cooper

On 1st April of this year I received a startling email from a certain Bruce Newby in Double Bay. I will quote the email.

I am writing to you as the editor of the excellent publications of the Australian Brontë Association. During Covid I have had the leisure to investigate several boxes of papers that have been in my family, and have been handed down from generation to generation without anyone paying much attention to them.

As you probably know, Thomas Newby published *Wuthering Heights*. But you will not know that I am one of his many direct descendants. I was very interested to discover, among all these old papers, the draft of a letter that Thomas sent to Ellis Bell. In it he explains that although her novel could be published as a three volume work, the fact that he would also like to publish Acton Bell's manuscript of *Agnes Grey*, made him wonder if she, Ellis, would mind if he condensed her novel by removing some of the less important chapters so that it would occupy just two volumes of a three volume set. I couldn't find her reply, but she must have agreed because that was how both novels first appeared.

My head began to swim and I searched the other boxes in case I could find the missing chapters. To my great joy I found them, neatly tied up with a lawyer's red ribbon with an accompanying note that read: "These chapters were removed from *Wuthering Heights* by permission of the author, Ellis Bell." I will send a copy if you can give me your postal address.



Now, you may have noticed the date of this email. Yes, it is a hoax. Actually it is a double hoax because neither Bruce Newby, nor his supposed email, exist! This is purely a device to get you interested in my new project.

Many years ago, when I was watching an amateur stage version of *Wuthering Heights*, I was struck by the theatrical nature of the novel. The set consisted of part of a room in Wuthering Heights on the left and a part of a room of the more genteel Thrushcross Grange on the right. I became aware that any action that didn't take place in either of these two houses, except for a few incidents in the four miles between them, just didn't exist. We are left in the dark as to how Mr Earnshaw came upon Heathcliff in Liverpool. We have no

idea where Heathcliff went after he ran away. Isabella runs away from Heathcliff and lives in London, but nothing of those ten years is reported in the novel save the fact that Linton was born and Isabella died.

I am sure Emily planned it this way and the artistic integrity of her story is enhanced by leaving these scenes to the reader. But I am also sure that Emily wanted the reader to use their imagination and to fill in these parts for themselves. My project is to do just this. Every six months, in the Newsletter, I will be presenting my version of one of these 'missing' chapters. I am beginning with chapter 0, which comes before Emily's novel begins. In it I give an expanded account of the incident with the 'fascinating creature' that Lockwood met at the sea-side, to which he briefly alludes in chapter 1.

CHAPTER 0: LOCKWOOD IN BRIGHTON

In June 1801, when I was 23, I found myself in Fleet Street, clutching the manuscript of my first novel, *Escape From The Bastille*, under my arm. I had no faith in the postal service and so I was delivering my precious cargo personally to the premises of John Murray and Samuel Highley, publishers.

The book, a romance set in Paris during the French Revolution, had taken me three whole, painful years to write and involved much research. My health had suffered badly and, if Murray and Highley had rejected my manuscript I am not sure that I could have survived.

I briefly met Samuel Highley, but he handed me over to his junior partner, John Murray the second. I was surprised to find that he looked even younger than I was.

When I told Mr Murray the nature of my novel he said, "I believe there's still considerable interest in the Revolution here in this country. There are those who say that, given the right circumstances, it could happen here."

"It's not a treatise on the possible causes – just a romance."

"Well, Mr Lockwood, the ladies like nothing better than a romance, and they buy more novels than their husbands."

I thought there was something peculiar in the way he looked at me. He tilted his head slightly to one side. Then I realised that he was blind in one eye. Mr Murray noticed me looking at his eyes and explained, "you've probably noticed that I've lost the sight of my right eye. It was when I was a boy and my writing master, in a fit of exasperation, threw a quill pen into my face. He had no intention of injuring me, but it landed perfectly in the middle of my eye and put out its sight."

I am pleased to report that they undertook to publish my book and printed 500 copies and it sold tolerably well. Although the business had been started quite some years ago by the father of young John, it was still a minor publishing house. From the perspective of my later years I now feel great pride in being one of this company's

authors because in the following decades they published such important authors as Jane Austen and Lord Byron. By the time I wrote my second novel, many years later, the partnership had dissolved and John Murray the second had relocated to Albemarle Street, just off the Strand, and



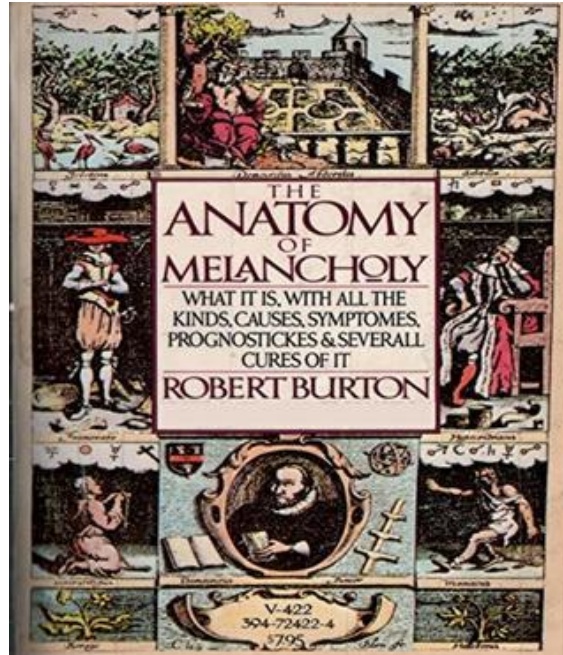
was considered to be one of the most influential publishers in the country.

When an author finally completes a work over which he has laboured for several years, he feels a sudden emptiness. The Bastille was my whole life for such a long time that I despaired of ever finding something to take its place. I had decided that my second novel would not be an historical romance, but rather a tale about ordinary people leading interesting lives.

My problem was that I had no idea as to how to begin. I had been somewhat of a recluse my whole life and didn't know much about people who lived their lives outside of the covers of a book. My health was poor so I consulted a doctor. He prescribed a month at some seaside watering place. He also recommended a book called *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, by Robert Burton. It was an old

book, written in 1621, but it was still in print and so I had no difficulty in finding a copy.

Melancholy certainly describes my condition at the time. My collapse after completing my Herculean task was only one contributing factor to my condition. My mother had died a few months previously and I was still grieving for her.



I suppose I should let you know of my family, what little there is of it. My father is a banker, and when I declined to follow him into the Coutts family, he didn't exactly disown me but he let it be known how disappointed he was. "You'll never make a living as a scribbler," he said. He was right, of course, but at least he gave me a reasonably generous allowance so that I could indulge my ambitions. I was very close to my mother but, as I have said, she is no more.

My only sibling is an older sister. When I was ten, Felicity decided to enter an order. She is now known as Sister Maria. In the sixteen years since I think I have scarcely seen her more than a dozen times. I am not a very sociable person and the only one I have felt to be a real friend is George. But he had been very busy studying law in the Inns of Court and so I didn't see him as much as I would have liked.



The prospect of a month by the sea began to invigorate me. I wrote to George and, as he was just about to take his finals, I arranged that he should accompany me to Brighton at the beginning of August. George and I stayed in a genteel lodging house on the sea front. George is an amateur naturalist. Of course all naturalists were amateurs in those days. It would be several decades before it would be possible to find employment in such pursuits. He was particularly attracted to the creatures that one could find at the water's edge and he was looking forward to collecting specimens.

At breakfast on the morning after our arrival I asked George what he planned to do that day.

"Oh, I shall take a bucket and spade ...," he said.

"And build sandcastles?" I said jokingly.

"Oh yes, I plan to be a little boy again. No, I shall collect some molluscs and maybe scrape some barnacles off some flotsam and jetsam if I can find any such timber."

"I never could tell the difference between flotsam and jetsam, if there is any."

"Oh yes, they're quite distinct in the law. Flotsam refers to anything that floats from the wreckage of a ship that has sunk. Jetsam is anything that has been thrown overboard."

I should have realised that George would know. He had just finished his law degree and was about to enter a firm of maritime lawyers after the summer.

At that moment I could not help notice a young woman, and what looked like her mother, enter the dining room. They sat at the next table. Hitherto I had taken very little notice of the fair sex. I had been preoccupied with establishing myself as an author and, in any case, I was much too shy to do anything about it if I had noticed a pretty young lady. But this was different. My head began to swim. George kept talking about salvage and other aspects of maritime law. What he said I don't remember. My whole attention was occupied by that wonderful creature. She briefly looked in my direction and so I quickly turned my eyes towards George. He had stopped talking – clearly he had noticed that I wasn't listening.

As the two ladies were behind him I leant over and whispered, "don't turn round but there's the most wonderful young girl on the table behind you. If you get up to take some more bacon you'll be able to see what I mean."

He stood up and, as he passed their table, the young girl smiled at him and I instantly became quite jealous. I wished I hadn't drawn his attention to her. He resumed his seat and whispered nonchalantly, "oh, she's not too bad to look at I suppose."

I was desperate to know her name so I listened carefully to the conversation on that next table. George, very considerately, kept quiet. I was rewarded a little later when her mother said, "oh Sylvia dear, could you get me some more toast?"

Sylvia! Ah, who is Sylvia, as the good Shakespeare once asked so eloquently.



*Who is Silvia? what
is she,*

*That all our swains
commend her?*

*Holy, fair, and wise
is she;*

*The heaven such
grace did lend her,*

*That she might
admirèd be.*

I was even more in love with her than before. Then she started to tell her mother about having taken the waters before breakfast. Such delightful tones, what a sweet voice. I longed to hear her sing, for I was sure that she could sing beautifully.

“Yes, Robert Burton is correct when he wrote that sea-bathing does wonders for combatting melancholy,” I heard her say. I was only half-way through the book but I had come across that advice in *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. But what could my dear Sylvia be melancholic about? I longed to go up to her and say that I, too, had read that book and was in need of that advice. But my shyness prevented me. Whenever she looked in my direction, which she did from time to time, I looked away. Not because she was looking at me, mind you. It was because George and I were sitting by the window and the sea was just across the road.

George got up to go, having finished his breakfast. I would have loved to have stayed until Sylvia and her mother left, but I felt too conspicuous to be sitting by myself – especially as I had satisfied my hunger. Perhaps if I fetched a morning paper, I could hide behind it. Perhaps tomorrow. I followed George out of the room.

One thing I was determined to do the following morning: I would wake as soon as it got light and go for a walk along the beach. This I duly did, and at 5 o'clock the following morning I was walking along the beach, with my shoes in my hands, getting

my feet wet as I walked along the water's edge.

There were very few bathing machines out that morning, each about fifty yards from the sand. I took out the portable telescope that I had borrowed from George and peered out to sea to see if any of those blobs near the steps of the machines were connected to the flaxen hair belonging to Sylvia. Alas, I was convinced that they were all ladies of a certain age. I waited for half an hour, just to make sure that no further bathing machines arrived. Then, one by one these contraptions were hauled into the shore and, one by one, fully dressed elegant ladies stepped out. Not one of them was under fifty!



I hurried back to the lodgings and dressed for breakfast, hoping not to miss my Sylvia. I was rewarded by finding that they had just begun breakfast as I entered the room. I was unable to sit at the nearest table because that was already occupied, but I chose the next best. As I had arrived a few minutes before George, I was able to position myself so that I had a good view of my paramour.

Perhaps her mother was a little deaf because the waiter raised his voice slightly when he asked if she would like any more tea. He referred to her as Mrs Christianson. So Sylvia was Sylvia Christianson. Perhaps of Danish heritage.

“Would it be possible to obtain a packed lunch?” Mrs Christianson asked the waiter. Sylvia plans to go out painting the whole day. The weather looks as if it will be quite sunny.”

“Certainly Madame,” replied the waiter.

Just then Mrs Christianson announced to the whole room, “haven’t we been having wonderful weather this week?” There were brief replies of agreement. Sylvia looked around and smiled at everybody. Wonder of wonders I managed to smile back!

There was a seat across the road from the lodgings and so I sat there reading a paper, waiting for Sylvia to emerge. I had planned to offer to help her carry her painting things. About twenty minutes later she emerged carrying an easel, a canvas, a palette and a number of other items of necessity. She crossed the road and I stood up, folding my paper.

“Can I help you carry those things?”

“Oh thank you, sir, I am much obliged.”

We had a lovely morning and we talked of many things. Over the next few days a feeling of rapport grew up between us. Each morning I would wait for her outside our lodgings. But I no longer felt the need to inspect the bathing machines to see if she appeared. Moreover I went down for breakfast early to ensure that I didn’t encounter her. I suppose I wanted to avoid the embarrassment of meeting her mother, wondering whether Sylvia had spoken to her about me.

But there I was every morning, ready to carry her things. One morning we went to the Royal Pavilion. It wasn’t as extensive as it is today but it was nevertheless a

magnificent structure and Sylvia was keen to paint it.

It started to come unstuck one morning when I went to my usual seat where I would wait for her. On this occasion she was already there, waiting for me. I thought that this was a bit presumptuous of her, as if she *expected* me to offer to carry her things. However I put this thought behind me and we had a nice long walk to Hove.

The next morning I slept in, and shortly after going down to breakfast Sylvia and her mother arrived. I froze. Sylvia brought her mother to our table (George was with me as usual) and said, “mother, this is my very good friend Fergus.”

Now she didn’t just say ‘my friend’ or ‘my good friend’. She included a ‘very’ that made it sound like I was her *special* friend. It’s true that I liked her a lot, but the prospect of matrimony at my time of life frightened me. It was clear that I was getting in too deeply. The next thing I expected was for her mother to ask me what my intentions were and what my annual income was.

I nodded politely and resumed my seat. Throughout breakfast I acted very coldly towards the Christiansons. I wasn’t rude. I answered every question they asked me from the other table, but in as few words as possible. After breakfast I went up to my room, and stayed there the whole day. George said I was being foolish but I couldn’t help it. I said I wanted to go back to London the very next day. George said he would have like to have stayed one or two more days, but agreed to go with me. The next morning saw us on the first train back to London.

I suppose I felt sorry for the girl. Perhaps I had led her on. Perhaps it was reasonable for her to expect us to spend the morning together on that last day as we had for the previous six days. Perhaps I’m a cad when it comes to women. I decided that the best thing for me was to go somewhere very isolated – where I would be sure not to meet any pretty young girls who might ensnare me. I knew that I couldn’t trust myself and would be head over heels with the first

pretty young creature I met, until I could control myself and end up being rude to the poor girl. My thoughts turned to Yorkshire. My grandfather had been a Yorkshireman. I came across an advertisement in *The Times*

for a house to let near a village called Gimmerton and I wrote to the proprietor, Mr Heathcliff, requesting a lease on the property for one year.

LOST POEMS OF EMILY BRONTË AND OTHER TREASURES

Sotheby's Auction Of Brontë Treasures

By insearchofannebronte@hotmail.com Jun 6 2021

In today's post we're going to look at perhaps the most eagerly anticipated literary auction of the century: the auction of the Honresfield Library at Sotheby's on 13th July, with online bids accepted from 2pm on the 2nd July.

Special thanks go to Dr. Gabriel Heaton and Melica Khansari of Sotheby's who have supplied me with lots of details and images of the items to be auctioned so that I can share them with you. This, in fact, is the first of three Honresfield auctions which are taking place in 2021 and 2022, so what is the Honresfield Library and why is it of such interest to Brontë lovers?

The Honresfield Library was founded by William and Alfred Law, two self-made mill owners who used their vast fortune to satiate their love of literature at their grand home Honresfield House near Rochdale – much like another Lancashire-born mill owner, Sir Edward Brotherton. Like Brotherton, who gifted many priceless manuscripts to the Leeds University library which bears his name, the Laws were huge Brontë fans. In 1939 the Laws' heir, their nephew Sir Alfred

Law, died without issue and the spectacular Honresfield Library collection vanished from view – until now.

The collection, large parts of which are now being auctioned, featured first editions, letters and manuscripts from leading writers including Charles Dickens, Jane Austen and Robert Burns. Also appearing in this first

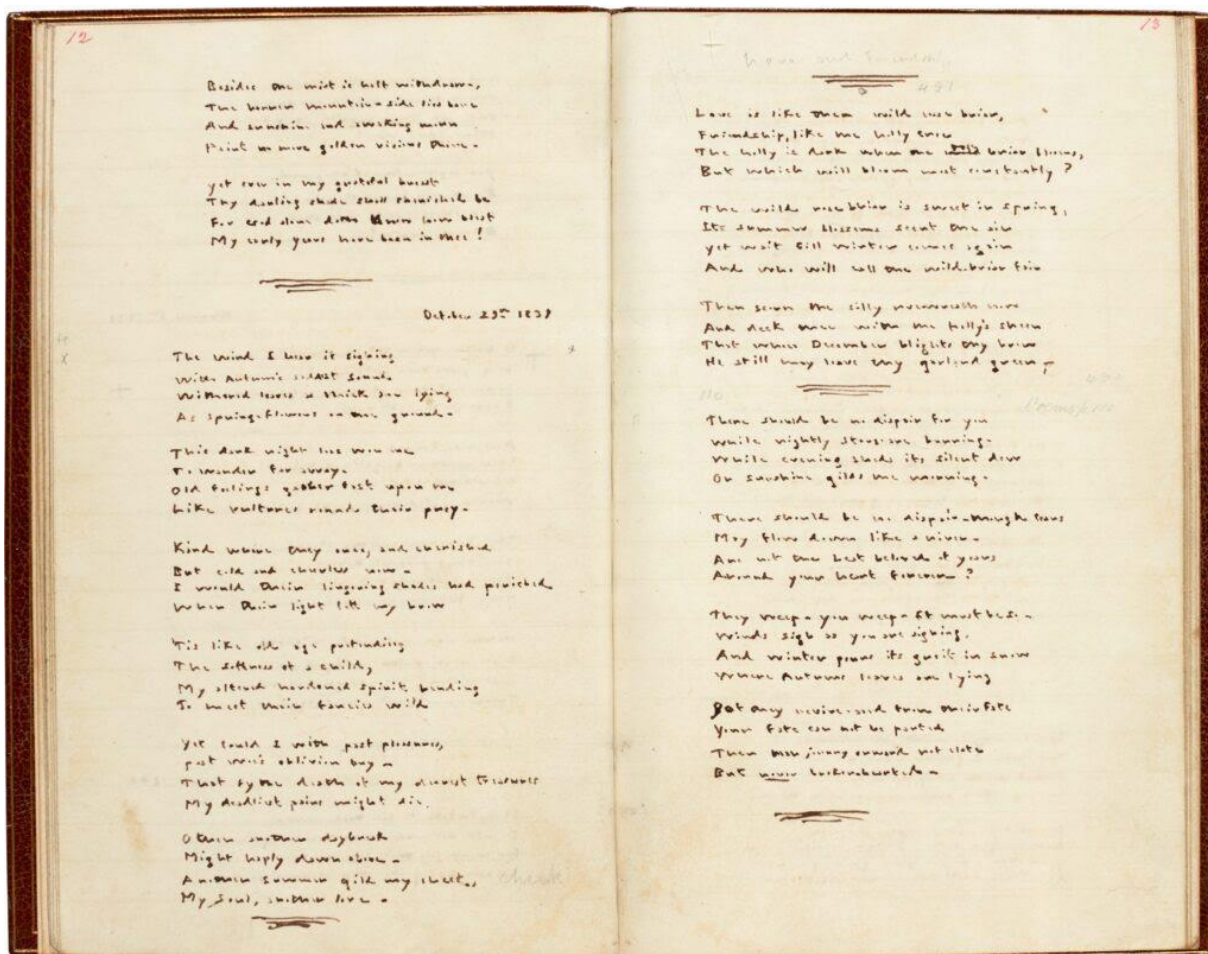
auction is the manuscript of Walter Scott's poem *The Lay Of The Last Minstrel*.

The Scott manuscript would certainly have interested the Brontës, who were great fans of the writer. In an early letter to Ellen Nussey, Charlotte Brontë stated: "Scott's

sweet, wild, romantic Poetry can do you no harm ... for Fiction – read Scott alone, all novels after his are worthless.'



Honresfield House, once home to literature lovers the Laws



Emily Brontë's Poems, courtesy of Sotheby's

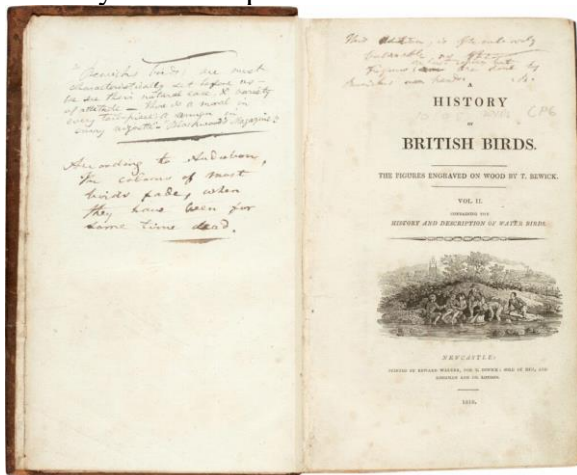
What has captured the interest of the world, however, are items from the Laws' Brontë collection which are soon to go under the hammer. We have letters from Branwell Brontë, first editions of *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey*, Emily and Anne Brontë's 1841 diary paper, and, perhaps most astonishingly, the manuscript book of Emily Brontë's poetry which Charlotte Brontë 'accidentally' discovered in late 1845:

"One day, in the autumn of 1845, I accidentally lighted on a manuscript volume of verse in my sister Emily's handwriting. Of course, I was not surprised, knowing that she could and did write verse: I looked it over, and something more than surprise seized me, – a deep conviction that these were not common effusions, nor at all like

the poetry women generally write. I thought them condensed and terse, vigorous and genuine. To my ear, they had also a peculiar music – wild, melancholy, and elevating. Meantime, my younger sister (Anne) quietly produced some of her own compositions, intimating that since Emily's had given me pleasure, I might like to look at hers. I thought that these verses too had a sweet sincere pathos of their own."

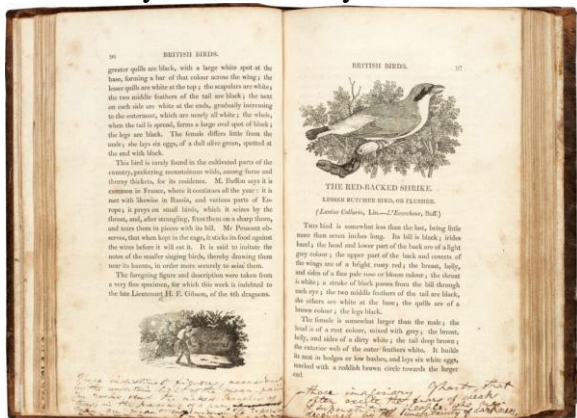
It is this very manuscript volume which is the highlight of the Honresfield auction in July, and although it has been given an auction estimate of £800,000 to £1,200,000 it would be unsurprising to see it fetch even more. Rather more affordable, to some, is the beautiful copy of Thomas Bewick's *A History of British Birds*. Dating from 1816, the year Charlotte was born, it was the

Brontë family copy, and we can tell how much the young Brontës loved it for two reasons: it features in both *Jane Eyre* and in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, and this edition is full of their notes. If the estimate is correct, it can be yours for between thirty and fifty thousand pounds.



The Brontë family Bewick, image courtesy of Sotheby's

In one delightful annotation, Patrick Brontë has described a Bewick illustration of branches as being suggestive of, ‘those imaginary ghosts that often excite the fears of weak, superstitious people, who are deceived by the uncertainty of darkness.’

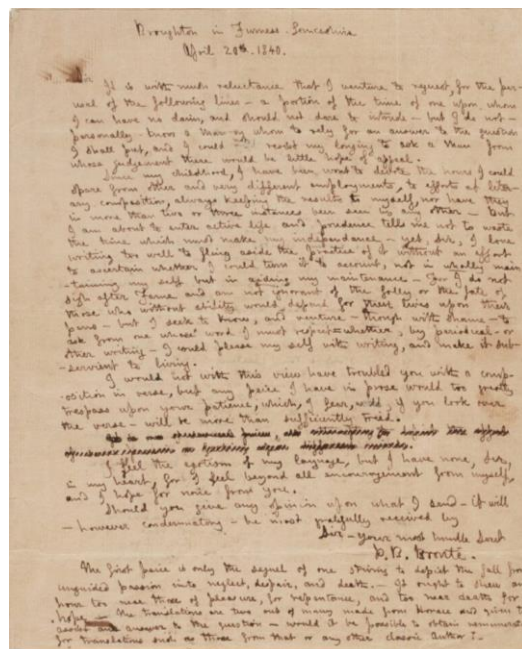


The Brontë copy of Bewick, image courtesy of Sotheby's

So what will become of this magnificent collection next month? The high value of the items for sale makes it seem likely that they will once again become the property of a wealthy, private investor – much in the way that multi-million pound artworks are often bought by city traders to

be locked away as a safe investment. Will these items disappear once more, or will a kindly benefactor gift them to the nation?

The Brontë Society has rightly called for the collection to be saved for the nation and has written to MPs. Unfortunately, the vast value of the Honresfield collection is too much for them to hope to raise without governmental help, and this government has shown no inclination to support literary heritage and the arts, before or during the pandemic. Nevertheless, hope springs eternal.



One of two letters from Branwell Brontë to Hartley Coleridge, image courtesy of Sotheby's

What is certain is that a fabulous collection will be sold by Sotheby's next month and that this has brought them to light once again – even if only fleetingly. I'm off to look down the back of my sofa for some spare pennies, if any of you have a million or two to spare, please get in touch. I leave you with this thought: how astonished would the Brontë sisters have been if they could have known that their work would be so valued, and create such excitement, two centuries after their births?

A LOST BRONTË LIBRARY SURFACES

A trove of manuscripts acquired from the Brontë family in the 19th century, all but unseen for the past century, will be auctioned at Sotheby's.



An 1841 birthday note from Emily Brontë to her sister Anne, part of a collection of manuscripts to be sold at Sotheby's in July. Credit: Sotheby's

From The New York Times
By Jennifer Schuessler
May 25, 2021

Brontë artifacts have a way of making dramatic reappearances. In 2011, a miniature book created by the 14-year-old Charlotte Brontë prompted a bidding war that climbed past \$1 million. In 2016, the Brontë Parsonage Museum announced that it tracked down a book filled with doodles and inscriptions by the Brontë children (including an unknown poem by Charlotte) that had once survived a shipwreck.



And now, a trove of Brontë family manuscripts — all but unseen for a century — will be auctioned by Sotheby's as part of what the auction house is billing as the sale of a legendary “lost library” of British literature treasures.

The Honresfield Library, a private collection assembled by two Victorian industrialists that vanished from public view in the 1930s, contains more than 500 manuscripts, letters, rare first editions and other artifacts from a number of canonical authors, including the manuscripts of Walter Scott's *Rob Roy* and Robert Burns' *First Commonplace Book*.

But it is the Brontë material — based on hoopla surrounding past Brontë auctions, and the estimates for this one — that is likely to cause the biggest stir. Highlights, which will be exhibited at Sotheby's in New York from June 5 to 9, include a handwritten manuscript of Emily Brontë's poems, with pencil edits by Charlotte. It carries an estimate of \$1.3 million to \$1.8 million.

The trove also includes family letters, inscribed first editions and other relics that offer a glimpse into life in the Brontë household, like the family's heavily annotated copy of Bewick's *History of British Birds* (which features in the opening scenes of *Jane Eyre*).

Gabriel Heaton, Sotheby's specialist in English literature and historical manuscripts, called the Honresfield Library the finest he had seen in 20 years, and the Brontë cache the most important to come to light in a generation.

"The lives of these sisters are just extraordinary," he said during a video interview, before offering a first peek at the materials. Looking at the manuscripts "takes you right back to the incredible moment where you had these siblings scribbling away in the parsonage."

Claire Harman, the author of *Charlotte Brontë: A Fiery Heart* said she had been "hyperventilating" since she got wind of the auction, which will be held online in July, after additional previews in London and Edinburgh.

"It's just absolutely gobsmacking," she said. "Scholars and readers have known these things exist, but you forget when they are in private hands. It's like *Sleeping Beauty* — there but not there."

The Honresfield Library took shape not far from the parsonage at the edge of the West Yorkshire moors, where Charlotte, Emily, Anne and their brother, Branwell (born between 1816 and 1820), grew up creating elaborate shared imaginary worlds. It was assembled starting in the 1890s by Alfred and William Law, two self-made mill owners who had grown up less than 20 miles

from the Brontë home in Haworth (which is now the Brontë Parsonage Museum).

The Laws' collection, held in the library at their home, Honresfield House, included what Heaton called "grand country-house books" like a Shakespeare First Folio (long since sold off). But the brothers, less typically, were also keen collectors of manuscripts, acquiring the Brontë cache from a dealer who had bought them directly from Charlotte's widower. William, the more serious collector, also paid frequent visits to Haworth to buy family relics that had been saved by neighbours and relatives.

After the deaths of the brothers (who never married), the collection passed to a nephew, who granted access to select scholars, and had facsimiles made of some items. But after his death in 1939, the originals fell out of public view.

By the 1940s, the collection had become "well-nigh untraceable," as one scholar put it at the time. In recent decades, some artifacts from the collection, like Charlotte's writing desk (now at the Brontë Parsonage Museum), have come up for auction. But the whereabouts of the rest remained unclear.

"When I was first approached about this material, I thought, 'Hang on — maybe it's *that* collection?'" Heaton recalled. "To then go to actually see it was quite a thrill." (The sellers, who wish to remain anonymous, are family descendants of the Laws, he said.)

The news that the newly surfaced collection would be dispersed at auction has not thrilled everyone. On Tuesday, the Brontë Parsonage Museum issued a statement calling for the Brontë material to be "preserved intact for the nation," and lamenting "the narrow commercialization and privatization of heritage".

Material from Emily Brontë's hand is particularly rare. There is no manuscript for *Wuthering Heights*, which was published in 1847, the year before her death from tuberculosis. Only two letters by her are known to survive, Heaton said.

The material to be sold at Sotheby's includes some of the "diary notes" Emily and Anne wrote for each other on their birthdays. (One from Emily, in 1841, instructs that Anne should read it later, when she turns 25.) There are also letters from 1840 by the least known Brontë, Branwell, including one to Hartley Coleridge, the son of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, which contain copies of his verses and describe his (never-fulfilled) literary ambition.

But the marquee item is the manuscript of 31 poems in Emily's hand, dated February 1844. It not only preserves her verse as she wrote it, Harman said, but played a crucial role in spurring the literary careers of all three sisters.

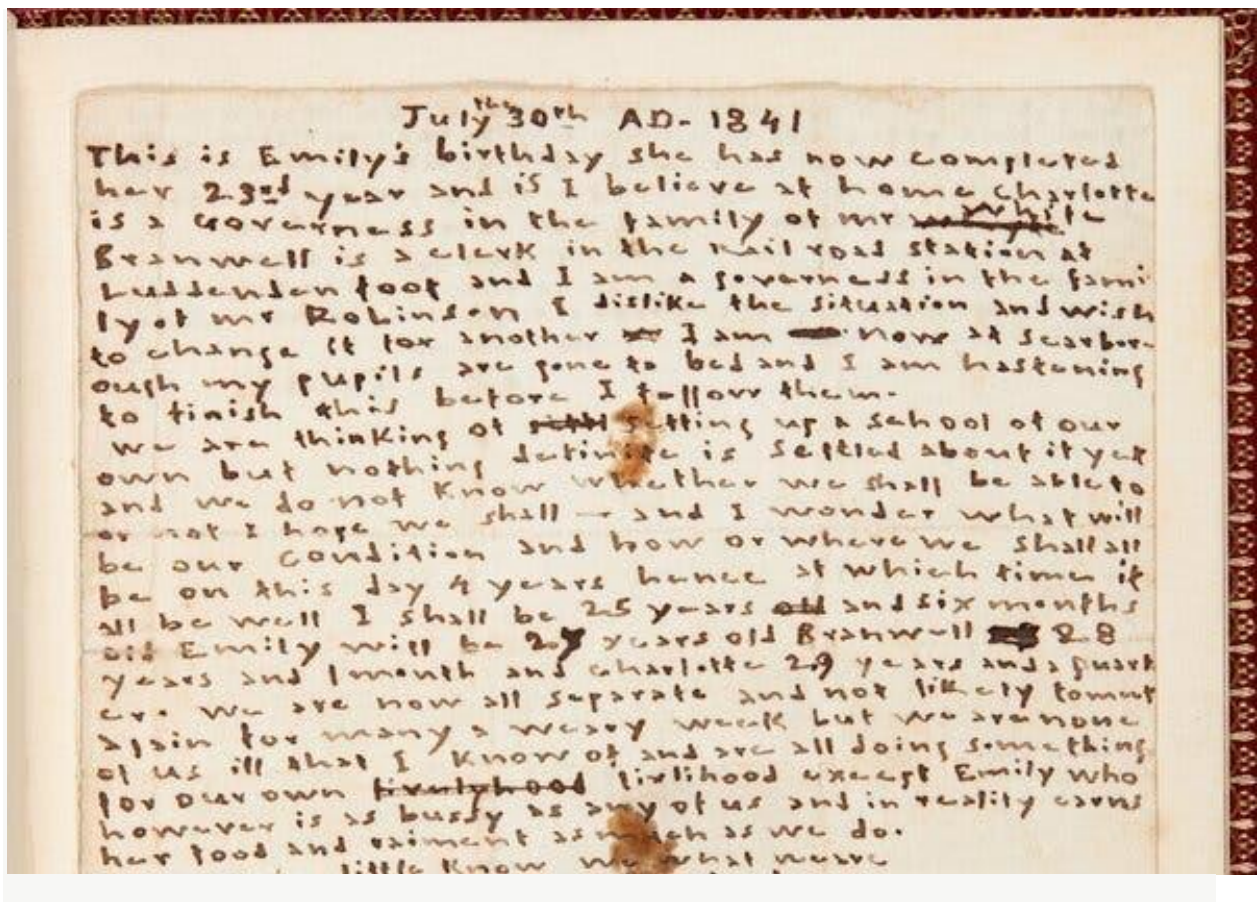
Emily had written her poems in secret, with no intention of publication. But in 1845, the story goes, Charlotte stumbled upon them by chance, and found them extraordinary. ("Never was better stuff penned," reads a pencilled notation, possibly by Charlotte, at the bottom of the manuscript.) Emily, while initially angry,

agreed to include them in a self-funded volume of poetry by the three sisters, who used the pseudonyms Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell.

That volume, published in 1846, sold just two copies. But it prompted the sisters to begin work on their novels, which became a sensation, setting off intense speculation about the true authors behind the pseudonyms — and the broader Brontëmania that continues today.

"If this manuscript is the one Charlotte looked at surreptitiously, it was a witness to that very tense scene between the sisters as well as a literary relic," Harman said. The Brontë literary story "only happened because of getting the show on the road with those poems."

The collection at Sotheby's includes other items that provide glimpses into everyday life at the parsonage. During the video interview, Heaton flipped through the family copy of Bewick's *History of British Birds*, which is full of annotations by Patrick Brontë.



The above illustration is a diary page by Anne Brontë, noting Emily's 23rd birthday. At the time, Anne was working as a governess. "I dislike the situation and wish to change it for another," she wrote. Credit: Sotheby's.

In early scenes of *Jane Eyre*, Jane leafs through Bewick's book, seeking imaginative refuge from her grim circumstances. In real life, the siblings used it as a model for drawing practice, while Patrick filled it practical notes on which species make good eating. (The scoter, a kind of duck, apparently tastes like "a mixture of beef and red herring.")

The collection also includes books inscribed by Charlotte and other family members to Martha Brown, the daughter of a family friend, who moved in with the family when she was 11, becoming a household

servant. Among them is a first edition of *Jane Eyre* inscribed by Patrick, and a housekeeping guide inscribed by Charlotte.

There are also first editions of Anne's novel *Agnes Grey* and of Emily's *Wuthering Heights*. Today, Sotheby's estimate for the pair is \$280,000 to \$425,000. At the time, the sisters had been angered by the publisher's typo-ridden job. Heaton pointed out another defect in the copy of *Wuthering Heights*: some gatherings of pages are bound out of order.

"It plays into the story we know about the novel's publication," he said. "It's just beautiful evidence."

Jennifer Schuessler is a culture reporter covering intellectual life and the world of ideas. She is based in New York.

New York Travelling Exhibition: 4th – 9th June 2021

London Exhibition: 10th – 12th July 2021

Bidding Opens: 2nd – 13th July 2021

Auction: Was to have been on 13th July 2021 but Sotheby's has agreed to postpone the auction to allow for a bid from the Friends of the National Libraries in the hope of keeping the collection intact and for it to remain in the UK.

Wiley, windy moors of *Wuthering Heights* marked for new housing estate.

By Olivia Rudgard, *Sydney Morning Herald*, April 5, 2021

The Yorkshire moors that inspired *Wuthering Heights* have been earmarked for a new housing estate that a Brontë expert says could completely destroy the views made famous by the classic.

The rolling hills outside Bradford, west Yorkshire have been unchanged for centuries and now form the gateway to the Brontë Way, a trail through the rugged landscape where the novelist sisters played as children and later used as motivational walks for their novels.



The walk was revamped only three years ago when author Michael Stewart created the Brontë Stones Walk, a 14 kilometre hike which takes visitors from Thornton, where the Brontës were born, to their famous parsonage at Haworth, now a museum.

But under plans proposed by Bradford council, part of the walk would become a site for 150 new homes, a mixture of council and private housing.

THE MOORS OF WUTHERING HEIGHTS: JUST WHAT IS THE TRUE STORY?

By Michelle Cavanagh

No doubt many of you also saw the article in the SMH on 5 April 2021 with the headline “Wiley, windy moors of Wuthering Heights marked for new housing estate” which went on to say that:

“The Yorkshire moors that inspired *Wuthering Heights* have been earmarked for a new housing estate that a Brontë expert says could completely destroy the views made famous by the classic. The rolling hills outside Bradford, west Yorkshire have been unchanged for centuries and now form the gateway to the Brontë Way, a trail through the rugged landscape where the novelist sisters played as children and later used as motivational walks for their novels.”

So I contacted Nick Holland who lives in Yorkshire and has written quite a

few books about the Brontës including *In Search of Anne Brontë* and *Crave the Rose Anne Brontë at 200* asking him what he knew about this to which I received the following reply:

“It does sound a bit worrying, but the truth isn’t exactly like the media stories here and in Australia. The proposed housing estate is in Thornton and not on the moors but in the fields between Thornton Bowling Green and the cemetery. Lots of local people have objected to it and there’s a petition but those things never do any good so doubtless Bradford Council will give it permission anyway.”

So, don’t believe everything you read; it pays to check details for yourself.

BOOK REVIEW HANOVER PRESS – JULIA KAVANAGH

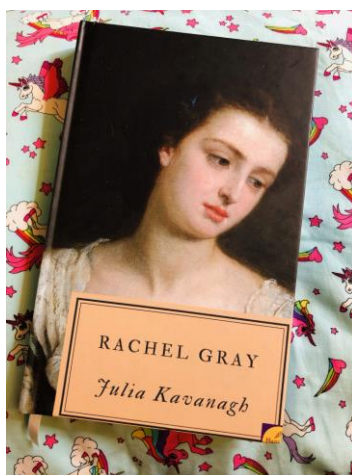
Anonymous published on

<https://the.travellinghistorianclub.wordpress.com>

More details at <https://hanoverpress.co.uk/>

Rachel Gray itself is a book that I am familiar with, but this edition is far superior to any that can be found online. When it was first printed in 1855 it was hugely popular.

The book’s author Julia Kavanagh is a fascinating figure. She was born in 1824 in Ireland, the daughter of Morgan Kavanagh, a poet,



tutor and novelist, and his wife Bridget but she spent very little time in the country. Instead she grew up in London and Paris.

In 1844, when Julia was about 20 her father left his family, never to return – although he was not opposed to trying to hitch himself to his daughter’s rising star in later years much to her annoyance.

Julia was well educated but the driving force behind her writing both at this early stage, and in the years to come, was the necessity of keeping herself and her blind mother out of poverty.

Both paternal abandonment and fear of the poorhouse are recurring themes in her novels.

Julia cut her teeth writing various articles and reviews for magazines before



writing her first novel *Three Paths* which was published in 1847. It was not very successful but her next novel published a year later *Madeleine: A Tale of Auvergne* met with popular success. Julia set her novels primarily in France, the country she knew best and her plain speaking and domestic style made her very popular with women. Her readership was extremely loyal and her books sold well enough for her to make a very decent living from them.

Her work drew the attention of Charlotte Brontë who met her and described her as “a young authoress, who supported her mother through her writings” and who was “half frank and half trembling.” I would dearly love to know what they discussed.

The book the Hanover Press chose to publish is *Rachel Gray*. It was the 7th novel

that Kavanagh published and it was one of her most popular. It tells the story of 26 year old Rachel Gray, the daughter of a grey haired carpenter who finds herself living with her stepmother. As with most of her novels Kavanagh here concerns herself with the idea of family, familial relationships, paternal abandonment and love as well as taking a broader look and conveying the social inequalities that were an everyday fact of life.

In the novel, Rachel Gray dreams of her father coming back to ‘rescue’ her – a theme I’m sure Julia understood all too well. Julia was also a lifelong Catholic and her book also reflects on the ideas of sin and morality. Many today, such as Michael Forsyth and Eileen Fauset have suggested that Kavanagh in her work is deliberately exposing the social and sexual inequalities she experienced personally but always within the conventions of the time. This has led to a generally sympathetic portrayal of women and their everyday lives – which is probably why her work was so popular with women, at the time who felt an affinity with her characters.

Likewise John Bull, a contemporary, wrote that her success was due to her “success in turning events taken from real life into fascinating works of fiction.”

In the 1860s Julia and her mother moved around France, living in Paris, Rouen and further afield in Nice after the start of the Franco Prussian War. She kept writing even though her health was failing until her death in 1877 due to a fall.

The Illustrated Times stated that “I know of no person so well able to succeed Charlotte Brontë’s throne as Julia Kavanagh” but this proved not to be the case. Her works have fared much less well and after her death they fell quickly out of the popular consciousness: a fact which seems extremely unfair, and I hope that the work of Hanover Press will help to bring her books back to public attention.

THE BRONTËS, THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON AND NAPOLEON

By Michelle Cavanagh



Portrait of Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington painted by Tomas Lawrence after the Battle of Waterloo.

Charlotte Brontë, was born in 1816, a year after the decisive battle of Waterloo at which Napoleon was defeated. Charlotte's father, the Reverend Patrick Brontë remained interested in the decades of warfare which ended in the abdication of Napoleon and the Peace of Paris.

Multitudes of soldiers returned to Yorkshire from battle overseas, suffering physical and psychological damage and were confined to the economic limitations of half-pay which soldiers received when in retirement or not in service. One of Patrick's first services at Thornton, on 23rd July 1815, was dedicated to the victory at Waterloo with the collections taken up to aid the widows and orphans of those

soldiers who had died.

All things connected with Napoleon held a fascination for the Brontës and the defeat of Napoleon, under the command of Wellington saw the Brontë family celebrating the 18th June each year as 'Waterloo Day'.

Charlotte too took on her father's hero worship of the Duke of Wellington. So when in 1826, the Reverend Patrick Brontë brought home a box of toy soldiers for his son, Branwell, his sisters Charlotte, Emily and Anne each picked one and together they would play war games on the surrounding moors. Charlotte named her soldier 'Wellington' after the Duke of Wellington and Branwell named his 'Boney', after Napoleon Bonaparte.

Charlotte and Branwell began writing stories about their chosen soldiers as part of their Juvenilia tales of Angria. No doubt details of the Napoleonic Wars covered in *Blackwood's Magazine* also helped to retain their interest in both Wellington and Napoleon.

Indeed, twelve years after Napoleon's death, in her manuscript *The*



The above portrait of Napoleon was painted by Jacques-Louis David when Napoleon was in his late thirties.

Green Dwarf, a seventeen year old Charlotte wrote the 'short story' *Napoleon and the Spectre* as part of her Juvenilia writings. The legacy of the Napoleonic Wars were so ingrained in Britain's social consciousness which explains Charlotte and Branwell's fascination with both Wellington and Napoleon.

On 5th May 1821, Napoleon Bonaparte died in a small bed surrounded by a group of his French friends while in exile in a damp and

reportedly rat-infested house on the British island of Saint Helena. He was fifty-one years old.

Two hundred years on, the cause of Napoleon's death remains an unresolved mystery despite the finding of his physician, who led the autopsy, stating that the cause of death was stomach cancer. Not everyone agreed with that finding including Napoleon's valet, Louis Marchand, who put forward the cause of death as deliberate arsenic poisoning.

To mark the 200th anniversary of Napoleon Bonaparte's death on 5th May 2021, after months of debate about the legacy of the country's most famous authoritarian leader, French President Emmanuel Macron laid a wreath at the marble crypt where Napoleon's remains are buried at the Invalides monument.

To some, Napoleon was a brilliant military and political strategist, to others he

was little more than a warmongering despot. Nevertheless Emmanuel Macron chose to walk a fine line through this political minefield. "Few destinies have shaped so many lives beyond their own," Macron said of the man who seized power in a coup in 1799 and died in exile on the island of Saint Helena in 1821 having briefly ruled over most of Europe. During the Napoleonic Wars he was taken seriously by the British press as a dangerous tyrant poised to invade their homeland. Nevertheless Napoleon was mocked in British newspapers as a short tempered small man and was nicknamed "Little Boney in a strong fit" No doubt the Brontë children read such reports which explains why Branwell called his toy soldier Boney.

NB. While Napoleon was only fifty one years old when he died, the Duke of Wellington lived until he was eighty three years old.

VALE CHESTER PORTER QC

The ABA was saddened to hear of the death of Chester Porter QC, a most distinguished member. The society was well represented at his recent funeral.

Chester and his wife Jean were keen supporters of the ABA for many years, attending meetings regularly until recent ill-health prevented them from doing so.

A voracious reader, Chester followed the talks with great interest, contributing opinions in the discussions following talks and continuing over lunch.



Having attended boarding school himself as a small boy, Chester was very interested in Charlotte Brontë's description of Jane Eyre being sent away to school, promoting him to contribute an article for *The Thunderer* on 'The Truth about Lowood School'.

Following a distinguished career as a barrister, Chester remained passionate about the law and its effects on society, and in 2014 we were treated to a talk by him on 'The Legal Aspects of *Wuthering Heights*', intriguingly subtitled 'How Did Heathcliff Get Away With It?'

Whether making speeches, proposing toasts or thanking speakers, Chester was such a pleasure to listen to. His lively wit, keen observations and insightful comments will be sadly missed.

We send our condolences to Jean, who although now living in a retirement home, remains most interested in ABA news.

Catherine Barker

CHESTER SPEAKING AT AN ABA CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Who else do you recognise? (Photo by Michael Links)



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Despite the ups and downs which Covid-19 have provided for us, all in all the Australian Brontë Association has fared pretty well.

We finished the year 2020 with our ever popular Christmas lunch which was held in the beautiful heritage listed Cellos Grand Dining Room, elegantly restored in exact detail to its original 1920s Art Deco. One of the most unique Sydney restaurants,

it's a favourite venue to enjoy Christmas cheer, socialising, entertainment and good food. And of course to buy tickets for the yearly raffle for which the ABA awarded seventeen prizes comprising of various books plus some Yorkshire Tea. It was a fantastic way to finish off our ABA year!

Not all our members were able to join us for the first meeting

of 2021 held in March at which Tasarla Harman gave us her insight into some contemporary perspectives on the Brontë sisters, comparing them to the Kardashian sisters. Tasarla gave us some very different aspects to the Brontës which proved to be both very entertaining as well as giving us all much food for thought. Our March 2021 meeting was recorded to be accessed on YouTube some time following the meeting. However, due to the easing of Covid restrictions, which saw many more members attending in person, it was decided not to record further meetings, especially in view of the fact that details of the yearly talks are published in *The Brontë Thunderer* at the years end.

Our first meeting was also our 2021 AGM at which the following committee members were voted in: Michelle Cavanagh, President; Annette Harman, Vice-President; Michael Links, Treasurer; Catherine Barker, Membership

Secretary; Christopher Cooper, Editor; with Jan Roden and Patrick Morris both members without portfolio plus we also welcomed Christine Yeats onto the committee.

My sincere thanks to all the ABA committee for putting their hands up in the service of our society. Cindy Broadbent, a committee member without portfolio during 2020, and whose input was greatly appreciated, did not stand in 2021 due to her many other commitments. Many thanks Cindy. And last, but certainly not least, accolades to Carmel Nestor who served on the committee from 2007 through to 2020 as Secretary, a task she took on for all but one of those years. With committee meetings now taking place on Zoom, which Carmel has been unable to access due to her poor internet connections, she decided to stand down. However, after thirteen years' service Carmel definitely deserves a break and we sincerely thank her.



For the May meeting our patron Christine Alexander explored Juvenilia with regards to the Brontës and other early writers. Christine also spoke about the much postponed Seventh International Literary Juvenilia Conference which is now due to take place at the UNSW, Sydney, 18-21 May 2022. As Christine noted, most of the overseas speakers who were originally due to speak are still willing to do so.

Friday 20 May 2022 is the session on the Brontës. Full details can be found at:

<https://sam2.arts.unsw.edu.au/isljc2022/program>

On that happy and hopeful note I look forward to seeing you at the remaining meetings for 2021.

**Michelle Cavanagh,
ABA President**

FRIENDS OF ETHEL TURNER: THE BIRTH OF A NEW LITERARY SOCIETY

By Michelle Cavanagh

Following our May meeting some of our members attended a garden party held at what was the Killara home of Ethel Turner and where she wrote *Seven Little Australians* in 1893. It was there that Literary historian and ABA member Susannah Fullerton launched the Friends of Ethel Turner, thanks to the present owners of the house, Eva and Albert Lim, who decided to ‘share’ their house once they learnt its history.



“After doing research on Ethel Turner, I told myself I want to use this house, not just for my own but to have it as a place of inspiration for young Australians,” Mr Lim said. It is hoped that this new literary society will be well supported. Anyone interested to join and who would like further details can contact Susannah at

susannah@susannahfullerton.com.au

COMMENTS ON THE HONRESFELD COLLECTION

By our patron, Christine Alexander

The sale of the Brontë manuscripts in the Honresfeld Collection is of immense significance for Brontë scholars and enthusiasts worldwide. As one of the few literary researchers to be granted access to this collection over the last thirty years, I can vouch for its significance and the importance of maintaining its integrity for future generations.

I traced the whereabouts of many Brontë manuscripts when I was a student at Cambridge working on my PhD on the early writings of Charlotte Brontë, subsequently published as *The Early Writings of Charlotte Brontë* (1983). At the time, the Honresfeld Collection (or Law Collection, as it was then known to scholars) was one of many private collections I investigated but it remained elusive to me for a number of years. I had more success in tracing private collectors in the USA and Canada, eventually finding over 100 unpublished Brontë manuscripts, together with almost the same number of drawings and paintings. I followed leads from Sotheby's and other sale catalogues, from early business records and letters regarding the Brontës in library collections and archives. In those days, one had to write letters that took ages to arrive and to travel in person by Greyhound bus, plane and train and then knock on doors — it was hard work travelling the length and breadth of the States and Canada as a student with limited funds, but great fun and an amazing experience. My research field work nowadays seems tame by comparison.

I finally made contact with the owners of what remained intact of the Honresfeld Collection in the late 1980s, while I was on study leave in Cambridge. I have worked on the Honresfeld Brontë material several times *in situ* and all my transcriptions and editions of the Brontë

manuscripts from this source are from the originals, including my recent Juvenilia Press edition of *The Diary Papers of Emily and Anne Brontë*, which includes photographs. My co-authored book on *The Art of the Brontës* has several small drawings from the Honresfeld Collection; and my final volume of *An Edition of the Early Manuscripts* (vol. 3), now nearing completion, includes a long poem and novelette from this source.

The Brontë material was originally housed in the library at Honresfeld, the home of Sir Alfred Law and his two uncles, who built up the original collection on the proceeds of their successful flannel-manufacturing business in Lancashire. Apart from manuscripts and annotated books that belonged to the Brontë family, there are several of their early drawings and shawls worn by the sisters. I have also seen the Honresfeld Scott, Burns and Austen items, and a fascinating collection of early books on witchcraft.

The condition of my access was maintaining confidentiality regarding the owners, and in my publications I have acknowledged my source as simply "Private collection" or "Law Collection", as have other scholars in a similar situation. This has been hard to maintain, and several scholars I have worked with in the UK and USA have guessed my access to the collection but also maintained silence. Fortunately, the Brontë Museum has good early copies of most of the Brontë written material in the Honresfeld Collection that scholars can use, but of course it is not the same as working on the originals, which enables reliable transcription and is enormously exciting.

With most private collections I have worked on, I have tried to persuade the owners to donate the material to the Brontë

Parsonage Museum, and in several cases this has happened. But the Honresfeld Collection is unique, consisting of extremely valuable manuscripts and first editions that represent the range and development from childhood of the Brontës' writing careers. It is also a fascinating example of a nineteenth-century bibliophile's interests and should remain intact to be studied and appreciated by all.

I hope the Brontë material can be acquired by either the Brontë Parsonage Museum or the British Library — it is part of the World's English Literary Heritage.

Christine Alexander

NEW EMILY BRONTË FILM

Emma Mackey will star as Emily in a new film. Mackey has been nominated for a BAFTA for *Sex Education* in the category of female performance in a comedy program.

The film marks the writer-director feature debut of actor Frances O'Connor, a double Golden Globe nominee for her performances in *Madame Bovary* and *Missing*.

Joining Mackey and Fionn Whitehead are Oliver Jackson-Cohen, Alexandra Dowling, Amelia Gething, Gemma Jones and Adrian Dunbar.

O'Connor said that the film will "brim with energy — intimately capturing the emotional intensity and adrenalin of youth, with all its messy honesty, heartbreak, humour and fearlessness; matched by the scale of our stunning locations."





THE *ELISABETH COOPER* MEMORIAL PRIZE FOR BRONTË COMPOSITIONS

AWARDED BY THE AUSTRALIAN BRONTË ASSOCIATION



A prize of \$250 will be awarded for an original composition inspired by the Brontës or their works. This is in the memory of Elisabeth Cooper who was a foundation member of the Australian Brontë Association. Elisabeth died in January 2020.



Eligibility: Entries are invited from school students who are currently in years 10 to 12.

Genre: The composition is to be a poem, a short story, a single-scene play or an essay.

Length: It should take no more than 10 minutes to be read aloud or performed.

Content: This list of suggestions is not exhaustive.

- * an incident in the lives of the Brontës or their writings, with added fictional content
- * a fictional incident about the Brontës, or their characters
- * something from any time and place that parallels something in the lives or works of the Brontës
- * a scene in which the characters refer to the Brontës and see something around them through the lens of the Brontës
- * an *original* piece of literary criticism of some aspect of one of the writings of the Brontës

Closing Date: 25th October 2021

Format: Entries should be double spaced, as a Word document or PDF, and sent to christopherdonaldcooper@gmail.com by the closing date, together with the entrant's name, school and contact details.

Judges: A panel of judges will choose the winner, and runners up.

Performance: The winning work, and possibly one of the runners up, will be performed at the ABA Christmas lunch on Saturday 4th December. The authors will be invited to take part in the performance, though this is not necessary. Entrants are assumed to give their permission for their entries to be so performed.

Publication: The winning entry, together with those by the runners up, will be published in the *ABA Newsletter* or the *ABA journal, The Thunderer* in December 2021, but the authors will retain their copyright.

Program for the rest of 2021

The Australian Brontë Association meets in Sydney five times a year. Meetings are held at the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel, 169 Castlereagh Street (near Park Street) at 10:30am, though we serve morning tea from 10:00am. Those who wish to do so, have a light lunch at the hotel after the meeting. 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 \$10 (non-members).

Saturday 11th September 2021 Alison Hoddinott

How to be a Good Wife: Charlotte Brontë and Charles Dickens

Villette and *Bleak House* were both published in book form in 1853. At the time the two novelists were thinking about marriage and the situation of the Victorian wife. Charlotte Brontë (born 1816) was wondering which of her suitors, if any, to choose. Charles Dickens (born 1812) was considering the incompatibility of his marriage to Catherine, which had taken place in 1836, when she was six weeks short of being of age. Their reflections on marriage are mirrored in their biographies, which quote freely from their letters, and in both novels.

Saturday 13th November 2021 Christopher Cooper

A man's mind: Emily Brontë

Monsieur Heger is reported as having described Emily as having a 'man's mind'. By this he meant that she had a logical mind. As a mathematician I would say that she had a "mathematician's mind". She had little more than the rudiments of mathematics in her education, but I recognise that in *Wuthering Heights* she displayed an innate appreciation of some of the fundamental ideas of higher mathematics such as complexity, nested structures and symmetry. In her novel she has planted a logic puzzle in terms of reconstructing its chronology. She displays complex symmetry in its genealogical aspects. She goes into great detail concerning the architecture and hardware of the two houses and includes examples of at least fifteen different uses for windows. And she deliberately omits the scenes that neither house could witness. Could it be that the novel is a story in which the two houses are the main characters?

Saturday 4th December Christmas Lunch

**Jointly with the NSW Dickens
Society**

**Cellos Restaurant, Castlereagh
Boutique Hotel**

