



# *The Australian Brontë Association Newsletter*

**Issue No 48**

**December 2021**

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## **7<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL LITERARY JUVENILIA CONFERENCE 2022**

**ZOOM Conference from UNSW Sydney**

**Wednesday 20 July to Friday 22 July 2022.**

***Literary Juvenilia, material imagination and ‘things’***

Young writers ranging from Pope, Chatterton and Burns in the eighteenth century, to Austen, the Brontës, Eliot and Dickens in the nineteenth, and Edith Wharton, C.S. Lewis, Judith Wright, Margaret Atwood, and J.K. Rowling in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have found inspiration and example in the everyday context of their writing practice—in a materiality related to their physical, social and cultural worlds and in the material conditions of their play, learning, imitation and critique. This conference will explore the material culture of juvenilia (youthful writing up to the age of twenty): the relationship between ‘things’ and literary imagination and practice.

The conference aims to provide a broad intellectual forum for academics, postgraduates, members of literary societies and the interested public.

**There will be a panel dedicated to the juvenilia of the Brontës, especially that of Anne Brontë to acknowledge her 2020 Bicentenary, sponsored by the Australian Brontë Association.**

### ***Keynote speakers:***

**David C. Hanson**, Professor and Head, Department of English, Co-editor of *Nineteenth Century Studies*, Southeastern Louisiana University. He specialises in the study of the creative process and how texts evolve from composition through stages of publication; and is editor of *The Early Ruskin Manuscripts, 1826-1842*, a digital edition of the early writings of influential art critic John Ruskin.

Professor Hanson will speak on **Things that 'seemed so uncome-at-able': Juvenilia and the Print Culture of Travel**.

**Beverly Taylor**, Professor and Head, Department of English and Comparative Literature, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. She specialises in Victorian literature and culture, especially poetry and women novelists including Elizabeth Barrett Browning and the Brontës. Professor Taylor will speak on **Becoming Acton Bell**, in celebration of the **2020 Bicentenary of Anne Brontë**.

**Trevor Cairney** OAM, Honorary Professor, University of Sydney; Life Fellow UNSW. He has been a teacher, researcher, Dean of Education, Pro Vice Chancellor (Research) and College Head. He has written widely on pedagogy, early learning, language, children's literature, comprehension and family literacy. He has written 10 books and over 250 articles, and has presented keynote and plenary addresses to many audiences around the world. He also writes the well-known blog *Literacy, Families & Learning* which is followed internationally by thousands of parents, children's authors and teachers. Professor Cairney will speak on: **The Relationship of 'Story', Meaning and Imagination to the World**

D.W. Harding (1937) suggested, "reading, like daydreaming and gossiping, is a means to offer or be offered symbolic representations of life". But this does not reflect a linear relationship to one's world. Early reading and writing are intertwined with children's explorations and actions, as they imagine futures and express meanings that matter. In this talk, I will explore the interrelationship of children's early experiences of literature, writing and life, as they explore their material world to construct and communicate meanings that matter.

### ***Conference organisers:***

Christine Alexander, Emeritus Scientia Professor, School of the Arts and Media, UNSW  
Chris Danta, Associate Professor, School of the Arts and Media, UNSW  
Donna Couto, Administration & Assistant Editor, Juvenilia Press, UNSW  
Ryan Twomey, Senior Lecturer, English Department, Macquarie University  
Pamela Nutt, Presbyterian Ladies' College, Sydney

**JUVENILIA PRESS:** <https://sam2.arts.unsw.edu.au/juvenilia/>

**INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF LITERARY**

**JUVENILIA:** <https://juveniliastudies.com/>

### **Call for Papers**

**Papers already submitted and accepted for the postponed 2020 conference will be honoured in our new Zoom program for 20–22 July 2022. Call for Papers are open from September 2021 for new submissions.**

A young writer's learning and creative experience is built around things. Drawing on Gaston Bachelard's evocative phrase 'material imagination', this conference will explore the material culture of juvenilia: the relationship between 'things' and literary imagination and practice.

Young writers ranging from Pope, Chatterton and Burns in the eighteenth century, to Austen, the Brontës, Eliot and Dickens in the nineteenth, and Edith Wharton, C.S. Lewis, Judith Wright, Margaret Atwood, and J.K. Rowling in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have found inspiration and example in the everyday context of their writing practice – in a materiality related to their physical, social and cultural worlds and in the material conditions of their play, learning, imitation and critique.

They have also experimented with what might be termed the concrete forms of early writing, with the making of books and magazines but also with a variety of genres that manifest variously on the page, suggesting an early awareness of relationship between content and form. Thus we will consider especially questions of material agency: how things structure early lives and writing habits; and how young writers imagine place, space and history through literary and visual artefacts.

We welcome papers that address both theoretical issues and close readings, both general discussions and individual case studies. It is anticipated that these papers relating to literary issues may also have multidisciplinary implications that extend to cognate areas of cultural enquiry, such as history, art history, education, media, philosophy, politics and theology.

### Suggested topics:

- ‘Things’, imaginary or real, that have inspired or have a special relationship with literary juvenilia.
- Ways in which the material world is imagined in literary juvenilia.
- Landscapes of early literary practice (natural or built environment; imaginary or real).
- The role of ‘things’ in imitation and experiment.
- The materiality and/or cultural history of early writing: book making, writing materials, diaries, source books and the like.
- Readings of aspects of the material world in early writings (aspects that may facilitate, inspire or constrain the child writer).
- School magazines and journal culture.
- Collecting juvenilia: past and present; the juvenilia archive.
- The relationship of visual and verbal in juvenilia; the material image and written word; illustration and marginalia.
- The juvenilia of the Brontës, Jane Austen, or other writers in relation to the above issues.
- Australian juvenilia in relation to the above topics.
- Other related issues.

Potential presenters are asked to submit the following:

**Abstract of 300 to 600 words** for consideration

**Bio of 100 to 200 words**

**Papers will be 20 minutes, plus ten minutes for questions. They will be pre-recorded and should be submitted as a good quality recording.**



# THE LOST CHAPTERS OF *WUTHERING HEIGHTS* by Christopher Cooper

Here continues my project of providing the ‘off-stage’ material that Emily Brontë chose to leave out of her novel. This piece answers the questions: “why did Mr Earnshaw go to Liverpool?” and “how did he come across the young Heathcliff?”.

## CHAPTER 4A: EARNSHAW IN LIVERPOOL

One wet morning, as Mrs Dean was busying herself with dusting, I asked her to sit down and to tell me more about Mr Earnshaw. She sat down, with her feather duster resting on her knees.

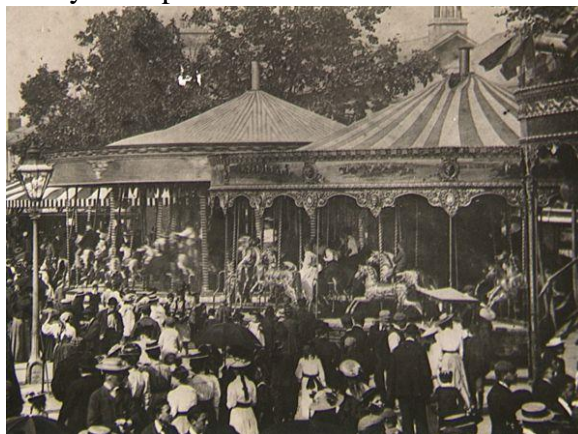
“Well, just for five minutes, mind you. I have to get this dusting done.” She then proceeded to give the following account.

As you probably know, the Earnshaws have lived at Wuthering Heights for many generations and so my master grew up there, as an only child and helped his father on the farm. I wasn’t born at the Heights, but my mother and I moved there when I was very young so that was the only house I ever knew – at least until I came to Thrushcross Grange. My mother was the maid at the Heights and, as I grew up, I helped too. I never knew my father. My mother never spoke of him, so I suspect that I caused her some embarrassment simply by being born.

The household in those early days consisted of Mr and Mrs Earnshaw, my mother and me, Hindley and Cathy and old Joseph. I have no idea how Joseph came to be there. I almost feel as though he had come with the house when it was built! There had been another son, between Hindley and Cathy, but he died as a baby.

I often wondered how Mr Earnshaw had met his wife. One day, when I was about twelve years old, Mr Earnshaw took to his bed. We thought nothing of it – just a cold he had caught by being out in the wet. To amuse him I asked him to talk about his life. This seemed to arouse him and make him less sleepy.

He said that when he was 21 years old he was sent by his father to go to a county fair to buy a couple of colts.



As it happens there was a pretty young lass also at the fair. She was working on a stall, selling the products of her needle. She was a mighty talented needlewoman and had all sorts of goods on display. Thomas (that were Mr Earnshaw’s name) said that he bought an embroidered pincushion from her as a gift for his mother.



They got to talking and Mr Earnshaw invited her to have afternoon tea in the refreshments tent. So the girl asked a



neighbouring stall-holder to mind her table while she and Mr Earnshaw went off for tea and scones.

Nothing eventuated from that encounter, but the following year Mr Thomas Earnshaw attended the same county fair, and lo and behold that same young girl – Catherine was her name – was again selling her needlework. This time Mr Earnshaw asked Catherine where she lived, so that he could write to her. This he did, regular like, but it weren't long before he walked to her cottage every Sunday, though it was upward of fifteen miles. They were married a year later. Catherine was three years younger than her husband.

Young Mr Earnshaw, as he was known back then, brought his bride to the Heights. Their first child was a son, Hindley. Then two years later they were blessed by another son. They called him Heathcliff. But that poor bairn didn't thrive, and the Lord saw fit to reclaim him after only three months. Then, a couple of years later, Cathy was born. As you can guess, she was named after her mother. When Cathy was about five years old, her grandparents were taken off by cholera within weeks of one another and so Mr Thomas Earnshaw inherited the property.

Well, I have told you about the time when Mr Earnshaw (Thomas that is) took himself off to Liverpool and returned with that dark, scowling, under-nourished boy whom they called Heathcliff after the son who had died. I asked Mr Earnshaw the circumstances of him finding Heathcliff, and why he had felt compelled to bring him back.

To tell you the truth some of the servants here were gossiping and thought that Heathcliff was a love-child of Mr Earnshaw, conceived on a previous trip to the city, and that he had decided to bring him back and live under the roof of his father. There were varying opinions as to where the mother had come from. Some said India, the milkmaid thought it might have been Jamaica. I thought all this gossip was idle speculation with no facts to support it. My belief was that Heathcliff had been found, just like Mr

Earnshaw had said, but I wanted to put it to the test.

“So where exactly did you find the boy?”

“Under a bridge, just outside of Liverpool.”

“And why, exactly, did you need to go to Liverpool – if it's not presumptuous of me to ask.”

A dark look came over Mr Earnshaw's countenance. Then it changed to a bright red of embarrassment. “I kept it a secret, but I may as well tell thee. You see it happened that I had a letter from a firm of lawyers in Liverpool. It seemed that I had an aunt whom I'd heard my father talk about, but I'd never met her. She died and left me an inheritance. The letter didn't say whether it was a lot or a little, but I remember my father saying that she was the widow of a sea-faring man – a captain I believe – and he had made his fortune in the New World.”

“So as you can imagine I fell into the fantasy of inheriting a small fortune. I had dreamed of one day being able to buy the nearby property of Thrushcross Grange and, as it happened, I had recently heard that it was up for sale. What a surprise it would have been for my wife if I came back from Liverpool carrying the deeds of that adjoining property.”

“So you really did walk all the way? I was wondering why you didn't take your horse,” I asked.

“I only had the one horse at the time and, as you may remember, it was lame. The horse-doctor said he needed a couple of weeks to recover and I wanted to lose no time in seeking my fortune. I walked all the way to Parbold and then managed to get a ride on a canal boat on the newly opened canal, right into Liverpool.



We navigated all through the night and arrived in Liverpool early the next morning. Under one of the last canal bridges, just before we reached the city centre, I caught sight of a small dark boy and an older lad. They were engaged in throwing stones at passing boats.”

**[Editor’s Note:** *There is a slight anachronism here. The Leeds-Liverpool canal began construction in 1770, just one year before Earnshaw’s journey. But it was only opened in 1777, and then only partially, with the Liverpool section only opened as far as Parbold. However, it seems a good explanation for why Earnshaw could reach Liverpool in such a short time. It’s not so much that canal boats could travel much faster than one can go on foot but, by becoming a passenger, one could recover from the exhaustion of walking. If Earnshaw had really walked all the way it would have been a heroic feat, especially with Heathcliff slowing him down on the return journey.]*



“I hurried off to the offices of Murchison and Murchison to learn of my good fortune. I was soon to discover that my good aunt had seen fit to leave me ten pounds! Perhaps it was worth the effort of making the journey but it would hardly secure the deeds of the Grange. I know I should have sent a letter to enquire about the inheritance before coming in person, but I had my heart set on coming back with the deeds to Thrushcross as a surprise for dear Catherine.”

“There was nothing for it but to run back to the canal. I had arranged to meet the boatman at three o’clock to take me back to Parbold. I managed to buy a fiddle for

Hindley and a whip for Cathy before making my way to the canal as arranged.”

“At the bridge, near where I was to meet my boat, I saw that same little urchin and his older friend. I asked if he was the boy’s brother. They didn’t look like brothers because the young boy had dark skin and dark hair while the older lad had red hair and freckles.”



“The older boy said that he had come upon the little boy, begging nearby not three days before. He had no idea where he had come from and, as the boy had very little speech, he could not speak for himself. I asked if I might take him back with me to look after him and the older lad said that, being homeless himself, the boy would be better off with me.”

“Again we navigated all through the night and it was late in the morning when we arrived at Blackburn. I bought some apples for you there, Nelly, as you remember. At least *your* gift wasn’t smashed or lost. We had a long, weary walk back here. The boy could walk but his little legs were so short he had to run part of the way. When he got tired I picked him up and carried him. We did get a lift on a farm cart for ten miles of the journey, but it was such an ordeal I thought my poor heart would give out. Even now I get these palpitations, and if I exert myself I get a pain in my chest.”

“I thought this boy might have, in time, become a replacement for the brother that Hindley never had. That’s why I called him Heathcliff. But as it transpired Hindley took a strong dislike to him. Mind you, he wasn’t an easy child. But I have hopes that giving him love, and the security of a home, he will make something of himself. At least Cathy is fond of him, though I think sometimes, as she orders him about, she treats him like her pet dog rather than as her young brother.”

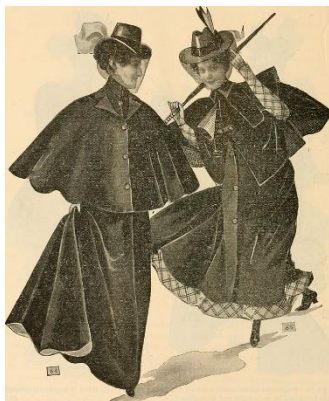
# CHARLOTTE BRONTË AND THE ROARING 1820s

by Christopher Cooper

Charlotte herself dressed plainly, as did her sisters. But she kept up with the latest fashions, through newspapers and magazines, as much as she kept up with politics and world affairs. In her novelette, *Stancliffe's Hotel* that she wrote in 1838, she describes high fashion of the type that we associate with that of a century later.

The high society women of Angria, the fictional land in Africa that she developed with Branwell, wore **boas**, and **turbans** and **diamond aigrettes** (tiaras made from white egret's feathers and gems) and **plumes of snow ostrich feathers**. These are things we associate with the Roaring Twenties. (Perhaps the 1820s also 'roared'.) Boas had only become fashionable a few years before Charlotte wrote, so this shows how well-informed she was despite being so far from the capital.

She also mentions **waterproof capes** and **mackintoshes**. These were fashionable for both gentlemen and ladies. The latter garment was first sold in 1824, not much more than a decade before Charlotte was weaving it into her story. It was invented by a



surgeon, James Syme, but was copied by Charles Macintosh. With the addition of a letter 'k' his name was immortalised by the garments themselves.

Underneath, the men wore **pantaloons, white tights and silks** and **blue dress-coats** with **velvet waistcoats**. Less formal were the **morning suits** but, if they wanted to dress even more casually they would change into a **check shirt** and **white jeans**. Yes this is well



before Levi Strauss. He may have invented the now familiar style, but the denim material itself was known centuries earlier. In fact the word 'jeans' is derived from the city of Genoa where such garments were popular. Denim itself came from Nimes, so it was *de Nimes* and hence denim.

When Angrian ladies were out riding they wore **riding habit**, and often **beaver hats** to keep their heads warm.

Although Charlotte led a simple life in the Haworth Parsonage, she was just as informed about what high society ate and drank as she was about what they wore. In this year's *Thunderer*, Michelle





Cavanagh has written an excellent article about *The Brontës and Food*, based on a talk that she gave earlier in the year. As Michelle pointed out, the sisters portray, in their novels, the sort of food that they were familiar with – good wholesome Yorkshire fare that was traditional in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However in *Stancliffe's Hotel* she depicts an exotic culinary world that was clearly based on her reading rather than on her personal experience.

The characters eat such unusual food as **radish and egg, rice-curry, devilled turkey and guava**. They also partake of **hares and partridges, oysters and fricandeau**. These days chicken is probably the most common type of meat, but in



Victorian times it was a rarity. Chickens were kept for laying eggs and were only consumed when they no longer laid. But the upper classes in Angria partook of **chicken wings** and it is unlikely that these came from tough, aged, 'boilers'.

The Angrian nobility drank as much as they ate – not just the porter or ale or gin that Branwell would have been familiar with, but **claret, watered Hollands** (Dutch gin and water), **brandy and water, cognac and champagne**.

After dinner, according to Charlotte, the men would retire and partake of their **Havannah or Virginian cigars** – perhaps with a **pinch of snuff**, or even some **opium**.

## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

A very warm welcome to our newest members: **Diane Davis, Catherine Evans, Jane Cameron, Anne and Mark Burns and Kerin Brown**.

We are sure that you will enjoy the meetings, talks and publications of the Australian Brontë Association as much as we do.

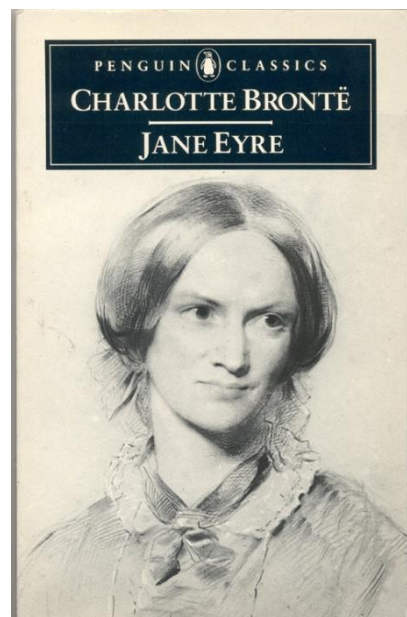
**Catherine Barker**  
Membership Secretary

## JANE EYRE WILL BE RETURNING TO THE STAGE

Glen Street Theatre at Belrose has announced that they will be presenting a new contemporary adaptation of *Jane Eyre* next May (25<sup>th</sup> -29<sup>th</sup>).

We are invited to “witness one of the most iconic pieces of English literature retold in a faithful yet fiercely original production” featuring four actors, most of whom will be playing more than one character. There is to be an accompanying original musical score so this certainly promises to be an innovative stage version of this classic story.

For booking details visit [www.glenstreet.com.au](http://www.glenstreet.com.au) Tel: 9470 5913





# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Well what a year 2021 has been for us all; one that no doubt we're all pleased is coming to an end. And I'm sure that we're all keeping our fingers crossed that another Covid lockdown will not appear again in the future!

Indeed, the past two years have thwarted so many plans for us all; a situation which has proved not only awfully difficult, but has also meant that so many plans have had to be changed. None more so that the Seventh International Juvenilia Literary Conference. Initially planned to take place in May 2020, three postponements have meant that it will now take place from the UNSW via Zoom, 20th to 22nd July 2022. So, save the date!

The capacity which ZOOM has given us has meant that we've been able to keep our members connected, both with the newly formed discussion groups held as part of Brontë Matters - which Annette Harman has reported on - plus both the July and September meetings. This was followed by our in-person November meeting, finally at the Castlereagh once again.

The July meeting, at which Christine Jack spoke about 'The Trauma Testimonies of Charlotte Brontë, Jane Eyre and Adèle Varens' highlighted how much various early experiences can effect the rest of your life. For the September meeting, a talk I gave a few years ago on 'The Brontës and Food' –

expertly read by Catherine Barker – proved to be a popular fill-in when the talk Alison Hoddinott was due to give had to be postponed until May 2022. At our November meeting, Christopher Cooper's talk 'A Man's Mind: Emily Brontë' was extremely well received as he explored Emily's innate appreciation of some of the fundamental ideas of higher mathematics. And for those members not able to join any of the meetings, they will all be published in the 2021 edition of *The Thunderer*.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all the members of the Australian Brontë Association committee – Annette Harman, Vice-President; Catherine Barker, Membership Secretary; Christopher Cooper, Editor; Michael Links, Treasurer; Jan Roden, Patrick Morris and Christine Yeats. Their input and help during 2021 has been greatly appreciated.

We have five great speakers organised for our 2022 meetings which you won't want to miss. And we'll be finishing off 2021 with another great Christmas celebration which this year will include our NSW Dickens Society friends.

Wishing you all a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

**Michelle Cavanagh, ABA President**

## **JANE EYRE: LIFE AT LOWOOD**

**Ruby Productions, written by Robert Johanson, directed by Jessica Thorpe.**

**Performance dates: January 8th and 15th at 2pm and 7pm**

**15 Evan St, Penrith**

This focusses on Jane's difficult youth as an orphan left with uncaring relative Aunt Reed who eventually sends her to Lowood – a poor boarding school run by cruel Mr. Brocklehurst. Period production full of historic costumes from Northeast England, 1832.

Ticket price is \$30 for adults and \$25 concession, \$40 at the door.

To book tickets go to [www.trybooking.com/BULFS](http://www.trybooking.com/BULFS)

To reserve email [rubyproductions99@gmail.com](mailto:rubyproductions99@gmail.com)

# SUMMARY OF AGNES GREY

by Anne Brontë

Originally called *Passages in the Life of an Individual*

Published in December 1847, Narrated by Agnes

(References [ ] are to chapters)

## QUOTES

- It'll do your rheumatiz good to hobble to church. [11]
- The human heart is like India-rubber. [13]
- Excessive vanity, like drunkenness, holds the heart, enslaves the faculties, and perverts the feelings. [17]
- Dogs are not the only creatures which, when gorged to the throat, will gloat over what they cannot devour, and grudge the smallest morsel to a starving brother. [17]
- It's the husband's part to please the wife, not hers to please him, and if he isn't satisfied with her as she is with him – and thankful to possess her too – he isn't worthy of her. [22]
- The end of religion is not to teach us how to die, but how to live. [23]

## PLOT

### [1]: THE PARSONAGE

Agnes outlines her family history. After an unfortunate speculation of her father Agnes decides to seek work as a governess.

### [2]: FIRST LESSONS IN THE ART OF INSTRUCTION

Agnes becomes governess to the Bloomfield children. They are uncontrollable and Agnes receives no support from the parents who blame Agnes for the misbehaviour.

### [3]: A FEW MORE LESSONS

The difficulties continue.

### [4]: THE GRANDMAMMA

Mrs Bloomfield senior appears to be sympathetic to Agnes but is two-faced. In one incident Agnes is unable to prevent the children messing the carpet by grinding up eggshells and she is reprimanded for her lack of control.

### [5]: THE UNCLE

Mr Robson, visiting to go shooting, encourages Tom to drink. Tom robs a nest, intending to torture the young birds. Unable to persuade Tom to release them Agnes drops large stone on the nest to kill them mercifully. She is strongly criticised by Uncle Robson and Mrs Bloomfield for denying Tom's pleasure. At the end of the term Agnes is dismissed.

### [6]: THE PARSONAGE AGAIN

Agnes returns home and decides to seek another post. She advertises and accepts an offer from the Murrays at Horton Lodge.

### [7]: HORTON LODGE

The Murrays have four children. Agnes is made to remember her station in life. Rosalie is preoccupied with fine clothes and making a good match while Matilda loves outdoor pursuits.

### [8]: THE 'COMING OUT'

Rosalie makes her debut at a ball.

### [9]: THE BALL

Rosalie tells Agnes about the ball. They discuss the rector Mr Hatfield and his new curate Mr Weston.

### [10]: THE CHURCH

Rosalie and Agnes discuss Mr Weston and Harry Meltham.

**[11]: THE COTTAGERS**

Agnes visits Nancy Brown. Nancy explains why she likes Mr Weston much better than Mr Hatfield.

**[12]: THE SHOWER**

Agnes visits Nancy again and meets Mr Weston who has just rescued Nancy's cat.

**[13]: THE PRIMROSES**

Agnes meets Mr Weston and they discuss flowers and the human heart.

**[14]: THE RECTOR**

Rosalie has been meeting Mr Hatfield 'by accident' in Moss Lane. He proposes and she takes great delight in his mortification when she declines and scolds him for his presumption.

**[15]: THE WALK**

Agnes goes for a walk with Rosalie. When they meet the Jane and Susan Green Rosalie attaches herself to them, ignoring Agnes. But then Mr Weston appears and he and Agnes have a long talk.

**[16]: THE SUBSTITUTION**

Rosalie, as a sport, decides to win Mr Weston's heart and contrives to meet him as he visits a sick child.

**[17]: CONFESSIONS**

Sir Thomas Ashby proposes to Rosalie and she accepts. She spends the weeks before the wedding determined to break as many hearts as possible, including Mr Weston's. To this end she devises ways of preventing Agnes from meeting him. Snap is given to the village rat-catcher.

**[18]: MIRTH AND MOURNING**

Rosalie marries Sir Thomas and they go on honeymoon. Matilda becomes bored. Mr Grey is seriously ill. Agnes returns home – to find him dead.

**[19]: THE LETTER**

Mr Grey is buried. Mrs Grey plans to set up a school somewhere. She receives a letter from her estranged father promising to make her a lady again if she would admit her mistake in marrying Richard. She refuses and he has nothing more to do with her.

**[20]: THE FAREWELL**

Agnes takes her leave of Mr Weston.

**[21]: THE SCHOOL**

Agnes and her mother commence their school. Agnes thinks of Mr Weston, hoping to hear from him. Instead she receives a letter from Rosalie, now the mother of a baby daughter, asking Agnes to visit.

**[22]: THE VISIT**

Agnes asks Rosalie of news of Horton, including Mr Weston. She says he has left Horton but no one knows where to.

**[23]: THE PARK**

Rosalie tells Agnes that she is desperately unhappy and detests her husband.

**[24]: THE SANDS**

On an early morning walk Agnes meets Mr Weston, with Snap whom he bought from the rat-catcher. He tells her he has a church two miles away.

**[25]: CONCLUSION**

Mr Weston makes frequent visits to Agnes and her mother. One day he invites her to accompany him on a walk. On a cliff top he proposes and she accepts. She marries him a few weeks later and they have three children.



## SCENES

**The Parsonage:** [1, 6, 18]

**Wellwood House:** [2-5]

**Horton:** [6-18, 20]

**The seaside town of A--:** [21, 24-25]

**Ashby Park:** [22-23]

## CHARACTERS

### AGNES'S FAMILY

**Agnes Grey:** [1-25] (based on Anne Brontë) The narrator.

**Richard Grey:** [1-6, 17-19] The father of Agnes, a clergyman in the north of England. He lost all his money when a ship, on which he speculated, sank. He taught Latin to Agnes and Mary.

**Alice Grey:** [1, 3, 6, 18-21, 23, 25] The mother of Agnes. She was a squire's daughter who married against the wishes of her family and friends and as a consequence was disinherited. She had 6 children, but four of them died young.

**Mary Grey:** [1, 3, 6, 8, 18, 19, 21] The sister of Agnes – 5 or 6 years older. She drew beautifully. She later marries Mr Richardson when she was about 28.

**Sally:** [1] The Grey's maid.

**Aunt Grey:** [1] An aunt of Agnes, very prim. Her old friend was Mrs Bloomfield, Agnes's first employer.

**Mary, Agnes and Edward Weston:** [25] The children of Agnes and Edward.

### AGNES'S HOME VILLAGE

**Mr Richardson:** [8] A vicar of a parish near Mr Grey's. He later married Mary Grey when he was about 36.

**Mr Smith:** [1,2] The village draper, grocer and tea-dealer. A gig was hired from him to take Agnes to Wellwood House.

### WELLWOOD HOUSE

The Bloomfield family was based on the Ingham family for whom Anne was a governess.

**Mr Bloomfield:** [1-5] Employed Agnes to be governess to his four children. He was a retired tradesman, in his 30's, of comfortable fortune. He was of ordinary stature with a large mouth, pale dingy complexion, milky-blue eyes and hair the colour of hempen cord. He was short-tempered and very critical of his wife.

**Mrs Bloomfield:** [1-5] The wife of Mr Bloomfield and an old friend of Aunt Grey. She indulged her children and took their side against Agnes when they misbehaved. She was tall, spare and stately with thick black hair, cold grey eyes and an extremely sallow complexion. Her manner was chilly.

**Tom Bloomfield:** [2-5] The only son of the Bloomfields, about 7 years old when Agnes came as governess. He had a wiry frame, fair complexion, flaxen hair and a small turned-up nose. He was selfish, wilful and cruel towards birds and animals. But his mother saw him as "generous, noble-spirited, to be led not driven, remarkable for always speaking the truth".

**Mary Ann Bloomfield:** [2-5] The eldest daughter, about 6 years old. She was tall and dark with a round, full face and high colour in her cheeks. She was obstinate with an affected simper and was always craving notice.

**Fanny Bloomfield:** [2-5] The middle daughter. She was very pretty but bellowed or spat if offended. "Remarkably gentle and requires encouragement", said her mother.

**Harriet Bloomfield:** [2-5] The youngest daughter, about 2 years old. She was little, broad, merry and playful.

**Old Mrs Bloomfield:** [4] Mr Bloomfield's mother. Towards Agnes she appeared sympathetic, but was later found to be two-faced.

**Mr Robson:** [5] Mrs Bloomfield's brother who came to visit. He was tall, thick set and strongly built. He had dark hair and a sallow complexion and had a turned-up nose and little grey eyes that were frequently half-closed. He had a self-sufficient manner and drank heavily.

**Betty:** [4] Nurse to Fanny and Harriet.

**Juno:** [5] One of Mr Robson's dogs.

## HORTON LODGE

**Mr Murray:** [6-7, 9, 12, 22] He employed Agnes as governess to his 4 children. He was of a higher rank than Mr Bloomfield – a blustering, roistering country squire. An active, practical farmer, he was a devoted fox-hunter and a skilful horse jockey and farrier. He was tall and stout with scarlet cheeks and a crimson nose.

**Mrs Murray:** [6-7, 14, 17] (based on Mrs Robinson) His wife, a handsome good-looking woman of about 40. She dressed very fashionably and loved giving parties.

**Rosalie Murray:** [7-18, 20-23] (based on Lydia Robinson) The elder daughter, about 16 when Agnes came. She was fair and decidedly pretty – perfectly formed with a healthy bloom. She wore her hair, very light brown inclining to yellow, in a profusion of long ringlets. She had pale clear eyes and small features. She was vivacious and light-hearted and had a talent for music and languages, but otherwise her mind was shallow and had never been cultivated. Her temper was naturally good though she was often testy and capricious and lacked self-control. She had never been taught the distinction between right and wrong. She was preoccupied with clothes and flirting, even when engaged.

**Matilda Murray:** [7, 9-10, 20, 22] (nicknamed Tilly) The younger daughter of the family, about 14, a strapping hoyden. Her features were larger, and her complexion much darker, than Rosalie's. She cared little for her appearance and loved riding and outdoor sports. She was reckless, headstrong, violent and unamenable to reason. She swore like a trooper.

**John Murray:** [7, 22] The elder son of the Murrays, about 11. He was a fine, stout, healthy boy – frank and good-natured. He was boisterous (“high spirited” said his mother), unruly and unprincipled. When Agnes arrived she found him untaught and unteachable and six months later he went off to school.

**Charles Murray:** [7, 22] The younger son, about 10. He was tall and slender – smaller, paler and less active and robust than John. He was cowardly and pettish (“nervous and tedious” was the way his mother described him). He was also capricious and selfish, yet he was his mother's darling.

**Brown and Williamson:** Female servants at Horton Lodge.

**Robert and Joseph:** Male servants at Horton Lodge.

**Snap:** [14, 24] Rosalie's dog, a terrier. Agnes was upset when he was sold to the village rat-catcher but was delighted to discover later that Mr Weston had bought him back.

## HORTON

**Mr Hatfield:** [9-11, 14-15, 17, 22] The rector at Horton. He wasn't very understanding towards the poorest of his parishioners and was more concerned with external appearances than inner truth. He succumbed to Rosalie's flirtation and proposed, only to be humiliated by her for his presumption. He later married an elderly spinster after weighing her purse against her failing charms.

**Mr Bligh:** [6] The seedy ex-curate of Mr Hatfield's.

**Edward Weston:** [9-18, 22, 24-25] Mr Hatfield's new curate. He was a little above middle size with a square face and dark brown hair, brushed aside a broad white forehead. He had brown deep-set eyes and large projecting eyebrows. He was much like for his kindness and friendliness towards the poor of the parish though Rosalie considered him an "insensate, ugly, stupid blockhead". But that didn't stop her trying to encourage his affections when she believed that he was attracted to Agnes.

**Nancy Brown:** [11-12, 14, 17-18, 20] A poor widow in the parish. She was afflicted "the rheumatiz" which made it difficult for her to go to church. Mr Hatfield said she must persist but Mr Weston was more sympathetic. She also had an inflammation of the eyes and so Mr Weston and Agnes would often read to her. Once she lost her cat and Mr Weston found it and returned it.

**William Brown:** [11] Nancy's son.

**Hannah Rodgers:** [11] A neighbour of Nancy's.

**Betty Holmes:** [10] A poor parishioner who had smoked a pipe for 30 years.

**George Higgins:** [10] A poor parishioner who was criticised by Mr Hatfield for walking on the Sabbath.

**Thomas Jackson:** [10-11] A poor parishioner of Mr Hatfield, troubled by his conscience.

**Mark Wood:** [11, 14-15] A poor labourer in the last stage of consumption.

**Mr Green:** [9-10, 13, 15, 17, 22] A local farmer, rich enough but of no family. He attended the ball where Rosalie said he was a 'country booby'.

**Jane and Susan Green:** [13, 15] Mr Green's daughters, lively and good-tempered.

**Sir Hugh Meltham and Sir Broadley Wilson:** [9] Attended the ball where Rosalie made her debut. She called them as 'old codgers'.

**Henry Meltham:** [9-10, 13-15, 17, 22-23] (Harry) Sir Hugh's younger son. He was a good-looking pleasant man. Rosalie saw a lot of him in London.

**Lord F--:** [9] Attended the ball where Rosalie declared that "he hates his wife but is struck with me".

**Lord G--:** [9] A married nobleman who attended the ball.

**Sir Thomas Ashby:** [9, 12, 14-17, 22-23] A young and rich nobleman who attended the ball. He was tall and gay but ugly. He was thin and wasted with a slight stoop in the shoulders. His pale face was somewhat blotchy and he was disagreeably red about the eyelids. He had a general appearance of languor and flatness, relieved by a sinister expression in the mouth and dull, soulless eyes. He marries Rosalie and they live with his mother at Ashby Park.

## PLACES

**A—:** [20-21, 24-25] (based on Scarborough) The fashionable seaside resort where Agnes and her mother set up a school. The school was in the heart of town, a considerable distance from the sea, divided from it by a labyrinth of streets and houses. On entering the town from the north-west there is a row of respectable looking houses on each side of the broad white road, with narrow slips of garden before them. Venetian blinds are at the windows and there is a flight of steps leading to each trim, brass-handled, door. The beach had smooth white sand and there was a semi-circular barrier of craggy cliffs, surmounted by green swelling hills. There were low rocks out at sea – looking with their clothing of weeds and moss like little grass-grown islands. Mr Weston's proposal was made on a mossy promontory.

**ASHBY PARK:** [17, 22] The home of Sir Thomas, 10 miles from Horton Lodge. It was commodious without and elegant within. The park contained ancient woods, herds of deer and a broad sheet of water.

**F—:** [24-25] A village 2 miles from A—where Mr Weston had his living. After their marriage he and Agnes lived there.



**HORTON:** [6] The village near Horton Lodge. It was near the town of O-- but was not in a manufacturing district. It was 70 miles from Agnes's home.

**HORTON LODGE:** [6-9, 12, 14-18, 20] (based on Thorp Green Hall) The home of the Murrays. It was 2 miles from the village church.

**LONDON:** [15, 17, 22-23]

**O—:** [6-8, 18] (based on York) The nearest town to Horton.

**WELLWOOD HOUSE:** [1-6, 17] The was the home of the Bloomfields, a new stately mansion. It had a lofty iron gateway and a smooth, well-rolled carriage drive with green lawn on each side, studded with trees.

## BRONTË MATTERS

This year the Australian Brontë Association held three Brontë Matters ZOOM meetings. Each Brontë Matters meeting was well attended by members and friends and two meetings were recorded. Our first meeting looked at *The Diary Papers of Emily and Anne Brontë* edited by our Patron Christine Alexander and member Mandy Swan. The second zoom meeting covered parts of *Agnes*

*Grey* and *Animals in the Bronte Writings*. The third virtual meeting discussed three books written on *Agnes Grey*. We shared a variety of perspectives on the Brontë writings and our own times in the pandemic.

We plan on continuing Brontë Matters in 2022.

**Annette Harman.**

## Program for 2022

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 12th March 2022 Jonathan Cooper**

#### ***Parallel visions: writers who create art***

Although much better known for her novels, Charlotte Brontë also drew, and painted watercolours. In her younger years, she even thought of herself more as a potential painter than a budding novelist. But is this just a curiosity of history, or does it point to something more significant? This lecture will explore the phenomenon of creatives in more than one field, particularly art and narrative writing, and examine some interesting parallels. For example, what do artists and writers aim to achieve when they create?

*Jonathan Cooper worked as an educator at the Art Gallery of NSW for more than 30 years. He is now a freelance writer, lecturer and website manager. Among his other interests are philosophy, physics and the international language, Esperanto.*

### **Saturday 14th May 2022 Alison Hoddinott (University of New England)**

#### ***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.

## PROGRAM FOR 2022 CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

**Saturday 9th July 2022 Rachel Givney**

### ***The Heart or the Pen – the Brontë's Choice***

Writers like The Brontë sisters, Jane Austen, Louisa May Alcott, and Emily Dickinson form cornerstones of female literary endeavour. But their achievements came at a price - none of these women ever married or had children (except for Charlotte Brontë, who married towards the end her life, but wrote very little afterwards). As a teenager, Rachel Givney loved reading the great novels of these pioneers. But she wondered, did these women have to forgo love and family to write? That's how her novel, *Jane in Love* was born. She'll be talking about what inspired her to write her novel and the choices early female writers faced between love, family, and career.

**Saturday 10th September 2022 Brendan Somes**

### ***The Only Book He Had Cheap from A&R – David Scott Mitchell and the Brontës***

David Scott Mitchell owned a very rare first edition of Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell – published by London by Aylott and Jones 1846. It is now held in the library that Mitchell founded, Sydney's Mitchell Library. This book of poems by Charlotte, Emily and Anne Brontë was for a Mitchell a rare acquisition - in the words of Fred Weymark of Angus and Robertson - Mitchell 'told me that the only book he had cheap from A&R was a copy of the right first edition of Currer Bell poems'. This talk will tell the story of this book from its publication in London in 1846 to its late 19th century acquisition by Mitchell and its 20th and 21st century life in the Mitchell Library.

**Saturday 12th November 2022 Penny Gay**

### ***Anne Brontë's The Tenant of Wildfell Hall: Speaking Out in 1848***

“Oh, reader! If there were less of this delicate concealment of facts – this whispering, ‘Peace, peace,’ when there is no peace ...” (Anne Brontë, ‘Preface’ to the Second Edition).

In the light of recent speaking out by young women about the abuse they have suffered from apparently respectable men, Penny will focus on the novel's depiction of masculinity and violence – or, as a critic of the day called it, Brontë's ‘morbid love of the coarse, if not of the brutal’. She will argue that Anne Brontë's speaking out – via her first-person narrators, both male and female – offers a new style of fiction that points the way (nearly 200 years later) to the brave life-narratives of today's victims. Penny's argument will include close analysis of the speech-patterns of major characters.

**Saturday 3rd December 2022 Christmas Lunch jointly with the NSW Dickens Society (further details later)**

