



+*The Australian Brontë Association Newsletter*

Issue No 49

July 2022

Website: www.ausbronte.net

Email: ausbronte@gmail.com



7th INTERNATIONAL LITERARY JUVENILIA CONFERENCE LUNCH

Saturday 23 July 12 noon

Adam Room, Castlereagh Boutique Hotel, 169 Castlereagh St.

\$75 for members, \$80 for non-members

Booking form on the website www.ausbronte.net

**ZOOM Conference from UNSW Sydney
Wednesday 20 July to Friday 22 July 2022.**

Literary Juvenilia, material imagination and ‘things’

The Friday session will focus on Anne Brontë to acknowledge her 2020 Bicentenary, sponsored by the Australian Brontë Association.

Keynote speaker Professor Beverly Taylor will speak on ‘Becoming Anne Brontë’.

Registration is open until 19th July 2022.

Fees include a year’s membership in the International Society of Literary Juvenilia (ISLJ) and access to the peer-reviewed Journal of Juvenilia Studies (JJS):

COST: Full: \$80, Retired, Students etc. \$50.

Juvenilia Press and the International Society of Literary Juvenilia invite you to join us online.

All details are on the conference website: <https://sam2.arts.unsw.edu.au/isljc2022/>

HEIRS OF THE EYRES

By Liz Richards, who is herself an heir of the Eyre

As we all know, Ellen Nussey was a life long friend of Charlotte Brontë. Ellen's brother, Henry, was vicar of St. Michael's church in Hathersage from 1845 to 1847. During this time Charlotte and Ellen often visited Hathersage and Charlotte came to know many places, and people that she would make use of in *Jane Eyre*.

The leading family in the Hathersage area at that time was the Eyre family. In the church, Charlotte would have seen the Eyre memorial, and in the graveyard she would have found the Eyre graves, including one for a Jane Eyre herself.

The Eyre family lived at the imposing North Lee Hall, just over a mile north of Hathersage. In *Jane Eyre*, North Lee Hall became Thornfield Hall.

Charlotte clearly saw the interior of North Lee Hall because it contained a famous cabinet, called the Apostle's cabinet which Charlotte describes in detail in *Jane Eyre*. The front of the huge cabinet contains paintings of the 12 apostles.



I must see the light of the unsnuffed candle wane on my employment; the shadows darken on the wrought, antique tapestry round me, and grow black under the hangings of the vast old bed, and quiver strangely over the doors of a great cabinet opposite — whose front, divided into twelve panels, bore, in grim design, the heads of the twelve apostles, each enclosed in its separate panel as in a frame; while above them at the top rose an ebony crucifix and a dying Christ.

This cabinet was presented to the Brontë Parsonage Museum by the Eyre family.

Also of interest is the George Hotel, as it too features as the George Inn in *Jane Eyre*, the coaching inn employed by Jane and



the stop at which Charlotte Brontë would have alighted on her visits to the village.

In Chapter 11 of *Jane Eyre*, Jane arrives at the George Inn on her way to Thornfield.

... you must fancy you see a room in the George Inn at Millcote, with such large figured papering on the walls as inn rooms have; such a carpet, such furniture, such ornaments on the mantelpiece, such prints, including a portrait of George the Third, and another of the Prince of Wales ... All this is visible to you by the light of an oil lamp hanging from the ceiling ...

The church at Hathersage is famous for both its Eyre and Brontë connections. At the end of the churchyard is a very long grave. It is said to be the final resting place of Little John who was one of Robin Hood's merry men. In 1780, a man named James Shuttleworth dug up a thigh bone there, and it measured more than twenty-eight inches, suggesting that Little John was over eight feet tall. On one of the boards in the tower the name Morton appears

Robin Hood has another connection to Charlotte and Anne Brontë. On the outskirts of Mirfield stands Kirklees Hall. Legend states that it is here that Robin Hood died, having been treacherously poisoned. In his dying moment he shot an arrow out of his window and was buried where he fell, somewhere in the woodland around the Hall. This legend would have been very well known to Charlotte and Anne Brontë, as Kirklees Hall is close to the Roe Head School which they attended.

In 1839, before he moved to Hathersage, Henry Nussey proposed to Charlotte but she turned him down. It has been suggested that he became the zealous St. John Rivers in *Jane Eyre*. The reasons for turning him down are unknown, but she thought very highly of him and the last page of *Jane Eyre* could be her tribute to Henry.

After leaving Hathersage, he left the church altogether. Throughout the rest of his life he suffered from mental illness, and was locked up in several mental asylums. In January 1860 he committed suicide.

The surname Eyre is rooted in the Anglo-Saxon culture and evolved from the variants HEYR or EYR. The earliest record of the Eyre family in Derbyshire was in 1250 when William le Heyr held the appointment of "Hereditary Forester of the Peak". This was a Royal appointment and for its service he was allowed a bovate (20 acres) of land in the Hope Valley. Hope Valley is a rural area centred on the village of Hope, Derbyshire, in the Peak District in the northern Midlands of England. William le Heyr, who died in 1299, was the common ancestor of most Derbyshire Eyre families.

Hope and the neighbouring town of Hathersage were two boundaries of the area that the Eyre families occupied over eight centuries. The village of Brough lies between these towns. By early 1800s there had been twenty generations of Eyres. Early generations had a predominance of sons named Nicholas or Robert.

Nicholas (1348 – 1410) of generation four lived at Highlow Hall, Hathersage. He had seven sons and built seven Halls. It is said that the seven sons lived within eyesight of Highlow Hall. The seven Halls of Moorseats, Shatton, Nether Shatton, Hazelford, Offerton, Crook Hill and North Lee with the surrounding land formed the basis of the



family holdings. Tradition says that when Nicholas gave certain signals from the flagstaff at Highlow, he could command the attendance of any or all of his sons as he required them.

Generation five produced a son, Nicholas, in 1371. Nicholas became Sir Nicholas. He died in 1459. His second son

William was baptised in 1390 at North Lee Hall. William, described as a gentleman of Hathersage, continued to live at North Lee Hall and his children and grandchildren were all baptised there as well. Nicholas's fourth child Robert married Joanna, the only child of the very wealthy Padley family. Robert and Joanna Padley had ten sons and four daughters and lived at Padley Hall, about two miles south of Hathersage. St Michael and All Angels' Church at Hathersage has a group of brasses related to this branch of the Eyre family.

The eighth generation no longer lived at North Lee Hall. These sons had the names John, Robert, George and Edward. From the records it can be seen that male Eyres were marrying not only female cousins Eyres but also female cousins whose mothers' maiden names had been Eyre. The Eyre family became one of the largest landholders in North East Derbyshire.

The present Highlow Hall is a small manor house of probably the sixteenth century, perched on top of a shoulder leading up to Smelting Hill and by ancient lanes from Hathersage to Abney and Great Hucklow. It was a home of the Eyre family of Hathersage, founded in about 1400 when Robert Eyre of Hope married Joan Padley, a local heiress.

There is a story that Highlow Hall came into the Eyre family when the younger of two sisters of the Archer family then living there married Nicholas Eyre, heir to the manor of Hope. According to legend, the older sister was almost married to him when she found that he was also paying attentions to her younger sister. Jilted, she fled the house and apparently killed herself, as some time later her ghost glided down the great oak staircase to confront Nicholas and put a curse on the house of Eyre. Within the prescribed time, this once great family was no more.

Among other ghosts supposedly seen at Highlow is a man dressed in white who, according to S.O. Addy in 1895, appears at midnight riding a white horse. Other writers mention a workman whose incessant grumbling during the restoration of the Hall in 1360 provoked Nicholas Eyre into murdering

him. In another version, he was a mason whom Robert Eyre found playing dice when he should have been working, so immediately killed with his sword.

There is also the ghost of one of Robert's friends. They were returning together from a drunken outing in Chesterfield when they quarrelled. In the ensuing fight, Robert killed his friend, as he successfully claimed, in self-defence. The story adds that Robert, too, would have been killed, by a blow to the head, had he not been wearing the same hard hat he wears in what is said to be his image, a man's head in a rolled-brim hat, carved on the north wall of Hathersage church.

One of England's numerous White Ladies also haunted the Hall after it had become a farmhouse. She was often seen crossing the courtyard and entering by the front door, then with a rustle of silken skirts ascending the oak staircase. One farmworker who sometimes saw her by moonlight would politely touch his cap at her approach, and once ventured to speak, but received no reply nor any other sign of having been heard.

A carter on his way home to Dronfield saw a woman standing with the palms of her hands resting on the cattle-trough as if gazing at her reflection. This was at about two in the morning, and, remarking on his return that the people at the Hall were astir early, he was told that he must have seen the White Lady. Bumps heard on the staircase from time to time were said to be echoes of the past, a lady in white having been murdered in one of the bedrooms, and her body dragged along the landing and down the stairs to be buried none knew where.

Further fragmentary traditions speak of tables mysteriously set for unseen guests. In 1973 a lay preacher who formerly lived at the



Hall, was conducting a service of exorcism during which the ghosts of a mother and child materialized at the top of the staircase.

Another house belonging to the Eyre family was North Lee Hall. The architect was probably Robert Smythson. Born between 1535 and 1537, Robert Smythson was one of Britain's finest architects. No documentation survives to verify the identity of the architect of North Lee Hall, but the attribution to Smythson has been made on stylistic grounds. Especially characteristic of Smythson is the building's ingenious split-level interior layout which uses a variety of floor and ceiling heights, providing a combination of halls and great chambers to the front in conjunction with smaller domestic rooms to the rear.

The legend of a mad woman at North Lee, reputed to have perished in a fire, may have been the inspiration for Mrs Rochester's dramatic demise. The Eyre's who were a local family, resided at North Lee for two generations during the 15th Century. They took up the tenancy again in 1750 and lived there until 1882.

By the middle years of the 20th century, North Lee Hall was in a state of dereliction: roofless and with blocked and broken windows. Inroads made by the weather had caused ceilings to collapse, partially destroying historic decorative plaster. Happily, the buildings solid three-foot thick millstone grit walls maintained their structural stability. The Hall has since been restored.

THE LOST CHAPTERS OF *WUTHERING HEIGHTS*

Part 3

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: "what did Hindley do when he went away to school" and "how did he meet his bride Frances?"

CHAPTER 6A HINDLEY GOES TO SCHOOL

I was curious to know how Hindley had gone away to school and came back with a wife. It is not the usual thing that you come back with after a period of education. So I asked Mrs Dean in the kitchen one morning, as she was peeling the potatoes for lunch.

"Yes, I had similar sentiments. I doubt if Matrimony was on the school syllabus. So, after the funeral of Frances, I asked Mr Hindley how he came to meet her, and this is what he told me. He was 17 when Mr Earnshaw sent him away to a school in Scotland, in a town called Alloway."

"But surely he had completed his education at that age."

"Well you see, up till then he had gone to the little village school in Gimmerton. Now Mr Earnshaw wanted him to go to Oxford but at Gimmerton he had not studied the classics. After all it were only a village school, and only provided the sort of basic education as befitted a farmer's son."

"Old Mr Earnshaw, although he was poorly educated himself, dreamt of Hindley becoming a gentleman, or at least a parson. Hindley had made it clear that he had no taste for the life of a farmer, even though the

Earnshaw farm was a prosperous one. So Hindley was sent off to Scotland and Mr Earnshaw decided to send Cathy, who was just nine at the time, off to the Gimmerton school to get some rudiments of learning. I'm sorry to say that at the age of nine she could barely recognise her own name. I helped Mrs Earnshaw to teach the domestic arts, such as needlework, and I did teach her to read simple chapbooks that itinerant pedlars would sell."

"Cathy was a quick learner and during the three years Hindley was away she improved her reading at Mrs Oldfield's village school. It was the same school I attended some eight years previously. Mrs Oldfield took in about a dozen girls, three of whom lodged with her. Cathy would ride over from the Heights every day. When she had the opportunity she would teach Heathcliff what she had learnt so that at the end of those three years he could write his name and a small number of words. But Cathy was able to read the Bible."

"And Hindley, what of him?" I enquired.

"Oh yes, I were telling you of *his* education wasn't I? Well he was sent to a small school run by a certain John Murdoch. Murdoch was self-taught and not much older than Hindley himself. There were five boys, all of them boarders. Murdoch concentrated on the dead languages. I gather that Hindley was a middling student. He had a good memory, though, and could remember whole passages of some book by that Julius Caesar – in English mind. When asked to translate a passage he just had to know enough of the Latin to know where to start."

"Did he make friends there?"

"Let me see. He did mention one or two of the boys. One was called Billie Murray and another was a young boy called Robbie. Now I come to think of it, the other two boys were Mr Murdoch's two younger brothers. He also had a sister called Frances."

"You don't mean that this was the Frances that Hindley brought back to his father's funeral?"

"Indeed it was. She was just 15 when he came to the school. Well the three boys –

Hindley, Billie and Robbie, called themselves The Holy Three. They gave themselves Roman names. I think Hindley called himself Collatine, Billie was Tarquin and Robbie called himself ... I forget what he was called. It started with the letter V."

I remembered the bard's poem *The Rape of Lucretius*. Collatine was the husband of Lucretius, Tarquin was the soldier who raped her and Valerius was a friend of both Collatine and Lucretius. I suggested, "perhaps he was called Valerius, and maybe they called the girl Lucretius."



"Yes, you're right, but how could you possibly know?"

"There's a poem called the ... the ... *Story of Lucretius*." I couldn't bring myself to give it its proper title.

"Yes, that were it. I remember now. They called Murdoch's younger sister Lucretius. They also had a saying. Something about 'all' and 'one', like 'one and all'."

"Perhaps it was:

*one for all, or all for one we gage;
As life for honour in fell battle's rage."*

"Not the whole thing, just the bit about 'one for all and all for one'. Then they said something about omnibuses."

"Ah yes, *unus pro omnibus, omnes pro uno*."

"That were it. Well according to Hindley they took part in these scare-brained things they called 'adventures'."

"What sort of adventures, I wonder."

“I asked Mr Hindley and he told me several stories where they frightened the local people. I don’t know whether you’ve heard of the tale of *Tam O’Shanter*?”



“Of course – the wonderful tale by Robbie Burns, published about ten years ago.”

“Well Robbie Burns was none other than the Robbie who was one of the Holy Three. I think he got the idea of his *O’Shanter* tale from a trick those boys played on the locals. You see the kirk was not far from the public house. One night Robbie dressed up as a warlock, Billie as a witch and Hindley as the Devil himself. It sends a shiver down my spine to even tell you of such sacrilegious behaviour.”

“They stole an empty coffin from the undertakers and set it up with an effigy of a corpse emerging from the open coffin. They broke into the church and lit it up with dozens of candles. Then they performed a Witches Sabbath with loud whoops and cackles. They timed it for when they knew that the locals would be walking past the church, full skinned, as they left the inn. The noise and the lights attracted their attention and when they looked in at the windows they thought the end of the world had come, and old Nic was preparing to take the unrepentant souls that remained after the Rapture.”

“So you think that Robbie Burns was recalling that adventure when he wrote *Tam O’Shanter*?”

“Not a doubt of it. Hindley laughed aloud as he told me of this trick. He said the local men gave up drinking for two whole weeks after. Personally I think such un-Christian behaviour ate away at Hindley’s soul and made him the good-for-nothing that he became.”

“I wonder that they didn’t get the Murdoch boys to join them.”



Christopher Cooper looking in at the window of Alloway Kirk where Tam O’Shanter was set.

“They wanted to keep it to themselves – the Holy Three, or I should say the Unholy Three. That would have been a more appropriate name for those rascals.”

“And Lucretia ... I mean Frances ... did she have anything to do with it?”

“Hindley liked Frances a lot and suggested they get her to dress up as a witch, but the others said she would tell her brothers and old Mr Murdoch.”

“So Hindley and Frances became sweethearts.”

“That’s a polite way of putting it – ‘lovers’ is more like it. In Hindley’s final term Frances became with child and John Murdoch insisted that Hindley marry her. But I do believe that Hindley did love her truly. He was most cut-up when she died. He was already on the slippery slope to Hell but her death just sent him hurtling to destruction.”

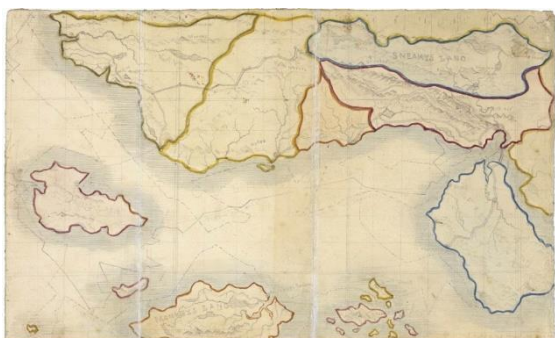
“I often think of the times when we were children together. He was about my age, you know. He was such a good little boy at first. I can’t think what entered his soul to make him become what he became. Joseph said it was the bad influence of Heathcliff. It is true that he started to become a wild and cruel boy at about the time that Heathcliff came into the house, but he was so much younger than Hindley and I just can’t see it. If anything it was Hindley who corrupted Heathcliff’s soul. Goodness me, the sun is high in the sky and I have so much work to do. If you’ll excuse me.”

THE BRONTËS AND WAR

Adapted from a post from insearchofannebronte@hotmail.com

It's easy to feel isolated from all that's going on in Ukraine, but the people of Ukraine are facing a very real struggle at this moment from which I sincerely hope they prevail.

Britain had a very recent history of warfare at the time that the Brontë siblings were born and grew up, for Britain had just emerged from the Napoleonic Wars. Indeed, the pivotal Battle of Waterloo took place less than a year before the birth of Charlotte Brontë and after the birth of her elder sisters Maria and Elizabeth. The Brontës grew up with the threat of war diminished, but the country remained on its guard and the newspapers and magazines the Brontës loved to read were full of tales of war and heroism.



Map of Angria, a war torn kingdom, drawn by a young Branwell Brontë

Young minds then, just like young minds today, were easily fired by such tales, and it led to a pivotal moment in the Brontë story and the story of English literature.

You remember how Patrick Brontë's 1826 gift of twelve toy soldiers to his son Branwell led to a series of games based around 'the twelve' and then on to stories and tiny books about them. The Brontë imagination was in top gear, and the rest is history. Here's how a young Charlotte Brontë remembered the event:

Papa bought Branwell some wooden soldiers at Leeds. When Papa came home it was night, and we were in bed, so

next morning Branwell came to our door with a box of soldiers. Emily and I jumped out of bed, and I snatched up one and exclaimed: 'This is the Duke of Wellington! This shall be the Duke!' when I had said this Emily likewise took one up and said it should be hers; when Anne came down, she said one should be hers. Mine was the prettiest of the whole, and the tallest, and the most perfect in every part. Emily's was a grave-looking fellow, and we called him 'Gravey'. Anne's was a queer little thing, much like herself, and we called him 'Waiting-boy'. Branwell chose his, and called him Buonaparte.

Charlotte hero worshipped the great military leader, and later Prime Minister, the Duke of Wellington, and thanks to the machinations of her publisher George Smith she finally met him in June 1850 after which she excitedly wrote to Ellen Nussey calling him, "a real grand old man."



Charlotte Brontë's hero The Duke of Wellington by Sir Thomas Lawrence

The Brontës' fascination with all things military was also inspired, no doubt, by their father's own leanings. He was a patriotic man who took great pride and interest in Britain's military activities; so much so that Charlotte's friend Ellen once said of him:

Mr Brontë's tastes led him to delight in the perusal of battle-scenes, and in following the artifice of war, had he entered on military service instead of ecclesiastical he

would probably have had a very distinguished career.

War, and especially the cessation of it, also touched greatly upon the life of another great friend of Charlotte Brontë: **Mary Taylor**. Charlotte met Mary and Ellen at Roe Head school near Mirfield, but Mary was from a far more comfortable background than the curate's daughter from Haworth.

The Taylors lived at the large and attractive Red House in Gomersal, and their finances seemed to be so sound that they even had their own bank. The source of the Taylor riches was cloth, and one particular variety of it, for Mary's father Joshua (immortalised by Charlotte as **Hiram Yorke in Shirley**) had a hugely lucrative contract to manufacture the red fabric used to make uniforms for the British army.

Unfortunately as peace descended, at least temporarily across Europe, the demand for this cloth collapsed and Joshua Taylor died bankrupt in 1840.

The Brontë juvenilia, in particular, is full of stories of intrigue, betrayal and war. From Glasstown to Angria and then onto Gondal, the domain of Emily and Anne Brontë's earliest writing, the influence of those toy soldiers and the tales



they inspired can still be seen.

This iron miniature of the Duke of Wellington was owned by Charlotte Brontë.

For Emily Brontë especially,

Gondal was not confined to childhood, it was a lifelong passion, so we see war-inspired poetry throughout her life. In 1837 Emily wrote this typically boisterous poem of Gondalian conflict, 'Song by Julius Angora':

'Awake! awake! how loud the stormy
morning
Calls up to life the nations resting round;
Arise! arise! is it the voice of mourning
That breaks our slumber with so wild a

sound?

The voice of mourning? Listen to its pealing;
That shout of triumph drowns the sigh of
woe.

Each tortured heart forgets its wonted
feeling;
Each faded cheek resumes its long-lost
glow.

Our souls are full of gladness; God has given
Our arms to victory, our foes to death;
The crimson ensign waves its sheet in
heaven,

The sea-green Standard lies in dust
beneath.

Patriots, no stain is on your country's glory;
Soldiers, preserve that glory bright and
free.

Let Almedore, in peace, and battle gory,
Be still a nobler name for victory!



The Battle of Waterloo by William Sadler

By 1843, however, Emily's 'On The Fall Of Zalona' shows a very different side of war, with lines including:

What do those brazen tongues proclaim?
What joyous fête begun –
What offerings to our country's fame –
What noble victory won?
Go, ask that solitary sire
Laid in his house alone;
His silent hearth without a fire –
His sons and daughters gone –
Go, ask those children in the street
Beside their mother's door;
Waiting to hear the lingering feet
That they shall hear no more.
Ask those pale soldiers round the gates

With famine-kindled eye –
They'll say, "Zalona celebrates
The day that she must die!"...
Heaven help us in this awful hour!
For now might faith decay –
Now might we doubt God's guardian power
And curse, instead of pray.

Charlotte Brontë too turned away from her earlier jingoistic view of war. By 1853 Britain was at war once more, this time fighting Russia in the Crimean War. Charlotte and Patrick both helped to raise funds for the Patriotic Fund, which gave money to wounded soldiers and to the families of dead soldiers.

In the postscript of a letter to Margaret Wooler dated 6th December 1854, in the aftermath of the charge of the Light

Brigade (which heads this post) Charlotte gives this moving account of her attitude to war, and why it has changed:

I say nothing about the War – but when I read of its horrors – I cannot help thinking that it is one of the greatest curses that can fall on mankind. I trust it may not last long – for it seems to me that no glory to be gained can compensate for the sufferings which must be endured. This tone may seem a little ignoble and unpatriotic – but I think that as we advance toward middle age – nobleness and patriotism bear a different signification to us to that which we accept while young. C B-N

Let us hope for better news from Ukraine soon. In the meantime, we can find solace in the books we love so much.

REVIEW OF *JANE EYRE* PERFORMED AT THE GLEN STREET THEATRE, BELROSE

By June Booker

On Sunday 29 May, together with my three daughters, I attended the performance of *Jane Eyre* at the Glen Street Theatre which was adapted by the Shake & Stir Theatre Co.

I was somewhat disappointed with the performance which I felt was rather dark. While congratulating the four actors for their modern presentation, you could not always

understand what they were saying. There was a lot to learn and cover in the presentation and I was not happy with how *Jane* was presented as I always thought of her as a timid and gentle person.

My daughters did enjoy the modern performance of this Brontë classic although they too thought that it was too dark.

June Booker

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

A very warm welcome to our newest members:

**Monica Abrahams, Patricia Foertsch, Jenny Hall, Fiona Lynch,
Mary Champion, Diane Malcolm and Anne Cherry.**

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

REVIEW OF *JANE EYRE* PERFORMED AT THE GLEN STREET THEATRE, BELROSE

By Mary Champion

On Friday 27th May, my husband Jack and I were extremely privileged to attend a magnificent performance of Charlotte Brontë's well known and much loved Gothic novel, *Jane Eyre*, an adaptation created by the Shake & Stir Theatre Co and directed by Michael Futcher.

It was an enlightening new production featuring new music composed and performed at the piano by Sarah McLeod who also played the character of Adele in a most intriguing and lovable manner. Her presentation of this character was almost childlike as indeed Adele was when she first entered the household of Edward Rochester.

The backdrop included an artificial fire, as well as totally convincing Gothic sound effects; fake smoke and minimal lighting immediately created the overall dark and at times, typical Yorkshire

ambience and environment, which placed the "full house" audience of four hundred, back to the novel's 1847 setting from "curtain up" to "curtain close". There were just four actors who portrayed all characters brilliantly within this new stage production of *Jane Eyre*, the spirited orphan in search of love.

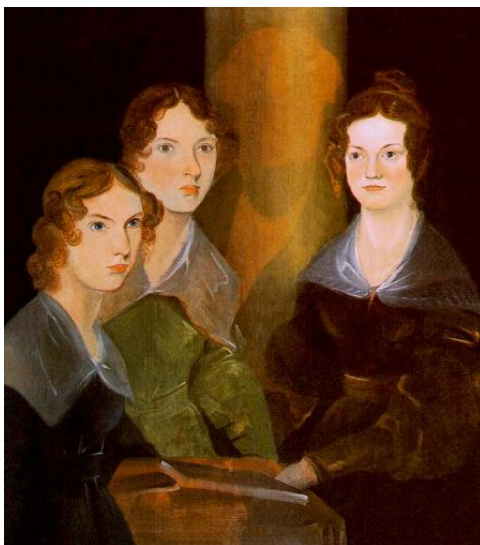
This skillful production did not stray from Charlotte Brontë's original script, bringing the story, and at times rather complex characters to us all in a modern perspective without losing the original plot of the novel.

We agreed that it was a wonderful experience which has prompted me to now read the book. My husband will probably beat me to it: at least he has the book all ready on the coffee table so we can enjoy comparing notes.

SEE THE ORIGINAL PILLAR PORTRAIT

Connect with the Brontë sister and others at Canberra's National Portrait Gallery. Billed as from Shakespeare to Winehouse; Icons from the National Portrait Gallery London eighty treasures from their collection are now showing daily at Canberra's National Portrait Gallery until Sunday 17 July 2022 so there's still a little time to visit. While the London National Portrait Gallery – which holds the world's most extensive collection of portraits – is undergoing the largest renovation of

their building in 125 years, eighty pieces from their fabulous collection have travelled to Australia for this exclusive exhibition.



Before it's too late start planning to see exhibits from the sixteenth century to today; Shakespeare to Winehouse, Darwin to Dickens, the Beatles, Brontë sisters and Beckham, plus many others. This really is a rare, once-in-a-generation opportunity so keep calm and grab your ticket!

Michelle Cavanagh

HAWORTH CELEBRATES A 1940's WEEKEND

Written by Michelle Cavanagh following details sent by Catherine Barker.

Haworth, the home of various members of the Brontë family from 1820 until 1861 when Patrick Brontë died after outliving all of his children celebrated a 1940's weekend on Saturday and Sunday 21st & 22nd May.

The event was organised by volunteers and apart from donations, the only income generated was by selling space to traders who put up stalls for food, clothes, drinks etc. as well as shopkeepers, pubs, cafes, restaurants and other businesses on Main Street and Mill Hey who contributed funds to keep the event running.

The Keighley and Worth Valley Heritage Steam Railway operated all weekend enabling the many visitors to travel in style to Haworth. Outside Haworth Station a free vintage shuttle bus service operated between the station and the Brontë Parsonage!

The celebrated Haworth 1940s Weekend takes place annually on England's May Bank Holiday Weekend. What began as a friendly local fundraising event has grown into a hugely popular vintage event in West Yorkshire, attracting a national and international crowd. Haworth's Entertainers Park was packed with a variety of vintage stalls, classic vehicle displays, pitstops and

character NAAFI style alfresco tearooms plus plenty of live music entertainment, tea and swing dances, free dance classes, jive dancing and more. There wasn't a shopfront, inn or attraction that wasn't adorned with vintage bunting during the weekend.

Events and regular entertainment took place at Entertainers Park just a short stroll from the Main Street including 1940s themed music, a beer tent, information points and vintage vehicles together with displays from Land Army Girls and Military re-enactor parades including speeches Churchill gave during the Second World War.

From quirky hats to flight gear, people turned out in their best 1940s inspired outfits for the occasion, some styling themselves with rollers tucked under hair scarves, vintage floral aprons and fake cigarettes in their mouths.

Hundreds of people watched the skies above Worth Valley as the Battle of Britain Memorial flight put on a spectacular show when the RAF flew the official AVRO Lancaster Bomber - one of the only two Lancasters in flying condition in the world - while the iconic Spitfire is another famous symbol of Britain's defence strategy during the Second World War. Spirits were up throughout the village which the Brontës knew so well in another era.



VALE JEAN PORTER

Our President Michelle Cavanagh represented the Australian Brontë Association at a memorial service held at St John's Anglican Church, Dee Why for one of our valued and long-standing members, Jean



Porter, who passed away on 2nd May aged 96.

Jean was born in Adelaide on 21 December 1925, leaving Adelaide for Sydney as an eleven year old. Jean, who loved reading and literature her whole life, gained a first for English for the NSW Leaving Certificate. By 1943 she began studying medicine at Sydney University, later moving to Science and upon gaining her degree she became a Science teacher, specialising in Biology and Chemistry, a career which lasted for twenty years. Jean's love of teaching saw her later tutoring her grandson Tom through High

School and University enabling him to get into medicine. This was quite a feat as by this time Jean was 88 years old.

In 1950 Jean travelled to England and Europe with her girlfriend before meeting Chester with whom she had a happy marriage of sixty seven years becoming the mother of Dorothy (who died in 2008), Mary and Josie. Amongst her many interests Jean had a love of nature, politics and travel; known to her family as a brave adventurer.

Along with her husband Chester, Jean regularly attended ABA meetings, enjoying the talks, contributing to the discussions, and joining members for lunch after the meetings, always fully participating in the socialising. Together with Chester, Jean also attended various ABA conferences, some held in conjunction with NSW Dickens Society.

Upon being widowed, Jean moved to a retirement home where she was able to continue her love of books. Increasing age and frailty prevented her from attending meetings in recent years, but she was always interested to hear of the activities of the ABA and greatly enjoyed reading our publications. As was noted at Jean's memorial, she was engaged in life to the end and was loved by all who knew her. Vale Jean.

Catherine Barker & Michelle Cavanagh

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Finally, the much postponed Seventh International Literary Juvenilia Conference is now due to take place online via Zoom from the UNSW with Friday 22 July dedicated to the juvenilia of the Brontës, and especially Anne Brontë to acknowledge her 2020 Bicentenary. Following the conference is a special lunch, to be held in the Castlereagh's Adam Room, details of which you will all have received and which I hope you'll be able to attend. Despite the fact that Covid has thwarted so many plans for so many of us, to quote Anne Brontë from Agnes Grey "The ties that bind us to life are tougher than you imagine, or than any one can who has not felt how roughly they may be pulled without breaking."

Together, ABA members have made sure that the ties that bind us all together remain strong and collectively we should be very pleased with ourselves. At the AGM which began our first meeting the following committee members were voted in: Michelle Cavanagh, President; Annette Harman, Vice President; Catherine Barker, Membership Secretary; Michael Links, Treasurer; Christopher Cooper, Editor; Jan Roden and Patrick Morris, both

members without portfolio plus Christine Yeats who joined the committee and has since taken on the role of Secretary. My sincere thanks to all the committee members for the work they all do for the betterment of our Society.

Our March meeting, at which Jonathan Cooper spoke about *Parallel visions: writers who create art* proved very popular as he explored what artists and writers aim to achieve when they create. Then the May meeting encompassed Alison Hoddinott's talk *How to be a good wife: Charlotte Brontë and Charles Dickens* which was read by Catherine Barker and Michelle Cavanagh as Alison – who lives in Armidale, NSW – was not able to attend in person. As always, those members who were not able to attend any of our meetings will be able to read the relevant talks on the 2022 edition of *The Thunderer*.

Now, with our shortest day behind us we can look forward to some warmer weather and three more interesting talks to be followed, at the end of the year, by our popular Christmas lunch which we'll be celebrating with our friends from the NSW Dickens.

Michelle Cavanagh, ABA President

Kill or Cure? A Taste of Medicine

23 July 2022 – 22 January 2023

State Library of NSW

Showcasing some of the Library's oldest and rarest books, this exhibition will immerse you in a world of deadly diseases and dangerous therapies. Wander the corridors and explore treatment rooms to uncover breakthrough moments, near misses and dead ends. Will the remedy kill or cure?

Featuring many rare books, Kill or Cure will highlight historical diseases, medical therapies and scientific breakthroughs at a time which saw great change — from the influence of the stars and the phases of the moon on patients, to healing chants and prayers, the knife-wielding

barber-surgeon and the game-changing scientific developments of the 19th century: anaesthesia, germ theory and vaccination.

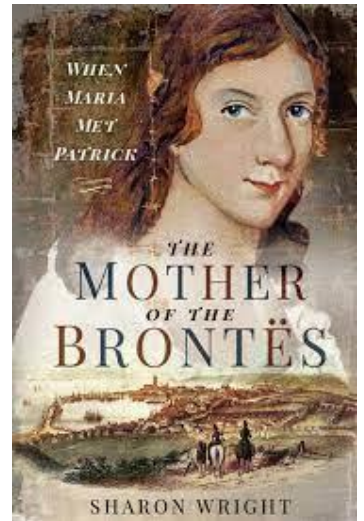
This free, immersive exhibition looks at how western medicine understood health, disease, and treatments from the 15th to the 19th centuries and is curated by Elise Edmonds our first speaker for 2023. However as the exhibition finishes before then, a visit to the State Library of NSW will be a great opportunity for ABA members to see what's in store for us!

Michelle Cavanagh

THE MOTHER OF THE BRONTËS

When Maria met Patrick

The chances of Cornish gentlewoman Maria Branwell even meeting the poor Irish curate Patrick Brontë, let alone falling passionately in love, were remote. But they did, making a life together and producing six children in the heartland of the industrial revolution before untimely death stalked the family. Now, Sharon Wright has penned Maria Brontë's fascinating life's story; another book to add to your collection!
Michelle Cavanagh



Program for the Rest of 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 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)

REVIEW

THE TENANT OF WILDFELL HALL

Condensed from the SMH review by John Shand

Sydney Theatre Company, Roslyn Packer Theatre June 25th

It was especially ambitious. Not only has playwright Emma Hoy condensed Anne Brontë's 500 page novel down to less than three hours of drama, she had to resolve how to dramatize Brontë's quirky structure, whereby the book's middle half is an elongated flashback in the form of a journal, with few of the countless characters overlapping between the "present" and the past.

Sometimes using a narrator, Hoy has done this by continually alternating scenes between the two realities (which lets the audience in some secrets that the book holds back). At the same time she has bent Brontë's tone and intentions to her will, making the first half largely a comedy of manners, and then thickening the gothic gloom in the second half.

Hoy does not have to amplify Brontë's assertive feminist voice. She and director Jessica Arthur were like Brontë, in their late 20s when crafting this Sydney Theatre Company production, which champions Helen's independence amid roguish males and petty, asinine females alike.

Ultimately, however, Hoy's adaptation works better than Arthur's production. Too often there's a stiltedness to the performance, especially in the first half,

when Hoy takes the book's comedic dimension closer to Jane Austen than Brontë. Tuli Narkle ensures Helen feels centred: morally robust, but without having had all her good humour upended in her husband's wineglass. She faces a world grimly set against her with vivacity and vulnerability as well as resolve.

Ben O'Toole makes her husband, the reprehensible Arthur, seem caricatured at first, offering no evidence of what could have attracted Helen. He becomes more convincing the more he sinks into evil – including burning his wife's paintings and insisting his young son scoffs brandy.

Danielle Catanzariti is a rather dizzy but entertaining version of that son, while Remy Hii often makes the serious-minded Gilbert too glib.

Scott particularly impresses not just as both Mary and Millicent Hattersly, but as a live musician and vocalist partially realising Clemence Williams' exceptional score, which emphasises the story's gothic shadows and sometimes takes up the emotional slack by being more genuinely affecting than the performance.

Elizabeth Gadsby's set employs a revolve, which helps Jessica Arthur spin between past and present, although it almost makes one giddy, so extensively it is used.

MORE PHOTOS OF HAWORTH'S 1940s WEEKEND

