

BOOKS ABOUT THE BRONTËS

WORK IN PROGRESS

- This will eventually contain a list of books about their lives, the places where they lived, or visited and about people they knew.
- There will be a short description of each such book.

ENCYCLOPEDIAS AND COMPANIONS

ALEXANDER, Christine and SMITH, Margaret: The Oxford Companion To The Brontës

This is the definitive Brontë encyclopedia, and every Brontë enthusiast should have one. Published in 2003. ISBN: 0-19-866218-1

580 pages, most of which consists of alphabetical entries. It includes extensive plots of the novels and biographies of the family, but also entries on characters of the novels, places they visited and places in the writings. In addition there is a list of entries by subject, maps of Yorkshire, Ireland and Angria and an extensive chronology of the family.

One of the shortest entries is on **Adelaide**. Not the city, or the queen, but one of the Brontës' tame geese.

BARNARD, Robert and Louise: A Brontë Encyclopedia

Published in 2007. ISBN: 978-1-4051-5119-1.

This is alphabetical and is less extensive than the Alexander/Smith Companion.

One entry that caught my eye is **London Zoo**. Charlotte visited it in 1850 and wrote a long, descriptive, passage about it to her father. The Barnards describe her account as with "verve and vividness". She listed the animals that caught her attention and the sounds they made. In particular she was intrigued by the "great Ceylon toads, not much smaller than Flossy".

PINION, F.B.: A Brontë Companion: Literary Assessment, Background and Reference

Published in 1975. SBN: 333-14426-0

This work is arranged by subject, with biographical entries on the members of the family and entries on the novels and poems. There is also a glossary of unusual or foreign words that crop up in the writings of the Brontës.

BIOGRAPHIES

BANKS, Lynne Reid: Dark Quartet

Published in 1976 by Weidenfeld and Nicolson. ISBN: 0-297-77153-1

This is a fictionalised biography of the Brontës. The facts are accurate but dialogue has been added so that it reads more like a novel. It is arranged in parts: The Unchildish Years (an interesting adjective to use), The Creative Years, The Adult Years, The Passionate Years and The Tragic Years.

Typical of the imagined conversations is this piece put into the mouth of Branwell. He's telling Charlotte about Christopher North, the editor of *Blackwoods Magazine*.

“He likes drinking, too, and horse-racing – he’s an out-and-outer, a real sportsman. I like that. I am learning to box, you know, from John and William, and they say I am quite good and they say that they’ll be taking me into the Black Bull for a drink after we’ve had a bout.”

Imaginary, but certainly in character.

BANK, Lynne Reid: Path To The Silent Country: Charlotte Brontë’s Years Of Fame

Published in 1977 by Weidenfeld and Nicolson. ISBN: 0-297-77319-4

A sequel to *Dark Quartet*, which finishes in 1849. It covers The Years Of Fame and The Years Of Grace. Here is a bit of fictionalised dialogue.

“Papa.”

“Yes, my dear?”

“Mr Nicholls – Mr Nicholls has –”

“Mr Nicholls has – what?”

“He has declared himself.”

“He – has – indeed! That whelp! That – spawn of the Irish bogs! That hundred-a-year nobody has dared to speak for you?”

DELAFIELD, E.M.: The Brontës, Their Lives Recorded By Their Contemporaries

Published in 1935 by Leonard and Virginia Wolf at the Hogarth Press.

This is a biography of the Brontës made up of pieces written by their contemporaries. Many are extracts from Mrs Gaskell. Others are extracts from letters by, or to, the Brontës, or reviews of the books, either published or personal. Jane Carlyle wrote of *Shirley*:

I have just finished that not masterly production. Now that the Authoress has left off “Corsing and Schwaring” (as my German master used to call it) one finds her neither very lively nor very original, [However] I perceived in her Book so many things I have said myself.

BARKER, Juliet: The Brontës

Weidenfeld and Nicholson, Published in 1994, ISBN 0-297-81290-4

BARKER, Juliet: The Brontës A Life in Letters

Viking, Published in 1997, ISBN 0-670-87212-1

FRANK, Katherine: Emily Brontë A Chainless Soul

Hamish Hamilton Ltd, Published in 1990, ISBN 0-241-12199-X

HOLLAND, Nick: In Search of Anne Brontë

The History Press, Published in 2016, ISBN 978-0-7509-6525-5

HUBERT, Maria, compiled by: The Brontës Christmas

Sutton Publishing Ltd, Published in 1997, ISBN 0-7509-1424-6

TULLY, James: The Crimes of Charlotte Brontë

Robinson Publishing Ltd, Published in 1999, ISBN 1-84119-131-0

HARMAN, Claire: Charlotte Brontë A Life

Viking, Published in 2015, ISBN 978-0-241-96366-1

FRASER, Rebecca: Charlotte Brontë

Methuen, Published in 1988, ISBN 0-7493-0114-7