

The Brontë Th(under)er

VOL 16, 2020

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The Brontë Thunderer

The Journal of the
Australian Brontë
Association



Volume 16
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The Australian Brontë Association has two types of publication. The Newsletter appears twice a year, generally in July and December, and contains ephemera, film and book reviews and news of topical interest. Longer items, including the text of talks given at our meetings, appear at the end of each year in this journal-type publication, *The Brontë Thunderer*.

The reasons for the name of the journal are as follows. For a start it clearly contains the name 'Brontë', so readers will not be left in any doubt as to the main theme of the publication. Secondly, the name 'Thunderer' would have been well known to the Brontës as a nickname for the respected newspaper *The Times* of London.

Then the Greek word for 'thunder' is βροντη, or Bronte. So in Greece Charlotte might be known as 'Charlotte Thunder'. How she came by this name is interesting, since her father was born Patrick Prunty, or Brunty.

The town in Sicily, near the volcano Mount Etna, was named 'Brontë', no doubt because of the thunderous noise given out by the volcano during an eruption. Then, because Nelson won an important victory assisting King Ferdinand the Fourth to regain the throne of Naples, he received the title 'Duke of Bronte'. Lady Hamilton used to call him 'Lord Thunder'.

Patrick Prunty, or Brunty, was a young Irishman attending Cambridge University and, having a high regard for Nelson, he adapted the spelling of his name in the university register to Bronte. To add further distinction he experimented with various accents for the 'e' before finally settling on 'Brontë'.

The final reference in the name is the fact that the word 'thunderer' contains the word 'under', reflecting the fact that this journal represents the Brontë followers 'down under'.

In 1986 Fergus McClory was appointed the Australian Representative of the Brontë Society, serving the members of that society who lived in Australia, and meetings were held in Sydney from time to time. Then, in 1998 the Australian Brontë Association was formed as an independent but complementary organization, in order to expand the local Brontë activities. Our patron is the distinguished Brontë scholar Christine Alexander, Professor of English at the University of New South Wales. We meet at the Castlereagh Hotel in Sydney.

We have been celebrating the 200th anniversaries of the Brontës. This year we celebrated Anne's birthday.

The 2020 committee is as follows:

Patron: Professor Christine Alexander
(Scientia Professor of English at the University of NSW)
President: Michelle Cavanagh
Vice-President: Annette Harman
Secretary: Carmel Nestor
Treasurer: Michael Links
Membership Secretary: Catherine Barker
Publications Editor: Christopher Cooper
Committee Members: Jan Roden
Cindy Broadbent
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