



The Australian Brontë Association Newsletter

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NEW BRONTË MUSEUM



The Brontë Parsonage Museum is one of the most visited literary shrines in the UK. Now a second museum is in the process of being set up to celebrate the lives and works of the Brontë sisters. It is the place where Charlotte, Branwell, Emily and Anne were all born when Patrick was curate of Thornton. It was only shortly after Anne was born that the family moved from the parsonage in Thornton to the much more well-known parsonage in Haworth.

The property is on Market Street in Thornton, on the outskirts of Bradford. Many years ago Barbara Whitehead bought and renovated it with the idea of the Brontë Society taking it over. Unfortunately the Brontë Society did not have the funds to purchase it and the Brontë Birthplace project lapsed. The property was sold and became, among other things, a coffee shop with a Brontë theme. But recently it came onto the market and a concerted effort was made to finally keep it as a Brontë shrine.

A crowdfunding effort, together with a large donation from somebody with a connection to Arthur Bell Nicholls, has enabled the property to be bought for £300,000. Now that the property has been secured there are plans to raise a further £300,000 to convert the property into a cultural and education centre with links to the Brontë family.

Nigel West, who traces a family connection to Charlotte Brontë's husband, made a "significant donation" to the crowdfunding appeal, which aims to transform 72-74 Market Street in Thornton, Bradford, into a tourist destination.

Around a million visitors a year travel to Haworth, to visit the house that writers Charlotte, Anne and Emily shared with their father, church minister Patrick, and their wayward brother, Branwell, and campaigners hope to transform the Thornton house, which went on sale this year, into a similar attraction.

Campaigners raised £300,000 from donations and grants, including a major one from the Bradford City of Culture 2025 fund. Now a further £300,000 is required to renovate the Grade II listed building.

None of the Brontë sisters gave birth to children, though Charlotte, author of *Jane Eyre*, Shirley and Villette, died while pregnant in 1855. Her husband, Arthur Bell Nicholls, moved back to his native Ireland and took up residence in Hill House in Banagher after her death, where he lived until he died. That house was inherited by Nicholls' cousin, Florrie, and when she died in 1959 it passed to her nephew Jim West – Nigel's father.

West, who lives in West Yorkshire and is a member of the Brontë society, said: "My father was 37 at the time, and the property wasn't thought to be worth much, so he passed it on to the church."

The property changed hands several times and is now run as a bed and breakfast called Charlotte's Way – maintaining the Brontë links. In the early 20th century a painting was discovered in the house, stuck on top of a cupboard. It was of the three sisters and now hangs in the National Portrait Gallery; known as the "pillar portrait" – it was painted by Branwell, who originally included himself in the picture but then painted over himself and inserted a pillar into the image.

West, 63, is a retired project manager for IBM. He said he made the donation to the campaign to transform 72-74 Market Street partly to honour the legacy of his father, who died two years ago, and also because he is passionate about the idea of it being used to help educate children, especially those from Bradford, which contains some of the most deprived wards in the country.

"I went to Leeds Grammar School thanks to a direct grant, and then on to York University, and without that start in education I would not have had the career I had," he said.



Jim West (left) with his son Nigel, at the Brontë Parsonage in Haworth, with a copy of the famous pillar portrait.

Photograph: Courtesy of Nigel West

"It will be amazing to secure the Brontë birthplace for future generations," he added. "The plans to make this an important community place for Bradford and to coincide with Bradford as UK City of Culture 2025 is a wonderful prospect."

The crowdfunding campaign is being fronted by Christa Ackroyd, a Bradford-born journalist who fronted regional news programmes for both the BBC and ITV for many years.

She said: "Sometimes on this journey to safeguard the Brontë legacy you stumble across something so unexpected, so wonderful, that you know you are on the right path. It sent shivers down our spines when we heard he wanted to do something both as a legacy to his late father, who inherited Arthur's home in Ireland, but also because of Nigel's passionate belief in the power of

education and our plan to use the Brontë story to inspire the next generation to achieve all their ambitions, no matter what stumbling blocks they encounter.

“Nigel is very modest about his family connection, but the fact we have

support from a living descendant of Charlotte Brontë’s husband – the man who stayed behind when all the children were gone to look after their father Patrick – is a wonderful example of synchronicity.”

THE BRONTË SISTERS WERE BORN IN A DELI

Reprinted from the ABA Newsletter 2014

Millions of book lovers have made a pilgrimage to the Parsonage Museum in Haworth, known around the world as the home of the Brontë sisters. Now the owner of a modest three-bedroom cottage six miles away aims to rival it as the ‘true birthplace’ of the famous literary family.

The cottage was shut up for years following the failure of a birthplace museum on the tourist trail. It was let as private rented accommodation until it came back on the market last year. The historical home had been rented as bedsits to tenants in search of cheap accommodation but the plaques commemorating the births of the four gifted children outside the faded front door were barely noticed.

After the last tenants packed their bags the landlord put the property on the market last year. The Brontë birthplace trust was formed by local villagers to save the property and turn it back into a museum again.

But this scheme failed after Bradford Council decided it could not afford to buy the property. Amid fears it would be turned back into flats, businessman Mark de Luca and his wife Michelle spotted the near-derelict property believing it to be an unpolished tourism gem. He renovated the home which was suffering from damp and flooding and has turned it into a deli where visitors can look round the Brontë’s private quarters.

The cafe is due to open up in May following an extensive renovation. Among other features, visitors will be able to inspect the very hearth where all three sisters were



born. It also boasts the built-in writing desk where Patrick Brontë wrote his first sermon – about the Battle of Waterloo.

The Grade II listed cottage in the West Yorkshire village of Thornton was built in 1802. Patrick Brontë, his wife Maria and their first two children, Maria and Elizabeth,



moved there in 1815 and it is where Charlotte, Emily, Anne and Branwell were all delivered in front of the fireplace in 1816, 1818, 1820 and 1817 respectively. But five years after making it their home, the family moved to the Parsonage at nearby Haworth – which has claimed the spotlight in the Brontë story ever since.



The new owners, both 29, sold their cottage in the village to buy the Brontë home. They snapped it up as a repossession for £120,000 and then spent another £30,000 doing it up. The couple already had a track record, having converted a Grade II listed building around the corner into a hair salon.

But it was cheap because the old timber windows were rotten, the roof was leaking, and the wallpaper was falling off the walls – which were riddled with rising damp. The old scullery at the rear of the property had flooded through the back door with waste from the overflowing drains.

The second bedroom where the younger Brontës slept has become the drawing room, though it still has the built-in wardrobe used by the children. The third bedroom used by the Brontë children's nurse serves as a study while the downstairs scullery has become their private kitchen.

The rest of the downstairs rooms, including the drawing room with the famous fireplace, have been laid out as a delicatessen and coffee shop with room for 35

people. A counter and open kitchen serving cakes, sandwiches, and pastries has been created in one of the front extensions built in the 1900s as a butcher's shop.

The couple hope the trendy décor will attract a new generation of Brontë fans who previously may have regarded the sisters' writings as a touch highbrow.

Mr de Luca added: 'We want to make the Brontës cool and trendy. The Brontë Society meetings and events at Haworth seem to attract mainly older people. 'The original idea of a museum is great – but you do not really get to sit there and enjoy reading a Brontë book or a newspaper.'

Brontë Society Chairman Sally McDonald said: 'The birthplace in Thornton is hugely important in the Brontë story. 'In the bicentenary year of 2016 the world's attention will turn to all places linked with Charlotte Brontë. 'Some years ago former Brontë Society member, Barbara Whitehead, bought and tried to restore the house but sadly it proved just too big a project. 'It is a pity the Birthplace Trust's hopes of turning the house into a museum were pipped at the post but it wasn't to be and it is heartening to hear the new owners are keen to sympathetically retain the history.'

Patrick Brontë wrote of his time in Thornton: 'My happiest days were spent there. This is where the family was complete. In Haworth, he said, he felt like 'a stranger in a strange land'.



© Ben Lack Photography Ltd

CHRISTMAS IN YORKSHIRE

*“Nowhere are the traditions of Christmas kept up with such splendour as in Yorkshire.”
(Visitor to the county 1812)*

While the Brontë’s home in Yorkshire is a fantastic place to be all year round, Christmas in Yorkshire is extra special. It has always been an area full of tradition, none more so than over the festive period.

The origins of Christmas celebrations in Yorkshire date back to the Roman Times, especially in the city of York. Their Saturnalia festival which took place from around 17th – 25th December was dedicated to Saturn, the god of harvest and agriculture, something which resonated well with Yorkshire people. The festivities included a relaxing of the normal Roman society rules. Courts were suspended, gambling was permitted, crime was more tolerated, masters would serve their slaves a banquet of food and singing in the streets was encouraged. There are elements of the Saturnalia festival, such as over-indulgence, merriment and singing which shape our Christmases even today. These winter celebrations gradually converted from a pagan ritual to a Christian one as the religion spread throughout the Roman Empire during the 4th Century. The idea that the final day of Saturnalia, the 25th December also marked the day of Jesus’ birth was first recognised by Pope Julius I when Christian ideology began to take hold towards the early middle Ages.

Another strong influence of Yorkshire Christmases came from both the Anglo Saxons and the Vikings, whose Yule celebrations were also absorbed into the winter festivities. This occasion marked the winter solstice on 21st December, rather than for worship of a god or prophet. The word, “yuletide” is still associated with the festive season today and lasted for around twelve days from the shortest day.

This establishment of a celebration in the third week of December swung heavily back towards religious purposes after the Norman invasion. The word “Christes Maesse” (Festival of Christ) was first used as a description for the festival around 1038.

William the Conqueror declared himself King of England on Christmas Day 1066, which in his eyes was a further reason to celebrate.

The grip of religion on British and Yorkshire Medieval society was pronounced further at Christmas, with church attendance and worship put at the forefront of the festivities. The foundations of three Yorkshire Christmas traditions date back to medieval celebrations.

Since the 1400s a tradition called “The Devil’s knell” has taken place in the town of Dewsbury. On Christmas Eve the parish church bells toll once for every year since the birth of Christ. The peel is timed so the last bell is rung exactly at midnight on Christmas Day. This ritual is done to remind Satan that Christmas resembles the beginning of his end and has only been missed during the Second World War, when church bells were silenced for national security. During Medieval times carol-singing was banned in churches because they disrupted the religious services and so the vocalists would have to go elsewhere instead. Over the centuries this custom of carol-singing manifested itself in several ways. Some of them stood outside in a circle, near a prominent landmark in the town or village. Others went from house to house collecting money and gifts from residents.

The sensible ones congregated in public houses and taverns, where the added warmth and ready availability of ale helped to loosen their tongues in song. One such carol-singing tradition still takes place each year at the Royal Hotel in the village of Dungworth, near Sheffield. Over the past two hundred years singers have congregated there every Sunday from mid-November to Boxing Day at noon for a two hour sing. These are a mixture of traditional carols and local Yorkshire songs, which are sung in the pub each week during the countdown to Christmas. Other similar events across South

Yorkshire take place in various pubs and venues from mid-November onwards.

Yorkshire has also made several

A natural addition to any Christmas dinner is traditional Yorkshire pudding, which form an important area of the festive



contributions to the food we eat around Christmas time. The first turkeys were brought over to England from the Americas by Yorkshire explorer William Strickland in 1526. Originally from Marske on the North Yorkshire coast, he built estates at both Wintringham in Ryedale and Boynton Hall near Bridlington with the profits he made from selling these exotic creatures. The Strickland family crest, which adorns both of these residencies, is in the shape of a turkey, something which is widely acknowledged as the first ever depiction of the bird in Europe. Boynton village church lectern, a stand that supports the bible, is carved in the shape of a turkey instead of a traditional eagle in honour of Strickland. The custom of eating turkey on Christmas day would only become popular centuries after Strickland's death in 1598, during the Victorian Period.

plate. Outside Yorkshire the debate rages as to whether to include them or not, but within the county it's compulsory! For pudding a slice of cheese enjoyed with Christmas cake is also a purely Yorkshire culinary tradition, which is said to date back to the 1890s.

The Yorkshire Christmas pie has its origins in the 17th Century and became popular during the Victorian era. The dish comprises of several birds, game and fowl in the recipe, such as turkey, goose, duck, grouse, pheasant and pigeon. These were layered with stuffing and encased in short crust pastry. Its links to the county came when they were made in the expansive kitchens of Harewood House in Leeds. Many of the birds which feature in the dish can be found on the moorlands of the county too, which may help explain the dish's links to Yorkshire. The 19th Century saw the emergence of similarities to how we celebrate Christmas

today. Before 1837 there were no Christmas cards, crackers, trees or even holidays for workers, apart from on Christmas Day itself. Here's hoping that the Brontë sisters received a Christmas card and enjoyed celebrating Christmas in Haworth!

Pencil sketch design for the second Christmas card, William Maw Egley, 1848,

England. Museum no. E.12-1940. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Michelle Cavanagh

Details from

<https://imfromyorkshire.uk.com/christmas-yorkshire/>

THE LOST CHAPTERS OF *WUTHERING HEIGHTS* Part 7

**by Christopher Cooper
ISABELLA IN LONDON**

Here continues my project of providing the 'off-stage' material that Emily Brontë chose to leave out of her novel. Isabella ran away from Heathcliff and lived in London for a number of years. Emily never reveals how she fared there except for the fact that she gives birth to Heathcliff's son, Linton. Here is my suggestion of what may have happened – Christopher Cooper

Mrs Dean told me that Mrs Heathcliff lived above a dozen years after quitting her cruel husband. She had fallen pregnant on her honeymoon and, in London, gave birth to Linton. But nothing was heard from her until a report came of her death.

One afternoon, when it was too wet for me to go for a walk, I settled up in front of the fire, partaking of tea and Mrs Dean's delicious scones. I asked her whether Isabella's death had come as a surprise.

"Oh yes, Mr Lockwood. We didn't even know that she and Heathcliff had a son."

"Did Heathcliff have the decency to try to seek her out and offer some financial support?"

"He did make some enquiries and even went to London himself on one occasion to look for her, but he was unable to find her. Of course there's no way he would have given her any money. If he had have located her he would have dragged her back, kicking and screaming, to Wuthering Heights. I dare say would have locked her in the attic so as to prevent her from ever running away again. After a few months he lost interest in finding

her, though if he got wind of the fact that he had a son and heir I'm sure he would not have rested until he found him."

"How did you hear of her death?"

"A letter came to Mr Edgar from a London legal establishment announcing that he had a nephew who had become an orphan."

"But Linton was no orphan. He still had a father!"

"Isabella had said that his father was dead and that his nearest relative was his uncle."

"Did the letter reveal how she died?"

"No, sir. The Linton family were of a delicate constitution: she and Edgar both lacked the ruddy health that you will generally find in these parts. What her illness was, I am not sure: I conjecture she died of the same thing as Edgar did some years later. A sort of fever."

"So you have no idea how she supported herself all those years?"

"Only once she was no more. You see the lawyer sent a letter that Isabella had written to her brother during the later stage of

her illness, to be forwarded to Edgar upon her death. The document wasn't sealed, and Mr Edgar allowed me to make a copy. It ran as follows.

To whomsoever it may be of interest, but especially my dear brother Edgar,

I hereby give an account of my life since leaving Wuthering Heights. The night I left Heathcliff I walked into Gimmerton and stayed with Zillah's sister. The next morning I hired a trap and pony from Mr Cartwright and drove to Bradford. From there I was able to take a coach to London. I had the address of my aunt and uncle in Bayswater, but I was afraid that they would send me straight back to Heathcliff. After all I was still married to him – still his own property.

Instead I took lodgings in Whitechapel Road and there considered my position. My small portion of money was almost used up. I knew that I needed to find a job. But what was I trained for? It would be beneath me to scrub steps or take in washing. Yet I was not educated enough to become a governess. I then hit upon a plan that would keep my body and soul together and, at the same time, be something that would hurt Heathcliff where he would feel it most. I became one of the ladies depicted by William Hogarth in his engravings, under the title, *The Rake's Progress*.

Yes, I don't care who knows it. I especially want Heathcliff to know that he has caused me to become a whore. He degraded me so much that I could sink no lower. Of course I wasn't one of the dirty street ladies who ply their trade among the sailors in Limehouse. No, I was a lady whore!

I spent the last of my little capital on a few fine clothes and, as I earned more money I spent most of it on clothes and fake jewellery. For weeks I ate very little. Had I realised that I was pregnant I might have done otherwise. I'm sure that the reason why Linton has been such a

sickly boy was because of my malnourishment in the first few months.

I was soon able to take a room in a lodging house in Wigmore Row. I decorated it with red curtains and a feather bed. I was therefore able to attract the better class of men, including several members of parliament and a Bishop.

But after several months I began to show and for six months I had to hibernate. Fortunately I had made enough in those few months to tide me over. Once Linton was born I opened for business again and arranged with Mrs Johnson downstairs to look after him while I was at work. I could now afford to feed him well, but I am sorry to say that the lack of nourishment during the first few months of my 'confinement' must have taken their toll.

After two years of this steady work I met Lord Pimlico. He took a liking to me and said I should not have to lead such a degrading life. So he rented a suite of rooms for me and Linton. He would visit me several times a week but, I'm sad to say, on other nights he continued to frequent brothels. Only on weekends did he live with his wife.

Lord Pimlico was a generous man, and he loved my little Linton, as I did too. I no longer had to continue my disgusting profession. I won't say I was ever in love with George – after all he was old enough to be my father – but I liked him. He was an angel compared to my hateful Heathcliff.

After some years his wife died and he offered me his hand in marriage. As I said I wasn't exactly *in* love with him, but who can afford to marry for love these days? I would have agreed if it wasn't for one terrible impediment. I was still the wife of Heathcliff!

I considered writing to Heathcliff to ask for a divorce. I could have given him sufficient grounds for divorce by telling him of my first profession and my liaison with Lord Pimlico. But I was frightened that if I did I could no longer keep my

whereabouts secret. Besides, there is no way he would have agreed. If Cathy had still been alive he might have agreed, in the hope that Edgar may one day have left her a widow. But he was determined to torment me and could never wish me happiness.

The years rolled on and Linton began to grow, but poorly. He was a quick boy and learnt to read early, but he had a certain sadness about him. I found it very difficult to please him and I scarcely remember a single time when he so much as smiled.

Dear Lord Pimlico came to me one day and said that he had left me his entire estate in his will, if he should predecease me. I thought this most likely as I was young and he was getting on in years.

"And what if I should predecease you?"

"I think that most unlikely."

"But if I do?"

"In that case I have many cousins who would be grateful to share my bounty."

That was three years ago. The dice have been loaded against me in that time. That most unlikely outcome of which we spoke now looks like it will be the ultimate outcome. George's cousins will benefit, as is only proper. I now know that I am dying, and Linton may never reach his majority. Lord Pimlico is, after all, only sixty-three and could live another twenty years.

As I have said, dear brother, I would have liked to look on your face one more time, but I am too ill to travel. I would have asked you to come to London, but I fear that my wicked husband would have found out and followed you. Apart from Lord Pimlico and my boy, you are all I have left in the world to love. Please look after Linton as long as he lives – which I fear may not be long. He has a sickly constitution and several times I thought I would have lost him. Whatever you do keep him out of the clutches of that wretched devil, Heathcliff.

Your loving sister, Isabella

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Amazingly another year is coming to a close which seems to have happened at such a breakneck speed. Maybe that has more to do with me getting older rather than the speed of time passing!

Nevertheless since our July 2023 report we have enjoyed three more meetings; first on 15 July when Christopher Cooper spoke on *Wuthering Heights* and *Frankenstein*, a meeting which I missed as I was in Copenhagen visiting family members at the time. It was, by all accounts, a talk which was very well received as Christopher explored the similarities and differences between the two novels. With *Frankenstein* published in 1816, the year of Emily's birth, she would have been thirteen years old by the time the first popular edition came out. Christopher surmised that it was highly likely Emily read newspaper reports about Mary

Shelley's novel and possibly even read it herself.

This was followed by Lee O'Brien's talk entitled "*Strange Power Strange Proofs*": *Chasing Certainty in Wuthering Heights* in which Lee discussed the violence which shocked many Victorian readers, raising questions about the limits of conventional assumptions regarding what women were supposed to know and led Lee to drawing on the violent world of the folk ballads that the Brontë children would have grown up hearing.

Finally, our last meeting for the year saw Jennifer McDonell looking at Emily Brontë's relationship to the non-human in her talk entitled *Emily Brontë's Creaturely Poetics* which gave us a completely different perspective to consider. Bringing Emily's relationship to her dog Keeper, nature and animals Jennifer discussed such creative

work offering freedom from the restrictive lives women in Victorian society experienced. It was another well received talk.

I cannot let the year go by without thanking all the members of the ABA committee; Vice President Annette Harman, Membership Secretary Catherine Barker, Secretary Christine Yeats, Editor Christopher Cooper, Treasurer Michael Links and Jan

Roden. Everyone's input and help during 2023 has been greatly appreciated.

With five great speakers organised for our 2024 meetings all that's now left to do is to enjoy our popular Christmas lunch to be celebrated with our friends from the NSW Dickens Society on Saturday 2nd December.

Wishing everyone a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Michelle Cavanagh, ABA President

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

A very warm welcome to our newest members:

Syd and Susan Cole

Kathleen Fernandes

CHRISTMAS IN HAWORTH



The Rotary Club of Haworth and Worth Valley conducted a Fun Run on November 26th 2022. It was attended by about 40 people who ran up to 5 kilometres. The money raised went into the club's Charitable Trust Fund.

ABA Meetings for 2024

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 together at a nearby cafe 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).

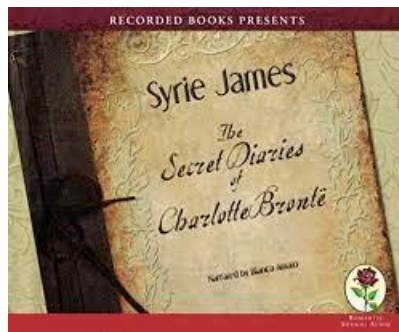
Saturday 9 March 2024, Christine Alexander

THE BLAVATNIK HONRESFIELD LIBRARY: BRONTË MANUSCRIPTS “SAVED THE NATION”

The Blavatnik Honresfield Library is a collection of books and manuscripts of exceptional historical and literary importance which includes rare editions by the Brontë sisters. Formed by the Lancashire mill owner William Law (1836–1901) in the late 19th century and put up for sale in 2022 it was purchased for the nation by the Friends of the National Libraries with the support of the Blavatnik Family Foundation. Christine Alexander will discuss insight into the treasures of the former “lost” Law Collection and her experience in gaining private access for some thirty years.

Saturday 27 April 2024, Syrie James

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS IN CHARLOTTE BRONTË’S NOVELS



Syrie James from Los Angeles is the author of thirteen novels that have been translated into twenty languages, including the award-winning *The Secret Diaries of Charlotte Brontë*. She will discuss the many ways in which Charlotte Brontë drew from her personal experiences and the people in her own life when writing her acclaimed novels *Jane Eyre*, *Shirley*, *Villette*, and *The Professor*.

Saturday 13 July 2024, Sophie Frazer

“THE ORB OF MY LIFE IS NOT TO BE SO ROUNDED”: THE AMBIVALENCE OF THE BILDUNGSROMAN IN CHARLOTTE BRONTË’S VILLETTE

Charlotte Brontë’s final, desolate novel *Villette* (1853) is a narrative of exile and displacement: one woman’s flight from her home in England to an indeterminate future in a foreign city. A distinctly phenomenological novelist, in *Villette* Brontë maps the affective crisis of displacement onto the transmutations of sensory

life. Avowedly ambivalent about her progress in the world, protagonist Lucy Snowe disavows material success and even, at times, acts with nonchalance about her very survival. In this way Brontë emphasises both the temptations and perils of conforming to the conventional plot of female development, eschewing marriage for her heroine in preference for an enigmatic and suitably indeterminate conclusion. In this paper I will read the phenomenal character of Brontë's narrative of oscillation between worldly success and the banality of insignificance, tracking the emotional expressiveness of the sensing body to bring out the loss inherent in Lucy's escape from the confines of a conventional female *bildung*.

Saturday 14 September 2024, Stephanie Russo

EMILY BRONTË, BIOFICTION AND FILM

Emily Brontë is not only one of the most famous novelists in English history; she is also the subject of novels, television series and films in her own right. However, while novelists write into the gaps of the historical record, the notoriously enigmatic and fanatically private Emily is a particular difficult subject for biofictions. In this talk, I trace how a wide range of novelists and screenwriters have represented Emily Brontë's life, writing career and death over the past century. I focus, in particular, on the persistence of the belief that there must have been a secret romance that holds the key to deciphering *Wuthering Heights*.

Saturday 9 November 2024, Chris Browne

COLLECTING THE BRONTËS

Chris Browne has been a book collector for more than fifty years and during that time has put together a personal library of around 15,000 books. His main interests are early 19th and 20th century English literature and the history of English publishing and printing. Accordingly, he has collected first, early, illustrated and interesting editions of his favourite authors, which include the Brontës. Chris's talk will naturally focus on his own collection of books by and relating to the Brontës from the twin perspectives of both an avid reader and an ardent collector. He will talk about his personal favourites, early editions, illustrated editions and some items of special interest. He will also give his personal reasons for collecting and reading the works of the Brontës, and will reflect on why they are still very relevant today.

Saturday 7 December 2024, 12 noon

**CHRISTMAS LUNCH AT CELLOS RESTAURANT,
CASTLEREAGH BOUTIQUE HOTEL, TOGETHER WITH
MEMBERS OF THE NSW DICKENS SOCIETY**