

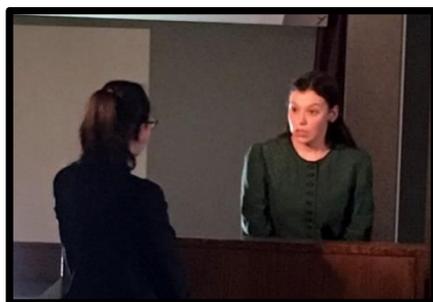


The INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR Victorian Women Writers Newsletter



~ January 2017 ~ New Year Edition ~ Issue No. 1 ~

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Welcome ... to this first issue of *The ICVWW Newsletter!*

Welcome to our first newsletter, which will be published three times a year and we hope will provide a useful calendar of events coming up, as well as a summary of what's been going on over the last few months. It's also an excuse to talk about our favourite topic, so you'll find a regular entry on "Books We Come Back To."



Carolyn Oulton (Director of ICVWW)

If there's one thing ICVWW likes apart from books, it's an excuse to put on Victorian costume and parade up and down the train from Folkestone to Dover while reciting comic verse. But second to that, it's watching *Don't Go Into the Cellar* fend off a court room interrogation as part of the *Being Human* Festival. Read on for the shock verdict on Lady Audley in "What ICVWW Has Been Up To..."

In the summer of 2016 we officially noticed that the nineteenth century was over, in our 1880s-90s conference. Since then we've looked to a new century as MA student Carla Danella led a guided tour of Smallhythe, home to Ellen Terry from 1900, as part of the Folkestone Book Festival. Carla is researching Terry's memoirist, the writer Christopher St John (Christabel Marshall).

We're looking forward to covering the years 1900-1919 in our 2017 conference and seeing what happened to other figures we know primarily as Victorians. But in the meantime we were pleased to hear from Professor Sally Shuttleworth that Charlotte Brontë was an experimental novelist *avant la lettre*.

Who are ICVWW?

Co-founded by Professors Carolyn Oulton and Adrienne Gavin, The International Centre for Victorian Women Writers (ICVWW) aims to spearhead new and innovative research in the area of Victorian Women's Writing, providing an international focus for scholars.



Bike ready? Pedal on to discover more!

What ICVWW Has Been Up To ...



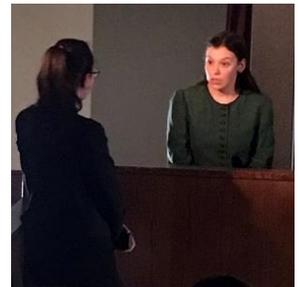
Being Human Festival: Lady Audley on Trial!

In the Victorian setting of Old Sessions House courtroom in Canterbury, on Friday 25th November, the ICVWW staged a criminal trial as part of *Being Human*, a festival designed to showcase the huge variety of projects and concepts explored within humanities-based studies across the country. We took this one step further, producing an interdisciplinary and inter-university event which saw Mary Elizabeth Braddon's fictional heroine, Lady Audley, in the dock.

Published in 1862, *Lady Audley's Secret* lived up to the sensation genre with an angelic title character who endeavours to climb the social ladder - whatever the cost. Multiple marriages, disappearing husbands, fraudulent names, and suspicious fires are just a few of the tropes Braddon employs, but are these as shocking now as they would have been to the original readership? ICVWW Research Associate Alyson Hunt adapted the novel into a police prosecution file, reconstructing events into a chronological timeline (inadvertently discovering that some of Braddon's dates are amiss), and writing witness statements from the characters' perspectives. Lady Audley's own perspective on her crimes was recorded in a police interview, along with a case summary detailing exactly where and when events occurred. Additional forensic witnesses (a handwriting expert and a fire investigation officer) were created to provide the additional evidence required to prosecute under modern guidelines.

The complete file, produced in accordance with current Police and CPS National File Standards, was presented to Criminal Law students from The University of Kent. They split into prosecution and defence, deciding between them which charges Lady Audley should face according to modern law, preparing questions, and identifying strengths and weaknesses of the case. Professional actors from Victorian theatre company *Don't Go into the Cellar* reviewed the same casefile, discovering just a week before the trial which witnesses would be called and thus which parts they would play. No script prepared, only the casefile was used as the basis of events in order to make the trial as realistic as possible. This kept both lawyers and witnesses on their toes! And now for the verdict!

- 1) Attempted murder of George Talboys contrary to section 1(1) of the Criminal Attempts Act 1981 - **Not Guilty**
- 2) Murder of Luke Marks contrary to the common law of England and Wales - **Not Guilty**
- 3) Attempted murder of Robert Audley contrary to section 1(1) of the Criminal Attempts Act 1981 - **Not Guilty**
- 4) Bigamy, contrary to section 57 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 - **defendant pleaded guilty**
- 5) Fraud, contrary to section 2(1) of the Fraud Act 2006 - **Guilty**



Charlotte Brontë: Experimental Novelist

Women's Writing in the Nineteenth Century Seminar Series 2016-17
Thursday 13th October 2016



Impossibly handsome men standing by huge fireplaces on winter nights, not a chill blain in sight - and no suggestion that one side is burning while the other is freezing. Blanche Ingram resembling nothing so much as the cool girl at school whose gang you pretended you didn't want to be in. Close-up to everyone's favourite governess, alternately victim and rebel, vaguely reminiscent of those pictures on the historical paperbacks you didn't mind reading in front of your mother.

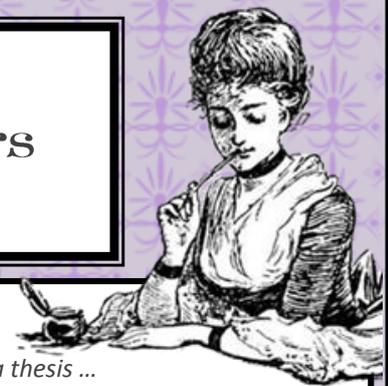


When did we allow this kind of packaging to hijack our reading of *Jane Eyre*? Because never mind what goes on in some of the film versions. Somewhere along the line this anodyne version of Brontë's blistering review of the nineteenth century has crept into our discussion of the novel itself.

As the ICVWW Brontë to Bloomsbury project moves from the *fin de siècle* to the early twentieth century, Professor Sally Shuttleworth's analysis of Brontë as an "experimental novelist" is particularly timely. How utterly appropriate that in her paper she should have focused on the stylistic ventures of a mid-nineteenth century author, whose style in both *Jane Eyre* and the less famous *Villette*, she argued, anticipates the demands of modernism.



Research and Researchers



Work in Progress

Ann Loveridge, PhD student, gives her thoughts on her journey of writing a thesis ...

The Countdown to Submission: Returning to the Thesis as a Young Draft

Walking back to the office with my supervisor, after engaging with the recent reconstruction at CCCU of “Lady Audley’s Trial”, she informed me that my drafts are now “cracking stuff”. Obviously, I found this immensely encouraging and a tremendous boost as the submission deadline for my thesis was drawing near. Although the thesis was taking on its final shape, I expressed a fear that I was not really “hitting the point.” My supervisor told me not to worry, because if I looked over my earlier drafts, I would realise that I am now writing with confidence. This is all brilliant, but the comment did inadvertently hit on an important development of the PhD journey.

Reading the initial drafts of my chapters can only be described as a toe-curling experience, one that is undertaken by focusing one eye on the page, pretending that the words, phrases, and opinions belong to someone else. As this work in progress shuffles along to adopt a fresh identity as a work of completion, our relationship has shifted. The earlier drafts feel as though someone else produced them: a naïve researcher who brimmed with confidence with basic knowledge gleaned over a short period.

This dilemma rests, in part, to the central topic of the work: the practice of late-Victorian vivisection and its relationship with the fiction of the period. According to the OED, there is no other word that can be substituted for the word vivisection, and my earlier drafts were drenched in pathos that competed with the sentimentalism which I was attempting to critique. However, along the way the actual process of vivisection itself has taken a back seat, and now co-exists with explorations of the vivisectioned body, and its development as a literary object. Other topics have added their own voice to the debate, such as the rabies virus, scientific illustration, and gender concerns. As the thesis approaches its completion, it appears to be a time to glance back at the author of the early drafts, because the nearly fully-fledged researcher fears they know very little, and is questioning what they have been up to over the past six years.



Where Are They Now?

We catch up with Dr Priyali Ghosh, PhD graduate of CCCU ...

I currently hold the post of Associate Professor in English at Royal Thimphu College, Bhutan. Since I took up the post in August 2016 I am still very new to it but, writing this at the turn of the year, I can say that I am at least one semester into this new life and world.

I was fortunate to be asked to teach a module in creative writing – bringing together my own creative life as a poet and performer and my educational life is a priority for me – and to be given a great deal of freedom in deciding what to teach and how to teach it. I was also asked to teach an English language module, which I approached from the communicative teaching perspective – trying to integrate games, role-play and other experiential learning tools into the classroom.

Living in Bhutan is, in some ways, of course, very different to my life as a doctoral student in Canterbury. In Kent, one is never too far from the seafront, whereas now I live in the mountains, and look across to a Himalayan range every morning from my bedroom window. In essentials though, they are really not very different to each other. I seek both to draw and learn from my students’ nuances of thought, interpretation, and feelings that build up their understanding of creative and critical thought, and to remain a part of the global effort to expand human consciousness.

Meeting Professor Edwin Thumboo, the eminent Singaporean poet, and watching him interact with my class and their guests is one special memory I look back on. Winning a Research Development Grant, to work on my postdoctoral research on ‘peaceful cosmopolitanism’ in the nineteenth-century – or the ability to live and create across cultures – is another.

I am always delighted to hear from fellow scholars at the ICVWW and can be contacted at p.ghosh.95@cantab.net



Interview with a Guest

Name: Clare Stainthorp

Title: Visiting Lecturer in the Department of English, University of Birmingham

What is your current research project?

I've just finished my PhD, which was on Constance Naden. I argue that in order to really understand her works we need to engage with Naden as a poet, a philosopher, and a scientist who was undertaking a fundamentally interdisciplinary project across her writings and educational pursuits. I'm currently undertaking thesis corrections, and ultimately hope to develop it into a monograph, so it still feels like my current research project. On the other hand, I'm now in the (very) early stages of a new project that focuses on freethought periodicals during the second half of the nineteenth century. Naden published within these, but my interest in these largely overlooked and undigitised periodicals is much broader. I'm hoping to address the questions of how these principally working-class thinkers expressed their radical secular ideas, and how this changed over time. I'm looking forward to hunkering down in some archives soon and starting to finesse my thinking on it.

What would be your dream research project?

My dream research project would be to edit a volume of Naden's works. She hasn't been in print since the 1890s (except in a few anthologies) and I'd love to have the opportunity to bring the diversity of her works to a wider audience. I'd want to produce a scholarly edition that included the contents of her unpublished notebooks that I discovered during my PhD, as well as her published poems and her essays on philosophical and scientific topics. I'm certainly hoping that I can make this dream a reality somewhere down the line!



Critical sources you can't live without?

The critical works I return to with greatest frequency are those by Gillian Beer. She writes so compellingly about a range of topics within literature and science and beyond, but it is her collection of essays *Open Fields: Science in Cultural Encounter* (1996) that I couldn't live without. The essays are a joy to read, bringing together her virtuoso readings of 'literary' and 'scientific' writings of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, complicating and unpicking such disciplinary understandings of genre.

What is your favourite work by a Victorian female writer?

George Eliot's *Middlemarch*. I know that isn't exactly an original choice, but nothing beats its sheer scale and beauty. All life is here. I find that whatever topic I'm currently thinking through, I can turn to it and there's some moment of insight waiting for me.

If you could have three Victorians round for dinner, who would you have and why?

Constance Naden, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, and Edith Cooper. What I wouldn't give to spend an evening chatting to Naden – I've worked on her for many years now, and while in some ways I feel like I know her well, she's such an enigmatic figure, so I'd love to be able to pick her brains! I'd also be fascinated to see Naden in her element, and so my other two choices are both women she knew, as well as being incredible people in their own right. I'm fascinated by the lengths Victorian women went to in order to secure the education they wanted; Garrett Anderson's successful pursuit of a medical career makes her an inspiring and important figure in that regard. Cooper (of Michael Field fame) was such a passionate and creative woman, she'd be a brilliant conversationalist and excellent teller of tales. I'd be hoping for a raucous evening discussing their plans for smashing the patriarchy.



Books We Come Back To ...



Book Recommendations

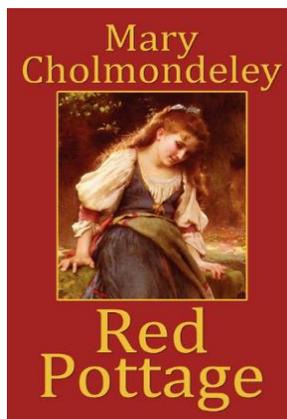
In this issue, Carolyn Oulton, director of ICVWW, gives her fictional and critical book recommendations ...

Red Pottage (1899)

Mary Cholmondeley

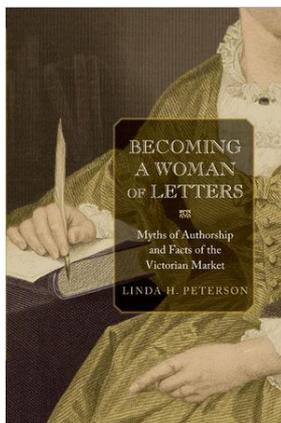
"This is one of those books that still makes me want to *be* the main character.

Hester Gresley is probably one of the most compelling fictional authors in Victorian literature, and the only one who can lure me away from *David Copperfield*."



Becoming a Woman of Letters: Myths of Authorship and Facts of the Victorian Market (2009)

Linda H. Peterson



"Linda supported ICVWW from the start. Her work helped to shape our sense of what it means to talk about Victorian women's authorship, especially in the context of professional publishing. She wrote insightfully on the identity of women writers and specifically on Cholmondeley's career as a female author at the *fin de siècle*."

New Publications



Key Popular Women Writers - A Major New Series

Eds. Janine Hatter
and Helena Ifill

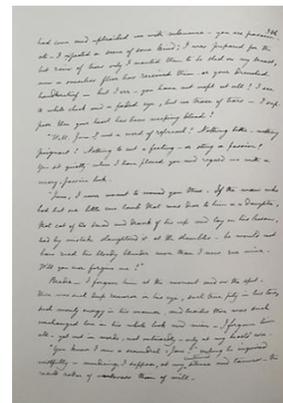
Click [here](#) to find out
more about this
new series!

Jane Eyre – The Manuscript

Charlotte Brontë

A limited edition
3-volume
reproduction of
Brontë's originally
submitted manuscript

Click [here](#) for more

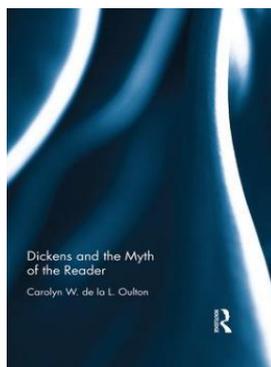


Publications from ICVWW

Dickens and the Myth of the Reader

(2016)

Carolyn Oulton



Accidental Fruit

(2016)

Carolyn Oulton



Upcoming Events & Conferences

ICVWW Women's Writing in the Nineteenth Century Research Seminar Series: Emma Liggin's "On the Border: Lesbianism and Hysteria in Amy Levy's *Romance of a Shop* and Eliza Lynn Linton's *The Rebel of the Family*"
Canterbury Christ Church University (Room Ng09), 9 March 2017, 17:00-18:30

George Egerton Conference

Loughborough University, 7-8 April 2017

ICVWW Fourth International Conference: *From Brontë to Bloomsbury*

Canterbury Christ Church University, 10-11 July 2017

Reputations, Legacies, Futures: Austen, Staël & Contemporaries, 1817-2017

Chawton House Library, 13-15 July 2017



Call for Papers



The ICVWW From Brontë to Bloomsbury Fourth International Conference

Theme: "Reassessing Women's Writing of the 1900s and 1910s" **Deadline for Proposals:** 28 February 2017

300-word abstracts and a 100-150 biographical note to be sent to: ICVWW@canterbury.ac.uk, Webpage information: [click here](#)



Special Issue of *Victorian Poetry*

Theme: "Gender and Genre" **Deadline:** 18 September 2017 **Publication:** Summer 2019.

Submissions of 20-25 pages, following Chicago Manual of Style 15th ed. Enquiries: veronica.alfano@gmail.com, lee.obrien@mq.edu.au



Special Issue of *Victorians Journal of Culture and Literature*

Theme: "Women of the Press in the 1890s" **Deadline:** 1 June 2017 **Notification:** 1 August 2017 **Publication:** Fall 2017

Questions & submissions of 5-6000 words to: C.L.Horrocks@ljmu.ac.uk, a.hunt@kent.ac.uk, deborah.logan@wku.edu.



King's College London: *Women, Money and Markets (1750-1850)*

Themes: "The varying practices of women associated with currency, global and/or domestic markets and marketability," "Material practices associated with value, exchange and/or female creativity," "Women as producers and/or consumers in the literary or other marketplaces," "Representations of women at work/ women's involvement in: Trade and industry, Professional services, Domestic service, The rural economy," "The place of women in the literary marketplace (past and present)" **Deadline:** January 31st 2017

300-word abstracts to womenmoneymarkets@gmail.com, indicating proposed format (individual paper, panel, roundtable, etc.).

Enquiries regarding the programme: emma.newport@kcl.ac.uk All general enquiries: womenmoneymarkets@gmail.com

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Don't Miss the Next Issue of *The ICVWW Newsletter* – Out May 2017!