

The
Martineau
Society



Third Newsletter
January 1995

THE MARTINEAU SOCIETY: THIRD NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the Third Newsletter of the Martineau Society. The theme has turned out to be Martineau houses - from Norwich to The Knoll, and as far as Aviemore - as well as further information on Martineau contemporaries and connections. We also have a report of our first highly-successful 'Martineau trail' round Norwich. If you would like to write something for the next Newsletter in August, please get in touch with Dr Valerie Sanders, University of Buckingham, Buckingham MK18 1EG.

MARTINEAU SOCIETY VISIT TO NORWICH: Saturday 7 January 1995

The New Year snow had melted by 7 January, which turned out to be a good day for the Martineau Society's first town trail - a walk round some of the Norwich landmarks particularly associated with Harriet and James Martineau. Eight of us met at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital main entrance for an entertaining and informative tour of the 'Surgical Martineaus', to coin a phrase from our guide, Dr Anthony Batty Shaw, Consultant Physician and author of Norfolk and Norwich Medicine. Dr Batty Shaw showed how five generations of the Martineaus had produced a doctor - the best known being Harriet and James's uncle, Philip Meadows (1752-1829), who was an expert in the treatment of bladder stones. He was also instrumental in founding a public subscription library, the Norfolk and Norwich Book Society, and the annual music festival. In 1813 he built Bracondale Woods (near the site of the County Hall) and Martineau Lane is named after him. He was assistant surgeon and surgeon to the hospital (founded in 1771) from 1778 to 1828. There are no doctors among the descendants of Harriet's father, Thomas (1764-1826), but three from other branches of the family had been traced: Robert Edward Tagart (1919-91), a descendant of the Helen Bourn who married Edward Tagart after the death of her first husband, Harriet's doctor-brother, Thomas (1795-1824); and Hugh and Richard Kinder, descendants of Harriet's uncle John Martineau (1758-1834). We were delighted to have Hugh with us for the day, and were struck by his resemblance to the portrait of Philip Meadows Martineau at the hospital.

After his introduction to the medical Martineaus, Dr Batty Shaw showed us the hospital's collection of portraits. The one of Philip Meadows is an oil painting by Sir William Beechey; others included a copy of a miniature by Denis Murphy, painter-in-ordinary to Princess Charlotte, of the short-lived Thomas Martineau; a pastel by George Richmond of Henry Reeve (1780-1814), a pupil of Philip Meadows, and father of the Henry Reeve who became editor of the Edinburgh Review; and William Donne (1746-1804) to whom Philip Meadows was himself apprenticed. We were then shown round the Old Outpatients Department (now the Sir Thomas Browne Library), and saw a further collection of portraits and busts - among them that of a Martineau connection, Dr Edward Rigby (1747-1821), who, at the age of seventy, fathered

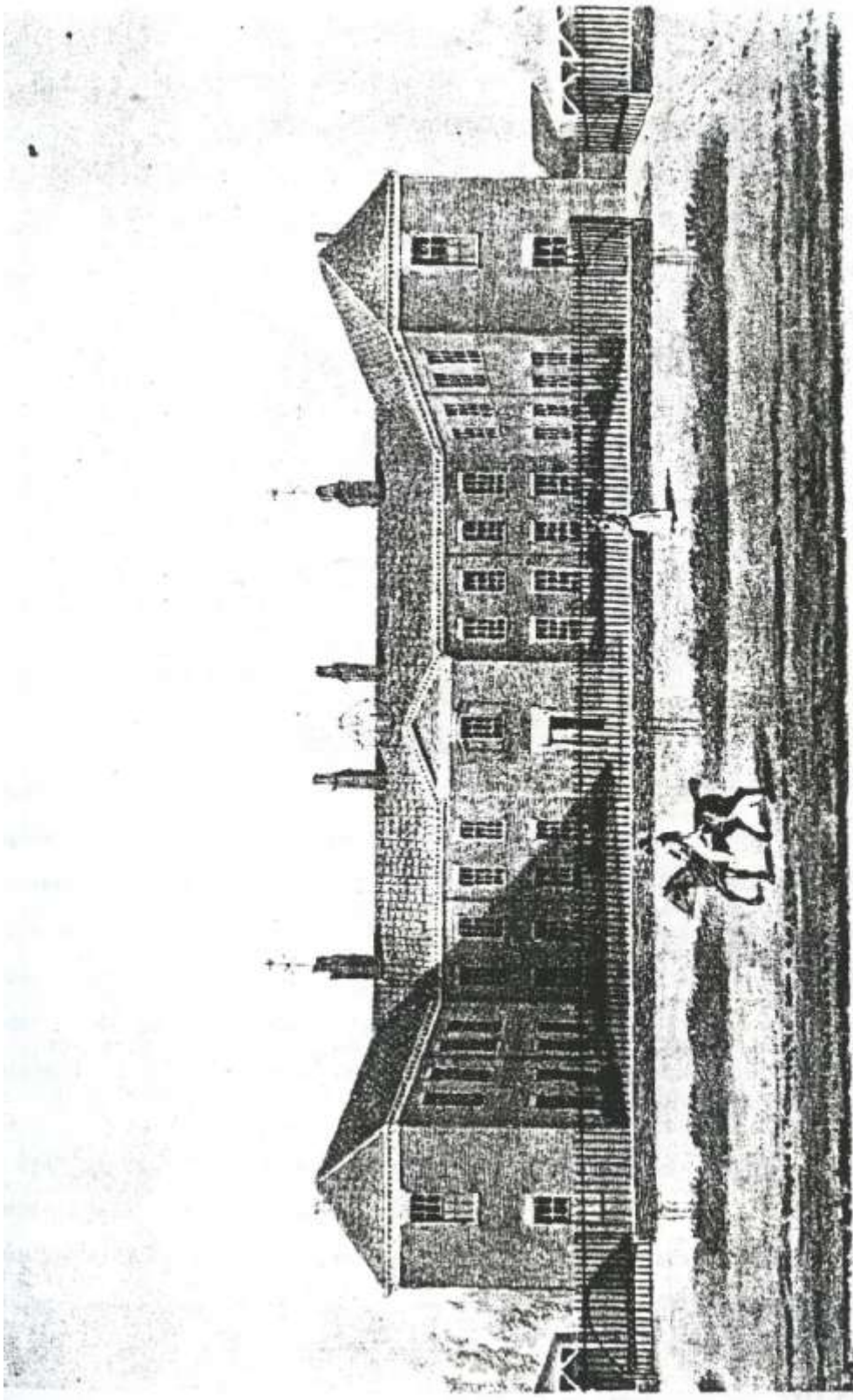
quadruplets! There was also a cast of Sir Thomas Browne's skull! We are very grateful to Dr Batty Shaw for giving us such a fascinating insight into the Martineau medical connections and the history of the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital.

We then walked through the town centre and out to the Octagon Chapel, Colegate (1756), which Harriet and James attended as children. Harriet used to look up at the rounded roof windows, looking for angels to take her to heaven in sight of the congregation. We settled less dramatically for inspecting the vestry's display of pictures and photographs, including those of David Martineau (1726-68), James as a very elderly man, his daughter Gertrude in 1915, and an engraving of the Chapel as it was in Harriet's day, with the old 'horsebox' pews. We also saw the memorial plaques on the Chapel walls to Philip Meadows Martineau and Henry Reeve.

Next door, in the Martineau Memorial Hall (1905), a delicious buffet lunch was followed by a tour of the building's upper floor (now a carpet warehouse) with its interesting stained glass windows. Nearby is Magdalen Street, where the Martineaus lived in two houses: first, Gurney Court, where Harriet was born, and then number 24 (both described in Elizabeth Arbuckle's article later in this Newsletter). Sophia Hankinson had arranged for us to see inside number 24, which is being re-converted from flats back into a house, and has an incredible number of square rooms and an elegant main staircase. We drank a glass of sherry in the dining-room, hosted by the present owner, Paul Foreman; then went our separate ways: some towards what Harriet describes in her Autobiography as 'St Austin's Gate (the nearest bit of country to our house)'; others to a cup of tea; others to trains home - all with a strong impression of early 19th century Norwich life.

Special thanks are due to Sophia for organizing such an enjoyable day. We hope to arrange further walking tours, and to welcome more members and friends on future occasions.

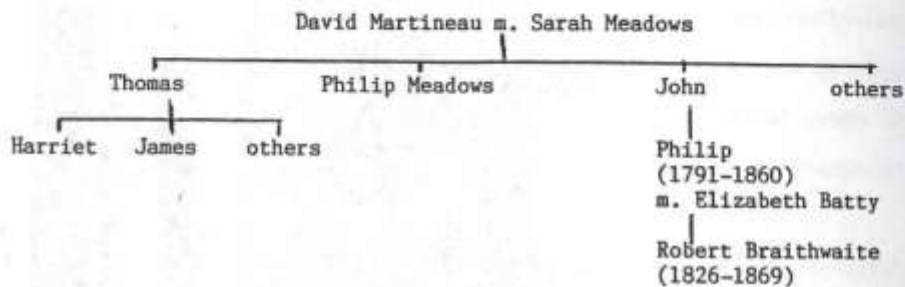
Valerie Sanders



NORFOLK AND NORWICH HOSPITAL, 1772

ROBERT BRAITHWAITE MARTINEAU

How does the Victorian artist, Robert Braithwaite Martineau (1826-69), fit into the Martineau family pedigree? His grandfather, John, a brewer in London, was a brother of Harriet and James's father, Thomas (1764-1826). John's son Philip (1791-1860) was their cousin, and father of Robert Braithwaite. The artist was well known for his domestic narrative/Pre-Raphaelite works, such as 'Last day in the old home' (1861) and 'Kit's Writing Lesson' (1852), an illustration based on Dickens's novel The Old Curiosity Shop.

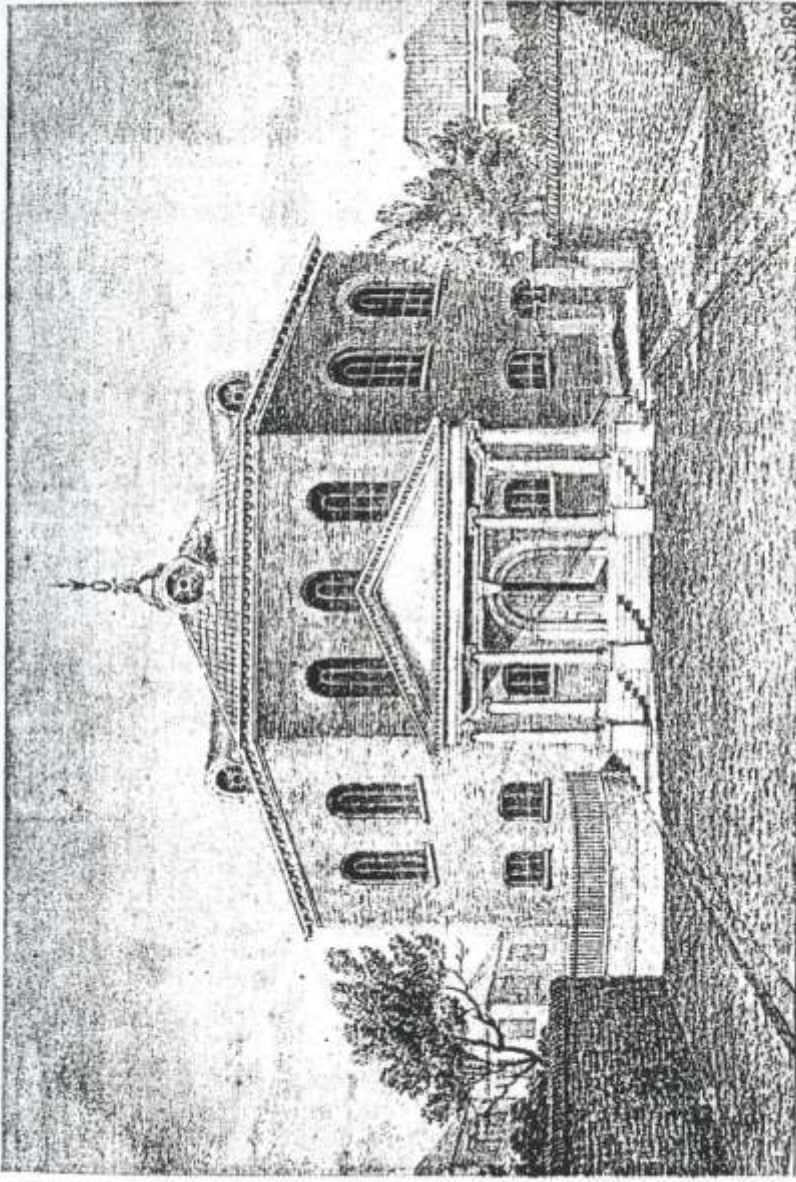


THE MEDICAL CONNECTION

Most of Harriet and James's forebears except their father were surgeons. An interesting connection was Edward Rigby, the distinguished Norwich surgeon and obstetrician, who married Susan, daughter of John Taylor (mining engineer, and hence a great-great-granddaughter of John Taylor, founder of the Octagon Chapel, Norwich), one of whose brothers, Philip, was helping John in the Devon mine, but came back to Norwich as apprentice to Fitch the apothecary, and 'established an international reputation as a chemist and engineer in the 1820s'. Their sister Sarah married David Martineau.

Rigby's sister Sarah married Dr Caleb Parry of Bath (Jane Austen's 'dear Dr Parry'), who was the first to describe goitre; one of their nine children became Sir William Edward Parry, Arctic explorer, Governor of New South Wales, Master of Greenwich Hospital and latterly Overseer of the Poor for Freebridge Lynn, Norfolk, living at Congham, near King's Lynn. (A descendant of his, Dr Ann Parry, has written an excellent life based on family papers, Parry of the Arctic, 1963).

Edward Parry's youngest sister, Caroline, 'a turbulent child', turned into



The Octagon Chapel (built 1756): drawing of 1828 by J Sillett.

a charming young woman who married Joseph Martineau, son of John (1758-1834, son of David II) who left Norwich for London and joined Whitbread's. Parry's wife found 'something very pleasing and nice in her manners, & so perfectly Ladylike & by no means dull, but very lively...He also I like very much...And they are so nice together & seem so very fond of one another, & keep us in countenance.' On the eve of their departure for Australia she went shopping with Caroline 'and tried to foresee all the things they might need in the antipodes.'

-Sophia Hankinson

NEWS FROM EAST ANGLIA

Sophia Hankinson has sent in two reviews of recent books about the Unitarian heritage in East Anglia.

Religious Dissent in East Anglia: Proceedings of the Second Symposium (April 1991) on the History of Religious Dissent in East Anglia; edited by Norma Virgoe and Tom Williamson, 1993 (from UEA Centre of East Anglian Studies: 0160356161).

This neat volume, attractively produced (jointly by the Norfolk Archaeological and Historical Research Group and the Centre of East Anglian Studies of the University of East Anglia), has the Sillett engraving of the Octagon Chapel, Norwich, on the front cover: an appropriate choice, for it makes a fulcrum, architectural, chronological and theological, for the papers contained within. These cover subjects as diverse as the earliest immigrants from Holand in the 1560s and the interrelation of architectural families and fashions around 1900. Articles on 'nonconformist Chapels in East Anglia' by Christopher Stell and 'Evidence for Dissent in Norfolk 1711-1800' by William Jacob, form an excellent background. Geographical balance is maintained by the inclusion of shorter papers on Suffolk and Cambridgeshire topics. The quality of research and presentation provides a most readable addition to the literature of Dissent: we look forward to its successors with enthusiasm.

The Unitarian Heritage in East Anglia. Produced by the Eastern Union of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, 1993. Obtainable from R Voegli, The Granary, Church Farm, Happisburgh, Norfolk NR12 0QY) (50p inc. p&p).

This compact 18-page booklet covers the history of Unitarians in the counties of

Cambridge, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk: a lively story, losing none of its liveliness through its composite authorship. The cover has a useful map (which could perhaps be made even better in the next edition) on which those unfamiliar with the terrain can find their way round the 'trails' within. There are descriptions of the meeting houses (including those no longer extant) and of the events they witnessed; thumbnail portraits of the ministers and layfolk who played a part in the evolution of Unitarianism among dissenting groups (not only in East Anglia) from the 17th century onwards; and useful references to further reading. Much of the material collected here is not readily accessible elsewhere and the booklet will be a welcome addition to the toolkit of anyone interested in Dissent. The Eastern Union is to be congratulated in setting an example which it is to be hoped other District Unions will follow.

MARTINEAU HOUSES

The Gurney Court house on Magdalen Street, Norwich, where Harriet Martineau was born in 1802 and lived the first three months of her life, keeps its aura of Georgian elegance. Plaques at the court entrance record the birth and death of Martineau and of Elizabeth Fry - born in the same house 22 years earlier. The front door, diagonally across the court, is topped by a cornice and fanlight between scroll mouldings. Ground floor rooms today house a surgery. Two curve-topped windows at the back of the house echo the rounded bow (shown in Martineau's Autobiography, Vol I) that extends through the first floor). The bow has three wide windows on each floor that still over-look a grassy garden with trees. Recent visitors could walk to the back of the surgery, climb the staircase and wander through the empty, high-ceilinged rooms Elizabeth and Thomas Martineau rented for their family. There the five eldest Martineau children must once have romped - and begun their stern learning regime.

Opposite Gurney Court at the present 24 Magdalen Street stands the 'Martineau House,' where the family moved in 1802. Here two more children were born, including James in 1805, named on the plaque by the door. The back part of the house served as a warehouse for the 'stuffs' (such as bombazines) Thomas exported

to the continent - until his business failed in the depression of 1825-6. An early photograph shows the 'handsome plain brick house' of Harriet's memory, 'roomy and good-looking enough but prosaic to the last degree.' Along one side runs an arched passage wide enough for a cart, with a now bricked-up opening apparently connecting to the warehouse. In Boswell's Court, at the back, stood outbuildings and the narrow yard, separate from the house, where Harriet and James planted childish gardens and tried to dig to China. From long windows under the roof of the warehouse (built for weavers), all the family but Harriet watched the comet of 1811. Strangely, she could not see it. For a number of years, ten family members and two or three female servants lived in the house, under Elizabeth's strict management. Around the corner of Colegate Street stood the Octagon Chapel, where Martineau-related families and friends worshipped. (The John Taylors, for instance, had lived in St. George's, Colegate.) Mr Madge, pastor of the Octagon, was often invited for Sunday evening supper. And local dignitaries like Mrs Barbauld sometimes came to call.

Today glass-fronted shops occupy the ground floor of 24 Magdalen Street. The owner of the house, Mr. Paul Foreman, has protested Harriet Martineau's 'prosaic' epithet, and has vowed to keep decorative features such as the panelled front door, now accented by white half-pillars. Mr Foreman has also confessed that he feels the spirit of the Martineaus is still in the house. Harriet in fact qualified her view by adding that in spite of its ordinariness, her 'dreamy years' were passed in the house. Whatever its true estimate, there is no doubt that two remarkable Victorians grew up under its roof.

-Prof. Elisabeth Arbuckle, San Juan

OBITUARY

It is with much regret that we have to report the death of one of our members. Miss Ruth Hartas-Jackson died on Sunday 23 October 1994 after a short illness. Ruth leaves a sister, Barbara, also a member of the Society, with whom she lived at Chieveley, Berks. We offer our sympathy and understanding to Barbara at this time. Ruth and Barbara are descendants of Robert Rankin, whose daughter, Elizabeth, married Thomas Martineau: the parents of Harriet and James.

THE KNOLL, AT AMBLESIDE by Barbara Todd

Home of Harriet Martineau from 1846-1876

'Saw a brown-faced woman waiting for the coach, thought I knew the face, looked out of the window, it was Miss Martineau...walked with her to her newly built and building house - a most commodious, beautifully situated and desirable residence...I planted two oaks for H.M. which, with her small spade, cost me some strain of the back. The more I see of her pretty house, the more I am pleased with it.'

So recorded the great Shakespearian actor, William Charles Macready, on the occasion of his first visit to The Knoll which Harriet Martineau had built, to her own design, during the preceding autumn and winter. She moved in in April 1846 and, at the time of Macready's visit, was busying herself with the utmost energy and enthusiasm planning the garden and furnishing the first (and only) home of her own. The happiest years of her hard-working life had just begun.

On a beautiful April day 146 years later, we saw The Knoll for the first time and, having just sold our London home, bought it on the spot, knowing immediately that our long cherished dream of one day living in The Lakes, was about to become a glorious reality.

The house was divided into two in the early 1960s, with part of the land below it sold to Charlotte Mason College for a playing field and part to a local builder. Our half, 'South Knoll,' includes HM's beautifully spacious drawing-room with large windows facing south and west, the half of the rocky garden containing her beloved sundial and most of the terrace with the glorious vista of meadows stretching across the valley to the Rothay river with Loughrigg Fell rising behind. H.M. so loved this view. 'I sometimes think if I blinked it might melt,' she wrote; I sometimes worry that if I blinked it might turn into a by-pass, for such a horrible scheme is currently being strenuously promoted by the Ambleside Relief Road Campaign and no less strenuously resisted by ourselves and friends in the Ambleside Protection Group!

As time and energy permit, I work hard on the rocky garden - where a pick-axe is more useful than a spade. It must have been so beautiful in H. M.'s day, but largely neglected over the years between. One of Macready's oaks (I'm sure it must

be Macready's) still stands proudly in the field below us, but although the stone pines which Wordsworth planted 'on the slope under my terrace wall' have long since vanished, just below the sundial is an ancient stump (now known to us as 'Wordsworth's stump') over which, rabbits permitting, I mean to trail a pretty clematis.

The cottage and group of outbuildings which H.M. built for the Norfolk farmer who looked after her cows, pigs, chickens and ducks and who grew a plentiful supply of vegetables on the flat land at the Knoll's southerly foot, has now been converted to a modern bungalow. But otherwise the house looks much as it once did, I think. Roses and honeysuckle have again been planted to scramble up the terrace wall and, while the winter storms batter us and we wait for the delights of the Lakeland spring, we are warm, cosy and very happy indeed within the thick Westmorland stone walls of Harriet's beautiful home.

Barbara Todd
South Knoll
Ambleside
December 1994

LOCATIONS OF MARTINEAU MATERIAL

Mrs Barbara Smith is interested in the locations of the many sources of Martineau material and has offered to act as collator of such information for the Martineau Society.

If anyone knows the whereabouts of Martineau papers or related material please

send a note to: The Librarian
 c/o Manchester College,
 Mansfield Road
 Oxford OX1 3TD

THE AVIEMORE CONNECTION

The previous Newsletter mentioned that James Martineau owned a holiday home in the skiing resort of Aviemore, where he was a keen walker. Howard Hague has investigated this connection in some detail and wrote about it a few years ago in the Unitarian Inquirer. In 1984 he went to visit the Martineau memorial, which he says 'occupies a prominent place in a triangle at the junction of the B970 and the small road which leads to the very beautiful Loch an Eilein, some two miles south of Aviemore. It is a fine, three-sided structure with Celtic designs carved on the upper panels.' It was erected as much in memory of James's daughters, Gertrude, Edith and Mary Ellen, as of James himself, all three having contributed to the life of the local community. Gertrude and Edith taught the carvers of Rothiemurchus for 25 years, while Mary Ellen established a library for the people of the district. The memorial was unveiled by Lady Mary Grant in 1913, and restored in 1974 by the Scottish Unitarian Association.

Not far down the road from the memorial lies 'The Polchar', the family's summer cottage, which is within ten miles from the highest peaks of the Cairngorm range, and a mile from the Loch an Eilein. Howard Hague comments: 'Originally perhaps just a shepherd's cottage, it was enlarged by the Martineau family and is a substantial building in its own grounds, though still retaining very much its rural character.' When he visited the house it was being renovated by its current tenants, who were certainly aware of its history. The strange name of the house means 'Pool of rushes'.

Howard Hague visited another memorial to James Martineau in 1986 at St Columba's Church in Inverdrue on the B970 road. It consists of a small statue with a wood carving underneath, showing a ploughing scene. It is not known who carved it (possibly even Gertrude Martineau herself?), or when it was first unveiled, though it was originally erected in the old Doune Church, the ruined remains of which can be seen two miles to the south of the B970. The inscription states: 'For many summers in the venerable church of Rothiemurchus he lifted his heart to God, 1877-1898.'

MARTINEAU PAPERS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

The previous Newsletter carried reports of the short papers given at the Inaugural Meeting of the Martineau Society. One final report comes from Chris Penney, Archivist and Senior Assistant Librarian at the University of Birmingham, who told the meeting about the University's valuable collection of Martineau papers. These were presented in 1961 by Sir Wilfred Martineau, the great-grandson of Harriet's brother Robert, the Birmingham brassfounder. The collection consists mainly of correspondence. There are about 1500 items, comprising letters to Harriet from Mrs Gaskell, Patrick Brontë, Matthew Arnold, Florence Nightingale and many others. There is also correspondence with Harriet's publishers and a good deal of miscellaneous material relating to her daily business affairs. There are few letters of Harriet herself, so the collection is backed up regularly by purchases on the open market. There are now over 100 of these additional letters. Printed material is also kept and sought for; there is at least one fine association copy - a first edition of Shirley sent to Harriet by Charlotte Brontë.

In 1991 the whole collection was published on microfilm by Adam Matthew Publications. This reduces wear and tear on the originals and makes them more widely known.

Access from students and scholars is welcomed. Intending visitors should write or telephone in advance and a letter of introduction is required on the first visit. Thereafter access is unlimited during the times the Special Collections department is open (Monday-Friday, 9-5): telephone 021-414-5838.

QUERY

1. Does anyone know why Harriet and James's 'Aunt Kentish' was so called, when she was Mrs Robert Rankin (née Ann Cole), married to their mother's brother?
2. Was Lady Mary Shepherd, mentioned in Harriet's Autobiography, an aunt of Lord Henley through the Edens or the Henleys?

An American enquirer would be glad of any information about either of these two aunts.

MARTINEAU MATERIAL AT THE BANCROFT LIBRARY, BERKELEY

Thanks to the efforts of the late Dr Reinhold S Speck, there is now a major archive of Martineau material at the Bancroft Library on the campus of the University of California, Berkeley. Dr Speck started collecting the letters and works of Harriet Martineau in 1952, and by the late 1980s owned about 600 volumes (in his own words, 'almost every copy of any work of hers that I have seen on the market or had offered to me'), besides 500 letters from Harriet to a variety of correspondents, and over a 100 from James. The collection includes 102 letters from Harriet to W J Fox, and family letters to Helen Bourn Martineau, later Tagart, wife of Harriet's eldest brother, Thomas, and some very early Norwich letters of the 1820s, in which Harriet describes her reading and life at home. Expertly catalogued by Dr Speck, the collection is easy to find one's way through, and yields some fresh and fascinating insights into Harriet's personality - more gleeful and flirtatious (at least in her correspondence with Fox) than her formidable image suggests, though the letters also reveal a good deal about the processes of negotiation between authors and publishers in the 1830s and beyond. Other correspondents include Henry Atkinson, Richard Monckton-Milnes, Charles Fox, Eliza Flower, the Carlyles, Anna Jameson, Sara Hennell, and Edward Moxon. Particularly interesting, because so thinly documented elsewhere, are the early letters to Thomas and Helen Martineau, her eldest brother and sister-in-law, who were out in Madeira trying to restore Thomas's health when he died there in 1824. In her early twenties, Harriet did her best to rally her depressed and widowed sister-in-law, urging her to 'REAL, HARD STUDY' (like the 3½ hours she herself did before breakfast). She also recommends gardening and walking followed by an early night as a recipe for a sound night's sleep. 'Never indulge with the Sofa: believe me it is bad for you: as soon as you lie down your sad thoughts come again, and it is excitement instead of rest to lie and think on the Sofa. You are as strong as any lady I know, and your bed will afford rest enough for both mind and body.' No sign here of the famous invalid Harriet Martineau was later to become!

THE REEVES OF NORWICH

Henry Reeve (1813-95) was a distant cousin of Harriet and James Martineau, through the Taylor family of Norwich, though it was as editor of the Edinburgh Review (1855-95) that Harriet had most contact with him. Before taking charge of the Edinburgh he had written Times leaders on foreign policy. Sophia Hankinson has been busy investigating the Reeve family history, starting with Henry's father, another Henry Reeve, who is commemorated by a wall-tablet in the Octagon Chapel in Norwich (accompanied by tablets to his wife and daughter). It reads as follows (translation of the Latin):

'To the blessed memory of Dr Henry Reeve, a man graced with outstanding knowledge, skill, integrity and character; who carried out his profession in this city most successfully, always swiftly attentive to the comfort of others until, falling victim to severe long-term illness, he died 8th December 1814 aged 35.'

A James Reeves was Master of Doughty's Hospital, an ancient almshouse off Colegate, Norwich, from 1864-74. Sophia is working to tie in the connection, and establish whether this branch of the Reeve family was at all closely related to the Henry Reeves. More to follow in subsequent Newsletters...!

JOINING THE SOCIETY

If you would like to join the Martineau Society, please contact our Secretary, Mr Alan Middleton, 49 Mayfield Avenue, Grove, Wantage, Oxon. OX12 7ND. The membership subscription is £10 a year for individuals and £30 for institutions. The Newsletter is issued twice a year, in January and August (editor: Dr Valerie Sanders, University of Buckingham, Buckingham MK18 1EG); and the Society holds its Annual General Meeting in Oxford on 15 July 1995.