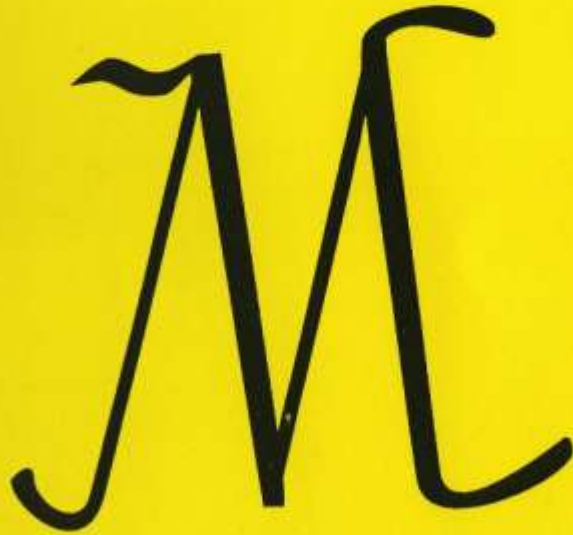


The
Martineau
Society



Ninth Newsletter
April 1998

THE MARTINEAU SOCIETY

President: Revd Dr Frank Schulman
Vice-President: Prof R K Webb
Chairman: Mrs Sophia Hankinson
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EDITORIAL

As the print size of the previous Newsletter was still rather small and difficult to read, I have experimented again with typefaces and spacing, hoping that things will look better this time.

We are now fast approaching the 10th issue of the Newsletter, which we think should be a special one -perhaps with a specific theme. If anyone has any good ideas, please contact the Editor (see the back page for addresses).

BETSEY'S SEAT

At the visit of the Martineau Society to Earlham Hall, members will remember that I had worked there for some years during the war and recalled that at the time there had been a very old seat in the walled garden. I was probably responsible for giving the impression that this was without doubt the garden seat referred to in the variously reported incident of Elizabeth Gurney and the gold watch left there by her suitor, Joseph Fry [see Newsletter 8, p 7]. On our return home, however, I sought out the programme for the City of Norwich School play of 1938. This was "The Spoils of Time" written by Mr T E Rigby, the English master. The play consisted of eight scenes each depicting an incident in the lives of eight famous Norfolk men. One of them was John Crome. This episode showed him visiting Earlham Hall to teach "drawing" to the Gurney girls, and bringing in the matter of the watch and garden seat. (This was long before girls were admitted to the school, and the seven Gurney girls were acted by boys - I was Louisa). In a footnote to this scene, Mr Rigby stated: "The garden seat originally used by Fry in the incident was for many years a treasured possession at Earlham Hall, and is now at the Castle Museum."

Sadly, Mr Rigby died only a year or so after the production of his play. Both he and his wife, Mrs Ethel Rigby, were Unitarians, and members of the Octagon. Mrs Rigby died only a few months ago at the age of 107, and until a short time previously had continued to attend the Octagon.

On reading Mr Rigby's note, it was obvious that more research was needed. I contacted the Curator of Social History at the Museum, Mr David Jones, and to my surprise very quickly received a reply that the seat was still in possession of the Museum but at Strangers Hall. This museum is officially closed for repairs and matters relating to fire precautions, but we were told we could visit by making an appointment. This we did on 15 May, and were shown the seat by Helen Rowles, the Assistant-Curator. She knew the story of the incident, and was most helpful in arranging the seat for us to take photographs.

It can immediately be seen that this was rather a special seat, and as little children no doubt the Gurney girls pretended it was a throne to play kings and queens, and later to be the centre-piece of the incident which could surely not have been bettered by Jane Austen.

-Frank Pond

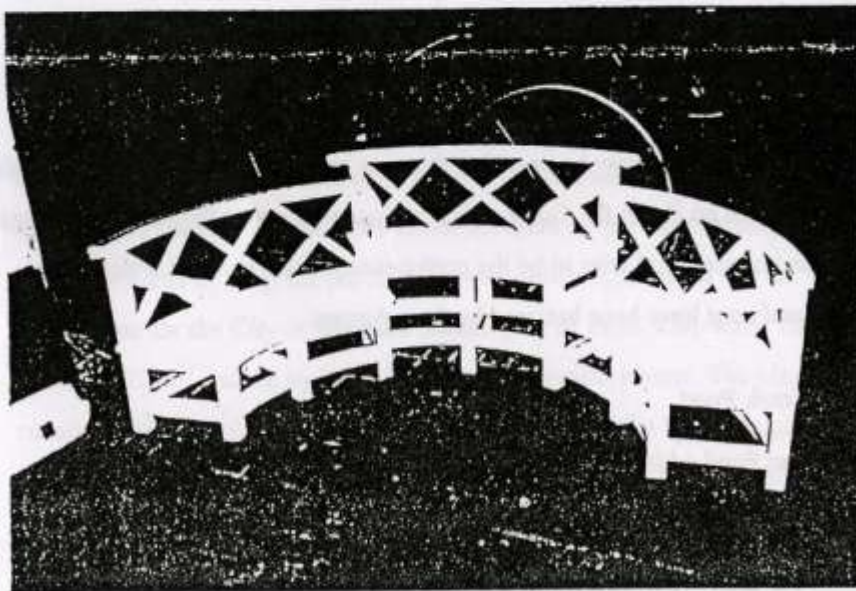
Jean Pond adds a quotation from Katharine Fry's book:
Ch 4, p. 38:

'Our mother's six sisters were most excited by this delicate affair, and knowing that the decision was to be made that morning by the taking up of the gold watch, they concealed themselves in the laurel bushes to watch. Joseph Fry laid the watch on a white seat in the garden. Later, the tall, graceful Betsey, her flaxen hair hidden under a Quaker cap, shyly emerged

upon the gravel path. She seemed scarcely conscious of her surroundings. But she reached the garden seat, and there in the sunshine lay the glittering watch. But she could not take it, and she fled swiftly back into the house.

The six sisters remained breathless in their hiding places. An hour elapsed, during which Betsey's father urged her to make the decision. Once again Betsey emerged from the house, faltering as she walked, but slowly, trembling she took up the watch, and the decision was made! She never once afterwards regretted her action.

Once the die was cast Betsey seemed to become more and more settled and happy.'



Betsey's Seat: currently displayed at Strangers Hall Museum, Norwich

CROMER HONOURS ELIZABETH FRY

In April 1997 a plaque was unveiled at the Cromer clifflop woods, honouring Elizabeth Fry, who used to visit there with her family and friends. Descendants of the Gurney family gathered in the woods to see the new plaque, which was supplied by North Norfolk District Council at the suggestion of Cromer Councillor Vera Woodcock.

A DEATH IN THE FAMILY: THOMAS MARTINEAU

Elisabeth Arbuckle's paper about James and Harriet's eldest brother Tom is continued from the last Newsletter:

Tom and Helen's baby, born at Norwich, was named Philip Meadows after his uncle. Although Tom was now diagnosed as having no disease in his lungs, he was advised by two doctors to leave Norwich for the coming winter. By August, Helen had begun inquiries for suitable quarters in Madeira for themselves and two servants. A house with garden and view of the mountains could be had for £400 a year, she was told, or £240 for the six winter months. A sketch and plan of a house near the capital, Funchal, were sent, and the owner's wife counselled Helen on furnishings, urging her to bring cotton underclothes and tapioca, currants and arrowroot.

Travel and living expenses for Tom and Helen in Madeira were at least partly to be met by Thomas. Towards the end of September, he hurried to Portsmouth to make arrangements for them on the steamer *Valiant*, sailing October 1st with a cow on board. Harriet later wrote James that Tom and Helen had stopped in London with their father's sister, Aunt Lee, for a few

days, but Tom was exhausted when they got to Portsmouth. Harriet wished fervently that God might protect them all. Magdalen Street seemed particularly empty to her, with Rachel at Bristol and Henry at Cadiz. On the *Valiant*, Tom and Helen studied Portuguese, but had a rough journey. By November, they had reached Madeira with their servants, William and Tillett, and were staying in a trading house where a group of young, single men boarded, and the food was good.

In December, Elizabeth begins folio-size letters to Tom and Helen, prescribing new remedies for Tom's cough and supplying tidbits of news of family and neighbours. She is gathering letters from others, including ones to their servants, and newspapers and journals like the *Edinburgh Review*, the *Monthly Repository* and the *Christian Disciple* as well as Tom's medical journals. She means to have them bundled into packets for the next ship stopping at Madeira, and she looks for merchant friends who might know of sailings. Would Tom send them his thoughts on Scripture passages, she asks? And could he send the recipe for making "Chow-chow"? If Henry stops in Madeira on his way home from Spain, as he hopes to do, could they send cuttings or seeds for Bracondale or the Magdalen Street garden?

On Christmas day, Elizabeth (not knowing the baby has died) writes recalling happy family celebrations in the past. This year, Harriet and Ellen sang duets in the parlour and there were punch toasts by the fire. A long "medley" of a letter from Rachel at Bristol was read out, and in the kitchen there was a "merry & thankful" party of old family servants - a custom Harriet was to inaugurate at Ambleside. Old Blythe was "handsomer than ever," Elizabeth comments, but nurse Newman was now nearly without

subsistence owing to "machinery" (the new power looms at Norwich having nearly ruined Norwich's traditional hand weavers). Harriet's book, Elizabeth goes on, "seems much approved & sells well." Emily Taylor (Harriet and James's second-cousin), urges Harriet to write a story for the small publisher Harvey and Darnton, and the two are talking of a new periodical on a larger scale than the *Monthly Repository*.

Harriet also began folio-size letters to Tom and Helen, sending them vignettes of life at Norwich: Ellen studying French and Latin grammar and teaching Sunday school, Mr Madge planning a Vestry Library but rejecting William Taylor's offer of *Emile*, and the first five hundred copies of her book just out. Mr Madge, she complains, has begun to lose popularity because his sermons seem dull or "too doctrinal." And the family "never go out...except to little Octagon parties." Their father and James, however, recently stayed at Newcastle, where the Greenhows have "a very small income" but a "beautifully neat and genteel" house. She hopes her story for Harvey and Darnton will bring her "about £5" and confirms that she and Emily want to establish a journal - reviews in the *Repository* being "worth so little." (William Johnson Fox may not have dismissed the *Repository* quite so briskly, but when he became editor in 1827 he hired Harriet and tried to enlist Emily Taylor.)

In mid-January 1824, the family at Magdalen Street learn of the death of little Philip. Elizabeth sends consolations, informing them that her father, Robert Rankin, passed away in early December and thus the eldest and the youngest on her side of the family died within a week of each other. They will order a grave marker for the baby, to be sent to Madeira.

The news from Madeira seems to offer less and less hope for Tom. At the end of January, Helen writes that they fear he waited too long to leave England. He coughs, cannot breathe and is too weak to ride very far. They lead a monotonous life, seeing few callers. Grimly, she says, she was relieved her baby's illness was short as she could not leave him for an instant. She had sent word of his death on the 29 November by way of Gibraltar, but the ship was delayed. In Madeira, she goes on, the peasants behave politely, even when they surround her as she tries to sketch. The men look handsome, but the women are dirty. On Christmas Eve, she went to the cathedral taking their servant, 22-year-old Ann Tillet, a Methodist. The gorgeously dressed women wearing jewels and artificial flowers in their hair (without bonnets) fascinated Helen. Yet mosquitoes and fleas abound everywhere in Madeira.

Through the winter and early spring, Elizabeth urges Tom to try soda water to lower his pulse and raspberry vinegar for his cough, to walk moderately, eat little meat and go out "on the sea." Probably to divert him, she passes along gossip about Philip Meadows, who hopes to form another book society (He had helped to found an earlier one). "At a meeting of medicals last week...an *ejected* member was very wrathful...[I]n Saturdays paper appears an advertisement calling [old members] together ..signed Cross -Secretary ... & very Cross the gentleman is I hear." Soon the new society goes badly because the doctor has failed to order wanted books. Philip Meadows, Elizabeth implies, is becoming senile, although he listens with attention to letters from Tom and Helen. The family at Magdalen Street have moved Tom and Helen's good piano from the Bank Street house, and Ellen and Harriet play the *Beggar's Opera*. Elizabeth and Harriet are reading Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion* and sewing and

knitting for Lissey's children. Harriet's book is nearly sold out, while testimonials of its "usefulness & acceptableness" come in. Dr Carpenter advises printing a new edition of 1,000 copies. Finally, Elizabeth reports, Henry is in Spain - overrun by French troops the year before, but now offering a promising market for Norwich cloth. Earlier, they feared he was in danger from "banditti" and pirates at sea. In November, he had reached Cadiz and was waiting for a wind to carry his ship to other Spanish ports. In December, his ship was chased and nearly boarded by a barbary Corsair, and in January, two letters came from Barcelona - a "strong hold" for business, she believes. By mid-March, the grave marker for the baby, "perfectly plain & neatly executed," is ready to be sent. The Madges and Emily Taylor approve, Emily especially for the "consolation." Even William Taylor has called round to offer his sympathy and to say that a sea captain acquaintance - with orders to cruise off the coast of Africa for the chance of intercepting slave-ships - might carry a packet of letters to Madeira. "Our dear Henry," Elizabeth says, is preparing to come and see them, though she worries about the "Algerines." At home, they "watch every opportunity" to send letters, and Tom's failure to hear arises from his father's "Constant & full occupation, & [oddly] his little knowledge how to obtain information" of sailings.

[The final section of this paper will appear in the next Newsletter]

CONGRATULATIONS

Two members of the Martineau Society are to be congratulated on their recent achievements:

Dr David Wykes has become Director of Dr Williams's Trust and Library (from 1 October).

Professor Ken Fielding has won the Morton H Cohen Prize for most distinguished volume of collected letters: this was volume 25 of Thomas and Jane Carlyle's correspondence, which he co-edited with Clyde Ryals of Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

Ken's edition of Carlyle's *Reminiscences*, co-edited with Ian Campbell, was also published at the end of 1997 as an Oxford University paperback (£7.99) and reviewed by Rosemary Ashton in the *Times Literary Supplement* on 5 December 1997.

THE MARTINEAU FAMILY OF HASTINGS

[The following piece was written by Shirley Read, a well-known local historian and neighbour of Reg Charles, who sent it on her behalf for inclusion in the Newsletter. Shirley, who died last year, had researched the Martineau connection in Sussex.]

They owned and lived in Fairlight Lodge (otherwise known, on occasion, as Lantern House), which is situated on the northern side of Fairlight Road at its junction with Martineau Lane.

Robert Braithwaite Martineau was an artist, a contemporary of the Pre-Raphaelite Movement. (Dante Gabriel Rossetti first brought Elizabeth Siddall to Hastings in 1854 and they were married in St. Clement's Church on 23rd May 1860.) The following is from *Hastings and Men of Letters* by Gerald Brodribb (1954):

'Members of the Pre-Raphaelite Movement took a sharp fancy to Hastings, and the story of Lear, Holman Hunt and the Rossettis had strong

Hastings associations. In 1852, after his first academy success with the "Hireling Shepherd", William Holman Hunt (then aged 25) was commissioned to do another work. He had also agreed to take Robert Martineau as a pupil, and the Martineaus, who were Hastings people, introduced Hunt to Edward Lear (1812-1888), who had also been asking Hunt for advice about the painting of landscapes. The upshot was that Lear agreed to find a suitable accommodation for them at Hastings, and he found rooms at Clive Vale Farm, the site of which...is where Clive Vale House, Saxon Road, now stands. In August 1852, Hunt arrived, accompanied by William Rossetti...and once Lear saw that the newcomers had brought no dogs, all went well. Lear hated dogs (The Martineaus nearby had one)...They stayed at Clive Vale Farm for two months, making much of the wild cliff scenery, which was exactly the type Lear needed for the pictures he was working on. The picture Hunt painted here was "Strayed Sheep"...

The great Millais once came to stay with them, and an excellent story is told of them all on p. 72 of AC Gissing's *William Holman Hunt* - a biography (Duckworth 1936). Robert Martineau, by the way, of the family whose home was at Fairlight Lodge (hence Martineau Lane), was an ancestor of the contemporary poet GD Martineau, who is also known for his scholarly researches on top cricket history, and spent much of his early life in Hastings."

Shirley Read also discovered that GD (Gerald) Martineau had written a two part-article on Fairlight Lodge in the *Sussex County Magazine* in 1935. The house was originally bought by a Dr Batty for £50 in 1811. 'In 1819,' writes GD Martineau, 'his daughter married Philip Martineau, a

Master in Chancery. They travelled by coach to Ore, and were there met and driven up. Some forty years later Mrs Martineau inherited her father's property...Before the trees grew up and hid its kindly light, Fairlight Lodge, or Lantern House, was the smugglers' signal for many a mile.' The Martineaus seem to have been in the awkward position of knowing what the smugglers were up to (and indeed accepting small gifts in exchange for a tactful silence) while entertaining the preventive officers and appearing to help. Martineau quotes some family letters he had on the subject, including this one:

"Smuggling was rife in granny's (Miss Batty's) day. My father used to tell of a fight between the preventive officers and smugglers in the small bottom field near the shaw, and of the former coming in to lunch - their swords being piled in the corner of the room. A keg of brandy chucked into the garden in their night raids was not unknown."

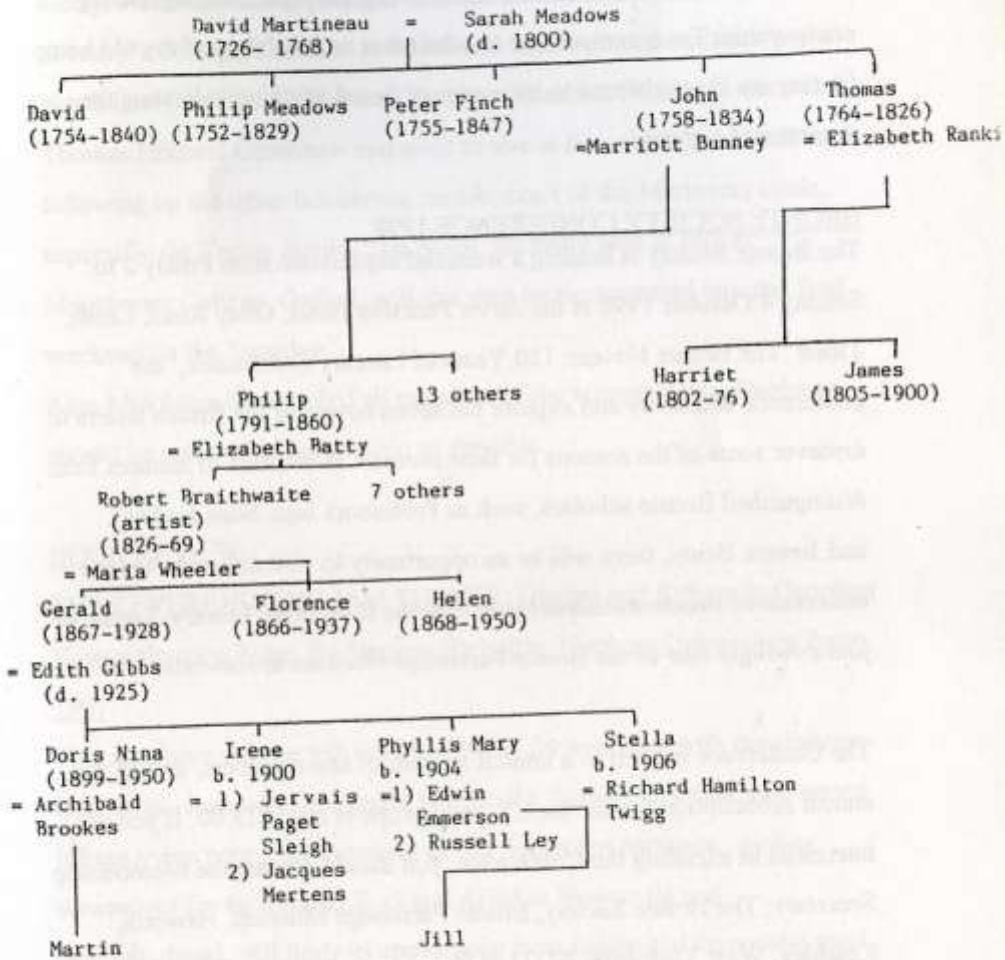
Martineau continues: 'But a more law-abiding epoch was at hand in the old place. It was the Victorian age of art and literature, and the walls and bookcases of Fairlight Lodge reflected the spirit of the time. I wish I could say that our distinguished cousins, Harriet and James Martineau, were visitors, but it does not appear that this was ever so. Robert Martineau, the artist, however, was a friend of Holman Hunt and Millais, both of whom came down to stay and paint.'



Fairlight Lodge, as it appeared in the time of the Martineaus

FAMILY TREE

This extract from the Martineau family tree shows GD (Gerald) Martineau's position in relation to Harriet and James's branch:



Was Fairlight Lodge haunted?

Many have remarked that it ought to have been, but definite evidence is somewhat lacking.

The difficulty is that the Martineaus, for the most part, are regrettably non-psychic. Truth compels me to admit that no inhabitant of my old home (during my time) claimed to have seen or heard anything indicating the presence of a ghost.'

BRONTE SOCIETY CONFERENCE 1998

The Bronte Society is holding a weekend conference from Friday 2 to Sunday 4 October 1998 at the Jarvis Parkway Hotel, Otley Road, Leeds. Titled 'The Bronte Novels: 150 Years of Literary Dominance,' the conference will study and explore the seven novels of the Bronte sisters to discover some of the reasons for their success. In addition to lectures from distinguished Bronte scholars, such as Professors Inga-Stina Ewbank and Jerome Beaty, there will be an opportunity to visit either the unique collection of Bronte memorabilia held at the Brotherton Library, Leeds, or join a twilight tour of the Bronte Parsonage Museum in Haworth.

The Conference is open to a limited number of non-members, though the annual subscription fee for the UK and Europe is only £15.00. If you are interested in attending the Conference, you should contact the Membership Secretary, The Bronte Society, Bronte Parsonage Museum, Haworth, Keighley, West Yorkshire, BD22 8DR.

MARTINEAU SOCIETY TRAIL

Don't forget our own exciting Trail and Conference in Durham and Newcastle on 10-12 September 1998. The details of this are shaping up nicely. Accommodation (cheaper than the Bronte Society's!) is available at St Mary's College, Durham. In addition to Martineau connections in the North East (the eldest Martineau daughter Elizabeth ('Lissey') married Thomas Michael Greenhow and went to live in Newcastle), we shall be following up the other fascinating ramifications of the Martineau circle, especially the Turner family. The AGM, normally held in July at Manchester College, Oxford, will this time be incorporated into the Trail weekend on the Saturday.

Alan Middleton has notified all members of the arrangements. Bookings should be made with him as soon as possible.

BOOK REVIEW

THE REVEREND WILLIAM TURNER: Dissent and Reform in Georgian Newcastle upon Tyne. By Stephen Harbottle. Northern Universities Press, 1997

This attractive volume will hold something for everyone with the slightest interest in - humanity, one might say, for the Turners and their kind oozed it from every pore - but members of this Society in particular, girding themselves for an Autumn Trail and AGM in Newcastle and neighbourhood, will find its appearance most timely and its content most enlightening. Here are Gaskells, Rankins, Aikins and Priestleys; here are Robberdses, Hollands and Martineaus and many other of the family names which make up the fabric of English nonconformity. Here are the dissenting academies in their infancy and adolescence; here is Turner, a model of his kind, founding at Newcastle the Sunday School, the Vestry

Library and eventually the "Lit and Phil," the bicentenary of which this volume celebrates and which is still going strong. Here is Turner, the family man, father of James Martineau's idol Henry (and six other children); Turner the indefatigable preacher, making the distinction 'between doctrinal and controversial preaching...and personal allusions to the character or conduct of those who hold those opinions. The first is frequently necessary, the second occasionally - the last...never.' Not profound, perhaps, but as well to be spelt out then as now. Not that Turner, even with his head down in the mound of sheer hard work he did during his long life, was altogether immune from controversy. His life was interwoven with the Unitarianism then burgeoning, and he could not have avoided it. Mr Harbottle devotes one of his short and pithy chapters to the frightfulness which arose from the Bishops of Durham and of Norwich subscribing to a volume of his sermons - hardly Turner's fault, one would have thought: it was not so long since 37 bishops had subscribed to Dr John Taylor's Hebrew Concordance - the wonder is that he had by then avoided controversy for 50 years of ministry.

To encompass such a full and fervent life in a single not-too-heavy volume, pleasant to handle and easy to find one's way about in, is a tall order. Occasionally one feels the pressure of so many facts and has sympathy with the effort of compression which must have been necessary: but Mr Harbottle is to be congratulated on achieving the task he undertook, and thanked by those attending the Autumn Trail, for whom his book will be excellent - even essential - background reading.

-Sophia Hankinson

Photograph of Catherine Turner at the age of 96



Note:

A letter from Henry Martineau (James and Harriet's brother) appears in Rachel Young's *A Mottram Miscellany* (Larks Press, Ordnance Farmhouse, Guist Bottom, Dereham, NR20 5PF at £4.95). The extract is about the choir at the Octagon Chapel, and throws a rather different light on the unfortunate Henry.

FAMILY TREE UPDATE

Mr John Taylor of Diss, a direct descendant of Dr John Taylor, whose family tree was shown in the last Newsletter, has supplied the missing surname of Jane who married Samuel Taylor (see p. 18 of the Newsletter, Tree 3). She was Jane Cowling of Yoxford, and is buried at Banham, where they later settled.

Richard, John Taylor's cousin, reports that the Model Farm built at Starston (the Taylor estate near Diss which Richard still farms) was designed by Samuel. The range was built in the 1840s and sadly does not have any use in today's agriculture as the roof heights are too low. Richard has just had planning permission to convert them into 6 houses.

HARRIET MARTINEAU IN CUMBRIA LIFE MAGAZINE

Barbara Todd, who lives in Harriet Martineau's former house, The Knoll, in Ambleside (which the Society visited on its 1996 Trail), is writing a series of articles for the *Cumbria Life* magazine. Barbara has discovered that Harriet had sent articles, headed 'A Year at Ambleside' to an American magazine which published them in instalments during 1850. The money earned from the articles was donated directly to her Boston friends working for the Abolition of Slavery.

The articles, likely to have come from her Journals, describe day-to-day life in Ambleside through the seasons: the hiring of servants at Martinmas ('Those who wish to be hired, stand about the market-cross, with a sprig of green, or a straw in their mouths'); the public humiliation of unfaithful husbands and wives who are made to 'ride the stang' (a pole: one thinks of the 'skimmity-ride' in Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*); and Guy Fawkes night. In her description of the bonfire preparations for 'Pope-Day', as some of the locals call it, Harriet spares a thought for her Catholic neighbours, who find the celebrations distinctly uncomfortable.

To Lakelanders, Harriet continues in her December bulletin, winter is the favourite season. She describes with great relish the pleasures of rising early on a frosty morning for her cold bath and brisk walk. 'To struggle on against the wind and splashing rain, in a thoroughly waterproof dress, is really pleasurable when it happens in the morning,' she tries to persuade her American readers. In the January/February issues, she describes a dramatic flood, and also how she came to choose the Lake District for her new home.

Barbara is gathering this and other information for a book to be called 'Harriet Martineau at Ambleside.' Further extracts from the American articles will be appearing in *Cumbria Life*.

Newsletter Contributions:

Articles of any length, book reviews, letters and observations, should be sent to the Editor:

Dr Valerie Sanders, Priestman Building, University of Sunderland, Green Terrace, Sunderland SR1 3PZ

Enquiries regarding the Society, especially new membership, should be addressed to the Secretary:

Mr Alan Middleton, 49 Mayfield Avenue, Grove, Wantage, Oxon OX12 7ND