

VPFA

VICTORIAN POPULAR FICTION ASSOCIATION

In this issue

1 Welcome from the Editors	9 Recent Publications
1 The Victorian Popular Fiction Association	10 Upcoming Events
1 2010 Annual Conference Thanks	13 Calls for Papers
2 The VPFA interview	13 New Titles from Victorian Secrets
6 The 3rd Annual VPFA Conference: CFP	15 Research Seminars and Lectures
7 VPFA Study Days	16 New Journal Announcement
7 Book Review	

Spring 2011 Newsletter

Welcome from the Editors

Welcome to the first issue of the new VPFA Newsletter, the aim of which is to keep you up to date with association news and events. Our hope is that you will find it a source of both information and interest and, with this in mind, we have tried to offer a range of items relevant to our shared interests in the Victorian and the popular. In this first issue, we are pleased to bring you an interview with VPFA member, Andrew King, who will be one of the keynote speakers (with Jennifer Phegley) at the third annual conference in July. We are particularly grateful to Andrew for being so generous with his time to offer us his views on a range of issues in a thought-provoking, insightful, and often inspirational interview. We would also like to thank Catherine Pope for her review of a new edition of Mona Caird's 1889 novel, *The Wing of Azrael*.

The editors welcome suggestions about the sort of features VPFA members would like to see in future newsletters. Please tell us about conferences you are organising, exciting projects you are working on, or anything else you think would be of interest to fellow members. Comments or items for inclusion can be e-mailed to us at the addresses below. We look forward to seeing many of you at the conference in July. ■

Anne-Marie Beller and Julie Bizzotto

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Victorian Popular Fiction Association

The Victorian Popular Fiction Association was established by Jane Jordan and Greta Depledge in 2009 to offer a regular forum for the dissemination of research in this growing area of Victorian studies.

The planning of the Victorian Popular Novelists 1860-1900 conference in September 2009 confirmed to the Association's founders that research into this area of Victorian studies was both diverse and rewarding. Besides our annual conference we are committed to holding regular research seminars in order to enable academics working in this field to share their work and establish and maintain a vibrant network of collaborative scholarship.

It is the long term aim of the Association to produce a peer reviewed journal in order to publish the latest research into Victorian popular fiction. ■

Jane Jordan and Greta Depledge

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Interested in joining the VPFA? For membership information visit www.fass.kingston.ac.uk/research/victorian/.

2010 Annual Conference Thanks Victorian Popular Culture: Prose, Stage & Screen

22–24 July 2010, Institute for English Studies,
University of London

In July 2010, members of the VPFA came together in London for the second annual conference on the topic of 'prose, stage and screen'. One of the key strands of the conference theme was adaptation. Thanks to all participants and attendees for making it such a terrific conference. And a special thanks to the keynote speakers: Professor Kate Newey (Birmingham University) and Dr Nickianne Moody (John Moores University Liverpool). ■



The organising committee of the 2010 conference: (from left to right) Robert Maidens, Jane Jordan, Greta Depledge, and Catherine Pope.

Photograph courtesy of Nickianne Moody.

The VPFA Interview

*As a keynote speaker at the next VPFA annual conference, we were delighted when **Andrew King** agreed to be the first subject of the VPFA interview. His thoughtful, shrewd, and entertaining responses make us look forward with enthusiasm to hearing his paper this summer.*

What's the best thing about being an academic?

The best thing for me is that part of my job involves exploring areas of knowledge that I know nothing about. That's why I wanted to be an academic and to a large extent it's what I've got out of it. In other words, I'm able to indulge my insatiable curiosity – to ask with perfect legitimacy as an adult the question that so infuriated my parents when I was a child: "Why?" I'm not at all sure I have or shall ever arrive at any definitive answers, but it's the excitement of and pleasure in putting words before a question mark that is - without question – the motive force behind what I do. Sometimes that question is why; at other times, it's what, or how or who or when – all those journalistic questions systematised by Carr Van Anda (the managing editor of the *New York Times* in the early twentieth century). Actually I don't think I want definitive answers, as then there'd be no reason to ask questions. Being institutionally legitimated to move with the kinetic energy behind questions and to galvanise and give space to others to move likewise – that's the best thing about being an academic. It's something we need to nurture and protect, as there is a danger – sometimes overestimated but nonetheless real – that such intellectual motility is being boxed, packaged and sanitised for commercial ends. Pessimists think that resistance is futile. I'm not so gloomy when I listen to some students.

What's the worst thing?

Dealing with people who don't want questions, who are afraid of them and refuse to acknowledge their fear through bravado or a facade of indifference, who prefer to remain immobile, frozen, locked in – or (the sophisticated response) who put on a front of engagement in dialogue while the armour underneath the artificial skin has rusted up completely so that communication and flexibility are impossible. While this latter is all too familiar at meetings in institutional settings, I'm not at all sure it's the worst thing about being an academic. I always hope that the rust will eat through the armour and liberate the body beneath, even if only a little, and that I'll witness this process. Worse I think is when students, statues hitherto, warm to life too late – at the end of the final year, perhaps, when they enter my office just before their exams and in anguish ask

what they are to do. That always hurts – why didn't they come earlier? I suspect that will be a scenario familiar to many readers.

What appeals to you about the Victorian period?

It's a return to my roots. Of course every idea of a beginning is a make believe, but it's in the Victorian period that I feel modern society starts: advertising agencies really get going (with all that that implies about celebrity, targeting, funding of media texts), the professions assume recognizable forms and establish familiar practices, entertainment as well as production become industrialised, society becomes electric, photographed, filmed, psychologised and sociologised, cultural production and consumption are reconfigured into fields whose contours persist today, globalisations and conservations, cultural and military imperialisms, sexual, class, race and gender oppressions, resistances, mobilities – and the Music of the Future with Siegfried's heroic horn call hunting for the unknown and unexperienced. The question seems to me to be rather what's there not to generate energetic engagement with the Victorian period?

Having taught at universities overseas as well as in the UK, how do they compare? Is there anything in particular you miss about teaching and working abroad?

This is a tricky question to answer as there are so many factors involved. First of all, overseas I was always the lowest of the low and on temporary contract. This meant a feeling of job insecurity even if, as in Italy as a *lettore* in the 1980s, I was constantly told that I should never worry that my contract might not be renewed. Indeed, that was the case as long as I cared to stay. In later places and countries I was only ever present as the accompanying spouse of my wife, who worked for the British Council, so I was always temporary and an outsider. That had the advantage that I remained outside the petty politicking that can generate a lot of unnecessary unhappiness within institutions. It also gave me a lot of freedom to come and go and choose what I wanted to teach. The only dedicated Victorian popular literature course I have ever taught was in Poland. The students were superb (as indeed were the students in Romania, though I never taught anything Victorian there).

Was your path into academia a traditional one, and did you ever want to pursue a different career?

My path to where I am now was by no means straightforward, and I'm glad about that. Throughout my childhood

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The VPFA Interview *cont.*

and adolescence I wanted to be a composer but faced firm opposition from my family – the fearful hostility by the provincial petty bourgeois of anything unfamiliar. In a bizarre and accidental compromise with them, I ended up reading classical and medieval Latin as an undergraduate. After two years of being more friendly with music students than my fellow Latinists, I “found” Latin in my third year and started to enjoy it. Feeling I had to pursue either music or Latin, I made a pyre in the garden and burnt all my compositions, though I hung on to my collection of scores (which I still have and read myself to sleep with). I stayed on to do an MA in Medieval Studies. Now wanting to explore the wider world beyond Gothic book hands and musical notation, I went to Italy determined to immerse myself in another culture and its history. I spent most of the 1980s first as a language teacher in a private school in the north and then as a *lettore* at the University of Catania in Sicily. In 1990 I got married to an Overseas Career Officer in the British Council and the next decade I spent living with her in the Philippines and Central Europe – and doing first an MA in English at Sussex where I wrote a far too ambitious dissertation under Jenny Taylor on Answers to Correspondents in penny periodicals, and then a part-time PhD on the *London Journal* under Laurel Brake’s expert guidance. After a few years of sessional work at Birkbeck and Hertfordshire, I got a full-time job in the Media Department at CCCU.

This is not at all a conventional career trajectory, but it’s one I’m very grateful for and it helps me do my job better. First it’s given me a wide background in European (and more recently non-European) culture in a broad sense beyond the literary or the popular. That, I hope, enables me to contextualise texts in ways a more conventional education would not have done. Unsurprisingly, it is one of the reasons I became interested in Ouida. As you know, she lived in Italy for the last four decades of her life and negotiated the high-status cosmopolitan environment she inhabited for some time there with the requirements of the mass-market fiction reader. Second, my biographical arc has opened me to students who achieve less well than the more advantaged and directed might. Students at CCCU often (usually?) come already feeling they’ve failed. They are frustrated, their energies blocked, frozen -- for all they may be wild party animals. I understand that – been there, done it. I try to thaw them out. I’m certainly not as successful as I’d like, but I do think it’s my duty to try as others, such as my much missed mentor in Sicily, Professor Alba Floreale, tried with me.

What characteristics do you believe make the ideal student?

Passion, precision, persistence, interrogation of everything, initiative, courage to confess to partial answers or no answers, organisation with flexibility, openness to exploring a wider field of vision than beyond the immediate project (time-frame permitting), willingness to take responsibility for action, warm commitment combined with cool distance. I hope you’ll note that none of this language is used in the marking criteria of validation documents, which have their rationale and place – but that is not here. You did ask about what I believed was “ideal”!

As a scholar with a background in Medieval Studies, who is also interested in Modernism and other more traditionally canonical literature, what initially drew you to researching popular fiction and Victorian periodicals?

The question mark I placed behind the cultural values I held in the twentieth century! It seemed to me that so many of them have their roots in a reaction to the nineteenth. The medieval seemed too far away from me by the time I left Sicily. The immediate, conscious, trigger was my reading of Foucault’s *History of Sexuality* volume 1, where I noticed that Foucault had depended entirely on restricted market texts in what claimed to be an analysis of an entire society. That didn’t seem to be methodologically valid. At a deeper level, though, I was coming to realise that, having reacted against my shopkeeper/ school-teacher background by embracing a resolutely non-utilitarian Art – at first versions of a post-Wagnerian Music of the Future – those old stories that my forebears read and told each other were still circulating in my head for all that I despised them. I came indeed to believe that my very notion of a non-utilitarian Art was at least partially derived from them. So I set out to find out what those stories were. I found them in nineteenth-century mass-market fiction and periodicals.

And do you think an element of snobbery regarding the “popular” as a valid field of research still exists?

Indeed I do. It seems to me that the canon has refrozen – not that it melted much except to accommodate (really the technical word would be “incorporate”) a few more texts by women and non-white writers. Supposedly abstract criteria of “excellence” which favour the canonical retain their hegemony. Just the other day I gave a talk in an English department on fiction published by Edward Lloyd. At the end I was asked what the point of studying such rubbish was. I had to repeat the argument which I’d made so many times before. It was that study of publishers like Lloyd had

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The VPFA Interview *cont.*

the potential first to help us see that the conventions of a few publishing houses whose market strategy was based on the idea of selling themselves as gatekeepers of Culture determined our criteria of excellence. Second, that it challenged any unambiguous notion of a trickle-down model of culture, as Lloyd's publications – examples of "kitchen literature" – trickled up, influencing the drawing-room sensation novel, the now para-canonical *Dracula* (on which the traces of *Varney the Vampyre* are pretty well established, as I doubt I need to remark in this context), and so on. Finally, that their confused typography and plots do not mean that Lloyd's publications are empty of content or poetry. Sophisticated poetic conceits and subtle, even philosophical, aperçus are commonly exchanged even in improvised everyday speech. But to hear those poetic devices and understand those observations requires us to hear differently, to try to bracket (insofar as we can) our received ideas of where philosophy and poetry lie. In the same way, we have to read the popular with all the respect and attention we have been trained to bring to the canonical, to the high status. Alas, the reply to my justification was that excellent writing was excellent writing irrespective of time and place.

That saddened me. I continue to hope that in our engagements with other people and their textual productions (of any sort, viva voce, written, visual) we are usually not giving marks against abstract criteria as in an exam or other assessment but trying to make productive relationships. To do that involves some kind of exchange: a sharing of words perhaps, the unconscious mirroring of a gesture or pose, or the giving and receiving of stories. When we are marking, or selecting papers for inclusion in a journal or book, that is another matter: our grades are in theory guarantees of a student's level of skill or the validity of a writer's claims. I don't see the point of giving grades to texts of the long dead, as if they were ranked in a class being sorted for different kinds of work just as I don't see the point of the literary rankings and prizes today beyond their purpose as marketing events. Is all we do in literary history a marketing job, pushing some texts (edited by someone we know no doubt) ahead of others? While of course there is an academic market for texts, I don't want to believe that the market is the only determinant of what we do. That Procrustean application of abstract criteria (often not even clearly formulated) seems violent to me, analogous (but not equivalent) to colonial dismissal of other cultures as

worthless. I try now for an emic approach: what is it about a text or a corpus of texts or a culture that I can use to understand it. What when reading offers a satori, a sudden and unpredictable moment of enlightenment?

In an essay from 1893 ("Le Secret du Précepteur" in the *Fortnightly*) Ouida, who did judge novels according to abstract criteria, remarks that we must bring to "a fine novel ... as cultured and as respectful a study ... as an educated traveller would take to the Vatican or to the Uffizi." I think we need to do that to every text, not just "fine novels," and indeed, wherever possible, to every person.

If you could choose any superpower, what would it be?

By that question I don't think you are asking about my geopolitical preference for the USA or China or another of the G8+5, though that possibility amused me. I'm taking it to refer to the many descendents of Eugene Sue's Rodolphe in his *Mystères de Paris*, Superman, Batman and so on. My superpower in that sense would be to accomplish 60 hours worth of work in 12. As a child I loved DC and Marvel Comics and seem to remember thinking Dr Fate was cool – he could fly, teleport, was telepathic and telekinetic. Any or preferably all of those superpowers would come in handy. The alternative is the energy, creativity and work ethic of any number of Victorian authors.

Which Victorian character would you say you most resemble?

My wife says Casaubon; I say Ladislav, though I am in fantasy Erceldoune in Ouida's *Idalia*: "a keen sportsman, the first rider in Europe... equally at his ease in an Arab camp and a Paris café, in a Polish snow storm, with the wolves baying in wrath and famine about the sleigh, and in the chancellerie of a British plenipotentiary over the dainty dishes of a First Secretary's dinner... [with] an iron constitution, a frame steeled to all changes of climate and inroads of fatigue, and that coolness under close peril, and utter indifference to personal indulgence, which made him renowned in the [diplomatic] messenger service and as much at home in the Desert as a Sheik...". Hm. Maybe not the "indifference to personal indulgence" or the "sportsman" in the sense of huntin' and shootin'.

All this raises the question of how we negotiate the differences between our perception of ourselves as we are and would like to be, and how others see us and would like us to behave. I'll leave that as a question for the moment, but I may well return to it at a later date.

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The VPFA Interview *cont.*

Where do you see Victorian studies going in the next few years? What trends do you think are on the horizon? Are there any areas you see losing momentum?

I feel outside mainstream Victorian studies due to my position in a media department where I'm surrounded by colleagues resolutely committed to the shock and technology of the new. As a result I find this question very hard. I feel certain though that the effects of digitization have not finished being thought through, not least in the way that various barriers (pay, geographical location) are being erected for access: who will benefit and who will lose? Will the internet really have changed much in terms of what social groups have access to what knowledge? The notion of media specificity, which is understandably dear to many who decry the crumbling of many Victorian (and other) paper originals, and which partly (but by no means exclusively) underlies concern about the move of newspapers out of Colindale, is another issue that is in need of more sustained thought. These are questions relevant not only to Victorian studies, but that doesn't mean to say we shouldn't address them. I don't want to be too pessimistic about pay and geographical barriers as for those of us who study the popular historically, digitization has made available thousands of texts we should never otherwise have been able to access. In that sense the internet has the potential, in its present configuration, to breach the walls of the canonical and open out the city of literature to a wider commerce. The internet, for the student of the popular, is what Virgil in the *Georgics* called felices ... silvae, fruitful, fruit-bearing, woods. We still need an overall dynamic map of those woods – a Google-earth view of nineteenth-century truly popular fiction. We know all too well that we sometimes can't see the wood for the trees serendipitously in front of us. This is a vast project that still needs doing despite the remarkable work of many from Richard Altick, Louis James and Sally Mitchell onwards. We also still need more studies that place individual popular texts, periodicals, authors in that wood, or part of that wood. The trees before us may obscure the pathways but the internet does enable orientation and connections that have never been achieved before. Social media such as the VICTORIA discussion group can help in that they can link up scholars working in different parts of the wood so that local maps can be shared. To some extent they are similar to conferences and study days, such as those run by the VPFA, RSVP and SHARP, though I have to confess I'm old enough to prefer corporeal to virtual conferences.

We need, too, to acknowledge our debt to the internet and be grateful for the gifts it has hitherto (pretty much) freely given us. Perhaps we should consider passing on the gifts by means of contribution of our labour so that even more texts can be accessed, edited, elucidated, contextualised. This is a hard task when working conditions are daily becoming – shall we say “astringent”? But it is an idea I believe we should store away for happier, more relaxed days even if we personally can't yet turn that idea into action. In terms of what is losing momentum, alas, I see – I hope mistakenly – as under threat overt and deliberate political intervention in the present through the study of the past, though, at the same time, I am delighted that there are Victorianists who are still actively engaged with explaining the social and political import of what they do. Just yesterday I was at a screen studies conference where almost all the papers I went to, including the plenaries, comprised hard-to-contest, comfortable, even celebratory close readings of individual commercial texts. At best they were accounts enclosed within their disciplines with no thought for the wider social implications of what they were saying. I have observed a similar focus in Victorian studies as well. We need to establish the value of what we do in terms other than just celebration of what we like. I'm not arguing here for a narrowly utilitarian approach but rather that we should keep before us at all times the question of how the past inflects us and reflects us. Thus, in a recent article on the *Family Herald* in *Victorian Periodicals Review* I wanted to remind readers that capitalism is not the only economy we live in. There are indeed alternatives – and we live them every day. They are casual, temporary economies based not on exploitation and the profit-motive, but co-operative, communitarian - sometimes masking exploitation and the profit-motive – but not always. Herbert Spencer may now be most famous for the phrase “survival of the fittest” but he also acknowledged that altruism and community contribute to what the “fittest” is. The phrase does not mean, as Ouida's wicked William Massarene believes, “survival of the strongest”. So often in our studies of the workings of capital in Victorian popular culture, it is Massarene's notion that we risk endorsing as an unalterable condition of society, even if we don't intend to. But 1) that notion is not true and 2) would we really want it if it were the case? It's like the fortunately outmoded convention of focussing on the lack of women's agency in Victorian times. Of course women were disempowered by the law, by medicine and by convention. But decades of work now has

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The VPFA Interview cont.

demonstrated how women were never simply pieces of furniture to be passed between men. Students of Victorian popular culture have been assiduous in excavating new evidence both historical and literary that show women in charge of their lives, contesting the conventions, flouting the law, pleasuring themselves as well as or instead of men or others generally. Such examples remain a resource of hope that things can be different. They should not, however, obliterate the real oppressions that women did suffer and continue to suffer. I wanted my examination of the co-existence of the gift economy and capitalism to enable us to see double – to mix simultaneously, without the aid of rose-glasses, visions of hope and reality. Only through that double vision can we experience the 3-D effect of the

past leaning out of the page on the screen in order to offer us the material hope of transformation and – dare I say it? – improvement (and what that improvement consists in is always and necessarily questionable – note: see question 1 above). An enlightenment project – a very Victorian one. And while accepting its need for constant interrogation, that project is not something I will apologise for.

In the current challenging climate, do you have any advice for people just entering the profession?

Persevere, be canny, don't be snobbish, apply for any job anywhere in the world you think you're likely to get, and don't forget that studying the popular academically is a political decision, not an excuse for fandom. ■

**Victorian Popular Fiction Association
3rd Annual Conference, 18th & 19th July 2011**

Sex, Courtship, and Marriage in Victorian Popular Culture

Institute for English Studies, University of London

Keynote speakers:

Dr. Andrew King, Canterbury Christ Church University

Dr. Jennifer Phegley, University of Missouri, Kansas City.

After our very successful conferences of 2009 and 2010 the Victorian Popular Fiction Association announces its third annual conference to be held 18th – 19th July 2011.

The themes we would like to develop are ideas of sex, courtship and marriage, and the ways in which they are explored and represented in Victorian popular culture. This theme enables us to develop our interdisciplinary interests in nineteenth-century culture, and our understanding of the many and varied attitudes towards relationships throughout the Victorian period.

We are pleased to announce that our keynote speakers will be Jennifer Phegley (University of Missouri) and Andrew King (Canterbury Christ Church), both of whom will be addressing aspects of the conference theme.

Papers relevant to the conference theme may be drawn from any aspect of Victorian popular culture and may address literal or metaphorical representations of the theme. We remain committed to promoting research in any aspect of Victorian popular fiction, and the revival of interest in understudied male and female popular writers from this period will again be pivotal to this conference, as we look to build on the foundations we established at our conferences in 2009 and 2010.

Topics might include, but are not restricted to:

- Sex and marriage in the periodical press
- The circulating libraries and their attitude to sex and marriage in Victorian fiction
- Sex and marriage on the Victorian stage
- Social codes governing courtship
- Courtship protocol and etiquette
- Physical relationships and intimacy
- Sex, marriage and emigration
- Taboos related to sex, courtship or marriage
- Sex, marriage and death
- Medical attitudes towards sex and marriage
- Unconventional or transgressive relationships
- Marital harmony and the professional man or woman
- Representations of divorce, separation or the legal position of married women in popular culture

Registration is now open:

<http://ies.sas.ac.uk/events/conferences/2011/VictorianPF3/index.htm>. ■

Study Days of the VPFA

In addition to the annual conference, the VPFA hosts a number of Study Days throughout the year. The most recent of these took place on Saturday March 5th 2011 at the Institute of English Studies, Senate House. This was a themed day, focusing on Amelia B. Edwards and Mary Elizabeth Braddon. The session was well-attended, with a lively debate following the two papers.

Tara MacDonald (University of Amsterdam) delivered the first paper, 'Sensational Reading in Amelia B. Edwards's *Hand and Glove* and *Barbara's History*', which focused on the difficulties experienced by Victorian reviewers in classifying Edwards's fiction. MacDonald argued that Edwards herself reflected on her novels' hybrid status by emphasizing the risks of sensational reading, even as she penned sensation plotlines. Through a discussion of *Hand and Glove* (1858) and *Barbara's History* (1863), the paper considered Edwards's self-reflexive representation of the dangers, for female readers, of applying melodramatic scripts to real life scenarios.

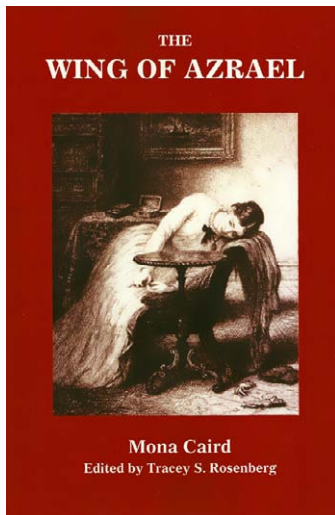
In the second paper of the day, "She knows much that ladies are not accustomed to know": The Gendering of Knowledge and Experience in the Fiction of Amelia B. Edwards and M. E. Braddon', Anne-Marie Beller (Loughborough University) examined the gendering of different forms of knowledge in the fiction of, and contemporary critical response to, both Edwards and Braddon. The paper focused on *My Brother's Wife* and *Eleanor's Victory*.



The VPFA organisers welcome suggestions and offers of papers for future study days. Enquiries should be directed to Jane Jordan or Greta Depledge. For details of previous VPFA Study Days, visit <http://fass.kingston.ac.uk/research/victorian/>. ■

Book Review: *The Wing of Azrael* by Mona Caird

Edited by Tracey S. Rosenberg
Valancourt Books (2010)
ISBN 978-1-934555-94-1



Mona Caird is best known for her 1888 article "Marriage", in which she argued that the venerable institution was a "vexatious failure". A reactionary retaliation in the *Daily Telegraph* prompted 27,000 letters, with many of the correspondents agreeing with Caird's gloomy assessment. The ensuing debate, "Is Marriage a

Failure?", captured the imagination of the public, spawning a book, a card game, and even an automaton. *The Wing of Azrael* (1889) was published in the following year, and the novel was judged largely in the context of the author's polemical writings. With this in mind, Caird included a preface in which she attempted to establish a clear demarcation between the two, explaining: "however much this

book may be thought to deal with the question so much discussed, there is no intention on the writer's part to make it serve a polemical 'purpose' or to advocate a cause. Its object is not to contest or argue, but to represent." Notwithstanding Caird's intention, *The Wing of Azrael* is incontrovertibly a novel with a purpose, but it is, nonetheless, a fine example of the form.

The novel tells the story of spirited Viola Sedley, who is promised at an early age to the cruel and sadistic Sir Philip Dendraith. Although in love with another man, Viola is forced to do her duty to her family in order to avert their financial ruin. Her father and brothers have run up large debts and are relying on Sir Philip's vast wealth to save them. Initially resigned to her fate, Viola soon discovers that marriage to a tyrant is intolerable. Denied the right to any identity of her own, she valiantly struggles to assert her selfhood, culminating in a dramatic and memorable conclusion.

Viola's circumscribed upbringing is vividly portrayed. There is no option for her other than to marry, and to do so for family advantage, rather than in accordance with her own wishes. Her father tells her that a daughter who will not marry is a "dead weight", a "DAMNED NUISANCE", and a

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Book Review: *The Wing of Azrael* by Mona Caird Cont.

figure to be scorned and derided. Although her worthlessness as a woman is constantly reiterated, her marriage to Sir Philip is her family's salvation, effectively saving them from the workhouse. Viola desperately tries to cancel her engagement after witnessing her future husband's extreme brutality toward animals, but her mother refuses to even entertain the idea, caring more for what the neighbours might think than for the happiness and potential safety of her daughter.

Mrs Sedley has continually indulged her own husband's tyrannical behaviour, thus providing Viola with a model of self-abnegation and martyrdom. Her sense of self completely destroyed, Viola agrees to go ahead with the marriage, although she makes it clear to Sir Philip that she is an "unwilling bride". Sir Philip subsequently delights in the challenge of "taming" her and achieving her complete subjugation. Although physical violence is only ever threatened and not actioned, he inflicts appalling mental cruelty upon his young wife: "He rules her with a rod of iron ... and she lives in deadly fear of him." Twenty years earlier, Anthony Trollope showed in *He Knew He Was Right* and *Phineas Redux* that psychological abuse also constituted marital violence, but Caird creates a monster far surpassing both Louis Trevelyan and Robert Kennedy.

Having only her mother's example to follow, Viola is initially unaware that her husband's behaviour is unacceptable. The arrival of Mrs Sibella Lincoln, a woman separated from her husband, opens her eyes to the reality of the situation. Mrs Lincoln is generally regarded as a disruptive influence in the community, offering a bad example to its women. Sir Philip warns Viola that associating with the newcomer will cause her to lose her "bloom". Mrs Lincoln is ostensibly Caird's mouthpiece, counselling Viola (and the female reader) that she does not have to tolerate abuse, and calling for a mutually supportive sisterhood.

There are many similarities between *The Wing of Azrael* and Sarah Grand's *The Beth Book* (1897). Both Beth and Viola enter their marriages in an almost somnambulant state and are subsequently spurred into action by the outrageous acts perpetrated by their husbands. *The Wing of Azrael*, however, lacks Grand's acerbic humour and optimistic conclusion. The eponymous Azrael is the Angel of Death, and he casts a dark shadow over both the novel and marriage as a whole. Although Caird later argued for the reform of marriage, rather than its abolition, in *The Wing*

of Azrael she sees the married state as an endless cycle of exploitation that can be broken only by elective spinsterhood. Whereas Sarah Grand could see a place for the New Woman within marriage, Caird believed selfhood could not be achieved without complete independence. Ultimately, however, she sees such autonomy as unattainable, leaving women with an impossible choice between mercenary marriage and impecunious spinsterhood. The supportive sisterhood ultimately enjoyed by Beth Maclure is unavailable to Viola Sedley, and she is defeated as much by her mother's tacit acceptance of marital violence as by her husband's brutality. In her bleak portrayal, Caird makes no concessions to the potentially delicate sensibilities of her readers, or to the common desire for a happy ending.

The novel does in places incline toward the melodramatic, but it is tightly plotted and grips the reader throughout, building the tension to an almost unbearable pitch. The narrative combines elements of the Gothic and sensation novel, with the occasional nod to literary realism. Whereas many New Woman novels have failed to stand the test of time, *The Wing of Azrael* is eminently readable and also retains its ability to shock the modern reader. Caird does not entirely succeed in her aim to be non-polemical, but the strong narrative arc is able to withstand the occasional authorial intrusion.

Tracey Rosenberg contributes a thoughtful introduction, comparing the novel with Caird's other writings on marriage, and placing it within the wider context of New Woman fiction. Rosenberg also explains the literary constraints operating upon Caird, who was obliged to produce work in the three decker format (possibly explaining the melodramatic interludes), and examines the tensions between writing for a popular audience and not sacrificing her message. The illuminating appendices include a range of contemporary reviews and extracts from the extraordinary debate prompted by Caird's "Marriage" article. Valancourt Books are to be applauded for making it possible for modern readers to appreciate this unjustly forgotten novel and the enduring power of Caird's writing. ■

Catherine Pope

Recent Publications

Andrew Mangham and Greta Depledge (Eds.), *The Female Body in Medicine and Literature* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, Feb 2011).

This collection explores the complex intersections between literature and the medical treatment of women between 1600 and 2000. It will be the first single volume to fully analyse the impact of women's surgery on literary production and, conversely, ways in which literary trends have shaped the course of gynaecology and other branches of women's medicine.

The interdisciplinary essays underscore how popular art forms have served an important function in the formation of 'women's science' prior to the twenty-first century. The book also demonstrates how a number of high-profile medical controversies were taken up and reworked by novelists, philosophers, and historians. Focusing on the vexed and convoluted story of women's medicine, this volume offers new ways of thinking about gender, science, and the Western imagination.

Saverio Tomaiuolo, *In Lady Audley's Shadow: Mary Elizabeth Braddon and Victorian Literary Genres* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, Oct 2010).

This book is devoted to Mary Elizabeth Braddon's complex relationship with the three main Victorian literary genres: the Gothic, the Detective and the Realist novel. Using Braddon's bestselling sensation fiction *Lady Audley's Secret* as a paradigmatic novel and as a 'haunting' textual presence across her literary career, this study provides a fertile critical reading of a wide range of Braddon's novels and short stories. Through an analysis of Braddon's negotiations with Victorian narrative, ideological and cultural issues, this monograph offers readers a refreshing view of gender, female identity and subjectivity, the treatment of insanity, questions related to technology and progress, the impact of evolutionism and Darwinism, the intersemiotic dialogue between pictorial art and novel-writing, the role of the (female) writer in the new literary market and the changing notion of capital in an increasingly fluid social context. Braddon's manipulation of Victorian literary codes and conventions proves that she was something more than a mere sensation writer and that her primary role in the nineteenth-century literary scene has to be reaffirmed. Drawing on a wide range of textual materials and literary sources, the book foregrounds Braddon's constant and sometimes ambivalent dialogue with her times, and with ours as well.

Richard Fantina, *Victorian Sensational Fiction: The Daring Work of Charles Reade* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

Sensation fiction emerged in the 1860s, and immediately generated alarm as many critics viewed the genre as a threat to prevailing Victorian values. Charles Reade, along with Wilkie Collins and Mary Elizabeth Braddon, was among the most well-known sensation novelists. With its explicit critique of power relations in the fields of medicine, criminal justice, and sexual mores, Reade's work anticipates Michel Foucault's theories elaborated a century later. Reade's work also provides rare glimpses of alternative sexualities and gender identities in nineteenth-century fiction. This book recovers the fiction of Charles Reade as a body of work that anticipates recent trends in literary and cultural theory.

Joanne Shattock (Ed). *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature, 1830–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

The nineteenth century witnessed unprecedented expansion in the reading public and an explosive growth in the number of books and newspapers produced to meet its demands. These specially commissioned essays examine not only the full range and variety of texts that entertained and informed the Victorians, but also the boundaries of Victorian literature: the links and overlap with Romanticism in the 1830s, and the roots of modernism in the years leading up to the First World War. The Companion demonstrates how science, medicine and theology influenced creative writing and emphasizes the importance of the visual in painting, book illustration and in technological innovations from the kaleidoscope to the cinema. Essays also chart the complex and fruitful interchanges with writers in America, Europe and the Empire, highlighting the geographical expansion of literature in English. This Companion brings together the most important aspects of this prolific and popular period of English literature.

Contributors: Joanne Shattock, Josephine Guy, Mary Hammond, Alison Booth, Susan Hamilton, Hilary Fraser, Sally Ledger, Katherine Newey, Gowan Dawson, Jenny Bourne Taylor, Andrew Sanders, John Plunkett, Patrick Brantlinger, Bridget Bennett, Alison Chapman.

Sigrid Anderson Cordell, *Fictions of Dissent: Reclaiming Authority in Transatlantic Women's Writing of the Late Nineteenth Century* (London: Pickering & Chatto Publishers, 2010).

Fin-de-siècle women's fiction by both British female aesthetes and American women regionalists repeatedly stages moments of rebellion in which female characters rise up

cont.

Recent Publications *Cont.*

and (literally or metaphorically) resist being incorporated into works of art. Cordell asserts that these revolutionary acts constitute a transatlantic conversation that ties together apparently disparate preoccupations with national identity, aesthetic practice and the question of creative ownership.

Traditional divisions between Victorian and American studies have largely dictated that these two groups of writers be treated as isolated entities. Given the robust exchange of texts and ideas across the Atlantic during the period, this division overlooks the lines of influence that emerged within a transnational reading public. *Fictions of Dissent* draws on both women's studies and book history to bridge this gap, while at the same time remaining attentive to the specifics of national difference. By examining these concerns through the work of both familiar and relatively unfamiliar women writers and within texts that circulated across national borders, Cordell's work builds on and extends recent scholarship and reveals the ways in which New Women writers saw political and economic independence as being intertwined with artistic and narrative autonomy.

Alberto Gabriele, *Reading Popular Culture in Victorian Print: "Belgravia" and Sensationalism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

Reading Popular Culture in Victorian Print offers a comprehensive study of the monthly periodical *Belgravia* and the innovative place it holds in the history of print culture. The book investigates important questions about the status of authors in the marketplace, the rhetoric of sensationalism, and the use of urban space as a branding strategy, ultimately making the claim that the periodical is the sensation novel of the 1860s.

Sara Malton, *Forgery in nineteenth-century literature and culture: Fictions of finance from Dickens to Wilde* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

In *Forgery in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture*, Sara Malton insists that we fully account for the prominence of forgery in the nineteenth-century cultural imagination. Examining a range of works from Dickens to Wilde, she considers how social and legal contexts inform the shifting representation of the crime and its varied perpetrators throughout the nineteenth century. Distinct in its historical attentiveness, *Forgery in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture* illuminates the breadth of cultural issues to which this "crime of the first magnitude" is linked. ■

Upcoming Conferences and Events

Urban Gothic, Haunted Cities, Spectral Traces

One-Day Conference in Liverpool, UK
24 April 2010

Organised by the North Gothic Network, a regional network of the International Gothic Association, in partnership with Edinburgh Napier University, Liverpool John Moores University and Edge Hill University.

Scholars of Gothic are increasingly welcoming historicised studies of Gothic and literary criticism examining how Gothic tropes and modes are inflected for a particular time and place. Even more specifically, critics call for studies not only of historicised Gothic, but of localised Gothic. In a discussion of these recent trends, Roger Luckhurst suggests that Gothic criticism pay fresh attention to the way location functions, for, 'it is worth recalling that ghosts are held to haunt specific locales, are tied to what late Victorian psychical researchers rather splendidly termed "phantasmogenetic Centres". This might suggest that the ghosts of London are different from those of Paris, or those of California.' This conference takes the specificity of urban 'phantasmogenetic centres' as an organizing principle, aiming to explore particular representations of urban gothic in literature, film, television and graphic novels.

Keynote speakers include:

Professor Sue Zlosnik (MMU), Dr Ben Highmore (Sussex), the artist Gerry Gapinski, who illustrates graphic novels of urban gothic, and Dr Heidi Grunebaum (to be confirmed), scholar of South African urban topography and Apartheid.

Insanity and the Lunatic Asylum in the Nineteenth Century

One-Day Conference in Birmingham, UK
13 May 2011

"The place where optimism flourishes most is the lunatic asylum" (Havelock Ellis).

This interdisciplinary conference will address a range of issues concerning the perception of insanity and madness in the nineteenth century, its manifestations and treatments, and the patients themselves. The conference will take place on Friday 13th May, 2011, in the chapel of the Birmingham Lunatic Asylum, an impressive building used to restrain and treat patients from 1862 until 1964.

cont.

Upcoming Conferences and Events *Cont.*

The Futures of Feminism: New Directions in Feminist, Women's & Gender Studies

Annual FWSA Conference, Brunel University
5–7 July 2011

Since the final decade of the twentieth century, discussions about and within feminism have often focused on feminism's place and relevance in today's Western societies and on the conceptualisations of the relationships between different strands and waves of the movement. This conference seeks to redress the focus on internal and generational divisions by exploring potential feminist futures and investigating new directions in feminist, gender and women's studies across activism, theory and practice in a range of disciplines and through a variety of social and cultural phenomena. As such, the event aims to address both where feminism is going as well as where it has not yet been, including areas of enquiry which have been neglected or ignored in past decades and approaches which conceptualise or help to shape potential feminist futures. For more information about the FWSA, including current competitions, joining information and contact details, please visit: www.fwsa.org.uk

Politics, Performance and Popular Culture in Nineteenth-Century Britain

7–9 July 2011

In particular, we are interested in examining the extent to which popular theatre can reveal public perceptions of contemporary social and political issues. And conversely, how might popular entertainment influence and shape contemporary political debate?

Confirmed speakers include:

Jim Davis (Warwick), Tracy Davis (Northwestern), Brian Maidment (Salford), David Mayer (Manchester), Rohan McWilliam (Anglia Ruskin), Kate Newey (Birmingham) and Mike Sanders (Manchester).

Conference website:

<http://www.drama.bham.ac.uk/conferences/19thcentury.shtml>

The Famed and The Forgotten

English Graduate Conference
English Faculty, University of Oxford
10 June 2011

How are the famed forgotten and how do the forgotten become famed? How are fame, infamy and anonymity broached, contested and refracted? What comprises the literary canon and what merits canonicity? Oxford University's English Graduate Conference, to take place 10 June 2011, will provide English postgraduates across the United Kingdom with the opportunity to explore the ideas "famed" and "forgotten" in the broadest possible terms, considering genre, methodology, materials, characters, language, periods and everything in between.

Conference website:

<http://graduate-conference.english.ox.ac.uk/>

Work and Leisure

Research Society for Victorian Periodicals
43rd Annual Conference
Canterbury Christ Church University, UK
22–23 July 2011

Much of the Victorian Press was built on an interdependency of work and leisure. Texts designed for consumption in leisure hours were created by armies of workers: authors, illustrators and editors, of course, but also printers' devils, water-colourists, photographers, ad agents, news-vendors, street sellers, and a host of others. Who exactly were these labourers and how were they organised? Then, what was the "leisure" that they promoted and how different was it from work? Reading the press is obviously an insufficient answer. Reading could be work for teachers, reviewers or those trying to entertain children or colleagues. To what extent, indeed, was leisure a ruse? How far did the Victorian press inscribe women's domestic labour as a form of leisure, or male work as pleasurable? More generally, how did the press fit into the wider context of the entertainment industry: the theatre, travel, music, exhibitions, sport and shopping?

Not all of the press was devoted to leisure and its limits. What of that enormous sector that unashamedly named their focus as work-related: the trade and professional press, newspaper pages devoted to the stock market and commodity prices, articles worrying over women in the workplace, over the masculinity of the civil servant, or over the demands of labourers on strike?

cont.

Upcoming Conferences and Events *Cont.*

Finally, what of the “cultural work” of the Victorian press? What was the function of the press in and on society? How might that cultural work relate to the pleasures of leisure? Conference website: <http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/arts-humanities/Media/victorian-periodicals-conference/home.aspx>

Composition and Decomposition

British Association of Victorian Studies
University of Birmingham, Edgbaston Campus
1–3 September 2011

The University of Birmingham will be hosting the 2011 BAVS Conference, 1–3 September 2011, on the Edgbaston campus. The theme reflects Birmingham’s own nineteenth-century history as the ‘workshop the world.’ Birmingham is a city intimately connected with industry and manufacture. However, one of its main exports in the nineteenth century was pens. Our conference thus draws on the double meaning of composition as both artistic practice and broader industrial process. At a time when the country as a whole, and this city in particular, is reflecting upon the legacy of industrial decline, this conference also invites speakers to think about its inverse, decomposition.

Keynote speakers include:

Dr Colin Cruise (University of Aberystwyth), author and curator of many works/exhibitions of Pre-Raphaelite art, including ‘Love Revealed: Simeon Solomon and the Pre-Raphaelites’ (2005–6) and the current ground-breaking ‘The Poetry of Drawing: Pre-Raphaelite Designs, Studies and Watercolours’ at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, January – May 2011. Professor Herbert Tucker, John C. Coleman Professor of Nineteenth-Century British Literature at the University of Virginia, and author of numerous works on Victorian poetry including his recent *Epic: Britain’s Heroic Muse 1790–1910* (OUP, 2008).

The Vulgar and the Proper: Victorian Manners and Mores

16th Annual Conference of the Victorian Interdisciplinary Studies Association of the Western United States, Houston, TX
13–15 October 2011

Keynote Speaker:

Helena Michie, Rice University; Plenary Speaker: Lynn Voskuil, University of Houston.

The 16th annual conference focuses on Victorian obsessions with vulgarity and propriety.

Conference website:

visit <http://visawus.org/>

Victorian Epidemics

Victorian Studies Association of Western Canada
Banff, Alberta
29–30 April 2011

Keynote speaker:

Pamela Gilbert, Albert Brick Professor of English, University of Florida.

This international conference will bring together specialists in Victorian art history, history, gender studies, science, and literature to contemplate the theme of disease in Victorian England and its colonies. Papers will address medical and social histories of disease, literary and artistic representations of disease, and disease as metaphor in Victorian culture.

Conference website:

http://web.uvic.ca/vsawc/?page_id=19

Spectres of Class: Representing Social Class from the French Revolution to the Present.

University of Chester, UK
15–16 July 2011

(Organised in association with CADAAD - Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis Across Disciplines).

For PDF poster - <http://english.chester.ac.uk/papers.php>. Organised by Professor Deborah Wynne and Dr Matt Davies, University of Chester English Department.

Confirmed keynote speakers:

Paul Kerswill, Professor of Sociolinguistics, University of Lancaster; Ruth Livesey, Reader in Nineteenth Century Literature and Thought, Royal Holloway, University of London

This interdisciplinary conference seeks to give a name to one of many spectres haunting the West: the spectre of class (manifested as movements, protests, identities, and inequalities). The gap between the rich and poor in the UK is currently the widest since the Second World War, according to a 2010 report by the National Equality Panel and, as the consequences of global recession deepen, the cuts imposed by governments in the West are likely to exacerbate social inequalities. In response to these forces, the Spectres of Class conference will consider the ways in which class is represented in language, literature and other cultural formations since the French Revolution, seeking to understand the historical basis of class identities and their manifestations today. Class was a central preoccupation of academic discourse in the twentieth century. In the last twenty years, however, the emphasis on class identity has become less pronounced as academics explore the power imbalances associated with gender, ethnicity, sexuality, disability status and nationality. Many important studies have emerged from these investigations. However, class issues

cont.

Upcoming Conferences and Events *Cont.*

cut across all these areas and, in the current climate of economic uncertainty, the material basis of class identities may come to challenge poststructuralist notions of identity as a lifestyle 'choice'.

Recoveries: Revisiting the Long Nineteenth Century

A one-day postgraduate conference at The University of Nottingham, UK
7 April 2011

Keynote Speakers:

Professor John Whale (University of Leeds) and Professor Josephine Guy (University of Nottingham)

Some would say it has been the business of recent literary and historical scholarship to recover 'lost,' 'forgotten' or 'misunderstood' 19th-century cultures, and in turn offer a new understanding of the period. This one-day interdisciplinary conference will focus on this scholarly practice from the perspective of author-driven recuperations. Recoveries seeks to explore the grounds upon which we recuperate and revalue nineteenth-century authors, and reflect upon how this practice (re)shapes our understanding of nineteenth-century cultures.

Conference website:

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/~aezweb/conference/doku.php?id=recoveries%3Ahome>. ■

Victorian Secrets

New and forthcoming titles

The Light that Failed – Rudyard Kipling's semi-autobiographical first novel based on his doomed relationship with a childhood sweetheart who instead loves another woman.

A Mummer's Wife – George Moore's controversial realist novel in which a bored Midlands housewife falls for the dubious charms of a travelling actor.

Vice Versâ – F. Anstey's hilarious tale of a father and son changing places. An overnight success when first published, its comic delights reportedly caused Anthony Trollope's fatal stroke.

Notable Women Authors of the Day – Helen C. Black's interviews with thirty late-Victorian writers, complemented by updated profiles and additional material.

All editions include critical introductions, suggestions for further reading, author biographies, and contextual appendices.

For more information, please visit:
www.victoriansecrets.co.uk. ■

Calls for Papers

Bram Stoker Centenary Conference 2012:

Bram Stoker and Gothic Transformations

12–14 April 2012 Organised by the University of Hull.

Locations: Derwent Building, University of Hull and Whitby, North Yorkshire

"My revenge has just begun! I spread it over centuries and time is on my side." (*Dracula*, 1897)

Count Dracula's declaration from Bram Stoker's iconic 1897 vampire novel is, in many ways, descriptive of the Gothic genre. Like the shape-shifting Transylvanian Count, the Gothic encompasses and has manifested itself in many forms since its emergence in 1764 with the publication of Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*. Its revenge has just begun. It has spread over centuries and time is on its side.

When Stoker wrote *Dracula* the genre was well over a hundred years old but the novel marks a key moment in the evolution of the Gothic – the text harks back to early Gothic's preoccupation with the supernatural, decayed aristocracy and incarceration in gloomy castles in foreign locales. *Dracula* speaks to its own time but also transforms the genre – a revitalization that continues to sustain the Gothic today.

On the eve of the centenary of Stoker's death, which occurred in April 1912, the University of Hull's Department of English and School of Arts and New Media, in association with the Centre for Victorian Studies, will host a three-day international conference, *Bram Stoker and Gothic Transformations*. The conference will take place at the Hull Campus of the University and in Whitby.

In *Dracula* Mina describes Whitby as a "lovely place" but it soon becomes a site of horror, when Dracula lands from the Demeter in the form of a dog to make his first appearance on English soil. At Whitby Abbey, Lucy becomes the Count's first English vampire bride.

The conference is interested in the iconic significance of Stoker's vampire novel and seeks to reappraise Stoker's work within its fin-de-siècle cultural climate. It is also interested in exploring the broader context of the changing nature of Gothic productions from the late eighteenth century to the present. Using *Dracula* as a key point in the evolution of the genre, it seeks to explore the novel's Gothic predecessors and influences, and the manner in which Stoker's work renewed the Gothic for future generations.

cont.

Calls for Papers *Cont.*

How do the Gothic's early themes of despotic rulers and fathers, grim prophecies, supernatural embodiments, incarceration, labyrinthine passages and corridors, threatened females, and sexual deviancy transform in subsequent cultural outputs from novels, theatre, films, television and computer games? How has the Gothic in its modern manifestations and variations sustained itself into a fourth century?

"At once escapist and conformist," Clive Bloom argues, "the Gothic speaks to the dark side of domestic fiction: erotic, violent, perverse, bizarre and obsessively connected with contemporary fears." How does the new Gothic of the twenty-first century engage in fantasy and fear?

The organising committee welcomes abstracts of 250-300 words for a 20 minute paper. Please send your abstract by email to Dr Catherine Wynne, University of Hull, UK (c.wynne@hull.ac.uk) by 1 May 2011.

Topics may include, but are not restricted to, the following areas:

- Stoker's work in its social, political and cultural context
- The development of the Gothic from Otranto to the twenty-first century
- Stoker's influence on the genre
- Irish and British Gothic
- Gothic theatre and drama
- Gothic visualities
- Gothic technologies
- Gothic bodies
- Gothic monstrosities
- Gothic sexualities
- Gothic psychologies
- Gothic narratives
- Gothic Intertextualities
- Gothic places and spaces
- Hauntings and spectrality
- Criminality and the Gothic
- Science and the Gothic
- Reincarnations of Dracula
- Vampirism and the 'Young Vampires' of the twenty first century
- Anti-Gothic, Gothic Parody, Comic Gothic

Conference website:

www2.hull.ac.uk/scarborough/conferences/bram-stoker.aspx

Haunted Men: Masculinity in the Ghost Stories of the Victorian and Edwardian Eras

One Day Symposium 5th September 2011

University College Falmouth www.falmouth.ac.uk

Keynote Speaker:

Professor William Hughes, Bath Spa University

The ghost story is often cited in contemporary commentary as a female genre. It is however a genre which follows the growing agitation for women's rights throughout the period; the rise of the New Woman, the suffragette movement and numerous political and legal changes. Diana Wallace argued that: 'The ghost story as a form has allowed women writers special kinds of freedom, not merely to include the fantastic and supernatural, but also to offer critiques of male power and sexuality which are often more radical than those in more realistic genres' (*Gothic Studies* 6.1 May 2004). This symposium will examine what happens to representations of men and masculinity in the ghost stories produced by both men and women in the face of growing criticism and change. Jennifer Uglow in the introduction to the *Virago Book of Ghost Stories* posits the idea that the men who see ghosts in these stories are pushed 'into conventional female roles: timid, nervous, helpless' (xvii). However, while sometimes ghosts and those men who see them are queered, manliness remains evident in some stories and in others muscular Christianity comes into play. Elsewhere rationality as well as religion is tested to its limits.

We invite 250-500 word proposals for 20 minute papers to be submitted by 29th April 2011 to ruth.heholt@falmouth.ac.uk The remit is wide, although there are some suggestions for topics/areas of discussion below:

Haunted Patriarchs; Ghosts in the Closet; Manly/Effeminate Ghosts; Ghosts in the domestic sphere; Sporting Ghosts (hunting, shooting, fishing etc); Ghost-hunting; Ghosts and authorship/readership; Haunting and performance; Haunting and technology. ■

Call for Journal Articles

The Latchkey: A Journal of New Woman Studies is pleased to call for submissions of scholarly articles and book reviews for the next two issues, to be published in November 2011 and in Spring 2012 respectively. All scholarly articles will undergo double blind peer review; book reviews will be published at the discretion of the editors. We accept submissions year-round. We are proud to feature a quick turnaround for submissions (usually no more than two to three months).

Submission guidelines and the latest issue can be found at <http://www.oscholars.com/Latchkey/start.htm>.

About *The Latchkey*: *The Latchkey* is a new online journal devoted to the concept of the New Woman, associated with the group of journals known as THE OSCHOLARS (www.oscholars.com), and published by The Rivendale.

The Latchkey covers the lives and writings of New Women authors and figures, the representation of the New Woman in literature, culture, art, and society, proto-feminism and early feminist journalism, and current innovative scholarship on the New Woman. While the term 'New Woman' originated in England, the cultural phenomenon extended beyond Britain and we wish to explore its presence (or reasons for its absence) and influence in other countries and across disciplines. We offer a much needed scholarly platform for inquiry, information, and exchange to academics, independent scholars and doctoral students working on these topics, and aim at covering both canonical and non-canonical New Woman figures and aspects.

Please direct any inquiries and submissions to the editorial team at unbolt@gmail.com. ■

Research Seminars and Lectures

Victorian Print and Popular Culture Seminar Series

Liverpool John Moores University (UK).

February 9th 2011

Dr Andrew King (Canterbury Christchurch University, Kent) "What Betsy Read: Sentiment and Sensation in the Kitchen 1840 - 1860".

March 16th 2011

Professor Brian Maidment (University of Salford) "A Jobbing Engraver in the Regency Print World - Robert Seymour 1825 - 1836".

April 20th 2011

Dr Juliet John (University of Liverpool) "Dickens and Mass Culture".

May 18th 2011

Margaret Beetham (MMU) - title TBC

To be held in room 103, Dean Walters Building, St James Road, Liverpool, Wednesday evenings between 5pm and 6.30pm. Refreshments to be provided.

For more information contact: Dr Clare Horrocks (Senior Lecturer in Media, Culture and Communication) C.L.Horrocks@ljmu.ac.uk. Tel: 0151 231 5035
Everyone welcome!

Victorian Studies Centre, University of Leicester

Spring Seminar Series 2011

19 January 2011

Dr Serena Baiesi (Università di Bologna), "But Italy, my Italy! Can it last, this gleam? Can she live and be strong?": Elizabeth Barrett Browning and the Italian Risorgimento'.

2 February 2011

Dr Rebecca Styler (University of Lincoln), 'Revelations of Childhood in the Spiritual Autobiographies of Anna Jameson and Mary Howitt'.

16 February 2011

Professor Clare Pettitt (King's College, London), 'Explorers in Print: Wonders, Miscellanies and News Culture'.

2 March 2011

Professor Elisabeth Jay (Oxford Brookes University), "They say that all the works bearing Dumas's name are not written by him. Well? Does not the chief cook have aides under him?" Or, What Did Thackeray Learn from Paris?'

16 March 2011

Dr Rohan McWilliam (Anglia Ruskin University), 'The West End of London in the Nineteenth Century'.

cont.

Research Seminars and Lectures *Cont.*

18 May 2011

Dr Richa Dwor (University of Nottingham), “‘The still undercurrent of deep feeling’”: Grace Aguilar, Amy Levy and the Literary Formation of Anglo-Jewish Identity’.

Everyone is welcome, and seminars take place at 5.15pm on Wednesdays in Room 1315, Attenborough Building. www.le.ac.uk/ee/vs/events.html.

2011 Departmental Lecture – Department of English & Drama, Loughborough University

11 May 2011

Lyn Pykett, ‘Material Girls: the Nineteenth-Century Sensation Novel and the Marketplace’

Martin Hall Theatre, Loughborough University.
Everyone welcome!

Annual Victorian Lecture 2011 at the University of Hull

Margaret Stetz. Mae and Robert Carter Professor of Women’s Studies and Professor of Humanities at the University of Delaware. ‘The Late-Victorian “New Man” and the Millennial “Neo-Man”’

25 March 2011, 6.00 p.m.

Lindsey Suite, Staff House, The University of Hull
Admission free, everyone welcome!

Margaret Stetz’s books include *Facing the Late Victorians: Portraits of Writers and Artists from the Mark Samuels Lasner Collection* (University of Delaware Press, 2007); *Gender and the London Theatre, 1880-1920* (Rivendale Press, 2004); *British Women’s Comic Fiction, 1890-1990* (Ashgate, 2001); a co-edited volume of essays (with Bonnie B. C. Oh) on military sexual slavery, *Legacies of the Comfort Women of WWII* (M. E. Sharpe, 2001); a co-edited volume of essays (with Cheryl A. Wilson) on two Victorian women poets, *Michael Field and Their World* (Rivendale Press, 2007); as well as co-authored books (with Mark Samuels Lasner), such as *England in the 1880s: Old Guard and Avant-Garde* (University of Virginia Press, 1989) and *England in the 1890s: Literary Publishing at the Bodley Head* (Georgetown University Press, 1990), which combine book history with cultural history. Her next book, *Oscar Wilde, New Women, the Bodley Head and Beyond*, is forthcoming from Rivendale Press. She has also co-curated numerous exhibitions on gender, art, and publishing history at venues such as the National Gallery of Art Library, Harvard University, the University of Virginia, Bryn Mawr College, and the Grolier Club in New York City.

The lecture is followed by a symposium on Neo-Victorian Art and Aestheticism (26 March). ■

New Journal Announcement

Victoriographies – A Journal of Nineteenth-Century Writing, 1790-1914 is concerned with writing of the long nineteenth century and writing about the nineteenth century. While committed to addressing the idea of what constitutes Victorian literature, *Victoriographies* also aims, in returning to the text as text, to explore not only, and as if for the first time, those canonical texts and authors that seem to be familiar, but also to interrogate the understudied, those years, decades, authors and publications which demand a response, and for which the journal aims to take responsibility.

Victoriographies encourages articles and research that focus on literary writing as writing, and not merely as a semi-transparent medium for sociological or historical investigation, naive in the assumption that language is solely a vehicle for presenting reality. The study and close analysis of the rhetoric and form of Victorian writing and the literary from 1790 to 1914 will be taken up with the explicit intention to explore, through close critical engagement and rigorous reading, notions of a ‘deep’ materiality or historicity, by which it is understood that there is a materiality of the letter commensurate with the materiality of history, and that language and literary mediation traces, and translates, the contours of such materiality and historicity.

In its principal focus of engagement, *Victoriographies* aims actively to encourage and invite articles that are interdisciplinary and theoretically oriented, and which give attention to philosophical, epistemological and ideological concerns, as these are embedded and encrypted in the surface and texture of the text itself. Aware of its own cultural and historical perspective, *Victoriographies* seeks to invent afresh the long nineteenth century.

This new journal will be published twice yearly, beginning May 2011, by Edinburgh University Press.

The first issue of *Victoriographies* is to focus on the theme ‘Whither Victorian Studies’. Any other papers are also welcomed for future issues, as are proposals for special editions. For more information contact Professor Julian Wolfreys (J.Wolfreys@lboro.ac.uk) or visit the webpage at <http://www.euppublishing.com/journal/vic>. ■

The VPFA Newsletter and logo were designed by Scott Ciruso: jake.ciruso@gmail.com.