Welcome to the first BAVS Newsletter of 2023! Read on for reviews and news of recent publications, upcoming event details, and CFPs.

The CFP for the BAVS 2023 conference is now open! The deadline for proposals is 16 April and (like last year) there’s no specific theme. We’ve got a wonderful set of keynote speakers lined up: Prof. David Amigoni (Keele University), Prof. Jennifer Devere Brody (Stanford University), Prof. Michael Hatt (University of Warwick), and Prof. Ruth Livesey (Royal Holloway, University of London). The conference website will be live soon, but in the meantime, you can follow BAVS 2023 on Twitter for updates and information. The annual conference is always a terrific opportunity to hear about the extraordinary breadth of new research happening in Victorian studies, and we’re sure that this year will be no exception. Hopefully we will see many of you at the University of Surrey in the summer!

During what has been a difficult start of the year for many, the BAVS Online Writing Retreats – established by our new Digital Officer, Heather Hinds – have proved to be an oasis of focus and productivity. Everyone is welcome to join. You can find out more and sign up for future sessions here.

A reminder that we’re always keen to hear from members who would like to join our book reviewer pool or would like to review a specific publication. Authors of recent work on any aspect of Victorian studies are also invited to get in touch to suggest titles for review. Full details can be found on the BAVS Newsletter webpage. We are also seeking contributions to our ‘Foundational Texts’ review series that re-visits a significant contribution to Victorian studies published between 1950 and the present. If you have an idea, please send your pitch to the Newsletter team at bavsnews@gmail.com.

Best wishes,

Clare Stainthorp & Sarah Wride
bavsnews@gmail.com
BAVS News

BAVS Conference 2023: Call for Papers

University of Surrey
31 August – 2 September 2023

Deadline for submissions: Sunday 16 April, 2023

Keynote speakers:
Prof. David Amigoni (Keele University)
Prof. Jennifer DeVere Brody (Stanford University)
Prof. Michael Hatt (University of Warwick)
Prof. Ruth Livesey (Royal Holloway, University of London)

BAVS 2023 will be held at the University of Surrey, and we look forward to hosting delegates across the range of BAVS members at our campus, situated in Stag Hill, Guildford. As a county, Surrey has been home to many eminent Victorians including Arthur Conan Doyle, H.G. Wells, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Gertrude Jekyll, Isabella Beeton, Ada Lovelace, Augusta Spottiswoode, and Edwin Lutyens. Guildford itself has close associations with Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) who lived his later years here with his sisters and is buried in The Mount Cemetery. Watts Gallery Artists’ Village, which includes Limnerslease, the former residence of George Frederic Watts and his artist wife, Mary, is close by, and a must-see for those interested in the Arts & Crafts movement.

The formal conference opens on the 31 August, preceded by an informal afternoon dedicated to PGR/ECR professionalisation workshops on 30 August.

As in 2022, the conference will not have a theme. Instead, we encourage submissions that reflect the breadth of BAVS members’ research interests on any aspect of Victorian Studies. We also invite diverse formats for their delivery, e.g. individual 20-minute papers; themed panels (3 papers, 20 minutes long or 4 papers 15 mins long); and roundtables (5-7 speakers delivering 5-minute talks). Topics suggested below are for guidance only.

Topics may include:
- Authorship & Reception
- Art & Industry
- Biography & Celebrity
- Capitalist Structures & Cultures
- Colonialism/Cosmopolitanisms
- Disability, Poverty & Disadvantage
- Ecocriticism/Eco-Gothic fiction
- Emigration/Immigration
- Family, Finance & Domesticity
- Forbidden Desires; Gender, Sex & Bodies
- Forgotten Victorians
- Journalism/Print Culture
- Victorian Language/Slang/Dictionaries
- Material Cultures
- Medicine, Science & Technology
- Misinformation & Propaganda
- Neo-Victorian Studies/Cultures
- The Arts & the Senses
- Theatre, Visual & Popular Cultures
- Travel & Tourism
- Utopian/Dystopian Ideologies
- Victorian Afterlives & the Supernatural
- Victorians & their Animals
- Victorian Creative Partnerships
- Victorian Education
- Victorian Surrey

Please send proposals via email to bavs@surrey.ac.uk by Sunday 16th April 2023.

Any queries, please contact the conference organisers at the email address above.
BAVS Online Writing Retreats

We are running a series of online writing retreats (they’re free and open to all!). They will take the form of short blocks of writing time with regular breaks, designed to get you into the flow of writing or working on a project.

Please [click this link](http://bavs.ac.uk) to sign up and to see when the next sessions will be.

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BAVS Funding Round Open

The deadline to apply for BAVS funding to support events, research, and public engagement activities is **31 May 2023**. Full details and application forms can be found on the BAVS website at [http://bavs.ac.uk/funding](http://bavs.ac.uk/funding).

**Events funding** (up to £800)

To support the costs of an academic conference or event relating to Victorian studies. The Association and its Executive remain committed to the development of postgraduate students, and it is anticipated that two postgraduate-organised/led events will be funded each academic year.

**Research funding** (up to £500)

To support the costs of individual research for postgraduates and early career researchers.

**Public Engagement funding** (up to £300)

To support the costs of public engagement activities by members at all levels.

Please direct all enquiries and application forms to the Funding Officer, Dr Amelia Yeates, [yeatesa@hope.ac.uk](mailto:yeatesa@hope.ac.uk).
Reviews

The BAVS Newsletter is always looking for writers, particularly among postgraduate, early-career, and independent researchers, to review recent works on any aspect of Victorian history, literature, and culture. To express an interest in reviewing, please email your name, affiliation (if applicable), five research keywords, and any titles or digital resources that you are interested in reviewing to bavsnews@gmail.com. You will find a list of books currently available to be sent out to reviewers on the Newsletter webpage. Reviewers must join BAVS if they have not done so already. We also encourage authors, editors, and publishers of recent works to suggest titles or digital resources for review by emailing the same address.

My Ladys Soul: The Poems of Elizabeth Eleanor Siddall, edited by Serena Trowbridge (Brighton: Victorian Secrets, 2018), 112pp., £10.00 (paperback), ISBN 9781906469627

The Poems of Evelyn Pickering De Morgan, edited by Serena Trowbridge (Brighton: Victorian Secrets, 2022), 139pp., £10.00 (paperback), ISBN 9781906469733

These two slim volumes, edited by Serena Trowbridge and published by Victorian Secrets, are novel and comparable in their focus on the poetry of neglected women artists: Elizabeth Eleanor Siddall (1829–1862) and Evelyn Pickering De Morgan (1855–1919). As such, the books can be read as companion pieces that reclaim Siddall and De Morgan as remarkable author-artists who have been long overshadowed by their more famous artistic husbands, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William De Morgan, as well as the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood more generally.

Better known as Pre-Raphaelite visual artists themselves, Siddall and De Morgan are appreciated anew in these volumes dedicated to their literary creativity, offering the most comprehensive collections of their poems to date. Trowbridge’s incorporation of understudied, unpublished material in the Ashmolean Museum collection and the De Morgan Foundation— as well as her introductions, timelines, and notes on the texts—illuminate work that is culturally valuable and ripe for further study. Both volumes appeal to scholars in English Literature, Art History, Women’s History and Gender Studies, as well as to the wider public with interests in the nineteenth century, Pre-Raphaelitism, poetry, and women’s writing.

Elizabeth Siddall is better known as a Pre-Raphaelite muse, or the mythologized corpse exhumed by Dante Gabriel Rossetti in order to publish the poems he buried with her. Yet she is given new life as a poet in her own right in My Ladys Soul: The Poems of Elizabeth Eleanor Siddall, which builds on recent revaluations of Siddall, focuses on her work and talent rather than her legendary life and tragic death. Trowbridge rejects the more commonly-used spelling ‘Siddall’– a ‘deliberate misspelling’ of ‘Siddall’ signifying the genius of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (p. 8) – and the book’s title is taken from a poem by Siddall in which ‘the aestheticised woman has a voice’ (p. 38). Indeed, this is the keynote of the volume.

Trowbridge’s critical introduction discusses Siddall as a respected artist and original poet, as well as the roles of her brother-in-law William Rossetti as her heavy-handed editor and John Ruskin as her rewarding yet restricting patron. Trowbridge notes Siddall’s literary inspirations (including Romantic poets, ballads, Shakespeare, and the Bible) and draws illuminating connections between her poetry and that of Emily Brontë, Christina Rossetti, and William Morris. As well as a useful reference list of works on Siddall and her poetry, Trowbridge includes poems associated with Siddall by the Rossettis and William Allingham, showing how Siddall was an inspiration for, as well as a writer of, poetry. The book also reproduces portraits of Siddall by Anna Mary Howitt, Barbara Bodichon, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti (who shows her working at an easel), reflecting varying perceptions of her by her contemporaries whilst eschewing more famous images of her (for example, Millais’s Ophelia and Rossetti’s Beata Beatrix).

My Ladys Soul is divided into ‘poems’ and ‘fragments’: sixteen full poems, arranged alphabetically, ranging from 4 to 51 lines; and six unpublished fragments by Siddall that have not been published before. None of Siddall’s poems were published in her lifetime, and most are scrawled on scraps of paper. Offering insight into the archival experience, Trowbridge explains that they are often near- illegible, with minimal punctuation, erratic spelling, and ambiguous or unknown titles and dates. Her editorial decision to include original features of both Siddall’s and De Morgan’s poetry aims to preserve its authenticity. Siddall’s poetry is often painful and elegiac, with themes of nature, liminal spaces, love, and death. The ‘fragments’ are evocative and haunting: ‘a golden flash’ and a wood ‘flooded black and heavy’ (p. 96) are vivid images in a poem composed with a leaking pen.
Trowbridge provides extensive explanatory notes on Siddall's poetry, due in part to its multiple versions, drafts, and publications. This makes for a rich if not entirely straightforward reading experience of a book that reveals the development of poems and the 'complexities of a poet's working practice' (p. 47). An image of Siddall's handwritten manuscript poem "Life and night are falling from me" offers insight into its composition, whilst her detailed pencil-and-ink drawing The Woeful Victory exemplifies her artwork's Pre-Raphaelite influence as well as her idiosyncratic style.

The Poems of Evelyn Pickering De Morgan is the first publication dedicated to the writing of De Morgan. Although the volume focuses primarily on De Morgan's childhood verses, containing over thirty poems, it also includes her childhood prose and drama. These salvaged writings – mainly unfinished, unedited drafts in De Morgan's exercise books – include an incomplete novel ('Nora de Brant'), short stories, fairytales, two plays including 'The love of money is the root of all evil', and a fictional magazine titled The Reader handwritten by De Morgan at about fourteen years old. A photograph of The Reader, along with imagined reviews celebrating the 'periodical' in 'Opinions of the press', hints at her early creative ambition. The book's inclusion of De Morgan's photographic portraits in girlhood and womanhood traces her evolution from a child of aristocratic heritage to a serious professional artist who carved out a career against the odds.

Trowbridge's introduction offers fascinating insight into De Morgan's upbringing, art training (at the Slade and South Kensington), and rebellious spirit, as well as the relationship between her visual and literary work, and her writing in the contexts of nineteenth-century juvenilia and children's reading. More material from, and commentary on, De Morgan's underexplored teenage diary would have been welcome, but the book's focus is on her creative work. Beyond some perceptive analysis of the formal, thematic, and stylistic preoccupations of De Morgan's poetry in the introduction, notes and commentary throughout the volume are minimal. Yet the lack of editorial intervention, compared to the volume on Siddall, leaves De Morgan's lesser-known work more open to interpretation by readers.

De Morgan's juvenilia is valuable as 'biographical psychological exploration' (p. 12). It offers insight into De Morgan's vivid, sometimes dark imagination and the preoccupations of her work, including the angel of death – a painting of which graces the cover of the volume. The enduring themes of nature, mythology, death, and the otherworldly in De Morgan's often meditative and melancholy poetry chime with her Spiritualist beliefs, whilst the dissatisfied voice railing against captivity ('To pine in a dungeon', p. 60) prefigures her later feminist support of women's suffrage. Trowbridge draws comparisons between De Morgan's poetry and the more famous work of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Christina Rossetti, and the Brontë sisters, whilst discussing her art in relation to Frederic Leighton, G. F. Watts, and Botticelli.

For De Morgan, as for the Pre-Raphaelites, 'poetry and painting went hand in hand' (p. 29), and many of her paintings were inspired by literary subjects – from the Bible to Tennyson. Trowbridge's inclusion of De Morgan's four short 'later poems on paintings' written in the 1890s, including The Undiscovered Country and Earthbound, invites a reading of them alongside her famous Symbolist and Spiritualist canvases with their metaphors on life, death, and the soul. Trowbridge suggests De Morgan's paintings can be considered as a continuation of her earlier 'remarkably pictorial' poetry (p. 28), which – as the volume shows – is a site of creative expression and experimentation.

As the most recent and up-to-date resources on Siddall's and De Morgan's poetry, these books are essential to future studies on the individual author-artists and invaluable to scholarship on nineteenth-century women's writing. Trowbridge's reclamation of these women and their works is a form of feminist activism that invites further research into women artists' writings, creative practices, and neglected archives. It is a shame that Victorian Secrets is no longer accepting submissions.

Lucy Ella Rose (University of Surrey)

Disability and the Victorians: Attitudes, Interventions, Legacies, edited by Ian Hutchison, Martin Atherton, and Jaipreet Virdi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), 216pp., £85.00 (hardback), ISBN 9781526145710

Born from the proceedings of a conference hosted by the Leeds Centre for Victorian Studies in 2012, Disability and the Victorians: Attitudes, Interventions, Legacies is a thought-provoking book that explores the development and impact of attitudes and interventions towards those with disabilities during the Victorian era. In the foreword, Karen Sayer makes the important observation that 'what Disability Studies [...] does, [...] to the benefit of Victorian Studies, is to generate an incisive, biting reminder that when we talk of the legacies of the Victorians after 1901, those legacies have had and still have a bearing on life as it is lived' (p. xv). The contributors to this book strive to draw attention to the fact that how the Victorians thought about and responded to disabilities continues to have an impact on present-
day thinking and approaches, and thus affects people’s everyday lives.

The book’s editors use their introduction to reinforce the idea that we can locate the origins of current confining conceptualisations of disability in the Victorian era: the Industrial Revolution, advances in medicine, and the interrelated emergence of philanthropy and specialised medical institutions all contributed to the creation of what is today described as the medical model of disability. Ten chapters follow, organised into three sections: ‘Attitudes’, ‘Interventions’, and ‘Legacies’. Amy Farnbach Pearson opens the first section with an exploration of the values and motivations of charitably funded hospitals. By focusing on Glasgow Royal Infirmary and the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, she also shows how Scotland played a significant role in disseminating the medical developments of the Victorian era. Esme Cleall’s absorbing chapter considers how three deaf social reformers fitted into the imperial matrix. Cleall argues that, despite being disabled/deaf ‘others’ who one might expect to empathise with the dispossessed indigenous peoples of colonised lands, John Kitto, George Tait, and Jane Groom ‘can all, in some ways, be said to have lived imperial lives’, all ultimately siding with and assisting the coloniser (p. 38). Deborah Fratz’s exploration of representations of impairment and disability in the realist fiction of George Eliot and Harriet Martineau concludes this section.

Jaipreet Virdi begins the section on ‘Interventions’ by employing the Royal Ear Hospital as a case study to chart the development of practical, medical, and technological responses to deafness. In Chapter 5, Joanne Woiak examines the Victorian response to alcohol addiction, considering the competing arguments of the teetotal movement, social Darwinists, and eugenicists to assess whether alcoholism was recognised as a disability during the nineteenth century. She concludes by asking if Victorian attitudes continue to impact contemporary thinking about alcohol dependency. Paula Hellal and Marjorie Lorch’s chapter explores Victorian attitudes to childhood disability by examining how physicians attempted to explain newly identified developmental disorders of language. Focusing on childhood aphasia, Hellal and Lorch highlight the distinctly haphazard ways in which medical professionals made breakthroughs to achieve greater understanding of the condition. Chapter 7 makes for a particularly fascinating read, with Caroline Lieffers investigating the development of the prosthetic limb by Benjamin Franklin Palmer and considering how he marketed his creation’s ability to make people ‘whole’ again, both physically and psychologically.

The final section, ‘Legacies’, emphasises ‘how the shadow cast by our Victorian forebears has been a long one’ (p. 12). In Chapter 8, Iain Hutchison discusses the treatment of disabled children in late nineteenth-century Scotland and traces how such Victorian approaches and principles evolved in the twentieth century. The continuity of such institutional attitudes is emphasised in Fred Reid’s highly personal discussion of his own upbringing in a residential blind school where surveillance – that distinctly Victorian preoccupation – was the norm. Martin Atherton concludes the book with a pointed examination of how government policies regarding hearing-impaired people have frequently replicated, rather than challenged, the kind of biased thinking that was prevalent in the Victorian era.

The focus on physical disabilities in this collection of essays at the expense of any truly in-depth discussions about how the Victorians approached mental disorders is somewhat disappointing. However, the editors are candid about the fact that their book does ‘not pretend to offer a comprehensive overview’ of how the Victorians ‘perceived or controlled’ all types of disability, but rather aims ‘to provide both a small sample of the variability of disability presentation and experience, and a taste of how the ethos that was spawned during the Victorian period was so powerful that it reverberated through the decades that followed’ (p. 14). Disability and the Victorians certainly fulfils its editors’ desire to generate debate and spur further research: its contents encourage critical reflection on disabled people’s experiences in the present day, thus enabling us to see how monumentally important the task of exploring the history of disability is. We must now work to consider this history not just in the Victorian era, but across the centuries and, crucially, around the globe.

Caitlin Doley (University of York)


Jane Suzanne Carroll’s British Children’s Literature and Material Culture: Commodities and Consumption 1850-1914 provides a chronological overview of the Golden Age of children’s literature in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the context of the increase in the trade and the mass production of commodities. Carroll’s book also examines the role of consumerism and the representation of commodities in British children’s literature – ranging from more popular texts such as Lewis Carroll’s Alice’s Adventures in...
Wonderland (1865) to more obscure texts such as A.L.O.E.’s Story of a Needle (1858) and Mary Louisa Molesworth’s The Cuckoo Clock (1877).

By utilizing children’s literature to examine relationships between objects and children, Carroll helpfully expands Bill Brown’s traditional notion of ‘thing theory’, which he first presented in his groundbreaking 2001 Critical Inquiry article. For Carroll, Brown’s definition of thing theory is limited because it assumes passivity of the thing acted upon. Through children’s literature, she examines the quasi-animistic relationships that things have with children because there is a fluidity in each category of subject and object, which in turn, encompasses the larger set of concerns with commodities as active agents in a Marxian sense. Carroll’s book also examines the critical shift from the widespread celebration of commodity culture, as exemplified by the Great Exhibition in 1851, to a widespread suspicion that emerged with industrialization and mass consumerism.

Carroll’s book is divided into four chapters. In the first two chapters, Carroll looks at the multitude of ways that children began engaging with material culture as an instructional medium that inducted them into consumerist practices. She notes that although children have limited power as consumers, their literature initiated them into consumer culture. The Great Exhibition is identified as nurturing this dynamic because children were treated like other patrons who wanted to touch and taste – they privileged the tactile over the visual, so they did not interpret objects the same way as parents did. After examining a predominantly visual medium, Carroll then shifts her focus to the it-narrative, a genre of literature where ordinary commodities take the role of narrators and give their autobiography. Although she notes that it-narratives were criticized for their lack of substance, the it-narrative’s value lies in its function as a reverse bildungsroman novel because it traces the social and material relations between people and commodities.

Chapters 3 and 4 of Carroll’s book reflect and examine the cultural shift from the early Victorian philosophy of objects as passive things with easily categorized quotidian value to the modernist moment when things begin to elude interlocutors. Instead of serving primarily as an instructional medium, as they did in the first half of the nineteenth century, Carroll shows how commodities entered a liminal space between the mundane and the fantastical/supernatural. Household objects, Carroll argues, quite literally became other worldly goods within children’s fiction. She also shows through readings of Beatrix Potter’s The Tale of Two Bad Mice (1904) and Kenneth Grahame’s Wind in the Willows (1908) how the fin de siècle shift away from Victorian commodity culture aligns with her push back against Brown’s idea that commodities are passive things that that are neatly overlaid with moral, social, and cultural values. Instead, she shows how objects can also subvert expectations, which is a radical shift from the Victorian sense of objects as aids to help make sense of the world.

Not only does Carroll’s book provide a fresh and insightful perspective on the dynamic and non-trivial relationships nineteenth-century children had with the material culture that often goes unnoticed as the mundane backdrops of their lives, but her arguments also advance the critical study of thing theory. Traditionally, thing theory has differentiated objects as items with a sense of purpose and things as purposeless objects. By considering things as an overlooked backdrop that functions in a variety of unexpected ways, Carroll’s argument complicates functionality and purpose as the traditional basis of thing theory.

Brittany Carlson (Iowa Wesleyan University)


The Cancer Problem: Malignancy in Nineteenth-Century Britain, by Agnes Arnold-Forster (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), xx+214pp., £60.00 (hardback), ISBN 9780198866145

The seven chapters that make up Alison Moulds’s Medical Identities and Print Culture, 1830s-1910s, introduced in Chapter 1, examine the relationship between medical professionals’ increasing contribution to print culture (as readers, writers, and editors of medical journals), how they were increasingly represented in fiction, and reforms to medical practice and training (for example, the standardization of medical training and of doctor registration) during the long nineteenth century. This is an interdisciplinary study of ‘how professional identities were constructed and contested’ (p. 9).

Chapter 2, ‘The Young Practitioner’, focuses on the problems that newly qualified doctors faced in trying to establish their careers. This chapter also offers insight into the advice that they were given: ‘unless you succeed in making your mark, and establishing a fair reputation and practice in the first six to eight years, the probability is that you never will’, counselled Jukes de Styrap in The Young Practitioner (1890) (p. 24). Moulds analyses some absorbing historical and fictional accounts of the struggles that beset the recently qualified doctor,
including *The Stark Munro Letters* (1895) by Arthur Conan Doyle.

The spotlight then moves to the metropolitan practitioner, for which Chapter 3 is named. Here Moulds investigates the professional rivalries between the medical schools of London and Edinburgh, whilst also engaging more broadly with the professional jealousies that existed between London and provincial doctors. The chapter concentrates on London, with an occasional mention of other cities. After stating that ‘almost 75 per cent of medical journals’ were printed in London, Moulds surveys the professional rivalries and lobbying that formed the mainstay of the various periodicals (p. 76). This chapter gives a riveting account of the ways in which medical journals helped to form medical identities.

Chapter 4, ‘The Country Practitioner’, investigates the issues facing doctors working in rural areas. Like their young urban colleagues, doctors with country practices struggled to establish a livelihood. Nevertheless, as Moulds comments, ‘The figure of the provincial or rural medical man proliferated in medical and popular writing across the nineteenth century’ (p. 118). This chapter describes how in time the well-being of patients became a unifying factor. Moulds argues that the increased number of medical journals was needed to support the provincial doctor as more established periodicals were often seen as catering for the metropolitan medical practitioner. She also explores how the coming of the motor car in the 1890s improved the mobility of country doctors and as a result the speed by which treatment could be made available to remote rural patients.

With Chapter 5, ‘The Medical Woman’, Moulds provides riveting information about the mammoth struggle that women faced in the medical profession, from the lack of training opportunities to the disparaging names. Robust debates about the ability and appropriateness of female doctors were carried out in numerous medical journals. Moulds goes on to argue that ‘While print culture facilitated increasingly diverse representations of the medical woman, she continued to be defined primarily by her gender’ (p. 201).

Chapter 6 considers the representation of colonial practitioners in British India in medical journals and fiction, building on research into how professional identities and communities were shaped in imperial spaces’ (pp. 213-14). Moulds critiques the difficulties faced by medical practitioners working in India, most especially cultural differences and social isolation. After all, ‘In 1905 only 5 per cent of the IMS (Indian Medical Service) were of Indian descent’ (p. 229). Moulds describes how practitioners who were judged to be different due to their age, race, or gender had to transcend bias to succeed professionally. She observes that disparagers often used the same arguments that ‘accord or overlap with those made by medical women’s detractors in Britain’ (p. 235). However, as Moulds points out, ‘by the late nineteenth century, the professional press increasingly portrayed medical women as well-respected and even aspirational figures’ (p. 238).

In Chapter 7, Moulds concludes that the medical profession’s engagement with print culture was crucial to the development of its identities (p. 261). She argues that while ‘the dominant professional identity […] was (unsurprisingly) codified as middle-aged, male and white’ (p. 262), and women and minority ethnic groups experienced, indeed still experience, prejudice, ‘increased representation of women and minority ethnic groups in the profession has also reshaped professional identities’ (p. 271).

This well-researched text will be an asset to those researching the expansion of the medical profession, the struggle of women to gain recognition in the profession and social acceptance as doctors, and the treatment of colonial medical practitioners. It will also be useful to anyone interested in the proliferation of medical journals or the upsurge of medical fiction from the 1830s to the early twentieth century. Indeed, there is a useful ‘Appendix’ providing an overview of the publication history of the medical journals cited in the book.

Medical journals also contributed to the dissemination of ideas about the causes of and treatments for cancer in the nineteenth century, the subject of *The Cancer Problem: Malignancy in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. Following a general introduction to the topic, Agnes Arnold-Foster’s book is divided into two distinct sections: Part 1 contains four chapters on ‘Characteristics and Cures’ and there are three chapters in Part 2 discussing ‘Causes’.

Today a diagnosis of cancer is generally not regarded as a death sentence, however, as Arnold-Foster comments in her detailed introduction, nineteenth-century medical writers referred to cancer as ‘synonymous with death and decline, and feared by doctor and patient’ (p. 15). Part 1 provides descriptions of actual cases, their diagnosis and treatment. That many of the available treatments were brutal simply emphasises how desperate those with cancer must have felt before seeking a medical remedy. Arnold-Foster describes how some treatments involved burning the afflicted area with acid or agonising invasive surgery; prior to the use of chloroform in the 1860s, such procedures were often not only extremely agonising but futile. She cites the bizarre treatment reported by Walter Hayle Walshe in *The Nature and Treatment of Cancer* (1846) of a patient ‘affected with a cancerous tumour in the face, [who] swallowed upwards of four hundred grey
lizards in the course of two months', ‘without obvious effect of any kind’ (p. 68).

Improved record-keeping facilitated the search for the causes of cancer, the subject of Part 2. Arnold-Foster argues that the increased hospitalisation of cancer patients allowed 'surgeons and physicians the opportunity to study people through the entire “life course” of their disease’ (p. 43). She examines how far the presumed increase in the numbers of those with cancer was due to the Victorian fixation with note-taking, cataloguing, and improved record-keeping. The practice of using maps to identify areas with high incidences of cancer indicated that environment was a probable cause of the disease; nineteenth-century writers also looked for answers in ideas about mutant cells, diet, and parasitology.

In her conclusion, Arnold-Forster reminds readers that whilst diagnosis, treatments, and morbidity rates have greatly improved in the twenty-first century, those who ‘recoil at [her] descriptions of arsenic and acid used in cancer treatments in the nineteenth century […] should take a walk through their local chemotherapy wards’ (p. 221). This comprehensive and meticulously researched book will provide an excellent reference guide for academic research, at the same time it is a book that the general reader with an interest in the social and cultural history of medicine will find accessible and absorbing.

*Kathleen Beal (University of Hull)*

**Psychic Investigators: Anthropology, Modern Spiritualism, and Credible Witnessing in the Late Victorian Age**, by Efram Sera-Shriar (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2022), 222pp., $50.00 (hardback), ISBN 9780822947073

The spectacle of the Victorian spiritualist séance hinged on direct observation: seeing was knowing. What was seen - table rapping, lights flickering, objects moving of their own accord, spirit photographs, ‘spirit apports’ that showered the room in flowers – could be marshalled as evidence of the ‘veracity of the spirit hypothesis’, or it could prove trickery (p. 8). With *Psychic Investigators*, Efram Sera-Shriar turns to the centrality of empiricism in the history of spiritualism to ask what made a credible witness in the scientific defence or debunking of spiritualist phenomena.

Roger Luckhurst and Richard Noakes have written about how spiritualism tested and pushed the boundaries of the naturalistic sciences in the late nineteenth century. In some ways, *Psychic Investigators* is a companion piece to Noakes’s *Physics and Psychics: The Occult and the Sciences in Modern Britain* (2019), which focused on the physical sciences. Sera-Shriar argues that the emerging human sciences, and anthropology in particular, engaged just as rigorously with spiritualism and, crucially, that these engagements – the ‘collecting, analysing, and representing’ data to definitively prove or disprove that humans transcended into spirits upon death - shaped scientific methods (p. 17). As such, *Psychic Investigators* sits within a relatively recent tradition in the history of science that centres scientific interest in psychic and supernatural phenomena in this period. This was no ‘amusing side story’ (p. 168): the possibility of verified spiritual entities could disrupt the foundations of scientific naturalism on which budding human sciences also built.

This is a big argument to make, but Sera-Shriar rightly hone in on microhistorical ‘vignettes’ to lay it out. In four chapters, the book examines the engagement of four well-known British anthropologists with spiritualist phenomena. Each represents a distinct position: the believer, the sceptic, the revisionist, the disbeliever. At first sight, this structure may suggest a clear delineation of attitudes and, due to the book’s roughly chronological structure, even that anthropology’s attitude to spiritualism tidily progressed from belief to disbelief. Instead, Sera-Shriar’s thick descriptions and ‘multiple contextualisations’ show how anthropologists’ theories and methods were constantly shaped and reassessed by new empirical data (p. 11). Each chapter takes a key text or small corpus of texts to reconstruct discussions about the nature of evidence, disciplinary boundaries, and scientific practice.

Chapter 1 takes seriously Alfred Russel Wallace’s own description of *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism* (1875) as a ‘new branch of anthropology’. Wallace went from being a ‘confirmed philosophical sceptic’ to a believer after witnessing a séance in 1865 (p. 16). Direct observation, either by himself or by a credible witness, was central in the development of his ‘theory of spiritualism’, in which natural selection and a ‘progression of the fittest’ continues into the afterlife. Chapter 2 considers Edward Burnett Tylor’s notebooks from November 1872 – written in the wake of the publication of Tylor’s *Primitive Culture* (1871) – in which his evolutionary theory of religion and his theory of animism were tested against first-hand encounters with séances in London. Immersing himself in the culture of spiritualism in London, Tylor, ‘the sceptic’, aimed to bring ‘religion firmly within the domain of scientific understanding’ (p. 50). In these chapters, Sera-Shriar touches upon the editorial processes of psychic investigators, showing what they chose to keep out of their published work, like Wallace’s observation of a table travelling through the séance.
room in a wavelike pattern, or Tylor’s findings from his ethnographic experiences (p. 40). Unfortunately, the sources are inconclusive about why they omitted precisely the most extraordinary phenomena encountered during their fieldwork. More importantly, perhaps, their notebooks offer glimpses of the sensory and embodied experiences of genuine believers that were often marginalised and censored (not least by the anthropologists themselves, who chose not to publish them).

Chapters 3 and 4 examine anthropological debates about the validity of Tylor’s theory of animism for explaining spiritualist phenomena through the lens of Andrew Lang’s Cock Lane and Common Sense (1894) and Edward Clodd’s The Question (1917). Although Lang, ‘the revisionist’, initially rejected animistic theory, his investigations into the famous Cock Lane ghost and credible witnesses of other experiments made him a ‘leading proponent [...] for belief in psychic forces’, notably telepathy (p. 166). Not all spiritualist phenomena could be explained by credulity, fraud, or superstition, according to Lang. His revisionist model came under attack from anthropologists of religion in the early twentieth century. For Clodd, the ‘disbeliever’, a credible witness was someone who disproved the veracity of spiritualist phenomena. Clodd’s The Question was a damning critique of spiritualism which appeared during a ‘renaissance’ of the movement, in the First World War. It laid out a tried and tested anthropological method for debunking spiritualists for ‘all types of investigators from any disciplinary background’ (p. 157).

Psychic Investigators throws important light on the foundational role of spiritualism in the early history of anthropological science in Victorian Britain. The processes by which psychic investigators considered witnesses as credible or dismissed them as untrustworthy were methodical and highly sophisticated; their discussions were practical, relying on experimental testing and the active contributions of spiritualists to the construction of knowledge about their culture. As such, Sera-Shiria strengthens and deepens analyses of spiritualism’s popularity as a ‘story of the Victorian crisis of evidence’, as Peter Lamont and others have argued. Empirical techniques and ideas about credible witnessing as they germinated in the world of psychic investigators came to determine anthropology, and influenced scientific interest in psychic phenomena from outside the discipline – this book and its cultural historical method is itself a testament of that legacy. Psychic Investigators changes the way we should read and write the history of anthropology in the Victorian age as a history of doubt, experimentation with observational practices, and a search for credible witnessing. Anthropological fieldwork began in the séance room.

Kristof Smeyers (University of Antwerp)


Lamenting the tendency of ‘salvation biographers’ to fill the silences in women’s life-writing using their own voices, Janet Beizer calls for an alternative method that is attentive to silence and resists a temptation to speak for the subject: ‘Can we begin to imagine a salvation project that would recover even fragments of a life without imposing another consciousness [...]?’ (Thinking Through the Mothers: Reimagining Women’s Biographies (Cornell University Press, 2009), p. 63). The introductory section to Sue Brown’s Julia Wedgwood, The Unexpected Victorian indicates that her book is of the ‘salvation’ variety, and from the outset suggests it may have panegyric undertones. ‘This biography’, writes Brown, ‘sets out to explore’ Wedgwood’s ‘fine qualities of the heart as well as the head’ (p. 4).

As a member of the Wedgwood-Darwin dynasty, Julia Wedgwood tends to be remembered (if at all) for her familial connections and her encounters with luminaries such as Browning, Eliot, Martineau, and Gaskell. But Wedgwood was also a novelist, biographer, and critical essayist in her own right. And yet her work has not received adequate attention in the literature on nineteenth-century women writers. Brown’s book, therefore, promised to be a welcome addition. However, although this cradle-to-grave biography covers some transformative events and significant relationships in Wedgwood’s life, her works receive comparatively little attention.

Brown nevertheless brings together an impressive list of sources to inform her narrative of a fascinating, complicated, and intelligent woman. She has spent many hours in the company of Wedgwood’s letters (now held in the V&A Wedgwood Collection). She makes good use of the Browning-Wedgwood correspondence in the Armstrong-Browning Library, and her interpretation of Wedgwood’s relationship with Browning in Chapter Six (‘The Era of My Life’) is well observed.

A wealth of Wedgwood’s ‘public and private writing survives’ (p. 4), but there are still gaps in her epistolarium. Rather than fostering the ‘hollows and the holes while resisting the temptation to fill them’ (Beizer, p. 26), Brown frequently glosses connections between events and relationships in Wedgwood’s life,
and how she imagines her subject felt about them. This authorial imposition is most notable in Brown's commentary on Wedgwood's relationship with her father, the philologist Hensleigh Wedgwood, but her assumptions are also apparent elsewhere.

Brown's inclination to over-sympathise with her subject frequently leads her to adopt a defensive position. She asserts, for example, that Wedgwood's decision to abandon fiction writing was a direct emotional response to 'her father’s objections' (p. 3). However, as I argue elsewhere (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leeds, 2022), the timeline of events does not support this claim and there were other self-directed and external factors at play.

Citing the letter in which Hensleigh Wedgwood offers a critique of his daughter's second novel An Old Debt (1858), Brown paints Hensleigh as a 'disdainful', 'tight-lipped' Victorian paterfamilias and casts Julia as a wounded daughter who 'bravely wrote back' to her father 'resisting his advice' (p. 72). This construal is problematic for many reasons, not least of which is that Brown has not seen this letter of resistance because, as she acknowledges, it has not survived. Imposing a synthetic melodramatic narrative on events lacks the element of objective detachment required for a more balanced reading. Like many Wedgwood commentators before her, Brown places too much emphasis on the conjectured reception of Hensleigh’s critique without recourse to the intent, context, and validity of his criticism.

Hensleigh submits, for example, that 'it is very difficult to sympathise' with Edward Young, the protagonist of An Old Debt (Hensleigh Wedgwood to Julia Wedgwood, [undated], V&A Wedgwood Collection, W/M 377). This criticism is valid. Revelations of Edward’s incentives may induce mild compassion in the reader, but his baneful actions and the pleasure he derives from his persistent wielding of immense power over his love interest, Ellen Scudamore, do indeed make it difficult to sympathise with him. Moreover, Hensleigh was not an outlier. Some contemporary critics and other family members shared his view.

Misspelled surnames of academics (pp. 310, 322, 349, 359) and Wedgwood's fictional characters (pp. 65-66) are indicative of a wider issue with inaccuracies in Brown's book. She wrongly states, for example, that Hensleigh was 'a graduate of Trinity College, Cambridge' (p. 7) (he graduated from Christ's College, Cambridge) and that his Dictionary of English Etymology was ‘published in 1857’ (p. 91) (the first instalment did not appear in print until 1859). Brown also claims that Charles Darwin 'incorporated' Hensleigh's 'bishop' example (p. 91) into the Origin of Species (1859), but it appears only in Darwin's longer manuscript on 'Natural Selection'. These errors expose limitations regarding Brown's knowledge about Hensleigh’s life and work, but they also suggest an acceptance of information without verifying it or reading relevant primary sources.

Hermione Lee has challenged the 'lingering idea of biography as the complete, true story of a human being, the last word on a life' (Biography: A Very Short Introduction (Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 18). For the reader who knows little about Julia Wedgwood and has an interest in the social networks to which she belonged, Brown's book is a useful contribution to the literature. However, it should not be taken as the last word. As Brown herself concedes, there is 'still much to discover about Julia Wedgwood' (p. 310). I might add that the same is true of her father.

Madison Marshall (University of Leeds)


‘Of course, I have not told the truth in this biography’, wrote Frank Russell, 2nd Earl Russell (1865-1931) at the close of My Life and Adventures (1923). The facts of life were, he believed, ‘but flotsam on the surface of the stream’. The true life, however, is the stream itself: ‘a continuous whole’ (p. 344). This stream was painted by Ruth Derham in her recent biography Bertrand's Brother (2021), but now we are treated to some added colour in the form of an accessible portable library of Frank's writing, edited by Derham.

The range of subjects covered in this collection is eclectic, mirroring the diversity of interests and commitments held by Frank Russell. This eclecticism is manifest in the reading list for the inaugural session of the Reading Society he co-founded whilst at Oxford: 'Charley read Byron’s “Dream”: Anak some Carlyle: Jackson Wordsworth's “Intimations and Immortality”: Mallet some Swinburne: Hobhouse some of Spencer's Principles of Psychology: I read from Light of Asia: & Maurice some Emily Bronte’ (p. 17). These were the events of a Sunday evening in February 1884 within the College rooms of the young Earl, grandson of the two-time Prime Minister John Russell and older brother to the great polymath Bertrand. Frank’s choice to read from Edwin Arnold’s narrative poem of the life of the Buddha reveals the peculiarity of the Russells as an aristocratic family with an edge. Not simply whiggish but, as Derham’s subtitle suggests, radical.

This collection proceeds chronologically through the life of the Earl. We begin then with juvenile letters and diaries written by Frank whilst boarding at Winchester school where we are
confronted with Wykehamist language, a vernacular developed at the school. Derham’s footnotes are given great expediency here as she translates for those of us uninitiated in the strange Wykehamist ways. We then experience Frank’s short-lived stay at Oxford, which despite its bitter end (Frank was sent down for the discovery of an improper letter) still proved to be formative.

I found it interesting that Frank’s interest in esoteric religious thought led him to adopt a vegetarian diet. This influence runs deep in the history of vegetarianism and is well told in Tristram Stuart’s *The Bloodless Revolution: Radical Vegetarians and the Discovery of India* (2006). During the late-Victorian period, Indian religious thought influenced a transnational matrix of vegetarian thought, which twisted and turned in on itself as figures like Edward Carpenter and Henry Salt in turn influenced Gandhi when he was in London during the early 1890s. Frank’s vegetarianism appears to have been fleeting though and he didn’t become part of this growing movement.

The most enjoyable writing, I think, is to be found in Chapter 2, which compiles a selection of letters he sent back to England during his travels around the United States. Being twenty years old at the time of his American exile, his travel writing is not always replete with keen observations: ‘We make the trip to see what the Mississippi is like and it’s certainly very big and very, very, dull’ (p. 41). However, at other times we see his keen mind and interest in technology: ‘We have been to Niagara […] I was glad to begin calculating how much electricity they could be made to supply to New York and cities en route if they were kept constantly at it working dynamos’ (p. 31). Frank also shared his disgust at the sights of the Chicago Stock Yard slaughterhouses (p. 33) a full two decades before their treatment by Upton Sinclair in *The Jungle* (1906).

The following two chapters revolve around Frank’s bigamy trial and prosecution. I was stimulated by his theological writings about Christianity from an agnostic perspective, which were fermented during his three-month stay at Holloway prison following his prosecution for bigamy. These *Lay Sermons* (1902) were preached against the material Church and in an appeal to a Christian spirit. Frank’s diversity of interests is present in the fifth chapter where we can read some of his motorist columns written in 1908. The final two chapters, which cover the years from the Edwardian suffrage campaigns through to the late 1920s, offer some added validation for the radical descriptor of Frank. Again, his political writing and speeches are characteristic in their diversity, spanning women’s suffrage, socialism, anti-conscription, birth control, and the ethics of suicide.

As the only introduction to Frank Russell’s writings in print this new collection highlights the wide breadth of his political campaigns and personal interests. Derham’s inclusion of a bibliography of Frank’s writing in the book’s appendix is especially useful. The volume will be of interest for all Russell scholars to learn about Bertrand’s older brother, but also for Victorian and Edwardian scholars who are interested in the political debates of the day.

*Daniel Breeze (Loughborough University)*

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**Nightingale’s Nuns and the Crimean War, by Terry Tastard** (London: Bloomsbury, 2023), 216pp., £85.00 (hardback), ISBN 9781350251601

Terry Tastard’s *Nightingale’s Nuns and the Crimean War* represents a unique and very welcome addition to the historiography of the Crimean War. It also contributes to Victorian women’s studies, through its direct contribution to the sub-fields of religious women and nursing. Its originality also comes from the fact that it is the only book to date to provide a comparative discourse of the Irish and English, Catholic and Protestant religious sisters – nuns – who served with and under Florence Nightingale in the East as nurses: examining their origins, motivations, activities, and personalities. This stands in contrast to work on male chaplains such as Gordon Taylor’s *The Sea Chaplains* (1978), Tom Johnstone and James Hagerty’s *The Cross on the Sword: Catholic Chaplains in the Forces* (1996), and Michael Snape’s *The Royal Army Chaplains’ Department: Clergy Under Fire* (2008), which have looked at men from all parts of the United Kingdom and from multiple Christian denominations (and Jews) in the army and navy.

Tastard argues that the story of the nuns, both Catholic and Anglican, who worked with and against or became lifelong friends with Nightingale was ‘almost written out of the story of Crimean War nursing’ (p. 3). That being said, the bibliography clearly shows that a healthy number of publications have been produced since the war, both by the nuns themselves and by twentieth- and twenty-first-century scholars. However, this work serves to bring these sources together in a single location and thus make their existence known and encourage their use in the future.

This very well-written book has a somewhat unusual, but nonetheless effective, construction as it is divided into a very short introduction and ten chapters, which can be generally grouped in pairs. The first chapter jumps straight to the point of Nightingale’s departure on 4 November 1854, before Chapter 2 goes back in time to provide the much-needed contextualisation of the war’s origins and
locations, and the socio-religious and religio-political contexts of mid-nineteenth century Britain and Ireland. Chapters 3 and 4 detail the hardships the nuns and Nightingale faced, from the infamous first Crimean winter (1854-55), one another, and the male administration which surrounded them. The fifth and sixth chapters look at the two principal areas where the nuns’ greatest efforts and positive impacts were made: Koulali and Balaclava. Chapters 7 and 8 focus on each national contingent and their experiences upon returning to Ireland and England respectively. Lastly, Chapter 9 and the conclusion engage with the nuns’ legacy and the overall message and purpose of the book.

In terms of caveats, the absence of a dedicated Anglican nuns’ chapter appears as an omission. Unlike the Irish Catholic nuns, who receive both Chapters Five and Seven, the Anglican nuns share Chapter Eight ('England: Return and aftermath') with the Catholic nuns from Norwood and Bermondsey and are relegated to a score of reference scattered throughout the book. Tastard does argue that the archives are ‘scanty’ when it comes to the Anglican nuns, but he also states that ‘two of the Anglican sisters left valuable memoires of their experience in the war’ (p. 3). While the omission (or impossibility) of such a chapter is regrettable, the nuns’ inclusion here, regardless of scale, acts as a very necessary counterweight to the dominant (largely Irish) Catholic narrative that has existed within the historiography since the 1960s.

This book naturally contributes to the field of Victorian women’s studies, by engaging with the dynamics of gender relations. Not just male-female dynamics within the professional work environment and under socially imposed hierarchies, expectations, and norms, but also female-female dynamics. These often proved to be the more hazardous interactions. These include Nightingale’s well-documented conflicted relationship with Mother Francis Bridgemen, leader of the Irish Sisters of Mercy, but also the Anglican nun Elizabeth Wheeler, with whom she had a very public conflict through the press. Nightingale’s decision to dismiss Wheeler along with several other English Anglican and Catholic nuns and lay nurses, whom she deemed to be ill-qualified, was the source of much bitterness and resentment, as was her treatment of the Irish Catholic contingent.

In conclusion, the author must be congratulated on an extremely well-developed bibliography and source base of British and Irish archives, contemporary publications, and modern publications on both Britain and Ireland, as well as the war. The collection of cited secondary publications comprise the most recent contributions to the field of Crimean War studies, and the ancillary fields of politics; religious studies; and women’s, military, nursing, and medical histories.

Published by Bloomsbury and coming hot on the heels of Lara Kriegel’s *The Crimean War and its Afterlife: Making Modern Britain* (2022), Terry Tastard’s *Nightingale’s Nuns and the Crimean War* is a must-read, not only for scholars of the Crimean War, but also women’s, religious, and nursing history in modern Britain and Ireland.

*Paul Huddie (University College Dublin)*

Paul Huddie (University College Dublin)
Recent Publications

Are you an author, editor, or publisher of a recent or forthcoming book on an aspect of Victorian history, literature, and culture? Please email a JPG image of the cover to bavsnews@gmail.com for inclusion in a future issue.

If you are interested in reviewing one of the titles featured below, please get in touch at bavsnews@gmail.com.


London Through Russian Eyes, 1896-1914 is a translated anthology of ‘London Letters’ written by Russian foreign correspondents which makes available for the first time in English the Russian perspective on early twentieth-century London life. This anthology provides a unique window onto Britain’s capital city as it existed more than a century ago in the minds of the Russian reading public. Russian foreign correspondents produced a substantial body of writing documenting London life in all its infinite variety, but their articles, published in Russian journals and newspapers, have not been accessible to English speakers until today. These articles, instrumental in forging Russian perceptions of London before the First World War, have now acquired a new interest as monuments of a vanished era and as records of the city’s history in their own right.

The selections in this anthology from Isaak Shklovsky, Korney Chukovsky, Samuil Marshak and Semyon Rapoport give just a taste of the riches that still lie hidden in the pages of old periodicals. The anthology is divided into four sections: ‘Foreigners in London’, focusing on the plight of immigrants in the city; ‘London Labour and the London Poor’, documenting the experiences of working-class Londoners; ‘London at Home and at Leisure’, depicting the domestic life and amusements of Londoners of all classes and ages; and ‘London Streets and Public Life’, covering elections, religious meetings, famous trials, jingoist celebrations and the funeral of Queen Victoria. The articles are accompanied by an in-depth introduction, illustrations and extensive annotations.

This anthology will appeal to anyone interested in London history or in Anglo-Russian relations, as well as to scholars of Russian literature. Chukovsky and Marshak both became famous writers later in life, and many of Shklovsky’s sketches have a distinct literary as well as historical value.

Black Students in Imperial Britain: The African Institute, Colwyn Bay, 1889-1911, by Robert Burroughs (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2022), 264pp., £20.00 (paperback), ISBN 9781802077254, also available as open access e-book

This book caters for the demand in new black histories by rediscovering several little-known Black people’s experiences in late-Victorian Britain. It centres on The African Institute of Colwyn Bay, or ‘Congo House’, at which almost 90 children and young adults from Africa and its diaspora were enrolled to train as missionaries between 1889 and 1911. Burroughs finds that, though their encounters in Britain were shaped by the racism and paternalism of
the late-nineteenth-century civilising mission, the students were not simply the objects of British charity. They were also agents in a culture of evangelical humanitarianism. Some were fully absorbed in the civilising mission, becoming leading missionaries. Others adapted their experiences to new ends, participating in networks of pan-Africanism that questioned race prejudice and colonialism. In their negotiations of the challenges and opportunities at the heart of the empire, the students of Congo House reveal how the global currents of Black history shaped the localised cultures of Victorian philanthropy. From racism to pan-Africanism, this study sheds new light on key issues in Black British history.


Narratives of the modern history of Palestine/Israel often begin with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and Britain’s arrival in 1917. However, this work argues that the contest over Palestine has its roots deep in the 19th century, with Victorians who first cast the Holy Land as an area to be possessed by empire, then began to devise schemes for its settler colonization. The product of historical research among almost forgotten guidebooks, archives and newspaper clippings, this book presents a previously unwritten chapter of Britain’s colonial desire, and reveals how indigenous Palestinians began to react against, or accommodate themselves to, the West’s fascination with their ancestral land. From the travellers who tried to overturn Jerusalem’s holiest sites, to an uprising sparked by a church bell and a missionary’s tragic actions, to one Palestinian’s eventful visit to the heart of the British Empire, Palestine in the Victorian Age reveals how the events of the nineteenth century have cast a long shadow over the politics of Palestine/Israel ever since.


The year 2023 sees the 150th anniversary of the death of William Harry Rogers. Rogers was one of the finest artist-designers of the Victorian period in Britain, to be considered in the same company as
Pugin, William Burges, Owen Jones and Christopher Dresser. His designs won several prize medals at the Great Exhibition of 1851, the event which provides a ubiquitous reference point for cultural histories of the nineteenth century. He subsequently specialised in designing the appearances of books and his work in this field in the 1850s and 1860s was unrivalled, with many of his designs also appearing in the USA. *William Harry Rogers* is the definitive account of his work and his life in Soho and the village of Wimbledon; it includes many new discoveries and hundreds of colour illustrations.


Contradicting common perception of them as mere footnotes in Tennyson's career, this book examines the influence of his strong-minded female forebears on the young poet and reveals that the women in Tennyson's family circle were prolific and engaging correspondents. Their letters, preserved in archives in Lincoln and for the most part unpublished, cast a unique light on the Tennyson family's interrelationships and the times in which they lived.

Focusing on the letters and lives of four Tennyson women – the poet's paternal grandmother, Mary Tennyson (1753-1825), her daughters Elizabeth Russell (1776-1865) and Mary Bourne (1777-1864), and her daughter-in-law Frances Tennyson, later Tennyson d'Eyncourt (1787-1878) – this book includes extensive and annotated extracts from the women's letters, linked by narrative passages providing context and continuity. The case studies cover six decades, from the marriage of Mary Turner and George Tennyson in 1775 to the death of George Tennyson in 1835, with brief Afterwords touching on the women's final years.


Until now, the missionary plot in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* has been seen as marginal and anomalous. Despite women missionaries being ubiquitous in the nineteenth century, they appeared to be absent from nineteenth-century literature. As
this book demonstrates, though, the female missionary character and narrative was, in fact, present in a range of writings from missionary newsletters and life writing, to canonical Victorian literature, New Woman fiction and women's college writing. Nineteenth-century women writers wove the tropes of the female missionary figure and plot into their domestic fiction, and the female missionary themes of religious self-sacrifice and heroism formed the subjectivity of these writers and their characters. Offering an alternative narrative for the development of women writers and early feminism, as well as a new reading of Jane Eyre, this book adds to the debate about whether religious women in the nineteenth century could actually be radical and feminist.


The Victorian Era saw a revolution in communication technology. Millions of texts emerged from a complex network of writers, editors, publishers and reviewers, to shape and be shaped by the dynamics of a rapidly industrializing society. Many of these works offer fundamental, often surprising insights into Victorian society. Why, for example, did the innocuously titled Essays and Reviews (1860) trigger public outrage? How did Eliza Lynn Linton become the first salaried woman journalist in England? What is “table-talk”?

Critical approaches to Victorian prose have long focused on a few canonical writers. Recent scholarship has recognized a wide diversity of practitioners, forms and modes of dissemination. Presented in accessible A–Z format, this literary companion reinstates nonfiction as a principal vehicle of knowledge and debate in Victorian Britain.

Who Stole the Secret to the Industrial Revolution? The Real Story Behind Richard Arkwright and the Water Frame, by Glynis Cooper (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2023), 184pp., £20.00 (hardback), ISBN 9781473875913

Unveils one of the most secret scandals of British history: that Richard Arkwright, a leading name in the English cotton industry, did not invent the revolutionary water frame. In truth, the invention was stolen. This is the first ever recorded case of industrial espionage, finally laid bare.

English schoolchildren are taught that Sir
Richard Arkwright ‘invented the water-frame and was the father of the Industrial Revolution and the factory system.’ That is simply not true. The water-powered spinning frame and the ‘modern factory system’ were pioneered in Italy over 300 years before Richard Arkwright was born.


Italy was the leading technological power in Europe from the 13th to the 17th centuries. The Italian Renaissance and the devastation caused by the Black Death (1347-49) brought forth a wealth of technological innovation and invention and the Italians automated much of the production of silk fabrics, using water as their power source, because there were no longer enough people left alive to carry out the work.

English organzine was inferior to Italian organzine. In the first recorded case of industrial espionage a young Derby engineer resolved to steal Italian silk manufacturing secrets. Water powered silk throwing machinery, reconstructed by John Lombe from his stolen plans and drawings, provided the blueprint for water powered cotton spinning machinery (water frame), and Cromford Mill (built 1771), was modelled on Derby Silk Mill (built 1719).

This book marks the 300th anniversary of John Lombe's premature death. Part of the mystery surrounding his actions is why has the truth been concealed for so long and why has the Italian connection remained unacknowledged? It is time to place this episode of history in a proper context, to set the record straight, and to fully acknowledge the part played by Italy in the English Industrial Revolution.

Britain’s Industrial Revolution in 100 Objects, by John Broom (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2023), 320pp., £25.00 (hardback), ISBN 9781399003933

- Key industrial and technological innovation and progress that turned the United Kingdom into the workshop of the world
- Improvements in road, rail and water transport that revolutionised freight and passenger travelling times and experiences within Britain and across the empire
- Political and workplace reform and resistance movements which aimed to spread the proceeds of
industrial growth in a more equitable fashion
- Developments in education, religion, leisure, culture and commerce that transformed everyday life for millions of people

Compiles 100 objects that had key influence on the industrial revolution, or arose from its events. A beautifully illustrated book, it also includes hundreds of suggestions for places to visit that are key to Britain’s historical past.

The period of Britain’s Industrial Revolution was perhaps the most transformative era in the nation’s history. Between about 1750 and 1914, life and work, home and school, church and community changed irreversibly for Britain’s rapidly expanding population. Lives were transformed, some for the better, but many endured abysmal domestic and workplace conditions. Eventually improvements were made to Britain’s social fabric which led to the prospect of richer and more fulfilled lives for working men, women and even children. Focusing on 100 objects that either directly influenced, or arose from, these changes, John Broom offers a distinctive insight into this fascinating age. With plentiful illustrations and suggestions for visits to hundreds of places of historical interest, this book makes an ideal companion for a journey into Britain’s industrial past.

**Opera and British Print Culture in the Long Nineteenth Century**, edited by Christina Fuhrmann and Alison Mero (Clemson: Clemson University Press, 2023), 256pp., £76.00 (hardback), ISBN 9781638040422

Recently, studies of opera, of print culture, and of music in Britain in the long nineteenth century have proliferated. This essay collection explores the multiple point of interaction among these fields. Past scholarship often used print as a simple conduit for information about opera in Britain, but these essays demonstrate that print and opera existed in a more complex symbiosis.

This collection embeds opera within the culture of Britain in the long nineteenth century, a culture inundated by print. The essays explore: how print culture both disseminated and shaped operatic culture; how the businesses of opera production and publishing intertwined; how performers and impresarios used print culture to cultivate their public persona; how issues of nationalism, class, and gender impacted reception in the periodical press; and how opera intertwined with literature, not only drawing source material from novels and plays, but also as a plot element in literary works or as a point of friction in literary circles.

As the growth of digital humanities increases access to print sources, and as opera scholars move away from a focus on operas as isolated works, this study points the way forward to a richer understanding of the intersections between opera and print culture.

**Queen Victoria’s Daughters-in-Law**, by John Van der Kiste (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2023), 232pp., £25.00 (hardback), ISBN 9781399001458

The first in-depth study of all four of Queen Victoria’s daughters-in-law in one place: Alexandra of Denmark, Grand Duchess Marie, Louise of Prussia and Helen of Waldeck-Pyrmont.

Of Queen Victoria’s four sons, the eldest married a Danish princess, one a Russian Grand Duchess, and the other two princesses of German royal houses.

The first to join the family of the ‘Grandmama of Europe’ was Alexandra, eldest daughter of the prince about to become King Christian IX of Denmark. Charming, ever sympathetic and widely considered one of the most attractive royal women of her time, she was prematurely deaf and suffered from a limp which was made fashionable by court ladies due to
her popularity. Alexandra proved an ideal wife for the
Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII.

Grand Duchess Marie, daughter of Tsar
Alexander II of Russia and wife of Alfred, Duke of
Edinburgh and later Saxe-Coburg Gotha, was cultured
and intelligent, but dowdy, haughty and, convinced of
the Romanovs’ superiority, resented having to give
precedence at court to her in-laws.

Louise of Prussia, a niece of William I, German
Emperor, had the good fortune to escape from a
miserable family life in Berlin and marry Arthur, Duke
of Connaught, a dedicated army officer who was
always the Queen’s favourite among her children.

Finally, Helen of Waldeck-Pyrmont, sister of
Emma, Queen Consort of the Netherlands, became the
wife of the cultured Leopold, Duke of Albany, but he
was haemophiliac and their marriage was destined to
be the briefest of all, cut short by his sudden death
less than three years later.

All four were very different personalities,
proved themselves to be supportive wives, mothers
and daughters-in-law in their own way, and
dedicated workers for charity at home and abroad.
Based partly on previously unpublished material
from the Royal Archives at Windsor and Madrid, and
the Leonie Leslie Papers, University of Chicago, this is
the first book to study all four as a family group.
BAVS Events

Nineteenth-Century Handwriting Study Day & Workshop
13 April 2023
Elizabeth Gaskell’s House, Manchester

How did people learn to write in the nineteenth century? What’s it like to use a dip pen? How did different writing implements shape the rhythms of writing? What difference did class, gender, impairment, or neurodiversity make to writing instruction? And how can a greater understanding of the act of writing, including writing shorthand, shape our engagement with nineteenth-century texts, people and archives?

The Nineteenth-Century Handwriting Study Day & Workshop, taking place 13 April 2023 at Elizabeth Gaskell’s House, Manchester, brings together new research into writing practice in the long nineteenth century with practical, hands-on workshops. The full programme is available on our website: https://handwriting19c.wordpress.com/programme/


Tickets are £35, and every attendee will go home with a pen holder and some Victorian pens.

Supported by the British Association for Victorian Studies (BAVS): bavs.ac.uk
and the British Association for Romantic Studies (BARS): bars.ac.uk

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Call for Papers: Occultism and Popular Culture in Europe

Date: 22 November to 23 November 2023
Location: Department of English, Germanic and Romance Studies, University of Copenhagen

There has been a long cultural fascination with the macabre, horrific, and downright creepy across European society. From the early popular novels of writers such as Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818), and the incredible visual spectacles of fairground phantasmagoria, to the growth of professional mediumship from the mid 1800s onward, and the telepathic radio experiments of the early twentieth century, Europeans have been entranced by all things spooky and ghoulish. The nineteenth century in particular was a tumultuous age of transformation, where conceptions of reality unravelled before people’s eyes. Media and technology unleashed a phantasmagoric panorama of alternate realities, and the spectre of invisible agents. Interpretations and encounters at the margins of common understanding of how naturalistic and technological systems work fostered beliefs, superstitions, and myths. The ethereal presence of communications without bodies suggested the possibility of supernatural forces at play. It was within this ever-changing social climate that interests in the occult, the gothic, the extraordinary, and the horrible flourished.

So much of the popular conversations surrounding the rise and growth of occultic media during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries connected to debates surrounding human belief, perception, trust, and the standards of scientific evidence. Stories about exposure and fraud were rife within this context. These issues continue to remain important in our modern age when media sensationalism is so endemic. To a certain extent, a study of popular occulture in Europe around the turn of the twentieth century, and the ways in which practitioners and challengers manipulated new media technologies to present carefully crafted stories to broad publics, links to our own contemporary discussions in the twenty-first century about media deception and fake news. A study of the rise of popular occulture in Europe, therefore, provides important historical lessons for understanding the continued surgency of media misperception that is rampant today.

To launch the research program for the newly formed Dark Arts Research Group: Studies in Gothic, Horror and the Occult, 1750-Present in the Department of English, Germanic and Romance Studies at the University of Copenhagen, there will be a two-day hybrid conference between 22 November and 23 November 2023 titled: ‘Occultism and Popular Culture in Europe.’ The aim is to explore the many ways that horror, gothic and occultic topics have been communicated, presented, and packaged for broad audiences from the late eighteenth century to today. We are especially interested in the ways different kinds of media technology, ranging from print and woodcut illustrations to photography and film have shaped conceptions of horror, gothic and the occult.

We are delighted to have two fantastic keynote speakers lined up for the event: Mathias Clasen, Aarhus University; and Richard Noakes, University of Exeter.

Core research questions include:
1. How and why did occultic ideas burst into the popular cultural mainstream from the late eighteenth century onward?
2. What role did the new mass media technologies such as print, photography, radio, etc., play in propagating these extraordinary beliefs and cultural interests?
3. How can digital tools and resources be used to transform the way we research, interpret, and ultimately present topics such as the history of European popular occulture?

Suggested topics can include:
- Print culture, publishing, and gothic, horror and the occult
- Science, perception, and extraordinary belief
- Magic, illusion and deception
• Technologies/objects used in practice, investigation, or in literary/artistic representations of the gothic, horror and the occult
• Digital studies of gothic, horror, and occultic topics
• Gothic, horror and the occult in the media

Those interested in presenting at the event in-person should submit a 200-word abstract and short biographical statement as a single document to Efram Sera-Shriar (ess@hum.ku.dk) by 31 August 2023. We will also accept panel proposals for up to four speakers.

The conference will also host a series of online events. We are interested in receiving submissions for roundtable discussions, ten-minute flash talks based around an image, film or object, or interview-style conversations between scholars. Please submit a 200-word abstract with short biographical statements for each of the participants involved as a single document to Efram Sera-Shriar (ess@hum.ku.dk) by 31 August 2023.

Please state in your submission if you wish to participate online or in-person.

There are a limited number of small travel bursaries available to early career researchers wishing to participate in the event. If you wish to be considered for one of these grants, please include a short statement in your submission outlining how this event will be of value to your research and career development.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with either of the project’s co-leading investigators: Robert Rix (rjrix@hum.ku.dk) or Efram Sera-Shriar (ess@hum.ku.dk).

The event is funded by a small research grant from CEMES at the University of Copenhagen.

We look forward to receiving your submissions.

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**CFP: Women Staging and (Re-)Staging the Nineteenth Century II**

Universitat de València 18-20 October 2023

Literature, Arts and Performance Research Group

The relation between women and the entertainment industry throughout the nineteenth century in Great Britain has been widely studied by Bratton (2011), Davis (2000, 2002), Donkin (1995), Davis and Donkin (1999), Gale and Gardner (2000), Newey (2005), and other scholars since the 1990s. Neo-Victorian appropriations of the nineteenth century on stage were celebrated in the 2016 special issue of *Neo-Victorian Studies* “Performing the Neo-Victorian” guest edited by Palmer and Poore, who aptly identify the recent and growing presence of the Victorians on the British theatrical scene in an ‘increasing variety of ways’ (1). Some such ways were already scrutinized in Poore’s monograph *Heritage, Nostalgia and Modern British Theatre* (2012) and later by Sharon Aronofsky Weltman (2020) in her approach to the modern American musical. Yet, as demonstrated by the first *Women Staging and Restaging the Nineteenth Century* international conference celebrated in 2022 under the auspices of the Department of English and German (UV), there are still research avenues in the field to explore.

Connections between contemporary theatrical productions by women who revisit and re-stage the nineteenth century, or the ways in which Victorian stage practices have informed Neo-Victorian fiction and theatre written by women were debated at the 2022 conference. As a follow-up to such discussions and funded by the GVA Research Project (AICO/2021/225), we open the Call for Papers for the *Women Staging and (Re-)Staging the Nineteenth Century II* international conference to be held at the Universitat de València between 18 and 20 October 2023. This is the final conference in a series of academic events organised as part of a three-year funded research project on women and entrepreneurship in the entertainment industry of the nineteenth century and its afterlives. The project gathers researchers from the Universities of Valencia, Málaga, Salamanca and Seville who are working on Victorian and neo-Victorian theatre and fiction.
In the second edition of the conference, it is our intention to broaden the scope of the discussion by including the following topics. Firstly, we are interested in reconsidering how women's theatrical activity is reflected throughout the nineteenth century in various traditions and cultures and, in terms of its projection towards the present day, the incorporation of transnational and/or transatlantic perspectives. In addition, how the plastic arts and other cultural industries, such as cinema, influence nineteenth-century female theatrical practice and neo-Victorian stagings respectively. Another major axis of the discussion will be focused on classical receptions of female cultural production related to the performing arts throughout the nineteenth century, as well as the forms of such reception today through, for example, the recovery of productions or texts.

The conference will be held in person at the Universitat de València with the hope that it will expand our discussion on the relation between women and the nineteenth-century stage with papers and panels that consider (but are not limited to) the following range of topics and areas of research:

- Nineteenth-century women staging the nineteenth century worldwide.
- Nineteenth-century women staging the nineteenth century from a transnational and transatlantic perspective.
- Nineteenth-century women staging the nineteenth century in the colonies.
- Classical receptions and women actresses, playwrights and managers in the nineteenth century and its afterlives.
- Neo-Victorian re-stagings of the nineteenth century by women.
- Contemporary women playwrights and artistic directors looking at the nineteenth century.
- Nineteenth-century actresses, women playwrights, and managers at present.
- Fictional recreations of (neo-) Victorian actresses, playwrights, managers, and producers in novels, in film and on the stage.
- Rewritings of nineteenth-century spectacle in (neo-) Victorian and contemporary fiction by women writers.
- Rewritings of nineteenth-century spectacle in (neo-) Victorian and contemporary theatre by women playwrights.

Please use the online form to submit proposals of 250-300 words with a short biography (100 words) by 5 May 2023. Speakers are expected to present papers of 20 minutes with Q&A at the end. More info at conference website.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:
Jim Davis (University of Warwick)
Viv Gardner (University of Manchester)
Fiona Macintosh (University of Oxford)
Kate Newey (University of Exeter)
Benjamin Poore (University of York)

MAIN ORGANIZERS: Laura Monró-Gaspar (UV), Rosario Arias (UMA), Victoria Puchal Terol (VIU)

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