



The INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR
**Victorian
Women Writers**
Newsletter

Director's Cut

CAROLYN OULTON

News? Let's see... ICVWW Events Manager Dr Susan Civale comes in as Co-Director (co-ordinating a REF submission isn't enough for some people). PG student Kate Kunova joins Dr Hayley Smith (formerly known as Hayley Smith) on the editorial team.

You may remember, Kate saved us when the Green Kitchen in Cliftonville recklessly asked me to lead a 'Cook Like an Edwardian' event (series launched by Susan for the Being Human Festival).

'I won't eat seafood. By the way, I can't cook. Oh and did I mention, I'm autistic and I can't cope with flour on my hands?' If anyone alive has been more creative with historic salad recipes, let's just say I'd like to meet them.

We also have a new partnership with the Curzon cinema in Canterbury (told you Susan was busy). I got to introduce *Wuthering Heights*, engaging with questions such as, why is this family quite so dysfunctional and (to misquote Elisavet Ioannidou) why does no one in the book ever want to go *outside*? Read it again if you don't believe me.

Anyway, Hayley tells me I have 350 words [shuffles papers]. You're all busy people, and probably need to be somewhere. So without further ado... Sorry, just practising.

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You see, lemon torte season is nearly upon us. This may or may not be the reason the Victorian Popular Fiction Association asked us to host their annual conference.

You'd have to ask Dr Clare Horrocks how far torte influenced her decision to work with us from 2015. But it helped to fuel a major breakthrough in 19C periodicals studies. Rumours that the British Library have invited us to eat this famous pudding at the almost equally renowned Punch table – joke! No more 'Humanities Academics Get Stuffed' headlines, PLEASE...

But we're all invited to take tea with interiors expert M. E. Haweis, and have a gossip about her divorce (we didn't make that up, she did). Dr Laura Allen has the lowdown.

Then off to rural Wales, to talk diaries, disability and class-crossing with 'queer pioneer' Amy Dillwyn, courtesy of PhD student Natasha Booth-Johnson.

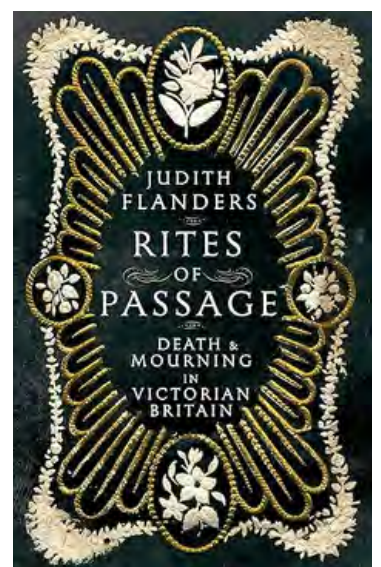
And-then-we-hit-the-wordcount-but-see-you-in-the next one.



Recent Releases

Rites of Passage: Death and Mourning in Victorian Britain by Judith Flanders (2024)

In *Rites of Passage*, Judith Flanders deconstructs the intricate, fascinating, and occasionally – to modern eyes – bizarre customs around death and mourning in Victorian Britain. Through stories from the sickbed to the deathbed, from the correct way to grieve and to give comfort to those grieving to funerals and burials and the reaction of those left behind, Flanders illuminates how living in nineteenth-century Britain was, in so many ways, dictated by dying. This is an engrossing, deeply researched and, at times, chilling social history of a period plagued by infant death, poverty, disease, and unprecedented change. In elegant, often witty prose, Flanders brings the Victorian way of death to life.



We want to hear from you! Get in touch with us:



Out of the Archives

The Women of Punch Exhibition & Archive (Liverpool John Moores Special Collections & Archives)

CLARE HORROCKS

This is really the story of an Archive within an Archive, within an Archive, within another Archive! The umbrella project over all of this research is *The Punch Contributor Ledgers Project* at Liverpool John Moores University. We begin in the dusty Archives at Harrods, moving to the British Library, then into a Digital Archive and finally into *The Women of Punch Exhibition and Archive* that I will be looking at in more detail in this feature.

The original *Punch* office and Archive that I first visited was a beautiful chaos of old books, ledgers, framed cartoons and walls of index card cabinets. On the keyword index cards, a handful of entries had contributor names pencilled next to them. As Patrick Leary has recently commented, “having found out the name of an author, the more we are able to discover about their personal, social, religious, professional and political lives, the more that information is likely to inform our understanding of the article, review, story or poem in question” “(Bringing Writers Out of the Shadows. Attribution Research and the Recovery of Identity”, Jan 2023).



Image courtesy of Clare Horrocks

The problem was, despite being on the cusp of a great discovery, the Archive was in the process of being sold to the British Library. The complete Archive was transferred in 2004; the problem was that the collection remained uncatalogued for a number of years. *The Punch Archive*, now MS88937, contains almost a thousand fields. There are three ‘sub-fronds’, the records of *Punch*, the records of Bradbury and Evans and Bradbury, Agnew and Co., the papers of R. G. G. Price.

It is not an insubstantial collection, though to date, apart from the Liverpool John Moores Contributor project, there hasn't really been a comprehensive study of the collection. There are details on finances, advertising, syndication, exhibitions and contributors. Indeed, there are also operational records from the nineteenth century as well as from the 1950s through to its final publication in 2002. As well as correspondence and records, there are original cartoons, artwork and even the original *Punch* table at which the contributors discussed the weekly issues (though this is in storage and the BL are very reluctant to bring it out!).

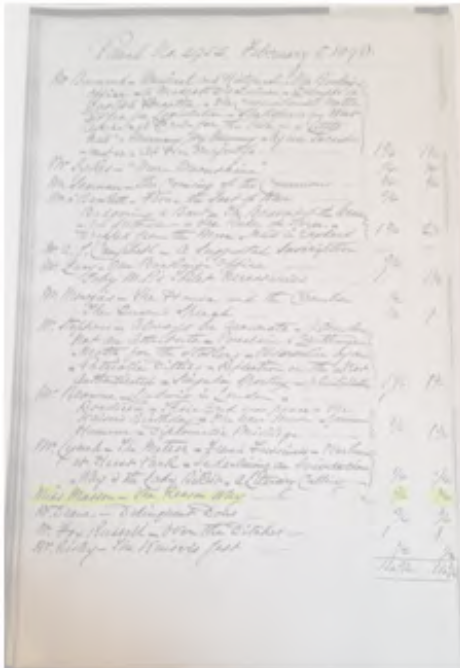


Image courtesy of Clare Horrocks



Image courtesy of Wikicommons

Post PhD I wanted to conduct a systematic analysis of the *Punch Contributor* Ledgers, winning a Curran Fellowship from the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals in 2008 to pilot a project for transcribing the first volume. The Ledgers run from 1843 to 1919 and it soon became clear I needed more funding if a full transcription of them was to be achieved. A collaborative project began with Gale Cengage in 2012 and in 2014 *The Punch Historical Archive* online was launched.

I had worked closely with the team at Andover who worked on Gale Cengage's Archives and, in collaboration with Patrick Leary, strove to build a database of resources that put the user at the forefront of the platform. I, and many other colleagues, have written extensively about the challenge of having attribution data and access to periodicals behind a subscription pay wall. It was not an ideal solution, but at least the hard part of transcribing the data had been done.

Patrick Leary and Gary Simons began work with LJMU to seek permission from Gale Cengage to use the basic raw attribution data and embed it within the online Curran Index. The 'sample' years were sent to Gary who worked tirelessly to embed all of the data, a job continued by the new editors Dr Lars Atkin and Dr Emily Bell.

The transcription of the Ledgers opens the gateway for a wealth of new research to be undertaken in the ever popular field of author attribution. My work with the International Centre for Victorian Women Writers (ICVWW) at Canterbury Christ Church University, under Professor Carolyn Oulton, gave me an outlet to start my work examining the first female contributor to the magazine, Mathilda Betham Edwards. The discovery of more and more female contributors began to evidence the emergence of a new 'sisterhood' of writers, previously never considered or associated with the magazine. In 2015 the *Punch Contributor Ledgers Project* launched its *Women of Punch* extended project with a keynote at the annual ICVWW event in Canterbury. My work on this new development continues with further publications on contributor Ada Levenson, culminating in *The Women of Punch Exhibition* and Archive that was launched as part of International Women's Day celebrations, 2024.

In total, I have identified 136 pieces written for *Punch* by women. I wanted to create a way in which people could access these pieces, rather than having to extrapolate them from the longer table of entries in the *Curran Index*. In 2023 the United Nations launched their International Women's Day theme as DigitALL: Innovation and Technology for Gender Inequality (unwomen.org). One of their four calls was to "remove all barriers to access the digital world". Whilst my partnership with the *Curran Index* had removed some barriers to the attribution data, users still could not analyse the pieces themselves unless they had a subscription to the full Gale Punch Historical Archive or could find them through free online versions of the magazine, such as the HathiTrust. International Women's Day inspired me to create a resource that would bring together a list of all the women contributors alongside digital images of the pieces they had written. And so, in September 2023, *The Women of Punch* online Archive was born.



Above: Ada Levenson

Below: Matilda Betham-Edwards

Courtesy of Wikicommons



International Women's Day has been celebrated for 110 years in Britain. From 1996 each year has annual themes. The theme for 2024 was *#InspireInclusion* and that is what I wanted for my project. It is hoped that the material in the Archive I have created will facilitate scholars across the world to begin to identify and engage with this exciting range of voices, in order that we can incorporate their research and work into the Archive. Whilst I have identified which women were writing for the magazine, we don't know who some of those women actually were. However, other scholars working in different areas of the periodical press may have come across them and can add biographical data to the resource to enhance our understanding of who exactly was working for Punch at this time. In this way we are 'removing barriers' to studying the voice of the female contributor and, as IWD advocates, 'promoting the creative and artistic talent of women and girls' in a call to 'celebrate women's achievements'.

There are two ways that you can use the Archive. The first and most straightforward is to scroll to the bottom of the front page where you can "Browse the Full Collection". Alternatively, we have used four themes to group the entries, tied directly to the colours and themes of International Women's Day; the colours and themes of the WSPU suffrage party from 1908. So, those under the Purple landing card are aligned with themes of Justice and Dignity, the Green aligned with Hope and the White with Purity. As you will notice, I have added a fourth to correspond with the NUWSS party; for more detail see the Red landing card on our home page, entitled Society and Community. This may seem an arbitrary way to organise each entry, however, how the definitions of these themes have changed since the nineteenth century provides an enlightening narrative in and of itself. If a piece did not 'fit' into a theme, I have not allocated it to any section, therefore you will find a fuller list of pieces by browsing the entire catalogue of images and attributions.

So, happy browsing everyone! As I have said, an integral part of the project is beginning to understand who exactly these women were, the social and professional circles in which they mixed. This information can be invaluable in finding meaning in the pieces, identifying the allusions made. There is a Comments box where scholars can contact the project team with suggestions for attribution and to add biographical data to those already attributed but where personal details remain unknown. The additional content will be reviewed periodically and the site updated accordingly if there is sufficient supporting evidence.

****This article includes some extracts taken from my longer introductory essay to the *Punch Contributor Ledgers Project* for the Curran Index****
(<https://www.curranindex.org/news/21/>)

Notes:

- Clare Horrocks and Nickianne Moody, 'Crumbs from the Table: Matilda Betham-Edward's Comic Writing in Punch' in Adrienne E. Gavin & Carolyn W. de la L. Oulton. *British Women's Writing from Bronte to Bloomsbury Volume 2, 1860s and 1870s*. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.
- <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/announcement/2022/12/international-womens-day-2023-digital-innovation-and-technology-for-gender-equality>
- Patrick Leary, "Bringing Writers Out of the Shadows. Attribution Research and the Recovery of Identity", *Curran Index*, January 2023. <https://www.curranindex.org/news/17/>
- Gary Simons, "Attribution Scholarship in the Curran Index", *The Curran Index*, January 2021. <https://www.curranindex.org/news/18/>
- *The Curran Index to Nineteenth Century Periodicals*: <https://www.curranindex.org/>



If you are working on an archival project featuring Victorian(ish) women writers, we'd love to hear from you! Drop us an email at ICVWW@canterbury.ac.uk or get in touch via Twitter or Facebook @ICVWW.



Interview with a Guest

*THIS ISSUE WE SPOKE TO
LAURA ALLEN, A PHD GRADUATE AT
CANTERBURY CHRIST CHURCH
UNIVERSITY*

What is your PhD project about?

My PhD project is a work of recovery of the author and illustrator Mary Eliza Haweis and is the first study to bring together the various facets of her career including published literature, unpublished writings, and memoranda. The current presentation of Haweis in scholarship is one-dimensional – Haweis is a connoisseur of women’s fashion, a female aesthete. Her other literary outputs, mentioned anecdotally, tie her casually to the Suffrage movement. The first aim of the project is to plug the gap in the current understanding of this author, and the second is to showcase a way to recover marginalised women writers who read across modes and challenge binaries, including the categories of feminist and anti-feminist. Haweis’ writings, which span from 1848 to 1898, cover both the domestic and political lives of women in the nineteenth century. She wrote of dress, furniture, housekeeping, unionising, the right to vote, and divorce. The project starts at the end of Haweis’ career and then works backwards to tease out a complex presentation of this under-researched woman writer.



Left: "Mrs. Haweis in her early forties". A page from 'Arbiter of Elegance' by Bea Howe, Harvill Press

Right: "FAIR EMELYE GATHERING FLOWERS." An illustration from 'Chaucer for Children, A Golden Key' by Mrs. H.R. Haweis



What first drew you to this research area?

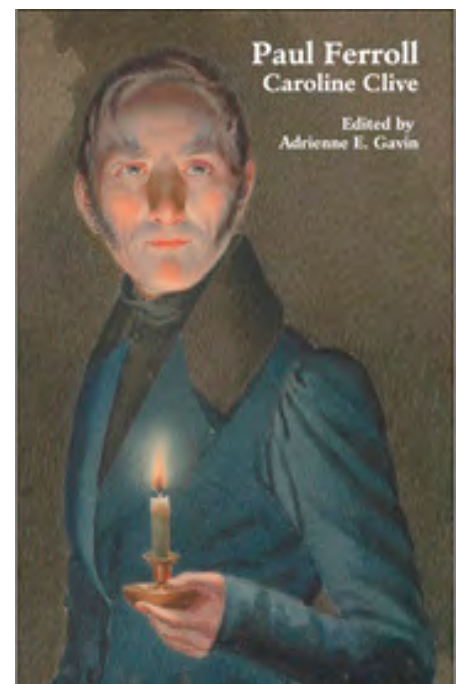
During my undergraduate and Masters degrees, I studied a range of Victorian literature, but my most keen interest was always in Victorian literature written by women. Particularly, during my MA year, women writers of the fin-de-siècle. It was this era that really drew my interest, and where I began to focus on more obscure genres of literature and understudied women authors. I was introduced to Haweis through one of my lecturers during my MA. He was aware of my interest in the recovery of Victorian women writers and the work that I was already undertaking through my Master's dissertation. The MA dissertation took Caroline Clive's *Paul Ferroll* (1855) as its subject. It was particularly rewarding to link this lesser-known text to contemporary ones, highlighting the ways in which they complemented and contrasted each other.

Is there anything that has particularly surprised you about your project?

The first work I read by Haweis was her novel – I ordered a copy from the British Library and I was surprised after my first read that the novel had never been studied and that there were so few mentions of it in studies of New Woman fiction, especially considering Haweis was known as an important aesthetic writer during the period. What I already knew about the fin-de-siècle and new woman fiction suggested to me that the novel belonged in the genre and that studying it would be a fresh contribution to the field. Haweis' novel stands out amongst her other texts, it is unique not only for its form but also for its confronting representations of married life.

Can you tell us about your recent/forthcoming publications?

I have had the incredible opportunity to contribute a chapter to *For Better, For Worse: Marriage in Victorian Novels by Women* (2018). The chapter, titled "[T]he laws themselves must be wicked and imperfect": The Struggle for Divorce in Mary Eliza Haweis's *A Flame of Fire*, was an opportunity to present Haweis and her novel alongside contemporary women writers.



The volume explores the fictional portrayal of marriage by women writers between 1800 and 1900 and will be of particular interest to anyone looking for research on marginalised Victorian literature. It foregrounds female voices, and it was an honour to be able to present Haweis' voice – which has too long gone largely unheard.

If you could meet three Victorian women, who would you choose and why?

Just three? How can I possibly choose! The list could go on into infinity (Sarah Grand, Mona Caird, any of the Brontë sisters!) but I suppose it would be very rude of me not to say Haweis ... so I'll start there. Though, I do think it would be very strange (and more than a little intimidating!) to meet her. I'm not sure she'd agree with everything I've written! The reasons, I suppose, are obvious though I would like to see if she'd be open to a bit of gossip – her memoranda has been fascinating to study, but I know she'd have more to say! The second would be Eliza Lynn Linton because it would be so interesting to know more about her views and how she formed them. I'd also love to meet Christina Rossetti because I have always been so drawn to her poetry, plus how could you not want to meet the woman who penned a poem named, "No, Thank You, John"!



Left: Eliza Lynn Linton

Right: Sarah Grand

Both courtesy of the Victorian Secrets

On Women Writers

Amy Dillwyn (1845-1935): Queer Pioneer of Welsh Women's Writing

NATASHA BOOTH-JOHNSON

"I think sometimes that I love her more than I ought to love any human being."

-- Journal of Amy Dillwyn (16th July 1870), Richard Burton Archives DC5/1/7

So wrote Welsh novelist Amy Dillwyn in her diary on 16th July 1870, one of many examples expressing her love for a female friend. The recipient of Dillwyn's ardent affection – 'my Beatrice' – was her close friend and the daughter of a prominent Welsh aristocrat, Olive Talbot (21st June, 22nd June, 10th July 1871). The pair had a great deal in common; much like Dillwyn, Talbot engaged in extensive philanthropy, suffered from chronic pain and disability, and descended from a well-known Welsh family. While Dillwyn taught classes to young girls in the poorer areas of Swansea, Talbot used her significant inheritance to build churches in the area; while Dillwyn suffered from migraines and had to spend much of her life indoors, Talbot similarly lived with a spinal condition that often rendered her immobile; and, finally, while the Dillwyns honoured anti-slavery activists and Norman ancestors as their forebears, the Talbots hailed from a long line of landowners and politicians.



Dillwyn and Talbot grew up alongside one another in the close-knit community of western Wales's upper echelons. Across the span of several years in her diaries, Dillwyn details her daily life between Swansea and London, within which mentions of Talbot are not, by any means, sparse. Most famously, Dillwyn frequently referred to Talbot as her wife and expressed her romantic feelings openly but, in spite of this, the undoubted queerness of her legacy is often overlooked.

Left: Portrait of Amy Dillwyn. Image courtesy of the Morris family.

"Surely after wooing her since I was 15, she must be my wife now."

-- Journal of Amy Dillwyn (27th February 1872), Richard Burton Archives DC6/1/7

Outside of the romantic, yet unrequited, relationship with Talbot, Dillwyn pursued a modestly successful literary career and published seven novels over a period of twelve years, beginning in 1880 with her debut novel *The Rebecca Rioter*. This novel, told from the perspective of a farmer in a working-class area of Swansea, follows a series of protests between 1839 and 1843 that saw local Welsh men don a kind of gender-ambiguous costume (usually feminine dresses combined with false beards) to disguise themselves as they burned toll gates to oppose new tax legislation. The novel received a respectable amount of praise, and the positive reception was continued with her subsequent novels, especially *Jill* (1884). Perhaps her most well-received novel, *Jill* is a sensational tale following a wealthy young woman who disguises herself as a lady's maid in order to escape a neglectful household. During her newfound employment, Jill becomes close with an upper-class distant cousin, Kitty, with whom she develops a homoerotic bond that is facilitated by the necessary intimacy of a mistress-maid relationship. What these two novels share is the use of disguise to obscure gender and class signifiers: for the protagonist of *The Rebecca Rioter*, Evan Williams, this is achieved through transgender costume while, for *Jill*, cross-class disguise allows her to traverse the possibilities of a female-female relationship and its queer consequences.



Left: The Rebecca Rioters. Illustrated London News, February 11, 1843.

Dillwyn's literary career, while cut short by the death of her father and the inheritance of his debts in 1892, was imbued with elements of her personal life, leading Dillwyn scholars, such as David Painting and Kirsti Bohata, to understand her fiction as semi-autobiographical. Painting opines in his 1987 biography that

'the stories are autobiographical in so far as they deal daringly with the plight of highly intelligent women who cannot find a truly rewarding place in a conventional society dominated by men'. (62)

Bohata adds to this in her 2013 introduction to Dillwyn's novel *Jill* (1884) when she writes

'Jill is perhaps the most autobiographical of all Dillwyn's novels [...] it is the story of Dillwyn's long, hidden love for another woman' (x)

The queer aspect of Dillwyn's fiction had not been substantially acknowledged prior to Bohata's work on the subject, which began in 2013. The last decade or so has seen a modest swell of interest in Dillwyn's queer legacy, but even the new edition of Painting's seminal biography, originally published in 1987, released that same year continued to omit any significant mention of Talbot or Dillwyn's inferred queerness. In her diaries, Dillwyn's references to Talbot are frequent and clear in their intentions.

Significant moments range from short lines – 'heard from my wife; saw my wife' – to heart-felt confessions of her feelings for her close friend – 'I feel as if I were going crazed for love of her' (12th June, 18th May 1873, DC7/1/7; 3rd August 1872, DC6/1/7). Unfortunately, no accounts at all exist from the period between 1875 and 1886, meaning any explicit reference to her fictional influences, queer or otherwise, are unavailable. Even so, reading her extensive diaries in tandem with her fiction illuminates a necessary queer reading, and the diaries offer a fascinating glimpse into the life of a philanthropic, intelligent, and in many ways unconventional, woman.

Notes:

- Bohata, Kirsti, 'Mistress and Maid: Homoeroticism, Cross-Class Desire, and Disguise in Nineteenth Century Fiction', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 45.2 (2017).
- Bohata, Kirsti, "'A Queer-Looking Lot of Women'": Cross-Dressing, Transgender Ventriloquism, and Same-Sex Desire in the Fiction of Amy Dillwyn', *Victorian Review*, 44.1 (2018)
- Dillwyn, Amy, Journal of Amy Dillwyn, Richard Burton Archives DC5/1/7. Courtesy of Morris family.
- Dillwyn, Amy, Journal of Amy Dillwyn, Richard Burton Archives DC6/1/7. Courtesy of Morris family.
- Dillwyn, Amy, Journal of Amy Dillwyn, Richard Burton Archives DC7/1/7. Courtesy of Morris family.
- Painting, David, *Amy Dillwyn*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2013)

ICVWW Event: 'Cook like an Edwardian'

If you missed out on the chance to cook like an Edwardian, look no further! See below for some of the recipes that we tried out on the day and some snaps of the event. Iced potatoes, anyone?

Iced potatoes

Ingredients

New potatoes
300ml Double Cream
Aspic/gelatine (optional)
Salt
Black pepper
Any additional seasoning

Equipment

Whisk
Knife
Mixing bowl
Anything with flat surface to freeze
the potatoes on
Pot for boiling potatoes

Method

- 1. Boil potatoes in chosen pot and let cool.*
- 2. Pour cream into a mixing bowl.*
- 3. Prepare aspic/ gelatine (optional) and add to the cream.*
- 4. Whip cream to custard consistency and add spices to taste.*
- 5. Cut cold potatoes to "shilling" thickness (about 10-15 millimeters) and dip into the cream until covered from all sides. 6. Lay each coated potato on a flat surface and freeze for at least 30 minutes.*



Fingask Salad

Ingredients

Salad
300ml Double Cream
1 tbsp Vinegar
1 tbsp Mustard
2 Eggs
Any salad vegetables of choice
Salt
Black pepper
Any optional seasoning

Equipment

Whisk
Knife
Cutting board
Mixing bowl (cream)
Mixing bowl (salad)
Pot for boiling water

Method

1. Cook eggs until hard-boiled and separate yolk (only the yolk will be used).
2. Cut salad into small pieces and set aside into a mixing bowl.
3. Prepare vegetables and add to the salad bowl (optional).
4. Pour cream into different mixing bowl and add mustard, vinegar and spices.
5. Add yolks to the mix and whisk until custard consistency.
6. Take mix and add to the cut salad.



Left: Iced potatoes. Right: Fingask salad



Next stop - Great British Bake Off!
Photos courtesy of Pete Bateson

Call for Papers and Upcoming Opportunities

- **Call for articles: Commemorating Corelli:** Following the success of the commemorative conference of 4 May, Dr Eleanor Dobson and Joanna Turner are delighted to announce a Call for Papers for a publication dedicated to the work and cultural influence of Marie Corelli. They welcome abstracts of 300 words accompanied by a short biography to be submitted to commemoratingcorelli@gmail.com by 8 June. Successful proposals will form the basis of essays of 8,000 words or fewer, with a submission date for first drafts to the editors of 31 December 2024. For more on this opportunity, please visit [@Corelli100](https://twitter.com/Corelli100) on Twitter/X or visit <https://commemoratingcorelli.wordpress.com/>.
- **Reminder!: VPFA Annual Conference 'Places and Spaces in Victorian Popular Literature and Culture'.** Registration is now open! You can now grab yourself a ticket and book accommodation. Please visit the VPFA webpage to find out more and to register: <https://victorianpopularfiction.org/vpfa-annual-conference/>
- **CfP: Early Career Essay Prize:** *Victorian Poetry* is pleased to announce a new prize recognizing exemplary essays by untenured scholars (including contingently employed and graduate student colleagues). Conferred on an annual basis by a committee comprised of members of the journal's editorial board, the prize carries an award of \$500 and publication in *Victorian Poetry*. Strong essays that do not win the award may also be considered for publication as recommended by the prize committee. Applications are due June 30, 2024. Scholars wishing to be considered should submit anonymized MS Word essays and brief CVs to victorianpoetryjournal@gmail.com with "Early Career Essay Prize" in the subject line. For more on this opportunity, visit: <https://navsa.org/2024/05/20/cfp-early-career-essay-prize-deadline-6-30-24/>.
- **BAVS workshop and Q&A:** Beyond the 'Obvious': Exploring Careers for Victorianists, with Dr Holly Prescott, PhD Careers Specialist. Workshop video launching Friday 31 May 2024 on [BAVS website](#). This workshop video will be followed by a live Careers Q&A with Dr Holly Prescott and Dr Sarah Parker (BAVS Careers Officer) via Zoom, on Tuesday 11 June 2024, 17.00-17.45 (BST). Please note you will need your membership login to access the workshop video.

If you have a CfP or an event that you'd like us to advertise, please get in touch!