



Keighley Local Studies Library

# Haworth & the Brontë Connection

## A Guide to Resources

North Street  
Keighley  
BD21 3SX  
01535 618215  
[keighleylocalstudies@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:keighleylocalstudies@bradford.gov.uk)

[www.bradford.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.bradford.gov.uk/libraries)

City of Bradford MDC

[www.bradford.gov.uk](http://www.bradford.gov.uk)

## The Collection

Keighley Library's collection of books, articles and news cuttings about the Brontë family, the Brontë Society and Museum is second only to the Brontë Parsonage Library itself. It is therefore, a most valuable and important study resource. Keighley Library's archive collection, local history library and family history records also fully provide for any study of Haworth during the lives of the Brontës and for the study of the growth of tourism and its impact, following the family's rise to national and international fame.

### Haworth at the time of the Brontës

The following books provide excellent overviews of Haworth Township and the immediate locality in terms of politics, religion, trade, transport, housing and social life, customs and beliefs:

- *Haworth, "A strange uncivilized little place"*, by Steven Wood (Tempus, 2005)
- *The Brontës at Haworth* by Ann Dinsdale (Frances Lincoln Ltd, 2006)
- *Brontë Country Lives & Landscapes* by Peggy Hewitt (Sutton, 2004)
- *Haworth, Oxenhope & Stanbury from Old Maps* by Steven Wood (Amberley, 2014)
- *The Real Wuthering Heights. The Story of the Withins Farms* by Steven Wood & Peter Brears (Amberley, 2016)
- *A History of Haworth from Earliest Times* by Michael Baumber (Carnegie, 2009)
- *The Brontës' Christmas* by Maria Hubert (Sutton, 1997)

Keighley Library also holds local trade directories, census returns, rate books, old maps, building and sale plans, tithe and enclosure awards, mill reports and other Haworth family collections in its archive. It also holds a variety of official medical reports for the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Chief among them is the report by Benjamin Herschel Babbage, regarding Haworth's sewerage and water supply in 1850. The Babbage report is the result of an inspection instigated by Patrick Brontë himself, after he voiced concerns about the health of the township, especially the water supply. Haworth Township records, including poor relief, (collection 33D80) are stored in Bradford District Archives ([bradford@wyjs.org.uk](mailto:bradford@wyjs.org.uk)). Haworth Urban District Council records (1851-1938) are held in Keighley Library, together with Keighley Borough Council records which include Haworth from 1938. From 1974, Haworth became part of Bradford MDC.

## **Haworth Church and Chapel**

Patrick Brontë officiated at Haworth's Church of St Michael and All Angels for over 40 years. Both he and his family lived through a period of growing local Non-Conformity, both Methodist and Baptist. How this impacted on the family at the parsonage is reflected in their biographies and afore mentioned histories.

Keighley Library holds individual Church and Chapel histories of Haworth. It also holds the parish and Non-Conformist records (including Baptist) and monumental inscriptions of the local families, and stores the archive records of the Haworth and Oakworth Wesleyan Methodist and Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Circuits (from 1974, Keighley and Worth Valley Methodist Circuit). Please see catalogues BK115 and BK337 (after 1974).

## **Brontë Tourism and the development of Haworth**

Even before Charlotte died, it is recorded that fans of the Brontë sisters' novels had already begun to travel to Haworth to see for themselves the wellspring of the family's unique character and literary works (Charlottes' letter to Ellen Nussey 5th March 1850). Mrs Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë* (1857) added even more weight to the unique and curious character of both family and place, stimulating further interest, and perhaps acting as the first guide book to the "Brontës of Haworth".

Keighley Library holds many tourist guides and brochures which have been published over the years about Haworth and places with a Brontë association, including walking guides. This collection shows that Haworth's early regeneration as an important centre for visitors, marks the village out as a unique study in the history of early modern literary tourism. This is charted in the article by Robert Barnard in, "Tourism Comes to Haworth", in *Literature and Tourism*, edited by Mike Robinson and Hans-Christian Anderson, Thomson 2002, pp.143-154 and also, "Tourists and the Cultural Construction of Haworth's Literary Landscape", by Sarah Tetley and Bill Bramwell, pp. 155-170, available in the Library.

## **Haworth's Character and Buildings**

The village of Haworth has become a unique study in itself, particularly for its development in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Its growing importance as a village of much character to be preserved is cause and effect of the growth of Brontë tourism over the years and a number of reports and studies have been produced that reflect this. Studies by the Civic Trust and the Planning Department of Bradford MDC, covering building styles, conservation and the

management and effects of tourism are all available in the Library, together with related news cuttings.

### **Haworth's Parsonage and the Brontë Society**

The Brontë Society was established in 1893 and had its first annual meeting on Saturday 8th December, 1894. The first president was Alderman Brigg, J. P., of Kildwick Hall, a man very active in local political and cultural affairs in Keighley. The Society was in part founded to collect together and preserve memorabilia of the Brontë family, some of which had been dispersed after the auction sale of household goods following Patrick Brontë's death in 1861; other items had left private collections to go to admirers of the family, both at home and abroad.

The Society founded the first museum in Haworth in a room above the Yorkshire Penny Bank. It opened on 18th May 1895 and a photograph of the attendant crowds can be seen in local histories. It wasn't until 1928 that the Parsonage was acquired by the Society for the new museum and the growing Brontë collection.

First hand accounts of the Society's meetings and the opening of both museums can be found in the *Brontë Society Transactions* which are stored on open access in Keighley Library and also in the local newspapers, the *Keighley News* and *Keighley Herald*, held on microfilm. There is also a detailed, illustrated history, *Brontë Parsonage Museum* by Ann Dinsdale and Kathryn White, (The Brontë Society, 1998). Some early correspondence, regarding the first museum, can be found in the Library's Brigg family archive collections but the main archive of the Brontë Society itself (DB28), is held at Bradford District Archives.

Since about 1928, Keighley Library has also collected and indexed news cuttings from the local press about the Brontës and the museum. These Brontë Scrapbooks provide an invaluable resource for local researchers, especially regarding new additions to the collection and new radio, film and T.V. adaptations of the Brontë works over the years.

### **Opening Hours**

Monday 9am to 7pm

Tuesday 9am to 7pm

Wednesday 9am to 7pm

Thursday 9am to 7pm

Friday 9am to 7pm

Saturday 9am to 5pm

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