

**The  
Victorian Studies Association  
Newsletter**



**Ontario, Canada.**

THE VICTORIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Number 21, March 1978

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Edited for the Victorian Studies Association of Ontario

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## EDITORIAL

Two years and four issues have not changed the tenor of the editor's comments. Once again we must apologize for the delay in the arrival of the Newsletter. Once again we ask for your continued provision of material for the Newsletter; whatever interest, or lack thereof, you find in the following pages is the result of the interest, or lack thereof, or our members. (We have, we realize, learnt something in two years: to pass the buck.)

## FORTHCOMING CONFERENCE

### Victorian Studies Association of Ontario

The annual conference of the Victorian Studies Association of Ontario will be held at Glendon College on Saturday, 15 April 1978. The speakers will be Dr. E.S. Shaffer (University of East Anglia), author of 'Kubla Khan' and the Fall of Jerusalem, who will give a paper on biblical criticism, especially the version of Samuel Butler; and Dr. P.M.H. Mazumdar (Hannah Professor of Medicine, University of Toronto) who will be talking about developments in nineteenth-century public health. The usual sumptuous food and drink will complement the intellectual fare.

## REPORTS OF MEETINGS, CONFERENCES

### Toronto Group

The Toronto Group of the Victorian Studies Association has enjoyed its usual three meetings during the academic year. The Group started well with a meeting in October at the house of Eleanor and Ramsay Cook with a discussion introduced by Richard Landon (Head of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library) of the Victorian collectors, Sir Thomas Phillips and Frederick Locker-Lampson. In November, the Group met at Dorothy and Brian Parker's to hear a paper by Neville Thompson (Western Ontario) in which he presented his interpretation of "the Duke of Wellington in Civilian Life." The last meeting for the year was held in March at Ann and John Robson's when a broad discussion of Thomas Carlyle was led by an interestingly diverse panel of speakers, Peter Morgan, David Shaw and Alan Thomas (all Toronto).

Conference on Editorial Problems

For this report, we thank Jane Millgate (English, Toronto).

"Editing Nineteenth-Century Fiction" was the title of the thirteenth annual Conference on Editorial Problems, convened by Jane Millgate and held at the University of Toronto on 4 and 5 November 1977. One of the five papers was on Zola, another took its examples of authorial excisions from the work of several American writers, but the three others each dealt exclusively with a major English figure. Professor Sylvere Monod, of the University of Paris (Sorbonne), spoke on editing Dickens, and especially on the different problems involved in presenting his works to readers in France and on both sides of the Atlantic; Professor Peter Shillingsburg, of Mississippi State University, took as his topic "Textual Problems in Editing Thackeray" and gave details of the procedures he intended to follow in his projected Thackeray edition; Michael Millgate discussed the history and authority of the various collected editions of Hardy's novels published during and after his lifetime. The 65 people who attended the conference from many parts of Canada and the United States were also able to enjoy the exhibit, "To be Continued Monthly", prepared by Elizabeth Hulse and displayed in the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library.

(E.J.M.)

Midwest Victorian Studies Association and Research Society  
for Victorian Periodicals

Merrill Distad (Toronto) prepared the following account.

The inaugural meeting of the Midwest Victorian Studies Association and the ninth annual conference of the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals were held back-to-back at the Midland Hotel in Chicago on Friday and Saturday, 18-19 November. The midwestern setting and the "two-for-the-price-of-one" arrangements for travel, the banquet, and the hotel facilities led to an impressive turnout of delegates from all parts of the U.S. and Canada.

The new MVSA celebrated its birth with a day of somewhat informal programming--a more formal conference is planned for the spring in Urbana. Walter Arnstein (Illinois), R.K. Webb (Maryland), and Sheldon Rothblatt (Berkeley) led a spirited discussion of "Victorian Theories of Education". Members of

Northwestern's thespian faculty staged a dramatic reading of the letters of J.S. Mill and Harriet Taylor Mill. Finally, Jane Stedman (Roosevelt) presented the day's only formal scholarly paper: "The Curriculum at Castle Adamant: Tennyson's and Gilbert's Learned Ladies". This exceedingly fine disquisition on Princess Ida was lightened by musical examples from the libretto rendered by members of Michigan's Gilbert and Sullivan Society.

After the joint banquet the RSVP conference convened with a well-attended evening session at which John North (Waterloo), Joel Wiener (C.U.N.Y.), and Michael Wolff (Massachusetts) discussed the current state of bibliographical and biographical study of Victorian periodicals and journalists. Joel Wiener is undertaking a multi-volume biographical dictionary of Victorian journalists, and asks that anyone interested in further information about the project and perhaps interested in becoming a contributor contact him at the Department of History, C.U.N.Y., Convent Avenue at 133rd Street, New York, N.Y., 10031., U.S.A.

The following morning witnessed a session given over to libertinism, censorship, murder, capital punishment, prostitution, and white slavery! Sally Mitchell (Wisconsin) had compiled and annotated "A Glossary of Prudery: Rhoda Broughton's Not Wisely but Too Well as a Periodical and Three-Decker Publication". Daniel Rutenberg (South Florida) traced an earlier manifestation of a controversy still very much with us in "From Praise of Hanging to the Femme Fatale: Capital Punishment in the 'Nineties Periodicals". And Ann Robson (Toronto) placed the heroic campaign of the Pall Mall Gazette into the context of feminist history as she analysed "The Significance of the Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon."

After lunch the venue of the conference shifted to the John Crerar Library of Science Law and Medicine on the campus of the Illinois Institute of Technology. In this final session Lee Grugel (Moorhead) discussed the journalistic career of a notable divine: "James Martineau: Reviewer as Victorian Apostle." Jeanne Peterson (Indiana) led the audience into the arcane world of the historian of medicine as she discussed "Specialist Journals and Professional Rivalries in Victorian Medicine."

With this the RSVP conference closed. As the delegates milled about saying good-byes all agreed that the double-conference experiment had succeeded. That both halves of this "double-header" were so good speaks well for the hard-work and skill

of the team of organisers. For admirably efficient local arrangements both Scott Bennet and Larry Poston (Illinois) received much-deserved praise and thanks.

(M.D.)

#### NEWS OF MEMBERS

Arline Golden (English, SUNY) was awarded a SUNY Faculty Research Fellowship in the summer of 1977 to initiate research on a project examining Victorian literary images of women as property in context of women's legal and special status during this period. During her present sabbatical, she is working on this project, tentatively titled: "'Reduced Into Possession.': Images of Women as Property in Victorian Fiction and Society." She also delivered a paper, "'A Moment's Ornament': Woman as Art Object in The House of Mirth," to the Art and Literature section of NEMLA, April, 1977.

W.J. Keith (English, Toronto) has published "Thomas Hardy's Edition of William Barnes" in Victorian Poetry, 15 (Summer 1977), 121-131. A preliminary report on this work appeared in the Newsletter in March, 1974.

Trevor H. Levere (I.H.P.S.T., Toronto) contributed an essay "The Rich Economy of Nature: Chemistry in the Nineteenth Century," to Nature and the Victorian Imagination, ed. U.C. Knoepfelmacher and G.B. Tennyson, University of California Press, 1977.

Juliet McMaster (English, Alberta) reports her book, Trollope's Palliser Novels: Theme and Pattern, will be published by Macmillan of London in the spring of 1978. Her monograph, Jane Austen on Love, will be published in the fall in the English Literary Studies monograph series. It includes the paper which she delivered at the annual meeting of the Jane Austen Society at Chawton, Hampshire, last summer. She is currently working on an edition of an unpublished MS of Thackeray's, the fragment of a play in blank verse about Bluebeard. This is destined for the collection of essays on Thackeray that is being edited by John Olmsted.

Michael Millgate (English, Toronto) in January 1978 published in collaboration with Richard L. Purdy volume one of the Clarendon Press edition of The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy. It is expected that the edition will consist of seven volumes in all. He was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship for 1977-78 and is currently working on a biography of Hardy for the Oxford University Press.

Ann Robson (History, Toronto) chaired a session at the History of Women Conference in Minneapolis in October 1977 and gave a paper on "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon" in November at the Conference of the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals in Chicago. She will spend 1978-79 working on John Stuart Mill's newspaper writings in London, England on a Canada Council Leave Fellowship with

John M. Robson (English, Toronto) who will be taking a year's leave from Victoria College to work in England on the edition of Mill's Collected Works.

George Wing (English, Calgary) has taken over the editorship of the Newsletter for the Victorian Studies Association of Western Canada.

#### JOURNALS

FOUR DECADES OF POETRY 1890-1930, formerly produced in England, will in future be published and printed in Toronto. For further information please contact The Editor, 231 Lonsmount Drive, Toronto, Ontario, M5P 2Y9

The subject of the recent numbers (4 and 5) of the Cahiers d'Etudes et de Recherches Victoriennes et Edouardiennes was E.M. Forster. Information and back issues can be had by writing to Professor J.C. Amalric, Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Victoriennes et Edouardiennes, Université Paul Valéry, B.P. 5043, Montpellier, Cédex 34032, France.

Publishing History, a new journal edited by Michael Turner of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, began in May 1977 and will appear twice yearly. This journal deals with publishing in its widest context including the relationship between publisher and author; the influence of a publisher on literary trends; publishing as a reflection of social, political, and cultural influences; and the economic/business history of publishing. Magazine and newspaper publishing and book distribution are also included. For further information write to Somerset House, 417 Maitland Avenue, Teaneck, NJ 07666, U.S.A.; or to Chadwyck-Healey Ltd., 21 Bateman Street, Cambridge CB2 1NB, England.

History of Photography's first issue appeared in January 1977 under the editorship of Professor Heinz K. Henisch, Department of Art History, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA. This new quarterly is devoted to the publication of original findings and addresses itself to scholars in the field

of art and photography; to librarians and archivists; to students of journalism or of the history of science; and to social historians. Further details may be obtained from: (U.S.A. and Canada) Light Impressions Corporation, P.O. Box 3012, Rochester, NY 14614; (U.K.) Taylor and Francis Ltd., 10/14 Macklin Street, London WC2B 5NF

#### ARTICLES

The first article Gladstone, Holyoake and the Ballot was written by Bruce Kinzer.

In 1872 the Gladstone government secured the passage of an act providing for secret voting at parliamentary elections. Forty years earlier the ballot question had first become a significant issue in English politics. Anti-aristocratic radicals of the 1830s, and in particular the Philosophic Radicals led by George Grote inside parliament and J.S. Mill outside, looked to the ballot to eliminate intimidation and bribery at elections, and thereby to extinguish the corrupt electoral influence exercised by the landed oligarchy. Although support for the ballot increased dramatically in the House of Commons during the 1830s, the Whig leadership opposed its adoption and, with the assistance of the Tories, successfully resisted the enactment of secret voting. In the subsequent decade parliament evinced little interest in the subject. Cobden, Bright, and others actively promoted the ballot cause during the fifties but the Palmerstonian ascendancy seemingly terminated its existence as a serious political question.

Not long after Palmerston's death, there occurred a rather curious episode involving the ballot and two prominent figures of the Victorian period, G.J. Holyoake, the secularist and political radical, and W.E. Gladstone. Encouraged by the passage of the 1867 Reform Act, which gave the vote to a large proportion of the urban working class, a number of earnest advocates of secret voting, Holyoake among them, believed that the time had come to press once again the claims of the ballot. Thus in the early part of 1868 there appeared under Holyoake's name A New Defence of the Ballot, a pamphlet which aggressively stated the case for secret voting. A complimentary copy of the pamphlet was sent to Gladstone who over the decades had been a consistent, though not especially vocal, opponent of the measure.<sup>1</sup> Gladstone, whose main

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<sup>1</sup>In introducing the government's 1866 Reform Bill Gladstone had stated that the ballot was a subject "which we cannot undertake to view with favour either now or at a future time." Hansard, 3rd series, CLXXXII, 12 March 1866, 24.



preoccupation at this time was the approaching general election, acknowledged receipt of the pamphlet in the following note, dated 11 September.

I thank you very much for your pamphlet.  
I will not say that you efface from my mind,<sup>2</sup>  
the arguments of Sydney Smith and John Mill,  
but the Ballot, or its friends, have to thank  
you for an able and successful defence.<sup>3</sup>

Not unnaturally, Gladstone's use of the word "successful" struck Holyoake as of some significance. Did Gladstone intend to signal his friends within the advanced wing of the Liberal party that he should no longer be regarded as an adversary of the ballot? Holyoake privately informed a number of Liberals interested in the question of what Gladstone had said in his note. Henry Berkeley, who had introduced numerous ballot motions in the House of Commons, thought it encouraging. "I like Gladstone's note...it looks like unsettled weather and the mind veering round."<sup>4</sup> One of those who heard from Holyoake concerning Gladstone's response to the pamphlet was Isaac Holden, Liberal candidate for the eastern division of the West Riding and an enthusiastic supporter of the ballot. Addressing a Leeds meeting on 15 September, Holden revealed "that Mr. Gladstone had just intimated his willingness to consider the question of the ballot."<sup>5</sup> The liberty which Holden had taken was to cause both Gladstone and Holyoake a measure of embarrassment.

On hearing of Holden's assertion at Leeds, George Glyn, the Liberal chief whip, immediately wrote to his leader.

Isaac Holden quotes you as ready to 'consider the question of the Ballot' but I think I may venture if needful, to say that you have not made such an announcement. I believe your feeling to be that you could tolerate the wish for the Ballot in your friends but that you could not yourself see your way to its being useful or expedient?<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See Sydney Smith, Ballot (London, 1839), and J.S. Mill, Thoughts on Parliamentary Reform (1859), Essays on Politics and Society, in Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, ed. J.M. Robson (Toronto, 1977), XIX, 337. By the fifties Mill had become an outspoken opponent of the ballot.

<sup>3</sup> Holyoake Papers, The Cooperative Union, Manchester, Gladstone to Holyoake 11 September 1868. Unfortunately, there is no copy of this letter in Gladstone's papers.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., No. 1820, Berkeley to Holyoake, 15 September 1868.

<sup>5</sup> Daily News, 17 September 1868.

<sup>6</sup> Gladstone Papers, British Library, Add. MSS. 44347, ff. 170-3, Glyn to Gladstone, 17 September 1868.

Public clarification of the matter, now rendered necessary by Holden's indiscretion, entailed further communication with Holyoake. The latter was not only made aware of Gladstone's displeasure at the application which had been made of his note, but was told that he had incorrectly read "successful defence" where he should have read "manful defence." Holyoake composed and sent a letter of apology to Gladstone.

Your courtesy in writing to me I have, so it must appear to you, converted into an annoyance. It has been unwittingly done. The words which I now see are "manful defence" applied to my argument on the ballot, I read "successful defence." The context told me such reading was doubtful, but a notary whom I asked to look at it read it "successful", as do persons now whose attention is called to it for the first time. Mentioning to Mr. Holden M.P. incidentally that you had used the phrase "successful" /sic/ defence" in reference to my pamphlet he made some allusion to it in his speech at Leeds.... I was surprised and pained at it, as I had no thought to publish your letter without your permission. I have taken immediate steps that the allusion be publicly corrected and apologize to you.<sup>7</sup>

Holyoake's efforts to correct the impression created by Holden's speech took the form of a brief report in the Daily News.

We have reason to believe that the statement which has obtained currency respecting Mr. Gladstone's conversion to the cause of the ballot has originated in a misconception of some sentences in which the right hon. gentleman expressed no more than his sense of the force with which the case for the ballot had been put in a recent publication.<sup>8</sup>

In this manner the Gladstone-Holyoake misunderstanding with respect to the ballot was brought to a close.

What is most puzzling about this entire affair is that, des-

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<sup>7</sup>Holyoake Papers, No. 1822, Holyoake to Gladstone, 17 September 1868.

<sup>8</sup>Daily News, 19 September 1868.

pite Holyoake's admission that he had misread the word at issue, the Liberal leader had indeed written "successful" and not "manful." Unlike some of Gladstone's other products, his note to Holyoake is highly legible. The word preceding "defence" is unquestionably "successful" and can be read as "manful" only if one is wilfully determined to read it as such regardless of the fact that the letters as they appear on the page spell "successful." It is probable that Gladstone, without thinking, had used a word which conveyed a meaning different from that which he had intended. When Glyn brought Holden's speech to his attention, Gladstone apparently insisted, and may even have believed, that Holyoake had erroneously read "successful" where he had written "manful". It was perfectly natural that Holyoake should have communicated to his friends what seemed a possibly significant message from Gladstone. But Holden acted imprudently in publicly declaring, based on Gladstone's note, that the leader of the Liberal party was no longer opposed to secret voting. Holyoake's letter of apology and acknowledgement that he had misread what he clearly had not is evidence both of his sincere regret at the use which Holden had made of the note and of his great respect for Gladstone as a conscientious reformer.

If there is little to admire in Gladstone's handling of this incident, one can at least say that Holyoake's confidence in him proved justified in the end. Throughout the election campaign Gladstone said nothing about the ballot. But by 1870 his government, for reasons having little to do with Holyoake's pamphlet, had committed itself to the passage of a Ballot Act. Two years later, to Holyoake's satisfaction, secret voting at parliamentary elections became the law of the land.

(B.K.)

Our last piece is a special event; we have to thank Michael Collie (English, York) for preparing a brief history of our Victorian Studies Association of Ontario in celebration of our first, of many, ten years.

#### A DECADE OF ASSOCIATION

It was a pleasure to be asked to look back over the first ten years of the Victorian Studies Association of Ontario, because in the terms established by its members it has obvious-

ly been a success. Most of us were and are members of other professional organizations, with ample experience of densely packed conference programmes and adequate expertise in specialist communication: it was felt at the outset that the Association should not attempt to rival or emulate these established organizations, but should rather create a forum within which people in our part of Canada who were interested in Victorian Britain could conveniently meet each other. Similarly, although at our early meetings there was talk of establishing a Victorian Studies Centre similar to those at the Universities of Leicester and Indiana, it was soon realized not only that we lacked both the physical facilities and the money to establish and maintain them, but also that our immediate needs were rather different from those of other places. Our early talk seemed to show -- at least to those who were doing the talking -- two things; first, that there was room, even a need in Eastern Canada for an association which would bring together people interested in Victorian Britain; second, that such an association did not have to be elaborate or grandiose.

With these considerations in mind a group of people began to meet informally during 1967, to determine what form such an association should take. That an exceptionally large number of Victorian scholars and specialists lived in Ontario was, of course, well known; that the range of interest was considerable was also known, though less clearly. What would best serve this probably large group of people? A meeting was held at York in the Spring of 1967, an ad hoc pilot committee formed consisting of Professors Robson (J), Helmstadter, Eisen and Collie and plans made for a questionnaire that would be widely distributed during the summer. The results of the questionnaire were encouraging and the committee therefore called the first meeting of the association, which was held in Massey College on 7 October 1967 and which, despite the long-weekend, was attended by seventy people. From this and subsequent meetings came the decision that in the first instance we should concentrate on an annual conference and on the publication of a newsletter, though from the beginning it was imagined that there would be the local informal gatherings in members' homes that have in fact been held fairly regularly, at least in Toronto. The first conference was then held in the spring of 1968, when draft bye-laws were presented to the membership for discussion,

an executive committee was elected and joint editors of the proposed newsletter appointed. Membership of the association was to be "open to all those who are interested in the study of Victorian culture" -- except undergraduates; and there was early agreement that the most convenient time for the annual conference was late March or early April.

Because this note on the first ten years of the Association's life is more than anything else an act of celebration, it seems appropriate to recall, not just the facts of how the association came into being, but also the cordial, civilized and unpretentious atmosphere of the early meetings. This clearly reflects the wishes of the membership and yet it seems not wrong to remember the particular people who have helped us so much by giving generously of their time by serving on the executive committee and as president of the Association and editors of the Newsletter. The Presidents of the Association have so far been Albert Tucker (York), Michael Millgate (Toronto), Dick Helmstadter (Toronto), Jack Robson (Toronto) and Trevor Lloyd (Toronto). The editors of the Newsletter have been Edgar Wright and Frank Peake (Laurentian), Jane Millgate and Robin Biswas (Toronto and York), W.J. Keith (Toronto) and, currently, Ann Robson (Toronto). Throughout its first ten years the Association has been supported financially by the School of Graduate Studies at Toronto and the Faculty of Graduate Studies at York, as well as, from time to time, by the Canada Council. We have also enjoyed, as it is pleasant once again to record, the hospitality of Glendon College, which was first made available to the Association for its annual conference through the good offices of Albert Tucker.

Although a fairly complete record of the Association's affairs can be culled from the Newsletter, where a brief summary of papers given at the annual conference has usually appeared, reconstructing and remembering our first nine conferences with complete accuracy proved unexpectedly difficult. So, for the record, the conferences are listed below. The Association has fairly clearly been fortunate in its speakers: academically and intellectually the level of discourse has been high; but when the whole list is drawn up, as it is here, one cannot help but wonder whether or not the titles of lectures taken together adequately reflect the undoubtedly wide interests of the membership and potential membership. Nothing on architecture, music, popular art, recreation or sport. Nothing on the Victorian overseas. Nothing on the army or indeed on any other institution. Nothing or next to nothing on Victorian science. Perhaps the very act of remembering the successful

conferences of the past will help us formulate our policies for the future and meanwhile the list is an extremely interesting, even impressive one.

(The name of the chairmen are given in brackets)

- 1968 David Newsome (Emmanuel College, Cambridge)  
"The Early Victorian World Picture"  
(Eisen)
- George Ford (University of Rochester)  
"Dickens and the Victorian Sense of Time"  
(Girling)
- Commentator: Professor R.K. Webb (Columbia University)
- 1969 John Clive (Harvard University)  
"Carlyle and Macaulay: Contrast and  
Contiguity" (Helmstädter)
- David DeLaura "Matthew Arnold and the Nightmare of  
History" (Collins)
- 1970 Brian Harrison (Corpus Christi College, Oxford)  
"English Prohibitionists: 1853-1872"
- Jack Robson (University of Toronto)  
"Fiction for the Historian: a Rhetorical  
Approach to the Victorian Novel."  
(Louis James, University of Kent)
- 1971 George Levine (Rutgers University)  
"Some Victorian Conventions of Realism:  
Dickens, George Eliot, Hardy."  
(Professor T.L. Pinney, Pomona College)
- George Rudé "Popular Protest in Early Victorian  
England." (Helmstädter)
- 1972 J.M. Cameron (University of Toronto)  
"The Tractarian Sensibility" (Eisen)
- Ian Gregor (University of Kent)  
"The Mayor of Casterbridge and History"  
(Professor George Wing, University of  
Calgary)
- 1973 Jack Simmons (University of Leicester)  
"The Impact of Railways on Victorian  
Society" (R.W. Greaves, University  
of Kansas)

- 1973 Michael Collie (York University)  
"Pre-Freudian Psychology and the  
Naturalist Novel." (Martha Vicinus,  
University of Indiana)
- 1974 Morse Peckham (University of South Carolina)  
"Cultural History: Romanticism and  
Behaviour" (Barry Gough, Wilfred  
Laurier University)
- Trevor Lloyd (University of Toronto)  
"William Morris and the Utopian Novel."  
(William Coles, University of Michigan)
- 1975 J.B. Schneewind (Pittsburgh University)  
"Sidgwick and Victorian Ethics"  
(Jack Robson)
- Alan Thomas (University of Toronto)  
"Documentation and Discovery: Uses of  
the Victorian Photograph".
- 1976 Paul Walton (McMaster University)  
"The Casual Ward by Luke Fildes"
- Juliet McMaster (University of Alberta)  
"Allegory and Imagery in The Eustace  
Diamonds." (F.E.L. Priestley)

For new members who may not have been party to the informal and mysterious process by which the Association has sometimes arrived at a consensus, it is perhaps worth mentioning that the conference format has been deliberate. The general policy, susceptible to variation of course at the discretion of the executive committee, has been to invite one speaker from home territory (Ontario, Eastern Canada, nearby parts of the U.S.) and one speaker from further afield. On the whole, this has worked: the leisurely arrangements of the conference have been justified, for the majority at least, by the calibre of the two main speakers and the quality of what they had to say. It could be, though, that the policy needs further discussions from time to time. If the conference's special character is to be retained, it should be endorsed by the membership as a whole, while the Association needs the assurance, if it is to remain faithful to its original charter, that people in Ontario doing interesting work in the Victorian field are invited to address it and to attend its meetings. Meanwhile the conference continues to fulfil an important part of its function very adequately by providing those who attend with

the chance, at least once a year, to meet each other in agreeable circumstances. We have been fortunate also in having a series of excellent exhibitions and, on one occasion, a film.

Associated, but not in any formal sense linked with the Association has been the Victorian Studies Option offered as a joint enterprise within the English and History masters programmes at York University and the University of Toronto. Most people who teach in the option are also members of the Association. The idea was to facilitate inter-university co-operation, encourage inter-disciplinary work and in a general sense permit the masters candidate a reasonably concentrated spell of work in the Victorian field. This seems a good occasion to report that, despite the vicissitudes of the times, the degree option has survived -- just! A rather interesting set of interdisciplinary seminars have been offered by York and Toronto faculty over the last few years and it remains our hope that members of the Association will continue to encourage students interested in the Victorian period to think of the option as one of the more useful possibilities open to them. Detailed information about the option as proposed for 1978-79 can be obtained from Niki Lary (Atkinson College, York University) or Dick Helmstadter (Department of History, University of Toronto).

Is there anything to be learnt from looking back over the records of our association? Of course the proper place for a discussion of the association's life is the annual business meeting and, if I now venture a few remarks on what we have done to date, it is with a clear notion of their personal or perhaps idiosyncratic character. First, the membership. We have never aspired to be a large organization and have been quite satisfied with a membership of about a hundred. Maybe we are no longer certain, however, that we are in touch with everyone in Ontario with interests in the Victorian field. I suspect a membership campaign is due. Second, the Association's purpose. Originally we tried to include anyone with an interest in Victorian Britain: over the years this has been whittled down to a group that consists mostly of literary people and historians. I rather regret our relative failure to involve architects, museologists, scientists, philosophers, publishers and so on. Perhaps the time has come to discuss this again, though I, at least, have no way of knowing whether, if we did discuss it, we would decide to settle comfortably for the good things we already have or whether we would see that the health of the Association in the future depended upon our being more broad in our interests, more determined in our



interdisciplinary pursuits and more eager to encourage the participation of people whose interests are not exclusively literary or historical. More generally, just as the end of this ten year period has been a good moment for looking back over the Association's records, so it might be a good moment for the re-assessment of the Association's purposes. So at least I believe.

(M.C.)