



# Writing Women

A Newsletter for the 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-Century British Women Writers Association

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## The Michael Field Society is Born

At the 2006 BWWC hosted by the University of Florida, three Michael Field scholars—Sharon Bickle (Monash University), Michele Lee (University of Texas), and JJ Pionke (Harper College)—decided that there needed to be a forum where Michael Field scholars could interact with their passion and excitement for Katharine Bradley, Edith Cooper, and their literary avatar, Michael Field. Thus, The Michael Field Society was born.



Currently, The Michael Field Society has a small, but enthusiastic membership, and this year, the Society is hoping to expand its ranks with the exciting launch of *The Michaelian*, an online journal dedicated to the interdisciplinary study of Michael Field and their literary circle. *The Michaelian* will be open to articles written by a wide range of academics, from graduate students and established professors to independent scholars (see the call for papers on page 4).

The Society has also undertaken a mission to raise funds for a headstone to commemorate the shared resting place of Katharine Bradley and Edith Cooper, who currently rest in an anonymous grave at St. Mary Magdalen's Church in Mortlake, England.

Additionally, The Society looks forward to planning a future Michael Field conference in the style of the “Michael Field and Their World” Conference held in 2004 at the University of Delaware. Recruiting new members and generating support is key to organizing this thrilling endeavor, to be possibly located at the Michael Field home in Richmond, England, now an enchanting bed-and-breakfast.

We seek dedicated members in all capacities, from those simply expressing their interest in Michael Field studies to those who want to help with both the journal and The Society at large. If you have a love of Michael Field, please visit our website <[www.michaelfieldsociety.com](http://www.michaelfieldsociety.com)> or send us an email at <[deepforestow1@michaelfieldsociety.com](mailto:deepforestow1@michaelfieldsociety.com)>. We'd love to hear from you.

—JJ Pionke  
(Harper College)

### **Invitation to the 2008 BWWC: Indiana University**

Indiana University is excited to host the Sixteenth Annual Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century British Women Writers Conference. Thanks to the enthusiastic responses to our conference theme, “Female Marginalia: Annotating Empire,” this promises to be yet another installment in the BWWC’s long history of rigorous discussion and debate. Our wonderful line-up of presenters took up our challenge to interrogate the margins, to grapple with women writers’ dynamic roles in shaping the critical conversations of their moment, and their papers represent the interdisciplinary nature, the intellectual challenges, the risks, and the variety that sets this conference apart. From panels such as “Colonizing Courtship”—which explores the violence of romance—and “Austen’s Afterlife”—which questions re-appropriations of Jane Austen—to less canonical panels that trouble not only the kinds of texts we explore, but the ways in which we explore them—such as “Gendering Journalism” and “Innovative Interfaces: The Technology of Writing”—these panels will inspire candid and compelling conversations.

Our plenary panelists and keynote speakers will likewise extend the conference theme in interesting directions. At our opening plenary panel, Susan Fraiman, Ann Cvetkovich, and Susan Stanford Friedman will initiate a timely conversation, posing provocative questions and thoughts about the state of feminist theory today inside and outside the academy. Richard Menke will address the relationship between media and information during the nineteenth century; Helen Deutsch will map disability and female desire to literary form; and Claudia Johnson will explore the discourse of the miraculous and fairy-dom in Victorian Janeism.

We will also be hosting three exhibits that offer a rare glimpse into marginal lives and lifestyles of the period. The Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction—created by IU’s famous Alfred Kinsey—will display the risqué world of Victorian sexuality and colonial erotica. The Mathers Museum will take us to regions across the globe to trek the voyages and display the cultures that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century women travel writers explored. And the Lilly Library will offer us insight, through three exhibits, into the English parlor, the London street scene, and the transatlantic realm of correspondence.

The Indiana Memorial Union, where we will host the 2008 conference, is located in the heart of IU Bloomington’s campus. From the hotel and conference rooms, attendees can gaze out across this busy IU campus and see the daily student life of this Big 10 University. More importantly, the IMU houses a Starbucks, a food court, a restaurant, a game room, cozy places to prepare papers, and is a quick walk to downtown Bloomington—a full-fledged university town of shopping, restaurants, and coffee shops. We look forward to seeing you in March. In the meantime, check our website for info and updates: <[www.indiana.edu/~bwwc](http://www.indiana.edu/~bwwc)>.

—Miranda M. Yaggi  
(Indiana University)

### **Announcement of the 2009 BWWC: University of Iowa**

We are excited to announce that the Seventeenth Annual Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century British Women Writers Conference will be hosted by University of Iowa from April 2–5, 2009. This conference, entitled “Fresh Threads of Connection,” will explore surprising connections in the study of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British women writers—whether those connections

are ones we generate through our research or discover to have existed in the past. We'll examine surprising connections between people (whether individuals or cultures), within and between texts and genres, and in the juxtapositions that scholars construct among texts, theories, and disciplines.

Our first major event on Thursday evening will feature a roundtable of scholars who will focus on connections among categories used to label certain women as the other, such as age, religion, class, and race. Instead of simply presenting their work, panelists will also engage in a discussion about the connections they see between their different projects, seeking to understand how marginalized groups can be understood in relation to one another. On Friday evening, we'll convene in the Senate Chamber of the gold-domed Old Capitol Building, Iowa's historic first capitol preserved as a museum, for an interdisciplinary lecture on women's literature and art. In keeping with our theme, Old Capitol will host an exhibit featuring unlikely connections between mother nature and female artists. The exhibit will accentuate literary moments from British women's writing which are specifically engaged with contemporary debates about animals and nature, covering topics from vaccination to gardening to vivisection. Iowa's Main Library will also host an exhibit of rare books by women writers from its large collection of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century texts. Saturday night, participants can look forward to a light-hearted night of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century theatrical entertainment in conjunction with a lecture on Romantic theatre.

The Sheraton, our conference hotel, is nestled in the heart of downtown Iowa City just blocks away from University of Iowa's campus. From the front door of the Sheraton, guests can walk out onto a pedestrian mall, the center of Iowa City's picturesque downtown. Most importantly, the Sheraton is

within easy walking distance of our on-campus exhibits, Old Capitol lectures, theatrical entertainment, and a multitude of restaurants, coffee houses, galleries, and shops that our conference participants can enjoy throughout the weekend.

Look for our call-for-papers soon on our conference website <[www.uiowa.edu/~englgrad/bwwc](http://www.uiowa.edu/~englgrad/bwwc)> or contact Anna Stenson <[anna-stenson@uiowa.edu](mailto:anna-stenson@uiowa.edu)> with any questions. We look forward to seeing you in Iowa City!

—Anna Stenson  
(University of Iowa)

### Buy Your BWWA Mugs!

As part of the BWWA's mission to support graduate student scholarship, we will be selling BWWA mugs at this year's conference for \$15 each or \$13 each if pre-ordered, with all proceeds going directly to the BWWA Graduate Student Travel Award Fund. If you wish to pre-order your mug and save \$2, please fill out and send the following order form:

<[www.clas.ufl.edu/users/lhager/temp/bwwa\\_mug\\_preorder.pdf](http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/lhager/temp/bwwa_mug_preorder.pdf)>.



—Lisa Hager  
(University of Florida)

### **Call for Papers: *The Michaelian***

The Michael Field Society announces a call for papers for the inaugural edition of “The Michaelian,” an academic, non-profit, peer-reviewed online journal, dedicated to the study of Michael Field (Katharine Bradley and Edith Cooper) and their circle.

Publication is intended to be annual. We welcome contributions such as articles, book reviews, reports of events regarding Michael Field and late-Victorian literature and culture (announcements, exhibitions, conferences...). Teaching experience related to introducing Michael Field to undergraduates is also of interest. The journal seeks to bring together advanced graduate students and scholars from many universities to create a unique forum for a wide-ranging discussion engaging with all aspects of Michael Field scholarship, including literature and literary history, feminist and lesbian/queer perspectives, collaborative writing, life-writing, theatre history, publishing history and art history.

Please submit essays by May 1, 2008, to Sharon Bickle, Centre for Women's Studies and Gender Research, Monash University, <sharon.bickle@arts.monash.edu.au>.

### **From the Editor**

In a future issue, we will be featuring information about past conference co-chairs and committee members in a “Where Are They Now” article. If you were involved in a past conference, send us an update on your latest successes to <bwwa@ipfw.edu>.

We encourage all members to pass along information about conferences, publications, and awards so that they can be shared with everyone (shameless self-promotion strongly encouraged!). Submissions may be sent to <bwwa@ipfw.edu> by February 15 for inclusion in the spring issue and by August 15 for inclusion in the fall issue.