

This talk was given by Ellen Outram who was a blue badge tourist guide for Derbyshire.

The talk was very well attended and lived up to members' expectations.

Ellen was set a challenge by a colleague to prove that there was a connection between Charlotte Bronte's book, Jane Eyre, and Hathersage. She set out to prove that the book was based on Hathersage and not Howarth where Charlotte lived.

The evidence is as follows:-

Charlotte lived from 1816 to 1855. During that short life she spent some time in France working as a nanny, and met a man who it is thought she based the character Mr Rochester on.

In 1845, Charlotte was invited by her friend Ellen Nussey to stay with her at the Old Vicarage in Hathersage. Ellen was preparing the house for her brother to live in and Charlotte agreed to help her and stayed in Hathersage for three weeks at the end of June and beginning of July 1845. Ellen's brother was on his honeymoon during this time. He had, in fact, proposed to Charlotte earlier, but she had no hesitation in turning him down as she found him a very dull man!

Charlotte arrived in Hathersage and was set down at the George Hotel and met by the owner Jim Morton.

During Charlotte's stay at the vicarage, she admired the views onto Stanage Edge and also down to the needle mills below the church. She socialised with people in Hathersage including the Oliver's and Rivers who were mill owners.

She noted the church in Hathersage was similar to that in Howarth but that in Hathersage the clock chimed and the church has a spire. Charlotte was also aware of the Eyre family members in Hathersage and the Eyre family brasses in the church.

Charlotte was asked to be a school mistress in Hathersage school but she turned the offer down.

Charlotte visited North Lees Hall which was owned by Mary Eyre. She climbed up to the top onto the flat leaded roof where she admired the view.

There is evidence to suggest that the original owner of North Lees went mad and was locked in the attic where she tried to set fire to it.

The evidence from Charlotte's visit to Hathersage is clearly shown in the Jane Eyre book as follows:-

The history of North Lees is mirrored almost exactly in the book.

The vicarage in Jane Eyre is clearly based on the vicarage Charlotte stayed in.

The Needle Mills in the valley below the church are mentioned in the book.

The Eyre name, so prominent in Hathersage, is the name of the main character.

The book talks about Morton who owns the George.

Mr Rochester's house is called Thornfield Hall. Thorn is an anagram of North and Lees is an Anglo Saxon term for field.

The landscape described in the book fits perfectly the actual landscape.

When Jane Eyre escaped from the house it is thought that she ended up on Moscar Moor or Fox House.

After her visit to Hathersage, Charlotte went home to look after her father.

The book was published in 1847.

This was the evidence presented by our speaker who also illustrated her talk with excellent slides. It was a fascinating talk.

The next meeting of the Society will take place on Tuesday April 14th and will be a members evening.

For further details visit our website [www.hopehistoricalsociety.co.uk](http://www.hopehistoricalsociety.co.uk)