The Martineau Society

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Martineau Society Subscription Information:

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* UK: Individual members £20 // Concessionary rate £10 // Institutional membership £45. Life membership rate is £200.

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Editor’s Note

The national debate on the Referendum in the United Kingdom on whether to leave or stay in the European Economic Union was sterile and misleading. The outcome was a marginal decision to leave or ‘Brexit’. The UK is, of course, a parliamentary democracy and the constitution, largely unwritten and based on long-developed conventions, has no provisions to put such decisions into effect. The Brexit decision is, at best, persuasive on politicians. So the current situation looks close to stalemate.

For those of us interested in writing and its influences on public views, especially the influences of writing by economists, we have good reason to be surprised both by the poverty of the Referendum debate and the lack of decisive guidance from leading writers and economists, most of whom clearly opposed Brexit. Was the influence on public views of writers and economists in the nineteenth century very different? The life and works of Harriet Martineau suggest it was.

This edition of The Martineau Society Newsletter looks at some of Harriet Martineau’s influences but begins with a close examination of the relationship of Harriet with her niece, Maria Martineau, as Valerie Sanders describes her, Harriet’s “niece-companion-nurse-secretary”. Maria died in 1864 after 9 years of living with Harriet, a time when it might be argued Harriet was at the peak of her influence on public attitudes. Sadly, Valerie and your editor have been unable to trace a photo or picture of Maria for the Newsletter. Help, please!

Keiko Funaki explores a prominent aspect of Harriet’s influence on public views, her popularising of political economics. Where did she find such ideas? What caused her to develop those ideas and why was she often so ahead of other economists? It is also clear, as we have seen in previous Newsletters, Harriet Martineau was not afraid to change her mind when events developed in a way she did not expect.
So what about an assessment of Harriet’s influence in all the different areas in which she became involved? This was the subject of a talk at July’s Society Conference by Gaby Weiner and now her paper appears in this Newsletter. How does one approach such a task? Gaby’s notes for the “Collection” show us how. We must grit our teeth if we wish to purchase the book to be issued very soon or persuade our libraries to include it in their collections for us to borrow – a worthwhile task for us all!

The greater part of this Newsletter is taken up by a special contribution. There must be editorial rules for contributions (see the Martineau Society Contact Information at the end of this and each Newsletter) and there must be times to set the rules aside. This is such an occasion. The Society conference in July was pleased to welcome two great-great-great-great nephews of Harriet and James, James and Jeremy Martineau and their wives, Meg and Judy (One hopes this is the correct number of ‘greats’). James brought a new portrait of Harriet, painted in America, a photograph of which you will find later. Jeremy has sent us a history of the Martineaus including from when Robert, Harriet and James’ elder brother, moved from Norwich in 1818 and onto Birmingham in 1828. The history of the family in Birmingham is extraordinary and recognised by the Guinness Book of Records. Generations of Martineaus provided Mayors and Lord Mayors from 1846 to 1994. Jeremy’s history will provide a valuable guide. Both James and Jeremy have become Life Members of the Society.

The Society’s annual general meeting resolved to send greetings and best wishes to the founder-member and former President, Sophia Hankinson of Norwich, who is unwell at present. Sophia was unable to come to the annual Conference at Birmingham after what is nearly an unbroken record since 1991.

Sophia has encouraged the Society’s members over many years to explore the history of ‘the other Martineaus’, apart from Harriet and James, as well as the contemporaries of them all, and publish their findings in the Newsletter.

We return to the normality of recent Newsletters with the postscript. James Martineau may have faded from public view during the twentieth century but his intellectual adventures were remarkable and well worth the study, perhaps providing his writings are read briefly.

Thanks once more to all our contributors, both long – established and new. The errors, of course, wholly belong to your editor and his tiring laptop.

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Maria ‘grows more and more glorious’: Harriet Martineau’s niece-companion-nurse-secretary

Valerie Sanders

I had no idea before that two persons could live together as she & I
did, in such close companionship for so many years, - with, to the best of my belief, not one word, look, or thought of discontent with each other. (CL 5: 57)

This is Harriet Martineau's summary of her relationship with her niece and companion, Maria Martineau (1827-64) two weeks after her death in February 1864. They had lived together for nine years, from the point in 1855 when Harriet was diagnosed with an apparently fatal heart condition, and needed full-time care at home. For nearly a decade Maria acted not only as nurse and companion, but also as secretary, housekeeper, and neighbourhood social worker. We know from her aunt's letters that Maria could manage a sewing machine, teach the maids, mesmerise pillows, make butter, organize relief parcels for the distressed cotton workers of Lancashire, correct proofs, and even look after a woman in labour, though she had never done so before. On her aunt's behalf she visited Samuel Lucas, editor of Once a Week, and Florence Nightingale, whose Notes on Nursing both aunt and niece enthusiastically promoted. Maria is frequently mentioned in Harriet's letters, and 'M.'s love' sent alongside her own to her favourite correspondents, but there remains something of a mystery about her, and how she felt about devoting a decade of her life to looking after her aunt. Martineau said in 1864 that Maria was 'as the most precious of daughters to me' (CL 5: 52) - but Deborah Logan has suggested Maria was more like a mother than a daughter - the mother Harriet never had (Logan 2002: 207). It was, at the very least, an opportunity to reconstruct the shape of the Victorian family household into a sisterhood of maids and companions, with Harriet at its centre and Maria as her first lieutenant.

Although Harriet set aside £2000 for Maria to inherit, her role was probably in other respects unpaid, and without formal training (unlike Florence Nightingale, who spent four months at the Kaiserwerth religious community in Germany, learning principles of nursing). Her nursing experience came from helping to look after her ageing parents at home in Birmingham. How Maria financed her 'annual leave' visits home and to London is unclear, though presumably her family paid for her concert and exhibition tickets (or possibly Maria was given an allowance by her parents or aunt). Maria’s ‘voice’ can be hard to trace, in terms of her opinions on these and other matters, though some of her own letters have survived (for example in the Cadbury Library, Birmingham), while others have been published at the end of Volume 5 of Deborah Logan’s Collected Letters, 2007). Everything about Maria seems very circumspect and sensible, but did she ever speak her mind? And who was really in charge at the Knoll? Did Maria take orders from her aunt, or did she manage her aunt’s daily programme? And what was her place in the community of other women at the Knoll, the loyal servants and the other Martineau friends and relatives who took their turn looking after Harriet when Maria was away?

Maria’s Background

Maria was the second of three daughters belonging to Harriet's faithful brother Robert (1798-1870), Mayor of Birmingham, and his wife, Jane Smith. Relations with this branch of the family were much calmer than those with James, and Harriet often visited and stayed there. When Harriet was setting off for America, Maria (then aged
about seven) asked for a hummingbird's nest as a present; in 1843, however (now sixteen) she appeared to her aunt (rather grudgingly) as 'a good, cheerful, affecte [sic] girl, rather backward from having had weak eyes, - but a fine creature in all essentials' (Memorials, ed. Deborah Logan p. 446). Nevertheless, Harriet liked her enough to hope she would stay on at Tynemouth with her for a while. Subsequently she described Maria as 'very clever, - a most superior person' (Memorials, p. 472). It
was Maria's sister Susan who was chosen, however, to accompany Harriet on her travels in Scotland and Ireland in 1852. 'My niece turned out an incomparable companion, as I rather expected,' she told Fanny Wedgwood (Letters ed. Arbuckle 1983: 124). It should of course be remembered that all three of Robert's daughters were at various times involved in looking after their aunt, so when she fell permanently ill again in 1855, her nieces were keen to help out.

From 1855-1864, however, Maria was the primary carer, though with regular breaks which Martineau insisted on her having, whatever her objections. There seems little doubt that Martineau was genuinely concerned for Maria's health as she often mentions it in her letters: when, for example, Maria returned from 'the Exhibition' in 1857, where the excessive heat made her 'voiceless, feverish &c. In two days she was perfectly well, by her usual medicines' (CL4:35). Maria practised homeopathy, but her aunt was also proud of the much healthier air and lifestyle in Ambleside, as she reassured her editor and medical friend, John Chapman:

I had no idea before that two persons could live together as she & I did, in such close companionship for so many years, - with, to the best of my belief, not one word, look, or thought of discontent with each other. (CL 5: 57)

In her descriptions of Maria Martineau also notices her positive state of mind: 'Maria is very well, amidst her cares' (CL4: 321); 'Maria is well & always happy, bless her' (CL4: 327); 'Her own health & vigour are wonderful; & for ability, I certainly never saw her equal among women' (CL4: 367). She is often described as out walking, and in 1860 she was resurveying the surrounding area for a revised (3rd) edition of her aunt's Complete Guide to the English Lakes (1860-9), sometimes accompanied by her sister Susan and brother Frank. Maria occasionally sounds less than enthusiastic about this work: 'M. will be very glad, she says, when she has finished,' Harriet reported in August 1860; 'but I am sure these excursions, with sister or brother, are very good for her. And we can call her home at any time' (CL 4: 235).

Perhaps Martineau needed to keep reassuring herself about her niece's health, given that Maria had devoted her life, indefinitely, to caring for her aunt, but in 1863, Maria took on an additional patient, spending 11 weeks nursing their neighbour, 'Miss Napier', who lived three miles away and was suffering from 'a low nervous fever' (5:7). This was Emily Napier of Gale Bank, sister of two distinguished brothers: Charles (1782-1853) and William Napier (1785-1860). William was both a military general and historian of the Peninsular War, while Charles was the British army's Commander-in-Chief in India. Miss Napier said afterwards that Maria had saved 'her mind, or her life, or both' (CL5: 11), but not content with this supreme effort Maria also longed to nurse Florence Nightingale. By this time Martineau was corresponding quite regularly with Nightingale, to promote her Notes on Nursing. 'M. & I have a wild wish that she cd go up to town for a day, once a month or so, to take your directions, as you cannot write,' she told Nightingale in 1863 (CL 5: 13).

In addition to the nursing of neighbours, Maria corrected proofs, helped research and revise articles, and copied sections of her aunt's work. In 1858 she was helping Martineau with a possible libel action over an article in the Edinburgh Review about abolitionism. Before she went on 'annual leave,' she engaged in a major house clean, 'the great wash, study arranging, clearing of letter boxes, posting up of memoranda, bringing in of geraniums, taking stock of hay and mangold, making the tiptop preserve, - blackberry jelly, bidding friends not expect letters for a month &c
&c' (Arbuckle, *Letters*: 210), as Martineau told Fanny Wedgwood in October 1861. Martineau was always anxious during Maria's absences and counted the days till her return, even though substitute minders did their best to assist.

**Maria's decline and death**

By this time, one at least of their neighbours Anne Jemima Clough (1820-92), sister of the poet Arthur Hugh Clough, was becoming concerned about Maria's welfare. Her own niece and biographer Blanche, Athena Clough, wrote tartly that Miss Clough used to see 'a good deal of Miss Martineau's nieces, who lived with her and spent themselves in her service' (*Memoir*, 1897, p. 84). Martineau was clearly nettled by lectures from Annie Clough 'about M. wearing herself out for me, & telling us all how we ought to manage differently. The truth is, entre nous' Martineau insisted to Florence Nightingale, 'that M.'s sisters have suffered so much by *their* nursing, - or rather tendance, at home that M. is almost ashamed of being so much stronger & happier than they' (CL 5: 13) - a reference to the other two sisters' care for their elderly parents. Martineau repeatedly insists that Maria's lifestyle was much healthier than theirs, but somehow or other it happened that Maria caught typhoid (probably, thought her aunt, from 'a poor dying woman in a pestiferous house,' CL 5: 57-8) and died on 29 February 1864.

When she first fell ill, Martineau was shocked: 'She & the rest of us never think of *her* being ill' (CL 5:52). She even grumbled about the extra work coming her way, with which she was helped by her sister Ellen's daughter, Harriet Higginson: 'I have to do & think of all sorts of things that Maria spares me at other times' (CL 5: 52). At first Martineau thought it was influenza, and found it difficult to adjust to her own reduced care in the circumstances: 'Her illness naturally makes me worse than usual,' she complained, rather ungraciously. (CL5: 52). She was already an expert on Victorian sickness narratives (from writing *Life in the Sick-Room*, 1844), though her own condition was a long-term, slow-developing condition, unlike Maria's 'nasty low fever' (CL5: 53) which left her in a 'drowsy languor. 'Victorian 'fevers' were always a roller-coaster of emotions for everyone who nursed the victims, with their condition fluctuating several times within one day, and relatively little the doctors could do to help. Maria's tongue went black, a hurricane blew up outside, and she asked for the window open: 'the wind roaring through the room & half-strangling the nurses, while she revelled in it' (CL5: 57). When the end came, Martineau, who had explained to correspondents the interim arrangements for looking after herself, found it difficult to say how she felt. To Lord Carlisle in March she explained: 'The one thing which I am least able to do is to speak of this calamity, & the struggles it imposes' (CL5: 57). Speak of it she did, however, still protesting that Maria had not died because of any overwork imposed by Martineau herself: 'She had the finest health & spirits, during the nine years she lived with me, till fatal calls were made upon her from another quarter' (CL5: 57). 'Except in one case,' she concluded, 'I never knew of such a consternation of grief from any death in private life' (CL5: 58). This other case was probably John Hugh Worthington, her fiancé, back in 1827, but it could have been her eldest brother Thomas Martineau who died of tuberculosis in Madeira in 1824. In 1865, Martineau told Fanny Wedgwood quite simply: 'The truth is, the mainspring of my life snapped when I lost Maria, as I doubt not you understand, and I need not say more' (Arbuckle, 257).
Maria's Voice

As presented by Harriet Martineau in her letters Maria sounds resolutely firm and cheerful, even brisk and businesslike. Probably no one expected the nursing of her aunt to be such a long-term commitment, but as Maria became familiar with the fluctuations and mini-crises of her condition, and the two adapted the working day to ensure Harriet was still able to write and meet deadlines, they fell into a shared routine that always gave Maria some time to herself. We have two main sources for her opinions on things: one is Martineau's reports in her letters of the conversations she had with Maria, and the other is Maria's own voice in the letters she wrote on her aunt's behalf, which are enough to show she was circumspect in her correspondence, and very much her aunt's spokeswoman. In Martineau's own letters, we occasionally hear Maria's comments in the background, as when Harriet told Florence Nightingale: 'Maria bids me remark the extraordinary tendency that visitors (my visitors) have to talk to the invalid in the way to make him or her sick. I am too deaf to know what M. has to do: but she says very few come whom she has not to check' (CL 4: 231). What she refers to here is the tendency of visitors to talk about 'tortures, operations, accidents, incidents of disgust, loathsomeness of some sort' - hardly guaranteed to put sick people at their ease.

Of course Martineau's point about being too deaf to pick up all the nuances of conversation is important in terms of what she was able to know and understand about Maria's role in her home. She could see what Maria was doing, but was she always able to perceive undercurrents, especially any indications of concern in her visitors' responses to the situation? She was however, keenly interested in, and respectful of, Maria's opinions, and quoted them to her correspondents: for example their shared excitement about Florence Nightingale's Notes on Nursing and its Supplement: "Well!" said Maria, 'We shall have read it all through before night". Her hasty read evidently daunted her, in that 'Today M. tells me she is almost frightened - it seems scarcely possible to be a nurse, - it requires so much experience.'(CL4:233). In career terms, Martineau seems to have expected Maria to become a professional nurse, once she had finished looking after her aunt. Martineau herself certainly promoted nursing as a career for middle-class women, as in her Cornhill article of April 1865, 'Nurses Wanted,' written at Nightingale's behest. In an attempt to persuade her readers to overcome their class prejudices and focus on the pleasures of making sick patients more comfortable, Martineau stressed the advantages of nursing over governessing: 'Instead of being pushed aside, imposed upon and mortified, like the overworked governess, she finds the whole household waiting, as it were, on her opinion and her advice' (Cornhill Magazine, April 1865: 415). Written a year after Maria died, if this article represents Martineau's opinion of the nurse's role in the household, it suggests she saw it as very far from being menial.

We hear Maria's voice very clearly in her shocked response to local ignorance about health - for instance, that a baby would be safe from croup if there was bacon in the house (CL5: 230). She also acts coolly in Martineau's house, managing a 'mad' cook, and saving a woman visitor's dress from catching fire. Everything about Maria suggests that she quietly and firmly controls what happens at the Knoll. Nevertheless the power balance between them is established each morning when Maria enters her aunt's room as the breakfast tray goes out, to take her orders for
the day.

External Correspondence

Finally, there are the letters Maria wrote on Martineau's behalf when her aunt was ill, which show Maria acting discreetly behind the scenes, not always in ways known to Martineau. For example, fearing that Florence Nightingale is close to death, she asks the feminist activist Bessie Rayner Parkes to telegraph her when she does, so that Martineau is spared the shock of finding out suddenly from the newspapers. To her American friend Ellis Gray Loring she explains her aunt's heart condition in some detail, while with John Chapman in 1858 she intervenes towards the end of a long-running dispute between them over Martineau's financial support for the Westminster Review, having, as she says, 'gone through the whole correspondence with the utmost desire to be just' (CL 5: 357). Maria politely but firmly says that she cannot 'suffer [her] Aunt in her present state' to be further subjected to this kind of treatment. Maria was by now privy to a number of contentious issues in her aunt's life, including arguments with Elizabeth Gaskell about her biography of Charlotte Brontë. When she visited Once a Week editor Samuel Lucas in 1859 she reported their negotiations fully to Martineau. Neither of them had seen Lucas before, so Maria describes his physical appearance and 'rather mincing' speech: they 'talked pretty fast for nearly an hour' (CL5: 359), discussing Martineau's future contributions to Once a Week. Their conversation ranged widely over all the subjects she was interested in, from health issues to her 'Representative Men' series: 'Then I mentioned America...He thinks you must have plenty to say about Liberty and Freedom...' (CL5: 360). Maria's report of this meeting is lengthy, detailed, informative, and sometimes mildly amusing. It shows that she was trusted by both parties to act as her aunt's agent in this relationship, and that she had a good memory for detail. Before the dispute with John Chapman she asked him confidentially to try his 'powers of diagnosis' on her aunt's condition when he next visits, and warns him off expecting anything for the next number of the Westminster Review ('She has been greatly overworked with the Shipping Dues...') CL5: 355).

This is of course only the tip of the iceberg of Maria's letters, but it is sufficient to show that she operated discreetly in effect as her aunt's personal assistant, knowing when to put in a quiet word of explanation or warning with people who were making too many demands. There remains a mystery about Maria, all the same. Her very discretion leaves little for the historian to probe as a clue to her real feelings, but the likelihood is she found her work for her aunt as good a career choice as was available to a middle-class woman of her time. She was certainly valued and appreciated. As Deborah Logan notes in The Hour and the Woman, she was 'one of the few women thoroughly and uncritically venerated by Martineau' (Logan 2002: 204); they never fell out, and as an example of the multi-tasking woman, albeit in a serving capacity, Maria is a model of how to adapt the constraints of her situation to lead a full and active life.

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Economic Thought of Harriet Martineau - ‘The Rioters; or, A Tale of Bad Times’ (1827)'

Keiko Funaki

Harriet Martineau's (1802-1876) theoretical background includes Malthus’s *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, Jeremy Bentham’s political economy, the currency controversy and the financial theory that developed during the peace after the Napoleonic Wars, the establishment of Ricardo’s economics, the labor dispute that led to the labor union theory of distribution (wages-fund theory), and so forth. Harriet Martineau appeared at the turning point of classical political economy.

D. Ricardo, T.R. Malthus, James Mill, J. R. McCulloch, R. Torrens and others were political economists although only Malthus held an academic post. The Political Economy Club was founded by James Mill and this circle of friends in 1821 in London for the purpose of coming to an agreement on the fundamental principles of political economy. Harriet Martineau started her literary activities in the disputatious atmosphere of classical political economy, and shared their visions.

In this paper, which follows chronological order, I elucidate Martineau's economic thought, and reexamine previous research. Mark Blaug treats Martineau as a member of the Ricardian School in his well-known book *Ricardian Economics: A Historical Study* (1958)². According to research on Ricardian economics, Harriet Martineau's ideas are derivative of economic theory; she was a popular fable writer and it has been argued that she plagiarized Mrs. Marcet. This has influenced the judgments of theoretical economists regarding her textbook on political economy, *Illustrations of Political Economy* (1832-34). This book series includes intelligible theoretical summaries of each of the fables aimed at the people. Since economic theory is explained in the fables by the acts of the characters, it was actually understood by people, like workers, children and women, and contributed to the spread of economics in society. However, because Martineau’s aim was to provide people with a readily understandable description of political economy, her own economic thought is seldom asserted there. Also, with the success of this work, Martineau’ gradually moved into other fields, such
as politics and journalism. Next, Martineau attracted attention when New Liberalism gained power in the early twentieth century. Martineau appears in writing on economics as a thoroughgoing free trader criticized as such by J. M. Keynes. Martineau’s *The Illustrations of Political Economy* (1832-34) paid respect to Adam Smith, and is strongly influenced by his ideas. Also, we can see the influence of the necessity theory of Unitarianism in the 18th century, in which society is subordinate to the laws of nature.

However, the commentary of economists is a partial evaluation of Martineau as a free trade promoter. Possibly at the point which explained the true purpose of economics, Martineau had rather more foresight than the economists. We can also see Martineau’s strong awareness of economic principles (science) and economic phenomena. These issues, such as labor wages, industrialization, technical innovation, international trade, resource problems, the Ireland problem, the independence of India, female workers, new business, and the design of new social mechanisms, are often dealt with in her writing. This brought an amateur interpretation to the theory of economics in a form that went out to the general public, although it was not caused by Martineau. It was after her father’s business in Norwich failed during the economic crisis from 1825 to the following year, when her oldest brother passed away from overwork, her father became sick and also died, and the business lost financial backing, that Harriet Martineau, who was hearing-impaired, began to make a living through literary activity. Historian R. K. Webb states that Martineau’s political economy was influenced by these background factors. (Webb, 1960, p. 59-60.).

Valerie Sanders, who in the field of literature analyzed Martineau's autobiography and letters, says that the focus of Martineau’s writings is aspects of all human actions, including individual and public action, the motion of the will, and the morals that feature in environmental protection. She states that Harriet Martineau carried out this idea while studying and writing the story of political economy. There are lots of labor problems, and Martineau’s central concern is, according to Sanders, workers and poor people (Sanders, *Reason over Passion*, 1986).

Thus, Martineau’s economic thought increased in importance not only in economics but in other fields of study. However, Harriet Martineau’s economic thought has not been fully analyzed as yet.

In this paper, I analyze the machinery theory in the early sections of Harriet Martineau’s tale, *The Rioters, or a Tale of Bad Times* (1827). After this tale’s success, Martineau received a request and wrote *The Turn Out*, which treats the theory of wages. These tales are pioneering “industrial novels.” *The Rioters* deals with the new instrumental theory of machinery, which becomes clear with the amendment in 1821 in the 3rd edition of Ricardo’s *Principles*.

Although previous research has seldom analyzed the early stages of her economic thought, in *The Rioters* she discussed the machinery question and the theory of free trade through the cast of the story, written in 1827. She wrote this tale at the suggestion of the editor of *The Globe*, a newspaper, which she had read with pleasure. In the first half of *The Rioters*, the theme is how machines bring about unemployment. The second half presents Martineau’s ideas about Law and Democracy.
The machinery question was a controversial issue among economists in the early nineteenth century. Berg (1982) mentioned
“The intellectuals of the Enlightenment welcomed it as an indicator of economic expansion which they believed would contribute to general ‘improvement’ of society. But in the early nineteenth century this prospect of a harmonious integration of economic and social improvement was thrown into question. The fact of industrialization now appeared concentrated in the machine”

Harriet Martineau focused on just this period. Does a mechanical introduction bring about workers’ unemployment? She puts the controversy on this machinery question skillfully in the conversation of a gentleman and a wise worker Brett in this tale. Is the unemployment permanent or temporary? Their subject matter was a controversy for the political economists of that time.

Next, I analyze Harriet Martineau’s optimistic attitude on free trade in this early book, The Rioters. Firstly, optimistic machinery theory. This is the view that reemployment can be stimulated by international trade although an introduction of machines causes a temporary surplus production and unemployment by the economic crisis that results. Secondly, the pessimistic machinery theory. Some workers discharged by the mechanical introduction are not reemployed. This structural outline was following the theory of political economy of those days. It is important to note that Harriet Martineau did not know of political economy when she wrote this little book, The Rioters (1827). If she did not know any political economy, how could she write about the machinery question at that time? The hint was in her autobiography. In her Autobiography, Martineau wrote as follows:
“My Globe newspaper readings suggested to me the subject of Machine-breaking as a good one, — some recent outrages of that sort having taken place: but I had not the remotest idea that I was meditating writing on Political Economy, the very name of which was then either unknown to me, or conveyed no meaning. I wrote the little story called The Rioters and its success was such that some hosiers and lace-makers of Derby and Nottingham sent me a request to write a tale on the subject of Wages, which I did, calling it The Turn Out. The success of both was such as to dispose Mr. Houlston to further dealings; and I wrote for him a good many tracts, which he sold for a penny, and for which he gave me a sovereign apiece.”

The Houlston was the first publishing company from which Martineau got an income as a writer and she wrote that she obtained the hint from The Globe (London newspaper) in her Autobiography. In 1820 Robert Torrens a Political Economist was acting as the chief editor of The Globe. Robert Owen’s paper in the Edinburgh Review in 1819 became the focus for an argument on machinery theory. First of all, Robert Torrens denied Owen’s pessimistic view of machinery theory which can be set out as follows:
Introduction of machinery ➔ General overproduction (Mass production by machines cause this effect, and business decreases) ➔ Restructuring of workers ➔ Permanent unemployment

In contrast Torrens claimed that the restructuring of workers does not end in permanent
unemployment. Although the imbalance of production and consumption brought by machines may bring about oversupply and may produce a depression and unemployment – these features would only be temporary. Martineau obtained the machinery theory from *The Globe* newspaper, in the midst of the argument. Torrens

![Robert Owen (1771 – 1858) by William Henry Brooke](image)

Wiki Commons

emphasized that the present depression is caused by partial oversupply, it is not permanent. Although I have discussed the importance of *The Globe* here in relation to Torrens and Martineau, in terms of economic theory, David Ricardo’s *Principles* was observed first.

Actually, the partial oversupply is explained in the scene of *The Rioters* that relates a
discussion between “I” to whom Martineau did not give a name and the wise worker Brett. The “I” is a narrator, a gentleman who goes to Manchester on business and who sympathized with Brett’s family of rioters. Harriet Martineau sets out the circumstances regarding the protest against their factory. “I” becomes involved in Brett family’s difficult circumstances. He subscribes to typical Manchester School Liberalism like that of Cobden, optimistic, harmonious and liberal market thought. However, The Rioters was published in 1827, and Cobden’s free trade theory appeared in the 1840s. It is very interesting that Martineau’s ideas were so far ahead of their time.

"I" clearly asserts the views of Martineau. For the workers Brett simplifies and expresses the words of Robert Owen as opposed to those of Torrens and other economists who asserted that the introduction of machinery made for temporary unemployment. The argument of Torrens versus Owen is described by "I" and Brett here.

Optimistic machinery theory.

In the tale, the wise worker Brett, who upholds Owen’s pessimistic machinery theory, has a discussed with "I", who supports the theory of temporary oversupply. Brett explains that mass unemployment will result from the power loom machine. "I" urges “keeping bearing now”. He emphasizes that the layoff is temporally. “I” states to Brett that the power loom is change not destruction. It will promote international trade and workers can gain high wages as a result of the prosperity that the loom will bring. Mechanical introduction produces surplus production temporarily, and it may become economic crisis, but "I" asserts the predominance of Britain in international trade by reason of Say’s Law that a sale is certainly carried out. Moreover, he points out that depression and prosperity occurred by turns after Napoleonic Wars. This is proof that depression is not permanent. Probably, Harriet Martineau did not know of Say's Law. Although Harriet may not have accepted machinery theory which was the newest economic theory at that time, the climax in the first half of the book concerns just the machinery question.

In Victorian novels, political economy is melancholy as Carlyle mentioned. However, even if Martineau treated political economy unconsciously, she never treated economic thought with melancholy. She upheld an optimistic future based on Say's Law.

Harriet Martineau claims that workers’ high wages and the overwhelming predominance in international trade are brought by the technical capabilities of Britain in this tale. Martineau believed the future bright with free trade.

What was a source of this controversy? It was the revision of Principles of David Ricardo which disturbed many political economists about the economic theory of the introduction of machinery. In the third edition of On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation David Ricardo added a new observation that the introduction of a new machine had brought about workers' unemployment. Ricardo had not thought that the introduction of machinery would bring workers unemployment in the first edition (1817) and the 2nd edition (1819). However, in chapter 31 of the third edition, he says that machine labor may be harmful to workers. Harriet Martineau wrote about political
economy in her little book *The Rioters*, but she did not know much about it. Nonetheless, the superiority of the free-trade practice of advanced nations is the steadfast background to Martineau’s tale. Although countries with advanced technology had advantage in the market, she said this technology may flow easily into foreign countries, and she claimed that market competition in peace-time continuously promotes innovation and economic growth which are shared among all. This resembles the views of R. Cobden and J. Bright, and it also has strong resemblance to the views of the Manchester School. This resemblance has also been pointed out by Mark Blaug. However, the 1840s, which saw the appearance of the Manchester School, is considered the golden age. Martineau came earlier. *The Rioters* was written in 1827, and the tale shows that she had such thought on economics even before her *Illustrations of Political Economy* which was written between 1833 and 1834. The important thing is that she understood political economy intuitively. Since political economy was the source of her fundamental thinking, she observed the economy as a scientific process from her early steps. Because of it, *The Rioters*, written well before *The Illustrations of Political economy*, is an important work. It shows the economic views that Martineau held from the beginning. The bankruptcy of her father’s factory had great effect on Martineau, but she later realized that this experience had been one of the “best things” that had happened to her. She was a very objective person.

The controversy on the question of technological innovation and the effect on employment is still not exhausted. Eric Brynjolfsson’s *Race against Machine* (2011) became a best seller. It was written after the Lehman shock in IT and analyzed the question of technical employment. However, the end of this work bears a close resemblance to the conclusion of John Stuart Mill. For both, the conclusion is familiar In the History of Economic Thought, such as a formation of human capital by Education, workers’ organizational reform and business promotion.

*The Rioters* (1827) was followed by *The Turn Out* (1829), *The Hill and Valley* (1832), and *The Manchester Strike* (1832). Martineau analyzes the economic policy of workers in her political economy. Harriet Martineau’s ideas may be able to be called social reform not only by popularization of political economy but also by her economic thought.

1 Harriet Martineau, *The Rioters; or a tale of Bad Times* Houlston 1827. The first printing was published anonymously.


4 Martineau experienced as her ‘great pain’ the market-cycle rotation which is the beginning of a capitalistic economy.

Great industry by machinery developed in the 20s of the 19th century Britain. A huge productive power makes a market full of goods for a short period of time. The stock panic of 1825 started being a periodic economic crisis. Harriet Martineau predicts the temporary economic crisis by surplus production. Ricardo and Marx predict the long term in which a rationalization promotes a decrease in employment.

John Maynard Keynes (1883 – 1946)
Conservapedia Public Domain

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Introduction

This paper summarises some of the content of the presentation by Stuart Hobday and myself at the Martineau Society annual meeting in Birmingham in July 2016 but also draws significantly on a paper entitled ‘Martineaus in Birmingham’ by my father, Denis, who was the last of the five family Mayors and Lord Mayors of the City. In his typical self-effacing way he stopped with the death of his own father, Wilfrid, in 1964 and therefore said nothing at all about himself. I want to put that right now as well to acknowledge his substantial contribution to this paper.

England

Martineaus in the UK descend from Gaston, born around 1660, a surgeon and a Huguenot from Bergerac; along with so many other French Huguenots he left his native France following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV in 1685. The Edict of Nantes, passed by Henry IV in 1625 following the French Wars of Religion, had granted the Huguenots, or Calvinist Protestants, religious tolerance in what was a predominantly Catholic country. Its revocation triggered an exodus in which Huguenot refugees migrated en masse to Protestant countries - principally England, the Netherlands and Prussia. Besides their official policies on matters of religion these countries were all home to a developing and increasingly influential merchant and professional class; this made them natural destinations for many of the Huguenot tradespeople, doctors and lawyers fleeing France. It is generally estimated that between two hundred thousand and five hundred thousand people left France at this time. Those leaving included a large part of the professional, merchant and entrepreneurial classes. As context, according to the 1806 census, France then had a total population of just over twenty-nine million - more than a hundred years later.

Gaston moved from Dieppe in 1686 and was naturalised as an English subject by patent in March 1689. In 1693 he married Marie, daughter of Guillaume Pierre from Dieppe, a fellow Huguenot refugee, at the French church of La Patente in Spitalfields in London. In 1694 or 1695, after some years in London, he moved to Norwich where he established himself in practice as a surgeon and the family settled. We do not know why he chose Norwich - perhaps because it had a long-standing tradition of taking in immigrants (some of them French) from the continent, perhaps because it was a major centre in its own right, or maybe Marie’s family had connections there.

His son and grandson, both named David, also practised in Norwich as surgeons, as did the eldest of the next generation, Philip Meadows, born in 1752. Philip Meadows was one of the seven children of the second David and his wife Sarah Meadows, seven boys and two girls, the great-grandchildren of the immigrant Gaston. The youngest,
Thomas, was born in 1764.

By the time Thomas had grown up the family had been in Norwich getting on for a century and become one of the leading families in the community.

It is Thomas’ third son Robert who later settled in Birmingham in 1828, became the local patriarch, and was the first of five members of the family, through successive generations, to hold office as Mayor or Lord Mayor of the City.

3. Norwich

In Norwich there was a close-knit community of French descent. The family was for a
while bilingual - although both Davids (Gaston’s son and grandson respectively) married English-speaking wives, Elizabeth Finch and Sarah Meadows, from local Norwich families.

One of the other leading local families was the Columbines. Gaston’s daughter Marie (who was born in London in 1694 and lived till 1780 - a very long life by the standards of the time) married Pierre Columbine at St Luke’s Chapel in Norwich in 1719. He was a weaver, as so many in Norwich at the time, and later, in 1755, became Mayor of Norwich.

Peter Finch (Elizabeth’s father and father-in-law of the older David) was for sixty-two years minister of the English Presbyterian chapel in Norwich; Sarah’s father Philip Meadows (father-in-law of the younger David) had been Mayor of Norwich in 1734. Each of these men had a non-conformist clergyman father who had been ejected from his ministry (and no doubt his living) in the preceding century following the Act of Uniformity in 1662. This is a reminder of how much religion and religious orthodoxy, but also new ideas, were issues of the day at a time of growing scientific enquiry, expanding overseas exploration, developing international trade, increasing mercantilism and centralising nation states. The Civil War, the Protectorate, and the Restoration, were all very recent events when these ejections took place. Even the Catholic Gunpowder Plot of 1605 would then still just about have been within living memory. Religious debate and religious tension in the seventeenth century and beyond were facts of life.

It is not known exactly when the family turned to Unitarianism, but it may have been quite soon after settling in Norwich. In this connection it is worth bearing in mind both the general climate of the time and the fact that, as descendants of a Huguenot refugee, they already had a family precedent for dissenting.

Gaston and both Davids are buried in the vault of the (now deconsecrated) church of St Mary-the-Less in Norwich where there is a plaque in their memory as well as a separate one in memory of the Columbine family. This church has an interesting history having been abandoned at the time of the Reformation and subsequently, in 1565, given by Norwich City Corporation to the ‘Strangers’ for use as a cloth hall. The ‘Strangers’ were the many foreigners who, over the years, had come to Norwich from the continent and settled there. Many of these were from the Low Countries, with which there had been close trade links since the Middle Ages, and many of them also were weavers.

As a result Norwich (then still the largest city in the country outside London until it was overtaken by Bristol with the rise of the slave trade) had both an established French community (who worshipped at the Walloon Church) and a well developed and highly specialised cloth trade. This trade continued through the eighteenth century despite growing pressure from imports (the Calico Crisis of 1719 to 1721) and gradual advances in technology.

Besides its French community Norwich also had an established community of Dutch and Flemish immigrants at this time. This community, initially quite small, had
expanded with the arrival of refugees from the Spanish-occupied Netherlands in the second half of the sixteenth century; then, during the seventeenth century, it had grown again with the arrival of immigrants from the Netherlands recruited to drain the East Anglian fenlands. At the end of that century, when Gaston and Marie settled there, Norwich was a bustling place with a population of around twenty-five thousand.

Sometime in the early part of the following century (the eighteenth) the family changed from the Walloon Church to St George’s Colegate and then the Octagon Chapel, also in Colegate, built in the neo-Palladian style by Thomas Ivory and completed in 1756. John Wesley called it ‘the most elegant meeting house in Europe’. The new building (then known as the New Meeting House) may have accommodated various non-conformist congregations, because sources mention both Presbyterianism and Methodism, although it became an established centre for Unitarian gathering that continues to this day. The second David and his wife Sarah Meadows were married in St George’s Colegate in 1751. The family tree records David’s eldest brother (also David - he died in infancy) as having been baptised there in St George’s Colegate in 1722. Both his other siblings and David himself are recorded, however, as having been baptised at the Octagon Chapel - also during the 1720s. The information in the family tree does not match the date of the building itself, so further research is needed here, although the most obvious explanation is simply that the family tree may be wrong.

4. Branching Out - Leaving Home

4.1 Summary

The second half of the eighteenth century was a time of major change for the family as Thomas’ generation (David and Sarah’s children) moved into various commercial ventures beyond the traditional family profession of surgeon undertaken by Gaston and the two Davids. Thomas and his siblings were born around the height of the Enlightenment.

4.2 Philip Meadows (Martineau)

The eldest son Philip Meadows (1752-1829) remained in Norwich where he continued in practice as a surgeon and achieved recognition as a noted lithotomist. He worked at the Norwich and Norfolk General Hospital, where he sat on the board of governors, and towards the end of his life, in the 1820s, served in the newly created office of land tax commissioner.

Around 1778 he married the daughter of a local rector, Elizabeth Humphries, who died in 1810 without any children. Subsequently he married Anne Dorothy Clarke, a widow, and with her had a daughter, Frances Anne, known in the family as Fannie Annie. He lived in a house, Bracondale Lodge, built for him around 1795 on the edge of town; this was demolished in the 1960s to make way for new offices for Norfolk County Council. The nearby Martineau Lane is still there; so is the memorial chapel built by Philip Meadows Martineau in 1804 in the garden.

4.3 David
Philip Meadows's brother the third David (1754-1840) moved in 1797 to London where, in 1784, he founded a brewery at Lambeth; this is recorded by the family tree as having been at King's Arm Stairs and was financed by him with his younger brothers Peter Finch and John. In 1808 he and Peter Finch withdrew from the brewery concern and set up business as sugar refiners, initially in partnership with a Mr Spurrel at Old Fish Street Hill, and then each with his own firm; in David's case this was David Martineau & Sons, established in 1812, in Christian Street at St-George's-in-the-East.

In 1786 David married Catherine Harris (from Maidstone in Kent) with whom he had a large family of four sons and six daughters. The daughters are recorded by the family tree as having lived for many years at Stockwell Common - later known as 165 Clapham Road. The two sons who reached adulthood and had families of their own (George and Charles) both settled at Tulse Hill, Norwood, in Surrey, and continued in business as sugar refiners.

4.4 Peter Finch

Peter Finch (1755-1847) started out as a scarlet-dyer in Norwich before also moving to London. There he became a brewer at Lambeth (with David & John) and then a sugar-refiner in the firm of Peter Martineau & Sons at Goulston Street in Whitechapel; he later went into banking with his own firm, Martineau & Story, at St Alban's. After retirement he lived at Brixton Hill in Surrey and eventually died at the advanced age of ninety-two.

He married twice - in 1778 and again around 1783. His first wife Susannah Scott, from Norwich, died in 1780 leaving a son, John Scott, who died a bachelor without family of his own. With his second wife Catherine Marsh (also from Norwich) Peter Finch had three sons and two daughters.

This branch of the family remained for the most part settled in Surrey or Middlesex and has two interesting military footnotes. Edward Marsh, a grandson of Peter Finch, served in India (as lieutenant-colonel, 10th Native infantry, Bengal Army) and survived the Indian Mutiny in 1857 while with the Indian Field Force. Horace Robert (nephew of Edward Marsh and great-grandson of Peter Finch) served in the Boer War and was involved at the siege of Mafeking where he won the Victoria Cross in the action at Game Tree; this was for dragging a wounded private to safety while under sustained fire from the Boers. He was wounded three times in the process and, as can be seen from photos, lost an arm. After this action he returned to England but later settled in South Africa and eventually in New Zealand.

4.5 John

The next son John (1758-1834) continued in brewing after the Lambeth venture with his brothers (David & Peter Finch) through his firm Martineau, Son & Bland. He became Master of the Brewers' Company in 1806 and then, from 1812 to 1834, a partner in Whitbread's Brewery. He was previously (from 1808 to 1812) in the sugar refining business with his own firm under the name Martineau, Son & Reid at Leman Street in
Whitechapel. The family tree records that in 1834 he was found dead in a vat of yeast into which he had fallen (perhaps due to a stroke) while on a tour of inspection at the Chiswell Street brewery; it adds that the coroner entered a verdict of death ‘by the visitation of God’.

In 1985, at the time of the tercentenary of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, there was still some family connection with the Whitbread’s Brewery (either current or relatively recent) because a reception for family members was held there after the public commemorative service in St Paul’s Cathedral organised by the Huguenot Society. In the family tree John Edmund, a great-great-grandson of John, is noted as having been managing director from 1931 to 1963.

In 1785 John married Marriott Margaret Bunney from Newbury in Berkshire. They had a family of nine sons and five daughters – large even by the standards of the time – ten of whom grew to adulthood.

4.6 Thomas & Family

The youngest son Thomas (1764-1826) remained in Norwich and established his own business as (according to the family tree) a ‘manufacturer of camlet and bombazine’; the business occupied premises at 24 Magdalen Street in Norwich and 1 King Street (off Cheapside) in London.

Thomas married in 1793. His wife Elizabeth, who seems to have been something of a force of nature, was the eldest daughter of a merchant from Newcastle-upon-Tyne Robert Rankin. All of their eight children survived into adulthood.

In order of birth the eight children (great-great-grandchildren of Gaston) are Elizabeth (1794-1850), Thomas (1795-1824), Henry (1797-1844), Robert (1798-1870), Rachel (1800-1878), Harriet (1802-1876), James (1805-1900) and Ellen (1811-1889). Harriet and James are both widely remembered to this day with substantial literatures devoted to them. Robert, who established himself in Birmingham and became the family patriarch, is also remembered but with very much less written about him.

The eldest child (named Elizabeth like her mother) married a doctor and surgeon from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Thomas Greenhow, and provides the link to the Middleton family. Elizabeth and Thomas are the great-great-great-grandparents of Kate Middleton, Duchess of Cambridge, who is a distant sixth cousin of my own children William and Kate.

The second of Thomas’ and Elizabeth’s children, also called Thomas, followed in his forebears’ footsteps as a surgeon, founding an eye infirmary, now part of Norwich and Norfolk General Hospital, but died young. He sailed to Madeira with his wife (Ellen Bourne from Manchester) to improve his health, lost their only child (another Philip Meadows) there in 1823 before his first birthday, and died of consumption on the ship home the following year.

In Norwich the family lived for a time in a house at Gurney Court rented from the
Gurney family; the Gurney family were Quakers and leading local landowners, who made a successful transition out of the fabrics business and into banking, and whose banking business eventually became part of Barclays. In this elegant period property a number of Thomas' and Elizabeth's eight children - including Robert and Harriet - were born; the prison reformer Elizabeth Fry (whose maiden name was Gurney) had also been born there in 1780. Soon after Harriet's birth in 1802 the family moved across the road to 24 Magdalen Street which also served as warehouse premises for the business. This is the address where James and the youngest child Ellen were born.

The materials produced by Thomas’ business, camlet and bombazine, are characteristic examples of the specialised trade in textiles and fabrics that had developed in Norwich since the Middle Ages. Exports went through Rotterdam to the continent for markets in the Iberian Peninsula and Far East and then through Hamburg and Danzig to Russia as far away as Siberia. London, with its large population and changing fashions, was also a major market - though a notoriously fickle one. The heyday in Norwich for all this trade seems to have been the twenty or so years to the end of the Seven Years War in 1763 so that, by the time Thomas (born the following year) started out in business, the market had probably already peaked. Later it went into precipitate decline as continental markets were disrupted during and following the Napoleonic Wars.

This is the background to Thomas’ efforts in business. He seems to have jumped on the gravy train and done well for a while but was in the end brought down by, above all, the collapse of his key market. The business had developed a substantial export trade in the Spanish market but was unable to regain or replace custom lost as a result of the Spanish Revolution in 1820 and the consequent intervention by the French in 1823. It never recovered, came under further strain with the national economic crisis of 1825 (when there were widespread bank failures) and, in June 1829, finally collapsed and had to close. It is still listed in a Norwich business directory of 1836 but by 1845 (the date of the next available publication in the local studies library) is gone. All creditors were eventually paid out in full.

By the time of the final collapse of the business Thomas had been dead for three years. The wind-down of the business, management and payment of creditors, and closure of the firm - then known as Thomas Martineau & Son - therefore fell to Thomas’ second son Henry as the continuing proprietor. Henry himself (though apparently a leading figure in the community after being elected a Norwich councillor in 1836) turned to alcohol under the strain - some of Harriet’s letters refer to him around this time, still in Norwich, causing trouble and getting into fights.

The business must have been in decline, if not been under real pressure, as the children were growing up during the Napoleonic Wars - Robert was approaching seventeen at the time of the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. He and his siblings must have grown up very much aware of the need to be able to stand on their own feet. It is as well that the independence, self-reliance and capacity for hard work (even the streak of entrepreneurialism) shown by Thomas and his brothers seems to have been inherited by at least some of Thomas’ own children - most obviously by Harriet, James and Robert though also by Henry.
The subsequent period - the 1820s - must have been one of great stress for the family at a time when those in business had to accept personal liability for all debts without the benefit of limited liability; the stress certainly contributed to the death of Thomas (still mourning the loss of his eldest son two years previously) at the relatively early age of sixty-two in June 1826. He is buried at the Rosary Cemetery, the first non-denominational burial ground in the country, in Norwich.

After the collapse of the business Elizabeth went to live with Harriet in London; they lived at 17 Fludyer Street in Westminster. This was in September 1832. Elizabeth had a strained and uneasy relationship with Harriet, who described her as a domestic tyrant, but must have needed the domestic security available with a dutiful daughter who had recently made a considerable name for herself with her writing and was already financially secure. In August 1834 (encouraged by her success but perhaps happy to leave her mother behind) Harriet left for America, only returning in August 1836, but then stayed in London until 1839.

Meanwhile, the wreckage of the family business in Norwich finally dealt with, there was the issue of what to do with Henry. It was around this time (not long after Harriet’s return from America) that he moved in with his mother and sister to live with them in the Fludyer Street house. No doubt it was easier for the family to keep the lid on his drinking in London - the only family member then still in Norwich was Henry’s cousin Fannie Annie who, following the death of her father Philip Meadows in 1829, still lived at Bracondale Lodge and never married. There were good reasons for Henry not to stay in Norwich - lack of income, absence of local family support, and erratic behaviour caused by his drinking habit. He must have had to step down as a councillor in Norwich without serving out his elected term. It seems that Henry did briefly make a new start in business - though perhaps without success - because the family tree refers to him as ‘an importer of wines in London’ but, frustratingly, without giving any further information.

Harriet left for the continent in April 1839. Early 1839 therefore seems the likely time of Elizabeth’s move to Birmingham to live with Robert and his young family in their new house in Highfield Road; Henry, who later (in June 1841) left for New Zealand, presumably made his final separation from the family around the same time. He died in New Zealand in 1844, having arrived at Wellington in October 1841 on the ship ‘Arab’, without ever having married or had family - perhaps without ever having fully got over the failure of the family business. The logical conclusion is that Robert did not make his elder brother welcome in his home; he probably considered Henry’s drinking habit (whether cured or not) a bad influence on his growing family.

There is a fascinating footnote concerning Henry in Wellington where, in August 1842, the New Zealand Gazette and Wellington Spectator referred to county court proceedings against a James Beckett for ‘stealing from stores owned by Henry Martineau, Thomas Bryson and George Wynter Blathwaite’ – the last-named (1812-1899) sailed as a fellow cabin passenger on the same ship as Henry and seems to have later returned to, and died in, England. Perhaps, despite the trauma of the family business failure in Norwich, Henry emigrated simply for a fresh start and the opportunity for business success; perhaps he just wanted to make a living in a new environment
away from a difficult past; or perhaps (in George Wynter Blathwaite from Hackney in the East End) he had already found a prospective business partner. Harriet’s letters suggest, however, that he was effectively despatched to New Zealand by the family and that the final decision was Robert’s. Maybe Robert, who since his father’s death had been the effective head of the family, helped his brother to fund a new life and another chance in business as a way of turning him away from his own new house and young family.

Elizabeth died at Highfield Road in August 1848 and was buried at the Old Cemetery (Key Hill) in Birmingham – the first member of the family to be interred in Birmingham. This was the year next following Robert’s Mayoralty.

5. Birmingham

We do not know specifically why Robert chose Birmingham, but it is not hard to see why he may have been drawn to it. He needed to make his way in the world, he was apparently set on business after his stay in London, and Birmingham in the 1820s was growing strongly and certainly offered plenty of commercial opportunity. Freedom of religious expression may also have been a factor – Birmingham was not yet an incorporated borough, and therefore not subject to the Five Mile Act, which meant that Unitarians and other non-conformists could worship freely there.

Birmingham had long been a centre of independent thought and scientific enquiry. During the previous half-century this had been exemplified most obviously by the meetings of the Lunar Society (whose members included Matthew Boulton, Erasmus Darwin, Josiah Wedgwood, Samuel Galton and Joseph Priestley) and by the experiments and writings of Joseph Priestley himself before the riots of 1791 that forced him to move to London and eventually to America.

Commercial activity, centred on the metal trade, thrived in Birmingham. The principal manufactures - in a high-wage local economy dominated by small, agile and entrepreneurial firms with a high level of cooperation between owners and workers - were small high-value items. Patent density (patents granted per head of population) in the period from 1760 to 1850 was three times that of elsewhere in the country. During the first half of the nineteenth century Birmingham’s population trebled from around seventy-five thousand to two hundred-and-thirty thousand. Exports came to represent a major part of the local economy.

Robert was one of many newcomers to Birmingham around this time. Other prominent families to have settled there from the final years of the eighteenth century include the Cadburys (Richard Tapper Cadbury), the Chamberlains (Joseph Chamberlain), the Crosskeys (Henry William Crosskey) and the Nettlefolds (John Sutton Nettlefold).
These, and other local non-conformist families such as the Kenricks and the Beales, can fairly be described as independently minded, intellectually curious, enterprising, hard-working, civic spirited, and philanthropically inclined.

Birmingham was already well on the way to becoming ‘The City of a Thousand Trades’ and ‘The Workshop of the World’, as it later became known, when Robert settled there in 1828.
6. **Thomas’ Son - Robert**

Robert left Norwich in 1818, the year in which he turned twenty. After a brief stay in London ‘to learn business’ (to use the same phrase as Denis in his paper entitled ‘Martineaus in Birmingham’) he moved to Dudley, near Birmingham, where for a while he joined the nail-making business of his future wife's uncle. He finally settled in Birmingham in 1828.

In Birmingham he set up in business as a brasscock founder. The business was successful and was still operating in the early years of the twentieth century when, in 1912, it was part of the three-way merger with two other brass companies as mentioned in section 11.3 below. Robert must have absorbed a good deal of the ways of manufacturing business from his father’s firm during his formative years in Norwich and no doubt felt comfortable in a manufacturing and trading environment.

In Birmingham it was not long before Robert became involved in the public life of the town for, in 1831, he became a Street Commissioner. As Birmingham was then only an unincorporated borough, the Street Commissioners and Justices were (with certain officers) effectively its government.

In 1838 a decision was taken at a dinner at Robert’s house to set up the Edgbaston Proprietary School to provide education for non-conformists. Non-conformists at that time were not admitted to King Edward’s School and therefore could not get a good education in Birmingham. The school was in Hagley Road, near the corner of Ladywood Road, and - in the 1860s after King Edward's rescinded the exclusion of non-conformists - became King Edward's Five Ways. The handsome building to which the school moved remained until the Five Ways roundabout was built in the early 1960s.

It is not surprising that, when Birmingham became an incorporated borough in 1838, Robert, having previously been a Street Commissioner, was elected a Borough Councillor. He was later elected Alderman and then Mayor, serving from 1846 and 1847, and only retired from the Council in 1858 after having become almost blind in 1854.

Outside the Borough Council he was deeply involved (with amongst other things) both the General Hospital and the Homeopathic Hospital, and with Lench’s Trust, of which he became a trustee in 1833 and was later bailiff.

An obituary states ‘In the Town Council, his career was marked by devotion to its truest interests, by great unselfish sacrifices of time and care, and he was amongst the earliest and most honoured of our Mayors’.

In all Robert's work he was greatly supported by his elder daughter Susan (1826 - 1894) who ‘for sixteen years attended, guided, cheered and finally nursed him’ and, once his eyesight began to fail, read him the papers for meetings.

After moving from Dudley, where Robert’s daughter Susan was born in 1826, he and
Jane lived for a while off Bristol Road, near where the Martineau Gardens now are, in the leafy suburb of Edgbaston. This is where their son Thomas was born in 1828. At the time Edgbaston was fast becoming established as the suburb of choice among leading Birmingham families due to the restrictions on industrial development imposed by the controlling Gough-Calthorpe family. In due course they moved to a substantial and elegant period property, again in Edgbaston, at 18 Highfield Road. This building was commissioned from John Barnsley and included a wing for Robert’s mother Elizabeth who, after moving from London, spent her later years in Birmingham. She eventually died in the house in 1848. Robert’s son Frank (section 7 below) also lived there.

7. Robert’s Family – Thomas & His Siblings

7.1 Thomas

Thomas (1828 - 1893) was the eldest of Robert’s three sons. He was the first pupil and the first headboy at Edgbaston Proprietary School, and the family has a medal that he won there for French. Subsequently he was articled to Arthur Ryland (his mother’s first cousin) and began his training as a solicitor in the law firm founded by Arthur Ryland in 1828 - the year in which his father Robert had moved to Birmingham. The firm (formerly Ryland Martineau & Co and Martineau Johnson and now known as Shakespeare Martineau) holds a draft of Arthur Ryland’s letter offering him a partnership from 1 January 1852 which includes this pearl of wisdom: ‘The forming of a partnership requires almost as much caution as the selecting of a wife’.

In 1859 Thomas married Emily Kenrick, the eldest daughter of Timothy Kenrick of Maple Bank in Church Road, Edgbaston, who from 1865 to 1868 was the first chairman of Lloyds Bank after it went public. Two of his other daughters married Joseph Chamberlain (as his second wife and the mother of Neville Chamberlain) and Charles Gabriel Beale and so linked four leading Unitarian families in Birmingham.

When Joseph Chamberlain joined the Borough Council in 1869, the calibre of the councillors was very low, and it was natural that he should seek to persuade able men to join him. Three of these were Robert Francis (Thomas’ younger brother) in 1874, Thomas himself in 1876, and Charles Gabriel Beale.

From an early age Thomas was a ‘diligent’ teacher in the Unitarian New Meeting Sunday Schools in Moor Street, a prominent member and then president of the Edgbaston Debating Society, and a committee member of the Edgbaston Proprietary School and later its president. He was also from 1862 to 1865 honorary secretary and then junior vice-president (1865 - 1866) and senior vice-president (1866 - 1867) of the Midland Institute. Later King Edward’s School amended its rules, removing religious bars and providing for the Borough Council to nominate governors, and Thomas was one of those nominated. He was prominent in seeking to bring the Assizes (which involved having a suitable court house) to Birmingham. All this, of course, was before he became a Borough Councillor in February 1876.

Four months later his aunt Harriet died, and Thomas acted as her first-named general
executor and her sole literary executor.

In November that same year he became a member of Birmingham's Water Committee of which he was appointed chairman five years later in November 1881.

Since 1838, when Birmingham had become an incorporated borough, its population had doubled, but the City still relied on wells and wooden pipes for its water supply. A more secure source of supply, capable of expansion to provide for further growth in population, was urgently needed. It was of course necessary for the future source to be higher than the local storage reservoir near Birmingham, which, in turn, had to be higher than most of the area to be supplied, in order to minimise the need for pumping.

It is easy for us today to take reliable water supply and clean drinking water for granted. When Wilfrid began as a boarder at Rugby School - I believe in 1902 - the boys were still given small beer (weak beer with very low alcohol content) rather than water.

Meanwhile, in 1884, as work to secure Birmingham's water supply continued, the City secured the right to hold Assizes; this led to the building of the Victoria Law Courts. In November 1884, while they were in the early planning stage, Thomas was elected Mayor. He was re-elected in 1885 and again in 1886. In 1887, during his third year as Mayor, Queen Victoria's jubilee year, she was received by Thomas when she visited Birmingham to lay the foundation stone of the Victoria Law Courts. Thomas was then knighted at Windsor.

A site had been selected for the water-collecting reservoirs at the Elan Valley, near Rhyader, in mid-Wales. This site provided a drop of about a hundred and fifty-six feet in the pipeline to Frankley, the storage reservoir on the outskirts of Birmingham, some seventy-five miles away. The cost of the scheme must have seemed frighteningly large for, apart from the purchase of land in the Welsh gathering grounds and at Frankley, it was necessary to build the dams at the Elan Valley and Frankley. Filter-beds, the long pipeline to Frankley, and the distribution works in Birmingham all had to be built. There was fear of the cost for the Borough Council and, in mid-Wales and along the pipeline route, fear of disturbance and of the unknown; all of this had to be overcome. It was on Thomas, as chairman of the Water Committee, that the brunt of all this fell. When a draft Bill had to be prepared for presentation to Parliament, a three-man Parliamentary Committee was set up to deal with it, and Thomas was appointed chairman. To give evidence to the relevant Committee of Parliament, to answer objections, and to see the Bill successfully through Parliament (and the family has his letter to his wife written the night he had done so), Thomas had to spend many weeks in London. The strain was such that, on 28 July 1893, he died aged only sixty-five.

Martineau Street in the City centre (redeveloped in the 1960s as Martineau Square and now renamed Martineau Place) is named after Thomas. The name is usually pronounced by Brummies as Martinew. There is a story of how, many years ago, a policeman was called to attend to a dead donkey at the corner of Martineau Street and Bull Street and started to take down notes. The spelling of Martineau was beyond him, and after several failed attempts he gestured towards the donkey said: ‘Oh pull the bloody thing round into Bull Street’. The story is recounted by Thomas’ grandson
Wilfrid (my grandfather) in a radio interview (‘That Reminds Me’) with the BBC in 1962 of which the family has a recording.

When Thomas was put forward in 1886 for a third year as Mayor, it was also proposed that a portrait of him should be painted in duplicate - one copy for the Council House and one to be presented to his wife Emily. The money was raised by subscription. One of the subscribers was Cardinal Newman who wrote the poem Dream of Gerontius later set to music by Elgar in his oratorio. The artist was Frank Holl RA who completed the first copy but died after doing only the preliminary outlines for the second one. The commission was taken on by Hubert Herkomer ARA who became interested in his subject and won agreement to do his own portrait of Thomas in the same position. It was Hubert Herkomer's portrait that came to the family, and it was this that would have largely formed Wilfrid's image of his grandfather who had died when he was only three and a half years old. As a young man at the office of Ryland Martineau & Co, Wilfrid once had to go to the Council House, where he saw Frank Holl's portrait. Returning to the office, he spoke to an elderly managing clerk saying that Holl's portrait could not be right, as it showed Thomas with a severe expression, whereas Herkomer's showed a benign face. ‘Oh, no, Master Wilfrid’, said the clerk, ‘Peppery, he were, very peppery’.

Thomas and Emily lived at 39 Augustus Road in Edgbaston. The house, which no longer exists, was known as ‘West Hill’.

7.2 Frank

Thomas' younger brother, Robert Francis (1831-1909), was known as Frank. Like Thomas, he was educated at the Edgbaston Proprietary School. On leaving school he joined his father's brass-founding business and, at the age of twenty-one, was travelling for the firm.

At about the age of thirty he was secretary of the fund set up in Birmingham for the relief of sufferers in the Lancashire cotton famine of 1862. Largely because of a leaflet that he wrote, the Birmingham Fund was a great success, raising a surplus of £6,000, an extremely large sum at the time, equivalent to about £650,000 in present value terms after adjusting for inflation. The bulk of it went towards the building of the sanatorium when the British Association (of which Frank was one of the local honorary secretaries) visited Birmingham in 1865.

Frank was chairman and one of the honorary secretaries of the Birmingham branch of the National Education League, which continued until 1876, when school attendance was made compulsory. In 1874 he was elected to the Borough Council, later the City Council, serving continuously until his death in 1909. He was elected Alderman in 1900. His principal involvements were with the Health Committee and the Education Committee. On the Health Committee, he protested vigorously against the unhygienic state of the disused Park Street burial ground, urged the Council to buy it for recreational purposes, and was assured that the Government would bring in a bill to deal with such cases. When at last this was done, the Bill was so bad that it was thrown out by the House of Lords, where it was introduced. Frank then set about promoting a private Bill, which was successfully passed at very little cost, resulting in
over twenty disused burial grounds in Birmingham being converted to spaces for recreation. On the Education Committee he was the first chairman of the Technical School Sub-Committee.

Outside the Council he was active in many fields. Like Thomas, he was closely involved with the Midland Institute, serving as junior vice-president in 1880-1881, senior vice-president in 1881-1882, and honorary secretary from 1884 to 1903. He was a leading member of the Peace and Arbitration Society and a trustee of Mason College, the precursor to Birmingham University, of which he was named as a governor in its charter.

Frank lived in Robert’s old house at 18 Highfield Road in Edgbaston but never married.

7.3 Susan

Robert’s eldest child - the older sister of Robert and Frank - was Susan who had been such a support for her father during his later years. In the process she became personally interested in much of his Robert’s work, and, when, in 1871 (the year after his death) Lench’s Trust set up a Ladies Committee to select and visit the almshouses, Susan was one of the original members. She became honorary secretary the following year. The Homeopathic Hospital, also in 1871, set up a Ladies Committee (known as the ‘Wardrobe Committee’) originally to manage and replenish a wardrobe of clothes to lend to outpatients. The scope of this committee’s work was soon widely extended, and Susan was the honorary secretary from the outset until her death. In 1876 she became a member of the Homeopathic Hospital board at a time when it was still almost unheard of for a woman to be on such a body. Despite these responsibilities she nevertheless found time to help her brother Frank in his work.

Like Frank she never married or had family of her own; she also evidently found personal fulfilment in her civic work and supporting Frank in his.

7.4 Civic Governance

The journalist Julian Ralph, writing in 1890 in Harper’s monthly magazine in New York, referred to Birmingham at this time – the latter part of the nineteenth century when Thomas and Frank were both active – as ‘the best governed city in the world’. He was commenting on the range and quality of public services provided by the City Council at a time when Birmingham, like other large cities, operated in a semi-autonomous relationship to central government in a way that, during the twentieth century, became impossible as central government powers were greatly expanded. In any case public works initiatives such as the Elan Valley water project, and the slum clearances and civic development in the City centre driven through by Joseph Chamberlain, were undoubtedly major influences in Julian Ralph’s judgment.

8. Thomas’ Family – Ernest & Clara

8.1 Ernest

Ernest CMG, VD, TD, MA, (1861-1952) was Thomas' son and, like his father, went to
the Edgbaston Proprietary School before going on to Rugby School and then Trinity Hall, Cambridge, for university. At Rugby School he was a member of the Volunteers, Royal Warwickshire Regiment, and a member of the Shooting VIII. He is said to have been an excellent rifle shot. At Cambridge, too, he joined the corps and became a sergeant in 1880. On coming down from Cambridge he joined the Birmingham Volunteers as a lieutenant in 1882 and by 1909 rose to the rank of lieutenant-colonel as commanding officer of the 6th Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment.

Like his forebears he was a Unitarian attending the Old Meeting, off Worcester Street, of which he was a warden and a Vestry Committee member.

Ernest qualified as a solicitor in 1882 and became a partner in the firm of Ryland Martineau & Co in 1886. He acted on at least one occasion as election agent for his uncle Joseph Chamberlain. In 1895 he followed his grandfather Robert by becoming a trustee of Lench’s Trust (Birmingham’s oldest public charity), a position which he held until his death in November 1951, when he was succeeded by his grandson Denis. In 1901 he was elected to the City Council, of which he was a member for forty-five years, serving initially on the Public Works Committee and the Industrial Schools Committee. He served, however, on many other committees and, in particular, the Water Committee of which he was chairman from 1919 to 1932. During his time as chairman local water storage was greatly increased with the construction of the reservoir at Bartley Green. When he gave up the chairmanship of the Water Committee, there was a particularly nice article in The Guildsman, the magazine of the Birmingham branch of National Association of Local Government Officers, recording a party given by the Water Department staff to ‘bid farewell to Col. Martineau on his relinquishment of the Chairmanship’ at which they presented him with a silver tankard.

Ernest was elected Lord Mayor in 1912 and re-elected the following year. In that year the first HMS Birmingham, a cruiser, was launched by his wife Margaret as Lady Mayoress. In those days the municipal year ran from November, so that he was still Lord Mayor when the First World War (famously described by Field Marshal Sir John French, Commander-in-Chief of the British Armies in France and Flanders, as a ‘battle between Krupps and Birmingham’) broke out in 1914. Ernest was fifty-three when, in September 1914, he resigned as Lord Mayor to take his battalion to France.

However, once he was in France, the Army decided he was too old for active service and recalled him. He was later awarded the CMG – Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George. Many years later a bundle of letters, congratulating him on the CMG and a mention in despatches, was obtained by his grandson Denis. Many of these letters were from officers who had served under him, and a number of them, commiserating with him on his return to England, said that, while there were others who could command in action, his great work lay in the training of the battalion. A year or two later he was made honorary colonel of his old battalion. Denis was told, many years later, by the county secretary of the Royal British Legion that their records showed that Ernest set up an organisation in Birmingham for the welfare of ex-servicemen and their families some years before the Royal British Legion was established by Field Marshal Haig. In 1938 he was awarded the Freedom of the City of Birmingham.
Margaret (Ernest's wife) ran the Sunday School at the Old Meeting for many years and, before she became largely immobile, was on Lench's Trust Ladies Committee. Their daughter Constance took over from her.

Ernest and Margaret lived in a large house called ‘Ellerslie’ at (I believe) 11 Augustus Road in Edgbaston not far from ‘West Hill’. It was demolished during the early 1960s to make way for new residential development. I remember my father Denis taking my brother Peter and myself for a walk in the grounds before redevelopment had begun but after the house itself had gone – there, only a mile and a half from the Town Hall and the City centre, a few sheep were grazing.

8.2 Clara

Ernest's sister Clara (1874 - 1932) was privately educated. For many years, she worked with the Birmingham Settlement to understand, from practical experience, the needs of the poor. She gave much time to the work of the Birmingham Charity Organisation Society and the City Aid Society and served on the committees of both.

In 1908 - 1909 she acted as Lady Mayoress for her uncle, Sir George Kenrick, who was a bachelor.

Clara was involved with old age pensions in Birmingham and, on the outbreak of the First World War, became active on the Citizens Committee formed to deal with the dependents of soldiers and sailors.

In 1913, on the retirement of Mrs Pinsent, Clara was returned (unopposed) to the City Council as only its second woman member. On the City Council she served on a number of committees - most notably the Education Committee (where she chaired the Special Schools Sub-Committee from 1916 until her death) and the Mental Deficiency Act Committee which she chaired from 1921 to 1932. In addition she served on three government departmental committees and, from 1921, as a magistrate besides acting as a trustee of Piddock's Charity and of Evans Cottage Homes.

At the Old Meeting, she was an active member, becoming the first woman churchwarden, and, occasionally, conducted services.

True to her particular interests on the City Council she left a sum of money to the Education Committee towards the purchase of a seaside school for the handicapped. The original seaside school at Towyn, in north Wales, was sold during her nephew Wilfrid's chairmanship of the Education Committee to enable a better place to be bought at Bognor Regis in Sussex. The Guildsman (the magazine of the Birmingham branch of National Association of Local Government Officers) ran an obituary of Clara, which included this sentence: 'For ourselves, the loss is tempered by a sense of profound gratitude and thankfulness for memories of a loyal and sincere friend and an admiration of her deep devotion to the great causes she had so much at heart'.

9. Ernest's Son - Wilfrid

Wilfrid, MC, TD, MA, (1889-1964), the eldest of Ernest's three children, was educated
at West House School and, like his father, at Rugby School and Trinity Hall, Cambridge, before being commissioned into the Territorial Army (6th Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment of which his father was commanding officer) in 1908. His articles (apprenticeship for admission as a solicitor) probably started late in 1911. It was in the following year that Wilfrid was a steward at the last of the Birmingham Triennial Music Festivals - started in 1768 to raise money to pay for the General Hospital - for which Mendelssohn's Elijah, Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto and Elgar's Dream of Gerontius (among many works by other composers including Dvorak and Sibelius) were specially commissioned. He went to France early in the First World War (as a Territorial Army officer) having begun his articles but before qualifying as a solicitor.

He was married in 1916 to Elvira (Vira) Lee Strathy, the daughter of a Harborne doctor, a Scots Canadian who qualified in medicine at Toronto at the age of twenty-one and then took a second qualification at Edinburgh.

During the First World War Wilfrid was awarded the MC, was mentioned in despatches and became the commanding officer of the 4th Army Signals School. Following demobilisation Wilfrid joined a firm in the City of London for a year and completed his qualification before returning to Ryland Martineau & Co in 1920; he entered into partnership on his father's retirement at the end of 1921.

He was soon getting involved in local affairs - honorary treasurer of Birmingham District Nursing Society from 1922 to 1926, governor of Edgbaston High School from 1924 to 1943, consular agent for Brazil from 1922 to 1931, vice-consul for Portugal from 1932 to 1964, and president of the Birmingham Consular Association in 1929, as well as being an officer in the 48th (South Midlands) Divisional Signals. In 1932 he was elected to the City Council and, by 1936, was chairman of the Traffic Control Committee where he was responsible for introducing Birmingham's first one-way system to ease traffic flow in the City centre. From 1935 to 1937 he was chairman of the House Purchase Sub-Committee of the Municipal Bank Committee.

Although he had only been on the Council for eight years, Wilfrid was elected Lord Mayor in 1940, probably in part because it was thought his First World War and subsequent Territorial service would ease contacts with the Army and the Home Guard. The first of the heavy air raids on the City occurred on the night of his installation in office. These air raids continued throughout the Blitz, which marked his year as Lord Mayor, although few heavy raids were launched on Birmingham thereafter. He was the only Lord Mayor to act as his own secretary as he sent the Lord Mayor's secretary to take charge of the rationing office.

Following his year in office he was appointed chairman of the Emergency Committee. This meant that, if Birmingham had been cut off from London, he would have effectively headed government locally. It was probably for this that he was knighted in the 1946 New Year's Honours.

However, it was to the Education Committee that he devoted most of his energies, serving from 1932, becoming vice-chairman in 1942 and succeeding his cousin Byng
Kenrick as chairman in 1943. Byng Kenrick had himself succeeded Wilfrid's great uncle Sir George Kenrick so that the chairmanship of the Education Committee was in the hands of these three relatives for over forty years.

After the Second World War it was hard to attract teachers to big cities like Birmingham, because there was an additional pay allowance only for London, although living costs in the country were much lower than in the big cities despite the pay scales being the same. In an attempt to mitigate this problem Wilfrid instituted a teachers’ club in Bristol Road, on the in-town side of Priory Road, where teachers could meet colleagues from various schools on a social basis over a drink or meal.

Wilfrid was chairman of two of the sub-committees of the Education Committee (then the largest local education authority in the country) and also served on a ministry committee and (often as chairman or president) on various national working parties and many national committees and bodies.

He was also a life governor and member of the Council of Birmingham University of which he was deputy pro-chancellor from 1957. From 1948 to 1954 he was a governor of Cheltenham College and, from 1948 to 1957, a governor of King Edward's Schools in Birmingham as well as bailiff in 1954.

In the 1950s Aldermen were still elected by the Council, one for every three Councillors, half of them every three years. In 1952 nineteen Aldermen (all but one of them Conservatives) were up for re-election following municipal elections in which there had been a strong shift to the left. As the tradition was that the parties' proportions of Aldermen should mirror their proportions of Councillors, most of the places were due to the Labour Party. This is how Wilfrid ceased to be a member of the City Council and how, after a period of nine years, his chairmanship of the Education Committee came to an end. However, as he was co-opted on to the Education Committee, he was able to continue most of his education work including especially the national part.

Locally his educational work included acting as a governor of Handsworth Grammar School, St Philip's Boys Grammar School (1936-1956) and St Paul's Girls Grammar School (1936-1957).

After the Second World War the City established two new secondary schools in Gressel Lane at Tile Cross; these were to cater for pupils who had failed to gain a grammar school place and were named after Wilfrid and his cousin Byng Kenrick who, like Wilfrid, had been so closely involved with education in Birmingham. Wilfrid’s widow Vira, and later Denis and Mollie, used to attend speech day and prize-giving at the Sir Wilfrid Martineau School. The nearby Central Grammar School for Boys (which in 1957 had moved from its original site in Suffolk Street) merged with the Byng Kenrick Girls Grammar School in 1974 when some of the grammar schools were converted into comprehensives. The merged school later took over the Sir Wilfrid Martineau School (which had been performing poorly) and in 2001 became the International School and Community College East Birmingham with specialist business and enterprise college status.
Denis used to recall a story about Wilfrid as chairman of the Education Committee. During Wilfrid’s tenure there was at one time a body referred to as the Sweating Chamber before which committee chairmen had to justify their estimates. One year he went in and was told that the Education Committee’s estimates were unacceptable. At that point he got up saying, as he turned to leave, that in that case he wouldn’t waste any more of his time. Before he could reach the door the Swearing Chamber members were almost pleading with him to come back. Having seized the initiative, he returned, and the estimates were approved.

Although it is Wilfrid’s education work that has taken up much of this sketch, the record would be incomplete without mention of his other involvements. From the 1920s Wilfrid and Vira were keen members of the City of Birmingham Choir, and, if he was in London for meetings on a Monday, he would ensure he was back in Birmingham for the weekly evening rehearsal, even though he might have to catch the 07:20 train back to London on the Tuesday morning. He was the only singing president the choir has had. He was also a trustee, and member of the Management Committee, of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and president of the Birmingham Bach Society.

In his role as a partner in Ryland Martineau & Co Wilfrid was appointed clerk to the Birmingham Assay Office from 1923. Soon after his appointment he was required to write a book on the law relating to the Assay Office in Birmingham. The work was all done at home at night with three copies of the resulting book being produced - one for the Assay Office and two (both of which he kept up-to-date with changes in statute or case law) for the office. One of the office copies was for his use while the other was, when necessary, sent to counsel with instructions. He was a Liveryman of the Goldsmiths Company from 1952. After he ceased to be clerk to the Birmingham Assay Office in 1960, a new Act was passed consolidating Assay Office law, and he was made a Guardian of the Assay Office.

An unusual thing Wilfrid did was during the General Strike of 1926 when, his son Denis understood, he drove a bus.

In the Territorial Army he transferred from the Royal Warwickshire Regiment to the Royal Corps of Signals in 1921, serving with the 48th (South Midlands) Divisional Signals based at Great Brook Street Barracks, becoming the commanding officer (lieutenant-colonel) from 1929 to 1933. In 1933 he became deputy chief signals officer, Southern Command, until 1937 when he was promoted to the rank of colonel.

One of his earliest commitments in Birmingham was his appointment as treasurer of the Birmingham District Nursing Society (1922 - 1926) as already mentioned. This led to the formation of the Birmingham District Nursing Association; Wilfrid was a trustee and (after it was wound up) also acted as trustee its surplus funds - subsequently the Birmingham District Nursing Charitable Trust.

In 1951 he was asked by the chairman of Martins Bank Limited to set up a regional board in Birmingham. He was the first chairman of the regional board as well as a member of the main board. In 1952 he became a member of the local board of Sea Insurance Co Limited and chairman of the board of Pearce & Cutler Limited.
He was president of the Birmingham & West Midland Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society from 1958. Shortly after the Second World War, when there was little planning law, Wilfrid was invited to join the West Midlands group, set up by Paul Cadbury, to consider planning for the West Midlands conurbation. In 1948 it published a book entitled ‘Conurbation, A Survey of Birmingham and the Black Country’ which was influential in post-war planning.

From 1952 to 1957 he was chairman of the BBC Regional Advisory Council and a member of the BBC General Advisory Council. He also served as a member of the Diocesan panel which interviewed candidates for ordination.

In 1957 Wilfrid was awarded the Civic Society's Gold Medal for his many and varied services to the City.

In the same year, by letters patent, he was granted armorial bearings for use by him and other descendants of his great-grandfather Robert; these are described in section 12 below.

In the early 1960s, almost up to his death, Wilfrid was working as hard as ever. In 1961, the year in which he turned seventy-two, he went up to London no fewer than seventy-eight times - sometimes staying at his club (the Army & Navy Club in Pall Mall) and sometimes coming home the same evening on the train.

Wilfrid and Vira lived at 30 Rotton Park Road in Edgbaston until the early 1960s when they moved to a flat in Melville Hall, Holly Road, also in Edgbaston. They also had a substantial house, a working farm, in the Cotswolds where they often spent weekends and where we used to spend time (holidays as well as weekends) when my brothers (Peter and Charles) and I were quite small. The farm, Upper Coscombe, (farmhouse, outbuildings, barns, cottages and around two hundred and fifty acres of farmland) had been bought in 1932 (for what now seems a derisory sum of £3,100 – equivalent to around £195,000 in present value terms after adjustment for inflation) but was sold after Wilfrid’s death in 1964.

At his memorial service, held in St Philip’s Cathedral, the City’s chief education officer said that he was a first-class administrator whose ability was matched by his courtesy, fair-mindedness and industry. A teacher representative on the Education Committee (a former national president of the National Union of Teachers) said ‘although Sir Wilfrid had been chairman of the Local Authorities Panel on the Burnham Committee, negotiating teachers’ salaries, he had been regarded with deep affection as well as admiration by teachers everywhere. He had a splendid sense of humour and tremendous wisdom. The product of generations of public service, he was the kind who do not come again.’.

Wilfrid's wife, Vira, deserves mention. She chaired the Midland Association of Warworkers Clubs from 1942 to 1946, Birmingham Association of Citizens Clubs from 1946 to 1950 and, from 1947 to 1955, Birmingham Council for Community Associations before becoming its vice-president. She was a City magistrate from 1942, then on the Juvenile Panel from 1943 to 1954, and president of the Birmingham branch of the...
NSPCC and of Family Service Units. She served on the BBC Midland Advisory Council, was a governor of Edgbaston High School for Girls, a member of The Bishop’s Commission for the Central Areas, a board member of the College of The Ascension, a trustee of Evans Cottage Homes and of the Feeney Trust and County vice-president of the Girl Guides Association.

10. Wilfrid’s Family – Denis & His Siblings

10.1 Denis

Denis (1920 - 1999) MA was the youngest of Wilfrid’s and Vira’s three children and followed the same educational path as his father attending West House School in Edgbaston before going on to Rugby School and Trinity Hall, Cambridge, where his study for a law degree was restricted by the start of the Second World War to two (rather than the usual three) years.

Denis served from 1940 to 1946 in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment where he attained the rank of captain and saw active service in the Middle East, North Africa and Italy. After demobilisation he resumed his law studies and, after serving articles with Wilde Sapte in London, qualified as a solicitor in 1950 before joining Ryland Martineau & Co; he was a partner in the firm from 1954 to 1984. His area of practice – estate & capital tax planning, wills, trusts & charities – allowed him to develop not only his professional expertise and experience but also his personal interest in a range of charitable causes broadly focused on the arts and education.

In 1961 he successfully stood as Conservative Party candidate for Edgbaston, as his father before him, and from then on served on the City Council till stepping down in 1991. For most of this period, until his retirement from the partnership in 1984, he also maintained his practice with Ryland Martineau & Co. He set up the George Henry Collins Charitable Trust for his client of that name and subsequently - before and after his retirement from legal practice - acted as trustee. George Henry Collins had died six months before his hundredth birthday and was the youngest child in a very large Victorian family; Denis told the story (related to him by his client) of his father, born in 1799, with his recollection of news coming through in June 1815 of Wellington’s and Blücher’s victory against Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo and all the bonfires and celebrations up and down the country.

Outside the City Council Denis became increasingly busy with a range of civic interests and pursuits. His principal and most enduring involvements were as trustee (from 1961 to 1991) of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra - where he was also chairman of the Management Committee from 1968 to 1974 and was instrumental in attracting first Louis Frémaux and then Simon Rattle as principal conductor and music director - and (from 1976 to 1991) of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre. He was also
significantly involved with the Birmingham Bach Society, the Birmingham Festival Choral Society, the Birmingham Company of the Royal British Legion, and SENSE in the Midlands, and for many years acted as vice-consul for Portugal.

Denis followed his father Wilfrid’s banking involvement by sitting on the Birmingham Municipal Bank board and later, after its take-over by the Trustee Savings Bank, also the Trustee Savings Bank regional board of which he was subsequently appointed
chairman. As chairman of the regional board he also sat as a director on the Trustee Savings Bank main board. During my time in articles in London (1979 - 1981) he and I used to meet for dinner at the St Ermin’s Hotel in St James’ when he was in town for a board meeting.

In May 1986, not long after retiring as a solicitor, he was elected Lord Mayor and served until the following year. Highlights of a busy and eventful year included the start of construction work on the International Convention Centre and Symphony Hall in Broad Street (marked by a commemorative stele with his name, and that of President of the European Commission Jacques Delors, outside the canalside entrance) and Birmingham’s bid for the 1992 Olympic Games.

As trustee of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra he had actively lobbied for many years for a new concert auditorium of international standard and was delighted when Symphony Hall was finally built. He used to remind anyone who would listen that Adrian Boult had been promised a new concert hall by the City as long ago as 1924 during his time as principal conductor.

During his year in office as Lord Mayor his nominated charity was the St John Ambulance Brigade for whom he subsequently acted as patron until his death in 1999.

Upon his death the Martineau Prize for Citizenship was established and endowed at West House School, Edgbaston, the preparatory school attended by his father Wilfrid, by Denis himself and his older brother Kiff, and by Denis’ and Mollie’s three sons – Peter, Charles and myself.

Denis and Mollie, who were married at Ashtead in Surrey in July 1952, lived in Edgbaston – first at 17 Wheeleys Road (where there is now a Civic Society plaque recording that the chocolate manufacturer and philanthropist Richard Cadbury lived in the house from 1861 to 1871) and then, from 1961, at 7 Vicarage Road and, from 1980 until Mollie finally moved out in 2006 some years after Denis’ death, at 10 Vicarage Road.

Throughout his professional career and his time on the City Council he was actively supported by his wife Mollie who shared many of his interests. She was also active in her own right with various Birmingham societies and charities including the Birmingham Bach Society, Lench’s Trust, the Blue Coat School, Feeney Trust and latterly (as patron) the Martineau Gardens in Priory Road not far from the Martineau Teachers’ Centre on Bristol Road.

10.2 Kiff & Alison

Denis’ elder siblings were Christopher and Alison. Both grew up in Birmingham and, like him, went to university at Cambridge (Trinity Hall and Newnham respectively) but then lived most of their lives away from Birmingham – in Alison’s case because of the requirements of the work of her husband Jack (John Wood) and, in Christopher’s case, due to his own calling as a clergyman. Christopher (1916 - 2012) was always known in the family by his own first attempt at his name as a very small boy – Kiff. He served as
ship’s chaplain on HMS Illustrious during the Second World War and met and married his wife Margaret Burkitt, an Australian, in Sydney. His first parish was Balsall Heath in inner-city Birmingham, followed by Shard End (then a new post-war housing estate) in the east of the City, but he then spent the majority of his ministry at Skipton in Yorkshire.

11. The Family in Business

11.1 Introduction

Businesses founded by family members since Gaston’s arrival in Norwich fared very differently - though each, for a period at least, with a degree of success.

There are of course the brewing, sugar refining and banking businesses established and run by Robert’s brothers (David, Peter Finch and John) and their descendants, but it is appropriate to deal here with the three businesses that stand in direct line of succession from Thomas and the family’s time in Norwich.

11.2 Thomas Martineau & Son

Thomas’ camlet and bombazine business was, according to the family tree, a ‘highly prosperous concern’ before it got into difficulty with the market downturn during and following the Napoleonic Wars. Other local Norwich textile businesses also suffered at that time, and a good many of them did not survive either. The business barely survived into the second generation and was wound down and closed by Henry after Thomas’ death. The experience seems to have taken a significant personal toll on both of them. Henry emigrated to New Zealand and died there, without ever marrying, in 1844 aged still in his forties.

11.3 Martineau & Smith

Robert’s brass-founding business, Martineau & Smith, must have prospered in order for Robert to afford his elegant period residence in Edgbaston. The business was taken on in due course by his third son Edward Kentish (younger brother of Thomas and Frank) who carried it on in partnership with his second cousin Francis Edgar. Francis Edgar, one of Peter Finch’s grandsons, had moved from Surrey where Peter Finch’s family had settled. Francis Edgar’s own family later moved to Somerset except for one son, Geoffrey Arthur, whose own son Gaston Madeley later succeeded to Robert’s old business in Birmingham.

The business, by then known as Martineau Beames & Madeley Ltd, merged with two other brass companies (based respectively in Halifax and in Manchester) in 1912. It had been incorporated some time after the passing of the first general Companies Act in 1862 which had, for the first time, made incorporation possible simply by registration. The new company’s head office was in Manchester but was moved to its works at Ormskirk, in Lancashire, in January 1923; the company went into receivership that same year with its undertaking and assets being acquired by a Mr Hattersley in August
1923. It is not clear if any member of the family then still had any remaining equity interest.

11.4 Ryland Martineau & Co

Arthur Ryland established his law firm, later Ryland Martineau & Co, in 1828 and, in 1852, took Thomas into partnership. The firm acted on the merger of Robert’s old brass-founding business 1912; it also acted down the years for a wide range of commercial and other clients both locally and nationally.

Notable Birmingham clients included Lloyds Bank (founded in the City in 1765 as Lloyd & Taylor’s Bank), Birmingham Assay Office, and both Birmingham University and Aston University.

The firm incorporated what was then Lloyds & Co in 1865 and has continued to act ever since; it is still a retained firm on the Lloyds Bank national panel of approved legal advisers.

Birmingham Assay Office, founded in 1773, predates the firm but has been a client since at least 1839 when Arthur Ryland was appointed as clerk - the first in an unbroken succession of partners to hold office as clerk from then until 2000 when the position ceased to exist. Those partners are Arthur Ryland from 1839 to 1877, Thomas Martineau from 1877 to 1892, John Barham Carslake from 1893 to 1923, Wilfrid Martineau from 1923 to 1960, John Wharton from 1960 to 1980 and Michael Winwood from 1980 to 2000.

The two universities have been clients continuously since they received their royal charters in 1900 and 1966 respectively.

The firm also acted for the Austin Motor Company and its successor, the British Motor Corporation, until its nationalisation and the formation of British Leyland in the 1970s.

More recent clients include the National Grid plc (the firm pioneered load reduction agreements for it with industrial customers following privatisation in 1986 and also advised on the under-Channel connection with the French grid) besides a large number of universities (including Cambridge University) and colleges nationally.

The firm still counts members of the Ryland family (descendants of founder Arthur Ryland) as current clients.

There have been three mergers involving what, until 1987, was still Ryland Martineau – abbreviated not long before that from Ryland Martineau & Co. In that year it merged with Johnson & Co, another respected local practice, and changed its name to Martineau Johnson. More recently, in 2011, there was a merger with a London practice, Sprecher Grier Halberstam, followed not long after by the merger in 2015 with Birmingham firm Shakespeares. Since then the merged practice has been known as Shakespeare Martineau.

Originally the firm occupied offices in Cannon Street before moving to 41 Church Street
where it was based for many years. I have the old brass wall plaque from this address which was given to me when the combined practices of Ryland Martineau and Johnson & Co moved to St Philips House (facing St Philips Cathedral) shortly after the merger. The move to the present offices in One Colmore Square followed before the two later mergers.

The enlarged firm has offices in almost a dozen locations, including Brussels, and ranks among the top 50 UK firms with a regional, national and international practice.

12. **Armorial Bearings**

Family members descended from Robert (Wilfrid’s great-grandfather) have the right to use the armorial bearings granted to Wilfrid by letters patent dated 30 September 1957. These are described in the family tree as follows:

- **ARMS** – Paly of six or and gules per fesse counterchanged, on a fesse also gules three roses argent, barbed and seeded proper, a bordure ermine.

- **CREST** – On a wreath of the colours, a martlet sable and to the dexter a fleur-de-lys argent.

- **MOTTO** – “Marte Nobilior Pallas.”

The reference in the grant to Robert and his descendants means that these arms are closely associated with the Birmingham branch of the family.

The motto (hinting at the family preoccupation with education – section 14 below) means ‘Wisdom is nobler than force’.

13. **Key Hill Cemetery**

Various members of the family (starting with Elizabeth - section 6 above) are buried in Key Hill Cemetery adjoining the Jewellery Quarter in Birmingham.

The headstone to the family grave reads:

‘Elizabeth Martineau

*widow of the late Thomas Martineau of Norwich*

*born October 8th 1771 died August 26th 1848*

*Also her granddaughter Marie Martineau*

*daughter of Robert and Jane Martineau*

*born August 27th 1827 died February 29th 1864*
Robert Martineau

born at Norwich August 19th 1798 died at Edgbaston June 17th 1870

Also Jane Martineau

his widow

born June 6th 1793 died March 20th 1874

Also Harriet

daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Martineau

born at Norwich June 12th 1802 died at Ambleside June 27th 1876

Also Susan Martineau

daughter of Robert and Jane Martineau

born at Dudley January 29th 1826 died at Edgbaston March 21st 1894

Also Robert Francis Martineau

her brother

born May 16th 1831 died December 15th 1909.

The headstone, which had fallen into a state of disrepair and was broken, was substantially restored around 2010 with support from the Martineau Society. Nearby are gravestones for other prominent Birmingham figures including the radical non-conformist clergyman George Dawson and Joseph Chamberlain and other members of his family.

In more recent generations members of the family have generally chosen to be cremated; in many cases (Wilfrid, Vira, Kiff, Denis and Mollie) their ashes are scattered at or near Coscombe Clump above Wilfrid’s former country house of Upper Coscombe.

14. Conclusion

The patriarch Robert and his descendants Thomas, Ernest, Wilfrid and Denis form a remarkable succession of family holders of office as Mayor and Lord Mayor, from father to son, in direct succession through five generations. This is particularly remarkable when considered from today’s perspective, with a little historical distance, when ideals of public service have faded somewhat. I know that Denis rather regretted this fading of the civic tradition and am sure that his forebears would have done so too.
Their record of public service is marked by a blue Civic Society plaque in the Council House. Members of the family (my mother and Denis’ widow Mollie; my uncle and Denis’ brother Kiff and his eldest son James; my two brothers Peter and Charles; Charles’ son Robert; my own son William and myself) were present when it was unveiled on 21 April 2008. There is incidentally a minor inaccuracy on the plaque, which records the year of Ernest’s death as 1952, when it was in fact 1951.

This continuity of service was also recognised by the Guinness Book of Records which issued Denis with a certificate. This fact was itself referred to in a strip cartoon feature (Factfile) that appeared in the Daily Mail in July 1994. Denis was always wryly amused both by the certificate and, in particular, by the ‘notoriety’ of publicity in the Daily Mail.

In finishing it is appropriate to record also the service of other family members which can easily be overlooked altogether. This includes, but is certainly not limited to, the wives of Robert, Thomas, Ernest, Wilfrid and Denis who also made civic contributions of their own. Jane (Smith), Emily (Kenrick), Margaret (Kendrick), Vira (Lee Strathy) and Mollie (Davies) were a significant supporting cast – in particular in the role of Mayoress or Lady Mayoress - but were often also principal actors, in a range of public appointments, in their own right. Other notable roles were played at various times by other family members – in particular Frank, Susan and Clara.

Education is a recurring preoccupation across family generations. Both Frank and Clara were very much involved with education - in particular through their work on the Education Committee – and Robert and Thomas each also played a material role with the Edgbaston Preparatory School, but it is above all Wilfrid whose name is remembered for his work in the field of education; it had national importance quite apart from a major impact in Birmingham itself. The importance of education, for self-improvement and the improvement of society in general, seems to have been intuitively understood within the family – not least by Robert’s sister Harriet. This appreciation can only have stemmed from the family’s long experience as non-conformists – firstly
as Huguenot refugees from France, actively persecuted by the state, and then as Unitarian dissenters initially excluded from ‘conforming’ (ie Anglican) schools (such as King Edward’s) and from university education at Oxford or Cambridge. As Oxford and Cambridge were then still the only bodies legally entitled to call themselves universities, non-conformists were effectively excluded from university education altogether. At Cambridge they were allowed to study but not to graduate; Oxford barred them even from matriculating. This situation only began to change with the establishment of Durham University in 1832.

Ernest was the first member of the family – or at least our branch of it – to go to university; he went to Cambridge and was followed in the next generation by his son Wilfrid, then by Wilfrid’s three children (Kiff, Alison and Denis) and, more recently, by my brother Charles and myself. Alison was at Newnham, an all-girls’ college, but the rest of us all went to Trinity Hall. Alison and her husband Jack, who was a contemporary of Kiff’s at Trinity Hall, met at Cambridge.

I should add a brief word about the ‘family’ firm – now known as Shakespeare Martineau. In truth it was never truly a ‘family’ firm, in the sense of belonging to and being controlled by the family, and was around seventy strong (with my father Denis as one of twelve partners) when I began work there as an employed solicitor in September 1981. The firm, like the City, has five successive generations, father to son, in continuous succession. In this case, though, the succession begins with Thomas (rather than Robert) and includes myself after Denis. At least one of us was a partner continuously from 1 January 1852 until 30 April 1996. That is when I left to move with my wife Judy to live close to her family in Australia.

Sadly, since my mother Mollie (who died in August of last year) moved at the end of April 2014 to be nearer my brother Peter, there has no longer been any family presence in Birmingham. The last time there was no family presence in Birmingham was before Robert’s move there in 1828.

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Origins of the Collection Harriet Martineau and the Birth of Disciplines

Gaby Weiner

The idea for the book came when I was working on my PhD. My PhD was a complex discussion on the contribution that Martineau had made to various disciplinary areas and fields of study. I was particularly interested in Martineau’s work on women and her contribution to feminist scholarship. My PhD was written in the late 1980s and I was awarded my doctorate in 1991.

My particular interest in Martineau had begun when I was asked to write an article on
her about her for a book collection by Dale Spender entitled *Feminist Theorists* in the early 80s. I was at that time working part-time as an educational researcher and so this was an interesting diversion for me.

But I became very interested in Harriet, particularly in her wide variety of writing on education. For instance, she took a strong stand against corporal punishment or any form of physical abuse of children.

I wrote the article after a lot of research in libraries just trying to figure out who this person was, and decided to investigate her further, following the publication of the article. Parallel to this I was beginning to develop a career in academia in particular relating to gender and social justice in education. So my research into Harriet was put on the back burner for a few years and I eventually managed to finish the PhD for which I studied part-time alongside my work in education in the UK and later in Sweden.

I had this idea for a book for a long time, one that would address the main question arising from my thesis about the extent of Harriet’s impact on different disciplines and fields of study. In my thesis, I identified a number of disciplines to which she contributed, for instance feminism, journalism, sociology, history, and fiction as well as political economy. It was only when we came to put book together that I found that there was so much more that she did.

Happily, it all came together couple of years ago, perhaps 2013, when I asked Valerie Sanders whether she would be interested in co-editing the book with me. While I had a wide knowledge about the sociological aspects of Martineau’s life and work, Valerie had much more knowledge and experience of nineteenth-century studies and cultural and literary studies.

**Three main aims for book**
- making sense of her seemingly fragmented career;
- seeking to recuperate her for the ‘disciplines’; and
- identifying the extent of her intellectual legacy.

**Key factors in Harriet’s story**
- Her life was extraordinarily varied, ranging between the extremes of obscurity and public notoriety
- As a woman’s life specifically, it broke numerous boundaries.
- She stood up for the rights of slaves, women, children, the blind and deaf.
- There was a late-twentieth-century return to prominence as an outspoken critic of her age, and eminent woman

**Book**
- The hope was that this collection would provide some sort of cohesion to, or overview of, Harriet’s intellectual output.
- It is suggested that she fared better in newly emergent disciplines such as Sociology, History, realist fiction and Psychology where she was able to insert herself into disciplinary debates with relative ease.
- She also made her mark in several sub-disciplines, such as women’s studies (particularly studies of feminism and women’s movements), travel writing,
using both to press her arguments on social justice and anti-slavery, journalism.

Bust of Harriet Martineau at Wellesley College Mass.

(Visit of Martineau Society 2009)

**Her achievements**

- *She herself was not always a reliable judge of her own strengths*, as summarized in her *Autobiography* and self-authored *Daily News* obituary, where, for example, she cites her most popular works as *Household Education* and her condensation of Comte.

- Martineau accurately identified her skills as a populariser, but downplayed her ability to originate ideas, or 'discover' or 'invent' new genres and forms of writing.

- The inflated, even incomprehensible, response to her political economy tales in the 1830s offers little help to modern literary historians in evaluating her lasting impact.

- Many early reviewers, such as Croker and Lockhart, were misogynistic and spiteful.
- Subsequent enthusiasms seem exaggerated or off-kilter in the longer perspective of literary history, e.g. her children's stories in *The Playfellow*. Undoubtedly they were path-breaking in their choice of settings and the autonomy given to her child heroes; however they disconcerted many adult readers with their depiction of extreme mental and physical trials.

- Martineau's achievements as a contemporary historian make significant advances towards a more democratic, inclusive notion of history, challenging its dominance by a white male majority.

- New critical approaches in the last twenty years have found much to admire in Martineau works which were previously overlooked or underrated.

- Our contention is that Martineau was in constant dialogue with her own culture, responding rapidly to its latest obsessions and concerns, both high and low, from slavery to the crinoline, and Crimean nursing to somnambulism.

- Perhaps the greatest achievement was to maintain this dialogue with her contemporaries and their times throughout the duration of her writing life.

- Dedication to *writing as a profession* may be seen as a key aspect of her legacy. If she was not writing about her own works and/or about payment, she was reading someone else's, often as a means of collecting material for the next book, or asking for books to be sent to her, or giving thanks for books. Her writing was admired for its clarity and accessibility, and her reputation for delivering manuscripts on or before the due date drew much appreciation from her publishers. She had a good sense of the publishing market, and what might be sufficiently controversial or innovative to widen her appeal – in Britain and elsewhere.

- Her writing was deeply political in the sense that she wanted to persuade readers that her ideas about morals, values, and social organisation, for instance, were the right ones to create a better world. She believed in a harmony rather than a conflict of interests in work relations, because she was optimistic about people's ability to cooperate. Her commitment to *laissez-faire* did not stop her advocating government intervention when she thought it necessary: for example, in provision of public services, leisure activities, education and public works.

- Her conception of work whether undertaken by male or female, working-class or middle-class, manual or white collar worker, was both as a right and duty – people should not be denied access to jobs and the professions because of their gender, social origin or religious affiliation, but also that workers had responsibilities too.

- Her so-called didactic moralism which sounds so nineteenth-century, middle-class do-gooding, might be better understood today as an indication of her social consciousness and will to activism.

- Her edict to friends to destroy her letters was mainly to allow her 'perfect freedom' to write anything she wanted, including her own authentic story, unfettered by worry about what it might do to her historic reputation.

- Ironically, the 'letters doctrine' meant a decline of her legacy in the last decades of the nineteenth century and first decades of the twentieth, because only her public writing was available after her death.

- Only relatively recently has her correspondence illuminated the context in which her work took shape.

- Her writing on children was sympathetic to children's powerlessness and wholly opposed to the violent disciplining of them. *Children for Martineau...*
were seen as a valuable and cherished component of society rather than apart or outside of it, and the same could be said of all the other underprivileged groups, from slaves to the disabled, whom she saw as lacking a voice in her contemporary society.
- She offered strong support for the work of domestic servants, nurses, and the other newer professions which her journalism helped contemporaries to see as 'professions'.
- Martineau was a practical writer: from start to finish her writing had an applied function. It was meant to change things.

Her Legacy
1. Many-sided because of its pervasiveness through many disciplines.
2. Strongest in feminism, sociology, life-writing, and journalism
3. The variety and richness of her writing as a chronicler of her times opens up many more avenues for exponents of the multiple disciplines she represented.

Finally
This book, we hope, will enable the next phase of Martineau scholars to discover other places where her work made a difference, and above all, continue to celebrate the extraordinary energy and enjoyment she brought to the profession of writing.

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Recent New Members (UK unless stated)

Georgette Vale, Jeremy Martineau (Life Member) (Australia), James Martineau (Life Member) and Meg Martineau.

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The Martineau Society

The Martineau Society was founded in the early 1990s by members of the Octagon Unitarian Chapel, Colegate, Norwich, to foster interest in the descendants of Gaston Martineau, surgeon and Huguenot refugee who settled in Norwich in 1695.

Their skills developed in many fields: medicine, art, writing, engineering, education, religion and industry and the Society publishes papers on their lives and correspondence with others in these fields and with their other contemporaries.

The Society is a registered charity (no. 1064092) and holds an annual conference which includes an AGM, papers and visits to places connected with the Martineau
family. The Society issues *The Martineau Society Newsletter* twice each year, containing scholarly articles and news of events and publications.

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The moral consciousness, while pausing short of its complete development, fulfils the conditions of responsible life, and makes character real and the virtues possible. Ethics therefore have practical existence and operation prior
to any explicit religious belief: the law of right is inwoven with the very tissue of our nature, and throbs in the movements of our experience; it cannot be escaped by anyone till he can fly from himself.

James Martineau *Study I*, Introduction.