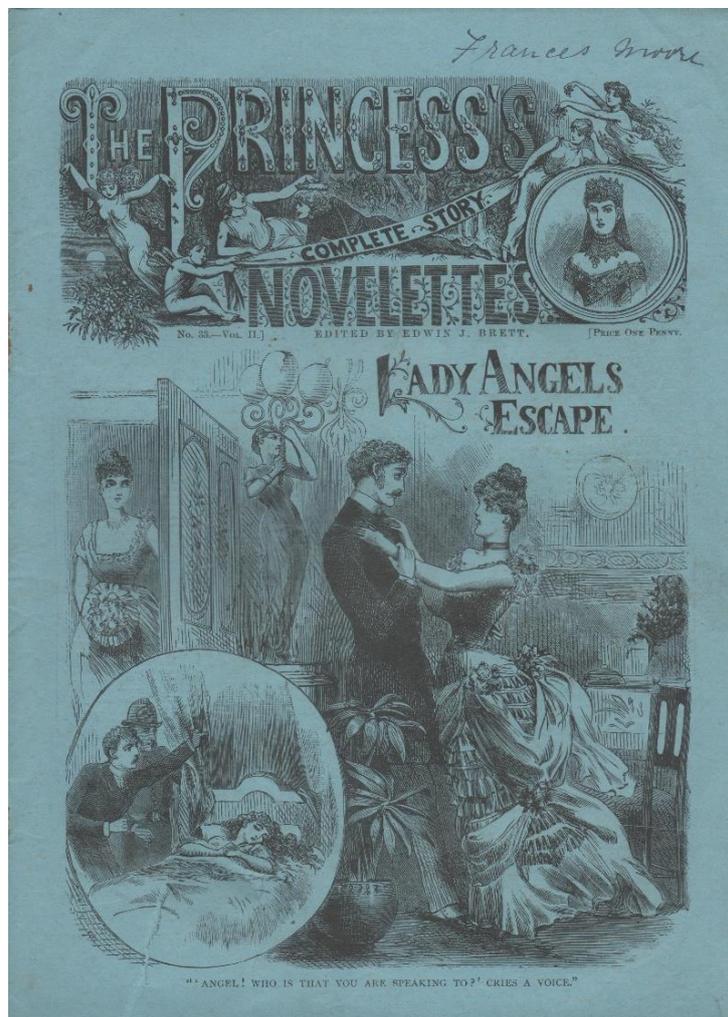


10th Annual Conference of the Victorian Popular Fiction Association



‘How Novel Was the Novelette? Fiction, Gender and Popular Nineteenth-Century Periodicals’

An exhibition curated by John Spiers, Senior Research Fellow, Institute of English Studies
School of Advanced Study, University of London

In association with the Institute of English Studies and the Senate House Library.

Senate House, 4-7 July 2018

With a Preface by Kara Tennant, USW Fashion, Faculty of Creative Industries, University of South Wales

Preface: 'How Novel was the Novelette?', Kara Tennant

How novel was the novelette? Merely posing this question prompts more: about readers; about reading; about the nature of fiction, and of what we expect from it. It also interjects straight into the heart of wider debates about the Victorian interest in 'novelty', a concern that we see manifest in all walks of nineteenth-century life, expressing the desire for newness, freshness and – above all – entertainment.

The novelette seemed custom-made for this very purpose. Both versatile and agile, it straddled a number of different 'modes' of popular fiction, forming the reading foundations for an expanding pool of contemporary consumers. It bolstered the fortunes of publishers such as Edwin J. Brett and William Lucas (Macdonald, 2009, p. 462). It also provided employment for innumerable illustrators, engravers, booksellers, and, perhaps most obviously, writers such as Mary Elizabeth Braddon and M. P. Shiel (Macdonald, 2009, p. 462). Yet for all of this, and despite its considerable popularity, the novelette has attracted relatively little attention as a form in its own right.

This exhibition, curated from the collection of Professor John Spiers, showcases original copies of the Victorian novelette, including titles as diverse as *The Illustrated Fireside Novelist*, *The Lady's Own Novelette*, *The Literary Gazette*, *The Princess's Novelettes*, and *The Grand Magazine*. Although these kinds of titles, as Eliot points out, can suggest a misleadingly "up-market" content (2001, p. 162), the range of this material nonetheless goes some way to represent both the breadth as well as the limitations of the genre.

As its name suggests, the novelette is often simply seen as a shorter form of the full-length novel, its suffix 'ette' implicitly emphasising its diminutive or reductive status. But this also somewhat diminishes its cultural identity. This exhibition therefore seeks to bring the novelette – in all its disparate guises – to the forefront as a form of popular fiction in its own right. It acknowledges the novelette as it relates to the 'real' novel, but also celebrates where it is different and distinct, to reveal what this added to the widening landscape of nineteenth-century reading material.

Indeed, the novelette was hardly known for its 'novel' qualities. Rather, it took a particular narrative form based upon well-rehearsed plots. These often centred upon an impoverished, young, and unusually-attractive heroine who, through a convoluted and melodramatic series of events, became socially elevated through marriage, sometimes even entering the aristocracy (see also Sanders, 2006, p. 129). But despite the novelette's "formulaic and predictable" nature (Macdonald, 2009, p. 462), the range of its plots are surprisingly broad, encompassing both the sweetly-sentimental and the wildly-dramatic.

These narratives became so popular – and hence so clichéd – that they were soon parodied within other forms of writing. One story, published in the magazine *The Girl's Own Paper* of 1897, gently mocks the form, featuring a character engrossed in "a halfpenny novelette" that tells the tale "of a farmer's daughter, who was beautiful beyond compare, and was badly treated at home, so [...] ran away with a few shillings in her pocket, and eventually married a duke" (Irvine, 1897, p. 298).

Even its fictional reader, Miss Lydia Morgan, typifies the novelette's stereotyped consumer – namely, girls and women from the working classes. As Sanders writes, the novelette was considered "the epitome of nineteenth-century women's 'trashy' reading" (2006, p. 129).

And, while certain critics argued that its readership was actually much broader than was generally acknowledged (Wright, 1883, p. 282; Macdonald, 2009, p. 462), fears and anxieties about the novelette were often linked with the credulity of its younger female readers. Emphasis was placed upon their potential impressionability and naivety, one writer for *The Girl's Own Paper* ominously speculating that “[s]illy, vapid, or morbid girls might perchance have been made different”, but for the influence of “the sentimental novelette” (Watson, 1899, p. 811).

At best, these fictions were regarded as intellectually worthless; at worst, they were actually considered morally damaging. In particular, novelettes were seen to set up ‘unhealthy’ expectations of lives marked out by adventure and romance – characteristics that could not have been further from contemporary ideals of femininity and quiet domesticity. It is hardly surprising, then, that within the socially-conservative Victorian cultural climate, such material was habitually feared, quashed and ridiculed. Nonetheless, it soared in popularity during the later quarter of the century. For many years, it provided young readers, many of whom worked for long, hard hours in exhausting, demanding and dispiriting conditions, with some distraction and relief.

Certainly, what the novelette lacked in intellectual rigour, it made up for in excitement. One text, typical of the ‘sensational’ or ‘penny dreadful’ part of the genre, was entitled ‘A Fatal Promise’ and was published in 1886 under the *Princess's Novelettes* series, edited by Edwin J. Brett of Fleet Street, London. It tells the convoluted tale of the beautiful, passionate, Bertie Verner, who escapes from her dastardly uncle in the dead of night, in order to evade an unwanted marriage. After descending from her window via a rope of knotted-up bedsheets, Bertie meets – and falls mutually in love – with the dashing former soldier Captain Errol Cameron of Lochmohr, who is himself bound into an unwanted betrothal of marriage in accordance in his dying mother’s wish.

Characteristically of its series, ‘A Fatal Promise’ comprises an illustrated title-page, while the text is arranged in newspaper-style columns and divided into short ‘chapters’. Visually, the use of space is expedient: the typeface is small and set close together, making reading a somewhat uncomfortable experience (Waller, 2006, p. 654). It also includes different-sized engravings that represent key moments of the action.

Some of these are tense and dramatic, such as the front cover, which depicts the attempted kidnap of Bertie, and the final scene representing Bertie and Lochmohr’s eventual happy marriage. Others, however, are far more subversive, making unexpected visual juxtapositions that seem to reference different genres of art and illustration. One such example, captioned “‘Stop!’ She said, ‘Or I will kill you!’” (1886, p. 265), represents a confrontation between Bertie and her love-rival, Miss Juliet Marling within a genteel drawing-room, whereby one woman has seized the other, fist clenched in readiness to strike.

The effect is so jarring as to be humorous to the modern eye, so unfamiliar is the artist’s visual representation of youthful, stylish female figures in near-physical combat. Indeed, elements of this scene recall the conventions and iconography of the fashion-plate, a form of illustration that appeared regularly in women’s magazines throughout the entire nineteenth century, and which was doubtless both a familiar and an aspirational image to the

novelette's consumer.¹ Indeed, the resituating of these fashionable figures within this illustrative and narrative context must have presented the reader with a new – and deliciously-unsettling – kind of reading experience.

The novelette, then, was a genre that engendered a paradoxical kind of 'novelty'. Thrilling and relentlessly-compelling, it drew upon the sensational, the subversive and the shocking. But it simultaneously remained comfortingly predictable, promising excitement, adventure and danger, and keeping its readers unceasingly eager for their weekly dose of 'novelty'.

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¹ On a related note, Sanders considers the significance of the detailed descriptions of fashionable dress that were integrated within the narratives of certain novelettes, as well as the inclusion of dressmaking patterns in the same issues (2006, p. 17; see also Chapter 4, 'Imagining Alternatives to the Romance: Absorption and Distraction as Modes of Reading', pp. 126-169).

'Novelettes', John Spiers

The novelette – a short novel, usually complete – met the call for something longer than a short story in nineteenth-century Britain. It was an important and widely sold and read form of fiction publication. Some novelettes were complete in themselves; other novelette periodicals often published serialised work.

These short new fictions have long been considered as widely read by the working-classes, and the lower middle-class. They were certainly widely read at these varied levels in society. However, Kristine Leslie Moruzi, in *The Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism* (edited by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor, Gent and London, Academia Press and The British Library, 2009), wrote that “In 1883, in the *Nineteenth Century*, Thomas Wright contradicted the prevalent view that the novelettes were read by the female domestic servant, citing rather the semi-educated daughters of the genteel classes, who had too much leisure but not much money.”

The ‘cheaper’ publishers who achieved the largest circulations throughout the century were the publishers of the penny novelettes, and of halfpenny and penny newspapers (with newspaper prices having fallen by 1900 to one-eighth of the cost in 1830). This format was used by some of the most successful publishers of popular cheap penny fiction. These novelettes were often very well illustrated, and by skilled artists including John Millais, Frederick Leighton, Frederick Sandys, and Arthur Boyd Houghton. The pictorial material needs to be taken seriously, as do the fiction texts. Wilkie Collins commented on the novelettes in 1858 – dubbing them “penny-novel journals.” They came into greater prominence in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, offering complete new serial stories. In the last years of the century there were some 35 titles competing for the rising real incomes of all classes.

These *Novelettes* were published at different market levels. Some hardcover cumulative volumes were very handsomely designed and bound and were clearly aimed at middle-class buyers. They gathered the weekly or monthly printed copies from the previous quarter, half year, or year. There were many novelettes issued for ‘down-below’, too, as lower-class weekly penny magazine publications (supplementing access to penny-novels). Yet some of those shown in this exhibit clearly reached into the middle classes, especially from the late 1880s. These novelettes included the *Penny Quiver*; *the Family Circle*; *the Fireside Novelist*; *the Ha’porth*; *Lazy Land*; *The Literary Gazette*; the *Penny Illustrated Paper*; the *Penny Magazine*; *the Penny Pictorial News*; *School Girls*; *Smart Fiction, Stories*, and the *Weekly Budget*. Monthlies included *After Work*; *Catholic Fireside*; *Crystal Stories*; and *Home Words*. Most were published at 1d.

The leading novelette publishers were Edwin J. Brett, Charles Shurey, William Lucas, William Stevens, James Henderson, and Thomas Harrison Roberts. Much of the writing was anonymous or pseudonymous but Mrs. M. E. Braddon was one contributor to novelette periodicals. For a posher market Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington in the 1880s issued *Low’s Select Novelets* in hardcovers. These included *The Clients of Doctor Bernagius*, translated from the French of M. Lucien Biart by the novelist Mrs. Cashel Hoyey (1881).

T. H. Roberts (1850-1912) claimed to have originated the “weekly novelette” and he was certainly a leading figure in its production. Robert Kirkpatrick, in his book *Pennies, Profits and Poverty, A Biographical Directory of Wealth and Want in Bohemian Flkeet Street* (Author, London, 2016) shows that Roberts worked in partnership with William Lucas (1844-1929) for many years, often as editor of Lucas’s publications. Roberts’s most successful publication was *The Illustrated Family Novelist*, launched in July 1878. This ran to just over 1,000 issues until 1897 when it became *The Family Novelist*. Roberts produced much else, which Kirkpatrick details.

Lady Florence Bell’s study of Middlesbrough in 1907 – *At The Works* – reported that the working-classes frequently read inexpensive novelettes. Flora Thompson described the club formed by

women in her hamlet to share novelettes. John Leigh found that in Lancashire in the early twentieth century women preferred novelettes to newspapers. One advantage of the novelette in the market was that it was sold throughout the week and not just on Sundays. Even so, many households owned no books at all, and read neither books nor newspapers, as Robert Roberts reported in his *The Classic Slum: Salford Life in the First Quarter of the Century* (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1973).

There were said to be farthing-novelettes, but I have not seen one. Frederick Willis, in *A Book of London Yesterdays* (London, Phoenix House, 1960) said that dealer's shops priced their wares with three-farthings [there were four farthings an old penny], and in some such establishments a farthing novelette was given as change.

Agnes Repplier, in her essay 'English Railway Fiction', in her *Points of View* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1891) said that one firm claimed a weekly sale of 7 million copies for its penny novelettes. Victor Neuberg made an estimate of the sheer volume of publications intended for the popular market at the close of the nineteenth century. For 1885, a year chosen at random, he traced 46 monthly and weekly publications featuring fiction, noting his list as "certainly far from complete." Victor E. Neuberg, *Popular Literature. A History and Guide. From the beginning of printing to the year 1897* (London, The Woburn Press, 1977).

Many of the earlier London publishers who issued penny fiction between 1830 and 1850 are listed in Louis James, *Fiction for The Working Man: 1830-1850. A study of the literature produced for the working classes in early Victorian urban England* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1963; Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1974; Brighton, expanded edition, Edward Everett Root, 2017). James also provides a check-list of penny-issue novels.

We show in the three display cases provided by the Senate House Library a selection of novelette publications from The John Spiers collection of Victorian & Edwardian Fiction.

The Literary Gazette. A Weekly Journal of Romance, General Literature, Criticism, Social Life, Music, and the Drama. No.1.-Vol.1. Friday, August 1, 1884. Two pence. By Post, 2 1/2d. London: J. & R. Maxwell, Publishers, Milton House, 14 & 15, Shoe Lane, And 35, St. Bride Street, E.C. And at all Railway Bookstalls, Booksellers, &c. Fscap. 32pp. Unillustrated cover, printed in black with Maxwell's advertisements.

Front cover promoted novels by 'Rita' and Miss Braddon. Inside, advertisements for other publishers C. Fox and T. H. Roberts. There was also a journal with the same title priced at 1s. and founded by Henry Colburn in January 1817. It was the earliest weekly newspaper devoted to literature, science, and the arts that obtained reputation and authority. Contributors included Prime Minister Lord Melbourne, on literary and religious topics. The *Gazette* was incorporated with the *Parthenon* in 1862.

The Illustrated Fireside Novelist. A Complete Novelette. No.599, New Series. Founded and Conducted by T.H. Roberts. [n.d.] ?1895. Large sq. roy. 8vo. Contains two anonymous stories, *Vowing And Paying*, and *Romeo And Juliet; or, Carl Roumain's Substitute*. 32 pp. 1d.

This publication began in 1885. The publisher, given on the back in small print, was W[illiam]. Lucas, at 158 Fleet Street, London, E.C.

The Lady's Own Novelette. And Weekly Supplement. 1d. **The Double Number 2 Complete Novels. No.245-Vol.XXI. Founded and Conducted by T.H. Roberts. 16pp. Sq.8vo.**

The firm also issued the penny weekly *Lazy Land*, another 1d. weekly publishing complete new novels. William Lucas was in partnership with Thomas Harrison Roberts in the 1880s, at 158 Fleet Street, London, E.C. The printers were Sully & Ford, 1 & 30 Plough-court, Fetter-lane, E.C.

The Literary Gazette. A Weekly Journal Of General Literature, Criticism, Social Life, Music, and the

Drama. No.1. – Vol.1. Friday, August 1, 1884. 2d. By post, 2 1/2d. London: J. & R. Maxwell, Publishers, Milton House, 14 & 15, Shoe Lane, and 35, St. Bride Street, E.C. Large sq. roy. 8vo. 32pp.

Produced by M. E. Braddon's husband. The earlier periodical under this title was *The Literary Gazette*, in London in 1817 with its full title being *The Literary Gazette, and Journal of Belles Lettres, Arts, Sciences*. Sometimes it appeared with the caption title, *London Literary Gazette*. It was founded by the publisher Henry Colburn, who appointed the journalist and contributor William Jerdan as editor in July 1817. The magazine ceased publication in 1863. It came out every Saturday morning in green paper covers at 4d.

Family Herald. Volume XXXII. Supplements. London: William Stevens, 421, Strand. Sold By All Booksellers And Dealers in Periodicals.

A major player in this market was the firm of William Stevens, Limited, of 421, Strand, London, W.C. *The Family Herald* was taken over by them when George Biggs, its founder, died in May 1859. It survived until April 1940.

Stevens also issued the *Family Herald Supplement*, and *The Monthly Magazine of Fiction*, which offered a full-length complete new novel every month for 3d. There were at least 504 vols. issued [BL list] and also a later series. Stevens also published *The Family Story Teller*, in stiff paper covers at 1s. each volume, and in fancy green cloth at 1s.6d. This was new fiction, much of it "romantic." The firm's other publications included the *Favorite Fiction Monthly*, which survived into the twentieth century, by now published from Henrietta Street in London's Covent Garden area and from 6, Queen Street, Edinburgh. This offered a complete novel at 6d. There were also special holiday numbers, and the *Sixpenny Magazine Of Fiction*, each issue offering a novel, and at least 57 appearing. Many of their publications were undated.

The volume contains 18 stories being the Supplements numbered 559 to 576 dated between October 21, 1889 and February 17, 1890. Large sq., fscap, bound in khaki cloth, decorated and blocked in black.

The title-page lists Colonial and Foreign booksellers and agents. Inserted at back is a 4pp. advertising section for the *Family Herald* itself, with many review comments, and listings for *The Family Story-Teller* and other Stevens publications.

The Halfpenny Journal: A Weekly Magazine For all Who Can Read. Vol. IV, No.158. London, Monday, July 4, 1864. Published by Ward and Lock, at the office of the HALFPENNY JOURNAL, No.4, Shoe Lane, Fleet Street, London Every Week One Halfpenny. Sq. fscap. This copy lacking any original covers, comprising issues from July 4, 1864 to June 5, 1865 bound in a publisher's binding. Vol.17.

An eight-page weekly magazine, *The Halfpenny Journal* had incorporated *The Welcome Guest* by December 19, 1864. *The Welcome Guest* had been set up by Henry Vizetelly but was not a success and it only lasted from 1858-64. During these years it was bought out by George Vickers. M.E. Braddon's husband John Maxwell bought the weekly sensational penny paper *The Welcome Guest* from Henry Vizetelly in 1860. He increased the price to 2d. and changed its name to *Robin Goodfellow*, before it was given its better known name.

On Monday, August 1, 1864 *The Halfpenny Journal* [founded by John Maxwell, first issue 1 July, 1861] began serialisation, anonymously, of Mrs M. E. Braddon's first novel, *Three Times Dead Or, The Trail of The Serpent*. It had been initially commissioned by the Yorkshire printer and bookseller William Empson, of Beverley. He sold it in 27 in weekly parts from February 1860, titled *Three Times Dead*. A one-volume edition followed, in 1860, from C. R. Empson of Tollgavel, Beverley, Yorkshire, with the London distributor W.M. Clark given on the title-page as of 16 and 17 Warwick Lane. Soon after, a revised, handsomely bound one-volume edition in blue cloth came out from Ward, Lock & Tyler under the new title *The Trail of The Serpent*. A yellowback and other cheaper editions followed this.

The first Ward, Lock & Tyler edition in 1862 had eight editions in three months – and made MEB's name at the start of her career. Braddon became the main writer of fiction for Maxwell's magazines, the *Halfpenny Journal*, the *Welcome Guest*, and then *Belgravia*, which she edited from its foundation in 1866. Most of her own fiction first appeared there for the next decade.

The Halfpenny Journal (traditionally but wrongly noted as founded by John Maxwell, 1861; edited by MEB's Mother, Fanny Braddon) serialised *The Black Band* under this title in August 1864-February 1865. By this time Ward, Lock seem to have owned the journal. The situation is unclear. Ward, Lock may have financed some of Maxwell's ventures. Kirkpatrick, for example, says that Ward, Lock had set up the journal and launched it on 1 July 1861. But *The Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism* says that the *Welcome Guest* was set up by Henry Vizetelly. Later, was Maxwell merely a front-man, or even a Ward, Lock employee? There are suggestions that Ward, Lock owned his firm or were significant shareholders. The imprint on the journal clearly stated that it was published by Ward and Lock at the Office of The Halfpenny Journal. The movement of the rights, if any, between these publishing parties remains an unresolved and distinctly fishy story, as set out by Sadleir in 1951 in Vol. I of *XIX Century Fiction*. The leading biographers of Braddon say that....

Anne-Marie Beller [*Mary Elizabeth Braddon. Companion To the Mystery Fiction* (Jefferson, N.C., and London, McFarland, 2012)] says that the novel "has some claim to be called the first British detective novel." Ward and Lock was still a young firm, having been set up in 1854 by Ebenezer Ward (1819-1902) and George Lock (1832-1891). Between 1865 and 1873 it was known as Ward, Lock & Tyler, and from 1878 as Ward Lock & Bowden. In 1897 it reverted to Ward, Lock, & Co.

In his *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* bibliography of his collection Robert Lee Wolff says that the weekly *Halfpenny Journal* was "designed for the poorest and least literate class of readers." In his *Sensational Victorian, The Life & Fiction of Mary Elizabeth Braddon* (New York and London, Garland, 1979) he says that between July 1861 and June 1865 Braddon published other fictions anonymously in this journal: *The Banker's Secret* (21 November 1864-5 June 1865) – which became *Rupert Godwin* (3 vols., Ward, Lock & Tyler, 1867); *The Factory Girl; or, All is Not Gold That Glitters* (12 January 1863-26 October 1863); *Oscar Bertrand; or, The Idiot of The Mountain* (2 November 1863-15 June 1864); *The Octoroon; Or, The Lily of Louisiana* (18 November 1861-17 March 1862); *The White Phantom* (26 May, 1862-12 January 1863); and *The Black Band; Or the Mysteries of Midnight* (1 July 1861-23 July 1862), serialized under the name Lady Caroline Lascelles. SEE ALSO F6: *The Trail of The Serpent*.

The journal came out in 245 numbers, merging with the *London Herald* (edited by Percy St. John) in March 1866. The *London Herald* had been launched by Henry Joseph Vickers in 1861, and was taken over by George Berger in 1863 when the price increased to one penny and its size increased to 16 pages. It was evidently always to struggle in the market however, in direct competition with *The London Journal*.

The Duchess Novelette. The Largest Novelette In The World. No. 1. – Vol.1. Edited By Charles Shurey. Price One Penny. Fscap. [n.d.] ?1894-5. Contains *A Wild Love*, Anon. Folio. 24pp. Engraved illustrated front cover signed Leighton Ward. Black and white throughout. 24pp. Printed and Published by Charles Shurey, the Proprietor, Caxton House, 11, Gough-square, Fleet-street, London, E.C, September 17th 1894. Ghostly illustrations throughout. Two column text.

The headline said that "Presented with this Number a Superb Picture entitled "Running The Gauntlet", by Leighton Ward, but it is missing here. This copy of this item has never been read as the first half remains uncut, as issued. Shurey's were both printers and publishers of these mostly anonymous penny sensational stories, with two column text, issued in the 1880s and 1890s. It was a family business. Shurey's Publications later issued *Smart Novels* in succession to *The Duchess Novelette*, and the series ran until the 1960s. By March 1921 1,382 items had already been issued. The firm also published a number of boy's story papers and novels in pocket libraries. It was sold to William Stevens Ltd. after Charles Shurey (1859-1935) died.

The Illustrated London Drawing Room Novelette. Containing Twenty-Six Complete Novels And 52 Illustrations. Half-Yearly Volume. London: The General Publishing Company, 280, Strand, W.C. and 125, Fleet Street, E.C. [n.d.]. ?1885. Fscap. Very handsomely bound in green cloth, blocked in gilt and black, with inlaid coloured picture on front cover. Contains Numbers 327 to 351 of weekly 16pp. issues, price one penny each. Illustrated engraved title-pages to individual stories. Double column text, with engravings.

A superb example of the best Victorian book design. How could a middle-class buyer with a few 'spare' shillings have resisted such a purchase?

The Illustrated Family Novelist. No.104. Volume V. A Library of Complete Original Novels. July to December, 1880. London: T.H. Roberts & Co., 42 and 43, Essex Street, Strand, W.C. Sq. Fscap. Brown cloth, blocked in gilt and blind. Title on front board and on spine in ornate gilt block. Each issue one penny.

Contains Numbers 104 to 129 of weekly 'complete novel' 16pp. issues, price one penny each. Names of authors given in contents list. Illustrated title-pages to individual stories. Each number consisted of one complete story, with an engraved illustrated title-page. Ink stamp of City of London Police, Bridewell Division.

This volume contains 24 stories. The magazine was launched in 1878 as a 16-page 1d. weekly by the firm of T. Harrison Roberts. This was formed and run by William Lucas (1844-1929) and Thomas Harrison Roberts (1850-1912), and was active between the late 1870s and 1900. As Kirkpatrick notes, Roberts claimed to have been the originator of the weekly novelette offering complete stories, but this idea seems to have had many fathers. *The Illustrated Family Novelist* ran to 1,007 issues, to 1897, when it was retitled as *The Family Novelist*. A predecessor was *The Novelette* (1878), issued by R. S. Cartwright. That firm continued into the inter-war period, and in the 1920s was acquired by the Newnes-Pearson Group as it then was. Collaboration between the two firms had begun in 1914 when they jointly purchased the independent publishing firm of Leach's. The two were consolidated, with *Country Life*, in 1929.

The Novelette. Vol. I. No.25. "The Cheapest Library of New Novels For Family and General Reading. 32 Pages One Penny Weekly. Published by R. S. Cartwright, 8, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C. 8vo Illustrated engraved cover in black and white. "Every Number In Print And May Be Had Of All Newsagents."

Cover stated that this was incorporated with the "Home Novelist". This copy bound in binder's brown pimped cloth.

In 1885 Lucas issued the *Fireside Novelist*, reprinting stories from the *Illustrated Family Novelist*. His *The Primrose Library* was merged with the latter publication. Lucas also published *The Ladies Own Novelette* (1889-1906), and other journals including *Ching Ching's Own*, edited by Edwin Harcourt Burrage (1839-1912). Roberts – a prominent Freemason and an active worker in charities – was awarded the Freedom of the City of London in 1890. He was also involved in the Company of Paper Makers. He issued some other important works including the co-operator George Jacob Holyoake's *Among the Americans* (1881).

Both Roberts and Lucas were among the forgotten publishers of the late-nineteenth century, but Kirkpatrick has researched and rescued them, as has Maryan Demoor.

The Illustrated Family Novelist. Edited By Florence Hodgkinson. Large sq. roy. 8vo., pale orange paper printed in red on cover, with engraved illustration signed W.D. Ewart [?]. No.264. Weekly Supplement Presented Gratis. Contained Tinsel – Not Gold. A Complete Novel. No author given. Back cover 'Our Ladies Page' on New Fashions printed in red. No publisher or printer information given.

This periodical was promoted as "The Biggest Pennyworth In The World." It should be distinguished

from the earlier *Illustrated Family Novelist* issued by Ingram, Cooke & Co. in the 1850s, and which was a conventional series of full-length hardcover novels.

The Novelette. Complete Novels. A Library of Original & Complete Stories By Popular Authors. Vol. II. The cloth cover titled thus. But the title-page has: *The Novelette Library of Original and Complete Novels, By Popular Authors, For Family Reading. The Sunday Times* says: - "No Lady need hesitate to have it on her Library Table." Contents: Love Your Lords, Jean Middlemas, and 6 other stories. London: Published by R.S. Cartwright, 8 Johnson's Court, EC. 1878. 8vo. Decorated brown cloth with inlaid coloured illustrative paper panel. Chocolate brown endpapers.

This extremely well produced and attractive volume contains seven stories. This publisher also issued *The Lady's Companion: a home journal for women and girls*, and also in 1886 two volumes of *Mrs. Leach's Fancy Work Basket: Practical Lessons in Art needlework, photograph, painting, lace making, mountmellick embroidery, macrame work, crochet, knitting, bead work, and home décor.* *The Novelette* was edited by novelist "Rita" [Mrs. Eliza Humphreys] 1878-80.

The Novelette. With Which The "Home Novelist" Is Incorporated. New Novels by favourite Authors for family Reading. 6d. Monthly. "The cheapest Library of New Novels for family and General Reading." 32 pages. One Penny Weekly. Vol. II, No.25. R.S. Cartwright, 8, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C.

A volume of 532pp, in brown binder's cloth. The publishers also offered "The Cheapest Cut-out Paper Patterns in the World" in a market where clothes were home-made. Also, "Every Number In Print And May Be Had Of All Newsagents."

Complete Novels. A Library of Original & Complete Stories By Popular authors. The cover titled thus. The title-page has: *The Novelette Library of Original and Complete Novels, By Popular Authors, For Family Reading. The Sunday Times* says: - "No Lady need hesitate to have it on her Library Table." London: Published by R.S. Cartwright, 8 Johnson's Court, EC. 1878. 8vo. Decorated brown cloth with inlaid coloured illustrative paper panel.

The Halfpenny Novelette And Family Budget. Halfpenny Novelette Office, 18, Guardian Building, Cross Street, Manchester. Large sq. 8vo. ?1880s. Published Every Monday. Pictorial cover printed on pink paper. This example being No.595, featuring 'The Mysterious Disappearance of Edith Hamley'. Inked on front cover is "by Marie B. Preston". 16p. + 4pp. covers.

Possibly the author's own copy, or a family copy, or a publisher's file copy? See The Halfpenny Journal - Magazine Data File www.philsp.com/data/data218.html accessed 17.6.2016. But the item shown here is not listed on the site.

Something To Read. A Journal for Single and Married Everywhere. No.274 – Vol .XI. Edited By Edwin J. Brett. With Novelette Gratis. Foolscap, 16pp. "A Complete Novelette Given Away Every Week With This Journal." [n.d.] 1886. Fscap. Paper, self-covered, black and white illustrations. Dated June 23, 1886 on printer's note on back cover. Price 1d. 26pp. including covers.

The novel for that week was Alice Gunter, 'His Neighbour's Wife; Or Dian's Kiss'.

This miscellany for the entire family was originally launched in 1881, and survived until 1909 (when his firm collapsed due to financial difficulties). Brett's list of boys' journals was large, as Kirkpatrick shows, and he also reached young ladies and the family group too. Brett issued this weekly journal intended for ladies with "Stories of Thrilling Interest", and with a full-size complete Novelette included with each Number. Price 1d. weekly; monthly parts, 6d.; quarterly, 1s.6d.; cloth vols. 4s.6d. In other advertisements Brett offered such journals weekly, complete with a full-size novelette, at 2d.; monthly parts, 6d.; quarterly, 12s. 6d.; cloth volumes, 4s.6d.

Brett also issued *The Princess Novelettes* – "Profusely Illustrated", 1d. weekly; monthly parts, 4d, the

Boys of England Novelette and the *Boys' Weekly Reader Novelette*, both weekly, 1d., or in 1s. vols. As well as a large series of cheap individual stories, sports guides, and other publications. Newnes later issued a series of penny half-penny paperback novels with the same series name.

Something To Read. A Journal for Single and Married Everywhere. With "The Gipsy Novelettes" incorporated. No.1091. – Vol. XLIII. Founded By Edwin J. Brett. With Novelette Gratis. Fscap, 12pp. and covers. Illustrated engraved black and white cover. 1d. [n.d.] but dated February 4th, 1902 on printer's note on back cover

The lead story here was *The Tragedy of Griffith Vaughan* by Florence Nixon. The cover illustrates a violent altercation involving a gun in a first class carriage of a railway train, surely evidence for a claim against the ubiquitous travel insurance? This journal evidently ran for many years, still priced at 1d.

Something To Read. Volume II. Comprising Seven Complete Stories By Miss M.E. Braddon. Contents: *Lady Audley's Secret, The Octoroon, The Cloven Foot, His Secret, A Wavering Image, The Wages of Sin, Aurora Floyd.* New York: J.S. Ogilvie & Company. 25 Rose Street. [n.d.] ?1880. Large sq. fscap, bright light brown cloth, decorative black floral design with title in gilt in centre of front board. "By Miss M.E. Braddon" included in titling on spine. Green end papers, inscribed in ink "To Mrs Fannie Smith Kelley From Sister Minnie March 29, 1892." 4pp. of advertisement at back listing some of the firm's publications, but not this title.

This formidable firm was one of the leading cheap reprint companies and suppliers of 'dime novels'. It began in New York in 1858 and became one of the largest purveyors of 'railroad literature' in the USA. It was one of the firms acquired later by John W. Lovell.

[Anon], *The Princess Novelettes. Lady Angel's Escape.* Complete Story. Edited by Edwin J. Brett. No.33 – Vol. II. Price One Penny. [n.d.]. ?1885. 16pp. Fscap, blue paper covers, illustrated with dramatic engravings.

Surely the most visually attractive of these kinds of publications. The series was offered weekly at 1s., or in monthly parts for 4d. Later it became a monthly. In collected volume form it was issued in maroon cloth.

[Anon], *The Princess Novelettes. At Midnight Hour.* Complete Story. Edited by Edwin J. Brett. Part 160 (Published Monthly). August 1889. This Part contains 5 Complete Stories, And an Up-To-Date Monthly Fashion Supplement. Price 20 Cents. Yearly Subscription \$2.25. Large tall roy.8vo. 80pp and illustrated, engraved blue paper covers. Office: Harkaway House, West Harding Street, Fetter Lane, Fleet Street, London, E.C., And All Booksellers.

Although dated August 1889 this must be a later issue. For when Edwin J. Brett died in December 1895 his sons continued under his name. In the late 1890s the company moved to West Harding Street, Fetter Lane, and the address was given the name of Harkaway House In June 1907, with large debts, the firm was wound up, but continued in the hands of the liquidator until late 1909.

The item shown, above, has a cover priced for the American market, although the monthly publications inside are priced at 1d., these being the original English sheets.

[Anon], *The Princess's Novelettes. "Carried By Storm"*, Complete Story. Edited by Edwin J. Brett. No.23 – Vol. I. Price One Penny. [n.d.]. ?1886-7. 16pp. Fscap, blue paper covers, printed in black, illustrated with dramatic engravings. Double column text.

Surely the most visually attractive of these kinds of publications. The series was offered weekly at 1s., or in monthly parts for 4d. Later it became a monthly. In collected volume form it was issued in cloth. When found the original covers are often missing – were they framed in cottages? Similarly, the individual pictures given away with each issue.

A successful Victorian 'penny' magazine aimed at the market of mainly working-class young women. Each issue featured one short novel and gossip on royals and/or celebrities. It included many illustrations and plates. Most of the novels are by unknown authors and contain sensational stories of romance or mystery. The word 'novelette' obviously 'sold'.

The Princess's Novelettes. Containing 26 Complete Stories Together with 270 Illustrations. Folio, decoratively blocked in silver and gilt, bevelled edges, dark maroon cloth. Edited by Edwin J. Brett. Office – 173 Fleet Street E.C. Vol. V. Pictorial title-page inked in mauve. Front board says 27 Complete Stories.

A most durable and desirable, handsome, luxurious edition.

The English Ladies Novelettes. Volume 1. [?1891]. Edited By Edwin J. Brett. Containing 26 Complete Stories, Beautifully illustrated With 100 Engravings. Office: 173 Fleet Street, London, E.C. Sq. Roy. 8vo.

This volume indexed the first volume. In a contemporary half-leather binding, but – unusually – with several of the fold-out presentation coloured plates surviving. A complete story was offered every week.

The Strand Novelettes. No.1. Isabel Bellerby. An Unseen Hand. George Newnes, Ltd., 8, 9, 10, and 11, Southampton Street And Exeter Street, W.C. Sq. Double Demy 16mo., [n.d.] ?1894. Pale blue paper pictorial cover. "Each Number A Complete Original Novelette." 32pp, + 4pp. covers.

Contains, loosely inserted, small oblong leaflet, printed in black on pink paper, listing this title as ready, and 5 others in preparation, to be published weekly, price one penny.

The Strand Novelettes. Vol. II. George Newnes, Limited, Southampton Street And Exeter Street, Strand, 1895. Sq. Double Demy 16mo. Pale duck-egg blue buckram, ruled black and tan, decoratively inked in red, gold and black. Pale fawn, decorated floral end-papers. Text set in two-columns.

Contains thirteen separately published novelettes, bound up together in this one volume in publisher's cloth, with a general title-page. Three such volumes were issued in all, separately, at intervals between March and August 1895. The Flower of Vengeance, by Frederic Breton. True Love's Mistake, by Miss M. Capes; A Love that Grew, by Alys Hallard; Maying in Harvester, by Alison Buckler; St Valentine's Lottery, by Isabel Bellerby; Alan Lindow's Wife, by Huan Mee; A Wish And its Cost, by Lester Lorton; In Exchange for a Life, by Robert Halifax; A Shadowed Life, by Bertha Henry; A Famous Mystery, by Hugh Coleman Davidson; The Taming of a Madcap, by Edith Maude Dunaway An Unsuspected Witness, by Hannah Marty, and Story of Two Singers, by Mrs. Henry E. Dudeney. The authors were all well-known popular writers of the day.

Newnes also issued many other periodicals publishing new fiction, including *The Grand Magazine* (from Vol. I, February - July 1905). This first issue included *A Tropical Horror* by William Hope Hodgson, and the 'My Best Story' series by A. Conan Doyle, W. W. Jacobs, Max Pemberton, H. G. Wells, Barry Pain, M. E. Braddon. The volumes later included short stories and articles (some reprinted from the previous century) by authors including Morley Roberts, Charlotte Gilman, Max Pemberton, Barry Pain, Frank A. Stockton. P. G. Wodehouse (*Tom, Dick and Harry A Cricket Story*) & William Hope Hodgson (*A Tropical Horror*), and J. Sheridan le Fanu (*The Room in the Dragon Volant*).

Similarly, *The Home Magazine*, launched on 23 April 1898, 1d., published every Wednesday with new serial fiction, it was edited by George Clarke and Frank Newnes. It was promoted as an "Illustrated Paper for Sunday And Weekly Reading." [Found tucked into my copy was a receipt from the Frances Mary Buss Schools for Girls. North London Collegiate School, Sandall Road, Camden Road, N.W., dated 14th May 1900].

The Grand Magazine. Vol. I, February - July 1905, George Newnes Limited, Southampton Street And

Exeter Street, Strand.

Newnes issued many other periodicals publishing new fiction, including *The Grand Magazine* (from Vol. I, February - July 1905, to Vol.77, April 1940). This was primarily a monthly magazine, which usually comprised less than a third of fiction in its contents. The first issue, however, included *A Tropical Horror* by William Hope Hodgson, and the 'My Best Story' series by A. Conan Doyle, W. W. Jacobs, Max Pemberton, H. G. Wells, Barry Pain, M. E. Braddon. The volumes later included short stories and non-fiction articles (some reprinted from the previous century) by authors including Morley Roberts, Charlotte Gilman, Max Pemberton, Barry Pain, Frank A. Stockton. P. G. Wodehouse (*Tom, Dick and Harry A Cricket Story*) & William Hope Hodgson (*A Tropical Horror*), and J. Sheridan le Fanu (*The Room in the Dragon Volant*). *The Grand* was unillustrated, and was an all-text magazine uncharacteristic of Newnes's usual approach to the market. Ashley says that "Newnes was hoping to provide more sophisticated reading for an otherwise less discerning readership." A direct competitor was *The Novel Magazine* (1905-37) published by C. Arthur Pearson.

Johnson's Pictorial Literature. Mysteries of Udolpho. Illustrated With Thirty-Two Large Wood Engravings. London: Printed and Published by W.S. Johnson, 60. St. Martin's Lane, Charing Cross. Foolsap. Issued Monthly. 1s.6d. Illustrated With Thirty-Two Large Wood Engravings. Sold by All Booksellers and Newsvendors [sic]. London: Printed and Published by W.S. Johnson, 60. St. Martin's Lane, Charing Cross.

Johnson was also the publisher of *Home Circle* (1849-54).

Each story 28pp. Volume contains 7 issues. This volume bound with morocco spine and marbled paper over boards; marbled end-papers. The original cover, printed on blue paper, is bound in. A very rare survival. Commonly these original, illustrated covers were lost/discarded when such volumes were bound. This bound volume does not have these.

Note:

The above material is extracted from John Spiers, *From Golden Guineas to Small Change. Changing Access to new adult fiction in an elite culture, and in the evolving 'mass' 19th century market* (forthcoming, Brighton, Edward Everett Root Publishers, 2019).

We are grateful to Dr. Maria Castrillo, Head of Special Collections and Engagement, The Senate House Library, University of London for much help in facilitating this exhibit.