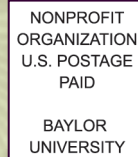




ARMSTRONG BROWNING LIBRARY
One Bear Place #97152 Waco, TX 76798-7152

Location: 710 Speight Ave. Waco, TX 76706
Phone: (254) 710-3566 Fax: (254) 710-3552
Web site: www.browninglibrary.org

Number 59 Fall 2011



THE PORTAL

News from the Armstrong Browning Library

*"A wondrous
portal opened
wide..."*

Number 59 • Fall 2011

Please Recycle

Help Fulfill A Dream

Soon after the construction of the Armstrong Browning Library, Dr. A. J. Armstrong lamented in a letter written in July 1952: "[A]fter dedicating the Library in a blaze of glory we [realized] we had practically not a penny left for landscaping..." Dr. Armstrong envisioned an area he described as "an outstandingly lovely portion planned for the grounds. . .to include beautifully designed benches where people can sit and meditate and absorb the beauty of the garden." The Garden of Contentment would enhance the Waco Hall side of the Library and provide a plaza for outdoor entertainment and fellowship.

To fulfill Dr. Armstrong's dream, Armstrong Browning Library is planning to bring a beautifully constructed "garden of contentment" to this special space. A generous supporter has made a lead commitment toward the project, but additional help is needed to bring this vision to life on Baylor's campus.

The Guardian Angel Fund supports special projects, like the garden of contentment, and contributes to the beautiful history and rich tradition represented by the ABL and its inspired founders. Please consider becoming a Guardian Angel today as we endeavor to

make Dr. Armstrong's plan a reality. Your support, at any level, is vital and is always greatly appreciated.

Gifts can be made online at www.baylor.edu/give, designate your gift to the **Armstrong Browning Library Guardian Angel Fund**. Checks may be made payable to Baylor University, indicating "Guardian Angel Fund" on the note line, and mailed to Christi Klempnauer, Armstrong Browning Library, One Bear Place #97152, Waco, TX 76798-7152.



Original Inspiration: Architectural design, ca. 1951, submitted by Lambert's Landscape Company, Dallas.

ABL STAFF

Rita S. Patteson
Director &
Associate Professor/
Curator of Manuscripts

Dr. Avery T. Sharp
Professor/Museum
Coordinator and
Research Librarian

Cynthia A. Burgess
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Administrative Coordinator

Jessica Mejia
Public Relations and
Facilities Supervisor/
Newsletter Editor

Melvin H. Schuetz
Assistant to the Curators

Martha Ervin
Patricia Harvey
Gertrude Kousz
Mary Rodriguez
Library Information
Specialists

*Oh, good gigantic
smile o' the brown
old earth,
This Autumn
morning!*

"James Lee's Wife VII:
Among the Rocks"

— RB

Benefactors Day Marks a New Association

This fall, Benefactors Day is scheduled for October 25th, 3:30 p.m., in the McLean Foyer of Meditation. This annual occasion is an opportunity to express appreciation to the friends who have become Armstrong Browning Library Guardian Angels. The guest speaker, Dr. Kirstie Blair, will be visiting at Baylor for a week as she prepares for her association with the Library in 2012 as holder of the Margaret Root Brown Chair of Robert Browning and Victorian Studies (see page 2 for the announcement).

Having previously taught at Keble College and St. Peter's College, Oxford, Dr. Blair joined the University of Glasgow as a Lecturer in English Literature in January 2005, where she was recently promoted to Senior Lecturer. Her primary research interests lie in Victorian literature, particularly poetry and poetic form, working-class poetry and poetics, literature and medicine, and literature and religion. Dr. Blair speaks regularly at faculty seminars and conferences and has a real interest in supervising postgraduate students, especially those in the fields of poetry and/or religion. Her first monograph, *Victorian Poetry and the Culture of the Heart*, appeared in 2006 from Oxford University Press. She is also an Associate Editor of *The Year's Work in English Studies*, and a Section Editor (Victorian literature) for *Literature Compass*.

Dr. Blair's lecture, titled "Robert Browning's Dissenting Forms," will be based on a chapter from her forthcoming book, *Form and Faith in Victorian Poetry and Religion* (Oxford University Press, May 2012). In her lecture, she will focus on "Christmas-Eve," the first long poem Browning produced after his marriage and the only poem in which he reflects explicitly on contemporary religion. She will consider how the famously eccentric forms of this poem deliberately intervene in the ongoing dispute about the relation of form to faith.

Dr. Blair's study shows how poets actively participated—often decisively—in the religious debates of the period through both the content and the form of their poems. Her work on Browning, which took shape during a visit to the Armstrong Browning Library in 2009, argues that his poems play with form—with the shape, structure, and rhythm of verse—in order to provide a subtle and pointed commentary on contemporary

religious questions, one which Victorian readers would have picked up but of which we are less aware.

In conjunction with the theme of the afternoon lecture, Carlos Colón, Resident Fellow at Baylor University's Institute for the Studies of Religion and Artist-in-Residence at the Armstrong Browning Library, will present new musical arrangements of Browning poetry. Colón will also premiere a new composition for oboe and piano inspired by a passage from *Aurora Leigh* that some have associated with the opening verses of Psalm 19.

The event, which is free and open to the public, will conclude with a reception that recognizes all ABL friends and that honors Dr. Blair as she begins her association with ABL.



Dr. Kirstie Blair, guest lecturer at the annual Benefactors Day, will also hold the Margaret Root Brown Chair of Robert Browning and Victorian Studies in 2012.

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

It is my pleasure to announce that Dr. Kirstie Blair, of the University of Glasgow, has been appointed to serve as the next holder of the Margaret Root Brown Chair of Robert Browning and Victorian Studies during the year of 2012. You will remember that the duties of the Director of the Armstrong Browning Library were split in 2009. Since that time I have handled the daily operation of the Library while a search committee considered candidates for a “scholar-in-residence”—someone to concentrate on scholarly research and publishing related to the ABL focus, teach and promote interest in research related to the Library’s holdings, and participate in ABL activities.

For the first half of 2012, Dr. Blair will remain in residence at the University of Glasgow while she plans and coordinates the international conference that will be held at the ABL in November 2012. In July of that year, she and her family will arrive to work for six months with ABL faculty and staff, Dean Pattie Orr, and members of several Baylor departments as she promotes the research aspects and collections of the Armstrong Browning Library.

I hope you will make every effort to attend the Benefactors Day celebration on October 25 and meet Dr. Blair. We, at the ABL, look forward to her presence and the opportunity to draw upon her expertise concerning the Brownings and their relationship to Victorian literature and culture. Please help us extend a true Texas and Baylor welcome to Dr. Blair.

Rita S. Patteson
Director



ABL Expands Its Social Media

The ABL is continuing to expand its social media presence. Along with Facebook, the ABL is now on Twitter. Please follow us for announcements, upcoming events, and information about the ABL. Tweet us your questions. Visit us at www.twitter.com/browninglibrary. We are also using FourSquare. The next time you stop by make sure to “check in” on FourSquare.



Announcing ABL Visiting Scholars for 2011-2012

August 22 - September 15: Erin Nerstad, a Ph.D. candidate in the English Department at the University of Chicago.

September 29 - December 2: Dr. Scott Lewis, editor of *The Brownings' Correspondence*, Senior Research Fellow at De Montfort University in Leicester, England, and President of The Browning Society, London.

October 22 - November 20: Dr. Kevin A. Morrison, assistant professor of English at Syracuse University.

February: Barbara Neri, an independent scholar from Pinckney, Michigan, and associate editor of *The Works of Elizabeth Barrett Browning* (Pickering & Chatto, 2010).

The ABL Visiting Scholar program assists those who reside outside the immediate area and is offered to those whose research will most benefit from the holdings of the Armstrong Browning Library. For more information, visit the Research Opportunities link on the ABL website at www.browninglibrary.org.

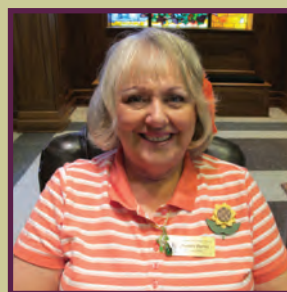
ABL Hires New Staff

On July 11, the ABL welcomed Jessica L. Mejia as its new Public Relations and Facilities Supervisor. Mejia graduated in December 2010 from Baylor University with a BA in Journalism-Public Relations.

Her duties include scheduling and coordinating events held in the ABL and overseeing daily operations of the public areas of the building. She oversees the production of *The Portal*, manages the Gift Gallery, gives tours, and supervises the part-time hosts of the library and the work-study students assigned to the main floor. Often she keeps the Library open for after-hour and special events.

Over the summer the ABL also welcomed Patricia Harvey, a 27-year veteran of public education. She joins the elite group of part-time workers—Martha Ervin, Gertrude Kousz, and Mary Rodriguez—who insure that students, faculty, staff, and visitors to the Library are welcomed and enjoy a safe, secure, and informative visit. Their titles were recently upgraded to Library Information Specialist I.

Harvey graduated from Baylor University in 1976 with a BS in Secondary Education, Speech, and Journalism. She was a member of Zeta Phi Eta and Texas State Teachers Association and taught for Waco ISD and LaVega ISD for 20 years. Harvey and her husband Stephen reside in China Spring.



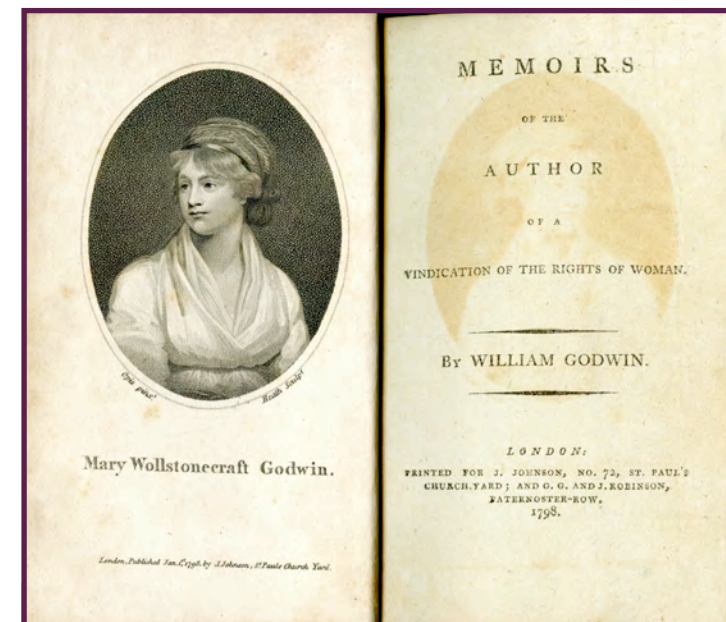
ACQUISITIONS SPOTLIGHT

One of the most important resources held by the Armstrong Browning Library is the Browning Library Collection—books and periodicals which were actually owned by Robert and/or Elizabeth Barrett Browning or members of their immediate family. The ABL holds approximately one-third of 2,681 items currently listed in *The Brownings: A Research Guide* (www.browningguide.org) under the Browning Library section.

But what of the other two-thirds? While the ABL is successful in discovering and acquiring more of the Browning Library titles each year, many of them are held by other institutions and will never be available on the market. Others are owned by private collectors who may hold them indefinitely, while the rest are unlocated—perhaps lost forever. Therefore, in an effort to recreate the library owned by the Brownings, ABL initiated the Browning Library Copies Collection. These are books which, based on the most complete information available, are the same editions as the volumes once owned and used by the Brownings.

While finding these exact editions can be difficult, the collection has grown to 232 titles, with 16 titles added within the past year. The three most recent additions to the Browning Library Copies Collection, while acquired separately, are important first editions associated with the English Romantic Movement. Coincidentally, their authors were closely associated with each other: first, William Godwin's *Memoirs of the Author of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1798), written about his wife Mary Wollstonecraft; then, *History of a Six Weeks' Tour Through a Part of France, Switzerland, Germany, and Holland* (1817) written by Mary Shelley, Godwin and Wollstonecraft's daughter; and finally, Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Posthumous Poems* (1824), compiled by Mary Shelley, and including a six-page preface about her late husband.

These three titles were once owned by Robert Browning. His copy of Godwin's *Memoirs* is held by the University of Toronto. Shelley's *Posthumous Poems*, inscribed by Browning and with manuscript alterations in the text, is unlocated. Having been offered for sale in a



Title-page of Godwin's *Memoirs* (1798) with a frontispiece portrait of his wife, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin.

Maggs catalogue in 1915, it is very likely in the hands of a collector. We know from a letter written to Thomas J. Wise by Browning that he once owned a copy of Mary Shelley's *Six Weeks' Tour*. It is also unlocated and might never be discovered as it may not bear his inscription or other identifiable markings.

Having access to the Brownings' personal library is an invaluable resource for those researching the lives and works of the poets. The new additions to the Browning Library Copies Collection will aid future scholars as they study the influence of other writers on the works of Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

Save the Dates

October 9-10: Chamber Singers Concert. Alan Raines is conducting. Performances are at 3:30 p.m. Sunday and 7:30 p.m. Monday. This event is free of charge and open to the public.

October 23: Robert H. Young Memorial Concert. A memorial concert celebrating the life of Robert H. Young includes performances by the Baylor University Chamber Singers and Baylor University Chamber Orchestra. Performances are at 3:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Sunday. For free tickets to this event, call the School of Music box office at 254-710-3571.

October 25: Benefactors Day, 3:30-5:00 p.m. Dr. Kirstie Blair from the University of Glasgow lecturing on “Robert Browning's Dissenting Forms.” Reception following. Free and open to the public.

November 5: Baylor Homecoming at the ABL. Open house with refreshments, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

December 4-6: Baylor Chamber Singers Christmas Concert, with Bella Voce led by Lynne Gackle, 3:00 p.m. Sunday, and 7:30 p.m. Monday and Tuesday. For ticket information, contact the School of Music box office at 254-710-3571.

February 11, 2012: Valentine Celebration, 4:00-6:00 p.m. Dave Tanner, a popular entertainer from the Dallas/Metroplex area, will be our Valentine host for the fourth straight year. A delectable dessert reception will follow in the Cox Reception Hall. \$50 per couple. \$30 per person. Anticipate a special presentation by Visiting Scholar Barbara Neri.

For more information and updates, please visit www.browninglibrary.org or contact Christi Klempnauer at (254) 710-4968.