

## **Brontë family dining table saved for the nation**

26 January 2015

The family table where literary classics *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights* and *Tenant of Wildfell Hall* were written goes on display.

Image



The Brontë family table where literary classics *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights* and *Tenant of Wildfell Hall* were written

A grant of just over £580,000 from the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) has enabled the Brontë Society to secure the Brontës' family dining table. With an incredible connection to the UK's literary heritage and at risk of being lost, it will now go on display at the Brontës' former home, Haworth Parsonage in West Yorkshire, for visitors to enjoy.

It was at this dining table where the whole Brontë family gathered to write and share ideas from childhood. It is at this table where the Brontë sisters' early works were written including Charlotte's *Jane Eyre*, Emily's *Wuthering Heights* and Anne's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*.

The table also bears the markings of daily use – ink blots, a large candle burn and a small letter E carved on to its surface. The table was sold after the death of Patrick Brontë in 1861 and has since passed through the same family. Without this grant, the table would have been sold at public auction.

Heritage Minister Ed Vaizey said: "The Brontë's family dining table has a close connection with some of the most famous English literature written in the 19th century. The National Heritage Memorial Fund grant recognises the importance of keeping these literary artefacts on display and it's wonderful that visitors to Brontë's former home in Yorkshire will now be able to enjoy it in its original setting."

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of NHMF, said: "The Brontë sisters are internationally revered for their contribution to English literature. Novels which have enthralled millions of readers were imagined and written at this table and seeing it brings to life the creative process behind the famous works. NHMF trustees felt it important that it should be saved for the nation so that it can be displayed to the public in its original setting."

Ann Dinsdale, Collections Manager at the Brontë Parsonage, comments: "We are extremely proud and excited to be bringing the Brontës' table back to its original home. It is one of the most important literary artefacts of the 19th century and displaying it in the Parsonage dining room marks a wonderful commencement to our programme of activity marking the forthcoming bicentenaries of the births of the Brontë siblings."

The table will be displayed in its original position in the dining room at the Parsonage where it can be viewed by the public from 1 February 2015, when the Brontë Parsonage Museum reopens for the coming season.

## **Notes to editors**

The Brontë Parsonage was the home of the Brontë family from 1820 to 1861 and was gifted to the Brontë Society in 1928. The society is a charity, which relies on the generosity of its members, and is responsible for collecting Brontë manuscripts and artefacts, administering the famous Brontë Parsonage Museum and also for promoting the Brontës' literary legacy within contemporary society.

The Brontë Society is one of the oldest literary societies in the English speaking world and is celebrating 120 years since it was founded in Bradford, throughout 2014.

The iconic Parsonage, where the novels were written, houses the largest collection of artefacts and documents associated with the Brontë family and their literary works in the world, and continues to inspire scholars, writers and artists.

Today the Brontë Society continues to carry out its founding aim; collecting and exhibiting material relating to the Brontës' lives and works, researching them and making them known to the widest audience through display, online access, reader appointments and a lifelong learning programme.

Further information about the museum can be found at the [Bronte Parsonage Museum website](#) or follow them on Facebook (Brontë Parsonage Museum) and Twitter [@BronteParsonage](#).

## **Further information**

NHMF press office: Natasha Ley or Tom Williams on 020 7591 6143 / 6056 or out of hours 07973 613 820, email: [natashaL@hlf.org.uk](mailto:natashaL@hlf.org.uk).