

# CRANFORD

ADAPTED BY MARTYN COLEMAN

WRITTEN BY ELIZABETH GASKELL  
AND MARTYN COLEMAN



DIRECTED BY  
HELEN HALLIDAY

13TH-16TH MAY  
DUNN VILLAGE HALL, RUSHLAKE GREEN TN21 9QD

PROGRAMME



Rushlake Green

REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 1184546

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# CRANFORD

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The Play takes place in the parlour of Miss Matty's house in the village of Cranford

## ACT I

**Scene i** Noon on a sunny day in the late autumn of 1830

**Scene ii** Late afternoon of the following day

**Scene iii** Late afternoon some months later

## ACT II

**Scene i** About eight o'clock of an evening a week or so later

**Scene ii** A bright sunny morning, two days later

and

some months later. A bright summer morning

“Miss Jenkyns wore a cravat, and a little bonnet like a jockey-cap, and altogether had the appearance of a strong-minded woman; although she would have despised the modern idea of women being equal to men. Equal, indeed! she knew women were superior.”

— **Elizabeth Gaskell**

# CAST

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## **(in order of appearance)**

Mrs Gaskell .....	Pam Edmonds
Miss Matilda Jenkyns (Miss Matty) .....	Sarah Cannon
Martha .....	Isobel Waterhouse
Mary Smith .....	Kirsty Coles
Miss Pole .....	Maria Harding
Miss Barker .....	Ann Walker
Mrs Forrester .....	Lizzie Hutcheson
The Hon. Mrs. Jamieson .....	Heather Young
Mr Hoggins .....	Paul Cox
Lady Glenmire .....	Irene Osprey
Jem Hearn .....	Benjamin Craven

# PRODUCTION TEAM

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Director .....	Helen Halliday
Assistant Director .....	Kim Twinn
Producer/Front of House .....	Anita Gunn
Set Design .....	Graham Stoner
Set Team .....	Jonathan Austin, Ian Charlesworth, Paul Cox, Nicky Stoner, Pam Edmonds
Set Dresser .....	Helen Halliday
Sound .....	Jonathan Austin
Lighting .....	Suzanne Toynton, Andrew Nairne
Stage Management and Props .....	Chris Wickham, Annie Wickham, Alison Wright
Costumes .....	Bryan Davies (BPD Costumes) Susan Wilson
Bar .....	Pippa Clarke, Clyde Young and Team
Publicity .....	Robert Barker, Clyde Young, Isobel Waterhouse

# DIRECTOR'S NOTES

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Welcome to the village of Cranford. Here the ladies gather to discuss the fashions of the day as reported in the St James' Chronicle, take tea and observe the comings and goings of their friends and relatives. It is a pleasant, if cloistered, existence and therefore a little excitement goes a very long way. However a social revolution evolves leaving everyone and everything changed. Things will never be the same in Cranford.

*Cranford* is based on Elizabeth Gaskell's childhood memories of the small town of Knutsford, Cheshire. As a fond record of an old-fashioned backwater, the story has primarily been praised for its charm, domestic detail, and vivid creation of a rural society dominated by a close-knit group of impoverished gentlewomen. Recent interest in the material conditions of domestic life in Victorian Britain has revealed that industrialization, imperialism, and the new consumer society are central to the story's treatment of class and gender issues. First serialized in *Household Words*, a weekly magazine edited by Charles Dickens, between December 1851 and May 1853, *Cranford* appeared in volume form in June 1853.

As some of the phrases and terms common in the 1830s are virtually extinct these days I have included a glossary of terms for your perusal. We hope you enjoy this transtemporal transportation into the past as we peep through the window of the wonderful Miss Matty Jenkyns and her many friends and acquaintances.

# GLOSSARY

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**Bombazine** – Fabric made with a silk warp and worsted wool or cotton weft, which not only makes it durable but also gives it an elegant drape. Historically significant, especially in the domain of mourning wear. In Victorian times, people often wore bombazine in black for formal occasions, making it a staple in wardrobes during that era.

**Widows Cap -A widow's cap (or mourning cap)**, a sign of mourning worn by many women after the death of their husbands, was a sign of religious and social significance[1] and was worn through the first mourning period during the 19th century .

**Ptisan** - commonly called **tisanes**, are beverages made from the infusion of any herbs, spices, or other plant material in water that is not derived from the tea plant . Many herbs used in teas/tisanes are also used in herbal medicine and in folk medicine.

**Queen of Spain's legs** - The story is associated with a Queen of Spain at around the end of the sixteenth century, possibly Mariana of Austria, the wife of Philip IV. The story goes that, during her journey south to be married, the young queen-to-be passed through a town that was famed for its silk stockings, then rare and expensive items. Wishing to show her due courtesy, the merchants of the town offered to present her with a pair. This was a period in which women wore skirts down to the ankles and stockings were considered undergarments of a decidedly intimate nature .The Queen's courtiers were aghast at this embarrassing breach of decorum, regarded as both indecent and audacious, and one replied loftily that "The Queen of Spain has no legs".

**General Burgoyne** – General **John Burgoyne** (24 February 1722 – 4 August 1792) was a British Army officer, playwright and politician who sat in the House of Commons of Great Britain from 1761 to 1792. Burgoyne is best known for his role in the American Revolutionary War. He designed an invasion scheme and was appointed to command a force moving south from Canada to split away New England and end the rebellion. He served as a member of the House of Commons for many years, sitting for the seats of Midhurst and Preston.

**Calash** - The calash bonnet was a popular and intriguing millinery item in the mid-1700s and was worn through the early 1800s. It came about because it protected the towering hairstyles from inclement weather and allowed for decency. Because it tied under the chin, it was considered more of bonnet than a hat.

**Souchong** - A distinctive Chinese black tea known for its bold, smoky flavor, created by smoke-drying the leaves over pinewood fires.

**Pekoe** - Pekoe tea refers to a grade of tea that is distinguished by the size and quality of the tea leaves used. Unlike other types of tea, Pekoe is not a specific tea variety but rather a classification within the black tea category.

**Gunpowder** - Gunpowder green tea is a particular variety of green tea from the *Camellia sinensis* plant that is prepared slightly differently and therefore may have unique properties and health benefits. The leaves are rolled into tight, small pellets, resembling the old style of gunpowder pellets, which can explain the name.

# A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF ELIZABETH GASKELL

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*Gaskell was a Victorian novelist, also notable for her biography of her friend Charlotte Brontë.*

Elizabeth Stevenson was born in London on 29 September 1810, the daughter of a Unitarian minister. After her mother's early death, she was raised by an aunt who lived in Knutsford in Cheshire. In 1832, she married William Gaskell, also a Unitarian minister, and they settled in the industrial city of Manchester.

Motherhood and the obligations of a minister's wife kept her busy. However, the death of her only son inspired her to write her first novel, *'Mary Barton'*, which was published anonymously in 1848. It was an immediate success, winning the praise of Charles Dickens and Thomas Carlyle.

Dickens invited her to contribute to his magazine, *'Household Words'*, where her next major work, *'Cranford'*, appeared in 1853. *'North and South'* was published the following year. Gaskell's work brought her many friends, including the novelist Charlotte Brontë. When Charlotte died in 1855, her father, Patrick Brontë, asked Gaskell to write her biography. The *'Life of Charlotte Brontë'* (1857) was written with admiration and covered a huge quantity of firsthand material with great narrative skill.

Gaskell died on 12 November 1865, leaving her longest work, *'Wives and Daughters'* incomplete.

# THE ANGIE TREW AWARD

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Each year at the AGM in October, the Angie Trew Award for ‘The Most Deserving Actor’ is presented to the person who has given an outstanding performance in the preceding 12 months. It doesn’t have to be a leading role, but something that has most impressed, amused or entertained our audiences. We have a panel of three regular audience members who make the decision for the Most Deserving Actor and the winner for 2024-2025 was Kim Twinn who, as a newcomer to the group last year, had taken on two major roles brilliantly in both *The Late Mrs Early* and *Plaza Suite*.

The Village Players also value our wonderful production teams and the Committee nominate the person who has given ‘The Most Valuable Input’ into productions and the award went to Jonathan Austin for his continued work on Sound, the set, getting ready for and clearing away from rehearsals which he takes on regularly, as well as managing the ticketing so skilfully..

Both awards were presented at the AGM.

# FORTHCOMING EVENTS

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Our next production will be the pantomime, *The Sleeping Beauty*, which will be performed 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> February 2027 with auditions being held in September 2026 and rehearsals starting in October. This will be directed by Maria Harding, who directed our last very successful pantomime, *Aladdin*, and we have secured the services of Richard Eldridge, a professional musical director. We will be looking for many children, plus young, and not-so-young, adults to take part so do please look out for more information and let us know if you are interested in joining us on what will be a fun experience!

# OUR THANKS

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The Village Players wish to thank everyone who has generously assisted with this production with special thanks to:

Robert Barker of Quest Graphics for the design and artwork of our programmes, flyers and posters, and for designing and maintaining our website

Mr & Mrs John Flavell for allowing the image of their house to be used as a backdrop for our set.

# PAST PRODUCTIONS

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**The Sleeping Beauty**

February 1992

**Ways and Means**

May 1992

**Fishy Business/Hidden Meanings**

December 1992

**The Boyfriend**

May 1993

**Cinderella**

February 1994

**The Patient & Rats**

November 1994

**Variety Show**

June 1995

**Boeing Boeing**

January 1996

**Beauty and the Beast**

February 1997

**Relatively Speaking**

November 1997

**Holiday Snap**

March 1999

**Mother Goose**

February 2000

**Seasons Greetings**

November 2000

**Fiddler on the Roof**

October 2001

**Out of Order**

May 2002

**Jack and the Beanstalk**

February 2003

**Home is Where Your Clothes Are**

November 2003

**Theatre in the Round**

June 2004

**South Pacific**

November 2004

**Blithe Spirit**

May 2005

**Dick Whittington and his Cat**

February 2006

**Don't Dress For Dinner**

November 2006

**When We Are Married**

May 2007

**A 15th Anniversary Review**

July 2007

**The Ghost Train**

November 2007

**My Fair Lady**

May 2008

**Not Now Darling**

November 2008

**Hay Fever**

May 2009

**It Runs in the Family**

November 2009

**A Celebration of Christmas**

December 2009

(in aid of The Eve Appeal in memory of Angie Trew)

**A Midsummer Night's Dream**

June 2010

(Shakespeare-on-the Green)

**Deadly Nightcap**

November 2010

**Oklahoma!**

May 2011

**See How They Run**

November 2011

**An Enchanted Journey  
around the world**

February 2012

(poetry and music evening in aid of Queen Victoria Hospital)

**Lord Arthur Savile's Crime**

February 2012

**20th Anniversary Review**

December 2012

**The Merry Wives of Windsor**

June 2013

**Make Way For Lucia**

November 2013

**Carousel**

May 2014

**There Goes The Bride**

November 2014

**Fatal Encounter**

May 2015

**Victorian Christmas Evening**

November 2015

**Cinderella**

February 2016

**Radio Play**

August 2016

**Glorious**

November 2016

**Sandcastles**

June 2017

**A Woman of No Importance**

November 2017

**Calamity Jane**

May 2018

**Relative Values**

November 2018

**The Happiest Days of Your Life**

May 2019

**Comfort and Joy**

November 2019

**Local Affairs**

November 2021

**Sound of Music**

May 2022

**Dracula - The Bloody Truth**

November 2022

**Witness for the Prosecution**

June 2023

**Aladdin - a Pantomime**

Nov/Dec 2023

**Upham Hall**

June 2024

**Blue Murder at the Blue Parrot**

August 2024

**The Late Mrs Early**

November 2024

**Plaza Suite**

June 2025

**It Runs In The Family**

November 2025