

## Gaskell Journal Editor's report for AGM 26<sup>th</sup> Sept 2020

Despite the challenges of this year, it has been a good year for the journal. The biennial Joan Leach Memorial postgraduate essay competition took place, with several strong submissions. We are grateful to Professor Kate Flint of the University of Southern California for judging the winner (from the shortlist agreed by the Editorial Board). The winning essay, on bees/beehive metaphors in *North and South*, will be published in the GJ this year. We also record thanks to Professor Joanne Shattock, Professor Emerita of the University of Leicester, for serving as judge for the three previous competitions.

The 2020 edition will be a special issue on 'Gaskell and Working-Class Culture', featuring three articles based on some of the excellent presentations given at the 2019 Gaskell Society conference. We appreciate authors' dedication and patience in getting their articles ready for publication during the challenges posed by the pandemic (e.g. closed libraries and archives).

It is pleasing to note (see Treasurer's Report) that £2000 of royalties have been paid by Proquest for use of the online version of the journal through the Literature OnLine package from 2016-19. The journal has also been added this year to the JSTOR online collection of journals, which extends the journal's reach to yet more university libraries, public libraries and individual subscribers at low cost (some content is free to access).

Finally, we applaud the arrival of the updated cumulative Index to the Journal, covering volumes 1-30 (1987-2017). This was a tremendous achievement and product of diligence by Janet Dudley. Hard copies of this can be obtained via the Gaskell Society website.