

# New Approaches to the Victorian Short Story

Thursday 4 July 2013  
University of Birmingham

This symposium aims to address the lack of critical attention that the Victorian short story has received by bringing together academics working on different aspects of the form. Owing to the popularity of the periodical press, the genre flourished throughout the period; Dickens, Gaskell, Collins, Eliot and James as well as lesser-known authors all produced short stories. The limitations of the form allowed for a degree of experimentation which may have been too much of a commercial risk in a full length work. As John Bowen writes, “the short story is in many ways a marginal form, which often takes marginal or outlaw figures as its central concern. It troubles itself, and thus its readers, with remarkable or strange events, with the inexplicable, disorderly or queer.” We aim to start a critical conversation regarding the nature and functions of the short story genre within the larger context of Victorian literature.



J. Gordon Thompson, 'Caught at Last' (1866). *London Society: An Illustrated Magazine of Light and Amusing Literature for the Hours of Relaxation*, 10 (1866), 80-97. Available in *ProQuest British Periodicals* (2007-).

All welcome. If you would like to join us for a meal afterwards then please email [e.ludlow@bham.ac.uk](mailto:e.ludlow@bham.ac.uk)

# Programme

All sessions take place in Arts 119,

**12.45 - 1:00: Welcome**

**1:00 - 2.30: Panel 1: Negotiating Relationships**

Chair: Jim Mussell (Birmingham)

Kara Tennant (South Wales): 'Cohesive Courtship: Wooing, Winning and Wedding through the Short Story Form'

Elizabeth Ludlow (Birmingham): 'The short story as domestic parable: Elizabeth Gaskell's contributions to *Household Words*'

**2.30 - 3:00: Coffee**

**3:00 - 4.30: Panel 2: Victorian Modernity**

Chair: Emma Francis (Warwick)

Rebecca Styler (Lincoln): 'Modernist Short Story Theory and the Strange Tale of Elizabeth Gaskell'

Maddie Wood (Brunel), 'Desiring spaces: Troubled modernity and psychological disturbance in Dickens's and Collins's short stories'

**4.30 - 5:00: Discussion: How do we teach the Victorian short story?**

**5:00 - 5.15: Closing Remarks**

**5.15 onwards: Drinks in the University Bar**