

James Uriah Walker 1812 - 1864

James Uriah Walker was baptised at Halifax Parish Church in 1812 and grew up in Silver Street. In 1838 he bought the *Halifax Guardian* newspaper, and its offices; the paper had been founded in 1832, as a Tory-backed publication. As proprietor of the *Guardian*, on the 7th May 1842, Walker was the first publisher of any work written by the famous Brontë siblings. On that date, his newspaper printed Branwell Brontë's poem "On the Callousness produced by Cares". On the 14th May, this was followed by "Peaceful Death and Painful Life," penned by the same author.

In 1858, after Charlotte Brontë's death, controversy erupted in the *Guardian* over Mrs. Gaskell's biography of the Haworth novelist, concerning her account of conditions at Cowan Bridge School when the Brontë sisters had been educated there in the 1820s. There followed a fierce correspondence in the *Halifax Guardian*, spearheaded by Sarah Baldwin, wife of the vicar of Mytholmroyd, who had been educated at Cowan Bridge. Mrs. Baldwin's statements about conditions at the school were denied by Charlotte's widower, Arthur Bell Nicholls, in response. Walker presided over this and issued warnings to both parties as the correspondence became increasingly vitriolic. Finally, Walker refused to publish anything more on the subject!