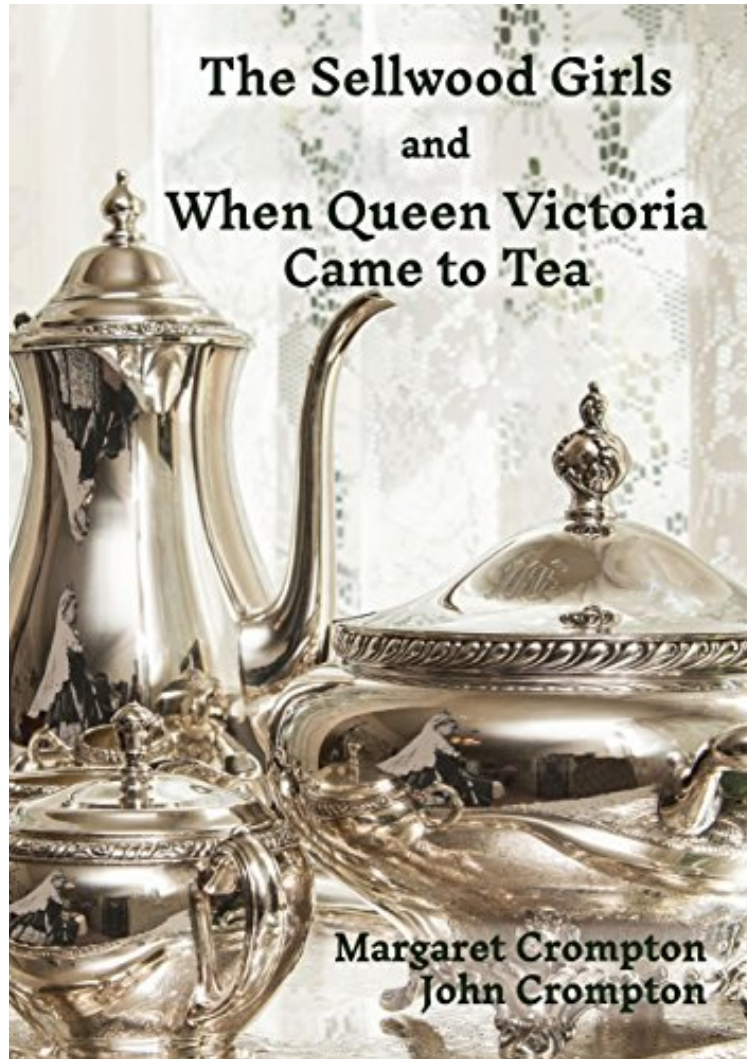


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The Sellwood Girls and When Queen Victoria Came To Tea

Margaret Crompton, John Crompton
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Margaret Crompton, John Crompton : The Sellwood Girls and When Queen Victoria Came To Tea before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Sellwood Girls and When Queen Victoria Came To Tea:

'The Sellwood Girls': Emily, Anne and Louisa Sellwood were born and brought up in Horncastle, Lincolnshire. Their father was a solicitor. Their mother died soon after Louisa was born and an unmarried Franklin aunt came to care for the children. In 1827, the girls attended a boarding school in Brighton. Emily and Louisa married the Tennyson brothers Alfred and Charles, who grew up in Somersby in the Lincolnshire Wolds. Thus they were both sisters and

sisters-in-law. Charles took the surname Turner, a condition of inheritance from his great-uncle Samuel Turner. Anne married Charles Weld. Their stories are characterised by hope and anxiety, love and loss, delight and despair, illness, guilt and, eventually, reconciliation. These stories emerge throughout the play. Hallam Tennyson (son of Alfred and Emily) is completing a submission to a playwriting event at the University of The Wolds - 'Bring-along-a-script,' In seeking to give a voice to his mother and aunts, he finds a voice for himself. Much of his life was devoted to his parents, including helping Emily to compile Tennyson's memoir. After his father's death, he inherited the title and became, thus, Hallam, Lord Tennyson. His great nephew, also Hallam Tennyson, was a respected radio drama producer. Hallam imagines the 3 sisters together in the garden of their boarding school in Brighton, 1827. He becomes the involved narrator. Time scheme and narrative are fluid and intriguing. The girls reflect on their home life, then imagine future husbands (who appear silently to illustrate these visions). The girls are transformed into their adult selves and through narration, reflection and discussion, they review their lives. Eventually they address Hallam directly, so that he becomes not only writer and narrator but also involved in the interactions and emotional development. Material from writings by the main characters, including journals, diaries, letters and poems, offers insights into not only the people themselves, but also C19 life in rural Lincolnshire. Dialogue often uses characters' own words and is as near as possible to the language of their time (1813 - 1898), while avoiding the archaic. Note that Alfred Tennyson and Charles Turner speak with a Lincolnshire accent. Cast: main roles - 7 adults - 3 female, 4 male. optional - 3 or 4 girls; 2 boys; 2 adult male. 'When Queen Victoria Came To Tea': Early autumn 1857. Emily and Alfred Tennyson are in residence at 'Farringford,' their Isle of Wight retreat in Freshwater. This is not far from 'Osborne House,' East Cowes, recently bought by Victoria and Albert. Events to which the play refers are actual, including Albert's unannounced visit in 1856, Victoria's never-realised intentions to visit, and her attitude to 'fun.' However, there is no evidence for the action which imagines secret, informal visits from Victoria to Emily, and Albert to Alfred, unique and precious opportunities for relaxation and revelation. Alfred is already Poet Laureate, and will not become 'Lord' until 1883. As far as possible, material is drawn from contemporary documents, including letters. Cast: 4 adults - 2 female; 2 male.