

The nation waited expectantly for Nightingale's return from the war. The Nightingale Fund, set up in her honour, raised millions of pounds (in today's money) for her to put to good use once home.

A series of public celebrations and a national holiday were announced upon peace being declared. On 29 May 1856, 1,000 rockets showered over Primrose Hill in London, while in Derbyshire a mile-long procession of 5,000 people paraded through Matlock Bath and Cromford. The residents of the Derwent Valley celebrated Nightingale as 'a neighbour of our own' and created a life-size effigy of her bearing the words 'The Good Samaritan' in flowers.

Nightingale's aunt Julia Smith helped organise a celebration on the family's Derbyshire estate, with a large peace banner, a band, fireworks and a feast of beef, mutton and plum pudding. It was attended by 800 people, including 'miners, ploughmen, weavers, sawyers, and stoneworkers, farmers and their wives'. Cheers were raised, 'Three times three for Florence Nightingale and only three for Peace'.

In 1855 *the London Journal* revealed Lea Hurst as 'The Home of Florence

The Homecoming



Nightingale'. Guidebooks soon drew tourists' attention to the area. The Nightingale family were concerned at the effects of this celebrity upon their quiet residence. Hilary Bonham-Carter, Nightingale's cousin, even suggested installing a telescope on a nearby hill so that fans could gaze at her from a distance.

Nightingale's homecoming was, in the end, a quiet affair. She sailed to

Marseilles under the name of Miss Smith, before making her way overland and across the channel to arrive, without recognition, at Whatstandwell Bridge Station on 7 August 1856. Nightingale, suffering the effects of a Crimean fever, and fatigued by her intense wartime workload, retreated into the confines of the family home. It was from here that the next stage of her work would commence.

Florence
Nightingale
Comes Home



Above: Photograph of *Florence Nightingale* lifeboat, taken near the railway station in Derby on 22 April 1865. Courtesy of WW Winter Ltd, Derby.

Left: Letter by Julia Smith to William Edward Nightingale describing peace celebrations on Cromford Meadow (May 1856). Claydon House Trust, Nightingale Papers, From N/210.



'N is for Nightingale' from *The Panoramic Alphabet of Peace* (1856). Courtesy of The British Library, General Reference Collection 555.a.43.