

= North & South (TV serial) =

North & South is a British television drama serial , produced by the BBC and originally broadcast in four episodes on BBC One in November and December 2004 . It follows the story of Margaret Hale (Daniela Denby @-@ Ashe) , a young woman from southern England who has to move to the North after her father decides to leave the clergy . The family struggles to adjust itself to the industrial town 's customs , especially after meeting the Thorntons , a proud family of cotton mill owners who seem to despise their social inferiors . The story explores the issues of class and gender , as Margaret 's sympathy for the town mill workers clashes with her growing attraction to John Thornton (Richard Armitage) .

The serial is based on the 1855 Victorian novel North and South by Elizabeth Gaskell . It was adapted for television by Sandy Welch and directed by Brian Percival .

= = Plot = =

Margaret Hale (Daniela Denby @-@ Ashe) and her parents Maria (Lesley Manville) and Richard (Tim Pigott @-@ Smith) move to the (fictional) industrial town of Milton , Darkshire , in the north of England because her father , a clergyman , decides to leave the Church of England and become a Nonconformist . Thanks to his friend , Mr. Bell (Brian Protheroe) , he is able to find a house and gains employment as a private tutor . One of his pupils is local mill @-@ owner John Thornton (Richard Armitage) , who gets off to a bad start with Margaret when she witnesses him beating a worker whom he has caught smoking in the mill , thus endangering all the workers . Gradually , Margaret gets used to Thornton , but his mother Hannah (Sinéad Cusack) and sister Fanny (Jo Joyner) disapprove of her , believing her haughty and alien to the customs of the North . In the meantime , Margaret attempts to do charitable work among the working classes , and thus comes into contact with Nicholas Higgins (Brendan Coyle) and his daughter , Bessy (Anna Maxwell Martin) , who contracted Pneumoconiosis from exposure to the cotton @-@ fibres in the mills . When Bessy became ill at Hamper 's Mill , her father moved her to Marlborough Mills , Thornton 's mill , because the working environment is better there . In a meeting with fellow mill owners , Thornton says he had a wheel for ventilation installed in all of the rooms of his factory , despite the fact that it costs a great deal of money . The other industrialists had refused to install a wheel because of the expense .

Margaret 's mother is falling ill . Mrs Hale desires to see her son Frederick (Rupert Evans) before she dies . Frederick , a naval officer was involved in a mutiny and he cannot return to England without risking his life . However , without telling her father , Margaret writes to her brother in Cádiz , Spain , to tell him that their mother is dying . Margaret calls on the Thorntons to borrow a water mattress for her mother and is trapped while mill workers riot during a strike . When the angry mob threatens John 's safety as he confronts them after Margaret 's goading , Margaret defends him from the rioters and is injured by a thrown stone .

Margaret recovers and returns home , telling nobody about what had happened at the Mill , mainly to protect the health of her mother . When Thornton proposes to her the next day , she scorns him , thinking he believes himself superior because of the difference in their financial circumstances . He denies this and tells her that he is in love with her , but she insists that her actions were not personal .

Meanwhile , Bessy Higgins dies and Thornton stops coming for lessons from Mr. Hale . As a distraction for Mrs. Hale and for herself , Margaret visits the Great Exhibition with her Aunt Shaw (Jane Booker) , her cousin Edith and Edith 's husband . Margaret meets Thornton at the exhibition , where he is discussing the machinery with a group of gentlemen , all of whom are listening with great respect and admiration for his simple good sense . Margaret is embarrassed to meet Thornton so soon after her rejection but defends him when Henry Lennox (John Light) , Edith 's brother @-@ in @-@ law and an admirer of Margaret , tries to belittle him for being in trade . Henry 's sophistication and reliance on fashionable wit and sarcasm compares unfavourably with Thornton 's honesty when Margaret sees them together .

When Margaret returns home , her mother has taken a turn for the worse . Margaret 's brother arrives just in time to see his mother on her death @-@ bed . While Frederick is in the house , Thornton comes to visit his friend Mr. Hale , but he cannot be allowed in , in case he sees Fred . Thornton interprets this as Margaret refusing to see him . The family 's servant , Dixon (Pauline Quirke) , sees a former member of Frederick 's crew in Milton town , and it is decided that Frederick must leave at once , before he is discovered and arrested . He and Margaret are seen together at the railway station by Thornton , who thinks Margaret has a lover .

Thornton gives employment to Higgins after Bessy 's death , and master and hand get along surprisingly well , despite their differences . They come up with a plan to feed the workers cheaply in a communal kitchen , and Thornton comes to a greater understanding with his workers as they share ideas . However , because of the strike , Thornton 's business is in trouble , and he is forced to close the mill .

Margaret 's father dies in Oxford and she leaves the north to stay with relatives in London , but her godfather , Mr Bell , makes over his fortune to her when he finds out that he has a terminal illness and chooses to move to Argentina for the better climate . Margaret becomes the owner of Marlborough Mills and John Thornton 's landlord . Thornton , having discovered the truth about Fred from Mr Higgins , goes south to see Margaret 's home town , and on the way back meets her returning from a visit to the north . She proposes a business deal by which the factory can be reopened ; after this the two share a kiss . Their final scene takes place on the railway station platform with both going " home " to Milton .

= = Cast = =

Daniela Denby @-@ Ashe ? Margaret Hale
Richard Armitage ? John Thornton
Tim Pigott @-@ Smith ? Mr Richard Hale
Lesley Manville ? Mrs Maria Hale
Sinéad Cusack ? Mrs Hannah Thornton
Jo Joyner ? Fanny Thornton
Brendan Coyle ? Mr Nicholas Higgins
Anna Maxwell Martin ? Bessy Higgins
Kay Lyon ? Mary Higgins
Pauline Quirke ? Dixon
Rupert Evans ? Frederick Hale
Brian Protheroe ? Mr. Bell
John Light ? Henry Lennox
Emma Ferguson ? Edith Shaw Lennox
Jane Booker ? Aunt Shaw
Will Houston ? John Boucher

= = Production = =

= = = Origins = = =

Sandy Welch started adapting Elizabeth Gaskell 's 1855 North and South in 2001 , making a few changes to emphasise the industrial landscape of the story . Welch 's story , for example , begins and ends with the main character Margaret Hale travelling by train , which is not the starting and ending point of the novel (although Gaskell describes the Hales travelling from the South to the North by train) . Welch also made the main characters visit the Great Exhibition of 1851 . These are changes Welch believed Gaskell would have done " if she 'd had the time " , since Gaskell had complained of being under pressure to complete the novel by her editor Charles Dickens . In the summer of 2003 Kate Bartlett was brought to the project as a producer and a ten @-@ week period

of pre @-@ production started at the beginning of February .

= = = Casting = = =

Daniela Denby @-@ Ashe had not originally auditioned for the role of Margaret Hale but for that of Fanny Thornton , and was not sure she would be participating on the project , but the producers had been looking for the right Margaret for a long time and Denby @-@ Ashe 's " directness , energy and charm " as well as the chemistry she had with would @-@ be co @-@ star Richard Armitage proved decisive . Armitage himself had been the first actor to read for the role of John Thornton and even though his performance had impressed producer Kate Bartlett and casting director Jill Trevellick , they still had to see many other possible Thorntons . Three weeks after casting had begun , Trevellick decided to recapitulate the first auditions , realising that Armitage was " perfect " .

= = = Filming = = =

Filming took place from the end of April 2004 until July 2004 . Gaskell 's fictional town of Milton , Darkshire , was loosely based on Manchester , but the producers decided to shoot many of the town scenes in Edinburgh , which maintains more of its visual and architectural heritage from the industrial Victorian era . Keighley in West Yorkshire became one of the main locations , the cotton mill 's exteriors were filmed at Dalton Mill . The scenes inside the mill were shot at Helmsore Textile Museum in Rossendale and Queen Street Mill on the outskirts of Burnley , Lancashire . London was another main location , all the interior scenes were shot at the Ealing Studios in west London and the Great Exhibition scene was shot at Alexandra Palace in North London . Other locations were Selkirk , a town in the Scottish Borders , Burnley in Lancashire , and the Bluebell Railway in Sussex , where the final and the beginning scenes were shot . Additional railway sequences were filmed in Yorkshire , using carriages provided by the Vintage Carriages Trust

As a costume drama , North & South required substantial work from the art department . In 2005 the serial 's production designer Simon Elliot received a British Academy Television Award nomination for Best Production Design .

= = = Music = = =

Martin Phipps composed the score for North & South . The short piano tune is played throughout the whole series in different rhythms . The music is especially loud and clear whenever there is a turning point in the relationship between Margaret and Thornton .

= = Reception = =

As the BBC had low expectations for the series , it was not well publicised and went almost unnoticed by critics . Audiences , however , were more receptive ; hours after the first episode aired in November 2004 , the message board of the programme 's website crashed because of the number of visitors the site was receiving , forcing host bbc.co.uk to shut it down . This sudden interest on the serial was attributed to Richard Armitage , a relatively unknown actor , whose portrayal of the emotionally restrained John Thornton drew parallels with Colin Firth 's portrayal of Fitzwilliam Darcy on the BBC 's 1995 mini @-@ series Pride and Prejudice , and the reception he later received . Armitage himself claims that the series was a success because of the " industrial landscape and the attention [that the series gives] to the working classes and the way they develop " . The reaction to the series was a surprise to the BBC , who then decided to release the DVD on 11 April 2005 .

North & South was voted " Best Drama " in the BBC drama website 's annual poll in 2004 . Richard Armitage was voted " Most Desirable Drama Star " and " Best Actor " , Daniela Denby @-@ Ashe was voted " Best Actress " (Sinead Cusack came in third) and three different scenes were voted as the year 's " Favourite Moments " , with the final scene winning the number one spot .

