

London Particular

The Dickens Fellowship Newsletter

“...HE MUST BE, VIRTUALLY, ABOUT TWO HUNDRED YEARS OLD, AT PRESENT.” (David Copperfield, Chapter 54)

In 2012, a great sporting event will take place in Britain...a Pickwickian Cricket Match. This is just one of many events scheduled, or mooted, to commemorate the bicentenary of Charles Dickens's birth. Some of these events will be known to Fellowship members already, but plans for many others are under way, including:

- ** Dickens Film Festival (London, British Film Institute)
- ** A major Dickens exhibition at the Museum of London
- ** Dickens Street Festival (Bloomsbury)
- ** Dickens New Poetry Award
- ** Dickens Christmas Fair (London)

...and many more. However, the programme is still flexible, and there are plenty of opportunities for Fellowship members to suggest additional events. Please send any suggestions to the website:

www.dickens2012.org

or write to Joan Dicks and Lee Ault, Joint General Secretaries, at 48 Doughty Street, London WC1N 2LX

“YOU MAKE A MERRY-MAKING OF THIS, EVERY MONTH....” (*Barnaby Rudge*, Chapter 77)

The programme of monthly events for 2009 is being finalised, but the first three events at Barnard's Inn Hall will be:

Monday 19th January: Social evening, plus introduction to *A Tale of Two Cities* and 'Dear Fellowship', letters from famous people

Tuesday 17th February: *Jerry Cruncher's Honest Trade* - Druin Burch, author of *Digging Up the Dead*

Wednesday 25th March: Film Adaptations of *A Tale of Two Cities* – Michael Eaton

Other meetings will take place on: 23rd April, 18th May, 8th September, 7th October, 12th November and 8th December.

“EVERYBODY WAS DRESSED FOR A FANCY BALL THAT WAS NEVER TO LEAVE OFF...” (*A Tale of Two Cities, Book II, Chapter 7*)

Victorian dress is not essential, but is encouraged, should you wish to attend Mr Fezziwig's Ball, an evening of Victorian dance in aid of the Charles Dickens Museum and Great Ormond Street Hospital, which takes place on Tuesday 2nd December at 6.30 pm in Barnard's Inn Hall, Holborn.

Whilst the Ghost of Christmas Past may not be present, the spirit of Christmas pas (de deux) will surely be, as the Arbeau Dancers guide you through music and moves familiar to Dickens and his characters, including the Sir Roger de Coverley, The Dashing White Sergeant and the Polka. No previous experience necessary.

Tickets: £25, to include seasonal buffet and a glass of wine.

For further information or to book tickets please contact the Museum on 020 7405 2127 ext 202 or email curator@dickensmuseum.com

“Then you were to pay up your subscription, get your card of membership...” *Edwin Drood, Chapter VI*

Please note that the membership renewal form for those registered with Central Branch is being sent out with this issue of The London Particular. Just like Mr Pickwick in his dealings with his kind-hearted attorney Mr Perker, we hope that you will have “an anxious desire to come to a pecuniary settlement...”

“Yes, Popery!” ...you may cry out, as you politely request a place at the table of Pope Joan players (as featured in *Pickwick*) - just one of a potpourri of entertainments at the **Victorian Games Evening on Friday 21st November** at the Charles Dickens Museum. Other activities include cribbage (as played by Dick Swiveller and the Marchioness), *Dickensian Consequences* (a variation on the popular pen and pencil game) and a Victorian quiz.

Cost to include food and wine: £12 to Friends of the Charles Dickens Museum (£15 to non-Friends.) Places are strictly limited. To book please contact 0207 4052127 ext 202 or email: info@dickensmuseum.com

“You shall win, however the game goes.”
(*Little Dorrit*, Chapter 30)

DICKENS IN THE NEWS

The Daily Telegraph ran an important article by Robert Douglas-Fairhurst on 21st October commenting on the relevance of *Little Dorrit* and other works by Dickens to the era of the credit crunch: **“For Dickens himself...money meant far more than the power to buy and sell. Money brought people together and split them apart; it turned ordinary people into models of generosity or monsters of greed; it kept the world moving and was forever threatening to make it spin out of control.”**

Coincidentally, on the same day, the newspaper ran a story about the proceedings of the Swedish Committee responsible for awarding the Nobel Prize for Literature, and this also mentioned *Little Dorrit*. It seems that during their deliberations, the Committee avoids naming writers, but instead uses codenames. Thus, Harold Pinter was “Harry Potter”, whilst Doris Lessing was “*Little Dorrit*”.

Contributions of clippings from members are always welcome, though the supply has dwindled in recent months. Sometimes an item appears in a newspaper which, whilst not directly related to Dickens, could be used to highlight matters related to *The Inimitable*, and these cuttings too would be appreciated. For instance on October 7th, The Times mentioned in its “On this Day” column the death in 1912 of the etymologist Walter William Skeat. His Dickensian connection is via his participation,

when an undergraduate at Cambridge, in the famous *Pickwick* examination, instigated by the poet C. S Calverley. Skeat finished runner-up to the novelist Walter Besant, who in later years felt qualified, perhaps by virtue of that exam result, to write the story “*The Death of Samuel Pickwick*”... which is itself germane to the subject of clippings because it began with a (spoof) obituary from an 1862 newspaper :

“We regret to announce the death, at an advanced age, of Mr Samuel Pickwick, F.R.S., F.R.A.S., F.R.S.I, F.R.L.S, corresponding member of many foreign learned societies, formerly chairman of the Pickwick Club, which took place at his residence at Dulwich on the night of April 30th.”

“I wonder no public-house has been set up with my portrait for the sign...” (*Edwin Drood*, Chapter VIII)

Allan Clack has informed *The London Particular* about an intriguing piece of Dickensiana he recently spotted. “In Northington Street, a stone’s throw from the Charles Dickens Museum, it is somewhat startling to come across a large framed painting of Charles Dickens attached to a street wall! It is above a small nondescript office building on the corner of Kirk Street and there is no indication of what the painting is doing there.”

Allan explains that, until a few years ago, a public house called *The Charles Dickens* stood on the site, though no trace of it survives, apart from its inn sign. “The painting looks somewhat lonely and ghostly,” says Allan, “but Dickens would surely be amused to see his portrait on a wall where he lived, worked and walked.”

A Final Thought....

“Then does she twirl and twine, a pastoral nymph of good family, through the mazes of the dance.” *Bleak House*, Chapter LXVI

Please send any contributions, news clippings etc to the *London Particular* editorial address:
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