
London Particular

The Dickens Fellowship Newsletter

“...A CLEVER KEEPER MAY KNOW HOW TO MANAGE A WOLF OR A TIGER, OR ANY OTHER CRUEL AND UNCERTAIN BEAST...” (Charles Dickens, *A Child's History of England*, Chapter 27)

A vacancy has arisen within the Dickens Fellowship for a keeper who rattles keys of the qwerty-kind and whose role is somewhat less concerned with menagerie cages than the cells of MS Excel spreadsheet management. For, after ten years of sterling service to the Fellowship, Derek Mortimer wishes to find someone to take over his responsibilities as **Keeper of the Membership and Dickensian Subscriber Records**. Derek writes: “Could you spend a few hours a week among friends at the Charles Dickens Museum, keeping the Fellowship’s membership and *Dickensian* subscriber records up-to-date and providing mailing lists and labels when required? To do the job one needs to be familiar with a computer or typewriter keyboard and inclined to be meticulous.”

How arduous is the role? Is it a case of:

“...the lists – nine hundred feet long, and three hundred and twenty broad...” (*A Child's History of England*)

No. The lists to be maintained are – ahem! - not of *quite* these dimensions.

Typically, there are active records for 600 members, 400 institutional *Dickensian* subscribers, 200 branch *Dickensian* subscribers and 80 individual *Dickensian* subscribers. The main mailing lists are: *The Dickensian* (3 p.a.), *London Particular* (3/4

p.a.), *Mr Dick's Kite* (3 p.a.) and the Social Secretary’s letter (mailing labels, 5 sets p.a.). In addition, officers occasionally need figures on membership and *Dickensian* subscribers.

Will the Keeper suffer like the young Boz: “I was to paste on each a printed label.” (Charles Dickens, *Autobiographical Fragment*)

No. Mailing lists are sent as Excel file attachments to e-mails.

An incumbent skilled in the use of spreadsheets and/or databases would have scope to improve the way the records are kept and used, and this could be of considerable long-term benefit to the Fellowship. Further details can be obtained from Derek Mortimer via postbox@dickensfellowship.org or at: www.dickensfellowship.org/recordsjob.htm

So, in conclusion, one may truly describe the post as:

Being for the Benefit of Mr (Dick’s) Kite

(Inspired by the heading to Chapter 48 of *Nicholas Nickleby*, with a little help from The Beatles.)

“He is a member of your club, or I am mistaken?” (*Pickwick Papers*, Chapter 3.)

Still on the subject of membership records, it is pertinent to ask: “Have you renewed your

membership?" The answer is 'yes' if you have received the May issue of *Mr Dick's Kite*. Should the answer be 'no' and you wish to remain a member, please send your remittance or credit card details to the Membership Secretary at 48 Doughty Street, London WC1N 2LX with a completed form or cover note. The membership subscription is still £14.50 or £24.00 for two people at the same address. *The Dickensian* is an extra £12.00

"...weaving its beautiful net-work..." (*Pickwick Papers, Chapter 28*) Derek has also completed his splendid redesign of the Fellowship's website. Please pay a visit to: www.dickensfellowship.org

In the event of any member experiencing difficulties when accessing the site – perhaps due to the use of a certain browser – it would be helpful to inform us via:
postbox@dickensfellowship.org

"No living person is a greater authority on the life and works of Charles Dickens than Michael Slater." – Claire Tomalin

Fellowship members will be delighted to hear that Michael Slater's new biography **Charles Dickens – A Life Defined by Writing** will be published in September. For further details of this major event see the notice on the sheet accompanying this issue of *The London Particular*.

"Do you keep a diary?" (*Edwin Drood*, Chapter 10)

The wreath-laying at Westminster Abbey, to commemorate the date of Dickens's death 139 years ago, will take place on Tuesday 9th June. The annual outing this year is to the Broadstairs Festival on Saturday 20th June. Further details of these two events will be sent to members in the London area shortly.

The Rochester Festival this year is from Friday 29th May – Sunday 31st May and

features parades, paddle steamer cruises, Victorian children's games, falconry displays, Punch and Judy and much more (including readings by Rochester Dickens Fellowship members.) See the full programme on the www.medway.gov.uk website.

The Charles Dickens Museum is hosting its annual House Party on Friday 5th June. Please contact the Museum for details on 020 7405 2127 ext 202. (Friends of the Museum will automatically receive information on this event.)

The premiere of the film *Charles Dickens's England* will take place on Tuesday 21st July at the British Film Institute on the South Bank. The film stars Derek Jacobi and features members of the Dickens Fellowship. Please let Lee Ault or Joan Dicks know if you are interested in attending this event. We understand that normal admission costs will apply. L.Ault@btinternet.com
joan@dickshg.freereserve.co.uk

A Reader Writes...

In the last issue of *The London Particular*, Allan Clack drew members' attention to a picture of Boz in Northington Street, which once served as a sign for a pub called *The Charles Dickens*. Long-time member W.R. Morris supplies further details: "It was originally called the White Lion, and was a jolly pub with a pianist and people singing. It was later called *The Charles Dickens*, and the Headquarters Committee once met there."

Mr Morris also remarks: "It is good to know that Allan Clack is still pubcrawling."

A Final Thought....

"Remember that for my Biography!" Charles Dickens to John Forster, 1849, quoted in *Forster's Life of Charles Dickens, Book Six*

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

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