
London Particular

The Dickens Fellowship Newsletter

“...IT SEEMED EXACTLY LIKE A DREAM...” (*Dombey and Son*, Chapter 3)

The desk now on display at the Charles Dickens Museum does indeed look exactly like the one which appears in R W Buss's famous painting *Dickens's Dream...because it IS the one in Dickens's Dream!*

Boz's desk - which was auctioned at Christie's in aid of Great Ormond Street Hospital in June of last year, and fetched half a million pounds - will be a temporary exhibit at the Museum until the end of November. Its new owner, Tom Higgins, who lives in southern Ireland, will then move it to an exhibition at the National Library of Ireland, but the desk will return to 48 Doughty Street on semi-permanent loan next year.

“England is my nation, this here is my dwelling-place, and blessed be creation.”
(*Dombey and Son*, Chapter 32)

The movie *Dickens's England*, starring Sir Derek Jacobi and members of the Dickens Fellowship, is now available on DVD. For further information visit:

www.charlesdickensengland.com

The beautiful 272-page book of the movie, featuring over 600 specially-commissioned photographs, is available for £25 (plus £4.50 UK P & P) accompanied by the DVD and 3 postcards free, a total saving of £17.99. Purchase by post (no credit cards) from Guerilla Books Ltd, 35 Thornbury Road, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 4LQ

“Those were capital days, too.”
(*David Copperfield*, Chapter 64)

Still on the subject of DVDs, *Dickens's London: Life, Works, Age* is a 3 DVD-set narrated by Dr Tony Williams. For further information contact Mike Mercer:
mikemercer@onetel.com

DVDs cost £10 each, or £27 for all three.

“...Mr Weller turned and began wending his way towards Leadenhall Market...” (*Pickwick Papers*, Chapter 33)

From 25 November to 24 December, Sam Weller would not look out of place at Leadenhall, when the daily lunchtime market takes on a Dickensian theme. Some stallholders will dress in costume, and there will be entertainers and readings. The Dickens Fellowship and the Charles Dickens Museum have been invited to take part. The daily market welcomes 25,000 visitors a week (equivalent to the annual footfall at the Charles Dickens Museum), so it would be a good platform for advertising the Fellowship and the Museum's Christmas programme of events. If you would be willing to man an information stall (in or out of costume) please contact Joan Dicks: 020 7242 8575 joan@dickshg.freemove.co.uk

“If I were to indicate such a programme....”
(*Our Mutual Friend* Book 2, Chapter 3)

...then perhaps members will make a note in their diaries! The first two London meetings of 2010, to be held at the Artworkers Guild, 6 Queen Square, will be:

Tuesday 26 January: **Introduction to *The Old Curiosity Shop*** by Dr Tony Williams, and social evening

Wednesday 24 February: **What the Butler Saw – Servants in Victorian England** by Alison Gowans

Further details of meetings will appear on membership cards, to be sent out in the New Year.

AND WHILE ON THE SUBJECT OF MEMBERSHIP CARDS...

Should you wish to **“have the cards again”** (*Nicholas Nickleby*, Chapter 38) please complete and return **the membership renewal form**, sent out with this issue of the *London Particular*, accompanied by your payment.

“A person of the name of Michael...” (*Bleak House*, Chapter 57)

...Professor Michael Slater, that is, will be reading from *A Tale of Two Cities* at the Charles Dickens Museum on Thursday 19 November at 6.30pm. Cost £12 (£10 to members of the Friends of CDM and National Trust. To book tel 020 405 2127 ext 202 or email: info@dickensmuseum.com

“I comes to a branch...” (*Dombey and Son*, Chapter 38)

There is a proposal to launch a new branch in Southport. For further information, please contact Dr Susan Garner-Jones:

susan.garner-jones@dial.pipex.com

DICKENS IN THE NEWS

Jan Recknal-Turner noted that Editorial of *The Daily Telegraph* of 16 July asked: **“Do the people of the Medway Towns of an age to retire need a booklet detailing the benefits of sexual activity and how to go about it?”** A new NHS booklet *Ageing Well in Medway* outlines the use of *Viagra* and the need for safe sex, leading the *Telegraph*

to remark: **“Some on the Medway do find that time hangs heavy on their hands, now that it has lost the industry and dockyards that Dickens described with such brio. This new imaginative work may turn Old Curiosity into Great Expectations for a Mutual Friend or two, but for how many will it end in Hard Times?”**

Allan Clack sent the *London Particular* another *Telegraph* item, this time from the letters page of 6 October:

“Sir – During a week in the sun in Vilamoura, Portugal, I was surprised to see the large number of British males, of a wide spectrum of ages, who, instead of proudly displaying their true level of baldness, choose instead to shave their heads completely. This phenomenon made the very popular marina area look as though it was staging a convention of Magwitches.”

An article in *The Times* on 5 September on blue plaques in London featured pictures of 28 plaques including, unsurprisingly, one for Dickens. However one of the other plaques displayed, namely for novelist Sir Walter Besant, is not without Dickensian interest. Why? For two reasons. As a young man, Besant finished top of the class in the famous Calverley Pickwick examination and, in later life, he wrote the short story *The Death of Samuel Pickwick*.

A Final Thought...

“...a kind of being who seemed to be an essential part of the desk at which he was writing...” (*Pickwick Papers*, Chapter 30)

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

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