
London Particular

The Dickens Fellowship Newsletter

“...a man of some mark, and well known, is anxious to be on the Committee...” (Letter from Charles Dickens to Charles Kent, 20th October 1867)

We trust that both men *and* women are similarly anxious to serve on the Management Committee of the Dickens Fellowship. The Committee meets at the Charles Dickens Museum in London four times a year, and needs enthusiastic people! If you would like to make a contribution to the everyday running of the Dickens Fellowship and have a say in its long-term development, please consider joining our friendly team. Nominations, supported by a proposer and a seconder from within the Fellowship should be sent to the Hon. Gen. Secretaries, The Charles Dickens Museum, 48 Doughty Street, London WC1N 2LX. The closing date for applications is Friday 3 September 2010.

If you would like to know more about this opportunity, please ring Joan Dicks on: 020 7242 8575
or e-mail joan@dickshg.freemove.co.uk

“...a certain William Turner -- who when last seen had been in a very wretched condition, covered with boils and sores, and suffering from ague, and who had told someone that he could never go back to live where he had previously been residing...”
(*All the Year Round*, 16 May 1869)

We strongly suspect that this is *not* the painter *Joseph Mallord* William Turner and thus the

place of residence is unlikely to be mentioned in the talk *Novelistic Elements in Turner's Topography* by Andrew Wilton, one of three illustrated talks given at the meeting:

DICKENS and TURNER: A JOINT MEETING OF THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP AND THE TURNER SOCIETY

on Monday 15 November, Art Workers' Guild, 6 Queen Square, London.

The other talks will be: *Dickens and Turner: Some Stylistic Affinities* by Malcolm Andrews and *Turner, Landscape and Victorian Writers* by Leonee Ormond.

The event starts at 6.30pm. Admission is free, refreshments provided. Donations are requested towards the Dickens Fellowship Oliver Fund, which supports a variety of small charities.

A Reader Writes...

In the February issue of *The London Particular*, there was an item about Fellowship member Bob Pykett's interest in a painting showing the Glasgow to London mail coach, as featured in *Nicholas Nickleby*, which he had seen reproduced in an old copy of the Halifax Building Society's magazine. Bob has now written again to say that he is delighted to have acquired a fine, full-colour print of the painting, which shows the coach-and-four "coming off the Pennines at speed and, being just past Barnard Castle, the yard-of-tin is held ready to send a call to Greta Bridge, where waits Nicholas..."

“...open day, in the open streets of this city...”
(*A Tale of Two Cities*, Chapter 15)

The Dickens Fellowship Open Day will take place at the Charles Dickens Museum, 48 Doughty Street, London on Saturday 23 October with a full programme of walks and talks arranged by Tony Williams and Anthony Burton. This event coincides with the Bloomsbury Festival.

“e’s are good...” (Or are they?)

Ebenezer, a name of course associated with Boz, is also associated with the dance band The Shamen, whose 1992 number one hit Ebenezer Goode (sic), became embroiled in controversy for the pun in its chorus, with “Eezer Goode”, sounding remarkably like whole-hearted advocacy of the recreational drug ‘e’. The Editor mentions this because a controversy as to whether “e’s are good” has seemingly arisen in connection with another sort of ‘e’, namely e-mail, and specifically with the Management Committee’s policy to encourage Fellowship members to switch to the e-version of the London Particular, in order to save trees and postage costs. The Editor recently received a long letter from Fellowship member Roger Shorter disputing these points.

Roger writes: “Sending a communication by post using re-cycled paper is far more ecological than communication by e-mail and for many members of the Fellowship it is much cheaper, at a personal and a national level, to use a 2nd class postage stamp than to buy a computer, which costs hundreds of pounds. Dickens would have sympathised with the poor, the ill and the handicapped, rather than the technologically adept and wealthy. Many people are not able to walk to a library, and queue to use a computer, even if they were minded to, which many of the nearly seven million (7 million!) people who don’t use e-mail have decided, (both for practical / ethical as well as Micawberish reasons) to avoid.”

The current policy of the Management Committee is in favour of sending the newsletter by e-mail to members of the Fellowship who already own and use a computer for their everyday communications. This does not incur any additional cost to them and saves the Fellowship money. Members who wish to receive the London Particular by e-mail should please send an e-mail to: stephenjarvis@hotmail.com. Some members have expressed a wish to keep their e-mail addresses hidden on this mass-mail, and so in future all issues will be sent as “BCC” with invisible addresses. Of course those members who do not register to receive the London Particular by e-mail will continue to be sent the newsletter by post.

DICKENS IN THE NEWS

Controversy of course also surrounds the television programme *Big Brother*, which on the one hand has been derided as “TV for morons”, and on the other hand was praised in a *Times* article last year as “the greatest work of art of the last decade.” The latest series has just featured a Dickens-themed task, which received considerable press coverage, such as in *The Sun* of 11th August, which proclaimed “Housemates have gone round the Twist”, and reported that they would have to eat gruel served by Mr Bumble. Other Dickensian activities included an endurance Miss Havisham trial, in which two housemates wearing wedding dresses were locked in a room for twenty-four hours, and a Bill Sikes darts challenge which required scoring a bullseye. Best of all, perhaps, was the task of the housemate who had to play David Copperfield... the American magician, that is, with the task requiring the performance of a Las Vegas-style illusion.

A final thought....

A big brother writes about his little brother:
“Fred is spending a fortnight here – I wish you could have seen him with his slippers, in a high wind.” (Letter from Charles Dickens to Thomas Beard, written at Broadstairs, 21st September 1839)

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