

Dickens Down Under

The occasional newsletter of the Christchurch Dickens Fellowship

ISSN 1174-5797 (paper) . ISSN 1179-383X (online)

Issue 132: September 2021

Edited by Vanessa Grenfell



Dickens Down Under

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Dickens Down Under is published by the Christchurch Dickens Fellowship, 17 Marley View St, Christchurch, New Zealand 8024, on an occasional basis, with around four issues a year (the first was March 1996). It is free to members of the Christchurch Dickens Fellowship, and non-members may subscribe for \$30.00 per year within New Zealand and \$35.00 per year outside

New Zealand, subscriptions to be paid in advance.

A version in portable document form (pdf), readable by Adobe Acrobat Reader (available free from www.adobe.com), is available from vsgrenfell@gmail.com at no cost.

The Christchurch Dickens Fellowship Website

Go to www.christchurchdickensfellowship.co.nz which provides information about the Fellowship and links to other Dickensian websites.

Errata

The editor apologises for printing ‘Bexleyheath’ as two words (Bexley Heath) instead of one, in John Spain’s article in *Dickens Down Under* 131, *My Ascent of Shooter's Hill in a November Fog at Night*.

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From the Pen of the President

Hello Fellow Dickensians,

We are well into winter and we are also well into *A Tale of Two Cities*.

The weather is cold and wet but our members are loud, passionate and raucous when acting out the French

revolution scenes and, just as changeable as the weather, they are soft and gentle when our sketches return to England! Both on and off the “stage” there has been a lot of knitting done, just as the female revolutionaries in France knitted as they sat around the guillotine. The drawing below, of the women knitting as they watch, is rather a favourite of mine.¹

Winter and knitting.
Keeps our minds off the
cold weather.
And our hands busy.



©A.F.K.



¹<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/472737292111906959/>

From the Pen of the President

As a little girl who learnt to knit at her grandmother's and mother's knees before the age of ten, all things to do with the history of knitting interest me. (I remember my age because my nana died when I was ten.)

Charles Dickens made much of the women knitting in this novel and those familiar with it know just how much value Madame Defarge placed in her knitting. It makes me wonder how many women refamiliarized themselves with this ancient art after reading the book. Knitting dates to the 11th century, at least according to 'Wikipedia.'² But then according to makersmercantile.com³ that is questionable; 'The legendary origin of the art of knitting has still been a question to many. No one has ever known the exact date of when the first production of a knitted item occurred. However, knitting is said to originate in the Middle East.' If you would like to read a little more, just ask 'Google' for 'the history of knitting' and you will, of course, find many entries, including one from the sustainable fashion collective⁴ and another from knitlikegranny.com⁵ which may get you started.

As I have returned to study, my personal reading of, *A Tale of Two Cities* is falling behind, so I will not comment further but there is a great article on, 'The lady revolutionaries who calmly knit during executions.'⁶ I will bring a copy of this, and the following song, to our next few meetings for those who would like to read it. The song, from about 1918, is called, 'Knit, Girls, Knit!' The first line of the song goes, 'It's time for every little girl to show what she can do,' and the chorus, 'Knit, girls, knit.'⁷

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²https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_knitting

³<https://www.makersmercantile.com/history-of-knitting-a-resource-guide.htm>

⁴ <https://www.the-sustainable-fashion-collective.com/2017/05/04/knitting-brief-history-knitting-uses>

⁵<https://knitlikegranny.com/knitting-history/#EarlyOrigins>

⁶ <https://timeline.com/tricoteuse-french-revolution-b9887af073f4>

⁷<https://www.loc.gov/resource/ihas.200205967.0?st=gallery>

From the Pen of the President

A reminder for those who have lost or misplaced their 2021-2022 syllabus; in October we will be moving on to *Reprinted Pieces*. As these are not always in the sets of Charles Dickens's works you may need to go hunting for a copy to read ahead of our programme 2 October. You could either read these online or download from 'Gutenberg'⁸ or there are some excerpts on audio at 'Librivox.'⁹ Peter Oakley has also volunteered to email a copy to you if you email him and ask.

The stories that are planned to be covered in November are, *Our Bore*, *Lying Awake*, *Our French Watering Place*, "Births, Mrs Meek, of a Son," *A Walk in a Workhouse*, *The Ghost of Art* and *Our Honourable Friend*. Then, in November, for your entertainment pain or pleasure, there will be a production of *The Battle of Life*. So, with those two on the horizon there is no need to be sad that 'A Tale' is over halfway through.

Lastly, I would like to remind all our members of a wonderful resource that The Charles Dickens Fellowship own, and that is our library consisting of many, many books on, or about, Dickens, plus those written by him. The majority of DVD's that have been made based on his books and about him are also all there for you to borrow, at no charge. So please talk to Graeme Yardley, our librarian, or contact him, as he is only too happy to lend out books that may be of interest to you.

Stay safe, stay home and stay well,

Kathleen Campbell

⁸<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/872>

⁹<https://librivox.org/charles-dickens-200th-anniversary-collection-vol-2-by-charles-dickens/>

The 90th Anniversary Celebration of the Christchurch Branch of The Dickens Fellowship



We celebrated our first 90 years in style! Our Christchurch Branch, number 117 of The Dickens Fellowship, was founded in June 1931 and to celebrate this twenty five members and two visitors gathered on 19 June for an anniversary dinner at Rosburn Receptions in Rangiora.

Prior to the dinner a visit was made to the adjacent Northbrook Colonial Museum which has an extensive range of New Zealand's social history displayed across 9,000 sq ft of buildings. Already in Victorian dress, we stepped farther back in time to experience products, materials and technology from yesteryears, including a collection of toys, tractors, and an early Rangiora street. In crinolines, top hats and tails, we our selves became part of the Victoriana on display as we meandered through the exhibits.



Toys at Northbrook Colonial Museum

A warming glass of rum punch was later much appreciated and stimulated conversations around a beautifully blazing fire and beside the exhibits placed on display by the organiser, Pauline Francis-Fox. The latter included photograph albums, old minute books, Dickens Centennial stamps and coins as well as the anniversary cake.

Right: Kathleen Campbell



Top left: Pauline Francis-Fox and Duane Griffin.

Centre: Noeline Calvert.

Left: Ember Matson.

The 90th Anniversary Celebration

A series of readings were presented once everyone was seated; the first of these was from a letter to William Charles Kent from Charles Dickens, dated 18 January 1866, and was read by John Sullivan. It was entitled, ‘How important is it to maintain outward calm during a boring speech?’ With difficulty it would seem:

“I dined with Ferguson at the Lord Mayor’s, last Tuesday, and had a grimly distracted impulse upon me to defy the toast-master and rush into a speech about him and his noble art, when I sat pining under the imbecility of constitutional and corporational idiots. I did seize him for a moment by the hair of his head (in proposing the Lady Mayoress), and derived some faint consolation from the company’s response to the reference. O! no man will ever know under what provocation to contradiction and a savage yell of repudiation I suffered at the hands of —, feebly complacent in the uniform of Madame Tussaud’s own military waxers, and almost the worst speaker I ever heard in my life! Mary and Georgina, sitting on either side of me, urged me to ‘look pleasant.’ I replied in expressions not to be repeated.”

Geoffrey Leach and John Sullivan enjoying the liquid refreshment.



The 90th Anniversary Celebration

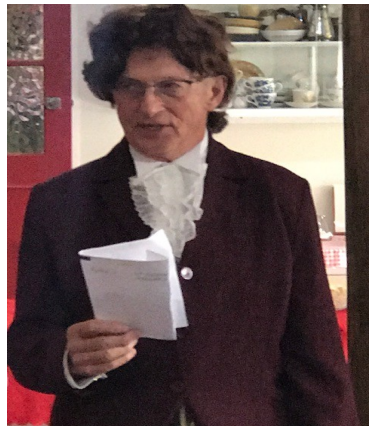
‘When is the best time of day for people-watching,’ taken from the beginning of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, was read by Chris Richards, and felt to be Dickens speaking of himself:

‘Night is generally my time for walking. In the summer I often leave home early in the morning, and roam about fields and lanes all day, or even escape for days or weeks together; but, saving in the country, I seldom go out until after dark, though, Heaven be thanked, I love its light and feel the cheerfulness it sheds upon the earth, as much as any creature living.

I have fallen insensibly into this habit, both because it favours my infirmity and because it affords me greater opportunity of speculating on the characters and occupations of those who fill the streets. The glare and hurry of broad noon are not adapted to idle pursuits like mine; a glimpse of passing faces caught by the light of a street-lamp, or a shop window, is often better for my purpose than their full revelation in the daylight; and, if I must add the truth, night is kinder in this respect than day, which too often destroys an air-built castle at the moment of its completion, without the least ceremony or remorse.’

The third, and last, reading was given by Pauline Francis-Fox from near the start of chapter 63 in *Nicholas Nickleby*. A reflection of Mrs Dickens senior, perhaps?

“There came one evening, per favour of Mr Linkinwater, an invitation from the brothers (Cheeryble) to dinner on the next day but one: comprehending, not only Mrs Nickleby, Kate, and Nicholas,



Chris Richards

The 90th Anniversary Celebration

but little Miss La Creevy, who was most particularly mentioned.

'Now, my dears,' said Mrs Nickleby, when they had rendered becoming honour to the bidding, and Tim had taken his departure, 'what does THIS mean?'

'What do YOU mean, mother?' asked Nicholas, smiling.

'I say, my dear,' rejoined that lady, with a face of unfathomable mystery, 'what does this invitation to dinner mean? What is its intention and object?'

'I conclude it means, that on such a day we are to eat and drink in their house, and that its intent and object is to confer pleasure upon us,' said Nicholas.

'And that's all you conclude it is, my dear?'

'I have not yet arrived at anything deeper, mother.'

'Then I'll just tell you one thing,' said Mrs Nickleby, you'll find yourself a little surprised; that's all. You may depend upon it that this means something besides dinner.'

'Tea and supper, perhaps,' suggested Nicholas.

'I wouldn't be absurd, my dear, if I were you,' replied Mrs Nickleby, in a lofty manner, 'because it's not by any means becoming and doesn't suit you at all. What I mean to say is, that the Mr Cheerybles don't ask us to dinner with all this ceremony for nothing. Never mind; wait and see. You won't believe anything I say, of course. So, it's much better to wait; a great deal better; it's satisfactory to all parties, and there can be no disputing. All I say is, remember what I say now, and when I say I said so, don't say I didn't.'



Pauline Francis-Fox

The 90th Anniversary Celebration



Left: Ros Calvert
and Chris Richards



Irene Taylor and Yvonne Gavin



Vanessa Grenfell

The 90th Anniversary Celebration

Ros Calvert said Grace before a two course buffet meal of good hearty fare commenced. Hot sliced ham, steamed potatoes and a variety of delectable vegetable dishes were followed by apple crumble and ice cream or the traditional pavlova.

Toasts were made to ‘The Queen’ and to ‘Christchurch Dickens Fellowship’ between courses; the former by Vanessa Grenfell and the latter by Harold Oakley, printed here:

“Fellow members, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It’s my privilege to propose a toast to ninety years of the existence of The Christchurch Dickens Fellowship.

How did we last so long? I don’t really know.

But perhaps, along the way, loyalty to our ‘Aims and Objects’ has helped:

‘To knit-to-gether, in a common bond of friendship, lovers of that great master of humour and pathos, Charles Dickens. To spread the love of humanity which is the keynote of his work.’

So, with gratitude for our past, I invite you to raise your glasses in a toast to 90 years of Fellowship.”

Harold Oakley
proposing the toast to
The Christchurch Dickens Fellowship



The 90th Anniversary Celebration



Carolyn McKubre

President, Kathleen Campbell

Following dessert a talk on ‘Philanthropic Incidents in the Life of the Branch,’ about items taken from the early minute books, was given by Annabel Gormack and is printed on page 22.

Esmé Richards cut the Anniversary Cake which was then plated and served with tea and coffee. The cake was made, and decorated with red geraniums by Vanessa Grenfell.

A number of group photos were taken for posterity by Pauline Francis-Fox and Kathy Sullivan, one of which appears over the page.

An amusing sketch, ‘Further Incidents from the life of the Branch,’ ensued and crowned the day’s entertainment. Photos and text are on following pages.

The 90th Anniversary Celebration



Seated on the floor from left are: Relda Oakley, Henry Oakley, Kathleen Campbell, and Ember Matson.

Seated in the centre are: Yvonne Gavin, Noeline Calvert, Bob (Robert) Oakley, Esmé Richards. Lesley McKone, Irene Taylor, Annabel Gormack, Graeme Yardley and Prue Gardiner.

Back Row: Edwina Palmer, Ros Calvert, Vanessa Grenfell, Geoffrey Rice, John Sullivan, Harold Oakley, Geoffrey Heath, Margaret Landauer, Duane Griffin, Carolyn McKubre, Michelle Moore, Chris Richards, Pauline Francis-Fox.

The 90th Anniversary Celebration
Further Incidents from the life of the Branch

—Vanessa Grenfell

A sketch including incidents, exaggerated or no, taken from old Dickens Fellowship Minutes!

Characters:

Elizabeth (Betsy) Trotwood:	President & Chairwoman	- Esmé Richards
Miss Pross:	Secretary	- Lesley McKone
Newman Noggs:	DF Member	- Geoffrey Heath
Ebenezer Scrooge:	DF Member	- Chris Richards
Wilkins McCawber:	DF Member	- Duane Griffith
Mrs Lirriper:	DF Member	- Kathleen Campbell
Clara Peggotty	DF Member	- Pauline Francis-Fox
Silas Wegg:	DF Member	- John Sullivan
Samuel Pickwick:	DF Member	- Graeme Yardley
Mrs Crummles:	DF Member	- Annabel Gormack
Dora Spenlow:	DF Member	- Ros Calvert
Rosa Dartle:	DF Member	- Vanessa Grenfell
Children:	DF Members	

Sketch:

- BT: *(Banging gavel)* Order! Order!
- NN: We're not in court Betsy! Ahh .. Elizabeth!
- BT: I beg your pardon! Madam President, or Madam Chairwoman, if you please!
- NN: I beg YOUR pardon Madam Chairwoman!
- BT: Accepted! But when I call a meeting to order, I'll have you to understand that I expect a civilised response Mr Noggs!
- NN: Arrghh!!!
Ah, ah, ...I mean yes Madame Betsy, ah,ahh....Madame...Madam President!
- BT: MOVING ON!!! *(Banging gavel)* Are there any apologies?
- MP: Miss Dartle ...
- RD: *(Indignantly)* Can you not see I'm here!

Further Incidents from the life of the Branch

- BT: Dr Dick, Mr Fagin, Miss Flight, Mr Magwitch and Miss Wickfield.
And, Mr McCawber sends an apology for lateness.
- BT: Again! What's wrong with the man?!
- MP: We..ll...
- BT: (*Cutting in*) **That** was a rhetorical question Miss Pross!
Presuming you have all read the minutes of our last meeting, as requested, are there any matters arising?
- Mrs L: Just that the membership actually declined with the resignation of Mr Tappertit, it did not increase, Madame President.
- BT: Thank you Mrs Lirriper. With that alteration, I propose that the minutes be accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting, all those in favour say 'Aye.'
- All: Aye.
- BT: Against? Carried! Moving to correspondence please Miss Pross.



Above from left: Duane Griffin, Vanessa Grenfell, Geoffrey Heath, Katherine Campbell, Ros Calvert, Lesley McKone.

Further Incidents from the life of the Branch

- MP: I have to report the sad loss of our Past President, Lady Deadlock; a loved and valued member who passed away recently and will be sorely missed. Unfortunately, the funeral was a private affair. (Hesitantly) Ah, a rather delicate matter has also arisen.
- BT: Miss Pross, may I remind you that you are merely reading the correspondence, not sharing with us your feelings on each topic!
- MP: Yes Ma'am! Madam President!
I have one more letter here; it's from Miss Wickfield, and it reads:
'Dear Fellowship Members,
I am pained to have to write these words, however, I feel that I must protest at the inclusion in our membership of Mr Fagin. It's common knowledge that the man is responsible for the immoral conduct of juveniles. Not only is he himself morally defective but he is taking these youngsters down with him!
I also believe that since he became a member our numbers have declined, and will continue to do so! I for one, will resign, if he does not! Sadly, yours in Fellowship,
Agnes Wickfield.'
- All: *(Silence, all looking at one another.)*
- BT: I suggest we now take a minute's silence for Lady Deadlock.
- All: *(Stand silently for 10 seconds.)*
- BT: Thank you ladies and gentlemen. As to the other matter, I suggest we take a vote. Hands up those who wish to remove Mr Fagin from this Fellowship?
- All: *(Look at each other, wondering if anyone will admit to it!)*
- NN: *(Tentatively put a hand up, then take it down!)*
- All: *(Remain still & quiet.)*
- BT: Very well! Miss Pross, put that on the next committee meeting agenda, if you please!
Mr Scrooge, you have Treasurer's business to discuss?
- ES: Yes, Madam Chairwoman. Outstanding subscriptions: owed by
- WM: *(Enter interrupting ES)* My apologies! *(be seated)*
- ES: **As** I was saying *(glaring at McCawber)* ...those with **overdue** subscriptions are **Mr Wilkins McCawber**

Further Incidents from the life of the Branch



From left: Lesley McKone, Esmé Richards, John Sullivan, Chris Richards, Pauline Francis-Fox, Annabel Gormack, Graeme Yardley, Duane Griffin.

WM: Ahh.....

ES: ... Mrs and Uriah Heep, as usual, and Mr Ralph Nickleby. They've all been sent final demands! (*Glare at McCawber again!*)

The other item we need to discuss is the matter of what should be done with Miss Haversham's legacy. I propose that it be invested, by me, for our future!

BT: We need to discuss this!

ES: I have proposed a motion Madame President! Are you ignoring it?

BT: (*Glaring at Scrooge*) All those in favour, say Aye!

All: (*No-one moves & silence reigns*)

BT: Does that mean you are all against? If so, raise your hands!

All: (*No-one moves & silence reigns*)

ES: For the **love** of Dickens, what is the matter with you all?

Further Incidents from the life of the Branch

- BT: Are there any other ideas? No? I suggest then, that we take this to the committee!
- All: *(Silence)*
- BT: Put that on the committee agenda if you please Miss Pross. Moving on! Are there any other treasury matters Mr Scrooge?
- ES: Yes Madam.
- BT: **Yes, Madame President!**
- ES: *(Aside)* Humbug! **Yes, Madam Chairperson!**
The Birthday Dinner at ‘The Takahe’ resulted in a loss of fifteen pounds! And meeting suppers are also running at a loss, although Miss Peggotty has donated two pounds, one shilling and tuppence to cover the latter shortfall.
Our credit balance for the year is 82 pounds, eight shillings and sixpence. That is all, Madam Chairperson!
- BT: **Thank** you, Mr Scrooge. This, then, is the appropriate time to discuss Miss Murdstone’s proposal that we dispense with the unnecessarily lavish suppers and move to tea and plain biscuits only.
- Mrs L & CP: *(In unison!)* No! They’re wonderful!
- BT: That is the whole point! I agree we should not be indulging ourselves as we do! Pies, salmon sandwiches, cream cakes, chocolate and the like! It is inappropriate, and immoral! There’s no place in a Dickens Fellowship for such extravagance!
- CP: Over my dead body! What better way to discuss the programmes and enjoy one another’s company than over a sumptuous supper!
- All: *(Clapping)* Hooray!
- Mrs L: Not on my sweet Nelly neither! Immoral indeed! Are you saying our members are ...
- BT: I **am** saying that I agree with Miss Murdstone for once! There is a profound principle here: there are children, people, in this country and throughout the world, who have insufficient to nourish them, whilst we indulge in gluttony! We are here to celebrate the life of an author who strove to improve the lot of those very people, and yet we pay lip service to those same issues our dear Dickens fought so hard to change!

Further Incidents from the life of the Branch

- DS: (Sweetly) Well, **I** want to stay with our delectable goodies! Mrs Lirriper's savouries are to die for! And Miss peggotty's pav is to die all over again!
- All: (*Clapping*)
- BT: Humph!
- SP: (*Stand*) **I** think Miss Murdstone should be **baked** with her own biscuits and **buried** with a wreath of **bugbane!** (*bugbane = 'to drive away'*)
- All: Hear, hear! (*Clapping*)
- BT: (*Snottily*) All those in favour of the motion say 'aye!'
- All: (*Silence!*)
- BT: (*Snottily*) All those against the motion say 'nay.'
- All: (*Raise both your arms and shout..*) **NAY!**
- BT: Motion denied! Now, it is the committee's recommendation that the book for next year be, Barnaby Rudge, and I ...
- WM: (*Cutting in ...*) I hate *Barnaby Rudge!*
- BT: **I propose** that we study *Barnaby Rudge* in four meetings and spend more time on the *Christmas Books*.
- RD: I'll second that!
- DS: (*Sweetly*) I think you're forgetting Miss Dartle, that for three of those meetings you and Mr Steerforth will be on the Continent!
- RD: (*Snottily!*) I'm still entitled to my opinion!
- BT: All those in favour ...
- All: **Aye!**
- BT: Carried. Is there any other business?
- SW: Yes! I find it a nuisance to have children present at our meetings; they are a distracting hindrance! I therefore propose that children are no longer permitted to attend our Dickens Fellowship meetings.
- Children: **That's not fair!**
- SW: Little beggars are always getting under foot!
- CP: **They are not!** Children have a right to learn about Dickens too!
- BT: That's enough thank you. Mr Wegg, I'll thank you to restrict your language to what is acceptable within the bounds of polite society!
- BT: Is there any further discussion on the matter?

Further Incidents from the life of the Branch

CP: They may be children but they're members too you know!
Mrs C: I declare that an outrageous abomination! Not allow the attendance of our precious troupe of little Crummies! Our theatrical future!
SW: I can tell you now, **if you continue to allow children to come to meetings, then I, for one, shall resign!**
Mrs C: **And if you don't allow them, then I shall resign!**
BT: All those in favour of barring children please say, 'Aye!'
ES & SW: Aye!
SW: And about time too!
BT: Quiet! We are voting here, thank you Mr Wegg! Anyone else?
All: (Silence)
BT: Those against barring children please say, 'nay'?
All: *(Except Scrooge & Wegg!)* *(Loudly)* Naaay!
ES: Bah! Humbug!
BT: The motion is denied!
SW: *(Get up, knocking chair over)* Well, I hereby resign! Little beggars!!! *(Exit noisily, thumping wooden leg on the floor)*
Children: *(Clapping loudly & jumping around with glee)* Yippee!
BT: *(Banging gavel!)* I declare this meeting closed!
CP: Hooray! Time for our scrumptious supper!

THE END

"I felt an earnest and humble desire, and shall do till I die, to increase the stock of harmless cheerfulness."



Charles Dickens – taken from a speech at Edinburgh, on June 25, 1841 and reprinted on our 90th Anniversary Celebration invitations.

Philanthropy in the Christchurch Branch of
the Dickens Fellowship
Gleaned from the Minute Books by Annabel Gormack

For this talk I have had a lot of fun going through the past Minute Books for the branch, the earliest of which started in 1938. I have brought some of the old Minute Books with me today so that people can have a look if they wish.

Annabel Gormack
giving her talk at the
90th Anniversary Celebration



By 1938 it looks as if the branch had set up a ‘Tiny Tim Fund,’ proceeds of which went, in large part, to the Crippled Children’s Society. In May 1938 the fund amounted to £51. In July of that year the committee met to decide which two of the five children whose names had been submitted by the CCS would be chosen to benefit from the fund. It was decided that the two should both be girls as the boys were already receiving more attention. The branch decided to sponsor Gladys Hammill and Grace Hansen. I wonder what happened to those two girls since then? Gladys lived with her parents, and Grace at the ‘Receiving Home.’ Representatives of the branch interviewed Gladys’s parents at her home, and the matron of

Philanthropy in the Christchurch Branch of the Dickens Fellowship



The dining room of a New Zealand Health Camp in the 1940s

the orphanage in Grace's case. Both girls attended the Technical College and were well supplied with clothing and school books already. Therefore it was decided that:

- (a) a personal interest should be taken in the girls. Members of the Fellowship might give the girls six or eight outings a year.
- (b) send them Christmas and birthday gifts.
- (c) keep one girl provided with a library ticket. (A ticket for Linwood library had already been procured for Gladys Hamill.)

A special committee was set up to achieve this, reporting to the wider committee.

Philanthropy in the Christchurch Branch of the Dickens Fellowship

There are other instances of the 'Tiny Tim Fund' being used. In 1939 sums were given to assist crippled children in Ward 14 of the Public Hospital, fretsaws and books on art were provided. Gladys and Grace received Christmas presents and £5 was given to help with the CCS boys' trip to Health Camp in Rangiora. In 1940, two girls were sponsored to attend Health Camp, Gladys and Grace perhaps? Following WWII, when other demands were made on the generosity of members, demands on the fund languished somewhat. In 1946, in answer to a question from a Mr Railton, Mr Caddick revealed that the fund was held at the Post Office Savings Bank and there was £45 in the kitty. It was suggested that the branch should write to the Crippled Children's Society for ideas of how they would like to use it. In 1947 a reply came. Either the funds could be held in Trust for the next polio epidemic or they could be put towards a new film projector for the children's entertainment. The branch voted to support the purchase of the new projector. Miss Jarman felt that those who had collected the money should be consulted first, but this was over-ruled!

Next we come to something called the, 'Overseas Parcels Fund.' The first mention I could find of this was of food parcels being sent in May 1946 to Mrs Shaw, a Christchurch member who was staying in England at the time, and also to the staff of Dickens House, London. At that meeting Miss Silby proposed the setting up of the fund, seconded by Miss Musgrove. A collection was taken up at the meeting and raised £2 7s 6d. The Parcels Committee set up to administer the fund was convened by Miss AG Musgrove. As rationing went on in the UK for some years after WW11, such parcels were much appreciated. In June 1946 a parcel was sent to the Manchester branch of the Fellowship who had reported an increase in their membership since hostilities ceased. Correspondence mentioned in the Minutes of subsequent meetings contains letters of thanks for the parcels. For Christmas 1947 parcels were sent to eleven crippled boys who attended the London School for PH children. In the following year, 1948, the headmaster, a Mr EFE Johnson, wrote acknowledging receipt of parcels, including fifteen sent for Christmas that year.

Philanthropy in the Christchurch Branch of the Dickens Fellowship

Perhaps the letters of thanks were somewhat fulsome? At the October 1948 meeting Mrs Morris moved and Mrs Grainger seconded a motion that letters acknowledging parcels should not be read in full. It was suggested that the names of the correspondents be mentioned and brief notes of the contents made. Letters would then be laid on the table for reference. I wonder if they were indeed tedious, or were the two ladies jealous of the attention and praise those on the Parcels Committee came in for?

The fund sometimes ran into debt and on those occasions a temporary halt was called to the sending of parcels. Fundraising events, including dramatic evenings, were held to make up the shortfall. Members seemed to have dipped into their pockets at each meeting to provide the funds.

Some of the recipients sent letters of thanks on their own behalf, one being a Master Benjamin Barnes (and his mother) in May 1948 and another Geoffrey Lamb in August 1948. Sadly, in 1949, a letter of thanks was received from one boy, only to be followed a short time later by a letter from the boy's mother to say that her son had passed away. It was agreed to send Christmas parcels in 1949 but after that the impetus and the fund seem to have petered out. The suggestion was made that small groups might like to send parcels under their own steam. I wonder what was in the parcels?

In March 1951 a quantity of dried fruit was requested by the Dickens Fellowship, London. A giant Jubilee cake was to be baked for the following year 1952, to be shared by children in need. The Christchurch Branch duly sent a donation.

And so, our monthly sales table helps to carry on the tradition of contributing to charity which began with the earliest members. Perhaps some of the fund generously donated to us recently by the Adelaide branch could be turned to further philanthropic use, in keeping with the efforts of earlier times? That decision is for another day.

REPRINTED PIECES

2 October programme, 2021.

The October programme will cover Dickens's *Reprinted Pieces* presented by Graeme Yardley and Peter Oakley.

The stories they are planning to cover, in sketches, are:

OUR BORE
LYING AWAKE
OUR FRENCH WATERING PLACE
“BIRTHS. MRS MEEK, OF A SON”
A WALK IN A WORKHOUSE
THE GHOST OF ART
OUR HONOURABLE FRIEND.

The other reprinted pieces may be covered more sketchily. They are well worth all reading, if only to answer the question of why they were thought to merit reprinting, in contrast to others which were not, such as those later collected in *Miscellaneous Papers*, which we studied in 2020.

If you don't have a copy of 'Reprinted Pieces,' the entire text, in relatively clean form, is available on the internet at

<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/872>

if you put this in the search line of your web browser. This allows you to read the collection online, or on your cellphone. Or you can download the text to format as you please, and/or print off. If you don't have internet access, and don't have a print copy, please let Graeme or Peter know, and they will attempt to procure a lending copy for you.

Reprinted Pieces, 2 October 2021.

Programme Report – July

A Tale of Two Cities, Book 2 Chapters 17-24

—Convened by Esmé Richards

Esmé had prepared a programme of four sketches, two readings and two talks to cover her allotted chapters. She had kindly inserted in the programme notes a time-line equating the historical events of the French Revolution with the fictional events from the novel. This very useful addition enables us to compare the two more easily as we move through the novel.

Esmé introduced her programme by reminding us that the Bastille was stormed on the 14th July 1789, an event we would see in that day's programme. When *A Tale of Two Cities* was first published, in weekly parts in *All the Year Round*, there were no accompanying illustrations. As each month's parts were gathered together and republished in monthly form, two illustrations by Phiz accompanied each volume. Esmé had included two of these in her programme notes. Some felt at the time that they were not up to Phiz's best and they were the last he did for Dickens. However many at our meeting did approve of them and felt they captured the atmosphere of the action well.

In the first sketch, Prue Gardiner, as reader, set the scene. Lucie Manette (Relda Oakley) sat quietly in the garden with her father, Dr Manette (John Spain), on the eve of her marriage to Charles. Lucie pressed her father as to whether he was truly happy with the marriage going ahead. Dr Manette assured her he was and indeed he felt that the marriage would brighten all their futures. They would all continue to live together. Dr Manette described his days of wondering about his unborn child as he languished in the Bastille.



Prue Gardiner as reader.

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Lucie had restored and blessed his life and he was quite at peace.



Relda Oakley as Lucie Manette about to be ‘given away’
by Chris Richards as Mr Jarvis Lorry.

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The second sketch follows on from this; the reader this time being Suzanne Waters. It was the morning of the wedding. Mr Lorry (Chris Richards) and Miss Pross (Vanessa Grenfell) waited with Lucie who was decked out in her bridal finery. Charles Darnay and Dr Manette were behind the closed door of the study. The time had come for Charles to reveal to Lucie's father his true identity. When they emerged Dr Manette was deathly pale, but calm. The wedding took place and Charles and Lucie departed for a fortnight's holiday. Mr Lorry had a little business at the bank which kept him away from the house for a couple of hours. Upon his return he was met by a flurried and anxious Miss Pross. The sound of tapping came from the Doctor's room; he was back at his work-bench making shoes! This terrible state of affairs lasted for nine days! Mr Lorry & Miss Pross kept an eye on him the best they could and at last Dr Manette emerged his old, lucid self, much to their relief.



Vanessa Grenfell as Miss Pross and Chris Richards as Mr Lorry.

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Margaret Lindauer, one of our new members, gave a reading that follows on from these events entitled, ‘The Old Companion Sacrificed’ from Chapter 19. Mr Lorry gained the doctor’s consent, albeit reluctant, to sacrifice the work-bench and tools from his prison days. Dr Manette went on holiday with Lucie and Charles for another two weeks, during which time Mr Lorry and Miss Pross seized their chance. The work-bench was sawn up and burnt and the tools and materials buried in the garden. Although they had permission to perform these actions, the pair managed to look very guilty throughout.

In Sketch three, Lucie and Charles (Geoffrey Heath), having arrived home and been welcomed by the household and by Sydney Carton, were then alone together. Lucie appeared thoughtful and

when her husband asked her the cause she extracted a promise from him to treat Sydney respectfully, with a generous heart and not to mind his faults. She couldn’t explain further but declared her sympathy for him and his wounded heart, saying his sadness contrasts with their happiness and Charles accedes to her request. The reader for this sketch was Noeline Calvert.

In the first of two papers, Chris Richards gave us some historical background to the French Revolution. During the 1700s, the era of enlightenment, the old way of stratifying society began to be challenged.



Margaret Lindauer as reader.

Programme Report – July

Towards the end of the century famine was widespread among French peasants while the nobles carried on a life of extreme luxury. Bread prices soared and the hated ‘gabelle’ (salt tax) fuelled the flames of revolution. At the famous storming of the Bastille only seven prisoners remained in the fortress but also contained within its walls was a large stock of gunpowder.



Peter Oakley
as ‘turnkey’ at
La Bastille.

Reading two, a dramatic reading, described the storming of the Bastille from Chapter 21. The reader was Jeni Curtis. While all the chaos and violence was going on below, the turnkey, Peter Oakley, showed Mr Defarge up to the cell occupied at one time by Dr Manette, 105 North

Programme Report – July

Tower. Defarge searched this very thoroughly. During the sketch, the patriots, Annabel Gormack, John Sullivan, Harold Oakley, Relda Oakley, Henry Oakley, Graeme Yardley, Pauline Francis-Fox, Lesley McKone, Peter Lewis and Kathleen Campbell, brandished an assortment of weapons



and gave passionate voice to their purpose of storming the fortress and releasing the prisoners. There was much shouting and hullaboo. The grizzly fate of the prison governor and some of the soldiers at the hands of the mob was recounted. At the end of the day there were seven released prisoners and seven heads on pikes.

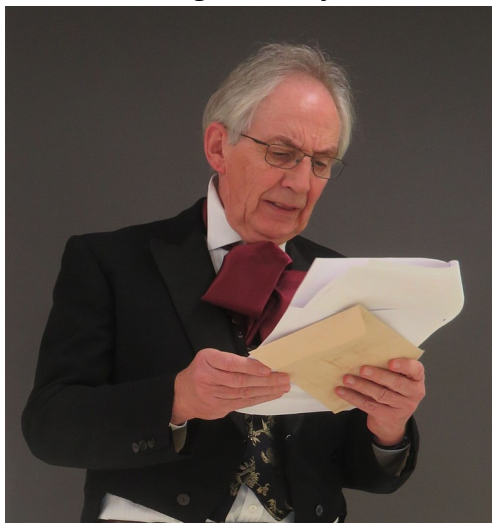
Programme Report – July

Ros Calvert gave a paper on the role of women during the French Revolution. In the beginning women were at the forefront and participated in the National Assembly. There was hope that the cause of women's rights would be furthered at the same time as the general cause of liberty for all. Women led the march on Versailles. However, as 'The Terror' grew, the position of women in the movement was downgraded to a more subordinate role. Esmé then summarised Chapters 22 and 23 where the foment in Paris reaches fever pitch. In these chapters Dickens uses evocative images of the sea to evoke the inexorable force of the revolution.

In the final sketch, from Chapter 34, Mr Lorry and Charles Darnay are in the London branch of Tellson's Bank. The reader for the sketch was Pauline Francis-Fox. Mr Lorry has determined that he must go to Paris to assist the firm's clients there. The news from France is dire but Charles cannot dissuade Mr Lorry from his plan. A messenger (Graeme Yardley) arrives with a letter addressed to the Marquis St Evremonde. Charles asserts that he knows such a person and will undertake to deliver the letter. It contains a plea for help from his retainer Gabelle who has been imprisoned on a false charge. Charles determines that despite the danger he must return to Paris to assist Gabelle. He writes two letters, one to Lucie and one to her father. He departs in secret not long after farewelling Mr Lorry on the same journey.

At 4.02 pm, the close of the programme, Esmé was thanked by Kathleen for a wonderful afternoon. The programme had prompted much discussion amongst those present who then continued to enjoy further conversation around the ample tea table.

Geoffrey Heath
as Charles Darnay.



A FRENCH AFFRONT

—Chris Richards

Why the French Revolution? Leading up to that time there had been little opposition to regal authority, but in the 1700s came the “Era of Enlightenment”, with new ideas of “liberty” and “equality”. The French monarchy, in the 1780s was suffering financially too, having borrowed substantially both to fight Great Britain, and to assist the Americans in their war of independence. On top of this, the Bourbon monarch, King Louis XVI was spending huge amounts of lire on his expansive lifestyle. But the people giving most of the money by taxes were the poorest, and as well, a period of famine had at that time come upon them. The political ‘Estate System’, dating from the ancient Roman Empire still applied. It was a type of social hierarchy where the Third Estate peasant worked a piece of land owned by the Second Estate, the noble class, while the most senior, the clergy, belonged to the First Estate. The nobles and clergy were largely exempt from paying taxes. The poor, the commoners of the Third Estate, some 98% of the population, while holding no real political power, particularly resented the tax on salt, a product they sorely needed to flavour and preserve their food. That tax was called - the “gabelle”.

In 1788 bread prices had risen so high average workers spent nearly 90% of their wages on that single staple. So bad was it that food riots broke out across France. King Louis XVI then decided to reconvene the old Estates-General which had gone into abeyance. However, this achieved little to ameliorate the situation for the Third Estate, so *they* declared themselves to be a new body – the National Assembly. In June 1789, finding their National Assembly meeting place locked out against them they met in an indoor tennis court, and took an oath – the Tennis Court Oath – not to disperse until a new written constitution was set in place. A number of clergymen and nobles also joined the National Assembly and Louis responded by moving several army regiments into Paris, and then threw out the popular and reform-minded Minister of Finance, Jacques Necker. This enraged the crowds, who seized 32,000 muskets and some cannons from a central military hospital, the Hotel des Invalides. On July 14, seeking stored gunpowder, the mob attacked the Bastille.

A FRENCH AFFRONT

The Bastille fortress had been erected in the 1300s, designed to guard Paris' eastern access. The massive stone building had thirty metre high walls and a wide moat, plus the added protection of a number of French soldiers and Swiss mercenaries. It frequently held political dissidents under lock and key, and often without trial. At the time of the Revolution



Bastille Day.

however, there were but a mere seven prisoners inside. The angry revolutionists on 14 July 1789 stormed the Bastille and finally accessed it over a drawbridge, lowered after a group of men had climbed over an outer wall. Once inside they captured the Bastille governor, Bernard-René de Launay, forced him to the city hall, and there separated him, first from his consort and then from his head. This they swiftly mounted on a pike and paraded it around the city. As well, a small number of royalist soldiers were butchered. The Bastille itself was later taken down, this becoming a symbol of the end of the Ancien Régime. But Louis XVI himself was consigned there - from October 1789 – until his appointment was kept on 21 January 1793 with Madame La Guillotine.

Every year now, since 1880, France celebrates its national day on 14 July. There it is known as *“la Fete Nationale”* and is a public holiday, with fireworks, military parades and public revelry. We call it *“Bastille Day.”* So remember, on the 14th, their famous French phrase: *“Vive le 14 Juillet!”*

The Role of Women at the time of the French Revolution.

—Ros Calvert

In the 1700s women in France had very few rights. They were expected to care for their families and had no role in the political or social leadership of the country. Poorer women had to work to support their families but they received lower wages than the men. Even prior to the beginning of the Revolution there were stirrings from women who were wanting equal pay and the right to vote. More privileged women held salons where there was much discussion of the politics of the day and some of them began to contribute their own ideas to these discussions. One famous example of this was Olympe de Gouges who published the “Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen” in 1791 as a counterpoint to the famous revolutionary document that focused specifically on the rights of men.

Women were very involved in the beginning of the Revolution. They dressed in patriotic garb, wrote pamphlets and other political documents, participated in riots and demonstrations, left their domestic duties to engage more with society and by whispering in their menfolk’s ears, incited them to violence against those they saw as their enemies. In some cases, they carried out the violence themselves, for example De Corday d’Armont, a follower of the more moderate Girondist faction, who assassinated the Jacobin leader Jean-Paul Marat. As is the case in every period of conflict, women moved to take on roles left vacant by men leaving to fight or becoming involved in the political realm. They were responsible for trying to find food for their families by working in the fields, and in the marketplaces.

Marie Antionette had a particular role in the Revolution, as it was her perceived influence over her husband in the ruling of the nation that led to widespread hostility from those in power. Also her lavish lifestyle made her extremely unpopular with the common people, particularly working women unable to feed their families. On the 14th of July 1789 women as well as men were in the crowd that stormed the Bastille, which event is seen as the beginning of the French Revolution. Later that year on the 5th of October, a group of women armed with pikes, axes and clubs began a march in the rain to Versailles to demand grain for food. This was known as the

The Role of Women at the time of the French Revolution.

“parade de poissardes” as many of the instigators were fishwives and market women.

However, the rising of women in this way threatened those in power and led to the diminishing of what rights they had previously had. In October 1793, the Jacobin leadership abolished women’s groups such as the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women, and arrested their leaders, thus crushing that movement. Napoleon Bonaparte was in charge after the ‘Reign of Terror’ had ended and the ‘Napoleonic Code’ of 1804 reduced the rights of women, ensuring that they were seen as inferior according to the law and subject to their husbands. Immediately after the Revolution there was an increase of divorce instigated by women but this was banned by the Napoleonic Code. At the same time all women were deemed to be of age to suffer the consequences of any offences that they had committed. Their dream of being able to have more control over their own lives was crushed.

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Women’s march on Versailles 1789

Points of Interest: Telson's Bank and Foulon

—Esmé Richards

Dear Christchurch Dickensians,

During the 3 July programme presentation of Book 2, Chapters 17-24 of *A Tale of Two Cities*, discussion arose about Telson's bank and whether or not it was modeled on a real bank of the time. I have been doing a bit of homework and I have gleaned some information from Andrew Sanders book, *A Companion to 'A Tale of Two Cities'* (1988). He states, and I quote,

'It has been suggested that Dickens derived the name of Telson's from Thelusson's Bank in Paris (Hill, 1945, 70). Carlyle makes pointed references to Thelusson's in his ironic discussion of the advance of Jacques Necker (1732-1804), Louis XVI's Controller of Finance.'

Still quoting from Andrew Sanders book,

'Dickens based Telson's on the London banking-house of Child and Co. This bank, founded in the seventeenth century, had premises at 1 Fleet Street, and leased rooms over Temple Bar from the City of London as a repository for their cash-books and ledgers.'

From the internet I have gleaned that Child and Co. is the oldest bank in the United Kingdom. It was a private bank with origins which can be traced back to the business of the Goldsmith, Robert Blanchard, who by 1649 was trading in the Strand, London. Blanchard was joined by Francis Child in around 1665. The firm 'Blanchard and Child' gradually diversified into banking. It remained a relatively small, private bank throughout the nineteenth century. Today it is part of the 'NatWest' group.

Banks arose according to the various need of the people. By the end of the eighteenth century three main types of banks were in operation. West End banks: Hoares, Coutts, Childs and Drummonds, were mainly involved in business with the aristocracy, gentry, government(securities) and wealthy

Points of Interest: Telson's Bank and Foulon

lawyers. East End banks: Martins, Curries, Glyn Mills and Mastermans made loans to the members of the stock exchange, did business with traders and manufacturers and acted as liaisons for country banks. Country Banks: started springing up in the latter half of the eighteenth century. There were less than a dozen before 1750. Their arrival was due mainly to the re-coinage of guineas in 1774, which created a special need for banks to collect coins and provide alternative currency.

Tellson's obviously falls into the first group but as to whether Child and Co had a branch in Paris I couldn't really find actual reference and I started getting bogged down in jargon, so I gave up. When I first arrived in London on my big O/E (not called by that name back then) in 1965, my New Zealand bank in the Strand was my base address, so it is not hard to imagine that Tellson's of London, to the new emigrants from France who had placed their money with the branch in either Paris or London, would also have used it as a place to meet and congregate.

The other point of discussion was, 'Was there a real person called Foulon?' - he who features in Chapter 22 of Book two, 'The Sea Still Rises,' when the mob seize him after he has been found in a country village, and stuff grass into his mouth, eventually taking his life, then his head, and that of his son-in-law as well. According to Dickens, Foulon had suggested that the starving peasants could eat grass. He had, many years before, staged his own death to escape the wrath of the crowd. Andrew Sander's book states,

'Joseph-Francis Foulon, or Foullon, was appointed a Counsellor of State to Louis XVI in 1784. Dickens's account was substantially drawn on from Carlyle.'

Joseph-Francis Foulon (1715-89)



What was Happening in England at the time of the French Revolution? —Pauline Francis-Fox

What time period are we talking about? Most history books begin the Revolution with the summoning of the Estates General in 1789 (the French Parliament had not met since 1614) and put an end date of 1799 with the formation of the French Consulate which established Napoleon Bonaparte as First Consul. The French Revolution was, of course, not just a single event on a particular day in a certain year. It was a series of events or developments that stretched over a number of years.

What is the time period covered in *A Tale of Two Cities*? It begins in 1775, the description of the fall of the Bastille is in 1789, book three of the novel begins in 1792 and I believe Darnay was executed sometime at the end of 1793. Britain reluctantly declared war on France in 1793 when ‘the Terror’ began and France threatened to invade Holland.

So, what was happening in Britain during 1789 and 1799? Let’s start with the monarch and things political. In 1789 King George III was the Monarch of Great Britain and Ireland and had been since 1760 when, at the age of 22, he inherited the crown from his grandfather George II. Although from the House of Hanover, George III had been born in Britain and, unlike his two predecessors, English was his first language; something that helped the British public warm to him. (Unlike the attitude of many of the French toward their king Louis XVI.)

George II was known as a devout and good-hearted man, interested in agriculture which earned him the nickname “Farmer George.” As a youth he may have had an infatuation with Hannah Lightfoot, the daughter of a shoemaker from Wapping and been in love with Sarah Lennox the great-granddaughter of Charles II by his mistress but in 1761 he was persuaded to marry a German, Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg. He, unusually, did not take a mistress after marriage and sired with Charlotte 15 children who he insisted should lead a life of religious observance. (His sons became George IV and William IV.) Prior to, and during the period we are concerned with, his reign was concerned with the rivalries between the Whig and Tory factions in Parliament, and with his own attempts to recover some power for the crown over the increasing importance of parliament, and in particular the House of Commons.

What was Happening in England at the time of the French Revolution?

The Whig supporters, especially, tended to be more liberal in their thinking, they wanted electoral, parliamentary and religious reform and sympathised with the ideas of the French Revolutionaries. The more conservative of the Whigs, like Charles Fox however, disliked the idea of Revolution and joined the Tories, pressing for peace with France.

The Tory supporters were more likely to be conservative thinking politicians, strong believers in the monarchy, in God, Queen and Country. Under William Pitt the younger, they won the support of the King. At this time Tories and Whigs were groups of like minded people rather than formal political parties. However, George disliked Fox, he believed him to be a bad influence on his son and it was with his influence that had seen Pitt elected as Prime Minister in 1783. It was a win for George in his battle with the question of who had the most say in appointing ministers, himself, the crown, or the majority in the house of Commons.

In 1788 things came to a head when George III became seriously ill and unable to govern. What his ill health was, has not yet been agreed upon. It has been described as bipolar disorder, or porphyria which is a liver disorder affecting the nervous system, and even, a recent study suggested, a surplus of arsenic, possibly from medicines and cosmetics used at the time. The question was, who was to be Regent whilst everyone waited for George to recover? Fox argued it was the absolute right of his son George Prince of Wales to become Regent. Pitt, fearing Fox's influence over the prince and his therefore being left out in the cold, argued it was for Parliament to decide and introduced in 1789 the Regency Bill. The bill passed the House of Commons but George recovered before it was ratified by the House of Lords.

So, during this period what did the thinking population of Great Britain believe and who was influencing their positions? How much support was there in Britain for the idea you didn't need a monarchy and how much for the idea of keeping a constitutional monarchy?

The defeat of the British in America and subsequent loss of the colonies had given reformers hope that change in England was possible. Ordinary people began to make connections between the economic hard-

What was Happening in England at the time of the French Revolution?

ships they faced on a daily basis and political corruption. They began to seek to change the old system of government hoping to extend the franchise and limit the power of the monarchy. The fall of the Bastille and the subsequent wars against France gave fuel to their argument that it was time to change the old order. Was it to be through reform or revolution?



‘A good

Constitution sacrificed for a Fantastic Form.’

James Gillray’s caricature of Thomas Paine tightening the corset of Britannia.

What was Happening in England at the time of the French Revolution?

Formal Groups seeking Parliamentary reform began to appear, especially in the towns and cities where the increasing effects of industrialisation began to be felt, and tradesmen and small industrialists sought a bigger say in how their lives were to be governed. In 1792 The Society of The Friends of the People was started by a group of young Whigs seeking representation for the common people. The Society for Constitutional Information became more vocal. Members even began to call themselves “citizen” in support of the French revolutionaries. Another group were the Corresponding Societies, such as The London Corresponding Society founded in 1792, calling for votes for all men, less taxes and improved social conditions.

The writings of two men had become significant during this period. Thomas Paine, whose work had supported American independence from Britain in 1791, then back in France, wrote *Rights of Man*, a series of articles that maintained it was the purpose of government to protect the

rights of the people and when it failed to do so revolution was allowable. He wrote that men are born free and equal and government should provide welfare for all, as all of society benefits. He believed monarchy was not hereditary and distinguished between the crown and the individual; he therefore opposed the killing of Louis XVI which led to his eventual imprisonment. Copies of his writings were printed and read in the coffee houses of London.

Similar ideas had been written by one Thomas Spence, an English radical who advocated common ownership of land.



Reformers Memorial,
Kensal Green Cemetery.

What was Happening in England at the time of the French Revolution?

The author Mary Wollstonecraft (Mary Shelley's mother) also wrote supporting Paine's writing and advocated republicanism. Paine and Wollstonecraft's writing had been in response to Edmund Burke's pamphlet *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, published in 1790 in which he attacked the idea of revolution and argued for the gradual constitutional reform not revolution.

The ideas that the French Revolution encouraged were also reflected in the English literature of the period. The youthful Wordsworth, Southey and Coleridge initially became supporters of ideas such as freedom from tranny of social conventions and institutions, though with the increasing level of violence during 'The Terror' both Wordsworth and Coleridge became disillusioned and felt the revolutionaries had gone too far.

Once war with France broke out the Government in Britain became alarmed at the amount of support for reform and the demand for change in England. Under the leadership of Pitt, a vigorous propaganda campaign began contrasting the ordered society of Britain with the anarchy of France. He created a nationwide spy network with ordinary people being encouraged to "dob in" any family or friends with revolutionary or radical tendencies. In England the right of *habeus corpus* was suspended. In Scotland, Edinburgh had become a centre for extreme radicals and many Scottish reformers such as Thomas Muir and Robert Watt were brought to trial for treason, the former being found guilty and deported to Botany Bay. Watt, despite maintaining he was acting for the government as a spy, was hanged, his head cut off and displayed and his bowels burned!

1795 was a year of failed crops and famine in Europe. Britain also suffered and as a result of the high cost of bread and increased taxes demonstrations occurred, especially in the market towns and cities. Pitt brought Laws against popular societies, usually the focus of unrest, prohibited meetings of more than fifty people and forbade speech against the King and government. Fox opposed these extreme measures arguing peace with France and reform would solve England's problems rather than repression.

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In 1797 there were mutinies in the navy as crews demanded better pay and conditions. The mutineers were defeated and the leaders who did not escape to France were punished. In Ireland, the question of Irish Catholic representation in the local parliament led to unrest, as did the formation of the United Irishmen, an organisation that hoped for support of guns and troops from the revolutionary Government in France, in their quest to free themselves from English tyranny and establish a Republic of Ireland. Instead, the Act of Union occurred in 1801.

During this period, despite the continued wars with France, Britain was eventually recovering from previous losses. A period of economic prosperity ensued as the effects of industrialisation were felt. Trade was increasing, the population increased, therefore the work force grew. The cotton industry had benefited from such developments as Watts's steam engine and Arkwright's water powered spinning machine in 1790.

By 1779 then, there had been no widespread revolution in Britain but neither had there been total reform. During these years of war with France successive British wartime administrations kept order at home through minor concessions, repressive acts and propaganda encouraging English patriotism and support for George III. Support for radical parliamentary reform never disappeared entirely and in fact, increased in the early part of the nineteenth century.

I will finish with 'bits and bobs' of things that occurred between 1789 and 1799 in Britain. There were four editions of the Encyclopaedia Britannica published between 1771 and 1815. In 1781 the scientist William Herschel discovered a new planet and tried to name it after King George but astronomers insisted on the tradition of naming the planets after mythological figures and so it became Uranus.

In April 1789 the mutiny on HMS Bounty occurred against Captain William Bligh. In March 1789 the first graphic description of a slave ship had been released and, in May of that year, William Wilberforce made his first major speech on the abolition of the slave trade. Sadly, in 1791 the Bill to abolish the slave trade was rejected by the House of Lords, however, it finally passed in 1807.

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The eighteenth century saw a surge in canal building in England as raw materials needed by the cotton and pottery factories were taken more quickly by barge, as were the finished products moved to city consumers.

1785 saw the publication of the newspaper *Daily Universal Register*, which was renamed *The Times* in 1788. The number of Circulating Libraries increased dramatically in the 1770s as publishers and authors sought to take advantage of the new wave of novels being written and the increased number of people who could read.



An English country house, Kedleston Hall, built 1765

It was a period that saw the design and construction of great country houses, filled with ornate furniture by Chippendale and Sheraton and surrounded by landscaped gardens, like those of Capability Brown.

Although advances had been made in the field of medicine, there were still many willing to believe in the power of the Spa. One of the most common treatments for the wealthy in the eighteenth century was bathing in, or drinking spa water, which they believed could cure all kinds of illnesses.

In 1791 John Wesley died. As the founder of the Methodist church,

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he had done much to bring religion to those who felt themselves outside the Anglican church. His emphasis on morality, self-discipline and thrift was for some a major force in keeping England free from revolution.

One final first appearance in this period, which I am sure many of us are grateful for, was the establishment in 1789 of a barber's shop in Soho where one Andrew Pears began to produce cosmetic products. Alarmed at the harshness of the soaps of the day, which contained arsenic or lead, he experimented with soap based on glycerine and natural products and smelling like an English garden. Today we still have Pears Soap!

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Programme Report – August

A Tale of Two Cities, Book 3 Chapters 1- 8

—Convened by Vanessa Grenfell

Vanessa opened her programme with a reminder of where the July programme had left the story. Then Pauline Francis-Fox gave a talk on what was happening in England at the time of the Revolution. Establishing a time-frame of 1789 to 1799. Pauline then went on to introduce George III and outlined his struggles with the increasing demand for reform by the liberal thinking politicians of the day, influenced by writers such as Thomas Paine. George III, she explained, much preferred to hold on to as much power for the monarchy as he could and supported those like Pitt the Younger who opposed revolutionary ideas. The talk went on to describe further events in England during this period, such as scientific discoveries of Herschel, the development of mechanical aids to industrialisation, the social changes sought by Wilberforce, plus the influence the French Revolution had on English Literature of the time. The talk ended with what might have been the most significant development, the appearance of Pears Soap!

Darnay
is
arrested



Graeme Yardley as Darnay, John Oakley as Postmaster and Kathleen Campbell, Jensen Brough and Cael de Boer as Patriots.

Programme Report – August

In the first sketch from Chapter 1, titled *The Journey*, Charles Darnay, played by Graeme Yardley, embarked upon a journey from England to France in the hope that he would be able to help his old servant Gabelle who had been imprisoned. Vanessa narrated the scene and enlisted the help of the audience who shouted loudly, “Down with the Emigrant” on cue. Reaching the town of Beauvais outside Paris Darnay was accosted by a number of revolutionaries played by John Oakley, Peter Lewis and Chris Richards all of whom called for Darnay’s arrest. The Postmaster, played by Peter Oakley, placated the crowd declaring he would be tried in Paris and explained to Darnay that, despite his protestations that he was not a traitor, the new proposed decree would mean that not only would the property of all emigrants be sold but all would be banished and any returning to France would be condemned to death. Reaching Paris, Darnay was questioned by an officer played by Kathleen Campbell and assisted by Patriots played by Cael de Boer and visitor Jensen Brough. Identified by Defarge, played by John Sullivan, Darnay, as the emigrant Evrémonde, was then consigned to the old debtor’s prison of Paris La Force now used by the revolutionaries to incarcerate political prisoners. Darnay appealed to Defarge for help but the latter reproved him for returning to France, declared himself loyal to his people and would offer him no help. Darnay, imprisoned “in secret” thinks he may not have made this journey had he foreseen the events of the last few days.

Scene 2 from Chapter 2, *The Grindstone*, took place in the premises of Tellson’s Bank in Paris. Mr Lorry, played by Peter Oakley, was agitated by the noise of a grindstone being installed in the courtyard but was even more alarmed at the sudden arrival of Lucie Manette, played by Relda Oakley, and Dr Manette, played by Harold Oakley. They explained that Darnay was imprisoned in Paris. Dr Manette, having been a prisoner in the bastille and therefore believing himself to be safe from the revolutionaries, promised to see what he could do to help free Darnay.

A Shadow is the title of the third sketch. Mr Lorry, not wanting to endanger the bank, found lodgings nearby for the Manettes and Miss Pross, played by Lesley McKone. Defarge arrived at the bank with a note for Lorry enclosing a letter for Lucie from Darnay. Defarge, accompanied by

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Madame Defarge played by Annabel Gormack and Vengeance, played by Edwina Palmer in her debut for the Branch, had gone to the Manettes where Madame Defarge and Vengeance were particular in their identification of Lucie and her child (played by a doll) and had cast a shadow over the proceedings. As a wife and mother, Lucie appealed to Madame Defarge and the Vengeance, but both coldly and without sympathy pointed out that they have both borne the misery, oppression and neglect of their *sisters* for a long time and had no interest in helping an Evrémonte.



Peter Oakley as Mr Lorry, Relda Oakley as Lucy, Edwina Palmer as Vengeance, Annabel Gormack and John Sullivan as Monsieur and Madame Defarge.

The programme then moved on to chapter 7, *A Knock at the Door*. After some fifteen months incarceration, Darnay had been moved to the prison Conciergerie to appear before the Tribunal. Miraculously he was

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released on the testimony of Manette and Lorry. However, this sketch also outlined Defarge and his wife denouncing Darnay so that he was once again under arrest.



Relda Oakley as Lucy, Graeme Yardley as Darnay, and Kathleen Campbell, Chris Richards, Jensen Brough and Cael de Boer as ‘Citizens’.



Duane Griffin as Jerry Cruncher, Lesley McKone as Miss Pross, John Spain as Solomon, alias John Barsad!

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Lesley McKone as Miss Pross, Geoffrey Heath as Carton and John Spain as Barsad

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In the next two sketches, *A Hand at Cards*, a lively Miss Pross and Jerry Cruncher, who is played by Duane Griffin, have been at the market purchasing provisions. They stopped at a wine shop to purchase wine when an astonished Pross recognised a customer as her long-lost brother Solomon, played by John Spain. Dressed as a Frenchman and a Republican, Solomon was horrified at being recognised by his excited sister. Jerry recognised Barsad as the government spy who had testified against Darnay at the Old Bailey! He was also identified as Barsad by no other than a nonchalant Sydney Carton, played by Geoffrey Heath. Establishing that Barsad was a prison spy for the Republicans and had access to the Conciergerie where Darnay was incarcerated, Carton skilfully persuaded Solomon, alias Barsad, that it was in his best interests to do Carton's bidding!

In true Dickensian fashion, Vanessa left us on a cliff-hanger! We will return next month to find out what that favour was.

Annabel Gormack concluded the afternoon's programme by thanking Vanessa for all her work in producing an enjoyable programme. Vanessa thanked all those who had taken part and members then gathered for our usual "nourishing" afternoon tea!

P.F-F.



Geoffrey Heath as Carton, John Spain as Barsad, Duane Griffin as Jerry Cruncher

A Tale of Two Cities—Time-line

<u>Date</u>	<u>Fictional Events</u>	<u>Book, Chapter</u>	<u>Historical Events</u>	<u>Date</u>
			Louis XV King of France - Damien's attempt at assassination	January 1757
22.12.1757	Manette engaged by Evrémondés	Bk 3. Ch.10.		
29.12.1757	Death of girl			
31.12.1757	Visit of Marquis. Arrest of Manette			
			Trial and execution of de la Barre	1766
Dec 1767	Manette begins his testament			
Nov 1775	Release of Manette from Bastille	Bk 1. Ch 1-6	Battle of Lexington	19.04.1775
Mar 1780	Darnay's trial at the Old Bailey	Bk 2. Ch 1-5	Gordon Riots	June 1780
June 1780	The thunderstorm in Soho	Bk 2 Ch 6		
July 1780	Marquis in Paris. Darnay's visit to château. Murder of Marquis	Bk 2 Ch 7-9		
July-August 1781	Darnay and Stryver propose to Lucie. Cruncher's attempt at resurrectionism	Bk 2	Necker's <i>Compe rendu</i> . Necker dismissed as Controller-General. Trial: de la Motte at Old Bailey	January 1781 May 1781 14.07.1781

<u>Date</u>	<u>Fictional Events</u>	<u>Book, Chapter</u>	<u>Historical Events</u>	<u>Date</u>
	Defarges visit Versailles	Bk 2. Ch 10-20	Increasing deficit of revenue in France	
July-August 1781	Marriage of Lucie & Darnay	Bk 2. Ch 10-20		
Summer 1783 - July 1789	Young Lucy born. Death of infant brother	Bk 2. Ch 21-23	States-General assembles at Versailles. 'Tennis Court Oath'	May 1789 20.06.1789
14.07.1789	Defarges at storming of Bastille and murder of Foulon		Necker again dismissed Storming of the Bastille	12.07.1789 14.07 1789
	Burning of Evrémonde château		States-General becomes Constituent Assembly	
			March on Versailles; royal family and Assembly brought to Paris	05.10.1789
			'First Emigration' of aristocrats	Oct to Dec 1789
			Abolition of Titles of Nobility	June 1790
			'Feast of Federation'. Oaths to Nation sworn on Champs de Mars	14.07.1790
			Debate over new	

<u>Date</u>	<u>Fictional Events</u>	<u>Book, Chapter</u>	<u>Historical Events</u>	<u>Date</u>
			constitution	
			Death of Mirabeau	April 1791
			Royal family attempts to leave France (Flight to Varennes)	June 1791
			Convention of Piltitz of German princes declares intention of interfering in French Affairs	Aug 1791
			Constitution accepted by King	Sept 1791
			Legislative assembly	Oct 1791
			Further emigration of nobles. German princes resolve to limit French influence on borders	Feb-Mar 1792
			French Assembly declares war against Emperor and his allies	20.04.1792
Summer 1792 21.06 1792	Young Lucie aged 9 Gabelle's letter written	Bk 2. Ch 21-23	Tuilleries invaded. Dialogue with King	June 1792
			'La patrie en danger'	22.07 1792
			Duke of Brunswick's	24.07.1792

<u>Date</u>	<u>Fictional Events</u>	<u>Book, Chapter</u>	<u>Historical Events</u>	<u>Date</u>
			Manifesto declares intention of 'military execution' if French royal family is harmed. Prussian and Austrian troops advance	
			Armed invasion of Tuilleries, massacre of Swiss Guards	10.08.1792
			Royal family moved to Temple	13.08.1792
14.08.1792	Darnay leaves for Paris	Bk 2. Ch 24	Royal right of veto suspended	
16-18 Aug	Darnay arrested	Bk 3. Ch 1	Longwy falls to Brunswick's army. Austrians besiege Thionville	23.08.1792
03.09.1792	Lucie and Manette arrive in Paris	Bk 3. Ch 2-3	Prussians take Verdun	02.09.1792
			Prison massacres in Paris	2-6 Sept '92
07.09.1792 - Oct 1793	Manette works in Paris prisons	Bk 3. Ch 4		
			France declared a Republic	20.09.1792
			Prussians retreat	Oct 1792
			King on trial	Dec 1792
			King condemned to death	17.01.1793

<u>Date</u>	<u>Fictional Events</u>	<u>Book, Chapter</u>	<u>Historical Events</u>	<u>Date</u>
	King executed. British ambassador leaves Paris			21.01.1793
	Austrian Netherlands in French hands			Feb 1793
	Britain and France at war			01.02.1793
	Committee of Public Safety asserts control			Jan – Feb 1793
	Revolutionary Tribunal instituted			Mar 1793
	Charlotte Corday murders Marat			13.07.1793
	Girondin deputies in prison			July 1793
	Valenciennes falls to Duke of York			26.07.1793
	Beginning of 'Reign of Terror'			Jul–Aug 1793
	'France Risen against Tyrants'			23.08.1793
	'Law of the Suspect'			17.09.1793
	Execution of Marie-Antoinette			18.10.1793
	Execution of 22 Girondins			31.10.1793
	Terror is 'the order of the day'			Nov 1793
	Execution of			06.11.1793

<u>Date</u>	<u>Fictional Events</u>	<u>Book, Chapter</u>	<u>Historical Events</u>	<u>Date</u>
			Philippe Egalité Execution of Madame Roland	08.11.1793
Nov-Dec 1793	Lucie watches outside La Force	Bk 3. Ch 5	Cult of Reason; plunder of the churches; the 'Carmagnole complete'	Nov 1793
Dec 1793	Darnay's 1 st trial before Revolutionary Tribunal	Bk 3. Ch 6	Toulon besieged by British; 'Noyade' at Nantes	Dec 1793
Dec 1793	Darnay rearrested	Bk 3. Ch 7		
Dec 1793	Carton finds Barsad in Paris; Carton resolves to rescue Darnay	Bk 3. Ch 8-9		
Dec 1793 or Jan 1794	Darnay's 2 nd trial; Manette's testament read; Darnay condemned	Bk 3. Ch 10		
Jan 1794?	Carton changes places with Darnay in Conciergerie; Carton executed.			

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- 2 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Storming_of_the_Bastille
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Illustrations and Photos

p.7 Rosburn Receptions

<https://cdn.eventfinda.co.nz/uploads/locations/transformed/128318-4945-34.jpg>

p.24 Health Camp, Otaki 1940

<https://nzhistory.govt.nz/files/styles/fullsize/public/images/stories/youth/youth-003.jpg?itok=8g3GP84U>

p.35 Bastille Day.

https://www.history.com/.image/ar_1:1%2Cc_fill%2Ccs_srgb%2Cfl_progressive%2Cq_auto:good%2Cw_1200/MTY1MTk5NzE5MTM0NDA1OTQ0/topic_bastille_day.jpg

p.37 Women at Versailles

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/57/A_Versailles%2C%2C%20Versailles_5_octobre_1789_-_Restoration.jpg/1280px-A_Versailles%2C%2C%20Versailles_5_octobre_1789_-_Restoration.jpg

p.39 Joseph-Francis Foulon

https://photos.geni.com/p13/b2/a2/a6/2c/53444839d666e6bb/joseph_francois_foullon_1715_large.jpg

p.42 Thomas Paine

[pichttps://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/b/b0/Fashion-before-Ease-Gillray.jpeg/800px-Fashion-before-Ease-Gillray.jpeg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/b/b0/Fashion-before-Ease-Gillray.jpeg/800px-Fashion-before-Ease-Gillray.jpeg)

p.43 Reformers Memorial

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/2/2d/Base_of_the_Reformers_Memorial%2C_Kensal_Green_Cemetery%2C_showing_Lloyd_Jones.JPG/220px-Base_of_the_Reformers_Memorial%2C_Kensal_Green_Cemetery%2C_showing_Lloyd_Jones.JPG

p.46 Kedleston Hall

<https://nt.global.ssl.fastly.net/images/1431729981271-kedlestonhall1098275mansionexterior.jpg?width=1920&auto=webp&crop=16:7>

p.47 Pears Soap

<https://i.ebayimg.com/thumbs/images/g/KcwAAOSwjNdb8-FL/s-l300.webp>

All other photos taken by Pauline Francis-Fox or Vanessa Grenfell.