

CFP: The 29th Annual Dickens Society Symposium

“Dickens, Context and Co-occurrence”

July 15 – 18, 2024

University of Birmingham, UK



We are delighted to welcome you to the University of Birmingham!

The theme of the 2024 symposium will be “Dickens, Context and Co-occurrence”. We invite you think of the various contexts that Dickens’s works are set in, connect to, and imagine. Contexts are where things co-occur – with various effects.

Topics of papers can cover Dickens and the context of theatre, the world of fashion, or the natural environment; Dickens and changing contexts through travel, translation, and time; contexts of family and friends; you may also want to think about the relationship between real world contexts and the textual contexts of the words on the page. As is the case every year, proposals on other aspects of Dickens’s life and works are welcome, too.

Please submit your abstract of 300 words (maximum) and bio of 150 words (maximum) to dickens2024@contacts.bham.ac.uk

DEADLINE: 15 JANUARY 2024.

Please note that you need to be a member of the Dickens Society to present at the annual conference. Membership is conferred by subscription to Dickens Quarterly. Find out more [here](#).

Birmingham is known for its status as the UK’s “Second City” (after London) and for its industrial heritage. Centrally located in the West Midlands, it boasts excellent transportation access, located less than two hours from London, and [has its own international airport](#). Home to the largest creative sectors outside the capital, it is one of the most multicultural cities of the UK, and also one of the greenest cities in the country. If you are

thinking of spending a few days before or after the symposium in Birmingham, you [might find this information useful](#).

The [University of Birmingham](#) is England's first civic university. Cultural assets on campus include the [Barber Institute of Fine Arts](#), the [Lapworth Museum of Geology](#) and [Winterbourne House and Garden](#). Charles Dickens visited Birmingham on several occasions, the most notable time probably occurring in 1853 when he gave his first public reading of A Christmas Carol in Birmingham Town Hall.

Details about travel, accommodation, and the conference programme will be posted and updated on the Dickens Society [website](#) and on the University of Birmingham's conference [page](#).

For any questions, please contact the conference organisers, Michaela Mahlberg at m.a.mahlberg@bham.ac.uk & Caroline Radcliffe at C.Radcliffe@bham.ac.uk.

Call for Bursary Applications:

The Dickens Society annually provides bursaries to support the scholarly development of graduate students, independent scholars, and untenured faculty.

For our Symposium in Birmingham, we will be offering bursaries for various social media responsibilities and assistance during the event.

We will be asking bursary recipients to take over the Dickens Society social media accounts during the Symposium, help with running the conference, possibly write a report of the papers to be disseminated afterwards through the Society's channels, and contribute a blog post on a topic of their choosing for the Society blog within four months of the end of the event.

To apply, graduate students, independent scholars, and untenured faculty whose papers have been accepted should send a one-page CV with a one-page cover letter to Claire Wood, the Society Secretary, at dickenssocietysecretary@gmail.com by **31 May 2024**.

The one-page cover letter should specify your academic status and funding (or lack thereof) and discuss the relevance of the Symposium for your research and professional development. It should also outline the following:

- Your own ideas for improving the social media presence of the event/any skills with Twitter and other relevant experience.
- If relevant, a very brief idea for a blog post you might write for the society blog after the event.
- Any relevant previous experience organizing and/or attending online and in-person academic conferences.

The bursary winners will be announced in early June. If you have any queries, please email dickenssocietysecretary@gmail.com.

Robert B. Partlow, Jr. Prize

The Partlow Prize recognizes the best essay submitted for presentation at the Symposium by a graduate student, independent scholar, or contingent faculty member. Applicants for the Partlow Prize must submit a complete essay, suitable for 20-minute presentation time, to the Program Committee Chair, Michaela Mahlberg, at m.a.mahlberg@bham.ac.uk by **1 May 2024**.

The Partlow Prize carries a cash award of \$500 (or, in the case of co-winners, two prizes of \$300 each) and a waiver of the registration fee for the Symposium. Should the essay be of publishable quality, Dickens Quarterly shall have the right of first refusal. We expect to decide on a winner by end of May.

David Paroissien Prize

The David Paroissien Prize is awarded each year to the best peer-reviewed essay on Dickens published in a journal or edited collection. The Prize is named for David Paroissien, a founding member of the Dickens Society and also the founder of Dickens Quarterly, which he edited from its first issue in 1983 until his final issue in December 2020. As an editor he was rigorous, tactful, and generous, particularly with younger scholars. Under his direction, Dickens Quarterly attracted contributions from Dickens scholars around the world and became a leading venue for new work in the field.

To nominate (or self-nominate) an essay for the Paroissien Prize, please provide a copy of the essay and a cover email giving the name, email address, and institutional affiliation (if any) of its author. For the 2023 competition (essays published 1 January 2023 – 31 December 2023), send these materials to Claire Wood, the Society Secretary, at dickenssocietysecretary@gmail.com by **31 January 2024**.

A three-person committee comprised of Officers and/or Trustees will judge submissions. Please note that, in determining an essay's eligibility for a given year, the actual date of appearance is what matters, not the nominal date of the journal issue, since it is common for journals to lag behind their publication date. Any author may be nominated for this Prize, whether or not they are a Society member. The Prize carries a cash award of \$500 and waives the registration fee for the Symposium at which the recipient will be recognized.

Decisions will be announced by early June 2024 to allow the recipient the option of making travel plans to attend the symposium and accept the prize in-person.