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# London Particular

The Dickens Fellowship Newsletter

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## LONDON PARTICULAR

The increased costs of printing and postage means this edition of the *London Particular* will be the last one to be automatically sent out to members by post. In future it will be sent electronically to those with that facility. Those members who would like to continue receiving the *LP* by post should write to The Dickens Fellowship, 48 Doughty Street, London WC1N 2LX. **Those who have already informed us that they wish to continue to receive a paper copy of *Mr Dick's Kite* need do nothing more; they will continue to receive the *LP* in the usual way.**

## REMINDER - MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Members should have received a renewal form for 2014 with the last *LP*. Fees are unchanged, i.e. £17 for membership, £15 for The Dickensian. If you haven't renewed, please do so asap. If you've mislaid the form, send your name and address with cheque payable to Dickens Fellowship, or credit card details, to the Membership Secretary, Dickens Fellowship, 48 Doughty Street, London WC1N 2LX. If you have renewed, you will have received membership card/programme for 2014.

## CHRISTMAS COMPETITION

The answers to the questions posed are:

1. In *The Haunted Man*, Redlaw is a teacher of chemistry.
2. In *The Battle of Life*, Snitchey is a lawyer.
3. In *The Chimes*, Sir Joseph Bowley's secretary is Mr Fish.
4. In *The Cricket on the Hearth*, Gruff and Tackleton manufacture toys.

The correct entries were all put in the hat at the Christmas Supper on 7 December and the winning entry, drawn by our President, Professor Jenny Hartley, was that submitted by Frans de Busser – a Central Fellowship member in Hillegom in The Netherlands. Congratulations to Frans. The copy of Richard B Adams's book, *Eben Kruge: How A Christmas Carol Came to be Written* is now with him.

## ALL CHANGE AT THE CD MUSEUM

*After 12 years at the CDM, first as Assistant Curator and more recently as Director, Florian Schweizer has been appointed Chief Executive of the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies (NADFAS). Florian oversaw the successful Great Expectations project which transformed the Museum. We wish him well in his new role. Louise West, formerly curator of the Jane Austen house at Chawton, will act as Director until a permanent replacement is found. Louisa Price has been appointed Curator in succession to Fiona Jenkins. We wish both Louise and Louisa well.*

**Scandalous authors** Joni Rendon, a former popular and hard-working volunteer at the CDM, has recently co-written a racy, entertaining, well-researched book entitled "*Writers Between the Covers*", a factual account of the love lives of famous authors. There is a chapter on the Dickens/Ellen Ternan relationship, and it also includes among others Byron, Tolstoy, Daphne du Maurier, Virginia Woolf and the jaw-dropping Arthur Miller/Marilyn Monro saga. Great fun and recommended. Obtainable on Amazon or direct from Joni on [rendon3@hotmail.com](mailto:rendon3@hotmail.com) for a signed copy. Price £10 including p&p.

**Dickens The Comforter** - Gillian Reynolds, radio critic for the Daily Telegraph, recently praised a programme in the "The Book That Changed Me" series, which featured former Labour Home Secretary, Alan Johnson, talking about David Copperfield. Johnson lived with his mother and elder sister in a Paddington slum, his father having run off years earlier. When he was 13 his mother died suddenly in hospital. He'd been sent to stay with the Coxes, family friends. The day his mother died, Mr Cox unlocked the book cabinet and allowed him to choose a book. He chose DC and the novel became his constant companion for a year. Tears fell for nurse Peggotty, he said, that didn't for his mother. When rehoused with his sister in a council flat in Battersea, far from home, DC saw him through.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

***Tues 15 April: PLEASE NOTE that, the advertised speaker, Professor Ian Haywood, is unable to attend. We are delighted that, at very short notice, Mr Bernard Winchester has agreed to give an illustrated talk on: The Gordon Riots of 1780. 6.30 start as usual. (Lumen)***

***Sun 11 May: Commemoration Service at the Church of St George the Martyr, Borough High Street, 11 am, followed by lunch at The George Inn, Southwark***

***Tues 20 May: Dr Caroline Radcliffe – ‘We mean to burst on an astonished World’ – Dickens and The Lighthouse (Lumen)***

***Mon 9 June: Wreath-laying at Westminster Abbey to mark the 144<sup>th</sup> anniversary of CD’s death. Assemble 5.45 pm inside the West Door. Members may wish to attend Evensong beforehand in the Abbey at 5 pm.***

***Thurs 19 June: ‘Making Sense of Place: A Short Walk in Paris with the Uncommercial Traveller’: talk by John Edmondson (Lumen)***

***Thurs 10 July: ‘Gaslight Stories: Tales from the Victorian Lunacy Panics – Women in White, Eccentric Heirs, Inconvenient People’: talk by Sarah Wise (Lumen)***

***ADDITIONAL MEETING – Members will be pleased to learn of an addition to the 2014 programme. On Tuesday 5 August Toru Sasaki, Professor of English at Kyoto University and President of the Japan Branch of the Fellowship, will speak on: ‘Knowing and Not Knowing in Great Expectations’. Start time 6.30 as usual. It will be good to see as many members as possible. (Lumen)***

**Freud and David Copperfield** DC is no. 15 in the *Guardian’s 100 Best Novels* series. According to Robert McCrum, it was the first book Sigmund Freud gave to his fiancée, Martha Bernays, on their engagement in 1882. McCrum loves DC ‘because it is, in a way, so un-Dickensian. (In what way? Ed.) *The story – so appealing to Freud – is of a boy making his way in the world, and finding himself as a man and as a writer*’. McCrum speaks of ‘the lovely, tranquil reflections on boyhood of the opening pages being replaced by the urgent demands of plot-making’. ‘The young man day-dreaming about literature among his father’s old books has been replaced by the best-

*selling writer, “The Inimitable”. Perhaps this was the truth about creativity that so moved Freud*’. Thanks to Prof Michael Slater for this article.

**Journalists Service** DF member Jan Turner tells me she attended a Thanksgiving Service held on 20 February at St Brides Church, Fleet Street. Simon Callow read from Dickens’s address to the 1865 Festival Dinner, held in Freemasons’ Tavern, Great Queen Street, in aid of the ‘Newspaper Press Fund’ as the charity was then called. This is the famous speech where CD refers to his own experience as a reporter: “*I have often transcribed for the printer, from my shorthand notes, important public speeches in which the strictest accuracy was required ..... writing on the palm of my hand, by the light of a dark lantern, in a post-chaise and four, galloping through a wild country, and through the dead of the night, at the then surprising rate of fifteen miles an hour.*”

**Dear Mr Dickens...** Paul Graham, our Joint Hon Gen Sec, tells me that, while children traditionally write to Santa Claus at the North Pole just before Christmas, Megan Maley, an enterprising schoolteacher in Grove City, Pennsylvania, encouraged 13 of her sixth grade children to write to Mr Dickens at 48 Doughty Street instead! Megan had been reading *A Christmas Carol* with her 11-year-old charges. They were making some very intelligent comments - so Megan asked them to put these and any questions they had into individual letters addressed to Mr Dickens himself. The questions include: ‘Do you intend to write a sequel?’ and ‘Did the reformed Scrooge ever get married?’ Very gamely, Mark Dickens, great, great grandson of the author and Immediate Past President of the Fellowship, has agreed to respond to them all personally. Many thanks to Mark for taking this task on!

***Dickens the Comforter – again. The Rev’d Fr Timothy M J van Carrapiett, a long-standing member, has recently moved to Surrey, and sent us some reminiscences of his childhood in Bedford during World War II. In the black-outs, he would sit at his grandmother’s knee by a roaring wood fire, while she read by candlelight – very dramatically – from Dickens’s novels. He found this a great comfort ‘in those dark sinister days’ and it led to a deep and lasting love of Dickens.***

**Like Mr Micawber, I’m waiting for something to turn up... More contributions, please, to: Alison Gowans, “Danesdyke”, 27A Ashcombe Road, Carshalton, Surrey SM5 3ET, or by email – [aligowans@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:aligowans@hotmail.co.uk)**