

# London Particular

The Newsletter for the Headquarters Group of the Dickens Fellowship

## YOUR COMMITTEE NEEDS YOU

**If you have ever wanted to get more out of your membership of the Fellowship, now is your chance – Your Headquarters Committee Needs You.**

Several long-serving committee members are reaching the end of their service this year, and new faces are being sought to take their place. It is a good chance to become more involved in the running of the Headquarters programme, to meet new people and to gain the satisfaction of helping your fellow Dickensians in the HQ group.

Meetings are held every two months, usually at the Dickens House, starting at 6pm. There are a number of specific tasks regarding membership, events and communications for which members of the committee may volunteer. Serving on the committee gives you a great insight into the workings of the Fellowship and its many activities.

Anyone is encouraged to put themselves forward: male or female, young or old. Financial, communications and computer expertise is particularly welcome, but the chief requirement is a willingness to contribute in a spirit of fellowship.

If you would like to help or be given further information, please contact: Dr Tony Williams, 33 Adam Close, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP13 6BY. Nominations should arrive as soon as possible as they need to be voted upon at October's Annual General Meeting.

## TOGETHER IN FELLOWSHIP

**Fellow Dickensians from all walks of life came together in Bristol for the 2003 Annual Conference in July. This was another very successful and well attended gathering, although some old friends were missed from this country and abroad.**

Cards were signed by many delegates to be sent to HQ members Esme Shayler and Gordon Philo who are not well, and to Alan and Marjorie Watts wishing them every happiness in their new home.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

**Thurs 2 Oct:** AGM and entertainment - Pickwick in Bath - at Swedenborg Hall

**Wed 12 Nov:** 'Why Mr Dickens couldn't really fly to Paris' - A talk by Derek Mortimer at Swedenborg Hall.

**Mon 1 Dec:** 'Dickens's Villains: Melodrama, Character, Popular Culture' - A talk by Juliet John at Swedenborg Hall.

**Sat 6 Dec:** Christmas Supper. Arrangements being made by Peter Duggan, whose contact details are on your membership card.

**Fri 19 Dec:** Gad's Hill Evening. 'Charles Dickens 1812-70: A Family View' - Henry Dickens Hawksley CBE.

**Until 31 Oct:** Gore of Yore at the Dickens House: Based upon Dickens's 'A Child's History of England' this exhibition has proved particularly popular with younger visitors to the House.

At the opening reception, Henry Hawksley transferred the presidency to Paul Schlicke. In all there were 134 delegates registered.

The programme of lectures and visits was well-organised, interesting and entertaining, and the closing, costumed reading of "Breach of Promise" (Scenes from Pickwick Papers) by members of the Bristol and Clifton Dickens Society – which predates the Fellowship itself – were a happy close to a very enjoyable conference.

A new HQ member, Herr Helmut Stibal, attending with his wife Else, put it in a nutshell- "It's like a happy family!"

Good to know that the aims of the Fellowship, and the influence of Charles Dickens are still so strongly realised.

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## CHELTHENHAM FESTIVAL

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**Simon Callow will again be celebrating Dickens in a new piece at this year's Cheltenham Festival of Literature.**

The performance will take place on Friday 17th October, 8.45-10pm, and there will be a discount of £2.00 for members of the Fellowship.

The Festival runs from 10th-19th October and features over 400 novelists and biographers, poets and storytellers, philosophers and explorers, artists and filmmakers.

Website: <http://www.cheltenhamfestivals.co.uk>

Brochure Hotline: 01242 237377

Box Office: 01242 227979.

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## DICKENS STUDIES

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**The Charles Dickens Museum is offering an exciting new evening course taught by some of the leading experts on Dickens's life and works from 21 October to 9 December 2003.**

The World of Charles Dickens course offers a unique approach to Dickens's personality, using the world's finest collection of Dickens related material. The subjects explore important aspects of Dickens's literary career and personal life, while tutors have been chosen to share their wide range of knowledge with students.

Andrew Xavier, curator of the Charles Dickens Museum, offers a behind-the-scenes look at the research collections; Dr Tony Williams, joint Honorary General Secretary of the Fellowship, leads an examination of Dickens's theatre; Anthony Burton, former curator at the Victoria and Albert Museum, looks at Dickens's illustrators and Doctor Leon Litvack examines Dickens's travels abroad.

Later in the course, the British Library's Dr Elizabeth James talks about Dickens's relationship with his publishers; Dickens's London is explored by Professor Andrew Sanders; Prof Malcolm Andrews, of the University of Canterbury looks at Dickens's public readings, and Prof Malcolm Slater gives a timely talk on Dickens and Christmas.

The course includes access to the research facilities at the Charles Dickens Museum, an invitation to the private view of the next special exhibition at the museum and handling of rare artefacts from the collection.

The course runs on Tuesdays from 6.30-8.00pm. The cost is £100 (£80 student concession fee.).

For more information telephone 020 7405 2127.

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## MARTHA ROSSO GIFT

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**Martha Rosso of the Philadelphia Branch – who sadly died in March this year – gave the Fellowship \$1,000 which is being used in accordance with her wishes to develop the organisation's website.**

While the current site offers a wealth of features connected to the Fellowship and Dickens himself, there is always scope for improvement. Some of the possible developments include:

- ▶ improving the site's design and navigation
- ▶ developing the content for different users
- ▶ a picture gallery of portraits and characters
- ▶ putting early issues of the Dickensian online
- ▶ transmitting Fellowship events to people online

Several members made suggestions for the site in the Centenary Survey, but new ideas are always welcome.

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## ON THE WEB

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**On the subject of the internet, there is a wealth of Dickens related material available at the click of a mouse:**

Fellowship member Sue Gane runs a site where you can buy guides for Dickens walks. She is currently offering a free copy of the David Copperfield London walk at [www.dickens-and-london.com](http://www.dickens-and-london.com)

Or try the site run by Professor Matsuoka of the Japan branch – and Nagoya University – for a vast compendium of writing about the Inimitable: [www.lang.nagoya-u.ac.jp/~matsuoka/Dickens.htm](http://www.lang.nagoya-u.ac.jp/~matsuoka/Dickens.htm).

And a new website has been established for Restoration House, Rochester, which was the model for Miss Havisham's Satis House in Great Expectations: [www.restorationhouse.co.uk](http://www.restorationhouse.co.uk)

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## HAVE YOUR SAY

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**Any feedback on the contents of this newsletter, or suggestions for future items to be included should be sent to: Matthew Davis, 80 Galloway Road, Shepherd's Bush, London, W12 0PJ.**