

Fellowship Notes and News

Edited by Tony Williams



When Found

Dickens's 'character detective'? John Lockwood has sent us a curious item from *The Washington Post* for 4 July 1896 (page 11). In

this article we learn about Joseph Lowman who, at the time of the article, was working as a lift attendant in Milwaukee, but who originated from London. His claim (uncorroborated as far as we know) is that, some forty years previously, he had worked for Charles Dickens as a combination of night watchman, bodyguard and researcher, making use of his contacts in the police and the underworld. He accompanied Dickens on his nocturnal excursions through London, and claimed Dickens disguised himself with a shabby old coat:

'...an' lookin' like the worst of them, with a coat not many of the boys would 'a' looked at. I had to be mighty careful into what I took him, though, for if that old coat had 'a' got ripped off there wouldn't been no fifteen volumes o' his left.'

He also argues that he was responsible for finding the originals of a number of Dickens's characters, describing himself as a 'character detective'. Among those listed are Paul Dombey and his father, Mrs Jarley and her waxworks, Nell's Grandfather, Sam and Tony Weller. Lowman's memories of Dickens are not entirely favourable. Whilst acknowledging the writer's professional skills and talent, he found his 'perfect frenzy of ideas' poured out for a stenographer to record, overpowering. He is critical of some of his personal behaviour and relationships, now much better known than they were at the time of the article. *The Washington Post's* writer ends the piece by reflecting with surprise that Dickens did not base any characters on Joseph Lowman, who seems to offer plenty of material.

Mamie remembers her father John Lockwood has also sent two memories of Dickens from his daughter Mamie, mentioned on page 6 of *The Washington Post* for 23 March 1884:

He had funny songs which he used to sing to them (his children), before they went to bed. One in particular, about an old man who caught cold and rheumatism while driving in an omnibus, was a great favourite, and, as it was accompanied by sneezes, coughs and funny gesticulations, it had to be sung over and over again before the small audience was satisfied. [perhaps ‘Shivery Shakey, ain’t it cold...’]

He had acquired by degrees an excellent collection of conjuring tricks and on Twelfth Night – the eldest son’s birthday – he would very often, dressed as a magician, give a conjuring entertainment, when a little figure which appeared from a wonderful and mysterious bag and which was supposed to be a personal friend of the conjurer, would greatly delight the audience by his funny stories, his eccentric voice and way of speaking and by his miraculous appearances and disappearances.

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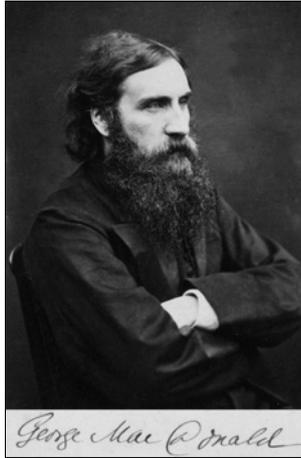
Writer to Writer Central Fellowship member Janet Recknell-Turner has provided us with details she has found, in the UK *Daily Telegraph* for 5 June, of an interview with Susan Hill, the writer of, among other works, *The Woman in Black*, which has been adapted for successful stage and film performances. Susan Hill credits Dickens and particularly *A Christmas Carol* as one of her major influences in writing the original work. In a previous interview in 2012 (which can be found at <https://dovegrayreadertypepad.com/>) she identifies Dickens as giving her ‘no greater influence, no greater source of reading enrichment and pleasure’, and continues her observations with ‘...there is nothing, nothing that he does not know about, understand and explain by presenting it in fiction. Domestic violence, the betrayal of children’s innocence, “the insolence of office and the law’s delays”, pomposity and self-regard, pride, humility, self-sacrifice, altruism, greed....it is all, all in Dickens. I often wonder if I need any other writer.’

Readers might be interested in two books by Susan Hill, both exploring her experiences in reading and both with substantial assessments of Dickens: *Howard’s End is On the Landing* (2009) and *Jacob’s Room is Full of Books* (2017), both published by Profile Books.

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Connected through Beards We were pleased to be contacted by Barbara Amell, editor of *Wingfold*, a quarterly magazine devoted to George MacDonald (1824-1905), a Scottish author, poet and Christian

minister. He was a pioneering figure in the field of modern fantasy literature. In an undated letter to MacDonald from his wife Louisa, filed with their September 1853 correspondence, she advised him to read an article about shaving in ‘last month’s *Household Words*’, adding she thought he would agree with the sentiments. MacDonald’s full beard had caused some controversy in the 1850s.



The article ‘Why Shave?’ was in *Household Words* for 13 August 1853; the authors were Henry Morley and W. H. Wills. In subsequent years, George MacDonald and Henry Morley became good friends; Morley was seated on the lecture platform for at least two of MacDonald’s literary lectures. In ‘Why Shave?’ the natural qualities of a full beard were praised, and the history of beards as common and revered in various cultures was represented. Also cited in this article were the health benefits for men with beards, for example: ‘...the whiskerless seldom can bear long exposure to a sharp wind that strikes on the bare cheek ... no better summer shield or winter covering against the sun or storm can be provided, than the hair which grows over those parts of the face which need protection and descends as beard in front of the neck and chest.’ George MacDonald suffered for most of his adult life from lung difficulties. He may have agreed with the cultural sentiments expressed in this article, but it seems likely that he grew a full beard and moustache on the advice of a doctor.

Fellowship Notes and News

People

Dickensians will be very pleased to welcome Ian Dickens as the Fellowship's President. His term of office will last for two years, from 2019 to 2021, which means that he will be our President when we mark the 150th anniversary of his great-great-grandfather's death next year, once more emphasising the links between the Dickens family and the Fellowship. We would also like to express our gratitude to Professor John Bowen for his unfailing involvement and support for Fellowship activities during his term of office as President from 2017.

Having organised this year's highly enjoyable conference in Eastbourne in July, Maggie de Vos came to the end of her term as Chairman of Fellowship Council. We are most grateful for the sterling contribution she has made, and would also like to thank Elizabeth Velluet for agreeing to take on that role in her place. She is well known to members of Branches world-wide for her skilful and efficient handling of the Diary and Branch Lines sections of this journal.

To them and all those who make such strong commitments to the Fellowship's well-being we send our very best wishes and thanks.

We would like to congratulate Dr Leon Litvack, Reader in English at Queen's University Belfast and Principal Editor of the Fellowship's Dickens Letters Project, on his recent appointment to the Advisory Council on National Records and Archives (ACNRA). He was appointed by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport in October 2019 and will serve for four years.

2020 Conference

Dickens Fellowship Conference next year will be marking the 150th anniversary of Dickens's death, and is taking as its theme "Lord, keep my memory green": Dickens in 1870 and after'. It will take place in London, from 15 to 20 July, based at Goodenough College. There will be an optional extra day on 21 July to enable delegates to visit Knebworth, the home of Dickens's friend and fellow-novelist, Edward Bulwer Lytton. Another optional event will be the Conference banquet, to be held at the Garrick Club.

Conference will be non-residential, but suggestions for places to stay are provided on the Conference website at <https://dickensfellowship.org/conference/> which contains all the other information potential delegates will require.

We look forward to meeting you in London next summer for what promises to be a very special and enjoyable conference.

London Birthday Dinner 2020

The 208th anniversary of Charles Dickens's Birthday will be celebrated on Friday 7 February 2020. Following the extremely enjoyable dinner held there last year, the 2020 Birthday Dinner will once again be held at the Oxford and Cambridge Club, 71 Pall Mall, London, SW1Y 5HD. We are once more grateful to Michael Rogers for arranging with the Club, of which he is a member, for us to hold this event there. Further details, including booking arrangements, will appear on the Fellowship's website in due course.

University of Buckingham Conference

Details of a conference being held at the University of Buckingham from 26-29 March 2020 on 'Dickens and Impact' may be found at <https://dickensimpact.art.blog>

Branch Lines

In the previous issue of this journal, and also at the Conference AGM, we explained some changes planned for the 'Branch Lines' section. These have been put into effect in this issue. Readers will find the same range of reports from Branches, but with an emphasis on particular highlights that have taken place. There is also the first of the Branch Self-Portraits, a more detailed account of a Branch's history and development. The first of these to appear comes from the Aberdeen Branch and we are grateful to Paul Schlicke and his team for compiling such a valuable account.

Dickens Fellowship Diary

Activities arranged for the period from January to April 2020 are given below. Further information is available from the appropriate Secretary. Visitors are advised to check, since some dates may be subject to change. Branch Secretaries are encouraged to send details of activities from May to August 2020 for publication in the Spring issue of *The Dickensian*, to Dickens Fellowship, c/o 48 Doughty Street, London WC1N 2LX or by e-mail to Elizabeth Velluet (elizabethvelluet@yahoo.co.uk) as soon as possible, and no later than 15 February 2020.

January

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| tbc | Niagara-on-the-Lake | <i>The Pickwick Papers</i> , chs 22-28 |
| 4 | Christchurch | New Year Picnic in the Botanical Gardens |
| 4 | Nottingham | <i>The Old Curiosity Shop</i> , chs 32-36 |
| 4 | Friends of Dickens,
New York | <i>The Old Curiosity Shop</i> |
| 7 | Bristol & Clifton | <i>The Old Curiosity Shop</i> , chs 38-45 led by Pat Cemlyn-Jones |
| 7 | Montreal | <i>David Copperfield</i> , chs 15-22 |
| 8 | Broadstairs | New Year's Social, with Dickens Quiz |
| 10 | Baltimore | <i>The Old Curiosity Shop</i> , chs 53-end |
| 11 | Carrara | Conference on 'The Relation between Dickens and the Italian Writer Carlo Emilio Gadda': Raffaele Donnarumma |
| 11 | New York City | Book Discussion |
| 11 | Rockland | <i>Martin Chuzzlewit</i> , chs 39-40; <i>American Notes</i> , chs 15-16 |
| 13 | Cambridge | 'Dickens and the Sea': talk by Vyvyan Brendon; Textual Discussion of <i>Dombey and Son</i> , chs 20-25 |
| 13 | Canterbury | 'Dickens and the Sedentary Body': talk by Vybarr Cregan-Reid |
| 13 | North East England | Reading Book of the Year |
| 14 | Portsmouth Birthplace | 'Introduction to Book of the Year: <i>Bleak House</i> ': talk by Tony Pointon |
| 15 | Aberdeen | 'Women's Issues in <i>Dombey & Son</i> ': talk by Christine Thomas |
| 16 | Rochester & Chatham | 'A Tale of Two Desks': talk by Malcolm Andrews |
| 17 | Palo Alto | Reading <i>Nicholas Nickleby</i> |
| 18 | Monterey | <i>A Tale of Two Cities</i> , Book 2, chs 5-13 |
| 18 | New Orleans | <i>The Old Curiosity Shop</i> , chs 31-39 |
| 18 | Nottingham | <i>The Old Curiosity Shop</i> , chs 37-41, led by Doug Travers; Bring and Buy sale |
| 18 | Philadelphia | <i>The Mystery of Edwin Drood</i> , chs 13-19, plot delineation. Reader's Theatre Presentation |
| 21 | Bristol & Clifton' | <i>The Old Curiosity Shop</i> , chs 46-53 led by Mary Oldfield and Charmian Howard |
| 21 | Central | 'Footnotes: In the footsteps of Dickens and Collins': talk by Peter Fiennes |

- 24-26 Carrara Mini-conference to celebrate 175th anniversary of Dickens's Visit to Carrara
 25 Bristol & Clifton A Literary Lunch
 27 Boulogne 'The Salvation Army'
 28 Southwold *Dombey & Son*, part 2. Images of *Dombey & Son*

February

- tbc Niagara-on-the- Lake *The Pickwick Papers*, chs 29-35
 1 Nottingham *The Old Curiosity Shop*, chs 42-47 led by Jennie Travers
 2 Christchurch Birthday Dinner
 4 Bristol & Clifton *The Old Curiosity Shop*, chs 54-61 led by Margaret Wright
 4 Montreal Birthday Lunch
 4 Portsmouth Birthplace Birthday Lunch
 5 Broadstairs 'Much of Sala, and but little of Russia: "A Journey due North", *Household Words* and the Birth of a Special Correspondent': talk by Catherine Waters
 6 Eastbourne Birthday Luncheon
 7 Central Birthday Dinner at the Oxford & Cambridge Club
 7 Cleveland Birthday Celebration
 7 Portsmouth Birthplace Celebration of the birth of Dickens at the Birthplace Museum – open free of charge to the general public. Garland to be placed on Dickens Statue in Guildhall Square
 8 Bristol & Clifton Birthday Party
 8 Broadstairs 'Happy Birthday Mr Dickens!' at The Pavilion. *The Bloomsbury Christening* performed by the Dickens Declaimers
 8 Cambridge Birthday Dinner
 8 Monterey Birthday Party
 8 New Orleans *The Old Curiosity Shop*, chs 40-49
 8 New York City Birthday Luncheon
 8 Friends of Dickens, Dickens's Birthday Celebration (tbc)
 New York
 8 Philadelphia Birthday Commemoration
 8 Portsmouth Birthplace 'Dickens and Medicine': Annual Birthday Lecture by Nicholas Cambridge at John Pounds Church, High Street, Old Portsmouth
 8 Rockland *Martin Chuzzlewit*, chs 41-44; *American Notes*, ch 17
 8 Toronto Birthday Luncheon. 'Sikes and Nancy': talk by John Huston
 8 Worcester Birthday Tea. *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, chs 10-12
 9 Canterbury 'Celebrating the Brotherhood of Pen: George Augustus Sala on Dickens and Thackeray': talk by Catherine Waters

- 9 Greater Boston Birthday Lunch
 10 Cambridge 'Sacred Tears': Sentimentalism in *Dombey and Son*: talk by Val Purton; Textual Discussion, chs 26-34
- 10 North East England Reading Book of the Year
 12 Aberdeen Birthday Celebration
 14 Melbourne Birthday Dinner
 15 Nottingham *The Old Curiosity Shop*, chs 48-52 led by Margaret Lawson
- 15 Pittsburgh 'An Opium Culture in the Victorian Era': talk by Kathy Burk
- 18 Bristol & Clifton *The Old Curiosity Shop*, chs 62-68 led by Roma Hussey
- 18 Central "'Received a blank child": Dickens and the Foundling Hospital': talk by Jane King
- 20 Rochester & Chatham 'Kent in the 19th Century': talk by Bob Ogle
- 21 Palo Alto Reading *Nicholas Nickleby*
 24 Boulogne D.I.C.K.E.N.S.
 25 Southwold Birthday Lunch

March

- tbc Niagara-on-the- Lake *The Pickwick Papers*, chs 36-42
- 3 Bristol & Clifton *The Old Curiosity Shop*, chs 69-73 led by Eve Fitt
- 3 Montreal *David Copperfield*, chs 23-32
- 4 Broadstairs 'Human Interest and Fancy Goods: Dickens and *The Uncommercial Traveller*': talk by Tony Williams
- 5 Eastbourne *Barnaby Rudge* (film part 2)
- 7 Christchurch 89th Annual General Meeting. Introduction to the books for 2020
- 7 Nottingham Birthday Luncheon with Michael Slater
- 7 Friends of Dickens, New York *The Old Curiosity Shop*
- 9 Bristol & Clifton Pot Pourri. Talks by members Rachel Bull, Pat Cemlyn-Jones, Eve Fitt and Peter Michael
- 9 Cambridge 'Miss Tox: an Archetype of the Old Maid and an Unsung Heroine': talk by Felicia Gordon. Textual discussion of *Dombey and Son*, chs 35-41
- 9 North East England Reading Book of the Year
- 10 Canterbury 'Dickens and Arctic Exploration': talk by Jacquie Stamp
- 10 Portsmouth Birthplace Discussion/Presentations of *Bleak House*
- 11 Worcester *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, chs 13-16. Selections from DVD
- 12 Cleveland General Discussion of *The Old Curiosity Shop*
- 14 New Orleans *The Old Curiosity Shop*, chs 50-59
- 14 New York City Book Discussion
- 14 Rockland *Martin Chuzzlewit*, chs 45-49; *American Notes*, ch 18

- 17 Bristol & Clifton *The Old Curiosity Shop*. Open Forum led by Leila Gilmore
- 18 Aberdeen "Zombie and Son": talk by John Bowen
- 18 Melbourne 'Introduction to *David Copperfield*': Elisabeth Neales
- 19 Rochester & Chatham 'The Percy Fitzgerald Collection': talk by Jeremy Clarke
- 20 Baltimore Dickens Appreciation Meeting
- 20 Boulogne Birthday Luncheon
- 20 Palo Alto Reading *Nicholas Nickleby*
- 21 Monterey *A Tale of Two Cities*, Book 2, chs 14-24
- 21 Nottingham *The Old Curiosity Shop*, chs 53-58, led by Kathy Powis
- 21 Philadelphia *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. Ch 20 plot delineation. Reader's Theatre Presentation
- 21 Pittsburgh 'Dickens as an Imperfect Reformer and Advocate': talk by Mark Sachleben
- 24 Central 'Celebrating the Brotherhood of the Pen: George Augustus Sala on Dickens and Thackeray': talk by Cathy Waters
- 24 Southwold 'Dickens and Thackeray – a Comparative Study'
- 25 Buffalo Discussion of *The Moonstone* by Wilkie Collins

April

- tbc Niagara-on-the- Lake *The Pickwick Papers*, chs 43-49
- 1 Broadstairs 'Charles Dickens, the Beneficent Unofficial Squire of Higham': talk by Jennifer Ide
- 2 Eastbourne Discussion/Readings of *Barnaby Rudge*
- 4 Nottingham *The Old Curiosity Shop*, chs 59-63, led by Anita Young; Raffle
- 4 Friends of Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop*
New York
- 4 Rockland Birthday Luncheon
- 6 Bristol & Clifton 'I think I shall always like it better than anything I have done or may do': What makes *The Old Curiosity Shop* so special?: talk by Tony Williams
- 7 Montreal *David Copperfield*, chs 33-39
- 8 Worcester *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, chs 17-20. 'Solving the Mystery of *Edwin Drood*', Margaret Watson
- 9 Cleveland 'Dickens and Dostoevsky': presentation by Richard Fox
- 11 New Orleans *The Old Curiosity Shop*, chs 60-68
- 13 Cambridge 'Edith Dombey: Degrees of Separation': talk by Christine Corton. Textual discussion of *Dombey and Son*, chs 42-48
- 14 Portsmouth Birthplace "'The Impress of the Moving Age": Dickens and *Bleak House*': talk by Tony Williams

- 15 Aberdeen 'Robinson Crusoe': talk by Eric Summers
- 16 Rochester & Chatham 'Life in the Victorian Kentish Workhouse': talk by Helen Allinson
- 17 Palo Alto Reading *Nicholas Nickleby*
- 18 Monterey *A Tale of Two Cities*, Book 3, chs 1-7
- 18 New York City Book Discussion
- 18 Nottingham *The Old Curiosity Shop*, chs 64-69, led by Liz Dunajewska
- 18 Philadelphia 'Philadelphia's Great Drood Trial in April 1914': video presented by Joseph Rondinelli
- 18 Pittsburgh 'Profiting from Dickens's Genius-Yesterday and Today': talk by Bob Thompson
- 20 Canterbury "I hope it is the best story I have written."
Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*: talk by Tony Williams
- 21 Central 'Dickens's Clowns: Charles Dickens, Joseph Grimaldi and the Pantomime of Life': talk by Jonathan Buckmaster
- 28 Boulogne Rendez-vous au Château
- 28 Southwold *Dombey & Son*, part 3; Review and Discussion of the Novel

Branch Lines

Branch Secretaries are encouraged to send in copies of their newsletters, and other information about branch activities, so that items of interest can be published here, and the network of news throughout the Fellowship maintained. Items for the Spring 2020 issue should reach Elizabeth Velluet (elizabethvelluet@yahoo.co.uk) or c/o 48 Doughty Street, WC1N 2LX as soon as possible and no later than 15 February 2020. Please restrict individual contributions to 200 words maximum.

Central

Dr Jeremy Parrott was our guest in June on the subject of 'The Ghosts of Charles Dickens'. The ghosts concerned were not supernatural apparitions but editions of Dickens's works cited in standard bibliographies which were never actually published! There is a surprisingly high number of them. Our annual Saturday afternoon pub meeting in July featured six members each advocating a Victorian novel as the best that Dickens didn't write. Somewhat surprisingly, *Jane Eyre* emerged victorious. Our September outing was by train to Leamington Spa – in the footsteps of Mr Dombey and Major Bagstock. Our guides, from the Leamington History Group, showed us the site of the long demolished Royal Hotel where Dickens stayed in 1838, the Regent Hotel where he stayed in 1858 and 1862, and the Music Hall (now Parthenon) where his readings on these two latter visits were given.

PAUL GRAHAM

Bristol & Clifton



Sally Draper Fry with Richard Drake. Photo: Peter Michael.

At the AGM of the Bristol & Clifton Dickens Society in June 2019, President Sally Draper Fry presented a cheque for £1000 to member Richard Drake, in his capacity as Hon. Treasurer of The Julian Trust, the Bristol homeless charity which we support. That makes £5200 over the past five years, a testament to how our members note the appropriate Dickens connection. Dickens approves in the foreground. We recalled his words in *Barnaby Rudge*: ‘To be shelterless and alone in the open country, hearing the wind moan and watching for day through the whole long weary night; to listen to the falling rain, and crouch for warmth beneath the lee of some old barn or rick, or in the hollow of a tree; are dismal things – but not so dismal as the wandering up and down where shelter is, and beds and sleepers are by the thousands; a houseless rejected creature.’

ROMA HUSSEY

Broadstairs

On Saturday 14 September, the Dickens Declaimers, a dramatic reading group from the Broadstairs Branch of the Dickens Fellowship, performed at the Epiphany branch of the New York Library for their hosts, the Dickens Fellowship of New York. The idea had come two years ago when Branch Honorary Secretary Chris Ewer and Committee member Gloria Underwood, went to New York and met up with members of the Fellowship. An instant rapport was established and the idea to return with the Declaimers was born. The Declaimers performed ‘Betsey Trotwood’, adapted from *David Copperfield*, and a piece from *Nicholas Nickleby* adapted from Dickens’s own reading. Each performance lasted an hour. The hall was packed and at the end of the afternoon the Declaimers received a standing ovation. The New York Fellowship was overwhelming in its hospitality and attention to detail, ensuring that our visit went smoothly and that we met as many of its members as possible. It was truly a memorable event, totally in the spirit of Fellowship, and forged a strong link between Broadstairs and New York. The Dickens Declaimers are: Liane Blades, Alan Root, Val Whitehouse and Clive Whitehead, shown (left to right) in this photograph from their visit.



The Dickens Declaimers in New York. Photo: Christine Ewer.

CHRISTINE EWER

Cambridge

A highlight of the summer for the Cambridge Branch was our second annual London walk which took place on Monday 9 July. The itinerary was along an eastern stretch of the Thames, starting at Tower Bridge and ending at the Docklands Museum of London. The group of fourteen was in the very capable hands of Ros Connelly, whose recently published annotated map, *A Walk with Charles Dickens along the Thames*, proved a valuable aid. Ros had also issued us with a collection of relevant Dickens passages, from journalism and novels, especially *Our Mutual Friend*, and several of these were delivered by participants at appropriate points along the way. The high point for many of us was standing on the tiny balcony of the bijou pub, *The Grapes*, model for *The Six Jolly Fellowship Porters*, with the tidal waves strongly lapping the walls below.

GILLIAN BAKER

Nottingham

Six members enjoyed the fellowship, sunshine and excellent organisation of the Eastbourne Conference. We congratulate Maggie de Vos and all who took part in it. Making her debut on top table at the Gala Dinner, Kathy Powis, at her 30th conference, was invited to present the toast to the Eastbourne Branch. Our annual 'just turn up' lunch celebrated the 80th birthday of Chairman Rosemary Longland with presents, cake, speeches and the compulsory balloon. The same occasion saw us saying goodbye to the Manager of Nottingham Mechanics. We are fortunate to have this venue in the centre of Nottingham and Robert Cockayne, with his team, has looked after us very well.

Tony Williams, our President, visited us again in September to bring our new season's book, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, to life, not only with descriptions of characters, places and plots but, crucially, with details about the novel's inception, publication in *Master Humphrey's Clock*, and how it was received by its readers

home and abroad. Most of us were unaware of Walter Savage Landor's claim that Little Nell was born in his house in Bath!



Anita Young.

Anita Young, shown here in one of her costumed readings of Victorian writers, helps to raise our profile (and funds) by entertaining other groups.

KATHY POWIS

Portsmouth Birthplace

Although we continue to have good attendances at our meetings, there is little to report at this time of year as we do not have meetings in July or August. However, we had our usual commemoration of the death of Dickens in St Mary's Church, Portsmouth on Sunday, 9 June (right on the day), which included an Evensong Service, followed by readings and refreshments in the church hall. Our annual coach outing in the summer was to Rochester, on the Saturday of the Dickens Rochester Festival. This was very successful, with a full coach, and all our members who went had an enjoyable experience. After the summer break, our first meeting was on Tuesday, 10 September, at which Professor Tony Pointon gave us a very interesting and entertaining talk on 'Dickens and Australia', to follow on from the Conference held there last year. Several of our members attended the Conference in Eastbourne this year.

GEOFFREY CHRISTOPHER

Rochester & Chatham

Branch members are regularly asked to support and help, in costume, in a diverse range of fund-raising events. They continue to raise funds for the Dickens Swiss Chalet Appeal. The latest issue of *Landscape* magazine (December 2019) features the Dickens festival in Rochester in which the local Branch plays a prominent role. Members gave interviews, provided information and are quoted. Many members appear in the photographs, which may be found on the Fellowship website.

STEVE MARTIN

Sheffield

In March Professor Michael Slater visited the Branch and gave a talk on 'An Attempt on his Life: confessions of a Dickens biographer'. He discussed various aspects of Dickens's life, including the way Dickens used to keep records of his meeting people, health, writing and personal life, month by month, on the same page within five columns. Reading and discussion of *Pickwick Papers* continued at the summer meetings. In April Diana Jones visited Jean Ireland in her Nursing Home and read her a chapter of the book. Sadly, in August the President and Secretary and other members attended Jean's funeral. They also attended in June the funeral of Gordon Walker. At the 10 May meeting, Valerie Bayliss, Secretary of the Victorian Society, Sheffield, told of the four years' hard work trying to take over the historic building, the Sheffield Old Town Hall, to restore and conserve it and make it a visitor attraction. On 12 September we had two talks by our members: Mary Prentice on 'George Orwell's Essays and Dickens' and Steve Roberts on 'Dickens's American Friends'.

MANJU RAY

Southwold

The new 2019/20 session started on Tuesday, 24 September at 2:30 pm in the Guide Centre, Cautley Road, Southwold. The monthly programme (usually the 4th Tuesday) consists mainly of presentations by members, the first being a report on the Eastbourne conference, followed by the first of several readings from our novel for the year, *Dombey & Son*. Later items will include: animals in Dickens; more eccentrics in Dickens's novels; *Master Humphrey's Clock*; Dickens and Thackeray; a Dickens birthday luncheon; members' personal reading choices. Refreshments and a raffle are available at meetings, plus Christmas and Spring buffets.

BILL WALLOND

Montreal

On a rainy, humid afternoon, 25 June, 29 members gathered at the Burgundy Lion Pub's tea room for the Branch's annual end-of-year Victorian afternoon tea. President Ellie Clavier-Rothstein gave a review of the year's activities and a preview of attractions next year. Ellie then welcomed guest Michelle Lefebvre from the Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation and presented her with a cheque for \$850 in support of their Tiny Tim fund. Michelle gave members a moving account of how their donations are spent. Over the last seven years the Branch has raised \$4350 for this worthy cause.

Toronto

The latest issue of *Mudfog News* includes an item on a visit on 14 June made by seven Dickensians to Holland Bloorview Hospital in Toronto. This is Canada's largest children's rehabilitation hospital. The group was given a full tour of the facilities and learnt about the research programmes of the hospital. They saw the donations display board indicating that the Fellowship group has donated \$10,000 and that amount is now to be amended to \$25,000.

The Toronto Branch has been donating to the hospital since the first donation in 1905, a Tiny Tim cot.

Haarlem

At our June meeting Dr Ben Moore gave us a lecture on 'Dickens and Architecture'. He mentioned the different architectural styles in the works of Dickens and more particularly in *Bleak House*, where the ornamented gate to Temple Bar in fact gives access to the novel. He spoke of a literary threshold. The house itself was also peculiar, with all its stairs, corridors, nooks and alcoves. *Bleak House* was like Tom Jarndyce's brains: 'blown out'. He compared it with Gad's Hill, which Dickens called: 'pleasantly irregular and violently opposed to all architectural ideas'. And, of course, he mentioned Mr Pecksniff, that man with a great name as an architect, but who had never built anything himself.

PIETER DE GROOT

Carrara

The 2019-2020 programme at the Carrara Branch of the Dickens Fellowship will be dedicated to the reading of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, to the analysis of the texts and characters. The official opening of the Dickensian year will be held on 20 October at 5pm at the premises of the Carrara Branch, with an introduction to the novel and the reading of the first chapter of *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Our English classes (Pre-intermediate and Intermediate level) started on 15 September and our members are already involved in the translation of five mystery short stories by Dickens to be published next year. This is a new approach to the study of English language as a foreign language, through Dickens. January will be the 'special month' of the Carrara Branch: on 11 January a conference on the relation between Dickens and the Italian writer Carlo Emilio Gadda will be held in Carrara by Professor Raffaele Donnarumma, from Pisa University. We are also organising a mini-conference (24-26 January 2020) to celebrate the 175th anniversary of Charles Dickens's visit to Carrara. The readings and the English classes finish in June 2020. Side events and a conference on contemporary English literature have been scheduled.

MARZIA DATI

Christchurch

During the cold winter months in Christchurch our Branch has been making its way steadily through the rather grim *Hard Times*. Our monthly programmes have included readings, sketches and talks on such subjects as 'The Industrial Revolution', 'Unions & Unionists' and 'The Condition of England Novel'. In our August programme, the convenor, Jeni Curtis, chaired a panel discussion on aspects of the novel where members were invited to join in the discussion. On the social side members enjoyed a pot-luck dinner to celebrate our Mid-Winter Wassail on 22 June. There was poetry reading, parlour games and delicious food on offer, including a wonderful cake baked by the president, Kathie La Rooij, in honour of its being our thirtieth such Mid-Winter celebration. Full details of these meetings and talks are included in the Branch newsletter *Dickens Down Under*

no 124 which is available by email. This issue also includes the lecture by Michael Rogers, delivered at the Dickens Fellowship Conference, Eastbourne, 2019 on 'The Legacy of Dickensian Language and Style'.

ANNABEL GORMACK

Cleveland

Three members of the Branch attended the Eastbourne Conference – Kathy Broz, Barbara Davis and Beth Bliss. Beth presented a brief survey of the history of knitting, culminating in Dickens's Mme Defarge, knitter of codes damning her enemies to the guillotine. Beth had created blood-red versions of a Liberty Cap worn by French citizens and a jumper with a knitted code – much admired by delegates at the Conference.

New York City Branch

The Fellowship gathered in June for its annual luncheon commemorating Dickens's passing. The meeting was well attended even to the point of entertaining a few gatecrashers, and we played a round of 'Dickens Bingo' as conceived by our indispensable events coordinator and member Lorraine Garvilla. July saw the approval of our budget for the 2019/20 fiscal year endorsed by the Executive Committee. It included a donation to the New York Public Library in appreciation of permission to use their meeting space all year. The Executive Committee also welcomed the offer by Mark Halperin to coordinate efforts to recruit new members. We had a gala September meeting graced with the appearance of the Broadstairs Declaimers, visiting New York City from the seaside Kent town of Broadstairs in England. It was our honour to present the Broadstairs Declaimers with a Letter of Welcome from New York City Mayor, Bill de Blasio. After a rousing performance of a *David Copperfield* selection featuring Betsey Trotwood, and another from *Nicholas Nickleby*, a number of members regaled the Declaimers with a dinner at the Hourglass Tavern. President John Galazin proposed a toast to the Declaimers and the Broadstairs Honorary Secretary Chris Ewer offered a toast in response.

MICHELLE ELDREDGE

Rockland

At our September meeting, which was the first meeting of the new season, we took the time to discuss briefly what we had read over the summer months. There was a wide variety of authors, titles and genres. They included Andrea Camilleri's Inspector Montalbano series, Daphne Du Maurier's *My Cousin Rachel* and *Rebecca*, Naomi Alderman's *Disobedience*, Louise Penney's *Bury Your Dead* and *A Better Man*, Ann Patchett's *Commonwealth* and *The Dutch House*, Timothy Egan's *The Immortal Irishman* and *The Worst Hard Time*; Hazel Gaynor's *The Lighthouse Keeper's Daughter*, and Jacqueline Winspear's series featuring Maisie Dobbs. Our members are doing their best to keep our public libraries open and circulating books as well as DVD and Blu-Ray films.

DORIS LATHAM

Branch Self-Portrait

ABERDEEN (est. 2013)

It took the Bicentenary celebrations marking Dickens's birth to spur Aberdeen members of the Fellowship to found a local Branch. Having seen the Aberdeen Literary Society – vibrant in the 1970s – fold in the 1980s through falling attendance, and also an attempt in the 1980s to inaugurate an American Studies Group never get off the ground, Dickens lovers in Aberdeen were hesitant to attempt setting up a Branch of the Fellowship. But a well-attended, highly successful season of Dickens Bicentenary events in 2012 sponsored by the University library suggested that there might be sufficient local interest to make a Fellowship Branch viable. Lectures by Adrian Poole, Bob Patten and Paul Schlicke attracted audiences of forty to sixty; readings of Dickens texts by members of the University English Department and David Lean films were popular. A lecture on 'Dickens in our Time' by BBC broadcaster James Naughtie (a local lad and an Aberdeen graduate) filled a large lecture theatre, and the appearance of Miriam Margolyes in her 'Dickens's Women' show was a sell-out in the largest auditorium on the University campus.

Accordingly, on the occasion of Miriam's performance, a flyer was placed on each seat of the Arts Lecture Theatre, inviting interested parties to come to a meeting to discuss founding a Fellowship Branch. Uptake, if not overwhelming, was substantial enough to encourage those who came along to give it a go. A series of lectures by local and international speakers was arranged, and a reading of *A Christmas Carol* provided festive cheer. Attendance quickly settled at around a dozen regulars, sometimes swelling to as many as twenty, and we were up and running. We met initially to discuss selected *Sketches by Boz* and then chose *Hard Times* as our first book of the season, and an exhibition of gems from the University's fabulous Dickens collection rounded off the inaugural season.

From the start we were clear that the purpose of our group was convivial rather than academic. We normally meet off-campus, and encourage active participation by non-academic members. Our chairman, Paul Schlicke, is himself a retired University lecturer whose primary interest is Dickens as a popular writer. One of our early events was a trip to Hospitalfield, the arts centre in Arbroath, some fifty miles south of Aberdeen, where a cache of Dickens letters dealing with negotiations over a proposed bequest to the Guild of Literature and Art had recently been discovered. A return visit there, supplemented by a lecture by Michael Slater on the Dickens connection, was one of the highlights of our 2016 conference.

At an early stage of our existence, our secretary, Eric Summers, began producing a thrice-yearly newsletter, each issue containing thirty to fifty pages of articles and pictures, reporting on Branch activities and also including reviews of lectures to the Branch and articles on cultural events in Scotland and beyond. Some but not all of the contents centred on Dickens's life and works. It has been named *Little Doric*, with a nod to the local Aberdeenshire dialect, and to Dickens's novel *Little Dorrit*, and has been much admired internationally from the start.

ABERDEEN BRANCH



(left): Little Doric, Aberdeen Branch’s newsletter
(below): books published by Branch members



Aberdeen Branch members: (l to r) Jeannette King, David Innes, Sally Lawton, Ann Penhale, Lorna Taylor, Paul Schlicke, Eric Summers, Andrea Schwedler, Alison Summers, Marion Anderson, Neil Clapperton.

In spring of 2013 Paul Schlicke travelled to London to present a slide show, prepared by Eric Summers, to a meeting of Fellowship Council, promoting a bid for affiliation with the international Fellowship. That step successfully accomplished, the Branch was invited to host the 110th annual Fellowship Conference in the summer of 2016. A committee consisting of the regular attendees of Branch meetings enthusiastically got to work planning the event – the first time ever in Aberdeen and only the third time in Scotland. Edinburgh Branch, founded in the early days of the Fellowship, hosted conferences in 1929 and 1994 but folded long ago. An early decision to invite the University events office to assist with arrangements on campus was a huge help. Tony Williams, then President of the Fellowship, provided invaluable advice and gave continuity by introducing each of the speakers. There were a few hiccups along the way – not least, discovering only days before proceedings were due to commence, that the kitchen in the student residence where delegates were being housed was due to be closed for refurbishment the very week of the conference! Brisk negotiation quickly sorted out that issue. It was disappointing that Dickensian films we hoped to screen were unavailable, but that problem was triumphantly solved by showing instead the film *Whisky Galore*, a delightful Ealing comedy based on the novel written by a past president of the Fellowship, Compton Mackenzie. It was another blow to find that the two buildings in town with significant Dickens associations (the Art Gallery, with its splendid collection of Victorian paintings, and the Music Hall, where Dickens gave public readings on two occasions) were both due to close that summer for major works. The problem over the Music Hall was imaginatively overcome when Michael Steele, a retired television producer and one of our members, prepared a twenty-minute film celebrating Dickens's association with the building. In the end a conference with a strong Scottish flavour was a great success. The Art Gallery remains closed to this day.

Thereafter the Branch has flourished vigorously. Membership has expanded by fifty percent in recent years. Each season we select one of Dickens's works as a focus for our discussions. We invite one or two Dickens specialists annually to come to Aberdeen to speak to us. Local members also give lectures, invariably followed by vigorous discussion. An annual Christmas party at which members give readings from seasonal writings has become a staple event. In the 2017-18 season the Branch collaborated with the Friends of the University Library to host a visit by Jerry White, the historian whose book on the Marshalsea Prison (of great significance in Dickens's life and writings) had recently been published.

We hosted an exhibition on Victorian journalism in 2013 and another on Dickens's life and works during the 2016 conference. The Branch has also worked to honour Dickens, sponsoring a seat in the refurbished Music Hall, where we commissioned a plaque commemorating his visits there. We made donations for the Dickens statue in Portsmouth and to Aberdeen women's aid (a twenty-first-century variant of Urania Cottage). The Branch also contributed to the fund-raising to help the Dickens House Museum in Doughty Street, London, to purchase the long-lost but recently discovered 1843 Margaret Gillies portrait of Dickens.

Several members have themselves been actively writing during the years of the Branch's existence: Sally Lawton, *The Nurse who Found herself in 1916*, a novel in which the heroine is seen reading *Bleak House*; Paul Schlicke, *Simply Dickens*, a monograph introducing Dickens's life and writings; Alison Summers, *A Thriving and Cheerful Population*, an account of life in the home front of Kirriemuir during the Great War; Eric Summers (co-author), *N5 & Higher Study Skills*, a student guidebook; Jeannette King, *Discourses on Ageing in Fiction and Feminism: The Invisible Woman*, and Neil Clapperton, *Litany for a Fallen Man*, a novel with characters, dialogue and setting strongly influenced by Dickens. In addition the Branch sponsored a writing competition as part of the 2016 conference, and published the short-listed entries under the title *Aberdeen Larks*. The winner, Jen Stein, with a short story entitled 'A Necessary Evil', was announced following the public interview of best-selling Scottish novelist Ian Rankin by Aberdeenshire's own BBC broadcaster James Naughtie.

Over the years, our members have represented all walks of life, from students through to people who have retired from working in the public, private and academic sectors. No matter the age or background, our members are united in an appreciation of the life and works of Dickens.

PAUL SCHLICKE

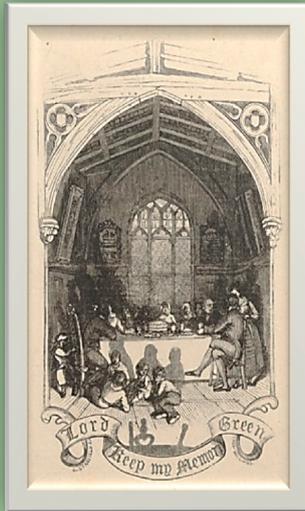
***'Lord, keep my memory green':
Dickens in 1870 – and After***

The Dickens Fellowship

114th Annual International Conference

**Commemorating the Sesquicentenary
of the death of Charles Dickens (1812-1870)**

London Wednesday 15th to Monday 20th July 2020



**Conference is non-residential and will be based at
Goodenough College, Mecklenburgh Square,
London, WC1N 2AB
near to the Charles Dickens Museum in Doughty Street.**

**Full details of the programme, speakers, visits and other
activities, together with a booking form, may be found on the
conference website at**

<https://dickensfellowship.org/conference/>

The 113th Annual Conference of the Dickens Fellowship: Eastbourne, 26-29 July 2019.

With happy memories of the superb Conference in 2010 ninety delegates returned to Eastbourne for the 113th Fellowship Conference, which was once again meticulously organised by Maggie de Vos. We were accommodated at the View Hotel on the sea front, with excellent rooms, many with balconies overlooking the promenade, and the meals were generally of a high standard.

The Civic Reception after dinner on Friday was underwhelming: the Deputy Mayor spoke extremely briefly, yet puzzled us all by bringing a bodyguard! However, after his quick departure Maggie de Vos entertained us with a Film/Slide show commemorating one hundred years of the Dickens Fellowship in Eastbourne, featuring such highlights as an earlier visit by Charles Dickens junior, commemoration Birthday dinners and lunches, visits by Richard Shuckborough, B.W. Matz, Michael Slater and others, a junior Fellowship gathering in 1957, a Victorian Festival, and of course coverage of previous International Fellowship Conferences.

At the Annual General Meeting on Saturday morning Professor John Bowen officially handed over the presidency of the Fellowship to Ian Dickens, who spoke of his family's links with Eastbourne, especially his great-grandfather Henry Fielding Dickens, who died shortly after visiting the town. Ian thanked John Bowen for his achievements and dedication to the Fellowship during his term of office. During her report on the Charles Dickens Museum Cindy Sughrue confirmed the exciting news of the acquisition of the 1843 miniature of Dickens by Margaret Gillies.

After the coffee break we had the first two lectures of the Conference. John Bowen's 'Waiting, for Dickens' began with a discussion of legacies both in Dickens's family and works, including the second chapter of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, in which numerous relatives hopefully anticipate a legacy, and citing also Mr Micawber, and *Great Expectations*, whose very title emphasises anticipation. The discussion then ingeniously linked 'waiting' with 'waitering', focusing on the novelist's fascination with the dynamic between those who waited and those who were waited on. The lecture explored several illustrative examples, including the admirable description of Kit Nubbles taking his family to the theatre, in which the waiter treats him with politeness and 'democratic deference', as G.K. Chesterton expressed it. Other, less complimentary, more patronising or exploitative examples were taken from other novels, all meticulously

analysed by Professor Bowen, who ended with an illuminating analysis of the rarely discussed 1862 Christmas number of *All the Year Round – Somebody's Luggage*, whose central character Christopher is the only waiter who 'both has narrative control and speaks at length in all of Dickens's oeuvre'.

Michael Madden's 'Charles Dickens, a Raconteur, a Reporter, a Radical' began in an arresting way as, without any introduction, he read a substantial extract from *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, not self-evidently connected with Dickens. Having shot the albatross the Mariner is, of course, cursed and forced by guilt to wander the earth, perpetually repeating his story and teaching love and reverence for 'all things both great and small'. Having explained that frequent reading of the poem influenced his views on Dickens's legacy, Mr Madden embarked on a detailed history of the Poor Law from Tudor times to the Amendment Act of 1834, debates on which Dickens heard in the gallery of the House of Commons. Mr Madden's theory seemed to suggest that Dickens might have felt guilty for declining opportunities to enter Parliament and possibly thereby help reform: a kind of survivor guilt, perhaps, linking his 'compulsive need to tell stories' with the Ancient Mariner. This highly speculative theory was nevertheless thought-provoking to the audience, and the survey of history from Henry VIII to the Attlee government of considerable interest.

After lunch we welcomed Keiko Kiriya from Kyoto Prefectural University, and her talk on Dickens and Dance was an innovation for the Fellowship Conference. With reference to *Sketches by Boz*, *Bleak House* and *Little Dorrit* she discussed the five positions of dancing, deportment, dancing schools for children, hierarchies and structures within the profession and the frequent poverty of participants. The lecture revealed interesting information about dancing and ballet in the nineteenth century, and was presented in a delightfully engaging manner.

Professor Kiriya's lecture was followed by 'Celebrations and Solemn Occasions in Dickens': five familiar readings by Professors Michael Slater and Malcolm Andrews from *Oliver Twist*, *Great Expectations*, *Dombey and Son*, *Martin Chuzzlewit* and *Our Mutual Friend* – brought vividly and convincingly to life in all their humour and poignancy by two of the most accomplished contemporary readers of Dickens.

The Gala Dinner was a most convivial occasion, enlivened at intervals by local singer and entertainer Dean Ager. The Immortal Memory was proposed by Tony Williams in a superbly crafted speech on memory and the functions of memory in Dickens's own writing, especially *David Copperfield*, his consistent veneration for New Testament values, and finally the appropriateness for Dickens himself of the very last word ('appetite') in his fiction: his fascination with, and complete immersion in, all that



2019 Dickens Fellowship Conference Scenes

(clockwise from top) Outgoing President John Bowen welcomes his successor Ian Dickens; Beth Bliss with her knitted Dickens pullover; Michael Eaton sporting his *Oliver Twist* shirt; Maggie de Vos and Cindy Sughrue with the magnificent bequest cheque.

life had to offer. After toasts by Marzia Dati and Kathy Powis, Maggie de Vos proposed the new President, and in his response Ian Dickens said he was 'humbled' to be the latest in the long line of close family members to serve as President, and especially during the 150th anniversary of his great great grandfather's death. He described his voluntary work, reading with children in schools, and the enthusiastic response that his family connection receives – one that he hopes to maintain as a valuable legacy of his presidency.

There were four lectures on Sunday morning, beginning with Beth Bliss on 'Knitting in *A Tale of Two Cities*'. Particularly interesting was the history of knitting from its origin in Egypt c. 450 A.D. to its spread to the Shetland Isles and especially France. This led on to an account of the *tricoteuses* and their bloodthirsty role in the 1789 Revolution, amusing themselves by socialising while watching the guillotining of 17,000 people, and to the prominent role played by Madame Defarge in Dickens's novel.

Nicholas Cambridge has researched Dickens's medical history in immense detail, and in an extremely well organised presentation he surveyed such an incredible quantity of illnesses, accidents and other medical conditions from which the novelist suffered that it seemed amazing that he could have achieved so much, or survived even to the age of 58. The lecture also covered medical conditions in the novels, such as the Pickwickian syndrome (Joe), epilepsy, Sturge-Weber syndrome (Monks), dwarfism, tuberculosis etc., doctors in the novels and doctors with whom Dickens was acquainted, mesmerism, hospitals and mental hospitals and much else.

After the coffee break Sandra Faulkner enlightened us about women in Dickens's life, and also some of the problems faced by women in Victorian times. She discussed his paternal grandmother (the original for Mrs Rouncewell), Mary Weller, his nursemaid, his own mother and also his sister Fanny, Maria Beadnell, Catherine Dickens, Mary Hogarth, Mme de la Rue, Ellen Ternan and others, exploring their roles in his life and his attitude towards them. She also considered the idealised presentation of women exemplified in some of his heroines, and as much else as could be included in forty-five minutes. Both content and presentation were impressive.

In my own lecture on 'The Legacy of Dickensian Language and Style' I maintained that Dickens's prose is frequently so arresting and strikingly original that it elevates the spirit through its humour, pathos, descriptive power, sheer luxuriance and exuberance. I then focused on such stylistic and linguistic devices as fanciful comparison, transferred epithets, animism, use of superlatives, indirect free style and idiolects. Using an example from *David Copperfield* I sought to prove the inventiveness of Dickens's prose

by demonstrating the difficulties encountered by translators. [Ed. – our reporter’s modesty omits to mention that Michael Rogers’s lecture was very well received for its wit and elegance.]

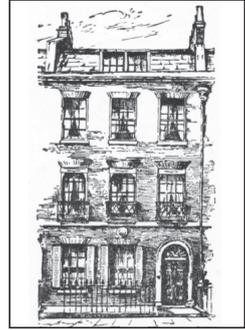
On Sunday afternoon some delegates attended evensong at the eleventh-century Westham church, and before the service had ample time to stroll in its quintessentially English country churchyard, while listening to the pealing of the bells. It was appropriate to use the 1662 prayer book and to have traditional hymns, though some confusion was caused to those unfamiliar with the liturgy. The pitch was rather too high for most men in the congregation, especially as the one man singing in the choir was drowned out by thirteen ladies, including the vicar. Despite that, it was a lovely service, and we were grateful to all those who made it possible.

In the evening we enjoyed seeing Michael Eaton again for ‘Sunday Night at the Movies’, but sadly his programme was greatly delayed by technical hitches. During the long wait he entertained us with a talk on the very early cinema, striding up and down for emphasis. Eventually, at 9.30 p.m. we were able to watch the highly entertaining 1922 film version of *Oliver Twist*, starring Jackie Coogan as Oliver.

Finally, on behalf of those who attended the Conference, sincere thanks to Maggie and Keith de Vos, and everyone else who in their different ways enabled this eighth Eastbourne Conference to be so successful, and appropriately in the Centenary year of the Branch.

MICHAEL ROGERS

The Charles Dickens Museum



The Museum's new exhibition, *Beautiful Books: Dickens and the Business of Christmas*, opened on 20 November and will run until 19 April 2020. *Beautiful Books* is guest co-curated by Simon Eliot (Professor Emeritus of the History of the Book, University of London) and has been developed in partnership with the antiquarian booksellers, Maggs Bros. The exhibition looks at the significant social, cultural and technological changes of nineteenth-century Britain that shaped the new, emerging Christmas book market. It shows how Dickens cornered this market from 1843 with the release of *A Christmas Carol* and how his Christmas Books and stories still shape and influence our notions of a modern Christmas.



The first printed Christmas card, 1843 along with an early proof inscribed by Henry Cole. Henry Cole collaborated with Joseph Cundall and John Calcott Horsley to create a greeting card specifically for the Christmas season. Released in 1843, 1000 copies were printed and this is one of only 21 examples known to have survived.

Image courtesy of Brick Lane Bookshop, San Francisco, California.

We have received several significant loans for this exhibition: an example of the first Christmas card commissioned by Henry Cole and illustrated by John Callcott Horsley in 1843, along with an early proof with Cole's comments on it, lent by Brick Row Bookshop in San Francisco, California. St Bride Library off the Strand has loaned important artefacts relating to the development of print technology, ranging from a compositor's stick and

type, to an early lithography stone. Maggs Bros have lent two beautifully bound books gifted at Christmas to the wives of the Maggs Brothers by the famous bookbinders, Sangorski and Suttcliffe.



Some of the Dickensian collectables bequeathed to the Charles Dickens Museum by Anton Charlton in 2019. These figurines are stamped on the base 'Made in Occupied Japan'. Image courtesy of the Charles Dickens Museum, London.

2019 has been a remarkable year in the ongoing development of the Museum's holdings. In addition to the high profile acquisition of the 'lost portrait' of Charles Dickens by Margaret Gillies, the Museum has received two generous and significant donations of Dickens collectables. The Terry Dunne Collection comprises over 180 pieces of figurines, thimbles and toby jugs depicting Dickens characters. Nearly every item has a story about where and when it was purchased or gifted, adding to the richness of the material as a whole. The Anton Charlton Collection is an even larger grouping of 300+ collectables with notable additions such as early German-made items, and a group of figures marked 'Made in Occupied Japan'.

The Museum's education and engagement work continues to develop. This summer we launched a new school holiday programme of family-friendly tours incorporating object-handling, role-play and reading activities. The sessions were very well received and, following this positive feedback, we have introduced these interactive elements into our schools programme as well. We have also launched tactile tours for students with

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), as well as a new school session developed around the themes of our recent *Food Glorious Food: Dinner with Dickens* exhibition.



A series of artworks in ink and wash by Anna Maronigu (1907-1941) illustrating scenes from *The Pickwick Papers*, 1928.
Image courtesy of the Charles Dickens Museum, London.

The Museum has loaned an extraordinary collection of 262 illustrations of *Pickwick Papers* to the MAN Museum of Art in Nuoro, Sardinia, Italy. These illustrations are the work of the Sardinian artist Anna Marongiu and are featuring in the first retrospective exhibition of her work, which runs until 1 March 2020. Marongiu was a talented artist who died tragically, at the age of 34, in a plane crash in 1941. The *Pickwick* illustrations date from around 1930 and were donated to the Museum in 1985 by her brother. This will be the first time the illustrations have ever been exhibited.

The Museum is also lending a number of items to Senate House Library for its exhibition, *Dickens and the Child*, which will run from 20 January to 20 June 2020. It explores Dickens's role as a writer, social reform campaigner, and philanthropist in alleviating the hardship that many children faced and in shaping a better future for those who followed.

CINDY SUGHRUE
FRANKIE KUBICKI
LOUISA PRICE

Obituaries



Valerie Browne Lester.
Photo: Toby Lester.

Valerie Browne Lester (30 July 1939 –7 June 2019)

Valerie Browne Lester, writer, scholar, translator, Pan Am flight attendant, and great-great-granddaughter of the important Victorian graphic artist Hablot Knight Browne ('Phiz'), died peacefully in her eightieth year, on 7 June 2019. Born in Britain, she spent her childhood in the West Indies and Nigeria, eventually graduating from an English boarding school. She began writing poetry, then switched to playwriting. In 1961 her spirit of adventure led her to join Pan American as a flight attendant. In that capacity, she met James Lester, a psychologist returning to the US after accompanying the first American Mount Everest expedition, and she married him. Decades later, Valerie penned *Fasten Your Seat Belts!*, a lively account of the experiences of those globe-circulating cabin crews, told mainly in their own words. Jim, also a musician, caught the writing bug and used his knowledge of music and psychology to compose a now classic account of Art Tatum, jazz pianist.

While raising their two children, Toby and Alison, Valerie took her B.A. at George Washington University and an M.A. at Georgetown. These studies encouraged her first to imagine a back story in the Caribbean for Emily Brontë's Heathcliff. She put aside that project in order to explore the art and life of her ancestor, Browne, Dickens's principal illustrator for ten novels, from *Pickwick Papers* to *A Tale of Two Cities*. She tracked down sketches, pictures, and relatives. Urged on by fellow enthusiasts, she also expanded the original limit of her study to incorporate the illustrations Phiz did for other Victorian writers, as well as the independent drawings and paintings he executed in later years. Her biography, *Phiz: The Man Who Drew Dickens* (2004), is the authoritative account of Browne's entire career; it is indispensable to Dickensians.

While recovering from a hitchhiking parasite that sapped her energy, Valerie translated Alain-Fournier's 'dreamy novel' (as she called it) about coming of age in pre-World War I France, *The Magnificent Meaulnes*. Then she learned Italian in order to compose over several years of arduous investigation a pathbreaking biography of the great eighteenth-century typographer Giambattista Bodoni. (Apple offers four Bodoni fonts in its menu.)

Her last research project was the life of Clarence Bicknell, a celebrated botanist whose family relationship Val discovered while writing about her Browne ancestry. She had been diagnosed with cancer in 2012, but completed her rich, vividly illustrated biography in 2018 and attended publication parties in Europe and the US. On her return to Hingham, Massachusetts, she finished her long-abandoned novel about eighteenth-century Jamaica. *The West Indian* was published two months before her death.

A loving, generous, curious, joyous, and unforgettable friend, Valerie gave warmly-received talks at many Dickens Fellowship meetings, and on one occasion to a standing-room-only crowd surrounded by the great Elkins Dickens Collection in the Free Library of Philadelphia.

Robert L. Patten



Jacqueline Hunault

Jacqueline Hunault

A great sorrow to share: the death of dear Jacqueline Hunault, whose funeral took place on 28 August in her village in Picardy, near Amiens. In bad health for several years, Jacqueline had had a fall, had fractured her femur, and had been unable to bear the operation.

Dickens's entry into Jacqueline's life dates from the year 1983, in Amiens University, when Dr Michael Slater had come to deliver a lecture about *Bleak House*. Smiling, cordial, she was the perfect ambassadress of Charles Dickens's works, and her frail appearance concealed a formidable energy and the soul of a globe-trotter. She had three children and nine grandchildren.

Janine Watrin

Michael Slater adds:

The slight but indomitable figure of dear Jacqueline and her radiant smile will be greatly missed at future Fellowship conferences and even more so, doubtless, at the meetings of our Boulogne Branch. Her passionate, and very knowledgeable, enthusiasm for Dickens was a delight to experience and those of us who attended the 2008 Annual Conference in Durham will happily remember her pleasure in being presented with a Percy Fitzgerald Award for her record of so many years' consecutive attendance at Conference.

Mavis Darby (4 April 1928-13 June 2019)

Mavis Darby was well known to Central Fellowship members as the wife and latterly widow of Bill Darby, who died in 2016. They had been married

since 1952. Mavis's funeral service was held at Beckenham Crematorium on 1 July this year. Those gathered there heard of her devotion to her family, her long interest in genealogy and abiding passion for poetry. The Fellowship was represented at the service by Peter Duggan and Tony Williams.

We were very sorry to hear from the Bristol and Clifton Dickens Society of the recent death of **Deidre Browning** at the end of October 2019, aged 90. She died peacefully at home in the loving care of her husband Walter after a period of illness. Deidre was a professional actress before handing over her talents, along with those of Walter, to the benefit of the Bristol and Clifton Branch. She will be missed, and not forgotten.

The Sheffield Branch lost two of its most loyal, long-serving members recently: **Jean Ireland** and **Gordon Walker**. Gordon and his wife raised a considerable amount of money for charity through their popular readings from Dickens.

We were sorry to learn of the death of **Janet Gisleson**, a long-serving member of the New Orleans Branch. She was reading *The Old Curiosity Shop* to the last and loved being a part of her Branch and of the Fellowship. She will be fondly remembered as always a kind and thoughtful Dickensian who added immeasurably to meetings. A celebration of Janet's life was held on Friday 9 August, at the Holy Name of Mary Church in Algiers Point, New Orleans.

We have also heard from the Philadelphia Branch of the death of **Mary Elizabeth Logan**, a Branch member for over forty-three years. Pat Vinci writes:

Liz Logan passed away on 25 June, after being in ill health for the past several months. She was a high school French teacher and a devout Dickens-lover as well. Liz joined our branch in 1976, contributing many presentations at our monthly meetings. She was a recipient of the H.O.L.D. (Honourable Order of The Lovers of Dickens) award. We always enjoyed her well-prepared and well-delivered talks. Liz was a genuinely nice person, helpful in many ways, who readily volunteered to transport anyone who needed a ride. We will miss her.

We extend our sympathy to the families and friends of those members we have lost recently.

THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

(Founded 6 October, 1902)

Headquarters: The Charles Dickens Museum, 48 Doughty Street, London WC1N 2LX

Website: www.dickensfellowship.org

Honorary General Secretary: Paul Graham (paulgrahamdf@live.co.uk)

Honorary Treasurer: Eddie Jones (dftreasurer@btinternet.com)

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