

London Particular

The Dickens Fellowship Newsletter

“WHAT AN INCESSANT HUM OF CONVERSATION AND GENERAL SIPPING OF COFFEE!”

(The New Year, SKETCHES BY BOZ)

Dr Paul Schlicke, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Charles Dickens Museum, sends the following letter:

Dear Members of the Dickens Fellowship

I am pleased to announce an exciting development at the Charles Dickens Museum. For some time the Trustees have been concerned that we have not been making the best use of 49 Doughty Street, the property which the Trust owns next door to the Museum. Half of the ground floor is presently used as a general office, the other half, along with the upper storeys, is rented out. As a valuable property, the building might generate greater income than at present; as an adjacent property it has great potential as an extension of exhibition and meeting space.

With such issues in mind, this past autumn the Museum's Board of Trustees commissioned a working party, chaired by Peter Chapman, to consider options for the best use of this property. His group carried out extensive investigation of possibilities, and presented a report to the Trustees in January, in which a recommendation was made to take over the entire ground floor of 49 and transform it into a coffee shop. This would, the committee proposed, quickly become self-financing and would soon become a source of further income, and it would greatly increase the amenity of the Museum.

The Board enthusiastically and unanimously approved this recommendation and steps are already being taken to realise it. Negotiations are under way with the sitting tenant to change the terms of the lease; planning permission is being applied for, and a new working party, once more chaired by Peter Chapman is presently drawing up detailed plans for the development. The report of this second working party will be discussed by Trustees at their meeting on 24 July, and further

details of this development will be made available to delegates at the Durham Conference of the Fellowship – and subsequently to all members. A request will be made at the Conference for a loan from Fellowship funds to assist this undertaking.

In his autobiographical fragment, Dickens describes the coffee-shop in St Martin's Lane and reminisces about the inscription “MOOR-EEFFOC” as seen backward from the inside of the window. G K Chesterton considered “that wild word...the motto of all effective realism”. It is our hope that when the Doughty Street MOOR-EEFFOC becomes reality that it will be a more than effective enhancement of the Museum.

Yours in fellowship

Paul Schlicke

“PARTY FEELING NATURALLY RUNNING RATHER HIGH ON SUCH AN EXCITING OCCASION...” (MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT, Chap 16)

This year's CHARLES DICKENS MUSEUM HOUSE PARTY will take place on Friday 6th June at 6.30 pm. Always a highly popular event, the party is an opportunity to mix and mingle with other Dickensians and all those concerned with the welfare of the Museum. If the weather is fine guests will again be able to enjoy the intimate atmosphere of the Museum garden.

We are delighted to welcome as our guest this year Museum Trustee, Councillor Flick Rea.

*Cost £15 (£10 members of the Friends of the Charles Dickens Museum and the Dickens Fellowship.) A rich variety of light refreshments – to include vegetarian options – will be provided by an in-house team. **ADVANCE PAYMENT IS ESSENTIAL TO SECURE YOUR PLACE** – please book early by contacting the Museum on tel 020 7405 2127 ext 202 or via email: info@dickensmuseum.com*

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual General Meeting of The Dickens Fellowship will be held at St. Chad's College Durham at 9.00 am on Saturday 2 August 2008, during the 102nd Annual Conference, to transact the following business:

- (a) to receive and to consider the report of Council on the activities of the Fellowship;
- (b) to receive and to consider the annual accounts and balance sheet of the Fellowship;
- (c) to elect the Honorary Officers;
- (d) to confirm the recommendations of Council in respect of membership subscriptions and affiliation fees
- (e) to transact such other business as Council may decide is appropriate for a General Meeting

The Agenda for the meeting accompanies this edition of *The London Particular* and will be published on the Fellowship website in due course.

One resolution is proposed by Council:

The Dickens Fellowship, if called upon, will make a loan to the Charles Dickens Museum for the coffee shop development of £15,000 for a period and term to be agreed.

Further documentation supporting this resolution will be made available at the start of the Conference.

.....

Every member of the Dickens Fellowship is entitled to vote at an Annual General Meeting, or to inform the Honorary General Secretary (or, in the case of Branch members, the Branch Secretary, who will then notify the Honorary General Secretary) in writing seven days before the meeting, of the way they wish to vote, on any specific resolution before it.

Every resolution put to an Annual General Meeting shall be decided on a show of hands together with any votes lodged with the Honorary General Secretary 7 days beforehand. The chairman of the meeting shall be the sole and absolute judge of the validity of every vote. Each Member shall have one vote and the chairman of the meeting shall have an additional, casting, vote.

This Notice of the Annual General Meeting has been sent by the Honorary General Secretary to the Honorary Secretary of each branch, and to individual members who are not associated with any branch at least thirty days before the meeting, stating the agenda and giving members the opportunity to register a proxy vote. **It is the responsibility of Branch Honorary Secretaries to inform Branch members and to inform the Honorary General Secretary of any matters arising therefrom, including the identity of proxy votes.**

**Lee Ault
Joan Dicks
Joint General Secretaries
May 2008**

Some Dickensian Clutter...and no Bucks Needed!! *

Anthony Burton's talk at 12.15 pm on *Dickens and Domestic Clutter* is just one of the events scheduled for the **Open Day at the Charles Dickens Museum on Saturday 21st June. All events are free**, and refreshments will be provided at the Museum. Other events, featuring Dr Tony Williams, Thelma Grove and Anthony Burton are:

- 11.00am – Walk: *Dickens's Neighbourhood*
- 1.00pm – Talk: *Dickens's New Career: starting the Public Readings in 1858*
- 2.00pm – Walk: *Dickens and the Nearby Pleasure Gardens*
- 3.30pm – Talk: *Dickens and the Working Woman*

**As many readers will know, Lady Maria Clutterbuck was the pseudonym adopted by Dickens's wife Catherine for the book What Shall We Have For Dinner? which she co-wrote with her husband.*

A Final Thought....

"He asked this member of the fraternity (who had two red herrings in his hand, and a loaf and a blacking brush under his arm) where was the nearest place to get a cup of coffee at." – Little Dorrit. Book 1, Chapter 9

Please send any contributions, news clippings etc to the *London Particular* editorial address:

Stephen Jarvis, 1 Riverine, Grosvenor Drive, Maidenhead, Berks SL6 8PF, UK. Email: stephenjarvis@hotmail.com