
London Particular

The Dickens Fellowship Newsletter

FORTHCOMING EVENTS Never mind the Jubilee and the Olympics – there are still some Dickensian events going on to celebrate his special year:-

Gad's Hill Place will be open from 25 July to 19 Aug, afternoons only, from Wed to Sun, for pre-booked guided tours of the key reception rooms and the all-important study. Admission by pre-booked ticket. Enquiries can be made on: events@dickensmuseum.com

Foundling Museum, Bloomsbury Objects from Charles Dickens Museum on display. From 11 May to 31 December, guest curators Jon Snow, Gillian Anderson, Mark Dickens and Armando Iannucci place objects from CDM into different contexts at the Foundling Museum, leading up to an exhibition on "Dickens and the Foundling" in the autumn.

Fact into Fiction; Charles Dickens, a Southwark childhood, at the Cuming Museum, Southwark, 22 May – 24 November.

Streets of Dickens, a library exhibition of old photographs depicting locations in Camden connected with Dickens's life and his novels. Holborn (Camden) Library, 38 Theobald's Road, Holborn. Open Mon, Tues, Thurs, 10 – 6 until 21 December. Tel: 0207 974 6342.

Dickens and the Artists – exhibition at the Watts Gallery, Compton, near Godalming, Surrey, 19 June – 28 October.

CD exhibition at New Kent History & Library Centre, Maidstone until August 2012.

Faces of Dickens – Although there is no statue in London, several representations of CD exist: one is a bust at the gothic red Prudential building on the site of Furnival's Inn, where Dickens lived when newly married. It is located in the public right of way through Waterhouse Square at the Prudential building in High Holborn opposite the Melton Mowbray public house. The bust and

inscription are in a recess in Waterhouse Square. Another "Face" in the next issue

DICKENS DAY– Thurs 16 August – City walks and tours of the MANSION HOUSE. Free walks, led by City of London Guides, will leave the City Information Centre (south side of St Paul's Cathedral) at 10.30 am and will follow a Dickensian route to busy Leadenhall Market. No need to book. By kind invitation of the Lord Mayor, between 2 and 4 pm there will be an opportunity to visit the principal rooms of the nearby Mansion House and to enjoy Dickensian readings, performance and songs in the magnificent Egyptian Hall. Cost £15, all proceeds to the Lord Mayor's charities. To book, please send cheques, payable to CLGLA, to DICKENS DAY, c/o Diana O'Reardon (Treasurer), 33 Willowcourt Avenue, Harrow, Middx HA3 8ET, enclosing email address or sae for booking confirmation (which must be brought on the day). Phone enquiries to Joan Dicks, 020 7242 8575 or 07837 686 277.

Olympic Special – Some advice for runners
With the London Olympics almost upon us, one wonders what modern athletes and spectators would make of an incident at one of the Gad's Hill sports days, organised and sponsored by CD. The events included foot-races for local residents as well as all comers. In the 120 yard hurdle race for strangers, a man came in second after running and jumping over 10 hurdles with a pipe in his mouth, smoking all the time. Dickens clapped him on the shoulder at the winning post and said, "If it hadn't been for your pipe, you would have been first!" "I beg your pardon, Sir", answered the man, "but if it hadn't been for my pipe, I should have been nowhere!"

Dickens and the Russians – CD may not have met Dostoevsky, but there's no doubt of his appeal in Russia. "In Russia, we understand

Dickens and maybe even all his subtleties, almost as much as the English”, claimed Dostoevsky three years after CD’s death. “Perhaps we even love him as much as his own countrymen do.” Tolstoy declared “All his characters are my personal friends”. Turgenev’s bond with CD was such that he even contributed articles to “Household Words”. Most of CD’s novels were translated into Russian almost as soon as they were published.

Dickens and the French – ‘*Le Magazine du Bibliophile*’ recently ran an article comparing CD with Victor Hugo. Both saw immense changes in their lifetimes – industrialisation, railways, people moving to big cities and huge disparities in wealth leading to revolutions in France, but not in England. CD and VH met in Paris in 1847. VH had read *Oliver Twist* and he wrote *Les Misérables* six years later. Both novels are about oppression and the underworld. *Oliver* is exploited, *Gavroche* is a survivor – but *Oliver* is rescued by the benevolent middle-class Mr Brownlow, while *Gavroche* has nowhere to go, society is indifferent and he dies on the barricades. *OT* ends optimistically, *Les Mis* does not. CD and VH tell us that economic crises may produce inequalities and turmoil for the future unless attitudes change. (The article, by the way, does not mention “*A Tale of Two Cities*” – a book the French have never liked.)

Should CD have been a doctor? DF Member, Dr Suresh Pathak, draws attention to a recent article in the British Medical Journal concerning an item in the journal in 1870 on Dickens’s death, in which his identification of various medical conditions in his novels is praised. The writer of the article says “What a gain it would have been to physic if one so keen to observe and so facile to describe had devoted his powers to the medical art.” Particular reference is made to the connection between right hemiplegia and aphasia (Mrs Skewton’s last illness in *Dombey & Son*). His descriptions of moral and mental insanity in characters “show the hand of a master”. He also mentions his later efforts to advance the interests of the East London Hospital for Children and his sympathies for the sick and suffering of every age.

“The Dickensian” Bicentenary Issue Most members are subscribers to the Dickensian journal and will have received the special bicentenary spring edition. It has a special souvenir cover, tribute articles by Simon Callow, Howard Jacobson, David Mitchell, James Naughtie and other writers, plus all the regular articles and contents. Copies of this issue are available from Dickens Fellowship,

48 Doughty Street, London WC1 2LX, price £9 plus £2 postage (UK) and £3 (overseas). Cheques payable to “Dickens Fellowship”.

“DICKENS WOMEN”

Miriam Margolyes will be touring the UK with her much-acclaimed one-woman show, *Dickens Women*, as follows:-

Sun Aug 26 – Pitlochry Festival, 8pm

Tues Aug 28 – Eden Court, Inverness, 8 pm

Thur Aug 30 – Aberdeen Univ, 7 pm

Sat Sep 1 – Alnwick Playhouse, 7.30 pm

Sun Sep 2 - “ “ 4 pm

Tues Sep 4 – York Theatre Royal, 7.30 pm

Wed Sep 5 – Scarborough, Stephen Joseph Theatre, 7.30 pm

Thur Sep 6 – SJ Theatre as above, 1.30 pm

Tues Sep 25 – Haymarket, Basingstoke, 7.30 pm

Fri Sep 28 – Norwich Playhouse, 7.30 pm

Sat Sep 29 – Norwich Playhouse, 7.30 pm

Sun Sep 30 - “ “ 7.30 pm

Tues Oct 2 – Bury St Edmunds, 7.30 pm

Wed Oct 3 - “ “ 2 pm & 7.30 pm

Sun Oct 7 – Lincoln University, 7.30 pm

Tues Oct 9 – New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, 7.30 pm

Thur Oct 11 – Old Laundry, Windermere, 8 pm

Sat Oct 13 – Welsh College of Music & Dramatic Art, Cardiff, 7.30 pm

Actor and DF member, David Barry, has produced a play, “Mr Micawber”, based on his book, “Mr Micawber Down Under”. Touring dates are:

14 Sep – Trinity Theatre, Tunbridge Wells;

15/16 Sep – Sarah Thorne Theatre Club, Broadstairs;

26 Sep – Woodville Studio Theatre, Gravesend;

4 Nov – Astor Theatre, Deal;

7 Nov – Hawth Studio Theatre, Crawley;

8/9 Nov – Arden Theatre, Faversham;

10 Nov – Epsom Playhouse.

“‘Let’s have some more’ said Mr Boffin, hungrily.” (*Our Mutual Friend*). No, not stories about misers, but more contributions, please! Send items to: Alison Gowans, “Danesdyke”, 27A Ashcombe Road, Carshalton, Surrey SM5 3ET, or by email - aligowans@hotmail.co.uk