Happy waning days of Spring, Everyone! Summer is soon upon us, with many adventures to come.

We present to you our second issue of our Volume 14 2022 newsletter. We will be Zooming only this Saturday, and will not return to our live venue, the Carnegie room at the Riverside Main Library until October.

For this spring, summer and fall season, we have elected to read and discuss The Uncommercial Traveller (U.T.) essay series. In the near future we are most fortunate to have two very prestigious guest speakers lined up: Professor John Jordan in August, and Dr. Valerie Purton in September. Both presentations will be Zoom only.

Charles Dickens himself is The Uncommercial Traveller, playing the role of the explorer and the investigator of interesting things, such as he did as a young man in Sketches by Boz; but now as a mature reporter, with his new sketches being observations that he makes throughout the 1860’s in the final decade of his life.

Your GRAD GRIND features interesting quotes from UT stories, along with a list of chapter (1-18) synopsis’s.

Please enjoy the 1966 feature article From Boz to the Uncommercial, written by Rosalind Vallance.

Please check out our back page for upcoming Fellowship Dickensian-related Zoom events.

Don’t forget that it is time to start planning for the U. C. Santa Cruz Dickens Universe, July 24-30! You will find more detailed information within on page 4.
FROM BOZ TO THE UNCOMMERCIAL (Part 1)

By Rosalind Vallance

Throughout his life Dickens was an incorrigible walker. From the age of five or six when he began exploring with his father the small hills, the riverside meadows and marshlands near Rochester in Kent until those last years when, escaping from London, he returned to live at Gad’s Hill in the same still unspoilt country, walking was not only one of his chief pleasures but became more and more an absolute necessity without which he declared he should “rust, break and die.”

One can imagine the small, taut, delicate boy setting off with his fascinating father as the young Hazlitt is said to have done “Like one who could never be tired.” The same determination upheld him when, virtually a dying man, he forced his gouty foot painfully into his boot and ploughed for mile after mile with his two dogs through the deep snow about Gad’s Hill. “If I could not walk far and fast I should just explode and perish” …” Restlessness, you will say. Whatever it is, it is always driving me, and I cannot help it.”

The intense emotional and nervous pressure which he thus admitted to his biographer, John Forster, eventually killed him at the age of fifty-eight, but it was the essential Dickens, who had once declared, “…much better to die, doing.”

He was born just too late to enjoy the Golden Age of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Hazlitt, Lamb and De Quincey, those writer-walkers who had the English countryside at its loveliest and most convenient, “half-wild and wholly tame,” inheriting from the eighteenth century unspoilt natural beauties together with those civilized adaptations to the landscape which we are apt to take for granted rather than the dispensation of Providence than the work of man.

Born in 1812, Dickens grew up under the ever-spreading shadow of the Industrial Revolution and lived well into the Railway Age, but his part of England, the south-east, was not much spoiled, and, even in London, acres and acres, sometimes only a few minutes’ walk from abominable slums, were still quite countrified. There were market-gardens, pleasure-gardens, and strawberry fields bordering the Vauxhall Bridge Road; in his young days at least, the green lanes, alive with singing birds, began at Sloane Square, Camberwell and Kilburn, and from the Strand, it is said, three windmills could be seen beckoning walkers to the country heights of Hampstead, Highgate and Shooters Hill.

In The Uncommercial Traveller, Dickens declared that there were seasons when the West End was delightfully Arcadian – when all the great houses were shut up and the whole place given over to the pleasant pastoral idlings of caretakers; the butler walks out unashamed in his carpet slippers in the pleasant open landscape of Regent Street and sits on the railings enjoying the morning paper; young men and servant girls daily by the pump in the Albany; as for the Uncommercial himself, he records that “soothed by the repose around me I wander insensibly to considerable distances, and guide myself back by the stars.”

Pure fantasy though this may have been, is there not something in its very cadence which evokes a London unbelievably different from our own, which nevertheless we know did once exist? When Dickens was a Londoner, it was possible to enjoy the gradual fading of daylight, the sudden rising of the moon, and the advent of real darkness and then the sparkling constellations – all that is lost to us behind the everlasting glare of street-lights, house-lights, head-lights, neon signs. Dickens could walk even on the outskirts of the town, in the middle of a country road, lost, perhaps, to this world, but in no great danger of being crashed without warning into the next. And surely his imagination, with its strong impulses towards whatever was dark and mysterious, must have found what it needed, as Coleridge, De Quincey, and Hazlitt did, in their long, dark night-walks. Once Dickens left his London house at two in the morning and walked to Gads Hill. It was October the 15th, 1857. He never forgot, he told Forster, the wonder of that equinoctial dawn, when night was so completely at odds with morning “which was which.”

The same occasion is recalled in the essay, “Shy Neighborhoods”: “So much of my travelling is done on foot, that if I cherished betting propensities, I should probably be found registered in sporting newspapers under some such title as the Elastic Novice, challenging all eleven-stone mankind to competition in walking. My last special feat was turning out of bed at two, after a hard day, pedestrian and otherwise, and walking thirty miles into the country to breakfast. The road was so lonely in the night, that I fell asleep to the monotonous sound of my own feet, doing their regular four miles an hour. Mile after mile I walked without the slightest sense of exertion, dozing heavily and dreaming constantly. It was only when I made a stumble, like drunken man, or struck out onto the road to avoid a horseman close upon me on the path – who had no existence – that I came to myself and looked ab – somewhere behind the sun, where I was going to breakfast. This rising of the moon, and the advent of the first stars, never forgot, he told Forster, the wonder of that equinoctial dawn, when night was so completely at odds with morning “which was which.”

Dickens trail in Higham, Kent

The day broke mistily – it was autumn time – and I could not disembarrass myself of the idea that I had to climb those heights and banks of clouds, and that there was an Alpine Convent somewhere behind the sun, where I was going to breakfast. This sleepy notion was so much stronger than such substantial objects as villages and haystacks, that, after the sun was bright, when I was sufficiently awake to have a sense of pleasure in the prospect, I still occasionally caught myself looking about for wooden arms to point the right track up the mountain and wondering why there was no snow yet. It is a curiosity of broken sleep that I made immense quantities of verse on that pedestrian occasion (of course I never make any when I am in my right senses) and that I spoke a certain language one pretty familiar to me, but which I have nearly forgotten from disuse, with fluency.

(continued on pg. 4)
By Tim Clark, Chairman

Did You Know?
(Interesting Dickens-related tid-bits to whet the Dickensian Whistle)

Uncommercial Quotes

“Your Honour, unless your Honour, without a moment’s loss of time, makes sail for the nearest shore, this is a doomed ship, and her name is the Coffin!” ~ Nurse’s Stories

I have in my day been caught in the palm of a female hand by the crown, have been violently scrubbed from the neck to the roots of the hair as a purification for the Temple. ~ City of London Churches

From a beetle-haunted kitchen below this institution, fumes arose, suggestive of a class of soup which Mr. Grazinglands knew, from painful experience, enfeebles the mind, distends the stomach, forces itself into the complexion, and tries to ooze out at the eyes. ~ Refreshments for Travellers

At Paris, I took an upper apartment for a few days in one of the hotels of the Rue de Rivoli; my front windows looking into the garden of the Tuileries (where the principal difference between the nursemaids and the flowers seemed to be that the former were locomotive and the latter not). ~ Travelling Abroad

Are not the sane and the insane equal at night as the sane lie a dreaming? Are not all of us outside this hospital, who dream, more or less in the condition of those inside it, every night of our lives? ~ Night Walks

The first diabolical character who intruded himself on my peaceful youth (as I called to mind that day at Dullborough), was a certain Captain Murderer. This wretch must have been an off-shoot of the Blue Beard family, but I had no suspicion of the consanguinity in those times. His warning name would seem to have awakened no general prejudice against him, for he was admitted into the best society and possessed immense wealth. Captain Murderer’s mission was matrimony, and the gratification of a cannibal appetite with tender brides. ~ Nurse’s Stories

I wonder that the great master who knew everything, when he called Sleep the death of each day’s life, did not call Dreams the insanity of each day’s sanity. ~ Night Walks

Here is a list of each Uncommercial Traveller (UT) essay/Chapters 1–18, along with a brief synopsis:

I—HIS GENERAL LINE OF BUSINESS (Dickens introduces himself in the guise of the Uncommercial Traveller.)

II—THE SHIPWRECK (The UT visits the scene of the wreck of the Royal Charter, which occurred 26 October 1859.)

III—WAPPING WORKHOUSE (The UT journeys from his Covent Garden lodging to the workhouse at Wapping following a report in The Times in which a police magistrate had said that the workhouse was a disgrace and a shame. There his is given a tour of the house and interviews some of the inmates there.)

IV—TWO VIEWS OF A CHEAP THEATRE (The UT makes two visits to the Britannia Theatre in Hoxton. On Saturday night he sees a pantomime and a melodrama. On the following Sunday evening he attends religious services there.)

V—POOR MERCANTILE JACK (The UT visits the Liverpool docks accompanied by the police superintendent.)

VI—REFRESHMENTS FOR TRAVELLERS (The UT takes a look at the inconveniences of travel.)

VII—TRAVELLING ABROAD (The UT travels to Paris and on to Switzerland.)

VIII—THE GREAT TASMANIA’S CARGO (The UT visits a workhouse in Liverpool containing dead and dying soldiers who have returned from India amid terrible conditions onboard the Great Tasmania.)

IX—CITY OF LONDON CHURCHES (The UT spends a year of Sundays visiting the ill-attended old churches in the city of London, monuments to another age.)

X—SHY NEIGHBOURHOODS (The UT reports on the peculiarities of pets found in obscure London neighborhoods.)

XI—TRAMPS (The UT makes a note of the various kinds of tramps plodding along country roads in summertime.)

XII—DULLBOROUGH TOWN (The UT visits Chatham, the hometown of his youth.)

XIII—NIGHT WALKS (The UT can’t sleep and spends his nights walking around London visiting Newgate, Covent Garden, Westminster Abbey and other locales.)

XIV—CHAMBERS (The UT describes the lonely lives of men who live in chambers in the various Inns of Court.)

XV—NURSE’S STORIES (The UT fondly recalls visits to places he has never been...in the beloved books of his youth. He also recalls being terrified as a child by the macabre stories told him by his nurse.)

XVI—ARCADIAN LONDON (The UT describes a deserted London out of season.)

XVII—THE ITALIAN PRISONER (While on a tour of Italy the UT meets a former political prisoner, now a wine merchant, and undertakes a commission to deliver an enormous bottle back to the man’s benefactor in England.)

XVIII—THE CALAIS NIGHT MAIL (The UT describes the journey from Dover to Calais by steamer and then on to Paris via the night express train.)
“Of both these phenomena I have such frequent experience in the state between sleeping and waking that I sometimes argue with myself that I know I cannot be awake, for, if I were, I would not be half so ready. The readiness is not imaginary because I often recall long strings of verse, and many turns of the fluent speech, after I am broad awake.

My walking is of two kinds: one, straight on end to a definite goal at a round pace; one, objectless, loitering, and purely vagabond. In the latter state no gypsy on earth is a greater vagabond than myself; it is so natural to me, and strong with me, that I think I must be the descendant, at no great distance, of some irreclaimable tramp.”

The disturbance of his feelings often sent him out both by day and by night at all sorts of unseasonable hours and in most undesirable conditions to work it off, as for example at Broadstairs, where, he wrote to Angela Burdette-Couts, “I walked ten miles over the burning chalk before I could regain the least composure.”

Country walking was part of his regular routine, either on holiday or when he was working. “Work and worry without exercise would soon make an end of me.” Long companionable walks were an important part of many of his friendships, though it may be questioned whether the enjoyment was always quite mutual. “Stone is still here,” he writes, “and I lamed his foot walking him seventeen miles.” It is never Dickens who suffers the casualty; he is usually the descendant, at no great distance, of some irreclaimable tramp.

The Frozen Deep. Dickens was prone to illnesses of a chronic kind, kidney trouble, cataract and so on, but never it would appear to accidents. This immunity was probably due to the natural lightness, agility and precision of all his movements, continually being improved by the stage-training in which he delighted.

His wife Catherine, who was nearly always pregnant, could scarcely have been much of a walking companion to him, though she and her sister Georgina accompanied him (in litters) on a hair-raising expedition up Vesuvius, and were subsequently “the wonder of Naples,” and Georgina walked with him in France and Switzerland. Their adored sister Mary who died at seventeen was always looked to as his perfect companion, thought back to as his perfect companion, thought it is doubtful where she or indeed anyone less than some fabulous “forty-wise power-partner” (to use Hesketh Pearson’s wonderful phrase) could ever have coped with the voracious demands of his complex personality. He was rather like one of those children in his own Christmas Carol party, where it was not a case of forty feeding like one, but of every child conducting itself like forty.

(End of part 1, to be resumed and completed next issue)

The Dickens Universe is a unique cultural event that brings together scholars, teachers, students, and members of the general public for a week of stimulating discussion and festive social activity on the beautiful Santa Cruz campus of the University of California—all focused on one or two Victorian novels, usually one by Charles Dickens.

In 2022, the Dickens Universe will pair one of the best-known novels of Dickens, David Copperfield, with the most famous of all nineteenth-century African American novels, Frances E. W. Harper’s Iola Leroy or, Shadows Uplifted. Reflections on how personal histories of coming of age play out through and against the mysteries and brutalities of history; confrontations with the claims of familial and community loyalties, as these come to be fractured, exposed, and reconfigured: through these and other ways of reading, Universe participants will explore what happens when the novels of these two extraordinary novelists, reformers, orators, poets, and journalists are brought into conversation.

Now in its 41st year of operation, the Dickens Universe combines features of a scholarly conference, a festival, a book club, and summer camp. Participants include people of all ages and walks of life—distinguished scholars, graduate students, undergraduates, retirees, young professionals, high school teachers, anyone who loves to read and who enjoys long Victorian novels.

Here are some of the things that make the Universe such a special experience.

- The college lifestyle: participants live on campus, eat together in the student dining hall, have time to meet and come to know each other in different ways.
- Everyone is reading the same book. We all have this one important thing in common.
- The range of activities—formal lectures, small discussion groups, films, daily Victorian teas, performances, Auctions, and Victorian Ball dancing.

The Universe offers a week of total immersion in the world of Victorian fiction with friendly, like-minded colleagues in a beautiful setting. Whether we’re returning to a Dickens novel that everyone knows and loves or branching out into a Victorian novel by another author who might be less familiar, during the Universe we build a community out of our passion for reading, talking with one another, and bringing Victorian culture to life. There is now time to register like now:

https://www.dickensfellowshipconference2022.nl/index.html
GRAD Fellowship Officers

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Future GRAD Meetings

- **June 18**: *The Uncommercial Traveller* (Ch. 1-18) **Tim Clark**
- **August 20**: *Night Walks*  
  Professor John Jordan
- **September 17**: *Dickens and Tennyson*  
  Dr. Valerie Purton

* Until further notice, all future meetings will be on Zoom only.

* Join Zoom Meeting

https://ucsc.zoom.us/j/93306449804?pwd=elpFZXBwRTkzbU10TUZoQ1VSVFpwdz09

This is our monthly request for you to consider our Annual Fellowship dues. Nothing has changed, $20 for a single, $30 for a duo. Memberships are rolling, so once you pay, your renewal is not due until a year has elapsed. And of course, we do not discourage any donation that exceeds the renewal! Aside from our annual International Fellowship dues, we donate the balance to local charities and sponsorships.

Upcoming Dickensian Zoom Events

- **Saturday, June 25th**, 1:00 pm PST: Greater Los Angeles Dickens Fellowship (GLAD)  
  www.gladfellowship.org  
  Cherie Francis moderates *Nicholas Nickleby*, Ch. 24-45

- **Sunday, June 26th**, 1:00 pm PST: Santa Cruz Pickwick  
  https://dickens.ucsc.edu/resources/pickwick-club/index.html  
  Wayne Batten presents *A Tale of Two Cities*, Book III, Ch. 1-15.

- **Saturday, July 9th**, 1:00 pm EST: Dickens Fellowship of New York:  
  www.dickensnewyork.com  
  Mark Halperin moderates *Dorrit* Ch. 15-22

- **Monday, July 11th**, 3:00 pm BST: Canterbury:  
  canterburydf@gmail.com  
  Dr. Jeremy Clarke presents “Dickens Landladies.”

- **Dickens House Museum** offers a variety of Family and Victorian themed virtual events, along with virtual tours of Dickensian neighborhoods, and the House Museum itself.  
  www.dickensmuseum.com

And don’t forget, coming up this July:

- **The 115th Annual International Dickens Fellowship Conference**, July 15-16, DF Central, ZOOM  
  https://www.dickensfellowshipconference2022.nl/index.html

- **The Dickens Universe**, July 24-29. U.C. Santa Cruz, California, USA  
  https://dickens.ucsc.edu/universe/