



Arts & Humanities
Research Council



**TECHNE AHRC funded PhD studentship – Partnership Award offered by Royal Holloway,
University of London and the Charles Dickens Museum**

Project: *Dickens and the Heritage Sector*

Supervisors: Royal Holloway supervisors – Professor Juliet John (Department of English) and
Dr Jane Hamlett (Department of History)

Charles Dickens Museum supervisors – Dr Cindy Sughrue (Museum Director) and Ms Louisa
Price (Museum Curator)

The Studentship

Applications are invited for a TECHNE Partnership PhD studentship, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, starting in October 2017. The studentship includes a stipend of £16,553 (plus fees at home/EU rates) for three years. In addition, the student will receive £550 per annum to support engagement with the Partner from the AHRC. Students can apply for an additional six months stipend to engage in extended development activities such as work placements.

As a TECHNE student, the person selected will have full access to the TECHNE Doctoral Training Partnership development activities and networking opportunities, joining a cohort of about 50 students per year from across seven universities in London and the south-east. See www.techne.ac.uk. TECHNE students can apply for additional funding to support individual or group training and development activities.

Project Description

Despite the fact that Dickens and Shakespeare are Britain's most prominent global literary exports, the role of the heritage sector in facilitating Dickens's rise to international iconhood has received very little critical attention. Though there is a great deal of work available on the role of the film and television industries in making Dickens the most adapted author for the screen of all time, Juliet John remains one of the few academics to have published work on his relationship to the concept of heritage as it plays out on screen and in other contexts, for example, museums, literary tourism and heritage organisations. The off-screen heritage sector is fast becoming one of the main growth areas in Victorian Studies today, with conferences like 'Placing the Author: Literary Tourism in the Long Nineteenth Century' (Elizabeth Gaskell House, Manchester, 2015), bringing academics working on English Literature, public history, geohumanities and cultural memory, together with academics and practitioners from the museum and tourist industries. There remains, however, no monograph on Dickens's relation to the heritage sector when there is in fact room for a sub-field, as there is indeed in Shakespeare Studies. Given Dickens's global cultural status, a significant research project in this area would cast important light on the processes (technological, affective, political, economic, geographical, institutional, and mnemonic) by which literary culture more generally can exert influence or impact on the public sphere.

The PhD proposed here will take as its research base the museum itself (the former Doughty Street home of Dickens in Bloomsbury), examining its history, exhibitions, visitor

information, merchandise, educational outreach, and archives. It will also utilise the Dickens bicentenary website hosted by the Museum and funded by the AHRC, which is the most comprehensive record which exists of the global celebrations which took part in 2012. The archives themselves comprise the biggest uncatalogued collection of newspaper clippings relating to Dickens in the world, charting all things Dickensian in the news from Dickens's death in 1870 to the early twentieth century. The Museum houses all the records of the Dickens Fellowship, a world-wide society of Dickens scholars and amateur enthusiasts which publishes the Dickensian magazine and whose mission is dedicated to preserving Dickens heritage. In addition, the Museum owns an expansive, uncatalogued collection of objects which is housed onsite and an unrivalled collection of books on Dickensian topography and Dickens walks, a side to the Dickens publishing industry which is still thriving.

Although the PhD student in receipt of the studentship may wish to link their core research to some work on other heritage institutions and bodies which have played a part in the Dickens industry (e.g. the Museum of London, the V&A, the smaller Dickens museums in Portsmouth and Broadstairs, the now defunct Dickens World in Chatham, Eastgate House in Rochester, the British Council, the Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage and relevant tourist boards), there is more than enough material at the Charles Dickens Museum for this to comprise the focus. It holds well in excess of 100,000 items ranging from letters and manuscripts to furniture, personal effects and the only clothing of Dickens known to have survived. The student will have the opportunity to play a full part in the 150-year anniversary conference and celebratory activities.

The project will be archivally and empirically based, yet in dialogue with theoretical frames from all the disciplines already mentioned. Chapters can be formulated by the successful applicant but might be divided as follows:

1. What is Literary Heritage? A scene-setting chapter reviewing work on literary heritage in the context of theoretical work on heritage, literary tourism, and cultural memory more broadly, pushing towards an analysis of why literary heritage taps into distinct cultural and affective dynamics.
2. Housing History – This chapter will consider the history and evolution of the museum in the context of other Dickens museums and the fascination with authors' houses more broadly. It will tap into work in museum studies, Victorian studies and public history on the material culture of the home but will also examine Dickens's particular fetishisation of the home and the importance of the 'aura' of the Dickensian home to the Dickensian 'brand' and its longevity.
3. Dickens in the Press – This chapter will examine the ways in which the press has 'heritagised' Dickens in the years since his death, emphasising certain aspects of his work and values above others (his role as a social reform, domesticity, Christmas and convivial company) in order to give the public what it imagines the public wants. Although there has been historical and geographical variation over the years, which the research will highlight, the 'feedback loop' created by these narratives underpins the public understanding of the commonly used adjective 'Dickensian'.
4. Exhibiting Dickens – This chapter will examine the back catalogue of exhibitions at the Dickens Museum through the ages (most recently 'Restless Shadow: Dickens the Campaigner') alongside visitor data to analyse how Dickens has been exhibited and to which audiences. Consideration will also be given to the Museum of London's

Dickens and London Bicentenary Exhibition in 2012, for which Juliet John acted as academic advisor, and the upcoming V&A 2020 exhibition.

5. Dickens and tourism – This chapter will use the museum’s collection of books on Dickensian topography and walking, alongside the museum’s visitor books and work with tourist and heritage agencies which promote places through their associations with Dickens, to examine the international appeal of Dickens. It will also try to establish the economics underpinning perceptions of Dickens’s cultural value.
6. Heritage education – The museum’s work with schools will be situated in a broader study of the uses of Dickens on the school curriculum. Sarah Winter’s *The Pleasures of Memory* (2011) provides some brilliant insights into the role of education in the the Dickens brand, but she examines only local examples from the American education system. The uses of Dickens in the British education system is an untapped field.

Supervision

The primary PhD supervisor Juliet John is based in The Department of English at Royal Holloway. The Royal Holloway English Department has an international reputation for advanced research. We have an excellent record of PhD completion and a thriving postgraduate community. Currently we have around 50 PhD students researching topics across the full range of literary studies, Creative Writing and Poetic Practice. Royal Holloway has excellent research facilities, including electronic resources and the largest library in the University of London. Our historic Victorian campus has a reputation for being one of the most beautiful campuses in the world.

Royal Holloway’s long-standing Centre for Victorian Studies (<https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/english/research/centre-for-victorian-studies/centre-for-victorian-studies.aspx>), run by the English department, is one of the leading international Centres for Victorian research, many of its events held in the stunning picture gallery (<https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/aboutus/artcollectionandpicturegallery/home.aspx>), which houses a world-famous collection of Victorian art. Royal Holloway is an award-winning centre for Victorian postgraduate training, moreover, each year hosting the residential London Victorian Studies Colloquium (<https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/english/research/centre-for-victorian-studies/the-london-victorian-studies-colloquium.aspx>) which brings together aspiring Victorian academics from all parts of the UK and beyond as well as masterclasses. We are a centre of excellence for research on Dickens and offer unrivalled opportunities for aspiring Dickensians: we have an official partnership with the Dickens Museum and are a member institution of influential the Californian consortium, the Dickens Project. Among other benefits, this means that each year a postgraduate student is funded to attend the Dickens Universe conference in Santa Cruz, the biggest annual gathering of Dickensians in the world. We are the only member institution in London and one of the few in the UK.

Jane Hamlett will be second supervisor on the project and is based in the Department of History, one of the largest in the country, with over 100 PhD students. The History department is also home to the London Centre for Public History, which will provide a stimulating context for this interdisciplinary PhD project. Dr Cindy Sughrue and Ms Louisa Price, the Director and Curator of the Dickens Museum, both have experience of supervising

and training doctoral students, and will guide day-to-day research at the Museum. Skills that will be developed at the Museum are archival research, interviewing, object handling, curating, conference organisation, marketing, social media, and data analysis.

Eligibility

The successful applicant should have a good first degree and a Masters (or be due to complete a Masters) in English Literature, Victorian Studies, Public History, Museum Studies and/or Heritage Studies. S/he should have a committed interest in Dickens.

Applicants must meet the RCUK residency requirements as described in paragraphs 43-46 of the 'Conditions of Research Council Training Grants'

<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/documents/termsconditionstraininggrants-pdf/> and comply with conditions set out in the AHRC Training Grant Funding Guide <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/skills/phdstudents/currentawardholders/>

A formal agreement regarding the Partnership between Royal Holloway and the Dickens Museum will be signed at the commencement of the project and the student will be asked to confirm that they have read and understood this agreement.

Enquiries and Application procedure

Informal enquiries about the project or the application should be directed to Juliet.John@rhul.ac.uk. **The closing date for applications is 5pm Monday 25th July.** Interviews will take place in early August (date tba).

You should complete a Postgraduate Research Application form

<https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studyhere/researchdegrees/applying/applicationprocessforresearchdegrees.aspx> and send the following to English.PGAdmissions@rhul.ac.uk by the deadline. **Please also ask two referees to write to this address by the closing date:**

- A covering letter explaining what you would bring to the project in terms of experience, qualifications and knowledge
- An up-to-date CV
- Two examples of written work completed during either Masters or undergraduate study.