
London Particular

The Dickens Fellowship Newsletter

VOTE FOR THE MUSEUM!

This year, the Charles Dickens Museum will be involved with UKTV History's **Britain's Best** campaign, which aims to find the nation's favourite historical site. Hosted by Alan Titchmarsh, the campaign will be spread over two television series. There will be an additional programme presenting the winner, as decided by the British public. As someone who values the Charles Dickens Museum, it would be great if you could take the time to vote from 5th April to 27th August by one of five methods:

- On the web, at www.uktvhistory.co.uk
- Texting BEST CHARLES DICKENS MUSEUM to 83222 (texts cost 50p plus standard network charges)
- Calling 09011 31 2007 and quoting Charles Dickens Museum (calls cost 50p)
- Visiting the Museum, and posting at one of the voting boxes
- For those with Sky, using the Red Button

So don't forget to watch **Britain's Best** on UKTV History (Sky Channel 537, Telewest 203, NTL 203 and Freeview 12) from 9th April to 20th May and from 23rd July to 27th August. The final result will be broadcast on 17th September.

FAREWELL TO SWEDENBORG

Members are reminded of the change in venue for the monthly meetings of the Central Fellowship: the two meetings scheduled for 23rd April and 23rd May will be the last to be held at Swedenborg Hall. As far as Dr Tony Williams has been able to establish, it seems that the first meeting of the Fellowship at the Hall took place on 1st December 1947, with a talk on *Filming Dickens* given by one

David Lean. The very last meeting at the Swedenborg will be a talk by Sally Ledger called *Is Eating People Wrong?* which will trace the two-way influence between *Oliver Twist* and the literature and visual culture of the anti-poor law movement, focusing in particular on the emergence of the figure of the beadle.

The first meeting at our new venue, Barnard's Inn Hall, will be Monday 10th September.

VISIT TO LINCOLN'S INN

Prior to the Fellowship's association with Swedenborg, meetings were held in various locations, including at Lincoln's Inn Old Hall. On 20th June 2007 at 2pm, there will be a guided tour visiting that location (which also featured in Bleak House) plus the New Hall and the Chapel. Refreshments are included in the price of £4.50 per person, and the tour will last about 90 minutes. The group will be limited to a maximum of twenty people. Anyone wishing to book should contact Dr Tony Williams by 30th April to reserve a place. Please write to him at 33 Adam Close, High Wycombe, Bucks HP13 6BY (NOT to the Charles Dickens Museum) enclosing a cheque made payable to The Dickens Fellowship.

Literary Residents of Bloomsbury, from Shelley to Empson, by way of Dickens and Friends – a walk led by Anthony Burton.

Bloomsbury is full of the former homes of literary figures – some famous, some notorious, some retiring. On Thursday 3rd May, Anthony Burton will help us to see Bloomsbury through their eyes. Departure is at 6.30 pm SHARP from The Charles Dickens Museum, 48 Doughty Street, and will last approximately two hours. Cost £5. Places are limited – book on 020 7405 2127 x202 or email: info@dickensmuseum.com

River Thames Boat Trip

The route for the trip has yet to be finalised, but will be (as it were) from "Boz to Boswell", as it will be held in conjunction with Dr Johnson's House, and will take place on Saturday 30th June 2007, 2pm-5pm. Tickets £18 (£15 Friends and Fellowship members.) Book in advance 020 7405 2127 x202

A Reader Writes...

Raymond Coleman wrote to the London Particular: "I have read that Dickens was afraid of masks of any kind, but nevertheless a death mask was taken on his demise. What happened to said mask?"

It seems that Dickens had agreed to sit for a bust by the sculptor Thomas Woolmer RA, but died before doing so. Woolmer took a death mask and used it to make casts for a bust. Does anyone know where the mask is?

Little Nell

The world premiere of the play *Little Nell* by Simon Gray, which explores the relationship between Dickens and Ellen Ternan, will take place at Bath's Theatre Royal from 4th to 28th July. Box office: 01225 448844

Sketches by Boz

There will be a *Sketches by Boz* walk held at Oaklands Park, in association with the Chichester Festival Theatre on 15th September at 11.00am. Box Office: 01243 781312

BRINGING LIFE TO DICKENS WORLD

Thelma Grove reports that work on the indoor themed attraction at Chatham Maritime is progressing well, although it will not be open to the public in time for Easter as originally announced.

Gerald Dickens has recorded the voice for the animatronic Dickens, with other actors voicing Sam Weller, Mr Pickwick and Magwitch. The sequences for the Britannia Theatre show and the Haunted House of Ebenezer Scrooge were filmed at Shepperton Studios. Alan Dobie as Scrooge and Jeff Rudom as the Ghost of Christmas Present looked particularly close to Leech's

illustration and the appearance of all those taking part should satisfy the most discerning Dickensian. Characters from different books interact at times – for example, there is a lively dialogue between Fagin and Miss Mowcher when she emerges from a giant book. From Dickens's 1,550 characters, some have been chosen from thirteen of the novels, and there are scenes from A Christmas Carol, American Notes and Pictures from Italy. A great day out is promised for all!

DICKENS IN THE NEWS

Pip and Pinholes: Miss E. Sadler and Jan Recknal-Turner both submitted an article from the Ramblers' Association Magazine for Spring 2007, featuring a walk in Dickens's Kent, in which photographs were taken using a pinhole camera. In Cooling Churchyard, famous for the encounter between Pip and Magwitch, the article's author, David Wise, points his camera at the lozenge-shaped stones and remarks: "Dickens himself would have used a pinhole camera: they were new in his day. Their basic nature – no viewfinder, exposure meter or film – ensures that results are often patchy, but when they come right they're timeless and have a mysterious quality that film or digital can't match."

Robert Seymour's Deedbox: Some readers will know of my interest in *Pickwick's* tragic illustrator Robert Seymour. For nearly two years now, I have been trying to trace a deedbox containing an extremely important collection of unpublished biographical material relating to Seymour, which has been missing for eighty years. I now believe that the only realistic way of tracing this archive would be via an article in a national newspaper. Does anyone know of a sympathetic journalist who might be interested in writing such a piece? If so, please contact me at the *London Particular* editorial address:

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

A Final Thought...

"Mr Tomkins declared that no other chimney-pot in the United Kingdom, broken or unbroken, could be so beautiful as the one at No.48."

- Charles Dickens, *Sketches by Boz*