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# London Particular

The Dickens Fellowship Newsletter

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'I asked him whether there was a great fire anywhere? For the streets were so full of dense brown smoke that scarcely anything was to be seen. 'Oh dear no, miss', he said. 'This is a LONDON PARTICULAR'. I had never heard of such a thing. 'A fog, miss' said the young gentleman.' *Esther Summerson and Mr Guppy, Bleak House Chapter III*

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 The menu of the Greyhound pub in Carshalton, Surrey, features 'LONDON PARTICULAR' soup – and yes, it's a pea-souper!

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**Dickens Productions** - The BBC is reported to be planning an adaptation of Edwin Drood for later this year, with an ending added by Gwyneth Hughes, a TV writer, and a new three-part version of *Great Expectations*, written by Sarah Phelps, to be shown on BBC1 at Christmas.

The Clint Eastwood film, *Hereafter*, starring Matt Damon, is now at a cinema near you and features scenes recorded by the two stars at the Charles Dickens Museum. Be warned, the film has received terrible reviews!

Member Jan Recknell-Turner reports that *Great Expectations* is being produced at the Richmond Theatre, London, 5-7 April, re-imagined in 19<sup>th</sup> century India. Well, goodness gracious me!

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**Dickens in the News** - In January, the *Daily Telegraph* featured leading articles using the word 'Dickens' or 'Dickensian' on no fewer than four occasions - a front page story about schools going back to 'Kings, Queens and Dickens'; a lead article describing an initiative to banish 'Dickensian' school-rooms; and a substantial piece describing artists Gilbert and George as 'heirs to Hogarth, Dickens and Sickert'. Most remarkable, a lead sports article where the controversial disqualification of golfer Pádraig Harrington, on a technical breach of rules, is described as 'Dickensian'. Dickensian golf rules? 'Dickensian' seems to be an all-purpose word for anything antiquated or inefficient.

## DICKENS FELLOWSHIP: Forthcoming events 2011

**CHRISTCHURCH CONFERENCE 14-19 APRIL. THE CONFERENCE HAS BEEN CANCELLED BECAUSE OF THE EARTHQUAKE. THE ORGANISERS TRIED HARD TO SALVAGE IT, BUT THERE ARE NOW NO AVAILABLE VENUES. WE SEND OUR SYMPATHY TO CHRISTCHURCH MEMBERS WHO WORKED SO LONG AND HARD TO PREPARE A WELCOME FOR FELLOWSHIP MEMBERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD.**

**Thursday 21 April:** 'Great Expectations on Screen'; film evening with Tony Williams at CDM.

**Sunday 8 May:** Commemorative service at church of St George the Martyr, Borough High Street at 11 am, followed by lunch at the George Inn, Southwark, with entertainment (see membership card for booking details).

**Saturday 21 May:** *Great Expectations* walk – Tony Williams. Start at St Paul's underground station at 2 pm.

## AUCTION NEWS

A copy of the first impression of the first edition of *A Christmas Carol*, inscribed by Dickens on New Year's Day 1844 to his friend William Macready, the actor, was sold at Sotheby's in London in October 2010 for £181,250. No information as to the buyer. (It certainly wasn't me... Ed.)

***Macready was known for his furious temper, but seems never to have quarrelled with Dickens in 33 years of friendship. Macready confided in his diary (1851) 'If it were right to have a personal friend, Dickens is the person most fit'. He called Dickens 'a friend who really loves me'.***

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### 'The Other Dickens'

Professor Lillian Nayder has just published a biography of Dickens's wife, Catherine Hogarth, following a recent tradition of resurrecting the lives of women who lived in the shadow of famous men. *Lillian Nayder, The Other Dickens, Cornell University Press, price £22.95.*

### **Dickens Statue**

**One of only two statues of Dickens in the world has been returned to public display in Australia after it went missing for almost 40 years. The statue, created in the 1880s, disappeared in 1972 after removal from Centennial Park in Sydney because of vandalism. Fellowship member, Sandra Faulkner, formerly of New South Wales, came across a reference to it in a book in 2006. Following an appeal to the public, the statue was tracked down to a private garden in the Blue Mountains near Sydney and brought back to the park in Sydney in 2007. A cast of the author's missing head was made and the quill, scroll and finger recreated. So, whether Dickens likes it or not, he has a statue in New South Wales! (The other statue, as many people will know, is in Philadelphia.)**

### Oliver's Workhouse?

Dr Ruth Richardson, historian of medicine from Cambridge University, claims to have identified a former workhouse as the model for the one where Oliver Twist was born. The old Strand Union Workhouse in Cleveland Street, near Euston Road, is due for demolition and Dr Richardson argues that it should be preserved because of the possible Dickens link. Dickens lived nearby with his family at 22 Cleveland Street (formerly 10 Norfolk Street) between the ages of 3 – 5 and again from 17 – 20, but there is no evidence of a direct link between Dickens and this workhouse. As we know, many of CD's characters comprised traits from several different people – perhaps the same applies to workhouses!

It is not accessible to the public and is surrounded by 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings. The boarded-up front of the building can be seen in Cleveland Street and there are views of other parts of it from Charlotte Street and Tottenham Mews. Google Cleveland Street Workhouse to find out more; there is an on-line petition if you are interested in trying to help save this building.

### **WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE A SAY IN HOW THE FELLOWSHIP IS RUN?**

**The twice-yearly meetings of the Dickens Fellowship Council play a vital role in communications between Executive Officers of the Fellowship and representatives of individual branches. The central Fellowship, which has nearly 600 members, needs to be represented at Council meetings. If you are a central Fellowship member and feel you can contribute, please consider putting your name forward. Please contact Joan Dicks on [joan@dickshg.freereserve.co.uk](mailto:joan@dickshg.freereserve.co.uk)**

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### **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

A reminder that your membership for 2011 should have been renewed by now. If you have renewed, you will have received your Membership Card/Programme. If not, please send your cheque, made payable to 'Dickens Fellowship', to Membership Secretary, Dickens Fellowship, 48 Doughty Street, London WC1N 2LX. Membership fee £17, £11 for second person at same address, £10 for students. £15 extra for the 'Dickensian' journal.

### **EDITOR RETIRES**

**It is with much regret that we have to inform you that Stephen Jarvis, who has been Editor of the London Particular for over five years, is now standing down, as he wishes to concentrate on completing his book about the illustrator Robert Seymour and Pickwick. Stephen has done an excellent job, collecting and putting together a whole range of news, views and information for members, and the Fellowship would like to thank him heartily for all his hard work, good humour and dedication. Thank you, Stephen, and good luck with the book!**

**Alison Gowans has taken over as our new Editor and this is her first issue. She is experiencing some trepidation, knowing she has a hard act to follow!**

**She would be very grateful for any contributions, news clippings etc. Please send to the *London Particular* editorial address: Alison Gowans, 'Danedyke', 27A Ashcombe Road, Carshalton, Surrey SM5 3ET, or by email - [aligowans@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:aligowans@hotmail.co.uk)**

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