

Dickens Fellowship Portsmouth Birthplace Branch

Welcome to the Portsmouth Branch



Portsmouth has many connections with Charles Dickens, not least the house in which he was born. The Dickens Birthplace Museum has been a museum open to the public for over one hundred years.

If you are interested in the novels and other works of the author, and would like to find out more about his fascinating background and life, there is no better way than joining your local branch of the Fellowship.

What does the Portsmouth Branch do?

We host a range of activities. We meet on the second Tuesday of each month, with the exception of February (see below), July and August (holiday recess). **We meet in St. Swithun's Church Hall, Waverley Road, Southsea, PO5 2PL from 2.30pm to 4.30pm.** Our meetings are fun, friendly and informative. The annual subscription for becoming a member of the Birthplace Branch is £10, and becomes due each 1st January. The usual itinerary is:

- First half: A talk or lecture on a Dickens or Portsmouth related theme.
- Refreshment break and time to chat with friends – a small donation towards the cost is requested.
- Second half: Discussion and/or readings concerning our Dickens' book of the year. Perhaps a fun quiz on some aspect of the book.
- The 'charity pig' is sent around for people to donate to. We then donate this money to local good causes. We also hold a Bring and Buy Sale at the meeting a few times a year.



Our Other Activities

February

Charles Dickens was born on 7 February, 1812 in a small terraced house, number 1 Mile End Terrace, Landport, and lived there for the first four months of his life, before the family moved on to 16 Hawke Street, Portsea. When the house came up for sale in 1903 Portsmouth Corporation bought it, and opened it on 22 July 1904 as a museum dedicated to the great author. We are proud to be associated with Dickens Birthplace Museum. Please visit its website:

<https://charlesdickensbirthplace.co.uk/> for more information.

We celebrate Dickens' birthday with a number of events, including:-

- In conjunction with Portsmouth Grammar School, an Annual Birthday Lecture at John Pound's Church, High Street, Old Portsmouth, on the nearest Saturday to 7th February (Charles Dickens's birthday).
- A wreath-hanging ceremony at the Birthplace Museum on the 7th, followed by the placing of a garland around the neck of the Charles Dickens statue in Guildhall Square at approximately 12.00pm.
- A Birthday Lunch on the first Tuesday in February, to which our President, the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth, and the Lady Mayoress are invited.



Other annual events

- A church service at St. Alban's Church on a Sunday, when it falls on the 4th of March, to celebrate the Baptism of Charles Dickens.
- An annual outing by coach during the month of May or June. Previous trips have been to Rochester, Isle of Wight, and London venues associated with Dickens.
- An Evensong Service in St. Mary's Church, followed by refreshments and readings from the works of Dickens in the church hall to commemorate the death of Charles Dickens. This takes place on the Sunday nearest to 9th June.

Our annual Christmas party in December is not to be missed – we celebrate in true Dickensian style with a song and a dance and plenty of Victorian parlour games.