

# GRAD GREETINGS

The Greater Riverside Area



A Proud Branch Member (#204) since 2009



September 2022    Volume 14, Issue Four

## NEXT MEETING

Date: Saturday, September 17, 2022  
Time: 10:00 am – 12:00 pm PDT

## ZOOM

Dr. Valerie Purton presents:  
Dickens and Tennyson

<https://ucsc.zoom.us/j/97712021318?pwd=MWZDNWlzL0xJWDNiSUFQNXZHV2pUQT09>



Sir Alfred Lord Tennyson, 1890 (W.W. Robson)

## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Happy advent to the Fall Equinox everyone. I believe that we are all ready to put this brutally hot summer behind us!

We present to you our fourth 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 15th. After taking a break in this month, we will return to read, discuss and conclude **The Uncommercial Traveller** (U.T.) essay series in October with Vikky.

This Saturday we are most delighted to have the very accomplished **Dr. Valerie Purton**, as she will reprise her presentation of **Dickens and Tennyson**. Your Zoom link is exhibited opposite here.

Dr. Purton's presentation will be followed by our GRAD business meeting, where we will share our Treasurer's Report, nominate donations and sponsorships, and share recent DF correspondence and news.

Lord Alfred Tennyson's literary career is detailed for you on page 3. Many works jump out as those both read and taught throughout our academic lives!

Your **GRAD GRIND** features a profile of **Valerie Purton**, along with a preview of her most fascinating talk that she will enthrall us with.

Please check out our back page for upcoming Fellowship Dickensian-related Zoom events, along with the summer conference dates for 2023.

## GRAD GRIND

By Tim Clark, Chairman



### Did You Know?

(Interesting Tennyson-related tid-bits to whet the Dickensian Whistle)

**Our Zoom GRAD Meeting this Saturday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 am**

Valerie Purton is Emeritus Professor of Victorian Literature at Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge, UK. She is the author of *Dickens and the Sentimental Tradition* (Anthem Press 2012) and co-author with Norman Page of *The Palgrave Literary Dictionary of Tennyson* (Palgrave, 2010). She is the Editor of the *Tennyson Research Bulletin* and has recently been elected Chair of the international Tennyson Society.



Valerie edited *Darwin, Tennyson and Their Readers* (Anthem 2014) and *John Ruskin and Nineteenth-century Education* (Anthem, 2018), which was short-listed for the Ruskin Prize. She is the author of many articles on Victorian literature and contributed a chapter to Elizabeth Ludlow's *The Figure of Christ in the Long Nineteenth-century* (Palgrave 2020).

We initially were introduced to Valerie on Zoom in April as she presented this talk for the Aberdeen, Scotland Dickens Fellowship. Simply fascinating. Here is a preview of some key points that Valerie will bring to your attention.

Dickens and Tennyson were giants of the Victorian age, but Tennyson's background was rural and Dickens's urban. Tennyson adored his mother and Dickens was unforgiving when it was clear his mother wanted him to return to the blacking factory. Tennyson suffered no such trauma and went to Cambridge rather than having to earn a living.

Both writers though were energetic young men who found it easy to make friends. They liked each other and Tennyson dined at Dickens's Devonshire Terrace home in 1843. In 1846 he became the godfather of Alfred Tennyson D'Orsay Dickens. Both men also shared a friendship with John Macready, and both loved the theatre. So, a really close relationship with Dickens was probably available to Tennyson. But the poet seems to have held back from becoming part of the novelist's intimate circle.

The two men did differ in their political opinions, Dickens being much more of a radical and much less of a monarchist. They were equally shocked by the behavior of Jamaica's governor in the notorious Edward Eyre case when the British appointed official sentenced 600 native rebels to death: and by the military incompetence displayed during the Crimean War. Tennyson was known as a typical imperialist by his peers; while Dickens was no jingoist and was consistently skeptical of politicians.

Both gentlemen resisted honors ...Dickens to the end, while Tennyson eventually succumbed and accepted a peerage. Both flirted with Unitarianism (this topic deserves a talk on its own). Dickens's faith was a strong but fairly simple and straightforward one of Christianity: irregular Code Amendments, belief in social activism, shock at the rise of Anglo Catholicism, rejection of extreme religiosity, dismay at the disinterest of many churches in the poor of their parishes.

(continued, pg. 3)

**Alfred, Lord Tennyson**, in full **Alfred Tennyson, 1st Baron Tennyson of Aldworth and Freshwater**

Tennyson was born August 6, 1809, Somersby, Lincolnshire, England and died October 6, 1892, at the age of 83, Aldworth, Surrey. The English poet is often regarded as the chief representative of the Victorian age in poetry. He was raised to the peerage in 1884.

In 1842 Tennyson published *Poems*, in two volumes, one containing a revised selection from the volumes of 1830 and 1832, the other, new poems. The new poems included “Morte d’Arthur,” “The Two Voices,” “Locksley Hall,” and “The Vision of Sin” and other poems that reveal a strange naïveté, such as “The May Queen,” “Lady Clara Vere de Vere,” and “The Lord of Burleigh.”

In 1847 he published his first long poem, *The Princess*, a singular anti-feminist fantasia. They appeared, at first anonymously, as *In Memoriam* (1850), which had a great success with both reviewers and the public, won him the friendship of Queen Victoria, and helped bring about, in the same year, his appointment as poet laureate.

In 1850, *In Memoriam* (a series of Elegies dedicated to his lifelong friend Arthur Hallam) is a vast poem of 131 sections of varying length, with a prologue and epilogue. Inspired by the grief Tennyson felt at the untimely death of his friend Hallam, the poem touches on many intellectual issues of the Victorian Age as the author searches for the meaning of life and death and tries to come to terms with his sense of loss. Most notably, *In Memoriam* reflects the struggle to reconcile traditional religious faith and belief in immortality with the emerging theories of evolution and modern geology.

Tennyson’s position as the national poet was confirmed by his *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington* (1852)—though some critics at first thought it disappointing—and the famous poem on the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava, published in 1855 in *Maud and Other Poems*. Many of the poet’s admirers were shocked by the morbidity, hysteria, and bellicosity of the hero. Yet *Maud* was Tennyson’s favourite among his poems.

A project that Tennyson had long considered at last issued in *Idylls of the King* (1859), a series of 12 connected poems broadly surveying the legend of King Arthur from his falling in love with Guinevere to the ultimate ruin of his kingdom. The poems concentrate on the introduction of evil to Camelot because of the adulterous love of Lancelot and Queen Guinevere, and on the consequent fading of the hope that had at first infused the Round Table fellowship. *Idylls of the King* had an immediate success, and Tennyson, who

loathed publicity, had now acquired a sometimes-embarrassing public fame. The *Enoch Arden* volume of 1864 perhaps represents the peak of his popularity. New Arthurian *Idylls* were published in *The Holy Grail, and Other Poems* in 1869 (dated 1870

In 1874 Tennyson decided to try his hand at poetic drama. *Queen Mary* appeared in 1875, and an abridged version was produced at the Lyceum in 1876 with only moderate success. It was followed by *Harold* (1876; dated 1877), *Becket* (not published in full until 1884), and the “village tragedy” *The Promise of May*, which proved a failure at the Globe in November 1882. He published a poem called “Despair” in *The Nineteenth Century* (November 1881). A more positive indication of Tennyson’s later beliefs appears in “The Ancient Sage,” published in *Tiresias and Other Poems* (1885). Here the poet records his intimations of a life before and beyond this life.

Tennyson accepted a peerage (after some hesitation) in 1884. In 1886 he published a new volume containing “Locksley Hall Sixty Years After,” consisting mainly of imprecations against modern decadence and liberalism and a retraction of the earlier poem’s belief in inevitable human progress.

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(Purton Bio, cont. from pg. 2)

Valerie will introduce us to Dickens’s last letter:

*I have always striven to express Venera. On for the life of our Savior, because I feel it; and because I rewrote that history for my children – every one of whom knew it from having it repeated to them – long before they could read, and almost as soon as they could speak.*

Dickens was a New, not an Old Testament man. Tennyson’s faith was more complex. The development of evolutionary theory unseamed him and sometimes provoked bouts of “*existential despair*.” We catch this in “*In Memoriam*”:

*O life as full, then, as frail! O for thy voice to soothe and bless!  
What hope of answer or redress? Behind the veil, behind the veil.*

Later Tennyson was instrumental in the formation of the Metaphysical Society; which was a forum for open-minded discussion between skeptical scientists and prominent religious thinkers. Religion clearly fascinated Tennyson. but he was not a churchgoer. On his death bed it was Shakespeare, not the Bible, that he clutched to his breast.

We are in for a fruitful, simulating talk that will generate many questions for discussion. You will find your knowledge of Dickens and Tennyson much enriched.

## GRAD Fellowship Officers

<b><u>Chairman</u></b>	Tim Clark <a href="mailto:poochclark@earthlink.net">poochclark@earthlink.net</a>
<b><u>Corresponding Secretary</u></b>	Vikky Pickett <a href="mailto:vikky.pickett@twc.com">vikky.pickett@twc.com</a>
<b><u>Recording Secretary</u></b>	Nancy Smith <a href="mailto:dragonsmith@verizon.net">dragonsmith@verizon.net</a>
<b><u>Treasurer</u></b>	David Pickett <a href="mailto:davidjpickett2018@gmail.com">davidjpickett2018@gmail.com</a>

### **Future GRAD Meetings**

- September 17: *Dickens and Tennyson*  
**Dr. Valerie Purton**
- \* October 15: *The Uncommercial Traveller* (conclusion, Ch. 19-36)  
**Vikky Pickett**
- November 12: *A Tale of Two Cities*  
Introduction  
**Wayne Batten**
- January 14: *A Tale of Two Cities* from a historical context, Book 1<sup>st</sup>, Ch. 1-6)  
**Kendall Mattern**

\* This meeting will be live/Zoom hybrid at Riverside Main Library, Carnegie Room. All other meetings are Zoom only.

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

- **Sunday, September 25<sup>th</sup>**, 1:00 pm PST: **Santa Cruz Pickwick**  
<https://dickens.ucsc.edu/resources/pickwick-club/index.html>  
**Prof. Karen Hattaway** introduces *Our Mutual Friend* (Book 1<sup>st</sup>, Ch. 1-17) (registration required)
- **Saturday, October 1<sup>st</sup>**, 1:00 pm EST: **Friends of Dickens, NY** [The Friends of Dickens New York](http://www.thefriendsofdickens.org)  
**James Armstrong** moderates *Oliver Twist*, Ch.7-13 (Hybrid)
- **Monday, October 10<sup>th</sup>**, 3:00 pm BST: **Canterbury**  
[canterburydf@gmail.com](mailto:canterburydf@gmail.com)  
**Prof. Jenny Hartley** presents "*Fagin, Chuffey and the Aged: Dickens and the Old Men.*" (Hybrid) (registration required)
- **Tuesday, October 11<sup>th</sup>**, 1:00 pm EST: **Montreal**  
[www.dickensmontreal.ca](http://www.dickensmontreal.ca)  
**Ellie Clavier** presents *Little Dorrit* (Book 1, Ch. 1-8)
- **Wednesday, October 12<sup>th</sup>**, 7:30 pm GST: **Aberdeen**  
[eadsummers@me.com](mailto:eadsummers@me.com)  
**Jeremy Parrott** presents "*Ghosts*"
- **Saturday, Oct. 15<sup>th</sup>**, 1:00 pm EST: **Dickens Fellowship of New York** [www.dickensnewyork.com](http://www.dickensnewyork.com)  
**Mark Halperin** moderates *Little Dorrit* Ch. 37-49

### Scheduled for Summer 2023:

The 2023 Fellowship Annual International conference in London, July 26-29, themed "*Dickens, Law and Disorder*"

The 2023 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Dickens Universe at U.C. Santa Cruz, July 23-29, featuring *A Tale of Two Cities*



