

**Dickens Fellowship AGM**  
**6 August 2024**  
**Joint Honorary Secretaries' Report**

This has been our first year as Joint HGSs. It has proved an interesting and challenging experience. On the whole, things have gone smoothly. The only serious problem has been the resignation of the editor and associate editor of *The Dickensian*, Emily and Tony, due to illness. This has inevitably resulted in delays to the publication of the Winter 2023 and Spring 2024 editions. Thanks to our president, Cathy, we have now made good progress in getting things back on track.

**Events during the year:**

1. A successful Annual conference was held in London in July 2023, with 80+ members in attendance. We are very grateful to Tim Suffolk, Geoffrey Christopher and all members of the Portsmouth Branch for hosting this year's annual conference, and to Ian Dickens for arranging a day-trip to the Isle of Wight for us.
2. On 6 October 2023, the Dickens Fellowship marked the 121st anniversary of its foundation. This was also a fitting moment to celebrate the contribution of Professor Emeritus Michael Slater to the Fellowship and to Dickens Studies. A symposium was held in his honour at Senate House, University of London. It was also live-streamed on Zoom for members who were unable to attend in person. It was an opportunity for friends and colleagues of Michael to acknowledge his immense contribution to the study of Dickens over several decades. The room was full to capacity and several members contributed over Zoom as well. Despite some technical difficulties with the audio-visual equipment, the event was enjoyed by all.
3. Central meetings moved to The Charterhouse, Charterhouse Square, London EC1M 6AN, from January 2024, and this beautiful and historic venue has proved to be perfect for our purposes.
4. A Christmas Lunch took place at The George & Vulture public house on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2023, and the annual Birthday Dinner took place at the Garrick Club on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024. The toast to the immortal memory was proposed by guest of honour, and former DF President, Professor Jenny Hartley OBE.
5. The annual wreath-laying at Westminster Abbey took place on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at 3pm. The oration was given, and the DF wreath laid, by Marion Dickens Lloyd, a great-great-granddaughter of Charles Dickens. A second wreath was laid by two children from Gad's Hill School.

**Other items of note:**

1. Professor Cathy Waters completes her term of office as our President this summer, and Lucinda Dickens Hawksley, a great-great-great granddaughter of Charles Dickens, has agreed to succeed her in the role. As Lucinda is unable to be with us in Portsmouth, Cathy has agreed to fulfil any Presidential duties at the conference, and the official handover will take place on Saturday 24 August at The Charterhouse in London.
2. The website continues to be used by members and we hope this will continue to grow. It is the easiest way for us to keep you informed of news and events, so please remember to look at it occasionally and to check in case there are last minute updates to meetings, conference plans etc. There are often interesting news items on there too. Several branch administrators have been entering their branch events on the website calendar and keeping their branch information up to date. I would encourage all branches to do so. Please contact Sati if you need help.
3. The numbers following the DF feed on X (formerly Twitter) now exceeds 4450. Many thanks to Paul Graham for continuing to maintain and update this, our only social media presence.

Sati McKenzie and Jacquie Stamp

23 July 2024