

**Rochester and Chatham Dickens Fellowship News:** It has become a tradition of late, that the Rochester and Chatham Dickens Fellowship (R&CDF) February monthly meeting is a social event. A belated Charles Dickens birthday celebration afternoon tea took place at Mrs Tickits Pantry in Rochester on Thursday 15th February. Nineteen members and guests had the whole of Mrs Tickits establishment reserved for themselves. After a warm welcome from the Chairman Nick Baines, all enjoyed a splendid afternoon tea. This was followed by the reading of Dickens quotations by the Chairman and Steve Martin. Rosemary Dymond continued the entertainment, giving an interesting overview of Dickens novel *Little Dorrit* and the Marshalsea prison area it was set in. Entertainment concluded with Sue Haydock reading a very relevant extract from *Little Dorrit* featuring the characters Mrs Tickit and Dr Buckan.



### Meeting dates and speakers for 2023-24 season.

Normally 6.15 for a 6.30pm start in Gad's Hill School Hall.

- September 21<sup>st</sup> 2023 AGM - no speaker
- October 19<sup>th</sup> – Members readings night
- November 16<sup>th</sup> - Professor Malcolm Andrews
- December 21<sup>st</sup> Christmas Meal - no speaker
- January 18<sup>th</sup> 2024 - Branch member and Author Stephen Duxbury (*A Brief History of Lancashire* 2012 and *Dickens and the North* 2024) with an introduction and reading from Nicholas Nickleby.
- February 15<sup>th</sup> Charles Dickens birthday celebration afternoon tea at Mrs Tickits Pantry in Rochester.
- March 21<sup>st</sup> Dr Clive Johnson with a talk - Dickens and Satire.
- April 18<sup>th</sup> Dr Jeremy Clarke with a talk about William Cuffay, an influential Chartist reformer and trade union activist who was born in Chatham.
- May 16<sup>th</sup> Local historian David Burton with his "The tales of the riverbank" talk part two, from Chatham Dockyard to the river Medway estuary.
- June 20<sup>th</sup> Deborah Collins - "Drunkenness, Madness and Bigamy - The Staff of Strood Union Workhouse".
- July 18<sup>th</sup> Summer outing – Rochester Cathedral Tour and refreshments