



118th Annual Conference



Canterbury

10am, Monday 14 July 2025
to
4pm, Wednesday 16 July 2025

INTRODUCTION

The 118th Annual Conference of the Dickens Fellowship will be held in the historic city of Canterbury, in the south east of England. The theme will be ‘Dickens, Faith & Antiquity’.

The Annual Conference is your opportunity to meet in person with fellow Dickensians from around the world, to have your say on Fellowship matters at our Annual General Meeting (AGM), and to hear a range of informative and entertaining lectures relating to our theme.

Our venue this year is the Cathedral Lodge Conference Centre, within the precincts of England’s oldest cathedral, which was founded by St Augustine in 597AD. The Conference Centre is much more modern; take a look, online, at www.canterburycathedrallodge.org *

The conference is non-residential, but all meals will be provided and are included in the cost.

There is some accommodation available to book onsite, at the Cathedral Lodge Hotel. Information about this, and other accommodation available within 10 minutes’ walk of the precincts, can be found on page 7.

Canterbury has significant links with the life and work of Charles Dickens as well as with other giants of literary history, such as Geoffrey Chaucer, Christopher Marlowe and Aphra Behn, and we will have the opportunity to explore some of these during the conference. A programme is included on the following pages.

Delegates will have free access to the cathedral and its precincts for the duration of the conference. Parking is, however, extremely limited, so please travel by public transport if you can (see travel information on page 7).

The seaside town of Broadstairs, where Dickens spent so many very happy family holidays, is nearby, and delegates may also wish to spend a few days there, before or after the conference.

The towns of Rochester and Chatham, which feature so prominently in Dickens’s life and works, are also not far from Canterbury, so well worth considering for a pre- or post-conference visit.

At our **Welcome event** on the morning of **Monday 14 July**, delegates will be able to greet each other over refreshments as well as collecting their conference badges and memorabilia. There will also be displays and representatives present from:

- The Dickens House Museum in Broadstairs
- Gad’s Hill Place, Higham (near Rochester)
- The Dickens Chalet, now sited in Rochester’s Eastgate House



All events will take place in the Conference Centre’s Claggett Auditorium, which has a large floorspace, a raised platform and a balcony. It is fully accessible at ground level, and those unable to climb the stairs to the balcony will have no need to do so.

OUR LECTURERS

in alphabetical order of surname

Professor Malcolm Andrews: Emeritus Professor of English at the University of Kent, and author of several books on Dickens and on landscape art, including *Charles Dickens and his Performing Selves* (2006) and *A Sweet View: the making of an English Idyll* (2021)

Dr Jeremy Clarke: Education Officer at The Guildhall Museum in Rochester, Lecturer and author of *The Charles Dickens Miscellany* (2014)

Dr Lydia Craig: Lecturer of English at Eastern Illinois University, USA; Associate Editor of *The Dickensian* and of the online *Charles Dickens Letters Project*; Co-Editor of *Dickens Search* (online) and of the book *The Verse of Charles Dickens* (2025).

Michael Eaton MBE: Dramatist, Writer and Film Historian, who has adapted Dickens's work for radio, stage and screen, and compiled the *Dickens Before Sound* collection of silent movies based on Dickens's work.

Professor Jenny Hartley OBE: Emeritus Professor at the University of Roehampton, and Former President of The Dickens Fellowship (2013-2015); Author, whose books include *Charles Dickens and the House of Fallen Women* (2008) and *Charles Dickens, A Very Short Introduction* (2019); Editor of *The Selected Letters of Charles Dickens* (2012).

Lucinda Dickens Hawksley: President of the Dickens Fellowship, Art Historian, Author - of books including *Charles Dickens and his Circle* (2016) and *Dickens and Christmas* (2017) - Broadcaster, and great-great-great-granddaughter of Charles Dickens.

Dr Keith Hooper: Independent Lecturer of Victorian Literature, English examiner for the Cambridge International Examining Board, and author of *Charles Dickens: Faith, Angels and the Poor* (2017).

Dr Peter Merchant: Former Principal Lecturer at Canterbury Christ Church University, Editor of a number of Wordsworth Classics' editions, and Co-Editor of *Dickens and the Imagined Child* (2019)

Professor Carolyn Oulton: Professor of Victorian Literature at Canterbury Christ Church University; Co-Director of the International Centre for Victorian Women Writers; Co-Lead for *Kent Maps Online*, and author of several books, including *Dickens and the Myth of the Reader* (2016)

Dr Jeremy Parrott: Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Buckingham, Associate Editor of the online *Charles Dickens Letters Project*, and Author, whose books include *David Copperfield Unbound; a Genetic Study* (2025)

Professor Valerie Purton: Emeritus Professor of Victorian Literature at Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge, specialising in the works of Tennyson and Dickens; Chair of the Tennyson Society; Author, whose books include *Dickens and the Sentimental Tradition* (2012).

Dr Doreen Rosman: Former Lecturer in History at the University of Kent, and Author, whose books include *The Evolution of English Churches* (2003) and *Canterbury: A History since 1500* (2022).

PROGRAMME of EVENTS

(subject to change, if circumstances dictate)

MONDAY 14 JULY

10:00am - Registration and refreshments, with displays as noted on page 2.

11:15am - Official Welcome and Opening of Conference,
for which we hope to be joined by the Lord Mayor of Canterbury

12 noon - Lunch

1:00pm - The 118th **Annual General Meeting** (AGM) of The Dickens Fellowship
Chaired by Mr Paul Allen, Chair of Council

For those unable to join us in the Auditorium, the AGM will be live-streamed on Zoom:

The Dickens Fellowship is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: The Dickens Fellowship AGM 2025

Time: Jul 14, 2025 13:00 London (BST)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84397084392?pwd=pcA6fbFOCYys32dXtde4Wo8dquGvtJ.1>

Meeting ID: 843 9708 4392

Passcode: 129793

We regret that we are unable to live-stream or record any of our other events.

3:00pm - Refreshment Break

3:30pm - Lecture 1: Dr Doreen Rosman, 'Canterbury in the Age of Dickens'

4:15pm - Lecture 2: Michael Eaton MBE, 'This age is so perverse and is so very short of faith:
Dickens, Evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics'

5:00pm - Lectures 1 & 2 Q&A

5:15pm - Opportunity to attend Choral Evensong in the Quire of Canterbury Cathedral at 5:30pm

6:30pm - Evening Dinner

8:00pm - Evening Entertainment:
Gerald Dickens performs ***To Begin With***,
portraying his great-great-grandfather in
a performance hailed as being 'rich with
nuance, humour, and a generous spirit',
as the story of Charles Dickens writing
The Life of our Lord for his children unfolds



TUESDAY 15 JULY

9:00am - Lecture 3: Lucinda Dickens Hawksley, 'Dickens and Unitarianism'

9:45am - Lecture 4: Dr Lydia Craig, 'Dickens, Nonconformism & Chapels'

10:30am - Lectures 3 & 4 Q&A

10:45am - Refreshment Break

11:15am - Lecture 5: Professor Valerie Purton, 'Dickens, Tennyson & Christian Faith'

12 noon - Lecture 6: Professor Jenny Hartley, 'The Old in *The Old Curiosity Shop*'

12:45pm - Lectures 5 & 6 Q&A

1:00pm - Lunch

2:00pm - Walking tours of Canterbury City Centre's Literary Associations

OR

(for those with mobility issues, or in case of heavy rain) Pre-Recorded AV tour of Canterbury (tbc)

4:00pm - Refreshment Break

4:30pm - Lecture 7: Dr Jeremy Parrott, 'Looking out for Greek roots:

Myths and Mysteries in *David Copperfield*'

5:15pm - Lecture 7 Q&A

5:30pm - a chance to rest before the Conference Grand Banquet - or you may wish to attend

Choral Evensong in the Quire of Canterbury Cathedral at this time

8:00pm - **Conference Grand Banquet,**

with Guest of Honour, The Revd Canon Dr Will Adam, Archdeacon of Canterbury

WEDNESDAY 16 JULY

9:00am - Lecture 8: Professor Carolyn Oulton, 'Iconoclastic Fiction: "Debunking" Dickens in
C. E. Bechofer Roberts's *This Side of Idolatry*'

9:45am - Lecture 9: Dr Jeremy Clarke, "'What a study for an antiquarian!'"

Patterns of coherence in Dickens World'

10:30am - Lectures 8 & 9 Q&A

10:45am - Refreshment Break

11:15am - Lecture 10: Dr Keith Hooper, 'Dickens and Angels'

12 noon - Lecture 11: Dr Peter Merchant, "'Hooly Blisful Martirs"? Dickens and Victorian *Via Crucis* Fiction

12:45pm - Lectures 10 & 11 Q&A

1:00pm - Lunch

2:00pm - **Keynote Lecture**, followed by Q&A:

Professor Malcolm Andrews: 'Dickens and the "Jackdaw Sentiment" for Antiquity'

3:30pm - Farewell Refreshments and Close of Conference Speeches

THE PRICE

The price for attending the Annual Conference is £350 per person

This includes:

All Lectures

The AGM

A show by Gerald Dickens

A Walking Tour (or pre-recorded tour) of Canterbury

Lunch on all 3 days

Morning and afternoon refreshments on all 3 days

Dinner on the evening of Monday 14 July

Grand Banquet on the evening of Tuesday 15 July

Free access to Canterbury Cathedral and its Precincts

To reserve your place, please register online at www.dickensfellowship.org,
or complete the booking form on the next page.

Thank you.



CONFERENCE BOOKING FORM

118th Annual Conference of the Dickens Fellowship

Canterbury, 14-16 July 2025

Please Register and Pay online at www.dickensfellowship.org, OR complete **one form per person** and either:

- email to jacqueline.stamp99@gmail.com

OR

- post to: Annual Conference 2025, The Dickens Fellowship, The Charles Dickens Museum,
48 Doughty Street, London, WC1N 2LX

Title:

Surname: Forename:

Postal Address:

.....
.....
.....

Email Address:

.....

Telephone Number(s):

.....

Are you a member of the Dickens Fellowship? (please circle your answer) Yes No

Branch Name (if you've answered 'Yes' above):

.....

Dietary Requirements:

.....
.....

Accessibility Requirements:

.....
.....

Emergency Contact details:

.....
.....

PAYMENT

Please pay in Pounds Sterling.

- By card to our Paypal account – please pay to dftreasurerlondon@gmail.com , or email the Treasurer at dftreasurerlondon@gmail.com to ask for a Paypal payment request.
- Cheque made payable to “The Dickens Fellowship” posted to the CD Museum, 48 Doughty Street, London WC1N 2LX
- Bank Transfer to “The Dickens Fellowship 2020 Conference”*, Sort code – 20-41-41, Account number – 90872407, SWIFT code: BUKBGB22, IBAN GB73 BUKB 20414190872407. As reference, please quote: Conf25 followed by your surname

**please don't worry that the account is named for '2020': this is our conference-only account.*

ACCOMMODATION IN CANTERBURY

Some rooms at the Cathedral Lodge Hotel, next door to the Conference Centre, are being held for those attending our conference.

Please note that these rooms are only available for the nights of 14 and 15 July and they will be released for other, public bookings 8 weeks prior to our conference.

If you wish to book one of these rooms, please contact the hotel direct - by either email or telephone - and state that you are attending the Dickens Fellowship Annual Conference.

Contact via:

Email: stay@canterburycathedrallodge.org

Tel: +44 1227 865350

There are many other accommodation options within 10 minutes' walk of the Conference Centre. For example (listed alphabetically):



ABode Canterbury, 30-33 High Street, Canterbury, CT1 2RX
www.abodecanterbury.co.uk
Email: info@abodecanterbury.co.uk
Tel: +44 1227 766 266

Cathedral Gate Hotel, 36 Burgate, Canterbury, CT1 2HA
www.cathgate.com
Email: cathedralgatehotel@btconnect.co.uk
Tel: +44 1227 464 381

Greyfriars Lodge, 6 Stour Street, Canterbury, CT1 2NR
www.greyfriarslodgecanterbury.com
Email: enquiries@greyfriarslodgecanterbury.co.uk
Tel: +44 1227 788 455

Hampton by Hilton Hotel, 7 Margaret's Street, Canterbury, CT1 2TP
www.hilton.com/en/hotels/rcshxhx-hampton-canterbury
Tel: +44 1227 936 505

The Thomas Ingoldsby (Wetherspoons) Hotel
5-9 Burgate, Canterbury, CT1 2HG
Tel: 01227 463339

TRAVELLING TO CANTERBURY

The city has two railway stations: Canterbury East and Canterbury West.
Both are within 10-15 minutes' walk of the conference centre.

The city also has a sizable bus station, served by National Express coaches as well as local buses.
This is within 10 minutes' walk of the conference centre.

By car, the city can be accessed via the M2, the A2 or the A28

“... in the course of the evening I had rambled down to the door, and a little way along the street, that I might have another peep at the old houses, and the grey Cathedral; and might think of my coming through that old city on my journey, and of my passing the very house I lived in, without knowing it.”

David Copperfield, chapter XV

