

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2011

THE CANTERBURY MINI-CONFERENCE

At the end of July, the Canterbury Branch of the Fellowship held a most successful mini-conference for the benefit of those who would have been unable to go to Christchurch, New Zealand. But we all know what happened in Christchurch. Which meant, of course, that the AGM took place in Canterbury instead.

Pat and Morys Cemlyn Jones, Pamela Martin and I attended from our Branch. We stayed in the Canterbury Cathedral Lodge, a hotel/conference centre within the precincts of the Cathedral itself. Last time I stayed in

Canterbury I stayed in the Cathedral Gate Hotel, on the upper floors of the shops next to the Cathedral. As I passed over a walkway from the Reception to my bedroom, it seemed as though I could reach out and touch the Cathedral tower. Not so, of course, but it seemed wonderfully close. Never did I imagine that I would one day stay within the very precincts.



Gerald Dickens, Michael Slater, Malcolm Andrews, Tony Williams, Thelma Grove were among our old favourites in action. All at their scintillating best.

FUTURE CONFERENCES

2012 - PORTSMOUTH

Next year's Conference will be in Dickens's birthplace, Portsmouth, where we may see the controversial statue of Dickens which is to be erected in Guildhall Square. Despite Dickens' stated wish in his will that there be no statues or monuments of him, both the Fellowship and the Dickens family are in favour of this project. The sculptor, Martin Jennings, is known for his sculptures of John Betjeman in St. Pancras and Philip Larkin in Hull. There will be a performance of Eileen Norris's adaptation of 'Barnaby Rudge' in the Kings Theatre. Eileen used to teach in the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School and would be delighted to have Bristol people in her audience.

2013 - BORDEAUX

Plans afoot - no definite details yet.

2014 - CHICAGO

I can't wait for this one after hearing Lucinda Hawksley enthusing about Chicago and the wonderful reception she received from Chicago Dickensians.

Lucinda Dickens Hawksley prepared us for her new book, due next year, on the Life and Lives of Augustus Dickens (Charles' youngest brother, 1827-1866) - Lucinda is never less than exciting with her enthusiasm for her subjects.

Carolyn Oulton, a Reader in Victorian Literature at Canterbury Christchurch University, made a wonderful link between Jerome K. Jerome and Charles Dickens. JKJ was a fan of Dickens, and there is a story that when he was a little boy - he was 11 when Charles Dickens died - he sat next to a man with piercing eyes on a park bench. He told the man he wanted to be a writer. Later he saw a portrait of Dickens in a gallery which made him realise that the man on the bench was none other than Charles Dickens. Carolyn is in the process of writing a biography of JKJ. I for one shall want to read it. My mother told me that she never forgave her older sister for reading aloud to her when she had mumps JKJ's 'three Men in a Boat'. She laughed so much that the mumps became even more painful than they already were.

Aleksandra Budrewicz-Beraton, a lecturer in the Pedagogical University of Krakow in Poland, talked about translations of Dickens' works into Polish and the influence he has had on Polish writers and readers. All his works are now accessible in Polish. Apparently Dickens, despite claiming to be a 'friend to Poland', made fun of Polish names, calling them 'inaudible, unintelligible..'. Nevertheless, with his concern for children and social injustice, he has become part of Polish culture. Aleksandra's technological skills proved extremely useful when the equipment proved too complicated while we were trying to watch a DVD of 'Dickens's England'. She was among those who helped to get the DVD going.

As well as this, we had tours around either the town or the Cathedral, and evening entertainment was provided by Lee Ault and Jeremy Clark of the Guildhall Museum, Canterbury.

FS

DAY AND RAY



There are others in this picture besides Day and Ray, who will be recognised by a number of our members.

Some of our members will know this couple who brought so much to the Bristol and Clifton Dickens Society. Raymond and Daisy Metcalfe lived at 65, Clifton Park Road, Clifton, in the years after the war. I can remember being introduced to their social evenings, held once a month on a Thursday, in their lovely house. As a child it seemed a long way to drive with my parent on the dark winter nights. We go from Westbury Park, over the Downs, and into the unknown territory of Clifton with its huge old houses, turn into a pillared gateway, where once there would have been iron gates, crunch up the drive and stop the car at the heavy, black front door. I pull the chain and hear it jingling inside. Suddenly it opens and we are

welcomed by Daisy with much laughter and smiles.

She leads us down the hall with its flickering gas lights and into the beautiful bright drawing room filled with people by a roaring fire and listening to Raymond playing tunes from the musicals on the piano. Daisy joins him and they sing duets. Maybe songs from Gilbert and Sullivan or 'Showboat'. It was always such a lovely welcome. They were both professional actors and very accomplished entertainers. We were very fortunate that they moved to Bristol from Brighton, and that they had such an interest in Dickens.

They took many roles in the plays: Mr and Mrs Crummles were favourites. Mr Jasper, Mr Murdstone and Mr Veneering were all portrayed by Raymond, and Daisy enjoyed acting Princess Puffer, Mrs Jarndyce and Sairey Gamp. They were both devoted to the Dickens Society, and while Raymond helped with scenery and transport, Daisy made costumes and props. It was a happy time for the society.

I look around the drawing room at the wooden picture rail crammed with toys and souvenirs from their acting careers, and at the vibrant floor-length blackout curtains which hang at the enormous bay window. Not dull black, but stitched and embroidered in bright-coloured tapes and wools and sequins to depict a river bank with thick, pale green grasses, brown velvet bull rushes which actually protruded from the curtains and glowing butterflies and water birds. Kingfishers swooping down to the river, ducks splashing. Daisy had turned a necessity into a work of art which was a joy to behold.

After the songs members were encouraged to contribute poems, readings and stories, after which tea, coffee and light refreshments would be served.

A truly social evening, with a Dickensian slant. More songs at the piano and then, reluctantly, we step out into the cold night air and drive home to Westbury Park. These Thursday evenings were to be remembered as a highlight of the winter.

Sadly Daisy and Raymond decided to return to Brighton after a few years and we lost their lively contributions; but they always kept in touch, and occasionally were able to come back to stay for a few days and be welcomed by old friends who had so enjoyed their generous hospitality in Clifton.

Sally Draper-Fry

CANON ALFRED AINGER

Charles Dickens and Richmond House, Clifton, Bristol



In 2010 the former Honorary Secretary of the Bristol and Clifton Dickens Society, Mr Lionel Reeves, published the first part of his long awaited centenary history of the Society entitled: 'Lovers of Dickens: The Formative Years of the Bristol and Clifton Dickens Society'.¹

Mr Reeves reminded members of the association between Bristol and the Reverend Canon Alfred Ainger (1837-1904), a friend of Dickens, who was at school with two of the novelist's sons. Ainger had taken part in many of the Dickens family's theatrical entertainments and in later life lectured on his experiences.² A bachelor, man of letters, wit, acclaimed preacher, subsequently

Master of the Temple, and successively a chaplain in ordinary to Queen Victoria and Edward VII, Ainger was appointed one of the residentiary canons of Bristol Cathedral in 1887. His duties required him to live in the city for three months a year. As there were no houses provided for the canons, each year he rented a home in Clifton for himself and his two nieces and a little dog. He was the author of books on the poet Thomas Hood and the essayist Charles Lamb, and Ainger's appointment initially filled him with enthusiasm because he could pursue his interest in the Romantic poets and their association with Bristol. He enthused to his friend, Dykes Campbell: 'how nice it will be to explore old Bristol [...] and hunt up the houses and other relics of Southey, Cottle and the rest'.³

Ainger had succeeded to the canonry the Reverend Dr John Percival, the former Head Master of Clifton College, founder of University College, Bristol and future Bishop of Hereford. In his first year of residence, 1887, Ainger lived in Percival's rented home, Callendar House, now part of Clifton Hill House, a University hall of residence, but in 1888 he rented Richmond House which stands above it. Ainger's letters show that he resided there each summer until at least 1895, perhaps until 1898, with the exception of the summer of 1892 when he lived at Dyrham Lodge, Clifton Park.⁴

Canon Ainger, like Dickens, was truly ecumenical in his spirit, outlook and sympathies. He numbered among his close friends in Bristol the Quakeress, Miss Sturge. The leading Congregational minister in Bristol, the Reverend Arnold Thomas of Highbury Chapel, upon hearing of his resignation wrote: 'You have been a great reconciling influence here, and we sorely need such influences'.⁵

Ainger's home for most of his sojourn in Bristol, Richmond House, is still standing. It is probably the oldest complete house in Clifton and was partly erected on the ruins of the mediaeval manor house of Clifton which was fired in the Civil War during the siege of Bristol. Erected between 1701 and 1703 for a wealthy linen draper, Whitchurch Phippen the Elder, by the end of the eighteenth century it had become a boys' boarding school. In the late 1840s it reverted to a private residence and passed to the University of Bristol in 1944 for use as undergraduate accommodation.

In May 2011 a number of enthusiasts decided to mark the retirement of Mrs Annie M Burnside from the Wardenship of nearby Clifton Hill House by erecting a plaque on Richmond House commemorating the residence of Canon Ainger and his association with Dickens. The Bristol and Clifton Dickens Society and its President, Mrs Sally Draper-Fry, were represented at the celebration by Mr Lionel Reeves and Mr Michael Williams, the former having been instrumental in generating the idea exactly twelve months before when his article first appeared at a book launch in Clifton Hill House.

M J Crossley Evans



1. M J Crossley Evans, 'A Grand City: Life Movement and Work': Bristol in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, (Bristol, 2010), pp. 365-400.

2. See: E Sichel, *The Life and Letters of Alfred Ainger*, (1906).

3. E Sichel, op.cit., pp. 153-5.

4. Ainger resided at 2 Codrington Place in 1901; 8 Victoria Square in 1902 and 8 York Place in 1903, all in Clifton. He resigned his canonry due to continued ill health in November 1903.

5. Quoted in E Sichel, op.cit. p. 369.

I had no knowledge of all this fascinating history when, during my first term at Bristol University - October to December 1959 - I used this "undergraduate accommodation". The two windows on the 1st floor right above, were the windows of my room. Richmond House is an annexe of Manor Hall FS

MRS ANNIE BURNSIDE



Mrs Annie Burnside, Warden of Clifton Hill House, where the BCDS held two Conferences and a number of Dinners, retired in July 2010 after 22 years of distinguished service to that Hall of Residence.

Annie is an amazing woman. She was born Annie Marguerite Mengardon in Clermont-Ferrand in France during the German Occupation, and lived most of her early life in Paris. After receiving her DES at the Sorbonne in Paris in 1967 on 'Horace Walpole and Clara Reeve as pioneers of the Gothic Novel', she later obtained her MA in Classical French Literature from the University of Bristol in 1972. She was a Lectrice in French at the University between 1982 and 2005, and was appointed Warden of Clifton Hill House in 1988.

In 1980 she founded the Ecole Francaise de Bristol and served as Head Mistress until July 1998 and is still involved as its President. She was a founder in 1983 of the Alliance Francaise de Bristol and serves as the President. She has been President of the Union des Francais de Grande Bretagne - Section SW - from 1982 to 2004, and in 1983 became a founder member of the Franco-British Business Club for the South- West region. Annie also received a number of French honours

Her years of distinguished service to Clifton Hill House and her students are recorded in a book 'A Palladian Villa in Bristol: Clifton Hill House and the People who Lived There' (Bristol 2009) and in 'Paul Fisher, linen draper and merchant of Clifton Hill House', in 'A Grand City' - 'Life, Movement and Work': Bristol in the 18th and 19th Centuries, (Bristol 2010) pp 47-62 she recounts the life and career of the Bristol merchant who built the hall.

Upon the retirement of Mrs Burnside a number of her friends determined that her contribution to the hall and to the wider community should be marked in an appropriate way, and commissioned a portrait of her from the well-known portrait artist, Dirk Larsen, who is also a member of the staff of Clifton Hill House.

The funds raised together with financial assistance from the friends of Manor Hall enabled the erection of two plaques to be commissioned for Richmond House, which geographically sits above Clifton Hill House. One marks the residency of the Rev. Alfred Ainger, a friend of Dickens and biographer and editor of the letters of Charles Lamb. The other commemorates Miss Emily Harriet Smith J.P., a pioneer of the Women's Suffrage Movement. She was the first woman Unionist Councillor of the city, the first woman to serve on the Housing, Libraries and Watch Committees of the City Council, one of the first three female magistrates in the city, the first woman to take the chair in the magistrates' court and the first to be appointed a Visiting Justice of HM's Bristol Prison. For many years Miss Smith also served on the Court of the University. Following her death, Richmond House became a residence for female undergraduate students..



Dr Martin Crossley- Evans

The bust of Annie shown at the head of this piece is the work of Jon Edgar. He has an extensive and varied portfolio - visit www.jonedgar.co.uk to find out more.

CHARLES DICKENS - "A LOW WRITER"

Open Forum - 15 March 2011

THE REVD.
CANON
ALFRED AINGER

M.A., LL.D.
1837 - 1904

Master of the Temple,
friend of Dickens
and
Biographer of Charles Lamb
lived here
1888 - 1898

MISS
EMILY HARRIET
SMITH

J.P.
1860 - 1944

Pioneer in the
Women's Suffrage Movement
and the first
Unionist Woman Councillor
in Bristol
lived here
1868 - 1944

ANNIE BURNSIDE

A VOTE OF THANKS

As a society we offer our thanks for the kindness and co-operation shown to us by Mrs Annie Burnside on the occasions of our Conferences and Dinners. She was always friendly and helpful, and made us feel thoroughly welcome on her beautiful premises.

What a contrast Annie Burnside was from the somewhat severe, though dry and amusing Miss Mcleod who was Warden of Clifton Hill House when I was a student. In those days you did not see Clifton Hill House at its beautiful best. I remember attending Philosophy tutorials with Miss Mcleod in her somewhat dreary room. Academically she was superb, and always generous with her cigarettes! She would have a tin of 50 Benson and Hedges (I think) which she shared most willingly with her students. An act of kindness which would definitely be frowned upon today.

FS

In preparing for our second OPEN FORUM, I became acutely aware of the need to proceed with caution, and not to 'indulge my fancy' by thinking of Dickens's fictional accounts as '*literal truths*'!

In 1866, a *Westminster Review* piece on *Our Mutual Friend*, suggested that, were Dickens serious about Poor Laws, he should write a pamphlet or go into Parliament; to use the novel as an instrument of reform was as "absurd as it would be to call out the militia to stop the cattle disease". Historians with reason to endorse these sentiments, may remind us of the perils not only of fictional politics, but also of fictionalised biography, in assuming that Dickens's position on an issue could readily be deduced from his novels. One commentator notes that Dickens was a prominent advocate of two educational institutions mercilessly satirised in his novels: training colleges (*Hard Times*) and ragged schools (*Our Mutual Friend*).

Conversely, some other literary critics have offered a different type of cautionary note, by suggesting that Dickens's novels are located in an 'imaginary universe' divorced from the world of Victorian England, and with little regard for the universe Dickens himself inhabited or for his own creative intentions. Lionel Trilling recalled his own discovery of the historical reality, the 'actuality' of what he himself once thought of as purely symbols – the dust heaps in *Our Mutual Friend*, which were in fact, as in the novel, very large and remunerative, or the Thames, which actually served as a sewer for London.

Realism in Dickens's time was magical as London became a living fairytale: grim, exciting and transformative. Dickens captured that actuality. Not only was he a brilliant novelist, but also an experienced reporter and social critic. Memoirs of that period contain many accounts of poor people reading Dickens; of those unable to read, listening to the latest instalment read aloud in the servants' hall, lodging house, public house, or tea shop. His appeal was widespread and he was praised for performing the function of 'moral teacher' to the "millions just emerging from ignorance into "the reading classes."

It was said at the time that Dickens was a "low writer" who wrote about low subjects for a low audience. A reviewer of *Bleak House* complained that it was "meagre and melodramatic, and disagreeably reminiscent of that vilest of modern books, *Reynolds's Mysteries of London*". John Ruskin defended Dickens by distinguishing him from another "low" writer, Frenchman Eugène Sue. Unlike *The Mysteries of Paris*, described as a loathsome specimen of "prison-house literature," *Oliver Twist* was an "earnest and uncaricatured record of the state of criminal life, written with a didactic purpose full of the gravest instruction." Those who accused Dickens of being a "low" writer generally used it with reference to his criminal characters and prison scenes. But this criticism did not usually extend to his depiction of the "lower classes," as distinct from the "dangerous classes."

Oliver Twist, perhaps the most Hogarthian of Dickens's novels, alternates between low characters of both kinds; it would be difficult to say which fascinated the readers - or Dickens himself - more. The murder of 'Nancy' was Dickens' favourite reading piece! It has been said that some critics see an intimate relationship between the two species of lowness, *Fagin* and *Oliver* being "alike if not identical" in their alienation from respectable society in which "poverty was tantamount to crime". This view is most strongly supported in an autobiographical memoir where Dickens recalled that unhappy childhood period in the blacking warehouse, when he was obliged to associate with "common men and boys." */over*

CHARLES DICKENS - "A LOW WRITER"

Open Forum - 15 March 2011 (continued from page 5)



Dickens at the Blacking Warehouse

by Fred Bernard

The gulf between pauperism and criminality, in the novel, as in reality, though large, was not unbridgeable. We are reminded that whilst some pauper children, like Noah Claypole, join the community of thieves, others, like Oliver, do not. As regards Fagin and Oliver being "alike if not identical" in their alienation from Society, Dickens made them utterly unlike. Oliver is entirely at home in the respectable company of Mr Brownlow and Mrs Maylie, although alienated from, and indeed repelled and terrified by the dark, dirty, dangerous underworld of the criminal. Fagin, on the other hand, is not an outcast from society as a pauper might be, but an outcast from humanity. He lacks redeeming qualities because he is not human.

"Fagin", the name assumed to have come from the Bob Fagin, a "good and kindly child" who befriended the young Dickens in the blacking warehouse, has been a source of much speculation among commentators. The fact that Dickens should have used the name for such an evil old man is a reminder once again, of the treacherous gap between fiction and reality! Lord Melbourne, (PM and Chief Political Adviser to Queen Victoria) disliked both forms of lowness, and confessed that he could not get beyond the opening chapters of *Oliver Twist*, which Queen Victoria had persuaded him to read. "It's all among Workhouses, and Coffin Makers, and Pickpockets" he told her. "I don't like that low debasing view of mankind. . . . I don't like those things; I wish to avoid them; I don't like them in reality, and therefore I don't wish them represented."

Queen Victoria (despite her Mother's disapproval of "low" and of all light books,) found *Oliver Twist* "excessively interesting". Even Thackeray, who considered the Fagin scenes pandered to the sensational tastes of the age, did not object to Dickens's other low themes and characters. "The pathos of the workhouse scenes in *Oliver Twist*, or the Fleet prison descriptions in *Pickwick*, are genuine and pure – as much of this as you please: as tender a hand to the poor, as kindly a word to the unhappy as you will; but in the name of common sense, let us not expend our sympathies on cut-throats, and other such prodigies of evil." Dickens himself left no doubt of the villainy of his criminals. His compassion was reserved for those worthy of it – the poor woman in *Oliver Twist*, for example, who died gasping the names of her children. His friend Richard Henry Horne [1805-84] rebuked those who pronounced Dickens a "low writer". [Ref: *A New Spirit of the Age* -1844].

I would like to conclude with the words of Daniel Webster during Dickens's visit to America in 1842. He said that Dickens had done more to "ameliorate the condition of the English poor than all the statesmen Great Britain had sent into parliament."

Leila Gilmore

PROPS

A **theatrical property**, commonly referred to as a **prop**, is an object used on stage by actors for use in the plot or story line of a theatrical production. Smaller props are referred to as "hand props". Larger props may also be set decoration, such as a chair or table. The difference between a set decoration and a prop is use. If the item is not touched by a performer for any reason it is simply a set decoration. If it is touched by the actor in accordance to script requirements or as deemed by the director, it is a prop. (wikipedia)

The Society is in possession of the following items:

2 parasols - 7 walking sticks - 2 canes - 2 Japanese sunshades - 2 truncheons (1 painted) - 1 cudgel - 1 riding whip - 1 evening bag - 1 small fan.

Anyone wishing to use any of these for a presentation for the Society or for an Outreading should apply to Pat Cemlyn Jones.

AUSTRALIA AND DICKENS'S SONS

Susan returned from Australia with a newspaper article by Thomas Keneally (author of 'Schindler's Ark' and 'The Playmaker', the novel on which Timberlake Wertenbaker's wonderful play 'Our Country's Good' is based), published in 'The Weekend Australian' about Dickens's two sons who went to Australia. A long article, but here are some significant details:

It was believed in the nineteenth century that Australia was a good destination to encourage independence and self-reliance in 'unsatisfactory' people - hence convicts and prostitutes, hence Magwitch and Mr Micawber. Dickens worried about his sons, and despite the anguish it caused him, he sent them off, so that hopefully they would make their own way, and not be too financially dependent on him.

First to be sent to Australia in 1865 was Alfred d'Orsay Tennyson Dickens (born 1845). Despite an inheritance from his father, Alfred did not make a success of things, but managed to buy a house and set up a stock and station agency. After the death of his wife, Jesse, in a pony cart accident, he moved his business to Melbourne, where it failed in the 1880's depression. He then joined a firm which organised tours to the UK and the USA, where Alfred did readings from Charles' works and promoted information about Charles' life. He died in the Astor Hotel, New York, in December 1911.



Edward Bulwer Lytton Dickens, known in the family as Plorn, (born 1852 and Charles' youngest son) arrived in Australia in 1867. He settled in Wilcannia, near Sydney, home, too, to Frederick Trollope, son of Anthony. Both served on the committees of the local cricket and jockey clubs. Plorn was elected to the New South Wales parliament as member for Wilcannia. From 1882-3, when things were not going too well for him, he joined his brother, Alfred in Melbourne, but was drawn back to Wilcannia and its politics, being elected by a 2-1 majority to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly. A fascinating but unauthenticated story tells that in routing the member for Bourke (nearby town), W.N.Willis, he used his family clout with "My late honoured father once wrote 'Barkis is willing'. If he had been here tonight, he would have said 'Willis is barking'." This is not included in Hansard, but it is known that Plorn did apologise for an indiscretion. Later he lost his seat, his wife, Connie, left him, and until his death in 1902, he lived in the Criterion Hotel in nearby Moree. Over sixty years later the Dickens Fellowship arranged for a memorial tablet to be placed in the Church of England in Moree.



FS

AUSTRALIA

Although disappointed that the Conference in Christchurch was cancelled - I was fortunate enough to have toured New Zealand in 2003 - I was looking forward to my adventurous visit to Alice Springs and the outback of Australia, which I had intended to combine with attending the Conference in Christchurch.

My father had a relation, Fred Raggett, who went to Alice Springs in the early 1900s. and started a wagon and hardware store.



Alice Springs - the original Spring

My Great Grand Parents kept the Post Office in Yate. My Great Aunt Rose married a soldier, Bill Crook, who went out to help Fred and to prospect for minerals. Rose followed with the children, Doreen, Willie and Kathleen. Kathleen later returned to England, became a district nurse in Bristol - and my Godmother. I saw photos of them at Wickcliffe Well in the Northern Territory and read of their pioneer efforts in the Pioneer Women's Hall of Fame in Alice Springs. What a hard life it was - but they prospered.

On my travels I met Cousin Wally, Doreen's son, who took me to see many interesting older buildings saved from demolition by his mother, who founded the National Trust in Alice. I visited the Flying Doctor School of the Air, the Old Telegraph Station, the Cattle Station, a camel farm, Ayers Rock - the Rain Forest, and a coral reef in the north. A truly amazing holiday! If not very Dickensian!

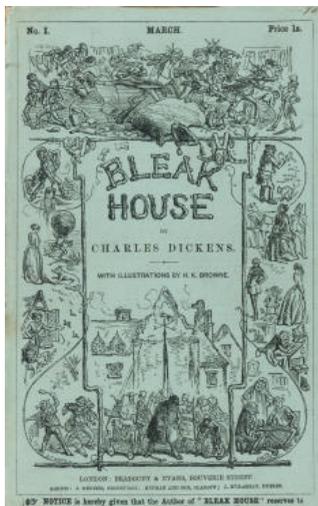
Susan Ham

BLEAK HOUSE

Book Group Book for 2011 - 2012

Bleak House was initially published in twenty monthly instalments between March 1852 and September 1853. It is held by many to be one of Dickens's finest novels, containing a vast, complex and engaging array of minor characters and sub-plots. The story is told partly by the heroine, Esther Summerson, and partly by an omniscient narrator. Memorable characters include the menacing lawyer Tulkinghorn, the friendly, but depressive John Jarndyce, and the childish and disingenuous Harold Skimpole, as well as the likeable but imprudent Richard Carstone.

At the novel's core is a long-running litigation in The Court of Chancery, Jarndyce and Jarndyce, which has, over time, proved so complicated and expensive to pursue, that it has become the object of hilarity and derision among the Court functionaries and public observers. The litigation is emblematic of the failure of Chancery. Dickens's harsh characterisation of the slow, arcane Chancery law process gave memorable form to pre-existing widespread frustration with the system. Though Chancery lawyers and judges criticised Dickens's portrait of Chancery as exaggerated and unmerited, his novel helped to spur an ongoing movement towards legal reform in the 1870s.



Cover of first serial, March 1852

MISS HAVISHAM'S CAKE

Pat Cemlyn Jones has drawn our attention to a piece in the Guardian about the Royal Society of Chemistry's plans for celebrating the 150th anniversary of 'Great Expectations' by recreating Miss Havisham's mouldering wedding cake. The ingredients are as follows:

5lbs flour - 3lbs butter - 2lbs sugar - 5lbs currants - 1lb ground almonds - 1lb candied peel - 16 eggs - two grated nutmegs - half an ounce each of mace and cloves - a gill each of wine and brandy.

Mrs Beeton calculated that such a cake would cost around 2 shillings per pound weight, which would work out at about £2 altogether, and equivalent to two weeks wages for a married man. The energy content of such a cake would be around 30,000 Calories (kcal). It could provide enough food to feed one person for around two weeks, or a family of mice for several months.

APOLOGIES

We apologise for two obvious errors in the Programme: Eve's dramatised reading of Bleak House will be on Thursday 10th **MAY** 2012 (*not April*). The first meeting of the Holiday Reading Group will be on Tuesday March 13th (*not 14th*).

Please also note that the Tuesday Afternoon Book Group will start at **2.15 pm** (*NOT at 2.00 pm*). This is a change from last year.

DICKENS AND LONDON

An exhibition

The Museum of London (150 London Wall, EC2Y 5HN) is holding an exhibition - Dickens and London - from 9th December 2011 to 10th June 2012.

It aims to "recreate the atmosphere of Victorian London.... Paintings, photographs, costume and objects will illustrate themes Dickens wove into his works such as poverty and childhood, while rarely seen manuscripts including 'Bleak House' and David Copperfield' - written in the author's own hand - will offer clues to his creative genius."

During December and January there will be a series of events, including Family Events during the Christmas holidays for anyone wanting to take children/grandchildren. Find out more at: www.museumoflondon.org.uk/

CHARLES DICKENS THE INIMITABLE

An exhibition

This exhibition, open Tuesday to Sunday, 10am - 6pm: entry price 2 euros - is open for viewing until 23rd October 2011 at the Chateau Hardelot, 1, rue de la Source, Condette (62), France. Close to Boulogne, 'Our French Watering Place' (Reprinted Pieces). Visit www.chateau-hardelot.fr for more.

Bristol & Clifton Dickens Society

(www.dickens-society.org)

Applications for membership (£15 per year) should be sent to
Liz Croucher at 38 Church Road, Easton-in-Gordano, Bristol BS20 0NB

COPY DATE FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER - 24th FEBRUARY 2012

Contact Frankie or Eve with your news

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