


Charles Dickens

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Charles Dickens




Charles Dickens is acclaimed as one of history's greatest novelists

Born: 7 February 1812

 Portsmouth, England

Died: 9 June 1870 (aged 58)

 Gad's Hill Place, Higham, Kent, England

Occupation: Novelist

Influences: Victor Hugo, William Shakespeare

Influenced: T. Coraghessan Boyle, Fyodor Dostoevsky, George Gissing, Thomas

Hardy, John Irving, Edgar Allan Poe,
Anne Rice, Zadie Smith, Tom Wolfe,
G.K. Chesterton

Charles John Huffam Dickens FRSA (7 February 1812 – 9 June 1870), pen-name "Boz", was the foremost English novelist of the Victorian era, as well as a vigorous social campaigner. Considered one of the English language's greatest writers, he was acclaimed for his rich storytelling and memorable characters, and achieved massive worldwide popularity in his lifetime.

Later critics, beginning with George Gissing and G. K. Chesterton, championed his mastery of prose, his endless invention of memorable characters and his powerful social sensibilities. Yet writers such as George Henry Lewes, Henry James, and Virginia Woolf fault his work for sentimentality, implausible occurrence and grotesque characters.^[1]

The popularity of Dickens's novels and short stories has meant that none have ever gone out of print. Dickens wrote serialised novels, which was the usual format for fiction at the time, and each new part of his stories was eagerly anticipated by the reading public.

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Life

Early years

Charles Dickens was born in Landport, Portsmouth, Hampshire, the second of eight children to John Dickens (1786–1851), a clerk in the Navy Pay Office at Portsmouth, and his wife Elizabeth Dickens (née Barrow, 1789–1863) on February 7, 1812. When he was five, the family moved to Chatham, Kent. When he was ten, the family relocated to 16 Bayham Street, Camden Town in London.

Although his early years seem to have been an idyllic time, he thought himself then as a "very small and not-over-particularly-taken-care-of boy". [2] He spent his time outdoors, reading voraciously with a particular fondness for the picaresque novels of Tobias Smollett and Henry Fielding. He talked later in life of his extremely poignant memories of childhood and his continuing photographic memory of people and events that helped bring his fiction to life. His family was moderately wealthy, and he received some education at the private William Giles's school in Chatham. However, this time of prosperity came to an abrupt end when his father, after spending too much money entertaining and retaining his social

position, was imprisoned at Marshalsea debtors' prison.

A 12-year-old Dickens began working 10 hour days in a Warren's boot-blackening factory, located near the present Charing Cross railway station. He earned six shillings a week pasting labels on the jars of thick polish. This money paid for his lodging in Camden Town and helped support his family.

After a few months his family was able to leave Marshalsea but their financial situation did not improve until later, partly due to money inherited from his father's family. His mother did not immediately remove Charles from the boot-blackening factory, which was owned by a relation of hers. Dickens never forgave his mother for this, and resentment of his situation and the conditions under which working-class people lived became major themes of his works. As Dickens wrote in *David Copperfield*, judged to be his most clearly autobiographical novel, "I had no advice, no counsel, no encouragement, no consolation, no assistance, no support, of any kind, from anyone, that I can call to mind, as I hope to go to heaven!" Eventually he attended the Wellington House Academy in North London.

In May 1827, Dickens began work in the office of Ellis and Blackmore as a law clerk, a junior office position with potential to become a lawyer, a profession for which he later showed his dislike in his many literary works. He later became a court stenographer at the age of 17. In 1830, Dickens met his first love, Maria Beadnell, who has been said to be the model for Dora in *David Copperfield*. Her parents disapproved of their courtship and they effectively ended the relationship when they sent her to school in Paris.

Journalism and early novels

In 1834, Dickens became a journalist, reporting parliamentary debate and travelling Britain by stagecoach to cover election campaigns for the *Morning Chronicle*. His journalism, in the form of sketches which appeared in periodicals from 1833, formed his first collection of pieces *Sketches by Boz* which were published in 1836 and led to the serialization of his first novel, *The Pickwick Papers* in March 1836. He continued to contribute to and edit journals throughout much of his subsequent literary career.

On 2 April 1836, he married Catherine Thompson

Hogarth (1816–1879), the daughter of George Hogarth, editor of the *Evening Chronicle*. After a brief honeymoon in Chalk, Kent, they set up home in Bloomsbury where they produced ten children:

- Charles Culliford Boz Dickens (6 January 1837–1896).
- Mary Angela Dickens (6 March 1838–1896).
- Kate Macready Dickens (29 October 1839–1929).
- Walter Landor Dickens (8 February 1841–1863). Died in India.
- Francis Jeffrey Dickens (15 January 1844–1886).
- Alfred D'Orsay Tennyson Dickens (28 October 1845–1912).
- Sydney Smith Haldimand Dickens (18 April 1847–1872).
- (Sir) Henry Fielding Dickens (15 January 1849–1933).
 - Henry Charles Dickens (1882–1966), barrister. (*Grandson*)
 - Monica Dickens (1915–1992). (*Great-granddaughter*)
- Dora Annie Dickens (16 August 1850–April 1851).
- Edward Bulwer Lytton Dickens (13 March 1852–23 January 1902). He migrated to Australia, and became a member of the New

South Wales state parliament. He died in Moree, NSW.

In the same year, he accepted the job of editor of *Bentley's Miscellany*, a position he would hold until 1839 when he fell out with the owner. However, his success as a novelist continued, producing *Oliver Twist* (1837-39), *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838-39), then *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Barnaby Rudge* as part of the *Master Humphrey's Clock* series (1840-41), all being published in monthly instalments before being made into books.

In 1842, he travelled with his wife to the United States and Canada, a journey which was successful despite his support for the abolition of slavery. The trip is described in the short travelogue *American Notes for General Circulation* and is also the basis of some of the episodes in *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Shortly thereafter, he began to show interest in Unitarian Christianity, although he remained an Anglican, at least nominally, for the rest of his life. [1] Dickens's work continued to be popular, especially *A Christmas Carol* written in 1843, the first of his Christmas books, which was reputedly written in a matter of weeks.

After living briefly abroad in Italy (1844) and Switzerland (1846), Dickens continued his success with *Dombey and Son* (1848); *David Copperfield* (1849-50); *Bleak House* (1852-53); *Hard Times* (1854); *Little Dorrit* (1857); *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859); and *Great Expectations* (1861). Dickens was also the publisher and editor of, and a major contributor to, the journals *Household Words* (1850–1859) and *All the Year Round* (1858-1870).

Middle years

In 1856, his popularity had allowed him to buy Gad's Hill Place. This large house in Higham, Kent, had a particular meaning to Dickens as he had walked past it as a child and had dreamed of living in it. The area was also the scene of some of the events of Shakespeare's *Henry IV, part 1* and this literary connection pleased him.

In 1857, in preparation for public performances of *The Frozen Deep*, a play on which he and his protégé Wilkie Collins had collaborated, Dickens hired professional actresses to play the female parts. With one of these, Ellen Ternan, Dickens formed a bond which was to last the rest of his life. The exact nature of their relationship is unclear, as

both Dickens and Ternan burned each other's letters, but it was clearly central to Dickens's personal and professional life. On his death, he settled an annuity on her which made her a financially independent woman. Claire Tomalin's book, *The Invisible Woman*, set out to prove that Ellen Ternan lived with Dickens secretly for the last 13 years of his life, and has subsequently been turned into a play by Simon Gray called *Little Nell*.

When Dickens separated from his wife in 1858, divorce was almost unthinkable, particularly for someone as famous as he was, and so he continued to maintain her in a house for the next 20 years until she died. Although they appeared to be initially happy together, Catherine did not seem to share quite the same boundless energy for life which Dickens had. Nevertheless, her job of looking after their ten children, and the pressure of living with a world-famous novelist and keeping house for him, certainly did not help.

Catherine had her sister Mary move in to help her, but there were rumours that Charles was romantically linked to his sister-in-law, possibly fuelled by the fact that she remained at Gadshill to look after the younger children when Catherine left. An indication of his marital dissatisfaction

was when, in 1855, he went to meet his first love, Maria Beadnell. Maria was by this time married as well, but seemed to have fallen short of Dickens's romantic memory of her.

Rail accident and last years

On 9 June 1865, while returning from France with the actress Ellen Ternan, Dickens was involved in the Staplehurst rail crash in which the first seven carriages of the train plunged off a bridge that was being repaired. The only first-class carriage to remain on the track was the one in which Dickens was travelling. Dickens spent some time tending the wounded and the dying before rescuers arrived. Before leaving, he remembered the unfinished manuscript for *Our Mutual Friend*, and he returned to his carriage to retrieve it. Typically, Dickens later used this experience as material for his short ghost story *The Signal-Man* in which the central character has a premonition of his own death in a rail crash. He based the story around several previous rail accidents, such as the Clayton Tunnel rail crash of 1861.

Dickens managed to avoid an appearance at the inquiry into the crash, as it would have become

known that he was travelling that day with Ellen Ternan and her mother, which could have caused a scandal. Ellen had been Dickens's companion since the breakdown of his marriage, and, as he had met her in 1857, she was most likely the ultimate reason for that breakdown. She continued to be his companion, and likely mistress, until his death. The dimensions of the affair were unknown until the publication of *Dickens and Daughter*, a book about Dickens's relationship with his daughter Kate, in 1939. Kate Dickens worked with author Gladys Storey on the book prior to her death in 1929, and alleged that Dickens and Ternan had a son who died in infancy, though no contemporary evidence exists.

Dickens, though
unharm[ed], never
really recovered from the Staplehurst crash, and his normally prolific writing shrank to completing *Our Mutual Friend* and starting the unfinished *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* after a long interval. Much of his time was taken up with public readings from his best-loved novels. Dickens was fascinated by the theatre as an escape from the world, and theatres and theatrical people appear in *Nicholas Nickleby*. The traveling shows were extremely popular and, after three tours of British

Isles, Dickens gave his first public reading in the United States at a New York City theatre on 2 December 1867.

The effort and passion he put into these readings with individual character voices is also thought to have contributed to his death.

When he undertook another English tour of readings (1869–1870), he became ill and five years to the day after the Staplehurst crash, on 9 June 1870, he died at home at Gad's Hill Place after suffering a stroke.

Contrary to his wish to be buried in Rochester Cathedral, he was buried in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey. The inscription on his tomb reads: "He was a sympathiser to the poor, the



Statue of Dickens in Philadelphia

suffering, and the oppressed; and by his death, one of England's greatest writers is lost to the world." Dickens's will stipulated that no memorial be erected to honour him. The only life-size bronze statue of Dickens, cast in 1891 by Francis Edwin Elwell, is located in Clark Park in the Spruce Hill neighborhood of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in the United States of America.

Literary style

Dickens's writing style is florid and poetic, with a strong comic touch. His satires of British aristocratic snobbery — he calls one character the "Noble Refrigerator" — are often popular. Comparing orphans to stocks and shares, people to tug boats, or dinner-party guests to furniture are just some of Dickens's acclaimed flights of fancy.

Characters

The characters are among the most memorable in English literature; certainly their names are. The likes of Ebenezer Scrooge, Fagin, Mrs Gamp, Charles Darnay, Oliver Twist, Micawber, Abel Magwitch, Samuel Pickwick,



Charles Dickens used his rich imagination, sense of humour and detailed memories, particularly of his childhood, to enliven his fiction.

Miss Havisham, Wackford Squeers and many others are so well known and can be believed to be living a life outside the novels that their stories have been continued by other authors.

Dickens loved the style of 18th

century gothic romance, though it had already become a target for parody — Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* being a well known example — and while some of his characters are grotesques, their eccentricities do not usually overshadow the stories. One 'character' most vividly drawn throughout his novels is London itself. From the coaching inns on the outskirts of the city to the lower reaches of the Thames, all aspects of the capital are described over the course of his corpus.

Episodic writing

As noted above, most of Dickens's major novels were first written in monthly or weekly instalments in journals such as *Master Humphrey's Clock* and *Household Words*, later reprinted in book form. These instalments made the stories cheap, accessible and the series of regular cliff-hangers made each new episode widely anticipated. American fans even waited at the docks in New York, shouting out to the crew of an incoming ship, "Is Little Nell dead?" Part of Dickens's great talent was to incorporate this episodic writing style but still end up with a coherent novel at the end. The monthly numbers were illustrated by, amongst others, "Phiz" (a pseudonym for Hablot Browne). Among his best-known works are *Great Expectations*, *David Copperfield*, *Oliver Twist*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Bleak House*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *The Pickwick Papers*, and *A Christmas Carol*.

Dickens's technique of writing in monthly or weekly instalments (depending on the work) can be understood by analysing his relationship with his illustrators. The several artists who filled this role were privy to the contents and intentions of

Dickens's instalments before the general public. Thus, by reading these correspondences between author and illustrator, the intentions behind Dickens's work can be better understood. What was hidden in his art is made plain in these letters. These also reveal how the interests of the reader and author do not coincide. A great example of that appears in the monthly novel *Oliver Twist*. At one point in this work, Dickens had Oliver become embroiled in a robbery. That particular monthly instalment concludes with young Oliver being shot. Readers expected that they would be forced to wait only a month to find out the outcome of that gunshot. In fact, Dickens did not reveal what became of young Oliver in the succeeding number. Rather, the reading public was forced to wait *two* months to discover if the boy lived.

Another important impact of Dickens's episodic writing style was his exposure to the opinions of his readers. Since Dickens did not write the chapters very far ahead of their publication, he was allowed to witness the public reaction and alter the story depending on those public reactions. A fine example of this process can be seen in his weekly serial *The Old Curiosity Shop*, which is a chase story. In this novel, Little Nell and her Grandfather are fleeing the villain Quilp. The progress of the

novel follows the gradual success of that pursuit. As Dickens wrote and published the weekly instalments, his friend John Forster pointed out: "You know you're going to have to kill her, don't you." Why this end was necessary can be explained by a brief analysis of the difference between the structure of a comedy versus a tragedy. In a comedy, the action covers a sequence "You think they're going to lose, you think they're going to lose, they win." In tragedy, it's: "You think they're going to win, you think they're going to win, they lose". The dramatic conclusion of the story is implicit throughout the novel. So, as Dickens wrote the novel in the form of a tragedy, the sad outcome of the novel was a foregone conclusion. If he had not caused his heroine to lose, he would not have completed his dramatic structure. Dickens admitted that his friend Forster was right and, in the end, Little Nell died. [3]

Social commentary

Dickens's novels were, among other things, works of social commentary. He was a fierce critic of the poverty and social stratification of Victorian society. Dickens's second novel, *Oliver Twist* (1839), shocked readers with its images of poverty

and crime and was responsible for the clearing of the actual London slum that was the basis of the story's Jacob's Island. In addition, with the character of the tragic prostitute, Nancy, Dickens "humanised" such women for the reading public; women who were regarded as "unfortunates," inherently immoral casualties of the Victorian class/economic system. *Bleak House* and *Little Dorrit* elaborated expansive critiques of the Victorian institutional apparatus: the interminable lawsuits of the Court of Chancery that destroyed people's lives in *Bleak House* and a dual attack in *Little Dorrit* on inefficient, corrupt patent offices and unregulated market speculation.

Literary techniques

Dickens is often described as using 'idealised' characters and highly sentimental scenes to contrast with his caricatures and the ugly social truths he reveals. The extended death scene of Little Nell in *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841) was received as incredibly moving by contemporary readers but viewed as ludicrously sentimental by Oscar Wilde: "You would need to have a heart of stone," he declared in one of his famous witticisms, "not to laugh at the death of Little

Nell."^[4] In 1903 Chesterton said, "It is not the death of Little Nell, but the life of Little Nell, that I object to." ^[5]

In *Oliver Twist* Dickens provides readers with an idealised portrait of a young boy so inherently and unrealistically 'good' that his values are never subverted by either brutal orphanages or coerced involvement in a gang of young pickpockets (similar to Tiny Tim in *A Christmas Carol*). While later novels also centre on idealised characters (Esther Summerson in *Bleak House* and Amy Dorrit in *Little Dorrit*) this idealism serves only to highlight Dickens's goal of poignant social commentary. Many of his novels are concerned with social realism, focusing on mechanisms of social control that direct people's lives (for instance, factory networks in *Hard Times* and hypocritical exclusionary class codes in *Our Mutual Friend*).

Dickens also employs incredible coincidences (e.g. *Oliver Twist* turns out to be the lost nephew of the upper class family that randomly rescues him from the dangers of the pickpocket group). Such coincidences are a staple of eighteenth century picaresque novels such as Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* that Dickens enjoyed so much. But to

Dickens these were not just plot devices but an index of the humanism that led him to believe that good wins out in the end and often in unexpected ways.

Autobiographical elements

All authors might be said to incorporate autobiographical elements in their fiction, but with Dickens this is very noticeable, even though he took pains to cover up what he considered his shameful, lowly past. *David Copperfield* is one of the most clearly autobiographical but the scenes from *Bleak House* of interminable court cases and legal arguments are drawn from the author's brief career as a court reporter. Dickens's own family was sent to prison for poverty, a common theme in many of his books, and the detailed depiction of life in the Marshalsea prison in *Little Dorrit* is due to Dickens's own experiences of the institution. Little Nell in *The Old Curiosity Shop* is thought to represent Dickens's sister-in-law, Nicholas Nickleby's father and Wilkins Micawber are certainly Dickens's own father, just as Mrs. Nickleby and Mrs. Micawber are similar to his mother. The snobbish nature of Pip from *Great Expectations* also has some affinity to the author

himself. The character of *Fagin* is believed to be based upon *Ikey Solomon*, a 19th century Jewish criminal of London and later Australia. It is reported that Dickens, during his time as a journalist, interviewed Solomon after a court appearance and that he was the inspiration for the gang leader in *Oliver Twist*. Dickens may have drawn on his childhood experiences, but he was also ashamed of them and would not reveal that this was where he got his realistic accounts of squalor. Very few knew the details of his early life until six years after his death when John Forster published a biography on which Dickens had collaborated. A shameful past in Victorian times could taint reputations, just as it did for some of his characters, and this may have been Dickens's own fear.

Legacy

Charles Dickens was a well-known personality and his novels were immensely popular during his lifetime. His first full novel, *The Pickwick Papers* (1837), brought him immediate fame and this continued right through his career. Although rarely departing greatly from his typical

"Dickensian" method of always attempting to write a great "story" in a somewhat conventional manner (the dual narrators of *Bleak House* are a notable exception), he experimented with varied themes, characterisations and genres. Some of these

experiments have proved more popular than others and the public's taste and appreciation of his many works have varied over time. He was usually keen to give his readers what they wanted, and the monthly or weekly publication of his works in episodes meant that the books could change as the story proceeded at the whim of the public. A good example of this are the American episodes in *Martin Chuzzlewit* which were put in by Dickens



A scene from *Oliver Twist*, from an early 20th Century edition.

in response to lower than normal sales of the earlier chapters. In *Our Mutual Friend*, the inclusion of the character of Riah was a positive portrayal of a Jewish character after he was criticised for the depiction of Fagin in *Oliver Twist*.

His popularity has waned little since his death and he is still one of the best known and most read of English authors. At least 180 motion pictures and TV adaptations based on Dickens's works help confirm his success. Many of his works were adapted for the stage during his own lifetime and as early as 1913 a silent film of *The Pickwick Papers* was made. His characters were often so memorable that they took on a life of their own outside his books. Gamp became a slang expression for an umbrella from the character Mrs Gamp and Pickwickian, Pecksniffian and Gradgrind all entered dictionaries due to Dickens's original portraits of such characters who were quixotic, hypocritical or emotionlessly logical. Sam Weller, the carefree and irreverent valet of *The Pickwick Papers*, was an early superstar, perhaps better known than his author at first. It is likely that *A Christmas Carol* is his best-known story, with new adaptations almost every year. It is also the most-filmed of Dickens's stories, many

versions dating from the early years of cinema. This simple morality tale with both pathos and its theme of redemption, for many, sums up the true meaning of Christmas and eclipses all other Yuletide stories in not only popularity, but in adding archetypal figures (Scrooge, Tiny Tim, the Christmas ghosts) to the Western cultural consciousness. Some historians consider this book to have played a major factor in redefining the holiday and its major sentiments. *A Christmas Carol* was written by Dickens in an attempt to forestall financial disaster as a result of flagging sales of his novel *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Years later, Dickens shared that he was "deeply affected" in writing *A Christmas Carol* and the novel rejuvenated his career as a renowned author.

At a time when Britain was the major economic and political power of the world, Dickens highlighted the life of the forgotten poor and disadvantaged at the heart of empire. Through his journalism he campaigned on specific issues — such as sanitation and the workhouse — but his fiction was probably all the more powerful in changing public opinion in regard to class inequalities. He often depicted the exploitation and repression of the poor and condemned the public officials and institutions that allowed such abuses

to exist. His most strident indictment of this condition is in *Hard Times* (1854), Dickens's only novel-length treatment of the industrial working class. In that work, he uses both vitriol and satire to illustrate how this marginalised social stratum was termed "Hands" by the factory owners, that is, not really "people" but rather only appendages of the machines that they operated. His writings inspired others, in particular journalists and political figures, to address such problems of class oppression. For example, the prison scenes in *Little Dorrit* and *The Pickwick Papers* were prime movers in having the Marshalsea and Fleet Prisons shut down. As Karl Marx said, Dickens, and the other novelists of Victorian England, "...issued to the world more political and social truths than have been uttered by all the professional politicians, publicists and moralists put together..."^[6] The exceptional popularity of his novels, even those with socially oppositional themes (*Bleak House*, 1853; *Little Dorrit*, 1857; *Our Mutual Friend*, 1865) underscored not only his almost preternatural ability to create compelling storylines and unforgettable characters, but also insured that the Victorian public confronted issues of social justice that had commonly been ignored.

His fiction, with often vivid descriptions of life in

nineteenth-century England, has inaccurately and anachronistically come to globally symbolise Victorian society (1837–1901) as uniformly "Dickensian," when in fact, his novels' time span is from the 1770s to the 1860s. In the decade following his death in 1870, a more intense degree of socially and philosophically pessimistic perspectives invested British fiction; such themes were in contrast to the religious faith that ultimately held together even the bleakest of Dickens's novels. Later Victorian novelists such as Thomas Hardy and George Gissing were influenced by Dickens, but their works display a greater willingness to confront and challenge the Victorian institution of religion. They also portray characters caught up by social forces (primarily via lower-class conditions) but which usually steer them to tragic ends beyond their control.

Novelists continue to be influenced by his books; for example, such disparate current writers as Anne Rice, Tom Wolfe and John Irving evidence direct Dickensian connections. Humorist James Finn Garner even wrote a tongue-in-cheek "politically correct" version of *A Christmas Carol*.

Although Dickens's life has been the subject of at least two TV miniseries and two famous one-man

shows, he has never been the subject of a Hollywood "big screen" biography.

Adaptations of readings

There have been several performances of Dickens readings by Emlyn Williams, Bransby Williams and also Simon Callow in the *Mystery of Charles Dickens* by Peter Ackroyd.

Museums and festivals

There are museums and festivals celebrating Dickens's life and works in many of the towns with which he was associated.

- The Charles Dickens Museum, in Doughty Street,



Bleak House in Broadstairs, Kent, where Dickens wrote some of his novels. The house was for many years a Dickens museum, and visitors would leave notes addressed to him in the desk-drawer in his

Holborn is the only one of Dickens's London

former study, overlooking harbour and sea.

homes to survive. He lived there only two years but in this time wrote *The Pickwick Papers*, *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby*. It contains a major collection of manuscripts, original furniture and memorabilia.

- **Charles Dickens' Birthplace Museum** in Portsmouth is the house in which Dickens was born. It has been re-furnished in the likely style of 1812 and contains Dickens memorabilia.
- The **Dickens House Museum** in Broadstairs is the house of Miss Mary Pearson Strong, the basis for Miss Betsey Trotwood in *David Copperfield*. It is visible across the bay from the original Bleak House (also a museum until 2005) where *David Copperfield* was written. The museum contains memorabilia, general Victoriana and some of Dickens's letters. Broadstairs has held a **Dickens Festival** annually since 1937.
- The **Charles Dickens Centre** in Eastgate House, Rochester, closed in 2004, but the garden containing the author's Swiss chalet is still open. The 16th-Century house, which

appeared as Westgate House in *The Pickwick Papers* and the Nun's House in *Edwin Drood*, will probably re-open under a related use. The city's annual **Dickens Festival** (summer) and **Dickensian Christmas** celebrations continue unaffected.

- The Dickens World themed attraction, covering 71 500 square feet, and including a cinema and restaurants, opened in Chatham on 25 May 2007.^[7] It stands on a small part of the site of the former naval dockyard where Dickens's father had once worked in the Navy Pay Office.
- **Dickens Festival** in Rochester, Kent. **Summer Dickens** is held at the end of May or in the first few days of June, it commences with an invitation only ball on the Thursday and then continues with street entertainment, and many costumed characters, on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday. **Christmas Dickens** is the first weekend in December- Saturday and Sunday only.

Dickens festivals are also held across the world.

Three notable ones in the United States are:

- The **Riverside Dickens Festival** in

Riverside, California, includes literary studies as well as entertainments.

- **The Great Dickens Christmas Fair** (<http://www.dickensfair.com/>) has been held in San Francisco, California, since the 1970s. During the four or five weekends before Christmas, over 500 costumed performers mingle with and entertain thousands of visitors amidst the recreated full-scale blocks of Dickensian London in over 90,000 square feet of public area. This is the oldest, largest, and most successful of the modern Dickens festivals outside England. Many (including the Martin Harris who acts in the Rochester festival and flies out from London to play Scrooge every year in SF) say it is the most impressive in the world.
- **Dickens on The Strand** in Galveston, Texas, is a holiday festival held on the first weekend in December since 1974, where bobbies, Beefeaters and the "Queen" herself are on hand to recreate the Victorian London of Charles Dickens. Characters from Dickens novels walk the street.

Notable works by Charles

Dickens

Charles Dickens published over a dozen major novels, a large number of short stories (including a number of Christmas-themed stories), a handful of plays, and several nonfiction books. Dickens's novels were initially serialized in weekly and monthly magazines, then reprinted in standard book formats.

Novels

- *The Pickwick Papers* (Monthly serial, April 1836 to November 1837)^[8]
- *The Adventures of Oliver Twist* (Monthly serial in *Bentley's Miscellany*, February 1837 to April 1839)
- *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby* (Monthly serial, April 1838 to
- *Bleak House* (Monthly serial, March 1852 to September 1853)
- *Hard Times: For These Times* (Weekly serial in *Household Words*, April 1, 1854, to August 12, 1854)
- *Little Dorrit* (Monthly serial, December 1855 to June 1857)
- *A Tale of Two*

- October 1839)
 - *The Old Curiosity Shop* (Weekly serial in *Master Humphrey's Clock*, April 25, 1840, to February 6, 1841)
 - *Barnaby Rudge: A Tale of the Riots of 'Eighty* (Weekly serial in *Master Humphrey's Clock*, February 13, 1841, to November 27, 1841)
- The Christmas books:
 - *A Christmas Carol* (1843)
 - *The Chimes* (1844)
 - *The Cricket on the Hearth* (1845)
 - *The Battle of Life* (1846)
 - *The Haunted Man and the*
- Cities* (Weekly serial in *All the Year Round*, April 30, 1859, to November 26, 1859)
 - *Great Expectations* (Weekly serial in *All the Year Round*, December 1, 1860 to August 3, 1861)
 - *Our Mutual Friend* (Monthly serial, May 1864 to November 1865)
 - *No Thoroughfare* (1867) (with Wilkie Collins)
 - *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (Monthly serial, April 1870 to September 1870. Only six of

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| <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Ghost's Bargain</i>
(1848)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit</i>
(Monthly serial, January 1843 to July 1844) ■ <i>Dombey and Son</i>
(Monthly serial, October 1846 to April 1848) ■ <i>David Copperfield</i>
(Monthly serial, May 1849 to November 1850) | <p>twelve planned numbers completed)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices</i>
(1890) |
|--|--|

Short story collections

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Sketches by Boz</i> (1836) ■ <i>Boots at the Holly-tree Inn: And Other Stories</i> (1858) ■ <i>Reprinted Pieces</i> (1861) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>The Haunted House</i> (1862) (with Wilkie Collins, Elizabeth Gaskell, Adeliade Proctor, George Sala and Hesba Setton) ■ <i>The Mudfog Papers</i> (1880) aka Mudfog |
|---|--|

- and Other Sketches
- *To Be Read At Dusk*
(1898)

Selected nonfiction, poetry, and plays

- *The Village Coquettes* (Plays, 1836)
- *The Fine Old English Gentleman* (poetry, 1841)
- *American Notes: For General Circulation* (1842)
- *Pictures from Italy* (1846)
- *The Life of Our Lord: As written for his children* (1849)
- *A Child's History of England* (1853)
- *The Frozen Deep* (play, 1857)
- *Speeches, Letters and Sayings* (1870)

Dickens as a Character in Fiction

- *The Loves of Edgar Allan Poe* (1942). Morton Lowry portrays Dickens.
- *Dickens of London* (1976) is a miniseries about Dickens. He is played as an adult by Roy Dotrice.
- Portrayed by Simon Callow in the 2005 Doctor Who episode The Unquiet Dead.

Notes

1. ^ Henry James, "Our Mutual Friend", *The Nation*, 21 December 1865- a scathing review
2. ^ John Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens*, Book 1, Chapter 1
3. ^ **Dickens, Charles** (1987). *Dickens' working notes for his novels*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. ISBN 0226145905.
4. ^ In conversation with Ada Levenson. Quoted in Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), p. 469.
5. ^ G. K. Chesterton, *Appreciations and Criticisms of the Works of Charles Dickens*, Chapter 6: Curiosity Shop
6. ^ Marx, Karl (August 1, 1954). The English Middle Classes. *New York Tribune*. Marxists Internet Archive. Retrieved on 2007-06-10.
7. ^ Hart, Christopher (May 20, 2007). What, the Dickens World?. *The Sunday Times*. Times Online. Retrieved on 2007-06-02.
8. ^ Serial publication dates from Chronology of Novels by E. D. H. Johnson, Holmes Professor of Belles Lettres, Princeton University. Accessed June 11, 2007.

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- Peter R Lewis, *Disaster on the Dee: Robert Stephenson's Nemesis of 1847*, Tempus (2007) for a discussion of the Staplehurst accident, and its influence on Dickens.
- Glavin, John (ed.) *Dickens on Screen*, (2003), New York: Cambridge University Press.

External links

- **Sources online**
 - Charles Dickens Biography
 - Works by Charles Dickens at Project Gutenberg
 - Dickens Literature — Chapter-indexed, searchable versions of Dickens' works
 - Charles Dickens HTML format of Dickens books
 - Charles Dickens Online The Works and Life of Charles Dickens
 - PSU's Electronic Classics Series Charles Dickens novels and stories in Free PDF

- Charles Dickens' Quotes
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- A Charles Dickens Journal Timeline of Dickens's Life
- **Critical analysis**
 - *Appreciations and Criticisms of the Works of Charles Dickens* by G. K. Chesterton
 - Charles Dickens's Themes An analysis of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *Nicholas Nickleby* and *A Trial For Murder*
 - Life of Charles Dickens, by Frank Marzials, at Project Gutenberg. 1887 publication with lengthy bibliography.
 - Charles Dickens: The Life of the Author a seminar by Kenneth Benson from the New York Public Library
- **Miscellaneous**
 - the Dickens Fellowship
 - Charles Dickens in south-west London Twickenham and Richmond
 - A Dickens web page with both original content and links to many other Dickens pages
 - Dickens' Characters some of the estimated 989 characters in Dickens
 - Dickens' London Map Learn more

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- A comprehensive Dickens page
- A genealogical tree of the Dickens family
- Charles Dickens — Gad's Hill Place
Daily Dickens information
- Dickens Museum Situated in a former Dickens House, 48 Doughty Street, London, WC1
- Dickens Birthplace Museum Old Commercial Road, Portsmouth
- Dickens House Museum 2 Victoria Parade, Broadstairs, Kent
- the Dutch Dickens Museum 2, Onderstraat, Bronkhorst (Netherlands)
- Broadstairs Dickens Festival
- International Dickens Festival
- Dickens Christmas Fair in San Francisco
- 'The Pride of Mankind' A sequence of verses advertising Warren's Boot Blacking — Dickens' first known appearance in print
- Free audiobook of *A Christmas Carol* at LibriVox
- Free audiobook of *The Signal-Man* at LibriVox
- Unabridged dramatic audio production

- of "A Christmas Carol" - RealAudio
- 1991 audio interview with Peter Ackroyd, biographer of Charles Dickens. Interview by Don Swaim of CBS Radio - RealAudio
- Charles Dickens at the Internet Movie Database
- Rochester local history
- Uses of Eastgate House, Rochester
- History of the Dickens Statue
- Charles Dickens by Pen and Pencil A scanned, full-text version of the 19th Century book on Charles Dickens's Life
- Dickens's Works: text, concordances and frequency lists
- 1868 Caricature of Charles Dickens by André Gill
- Charles Dickens survives a train crash The text of a letter sent by Dickens after the Staplehurst rail crash of 1865

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