Alresford Historical & Literary Society

Newsletter November 2026

Next Meeting Wed 18th November, 7.30 pm, The Methodist Church

It was the best of times, It was the worst of times – The Charles Dickens story

A theatrical presentation by Brian & Jacqueline Sutton



The story of a literary genius. The Charles Dickens you never knew. His controversial private life including 'The invisible Woman', his social campaigning, his humour, the stories and characters. From 'A Christmas Carol' to 'Pickwick Papers' to 'Oliver Twist' and much more…….. Meet Mr. & Mrs. Bumble in their parlour….All encapsulated in a one hour talk with many pictures and quotes. [B&J-S]

We are delighted to welcome Brian & Jacqueline back to our society. Last year they explored the life and works of Dylan Thomas. They return now to lead us into the world of Charles Dickens, our local Hampshire novelist.



Hampshire satisfies both sides of our society's remit by gifting us two historically great literary figures. Jane Austen (1775 – 1817) sparkled with stories about her middle classes of the Georgian period, while Dickens (1812 – 1870), born in Portsmouth, observed the high and low life of his times and crystallised this knowledge in his novels. Sometimes dark and sometimes humorous, he was arguably the greatest of Victorian novelists.

Dickens gained international acclaim for his published works. Then in his latter years he achieved a new fame for the public reading of his stories in halls and meeting rooms throughout the land and also America. Brian and Jacqueline follow his example with a theatrical approach to presentation including what are effectively some public readings of extracts from his novels. [MD]

November 18th will be the Last Meeting of 2026. Looking Back on October:

Our Annual Dinner took place on 23rd October at Alresford Golf Club. As guests of honour, we had two ex-mayors of Winchester - Councillors Sudhakar Ashwal (2025-26) and his wife Vivian Achwal (2021-22). Black ties and posh frocks set the tone and the Golf Club did us proud with an excellent three course dinner. Sudhakar made it clear that as mayor he focussed on ensuring that Winchester looked after everyone, including the disadvantaged. He's clearly a "good sport"; he told us when asked to join in a Morris Dance he threw caution to the wind and said "Yes"!

However, on 21st October we had a problem! Without prior warning our speaker, Stephen Goss, failed to turn up to give his planned talk on Gilbert and Sullivan. After two weeks of our trying to contact him he has still (as of 4th November) not responded to our requests to explain what happened. We trust that he is well, but he is incommunicado, so we don't know. We had the excruciatingly embarrassing task of sending our audience of 65 home without a talk, for which the society is really sorry. [MD]

Mike Dickens, Hon Secretary secretary@alresfordhistandlit.co.uk