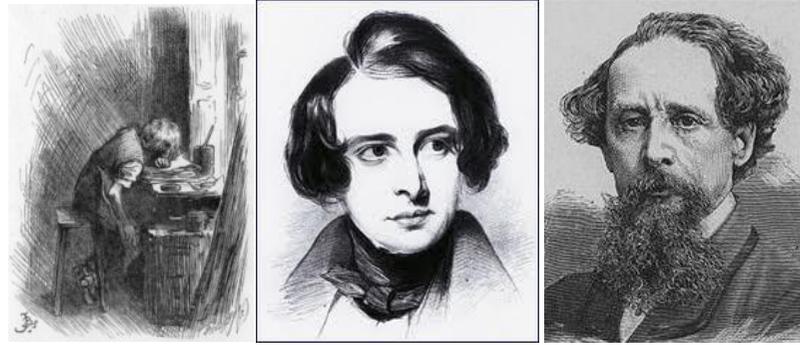


HAPPY 200TH BIRTHDAY, CHARLES DICKENS!

The Victorian novelist was born two centuries ago on February 7, 1812.



His own story was one from rags to riches. He was born in Portsmouth and went through a hard childhood, having to work because of his father's debts.

He began his career as a journalist. He was helped by George Hogarth – his father-in-law – and published the *Pickwick Papers*, which made him highly successful.

He published series of sketches, novels, weekly periodicals or travel books.

He spent much time abroad, for example in the USA, lecturing against slavery or touring Italy.

He died of a stroke in 1870 and is buried in Westminster Abbey.

To celebrate this date, a **COIN** has been minted...

The two-pound uncirculated collectible coin is available via the Royal Mint's website for 8.50 pounds.



The design shows a portrait by artist Matthew Dent that uses titles like "David Copperfield" and "A Christmas Carol" to form a silhouette of Dickens' face.

"I wanted the design of the coin to reference both the immense contribution Dickens has made to British literature and his iconic portrait," Dent said.

Discover some of the events organized to celebrate this date ...

JANUARY – GERMANY

A debate, in Berlin, featuring the writers Claire Tomalin, Toby Litt, Louise Doughty, Philip Hensher, Denise Mina and David Nicholls. The latter has adapted *Great Expectations* for a film, directed by Mike Newell, which has begun shooting since October, starring Helena Bonham Carter as Miss Havisham and Ralph Fiennes as Magwitch.

Great Expectations had two endings, a bleak one and a somewhat romantic and sentimental one. According to David Nicholls, neither were satisfactory and he has chosen a new ending which is somewhere in between.

This group of people will discuss the question: "What would Dickens write today?"

JANUARY - DICKENS ON SCREEN

A retrospective of films and TV works based on or inspired by Dickens – starting at the British Film Institute – Southbank, London

FEBRUARY – INDIA

The theatre company Punchdrunk, in collaboration with east London's Arcola theatre, will go to Lahore and Karachi to perform *The Uncommercial Traveller*, a work based on some of Dickens' less well-known journalism.

CHINA

The British Council has launched a creative writing project called Sketches with Boz (Dickens' pseudo) through QQ, the Chinese equivalent of Twitter; the call for aspiring writers for the project will go across the world.



Joe, Pip, Estella, and Miss Havisham

SPRING 2012 – USA

Speak up! – ‘The Charles Dickens Oral Interpretation Contest’ will be launched in US high schools. There will be prizes for the best declamatory skills!

ON APRIL 2nd – CITY READ LONDON

A campaign to spread a love of books and reading to the widest possible audience throughout the capital. The idea is to choose one book – *Oliver Twist* – for the whole city to read, discuss and debate and bring the Londoners together in a series of special events, across London & online.

CINEMA

Films will also be a key part of the programme and there are plans for 12 films to be screened in 20 countries, including David Lean's ‘Oliver Twist’ and ‘Great Expectations’.

EXHIBITIONS

From May 2011 onwards Dickens’s life, works and legacy will be explored in a series of exhibitions across the globe to see and experience what inspired Dickens to become one of the world’s greatest writers and to find out more about the times he lived in. London and UK will host a number of special commemorative exhibitions while venues in France, Switzerland and US will also show the rich heritage of Dickens’s life.

Make your pick! : <http://www.dickens2012.org/section/exhibitions>



‘Please Sir, I want some more ...’

Charles Dickens: Six things he gave the modern world - by Alex Hudson BBC News Magazine

- 'The man who invented Christmas', not the religious festival but the wider popular culture phenomenon that surrounds it
- His care for those at the bottom: 'Dickensian' has become a word to refer to an unacceptable level of poverty
- The finest comedian, in the way in which he made his characters speak
- An inspiration for the cinema, a key and important influence in its development
- One of his greatest achievements = the development of characters and his gift at suggesting their traits and roles – some of the characters have even entered the language as nouns i.e. 'a Scrooge'
- His attack on the judicial system has remained in people's minds

Florian Schweizer, who is both director of Dickens 2012, and of the Charles Dickens Museum, in Doughty Street, London, said: "Charles Dickens deserves to be commemorated as one of the greatest storytellers, entertainers and philanthropists in history".

"The programme put together by Dickens 2012 in the UK and by the British Council around the world reflects the vast cultural impact and relevance of the man and his works."

<http://www.dickens2012.org/>

DICKENS ON THE BBC

This is the recap of all the shows scheduled on BBC TV or Radio about Charles Dickens:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/tv/seasons/books/>

