Dickens in the Digital Age

Thursday 18 February 2021, 13.00 – 18.00 GMT
Online via Microsoft Teams Live

Charles Dickens left behind a remarkably complete record of his literary output, including handwritten drafts for most of the major novels, marked-up page proofs, working notes, and more. In addition, the V&A holds a wealth of artworks related to Dickens: original illustrations for many of the novels, portraits and photographs of the author, and a number of artworks inspired by Dickens's characters. The Dickens archives present a unique resource for understanding the entire process of textual composition, production, reproduction, and dissemination. The 'Deciphering Dickens' project aims to create an accessible, interactive digital platform in order to share the full range of these extraordinary materials with a wider audience.

Join us for an afternoon exploring the V&A's Dickens collections and considering some of the key technical, editorial, and practical questions involved in creating such a platform. The 'Deciphering Dickens' team will discuss the project's work to date, looking in detail at the museum's Dickens collections and revealing some of the most recent discoveries the project has made. This will be followed by discussion panels exploring exciting new approaches to the ways in which we might read, edit, and share historical materials in the digital age, both in Dickens's case and beyond. The panels will consider questions of editing, analysis, and accessibility, and explore some of the challenges and opportunities in using digital tools to study and share literary archives.

Schedule:

13:00   **Welcome: Tristram Hunt (Director of the V&A)**

13:10   **Introduction to the 'Deciphering Dickens' project:**

          John Bowen (University of York)

          Doug Dodds (V&A)

          Emma Curry (V&A)

Session 1: Digital Projects
Chair: Doug Dodds

14:00   **Michaela Mahlberg (University of Birmingham) and Viola Wiegand (University of Bath)**

          CLiC – creating a tool for close and distant reading

          Kathryn Sutherland (University of Oxford)

          The Short Life of Digital: Jane Austen's Fiction Manuscripts

          Emily Bell (University of Leeds)

          Digital Paratexts

15:00   **Break**

Session 2: Editing Dickens
Chair: John Bowen

15:20   **David Hewitt (University of Aberdeen)**

          The Oxford Edition of Charles Dickens

          Joel Brattin (Worcester Polytechnic Institute)

          What Textual Collation Reveals: *A Tale of Two Cities* as a Case Study

          Leon Litvack (Queen's University Belfast)

          Editing *Our Mutual Friend* with Juxta

16:20   **Break**

Session 3: Deciphering Texts

Chair: Emma Curry

16:45   **Pete Orford (University of Buckingham)**

Deciphering Dickens's Italian Letters

Philip Palmer (The Morgan Library & Museum)

Dickens Manuscripts at the Morgan Library & Museum

Claire Wood (University of Leicester) and Hugo Bowles (Università di Foggia)

The Dickens Code

John Drew (University of Buckingham)

Dickens Journals Online (djo.org.uk): the 'Public Collaborative Text Correction' project

17:55   **Closing remarks: Joanna Norman (Director of the V&A Research Institute)**

This event is organised by the V&A Research Institute and generously supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.