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Friends of St Oswald's

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FRIENDS OF ST. OSWALD'S SUPPER THEATRE
PRESENTS

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Originally by Charles Dickens

A seasonal entertainment suitable for all ages
Friday 6th December & Saturday 7th December 2013
St Oswald's Church, Ravenstonedale





Charles Dickens

Charles Dickens was born in 1812 and while he was still at school his father spent a short time in prison for debt. Charles was sent out to work at a boot-polish factory to support the family. This early experience of poverty and child labour led him to campaign all his life against the exploitation of the poor by rich capitalists. His experiences at the factory also provided him with material for many of his novels and short stories, as did his first jobs as a junior legal clerk and legal reporter.

He started his first novel, *The Pickwick Papers*, in 1836, the year of his marriage to Catherine Hogarth. His next book, *Oliver Twist*, drew on his unhappy schooldays and he also named one of the characters after one of his fellow-workers at the boot-polish factory – Fagin. Dickens always used vivid names for his characters, so much so that some have entered the language. He wrote in his diaries that he based *Scrooge*, which has become a synonym for miser, on Ebenezer Scroogie whose gravestone he saw in Edinburgh. However, Dickens misread Scroogie's epitaph "meal man" (i.e. corn merchant) as "mean man".

Many of his books were written in instalments, and Dickens was as expert as modern soap-opera authors in devising cliff-hangers to keep the readers hooked. During the serialisation of *The Old Curiosity Shop* in 1840, readers in New York even waited on the dockside for a ship from England, and shouted out "Is Little Nell dead?"

Dickens first visited the USA in 1842, sightseeing and lecturing against slavery. He campaigned for an international copyright law, having lost money through foreign pirated editions of his books. In 1843, after a visit to the Cornish tin mines, where children worked in appalling conditions, he decided he could reach a wider audience by writing another book, rather than continuing on a lecture tour. He wrote *A Christmas Carol* in six weeks, both to highlight the effect of capitalism on the poor, and to emphasise the importance of family life.

His later novels such as *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Great Expectations* were very successful and Dickens continued to travel widely, lecturing and giving readings from his books. He was taken ill on a tour of England, and died following a stroke in 1870.

Quiz

(answers on last page)

1. Which of these actors has NOT played Ebenezer Scrooge?
 - a) Orson Welles
 - b) Sid James
 - c) Michael Caine
 - d) Laurence Olivier
 - e) Patrick Stewart

2. How many copies of *A Christmas Carol* were sold in the week after its publication on 17 December 1843?
 - a) 6
 - b) 60
 - c) 600
 - d) 6000
 - e) 60000

3. When was the earliest film based on *A Christmas Carol* released?
 - a) 1901
 - b) 1910
 - c) 1928
 - d) 1935
 - e) 1951

4. As well as The Muppets, which of these characters appeared in their own version of *A Christmas Carol*?
 - a) Mr Magoo
 - b) Bugs Bunny
 - c) Mickey Mouse
 - d) Blackadder
 - e) The Klingons

5. Dickens is often credited with reviving the traditions of Christmas which had been banned by the Puritans – even for popularising the phrase **Merry Christmas** - but do you know the order in which these features of a Victorian Christmas were introduced into Britain?

Christmas Trees, Christmas Cards, Christmas Carols, Christmas Crackers, Christmas Turkeys.

CAST in order of appearance

CHARLOTTE DICKENS, narrator	Caroline Morris
EBENEZER SCROOGE, a disagreeable miser	David Morris
BOB CRATCHIT, Scrooge's clerk	Richard Staley
FREDA, Scrooge's niece	Sue Richardson
GENTLEMAN OF THE CITY	Michael Metcalfe-Gibson
GENTLEWOMAN OF THE CITY	Beverley Lock
GHOST OF JACOB MARLEY	Richard Staley
GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST	Fran Parkinson
SCROOGE AS A SCHOOLBOY	Robbie Boustead
MR FEZZIWIG, Scrooge's first employer	Michael Metcalfe-Gibson
MRS FEZZIWIG	Thelma Mayfield
SCROOGE AS A YOUNG MAN	Mark Barker
BELLE, Scrooge's former fiancée	Vicky Boggan
GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT	Jackie Wedd
MRS CRATCHIT	Liz Hutchinson
MARTHA CRATCHIT	Hollie Boustead
TINY TIM	Frankie Kelly
JAMES, Freda's husband	Richard Todd
GHOST OF CHRISTMAS YET TO COME	George Clooney*
2 ND GENTLEMAN OF THE CITY	Richard Todd
CHARWOMAN	Caroline Morris
MRS DILBER, a laundress	Hilary Law
OLD JOE, a buyer and seller of goods	John Houston
BOYS IN STREET	Sam Hutchinson
	Daniel Buckler

*UNDERSTUDY

Dave Wedd

Other parts played by the Company, children from Ravenstonedale School and Eliza Lewis.

The action takes place on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Tonight's production of *A Christmas Carol* has been adapted from Dickens's original story by Joan Houston, but most of the words you will hear were written by Charles Dickens - although they are not necessarily in the same order...

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Ian Smallwood
Thelma Mayfield
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Sue Richardson
Judith Todd
Judith Todd
David Morris
William Ellis
Jackie Wedd
Ainsworth & Parkinson
John Houston
June Ellis
Carole Clayton
Sally Metcalfe-Gibson
John Houston

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ainsworth & Parkinson
Lune Spring Players
Stan Frost
Clarks Shoes, Edinburgh
Caroline Morris

Printing
Lighting Equipment
Website and photography
Shoeboxes
Pair of tights for special effects





FRIENDS of ST OSWALD'S

St Oswald's is one of the country's finest churches, of considerable architectural and historic importance. Perhaps more significantly for those of us who live locally, the church is a beautiful landmark in Ravenstonedale, and the churchyard is a final resting place for many generations, of all denominations.

The costs of maintaining the church are considerable, and can no longer be supported by the congregation alone. The Friends of St Oswald's was established as a charity to raise funds to help preserve the fabric of the church for the benefit of future generations. The Friends of St Oswald's is totally secular; it is concerned with the church as a building, not as a religious institution.

We have held a number of highly successful fund-raising events, including a Summer Ball and a Hog Roast. Tonight's production is the second Supper Theatre. The first, a Tam O'Shanter evening in February this year, proved extremely popular. Both have furthered another aim of the Friends, which is to encourage the use of the church for the wider community.

The Friends are now financially in a position to be able to undertake the first major project - to replace the rather antiquated heating system with one based on air source heat pump technology. This will be more efficient, more ecological and much more affordable. It is hoped that the installation will be completed in time to provide benefit for at least some of this winter.

Further details of Friends of St Oswald's and of how contributions can be made are at www.friendsofstoswalds.co.uk

Quiz Answers

1. d) Laurence Olivier never played Scrooge (his only Dickensian role was the headmaster Mr Creakle, in a TV movie of *David Copperfield* in 1969). Orson Welles played Scrooge once, on radio in the USA, in 1938. Sid James played Scrooge in *Carry on Christmas* in 1969, a highly irreverent TV version. Michael Caine played Scrooge in *The Muppet Christmas Carol* in 1992, which follows the original story quite closely. Patrick Stewart played Scrooge in a TV movie in 1999.

2. d) The first print run of 6000 copies sold out by 24 December 1843, and the book continued to sell well after the New Year, running to seven editions by May. It has never been out of print since.

3. a) 1901. *Scrooge or Marley's Ghost* is the earliest surviving film adaptation – about five minutes still exist. It was shown as a Royal Command Performance on Christmas Day 1901 at Sandringham. On 23 December 1910, the Edison Manufacturing Company released a 10 minute silent film version in the USA. (There are 7 known silent versions altogether). In 1928 the first sound version, a filmed monologue entitled *Scrooge*, was released in Great Britain. In 1935 a second British sound film also entitled *Scrooge* was released. The classic 1951 British film *Scrooge* stars Alistair Sim in the title role.

4. They all did.

Mr Magoo's Christmas Carol was a cartoon made for TV in 1962.

Bugs Bunny's Christmas Carol was released in 1979.

Mickey's Christmas Carol was made in 1983.

Blackadder's Christmas Carol was first shown in December 1988.

The Klingon Christmas Carol, written in 2006, was the first play to be performed in the *Star Trek* Klingon language.

5. Some Christmas Carols dating back to medieval times are still sung today. Although turkeys were a luxury in Victorian times, they had been eaten at Christmas from the 16th Century. Christmas Trees were introduced to Britain by Prince Albert in 1841, and the first Christmas card was published in 1843. Crackers did not appear until 1846, and were based on twisted sweet wrappers, with a 'crackle' added.

And finally - believe it or not - a species of snail discovered in Fiji in 1983 was given the scientific name *Ba humbugi*

Merry Christmas!