

'...no man could possibly survive the consumption of such frequent toasted cheese'



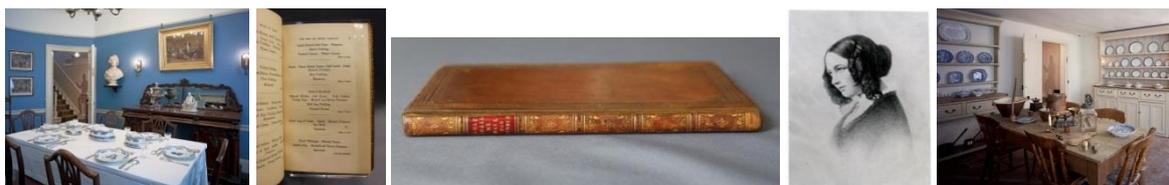
CHARLES
DICKENS
MUSEUM
London

Mac and Cheese, Fondue and Cold Pigeon Pie - At Home with Catherine & Charles Dickens

CHARLES DICKENS MUSEUM ACQUIRES RARE COOKBOOK WRITTEN BY CATHERINE DICKENS

- *What Shall We Have For Dinner?* includes introduction by Charles Dickens as 'Sir Charles Coldstream'
- 1852 cookbook joins new exhibition, *The Other Dickens: Discovering Catherine*, in the couple's first family home
- Special 'Hearing Catherine' events with artist Felicity Ford

1 September 2016 -- The Charles Dickens Museum has acquired an extremely rare early edition of a fascinating cookbook written by Catherine Dickens - wife of Charles - in the early 1850s. The slim, hardback volume, *What Shall We Have For Dinner?*, was written by Catherine under the pen name 'Lady Maria Clutterbuck', a character played earlier by Catherine in a play, *Used Up*, performed at Rockingham Castle in Northamptonshire (the inspiration for *Bleak House*).



Recently acquired from an antiquarian book seller, the 1852 edition has gone on immediate display at the Museum at **48 Doughty Street**, the London townhouse where Dickens completed *The Pickwick Papers* and wrote *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby*. It joins a combination of rarely-seen exhibits in the Museum's current special exhibition, *The Other Dickens: Discovering Catherine*, which aims to present an accurate picture of a woman who met Charles Dickens in her teens and whose own character and achievements remain in his shadow. **The exhibition runs until 20 November 2016.**

What Shall We Have For Dinner? is filled with meals and menus ('bills of fare') created by Catherine to put before gatherings of between two and twenty people, all aiming to answer the title of the

book. The book's introduction, again attributed to Lady Maria Clutterbuck, was written by Charles Dickens. In it, 'Lady Maria' explains the purpose of the book: *'...the ever-recurring inquiry of WHAT SHALL WE HAVE FOR DINNER? makes the matutinal meal a time to dread, only exceeded in its terrors by the more awful hour of dinner! It is to rescue many fair friends from such domestic suffering, that I have consented to give to the World THE BILLS OF FARE which met with the approval of Sir Jonas Clutterbuck, believing that by a constant reference to them, an easy solution may be obtained to that most difficult of questions, 'WHAT SHALL WE HAVE FOR DINNER?'*

Among Catherine's menu plans, toasted cheese appears several times. The family had a cheese toaster - in effect, a fondue set - comprising a dish to hold cheese with a container for hot water underneath to keep the cheese at melting point. Cheese would be grated into the top, seasoning added, and perhaps mustard, pepper, port or porter and butter added if it was a little dry. Then, the whole dish would be sent to the table with buttered bread or toast, probably to be enjoyed with a glass of port. Catherine would often pair this dish with a refreshing watercress salad.

Charley Dickens (eldest son of Catherine and Charles) recalled, 'my mother in the old Tavistock House days published, under the name of Lady Clutterbuck, a book of her own daily bills of fare, the critics with one accord agreed that the little work was well enough, but that no man could possibly survive the consumption of such frequent toasted cheese'.¹

Among Catherine's menus for two or three persons is a line-up of lobster cutlets, rabbit curry, rice dumpling, mashed & brown potatoes and Italian cream; the last required whipping together cream, powdered sugar, lemon juice and lemon rind for nearly an hour.

Her menu for 20 includes vegetable soup, turbot with smelts, shrimp sauce, roast saddle of mutton, boiled fowls, tongue, oyster curry, rice, pork cutlets, spinach, mashed and brown potatoes, beetroot salad, cabinet pudding, marmalade tartlets, custards and macaroni.

Among her recipes is:

Scotch Minced Collop

Take two pounds of the fillet of beef, chopped very fine, put it in a stew-pan, and add to it pepper and salt and a little flour, add a little good gravy, with a little ketchup and Harvey's sauce, and let it stew for twenty minutes over a slow fire; serve up very hot, garnished with fried sippet of bread. This quantity of beef makes a good-sized dish.

Lamb's Head and Mince

Cut a lamb's head in half, boil and then brown in a Dutch oven or with a salamander; mince liver and dish up together.

Louisa Price, Curator of the Charles Dickens Museum, said, “The cookbook is a reminder of skills and qualities that are often sidelined when Catherine is discussed. The book, which ran to five editions, reflects her Scottish heritage and her culinary experiences living abroad in places like Switzerland, Italy and France. The couple often entertained and the book is clearly written by someone who knows how to juggle the realities of catering for larger dinner parties with a small kitchen, for example, preparing items in advance, and serving things cold.”

Catherine has an astute understanding of seasonal cookery, as well as the nuances of meat cookery - providing a range of examples of how to prepare dishes on a stovetop, baked in an oven or on a bottle jack (a device which rotates meat on a spit). The book is a wonderful addition to the exhibition and fills a significant gap in our collection. Though we have often referenced the publication, and used its contents to illustrate the culinary life of the Dickens family here at Doughty Street, we have never owned a copy until now.”

The Other Dickens: Discovering Catherine aims to debunk a series of myths surrounding the life of Catherine Dickens, adding significant detail to a name only known through the achievements and actions of her husband.

Among the key exhibits are rarely-seen pieces of Catherine’s jewellery, including her engagement ring, snake design ring and bracelet, and chain purse; Charles and Catherine’s Draft Deed of Separation, drawn up in 1858; and illuminated extracts from Catherine’s Last Will and Testament. With the support of a Grant for the Arts from Arts Council England, the Museum also features ***Hearing Catherine***, a series of six new sound installations by artist **Felicity Ford**, which emerge in each historic room and bring Catherine’s voice back to Doughty Street. Felicity Ford will present two special events in September.

Hearing Catherine: The Artist’s View

Date: Thursday 8 September at 6pm and 6.45pm

Hearing Catherine was created not only to give Catherine a voice, but also to animate a sense of her presence in the rooms that she and Charles Dickens once shared at 48 Doughty Street. In a short guided tour, Felicity Ford will describe the key role of the Museum in the development of her work. Visitors will learn about recording coal scuttles and fire-grates; listening to butter-churns; the lure of old bells; a fortuitous encounter with an emergency siren in Kensal Green; and the challenges and pleasures of trying to hear the past.

Hearing Catherine: An Evening of Stories and Songs

Date: Wednesday 21st September at 6pm, 6.30pm and 7pm

Catherine Dickens had a wide variety of talented female friends - often described as an 'irreverent coterie' - who were contemporaries, allies and friends. Mirroring this coterie, three creative female collaborators - Felicity Ford, Louize Harries and Rachel Moffat - will celebrate Catherine's world in sound. The evening will be presented in the spirit of female friendship as a source of identity, empowerment and creativity. It will illustrate aspects of research conducted in order to bring Catherine's memory to life in the house in which she and Charles Dickens lived in the 1830s.

For tickets to the *Hearing Catherine* events, please visit dickensmuseum.com

The **Charles Dickens Museum** holds the world's most comprehensive collection of Dickens-related material. As visitors make their way through the house, they will spend time at the desk where he wrote *Great Expectations*; see the raised reading desk he designed and from which he gave countless public readings; and pore over original manuscripts of his great works, letters, personal items and photographs.

When Charles Dickens moved into **48 Doughty Street**, he was a little-known writer, still using his pen-name, Boz. By the time he left, he was an international superstar. The rooms are still filled with the furniture he bought - most of the fireplaces, doors, locks, window shutters and fittings are still in place as they were when the family resided there.

VISITOR INFORMATION Exhibition Dates: Until 20 November 2016.

Opening hours: Tuesday-Sunday, 10am-5pm (last admission 4pm). Closed on Mondays.

Entry to the rooms of the Museum every 15 minutes between 10am and 4pm. Booking: dickensmuseum.com or 020 7405 2127.

Museum admission prices: Adults £9; Concessions £6; Children (6-16) £4; Under 6 free.

Address: Charles Dickens Museum, 48 Doughty Street, London WC1N 2LX

More information: www.dickensmuseum.com 020 7405 2127 events@dickensmuseum.com

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Notes to Editors:

¹From 'Reminiscences of My Father' in Windsor Magazine, Christmas supplement, 1934.

2. Catherine Hogarth married Charles Dickens in 1836. They lived together for the next 22 years, Catherine having ten children (two of whom were born at Doughty Street) in the first sixteen of those years, as well as travelling to America and living abroad. When they separated, Catherine moved to 70 Gloucester Crescent near Regent's Park, where she stayed for 21 years, outliving Charles by nearly a decade. During this time, Charles Dickens painted a harshly negative portrait of his wife, suggesting that Catherine was constantly depressed and an uncaring, unfit mother.

Issued by *The Press Office*. For further information and images, please contact Michael Barrett on 020 8295 2424, 07813-558772 or mb@thepressoffice.uk.