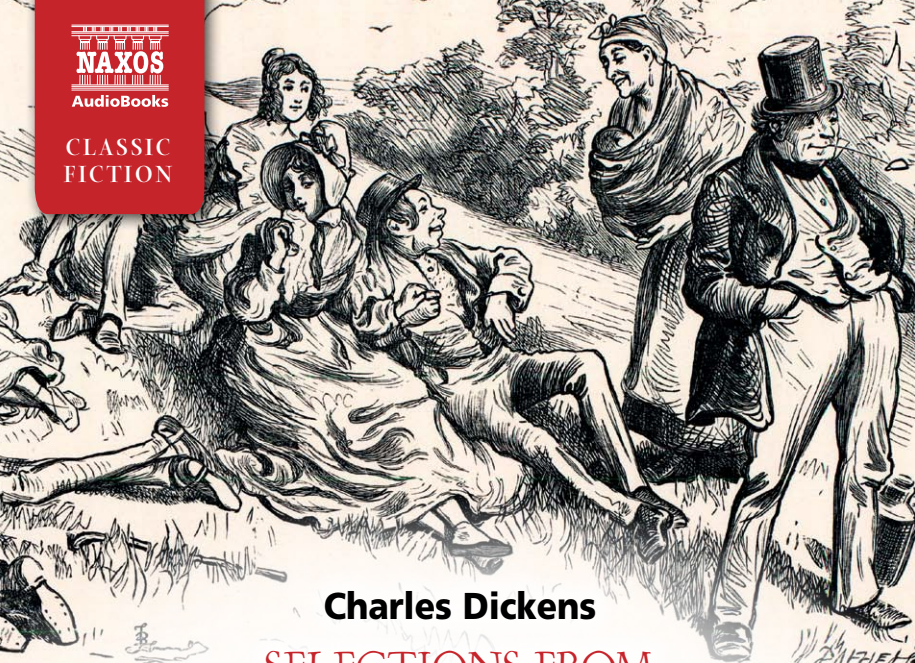


NAXOS
AudioBooks

CLASSIC
FICTION



Charles Dickens

SELECTIONS FROM

Sketches by Boz

Read by **David Timson**

1	The Streets – Morning	5:17
2	Another hour passes away...	7:53
3	The Streets – Night	5:30
4	It is nearly eleven o'clock...	7:29
5	Meditations in Monmouth Street	7:11
6	The next suit, smart but slovenly...	4:15
7	We took a step or two further on...	5:15
8	London Recreations	6:10
9	On a summer's evening, when the large watering-pot...	6:13
10	Greenwich Fair	4:42
11	The chief place of resort in the daytime...	4:53
12	Imagine yourself in an extremely dense crowd...	5:43
13	The exhibitions next in popularity to these...	5:28
14	The Pawnbroker's Shop	6:34
15	At the present moment, this elegantly-attired individual...	6:00
16	Here, as the woman has completely run herself...	6:42
17	A Christmas Dinner	6:00
18	When the church-party return to lunch...	6:15
19	The Boarding House – Chapter 1	6:21
20	He always went out at ten o'clock in the morning...	6:01

21	Mr Calton, the remaining boarder, shortly afterwards...	7:30
22	A pause ensued, before the table was replenished...	4:21
23	We are not about to adopt the licence of novel-writers...	5:22
24	Mr Septimus Hicks looked up at the ceiling...	5:03
25	'I say,' said Tibbs, shutting the door...	5:29
26	The Boarding House – Chapter 2	5:29
27	'It's rather singular,' continued Mrs Tibbs...	5:12
28	The chattels of Mrs Bloss were forwarded...	5:04
29	Mr John Evenson was in the receipt of an independent income...	4:57
30	The room-door was suddenly thrown open...	5:07
31	'Oh dear!' said the latter, 'I feel alarmingly faint...'	4:04
32	One evening, the different inmates of the house...	5:36
33	A titter followed this announcement...	5:11
34	'The first thing to be done,' continued the Hibernian...	4:48
35	'What's the matter!' shouted Gobler...	4:25
36	The Tuggses at Ramsgate	5:56
37	'We must certainly give up business,' said Miss Tuggs...	5:16
38	'Walter, my dear,' said the black-eyed young lady...	5:10
39	Resisting even the temptation of securing...	5:24
40	If the pier had presented a scene of life and bustle...	4:14

41	'What do you think of doing with yourself...'	6:33
42	Great was the confusion of Mr Cymon Tuggs...	5:46
43	'Who's this?' inquired Mr Cymon Tuggs...	6:01
44	Enter the captain, Joseph Tuggs, Mrs Tuggs, and Charlotta...	4:35
45	The Bloomsbury Christening	7:09
46	A day or two afterwards, as Dumps was perusing a morning paper...	5:51
47	Dumps paused; he could not think of walking...	5:29
48	The argument was irresistible: Dumps paid the disputed sixpence...	6:11
49	Evening came – and so did Dumps's pumps...	5:08
50	'Uncle,' said little Kitterbell, after Dumps had been introduced...	5:25
51	'Hush! Hush!' said Mr Kitterbell, rising and looking very important...	5:34

Total time: 4:47:45

Charles Dickens

(1812–1870)

SELECTIONS FROM

Sketches by Boz

'Little pictures of life and manners as they really are'
(from Dickens's preface to the first series of sketches)

Dickens began to write fiction at some point in 1833, his first stories appearing in *The Monthly Magazine* in 1834. As a novice writer and uncertain of his talents, he burst into tears on seeing his words in print for the first time. Before long, however, he was writing for several journals, and in 1836, he collected these first writings together and published them as *Sketches by Boz*.

'Boz' derived from Dickens's way of saying 'Moses' as a child, through his nose, and it became a nickname in the Dickens family, not for Charles, but for his youngest brother Augustus.

In these pieces we see the early development of Dickens's great talent. His

first pieces are descriptive scenes of daily life: the bustle of London streets, early and late; the very streets Dickens walked at all hours of the day and night which provided him with inspiration throughout his working life. When he was abroad he never found the same stimulation in the streets of Paris or Genoa. *Sketches by Boz* is a testament to Dickens's great love of London in all its facets. However, it was not long before comic characters and plots began to appear in his *Sketches*, anticipating future novels to come. In *The Boarding House*, one of his first fictions, he shows in its construction his passion for the theatre and particularly the one-act farces that were so popular in the

early 19th century. *The Boarding House* could easily be transferred to the stage. But lest the public should think him a frivolous writer, Dickens was at pains to introduce more serious, even tragic themes; and some of the *Sketches* (like *The Pawnbroker's Shop*) prepare us in their sombreness for his novels that deal with deprivation and social injustice.

Although the street-names of Dickens's London are still with us: Great Russell Street; Tottenham Court Road; Great Coram Street; Drury Lane etc., the common Victorian everyday expressions are not. Some of the more obscure references are explained below.

The Streets – Morning and Night

The most striking aspect of these two chapters is the numerous activities that actually go on in the streets – lost sights, for the most part, of muffin-boys, nine-o'clock beer men, hot potato sellers, kidney-pie men and household servants.

The Hummums: in Dickens's time this was something of a bachelor hotel

situated in Covent Garden. The name 'Hummums' is an English variation of the Arabic word *hammam*, meaning bath, and the Hummums held a long tradition of offering a Turkish bath service, along with other reputable and disreputable services. It survived from the 17th to the early 20th century.

'Come-the-double-monkey': to take more than one's share; but also probably a lost theatrical term.

'I b'lieve you': catchphrases and sayings have existed as long as there has been entertainment. This phrase (usually used to mean the exact opposite of what it says) originated in a play called *Green Bushes*. It was spoken by the comic actor Paul Bedford (1798–1869) with his inimitable chuckle: 'I b'lieve you my bo-o-oy'.

Purl: Beer heated almost to boiling, then flavoured with gin, sugar and ginger.

Meditations in Monmouth Street

Monmouth Street, renowned in Dickens's day for second-hand clothes, still caters for those seeking the fashions of the

1960s and 1970s. Some of the old clothes Dickens sees may need explanation:

Cloth Boots: half-boots with a soft upper, unusual for this period.

Denmark satin shoes: coarse worsted stuff with a smooth surface on one side, giving a silken finish.

Knee-cords: corduroy breeches reaching down to the knee, and fastened with a strap or bow.

List shoes: made of coarse woollen cloth.

Pilot Greatcoat: a thick duffle jacket.

Tops: top boots were knee-length thick leather boots with the top of a contrasting colour, usually tan.

London Recreations

Dickens's descriptions of the suburban working-man taking pleasure in his garden is still very much a part of a Londoner's relaxation after a hard day's work today, as is the Sunday trip out with the family.

The Fancy Fair: it was a fashion in

the 1830s for young women from all classes of society to sell knick-knacks and fancy goods at a bazaar or garden party for charity. It gave young women the opportunity to legitimately show off their attractions to young men whilst helping a good cause. Dickens obviously found this humorous, as he refers to it in several of the *Sketches*, and in *The Tuggses at Ramsgate* includes a raffle, an extra dimension to the Fancy Fair.

Greenwich Fair

Dickens paints a lively picture of Londoners enjoying themselves. Unfortunately the fair became too riotous for the local inhabitants, and was discontinued in 1857.

Kiss-in-the-ring: a kissing game

Mr Horner and the Colosseum: built in Regent's Park by Mr Horner, to display his sketches of the panorama of London from the top of St Paul's, on 46,000 square feet of canvas.

Richardson's show: John Richardson

was the king of the fairground theatre booths – where rough entertainments based on sensational melodrama, and interspersed with curious characters such as dwarfs, giants and spotted boys, provided thrilling spectacle. Richardson, born in the workhouse, made a fortune of £20,000 from fairground entertainment, dying in the year *Sketches by Boz* was published. Dickens, always an enthusiastic admirer of rough-and-ready entertainment, wrote Richardson's obituary.

Scratcher: a toy that imitates the sound of tearing cloth.

Threading my grandmother's needle: a children's catching game.

The Pawnbroker's Shop

Dickens shows his sympathy for the poor and deprived in this sketch, which was to be such an important feature of his novels. He reflects on how easily poor young women can slip into prostitution, and in 1847 collaborated with the philanthropist Angela Burdett-Coutts to provide a safe house for fallen

women in Shepherd's Bush. In its first six years, around 50 or 60 inmates passed through its doors aged between 14 and 26.

Ferguson's first: James Ferguson (1710–1776) a Scottish astronomer, made a clumsy-looking watch of wood and whalebone.

Round my hat: a reference to a favourite song 'All Round My Hat', but also slang for being indisposed through drink.

Up the Spout: slang for the chute in a pawnbroker's shop down which goods were dispatched into the cellar for storage. A euphemism for something that is lost forever.

A Christmas Dinner

If there is one word we associate with Charles Dickens, it is the word 'Christmas.' Both his daughters, in their memoirs of Dickens, dwell on the happy times they remembered at Christmas. However, Kate, in a letter to Bernard Shaw many years after her father's death, hints at the darker side of Dickens:

If you could make the public understand that my father was not a joyous, jocose gentleman walking about the world with a plum pudding and a bowl of punch you would greatly oblige me.

The Boarding House

Bartellot's: a fashionable hairdresser at No. 254, Regent Street.

Boulogne: a French port popular with people with money difficulties in the 19th century.

Bucellas: a Portuguese white wine, like Hock.

Di Piacer: an air from Rossini's opera *The Thieving Magpie*.

Joe Millerisms: Joe Miller was an 18th-century actor. A collection of his jokes was published after his death and proved very successful. Owing to the quality of the jokes, any time-worn jest came to be called 'a Joe Miller' or 'a Joe-Millerism.'

Lindley Murray (1745–1826): a grammarian whose book of grammar (1795) became the standard school text

book in the early 19th century.

Orson: a character in the children's story *Valentine and Orson*. Orson is carried off by a bear and becomes a wild man.

Pelisse: a woman's outer garment reaching to the ground.

George Henry Robins (1778–1847): a famous auctioneer who always described the properties he was to sell in a hyperbolic style.

Captain Ross (1777–1836): an Arctic explorer who twice tried to navigate the North-West passage.

Smoke-jack: an apparatus for turning a spit over a fire, rotated by the air-current in the chimney.

Wandering Jew: a legendary figure doomed to wander the earth until Christ's second coming.

The Tuggses at Ramgate

Dickens gets into his stride as a comic writer with this story. The characterisation is more developed and the humour less farcical than in *The Boarding House*. We should remember how relatively recent the idea of a family seaside holiday was

in 1836, with the advent of trains and steamers.

Berlins: gloves made from fine wool yarn.

Blockade-man: a coastguard

Fly: a light double-seated one-horse carriage, let out for hire.

Rowland's Macassar Oil: hair oil made from the fruit of trees in Makassar. Popularised by A. Rowland of Hatton Garden, who succeeded in eliminating the use of bear-grease for hair.

The Bloomsbury Christening

There are pre-echoes of Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol* in the character of Nicodemus Dumps and his relation to the Kitterbells, themselves embryonic Cratchits.

Bluchers: Heavy half-boots laced at the front, named after the Prussian Field-Marshal at Waterloo.

Cad: the slang term for a conductor of an omnibus.

Hoyle: Edmund Hoyle (1672–1769) was the leading authority on the game of

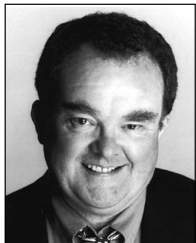
whist, and standardised the rules.

Jack-in-the-Green: a traditional character in May-day processions, hidden in a framework of green leaves.

The lady with the brass ladle: Another May-day reveller, known as 'her Ladyship' who collected money from the spectators in a brass ladle.

Mrs Radcliffe's Castles: Anne Radcliffe (1764–1823), a Gothic novelist. A veiled picture features in her *Mysterries of Udolpho*.

Notes by Nicolas Soames



David Timson has made over 1,000 broadcasts for BBC Radio Drama. For Naxos AudioBooks he wrote *The History of Theatre*, which won an award for most original production from the Spoken Word Publishers Association in 2001. He has also directed five Shakespeare plays for Naxos AudioBooks, including *King Richard III* (with Kenneth Branagh), which won Best Drama award from the SWPA in 2001. In 2002 he won the Audio of the Year award for his reading of *A Study in Scarlet*. He has read the entire *Sherlock Holmes* canon for Naxos AudioBooks.

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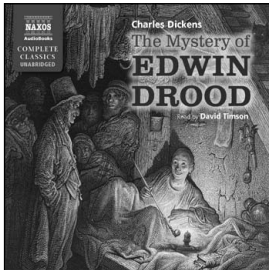
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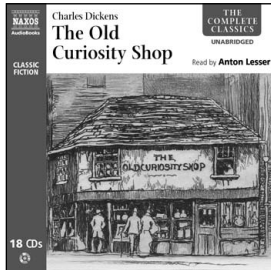
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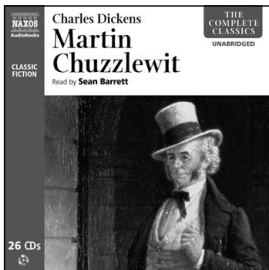
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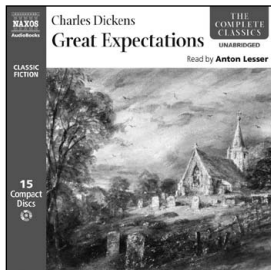
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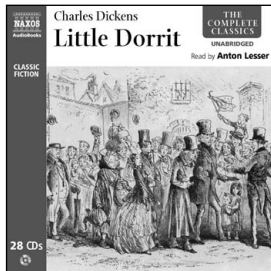


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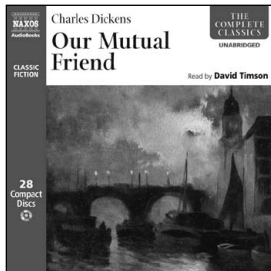
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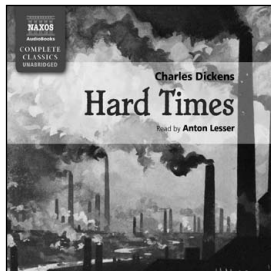
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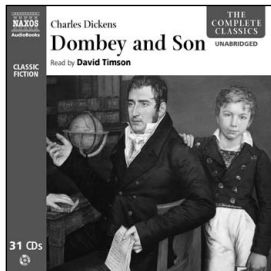
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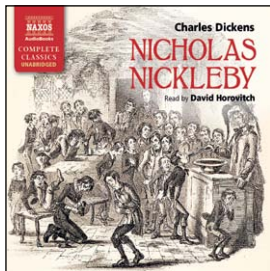
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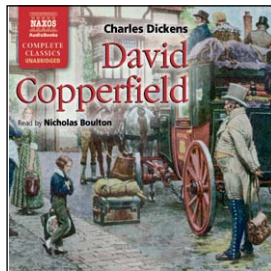
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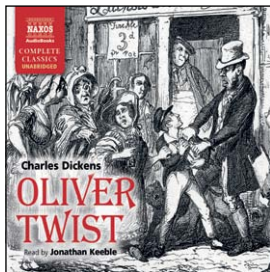
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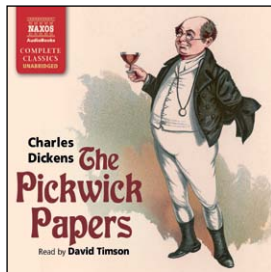
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Charles Dickens

SELECTIONS FROM

Sketches by Boz

Read by **David Timson**

Dickens's renowned skill for keen social observation and, more specifically, his incredibly detailed knowledge of London and its theatres, prisons and inns, is perfectly realised in *Sketches by Boz*. Many of the themes he goes on to explore in his great novels are foreshadowed in this early collection of short accounts that centre on London and its inhabitants.



David Timson has made over 1,000 broadcasts for BBC Radio Drama. For Naxos AudioBooks, he has written *The History of Theatre*, directed five Shakespeare plays, and read the entire *Sherlock Holmes* canon.

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