

# Decoding Dickens: Contexts, Inspirations, Approaches

An online networking symposium that introduces the 'savage stenographic mystery' of Dickens's shorthand and the challenges of deciphering unusual scripts.

**Friday 23 July 2021, 2pm-6.30pm (BST)**

## Programme

Live tweeting from 2pm, with Lydia Craig (@lydiaecraig). Follow us @dickens\_code #DecodingDickens

### Session 1: Contexts

*Chaired by Claire Wood (University of Leicester)*

2.00pm: **Welcome and an Introduction to the 'Dickens Code'**, with Claire Wood and Hugo Bowles (University of Foggia)

2.10pm: **Panel A: Shorthand Mysteries**

**'All the World Writes Short Hand': The Proliferation of Shorthand in Seventeenth-Century England**, with Kelly McCay (Harvard University)

**'4 2 3 5 4 5 ?' or 'Very Merry Guessing Words': Glimpses into the Sociability of Eighteenth-Century Shorthand and its Deciphering**, with Tim Underhill (Independent)

**'The Devil's Handwriting': Dickens, *Brachygraphy*, and Two Mysteries**, with Hugo Bowles

**Solving the Pre-symposium Task**

**Q&A** (15 minutes)

3.00pm: **Panel B: Spotlighting Shorthand**

**Curatorial Roundtable**, with John Hodgson (John Rylands Library, University of Manchester), Frankie Kubicki (Charles Dickens Museum, London), Joe Shemtov (Free Library of Philadelphia), and Dominik Stoltz (Saxon State and University Library Dresden)

3.30pm: **Coffee and Comment Break**

### Session 2: Inspirations

*Chaired by Emily Bell (University of Leeds)*

3.45pm: **Recap and Reflection**, with Pete Orford (University of Buckingham)



*'The Dickens Code' project is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). Find out more at: [le.ac.uk/dickens-code](http://le.ac.uk/dickens-code)*

3.50pm: **Panel C: Creative Crowdsourcing**

**Constructing Scientific Communities and 'Science Gossip'**, with Gowan Dawson (University of Leicester)

**Deciphering Dickens**, with Emma Curry and Aine McNicholas (V&A Museum, London)

**The Old Joke Archive**, with Bob Nicholson (Edge Hill University)

**Q&A** (15 minutes)

4.35pm: **Panel D: Manuscripts and Digital Scripts**

**Editing Aphra Behn in the Digital Age**, with Mel Evans (University of Leicester)

**Transcribe Bentham**, with Philip Schofield (University College London)

**Dickens Journals Online**, with John Drew (University of Buckingham)

**Q&A** (15 minutes)

5.20pm: **Coffee and Comment Break**

## **Session 3: Approaches**

*Chaired by Leon Litvack (QUB)*

5.35pm: **Recap and Reflection**, with Pete Orford

5.40pm: **Panel E: The Decoding Challenge**

**A Dickens Decoding Task: The Morgan Library's 'Tavistock' Letter**, with Claire Wood

**Can Machines Crack the Dickens Code?** with Huiyu Zhou (University of Leicester)

**Forensic Linguistics and Shorthand Decoding**, with Andrea Nini (University of Manchester)

**Q&A** (15 minutes)

6.20pm: **'Decoding Dickens' Prize Announcement**

6.30pm: **CLOSE**