

A CHRISTMAS CAROL



Being a Ghost Story of Christmas by Charles Dickens

A Globe Players Text Study presentation, being a performance of the entertainment and an examination of the text



Ebenezer Scrooge's ill treatment of his clerk, Bob Cratchit, his unwillingness to celebrate Christmas with his nephew, Fred, and his attitude towards those in need as expressed to a hapless charity collector who calls on him, all lead to a succession of ghostly visitors on the night before Christmas. They all work their magic on him until, when Christmas day dawns, Mr Scrooge is a new man.

When he wrote his “ghostly little book”, Charles Dickens expressed his modest hope that, in doing so, he would “not put my readers out of humour with themselves, with each other, with the season, or with me. May it haunt their houses pleasantly...” He needn't have worried about that! The story has remained popular for almost one hundred and fifty years, not just in book form, but on stage, film, radio and television. And its message has remained relevant throughout this time.



VICTORIAN SOCIETY

In Victorian England, people became more aware of themselves as part of society as a whole. Charles Dickens, as easily the most popular writer in Britain, did a lot to create this awareness. His popularity became for him a means of encouraging social reform. In his writings, Dickens presented the conflict between those who tried to bring about improvements in society and those who didn't. Our presentation gives an indication of how Dickens used this delightful timeless novella to further his campaign for social change.

THE WORKHOUSE

One of Dickens' concerns was for prison reform and the abolition of the workhouse. (His own father had been held in the debtors' prison.) And life in the workhouse was deliberately harsh, with the intention of deterring the “able-bodied poor” and ensuring that only the totally destitute would apply for this meagre assistance.

CHRISTMAS

On every Christmas Day of Charles Dickens' childhood up to the age of eight, it snowed. This formed Dickens' picture of the ideal Christmas. And throughout A Christmas Carol, every reference to snow is to be found in descriptions of people having a happy time at Christmas. Much of the imagery we today associate with Christmas comes from this story of the reform of the miserly Mr Scrooge.