

**NAXOS**  
AudioBooks

COMPLETE  
CLASSICS  
UNABRIDGED

Charles  
Dickens **The**  
**Pickwick**  
**Papers**

Read by **David Timson**

'David Timson makes me laugh aloud –  
Dickens would be proud of him'  
**Claire Tomalin**



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1	<b>The Pickwick Papers</b>	7:36
2	Mr Pickwick's oration upon this occasion...	5:37
3	<b>Chapter 2: The First Day's Journey...</b>	6:34
4	The mob hitherto had been passive spectators of the scene...	4:39
5	Now it so happened that Mr Pickwick...	5:53
6	In this strain, with an occasional glass of ale...	6:05
7	'Devil of a mess on the staircase, waiter,'...	5:01
8	The temptation to be present at the ball...	6:51
9	While the aristocracy of the place...	6:16
10	That gentleman was fast asleep...	6:11
11	To this determination Mr Winkle was urged...	6:33
12	The state of the case having been formally explained...	6:32
13	Now Mr Winkle had opened his eyes...	4:37
14	<b>Chapter 3: A New Acquaintance...</b>	4:51
15	<b>The Stroller's Tale</b>	5:35
16	It was late, for I had been playing in the last piece...	6:03
17	I sat there for upwards of two hours...	6:21
18	It would afford us the highest gratification...	4:21
19	Mr Tupman, thus solemnly adjured...	4:07
20	<b>Chapter 4: A Field Day and Bivouac...</b>	6:04

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21	Mr Pickwick had been so fully occupied in falling about...	6:09
22	There are very few moments in a man's existence...	5:33
23	Astounding evolutions they were...	4:39
24	'How dear Emily is flirting with the strange gentleman,'...	7:23
25	<b>Chapter 5: A Short One...</b>	6:46
26	Now Mr Winkle did entertain considerable misgivings...	5:33
27	Now whether the tall horse...	4:26
28	A red-headed man was working in the garden...	7:22
29	<b>Chapter 6: An Old-Fashioned Card Party...</b>	6:02
30	The rubber was conducted with all that gravity...	7:32
31	<b>The Ivy Green</b>	3:56
32	<b>The Convict's Return</b>	6:51
33	In the first transports of her mental anguish...	4:59
34	On a fine Sunday evening...	3:47
35	The last soft light of the setting sun...	5:37
36	<b>Chapter 7: How Mr Winkle, Instead of Shooting at the Pigeon...</b>	7:08
37	The slight omission was rectified.	6:37
38	It was therefore settled that Mr Tupman...	6:27
39	Mr Pickwick was sufficiently versed...	7:19
40	There being no further preliminaries to arrange...	5:06

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41	Enthusiastic as we are in the noble cause...	1:54
42	<b>Chapter 8:</b> Strongly Illustrative of the Position...	5:48
43	Mr Tupman no sooner heard this avowal...	7:37
44	Mr Tupman thought of the widow at Rochester...	5:55
45	If Mr Jingle, from his place of concealment...	7:17
46	Now, if there was one individual in the whole world...	6:10
47	<b>Chapter 9:</b> A Discovery and a Chase	6:41
48	For the first three or four miles...	6:56
49	'Jump in – jump in!'...	6:35
50	<b>Chapter 10:</b> Clearing Up All Doubts...	6:21
51	'Come in,' said a man's voice...	6:34
52	He was yet on his way to the White Hart...	5:06
53	'We want to know –' said Mr. Wardle...	6:29
54	'My dear Sir,' said the little man...	4:00
55	'Well, my dear Sir, well,'...	4:32
56	<b>Chapter 11:</b> Involving Another Journey	6:12
57	It was a more difficult task to take leave...	7:03
58	He tapped at the cottage door...	6:27
59	<b>A Madman's Manuscript</b>	7:13
60	In one thing I was deceived with all my cunning...	7:23

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61	She died next day...	4:50
62	I saw the sudden change...	4:46
63	At the end of the manuscript was written...	7:25
64	<b>Chapter 12:</b> Descriptive of a Very Important Proceeding	7:23
65	Mr Pickwick was struck motionless and speechless...	6:55
66	<b>Chapter 13:</b> Some Account of Eatanswill	5:08
67	It was late in the evening...	6:08
68	Here the little man indulged in a convulsion of mirth...	5:49
69	Mrs Pott received Mr Pickwick's paternal grasp...	4:50
70	The noise and bustle which ushered...	6:39
71	The stable-yard exhibited unequivocal symptoms...	6:12
72	'There's Winkle,' said Mr. Tupman...	4:22
73	Then Horatio Fizkin, Esquire, of Fizkin Lodge...	5:13
74	<b>Chapter 14:</b> Comprising a Brief Description	3:39
75	Here it was that Mr Tupman and Mr Snodgrass...	4:28
76	It's a queer name; but he used to call it <i>The Bagman's Story</i> ...	6:22
77	In less than five minutes' time...	6:04
78	It was a good large room with big closets...	6:12
79	I have been a great favourite among the women in my time...	5:52
80	Morning aroused Tom from the lethargic slumber...	7:10

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81	Gentlemen, I have heard my uncle say...	3:06
82	<b>Chapter 15:</b> In Which Is Given a Faithful Portraiture...	7:26
83	Mr Pickwick took up his hat, and repaired to the Peacock...	7:44
84	The morning came...	5:55
85	Very few people but those who have tried it...	6:22
86	As the enthusiasm in Count Smorltork's favour ran very high...	4:23
87	Mr Pickwick's knife and fork fell from his hand...	3:44
88	<b>Chapter 16:</b> Too Full of Adventure to be Briefly Described	6:46
89	The coach rattled through the well-paved streets...	6:34
90	'And what sort of a place have you got?'...	7:05
91	'What had better be done, then?'...	6:35
92	Having settled these preliminaries...	6:13
93	Like all Mr Pickwick's determinations...	6:50
94	An hour and a half elapsed...	4:44
95	<b>Chapter 17:</b> Showing That an Attack of Rheumatism...	1:54
96	<b>The Parish Clerk: A Tale of True Love</b>	5:58
97	A prettier foot, a gayer heart...	6:25
98	The circumstance which directed his thoughts...	6:50
99	<b>Chapter 18:</b> Briefly Illustrative of Two Points...	6:43
100	There appears nothing very tremendous...	6:13

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101	So, as the hysterics were still hovering about...	6:17
102	Mr Pickwick would in all probability...	6:13
103	<b>Chapter 19: A Pleasant Day With an Unpleasant Termination</b>	6:29
104	'Stop, Sam,' said Mr Pickwick...	7:12
105	Mr Tupman's process...	6:41
106	'This is delightful – thoroughly delightful!'...	6:50
107	'Who are you, you rascal?'...	5:35
108	<b>Chapter 20: Showing How Dodson and Fogg Were Men of Business...</b>	7:16
109	'Nice men these here, Sir,'...	6:05
110	'Here is the entry,'...	6:35
111	At first the evolutions of the stout man...	7:40
112	'Well, what do you think of what your father says, Sam?'	6:05
113	The puffy-faced young man rose...	5:06
114	<b>Chapter 21: In Which the Old Man...</b>	6:52
115	I knew another man...	7:11
116	<b>The Old Man's Tale About the Queer Client</b>	5:28
117	Winter came, and with it weeks of cold and heavy rain...	7:08
118	Although for many weeks after this...	7:06
119	The tale told itself at once...	7:19
120	The implacable animosity of Heyling...	6:50

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121	<b>Chapter 22:</b> Mr Pickwick Journeys to Ipswich...	6:33
122	'I am happy in the prospect of your company, Sir,'...	6:52
123	With such conversation...	6:38
124	Mr Pickwick congratulated the fortunate owner...	6:35
125	The bedsteads stood one on each side of the door...	6:18
126	Now, although Mr Pickwick was not actuated by any definite object...	6:09
127	<b>Chapter 23:</b> In Which Mr Samuel Weller...	7:29
128	In the contemplative mood which these words had awakened...	6:33
129	Sam eyed his companion for a few seconds...	6:27
130	<b>Chapter 24:</b> Wherein Mr Peter Magnus...	5:31
131	Mr Pickwick had taken a few strides...	6:25
132	We do not mean to assert...	5:39
133	'Muzzle!' said the magistrate.	7:03
134	While these resolute and determined preparations...	7:17
135	The shopkeepers of the town...	5:45
136	<b>Chapter 25:</b> Showing, Among a Variety of Pleasant Matters...	6:56
137	'Grummer,' said Mr Nupkins...	6:26
138	Mr Pickwick had a great deal more to say...	5:56
139	As the narrative proceeded...	7:29
140	When Mrs Nupkins dried up her tears...	6:31



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141	'Well, here's a game!' cried Sam.	7:08
142	When Mr Pickwick arrived at this point...	5:18
143	<b>Chapter 26:</b> Which Contains a Brief Account...	5:46
144	'Hold your noise – do – you naughty creetur!'...	5:09
145	Sam understood all this, of course...	4:08
146	<b>Chapter 27:</b> Samuel Weller Makes a Pilgrimage...	7:03
147	The appearance of the red-nosed man...	7:44
148	'They're always a-doin' some gammon of that sort, Sammy,'...	7:54
149	<b>Chapter 28:</b> A Good-Humoured Christmas Chapter...	7:20
150	And now the bugle plays a lively air as the coach rattles...	7:39
151	Meanwhile, Mr Pickwick and his friends...	6:40
152	A happy party they were...	7:33
153	'Mr Miller,' said Mr Pickwick to his old acquaintance...	5:43
154	If anything could have added to the interest...	5:15
155	'I'm a-going to tell you,' replied Mr Weller...	4:55
156	Now, the screaming had subsided...	3:05
157	<b>A Christmas Carol</b>	5:19
158	<b>Chapter 29:</b> The Story of the Goblins...	6:37
159	'It was the echoes,' said Gabriel Grub...	7:19
160	At last the game reached to a most exciting pitch...	6:49

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161	At these words, the cloud was dispelled...	7:16
162	<b>Chapter 30:</b> How the Pickwickians Made and Cultivated...	7:42
163	The arrival of the two new visitors...	8:02
164	While Mr Pickwick was delivering himself...	5:30
165	The clay upon so much of Mr Pickwick's coat....	5:30
166	<b>Chapter 31:</b> Which Is All About the Law...	5:13
167	Here Mr Jackson cast his eye on the parchment...	4:54
168	Mr Pickwick slept little that night...	5:16
169	The relation of this affecting incident...	7:38
170	It was an uncarpeted room...	6:42
171	These tokens of the Serjeant's presentiments...	6:55
172	<b>Chapter 32:</b> Describes, Far More Fully...	5:54
173	'Oh, it isn't any inconvenience,' replied the little woman...	6:17
174	Mr Snodgrass, who entered last...	7:43
175	After supper, another jug of punch...	6:35
176	At this point the remainder of the guests interposed...	6:27
177	<b>Chapter 33:</b> Mr Weller the Elder...	7:05
178	The brandy-and-water luke...	5:53
179	Mr Weller resumed his pipe with critical solemnity...	6:47
180	As the elder Mr Weller entertained...	5:59

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181	There is little doubt that Mr Weller...	7:54
182	Any further observations...	5:39
183	<b>Chapter 34: Is Wholly Devoted To a Full and Faithful Report...</b>	6:09
184	Mr Justice Stareleigh...	7:11
185	The ushers again called silence....	7:02
186	Serjeant Buzfuz, who had proceeded...	5:19
187	A visible impression was produced...	6:46
188	Meanwhile Mrs Cluppins...	6:40
189	'Now, Mr Winkle,' said Mr Skimpin...	7:26
190	Now, if the unfortunate Mr. Phunky...	7:11
191	Hereupon there was a general laugh...	5:05
192	'I have no objection to admit, my Lord,'...	4:47
193	<b>Chapter 35: In Which Mr Pickwick Thinks...</b>	5:43
194	The gentleman with the whiskers hummed a tune...	7:05
195	Nothing worthy of special mention occurred...	7:33
196	At the appointed hour, Mr Pickwick and his friends...	6:12
197	Bath being full...	6:28
198	At this anecdote his Lordship laughed very heartily...	5:15
199	<b>Chapter 36: The Chief Features of Which Will be Found...</b>	4:58
200	<b>The True Legend of Prince Bladud</b>	7:21

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201	It is an old prerogative of kings...	7:56
202	Just as the clock struck three...	7:26
203	<b>Chapter 37:</b> Honourably Accounts for Mr Weller's Absence...	7:58
204	Crossing the greengrocer's shop....	7:14
205	The man in blue being a light-haired...	7:35
206	Mr Whiffers's address was responded to...	7:29
207	<b>Chapter 38:</b> How Mr Winkle...	6:19
208	'Well!' said Mr Winkle...	6:22
209	'My dear friend,' said Mr Ben Allen...	6:22
210	The mirth of Mr Bob Sawyer was rapidly ripening into the furious...	5:59
211	About half-past twelve o'clock...	6:56
212	<b>Chapter 39:</b> Mr Samuel Weller, Being Intrusted...	7:25
213	Sam continued to sit on the large stone...	6:18
214	Sam ruminated for a few moments...	5:57
215	Flattering as these professions of good feeling were...	4:22
216	After an absence of five or ten minutes...	4:53
217	While these things were going on...	6:43
218	<b>Chapter 40:</b> Introduces Mr Pickwick...	6:49
219	But this Sam flatly and positively...	6:53
220	'Aha, my dear sir,' said the little man...	6:13

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221	This was a room of specially dirty appearance...	5:07
222	The hackney-coach jolted along Fleet Street...	4:31
223	<b>Chapter 41:</b> What Befell Mr Pickwick...	7:37
224	In the galleries themselves...	7:21
225	As Sam concluded...	6:48
226	This figure was the first to perceive...	6:18
227	Unwilling to hazard another quarrel...	4:07
228	<b>Chapter 42:</b> Illustrative, Like the Preceding One...	5:50
229	After breakfasting in a small closet...	6:40
230	Subsequent occurrences confirmed...	5:53
231	The matter was soon arranged, as the turnkey had foretold...	6:14
232	Turning these things in his mind...	6:22
233	Jingle delivered this singular summary of his prospects in life...	5:48
234	<b>Chapter 43:</b> Showing How Mr Samuel Weller...	5:13
235	Now, the place where this discourse occurred...	5:21
236	'I remember, gentlemen,' said Mr Pell...	6:33
237	'Well, now,' said Sam...	6:37
238	Meanwhile, Sam, having been formally introduced...	5:19
239	By the time the officer arrived...	3:55
240	<b>Chapter 44:</b> Treats of Divers Little Matters...	4:55

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241	'One night he was took very ill...'	3:59
242	The above short dialogue took place as Mr Weller...	6:33
243	'After that, we went into Chancery...'	6:43
244	There was something so very abrupt and unsettled...	5:51
245	He had sat ruminating about the matter for some time...	6:22
246	<b>Chapter 45:</b> Descriptive of an Affecting Interview...	7:16
247	Here the old gentleman shook his head from side to side...	6:27
248	After Mrs Weller and the red-nosed gentleman...	6:30
249	During the delivery of the oration...	6:42
250	During the whole of this time...	7:35
251	The area formed by the wall in that part of the Fleet...	6:21
252	<b>Chapter 46:</b> Records a Touching Act...	5:48
253	The above examination of a child of tender years...	6:32
254	However, there was no help for it...	6:56
255	The waiter was at once despatched...	5:25
256	<b>Chapter 47:</b> Is Chiefly Devoted to Matters...	6:03
257	Punctually at the appointed hour next morning...	5:12
258	Mr Pickwick, whose face had been undergoing...	5:44
259	As Sam Weller spoke, he threw the door open...	6:01
260	Mr Pickwick's nature was a good deal worked upon...	6:12

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261	<b>Chapter 48:</b> Relates How Mr Pickwick...	5:27
262	While these observations were being exchanged...	5:58
263	'Stop a moment, ma'am,' said Bob Sawyer...	6:31
264	This reminded Mr Bob Sawyer...	6:47
265	At length, when this determination had been announced...	6:19
266	<b>Chapter 49:</b> Containing the Story...	6:31
267	I don't quite recollect how many tumblers of whiskey-toddy...	6:27
268	There might be a dozen of them...	6:01
269	As the guard spoke, there all at once appeared...	6:03
270	At present, however, his thoughts were occupied...	6:00
271	Now, my uncle was always remarkable for great boldness...	6:22
272	'You will never leave me,' murmured the young lady.	6:03
273	<b>Chapter 50:</b> How Mr Pickwick Sped...	6:23
274	Mr Pickwick might very probably have reasoned himself...	6:08
275	During this short interchange of sentiments...	6:16
276	The delicate nature of this commission...	6:20
277	Deprived of the young lady's society...	5:27
278	'Did you speak, Sir?' inquired Mr Winkle...	5:34
279	<b>Chapter 51:</b> In Which Mr Pickwick Encounters...	6:05
280	Expatiating upon this learned and remarkable theory...	6:30

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281	'And how are matters going on in Eatanswill?' inquired Mr Pickwick...	5:26
282	<b>Hole-And-Corner Buffery</b>	5:29
283	This gentleman was shown into the room...	6:30
284	'The ribaldry of this miserable man is despicably disgusting,' said Pott...	6:25
285	<b>Chapter 52: Involving a Serious Change...</b>	7:06
286	Mr Weller drew the household beauty closer to him...	6:23
287	While the old gentleman was thus engaged...	7:44
288	'Very kind o' the old lady to think o' me,' said Sam...	7:31
289	<b>Chapter 53: Comprising the Final Exit...</b>	7:42
290	'Foolish fellow,' said Mr Pickwick...	7:04
291	It was brief enough on Mr Jingle's part.	6:38
292	There was a coolness about all this...	5:19
293	'If there's law in England, sir,' said Dodson...	3:10
294	<b>Chapter 54: Containing Some Particulars...</b>	5:56
295	Having closed the room door...	7:10
296	Thus expressing himself, the little gentleman poked his snuff-box...	6:23
297	The fat boy, gradually recovering his former position...	6:30
298	At this point of the reconciliation...	4:55
299	'Dear me!' said Mr. Pickwick...	6:18
300	<b>Chapter 55: Mr Solomon Pell...</b>	6:37



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301	The messenger fortunately found Mr Solomon Pell in court...	6:20
302	'What is the business upon which – um?'	6:00
303	'Hold hard there,' interposed the mottled-faced gentleman...	7:12
304	Wilkins Flasher, Esquire, now condescended...	5:08
305	<b>Chapter 56:</b> An Important Conference...	6:28
306	This here money,' said Sam...	6:47
307	'You give me no great encouragement to conclude what I have to say,' ...	5:18
308	At the close of this declaration...	5:57
309	Arabella's tears flowed fast...	5:02
310	<b>Chapter 57:</b> In Which the Pickwick Club...	5:50
311	There were few preparatory arrangements...	6:29
312	Let us leave our old friend in one of those moments of unmixed happiness...	6:10

**Total time: 32:13:15**

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# Charles Dickens

(1812–1870)

## The Pickwick Papers

*'The work will be no joke, but the emolument is too tempting to resist'*

– Dickens to his fiancée on the *Pickwick* proposal.

*The Pickwick Papers* actually began life as a project to promote the humorous illustrations of Robert Seymour, who was enjoying success in the 1830s as a depicter of the cockney sportsman ineptly indulging in the country pursuits of hunting, shooting, and fishing. However, the publishers Chapman and Hall felt that a text was needed to link the illustrations, and turned their attention to a rising 24-year-old in the field of journalism who wrote under the name of 'Boz' and who had been making his name as a humorous observer of the habits and quirks of London life in a series of articles for *The Morning Chronicle* and other papers. These were eventually collected together and published as *Sketches by*

*Boz*. 'Boz' was the pen-name of Charles Dickens.

1836 was an important year in young Dickens's already busy life. He accepted the commission from Chapman and Hall to provide a text for Seymour's illustrations, using it as an opportunity to write his first novel; then, with the security of an income, he married his fiancée, Catherine Hogarth, on 2 April, between writing the first and second instalments of *The Pickwick Papers*.

From the first it seems Dickens intended to make the project his own:

*I objected on consideration that although born and partly bred in the country I was no great sportsman...*

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*that the idea was not novel, and had already been much used and that it would be infinitely better for the plates to arise naturally out of the text; and that I would like to take my own way with a freer range of English scenes and people, and was afraid I should ultimately do so in any case, whatever course I might prescribe to myself at starting.*

Dickens produced the first two chapters and then submitted them to Seymour, in an attempt to mould the established artist to his own scheme of things, thereby cheekily reversing the agreed artistic process. Meeting with Seymour to discuss some minor alterations to the first two plates, and leaving him apparently satisfied with his suggestions, Dickens was horrified to learn that the artist had committed suicide two days later. This tragic circumstance meant that the project, planned to appear in 19 monthly parts and which was well on the way towards the publication of its first instalment, would have to be completely re-thought. Dickens's text would now

dominate, and though the first instalment would contain Seymour's two completed plates, a new illustrator would have to be found for the remainder of the series. After a failed commission with a Mr Buss, a young comic artist called Hablot Knight Browne was contracted, a man whom Dickens found to be in perfect sympathy with his own comic spirit. Browne signed his works as 'Phiz', and thereafter 'Boz' and 'Phiz' became inseparably linked in the public's mind. Phiz went on to illustrate 10 of Dickens's subsequent novels.

Dickens knew he could not confine himself exclusively to writing about the exploits of Cockney sportsmen, or even a 'club', and apart from the character of Winkle, the naïve city dweller who pretends he has a facility for all things sporting, Dickens does not explore the theme further.

Likewise the restrictive formula set out in Chapter One, that all the adventures should be relayed back to the Pickwick Club in London by written report and then re-told by an editor, is soon dropped after the early chapters. This freed Dickens to write without any restrictions. What he

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in fact created is a rambling, picaresque novel: a tribute to the literary heroes of his childhood, Fielding and Smollett, who first evolved this kind of novel, based upon a journey or series of excursions allowing them to introduce random characters and situations as their genius suggested. These excursions link Dickens's loosely constructed narrative, assisted by the copious amounts of drinking and eating regularly indulged in at every journey's end. A lot of the book's charm is to be found in the nostalgic descriptions of travelling by coach or gig, soon to fall victim, by 1836, to the advance of the railway.

In place of the 'club', the book focuses on the benign Mr Pickwick alone, founder of the club and hailed by its members as a man of significant intellect and genius. But the joke is that Mr Pickwick is just an ordinary man with nothing exceptional about him but his old-fashioned tights and gaiters, and who is elevated to a higher plane by his friends, Snodgrass, Tupman and Winkle, who call him 'Immortal', and who don't themselves even reach *his* modest intellectual heights. However, Dickens develops Mr Pickwick from an

unworldly and naïve figure into a true philanthropist who shows understanding and sympathy, even magnanimity, towards the likes of Jingle who took advantage of his good nature, and Mrs Bardell, whose legal action for breach of promise against him led to Pickwick's humiliation in the debtors prison.

*The Pickwick Papers* became an advertisement for Mr Charles Dickens, a young author displaying his wares to the public and showing promise of greater things to come. In fact, we can feel the young author's style maturing as the book proceeds, to the extent that by the time he puts Mr Pickwick in the Fleet prison for debt, he is making a social and political comment, drawn from his own bitter remembrances as a child of his father's imprisonment for debt in the Marshalsea prison. His descriptions of life inside are as moving and finely written as passages in his later novels. This episode anticipates Dickens's inclination for reform, so much a part of his later writings. He also criticises the law, exposing the incompetence of country magistrates and the corruption of lawyers such as Dodson and Fogg. He

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would expand his concerns about the law in *Bleak House*, and the prison system in *Little Dorrit*.

Dickens also incorporates into *The Pickwick Papers* the traditional element of travellers tales, which are randomly interspersed into the narrative, giving him the opportunity once again to show his skills and versatility of style. The pathos of *The Stroller's Tale* anticipates the death-bed scenes in *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Dombey and Son*; whilst *The Story of the Goblins who Stole the Sexton* has more than a hint of *A Christmas Carol* about it. Other interpolations reflect Dickens's taste for sentiment and morbidity.

But it is the comedy we relish the most, and Dickens lays down in this, his first novel, the comic trends we now associate him with. *The Pickwick Papers* abounds in portraits of lower middle-class and working-class characters: lawyers and their clerks, county magistrates, medical students, inn-keepers, waiters, chambermaids, coachmen, cabmen and more, their foibles and follies exposed with rich humour and understanding. Rising in their midst is one of Dickens's

greatest comics creations: Mr Samuel Weller, a boot-black who becomes Mr Pickwick's manservant and whose personality comes to dominate the book, and change its nature. His cockney verve and wit give comic energy to the narrative and his exchanges with his father Tony are classic. Not one to suffer fools, Sam speaks his mind openly with honest perception. His devoted care and attention for his unworldly master is truly touching, and the heart of the book is the developing mutual dependency of master and man, revealed in the comic interplay of their contrasting natures.

Soon after publication, Sam's sayings were extracted from the book and circulated as 'Wellerisms' throughout the English-speaking world, just a part of the craze that grew up around *The Pickwick Papers*, leading to pirated editions and theatrical adaptations. The introduction of Sam Weller sealed the success of *The Pickwick Papers*; the initial print run had been only 400, but by the last instalment it had increased to 40,000. So great was the 'Pickwick' craze, that a contemporary remarked it had 'secured far more

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attention than was given to the ordinary politics of the day.' There were 'Pickwick' cigars, hats and coats, and 'Pickwick' was the buzz-word of 1836.

Early reviewers were amazed by the rapid success of young Boz's first novel. The *Quarterly Review* suggested that he could not keep up this energetic comic style, and though he had 'risen like a rocket', he would 'come down like the stick.' While *The London and Westminster Review* boldly stated:

*We purpose... to investigate the foundation of a popularity extraordinary on account of its sudden growth, its vast extent and the recognition which it has received from persons of the most refined taste, as well as for the great mass of the reading public.*

But investigation or explanation was unnecessary, for Dickens was no passing phenomenon. With the publication of *The Pickwick Papers*, Dickens had arrived to stay.

**Notes by David Timson**



**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.

### Credits

Recorded at Motivation Sound Studios, London

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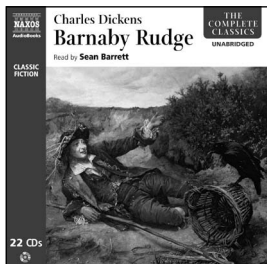
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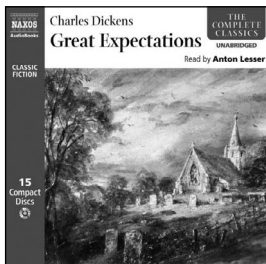
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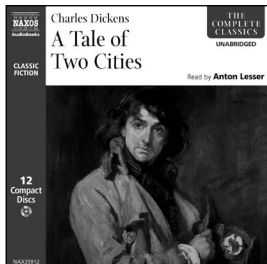
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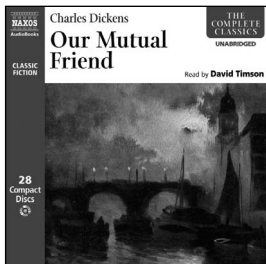
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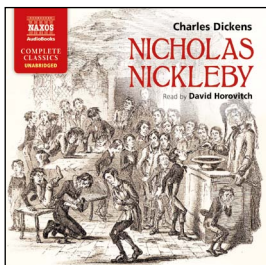
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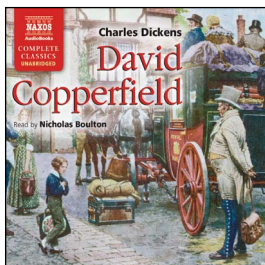
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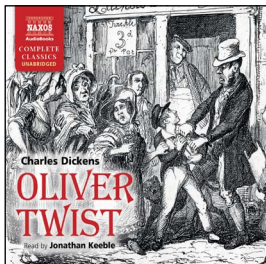
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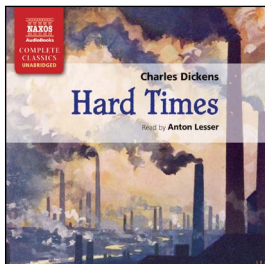
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**Charles Dickens**

# The Pickwick Papers

Read by **David Timson**

In *The Pickwick Papers*, his first novel, Dickens displays the talents and skills that became his trademark; observational humour, pathos and social comment abound as we follow Mr Pickwick and Sam Weller, his sharp-tongued cockney servant, travelling around England with his friends in search of adventure and knowledge. Brilliantly comic scenes at the Eatanswill election, and the trial of Mrs Bardell vs Pickwick contrast with the horrors of the debtors prison. It was Thackeray who described the novel as 'that great contemporary history', and it presents a nostalgic view of England just before the coming of the railway.



**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.

'I can't think of any better way to spend a winter evening than with Naxos AudioBooks' *The Pickwick Papers*, a complete recording read by the wonderful David Timson, who brings every character to sparkling or lugubrious life. He makes me laugh aloud – Dickens would be proud of him' – Claire Tomalin

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