

R.D. Dickens Ware Scenes

The largest and by far the most prevalent of the Dickens series is Dickens Ware "A". This impressive series was first introduced in 1908; it was augmented for the celebration of the centenary of Dickens's birth in 1912. The range was increased in 1917; by 1930 production had all but stopped. In 1931 a limited series was reintroduced on a different colour scheme. By 1951 production had reduced to a trickle of rack plates, chop dishes, mugs and bonbon dishes.

The Dickens Ware "A" series consists of 31 characters depicted on four styles of background; A Victorian streetscape (with several variations, but all of the same school); A Victorian parlor or front room (again, several variations, but all of the same school); A courtroom (Buzfuz & Mrs Bardell); and Sydney Carton who appears on the stairs of the guillotine with an expectant crowd below.

This page is absolutely chockers with information regarding this fascinating series; from mechanisms for dating items through to pictures of the 31 characters in up to three colour-ways. Follow the read more tab and I hope you enjoy this page as much as I have creating it -.....

Royal Doulton Dickens Ware "A"

The Dickens Ware "A" series was designed by C.J. Noke with the assistance of William Grace, Walter Nunn, Leonard Langley and Harry Tittensor. The Charles Noke designed scenes often bear a facsimile of his signature which can cause them to sell for a premium. Dating Dickens Ware

Often the date is impressed into the base, this is especially so for items where the base is a large flat expanse. These are the techniques I employ to determine the production era when an item is not dated. In the absence of an impressed date code the pattern number is a useful indication to the production era. There are 8 pattern numbers assigned to Dickens Ware:-

D.2973 was introduced in 1908 D.3020 ” ” 1908

D.4030 ” ” 1918

D.4069 ” ” 1918

D.5175 ” ” 1931

D.5862 ” ” 1937

D.6327 ” ” 1951

There is only one Bone China pattern number

E.8288 ” ” 1913

If the item does not have a pattern number there is no need to disappear as the production era can be ascertained by the variation in the colour-way and minor variations in the actual Dickens Ware maker's mark. Most examples of this series are marked with the special Dickens Ware back stamp; the only time this mark is missing is when the item base is too small to fit the mark. Shown below are three examples of this mark, the first mark is taken from a bulb bowl with the number D.2973 (dates from 1908). This next mark comes off a Vase with the number D.5175. You will note it varies slightly from the first mark. This pattern number was introduced in 1931 so this mark dates from this time and I doubt if it was used after 1951.

The final mark (shown below) comes off a Mug with the pattern number D.6327. It also varies slightly from the other marks. This pattern number was introduced in 1951.

The colour-way is a useful tool for determining an item's production era. I have identified 3 distinct colour-ways. The first colour-way, which was in use during the 1908 to circa 1931 period, the second was in use from circa 1931 to 1951 and the third was in use from 1951 until the end of production which was in the late 1950's. I have decided to list the 31 different characters that Doulton depicted by the novel in which they appear. My aim is to have as many of the colourways as possible.

The centenary of Charles Dickens birth was in 1912. In celebration of this occasion Royal Doulton, published the booklet ”A Tribute In Pottery To The Genius Of Charles Dickens". This booklet covers 22 of the 31 characters that were depicted by Royal Doulton in the Dickens Ware series. I have included 22 quotes from this booklet. For me they are an insight into the times and the thoughts of the people who conceived Dickens Ware.

Pickwick Papers

Charles Dickens wrote his first novel when he was in his mid twenties. "The Pickwick Papers" was first published in a serial format, between April 1836 and November 1837, as "The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club". The novel is a loose collection of stories of various characters based around the Pickwick club. The eight characters depicted are:-

Mr Pickwick

"Pickwick the immortal, the ever-young - and this despite his bald head and spectacles: despite his amplitude of waistcoat, his shorts and gaiters. Brimful of good nature is Mr Pickwick: a little stubborn at times, aye, intensely stubborn; yet with a romantic heart and a disposition positively overflowing with the milk of human kindness." 1908 to 1931 era colour-way 1931 to 1951 era colour-way 1951 to late 1950's era colour-way Tony Weller

"Weller the elder, the typical coachman of a century ago. Stern mistruster of 'vidders'; staunch believer in the virtue and power of a 'halib'; ruminative philosopher and Nemesis to the rum-soaked Stiggins."

1908 to 1931 era colour-way 1931 to 1951 era colour-way 1951 to late 50's era colour-way Sam Weller "Sam Weller, faithfulest of retainers. Full of quaint wisdom and epigram of Cockaigne. Calm amid the wildest tumult; undismayed facing the most extravagant odds; imperturbable when patronised by the most dignified of gentleman's gentleman." 1908 to 1931 era colour-way 1931 to 1951 era colour-way 1951 to late 1959's era colour-way Fat Boy "The Fat Boy still slumbers, despite the loudly renewed calls of Jolly Old Wardle: slumbers placidly and stolidly and in any position. The magic call of eatables or drinkables alone dispels the spirit of somnolency from his rotund form." 1908 to 1931 era colour-way 1931 to 1951 era colour-way Alfred Jingle "Alfred Jingle, Esquire, the seedy, the impudent, the unabashed: the philosophic citizen of the world, who is all things to all men and ever-ready, even over-ready, to help himself." 1908 to 1931 era colour-way 1931 to 1951 era colour-way Serjeant Buzfuz "Sergeant Buzfuz, the forensic bully, cozening or brow-beating intelligent juries as occasion serves: the legalised champion of broken-hearted widows: adored of solicitors, and constant recipient of highly-marked briefs." 1908 to 1931 era colour-way Mrs Bardel "Mrs. Bardell, classic among widows, with semi-bashful thoughts of re-marriage and a rise in the social scale, but with no premonition of 'The Fleet.'" 1908 to 1931 era colour-way 1908 to 1931 era colour-way have included the above picture as it is a scarce variation of the scene, normally Mrs Bardell appears in a courtroom Mr Dodson 1908 to 1931 era colour-way Martin Chuzzlewit

The Dickens novel Martin Chuzzlewit was first published as a serial during 1833 and 1834, it was originally called "The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit";

Mark Tapley "Mark Tapley, eccentric philosopher and matter-of-fact genius, sturdily bearing with him, even in his new-world wanderings, the scent of the English hedgerow and the breath of the Blue Dragon. Likewise a fixed determination to be jolly in any and every circumstance, or die."

There are two versions of Mark Tapley, in one he is holding his cane in his hand in the other it is under his arm. 1908 to 1931 era colour-way Scene from tray date coded December 1937 1931 to 1952 era colour-way This is the second version of Mark Tapley, it is the scarcer of the two versions. 1908 to 1931 era colour-way Pecksniff Pecksniff, architect and hypocrite, with his sanctimonious manner and his sordid soul: with his treble-sized moral halo, and his unbounded relish for grovelling before the golden calf." Tom Pinch 1908 to 1931 era colour-way 1931 to 1951 era colour-way Sairey Gamp "Mrs Gamp, nurse and midwife: Sairey of the moist eye turned upwards in moments of emotion: with her stern partialities regarding diet and her stringent rules concerning drink: with her tender solicitude for patients 'en posse', and her spiritual communings with the invisible 'Mrs Harris.'"

1908 to 1931 era colour-way 1931 to 1951 era colour-way David Copperfield

Was published in 1850, it is Dickens first novel to be written in the first person and was written from the point of view of David Copperfield. This novel is autobiographical and was supposed to have been Dickens favorite work.

Uriah Heep "Uriah Heep, red-hearted 'Ury': distilling the gospel of 'unbleness' at every pore, and fawning on hands that later shall feel his teeth." 1908 to 1931 era colour-way Barkis "Barkis, the carrier, stolid of feature as of mind: Barkis, the slow and sure, and 'a it near,' who achieved immortality by simply announcing the fact of his being 'willin'." 1908 to 1931 era colour-way 1931 to 1951 era colour-way Old Peggotty "Dan'l Peggotty, the sturdy Yarmouth boatman; prematurely aged and broken-hearted by the dishonour and flight of Little Em'ly, yet with a fine, simple faith in her ultimate recovery and redemption." 1908 to 1931 era colour-way 1931 to 1951 era colour-way Mr Micawber "Micawber, the ever hopeful, the ever-confident, the ever-expectant of something in the turning-up line; with his portentous gentility and his infinite capacity for writing letters."

1908 to 1931 era colour-way 1931 to 1951 era colour-way 1951 to late 1950's Oliver Twist

Oliver Twist was published serially between 1837 and 1838. This is the most famous of Dickens novels; there have been countless films, plays and musicals made from this story.

Artful Dogger "Master John Dawkins, the Artful Dodger: prince of prigs and downiest of pick-pockets, with his snub-nose, his dirty face, and his loftily expressed contempt for 'beaks' and others set in authority over him." 1908 to 1931 era colour-way 1931 to 1951 era colour-way date coded July 1937 Fagin "Fagin, the sordid, the vile. The trainer of youthful thieves, the crafty receiver of stolen property: behind whom hovers the black shadow of the gallows." 1908 to 1931 era colour-way 1931 to 1951 era colour-way Bill Sykes "Bill Sikes, robber and housebreaker - he who has given a name to the burglar for all time. Fuffian and murderer, devoid of any one redeeming quality, yet loved by --- a woman, and a dog!" 1908 to 1931 era colour-way 1931 to 1951 era colour-way
Nicholas Nickleby

Nocholas Nickleby was written by Dickens around July 1838 and was first published in a serial format during 1838 and 1839. Mr Squeers "Squeers, the illiterate schoolmaster: the brutal, bullying, ruffianly Squeers, with his solitary eye, his villainous expression, and his 'fatherly' love for his unfortunate pupils at Dotheboys Hall, Yorkshire." 1908 to 1931 era colour-way 1931 to 1951 era colour-way Newman Noggs

Mr Mantaliniplate date coded November 1916 1908 to 1931 era colour-way Dombey and Son

Dombey and Son was first published serially between October 1846 & April 1848, it was originally called “Dealings with the Firm Dombey & Sons”.Mr Toots Cap'n Cuttle "Cap'n. Cuttle, mariner, simple of mind and rubicund of face, with a religious dread of terrible Mrs. MacStinger, and a profound veneration for the learning and genius of one, Sol. Gills. 'When found, make a note of.'" 1908 to 1951 era colour-way 1931 to 1951 era colour-way
Bleak House

Bleak House was Dickens ninth novel; it was published in 20 monthly installments between March 1852 and September 1853.

Poor Jo "Poor Jo, the crossing sweeper, for ever moving on: sad victim of a social misarrangement which carefully tends the gentle hearthen abroad beneath a tropic sky, and coldly leaves a nursling of its own to squalid degradation and hopeless misery." 1908 to 1931 era colour-way 1931 to 1951 era colour-way Mr Chadband

1908 to 1931 era colour-way

Old Curiosity Shop

The Old Curiosity Shop was published serially during 1840 and 1841.

Dick Swiveller "Dick Swiveller, thrice glorious Dick: with his financial troubles, his amatory weaknesses, and his inability to refrain from looking upon the wine when it is red - or rosy - within the cup." 1908 to 1931 era colour-way

1931 to 1951 era colour-way

Little Nell"Nell, little Nell, simple, courageous dream-child; crossing unsullied the mud-bespattered byways of darksome vagrancy."

1908 to 1931 era colour-way

1931 to 1951 era colour-way The Chimes

The Chimes is a short novel first published 1844. It is the second of the five Christmas books that Dickens penned, it came out a year after “A Christmas Carol”.

Trotty Veck"Trotty Veck, the quaint little elderly ticket-porter: devout believer in the everlasting wisdom of The Chimes,

and filled with a devout faith and reverence for his betters."

1908 to 1931 era colour-way 1932 to 1951 era colour-way (dated coded January 1931)

Barnaby Rudge Barnaby was published serially in weekly installments from Feb 1841 - Nov 1841. It was Dickens fifth novel and the first of the two historical novels that he penned. Barnaby Rudge "Poor Barnaby Rudge! surely the strangest and most distraught hero that ever figured in story. And Grip, the raven, joyous comrade of his mad adventures, with his 'Polly, put the kettle on,' and 'I'm a devil, I'm a devil!'"

1908 to 1931 era colour-way

1931 to 1951 era colour-way The Tale of Two Cities Dickens' twelfth novel and his second historical novel; it was first published in the weekly journal, "All the Year Round", between April 1859 - November 1859. I just love the beginning of this novel; "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times". Sydney Carton "Stand forth, Sidney Carton! cowardly Drunkard and loose-liver, redeemed by thine honest love for a pure girl and in such redemption proving that 'greater love hath no man than this, that he should lay down his life for a friend.'" 1908 to 1931 era colour-way The Oval Carver that this scene was taken from was date coded September 1931