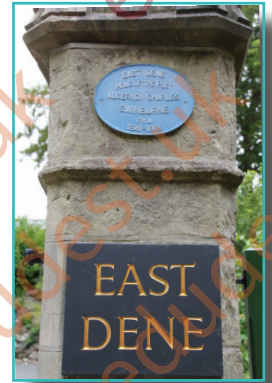




Home of Algernon Charles Swinburne

Swinburne grew up at East Dene, a large stone mansion and estate in the village of Bonchurch on the Isle of Wight, which his father bought as a holiday home in 1841. At the age of five, he was baptised in the old church in 1843. He was a poet and novelist and was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature each year from 1903 – 1907 and 1909. Due to being a vibrant, rather rebellious character who enjoyed the excesses of life, his health suffered, and at the age of 42, he was looked after for the rest of his life by his friend Theodore Watts, in Putney, London.



Despite dying in London in 1909, he was later buried in Bonchurch (according to his will) where his grave can be found. Known as an atheist (a person who does not believe in the concept of God), he requested that there was to be no Christian ceremony at his funeral.

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The sea gives her shells to the shingle,
The earth gives her streams to the sea;
They are many, but my gift is single,
My verses, the firstfruits of me.
Let the wind take the green and the grey leaf,
Cast forth without fruit upon air;
Take rose-leaf and vine-leaf and bay-leaf
Blown loose from the hair.

.....

Though the many lights dwindle to one light,
There is help if the heaven has one;
Though the skies be discrowned of the sunlight
And the earth dispossessed of the sun,
They have moonlight and sleep for repayment,
When, refreshed as a bride and set free,
With stars and sea-winds in her raiment,
Night sinks on the sea.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

- ▶ Read the poem again now you're in Bonchurch. The selected verses from the poem could be read out near St Boniface Church.
- ▶ Can you try and write a few lines of your own, using the same rhythmic structure?



A.C. Swinburne – poetry analysis activity

Whilst many of Swinburne's poems are fairly complex to understand, some are quite simple and capture the innocence of children. Look at the following poem:

First Footsteps by Algernon Charles Swinburne

A little way, more soft and sweet
Than fields aflower with May,
A babe's feet, venturing, scarce complete
A little way.

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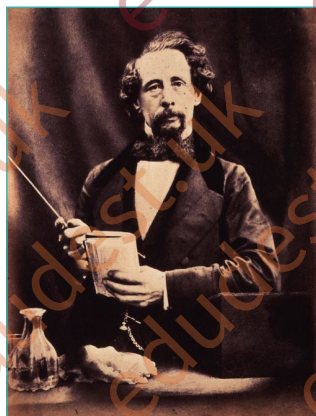
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Glad as the golden Spring to greet
Its first live leaflet's play,
Love, laughing, leads the little feet
A little way.

1. What does Swinburne compare babies' footsteps to?
2. Can you find an example of alliteration?
3. What is the effect of this?
4. What phrases does the poet repeat, and why?

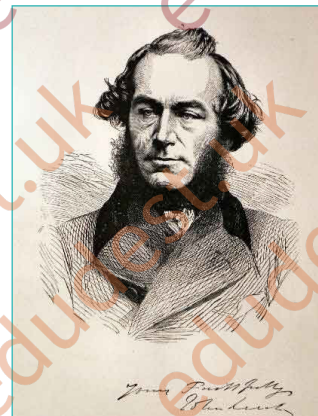


Charles Dickens & John Leech



One of the most famous visitors to Bonchurch was Charles Dickens, who stayed at Winterbourne House during the summer months of 1849, where he wrote chapters twelve to eighteen of *David Copperfield*.

One of his friends, John Leech (an illustrator, right), socialised with Dickens in Bonchurch; these two men were great friends and Leech illustrated some of the scenes in Dickens' novels (more notably *A Christmas Carol*). Examples of Leech's illustrations can be seen below.

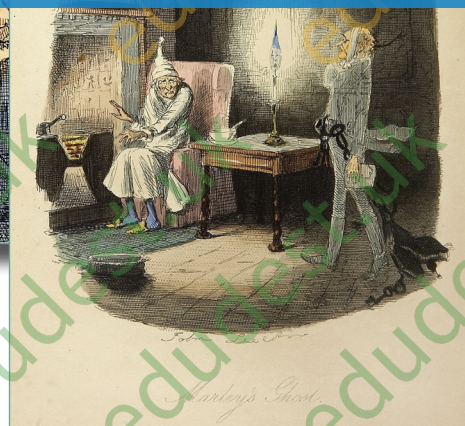
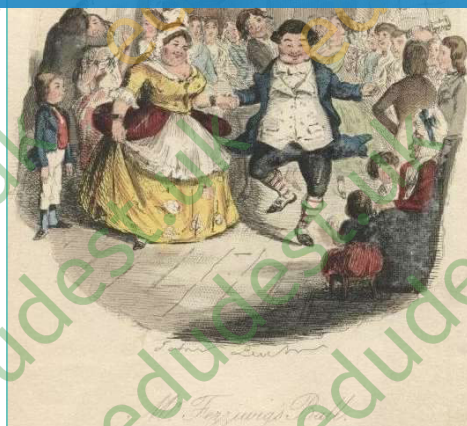


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ART/ENGLISH CROSSOVER ACTIVITY

Victorians would have sketched many things around them as they did not have photography like we do today.

- ▶ Look at how John Leech uses lines to create his images.
- ▶ Whilst in Bonchurch, sit down somewhere and have a go at drawing some of the people/scenes around you in his style. You could draw one of your class mates or some of the other people who you observe on the trail.

Back at school... Read the novel (or sections of the novel) *David Copperfield*. You could then draw some of the characters in the style of John Leech.

Compare these to the drawings created by your class mates and discuss why you may see these characters differently.

Arts, Literary & History Trail - BONCHURCH - KS3



Art / History

Bonchurch is steeped in history and is believed to be one of the oldest settlements on the Isle of Wight.

Old St Boniface Church has a nave and chancel which dates back to the eleventh century and has been a popular place for tourists to visit on their travels. The poet Algernon Charles Swinburne was baptised here and later buried in the newer St Boniface Church up the hill which was consecrated in 1848.

Sketching Bonchurch!

- ▶ Sketch both churches on your walk around Bonchurch. Upon your return to school, you could reproduce one of the images using different media. It may, therefore, be wise to photograph the outside of the buildings.
- ▶ You could also sketch any images which you find interesting inside the church or church grounds (such as stained glass windows, different grave stones etc.).
- ▶ Sketch images which you find inspiring as you walk the trail. As with the churches, you may want to photograph

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Piscina



Headstone in unique local design



Wall painting of Last Supper



Double headed window



Sunday School seat



Tomb for a married couple