

A Christmas Carol Celebration

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In December 1853 *Charles Dickens* chose *A Christmas Carol* for his *first ever public reading*. In Birmingham Town Hall, 2000 people gathered to hear what has now become arguably the most popular Christmas tale from one of Britain's most highly acclaimed writers.

In the year of the 200th anniversary year of Dickens' birth, the University of Birmingham presents original copies of this classic text, *A Christmas Carol*, which approaches its 160th year of publication. The University's Cadbury Research Library is home to two first editions of the book along with a selection rare editions and dramatizations of the story. These join other Christmas books by Charles Dickens in our collections such as *The chimes* (1845) and *The cricket on the hearth* (1846), as well as a complete run of his magazine *Household words* (1850-1859) which included special Christmas numbers, together with celebrated masterpieces such as *David Copperfield* (1849-1850) and *Bleak House* (1852-1853) in their original serial parts.



Frontispiece to *A Christmas Carol*, 1st edition, Chapman & Hall, 1843

The Cadbury Research Library is home to a rich and diverse collection of books and manuscripts for study by University staff and students as well as the public. The archive consists of approximately 120,000 pre-1850 books dating from 1471 and some 3 million manuscripts.

Martin Killeen, Rare Books Librarian at the Cadbury Research library, said: 'The University is honoured to have such a rare set of books by Charles Dickens in its collections; they are particularly valuable as teaching resource.'

Images of the rare and early editions of *A Christmas Carol* from the Cadbury Research Library can be viewed in the [image gallery \(/news/latest/2012/12/christmas-carol-images.aspx\)](#).

Notes to editors

To find out more about the Cadbury Research Library's Special Collections please visit: <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/facilities/cadbury/index.aspx> (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/facilities/cadbury/index.aspx>)

A Christmas Carol will be broadcast on BBC One on Christmas Eve at 18:45

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