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## **Charles Dickens's turkey letter and his role in popularising Christmas traditions**

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# The Guardian

## Charles Dickens's turkey letter and his role in popularising Christmas traditions

**Dr Leon Litvack**, principal editor of The Charles Dickens Letters Project, on a letter forgotten and then rediscovered in the National Railway Museum's archives. Plus, **Toby Wood** on a letter from a Magi

### *Letter*

Sun 22 Dec 2019 18.13 GMT



The letter from Dickens discussed in a recent article is 'an important reminder of Dickens's persistent association with the Christmas season', writes Dr Leon Litvack. Photograph: Bettmann/Bettmann Archive

Your article about a letter from Charles Dickens (Newly found note shows Dickens's last turkey was lost in rail fire, 19 December) says it had been "forgotten" in the National Railway Museum archives and then found "during a reappraisal of the collection". However, this letter has long been familiar to The Charles Dickens Letters Project: it was published nearly 20 years ago, in the 12th volume of Dickens's letters.

Since 2002, the project has been responsible for finding and publishing new letters; about 30 to 40 new missives come to light in any given year, and are now published on our website.

The letter that is the focus of your article is, nevertheless, an important reminder of Dickens's persistent association with the Christmas season, and of how much he did to popularise the traditions that we still enjoy today - including the consumption of turkey.

**Dr Leon Litvack**

*Principal editor, The Charles Dickens Letters Project*

A letter about the failure of Labour leadership from a Magi (Letters, 21 December)?  
Well, it is Christmas.

**Toby Wood**

*Peterborough, Cambridgeshire*

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Topics

- Charles Dickens
- Turkey (popular Christmas and Thanksgiving dish)
- Christmas
- Food
- letters