



PRESS RELEASE – for immediate publication

31<sup>st</sup> May 2017

**BUY YOUR TICKETS NOW FOR “MY DEAREST KATE” PLAY PERFORMS IN GODALMING TO RAISE MONEY FOR AGE UK SURREY**

The story of Charles Dickens and his wife Catherine, seen through a collection of the letters exchanged between herself and Charles, is the focus of a play ‘**My Dearest Kate**’ by Ellie Dickens which is being performed on **Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> June** at **The Wilfrid Noyce Centre** in Godalming from **2.00pm** (doors open at 1.30pm).

Marianne Gaston plays Catherine and David Holman plays Charles in this exciting dramatic new Small Spaces Theatre Company adaptation. Tickets priced at £10.00 (adult) and £5 (under 14’s) are available from Record Corner in Godalming (cash or cheque only) or from Eventbrite [www.eventbrite.co.uk](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk).

Tea, coffee and cake are available to purchase after the performance. Proceeds from the event will go to Age UK Surrey to support services to improve later life for people across Surrey.

End of press release.

**More information about “My Dearest Kate”**

“**My Dearest Kate**” is the story of Catherine Dickens and her and Charles’ turbulent marriage and separation until her death, seen through actual letters. Originally written and performed by Ellie Dickens in 1983, as a one woman play at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and touring throughout Britain and America. She has given her blessing and consent for **My Dearest Kate** to be adapted into this entertaining dramatic 2 actor production, with moments of touching humour.

Catherine Thompson Hogarth was born on 19<sup>th</sup> May 1815, the eldest daughter of George and Georgina Hogarth. She met Charles John Huffam Dickens in 1834 when her father, having taken a job as a music critic on The Morning Chronicle, befriended Charles, also working as a journalist on the paper, and invited him to the Hogarth family home in Kensington. They became engaged in 1835 and were married the next year in St. Luke’s Church, Chelsea on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, the same year he began serialising his first novel, “*Pickwick Papers*”.

After 22 years of marriage, Catherine and Dickens were legally separated. He did not approve of Catherine’s lack of energy for which he had no sympathy despite the fact that the woman had had

over twenty pregnancies. She and Charles had 10 children, though their daughter Dora, their 9<sup>th</sup> child, only lived for 8 months. Charles forced Catherine to leave their home, unjustly alleging that she was mentally disordered and unfit as a wife and mother. He resented he had so many children to support and seemed to blame her alone for having had ten children. They never divorced and Charles bought Catherine a town-house in Camden Town, London and gave her £600 per annum.

On her deathbed in 1879 she gave her collection of Dickens' letters to their daughter Kate (Perugini), whose wedding she had not been allowed to attend, instructing her to give these to the British Museum, so that the world would know her story and the Charles she knew. Catherine died of cancer on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1879 and was buried in Highgate Cemetery, North London with little Dora who died of convulsions in 1851.

The letters were subsequently delivered to the Museum in 1899. Kate Perugini approached the Trustees of the British Museum with the request that they were not published until after the deaths of her brother, Sir Henry F. Dickens, and herself, being the last surviving children of Charles Dickens.

### **More information about Age UK Surrey:**

Age UK Surrey is an independent local charity. We work across Surrey to help improve the lives of older people. Our services are designed to enable older people remain independent and informed, healthy and active and connected to their communities. We help combat loneliness and social isolation.

Services include: Information and Advice, Counselling, Help at Home, Computer Drop-in Centre in Guildford, Tea and Chat in Tandridge, Foot Care in clinics across the County, Shopmobility in Guildford, Men in Sheds in Ash, Making Connections in Guildford & Waverley, Handyperson Service and Making Connections in Runnymede & Spelthorne, and Café Culture in Cranleigh.

Numbers of people over 85 continues to grow in Surrey:

- A 25% rise since 2001;
- 32,300 people in this age group (2014).
- Nearly 214,000 people are over 65 (2014).
- Statistics show that people in Surrey generally live longer than the national average.
- In 2012 there were 15,456 people in Surrey living with dementia, predicted to rise to 19,000 by 2020.

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**Age UK Surrey**

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