



## ***THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY***

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**NEWSLETTER**

**SUMMER 2022**

### **Anthony West 25 August 1936 – 29 May 2022**

The Society is very sorry to report the death of Wilkie Collins's great-grandson Anthony West. Wilkie's own son William Charles Collins Dawson (1874-1913) had two children. William's daughter Helen Martha Dawson (1907-1987) married George West and Anthony was their son. Our patron and Wilkie's great-granddaughter Faith Clarke attended the funeral on 28 June and writes this appreciation of Anthony for us.

Anthony West, more often known as Tony, died on the 29th May at the age of eighty-five. He was a much loved family man who will be greatly missed and he was also the great-grandson of Wilkie Collins.

Cousin Anthony certainly added colour to my childhood, sometimes in an unexpected way. One summer, I remember, we pitched a tent on the lawn to have a sleepover but, waving his blunderbuss around the tent, he hit me on the head. I was sworn to secrecy for ever and did not let him down but, in the morning, the lump on my head sadly gave the game away. On another occasion

he fixed some wheels on a crate, took me to the top of a hill, put me in the crate and let go. I did not come out of that adventure unscathed either, but I never held it against him.

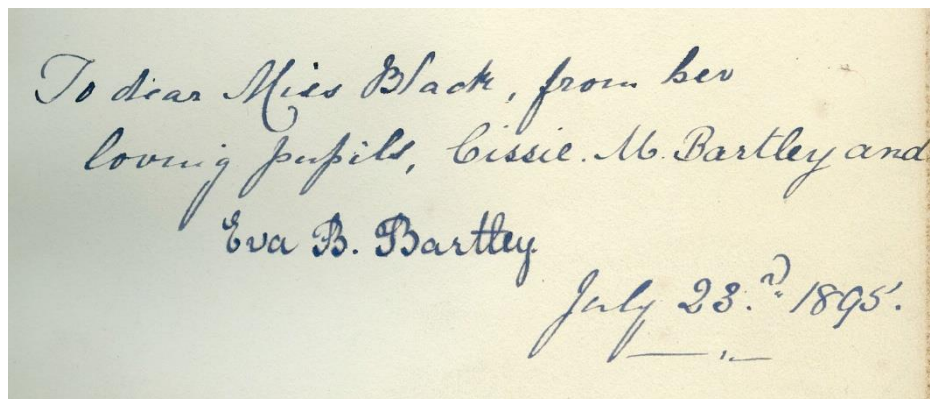
Sailing was a popular pursuit to be shared with all the family and, indeed, any interests of his children, immediately became his interests, too. Tony's passion for cars directed his whole working life. Firstly, there was an engineering apprenticeship with Bedford Trucks followed by other appointments with Volvo and later within the Vauxhall group. To end his career, it was back to Vauxhall, handling Fleet Sales both nationwide and overseas and, finally, managing Special Vehicle Orders for the police, the army and fire services.

With Tony leaving two sons and four grandchildren, it is comforting to know that the Wilkie line will live on for a long time to come. Indeed, the two youngest grandsons have already made their mark with school projects and addressing their class on the subject of their great-great-great grandfather. Well done, Oscar and Harry!

**Faith Clarke**

### **A PERSONAL COPY OF *RAMBLES BEYOND RAILWAYS***

Recently advertised for sale on ebay was a fine copy of the first 1851 edition of *Rambles Beyond Railways*, elegantly bound in maroon leather with ornate decoration in gilt. On the front free end-paper is the presentation inscription "To dear Miss Black, from her loving pupils, Cissie M. Bartley and Eva B. Bartley. July 23rd. 1895." Those who have read the more detailed biographies of Wilkie, especially William Clarke's *The Secret Life of Wilkie Collins*, may recognise the last two names as well as the surname Bartley.



To dear Miss Black, from her  
loving pupils, Cissie M. Bartley and  
Eva B. Bartley  
July 23<sup>rd</sup>. 1895.

Caroline Graves, who lived with Wilkie for twenty or so years in Gloucester Place, had a daughter, Harriet Elizabeth – Carrie, as Wilkie used to call her. She became his goddaughter and frequently acted as his amanuensis. Carrie married in 1878 Henry Powell Bartley, who became Wilkie’s solicitor. They had four surviving daughters: Doris Elizabeth (Dah) who became Doris Beresford, a musical comedy actress; Cecile Marguerite (Cissie); Evelyne Beatrice (Bollie) who became Eve Bebington; and Iris Dora.

Caroline died in June 1895. By this time, the extravagant Henry Bartley had run out of money and in May that year sued for bankruptcy – he had already sold the 1850 Millais portrait of Collins to the National Portrait Gallery. His profligate lifestyle and subsequent embezzlement destroyed the inheritance that Wilkie had so carefully worked out for both his ‘morganatic families’.

By July 1895, Cissie was 14 years old and Eva just 12 and the family had been abandoned by their father. It is unlikely that at their young age they would have had the money either to purchase or commission such an elegant binding. It is unclear whether the presentation to Miss Black was because she was leaving or whether, and rather more likely, the girls were obliged to leave school for financial reasons. We can speculate that the volume was selected from Carrie’s personal books. Possibly it had been passed down to her having previously belonged to Caroline. Perhaps, even, the expensive binding had been commissioned by Wilkie and presented to Caroline. It may have been his personal copy although it doesn’t appear in Baker’s *Wilkie Collins’s Library* and is not listed in any of the contemporary sales catalogues. We’ll probably never know for certain, but it does seem to offer a personal link to Wilkie. More details of the Bartleys can be found in *The Secret Life*.

### ***THE WOMAN IN WHITE AND THE EARLY CINEMA***

Since the 1940 *Crimes at the Old Dark House* and the 1948 version of *The Woman in White* there have been several television adaptations and series not only in England but also in Germany, Spain and Russia. There had been, however, several adaptations by the silent cinema, beginning with two versions in 1912.

A version by Thanhouser was released in two reels with the scenario by Lloyd Lonergan, starring Marguerite Snow as Laura Fairlie and Anne Catherick, William Garwood as Walter Hartright and James Cruze as Sir Percival Glyde. This adaptation was released on 20 October 1912, just two days before that filmed by the Gem Motion Picture Company with Janet Salisbury as Laura Fairlie and the *Woman in White*, Alexander F. Frank as Fosco and Charles Perley as Walter Hartridge (sic). There is a six-page synopsis of the Gem version by John Ogden with photographic stills in *The Motion Picture Story Magazine* for November 1912, pp 49-56. The Thanhouser version was apparently lost when the studio burned down in 1913.

There were then two ‘modernised’ versions in 1917. *Tangled Lives*, released on 2 April, where “after squandering his entire estate, Roy Schuyler is forced by his creditors to marry the wealthy Laura Reid. Ann, Laura's half-sister, tries to warn her sister of Roy's motives, but is kidnapped by Roy and incarcerated in an asylum before she is able to do so ... etc.” It was directed by J. Gordon Edwards with scenario by Mary Murillo and starring Genevieve Hamper as Laura Fairlie and Walter Miller as Walter Hartwright (sic).

A new Thanhouser Film Corporation version of *The Woman in White* was released on 1 July 1917. It was directed by Ernest C. Warde with the scenario once again by Lloyd F. Lonergan. It starred Florence La Badie as Laura Fairlie and Ann Catherick, Richard R. Neill as Glyde, Gertrude Dallas as Marian, Arthur Bauer as Fosco and Wayne Arey as Hartright. It had the alternative title of *The Unfortunate Marriage* and was re-released by Chandler Pictures c.1920.

A subsequent version then becomes even more remote from the original, issued by the Acme Pictures Corporation in September 1919 in five reels as *The Twin Pawns*. “Separated since birth, twins Violet and Daisy White are unaware of each other's existence. Violet, the idol of her indulgent father Harry has everything her heart could desire while Daisy, reared by her indigent mother, is poorly clad and underfed ... etc. The scenario, such as it was, was created by the director, Léonce Perret. It featured Mae Murray, Walter Oland, Jack W. Johnston and Henry G. Sell. This version was also issued in 1920 as *The Curse of Greed*.

The first British version was released in January 1929 as *The Woman in White* from the British and Dominion Film Corporation. It was produced by Herbert Wilcox seemingly with some resemblance to Collins's original, featuring Blanche Sweet as Laura Fairlie and Anne Catherick, Haddon Mason as Walter Hartright, Cecil Humphreys as Sir Percival and Frank Perfitt as Count Fosco.

Two of the early versions can now be found on modern DVD. A restored version of *The Woman in White/The Unfortunate Marriage* is currently available in the Thanouser Collection, part of the combined Volumes 7, 8, & 9. *The Twin Pawns* is available from tripdiscs.com. for £6.99. Both titles also turn up from time to time on ebay.

Further plot and cast details with photographic stills are available at IMDB [https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0172741/?ref\\_=nv\\_sr\\_srsg\\_0](https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0172741/?ref_=nv_sr_srsg_0)

There is, incidentally, an actor called Wilkie Collins, known for his roles in *The Tale of Ruby Rose* (1987), *The Fringe Dwellers* (1986) and *The Accidental Conspiracy* (1995).

### **'THE DREAM WOMAN' ON RADIO 4 EXTRA**

"Isaac lives in constant fear of a knife-wielding female. But is she of this Earth - or from beyond the grave?" This was the BBC introduction for a very passable adaptation of 'The Dream Woman', repeated on Radio4 Extra on 13 June as part of its 'Haunted' series. It was adapted by Derek Hoddinott and originally broadcast on the BBC World Service as long ago as 1979. Sadly, it is not currently available on BBC Sounds but 'Mrs. Badgery', read by Christopher Harper, is.

### ***CLUES FROM THE COUCH***

Members interested in detective fiction may like the idea of the newly published *Clues from the Couch: Psychology in Detective Fiction from Wilkie Collins to Winspear and Penny* by Laird R. Blackwell who has taught psychology and literature for over thirty years. Quoting the publisher's blurb:

The detective story – the classic whodunit with its time-displacement structure of crime – according to most literary historians, is of relatively recent origin. Early in its

development, the whodunit was harshly criticized for its tightly formula-bound structure. Many critics prematurely proclaimed "the death of the whodunit" and even of detective fiction altogether. Yet today, the genre is alive, as contemporary authors have brought it into modern times through a significant integration of elaborate character development and psychology. With the modern psychological detective story emerging from the historical cauldron of detective fiction and early psychology, the genre continues to develop a complexity that reflects and guides the literary sophistication needed. This book, the first of its kind, analyzes over 150 whodunit novels and short stories across the decades, from *The Moonstone* to the contemporary novels that saved the genre from an ignominious death.

Published in the USA by McFarland at \$55 and about £58 in the UK; available discounted from the Book Depository and Amazon.

### **PLOTTING THE NEWS IN THE VICTORIAN NOVEL**

Another new title, *Plotting the News in the Victorian Novel*, part of Edinburgh Critical Studies in Victorian Culture, by Jessica R Valdez, Assistant Professor of English at the University of Hong Kong has been published by Edinburgh University Press. The text draws upon a real Victorian news story in each of the first three chapters. Once again, quoting from the publisher's blurb:

This book shows that novelists often responded to newspapers by reworking well-known events covered by Victorian newspapers in their fictions. Each chapter addresses a different narrative modality and its relationship to the news: Charles Dickens interrogates the distinctions between fictional and journalistic storytelling, while Anthony Trollope explores novelistic *bildung* in serial form; the sensation novels of Wilkie Collins and Mary Elizabeth Braddon locate melodrama in realist discourses, whereas Anglo-Jewish writer Israel Zangwill represents a hybrid minority experience. At the core of these metaphors and narrative forms is a theorisation of the newspaper's influence on society.

### **COLLINS AND TROLLOPE**

In Chapter XVII of Anthony Trollope's *The Small House at Allington*, originally published in the *Cornhill* during 1862, there is a nice reference to the then recently published and hugely popular *The Woman in White*. Trollope describes "their dear Lady Dumbello, hoping this and beseeching that, as though the "The Woman in White" before them had been the dearest friend of

their infancy. She was a woman in white, being dressed in white silk, with white lace over it, and with no other jewels upon her person than diamonds.”

Trollope, the prolific novelist best known for his *Barsetshire* and *Palliser* series, was highly regarded by Collins for his energetic but consistently workmanlike production of fiction. Collins wrote to Horace Pym in 1887: “By comparison with my late 'colleague,' Anthony Trollope, with his watch on the table, and his capacity for writing a page in every quarter of an hour, I am the slowest coach now on the literary road.” ([2785] to Horace Noble Pym, 5 December 1887)

Collins's fiction similarly received a rather guarded assessment in Trollope's 1883 *An Autobiography* “Of Wilkie Collins it is impossible for a true critic not to speak with admiration, because he has excelled all his contemporaries in a certain most difficult branch of his art.” Trollope continues, however “The construction is most minute and most wonderful. But I can never lose the taste of the construction...One is constrained by mysteries and hemmed in by difficulties, knowing, however, that the mysteries will be made clear, and the difficulties overcome at the end of the third volume. Such work gives me no pleasure.”

## **WILKIE IN COMMON CULTURE**

Wilkie's most famous novel continues to inform popular culture. An obscure article ‘What The Numbers On Your Toaster Actually Mean’ on an American website (8 April 2022) is a paean to toast and begins with the famous quote from *The Woman in White* “My hour for tea is half-past five, and my buttered toast waits for nobody.” Find out more about toast at [www.tastingtable.com/826198](http://www.tastingtable.com/826198) and look up the quote in ‘Mrs Catherick's letter’ in ‘Hartright's Narrative, Part the Second’, originally published as Part 36 on 21 July 1860 in *All the Year Round*.

*Armadale* is less often quoted but here it pops up in *The Daily Telegraph* (30 April 2022) beginning a review by Francesca Peacock of an exhibition on shipwrecks at Hastings Contemporary gallery. “From Gerald Manley Hopkins's poem ‘Wreck of the Deutschland’ (written 1875–6) to Wilkie Collins's novel *Armadale* (1864–6), we've long thought of the 19th-century sea as beset with dramatic shipwrecks both real and fictional”. Paywalled but you can get round it

[www.telegraph.co.uk/art/reviews/seafaring-hastings-contemporary-review-exhibition-show](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/art/reviews/seafaring-hastings-contemporary-review-exhibition-show) .

## **MR FAIRLIE**

Graham Caveney in his new book *On Agoraphobia* uses Mr Fairlie from *The Woman in White* as a literary example

*The Woman in White*, home to one of the most sinister grotesques of nineteenth-century fiction. Mr Fairlie is a man whose excessive sensitivity leads to a permanent migraine. He languishes in his room, able to tolerate only the dimmest of lights and the softest of sounds. His feet ‘were effeminately small,’ writes Collins, clad in ‘little womanish bronze-leather slippers.’ At one point Fairlie describes himself as ‘nothing but a bundle of nerves dressed up to look like a man.’ His nerves have castrated him...Both Miss Havisham and Mr Fairlie’s seclusions were rendered in terms of a gendered grotesque: the first as a monstrous spinster, the second as foppish aesthete. (*On Agoraphobia*, Graham Caveney, Picador 2022, pp.32, 70).

Mr Fairlie is also responsible for another nice quote – possibly how we all feel when having a bad day:

It is the grand misfortune of my life that nobody will let me alone.

## **WILKIE STUDIES ONLINE**

Five fairly recent studies of Wilkie Collins are available free online as pdfs. A search for ‘Wilkie Collins’ on [www.epdf.tips](http://www.epdf.tips) turns up

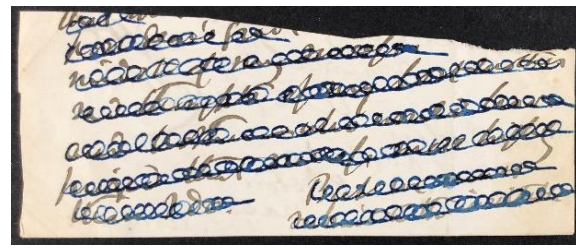
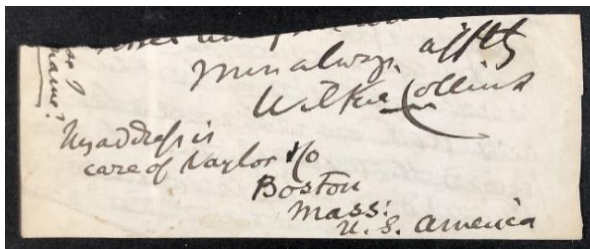
- Lyn Pykett, *Authors in Context – Wilkie Collins* (2005)
- Jenny Bourne Taylor, *The Cambridge Companion to Wilkie Collins* (2006)
- William Baker, *A Wilkie Collins Chronology* (2007)
- Graham Law and Andrew Maunder, *Wilkie Collins – a Literary Life* (2008)
- A B Emrys, *Wilkie Collins, Vera Caspary and the Evolution of the Casebook Novel* (2011).



Four of these authors are Society members. The site also has pdfs of eight of Wilkie's novels.

## WILKIE'S LETTERS

A number of Wilkie's letters have recently come to light. Including two tantalising scraps. Many Victorians collected scrap books of signatures of famous people. Many examples are known of Wilkie writing a short letter or sending collectors a small signed and dated piece of paper for their albums. Occasionally, a collector will be sent the cut off end of a full letter just for the signature. That can leave a partial text on the other side. Two of these have come to light this year. One had the text obscured by a systematic overwriting in blue ink of joined up small circles.



The other was glued to a page so the writing could not be seen. In both cases detective work – and modern image analysis – has enabled the Editors to read the dozen or so words on the reverse of these valedictions. We may even be able to identify possible recipients and dates. Both will feature in the next Addenda and Corrigenda to the Collected Letters to be published the end of the year which will include many other newly-found letters – most of them complete!

## MERCY MERRICK – LA NUOVA MADDELENA

WCS member and prize-winning author Serena Venditto has produced a fresh Italian edition of *The New Magdalen*. Using the original 1874 translation she has updated the language into what she tells me “will be like a brand new translation!”. Published by Homo Scrivens in Naples the book has an introduction, a short biography of Wilkie, and a concluding critique of the book by Serena. It also contains a promotion for the Society and a paragraph welcoming the edition by WCS member Paul Lewis. Find out more at [www.homoscrivens.it](http://www.homoscrivens.it) where you can buy a copy for €18. Serena is an

archaeologist and writer of detective fiction and is on Twitter and Instagram @LadyAventinus.

### **WILKIE IN THE NORTH**

A new book *Dickens and the North* brings together the occasions when Charles Dickens visited Scotland, Ireland, and the north of England. On some of these trips he was accompanied by Wilkie Collins. The book, by Stephen Duxbury, begins with the tour by Dickens and Wilkie to Cumberland which they wrote up as ‘The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices’ for *Household Words*. The trip was, of course, really a cover for Dickens’s visit to the Doncaster races where he planned to meet the Ternan family who were acting there in race week. Ellen Ternan later became Dickens’s lover.

That trip features three times in the book – once in its own Chapter and twice more later on. Wilkie’s trip to Whitby is also included as is the amateur dramatic performance at the Sunderland Lyceum Theatre in August 1852.

Aside from Collins the book also presents some obscure details on Dickens’s life that are either not known or certainly hard to find. My favourite was the reference (p. 152) to the Whitby and Pickering Railway which used horses to pull carriages up steep rails and then counterweights when the route became too tough even for the horses. The book explains Dickens’s comments on this much more fully than the Pilgrim edition of his letters. The book can be found on the Grayswood Press website for £12.50.

### **DICKENS DAY**

WCS members may be interested in Dickens Day which returns after a gap of two years. It will take place on 8 October at London’s Senate House with the theme ‘Beginning Dickens’. Contact [IESEvents@sas.ac.uk](mailto:IESEvents@sas.ac.uk) for more details and see @DickensDay\_UK on Twitter.

### **SALE OF THE PET LAMB**

One of William Collins’s most iconic paintings came up for auction at Sotheby’s in April. *The Disposal of a Favourite Lamb*, also known as *The Sale of the Pet Lamb*, was painted in 1813 and bought from the Royal Academy

Exhibition of that year by William Ogden for 140 guineas (£147). The painting has spent all its life in private collections and was last seen in a Sotheby's sale more than forty years ago on 29 November 1978. So it was a real privilege to see the painting in all its vibrant life at Sotheby's where it was on exhibition. It shows a butcher handing over a few coins for a lamb which the mother is selling to make ends meet, to the distress of her children who are mocked by the butcher's boys. The image was not so mawkish as it may appear to us now. Country people did commonly keep so-called cade lambs abandoned by their mother until they grew to edible size when they were sold. Nevertheless, the painting was one of William's most popular images and was engraved many times both for individual sale and in art books. On 5 April 2022 it cost its anonymous buyer £11,970, a sum not much lower in real terms than its original price in 1813.



Sale details can still be seen at [www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2022/old-master-paintings/the-sale-of-the-pet-lamb](http://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2022/old-master-paintings/the-sale-of-the-pet-lamb)

## **WILKIE CONFERENCE**

The Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey is hosting a conference there called 'Wilkie Collins and his Work' on 8 & 9 December 2022. WCS member Professor Andrew Mangham is the keynote speaker. The

University is inviting people to send proposals for 20-minute presentations on any aspect of Wilkie’s work. Send a 250-word synopsis and an academic biography to bnic2020@metu.edu.tr by 16 September not forgetting your name and contact information. Any queries to Prof. Dr. Hülya Yidiz Bağçe huyildiz@metu.ed.tr.

## **THE END**

Finally, at the end of this newsletter, here is Wilkie himself on reaching the end.

To his friend Pigott on finishing *Basil*:

Yesterday morning I wrote those two last welcome words “The End”; and today, I feel as if I had really achieved something wonderful in only getting rid of my own little trumpery responsibility. ([0136] to Edward Pigott, 16 September 1852).

To the *Household Words* printer, on writing the final instalment of *The Dead Secret*:

I have done!! Those two blessed words, “The End” were written at 1/2 past 3, today. ([0254] to F. M. Evans, 21 May 1857).

And to his mother, Harriet Collins, 26 July 1860 [0357] triumphant after completing *The Woman in White*:

Hooray ! ! ! ! !

I have this instant written at the bottom of the four hundred and ninetieth page of my manuscript the two noblest words in the English language

— The End —

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