



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

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### **NEWSLETTER**

**SPRING 2023**

#### **RAMSGATE TALK**

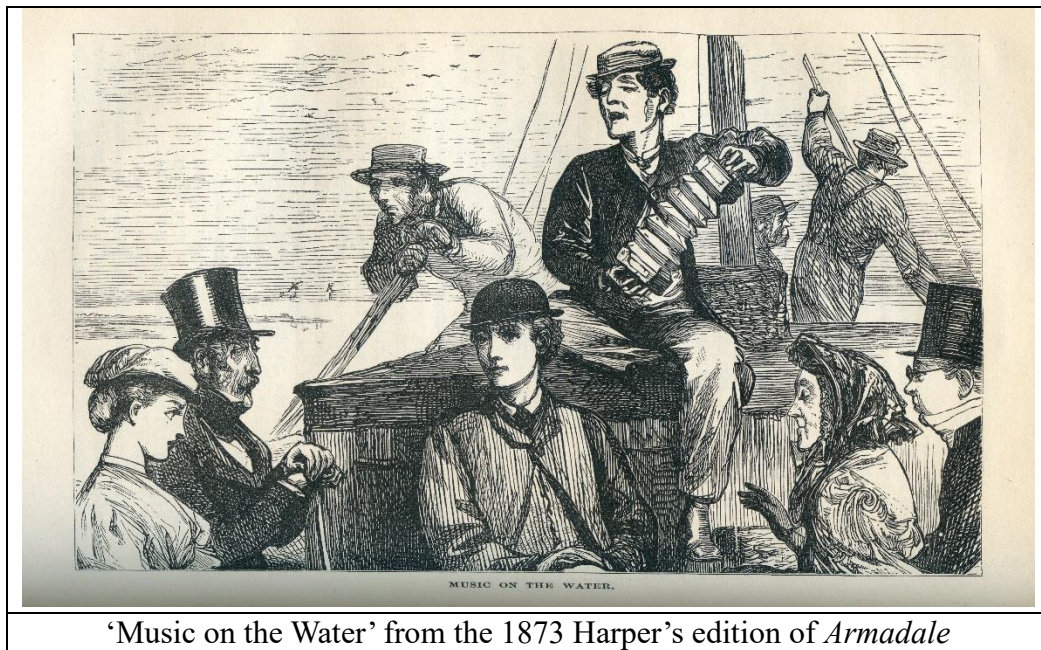
On Monday 15 May, Paul Lewis is giving a talk about Wilkie in Ramsgate called 'A Tale of Two Towns'. Organised by the Ramsgate Society it will be at the Royal Temple Yacht Club in Ramsgate, doors open 6.30pm. Sadly the organisers say every place is taken but you could try to get returns here [bit.ly/WilkieCollinsTalk](http://bit.ly/WilkieCollinsTalk).

#### ***A WILKIE COLLINS SONGBOOK***

One of the more unusual contributions to Wilkie Collins studies is the just published *A Wilkie Collins Songbook* by Allan Atlas. It is published by A-R Editions, from Middleton, Wisconsin as part of their series 'Recent Researches in Music.'

The Songbook contains the complete scores and lyrics of twenty-seven pieces of music "that were either cited by Collins or can be associated with him in one way or another." Here we have Francesco Berger's overture to *The Frozen Deep* plus six pieces inspired by Collins's works - four for *The Woman in White*, and one each for *No Name* and *No Thoroughfare*. The bulk of the anthology consists of twenty ballads, patriotic songs and traditional tunes to which Collins refers in his works or in some cases are performed by his characters. These include, for example, 'Begone, Dull Care' 'The Girl I Left Behind Me' and 'Nelson' by John Braham.

Each piece includes a commentary on its sources, its relation to Collins's work, some details of the relevant plot summary plus where useful quotations from the original text. There are also critical notes and comments on the musical score. *Armadale*, we learn contributes seven pieces to the Songbook, more than any of Wilkie's other novels or short stories; the 'Fosco Gallop' was inspired by Collins's 1871 adaptation of *The Woman in White*; and the 'No Name Waltz' contains the mysterious dedication by 'The Veiled Lady.'



'Music on the Water' from the 1873 Harper's edition of *Armadale*

The Songbook also contains a 'thumbnail biography' of Collins together with paragraphs on Collins and music. He notes Wilkie's dislike of German music and Schumann in particular and his preference for melodies.

As in all Victorian literature, music plays many roles within Collins's works: dramatic, symbolic, psychological, and decorative, among others. Thus *Basil* (1852), *The Woman in White*, and *Armadale* weave music and musical venues into their plots in a number of significant ways.

Allan Atlas is emeritus professor at the Graduate Centre in New York and has published extensively on music including 'Wilkie Collins, Mr. Vanstone, and the Case of Beethoven's "No Name" Symphony' (*Dickens Studies Annual*, 33, 2003). Overall, the Songbook is a musical tour de force and an invaluable accompaniment for your next Wilkie Collins Concert.

See also ‘The Making of a “Wilkie Collins Songbook”’ at [https://www.areditions.com/blog/post/the-making-of-a-wilkie-collins-songbook?mc\\_cid=7858940547&mc\\_eid=1dcf3a0659](https://www.areditions.com/blog/post/the-making-of-a-wilkie-collins-songbook?mc_cid=7858940547&mc_eid=1dcf3a0659).

Although published in the USA (ISBN 978-1-9872-0836-8), it can be obtained through Amazon in the UK but you will need to sit down for the astounding price of \$325 or £298.60 - and that for a soft cover book! Why do publishers issue books which they know only libraries and the occasional millionaire will buy?

### ***THE FROZEN DEEP AT KENSAL GREEN***

The latest issue of *The Telamon*, the magazine of the Friends of Kensal Green Cemetery, features a lengthy article by Alison Freebairn and Logan Zachary about the North-West Passage and its connection with Kensal Green where, of course, Wilkie is buried. His *The Frozen Deep* play written in 1857 was based on the Franklin expedition which was lost while searching for the North-West Passage during 1845. The expedition in Collins’s drama has a much happier ending than real-life ill-fated venture which lost the naval vessels *Erebus* and *Terror*.

Wilkie lies in good company with Lady Jane Franklin and Sophia Cracroft, wife and niece respectively of Sir John Franklin, both of whom refused to accept the Admiralty decision to abandon the search. Lady Franklin (1791-1875) is buried in Catacomb B beneath the chapel. In 1854, with one last attempt at discovering the fate of her husband she privately commissioned Captain McClintock and his ship the *Fox* to continue the search which ultimately revealed the date of his death on 11 June 1847 (see below). Sophia Cracroft (1816-1892) collaborated with Lady Franklin’s endeavours. Named after her, the *Sophia* was part of the 1850-51 search and its Captain, Horatio Austin, is likewise buried at Kensal Green.

Also buried at here is Sir John Ross (1777-1856) who had made two unsuccessful attempts to find the North-West Passage in 1818 and 1829. He also accompanied the 1850-51 search expedition which located the graves of three members of Franklin’s crew on Beechey Island. Other connections with the North-West Passage are Sir Robert McClure (1807-1873) and his rescuer Bedford Pim, whose grave is currently located but unmarked, together with several other notables listed in this excellently detailed article.



Graves of four re-interred sailors as they now appear at Beechey Island in the Canadian Arctic

Outside the Canadian Arctic itself, no single place is home to as many graves from the quest for the North-West Passage as this one London cemetery.

Further details of Alison Freebairn’s research and collaboration with Logan Zachary are available with photographs on her website, [finger-post.blog](http://finger-post.blog).

## **COLLINS AND THE ARCTIC**

Collins never lost his interest in the far North. Nearly thirty years after *The Frozen Deep* drama and ten years after his 1874 book version of the story, he purchased a copy of McClintock’s *The Voyage of the ‘Fox’ in the Arctic Seas: a Narrative of the Discovery of the Fate of Sir John Franklin and his Companions* (London: John Murray, 1859). This particular copy had been presented by the publisher on 22 December 1859 to E. Osborne Smith, treasurer of the Geographic Club. Beneath the original presentation inscription Wilkie has written “Purchased from a London Bookseller, in 1884, by Wilkie Collins.” This same copy includes the further ownership inscription of noted Arctic collector Townsend W. Thorndike “Added to my Arctic Collection Jan 8th, 1913”.

E Osburne Smith Esq  
Treasurer of the Geograph. Club  
with the publishers Comp  
Dec 22. 1859.

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Purchased from a London  
Bookseller, in 1884, by  
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Added to my Arctic  
Collection Jan 8th 1913  
Journes W. Thordike

McClintock commanded the private expedition sponsored by Lady Franklin in 1857 to search for her husband and his crew, missing since 1845. This account details his thorough search of the area between the Boothia Peninsula and King William Island, and his discovery of the fate of Franklin with the recovery of written records left by Lt. Graham Gore, Captain James Fitzjames, and Capt. Francis Crozier. (Arctic Bib. 10555; National Maritime Museum I 930; Sabin 43043; Smith 6220; TPL 8741; cfLande 1300).

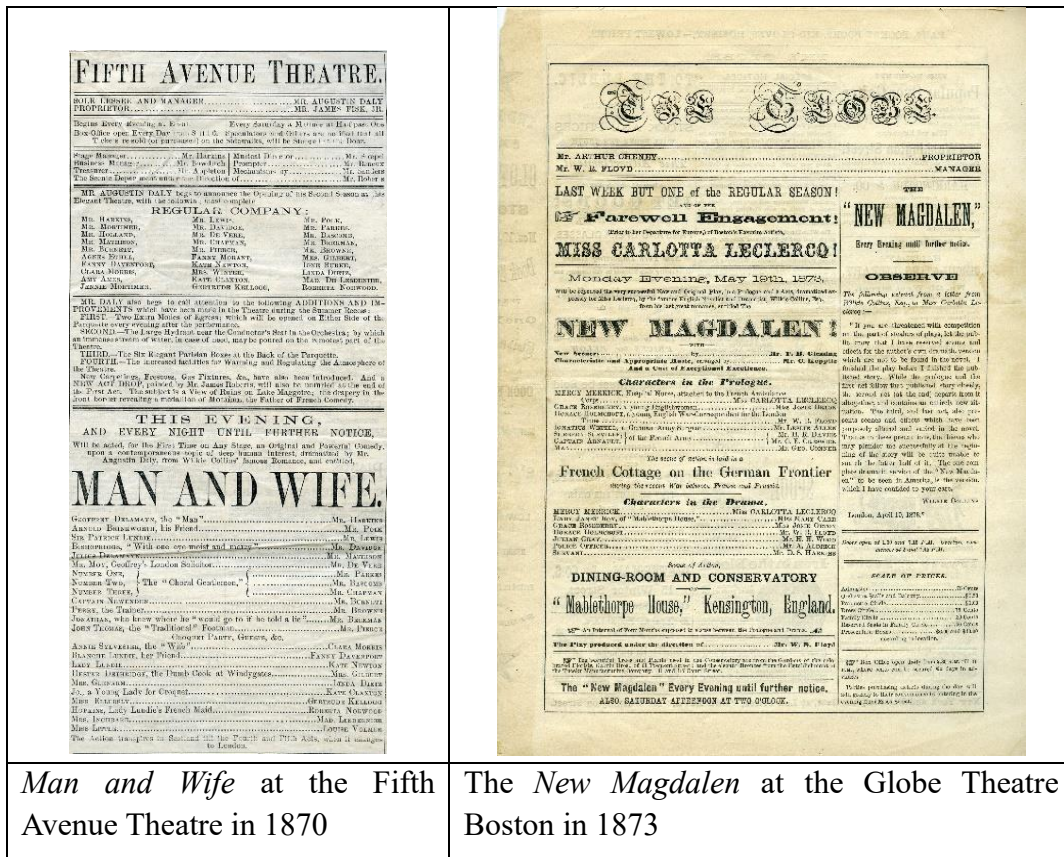
### **WILKIE AND CHARLES COLLINS, AND AUGUSTIN DALY IN *THE DICKENSIAN***

Wilkie receives a theatrical mention in an interesting article by Don Richard Cox in *The Dickensian* (Winter 2022, No. 518, Vol. 118, Part 3). Cox is familiar with Wilkie's works, having been co-editor of the scholarly Broadview Press edition of *Blind Love* in 2004.

'The Charles Collins Letter: Some additional Mysteries' investigates a letter thought to have been written on 4 May 1871 by Wilkie's brother Charles to Augustin Daly, the New York theatre manager and playwright. The correspondence concerned Daly's proposed dramatisation of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. The letter was first published in Daly's biography, *The Life of Augustin Daly* by his brother, Joseph Francis Daly (New York: Macmillan, 1917,

pp. 107-8). Cox's detailed investigation discusses various mysteries surrounding the letter and the involvement of Wilkie's dramatic agent, John Bonner.

Wilkie was originally at loggerheads with Augustin Daly because of his unauthorised adaptation of *Man and Wife* which ran for ten weeks at New York's Fifth Avenue Theatre from 13 September 1870. Wilkie, as ever, was keen to protect both his copyright and reputation and subsequently objected to Daly's *No Name* which was staged in June 1871. Eventually they were reconciled and Collins collaborated more willingly with Daly for the highly successful *The New Magdalen* in November 1873. The two eventually became good friends and Collins presented Daly with the manuscript of his then unpublished novel *Iolani* when he toured London in 1878.



Man and Wife at the Fifth Avenue Theatre in 1870

The New Magdalen at the Globe Theatre Boston in 1873

## THE NEW MAGDALEN IN SAN FRANCISCO

The New Magdalen was hugely popular on both sides of the USA with a very successful but unauthorised production by the theatrical producer and playwright

David Belasco. This was staged at Shiel's Opera House in San Francisco on 14 July and preceded the version by Augustin Daly. Theatre critic, William Winter, describes the circumstances in his *Life of David Belasco* (New York: Boatyard, 1918, Vol. I, pp. 47-48).

I had mentioned Wilkie Collins' 'The New Magdalen' [published that year] to Le Roy as containing good material for a play and he had bought a copy of the book and begun to make a dramatization. He told Miss Pateman about it and when she agreed that it would make a fine play for her he hastened his work, dictating to me, and it was brought out soon afterward." Le Roy's "dramatization" of Collins' novel was produced at Shiels' Opera House on July 14, 1873, and it was the first, or one of the first, stage adaptations of the story to be acted in America: piratical versions of it eventually became so numerous that, at one time, they could be bought for \$10! Collins, in the disgraceful state of American copyright law at that time, was helpless to prevent what he designated, in writing to me, as the "larcenous appropriation of my poor 'Magdalen.'" As illustrating the practical value of priority in such matters and an injury often inflicted on authorship, it is significant to recall that Le Roy's scissored version of the novel and Miss Pateman's performance in it were much preferred, in San Francisco, to the drama made by Collins, as it was acted there, at the California Theatre, by Carlotta Leclercq (1838-1893), September 22, 1873.

Writing about the production of Le Roy's "larcenous appropriation," Belasco has said: "When it was ready it represented a week of pasting, cutting, and putting together.... It proved to be one of the greatest successes San Francisco ever had.... As for the actress, Bella Pateman, she was a wonderful woman of tears, always emotionally true, and she became the idol of the hour, for her *Mercy Merrick* showed her to be an artist of great worth." Miss Pateman was an accomplished actress (her professional merit was much extolled in conversation with me by both Edwin Booth and Lawrence Barrett), and she became an exceptional public favorite in San Francisco. Her first engagement in that city continued until August 16, and, after July 14, it was devoted on all but four nights to repetitions of "The New Magdalen.

Apart from *The New Magdalen*, Belasco also produced a version of *Man and Wife* during the latter half of 1873.

### ***RADIO TIMES***

Our regular Cornish contact and WCS member, Jak Stringer, has drawn our attention to a small paragraph in the *Radio Times*. Mark Catley, its correspondent from Watford, compliments Sky Arts on its series 'Skinner and Mina's Literary Road Trip' which has included 'Pope and Swift', 'Boswell and Johnson' and 'Wordsworth and Coleridge'.

Frank and Denise, the warm and witty presenters, work so well together. Their 'Road Trip' offers us stunning locations and the chance to discover or perhaps rediscover great writing. We are informed and entertained. I do hope there will be further series. Perhaps the friendship between Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins might make a suitable subject?

Indeed, it would, so let's hope either Sky Arts or even the BBC will take the hint for next year's bicentenary.

Jak has presented several one-woman shows about Wilkie. She and her partner in likeable eccentricity, Linda, issue regular newsletters 'History-onics' about their weird and wonderful goings on in Cornwall. If you would like to subscribe, e-mail Linda at [lindacamidge@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:lindacamidge@yahoo.co.uk) – or send a message to Camidge & Stringer on Facebook.

## **WILKIE AT SEA**

Sailing was one of Wilkie's his favourite outdoor recreation. 'He had a thoroughly English love of the sea and of all that belongs to it' (*Armadale*). His regular sailing companions were Edward Pigott, Henry Bullar and Charles Ward. Both Collins and his doctor, Frank Beard, were convinced that the sea breezes were good for his health. Collins's first major trips were with Pigott to the Scilly Isles in 1855 and Cherbourg in 1856. He sailed from Broadstairs in 1858 and the early 1860s, and from Great Yarmouth in 1864. In his later years, he sailed off Ramsgate where he joined the local yacht club from the 1870s.

Collins was himself a good sailor and sailing featured in several stories, including 'The Cruise of the Tomtit' (1855), 'A Plot in Private Life' (1858), *Armadale* (1866), and 'Miss or Mrs?' (1871). But having just returned from a less than calm winter cruise, it might be worth remembering the inebriated Zack in *Hide and Seek* (1854) produce

sounds nautically and lamentably associated with white basins, whirling waves, and misery of mortal stomachs wailing in emetic despair.

## **MOONSTONES FOR £100,000**

This is the spectacular price for two separate *Moonstones* currently for sale on AbeBooks. The first is an 1868 three-volume first edition copy of *The Moonstone*



in original condition. The purple binding looks brighter than most copies that survive in cloth although from the illustrations the spines look unevenly darkened with age. There are also two tipped-in Collins signatures. Not in this case, but the first edition of 1500 copies is often advertised with the distinguishing point that ‘treacherously’ is misspelled ‘treachesrouly’ on p. 129 of Volume II. This misprint, however, is still present in the subsequent second edition of 500 copies issued in the same year.

The second item is more significant being Collins’s own annotated copy of the dramatic version of the play privately printed in 1877. This is the same, unique copy which was sold for \$50,400 including premium at Sotheby’s, New York, in December 2022. See our last Newsletter, Winter 2022, for further details.

### ***THE MOONSTONE IN THE TOP 5***

T. S. Eliot called it “the first, the longest and the best of modern English detective novels” and Dorothy L. Sayers said it was “probably the finest detective story ever written”. But *The Moonstone* is relegated to fifth place in the list on knowinsiders.com (search ‘ten best detective novels’) after two by Agatha Christie, all of Sherlock Holmes and, extraordinarily, Dan Brown’s *Da Vinci Code*! I doubt if members will agree!

### **WILKIE’S LETTERS**

The fourteenth Addenda & Corrigenda to Wilkie’s letters is enclosed with this newsletter. It features 36 newly identified letters, including two important items on copyright and a letter setting out how Wilkie managed and was paid for foreign translations. There are also letters to publishers, friends, fans, and a photographer, as well as the last letter he wrote from Ramsgate the year before his death. Wilkie’s letters were mainly written straight onto the page with few amendments or corrections. It is the closest we can get to hearing him talk. Sadly, he turned down an opportunity to record his voice on the astonishing new sound recording equipment invented by Thomas Edison. A year before his death he wrote to Edison’s agent in England

in the present state of my health, I fear there is little hope of my being able to profit by this opportunity which you have been so good as to offer me of investigating the most wonderful invention of our time. ([2892] to George Gouraud, 24 September 1888).

## DINNER WITH DICKENS

The editors of The Dickens Letters Project, Dr Leon Litvack, has come up with a novel idea to get Dickens to speak to us. Using artificial intelligence and an as yet small sample of Dickens's letters he has launched a competition for software developers to devise a game where Dickens would answer people in a natural way in his own words from the letters. Could you talk your way not getting an invitation to a dinner party? More at qub.ac.uk search 'litvack hackathon' or, if you have a subscription to *The Times*, read the story here <https://bit.ly/3xoAmuN>

## DICKENS'S NOTES

Another fascinating Dickens project is the publication of his working notes at dickensnotes.com. The chapter by chapter notes he wrote for *Bleak House* and *David Copperfield* are already online and give an interesting background to the composition of those novels. Dickens didn't just write notes to himself. He also tried to help Wilkie, in particular finding titles for his books. For example, on 24 January 1862 he sent Wilkie 26 titles he might use for No Name (See *Pilgrim* Vol. X, p. 22). Wilkie considered some but then at the last minute came up with *No Name* and stealthily went back in the manuscript to insert the words 'no name' in the story. See Virginia Blain, 'The Naming of No Name', *Wilkie Collins Society Journal*, 1984 pp. 25-29. To read it go to wilkiecollinssociety.org click on journal and scroll down to original series and enter the updated username **franklin** and password **blake**.

Wilkie's own notes for *The Moonstone* were published and annotated by Professor William Baker in *Victorian Institute Journal*, Vol. 31, 2003, pp. 187-205. Wilkie also wrote extensive notes for his last novel, *Blind Love*, which he died before completing and which was finished from these notes by Walter Besant who wrote in the Preface

I found that these were not merely notes, such as I had expected — simple indications of the plot and the development of events—but an actual detailed scenario, in which every incident, however trivial, was carefully laid down: there were also fragments of dialogue inserted at those places where dialogue was wanted to emphasise the situation and make it real...the possession of this scenario lightened the work enormously.

## **THE WOMAN IN WHITE POSTER**

The model for the famous poster for the 1871 dramatic version of *The Woman in White* has been revealed in an online Croydon newspaper. The full-size artwork for the poster was drawn by the Victorian artist Frederick Walker. It turns out that the model was his sister, Mary, who died 29 November 1925, probably in her eighties. Frederick himself died in his thirties in 1875, not long after producing the artwork. The identification was in an article on a Croydon news website as part of a long and interesting article about Walker and his paintings. It includes an image of his original work for the poster - see [insidecroydon.com](http://insidecroydon.com) - search Frederick Walker. The life size original is in the Tate and can be found online at [tate.org.uk](http://tate.org.uk) by searching the same name.

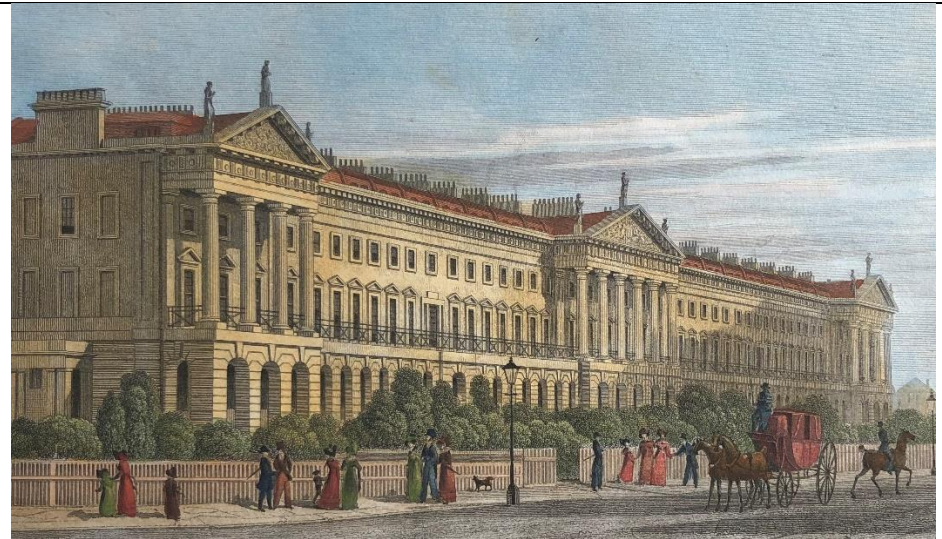
## **A FAIR PENITENT**

One of Wilkie's earliest forays into writing a short piece of historical fiction from real events was 'A Fair Penitent'. First published in *Household Words*, 18 July 1857, Vol. XVI, pp. 55-59. Most unusually this story has been republished recently on a website called [magtheweekly.com](http://magtheweekly.com). A search on the site will find the two parts into which it has been divided. It is one of those stories which make classifying Wilkie's writing into fiction and non-fiction so difficult. It is well worth a read in this new and accessible version although it can also be found in Julian Thompson's *Wilkie Collins: the Complete Shorter Fiction* (London: Robinson Publishing, 1995).

## **HANOVER TERRACE DICKENS'S HOUSE FOR SALE**

Wilkie Collins lived at 17 Hanover Terrace from August 1850 to June 1856 with his mother Harriet and brother Charles. It was from here that Charles painted *May in the Regent's Park*, one of his more well-known paintings and now in Tate Britain (though not always on display). Less well-known is that Dickens rented no. 3 Hanover Terrace from 14 February to 15 June 1861. From there he wrote letters and held dinner parties and it is inconceivable that Wilkie did not see him there close to his old home – Dickens certainly visited No.17 when Wilkie was there. Wilkie is often mentioned in letters Dickens wrote from Hanover Terrace. This stay of just four months has been used to market No. 3 as 'Charles Dickens's Former Regent's Park townhouse' on [luxurylondon.co.uk](http://luxurylondon.co.uk) and no doubt bump up the price to the astonishing £22.5 million for a 115 year lease and with £9000 a

year annual charges. The 6103 sq. ft. home is still on sale at [knightfrank.co.uk](http://knightfrank.co.uk) and you can get some idea there of how Dickens and indeed Collins lived as authors. It would be beyond most writers now – and indeed probably was then.



Hanover Terrace as it appeared in 1827

## OBITUARY

Ray Jenkins, who wrote the BBC's 1982 TV version of *The Woman in White* died on 17 January aged 87. The serial starred Ian Richardson as Frederick Fairlie, Diana Quick as Marian Halcombe, Jenny Seagrove as Laura Fairlie and Alan Badel as Fosco. It is still available on DVD. More at [variety.com](http://variety.com) and search 'Ray Jenkins'.

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