

WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER
Number 1

ANNOUNCEMENTS

"...there, as if it had that moment sprung out of the earth or dropped from the heaven--stood the figure of a solitary Woman, dressed from head to foot in white garments •• •"

William Clarke, a. Society member in London, writes:

A new short biography of Wilkie Collins is in preparation by William Clarke in London. He is concentrating on Collins' rather elusive private life. Mr. Clarke hopes that readers may be able to help him on two points, one specific, one general:

1. Where is the diary and commonplace book of his father, William Collins, which was sold at Sotheby Parke Bernet in New York in 1948 or 1949?
2. Does any reader have any information about correspondence, relating to Caroline Graves and Martha (Rudd) Dawson, held privately?

He can be reached at the following address:

37 Park Vista
Greenwich
London S.E. 10
England

Andrew Gasson, also of London, is presently working on an analytical bibliography of Collins' works.

Benjamin Franklin Fisher IV, of the University of Mississippi, is working on an edition of Wilkie Collins' plays. He is also writing a bibliographic essay for the Society's prospective journal; the essay will discuss items published since 1976, the year at which Kirk H. Beetz's bibliography stops. If you have had something published which relates to Collins and would like Professor Fisher to include it in his essay, please send him a copy:

Department of English
University of Mississippi
University,
Mississippi 38677

MORE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thomas D. Clareson, of the College of Wooster, is writing an extensive biography of Charles Reade. He is interested in any information about Reade, especially about his relationship with Wilkie Collins. He may be reached at:

Box 3186
The College of Wooster
Wooster,
Ohio 44691

Kirk H. Beetz, of the University of California, Davis, has two essays on Collins forthcoming. One is titled, "Wilkie Collins and The Leader: With a List of Newly Identified Works of Wilkie Collins," and will appear in Victorian Periodicals Review in 1981. The other is titled, "The Other Fiction of Wilkie Collins: the Dover Editions," and will appear in University of Mississippi Studies in English. Dr. Beetz also wishes to announce his work on The Collected Letters of Wilkie Collins. Although this project is nearing completion, he remains interested in information about the locations of letters--especially in small or private collections. He may be reached at:

813 Radcliffe Drive
Davis,
California 95616

A TIDBIT

The American Heritage Dictionary (hardbound "New College Edition") uses the following phrase from The Woman in White to help define the word patience:

"This is the story of what a woman's patience can endure •• •"

NEWS

"I loved her.

"Ah! how well I know all the sadness and all the mockery that is contained in those three words."

The Society presently does not have a large enough membership to satisfy the Modern Language Association of American, thus making unlikely the possibility of the society being recognized in time to secure a meeting room at the 1981 convention in New York. All members are asked to spread the word of our Society to prospective members. Recognition can still come in time for the 1982 convention.

The proposed Society Journal is still scheduled to appear in the late summer. Lack of funds places the publication in

NEWS (CONTINUED)

jeopardy. Ideally, the Journal would include reviews, notes, and announcements, as well as an essay or two. For the present only Professor Fisher's bibliographic essay is scheduled to appear. However, the Society is young and growing and its members can hope for better times once it has matured. Inquiries about possible reviews should be sent to Dr. Beetz.

One of the Society's members has suggested that the Society dispense with the notion of publishing a journal, arguing that there are already too many such publications. What do the rest of you think? Please write to one of the Society's officers (listed below).

The 100th anniversary of Wilkie Collins' death is in 1989. Is it too early to begin thinking about an event to mark the year?

ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

"The thought leaped through me, like the fire leaping out of the shattered skylight."

The newsletter will appear irregularly, whenever enough material to fill it is in the president's files. Announcements of projects and publications are solicited from the Society's membership, in order to provide publicity the activities of members. Very short notes (see A TIDBIT, above) and reasonably brief queries are welcome. Replies or queries directed at specific members should be directed to the president or secretary whenever member addresses are not provided.

Remember, part of the Society's objectives is to pass the word around about work related to Collins. If you are working on something which might interest Society members, please let notice of it be included in the Newsletter.

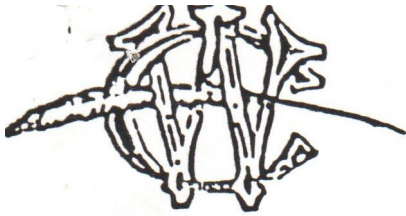
OFFICERS

"I entered into no sordid particulars, in discussing this part of the subject."

President: Kirk H. Beetz
813 Radcliffe Drive
Davis,
California 95616
USA

Secretary: Andrew Gasson
3 Merton House
36 Belsize Park
London N.W.3. 4EA
England

February 20, 1981



THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

PRESIDENT

Kirk Beetz
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U.K. NEWSLETTER

SPRING 1984

Dear Member,

PUBLISHERS DISCOUNTS FOR MEMBERS

Kirk Beetz has been busy in the States negotiating some very favourable terms for members of the Society.

1. Garland Publishing Inc. has made an excellent offer in respect of R.V. Andrew's Wilkie Collins: A Critical Survey of His Prose Fiction (published in 1979 - a dissertation from 1959. 358pp). This currently sells at \$42.00 but can be purchased by Wilkie Collins Society members for only \$12.00, representing a 70% discount.

2. Scarecrow Press has also arranged to offer Jon L. Breen's What about Murder?: A Guide to Books about Mystery and Detective Fiction (published in 1981) at a discount. The book usually sells in the U.S. for \$12.50 but can be purchased by members at the special price of \$9.50 plus postage. The distributors in England are Bailey Bros. & Swinfen Limited and they have kindly agreed to a 10% discount off the U.K. price of £12.50 (i.e. £11.25 plus £1.00 postage and packing). Members are also reminded that Bailey Bros. & Swinfen give a 15% discount off Kirk Beetz's Annotated Bibliography.

Those wishing to take advantage of these offers should either use the enclosed forms or otherwise clearly state their membership of the Wilkie Collins Society. Payment should accompany all orders.

3. In addition, Holt-Saunders of 1 St Annes Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN21 3UN give members a 20% discount off the price of their publications which include the various Twayne's series.

COLLINS TITLES IN PRINT

The latest title in the Dover Press Series is Man and Wife published at £4.50 by Constable and Co.

Other titles not mentioned in previous Newsletters are The Biter Bit and Other Stories (published by Alan Sutton) and My Miscellanies (published by Gregg International).

cont/d...

WANTS LIST

As usual, there have been several requests for Collins titles which seem ever harder to locate.

Virginia Blain (of c/o School of English & Linguistics, Macquarie University, North Ryde, Sydney, NSW 2113, Australia) is currently preparing a new edition of No Name for the Oxford University Press. She is anxious to purchase any one volume edition of this title published prior to about 1880. The text must be complete and in good order but the condition of the binding is unimportant.

Norman Ravenscroft (of 5 Darlington Road, Long Rock, Penzance, Cornwall) is looking for any Chatto and Windus edition of No Name and Man and Wife.

Kevin Conkey (of 2 Thorverton Court, Thorverton Road, Cricklewood, London NW2) is also searching for Chatto and Windus editions in original green cloth of The Woman in White; Blind Love; A Rogue's Life; Armadale; My Miscellanies; The Law and the Lady; Frozen Deep and Haunted Hotel. He is also seeking any edition of The Guilty River.

Sue Jordan (of 45 Hull Road, Cottingham, N. Humberside) is looking for reading copies of Miss or Mrs? and Mr Wray's Cashbox.

VICTORIAN STUDIES (Summer 1983 Vol. 26 No. 4 page 531)

In addition to the Wilkie Collins Society Journal, the Victorian Studies Bibliography for 1982 lists the following works relating to Collins:-

Beetz, Kirk H. "The Other Fiction of Wilkie Collins: The Dover Editions." UMSE n.s. 2 (1981):111-20

Beetz, Kirk H. "Wilkie Collins and The Leader." VPR 15, 1:20-29

Lohrli, A. "Wilkie Collins and Household Words." VPR 15:118-19

Murfin, Ross C. "The Art of Representation: Collins' The Moonstone and Dickens' Example." ELH 49:653-72.

Reierstad, Keith. "Innocent Indecency: The Questionable Heroines of Wilkie Collins' Sensation Novels." VIJ 9 (1980-81):57-69.

Andrew Gasson



THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

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U.K. NEWSLETTER

SPRING 1985

Dear Member,

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Enclosed with this Newsletter is your Membership Renewal Notice. Regrettably, the 1985 subscription has to be raised to £7.50. This is entirely due to the fact that the Journal is produced in the United States and the present low exchange rate means that its cost to the U.K. will be considerably increased.

PROSPECTIVE MEETING

Sue Lonoff seeks participants in a possible Special Session for the December 1985 Convention of the Modern Language Association in America. Her proposed topic is "Wilkie Collins: New Directions."

Please write to her at:

Sue Lonoff
Preceptor
Expository Writing
Harvard University
Harvard Union 3rd Floor
12 Quincy Street
Cambridge
Massachusetts 02138
U.S.A.

She has an April deadline for her proposal so please write to Dr Lonoff soon.

MLA MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Modern Language Association of America is not necessary for those who simply wish to attend one of its Special Sessions, but those who wish to deliver papers must be members.

If you are interested in joining the MLA or in simply learning more about it, send your enquiry to:

Members Services
Modern Language Association
62 Fifth Avenue
New York
New York 10011
U.S.A.

cont/d...

MLA INTERNATIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

Finally, on the subject of the MLA, we have recently been informed that the Wilkie Collins Society Journal has been added to the Master List of Periodicals of the MLA International Bibliography. It has officially been assigned the acronym WCSJ.

CALL FOR ARTICLES

The manuscripts for Wilkie Collins's novels, stories, and plays are scattered - often in fragments - in libraries and private collections around the world. Kirk Beetz, the editor of the Wilkie Collins Society Journal (1307 'F' Street, Davis, California 95616), requests members who know of the location of any of Collins's literary manuscripts to submit essays describing where they may be found (the Princeton University Library, for instance) and what state they are in. Please focus on just one library or private collection. Such an article need not be long - although it could be.

WILKIE COLLINS AND NINETEENTH CENTURY PSYCHOLOGY

Jenny Taylor, of the University of Bradford, writes that she has recently completed a Ph. D thesis on 'Wilkie Collins and Nineteenth Century Psychology: Cultural Significance and Fictional Forms'. It looks particularly at "Collins's representation of madness but also at his use of competing psychological paradigms in the context of contemporary theory; and makes use of modern literary theory in analysis of the narrative structures as well as explicit thematic concerns". She hopes that the thesis will be published before too long, and would be very interested to hear of anyone that might be working in a similar area.

VICTORIAN STUDIES (Summer 1984 Vol 27 No 4)

In addition to the Wilkie Collins Society Journal, the Victorian Studies Bibliography for 1983 lists the following works relating to Collins:

Barickman Richard, Susan MacDonald, & Myra Stark. Corrupt Relations: Dickens, Thackeray, Trollope, Collins, and the Victorian Sexual System. NY: Columbia UP, 1982 285pp

Gates, David P. "Tracing the Thread: The Image of the Labyrinth in Selected Novels by Wilkie Collins, Charles Dickens and Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu." DAI 43:2678A

Leavy, Barbara Fass. "Wilkie Collins's Cinderella: The History of Psychology and The Woman in White." DSA 10 (1982):91-141

Meckier, Jerome. "Wilkie Collins's The Woman in White: Providence Against the Evils of Propriety." JBS 22, 1 (1982): 104-26.

Most, Glenn W., & William w. Stowe, -eds. The Poetics of Murder: Detective Fiction and Literary Theory. San Diego, CA: Harcourt. 394 pp.

From the same issue (pp 435-460), members may also be interested in Anthea Trodd's The Policeman and The Lady: Significant Encounters in Mid-Victorian Fiction. The Moonstone and Constance Kent Road Case are discussed in detail but also mentioned are Armadales and The Biter Bit.

LITERARY LODGINGS

Published at the end of 1984, Literary Lodgings by Elaine Borish (Constable, £9.95) features a chapter on Wilkie Collins and the Royal Hotel Whitby, where he went to stay with Caroline Graves in 1861 in order to work on No Name. Alas, the alleged portrait of Wilkie on p 223 is in fact that of his father, William Collins!

MEMBERS WANTS

Returning to No Name, Virginia Blain (c/o School of English & Linguistics, Macquarie University, North Ryde, Sydney NSW 2113, Australia) is still seeking any one volume edition of this title published prior to about 1880 for the new edition she is currently preparing for the Oxford University Press. The text must be complete and in good order but the condition of the binding is unimportant.

Andrew Gasson is looking for The Dead Secret and Hide and Seek in the Chatto and Windus edition in original green cloth.

* * * * *

Andrew Gasson



THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

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U.K. NEWSLETTER

SPRING 1986

Dear Member,

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Enclosed with this Newsletter is your Membership Renewal Notice. I am pleased to report that the 1986 subscription can show a modest reduction to £7.00 now that the pound has been improving against the U.S. dollar.

NEWS FROM MEMBERS

Dr N.A. Rance of 83 Ollerton Road, London N11 2JY, has an article entitled "Wilkie Collins in the 1860's: The Sensation Novel and Self Help" in a collection of essays on suspense fiction in the 19th Century. (Publisher - The Lumiere Press).

Virginia Blain writes from Macquarie University, Australia that she is progressing well with the new edition of No Name which she is preparing for the Oxford University Press.

Dr Selby Whittingham of Flat 2, Turner House, 153 Cromwell Road, London S5 0TQ is interested in any connexion between Wilkie Collins and the Geddes family. Specifically he asks:

1. The present whereabouts of the portrait by Andrew Geddes ARA of 'The Sons of William Collins, RA' exhibited at the RA in 1834. This was in the 1890 Wilkie Collins sale.
2. How was Mrs William Collins (Harriet Geddes) related to (a) Andrew Geddes ARA (b) Dr Alexander Geddes?

Any member with information can contact Dr Whittingham direct at his address above.

VICTORIAN STUDIES (Summer 1985 Vol. 28. No. 4)

In addition to the Wilkie Collins Society Journal, the Victorian Studies bibliography for 1984 lists the following works relating to Collins.

Bedell, Jeanne F. "Wilkie Collins," pp 9-32 in Twelve Englishmen of Mystery Ed. Earl F. Bargainnier. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green U Popular P. 325pp.

cont/d...

- Frick, Patricia. "The Fallen Angels of Wilkie Collins." IJWS7:343-51.
- Frick, Patricia Miller. "Wilkie Collins's 'Little Jewel': The Meaning of The Moonstone." PQ 63:313-23.
- Gates, Barbara T. "Wilkie Collins's Suicides: 'Truth as It is in Nature.'" DSA 12 (1983): 303-18.
- Hennelly, Mark M., Jr. "Detecting Collins' Diamond: From Serpentstone to Moonstone." NCF 39:25-47.
- Lohrli, Anne. "Wilkie Collins: Two Corrections." ELN 22,1:50-53.
- Nadel, Ira Bruce. "Science and The Moonstone." DSA 11(1983): 239-59.

Members may also be interested in Heart and Science's mention in Coral Lansbury's essay. 'Gynaecology, Pornography, and the Antivivisection Movement in the previous issue of the Victorian Studies (Vol. 28, No. 3).

CALL FOR ARTICLES

As usual, Kirk Beetz in his capacity of editor of the Journal would be interested to receive any articles or essays for publication in the 1986 edition. Please write to him direct at 1307 'F' Street, Davis, California 95616, U.S.A.

Andrew Gasson has a spare copy of The Queen of Hearts available. This is the one volume 1875 Chatto and Windus "New Edition" in original green cloth. It is however in rather worn condition. At the same time, he is looking for Hide and Seek in the same series.

Andrew Gasson.



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U.K. NEWSLETTER

WINTER 1987 /88

Dear Member,

You should by now have received your copy of the latest Journal (Vol VI) 1986. As you will have realized, this was considerably delayed because of difficulties encountered in the States by the editor, Kirk Beetz. To bring future issues up to date, it has been decided to combine those for 1987 and 1988 into a single volume. It is hoped that this will then enable a 1989 Centenary Edition to be published on schedule.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

The enclosed Subscription Notice for £7.00 is thus for the years 1987 and 1988 combined. Those members who kindly paid the 1987 subscription in advance of a formal request are therefore paid up until the end of 1988.

NEWS FROM MEMBERS AND CORRESPONDENCE

It was anticipated that Laurence Ince's interesting essay "Wilkie Collins: The Intimacies of the Novels" in Volume VI of the Journal would prove controversial and it has indeed evoked a response from William Clarke, whose own biography of Collins is shortly to be published. His initial reply is enclosed with this Newsletter together with further ideas from Laurence Ince. However, the final word for the moment must remain with Mr Clarke as for the first time he is now able to reveal his own personal connexion with the descendants of Wilkie Collins.

FORTHCOMING WORKS

With the Collins centenary fast approaching, several new publications are in the pipeline.

a) As mentioned above, William Clarke of Greenwich has written a new Biography; The Secret Life of Wilkie Collins. This is due to be published in London during June 1998 by Allison and Busby (part of W.H. Allen). It will undoubtedly be of great interest to all Collins enthusiasts as it is likely to shed much light on

cont/d...

previously obscure aspects of his life. The anticipated price is £14.95 and the Society is currently negotiating with the publishers to obtain a trade discount for members. Further details will be announced in due course.

b) Kirk Beetz of California has been working on Collins's letters for several years and Oxford are now expected to publish a Selected Edition during 1989.

c) Catherine Peters of Oxford is writing a full scale critical Biography of Collins which will be published by Secker and Warburg. She is also working on a New Edition of Armada, to be published by Oxford University Press in the World's Classic series.

d) Insights. Macmillan Press have announced a New Series associated with the Lumiere Press. It is being launched with the title Masters of the Nineteenth Century and the first volume contains nine essays, including one by Society Member, Nicholas Rance. Further details are enclosed together with a copy of the attractive Woman in White poster used for The Middlesex Polytechnic's recent conference on this subject.

RECENT EDITIONS

No Name

Virginia Blain's newly edited version of No Name has now been published by Oxford University Press in the World's Classics series. This is based on the 1864 one volume edition with the original frontispiece illustration by Millais. • It also contains her new introduction together with numerous notes on the text. A review of this edition should appear in the next issue of The Journal.

A Rogue's Life

Apart from the recently issued Dover Press edition of A Rogue's Life - reviewed by Robert Ashley in Volume VI of The Journal - John Sutton Publishing reprinted their own issue of this title during 1987. They have also published The Biter Bit (which includes Mad Monkton, Gabriel's Marriage and The Lady of Glenwith Grange).

WANTS LIST

Richard Beaton of Avenue de l'Armee 50, 1040 Bruxelles is looking for any edition of Poor Miss Finch and The Fallen Leaves.

TITLES AVAILABLE

The latest catalogue from Valentine Books has several early but mainly rebound editions of Collins titles. Their address is 12 Summerhouse Road, London N16 0NA (01-254 4225).

Recent catalogues from Jarndyce (46 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PE - 01-631 4220) have also featured some uncommon titles.

VICTORIAN STUDIES (Summer 1987 Vol. 30, No. 4)

The Victorian Studies Bibliography for 1986 lists the following works relating to Collins;

Lonoff, S. Wilkie Collins and His Victorian Readers...
See VB 1983, 585.
Rev.. by S. Smith in MLR 81 :457-58.

Miller, D.A. "Cage aux folles:Sensation/and Gender in Wilkie Collins's The Woman in White." Representations 14:107-36.

Purton, Valerie. "Dickens and Collins:The Rape of the Sentimental Heroine." Ariel E 16, 1(1985): 77-89.

CALL FOR ARTICLES

As usual Kirk Beetz, in his capacity of Editor of The Journal would be interested to receive any articles or essays for publication in both the 1988 and '89 editions. Please write to him direct at: 1307 'F' Street, Davis, California 95616, U.S.A.

Andrew Gasson.



The Wilkie Collins Society

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U.K. NEWSLETTER

Summer 1988

Dear Member,

FORTHCOMING WORKS

The Secret Life Of Wilkie Collins

William Clarke's eagerly awaited biography "The Secret Life of Wilkie Collins" was published on August 1st at £14.95. A fair amount of publicity has already been generated about this, including a full page article in the Independent of Saturday July 23rd. Mr. Clarke and the Society have made arrangements to provide members with signed copies of the book at the author's discount price of £9.95. To take advantage of this, please write directly, mentioning membership of the Society, to Customer Sales, Allison & Busby, 44 Hill Street, London W1X 8LB.

The Arabian Nights in English Literature

A long-standing member of the Society, Peter L. Caracciolo writes: 'Arabian stories have stirred the imagination of British writers since Chaucer's day. In the tales of Scheherazade, too, are some of the origins of genres such as the novel, detective and science fiction; thence, also have come influences on pantomimes, opera and film, the Eastern store house supplying images for widely different attitudes: patriarchal, suffragette, imperialist revolutionary, Christian and otherwise. 'Wilkie Collins and the Ladies of Baghdad or the Sleeper Awakened' is the title of one of the essays that Peter Caracciolo has contributed to the Arabian Nights in English Literature, a profusely illustrated collection of widely ranging studies by diverse hands which he has edited and MacMillan will publish this autumn.'

THE 1989 CENTENARY

Various suggestions are being made as to how the fast approaching Collins Centenary should be marked. There is a possibility of a Centenary Conference to be organised by Professor Terry of The Department of English, University of Victoria, Canada. This, however, is at the early stages of planning. Another idea is for a Centenary Dinner to be held at a Collins related venue in London.

cont/d.....



-2-

I should be pleased to receive any further suggestions from members, with an indication of whether they would prefer

- a) September 23rd, or if another time of year is better.
- b) A formal or informal gathering.

Theatre Production of The Woman in White

According to the press, the Greenwich Theatre will be **staging a** revival of The Woman in White in December this year.

The Journal

Kirk Beetz has written to say that the combined 1987/1988 Journal is about to go to the press in the States. This will be distributed as soon as it is available in the U.K.

WANTS LIST

B.Tootell of 12 Belvedere Grove, London SW19 is looking for any reasonable, 1900ish copies of the following titles: Man and Wife, Miss or Mrs?, The New Magdalen, The Black Robe, Heart and Science, A Rogue's Life, The Evil Genius, Little Novels, The Legacy of Gain, The Two Destinies, The Haunted Hotel, Antonina and The Law and the Lady.

ANDREW GASSON



The Wilkie Collins Society

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U.K. NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN/WINTER 1988

PUBLICATIONS

Since the summer Newsletter, two new publications on Collins and his work have appeared:

In The Secret Theatre of Home, Wilkie Collins, sensation narrative & nineteenth-century psychology, by Jenny Bourne Taylor. This is published by Routledge at £35.00, but is available to members with a 25% discount at the special price of £26.25. An order form is enclosed and this should be sent to Claire Hills, Promotions Department, Routledge, 11 New Fetter Lane, London, EC4P 4EE.

Wilkie Collins: Women, Property and Propriety, by Philip O'Neill. This is published by MacMillan Press at £27.50.

Members are reminded that William Clarke's The Secret Life of Wilkie Collins is available at the author's discount price of £9.95 from the publishers, Allison & Busby, 44 Hill Street, London, W1X 8LB.

THEATRE REVIVAL OF THE WOMAN IN WHITE

As mentioned in the earlier Newsletter, the Greenwich Theatre is staging a revival of The Woman in White. This is not Wilkie Collins' own adaptation, but a new version by Melissa Murray, and directed by Sue Dunderdale. The production will run from December 1st. 1988 until January 21st. 1989.

NOTES AND QUERIES (Her Dearest Foe)

Muriel Smith of Maidenhead, Berks. has sent details of her submission to Notes and Queries (Vol.233, No.3), published in September. It concerns an early detective novel, Her Dearest Foe, which has many similarities to The Moonstone. It was originally published in Temple Bar, 1869-1870, and she suggests that this and other 1 novels previously classified as 'domestic' would offer an interesting research project for their detective content.

DATA-PROTECTION ACT

Members are advised that details of their names and addresses are now kept on computer.

THE 1989 CENTENARY

Discussions are being held with a view to arrange a Centenary Dinner at a Collins related venue in London. This may be in either September or October, 1989 the exact date will be announced in due course. As it will be helpful to have some indication of likely support, it would be appreciated if you would complete the tear-off slip below.

November 1988

NAME

I Would/would not be interested in attending a Collins Centenary Dinner.

I would prefer September/ October.

I would possibly like to bring guests.

Other suggestions _____



The Wilkie Collins Society

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U.K. NEWSLETTER

Spring 1989

THE JOURNAL

Enclosed with this Newsletter is the latest edition of the Wilkie Collins Society Journal, Vol.VII.

WILKIE COLLINS CENTENNIAL CONFERENCE

Professor R.C.Terry of the Department of English, University of Victoria, B.C., Canada, has now confirmed that the Centennial Conference will take place from September 29th. to October 1st at the Dunsmuir Lodge Conference Centre. Speakers include Michael Booth, Fred Kaplan, Christopher Kent, Sue Lonoff, Catherine Peters and John Sutherland. Further details of the meeting are attached.

CENTENARY DINNER

Plans for the Centenary Dinner are progressing and it will be held on Thursday October 26th. 1989 at the Reform Club, Pall Mall, which Wilkie was known to frequent. It is being organised under the auspices of the prestigious Thackeray Society which holds regular literary dinners at this venue. Wilkie's great grand-daughter, Faith Clarke, will be present and it is hoped that speakers will include Sir Kenneth Robinson and Benny Green.

U.K. CENTENARY MEETING

There is also the possibility of a one-day Centenary Conference in mid to late October. Provisional arrangements are being made by Dr Nicholas Rance of the Middlesex Polytechnic, All Saints, White Hart Lane, London, N. 17. Further details will be given in due course.

PUBLICATIONS

Details are enclosed of The Arabian Nights in English Literature, published by Macmillan and edited by Society member Peter Caracciolo who contributed the chapter on Wilkie Collins. The book has been hailed by Anthony Burgess as "a remarkable and much-needed study which shows how soaked our literature is in the tales of Scheherazade. Scholarly, humane and far-reaching".

A new Oxford University Press edition of Armada, edited by Catherine Peters, is due to appear in November. It is also anticipated that in the same series Basil, edited by Dorothy Goldman, will be published early next year.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The annual subscription for 1989 has been maintained at the present level of £7.00.

GHOST STORY SOCIETY

Members may be interested to hear of the recent formation of the Ghost Story Society. Further information is available from Rosemary Pardoe, Flat One, 36 Hamilton Street, Hoole, Chester, CH2 3JQ.

TRIVIAL PURSUITS: READINGS IN POPULAR CULTURE

Details have been received of this one day conference introducing the forthcoming MacMillan 'Insights' volume on popular culture. It will be held at Bedford College of Higher Education on Saturday 15th. April. Tickets are available from Dr A. Page, Bedford College, Polhill Avenue, Bedford, MK41 9EA.

Andrew Gasson



The Wilkie Collins Society

3 Merton House, 36 Belsize Park, London NW3 4EA.

To Andrew Gasson
The Secretary
The Wilkie Collins Society
3 Merton House
36 Belsize Park
LONDON NW3 4EA

I enclose my remittance of £7.00 for 1989 membership of the Wilkie Collins Society.

NAME (Block Capitals)

ADDRESS

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.....

.....

.....



The Wilkie Collins Society

PRESIDENT

Kirk Beetz
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SECRETARY

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U.K. NEWSLETTER

Summer 1989

U.K. CENTENARY MEETING Wednesday October 25th
A Wilkie Collins Centenary Conference in the U.K. has now been arranged by Dr Nick Rance of The Middlesex Polytechnic to take place on October 25th. Speakers will be Peter Caracciolo, Andrew Gasson, Nick Rance, Catherine Peters, and Jenny Bourne Taylor.

CENTENARY DINNER Thursday October 26th
The Centenary Dinner will take place on the following evening at the Reform Club, Pall Mall. Replies and bookings should be made on the enclosed sheet.

CENTENNIAL CONFERENCE IN CANADA SEPTEMBER 29TH - OCTOBER 1ST
This Meeting has been arranged by Professor R.C. Terry of the Department of English, University of Victoria, B.C. It will be held at the Dunsmuir Lodge Conference Centre. Speakers include Catherine Peters and Peter Caracciolo from the U.K., as well as Michael Booth, Fred Kaplan, Christopher Kent, Sue Lonoff and John Sutherland.

PUBLICATIONS

Members are reminded of recent publications and Society discounts:

William Clarke's The Secret Life of Wilkie Collins, Allison & Busby; author's discount price £9.95. Paperback available shortly.

Jenny Bourne Taylor's In the Secret Theatre of Home, Wilkie Collins, sensation narrative & nineteenth-century psychology, Routledge; authors discount price £26.25.

Peter Caracciolo's The Arabian Nights in English Literature, Macmillan; 37.50.

Philip O'Neill's Wilkie Collins: Women, Property and Propriety, Macmillan Press; £27.50.

THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP AND GAD'S HILL PLACE

Members may know that our friends in the Dickens Fellowship are negotiating to buy Gad's Hill Place. To assist with fund raising, the Secretary, Alan Watts has written a 40,000 word book entitled Dickens at Gad's Hill. The foreword is by Monica Dickens. All copies will be signed by the author and by Cedric Dickens who has added a postscript. The minimum cost is £15 and further information is available from Alan Watts, 34a The Avenue, Beckenham, Kent.



THE WILKIE COLLINS CENTENARY CONFERENCE
 APPROACHES TO VICTORIAN POPULAR FICTION
 Wednesday October 25th 1989
 10.30am - 5.00pm

The Centenary Conference is being arranged in conjunction with Dr Nick Rance of Middlesex Polytechnic. It will be held at the Enfield Site, Queensway, Enfield, Middlesex, EN3 4SF. The nearest station is Southbury Road, on the Liverpool Street Line.

SPEAKERS

Catherine Peters (Oxford University)
 'Invite no dangerous publicity' - Some independent women and their effect on Wilkie Collins' life and writing.

Nick Rance (Middlesex Polytechnic)
 Nothing painful Ma'am! Best sellers: what do readers want?

Jenny Bourne Taylor (Sussex University)
 Wilkie Collins - Narrative strategy and psychological paradigm.

Peter Caracciolo (Royal Holloway and Bedford New College) The limits of popular fiction

Andrew Gasson (London)
 Some biographical and bibliographical notes

COST (To include morning coffee and afternoon tea)

Members of the Wilkie Collins Society	£5
Non-members	£10

Refectory and bar service will be available for lunch.

THE WILKIE COLLINS CENTENARY CONFERENCE

To Dr Nick Rance
 83 Ollerton Road
 New Southgate
 London, N11 2JY

Please return by October 1st

I enclose my remittance of £5.00 (or £10.00)

NAME

ADDRESS.....

.....

.....



The Wilkie Collins Society

PRESIDENT

Kirk Beetz
1307 'F' Street
Davis
California 95616
U.S.A.

SECRETARY

Andrew Gasson
3 Merton House
36 Belsize Park
London NW3 4EA
ENGLAND.

U.K. NEWSLETTER

WINTER/SPRING 1991

SOCIETY REPRINTS

Members should have received by now their copy of The Last Stage Coachman. It is hoped that this will be the first of a series of reprints of Collins works which have never otherwise been reprinted. Necessarily it needs to be a fairly short piece but I should be pleased to have suggestions for the 1991 title.

THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

I have been asked by the Dickens Fellowship to give a talk on **Wilkie Collins and Charles Dickens**. This will take place on Thursday February 21st 1991 at The Swedenborg Hall, 20 Bloomsbury Way, London, W.C.1., 6.30 pm for 7.00 pm. The President of the Fellowship as suggested that we should regard this as a joint meeting and all members of the Wilkie Collins Society will be made most welcome.

OTHER TALKS

From time to time I receive requests to provide a speaker on Collins for other organisations. The latest invitation is from the Jersey Ladies Literary Luncheon Club for the October - March, 1991 - 92 season. Expenses and a fee will be paid. If any member is interested in this engagement I can let them have further details. In addition, the Alliance of Literary Societies, to which we are affiliated, keeps a list of speakers so that anyone prepared to be contacted for talks may like to let me know for future reference.

NO THOROUGHFARE AND THE LAZY TOUR

Alan Sutton Publishing (Phoenix Mill, Far Thrupp, Stroud, Gloucester, GL5 2BU) have now issued the Special Edition of No Thoroughfare and Other Stories which is also available in their Pocket Classics series. It includes the above two titles as well as four other short stories by Dickens. Also available from the same publishers are:

The Biter Bit and other stories
The Dead Secret
The Haunted Hotel
Heart and Science
Man and Wife
My Ladies Money
A Rogue's Life
The Yellow Mask and Other stories

ITEMS FOR SALE

Two non-members have written to me with Collins items which they wish to sell and may be contacted direct:

David Jackson of 16 Vogrie Road, Gorebridge, Midlothian, Scotland, EH23 4HH, has the Vanity Fair cartoon of Collins, The Novelist who invented sensation. He has suggested a price of about 40.

J.R.Hilton of 6 Woodstock Avenue, Newton-le-Willows, Lanes., WA12 8PR has a copy of Antonina in the Tauchnitz Copyright Edition. It is dated 1863 but as is well known with regard to this series Tauchnitz never changed the date on the title page even in subsequent reprints.

Incidentally, The Bibliographical Society of America has now published the long awaited bibliography by Todd and Bowden on Tauchnitz International Editions. It is very comprehensive, even if one does practically need a PhD to understand fully the complete range of symbols, abbreviations and annotations. However, it would readily solve such minor problems as the one mentioned above.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1991

The membership subscriptions for 1991 is now due. It has been kept at 7 (\$10) - the same rate as last year.

TOPICAL QUOTE

"I am recovering from one of those severe colds which it is the privilege of this great country to confer on the fortunate people who dwell in it."

(Collins letter dated September 28th. 1866.)

Andrew Gasson



The Wilkie Collins Society

PRESIDENT

Kirk Beetz
1307 'F' Street
Davis
California 95616
U.S.A.

SECRETARY

Andrew Gasson
3 Merton House
36 Belsize Park
London NWJ 4EA
ENGLAND.

UK NEWSLETTER

SPRING/SUMMER 1991

PRODUCTION OF THE FROZEN DEEP

The first reason for this Newsletter is the forthcoming play reading by the Anvil group of The Frozen Deep. This will take place at the Lyric studio, Hammersmith, King street, London, W.6 on Sunday June 16th at 7.30 p.m. I don't have a precise date, but this must be the first public performance for many years. In order to gain an idea of numbers it would be useful if members could let me know if they intend to come, using the tear-off slip on the next page. Guests will also be very welcome.

PUBLICATIONS

Wilkie Collins and Other Sensation Novelists by member Nicholas Rance has recently been published by Macmillan. The usual cost is 35 but members of the Society can obtain copies with a special 25% WCS discount at 26.25 plus 1.50 p.& p. The enclosed order form with remittance should be sent direct to Helen Brown of Macmillan.

(N.B. This offer only applies to the UK and Europe).

Published by St Martin's Press, New York (at \$17.95) is The Detective and Mr. Dickens, Being an Account of the Macbeth Murders and the Strange Events surrounding them - A Secret Victorian Journal Attributed to Wilkie Collins and Edited by William J. Palmer (ISBN 0-312-05073-9). It is, to quote the blurb, "Set largely during April and May of 1851, exploring the relationship of Dickens and Collins with Inspector William Field of the Metropolitan Protectives of London, one of the first professional detectives". Dickens scholars may also recognise Mike Slater and Katie Tillotson, also included in the cast of characters.

Full marks to Alan Sutton Publishing who continue to revive and keep in print at relatively modest cost several Collins's titles. Their latest publication is Heart and Science and they now have plans for The Woman in White and The Moonstone. A list of their books is enclosed.

Jenny Bourne Taylor, who wrote In the Secret Theatre of Home - Wilkie Collins, sensation narrative, & nineteenth-century psychology is currently working on a new edition of The Law and the Lady for Oxford University Press. This should appear towards the end of the year.

ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES

The Wilkie Collins Society continues to be affiliated to the Alliance of Literary Societies. The latest issue of the Chapter one Newsletter was distributed at their Annual General Meeting in April.

PUNCH CONFERENCE

"VICTORIAN PUNCH" - A Sesquicentennial Conference is being arranged for 12th-13th July 1991. For further details, contact Michael Slater of the Department of English, Birkbeck College, Malet Street, London, WC1E 7HX.

SHE LOVES AND LIES (Mr Lismore and the Widow)

The complete autograph manuscript of this short story which appeared in Volume I of Little Novels in 1887 is again for sale. It came up auction a year or so ago and fetched about half the current asking price. So anyone with the odd 27,500.00 to spare can purchase it from C.R. Johnson Rare Books, 21 Charlton Place, London, N1 8AQ (071-354 1077). It is item 81 in their Catalogue 32 which would be interesting to keep for the excellent description and for the illustrations of Collins and the text.

A POSSIBLE MEETING IN LONDON

There have been one or two suggestions for an informal meeting in London, possibly with a short talk. The last time we tried this support was rather poor (nearly non-existent), mainly because members are so widely spread around the country, not to mention the USA. However, I shall be happy to try again and arrange something - probably about mid October - if there seems to be sufficient interest. Please return the tear-off slip below to let me have an idea of possible support.

To Andrew Gasson
Wilkie Collins Society
3 Merton House
36 Belsize Park
London, NW3 4EA

I shall/ shall not be attending The Frozen Deep on June 16th.

I would/would not be interested in a London Meeting. I would prefer

- a) mid-week evening
- b) weekend evening
- c) weekend afternoon.

NAME (Block capitals) _____

THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY



PRESIDENT Kirk Beetz, 1307 'F' St, Davis, Ca 95616, USA
SECRETARY Andrew Gasson, 3/36 Belsize Park, London NW3 4EA
MEMBERSHIP Robert Blackham, 46 Auckland Road, Ilford, IG1 4SE

UK NEWSLETTER

SPRING 1993

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1993

The 1993 UK membership subscription has been held at £7.50. This is now due and should be sent to Robert Blackham at the above address.

JOURNAL INDEX

Enclosed with this Newsletter is an index for the wcs Journal, 1981 - 1991. Longstanding members will have most of the earlier volumes. Regrettably, however, there are no back numbers available.

PUBLICATIONS

Catherine Peters (Author of The King of Inventors) continues to be busy in the field of Collins. She has written the introduction to the recently published Everyman edition of The Moonstone, companion to the handsomely produced Woman in White in the same series. She has also edited Hide and Seek for OUP's World's Classics, due in Spring 1993.

Academic publishing continues to move at something less than the speed of light - but some of the papers of the 1989 Wilkie Collins Centenary Conference have apparently appeared in Dickens Studies Annual, 20 (1991). The remainder are still expected from AMS Press.

The Windings of the Labyrinth: Quest and structure in the major novels of Wilkie Collins by Peter Thoms (Ohio University Press, 1992; ISBN 0-8214-1039-3) is now available in the UK, price £34.20. (Copies can be ordered through Dillons). Its five main sections deal with Basil, Hide and Seek, The Dead Secret; The Woman in White; No Name; Armadale; and The Moonstone.

DICKENS AND THE GASKELL SOCIETY

The Gaskell Society are holding a joint meeting with the Dickens Fellowship on Saturday November 6th at 2.15 p.m. at Francis Holland School, 39 Graham Terrace, London, S.W.1. Edward Preston is talking on 'Dickens and Elizabeth Gaskell' and the Gaskell Hon. Sec., Mrs Joan Leach, has kindly invited any interested members of the WCS.

The next meeting of The Dickens Fellowship is 'A Theatrical Evening with Charles Dickens' by Patricia Flower. This will be held at 7.00 p.m. at the London Welsh Association, 157 Grays Inn Road, London, W.C.1.

MISCELLANEOUS

There are a few miscellaneous items, some of them omitted from previous Newsletters, with a peripheral Collins interest:

Offer from Staying off the Beaten Track

This annual publication features places with literary associations at which visitors can stay for moderate prices. It can be ordered at a cost of £9.95 from Explore Britain, Alston, Cumbria, CA9 3SL (0434 381563). As a special offer, members of the Society will receive, free, 18 worth of vouchers to be used against the cost of accommodation.

The Writer's Handbook

Details of the WCS, together with a listing of other literary Societies, will be included in The Writer's Handbook. This is now entering its seventh edition, with further details from the editor, Barry Turner, 45 Islington Park Street, London, N1 1QB (Tel; 071-226 7450)

Mystery Writers of America, Inc.

The MWA (17 East 47th Street, 6th Floor, N.Y., NY 10017, Tel: 212- 888-8171) are preparing a database of Societies and Journals, including everyone from Wilkie to Sherlock, and from Dorothy L. Sayers to Edgar Wallace. There are even some U.S. writers!

Association of Independent Libraries

Members of this association are all subscription libraries, founded between 1768 and 1841, before the public library service. They are distributed throughout the U.K., including, for example, The London Library and the Birmingham and Midland Institute (home of The Alliance of Literary Societies to which the WCS is affiliated). The Hon. Sec. is Mrs Janet Allan, The Portico Library, 57 Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3HY. I have visited The Portico which is a fascinating place as well as holding several Collins titles.

Tennyson on Video

PA Video Communications have produced a documentary film on the life and work of Tennyson entitled 'The Circle of the Hills'. It is available from 88 Vickers Lane, Louth, Lincolnshire, LN11 9PJ (Tel:0507 600064) at a cost of £18.45 including p & p.

Swansea, City of Literature

The Arts Council has designated Swansea the British City of Literature in 1995. This will be the fourth in a series of year-long festivals related to the arts, similar to the role of Birmingham in the 1992 Year of Music. Further information is available from Tonia Kemp or Karisa Krcmar, Marketing and Communications Division, Singleton Street, Swansea, SA1 3QG, Tel: 0792 476666.

FORTHCOMING CATALOGUE

Dickens specialist, Jarndyce, is planning to issue a catalogue on Collins some time during the Summer. Those wishing to receive a copy can contact them at 46 Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury, London, WC1 3PA, 071-631 4220.



THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

President Kirk Beetz, 1307 'F' Street, Davis, California 95616, USA

Secretary Andrew Gasson, 3 Merton House, 36 Belsize Park, London, NW3 4EA

Membership Louise Marchant, 10A Tibberton Square, Islington, London, NI 8SF

UK NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 1994

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Members who have not done so already should send their 1994 subscriptions to Louise Marchant at the above address.

KENSAL GREEN CEMETRY

On Saturday July 2nd 1994 (2.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m.) the Friends of Kensal Green Cemetary (FOKGC) are once again holding an open day. Everyone is welcome to the various events planned by FOKGC and Louise Marchant has compiled the enclosed *In Memory of Wilkie Collins*, mainly from contemporary Newspaper reports. The WCS will this year have a small stand to promote interest in both Collins and the Society. We shall have a variety of material on display and distribute copies of *In Memory* as well as other items.

RAMBLES AROUND MARYLEBONE

Rambles Around Marylebone seems to have been very well received by everyone. Now that we have had in all the bills for design and production the total costings have come out rather less than anticipated. This means that additional copies (all signed by the author) will be available at £3.50 to members and £4 to non-members.

A RAMBLE ROUND MARYLEBONE

We shall attempt to put the ramble to the test on Sunday August 7th. Anyone interested in trying the route should meet at 2.15 p.m. outside 'The Volunteer' pub which is at the very northern end of Baker Street at the Junction with Park Road. This is opposite the gate to Regents Park and close to the starting point. We shall depart at 2.30 p.m. prompt.

MARGARET CARPENTER AND THE COLLINS FAMILY

Richard Smith has continued his fascinating research into Margaret Carpenter and her portrait of old Mrs Collins. He gives details on the enclosed sheet to which I have added a photocopy from Horace Pym's privately printed book of 1891, *A Tour Round My Bookshelves*. This also contains several other references to Wilkie's works.

A PUBLISHING COINCIDENCE

Wilkie Collins thrived on coincidences. Faith Clarke, his great grand-daughter, has just told us of a minor one, relating to *The Woman in White* in Moscow. Her husband, William Clarke, Collins's biographer spent a week in the State Archives in Moscow earlier this year, with a young Russian interpreter Anya, for his new book *The Lost Fortune of the Tsars* (due out in July). He casually asked her why her English was so good. "I had one grandfather from Liverpool and my other grandfather, who died last year, published English classics". What kind, he asked. "His last was *The Woman in White* by Wilkie Collins. Have you heard of him?" Faith now has a copy of the latest Russian edition. It is one of half a million published in hardback in 1992.

LOCATION OF THE MOONSTONE

Yorkshire journalist, Harry Mead, has been carrying out research into the probable location of *The Moonstone*. His article will be published in autumn issue of *The Yorkshire Journal* and will also discuss the local legends associated with the Indian Maharajah who lived in the county at the time that Collins is known to have visited the area. We hope to have copies to send out to members later in the year.

PUBLICATIONS

The Alan Sutton Pocket Classics Series now has available fifteen Collins titles, either published or being reprinted. The two latest editions, *The Black Robe* and *Poor Miss Finch* have not been issued since the turn of the century and now have the benefit of a new introduction by William Clarke, author of *The Secret Life of Wilkie Collins*.

In the World's Classics series, OUP have now brought out *Mad Monkton and Other Stories* which contains a mixture of tales from *After Dark*, *The Queen of Hearts* and *Little Novels*; and a combined volume at £8.99 which includes *The Woman in White*, *The Moonstone*, and *The Law and the Lady*. Catherine Peters is also editing *Poor Miss Finch*.

A new edition of *The Evil Genius* has just appeared in Canada, from The Broadview Press (P.O. Box 1243, Peterborough, Ontario, K9J 7H5).

COLLINS IN GERMANY

Kirsten Milek of Stuttgart writes that Collins is undergoing a major revival in Germany as well as in England. Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag have published a new translation of *Die Frau in Weiss* and there have been Television series of *The Woman in White*, *The Moonstone* and *Armada*.

MY MISCELLANIES

Those visiting Golders Green in London, N.W.11 can now drop in to The No Name Cafe - but expect an American Diner with full modern sound effects rather than traditional English food!

Collins received two recent mentions in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*. The February 1994 issue published my brief letter about Wilkie's gout and its treatment with opium and morphia, in response to A.M.B. Golding's paper 'Two Hundred Years of Drug Abuse' (May 1993). In the April 1994 issue, a full page obituary of R. N. Thompson, former Executive Director, described how "He looked perfectly in tune with the wood-panelled surroundings of his London gentleman's club and his 'image' was echoed in his reading habits (the *Spectator*, Wilkie Collins) and in his fondness for traditional English puddings."

Wilkie, of course had a rather cynical opinion of doctors such as the following quote from *The New Magdalen*: "He is at the head of his profession.....- and he knows no more about it than I do. The great physician has just gone away with two guineas in his pocket. One guinea for advising me to keep her quiet; another guinea for telling me to trust to time..."

Sam Bull (Flat 1, Cranfield Court, 21-22 Homer Street, London, W1H 1HE), also of FOKGC, is interested if anyone knows a real surname for actress sisters Rose and Carlotta Leclercq. Carlotta appeared as Charles Fechter's leading lady in *No Thoroughfare* and *Black and White*.

The Housman Society have asked me to give advance notice that they are planning a number of events in 1996 to celebrate the centenary of A. E. Housman's ever popular *A Shropshire Lad*. Further details from Jim Page, 80 New Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, B60 2LA (0527 874136).

The George Eliot Fellowship is holding a 'Sunday in the Park' on 17th July at University College, Inner Circle, Regents Park. A talk by Professor Rosemary Ashton at 2.30 p.m. will follow a buffet lunch at 1.00 p.m. Bookings and further details from 19 Fitzjohn's Avenue, London, NW3 5JY.

APG

PATRONS

At a recent committee meeting it was felt that it would enhance the status of the Society if we could appoint distinguished names as Patrons of the Society. There were three self-evident possibilities with a well known Collins connexion, Faith Clarke, Wilkie's great granddaughter, Sir Kenneth Robinson, author of the pioneering biography in 1951, and the well known broadcaster Benny Green who has also written several pieces on Collins. We very are honoured that they have all agreed to accept.

ANOTHER UNLIKELY COINCIDENCE

Following the publishing coincidence in the Summer Newsletter, Catherine Peters writes that she looked for the first time for years, at a prayer book owned by one of her great-great-great-grandmothers, in which she had recorded the marriage of her daughter and son-in-law, (Catherine's great-great-grandparents) and the births, names and godparents of their five children. The marriage details are recorded as follows.

'I certify that Major James Murray MacGregor, of the Honble. East India Company's Service, and Miss Catherine Wedderburn Dunbar, daughter of the deceased Captain Thomas Dunbar of Woolfield, were married on the 26th Feby. 1801, according to the forms of the Church of England by me Archibald Alison, first Minister of the English Episcopal Chapel Edinburgh. Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder. Edinburgh 8th March 1801.'

This is, of course, the clergyman who married William and Harriet Collins in the same Chapel in 1822. He took up the Edinburgh post in 1800, and stayed until 1839. Futher background is given at the end of Chapter One in Catherine's biography, *The King of Inventors*.

THE YORKSHIRE JOURNAL

The *Yorkshire Journal* published the results of Harry Mead's interesting researches into the location of *The Moonstone* in their September issue. With their kind permission, a photocopy is enclosed. A complete copy of the Journal can be obtained for £2.95 from Smith Settle Ltd, Ilkley Road, Otley, W. Yorks, LS21 3JP (0943 467958).

DAWSON AND PARRISH'S WILKIE COLLINS AND CHARLES READE

Dawson Publishing have several titles available relating to various nineteenth century authors such as Dickens (see enclosed sheet), Meredith, Jane Austen, The Brontës, George Eliot, and Trollope, many with a strong emphasis on bibliography. They have in particular the 1968 reprint of M.L. Parrish's *Wilkie Collins and Charles Reade: first editions described with notes*. This is priced at £25 but Dawson have agreed to a 10% discount for this particular title for WCS members. Full details of Parrish and other titles from Dawson UK Ltd, Cannon House, Park Farm Road, Folkestone, Kent CTT19 SEE (0303 850101 Ext. 131; Fax 0303 850440).

A RAMBLE AROUND MARYLEBONE

On August 7th a small but select group of WCS members met in Baker Street and, ignoring the rival attractions of the Sherlock Holmes Museum, walked the route laid out in William Clarke's recent guide to Wilkie's residences in London. The map is easy to follow and, despite the summer heat, the full exercise took about two and a quarter hours to complete. The route is doubly interesting because apart from the addresses with a Collins connexion it passes a great many other blue plaques, including H.G. Wells, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Lutyens and Samuel Morse.

KENSAL GREEN

The open day at Kensal Green Cemetary on July 2nd proved of great interest. The WCS had a small stand along side one or two other literary societies, bookstalls and 'Friends of' various cemeteries. Apart from the Dickens and Collins tour, WCS members attending were seen to disappear into the catacombs - but we counted them all out and we counted them all back. Louise Marchant's *In Memory of Wilkie Collins* was well received and we hope to repeat the event next summer.

IOLANI

Ira Nadel writes from Vancouver that he has now completed his introduction to *Iolani* and hopes to have the edited text finished by about March. It will then be up to Princeton University Press how long it takes Wilkie's long lost Polynesian novel to hit the bookshops.

WILKIE COLLINS - AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE

Andrew Gasson has just begun work on *Wilkie Collins - an Illustrated Guide*. It will aim to present details of Wilkie's life and work, friends, relatives and associations as well as covering topics such as the detective story and nineteenth century publishing. It will have a concise style with a strong emphasis on illustration (comparable with several works, for example, on Dickens). It is hoped that there will be about 200 black and white photographs. Alphabetical listing of entries and cross-references are intended to give easy access to information and should complement the existing biographies by Catherine Peters and William Clarke. It will be published by Oxford University Press, but not for another year or two.

THE COMPLETE SHORTER FICTION

Robinson Publishing now expect to bring out *Wilkie Collins: The Complete Shorter Fiction* towards the end of March 1995. It is being edited by Dr Julian Thompson, lecturer in English at Oxford University, and the cost will be £30.

CURRENT COLLINS TITLES

Katherine Haynes has compiled the enclosed review of Collins titles which are either current or in preparation. This is the greatest number since the original Chatto & Windus editions went out of print at the turn of the century. We hope to bring the list up to date periodically, so please send details of any editions you know of which may have been inadvertently omitted.

ALAN SUTTON

Alan Sutton, in particular, are to be congratulated on now having fifteen Collins titles in print (plus *No Thoroughfare* with Charles Dickens); A full listing/order form is included and they have kindly agreed that prices will include postage and packing for WCS members in the UK. The full catalogue shows a comprehensive range of subjects, apart from their Pocket and Gothic Classics. (Phoenix Mill, Far Thrupp, Stroud Gloucester, GL5 2BU; 0453 731114; Fax 0453 731117).

I have just finished reading their edition of *The Fallen Leaves* which I'd avoided before because of its reputation as Collins least successful story. Expecting to be disappointed, I was pleasantly surprised. It is quite readable and except for one of Collins's more amazing coincidences where Amelius Goldenheart finds Mrs Farnaby's long lost daughter on the streets of London without even trying, it hangs together well. It also contains interesting aspects of detective fiction

in the scene where Amelius has to identify the body of Jervis in the mortuary and where the cause of death is discussed. For a change, Collins also finds something good to say of the medical profession when he describes the surgeon as "a worthy member of the noble order to which he belonged".

THE HIGHWAYMAN AND MR DICKENS

But for really poor story telling try William Palmer! After the appalling *The Detective and Mr Dickens* (badly written, factually incorrect and unbelievable dialogue), he has now produced *The Highwayman and Mr Dickens* which also purports to be written in the first person as 'a secret Victorian journal, attributed to Wilkie Collins'. Say no more.....

WILKIE COLLINS: AN ODD VOLUME

John Hart's recent catalogue 32 had one or two copies of this resumé of Collins, published in a limited edition of 133 copies by the Sette of Odd Volumes in 1967. It is described as No. CVII of the Privately Printed Opuscula, Issued to Member of the Sette of Odd Volumes, originally presented as a paper read before the 666th Meeting of the Sette by Arthur Brown on 11th April 1967 at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. The Sette is an exclusive private dining club which is still in existence.

DIRECTORY OF LITERARY SOCIETIES

Library Association Publishing has now produced the Directory of Literary Societies and Author Collections, edited by Roger Sheppard. The volume lists over 500 societies and collections and provides a useful desk-top reference tool. It is available from LAPL, 7 Ridgemount Street, London, WC1E 7AE (071 636-7543) at £35 Hardback.

TALKING BOOKS

Collins is now represented by *The Moonstone*, read by Patrick Tull, (Cover to Cover 052); *The Woman in White*, read by Ian Holm, (Cover to Cover 018 - but said to be available only to libraries); and *A Terribly Strange Bed*, read by Robin Bailey in a collection of short stories by several authors. Further details of these titles as well as their entire range can be had from The Talking Bookshop, 11 Wigmore Street, London, W.1., 071-495-8799.

COLLECTED EDITION FOR SALE

Dr William Baker of the English Department, Northern Illinois University, Dekalb, Ill 60115, USA still has for sale the 30 volume collected edition of Collins's works, published by P. F. Collier in 1900. He has suggested a price of \$850 plus postage.



THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

Chairman Andrew Gasson, 3 Merton House, 36 Belsize Park, London, NW3 4EA

Membership Louise Marchant, 10A Tibberton Square, Islington, London, N1 8SF

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 1995

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1995

The 1995 membership subscription is now due and should be sent to Louise Marchant at the above address. It has been held at £7.50 for UK and European members but in view of the high cost of overseas postage it is now necessary to charge £10 for those outside of Europe.

TITLES IN PRINT

Following December's review of current titles, Robin Tucker writes that he has found *Rambles Beyond Railways* still available from W.H. Smiths. This is the Cornish Library edition and also contains *The Cruise of the Tomtit*. The ISBN number is 0 90774 605 5. (Also obtainable from W. H. Smith, Wilkie features on the back cover of *The Great Writers* - see review below). Penguin Books have recently published a new edition of *No Name*.

ALAN SUTTON

Alan Sutton continue to expand their list of Collins titles and in May expect to have available both *Jezebel's Daughter* and *The Evil Genius*. They are considering other titles for late summer. (*The Evil Genius* has also been published in Canada by the Broadview Press with extensive introduction and notes by Graham Law).

FILM VERSIONS OF THE MOONSTONE AND THE WOMAN IN WHITE

Until recently most of the cinema reference books, such as Halliwell, have denied the existence of a film version of *The Moonstone*. However, a mention has just come to light in the mystery magazine *Scarlet Street*. Produced

in 1934, the film stars David Manners and Phyllis Barry. The description, rather in the way of Hollywood, seems to bear little resemblance to the authentic Collins plot: "A young adventurer and his Hindu servant arrive at a gloomy mansion during a terrific storm. There they deliver The Moonstone, a famed gem recaptured from a lost temple in the wilds of India. The creepy estate is filled with a cast of sinister looking guests and servants and during the night the gem disappears. A great old-dark-house thriller from Monogram."

Incidentally, there have been at least two film versions of *The Woman in White*. One with the real title, starring Sydney Greenstreet as Fosco (1948); the other called *Crimes in the Old Dark House* (1940). I have a copy on video of the 1948 version and at a recent committee meeting it was suggested that we could hold a film evening to show this. If members are interested in seeing a rather creaky version of *The Woman in White*, they should let me know on the enclosed membership renewal form and we'll try to arrange a convenient date - probably a mid-week evening in the London area.

I would also be interested to hear from members who know of any other film (or television) versions of Wilkie's works, either English or foreign language productions.

ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES

The WCS continues to be affiliated to The Alliance of Literary Societies. The AGM and Forum at which the various Societies display their activities will be held on Saturday 29th April at the New Unitarian Hall, Ryland Street, Birmingham. This year's Forum will be hosted by The Friends of Keats House and the Alliance President, Gabriel Woolf, will present readings from Keats. Apart from the WCS 'official delegate', visitors are welcome at the nominal cost of £1.00.

COLLINS AT THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

The famous Millais portrait of Wilkie as a young man has been brought out of storage and is currently on show at the National Portrait Gallery. Incidentally, members are reminded that Katherine Haynes, who a few years ago was single-handedly responsible for persuading the NPG to reprint the portrait, still has supplies of the postcards available at a cost of 20p each. Anyone wishing to obtain copies should contact her direct at 150 Elstree Park, Barnet Lane, Borehamwood, Herts, WD6 2RP.

Katherine has been very busy on behalf of the WCS and has also written the following two pieces. (I would be pleased to hear from other members with either brief snippets of news or longer contributions).

THEATRICAL VERSION OF THE MOONSTONE

The Moonstone, adapted by Anthony Peters, was staged at the Maltings Art Theatre, St Albans, 19th - 21st January. This was a very simply staged production, the cast consisting of four people in various roles, using a minimum of props and costume changes. During the first act the stage was dominated by a large diamond-shaped board which could be tilted in various directions and became, amongst other things, a table, the bank above the Shivering Sands and even *The Moonstone* itself. At times this was lit with eerie ultraviolet light which helped enforce the idea of the brilliance and value of the gem.

The stage contained four gothic pointed chairs; four tall lamps - like street lamps with globes; and four small lamps also shaded by globes which, like the board, were used to represent for example *The Moonstone* and a rose in Sergeant Cuff's hand. At first we found it a little odd that *The Moonstone* was not represented by one single object, but we soon found the actors slipping from one character to another, and all the props used in such effective and imaginative ways that we quickly adapted to the idea.

When we first became acquainted with the actors I was a little disappointed that Franklin Blake was played by Adam Cockerton rather than Callum Coates who was just as I had pictured Blake to be. Coates, however, turned out to be a splendid Cuff, particularly in his scenes with Ian Ramage as Gabriel Betteredge. The fourth member of the team was Susanna Northern, who brought out the pathos and tragedy in the character of Rosanna Spearman.

The story was in part narrated by the four members of the cast, with key scenes being acted out. For the second act the diamond-board was removed and the four street lamps were used to transport us to a foggy London street and the attack upon Godfrey Ablewhite (Coates). This was almost a 'black-and-white' production, with very little colour about the stage and costumes. As a result of this, the sparse set and strong story-telling, the audience could to a large extent use its imagination. Weird electronic music added to the atmosphere.

We attended the performance on 19th January, the two later dates having been sold out. The theatre seemed

packed out and we all had to edge up on the benches to squeeze a few more people in. It is good to see in this day and age that Wilkie Collins is just as popular as ever.

GREAT WRITERS

Great Writers: an illustrated companion to the lives and works of Britain's most celebrated writers. W. H. Smith Exclusive Books, 1992. (Originally published at £11.99 but priced in their recent sale at £5.99).

This large book reproduces material originally used by Marshall Cavendish in their 'Great Writers' series, in which Collins's *The Woman in White* was Number 11. The picture of Wilkie by Charles Collins, his brother, is reproduced on the back cover.

Those who missed out on the magazine publication can here catch up on the pieces 'Runaway Success' about Collins's life and '**Fear** of the Madhouse' concerning his sources and inspiration. These cover eleven pages of the original magazine to give a fair sized piece on Wilkie.

Obviously, in a volume covering so many writers, they have not used all of the material published by Marshall Cavendish from 1986-1988. The two other pieces on Collins were '*The Woman in White*, a reader's guide' and 'Thrilling Tales, the writer at work'. All the articles are richly illustrated. Other writers in the book include Mary Shelley, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and, of course, Dickens. KH

REFERENCE HANDBOOKS

The fourth edition of the *Marcan Handbook of Arts Organisations* is now available from PO Box 3158, London SE1 4RA at a cost of £20 plus £1.20 p & p. It gives a compendium of information on the activities and publications of national, regional and international arts and cultural organisations.

The ninth edition of Macmillan's *Writer's Handbook* is due for publication in August at a cost of £13.99. It will be obtainable from bookshops or direct from Dominic Taylor, Macmillan Publishers, 18-21 Cavaye Place, London SW10 9PG (£14.99 with p & p).

APG



THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

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Membership Louise Marchant, 10A Tibberton Square, Islington, London, NI 8SF

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 1995

PUBLICATIONS

So far this year, there has been a wide and varied range of publications by and about Collins:

WILKIE COLLINS: THE COMPLETE SHORTER FICTION

Despite the publishers' best endeavours to keep it secret from the WCS, *The Complete Shorter Fiction*, edited by Julian Thompson, was brought out earlier this year (Robinson Publishing, ISBN 1-85487-264-8. Despite the high price of £30, its 925 pages include all the fiction under novella length (30,000 words) published by Collins in his lifetime. Readers will therefore find a comprehensive range of forty-eight stories from the obscure 'The Twin Sisters' (1851), to the often republished 'A Terribly Strange Bed' (1852). Each story is preceded by a headnote which gives details of its publishing history and other useful information.

Overall, a 'must' for readers and collectors of Collins. Dr Thomspen is a lecturer in English at Oxford University and has compiled a similar volume on Anthony Trollope. If Collins follows the same route, there may be a less expensive paperback version in due course.

VICTORIAN FICTION: Writers, Publishers, Readers

Written by John Sutherland, this title is published by Macmillan at £35.00 (ISBN 0-333-63286-9 hardcover) and £12.99 (ISBN 0-333-64422-0 paperback). It gives a fascinating insight into the cultural, social and commercial factors influencing the production of Victorian Fiction, a subject on which John Sutherland has published widely. Collins receives full mention, including Chapter Two devoted to the writing of *The Woman in White*. He argues that the book is peculiarly a product of the 1850s; is the formative text in the evolution of the Sensation Novel; uses the courtroom as a forensic narrative technique; and was influenced by the Rugeley poisoner, William Palmer. Sutherland also compares the novel's chronology in both the original manuscript and the first three-volume book edition. Of more general interest is Chapter Eight 'Who were they?' which analyses the demographics of Victorian novelists.

DETECTIVE FICTION: The Collector's Guide

The second edition of Detective Fiction: The Collector's Guide by John Cooper and Barry Pike has recently been published by Scalar Press. At 340 pages it is about 50% longer and therefore more comprehensive than the first edition which concentrated on 'Golden Age' authors. The book is intended as a handbook for collectors of the genre and gives practical advice on all aspects of assembling and maintaining such a collection. The main body of the book presents authors alphabetically, giving a brief resume of their background together with a checklist of titles.

Collins, alas, not fitting into the mainly twentieth century contents, doesn't receive an entry but my own lasting impression on looking through the nearly 150 author entries remains 'just look at what he started'. This is reinforced when reading Appendix A since Collins could be included in several of the 15 subject headings such as The humorous mystery, Police procedurals, Small town mysteries, Legal mysteries and Locked rooms. In addition, the general principles of collecting suggested in the introductory sections still apply equally well to a particular author such as Collins. Other Appendixes give details of publishers' practices, a glossary of terms, specialist dealers, and author societies in which the WCS is duly mentioned.

Detective Fiction is available direct from Scalar Press at £39.50 (plus 3.50 p & p), Gower House, Croft Road, Aldershot, Hampshire, GU11 3HR, (Telephone 01252 317707, Fax 01252 343151). Members in the USA should contact Scalar Press, Old Post Road, Brookfield, Vermont, 05036-9704 (800 535 9544).

WEST NORWOOD CEMETERY: The Dickens Connection

WCS member Paul Graham has just completed this excellent ninety-page booklet (ISBN 1 873520 10 7) for The Friends of West Norwood Cemetery (79 Durban Road, London SE27 9RW). It features thirty-nine 'residents', with several references to Collins. These include Richard Bentley, William Bradbury, Douglas Jerrold, Frederick Robson and David Roberts. Entries are illustrated with line drawings by Don Bianco and contain many useful references.

MR DICK'S KITE

Alan Watts of the Dickens Fellowship has recently sent out his latest issue of *Mr Dick's Kite* (No. 40). Wilkie receives a mention in connection with his identity as Thomas Idle in *The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices*. Much as Wilkie relished his air of indolence, as Alan Watts *The Kite's* creator writes, "The list of all these (Collins's) writings is most impressive. Can anyone seriously believe that their author was a born-and-bred idler, a consistent idler? Dickens, of course knew better."

ALAN SUTTON

ALAN SUTTON have published two new titles in their Pocket Classics Series: *The Two Destinies* (£4.99) and *I Say No* (£5.99). They have also reissued *Miss or Mrs?* in a larger format at £3.99. Alan Sutton tell me that they usually take texts from copies in the London Library. This means that in some cases the texts are drawn from first editions.

POOR MISS FINCH

Oxford University Press have now published their critical edition of *Poor Miss Finch* in the World's Classics Series. It is edited with valuable notes by Catherine Peters and is available at £5.99, paperback.

VICTORIAN STUDIES

The most recent issue of *Victorian Studies* publishes its bibliography for 1993. The listing for Collins has gradually expanded over the last few years and apart from book reviews currently includes:

Allen, Brooke. "More Than Sensational: The Life and Art of Wilkie Collins." *NewC* 12, 4:31-40.

Salee, Susan. "Wilkie Collins and Surplus Women: The Case of Marion Halcombe." *VLC* 20 (1992):197-215.

Bernstein, Stephen. Reading Blackwater Park: Gothicism, Narrative, and Ideology in *The Woman in White*." *SNNTS* 25:291-305.

Hendershot, Cyndy. "A Sensation Novel's Appropriation of the Terror-Gothic: Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White*." *Clues* 13(1992):127-33.

Nayder, Lillian. "Aspects of Empire in *The Woman in White*." *VN* 83:1-7.

Tutor, Jonathon Craig. "Lydia Gwilt: Wilkie Collins's Satanic, Sirenian Psychotic." *UMSE* 10(1992):37-55.

Zander, Andela. "Spot the Source': Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone* und John Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman*." *ZAA* 41:341-48.

FILM VERSIONS OF COLLINS

As mentioned in the last Newsletter, a select band of members gathered to watch the film version of *The Woman in White*. James Agee probably summed it up best with:

"The Wilkie Collins novel is given the studious, stolid treatment ordinarily reserved for the ritual assassination of of a great classic. This is not intended as a recommendation."

Whilst not exactly Hollywood at its best, most of the plot does bear some resemblance to the book and Sidney Greenstreet carries off the part of Fosco with his usual style. Also in the cast are Gig Young and Eleanor Parker.

The newly found 1934 version of *The Moonstone* is probably Hollywood at its worst and can only be recommended to broad-minded devotees. Set in the twentieth century, Sergeant Cuff is the suave emissary of Scotland Yard, complete with Anglo-American accent, sent North to protect the diamond. Lady Verinder is altered to Sir John, an eccentric country doctor being pressurised for money by an archetypal foreign villain. Rachel is renamed Anne, and Betteredge has also undergone a sex change into a faithful lady housekeeper. But there is an Indian, who doesn't end up with the jewel - and perhaps Wilkie might have liked the whole thing as a parody!

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Any membership subscriptions for 1995 which are still unpaid should be sent to Louise Marchant, our membership secretary, at her usual address.

WANTS LIST

If any members are searching for particular titles, editions or odd volumes, or if they have duplicate copies to dispose of, details can be included in future Newsletters. A current request is for an odd volume two of the first English three volume edition of *No Name*. The binding and condition are immaterial as long as the preliminary leaves are complete and in good state.

HOUSEMAN SOCIETY

The Houseman Society have asked us to publicise their forthcoming Centenary of *A Shropshire Lad*. Enclosed is their illustrated brochure of events which WCS members will be welcome to attend.

BLOOM TOURS - IRELAND

Bloom Tours have asked us to mention their literary tours. They are arranging two Autumn, eight-day itineraries 'Joyce's City and Yeats' Country' at £780 per head. Further information from Caragh House, Prosperous, co. Kildare, Ireland (Tel/Fax 35345-60118).

APG

THE EVIL GENIUS

Katherine Haynes has been reappraising *The Evil Genius* (Alan Sutton £4.99). Apart from very favourable comment on William Clarke's new introduction to the Collins titles in the Pocket Classics Series, Katherine has written the following

The opening sentence of *The Evil Genius* catches the attention immediately and you instantly want to know what is going to happen. A man has been found guilty committing a crime. He leaves a cryptic note for his wife, telling her where some diamonds are to be found. From this the reader gains the impression that this is to be a story of mystery and detection. Is the man, in fact, innocent of the crime? What has become of the diamonds? I imagined we might follow the wife as she pursued her investigations, but no. Having remarried she deserts her daughter and travels abroad.

Instead of following the fortunes of the woman, we are told of the wretched childhood of the deserted daughter. She goes by the strange name of Sydney and advertises her

services as a governess. Mr Herbert Linley engages her and we soon find ourselves entangled in a domestic drama brought about by the eternal triangle. Events we have followed closely at the beginning of the book are not referred to again and characters introduced in the early part of the story disappear, never to grace its pages again.

Having imagined that Sydney might try to move heaven and earth to clear her father's name, we find her being told very briefly of his complete innocence with virtually no reaction from her on receiving this information. There is no explanation of how it was her father came by the diamonds if he was really innocent of any crime.

Although there are domestic dramas and intense scenes between husband, wife and mistress the passages on the sanctity of marriage, divorce, the laws of man as opposed to the laws of nature and so on, become a little wearing. I have admired Collins use of coincidence in other works but here our belief in random chance is at times stretched to breaking point.

Amongst the main characters there are neither true villains nor heroes. Collins is at great pains to point out that his characters are human, with an equal mixture of good and bad. Mr Linley's brother is at one time described as 'the evil genius' and on other occasions the expression is used for Mr Linley's mother-in-law, Mrs Presty. So who is 'the evil genius' of the title?

As in other works, Collins is concerned here with what is expected by polite Society and what is expected of human nature. Because a woman is divorced, is she to be ostracised? Because a man is divorced is he never to see his child again? Should someone who has committed adultery be denied forgiveness?

Whilst applauding Collins for his views on such matters, I regret that he did not pursue the 'mystery angle' which would have made this well-written and well-meaning novel even better. That said, in my opinion, I would rather read a second-rate work by Wilkie Collins than a so-called best seller by many another author!

KH



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Publicity Katherine Haynes, 150 Elstree Park, Barnet Lane, Boreham Wood, WD6 2RP

NEWSLETTER

WINTER 1995-1996

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1996

The 1996 membership subscription is now due and should be sent to Louise Marchant at the above address. It has again been held at £7.50 for UK and European members and £10 for those outside of Europe. Payment should be made in Sterling.

JOINT MEETING WITH THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

The WCS and the Dickens Fellowship are planning a joint meeting for early in November 1996. Professor Michael Slater of Birkbeck College, author of several books on Dickens, will probably speak on the joint Collins and Dickens amateur theatricals, covering *The Lighthouse* and *The Frozen Deep*. Full details will be confirmed in the next Newsletter.

REVIEW OF TITLES IN PRINT

Last year's listing of Collins titles currently available has been brought up to date. As ever, if any member knows of any editions that may have been omitted, please let me know for future updates.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Alan Sutton are nearing the end of their Collins programme, having successfully brought back into print the majority of his lesser known novels in their Pocket Classics Series. There are two new titles forthcoming in May 1996. The first is a single volume containing *The Frozen Deep* and *Mr Wray's Cash-Box*. *The Frozen Deep*, originally published in 1874, has remained out of print since the Chatto & Windus edition in 1915. *Mr Wray's Cash-Box* (1852) was reissued as part of a much larger anthology in 1991 but the new publication will make it much more accessible. The second title will be a new paperback edition of William Clarke's biography *The Secret Life of Wilkie Collins*. Originally published in 1988, this edition will include new information such as details of the Iolani manuscript recently discovered in New York.

THE LETTERS OF WILKIE COLLINS

We at last have firm good news about an edition of the letters of Wilkie Collins. Faith Clarke has given formal permission to the Macmillan Press to publish a collected edition of her great-grand father's letters. They will be edited by Professor William Baker of Northern Illinois University and by William Clarke who was invited to join him as co-editor. William Baker has published various articles on Collins, including 'The Manuscript of *No Name*' in *Studies in Bibliography* (Papers of the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia), Vol. 43, 1990. He is also well known for his work on George Eliot. William Clarke is the author of *The Secret Life of Wilkie Collins*. Macmillan hope to publish some time in 1997-98.

WILKIE COLLINS TO THE FOREFRONT

At long last fifteen papers presented at 1989 Wilkie Collins Centennial Conference at the University of Victoria, B.C. have appeared in print. They are published by AMS Press, Inc. (56 East 13th Street, New York, N.Y. 10003) under the title *Wilkie Collins to the Forefront: Some Reassessments*, edited by Nelson Smith and R. C. Terry (ISBN 0-404-64351-5). They are available in the U.K. from Eurospan, 3 Henrietta Street, London, WC2E 3LU (0171-240-0856) at £49.50.

EVERYONE IN DICKENS

Greenwood Press are publishing a three-volume scholarly reference collection devoted to the complete works of Charles Dickens. Entitled *Everyone in Dickens*, it is

compiled and edited by George Newlin. Further details of this comprehensive work as well as the Collins/Dickens relationship are contained in the enclosed leaflets.

TALKING BOOKS

The latest Collins addition to the world of recorded books is *The Haunted Hotel* by Complete Listener at £16.49. Still available are: *The Woman in White* in an abridged version read by Nigel Anthony, published by Penguin at £9.99; and an unabridged version by Cover to Cover at about £49. There is an abridged version of *The Moonstone* by Naxos at £8.49; the full recording with Ian Stewart and Patrick Tull costs £55.49. 'A Terribly Strange Bed' is included in *Classic Tales of Mystery and the Supernatural*. These are all available from various outlets, including the Talking Bookshop, 11 Wigmore Street, London, W.1., 0171-495-8799. In addition, many public libraries now loan recorded books. Ideal for lazy readers - and they are possibly the best antidote for traffic jams!

BOOKMARKS

We are enclosing a few of the recently produced WCS bookmarks. Apart from being useful, we hope they will help publicise the Society. If you would like any extra, they are available free of charge but please send a stamped addressed envelope.

LA BIBLIOTHÈQUE DES LITTÉRATURE POLICIÈRES. BILIPO

A new public library (BILIPO) devoted to the mystery novel has recently opened in Paris. It was created by the City of Paris to collect and preserve books, magazines, film posters and post cards relating to the mystery novel for the serious study of the genre by students, writers and historians. The library currently holds over 30,000 novels including 3,500 general reference books on historical aspects of the genre, bibliographies, espionage, criminology, etc. Much of the literature is in English.

BILIPO welcomes enquiries and comments, as well as donations of books and magazines. The aim of the library is to provide a centre for study; to organize expositions and workshops, and to publish critical studies of current and past literature on the subject of crime. Further details can be obtained from the head librarian, Catherine Chauchard.

JOURNAL OF VICTORIAN CULTURE

Leeds Centre for Victorian Studies is launching the new biannual *Journal of Victorian Culture*. This should appear for the first time in Spring 1996. The editorial board expect that the journal will become the central forum for academic exchange for the broad field of Victorian Studies in Britain. It will contain a listings/noticeboard section. Further information from Martin Hewitt of the Leeds Centre for Victorian Studies, School of Humanities and Cultural Studies, Trinity and All Saints, Brownberrie Lane, Leeds, LS18 5HD, (0113 283 7231).

ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES

The WCS continues to be affiliated to the Alliance of Literary Societies. They plan to hold the 1996 AGM and one day seminar in Birmingham on Saturday 20 April. The hosts this year will be the Houseman Society with talks about his life and works. All WCS members will be welcome to attend at a nominal charge of £1.00. Anyone interested should let me know.

SYMPOSIUM ON THE DETECTIVE STORY

The School of Advanced Study, University of London, is organizing a symposium on the Detective Story. It will be held at the Institute of Germanic Studies, 13-14th June. This international symposium will treat English, American, French, German, and (probably) Czech and South African detective fiction, and will include writers as well as scholars from a number of countries. The organizers are Martin Swales and Robert Vilain of the Institute of Germanic Studies, Annette Lavers of the Institute of Romance Studies and Warren Chernaik of the Centre for English Studies (Senate House, Malet Street, London, WC1E 7HU). The full programme is expected to be available in the spring.

KENSAL GREEN CEMETERY

Friends of Kensal Green Cemetery will be holding another open day during the summer. It will take place on Saturday 6 July between 11 a.m. and 4.30 p.m. and there will be the usual tours, talks and other attractions. Further information can be obtained from F.O.K.G.C., Harrow Road, London, W10 4RA.



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NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 1996

JOINT MEETING WITH THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

Michael Slater has revised the topic of his talk on Monday 4 November, 6.00 for 6.30 p.m. He will now be speaking on Collins's collaboration with Dickens in writing Christmas Stories for *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*. The talk should coincide with a volume of Christmas stories, edited by Dr Ruth Glancy, appearing in the new paperback series of the Everyman Dickens. Collins's contributions are apparently fully represented. Professor Slater's new title is 'Christmas with Dickens and Collins' and the joint meeting will take place at the Swedenborg Hall, 20-21 Bloomsbury Way, London, WC1 (entrance in Barter Street).

NEW AND FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS

Broadview Press, the Canadian publishers issuing the excellent version of *The Evil genius* edited by Graham Law, are planning a new critical edition of *Heart and Science*, first published in 1883. It will be edited by Professor Steve Farmer of the English Department at Arizona State University and will include text documents from the period. Many concern the anti-vivisection debate that was raging in England in the 1870s and 1880s and an appendix will contain letters to and from Collins, supplementing his own views expressed in the preface to the novel. Publication is intended for October 1996 at CDN \$15.95; it should be available in the **U.K.** in January 1997 with a probable price of £10.95. (Broadview Press, 71 Princess Street, P.O. Box 1243, Peterborough, ON K9J 7H5, Canada, Tel. (705) 743-8990, **Fax** (705) 743-8353. In England, through B.R.A.D., 244a London Road, Hadleigh, Essex SS7 2DE, Tel. 01702 552912, Fax 01702 556095).

SUTTON PUBLISHING

Sutton Publishing, previously Alan Sutton, have now released their two latest titles. The new paperback edition of William Clarke's *The Secret Life of Wilkie Collins* was published on 18 July at £9.99. It contains details of the recent discovery in New York of *Iolani*, Collins's first unpublished novel. Sutton's other new title is *The Frozen Deep and Mr Wray's Cash-Box*, priced at £5.99. *Mr Wray's* only other appearance since 1852 was in Richard Dalby's 1991 anthology, *Crime for Christmas*. *The Frozen Deep* has not been reissued since the Chatto & Windus edition of 1915.

COLLECTED EDITION - AMS PRESS

It seems that AMS Press (56 E. 13th Street, New York, NY 10003 - 4686, US) have rereleased 'The Works of Wilkie Collins', ISBN 0-404-01750-9. This is a reissue of the original 1900 collected edition in 30 volumes by P. F. Collier, republished in 1970. Titles cost \$93 where available and the complete edition the rather modest sum of \$2,790! Good secondhand runs occasionally turn up in the UK and anyone interested in a full set would probably do better to contact antiquarian booksellers who are likely to charge less than the current AMS price. The volume divisions of the Collier edition are rather arbitrary with major novels mixed up with various short stories.

Nevertheless, the combination of AMS with Sutton, OUP and Julian Thompson's *The Complete Shorter Fiction* means that almost all of Collins's fiction is once again in print.

A DICKENS CHRONOLOGY

Recently back in print is *A Dickens Chronology* by Norman Page, originally published in 1988. As the title suggests, events in Dickens's life are given chronologically between 1812 and 1870. There is good detail on Collins's movements from 1851 onwards. A useful little book but at the impressive price of £47.50! - no illustrations but a Dickens family tree. Macmillan Press Ltd, ISBN 0-333-38859-3, hardback.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Ira Nadel writes that his edition of *Iolani* with a comprehensive introduction will soon be delivered to Princeton University Press, with publication now scheduled towards the end of 1997. Professor Nadel has also been working on a critical edition of *The Dead Secret*. Andrew Gasson's *Wilkie Collins: an Illustrated Guide* is intended for publication by OUP in January 1998; William Baker and William Clarke are progressing well with their work on Collins's letters.

Kirsten Hüttner (previously Mück before her recent marriage) has almost completed her PhD dissertation on *The Woman in White* and this should be published in English later this year in an edition of about 300 by the small academic publishers, Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier. Anyone interested in obtaining a copy should write to Kirsten Hüttner at Stettner Str. 20, 70327 Stuttgart, Germany.

TANGLED WEB

Andrew Osmond has issued the first number of his magazine, *Tangled Web*, devoted to crime and detective fiction. Collins is duly recognised in 'Satan in the Hairbrush: *The Moonstone* and Literary Subversion' by Sarah Clarke. As a new project, *Tangled Web* will welcome articles or short stories on most aspects of the genre. It costs £2.95, U.K.; £3.95, overseas. Further information from Andrew Osmond, 69 Holm Oak Park, Watford, Herts, WD1 8TH.

MORE ON DETECTIVE FICTION

For those with an interest in detective fiction, a new bookshop, 'Crime in Store' recently opened at 14 Bedford Street, London, WC2. Further information from Ralph Spurrier (01273 843 066) or Kathryn Skoyles (0171 515 6791).

This year's Bouchercon, World Mystery Convention, is taking place from 10-13 October at St. Paul, Minnesota. Details from Dennis Armstrong, 4400 Upton Ave. So. #408, Minneapolis, MN 55410.

THE WILKIE WEB

There has been a great deal recently in the press about the Internet. Journalist member, Paul Lewis, has put together the enclosed pamphlet on 'The Wilkie Web' which will serve as a useful introduction to the subject in general and Collins in particular. Information available seems to range from bookshop lists to detailed research papers.

TALKING BOOKS FROM THE RNIB

Following the note about recorded books in the last Newsletter, I have been informed that the RNIB have several Collins titles available in a mixture of Talking Book, Tape Cassette, and Braille. Works include: *No Throughfare*, *The Moonstone*, *Basil*, *No Name*, *The Woman in White*, *The Dead Secret*, and *Armada*. Further information from RNIB Customer Services, PO Box 173, Peterborough, PE2 6WS, Tel. 0345 023153; or RNIB Talking Book Service, Mount Pleasant, Wembley, Middlesex, HA0 1RR, Tel. 0181-903 6666

SIR KENNETH ROBINSON (19 March 1911 - February 16 1996)
The recent death of Sir Kenneth Robinson at the age of 84 came as a sad loss. As a public figure he was well known as a former Labour MP, Minister of Health from 1964-1968, chairman of the English National Opera 1972-1977, and the Arts Council 1977-1982. He was knighted in 1983. Members of the WCS will remember him as a speaker at the 1989 Centenary Dinner and a distinguished Patron of this society. All those with an interest in Collins will have read and appreciated his pioneering biography of Wilkie. In his forward, Sir Kenneth recorded how he came to read Collins while in a Bombay hospital and decided to investigate the mystery of his life. 'About 1948 I came to the conclusion that Collins had waited long enough for a biography, and, since no one else appeared likely to fill the gap, I decided to write it myself....Despite an affection for my subject which grew with my knowledge of him, I have tried to be objective. The result will, it is hoped, throw light upon one who has long been regarded as a literary enigma.'

Those who have read the biography will know how well he succeeded. It is still remarkably readable and no WCS member should be without a copy. Incidentally, our other literary patron, Benny Green, wrote a highly favourable review of the second edition under the title 'Victorian Rake and Rebel' in *The Spectator* of 4 January 1975.

Another recent death with a Collins connection was that of the well known actor Patrick Cargill. He played the part of Sergeant Cuff in the early television serialisation *The Moonstone* in 1959.

COLLINS IN THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

Wilkie made the front page of *The Daily Telegraph*, Arts and Books section, on 22 June in a piece entitled 'Mystery of the Missing Fortnight' taken from John Sutherland's recent book *Is Heathcliff a Murderer?* (OUP, £3.99). It discusses the popularity of *The Woman in White* and the chronological errors made by Collins in the construction of the plot, subsequently corrected in the 1861 one volume edition.

GRAYSHOTT LITERARY FESTIVAL

Described as A Rural Weekend for Readers and Writers, The Grayshott Literary Festival will be held from 20-22 September. Nothing directly on Collins, but a good mixture of old and new writing, including 'Heroes and Villains', 'Parodies' and 'Arthur Conan Doyle'. Tickets, £10 per day, 01428 604798, Enquiries 01428 712892.



THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

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Chairman Andrew Gasson, 3 Merton House, 36 Belsize Park, London, NW3 4EA

Membership Louise Marchant, 10A Tibberton Square, Islington, London, N1 8SF

NEWSLETTER

WINTER 1996

'A PICTORIAL TOUR TO ST. GEORGE BOSHERVILLE'

With this Newsletter comes the latest WCS reissue of one of Collins's out of print pieces. Now that almost all of his fiction, short and long, is back in print it was decided at a recent committee meeting that we should concentrate on the non-fiction works, many of which have never been republished and are difficult to locate in their original form. With the help of Paul Lewis and his computer, we begin with 'A Pictorial Tour to St. George Bosherville', an early piece originally published in volume XXIX, no. 173 of *Bentley's Miscellany*, May 1851, pp 493-508. It runs to about 10,000 words and is longer than any of our previous publications. We would be interested to hear from members with suggestions for future reprints.

MEMBERS CONTRIBUTIONS

The WCS *Journal*, originally produced by Kirk Beetz in the States, unfortunately seems to have gone into abeyance. If any members have short articles, say up to about 1,500-2,000 words and preferably submitted both as printed copy and on disk, we would be keen to consider them for inclusion with future Newsletters. We would also like to hear of any news items or recent publications we may have omitted to mention.

JOINT MEETING WITH THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

On Monday 4 November Professor Michael Slater gave a highly entertaining and informative talk, 'Christmas with Dickens and Collins', about Collins's collaboration with Dickens in writing Christmas Stories for *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*. He highlighted the different character of Wilkie's sensational

contributions (such as 'The Ostler'/'Dream Woman') compared with Dickens's own writing which was directed much more for the family at Christmas.

CHARLES DICKENS CHRISTMAS STORIES

Professor Slater's talk coincided with the newly published *Charles Dickens: The Christmas Stories*, edited by Dr Ruth Glancy. This volume contains all the original illustrations and appears in the new paperback *Everyman Dickens*, of which Professor Slater is Series Editor (Good value at £8.99 for 843 pp; ISBN 87712 7). Although the book is mainly Dickens, Collins's contributions are well represented with detailed editorial notes throughout.

EVERYTHING IN DICKENS

Following his monumental *Everyone in Dickens*, George Newlin has now produced *Every Thing in Dickens: Ideas and Subjects Discussed by Charles Dickens in his Complete Works - a Topicon*. This companion volume is an assemblage of extracts from the complete works and attempts to include every notable passage or comment by Dickens on the subjects which interested him. (£99.95, ISBN 0-313-29874-2). Further details from Greenwood Press, 3 Henrietta Street, London WC2E 8LU (Tel 0171 240-0856, Fax 0171 379-0609).

A POSSIBLE NORTHERN MEETING

Mark Valentine, of 23 Southfield Terrace, Addingham, Ilkley, West Yorkshire, LS29 0PA, is keen to arrange an informal meeting of WCS members in the North. Anyone interested in attending such a gathering should contact him direct at the above address.

THE MOONSTONE

BBC Television is currently producing a new film version of *The Moonstone*. It is expected to be a lavish production in keeping with the several nineteenth century period dramas of recent months. It is due to be shown during the Christmas-New Year schedule. There should also be an introductory piece on the BBC *The Bookworm* programme some time during December.

SUTTON PUBLISHING

Sutton Publishing now have eighteen Collins titles available as well as their new edition of William Clarke's *The Secret Life of Wilkie Collins*. Details are enclosed with an order form for Sutton's latest offer

for 50% off *The Secret Life*.

"THE WOMAN IN WHITE"

Kirsten Hüttner's PhD dissertation, "*The Woman in White*": Analysis, Reception and Literary Criticism of a Victorian Bestseller has now been published in English by the German academic publishers, Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier (DM 54.80, ISBN 3-88476-227-3). Contents include Literary Analysis; the Sensation Genre; Reception and Literary Criticism in Germany, England, France and Russia; and a comprehensive Bibliography. Anyone interested in obtaining a copy should contact WVT, Postfach 4005, 54230 Trier, Germany; (Tel 0651-41503, Fax 41504)

ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES

The Wilkie Collins Society continues to be affiliated to the Alliance of Literary Societies. They have sent advance notice that next year's AGM and Seminar will take place in Birmingham on Saturday 19 April and will be hosted by the Mary Webb Society. The Alliance is also compiling a list of speakers for eventual circulation. Let me know if you are interested in attending the meeting, or if you are prepared to give a talk about Wilkie Collins and the areas to which you might be prepared to travel. I will then pass on details to the Alliance Secretary, Bill Adams.

THE NEW OUP *THE WOMAN IN WHITE* (REVIEWED BY PAUL LEWIS)

A new edition of *The Woman in White* is a hard thing to do. It remains Collins's most popular and most analysed work. But Professor John Sutherland starts with the best credentials. He has already raised new questions about the chronology of the book (see 'The Missing Fortnight' in *Is Heathcliff A Murderer*, OUP 1996 ISBN 0-19-282516-X) and now adds a new social context to Wilkie's story.

The sources for *The Woman in White* have been well documented before - the French book of court cases Collins bought in Paris, the court case of William Palmer the poisoner, and several contemporary accounts of people falsely incarcerated in lunatic asylums. But John Sutherland also suggests that the book is partly inspired by events in the life of Wilkie's friend Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton. Unhappily married, he had his sane wife committed to an asylum until a campaign by her friends and the newspapers obtained her release.

Sutherland, like almost every other editor of *The Woman in White*, chooses to use the 1861 one volume edition of the book as his text. For the first time he collates this edition with the manuscript of the novel and the serial publication in *All The Year Round*. His copious notes record every variation. Sutherland also goes further than anyone before in setting out an entire chronology of the story from Fosco's birth in 1790 to Frederick Fairlie's death in 1852. His appendixes on the writing and publication history and a facsimile of the page in *All The Year Round* when the magic words first hit paper complete an excellent edition.

But I have some regrets. This text replaces the previous OUP World's Classics text (edited by Harvey Peter Sucksmith) which was the only one in print to divide the story into its original forty serial parts. It also contains some excellent archive material about Collins. Technically out of print it can still be found at the bargain sticker price of £1.99 (ISBN 0-19-282403-1).

And I do have some quibbles with Sutherland's racy introduction - *The Woman in White* is not Collins's fourth published novel but at least his fifth (*Antonina*, *Basil*, *Hide and Seek*, *The Dead Secret*, and the short *Mr Wray's Cash-Box* all preceded it); we don't really know that "Collins was, in later life, an indefatigable sexual experimentalist"; and the suggestions of a final *ménage à trois* between Walter Hartright, Laura Fairlie, and Marian Halcombe are not really supported by the text. But at £2.50 this is a fine addition to any enthusiast's library which will add to everyone's knowledge about this marvellous book.

DAPHNE DU MAURIER

We have been asked to mention the Daphne Du Maurier Festival of Arts and Literature which will take place from 9-18th May 1997 at Fowey on the Cornish Riviera. Further details from Tourism and Leisure Department, Restormel Borough Council, Penwinnick Road, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 5DR (Tel 01726 74466, Fax 01726 68339)



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Publicity Katherine Haynes, 150 Elstree Pk, Barnet Lane, Boreham Wood, WD6 2RP

NEWSLETTER

WINTER/SPRING 1997

NEW MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Because of her other personal commitments, our very efficient Membership Secretary, Louise Marchant, has been forced to give up the position which she has so ably filled for the last few years. She will remain on the committee where she will continue to give us the benefit of her advice and personal knowledge of Society members.

The WCS is grateful to Paul Lewis for taking over the post from 1st February and all membership enquiries should now be sent to him at the above address. Members will remember his excellent article from last year about Wilkie Collins on the Internet. His e-mail address is: paul@deadline.demon.co.uk.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1997

The 1997 membership subscription is now due and should be sent to our new Membership Secretary, Paul Lewis, at the above address. (NB subscriptions run from 1st January - 31 December). For the first time in several years, there is a modest increase for UK and European members to £8.50. Because of the very high overseas postage rates, a larger increase to £12.50 is necessary for those in the USA and outside of Europe. Payments from abroad must be made in Sterling otherwise bank charges for conversion absorb almost all of the subscription.

BOOKSELLER'S PAGE

Long-standing member, Richard Beaton, writes that he has now established himself as a second-hand and antiquarian bookseller. He specialises in nineteenth century fiction and will include several Collins items in his forthcoming Catalogue 4. Members wishing to obtain a copy should contact him at 11a St John's Terrace, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 2DL (Tel. 01273 474147).

Sarah Wyatt of Phaistos Ephemera & Books (Hillside, 62 Victoria Road, Wargrave, Berks, RG10 BAE, Tel. 073 440 3454) has an original programme for the dramatic version of *The Dead Secret*; it is for the first night, 29 August 1877.

US bookseller, MacDonnell Rare Books (9307 Glenlake Drive, Austin, Texas 78730, Tel. 512 345-4139) also issues regular catalogues on nineteenth century literature. These obviously have a strong American flavour but Collins material is frequently included. The recent Catalogue 18 features the first English edition of *Mr Wray's Cash-Box* and the first American edition of "*I Say No*". The latter is particularly interesting as it precedes the English edition by about three months.

For those keen on mystery, detective and crime fiction, *The Deadly Directory*, International Edition for 1997-1998 has recently been announced. It records all of the businesses, publications and organisations specialising in the field with each entry coded, described and listed both alphabetically and by category. The Directory is available at \$25 from Deadly Serious Press, PO Box 1045, Cooper Station, New York, NY 10276-1045; or in the UK from Zardo Books, 20 Whitecroft, Dilton Marsh, Westbury, Wilts, BA13 4DJ, Tel. 01373-865371.

NB Any other bookseller members will be welcome to let me know of Collins items or catalogues with Collins entries for inclusion in future Newsletters.

THE NEW NINETEENTH CENTURY: FEMINIST READINGS OF UNDERREAD VICTORIAN FICTION

This new title, edited by Barbara Leah Harman and Susan Meyer, has been published by Garland at \$50 (ISBN 0-8153-1292-X). The forward has been written by John Sutherland who notes that approximately 50,000 novels were published during the Victorian period by some 3,500 novelists. Quoting from a recent review by P. W. Strine, Gordon College (I don't have the source) "This book is about the

task of rethinking that granite-etched reading list of 19th-century novels, a list used in the classroom for five generations. These 15 essays on "underread" Victorian fiction treat the work of novelists normally considered "second-tier" - Anne Bronte, Wilkie Collins, Charles Reade, Walter Besant, George Moore, George Gissing - and those so minor as to appear hardly ever on any syllabus anywhere - Sarah Grand, George Egerton, Flora Annie Steel, and Geraldine Jewsberry." The review continues "...that a fuller knowledge of these unfamiliar novels would bring a deeper appreciation of the Victorian female novelist, since most of the lesser-known novels in the Victorian period were written by women." Wilkie would have undoubtedly agreed. In *The Black Robe* he describes "A very remarkable work ... in the present state of light literature in England - a novel that actually tells a story ...it has another extraordinary merit - it isn't written by a woman." In *The Evil Genius* Mrs Presty tells how her late husband called her "one of the most remarkable women in England - you have never written a novel."

THE MOONSTONE ON TELEVISION

As predicted in the last Newsletter, the BBC Television film of *The Moonstone* was shown in two parts on 29 and 30 December. Apart from their continued lack of originality in choosing *The Moonstone* at the expense of any other of Collins's works, they produced a lamentably poor adaptation. The script might have been forgiven for omitting subplots because of the constraints of time, but cannot be excused omitting Betteredge's beloved *Robinson Crusoe*; or for turning Dr Candy into Mr Murthwaite; or for disinheriting Penelope as Betteredge's daughter. The shivering Sands looked like a landfill site; Rosanna Spearman dramatically acquired an audience for her suicide; Superintendent Seegrave was demoted to constable; and Sergeant Cuff, described by Collins as 'a grizzled elderly man' with eyes 'of a steely light grey' was transformed into the much younger, dark-eyed Antony Sher. But the film's worst fault was its failure to re-create the air of mystery and intrigue of the original. Indeed, if the original had been like this, then the whole detective genre might never have been invented - but the costumes were good! According to the BBC Production Notes, the writer of the screenplay, Kevin Elyot, considered it necessary to 'take it apart, strip it down to what actually happens, and put it back together again as a film which is faithful to the spirit of the original' - a singular failure.

Very much better was the introductory piece shown the previous week on BBC's *The Bookworm* programme. This managed to set *The Moonstone* in its proper context much more dramatically than the actual production!

MEMBERS' ARTICLES

Hilary Newman has taken up the invitation to contribute an article to accompany the Newsletter, in the absence of the *Journal*. Future contributions from other members will be welcome but publication would be greatly assisted if they could be sent on disk.

COLLINS TITLES IN PRINT

The listing of Collins's books currently available has been brought up to date. As ever, if members knows of any titles that may have been omitted, please let me know for future updates. With the exception of *Antonina* - which is not as unreadable as some critics have claimed - virtually all of Wilkie's fiction is now back in print, mostly in affordable editions which would have pleased him immensely. Full marks to Sutton Publishing who have re-introduced the majority of his less well known works; and to OUP and Broadview Press for their excellent critical editions.

BOOK OF THE YEAR

Member Mark Valentine has sent a cutting from *The Spectator* of 23 November where regular contributors nominate their books of the year. Craig Brown wrote "I would hate to be too cravenly Spectatorish in choosing a novel that is 134 years old, but Wilkie Collins' *No Name* (Penguin, £2.99) really was the best book I read this year. By turns witty, gripping, ingenious and creepy, it beats *The Woman in White* hands down."

THE HISTORICAL NOVEL SOCIETY

The newly formed Historical Novel Society thought that its activities might also be of interest to some members of the WCS. Further details are available from Richard Lee, Marine Cottage, The Strand, Starcross, Devon, EX6 8NY.

APG

STOP PRESS. THE MOONSTONE - THEATRICAL VERSION

Paul Lewis has heard of a forthcoming play version of *The Moonstone*. It will be staged by the Barebones Company at various theatres, mainly in the south and west, between April and November. Towns include Shaftsbury, Rugeley, Cheltenham, Devizes, Bath, Ferndown, Midsomer Norton, Purton, Milton Keynes, Reading and Bristol. Further details in the next Newsletter.



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NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 1997

'Nobody can accuse me of having ever been accessory to the disturbing of quiet people with useful knowledge.' (*A Rogue's Life*)

SOME SUMMER QUOTES

'Of all oppressive summers, a hot summer in London is the hardest to endure.' (*The Evil Genius*)

With the Australians in England to contest the Ashes series, the Test selectors should bear in mind that 'Doctor Chennerly... was the best bowler in the Long Beckley cricket-club. A strictly orthodox man in the matter of wine and mutton.' (*The Dead Secret*)

And for those inclined to a more indolent approach to life, Gabriel Betteredge decided to 'set [himself] in the warm summer air next - seeing that what is good for old claret is equally good for old age.' (*The Moonstone*)

A LIST OF E-MAIL ADDRESSES

It seems as if there are now several members of the WCS who are on the Internet. Anyone interested in being on a separate e-mail list for the mutual exchange of information should contact our membership Secretary, Paul Lewis, at paul@deadline.demon.co.uk.

THE WCS JOURNAL

It has been a continuing disappointment that our erstwhile American colleagues have been unable to bring to publication any recent issues of *The WCS Journal* - hence our own reprints and brief articles by members (more always welcome). We are therefore exploring the

possibility of publishing in the UK a New Series of *The Journal* under the editorship of Collins scholar, Graham Law. Graham Law hails from the south of Manchester, completed his doctorate on mystery fiction at the University of Sussex, and is now Professor in English Studies at Waseda University, Tokyo. He is especially interested in questions concerning Collins's reading public. He has published essays on Collins's periodical publication and edited a number of Victorian novels for the Broadview Literary Texts series, including *The Evil Genius*. At present he is collecting material for a book on the late nineteenth century serialisation of popular novels in British provincial newspapers.

In addition, few of our current membership have any or all of the back numbers of the original *Journal* and we are looking at the prospect of reissuing the entire run from 1981-1991 as a single volume with an index. This will be for sale to members at a discounted rate as well as to libraries and others.

AN ANALYSIS OF WILKIE COLLINS'S HANDWRITING

'The handwriting wandered crookedly up and down, in deplorable freedom from all proper restraint' (*Armada*)

Handwriting expert Andrea Lyttleton recently took a look at Wilkie Collins. Andrea is a qualified graphologist and a member of the British Academy of Graphology with an Advanced Diploma in Personnel work. Her interest developed from a fascination of letter form and psychology and her usual speciality is the field of recruitment. However, she analysed Tony Blair's writing for *The Daily Telegraph* of 3 April 1997; and recently had the opportunity of examining several Collins letters dating from 1864 to 1889 in approximately 10 year intervals. Her report on Collins's handwriting is enclosed with this Newsletter.

COLLINS AND POLITICS

Wilkie wisely seems to have had very little to do with politics during his lifetime. Reading through his works, however, he might have suggested the following advice to our various leaders, new and old.

'In short, my dear sir, everything wears out in this world - and why should the House of Commons be an exception to the rule.' (*The Black Robe*)

'As a member of parliament, he set an example which might have been followed with advantage by many of his colleagues. In the first place, he abstained from hastening the downfall of representative institutions by

asking questions and making speeches. In the second place, he was able to distinguish between the duty that he owed to his party, and the duty that he owed to his country.' ('I Say No')

"Which of our political parties deserves the confidence of the English people?" In plain terms, on his side, Randal answered: "The party that lowers taxes." (*The Evil Genius*)

'Resignation is sublime.' (*The Woman in White*)

And finally, does our new Home Secretary, Jack Straw, know about his namesake (alias Hans Grimm) from *Jezebel's Daughter*? This novel was, of course adapted, from Collins's earlier stage play appropriately called *The Red Vial*

'THE GREAT (FORGOTTEN) INVASION'

February 22 this year marked the 200th anniversary of the curious invasion of Britain by four ships sent by the Directorate of the French Republic. They contained 1,400 soldiers who landed on the coast of Wales. Under the leadership of Lord Cawdor, the local labourers put around their shoulders their wives' red petticoats. The French were so convinced that they were about to engage red-coated English soldiers in battle that they surrendered without a fight. The anniversary achieved reasonable publicity in the press and on the radio but the media overlooked Collins's historical account of the landing, first published in *Household Words* for 12 March 1859. The article was subsequently republished in *My Miscellanies* (1863), ending in Collins's words: 'But there is a Moral to be drawn from it, nevertheless. If we are invaded again, and on a rather larger scale, let us not be so ill-prepared this next time as to be obliged to take refuge in our wives' red petticoats.'

SOME LITERARY CONNECTIONS

Long-standing member Muriel Smith has come across three interesting Collins connections:

Collins and Chesterton

The following extract comes from an early Chesterton essay entitled 'How Not to Do It', published originally in *The Speaker* of 23 March 1901 as a review of *How to Write Fiction* by Grant Richards and reprinted in *The Chesterton Review*, vol XXI, no. 4, November 1995.

'We have nothing to say to Wilkie Collins and Sir Walter Besant and other authorities from whom explanations of artistic method are quoted here, except that, with the

deepest faith in their talents and veracity, we do not believe a word they say. We do not believe that they wrote their books as they say they did; we know that the power to write a good story is one thing, the power to analyse one's own thoughts quite another, and we simply find evidence in their books themselves that they had their origin in infinitely higher and more mysterious forces than the simple rule of thumb to which their authors ascribe them. We should not believe that St Paul's Cathedral was built especially for a stable even if Sir Christopher Wren said it was, nor do we believe that *The Woman in White* was written by Wilkie Collins because he had invented a certain plot which required a villain, and that villain must be a foreigner. A villain is a dull person both in fiction and real life: Count Fosco was an inspiration from on high.'

Collins and Trollope

The Woman in White began publication in *All the Year Round* on 26 November 1859. Anthony Trollope's *The Small House at Allington* began in *The Cornhill* in September 1862 and ran for 20 instalments, totalling 60 chapters. In Chapter 17, which would have appeared in February 1863, there is the following Collins reference:

'The ladies Margaretta and Alexandrina fluttered up with little complimentary speeches to their dear Lady Dumbello, hoping this and beseeching that, as though the 'Woman in White' before them had been the dearest friend of their infancy.'

Miss Inchbald's Simple Story

It may be remembered that the *WCS Journal* Volume V for 1985 contained a reprinted piece by Collins, 'Books Necessary for a Liberal Education' from the *Pall Mall Gazette* of 11 February 1886. In this he notes:

'Read, My good public, Miss Inchbald's *Simple Story* in which you will find the character of a young woman who is made interesting even by her faults - a rare triumph, I can tell you, in our Art.'

This advice it is now possible, even easy to follow: the 1791 novel has lately been published in paperback by Penguin at £6.99.

THE SHIP HOTEL, ALLONBY

Allonby is a coastal town in Cumberland on the Solway Firth, visited by Collins and Dickens on their walking tour of 1857. They arrived in time for lunch on 9 September and stopped for two nights before going on to Doncaster. They stayed at *The Ship* described by Dickens

as 'a capital little homely inn looking out upon the sea...a clean nice place in a rough wild country'. The landlord was Benjamin Partridge whose immensely fat wife was 'very obliging and comfortable.' It is in Allonby, in 'The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices', that Collins as Thomas Idle engages in autobiographical reflections.

After a recent visit, I can confirm that *The Ship* is still in existence and under the new and capable management of Carole (who is not immensely fat) and Peter Yates. It had apparently fallen on hard times but is now beginning to thrive. The dining room has become the 'Dickens Room' and they intend to make the first floor lounge into a 'Collins Room'. This is probably where Wilkie sat nursing his injured ankle. Bed and breakfast is from approximately £20 per person but the new landlords agreed that WCS members might have a 10% discount. Telephone 01900 881017.

COLLINS AT RAMSGATE

Wilkie regularly stayed at Ramsgate from the early 1870s, convinced that the sea breezes were good for his health. Catriona Blaker of the Ramsgate Society has recently written for *Ramsgate Remembered* (Issue Number 13, 1997) 'Strange Doings at the Seaside or: Wilkie Collins (1824- 1889) and Ramsgate'. The title is based on a quote from *The Fallen Leaves*. The author of this very useful article discusses the relationship of Collins's life and works to Ramsgate. The town is also used for the plots of *The Law and the Lady* and *Poor Miss Finch*. Collins and Pigott are said to have joined the local yacht club, but her research back to the 1850s for this piece seems to have found no record of their membership of the Royal Temple Yacht Club, which moved down river from the Lower Thames. The editor of *Ramsgate Remembered* is Jeremy Hewett, 22 Wellington Crescent, Ramsgate, Kent (Wilkie, remember, installed Martha at number 27 as Mrs Dawson).

Catriona Blaker is also the Hon. Sec. of the Pugin Society and we are looking at the possibility of a joint meeting next summer (1998) - perhaps a walking tour combining both Pugin and Collins places of interest. Those wishing to join the society can contact her at 122 Grange Road, Ramsgate, Kent CT11 9PT. Tel 01843 596401.

AN ILLUSTRATION BY CHARLES COLLINS

The ever alert Paul Lewis has recently discovered an 1851 oil on wood painting by Wilkie's brother, Charles Allston Collins, at the Tate Gallery. It is on view in room 10 and in addition has been reproduced by the Tate as a colour postcard (reference T 03025). The illustration is entitled *May in The Regent's Park* and represents the view

from the Collins then family home at 17 Hanover Terrace (the starting point for William Clarke's *Rambles Around Marylebone*). Apart from the traffic, the scene today is remarkably similar nearly 150 years later.

CAN JANE EYRE BE HAPPY?

John Sutherland, Lord Northcliffe Professor of Modern English at University College London, has just published his second volume of literary puzzles to follow last year's *Is Heathcliffe a Murderer?* His new book is also issued as an OUP paperback at £4.99 and contains an essay on *Armada* entitled 'What Precisely Does Miss Gwilt's Purple Flask Contain?'.
Armada

FORTHCOMING WORKS

Lillian Nayder, professor of English at Bates College in Maine, has prepared a new short biography and analysis of Wilkie Collins for the Twayne series on modern authors. Replacing the version by William Marshall published in 1970, it is due to be published later this year as ***Wilkie Collins Revisited***, Twayne/Macmillan, New York 1997. Professor Nayder has also finished a book on the collaborative relationship between Dickens and Collins including *The Frozen Deep*, *The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices* and *No Thoroughfare*. It is due out in 1998.

Next year, 1998, promises to produce a bumper crop of new works on Collins, as well as being the 150th anniversary of his first published book *Memoirs of the Life of William Collins, Esq., R.A.*

Wilkie Collins: Man of Mystery and Imagination by Alexander Grinstein. Dr Grinstein, a US member of the WCS, is a practising psychoanalyst involved in training and supervision at the Michigan Psychoanalytic Institute. He has published a number of books and articles on psychoanalysis and biographical studies. His book on Collins examines the relationship between Wilkie Collins's personal history and his writings. Publication is anticipated by International Universities some time during 1998.

The Letters of Wilkie Collins, edited by Professor William Baker and William Clarke. The editors tell me they are making good progress on what has proved a mammoth task, having apparently located nearly two thousand letters. They hope the book will be published in autumn 1998 by Macmillan in two volumes.

Ioláni, Wilkie's long-lost Polynesian novel is being edited for publication at Princeton University Press by

Ira Nadel. This has apparently been delayed by other commitments but is also anticipated for next year.

Wilkie Collins - An Illustrated Guide by Andrew Gasson is still on schedule for publication by Oxford University Press in February 1998. It will be produced as an alphabetical reference guide with about 200 photographic illustrations.

COLLINS ON THE INTERNET

Paul Lewis offers the following updates to his excellent piece issued last year on 'The Wilkie Web':

Collins Sites

There are three dedicated Collins sites on the world wide web.

David Grigg runs a very nice site called the Wilkie Collins Appreciation Page from Melbourne, Australia at <http://www.ozemail.eom.au/~drgrigg/wilkie.html>.

Professor Mitsuharu Matsuoka at Nagoya University, Japan has some Wilkie Collins pages with a lot of information and useful links at

<http://ernie.lang.nagoya-u.ac.jp/~matsuoka/Collins.html>

Paul Lewis's Collins site is at <http://www.deadline.demon.co.uk>

Sites which mention Collins

Victorian Sensationalism Online puts Collins in the context of other sensation novelists <http://www.ualberta.ca/~amactavi/sens1.htm>

Michael Groat's British Sensation Fiction pages have some useful summaries and analysis of some of Collins's work. <http://members.gnn.com/MGrost/sensatio.htm#Collins>

Jon Varese has some interesting material on contemporaries of Charles Dickens and what they thought of him. Many of them were also Collins's friends. <http://www.sas.upenn.edu/~varese/ghosts.htm>

The BBC has a site associated with its December 1996 film version of *The Moonstone* <http://www.bbc.co.uk/bookworm/progs/wcollins.html>

Kirsten Hüttner, one of the few german scholars working on Collins, has just published a book on *The Woman in White* and her page is at http://home.t-online.de/home/0711334553-0002/wilkie_1.htm

There is a picture of Wilkie's grave at
<http://www.xs4all.nl/~androom/dead/kensal.htm>

The Internet Bookshop (iBS search page) lists no less than 69 books by Collins. These include duplicates with at least 10 *Woman in White's* and 14 *Moonstone's*. The major works are mainly published by OUP and Penguin, as critical editions. Most of the minor novels come from Sutton Publishing - not critical editions but containing an introduction by William Clarke, nicely produced and representing the easiest way of reading Collins's more elusive titles.

In addition, there are now more than 20 of Wilkie's works in electronic form on the Internet. The full list is on the Paul Lewis web pages (see above) but one major contributor is James Rusk
<http://www.why.net/home/jrusk/collins/contents.html>

The Gaslight study group has some Collins material including a contemporary review of sensation novels such as *No Name*
<http://www.mtroyal.ab.ca/programs/arts/english/gaslight/>

An interesting bibliography of where to find Collins's supernatural stories in current books is at
<http://www.sff.net/locus/b101.html>

Mysterious Bytes - an electronic magazine on mystery stories - has some Collins material
<http://www.db.dk/dbaa/jbs/mystbyte.htm>

The best place to start looking for Victorian material in general is
<http://www.indiana.edu/~victoria>

William J Palmer's home page with details of his pastiches of Collins is at
<http://www.mdn.com/dickens/index.html>

BASIL - THE FILM

At last a production company has been adventurous enough to make a film of a Collins novel apart from *The Woman in White* or *The Moonstone!* *Basil* has been financed by Kushner-Locke, a Californian TV, film and media company. The director is Radha Bharadwaj whose only other film, *Closet Land* (1991), despite some critical success, was not a money spinner grossing scarcely \$250,000 in the USA.

Mannion, the villain, is played by Christian Slater, perhaps best known for *Interview with the Vampire*.

Slater also co-produces the film. The main female character is played by Clair Forlani who appeared in *The Rock* and *Basquiat*. Basil is played by Jared Leto whose only other sighting in the UK was in *How to Make an American Quilt*. Basil's autocratic father is played by Sir Derek Jacobi, veteran of *I Claudius*, the *Cadfael* television series and *Little Dorrit*.

The film is currently in post production following location filming in London which ended in mid-April. There is no news yet of a British distributor but Kushner-Locke hope for a release later this year. They describe the film **as a Gothic Romantic Mystery**. Most of the plot appears quite similar to the book - a rare cinematographical event - except that Margaret Sherwin has been renamed Carla to contrast with Basil's devoted sister Clara. Wilkie, with his predilection for the theme of identity, might even have approved of the name switch (especially with the coincidence of a real-life Clair playing the part).

BOOK REVIEWS (BY PAUL LEWIS)

Wilkie Collins to 'the Forefront.: Some Reassessments, edited by Nelson Smith and R. C. Terry, AMS Press, New York 1995 (ISBN 0404 643 515).

Wilkie Collins to the Forefront is based on lectures and papers given at the 1989 conference held to mark the centenary of Wilkie Collins's death. But the glacial pace of academic publishing means that the book - dated 1995 - is only now available in the UK. It brings together some absolutely marvellous scholarship. Catherine Peters makes tantalising connections between Collins's work and three strong but almost invisible women in his life. Sue Lonoff finds a surprising amount of information on his almost undocumented friendship with Edward Lear. William Clarke's perceptive and lively essay is on Collins's correspondence late in life with the 12-year old Anne le Poer (Nannie) Wynne. And Kathleen o' Fallon examines Wilkie's challenge to traditional gender roles. There are eleven other excellent papers in this accessible, entertaining and varied collection. It costs £48.95 and is available in the UK from Eurospan Distribution Services. Tel 0171 240 0856.

Heart and Science: A Story of the Present Time by Wilkie Collins, edited by Steve Farmer, Broadview Literary Texts, Ontario 1996. ISBN 1-55111-124-1.

Like all Broadview texts this fine edition of *Heart and Science* contains a comprehensive introduction, copious

notes, and useful appendixes. Steve Farmer has done an excellent job in providing a sound academic framework for one of Collins's later and lesser known works. The appendixes include contemporary documents about the vivisection argument, the details of the serial divisions of the text when it was first published in *Belgravia*, contemporary reviews of the book, and the few letters of Collins which refer to it. On a few occasions I found Farmer's footnotes slightly otiose and in one case, where he locates the Sussex Downs in north west London, wrong. But that should not detract from an excellent edition which should revive interest in this excellent book which Steve Farmer summarises as "...an interesting Victorian love story, a...tale of intrigue and suspense...an engaging study of character...an occasionally lurid melodrama, and a unique and provocative document of a nineteenth century controversy that remains a volatile issue even today. And finally, it is a pleasure."

'NINE O' CLOCK! '

Paul Lewis, continuing his research into the publication of Collins's early works, has discovered a previously unrecorded fragment for **a** manuscript of one of the earliest short stories. 'Nine O'Clock!' is set in the French Revolution and was first published in *Bentley's Miscellany* in August 1852 - the fifth short story known. No manuscript of the whole story is recorded but the first paragraph is found on the verso of folio 65 of the manuscript of *Basil* which is in the British Library. It is a relatively unamended paragraph - especially when compared with the manuscript of *Basil* which is rendered almost illegible by alterations - and seems to have been dashed off as **a** single thought while *Basil* was being written early in 1852.

Manuscript

'The night of the 30th of June, 1793 was a memorable night in the prison annals of Paris. The Deputies who represented the Department of the Gironde in the French Parliament had been thrust aside to make way for the sanguinary career of Robespierre and his colleagues of the Reign of Terror -- the twenty one leading men of the famous "Girondin" party, were condemned to the guillotine. Their last night in prison was the night of the 30th: on the morning of the 31st they had ceased to live.'

As printed in *Bentley's*

'The night of the 30th of June, 1793 is memorable in the prison annals of Paris, as the last night in confinement of the leaders of the famous Girondin party in the first French Revolution. On the morning of the 31st, the

twenty-one deputies who represented the department of the Girondin, were guillotined to make way for Robespierre and the Reign of Terror.'

WILLIAM PALMER STRIKES AGAIN

The author of the almost impossibly bad *The Detective and Mr. Dickens* and *The Highwayman and Mr. Dickens* is at it again with *The Hoydens and Mr. Dickens*. The good news is that this is the 'third and final book' in the series where 'Charles Dickens, Inspector William Field and Wilkie Collins must stop the blackmailer of one of Dickens's closest friends, find the murderer of a controversial feminist, and track down the robbers of London's greatest bank.' Neither Wilkie nor Dickens did anything to deserve such treatment, but those brave enough to order the book could contact St. Martin's Press (1-800-288-2131) or try the on-line bookstore: <http://www.amazon.com>. These details are derived from William J. Palmer's Homepage on the web. (This is not intended **as a** recommendation!)

OTHER LITERARY SOCIETIES

We have had several requests from other literary societies to mention their organisations and events of possible interest:

The Alliance of Literary Societies. The WCS continues to be affiliated to the Alliance which maintains a wide-ranging membership of societies and publishes the annual Newsletter, *Chapter One*. It held its AGM on 19 April 1997 followed by a presentation from the Mary Webb Society which included readings by the President, Gabriel Woolf, and Rosalind Shanks.

The Ledbury Poetry Festival has announced its inaugural programme which aims to promote poetry on a broad base and its approach will be populist, specialist and educational, reflected by music and painting. It will be launched by George Melly and runs from 4-13 July 1997. Other artists are expected to include Peter Barkworth, Tim Pigott-Smith, Jeremy Irons and Gabriel Woolf. Further information from the Town Council Offices, Church Street, Ledbury, Herefordshire HR8 1LDH. Tel and Fax 01531 634156.

The Philip Larkin Society is presenting an international conference, 'New Larkins for Old' at the Lawns Centre, University of Hull, 27-29 June 1997. Further information from Mrs Janet Whitehead, The Philip Larkin Society, The University of Hull, Hull HU6 7RX. Tel 01482 847930; e-mail jhw@palsoc.karoo.co.uk.

The Charlotte M. Yonge Fellowship now issues a regular Newsletter devoted to this prolific nineteenth century author. A recent issue included a lengthy review of a study of her life and works by Alethea Hayter. This same author wrote *Opium and the Romantic Imagination* (1968) which included a chapter on Collins and his use of opium. Charlotte Yonge was a contemporary of Wilkie and Sutton Publishing have just republished *The Trial* which as an early detective novel has been compared to his work. Further details of the Fellowship from Mrs Jean M. Shell, 78 Sunningfields Road, Hendon, London NW4 4RL. Tel 0181-203 4353.

Unfortunately too early for this Newsletter, **The George Eliot Fellowship**, Southern Branch, recently held a full-day meeting at the Guildford Institute. Wilkie Collins and George Eliot knew each well. In the late 1850s and early 1860s Wilkie received frequent invitations from the G. H. Leweses and attended their Saturday evening soirees. Further information about the Fellowship's Southern Branch from Mrs M. Jennings, 130 Grattons Drive, Pound Hill, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 3JP. Tel 01293 884716; e-mail margaret@grattons.demon.co.uk.

The main George Eliot Fellowship, in conjunction with the Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council run Guided Tours of George Eliot Country during the Summer. Remaining dates are 29 June, 10 August and 14 September 1997. Details from the secretary, Mrs Kathleen Adams, 71 Stepping Stones Road, Coventry CV5 8JT. Tel 01203 5922331; or from Rose Selwyn, Nuneaton Town Hall, 01203 376490.

The Walter de la Mare Society was formed on 25 April 1997 to "bring his work to a wider audience". Founding members include de la Mare's surviving grandsons and luminaries such as Julia Briggs and Russell Hoban. It costs £15 a year for two newsletters. Walter de la Mare wrote a lengthy essay, 'The Early Novels of Wilkie Collins', for *The Eighteen Sixties* (CUP 1932). Further information from Claire Sawford, The Creative Umbrella, 30 Harcourt Street, London WIH 2AA.

BOUCHERCON '97

For fans of detective fiction, the 28th World Mystery Convention is to be held at the Monterey Convention Centre, California, 30 October - 2 November. The guest of honour is Sara Paretsky (of V. I. Warshawski fame) and further information can be had from Bouchercon '97, P.O. Box 26114, San Francisco, CA 04126-6114; E-mail, bchrcon97@aol.com.

APG



THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

PATRONS Faith Clarke Benny Green

Chairman Andrew Gasson, J Merton House, 36 Belsize Park, London, NWJ 4EA

Membership Paul Lewis, 47 Hereford Road, Acton, London WJ 9JW

NEWSLETTER

WINTER 1997

'I hope you won't pay the rheumatic penalties of a winter residence in England.'

(The Black Robe)

THE 1997 COLLINS REPRINT

Continuing our series of Collins reprints, we are enclosing with this Newsletter '**Considerations on the Copyright Question Addressed to an American friend**'. It was originally published during 1880 and republished as 'thou Shalt not Steal' in the June 1890 issue of *The Author* (the journal of the Society of Authors).

***IOLANI* - AN UPDATE**

Ira Nadel writes from the University of British Columbia in Vancouver concerning the forthcoming edition of *Iolani*:

The edition of Wilkie Collins's first novel, an apprentice work written while he was employed at Antrobus & Company, tea merchants in the Strand, in 1844, is complete with a final review by Princeton University Press now occurring.

The edition will contain not only an 'Introduction', outlining Collins's sources and contextualizing his fascination with Tahiti, but will list all substantial variants and cancellations in the manuscript. Unlike Collins's other manuscripts which show much reworking and many deletions, the manuscript of *Iolani* is reasonably clear, suggesting that it might be the fair copy made for circulation to, first, Longman and then

Chapman and Hall in 1845. Publication of the novel for the first time is expected in 1998.'

THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

The recently formed Wilkie Collins Society of North America has just issued its own first Newsletter, Volume 1, Number 1, Fall 1997. It contains an essay by Graham Law on 'Collins and the Newspaper Novel', a review of Collins Websites by Simon Cooke and some general announcements. Subscription is \$20 (\$15 for full-time students) with further details from Professor Lillian Nayder, Department of English, Bates College, Lewiston, ME 04240, USA.

THE REVISED *JOURNAL* - A CALL FOR PAPERS

Graham Law, as mentioned in the last Newsletter, has been putting together an editorial board *as well as* exploring various methods of publication for a revised Journal. He has now asked us to include the following Call for Papers:

The *Wilkie Collins Society Journal* is an annual volume dedicated to original scholarly essays and reviews of publications relating to Wilkie Collins, his works, and his culture. The *Journal* appeared regularly during the 1980s but has recently been dormant. A New Series will be launched in 1998, with a fresh editorial team and editorial board, sponsored jointly by the original London-based Wilkie Collins Society and the newly-formed Wilkie Collins Society of North America.

The joint-editors are Graham Law and Lillian Nayder; the editorial board includes Tamar Heller, Clair Hughes, Phillip O'Neill, Catherine Peters, and Jenny Bourne Taylor.

The editors are now actively seeking submissions for the opening issues. Articles (not more than 6,000 words) should be sent to one of the postal addresses provided below. All manuscripts should follow the MLA Stylesheet, 2nd edition, and be submitted on computer diskette (MS-DOS Format, with Microsoft Word or Word Perfect) plus one paper copy, and should not be under consideration for publication elsewhere. Please note that the e-mail addresses below should be used for enquiries only, not for submissions.

Submissions from the UK and worldwide, excluding North America should be sent to: Graham Law, [Until March 1998], School of English

and American Studies, University of Exeter, Exeter EX4 4QJ, England; or [from April 1998), School of Law, Waseda University, Nishi-Waseda 1-6-1, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 169-50, Japan. (e-mail, Graham Law - glaw@mn.waseda.ac.jp).

Submissions from North America only to: Lillian Nayder, Department of English, Bates College, Lewiston, ME 04240, USA. (e-mail, Lillian Nayder - lnayder@abacus.bates.edu).

Under the guidance of our joint editors, the new Journal will publish refereed essays of the highest possible standard. We will continue to use the Newsletter for publishing shorter articles which can be of a less serious or more speculative nature. A maximum of about 2,000 words fits the current AS format as a separate sheet but a short paragraph on an interesting theme would be just as welcome for inclusion in the body of the Newsletter. Katherine Haynes has contributed for this issue 'The Possible Influence of Wilkie Collins on Bram Stoker' which should encourage us to look at Stoker's less well known works.

WILKIE COLLINS-THE NEW TWAYNE EDITION

Lillian Nayder's *Wilkie Collins* has just been published as no. 544 in the Twayne English Author Series (New York 1997, ISBN 0805770593). This new edition replaces the 1970 version by William Marshall and brings new insights particularly on class and feminism. A fuller review will appear in the next Newsletter.

BASIL (THE FILM)

(Directed by Radha Bharadwaj and financed by Kushner-Locke, a Californian TV, film and media company.)

A pre-release screening of *Basil* took place in mid-October - a welcome event to see a film of a major Collins novel which is not *The Moonstone* or *The Woman in White* and which is not made for television. The final version differs in some respects from the original screenplay mentioned in the Summer Newsletter.

Changes from the author's original seem inevitable in any adaptation for the screen but the alterations to *Basil* are probably less severe than many made by Collins in dramatising several of his own works for the stage. The film, therefore, is generally true to the spirit of the book if not

always in the detail and tells the story of the aristocratic Basil (Jared Leto) who contracts a secret marriage beneath his class to a linen draper's daughter.

The opening scenes are not in the book as written by Collins but set the scene well through the eyes of the infant Basil, suitably autobiographical as a young storyteller and artist. We are introduced to his proud, stern father - 'an English gentleman of large fortune' whose family is 'one of the most ancient of this country' extending 'back beyond the Norman conquest.' The cast is largely unknown with the major exception of Derek Jacobi who gives an excellent performance as Basil's father, gliding with natural ease through a Victorian England admirably recreated with elegant sets and costumes. Margaret (renamed Julia for no apparent reason in the film and played by Claire Forlani) is convincing with her increasing contempt and avariciousness towards Basil; while Mr Sherwin is perfectly cast as her overprotective and mercenary father ('£30,000 will do nicely for a start').

The photography is good rather than brilliant but uses some clever camera angles. In some places the cutting is mildly confusing with rapid switches between the various locations, whilst the musical score provides a stylish accompaniment. The way the story has been reworked for the screen explains the unexpected elimination of the scene where Basil falls in love at first sight with Margaret (Julia) on a London omnibus. Two other dramatic opportunities, however, have more inexplicably been missed. The first notable omission is the scene where Basil's father tears the last leaf out of the family bible before expelling him from the house. Secondly, Mannion's fall to the abyss below from the dramatically perilous and misty rocks of Cornwall is replaced by a tame suicide leap from grassy cliff-tops in undramatic sunshine - a disappointment compared with Collins's powerful descriptive writing for this particular scene.

Other changes from the original are both inexplicable and unsuccessful. However, the seduction scene, for which most of the contemporary critics never forgave Collins, is now set in Mannion's rooms and probably more convincing to a modern audience. This is also true for his subsequent brutal disfigurement by Basil. The mysterious background of Mannion (Christian Slater) has been carefully changed but the long letter to Basil provides a convincing explanation for Mannion's obsessive revenge to destroy Basil's father and the family name. The character of Clara, however, is a weak version compared with Basil's sister in the

book and lacks any compelling warmth. The ending has also been partly changed but provides 'the full and loving reconciliation' between Basil and his father glossed over in the novel's last chapter. The final confession of his motives towards Basil to explain his stern and overbearing guidance is more reminiscent of the equally flawed Mr Thorpe in *Hide and Seek*.

Overall, a very watchable film mainly true to the original in most areas but strangely divergent without obvious improvement in others. Would Wilkie have approved? Compared, for example, with the appalling *Moonstone* of last year, almost certainly yes. Further details of *Basil* with an illustration can be found on Paul Lewis' web site.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE - ON TELEVISION - AGAIN

Following on from last year's *The Moonstone*, the BBC have produced a new television film of *The Woman in White*. It will also be shown in two parts over the Christmas period and follows their much earlier production in 1982. That original version starred Alan Badel in his last role, as Fosco, Jenny Seagrave as Laura Fairlie and Diana Quick as Marion Halcombe. Ian Richardson who played Philip Fairlie takes the same part in the current version. The cast also consists of Susan Vidler - as The Woman in White - Justine Wadell, Tara Fitzgerald, John Standing, Simon Callow and James Wilby. *The Mail on Sunday* of 16 November featured an interesting two-page illustrated article by journalist Michael Burke on *The Woman in White* and Wilkie's private life. This appeared to have been based mainly on the late Kenneth Robinson's biography and gives the rather speculative Millais version of Wilkie's first meeting with Caroline Graves. Penguin Books have been quick off the mark and have changed the illustration on their front cover to fit in with the television film.

'THE USE OF GAS IN THEATRES' - A QUERY

Steve Farmer who edited the excellent Broadview Press edition of *Heart and Science* writes with the following query:

'Here's an interesting puzzle concerning Collins's article 'The Use of Gas in Theatres' or 'The Air and the Audience'. The 1924 reprint of the article in the journal *The Mask* proclaims that Collins wrote the article in 1881. In fact, most sources suggest 1881 as the date of composition. Some checking, though, has led me to believe that Collins wrote the piece in the early summer of 1885. The *Mask* reprint contains the following passage:

'On the sixth of April last, (1881) Mr. Steele Mackaye, author of the most popular play thus far written by an American dramatist (*Hazel Kirke*) opened a new theatre in New York.'

The Masks parenthetical is incorrect, an editor's or printer's typographical error perhaps, for the new theatre and the new play to which Collins refers in this passage both opened in New York on April 6th, 1885. Steele Mackaye (1842-1894) was an American playwright whose most successful play, *Hazel Kirke* (1880), ran for over 500 nights without interruption at the Madison Square Theatre, which had been taken over by Daniel Frohman (1851-1940) when Mackaye went bankrupt in 1879. Mackaye went on to build his own theatre, the Lyceum, of which Collins is writing here. The 'new play' was *Dakolar*, which opened at the Lyceum, Mackaye's new theatre, on April 6, 1885. The play was a failure, and Mackaye thereafter withdrew from management.

Both R. V. Andrew's and Beetz's bibliographies claim the article was written in 1881 but printed in 1885. That seems unlikely unless Collins's embedded the new 'Steele Mackaye' material when Allen Thordike Rice published it in 1885. Other references to the article simply refer the reader to the 1924 date.

Does anyone have information on this problem of dates or know of any letters in which Collins alludes to this article before 1885? Does the Rice publication, which I have not seen, suggest that Collins had written the piece four years before he published it?'

Steve Farmer's address is 3822E.Tanglewood Drive, Phoenix, AZ 85044, USA; e-mail STEVE.FARMER@ASU.Edu.

PUBLICITY OFFICER

Katherine Haynes - the new Honorary Secretary of the Dracula Society - has now relinquished the position of Publicity Officer for the WCS. She will remain on our committee so that we will still retain the benefit of her almost infallible knack of finding useful information relating to Wilkie; but please let us know if any member, probably from the London area, would like to take over publicity and PR in general.

VICTORIAN STUDIES

The latest issue of *Victorian Studies* (Summer 1996, vol. 39, no. 4) contains the Victorian Bibliography for 1995. The listing for Collins

includes reviews of the recent editions of *The Evil Genius* (Broadview, edited by Graham Law), *No Name* (Penguin, edited by Mark Ford), *Poor Miss Finch* (OUP, edited by Catherine Peters), as well as the following articles:

Andres, Sophia "Pre-Raphaelite Paintings and Jungian Images in Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White!*" VN 88:26-31.

Calanchi, Alessandra. "Visite guidate: La Complicità dello scenario domestico in *The Moonstone.*" *Paragone* 32-32 (1992): 28-46.

Crawford, Scott A. G. M. "Wilkie Collins: Master of Melodrama and the Critic of Victorian Athleticism." *Aethlone* 5, 2 (1994): 87-96.

Ledwon, Leonara "Veiled Women, The Law of Coverture and Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White.*" VLC 22 (1994): 1-22.

Morris, Debra S. "The Matrilineal in Wilkie Collins's Novels." DAI 55:560A.

Naugrette, Jean-Pierre. "*The Moonstone.* Signes Indiens." EA 48:407-18.

Thoman, Ronald R. "Wilkie Collins and the Sensation Novel," in V, Richetti, pp. 479-507.

SOME DUTCH NOTES

Louise Marchant has discovered from one of our Dutch members, Jeanette van der Kruijff, that there is a new Dutch edition of *The Moonstone*. This 1997 edition of *De Maansteen* is published by Menken Kasander & Wigman Uitgevers of Leiden (ISBN 90 74622 13 5). The novel's first publication in Holland was in 1869 with another edition the following year. There is also a translation of *The Woman in White* which itself had nineteenth century editions in 1861, 1866 and 1875.

WILKIE'S GRAVE IN KENSAL GREEN

A recent issue of *The Magazine of the Friends of Kensal Green Cemetery* (September 1997, No. 21) contains 'A Literary Pilgrimage to Kensal Green' by Alan Frost. Wilkie's grave 'the tidiest and most well-kept' is duly mentioned. 'Who has not read *The Moonstone* and *The Woman in White* and not marvelled at the intricacies and unrivalled skill of this man who wrote them down? ... (the) great precursor of all mystery fiction; all this long before the likes of Agatha Christie came upon the scene.' Members are reminded that there is a small plaque from the WCS at the grave which is situated a little behind, on the west side, of the central church.

MASTERMIND

It took the 25 years, but Wilkie finally made it to Mastermind. One of the contestants for the third semi-final of the last series chose as her supplementary subject 'The Life and 1860s Novels of Wilkie Collins. This was broadcast on Wednesday August 27. She put up a very creditable performance, scoring 12 in the first round of special subjects but was overtaken by some fierce opposition in the general knowledge round.

MY MISCELLANIES

Katherine Haynes has sent me a copy of her 1982 English Literature GCE examination paper which includes *The Woman in White* as one of the set books - probably to coincide with the BBC Television adaptation that year. The questions: (a) Basing your answer on specific incidents, explain whether you find Sir Percival Glyde or Count Fosco the more wicked. (b) Do you think patience is Laura Fairlie's chief characteristic? Answers on a postcard.....

BILIPO (Bibliothèque des Littérature Policieres) is holding another in its series of exhibitions on the history of crime fiction. It is currently showing '1927-1997 *Le Masque: 70 ans d'aventures*' until 17 January 1998. Address 48-50 Rue du Cardinal-Lemoine, Paris Ve (01 42 34 93 00).

Sutton Publishing still have their sixteen Collins titles in print together with *No Thoroughfare* listed jointly with Dickens. A copy of their New Titles catalogue is available from Regina Schinner, Sutton Publishing, Phoenix Mill, Thrupp, Stroud, Glos. GL5 2BU (01453 731114); this includes new editions of Mrs Braddon, Hugh Walpole, Thomas Hardy, the Brontës and several others. Their current special offer is free 'p & p' for all orders over £15 and 10% discount for all orders over £30.

The 13th edition of the *Directory of British Associations* is available from CBD Research Ltd, 15 Wickham Road, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 2UQ (£142.50 or £200 for the CD-Rom).

APG

'Nobody can accuse me of having ever been accessory to the disturbing of quiet people with useful knowledge.'
(*A Rogue's Life*)



THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

PATRONS Faith Clarke Benny Green

Chairman Andrew Gasson, 3 Merton House, 36 Belsize Park, London, NWJ 4EA

Membership Paul Lewis, 47 Hereford Road, Acton, London WJ 9JW

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 1998

With Spring coming on the thoughts of some turn to outdoor activities such as training for the London Marathon. But don't forget Wilkie considered

“There is about as much variety in a flock of athletes as in a flock of sheep” (*Man and Wife*)

and “The worst curse of human life is the detestable necessity of taking exercise” (*The Moonstone*),

Miserrimus Dexter, however, leaped - or hopped - into action with “My brains are beginning to boil in my head. I must take refuge in physical exercise. I must blow off the steam, or I shall explode in my pink jacket on the spot!” (*The law and the Lady*).

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1998

The 1998 membership subscription is now due and should be sent to Membership Secretary, Paul Lewis, at the above address. (NB subscriptions run from 1st January - 31 December). For this year, we are maintaining the subscription at £8.50 for UK and European members and £12.50 for those in the USA and outside of Europe. Payments from abroad must be made in Sterling otherwise bank charges for conversion absorb almost all of the subscription.

FRENCH PREFACE TO *THE WOMAN IN WHITE*

Paul Lewis has been taking a detailed look at the preface to the first French edition of *The Woman in White*, published in 1861. His translation and accompanying notes are being sent out with this Newsletter.

CONSIDERATIONS ON THE COPYRIGHT QUESTION

Long-standing member and regular correspondent, Muriel Smith, has written to add the following notes to Collins's essay on this topic circulated with the last Newsletter:

'The United States in the nineteenth century specialised in the short story. This had nothing to do with national psychology: it was a question of market forces. In the absence of international, as distinct from national, copyright, the competition of cheap new British novels made the publishing of new American novels by new writers a risk that American publishers were not prepared to take. A Senate Committee on Patents considered the matter in 1886¹ The Boston publisher, Dana Estes, testified that for two years he had not published an American manuscript: his house was not a charitable institution. He cited a particular author - the now acclaimed Charles Egbert Craddock, in real life Mary Noailles Murfree, a fragile spinster in her thirties, who would never have had her manuscript accepted had she not previously made herself known by getting local colour stories of life in the Tennessee mountains into the magazines. These were the salvation of beginning authors.'

I. George Stuart Gordon, *Anglo-American Literary Relations* (Oxford 1942).

Quoted from Muriel Smith's article 'Chesteron, Poe and Others' in *The Chesteron Review* (vol. 21, no. 4, November 1995)

SOME BOOK REVIEWS BY PAUL LEWIS

***WILKIE COLLINS - AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE* BY ANDREW GASSON, OUP 1998 ISBN 0-19-866215-7, £19.99.**

Biographies put writers into a chronology and analyse their work in the context of their lives. Andrew Gasson's new book fills in all the details which biographers leave out but which collectors, admirers, students, and scholars want to explore. It is an A-Z - or more exactly an A-Y - of Wilkie Collins. From 'Ablewhite, Godfrey' to

'Youth's Companion', An *Illustrated Guide* is an encyclopaedia, drawing on Gasson's extraordinary knowledge built up during more than twenty years spent studying the man and collecting his work

To prepare for this book Gasson read again everything Collins wrote and that has resulted in useful plot summaries of all his fiction which will be turned to by scholars for a long time. It also enabled him to pull out a wide selection of Collins aphorisms and quotes which show how scandalously this writer has been omitted from traditional Dictionaries of Quotations. The book has entries on every friend, relative, and acquaintance of Collins; full details of the publishing history of every book, story, and play; potted histories of Victorian publishers and publishing practices; and concludes with a wonderfully full bibliography to match the comprehensive bibliographical detail throughout the work.

As if that wasn't enough, the book contains over 200 illustrations, many published for the first time. They include some extremely rare first editions of Collins's stories in obscure periodicals, play-bills, manuscripts, portraits and photographs of Collins and his relatives and friends, and pictures of buildings associated with Collins. The only pity is that none of it is in colour.

I have few other niggles, though I think the book touches too lightly on Collins extensive journalism, concentrating mainly on his fiction. Inevitably in a book of this length and comprehensiveness and despite the pains Gasson took, the odd mistake or omission will come to light. Not least because scholarship is constantly bringing us more on Collins's life and work. Gasson intends to put updates on his website (at <http://www.gasson.demon.co.uk>) as new information comes to hand. If you love Collins, **if** you study Collins, if you collect Collins or if you are just interested in the Victorian period, buy this well written and approachable Collins encyclopaedia.

CLASS, SEX, AND DOMINATION

Wilkie Collins, by Lillian Nayder, Twayne Publishers, New York, 1997, ISBN 0805770593. No.544 of Twayne's English Authors Series.

I approached Lillian Nayder's new book on Wilkie Collins with caution. Literary analysis of books which were primarily intended as exciting and popular fiction runs the risk of over-reading - putting modern day motives and insights into the mind and intentions of long dead writers. But the more I got into Nayder's careful and detailed probing into what lay behind Collins's stories the more convinced I became that much of what she concluded was true. And that was not least because her work is grounded in the most thorough research into original sources.

She concludes that Wilkie had very advanced views on women's rights, on class, and on colonial power. But that his expression of these views in his books is always tempered by a conclusion which supports the Victorian status quo.

She examines in detail the art of his father, William Collins, and the views on class that shows, contrasting them with Wilkie's views and finding coded references to his rejection of these views in his otherwise hagiographic biography of his father. She looks at class in *Hide and Seek*, *The Dead Secret*, and *The Law and the Lady*; at what are nowadays called 'gender issues' in *The Woman in White*, *No Name*, and *Man and Wife*; and at empire and colonization in *Armada*, *The Moonstone*, and *The New Magdalen*.

The first two chapters are biographical and she concludes with a look at some of Collins's lesser known work and a wonderfully complete bibliography of modern studies of Collins. And within the text are detailed, unravelling plot summaries of the works covered.

Agree with her or not, once you've read Nayder's forensic analysis, you will never read Collins in quite the same way again.

***THE LETTERS OF CHARLES DICKENS, VOL IX 1859-1861* (EDITED BY GRAHAM STOREY) OUP 1997**

Three completely new letters from Charles Dickens to Wilkie Collins are just some of the delights to be found in volume IX of *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, edited by Graham Storey and published recently by Oxford University Press. The lives of Dickens and Collins were so closely linked from the time when they first met in 1851 to Dickens's death in 1870 that any scholarship about Dickens in that period is useful to Collins studies.

This latest volume covers the crucial time when Dickens set up *All The Year Round* and Collins wrote *The Woman in White*, his best known and most successful work.

Even familiar material is re-evaluated by the meticulous scholarship of Storey and his team. The letter from Dickens to Collins (26 January 1859) which lists other possible titles for the as yet unnamed *All The Year Round* has always been cited as a Dickens holograph. But Storey reveals that part of the list - including the first appearance of the title *All The Year Round*- is in Collins's hand. As Storey says "it is just possible that Collins... himself originated the title". If that is not the case, it is Collins' own manuscript note taken on the back of the letter when he met Dickens to discuss the title on 27 January 1859.

Other familiar material - such as Dickens's comments on *The Woman in White* - previously scattered over several different books - is collected here between two covers with Storey's detailed and careful footnotes. And new letters - as well as new details in old ones - tie down Collins life.

He went to Gloucester for a week on Tuesday 4 September 1860, he dined with Dickens at 5 on 16 May 1859 at Vereys in Regent St. Apart from the 22 letters to Collins (3 new, one partly new, and six others missing from the 1882 *The Letters of Charles Dickens to Wilkie Collins*), Collins is mentioned in many letters to other people and appears in numerous footnotes. His lover Caroline Graves crops up in a few, obscure references, usually excised from other editions. On 19 August 1860 Dickens wrote to Mrs Frances Dickinson "Wilkie has finished his White Woman (if he had done with his flesh-coloured one, I should mention that too) and is in great force." And on 5 March 1861 he wrote to Mrs Nash "He [Wilkie] has made his rooms in Harley Street, very handsome and comfortable. We never speak of the (female) skeleton in that house, and I therefore have not the least idea of the state of his mind on that subject. I hope it doesn't run in any matrimonial groove. I can imagine similar cases in which that end is well and wisely put to the difficulty. But I can *not* imagine any good coming of such an end in this instance."

Finally, an appendix prints in full - and for the first time - Collins's letter of 7 August 1860 accepting a two year appointment to *All the Year Round* to write, among other things, "a serial story of about the same length as *The Woman in White*" at pay of £7-7s a week and an eighth share of the profits. That book was *No Name* but Collins' withdrew from this agreement early, in January 1862.

KATE FIELD- SELECTED LETTERS (EDITED. CAROLYN J. MOSS), SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1996

Two new tidbits about Collins appear in a new biography and letters collection of the American writer and lecturer Kate Field (1843-1896). Collins wrote a chapter for her biography of the American actor Charles Fechter, a close friend of Collins who appeared in two of the author's plays. Writing on 16 February 1882 to Lawrence Hutton, who edited the series in which the Fechter biography appeared as well as editing a volume of Dickens's letters to Collins, Field says: "I intend to wind up the book with accompanying recollections which I have had copied. For this boon bless me, as Collins's mss would have made you somewhat profane, clear as it is. The erasures and interpolations are many." And writing on 13 July 1882, during her visit to England, she tells a friend that she is visiting Collins the next day.

P.L.

DICKENS'S YOUNG MEN BY P. D. EDWARDS

Recently published as part of the 'Nineteenth Century Series', under the general editorship of Joanne Shattock and Vincent Newey, is *Dickens's 'Young Men': George Augustus Sala, Edmund Yates and the World of Victorian Journalism* by P. D. Edwards, Darnell Professor of English at the University of Queensland. (ISBN 1-85928-043-9, £42. Ashgate Publishing Ltd, Unit 3, Lower Farnham Road, Aldershot, Hants GU12 4DY, Tel 01252 331551, Fax 01252 317446).

As the jacket blurb says, "Yates and Sala were possibly the best known and most successful of the 'young men' during Dickens's lifetime and for a generation or so after it." Other writers in the circle included Moy Thomas, John Hollingshead, Percy Fitzgerald and Blanchard Jerrold. Wilkie Collins, the author emphasises, rapidly acquired an independent reputation and was not one of them. Nevertheless he makes occasional but brief appearances with his early relationship with Dickens and *Household Words*, the staging of *The Lighthouse*, the blackballing of Wills, his and Dickens's candidate for admission to the Garrick Club, and his support in connection with the libel case against Yates.

Despite the title, this is not really a book about Dickens. Although considering the personal and literary relationships with Dickens of both Yates and Sala, it views the world of journalism very much from their point of view. It charts their respective rises to literary fame, compares their different approaches to life - the Bohemian, dissolute and unreliable Sala and the more stable, respectable Yates. Throughout their careers they veered from warm friendship to periods of enmity. They came from similar artistic backgrounds and both developed as prime exponents of the 'new journalism', becoming respectively special correspondents for *The Daily Telegraph* and *The New York Herald*. They were both made bankrupt in the 1860s but Yates eventually achieved success and wealth as the proprietor of *The World*, whereas Sala, also a household name, died in poverty. The book is expensive at £42 but nicely produced with sixteen illustrations most of which are quite unusual. It provides a useful insight into the world of Victorian journalism, the same background from which Wilkie graduated into the league of major author. The lives of Yates and Sala make an interesting comparison since, despite their lifetime fame, neither achieved enduring success as a novelist. APG

BBC TELEVISION'S *WOMAN IN WHITE* GETS THE BIRD

The Woman in White, BBC ONE, 28 and 29 December 1997 2x65 minute episodes, screenplay David Pirie, Director Tim Fywell.

The BBC followed 1996's distressingly bad *Moonstone* with the only slightly less disappointing *The Woman in White*. WCS member, P. Tohen of Kent described it

aptly as 'a travesty' - dictionary definition 'an imitation or description that misrepresents the original'. Paul Lewis in his review below has been equally unimpressed:

The BBC seems determined to have a turkey every Christmas. A year after the disastrous 1996 version of *The Moonstone*, we were given a pastiche of *The Woman in White*. Of course it is difficult to translate the complex, quarter of a million word plot of Collins's masterpiece into two hours of television. But when the BBC took so many pains with the costumes and the sets and when the actors put so much into their roles, it is sad how little care was taken with the two things which Wilkie Collins himself gave us - the plot and the language.

The screenplay by David Pirie (*Black Easter, Element of Doubt*) opens in Limmeridge. Walter Hartright, unmet at the station, walks to the house and encounters Ann Catherick. Exactly the same opening was used in the 1948 Hollywood version. And the rewritten encounter loses all its dramatic force and it is a good ten minutes into the story before a cheer can go up for the first words that are vaguely based on what Wilkie wrote.

Taken as a new, Victorian melodrama the production had some merit. Several people who had not read the original told me they enjoyed it and some then went on to read the book which enthralled Victorian England in 1860. But what a surprise they were in for! The BBC cast the more beautiful woman to be the ugly Marian (and changed her name to Fairlie in case we could not cope with the complexities of two half-sisters with different surnames) and the plain one to be Laura, as well as the thinnest man ever to be the fat Count Fosco. Percival Glyde's secret which Wilkie gave us - and which he claimed no-one ever guessed before he revealed it - was transformed into a vague problem with a will and allegations of under-age sex with Ann Catherick. The story was brought forward 18 years to 1869 so that reference could be made to the Rosettis as a way of justifying an entirely new - and in the event unbelievable - grave opening scene. Poor Hartright is sent away from Limmeridge after an allegation of sexual harassment from which point he degenerates into a drunk who sketches for a living in bars; Marian, who is the strong one in the first half of the book and the weaker one in the second becomes the dominant force in the second half of this adaptation, using her sexuality to get her way with both Hartright and the doctor who holds the key to Laura's identity. And it ends with mass meeting at Limmeridge in which everyone takes leave of their carefully drawn characters in a scene reminiscent of the schmaltz at the end of *Star Wars*.

The acting on the whole was excellent. Though a mere scrap of a man, Simon Callow (*Four Weddings and a Funeral, A Room with a View*) conveys a real hard menace beneath Fosco's wonderfully precise politeness. Ian Richardson (*House of*

Cards, The Fourth Protocol), was a brilliant hypochondriac Mr Fairlie (the part he had originally taken in the much better 1982 BBC Television production). And what Wilkie called “the two women’s roles” were both played with passion and care by Tara Fitzgerald (*The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, Brassed Off*) and Justine Waddell in her first television role. But although it was cooked, basted and dressed to perfection, the screenplay that changed the plot and made up the dialogue was still a turkey at heart. And it was Wilkie who was stuffed.

Other views

Ronald Taylor writing to Radio Times also called it ‘a travesty of Collins’s masterpiece.’ H. R. F. Keating wrote ‘Planners should think twice before setting out to murder...great novels’. And Laura-Louise Blair, an ‘A’-level student, asked ‘if a 17-year-old can fully comprehend a novel of such brilliance, why is that a whole BBC team can be so wrong?’. Louise Marchant, our former membership secretary, thought ‘it started with promise and went downhill rapidly’. And chairman Andrew Gasson said ‘Wilkie gave us a perfectly good secret, why change it?’

RADIO STARS - FIVE STORIES FROM *LITTLE NOVELS*

‘Mr Policeman and the Cook’, ‘Miss Jéromette and the Clergyman’, ‘Mr Marmaduke and the Minister’, ‘Miss Bertha and the Yankee’, ‘Miss Morris and the Stranger’, BBC Radio 4, Wednesdays at 12.25 from 31/12/97 to 28/1/98, dramatised by John Arden, with Ronald Pickup as Wilkie Collins.

The BBC followed its Christmas television version of *The Woman in White* with a rather better series of five short stories by Wilkie Collins on Radio 4. They were based on the false - and annoying - premise that Collins was so dependent on laudanum in his later years that he was incapable of writing full-length novels so he was reduced to writing short stories. This myth was repeated in Radio Times (3-9 January p131) and the writer also made the howler that because we knew Collins died in 1889, he also knew that in the early 1880s. But that aside, these five dramatised adaptations, with Collins as narrator and woven into his own life, kept faithfully to the original plots and used much of the original language. The stories were taken from the fourteen tales collected in *Little Novels* (1887) and originally published between 1875 and 1887. Overall, thoroughly enjoyable and worthwhile. Let’s hope BBC Worldwide puts them on sale

P.L.

WILKIE COLLINS AND FRANK BEARD - ALSO ON THE RADIO

Coming up soon on BBC Radio 4 is an interesting series on writers and the subjects of their dedications. Wilkie dedicated *No Name* (1862) to his friend and physician, Francis Carr Beard. The programme will explore their friendship, Wilkie's medicinal use of laudanum, his attempts to give it up and how it features in his books.

The series will be broadcast at the beginning of the new Radio 4 schedules at 3.30 p.m. during the week of 6 - 10 April 1978.

THE ARTS CLUB

Louise Marchant - to quote her own words again - is 'always amazed where Wilkie turns up'. She recently visited the Arts Club and discovered that Wilkie had joined in 1866 prior to its move to central London's Dover Street. The club produced a book entitled *A Most Agreeable Society*, celebrating 125 years of its existence dating from its beginnings in Hanover Square in 1863. On page 11 we learn that, according to John Forster, it was in the club's dining room that Wilkie confided to Charles Dickens that he had lost his virginity in Rome at the age of fourteen. With some inaccuracies, the book continues:

'As the son of a painter and Royal Academician, Collins was an ideal member, with his placid, benign, bespectacled face and courteous manners, but it would be wrong to take too simple a view of him. Like Dante Gabriel Rossetti, he was passionately addicted to opium, and though a 'confirmed bachelor' in the eyes of the world, maintained, under the name of Mr Dawson, two mistresses, by one of whom he had a family. Each lived in a separate house in adjoining squares in Bayswater, and he divided his time equally between them, taking out in favour of each a life insurance policy on himself, and at his death dividing his estate of £11,000 between them.'

Other members during Wilkie's time included Charles Dickens, Charles Reade, Edmund Yates, Swinburne, Whistler, Du Maurier (illustrator of *The Moonstone*, *Poor Miss Finch*, *The New Magdalen* and *The Frozen Deep*), Henry Irving, Richard Monckton Milnes (later Lord Houghton and who had proposed Collins for membership of the Athenaeum in April 1861), Luke Fildes (illustrator of *The Law and the Lady* and *Miss or Mrs?*), and Carlo Perugini (whom Kate Dickens married after the death of her first husband, Charles Collins).

TWO POSSIBLE OUTINGS

Paul Lewis has identified the house in Gower Street occupied by Millais at the time of the supposed night-time meeting with Caroline Graves. He would like to organise a walk commencing at this meeting point to take in several Wilkie locations in the Central London/Marylebone area and finishing at Gower Street. This would probably be arranged for a weekend at the start of the Summer. Would anyone interested please contact Paul at his usual address.

The other possibility was mentioned in a Newsletter last year and would be a joint meeting with the Pugin Society. This is based in Ramsgate, a favourite seaside haunt of Wilkie from the 1870s which also featured in several of his stories. The proposed outing would also be planned for a weekend, probably at the start of September 1998, and anyone interested should contact Andrew Gasson.

GEORGE MACDONALD

John Docherty of the George Macdonald Society is attempting to discover why *Thomas Wing/old, Curate*, one of the worst-written of all the author's novels (J. D.'s words!), is nevertheless one of the most popular. Macdonald apparently imitated the style of contemporary Sensation Novels and possibly some of Wilkie's detective stories. John Docherty has found parallels in two short stories of Margaret Oliphant (she who admired *The Woman in White* but called *Basil* 'a revolting story') and wonders whether anyone can cite an individual work of Collins which includes more than one of the following incidents:

- The murderer concealing evidence by dumping it down a mineshaft.
- An amateur detective discovering some of this by pretending to be a geologist.
- The murdered girl's mother a bigamist and vulnerable to blackmail.
- The victim killed by her lover because seen with another at a masked ball.
- The murderer a well-to-do southerner; the victim from the Midlands.
- The murderer hidden by his sister in a lonely house.
- The murderer escaping to Holland, aided by accomplices with a small boat.

Any suggestions to John Docherty, 9 Meadway Drive, Forest Row, RH18 5NU.

DAPHNE DU MAURIER FESTIVAL

A second Daphne Du Maurier Festival of Arts and Literature is being held from 8-17 May 1998 in Fowey, Cornwall. Events are too numerous to list but full details can be obtained from Jonathan Aberdeen, Festival Co-ordinator, Restormel Borough

Council, Penwinnick Road, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 5 DR (Tel. 01726 74466,Fax. 01726 68339).

I have always thought there are some interesting coincidences in the works of Wilkie Collins and Daphne Du Maurier, grand-daughter of George Du Maurier, one of Collins's illustrators. Their first books were both biographies of their respective fathers (*Memoirs of the life of William Collins* and *Gerald*). But in addition they both wrote:

A ghost story set in Venice (*The Haunted Hotel* and *Don't Look Now*).

A novel with a sinking ship in which someone is allowed to die (*Armada* and *Rebecca*).

A travel book of bygone Cornwall (*Rambles Beyond Railways* and *Vanishing Cornwall*)

Novels with stolen or substituted identity (*Woman in White* and several others as this was a favourite Collins theme and *The Scapegoat*)

Novels set in Cornwall (*The Dead Secret* and *Rule Britannia* plus others since Daphne Du Maurier lived there)

Stories with prophetic dreams (*The Two Destinies* and *The Flight of the Falcon*)

In *The Moonstone* both Franklin Blake and Godfrey Ablewhite wanted to marry *My Cousin Rachel* (Verinder); and N. P. Davies in his biography of Collins considered that *The Law and the Lady* was the inspiration for *Rebecca*..

GEORGE ELIOT COUNTRY

The George Eliot Fellowship working in association with Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council is arranging five guided tours of George Eliot Country between 10 May and 13 September. For further information contact Rose Selwyn, Town Hall, Coton Road, Nuneaton, Warwickshire, CV1 1 5AA (Tel.01203 376490). For details of the George Eliot Fellowship contact Mrs Kathleen Adams, 71 Stepping Stones Road, Coventry, CV5 8JT (Tel. 01203 592231).

APG

“Books are companionable creatures” (*The Black Robe*)





THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

PATRONS Faith Clarke Benny Green

Chairman Andrew Gasson, 3 Merton House, 36 Belsize Park, London, NW3 4EA

Membership Paul Lewis, 47 Hereford Road, Acton, London W3 9JW

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 1998

SOME SUMMER QUOTES

‘Light, Sir, is the grand decree of Providence’. *The Woman in White*

And for those about to take up sailing, don’t forget Wilkie’s warning and suggested cure:

‘Sounds nautically and lamentably associated with white basins, whirling waves, and misery of mortal stomachs wailing in emetic despair’. *Hide and Seek*.

‘If ever a man cured sea-sickness in a new way yet, I am that man - I got over it by dint of hard eating’. *The Frozen Deep*.

DUTCH PUBLISHERS

Enclosed with this Newsletter is ‘Wilkie Collins and his “dear Dutchmen”’. This essay by P.J.M. van Winden is based on a final research project for the Book and Publishing programme of the English Department of the University of Leiden. The project itself traces the Dutch part of the publication history of Collins’s translations from 1850 to the end of the 19th century. The essay concentrates on the particularly vivid events of 1869 and 1870 which saw Collins at loggerheads with the Dutch publishers, Belinfante Brothers. The essay is an outline of an article submitted to *Quaerendo*, which has more detail on copyright matters and Dutch book trade practices and which follows Gebroeders Belinfante’s interests in Collins to the end of the century.

RAMSGATE

The date of the proposed trip to Ramsgate has now been finalized for Saturday 12 September 1998. The day will be an informal outing and consist of a guided walk through parts of Ramsgate with a Collins connection after which members of the WCS will be entertained by the Pugin Society in Wellington Crescent - just a few doors from where Martha Rudd stayed in the 1870s. There may not be time for another reminder before September so anyone interested should contact Andrew Gasson at the above address.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Current membership of the Society now stands at well over 100. Those members who have not yet paid for 1998, however, are reminded to forward their subscriptions to Paul Lewis at 47 Hereford Road, Acton, London W3 9JW.

RECENT AND FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS

CRIMINAL SENTENCES

Recently published is *Criminal Sentences: true crime in fiction and drama* by Steve Haste (Cygnus Arts, 16 Barter Street, London WC1A 2AH; ISBN 1 900541254, £15). This book is possibly the first full-length study of the influence of true crime on fiction and drama and has brief introductory sections on what the author calls 'crime fiction' (defined as 'a literary genre in which fictional narrative is developed from the basis of real events or characters'). It discusses sub-divisions of the field and gives a useful history back to the beginnings of literature. Collins is accorded an appropriate place since *The Moonstone* 'is without doubt the first crime fiction detective novel.' The main body of the book, however, is an A to Z of crimes and criminals, giving basic details of the facts of almost 200 cases or lives. Each entry considers the fiction works based on the facts and the entire book covers over 400 publications. The volume contains plot summaries for each of the fictional works as well as the real life cases on which they are based. These are always difficult to write and the text sometimes does not flow easily - with a few split infinitives included for good measure. There is a useful bibliography and each entry has suggestions for further reading.

Keeping some very distinguished (or infamous) company, from Lizzie Borden to Thomas Wise, Collins has four entries: The Constance Kent Road Case which provided several details for *The Moonstone* including Inspector Whicher's

inspiration for Sergeant Cuff; Rachel Levenson on whom Mrs Oldershaw in *Armadale* was based; The Marquise de Douhault whose imprisonment Wilkie read of in *Recueil des Cause Célèbres* and used in *The Woman in White*; and the American Boorn Brothers Case which Collins used as the basis for 'John Jago's Ghost'. There are one or two inaccuracies and not mentioned are *Blind Love*, based on the Von Scheurer Fraud Case, and the influence of the Madeleine Smith trial on *Armadale* and *The Law and the Lady*. An interesting feature of the book is the inclusion of other fictional works based on the same real-life cases. Thus the stage play *Beautiful for Ever* (1868) was also based on Rachel Levenson; and Francis King's *Acts of Darkness* (1983) was derived from the Constance Kent case. *Criminal Sentences* relates the fictional counterparts to many different types of crime and overall will prove a very useful reference book.

OXFORD CLASSIC FICTION

The ever alert Katherine Haynes has discovered that the bookshops group, 'Books etc.', has joined forces with Oxford University Press to produce a free publication entitled *Classic Fiction etc.* This 100 page volume features extracts from the Oxford World's Classics. Each of the thirteen entries consists of a short introduction followed by a chapter from a representative work. Wilkie is duly included with Chapter II from *No Name*. Other authors range from Chaucer to Herodotus and from Lewis Carroll to Virginia Woolf.

THE MOONSTONE FROM BROADVIEW PRESS

A new edition of *The Moonstone* will be published by Broadview Press later this year or early in 1999. Edited by Steve Farmer of the University of Arizona, the new edition will contain significant contextual material which has not been republished before. In particular, it will contain the text of the stage version of *The Moonstone*, written by Collins in 1877, together with biographies of the main actors, contemporary reviews of the play, and a sketch done by Collins to show how the stage set should look. There will also be contemporary accounts of two crimes which Collins used for parts of his plot together with letters by Collins. Some pieces written by Collins about Indian culture and about Victorian theatre may also be included. Broadview, a Toronto based publisher, has already produced excellent editions of *Heart and Science*, also edited by Steve Fanner, and *The Evil Genius* edited by Graham Law.

PENGUIN EDITIONS

Adding to their existing Collins publications (*The Woman in White*, *No Name* and *Armadale*), Penguin is publishing two new editions in August. *The*

Moonstone is being re-issued with a new introduction by Sandra Kemp, replacing the previous version first published in 1966. ISBN 0140 434089; £2.50.

The Law and the Lady, a newcomer to Penguin's list, has an introduction by David Skilton. ISBN 0140 436073; £6.99.

ASSOCIATED UNIVERSITY PRESSES

The latest 80 page catalogue from the Associated Universities Presses gives details of new works as well as their extensive backlist. There are several titles listed for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as well as American, Irish and European literature. By and large serious academic stuff. Details from 16 Barter Street London, WC1A 2AH (0171 405 7979; fax 01714043598).

WILKIE COLLINS (NEW CASEBOOKS)

Also due to be published shortly in the New Casebooks series is *Wilkie Collins* edited by Lyn Pykett. Few details are available at present but the title suggests a volume of essays. The publishers are Macmillan in the U.K. (at £37.50 or £11.99 in paperback) and St Martins Press in the U.S. (At \$49.95, ISBN 0312212690).

19th CENTURY RESOURCES

Primary Source Media have recently produced a new catalogue of important material designed for scholars undertaking or teaching nineteenth-century studies in Literature, British Politics, Economics, International History, and the National and Popular Press. The section on Arts, Literature and Science includes 'The Charles Dickens Manuscripts' from the Forster and Dyce Collections; *The Dickensian* from 1905-1974; 'The Bronte Manuscripts' from the Bronte Parsonage Museum and The British Library; and 'The Life and Works of A. W. N. Pugin' from the Victoria and Albert Museum. Archive material of this quality and importance proves very expensive - from several hundred pounds upwards - but further details from Primary Source Media, P.O. Box 45, Reading, RG1 8HF (0118 9568844; fax 0118 9591325).

IOLÁNI

Ira Nadel writes that he has just finished copy editing his text of *Ioláni* and the book is currently back with the publishers. He hopes to receive proofs for correction later in the summer and Princeton expect to publish either at the end of this year or early in 1999.

WILKIE COLLINS - AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE

Andrew Gasson has now set up a web page for 'additions and corrections' to *Wilkie Collins - An Illustrated Guide* at <http://www.gasson.demon.co.uk>. He would be pleased to hear from anyone with suggestions for inclusion.

SOME RESEARCH NOTES FROM PAUL LEWIS

WHERE WILKIE LIVED

The houses where Collins lived in adult life have been fairly well documented in *Rambles Round Marylebone* by William Clarke and published by the Wilkie Collins Society in 1994. But the homes he shared with his parents are less well known. Two of these at least are still extant. In 1830, when Wilkie was 6, the Collins family moved from Hampstead back to London. The house was at 30 Porchester Terrace, Bayswater. The street runs north from Hyde Park, then as now an area for political demonstrations. In a letter to his friend William Winter, written in 1887, he describes how his father, William Collins, had to place candles in all the windows or risk having the windows smashed by a crowd which supported the reforms. William did NOT support them but had to 'illuminate' the house nevertheless. A neighbour opposite who did not, had all the windows smashed.

Contemporary records show that - unusually for this time - the house numbers were arranged with odds on one side and evens on the other. They are still in the same order and the present number 30 is almost certainly the house where the Collins family lived for eight years. Once a fine Victorian villa, it has now been rather tastelessly modernised. The appearance has been further damaged by the installation of numerous security devices. It seems to be owned by a foreign embassy.

After a brief stay at 20 Avenue Road in Regent's Park, during the summer of 1840 the family once again moved again to Bayswater. Oxford and Cambridge Terrace were the rows of houses either side of what is now Sussex Gardens and the Collins family moved to 85 Oxford Terrace. It was from number 85 that William Collins wrote to his patron Sir Robert Peel, who became Prime Minister in 1841, to try to get his son William Wilkie a job in the civil service. And it was here, surrounded by his family, at 10 o'clock on 17 February 1847 that William Collins died.

It was while he lived in Oxford Terrace that Wilkie wrote his first known published article, 'The Last Stage Coachman' (*Illuminated Magazine* vol. 1 no.1 pp 209-211, August 1843). Here he also wrote his first novel *Ioláni*, never published during his lifetime, most of *Antonina* (Bentley, 1850) and the biography of his father *Memoirs of William Collins, R.A.* (Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1848). From here he travelled to work at Antrobus, the tea merchants in Strand, and later took up his studies, such as they were, to become a barrister in 1846.

The Post Office London Directory 1843 shows that number 85 was occupied by a William Cummins esq (certainly a misprint) and that Devonport Street ran between nos.82 and 83. Contemporary maps show that Devonport Street is the road now known as Sussex Place. Counting the houses towards Hyde Park reveals that 85 is the building currently known as 171 Sussex Gardens. A tall, five storey terraced Victorian house, 171 is still in fine condition.

PICTURES BY WILKIE'S FATHER AND BROTHER

Wilkie Collins father, William, was a prolific painter - his son's biography of him lists more than 200 pictures although these are not rated today and are hard to find.

Birmingham City Art Gallery

The Reluctant Departure (1815) [in the circular entrance]

Henry Cole Wing, Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Seaford - Sussex (1844)

Rustic Civility (1834)

Interior with figures (possibly A Country Kitchen 1811)

The Caves of Ulysses at Sorrento Naples (1843)

Villa d'Este - Tivoli (1842)

National Gallery, London

Sunday Morning (1836)

Wilkie's brother, Charles Allston Collins, was also a professional artist for some of his life. He was on the periphery of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, though never a full member. Few of his pictures are on display.

National Gallery, London

May in the Regent's Park (1852)

Henry Cole Wing, Victoria and Albert Museum, London
The God Harvest (1854)

Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
Portrait of William Bennett (1850)
Convent Thoughts (1850)

ITALIAN PERIODICAL PUBLICATION

An early Italian translation of a Wilkie Collins story has recently been identified. Pierangelo Filigheddu, an Italian scholar working on a study of the Italian writer Ottone Bacaredda (1848-1921), came across a story translated by Bacaredda entitled 'Il marito di due mogli' ('The husband with two wives') which was published in a local Sardinian newspaper *L'Avvenire di Sardegna* in 1873. The story was headlined *Romanzo Inglese del Signor W. Collins*.

In fact it is a translation of a story which first appeared as 'A Marriage Tragedy' in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (XVI, no.93 pp 334-357, February 1858). It was then republished in *The Queen of Hearts* (1859) as 'Brother Griffith's Story of a Plot in Private Life' and is generally now reprinted simply as 'A Plot in Private Life' - for example in Julian Thompson's *The Complete Shorter Fiction*.

RED HOUSE STABLES CARRIAGE MUSEUM

Katherine Haynes has also come up with details of the Red House Stables in Darley Dale, Matlock. Here they maintain a working carriage museum with a unique collection of horse drawn vehicles. There are nearly 40 carriages including one of the few surviving Hansom Cabs, a Stage Coach, Royal Mail Coach and various other private and commercial vehicles. Trips can be taken by a Carriage and Pair, complete with liveried coachman and groom. Details from Old Road, Darley Dale, Matlock Derbyshire DE4 2ER (01629 733583).

WILLIAM CLOWES

Paul Graham, who in 1995 wrote *West Norwood Cemetery: the Dickens Connection*, has recently been researching two more 'inmates'. William Clowes Senior, founded the printing firm which bears his name and his son, William Clowes Junior, was the first to install a steam press. Between them, they were responsible for printing several of Collins's novels. To mark the firm's sesquicentennial, its history was published as *Family Business* in 1953 and reproduced Collins's signature on page 56. Further research is proving difficult

in the absence of archives and anyone with additional information or suggestions of suitable sources might like to contact Paul at Flat 4, 9 St Andrew's Road, Surbiton, Surrey, KT6 4DT.

COLLINS IN *NORTHWEST*

The 13 March issue of *NorthWest*, one of London's give-away property magazines, featured a one page biographical article on Collins by Peter de Loriol. Entitled 'A Ghostly Influence', the piece is illustrated with Edward Ward's 1862 sketch of Wilkie but contains several inaccuracies. The author notes, however, that 'His dark, brooding, intense and shocking stories spawned generations of imitators.'

KENSAL GREEN

Kensal Green Cemetery now has a page on the web which includes a photograph of Wilkie's grave. It also has links through a related site, 'Page of the Dead', to various other cemeteries in the U.K. and Europe.

Friends of Kensal Green Cemetery have also been working for some time on a publication entitled *Paths of Glory: A Select Alphabetical List, Illustrated with line Drawings of the Monuments, of Persons of Note Commemorated at the Cemetery of All Souls at Kensal Green*. It is expected to be ready towards the end of the year. Collins will be described as 'the pioneer of detective fiction in England'.

SHARP

The Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing (SHARP) is an international organisation for book historians with 1,000 members in 20 countries. It is open to academics and non-academics, historians, bibliophiles and all those with an interest in the history of the book. SHARP will publish a scholarly journal, *Book History*, as well as its quarterly Newsletter. Details from Dr Linda Connors, Drew University Library, Madison, NJ 07940. The organisation is also holding SHARP 98, a series of affiliated meetings in Vancouver from 15-22 July 1998. Details c/o Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing, Simon Fraser University, Harbour Centre, 515 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6B 5K3 (604 291 5215, fax 604 291 5098; e-mail sharp98@sfu.ca).

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

The Strand Magazine has recently been revived in the USA. The original, now remembered mainly for the introduction of Sherlock Holmes, was founded by George Newnes in 1891, two years after Wilkie's death. For sixty years it published not only Arthur Conan Doyle but also key authors of the twentieth century including Somerset Maugham, Graham Greene and Agatha Christie (who should have known better than to describe in *The Third Girl* (1966) Hercule Poirot complaining of Collins in 'lack of method and romantic outpourings'). *The Strand Magazine* eventually closed in 1950 and its reincarnation is a quarterly publication dedicated to the best of mysteries, short stories, essays and poetry. The annual subscription is \$24.95 for the USA and Canada; \$29.95 for the rest of the world. Further details from P.O. Box 1418, Birmingham, MI 48012-1418, USA (1 800-300-6652, USA; 0 800-961-280, UK; strandmag@worldnet.att.net)

HARPERS MAGAZINE AT HAY ON WYE

A recent trip to Hay on Wye discovered a large quantity of Harpers Monthly Magazine. These are bound half-yearly volumes from 1850, vol. I, to about 1880. They are quite reasonably priced from £3 to £5 depending on condition and several contain stories or serials by Collins. There are also a few odd issues of *Harper's Weekly*. Further details from Tim Shephard at Richard Booth's Bookshop Ltd, 44 Lion Street, Hay on Wye, Herefordshire, HR3 5AA, (01497 820322; fax 01497 821150).

THE WOMAN IN WHITE POSTER

Frederick Walker's stunning poster for the 1871 theatrical version of *The Woman in White* features prominently in the current exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum entitled 'The Power of the Poster'. The original, partly because of its colour and partly because of its sheer size, is even more striking in real life than even the best black and white reproduction.

Walker was a friend of Wilkie, his brother Charles, and Millais. Walker had written to the wood engraver W. H. Hooper 'I am bent on doing all I can with a first attempt at what I consider might develop into a most important branch of art' and, in a later letter, added 'I propose trying my hand at the thing itself - a dashing attempt in black and white'. The original on buff paper is laid to wood in charcoal, chalk and black and white gouach. It is impressively life-size, the whole frame being about 9 feet by 5 feet, and gives an overall sepia effect. It has been called 'the first high-art poster the world ever knew' and 'the first work of any importance in the history of the pictorial poster.' The original is owned by

the Tate Gallery (reference 2080). F. W. Waddy later used it as the background for a caricature of Collins published in *Once a Week* on 24 February 1872.

A small coloured reproduction of the poster is included in Margaret Timmers's *The Power of the Poster* published by the V. & A. to accompany the exhibition.

SERGEANT CUFF AND DICKENS'S FAVOURITE DETECTIVE

The latest issue of *The Dickensian* (Spring 1998, vol. 94 no. 444) has one or two interesting notes of Collins interest. Ray Dubberke's essay on 'Dickens's Favourite Detective' discusses the influence of Chief Inspector Frederick Williamson referred to in the 1872 *Yesterday With Authors* by James T. Fields as Detective W-. Dubberke concludes that 'W' was neither Inspector Whicher - the obvious choice - nor Inspector Charles Frederick Field, suggested by Philip Collins in his 1981 *Dickens Interviews and Recollections*. The article describes Williamson's rise to prominence during the 1850s and 1860s. Williamson always wore a flower in his buttonhole taken from his own garden. He was apparently famous for his roses and this could have been an inspiration for Sergeant Cuff in *The Moonstone* (1868). "Perhaps Wilkie and Williamson met on one of Dickens's underworld rambles, or perhaps Dickens simply told his friend about the detective who 'was famous for his roses'."

WISBECH MUSEUM

Also noted in *The Dickensian* was the exhibition mounted by the Wisbech and Fenland Museum on Chauncy Hare Townshend during March and April. This will now be repeated from 14 November to Christmas 1998. Collins knew Townshend well as the wealthy and eccentric friend of Dickens, meeting him at Tavistock House, Boulogne and Lausanne. He almost certainly provided the model for the hypochondriac Mr Fairlie in *The Woman in White* and the description in the novel of Fairlie's jewels is probably based on Townshend's own collection now housed at Wisbech which also has the manuscript of *Great Expectations*. Enquiries to the Curator and Librarian, Wisbech & Fenland Museum, Museum Square, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire PE13 1ES (01945 583817).

ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES

The WCS continues to be affiliated to the Alliance of Literary Societies. This year's Annual General Meeting and Seminar was held on Saturday 25 April. It took place under the joint auspices of the Lewis Carroll and Daresbury Lewis Carroll Societies with readings by Alliance President, Gabriel Woolf.

The Alliance now has an interesting web site at <http://www.sndc.demon.co.uk/als.htm> which lists affiliated literary societies (including the WCS) and gives details of their forthcoming events.

THEIR MISCELLANIES

WRITERS HANDBOOK

The 12th edition of *The Writer's Handbook* is due to be published shortly. Amongst other useful addresses and listings, it gives details of various literary societies (including the WCS). The editor is Barry Turner at 34 Ufton Road, London N1 5BX (0171-275 8662, fax O I 71-241 0118)

LEDBURY POETRY FESTIVAL

The Ledbury Poetry Festival is being held again, from 9 - 19 July. The varied programme consists of readings, performances, masterclasses, workshops, exhibitions, talks and competitions. Further information from The Ledbury Poetry Festival, Church Street, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 1DH (01531634156; fax 01531 631193). Ledbury is situated between Gloucester, Worcester and Hereford and an easy drive to the bookshops of Hay-on-Wye.

CARIBBEAN CRUISE MURDER

Those wishing to combine a Caribbean Cruise on the *Sea Princess* with a spot of detective fiction may be interested in a seven day trip from 9 January 1999. Guest authors on board will be Dorothy Cannell, Harlan Coben and Shelly Reuben (no, I hadn't heard of them either) but details from The Cruise Company, 19 Snell Street, Sonora, CA 95370, USA (001 888 532-2272).

MAGNA CUM MURDER

The Mid America Mystery Conference (a.k.a Magna Cum Murder) will be held from 30 October to 1 November 1998 in Muncie, Indiana. Special guests include John Harvey, Patricia Moyes, Dorothy Salisbury Davis, Jerry Bledsoe and Laurence Shames (I still haven't heard of them). Further details from The E.B. and Bertha C. Ball Center, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306 (765 285-8975; fax 765 747-9566; kennisonk@aol.com)

'People who read stories are said to have excitable brains'.
Heart and Science.





THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

PATRON Faith Clarke

Chairman Andrew Gasson, J Merton House, 36 Belsize Park, London, NW3 4EA

Membership Paul Lewis, 47 Hereford Road, Acton, London W3 9JW

NEWSLETTER

WINTER 1998

THE NEW *JOURNAL*

At last the WCS has a new *Journal*! Enclosed with this Newsletter is volume 1 of the New Series for which we have all patiently been waiting. Its appearance is a tribute to the new editors, Graham Law and Lillian Nayder, who have worked so hard on its production as well as to the editorial Advisory Board. Overall it represents a worthy successor to the original *Journal* edited by Kirk Beetz. The format consists of essays, notes and book reviews and submissions are invited for future editions. Details of the required format are given on the title-page. The *Journal* is included with the subscription for members of both the Wilkie Collins Society and the Wilkie Collins Society of North America.

WILKIE COLLINS AND WEST NORWOOD CEMETERY

Also accompanying this Newsletter is an essay by Paul Graham 'Wilkie Collins and West Norwood Cemetery'. This details several 'inmates' who have a connection with Collins such as Douglas Jerrold, Richard Bentley and William Clowes. Some of the biographical details are derived from Paul's earlier publication, *West Norwood Cemetery: the Dickens Connection*, which he wrote in 1995. This is currently available from The Friends of West Norwood Cemetery, 79 Durban Road, London SE27 9RW.

BENNY GREEN (9 December 1927 - 22 June 1998)

Members will by now have read of the sad death of one of our patrons, Benny Green, who died in London earlier this year aged 70. His interests were diverse but in addition to his many talents in the fields of jazz, theatre and music criticism, literary scholarship, writing and cricketing anthologies he was, of course, a great Collins enthusiast.

Perhaps not many WCS members will know of or remember his speech in September 1989 at the dinner which took place at the Reform Club in London to mark the centenary of Collins's death. It was a good-humoured, sympathetic, tour de force.

Alas no record remains of this or any of his radio comments on Collins but we can still read his review of Kenneth Robinson's reprinted biography published in *The Spectator* of 4 January 1975. Under the title of 'Victorian rake and rebel' he wrote 'For Collins must surely be one of the strangest odd-balls to turn up in all of the annals of English literature, a man so clearly born out of his time that it is nothing short of miraculous that he made himself so comfortable inside the horsehaired hothouse of Victorian society ... But Collins was sagacious as well as salacious, and it was this curious blend of disregard for the proprieties and a shrewd businesslike brain which so captivated Dickens ... he was a formidable artist in his own right. There is no question that his astonishing mastery of plot construction, a gift well exercised by his need to resort to it in his chaotic private life, influenced Dickens profoundly in the last few novels'

Kenneth Robinson would have been grateful to Benny Green, not only for a generous review of his ground-breaking biography but also for dispatching Dorothy L. Sayers. She had apparently denied Robinson access to some of the papers she had acquired by dint of her reputation for her own intended biography which she failed to complete after over 35 years of trying. 'No doubt the sardonic ghost of Collins would have regarded the failure to nail him by Miss Sayers as a merciful release from that lady's odious talents as bowdleriser and snobbist.' Well done, Benny - we shall miss you.

RAMSGATE

A small group of about a dozen, including one member from Holland took part in the 'Rambles around Ramsgate' on Saturday 5 September. We began with a diversion to Broadstairs and Bleak House (Fort House) where Wilkie stayed during the writing of *No Name* in 1862. After lunch Catriona Blaker of The Pugin Society gave us an excellent tour of St Augustine 's Abbey and showed us the house where Pugin himself lived. By this time the rain had stopped and local history expert Jeremy Hewett guided us through those parts of Ramsgate where Wilkie had stayed both as a child and from the 1870s. These included 14 Nelson Crescent which he visited with Caroline Graves and 27 Wellington Crescent which Martha Rudd occupied as Mrs Dawson. What became apparent was that although these two addresses are now only a few minutes away from each other, in Collins' s time the absence of a direct road would have entailed a much longer walk and ensured that the two households were kept discreetly apart. Wilkie accompanied his parents to Ramsgate in 1833. They originally rented a house in Albion Hill where the accommodation proved so unsatisfactory that the family removed to the street still known as the Plains of Waterloo. Apart from these addresses we also saw the exterior of the impressive Granville Hotel (built by Pugin 's son) where Wilkie stayed en route to France in 1872 and the Ramsgate Yacht Club. Although he was reputed to have joined this with Pigott, more recent research by Catriona Blaker suggests this may not have been so.

The afternoon ended with some fine hospitality by Liz and Jeremy Hewett at 22 Wellington Crescent, just a few doors from number 27.

MARGARET CARPENTER AND WILKIE'S MATERNAL RELATIVES

In 1993 a very successful Bicentenary Exhibition at Salisbury Museum celebrated the work of Wilkie's aunt, the portrait and genre painter Margaret Carpenter (1793-1872). Since then Richard Smith, who curated the show, has continued his research into her life and work, and has now completed a biography which he hopes to have published soon. His work continues on cataloguing her prolific output of over 1,100 pictures, and trying to trace them, mostly from private collections.

Exciting new discoveries keep popping up! Earlier this year a 'portrait of a young girl' came up at auction, and Richard realised it was Margaret Carpenter's long-lost 1839 portrait of her 12-year old young daughter Jane - the future wife of Wilkie's friend Charles Ward, and his favourite cousin. It was originally bought by the 19th-century collector Robert Vernon, who gave the bulk of his collection - but not his Carpenters - to the National Gallery. This lovely portrait of Jane now hangs above Richard's desk.

He has also written a paper for a future issue of the revived *WCS Journal* on the subject of 'Wilkie's Maternal Relatives'. Amazingly, Wilkie had no less than 26 first cousins (with at least 29 children between them), besides aunts, uncles, grandparents, and others connected by marriage. With their extraordinary variety of experiences, they represent a side of his life which has hitherto lain largely unexplored. Just as his mother's 1853 'disguised' autobiography (uncovered by Catherine Peters, and largely decoded by Richard Smith) has prompted a fresh evaluation of certain influences on his work, it is possible that this wider knowledge of Wilkie's many relatives may now reveal further parallels working through the novelist's mind.

Richard Smith is also compiling an iconography of the Collins family. This takes the form of a detailed catalogue of all known original portrait images - paintings, drawings, engravings, sculptures and photographs - of Wilkie, Charley, their parents and grandparents. So far 81 images of 7 out of the 8 individuals have been researched and listed. If any members reading this know of any kind of portrait which has never been reproduced in any of the standard books on Wilkie, and may be lurking in some private or public collection, would they please let Richard know (at "Lime Cottage", 78 Hessel Road, Ealing, London W13 9ET). The owner's identity will be treated as confidential. Eventually it is hoped that the iconography could be published, complete with reproductions of all the different images.

MILLAIS EXHIBITION AT THE NPG

The National Portrait Gallery is staging an exhibition of the works of Millais in the Wolfson Gallery from 19 February - 6 June. This will include his classic portrait of Collins painted in 1850. Millais was instrumental in setting up the NPG in 1889, the year of Collins's death, and became President of the Royal Academy in 1896.

CHAUNCY HARE TOWNSEND AT THE WISBECH MUSEUM

As mentioned in the last Newsletter, The Wisbech and Fenland Museum is repeating its exhibition commemorating the birth of the Reverend Chauncy Hare Townshend (1798-1868) from 14 November 1998 - 30 January 1999 (Tuesday-Saturday, 10 - 4, but closed 24 December - 12 January; admission free). Townshend was a wealthy and eccentric friend of Dickens and Wilkie first met him at Tavistock House. Townshend was one of the first collectors of early photography as well as accumulating quantities of glass, china, books, manuscripts and geological samples and he is very likely the model for Mr Fairlie in *The Woman in White*. His collections were divided between the Victoria and Albert and the Wisbech Museum where his (and perhaps Mr Fairlie's) jewellery can still be seen. Further information can be obtained from the Wisbech & Fenland Museum, Museum Square, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire PE13 1 ES (01945 583817)

DICKENS PASS LIST TO *THE FROZEN DEEP*

The latest issue of *The Dickensian* (Summer 1998 No. 445, Vol. 94 Part 2) has on p. 150 a photograph of Dickens's Pass list to the performance of *The Frozen Deep* on 4 July 1857 at the Gallery of illustration. Dickens writes sternly "No one to enter at the stage door on any pretence without pass or an order from Mr Charles Dickens or Mr Arthur Smith..." The list comprises 38 names including, of course, Collins plus the remainder of the cast, orchestra and set designers.

***WILKIE COLLINS* BY DOROTHY L. SAYERS**

Despite Benny Green's view, Dutch member Pierre Tissot van Patot writes that he has just obtained from the Amazon bookshop on the internet a copy of the Dorothy L. Sayers' unfinished Biography of Collins. This covers only Wilkie's early years and was originally published in 1977 in a limited edition of 1,000 copies. It has now become quite difficult to locate. ...

LITERARY NORFOLK - AN ILLUSTRATED COMPANION

Literary Norfolk by Julian Earwaker and Kathleen Becker, as the cover blurb tells us, is 'a celebration of the writers and writings of a unique and beautiful corner of Britain.' Lavishly illustrated with more than 250 photographs in colour and black-

and-white, it successfully takes the reader on a literary pilgrimage of the area ‘journeying through landscapes both real and imaginary’. The book is divided into ten chapters which represent the broad geographical areas of Norfolk such as Fens, Broads and Brecklands. Within each chapter individual locations are listed in alphabetical order. This system is supplemented by comprehensive indices of people (including Auden, Coleridge, Dickens, Kipling, Pepys and Wordsworth) and places (from Aylsham to Yarmouth), together with a useful bibliography and listing of literary societies with a Norfolk connection.

Wilkie is duly mentioned ‘renowned for his superb rendering of a sense of place’ where the real life Horsey Mere (researched during the summer of 1864) became Hurl Mere in *Armadale* (1866) which features some of Collins’s finest descriptive writing. *Literary Norfolk* includes photographs of both Horsey Mere and the tombstone of Martha Rudd’s parents in Winterton Churchyard. There are also quotations from *The Guilty River* and *The New Magdalen*.

Literary Norfolk is handsomely produced and includes a foreword by Malcolm Bradbury. It is obtainable from Chapter 6 Publishing, 134 London Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 2HQ at £14.99 (ISBN 1 870707 01 X).

***WILKIE COLLINS* (edited by Lyn Pykett)**

Lyn Pykett has brought together eleven critical essays about Collins’s work, written between 1975 and 1992, in the New Casebook Series. They are a mixture, she indicates, of landmark works which have set the agenda for literary discussion of Wilkie’s fiction and more recent criticism by younger academics - although she does not explain why she stopped in 1992. The book is unoriginal in another way, concentrating mainly on the familiar works *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone* with a nod towards *Man and Wife*. It kicks off with Pykett’s own 25 page introduction about Collins and follows with essays by, amongst others, Jenny Bourne Taylor, Walter M. Hendrick, Mark Hennelly, Jr, and Tamar Heller. At £12.99 paperback (Macmillan, London ISBN 0-333-65771-3 and St. Martin’s Press, New York, ISBN 0-333-69345-0) it is an excellent way to obtain eleven essays on Collins that are otherwise hard to locate. PL

THE LETTERS OF CHARLES DICKENS: VOLUME X 1862-1864

The wonderful Pilgrim edition of Dickens’s letters, currently edited by Graham Storey, is nearing its conclusion and the volumes are cheaper and more frequent thanks to new money from the British Academy. Volume X does not contain the Wilkie gems of volume IX but there are 20 letters (plus one in summary and one mentioned) to him from Dickens. Three of these are previously unpublished and four contain some new material. A letter of 24 January 1862 includes Dickens

suggestions for the title for *No Name* and a new analysis shows which parts were written or commented on by Collins. On 20 July Dickens wrote asking for volume two of *No Name* 'I am all impatience to read it'. And on 20 January 1863, Dickens writes of his secret arrangements in Paris 'my absence is entre nous', probably seeing his young lover Ellen Ternan. Another letter (27 July 1862) has been published before but omitted a reference, in code, to Caroline Graves. So for Collins addicts, a delightful read - even at £65 (Clarendon Press, Oxford 1998, ISBN 0-19- 812294-2). PL

WHAT JANE AUSTEN ATE AND CHARLES DICKENS KNEW

Republished earlier this year is *What Jane Austen Ate and Charles Dickens Knew* by Daniel Pool. Subtitled *Fascinating facts of daily life in the nineteenth century*, this guide sets out to be a generalised 'notes to readers' of nineteenth century literature. It is divided into two parts, the first explaining everyday Victorian life in terms of money, holidays, rules of precedence and etiquette, court life, transport, sex, health and domestic life in general. Part two presents a glossary of terms from 'abigail' (a lady's maid) to 'Your Worship' (the correct form of address to a magistrate) via 'landau' (an open four wheel carriage) and 'pelisse' (a kind of overcoat for women). The book was first published in the USA in 1994 which explains why the overall impression remains that it was written for an American readership wishing to understand 'aspects of English life that figure significantly in the major nineteenth century novels.' The authors quoted are mainly Dickens, Austen, Thackeray, Trollope, Hardy and George Eliot with apparently no mention of Collins. Nevertheless, it contains a great deal of useful information in an idiosyncratic way. We have Mayfair and Westminster but no Marylebone; useful details on medical conditions but little on laudanum; good explanations of 'gigs', 'dog carts' and 'postillions; but unnecessary entries for 'housemaid' and 'yellow fever'. It concludes with a very full bibliography to cover the English way of life and might just answer that nagging query about England in the last century. (Robinson Publishing, ISBN 1-85487-875-1, paperback £9.99)

DETECTION & ITS DESIGNS

Detection & its Designs: Narrative & Power in 19th-Century Detective Fiction by Peter Thoms is published by Ohio University Press (ISBN 0-8214-1223). The book presents his interpretation of early works in the detective genre through readings from *The Moonstone*, *Caleb Williams*, *Bleak House*, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, and Poe's Dupin Stories. The chapter on *The Moonstone* is entitled 'The Detection of Innocence' and illustrates the main theme that detective fiction 'grapples with the issue of storytelling ... to uncover the detective's motives of controlling the representation of both himself and others'. Thom's earlier book, *The Windings of the Labyrinth*, discussed 'quest and structure in the major novels of Wilkie Collins'.

HUNTED DOWN

Recently published by Peter Owen is *Hunted Down* which features the detective stories of Charles Dickens and represent his contribution to the genre from Inspector Bucket of *Bleak House* onwards. The stories are edited with a useful introduction by Peter Raining which discusses the Detective Police of the time. Dickens based his Sergeant Witchem on the real life Inspector Whicher who Collins partly used as the model for Sergeant Cuff in *The Moonstone*. (ISBN 0 7206 1045 1, £9.95 paperback; ISBN 0 7206 0994 1, £16.95 hardback).

AGATHA CHRISTIE

Also from Peter Owen comes *Agatha Christie and the Eleven Missing Days* by Jared Cade which investigates Agatha Christie 's strange disappearance from her Berkshire home during December 1926. Although there is no discernible Collins connection - apart from the need for both writers to maintain a secret life - the book puts Christie's life in context in terms of the mystery writer's creative output. Unfortunately Hercule Poirot, who had obviously never heard of Sergeant Cuff, once complained of 'the lack of method or order in the romantic outpourings of Wilkie Collins' (*The Third Girl* 1966) - but an interesting and well researched biography (ISBN 0 7206 1055 9 at £18.95).

WHERE WILKIE LIVED (SOME FURTHER NOTES BY PAUL LEWIS)

My continuing researches into where Wilkie lived have turned up more extant buildings which he shared with his parents and, in one case, with Caroline Graves. I have also established where he was born. I have been helped in this research by the London Metropolitan Archive which holds comprehensive information about the changes to the names of streets and the numbering of the buildings in them.

Wilkie was born at 11 New Cavendish Street on 8 January 1824. That road still exists, north of Oxford Street and running parallel to it. The building in which Wilkie was born stood on the south side of New Cavendish Street, between Portland Place and Hallam Street. It was renumbered 96 in 1871 when New Cavendish Street was extended. Sadly the building in which he was born has now gone, replaced by a block of flats dating from around 1900. Although the family moved to Hendon by the end of 1825, Wilkie's father William seems to have kept the house on as he wrote letters from there for some years.

After Hendon, Hampstead and then 30 Porchester Terrace (which still stands, see the Summer 1998 Newsletter), the Collins family left for Italy in 1836. On their return on 15 August 1838 they moved, after some trouble, to 20 Avenue Road which runs north from Regent's Park. The house is the present number 39, a handsome villa in its own grounds. However, William blamed the clay soil on which it was built for

an inflammation of his eyes - symptoms from which Wilkie also suffered for most of his life - and in the summer of 1840 they moved to 85 Oxford Terrace. Further research has corrected some information on this house which I gave in the Summer Newsletter. The house is the present number 167 (not 171) and no longer has its own front door, being combined with the next door house. And there was one further move before William Collins died. In September 1843 the family moved round the corner to 1 Devonport Street. Here William had a bigger studio - the best he had had - and despite failing health settled down to work. This house also still stands, now 1 Sussex Place and used as an hotel.

So it was here that Wilkie began to pursue his own work. And it was here that the death certificate shows that William Collins died on 17 February 1847. It is a sad commentary on a successful life that none of the homes where William Collins, RA lived and painted bears a blue plaque recording the fact.

Of the rest of the houses which Wilkie called home, 17 Hanover Terrace still stands in Regent's Park and of course 90 Gloucester Place (renumbered 65 in 1935) where he lived for twenty years, bears the only blue plaque to celebrate Wilkie's residence. But another of his homes has now been identified. Wilkie probably met Caroline Graves, who was to share the rest of his life with him (though for most of it she also had to share him with Martha Rudd), in 1854. When they met she was living over her junk shop at 5 Charlton Street. The address is now known as 42 Hanson Street and the original building is gone. After that she lived at 22 Howland Street, now known as 43, and that property has also been demolished. But then Wilkie installed her in a handsome eighteenth century terrace at 124 Albany Street where she was certainly living in 1859 and possibly longer. It was the first time that Wilkie openly lived with her - he wrote letters from that address early in 1859. This house still stands and is now 65 Albany Street, on the east side of Regent's Park. PL

WILKIE ON THE RADIO

A copy of an early BBC Radio serial of *The Woman in White* has been discovered in Holland. Frits Enk, a journalist with a Dutch radio station, recorded the first seven of twelve episodes when they were broadcast in 1969. Adapted by Howard Agg and starring Peter Baldwin as Walter Hartright, Margaret Wolfit as Marian Halcombe, and Patricia Gallimore as Laura Fairlie, the serial ran on Sundays at 8.30pm on BBC Radio 4 from 12 October to 28 December 1969, repeated on Tuesdays at 3pm. At the moment it appears that the BBC does not have a copy of this serial. Frits Enk is planning to mount an exhibition about Wilkie Collins in Holland next year. It will include Dutch translations and radio, television and film adaptations. PL

WILKIE ON VIDEO

The BBC's recent television adaptation of *The Woman in White* has now been released on video. Despite a strong cast and wonderful costumes and sets, the writer made the mistake of significantly changing elements of the story and throwing out most of Wilkie's writing. It costs £12.99 from bookshops and direct from the BBC on 01624 675 137. PL

THE DREAM WOMAN AND OTHER STORIES

This collection of Collins's short stories, edited by Peter Miles, was published earlier in the year by Phoenix Paperbacks (ISBN 0 75380 454 9, £3.99). The selection includes eleven tales from both early and late in Wilkie's career and reprints some of the less common as well as 'the usual suspects' (all were published in Thompson's *The Complete Shorter Fiction* in 1995). Peter Miles also gives us a short introduction and some useful notes about the editions he has used for the stories. In some cases these are different from those in Thompson. 'The Dream Woman', 'The Ghost in the Cupboard Room' ('Blow up with the Brig!') and 'Picking up Waifs at Sea' ('The Fatal Cradle') all use earlier versions. 'Fie! Fie! Or the Fair Physician' is one of the stories that Collins confessed to writing in haste and specifically requested should not be republished after his death.

THE FROZEN DEEP

Paul Graham contributes the following paragraphs about *The Frozen Deep* and the Dickens Fellowship Conference:

The 92nd Annual Conference of the Dickens Fellowship took place between the 23 and 29 July 1998 at Connecticut College, New London, USA. Two items of particular interest to Collins enthusiasts were included in the programme. The first was a talk entitled 'Dickens' Companion - Wilkie Collins' delivered by Ronald R. Thomas, Professor of English at Trinity College. The second was a staged reading of *The Frozen Deep* in which some of the bolder conference delegates participated. Our correspondent in Connecticut informs us that this was the highlight of the conference. Painted backcloths similar to those originally created by Clarkston Stanfield were used to set each scene. Costume and makeup were worn. The director, Douglas Broyles, ensured that his volunteer cast were well rehearsed, whilst himself undertaking the arduous role of Richard Wardour. Amongst the notable performances were those of amateur Brighton actress Patti Page who played Clara Burnham; Malcolm Andrews, editor of the *Dickensian* and Professor of Victorian Studies at the University of Kent, who portrayed Lieutenant Crayford; and Gerry McCrudden, Deputy Counsel at the British Consulate in New York, who provided comic relief as John Want, the cook.

Pattie Page, property manager for Brighton Little Theatre where she has been for the last 29 years, made the headlines of her local newspaper, the *Evening Argus*, on 22 July with a write-up about *The Frozen Deep* and her trip to Connecticut. PG

BASIL - THE FILM

Scanning the internet has shed some light on the apparent disappearance of last year's film version of *Basil* which is currently embroiled in all kinds of artistic and financial disputes. Hollywood's *Variety* reports 'In a highly unusual move, the Toronto International Film Festival has invited the director's cut of the Christian Slater film *Basil* to screen after it was yanked from last year's event at the last minute by its distributor. It is not clear the film will ever make Toronto, however. The distributor, Kushner-Locke, recently sold its own cut of the film to American Movie Classics' sister cable channel Romance Classics, where it is scheduled to have its US premier in October. And although Slater, one of the film's producers, has offered to put up half of the \$200,000 budget needed to complete the director's cut, Kushner-Locke so far has refused to release the original elements to the filmmakers. "Toronto is the only chance for people to see the film the way the filmmakers intended," said its director, Radha Bharadwaj.

"We were delighted to invite the film for the 1997 film festival and deeply regretted its withdrawal," says Piers Handling, executive director of the festival. "We were impressed by its innovativeness, emotion and beautiful performances. The invitation still stands for the 1998 festival. Even before the film went into production, Bharadwaj and Slater clashed with Kushner-Locke executives over both creative and financial matters. Saying that their version is not the film she intended to make, Bharadwaj is now attempting to have her name taken off the picture, and have it released as an Alan Smithee film. "I've tried every way imaginable to get the movie back to its original form to no avail," said Slater. "I'm very sad about the events that took place and pray that the film that will be viewed is the director's vision." While it's unusual for a film to be invited to the same festival two years running, it is not unprecedented.'

THE WOMAN IN WHITE ON AMERICAN RADIO

Also gleaned from the internet were a few notes about San Francisco's Shoestring Radio Theatre which specialises in producing both original dramas by contemporary playwrights and fresh interpretations of traditional works. *The Woman in White* clearly fits into the latter category and their adaptation in 1995 was apparently one of five Golden Reel nominees for Best Radio Drama Production. Described as a 'chilling gothic melodrama (produced by Monica Sullivan and directed by Randy Parker), the play was first broadcast locally on KUSF in March 1995 and aired nationally on the Public Radio Satellite System in May the same year.

VICTORIAN CRIME

A one day interdisciplinary conference on Victorian Crime will be held at the University of London Centre for English Studies on 24 April 1999. Proposed themes are: crime fiction, the birth of forensic science, police history, crime journalism, slums and rookeries, Jack the Ripper, Mayhew and other social observers, frauds and fakes, prostitution, political unrest, prisons and punishment, and legal history. Proposals for 20 minute papers (not more than 250 words) should be sent to Ms Chris Willis (Department of English, Birkbeck College, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HX; e-mail 100415.1234@compuserve.com). Further details can be found on the website at <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Crete/3783/crimeconf.html>.

THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY

WCS members may be interested in The Victorian Society. It was originally founded in 1958 as a national pressure group to protect Victorian and Edwardian buildings in England and Wales but has now expanded its activities to welcome anyone with an interest in the culture and history of the period 1837-1914. The society produces annual *Journal* as well as a wide range of other publications. It runs the Linley Sambourne House Museum in Kensington and further information can be obtained from I Priory Gardens, Bedford Park, London W4 1TT (0181 994 1019)

THE WOMAN IN WHITE AT THE NATIONAL FILM THEATRE

The 1982 television version of *The Woman in White* is being shown at the NFT on London's Southbank on 8 and 15 December. This is probably the best adaptation to date and was originally broadcast in five episodes in April-May 1982. It featured Alan Badel (in his last role) as Fosco, Jenny Seagrove as Laura Fairlie and Diana Quick as Marian Halcombe.

SPANISH TRANSLATIONS

A note from James Rusk, who seems to be almost single-handedly responsible for producing the electronic texts on the internet of several of Wilkie's works, reveals that there is now a Spanish translation of *No Name* by Paquita Martinez. She is also working on some of the short stories.

APG

SOME QUOTES ON FOOD AND DRINK FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON

‘Lots of Strong soup. and joints done with gravy in them - there’s my notion of good feeding.’ (*Armada*)

• ‘At my age ... nothing is serious except indigestion.’ (*Man and Wife*)

‘There are some men whose minds get drunk and some men whose bodies get drunk. under the influence of intoxicating liquor.’ (*Hide and Seek*)

‘If there is a poison which undermines the sources of life, he remarked. it is alcohol. If there is a vice that degrades humanity. it is intoxication.’ (*Blind Love*)

‘I see that you have contracted the vile modern habit of smoking.’ (*Man and Wife*)





THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

PATRON Faith Clarke

Chairman Andrew Gasson, J Merton House, 36 Belsize Park, London, NW3 4EA

Membership Paul Lewis, 47 Hereford Road, Acton, London W3 9JW

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 1999

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1999

The 1999 membership subscription is now due and should be sent to Membership Secretary, Paul Lewis, at the above address. (NB subscriptions run from 1st January - 31 December). For this year, we are once again maintaining the subscription at £8.50 for UK and European members and £12.50 for those in the USA and outside of Europe. Payments from abroad **must** be made in Sterling otherwise bank charges for conversion absorb almost all of the subscription.

BASIL

The film version of *Basil* after its single public showing on US television appears to have once again disappeared without trace. However, it has been possible to obtain a video copy and we are considering an informal showing in the near future, possibly in Belsize Park at the above address or at another venue in central London. Those interested should add their names and a telephone contact number to the enclosed membership renewal form and return before April 30.

‘THE EXHIBITION OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY’

Accompanying this Newsletter is the latest in the series of reprints of Collins’s shorter works which have never previously been republished. Wilkie’s review of the exhibition of the Royal Academy originally appeared in the June 1851 issue of *Bentley’s Miscellany*, then a popular and influential literary magazine but now almost unobtainable in any form. As Paul Lewis points out in his introduction, the Royal Academy occupied the eastern wing of what is now the National Gallery on the North side of London’s Trafalgar Square - literally round the corner from the current Millais exhibition where the 1850 Collins portrait is on display. [For a late correction please see back page.]

MILLAIS EXHIBITION

The exhibition 'Millais: Portraits' runs from 19 February - 6 June 1999 at the National Portrait Gallery, St Martin's Place, London WC2H 0HE. The famous 1850 image of Wilkie as a young man is included in the section on Early and Pre-Raphaelite Portraits. It is not a large picture, measuring only 10.5" x 7" (267 x 178 mm) and is executed in oils on canvas. It features twice in the handsome book which accompanies the exhibition. This includes 156 illustrations of which all but 20 are in colour and is written by Peter Funnell and Malcolm Warner (Hardback ISBN 1 85514 255 4, £35; paperback ISBN 1 85514 245 7). The commentary refers to Harriet Collins's hospitality in Hannover Terrace, the famous meeting with Wilkie's 'woman in white', Caroline Graves, and Holman Hunt's opinion that this portrait of Wilkie 'remained to the end of his days the best likeness of him', adding 'It will be seen that he had a prominent forehead, and in full face the portrait would have revealed the right side of cranium outbalanced in prominence that of the left.'

We also learn from the book that the *Wilkie Collins* '...is unquestionably Flemish in inspiration. It is unlikely to have been a commission, and was more probably a tribute of friendship to a man whose idiosyncratic appearance caught Millais's imagination and whose mother and brother were among his closest friends. The gesture of Collins's beringed hands, while probably characteristic of the man, is apparently a play on the Flemish practice of representing the sitter as if in prayer....the size and shape of the painting and the placing of the figure all reflect the Memling style, but Collins was neither saint nor man of prayer. The painting is no parody, but it has its own subdued humour.' The text continues with: 'The coat of arms at the upper left belongs to various Collins families, to which the sitter may or may not have been related. It was perhaps suggested by Thomas Combe, who had an interest in heraldry and whose own [Millais] portrait features a similar device.'

There are several other pictures of interest in the exhibition. It features Millais's 1850 pencil sketch of Charles Collins as well as the much larger 1880 oil painting of Kate Dickens (Collins) when she subsequently became Mrs Perugini. It is a good opportunity to see the various self-portraits of Millais as well as pictures of his wife, Effie, Holman Hunt and the eminent surgeon Sir Henry Thompson with whom Wilkie was also acquainted. Another curious coincidence emerges from the portrait of Lillie Langtry. Apparently she was introduced to society - and met Millais - at a reception given by Sir John and Lady Sebright in 1876. Mr Sebright, of course, is the name of the staid English oculist in *Poor Miss Finch* published a short while before in 1872.

Those wishing to obtain a copy of the *Wilkie Collins* (ref. 967) - or any other NPG pictures - may like to avail themselves of a new service. The images have now been scanned into digital form and can be reproduced as full colour digital prints in a choice of four paper sizes: Small (10" x 6", £5.50); Standard (10" x 8",

£8.50); Large (12" x 10", £12.50); and Super (18" x 12", £17.50). The image size of the Large is very close to that of the original Collins portrait. The other Wilkie pictures available are the wonderful 1880 Rudolph Lehmann, (ref. 3333); the Vanity Fair Spy cartoon; and a black and white photograph originally taken by Sarony during Wilkie's 1873-4 reading tour of America. The service is provided by the NPG shop (Tel. 0171 306 0055). Also available from the bookshop is *The Pre-Raphaelites - their Lives in Letters and Diaries* by Jan Marsh. This contains a portrait of Charles Collins by Holman Hunt as well as a sketch by Charles Collins 'At Aunt Pat's' showing Thomas Combe and his wife Pat (patrons of Charles) and Millais.

'DIFFERENT WORLDS' BY GRAHAM LAW

Following on from his article in the new series of the *WCS Journal*, Graham Law has been investigating further the US newspaper publication of *Blind Love*. He has unearthed a surprising report in the *New York World* and his research is presented in his essay, 'Different Worlds', which accompanies this Newsletter.

VICTORIAN CRIME

The international interdisciplinary conference on Victorian Crime is being held at the University of London Institute for English Studies on Saturday 24 April. The aim of the meeting is to explore the relationship between crime and nineteenth century society. Speakers will include Stephen Knight, Jennifer Davis, Ann Heilmann, Sally Ledger, Laura Marcus, Lillian Nayder, Barbara Onslow, Lyn Pykett, Angélique Richardson and Chris Willis. Apart from Wilkie Collins and sensation fiction, they will cover themes such as sensation melodrama, forensic evidence, fictional criminals, Sherlock Holmes, women detectives, women and prisons, social problems and fin de siècle anxieties.

The meeting runs from 9.00am to 7.00pm and according to the provisional programme the main session on Collins begins at 4.30pm. It will include 'Her Resolution to Die: "Wayward Women and Construction of Suicide in Wilkie Collins' Crime Fiction' (Emma Liggins); 'Fallacies of Testimony: Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* and Victorian Theories of Memory (Cathy Tingle); and "'The Confidential Spy of Modern Times": the Sensation Novel, the Detective and Modernity'. The conference costs £18 (£10 concessions) and is organised by Chris Willis, Department of English, Birkbeck College, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HX; e-mail 100415.1234@compuserve.com. Bookings and enquiries should be made to Janet Josephs, Institute for English Studies, Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU (tel. 0171 862 8675; e-mail ies@sas.ac.uk).

IOLÁNI

One of the main publishing events of 1999 will be the long-awaited appearance of Wilkie's first and long-lost novel, *Ioláni*. Paul Lewis is in the enviable position of having received an advance copy and writes the following as a first appraisal:

It's been a long time coming but Wilkie Collins's first novel *Ioláni* was well worth the 155 year wait. Written in 1844, rejected as Wilkie later explained because of 'scenes which caused the respectable British publisher to declare that it was impossible to put his name on the title-page', kept in a drawer, brought out in 1877 when the setting was used in a short story ('The Captain's Last Love') published in *Belgravia Magazine*, given to his friend the New York impresario Augustin Daly in 1878, auctioned in 1900, sold, auctioned again in 1903 when it disappeared from sight. All five of his modern biographers declared it lost. Then it turned up at New York book dealers Glen Horowitz in 1991 where it was offered at a price of \$175,000 and subsequently sold.

The current owner, identity unknown, has allowed this edition to be prepared by Professor Ira B Nadel of the University of British Columbia. And, until another is allowed, it will be the definitive text. So it is good that Nadel has kept most of Collins's own rather eccentric punctuation and spelling (though why not all?) and has published a complete list of all the emendations and deletions in the manuscript.

Set in Tahiti before it was discovered by Europeans, the story tells the tale of a mother trying to keep her baby safe from its father, a priest, who is determined to sacrifice it to the Gods. Against all odds she succeeds, helped by her own step-daughter and a mysterious mad man.

Nadel does an excellent job in his 25 page introduction pinning down the sources of the book, finding the elements of the story, the characters and even their names. He has tracked down and cites almost all the contemporary references to the book. And he points out many elements in the story which are found in Collins's later work.

There are indeed many classic Collins elements to find. Powerful women characters, one of whom sacrifices everything. A villain who, frightening though he is, has redeeming features and a villainy that has some cause. Scenes of great violence and tender and sexual love. At least one very eccentric character who is nevertheless central to the plot. Descriptions of landscape like works of art, and climate which sets the scene for the story and changes with its mood. A structure that already seems designed for periodical publication - cliffhanger endings to chapters as the action moves elsewhere. And above all a story that keeps you reading and surprises you at every turn. And there are deeper themes - about class, and gender, about religion. That is not to say it is perfect. It is not.

It contains great clunky bits of exposition, it rushes to its end as if the author had run out of plot, and the character development is rather shallow at times. But it is an enjoyable read, not just an interesting early novel of a man who became a famous writer. The London publishers who rejected it - Longmans and Chapman missed a great opportunity.

Wilkie Collins, *Iolani; or Tahiti as it was. A Romance* (Edited by Ira B Nadel, Princeton University Press, 1999 ISBN 0691 03446-X) will be published in the USA in April and the rest of the world in May.

WORLD CLASSICS FROM OUP

A new edition of three of Wilkie's novellas has been published by Oxford University Press in its World Classics series. It is edited with a sound 20 page introduction by Norman Page (Emeritus Professor of Modern English Literature at the University of Nottingham and editor of the excellent *Wilkie Collins - the Critical Heritage* in 1972) and Toru Sasaki (Associate Professor of Kyoto University in Japan, one of a growing number of Japanese academics with an interest in Wilkie) The book also contains an updated and revised chronology - though why do all printed chronologies omit the family's move from Oxford Terrace to Devonport Street in 1844? The endnotes are a little brief, but a nice addition to the republished work of Wilkie Collins.

Miss or Mrs?, The Haunted Hotel, The Guilty River, edited by Norman Page and Toru Sasaki, OUP 1999, £6.99 or \$10.95 ISBN 019 283307 3.

PL

THE HAUNTED HOUSE

Nekta Publications (P.O. Box 18514, London E11 2YH) have reprinted in paperback 'The Haunted House' by Charles Dickens and others, originally published as the first of the Christmas Numbers of *All the Year Round* in 1859. This current edition is supplemented by a brief editorial introduction and a ten page Afterword by Peter Rowland. Collins contributed 'The Ghost in the Cupboard Room' which subsequently appeared as 'Blow up with the Brig!' in *Miss or Mrs? And Other Stories in Outline* (1873). The price is £7.95 including postage and packing.

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

The first issue of the newly revived *Strand Magazine* has now been published. Elegantly produced, it contains a mixture of short stories and articles. The editorial by Andrew Gulli sets out the magazine's intention: 'The original *Strand* (1891-1950) established a tradition of exceptional mystery fiction which we plan to continue. In addition to mysteries readers will find superb Sherlock Holmes

pastiches, unsurpassed articles and columns, as well as insightful book reviews of the latest mysteries, pastiches, and anthologies.’ The first piece, by Chris Willis, is a short history of the *Strand Magazine*. There is a horror story by Emmy award-winning writer Henry Slesar, a humorous attack on modern unsolicited post by novelist James Sallis, and a mystery set in Rome by Verbena Pastor. Andrew Gasson contributed ‘Wilkie Collins and Crime Fiction’ which with permission from the *Strand* we hope to circulate with the next Newsletter.

The *Strand Magazine* is published quarterly at \$24.95 in the US and Canada, \$29.99 elsewhere. Details from P.O. Box 1418, Birmingham, Michigan, 48012-1418, USA; e-mail strandmag@worldnet.att.net.

CHAUNCY HARE TOWNSHEND

The recent exhibition at the Wisbech Museum was accompanied by an excellent illustrated 32 page booklet, *The Life and Times of Chauncy Hare Townshend: a Victorian Collector* (ISBN 0 9519613 2 20). This is modestly priced at £2.50 and is available from The Wisbech & Fenland Museum, Museum Square, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire PE13 1 ES (Tel. 01945 583817).

FEMALE EMIGRATION FUND

On a recent trip to Tasmania, it was interesting to see in the centre of historic Hobart a commemorative plaque featuring a copy of an early 1850s advertisement for ‘Single Women and Widows of good character’ sponsored by The Committee for promoting the Emigration of Single women. ‘A fine ship of about 500 tons burthen carrying an experienced surgeon and a respectable superintendent to secure the comfort and protection of the emigrants during the voyage, will sail from Gravesend on Thursday 1st of May next for Hobart Town Van Diemen’s Land on payment of five Pounds only.’

Wilkie’s early excursion into dramatic adaptation as well as his first appearance on a public stage was *A Court Duel* on 26 February 1850. The play was staged at Miss Kelly’s theatre in aid of the Female Emigration Fund which assisted impoverished women to settle in the colonies. Advertisements in the *Times* of 22 and 26 February 1850 note ‘A COURT DUEL will be performed by gentlemen amateurs, assisted by Miss Jane Mordaunt, who has kindly given her gratuitous services.’ Jane Mordaunt was a professional actress while the gentleman amateurs included Charles Collins in the lead, Wilkie and Henry Brandling (illustrator to *Rambles Beyond Railways*). The theme of emigration subsequently featured in *No Name* (1862) where Magdalen’s maid, Louisa, departs for Australia.

ARMADALE

On the same trip, one of the participants came from a town in New South Wales called Armidale. Checking the local guide books shows that there are also two Armadales correctly spelled, one in Victoria and one in Western Australia. Further investigation reveals another in Canada and three in Scotland - at Inverness, Sutherland and West Lothian. Presumably one of these provided the title for *Armadale*, possibly the one in Sutherland, just along the coast from Thurso which the eighteen year old Wilkie visited in the summer of 1842 while touring Scotland with his father. As he noted in *The Memoirs of William Collins*, 'The coast scenery of Thurso and its immediate neighbourhood, though less wild and extensive, was perhaps more varied than the shores of Shetland itself.' The other possibility is the West Lothian Annadale which Wilkie and his father may have seen as they travelled home via Inverness, Glasgow and south to Liverpool

KENSAL GREEN

The Friends of Kensal Green Cemetery will hold their annual open day from 10.30 am on Saturday 10 July. Apart from the opportunity to visit Wilkie's grave (31754/square 14l/row 1, located behind the central church), there will be specialist tours of the cemetery, catacomb and crematorium, a Victorian horse hearse, a motorcade of historic hearses, poetry readings, organ recital, stalls and refreshments. Further details of this and other events can be obtained from Robert Stephenson, FOKGC, PO. Box 1035, London W2 6ZX.

GEORGE ELIOT COUNTRY

Guided tours of George Eliot Country, organised by Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council in association with the George Eliot Fellowship, will take place on the following Sundays during 1999: 16 May, 27 June, 8 August and 12 September. Further details from Rose Selwyn, Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council, Town Hall, Coton Road, Nuneaton, CV11 5AA (tel. 01203 376490).

LEDBURY POETRY FESTIVAL

This year's Ledbury Poetry Festival runs from Sunday 27 June to Sunday 11 July. There is a very wide range of events and further details can be obtained from the Town Council Offices, Church Street, Ledbury, Herefordshire HR8 1DH.

INTERNATIONAL PLAYWRITING FESTIVAL

The 1999 International Playwriting Festival will take place from Friday 19 to Sunday 21 November and is currently receiving entries for its annual competition. Further details from Rose Marie Vernon, Festival Administrator, Warehouse Theatre, Dingwall Road, Croydon CR0 2NF.

‘In all the thousands of times I have asked other people for advice, I never yet got the advice I wanted’ (*Armada/e*)

‘He was honourable, in the second place, as having won the highest popular distinction which the educational system of modern England can bestow - he had pulled the stroke-oar in a University boat-race’ (*Man and Wife*)

‘There is only one kind of speaker who is quite certain never to break down under any stress of circumstance - the man whose capability of talking does not include any dangerous underlying capacity for knowing what he means’ (*The Dead Secret*)

CORRECTION TO ‘THE EXHIBITION AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY’

In the final paragraph of the Introduction, all of the payments incorrectly begin with the figure ‘3’. Thus £36-18s (£36.90) should read £6-18s (£6.90) and so on.





THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

PATRON Faith Clarke
Chairman Andrew Gasson, 3 Merton House, 36 Bclsize Park, London, NW3 4EA
Membership Paul Lewis, 47 Hereford Road, Acton, London W3 9JW

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 1999

Thus far, 1999 has been an important year for works relating to Collins. Wilkie's first novel *Ioláni*, discussed in the previous Newsletter, is widely available in bookshops and has been extensively reviewed in the press. This Newsletter, with the assistance of Paul Lewis, will concentrate on further texts with a Collins interest as well as giving details of special offers from Macmillan and Sutton Publishing.

THE LETTERS OF WILKIE COLLINS

At last there is an edition of Wilkie Collins's letters, most of which are now held in various libraries in the USA. Until now, there were few published sources for the great majority of Wilkie's letters, apart from one obscure PhD thesis and half a dozen letters reproduced by an American university library. The main sources for his letters were the few which had been printed in reminiscences by his contemporaries and the extracts published by his biographers, notably of course *The King of Inventors* by Catherine Peters and *The Secret life of Wilkie Collins* by William Clarke

William Baker (Professor of English at Northern Illinois University) and William Clarke have now published the first results of their major task of cataloguing each letter and putting it in context. For these first two volumes they have had to be very selective. Out of the 2,223 letters they have identified, space has limited them to publishing the full texts of just 464 and part-publishing and summarizing a further 127. But in a stroke of scholarly excellence, the remaining 1,632 are listed by date, correspondent, subject and current location – giving students, collectors and, inevitably, dealers, a hand list of known Collins letters. The authors plan a further two volumes, with a different publisher, in the next two to three years.

It would be invidious to criticize the editors either for publishing so few letters or for their selection of the ones which they have chosen. It is hoped that

eventually they will all be in the public domain. For ...,w all those with an interest in Collins's work can read the letters he wrote from Cornwall alongside the published text of *Rambles Beyond Railways*. They can read the accounts by the young Collins of his school days. They can puzzle over the curious correspondence with Anne le Poer Wynne when she was aged 12 and Wilkie was in his 60s – a correspondence given its own chapter and introduction. They can read the long letters to his mother and brother describing Paris, Italy, and his trips around the British Isles. And they can read Wilkie's own, plainly written, accounts of how illness dogged his life.

Sadly no-one can read a single letter to either of his lovers – Caroline Graves and Martha Rudd - none has survived. And there are just three letters to his close friend Charles Dickens - two of which are published here. Dickens burned most of the letters he received as part of his vain attempt to keep his 13 year affair with Ellen Ternan a secret.

Along with appreciating Collins's lively, engaging prose, we can also admire the work of the editors - useful introductions, both to his life and to each chapter, comprehensive indexes, notes to each letter, and the immense knowledge and scholarship they each have brought to this excellent work. No doubt, the publication of these two volumes will encourage the emergence of more letters currently languishing in family archives or collectors' cupboards. And with each one, we will learn a little more about Wilkie Collins. As the editors say "His friendship, good humour, social graces, candour, lack of pomposity, shrewd judgement, his capacity for work, play, and high living, as well as his constant battle with ill-health, shine through them."

The Letters of Wilkie Collins - Volume 1: 1838-1865 and Volume 2 1866-1889, edited by William Baker and William M. Clarke, Macmillan, London 1999, ISBN 0333 73247 2, £95 (each volume separately £50).

SPECIAL OFFER TO MEMBERS OF THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

The two editors and Macmillan have very generously arranged that paid-up members of the WCS can purchase the two volume set at the special offer price of £50 including post and packaging. Orders should be sent direct to Macmillan using the order form enclosed with this Newsletter.

ANOTHER SPECIAL OFFER - FROM SUTTON PUBLISHING

Wilkie would have approved of Sutton Publishing. They have over the last few years brought back into circulation the majority of his novels in nicely produced editions at reasonable prices. Affordable fiction for the reading public was always an ambition during his lifetime when dealing with contemporary publishers such as Smith Elder and more particularly Chatto & Windus. Sutton Publishing have now reissued a new paperback edition of William Clarke's *The Secret life of Wilkie Collins* and for members of the WCS they are making this available at the reduced price of £6.99. In addition, they are offering discounts

on eleven of Collins own titles. Full details are enclosed and orders should be sent direct to Littlehampton Book Services.

THE MOONSTONE FROM BROADVIEW PRESS

Broadview Press have followed *The Evil Genius* and *Heart and Science* in their literary texts series with Steve Farmer's new edition of *The Moonstone*. This excellent version contains a detailed 30 page introduction, Notes on the Text with publication details, and copious annotations. Most of these are very helpful although some, such as details on sovereigns and guineas or the location of Brighton, are clearly designed for a North American audience. There are several Appendixes which include contemporary reviews; excerpts from newspaper accounts of the Constance Kent Road Case and the Major Murray Northumberland Street Case of 1861; Collins on Indians, a reprint of A Sermon for Sepoys' the *Household Words* article of 27 February 1858; letters by Collins concerning *The Moonstone*; and contemporary reviews of the dramatic version at the Olympic Theatre. The jewel in the appended crown, however, is Appendix F where the otherwise unobtainable text of the play is reproduced in full. This Broadview version will undoubtedly become the definitive critical edition of *The Moonstone* and deserves a five star rating.

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

The editor of the newly reincarnated *Strand Magazine* has kindly given permission to reproduce and circulate 'Wilkie Collins and Crime Fiction' which appeared in the first issue. The second number contains several short stories as well as articles on Conan Doyle, Agatha Christie, E. C. Bentley and The Great Detectives; an interview with Michael Bond; and several book reviews. The subscription is \$24.95 for the USA and Canada and \$29.95 worldwide. Correspondence should be sent to Andrew Gulli, The Strand Magazine, P. O. Box 1418, Birmingham, Michigan 48012-1418, USA. In the U. K., subscriptions can be sent to Diamond Magazine Distribution Unit 7, Rother Ironworks, Fishmarket Road, Rye, E. Sussex TN31 7LR.

MESMERISM

A new study of mesmerism by historian Alison Winter suggests that the Victorian audience expected to be held under a spell by sensation fiction. She looks briefly at Collins's essays on mesmerism ('Magnetic Evenings at Home' published in *The Leader* from January to March 1852 and sadly not available outside the British Library). She suggests that Collins was experimenting in the way he wrote *The Woman in White* with the physiological response of his readers. "I do think it plausible that this was an experiment in mental influence and nervous stimulus in a more literal way than his readers might assume." There are a few other references to Collins and Dickens in this long and thorough book about the phenomenon of mesmerism in Victorian England. Alison Winter is associate professor of history at the California Institute of Technology.

Mesmerized - Powers of Mind in Victorian Britain by Alison Winter, University of Chicago Press, 1998. £23.95 ISBN 0226902196.

COLLINS STUDIES

Collins scholar and professor of English, Lillian Nayder, is about to publish a bibliography of Collins's studies taking over from where Kirk Beetz's invaluable *An Annotated Bibliography 1889-1976* left off. Her 70 page piece in the forthcoming *Dickens Studies Annual* describes and discusses recent trends in Collins criticism and includes a substantial bibliography of writings, dissertations, and editions of his work from 1982.

Tennessee Studies in literature is looking for new essays for a volume entitled *Reality's Dark Light - The Transgressive Wilkie Collins*. Proposals of 750-1,000 words should be received by 1 February 2000. More details from Maria K. Bachman and Don Richard Cox, Department of English, University of Tennessee, Knoxville TN 37994-0430 or email to mkbachman1@earthlink.net or dcox@utk.edu

UNDER LOCK AND KEY

Under lock and Key by Thomas Wilkinson Speight was published in 1869 by Tinsley, shortly after *The Moonstone*. It is interesting for the following disclaimer which appears immediately after the title-page: "Injustice to himself the author thinks it requisite to state that the entire plan of this story was sketched out, and several of the chapters written, before the first lines of Mr. Wilkie Collins's "Moonstone" had been given to the Public. He has further declined himself the pleasure of reading "The Moonstone" till after the completion of his own story, so as to preclude any possible charge of having derived the outline of his plot from the work of another writer. London, *February*, 1869."

Whether this disclaimer was inserted at the request of Speight or whether William Tinsley was playing safe, having just recently had a disagreement with Wilkie over the publication of the second edition of *The Moonstone*, we cannot be sure. The plot of *Under lock and Key* certainly figures a large Indian gemstone, the Great Mogul Diamond, and one of the characters, Paul Platzoff, is a regular consumer of opium. There are several other similarities to Wilkie's works, including multiple narrators; a father and son as business advisers rather like Pedgift and Pedgift Jr in *Armada*; a daughter reunited with her mother on the latter's deathbed as in *The Dead Secret*; and a servant who is really a spy looking to steal the treasure like Magdalen Vanstone in *No Name*. Whatever T. W. Speight did or did not borrow from Wilkie, the main thrust of the plot is very different from *The Moonstone* and the story is very readable in its own right.

It is currently available in one volume as a facsimile reprint of the original three-decker, complete with typically large type, wide line spacing and large areas of

white page, from Ayer Company Publishers on the internet at <http://www.scry.com/ayer> or at 6 Lower Mill Road, North Stratford, NH 03590, USA, 888-267-7323, fax 603-922-3348 (ISBN 0405079001, \$68.95). NB. Like most US publishers, however, they are particularly bad at ignoring order queries and requests for further information.

Nevertheless, available from the same source are several interesting reprints of hard to find material relating to Wilkie. There is the only copy in print of *The Queen of Hearts* taken from the 1859 Harper edition (ISBN 0405078684 at \$39.95). *Studies in English* includes a short essay by C. K. Hyder 'Wilkie Collins in America', costing \$18.95 (ISBN 0836909135). There is also Parrish's assessment of Wilkie Collins and Charles Reade for \$24.50 (ISBN 0833726757) and the earliest biographical treatment of Wilkie in English by S. M. Ellis, *Wilkie Collins, Le Fanu and others*, which also includes a chapter on Wilkie's brother Charles Allston Collins. This costs \$21.95 ISBN 0836904133. Finally, there are two other books related to Collins's writing - *The Notting Hill Mystery*, by Charles Felix (very similar to 'The Biter Bit' but often cited as the first true English detective novel) and *The Rose and the Key* by J. S. Le Fanu which was also similar to *The Moonstone*.

THE TEAR OF KALEE

Rather tediously written in deliberately archaic style and much more guilty of *Moonstone* plagiarism than *Under Lock and Key* is the 1902 story, *The Tear of Kalee*, jointly written by Herbert Inman and Hartley Aspden. This, too, features a great diamond stolen from the forehead of an Indian idol followed across the seas by high caste Brahmins. There is another storyline in which the jewel is stolen from a locked safe by its custodian whilst sleep-walking under the influence of an accidentally administered drug containing opium, watched by another member of the household. Franklin Blake's line "Carbon, Betteredge,! Mere carbon." reappears as "only a little piece of carbon". There is also a similarity to *The New Magdalen* where one of the main protagonists steals the identity of another character he assumes to be dead. *The Tear of Kalee* is not to be recommended as a good read but represents an interesting derivative of *The Moonstone* over 30 years after it was originally published in 1868.

THE OXFORD READERS COMPANION TO DICKENS

The Oxford Readers Companion to Dickens (OUP, ISBN 0-19-866213-0, £40) is an infuriatingly brilliant book. In addition to the General Editor, Paul Schlicke, there are three Consultant Editors, Philip Collins, Michael Slater and Eric J. Stevens, seven Consultant Editors, and some 50 or so other specialist contributors. The preface proclaims that "The *Companion* is organized to provide in one volume easily accessible, meticulously reliable information for the general reader and specialist alike. It offers breadth of scope allied to depth of detail, in order to serve both as a resource of first resort for the specialist, and as a source of accessible and dependable information for the general reader."

Indeed, this very handsomely produced book consists of 654 pages, mainly presented in double column format. It is well illustrated with numerous black and white pictures and photographs, four pages of maps, a rather limited bibliography, an alphabetical list of characters, a chronology rather grandiosely described as a Time Chart, the Dickens family tree, a classified contents list and an index. So everything is there, but...

The expectation for the '*Companion*' was that entries would be entirely alphabetical and, with the help of cross-references, self sufficient. The cross-references are good but without the help of the index, classified contents and the page and a half of 'how to use this book', the reader could easily be lost. Wilkie Collins appears where expected and receives a little over two columns from the pen of Professor Michael Holligton. The next three topics consulted at random were Charles Dickens Junior, Kate Dickens (Perugini) and Gad's Hill, and it came as a surprise to find that none had its own separate entry. The first two figure briefly under Dickens's Children and the last under 'Homes of Dickens' in company with the similarly placed Tavistock House. Doughty Street on the other hand sneaks in with its own entry as Dickens House Museum. Similarly, Chauncey Hare Townshend and John Elliotson are indirectly located via the index, under mesmerism.

The designers have also been at work on this book and not always to best effect! The main entries, particularly the major novels, are distinguished from the rest of the text by departing from the double column format and having larger text in full-page shaded boxes which really do little to enhance readability. The overall format therefore incorporates problems with layout and structure. Thus the entry on Television Adaptations on page 548 is interrupted by five and a half pages of shaded *A Tale of Two Cities* only to resume on page 554. The designers obviously had something against religion since The Bible on page 37 has to make way for *Bentley's Miscellany* until its completion on page 41, and The Book of Common Prayer is interrupted by seven pages of *Bleak House*.

Notwithstanding the above, the treatment of the novels is generally excellent; there are acres of contextual entries and social history, and few obvious omissions. Overall the *Companion* is destined to become a standard reference book on Dickens, his life and works. It is likely to replace the various Dickens Indexes which have been published from time to time and are now generally out of print. The narrow reader of specifically Collins's works may not necessarily gain a great deal from this tome but anyone with a wider interest in Dickens and his time will find the book indispensable.

APART FROM THE TEXT

Both readable and useful for those with an interest in book production and its history is Anthony Rota's *Apart from the Text*. Its publication coincides with the 75th anniversary of antiquarian booksellers Bertram Rota and gives an excellent

overview of nineteenth century publishing practice. The book contains chapters on Part-Issues and Serials, The Three-Decker, Book Illustration, Series Publishing & the Yellow-Back; Bindings, Dust-Jackets, Paper and Design. It is usefully illustrated and good value at £20. In the UK, it is available from the Private Libraries Association, Ravelston, South View Road, Pinner, Middlesex HA5 3YD (ISBN I 900002 47 6); in the USA publication is by Oak Knoll Press, 310 Delaware Street, New Castle, Delaware 19720 (ISBN 1 884718 52 3)

THE LETTERS OF CHARLES DICKENS TO WILKIE COLLINS

Paul Graham has sent the following piece concerning the Laurence Hutton edition of *The letters of Charles Dickens to Wilkie Collins*:

The collection of letters from Dickens to Collins was published in both London and New York in 1892. The editor was Laurence Hutton. A recently published collection of articles, *American Episodes Involving Charles Dickens* by Sidney P. and Carolyn J. Moss (ISBN 0-87875-504-7), includes a short (four page) essay by the latter in which she seeks to solve "a minor mystery...which...no Dickens or Wilkie Collins scholar has yet explained", namely why and how Hutton, a relatively obscure New York journalist, came to be chosen for the task.

The letters were the property of the Collins estate. Alexander Watt, Collins's literary executor, sought permission from Georgina Hogarth, sole surviving executor of Dickens, to publish them to benefit Collins's heirs. Georgina gave her permission, with the proviso that she was to have power of selection and final approval. Her experiences of editing a three volume edition of Dickens's letters with Mamie Dickens, which included twenty letters to Collins, was such as to deter her from taking on the editorship. Watt then negotiated with Harper & Brother, Collins's usual publishers in the USA. Once they agreed to publish, the choice of Hutton as editor was "an obvious one" since he was literary editor of *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, where these letters first appeared in 1891 (not so much of a mystery then, however minor). There is no discussion as to why one of Wilkie's regular English publishers was apparently not approached to publish the letters. This surely is the unresolved mystery. If the purpose was to benefit the heirs of Collins's estate, then negotiations with more than one firm would seem to have been in order.

The article does include hitherto unpublished letters to Hutton from Georgina Hogarth and Henry Mills Alden, Harper's editor-in-chief, on the enterprise. These letters, and the proofs that Georgina returned to Harper's, are now located in the Laurence Hutton Collection in Princeton University Library.

BASIL - THE FILM

On Monday 7 June, twenty or so WCS members and guests met at the Bonnington Hotel in central London to see the video film version of *Basil*. The cast includes Claire Forlani, Christian Slater, Jared Leto and Derek Jacobi who,

as Basil's father, carries the film with an excellent performance. Inevitably there were differences from the true Collins story but most alterations did not prove too intrusive. The general consensus considered it an enjoyable film well worth seeing. In addition, the evening proved a useful opportunity for WCS members to meet each other socially. There is no news yet of a distributor or an official release date for *Basil* so we hope it will not disappear into oblivion.

THE FROZEN DEEP - NOW

Collins's story of the Northwest Passage, *The Frozen Deep*, featured two ships the *Sea-Mew* and the *Wanderer*. The plot was largely based on the expedition to find Sir John Franklin in which the real life ships were called the *HMS Breadalbane* and the *Phoenix*. The *Breadalbane* is probably the world's most northern shipwreck, dramatically sunk within 15 minutes when her hull was ripped open by blocks of ice in 1853. 130 years later a Canadian research team discovered the remains, upright and well preserved on the sea bed, some 350 feet below the ice. The wreck has become a national monument and those with a liking for ice, a taste for adventure and the odd £6,449 to spare can now visit it on the sea floor near Resolute Bay in one of the new breed of 'submersibles'. Details from Wildwings Worldwide Travel in Bristol (whence sailed Frank Aldersley and Richard Wardour in *The Frozen Deep*) - telephone 0117 9848040.

THE UNDER-RATED WOMAN IN WHITE

In a recent literary interview (The Sunday Times of 4 April 1999), James Callaghan as well as nominating Charles Dickens as his favourite author, *Jude the Obscure* as the saddest book he has read, described the *The Woman in White* as "a dramatic story powerfully told" and considered it his most under-rated book.

M. R JAMES WEEKEND

Ghosts and Scholars, the magazine devoted to M. R. James and his work will celebrate its twentieth anniversary during 1999. To mark the event, an M. R. James weekend is being held on Saturday 30th and Sunday 31st October at the Royal Victoria and Bull Hotel, 16-18 High Street, Rochester, Kent. The weekend will consist of talks, a quiz, dramatised short stories and a panel chaired by the guest of honour, Professor Christopher Frayling. For further information send a stamped addressed envelope to Katherine Haynes, 150 Elstree Park, Barnet Lane, Boreham Wood, Herts WD6 2RP.

It is the nature of Truth to struggle to the light. (*Man and Wife*)

If you want to make a dish of lies digestible, always give it a garnish of truth. (*Armada*)

Telling the truth...is a more complicated affair than you seem to think. (*The Evil Genius*)



THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

PATRON Faith Clarke

Chairman Andrew Gasson, 3 Merton House, 36 Belsize Park, London, NW3 4EA

Membership Paul Lewis, 47 Hereford Road, Acton, London W3 9JW

NEWSLETTER

WINTER 1999

THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY JOURNAL

Accompanying this Newsletter is the second issue of the New Series *Journal*. Our thanks are due to the hard working editors, Graham Law and Lillian Nayder, who have spent so much time and effort putting together such an excellent publication. The intention is for the *Journal* to continue on an annual basis and submissions are now being sought for the 2000 edition. Those interested in contributing a formal, refereed essay should contact Graham Law at School of Law, Waseda University, Nishi-Waseda 1-6-1, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 169-50, Japan (e-mail: glaw@mn.waseda.ac.jp); or for North America, Lillian Nayder at Department of English, Bates College, Lewiston, ME 04240, USA (e-mail: lnayder@abacus.bates.edu).

In addition, members are also welcome to let us have rather less formal or more speculative pieces of up to 2,000 words which can be sent out with future Newsletters. We would also like to receive any short snippets of Collins related news or information which can be included just as a paragraph in the Newsletter.

LAPEL BADGES

Also enclosed with this Newsletter is a vitreous enamel lapel badge incorporating Collins's own 'WC' monogram. This has been used by the WCS since its inception in 1980 almost exactly 100 years after Wilkie himself began to use the device on his own notepaper. This first badge is complimentary to members. Additional copies can be ordered at a cost of £3.00.

‘WILKIE COLLINS STUDIES: 1983-1999’

Dickens Studies Annual, Volume 28 (pp. 257-329), features the long awaited update by Lillian Nayder to Kirk Beetz’s pioneering *Wilkie Collins: An Annotated Bibliography, 1899-1976*. This was originally published by the Scarecrow Press over twenty years ago in 1978 and updated by Beetz himself as ‘Wilkie Collins Studies, 1972-1983’ in volume 13 of the *Dickens Studies Annual* for 1984 (pp. 333-55). As the current introduction states, This latest survey “examines the scholarship devoted to Collins since 1982, reviews recent editions of his fiction as well as biographical studies, and identifies and discusses trends in Collins criticism.” The long introductory essay of about 50 pages is divided into five parts and the survey concludes with a comprehensive bibliography listing “more than 200 works, including editions, biographical and critical studies, and dissertations. Among the subjects discussed are the canonization of Collins, and the ways in which his status as Victorian rebel has been questioned and his cultural significance and aims redefined.” Overall this is an immensely detailed and scholarly survey which all students of Collins will find an invaluable source of reference.

VICTORIAN STUDIES

The most recent issue of *Victorian Studies* (Summer 1998) features the journal’s annual ‘Victorian Bibliography’. The Collins entry, as usual, lists several entries which include:

Chattman, Loren. “Diagnosing the Domestic Woman in *The Woman in White* and *Dora*,” in V. Siegal & Kibbey, pp. 123-53.

Dolin, Tim. *Mistress of the House: Women of Property in the Victorian Novel*. Aldershot: Scolar 153 pp.

Gomel, Elana, & Stephen Weninger. “The Tell-Tale Surface: Fashion and Gender in *The Woman in White*.” *VU* 25: 29-58

Liggins, Emma. “The ‘Evil Days’ of the Female Murderer: Subverted Marriage Plots and the Avoidance of Scandal in the Victoria Sensation Novel.” *JVC* 2:27- 41.

Law, Graham. “Wilkie in the Weeklies: The Serialization and Syndication of Collins’s Late Novels.” *VPR* 30: 244-69.

Mangum, Teresa. “Wilkie Collins, Detection and Deformity.” *DSA* 26:285-310.
McEathron, Scott. “Romantic Portraiture: The *Memoirs of William Collins* and *The Woman in White*. *VIJ* 25: 7-28.

Moore, Pamela L. "An Insoluble Mystery is Standing on Your Hearthrug: Investigations of Female Bodies in Sensation Fiction." DAI 56(1996):2669A.

Parker, Sara K. "Wilkie Collins and Victorian Masculinities." DAI 58: 886A.
Sherlock, Robin E. "'Fatal Resemblances': Educating the Female Body." DAI 57:3951A.

Wynne, Deborah. "Vidocq, the Spy: A Possible Source for Count Fosco in Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*." N&Q 44: 341-42.

THE VICTORIAN

The Victorian Society, mentioned in an earlier Newsletter, has now published the first number of its new magazine, *The Victorian*, as part of its "long-term strategy of broadening and diversifying its range of activities beyond its core work of fighting for the preservation and better understanding of Victorian architecture." Andrew Gasson was invited to contribute an essay on Collins and this took the form of a short biographical piece. This will probably contain nothing new to most WCS members but the publishers have reproduced seven of the illustrations from *Wilkie Collins - An Illustrated Guide*. Further details of the Victorian Society can be had from 1 Priory Gardens, Bedford Park, London W4 1TT (Tel 0181-994 1019; e-mail admin@victorian-society.org.uk).

THE OXFORD READERS COMPANION TO TROLLOPE

Following their *Dickens Companion*, Oxford University Press have now published the *Oxford Readers Companion to Trollope* (ISBN 0-19-8662 10-6, price £40). The volume follows the style of the Dickens with a General Editor, R. C. Terry; two consultant editors, N. John Hall and John Sutherland; and over 30 other contributors including Nelson C. Smith. Reg Terry is a noted Trollope scholar from the University of Victoria, British Columbia and was co-editor with Nelson Smith of *Wilkie Collins to the Forefront: some Reassessments* (AMS Press, New York, 1995). Most of these papers had previously been presented at the Wilkie Collins Conference at the University of Victoria in September 1989, ably arranged by Terry to commemorate the centenary of Wilkie's death.

The Trollope Companion follows the pattern of the Dickens in layout, style and content with 600 pages of detailed entries and illustrations, a thematic overview, chronology, family trees, a series of maps and a brief bibliography. Unlike the Dickens, there is no index but the much more careful adherence to the alphabet in the main makes this unnecessary and the book is generally much easier to use. The Collins entry was written by Terry but, despite the acknowledged friendship

between the two authors, commands only a single paragraph of a little over 100 words.

Minor criticisms are the shaded text for major entries which interrupt the main flow of the alphabetical entries and where characters are described it is not necessarily clear in which novel they appear. Overall there is not a great deal of Collins in this excellent volume but Oxford have produced another indispensable reference book for those with an interest in nineteenth century literature and publishing

THE LETTERS OF WILKIE COLLINS

WCS members are reminded of Macmillan's generous offer, making available the two volume edition of *The Letters of Wilkie Collins* at the heavily discounted price of £50 including postage and packing (normal cost £90). The special order form was sent out with the last Newsletter - or contact Marketing Department, Macmillan Press, Houndsmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG2 1 6XS (Tel 01256 329242).

THE LETTERS OF CHARLES DICKENS

Just published is volume eleven of *The Letters of Charles Dickens 1865-1867*, edited by Graham Storey. (Oxford University Press £70, ISBN 0-19-812295-0). As with other recent volumes in this superlative series, there is much of Collins interest both in the letters and the detailed annotations. The information is easily accessed through the 'List of Correspondents' and the comprehensive 'Index of Names and Places'. We are taken from the Garrick club in March 1865 to the stage adaptation of *No Thoroughfare* in December 1867. In between we have the house warming party at Gloucester Place and Wilkie's assistance to Wills with *All the Year Round* during Dickens's reading tour of America. There are also numerous references to Charles Collins. With 577 pages for these three years alone, one sympathises with the editors of the Collins letters where Wilkie's entire life had to be fitted into the same space.

STRANGER THAN FICTION

Collins rates ten or so entries in the recently published *Stranger Than Fiction: a book of literary lists* by Aubrey Dillon Malone. Wilkie is included under 'Amateur dramatics', 'Father's jobs', 'Literary friendships', 'Authors' hobbies', 'Illegitimate children', 'Lawyers who never practised', and 'Writers who never married'. Almost inevitably Collins is included in the list of 'substance abusers' and *Iolani* is described as "an unfinished work that should have been left to rest".

The book is essentially a collection of literary trivia, published by Prion at £9.99. (Another piece of trivia: prions are a type of protein responsible for the transmission of the new variant CJD).

THE WILKIE WEB

Issued separately for ease of use is the helpful summary by Paul Lewis of Wilkie Collins on the Internet. A recent search with Alta Vista using “Wilkie Collins” gave no less than 3523 results! Paul’s simplification of a Collins search will save a huge amount of time - not to mention the telephone bill.

SOME ADDITIONAL NOTES FROM PAUL LEWIS

ART CONNECTIONS

There are several pictures with Wilkie Collins connections in the newly opened Guildhall Art Library in the City of London. The Guildhall has a major art collection - more than 4,500 works - but none has been on public display since the original 1886 Art Gallery was destroyed by German bombs in 1941. The new gallery, officially opened by the Queen on 2 November 1999, remedies that with more than 250 works on display.

Two pictures by Wilkie’s father - William Collins, RA – are on display: *Borrowdale* (1821 or 23), a scene in Cumberland, is described by Wilkie in his biography of his father as “an inland view, with fertile wood and mountain scenery, rising high in the canvas, and a group of Cumberland children playing by the banks of a brook that ripples into the foreground of the picture.” Close by is *A Nutting Party* (1831), “a rustic inland scene with a fine group of children in the foreground”. Both are excellent examples of Collins’s work and the gallery has four others, currently in storage.

Apart from the William Collins there are pictures by Millais, Rossetti, G. F. Watts, Daniel Maclise, Augustus Egg, Marcus Stone, Edwin Landseer and Constable - all artists who have connections with Wilkie, his brother Charles, and Dickens. There is also a fine picture by James Baker Pyne of London from Hampstead Heath that put me in mind of *The Woman in White*. The gallery is open every day and well worth the modest entrance fee. More information on 020 7332 3700 or consult the internet site at:

<https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/attractions-museums-entertainment/guildhall-art-gallery>

The entire collection of 20,000 images can be seen on the internet at <http://collage.nhil.com/> but using a rather difficult database and only in small format

THE WOMAN IN WHITE

A new edition of *The Woman in White*, edited by Matthew Sweet, was published by Penguin in November. Sweet's introduction provides a comprehensive context to the novel, with most of the detail that could be wanted by a general reader. He admits he has drawn heavily on the work of previous editors - who couldn't in such an over-ploughed field as *The Woman in White*? His notes are good although his enthusiasm perhaps encourages him to believe rather than to check every fact. But the appendix on the 1871 stage version, complete with plot summary and sample scene, is new and very useful. At £2.99 for 720 pages (ISBN 0140437312) a worthwhile edition - and addition - for anyone's collection.

THE MOONSTONE

By contrast, a new edition of *The Moonstone* edited by John Sutherland does have some genuinely new insights in the Introduction. He casts new light on Dickens's change of heart from praising to sneering at it within nine months. He finds evidence that Collins's later recollection that he dictated the novel to an amanuensis is false - the manuscript is almost entirely in Wilkie's own hand. And far from repeating T. S. Elliot's famous phrase 'the first, the longest and the best' of English detective novels he sees that as saddling *The Moonstone* with its worst feature - an ordinary detective tale. Instead, he finds a superb book which is far, far more than that. Sutherland's introduction and, despite his protestations, original notes make this a £2.99 bargain from the Oxford University Press. ISBN 0192833383

One final thought on both new books. Each has a useful chronology of Wilkie's life. But what conspiracy removes from almost every published chronology - including both of these - the Collins' family move to 1 Devonport Place in the summer of 1843?

THACKERAY

A new biography of William Makepeace Thackeray by D. J. Taylor follows in a long tradition by giving scant attention to Wilkie Collins. There are two mentions only in the text both concerning the events surrounding the expulsion of Edmund Yates from the Garrick Club in 1858 after he wrote critically of Thackeray in *Town Talk*. Dickens and Collins supported Yates and left the club

in protest. The account of the incident is clear and makes the context with Dickens's sensitivity to comments Thackeray made about his relationship with Ellen Ternan. Perhaps more surprising is the lack of any detail about the close friendship in his later years between Thackeray and Wilkie's brother Charles. There is just a brief quote from Charles's moving and detailed letter to Wilkie about his death in the final pages of the book. But at least that is more than either Wilkie or Charles get in Catherine Peters' biography of Thackeray, just reprinted by Alan Sutton.

AUDIO CASSETTE

The complete and unabridged tape of *The Two Destinies* has been published recently by Sterling Audio in the US. ISBN 0754002926

BOUCHERCON 2001

Some advance notice for detective enthusiasts: the future Bouchercon 2001, the 32nd World Mystery Convention will take place from 1-4 November 2001 in Washington DC. Guests of Honour will be Sue Grafton and Peter Lovesey. Further details can be obtained from P.O Box 11700, Washington, DC 20008 or info@bouchercon2001.com.

THE DEADLY DIRECTORY

Also for those with an interest in detective fiction is *The Deadly Directory* edited by Kate Derie and published by the Deadly Serious Press. The Directory is "your guide to the mystery community - names, addresses, and all the information you need for getting in touch with everybody who is anybody in the world of mystery, crime and detective fiction." Sections include Booksellers, Small Presses, Archives and Collections, Conventions and Conferences, Organizations, Publications, and Theatre Events. The WCS is duly mentioned under Fan Clubs and Author Newsletters. Further information form The Deadly Serious Press, 868 Arlington Avenue, Berkeley, California, 94707-1938 (e-mail: info@deadlyserious.com).

WHAT WILKIE THOUGHT OF CHRISTMAS

(A compilation from his letters by Paul Lewis)

“This awful Christmas time! I am using up my cheque-book and am in daily expectation of fresh demands on it.” (to Charles Ward, 1861).

“Are the filthy “Christmas festivities” still an insurmountable obstacle to any proceeding that is not directly connected with the filling of fat bellies, and the exchange of vapid good wishes?” (to William Tindell, 29 December 1874).

“There are all sorts of impediments - literary and personal - which keep me in England at the most hateful of all English seasons (to me), the season of Cant and Christmas? But for Christmas-time, I should have read it long ago. I have returned to heaps of unanswered letters, bills, payments to pensioners, stupid and hideous Christmas cards, visits to pay - and every other social nuisance that gets in the way of a rational enjoyment of life.” (to Nina Lehmann, 28 December 1877).

“There is every temptation to die. We have not seen the sun for three weeks, in London - the plague of Christmas Cards is on the increase? Oh, what a miserable world to live in!” (to Sebastian Schlesinger, 29 December 1883).

“But there is surely a chance of a change for the better, after the horrors of Christmas are over.” (to Nannie Wynne, 19 December 1885).

“Your kind and liberal letter reaches me, at the season devoted to prodigious eating and drinking, universal congratulating and holiday-making, and voluminous appearance of tradesmen’s Christmas bills. “Business” is at a standstill, this year, until Monday next.” (26 December 1886).





THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2000

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1999

The 2000 membership subscription is now due and should be sent to Membership Secretary, Paul Lewis, at the above address. (NB subscriptions run from 1st January - 31 December). For this year, we have increased the subscription to £9.50 for UK and European members and £15.00 for those in the USA and outside of Europe. (The slightly greater increase for overseas members reflects the extra cost of postage for bulky items such as *The Journal*). Payments from abroad **must** be made in Sterling otherwise bank charges for conversion absorb almost all of the subscription.

A GAD'S HILL EVENING

Paul Lewis is giving a talk to the Dickens Fellowship entitled 'Dickens, Wilkie Collins and Gad's Hill' on Friday 24 March at 8.00 pm at Gad's Hill itself. The evening commences at 7.00 pm with a buffet and concludes at about 9.30 pm. The Dickens Fellowship has arranged a coach to leave central London's embankment at 5.00 pm sharp for an inclusive cost of £17.50. Further details from Peter Duggan, 6 Citrus House, Alverton Street, Deptford, London SE5 5NP

WILKIE COLLINS AND MARYLEBONE - 1

The St Marylebone Society is holding a Collins evening on Thursday 30 March at 6.30 pm. Andrew Gasson is giving a general talk with slides on 'The Life and Works of Wilkie Collins' which will be supplemented by Paul Lewis on 'Wilkie's Homes in Marylebone'. This will include details of Paul's recent research into several of Wilkie's addresses in this part of London. The venue is downstairs in the Junior Library, Marylebone Library, Marylebone Road, London NW1. The cost to visitors is £2.

WILKIE COLLINS AND MARYLEBONE - 2 A WALK WITH THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY

The **Wilkie** Collins Society and The Victorian Society are planning a joint walk for late summer this year, to be based on William Clarke's *Rambles around Marylebone*. Andrew Gasson and Paul Lewis, who will make some additions and corrections in the light of his recent researches into this whole area of central London, will highlight the Wilkie information about the various addresses and it is hoped that a member of the Victorian Society will give some background details relating to general historical and architectural features. The provisional date is the afternoon of Sunday 10 September but more information will be available for the next Newsletter.

FRIENDS OF KENSAL GREEN CEMETERY

At the conclusion of the formal Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Kensal Green Cemetery on Saturday 8 April 2000, at 2.00 pm in the Dissenters' Chapel, Dr Chris Brooks will give a talk on 'Property, Prurience, and the Body in Victorian Commemoration'. Wilkie, of course, was buried at Kensal Green on 27 September 1889 and Caroline Graves, his lifetime companion for some 30 years, was buried in the same grave when she died in 1895. This meeting would therefore provide a good opportunity to visit their final resting place. (Grave number 31754, square 141, row I).

THE CAMBRIDGE BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

The third edition of *The Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature, Volume 4. The Nineteenth Century* (edited by Joanne Shattock,, ISBN 0 521 39 1 00 8) was published in January. The original CBEL was published in 1940 with a revised edition issued from 1969-1974. This new publication (CBEL3) has been 10 years in preparation and represents a mammoth updating of the original work. Volume 4, alone, runs to nearly 3,000 pages. The earlier distinction between major and minor novelists has been dropped. Novels, Poetry, Drama and Prose are now divided into Early, Mid and Late Nineteenth Century. There are sections on Book Production, Literary Relations with the Continent, general works on the Novel, Political Economy, Philosophy and Science, Religion, English Studies, Household Books, Sport, Education and Newspapers.

The CBEL3 entry on Wilkie Collins was compiled by Andrew Gasson and comprises seven pages compared with two or three columns in the second edition. It follows the house style which includes Bibliographies, Collected Editions, the major works, Plays, periodical publications in Miscellaneous Works, Parodies, Adaptations, Biographies and contemporary criticism, reviews and obituaries. The individual entries on the major works give details of periodical publication, first and subsequent English editions, US authorised and pirated editions and foreign translations.

Other entries vary from a few lines (eg Charles Allston Collins), typical of a vast array of authors all but lost in obscurity, to a vast 90 pages for Charles Dickens. Overall CBEL3 is a monumental work, compiled by a dedicated team which includes the editor Joanne Shattock, Professor of Victorian Literature at the University of Leicester, plus a list of 180 contributors. The volume truly contains huge resources of bibliographical information which will ensure it lives up to its claim 'to allow scholars the possibility of exploring the literature of the British Isles at a level not afforded by any other source.'

A SPECIAL OFFER FOR WCS MEMBERS

Cambridge University Press are giving WCS members the opportunity to take advantage of a special offer of a 20% discount off the published price

of £125 which has been reduced to £95 plus £2.50 p & p. Orders should be sent direct to the Cambridge University Press using the form enclosed with this Newsletter.

WILKIE AND THE PIRATES

During his lifetime, Collins was constantly plagued by literary piracy both in the USA and on the Continent and fought a never ending battle to protect his copyrights. His strong views (originally published in 1880) were reissued in the 1997 Wilkie Collins Society reprint *Considerations on the Copyright Question Addressed to an American Friend*. Ironically, then, Ira Nadel (editor of the recently published *Ioláni*) writes that he suspects that there is a pirated edition of this, Wilkie's first novel, produced in Spain. The publishers are rumoured to be based in Barcelona but there remains the mystery of how they obtained the text early enough to produce a pirated edition more or less at the same time as that of the authorised version from Princeton. Their attempted justification, that Collins has been dead for more than 70 years and that the work is in the public domain. has the same dishonourable flavour as that of their nineteenth century counterparts. If any members are travelling to Spain in the near future and find a copy, they may be able to shed some further light on the matter.

THE 100 BEST NOVELS

It was interesting to see the *Daily Telegraph* of December 31 1999 which compared a number of its contributors, views of '100 Books of the twentieth century' with those it published a century earlier in 1899 as '100 Best Novels in the World - Books that must be Read, and Read, and Read Again'. The original list from 100 years ago was selected by the then editor of the *Telegraph* and included, amongst most of the high spots of nineteenth century literature, both *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone*.

MARY BRADDON CONFERENCE

Mary Braddon acknowledged in 1887 that she owed *Lady Audley's Secret* to *The Woman in White* and that 'Wilkie Collins was assuredly her literary father'. They also became personal friends.

There will be a conference on the 'Life and Work of Mary Elizabeth Braddon' on Saturday 13 May at Birkbeck College, London. Speakers will include Jennifer Carnell (author of a forthcoming biography); Donald Hounam (author of the television adaptation of *Lady Audley's Secret*); Michael Slater (Professor of Victorian Literature at Birkbeck); and Chris Willis, also of Birkbeck. The cost is £15 (£10 concessions) with cheques payable to Birkbeck College. For bookings and further information contact: Chris Willis, c/o Centre for Nineteenth Century Studies, School of English, Birkbeck College, Malet Street, London, WC1E 7HX; e-mail Chris@chriswillis.freeserve.co.uk (other details to be found on her website at <http://www.chriswillis.freeserve.co.uk/braddonday.htm>).

LITERARY TOURS

Hallam Anderson arrange coach tours to various parts of England to visit Literary Trails associated with several major authors. There is not as yet a Wilkie Collins tour but they do arrange day excursions and two day tours to 'Charles Dickens Country'. Other authors include Jane Austen, Thomas Hardy, the Bronte Family, D. H. Lawrence and William Shakespeare. All tours include a specialist guide and further information can be had from 3.11 Lafone House, 11-13 Leathennarket Street, London SE1 3HN (0207 234 0505).

ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES

The WCS continues to be affiliated to the Alliance of Literary Societies which now numbers some 90 different member organisations. This year's annual meeting will be held on Saturday 15 April at the Birmingham and Midland Institute, Margaret Street, Birmingham. The morning will be taken up with the AGM and an open session for discussion.

The afternoon is being sponsored by the Bronte Society and commences at 2.00 pm with 'A Light-hearted Talk on Aspects of the Brontes' by Tom Winnifrith, Emeritus Professor of English at Warwick University. It will be followed by 'Notable Literatae who have been Associated with the Brontes' by Revd. John Waddington-Feather. The meeting will conclude with the customary readings by the Alliance President, Gabriel Woolf. The entry fee is a modest £1 and anyone interested in attending should contact the secretary, Rosemary Culley, at 22 Belmont Grove, Havant, Hampshire PO9 3PU (023 9247 5855).

MARGARET CARPENTER (1793-1872)

Margaret Sarah Carpenter (nee Geddes) was a younger sister of Wilkie Collins's mother Harriet. A very talented artist, she had a long and successful career as a portrait and genre painter, and exhibited more pictures at the Royal Academy than almost any other woman artist of the 19th century.

Born in Salisbury, she moved to London in 1813 and at the age of 24 married William Hookham Carpenter, the son of an Old Bond Street bookseller. Between 1818 and 1829 they had eight children, of whom three died in infancy, but three - William, Percy and Henrietta - became artists themselves. The younger daughter Jane was Wilkie's favourite cousin and married his great friend Charles Ward.

Margaret was almost certainly a pupil of Sir Thomas Lawrence, and after his death in 1830 she was seen by many people as his natural successor as a portraitist. She counted John Constable among her close friends, and entertained the talented young painter Richard Bonington before his untimely death.

In the summer of 1993 Richard Smith organised an exhibition of her work at Salisbury Museum to mark her bicentenary. Some 34 oil paintings, watercolours and drawings were shown, and a great deal of interest, both local and national, was raised. Richard has continued to research her life, work and family, and has completed a biography which is now to be

published by Antique Collectors Club of Woodbridge. It will be profusely illustrated - including the recently-discovered portrait of Jane Carpenter at the age of 12 - and is provisionally scheduled to appear in the middle of 2001. Further details will follow in subsequent newsletters.

THE ART OF DETECTIVE FICTION

Macmillan and St Martin's Press in association with the Institute of English Studies at the University of London published *The Art of Detective Fiction* (ISBN 0-333-74601-5) on 10 March. The book originated in an international conference held in London, called 'Murder in Bloomsbury'. It consists of revised versions of papers given at this meeting together with others commissioned for the volume. The book should interest general readers with a love of detective fiction as well as scholars with a more academic approach to the subject. Apart from the editors, Warren Chemaik, Martin Swales and Robert Vilain, the sixteen contributors include Josef Skvorecky ('Poe and the Beautiful Segar Girl'), Sarah Dunant ('Body Language: a Study of Death and Gender'), David Trotter ('Fascination and Nausea: Finding Out the Hard Way'), Chris Willis ('Making the Dead Speak: Spiritualism and Detective Fiction'), Birgitta Bergland ('Desires and Devices: On Women Detectives in Fiction') and Margaret Kinsman ('A Band of Sisters'). The essays cover a variety of approaches with, as the blurb says, 'particular attention paid to the 'Golden Age' of English detective story-writing and to the 'hard-boiled' American version of the genre.' There is disappointingly little mention of Wilkie, however, although Warren Chemaik in 'Mean Streets and English Gardens' notes Dorothy Sayers comment 'If the detective story was to live and develop it *must* get back to where it began in the hands of Collins and Le Fanu, and become once more a novel of manners instead of a pure crossword puzzle.' Wilkie's Old Sharon, the slovenly detective from 'My Lady's Money', receives a very brief mention in Audrey Laski's 'The Detective as Clown: a Taxonomy'. She also discusses how the detective's associate (e.g. Gabriel Betteredge or Dr Watson) is used as narrator to solve the problem of keeping the real detective's thoughts away from the reader who might otherwise solve the mystery too soon.

The book is handsomely produced and has a Sherlock Holmes illustration on the front cover. (ISBN 0-333-74601-5, Macmillan; 0-312-22989-5, St Martin's Press, USA). The publishers have introduced it with a special offer price of £21.25 (normal price £42.50). Further details from Polly Barnett, Macmillan, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hants RG21 6XS (Tel 01256 329242; Fax 01256 330688).

THACKERAY; A WRITER'S LIFE

This title, originally published as *Thackeray 's Universe: Shifting Worlds f Imagination and Reality*, by Catherine Peters is now available in paperback from Sutton Publishing (£12.99, ISBN 07509 2306 7). Catherine Peters, of course, wrote her acclaimed biography of Collins, *The King of Inventors*; Sutton Publishing are notable for re-issuing most of Wilkie's books in their excellent 'Pocket Classics' series as well as the latest paperback version of William Clarke's equally valuable *The Secret Life of Wilkie Collins*.

TALKING SCRIBBLE

Talking Scribble is a new website for aspiring authors. For a first year fee of £15 the site will include a synopsis, text of the first chapter and details about the author of new works. Various categories are available with further details from 19 West Street, Liskeard, Cornwall, PL14 6BW (info@talkingscribble.com).

APG

SOME ADDITIONAL NOTES FROM PAUL LEWIS

ART NOTES

The most famous painting by Wilkie's brother, Charles Allston, is on show in London for the first time since 1851. Usually to be found at Oxford's Ashmolean Museum, *Convent Thoughts* is now on display as part of a new exhibition at the Tate Gallery (shortly to be renamed Tate Britain), on the Embankment near Pimlico tube on the Victoria underground line. The exhibition, *Ruskin, Turner, and the Pre-Raphaelites*, is on show from 9 March -29 May 2000; full admission price £7.00.

John Ruskin (1819-1900) was a dominant art critic of the 19th Century. Wilkie gives a long assessment of his book *Modern Painters* in a letter of 12 January 1849 (Baker and Clarke, *The Letters of Wilkie Collins*, 1999 vol. I pp. 38-9). When Wilkie's friend John Everett Millais married Ruskin's ex-wife Effie, Wilkie was unable to attend the ceremony in Scotland. But he held a party for friends in London on the wedding day. Inviting Edward Piggot in a letter of 2 July 1855, he wrote "May he consummate successfully!" - Ruskin's marriage had been annulled on grounds of non-consummation. Ruskin refers to Charles Collins in his book *Pre-Raphaelitism*. (Further information can be obtained from http://www.tate.org.uk/home/news/07_0100.htm).

WILLIAM COLLINS R.A.

Wilkie's and Charles's father, the more famous artist William Collins RA, will feature in a planned exhibition at the Museum of London about Collins Farm. Located in North Hampstead, the Farm was not named after William but was the home for some years of William's friend, the artist John Linnell. William himself took lodgings near the Farm in the summer of 1823 when his wife Harriet was pregnant with Wilkie. No more details are available at the moment but one or more rarely seen paintings by William should be on display as well as information on the artistic circles into which Wilkie was born.

WEB UPDATE

One web address not mentioned in my guide in the last Newsletter is <http://www.imdb.uk.com>. This website is a very comprehensive database of all known films and lists 17 films and TV series based on Wilkie's works. Not as long the list as in A. J. Hubin's *Crime Fiction* nor indeed as in Andrew Gasson's *Wilkie Collins - An Illustrated Guide* but more detail is provided. If you have further information on any film you can e-mail it to the compilers who will eventually add it to the listing.

There are also a few of mentions of Wilkie at a newish site about Charles Dickens <http://www.perryweb.com/Dickens/indcx.html>. One crossword clue will give Wilkie Collins Society members no trouble at all! The text of an excellent contemporary review of *The Woman in White* in Blackwood's *Edinburgh Magazine* of May 1862 has now been made available on the internet. The site <http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/ilej/journals/srchbm.htm> will take you to a search page and typing in Wilkie Collins will locate a list of articles mentioning him. All are of interest but Vol.91 (559) May 1862 pp. 564-584 is the review of *The Woman in White* with comparisons to Dickens' *Great Expectations*.

WILKIE WATCH

Wilkie's name keeps popping up in the newspapers. From a guide to Suffolk to a pub walk round Hampstead, his name is used as a writer of detective fiction, a bon vivant, a traveller, a taker of laudanum and the touchstone by which good dramatic novels are judged. Comparisons to Wilkie have been almost obligatory in reviews in reviews of Charles Palliser's novel *The Unburied* now out in paperback from Phoenix at £6.99. Though in my view, good as this Victorian pastiche is, Wilkie it is not. Another book recently compared to "the kind of nineteenth-century blockbuster we tend to associate with Dickens or Wilkie Collins" is Anita Shreve's *Fortune's Rocks* (Little, Brown £9.99). The Isle of Thanet (aka Ramsgate) was featured in *The Daily Telegraph* in a piece on cheap property in the South East of England. It began "What do Charles Dickens, Dennis Bergkamp, Wilkie Collins, Sir Edward Heath, and Queen

Victoria have in common? They all spent their summer holidays on the Isle of Thanet".

Peter Jeffrey, who played Mr Bruff in the adaptation of *The Moonstone* by Kevin Elyot shown on BBC television at Christmas 1996, died on Christmas Day 1999 aged 70. Peter was a founding member of the Royal Shakespeare Company. And Noel Johnson, who was best known as *Dick Barton - Special Agent* on the radio in the late 1940s, was discovered for that role while playing a small part in a BBC radio adaptation of *The Woman in White* in 1945. He died on 2 October 1999.

WILKIE ON TAPE

Not new - it carries a copyright notice of 1998 - but worth looking out is an unabridged reading of 'The Dead Hand' and 'A Terribly Strange Bed' published by Audio Book and Music Company (24 Somerton Road, London; tel. 020 8830 7224). Actor Richard Mitchley's semi-dramatised reading (he denotes characters by different accents) is competent and there is something about having these creepy stories read aloud that adds to their power.

Also of interest is that in 'The Dead Hand' (first published as the doctor's story in 'The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices' in *Household Words*, 10 October 1857) Wilkie previews passages in two later novels and the title of a much later story. Compare "I have no name and no father. The merciful law of Society tells me I am Nobody's son!" ('The Dead Hand') and "legally speaking, she and her sister had No Name ... Mr. Vanstone's daughters are Nobody's Children; and the law leaves them helpless at their uncle's mercy" in *No Name* (1862) where the phrase 'nobody's child[ren]' appears no fewer than six times. Compare the doctor in 'The Dead Hand' "I candidly confess to you that, in bringing that man back to existence, I was, morally speaking, groping hap-hazard in the dark." and this passage from *The Moonstone* (1868) "Mr. Franklin replied that a course of medicine, and a course of groping in the dark, meant, in his estimation, one and the same thing." Finally, 'The Dead Hand' contains this phrase "my dead-alive patient at The Two Robins Inn". 'The Dead Alive' was the alternative US title for 'John Jago's Ghost', published in 1873.

THE NAME COLLINS

Some biographical details of Wilkie and his father and brother are found in a piece in the March 2000 issue of *Family History Monthly*. There are, however, some factual errors: Wilkie was not born in Tavistock Square; he never intended to be a landscape artist and he was not a reel use nor forced into being one by begging letters; his brother Charles was never actually a formal member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. But the piece gives interesting information about the history and distribution of the name Collins as well as two photographs of Wilkie. It also includes a summary of the life of another famous Collins, Michael the Irish Republican, together with some Internet references for Collins as a name. Wilkie himself gives some details of his ancestors in his biography of his father, *Memoirs of the Life of William Collins. R.A.* published in 1848. (Brenda Ralph Lewis; 'The Surname Collins', *Family History Monthly*, 54, March 2000 pp. 48-51, price £2.30.)

PL.





THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

PATRON Faith Clarke

Chairman Andrew Gasson, 3 Merton House, 36 Belsize Park, London, NW3 4EA

Membership Paul Lewis, 47 Hereford Road, Acton, London W3 9JW

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2000

WILKIE COLLINS AND MARYLEBONE A WALK WITH THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY

As mentioned in the last Newsletter, The Wilkie Collins Society and The Victorian Society have planned a joint walk for the afternoon of **Saturday 9 September 2000**, to be based on William Clarke's *Rambles around Marylebone*. Andrew Gasson and Paul Lewis, who will make some additions and corrections in the light of his recent researches into this whole area of central London, will highlight the Wilkie information about the various addresses and it is hoped that a member of the Victorian Society will give some background details relating to general historical and architectural features.

The walk will commence promptly at 2.30 p.m. at 17 Hanover Terrace in Regent's Park, London NW1. Wilkie, of course, lived here as a young man with his mother and brother Charles between 1850 and 1855. We intend to meet between 1.00 p.m. and 2.15 p.m. at the Volunteer pub at the extreme top end of Baker Street. Members can either join us here or at Hanover Terrace itself in good time for the 2.30 start. Would those interested in attending please drop a line to Andrew Gasson at the above address or send an e-mail to apogee@gasson.demon.co.uk.

'A PLEA FOR SUNDAY REFORM'

Enclosed with this Newsletter is 'A Plea for Sunday Reform', originally published in *The Leader* of 27 September 1851. It dates from the beginning of Collins's writing career and in common with earlier reprints from the Society this piece has never previously been republished. The detailed introduction has been written by Paul Lewis who provides useful background information. For its time, the essay is both radical and controversial.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2000

Members who have not yet paid their subscription for 2000 are reminded that this is now due and should be sent to Membership Secretary, Paul Lewis, at the above address. (NB subscriptions run from 1st January - 31 December). The amount this year is £9.50 for UK and European members and £15.00 for those in the USA and outside of Europe. Payments from abroad **must** be made in pounds Sterling.

BLUE PLAQUES

Those who took part in an enjoyable outing to Ramsgate in September 1998 will remember the generous hospitality of Jeremy Hewett who entertained us in his home at 22 Wellington Crescent. This is just a few doors from the house at number 27 where Wilkie in the guise of Mr William Dawson routinely stayed with Martha Rudd (Mrs Dawson) and the rest of 'his morganatic family' during his own summer trips to Ramsgate from the early 1870s. Jeremy writes that the entire facade of Wellington Crescent is currently being restored. Subject to planning consent from the Thanet District Council and agreement from the present owner of number 27, there is a strong possibility that a blue plaque might be erected to commemorate Wilkie's visits. He will be in the esteemed company of Samuel Coleridge Taylor who stayed at number 7 in 1821. The WCS is in touch with the relevant people and is lending its support for the project.

Incidentally, a short while ago the Society encouraged the owners of 17 Hanover Terrace to enquire about a Blue Plaque. They were turned down by English Heritage on the grounds that one had already been erected in Gloucester Place and the rule, at least for London, is that one is the limit. The other general rule seems to be that they should be circular. Does anyone know why Wilkie's appears to be the only square plaque in evidence?

BOOKLIST COMPUTER PROGRAMME

Booklist 3.6 is the latest version of a popular computer book cataloguing database. The programme is based on Microsoft Access and can record details of book holdings, provide on-screen search and sorting by author, title, description, price, or pre-determined keywords. Most pure collectors will not actually need some of the features designed mainly for booksellers such as catalogue production or the ability to list books on the internet. Nor will they worry about its compatibility with other services in the rare and secondhand booktrade. Nevertheless the programme is easy to use and could provide the useful discipline to persuade us to catalogue our own collections in a simple and straightforward manner combined with the ability to print out the results. It is sensibly priced at £35 including VAT

and will run on any version of Windows. Further details are available from The British Bookdealers Centre, 7 Pulleyn Drive, York YO24 1DY (01904 631752) or www.clique.co.uk/booklist.htm.

NEWGATE NOVELS

WCS member, Caroline Riddell, has sent a copy of Richard Davenport-Hines article from *The London Review of Books* (16 March 2000) on *Cult Criminals: The Newgate Novels 1830-47*, published by Routledge (6 volumes, ISBN 0 415 143837, £399). Interesting parallels are drawn with Bulwer-Lytton's *Lucretia* and the character of Lydia Gwilt:

'Lucretia Clavering is the tragic forerunner of Lydia Gwilt in Wilkie Collins's *Armada*. Both women are intelligent, energetic and full of initiative. They know their own hearts, and their lives are transcended by one great love, which for a time seems to make sense of everything for them. Their existence is controlled, though, by the complacent benevolence of gentlemen who hold all the financial power and are bloated with a second-rate moral certitude. Both women dare to want financial independence; both desire to make their own choices in love; both resist being yoked under the tyrannous principle that all human happiness is family-centred. Certainly, both women are egotists, but they have consciences, and falter because of their capacity for remorse and self-doubt.... In consequence, the retribution visited on the women for their self-assertion is terrible. One dies in the madhouse, and the other locks herself in a lethal gas chamber.'

A LITERARY GUIDE TO LONDON

Penguin books have recently published *A Literary Guide to London* by Ed Glinert (ISBN 0-14-027904-0, £12.99). The book is divided into geographical sections, easily located from the table of contents, with a comprehensive index of about 450 writers, past and present. Collins is well represented with seven entries including: Wellington Street for *All the Year Round* and *The Moonstone*; 17 Hanover Terrace; Gloucester Place, 82 Wimpole Street; and Harrow Road for Kensal Green Cemetery. Finchley Road at Swiss Cottage is given as the setting for the crossroads meeting in *The Woman in White* although the actual place would be about a mile further north at the junction of West End Lane and Froggnal Lane. A final curious entry is Berners Street (which may have become confused with Hannover Terrace or the earlier Blandford Square) where Glinert claims 'Collins lived with his mother and brother in the 1850s at no. 38, where he wrote *Antonina*.

ANTHONY TROLLOPE FROM SUTTON PUBLISHING

Sutton publishing who have brought most of Collins's lesser known titles back into print and recently re-issued both William Clarke's *The Secret Life of Wilkie Coffins* and Catherine Peters' biography of Thackeray, have now published *Anthony Trollope* by Graham Handley in their series of Pocket Biographies - designed to present 'highly readable brief lives of those who have played a significant part in history'. Trollope is nicely reduced to 96 pages plus notes, short bibliography and chronology. There are also about a dozen black and white illustrations. One of these is the composite picture called *Authors* which was widely circulated in the late 1870s in both *carte de visite* and cabinet formats. It shows nine authors including Dickens, Trollope, Thackeray, Bulwer-Lytton, Macaulay and, of course, Wilkie Collins. *Trollope* is available in paperback at £5.99 (ISBN 0 7509 2270 2).

THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF EPHEMERA

Members who collect ephemera relating to Collins in particular or anything else in general may be interested in the British Library publication *The Encyclopaedia of Ephemera* by Maurice Rickards. The numerous entries include manuscript and printed matter from visiting cards to theatre programmes and newspapers to bookmarks. The volume is intended not only for collectors but also for social historians, reference librarians and students of design and printing. It is due for publication in September (ISBN 07123 4679 1; £35).

A CRIMINAL MISCELLANY

ENGLISH COUNTRY HOUSE MURDERS

Recently discovered in an American short story collection, *English Country House Murders: Classic Crime Fiction of Britain's Upper Crust*, is Collins's tale of 'A Marriage Tragedy'. This was originally published with the same title in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* in February 1858 and will be better known to UK readers as 'Brother Griffith's Story of a Plot in Private Life', taken from its subsequent appearance in *The Queen of Hearts*. This US collection is edited by Thomas Godfrey and published by The Mysterious Press at \$6.99 (ISBN 0-445-40845-6).

THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF MURDER AND MYSTERY

The Encyclopaedia of Murder and Mystery is an A to Z of the whodunit, cataloguing titles, characters, weapons, murder scenes, film adaptations and many other aspects of the genre. Edited by Bruce Murphy, the book is published by St. Martin's Press at \$75 (175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010; www.stmartins-scholarly.com). ISBN 0-312-21554-1).

MAGNA CUM MURDER

The Mid America Crime Fiction Conference (Magna cum Murder) is holding its annual conference in Muncie, Indiana, 27-29 October 2000. The meeting is open to all lovers of crime fiction and the programme will consist of panels, programmes, interviews and presentations by various crime writers. There will also be a prize for the best 25-30 page radio mystery script. Details from the E. B. Ball Center, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306; kennisonk@aol.com.

BOUCHERCON 2001

The 32nd World Mystery Convention, Bouchercon 200 I, will be held next year on 1-4 November 2001 in Washington DC. In addition to the usual array of top figures in the world of mystery, the programme will include FBI and CIA expert panels, guided mystery tours of Washington, tours of the Library of Congress and the White House. Details from P.O. Box 11700, Washington DC 20008; www.bouchercon2001.com.

GEORGE ELIOT TOURS

The George Eliot Fellowship in conjunction with Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council continue to run their regular tours in George Eliot Country. Details from Rose Selwyn, Town Hall, Coton, Nuneaton, Warwickshire CV1 1 SAA.

SOME NOTES BY PAUL LEWIS

CHRISTIE'S SALE

Manuscripts and letters written by Wilkie Collins, which had vanished for more than 100 years, surfaced at Christie's auction house in London during July. They had belonged to William Foyle, the founder of the famous London bookshop. He died in 1963 but it was only after the death of his daughter Christina last year that

the library was sold off by the trust which she left it to. Altogether, it fetched a record price for a European private library - £12.6 million. Among the items of more general interest-medieval illustrated manuscripts, books from the dawn of printing, a love letter from Lord Nelson to Emma Hamilton, and numerous letters from Dickens - were two Wilkie manuscripts which had not been seen since their sale in the 1890s, two Wilkie letters, and a bound collection of first editions of almost all his books. The prices fetched by all the lots were generally well above expectations.

The first, 73 uniformly bound volumes comprising all but three of Wilkie's published books (wanting *The Moonstone* but including *The Woman in White*), and almost all first editions, was estimated to fetch up to £2,500. It went for £14,100 (including the 17.5% buyer's premium charged by Christie's), or £470 for each of the 30 works. For these rebound books, left rather soulless in their mid 20th century binding, it was a high price. But it reflects the growing interest in Wilkie first editions, even in rebound condition.

The most important of the Wilkie lots was the fair copy autograph manuscript of *Memoirs of the Life of William Collins Esq. R.A.*, Wilkie's biography of his father and his first published book. It was sold on 18 June 1890 by Sotheby, Wilkinson and Hodge for £6 to a dealer called Webster. Then it disappeared. Foyle probably bought in the 1930s but no-one recorded its location and it was absent from the standard works which locate literary manuscripts. The document has been carefully and elegantly rebound, probably in the 1890s, and consists of the whole manuscript of the book as well as one month of his father's journal for January 1814 and a list made by William in 1845 of his unfulfilled commissions. There are a few small sketches by Wilkie within the manuscript pages and the binder added an excellent collection of engravings of Wilkie and of prints of William Collins's work. Although it is called on the front page in Wilkie's hand a 'fair copy', it contains numerous amendments, many of them extending over the whole reverse of the preceding page. This fascinating item fetched treble its estimate, at £37,600 - buyer unknown.

The second manuscript was of Wilkie's ill-fated play *Rank and Riches*. Also known at this time as *Lady Calista – a Comedy in Four Acts and Five Tableaux*, the text is a neat copy in various hands, but is heavily amended by Wilkie. It consists of various versions of some scenes and the final page, at least, is missing. The play was performed at the Adelphi Theatre in June 1883 but was disliked by critics and public alike and marked the end of his career as a dramatist. Four other manuscripts of this play in various states are known, all in libraries. This copy, originally sold by Sotheby's in June 1891, currently fetched £7,638.

Finally, two letters by Wilkie - and one referring to him - were in the sale. The first was an interesting 3 page letter of 12 October 1866 to John Palgrave Simpson, written just before Wilkie's trip to Italy, about selling the rights of *The Frozen Deep* to theatres outside London. This letter was bound in to a copy of the autobiography of Wilkie's friend the artist William Powell Frith. Also contained in the volume was a letter from the actor Arthur Cecil Blunt of 12 December 1875 written in Liverpool and also sent to Palgrave Simpson. He starred with Ada Cavendish in the production of Wilkie's play *Miss Gwilt* which had opened in Liverpool three days earlier. It then moved to London's Globe Theatre in April 1876. In the letter Blunt says "Wilkie Collins expresses himself very much pleased." These four volumes, including 193 illustrations and two other letters, fetched £823, at the low end of Christie's estimate. Another letter, of less interest, was contained in volumes of the autobiography of George Sala, which remained unsold.

The sale catalogue - without illustrations - is available online at <http://www.christies.com> and the site has a lot of other information there about the sale. The printed catalogue of the sale, The Library of William Foyle 11-12 July 2000, was in three volumes. The Wilkie material is in Part III which contains illustrations of the two Wilkie manuscripts. It costs £25.

WILKIE WATCH

Wilkie's name continues to appear in newspapers and magazines. Auberon Waugh nominated him in *The Sunday Telegraph* (16 April) as his 'author not enjoying the standing he deserves'. He called him a "master of plot, mystery, and suspense and critic of social abuses". And we learn that another fan of Wilkie is American playwright John Guare (*New York Times*, 7 May).

On the same day Craig Brown (7 May) in the *Mail on Sunday* compares US novelist Philip Roth to Wilkie - the first time, he says, that has been done. Craig Brown also used Wilkie's name six weeks before in a review of the book by Diana's last bodyguard, Trevor Rees-Jones, saying it concluded as 'a mesmerizing Wilkie Collins story of cat-and-mouse'. An allusion he liked so much he repeated in on 23 July! Other book reviews continue to cite Wilkie as a standard. Andrew Pyper's *Lost Girls* mixes 'the ghostliness of Wilkie Collins with the plotting... of John Grisham' (*Independent* 5 June). But Roger Protz's *Britain's Best 500 Pubs* is criticised in *The Journal* (2 June) for forcing readers to 'wade through sentence after sentence about Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins and John Peel' before the word 'beer' is mentioned. Joanna Trollope was more positive in *The Guardian* putting *The Moonstone* sixth on her list of 'unputdownables' for Summer reading.

A piece on home decoration in *The Independent* (April 29th) says that our interest in the appearance of our homes saw its roots in Victorian times and cites *Basil* (1852) and the Sherwin's 'brash, new, fresh-painted' home at some length, reminding us too that Wilkie never owned a house in his life. And *The Guardian* reminded us (1 June) that Wilkie lived at 12 Harley Street in London where he wrote "much of *The Woman in White*", though without pointing out that the house was later renumbered 26 and subsequently pulled down.

The Independent (17 May) ran a big feature on the campaign by the Indian government to take back the Koh-i-noor diamond - currently in the Queen Mother's crown in the Tower of London. A fascinating piece, which moves on to other diamond thefts, including the 189 carat Orlov, in the Imperial Sceptre in the Kremlin. This story, says author Tim Hulse, "later inspired Wilkie Collins to write *The Moonstone*, his famous novel of diamonds and deceit."

A piece in the *Edinburgh Evening News* (15 June) looks at an unpublished letter of Walter Scott coming up for auction. It cites Wilkie's view of James Fenimore Cooper "the greatest artist in the domain of romantic fiction in America." It is a quote I could not trace but he did say in 1884 "It may be hundreds of years, before another Fenimore Cooper appears in America, or another Walter Scott in England. I call these two and Balzac - the three Kings of Fiction." (To Paul Hayne, 3 May 1884).

A sideways look at the refugee crisis in Dover in the *Independent on Sunday* (25 June) reminded us of the associations of the town with Dickens and Collins. "In 1852, at IO Camden Crescent, Dickens read *Bleak House* to Wilkie Collins".

Finally *Time Out* (19-26 July) compares the public excitement over *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* with that surrounding *The Woman in White* and Dickens's *The Old Curiosity Shop*. It repeats some unsubstantiated canards about the book and bizarrely claims that Collins's subsequent wealth "allowed him to plunge deeper into his laudanum habit".

‘NINETEENTH-CENTURY ATTITUDES TO INTERNATIONAL COPYRIGHT’

Collins's continual problems with copyright in America and Europe during the nineteenth century are well known. He was particularly incensed at the Dutch publishing firm of Belinfante Brothers who attempted to publish *Man and Wife*

without his permission in 1869. Details of the case have been given in the biographies by Kenneth Robinson and Catherine Peters and in Andrew Gasson's *Wilkie Collins - an Illustrated Guide*. This new essay by Adriaan Van Der Wee! in *Publishing History* (47:2000, pp. 31-44) is interesting for discussing the differences between Dutch and English publishing practices at the time and explains why the Dutch were so reluctant to acknowledge foreign authors' rights.

RECENT SPANISH EDITIONS OF WILKIE COLLINS

Wilkie would be much happier with events in Spain where his international reputation continues strongly. Spanish member of the WCS', Antonio Iriarte, has provided the following useful list of the Spanish translations of his books that are currently available - and this excludes Catalan, Galician and Basque translations of *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone*. It also partly answers the earlier question from the last Newsletter about the publisher of Iolani.

All listed books are currently available as at 25 July 2000.

Editorial Montesinos, Barcelona:

La dama de blanco [The Woman in White], translation by Maruja Gomez Senegales, first published April, I 984, reprinted many times since. ISBN: 84-89354-20-0.

La piedra lunar [The Moonstone], translation by Horacio Laurora, foreword by Jorge Luis Borges, first published 1981, reprinted many times since; 7th edition, 1997. ISBN: 84-89354-46-4.

El hotel encantado [The Haunted Hotel], translation by Alberto Correa Fink, first published 1996, reprinted autumn 1998. ISBN: 84-89354-23-5.

La mano muerta [The Dead Hand], short story collection including: "La mujer ensueño" ["The Dream Woman"]; "La mano muerta" ["The Dead Hand"], "La confesión del pastor anglicano" ["Jérômette and the Clergyman"], all translated by Santiago Martin, and "Monkton el loco" ["Mad Monkton"], translated by Elvio Gandolfo. First published in this edition April, 1998. ISBN: 84-89354-56-1.

Doble engaño [The New Magdalen], translation by Aurora Gonzalez Bird, first published October, 1998. ISBN: 84-89354-51-0.

El secreto de Sarah [The Dead Secret], first published 1999. ISBN: 84-89354-88-X.

Ediciones Alba, Barcelona

Basil [Basil], translation by Miguel Martínez Lage, first published February, 1996; 2nd edition, May, 1996; 3rd edition, March, 2000. ISBN: 84-88730-98-5.

Sin nombre [No Name], translation by Gema Moral Bartolome, first published December, 1997; 2nd edition, February, 1998; 3rd edition, May, 1998. ISBN: 84-89846-10-3.

Pobre señorita Finch [Poor Mrs. Finch], translation by Miguel Martínez Lage, first published April, 1999. ISBN: 84-89846-70-7.

Ediciones B, Barcelona

la dama de blanco [The Woman in White], translation by Miguel Martínez Lage, first published February, 1998 (reprinted several times since). ISBN: 84-406-4413-2. The best available edition. New paperback edition published March, 2000. ISBN: 84-406-9689-2.

Armada [Armada], translation by J. Ferrer i Aleu, originally published in 1990, first published in this edition February, 1998, reprinted several times since. ISBN: 84-406-7615-8. New paperback edition published March, 2000. ISBN: 84-406-9687-6.

La piedra lunar [The Moonstone], translation by Horacio Laurora, originally published in 1982, first published in this edition, February, 1998. ISBN: 84-406-7616-6. It's the same translation as the Montesinos edition. New paperback edition published March, 2000. ISBN: 84-406-9688-4.

With Charles Dickens: Los Perezosos [The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices], translation by Jordi Gubern, first published September, 1997. ISBN: 84-406-7612-3.

Ediciones del Bronce, Barcelona

Confesiones de ungrajuja [A Rogue's Life], translation by Jose Manuel de Prada, first published November, 1997. ISBN: 84-8300-307-4.

El hombre de negro [The Black Robe], foreword and translation by Damian Alou, first published October 1998. ISBN: 84-89854-38-6.

Ediciones Rialp, Madrid

La ley y la dama [The Law and the Lady], translation by Maria Cristina Graell, first published 1994. Four editions so far. ISBN: 84-321-3064-8.

With Charles Dickens: Calle sin salida [No Thoroughfare], translation by Gregorio Solera, introduction by C.G.A., first published October, 1996, reprinted February, 1997. ISBN: 84-321-3122-9.

Ediciones Peninsula, Barcelona

With Charles Dickens: Callej6n sin salida [No Thoroughfare], translation by Ana Poljak, first published May, 1997. ISBN: 84-8307-047-2.

With Charles Dickens: El viaje inutil de dos aprendices gandules [The lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices], translation by Ana Poljak, first published November, 1997. ISBN: 84-8307-069-3.

Ediciones Valdemar, Madrid

Iolani, o Tahiti tal coma era [Iolani, or Tahiti As It Was], translation by Oscar Palmer and Santiago Garcia, introduction by Oscar Palmer, first published autumn 1999. ISBN: 84-7702-277-0.

Monkton, el loco y otros cuentos de terror y misterio [i.e., *Mad Monkton and Other Tales of Terror and Mystery*], short story collection including: “Monkton, el loco” [“Mad Monkton”]; “Una cama terriblemente extraña” [“A Terribly Strange Bed”]; “La señorita Jeromette y el clérigo” [“Miss Jérômette and the Clergyman”]; “La señora Zant y el fantasma” [“Mrs. Zant and the Ghost”]; “¡Revienta con el bergantín!” [“Blow Up With the Brig!”]; “La mujer del sueño” [“The Dream Woman”]; “La mano muerta” [“The Dead Hand”]; “El señor Percy y el profeta” [“Mr. Percy and the Prophet”]; “El fantasma de John Jago” [“John Jago’s Ghost”]; “Las gafas del diablo” [“The Devil’s Spectacles”]. Translation by Oscar Palmer, introduction by Oscar Palmer, first published February, 2000. ISBN: 84-7702-301-8.

Ultramar Editores, S.A. , Barcelona

Historias sobrenaturales y de terror [i.e., *Stories of Terror and the Supernatural*]. A short story collection. Contents and translator unknown. First published 1989, a 1996 edition is also listed on the ISBN data base and it is theoretically still in print, but I have never seen the book. ISBN: 84-7386-514-6.

Bibliotex, S.L.

¿Quién mató a Zebedee? [“*Who Killed Zebedee?*”]. Probably a short story collection. First Published 1998. Contents and translator unknown. I have never seen the book. ISBN: 84-8130-061-6.

A Further Note of Interest:

There also is a Spanish edition of William M. Clarke’s biography, published by Ediciones Alba as *La vida secreta de Wilkie Collins*.

APG



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NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2000

WCS JOURNAL 2000

Accompanying this Newsletter is Volume 3 of the *Wilkie Collins Society Journal*. Our thanks are due once again to the painstaking efforts of the editors, Graham Law and Lillian Nayder for putting together such an interesting collection of essays. These includes articles on *Basil*, Ellen Wood, Violence of the Working Woman, Evangelicism, Hugh Conway, and Dorothy L. Sayers.

DOROTHY L. SAYERS

This last essay by Susan Haynes is particularly topical since a large archive of books and papers of Dorothy Sayers is being sold at the Sotheby's English Literature sale of 19 December 2000 (lots 251-302). Sayers, of course wrote the unfinished biography of Collins, edited by E. R. Gregory and published by Toledo University in 1977. She had accumulated a large collection of papers and manuscript material most of which had been sold to the Humanities Research Center at Austin, Texas. Although her own archive consisted of 37 works by Collins, 24 manuscripts and proof copies and 152 autograph letters, she apparently denied access to this material to both Kenneth Robinson and Robert Ashley when they were working on their own biographies. There is very little direct Collins material in the present sale although lot 289 contains the thirteen page typescript of her introduction to the 1944 Everyman edition of *The Moonstone* "with minor manuscript corrections in ink and annotations in pencil with the stamp of her agent Pearn, Pollinger & Higham Ltd, and date stamps 27 October 1942 and 9 February 1942."

Sayers, of course, was a great admirer of Collins, recognising his talents during the first half of the twentieth century at a time when he had lapsed from his earlier public popularity, and mentioned him frequently in her writings about the mystery or detective novel. In November 1930, for example, she published an essay in the *London Mercury* called ‘The Present Status of the Mystery Story’. Here she wrote “Wilkie Collins was a writer of very great literary merit, whose work was read and admired by Dickens, Tolstoy, Leigh Hunt, Swinburne, and other people of importance in their day and ours. He was in no sense of the word a hack writer; he took his art seriously.” She continues “we need a great new popular genius to ... give us a new *Moonstone* or a new Sherlock Holmes. And defending the Victorian sensationalists in her final paragraph, Sayers concludes “But read the scene where Walter Hartright meets Anne Catherick upon the road from Hampstead, or that in which Sir Percival Glyde is trapped in the burning church. Follow Betteredge and Franklin Blake as they track Rosanna Spearman to the Shivering Sands... if these passages are not good writing, then I do not know what good writing is.”

***SERIALIZING FICTION IN THE VICTORIAN PRESS* BY GRAHAM LAW**

This new title by the co-editor of the *WCS Journal*, Graham Law, has just been published by Palgrave (Macmillan/St Martin’s Press), London/New York (ISBN 0-333-76019-0 (UK) or 0-312-23574-7 (US)). Graham, who has written several essays on the subject of serialisation and syndication, contributes the following notes, culled from the publicity material announcing his new book:

“That most Victorian novels were initially published and purchased in instalments is now well understood. But attention has tended to focus on monthly serialization in metropolitan literary magazines. However, this ground-breaking study shows clearly how, from the late 1860s at least, serial publication in syndicates of weekly news miscellanies issued throughout Britain, and indeed its Empire, was increasingly important in cultural as well as economic terms.

This approach generates new insights into the conditions under which novels were read and written, whether by long-forgotten explorers of the mass-market like David Pae, popularising authors like Braddon, or major artists like Hardy. However, Wilkie Collins, whose final six novels were

all published initially as newspaper serials, remains one of the most important cases brought forward. His career as a serial novelist and his relationships with the syndicating agent W.F. Tillotson and the literary agent A. P. Watt are all discussed here in some detail.

Drawing on extensive archival research, *Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press* is the first comprehensive account of the publication of instalment fiction in Victorian Newspapers. A detailed descriptive history of the rise and decline of the practice of syndication is followed by a wide-ranging discussion of its implications for readership, authorship, and fictional form. The argument is supported both by illustrations and by tables presenting a wealth of data in easily assimilable form. This examination of a neglected corner of the market-place for later Victorian fiction represents an important contribution to both literary and publishing history.

OXFORD

The enclosed 'Oxford World's Classic Magazine' shows that OUP now publish eight critical editions of Collins's works (*Armada*, *Basil*, *The Dead Secret*, *Hide and Seek*, *The Law and the Lady*, *Mad Monkton*, *Man and Wife*, and *Miss or Mrs?*). Some of these may be the only inexpensive editions available. The Wilkie Collins internet discussion group has reported that *The Dead Secret*, in particular, is currently out of print from Sutton Publishing who otherwise maintain a much longer list of Collins titles.

BOOK REFERENCES

It is always remarkable how the standard reference books on quotations almost universally manage to neglect Collins's works. In the 1997 *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Quotations*, he does achieve a single reference in the section on 'Audience': "It is perhaps hardly too much to say that the future of English fiction may rest with the Unknown Public- a reading public of three millions which lies right out of the pale of true literary civilization - which is now waiting to be taught the difference between a good book and a bad." This was originally written in an essay for *Household Words* (21 August 1858) and reprinted in *My Miscellanies* (1863) although the current dictionary's source is the 1932 *Fiction and the Reading Public* by Leavis. Throughout his career Wilkie was keen to be published in cheap editions to achieve the widest possible readership.

He consistently aspired to gain “The readers who rank by millions ... who give the widest reputations, who return the richest rewards, and who will therefore command the service of the best writers of their time.” He would therefore have been pleased to be in the present company of Charles Dickens, P. D. James and possibly even his namesake Joan Collins (“I’ve written bits of novels since I was six or seven. I was always very good at English at school.”). Wilkie, on the other hand, was often self-disparaging about his own English

Collins also appears in the 1999 paperback version of *The New Oxford Book of English Prose*. In the company of over 100 other distinguished authors, the editor John Grose includes three passages from Collins. These are the first meeting with Marian Halcombe at Limmeridge House which concludes with the famous sentence “The lady is ugly!”; a description of the shabby lawyer’s clerk from *Armadale*; and the passage from *The Moonstone* where Sergeant Cuff discovers the smear of paint and dismisses the bungling Superintendent Seegrave.

The Moonstone, together with a small portrait of Collins, also features on p. 377 of *The Illustrated History of the 19th Century*, published earlier this year and now to be found in remainder bookshops. “This, the most famous novel by British writer William Wilkie Collins (1824-1889), introduces the figure of Sergeant Cuff_ and confirms Collins’ status as the first author in English to write full-length detective novels. His *The Woman in White* (1860) is generally considered to be the first of the genre.” Some might argue with the details of the above but it is encouraging to find Collins noted as a figure of importance in a non-specialist and essentially popular book.

BROADVIEW EDITION OF *BLIND LOVE*

Don Richard Cox, Lindsay Young Distinguished Professor of the University of Tennessee, together with a colleague, Maria Bachman, are preparing a critical edition of *Blind Love* for Broadview Press. This was Collins’s last novel, eventually completed by Walter Besant, and. is particularly interesting because of it was based on a true life crime known as the Von Scheurer Fraud. In keeping with the previous, always excellent Broadview editions of Collins’s work (*The Evil Genius*, *Heart and Science* and *The Moonstone*) there will be extensive notes and full details of the

background to the case. It is expected that *Blind Love* will be published in about eighteen months time.

SUMMER WALK

As mentioned in the last Newsletter, the WCS held a joint meeting with the Victorian Society on the 9 September. Altogether about 30 of us met outside 17 Hanover Terrace where Wilkie lived from 1850 to 1856. The WCS contingent was truly international with six members from Holland over for the weekend and one from Chicago who had come more or less directly from the airport. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the walk and outlined the proposed route, which was loosely based on William Clarke's *Rambles around Marylebone*. This had, however, been expertly rearranged by Paul Lewis to take in most of the Marylebone places of Collins interest and to form a circuit finishing conveniently close to the starting point. Paul has recently spent a good deal of time in various archives identifying where street numbers and names have changed since the 1900s and we all had the benefits of his research during the afternoon. Andrew Gasson added some extra details and supplied some contemporary quotations from Wilkie's writings and the recently published *Letters*. The walk covered about four miles and took about three hours at a fairly leisurely pace.

For those unable to attend, a printed version of the walk is included with this Newsletter. Also, there is advance notice of a future walk by the Manor House Operatic Society for one evening next summer. This organisation runs an annual treasure hunt as a fund raising exercise and - with a little bit of persuasion - have decided use the Marylebone area for their next outing. Although not specifically a Collins walk it will cover much of the same ground and knowledgeable WCS members should have a head start with the questions! Further details will be available for the next Newsletter.

RECOLLECTIONS OF WILKIE COLLINS IN *CASSELL'S JOURNAL*

WCS member and antiquarian bookseller from Lewes, Richard Beaton, must take the credit for finding previously unrecorded memoirs about Wilkie Collins. *Cassell's Saturday Journal* for Saturday 5 March 1887 (No. 179 Vol. 4, pp. 355-356) contains 'A Novelist on Novel-Writing. An Interview with Mr. Wilkie Collins'. This short piece is particularly

interesting since it has not been noted in any of the standard bibliographies or biographies. Wilkie was never keen on publishing his memoirs and two years later, in 1889, he declined a similar proposal from the Dutch-American publisher Edward Bok by saying “we have had (to my mind) more “Reminiscences” latterly published in England than are really wanted. It will soon become a distinction not to have written one’s autobiography.” This present interview mainly covers familiar ground, discussing his approach to plot construction, regarding *Armadale* as his best book, and his high opinion of Sir Walter Scott, Charles Dickens and Fennimore Cooper. We hope to provide this as a reprint for WCS members some time in 2001.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE - THE 1982 TELEVISION SERIES

By comparison with the appalling recent BBC television adaptation of *The Woman in White*, the 1982 version is in a different league. It starred Jenny Seagrove as Laura Fairlie, Diana Quick as Marian Halcombe, Ian Richardson as Mr Fairlie and Alan Badel, in his last role, as Count Fosco. The production was originally broadcast in five episodes and runs for 4½ to 5 hours. The WCS is hoping to give members the opportunity to see the complete adaptation, probably one Sunday in the spring of 2001. We will choose a central London location and the timing is likely to be from afternoon to early evening with a break for refreshment. Those interested should contact Andrew Gasson at the above address or by email at apogee@gasson.demon.co.uk.

COLLINS AND CRICKET

It is not really known what Wilkie’s views were on cricket although he would probably have disapproved considering his opinion on athleticism in *Man and Wife* and his comment in *Say No* (1884) “The worst curse of human life is the detestable necessity of taking exercise.” With the help of Paul Lewis, we have unearthed a few quotes. In *The Dead Secret* Wilkie refers to Doctor Chennery as “the best bowler in the Long Beckley cricket-club.” In *Man and Wife* he describes in Chapter 16 how “The usual “Sports” were to take place--such as running, jumping, “putting” the hammer, throwing cricket-balls, and the like.” Chapter 43 asks “What does the new generation know? It knows how to row, how to shoot, how to play at cricket, and how to bat” followed in Chapter 45 with “The solemnity takes its rise in an indomitable national passion for hardening the arms and legs, by throwing hammers and cricket-balls. . . . Any person

who presumes to see any physical evil involved in these exercises to the men who practice them, or any moral obstruction in the exhibition itself to those civilizing influences on which the true greatness of all nations depends, is a person without a biceps, who is simply incomprehensible.” Finally, in *A Rogue’s Life* Frank Softly, the narrator, describes how he “was sent to one of the most fashionable and famous of the great public schools....and learned to play at cricket.”

It was interesting, therefore, to discover two good friends of Wilkie in a well know cricketing painting. The picture in question is by G. H. Barrable & R. Ponsonby Staples and shows the 1887 match between England and Australia set against the old pavilion at Lords. The key personages in the painting are the Prince and Princess of Wales with a disdainful Lillie Langtrety looking the other way. But also with the spectators are the American actress Mary Anderson, a renowned beauty of the time whose memoirs include correspondence with Wilkie with his intention to write a play specially for her; and seated separately Augustin Daly, the American impresario. Daly staged Collins’s plays for the New York theatre and brought his touring company to England on five occasions. It was to Augustin Daly that Collins gave the unpublished manuscript of *Ioláni* – perhaps during this particular visit to London. The painting is exhibited in the Museum at Lords cricket ground and is reproduced in the 1987 *Double Century a History of MCC and Cricket* by Tony Lewis.

COLLINS AND THE AMERICAN THEATRE

Most references to the production of Collins’s plays in the US revolve around Augustin Daly, who apart from theatre management was a noted dramatist, translator and critic. His activities seem to have been confined to New York where he staged *No Name* in 1871 and *The New Magdalen* in 1873. Now another American director and actor has come to light in the person of David Belasco (1859-1931). He staged a joint dramatisation with James H. Le Roy of *The New Magdalen* on 14 July 1873 at Shiels Opera House in San Francisco and followed this with a production of *Man and Wife* between 18 August and 18 October.

SOME ADDITIONAL NOTES FROM PAUL LEWIS

REVIEWS

The Dons and Mr Dickens is the fourth pastiche by William J. Palmer based on what he calls the ‘secret journals of Wilkie Collins’. The book is written in the first person by ‘Wilkie’ and the story is a well enough told yarn about an attempt to assassinate the Prime Minister. Sadly, this book pays even less regard to the true facts of Wilkie’s life than its predecessors. The problems start with the cover which features a poor picture of Wilkie that is in fact mirror-reversed and end with the last pages which find Wilkie embracing a warm family Christmas - as we know, Wilkie hated Christmas. There are mistakes on almost every page. Unlike Wilkie, Palmer couldn’t even check the calendar, calling November 30th 1853 a Saturday (it was a Wednesday) and then bizarrely getting it right by fixing December 10th to be a Saturday too! But perhaps a small error when you recall that Dickens and Collins together with Augustus Egg were in fact together in Europe from October 10th 1853 to December 11th. Among the solecisms - bicycles (not yet invented), cameras (much more familiar than he says), flash powder (not used except in Hollywood films); public houses closing at 3 p.m. (not introduced until 1914); Wilkie and Dickens drinking pints of beer; trains leaving Victoria to travel direct to Oxford (and with a brougham strapped to a freight car); Wilkie being an Oxford alumni; and Ellen Ternan too old. The mistakes come faster than the thrills as you turn the pages. And these are just the new errors - the old ones about Wilkie’s paramour Meg, an ex-prostitute, and Palmer’s persistent belief that Collins was a sort of doltish companion to the genius Dickens, grate on the nerves like a bad signature tune. Palmer is clearly enjoying himself – giving the name ‘Morse’ to an Oxford policeman and placing Mycroft Holmes as a real character in the plot – more than this reader at any rate did. *The Dons and Mr Dickens* by William J. Palmer, St Martin’s Minotaur, New York 2000. You have been warned!

LITERARY CRITICISM

The Fiction of Geopolitics by Christopher GoGwilt, Stanford University Press 2000. I didn’t expect to enjoy the chapter on Wilkie in *The Fiction of Geopolitics* and *The Moonstone*, but I did. I found it a very persuasive argument that there is a strong thread of comment on Britain’s dependence on the colonies for their wealth and power

“behind every English estate there is likely to be, screened from view, a colonial plantation... In *The Moonstone*, screened from the Verinder’s estate by a ‘plantation of firs’, are the Shivering Sands, the novel’s primal scene of sensational mystery, whose topographical deformity is metonymically linked to Rosanna [Spearman]’s vision of ‘hundreds of suffocating people.’”

GoGwilt links the story to a painting by Sir David Wilkie (Wilkie’s godfather) of the aftermath of the capture of Seringapatam and discusses the Moonstone itself as a surrogate for Rachel Verinder’s virginity.

ART NOTES

One of William Collins’s major works of art came up for auction at Sotheby’s in London on November 30th. *Skittle Players* was painted in 1832 and was one of Wilkie’s favourite works by his father. In *Memoirs of the Life of William Collins* (1848) Wilkie devotes four pages to a detailed description of this “strikingly original composition of eight principal, and eight second and third rate figures; a disposition of light and shade, harmonious and scientific; and a tone of colour, brilliant, various and true.” (vol II p. 4)

It was sold to a Mr George Young in 1844 for 400 guineas (£420). Wilkie complained to his agent A. P. Watt that it was then resold in 1875 for 2,400 guineas and was “received with rounds of applause, on its appearance in the auction room.” He believed that the artist or his descendants should benefit from this gain in value – part of his campaign for copyright law. Such a law now applies in several European countries as the ‘droit de suite’ but was rejected earlier this year by the British government. How would Wilkie have felt to know that this picture fetched £82,000 (more than £95,000 with buyer’s premium and VAT) at its sale in the year 2000?

Charles Collins’s art is featured in a piece by Robert Raven in *The Dickensian* (Summer 2000, pp.118-126). He examines – deconstructs might be a better word – the sketches which Charles did for illustrations of *Edwin Drood* (they were never used) to give clues to Dickens’s plot intentions. The analysis depends on Charles having access to Dickens’s thoughts before he wrote the parts he finished before his death.

WEB NOTES

An image of *Skittle Players* and a transcript of Wilkie's comments about it from *Memoirs* are on my website www.wilkiecollins.com. Follow menu item 6 - Wilkie's Family. Other new items on the Wilkie Collins website are images of some early editions of some of his books and the illustrations in them (menu item 1) and a growing archive of more than 40 images of Wilkie drawn mainly from contemporary sources including photographs, cartoons, and paintings (menu item 2).

I have recently been enjoying very much <https://www.umass.edu/AdelphiTheatreCalendar> which provides a full day-by-day list of performances at the Adelphi theatre in London from 1806-1900 including three of Wilkie's plays - *Black and White* 1868, *No Thoroughfare* 1867 and 1870, and *Rank and Riches* 1882. The site includes cast lists and supporting plays and of course enables the careers of actors and actresses who performed in his plays to be tracked.

<http://www.bemorecreative.com/one/2042.htm> is more remarkable for publishing five quotes from Wilkie - how rare they are - than anything else though its links to search engines may encourage further browsing.

<http://www.stmarylebone.org.uk> has a marvellous early picture of the church where Wilkie was christened on 18 February 1824 together with a history of this fine building finished in 1817.

Finally, the following web-site, <http://www.webincunabula.com/html/english/books/c/co/noname.htm> has a nice electronic version of the 1873 Harper's Library Edition of *No Name* together with the illustrations.

And a reminder that there is an active internet Wilkie Collins reading group. We are currently reading *The Dead Secret*. The email discussions can be quite lively and new members are always welcome. Find out more from Susan Dara at susandara@aol.com.

WILKIE IN THE PRESS

A piece about silent films in the *Los Angeles Times* (27 July) led me on a search for a 1917 silent film version of *The Woman in White*. Originally

called, according to the newspaper, *The Unfortunate Marriage* it is now listed at <http://imdb.com> as *The Woman in White*. The Library of Congress appears to own a copy of the 68 minute film which was shown in L.A. that night.

In *The Daily Telegraph* two days later Christopher Howse called for a dramatisation of *The Law and Lady* sponsored by disability rights organisations for its portrayal of the powerful but legless Miserrimus Dexter and his cousin Ariel whom he describes as having ‘learning difficulties’. A nice idea.

Matthew Sweet tells us (*Independent on Sunday* 29/10/00) that “nobody has successfully adapted Wilkie Collins for the screen.” And three weeks later he discusses female facial hair (and hairiness generally) recalling “Wilkie Collins received several letters from men who wished to make marriage proposals to his heroine, Marian Halcombe, a woman possessed of ‘dark down on her upper lips [which] was almost a moustache”.

Travel writers often invoke Wilkie’s ghost. Oliver Burkeman (*The Guardian* 30/9/00) wrote of Cumbria “The strange dark beauty of the cloud-shrouded crags and fells of northern Cumbria has had a bad press ever since Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins made a disastrous trip up Carrock Fell in 1871 (Dickens moaned about the views and Collins sprained-his ankle and sulked for the rest of the trip).” And a long piece about Saltash by Martin Hesp in *The Western Morning News* (9/10/00) includes this tantalising quote “the writer Wilkie Collins also took a ferry to Saltash and ended up in a tavern, ‘Filled with shrimpers, sailors, fishermen and watermen, all looming large through a fog of tobacco, and all chirping merrily over their cups”’. If you can identify this quote, e-mail me at paul@paullewis.co.uk The first one pulled out of the hat will get a free subscription for 2001.

Wilkie’s drug habit is resurrected in *The Birmingham Post* (4/11/00) with a lengthy quote from *An Empire of Plants* by Toby and Will Musgrave. “Two writers of fiction famously addicted to opium were [Coleridge] and Wilkie Collins... There is strong evidence that Wilkie Collins lived in almost constant pain as a result of a serious rheumatic condition and that laudanum offered him relief, particularly of sleep, that he needed in order to function.”

The Guardian (15 September) rated *The Woman in White* the 23rd best classic written before 1900 and Russell Hoban (*The Daily Telegraph* 28/10/00) took it on holiday with him – along with Henry James’s *Portrait of a Lady*, Gogol’s collected tales and a John Grisham novel.

Finally there is the usual crop of reviews of new novels where Wilkie’s name crops up as the gold standard. “He has clearly immersed himself in the wilder works of Sheridan Le Fanu and Wilkie Collins” (*The Daily Telegraph* 26/8/00) ; “The literary echoes raised are those of Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins” (*Daily Mail* 1/9/00); “Even Wilkie Collins would have admired the clever plot of this mystery” (*The Scotsman* 3/10/00); “The fearless Sally Lockhart, an orphaned Victorian girl who rides like a Cossack and survives plots worthy of Wilkie Collins” (*Sunday Times* 8/10/00).

Both *The Times* and the *Irish Press* remembered the anniversary of Wilkie’s death on 23rd September.

LOCATING THE VICTORIANS

In Summer 2001 the Science Museum, the Victoria & Albert Museum and the Natural History Museum in London are hosting what they describe as “a great Victorian festival” to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Great Exhibition and the 100th of the death of Queen Victoria. There will be major exhibitions and an international conference from 12-15 July to “interpret the 19th century for the benefit of the 21st” The Society is currently considering whether to have a stand there. More from the website <http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/researchers/victorians/>

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THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

PATRON Faith Clarke

Chairman Andrew Gasson, 3 Merton House, 36 Belsize Park, London, NW3 4EA

Membership Paul Lewis, 47 Hereford Road, Acton, London W3 9JW

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2001

THE WOMAN IN WHITE (TV VERSION)

We can now confirm the details for our showing of the 1982 BBC television version of *The Woman in White*. This will be shown on Sunday 29 April 2001 in the Bedford Room of the Imperial Hotel, Russell Square, London WC1, the exact location being at the South east corner of the square. We will show the complete production which consists of five 50 minute episodes. The Bedford Room is available from 2.00pm and the programme will start promptly at 2.30pm. There will be an interval about half way when tea, coffee and sandwiches will be served, with a finishing time of about 8.30pm. The WCS will subsidise the afternoon but to cover the costs of refreshments and room hire we are asking for a contribution of £10 for members and £12 for guests who will also be welcome. Please return the enclosed booking slip by April 14th.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2001

The 2001 membership subscription is now due and should be sent to Membership Secretary, Paul Lewis, at the above address. (NB subscriptions run from 1st January – 31 December). For this year, we have made a modest increase to the subscription to £10 for UK and European members and £16.00 for those in the USA and outside of Europe. (The slightly greater increase for overseas members reflects the extra cost of postage for bulky items such as *The Journal*) Payments from abroad must be made in Sterling otherwise bank charges for conversion absorb almost all of the subscription.

'A NOVELIST ON NOVEL WRITING'

The latest WCS reprint is- 'A Novelist on Novel Writing'. This was originally published in *Cassell's Saturday Journal* for Saturday 5 March 1887 (No. 179 Vol.4, pp. 355-356) It was recently discovered by the ever alert antiquarian bookseller Richard Beaton from Lewes and fits ideally into our theme of reissuing short pieces by or about Collins which have never previously been republished.

SERIALIZING FICTION IN THE VICTORIAN PRESS

Graham Law's *Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press* was published at the end of last year and fulfills our best expectations. The author points out that the serialisation of fiction began at least 100 years before Dickens's *Pickwick Papers* and that "...for almost the whole of the Victorian period, a significant majority of 'original' novels published as books had appeared previously in monthly or weekly instalments, as independent numbers, in magazines, or in the pages of newspapers." Law's book is mainly concerned with the period from 1870-1890 when periodical publication "shifted gradually but unmistakably from serialization in single metropolitan magazines ...to syndication in groups of provincial weekly papers with complementary circulations." The central figure around which the book is constructed is W. F. Tillotson, proprietor of *The Bolton Weekly Journal*. He founded the 'Fiction Bureau', a newspaper syndication agency specialising in the serialisation of novels. This began with agreements to publish the works of John Pae and Miss Braddon but soon involved many other authors including Wilkie Collins who becomes one of the important threads throughout Law's meticulously researched publishing history. Appendix A.5 gives details of the syndication of seven of his late novels, *Jezebel's Daughter*, *The Black Robe*, *Heart and Science*, *I Say No*, *The Evil Genius*, *The Legacy of Cain* and *Blind Love*. Most of this syndication was arranged through his literary agent, A. P. Watt, and we learn that Collins's stories appeared not only in numerous English, Scottish and Welsh newspapers but also overseas in American, Canadian and Australian papers. The remuneration for the novels varied from £500 for *Jezebel's Daughter* to a probable £1,600 for *I Say No*.

Law makes his point about the importance of Newspaper publication in Chapter 6 where he notes that “Wilkie Collins accepted £1,300 and £1,000 from Tillotsons for serialization rights respectively to *The Evil Genius* (1885-86) and *The Legacy of Cain* (1888), but received only £500 each for seven-year leases on the volume rights from Chatto and Windus.” Further details of Collins's publishing history are given later in the same chapter under 'Professionalization: Collins and Braddon'. We are also treated to Collins's scathing descriptions of Tillotson as “this little pest”, “that wretched creature” or “that impudent little cad”.

Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press therefore gives a detailed descriptive history of the rise and decline of syndication with a wide-ranging discussion of its implications for readers and authors. It will prove essential reading for those with an interest in this particular aspect of publishing history. The book is handsomely produced with sixteen, mostly uncommon illustrations. The notes are excellent with a comprehensive bibliography and index. It is available from Palgrave (Macmillan/St. Martin's Press) at £40 (ISBN 0-333-76019-0, or 0-312- 23574-7 in North America).

'THE DREAM WOMAN' - THE FILM

In the last Newsletter we quoted the *Los Angeles Times* of 27 July 2000 which gave details of a 1917 film version of *The Woman in White*. Long-standing member Brian Huss sends the following correction and fascinating recollection: “Surely the film *The Unfortunate Marriage* was the (equally unfortunate) title of 'The Dream Woman'. I didn't see this but my elder sister, born in 1911, held me enthralled when I was young, long before I had read the story, with her description of Rebecca Scatchard approaching the bed on which Isaac lay with long tip-toed strides, stabbing once and then as he jerked awake and flung himself from the knife stabbing again.” A look at *Hubin*, one of the standard references on crime fiction, makes no mention of this production but gives a 1914 version of *The Woman in White* as *The Dream Woman* directed by Alice Blache; a later one in 1917 called *Tangled Lives*; and another in 1917, presumably as *The Woman in White*, directed by Ernest C. Warde with a screenplay by Lloyd Lonergan. Brian would be glad to hear from any member with further information about the production of *The Unfortunate Marriage*.

(He can be contacted at 19 Kingston Drive, Norton-on-Derwent, Malton, North Yorkshire YO17 9DD).

THE LETTERS OF WILKIE COLLINS

The recently published *Letters of Wilkie Collins*, edited by Professor William Baker and William Clarke has recently won an award from *Choice*. Every year its subject editors single out for recognition the most significant print and electronic works reviewed in *Choice* during the previous calendar year. The list generally attracts great interest from the academic library community since it reflects the best in scholarly titles. The latest awards for 2000 appeared in the January issue and include 640 titles in 54 disciplines and subsections. The two volume edition of letters is still available from Macmillan (now Palgrave) in the UK (ISBN 0-312-22343-9) and St. Martins Press in the USA (ISBN 0-312-22344-7).

MANOR LIGHT OPERA AND A WILKIE TREASURE HUNT

Manor Light Opera is running a Marylebone/Wilkie Collins Treasure Hunt covering many of the streets where Wilkie lived. The event will take place on Wednesday 13 June 2001, starting at the Gloucester Arms on the corner of Gloucester Place and Ivor Place. To enter, turn up between 6.15 pm and 7.15 pm; teams of 2 to 4 persons will be organised. Remember to bring a pen and stiff backing for question papers. If you are interested, contact Paul Huggins on 020 8346 2104 to confirm the arrangements. An admission fee of £4 is charged to raise funds for putting on operettas. This year's production is *The Mikado* at the Steiner Theatre, near the Gloucester Arms. It will be performed from 15 - 19 May and the box office number is 020 7328 7846.

Also to raise funds, there is also a Quiz Supper on Saturday 21 April 2001 at St Mary's Church Hall, Hendon Lane, Finchley N3. Further details from John Lewis, 164 Goldhurst Terrace, London NW6 3HP (Tel 020 7328 7846; e-mail jawigalewis@cableinet.co.uk).

KENSAL GREEN CEMETERY

As most members will know, Wilkie was buried in Kensal Green cemetery in 1889. Friends of the Cemetery (FOKGC) hope that the first major,

scholarly book dealing with its origins and development will be published later in the year. This well-illustrated work will be edited by Professor James Stevens Curl (noted for his studies on funerary architecture and landscapes) and will contain contributions from several distinguished authors, all of whom have given their work without charge. Publication is scheduled for the autumn and the book will consist of about 300 large format pages. The first limited edition will consist of 1000 numbered copies and will contain a list of subscribers with the names of all who have ordered in advance and wish to be included. The publishers have agreed to covenant a large proportion of the profits to the FOKGC. Those interested in the special subscribers offer price of £30 should contact, before 30 April, Phillimore & Co. Ltd., Shopwyke Manor Barn, Chichester, West Sussex PO20 6BG.

THE LIGHTHOUSE IN FRENCH

Collins's 1855 play, *The Lighthouse*, was a melodrama loosely based on his short story 'Gabriel's Marriage' but set in the Eddystone Lighthouse of 1748. The manuscript of the play is currently held in the Forster Collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum. No printed or published version of the play is known to exist in English, although the play was translated into French by a great admirer of Collins, Emile Forgues. The assumption has always been that only acting copies were produced for the distinguished cast which, in England, included Wilkie, himself, Charles Dickens, Augustus Egg, Mark Lemon Mary Dickens and Georgina Hogarth. A recent discovery has shown that the French translation was published at the end of a collection of short stories, all translated by Forgues and taken from *The Queen of Hearts*. The latter was itself dedicated to Forgues in recognition of his complimentary critical essay in *La Revue des deux Mondes* of 1855.

The French collection is called *Une Poignée de Romans: seconde série* (A Handful of Tales); it is undated but appears to have been published in the early to mid 1860s. *The Lighthouse (Le Phare)* occupies pages 278-346 and includes an introduction by Collins dated 1 July 1856. It sets the scene at Eddystone, describes the first production at Dickens's Tavistock House and confirms that this is the first printed publication. The play consists of two acts with respectively six and thirteen scenes.

(An additional note from Paul Lewis - The Pilgrim edition of Dickens's letters records that *The Lighthouse* was published in French in the Paris weekly *L Ami de la Maison* in 1857, together with a short biography of Dickens by Emile Forgues.)

THE OXFORD 'POP-UP'

A very useful little programme from Oxford University Press is their 'Oxford Pop-up'. The CD-Rom installs onto the hard disk *The New Oxford Dictionary*, the *New Oxford Thesaurus*, the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* and the *New Oxford World Encyclopaedia*. Double clicking on a word then gives instant access to these four references sources. The cost is £29.99 from www.oup.com or from their direct sales on 01536-741727.

THE DICKENS MAGAZINE

We are enclosing a leaflet for the recently introduced *Dickens Magazine*. The first issue of Series I sets the pattern for future numbers. It is divided into two parts, the first devoted to articles on one of the major novels (in this case *Great Expectations*); and the second to contemporary authors and events (e.g. George Eliot, the beginnings of the novel, and the American Civil War). The editor, Alan Watts, is of course well aware of the importance of the Dickens-Collins connection and Wilkie will feature in at least one of the future issues with the reprint of an article by Andrew Gasson.

VICTORIAN STUDIES BIBLIOGRAPHY

The latest issue of *Victorian Studies* (Vol. 42, No. 4, Summer 1999/2000) contains their extensive annual bibliography with the following listing for Collins:

The Woman in White. Ed. John Sutherland. Oxford UP, 1996. 702 pp.
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Clarke, W. *The Secret Lift of Wilkie Collins* See VB 1988, 700. Rev. by T. Heller in VLC24(1996):349-66.

Coad, David. "Other in *The Moonstone* and *Dracula*." *Annales du Monde Anglophone*4(1996):33-53.

Gasson, Andrew. *Wilkie Collins: An Illustrated Guide*. Oxford UP. 189 pp

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Lepaludier, Laurent. "Apports et limites des Modeles du savoir I. !age scientifique dans *The Moonstone* de Wilkie Collins." CVE47:173-87.

Met, Pierre. "Wilkie Collins: A Detective of His Repressed Desire," in V, Pereira, pp. 61-66.

Morris, Debra. "Maternal Roles and the Production of Name in Wilkie Collins's *No Name*." *DSA* 27:271-86.

Nayder, Lillian. *Wilkie Collins*. London: Prentice; NY Twayne, 1997. 174 pp.

Peters, C. *The King of Inventors*..... See VB 1991, 546. Rev, by T. Heller in VLC24(1996):349-66.

Pykett, Lyn, ed. *Wilkie Collins*. Basingstoke: MacMillan; NY: St. Martin's. 280 pp. Includes P. Brantlinger, "What Is 'Sensational' about the Sensation Novel?" 30-57; A. Cvetkovich, "Ghostlier Determinations: The Economy of Sensation and *The Woman in White*,"109-35; D. David, "Rewriting the Male Plot in Wilkie Collins's *No Name*," 136-48; E. Gruner, "Family Secrets and the Mysteries of *The Moonstone*." 221-43;

T. Heller, "Blank Spaces: Ideological Tensions and the Detective Work of *The Moonstone*, 224-70; M. Hennelly, "Reading Detection in *The Woman in White*," 88-108; A. Hutter, "Dreams, Transformations and Literature: The Implications of Detective Fiction," 175-96; W. Kendrick, "The Sensationalism of *The Woman in White*," 70-87; U. Knoepflmacher, "The Counterworld of Victorian Fiction and *The Woman in White*," 58-69; D. Miller, "From *Roman Po/icier* to *Roman-Police*. Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone*," 197-220; J. Taylor, "*Armadale*. The Sensitive Subject as Palimpsest," 149-74.

Rance, N. *Wilkie Collins and Other Sensation Novelists*.....See VB 199 I, 546-47.
Rev. by T. Heller in *VLC* 24(1996) :349-66.

Smith, N., & R. Terry, eds. *Wilkie Collins to the Forefront*..... See VB 1995, 712.
Rev. by E. Gruner in *YES* 28:334-35.

Stave, Shirley A. "The Perfect Murder: Patterns of Repetition and Doubling in Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*." *DSA* 25(1996) :287-303.

Taylor, J. *In the Secret Theatre of Home*.... See YB 1998, 700. Rev. by T. Heller in *VLC* 24(1996):349-66.

Thoms, P. *The Windings of the Labyrinth*.See YB 1993, 633-34.
Rev. by T. Hellerin *VLC*24(1996):349-66.

Williams, M. Kellen. "'Traced and Captured By the Men in the Chaise': Pursuing Sexual Difference in Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*." *JNT*28:91-110.

Wills, Adele. "Witnesses and Truth: Juridical Narratives and Dialogism in Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone* and *The Woman in White*." *NeFo* 32 (1997) :91-98.

SOME ADDITIONAL NOTES FROM PAUL LEWIS

WILKIE IN ITALY

Another important picture by Wilkie's father, William Collins RA, has surfaced briefly, this time in a provincial auction. *The Caves of Ulysses at Sorrento* was painted in 1841 and is based on a sketch and notes taken during the family's two year trip to Italy from] 1836 to 1838. In the middle of that trip the family fled the 1837 cholera epidemic in Naples to stay about 30 miles away in Sorrento, at the western end of the Bay of Naples. "The painter could not have chosen a more delightful place of refuge from infected Naples than Sorrento" Wilkie wrote in his biography of his father (II 107). And he describes the sketches he made there. "The second looks towards Vesuvius also, but from a different point. Here the smooth limpid sea, with gay market-boats floating idly on its surface, ripples into the foreground, tinged with the clear Italian reflections of the hour and scene. A strip of beach, an extremity of rocky cliff, and the point of Vico, presented the rest of the composition in Nature, and supply it in the sketch. The airy delicacy and daylight of the effect thus produced proved so popular in England that the painter was commissioned to paint two pictures from it." (II 109).

One of these was for John Gibbons (1777-1851), son of a banking and iron family in Wolverhampton and a great collector of pictures and furniture. He bought the painting for £200. It was sold by Phillips at its Knowle saleroom near Solihull on 10 January 2001 as part of an estate sale for the Gibbons family. It fetched £14,400 plus premium and taxes. The family, which still has the receipt written by William, is believed to have bought the picture back.

The original sketch on which the picture was based became a treasured possession of Wilkie's - he had it reframed in 1867.

An image of the picture and more information about it from Wilkie's biography are at www.wilkiecollins.com.

AT HANOVER TERRACE

One interesting connection between the Gibbons and Collins families emerged from the sale catalogue. The Gibbons family had a London house at 16 Hanover Terrace, where John Gibbons had a picture gallery built for his 150 paintings, including another Collins - *Fetching the Doctor* 1845. William died in 1847 and in August 1850 Harriet moved from 38 Blandford Square to 17 Hanover Terrace, next door to the Gibbons family. John himself died a year later. When Wilkie's mother Harriet moved out of Hanover Terrace in 1856, she stayed next door for a time with John Gibbons's widow Elizabeth. We know that because on 5 April that year Wilkie addressed a letter from Paris to her "Care of Mrs Gibbons, 16 Hanover Terrace".

ROYAL ACADEMY

The Royal Academy, of which William was a member and where Charles Collins studied, began in Pall Mall but moved to what is now Somerset House, Strand in 1780 where it remained until 1836. The rooms occupied by it are now completely filled by the Courtauld Gallery and the fine, Great Room on the top floor, where many of William's pictures were displayed at the summer exhibitions, is now open to the public as part of the Gallery. The staircase, the approach and the Great Room itself would have been very familiar to Wilkie. The whole place now has an 18th century feel and is well worth a visit.

While you are there why not stroll up Wellington Street opposite, past the Lyceum Theatre on the left. None of Wilkie's plays was performed there, but we know he was in the audience on several occasions. Dickens haunted it pursuing the actress Ellen Ternan. A little further up Wellington Street, number 26 on the right, are the offices of *All The Year Round*. A blue plaque confirms the still extant building on the corner of Tavistock Street where *The Woman in White*, the title of *No Name* and so much else was discussed.

IN THE PRESS

Two book reviews invoke Wilkie's name as the gold standard of mystery writing. The *Mail on Sunday* (3/12/00) compares Trevor Rees-Jones book on the death of the Princess of Wales to Wilkie Collins and Mohamed al Fayed to Count Fosco. And *The Los Angeles Times* (8/12/00) says that Ian Rankin's detective novel *Set in Darkness* calls "Wilkie Collins to mind as often as it does Inspector Morse."

More recently, *The Love of Stones* by Tobias Hill reminds two reviewers of *The Moonstone* (*Sunday Times* 11/2/01 and *New Statesman* 12/2/01).

Reviews of Wilkie's own books are non1 lally rare but the excellent Cover to Cover version of *The Woman in White* - an unabridged audiobook read by Ian Holm - received two recommendations for Christmas presents; one in the *Evening Standard* on 18 December and this on 3rd by Jessica Mann "One of the first and best detective thrillers ...Gladstone is reported to have cancelled a party to finish this gripping tale. For the same reason I drove at a crawl for miles."

le Monde (29/12/00) carried a full front page review of *Cache-cache* a new French edition of *Hide and Seek* translated by Alice Nevill, and published by Phébus. The publisher has many Wilkie Collins titles in French.

The forthcoming 100th anniversary of the death of Queen Victoria led to many pieces, several of which invoked Wilkie's name. An editorial in *The Times* (26/12/00) on Victorian novels and their link to the present says "if we balk at literary tie-ins consider the *Woman in White* shawls". Mathew Sweet, who edited the recent Penguin edition of *The Woman in White*, wrote two pieces. 'Victoria's Secrets' (*Mail on Sunday* 31 December) mentions Wilkie twice, once for his two partners and once for being buried near the acrobat Blondin in Kensal Green cemetery. The other, 'We were very amused' (*Independent on Sunday* 7 January), was a controversial piece, claiming that laudanum was the "People's Intoxicant" and saying that Wilkie and others "glugged it back with enthusiasm". Finally *The Times* and *The Belfast Telegraph* remembered Wilkie's 177th birthday on 8 January.

WILKIE'S LETTERS - AN APPEAL

Baker and Clarke's prize-winning volumes contained around a quarter of Wilkie's known letters. Now another publisher has agreed to publish the remainder. Bill Baker, together with joint editors, Professor Graham Law of Waseda University, Tokyo and Collins experts Andrew Gasson and Paul Lewis of the Wilkie Collins Society, will produce three volumes containing all the other known letters that were not contained in the original *Letters*. Pickering and Chatto aim to publish the new volumes at the end of 2004. Any member who has any information about the location of unknown Wilkie letters should email paul@paullewis.co.uk.

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BOOKS GLOBAL

Aspiring authors may be interested in BooksGlobal.com which publishes books on its website without the need for a traditional publisher or agent. Further details from BooksGlobal@hotmail.com or the website <http://www.BooksGlobal.com>.

GEORGE ELIOT TOURS

The George Eliot Fellowship in association with Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council are continuing their regular tours of 'George Eliot Country'. This year's dates are Sunday 20 May, Wednesday 27 June, Wednesday 8 August, and Sunday 9 September. Further details from Rose Selwyn, Town Hall, Nuneaton, Warwickshire CV11 5AA (024 7637 6376; or rose.selwyn@nuneaton-bedworthbc.gov.uk).

LEDBURY POETRY FESTIVAL

This year's Ledbury Poetry Festival runs from 28 June to 8 July featuring poet in residence Ruth Padel. There is the usual Poetry competition with a first prize of £250. Details from Town Council Offices, Church Street, Ledbury (01531 634 156; prog@poetry-festival.com. www.poetry-festival.com).

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THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2001

MAGNETIC EVENINGS

Enclosed with this newsletter is the Society's latest reprint, 'Magnetic Evenings at Home'. These essays were first published in *The Leader* early in 1852 and have never been republished since. The couplet quoted is from *The Princess* by Tennyson and the Shakespeare quotation is from *Hamlet*

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF WALTER BESANT'S DEATH IN JUNE 1901

The latest issue of *The Author* (Summer 2001) noted that 9 June 2001 was the 100th anniversary of the death of Walter Besant who completed Wilkie's last, unfinished novel *Blind Love*. Besant was a long-standing friend of Wilkie, founder and Chairman of the recently formed Society of Authors, and social reformer. He promoted the People's Palace at Mile End in east London 'for intellectual improvement and rational amusement' in 1889. As a result of journalist Harry Quilter's efforts, the People's Palace (later Queen Mary's College) became the home of the 'Wilkie Collins Memorial Library of Fiction' consisting of about 1,100 novels. Besant was a popular novelist in his own right collaborating with James Rice on several best-selling books between 1871 and 1882. He also contributed twelve Christmas numbers to *All the Year Round* from 1876 to 1887. Besant was responsible for founding *The Author*, published monthly from May 1890 by Wilkie's agent, A. P. Watt. The second issue (vol. 1, no. 2, June 1890) reprinted Collins's 1880 protest against literary piracy, 'Thou shalt not Steal': Considerations on the Copyright Question Addressed to an American Friend.'

In August 1889, Collins realised that he was too ill to finish *Blind Love*, then being serialised in *The Illustrated London News*. Wilkie suggested that his literary agent, A. P. Watt, should approach Besant: “If he has the time I think he will do it ... he knows that I would do the same for him if he were in my place.” Wilkie had completed the first 48 chapters (weekly parts 1-18 in *The Illustrated London News*) and had worked out the remainder of the plot. Besant agreed to complete the novel and was surprised to find that Collins’s working notes represented a detailed scenario with fragments of dialogue already inserted. Besant was “careful to adhere faithfully and exactly to the plot, scene by scene, down to the smallest detail as it was laid down by the author.” Besant’s full explanation is found in the preface to *Blind Love*.

FOXWOLD SALE -A WILKIE AND CHARLES PAINTING

Continuing the theme of *Blind Love*, 26 June saw the sale of Foxwold, a large country house and estate near Westerham in Kent. This was originally the home of wealthy man-about-town and lawyer, Horace Pym. The house has recently been sold by his descendants with an asking price of £2 million followed in June by a sale of the residual contents. An earlier sale in April 1996 included Pym’s hand written notes sent to Wilkie before he started the novel. These details were included in Pym’s own memoirs, *A Tour Round My Bookshelves* which was privately printed in 1891. The plot of *Blind Love* was based on an insurance scam known as the Von Scheurer Fraud in 1883-1884. Wilkie heard about this case from Pym over lunch at his great friends, the Lehmanns, in December 1887. He was so excited by the case that he immediately wanted to jot down the details for future use. Two days later Pym sent him the complete history of the fraud but Wilkie was unable to start work on it until he had completed the serialisation of *The Legacy of Cain*. *Blind Love* was the third title for the story, originally known as *Iris* and as late as May 1889 as *The Lord Harry*.

The main item of interest in the current sale was the double portrait by Andrew Geddes (1783-1844) of Wilkie and Charles Collins aged respectively nine and five. It is a large oil painting, measuring with the frame about 4’ 6” by 3’ 6”, and shows the brothers wearing matching red tunics and white trousers against a landscape setting. The portrait was purchased by Pym at the Christie’s sale of Wilkie’s paintings in February 1890 and subsequently exhibited at the Victorian Exhibition of 1892. Black and white photographs of the picture are included in Catherine Peter’s *The King of Inventors* and in Andrew Gasson’s *Wilkie Collins –An Illustrated Guide*.

SOME ART NOTES

Another, rather more major sale was also held on 26 June at Thornton Manor, Wirral. This was the Sotheby's auction of the renowned Leverhulme Collection. The report of the sale results showed some astonishing prices but perhaps none more than Lot 405. This was a portrait of *Flossie* by Kate Perugini, Dickens's daughter and Wilkie's sister-in-law. The estimate of £8-12,000 was surpassed tenfold with a price of £121,200.

GUILDHALL ART GALLERY

Omitted from an earlier Newsletter was a note from Faith Clarke, the Society's Patron. She wrote "I was interested to learn from a recent Newsletter that two paintings of my great, great grandfather, William Collins, could now be seen at the newly opened Guildhall Art Library in the City of London. Previously the only time you could see one of them, *Borrowdale*, was as you climbed the stairs at the Mansion House at a Lord Mayor's reception. It is unlikely that two others, sold to the Prince Regent, one in July 1818 and the other in January 1826, will go on show since they are now in York House, St James's Place. The last time I saw one of these it was hanging behind the desk of Prince Charles' Private Secretary."

Paul Lewis now adds: There are six paintings by William Collins owned by the Guildhall Art Gallery in London. *A Nutting Party* (1831) and *Scene in Borrowdale, Cumberland* (1821) are on display. *The Sale of a Pet lamb* (1813), *Barmouth Sands* (1835), *Shrimp Boys at Cromer* (1816), and *The Kitten Deceived* (1817) are not. The display is rotated so that they should all be seen at some point. Images of all six can be found using the search facility on <http://collage.1thil.com>. And two more William Collins pictures have been put on display at the Henry Cole Wing of the Victoria and Albert Museum - altogether eight are shown on two floors, as well as a picture by Wilkie's brother Charles.

ART ON THE LINE

Two major works by Wilkie's father William Collins will go on display in London in October. The Courtauld Institute Gallery now occupies the rooms in Somerset House, Strand, that the Royal Academy occupied between 1780 and 1836. William was an Associate of the Academy from 1814 and a full member from 1820. His pictures were shown at its annual exhibition every year from 1807. The Courtauld is recreating those days in a major display called Art On The Line. The Fine Rooms on the top floor, including the Great Room where the annual exhibition took place, will be filled with 300 pictures first shown there

between 1780 and 1836. Two William Collins pictures will be included:— *The Reluctant Departure* (1815), normally on display in Birmingham City Art Gallery, and one of William's most famous works, *Rustic Civility*, oddly known now as *Coming Events*. That has been lent by the present Duke of Devonshire. The 6th Duke bought it from the Royal Academy exhibition in 1832 for 250 guineas. Also in the exhibition will be pictures by Wilkie's relative Andrew Geddes and his godfather David Wilkie after whom he was named. The exhibition will run from 18 October until 20 January and cost £8 to see. More information from the Courtauld 020 7848 2526 or on <https://courtauld.ac.uk/>

CREATIVE QUARTERS

There were two Collins connections in an exhibition at the London Museum on artists in London which closed on 15 July. The 1835 section featured Collins Farm, Northend, Hamsstead where William Collins stayed before Wilkie was born. Sadly, William's work was not represented. But his friend and neighbour John Linnell had several works included as did Augustus Egg, including a self-portrait as David Fallen in Bulwer Lytton's play *Not So Bad as We Seem*. This was the first play Wilkie acted in with Dickens in 1851. An image of this picture and details of the exhibition can still be found on the Museum's website www.museum-london.org.uk/MOLsite/menu.htm.

ALLY SLOPER

The Character of Ally Sloper was invented in 1867 by Charles Henry Ross, a writer of Penny Dreadfuls, but only achieved real fame after 1884 after Ross had sold the character to Gilbert Dalziel of the Dalziel family which published *Ally Sloper's Half Holiday* for some 40 years. Sloper was an amiable con-man whose full name was Alexander Sloper F.O.M (Friend of Man). Through Dalziel he established a reciprocal order for distinguished readers known as The Friends of Sloper, sending out certificates entitling the holder to style himself F. O. S.

The latest Catalogue 1309 from booksellers Maggs Brothers features an interesting item about Ally Sloper, "an album of letters of acknowledgement for the award of the F. O. S. title. The album contains the letters of gratitude that Dalziel received from a cross-section of late Victorian society between 1885 and 1887 who mostly entered into the humorous spirit of the award. Artists included Millais, Alma-Tadema, John Singer Sargent, Edward Poynter and Luke Fildes (illustrator of *The Law and the Lady* and *Miss or Mrs?*). Other areas well represented are the theatre and the music hall.

Wilkie Collins received his award of F. O. S. early in 1886. His letter of thanks is not included in the present album since it is located in the Stanford University Libraries. It was published with five others and an introduction by J. Terry Bender as *Six Letters of Wilkie Collins from the Charlotte Ashley Felton Memorial Library*, San Francisco 1957. The book, which can still be found for sale at a reasonable price on internet book sites, consists of facsimiles together with their transcriptions. The Collins letter is dated 23 February 1886 and was published in the *Half Holiday* for Saturday 6 March 1886. The following is the actual text:

To Ally Sloper, Friend of Man.

Illustrious Sir,

After more than thirty years experience in the use of his pen, the undersigned finds himself incapable of expressing the emotions of pride pleasure and gratitude with which he has received the Award of Merit, and the permission to add to his name F.O.S. In this difficulty he submits his heart to Sloper, and confidently leaves that true Philanthropist to draw his own conclusions. At the same time, the undersigned begs to remark that the Award of Merit (with the autograph that accompanies it) is superior to all other awards in this respect - that it is useful as well as ornamental. When the Social revolution passes this way, W.C. will appear in his balcony - will exhibit his diploma - and will save his windows. In the meantime visitors will be invited to view the autograph. Young people (provided with their copy books) will learn what a truly free and noble handwriting really is. And correspondents, guilty of that last and lowest form of human conceit which consists in writing illegible signatures, will be referred to the Sloper-signature, and will be instructed to follow the Sloper-example.

Illustrious Sir, Your grateful servant to command,

Wilkie Collins F.O.S.

WILKIE AT WAITROSE

Wilkie lived most of his life in central London's Marylebone area, the heart of which is the recently revitalised High Street. Part of this redevelopment is the newly constructed Waitrose food supermarket. The right hand wall inside the main entrance consists of tiled illustrations of the area surrounded by local residents from the past such as Gladstone, Turner, Faraday, Browning and Dickens. Wilkie is of course included and almost has a place of honour in being placed at the lower right corner and easily visible through the main window. It is certainly not the finest portrait you will ever see but there is at least a perceivable likeness whereas the Dickens is virtually unrecognisable. It is a nice touch to find Wilkie remembered in his own high street but a shame Waitrose don't sell a Scottish cheese called *Armadale*.

‘THE WOMAN IN WHITE TELEVISION SCREENING

About twenty-five members and guests attended the screening of the 1982 television version of *The Woman in White* on 29 April. The quality of this production was in a different league to the more recent attempt by the BBC. Although virtually the entire assembled company already knew the story and the complete five episodes lasted a little under five hours, everyone in the room remained spellbound to the end. A serialisation of this length had the advantage of being able to keep faithfully to the original story, develop some depth to the characters and retain a large part of Collins’s original dialogue.

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

The Woman in White currently features as part of the Open University course, the 19th Century Novel. Chapters 3 and 4 of the OU textbook *Identities* are by Valerie Pedlar. ‘*The Woman in White: sensationalism, secrets and spying*’ (pp. 48-68) has sections on ‘Sensationalism and Gothic’, ‘The terrors of the country-house’, ‘Serial-reading, secrets and spying’, ‘Narrative method: taking control in a determinist world’ and ‘Sensation and realism: reading for pleasure or reading for profit’. Chapter 4, ‘Drawing a blank: the construction of identity in *The Woman in White*’ (pp. 79-94), devotes itself to ‘*The Woman in White* and melodrama’, ‘Heroines: the significance of doubling in *The Woman in White*, ‘Images of confinement and control’, and ‘Identity and gender’. Both chapters contain a useful bibliography of works cited and further reading. There is also an accompanying Reader for the course and Chapter 8 of this is also devoted to *The Woman in White*.

THE LITERARY ENCYCLOPAEDIA

The Literary Encyclopaedia is a large co-operative venture evolving on the internet at www.literaryencyclopaedia.com. It currently claims about 4,500 literary authors from all over the world together with some 7,000 major works and 1,000 historical events or critical topics. Many of the entries are as yet incomplete but the index is nevertheless useful to see what works may have been written in a particular year or generate a list of writers according to various search criteria or key words. The eventual aim of the *Encyclopaedia* is to provide biographies and text profiles of 500 to 2,500 words for all important authors and works in the English language together with notes on philosophers and historical events which have had an impact on literary culture. The work is growing rapidly so that more than 300 scholars have already agreed to write between them some two million words. Scholars interested in contributing to the *Encyclopaedia* are invited to write to editors@literaryencyclopaedia.com.

BIBLIOMANIA

Bibliomania claims to be the world's leading digital library with over 2,000 texts free online. The 'read' section of the site presents a library of the "best in world literature, both in English and English translation." Each author has his or her own author page with a detailed biography and links to web resources. New books are being added every month. There is also a 'study' section to further the understanding of the texts with a series of study-guides. Further details are to be seen at www.bibliomania.com.

FAVOURITE TALES OF THE FANTASTICAL

Devotees of the paranormal may be interested in having a signed copy of Peter Underwood's *Favourite Tales of the Fantastical*. Peter Underwood is a prolific author and renowned ghost hunter. There is no actual story by Collins – perhaps in a future collection – but the book features rare tales of the weird and wonderful by several contemporaries, including Charles Dickens, Bram Stoker, Ambrose Bierce, Mrs Oliphant, Edith Nesbit, R. L. Stevenson and Sheridan Le Fanu. The collection is published at £9.99 (\$15) plus p & p £1.75 (\$5) by Derby Publishing, 16 School Road, Haslemere, Surrey, GU27 3RN (Tel. 01428 652320;email derbypublishing@aol.com).

THE DARK CLUE

Wilkie has featured in several pastiche novels set in the 19th century, but *The Dark Clue* by James Wilson is the first to feature characters from his work. Wilson imagines a sequel to *The Woman in White* in which Walter Hartright, aided by Marian Halcombe, research the life of the painter J. M. W. Turner. Laura plays a suitably minor role. The rest of the characters in the book are historical – such as Charles Eastlake, president of the Royal Academy. Wilson, either knowingly or otherwise, uses locations which would have been familiar to Collins such as Portland Place, close to where he was born, Avenue Road where he lived, and Church Row Hampstead, where he did not live but which some histories wrongly say he did. The book is set in 1854 – though Wilson does not tell us so, it is the only year in the 1850s which fits the calendar. The first half proceeds well enough, but the end degenerates, as Victorian pastiches so often do, into a sexual miasma into which Hartright plunges following the dark clues about Turner's life. Finally, Walter ends up with nervous exhaustion, Marian rescues him and they then return to Limmeridge to resume their *ménage à trois*, which Marian at least, admits is her desire. A mixed book, enjoyable in parts, ridiculous in others, but not the gripping thriller the blurb promises. James Wilson, *The Dark Clue*, Faber and Faber, London 2001 ISBN 0-571-20271-3.

PSYCHOANALYZING WILKIE

Wilkie Collins Society member Dr. Alexander Grinstein has produced a psychoanalytical study of Wilkie which will be published shortly. He writes "It

provides insight into the complexities of Collins's personality and delineates some of the underlying problems with which he struggled all his life." *Wilkie Collins: Man of Mystery and Imagination* is due out in October from International Universities Press, ISBN 0-823-66681-6 and can be pre-ordered from www.amazon.com.

OTHER BOOKS

A new edition of *The Moonstone* is due out from Random House in their Modern Library series on 27 September. It is edited by author Caleb Carr (*The Alienist, Killing Time*) with notes by detective fiction specialist Chris Willis ISBN 0-375-75785-6. Chris is also doing the notes for a new *The Woman in White*, (edited by Anne Perry who wrote the Victorian murder mystery *Ashworth Hall*), also from Random House and due out early next year. The BBC is promising a new audio cassette version of *The Woman in White* in November - ISBN 0-563-53518-0.

NEW E-TEXTS

James Rusk has added one more Wilkie book to his extensive collection of e-texts. *Basil* is now available and *Hide and Seek* and *The Dead Secret* are promised for early next year. You can see all his material on <http://free.freespeech.org/wcollins> though he will be moving it shortly because of the annoying pop-up adverts which freespeech now inserts. A full classified list of all the available Wilkie e-texts is held on www.wilkiecollins.com. A curious and not very accurate French site on Wilkie has appeared at <http://authologies.free.fr/collins.htm> and several pictures of Wilkie's grave can now be found on <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/1934/wilkie-collins>. A short history and a nice old image of St Marylebone church where Wilkie was christened on 10 February 1824 is at www.stmarylebone.org.uk.

'A TERRIBLY STRANGE BED' -THE FILM

A film version of Wilkie's story 'A Terribly Strange Bed' has turned up. Originally made in 1973 for the series *Orson Welles Great Mysteries*, the 24 minute colour film starred Edward Albert as Charles Faulkner with Colin Baker as his friend and Rupert Davies as the old soldier. Director Alan Cooke has closely followed the plot of the story, though he loses the tension of the slow realisation of the bed slowly moving down. The melodramatic introduction and conclusion by Welles is wonderfully well done. The film, which was shown on Anglia TV in the UK, is not included in any standard reference works and to that extent has been rediscovered. The story was originally published in *Household Words* in April 1852 and was subsequently included by Wilkie in *After Dark* 1856. Wilkie claimed it was based on a true story, or at least one told to him as true. It has remained an enduring favourite among his tales, turning up in many collections of horror or mystery stories.



THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2001

WCS JOURNAL 2001

Enclosed with this Newsletter is Volume 4 of the *Wilkie Collins Society Journal*, now produced in the more standard A5 format. As ever, we are grateful for the editorial skills of Graham Law and Lillian Nayder and to the authors of the various essays. This year's contributions include articles on suicide in Collins's crime fiction, two different aspects of *Lady Audley 's Secret* and a wide selection of book reviews.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Membership Secretary Paul Lewis has a new address. It is now 4 Ernest Gardens, Chiswick, London W4 3QU email paul@paullewis.co.uk tel 020 8747 0115.

THE SOCIETY OF AUTHORS

Following the notes in our last Newsletter about the hundredth anniversary of the death of Walter Besant, details have recently been unearthed of the dinner held on 25 July 1888 to 'American Men & Women' at the Criterion Restaurant, Piccadilly. Wilkie was a keen supporter of the Society and for a while one of its stewards. This was his last appearance at such a major function. Remembering the kindly and hospitable welcome during his US tour in 1873-1874 and the dinner in his honour at the Lotos Club of New York, he would certainly have been keen to attend. The toasts of the evening included (1) The Queen and the President of the United States, proposed by the Chairman (Professor James Bryce) with a response by Consul-General Waller; (2) Literature, proposed by the Chairman and replied to by J. Russell Lowell; (3) The Incorporated Society of Authors, proposed by Mr Brandler Matthews with a response by Walter Besant as

Chairman of the Executive Committee; (4) American Men and Women of Letters, with separate toasts for Science, Poets and Novelists.

The printed table plan shows that Collins was duly placed on the top table, seated between Mrs Frances Hodgson Burnett and Professor S. P. Langley. The total company consisted of nearly 150 diners and included Oscar Wilde, W. M. Rosetti, William Black, A. P. Watt, Edmund Yates, George Meredith, Bret Harte, Edmund Gosse and J. McNeal Whistler. In those days dinners were real dinners and the nine courses included Hors d'oeuvres; Consommé Rossini; Truite Saumoné; Poulet de Grain à la Stanley; Filet de Boeuf au Madère; Caneton roti; Charlotte Russe; Whitebait; and Fraise Crème Glacée with coffee.

Incidentally, membership of the Society of Authors is open to all with an interest in writing and publishing. The advice from their experts on contracts is particularly valuable and anyone with thoughts of producing a book or writing for periodicals, radio or television will find the relatively modest cost of membership extremely worthwhile.

THE ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES

The WCS continues to be affiliated to the Alliance of Literary Societies which has provided advance details of next year's Conference weekend and AGM on Saturday 27 and Sunday 28 April. The annual meeting is sponsored each year by a different society and 2001 will be arranged by the Arnold Bennett Society which is celebrating the centenary of the publication of *Anna of the Five Towns*. Events will take place in and around Burslem, Lancashire with a varied programme of talks, film screenings, walks and visits to local potteries. Further details at this stage from ALS secretary, Rosemary Culley, at 22 Belmont Grove, Havant, Hampshire PO9 3PU (023 9247 5855; rosemary@sndc.demon.co.uk).

WILKIE IN THE PRESS

The Times on 30 November carried a piece comparing today's TV soaps with the sensation fiction of Dickens, Gaskell and Wilkie Collins: "Those artists, like today's soap scriptwriters, wrote primarily to entertain but also sometimes to campaign." It nevertheless reminded us of the now discredited Swinburne couplet:

"What brought good Wilkie's genius nigh perdition?
Some demon whispered – 'Wilkie! Have a mission'"

Tim Adams in *The Observer* (11 November 2001) reviewing the TV version of *The Way We Live Now* claims that Trollope was a major writer whereas Wilkie Collins wrote 'minor works'. *The Washington Post* (17/6/01) is similarly disrespectful using the phrase "the 'lesser Dickens', Wilkie Collins."

The *Bristol Evening Post* recalled the 150th anniversary of the performance on 12 November 1851 of Bulwer Lytton's play *Not So Bad as We Seem* to 1,400 people at the Victoria Rooms, Clifton. Wilkie Collins played a small part in the play. They stayed at the Bath Hotel, Clifton. The play had first been put on earlier in the year and it was then that Wilkie met Dickens for the first time. The performances raised money for the Guild of Literature and Art, a charity which helped writers and artists fallen on hard times.

The *Western Mail* (28/9/01) reveals that Manorbier Castle near Tenby was one of the locations used in 1997 for what it calls the "little-seen film" of *Basil*.

Jonathan Myerson (*Independent* 24/9/01) dismisses recent scholarship to say that Wilkie Collins did not launch the detective story. His books, he says, are more whydunits than whodunits. He gives the credit to Edgar Allan Poe and then Conan Doyle, who made the detective story respectable.

El Pais (22/9/01) gave a long biographical account with a photograph to mark the first publication in Spanish of *la Reina del Mal* (*The Evil Genius*) pointing out it was a 'minor work' though 'carried off beautifully'. Six weeks earlier (4/8/01) it carried a similarly long review of *Sin Nombre* (*No Name*).

The usual crop of book reviews refer to Wilkie Collins, usually comparing the new book, favourably or not, with his work. The reviewer Helen Brown (*The Daily Telegraph* 4/8/01) confesses that "the first writer to have me suffocating with suspense was Wilkie Collins." And she claims the American writer Glen David Gold is "his match".

Author Patrick Gale told the *Daily Mail* (3/8/01) that he was reading *Armada* "a wonderful baleful thriller involving murder, impersonation, dreams, fate, true love, blood brotherhood and one of the wickedest women ever created" ...Can't think why no one has filmed it yet." Here here! And another writer, Adam Thorpe, puts *No Name* as his top novel "disturbing, thrillingly plotted, way ahead of its time yet bizarrely overlooked."

Finally, a piece in the advertising periodical *Campaign* records that the smart bank Coutts had appointed its first advertising agency in 300 years of existence, mentioning its "client list to die for" including Dickens, Chopin, Byron, and Wilkie Collins.

NOT SO BAD AS WE SEEM

Returning to *Not so Bad as We Seem*, there are two items with particular Collins interest in the latest Jarndyce Catalogue CXLV. This is a superb production with over 1800 items devoted to Charles Dickens. Item 1167 (price £500) is an admission ticket to the performance of *Not so Bad as We Seem* at the Lecture Hall, Derby on Wednesday 25 August 1852. The ticket is quite large at 17 x 21.5 cm and is the same design as that used for the original London production. It was designed by Royal Academy artist E. M. Ward whose secret wedding in 1848 had been masterminded by Wilkie and formed the basis of his 1871 novella, *Miss or Mrs?*. Item 1193 in the catalogue relates to the same performance and is the single column playbill printed in red and black (price £850). (Jarndyce at 020 7631 4220)

THE DICKENSIAN

The Jarndyce catalogue lists numerous editions of *The Dickensian* some of which may well contain references to Collins. The latest issue of the journal, however, features a major article by WCS member Carolyn Oulton on ‘A Vindication of Religion: Wilkie Collins, Charles Dickens and *The Frozen Deep*’ (Summer 2001, no. 454, vol. 97 part 2, pp. 154-158). Carolyn argues her religious theme against the background of the play where the inspiration of the main characters, Richard Wardour and Frank Aldersley, “is shown to be specifically religious, though mediated through the channel of human support” and “...evil which he himself embodies, is presented by Wardour in terms of a Christian miracle.” For Collins, “the influence of religion is felt through a personal response to temptation, whereas Dickens sees it operating as a unifying force among a group holding similar ‘manly’ values.”

SOME OTHER COLLINS ANNIVERSARIES IN DECEMBER

150 years: 17 December 1851 is the 150th anniversary of the publication of *Mr Wray’s Cash-Box* by Richard Bentley. This rather sentimental story is currently scheduled as a Christmas reading by the Wilkie Collins List (wilkiecollins@yahoogroups.com).

As a totally irrelevant aside, 17 December 1911 was the date on which Captain Scott and his four companions left the South Pole to begin their doomed return journey northwards. A copy of *The Illustrated London News* can still be seen on Scott’s table in the hut at Cape Evans on the Ross Sea.

140 years: Collins contributes ‘Picking up Waifs at Sea’ as Chapter 4 of Tom Tiddler’s Ground in the Xmas number of *All The Year Round*. This was later republished as ‘The Fatal Cradle’ and for today’s diet conscious

times begins with the immortal line ‘My weight has been the grand misfortune of my life.’

130 years: *Miss or Mrs?* is published in *The Graphic* on 25 December 1871.

120 years: Collins makes a formal agreement on 10 December 1881 with A. P. Watt, the first literary agent.

THE LETTERS OF WILKIE COLLINS

The Public Face of Wilkie Collins will collect together chronologically all the known letters of Wilkie Collins. Those already published in *The Letters of Wilkie Collins* (Baker and Clarke, Macmillan 1999) will be listed but without the text. All the others will be published in full with notes and introductory essays relating Collins’s life to his correspondence. The editors will be Professor William Baker, Andrew Gasson, Professor Graham Law, and Paul Lewis. The 3 volume book will be published by Pickering and Chatto in March 2005 price £295.

Many new letters have already come to light. Anyone with information to share about Wilkie Collins’s letters should contact Paul Lewis at the Wilkie Collins Society.

SOME RECENTLY PUBLISHED BOOKS

The Haunted Looking Glass is a selection of ghost stories, including Collins’s ‘The Dream Woman’, chosen and illustrated by the artist Edward Gorey (1925-2000). This classic book has been reprinted by the New York Review of Books (ISBN 0-940322-68-4) and costs \$12.95.

Ian Cunningham’s *A Reader’s Guide to Writers’ London* (Prion 2001) is a well researched and wonderfully illustrated guide to the districts and buildings of London with literary connections. Wilkie Collins is well represented with a two page biography which exaggerates his life. There is a fine Sarony picture, a paragraph on the location of the crossroads where Walter Hartright meets Anne Catherick in *The Woman in White* and an interesting mention of a restaurant in Greenwich where Dickens and Collins ate dinner to celebrate completing another literary work. (ISBN 1-85375-425-0 price £20).

Inventing the Victorians by Matthew Sweet (Faber and Faber, 2001, £16.99 ISBN 0-571-20658-1) is an iconoclastic look at the Victorian era. He takes the strait-laced, sexually moral, sober, hardworking image and turns it on its

head – showing the Victorians were not like that at all and not very different from our own times. He also shows us what we owe the Victorians who “invented the theme park, the shopping mall, the movies, the amusement arcade, the roller-coaster, the crime novel and the sensational newspaper story.” He might have added instant global communication, the motor car, and photography. Wilkie Collins gets 13 references in the text the best referring to the new, brashly decorated house of the Sherwins in *Basil* and the longest describing his friendship with the 12 year old Nannie Wynne. Even Wilkie’s brother Charles gets a mention with an approving quotation from his work. A fascinating book which was summarized by Sweet – including references to Wilkie Collins – in a long piece in *The Independent on Sunday* magazine on 21 October.

WOMAN IN WHITE

An excellent production of *The Woman in White* on BBC Radio 4 is now also available on cassette. The dramatisation by Martin Wade shows how a great book can be made to come to life if you follow three simple rules - keep the story, keep the characters, and keep the language. It should make the recent TV dramatisers of Collins – who changed the plot, threw out almost all the language, and barely kept the characters – thoroughly ashamed. Broadcast in four one hour episodes each Sunday from 11 November 2001 it starred Toby Stevens as Walter Hartright and Juliet Aubrey as Marian Halcombe. All the acting was excellent and evoked not only the sense of Victorian England but the claustrophobia and fear of Collins’s seminal sensation novel. Reviews were universally good in *The Times*, *The Independent*, and *The Stage*, and this by Ken Garner in the *Express on Sunday*: “Martyn Wade’s dramatisation preserves Wilkie Collins’s series of first-person narratives, particularly unsettling on radio where in a scary landscape we need to cling to a trustworthy voice. Cherry Cookson’s direction and Elizabeth Parker’s creepy music complete the shameless, melodramatic effect.” The cassette is published by BBC Worldwide, price £9.99.

CHARLES COLLINS’S GRAVE

Wilkie’s brother Charles was buried in Brompton Cemetery, Old Brompton Road, London SW5. The only known reference to his grave is in the chapter on his life by S. M. Ellis in his book *Wilkie Collins, Le Fanu and others* (London 1931), where he writes (p.73) “His grave is covered by a flat granite slab on which it is just possible to decipher his name and the dates of his birth and death. There is no text or inscription to record who he was or what he did: inadequate recognition in death as in life.”

Ellis was right about the text of the inscription, which simply reads Charles Allston Collins. Born 28th January 1828. Died 9th April 1873. But the text and the granite slab are clean and clear. You can find it in Section E. From the North-east corner go south down the broad path, past two cedars on the right, and then about nine plots before the third cedar, go right (west) to the third row in. You don't need a compass – the cemetery has maps on posts with the directions marked.

A NEW WILKIE PIECE

A previously unrecognized short piece of writing by Wilkie Collins has recently been identified. We now know he wrote the obituary of his father William Collins RA published in the *Art-Union Journal* of April 1847 (p137). That makes it the second earliest of his known published works, the first being 'The Last Stage Coachman' published in *The Illuminated Magazine* in August 1843.

WILLIAM COLLINS

Art on the Line - previewed in the last newsletter - is a largely successful attempt to recreate a crowded, floor-to-ceiling Royal Academy annual exhibition of the late 18th to early 19th century. The Courtauld Institute Gallery in Somerset House, Strand, London now owns the space which the RA occupied from 1780-1836. William Collins was a student there and subsequently a member. He exhibited almost every year from 1807 until his death and two of his works are on show – *The Reluctant Departure* (1815) (currently owned by Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery) and *Rustic Civility* (1832). This latter picture is on loan from the Chatsworth Estate. The exhibition runs until 20 January 2002.

The Reluctant Departure is particularly interesting. The painting shows a young man departing for the Napoleonic Wars leaving behind his wife and baby. Collins's description on p. 69 of vol. I of *Memoirs of the Life of William Collins, Esq., R.A.* begins: "In "The Reluctant Departure," the incident of a mother taking leave of her child as it lies in the nurse's arms, ere she descends to a boat in the foreground, which a fisherman and his boy are preparing to push off from the shore, is treated with singular boldness and simplicity of effect." In April 1885, Wilkie presented a copy of his biography to A. P. Watt to which he has appended the following note: "'The Reluctant Departure.'" (1815). The Descriptions of pictures Exhibited before 1823, are taken from my mother's recollections of them on the Royal

Academy walls. In this case, I have evidently mistaken what she told me - and perhaps her memory may also have been a little at fault. On, and after 1823, my mother spoke (and I wrote) of what she had seen in progress in my father's Studio. Her memory - in these cases (tested by old friends of my father who lived to read my Life of him) was declared to be wonderful. 27 Nov^r 1884 W.C."

A smaller copy of *Rustic Civility* (1834) painted for the collector John Sheepshanks can now be seen in the newly opened British Galleries at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Other works by William Collins are still on show in the museum's Henry Cole Wing. The V&A is now free of charge.

Three more William Collins pictures are getting an airing at the Guildhall Art Gallery in the City of London. *Barmouth Sands* (1835), *Shrimp Boys at Cromer* (1816), and *The Kitten Deceived* (1817) are now on display. The Guildhall owns six Collins pictures and rotates the collection from time to time. Not very good images of them can be found through <http://collage.nhil.com>.

Another major William Collins painting surfaced briefly at Christie's saleroom. *Capstern at Work, Drawing up Fishing Boats* was originally shown at the Royal Academy in 1820. William records that he took seven weeks to paint it, finishing on 8 February. It was sold to Sir T. F. Heathcote for 150 guineas - the original purchaser of two pictures now at The Guildhall - *The Kitten Deceived* and *Shrimp Boys at Cromer*. In 1890 its price had risen to £840, again at Christies. Its estimated price on 30 November 2001 was £15,000-£20,000 but it failed to find a buyer.

BOOKFINDERS

A new edition of the *Register for British Bookfinders* has now been published in a fully revised and enlarged edition. It is in A5 format and lists county by county over 100 businesses offering booksearch services with details of Names, Addresses, Telephone and Fax numbers, e-mail and internet information. It covers the whole of the UK and the price remains the same as the original 1998 edition at £3.99 post free. The Register is available from C. Ambrose Winder, Toronto House, 11 Mayfield Grove, Harrogate, N. Yorkshire HG1 5HD (Tel/fax 01423 566239).

PL and APG



THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

PATRON Faith Clarke

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NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2002

‘VICTIMS OF CIRCUMSTANCES - PART THREE REDISCOVERED’

Some exciting news from Graham Law reveals a previously unknown short story by Wilkie Collins

‘In November 1884 the publishers of a popular weekly family paper, *The Youth’s Companion* of Boston, Massachusetts, approached Wilkie Collins to write two or three short sketches for the paper, illustrating miscarriages of justice due to the misuse of circumstantial evidence. By a curious coincidence, the Boston firm went by the name of Perry Mason and Company. Up to now Collins scholars have understood that only two stories, ‘A Sad Death and Brave Life’ and ‘Farmer Fairweather’, were ever written and published. But work by Graham Law on the correspondence between Collins and the literary agent A. P. Watt has revealed that, in early June 1886, Collins in fact wrote a third story in the series. This eventually appeared in the Boston paper in the spring of 1887 under the title ‘The Hidden Cash’. After a century and a quarter, that story will be reprinted for the first time as a supplement to the Summer Newsletter of the Wilkie Collins Society, together with an essay by Graham Law discussing how ‘The Hidden Cash’ was lost and found, and the light it sheds on the mysterious business of late Victorian publishing.’

The first two pieces were republished by the WCS in November 1992 but are now out of print. They can, however, still be found in *Wilkie Collins: The Complete Shorter Fiction*, edited by Julian Thompson and published by Robinson Publishing in 1995.

This is a useful place to make two corrections to the entry in Andrew Gasson's *Wilkie Collins: An Illustrated Guide*. The second sketch, 'Farmer Fairweather' in fact appeared in *The Youth's Companion* on 16 December 1886 (not 19 August), and in *The Boy's Own Paper* on 26 February 1887 (not 26 September).

UNEQUAL PARTNERS

Recently published by Cornell University Press is Lillian Nayder's *Unequal Partners: Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins, and Victorian Authorship* (ISBN 080 I 439256, cloth, £23.50).

Lillian Nayder's books annoys, informs, delights, and amazes. As in her *Wilkie Collins* (Twayne 1997) she gives a higher purpose to what seem like straightforward writings. In this book she analyses the literary collaborations of Collins and Dickens and sees them as playing out their relationship in the nine works they wrote together and even in the play where they first met. In *Not So Bad As We Seem* Dickens and Collins are master/servant. They progress to captain/mate (*Wreck of the Golden Mary*), fellow officers (*The Frozen Deep*) and then gentlemen of different but equal tastes (*The Lazy Tour*). They use their collaborations to pursue their own different social agendas - Collins his own continuing concern with class and gender inequities, and with imperial wrongdoing: Dickens a whole range of things including exonerating arctic explorers of cannibalism in the face of starvation in *The Frozen Deep*. In the most detailed chapter Nayder analyses variants of that story and the back and forth interplay of the two writers trying to make the work say what each wanted. It was a battle that Collins only won by republishing it as he wanted four years after Dickens had died. Meanwhile, she sees *Edwin Drood* not as a novel influenced by Collins but as a response to *The Moonstone*, the final non-collaboration where Dickens sets out his own views in a novel intended to be better but left unfinished at his death.

Nayder collates numerous diverse and in many cases new sources to provide a compelling narrative which challenges the view that Dickens was a benign genius helping young writers along. Her conclusion is that Dickens finally showed his mastery over Collins by imitating him.

THE LETTERS OF CHARLES DICKENS

Oxford University Press have announced the publication of *The Letters of Charles Dickens - Volume Twelve, 1868-1870*, edited by Graham Storey, Margaret Brown and Kathleen Tillotson (ISBN 0-19-924596-7, £80 hardback).

This concluding volume covers the final two and a half years of Dickens's life and also contains items of new information which came to light too late for earlier volumes. It includes a cumulative index of correspondents for all twelve volumes; an index of names and places; addenda and corrigenda for vols. I to XI; and numerous other details of Dickens's public readings, appeals and publishing agreements.

HARRIET COLLINS'S DIARY

Angela Richardson, a member of the Wilkie Collins Society and the moderator of the Wilkie Collins e-mail list, is currently transcribing the manuscript journal of Harriet Collins. In September 1836 the Collins family set off for Italy and Harriet kept a daily journal for the first fifteen months of their visit. It contains fascinating references to the people they met along the way (including Wordsworth) and tiny details of their domestic life. Angela will be giving a talk on her work at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London - which holds the diary - on Monday 7th October at 1pm and will be trying to interest a publisher into making this hidden work available to all.

WILKIE'S LIBRARY RECONSTRUCTED

A new work by professor William Baker, due out in April 2002, will reconstruct the books in Wilkie's own library. Using sale catalogues and other unpublished material, Baker examines the books Collins owned, analyses their significance, and discusses how they and his pictures were dispersed after his death. *Wilkie Collins's Library: A Reconstruction*. Greenwood Publishing, 2002 ISBN 0313313946 price \$74.95.

WILLIAM TINSLEY

Published at the end of last year was *William Tinsley (1831-1902): Speculative Publisher* by Peter Newbolt (Ashgate Publishing, Gower House, Croft Road, Aldershot, Hants GU11 3HR; and in the United States 131 Main Street, Burlington, Vermont 05401-5600; £59.95 with a 15% discount if ordered online at www.ashgate.com; ISBN 0754602915).

The book describes Tinsley's rural upbringing, his early days in London buying and selling books as a bookseller's runner and the setting up of his publishing business with his brother Edward in 1854. There is also a chapter on the Circulating Libraries and the three-decker system of publishing for Victorian

novels. Tinsley's first three-decker was published in 1859 followed by Sala's *The Seven Sons of Mammon* in 1861.

These were followed by the incredibly successful *Lady Audley's Secret* in 1862 and Collins's *The Moonstone* in 1868. Wilkie is discussed in Chapter thirteen, 'Harrison Ainsworth and Wilkie Collins'. There are brief biographical and publishing details but most of the Collins section repeats the material found in Tinsley's own memoirs, *Random Recollections of an Old Publisher* (1900) and Edmund Downey's *Twenty Years Ago* (1905). These give different versions of the disagreement between Wilkie and Tinsley over the publishing of a second edition of *The Moonstone*.

The book continues with publishing details of the numerous other Tinsley authors. There is a chronology of the history of the firm and a detailed check-list of all books published by Tinsley Brothers. There are eight illustrations and a comprehensive index. Overall a sympathetic account and a useful insight for those with an interest in nineteenth century publishing

NO THOROUGHFARE

A note in the Winter 2001 issue of *The Dickensian* (No. 455, Vol. 97, Part 3) records that the Christchurch (New Zealand) branch of the Dickens Fellowship, finding that there was no other text available for study by its members, has recently published an edition of *No Thoroughfare* (ISBN 09582249 0 0). There is a short introduction and a commentary on editorial procedures. Copies of this and their other Dickens publications may be obtained from The Christchurch Dickens Fellowship, PO Box 21-392, Otautahi, New Zealand 8030 (price NZ \$20 including postage).

WORDSWORTH EDITIONS

Wordsworth continue to publish their low cost editions (in the £1 to £1.50 range) with two Collins titles. *The Woman in White* features in their Top 50 Classic Best-Sellers. It is complete and unabridged but has only a brief introduction. *The Moonstone*, however, is listed as having both introduction and notes. The full list is available from Wordsworth Editions, Cumberland House, Crib Street, Ware, Hertfordshire SG12 9ET (01920 465167) enquiries@wordsworth-editions.com).

OTHER NEW EDITIONS

A new edition of *The Woman in White* edited by Anne Perry with notes by Chris Willis was published by Modern Library in January (ISBN 0375759069) price £5.99. Another edition of this popular book is promised by Penguin in June. Signet has published a new edition of *The Moonstone* with an introduction by Frederick Karl (\$6.95 ISBN 0451528298). Ulverscroft, the large print publisher, has added *The Evil Genius* (ISBN 0708993281 £17.99) to its Collins collection. It published *The Black Robe* last January and has large print and audio versions of *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone*; see www.ulverscroft.co.uk. A new kind of publisher, www.indypublish.com, claims to have available a number of out of print Collins works including *After Dark* and *Antonina*. They are available hardback or paperbound, though it is not clear how these are published or by whom. All these titles can be obtained online through www.amazon.co.uk or www.amazon.com

The BBC has published Peter Ackroyd's *The Mystery of Charles Dickens* performed by Simon Callow on two cassettes lasting 1 hour 40 minutes (ISBN 0563536500 price £9.99).

BOOKS ON LONDON

Wilkie continues to be included in books on London. The latest edition of Macmillan's *The London Encyclopaedia*, edited by Ben Weinreb and Christopher Hibbert, has several entries under Collins in the 'people index'. It gets most facts right, mentioning Gloucester Place and Hanover Terrace as residences. Under Clarence Terrace in Regent's Park, however, the authors suggest that Wilkie Collins 'was living at No. 2 in 1859, the year in which he launched *All the Year Round*': Dickens seems to have been relegated to the role of co-editor. But we do learn that the same house was later occupied by Louis Macneice from 1954-1963. The book also perpetuates the myth that Wilkie lived for a while in Church Row, Hampstead. It also notes that he used to visit the well known Hampstead coaching inn, Jack Straw's Castle and made occasional trips to the Trafalgar Tavern in Greenwich.

John Russell's *London* (Thames and Hudson) has a nice quote in the chapter on 'The Spirit of the Place': 'The Novelist Wilkie Collins got that right once and for all when he wrote in his *Basil* in 1852 that the London omnibus was "a perambulatory exhibition-room of the eccentricities of human nature."' Both Wilkie and Charles Collins are mentioned in the section on Regent's Park but if all is to be believed there was a third brother called William!!! – also a 'very

good painter'. Otherwise it is a very nice publication with excellent colour illustrations.

FINGERSMITH

Fingersmith is the third novel by prize-winning author Sarah Waters. It has been widely compared in the press to a Wilkie Collins novel and for once this praise is warranted. Sarah writes beautifully, tells her tale with mastery, unfolds her mystery with eye-popping skill, and leads you by the hand round the last corner to her conclusion.

Set in the 1860s, there is something of the plot of *The Woman in White* – a conspiracy to marry an heiress and steal her fortune, a lonely country house, an eccentric uncle more concerned with his books than with people, a handsome young visiting artist who mounts his prints, and plans to hide a woman by locking her up in an asylum.

There are also tantalizing references to Wilkie's life including a reference to the artist George Morland – Wilkie's father's tutor: 'praise Morland over Rowlandson - he thinks Rowlandson a hack.' One of the doctors committing people to the asylum is named Graves – perhaps after Wilkie's lover Caroline Graves whose story was claimed to be the origin of *The Woman in White*.

Although this book seems designed to echo Collins, it is in fact a hellish antithesis of him. No-one is what he or she seems, the plot turns darker with each page, and the mystery, once finally revealed, is as appalling as it is Collinsian. Ultimately, though, like any good Victorian sensation novel, it is a love story and at the end... but enough has been said about the plot already. It may not have the complexity or the subtlety of *The Woman in White*, nor indeed of many other Collins novels, but it deals with the Victorian period in a contemporary and interesting way and has those unguessable heartstopping moments that sensation fiction needs. If you love Wilkie, *Fingersmith* will not disappoint (Virago Press 2002 ISBN 1860498825 £12.99).

THE RAG & BONE SHOP

The Rag and Bone Shop by Jeff Rackham purports to be 'a novel of Charles Dickens's very real, but little known, excursion outside the bounds of conventional Victorian morality; an engrossing tale that illuminates the warring demands of public propriety and private libertinism.' Part love story, part morality tale', the book tells the story of Dickens's affair with Ellen Ternan as

narrated by Wilkie Collins, Georgina Hogarth and the actress herself. Immorality tale would probably be a better description with most of the salacious parts reserved for Wilkie. Much of his supposed private life is revealed with a curious mixture of biographical fact and preposterous invention. Caroline shares Wilkie's opium and Martha is willingly seduced in Great Yarmouth and they all conspire to avoid scandal with a simple-minded Joseph Clow to dispose of Dickens's and Ellen's illegitimate child. The author is apparently another professor of English but obviously in the William Palmer school of absurd fiction. For those that must, the book is published by Zoland, 384 Huron Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138; www.zolandbooks.com. (ISBN 1581951051 available at \$25 through www.amazon.com where you can read reviews and download a sample chapter - allegedly by Wilkie Collins.)

WILKIE'S ART

Wilkie was encouraged to draw and paint by his father, the artist William Collins RA, and one of his pictures was hung in the Royal Academy's annual exhibition in 1849. There is no evidence, however, that he ever thought of art professionally. Three of his drawings can be found in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. One of these was reproduced by Peters in her biography (*The King of Inventors* 1991, pl.6). But the three are otherwise unrecorded. All date from the time when he signed himself W.W. or W. Wilkie Collins. One is of a church in Granada, another a country scene with a bridge and a house, the third a tower by a river clearly in Europe and dated April 1841. A fourth picture, ascribed by Pierpont Morgan to Wilkie but unsigned, is of 21 characters from Dickens. Subject to copyright permission images of these pictures will shortly be available on www.wilkiecollins.com.

JOHN ELLIOTSON

An advertisement for *Royal Society of Medicine: Portraits, Paintings and Sculptures* by Alex Sakula features a portrait of John Elliotson, MD, FRCP (1791-1868). The accompanying text relates that 'he was born in Southwark, the son of a wealthy druggist. He was educated at Edinburgh University and Jesus College, Cambridge and qualified in medicine in 1816. Despite opposition, he was, in 1817 appointed to the staff of St Thomas's Hospital as physician and in 1831 to the Chair of Medicine at University College London. He carried out pioneer studies in allergy and was famed as a clinical teacher. He was elected FRCP in 1822. In 1837, he became deeply interested in the cults of mesmerism

and phrenology, which invoked considerable criticism by the medical establishment: his reputation suffered, and he was forced in 1838 to resign from his Chair at University College.’ The book is available from the Library of the Royal Society of Medicine in Wigmore Street, London.

Collins was well acquainted with Elliotson who in 1863 tried, unsuccessfully, to use hypnotism as a substitute for laudanum to control the pain from Wilkie’s rheumatic gout. The interest in mesmerism was shared by Collins, Dickens and Chauncy Hare Townshend. Ezra Jennings in *The Moonstone* calls Elliotson ‘one of the greatest of English physiologists’ and uses a case history in his *Human Physiology* as the inspiration for the attempt to find the missing diamond by administering a second dose of opium to Franklin Blake. Elliotson writes on page 646 that ‘The curious occasional circumstance of our not remembering the points of a dream till dreaming of the same thing again, has been strikingly noted in the sleep-waking.’(sic). He then describes the case of ‘an Irish porter to a warehouse, who forgot, when sober, what he had done when drunk: but being drunk, again recollected the transactions of his former state of intoxication. On one occasion, being drunk, he had lost a parcel of some value, and in his sober moments could give no account of it. Next time he was intoxicated, he recollected that he had left the parcel at a certain house, and there being no address on it, it had remained there safely, and was got on calling for it.’

We also learn from the latest issue of *Mr Dick’s Kite* (Alan Watt’s regular Newsletter to members of the Dickens Fellowship) that Elliotson was amongst the first of the medical profession to discontinue the practice of attending patients in evening dress which would have included knee-breeches and black silk stockings.

KENSAL GREEN CEMETERY

The February edition of *The Magazine of The Friends of Kensal Green Cemetery* announces that their Open Day will this year take place on Saturday 13 July. This is always an interesting excursion with several annual events and attractions. These usually take place close to where Wilkie’s Grave is located and the day provides an excellent opportunity to visit his last resting place (Grave number/Square/Row 31754/141/1). The FOKGC shop will also have on sale *The Origins and Development The General Cemetery of All Souls, Kensal Green, London, 1824-2001* edited by James Stevens Curl. This is the definitive work on Kensal Green and contains a wide range of essays by experts on different aspects of the cemetery (Phillimore & Co). There are also thematic

maps of Kensal Green, two of which may be of particular interest to WCS members: 'The Dickens Connection' and 'Royal Academicians'.

WILKIE IN THE PAPERS

The last four months have produced more references to Wilkie in the press than ever. Many are book reviews using his name as the standard by which modern crime or thrillers are judged (and every review of *Fingersmith* refers to Wilkie) but others are more substantial.

The Victorian specialist and writer John Sutherland wrote a thoughtful piece in *New Statesman* (17/12/01) comparing Victorian and Blairite Britain through the publishing history of Trollope. He asserted that Trollope's star was waning and that the new favourite is Wilkie Collins'.

A silly piece (20/12/01) about Collinses in *The Daily Telegraph* pretended that Joan had married Wilkie and 'his best known work *The Woman in Nothing*' was based on this liaison.

A review of *An Athletics Compendium: An Annotated Guide to UK Literature of Track and Field* (British Library £30) is the unlikely place for a short but good review of *Man and Wife* 'a vivid picture of a Victorian athletics meeting.' (*The Times* 21/12/01)

Wilkie's birthday on January 8th was remembered in *The Times* and *The Birmingham Post*.

Le Monde on 11 January reviewed a new edition of *Basil* in French saying 'all the impulses of the Victorian novel are there, so gripping you cannot stop reading.'

Jack Adrian Bradnum is not a name normally associated with Wilkie Collins but his obituary (*The Independent* 18/1/02) reminds us that he was a writer of radio dramatisations who brought us 'an excellent *Dead Secret* in six hour long episodes.' He also wrote *A Terribly Strange Man* a portrait of Wilkie in 1868, broadcast on Radio 4 in 1971. Bradnum died on 25 December 2001 aged 81.

A bizarre piece in *The Washington Post* (23/1/02) for America's National Pie Day (promoted by the American Pie Council) reminds us that Gooseberry, while tracking down Godfrey Ablewhite in *The Moonstone*, goes to an eating house. 'He had a shilling in his pocket; and he dined sumptuously, he tells me, on a

black-pudding, an eel-pie, and a bottle of ginger-beer. What can a boy not digest?’

Steven Johnson writing in the *Scotsman* (31/1/02) about the ‘manor house whodunit’, looked at the context of the new film *Gosford Park* and then says ‘Do away with the Jamesian psychological intricacies ... borrow the inspector from Wilkie Collins ... and *voilà*, you have your Agatha Christie drawing-room mystery.’

A review of the BBC version of Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment* by arts critic and broadcaster Mark Lawson claims that ‘Dostoevsky is often credited with creating the genre of psychological crime-writing - with his English sidekick Wilkie Collins whose *Moonstone* came out two years later.’

An essay in *The Guardian* (23/2/02) on marketing and genres of modern and Victorian literature by John Mullan of University College, London says of sensation fiction ‘The most successful practitioners were Charles Reade and Mary Elizabeth Braddon, though Wilkie Collins made the genre into something like literature.’

A review of *The Last Opium Den* by Nick Tosches lists works created under the influence of that drug and ‘One might also mention the later work of Wilkie Collins, who became addicted to the drug in the form of laudanum (tincture of opium); the marked falloff in quality of his later fiction may well be attributable to the drug’s ravages.’

Finally Peter Conrad writes in *The Observer* (3/3/02) about sleepwalking in the context of a play *The Prince of Homburg* and an opera *La Somnambula* both on in London in March, to remember that ‘the plots of Charles Brockendon Brown’s *Edgar Huntly* (1799) and Wilkie Collins’s Victorian whodunit *The Moonstone* depends on sleepwalkers who betray themselves during their nocturnal digression.’

E-TEXTS

More of Wilkie’s work is available on e-text, mainly through James Rusk’s website at www.blackmask.com/jrusk/wcollins. He has added *Hide and Seek* Next will come *The Fallen Leaves* followed by *Heart and Science* and *Blind Love*. That will complete Wilkie’s novels apart from *Ioláni* where there may copyright problems. He has also recently added some plot summaries to the site,

taken from *Author's Digest* 1908. A complete list of known Wilkie e-texts can be found at www.wilkiecollins.com menu option 5.

James Rusk has also made available the text of *Not So Bad As We Seem*, the play by Bulwer Lytton in which Wilkie acted in 1851. Dickens offered him the part of Smart the Butler which Wilkie accepted leading to their meeting and lifelong friendship. The play is at jrusk.tripod.com/bulwer/bad.html

WEB NEWS

A new section has been added to Hans Noordam's website which contains biographies of Wilkie and his brother Charles together with links to some of their contemporaries. Many contain links to Hans's pictures of their graves, including a nice picture of Wilkie's grave in Kensal Green Cemetery. There is also a picture of Ada Cavendish's grave in the same cemetery – she acted in some of Wilkie's plays. The address is www.androom.com then select "index" under the Biographies Section.

CHRISTIE'S NEW YORK

The Christie's New York sale (1104) on 17 April is Part 1 of 'The Detective Fiction Library of Richard M. Lackritz, M.D.' Apart from the original typescript manuscript of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, the collection features several Collins first editions, including *The Woman in White*, *The Moonstone*, *No Name* and *The Queen of Hearts*. The catalogue is available from Christie's and details of the various lots can be viewed on their website.

DICKENS FELLOWSHIP – CENTENARY CONFERENCE

The Centenary Conference of the Dickens Fellowship is being held in London from 18-25 July at University College. One of the themes of the meeting is 'London' and the opening session will introduce participants to London as Dickens - and no doubt Collins - knew it. Further papers will explore the way the city has changed since the nineteenth century. There will then be a showing of the 1920 silent version of *Bleak House* at the National Film Theatre. Apart from the numerous lectures, other events include visits to museums, houses with literary and artistic connections, Highgate Cemetery and a tour of the British Library. Further information from The Dickens Fellowship, 48 Doughty Street, London WC1N 2LX; www.dickensfellowship.org/

WILLIAM COLLINS

On his 39th birthday, 18 September 1827, Wilkie's father, the artist William Collins RA, wrote in his journal 'Cuyp's...pictures are entirely free from this blackness, and have, I believe, consequently great breadth, glow, and power; and do not require absolutely, as mine certainly do, to be seen with a very strong light.' Now, 175 years later, a wonderful exhibition of the pictures of the Dutch artist Aelbert Cuyp (1620- I 691) is on show at the National Gallery in London. The influence on William Collins is immediately apparent in Cuyp's treatment of skies and horses, his love of evening and morning sunlight, and his broad sea compositions. The exhibition runs to 12 May and entry is £7.

A SPECTRUM OF FANTASY

WCS members interested in fantasy fiction will welcome the publication of the third and final volume of *A Spectrum of Fantasy* by George Locke (£90, hardback). The complete series, arranged alphabetically, provides bibliographical and descriptive information on a huge range of titles from both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. There are now appendices on original artwork and manuscript material, together with indices to all authors, illustrators and titles. Collins features in Volume I with a just a single entry for *After Dark*. Further information from Ferret Fantasy, 27 Beechcroft Road, Upper Tooting, London SW17 7BX (020 8767 0029).

PESCA

A recent trip to Antarctica revealed that the first whaling company in those parts was set up at the turn of the twentieth century in Argentina and operated out of South Georgia. It was called Pesca, the same name as Wilkie's eccentric Italian professor in *The Woman in White*.

LEDBURY

This year's Ledbury Poetry Festival will be held from 4-14 July and will feature amongst several others Andrew Motion and Matthew Sweeney. There is the usual Poetry Competition and further details can be had from Town Council Offices, Church Street, Ledbury, Herefordshire HR8 1DH (0845 458 1743, <https://ledburypoetry.org.uk>)

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THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2002

VICTIMS OF CIRCUMSTANCES

Enclosed with this Newsletter is the Society's latest publication, the first complete edition of *Victims of Circumstances Discovered in Records of Old Trials*. It had always been thought that Collins wrote only two of these short pieces based on miscarriages of justice – 'A Sad Death and Brave Life' and 'Farmer Fairweather'. They were published by the WCS as one of its early reprints in 1992. Recent work by Graham Law in connection with the forthcoming edition of Collins's letters suggested the existence of a third article. Some astute detective work, worthy of Sergeant Cuff himself, tracked down the original manuscript of 'The Hidden Cash' at Stanford University Library and the story is now republished for the first time since it originally appeared in 1887. Full details of its disappearance and rediscovery are explained in Graham's meticulously researched introduction.

WILLIAM CLARKE

Our congratulations and best wishes go to William Clarke who celebrated his 80th, birthday during June. Most members will know that he is married to our Patron, Faith Clarke, Wilkie's great granddaughter. William Clarke's excellent biography, *The Secret Life of Wilkie Collins* was originally published in hardback during 1988 and has more recently been republished by Sutton Publishing in paperback.

THE LETTERS OF WILKIE COLLINS

Nearly 250 previously unknown letters from Wilkie Collins have been identified by the editors of *The Public Face of Wilkie Collins* and there are more to come. When it is published in three years' time the book will be the definitive edition of the writer's letters, supplementing the prize-winning 1999 edition of *The Letters of Wilkie Collins* by William Baker and William Clarke. That was the first ever edition of his letters, but publishing constraints limited it to including the full text of only 462 letters. The new book will publish the full text of all the other letters – more than 2,000 – together with essays linking Wilkie's correspondence with his life and 19th century publishing. At the moment – and it changes each week – the editors have identified 2484 letters by Wilkie Collins in 73 collections. More than half are in the United States of America, a few in

Australia and the rest in the UK. They are addressed to a total of 476 recipients. More than 1,000 are business letters, 700 odd are to his friends, and fewer than 200 are to relatives. New letters are turning up all the time – some had remained unidentified in library collections, others have been made available by collectors, and a considerable number have appeared on the commercial market. Some had been lost for generations stuck in the pages of books, others collected in scrap books, and some appear, apparently from nowhere, in dealers' or auction catalogues. One turned up at Sotheby's on 11 July 2002. If any member has, or knows the location of, letters which have not been previously recorded please contact paul@paullewis.co.uk. The editors will guarantee anonymity – or a full credit – at the owner's preference.

VICTORIAN STUDIES AND COLLINS'S LETTERS

The latest issue of *Victorian Studies* (vol. 44, No. 1, Autumn 2001) contains a detailed review of the two volume Macmillan edition of *The Letters of Wilkie Collins* edited by William Baker and William Clarke published in 1999. The review is generally favourable although picking out one or two minor inconsistencies in editorial procedures. But as we all agree, "The appearance of the letters of Collins in print is welcome. We not only discover the challenges Collins faced throughout his publishing career and the nature of his friendships but we understand more fully the severity of his illnesses and dependency on laudanum, his determination to oversee access to his work, and his descriptive talent...We unquestionably have, now, more information about Collins's publishing habits, income, writing practices and ... [will give] critics new insights into the sensational and scientific mind of this persistently popular Victorian writer." The review is by WCS member Professor Ira Nadel, of the University of British Columbia. Ira's other claim to fame is his recently published biography of Tom Stoppard, *Double Act*. The *Letters* are available from Macmillan (now Palgrave) and when first published were available to WCS members at a substantial discount for direct purchase from the publishers.

The same issue of *Victorian Studies* also reviews *The Haunted Mind: The Supernatural in Victorian Literature*, edited by Elton E. Smith and Robert Haas, Scarecrow Press, \$39.50, £33.25. The reviewer here, William Hughes, takes the editors to task for omitting a reference to Wilkie's *Haunted Hotel*.

THE 'WHO DUNNIT?' EXHIBITION AND CONFERENCE

The Galleries of Justice (Museum of Law) are hosting an exhibition entitled 'Who Dunnit?' This will concentrate on the history of crime fiction and the opening section will be devoted to the works and influence of Wilkie Collins. The exhibition will run from 9 September 2002 to 28 February 2003 and will be held at Galleries of Justice, Shire Hall, High Pavement, Lace Market, Nottingham NG1 1HN (www.galleriesofjustice.org.uk).

The exhibition is timed to coincide with a three day conference organised by Nottingham Trent University, also to be held at the Galleries of Justice, Nottingham, from 11-13 September 2002. The conference will examine the issues surrounding the identification and representation for public consumption of what constitutes 'bad behaviour' including

crime. Papers will include identifications and representations including legal documentation both fictional and non-fictional, examination of the processes of detection, trial and punishment. This year's core theme is the enduring popularity of Agatha Christie and has been chosen as a celebration of the launching at the Galleries of Justice Library of their Crime Fiction collection for the East Midlands. Other themes include 'crime and society'; 'detection and methods of policing in fiction and practice'; 'perpetrators and victims'; 'policing society through drama and representation'; and 'reconciling fact and fiction'. For further information contact the conference organisers, Dr Judith Rowbotham (JudithRowbotham@ntu.ac.uk; 0115-848-3299); Dr Kim Stevenson (Kim.Stevenson@ntu.ac.uk; 0115-848-2266); or for Agatha Christie details, Karen Mitchell (karen-mitchell@ntlworld.co.uk).

WILKIE COLLINS'S LIBRARY

Greenwood Press have now published Professor William Baker's *Wilkie Collins's Library: a Reconstruction*, as part of their Bibliographies and Indexes in World Literature, No. 55 (ISBN 0-313-31394-6). The publicity material records how the reconstruction of Collins's library offers a thorough analysis of the books he owned and his response to them and so illuminates Collins as both a reader and writer.

The book begins with a narrative discussion of the contents of Collins's library and its auction. This introductory essay sheds light on the types of books he owned, his use of those texts in his writings, and the dispersion of his collection in 1890. The bulk of the volume provides annotated entries for each item from his library. Entries include publication and bibliographic information, descriptions from sale catalogues, information about the author of the item, citations of the book or author from Collins's letters, and information on the present location or subsequent history of the item. An appendix catalogues paintings and artwork in Collins's possession at the time of his death. The contents include a Preface; Introduction; Wilkie Collins and His Books; The 1890 Dispersion of Wilkie Collins's Library; The Composition of Wilkie Collins's Library; Conclusion; Reconstruction of Wilkie Collins's Library; Appendix; and Index.

William Baker, of course, is no stranger to the WCS as co-editor of *The Letters of Wilkie Collins* (1999). He is Professor, Department of English, and Professor, University Libraries, at Northern Illinois University. His previous books include *Recent Work in Critical Theory, 1989-1995: An Annotated Bibliography* (1996), *Twentieth-Century Bibliography and Textual Criticism: An Annotated Bibliography* (2000), and *A Companion to the Victorian Novel* (2002), all available from Greenwood Press.

Wilkie Collins's Library is distributed in the UK by EDS, 3 Henrietta Street, London WC2E 8LU (020 7240 0856). Although expensive, the price of £58.50 represents a 15% discount for WCS members when using the enclosed form for direct sales.

THE MOONSTONE – A NEW DRAMATIC VERSION

Over the years there have been relatively few dramatic texts of Wilkie's works. A welcome addition is Michael Theodorou's recent version of *The Moonstone* published as part of Nelson Dramascripts (www.nelson.co.uk ISBN 0-17-432553-3). The series

is actually designed for students in the lower and middle years of secondary school and plays are designed to be either read or acted. The format consists of an introduction; the script itself notes: activities such as discussion, improvisation and artwork; and a retrospective look at the play with further activities. *The Moonstone* is an exciting addition to the series and keeps nicely to the spirit of Collins's original – unlike a certain television version. Act I, 'The Loss of the Diamond', contains 32 scenes and Act 2, 'The Discovery of the Truth', a further 20. There are certainly copious notes, although being aimed at a more junior audience, most will be rather elementary for WCS members. In the author's words, *The Moonstone* presents a daunting task ... what do you leave out... it seems impossible to exclude any strands for fear of missing out essential detail." The author's own concept is "to tell the story as swiftly as possible and to focus on the one vital question: Who stole the Moonstone?" Wilkie would have approved of this approach and probably of this particular version. He had his own problems with dramatising the novel for the stage in 1877 and ended up oversimplifying the plot by omitting Rosanna Spearman, Ezra Jennings and even the Indians. He also restricted the action to a twenty-four hour period and set the play at Rachel Verinder's country house in Kent rather than Yorkshire. Michael Theodorou's version does rather better, retaining all of the important characters and keeping to the original locations.

WILKIE COLLINS, CHARLES DICKENS AND RELIGION

WCS member, Carolyn Oulton, has completed her book on Wilkie Collins and Charles Dickens which is expected to be issued towards the end of the year. Carolyn writes: "It covers Newman and George Eliot as well, but is really concerned with Dickens and Collins and their response to evangelicalism. The premise is that they deliberately subverted orthodox doctrine in their writing; i.e. they were not just blithely unaware of the religious crisis going on around them. It will be the first full length treatment of Wilkie's religion (and the only statement I've found of a Christian belief apart from an allusion in an old issue of the *WCS Journal*). It aims to shake up the assumption that neither of them thought much about religion. And in the course of doing this, I look at philanthropy and criminality as well as ideas of damnation and redemption. The cover illustration will feature, very appropriately, Charles Collins's *Convent Thoughts*."

LIBRARIES AND THE ASSAULT ON PAPER

Not directly related to Wilkie, but issues that at least indirectly affect all of us concerned with literary research, are raised in Nicholson Baker's *Double Fold: Libraries and the Assault on Paper* (Random House, New York, \$25.95 and in the UK, Vintage, £7.99 paperback). It seems that Librarians and archivists, who were once upon a time dedicated to the preservation of the materials under their care, have increasingly adopted the practice of microfilming books and periodicals which are subsequently either disposed of or destroyed. In the most recent edition of *The Private Library* (Spring 2001, 4:1), the editor, David Chambers, argues an eloquent case against this destruction of source material. The main culprits are the major US institutions and research libraries such as the Library of Congress, Harvard and Yale, and Columbia, where vast runs of periodicals and books have been cut up, filmed and thrown out. Nor is the British Library totally free of guilt and Nicholson Baker's hook was apparently stimulated by its sale of foreign newspapers – including those from the US which no longer exist over

there – since its legal obligation extends only to preserving British newspapers in their original form. The argument for all of this destruction is purely to save space. *Double Fold* was also reviewed by Max Egremont in the summer issue of *The Author* (CXIII. No. 2). Those who feel strongly about the preservation of our paper heritage can join The Friends of the National Libraries, c/o The Department of Manuscripts, The British Library, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB (michaelhorrie@blueyonder.co.uk)

KOH-I-NOOR DIAMOND

The untimely death of the Queen Mother earlier this year prompted an article in the *Daily Mail* on 3 April 2002 on the Koh-i-Noor, the great diamond centrepiece of the crown made for the coronation of George VI in 1937. The article is mainly concerned with the effect of the Indian diamond's curse on its male owners and gives a gruesome chronology of its victims from the 16th century onwards. The stone was ultimately appropriated by the Governor General, Lord Dalhousie, from the nine year old Punjabi prince, Duleep Singh, and smuggled into England for the Great Exhibition of 1851.

Wilkie, of course, was well aware of the Koh-i-Noor and its history and it was one likely inspiration for *The Moonstone*. Other possible contenders were the Orloff and the Pitt diamonds, whilst the fabulous yellow colour was taken from the King of Portugal's gem. It is also feasible that the paths of Duleep Singh and Wilkie might have crossed since he stayed in Whitby during the summer of 1861 and the Maharajah rented the nearby Mulgrave Castle between 1859 and 1864. But whatever the truths, Sergeant Cuff put it best with "Carbon, Betteredge! Mere carbon."

NINETEENTH CENTURY SHORT TITLE CATALOGUE

Those interested in nineteenth century bibliography have previously been able to obtain the existing 1801-1870 catalogue on CD. Now available is the period 1871-1919. Together, the two CDs now list 1,500,000 English titles and have been compiled from holdings in the major copyright libraries in the UK and USA. The data can be searched in a variety of ways including author, title, date, publisher and illustrator. The price for private individuals is £61.75 including VAT (more for institutions) and the CDs can be obtained from Avero Publications Ltd, 20 Great North Road, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE2 4PS.

ACKROYD AND THE MISSING WILKIE

Peter Ackroyd's majestic three part series on Dickens (BBC 1, 11th, 18th, 25th May 2002) was brilliantly done. Ackroyd loomed from the Victorian mist to weave together Dickens's story as one of secrets and lies. He began, and ended, with the railway accident at Staplehurst five years before Dickens died, when he was returning from France with his mistress Ellen Ternan and her mother. Real locations merged seamlessly with scenes from BBC productions of Dickens's stories. Actors played Dickens's relatives and friends, speaking words that were, in the annoying style of Ackroyd, a mixture of the real and the invented. Although Forster and even Thackeray were portrayed, there was not a single mention of Dickens's closest friend and literary collaborator- Wilkie Collins. It was a bizarre omission. The series is not yet available on video or DVD but Dickens's life has been repackaged again by Ackroyd in an

illustrated book, *Dickens – Public Life and Private Passions* BBC books, 2002 £16.99, ISBN0563 534 737. There at least Wilkie gets a few brief mentions, though his real significance in Dickens's life is still not recognised. There is an audio tape version of the book read by Ackroyd with Anton Lesser as Dickens, and a website www.bbc.co.uk/dickens

AUSTRALIA

Publication of Wilkie's work in Australian periodicals has been discovered by the Melbourne academic Toni Johnson-Woods. Her *Index to Serials in Australian Periodicals and Newspapers. Nineteenth Century* lists 11 Australian serialisations of 9 of Wilkie's works in six periodicals. The earliest to appear was *No Name* in the *Illustrated Melbourne News* from July 1862 and the last *The Evil Genius* in the *Sydney Mail* starting January 1886. Wilkie's agent in Australia was H.C Biers in Melbourne and a dozen of Wilkie's letters are in Australian libraries. Any further information about Wilkie in Australia or New Zealand would be welcome. The book is A\$26 from Mulini Press, PO Box 82, Jamison Centre, Canberra, 2614. Australia. ISBN 0949910686.

NEW EDITIONS

In August, Travelman Publishing, which issues short folding pamphlet style stories for reading on journeys, is publishing what it calls *Biter Bit* but which publicity shots show to be *The Traveller's Tales of a Terrible Bed*. 'The Biter Bit' was first published as 'Who is the Thief?' in *The Atlantic Monthly* April 1858 and then renamed 'Brother Griffith's Story of The Biter Bit' in *The Queen of Hearts* (1859). It is rarely republished though it is one of Wilkie's seminal detective stories. 'A Terribly Strange Bed' is much reprinted and first appeared in *Household Words* in April 1852. ISBN 186092042X, approximately £1.

In September, Hesperus Press is publishing *Who Killed Zebedee?* Edited by Martin Jarvis this is one of Wilkie's later short stories published in the New York periodical *Spirit of the Times*, Christmas 1880. It was renamed 'Mr Policeman and the Cook' in *Little Novels*. ISBN 1843910195 price £5.99. In October, Dover Publications promises a new edition of *The Moonstone*. ISBN 0486424510 price £3.

PRESS CUTTINGS

Under the heading 'What is the most exciting book ever written' in the *Sunday Telegraph*, 31 March 2002, John Mortimer nominates *The Woman in White*. A drawing master is "caught up in a plot of mesmerising wickedness, devilish skill and mythic qualities... Wilkie Collins can be funny, startling, terrifying, sarcastic and never less than gripping."

Wilkie is mentioned on two occasions (*The Dead Secret* in 1857 and *The Queen of Hearts* in 1859) in the publicity material for *The Oxford Chronology of English Literature*. This monumental work covers printed records from 1474 to 2000, and includes 30,000 titles from some 4,000 authors, with a strong emphasis on English Literature. It is divided into five broad categories: Fiction; Poetry; Drama; Literary scholarship; and Non-fiction.

Jessica Moran (*Scotsman* 8/6/02) says “Tire of McDermid and Rankin. and you should certainly check out Wilkie Collins.”

Academic Dr Adrena Telford is taken to task for her view that women owe current problems of sex discrimination to Victorian writers. She looked at five books by Dickens and one each by Thackeray, Gaskell and Charlotte Bronte. But Robert Mendick, writing in the *Independent on Sunday* (23/6/02), says “Where would the heroines of Wilkie Collins, Trollope, George Eliot fit into this [theory]?” Quite.

The *Time Out* guide to London cemeteries (17/4/02) doesn't forget Wilkie's place in Kensal Green – worth a visit at Harrow Road London W10, 9am-6pm every day.

Wilkie's lifelong fight for proper copyright protection was remembered in a piece on the BBC Online website (17 June 2002) with a quote from Wilkie's 1880 ‘Considerations on the Copyright Question’.

The playwright John Arden (*Stage* 18/4/02) recalls among other things the six plays he wrote for BBC Radio 4 based on stories by Wilkie. And James Maxwell's staging of a play based on a Wilkie story was remembered in *Irish Times* 15 June 2002.

Finally, Wilkie continues to be the gold standard of suspense fiction to which modern books are compared, favourably or not. These include *The Grenadillo Box* by Janet Gleeson (Bantam £12. 99), *The Impressionist* by Hari Kunzru (Hamish Hamilton £12.99), and the Orange prize-winning *Bell Canto* by Ann Patchett (Fourth Estate £6.99).

WILKIE COLLINS AND JOHN JASPER'S SECRET

Ken Cutler is seeking information regarding the publication of *John Jasper's Secret*. This is a continuation of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, written by US journalist Henry Morford and originally published anonymously in 1871. By the end of the 19th century this had been incorrectly attributed to ‘Wilkie Collins and Charles Dickens the Younger.’ Cutler has found some details in ‘The History of a Mystery; A Review of the Solutions to “Edwin Drood”’ by George F. Gadd in *The Dickensian* of October 1905. This acknowledges a Mr H. Snowden Ward and there is also a Collins letter to *Harper's Bazar* of 18 December 1878 denying his involvement in any continuation. Ken Cutler would he pleased to receive any information about either Snowden Ward or a column in Harpers called ‘Sayings and Doings’; he can be contacted at Goldascut@aol.com.

KATEY DICKENS

An exhibition on Dickens's daughter Katey opened on 18 July at The Dickens I louse Museum in London. Kaley married Wilkie's brother Charles on 17 July 1860. Charles Collins died on 9 April 1873 and 14 months later Kate married another artist. Charles Perugini; it is under this name of Kate Perugini that she is now usually known. After her death in 1929 her reminiscences were published by her friend Gladys Storey. Called *Dickens and Daughter* the book remains a key source of disputed facts about Dickens's relationship with his wife and his mistress Ellen Ternan. Kate was an artist herself and

the exhibition – called ‘My Lucifer Box’ – contains several of her paintings as well as biographical material. It will run until 2003.

Dickens lived in Doughty Street before he knew Collins but there are some interesting Wilkie related artefacts from later years, including the backdrop by Clarkson Stanfield to Wilkie’s play *The Lighthouse* as well as photographs and copies of plays and playbills. Admission to the house is £4 and there is no extra charge for the exhibition. Dickens House Museum, 48 Doughty Street, London WC1N 2LX (020 7405 2127 or look at <https://dickensmuseum.com>).

E-TEXTS

James Rusk continues with his work of putting Collins’s novels into e-text form. His latest is *Blind Love* leaving only *Heart and Science* of the novels to be done apart from *Iolani* which may be excluded for copyright reasons. His three non-fiction works and several of his essays, remain to be done. You can read *Blind Love* at www.blackmask.com/jrusk/wcollins/blind/blindttl.htm and all the etexts of Wilkie’s work, including short stories and some non-fiction, are listed on www.wilkiecollins.com, menu item 5.

ART NOTES

Another major work by Wilkie’s father, William Collins RA, resurfaced at auction recently. *The Morning Lesson* was sold at Christie’s on 11 June (lot 40). Painted and exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1834 (not 1836 as the catalogue stated) Wilkie described it as a “fresh, open, dewy landscape” with a “tranquil Cumberland distance” and “a rosy girl, teaching a little child at her knees to read the alphabet”. Originally sold to Mr Carey of Philadelphia for 120 guineas, it now fetched £28,860 including premium.

ESSAY COMPETITION

The David St John Thomas Charitable Trust is combining with the Alliance of Literary Societies to sponsor an essay competition on the subject ‘Does 19th century fiction still have anything to say to a 21st century audience?’ Arguments should be set out in up to 1,000 words and sent by 15 October 2002 to ALS Joint Competition, DT Charitable Trust, P.O. Box 6055, Naim IV12 4YB. There are no entry fees or entry form and there is a first prize of £100 and second prize of a £25 book token. Rules can be obtained from the above address.

DICKENS WALKS

Guides to walks in Charles Dickens’s London are now available from Dickens-and-London.com. They include David Copperfield’s London; a Covent Garden Walk; Exploring Fled Street; and Discover London’s Docklands. Some of the material should include areas with which Wilkie was familiar and the guides are illustrated with 19th century and modern pictures. The walks last about two hours and start and finish at London underground stations. The guides cost £3.99 and can be bought on the internet with a credit or debit card; or for those preferring something less virtual from 22 King Charles Walk, London SW19 6JA (020 8789 0029).

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THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

PATRONS Faith Clarke, Baroness James of Holland Park

Chairman Andrew Gasson, 3 Merton House, 36 Belsize Park, London, NW3 4EA

Membership Paul Lewis, 4 Ernest Gardens, Chiswick, London W4 3QU

NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2002

OUR NEW PATRON

We are delighted to announce that the Wilkie Collins Society has a new patron in the distinguished form of Baroness James of Holland Park who now joins our other long-standing patron, Faith Clarke, great-granddaughter of Wilkie Collins.

Baroness James is better known to us all as P. D. James, the creator of detective policeman Adam Dalgliesh. Born in Oxford in 1920, her family moved to Cambridge when she was eleven and with holidays taken at Lowestoft, East Anglia has become a frequent setting for her novels. For several years P. D. James worked first for the National Health Service and then with the Civil Service where she secured a senior promotion to the criminal policy department at the Home Office. In this position she was responsible for appointing forensic scientists and advising ministers on juvenile crime, also issues which reappear in her novels.

P.D. James' first book, *Cover Her Face*, was published in 1962 and followed by several other successful novels. Her enduring fame was established with the 1977 *Death of an Expert Witness* and she began writing full-time in 1979. Since then, the books and television adaptations have thrilled us all and both she and her characters have become household names.

P. D. James was awarded the OBE in 1983 and created a Life Peer in 1991. She chaired the Booker Prize panel in 1987 and since 1997 has

been President of the Society of Authors – of which Wilkie was an enthusiastic founder member in 1884 but only a vice-president. Throughout her writing career, there have also been numerous awards which include *Shroud for a Nightingale* (1971), Silver Dagger Award (Crime Writers Association) and Best Novel Award (Mystery Writers of America); *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman* (1973) Best Novel Award (MWA); *The Black Tower* (1975) Silver Dagger Award (CWA); *A Taste for Death* (1986) Best novel Award (MWA); Diamond Dagger Award (CWA 1987); *The Children of Men* (1992) Deo Gloria Award for a science fiction story; and more recently the Grandmaster Award (MWA 1999).

Wilkie would have been delighted to know he had as a patron such an illustrious successor in the art of crime fiction as Baroness James. Like the rest of us, he would also eagerly await her next novel.

MURDER, MYSTERY AND WILKIE

We had the pleasure of hearing P. D. James in person when she told the Royal Society of Medicine on 2 October that “Sergeant Cuff was the earliest and certainly the most successful” of detectives in crime fiction. Speaking at a meeting of the RSM’s History of Medicine section on ‘Murder and mystery: medical science and the crime novel’ she praised *The Moonstone* as Collins’s “single if remarkable [detective] novel” which pioneered the technique of keeping the reader guessing who was guilty, moving the target from one character to another. She also told her audience of around 100 people that “a novel that lacks scientific credibility loses its power” and said Collins was the first to realise this. “Wilkie Collins had a deep respect for medical and scientific fact” and took “meticulous steps in his research”.

WCS JOURNAL

Enclosed with this Newsletter is Volume 5 of *The Wilkie Collins Society Journal* in our usual A5 format. We are once again grateful to our editors, Graham Law and Lillian Nayder for their great efforts and skill in producing such a worthwhile publication. This year’s issue will be particularly useful to students of Collins with a detailed analysis of Charles Dickens’s letters to Wilkie Collins by Paul Lewis; Graham Law’s

inventory and discussion of the Chatto & Windus archive at Reading University; a further essay on *Lady Audley* by Claire Hughes; and Casey Cothran's essay on the British and American versions of *Black and White* by Collins and Fechter. In addition we have the usual range of book reviews.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership subscriptions for 2003 are due on 1 January and if they have not already been sent should now be forwarded to Membership Secretary, Paul Lewis, at the above address. For this year we are holding the subscription at £10 for UK and Europe and £18 for the rest of the world. Please remember that payments from abroad must be made in Pounds Sterling to avoid the high cost of converting overseas funds.

The Wilkie Collins Society has a worldwide membership that this year reached a new record level of 136 people. Although most members are in the UK, we have Wilkie enthusiasts in 14 other countries – USA, Japan, Australia, Netherlands, France, Germany, Spain, Canada, Czech Republic, Italy, Jersey, Russia, and South Korea. If you know any friends or relatives who love Wilkie why not introduce them to the Society for Christmas?

***THE WOMAN IN WHITE* – AN EARLY FILM VERSION**

The ever alert Katherine Haynes has spotted that London's National Film Theatre is showing the 1929 Herbert Wilcox version of *The Woman in White* on Monday 20 January at 6.20 pm and Wednesday 22 January at 8.40 pm. This was the last of several silent versions which dated from as early as 1912. The following are the NFT programme notes:

“Herbert Wilcox's prime strategy was to make prestige productions, using well-known plays or novels with stellar attractions from the US. What novel had a better track record for attracting financiers than Wilkie Collins' perennially popular gothic mystery novel? And what American Star could better bring in the crowds than Blanch Sweet? Promised in marriage to the despicable Sir Percival Glyde (Cecil Humphreys), beautiful young heiress Laura Fairlie (Sweet) stumbles into a diabolical

fraud cooked up by Sir Percy and the even more odious Count Fosco (Frank Perfit). For many years thought to be a lost film, this is the first time this will have been seen since its original release.” (Bryony Dixon).

For further information contact the National Film Theatre, South Bank, London SE1 8XT, Box Office: 020 7928 3232. www.bfi.org.uk/nft. Non-members of the NFT may book after Friday 20 December.

BOOKS

In the Summer newsletter we previewed a new edition of Wilkie’s short story *Who Killed Zebedee?* from the newly formed Hesperus Press. It finally came out on 16 September and was well worth the wait. The edition is well produced, nice to look at and easy to read with a good introduction by Martin Jarvis and a short biography of Wilkie. *Zebedee* was first published as a Christmas story in 1880 in the New York *Spirit of the Times* and was republished as ‘Mr Policeman and the Cook’ in *Little Novels* 1887. Also in the book is *John Jago’s Ghost* (1873) which is based on a story Wilkie came across on his trip to the USA in 1873-74 and is sometimes called either ‘The Dead Alive’ or ‘The Morwick Farm Mystery’. ISBN 1843910195

Hesperus has also published *The Haunted House* – the 1859 Christmas number of *Household Words*. It contains Wilkie’s ‘The Ghost in the Cupboard Room’ which was later reprinted as ‘Blow up with the Brig!’, as well as two ghost stories and an introduction by Dickens and four more stories by authors including Elizabeth Gaskell and George Augustus Sala. It is introduced by Peter Ackroyd and has short biographies of the six writers. ISBN 1843910217.

At £5.99 each these books are wonderful stocking fillers for Wilkie fans. More on www.hesperus.com

Wildside Press, based in Pennsylvania in the USA promises a new edition in February of *The Evil Genius* edited by Amy Sterling Casil, a Californian science fiction writer. ISBN 1592249612. The company has told the WCS that it intends “to reissue all of the texts eventually”. The book is at the printers and can be ordered through Amazon.

The Summer 2002 number of *The Dickensian* notes that there is a new edition of *The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices* by Dickens and Collins. This has been published by the Christchurch, New Zealand, branch of the Dickens Fellowship which also re-issued *No Thoroughfare*, *The Haunted House*, *The Lamplighter* and *The Lamplighter's Story*. Further details are available from P. O. Box 21-392, Otautahi, New Zealand 8030.

The Lazy Tour also receives a mention in a paragraph about walking in the latest issue of *Mr Dick's Kite*, Alan Watt's enjoyable little newsletter sent to members of the Dickens's Fellowship. Wilkie and Charles Collins are also mentioned in connection with the Exhibition about Katie Dickens – Dickens's daughter who was married to Charles – at the Dickens House Museum which ran from last July.

THE DICKENS MAGAZINE

Grayswood Press are publishing the Second Series of *The Dickens Magazine* which this time concentrates on *Hard Times*, the author's biting and satirical novel. The series consists of six issues and explores the social, economic and literary background as well as considering Dickens's influence on his contemporaries and successors. The editorial team consists of Alan Watts, Thelma Grove, Tony Williams and David Parker. Further details from the publishers at Rockfield, Ash Tree Close, Grayswood, Surrey GU27 2DS (tel. 01428 656665).

MUSICAL WOMAN IN WHITE?

Andrew Lloyd Webber, composer and writer of such hits as *Phantom of the Opera*, *Evita*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Cats*, and *Starlight Express* is reported to be working on a musical version of *The Woman in White*. However, at the opening of a new production of *Cats* he is reported as saying that it is proving difficult to adapt the material for a musical, complaining "It is like an operation." And *The Sunday Times* reports him as saying "I'm kicking about somewhat just now, annoyed that I haven't found a story that I feel I can do what I do best to. I've got so many tunes sitting around at the moment And it is so irritating."

In his own time, Wilkie, in common with other nineteenth century figures, had his works celebrated by pieces of popular music. At least three of these related to Collins's hugely popular story and included: *The Woman in White Waltz* by C. H. R. Marriott and sold at 4s.; *The Woman in White* with words by J. E. Carpenter and music by C. W. Glover at 2s. 6d; and *The Fosco Galop* by G. Richardson at 4s.

WILKIE'S WALK

A short programme on BBC Radio 4 on 21 November reconstructed Wilkie's walk in August 1859 in Broadstairs, Kent, when he was writing *The Woman in White*. Collins later claimed he was inspired by the sight of the North Foreland Lighthouse – “as stiff and as weird as my white woman” – to give the book its title. He wrote to tell Wills, the sub-editor of Dickens's *All The Year Round*, who was desperately waiting for the title to set the type for the first episode of the story. Dickens wrote back at once to say “I have not the slightest doubt that The Woman in White is the name of names, and very title of very titles.” The walk was conducted by Richard Francis accompanied by Wilkie Collins Society member and writer on Victorian literature Matthew Sweet whose edition of *The Woman in White* is being reissued by Penguin in February (ISBN 0141439610).

THE BIG READ

The BBC is launching a search for Britain's best-loved novel. Everyone will have the opportunity to nominate their favourite and the top ten will then enter an intense run-off with celebrity supporters to find the one book we love best. The format will be similar to the BBC's Great Britain series in which 1.6 million people voted for the ‘greatest’ Briton – who turned out to be Winston Churchill. The search starts in March and will cover the BBC's television, radio, and online services. So plenty of opportunity to make sure that Wilkie Collins features on the list!

ART NOTES

Wilkie's brother Charles Allston Collins (1828-1873) was a well known artist in his earlier years and a close associate of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood founded in 1848 by John Everett Millais, William Holman

Hunt. and Dante Gabriel Rosetti. One of Charles's finest pictures, *Berengaria's Alarm*, is back on public display at the Manchester Art Gallery. now reopened in the city centre after a £35 million refurbishment. Painted in 1850, it shows Berengaria, the wife of Richard Coeur de Lion, alarmed at being offered her husband's girdle by an itinerant salesman. She sees it as evidence that he is dead. You can see an image at <https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/berengarias-alarm-for-the-safety-of-her-husband-richard-coeur-de-lion-awakened-by-the-sight-of-his-girdle-offered-for-sale-at-rome-204696>

Two pictures by Wilkie's father, William Collins RA, have been brought out of the basement at Tate Britain in London. *Prawn Fishers* (1829) and *Early Morning in Cromer* (1846) are now on display in the Marine Paintings gallery. *Early Morning* was a favourite of Wilkie and he was outraged when the picture, which was bought for 300 gns (£315) by a Mr Gillott, was sold on his death in 1872 for 3,600 guineas (£3,780) at the auction house of Christie and Manson. Wilkie believed that the heirs of artists should enjoy a share of later gains in the value of their works – a law which is now in force in most of the European Union but not yet in the UK. Both these pictures can be seen in rather poor quality reproductions on the Tate website www.tate.org.uk

More William Collins can be found in 'Love, Labour, and Loss' at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter, Devon (01392 665 858) until January 4th. The exhibition looks at the depiction of farm animals in art and one of Collins's most famous works, *The Sale of the Pet Lamb* (1812), is there alongside Damien Hirst's *Prodigal Son* (1994), his famous two embalmed halves of a calf. More on *The Sale of the Pet Lamb* including an image and Wilkie's own description of it at www.wilkiecollins.com menu item 4.

WILKIE CUTTINGS

Many cuttings reflect the popularity of Wilkie Collins – especially *The Woman in White* – as a good read with Christmas approaching. Michael Dirda, the book reviewer for 15 years on *The Washington Post*, devotes a paragraph to “arguably the greatest 19th-century sensation novel” and concludes by saying “If you pick up this long, long novel and shake it, nothing will fall out” (*Washington Post* 10 November 2002). A week earlier Louise Walsh in *The Sunday Times* said that “Long nights call for

Gothic classics and Victorian melodramas” and recommends *The Woman in White* as one such example.

Wilkie featured in a quiz in the *Liverpool Daily Echo* (2 November). No prizes to our members for guessing “Which Wilkie Collins book is said to be the first detective story written in English?”

A news report in *The Times* (16 October) about the Washington sniper looked at the different traditions in detective fiction in the UK and the USA and put Wilkie alongside Agatha Christie for novels where criminals pursue “an external motive, often money or a legacy.”

Wilkie was mentioned in a review of the film of A. S. Byatt’s *Possession* (Matthew Sweet *Independent on Sunday* 13 October) as well as several reviews of Michel Faber’s epic novel set in 1876, *The Crimson Petal and the White*, which has a couple of references to Wilkie Collins in it. *White Mughals* by William Dalrymple was reviewed in the *Sunday Times* (6 October) as “a moving romance that borrows unabashedly from Wilkie Collins”. Caroline Moore in the *Sunday Telegraph* (14 July) called *The House* by Teresa Waugh “high-spirited, enjoyable nonsense – rather like Wilkie Collins crossed with Nancy Mitford”.

A letter from Wilkie to his friend Holman Hunt giving him dietary advice was quoted in *The Independent* on 8 October, the 117th anniversary of its writing.

The London *Time Out* (18 September) claimed that the pub Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese in London’s Fleet Street played “host to regulars of the calibre of Charles Dickens, Thackeray, and Wilkie Collins”. And the Trafalgar Tavern, Park Row, London SE10 also claimed the same trilogy of authors as “regulars” in *The Observer* (1 September). The evidence to support either claim is not known.

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THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2003

THE WOMAN IN WHITE - THE MUSICAL

Andrew Lloyd-Webber is pressing ahead with his plans for a musical version of *The Woman in White*. Sonia Friedman produces, ex National Theatre director Sir Trevor Nunn is to direct, lyricist David Zippel (who wrote the lyrics in *Tarzan*, *Hercules* and *Mulan*) will write the lyrics. Playwright Charlotte Jones (whose *Humble Boy* was at the National Theatre) has reportedly been "holed up in a New York hotel" with Webber doing the adaptation. Act I is finished. The musical will open in London early in 2004 but parts of it may be previewed at Lloyd Webber's private Sydmonton Festival in July.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE – 19th CENTURY STAGE VERSIONS

The Woman in White was first performed as 'A Drama in Three Acts' at the Surrey Theatre, Blackfriars Road, Lambeth. This was a short-lived unauthorised production opening on 3 November 1860 and revived at the Theatre Royal, Leicester, 26 August 1870. An unfavourable review of the unauthorised production of 'The Woman in White' at the Surrey Theatre has just been discovered on p. 149 of *The Players: A Dramatic, Musical and Literary Journal* of 10 November 1860, Vol. II, No. 46.

"Fancy an artist being told to turn a drama into a single picture! He would at once reply that it was an impossibility. He might seize upon some prominent and suggestive features; but after all, the single picture and the drama would be essentially different. Not more different, we contend, than the difference between a novel and a drama. From the limit as to time, there must, whether we like it or not, be something like the observance of on the unities. Indeed, the better the novel the worse the drama, and we should advise adapters to turn their attention to "rejected novels." We are led to these remarks by the production of 'The Woman in White' at the Surrey Theatre, on Saturday last. Verily, Mr. Wilkie Collins is translated! We have seen many adaptations, but this is the worst. Had it not been for the blue fire, shooting &c., the piece would have been a decided failure. We would suggest to the management to call this drama a farce, and the audience will laugh at it and enjoy it accordingly. Nothing in the whole piece is more comic than to see the fine acting of Mr. Creswick wasted on such an unseemly part. The irresistibly funny way in which Mr. Holloway did a tragic scene also deserves mention."

In a postscript to a letter to Edward Marston of 31 October 1860 Collins writes "They are going to dramatize the story at the Surrey Theatre - and I am asked to go to law about

that. I will certainly go and hiss - unless the manager makes a "previous arrangement" with me."

Collins own version of *The Woman in White*, extensively rewritten from the novel ran with great success at the Olympic Theatre from 9 October 1871 to 24 February 1872 and was more than favourably received. Reviews of this production were published as a sixteen-page booklet in late 1871 as *Specimens of Criticism Extracted from Notices of "The Woman in White" in the Press*.

BEFORE THE BOOKER

BBC4 Television is currently working on the second series of 'Before the Booker'. The programme takes the form of a literary debate, hosted by Clive Anderson, which sets out to choose what books would have won the Booker Prize before the Booker was invented. The debates will be recorded in front of a Jive audience, members of which will contribute to the discussion. Six programmes in the series are planned, each looking at a different year. 111e years and their respective books will be:

1818 *Northang Abbey* (Jane Austen), *Persuasion* (Jane Austen),
The Heart of Midlothian (Walter Scott) and *Frankenstein*, (Mary Shelley).

1860 *The Woman in White* (Wilkie Collins), *Great Expectations* (Charles Dickens),
The Mill on the Floss (George Eliot) and *First Love* (Ivan Turgenev).

1925 *The Trial* (Franz Kafka), *Mrs Dai/away* (Virginia Woolf), *The Great Gatsby* (F. Scott Fitzgerald) and *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (Anita Loos).

1932 *Cold Comfort Farm* (Stella Gibbons), *Brave New World* (Aldous Huxley), *Black Mischief* (Evelyn Waugh), and *light in August* (William Faulkner).

1954 *Lucky Jim* (Kingsley Amis), *Lord of the Flies* (William Golding), *Lord of the Rings Vol. II The Two Towers* (J. R. R. Tolkien) and *A Proper Marriage* (Doris Lessing).

1966 *The Magus* (John Fowles), *Wide Sargasso Sea* (Jean Rhys), *In Cold Blood* (Truman Capote) and *The Master and Margarita* (Mikhail Bulgakov).

The 1860 *Before the Booker* is being recorded on Saturday 17th May at 7pm (Channel 4 studios, Horseferry Rd, SW1) and should be shown during the six weeks preceding this year's Booker prize ceremony in October. They may still need some more audience members, particularly men, so that those interested in attending should contact Anna Ewart-James on 020 7428 3154 or Aewartjames@aol.com.

BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR VICTORIAN STUDIES

The British Association for Victorian Studies is making a call for papers for its forthcoming meeting 'The Age of Experiments, 1800-1 900' at the University of Wales Aberystwyth on 4-6 September 2003

111ey invite proposals for papers (of 15-20 minutes duration) on any aspect of experimentation and/or innovation in the nineteenth century, including Victorian avant gardes, experimentation and innovation in music, literature or the visual and plastic, arts, new technologies (and the responses to them), ilmovatory thinking or practice in the sciences (including experimentation and new developments in medical disciplines, and

the emergence of 'new' sciences), innovatory forms of cultural production, social and sexual experimentation, the concern with the 'new'.

Proposals of about 300 words should be sent to Professor Lyn Pykett, Department of English, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, Penglais, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion SY23 3DY. (email lyp@aber.ac.uk).

The plenary lecturer will be Sally Shuttleworth with Plenary Panellists Kathryn Gleadle, Cora Kaplan, Roger Luckhurst, Jo McDonagh, Rick Ryland and Shearer West.

Further details and a booking form can be obtained from <http://www.qub.ac.uk/en/socs/bavs/events.htm>.

LITERATURE AND RELIGION IN MID-VICTORIAN ENGLAND

A SPECIAL OFFER FROM PALGRAVE

Published last December is Carolyn Oulton's *literature and Religion in Mid-Victorian England: from Dickens to Eliot*. (ISBN 0-333-99337-3, Hardback, 221 pp). Palgrave Macmillan has kindly arranged a special offer for WCS members with a price reduction from £42 to £35 for direct purchases on the enclosed order form. This work, as the blurb says, places Dickens and Collins against important figures such as Henry Newman and George Eliot in seeking to recover their response to the religious controversies of Mid-nineteenth century England. It is an erudite treatment of a difficult and previously neglected subject.

The book consists of five chapters in the first of which, 'Tradings in Religion: Legislation and Crisis at Mid-Century', the author states that she is specifically concerned "to assess the impact of evangelicalism on Dickens and Collins in the 1850s and 1860s" and notes that "both writers were more profoundly religious than is often realised". "Collins's disagreement with Edward Piggott and *The Leader* is discussed and though his novels "are not written primarily as religious works it is possible to glean from them some idea of his personal beliefs." Examples noted are the aptly named Mrs Galilee in *Heart and Science* and Miss Clack in *The Moonstone*. Collins had also published the anti-sabbatarian 'A Plea for Sunday Reform' in *The leader* of 1851 and with Dickens collaborated for the 1856 'The Wreck of the Golden Mary' which presents evangelicalism "in its most invidious light."

The second chapter, 'A Man's Resolution and a Woman's Patience: Fighting the Battle of Life' is concerned with Collins's subversive views of manly Christianity, seen through the medium of Walter Hartright in *The Woman in White*, *The Frozen Deep* and *Man and Wife* but contrasted with those of Dickens in *A Tale of Two Cities*. Chapter 3, 'The Redeployment of Doctrine - Treatment of Original Sin, Infant Depravity and Providentialism' endeavours to show that compared with Dickens Collins represents a more liberal and cohesive position in his major novels of the 1860s. Several examples are given of religious austerity from Numerian in *Antonina* and Zack's father in *Hide and Seek* to Midwinter's stepfather in *Armada* and the odious Michael Vanstone in *No Name*. Providence however, both controls the deaths of Sir Percival and Fosco in *The Woman in White* whilst allowing other characters in Collins's novels of this period to make amends. By contrast, the agnostic George Eliot is forced to rely on the Law of Consequences.

Chapter 4, ‘Subverting Judgement: the Case for Redemption through Sanctification of the Siruler’, is concerned with reformation, forgiveness and atonement whilst chapter 5, ‘Pet Prisoners and Honest Paupers: Philanthropic Dealings with Poverty and Criminality’, is concerned specifically with “the impact of poverty and criminality, as they engage with what Dickens and Collins imply to be the evangelical treatment of the issue of salvation and divine judgement.” This is a nice opportunity to remind us of Miss Clack’s “blessed work of interference.”

The Conclusion notes that Collins rejected his evangelical upbringing and denied a belief both in Hell and divine retribution. Nevertheless in the 1850s and 60s both Dickens and Collins were “working towards an increasingly complex model of liberal Christianity” and “In their novels, they attempt to reconstruct their perceptions of these truths for the general reader, through a fictional medium.”

BLIND LOVE FROM BROADVIEW

Following their excellent critical editions of *The Law a,ld the Lady, Heart and Science* and *The Moolstone*, Broad view press intend to publish *Blind Love* towards the end of this year. Editor Don Cox of the University of Tennessee writes:

“The forthcoming Broadview edition of *Blind Love* will be the first critical edition of the novel ever published. The novel was serialized in the summer and autumn of 1889 and a three-volume version was published by Chatto and Windus in January 1890. A somewhat corrupted version of that text was published later in one volume in 1890, and it is generally the text of that 1890 one-volume that we find reprinted in several cheaper editions in the nineteenth century. To our knowledge, the only twentieth-century edition of the novel is the one published by Dover in 1986, which reproduced photographically the corrupt 1890 one-volume version. This new edition takes as its primary text the original 1890 three-volume edition. The original serialization in *The Illustrated London News*, as well as the existing manuscript and Collins’s plans were also consulted. This edition also contains the sixteen illustrations by Amedée Forestier that appeared in the 1890 three-volume edition.

This Broadview edition, like others in the series, also contains a good deal of supplementary material. Among the textual items that have never been published is a sample chapter from Collins’s earlier novel “Iris,” a story that was abandoned and then rewritten to become part of *Blind Love*. We also include an excerpt from the synopsis Collins gave to Walter Besant so readers can compare Collins’s plan for the book with the version Besant actually published. Other ancillary materials include articles reacting to Collins’s sudden death; reviews of *Blind Love*, as well as analyses of Collins’s career, newspaper accounts of the insurance fraud, and the “inside story” of the fraud in the form of detailed notes that were given to Collins; and newspaper accounts describing the turmoil in Ireland during the “Land War,” along with *Punch* cartoons depicting the English attitudes toward the Irish. A short statement which Collins apparently intended to serve as a preface to the novel appears for the first time.”

RADIO INTERVIEW WITH SARAH WATERS

Radio 4’s ‘Open Book’ programme of 9 February 2003 featured an interview with Sarah Waters about both her previous work and her forthcoming novel, set for a change in the twentieth century England. She discussed the background to *Fingersmith*, Wilkie Collins and nineteenth century fiction and particularly mentioned *The Woman in White* and *Armada*. This she described as “the most complicated plot in the history of fiction.” Wilkie would have been delighted as he always considered *Armada* his best book.

HESKET NEWMARKET

Another radio interview at the end of January concerned Hesketh Newmarket in Cumberland where the local inhabitants are fighting to prevent the sale of their local hostelry, The Crown, to a large brewery. Wilkie visited Hesketh Newmarket on 7 September 1857 in company with Charles Dickens at the beginning of their walking tour, written up for *Household Words* as 'The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices'. The two of them stayed at the Queen's Head, also close to Carrock Fell where Wilkie famously sprained his ankle and had to be carried down the mountain to nearby Wigton and then on to Allonby on the Solway Firth.

KENSAL GREEN CEMETERY

Wilkie, of course, is buried in Kensal Green Cemetery (Grave 31754, Square 141, Row 1) along side Caroline Graves. The stone cross carries the simple inscription 'Wilkie Collins, author of *The H'omallin White* and other works of fiction'. For those who have never had the opportunity to visit his grave, there is an illustration on a website called Page of the Dead at <http://www.xs4all.nl/~androom/dead/kensal.htm>. This useful site also gives brief biographical details of deceased notables with information on the cemetery in which they are buried. Using the index we can discover, for example, that also buried in Kensal Green is Ada Cavendish (1839-1895). She was the famous nineteenth century actress well known to Wilkie through her portrayals of Mercy Merrick in the 1873 and subsequent stage productions of *The New Magdalen*. She also took the lead in *Miss Gwilt* (1875-6).

The annual open day organised by the Friends of Kensal Green Cemetery will this year take place on Saturday 13th July 10.00-5.00pm. This is a major event with many attractions including tours of the cemetery, catacomb and crematorium. There will be an art exhibition, a display of funerary artefacts, stalls and refreshments. A large number of motor hearses will be on display throughout the day and will take part in two motorcades around the cemetery. Further details of FOKGC can be found at <http://www.kensalgreen.co.uk/documents/friends.html>.

COLLINS' TEXTS BY JAMES RUSK

The amazing James Rusk, who has single-handedly created e-texts for virtually all of Collins's novels and short stories, notes that he has recently updated his website. The format remains the same but the new HTML versions of Collins's works feature hundreds of minor corrections. If you have archived any texts from his site you can download the new versions from <http://www.blacknask.com/jrusk/wcollins/>.

A HORSE CALLED WILKIE

Adulation of Wilkie Collins in the 19th century was widespread including the USA. 'In the 1880s a racehorse was named after him. *Wallace's Monthly*, which describes itself as 'An Illustrated Magazine devoted to domesticated animal nature', listed a horse called Wilkie Collins in its edition February 1885-February 1886. He was the son of Black Wilkes and Rosa and was bred at the General Howard stock farm in western New York State.

Cigars and a cigar cutter were also branded Wilkie Collins around the same time. If any member has more information on Wilkie Collins branding please let Andrew or Paul know.

WILKIE IN THE PRESS

An account of the archives at Coutts's bank by Helen Dunne of *The Daily Telegraph* (6 January 2003) - after a Christmas press evening in December - mentions letters from Wilkie to the bank (they will of course be included in *The Public Face of Wilkie Collins* edited by Baker, Gasson, Law, and Lewis, Pickering & Chatto 2005). Wilkie, his father, mother and brother were all customers of Coutts but only Wilkie's few letters seem to have survived.

Niall Ferguson, author of *Empire - How Britain made the Modern World* - confessed in the *Sunday Times* (5 January 2003) that he was addicted to reading in bed that he was half-way through *No Name* - among other books.

The *Times Educational Supplement* carried a long piece by Faye Hammill (10 January 2003) on 'The Blonde'. She tracks down John Casper Lavater's *Essays on Physiognomy* which said that fair hair was associated with weakness and tenderness and dark hair with the opposite characteristics. She cites *The Woman in White* as an example of this as well as two of Wilkie's favourite, *The Last of the Mohicans* by James Fenimore Cooper and "almost all of Walter Scott".

Wilkie's Prologue to *The Moonstone* is a "notable example" of the Preface, according to John Mullan writing in *The Guardian* (11 January 2003). It thrusts us into "a scene of murderous violence ... [and]... violence will surely return upon those who yearn to possess the diamond."

A review in the *Vlail 011 Sunday* of David Thomson's *New Biographical Dictionary of Film* claims it is "Titten in a whimsical fashion and the "entry on W. C. Fields is written as a letter from Charles Dickens to Wilkie Collins".

The biographer Clare Tomalin writing about *Love and Dirt - the marriage of Arthur Munby and Hannah Culwick* by Diane Atkinson, opens with this: "Not every Victorian gentleman dreamed of being married to a lady... Wilkie Collins had two ménages with women he picked up, one in the street, the other at an inn where she was a servant." (*Evening Standard* 20 January 2003).

The least kind mention of Wilkie recently was Colin Burrow (*Evening Standard* 10 February 2003) in his review of Andrew Motion's biography of Keats. "Its characters have no life at all, and its plot is thin and creaking to an extent that would shame even Wilkie Collins on a bad day."

But Jonathan Heawood in *The Observer* (2 March 2003) "Tiling about the re-launch of Penguin Classics is kinder. "If *Granta* had produced a short list of the Best of Old British Novelists, Wilkie Collins would be near the top of the list... The renaissance of interest in Collins shows that, in some cases, a frisson can be born again in readers who want it badly enough. His huge popularity is a sign of the paucity of our 0\11 novelists' ability to create the Wow! Factor."

Now that Sarah Waters' novel *Fingersmith* is out in paperback reviews of it make the obligatory references to Wilkie - one unkindly claims "she has lifted character, setting and plot "from *The Woman in White*" (*The Daily Telegraph* 18 January 2003), a second calls it "a loose riff on Wilkie Collins", and a third (*Sunday Tribune* 2 March 2003)

quotes Waters as saying “I love Dickens and Wilkie Collins. Although every time I read him I find myself going ‘hmmm, you’re not Dickens are you?’”

BEST AND WORST

WCS member Brian Huss suggests we nominate our favourite and least favourite Wilkie novels, though he suggests excluding the big four (*The Woman in White*, *Armada*, *No Name*, *The Moonstone*) – unless of course you want to suggest one as your least favourite! He nominates *The Dead Secret*, *Poor Miss Finch*, *Jezebel’s Daughter*, and *No Thoroughfare* as his favourites “And the worst? *Fallen Leaves* for me.” If members want to join in send nominations by email to paul@paullewis.co.uk or by post to the address on the front of the newsletter.

MARY BRADDON

The Trail of the Serpent by Mary Elizabeth Braddon was originally serialized as *Three Times Dead* in 1860 while *The Woman in IV/lite* was causing such a stir in *All The Year Round*. It sold badly and Braddon revised and cut the text republishing it under its new title in March 1861. It was then an immediate success setting her on a writing career which included 80 popular novels. Like many Victorian novels it has not been in print for almost a century. So this new edition of the first full-length novel of a contemporary and competitor of Wilkie Collins is welcome. It has meticulous notes by Chris Willis of London Metropolitan University, a forward by Sarah Waters, and Braddon’s own account of the book, Written in 1893. Willis believes that the boy detective was an inspiration for Gooseberry in *The Moonstone* and the asylum scenes are reminiscent of those in Collins. The edition also has a two page ‘Reading Group Guide’. *The Trail of the Serpent*, edited by Chris Willis, Modern Library, New York, ISBN 0812966783, \$13.95, is available at £8.03 plus postage from Anlazon.

LEDBURY POETRY FESTIVAL

The Ledbury Poetry Festival is this year being held from 4-13 July in conjunction with the Arvon Foundation which runs courses to stimulate new writing. Further details from <http://www.poetry-festival.com>, or telephone 0845 458 1743.

RECENT SPANISH EDITIONS 2000-2003

Collins’s international popularity continues to prosper. We are grateful for the efforts of Spanish WCS member, Antonio Iriarte, who has produced a new list of current Spanish language editions of Wilkie’s works. Antonio writes:

“Further to the list published in the Summer 2000 *Newsletter* (pp. 9-12), the following new titles by Wilkie Collins have been published in Spanish. Most titles in the original list are still currently available, as are all those detailed below, as at 1 March 2003. It is worth mentioning that the various new editions of both *The Moonstone* and *The Woman in White* make use of translations already long available in other editions, some of which are still on the market. Please note, however, that Rialps’s *El secreto* constitutes the second, different, translation of *The Dead Secret*, already available as *El secreto de Sarah* (Montesinos) since 1999. There are also new translations of *The Haunted Hotel* and of several short stories.”

Editorial Montesinos, Barcelona:

Dos destinos [The Two Destinies], translation by Elena Martin Enebral, first published October, 2000. ISBN: 84-95580-00-4.

‘La dama de Glenwith Grange’ [‘The Lady of Glenwith Grange’], short story collection including: ‘La dama de Glenwith Grange’ [‘The Lady of Glenwith Grange’]; ‘El ultimo amor del Capitán’ (‘The Captain’s Last Love’); ‘El diario de Anne Rodway’ (‘The Diary of Anne Rodway’); ‘El fantasma de John Jago’ [‘John Jago’s Ghost’], and ‘¿Quién mato a Zebedee?’ (‘Who Killed Zebedee?’), translation by Elena Martín Enebral, first published November, 2000. ISBN: 84-89354-99-5.

Ediciones Alba, Barcelona

Marido y Mujer [Man and Wife], translation by Gema Moral Bartolome, first published November, 2002. ISBN: 84-8428-167-1.

Ediciones del Bronce, Barcelona

Las hojas caídas [The Fallen Leaves], translation by Miguel Martínez-Lage, first published November, 2001. ISBN: 84-8453-077-9.

Ediciones Peninsula, Mataró (Barcelona)

La reina del mal (‘A Queen’s Revenge’), translation by Oscar Maristán Tolós, first published July, 2001. ISBN: 84-95776-02-2.

El río culpable [The Guilty River], translation by Oscar Maritany y Denise Despeyroux, first published October, 2001. ISBN: 84-95776-06-5.

la piedra lunar [The Moonstone], translation by Horacio Laurora, first published in this edition January, 2002. ISBN: 84-95776-16-2.

la dama de blanco [The Woman in White], translation by Maruja Gomez Segales, first published in this edition May, 2002. This translation first published 1984. ISBN: 84-95776-03-0.

El legado de Cain [The Legacy of Cain], translation by Esther Pérez Pérez, first published August, 2002. ISBN: 84-95776-32-4.

Ediciones Rialp, Madrid

El secreto [The Dead Secret], translation by Maria Cristina Graell Vázquez, first published October, 2001. ISBN: 84-321-3368-X.

Ediciones Rueda J.M., S.A., Madrid

El hotel de los horrores ‘la confesión del pastor anglicano [The Haunted Hotel/ ‘Miss Jéromette and the Clergyman ‘), translation by Rocio Agudo Aceme, first published June, 2002. ISBN: 84-8447-114-4.

Suma de Letras, S.L., Madrid

La piedra lunar [The Moonstone], translation by Horacio Laurora, first published in this edition September, 2001 “Punto de lectura” series, no. 172/1. Translation first published 1981. ISBN 84-663-0425-8.

la dama de blanco [The Woman in White], translation by Miguel Martínez-Lage, first published in this edition, February, 2002. Translation first published 1998. “Punto de Lectura” series, no. 172/2. ISBN: 84-663-0509-2.

THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2003

A WILKIE COLLINS CONFERENCE – MARCH 2004

A conference under the general title of ‘Wilkie Collins and the Art of Crime’ is being arranged in conjunction with the University of London Institute of English Studies (IES) School of Advanced Study. It will be an all day meeting on Saturday 6 March 2004 with a probable cost of £15 for members of the WCS and concessions, and £25 for non-members. The list of speakers is still being confirmed and we hope to give full details for booking with the December Newsletter.

A STUDY COURSE ON DICKENS

The Charles Dickens Museum (previously Dickens House Museum) is running an exciting course entitled ‘The World of Charles Dickens’. The series of eight lectures will take place in the unique setting of Dickens’s own house, 48 Doughty Street, where he lived between 1837 and 1839 and wrote *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby*. The topics covered include ‘Dickens’s Theatre’ (Tony Williams); ‘Dickens’s Illustrators (Anthony Burton); ‘Dickens Abroad’ (Leon Litvack); Dickens and Publishers’ (Elizabeth James); ‘Dickensian London’ (Andrew Sanders); ‘The Public Readings’ (Malcolm Andrews); and ‘Dickens and Christmas’ (Michael Slater). The course includes access to the research facilities at the Charles Dickens Museum with access to rare artefacts from the collection.

The course fee is £100 (£80 concessions) for the entire course which runs on Tuesday evenings from 21 October – 9 December 2003. For further information or bookings contact info@dickensmuseum.com or 020 7405 2127.

COLLINS AND THE RELAUNCHED *HOUSEHOLD WORDS*

The ever-alert Richard Beaton has discovered a 'new' piece by the Manx novelist, Hall Caine, referring to Wilkie. In 1902 it was intended to relaunch a new series of *Household Words* and Caine narrates the following story:

'Calling on Wilkie Collins in the last days of his life, I found my friend greatly excited by the prospect of publishing his next novel as a serial in one of the very humblest of cheap periodicals. A great illustrated weekly had offered a better price, but that counted for nothing. "Think of it--three hundred thousand readers!" I argued that they were not his readers, but the readers of Jack Sheppard, and of all the wildest balderdash that could be put together. "All the better" said Collins. "They'll be easier to handle if I give them something worth having." I argued that, apparently, they did not want good work, since they were always revelling in bad. "Nonsense," said my friend, "they take the best they can get, and it is our fault if they can't get any better." "But think of it," I protested, "you are giving up the best readers in the country for this unknown penny public. "That's the worst of it," said Wilkie. "It is such a pity it can't be a ha'penny one."

Some of this sounds similar to Collins's views expressed in his 1858 essay, 'The Unknown Public', for the original *Household Words* run by Charles Dickens (21 August 1858). Here he discovered for the first time the penny novel-journalists and an estimated 'monster audience of at least three million!' and considered that 'the future of English fiction may rest with the Unknown Public which is waiting to be taught the difference between a good book and a bad.'

Caine's 1908 autobiography, *My Story*, repeats several recollections of Collins previously published in *The Globe* of 4 October 1889. These anecdotes are not necessarily reliable and Caine was criticized by a correspondent of *The World* (16 October 1889) for inaccurate reports in a number of provincial journals.

DID WILKIE PLAY THE CONCERTINA?

The Wheatstone English concertina was extremely popular in mid-Victorian times. It was developed by Sir Charles Wheatstone (the noted physicist responsible for the Wheatstone Bridge) and became familiar at both concert performances and upper-class musical soirees. There was music specially written for the concertina and its two great virtuosos were Giulio Regondi and Richard Blagrove.

On page four of *The Wheatstone English Concertina in Victorian England* by Allan Atlas (OUP 1996), its author, an American Professor of Music, suggests “... the identity of two other mid-century concertinists is worth a moment’s (possibly wild) speculation. The Wheatstone ledgers record the sale of a concertina on 18 May 1860 to a Mr Collins, while an entry of 18 February 1861 records another to a Mr Dickens. Now, while the name Collins is commonplace and Dickens is not rare, we may at least ask if Messrs Collins and Dickens could be the writers Wilkie and Charles.” The Wheatstone ledgers are now in South London’s Horniman Museum. These also reveal two further sales to a Mr Collins on 11 January 1861, one at 3 guineas and one at 6 guineas at about the time as the young Carrie Graves was staying with Wilkie in Harley Street. Perhaps one or all of these concertinas was a present.

But as Atlas points out, Dickens was known to be ‘an avid accordionist’ and Wilkie was certainly familiar with the concertina. The instrument features in both *The Woman in White* and *Armada*. Count Fosco is an accomplished concertina player singing when ‘sitting in the full blaze of the hot June afternoon ... Figaro’s famous song in the Barber of Seville ... accompanying himself on the concertina, which he played with ecstatic throwings-up of his arms...’

In *Armada*, the musician is Pedgift Junior who owns a very elegant concertina, inlaid with his initials in mother-of-pearl, which he uses to entertain Miss Milroy on the picnic boat. “‘The Death of Marmion,’ ‘The Battle of the Baltic,’ ‘The Bay of Biscay,’ ‘Nelson,’ ... these were the songs in which the roaring concertina and strident tenor of Gustus Junior exulted.’ He concludes with ‘The Mistletoe Bough’ and ‘Poor Mary Anne’ and finally pleases the deaf Mrs Pentecost with her ear trumpet with a sacred melody.

Readers interested in this topic should also refer to the essay ‘Collins, Count Fosco, and the Concertina’ by Allan Atlas in the *WCS Journal*, NS II 1999 pp. 56-60. There seems to be no mention of the instrument in the letters of either Collins or Dickens but did Wilkie play the concertina?

REALITY’S DARK LIGHT

A new book on Collins called *Reality’s Dark Light: The Sensational Wilkie Collins* is due out in September. It is Volume 41 in the University of Tennessee’s *Studies in Literature* and is edited by Maria K. Bachman and Don Richard Cox. The illustrated book will retail in the United States at \$40 (ISBN: 1572332743).

The following is an extracts from the blurb: ‘In the midst of a Victorian culture ingrained with strict social etiquette and societal norms, Wilkie Collins

composed novels that contained asocial, even anarchic, impulses. Seen as a radical, especially in his later writing, Collins purposefully took on the sensitive issues of marriage laws, vivisection, and socialism. He openly criticized Victorian social conventions, and he clearly questioned England's imperial privilege. During a time when women were socially marginalized, Collins's novels are replete with strong, independent, even illegitimate and vengeful heroines. Collins creates a world more Kafkaesque than Dickensian, a world populated by doppelgangers, secret selves, oddballs, and grotesques. The essays of *Reality's Dark Light* purposefully work to expand Collins's legacy beyond *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone*; they move well past the simplistic view of Collins's works as 'sensation novels', 'detective novels', or even 'popular fiction', all labels that carry with them pejorative connotations. Throughout his career, Collins continued steadfastly to espouse his artistic vision of realism, but it was a vision that bore the burden of critical scorn because his fiction so often focused on darker truths that offended middle-class Victorian society.'

The contents include Tamar Heller on 'Masterpiece Theatre and Ezra Jennings's Hair: Some Reflections on Where We've Come, and Where We're Going, in Collins Studies'; Martha Stoddard-Holmes on 'Bolder with Her Lover in the Dark: Wilkie Collins and Disabled Women's Sexuality'; Graham Law on 'Yesterday's Sensations: The Challenge of Collins's Late Works'; and other contributions by Lillian Nayder, Jenny Taylor and the editors.

BLIND LOVE

The Broadview Press edition of *Blind Love* – also edited by Bachman and Cox – is due out on 1 November 2003 (ISBN 155111447X). Broadview editions have established themselves as the definitive critical editions for Collins's works and apart from meticulous attention to the text include invaluable background material. For further details from Don Cox see the WCS Spring 2003 Newsletter.

WILKIE COLLINS – MAN OF MYSTERY AND IMAGINATION

A new book by Wilkie Collins Society member Dr Alexander Grinstein offers a Freudian analysis of Wilkie's life seen through his work. Grinstein is a Professor of Psychiatry and President of the Sigmund Freud archives in New York. So naturally his approach is from a psychoanalytic point of view. If you believe in Freud you will find this book interesting and insightful. But even uncritical readers will baulk at the typos and minor errors and may also wonder if every single one of Wilkie's books and stories really was part of a process of working out the relationship with his father, mother, brother, lovers and even

his own body – and if those relationships were really as troubled as Freud, or at least Grinstein, would have us believe. But the book is an interesting and unusual addition to Collins studies and congratulations to Grinstein for the immense amount of work that has gone into it. *Wilkie Collins – Man of Mystery and Imagination* International Universities Press, Madison, 2003 (ISBN 0823666816).

VICTORIAN SENSATION

Recently published is Michael Diamond's *Victorian Sensation or the Spectacular, the Shocking and the Scandalous in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Anthem Press, ISBN 1 84331 076 7, hardback, £25). Diamond draws on a wealth of primary material to "explore the stories that impacted on Victorian Society through the eyes of the contemporary media ... shedding light on the Victorian appetite for gruesome and explicit reportage on murders and sex scandals."

Much of the material is drawn from contemporary newspaper accounts with chapters covering royalty, politicians, religion and morality, sex scandals and murder, the 'sensation' novel and the 'sensation' drama. There is a useful chronology and nearly 40 illustrations. Two of these relate specifically to Collins, showing the theatre programme for the 1877 production of *The Moonstone* and 'The Woman in White Waltz'. The 'sensation' novel and the 'sensation' drama are discussed in relation to Collins, Mary Braddon, Mrs Henry Wood and Charles Reade. Thus there are several references to Wilkie and his works as well as to his source material such as the Constance Kent and Madeleine Smith cases.

INVENTING THE VICTORIANS

Like most good books, Matthew Sweet's *Inventing the Victorians*, which covers similar ground, has now been remaindered. Originally published in 2001 at £16.99, it is available for £5 from Foley Books Ltd, 64 Nottingham Road, Bingham, Nottinghamshire NG13 8AW (01949 831112).

A VICTORIAN BOOKER PRIZE

A new series of *Before the Booker* will be broadcast on the digital BBC FOUR channel in the autumn during the six weeks leading up to the 2003 Booker Prize award. The series takes four books published in one year and a panel of enthusiasts and experts decides which would then have won the Booker Prize for Fiction. Second in the series is 1860 comparing *The Woman in White*, Dickens's *Great Expectations*, George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* and *First*

Love, a novella by Ivan Turgenev. Despite a strong defence by eminent QC Michael Mansfield, Wilkie fans should be prepared to weep at the treatment of his book which clearly would have won in 1860 and which the panel unanimously agreed created a genre of escapist fiction. Nevertheless the standard of debate, chaired by Clive Anderson, was extremely high even if the winner was no surprise.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO WILKIE COLLINS?

The *Sunday Times Magazine* of 11 May (page 14) gave a very brief biography of Collins in its series 'Whatever Happened to'. He was given due credit for inventing the detective novel and the short piece was accompanied by the Lock and Whitfield photograph for the fifth series of *Men of Mark* in 1881.

THE BIG READ

The BBC's 'The Big Read' also comes to a climax later this year. *The Woman in White* is the only Collins book on the list of the nation's 100 favourite novels. Whether it will make it any further to the final stages remains to be seen. There is more information at www.bbc.co.uk/arts/bigread, although not very much about Wilkie!

Our own attempt at a 'Big Read' – asking members to nominate their favourite Collins book – has had a small response. So we are extending it to Christmas. Please let Andrew (apogee@apgee.co.uk) or Paul (paul@paullewis.co.uk) know your favourite Wilkie novel – and why. You can do this either by email or post.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE – THE MUSICAL

Reports in industry newspapers say that Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical loosely based on *The Woman in White* received its first airing in July at the composer's home in Sydmonton. Producers from the USA and the UK were given a workshop presentation of Act I and one or two songs from Act II. The lyrics are by Charlotte Jones and David Zippel; Trevor Nunn is down to direct and musical director Simon Lee conducted a six piece orchestra. There is no news yet on commercial production.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF COLLINS

The 1861 one volume edition of *The Woman in White* contained what is thought to be the first photographic image of an author pasted in to a book. We know that Wilkie sat for several versions of the photograph, taken by Cundall Downes of New Bond Street. But new analysis now indicates that there were numerous minor – and some major – variants of the picture – see examples at Paul Lewis' web site www.wilkiecollins.com. If any members have a copy of this edition and are willing to share information about the image, could they contact membership secretary Paul Lewis paul@paullewis.co.uk or by letter to the address on the front of this newsletter.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE – A NEW E-TEXT

The indefatigable James Rusk, who has converted almost all of Wilkie's fiction into e-text format, is now embarking on other material. Some essays from *My Miscellanies* (1863) are already on his site and he has recently obtained permission to convert Wilkie's 1871 dramatic version of *The Woman in White*.

This is a very welcome addition to the availability of Collins's works since there were probably no more than about 25 fragile copies of the original text. It was privately printed by Collins, himself, for the stage production at the Olympic Theatre. The first night took place on 9 October 1871 and the play ran with great success until February 1872. The text is now available at www.blackmask.com/jrusk/wcollins/main.html. There are also some illustrations from *The Woman in White* on Andrew Gasson's revised web site at www.wilkie-collins.info.

WYBERT REEVE

Actor and friend of Collins, Wybert Reeve (1831-1906), played the part of Walter Hartright in the Olympic production of *The Woman in White* although he later took over the role of Fosco and took the production on tour around England for over a year. Reeve published several anecdotes about Wilkie in 'Recollections of Wilkie Collins' in *Chambers's Journal* for June 1906. It has recently been discovered during a trip to Australia, where Reeve spent many of his later years, that this article originally appeared in Reeve's 1891 memoirs, *From Life*, published by George Robertson of Melbourne. The book also contains a black and white portrait of Reeve. Robertson had earlier published at least two of Collins's titles and for a time was located very appropriately in Little Collins Street.

LETTERS

Work on the new, comprehensive edition of Wilkie Collins's letters is entering its final stages. The editorial team has now identified more than 2800 letters, over 650 of which had not been recorded previously. The list of letters which can be included will have to close in the next few weeks. So if any member has any information about letters that they wish to share please contact Paul or Andrew as soon as possible. *The Public Face of Wilkie Collins* will be published by Pickering & Chatto in four volumes in Spring 2005 – price £350. www.pickeringchatto.com/wilkiecollins.htm

NEWSLETTER SPONSOR- RICHARD BEATON

This particular Newsletter is sponsored by Richard Beaton Books. Richard Beaton is a bookdealer, buying and selling 19th and early 20th century fiction. His regular catalogues (4 – 6 per year) offer three-decker first editions, yellowbacks, continental editions, literary journals, as well as good reading copies of scarce titles. Richard's stock is strong on 'sensation' fiction, with a good selection of titles by Wilkie Collins, Charles Reade, Mary Braddon, Mrs Henry Wood, etc. To contact Richard, please write to: Richard Beaton, 24 Highdown Road, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1QD, UK; or e-mail: richard.vic.fic@gmail.com or see www.victorian-novels.co.uk.

APG
PL

The easiest way to contact us, either with queries or with information for future Newsletters, is now by email:

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THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2003

MARCH CONFERENCE CANCELLED

For a variety of administrative reasons, the conference planned for 6 March 2004 has had to be cancelled. We hope this hasn't caused any inconvenience but in its place we can announce an even more exciting meeting....

P. D. JAMES – A JOINT MEETING OF THE WCS AND THE THACKERAY SOCIETY

Our new Patron and eminent author, P. D. James, has kindly agreed to speak at a joint meeting of the WCS and Thackeray Society on Thursday 27 May 2004. The Thackeray Society is a prestigious literary society associated with the well-known Reform Club in London's Pall Mall. It takes its name from the novelist who was an early member of the Reform and is the Club's literary and historical society, founded more than twenty years ago. Members meet in the Club's spacious library for dinner followed by a serious talk on a literary or historical subject.

The evening will therefore take the form of a formal dinner – black tie for gentlemen – followed by the talk from P. D. James entitled 'Wilkie Collins's Contribution to the Detective Novel.' All members of the WCS are welcome and may bring one guest. The cost of the evening will be £45 including wine and a bookings form will be sent out with the first Newsletter of 2004.

Long standing members may remember the highly successful joint meeting held in October 1989 at the Reform Club to mark the centenary of Wilkie's death. On that occasion we were addressed by both of our earlier Patrons, Sir Kenneth Robinson and Benny Green. The forthcoming dinner will be just as exciting.

WCS JOURNAL

Enclosed with this Newsletter is Volume 6 of *The Wilkie Collins Society Journal* in our usual A5 format. We are as ever grateful to our editors, Graham Law and Lillian Nayder for their continuing endeavours and skill in producing a publication of such a high standard. This year's issue contains essays with novel insights into *Armada* by Laurence Talairach-Vielmas and *The Law and the Lady* by Patricia Pulham, together with Andrew Mangham's 'Hysterical Fictions' of Mary Elizabeth Braddon. There are also the usual reviews of recent works, this time books by Dr Alexander Grinstein (by Catherine Peters), Carolyn Oulton (by Norman Vance) and the new Broadview edition of *Blind Love* (by Graham Law); in addition Lyn Pykett discusses no less than three different *Companions to the Victorian Novel*.

A RUSSIAN DISSERTATION

Collins has always been extremely popular in Russia and most of his works were translated. Many were serialised and issued remarkably soon after English publication. *The Moonstone* and *The Woman in White* have been constantly republished and modern editions have print runs of several hundred thousand.

WCS member, Kirsten Hüttner, has spent a great deal of time in St Petersburg and is particularly knowledgeable about Collins's reception in Russia during the nineteenth century as well as current work by modern scholars. She has therefore prepared a summary of the recent dissertation thesis by Zlata Antonova of Cherepovets State University. This is entitled 'The Third Period of Creative Work of Wilkie Collins' and gives a different perspective on his later novels. Kirsten's own dissertation thesis, *Wilkie Collins's The Woman in White – Analysis, Reception and Literary Criticism of a Victorian Bestseller*, was published in English by Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier (ISBN 3-88476-227-3).

It includes details of the novel's reception in Germany, France and Russia. (Further information on http://home.t-online.de/home/0711334553-0002/wilkie_1.htm, or follow links from the websites of either Paul Lewis or Andrew Gasson).

MEMBERSHIP

The Wilkie Collins Society has a worldwide membership which is fairly stable at just over 130 people. Most members are in the UK but we have Collins enthusiasts in 14 other countries – USA, Japan, Australia, Netherlands, France, Germany, Spain, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Italy, Jersey, Russia, and South Korea. If you have friends or relatives who love Wilkie why not introduce them to the Society for Christmas. The subscription remains unchanged at £10 UK and EU or £18 anywhere else in the world.

Remember that subscriptions are due on 1 January and six members have already paid. If you have not paid for 2004 you should have a separate reminder letter with this Newsletter. If you have paid in the last few days, please ignore it.

BIG READ

BBC Television's 'The Big Read' created a great deal of interest with Wilkie represented in the early stages by *The Woman in White*. To accompany the series, the BBC published *The Big Read Book of Books* (Darling Kindersley, ISBN 1 4053 0405 7 £12.99). Wilkie's contribution (number 77) appears on page 139, introduced with "This thrilling, suspense-filled tale of madness, murder and mistaken identity is a model example of the sensationalist novel, blending horror with psychological realism. A Gothic masterpiece, *The Woman in White* is the best known of Wilkie Collins' work." There is a very brief biographical sketch with four illustrations. One of these purports to be a photograph of Wilkie but it is unlike any of the pictures normally associated with him (see the images on Paul Lewis's website). Perhaps – very appropriately – it's a case of 'mistaken identity' and is in fact another bearded Victorian. Wilkie alas didn't reach the final 21 but congratulations to the eventual winner, *The Lord of the Rings*.

WCS BIG READ

We had very few responses to Brian Huss's idea of nominating our best and worst Wilkie novels. He started it off in the Spring Newsletter with *The Dead Secret*, *Poor Miss Finch*, *Jezebel's Daughter* and *No Thoroughfare* as his favourites. He nominated *The Fallen Leaves* as the worst. The instruction to exclude the big four was completely ignored and the eventual result is *Armadale* as the favourite. *The Moonstone*, however, did get one vote as his worst novel – 'boring' was the word used!

Armadale was Wilkie's own favourite, even though he specifically asked that his tombstone record him as 'The Author of The Woman in White and other Works of Fiction'. An interview in 1887 quotes Wilkie as saying of *Armadale* "It is by far the best thing I have ever written, and in my own opinion, no other book of mine can compare with it." (*Cassell's Saturday Journal* 5 March 1887) and a new letter has now been identified in which Wilkie writes of *Armadale* "I have always considered this novel to be the best that I have written." It is certainly the longest. And with five separate characters called Allan Armadale certainly the most complex!

HESKET NEWMARKET

Wilkie visited Hesketh Newmarket in Cumberland with Charles Dickens on 7 September 1857 at the start of their walking tour which became 'The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices' in *Household Words* 3-31 October 1857. Earlier this year we mentioned in the Spring Newsletter that The Old Crown public house was under threat. A follow up news item on the BBC Today Programme on 13 September revealed that The Crown had now been saved from sale to a large brewery by a co-operative of mainly local people who intend to maintain its present character as a small but traditional pub.

NEW BOOKS

Peter Haining is following up *The Best Supernatural Stories of Wilkie Collins* (Robert Hale, London 1990) and is editing *Sensation Stories: Tales of Mystery and Suspense*. This volume collects ten of Wilkie's earlier stories and will be published by Peter Owen in the Spring of 2004 (ISBN 0720612209) – further details at www.peterowen.com.

Eavesdropping in the Novel from Austen to Proust by Ann Gaylin looks at 'eavesdropping' as a flexible genre of writing in Austen, Balzac, Collins, Dickens and Proust. Apart from the analysis of Collins, Balzac was one of Collins's 'three kings of fiction' (along with Walter Scott and Fenimore Cooper). Dickens, of course, was Wilkie's close friend and collaborator over many years. Cambridge University Press 2003 (ISBN 0521815851).

The Double in the Fiction of R.L. Stevenson, Wilkie Collins and Daphne du Maurier is by Kings College London scholar Nathalie Abi-Ezzi. It is said to analyse the double as a way of examining the imprisoned female character and how she frees herself. Published by Peter Lang, Oxford 2003 (ISBN 3906769682).

PhD SCHOLARS

Wilkie Collins Society member Cedric Courtois is working on his PhD thesis on Wilkie Collins and would like to make contact with any other members who are actively studying Wilkie as part of academic activity. He can be contacted at cedric_courtois@yahoo.co.uk.

FOREIGN BORN CHARACTERS IN WILKIE

James Rusk has extracted this list of significant characters in Wilkie's novels who were born outside the UK. If anyone wants to extend or develop this theme further please let us know!

The Dead Secret Uncle Joseph Buschmann (German)

The Fallen Leaves Rufus Dingwell (American) and Leblond Theophile (French)

"I Say No!" Francine de Sor (West Indian)

Jezebel's Daughter Herr Engelmann, Herr Keller, and Fritz Keller (all German) and

Mandame Fontaine (French?)

No Name Mrs. Lecount (French)

Poor Miss Finch Madame Pratulungo (French) and Herr Grosse (German)

The Woman in White Count Fosco and Professor Pesca (both Italian)

In two cases a major villain of the novel is foreign-born (Fosco and Lecount), and in one case the foreign-born character narrates the entire novel (Madame Pratolungo).

WILKIE'S VOICE?

Many people have wondered if there is an extant sound recording of Wilkie Collins speaking. Sound recording dates back to 1887, two years before Wilkie died, so it is possible. But work done on the forthcoming edition of Wilkie's letters shows that he refused the offer to record his voice.

In 1887 Thomas Alva Edison set up the Edison Phonograph Company with George E. Gouraud. He had been a colonel in the Civil War and they set about recording famous people of the day. Gouraud came to England and set up home in Beulah, South London. He called it Little Menlo after Edison's original laboratory at Menlo Park, New Jersey but it was generally known as Electric House – many things were done automatically by electricity.

He invited celebrities to Little Menlo to record their voices on the new phonograph. The actor Henry Irving, as well as Browning and Tennyson, recorded their voices. A letter has been discovered by the editors that shows Wilkie was invited to record his voice but he turned the offer down.

This particular letter will be one of nearly 3000 to be published in *The Public Face of Wilkie Collins* by Pickering & Chatto in April 2005.

IN OUR TIME

Melvyn Bragg took the subject of sensation novels for his intelligent weekly programme *In Our Time* on BBC Radio 4 on 6 November 2003. John Mullan of University College London, Professor Lyn Pykett of the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, and Professor Dinah Birch of the University of Liverpool unpicked the rise and importance of the sensation novel through Mrs Henry Wood's *East Lynne*, *Lady Audley's Secret* by Mary Braddon and *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone*. A great listen which you can still hear on the BBC website <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p005492t>

ART SALES

Two interesting pictures by Wilkie's father, William Collins RA, were recently on sale at auction in London. A really fine and interesting portrait of James Campbell of Hampton Court painted in 1812 and originally sold for 37 guineas to Campbell came up at Christie's on 13 November. It did not, however, make its estimate of £4000-£6000 and was unsold.

An interesting picture from the Collins family trip to Italy during 1836-1838 came up at Christie's two weeks later on 25 November. *Ave Maria – Scene near Tivoli* was painted in 1840. Sold originally to Sir Thomas Baring for 150 guineas, it too failed to reach its estimate of £6000 to £8000 but was sold for £5377 including premium. A bargain.

Both can be seen in the Christie's catalogues at www.christies.com

WILKIE IN THE NEWS

Sunday 30 November was a good day for Wilkie press-watchers. First, Judith Flanders wrote in *The Independent on Sunday* about the Victorian Christmas and the development of seasonal ghost stories. She says that Wilkie “loathed the whole season” though she concedes he did write “a couple of Christmas stories.” Not quite true – he wrote at least twenty, but she correctly quotes his letter to Nina Lehmann (28 December 1877) when he says it is “the most hateful of all English seasons” and calls it “the season of Cant and Christmas”.

Then, in the same newspaper Richard Devonport Hines wrote a long piece about the use of drugs by writers and inevitably Wilkie is cited as someone who “became dependent on opium originally prescribed to treat his physical pains and strained nerves.” Hines quotes a letter to Paul Hamilton Hayne of 28 January 1885 in which Wilkie says of himself “Laudanum – divine laudanum – was his only friend.” Though whether he really was “drugged out of his senses” when he wrote *The Moonstone* is more doubtful.

And Caroline Moore is to be congratulated for her *Sunday Telegraph* piece of the same date for identifying Professor Tizzi – the narrator of ‘The Yellow Mask’ in *After Dark*. She says he was “venerable, comic, pitiable” in her analysis of scholars in literature. Prof Tizzi

is not the name of a Wilkie character that would spring to mind even among his fans.

Liz Hoggard (*The Observer* 2/11/2003) wrote about the female moustache “still a major taboo” and inevitably refers to Marian Halcombe as the “moustachioed heroine” in *The Woman in White*.

WOMAN IN WHITE – THE MUSICAL

Andrew Lloyd Webber’s musical version of *The Woman in White* is due to open in September at the Palace Theatre London, where *Les Miserables* has been showing for nearly 25 years. It will be directed by Sir Trevor Nunn and the cast will be announced in the New Year. The box office opens in February. Andrew Lloyd Webber’s company The Really Useful Group has confirmed that the new musical is “freely adapted” by Charlotte Jones from the book and has a “hauntingly romantic score” by Lloyd Webber. The company says the musical will “bring to the stage a plot of terrifying brilliance. A handsome young man is stranded at a remote railway cutting. Out of the darkness looms a woman, a mysterious figure dressed in white, who burns to tell a chilling secret. Two sisters find themselves snared in a web of betrayal and greed, the victims of a flawless crime. Unprotected in a man’s world, they will need all their resourcefulness and courage to outwit a villain of overpowering charisma and ingenuity. But they can also rely on the guiding hand of love.” A special website www.womaninwhitemusical.com is promised in the near future.

<http://www.andrewlloydwebber.com/shows/the-woman-in-white>

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NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2004

P. D. JAMES AT THE THACKERAY SOCIETY

Members are reminded of the announcement in the last Newsletter of our joint-meeting with the Thackeray Society on Thursday 27 May 2004 at the Reform Club in London's Pall Mall. Our Patron, the distinguished author P. D. James, will be speaking on 'Wilkie Collins's Contribution to the Detective Novel'.

The evening will commence at 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm with the Thackeray Society's traditional formal dinner-black tie for gentlemen – followed by P. D. James' talk. All members of the WCS are welcome and may bring one guest. The cost of the evening is £45 including wine with dinner. A bookings form from the Reform Club is enclosed and should be returned with your remittance on direct to The Secretary of the Thackeray Society, Reform Club, 104 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5EW.

THE WILKIE COLLINS MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Enclosed with this Newsletter is a piece on The Wilkie Collins Memorial Library which was set up by the journalist Harry Quilter in the early 1890s after permission had been refused for a memorial in St Paul's. Andrew Gasson has been investigating the library's fate in the archives of both the People's Palace in London's Mile End and Stepney Borough Council's Libraries Committee. Much interesting information has come to light but the eventual demise of the Memorial Library remains a 'Dead Secret.'

THE WOMAN IN WHITE – THE MUSICAL

Excitement mounts in theatrical circles over the musical adaptation of *The Woman in White* due to be staged by Andrew Lloyd-Webber at the Palace Theatre in London's Charing Cross Road. Lloyd Webber owns the theatre and there was trouble earlier this year with the cast of *Les Miserables* which is being forced to transfer after a 19 year run at the Palace to the more compact Queen's Theatre with a smaller orchestra pit.

The musical, said to have a £5 million budget, will star Michael Crawford as Fosco and Maria Friedman as Marian Halcombe. Michael Crawford, 62, first hit the musical stage in his *Phantom of the Opera* and was persuaded not to sail the Atlantic single handed in order to take the role of Fosco, his first on the west end stage since *Phantom*. Maria Friedman has won three Olivier Awards, most recently for her role in the musical *Ragtime*.

The script contains an attempted seduction of Marian by Fosco. That was the idea of Charlotte Jones, who is adapting the play for Lloyd Webber. She suggested it at their first meeting and now confesses that the pair are taking 'every liberty' with the story in order to squeeze 600 pages into two and a half hours and make it fit the musical format and the needs of a modern audience.

She also says that Lloyd Webber, whose collection of pre-Raphaelite paintings was recently exhibited at the Royal Academy, is a natural Victorian. You can get a flavour – including some music – at <https://www.andrewlloydwebber.com/shows/the-woman-in-white>

The casting, the money, the writer, the director (Trevor Nunn), and the location mean that *The Woman in White* has international interest. It has been previewed in newspapers in New York and early tickets are already appearing on eBay for inflated prices. It opens for previews on 28 August 2004 and tickets – ranging in price from £15 to £50 can be booked direct on line at www.thisistheatre.com/londonshows/womaninwhite.html or on 0870 895 5579.

This month's *Theatregoer Magazine*, given out free of charge with west end theatre programmes, includes an article about Charlotte Jones and her adaptation. "It helps," according to Jones, "that this one [*The Woman in White*] is flawed. In some ways, this is a bit of a potboiler, so we could be freer with it. Some novels -- Madame Bovary, for instance -- are so revered that people feel very proprietorial and they don't like changes. It's not like that with *The Woman in White*. There'll be purists, but lots of people have said it's their favourite novel and then can't remember a word of it." The author of the article is Georgina Brown of *The Mail on Sunday*.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE –IN INDIA

According to *The Daily Mirror* of 14 January *The Woman in White* is also being turned into a television series in India with the title *Dhawa/a Kanya*. Sangeetha (Laura) from Sudulanda Walawwa in Kapdy marries Sriyantha (Percy) and after the honeymoon the couple come to live in Sriyanthantha's palatial mansion. Here they are joined by his closest friend W. Jayasiri (Fosco) and Sangeetha's sister Jayani (Marian).....

The script is by Professor Nimal Senanayake who is co-producer with Sunil Wickrama. The shooting location is in Galle, Sri Lanka, but for the story it is near Kaludiyawewa which translates as Blackwater Lake. Senanayake is reported as saying that he was so impressed with Wilkie Collins's novel that he thought the unusual plot had the ideal ingredients to make a hit, if it was adapted carefully. He took up the challenge of scripting and spread the story to run for 29 episodes. Further details from <http://www.dailymirror.lk/2004/01/14/feat.asp>.

Wilkie would have almost certainly been very pleased at such an adaptation (probably more than with a musical version) since on 29 December 1883 he wrote to his friend Sebastian Schlesinger: "By-the-bye, I have gained my little distinction, since you last heard of me. My novels are so popular among the native races of India (who can read English) that they are to be translated into the Bengali language for the native inhabitants who want to read me. The Series is to begin with "The Woman in White." There seems to be some promise, in this, of the stories being still alive when the story-teller is dead." Well, how right he was.

THE VAN DE POEL SALE AT CHRISTIE'S

Auction sales often bring out interesting and unique items which have been hidden away for many years. The stunning Van de Poel sale by Christie's on 2 March featured Wilkie's personal copies of the play versions of *No Name* and *The Woman in White*. *No Name* was never actually produced in England although there were two different adaptations. The first was written by W. B. Bernard, shortly after the publication of the book in 1863, whilst the second adaptation was made by Wilkie himself in 1870. This was the copy sold at Christie's as Lot 163. The following item, Lot 164, was Wilkie's own copy of *The Woman in White* play, published in 1871. This was particularly interesting as the author had made numerous alterations to the printed text and had virtually rewritten the last two pages. The actual play was a great success running from 9 October 1871 to 24 February 1872. The auction was also a great success with *The Woman in White* selling for £13,000 plus buyers premium.

THE ARTS CLUB

Members may be interested to follow in Wilkie's footsteps and join The Arts Club which was founded in 1863 for those connected either professionally or as amateurs in the Arts, Literature or Science. In 1896 the Club acquired the freehold of the fine 18th century town house in Dover Street. In the course of its life, the Arts Club has included amongst the various categories of membership many of the most outstanding figures in the history of art, literature and science.

Collins became a member in the 1860s, the decade during which literature was a dominant element of the club's activities. There he might have met Charles Dickens, Charles Reade, Edmund Yates Algernon Swinburne as well as Rossetti, Whistler, Carlo Pellegrini (the *Vanity Fair* caricaturist 'Ape') and Richard Monckton Milnes. A full history of the club was written in 1989 by Bernard Denvir under the title of *A Most Agreeable Society*.

Further details of the Club and its membership are available by telephone from the Membership Secretary on 020 7408 5093 – or look on their website at <https://www.theartsclub.co.uk/>

A COLLINS CONCORDANCE

Since the death of the man behind www.concordance.com there has been no online concordance to Wilkie's works. The gap has been filled by Japanese Victorian literature scholar Mitsuohara Mutsuoka. His Hyper-Concordance contains a searchable database of the works of dozens of authors, including Collins. It enables any word or phrase to be found quickly and in context. At the moment, except for Dickens, searches have to be made on individual works rather than the author's whole *corpus*. Try it at <http://victorian-studies.net/concordance/>

MARY BRADDON

Mary Elizabeth Braddon (1835-1915) was a prolific sensation novelist as well as the founding editor of *Belgravia: A London Magazine* in 1866. She was strongly influenced by Wilkie, amongst others, and in 1887 acknowledged that she owed her best known novel, *Lady Audley 's Secret*, to *The Woman in White* and that “Wilkie Collins is assuredly my literary father.” In *Rough Justice* (I 898), Detective Faunce’s novel reading includes Dickens, Balzac, Gaboriau, Scott and, of course, Wilkie Collins. WCS member, Paul Graham, sends us the following report:

‘As part of the celebration of the life of Mary Elizabeth Braddon, one of the London Borough of Richmond’s illustrious former residents, the Orange Tree Theatre was the venue for two performances of *Secrets and Rumours: The Unconventional Life of M.E. Braddon*. Written by two current Richmond residents, Doug Pinchin and Richard Morris, and based upon Jennifer Carnell’s biography of the novelist, the scene was Braddon’s study in her home, Lichfield House, Richmond, in 1895. A dinner party has just ended, the fashionable guests, including the doomed Oscar Wilde, have just departed, and Braddon (Sabina Franklyn) is left to ruminate upon the scandal that threatened to engulf her. She recalls her precarious days as an actress, her early attempts at authorship under the protection of a deformed publisher in Beverley, East Yorkshire, and her fateful meeting with the handsome publisher, John Maxwell. In a history that would not be out of place in one of her novels, Braddon and Maxwell fell in love but could not marry because Maxwell was already married to a madwoman. When the fact of their unmarried state was revealed, the foundations of their lives were shaken but the storm was ridden out and marriage and respectability eventually followed.’

Although not quite a one-woman show, Sabina Franklyn was assisted by fleeting appearances by four other actors: the success of the play stood or fell upon her performance. Fortunately she was more than capable of carrying the burden. The evening illustrated the massive odds against which Braddon triumphed; fearsome reviews of her acting, George Eliot’s withering criticism of her writing, and the public revelation of her scandalous domestic arrangements following the death of the real Mrs Maxwell which, when reported, led anxious friends to call upon her, as they had assumed she was already Mrs Maxwell.’

Huge credit goes to the theatre for commissioning the play for just two performances and staging it so well in an authentic-looking set. The performance I saw was sold out, and the appreciative audience included a direct descendant of that bold union of Maxwell and Braddon.’

There is also a Study Day from 10.00 am to 5.00 pm on 30 March at the Museum of Richmond. The day features a guided tour around Braddon’s Richmond in the

morning and, in the afternoon, talks from Jennifer Carnell, Gabrielle Malcolm, Matthew Sweet and Kate Mattacks. £15 (£ I O concessions). Information from the Museum of Richmond, Old Town Hall, Whittaker Avenue, Richmond, TW9 1TP.

CHARLES COLLINS IN EXHIBITION

A marvellous collection of landscape paintings by pre-Raphaelite artists is on show at London's Tate Britain gallery. Among 150 works, many from private collections and others seldom seen in public, is Wilkie's brother Charles Allston Collins's *May in the Regent's Park*. Painted in 1851, it is a view from 17 Hanover Terrace where Wilkie and Charles lived with their mother Harriet from 1850 to 1856. The building still stands and the view, from an upstairs window, can still be seen. It looks eastward over what is now the boating lake in Regent's Park. Described by a guide to the exhibition as 'a good painting but not a great painting' it is painted in bands with a narrow sky, trees, lake, park- with sheep-road and finally the garden in front of Hanover Terrace. It still looks remarkably as it did more than 150 years ago. Painted in brilliant colours with what Alison Smith says in the catalogue is 'the detached gaze associated with modern urban landscape'. The picture has been hidden in the Tate storeroom for some years and this may be a rare opportunity to see it. The exhibition, *Pre-Raphaelite Vision*, is on until 3 May before moving to Berlin (12 June to 19 September) and then Madrid (6 October 2004 to 9 January 2005).

THE FRIENDS OF KENSAL GREEN CEMETERY

The latest issue of the Friends' Magazine gives advance notice of this year's open day which will take place on Saturday 4 July. The programme of events will include tours of the cemetery and catacombs as well as the opportunity to see Wilkie's and Caroline's last resting place which is situated close to the central chapel – Grave 31754/square 141/row 1.

The magazine also contains an article by Sam Bull on William Powell Frith, R.A. (1819-1909). The well-known artist, famous for his paintings of *Derby Day* and *Ramsgate Sands*, was a long-standing friend of Wilkie and a fellow student with Charles Collins. Frith participated in their amateur theatricals and was also a regular guest of Dickens. Various anecdotes about Wilkie are to be found in his *My Autobiography and Reminiscences* (1887-1888). Frith is also buried in Kensal Green at square 64/PS.

LEDBURY POETRY FESTIVAL

The 2004 Ledbury Poetry Festival is to be held between 2 and 11 July. As in previous years, there will also be poetry competition with a closing date of 13 August. For a full programme, contact 0845 4581743 or <https://ledburypoetry.org.uk> .

ARNOLD BENNETT AT STAFFORDSHIRE

Staffordshire University is holding a conference with the theme 'Arnold Bennett: New Perspectives' on Saturday 12 June 2004 in the Regional Film Theatre. The conference is being run in association with the Arnold Bennett Society which celebrates its jubilee and aims to raise the profile of the author and to re-appraise his contributions to literature and journalism. The keynote speaker is Roy Hattersley. Full details are available from Lennie Ashwell, Faculty of Arts, Media and Design, Staffordshire University, College Road, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 2XW, or from l.ashwell@staffs.ac.uk.

GEORGE ELIOT

This year's Guided Tours of George Eliot Country are taking place on 16 May, 16 June, 4 August, and 12 September. They are organised by Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council in association with the George Eliot Fellowship who provide the tour guides. Further details from Rose Selwyn on 024 7637 6490 or tourism@nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk.

ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES

Information about a wide range literary activities is available from very worthwhile Alliance of Literary Societies to which the WCS continues to be affiliated. The website at <https://allianceofliterarysocieties.wordpress.com/> lists all of the member groups and gives details of their various forthcoming events plus links to other relevant sites.

**APG
PL**





THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

PATRONS Faith Clarke, Baroness James of Holland Park (P. D. James)
Chairman Andrew Gasson, 3 Merton House, 36 Belsize Park, London, NW3 4EA
Membership Paul Lewis, 4 Ernest Gardens, Chiswick, London W4 3QU

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2004

‘A NATIONAL WRONG’

Enclosed with this Newsletter is ‘A National Wrong’. This previously unsigned article by Wilkie Collins and James Payn, the novelist and editor, was originally published in *Chambers’s Journal* on 12 February 1870. It is now republished for the first time with credit going to Graham Law whose research discovered the piece and who has now edited it for the WCS.

P. D. JAMES ON WILKIE COLLINS

“The novel was innovative at the time it was written and it remains the detective story which more than any other successfully reconciles the novel of excitement and action with the novel of social realism and psychological truth... No other single novel has as comprehensively and brilliantly adumbrated all future developments in this resilient and fascinating genre...*The Moonstone*, one of the most perfectly plotted and technically brilliant novels in the English language, moves confidently forward in its variety, its richness and its sustained excitement.”

That description began a talk by the detective novelist P. D. James on ‘Wilkie Collins’s Influence on the Detective Novel’. Speaking at a joint meeting of the WCS and the Thackeray Society at the Reform Club on 27 May, Lady James concluded that it was “lasting and profound.”

Wilkie Collins introduced psychological realism – “what goes on in the mind is much more important than what is picked up on the drawing room floor.” He created the “professional investigator with orthodox skills and personal eccentricity” in Sergeant Cuff. And he followed the “fair play rule in detective

fiction” so that all the clues are there to lead the reader to the answer by logical deduction – of which *The Moonstone* was “the most convincing early example.”

He was also “meticulous in his research” making sure “historical, forensic and medical details were correct.” Lady James said “we have all learned from Wilkie Collins the necessity for conscientious research and the meticulous attention to scientific and physical details” And she went on to criticise Dorothy L. Sayers, Agatha Christie and others from the so-called ‘golden age’ of detective fiction for their complete lack of credible murders and accurate detail.

Add to that his use of different narrators his powerful description of the physical environment and the dramatic contrast between the “order, comfort and hierarchy of the Verinder household and the alien and terrifying world outside” and you get “the best of modern detective stories in the English language” which was “undoubtedly an influence... in all main aspects of my crime writing.”

She added “Collins shares with Anthony Trollope the ability to create women who are strong, courageous and independent who we can believe are capable of physical passion.” And concluded “It is because Wilkie Collins’s masterpiece so perfectly combines sensationalism with this essential truth of description, truth of character, and truth as to men and women that it has so profoundly influenced the writing of subsequent detective fiction. And more than a hundred and thirty five years after its first appearance still continues to delight and enthrall us.”

Baroness James of Holland Park is a patron of the WCS and we hope to publish her talk at a later date.

82 WIMPOLE STREET

Wilkie Collins lived at 82 Wimpole Street from early 1888 after leaving his former house at 90 Gloucester Place. Wimpole Street is in central London’s Harley Street area on the Howard de Walden Estate and the archivist, Richard Bowden, has recently unearthed the Estate’s documents on Wilkie’s last home. The house today is unlike its immediate neighbours, having been completely rebuilt during the 1920s. The original appearance can be seen in a photograph illustrating Arthur Compton-Rickett’s article ‘Wilkie Collins’ on pp. 107-122 of *The Bookman* of June 1912.

The earliest document from the archives is dated 15 March 1850 and refers to the existing lease to a Mr Thomas Huddle due to expire on Lady Day 1854. The new lease will be granted to Mr Thomas Burn by His Grace the Duke of Portland for a period of 36 years at an annual rent of £50 for a payment or ‘fine’ of £247.

The next document brings us towards the period of Collins's occupation and is dated 5 October 1886. It represents a new lease for a further 36 years, this time granted by the Trustees of the will of William Henry Cavendish Scott, Fourth Duke of Portland to 'Joseph Walker, Esqre M.D. of 22 Grosvenor Street. W.' for a rent of £80. Walker is 'forthwith to insure the premises' for not less than £1200 and to pay a fine of £500. The document also details extensive works to the house which must include thorough repairs to the roof, windows and basement, relaying the floors and drains; and making good brickwork and the first floor balcony and verandah. Collins is not mentioned by name in the lease but we can assume that the house was in excellent order by the time he moved in as a sub-tenant during February or March 1888. In a letter of 22 December 1887 he had written 'I have taken refuge in the upper floors of &2. Wimpole Street, having the whole place to myself excepting only the dining rooms. I may move next month. I must move in February.' Walker was an eminent dental surgeon and had been editor of the *Monthly Review of Dental Surgery*. He had also been awarded the German War Medal which echoes the opening scenes of *The New Magdalen*. Perhaps he used just one or two of the rooms to practise in Wimpole Street which is why Wilkie had the run of most of the house. In any event Collins remained in occupation until his death in September 1889.

The final document in the archives is dated 26 July 1922 on behalf of The Right Honourable Thomas Evelyn Baron Howard de Walden and Seaford and grants a new lease to A. H. Michell Esq. to commence on 6 April 1926. The rent will be £25 for the first twelve months and £70 thereafter. The document also includes a complete Particulars of Works 'To pull down the whole of the existing buildings on the site', defining precisely the nature of the materials to be used in rebuilding the house, and concludes 'The works are to be completed by 6 April 1927.'

WILKIE COLLINS – SENSATION STORIES

Peter Haining, who edited a collection of Wilkie's stories in 1989, has done it again. *Wilkie Collins – Sensation Stories* brings together ten of Wilkie's best, ranging from his first- 'The Last Stage Coachman' (1843) through the wonderful 'The Diary of Anne Rodway' (1856), the inevitable 'The Dream Woman', this time in its 1859 version, to the much later 'The Clergyman's Confession' (1875) and 'Love's Random Shot' (1883). There is a short introduction which makes some rather dubious claims – including that Wilkie went to Winterton as a child and that he met Martha Rudd there as early as 1860. A number of the illustrations are rather badly reproduced. Nevertheless, it is a useful re-publication of some of his hard to find stories. But don't believe the book when it says some of them have 'never been reprinted.' They all have.

Though until now they were mostly out of print. Peter Haining, editor, *Sensation Stories* Peter Owen, London 2004 (£12.50, ISBN 0-7206-1220-9).

‘A HOUSE TO LET’

One story that is very hard to find is Wilkie’s contribution to the 1858 Christmas Number of *Household Words* called ‘A House to Let’. The whole issue has been reprinted by Hesperus publishing and it contains two chapters written jointly by Dickens and Collins and another- ‘Trottle’s Report’ – just by Collins. There is also a chapter by Elizabeth Gaskell, one by Dickens alone, and a poem by Adelaide Anne Proctor. Charles Dickens, *A House to Let* Hesperus 2004 (£6.99 ISBN 1-84391-085-3).

DEATH BY DICKENS

Wilkie and his brother Charles both appear in the role of detective in two stories in *Death By Dickens* edited by thriller writer Anne Perry. The book contains eleven stories inspired by Dickens’s work. Among them ‘The House of the Red Candle’ by Martin Edwards which features Dickens with Wilkie and ‘The Passing Shadow’ by Peter Tremayne which casts Charles Collins as Dickens’s companion. The first owes more to the pastiches by William Palmer than anything either Dickens or Collins wrote. The second is a much more thoughtful and interesting piece, though lacking in genuine Victorian dialogue or manners. In both, the Collinses are Watson to Dickens’s Holmes, solving mysteries in the seedier back streets of London – and both feature a woman called Bella. The book concludes with Anne Perry’s own ‘A Tale of One City’. Anne Perry, editor, *Death By Dickens* Berkley Prime Crime, New York 2004 (ISBN 0-425-19420-5).

THE MAN IN THE MOONSTONE

The Man in the Moonstone is a book for children by Melanie Johnson. This Dinah Galloway mystery puts the heroine in a musical version of *The Moonstone* which sets the scene for adventure and detection. Melanie Johnson, *The Man in the Moonstone* Orca 2003 (ISBN 1-55143-264-1).

THE HAUNTED HOTEL

A new production of *The Haunted Hotel* will be staged at the Gateway Theatre, Chester, from Monday 8 to Saturday 13 November 2004. It will star well known actor, Brian Blessed. This production is adapted for the stage from Collins’s 1878 novel by Philip Dart and Val May. The story is notable as an early – or possibly the first – example of dental records being used to identify a body – or in this case

a head. There was a previous, excellent adaptation for the Channel Theatre Company of *The Haunted Hotel*, just by Philip Dart, in November 1992. In the current version “Blessed plays a theatrical impresario who summons a company of actors to an empty Victorian theatre in order to enact a ghost story for a private performance. As the extraordinary story unfolds, sudden disappearances and horrifying apparitions lead to a harrowing climax.” Further details from the box office on 01244 340392 or from <http://www.chestergateway.co.uk/viewshowdetail.php?id=38>.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE

Michael Crawford fans can hardly contain themselves as the opening night of the musical *The Woman in White* approaches. He stars as Fosco. Music of course is by Andrew Lloyd Webber, with lyrics by David Zippell. We know now that the freely adapted story by Charlotte Jones changes both the secret at the heart of the story and the manner of the death of Glyde. And of course there’s that fatal attraction between Marian, played by Maria Friedman, and Fosco. Preliminary scripts and a couple of early versions of songs have been sold on eBay as have posters for the show and very expensive tickets. An active – and very pro-Michael Crawford – discussion group has started on Yahoo WomanInWhiteTheMusical@yahoogroups.co.uk. But Lloyd Webber’s company, The Really Useful Group, had to suspend its own internet discussion group after other fans used it to abuse Michael Crawford. All very silly. You can keep up with the official news at www.womaninwhitethemusical.com where there is a full cast list and a weekly production diary.

Other members of the cast include Angela Christian and Jill Paice playing Anne Catherick and Laura Fairlie, Martin Crewes as Walter Hartright, with Olivier Darley as Glyde and Edward Petherbridge as Mr Fairlie. The production also features a signalman, ‘corn dolly girls’ and others on swings. Wilkie once suggested perking up a production of his play *No Thoroughfare* by introducing a Swiss ballet danced by “twelve nice girls, with short, transparent petticoats”. If only he knew!

The Palace Theatre, which dates from 1891, is being transformed and refurbished inside and should itself be spectacular. The show opens for previews on 28 August and the full production runs from 15 September until 5 March 2005. Tickets are £15 to £50, though cheaper seats have a restricted view. Call 0870 895 5579 or book through the website.

THE PUBLIC FACE OF WILKIE COLLINS

The collected letters of Wilkie Collins is now less than a year from publication with the above title. The total number of letters tracked down by the editors is tantalisingly close to 3,000 and around 2,000 of those have never been published anywhere before. New letters have turned up in Germany, Poland and France as well as many more in the UK and USA. As well as new information about the battle for copyright, Victorian publishing, Wilkie's love of the theatre and sailing, his travels in Europe and the USA, and his many friends, the book will even reveal which days of the week he favoured for letter writing! *The Public Face of Wilkie Collins* by William Baker, Andrew Gasson, Graham Law and Paul Lewis will be published in June 2005 by Pickering & Chatto in four volumes, price £350/\$540. More at www.pickeringchatto.com/wilkiecollins.htm

E-TEXTS

James Rusk continues to convert Wilkie's work into electronic form. There are now five of Wilkie's plays on his site, including *The Moonstone* and *Black and White*. More are expected at www.blackmask.com/jrusk/wcollins/main.html. Almost all Wilkie's writing is now available in electronic format. Go to www.wilkiecollins.com and menu option 5 for the complete list. You would do better to print them off the web than pay the prices asked by The Wildside Press for its printed out versions of e-texts, which now includes much of Wilkie's work.

CHARLES COLLINS AT THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT

One of Charles Collins's paintings has a new home in London. The Victoria & Albert Museum has opened new Painting Galleries to house the founding collections of paintings donated to it by three Victorian patrons, John Sheepshanks, Constantine Jonides, and Chauncy Hare Townshend. 'The Good Harvest' was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1854 and was previously on display in a dimly lit room at the V&A. Its pre-Raphaelite beauty can now be seen much more easily in the well lit galleries crowded with paintings. Sadly no space has been found in the five rooms for a single one of the seven William Collins paintings that the V&A owns which used to be on show in the Henry Cole Wing.

NEW ZEALAND

Concert cellist Steven Isserlis is a longstanding member of the WCS and never misses a chance on his travels to promote Wilkie Collins's work. Interviewed for the *Dominion Post* in Wellington, New Zealand, he revealed he was reading *Man and Wife* 'the only big Wilkie Collins novel he hadn't read' and he

mentioned not only his 'favourite book of all time', *Armada*, but also his membership of the Society.

DUTCH EDITIONS

WCS member Pierre Tissot van Patot is researching editions of Wilkie's work published in the Netherlands. If any members have any pre 1900 Dutch editions themselves or have information about such editions he would like to hear from you at ptissotvanpatot@technip.com

DOUGLAS JERROLD

The latest issue of *Victorian Studies* (Winter 2004, Vol. 46 No 2) features a detailed review of Michael Slater's *Douglas Jerrold: A Life (1803-1857)*. Jerrold was a dramatist, novelist and journalist and is best known for his association with *Punch*. He edited several periodicals including *The Illuminated Magazine* which published Wilkie's first recorded work, 'The Last Stage Coachman', in 1843. Wilkie took over the role of Mr Shadowly Softhead when Jerrold abandoned the 1851 provincial tour of *Not So Bad as We Seem*. He later composed a biographical tribute, 'Douglas Jerrold', in *Household Words* for 5 February 1859 where he wrote that he was "one of the first and dearest friends of my literary life." When Jerrold died suddenly in 1857, *The Frozen Deep* was revived as one of the events to raise funds for his widow. As the reviewer of this new biography puts it, "For the literary and journalistic life of Douglas Jerrold provides, in miniature, a cultural history of popular and radical culture in the first half of the nineteenth century. As such, Michael Slater's study is essential reading for any student of the period."

MARY BRADDON

For those who missed it earlier in the year, there are two more opportunities to see the play *Secrets and Lies* by Doug Pinchin and Richard Morris, previously mentioned in the spring 2004 Newsletter. The play is about the unconventional life of Mary Braddon with the title derived from "the secrets and rumours she had to keep hidden from her adoring public ... which if fully revealed would destroy her reputation as a writer." Mary Braddon acknowledged in 1887 that she owed *Lady Audley's Secret* to *The Woman in White* and that "Wilkie Collins is assuredly my literary father." The production features Sabrina Franklyn and will be staged at Ham House on Sundays 19 and 26 September 2004. Further details available from Ham House, Ham Street, Richmond upon Thames TW10 7RS, 020 8940 1950 or the Ticket Office, 01494 755572.

THE MARGERY ALLINGHAM SOCIETY

Margery Allingham is probably best known for her detective Albert Campion. Chairman Barry Pike has written that over the next few months the Margery Allingham Society is celebrating the centenary of her birth on 20 May 1904: she died in 1966. The anniversary is being marked by a series of events including exhibitions at the Barbican and National Portrait Gallery; a new book, *Margery Allingham: 100 Years of a Great Mystery Writer* published by Lucas Books; talks by Susan Rowland at the Mayfair Library and one by Leslie Forbes at the University Women's Club. There is also a weekend conference in Chelmsford in September.

For information about the Margery Allingham Society, write to Mrs Marianne Van Hoever, 9 Bailey Street, Castle Acre, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE32 2AG (margeryallingham.org.uk)."

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THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2004

THE WCS JOURNAL

The 2004 number of the *Wilkie Collins Society Journal*, editors Graham Law and Lillian Nayder report, has missed the Christmas deadline at the printers by the proverbial whisker. They would like to apologize to contributors and subscribers alike for the delay and are confident that the latest issue will be available early in the New Year.

Volume 7 will contain four articles covering the length and breadth of Collins's career. Laurence Vielmas gives a detailed reading of two novels from the last decade of the author's life (*Jezebel's Daughter* and *Heart and Science*), unravelling their relations to the new mode of scientific Gothic and its work in the reconstruction of gender roles in the later nineteenth century. Angela Richardson, on the other hand, goes back to the author's early teens and offers a new reading of Harriet Collins's manuscript *Italian Journal of 1836-37*, making the case for the mother to be treated as an author in her own right. In between, Graham Stott and Carolyn Oulton return to two of the major sensation novels of the 1860s (*The Woman in White* and *Armadale*, respectively), focusing in turn on the dynamics of weekly serial publication and the conventions of romantic friendship.

In addition, in the Reviews section, there will be a notice of *Reality's Dark Light*, edited by Maria K. Bachman and Don Richard Cox, the first collection of scholarly essays on the author to appear since *Wilkie Collins to the Forefront* (1995). This is followed by a review of two specialist studies by Alexis Weedon and Bradley Deane on the Victorian fiction industry with particular reference to the rise of the mass market, both of which give a prominent place to the author of 'The Unknown Public'.

We are sure that the issue will be worth waiting for! It will be the subject of a separate mailing and should be sent out in January.

UNPUBLISHED PLAY

During research for the forthcoming edition of Collins's letters at various county records offices, some unpublished notes by Collins have been discovered. These represent his working ideas for a possible play which in the event was never

completed. It is hoped to send a transcript of these notes with background details and an introduction also in the early part of 2005.

A WILKIE COLLINS CONFERENCE

The University of Sheffield is hosting a one-day conference on Wilkie Collins on Saturday 19 March 2005. There is no theme, but papers on his life and literature have been submitted and there will be a panel on the forthcoming edition of his letters. Jenny Bourne Taylor and Graham Law are confirmed speakers. Further details are available from Andrew Mangham, Department of English Literature, University of Sheffield, Western Bank, Sheffield, S10 2TN or egp02asm@sheffield.ac.uk. The University website is at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/english/events/collins1.html>. Proceedings will be reported in the 2005 *WCS Journal*.

WILKIE COLLINS BREAKS SOME RECORDS

2004 is the year that Wilkie Collins has gone mad – or at least the prices of his books have. Wednesday 3 March saw the renowned *Halsead Vander Poel Collection of English Literature* come under the hammer at Christie's in London. Collins was in highly esteemed company with entire collection containing some of the most significant books of English literature from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries.

Wilkie was represented by three items. Lot 163 consisted of a first edition of *No Name* with a short autograph letter together with a copy of the dramatic version of *No Name* privately published by the author in a small edition during 1870. This sold for about £3,800 including the auction premium. Lot 165, however, was a copy of the more unusual, dramatic version of *The Woman in White* also 'published by the author', in 1871. This was a unique copy since Collins had made alterations to the last two pages of the text but it sold for a little under £16,000 with the auction premium. But do not despair if you missed the sale, since the play is still available from Boston bookseller Peter Stern at the revised price of a mere \$65,000. The third lot, 164, consisted of reviews of *The Woman in White* play published as a 16 page pamphlet in 1871 as *Specimens of Criticism Extracted from Notices of "The Woman in White" in the Press*. A year or two ago another copy was sold by a US bookseller for \$500 but lot 164 sold for nearly £1,700 inclusive. In 1871 it was probably given away free.

A more recent Sotheby's auction on 3 December sold books from 'the Library of Mrs J. Insley Blair' another notable American collector. There were four Collins items. Lot 126 was a first edition of the 1852 *Mr Wray's Cash-Box* which sold for \$960 while lot 129, the 1873 dramatic version of *The New Magdalen*, went for the same inclusive price which was probably fairly reasonable for a rare publication. More exciting was a first edition in original cloth of *The Woman in White* which sold for an astonishing \$30,000 against an estimate of \$6-8,000. But this proved a mere trifle compared with a first of *The Moonstone* in cloth which went for the stratospheric \$125,600 which must be a record for any published Wilkie book.

Prices also seem to be rocketing with both traditional and internet booksellers. An 1861 one volume edition of *The Woman in White*, inscribed by Collins during his visit to Rome in 1864 but rebound in elaborate modern calf, can be had from Houle Rare Books for \$7,500 while the aforementioned Peter Stern could let you have a copy of

After Dark in original cloth for just \$12,500. If collections are more to your taste, the Heritage Bookshop of Los Angeles has for sale 28 Collins titles in 66 volumes – mainly first editions in two or three volumes – uniformly rebound in leather at \$30,000.

In his lifetime, the maximum Wilkie received for writing one of his books was the £5,000 agreed by Smith, Elder for *Armada/e* which was published in 1866. At the time, this was the highest sum ever paid to an author with the exception of Dickens.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE MUSICAL

The first word in the musical version of *The Woman in White* that Collins himself actually wrote is ‘crush’. When Marian Halcombe tells Walter Hartright he must give up his love for Laura Fairlie because she is engaged to Sir Percival Glyde, Collins wrote “‘Crush it!’ she said. ‘Here, where you first saw her, crush it!’”. Lyricist David Zippel had Marian sing “You must crush all feelings for her”. That is the first evidence, 32 minutes into the production, that he had read the book.

The show, with music by Andrew Lloyd Webber and tightly directed by Trevor Nunn, opens with a scene straight from Dickens’s ghost story *The Signalman* and echoes the 1948 film of *The Woman in White* rather than Collins’s own dramatisation of the book itself. It uses characters that are very different from the originals to move through scenes vaguely related to Collins’s plot. Marian (Maria Friedman) is beautiful and girly; Laura (Jill Paice) is strong; Hartright (Martin Crewes) does little; and Mr Fairlie (Edward Petherbridge) is camp rather than hypochondriac. Strangely it is Sir Percival Glyde who most resembles Collins’s original character – Oliver Darley gives us a sleek and creepy villain. Fosco, conceived by Collins as a contradiction – a fat man who is evil rather than jolly- has his jollity and humour restored by a padded and prostheticised Michael Crawford. The secret is changed – Glyde seduced Anne Catherick and drowned her baby – and his death inevitably comes on the railway track with which the story opens rather than Collins’s more dramatic original in a vestry fire.

The hi-tech set, using projected computer graphics onto a mobile cyclorama mounted on a revolve, with doors that magically arrive at the right place and time for an entry or exit, is as effective as a flight simulator in swooping the audience through the perspective of the many scene changes. Marian’s soaking in a thunderstorm as she overhears Glyde and Fosco plotting is well done, as are the wedding, Laura’s refusal to sign the unread document, and the rescue from the asylum. The sisters’ talk of their powerlessness in the face of men is reminiscent of the book. But these are small islands in a sea of doggerel set to unmemorable tunes sung by over-amplified voices.

The packed house, the many overseas visitors, the frequent applause, a standing ovation at the end, seven nominations for Theatregoers Choice Awards 2005, and the plans to open the play in New York in November 2005 show that many people love it. Perhaps they are Lloyd Webber or Michael Crawford fans rather than readers of Wilkie Collins. In the seduction scene of Marian – I am not making this up – Fosco sings “I can get away with everything because I have no shame”. Mmmm.

The *Woman in White* is at London's Palace Theatre. It has been beautifully restored by Lloyd Webber's Really Useful Theatre Company which has managed to persuade the National Portrait Gallery and the Tate Gallery to lend two relevant works for temporary display in the foyer. These are the portrait of the young Collins by Sir John Everett Millais and Frederick Walker's famous poster for the first production of the *Woman in White* at the Olympic Theatre in the 1870s. There are also two fine pictures from Lloyd Webber's own collection. With contributions by William Clarke and Andrew Gasson, an interesting exhibition on Collins is staged in the corridor next to the stalls bar and memorabilia are on sale downstairs. The show runs until 3 September 2005. Tickets from the box office on 0870 895 5579. More on www.womaninwhitethemusical.com

THE HAUNTED HOTEL

The Haunted Hotel is a successful adaptation of Collins's 1879 ghost story by Philip Dart and Val May and has toured England for the last two months. The construction of the play is based on the story within a story. Sir Francis Westwick, a relative of the Westwicks of Collins actual novel is an actor manager in desperate need of a hit to save his failing Majestic Theatre in 1900. He invites the famous actor Gerald Ivor and his leading lady to a midnight reading of a new play which follows the plot of *The Haunted Hotel* originally set by Collins in 1860. This is a clever way of presenting the story, combining Collins's mystery and suspense with some on and off stage hauntings to surprise both the cast within a cast and the real life audience. Although a novel approach, some of these extra dramatic happenings do distract from the main storyline which otherwise fairly accurately presents Collins's original plot.

The play stars Colin Baker as an excellent Sir Francis – a part which was originally to have been taken by Brian Blessed – Lynette McMorrough as Lady Westwick, Dominic Kemp as Gerald Ivor, Elizabeth Counsell as Maria Cavenna, Louise Breckon-Richards as Evelyn Collier and Richard Hodder as Albert Denny. The play is directed by Val May. His co-adaptor, Philip Dart, was responsible for a previous production of *The Haunted Hotel* by the Charmel Theatre Company in 1992.

GONG DONKEYS

Gong Donkeys is an unconventional play which neatly slips Wilkie Collins into the humorous but rather sad storyline along with Charles Dickens and Ellen Ternan. The play is set in the rough end of Doncaster where the bookish David from the smart side of town comes to stay with his aunt and uncle during the school holidays whilst his mother is in a mental hospital because of her husband's infidelities. Cleverly interwoven with the real life drama of his parents' imminent divorce is his uncle Robert's obsession with the Dickens and Collins journey to Doncaster in 1857. The trip of course was a subterfuge of Dickens to be in Doncaster for Race Week where he could meet the young actress Ellen Ternan. Soon after, he was himself to separate from Catherine Dickens. The publicity material describes the play as "a story about storytelling" which it does on several levels including the amateur theatricals into which David is drawn by his cousin Charlene and her two backward, misfit friends, Gobbo and Wink.

Dickens and Collins jointly wrote up their expedition in the ‘Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices’, published in *Household Words* 3-31 October 1857. Uncle Robert in one scene of *Gong Donkeys* relates Collins’s story of ‘The Double-Bedded Room’ which was later republished as ‘Brother Morgan’s story of The Dead Hand’ in *The Queen of Hearts* (1859). ‘The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices’ where Collins assumes the role of Thomas Idle and Dickens that of Francis Goodchild also involves storytelling. But the other theme of assumed identity is picked up in *Gong Donkeys*. The title was a term coined by Dickens to describe the Doncaster rowdies who made a noise between a gong and the braying of a donkey.

Gong Donkeys was written by Richard Cameron (author of *The Glee Club*) and directed by Mike Bradwell. It was staged at the Bush theatre in London’s Shepherd’s Bush from 3 November to 11 December. For those who missed the production, the text of the play has been published by Methuen (ISBN 0 413 77494 5).

THE WOMAN IN WHITE ON RADIO 2

A new reading of *The Woman in White* has begun on BBC Radio 2. Abridged by Paul Kent into eight fifteen minute episodes, the adaptation is read by actor Dougray Scott. It is broadcast in the UK on Fridays from 10 December at 9.15pm GMT, but pauses over Christmas and New Year. You can listen to each episode for up to a week after transmission on the internet at www.bbc.co.uk/radio2.

MILLAIS’S DRAWINGS

John Everett Millais (1829-1896) was a lifelong friend of Wilkie. A founder of the pre-Raphaelite movement, he later became President of the Royal Academy. His paintings are still well known but an exhibition at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery – transferring later to London – celebrates his less familiar drawings. Millais was a superb draughtsman who, even as his fame grew, continued to produce illustrations for books and periodicals. His first book illustration was the frontispiece for Collins’s *Mr Wray’s Cash-Box* dated 1852 but published for the Christmas market in 1851. Birmingham Gallery unearthed a preliminary drawing for this work, previously misclassified, which is shown beside a fine example of the first edition of the book. The exhibition runs until 17 January and will move to Leighton House, 12 Holland Park Road, London W14 8LZ from 19 February to 29 April 2005.

THE SECRET LIFE OF WILKIE COLLINS

The Secret Life of Wilkie Collins has recently been republished by Sutton Publishing and its author, William Clarke, writes:

“This latest paperback edition of my biography of Wilkie Collins, first published in 1988, was deliberately timed to coincide with the opening of Andrew Lloyd Webber’s musical *The Woman in White* at the Palace Theatre, London, on September 15. It seemed an opportunity to extend interest in the novelist to an even wider audience. Copies are on sale at the theatre.

It also gave me an opportunity to up-date the biography in the light of subsequent publications about Collins, especially Catherine Peters’ *The King of Inventors: A Life*

of *Wilkie Collins* (1991) and Andrew Gasson's *Wilkie Collins – An Illustrated Guide* (1998). The new edition also covers the dramatic appearance of the manuscript of Wilkie's first novel *Iolani* in New York in 1991 and its first publication in 1999. It had been turned down by both Longmans and Chapman and Hall in the mid-1840s. As Wilkie himself subsequently confessed: 'My youthful imagination ran riot among the noble savages, in scenes which caused the respectable publisher to declare that it was impossible to put his name on the title-page of such a novel.'

The Secret Life of Wilkie Collins by William Clarke. Sutton Publishing, Third Paperback Edition, ISBN 0 7509 37661, 2004 Price £7.99.

A NEW PUBLICATION

One of Wilkie's most popular short stories 'A Terribly Strange Bed' has been republished by Broadview press in a new collection, *Victorian Short Stories* edited by Dennis Denisoff of Ryerson University, Toronto. A bargain at £12.99. ISBN 1 551113562. Broadview over the last few years have published excellent critical editions of *The Evil Genius*, *The Moonstone*, *Heart and Science* and more recently *Blind Love*.

NEW BIOGRAPHIES

The monumental Oxford Dictionary of National Biography was published in September. Its 60 volumes contain new biographies of Wilkie (by WCS member Catherine Peters, author of *The King of Inventors*); his brother Charles (by WCS member William Baker); his father William Collins RA (by Diane Perkins); and his aunt, the painter Margaret Carpenter (by WCS member Richard Smith). The 50,000 entries also include biographies of many of Wilkie's friends and colleagues. The printed version is probably out of most people's reach at £7,500 – even if shelf space were available to house it. There is, however, an online subscription which gives access to the same data in an easily searchable and more versatile form which will have the advantage of regular quarterly updates. This is also expensive at £195 a year but you can take a trial subscription for three months at £50 and download all the pieces you want – or go to a good library and photocopy them. More information is available at <mailto:onlineproducts@oup.com> or fax: +44 (0) 1865 353308

COLLINS'S LETTERS

The collected edition of all known letters written by Wilkie Collins is on schedule for publication in June 2005. Proofs are being checked as you read this and the editors are very excited by the wealth of new material that has been unearthed and the numerous new connections and deductions that have been made. Its 1,600 pages will contain nearly 3,000 letters, more than 2000 of which have never been published anywhere before. *The Public Face of Wilkie Collins* will be a major contribution to Collins scholarship. The four volume set from Pickering & Chatto will be £350. ISBN 1 85196 764 8.

WEEKLY WILKIE

A new website lets you read nineteenth century serial novels in weekly parts, exactly as the Victorian reader did, week by week. www.hapka.com/mousehold currently has two Collins novels: *The Woman in White* and *No Name* which will be emailed to you once a week. The text is not the original from the periodical publication but a later book edition divided up into the equivalent weekly portions. It can be very compulsive! You have to register, but there is no charge. The site also contains work by Dickens, Dumas, Stevenson, Reade and Lytton. More will be added.

J. K. ROWLING ON COLLINS

The Moonstone is 'a cracking read' according to the author J. K. Rowling. Speaking in Edinburgh at a reading of her work, the creator of Harry Potter told the audience "The last novel that I read was Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone*, which I have been meaning to read for years. It is a cracking read. I have just been on holiday and, for the first time in five years, I did not take any Iris Murdoch with me because it is so depressing. I was just about to put one in my case and I thought, "Why do this? Why put yourself through this?" so I didn't bother. I read Wilkie Collins instead and it was a much better experience."

CHRIS WILLIS

Members will be saddened to hear of the death of Victorian scholar Chris Willis at the age of 44. Chris joined the Wilkie Collins Society in 1996. She edited editions of both *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone* and recently produced an edition of the first novel of Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *The Trail of the Serpent*. Chris believed the boy detective in this book was the inspiration for Gooseberry in *The Moonstone*. She never sent an email without appending a note on her latest political campaign – whether against the Iraq war, for the prisoners in Guantanamo Bay, or to protect hedgerows or Victorian buildings. She will be missed. Her best memorial is her own website www.chriswillis.freeserve.co.uk which scholars are working to preserve. It is hard to realise the creative force behind it is no more.

NO NAME

US bookseller, John Motavalli of Connecticut, apart from selling Collins titles is a dedicated fan. Like many of us he was first hooked on Wilkie by reading *The Woman in White*. His current project, however, is a screen adaptation of *No Name* which he has co-written with a colleague. This has apparently attracted some interest in the States and he is hopeful that it might result in a screen or television version.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Membership subscriptions are due on 1 January. If you have not paid for 2005 – a few have already sent in their dues – there is a separate reminder with this Newsletter. If it has crossed with your subscription, then please ignore it.

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THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2005

THE PUBLIC FACE OF WILKIE COLLINS – SPECIAL TERMS FOR MEMBERS

The four volumes of Wilkie's letters, published under the title *The Public Face of Wilkie Collins* are due to be published in early to middle June of this year. The full price for the complete publication – volumes are not sold separately – is £350. The WCS, however, has been able to negotiate with Pickering & Chatto generous terms for members so that they can receive a 30% discount off the published price – making it just £245.

The offer is strictly for individual, non-institutional members of the society with the following conditions:

- Orders must be placed on or before the 1st of September 2005.
- They should be e-mailed or phoned through to James Powell at james@pickeringchatto.co.uk or on 020 7405 1005.
- In their correspondence with James Powell, members should refer to this offer and the WCS.

The Public Face contains a shade under 3,000 letters by Collins of which more than 2,000 have never been published before. Since the book went to press another couple of letters have turned up – one at auction and one in a 1917 catalogue. Updates will be published in the *Wilkie Collins Society Journal*.

COLLINS – A VICTORIAN LITERARY FIGURE

More news from Pickering & Chatto re-enforces Collins's continuing importance in studies of Victorian literature. Collins is the subject of one of the volumes in their ongoing 'Lives of Victorian Literary Figures' series. Part V comes out in 2006 with Collins featuring in a three-volume

set alongside Mary Elizabeth Braddon and William Thackeray. The author will be Professor William Baker and details can be seen at <http://www.pickeringchatto.com/victorianlives5.htm>. We hope to arrange a similar discount for WCS members in due course.

SHEFFIELD CONFERENCE

Andrew Mangham is to be congratulated on arranging an excellent one-day conference at the University of Sheffield on 19 March 2005 which turned out to be a truly international day. About fifty people attended with speakers and delegates from Europe, the United States and Japan.

The meeting began with a roundtable discussion conducted by Jenny Bourne Taylor and featuring several of the contributors to her forthcoming *Companion* who explained their particular emphasis on Collins studies. The first session continued with separate presentations by Graham Law (Waseda University) and Paul Lewis (WCS) on different aspects of their work on the forthcoming 'Letters' and concluded with Holly Furneaux (Birkbeck College) on 'Hold the "Matrimonial Sauce": The Celebration of Bachelorhood in Collins and Dickens'.

The session on 'Art and Illusion' featured Elizabeth Anderman (Colorado) on 'Paintings, Pater and the Aesthetic: How Reading and Perspective Create Sensation in Wilkie Collins *The Law and the Lady*'; Clare Douglass (North Carolina) on 'Text and Image Together: The Influence of Illustration and the Victorian Market in the Novels of Wilkie Collins'; and Aoife Leahy (Dublin) on 'The Evil of Raphaelesque Art: An Arc Throughout the Fiction of Wilkie Collins'.

A parallel session on 'Gender and Identity' included papers from Andrew Mangham (Sheffield) on "'What Could I Do?": Nineteenth-Century Psychology and the Depths of Masculinity in *The Woman in White*'; Tony Garland (Leicester) "'Pliable Under Change": Identity Anxiety and *The Woman in White* as Sensation Fiction'; and Jessica Cox (Swansea) on 'Miss or Mrs?: Gender Confusion in the Novels of Wilkie Collins'.

The concluding session on 'Genre and Narrative' featured talks on the stage adaptation of *The Woman in White* by Janice Norwood, who had gathered a good deal of new information on early versions of the play, together with papers on *The Fallen Leaves* by Anne-Marie Beller and *Heart and Science* by Christina Leja.

It is hoped to publish some or all of the papers presented at the Sheffield conference in the next issue of *Wilkie Collins Society Journal*.

THE DICKENSIAN

The latest issue of *The Dickensian* (Winter 2004, No. 464, Vol. 100, Part 3) contains various items of Collins interest.

Paul Lewis returns to his theme about Charles Dickens's famous bonfire in September 1860 at Gad's Hill where he burned a vast wealth of accumulated correspondence. Paul examines the evidence in detail and cogently challenges the generally accepted account and relates the events to the lives of Dickens, Collins and their families.

There is also a note that "the monument to Douglas Jerrold in West Norwood Cemetery has been reconstructed, after its destruction in the 1980s. There will be a re-dedication service on Saturday 21 May 2005 at 2.30 pm. All are welcome to attend at the West Norwood Cemetery in south London, SE27."

Jerrold (1803-1857) was editor of *The Illuminated Magazine* which published Collins's first known published article, 'The Last Stage Coachman', in August 1843. The two appeared together in amateur theatricals and Wilkie later wrote "Douglas Jerrold was one of the first and dearest friends of my literary life." Jerrold died suddenly in 1857 and *The Frozen Deep* was revived as one of a series of events to raise funds for his widow.

Finally, *The Dickensian* gives a brief description of Collins's and Dickens's ascent of Carrick Fell in September 1857. This became the first part of 'The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices', published in *Household Words* for 3 October 1857.

THE DICKENSIAN EXHIBITION

'100 Years of The Dickensian' is the current exhibition at the Dickens House Museum (48 Doughty Street, London WC1N 2LX). The display shows the history of a magazine that was first published in 1905 as the publication of the Dickens Fellowship, itself established in 1902. With an uninterrupted run, *The Dickensian* is one of the oldest literary magazines in the world. Over the years, because of the close association between Wilkie and Dickens, there have been many articles of interest to Collins scholars. The opening hours are Monday-Saturday 10.00-4.30, Sunday

11.00-4.30. Admission £5 (and concessions); telephone 020 7405 2127, www.dickensmuseum.com.

COLLINS AT AUCTION

Collins continues to achieve staggering prices at auction. A major sale took place on Wednesday 23 March with the auction of the Library of George Cosmatos. Cosmatos was a major film director and during his career had time to amass a superb collection of books and manuscripts. Amongst them were five early Collins editions. Lot 51 was a first English edition of *The Frozen Deep* (1874) which fetched £1,140 including the buyer's premium, against an estimate of £500-800. This seemed a high price as the copy for sale was a later, variant binding in brown cloth – an edition intended for sale by W. H. Smith. Lot 52 consisted of the first edition of *Memoirs of the Life of William Collins* and the first American edition of *The Moonstone* which together sold for £984 against an estimate of £700-800.

The highest price, however, was achieved by Lot 49, the first American edition of *The Woman in White* which was published in one volume and sold for £6,600 against the estimate of £6,000-8,000. Sold with a *carte de visite* photograph of Collins, it was certainly a very good copy which had originally belonged to Morris L. Parrish who published the standard Collins bibliography in 1940. As usual, this edition has the figure of a woman blocked on the lower part of the spine although in this copy the blocking appears to have been skilfully painted in after publication. Sotheby's description continues to perpetuate the myth that the US edition, published in August 1860, preceded the first English edition by a month, and erroneously describes the latter as issued in September. In fact Collins tried to arrange that both US and English editions should be published simultaneously and evidence suggests that there was at most one day between their respective publication dates.

One item, Lot 50, the first English edition of *No Name* remained unsold. This was not surprising since it is a relatively easy first edition title and had a very high estimate of £1,000-1,500.

FAT AND 'OPENBOOK'

BBC Radio's regular Sunday afternoon book programme, 'Open Book', on 9 January presented a special edition on 'Fat' and how the meaning of fat has changed for writers since novels of the nineteenth century. The discussion included details of several books with fat

protagonists, from Charles Dickens's *Pickwick Papers* and *David Copperfield* via Frank Richards's *Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School* to William Golding's *The Lord of The Flies*.

Collins continues to be the reference point for so many aspects of fiction and during the broadcast, his archetypal villain, Fosco, was mentioned as one of the favourite fat character to appear in a book.

The programme did, however, omit to mention Wilkie's most appropriate quote of all for the avoirdupois-challenged – "My weight has been the grand misfortune of my life." This first appeared in the short story 'Picking up Waifs at Sea' which formed Chapter 4 of the Extra Christmas number of *All the Year Round* for December 1861 and was subsequently included as 'The Fatal Cradle: Otherwise the Heartrending Story of Mr Heavysides' in *Miss or Mrs? And Other Stories in Outline* (1873). The humorous story concerns two babies born at sea, their identities confused by being placed in the same makeshift cradle and 'allocated' to parents by virtue of their weight.

THE LIGHTHOUSE – AN ANNIVERSARY

The night of 16 June 2005 is the 150th anniversary of the first ever production of Collins's play, *The Lighthouse*. In May 1855, Wilkie sent the finished play to Dickens who enthusiastically took over its production as one of his amateur theatrical pieces at his own little theatre at Tavistock House. The play is set in the Eddystone Lighthouse of 1748; Dickens played the head lightkeeper, Aaron Gurnock, and Wilkie his son, Martin. Other parts were played by Augustus Egg, Mark Lemon, Mary Dickens and Georgina Hogarth.

The production ran for four nights – all oversubscribed – from 16 June with Clarkson Stanfield painting the scenery and Francesco Berger composing the overture and incidental music. There was one further performance on 10 July at Colonel Waugh's miniature theatre at Campden House, Kensington, in aid of The Bournemouth Sanatorium of Consumption and Diseases of the Chest. The play received good reviews but a report of Wilkie's acting was less enthusiastic. John Lehmann's *Ancestors and Friends* records a letter describing the dress rehearsal at Colonel Waugh's private theatre: "Last night...Mrs Collins sat next to me and got every now and then so excited applauding her son Wilkie that I thought the respectable, comely old woman would explode, he all the time looking and acting most muffishly. Nothing could be better than the drama as drama, but oh, he makes a most unloving and unlovable lover."

Because of the play's success, Wilkie immediately hoped for a production on the professional stage for *The Lighthouse* but this did not take place until two years later at the Royal Olympic Theatre, from 10 August to 17 October 1857. This became Collins's first professional production with Frederick Robson playing Aaron Gurnock and George Vining reading the Prologue. There were also several amateur productions from 1865, many of which featured Wilkie's friend, Palgrave Simpson.

We have been in touch with various theatre companies, so far without success, to see if a production of *The Lighthouse* could be arranged to coincide with the anniversary. If any member knows of an amateur theatrical group which would be interested in either staging a production or simply doing a play reading, please contact Andrew Gasson.

THE DEAD ALIVE

Due to be published at the end of May, is *The Dead Alive: A new edition with an account of the actual case* by Rob Warden (Northwestern, ISBN 0810122944). There is also a foreword by Scott Turow, the author of several legal thrillers, who writes that on the evidence of *The Dead Alive* Wilkie Collins might well be the first author of a legal thriller. Here is the lawyer out of sorts with his profession; the legal process gone awry; even a touch of romance to soften the rigors of the law. And here, too, recast as fiction, is the United States' first documented wrongful conviction case. Side by side with the novel, this book presents the real-life legal thriller Collins used as his model – the story of two brothers, Jesse and Stephen Boom, sentenced to death in Vermont in 1819 for the murder of their brother-in-law, and belatedly exonerated when their “victim” showed up alive and well in New Jersey in 1820. Wilkie's story, later republished as *John Jago's Ghost*, was originally published in various periodicals of the time between the end of December 1873 and February 1874.

The forthcoming publication was spotted by a member of the Wilkie Collins list, Michael, who notes that “Rob Warden, one of the nation's most eloquent and effective advocates for the wrongly convicted, reconsiders the facts of the Boom case for what they can tell us about the systemic flaws that produced this first-known miscarriage of justice – flaws that continue to riddle our system of justice today. A tale of false confessions and jailhouse snitches, of evidence overlooked, and justice more blinkered than blind, the Booms' story reminds us of the perennial nature of the errors at the heart of American jurisprudence – and of

the need to question and correct a system that regularly condemns the innocent.” The book is available through Amazon at \$16.47 plus shipping.

KENSAL GREEN CEMETERY

The Friends of Kensal Green Cemetery are holding their annual Open Day on Sunday 10 July from 10.00am – 5.00 pm. There will be the usual tours, stalls, band and other activities. This year the event will be combined with 60th VE and VJ celebrations. Wilkie’s grave is number 31754, Square 141, Row 1, close to the central Chapel.

THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO WILKIE COLLINS

The Cambridge Companion to Wilkie Collins will be published in 2006. Edited by Jenny Bourne Taylor (author of *In the Secret Theatre of Home* (1988) and editor of the Oxford University Press edition of *The Law and the Lady*), the *Companion* will offer a critical resource for students, teachers and others interested in new critical perspectives on Collins’s work. The edition will cover the whole of Collins’s career, with a biographical chapter, overviews of the early and late writing, together with discussions of the short stories and the plays in the context of Victorian theatre. Other chapters will focus on different aspects of Collins’s work: his shifting position as a professional writer; his pivotal role as a sensation novelist, and ‘master of detective fiction’; his ambivalent representation of marriage and the position of women; his uneasy portrayal of masculinity; and his complex representations of race and disability. A final chapter will explore ‘Collins’s afterlives’ – his still powerful influence on writers today, as well as looking at rewritings and adaptations of his work. Jenny Bourne Taylor has assembled a distinguished panel of contributors including Tim Dolin, Anthea Trodd, Lyn Pykett, Graham Law, Lillian Nayder, Kate Flint, John Kucich, Carolyn Dever, John Bowen, Jim Davies, Ronald Thomas, and Rachel Malik.

NO NAME

Novelist Nick Hornby gives a lively if rather critical review of *No Name* in his new collection of essays, *The Polysyllabic Spree* (ISBN 1932416242). “...in fact, the last four hundred and eighteen pages nearly killed me, and I wish I were speaking figuratively. We fought, Wilkie Collins and I. We fought bitterly and with all our might, to a standstill, over a period of about three weeks...”

THE LAW AND THE LADY ON RADIO 4

A one-hour version of *The Law and the Lady* was broadcast in January on Radio 4 as part of its 'Lady Detectives' series. The abridgement of a three-volume novel into a one-hour play was done extremely well by director Patrick Rayner. The BBC has no plans to publish the CD of the series, or the play, at the moment. But it is always worth keeping an eye on BBC7, the digital radio station that rebroadcasts a good deal of wonderful drama from Radio 4. You can access it online at www.bbc.co.uk/bbc7.

THE FROZEN DEEP – A DRAMATIC VERSION

A version of *The Frozen Deep* will be performed by theatre company Ironduke at the Edinburgh festival this year. The 55 minute adaptation has been dramatised from the short story by Pauline Flannery, who will also direct the play. Pauline has previously dramatised successful versions of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. The play is billed as 'against the backdrop of Franklin's doomed expedition to find the North-West Passage in 1845, experience a tale of sex and sacrifice in the North Pole.' The play runs from Monday 8 to Sunday 21 August (except Monday 15th), at Augustine's Sanctuary and there is a discount on the £7 ticket price for WCS members who can get them for £5. Book through Augustine's on 08452 262721 and mention you are a WCS member

THE WOMAN IN WHITE

A version of *The Woman in White* was performed by Louth Playgoers at the Riverhead Theatre, Louth, on 18 and 19 March. And *The Woman in White* was the book of the big read at the Cookham-on-Thames Festival on 30 April.

A GERMAN WEBSITE

Daniel Stark from Germany has created a new Wilkie Collins website entirely in German. www.wilkiecollins.de contains translations of Wilkie's work into the German language, many of them done by Daniel himself. There is also some biographical material, including a map of the Collins's family's trip to Italy in 1836. Some of these items contain a sound file of the items being read aloud which will play on your computer. If you speak German, an interesting resource.

FRENCH TITLES

The first etext in French of Wilkie Collins has been recently published online. It is *L'hotel hanté – The Haunted Hotel* and is at www.ebooksgratuits.com or from www.gutenberg.org. There are also half a dozen scans of French editions of Collins books at the website of the French national library <http://gallica.bnf.fr> but they have not yet been converted into etexts.

THE OTHER WILKIE COLLINS

Work on *The Public Face of Wilkie Collins* has turned up many strange things. But perhaps the oddest is the fact that there were two other Wilkie Collins listed in the 1871 census. One was a duplicate Collins family, but a generation younger than Wilkie's. Father William, a letter carrier, was born in 1833 and his wife, Harriet, a dressmaker in 1832. Wilkie Collins himself (Wilkie E. Collins) was born in 1865 and had a brother Charles, born in 1863. Siblings Ellen, Harriet A., Oliver and Winifred completed this rather larger family which lived in Commercial Road (now Ebury Bridge Road) in Chelsea. The census also records one other Wilkie Collins, a baby, born in late 1870. He lived with his mother, Mary Ann Collins, a 24 year old cotton weaver listed as married and living in Preston, Lancashire. Neither of these Wilkies appears in 1881 but there is another Wilkie Collins, a butterman, born in Wiltshire in 1858.

WILLIAM COLLINS

A number of paintings by Wilkie's father have been in auction recently. The splendid *Scene from the Caves of Ulysses at Sorrento* fetched £18,000 at Sotheby's on 22 March. Painted in 1841, the picture was bought from the Royal Academy exhibition by John Gibbons for £200. An 1822 oil sketch of *The Landing of George IV at Leith* which is mentioned in Wilkie's biography (vol.I, p.202) and which was sold at Bonhams in Edinburgh last August for £2,600, was put up again on 14 April but failed to sell. *Children on the Shore* fetched £900 at Sotheby's Olympia on 9 March. And a small portrait of Emma, Lady Hamilton as a bacchante, copied from a Joshua Reynolds painting, failed to sell (estimate £700-900) at Christie's South Kensington sale room on 9 March. The painting was bought at Bonhams in Chester for £480 in March 2004. A landscape with figures said to be by Collins c.1840 fetched \$2,225 on eBay in March (#7315684412).

THE UNKNOWN PUBLIC

The latest *Victorian Periodicals Review* contains an essay about Collins's early piece on the mass market readers of Victorian periodicals. 'The Unknown Public' was published in Dickens's weekly *Household Words* on 12 August 1858 and is used as the basis of the essay by Lorna Huett, a graduate student at Trinity College, Cambridge who is working on a thesis on *Household Words* and its successor *All The Year Round*. She looks at the public identified by Collins and draws her own conclusions about the readers of Dickens's periodicals – who of course were Collins's readers too.

Victorian Periodicals Review, University of Toronto Press, Vol.38 No.1 Spring 2005 pp61-82.

THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR VICTORIAN STUDIES

The interdisciplinary British Association for Victorian Studies, founded in 2000, is actively looking for new members. Its President, Isobel Armstrong, writes "In the five years since the Association was founded we have developed our activities and extended our services to scholars so that membership of the Association has become a must – essential for serious scholars of the period." The Association holds an annual conference in September and publishes a Newsletter and Yearbook to provide important professional and scholarly information. The BAVS 2005 conference, 'Victorians in the Long View: Contrasts and Continuities', will take place at the University of Gloucestershire, 5-7 September 2005.

Those interested in joining should apply to Richard Pearson, Department of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences, University College Worcester, Henwick Grove, Worcester, WR2 6AJ (Tel. 01905-855356 r.pearson@worc.ac.uk) or for additional information see. The website <https://bavs.ac.uk> has useful Victorian information and links, including one to a downloadable version of the 1827 Greenwood map of London.

ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES

The WCS continues to be affiliated to the Alliance of Literary Societies which is holding its AGM weekend meeting on 21 and 22 May 2005. This year's meeting is hosted by the Charles Lamb Society and begins at Swedenborg Hall, 20-21 Bloomsbury Way, London WCI. The

programme consists of walks round Lamb's London, a museum visit and a trip to Lamb's homes at Enfield and Edmonton. Further details can be obtained from the Society's chairman, Nick Powell, on 020 7703 6792.

LEDBURY POETRY FESTIVAL

The 2005 Ledbury Poetry Festival will be held from Friday 1 to Sunday 10 July. It appears to be going from strength to strength with no less than 69 items on the programme and poets from Europe, America, Asia and the Middle East. For a programme booklet or bookings, contact the box office at 0845 458 1743 (<https://ledburypoetry.org.uk/>).

**APG
PL**

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www.wilkie-collins.info**





THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

PATRONS Faith Clarke, Baroness James of Holland Park (P. D. James)

Chairman Andrew Gasson, 3 Merton House, 36 Belsize Park, London, NW3 4EA

Membership Paul Lewis, 4 Ernest Gardens, Chiswick, London W4 3QU

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2005

AN ANNIVERSARY NOTE

This year, 2005, marks the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Wilkie Collins Society. Andrew Gasson recalls that it started like this:

Early in 1980, I had just acquired the recently published *Wilkie Collins: An Annotated Bibliography, 1889-1976* by Kirk Beetz (Scarecrow Author Bibliographies, No. 35, Scarecrow Press, 1978). Item 408 in Beetz's listing is Edward Marston's *After Work* (1904). In his description, Beetz notes that it had been quoted by Kenneth Robinson but "no bibliographic details are given... and it has proved impossible to locate a copy of Marston's work." By one of those strange but fortunate coincidences, I had literally that day borrowed a copy from the library of the old National Book League – that was in the time when the NBL was keen to promote books among the reading public.

I wrote to Beetz, who lived in California, care of the publishers at the end of January 1980 and received a reply about two weeks later. He was already deep into Collins studies at that time and this first letter noted "I am presently writing an article intended for publication in a journal, which will expand the list of works by Wilkie Collins. I have identified many of the unsigned essays of Collins which were published in the 1850s. He was a very busy journalist. Dickens, believe it or not, was not his principle employer." This article became the ground breaking 'Wilkie Collins and *The Leader*' published in *Victorian Periodicals Review* (15 Spring 1982, 20-29) in which Beetz recorded a large number of previously unidentified contributions by Collins.

Further correspondence followed and in April I made the tentative suggestion "The thought occurred that if there were sufficient people interested, a Wilkie Collins Society might be created." Beetz picked up on this immediately and I think it was during a telephone conversation a few weeks later that he proclaimed "We now have a Wilkie Collins Society, I'm President and you're Secretary." And so we began, with the first Newsletter written by Beetz in late

1980 and published in early 1981. Its first announcement was a request for information by William Clarke who had begun his research into *The Secret Life of Wilkie Collins*: “(1) Where is the diary and commonplace book of Wilkie’s father William Collins, which was sold by Sotheby’s New York in 1948 or 1949 and (2) Does any reader have any information about correspondence relating to Caroline Graves and Martha (Rudd) Dawson?” Twenty-five years later these questions remain unanswered and even with the recent publication of the *Collected Letters* no correspondence has surface from Wilkie to either of the two women in his life. The Newsletter also carried an interesting note that *The American Heritage Dictionary* in order to help define the word ‘patience’ uses the first line from *The Woman in White* “This is the story of what a woman’s patience can endure...”

It was Beetz who suggested using Collins’s own monogram with a quill pen for the Society’s logo and also the idea of the *WCS Journal*. Altogether there were eight issues between 1981 and 1991 of this First Series. By 1982, between the UK and US we had jointly about fifty members and it is gratifying to realise that some of those early names are still with the Society and have supported us throughout. Shortly after this, Beetz seemed to follow in Wilkie’s footsteps and was plagued by ill health and our personal contact became rather sporadic. We have rather lost direct touch with the American WCS which has gone its own way. Beetz also looked remarkably like Wilkie when we met for the first time during the 1989 Centenary Collins Conference in Vancouver, with a large beard and small metal-rimmed spectacles.

Since then the UK side of WCS has grown to a membership of more than 130 from the UK, Europe, the United States and as far afield as Japan, Australia, Russia and Taiwan. This would be a suitable time to acknowledge the enthusiastic help over the years of former secretaries and helpers such as Louise Marchant, Katheryn Haynes, Paul Graham, Graham Law and more recently the superb organisational skills of Paul Lewis (my apologies for anyone inadvertently omitted).

NEW E-TEXT

Virtually all Wilkie’s fiction is available in e-text form but his non-fiction is much less complete. Now, one gap has been filled. Daniel Stark who runs the German Wilkie Collins website has ‘e-texted’ *Rambles Beyond Railways*. He has used the 1852 second edition and has also included the 12 illustrations by Henry Brandling. The 1852 is the most complete edition; it is identical to the first in 1851 but includes a few authorial updates. In later editions two chapters were dropped to make room for ‘The Cruise of the Tom-Tit’. The e-text is to be found at www.wilkiecollins.de/rambles/index.html. Only two books now

remain without an e-text: *Memoirs of the Life of William Collins, Esq., R.A.* published in 1848 and Wilkie's first novel *Iolani* which was only published in 1999. Many short pieces of non-fiction remain unavailable, as do eight of his known plays. A complete list of currently available e-texts is on www.wilkiecollins.com menu item 4. Another website <http://www.wilkie-collins.com> run by the Classic Literature Library has used some of these e-texts to produce its own listings and has some commercial links as well. And don't forget the sterling efforts of James Rusk who has probably produced more e-texts than anyone else and personally worked so hard on his own e-text site at <http://www.blackmask.com/jrusk/wcollins>.

A NEW EDITION OF *ARMADALE*

A new publisher, Traviata, is publishing some lesser known nineteenth century novels. *Armada* is among its first five offerings and certainly fits the aim to "specialise in republishing works, mainly from the 19th century, which have been unjustly forgotten – either completely, or because their authors are now remembered for only a small part of their output." The blurb for *Armada*, which Wilkie always regarded as his finest work, reads "A Victorian thriller on a grand scale. What is the mysterious tie that binds the two Allan Armadales? Are they destined to destroy each other as their fathers did – or can they be reconciled and wipe out the past? Is the mysterious dream a real prediction of the future or can it be dismissed as unscientific nonsense?" *Armada* costs £12 which is rather more expensive than other available versions. The remaining four titles are Charles Reade's *The Cloister and the Hearth*; *Hadrian the Seventh* by Frederick Rolfe, Baron Corvo; *Quits!* by Jemima Montgomery, Baroness Tautphoeus; and *The Revolution in Tanner's Lane* and *Miriam's Schooling* by Mark Rutherford. Further details at www.traviatabooks.co.uk.

WILKIE COLLINS IN CONTEXT

Professor Lyn Pykett of Aberystwyth University has just published a new book *Wilkie Collins* in the 'Authors in Context Series' from Oxford World's Classics. The aim of the series is "to examine the work of major writers in relation to their own time and to the present day." It provides "detailed coverage of the values and debates that colour the writing of particular authors against this background" and also "considers how critical interpretations have altered over time, and how films, sequels, and other popular adaptations relate to the new age in which they are produced."

The book sets the scene with a chronology of Wilkie's life and works with a parallel time line of historical and cultural events. There follows a brief biography of Collins which manages to cram into just 26 pages most of the key

facts. The next two chapters, 'The Social Context' and 'The Literary Context' admirably provide the nineteenth century background, that is the context within which Collins lived and worked. The next three chapters, 'Masters, Servants, and Married Women: Class and Social Mobility in Collins's Novels'; 'Sex, Crime, Madness, and Empire' and; 'Psychology and Science in Collins's Novels' take a more specific and academic approach to Collins's works.

Some of the final chapter, 'Recontextualizing Collins: The Afterlife of Collins's Novels', hangs uneasily with the rest of the book but the section on criticism usefully spans the time from Wilkie's obituaries to the present day and it is probably helpful to know which of his books are currently in print. An address for e-texts could have been included in the appendix on websites. The section on Collins's theatre adaptations presents some exciting material not found elsewhere but could have been usefully expanded. By contrast, there is a good deal more on film and television adaptations. Lyn Pykett has throughout the book shown a skill in encapsulating the nub of Collins's complicated plots in a few well-chosen words before introducing her main points.

It is always instructive to move from a focus on a very narrow area – in this case Wilkie Collins – and set it against the general background of the nineteenth century: by and large this book succeeds well and should be a worthwhile addition to the bookshelves of all Collins enthusiasts. It is published by Oxford University Press at £7.99 (ISBN 0192840347).

CINEMA AND TELEVISION ADAPTATIONS

The Internet Movie Database www.imdb.com gets better and better. A search on Wilkie Collins turns up 30 film and TV versions of his fiction. Among them are several that have been retitled such as *Tangled Lives* – a 1917 silent version of *The Woman in White* – and *The Quest of the Sacred Jewel* which is a 1914 version of *The Moonstone*. One though remains a mystery and seems just to have taken some Collins-like ideas such as the identity of twins and lunatic asylums: *The Twin Pawns* (1919) directed in France by Léonce Perret and shown in the USA under the title *The Curse of Greed* is listed as based on a Collins play. Four characters are named – Daisy and Violet White, John Bent and Harry White.

Lyn Pykett as an appendix to her *Wilkie Collins in Context* usefully lists 25 cinema and television adaptations. She also provides detailed plot summaries of several productions although some of these – especially the modern ones – are truly terrible adaptations.

Titles are also given in the Collins entry in Volume I of Hubin's *Crime Fiction*. A further source of information is the American Film Institute Catalogue <http://www.afi.com/members/catalog/BasicSearch.aspx>. All of these, however, omit German television adaptations of *The Woman in White*, *The Moonstone*, and *Armada*.

LIVES OF VICTORIAN LITERARY FIGURES

Pickering & Chatto are publishing a collection of contemporary biographical material about Wilkie Collins in their *Lives of Victorian Literary Figures* series. Part V is *Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Wilkie Collins, and William Thackeray by their contemporaries*. The Collins section is being written by Professor William Baker, one of the editors of *The Public Face of Wilkie Collins – the Collected Letters* published earlier this year. The new book is due out in 2006.

A REVIEW OF BASIL

The ever alert Sylvia Harlow of Tiger Books has discovered a lengthy 'new' review of *Basil* in *Eliza Cook's Journal* (volume VIII, pp. 251-253, November 1852-April 1853). It provides an excellent plot summary but adds after the scene where Basil has dashed the villain, Mannion, to the ground "At this point it would have been better for the story to have drawn to an end, for here the interest culminates. Up to this point, too, it is carefully written. There is a charm and power in the style which make the improbability of the incidents forgotten, but it goes far beyond this, and Mr Collins betrays a want of power to develop that which he has the germs of." In the conclusion, the reviewer continues "Yet, spite of these defects, of glaring improbability, of the frequent want of adequate motives for action, of the apparent insufficiency of causes to produce the effects which follow, the book has an attractiveness, derived from the interest worked up in the earlier parts, which will make the reader unwilling to put it down till he has finished it."

THE FROZEN DEEP- A SECOND PERFORMANCE

Unfortunately we have had no success in persuading a theatre company to do an anniversary production of *The Lighthouse* but there is good news with the revival of *The Frozen Deep*. The version mentioned in a previous Newsletter and performed at the Edinburgh Festival has been dramatized from the short story by Pauline Flannery who will also direct the play. This is billed as 'against the background of Franklin's doomed expedition to find the North-West Passage in 1845, experience a tale of sex and sacrifice in the North Pole.' The production now has an afternoon slot at the Theatre Museum in Covent Garden which will take place on Sunday 18 September at 3.00pm. The Museum has an

80 seat Studio Theatre which will be ideal for a small scale show. The running time is approximately 55 minutes and WCS members are encouraged to support the revival of one of Wilkie's earliest plays.

Tickets are normally £8.00, but members are offered the Concessionary Rate of £6.00. Bookings should be made via the Theatre Museum Box Office, 020 7943 4750. There will also be an opportunity to meet the director/adaptor and cast after the performance in the Picture Gallery, just outside the Studio, where drinks will be served.

CLOSURE OF BLEAK HOUSE

The Newsletter for the Headquarters Group of the Dickens Fellowship, *London Particular*, for April this year highlighted the closure of Bleak House. This was at one time Dickens's residence on the cliffs at Broadstairs where he invited friends such as Wilkie Collins, John Forster and Hans Christian Anderson. It was more properly known as Fort House and Wilkie was in fact a regular visitor. Later on, after his success with *The Woman in White*, he was able to rent the house in his own right during 1862 and he in turn invited friends to stay like Frank Beard, Charles Ward and Augustus Egg together with Edward Pigott and Henry Bullar to indulge in his favourite recreation of sailing. It was at Fort House that much of the serialisation of *No Name* was written. Further information was written up in *The Times* of 4 April 2005.

THE LONDON EXPLORERS GROUP

Dr Andrew Duncan, author of *Walking London*, *Secret London* and other well-known London guides has launched an organisation called the London Explorers Group (LEG) specifically designed to introduce Londoners to the history, heritage and geography of their home city, mainly by means of guided walks. At the moment LEG walks happen once a month on a Sunday morning, but from the autumn they will be repeated during the week on a Thursday morning. Standard walks cost £7 and are just 'turn up and go'. Special walks cost a bit more and usually require booking. Andrew leads most of the walks himself, but he is gradually building up a roster of experts who can offer walks in their own specialist area – for example, Wilkie Collins! We may do a joint WCS-LEG Collins walk next summer. Andrew says LEG offers LESS: Learning, Exercise, Sightseeing and Socialising (he obviously has a weakness for acronyms). If you would like to go on the LEG mailing list to receive details of walks and other events, please email info@leglondon.co.uk or send your details to LEG, 2b Gastein Road, London W6 8LU. Walk information is also posted on the internet at www.leglondon.co.uk.

LARGE PRINT COLLINS BOOKS

We are now fortunate that we can readily obtain so many of Collins's works from a variety of publishers including Oxford University Press and Sutton Publishing. Ulverscroft Publishing specialise in large print books and currently have available the following titles: *The Black Robe*, *The Dead Secret*, *The Evil Genius*, *The Moonstone* and *The Woman in White*. In addition, they have an unabridged audio recording of *The Frozen Deep*. Further details at <http://www.edisure.com/-ulverscroft/uk/ukindex.html>. Their London address is 3 Maple Grove Business Centre, Lawrence Road, Hounslow, Middlesex TN4 6DR (Tel/Fax: 07767 646572).

JOHN EVERETT MILLAIS

A recent joint publication by The Private Libraries Association, The British Library and Oak Knoll Press is *Beyond Decoration: the Illustrations of John Everett Millais*. The author is Paul Goldman, formerly a curator in the Department of Prints and Drawings at the British Library, who also wrote amongst other titles *Victorian Illustrated Books 1850-1870* and *John Everett Millais: Illustrator and Narrator*.

Millais (1829-1896) was a founder member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and a close friend of both Wilkie and Charles Collins. He took part in their amateur theatricals and stayed with the Collins family in 1854. Millais painted his classic portrait of Wilkie now held in the National Portrait Gallery during 1850. *Beyond Decoration* is the first book to reproduce all of Millais's published illustrations. In addition, it discusses each image with its literary context "to ensure a full understanding of the meaning Millais wished to convey and illuminate. The original designs are chiefly wood engraving, though some were engraved on steel; the small number of etchings that he undertook are also included." The book exhibits the artist's enormous range and "is intended to provide a new approach to the book and periodical illustrations of Millais" and "provided here are the literary contexts for each design, and it is the relationship between the image and the text which forms the central theme of the present work."

Collins is represented by two illustrations. The first is the etched frontispiece to *Mr Wray's Cash-Box; or, The Mask and the Mystery. A Christmas Sketch* (1852). "Annie Wray ties her lover, Martin Blunt's cravat: '...telling him to stoop, [she] tied his cravat directly – standing on tiptoe'." This is Millais's first published illustration although it was preceded by one other, an etching intended for *The Germ* to accompany a story by Dante Gabriel Rossetti in 1850. This, however, was never actually published.

The other is the steel-engraved frontispiece, 'One half-hour', to the 1864 first one volume edition of *No Name* published by Sampson Low. This illustrates the dramatic scene at Aldborough in the book where Magdalen in a state of despair at her forthcoming marriage to Noel Vanstone contemplates suicide. "For one half-hour to come, she determined to wait there, and count the vessels as they went by. If, in that time, an even number passed her – the sign given, should be a sign to live. If the uneven number prevailed – the end should be Death." Wilkie wanted Millais also to illustrate *Armada* but he was unable to do this because of the pressure of his other commitments.

Beyond Decoration is an excellent publication and will be essential to all those with an interest in nineteenth century illustration. It is the latest annual volume prepared for members of the Private Libraries Association. Membership details are available from John Allison, East Pavilion, Dudbridge House, Dudbridge, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL5 3HF.

THE ROYAL ACADEMY

A recently discovered catalogue of the Exhibition of the Royal Academy of Arts for 1849 makes interesting reading. Wilkie's father, William Collins, had been an associate since 1814 and full Academician between 1820 and his death in 1847. Charles Collins, of course, became a professional artist and produced some excellent works but before settling on a career as an author, Wilkie also briefly followed in his father's footsteps. One example of his drawing appears in Catherine Peters's *King of Inventors* and another sketch is reproduced in Robert Lee Wolff's 'Nineteenth-Century Fiction' in *The Book Collector* of Autumn 1965.

1849 was the year that both Wilkie and Charles showed pictures in the summer exhibition. Wilkie's picture was entitled *The Smuggler's Refuge* and was placed in the East Room; Charles's was called *The Empty Purse* and exhibited in the West Room. The brothers were both listed in the catalogue index as living at 38 Blandford Square, Regent's Park.

Their works were in the distinguished company of pictures by J. M. W. Turner and David Roberts as well as paintings by William's friends, John Landseer, John Linnell and William Etty. But also on display were several paintings and drawings by Wilkie's circle of friends. These include *Isabella* by Millais, *Rienzi* by Holman Hunt, "*Coming of Age*" by William Frith, and *Henrietta Maria* and *Launce's Substitute for Proteus's Dog* by Augustus Egg. One of Wilkie's lifelong friends, Edward Ward, showed *Benjamin West's first effort in art* and *Daniel Defoe and the manuscript of Robinson Crusoe* while his wife, Henrietta,

exhibited a drawing, *A study of heads*. Other members of the Collins family were also represented with Wilkie's aunt, Margaret Carpenter, exhibiting four pictures together with three by her son William Carpenter, Jr.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE – THE MUSICAL

The musical version of *The Woman in White* has now been running for a year and no doubt this has helped revive a knowledge of Wilkie Collins with many members of the public, both reading and musical. As predicted, the musical is shortly to open in New York with Michael Crawford and others of the original cast and according to the latest press release "Following the pre-production period for the Broadway transfer of *The Woman in White* Trevor Nunn and Andrew Lloyd Webber initiated creative changes during rehearsals for the new West End cast." The main news is that Simon Callow makes his debut as in a West End musical as Count Fosco during the week of 29 August. Simon Callow, of course, had already played Fosco in the 1997 BBC television production (WCS members may remember that despite excellent acting the adaptation was very poor). The new West End musical cast also includes Ruthie Henshall starring as Marian, with Damian Humbley and Alexandra Silber playing Walter Hartright and Laura Fairlie. Elinor Collett plays Anne Catherick, Michael Cormick plays Sir Percival Glyde, and Edward Petherbridge from the original cast continues as Mr Fairlie.

The American production of *The Woman in White* opens on Broadway on 17 November at the Marquis Theatre. This will be the first of London's current major new musicals to open in New York. Final casting sessions are currently taking place in New York with Trevor Nunn. The Broadway Production of *The Woman in White* is produced by Boyett Ostar, The Nederlander Organisation, Sonia Friedman Productions and The Really Useful Theatre Company.

The BBC morning discussion programme, 'Midweek' on 20 July included an interview with Ruthie Henshall who has taken over the part of Marian Halcombe. The discussion ranged over her approach to the part, the use of video projection and the staging of the musical in New York.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE – EXCLUSIVE OFFER TO THE WCS

The Really Useful Theatre Company has made available a special offer to those who haven't yet seen the production at London's Palace Theatre or who may wish to see it again in its revised incarnation. WCS members can save up to 50%. The best available seats are now only £25.00 (normally £50.00, £45.00,

£37.50, £32.50). These will be subject to availability and there will be no booking fee for all performances Monday to Friday and Saturday Matinees (Matinees 2.30 pm and Evening 7.30 pm). The offer is valid only from Thursday 1 September until Friday 30 September and bookings must be made by calling 0870 895 5579 and quoting the Wilkie Collins Offer.

WILKIE COLLINS AND CRICKET

With such a fiercely contested series as the current Test Matches against Australia, it seems appropriate to take a look at Collins's mentions of cricket in his writing. The first cricket tour of Australia took place in 1861-62 so in Wilkie's day the 'old enemy' would have been the 'new enemy'. This particular tour was described in detail in *The Trailblazers* by David Frith, published in 1999. Here he writes "It was not the easiest passage of Dickens's life, for he was besotted with Ellen Ternan, the young actress (who played cricket); had separated acrimoniously from his wife Catherine (one of his daughters was to proclaim Dickens 'a very wicked man'); was agonising over a venereal disease apparently contracted on a brief visit with Wilkie Collins to Paris; and had viciously outmanoeuvred the publishers of his *Household Words* magazine..."

From Collins, himself, we learn that in *Basil* (1852) the eponymous hero's brother Ralph "then, at college, became illustrious among rowers and cricketers." Frank Softly in *A Rogue's Life* (1856) describes how he "learned to play at cricket", whilst in *The Dead Secret* (1857) Doctor Chennery was, in a physical point of view, a credit to the Establishment to which he was attached. He stood six feet two in his shooting-shoes; he weighed fifteen stone; he was the best bowler in the Long Beckley cricket-club."

Mr. Ronald in *The Fallen Leaves* (I 879) seemed less fortunate: "His mind began to wander strangely; he was not angry or frightened or distressed. Instead of thinking of what had just happened, he was thinking of his young days when he had been a cricket-player. One special game revived in his memory, at which he had been struck on the head by the ball. "Just the same feeling," he reflected vacantly, with his hat off, 'and his hand on his forehead. "Dazed and giddy – just the same feeling!"

There is a brief mention in 'A Shockingly Rude Article' (reprinted in *My Miscellanies* (1863) from its first appearance in *Household Words* in 1858): "I married a man the other day for the third time. Man in my parish. Capital cricketer when he was young enough to run."; whereas in *Man and Wife* (1870) we have "The usual "Sports" were to take place – such as running, jumping, "putting" the hammer, throwing cricket-balls" together with Sir Patrick Lundie

lamenting “What does the new generation know? It knows how to row, how to shoot, how to play at cricket, and how to bat.”

For Professor Pesca in *The Woman in White* (1860), “The ruling idea of his life appeared to be, that he was bound to show his gratitude to the country which had afforded him an asylum and a means of subsistence by doing his utmost to tum himself into an Englishman. Not content with paying the nation in general the compliment of invariably carrying an umbrella ... I had seen him risk his limbs blindly at a fox-hunt and in a cricket-field; and soon afterwards I saw him risk his life, just as blindly, in the sea at Brighton.”

But for the longest and most humorous description, we have to remember Thomas Idle, the persona adopted by Wilkie in ‘The Lazy tour of Two Idle Apprentices’ (1857):

“So, again, with the second disaster. While Thomas was lazy, he was a model of health. His first attempt at active exertion and his first suffering from severe illness are connected together by the intimate relations of cause and effect. Shortly after leaving school, he accompanied a party of friends to a cricket-field, in his natural and appropriate character of spectator only. On the ground it was discovered that the players fell short of the required number, and facile Thomas was persuaded to assist in making up the complement. At a certain appointed time, he was roused from peaceful slumber in a dry ditch, and placed before three wickets with a bat in his hand. Opposite to him, behind three more wickets, stood one of his bosom friends, filling the situation (as he was informed) of bowler. No words can describe Mr. Idle’s horror and amazement, when he saw this young man – on ordinary occasions, the meekest and mildest of human beings – suddenly contract his eye-brows, compress his lips, assume the aspect of an infuriated savage, run back a few steps, then run forward, and, without the slightest previous provocation, hurl a detestably hard ball with all his might straight at Thomas’s legs. Stimulated to preternatural activity of body and sharpness of eye by the instinct of self-preservation, Mr. Idle contrived, by jumping deftly aside at the right moment, and by using his bat (ridiculously narrow as it was for the purpose) as a shield, to preserve his life and limbs from the dastardly attack that had been made on both, to leave the full force of the deadly missile to strike his wicket instead of his leg; and to end the innings, so far as his side was concerned, by being immediately bowled out. Grateful for his escape, he was about to return to the dry ditch, when he was peremptorily stopped, and told that the other side was ‘going in,’ and that he was expected to ‘field.’ His conception of the whole art and mystery of ‘fielding,’ may be summed up in the three words of serious advice which he privately administered to himself on that trying occasion – avoid the ball. Fortified by this sound and salutary principle, he took his own course, impervious alike to ridicule and

abuse. Whenever the ball came near him, he thought of his shins, and got out of the way immediately. ‘Catch it!’ ‘Stop it!’ ‘Pitch it up!’ were cries that passed by him like the idle wind that he regarded not. He ducked under it, he jumped over it, he whisked himself away from it on either side. Never once, through the whole innings did he and the ball come together on anything approaching to intimate terms. The unnatural activity of body which was necessarily called forth for the accomplishment of this result threw Thomas Idle, for the first time in his life, into a perspiration. The perspiration, in consequence of his want of practice in the management of that particular result of bodily activity, was suddenly checked; the inevitable chill succeeded; and that, in its turn, was followed by a fever. For the first time since his birth, Mr. Idle found himself confined to his bed for many weeks together, wasted and worn by a long illness, of which his own disastrous muscular exertion had been the sole first cause.

BOOKS FOR SALE

Past member, Mrs Beryl Williams, would like to dispose of some Collins related books. Hoping that they will find a good home, she is generously offering them at the nominal cost of £5 to cover post and packing. The list of titles is:

Wilkie Collins -A Biography, Kenneth Robinson 1951;

Wilkie Collins, Le Fanu and Others, S. M. Ellis, 1951;

Wilkie Collins, Robert Ashley, 1952;

Wilkie Collins -An Annotated Bibliography, Kirk Beetz, 1978;

Wilkie Collins, Women, Property and Propriety, Philip O’Neill, 1988;

The King of Inventors, Catherine Peters, 1991;

Memoirs of the Life of William Collins, R.A., E.P. Publishing, 1978.

For further details, contact Mrs Williams at bwilliams@aspects.net.

ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES – SPRING WEEKEND

The Alliance of Literary Societies, to which the WCS is affiliated, has given advance notice of its next AGM and literary weekend. This will take place on 13 and 14 May 2006 in Bath. The meeting will be hosted by the Jane Austen Society. For further details consult the website at <http://www.allianceofliterarysocieties.co.uk> where there is a host of information on all of its numerous affiliated members.

**PL
APG**

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THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2005

WCS JOURNAL

Enclosed with this Newsletter is the latest issue, Volume 8, of the *Wilkie Collins Society Journal* in our usual A5 format. We are as ever extremely grateful to our editors, Graham Law and Lillian Nayder, for their painstaking efforts and skill in producing such a worthwhile publication.

BOOK AND MAGAZINE COLLECTOR

Wilkie Collins features in an extensive fifteen page article by Richard Dalby in the December issue of *Book and Magazine Collector*. The essay gives a good biographical resume of Collins's life set against the background of his published works. The piece is excellently illustrated with many of the pictures, such as Wilkie's own copy of *The Woman in White* play and examples of two and three-decker novels, apparently taken from recent catalogues. Overall they give a real flavour of nineteenth century publishing. In keeping with the style of the publication, Dalby gives the prices of books achieved at auction over the last few years. The piece concludes with a useful bibliography of Collins's works, divided into Novels, short stories, collaborations with Dickens, and non-fiction. Added to the titles are estimates of current values for English and US editions in original cloth. Thus *Antonina* is judged at £1,000; the UK *Woman in White* and *The Moonstone* at £8,000; and the later novels between £600-£800. Although Dalby gives figures of £800-£1,000, there are problems in attempting values for some difficult titles, particularly the early works such as *Basil* and *Hide and Seek*, since some of these haven't appeared for sale in their original bindings for many years. On balance, this is an excellent article for the Collins collector.

A LETTER FROM DICKENS TO COLLINS

There is an interesting item for sale in the latest Holiday Selection catalogue from the Heritage Bookshop in California. Number 132 is a letter from Charles Dickens to Wilkie Collins dated 20 January 1863. It is written from the Hotel du Helder during one of Dickens's trips to Paris and addressed to "My Dear Wilkie". The full text of the letter is published on pp. 198-199 of volume ten in the Pilgrim Edition of Dickens's letters. The letter is full of hints, and the annotations suggest that Dickens was spending a week away with Ellen Ternan. Dickens letters to Wilkie are now extremely uncommon but perhaps this is not quite a bargain at \$8,500. The Heritage Bookshop can be contacted at 8540 Melrose Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90069 or heritage@heritagebookshop.com,

ON THIS DAY

The recently published *On This Day* by Sandra Kimberley Hall gives historical events for each day of the year. Wilkie is duly mentioned for 8 January 1824, a birthday he shares with Steven Hawkins (of Time fame, in 1942) and David Bowie (1947). Also on this day Marco Polo died in 1324; Bonnie Prince Charlie occupied Stirling in Scotland in 1746; and Charles de Gaulle was proclaimed first President of the Fifth Republic of France. There is, however, nothing recorded for Collins on 23 September although on this date in 490 BC Pheidippides, an Athenian courier, ran to Sparta to request help when the Persians landed at Marathon. After the battle and another run back to Athens Pheidippides apparently died of exhaustion. This is the same fate that befell some modern marathon runners during 2005 – and they say that exercise is good for you!

Wilkie was ambivalent about exercise in general although his favourite past time was sailing. The recently published *Letters* inform us that he wrote in 1857 that "want of exercise has ended in the return of some of my old bilious miseries"; and in 1879 "When this work is done, the exercise begins – or there is no health for me"; and in 1882 "Exercise and diluted champagne still keep the gout at its near distance." On the other hand, he couldn't resist commenting in *I Say No!* (1884) "The worst curse of human life is the detestable necessity of taking exercise."

P. D. JAMES ON 'OPEN BOOK'

Our distinguished Patron, P. D. James, has become a regular contributor to the airwaves. In addition to her appearances on 'Any Questions' she recently took part in a half-hour special on BBC Radio 4's Sunday

afternoon programme 'Open Book' on 8 October. During the interview, she discussed at length her celebrated detective, Adam Dalgleish, and introduced her new book, *The Lighthouse*. This has all the ingredients of an archetypal detective story, taking place within a closed community set on an island. Other topics ranged over her other numerous works, her background, and personal life and beliefs. Apart from her well-known liking for Wilkie Collins, P. D. James is also enthusiastic about the works of Anthony Trollope.

It is good to welcome another 'Lighthouse', 150 years after Wilkie's play with the same title was published in 1855. The 2005 *Lighthouse* is published by Faber and Faber (ISBN 0-571-229 18-2) and of course available from 'all good bookshops'.

CHARLES DICKENS STUDIES

Palgrave Macmillan has recently announced its new title *Palgrave Advances in Charles Dickens Studies*. The editors are Robert L. Patten and John Bowen, both leading authorities on Dickens. The blurb describes "A comprehensive and authoritative guide to the study of one of the most important Victorian novelists with an international team of contributors. The volume is based on the latest research bringing readers a comprehensive guide to the most important contemporary work on Dickens." (ISBN 1-4039-1285-8, hardback at £55; ISBN 1-4039-1286-6, paperback at £16.99).

M. E. BRADDON SYMPOSIUM

The University of Wales Swansea is planning a symposium on Mary Elizabeth Braddon for 26 April 2006. Braddon, of course, acknowledged the influence of Wilkie Collins as "assuredly my literary father".

The one-day conference "seeks to draw together scholars working on all aspects of Braddon's life and fiction." Suggested topics might be Braddon and the literary marketplace; the theatre; the sensation novel; influences on and by other writers; social commentary in her fiction; autobiographical elements; and adaptations of her works.

The deadline for abstracts, which should be 150-200 words, is 31 January 2006. Those interested in the event and wishing to be placed on the mailing list can contact braddonconference@ntlworld.com. The conference co-ordinator is Jessica Cox.

MURDER MOST FOUL

Long-standing member, Angela Richardson, has discovered a new CD 'talking book' entitled *Murder Most Foul* which contains a reading of 'Who Killed Zebedee' by Derek Jacobi'. Other stories in the collection are Margery Allingham's 'Bluebeard's Bathtub', Robert Barr's 'An Alpine Divorce'; and Arthur Conan Doyle's 'The Speckled Band'.

'Who Killed Zebedee' is a short story of revenge, murder and detection, originally published in the United States paper, *The Spirit of the Times*, on the 25 December 1880. It was reprinted in Collins's collection of short stories, *Little Novels*, during 1887 under the revised title 'Mr Policeman and the Cook'.

THE WILKIE COLLINS LIST

Angela currently runs the Wilkie Collins list which provides a very useful exchange of information. For those WCS members not familiar with the web-based list, it can be contacted through <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wilkiecollins/>. The group is currently rereading Wilkie's novels in chronological sequence. It has recently finished *Basil* (1852) and has just commenced *Hide and Seek* (1854).

MRS LIRRIPER

In the mid 1850s, Wilkie's brother Charles gave up art and from 1858 earned his living by writing. His work is seldom republished but a new book *Mrs Lirriper* reproduces two Christmas numbers from Dickens's periodical *All The Year Round* and includes two of Charles's pieces. 'How the Best Attic Was under a Cloud' first appeared at Christmas 1863 in *Mrs Lirriper's Lodgings* and 'A Past Lodger Relates a Wild Story of a Doctor' a year later in *Mrs Lirriper's Legacy*. Other contributors included Dickens himself, Elizabeth Gaskell, Edmund Yates and Hesba Stretton. At this time Wilkie was not contributing to the Christmas numbers. *Mrs Lirriper* (edited by Philip Hensher), Hesperus Press (ISBN 1-84391-131-0 £12.99). Another Charles Collins story is in *Mugby Junction* also from Hesperus ISBN 1843911299. More from www.hesperuspress.com

THE DEAD ALIVE

Wilkie's short story 'The Dead Alive' has been reprinted with a long commentary by Rob Warden, the Executive Director of the Centre on Wrongful Convictions at Northwestern University School of Law. He is

a campaigner against miscarriages of justice and says that the Boom case on which ‘The Dead Alive’ is based was the first documented wrongful conviction for murder in the USA. He reprints in full Stephen Boom’s false confession to the murder with his brother Jesse of Russell Colvin. Collins named the Boom brothers Ambrose and Silas Meadowcroft and the victim John Jago. Warden points out that DNA tests would today have prevented the conviction of the Booms. But he then gives brief summaries of eleven other wrongly convicted defendants in ‘dead alive’ cases – where the alleged murder victim was in fact not dead. And the book ends with a chilling list of 235 people sentenced to death for murder in the United States who were subsequently exonerated. He picks out in bold 59 of them who were convicted on the basis of their own false confession.

‘The Dead Alive’ was first published in 1873 in the USA during Wilkie’s American reading tour. He had read the printed account of the Boom case and wrote the story in New York. It was retitled ‘John Jago’s Ghost on its 1874 publication in the UK in *The Frozen Deep and Other Tales*.

Wilkie Collins’s The Dead Alive – The Novel, the Case, and Wrongful Convictions, Northwestern University Press, Illinois, 2005. (ISBN 0- 8101-2294-4, available through amazon.com for \$16.47).

OTHER REPRINTS

A number of hard to find Collins books have been republished recently. Wilkie’s first collection of short stories *After Dark* has been reissued in large print by Dodo Press (ISBN 1406501 158 £12.99). Although all the stories are available elsewhere, the framing and linking material is not – so it is good to have the book republished in full. Dodo Press also published *Armada* in June 2005 (ISBN 1905432143 £24.99). Frontlist Books publishes *The Frozen Deep* (ISBN J-84350-092-2 for £5.99). Aegypan issued *Mr Wray’s Cash Box* (ISBN 1598184393 for £8.95). And Echo Books claims to have practically the whole Collins canon in paperback form for £12.99 each. Many of these editions are in fact print- on-demand books using publicly available e-texts. It may be cheaper to download them and print them off yourself. A full list of e-texts is on www.wilkiecollins.com.

PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

Guardian Unlimited and Penguin Books have launched a competition for readers to submit a photograph to illustrate the cover for a new Penguin

edition of *The Woman in White*. Covers for three other books are also in the competition: *Hell's Angels* by Hunter S. Thompson, *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevsky, and *Mrs Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf. The winner of each will get a top of the range Nikon camera with a smaller Nikon for the runner up. The closing date for all four is 30 December and the short-listed photographs can be seen later in January at <https://www.theguardian.com/books/competition/0,13349,1595739,00.html>

WILKIE ON THE AIRWAVES

With this newsletter is *Wilkie on the Airwaves* by Paul Lewis. Using BBC archives and *Radio Times* Paul has put together the most complete account yet of readings and dramatizations of Collins's stories on BBC television and radio together with other items about or involving Collins.

OBITUARY

Derek Aylward – who took the role of Godfrey Ablewhite in the 1959 BBC TV production of *The Moonstone* – died on 9 July 2005 aged 82. Aylward appeared in small roles in a few pre-war films and got his break with ENSA in a 1944 production of Noel Coward's *Blithe Spirit*. From 1950 to 1970 he appeared in the West End and in a number of television roles including one in *The Prisoner* in 1964. He is once rumoured to have demanded his pay in guineas rather than pounds. It was the difference, he said, between “being treated as a gentleman and being treated like a tradesman”.

THE HAUNTED HOTEL

Philip Dart and Val May's freely adapted stage version of *The Haunted Hotel* was revived on a three month UK tour from September to November with William Gaunt, Dominic Kemp, and Susannah York in the key roles. Despite the cast, reviews were disappointing.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE IN NEW YORK

Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical production of *The Woman in White* opened at New York's Marquis Theatre on 17 November with much of the original London cast including Michael Ball, who took over the role of Fosco from Michael Crawford, Maria Friedman as Marian and Jill Paice as Laura. Initial reviews were mixed, though Friedman won much praise for going back on stage weeks after an operation for breast cancer. Sadly, she had to give up the role for further medical treatment in the

middle of December. Brendan Lemon for the *Financial Times* “liked the rat” but little else. Kamal Al-Soyaylee for *The Globe and Mail* thought it a “predictable approach to a great book” but liked the local Toronto actor Adam Brazier as Hartright. The *New York Post* was more enthusiastic; Clive Barnes found it “a thrilling musical with a weirdly engrossing tale full of artifice and spine-chiller twists.”

Meanwhile in London critics were invited back to the Palace Theatre to see the new stars – Simon Callow as Fosco and Ruthie Henshall as Marian. Callow was replaced at the end of November by David Burt as the show clocked up its 500th performance. Charles Spencer of *The Daily Telegraph* at least revised his opinion of a “terrible disappointment” to praise the slightly revised score though the rest remained “fatally misconceived.” Tickets are available up to 1 April 2006.

CHRISTMAS

Wilkie’s general dislike of “this awful Christmas-time” contrasted with his use of it to sell his works. Christmas books began with *Mr Wray’s Cash Box* published for Christmas 1851 and ended with *The Guilty River* for 1886. Stories spanned more than thirty years too, from ‘The Fourth Poor Traveller’ in the Christmas edition of *Household Words* to ‘The First Officer’s Confession’ in *Spirit of the Times* Christmas 1887. For more on Christmas publications and with eleven quotes from his letters about “the season of Cant and Christmas” see the new and revised menu item 7 at www.wilkiecollins.com.

LAST AND DEFINITELY LEAST – A WILKIE PASTICHE

Not recommended at all is *The Rag and Bone Shop* by Jeff Rackham, a Professor of English at the University of North Carolina-Asheville. Rackham weaves together the known facts and some speculation about Dickens’s relationship with the young actress Ellen Ternan to create a wholly unbelievable tale about an illegitimate child born in France and Wilkie Collins’s role in its disappearance. Although Rackham sticks vaguely to the known facts of Dickens’s life, he gets almost every detail of Collins wrong from his relationships with his own women friends to his close friendship with Dickens and ends up with a plot so preposterous as to be laughable rather than annoying. Like the other professorial pasticher William Palmer he delights in making up scenes of sexual debauchery – though in Rackham’s case he excuses Dickens from taking part in most of these. The story is told in interlinked narratives by Ellen Ternan, Dickens’s sister-in-law Georgina Hogarth (who maintains a

fantasy that she is in fact Dickens's secret wife) and by Collins himself. Never published outside the USA The Rag and Bone Shop is only mentioned for those who might want it as part of a Wilkie pastiche collection. Originally published in 2001 by Zoland Books (ISBN 1- 58195-105-1) and later by Penguin (ISBN 0-14-200225-951400).

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NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2006

ANOTHER 'RAMBLES AROUND MARYLEBONE'

As mentioned in an earlier Newsletter, the WCS is planning a summer walk in conjunction with Andrew Duncan's London Explorers Group (LEG). The route will mainly follow our earlier 'Rambles Around Marylebone' in 2000 but new information has come to light with the publication of Wilkie's letters in *The Public Face* and we hope to add some new sites to the itinerary. The walk will be led jointly by Paul Lewis and Andrew Gasson with occasional interruptions from Andrew Duncan.

The walk will take place on the afternoon of Sunday 2 July 2006. It will commence at 2.00 pm from the Windsor Castle pub, 98 Park Road, London, NW1 4SH (020 7723 9262). This is on the right hand side of the road, about five minutes walk north of Marylebone Road and Baker Street underground station. Members might like to meet up and join other participants from LEG from 1.00 pm.

To have an idea of the probable support for the walk, we would appreciate it if members would contact us if they think they are likely to come along (preferably by email to Andrew Gasson on apogee@apgee.co.uk). Also, as we may not manage another Newsletter before the walk, check on the www.wilkiecollins.com website the week before in case there are any last minute changes to the arrangements.

Andrew Duncan is the author of *Walking London*, *Secret London* and other well-known London guides and launched LEG to introduce Londoners to the history, heritage and geography of their home city, mainly by means of guided walks. Other LEG walks take place once a

month on Sundays. If you would like to go on the LEG mailing list to receive details of walks and other events, please email info@leglondon.co.uk or send your details to LEG, 2b Gastein Road, London W6 8LU. Walk information will also be posted on the internet at www.leglondon.co.uk.

COLLINS IN *HOUSEHOLD WORDS*

Our latest reprint continues to make available those works of Wilkie Collins which have not been republished since their original appearance in print during the nineteenth century. The enclosed publication includes ‘Strike!’, ‘Highly Proper!’ and ‘A Breach of British Privilege’ These three essays have been prepared with an introduction by Paul Lewis and originally appeared in *Household Words* in the 1850s. We hope to republish further essays to go out with a subsequent Newsletter.

***THE WOMAN IN WHITE* IN LEICESTER**

Also accompanying this Newsletter is ‘The Mystery of *The Woman in White* in Leicester’. This is the result of Open University scholar Valerie Pedlar’s careful research into early productions of the play.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE

Any new critical edition of Collins’s works by Broadview Press is eagerly anticipated. Following their previous publications, *Heart and Science*, *The Evil Genius*, *The Moonstone* and *Blind Love*, we now have *The Woman in White*. The earlier Broadview texts have all been extremely well annotated and published with a wealth of contextual matter which is often worth the price of the book on its own.

The editors of this new edition, Maria K. Bachmann and Don Richard Cox should be well known to Collins readers with their recent editorship of both *Blind Love* and *Reality’s Dark Light*. *The Woman in White* ably follows in their earlier footsteps. The editors have consulted the original manuscript of the novel although the text “that electrified readers in 1859-60” is taken from the original weekly publication in Dickens’s *All the Year Round* and attempts “to preserve that excitement ... by indicating all serial breaks so modern readers will be forced to pause and take a breath.”

The scholarly introduction includes the main themes of the novel: Sensation fiction, Composition History, Narrative Structure, Victorian

Psychology and Mesmerism, Marriage and the “Woman Question”, “The Italian Question”, and the Dramatic Adaptation. There follows a detailed note on the text and the edition also includes engravings from later Smith Elder and Chatto & Windus publications.

The notes, especially those about English geographical locations, seem mainly intended for a North American audience. There is, however, a good deal to inform modern UK readers whether it concerns a description of bathing machines, contemporary social customs, class structure of nineteenth century England, Victorian recreations or the history of and differences between a brougham, a chaise and a dog cart.

As we have come to expect from Broadview, there are several useful additions to the main body of the text. Appendix A includes prefaces to the English editions of 1860 and 1861 together with a translation of that for the first French edition by E. D. Forgues, also in 1861 (WCS members may recall that Paul Lewis made a similar translation in 1998 to accompany the Spring Newsletter). There is a sample page from *All the Year Round* while Appendix C includes several commentaries and reviews, usefully presented at length.

The debate over ‘The Woman Question’, originally raised in the introduction, is expanded upon with supporting articles in Appendix D. One of the important themes of *The Woman in White* is the misuse of lunatic asylums and this forms the basis for Appendix E together with articles on the ‘Mesmeric Mania of 1851’. The last of these is the text of Collins’s first letter in the ‘Magnetic Evenings at Home’ series, originally published in *The Leader* of 17 January 1852 (once again, this will be familiar to WCS members from our August 2001 reprint). The additional matter ends with a usefully set out bibliography.

With the Broadview text of *The Moonstone*, we were treated to the text of the play. If we could wish for one extra inclusion in this current volume, it would be the text of Collins’s own dramatic version of *The Woman in White*. The play was originally ‘published by the author’ in a very small edition and is now virtually unobtainable. The editors have, however, taken the trouble to consult a copy for the relevant section of the introduction.

Overall, this is an excellent critical edition of *The Woman in White* which fulfils our expectations. It has been prepared with great thoroughness by two editors well versed in Collins studies and gives the earliest published version of Collins’s text. It provides a lengthy introduction covering

most of the important issues raised by the novel. The annotations have been carefully researched and the various Appendixes succeed in furnishing the reader with exactly the right sort of contextual and background matter to give a better understanding of the story (ISBN 1-55111-12345).

A DRAMATIC VERSION OF *THE WOMAN IN WHITE*

For most of us without access to Collins's original and not wishing to spend \$65,000 on the copy available on the internet, a relatively new dramatic version of *The Woman in White* is the adaptation from Collins's novel by Constance Cox. This three act play is produced by the well known firm of theatrical publishers, Samuel French, in their series of Acting Editions (ISBN 0 573 11578 8) and is available for £7.50 from their own bookshop at 52 Fitzroy Street, London W1T 5JR (020 7255 4300; www.samuelfrench-london.co.uk).

Constance Cox was a very well known dramatist for film and television, specialising in the classics such as *Pickwick Papers*, *Wuthering Heights*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park* and *Lady Audley's Secret*. There is a 'French connection' with Collins going back to 1867 when Samuel French in New York published an adaptation of *No Thoroughfare* by Louis Lequel (No. 348 of their Standard Drama series). This was performed at Mrs. F. B. Conway's Park Theatre, Brooklyn, 6 January 1868.

The current publication of *The Woman in White* as a play seems something of a mystery since it was first issued in 2005 although Constance Cox died in 1998 and over the last few years there have been several amateur productions of her adaptation. In 2005, for example, it was staged at King's Lynn, the Riverhead Theatre, Louth, and by the Durham Dramatic Society. These last two apparently played to respectively 85% and 96% capacity. This year there has already been a production by the Cuffely Players.

According to the Samuel French, Inc. website (based in New York) there are two other versions rather further removed from Wilkie's original. *The Woman in White* by Tim Kelly and Jack Sharkey is a musical adaptation sub-titled 'A Cautionary Tale of Monstrous Evil and Black hearted Villainy in Song and Dance' and described as "a loony musical spoof of Wilkie Collins' grim Gothic novel. Amid murder, madness, betrayal and vile deeds, the music is merry. There are even two fiendish murders set to music! The central character, villainous Sir Percival Glyde, and his

cohort in crime Countess Fosco (Proprietor of a madhouse) are two of the vilest – and funniest – foul fiends ever set to toe tapping music.

Egad, The Woman in White (Sealed in a Madhouse) by Tim Kelly is described as a “laugh oriented, old fashioned melodrama based on Wilkie Collins’ classic and it’s wild, fast and funny. It features a disreputable (and hilarious) villain who dispatches his adversaries with nefarious ease and even seals his wife in a madhouse to steal her vast fortune! He battles a wicked countess in one of the most uproarious fight scenes ever staged! When all else fails, he engineers mock funerals. But he’s scared of the mysterious “woman in white” who’s escaped from the asylum to seek him out. Abandoned wives, insolent servants, lawyers, hypochondriacs and manly drawing masters parade across the stage in gales of comedy terminating only when the villain is brought to justice in an audience cheering, outrageous and spectacular finale.”

Those interested can compare these modern versions with Wilkie’s own dramatisation at James Rusk’s comprehensive website to be found at <http://www.blackmask.com/jrusk/wcollins/wiw/wiw.html>.

FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS OF *THE WOMAN IN WHITE*

The production by the Cuffley Players is to be repeated as part of the Hertford Theatre Week on Thursday 27 April 2006. The box office can be contacted on 01707 873856.

The Woman in White will also be performed by the Bedford Dramatic Society from 26-30 September. It appears that they are still auditioning so that any WCS thespians can obtain further details :from www.bedforddramaticclub.org.uk. Otherwise tickets will be available from the Central Box Office, Harpur Suite, Harpur Street, Bedford MK40 1LA (01234 269519).

***THE WOMAN IN WHITE* – THE MUSICAL**

The £4 million musical version of *The Woman in White* at London’s Palace Theatre closed on 25 February after a successful run of nineteen months. It will be replaced in October by Monty Python’s *Spamalot*. In a more surprising move, the New York production at Broadway’s Marquis Theater closed on 17 February less than three months after it opened. The star Maria Friedman had quit the show almost at once due to cancer and Michael Ball who played Fosco missed many performances

due to a viral infection. Producer Andrew Lloyd Webber told reporters “There have been performances when two or more leads have been absent due to illness. I’m not sure even *The Phantom Of The Opera* could have survived the illnesses which have beset this wonderful company.” Reuters reported that only 30 out of 129 New York performances included the full original cast and that the musical had lost \$8 million. With mixed reviews and barely half the seats filled its end in NY was inevitable. By contrast, Lloyd Webber’s *The Phantom of the Opera* recently became the longest-running show in Broadway history passing 7,486 performances. There are reports that the musical is to be ‘reversioned’ for a year long, British tour in 2007.

DICKENSIAN PERILS

An article by Michael Hollington in the Winter 2005 issue of *The Dickensian* examines ‘The Perils of Certain English Prisoners’ written by Dickens and Collins. Published as the 1857 Christmas number of *Household Words* the piece concerns treachery and piracy in Central America. Hollington argues that previous attempts to see it as an allegory for Britain’s colonial role in India are wrong, despite evidence to that effect from Dickens’s own letters. In fact it was about Central America and the search there for gold and a route from the Atlantic to the Pacific. He also sees the story as one of collaboration between Dickens and Collins, cooperatively building on each other’s work rather than showing the rivalry between them that Lillian Nayder (whom Hollington calls ‘Najder’ throughout) found in *Unequal Partners* (Cornell, 2002).

P. D. JAMES ON TELEVISION

Following her recent appearance on BBC Radio’s ‘Open Book’, WCS Patron P. D. James was the subject of an hour long interview with Mark Lawson on BBC 4 television. This took place on Saturday 11 March and was repeated the following night. With the extra time available for a lengthy interview, the delightful and leisurely conversation covered a whole range of subjects, including her early personal life, how she writes her books, and her methods of working out plots and clues in advance.

ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES

The annual meeting and combined AGM of the Alliance of Literary Societies is this year being sponsored jointly by the Jane Austen and Burney societies. It will take place in Bath over the weekend of 13 and 14 May in the Abbey Church Rooms, Westgate. There will be talks by

Maggie Lane and Angela Barlow, guided walks and various social events. Further details and links from the Alliance website at <http://www.sndc.demon.co.uk/>.

WILKIE LIVES ON

Sex and the City star Sarah Jessica Parker and her husband Hollywood actor Matthew Broderick have named their son after Wilkie Collins. Parker described Collins to *Guardian* journalist Jess Cartner-Morley as “their favourite author”. James Wilkie, born on 28 October 2002, is also named for Broderick’s father, James.

WILKIE ON THE RADIO

WCS member Barry Pike has found five more adaptations of Wilkie’s work on BBC radio (see *Wilkie on the Airwaves* with the Winter 2005 Newsletter). They include a 1960 twelve part serial of *The Woman in White*, a 1970 four part adaptation of *The Dead Secret* and a 1973 *No Name* in six episodes. Further contributions welcome.

M. E. BRADDON SYMPOSIUM

WCS members are reminded of the Mary Elizabeth Braddon conference to be held at the University of Wales Swansea on Saturday 22 April 2006. Further details and booking arrangements are available on <http://www.braddonsymposium.co.uk/>.

LEDBURY POETRY FESTIVAL

The 2006 Ledbury Poetry Festival will be held from 30 June to 9 July. There will be the usual wide range of contributors and the traditional poetry competition. For a free programme, telephone 0845 458 1743 or look at <https://ledburypoetry.org.uk/>.

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NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2006

E-TEXT NEWS

A project at the University of Buckingham aims to e-text the whole of Dickens's periodicals *Household Words* and *All The Year Round* by the 200th anniversary of Dickens's birth in February 2012. That will mean the original periodical texts of some of Wilkie's major fiction will be available for the first time in e-text form. *The Dead Secret*, *The Woman in White*, *No Name*, and *The Moonstone* first appeared there in their original form as did the shorter works *Sister Rose*, *A Rogue's Life*, and *The Yellow Mask*. There were also numerous short stories and essays. The editor of the project is Dr John Drew. You can find out more or become a supporter or friend of the project at <https://www.djo.org.uk/>

Independent of Buckingham's work, Paul Lewis has now e-texted all Wilkie's 40 non-fiction contributions to *Household Words*. This is the first time that half of these have been available. The other half were collected by Wilkie in *My Miscellanies* (1863) but they were edited and abbreviated and this is the first time since the 1850s that these original versions have been published. The Wilkie Collins Society published three of these pieces that were not in *My Miscellanies* in the spring. This continues its ongoing series of reprints of Collins's short pieces which have never previously been republished. Enclosed with this Newsletter is the second part which contains three more essays from *Household Words*.

Before he worked on *Household Words* Wilkie wrote for the socialist weekly, *The Leader*. Although many of his contributions have been identified, there is no complete bibliography of them. Identification work will become easier when the whole newspaper is available in e-text form. Sponsored by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and with the co-operation of the British Library, a team at King's College London is e-texting six nineteenth century periodicals including *The Leader*. The team hopes to have images of the pages by the end of this year and a fully searchable text version by the end of next year. Check up on progress at <https://ncse.ac.uk/index.html>

James Rusk, who has single-handedly e-texted so much of Wilkie's work, has moved the texts to a new site. The new address is www.digitalpixels.org/jr/wc. All the available or known e-texts of Collins's works are accessible through www.wilkiecollins.com

COLLINS IN APPLETON'S JOURNAL

Although no full biography of Wilkie Collins was published in English until well into the 20th century, a number of short biographical sketches did appear in journals during his lifetime. Enclosed with this Newsletter is one of these. It was written by the American journalist George Makepeace Towle who visited Wilkie in June 1868 and for whom Wilkie later wrote a 'Memoir' to assist with this piece. It was published in *Appleton's Journal of Popular Literature, Science, and Art* on 3 September 1870 and has never been republished.

T. W. SPEIGHT AND THE MOONSTONE

An interesting Victorian author is Thomas Wilkinson Speight. He was a prolific writer who seems to have used Collins for inspiration on more than one occasion.

William Tinsley published his *Under Lock and Key* in 1869, the year after *The Moonstone*. Immediately after the title-page appears the following disclaimer: "In justice to himself the author thinks it requisite to state that the entire plan of this story was sketched out, and several of the chapters written, before the first lines of Mr. Wilkie Collins's "Moonstone" had been given to the Public. He has further declined himself the pleasure of reading "The Moonstone" till after the completion of his own story, so as to preclude any possible charge of having derived the outline of his plot from the work of another writer. London, February, 1869."

We can speculate on whether this disclaimer was inserted at the request of Speight or whether William Tinsley was playing safe, having just recently had a disagreement with Wilkie over the publication of the second edition of *The Moonstone*. The plot of *Under Lock and Key* certainly figures a large Indian gemstone, the Great Mogul Diamond, and one of the characters, Paul Platzoff, is a regular consumer of opium. The book contains several other similarities to Wilkie's works, including multiple narrators; a father and son as business advisers; rather like Pedgift and Pedgift Jr in *Armada*; a daughter reunited with her mother on the latter's deathbed as in *The Dead Secret*; and a servant who is really a spy looking to steal the treasure like Magdalen Vanstone in *No Name*. We will probably never know what T. W. Speight did or did not borrow from Wilkie, but the main plot is very different from *The Moonstone* and the story is entertaining in its own right.

Another readable story by Speight, published rather later in 1906, is *The Grey Monk*. It has a very well constructed story with a disinherited son returned from the dead, a foundling girl who finally discovers her real family and the ghost of

the Grey Monk. Mixed into the intriguing plot is a rogue and a villain called Verinder – a name to bring back recollections of *The Moonstone*,

A DRAMATIC VERSION OF *THE WOMAN IN WHITE*

We mentioned in the last Newsletter the Constance Cox adaptation of *The Woman in White* mentioned by the theatrical publishers, Samuel French, in their series of Acting Editions. This suggested a minor mystery since the publication was first issued in 2005 but the dramatist died in 1998. Amanda Smith, the Editorial Director of Samuel French has written to say that “the play was first ‘published’ as a manuscript copy for hire by Evans Plays Ltd in 1967. Samuel French acquired the Evans playlist some thirty years ago and with it this version of *The Woman in White*. It was performed from time to time, using manuscript copies, but the title has proved quite popular in recent years hence our decision to exercise our option to publish it as an Acting Edition – giving the 2005 copyright line.” The play is available for £7.50 from the Samuel French bookshop at 52 Fitzroy Street, London W1T 5JR (020 7255 4300; www.samuel french-london.co.uk; (ISBN 0 573 11578 8)

WILKIE ON DVD

Wilkie fans tend to think that the earlier BBC versions of his work far surpass the much abridged and changed 1996 and 1997 dramatisations of *The Moonstone* and *The Woman in White*. An early version of *The Moonstone* is now available in its original five episodes. First broadcast early in 1972, the dramatisation was by Hugh Leonard with Vivien Heilbron as Rachel Verinder, Robin Ellis as Franklin Blake and John Welsh as Sergeant Cuff. The plot and atmosphere remain faithful to the original story. The DVD is available from www.acornmediauk.com or on 0845 123 2312 price £19.99 plus £3 postage. Some cheaper copies have been appearing on eBay and it also costs less through www.amazon.co.uk.

A much earlier film version of *The Moonstone* from 1934 is also now available on DVD. Starring David Manners and Phyllis Barry and directed by Reginald Barker, the plot is changed almost out of recognition and shortened to just over an hour.

Lovers of early films may also like to track down a DVD of *Crimes at the Dark House* (1940) a terrible melodrama directed by George King loosely based on *The Woman in White* and starring Tod Slaughter and Sylvia Marriott.

The 1998 version of *Basil* starring Christian Slater, Claire Forlani and Jared Leto is also now available on DVD. This version is directed by Radha Bharadwaj and although departing from the plot in some places, captures a good sense of the period. Derek Jacobi is excellent as Basil’s stem Victorian father but the film is let down by some of the other acting. All three are best found through www.amazon.co.uk. Remember that you will need an ‘all-regions’ DVD player for some of the US versions

‘A TERRIBLY STRANGE BED’ ON TV

Another television version of ‘A Terribly Strange Bed’ has been discovered. Dating from the 1950s, probably 1954, it squeezes the plot into 12 minutes. Produced by Dynamic Films of New York it is part of a US television series called ‘On Stage with Monty Woolley’ in which Woolley (1888-1963) starred in short versions of various classics. Woolley first appeared in films in 1936 and his career petered out in made-for-TV specials like this. It is pretty terrible and lacks the style and faithfulness to the plot of the later Orson Welles TV version made in 1973.

BASIL ON RADIO

The BBC broadcast a two episode adaptation of *Basil* on Radio 4 in June. This was a really excellent adaptation, quite faithful to the original, carefully casted and well acted. Although the BBC is not currently selling a recording of this version, classic serials like this pop up frequently on BBC 7 – the digital radio station which specialises in repeats of comedy and drama from Radio 4. Look out for it from time to time at www.bbc.co.uk/bbc7.

BLIND LOVE

The excellent Broadview edition of *Blind Love*, edited by Maria K Bachman and Don Richard Cox is back in print. As with every Broadview edition it contains all the background material you could wish for, including reviews, obituaries (Collins died part way through writing the book), details of the Von Scheurer case on which it was based, and Collins’s plot summary from which Walter Besant finished the novel (from Chapter 49) on Wilkie’s death. Details from www.broadviewpress.com (ISBN 1-55111-447-X).

WILKIE’S COUSIN

New details have emerged of a first cousin of Wilkie – Charles Gray (1835-1883). Charles was the eighth and youngest child of the younger sister of Wilkie’s mother, Catherine Esther Geddes who married John Westcott Gray. Charles Gray travelled to Australia, as did his brother Alexander, and then to South Africa where he settled in Pietermaritzburg. At some point he adopted the stage name of Charles Lascelles. In Pietermaritzburg he pioneered opera and musical comedy and sang himself as a baritone.

ANOTHER WILKIE COLLINS

Long standing WCS member, Katherine Haynes, writes that recently she was talking to an Australian customer in her shop and was pleasantly surprised to discover that his name was Bruce Wilkie Collins. Apparently it is now a tradition for all members of his family to be given the middle name of Wilkie!

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NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2006

THE WCS JOURNAL

Volume 9 of the Wilkie Collins Society *Journal* is in its final stages of preparation and should be dispatched to members early in the new year. It will be a bumper issue with the contents including a lengthy study by Paul Lewis on ‘My Dear Dickens: Reconstructing the Letters from Collins’; ‘A Tale of Two Authors: The Shorter Fiction of Gaskell and Collins’ by Graham Law; and ‘From “A Journey in Search of Nothing” to “The Lazy Tour”’: Collins, Dickens, and the “Tyro Do Nothing”’ by Chris Louttit. There will also be the second ‘Addenda and Corrigenda’ to *The Collected Letters of Wilkie Collins* (William Baker, Andrew Gasson, Graham Law and Paul Lewis). Finally, Volume 9 will include reviews of Tamara S. Wagner’s *Longing: Narratives of Nostalgia in the British Novel* by Mark Knight; Rob Warden’s *Wilkie Collins’s The Dead Alive: The Novel, the Case, and Wrongful Convictions* by Lillian Nayder; and Collins’s *The Woman in White*, ed. Maria K. Bachman & Don Richard Cox, by Andrew Maunder.

MARYLEBONE JOURNAL

The latest issue of the Howard de Walden Estate’s elegantly produced *Marylebone Journal* for December-January features two short but interesting articles on Collins, both written by Louisa McKenzie. The first, entitled ‘A Double Life’, is mainly biographical. It stresses Wilkie’s disinclination for marriage against the background of his relationships with Caroline Graves and Martha Rudd. The other piece, ‘The Sensation Novel’, is mainly concerned with *The Woman in White*. There is a short resume of Collins’s addresses in Marylebone: 2a and 11 New Cavendish Street, 12 Harley Street, 82 Wimpole Street and 33 Bolsover Street. Strangely, however, there is no mention of Wilkie’s main residence for 20 years at 90 Gloucester Place (now renumbered 65) – presumably

because it is not actually on the Howard de Walden Estate which covers a significant part of the Marylebone area. Finally there is a full page image of Collins's from the series taken by Sarony, the well known New York photographer, during Wilkie's reading tour of America in 1873-1874. The picture is unusual **in** being a full-length study whereas most of the Sarony series are head and shoulder or three-quarters length. Further details can be found about *The Marylebone Journal* at <https://www.marylebonejournal.com/>. Or 020 7290 0940.

LIVES OF VICTORIAN LITERARY FIGURES

The next part of the Pickering & Chatto Series *Lives of Victorian Figures* is due to be published in January 2007 (ISBN 978 1 85196 819 0). Part V consists of three volumes, Wilkie Collins, Mary Elizabeth Braddon and William Thackeray. The Collins volume is jointly edited by Professor William Baker and Andrew Gasson. As with earlier books in the series, the volumes consist of a general introduction, followed by mainly contemporary biographical accounts. These are reproduced as annotated facsimiles of the originals with background material on the authors of the various extracts. These include:

George Makepeace Towle, 'Wilkie Collins', *Appleton's Journal of Popular Literature, Science, and Art* (1870); James Payn, *Some literary Recollections* (1885); 'A Novelist on Novel-writing: an interview with Wilkie Collins', *Cassell's Saturday Journal* (1887); 'Celebrities At Home. No. LXXI. Mr. Wilkie Collins in Gloucester-Place', *The World* (1877); Wilkie Collins, 'Reminiscences of a Story-Teller', *Universal Review* (1888); A. C. Swinburne, [Wilkie Collins], *Fortnightly Review* (1889); M. W. Townsend, [Wilkie Collins], *Spectator* (1889); H. Caine, 'Wilkie Collins. Personal Recollections', *The Globe* (1889); Edmund Yates, 'Moi-Meme. In Memoriam W.W. C., Obit September 23rd 1889', *The World* (1889); Andrew Lang, 'Mr Wilkie Collins's Novels', *Contemporary Review* (1890); Etheldine (Linda) Gardiner, [Wilkie Collins], *Temple Bar* (1890); Horace Pym, 'On Wilkie Collins', *A Tour Round My Bookshelves* (1891); Harry Quilter, 'In Memoriam Amici: Wilkie Collins', *Preference in Art, Life and Literature* (1892); Nathaniel Beard, 'Some Recollections of Yesterday', *Temple Bar* (1894); Mary Anderson, *A Few Memories* (1896); William Tinsley, *Random Recollections* (1900); Arthur Waugh, 'Wilkie Collins and His Mantle', *Academy Magazine* (1902); Edmund Downey, 'A Peep at the Author of "The Woman in White."'', *Twenty Years Ago* (1905); Lewis Melville, 'Wilkie Collins', *Victorian Novelists* (1906); Wybert Reeve, 'Recollections of Wilkie Collins', *Chamber's Journal* (1906); William

Winter, 'Wilkie Collins', *Old Friends* (1909); Marie and Squire Bancroft, *The Bancrofts: Recollections of Sixty Years* (1909); Arthur Compton-Rickett, 'Wilkie Collins', *The Bookman* (1912); Frank Archer, *An Actor's Notebooks* (1912); and Lucy Bethia C. Walford, *Memories of Victorian London* (1912)

Pickering & Chatto have agreed to offer members of the WCS a substantial discount, reducing the cost to £199 compared with the full published price of £275. Members wishing to order the books should quote their membership of the WCS and contact Pickering & Chatto direct at 020 7405 1005 or email sales@pickeringchatto.co.uk. Please note that Part V consists of all three volumes (Collins, Braddon and Thackeray) and the publishers cannot supply the Collins volume on its own.

'A HOUSE TO LET'

A new departure for BBC Radio 4 was the adaptation in five fifteen minute parts of 'A House to Let'. This piece was originally published as the extra Christmas number of *Household Words* for December 1858 under the editorship of Dickens. The story was jointly written by Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins and Elizabeth Gaskell. In the original, the narrator is found a new London home by her servant, Trottes. She takes an interest in the run down and neglected house opposite which is 'To Let' and ends up adopting the young child she discovers is imprisoned there to keep him from his rightful inheritance. Collins contributed the short story, 'Trottes Report' and collaborated with Dickens on the opening and closing framework narratives, 'Over the Way' and 'Let at Last'.

'A House to Let' was the last of the Christmas numbers of *Household Words*. Collins had previously contributed: 'The Fourth Poor Traveller' ('A Stolen Letter') in 'The Seven Poor Travellers' (J 854); 'The Ostler' ('The Dream Woman') as the second part of 'The Holly Tree Inn' (1855); 'John Steadiman's Account' and 'The Deliverance' in 'The Wreck of the Golden Mary' (1856); and 'The Prison in the Woods' in 'The Perils of Certain English Prisoners' (1857). In 1859, Dickens fell out with the publishers, Bradbury & Evans, and started his own journal, *All the Year Round* which published altogether nine Christmas numbers. Collins contributed to four of these: 'The Ghost in the Cupboard Room' ("Blow up with the Brig!") in 'The Haunted House' (1859); 'The Seafaring Man'; and (with Dickens) 'The Money' and 'The Restitution' in 'A Message from the Sea' (1860); 'Picking up Waifs at Sea' (The Fatal Cradle) in

'Tom Tiddler's Ground' (1861); and *No Thoroughfare* (with Dickens, 1867).

MORE WILKIE AT THE BBC

During October and November, Radio 7, which concentrates on drama, repeated one of the BBC's early dramatisations of *The Woman in White*. Searching the BBC's website on either Radio 4 or Radio 7 produces a wide range of Collins mentions – everything from Pilchard fisheries in Cornwall (taken from *Rambles Beyond Railways*) to a review of a modern adaptation of *The Haunted Hotel* in Coventry.

WILKIE ON DVD AND VIDEO

Currently on ebay there are several film and video versions of *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone*. These are mainly the 1990s (rather poor) BBC adaptations but the earlier and very much better version on DVD of *The Moonstone* from 1972 is still available from time to time as well as being sold at the BBC's own shop at the fixed price of £19.99. The 1934 film version of the same title is also regularly available but it is such a terrible adaptation that it is for enthusiasts only and not for the faint hearted!

THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO WILKIE COLLINS

Wilkie, who "had no inclination for a University life, and if it be not heresy to say so, I am no great admirer of University life now" is the subject of a new study by Cambridge University Press. Edited and introduced by Professor Jenny Bourne Taylor, the publisher's blurb promises to "analyse Collins's exploration of the tensions which lay beneath Victorian society". The Companion has the following chapters by well known and distinguished scholars of Victorian literature.

1. Collins's career and the visual arts by Tim Dolin
2. The early writing by Anthea Trodd
3. Collins's shorter fiction by John Bowen
4. Collins and the sensation novel by Lyn Pykett
5. The Moonstone, detective fiction and forensic science by Ronald R. Thomas
6. The later novels by Jenny Bourne Taylor
7. The professional writer and the literary marketplace by Graham Law
8. The marriage plot and its alternatives by Carolyn Dever
9. Collins and Victorian masculinity by John Kucich

10. Collins and Empire by Lillian Nayder
11. Disability and difference by Kate Flint
12. Collins and the theatre by Jim Davis
13. The afterlife of Wilkie Collins by Rachel Malik

The Cambridge Companion to Wilkie Collins is part of the Cambridge Companions to Literature series. It is available as a hardback at £45 or a paperback at £16.99.

WILKIE WEBSITES

Both Paul Lewis and Andrew Gasson have recently been adding to their respective Wilkie Collins websites.

The quote in the above paragraph is from ‘Men and Women’ (5 February 1887). It is one of more than fifty contemporary biographies of Wilkie on Paul Lewis’s expanded website www.wilkiecollins.com. The passages are all either published in Wilkie’s lifetime or written by eyewitnesses to his life or work. Although most of them are known to scholars, very few have been available in e-text form before. Some – like the one in ‘Men and Women’ – contain quotes from Wilkie himself and constitute the closest we will ever get to autobiography. The collection is not complete, but it is still growing and if any readers know of passages that are not there please forward them to paul@paullewis.co.uk. In addition to the new biographies the collection of images of Wilkie also continues to grow slowly as new photographs or drawings emerge. There are now more than 90, including all the major paintings of Wilkie, most of the known photographs, and some other drawings.

At www.wilkie-collins.info Andrew Gasson has now added images of unusual, first and early editions for all of Collins’s books. Also included for each title are plot summaries and publishing history. There is another illustrated section on Collins’s published dramatic works. Other sections have also been updated and there are new pages for example on Wilkie’s liking for animals.

James Rusk continues to maintain his website of e-texts at www.digitalpixels.org/jr/wc/. Here you will find almost all of Collins’s fiction together with some of his dramatic adaptations. At www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2002/May02/WCollins.htm there are some details about Collins and music. There are also one or two notes on *Poor Miss Finch* and epilepsy available at www.epilepsiemuseum.de/alt/lucillaen.html.

A WILLIAM FRITH EXHIBITION

The Guildhall Art Gallery in the City of London is holding the first exhibition for fifty years of paintings by Wilkie's close friend William Powell Frith (1819-1909). Frith studied art with Wilkie's brother Charles and Wilkie was a frequent visitor to Frith's home. Despite this there are just three brief references to Wilkie in Frith's autobiography. Similarly visitors will struggle to find much of Wilkie in this exhibition. The £20 catalogue contains a chapter on Dickens and Frith but just one mention, literally, of Wilkie Collins. For all that, it is a lovely little exhibition, bringing together for the first time Frith's three iconic panoramas of Victorian times – *Life at the Seaside* (1853), *Derby Day* (1856), and *Railway Station* (1862). Sadly the last two were glazed with reflective glass (the Tate which owns *Derby Day* should really know better) making distant or close study of the numerous characters very frustrating. *Life at the Seaside*, which was based on a visit to Ramsgate in 1851, shows many Ramsgate landmarks including Wellington Crescent at the top right where Wilkie once stayed. Other pictures include a charming study of a crossing sweeper (1858); this shows houses behind that could be Pembridge Villas near Notting Hill where Frith lived from the 1850s and where Wilkie was a frequent visitor. Like Wilkie, Frith had two families. Unlike Wilkie he had children with both the women in his life – twelve with his wife and seven with his mistress Mary Alford.

'Painting the Victorian Age' is at Guildhall Art Gallery, London EC2P 2EJ until 4 March and at the Mercer Art Gallery, Harrogate, 24 March to 15 July 2007.

WILKIE WALK-ON – *THE WORMS OF EUSTON SQUARE*

A rather strange Victorian pastiche has Dickens and Wilkie Collins as walk-ons. Author William Sutton warns in the blurb "I have been slovenly in my researches" and admits in an interview that he wrote the whole book, which is long, with no more reference material than an encyclopedia. He didn't say the dialogue is wooden and the plot creaks – but it does. *The Worms of Euston Square* by William Sutton, (Edinburgh 2006 ISBN 181183-JOO-X) is £9.99 but cheaper on Amazon. Safer to read more here before you buy www.william-sutton.co.uk and www.myspace.com/eustonworms

Wilkie also had a mention in a very interesting play *Little Nell* by Simon Gray. Drawing heavily on Clare Tomalin's biography of Dickens's lover Ellen Ternan *The Invisible Woman*, the play was on BBC Radio 4 on 16 December and a stage version is promised for 2007. At one point Ellen

asks Dickens how he refers to her among his friends “What do you call me to Wilkie?” she demands.

READ TO ME

If you like your books read to you but baulk at the price of full text versions of Wilkie’s works, then a public domain – ie free – version of the full text of *The Woman in White* would be of interest. LibriVox – see more at librivox.org – provides audio versions of public domain books. It is entirely voluntary, so the quality of the reading varies. Currently a team is working on *The Woman in White* using different voices for each narrator. The organizers claim to have the readers lined up but are looking for an editor to tie it all together. All you can hear so far are two auditions for Count Fosco at <http://wilkiecollins.wordsaloud.com>. To read about their current progress so far, you can investigate <http://librivox.org/forum/viewtopic.php?t=3721> Let them know if you can help.

WILKIE AT THE NFT

The National Film Theatre in London has been showing a small number of Wilkie Collins stories as part of a series called ‘Tales of Mystery and Laudanum’. It has found a 1957 television version of *The Woman in White* produced for the ‘Hour of Mystery’ on Thames Television. It is also showing the one remaining episode – 6 out of 7 – of the BBC’s 1959 version of *The Moonstone* – watch out for Patrick Cargill and James Hayter. The evening is rounded off by the Orson Welles ‘Great Mysteries’ version of *A Terribly Strange Bed* produced for Anglia Television in 1974 and introduced by the Great Man himself (Welles that is – not Wilkie!) and with roles for Rupert Davies and Colin Baker. Hurry for tickets on 29 December. www.bfi.org.uk/incinemas/nft/film/7079. The NFT also showed the awful 1997 BBC television version of *The Woman in White* directed by Tim Fywell; even Ian Richardson’s wonderful Mr Fairlie fails to save the altered plot and lack of Wilkie’s own words.

WILKIE AT SCHOOL

Education Secretary Alan Johnston – an ex-postman and rock guitarist – has stepped in to make sure that Wilkie remains part of the reading list for the school curriculum in English. At one time the entire pre-1914 literature list looked set to disappear. But Wilkie will now stay, along with Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, Henry James and

George Eliot. Johnston calls these writers “a crucial part of our national heritage.” The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority will begin consultations on the list in February with a view to publishing a final version in 2008. Only one reference to Wilkie comes from a search of its website – for the graveyard scene in *The Woman in White* at www.qca.org.uk/12571_2373.html.

QUOTE UNQUOTE

One of our continuing frustrations is the quote, widely attributed to Wilkie, “Make ’em laugh, make ’em cry, make ’em wait.” It is said to be his recipe for writing a successful story. It cropped up again in *The Guardian* letters page on 11 November. But when did he say it and where? If anyone can track it down to the nineteenth century please let the editors know.

RAMBLES BEYOND RAILWAYS

Daniel Stark, who e-texted Wilkie’s Comish travel book *Rambles Beyond Railways* has now followed in Wilkie’s footsteps and illustrated his e-text with his own photographs. The modern image of the Cheese Wring next to Henry Brandling’s original lithograph is particularly striking. See them at www.wilkiecollins.de/rambles/rambles-ext.html.

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www.wilkie-collins.info**



THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

PATRONS Faith Clarke, Baroness James of Holland Park (P. D. James)

Chairman Andrew Gasson, 3 Merton House, 36 Belsize Park, London, NW3 4EA

Membership Paul Lewis, 4 Ernest Gardens, Chiswick, London W4 3QU

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2007

WILKIE COLLINS AT THE SOCIETY OF AUTHORS

Accompanying this Newsletter is 'Wilkie Collins and his Last Dinner at the Society of Authors'. This piece was prompted by a previously unrecorded letter from Collins to James Stanley Little which recently appeared at auction. Little was the executive secretary of the Society of Authors and Wilkie was enclosing his payment of 10/6 for the dinner which is discussed in the article.

BOTALLACK MINE

Also with this Newsletter is a 'Description of the Visit by Wilkie Collins to Botallack Mine'. This has been written by long standing WCS member Pierre Tissot van Patot from Holland and gives an excellent modern perspective on what Wilkie would have seen during his walking tour of Cornwall. Collins's description of the mine was originally published as Chapter XI of *Rambles Beyond Railways* in 1851 and in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* for April 1851.

JOINT EVENT WITH THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

The Wilkie Collins Society and the Dickens Fellowship are holding a joint event on the evening of 4 October in London at Barnard's Inn Hall EC1N 2HH which is in Holborn. The talk will be given by WCS membership secretary Paul Lewis on the correspondence of Dickens and Collins. There will probably be a small charge. Further details will be given in the Summer Newsletter.

WILKIE IN THE WOOD

Andrew Gasson has agreed to give a talk to the St John's Wood Society at 7.00 pm on Tuesday, 30th October at St. John's Wood Church, London NW8. This is situated by the St. John's Wood Roundabout next to Lords cricket ground. The provisional title is 'Wilkie in the Wood'. There will be a small charge for the evening and members of the WCS will be very welcome. Details should be finalised in time for the Summer Newsletter.

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MEMBERS

We are always pleased to receive a contribution from members. This could be just a snippet of news for the Newsletter or a full length article. The latter could in turn be a serious academic essay for the WCS *Journal* (which should be addressed to editors Graham Law or Lillian Nayder); or possibly a more informal piece to accompany a Newsletter (which can be emailed to Andrew Gasson or Paul Lewis).

REALITY'S DARK LIGHT FROM TENNESSEE

Reality's Dark Light was originally published in 2003 as part of the Tennessee Studies in Literature series. The thirteen Collins essays are edited by Maria K. Bachman, assistant professor of English at Coastal Carolina University, and Don Richard Cox, professor of English and associate dean at the University of Tennessee. WCS members will also recall their collaborations for the Broadview Press editions of *Blind Love* and *The Woman in White*.

The book, normally available at \$40, is currently on sale from the University of Tennessee Press at the bargain price of \$10. Further details can be had from <https://utpress.org/title/realitys-dark-light/>.

BUT MEMBERS ARE ADVISED TO BE VERY CAREFUL WHEN PURCHASING ONLINE. The checkout price may still show as \$40 and personal experience has proved it to be extremely difficult to obtain a credit card refund to obtain the book at the advertised price.

THE HAUNTED HOTEL FOR SALE

Collectors of Collins's works may be interested to know of a nineteenth century edition for sale. Donna Falcon recently inherited a copy of *The Haunted Hotel* which she wants to sell (although we enthusiasts might enquire why). It is the first Canadian edition published in green cloth during 1878 by Rose-Belford of Toronto.

Collins's Canadian publishers were originally Hunter, Rose who published at Collins's request a book version of *Man and Wife* in June 1870. This experiment in preventing American periodical piracy in Canada proved so effective and financially rewarding that Collins found he had created a new market for his books. By 1874 the firm had also published *Poor Miss Finch*, *The New Magdalen*, *Miss or Mrs*, *The Dead Alive*, and *American Readings* which consisted of 'The Frozen Deep' and 'The Dream Woman'.

During his reading tour of North America in 1873-74, Collins was entertained by Rose and his wife. The Hunter, Rose partnership came to an end when Hunter died in 1877 after which Rose collaborated with Belford of Chicago. Other Toronto editions included *The Law and the Lady*, *The Two Destinies*, *The Fallen Leaves*, *Heart and Science*, and *The Haunted Hotel* which was in fact the first edition in book form. Anyone interested in this particular copy can contact Donna at dtfalcon@nrtco.net. An idea of current prices can be obtained from ABE on the internet although most of the books for sale here are fairly expensively priced by book dealers.

POOR MISS FINCH AND EPILEPSY

Poor Miss Finch is included in the website for the German Museum for Epilepsy in Kork which also lists numerous other authors and their epilepsy related stories. A key part of Collins's plot revolves around Oscar Dubourg's epilepsy following a head injury and his subsequent skin discoloration from treatment with silver nitrate (dyschromia). The website features an illustration in colour entitled 'What is it?' with the following description: "This picture shows the engaged couple - the blind Lucilla and her bluish-looking fiancé. In the background, the different phases of one of Oscar's grand mal seizures are depicted. The artist has sketched the body axis in orange. This signal colour sets off the drama of the fall during the convulsion, which is portrayed in different stages (from the body standing up straight to it lying on the ground)." The website is found at <http://www.epilepsiemuseum.de/english/kunst/lucilla.html>.

WILKIE IN THE PRESS

The Woman in White featured in the *Times* Online Books Group for 6 January 2007. Every month Alyson Rudd introduces a different book and invites readers to give their opinions. She summed it up nicely in the opening paragraph with "*The Woman in White* was commissioned by Charles Dickens, a friend of Wilkie Collins, and was an immediate hit.

Collins gave the readers everything - suspense, fear, love, mystery, greed, lunacy, bravery and comedy.” There were numerous favourable opinions from *Times* readers, one of which was reprinted on the book page of 23 February. The issue for 20 January reprinted part of the original review from the *Times* of 30 October 1860.

It begins well enough with “Great in the art of mystification, Mr Wilkie Collins delights in a mystified character, and in the present novel has expended all his power in the setting forth of an enigmatical personage - the Count Fosco. Count Fosco is the great character of the novel.” It continues, however, rather less enthusiastically: “The novel will not bear a very close inspection. It is rather to be devoured whole, as a boa constrictor bolts a rabbit, than to be criticised in detail, and we gladly bear witness that it is successful, before the reader has had time to examine it, in producing an over-mastering excitement. Let no one accuse us of contradiction in cordially lauding a book in which at the same time we discover serious faults.” It was this review in the *Times* which first pointed out errors in the chronology of the book’s plot. Notwithstanding such criticism, *The Woman in White* was and still is a great success and has never been out of print since its first publication in 1860.

WILKIE IN INDIA

From the press rather further afield, in India, Wilkie is well represented in several articles published in *The Hindu* literary review. This is entirely appropriate since *The Moonstone* is the author’s other title which has never been out of print since the 1860s. Wilkie also enthusiastically received the news that *The Woman in White* was to be translated into Bengali in November 1883 and his literary agent, A. P. Watt, attempted to arrange serialisation of ‘I Say No’ in an Anglo-Indian periodical.

WILKIE’S HOME DEMOLISHED

One of the remaining houses where Wilkie lived has been demolished. The Collins family moved into 20 Avenue Road, just north of Regent’s Park, on their return from the Continent in September 1838. They stayed there for a little under two years and during that time William Collins suffered from a condition diagnosed as gout in the eyes – a painful malady which Wilkie claimed he inherited from his father. Doctors blamed the illness on many things and Wilkie wrote “the clay soil on which his house was built was suspected of having some connection with the malady of which he complained; and he was strongly recommended to take another abode, on dry gravel ground.” (*Memoirs of the Life of*

William Collins, R.A. 1847 II 166). In the summer of 1840, the family made the move to the drier soil of 85 Oxford Terrace near London's Hyde Park.

It was from 20 Avenue Road that Wilkie travelled the four miles by omnibus to board at Henry Cole's school at Highbury Place. His time at the school coincided with living at 20 Avenue Road and it was at Cole's that his story-telling powers were first realised – not by masters but by fellow pupils who bullied him into amusing them with tales.

The house was renumbered 39 in 1859. Although built in the early 19th century the house was not listed or deemed to be of any particular architectural or historic merit, though it is in the St John's Wood Conservation Area. Alterations to make its attics habitable in 1903 and the internal conversion into four flats around 1960 had resulted in the loss of its internal features. But the building was a rare survival of the original small footprint properties built on large plots in this area. Most of its neighbours were extended or replaced a century ago or more.

A detailed survey as part of the demolition application estimated in 2002 that it would cost £1.5 million for a "scholarly restoration" to its original form. Instead of insisting on that, Westminster City Council permitted its destruction and replacement by a large family home, valuing the completed site and dwelling at more than three times that figure. Today it would be worth far more. The house was pulled down last year and a concrete core of a large brick-faced luxury family home is now being built.

The planning applications and background documents can be seen at www.westminster.gov.uk. Two photographs of the house in 1999 are at www.wilkiecollins.com, menu item 11 - 'Where Wilkie Lived'.

WILKIE AND BOTANY

Clive Lovatt, a botanist currently based in Malawi, has discovered that Wilkie was one of the subscribers to a book called *Flora of Weston* by Gustavus St. Brody (1828-1901) published in 1856. Collins was a frequent visitor to Weston-super-Mare where his friend Edward Pigott lived and where he also struck up acquaintance with the doctor, Joseph Stringfield. It could have been at Stringfield's that Collins met St. Brody or at least agreed to be a subscriber to his book. The full two page article by Clive Lovatt is currently available online at the website <http://www.natstand.org.uk/pdf/StBrodyGAO005.pdf>

MP3 WILKIE

The indefatigable e-texter of Wilkie's work, James Rusk, is getting fed up with poor quality audio versions of his stories. The site www.audiobooksforfree.com has *The Moonstone*, *Blow Up With the Brig*, *The Fatal Cradle*, and *Who Killed Zebedee?* But James complains that the free downloads are of extremely poor quality. "It sounds like the narrator is in a tin can full of water." And he warns "If you want to download a higher quality version, you have to pay." He invites retired or aspiring actors to step in to form a site of well read, free Wilkie Collins stories in mp3 format.

HARRIET IN WILTSHIRE

An excellent but brief biography of Wilkie's mother Harriet Collins will be published in a forthcoming edition of *Wiltshire Life*. Harriet was the eldest of six children, born in Wiltshire near Salisbury. Author Mary de Vere Taylor has read widely to produce the short but enlightening account. *Wiltshire Life* is published monthly by A&D Media. More at www.markallengroup.com/aandd.

THE BRITISH LIBRARY

The British Library has dipped a toe into the 21st century by allowing a pilot group of 40 readers to use their own cameras in the reading room. The BL is becoming more and more isolated in its refusal to allow readers to take their own images of the collection. The V & A Library has done so for many years - even offering a camera stand - and the National Archives allows the use of cameras once a reader has registered and signed a copyright agreement. In the experience of your editors using a digital camera to record manuscripts and fragile publications minimises both the time and the contact with the objects, aiding conservation rather than harming the artefacts. The digital images can then be transcribed, read, printed out or analysed at leisure. Permission to take images would allow the easy study of the texts of all Wilkie's plays, the manuscripts of some of his works and the small number of letters held by the BL. The pilot ended on 17 March and a report on the trial will be in the May Reader's Bulletin.

NEW WILKIE STUDY

Andrew Mangham, who organised the Wilkie Collins conference in Sheffield in 2005, has edited a new series of essays on the author which is due to be published shortly. *Wilkie Collins: Interdisciplinary Essays*

looks at Collins's journalism, plays and some of his lesser known and studied works such as *The Fallen Leaves* and *The Legacy of Cain*. It will also look at his work in the context of art, spiritualism, copyright, medicine and the law. A full review will appear in the Summer Newsletter. The book is published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing price £34.99 ISBN 1-84718-109-0. More at <https://www.cambridgescholars.com/product/9781847181091>

***THE WOMAN IN WHITE* WEBSITE**

A website (slightly commercial) devoted solely to *The Woman in White* has been created by Stephen Bray at www.womaninwhite.info. On the site, which has been running for a little over a year, you will find details of the book itself with a plot summary and detailed analysis of all the main characters. Other pages relate to film and theatrical versions and the more recent musical. There are useful links to other sites but rather a lot of advertisements.

THE LEDBURY POETRY FESTIVAL

This year's festival is to be held from 29 June to 8 July. To request a free programme, telephone 0845 4581743 or visit <https://ledburypoetry.org.uk/>

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NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2007

JOINT EVENT WITH THE CHARLES DICKENS MUSEUM

WCS membership secretary Paul Lewis will be giving a talk on the correspondence of Dickens and Collins at a joint meeting of The Wilkie Collins Society and the Friends of the Charles Dickens Museum. It will take place at 6.30 pm on Thursday 4 October in Holborn at Barnard's Inn Hall, Gresham College, London EC1N 2HH. The charge for the evening to include a glass of wine is £8 to members of the WCS or Friends of the CDM and £10 for non-members. Bookings should be made through the Charles Dickens Museum on 020 7405 2127 or info@dickensmuseum.com.

'WILKIE IN THE WOOD'

Andrew Gasson is giving a talk to the St John's Wood Society on Tuesday 30 October 2007 at 7.00 pm in the St John's Wood Church Hall, NW8 7NE. This is situated on the St John's Wood roundabout next to Lords Cricket Ground. The title of the illustrated talk will be 'Wilkie in the Wood' and will be about Collins's life and works relating them where possible to St John's Wood. Wilkie lived for most of his life within walking distance of the area, in Marylebone.

Tickets are available in advance for £5 for members of the WCS and St John's Wood Society by sending the enclosed bookings form to Elizabeth Aldwinckle, PO Box 20586, London NW8 0ZU. The price for non-members and on the door will be £7.

WHAT HAVE HARRY POTTER AND *THE MOONSTONE* IN COMMON?

The recent hype about Harry Potter with huge queues outside bookshops waiting for the next publication reminds us of the huge popularity of *The Moonstone* in 1868. Its publisher, William Tinsley, in his *Random Recollections of an Old Publisher* recalled "During the run of "The Moonstone" as a serial there were scenes in Wellington Street that doubtless did the author's and publisher's hearts good. And especially when the

serial was nearing its ending, on publishing days there would be quite a crowd of anxious readers waiting for the new number, and I know of several bets that were made as to where the moonstone would be found at last.” Is anyone prepared to bet on whether Harry Potter will still be read in 139 years time?

COLLINS BIBLIOGRAPHY

For those interested in Collins bibliography, bookseller Scott Brindred has copies available at £20 post free of the 1968 Burt Franklin reprint of Parrish and Miller’s *Bibliography of Wilkie Collins and Charles Reade: First Editions described with Notes*. This was originally published in a limited edition of 400 copies in 1940 and the facsimile reprint has also been out of print for several years. Contact Scott Brindred at 17 Greenbanks, Lyminge, Kent CT18 8HG (01303 862258).

A SIMPLE STORY AND THE PALL MALL GAZETTE

Broadview Press which has been responsible for such excellent modern editions of Collins’s works has just published *A Simple Story* by Elizabeth Inchbald (1753-1821). Collins makes an interesting reference to this novel, originally published in 1791, in an article written for the *Pall Mall Gazette* of 11 February 1886, entitled ‘Books Necessary for A Liberal Education’. “Read, my good public, Mrs. Inchbald’s Simple Story, in which you will find the character of a young woman who is made interesting even by her faults – a rare triumph, I can tell you, in our Art.” Kirk Beetz in an essay for the *WCS Journal* (first Series) in 1985 notes that the *Pall Mall Gazette* frequently published negative if not downright nasty reviews of Collins’s books but when it asked its readers for their favourite author during 1884, Collins won by a wide margin. He was therefore asked to reply to John Lubbock’s earlier list of books necessary for a liberal education. The result was a compilation intended to be both respectable in literary terms as well as appealing to a middlebrow readership. Those wishing to read Wilkie’s entire selection will soon be able to find the complete article on Paul Lewis’s website.

A DRAMATIC VERSION OF ARMADALE

WCS member, Susan Hanes from Chicago, has discovered a forthcoming adaptation of *Armadale*, based on the Wilkie Collins’s novel. It will take place in Milwaukee in the USA from Wednesday 23 April until Sunday 25 May 2008. The Wisconsin Events website at <http://www.wisconline.com> states: “A world premiere adaptation of Wilkie Collins’ sensational Victorian novel. A deathbed request leads to the most gripping of intrigues in this tale of deception, inherited curses, romantic rivalries and murder. In the center of it all is the mysterious and beautiful Lydia Gwilt, one of the most hardened and most fascinating female villains in literature. Single tickets go on sale Aug 20. Milwaukee Repertory Theater – Quadracci Powerhouse Theater, 108 E Wells St, Milwaukee, Milwaukee County. Call 414-224-9490.” Details of the

forthcoming production also feature on the Milwaukee Repertory website at https://media.milwaukeeerep.com/filer_public/34/36/3436296b-0100-4cde-9d7a-71ff9d779098/armadalesgedited.pdf.

In Collins's time, his theatrical version of *Armada* was staged under the title *Miss Gwilt*. It was first performed at the Alexandra Theatre, Liverpool on 9 December 1875. It opened in London at the Globe Theatre on 15 April 1876 with Ada Cavendish in the title role and Arthur Wing Pinero taking the part of Mr Darch. It was also staged at Wallack's Theatre, New York, from 5 June 1879.

THE FROZEN DEEP IN THE TIMES

Another WCS member, Nikki Ellen, tells us about the *Times*² supplement to the *Times* of 5 June 2007. This contained about seventeen pages on the theme of the year 1857 and Nikki recommends it for its really good social and political background for that year. Collins and Dickens receive a mention for *The Frozen Deep* in the section 'The Great, the good and the bad.'

MORGAN LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

The Woman in White featured in an exhibition on 'Victorian Bestsellers' at the Morgan Library and Museum in New York. This was held earlier in the year, between 26 January and 6 May. Some further details can be found on the Morgan site <https://www.themorgan.org/press/2006/victorian-bestsellers-exhibition>.

THE LIGHTHOUSE

The Spring 2007 issue of *The Dickensian* on p. 77 notes the recollections of the one time Fellowship Drama Group. From these we learn that there were two performance of *The Lighthouse* on 22 April 1950. "Adaptation and production for both performances was in the capable hands of Jane Bacon, with stage management by Doris Day, better known to many Fellowship members as Dot Walker." Also involved in the production were Elaine Waley and John Greaves. These were perhaps the first performances of the play since its original production in 1855 at Dickens's Tavistock House and a professional run at the Royal Olympic Theatre from 17 October 1857.

The WCS tried to interest various amateur theatrical groups to arrange a sesquicentennial production in June 2005 but without success. So if any member now knows of a theatrical society which might be interested in staging a revival or just performing a play reading, please contact Andrew Gasson.

The same issue of *The Dickensian* notes that the Melbourne branch of the Dickens Fellowship has been giving a dramatised reading of Collins's and Dickens's other collaborative play, *The Frozen Deep*.

NO NAME

BBC Radio 4 broadcast a new two part dramatisation of *No Name* on 10 and 17 June 2007. Writer John Fletcher dealt with the short format (just two one-hour episodes) by beginning the play at the funeral of Andrew and Mrs Vanstone (both killed in this version in a train crash). That omits the astonishing drama in the book of his and then her death but the interview with the lawyer sets out the terrible consequences of the Vanstone's irregular relationship. This enables the play to concentrate on Magdalen Vanstone's journey to which the rest of the play is reasonably faithful - although much curtailed. Generally played by a fine cast (Jaimi Barbakoff tough and determined as Magdalen, Ron Cook an excellent Captain Wragge, Diana Quick superb as the intelligent and formidable Madame Lecount and with Richard Nichols as the completely self-absorbed Noel Vanstone) this is a very good two hour listen. It is in fact the fifth dramatisation by BBC radio of this book, the other four being broadcast in 1952, 1958, 1973, and 1989. It is almost certain to be repeated on digital radio's BBC 7 from time to time.

'WHO KILLED ZEBEDEE?'

BBC 7 has been broadcasting a two-part adaptation of 'Who Killed Zebedee?' This is a short story of revenge, murder and detection, originally published in *The Spirit of the Times*, 25 December 1880. It was reprinted in the *Seaside Library* (volume 45, No 928), 26 January 1880, and as 'Mr Policeman and the Cook' in *Little Novels* (1887).

COLLINS AND THE BBC

There are numerous references to Wilkie Collins scattered throughout the BBC's amazingly comprehensive website. A search on <http://search.bbc.co.uk> brings up several pages of results. These range from notes on programmes to details of the architectural heritage of the Cornish pilchard fishery, described by Collins in *Rambles Beyond Railways*; from saving the Crown public house in Hesket Newmarket, visited by Collins and Dickens at the start of their Cumberland trip in 1857; to Iain Duncan Smith's comment on his own novel, *The Devil's Tune*, "I'm more with the Wilkie Collins view of a novel than the Jeffrey Archer view." – We would certainly hope so!

JOSEPH SHERIDAN LE FANU

Le Fanu Studies (ISSN 1932-9598) invites essays on any aspect of the life and works of famous Victorian mystery and ghost story writer Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu (1814-1873). It also seeks essays about works of drama, literature, and film related to Le Fanu. Authors should utilize documentation based on *The MLA Style Manual*. The journal appears twice yearly, in May and November. Prospective contributors should

contact the editor, Gary William Crawford, who can be reached by email at gothicptl2@aol.com or at Gothic Press, 2272 Quail Oak, Baton Rouge, LA 70808-9023. Telephone 225.766.2906. The recently updated Gothic Press website is www.gothicpress.com (c) 2006-2007 by Gary William Crawford. For further details see the website at <http://www.jslefanu.com/lefanustudies.html>.

ROBERT ASHLEY

With regret the Society reports the death of one of Wilkie Collins's first biographers, Robert Paul Ashley, at the age of 91. Ashley's book *Wilkie Collins* was published in 1952 and made use of letters and original material which was then very hard to locate. It was based partly on his doctoral thesis *The Career of Wilkie Collins* submitted to Harvard University in 1948. Ashley had served in the navy during World War II before pursuing an academic life. He became Dean and then Professor of English at Ripon College in Wisconsin where he taught until his retirement in 1982. The college has a Court named after him. He was an authority on the Victorian mystery novel lecturing and organising readings, sometimes dressed as Sherlock Holmes. He was a keen tennis player until his final years and coached the Ripon College team until 1964. He died of complications following a stroke on 22 November 2006.

JOSEPH STRINGFIELD

Wilkie knew and visited Dr Joseph Stringfield of Weston-super-Mare and stood bail for him when he was accused in London of threatening to kill his wife's solicitor. She was divorcing him on grounds of cruelty to her and their three children. More details of Stringfield's life emerged recently in the *Bristol Evening Post*. It claims he offended locals with his belligerent attitude and even fomented a mutiny in the voluntary artillery corps. His obituary in 1869 described him as "a lover of uniforms and the last Westonian to wear a tricorne hat." It also claims that Wilkie was a guest at Stringfield's marriage to his second wife in 1858 being listed as a "friend". (*Bristol Evening Post* 10 May 2007). See also *The Public Face of Wilkie Collins* II 45, 114-115.

MEMOIRS

James Rusk, who has so far concentrated on e-texting Wilkie's fiction, has now fulfilled the massive task of e-texting the 173,000 words in *Memoirs of the Life of William Collins Esq., R.A.* The *Memoirs* were Wilkie's first published book – he interrupted writing *Antonina* on his father's unexpected death on 17 February 1847. *Memoirs*, published in 1848, is of considerable importance. It contains a great deal of information about Wilkie's early life and that of his brother, the artist Charles Allston Collins. It also tells us a great deal about his parents, his grandfather - also an author

in a small way – his uncle Francis Collins, and his brother Charles as well as giving a unique insight into the close artistic world in which he was brought up.

Memoirs also provides a wealth of information about William Collins himself including extracts from his now lost Journal and many letters. Today William Collins is a rather neglected Victorian genre painter. But in the second quarter of the 19th century he was one of the best known artists of his day and his fame lived on for a generation after his death. At a sale in May 1866 William Collins's painting *The Skittle Players* was sold for 1,200 guineas, just short of the 1,300 guineas paid for Constable's *The Hay Wain*.

Original editions of the *Memoirs* are rare and expensive to buy - good copies on the various internet book search sites sell for upwards of \$1,000. There was also a 1978 reprint by EP Publishing with very usefully added indices of People and Places but this is possibly even harder to locate. So making the text available electronically is yet another debt the Wilkie fraternity owes to James Rusk. It is currently available exclusively on www.wilkiecollins.com together with images of the portrait frontispiece by John Linnell and the two half-titles illustrated with engravings based on William's works. An Appendix lists William's major works. A plain text version should soon be uploaded to Project Gutenberg.

All the books and short stories published during Wilkie's lifetime are now available electronically together with much of his journalism and some of his plays. An e-text of the remaining novel *Ioláni*, written in 1844 but not published until 1999, will be released later this year.

THE FIRST BIOGRAPHY OF COLLINS – VOLUNTEER WANTED

The text of the first full length biography and critique of Wilkie's work - and the only one published in his lifetime - has been put on the internet by Daniel Stark. *Wilkie Collins - Ein biographisch-kritischer Versuch* was written by the Austrian born writer and academic Ernst von Wolzogen (1855-1934) and published in 1885. Most of the book is a description and critique of Wilkie's work but Chapter 2 is a short biography and contains an extract of a letter which Wilkie wrote to von Wolzogen on 20 December 1882. The book, which is written in German, is extraordinarily rare and originally published in a Gothic typeface which is very difficult for modern readers. So a German e-text is extremely helpful. Daniel Stark is host of the German website www.wilkiecollins.de and has already e-texted *Rambles Beyond Railways*. The German text can be found at www.wilkiecollins.de/biographie/index.htm and in addition there is a pdf version at www.wilkiecollins.de/biographie/wolzogen.pdf. The original of the scanned text is now also available at <https://gdz.sub.uni-goettingen.de/id/PPN526297514>. Links to all three and an English translation of the letter extract are at www.wilkiecollins.com menu item 1.

If any German speaking member would like to volunteer to translate the text - which is just under 50,000 words - please contact the Society.

THE RAPTURE OF WILKIE COLLINS

A friend of WCS member Jackie Irwin has discovered a modern eulogy to *The Woman in White*. Janine McLeod spotted this passage in the latest best-selling American novel by Nora Ephron: "And finally, one day, I read the novel that is probably the most rapture-inducing book of my adult life. On a chaise longue at the beach on a beautiful summer day, I open Wilkie Collins's masterpiece, *The Woman in White*, probably the first great work of mystery fiction ever written (although that description hardly does it justice), and I am instantly lost to the world. Days pass as I savor every word. Each minute I spend away from the book pretending to be interested in everyday life is a misery. How could I have waited so long to read this book? When can I get back to it? Halfway through, I return to New York to work, to finish a movie, and I sit in the mix studio unable to focus on anything but whether my favourite character in the book will survive. I will not be able to bear it if anything bad happens to my beloved Marian Halcombe. Every so often I look up from the book and see a roomful of people waiting for me to make a decision about whether the music is too soft or the thunder is too loud, and I can't believe they don't understand that what I'm doing is Much More Important. I'm reading the most wonderful book." (Nora Ephron *I Feel Bad About My Neck*, Doubleday, New York, 2006 pp185-186).

THE WOMAN IN WHITE ON THE RADIO IN THE UNITED STATES

The Woman in White recently featured on air at the National Public Radio service in the United States. Following the programme they added the following web page: <https://www.npr.org/2007/08/07/12530673/a-summer-thriller-smartly-turned-out-in-white>

A WEBSITE CALLED poormissfinch.com

Sadly this website is nothing to do with Wilkie Collins. Owner Laura Adams explains "It's actually a reference to the movie *The Seven Year Itch* with Marilyn Monroe. Nine years ago, when I was getting online for the first time and needed an email address, I wanted something more interesting than LauraA@whatever.com. My husband and his sister were constantly quoting that movie at the time, which I don't particularly like, but the part with "A certain Miss Finch, poor Miss Finch..." is funny. So I decided to be poorMissFinch@whatever.com. As our email carrier has changed, I've kept poormissfinch@... and that has been my online identity ever since. When it came time to choose a URL, we kept coming back to it. And that's the story." Laura is not blind like Wilkie's Lucilla Finch - nor is her husband blue. But her bloggish

website is typical of the personal accounts of daily life being made available to everyone in the world.

ROMANTIC FRIENDSHIP

WCS member and WCS *Journal* contributor Dr Carolyn Oulton has published her book *Romantic Friendship in Victorian literature*. One chapter analyses *Armada* and its “engaging criminal adventuress, Lydia Gwilt” and how she interacts with the relationship between Allan Armadale and Ozias Midwinter. She also mentions briefly other relationships in Collins’s works - the friendship between the half-sisters Laura Fairlie and Marian Halcombe in *The Woman in White* and Miss Clack’s guarding of Rachel Verinder in *The Moonstone*. Published by Ashgate at £50 ISBN 978-0-7546-5869-6.

THE LETTERS OF WILKIE COLLINS

An astonishing number of new letters have been tracked down this year by the editors of *The Public Face of Wilkie Collins*. More than 60 new letters have surfaced in the last twelve months. They range in date from the 1840s to the 1880s covering all aspects of Wilkie’s personal and public life. The full texts of several other letters, which were previously known only as summaries, have also been found. A collated *Addendum & Corrigendum (3)* will be published with the winter newsletter.

NATIONAL CURRICULUM

Head of the National Curriculum (in England) Ken Boston has included Wilkie as one of 44 ‘English Heritage’ authors in his recommended books to study by 14-16 year olds in schools. Boston, 64, took up his post recently as head of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). Now it is up to teachers to decide which of the books they actually teach or recommend.

FARNCOMBE ESTATE

Farncombe Estate offers a wide variety of summer and autumn breaks with accommodation in the Cotswolds. Talks and courses include literature, writing, music, art appreciation, history and photography. Further details can be found at www.FarncombeEstate.co.uk or 01386 854100.

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NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2007

‘NEW DRAGON OF WANTLEY’

With this newsletter is an exciting discovery. Professor Graham Law has identified a new story by Wilkie Collins. Using evidence from the Collected Letters and computer analysis of phrases in the text he has established that ‘The New Dragon of Wantley- a Social Revelation’ published in *The Leader* on 20 December 1851 is by Collins and that “no other conclusion seems possible.” The text of the *story* together with his detailed analysis of the evidence and a new assessment of Collins’s contributions to *The Leader* is enclosed with this newsletter. The Society is very grateful to Graham Law for permission to publish the work here first.

WILKIE DAY BY DAY – A WILKIE COLLINS CHRONOLOGY

There have been many chronologies of Wilkie Collins as part of an introduction to one of his novels, a biography or his letters. But Professor William Baker’s latest Wilkie Collins study is the first book length attempt to chronicle Wilkie’s life day by day. It starts in 1740 with the birth of Wilkie’s paternal grandfather William and ends not, as you might expect with the death of the mother of his children Martha Rudd in 1919, but with the publication of his letters edited by Baker (with Gasson, Law and Lewis) in 2005. For anyone trying to pin down what was Wilkie doing at any particular time it is invaluable – a calendar to accompany Gasson’s A-Z. But there are quibbles with it.

There are numerous previously unknown details. For example on 31 May 1853: ‘Finishes the first volume of *Hide and Seek*, originally called “The Hair Bracelet.”’ But one can search in vain for the source of that fact; and similarly that *Basil* was still called *Laureath* when Wilkie finished the first volume (20 September 1851). The lack of footnotes is the bane of modern biography (Ackroyd’s *Dickens*, Hawksley’s *Katy*) and it’s a great pity that Bill Baker hasn’t given us any in what is essentially a reference work.

There is also some doubt about the large number of the diaried ‘events’ which turn out to be a letter written by Collins or even by Dickens; or entries like this for 14 September 1852: ‘Duke of Wellington dies at the age of 83 at 3:25pm at Walmer Castle. CD walking at Walmer during the afternoon.’ To be sure Collins was staying with Dickens at the time but if we are supposed to think that the death of Wellington is relevant (it was, Collins mentioned it in a letter to Pigott on 16th) or that he went walking with Dickens (also mentioned in that letter) then those facts should be on 14th when they happened not on 16th when Collins ‘writes EP...’ about them. It would be much stronger if events mentioned in letters were set out on the date they happened not the date they were written about.

But it’s very easy to niggle and we shouldn’t detract from the value of a 240 page book which is the first detailed chronology of Wilkie’s life and which has three useful indexes of works, people and places. It deserves to be on every Wilkie enthusiast’s or scholar’s shelf and in every decent university library. William Baker, *A Wilkie Collins Chronology*, Palgrave Macmillan 2007, ISBN-13: 978-1403994813, £38.71 from www.amazon.co.uk

DICKENS’S BICENTENARY LOOMS

2012 is a momentous year. The London Olympics; the new national pension scheme; and the bicentenary of the birth of Charles Dickens. Dickens, a close friend of Wilkie Collins until his death in 1870, was a novelist of such considerable note that preparations for worldwide celebrations of his birth in Portsmouth 200 years ago on 7 February 1812 are already beginning. A website has been set up - www.dickens2012.com – but at the moment that leads to the Dickens Museum website which is co-ordinating the events through a working group chaired by curator Florian Schweitzer. Anyone who is organising an event is invited to email the group’s events co-ordinator Paul Schlicke at p.schlicke@abdn.ac.uk. Best avoid 27 July when the Olympics opens but there is probably no need to worry about 6 April when the pension scheme begins!

DICKENS-COLLINS CORRESPONDENCE

On 4 October, the WCS held its joint meeting with the Friends of the Charles Dickens Museum. Paul Lewis gave a fascinating talk on the correspondence between Dickens and Collins. By analysing in great detail the text of more than 150 surviving letters he was able to ‘recover’ the likely contents of more than 130 reconstructed letters which have not survived.

THE OVERTURE TO THE FROZEN DEEP

As mentioned in the Summer Newsletter, Andrew Gasson gave a talk: to the St John’s Wood Society on ‘Wilkie in the Wood’ on 30 October. The talk was mainly biographical but linked in Collins’s connections to the area, which was always within walking distance of his various homes in Marylebone, and references in his stories. (some of these details are now on the website at www.wilkie-collins.info).

The evening was notable, however, for a performance of the overture to *The Frozen Deep*. By a fortunate combination of circumstances, a score of the overture had been located, there was a piano in the hall of the St John's Wood Church and, most important, there was a musician (Vyvian Bronk) in the audience who gave an unrehearsed but virtuoso performance. The overture was originally written by Francesco Berger (1834-1933) for the 1857 amateur production of *The Frozen Deep* at Dickens's Tavistock House. There is no mention in Berger's autobiography of whether his overture was also used for the professional production of the play at the Olympic in 1866 so it is possible that this was the first public performance for 150 years.

MILLAIS EXHIBITION

The works of John Everett Millais seem to be just as popular as ever with the current exhibition at the Tate Britain Gallery which continues until 13 January 2008. There was a previous exhibition of Millais's portraits at the National Portrait Gallery in 1999 and Paul Goldman's *Beyond Decoration: the Illustrations of John Everett Millais* was reviewed in the Summer 2005 Newsletter. The current exhibition divides the works into Pre-Raphaelitism, Romance and Modern Genre, Aestheticism, The Grand Tradition, Fancy Pictures, Portraits, and The Late Landscapes. The famous portrait of Wilkie dating from 1850 is, of course, on show as well as the sketch of Charles Collins. There are also several references to Wilkie and Charles in the comprehensive catalogue which accompanies the exhibition (ISBN 978-185437-667-1, Tate Publishing).

EWANRIGG HALL AND MARYPORT

The Maryport Guide to Cumbria (<https://www.visitcumbria.com/car/hesket-newmarket/>) records the visit of Collins and Dickens during their visit to Cumberland almost exactly 150 years ago in September 1857. Maryport is situated south of Allonby, where they stayed at the Ship Inn, on the north west coast of England overlooking the Solway Firth with views of Scotland. This trip formed the basis for *The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices* subsequently published in *Household Words* from 3-31 October 1857.

Even more interesting is the suggestion that the nearby Ewanrigg Hall was used in *The Woman in White* as the setting for Limmeridge House. Closely following the Collins-Dickens route in 'The Lazy Tour', Walter Hartright writes "My travelling instructions directed me to go to Carlisle, and then to diverge by a branch railway which ran in the direction of the coast. When I rose the next morning and drew up my blind, the sea opened before me joyously under the broad August sunlight, and the distant coast of Scotland fringed the horizon with its lines of melting blue." Ewanrigg Hall was the home of the Christian family and Fletcher Christian of *Mutiny on the Bounty* fame was born there in 1764. The house was demolished in 1903 but there is a photograph on Matthew Beckett's excellent Lost Heritage website at lh.matthewbeckett.com/houses/lh_cumbria_ewanrigghall_gallery.html.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE ON STAGE

Valerie Pedlar of the Open University, who wrote for the WCS *The Mystery of The Woman in White in Leicester*, sent out with the spring 2006 Newsletter, has for some while been researching the various stage versions of *The Woman in White* and shares the following information:

When Wilkie Collins's novel was published in 1860 as a serial in Dickens's journal *All the Year Round* it caused a sensation, so it is not surprising that theatrical managers were quick to see its potential for the stage. In the nineteenth century the only way for an author to retain theatrical rights over his or her novel was immediately to re-write it as a play. And this is just what Bram Stoker did with *Dracula*. Collins, however, did not do this, and consequently, to his fury, many adaptations were made which didn't earn him a penny-piece.

The first of these was put on at the Surrey Theatre, London, almost as soon as the last instalment had come out. The Surrey was well known for its melodramas, and J. R. Ware's dramatisation of *The Woman in White* didn't disappoint. Several other versions were put on at theatres in London, the provinces, Europe and even Australia before Collins wrote his own adaptation in 1871.

His play was put on at the Olympic Theatre (alas no longer in London) and was a great success. It is strikingly different not only from all previous versions, but also from his own novel. Most noticeably he dispenses with the famous meeting between Walter Hartright and the woman in white at the start of the book, though the basic plot remains the same.

Constance Cox's play, which first appeared at Aldershot in 1952, is one of at least six adaptations written in the twentieth century, and is faithful to the original. More recently there have been film and television versions, as well as Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical, which alter the plot to chime in with modern preoccupations. It is nearly 150 years since the novel was first written, but *The Woman in White* continues to entertain audiences and readers alike.

RECENT PRODUCTIONS OF THE WOMAN IN WHITE ON STAGE

The Woman in White has **hit** the stage in two productions of the adaptation by Constance Cox during October. The Sidmouth Amateur Dramatic Society staged its production at the Manor Pavilion Theatre; and two weeks later the Marlowe Players staged a professional production at the Derby Playhouse Studio Theatre. There is a photograph at <https://www.marlowe-players.co.uk/past-productions/the-woman-in-white>.

Members are reminded that the Constance Cox version is now published by Samuel French in its series of Acting Editions (ISBN 0 573 11578 8) and is available for £7.50 from their own bookshop at 52 Fitzroy Street, London W1T 5JR (020 7255 4300; www.samuel french-london.co.uk).

NOT SO RECENT PRODUCTIONS OF *THE WOMAN IN WHITE*

The New York Times recently reprinted from its archives the review of *The Woman in White* from 16 December 1873. It begins “Last evening Mr. Wybert Reeve, an actor of some note in England, made his debut before an American audience, at the Broadway Theatre. The play chosen for this occasion was Wilkie Collins’ own version of “The Woman in White,” a dramatization which was claimed to preserve more than the salient points of the novel in fact, moving on the actuating and pervading spirit in which the author penned his exhaustively thrilling narrative.” Wybert Reeve had originally played Fosco in the Olympic Theatre production and on provincial tour in England. The play ran for two weeks on Broadway during Collins’s reading tour of America. The full review is nearly 3,000 words and can be found by searching for Wybert Reeve in the 1851-1980 section of the *New York Times* archive page.

A much lengthier discourse about Collins’s version of the play is ‘Scandalous Sensations: The Woman in White on the Victorian Stage’ by Maria Bachman. This can now be found at www.thefreelibrary.com/Scandalous+sensations:+The+Woman+in+White+on+the+Victorian+stage+aO146390067

***THE WOMAN IN WHITE* -A RESTORED VERSION OF AN OLD FILM**

One of the earliest known film versions of *The Woman in White*, dating from July 1917 has recently been released on DVD as part of a three-disc set by the non-profit Thanouser Company Film Preservation. The original film consisted of five reels of 4,627 feet and lasted 1 hour 8 minutes. It was directed by Ernest C. Warde with the scenario by Lloyd F. Lonergan and photographed by William M. Zollinger. The cast included Florence LaBadie (double role as Laura Fairlie and Ann Catherick), Richard R. Neill (Sir Pervival Glyde), Gertrude Dallas (Marian Halcombe), Arthur Bauer (Count Fosco), Wayne Arey (Walter Hartright), J.H. Gilmour, Claude Cooper. A Pathé Gold Rooster Play released through the Pathé Exchange. The film was reissued by Chandler Pictures as *The Unfortunate Marriage* in about 1920.

Quoting from the Thanouser blurb, “*The Woman in White* was adapted from a very well known contemporary novel and was a particularly fine vehicle for the beautiful Florence LaBadie, one of the last of the old stock company still with Thanouser in 1917. She was called “the most important personality at the Thanouser studio” by Thanouser historian David Q. Bowers. Two months after the release of *The Woman in White* she was in an automobile accident and she died in October from her injuries, just a week later than the release of the studio’s final new production. In its last two years of production Thanouser concentrated on multi-reel features of high quality. Lloyd Lonergan’s scenarios were the foundation for the attention to quality, whether with original stories or with adaptations like *The Woman in White*.”

The Woman in White forms part of Volume 9, *Lloyd Lonergan’s Legacy* a tribute to Edwin Thanouser’s brother-in-law Lloyd Lonergan who drew on nearly 20 years experience writing for important newspapers in Chicago and New York City. He

wrote over 800 scenarios for the studio (many with alliterations in their title) as well as heading its story department. This sampling of his creative genius includes *Daddy's Double* (1910), *When the Studio Burned* (1913), *An Elusive Diamond* (1914), *The Marvelous Marathoner* (1915) and *The Woman in White* (1917). The 'Thanhouser Collection, Volumes 7, 8 & 9' is priced at the fairly modest \$24.95 and may be ordered directly from Thanhouser Company Film Preservation, Inc. at 8770 NW Kearney Street, Portland, Oregon 97229 USA or online at www.thanhouser.org. If you like silent film, this version of *The Woman in White* is fairly true to Collins's original and despite its age, extremely watchable.

HENRY NEVILLE

Henry Neville, the famous Victorian actor, features on the Gartside-Neville family website run by Barry Collins (no relation to Wilkie). (Thomas) Henry (Gartside) Neville (1837-1910) played Richard Wardour in the 1866 production of *The Frozen Deep* at the Olympic Theatre; George Vendale in the successful run of *No Thororoughfare* at the Adelphi from December 1868; and Franklin Blake in *The Moonstone* in September 1877, also at the Olympic Theatre. See users.zoominternet.net/~bcollins/preview_189.

AUDIO BOOKS

There are numerous audio book versions, abridged and unabridged, of Wilkie's most popular novels *The Moonstone* and *The Woman in White* but very few of his other stories are available in this medium. Recent additions at very reasonable prices are *The Evil Genius* from Tantor Unabridged Audiobooks (www.tantor.com), *The Frozen Deep* from www.audiohome.co.uk and *A Rogue's Life* from www.baileywickbooks.com in MP3 format. There are sample excerpts on the various websites so check that you can cope with several hours of sometimes totally unsympathetic American accents.

TRAFALGAR TAVERN

According to the Greenwich Guide, Wilkie was one of the diners at the Trafalgar Tavern which dates from 1837. Other distinguished visitors arriving by river apparently were Dickens and Thackeray, attracted by the inn's famous whitebait suppers. These were frequently served with iced champagne which certainly would have been to Wilkie's taste. The area declined in popularity around the end of the nineteenth century and the Trafalgar Tavern had to wait until 1965 to be restored to its former grandeur. <https://greenwich-guide.org.uk/trafalgar>

EAVESDROPPING

Ann Gaylin takes the idea of 'eavesdropping' and turns it into a book finding examples in works from Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* to Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*. One chapter is devoted to *The Woman in White* - amusingly called 'The madwoman outside the attic' - and examines how reading and hearing other people's words is at the heart of the novel. Written in the modern language of

literary criticism it is a work about ‘agency’ ‘identity’ ‘transgression’ ‘narrative space’ and ‘gender roles’. Good that Wilkie can still offer so rich a seam to modern scholarship.

Ann Gaylin *Eavesdropping in the Novel from Austen to Proust* Cambridge 2002, reissued in paperback 2007 ISBN 0-521-03890-1 £23.99.

FAIRY TALES

Laurence Tailrach-Vielmas is a long-standing member of the Wilkie Collins Society and a past contributor to the *WCS Journal*. Her new book is *Moulding the Female Body in Victorian Fairy Tales and Sensation Novels*. The publisher’s blurb says the book “examines how Victorian fantasies and sensation novels deconstruct and reconstruct femininity”. Wilkie Collins’s novels naturally feature in her examples. There is a 25% discount on the published price of £50 using the flyer enclosed with this newsletter.

SENSATION STORIES - BOOK OFFER

Sensation Stories brings together ten of Wilkie’s short tales from his very first known published work ‘The Last Stage Coach-man’ (1843) through the best known ‘A Terribly Strange Bed’ (1852) and ‘The Dream Woman’ (1855) to his later work ‘The Clergyman’s Confession’ (1875) and ‘Love’s Random Shot’ (1883). Originally published in 2004, this paperback with an introduction by Peter Haining is now available to WCS members for just £5 plus postage thanks to a generous offer from the publisher Peter Owen. See enclosed flyer for contact details.

HARPER’S WEEKLY

Another odd website with a wealth of Wilkie material is www.sonofthesouth.net which is devoted to the US civil war. As part of that interest it contains a full run of *Harper’s Weekly* during the war period 1861-1865 and includes the illustrated serialisation of *No Name* and some images of Wilkie which accompanied it. A search box on the front page will find Wilkie material including adverts for Harper publications of his work.

NEW E-TEXTS

The job of e-texting all Wilkie’s works continues with the release of *No Name* dramatised in four acts by Wilkie in 1870 but never performed in the UK. The hard work was done with his usual thoroughness and attention to detail by James Rusk and the complete play is now available on his website at www.digitalpixels.org/jr/wc/nonameplay.html.

Six of Wilkie’s fifteen plays are now available in e-text form and more will follow in 2008. The full canon of Wilkie’s e-texted work is available at www.wilkiecollins.com.

MARY CHOLMONDELEY

Carolyn Oulton of the University of Canterbury and a WCS member wonders if members would like to contribute to a collection of scholarly articles on the late

Victorian author Mary Cholmondeley. Her first novel - *The Danvers Jewels* (1887) – apparently bears more than a passing resemblance to *The Moonstone* (1868). Abstracts of 300-500 words should be sent to carolyn.oulton@canterbury.ac.uk and SueAnn Schatz ssschatz@lhup.edu.

GOOGLE IT

A growing number of first and early editions of Wilkie's works are available in their original format through <http://books.google.com>. A search on the titles of the books brings up the full text as well as reviews in contemporary periodicals. Put *Mr Wray's Cash-Box* into the search box (taking care with the punctuation) and you will get access to the Bodleian Library's copy of the first edition of 1852 as well as a review in *Bentley's Miscellany* "so pretty and graceful a contribution to the season."

Some books are wholly or partially blocked (in the UK at least) by what seem to be copyright concerns but *After Dark*, *Antonina*, *My Miscellanies*, and the 1861 US edition of *The Woman in White* with the John McLenan illustrations are all there.

VINTAGE CLASSICS

Random House have just published a paperback version of *The Woman in White* in their 'Vintage Classics: books that changed the world' series. As their blurb says, "A hypochondriac uncle, two girls who look identical, a count with a penchant for mesmerism and vanilla bonbons, a lunatic asylum, an evil husband... What more could you want?" (9780099511243, paperback at £5.99).

BIG WILD READ

Anne Snelgrove, Labour MP for Swindon, put *No Name* on her holiday reading list as part of a campaign to get Swindon Library's summer reading challenge The Big Wild Read off to a good start. The idea was to get children reading and for every 150 books read the Woodland Trust planted a tree.

HELP!

The iconic Beatles film of 1965 *Help!* has been re-released in a new digital format restored from the original negative. The bizarre plot was based loosely on the central theme of *The Moonstone* – the recovery of a large rare diamond by its Hindu owners. In this case the jewel is in a ring worn of course by Ringo himself who does not value the stone and wants to give it back. Surreal mayhem follows the Fab Four around. Full price is £21.99 but much cheaper through amazon.co.uk.

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NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2008

THE FROZEN DEEP

One of the roles of the WCS has been to bring back into circulation some of the unpublished and difficult to locate works of Wilkie Collins. As a minor departure from this main objective, this Newsletter is accompanied by a CD of the overture to *The Frozen Deep*. This was composed by Francesco Berger for the original 1857 amateur production of Collins's play and dedicated to Charles Dickens. The WCS was fortunate to secure the services of pianist, Vyvian Bronk, who first performed the overture during Andrew Gasson's talk to the St John's Wood Society last October. We hope that Wilkie as a great music lover would approve. As he wrote in *Heart and Science*, "One *must* like music."

COLLINS AND DICKENS AT THE DONCASTER RACES

Alan Watts, doyen of the Dickens Fellowship, in a recent issue of his regular newsletter, *Mr Dick's Kite*, mentioned an interesting article by David Ashforth published in *The Racing Post*. The piece was published on 11 September 2007, the 150th anniversary of the visit of Collins and Dickens to Doncaster in 1857. The visit to the races followed their walking tour of Cumberland which was written up and published as 'The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices'.

'On the morning of Monday, September 14, 1857, two men caught a train from Leeds to Doncaster. The younger of the two, Wilkie Collins, was limping... Charles Dickens had insisted that they climb Carrock Fell, in the Lake District. Collins slipped on a wet stone and twisted his ankle. He had to be helped down the hillside, but Dickens was determined to continue their tour and reach Doncaster, where he had booked rooms at the Angel Hotel. Monday marked the start of St Leger week, the week when, according to The Doncaster Chronicle: "Doncaster is the beau ideal of the sporting town, where the tocsin sounds for its autumnal revelries.'"

One reason for Dickens's determination to reach Doncaster, of course, was the presence in the town of the young actress Ellen Ternan. She was appearing at the Theatre Royal in a performance 'that ended with a dance by girls dressed as jockeys.'

WILKIE COLLINS'S AMERICAN TOUR, 1873-1874

Long standing WCS member, Susan Hanes, has just published *Wilkie Collins's American Tour, 1873-1874*. As the title suggests, the book is a detailed examination of Wilkie's reading tour of the USA, undertaken in 1873-1874. It includes chapters on his auspicious welcome to New York City; the early readings in upstate New York; Philadelphia, Boston and New York; Baltimore and Washington; Canada; and Cleveland, Detroit and Chicago. There are also appendixes on the

detailed itinerary, 'The Dream Woman' and a summary of performances. Susan has written the following few lines to give some background to her research:

"It was a happy (and exciting, I must admit) moment when I returned from our recent travels in Central America to find my book, *Wilkie Collins's American Tour, 1873-1874*, in the pile of mail that accumulates when one is away. Several years ago, I had the idea to try and retrace Wilkie's steps during his six months in North America, in much the same way I had followed his travels around England in 1998. Little did I know what I was getting into. As I write in my Preface, little had been written about Wilkie Collins's journey across the pond. There was no George Dolby or Eyre Crowe to record his daily activities as in the case of Dickens and Thackeray.

"Starting with Clyde K. Hyder's short article, 'Wilkie Collins in America', published in 1940 by the University of Kansas, I began my search. I began in Toronto, where I visited the Toronto Reference Library and poured over microfilm newspapers until my eyes glazed over. When I found an announcement for a reading, I would look for a review on the following day. I quickly learned that just because a reading was announced, it was no guarantee that it had actually occurred.

"Eventually, I traveled to over 50 cities in the eastern US and Canada as well as around the Great Lakes area. I visited nearly 80 libraries, research institutions and historical societies, looking for articles, news reports and personal correspondence. Eventually I was able to confirm 25 readings in 22 locations during the 154 days that Wilkie spent in North America.

"Incredibly, the hunt never got old for me. As happens so often in life, just when things seemed to be reaching a dead end, I would find a delightful tit-bit that would keep me going. My favorite finds include a letter written by a boy to his brother, describing the reading he had attended in Providence in less than glowing terms; the exchange of good-natured notes between respected US statesman John Hay and well-known raconteur William Seaver concerning a breakfast banquet in Wilkie's honor; and the menu of the dinner for Wilkie at New York's Century Club that he signed twice as it went around the table.

"But perhaps the most interesting discovery I made was the letter confirming that Wilkie's visit to the Community of Perfectionists in Wallingford, Connecticut had inspired his later novel, *The Fallen Leaves*.

"I approached the project as a librarian. My joy was in the seeking-and in the finding. I will leave it to others to evaluate what I have found, and look forward to adding to what we already know of Wilkie's travels in America as others make discoveries of their own."

Wilkie Collins 's American Tour, 1873-1874 (ISBN 978 1 85 196 968 5) is published by Pickering & Chatto which generously offers WCS members a 25% discount off the usual price of £60 for orders made before 31 October 2008. See the enclosed order form for details.

SUSPICIONS OF MR. WHICHER

Suspicious of Mr. Whicher: or The Murder at Road Hill House by Kate Summerscale is a full length investigation of the 1860 Constance Kent Road (a village in Wiltshire) murder case. The death of a young boy whose throat was slit in an outside toilet excited huge interest in the newspapers and in Victorian society, especially as the murderer had to be one of the family or servants within the house on the night of the death. Collins fans will know that features of this real life murder case, such as the stained night gown, were incorporated into the plot of *The Moonstone*. Whicher was the detective Inspector on whom Sergeant Cuff is partly based. Whicher joined the

police force in 1840 and the newly formed detective police in 1842. He featured prominently in the Road Case but his reputation as the 'Prince of Detectives' suffered after Constance Kent was acquitted and he wrongly arrested an innocent man during a subsequent murder case in 1861. Whicher was also the model for Dickens's 'Sergeant Witchem' in his *Household Words* articles on the Detective Police: 'A Detective Police Party' (27 July and 10 August 1850); and 'The Artful Touch' in 'Three "Detective" Anecdotes' (14 September 1850).

Kate Summerscale investigates all aspects of the murder in her 300 page volume. Her lively style hides an enormous amount of original research - set out in 42 pages of notes and references - which makes the book a valuable modern account of a well documented event. The first book on the Road Case was written within a year of the murder by J. W. Stapleton, *The Great Crime of 1860*, and among the others is *The Tragedy at Road-Hill House* by Yseult Bridges nearly 100 years later in 1955. The book is handsomely produced and well illustrated with maps, diagrams and photographs of the principal protagonists. It is published in the UK by Bloomsbury at £14.99 (ISBN 978 0 7475 8215 1). For further details of the book and the murder see http://www.telegraph.co.uk/arts/main.jhtml?xml=/arts/2008/03/29/sm_whicher29.xml.

ARMADALE AT THE MILWAUKEE REPERTORY THEATER

Wilkie's own favourite of his novels, *Armada*, has now been seen on stage for the first time in more than 100 years. The Milwaukee Repertory Theatre is responsible for a new adaptation by Jeffrey Hatcher of Wilkie's longest and most complex novel. Hatcher is one of the most prolific and frequently produced playwrights in the US. *Armada* runs for 2 hours 30 minutes and from 23 April to 25 May. There is more at www.milwaukeecrep.com but the ever peripatetic Susan Hanes, who was fortunate enough to see the production, sends us the following report:

'The world premiere of Jeffrey Hatcher's *Armada*, based on the 1866 novel by Wilkie Collins, opened at the Milwaukee (Wisconsin) Repertory Theater on April 23. Billed as a "tale of deception, inherited curses, rivalries and murder," the production, directed by Joseph Hanreddy, distilled Collins's longest and most complex work into an exciting evening of deception and intrigue.

"The play opened with the full cast on stage and the audience was called upon to pay close attention to a rapid series of explicative speeches as the characters revealed their complicated identities and relationships in the story. Interior monologues and commentaries by other characters carried the plot along within its two-and-a-half-hour running time. The single set employed multiple levels and well-chosen Victorian props to project the action seamlessly from one scene to the next. Characters often made their exits through the audience, allowing the pacing on stage to continue while at the same time suggesting a change of location.

"The sensational aspect of Collins's story was highlighted and there was no attempt to diminish the sense of melodrama. Collins's wit was evident in the deliciously droll characterizations of Brock/Bashwood, Mrs. Oldershaw/Mrs. Milroy, and Dr. Downward/Major Milroy, performed by Peter Silbert, Rose Pickering, and James Pickering, respectively. Deborah Staples delivered a delightfully scheming and equally disarming Lydia Gwilt, although her frequent excursions to the boathouse and a rather explicit encounter on the chaise longue at centre stage front belied any Victorian sensibilities. Brian Vaughn was a suitably good-natured and believable Allan Armadale, and Emily Trask demonstrated her singing and playing talents as the sometimes petulant, sometimes coquettish Nellie Milroy. But the most compelling role was that of Ozias Midwinter, performed with a dark intensity by guest actor Michael Gotch who captured the brooding angst of the "other" Armadale.

“As an ardent Wilkie Collins enthusiast, I approached this production with a mixed sense of anticipation and apprehension. I was concerned that the spirit of the story might be turned into a silly, slapstick jab at old-fashioned Victorian scruples. But this production, with its fast-paced, clever dialogue, its superb acting, and its intelligent direction, delivered a thrilling evening of theater of which Wilkie himself would have thoroughly approved.”

ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES

The WCS continues to be affiliated to the Alliance of Literary Societies. The alliance maintains a comprehensive website at <http://www.sndc.demon.co.uk/> featuring dozens of authors from Jane Austen to Charlotte Yonge. This year’s literary weekend and AGM was held on 17 and 18 May in Swindon and organised by the Richard Jefferies Society. Further details of the Alliance from Linda J Curry, Chair, ALS, 59 Bryony Road, Birmingham B29 4BY.

THE 50 GREATEST CRIME WRITERS

The Times book page of Saturday 19 April featured the 50 greatest crime writers. Wilkie Collins was placed at number 24. His life and works were briefly described in a column of text by Nicci French (pseudonym for Nicci Gerrard and Sean French) complete with a half page photograph. The top ten were given as Patricia Highsmith, Georges Simenon, Agatha Christie, Raymond Chandler, Elmore Leonard, Arthur Conan Doyle, Ed McBain, James M. Cain, Ian Rankin and James Lee Burke. Our distinguished patron, P. D. James, was high in the list and placed at number 12. Full details can be found at http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/system/topicRoot/Top_50_books.

SUSAN HILL AND HER CREATIVE WRITING BLOG

Well known author, Susan Hill, perhaps best known for her ghost story *The Woman in Black* runs a creative writing forum on <http://blog.susan-hill.com/blog>. In the archives section for 27 September 2007 can be found her admirable assessment of Wilkie Collins:

“No, not a good, a great example. Wilkie Collins. Not every novel he wrote has stood the test of time and his short stories are not much read now but any writer would be proud to have written the two we still buy and read and admire, *THE WOMAN IN WHITE* and *THE MOONSTONE*. They were hugely popular when they were written, the former in particular and Collins deliberately did a very important thing - he showed that a popular, best-selling genre can become great literature as well. I have just read this in the Cambridge Companion to WC and I would urge all those who may think it beneath them to write a crime novel, a historical romance, a Gothic novel or any other genre piece to take it to heart.

“Collins’s own ambition was to be a writer for all classes. His professionalism bred a sense of duty to his paying public and his first hand knowledge of the financial insecurity to which artists were always vulnerable committed him to an uncontroversial popular art. His great achievement was to show that a low, popular art form was capable of extraordinary subtlety and power. He discovered that it was by giving the reading public what it wanted - ‘violent and thrilling action, astonishing coincidences, stereotypic heroes, heroines and villains, much sentimentality and virtue rewarded and vice apparently punished at the end’ - that you could tell it what it did not want to hear.’ Take good note of that.”

VICTORIAN ARTISTS IN PHOTOGRAPHS

Wilkie was represented by a single *carte-de-visite* photograph in the recent exhibition at the Guildhall Art Gallery (7 January – 13 April). The portrait, showing the subject wearing an astrakhan coat, was taken as part of a series by New York photographer, Sarony, during Collins’s 1873-74 reading tour. Wilkie always considered these US photographs far superior to any of those

taken in England. The exhibition mainly featured Victorian artists. It was based on the collection originally assembled by art dealer Jeremy Maas which passed on his death to Rob Dickens. Copies of the superbly illustrated *The Victorian Art World in Photographs* by Maas are still available on the internet through the various book search sites and the Sarony portrait can be seen at http://www.paullewis.co.uk/wilkie/wilkieimages/1874Sarony_full_CDV.htm

MARGARET CARPENTER

Margaret Carpenter was Harriet Collins's younger sister and Wilkie's aunt. She was a talented and successful portrait painter, exhibiting at the Royal Academy almost every year from 1814-1866. Albany Fine Art of Oxford has recently created amongst its featured artists a biographical page on its website at <http://www.albanyfineart.co.uk/carpenter/index.html>.

AUDIO BOOKS

The audio book of *Mr Wray's Cash-Box* has now been added to the Collins titles mentioned in the last Newsletter - *The Frozen Deep*, *The Evil Genius* and *A Rogue's Life*. *Mr Wray* is part of the 'Victorian Collection of Assembled Stories'. It is read by Peter Joyce, unabridged on four CDs with a list price of £13.49. (ISBN 978-1-86015-069-2). There is also a new full text audio book of *The Woman in White* about to be published by Naxos. Using multiple narrators for the various parts this is an unabridged reading of the book.

The Talking Bookshop in central London's Wigmore Street, close to Oxford Circus, has prepared the enclosed listing of currently available Collins titles, together with their reader, format and price. These recordings are all available from the Talking Bookshop where WCS members will be given a 10% discount until the end of July. Alternatively titles can be ordered through the website at www.talkingbook.co.uk quoting Wilkie Collins Society membership.

A PRODUCTION OF *THE WOMAN IN WHITE* IN SOUTHPORT

Valerie Pedlar has added to her brief comments in the previous Newsletter with the following notes on the Constance Cox adaptation of *The Woman in White*.

"It would appear that the publication of Constance Cox's dramatisation of *The Woman in White* by Samuel French in 2005 has encouraged amateur companies to put on the play (Newsletter, Spring 2006), and there was an opportunity to see it in the north-west last October when it was presented by The Southport Dramatic Society. After the liberties taken in the BBC serialisation a few years ago, and in the Lloyd Webber musical, it was good to see a dramatisation of Collins's novel that remains pretty faithful to the original.

"The major adaptation is in terms of setting, which is limited to the drawing room at Limmeridge Hall. This confinement emphasises the domesticity of the drama, and precludes any sensational staging of such key moments in the novel as Walter Hartright's first meeting with Anne Catherick, the meeting with Marian and Laura by the gravestone, the fire in the vestry and Marian's meeting with Laura at the asylum. It's a relatively small point, but the sense of conventional, almost comfortable domestic life is further preserved in the failure to account for the resemblance between Anne and Laura: Philip Fairlie's adultery is not revealed. Nevertheless, the text does allow for the horror of Laura's predicament, for the loss of identity and her persecution by both Sir Percival and, more subtly, Count Fosco. The continuity of place means that Sir Percival in effect takes over the Fairlie home; he becomes a usurper (if only temporarily) and his tyranny over his wife is augmented by his tyranny over the housekeeper.

“I found myself reminded of Patrick Hamilton’s *Gas light* (1938), where the terrorisation of a wife by her husband is achieved with gothic intensity within a domestic setting. But Cox’s play does not have such an impact, at least it didn’t in this production. *The Woman in White* has a much busier plot, but I think that more could have been done to create a sense of menace, perhaps with more atmospheric lighting, or by the use of background music at key moments. Most important, though, is the acting: on this occasion not the best I have seen on this stage, which has seen some fine amateur performances. The key moments listed above are reported onstage, so the actor needs to recreate the drama of the event. I was particularly aware that Marian’s long speech describing her rescuing of Anne from the asylum failed to communicate a sense of emotional trauma. And, though Laura’s appearance in the last act wearing Anne’s clothes was suitably cowed and bewildered, she recovered remarkably quickly once dressed from her own wardrobe.

“Reviewing the first adaptation of the novel, the play by J.R.Ware that was put on at the Surrey Theatre in 1861, the *Era* comments on the loss of mystery, the absence of originality when Count Fosco, for instance, is required to ‘portray and speak acts, and ideas only dimly hinted at by the author’. The reviewer seems to be concerned with mysteries of personality rather than of plot and to be jibbing at the inevitable substantiation of representing a character on stage. It is likely, however, that the fault lay in the script-writing and in the acting, and maybe a stage version of this classic novel that mediates between the original and the sensibilities of a modern audience has yet to be written.”

The popularity of the current version of *The Woman in White* continues with a further production at the People’s Theatre in Newcastle which opened its new season in January.

ANTONINA

Wilkie’s first published novel is back in print. Diggory Press, which is also a self-publishing company, has produced an edition of this Roman epic first published in 1852. It is available through Amazon for £7.99 or less, ISBN 978-1846859762.

THE MOONSTONE-THE DRAMATIC VERSION

A print edition of the dramatic version of *The Moonstone* has been published recently also by Diggory Press ISBN 978-1846859830.

THE NEW MAGDALEN

The e-texting of Wilkie’s plays continues thanks to the work of James Rusk. He has now finished *The New Magdalen - a Dramatic Story* using the original text as privately published by Wilkie Collins to preserve his dramatic copyright as the stage play opened on 19 May 1873 at the Olympic Theatre. www.digitalpixels.org/jr/wc/newmagplay.html. Seven plays - out of fifteen - are now available in e-text format through James Rusk’s site at www.digitalpixels.org/jr/wc/ and a link to all e-texts is found at www.wilkiecollins.com (menu item 1).

THE CIRCULATING LIBRARY

A new bibliographical website has been launched. At the Circulating Library: A Database of Victorian Fiction, 1837-1901 <https://www.victorianresearch.org/atcl/> aims to catalogue biographical and bibliographical information about the three-decker editions of Victorian authors. The database currently contains entries for over 800 authors, 60 publishers, and 2000 titles. Only 13 of Wilkie’s books from *No Name* (1862) to *The Legacy of Cain* (1888) are mentioned and at the moment details are brief.

DORÉ'S LONDON

Doré's London is a new book which combines Gustav Doré's renowned engravings of London life with passages from several authors including Dickens, Collins, and Trollope. Published by Arcturus Foulsham at £16.99 ISBN: 978-0572034320.

ANTHONY MINGHELLA

The recent, untimely death of Anthony Minghella is strongly reminiscent of one of Wilkie's early short stories, 'The Family Secret'. The film director underwent what should have been routine surgery for removing a growth on his neck but tragically failed to recover from a catastrophic and ultimately fatal haemorrhage. In Wilkie's story, Charley, the narrator, spends many years trying to discover the family secret from his relatives. He finally learns by chance that his beautiful young sister died when Uncle George, a doctor, performed a rash operation to remove an unsightly tumour from her neck. The story was originally published as 'Uncle George; or, the Family Mystery' in *The National Magazine*, November 1856. It was reprinted in *The Queen of Hearts* (1859) as 'Brother Griffith's Story of the Family Secret'.

OBITUARIES

We are sad to report the death of WCS member Alexander Grinstein aged 89. Dr Grinstein was a practising psychoanalyst for more than 50 years and in 2003 he published *Wilkie Collins: Man of Mystery and Imagination*, the only book length psychoanalysis of Wilkie's works and life. He also wrote a psychoanalytic study of Beatrix Potter. He had been a member of the Society since 1995. Alexander Grinstein MD, born 1918, died 11 December 2007.

The American academic Richard D. Altick has died age 92. Altick's book *The English Common Reader*, published in 1957, was the first to look at what he called the mass reading public. In its opening pages he cited Wilkie Collins's 1858 essay 'The Unknown Public' and there are other references to Wilkie's desire for a mass or popular audience. Altick was widely credited with bringing the Victorian era to life as well as encouraging its serious study. Richard Daniel Altick, 19 September 1915 to 7 February 2008.

The actress Eva Dahlbeck who appeared in a Swedish language film loosely based on *The Woman in White* (*Kvinna i vitt* 1949) has died aged 87. She played the part of Solveig Rygard but it is not known which character that represents in the original. Dahlbeck later acted in many Ingmar Bergman films and wrote poetry, plays, novels and screenplays. She died in Sweden of Alzheimer's disease on 8 February 2008.

ARCHIVES OF THE NEW YORK TIMES

The archives of the *New York Times* contain a wealth of information about Collins from book reviews to theatrical criticism and from details of his final illness to reports on the sale of his books and manuscripts. A search on his name in the section from 1851 onwards brings up nearly 400 entries. <http://www.nytimes.com/ref/membercenter/nytarchive.html>.

ARCHIVES OF THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS

Illustrated London News Group has been sold by its owners Sea Containers to new owners who will develop the extensive digital archive of the *ILN* and *The Graphic* in which several of Wilkie's stories first appeared. At the moment, however, it is not known when access to the early fiction and the engravings made to illustrate them will become available.

IN THE PRESS

Wilkie Collins has cropped up in a few highly unlikely references in the press recently. A piece by Craig Brown in *The Daily Telegraph* about the divorce case of Heather Mills and Sir Paul McCartney suggested that the case contained “fantastical coincidences such as one might find in a tale by Wilkie Collins, incorporating opposites with twinned names and sudden changes of appearance.” (22 March 2008).

Another in *The Guardian* about the troubled singer Britney Spears suggested that the “mad, bad and sad woman of psychiatric wards and courtrooms ... confined by her father’s legal order... might almost be in a Victorian melodrama scripted by Wilkie Collins.” (Lisa Appignanesi 10 March 2008).

The music magazine *Audiophile Audition* carried this review by Gary Lemco of Schubert’s Piano Works for Four Hands played by Allan Schiller and John Humphreys. “Schiller and Humphreys turn the *Scherzo* into a thrilling carillon whose F Minor trio rings with Poe and Wilkie Collins.”

And Wilkie even makes the credit crunch. Jeremy Batstone-Carr writes in *Moneyweek* “it is important to bear in mind that rising commodity prices and falling house prices (and accompanying crisis in the credit markets) are the physical manifestations of two key opposing forces; inflation and deflation. Pick the right one and investors could walk off with the big prize, pick the wrong one and investors could end up, like Wilkie Collins’ character, Rosanna, plunging dramatically into the suffocating mud.”

GUEST APPEARANCES

Wilkie appears briefly in a new novel by Karen Joy Fowler called *Wit’s End*. The 29 year old heroine is a teacher who loses things. “Countless watches, rings, sunglasses, socks, and pens. The keys to the house, the post office box, the car. The car. A book report on Wilkie Collins’s *The Moonstone* plus the library’s copy of the book, plus her library card.”

And he will appear extensively in *Drood* by horror and science fiction writer Dan Simmons. Described as a mixture of “history, biography, and dark fantasy” *Drood* takes the five years from Dickens’s involvement in the Staplehurst train crash to his death and “looks at the secrets of Charles Dickens and his friend Wilkie Collins in the period 1865 to 1870.” *Drood* will be published in 2009.

WEBSITE BIOGRAPHIES

The Vault at Pfaffs <http://digital.lib.lehigh.edu/pfaffs/people/psearch/> contains an archive of people in the artistic and literary world of 19th century New York. Wilkie doesn’t appear but Augustin Daly – who presented some of his plays – does and so too do his friends William Winter and Frank Bellew.

LEDBURY POETRY FESTIVAL

This year’s Ledbury Poetry festival takes place from 4-13 July. As usual there will be a mixture of readings, performances, exhibitions, music, talks and workshops. The annual competition will be judged by Jackie Kay. Further details from 0845 4581743 or <https://ledburypoetry.org.uk/>.

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THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2008

NEW BOOKS

Wilkie Collins scholarship continues to thrive. Two more full length books on Collins have been published this year - both by members of the Wilkie Collins Society.

First for review is the interesting work by Professor Graham Law and Andrew Maunder. *Wilkie Collins: A Literary Life* is biography but it is divided by theme rather than chronology. Individual chapters look at Wilkie as a journalist and as a missionary, in relation to London, women and the theatre, his education and the circles in which he moved. And of course, given Law's involvement, two useful chapters look at his work in the context of the changing Victorian literary marketplace. Drawing extensively on the latest scholarship, including of course on Law's continuing work on Wilkie's letters, the book combines biography and literary analysis. There are a couple of points to take issue with. Caroline Graves ran a marine store - a second-hand shop - not a tobacconist's shop- after her husband's death (p. 84) and it is surely an undetected typo on p. 30 which reads "the radical weekly *The Leader*, then owned by his friend Edmund Yates" – it should read Edward Pigott. Students of Law and Maunder will not find it hard to separate the contributions each makes – though there are some parts where, as in the collaboration of Collins and Dickens, the influence of each is intermingled. The book, which should be in every collection of Collins studies, is published by Palgrave Macmillan ISBN 978-1-4039-4896-0.

Mariaconcetta Costantini's book *Venturing into Unknown Waters* has a painting of a shipwreck by Turner on its cover. And the book examines how Collins navigated the perilous and tricky waters of the changing moral climate in the Victorian era. Part I finds navigation metaphors throughout Collins's work and in particular looks at his stories in which the sea plays a key role – from the short story *Mad Monkton* to the longest novel *Armada*. Part II is on more familiar territory as Costantini examines Wilkie Collins and 'otherness' which she calls 'alterity' – a word I confess this native English speaker had to look up. Race, refugees, and disability are examined. Drawing on current scholarship, techniques and language ('diagetic' was another word that had me reaching for the dictionary) Costantini offers interesting insights into what Collins was really writing about. *Venturing into Unknown Waters: Wilkie Collins and the Challenge of Modernity* is published by Edizioni Tracce, Pescara 2008 ISBN 978-88-7433-500-8.

The only Russian member of the WCS, Zlata Antonova, has published her 2006 thesis on Collins. *The Life and Work of Wilkie Collins* is in Russian and its three sections look at childhood and youth and the early work 1843-1860; the Golden Ten Years (1861-1870); and the third period and his 'second manner' of writing 1871-1889. Contact paul@paullewis.co.uk if you read Russian and would like a copy.

There have been twelve full length books about Wilkie's life and work published already this century. A complete list of the 22 biographies and the 16 book length studies of Wilkie Collins and his work can be found at www.wilkiecollins.com menu item 5.

THE FROZEN DEEP

The main foundation for the story of *The Frozen Deep* was the doomed Franklin Expedition of 1845 to discover the North-West Passage. There is, however, another possible influence on Collins's version of the story in the person of the noted American Arctic explorer Elisha Kent Kane (1820-1857). Kane served in 1850 as medical officer on the first Grinnell expedition searching for the lost Franklin party. He subsequently organised and led the second Grinnell expedition of 1853-1855 and like Franklin before him was forced to abandon ship and retreat over the ice. Unlike Franklin, he eventually reached the comparative safety of Greenland. This second voyage was narrated by Kane in *Arctic Explorations* (1856) shortly before his early death on 16 February 1857. Kane visited England to report personally to Lady Franklin the results of his searches. He had become a celebrated and internationally recognised figure and was the subject of numerous obituaries and tributes.

Collins's tale of heroism and rescue, originally written as a play with the help of Dickens in 1857, was revised for the Boston part of his reading tour in 1874 and further extended for book publication later the same year. The play includes clairvoyance and spiritualism in the person of the old nurse, Esther, whilst in the book version it is Frank Aldersley's fiancée, Clara, who is invested with second sight.

It is here that we find an interesting parallel with Elisha Kane. In 1852 he met and fell in love with Margaret Fox, a renowned psychic. She was famous for her 'spirit rapping' and seances although is now considered a totally fraudulent medium. After Kane's death she asserted that she had been his wife. There seems to be no actual evidence of this claim but she published *The Love Life of Dr. Kane* (1866) which contains several of his letters to Margaret Fox. More recent publications are *Raising Kane.-The Making of a Hero, the Marketing of a Celebrity* by Mark Horst Sawin (Elisha Kent Kane Historical Society, 1997, <https://the-elisha-kent-kane-historical-society.square.site/>) and *Exploring Other Worlds: Margaret Fox, Elisha Kent Kane, and the Antebellum Culture of Curiosity* by David Chaplin (University of Massachusetts Press, 2004).

LITTLE NELL AND FROZEN DEEP

BBC Radio 4 repeated the play *Little Nell* on Saturday 23 August. This was broadcast as a tribute to playwright Simon Gray (1936-2008) who died earlier this year. Gray was inspired by *The Invisible Woman*, Claire Tomalin's book about Nelly Ternan and Charles Dickens who met during the tour of *The Frozen Deep* in 1857. The play examines their first meeting as well as the lies told to keep the affair secret. It is the date of a programme for *The Frozen Deep* that alerts Ellen Ternan's son to the fact that she had altered her age by some ten years and sends him to request information from Sir Henry Dickens. The rest of the story is then told in a series of flashbacks.

COLLINS AND DICKENS AT DONCASTER

Following the mention of Doncaster in the last Newsletter, William Clarke, author of *The Secret Life of Wilkie Collins*, sends the following interesting note: 'Your item on Collins's and Dickens's visit to the Doncaster races reminds me of the remarkable outcome of Dickens's bets that day. On the day of the St Ledger, he later recalled, he bought a race card and quickly chose the names of three horses for the first three main races. And, he added, "if you can believe it without your hair standing on end, those three races were won, one after the other, by those three horses."'

WILKIE COLLINS AND COLUMBO

WCS member Angela Richardson suggests that the lawyer Pedgift senior, in *Armadale*, is an early model for the American television detective Columbo. Like Columbo, Pedgift senior always wins his arguments by a final question which he poses as he is almost out of the door. Here is how Wilkie describes the technique:

‘Mr. Pedgift’s form of diplomatic practice had been the same throughout his life, on every occasion when he found his arts of persuasion required at an interview with another man. He invariably kept his strongest argument, or his boldest proposal, to the last, and invariably remembered it at the door (after previously taking his leave), as if it was a purely accidental consideration which had that instant occurred to him. Jocular friends, acquainted by previous experience with this form of proceeding, had given it the name of “Pedgift’s postscript.” There were few people in Thorpe Ambrose who did not know what it meant when the lawyer suddenly checked his exit at the opened door; came back softly to his chair, with his pinch of snuff suspended between his box and his nose; said, “By-the-by, there’s a point occurs to me;” and settled the question off-hand, after having given it up in despair not a minute before.’”

‘For the second time Allan shook his head. “Is that your final resolution, sir?” “It is, Mr. Pedgift; but I am much obliged to you for your advice, all the same.” Pedgift Senior rose in a state of gentle resignation, and took up his hat “Good-evening, sir,” he said, and made sorrowfully for the door. Allan rose on his side, innocently supposing that the interview was at an end. Persons better acquainted with the diplomatic habits of his legal adviser would have recommended him to keep his seat. The time was ripe for “Pedgift’s postscript,” and the lawyer’s indicative snuff-box was at that moment in one of his hands, as he opened the door with the other. “Good-evening,” said Allan. Pedgift Senior opened the door, stopped, considered, closed the door again, came back mysteriously with his pinch of snuff in suspense between his box and his nose, and repeating his invariable formula, “By-the-by, there’s a point occurs to me,” quietly resumed possession of his empty chair. Allan, wondering, took the seat, in his turn, which he had just left. Lawyer and client looked at each other once more, and the inexhaustible interview began again. (*Armadale* Book the Third Chapter 5)’. The whole of the next chapter is called ‘Pedgift’s Postscript’

THE LEADER

Wilkie contributed to the radical weekly newspaper *The Leader* from 1851 to 1855. A total of 46 reviews and social comments have been identified, a preliminary and speculative list by Beetz in 1982 and a more definite though

probably not complete tabulation by Graham Law in the introduction to *The New Dragon of Wantley* published by the WCS in November 2007. However, copies of these items have been hard to obtain – few complete runs of *The Leader* survive. There is one in the British Library and another at Manchester Public Library. But now the whole text of *The Leader* is available online and at no charge at www.ncse.ac.uk. The software allows you to leaf through editions of *The Leader* as if through the physical and now very fragile volumes. You can search for key words or jump straight to particular issues and pages. You can download whole issues as pdfs and with a little work the text can be copied and e-texted. A wonderful resource for some of Wilkie's earliest and hardest to find work.

AVENUE ROAD – ST JOHN'S WOOD

Wilkie lived with his family at 20 Avenue Road (now renumbered 39) between 1838 and 1840. From *The Memoirs of William Collins, R. A.* we learn that Wilkie's father was required "...to find a new abode. This was, after some trouble, accomplished by engaging a convenient dwelling in the Avenue Road, Regent's Park - precisely in the quiet situation, on the outskirts of London, which Mr Collins desired to occupy."

The original villa was completely demolished about eighteen months ago but has now been rebuilt. The exterior of the new house is nearly finished and although different from its predecessor and rather larger appears to have been designed in a fairly sympathetic style. At https://www.wilkie-collins.info/home_sjwood.htm there is a temporary photograph which will be replaced with a full image when the builders' hoarding has been removed.

THE REAL BLUE MAN

One of Wilkie's odder characters is Oscar Dubourg in *Poor Miss Finch*. Oscar receives a blow to the head during what we would call a mugging and the injury causes him to have epileptic fits. The cure he is recommended is to take silver nitrate over a prolonged period. It works on the epilepsy but has the unfortunate side effect of making his skin go blue. Fortunately at that time his beloved is suffering from temporary blindness and cannot see him. So far so Wilkie.

Or rather so Oprah Winfrey. A guest on her show, Paul Karason a 57-year-old former teacher originally from Oregon, drinks colloidal silver and rubs it into his skin to deal with a form of dermatitis. But over the 14 years he has done so his skin has turned so blue he is referred to as Papa Smurff by the locals. Fortunately his girlfriend, Jackie Northup, says she is used to it. You can read

more and see the blue Paul Karason on the internet. It doesn't seem to be a hoax. See https://binside.typepad.com/binside_tv/2008/01/man-who-turned.html and <http://abclocal.go.com/kfsn/story?section=news/local&id=5843725>

BETTEREDGE'S *ROBINSON CRUSOE*

Melissa Free of the University of Illinois believes she has tracked down the edition of *Robinson Crusoe* which Betteredge quotes from in *The Moonstone*. Betteredge uses *Crusoe* rather like the bible, as he explains:

“You are not to take it, if you please, as the saying of an ignorant man, when I express my opinion that such a book as ROBINSON CRUSOE never was written, and never will be written again. I have tried that book for years – generally in combination with a pipe of tobacco – and I have found it my friend in need in all the necessities of this mortal life. When my spirits are bad – ROBINSON CRUSOE. When I want advice – ROBINSON CRUSOE. In past times when my wife plagued me; in present times when I have had a drop too much – ROBINSON CRUSOE. I have worn out six stout ROBINSON CRUSOES with hard work in my service. On my lady's last birthday she gave me a seventh. I took a drop too much on the strength of it; and ROBINSON CRUSOE put me right again. Price four shillings and sixpence, bound in blue, with a picture into the bargain.”

Free identifies the edition as that published by Macmillan in 1866 as Collins was writing the story. She says it fits in both with the description, the quotes and with at least two of the page numbers cited by Betteredge.

Only a two volume 1790 edition of the book is recorded in Collins's library on his death (Baker 2002 p. 99) though the catalogue would be unlikely to list separately a more recent edition.

JEWELS FROM *THE MOONSTONE*

The Moonstone begins with the looting of the jewels removed from Seringapatam in 1799 from the legendary treasury of Tipu Sultan. Some of these jewels are now on display in the redesigned William and Judith Bollinger Jewellery Gallery at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London which opened in May. The jewels were given to Major-General George Harris for his part in the battle and although most were sold the emeralds remained in the family and were reset in the early 1870s.

In *The Woman in White*, Mr Fairlie's jewels are based on the collection of Collins's and Dickens's friend Chauncy Hare Townshend (1798–1868). These are on permanent display at the Wisbech and Fenland Museum and by coincidence the bequest was dated 1868, the year *The Moonstone* was published (see http://www.wisbechmuseum.org.uk/virtualtour_townshendroom.htm).

FOSCO STOLEN

An unashamed steal of Count Fosco from *The Woman in White* is to be found in *Pavel & I* by Dan Vyleta. This murky thriller set in Berlin just after World War II features the menacing Colonel Fosko. A mink-wearing epicurean, the corpulent Fosko is a corrupt British Officer who controls a lawless section of Berlin. Even though English is not German born Vyleta's first language, reviewers have described the book as 'haunting', 'literary', 'enthraling' and 'Grahame Green meets Charles Dickens'.

DORIS BARTLEY'S DRESS

A dress recently came up for sale that once belonged to Doris Elizabeth Bartley, the eldest daughter of Harriet Graves and Henry Powell Bartley. Harriet was the daughter of Caroline Graves and married Bartley, Wilkie's solicitor, in 1878. Doris was born in 1879 and was Wilkie's god-daughter. Under the name Doris Beresford she acted in musical comedies at the Gaiety Theatre and the red silk dress was probably one she wore on stage. It was sold by Auctionatrium as part of the estate of Mary Brown of Portobello in March. It can be seen at www.auctionatrium.com/portobello_mary.html labelled simply as 'tum of the century theatrical costume'. The price it fetched is unknown.

THE ORIGINAL COLLINS BIBLIOGRAPHY

The first full length bibliography of Collins was *Wilkie Collins and Charles Reade. First Edition, described with notes* by Morris L. Parrish with the assistance of Elizabeth V. Miller. This was originally published in London in 1940 as a limited edition of 400 copies. It was reprinted as a facsimile edition during 1968 by Burt Franklin of New York as part of its Bibliography and Reference Series. It turns up occasionally on ebay but copies can also be had from book dealer Scott Brindred who specialises in bibliography (17 Greenbanks, Lyminge, Kent CT18 8HG, 01303 862258).

SNOOKS

There was recent publicity about Reigh Mills Boss, reported as kidnapped by her own divorced father, Clark Rockefeller, during a custody visit in Boston.

The seven-year-old girl's nickname, interestingly enough, was Snooks which by a nice coincidence was the name of the Collins family cat in the 1840s. Wilkie always liked animals and in August 1844 he wrote to his mother about a little domestic incident: "I lectured her [Susan, the family servant] the other day upon inhumanity. In her zeal for science, or for her kitchen, (I don't know which) she attempted to re-introduce by the kitten's nose that which the innocent animal had just previously expelled as worthless from an opposite and inferior portion of its body. Charlie tried rage upon the subject with the cook. I tried philosophy with the housemaid. He failed. I succeeded – Purified is the nose of Snooks." There is one other reference to our feline friend when writing from France, once again to Harriet, three years later in August 1847: "I received your letters with great satisfaction. The news about my excellent "Snooks" was perfectly gratifying."

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NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2008

THE JOURNAL

The editors of the *Journal of the Wilkie Collins Society* (Graham Law and Lillian Nayder) have informed us that for a variety of reasons there will not be the expected Volume 10 to be issued for 2008. It is hoped that the *Journal* will resume its normal annual publication during 2009. The annual supplement to *The Collected Letters* of Wilkie Collins will also be published in 2009.

As a reminder, if any members have suitable academic articles for inclusion in the *Journal*, they are invited to submit them to Graham Law at glaw@waseda.jp. In the same way, the Newsletter is always pleased to receive any contributions which can be of a much more informal or speculative nature. These could either be included as a paragraph in the Newsletter or if of greater length could be issued as a stand alone article.

WILKIE COLLINS QUIZZES

If you think you know your Wilkie Collins test yourself on a quiz at FunTrivia. There is no charge to join and you can remain anonymous. The FunTrivia website hosts some 85,000 quizzes in over 12,000 categories. Three of these relate to Wilkie. One, called rather grandly 'The Life and Works of Wilkie Collins' presents ten questions at <http://tinyurl.com/3tg3zw>. The other two are on *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone*. The questions on *The Moonstone* are rather more difficult than those for the other two. Those who wish to test

their own knowledge of Wilkie Collins can find the questions at <http://www.funtrivia.com/quizzes>. No prizes but good luck.

P. D. JAMES AND *THE PRIVATE PATIENT*

Our distinguished Patron, Baroness James, has recently published her sixteenth crime novel. Most of these feature her police detective, Commander Adam Dalgliesh. A review in *The Times* of 10 September 2008 commented “In the 46 years since Dalgliesh first appeared in print, he has solved murders by penetrating the complexities of human psychology, and illuminated enduring ethical dilemmas..... In negotiating his way through the pathways of human destructiveness, Dalgliesh is also a guide to our times. Lady James is a perceptive chronicler of the changing landscape of London; the flux of urban development and the housing market; the corrosive culture of sink estates; the ruthless politics of the professions; and even the use of the internet for hedonistic purposes.” All in all, the reviewer suggests “The work of Baroness James of Holland Park has elevated English detective fiction far beyond the diverting puzzles typical of the genre novelists of an earlier generation.” But we gather she still admires Wilkie Collins.

The Private Patient is set in a private clinic in Dorset where an investigative journalist arrives for treatment by a distinguished surgeon but comes to an untimely end. The novel is published by Faber and Faber and is available in hardback at £18.99, ISBN 978-0-571-24244-3.

ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES

A note from Linda Curry, the secretary of Alliance of Literary Societies, informs us that “the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust offers opportunities for British citizens to travel overseas to undertake study projects related to their trade, profession or particular interest. These fellowships are open to applicants of any age and from all walks of life, irrespective of academic or professional qualifications. Further details are available from the website at www.wcmt.org.uk.

Members are also encouraged to visit the Alliance website <http://www.sndc.demon.co.uk/> which gives a comprehensive listing of virtually every literary society in the UK, together with useful links, details of literary competitions and dates for various literary festivals.

RAMSGATE

Wilkie and Ramsgate received a mention in the *Times* Online for 30 August 2008 in an article by Clive Aslet on ‘England’s Best Homes’.

“Queen Victoria enjoyed childhood holidays beside the Ramsgate sands, but the truth must out: she also contracted typhoid. Drains were to be a Victorian preoccupation. And there were other things about Ramsgate that may have elicited a grimace. It was occupied by the unrecognised “wife” of one of her rackets uncles. Opium addicts such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Wilkie Collins added to the raffish tone.”

Collins regularly visited Ramsgate with Caroline Graves from the early 1870s. Along with his doctor, Frank Beard, he was convinced that the sea breezes were good for his health and gave relief from the oppressive London heat in summer. He regularly stayed at 14 Nelson Crescent and was sometimes joined by his ‘morganatic family’ – Martha Rudd and his children – who stayed in the equally impressive terrace at 27 Wellington Crescent. To observe the proprieties, Wilkie visited them here as Mr William Dawson.

DICKENS, FORSTER AND COLLINS

Sotheby’s literature sale of 17 December featured in lot 40 a superb, extra-illustrated copy of Forster’s *The Life of Charles Dickens*, published by Chapman and Hall in three volumes, 1872–74.

John Forster was a friend of Dickens for over thirty years and is often regarded as his official biographer. He became his adviser in both literary and personal affairs and was his co-executor. Forster originally owned an eighth share of *Household Words* and would have met Collins during his early years of journalism and short story writing. They apparently enjoyed a cordial relationship for several years, meeting at Dickens’s home and during amateur theatricals. The rather pompous Forster, however, became increasingly jealous of Wilkie’s exuberant influence over Dickens. Collins for his part felt no animosity and dedicated *Armadale* to Forster in 1866 “in affectionate remembrance of a friendship which is associated with some of the happiest years of my life.” Collins was impressed with the first volume of *The Life of Charles Dickens* thanking Forster in November 1872 for “the most masterly biographical story you have ever told.” The later two volumes, however, ignored Collins and prompted him to describe the book as “The Life of John Forster, with notices of Dickens.” Collins’s frank views on both Dickens’s work and Forster are recorded in an article in *The Pall Mall Gazette* of 20 January 1890: ‘Wilkie Collins about Charles Dickens from a Marked Copy of Forster’s “Dickens”’.

The Sotheby's first edition copy in a beautiful Sangorski & Sutcliffe morocco binding from 1912 has been expanded to six volumes with 738 additional items expertly mounted within its pages. According to the catalogue entry, these consist of "169 autograph letters and notes by Dickens, friends, and fellow writers, 15 clipped signatures, 120 illustrations of Dickens's work by H.K. Browne ("Phiz"), George Cruikshank, Daniel Maclise, John Leech, and Marcus Stone, 327 engraved portraits of Dickens's circle, contemporary and historical personages, and 111 views of locations relating to the writer's life." This unique copy had an estimate of £17,000–20,000 but with buyer's premium actually sold for £34,850.

Included in the volumes are a full page portrait and three letters of Collins to Dickens's and Collins's mutual friend Charles Kent.

ORIGINAL TEXTS ONLINE

An archive of books from libraries around the world offers free downloads of many original texts using images of the pages. You can use it to look at early English and American editions of Wilkie Collins's works, often including illustrations. A search on his name will also produce some reminiscences and pieces about him and his work. They can be downloaded as PDF files or in various other formats for easy reading. But the great advantage over normal e-texts is that you see the original text on the page just as contemporaries would have originally read it. Hours of harmless downloading fun! <http://www.archive.org/details/texts>.

A NEW REMINISCENCE

Many people who met Wilkie Collins wrote an account of the event. A new one has recently come to light. It was written by William Henry Rideing (1853–1918), an English journalist who spent most of his career in the USA. In the 1880s he was working on *The Youth's Companion*, a Boston publication for which Wilkie wrote three stories. The editor Daniel Ford wrote to Wilkie in May 1886 asking if Rideing could call on him when he was in London. Wilkie replied on 1 June "It is needless to add that I shall be delighted to make Mr Rideing's acquaintance on his arrival in London". This short reminiscence is based on the meeting when Wilkie was 62. It was published 28 years later in 1912. Although the physical description of Wilkie is reminiscent of others, the 'luxuriant beard like spun silver' is a particularly fine evocation of his appearance.

‘AGAIN in memory I call at Gloucester Place to see Wilkie Collins in his little house, a cheerful, rotund, business-like man of a height disproportionate to his ample girth. Already advanced in years, he had the briskness of middle age, and the freshness of youth in his complexion. His luxuriant beard was like spun silver, and had he worn a long mediaeval cloak and peered out of it below its cowl, he would have made the traditional Faust as that character appears before Mephistopheles transforms him. Notwithstanding his matter-of-fact speech with its occasional cockneyisms of phrase and pronunciation; notwithstanding his well-tailored and modern apparel, as modish as that of any city man; there was a suggestion of the pictorial necromancer about him, which grew as one listened to him, and instead of the prints, of which he was a connoisseur, against the walls, one almost expected to find the apparatus of an alchemist.

‘He spoke of having visions and extraordinary dreams, not with any apprehension of mental disorder, nor as revealing anything abnormal, but without visible consciousness of the bewilderment he was producing in the listener. I suppose that as he proceeded he must have seen the question in my face, for as he turned to show me a valuable print he had picked up at half a crown in the neighbourhood of Leicester Square, and described with excellent mimicry the transaction between himself and the old woman who sold it, he offered me a brief explanation, “Coffee. I drink too much of it.”

‘He was writing for us a few stories based on circumstantial evidence, and he frankly exhibited to me the books of remarkable trials which he was using as material. Let not any literary aspirant in the imitative age think from this that he can do the same thing; that old trials in sheepskin volumes will relieve him of the labour of invention and imagination; that ready-made plots are to be bought in Chancery Lane or the Strand at a few shillings apiece. Stevenson’s “sedulous ape” is a part often played in the vanity of youth, but it leads to sad eye-openings. Unskilled and inexperienced hands may boil all the ingredients of an epicurean broth without being able to extract from them the savour of the cook’s secret, incommunicable by formula. The trials are accessible to all, but all attempts to transmute them, as Wilkie Collins did, into little dramas enacted by human beings in natural surroundings, are sure to be futile, and the discouraged novice will learn that what seems so easy depends after all on the possession and exercise of that creative imagination which the books do not supply.’

From *Many Celebrities and a Few Others*, New York, 1912 pp 246–247.

More than 90 reminiscences and accounts of Wilkie Collins can be seen at www.wilkiecollins.com, menu item 4.

NEW ACADEMIC STUDIES

Wilkie Collins Society member Claudio di Vaio has published a new book length study of Wilkie Collins. It is written in Italian – though all the quotes from Wilkie’s work are in English! It contains a detailed discussion of *The Woman in White* and its critical reception from 1860 to the present time and looks at interpretations of it by current scholars of gender in sensation novels. The book is called *Wilkie Collins e il Gioco della Coppie – Rappresentazioni dei Ruoli Sessuali in The Woman in White* which Claudio translates as ‘Wilkie Collins and the Marital Game: Representations of Gender Roles in The Woman in White’. Claudio is studying for his PhD at the University of Pescara. He has published numerous articles on the sensation novels of Collins and Braddon and is currently working on the novels of Joseph Sheridan le Fanu.

The book has ISBN 978-88-548-2130-9 and is best ordered from the publisher at www.aracneeditrice.it where it should cost €9.

Victorian Sensation Fiction – a reader’s guide to essential criticism is by Andrew Radford. The book assesses criticism of the sensation novel from the often vituperative nineteenth century reviews, through the growing interest in the genre in the twentieth to today’s scholarly analysis. There is of course much material about Wilkie Collins as well as Elizabeth Braddon and Mrs Henry Wood. Chapters on the rise and rise of sensation fiction, detection, class, feminism, racism, and how our view of it has changed all lead to a conclusion on future directions for research. ISBN 978-0-230-52489-7, it is published by Palgrave Macmillan and is available on Amazon for £13.99.

Brief Lives: Wilkie Collins by Melisa Klimaszewski is a new short biography due out in March 2009 from Hesperus Press. ISBN 978-1843919155 and available on pre-order from Amazon at £5.59.

A hint from South African and Australian newspapers suggests that biographer extraordinary, Peter Ackroyd – who has written the lives of both Dickens and The Thames – is reputed to be working on a biography of Wilkie Collins. No further details are available as we go to press.

TALKING BOOKSHOP

The Talking Bookshop, which is able to supply all of the various Collins titles currently available as audiobooks, has moved from its original home in

Wigmore Street to Baker Street – parallel in fact with Gloucester Place where Wilkie lived from September 1867. The new address is 36 Baker Street, London W1U 3EU (at the corner of Blandford Street); telephone 020 7486 7040.

CSA Word publishes a CD called *Murder most Foul I*, which contains an unabridged version of ‘Who Killed Zebedee?’ read by Derek Jacobi. The story was first issued in *The Spirit of the Times* in 1880 and was published by Wilkie in his book of collected short stories *Little Novels* in 1887 under the title ‘Mr Policeman and the Cook’. The CD also contains stories by Margery Allingham, Robert Barr, and Arthur Conan Doyle. It is also contained in *Murder most Foul...the collection* which includes four more stories – although not by Wilkie – and isn’t much more expensive. The CDs can be ordered on 0208 871 0220 or from the CSA website <http://www.btowstore.com/epages/3828.sf>.

LITERARY COURSES

The Farncombe Estate Centre is once again running a series of literary courses during 2009. These are a mixture of day and weekend courses and cover such topics as fiction, novel and children’s writing, illustrating books, and journalism. Facilities are provided by the Cotswold Conference Centre and full details are available from Farncombe Estate Centre, Broadway, Worcestershire, WR12 7LJ; telephone: 01386 854100; enquiries@FamcombeEstate.co.uk; www.famcombeestates.co.uk.

Broadway, incidentally, was the picturesque Cotswold village to which Wilkie’s renowned actress friend, Mary Anderson, retired when she left the stage in 1899.

CORNHILL REVIVED?

Sex and the City actress Sarah Jessica Parker is to re-launch a version of the *Cornhill* magazine. Parker is a Wilkie fan – she and husband Matthew Broderick called their son James Wilkie in 2002 claiming that Collins was ‘their favourite author’ (WCS Newsletter Spring 2006) – and the *Cornhill* published *Armada* from November 1864 to June 1866. Parker wants to use the magazine to “unveil some of America’s top undiscovered visual artists and writers.”

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NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2009

‘VOLPURNO’ AND A PRIZE FROM THE WCS

The most exciting recent news is the discovery of a previously unrecorded short story by Wilkie Collins. This precedes ‘The Last Stage Coachman’ which has hitherto been the earliest known work by Collins, appearing in Douglas Jerrold’s *Illuminated Magazine* in August 1843. Credit for the rediscovery of ‘Volpurno – or the Student’ goes to Daniel Hack, Associate Professor in the Department of English at the University of Michigan, during the autumn of 2008. Readers of *The Times Literary Supplement* may have seen its first republication in the issue of 2 January 2009 together with an introduction by Hack. The WCS is now issuing the story as a separate publication with a different introduction by Paul Lewis.

‘Volpurno’ was originally published in New York on 8 July 1843 in *The Albion, or British, Colonial, and Foreign Weekly* and in the same month in two other broadsheets – in Philadelphia in the *Pennsylvania Inquirer and National Gazette* on 20 July and again in New York in *The New Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction* on 29 July.

The story is taken from prior publication in England - probably in May or June 1843 -although the original source has yet to be identified. The Wilkie Collins Society would like to offer a prize of 3 years free subscription to the WCS to the

first person who can locate the original UK publication of ‘Volpurno’. So if you’re researching in the British Library or anywhere else in the world, keep your eyes open.

THE COLLECTED LETTERS OF WILKIE COLLINS

With this Newsletter we are also enclosing the latest ‘The Collected Letters of Wilkie Collins: Addenda and Corrigenda (4)’. This was originally scheduled to appear in December 2008 but in the absence of last year’s *Journal* it was felt worthwhile issuing it as a separate publication. There are forty new letters derived from auction or dealers’ catalogues, libraries and collections which had previously been overlooked, some which have recently come to light from various other sources, plus a small number held over from A&C (3) for more detailed annotation. There is now a published total of 3112 letters and the editors have already identified new additions which will be published at the end of the year.

WILKIE COLLINS AND MUTUALLY ASSURED DESTRUCTION

According to Wikipedia at wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_deterrence Collins possibly started the notion of Mutually Assured Destruction:

‘Perhaps the earliest reference to the concept comes from the English author Wilkie Collins, writing at the time of the Franco-Prussian war in 1870: "I begin to believe in only one civilising influence—the discovery one of these days of a destructive agent so terrible that War shall mean annihilation and men's fears will force them to keep the peace".’

This quotation in fact comes from a letter Collins wrote to his German translator, Emil Lehmann, on 7 August 1870 and the full paragraph is:

“I am, like the rest of my countrymen, heartily on the German side in the War. But what is to be said of the progress of humanity? Here are the nations still ready to slaughter each other, at the command of one miserable wretch whose interest it is to set them fighting! Is this the nineteenth century? or the ninth? Are we before the time of Christ or after? I begin to believe in only one civilising influence - the discovery one of these days, of a destructive agent so terrible that War shall mean annihilation, and men's fears shall force them to keep the peace.”

Collins clearly liked the theme since he returned to it not in the novel which begins at the time of the Franco-German War, *The New Magdalen* (1873) but in two later works.

In *Jezebel's Daughter*(1880) Chapter XV. Number III. 1811 Collins describes the mysterious Hungarian:

‘What his history is, nobody knows. The people at the medical school call him the most extraordinary experimental chemist living. His ideas astonish the Professors themselves. The students have named him 'The new Paracelsus.' "I ventured to ask him, one day, if he believed he could make gold. He looked at me with his frightful grin, and said, 'Yes, and diamonds too, with time and money to help me.' He not only believes in The Philosopher's Stone; he says he is on the trace of some explosive compound so terrifically destructive in its effect, that it will make war impossible. He declares that he will annihilate time and space by means of electricity; and that he will develop steam as a motive power, until travelers can rush over the whole habitable globe at the rate of a mile in a minute.’

The second use of this notion comes in *Heart and Science* (1883) Chapter XII, when discussing the evil Dr Benjulia:

‘A large white blind, drawn under the skylight, and hiding the whole room from view. Somehow, the doctor discovered him - and the man was instantly dismissed. Of course there are reports which explain the mystery of the doctor and his laboratory. One report says that he is trying to find a way of turning common metals into gold. Another declares that he is inventing some explosive compound, so horribly destructive that it will put an end to war.’

These excerpts suggest that Collins has perhaps trumped H. G. Wells in predicting the future.

WILKIE COLLINS IN GLOUCESTER PLACE

Collins lived at 90 Gloucester Place from September 1867 till February 1888. There are several details and some photographs at http://www.wilkie-collins.info/home_gloucester.htm. The archivist of both the Portman and Howard de Walden Estates, Richard Bowden, has been delving into the files and has been able to add a few extra points of information. Collins's home for so many years was renumbered from 90 to 65 in 1936. The Property reached the end of its original 99 year lease in 1888 – this, together with building leases for the whole of the block now numbered 37-75, had been granted to a William

Vale – who one can assume was the builder of the whole of this block - in 1789. The new lease for number 90 (65) went to a John Leonard for 25 years from Lady Day 1888. Looking at the dates leads one to think that this was the change which provoked Wilkie Collins's move to 82 Wimpole Street, although at the end of 1887, with the lease on Gloucester Place running out, Collins complained to the actress, Mary Anderson, 'my landlord, the enormously rich Lord [Portman] asked me such exorbitant terms for allowing me to continue to be his tenant that I confronted the horror of moving in my old age.'

Does anyone have an explanation of why all other commemorative plaques are circular whilst Wilkie's is square?

COLLINS DICKENS AND DETECTIVE WHICHER

The Christmas Eve edition of 'Thinking Allowed' on BBC Radio 4 had an interesting discussion on the role of Detective Whicher in the Road Hill House murders, and the influence of that crime on both Collins and Dickens. With the author of *The suspicions of Mr Whicher* Kate Summerscale, Louise Westmarland who lectures in criminology at the Open University, and Dick Hobbs, Professor of Sociology at the LSE. You can hear it at www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/factual/thinkingallowed/thinkingallowed_20081224.shtml

WILKIE COLLINS – THE VICTORIA LIST FAVOURITE

A poll among academics who subscribe to the online Victoria List asked for recommendations of a Victorian novel to change the mind of someone who hates Victorian novels. Wilkie Collins was the overwhelming favourite with *The Woman in White*, *The Moonstone* and *No Name* getting votes. Runners up were Rider Haggard's *She*, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and *Lady Audley's Secret* by Mary Elizabeth Braddon. Find out more about the Victoria list and how to join at <http://victorianresearch.org/discussion.html>

THE EARLIEST TRANSLATION OF MISS OR MRS?

The earliest French translation of Wilkie's Christmas story *Miss or Mrs?* has come to light under the rather more Gallic title of 'Baisers Furtifs' (Secret

Kisses). It was published on 15 January 1872 in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* although with no indication of who translated it. That makes it the earliest known foreign translation. *Miss or Mrs?* was originally published in *The Graphic Christmas Number* dated 25 December 1871 but in fact issued on 13 December 1871 in London. Collins reported that 200,000 copies of *The Graphic* were sold. *Harper's Weekly* in New York carried it in three parts from 30 December 1871 to 13 January 1872. It was also published in Canada by Hunter Rose in one volume in 1872 and a German translation *Fräulein oder Frau?* was published by Günter in the same year in Leipzig. Tauchnitz published an English language version for sale on the continent on 13 June 1872. *Miss or Mrs?* was republished in London by Bentley as a one volume book *Miss or Mrs? and Other Stories in Outline* in 1873.

THE OTHER TWIN

Unlike most theses which remain hidden on academic library shelves, *Alison Clarke* has taken the unusual step of making available her doctoral thesis *The Other Twin: A Study of the Plays of Wilkie Collins*. As she writes on her website, having spent many years studying them, she provides “the story of his many plays, most of them successfully produced on the London stage an in depth study of the plays, the sources they come from, the collaborations involved, and in the context of their time, along with a fully researched overview of theatre in the Victorian Age.” She continues “When I began my thesis, many of the plays were only available at various libraries around the world, mostly inaccessible to the average keen Wilkie Collins fan. I spent many hours in the British Library reading the plays, either in book form, or in hand-written manuscript form. Happy hours, but time-consuming nonetheless.”

These days, fortunately, etexts are available from James Rusk's site www.digitalpixels.org/jr/wc/ with some background information and illustrations at www.wilkie-collins.info/plays_wilkie_collins. In addition, various modern reprints can be bought on internet book sites such as www.abebooks.com.

Those, however, wishing to obtain a copy of Alison Clarke's work can purchase it for the modest sum of £6.99 from her website www.wilkiesplays.co.uk.

ARMADALE AT THE MILWAUKEE REPERTORY THEATER

As mentioned in last year's spring Newsletter, Wilkie's own favourite of his novels, *Armada*, was staged for the first time in more than 100 years by the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre with a new adaptation by Jeffrey Hatcher. Unfortunately this was rather remote for most WC members to attend but brief snatches with a flavour of the production can now be seen on the Kosmix website at [books.kosmix.com/topic/Armada_\(novel\)](http://books.kosmix.com/topic/Armada_(novel)).

CBEL AND COLLINS ONLINE

The third edition of the *Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature* (Volume 4, 1800-1900) was published in 1999. There is now a limited preview of the 1536 page work at books.google.co.uk/books?id=zc6BnY4UQmIC. The preview does contain most of the section on Collins although you will probably need to use your computer's zoom feature (control +) to read the microdot print.

DICKENS AND TOURISM CONFERENCE

A conference on 'Dickens and Tourism' will take place at the University of Nottingham from 11–14 September 2009. The organisers are looking for papers across a wide range of interests. Proposals are invited from scholars in any relevant discipline on the following main themes:

Victorian tourism, its antecedents and legacy.

Travel writing and guide books of the Victorian period.

Dickens's travel writing: *American Notes*, *Pictures from Italy* and the Journals.

Tourism as it appears in the novels of Dickens and his contemporaries.

Tourism to sites associated with Dickens and his contemporaries.

'Literary' tourism and its association with media-stimulated tourism.

Museums and attractions and their roles in tourism.

Abstracts should not be more than 500 words long, 12 point, 1½-line spaced and be formatted for printing on A4 paper. The deadline for submission of abstracts is Friday 29 May 2009. A final paper of around 4–8,000 words must be submitted by Friday 31st July 2009 for inclusion in the Conference Proceedings. All abstracts and papers should be submitted electronically to

Ann.Lavin@nottingham.ac. Further details will be available via <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/ttri/>.

100 NOVELS EVERYONE SHOULD READ

The weekend *Telegraph Review* for Saturday 17 January 2009 contained a list of ‘100 Novels everyone should read’, described as ‘A Telegraph selection of the essential fiction library’. *The Moonstone* was listed as number 25, ‘Hailed by T. S. Eliot as “the first, the longest, and the best of modern English detective novels”’, immediately behind James Joyce’s *Ulysses* at number 24. The top three were *Middlemarch*, *Moby Dick* and *Anna Karenina*. There was no inclusion for *The Woman in White* but nor did *War and Peace* make the list as the editors seem to have allowed just one novel per author.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE IN THE INDEPENDENT

For no very obvious reason, *The Independent* for Friday 16 January 2009 reprinted the 1871 *Graphic* theatre review of *The Woman in White* which was originally staged at London’s Olympic Theatre from 9 October that year. The full review can still be found online in the Theatre and Dance section of *The Independent* and begins:

“It is rather late in the day to recommend people to go and see *The Woman in White* at the Olympic Theatre, but those who have not witnessed the piece have a real treat in store for them. Mr Wilkie Collins has adapted the piece with great skill, and, abandoning the usual tenderness for his offspring, which too often characterises the novelist who essays to dramatise his own compositions, he has not hesitated to sacrifice some of the most apparently telling scenes in the novel for the purpose of presenting a clear and artistic play. Then the piece is remarkably well performed.”

EMAIL ADDRESSES FOR MEMBERS

The WCS would like to compile a comprehensive list of email addresses of its members. From time to time events come to our notice and it is generally not feasible to prepare a Newsletter in time to alert members to various items of Collins interest. The TLS publication of ‘*Volpurno*’ is an example which would

proved entirely possible by email. Obviously such a list would remain confidential and will not be passed on to any third party so that you will not be bombarded with unwanted emails. If you are happy to confirm your email address to paul@paullewis.co.uk, we shall include you if an electronic mailing becomes appropriate.

THE ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES

The Literary Weekend and AGM of The Alliance of Literary Societies will be held from 12-14 June 2009 in Dublin. The base for the meeting will be the Best Western Academy Plaza, Findlater Place, Dublin 1 (+353 1 878 0666). Those interested in attending should first contact Julie Shortland, ALS Treasurer, 22 Beeches Road, Kidderminster DY11 5HF or anita.fernandez-young@nottingham.ac.uk.

LEDBURY POETRY FESTIVAL

The annual Ledbury Poetry Festival will be held from 3-12 July. There will be the usual writing workshops, and reading groups together with readings, performances, talks and exhibitions. The judge of this year's poetry competition will be Daljit Nagra. Further details from Church Street, Ledbury, Herefordshire HR8 1DH, 0845 458 1743; www.poetry-festival.com.

Paul Lewis
Andrew Gasson

paul@paullewis.co.uk
apogee@apgee.co.uk

www.wilkiecollins.com
www.wilkie-collins.info



THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

PATRONS Faith Clarke, Baroness James of Holland Park (P. D. James)
Chairman Andrew Gasson, 3 Merton House, 36 Belsize Park, London, NW3 4EA
Membership Paul Lewis, 4 Ernest Gardens, Chiswick, London W4 3QU

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2009

A NEW WILKIE WALK – SUNDAY 13 SEPTEMBER

One hundred years ago this November these words were first published and took the reading public by storm.

‘I had now arrived at that particular point of my walk where four roads met – the road to Hampstead, along which I had returned; the road to Finchley; the road to West End; and the road back to London. I had mechanically turned in this latter direction, and was strolling along the lonely high-road – idly wondering, I remember, what the Cumberland young ladies would look like – when, in one moment, every drop of blood in my body was brought to a stop by the touch of a hand laid lightly and suddenly on my shoulder from behind me.

I turned on the instant, with my fingers tightening round the handle of my stick.

There, in the middle of the broad, bright high-road – there, as if it had that moment sprung out of the earth or dropped from the heaven – stood the figure of a solitary Woman, dressed from head to foot in white garments, her face bent in grave inquiry on mine, her hand pointing to the dark cloud over London, as I faced her.

I was far too seriously startled by the suddenness with which this extraordinary apparition stood before me, in the dead of night and in that lonely place, to ask what she wanted. The strange woman spoke first.

"Is that the road to London?" she said.'

(*All The Year Round* vol.II p.101, 26 November 1859)

To celebrate this centenary the Society, helped by member Julian Foster, is planning a walk to recreate at least part of the journey of Walter Hartright from Hampstead Heath to London and it will certainly include "that particular point" where Walter first encounters the woman in white, Anne Catherick.

We are planning it for the afternoon of Sunday 13 September. At present the arrangements are to meet at 2.00 pm by Finchley Road underground station to leave promptly at 2.15 pm. If you are interested in joining us, please email Paul Lewis (paul@paullewis.co.uk). This will give us an idea of numbers and also allow us to let you know at short notice if there are any changes.

EMAIL ADDRESSES FOR MEMBERS

We have had a good response from members so that a comprehensive list of email addresses can be compiled. In this way we can alert you to forthcoming items of Collins interest for which there is insufficient time to prepare a Newsletter. Almost half of all members are on the list. If you did not get an email on 8 June about the radio adaptation of *Armadale* then you are not on the list. If you would like to be included on it please confirm your email address to paul@paullewis.co.uk. The list will not be passed on to anyone else and will not be used for anything but sending out information related to Wilkie Collins to members of the society.

ARMADALE

Of all his novels, Wilkie's own favourite was *Armadale*. On 25 June 1888 he wrote to an admirer "To you I may make the confession that I have always considered this novel to be the best that I have written." Fifteen months before he was quoted as telling a reporter "It is by far the best thing I have ever written, and in my own opinion, no other book of mine can compare with it" (*Cassell's Saturday Journal*, 5 March 1887, pp. 355–6). Two years before that he was quoted as writing to another admirer "I am especially pleased to hear that you like "Armadale" – for, if I may venture to pronounce an opinion. I think "Armadale" the best book that I have written. (*New York Times* 29 June 1885 p.3).

But *Armadale* has never taken hold with dramatists and film-makers although there was a German adaptation for television several years ago. So it was a very pleasant surprise to hear what is believed to be its first radio dramatisation on BBC Radio 4 in June. Reading aloud the near 300,000 words of *Armadale* aloud would take more than 27 hours. So collapsing this complex story into three one hour episodes is a major task. When Collins dramatised it for the stage in 1875 he called it *Miss Gwilt!* and made the heroine and villain Lydia Gwilt the central character. Dramatiser Robin Brooks employed the same method, using her as the narrator of the whole story, despite the difficulty caused by her death at the end. This well acted, atmospheric and generally faithful adaptation captures the evil seductiveness of Collins's favourite villain and leading lady.

It ran on Radio 4 on Sundays from 7 to 21 June at 3pm with repeats at 9pm on the following Saturdays. It is not yet known if the BBC will publish this version on CD.

ARMADALE (1866), WILKIE COLLINS - PSYCHIATRISTS IN 19TH-CENTURY FICTION

Wilkie's own favourite novel also features in 'Armadale (1866), Wilkie Collins - Psychiatrists in 19th-century fiction', an essay by Fiona Subotsky published in the *British Journal of Psychiatry* (2009) 194, 445. "Lunatic asylums appear in other novels of Wilkie Collins, notably in *The Woman in White* and *Jezebel's Daughter*, but their medical attendants are not significant for the stories. The villainous Dr Le Doux of *Armadale* makes up for this. He is represented as not only foreign (suspicious in itself) but unqualified; he has previously practised under another name as an abortionist. Collins can thus distance himself from medical criticism."

Fiona Subotsky has also written in the same series on Sheridan Le Fanu, Charles Reade and Charles Lever as well as an article on R. L. Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.

DROOD BY DAN SIMMONS - ANDREW GASSON'S OPINION

Drood is a very long (nearly 800 pages) and rather horrid novel purporting to be a manuscript by Wilkie Collins, sealed for 125 years, telling the story of his supposed mutually antagonistic relationship with Dickens. It begins on 9 June 1865 – the date of the Staplehurst railway crash in which Dickens was caught up whilst travelling with Ellen Ternan and where he meets the eponymous Drood – and ends, apart from a final chapter, with the death of the Dickens.

Drood, himself, emerges as a cross between a mesmerising phantom and murderous master criminal.

The enormous amount of research that Dan Simmons has undertaken in preparing his story is not only the cause of the excessive length but also the source of its own undoing. The fictional Wilkie accuses Dickens of “having characters wander off into incidental occurrences and unimportant side-plots having nothing to do with the overriding idea...” With *Drood* it is the superabundance of facts which gets in the way of the story. In the main, the details are correct but, at the risk of nit-picking, there are many small errors such as the description of Wilkie’s house in 90 Gloucester Place (there was no servants’ staircase and Wilkie did his writing in the large L-shaped study on the first not ground floor).

Irrespective of the above, the ‘sound’ of Wilkie’s voice is totally wrong and self-evidently he would not have written using modern Americanisms. He would not have consumed constantly such vast quantities of laudanum and nor is it easy to accept this version of Wilkie’s doppelganger and other phantoms. Those who have read Collins’s letters cannot conceive of his both plotting and carrying out murder. There is another unpleasant scene where he kills a puppy just to see the effects of quicklime on its corpse, hardly the actions of the animal lover who wrote in *The Woman in White* “The misery of a weak, helpless, dumb creature is surely one of the saddest of all the mournful sights which this world can show.”

The descriptions of Caroline Graves and Martha Rudd are no less incredible and at the very end of the book when Wilkie has written his final note to Frank Beard, barely legible as he draws his last breath, “I am dying, old friend” the reader is expected to believe that he would be finishing off and tidying up his huge manuscript.

Overall, *Drood* is the most speculative, unpleasant, overlong biographical account of Wilkie Collins, Charles Dickens and their friends and family you are likely to encounter. Read it if you are an enthusiast with strong wrists.

***DROOD* – ANOTHER VIEW FROM PAUL LEWIS**

Andrew is of course right that *Drood* adopts an entirely false ‘voice’ and character for Wilkie and indeed for the other people in his life such as his life-long companion Caroline and his mother Harriet. Nevertheless I have to admit enjoying it once I had got over the shock of seeing these false notes, which eventually I came to ignore, though my copy has many notes in the margins ending in exclamation marks. Simmons is not a Victorian student still less a fan

of Collins or Dickens. But he did very well from a standing start in his thorough research which seemed to include some fairly obscure items. He also almost succeeded in fitting the unlikely events in the book into the lacunae that inevitably exist in our knowledge of the lives of people who have been dead for more than a century and whom we only know from their letters and the anecdotes of friends. And although the casual killing of the dog and the plans to commit murder rankle, I actually thought the revelation of his actual final victim was very clever. Overall I found it remarkably readable and well told. But then, I brought myself up on science fiction.

A DROOD POLL

So here you have two opposing views. It would be interesting to know what the WCS membership think of it. What is your opinion? Did you like it or hate it? Let us know, preferably by email to Andrew Gasson at apogee@apgee.co.uk and we'll publish the results in the next Newsletter.

PSYCHOPHARMACOLOGY AND *THE MOONSTONE*

In the last Newsletter we mentioned that Collins might have invented the concept of Mutually Assured Destruction. Now it seems that there may be a case in *The Moonstone* for his having used psychopharmacology years in advance of the scientists. There is an abstract on the web of 'Psychopharmacology and the mystery of The Moonstone', a paper by Shepard Siegal in *American Psychologist* (vol 40 (5), May 1985, 580-581). This contends that "Collins's detective novel, *The Moonstone*, is remarkable not only for the exploitation of psychological principles but also the recognition of these principles before their discovery by psychologists. Drug dissociation (reported by psychologists in the 1930s) is central to the novel. It is suggested that Collins was a reader of Victorian physiological and phrenological literature, a laudanum addict, and given to introspective analyses of his experiences with opium."

Collins was well acquainted with the controversial John Elliotson who in 1863 tried, unsuccessfully, to use hypnotism as a substitute for laudanum to control the pain of his rheumatic gout. Ezra Jennings in *The Moonstone* (1868) calls Elliotson 'one of the greatest of English physiologists' and uses a case history in Elliotson's *Human Physiology* as his inspiration for the attempt to find the missing diamond by administering a second dose of opium to Franklin Blake.

COLLINS, PHRENOLOGY AND PHYSIOGNOMY

Mention has been made in an earlier Newsletter of assessments of Wilkie's character from his handwriting (also available at http://www.wilkie-collins.info/wilkie_collins_writing.htm). A recent discovery records another assessment in a book on the arts of phrenology and physiognomy *How to Read Character: Hand-book of physiology, phrenology and physiognomy, illustrated with a descriptive chart* by Samuel Roberts Wells (New York, 1871). The book gives numerous examples and small illustrations of nineteenth century figures, including Collins on pages 124 and 125. "If intellect be the leading development, the forehead and whole anterior compartment of the cranium ... will be deep and broad, as in fig. 167 [a line drawing of Wilkie Collins]. Here the posterior compartment or Region of Propensity is short and narrow, and the Superior or Spiritual Region (seat of the Moral Sentiments) only moderately developed. If your subject have a forehead like this, you will infer that he is both an observer and a thinker of more than ordinary capacity." Collins is described in a footnote as "An English novelist and miscellaneous writer, noted for his skill in the management of the plot in his fictions. "After Dark," "The Dead Secret," and "The Woman in White" are among his most popular works." The full text can be found online with the two pages relevant to Wilkie Collins at <http://www.archive.org/stream/howtoreadcharact00fowluoft#page/124/mode/2up>.

COLLINS, DICKENS AND THE DUTCH QUEEN

Long standing Dutch member, Pierre Tissot van Patot, has been researching a little known meeting of Wilkie Collins and Charles Dickens with Queen Sophie of The Netherlands which took place in 1870. Pierre writes:

The Dutch Queen Sophie (1818 – 1877), wife of King Willem III (1817 – 1890), visited England from 23 February to 29 March 1870. She met a few times with Queen Victoria and the Prince and Princess of Wales and on Monday 28 March she attended a dinner at the house of Mr John Lothrop Motley (1814 – 1879). Mr Motley was then the US Minister of State (April 1869 – December 1870). He was an historian who had written several well known books on the Dutch History of the 16th and 17th Century. During the dinner Queen Sophie met Wilkie Collins and Charles Dickens. The dinner was also attended by the Dutch and Austrian Ministers of State, and British Members of Parliament. The meeting was recorded in several Dutch newspapers and further details can be found in the *Times* of Tuesday 29 March 1870 (p. 12, col. C).

"In the evening the Queen honoured his Excellency the Minister of the United States and Mrs. Motley with her company at dinner at the American Legation in Arlington Street. Her Majesty was attended by the Baroness de Pabst de Bingerden." Amongst the guests who "had the honour to be present" were

Wilkie Collins and Charles Dickens.” Collins had written to Mary Motley on 22 March 1870 “Mr Wilkie Collins accepts with much pleasure the honour of dining with the Minister of the United States and Mrs Lothrop Motley on Monday 28th March at ¼ to 8 ‘oclock.” (WCSJ, 2005, vol. 8, p. 49).

THE WOMAN IN WHITE IN THE DUTCH THEATRE

Pierre has been equally thorough and industrious in researching *The Woman in White*. The first Dutch translation of the novel by W.J. Mensing was published in 1861 (December 1860) by P. N. van Kampen in Amsterdam; later republished in 1874 by the Gebroeders Belinfante as the first book in their cheap Wilkie Collins series. No further editions were published in the 19th century. *The Woman in White* was well known in the Netherlands but not a great financial success.

In England there had been stage productions of the novel before the adaptation by Wilkie Collins himself. In the Netherlands, English plays were not generally very popular. Even the plays of William Shakespeare were translated from a French version. None of the English adaptations of *The Woman in White* was used in The Netherlands but in 1867 the German actress and playwright Charlotte Birch-Pfeiffer wrote her own version as *Die Frau in Weiss*. Charlotte Birch-Pfeiffer was one of the most successful German playwrights of her time but she was forgotten 30 years after her death in 1868. She wrote more than 80 plays and several of the successful ones were performed in the Netherlands for many years. The public liked her plays but the critics found them too melodramatic and old fashioned.

Die Frau in Weiss was first performed in Berlin on 28 October 1867. In Amsterdam the German version was performed only on 24 November 1867. Fraulein Niemann-Seebach, who played a major role, was performing that winter in Amsterdam. The first Dutch performance of the play, *De Vrouw in het Wit* took place on 5 February 1868 in the Stads-Schouwburg in Amsterdam. They also enacted the play over the next few years, performing it at yearly fairs in other cities. There were also extended tours every summer.

In 1870, *De Vrouw in het Wit* was performed by the Koninklijke Tooneelsten from the Koninklijke Schouwburg (Royal Theater) in Den Haag. They received a yearly grant of 10,000 NLG from the Dutch King. The Koninklijke Tooneelsten played *De vrouw in het Wit* only in Den Haag, Delft and Rotterdam.

When the play was revived in the 1887, the starring role was played by Theo Frenkel-Bouwmeester who became the most famous actress of her time. Theo

Frenkel-Bouwmeester also played a star role in a revival of the Dutch version of *The New Magdalen*. The Dutch translation was never officially published and has not been located. The translator, C.J.Roobol, was famous and his other translations were close to the original.

DICKENS AND THE *WOMAN IN WHITE* PARTY

Dickens Project researcher Jon Varese asks why Dickens was not at the party Wilkie threw to celebrate the completion of *The Woman in White*. The celebratory banquet with a chef from Genoa was at Collins's house 12 Harley Street on Thursday 9 August 1860. On 3 August he wrote to his friend Edward Ward:

“We dine here at ½ past 6, on Thursday the 9th, to drink success to the book in England, Germany, America (United States) and Canada in all which places it will be published this month. Will you come? – No evening dress – everything in the rough – Hunt and Egg are coming and Walker – and perhaps Gregory and Lehmann and H. Bullar. Cast respectability to the winds and write me a line to say you will come!”

Frederick Lehmann accepted shortly after and Collins replied to him on 6 August “Delighted to hear you are coming.” and promised to discuss “on Thursday” when he might go away with him. A few days after the party on 14 August Collins wrote to Charles Ward:

“I wish you had dined here on the 9th. The Genoese cook really did wonders. I never eat a more perfect dinner in Paris.”

So is it significant that Dickens – who edited *All The Year Round* which had serialised the story and was Wilkie's closest friend – was not invited to the celebratory party? There was clearly no rift between them. In fact Dickens and Collins had their own dinner to celebrate the end of the work at the *All the Year Round* office on 31 July. And on 7 August Wilkie wrote to Dickens accepting a renewed two year engagement on *All The Year Round* for seven guineas a week plus one eighth of the profits. And then on 11 August Collins went down to spend three days with Dickens at his Kent home Gadshill, an invitation which had been sent before 6 August.

We also know that Dickens had been staying in London in early August and returned to Gadshill the day before the party. He did not like socialising at that time feeling many friends judged him for leaving his wife. And there is another reason why he would not be seen out partying. His own brother Alfred had died on 27 July and the funeral was on 3 August. Victorians were very strict about

mourning at that time. So it is not surprising that Dickens did not attend Wilkie's party to celebrate the final work on *The Woman in White*.

THE NEW MAGDALEN REINCARNATED AS ZIRA IN NEW YORK

The dramatic version of *The New Magdalen* was first produced on 19 May 1873 at the Olympic Theatre by Ada Cavendish who played the part of Mercy Merrick opposite Frank Archer as Julian Gray. The play was a great success, running for four months prior to a provincial tour. On the Continent it was performed in Paris, Rome, Berlin, Vienna and with numerous productions in Holland. In America Collins was present for the opening of Augustin Daly's production at New York's Broadway Theatre (10 November 1873). There were numerous revivals including those at the Charing Cross and National Standard, 1875; the Theatre Royal, Brighton, 1883; the Novelty, London, the Prince's, Bristol and the Royal Lyceum, 1884; the Margate Theatre Royal, 1885; The Oldham Colosseum, 1887; and the Marlborough (Holloway Road), 1906.

Also at the turn of the century there was a rather different version called *Zira: a drama in Four Acts* at the Princess Theatre, New York. It was 'founded upon the same story as WILKIE COLLINS' "The New Magdalen"' and ran from 21 September 1905 for 128 performances. The original story was set at the time of the Franco-German war in 1870 whereas the *Zira*, rewritten by J. Hartley Manners and Henry Miller, opens in Capetown during the Boer war. The play was Directed by Henry Miller, starred Margaret Anglin in the title role of 'Hester Trent, afterwards called "Zira", and Fred Thorne as the Bishop of Wapping. *Zira* was subsequently staged at the Majestic Theatre, Boston, and a newspaper review of 14 May 1906 recorded that "Boston people are to be afforded the pleasure of seeing the most talked-of straight dramatic amusement of the present day..." "Zira" became famous in a single night, and the beautiful play and the beautiful player proved a Broadway sensation. The New York reviewers actually credited Miss Anglin with the finest piece of emotional acting seen in years."

The New Magdalen: a Dramatic Story in a Prologue and Three Acts was 'Published by the Author' in 1873 (1 Vol, 158 pp, buff paper wrappers). There was also a version by A. D. Ames (no 112), Clyde, Ohio 1882. Thanks to the ever industrious James Rusk, an etext of Collins's original version can be found at www.digitalpixels.org/jr/wc/newmagplay.html.

WILKIE ON LINE BY TRISTANIA CURRIE

Tristania Currie has commenced a series of online articles about the works of Wilkie Collins. As an introduction to the project, she writes:

As a freelance writer, both in print and on the web, and longstanding devotee of the works of Wilkie Collins, I am delighted to have this opportunity to tell you about a project that I am working on. I first read 'The Woman in White' as an undergraduate studying English at Queen Mary College, University of London and was hooked immediately by the lively, atmospheric writing, the page-turning plot and the strong characters, particularly Marion Halcombe and Count Fosco. My interest in Wilkie Collins and his contemporaries grew to such an extent that as soon as I graduated I became a postgraduate student at the University of Keele, reading for an MA in Victorian Studies. It was here that I was privileged to be studying under the tutelage of John Bowen and Anthea Trodd, both distinguished Victorian Studies Scholars.

My interest in the literature and culture of the period has guided me down many new and exciting pathways. I am currently engaged in writing a series of linked articles on the works of Wilkie Collins for a magazine site titled *Suite101.com*. The intended outcome of this project is to have available, on this site, a series of reviews outlining the plot, characters, settings and main themes of Collins' works. The articles are aimed mainly at readers who are new to Wilkie Collins or who have read 'The Woman in White' and 'The Moonstone', enjoyed them and want to read more but are now wondering where to turn next and would like to have an idea of what his other novels are about. They are not intended to be scholarly critical evaluations, rather introductions that will render Collins works accessible to a wide range of potential readers.

The series of articles will be published over the coming weeks and months. By copying and pasting <http://www.suite101.com/profile.cfm/scheherazade73> into your browser you will access my profile page from which you can follow the links to the Wilkie Collins articles.

JAMES PAYN – A COLLINS MENTION IN *THE STRAND MAGAZINE*

James Payn (1830-1898) was a prolific novelist, editor and journalist and as such was friendly with most of the literary men of his time, including Charles Dickens to whom he dedicated *Mirk Abbey* (1866) and Wilkie Collins of whom he was a great admirer and to whom he dedicated *Gwendoline's Harvest* in 1870.

By 1867 Payn was already an informal dinner guest at Collins's house in Gloucester Place. They were kindred souls in some respects since at school they were both bullied and known as story tellers and in later life both suffered from gout. Collins advised Payn on literary matters, especially those concerning publication in the United States and Canada. Collins wrote in March 1869 "I have found Harpers very liberal, and thoroughly straightforward

people – and I hope you may have the same experience of them.” They published *Bred in the Bone* in *Harper’s Weekly* but complained of Payn’s notoriously indecipherable hand writing. To Hunter Rose in Toronto, Collins wrote in February 1875 “Only the other day, Payn was cordially thanking me for introducing him to you. So you see it is a case of “love on both sides.” A better fellow than P. never took pen in hand. I reckon him among my special friends.”

While Collins was battling during 1869 with the Dutch firm of Belinfante Brothers over royalties for their publishing *Man and Wife*, he collaborated with Payn on an unsigned article entitled ‘A National Wrong’. This piece commented on and reprinted Collins’s correspondence with the firm. It was published by Payn in his capacity of editor of *Chambers’s Journal* on 12 February 1870 and recently reprinted by the WCS (Gasson, Law and Lewis, WCS, July 2004).

Payn made two brief references to Collins in *Some Literary Recollections* (1885); and in *Notes from the News* (1890) one of the reprinted essays described how science had caught up with an idea in *No Thoroughfare*. Another reference was recently found in *The Strand Magazine* under the heading ‘The Compleat Novelist’ where Payn is now advising others on the art of story telling.

“At all events, whether the ending is good or bad, it ought to be concealed. There are some readers indeed who are so unprincipled as to look at (what used to be) the third volume first, just as children cannot keep their hands from the dessert when the soup is on the table; but this conduct is contemptible. Wilkie Collins thought it criminal. I shall never forget his distress of mind when, in the vanity of youth, I boasted to him that I had guessed the secret of “The Moonstone” at an earlier date than he had intended.”

BRIEF LIVES

Wilkie Collins will soon appear in the series ‘Brief Lives’ from Hesperus Press due to be published in later this year (ISBN 9781843919155, £6.99). The author of this short biography of 112 pages is Melisa Klimaszewski and the introductory blurb runs as follows: “A close friend and collaborator of Charles Dickens, Collins secured his own fame with sensational novels that feature intricate legal plots, mistaken identities, and complex crimes. Boldly challenging the mores of Victorian society by maintaining two families and shunning the institution of marriage, Collins was also one of the most unconventional public figures of his day. His life story, succinctly told in this elegant biography, promises to instruct and to entertain.”

WILKIE COLLINS – ESSAYS

Wilkie Collins – Interdisciplinary Essays, edited by Andrew Mangham, was first published in 2007. Cambridge Scholars Publishing has now issued a second edition in paperback and with a new preface and a new foreword by Jenny Bourne Taylor. The book is £14.99 from www.c-s-p.org.

WILKIE COLLINS AND *THE WIRE*

Fans of *The Wire*, the prizewinning police drama set in Baltimore which is being shown on BBC2, may be amused to know of a Wilkie Collins connection. The show was created and written by Baltimore journalist David Simon who spent a year with the police to get the background to the story. His previous series *Homicide: Life on the Street* features an overweight drug baron who hates violence called Wilkie Collins. He was played by actor Robert F Chew who reprised a similar character – Joseph (Proposition Joe) Stewart – in *The Wire*.

WCS member Mark Bennett of the University of Glamorgan says “I am sure the use of the Collins name is knowing; David Simon must be a fan”. And he sees “a sliver of influence” in the way the series constructs “the city through the multiple and interacting perspectives of different groups in the tradition of Collins’s multiple narrators.”

CHURCHILL SCHOLARSHIPS

The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust is once again offering Travelling Fellowships to UK citizens to travel overseas to undertake study projects related to their profession, trade or particular interest. Applications in a variety of categories should be received by 6 October 2009. Further details are available on the Trust’s website at www.wcmt.org.uk or from 15 Queen’s Gate Terrace, London, SW7 5PR.

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THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

PATRONS Faith Clarke, Baroness James of Holland Park (P. D. James)

Chairman Andrew Gasson, 3 Merton House, 36 Belsize Park, London, NW3 4EA

Membership Paul Lewis, 4 Ernest Gardens, Chiswick, London W4 3QU

NEWSLETTER

26 NOVEMBER 2009

There are two main themes for this Newsletter, *The Woman in White* and the 150th anniversary of its first publication and the relationship between Collins and Dickens in the light of several recent publications. 26 November 1859 is the issue of *All the Year Round* in which *A Tale of Two Cities*, Dickens first story for the recently created periodical, concluded and was immediately followed by the opening instalment of *The Woman in White* by Wilkie Collins, his friend and collaborator. Between the two stories Dickens had announced “And it is our hope and aim, while we work hard at every other department of our journal, to produce, in this one, some sustained works of imagination that may become a part of English Literature.” *The Woman in White*, never out of print since its first publication, has amply fulfilled this aspiration.

TALKING ABOUT DETECTIVE FICTION

But first we must begin with a short history of the British detective fiction by our distinguished Patron, P. D. James. From the Foreword we learn that this followed a request in 2006 from the Bodleian Library’s Publishing Department. *Talking about Detective Fiction* is a splendid little book, doing exactly what it says on the cover, in eight chapters from the beginnings, by way of Sherlock Holmes, the Golden Age, hard boiled detectives, formidable women authors of the *genre* and ending with a glimpse of tomorrow. Each chapter begins with an

amusing cartoon and the book concludes with a short Bibliography and Suggested Reading. (ISBN 978-1-85124-309-9, £12.99).

Wilkie Collins receives due mention in the opening chapter where *The Moonstone* is singled out for particular praise. “No other single novel of its type more clearly adumbrates what were to become the main characteristics of the genre.”

THE WOMAN IN WHITE WEEK BY WEEK

To celebrate the 150th anniversary of the publication of *The Woman in White* in Charles Dickens’s periodical *All The Year Round*, WCS member Paul Lewis has begun the mammoth undertaking of republishing the story in its original 40 parts ,week by week, as the Victorians read it.

Each week a pdf of the text of the original will be emailed to subscribers. More than 225 people are receiving the emails including more than 70 WCS members who are on our email list. If you are not already on the WCS email list send Paul your details now and he will add you to the recipients. If you have any friends who would be interested feel free to let them know. There is no charge – all you have to do is to send an email with the subject *The Woman in White* to paul@paullewis.co.uk. New subscribers will get previous parts to date.

The first part was dated 26 November 1859 but in fact was available three days earlier on 23 November. And our first part was sent out on the 150th anniversary of that day together with a copy of the original illustrations in *Harper’s Weekly*, which published the story simultaneously in New York. Future parts will be sent out each Monday until 22 August 2010.

If you do not have access to email, the Society regrets it cannot post printed copies each week but we enclose the first one for your interest. More information at www.womaninwhite.co.uk and you can follow Wilkie's and Dickens's day to day lives 150 years ago – and mine while doing this project – at www.twitter.com/thewomaninwhite.

The story is newly e-texted from the original by James Rusk of Texas and this pure original version is not available anywhere else. Our thanks once again go to James for his sterling work.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE AT THE THEATRE

Perhaps because of *The Woman in White* anniversary or probably just by coincidence, various theatres seem to have decided to stage productions of Collins's ever popular novel. Earlier this year, Christendom College in Virginia, USA, presented it as their spring play from 3-5 April. Closer to home, the Stockport Plaza ran a production from 24-31 October. More recently, the Sevenoaks Players followed suit with a version of the play at the Stag Theatre in their home town from 11 to 14 November.

WOMAN IN WHITE ON FLICKR

Another appearance of *The Woman in White* is on the photographic website, Flickr. Here you will find two 'Interpretations for *The Woman in White* by Wilkie Collins' on <http://www.flickr.com/photos/28819258@N05/> illustrating the text "There, as if it had sprung that moment out of the earth stood the solitary figure of a woman dressed from head to foot in white." Another artistic approach is found with a cut-out white figure on a book at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/ouissi/3338862910/>

THE WOMAN IN WHITE IN THAILAND

It may be of interest to members to know that there are now learners of English reading 'The Woman in White' all over the world. One of our members, Richard Lewis, produced an adaptation of the novel for Oxford University Press seven years ago as part of their 'Bookworm' series of graded readers for foreign learners of English. This adaptation involved simplifying the vocabulary to an Upper Intermediate level, restructuring the book into three parts and fifteen chapters, having the story told by just two characters, Walter Hartright and Marian Halcombe, and including illustrations. There is also a glossary. To date this version of 'The Woman in White' has sold some 60,000 copies globally. Excitingly, around a year ago a bi-lingual edition for China was produced with running translations of vocabulary into Chinese throughout the book and in recent weeks a beautifully presented bi-lingual edition for Thailand has appeared. There is therefore now the prospect of 'The Woman in White' reaching a huge audience in China and Thailand. How pleased Wilkie would have been, and how equally pleased Richard Lewis is to have played a part in transmitting this great novel to a truly global audience.'

The Thailand edition is translated by the Se-Education Publication Company Limited by arrangement with OUP (ISBN 978-974-212-895-1).

THE BROTHERHOOD

Count Fosco also appeared on *The Guardian* books page for 10 October 2009 where it published another of its '10 of the Best' series. On this occasion, John Mullen listed 'Ten of the Best Secret Societies in Literature'. Top of the list was The Brotherhood, an Italian secret society from which Fosco was on the run in *The Woman in White*. At the end of the book, Fosco's body is found in the Paris mortuary with 'T' for Traditore cut into his arm. Collins's creation is in

good company with representatives from Spectre (Ian Fleming) via The Secret Seven (Enid Blyton) to the Klu Klux Klan (Arthur Conan Doyle).

WILKIE COLLINS IN THE *SEATTLE POST*

The indefatigable traveller and WCS member Pierre Tissot Van Patot from Holland has been continuing his researches, this time in the USA. He has found the following unexpected paragraph in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* of 24 September 1889:

“At a dinner, not long ago, Wilkie Collins related instances proving how impossible it was to introduce into a novel descriptions of places wholly imaginary. In one of his works he describes a house which was entirely the offspring of his imagination. A few days after publication, a man called upon him to protest against the introduction of his house into his novel. Strange to say, the pages of the novel contained a perfect description of the man’s property. At another time he used as one of his characters a man who was so exact about his eating that he weighed every morsel which entered his stomach. Mr Collins has in reality never heard of such a man. He was greatly surprised one week after the appearance of his book by the visit of an utter stranger who wished to know by what right Mr. Collins made him ridiculous in print by mentioning one of his peculiarities.”

The first story was originally related by Collins in ‘Reminiscences of a Storyteller’, published by *The Universal Review* the previous year, 1888. The subject of the description was Blackwater Park in *The Woman in White*. The second slightly altered story appeared in the same recollections with Count Fosco as the character in question.

The piece was published the day after Wilkie succumbed to bronchitis but no mention is made of his death.

WILKIE COLLINS'S TROUSERS

Another piece located by Pierre in *The Toronto Globe* refers to Wilkie as a man of fashion. “The “Swells” of New York, it is said, never wear the same trousers two days in succession, and having the “off” pair carefully pressed, always display the crease fold of newness down the front: but patient appliances have placed it within the means of “the sons of toil” to keep their trouser knees from “blistering.” Trousers with the fold of freshness or newness down the front are becoming so general that the “swells” incline to the blister or bagginess, indicating wear. Wilkie Collins, the novelist, is as noticeable for the bagginess of the knees of his trousers as some public men are for their shocking bad hats, and when in America some years ago declared that he did not feel entirely happy until wear had produced this effect. He, however, was something of a Sybarite, and studied comfort rather than style.”

Wilkie was also presented as an accidental fashion icon in Wybert Reeve’s 1906 ‘Recollections of Wilkie Collins’ published in *Chambers’s Journal*.

“One thing greatly amused us. Before leaving England he found himself in want of a rough travelling suit of clothes, and driving through the City, he turned into Moses’ great emporium and bought a cheap shoddy suit. The *New York Herald*, in describing Collins, gave an elaborate account of his person. He was wearing at the time the slop suit, and the description wound up with the statement that Mr Collins was evidently a connoisseur of dress. He had on one of those stylish West End tailor’s suits of fashionable cut by which an Englishman of taste is known.”

CHARLES DICKENS BY MICHAEL SLATER

Just published is *Charles Dickens*, the magnum opus by Michael Slater, emeritus Professor of Victorian Literature at Birkbeck College, University of London. To do justice to this excellent biography would take up the entire Newsletter but here we have in 700 pages, 27 chapters, 80 plates and 61

illustrations in the text everything you ever wanted to know about the life and works of Charles Dickens. Collins is well represented with significant discussion in connection with *The Lighthouse*, *The Frozen Deep*, *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone* together several mentions of his other works. Details of Dickens's friendship with Collins are scattered throughout the book, easily found with the comprehensive index, beginning with "His growing friendship with Wilkie Collins, twelve years his junior but already very much a professional writer and one whose works he admired, seems to have provided another source of relief and relaxation for Dickens."

Charles Dickens is not only a thoroughly readable biography but a work of great scholarship with full references to 43 pages of notes. *Charles Dickens* will deservedly become the Inimitable's definitive biography.

It is published by Yale University Press at £25 (ISBN 978-0-300-11207-8). The publishers have kindly agreed that members of the WCS can take advantage of the discounted price of £22 including free postage if ordered on the enclosed form.

DROOD

We didn't receive many replies to our *Drood*' poll in the summer Newsletter but we have two contributions from members. Paul Graham writes:

"I have just finished *Drood* and take the Gassonian rather than the Lewisian point of view. You both point out that the tone is wrong - how the author of *Heart and Science* could callously kill a puppy as part of an experiment to discover the corrosive nature of quicklime is beyond me - but the plot itself is far too flimsy and silly to justify the vast amount of background research that must have gone into it. Loose ends are everywhere.

Wilkie's "disposal" of Agnes - fed to the monster stalking the servant's staircase is just absurd. It left the questions of where the girl disappeared to and how she died (if she did) unanswered. It is also unclear who wrote the letter from her naming her soldier boyfriend.

I agree with Paul that the revelation of Wilkie's final victim was clever and unexpected - but this was mainly because it was motiveless. Having taken such pains to get rid of Caroline from his home, and rather revelling in her consequent discomfort, Wilkie then risks the noose to extricate her and get her back in his home again!

Wilkie's murder of Dickens is described - and then revealed to have been only a dream! This is a cheap trick and a con on the reading public. The Other Wilkie and the Scaly Green Woman who haunt Wilkie are presumably meant to be emanations from his laudanum addled brain. Is the whole unpleasant Drood experience a part of this hallucination? Are we meant to believe that it is an extremely elaborate and entirely pointless practical joke played by Dickens and which lasts five years? In particular I found the continual scuttling scarab boloney tedious in the extreme. As an exercise in horror fiction (if that is what it is meant to be) it failed."

Adele Wills, however, presents a more positive view:

"Drood" is a monstrous novel, in all respects, and the liberties it takes with its representation of Collins and Dickens reveals a lack of real sympathy for its subject matter. However, like Paul Lewis, I found the novel strangely compelling and the plot's twists and turns certainly commanded my attention. There are false notes aplenty and the sensationalist style sometimes falters. But what worked for me was the uncertainty around the novel's 'reality', created by the unreliable and opium-addicted narrator. Many scenes are far-fetched and people behave inconsistently and strangely; yet this oddness was also gripping. Coupled with Dickens' own powerful imagination and his interest in mesmerism, the novel did have an internal coherence. Don't read the novel for any sense of an authentic exploration of the creative relationship between Dickens and Collins; but do read it for an unashamedly fantastic and Gothic perspective on the final years of Dickens' life and for an ingenious and imaginative view on Dickens' final unfinished novel."

THE LAST DICKENS

Mathew Pearl's *The Last Dickens* covers some of the same ground as *Drood* with a preoccupation for opium and its dens in Victorian London. It is no less well researched but mercifully about half the length and a good deal more readable. It is the story of James Osgood of Boston publishers Fields, Osgood & Co. (later James R. Osgood & Co) and his search for any traces of the unfinished half of the manuscript of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* following Dickens's untimely death in 1870. Osgood's journey takes him to Gad's Hill, London and the less salubrious parts of the capital's underworld. These adventures are interposed with Dickens's last reading tour of the USA in 1867 and a digression to India to encounter Frank Dickens. The overall theme emerges as opium with a fictional master criminal although we are introduced to the real life characters of John Forster, Georgina Hogarth, George Dolby and Frederic Chapman. We also meet the Harper Brothers who are portrayed in a rather unfavourable light. Although Collins does not appear as a character and receives only one or two brief mentions, the novel is still worthwhile reading for a realistic impression of the places in the nineteenth century. The search for *Edwin Drood* is pure speculation but unlike Simmons's *Drood* is believable and ends with a satisfyingly constructed plot. (ISBN 9781846550843 hardback, £12.99).

***WANTING* by Richard Flanagan**

There seems no getting away from Dickens at present. He features once more, this time with Collins, in Richard Flanagan's new novel *Wanting*. The main characters are Sir John and Lady Franklin and a young aborigine girl called Mathinna whom they adopt but ultimately fail to westernise. Much of the book takes place during Franklin's governorship of Van Dieman's Land (Tasmania) and deals with the brutal history of the treatment of the indigenous population. Franklin's constant desire is to return to sea and resume his quest for

exploration. This becomes the voyage to the Northwest Passage which also results in failure and the demise of the entire expedition. The Tasmanian story is juxtaposed with Dickens's meeting with Lady Franklin, his public support in the pages of *Household Words* to refute the charge of cannibalism by British sailors and the production of *The Frozen Deep*, based of course on the disastrous Franklin expedition. This brings Wilkie into the plot, albeit as something of a bystander, with both the writing and the theatrical productions of the play which in turn leads to Dickens's relationship with Ellen Ternan. *Wanting* is published by Atlantic Books at £14.99 (ISBN 978-1-84887-071-0). Further details are to be found on the Flanagan website at www.richardflanaganwanting.com.au/thebook.aspx.

BLEAK HOUSE FOR SALE

We stay with Dickens to mention the mansion in Broadstairs originally known as Fort House and now called 'Bleak House'. Earlier this year it was put on the market for the modest sum of two million pounds by a local agent (www.terencepainter.co.uk). Quoting the estate agent's blurb:

"Bleak House commands one of the most prominent positions in Broadstairs - high up on the cliffs on the coast of Kent stands this mansion, known far and wide as the seaside residence of the great novelist, Charles Dickens. This Grade II Listed house was built in 1801 and has to be one of the country's most renowned homes as here, in a small study looking straight out across the sea, Charles Dickens wrote the greater part of his most famous novel, *David Copperfield*. The current owners of this amazing property have extensively restored the majority of this vast building, retaining a multitude of grand and quirky features including the lower ground floor museum, with its prison cells, underground inn and old artefacts."

Following the success of *The Woman in White*, Collins rented the house with Caroline Graves from July to October 1862. It provided both a quiet place for working on the serialisation of his next novel, *No Name* (1862), and ample

accommodation for the frequent visitors which included Charles Ward, Frank Beard and Augustus Egg, as well as Henry Bullar and Edward Pigott for the sailing.

THE DANGERS OF CRINOLINE

Book dealer, Jarndyce, well known for its specialisation in Dickens material, had an interesting item on sale in its September 2009 (CLXXXIII) catalogue. Item 493, Sensational Chapbooks number 22, published in 1858 was ‘The Dangers of Crinoline, Steel Hoops, &c. Shown in the Fearful Account of a Lady of Title Nearly Burnt to Death’ This is nicely reminiscent of one of Wilkie’s articles ‘Give Us Room’ originally published in *Household Words*, 13 February 1858 and reprinted in *My Miscellanies* (1856). Here Collins also discusses the dangers of crinoline in the context of overcrowding in parties given in private houses.

WILKIE COLLINS, MEDICINE AND THE GOTHIC

WCS member Dr. Laurence Talairach-Vielmas has written another book on Collins. *Wilkie Collins, Medicine and the Gothic* examines how Wilkie Collins’s interest in medical matters developed through his writing. He claims that the aristocratic villains, victimized maidens and medieval castles of classic Gothic tales were reworked and adapted using medical detail to thrill his Victorian readership. He covers nine novels from *The Woman in White* to *The Legacy of Cain*. (University of Wales Press, 2009, Hardback, ISBN 10-0708322239. Price £75 – but cheaper through Amazon).

THE VICTORIAN APPROACH TO MODERNISM IN THE FICTION OF DOROTHY L. SAYERS

There are many references to Wilkie Collins in a new book by another WCS member Aoife Leahy. *The Victorian Approach to Modernism in the Fiction of*

Dorothy L. Sayers is published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing. Leahy finds numerous links between Sayers and Collins and shows how she draws on Collins's work melding it with many other strands from Victorian fiction. (ISBN (10): 1-4438-0993-4, £34.99 and slightly less through Amazon).

BIRTH RECORDS

New online records have enabled us to find for the first time the baptism of Wilkie's brother Charles Allston Collins. He was born on 25 January 1828 at the house in Pond Street, Hampstead, where the family lived from 1826-1829. He was baptised on 11 April 1828 at the parish church of St John at Hampstead.

The records also contain the image of the original baptism record for Wilkie Collins on 18 February 1824 at Saint Marylebone, Westminster. Here his father is given his full name William John Thomas Collins – the only other times that appears are on William's will and his own baptismal record. The records contain no baptisms for any of Wilkie's three children. Only the youngest, his son William Charles Collins (25 December 1874), has a birth certificate. His two daughters Marian (4 July 1869) and Harriet Constance (14 May 1871) had none. Although registration of births was required from 1836 no sanctions were imposed for those that did not do so until 1874.

WILKIE IN NOVELS

WCS member Jackie Irwin from New South Wales, Australia has pointed out that contemporary author Audrey Niffenegger mentions Wilkie's two most famous works in two of her novels. Jackie writes:

“In *Her Fearful Symmetry* (2009, and her latest book) “Valentina was lying on the pink sofa with a tattered Penguin edition of *The Woman in White*. She found it difficult to concentrate on Count Fosco and Marian with Elspeth fluttering pages only a few feet away.” Elspeth is

Valentina's aunt in ghost form. I believe the reference is mentioned because this book features 2 separate pairs of twins, one of which set has a swap of identities....It is therefore perhaps recalling the Laura Fairlie and Anne Catherick swap.

In *The Time Traveller's Wife* (first published 2004 and recently made into a film) "I'm at Henry's apartment, in Henry's bed, reading *The Moonstone*." Perhaps the link between it and *The Moonstone* might be the fact that drugs are referenced as a means to an end...the end in this book's case being the stopping of the time travelling tendency of the main character in the book to secure him in the present with his wife. Anyway that is my theory. I think the author must be a Wilkie fan."

If anyone else comes across Wilkie references in books please let us know.

CHICAGO PUBLIC RADIO

Chicago Public Radio has made available a lecture by Sara Malton recorded on 4 April 2009 as part of the Fourth Annual Caxton Club/Newberry Library Symposium on the Book. The talk is entitled 'A Capital Past: Forgery, Wilkie Collins and 19th-Century Cultural Memory'. The lecture considers how nineteenth-century authors compared the severe punishment for financial forgery with the relatively limited penalties doled out for crimes against intellectual property. Sara Malton, of St. Mary's University in Halifax, explores this aspect of nineteenth-century culture by concentrating on the life and works of Wilkie Collins. The whole talk can be downloaded from <http://www.chicagopublicradio.org/Content.aspx?audioID=33746>.

COLLINS ON THE RADIO

Two of Wilkie's most popular short stories have recently been broadcast on BBC Radio 7. 'A Terribly Strange Bed' was read in two instalments on 14 and 15 October. It was originally published on 24 April 1852 as Collins's first ever contribution to *Household Words* and later included in his 1856 collection of

short stories, *After Dark*. ‘Who Killed Zebedee? Was a more recent broadcast, also in two instalments, on 23 and 24 November and read by Ronald Pickup. This story was originally written for the US journal, *The Spirit of the Times* for 25 December 1880 and included in the later volume of short stories, *Little Novels* (1887), as ‘Mr Policeman and the Cook’.

MYSTERY MASTERPIECE - *THE MOONSTONE*

If you’d like an entertainment which is somewhere between good old fashioned Cluedo and an onscreen computer game, then ‘Mystery Masterpiece: The Moonstone’ is worth investigating. The introduction reads “An ancient and priceless piece of jewellery, the Moonstone, has been stolen, and it’s up to you to track it down! Investigate every person who was in the mansion at the time of the crime to solve the mystery and catch the crook, in this Hidden Object game! Explore every room of the mansion to find valuable clues in Mystery Masterpiece – The Moonstone, and return the jewel to its rightful owner.” There are nine suspects, eight of whom come straight from the novel and Raj Gupta who represents the Indians. Excellent graphics and moody accompanying music if you like. The game costs \$6.99 or you can download a version which allows you to play for free for one hour. The file size, however, is very large at 145 Mb and takes a long, long time to download. Full details at <http://www.bigfishgames.com/download-games/5809/mystery-masterpiece-the-moonstone/index.html>.

WILKIE COLLINS ON FACEBOOK

Wilkie apparently has a new French based fan site located on Facebook under the heading of ‘Entertainment & Arts - Books & Literature’. It describes itself as ‘Un groupe pour les fans francophones de Wilkie Collins! Wilkie is our master! Honorons sa mémoire :-)’. At present there are 61 people signed up who confess to being ‘Proud members of Wilkie Collins Addicts’ and you can

see the various messages in a good mixture of languages on www.facebook.com/group.php?v=wall&viewas=0&gid=41579931333.

THE WILKIE COLLINS MINI CHALLENGE

Another unusual website is the Wilkie Collins Mini-Challenge. The challenge itself is to read or watch two works by Wilkie Collins between 1 October 2009 and 1 December 2010 – not a problem for WCS members. You can sign up for the challenge or leave comments and links to reviews. There are a several other related topics. (minichallenges.blogspot.com/2009/09/wilkie-collins-mini-challenge.html).

OTHER WILKIE COLLINS

Recently auctioned on ebay was the *Report of the Cruise of the U.S. Revenue Cutter Bear and the Overland Expedition for the Relief of the Whalers in the Arctic Ocean, from November 27,1897 to September 13,1898*. The interesting thing about this particular copy was the tipped in visiting card of a previous owner, Captain John Wilkie Collins, Engineer in chief of the U.S. Cutter Service.

Also to be had on the web are American Indian replica knives from www.nativewayonline.com. The Administrative Contact is listed as one Wilkie Collins which reminds us of *Hide and Seek* and the outlandish Mat Marksman who was scalped by Indians.

SHADYOLD LADY

The curiously named website www.shadyoldlady.com is a comprehensive guide to London “helping to bring her intimate knowledge of London to the masses.” There are numerous sections with popular entries ranging from the Gunpowder Plot via Hercule Poirot’s house to Charles Dickens’s first love. Others include themes, tours, architecture, graves and a lengthy literary list in which Collins’s home at 90 Gloucester Place is duly recorded. There are brief details of

Wilkie's life and works and the page is complete with the virtual blue plaque which all subjects receive.

LONDON EXPLORERS GROUP

Following our September *Woman in White* walk, Andy Duncan reminds us of his own walking group:

“LEG – short for London Explorers Group – is a London walking group providing opportunities for Londoners to explore their city, learn about its history and heritage and find out about what's going on in the city today in terms of development, regeneration and infrastructure renewal. LEG runs at least one walk a month – repeated twice during the week and twice at weekends – exploring a different part of the capital. These walks are just turn up, last about two hours, take place whatever the weather and cost £10 (£8 with a LEG card). LEG also organises occasional specialist walks, for example on architecture and geology. These walks also last about two hours, take place whatever the weather and cost £10, but they usually need to be booked. The regular monthly walks are led by Dr Andy Duncan, founder of LEG and author of *Walking London*, *Secret London* and other well-established London guides. The specialist walks are usually led by experts in their field. To join LEG, all you need to do is sign up for the mailing list by sending your email address (or postal address if you are not online) – to LEG at info@leglondon.co.uk, 19 Boileau Road, London SW13 9BJ, tel: 07958 656 888. The current LEG programme is online at www.leglondon.co.uk.”

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THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2010

THE WOMAN IN WHITE - WEEK BY WEEK

Paul Lewis continues the mammoth task of publishing *The Woman in White* in its original weekly parts. More than 550 subscribers all over the world eagerly await their Sunday morning Collins 'fix'. Many others download the weekly pdf from the website www.womaninwhite.co.uk. Some subscribers admit they cannot cope with the suspense and cheat by looking ahead in a paperback edition on their shelf. But most seem to enjoy the cliff-hangers and wait in agony for the next weekly part as Victorians did 150 years ago.

The text is freshly e-texted from the original and carefully checked against the text down to the last comma. It is the first time the misprints in the original text have been carefully documented. And the exercise has turned up some eccentric spellings - such as 'recal' - which were sometimes but not always changed in subsequent editions. As well as the original text Paul has also scanned the original illustrations from the New York publication *Harper's Weekly* and those from the 1875 Piccadilly edition.

The exercise has given new insights into how Wilkie worked and split the story up, balancing his own workload with the dramatic needs of the fiction itself. Some parts end in the middle of what is later a continuous section in the book publication. And Wilkie constantly underestimates how many parts the story will take to finish.

It is still possible to join. New members are sent the back numbers by email. All Wilkie Collins Society members are already on the list but any friends, colleagues or secret Wilkie fans need only send an email to paul@paullewis.co.uk.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE IN THE INDEPENDENT

The 150th anniversary of *The Woman in White* was also picked up by *The Independent* of Sunday 27 December. The article by Fiona Halliday describes its huge popularity at the time, adds some biographical notes and concludes with “Collins influenced writers as diverse as Hardy, Conan Doyle and Du Maurier. Contemporary novelists such as Sarah Waters and Michael Cox have acknowledged his power. Though dispossessed hysterical heiresses and supernatural jewels may be dated, those blood-filled and myopic eyes of his proved far-sighted indeed. He took the measure of the immeasurable and parcelled out the dark forces of crime, death and desire as if he had a tape measure and a T-square. Nothing in the world was alien to him, and in what seemed most alien lay what was most truthful.”

The piece ends with quotes by Kate Mosse, Audrey Niffenegger, Helen Oyeyemi, James Wilson and Collins’s biographer, Catherine Peters, who writes “*The Woman in White* is a great mystery story, with suggestions of ghosts and the enduring fascination of ‘domestic gothic’. Collins appeals to succeeding generations according to their preoccupations. In the 1920s-1930s, he was seen as a detective story writer; feminism claimed him as a champion of women; now there seems to be a return to ghosts, vampires and other aspects of the uncanny.” The full piece can be seen at <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/white-magic-the-woman-in-white-has-kept-us-in-suspense-for-150-years-1848385.html>.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE AND OTHER PLAYS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Pierre Tissot van Patot has been extending his researches to South Africa. He has discovered that *The Woman in White* was staged on various occasions in Capetown during 1867. The adaptation was probably made by Sutton Vane (senior) and the company headed by Le Roy and Duret: productions were staged

on 21 and 24 October and 4 November. The theatre apparently burned down in 1868. There were also productions of other Collins plays:

“*The New Magdalen*, a new play in a prologue and 3 acts adapted by Mr Sutton Vane from Wilkie Collins’s celebrated novel” was staged on the 11 and 12 October 1877.

Adrift, was adapted by Sutton Vane from Collins’s novel *The Frozen Deep* on 6, 7 and 11 March 1878 and staged in the Good Hope Gardens.

Some of these details are contained in F. C. L. Bosman’s *Drama en toneel in Suid-Afrika, Deel II 1856-1912*: J. L. van Schaik, Pretoria, 1980 (ISBN 0 627 01105 5).

THE WOMAN IN WHITE DRAMA

The Woman in White as a drama continues to please contemporary audiences. Kelso High School in Lower Columbia, Washington State performed its own dramatisation of the story in aid of the American red Cross in Haiti. A local reporter said the Victorian plot had “mysteries swirling like the fog on the moors.” And the teenage cast gave their insights into the play. Skylar Cruz summarised his character Glyde as “A very secretive character... pretty much my whole goal is to try to get money;” and Sierra Baker who played Anne Catherick warned “There are a lot of underlying plots; a lot of twists, you really have to pay attention when you watch it.” Indeed.

And the characters and plots continue to fascinate from different perspectives. Vivienne Parry wrote an interesting piece on the BBC website <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/8622367.stm> to support her Radio 4 documentary *Madwomen in the Attic*. She reminds us that Bulwer Lytton had his wife declared insane and confined to an asylum though she was clearly not mad after she made embarrassing remarks about him when he stood for parliament.

THE LOUISE NOTTAGE CASE

The source of Collins's plot for *The Woman in White*, with Laura's confinement in a lunatic asylum, is generally accepted as Maurice Méjan's *Récueil des Causes Célèbres*. A descendant of the Nottidge family, James Miller, draws our attention to an English case reported in *The Times* which also has some similarities.

Following the death of clothier Josias Nottidge of Wixoe in 1844, his five daughters each inherited the sum of £6,000. By 1846 the sisters had been persuaded by the Rev. Henry Prince, a defrocked Anglican priest, to contribute to a new religious community, to be called Agapemone, or The Abode of Love. The following year the sisters travelled to live in The Abode of Love, a walled community guarded by dogs in Spaxton, Somerset. Rev. Prince immediately arranged for the sisters to marry young clergymen of his selection: the young clerics had agreed to pay over a proportion of their wealth, once acquired by marriage, to the Rev. Prince.

While three of the sisters proceeded with the marriages, Agnes and Louisa Nottidge declined to marry in these circumstances. Agnes reported experiencing brutal treatment and left the community. When Agnes' brother-in-law, Frederick Ripley, heard her story he travelled to The Abode of Love and forcibly removed Louisa from the grip of Rev. Prince, then committing her to a private lunatic asylum.

Louisa Nottidge escaped from the asylum, then sued her brother-in-law, and her brother, for abduction and false imprisonment. The proceedings of *Nottidge v Ripley and Another*, were reported in *The Times* on 26-29 June, 1849. Louisa won her case, having been certified sane by Rev. Prince, and returned to spend the rest of her life at The Abode of Love.

In 1849 Collins was studying to be a barrister at Lincoln's Inn and would almost certainly have heard of the case which was the sensation of the time with the court "crowded to suffocation". He had not yet met Dickens but may well have read the latter's supplement to *Household Words*, *The Household Narrative of Current Events* for May 1850 (p. 110), which devoted half a column to the case.

There was a later suit, *Nottidge v Prince* (1860), in which the Nottidge family were able to recoup some of the monies handed over to Rev. Prince by the Nottidge sisters. This action remains a leading case in the field of ‘undue influence’. It can only be speculation as to whether the original Nottidge case had any influence on Collins’s plot for *The Woman in White* or on *Man and Wife* (1870) where he argues for a Married Woman’s Property Act, or even on the much later *Fallen Leaves* (1879) which features an American religious sect - although this is generally regarded as based on the Oneida community in New England. But what turns out to be an interesting coincidence is that this second Nottidge case was widely reported in the press between July and August 1860, just as the serialisation of *The Woman in White* in *All the Year Round* was drawing to its dramatic conclusion. The book publication took place on 15 August 1860 and the publicity of *Nottidge v Prince* may well have assisted the marketing success of Collins’s novel.

The Woman in White is dedicated to “Bryan Waller Procter from one of his younger brethren in literature who sincerely values his friendship and who gratefully remembers many happy hours spent in his house.” Procter, pseudonym Barry Cornwall, was by another coincidence Commissioner of Lunacy from 1832-1861 and wrote the report which was responsible for the release of Louise Nottidge.

The religious community at The Abode of Love was not finally dissolved until 1958. Members who would like further details of his theories can contact james_miller44@talktalk.net.

THE MOONSTONE LEGACY

It’s rather surprising that so few of Collins’s stories have been ‘borrowed’ to provide a modern sequel. One example is James Wilson’s 2001 *Dark Clue* where Laura, Marian and Walter from *The Woman in White* embark on new adventures. Now, however, we have a continuation to *The Moonstone*, in the form of *The Moonstone Legacy*, due to be published by Pushkin Press on 31 May 2010. Authors Diana de Gunzburg and Tony Wild have sent us the following advance notes:

“What will be the next adventure of the Moonstone? Who can tell?” So ends the Collins classic - and the challenge has finally been picked up in the form of a young adults’ mystery adventure novel, partly set in Shalimar, a splendid Anglo-Indian mansion on the North Yorkshire Moors.

Fourteen year-old Lizzy Abercrombie’s mother dies in a tragic accident on the full moon. But was it really an accident? Lizzy discovers that her death may be linked to a mysterious family curse. Determined to find the truth, her quest takes her to the Temple of the Moon in India, where she uncovers the terrible past of her ancestor George Abercrombie. But her discoveries put her in mortal danger from a ruthless enemy...

The Temple of the Moon at Somnath is, of course, the setting of *The Moonstone’s* visionary final chapter. What members of the Society may not know is that region is one of India’s most sacred landscapes, setting for many scenes in the Mahabharata, and the background for one of the Vishnu Puranas concerning the legendary Syamantaka, a sacred diamond, gift of the sun God. These features are woven into the story, too, embracing the East in a way of which Collins might well have approved.

Tony Wild explored the Indian subcontinent as a young man, and wrote his popular histories for HarperCollins - *The East India Company: Trade and Conquest from 1600* (1999) and *Remains of the Raj* (2001), nominated Jan Morris’ Book of the Year. A one-time actor, filmmaker and screenwriter, this collaboration is his first novel.

Diana de Gunzburg was born in Pakistan and is Anglo-Russian-Afghan. Her great-grandfather was the last person to be publicly hanged for insurgency by the British in the North West Frontier of Pakistan, where her father still farms his estate. Diana was brought up between the North West Frontier and her mother’s native Yorkshire. She has recently published articles about her upbringing in *Alef* magazine and *Afghan Scene*. She lives with her husband and teenage daughter in Paris where she teaches yoga. This is her first book.”

The Moonstone Legacy is written mainly for younger readers in an exciting, easy to read style and with a nicely ambiguous ending. The book is set in the twentieth century with a new cast of characters although two of the minor

players are called Franklin and Penelope - apparently an unconscious homage to the original. And by yet another coincidence the Indian meaning of Shalimar (the name of the Yorkshire mansion) is Abode of Love.

Further details are given on the enclosed flyer from Pushkin which gives WCS members a small discount off the published price of £8.99. (Pushkin Press, ISBN 978 1 906548 21 6). Pushkin Press have also published *Memoirs of Joseph Grimaldi* by Charles Dickens.

ELECTIONS, PARLIAMENT AND SPEAKERS

In these unusual electoral times, It might be worth noting some of Collins's words on parliament and elections:

“Which of our political parties deserves the confidence of the English people?”
In plain terms, on his side, Randal answered: “The party that lowers taxes.”
[The Evil Genius]

“Nobody seems to know whether there is to be another general election - or a Civil War - and your old Literature hides her diminished head.” [Letter to Charles Kent, 11 May 1886].

“Parliament and hereditary legislators don't care a straw about us or our interests - we must somehow make them care.” [Letter to E. M. Ward, 20 March 1855].

“As a member of parliament, he set an example which might have been followed with advantage by many of his colleagues. In the first place, he abstained from hastening the downfall of representative institutions by asking questions and making speeches. In the second place, he was able to distinguish between the duty that he owed to his party, and the duty that he owed to his country.” *[I Say No!]*.

“If you had been the wife of a Cabinet Minister”, she said to her daughter, “you would have been too well used to telegrams to let them frighten you.” *[The Evil Genius]*

“Please enclose it to T[illotson] merely saying that you draw his attention to a new mistake! Are they all drunk in honour of the election? [Letter to A. P. Watt, 2 December 1885].

In Wilkie’s time, when writing *The Woman in White*, the UK had its first Liberal Prime Minister. Viscount Palmerston, the MP for Tiverton, lost office as a Whig Prime Minister in 1858. He brought together an alliance of Whigs, Peelites, Radicals and Irish Brigade to defeat the Conservatives in the General Election of May 1859 (in which Wilkie almost certainly did not have a vote as he was not qualified as a property owner). After the election, the alliance was known as the Liberals and the party won again in the summer of 1865 for the first time under the Liberal banner. Tiverton & Honiton remained Conservative in the 2010 election with almost no swing from Conservative to Liberal Democrat.

With so much recent oratory, here are a few additional comments on speakers in general:

“Telling the truth...is a more complicated affair than you seem to think.” [*Hide and Seek*]

“There is only one kind of speaker who is quite certain never to break down under any stress of circumstance - the man whose capability of talking does not include any dangerous underlying capacity for knowing what he means.” [*The Dead Secret*].

“Without the slightest comprehension of the subject to embarrass him in the flow of language.” [*Hide and Seek*].

A COLLINS OBITUARY IN *TYPO*

Typo. A Monthly Newspaper and Literary Review was written, composed and distributed by Robert Coupland Harding from 1887-1897. The eleven volumes are mainly directed at domestic and international news about printing and allied book trades and include a series of articles on ‘Design in Typography’. There are also book reviews and obituaries. The issue for 28 September 1889 (p. 107) prints the following:

“All readers of fiction will regret to hear of the death of Mr Wilkie Collins, one of the most original and popular novelists of the Victorian era. Mr Collins, who was born in January, 1824, had been in failing health for some time past, but the later telegrams had recorded an improvement. He was not only a novelist, but a successful dramatist, and his stories, of which the most popular is *The Woman in White*, are marked more by skilful plot and dramatic situations than by portrayal of character. One of his stories, *Armadale*, has, we believe been oftener reprinted in New Zealand weeklies than any other serial. Collins was a friend of Dickens; and was often associated with him in literary work; but there is a well-marked difference in the work of the two writers. A story by Wilkie Collins is now current in the *Illustrated London News*, and the author’s admirers will be glad to know that the MS. is complete.”

A further note on 28 June 1890 (p.69) records that “*The New Zealand Graphic* is the name of an attractive weekly issued by Mr H. Brett, the enterprising publisher, of Auckland. For the information of those who may hereafter desire to complete their files, it should be noted that the first number is « marked and numbered» Vol. vi, No. 32. The new weekly has a neat engraved heading, and the original matter is well written. It begins the serial « Blind Love, » by the late Wilkie Collins, the illustrations to which-as, in fact most of the engravings-are from imported blocks. Presswork and paper are excellent; but the composition and arrangement of the matter are open to improvement.”

Typo is the centrepiece of a three-year research project on typographical journals funded by the Marsden Fund of the Royal Society of New Zealand. The journal plus a note on sources can now be found online at <http://www.nzetc.org/tm/scholarly/tei-corpus-typo.html>.

BRIEF LIVES: WILKIE COLLINS

Latest in the Hesperus Press series, ‘Brief Lives’, is a new biography of Collins by Melisa Klimaszewski. It is a short 112 page introduction to Collins’s life with the following advertising blurb: “A close friend and collaborator of Charles Dickens, Collins secured his own fame with sensational novels that feature intricate legal plots, mistaken identities, and complex crimes. Collins was also one of the most unconventional public figures of his day. This

biography presents his life story.” Published by the Hesperus Press at £7.99 (ISBN: 9781843919155).

Hesperus have also published *The Frozen Deep*, *A Rogue’s Life*, *Who Killed Zebedee and John Jago’s Ghost* and *The Lazy Tour o/Two Idle Apprentices*.

DECORATE WITH WILKIE

Cafepress seems to specialise in decorating everything from T-shirts to wall clocks. So if you fancy a Wilkie Collins mug, apron, mouse mat or even a teddy bear, these plus various other items are available to order. The picture used for decoration is the Rudolf Lehmann portrait of Wilkie painted in oils during 1880. For further details see <http://shop.cafepress.co.uk/wilkie-collins>.

THE GUERNSEY LITERARY AND POTATO PEEL PIE SOCIETY

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society by Mary Ann Shaffer, and Annie Barrows is a recent epistolary novel about the island of Guernsey during the German occupation and of the strangely named society. The heroine, Juliet Ashton, in one letter contains an odd but inaccurate reference to Collins. Referring to another character, Markham Reynolds, she writes: “We talk of higher matters, such as Victorian literature. He’s an expert on Wilkie Collins of all things. Did you know that Wilkie Collins maintained two separate households with two separate mistresses and two separate sets of children? The organisational difficulties must have been shocking. No wonder he took laudanum.” (Random House, paperback ISBN: 978-0-385-34100-4).

WILKIE EN FRANÇAIS

Gallica, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/accueil/en/content/accueil-en> is a full-text project of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France which enables one to find the original translations of many of Wilkie’s works. Twenty of his books were translated in his lifetime and published largely by Hachette in Paris. The Bibliothèque has copies of all of them and Gallica has many of them on its database in full text with images of the original pages.

NO FT NO WILKIE

The *Financial Times* used a quote from Wilkie's *Rambles Beyond Railways* to describe the Cheesewring on Bodmin Moor:

"Soon, moorland stretches as far as the eye can see. After an easygoing mile followed by a short climb adjacent to an old quarry, you reach the Cheesewring. According to local myth, this outlandish geological formation is the result of a rock-throwing contest between a giant and a diminutive saint - the giant, inevitably, was beaten by divine powers. Wilkie Collins described it well in *Rambles Beyond Railways or Notes in Cornwall Taken A-Foot*: "If a man dreamt of a great pile of stones in a nightmare, he would dream of such a pile as the Cheesewring." (*FT* 27 March 2010).

RAMBLES BEYOND RAILWAYS

There is also quite a nice summary of *Rambles Beyond Railways* at <https://fleurfisher.wordpress.com/2010/01/21/rambles-beyond-railways-by-wilkie-collins/>. Fleur Fisher is apparently a self-confessed Comish bookworm and her pages give several quotes and illustrations from the book, including the Cheesewring.

YELVERTON AND WIFE

Wild Romance: the true story of a Victorian Scandal is an account by new writer Chloe Schama of the famous Yelverton divorce case which Wilkie used in the plot of *Man and Wife*. In 1868 he wrote to his lawyer Benham: 'I want to find out what "Mrs Yelverton's" grievance is - in "a nutshell" - with a view to making it the starting point in a play (this between ourselves). Can you tell me, in what point her marriage, was "null and void"?' (To Benham 25 September 1868). Published by Bloomsbury at £15.99 the book uses long passages from the correspondence of Charles Yelverton and Theresa Longworth whom he married twice under Irish and Scots law but not in England and then married someone else. After several inconclusive court cases the ex-couple retired abroad separately.

BARCELONA ONE MORE TIME

Longstanding WCS member, Richard Lewis, whose adaptation of *The Woman in White* for foreign learners of English was mentioned in the last Newsletter, has now created a website www.barcelonaonemoretime.co.uk. *Barcelona One More Time* tells the story of a language teacher who leaves England in 1976 to take up a job teaching English in Barcelona. The first sentence of the book is written in homage to *The Woman in White* and on the website can also be seen the striking cover of his adaptation for Oxford University Press. There is a further mention of Wilkie Collins in Richard's *Artistic Thanet* which reveals the connection of various authors and artists with the area.

LEDBURY POETRY FESTIVAL

This year's Ledbury Poetry Festival takes place from the 2-11 July. There will be the usual performances, readings, talks, walks and music plus writing workshops and the annual poetry competition. Further information from 0845 458 1743 or at <https://ledburypoetry.org.uk/>.

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NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2010

MORE WOMAN IN WHITE

The Woman in White in its 150th anniversary year is still occupying our attention. Accompanying this Newsletter are two essays relating to Wilkie's most famous novel.

Paul Lewis has now finished his week by week e-text publication of the original text of the serial as it appeared in forty parts from 26 November 1859 to 25 August 1860. The parts can be downloaded from www.womaninwhite.co.uk and the whole collection of 40 parts is also available there as a single PDF. The site also contains PDFs of the original illustrations from *Harper's Weekly* by John McLenan and a growing catalogue of background material about the book and its publication.

The original text has never been available in electronic form before and the e-text has been carefully collated to give an accurate transcription of Wilkie's words as originally published. The text includes the errors of the original.

A year ago the Society retraced Walter Hartright's walk and his meeting with Anne Catherick on the road from Hampstead to London. Paul Lewis's account of that walk with much original material and analysis is enclosed with this newsletter. The route of Walter's walk is now available on an annotated Google map. Follow the walk, check out key events on it, and use Google Streetview to take the walk yourself! The link is on www.womaninwhite.co.uk in the background section.

We also enclose Andrew Gasson's '*The Woman in White – a Chronological Study*' which was originally published in Volume II of the First Series of the society's *Journal* in 1982. The current version has been considerably updated with new material and evidence of the novel's publishing history and tries once and for all to dispel the myth that the US edition preceded the English book version in three volumes. It didn't!

HISTORY TODAY

The Woman in White featured in a well illustrated article in the August issue of *History Today* (volume 60, no. 8). Sarah Wise in 'A Novel for Hysterical Times' looks at events that possibly influenced Collins's novel. She first mentions the story ascribed to John Everett Millais when he was walking home with Wilkie and Charles Collins and they met a real life woman dressed in flowing white robes. The next section describes the case taken from Maurice Mejan's *Recueil des Cause Célèbres* in which Marie Douhault was locked away in a lunatic asylum. This is generally regarded as the main source for *The Woman in White*. Not otherwise available, the lengthy summary provides full details of the complicated case.

The final possible influence given in the article is the story of Constance Cumming, an elderly widow, whose daughters had her consigned to various asylums in order to obtain control of her property. The article describes how this case was part of the 1850s 'lunacy panic' and quotes from *The Lancet* 'No case could illustrate more forcibly or more painfully than Mrs Cumming's the wrongs and the cruelties that may be perpetrated under the name of the law; no case could demonstrate more urgently the necessity for vigorous and radical reform in the law that could permit such atrocities to be permitted.'

The article can be purchased online at www.historytoday.com/sarah-white/woman-white-novel-hysterical-times although this version does not contain the illustrations.

THE MUGHAL PRINCE

Following on the Nottidge case mentioned in the Spring Newsletter, WCS member Chris Adye spotted another possible influence for *The Woman in White* in a *Guardian - Observer* review of 1 August for *The Inordinately Strange Life of Dyce Sombre: Victorian Anglo Indian MP and Chancery 'Lunatic'* by Michael Fisher. Dyce Sombre was a wealthy Indian prince who married an English viscount's daughter. She had him declared insane, locked up in a lunatic asylum and then took control of his fortune. As the reviewer put it, 'A tragic but extraordinary life that once inspired fiction by Jules Verne, Sir Walter Scott and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, as well as bearing an intriguing resemblance to the main plotline of Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*.' The full review with a portrait can found at the *Guardian* online and the book is published by Hurst & Co at £18.99.

CURSED DIAMONDS

Chris Adye also noticed a piece in the *Daily Telegraph* of 2 June about the Indian government's request for the return of the Koh i Noor diamond. As Dean Nelson in Delhi wrote 'Wilkie Collins acknowledged its inspiration for his novel *The Moonstone*, the story of a young woman who inherits a sacred diamond and the misery of its curse from a corrupt relative who stole it in India... The diamond has been in British possession since East India Company forces in India defeated the Maharaja of Punjab in 1849 and forced him to hand it over to Queen Victoria as a tribute following the Treaty of Lahore.' Of course, according to Collins the diamond has been safely back in India and set in 'the forehead of the deity ... [and] after the lapse of eight centuries, the Moonstone looks forth once more, over the walls of the sacred city in which its story first began.'

Another cursed gemstone was the Hope Diamond which was the subject of a Channel 4 television documentary on 24 May. Does the programme's synopsis sound familiar?

'According to popular belief the diamond was stolen from a Hindu temple and harbours a deadly curse: and that all who have owned it, or even all those who have touched it, have met with extraordinary tragedy, including Marie Antoinette and King George IV... 'They [the investigators] trace it back to King Louis XVI and his gem-fanatic wife Marie Antoinette, the royal playboy King George IV and great London banking heirs, the Hope family, who gave the diamond its name. These owners would see bloody deaths and unfathomable losses of fortunes. But no one seemingly felt the curse of the Hope more than its final owner, Washington socialite Evalyn Walsh McLean. After the violent death of her family and with her fortune in tatters, hundreds of news headlines blamed her downfall on the "Death Jewel".'

The interesting thing to emerge from the programme was that Pierre Cartier, the renowned jeweller who sold the diamond to McLean, was responsible for inventing the curse – based on Wilkie's *The Moonstone* in order to increase the charisma and value of the stone. The full story was published in *Hope Diamond: The Legendary History of a Cursed Gem* by Richard Kurin in 2008. Kurin can be seen delivering an entertaining lecture on the subject to the Library of Congress on You Tube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=YRjUr2ba9lg.

COOL FROM THE MOONSTONE

Readers of the *Times Literary Supplement* have been writing with examples of the word 'cool' being used in its current sense of stylish and admirable as far back as the 19th century. One such quote is from *The Moonstone* when Franklin Blake suggests a way to win round Rachel Verinder.

"She has been a guest of yours at this house," I answered. "May I venture to suggest—if nothing was said about me beforehand—that I might see her here?"

"Cool!" said Mr. Bruff. With that one word of comment on the reply that I had made to him, he took another turn up and down the room.

"In plain English," he said, "my house is to be turned into a trap to catch Rachel; with a bait to tempt her, in the shape of an invitation from my wife and daughters. If you were anybody else but Franklin Blake, and if this matter was one atom less serious than it really is, I should refuse point-blank. As things are, I firmly believe Rachel will live to thank me for turning traitor to her in my old age. Consider me your accomplice. Rachel shall be asked to spend the day here; and you shall receive due notice of it." (Third Narrative by Franklin Blake, Chapter VI).

THE MOONSTONE IN A FIRST EDITION SALE

Collins is likely to be in very good and very expensive company when a rare copy of the first edition of *The Moonstone* comes up for sale at Sotheby's later in the year. It is one of three thousand first editions all in immaculate original condition and with many signed by the

author. Sotheby's estimate that the entire collection, described as the greatest of its kind, could sell for between £8 and £15 million. *The Moonstone*, probably the most valuable of Wilkie's works, largely because of its status as one of the very first detective novels, could fetch a large five figure sum. Even copies which have been rebound currently fetch more than £5000.

A signed copy of *A Christmas Carol* is expected to fetch up to £200,000. Charles Dickens inscribed the copy on New Year's Day 1844 to William Macready, the actor and close friend. The collection will be sold in a series of sales beginning on 28 October.

P. D. JAMES'S 90TH BIRTHDAY - AND HOW THEY WRITE THEIR BOOKS

We must extend our congratulations to our Patron, P. D. James, who celebrated her 90th birthday on 3 August. To mark the occasion Faber & Faber have brought out a new paperback collection of her crime novels. She has been widely interviewed in the media about her life and works including BBC Radio 7 where they have been repeating *A Taste for Death*. At least two interviews can be found on line. In the *Telegraph* on 21 July at she was asked how does she get into the mind of a killer?

"I think when you create a character you become that character for as long as you are writing about them. So when I am writing about a killer, I am that killer. I am in his mind, which is probably why I don't have sadistic mass murderers as characters. They terrify me as much as anybody and I wouldn't want to be in their minds. And, anyway, most mass murderers are mundane."

The complete interview with Baroness James can still be found at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/authorinterviews/7894385/PD-James-interview-I-have-lived-a-very-happy-and-fulfilled-life.html>.

Then in *Spinetingler Magazine* on 30 March Baroness James is prompted to reveal her technique of plotting and writing.

"A great deal of plotting and planning, a huge amount," she admitted. "The books take as long to plot and plan as they do to write. I usually begin with a setting, which sparks off my imagination. I have a very strong response to what I think of as the spirit of a place. And then come the characters, and only [after these] the details of the plot. It's all written down [beforehand] and all the research is done, and there are lots of charts, with details of the weather. I go back to the setting over and over again and take photographs. But when I begin to write the book it does change: the characters seem to reveal themselves to me in greater detail, and sometimes seem to do rather unexpected things. So I never get exactly the book that I thought I was going to write."

The full interview is available at <http://www.spinetinglermag.com/2010/03/30/p-d-james-interview>.

Wilkie Collins made similar revelations in a piece written for *The Globe* of 26 November 1887, pp. 511-514. This was entitled 'How I Write My Books: Related In a Letter to a Friend' and the *méthode Collins* (as he called it) makes an interesting comparison with the *méthode James*.

"My first proceeding is to get my central idea — the pivot on which the story turns.

The central idea of "The Woman In White" is the idea of a conspiracy in private life, in which circumstances are so handled as to rob a woman of her identity by confounding her with another woman, sufficiently like her in personal appearance to answer the wicked purpose. The destruction of her identity represents a first division of the story; the recovery of her identity marks a second division.

My central idea suggests some of my chief characters. A clever devil must conduct the conspiracy. Male devil? or female devil? The sort of wickedness wanted seems to be a man's wickedness. Perhaps a foreign man. Count Fosco faintly shows himself to me, before I know his name. I let him wait, and begin to think about the two women. They must be both innocent and both interesting. Lady Glyde dawns on me as one of the innocent victims. I try to discover the other — and fail. I try what a walk will do for me — and fail. I devote the evening to a new effort — and fail. Experience tells me to take no more trouble about it, and leave that other woman to come of her own accord. The next morning, before I have been awake in my bed for more than ten minutes, my perverse brains set to work without consulting me. Poor Anne Catherick comes into the room, and says: "Try me".

I have got my idea; I have got three of my characters. What is there to do now? My next proceeding is to begin building up the story.

Here, my favourite three efforts must be encountered. First effort: to begin at the beginning. Second effort: to keep the story always advancing, without paying the smallest attention to the serial division in parts, or to the book publications in volumes. Third effort: to decide on the end. All this is done, as my father used to paint his skies in his famous sea-pieces, at one heat. As yet, I do not enter into details; I merely set up my landmarks. In doing this the main situations of the story present themselves; and, at the same time I see my characters in all sorts of new aspects. These discoveries lead me nearer and nearer to finding the right end. The end being decided on, I go back again to the beginning, and look at it with a new eye, and fail to be satisfied with it. I have yielded to the worst temptation that besets a novelist — the temptation to begin with a striking incident, without counting the cost in the shape of explanations that must, and will follow. These pests of fiction, to reader and writer alike, can only be eradicated in one way. I have already mentioned the way — to begin at the beginning. In the case of "The Woman In White," I get back (as I vainly believe) to the true starting point of the story. I am now at liberty to set the new novel going; having, let me repeat, no more than an outline of story and characters before me, and leaving the details, in each case to the spur of the moment."

Members can refer to the full text in the WCS publication of July 2007 or see it online at paullewis.co.uk/wilkie/biography/Collins1887.htm

A SWEDISH BIBLIOGRAPHY

The first bibliography of Wilkie Collins titles in Swedish has been prepared by Lars-Erik Nygren. He has identified close on 200 Swedish editions including an 1861 translation of *The Woman in White*, called in Swedish *Den hvitklädda qvinnan*, followed by *No Name (Namnlös)* in 1862. Editions of most other books followed, concluding with *Blind Kärlek* in 1889. The 77 page bibliography contains illustrations throughout and is a thoroughly good piece of work, and surprisingly intelligible to non-Swedish speakers. *Wilkie Collins på svenska – en bibliografi* can be obtained from the author price SEK160, £13.50 or €16.50. You can pay by PayPal – contact lars-erik.nygren@comhem.se for details.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE ON DVD

The BBC has issued a DVD of the 1982 television adaptation of *The Woman in White* dramatised by Ray Jenkins and starring Diana Quick (Marian Halcombe), Alan Badel (Fosco), Ian Richardson (Mr Fairlie), Jenny Seagrove (Laura), Deidra Morris (Anne Catherick), John Shrapnel (Glyde) and Daniel Gerroll (Hartright). The five 55 minute episodes were first broadcast on BBC1 14 April to 12 May 1982. Unlike the more recent adaptation the script uses much of Wilkie's original text and all the essentials of the original plot. The DVD can be found most cheaply on amazon.co.uk or direct from bbeshop.com. Unfortunately the BBC has decided to restrict the DVD to regions 2 and 4. Outside Europe and Australasia check it will work in your DVD player before ordering it.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE AS A TALKING BOOK

For those who haven't had time recently to read *The Woman in White* in weekly parts from the Paul Lewis project but like the idea of being read to, Naxos AudioBooks have an unabridged version comprising 22 CDs lasting a total of 28 hours. It is read mainly by Glen McCready and Rachel Bavidge. It is normally £70 but can be obtained as a special offer for the heavily discounted price of £30 from the Audiobookstore, 36 Baker Street, London W1U 3EU; 020 7486 7040; and www.audiobooks.co.uk.

YELLOWBACKS ONLINE AND E-TEXTS

The Times of 17 July 2010 had an interesting piece about Victorian yellowbacks and their digitisation by Emory University Libraries' Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library (MARBL). It has over 1200 examples in its archives and in addition to e-texts, you can see illustrations of the original pictorial boards.

Yellowbacks were cheap editions, usually of fiction, issued from the 1850s to the early twentieth century. They were the paperbacks of their day, generally priced at two shillings and sold at railway bookstalls. According to John Sutherland, they were originally published by Chapman & Hall in conjunction with W. H. Smith whose first of many bookstalls was opened at Euston Station. The binding consisted of strawboard covered with glazed coloured paper, usually yellow, on which appeared an eye-catching illustration.

Ultimately most of Collins's fiction was issued in these pictorial boards, starting with Sampson Low in 1865 for *Antonina*, *The Queen of Hearts* and *The Woman in White*. As Collins's copyrights changed hands, Smith, Elder issued ten titles in this format, Chatto & Windus twenty-nine and Routledge (never Collins's publishers during his lifetime) four. *The Woman in White* is interesting because apart from an edition with the usual yellow cover, Chatto issued a version with white boards to go with the title.

Currently Emory doesn't seem to have any titles by Collins but there are several examples by his contemporaries such as Charles Dickens, Mary Braddon and Walter Besant. Emory can be found at <http://web.library.emory.edu/yellowbacks> with full details of access.

There are several yellowback illustrations at www.wilkie-collins.info but the definitive work on the subject is *Victorian Yellowbacks and Paperbacks, 1849-1905* in nine volumes by Chester W. Topp. Volume III is of particular interest as it contains details for Chatto & Windus which published most of Collins's works as yellowbacks. Various titles are scattered throughout the other volumes.

E-TEXTS

E-texts of nearly all of Collins's works can be found on www.wilkiecollins.com and www.digitalpixels.org/jr/wc/ by James Rusk. Another source of e-books is <http://www.mobileread.com/forums> to which *The Woman in White* has just been uploaded.

This new digital edition of has been produced by Alex Bell in Canada using a publicly available e-text and illustrated with 40 of the *Harper's Weekly* engravings. You will need to download Adobe Digital Editions to read it on a computer.

Another new website lists e-texts of Wilkie's work including some in Finnish at <http://manybooks.net/authors/collinsw.html>

Miss Gwilt – Wilkie's own adaptation of *Armadale* for the stage – will soon be added to the collection of e-texted plays. James Rusk is the indomitable e-texter. The play was first performed at the Alexandra Theatre, Liverpool, on 9 December 1875, then at the Globe in London from 15 April 1876. The e-text will be available later this month through wilkiecollins.com menu item 1.

With the 200th anniversary of Dickens's birth barely eighteen months away (7 February 2012), the Dickens Journals Online project at the University of Buckingham is making good progress. It aims to have its database of all 43 volumes of *Household Words* and *All The Year Round* - as well as the little known *Household Narrative of Current Events* – online in time for the 200th anniversary. That will bring a large amount of Collins material into the public domain – not just the original texts of fiction which include *The Dead Secret*, *A Rogue's Life*, *The Yellow Mask*, *Sister Rose*, *The Diary of Anne Rodway*, *No Name* and *The Moonstone* (*The Woman in White* is of course now already done!). There will also be a great deal of non-fiction and the Christmas numbers which Wilkie wrote jointly with Dickens. It will be good to have the original unamended texts of these works online. Sadly we are not

completely sure which pieces in *All The Year Round* Wilkie wrote, though previous bibliographies certainly include some he did not write and exclude some which he did. There are of course vast proof-reading tasks involved with such a project and the current first draft suffers from the usual errors of computer generated e-texts. You can read the images and e-texts at the betasite www.djo.org.uk. The system to let you join in with the proof-reading task will be there by the end of September for at least six months. To do this you will need:
Username: WCS.member Password: DJO!2012.

DICKENS IN THE MUSIC HALL

In the Summer issue of *The Dickensian* (No. 481, Vol. 106, Part 2), WCS member Alan Sutcliffe has contributed Part 1 of his major study of ‘Dickens in the Music Hall.’ Most of the meticulously researched essay relates specifically to stage adaptations of Dickens’s works but there is due mention of *No Thoroughfare*.

‘The play, *No Thoroughfare* by Dickens and Wilkie Collins ran at the Adelphi Theatre from 26 December 1867 to 20 June 1868. At Deacon’s in March 1868 Fred Albert sang ‘of different ways in which men go, in which they find *No Thoroughfare*.’ In February 1868 Robert Fraser sang *Joey Ladle* and *The Boys at Mugby* at the New Star Music Hall, Liverpool, and in May sang the former, at least, at the Philharmonic.’”

BEAUTIFUL FOR EVER

Beautiful For Ever by historian Helen Rappaport is an account of Madame Rachel of Bond Street – a cosmetician and blackmailer who lived in the mid- 19th century. Madame Rachel – who was much in the news in the 1850s and 1860s – is supposed to be the source for Maria Oldershaw, Wilkie’s creation in *Armada* who was the foster mother and collaborator of the anti-heroine Lydia Gwilt. The book is written in a compelling style and relies entirely on original and fully researched material. Rappaport has produced a thorough and readable study of vanity and its exploitation. ISBN 978-1-902421-52-0; *Beautiful For Ever* is £12.99 – or £9.09 or less through Amazon.

DROOD - THE FILM

Drood – the pastiche written by Dan Simmons in the name of Wilkie Collins (see Newsletter Summer and Winter 2009) – could be made into a film. Universal Pictures bought the rights before the book was published and industry rumours suggest a version may be planned, directed by Guillermo Del Toro – who is currently working with Peter Jackson on the *Lord of the Rings* follow-up (or should that be prequel) *The Hobbit*. We’ll see.

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NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2010/11

THE HORRORS OF MOVING

Andrew Gasson has moved and from 1 November his address is as shown above. As Wilkie so stylishly put it when moving to Gloucester Place in August 1867 'Will you kindly cause my address in your books to be altered to the address at the head of this letter, to which I have recently removed.'

Having now experienced the chaos of moving, the conclusion is that Wilkie was right when he wrote on 6 February 1888 'I write surrounded by the horrors of moving.' So far, however, the suffering and chaos have not been as great as his when wrote again on 27 April 1888:

'The horrors of moving (not over yet), and the dire necessity of writing against Time, have been a little too much for me together. And when several thousand patterns of wall-paper (intended to replace a paper in the dining-room which influences my eyes every time I look at it) presenting every variety of hideous ugliness, arrived one after the other in interminable series, my power of endurance gave way, and I became one mass of yellow green Bile from head to foot. I am slowly, slowly getting better under a system of physic and diet...'

A NEW COLLINS BIOGRAPHY

WCS member, Andrew Lycett, is commencing work on a new Collins biography. It is now nearly twenty years since the definitive work by Catherine Peters, *The King of Inventors*, was published in 1991 and longer than that since William Clarke's more personal biography *The Secret Life of Wilkie Collins* in 1988. A great deal of new material has come to light during this time, including the various editions of Collins's letters. The following is the recent press release from the publishers.

'Hutchinson publisher Caroline Gascoigne has acquired UK and Commonwealth including Canada and exclusive Europe rights to publish a biography of Wilkie Collins by Andrew Lycett from Natasha Fairweather at A. P. Watt. The book will be published by Hutchinson in hardback and in Windmill paperback.

'Leading biographer Andrew Lycett is taking a radical new look at Wilkie Collins's unconventional life and increasingly popular work, incorporating a wealth of new material.

'Caroline Gascoigne says 'I have been a great admirer of Andrew's work for many years. His interpretation of the life of Wilkie Collins - like his biographies of Conan Doyle and Kipling - will be a must-read, and sure to appeal to the myriad fans of *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone*. I'm thrilled that Andrew is joining Hutchinson with such an exciting project.

'Andrew Lycett says, 'I am delighted to be publishing with Hutchinson and renewing a much-valued working relationship with Caroline Gascoigne. Wilkie Collins is an extraordinarily colourful Victorian figure whose professional career and private life yield up all sorts of surprises.'

THE RACING WILKIE COLLINS

An unusual form of American recognition for Collins was to have a horse named after him. *Chester's Complete Trotting and Pacing Record Containing Summaries of all Races Trotted or Paced in the United States or Canada, From the Earliest Dates to the Close of 1885*, compiled and published by Walter T. Chester, New York, 1886 shows this other Wilkie Collins's father was George Wilkes and his mother to be Rosa by Rosca. George Wilkes had originally been called Robert Fillingham but had his name changed in honour of the owner of *The Spirit of the times*, one of the more prominent New York journals. By a nice coincidence, this magazine published Christmas stories by the real Wilkie Collins between 1876 and 1887 and most of these were republished in various English periodicals and with different titles collected as *Little Novels* in 1887.

We can also learn from www.allbreedpedigree.com that Wilkie Collins was black, stood 15.3 hands high, was born in 1876 - hence perhaps the reason for the equine namesake - and had some 300 brothers and sisters.

Wilkie was aware of his equestrian rival since he wrote to A. P. Watt on 11 March 1887 "You will be amused to hear that a famous trotting stallion in the U.S. has been called "Wilkie Collins". A printed pamphlet sent to me, records his virtues, and says "Wilkie Collins covers mares at \$75 dollars each"!!!!" The 1894 *Book and Table of Sires* compiled by W. H. Golcher shows the equine Wilkie Collins still to be going strong and a later edition in 1903 shows that he had numerous progeny with names like Teddie Collins and Bessie Wilkes.

MORE CONFUSION OVER THE REAL WILKIE COLLINS

The following extract from the *South Australian Advertiser*, Adelaide, on Wednesday 15 June 1870 implies that Wilkie Collins was something of a household name even down under. We know that he liked music and Mozart in particular but there are no notes about his singing capabilities.

'The Best Tenor -"Alpha" asks if "Mr. Wilkie Collins," who sang with Madame Anna Bishop, is the best tenor singer who has visited South Australia. Our correspondent is confounding Mr. Wilkie who accompanied Madame Bishop, with Mr. Wilkie Collins, the celebrated novelist. We should be sorry to be compelled to say who is the best tenor who has visited this colony. Wilkie had a sweet tenor voice, and so had Lascelles, and Squires, and Beaumont, and some others. For our part, we should be glad to hear any of them again.'

WILKIE COLLINS'S FURNITURE AND EFFECTS

The following description is also taken from an Australian newspaper, *The Sydney Morning Herald* of 13 December 1889. It apparently reproduces a piece originally published in London's *St James's Gazette*.

'The Sale of Mr Wilkie Collins's furniture and effects which recently took place in London, is thus described by the *St. James's Gazette* :- "The sale was particularly melancholy. The day was gloomy, the house was gloomy, and the occasion was gloomy.

'Long before I o'clock the rooms were filled with curious visitors, feeling the texture of the curtains, appraising the chairs, and criticising the 'effects.' To be quite candid, it seems a pity that the friends of the dead novelist did not see their way to disposing of the house-hold fragments which were offered to the public by private treaty. It was painful to see the meanest domestic trifles accorded a place in the catalogue. And a walk through the house disclosed bundles of odds and ends which only a dustman would have thought worth the carriage. Upon the second floor was the mournful room where the good old novelist died - a gloomy chamber, with three windows overlooking Wimpole-street. A faded mirror over the mantelshelf reflected the shabby remnants of upholsteries which were allowed to remain in their places while the broker's men wandered in and out discussing the appointments in the husky tones which are their peculiarity. Gentlemen in seedy garments their boots broken out, their necks without collars, and their coats and trousers patched and stained. In his lifetime this room had been filled with books and prints, as indeed one guessed for oneself, for an empty bookcase occupied the whole of one wall. Standing up, all forlorn, was the adjustable reading desk which Mr Collins used at his bedside. The bed itself was iron, and hung round with shabby red curtains.

'The sale was conducted in the front drawing-room, a pleasant enough room, hung with yellow paper and lighted by three tall windows. The folding doors, which opened into the little back drawing-room where Collins worked to the last, were flung open, and the lots were piled up all around. The auctioneer mounted a temporary platform at one end and soon got to work. The room was quite full and he was monarch of all he surveyed. In front of him was a row of fenders in all stages of decrepitude. Ranged alongside of these interesting articles were what a sarcastic furniture-dealer denominated as 'the decent folk, 'the gentlemen in silk hats, and a few enterprising ladies. Beyond were the real buyers, who 'ad come 'ere to hold Collingses sale to turn a 'ones! penny.' 'Silence please,' cried the auctioneer. 'Lot 2, a japanned Oxford washstand basin, ewer, footbath, a japann-' At this moment two brokers,

who were fortunately removed from each other by a bristling row of fenders, quarrelled audibly about a catalogue. 'Now, then, old cock eye,' cried the lesser one, 'shut up, can't yer.' 'Who are you a callin' cock eye of?' Jest wait till I come acrost you. See if I don't put a blacklead brush on one o' your'n.' 'Silence please, or I'll put you out.' 'Yer can't. This is a public hauction. Ask the pleeceman,' turning to a constable on duty. Mr Holcombe, the auctioneer, then laced to again with the japanned foot bath, but the catalogue question was a burning one and not to be quenched.' Now then, Oakum, give us a catalogue, can't yer. I never was treated like this ere before, and I ain't agoin to stand it. Gimme a catalogue. I've come ere to do a day's work, and how can I do a day's work without knowin' wot I'm a buyin'? 'I can't give you one. Lot 4-' 'Well give me my money back.' 'Oh! shut up,' cried a voice from the crowd.' 'Shut up and let's go to business. If e aint got no books you can't 'ave none.' The grievance is settled amicably. The man who is charged with having a cock eye and the man who has come out to do a day's work make a friendly alliance, the fenders rattle, and Mr.' Oakum rattles too till he is hoarse, and sings out' Bring me a glass of water, John.' 'A glass of whisky and water, John' mimics a wag. 'Oh, give him a drop o' gin,' cries another, and at this crisis an alarum goes off with a bang and a whirr to add to the confusion, and no wonder Mr. 'Oakum' asks the faithful John to pass along a jug of water; and so the lots go on. Blankets and bed linen, pots and pans, fenders and fire irons, mattresses and Windsor chairs, champagne coolers and fireguards, coalscuttles and 'Turks' heads, stair rods and Kidderminster carpets, gipsy tables and fire-shovels, &c, &c, until we get to the dozen or so interesting things in the sale. These were the relics with a personal interest. These objects had been handled by everybody. 'Lot 105. The 4ft. 6 in. mahogany table, on castors with four drawers in frame, top lined with leather. On this table (formerly the property of the father of Mr Wilkie Collins) the distinguished novelist wrote all his books.' It was ink-stained, the leather was colourless and worn, and it bore the signs of many a long year's wear and tear. Some enthusiast got it for £10. 'It ain't worth 30 bob,' ejaculated a matter-of-fact broker. Another interesting relic was the writing slope which Collins used, and which brought £3 5s. Another of these slopes had evidently been made after the design of the novelist. Folded up, it looked like a miniature gun case; it contained a compartment for writing materials, and was evidently used for travelling. And so lot by lot the 'effects' were knocked down, and 82 Wimpole-street is once more to let."

An exterior photograph of Wilkie's Wimpole Street home as it was in his time can be seen at www.wilkie-collins.info/home_wimpole.htm.

REAL CRIME WITH *THE WOMAN IN WHITE*

The Woman in White was in such demand that it tempted at least one thief to steal 12 copies from the publisher Sampson Low and attempt to steal a further six. George Cooper appeared before the Guildhall Magistrates on 11 June 1861 accused of obtaining books on false pretences. He had turned up at Sampson Low's office on Friday 17 May with an order signed 'G. Smart' for six copies of the newly published one volume edition to deliver to rival publisher Smith and Elder. Presumably he sold the six copies himself below their published price of six shillings and he returned a week later on 24th with a similar order and took away

another six. Sampson Low became suspicious of his handwritten orders and when he returned for a third time on 7 June asking for six more he was asked if he had written the orders himself. He confessed that they were in his own handwriting and he was taken into custody. The magistrates heard from Smith and Elder that it had not given him an order for the books and Cooper was committed for trial. (*The Times* 12 June 1861 p. 1 IF)

VICTORIAN MYSTERIES

Big Fish Games which had earlier produced a 'hidden object' game for *The Moonstone* has now launched *The Woman in White*. The format appears similar with exceptional graphics and employing, at least by name, the characters from Wilkie's novel. It can be found at www.bigfishgames.com/download-games/9162/victorian-mysteries-woman-in-white/index.html. It is, however, an enormous download at nearly 240Mb and the trial version seems unreliable. There is another game entitled *The Haunted Hotel* but this has no connection with the Collins novel.

THE ATLAS OF FICTION

The Atlas of Fiction website gives the geographical locations for many of the places mentioned in the works of numerous authors. The format consists of the place name followed by a one line description of the action occurring there. There is also a link to a world atlas showing the position of all points on the map. The Collins novels so far listed are *The Woman in White* where places from St John's Wood to Honduras are mentioned; and *Armadale* which includes locations from Bad Wildbad to the Norfolk Broads. For the full listing see www.atlasoffiction.com/list.cgi?all.

SOME SCANDINAVIAN ETEXTS

In the Summer 2010 Newsletter we mentioned the Swedish bibliography by Lars-Erik Nygren which is still available from the author at lars-erik.nygren@comhem.se. It is interesting to note that Project Gutenberg now has three etexts in Finnish (*No Thoroughfare*, *John Jago's Ghost* and *Sister Rose*) to join the two titles in French which have been available for some while (*No Thoroughfare* and *The Haunted Hotel*).

90 GLOUCESTER PLACE

Wilkie's home between September 1867 and February 1888 at 90 Gloucester Place (now renumbered 65) has been empty and in a terrible state of neglect for several years. It now seems that the Portman Estate which own the building has at last started renovation works. The house has four stories, a large stone staircase and an impressive double drawing-room on the first floor where Collins did most of his writing. Let's hope this will be preserved when building works are completed.

'THE DEAD HAND'

'The Dead Hand' was a short story originally published as 'The Double-Bedded Room' in *Household Words*, 10 October 1857. It forms the second chapter of 'The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices' and was later republished in *The Queen of Hearts* as 'Brother Morgan's Story of the Dead Hand'. In the original, Arthur Holliday arrives in Doncaster during the busy September race-week. The only accommodation he can find is a shared room with a body occupying the other bed. His apparently dead companion revives in the night. He has an uncanny resemblance to Arthur and years later is found to be his illegitimate half-brother. The physical description of the 'dead' man, however, was that of a doctor's assistant Collins and Dickens met on their tour. Collins later used his strange appearance for the character of Ezra Jennings in *The Moonstone*.

'The Dead Hand' was adapted for the stage as a one-off production at the Greenwich Theatre on 31 October 2010. Perhaps with Halloween in mind, the adapter, David Gilbrook chose to add to the main theme an overwhelming Voodoo element. His 'excuse' was based on a quote from Collins's original "You have brought a poor devil back into the world who has no business there." The play, here set in 1850, was well acted by a versatile cast of three (David Martin, Amanda Howard and Nicholas Gilbrook) but there was a great deal that Wilkie would have failed to recognise.

AUCTION NEWS

One hundred and fifty years after it was published a very fine copy of the original three-volume first edition of *The Woman in White* in its original blind-stamped violet cloth with adverts dated 1 May 1860 fetched £21,250 including buyer's premium at Sotheby's in London in October. Sadly the Sotheby's catalogue repeated the error that this edition was published after the American edition which is simply false - see Andrew Gasson's updated account of the publishing history of the book sent with the Summer newsletter. One reason why the price fetched for this first book edition was nearly twice the highest estimate Sotheby's put on it was the early date of the advertisements present in volume III. Their usual date for a true first edition is August 1860 but this copy which had previously been sold at the Bradley Martin sale in 1990 had advertisements for May 1860.

However, even that price was eclipsed by the next lot - *The Moonstone* - a first edition in three volumes bound in the original purple cloth which cost the buyer £67,250. Other highlights in the sale were a first of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* at £127,250 and a first of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* at £115,250. But the top price was for a copy of the first impression of the first edition of *A Christmas Carol* inscribed by Dickens on New Year's Day 1844 to his friend W. C. Macready which cost the buyer £181,250.

THE MOONSTONE ON RADIO 4

Radio 4 is broadcasting a newly dramatised version of *The Moonstone* in its classic serial slot starting on Sunday 23 January at 3pm. The four episode treatment is by David Lucie and is

the first new radio dramatisation of this story by the BBC since 1979. Eleanor Bron is Lady Verinder and Kenneth Cranham is Sergeant Cuff. Rachel Verinder is played by Jasmine Hyde with Paul Rhys as Franklin Blake and Steve Hodson as Betteredge. The play has music by David Chilton and the BBC says it was recorded "on location".

A NEW STAGE PRODUCTION OF *THE MOONSTONE*

Long standing US member, Susan Haynes, writes that her local Lifeline Theatre in Chicago is staging a new three hour production of *The Moonstone* from 4 February to 27 March. It is adapted by Robert Kauzlaric and directed by Paul S. Holmquist. The theatre's blurb reads: 'The Moonstone, an Indian diamond steeped in a history of violence and mysticism, is stolen from Rachel Verinder's sitting room, and no one in her household is above suspicion. Join an unforgettable collection of liars, lovers, addicts and outcasts as they struggle to uncover the truth and reclaim the stone before its curse destroys them all. This thrilling mystery, regarded as the first detective novel in the English language, is re-imagined by the award-winning adaptor and director of *The Island of Dr. Moreau* and *Nowhere*.' (See www.lifelinetheatre.com).

SOME NEW COLLINS LETTERS

Jamdyce, the specialist London bookseller, has for sale the archive of the actor Frank Archer (1844-1917) which includes 28 letters from Wilkie Collins. The whole collection, which fills three trunks, is believed to have been purchased from the actor's family. Archer, whose real name was Frank Arnold, played Julian Gray in the original production of *The New Magdalen* at the Olympic theatre in 1873. He reprised the role in 1884 and was a friend and correspondent of Collins for more than fifteen years. They last met in December 1887 less than two years before Collins died. Fourteen letters from Archer to Collins are known in full and six in part from Archer's autobiography *An Actor's Notebooks* (1912) and from Kenneth Robinson's 1951 biography of Collins. Robinson notes that he was lent the letters by Archer's son Frank H. Arnold. As well as the letters, the archive includes Archer's diaries and details of theatrical expenses and his pay. There is also a lot of other material, including a box of beards, of less interest to Wilkie scholars. The price is £38,000.

THE OTHER DICKENS

WCS member Professor Lillian Nayder has just published her biography of Dickens's wife Catherine Hogarth. With numerous references to Wilkie and his family the book follows a modern tradition of resurrecting the lives of women who lived in the shadow of famous men. Nayder, who has written extensively on Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins and their relationship, provides extensive footnotes in her comprehensive and fascinating account of Mrs Charles Dickens. Lillian Nayder, *The Other Dickens*, Cornell University Press, 2011 ISBN 978-0-8014-4787-7, price £22.95.

YELLOWBACKS

Victorian 'yellowbacks' were the small format 19th century editions of literature with a sometimes lurid illustration on the front board which sold for two shillings at railway bookstalls. Collectors have relied on Chester W. Topp's nine volume catalogue as the definitive bibliography. Collins titles feature mainly in volume III which includes Chatto & Windus but they are also scattered throughout the collection. Now, 4000 of Topp's original yellowback and paperback volumes from 1849 to 1905 have been bought by the Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Book Library of Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. Librarian David Faulds plans to re-catalogue and digitise the volumes in a project scheduled to take three years - see <http://goo.gl/ikYel>.

AUTHOR OF THE FIRST DETECTIVE NOVEL UNMASKED

We have known for some time that *The Notting Hill Mystery* predated *The Moonstone* by five years and has a strong claim to be the first detective novel (though some might say it owes much to *The Woman in White*). But when it was identified by Julian Symons in 1975 its author was given as 'Charles Felix', a name known to be a pseudonym. Now an American writer, Paul Collins, claims to have established that his true identity is Charles Warren Adams (1833-1903) of the publisher Saunders, Otley & Co which published his books! Read his conclusions in *The New York Times* Sunday Book Review, 9 January 2011, p. BR23 or online at goo.gl/EsqnA.

THE LAKE

BBC 7 which never ceases to surprise with its repeats of often forgotten drama featured on 2 October *The Lake* by Ellen Dryden. This tale of a long ago death and its cover up, although with no direct Collins content, was interesting for one of its main characters who adopted the name Moonstone.

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NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2011

WILLIAM MALPAS CLARKE (1922-2011)

With great sadness we have to report the death of William Clarke. Married to Faith Dawson, Wilkie Collins's great-granddaughter, he is best known to WCS members for his 1988 ground breaking biography *The Secret Life of Wilkie Collins*. 'Bill' Clarke pioneered the use of family history and financial records in literary scholarship. He used them and his family connection to cast light on Collins's complicated private life. Although some of the details had previously been known, they remained largely unwritten until in a model of clarity he put them together to produce *The Secret Life*. This presented the facts and gave us for the first time photographic portraits of Caroline Graves and Martha Rudd. *The Secret Life* is still invariably used as the best source of personal detail on Collins.

William Clarke was also more widely acclaimed as an astute and influential financial journalist. He began his career on the *Manchester Guardian*, later becoming City Editor of *The Times*. He held a number of important financial appointments and subsequently contributed several books on the City. More recently he wrote *The Lost Fortune of the Tsars* and *The Hidden Treasures of the Romanovs*. It was once said that "William Clarke is to the City of London what Boswell was to Dr. Johnson." It would be no exaggeration now to substitute 'Collins' for 'City of London'.

A more detailed obituary was published in *The Independent* of 30 April 2011 and can be found online. The funeral took place on Friday 6 May at St Alfege's Church, Greenwich, and the WCS was represented by Andrew Gasson.

THE RED VIAL

One of the most exciting Collins events for a while was the revival of his 1858 play, *The Red Vial* by the Department of Drama and Theatre Arts of Birmingham University. Unlike various modern adaptations of Collins's works, this production used a script taken from the original manuscript. There is no published version of the text and according to the *Index of English Literary Manuscripts* two copies of the ms survive, one in the British Library (Add. MS 52976D) "Draft, 46 leaves, submitted to the Lord Chamberlain's Office; licensed 2 October 1858; the other a signed draft dated 11 October 1858 which had been sold at auction in 1891 after Collins's death. As far as is known there has therefore been no performance of *The Red Vial* for the last 153 years.

Although the original production ran for four weeks at the Olympic Theatre from 11 October 1858 the play was not wholly successful. Pascoe's *Dramatic List* for 1879 notes: "...in a melodrama by Mr. Wilkie Collins, entitled 'The Red Vial,' Mrs Stirling sustained the part of *Madame Bergmann*. This play was of the most repulsive kind, and is alluded to in contemporary criticism as "the most brilliant failure of the day." Mrs Stirling's acting was its one redeeming feature." The lead part of Hans Grimm was played by Frederick Robson. During his lifetime, Collins resisted requests to revive the play. For example, he wrote to the playwright, J. Stirling Coyne, on 6 May 1859:

"I am much obliged to you for your note on the subject of The Red Vial, which I have just received. Considering the reception which this play met with in London, under all the advantages of being interpreted by an admirable company, under the immediate supervision of the author, I must honestly confess that I am unwilling to trust it to the chances of provincial representation by a company of whom I have no knowledge and over whose rehearsals I can exercise no control. On this ground, therefore - though I feel sincerely indebted to you for offering me the opportunity of producing again the play on the stage - I must beg you to excuse me if I abstain from availing myself of the proposal which your note contains."

The plot was later expanded by Collins for his 1879 novel *Jezebels Daughter* although paradoxically the script of *The Red Vial* gives the opposite impression of being condensed from a larger work.

This new production ran from 10-12 February and was directed by Dr Caroline Radcliffe. Apparently all other aspects of the play such as lighting music and set design were the responsibility of the students of the Drama and Arts Department. Overall they created a very successful and exciting production. The set was minimalist but effective; the lighting and music created exactly the right atmosphere; the acting was competent with excellent performances from Willow Costello-Smith as Widow Bergman and in particular Luke Harris as Hans Grimm. There were two brilliant scenes - one where the poison is administered shown with dramatic back lighting; and the other showing the drunken revelry in the Frankfurt Deadhouse. Photographs of the production can be seen at https://www.wilkie-collins.info/play_redvial_2011.htm

Congratulations to Birmingham for having the originality to stage something other than *The Woman in White* or *The Moonstone*. Wilkie would have been pleased.

MISS GWILT - A PUBLISHED VERSION

Collins's own adaptation of *Armadale*, *Miss Gwilt*, has now been published by the British Library Historical Reprints series in the Poetry & Drama section. The otherwise unobtainable text was digitised from the original by Microsoft.

Miss Gwilt: A Drama in Five Acts was never published but 'Printed for performance at the Theatre only' in 1875. The revised plot had Lydia Gwilt as a more sympathetic character and Dr Downward as the main villain. It was first performed at the Alexandra Theatre, Liverpool, 9 December 1875 and opened in London at the Globe Theatre on 15 April 1876. The part of Mr Darch was played by A. W. Pinero and the title role by Ada Cavendish.

DICKENS IN THE MUSIC HALL

The latest issue of *The Dickensian* (Winter 2010, No. 482, Vol. 106 Part 3) features the second part of Alan Sutcliffe's comprehensive account of Dickens in the Music Hall. The first part was published in the Summer 2010 issue and the current contribution is "... an attempt to provide a record of the British Music-hall entertainment derived from Dickens's writings, including information of the turns performed and the performers, together with a selection of contemporary comment." The first part was published in the Summer 2010 issue (No. 481, Vol. 106 Part 2) and dealt with the topic up to 1896. This

second part deals with such entertainments between 1896 and 1914. Although there are no specific Collins references in this part, we are presented throughout with an impressive wealth of detail.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE IN THE MUSIC HALL

The Woman in White featured in popular entertainment in the 1860s with music scores such as ‘The Woman in White Waltz’ and ‘The Fosco Gallop’. Following the publication of *Poor Miss Finch* in 1872 Wilkie’s stories were given a double plug in the music halls. The front cover to a comic version of sheet music entitled ‘The Woman in White’ shows an open copy of *Poor Miss Finch* lying on the floor beside a seated woman dressed in white with a bright blue face. This is a direct reference to the novel where Oscar Dubourg takes silver nitrate for epilepsy and his skin turns blue as a consequence. The music was written and composed by Walter Burnot (d. 1905) and “Sung with great success by E. A. Hart.” The complete words are as follows:

I.

We met at a ball, oh handsome and tall,
Was Mary Ann, Sarah Ann, Polly Ann Wright.
She’d white satin shoes, her eyes they were blue,
And the whole of her costume of muslin was white;
But when I think of her terrible fate,
It’s awful, it’s awful!
Don’t laugh for a tragedy ‘tis I relate,
Of the fate of the Woman in White.

CHORUS

The Woman in White, the Woman in White,
Was the sight, the delight, and the belle of the night,
Her eyes they were bright, her footfall was light,
And the Woman in White, was - the Woman in White

2.

I treated her twice to strawberry ice,
And nine oyster patties she put out of sight,
She ate jelly and jam, and chicken and ham,
Till her face like her dress was decidedly white;
Her mouth was so small and her appetite large,
‘Twas awful, ‘twas awful!
Some two, ten and six was the moderate charge,
For feeding the Woman in White.

The Woman in White, &c.

3.

Her style was so nice, I laughed at the price,
I expended on Polly Ann Sarah Ann Wright,
I quickly proposed, and the bargain was closed,
That I soon should marry the Woman in White.
But to think of her now brings tears to mine eye,
It's awful, it's awful!
She's a fright, and a sight, and a horrible guy,
No longer the Woman in White.

SPOKEN.

After our marriage she looked as white as a ghost that had been thro' the court and been white-washed, as white as a marble Venus with it's [sic] clothes on, fluttered by excitement, I gave her the first thing to drink I could lay my hand on, or she would have fainted, I thought I gave her cognac, alas it was hair dye, nitrate of silver; she drank, with what effect Wilkie Collins and the next verse alone can tell."

The Woman in White, &c.

4.

The notion is new, but it also is true,
She swallowed her hair dye that horrible night,
Her skin changed it's hue, to an indigo blue,
Which made her at once a terrible fright;
There's a moral to come, in the present I think,
It's awful, it's awful!
But hair dye's a lotion that no one should drink,
As did the fair Woman in White.

The Woman in White, &c.

Written for the music hall by Charles Coote Jr, there was also an 'After Dark Galop'. This however related to Dion Boucicault's successful 1868 play of this name and had no connection with Wilkie's 1856 collection of short stories.

WOMAN IN WHITE ON STAGE

WCS member Di Scotney alerted us to a production of *The Woman in White* coming up at the Cambridge Arts Theatre from Monday 25th to Saturday 30th July. Adapted by Nicola Boyce and starring Colin Baker, Peter Amory and Glyn Grain, the theatre summarises the plot thus: "Love, suspense and danger all combine to create this a haunting mystery of mistaken identities and stolen fortunes, heroism, high drama and volatile passions." More information and booking at www.cambridgeartstheatre.com or call 01223 503333.

THE FIRST COLLECTED EDITION

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the first attempt to produce a uniform edition of Wilkie's works. Sampson Low, who had published the hugely successful three volume edition of *The Woman in White*, secured the right to re-issue six of Wilkie's novels in one volume editions. Low described it as a 'cheap' edition but at 5 shillings each they were still half a week's wages for a servant. Handsomely bound in mauve cloth similar to the three-volume *The Woman in White*, the series began with the Roman tale *Antonina* published in February 1861; this was followed by *The Dead Secret* in March and then the one-volume and revised edition of *The Woman in White* at the very end of April. This book was the first to carry a pasted in portrait of the author which accounted for the extra shilling on the price. Wilkie wrote to his friend Charles Ward on 16 April 1861

"The cheap edition of that eternal Woman In White promises to beat everything we have done yet. We start with 10,000 copies and Low expects to sell 50,000 before we have done! I have had to sit again - for the photographs can't keep up with us. We publish on Chimney-Sweepers' Day, price 6/."

Chimney-sweepers' Day is 1 May when sweeps traditionally paraded the streets and asked for money. The book was first advertised in *The Times* on 26 April as published 'this day'.

Hide and Seek followed in September and then *The Queen of Hearts* and *Basil* in 1862. *No Name* was the last in the series before the rights to publish in that format passed to Smith, Elder.

PHIZ ILLUSTRATES ANTONINA

Hablot Knight Browne - known as Phiz - is best known as the illustrator of Dickens's works. But it has now been established that he was also the artist for the dramatic frontispiece in the one-volume edition of *Antonina* published in 1861 by Sampson Low. The engraving depicts the scene where Goisvintha tries to murder Antonina with a long hunting-knife but is foiled by her brother Hermanric.

It is signed 'R Young' for Robert Young the man who engraved Hablot Browne's work. The identity is confirmed by Low's advert for the book 'with steel engraving by H. K. Browne (Phiz).' Phiz also did the frontispiece for

Charles Collins's book *The Eye-Witness* which brought together pieces Charles wrote for Dickens's periodical *All The Year Round*. *The Eye-Witness* was published by Low in December 1860.

WILKIE'S LIFE 150 YEARS ON

Wilkie Collins Society membership secretary Paul Lewis is using social media to publish a day by day account of the life of Wilkie Collins. His twitter persona @thewomaninwhite tweets Wilkie's life 150 years on. He draws on Wilkie's complete letters, Wilkie's bank account and those of his brother Charles and mother Harriet, letters between members of Wilkie's family, the letters of Charles Dickens and other contemporary material. More than 250 people are currently following the various entries and anyone can read them at www.twitter.com/thewomaninwhite.

THE MOONSTONE ON RADIO 4

Radio 4 broadcast a wonderful adaptation of *The Moonstone* which ran for four weeks from 23 January 2011. Adapted by Doug Lucie with evocative music by David Chilton it contained much of the original language and dialogue; the plot was neatly cut into four 55 minute episodes. If only television adapters could take a lesson from this excellent and simple translation of the first and best detective story for the radio. There are no plans to issue it on CD yet but keep an eye on the classic drama from Radio 4 Extra - recently rebranded from the previous Radio 7 - and found on the internet and digital radios only. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4extra/programmes/genres/drama/current>.

CATHERINE HOGARTH RE-EVALUATED

Wilkie Collins Society member Professor Lillian Nayder has published her biography of the woman she tells us we should not call Charles Dickens's wife. Like many well-educated and intelligent women Catherine Hogarth could have had her own successful career in another age. But in the early 19th century once married to Dickens her job was to produce children - which she did at the rate of almost one a year. Nayder is clear though that their marriage was a long and in many ways a happy one - until Dickens, growing tired of his ageing wife, began his affair with the young actress Nellie Ternan and tried to blame Catherine for the break up of their home. Nayder concentrates on Catherine not Dickens and in a tremendous re-examination of the evidence brings forward the friends and family who continued to support her after Dickens's desertion.

Among those was Wilkie Collins who wrote to her on several occasions and was invited to her home in 1867 when Dickens was in America. He obtained a box for her to see *The Woman in White* in 1871 and supplied a signed photograph for her album in 1862.

This is a highly readable but nevertheless deeply scholarly work. Its tough analysis of Dickens and how badly he treated Catherine and his children - even by standards of the time - has caused controversy in traditional circles. But every reference is pinned down by footnotes and Nayder's analysis using existing and many unpublished sources produces a reappraisal which has proved irresistible to many scholars - see for example <http://bit.ly/1DJgg6>. Published by Cornell University Press *The Other Dickens - A Life of Catherine Hogarth* is about £22 in the UK (ISBN 978-0-8014-4787).

WILKIE ON SMOKING

WCS member and antiquarian bookseller, Richard Beaton, has recently come across a brief mention of Wilkie Collins in an article called 'Is Smoking Really a Bad Habit?' in the journal *The Young Man* for October 1897. The first half of the article (pro-smoking) by Dr Andrew Wilson ends:

"Whenever anybody counter-blasts to-day against tobacco, I feel as did my old friend Wilkie Collins, when somebody told him that to smoke was a wrong thing. "My dear sir," said the great novelist, "all your objections to tobacco only increase the relish with which I look forward to my next cigar!"

Amusing, and nice to see Collins described in 1897 as a "great novelist".

There are various references in Wilkie's correspondence to cigar smoking or 'fumigation' but nothing to Dr Andrew Wilson who was a regular contributor on science topics in the 1890s to the *Illustrated London News*. Wilkie sums up his views on smoking in a letter to A. Arthur Reade on 10 February 1882

'When I am ill (I am suffering from gout at this moment) tobacco is the best friend that my irritable nerves possess. When I am well - but exhausted for the time by a hard day's work - tobacco revives and composes me. There is my evidence in two words.

When a man allows himself to become a glutton in the matter of smoking tobacco, he suffers for it. And if he becomes a glutton in the matter of eating meat, he just as certainly suffers - in another way. When I read learned attacks on the practice of smoking, I feel indebted to the writer. He adds largely to the relish of my cigar.'

BRIEF LIVES - WILKIE COLLINS

The delayed biography of Wilkie Collins by Melisa Klimaszewski in the Hesperus Press *Brief Lives* series has now been published. In 143 pages it manages to encapsulate most of what we need to know of Wilkie's life and works. There are seven well ordered chapters: From Willie to Wilkie, Roaming and Writing, Sensational Developments, The 1860s: A Decade of Distinction, Theatricalities, A Painful Decline, and Legacies. There are deliberately few references in the text - to assist its easy readability - but there is a brief bibliography of mainly recent texts. The final chapter, Legacies, is particularly interesting. It notes Collins's influence on both 19th and 20th century writers as well as bringing us up to date **with** film and television productions. The only criticism is perhaps the lack of an index but overall this *Brief Life* does what it says on the proverbial tin: it provides an excellent introduction to the complex life of Wilkie Collins whose works "stand as a testament to the lasting and varied legacies of a supreme storyteller." (Hesperus Press, ISBN 978-1-84391-915-5, price £7.99).

THE ANTIQUES ROAD SHOW

Wilkie seems to crop up in the most unlikely places. In the BBC Television Antiques Road Show on 30 January, one of the items for valuation was a sewing machine mounted onto a wooden table. Secreted in the draw were several carte de visites of the original owner's favourite authors and first out was a coloured portrait of Wilkie

FOSCO THE VILLAIN

BBC 2 Television ran a four part series on the English novel, presented by Sebastian Faulks. The last part, broadcast on 26 February, concentrated on villains. Count Fosco was featured as the arch villain of *The Woman in White*. He was in the excellently evil company of such characters as Lovelace from *Clarissa*, Fagin from *Oliver Twist* and in the twentieth century Merrick from *The Jewel in the Crown*. Faulks explored in some depth the psychology of

Fosco, suggesting it isn't only Laura's money he wants: he is also looking for a worthy opponent whom he finds in the character of Marian Halcombe. Justice is generally seen to be done and Fosco, in company with his fellow villains in the programme, comes to a sticky end.

Faulks also noted the great popularity of *The Woman in White* and threw out that Oscar Wilde named his cat Fosco. According to Matthew Sweet in *The Independent on Sunday* of 22 August 2004, Wilde had also chosen Fosco as his undergraduate nickname.

RECOGNITION FOR MARIAN HALCOMBE

Novelist Kate Moss, lamenting the under representation of heroines in Sebastian Faulkes' recent series on BBC2 Television, championed the case for Wilkie Collins and Marian Halcombe in particular on Radio 4's 'Open Book' programme for 13 February.

RAMSGATE RECOGNITION

Wilkie Collins now has a Blue Plaque commemorating his regular visits to Ramsgate. Under the auspices of the Ramsgate Society, local author Jane Wenham-Jones unveiled a blue plaque at 14 Nelson Crescent on Saturday 22 January. "Wilkie Collins" she said "wrote 30 novels in 65 years and I have published five books in 10 years so I think I'm doing OK. But then I have a computer, a Word programme, and copy and paste - he had to do it all by hand." Also adding a few words for the small gathering of enthusiasts were Andrew Gasson, who gave a few details of Wilkie's Ramsgate connections, and event organiser, Frank Batt, who suggested that "Wilkie Collins is to Ramsgate what Dickens is to Broadstairs." A full report and photographs can be found on the 'This is Kent' website and further details of Wilkie at Ramsgate at www.wilkie-collins.info/home_ramsgate.htm.

***THE WOMAN IN WHITE* IN THE FAR EAST**

'The Woman In White' is reaching an ever larger audience in China, thanks to the bilingual English/Chinese edition of WCS member Richard Lewis' adaptation of the novel for learners of English, published by Oxford University Press. A new generation of TWIW enthusiasts is growing in the East, which goes once more to demonstrate not only the timelessness of Wilkie's masterpiece, but the global, cross-cultural appeal of his writing. To add to this,

a bilingual English/Thai edition has also been produced for Thailand. Wilkie would certainly have been gratified to know that his book had been made accessible to so many people in the Far East and that in the 21st century there was still an ever increasing number of fans of TWIW in the world.

For details of Richard's adaptation of TWIW and his other publications, see his web site: www.richardlewisbooks.co.uk

THE MOONSTONE IN CHICAGO

A new adaptation of *The Moonstone* by the Lifeline Theatre Company of Chicago runs from 4 February to 27 March. WCS member, Susan Hanes, has sent the following report.

Chicago's Lifeline Theater production of *The Moonstone* is a cosy, intimate portrayal of Wilkie Collins's 1868 novel. Robert Kauzlaric's adaptation manages to capture the intrigue of Wilkie's story while cleverly exposing the characters' relationships to an audience perhaps unfamiliar with the novel. Although the play runs for almost three hours, it never drags, and we were in thrall throughout. The staging, a spare bi-level Georgian set, allows for frequent scene changes while maintaining a sense of place. A particularly clever depiction is Rosanna's death at the Shivering Sand, when she descends among the waving arms of the other characters, bringing to mind her words that the Sand reminded her of "hundreds of suffocating people under it." The eleven-member ensemble cast seamlessly merges multiple scenes and for some, dual roles. Sean Sinitski is a pleasing Betteredge, drawing appreciative titters whenever he withdraws his beloved *Robinson Crusoe* from a breast pocket. Ann Sonnevile is a cool and lovely Rachel Verinder and Kaitlin Byrd balances both Drucilla Clack and Rosanna Spearman, refraining from overacting either role

Further details and a short video of the production are on the Lifeline website at <https://lifelinetheatre.com/performances/10-11/moonstone/>.

ARMADALE IN THE GUARDIAN

Ever alert WCS member, Chris Adye, noted the following short letter in the pages of the *Guardian* for 24 March 2011. "As the lack of good roles for black actors is in the news (Response, 23 March), may I put in a plea for an adaptation of Wilkie Collins *Armadale*? It's a terrific story and, of the two male leads

(both called Allan Arnadale), the more complex and intelligent one is black. There's a small part for his mum, too, and I'm sure Andrew Davies could beef it up. (Priscilla Bench-Capon)."

THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP READING GROUP

Joan Dicks, Joint Honorary General Secretary of The Dickens Fellowship informs us that The Charles Dickens Museum is the atmospheric venue for a reading group set up to explore the work of Dickens and his contemporaries. The reading group meets once a week on Thursday afternoons from 2.30-5.00 for reading and discussion led by Dr Jane Gibney of Royal Holloway, University of London. There is a break for tea, provided by the Museum in its new tea room.

It is hoped to attract Dickens enthusiasts as well as welcoming readers who are less familiar with nineteenth-century writers. The house provides a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere for getting to know some of the great writers and at each session there is an opportunity to raise questions about the books being read and to debate ideas with the other members of the Group.

The first twelve-week session began on Thursday, February 17, 2011 and is exploring three Victorian "thrillers". The three books have exciting plots involving abandonment, revenge, bigamy, treachery and murder. Each draws the reader into the psychological and actual conflicts that challenge the characters. They present similar but individual dilemmas concerning society and social status. All three novels are available in Penguin Classics and are *Great Expectations* (Charles Dickens), *The Woman in White* (Wilkie Collins) and *Lady Audley's Secret* (M. E. Braddon). The fee is £10 for each session or £96 for twelve sessions. <https://www.dickensfellowship.org/>

LEDBURY POETRY FESTIVAL

This year's poetry festival is to be held from 1-10 July. In addition to the usual performances, writing workshops and reading groups, there will be the annual competition. Further details from 0845 458 1743 or <https://ledburypoetry.org.uk/>

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THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

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Membership Paul Lewis, 4 Ernest Gardens, Chiswick, London W4 3QU

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2011

THE WILKIE COLLINS JOURNAL ON-LINE

We are very pleased to announce that a new series of *The Wilkie Collins Society Journal* will be commencing in 2012. Society member Andrew Mangham (University of Reading, UK) will be taking over from Graham Law and Lillian Nayder as general editor. There will be some significant changes to the format of the journal: the main one being that the publication will become an on-line publication. Society members will no longer be sent a paper copy of the journal but given a unique access code, which will provide access to an on-line, printable version. Members will also be able to read, print and search back issues. The other significant change to format will be the title, which will be *The Wilkie Collins Journal* from now on.

Tatiana Kontou (Oxford Brookes University, UK) will become the journal's reviews editor; both she and Dr Mangham are happy to answer enquiries and welcome article/review submissions of 6-8,000 words (MLA formatting). The journal has a new editorial board and will aim to continue as a peer-reviewed, quality journal dedicated to the life and works of Wilkie Collins and related authors. Thanks to funds from the Wilkie Collins Society, it has been possible to employ a professional web design company, which has done an excellent job in creating an attractive website. Society members may view a working prototype of the website at <http://acc.wilkiecollinssociety.org/>

Enquiries should be made to Dr Mangham in the first instance: a.s.mangham@reading.ac.uk.

We would like to take this opportunity of thanking once again our previous editors, Graham Law and Lillian Nayder. They both have immensely busy academic schedules but put in an enormous amount of work to sustain such a

high standard in the Second Series which ran for ten issues from 1996 to 2007. As mentioned above these will ultimately all be available on the Journal's website. In due course we hope to add articles from the long out of print First Series.

THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY WEBSITE

We have at the same time created a dedicated website for the society at www.wilkiecollinssociety.com. We have already created an archive of the Newsletters from the last fifteen years or so. There is an email contact form for members and prospective members and we shall now be able to add topical news items which arise in between printed Newsletters.

'THE DEVIL'S SPECTACLES'

'The Devil's Spectacles' (1879) is one of Collins's more obscure short stories which has recently been resurrected in *The Haunted Hotel & Other Stories* (Wordsworth Editions, 2006 ISBN I 84022 533 5). Wilkie would not have approved of this as together with two or three other tales it was written specifically for New York publication in *The Spirit of the Times*. He carefully stated "These stories have served their purpose in periodicals, but are not worthy of republication in book form. They were written in a hurry, and the sooner they are drowned in the waters of oblivion the better. I desire that they shall not be republished after my death."

Neil Handley, the alert curator of the British Optical Association Museum at the College of Optometrists, recently picked up on the optical title. He has written the following review which is interesting to read since it is from a non Collins perspective:

'At last I have read Wilkie Collins' famous short story 'The Devil's Spectacles'. It is a strange tale of an old-fashioned pair of spectacles that were supposedly given to a polar explorer by Satan himself as a reward for having descended to the basest moral level by eating the flesh of his companion who had perished in the snow. The spectacles allow the wearer to read the innermost thoughts of people, but this apparently useful property is not all it seems for they reveal all the faults of people, but none of their merits. The narrator, Alfred, is given the spectacles by the former explorer, Septimus Notman, on his deathbed when it is explained that they must be given to another person because if you throw the spectacles away they will come back to you and if you smash them up they will magically, and ominously, put themselves back together again. As Alfred and Septimus have never exactly got along one senses already that this gift is not

altogether an act of benevolence. The giver is 'Notman', not a man, because he has become inhuman.

'Alfred describes his new possession as being 'of the old-fashioned sort, with big circular glasses and stout tortoiseshell frames'. They smelled musty and needed to be thoroughly cleaned. Several times in the story he is described as taking them in and out of his pocket. The implication is that these are nose spectacles or folding eyeglasses rather than spectacles with sides, although this is not explicitly stated. When he puts them on, even though he moves in polite society, people feel obliged to comment upon their 'hideous ugliness'. Alfred lays the blame on 'my oculist', to which his mother responds 'I don't say your sight may not be failing; I only say change your oculist'. Interestingly it is known that Wilkie Collins' own eyesight was failing in this period.

'The Devil's Spectacles act as a medium to see through people's bodies, even to see the back view of someone's heart, but if Alfred was sceptical as to Notman's story before, the spectacles are now 'infernal' to him. A few uses later and he is glad to take them off, confiding in the reader that he had grown afraid of them and later still describing them as 'contaminating'. Alfred begins to realise that even when people tell lies there are sometimes higher and nobler motives that may cause this. If you read to the end of the story you'll discover how he manages to give the spectacles away and to which deserving character.

'This very odd story, seen as distinct from the author's usual output, was published in a number of periodicals in 1879, but with a rather abrupt ending that fails to satisfy and may be interpreted as a late attempt at a get-out. Collins subsequently refused to let the story appear in book form. In my opinion he was right to do so since quite apart from the slur on the standards of ophthalmic professionals and the damage this story may have done to the image of spectacle-wearers, it is a story as much about constrained social manners. In this sense it is typical of much of Collins' rather tedious output and, if nothing else, serves to make the story very dated in its appeal

'In a Vanity Fair caricature of Wilkie by Adriano Cecioni, published 3rd February 1872, he is shown seated on a chair and wearing oval-eye spectacles. Collins was a friend of Charles Dickens and is perhaps most famous as the author of 'The Woman in White' (1860) and 'The Moonstone' (1868). The National Portrait Gallery in London has two good portraits of him wearing spectacles, one by Sir John Everett Millais (1850) and the other by Rudolph Lehmann (1880). Blindness and other physical defects appear in several Collins novels, for example 'Poor Miss Finch' (1876) includes a description of a German oculist working in England and an operation to couch cataract. (See the

reference in *The Optician*, 14.12.1956). For an article by optometrist Andrew Gasson on the eyes of Wilkie Collins see *Ophthalmic Optician*, 8 May 1982 p.337.’

It is interesting that Neil picks up on the spectacles as a gift with a sting in the tail as this harks back to Herncastle’s gift of the cursed diamond in *The Moonstone*, written nine years before. The full review can be found at www.college-optometrists.org/en/knowledge-centre/museyeum/museumblog.cfm ; and ‘The Eyes of Wilkie Collins’ is at www.wilkie-collins.info/eyes_of_wilkie_collins.htm.

COLLINS DICKENS AND ART

The Spring issue of *The Dickensian* (No. 483 Vol. 107 Part 1) features a report of the Sixth Annual Watts Lecture of 6 March 2011. The lecture included references to Collins’s article ‘To Think or Be Thought For’ (*Household Words* 13 September 1856) in which he suggests that we should form our own opinions on art and not be governed by the cant of establishment criticism. It also tells us that Wilkie’s brother Charles Collins also wrote a series of articles on artistic subjects and reminds us both of his marriage to Dickens’s artist daughter Kate and Wilkie’s satirical treatment of Mr Fairlie *The Woman in White*.

***THE WOMAN IN WHITE* – A NEW ADAPTATION**

A new version of *The Woman in White* by Nicola Boyce was staged at the Cambridge Arts Theatre during the last week in July. The adaptation comes from the Ian Dickens Productions stable. There is a large cast which includes Colin Baker as Fosco, Peter Amory as Sir Percival Glyde, Neil Stacy as Mr Gilmore, Glyn Grain as Mr Fairlie, Isla Carter as Laura and Anne Catherick, Lucy Cudden as Marian Holcombe (sic) and Thomas Brownlee as Walter Hartright. The experienced members of the company give excellent and convincing performances although one or two of the characters perhaps resort to a little too much melodramatic ‘Ha! Ha! Ha!’

The adaptation, by and large remarkably faithful to Collins’s novel, makes one realise quite how complex a plot he created for the original. It begins with Wilkie’s classic opening lines “This is the story of what a Woman’s patience can endure and what a Man’s resolution can achieve.” The long first act of the almost three hour play sets the scene in great detail whereas Laura’s change of identity and the final denouement are rather rushed. Sir Percival’s demise in the burning church at Old Welmingham would have made a dramatic scene but was disappointingly omitted. The secret is revealed in the dialogue but might well leave an audience unfamiliar with the book rather confused. A nice homage to

the original is the use of multiple narrators. The main characters have monologues in the style of Collins so that “The story here presented will be told by more than one pen ... and by more than one witness.” Much of the dialogue is taken from the book although there are one or two strange alterations such as Laura’s inheritance changing from £20,000 to £30,000. As a final acknowledgement to the author, the lively musical background is mainly taken from Mozart, of whom Collins wrote “There is always comfort in Mozart... the King of all the music-composers that ever lived.”

Overall, this is a successful adaptation which is well worth seeing. It continues on tour in several provincial theatres with further performances up to the end of October in Swansea, Guildford, Buxton, Worthing, Derby, Basingstoke, Crew, Malvern and Taunton.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE ON RADIO 4 EXTRA

Listeners to Radio 4 Extra between 30 June and 5 July would have heard the repeat of a dramatisation of *The Woman in White* in four episodes. It was adapted for radio by Martin Wade and featured Toby Stevens as Walter Hartright, Juliet Aubrey as Marian, Emily Bruni as Laura, Edward Petherbridge as Mr Fairlie, Jeremy Clyde as Sir Percival and Phillip Voss as Fosco. The nice, moody musical score had been written by Elizabeth Parker.

The adaptation was originally heard in March 1998. Radio 4 Extra have a penchant for repeats so it may well reappear in due course. The recording is, however, available on CD as part of the BBC Radio Collection.

THE ROAD HILL HOUSE MURDER

The Stafford Gatehouse Theatre will present *The Road Hill House Murder* from 9-12 November. Quoting from the theatre’s introduction: “Based on real events in the village of Road (now called Rode) in Wiltshire in 1860, this drama tells of the attempts of one of Scotland Yard’s first ever detectives to solve a particularly grisly murder, one which shocked the whole nation. Whicher’s single-minded pursuit of the one he believed guilty in spite of public opposition and ridicule led to a mental breakdown and premature retirement from the force. But was he right?” The case has recently had revived publicity with the best seller by Kate Summerscale, “The Suspicions of Mr Whicher.”

The clue of a stained missing night dress was subsequently used in 1868 by Collins in *The Moonstone* where Franklin Blake’s nightgown is hidden by the servant, Rosanna Spearman. Further details are available at staffordgatehousetheatre.co.uk/whats-on/amateur-dramatics/Road-Hill-House.

AT THE CIRCULATING LIBRARY

The bibliographical website, 'At the Circulating Library: A Database of Victorian Fiction, 1837–1901', was originally founded in 2007. It was created by Troy J. Bassett, assistant professor of English and Linguistics at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, to provide biographical and bibliographical data about the countless authors, publishers, and novels of the Victorian period. It was inspired by and continues the work of the two bibliographical websites *British Fiction 1800-1829* and *The English Novel, 1830-36*. As of October 2010, the site claims that the database accounts for all of the two-, three- and four-volume novels published during the Victorian period. Further author and serialization details are currently being added.

The Collins entry now records 26 titles, each of which gives brief bibliographical details. These include links where appropriate to the journals or Newspapers in which the novels were serialised which in turn list chronologically other fictional material. There is a page with a useful list of periodicals and interesting sets of statistics. Currently the database contains 7335 titles, 2494 author entries, and 225 publishers. Wilkie doesn't make it into either the Most Prolific – headed by Margaret Oliphant with 71 titles – or the Most Prolific Serial Authors – headed by Mary Braddon with 47 titles. He was, however, published in eight of the fifteen Most Prolific Periodicals – headed by *The Manchester Weekly Times* with 77 titles, one of which was *Heart and Science*. *All the Year Round* came a close second with 76, including, of course, *The Woman in White* and *No Name*.

WILKIE COLLINS, VERA CASPARY AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE CASEBOOK NOVEL

A new book examines Collins's use of documents in his books and claims that Vera Caspary, a 20th century writer of thrillers and film noir stories, made extensive use of his plots. In *Wilkie Collins, Vera Caspary and the Evolution of the Casebook Novel*, Professor A. B. Emrys of the University of Nebraska-Kearney claims that Caspary (1899-1987) was inspired to write thrillers by reading *The Woman in White* and made use of its structure and plot three times in her career. This included her most famous novel *Laura*. The first half of the book sets out Emrys's analysis of Collins's work. The second makes the links with Caspary. ISBN 978-0-7864-4786-2 Macfarland & Co., Jefferson and London 2011.

THE SWEDISH BIBLIOGRAPHY

Lars-Erik Nygren, who created a Swedish bibliography of Collins titles, has now prepared an update as a result of further research. The illustrated original

identified nearly 200 Swedish editions and *Wilkie Collins på svenska – en bibliografi* can still be obtained from the author price SEK160, £13.50 or €16.50. You can pay by PayPal – contact lars-erik.nygren@comhem.se for details.

WILKIE IN THE NEW YORKER

[Melisa Klimaszewski](#)'s recent biography of Collins in the Hesperus Press Brief Lives series prompted an excellent review of both the book and Wilkie's life in the *New Yorker* for 25 July. The article was written by Jonathan Rosen with the title 'Doubles: Wilkie Collins's shadow selves'. Although concentrating on *The Woman in White* the four and a bit pages neatly encapsulate both Wilkie's life and works, a sort of brief resume of a brief life. It credits Wilkie with the creation of the sensation novel "a wildly popular Victorian genre that blended gothic horror and domestic realism—and the latter is often credited with spawning the modern detective story, that's not a bad legacy." Collins is not regarded as a protégé of Dickens but awarded equal status and we Wilkie fans are "more cultic than mainstream." The article also features a rather splendid and novel caricature of Wilkie. It is pay for access but can be read online at archives.newyorker.com/?i=2011-07-25#folio=075.

MORE WILKIE IN NEW YORK

The Morgan Library in New York has three pencil sketches by Wilkie Collins. One of them was featured in an article in the Huffington Post recently, written by the Library's manuscripts cataloguer Carolyn Vega. The picture illustrated in the piece is noted as being the Church of San Nicolas in Granada Spain though Carolyn Vega says she cannot identify that church or any other images of it. The other two drawings, which she does not mention, are labelled 'A Tower and A River April 1841' and 'A Country Scene'. At this time Collins was still considering a career as an artist and his painting *The Smuggler's Retreat* was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1849, item 38 although positioned high up in the Octagon Room it would have been hard to see. The same folder at the Morgan also contains two photographic portraits of Collins, the 1861 Cundall & Downes taken in London; and one of the series taken by Sarony of New York, posed for during Wilkie's reading tour of America during 1873-4. Full details of the article can be found at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/carolyn-vega/photographing-wilkie-collins_b_906742.html

WILKIE COLLINS AND VERA CASPARY

Published in April is Wilkie Collins, Vera Caspary and the Evolution of the Casebook Novel by A. B. Emrys. The main theme shows how Vera Caspary

(1899-1987), well known in her time for crime novels and film scripts, drew on Collins use of multiple narrators and documents to influence her own work. Her best known book is *Laura* which also became a successful film and play. The six chapters on Collins “define recognizable characteristics of the novel of testimony in three novels by Collins, *The Woman in White*, *The Moonstone* and *The Legacy of Cain*, his final completed novel.” The introduction continues with “Her fiction is a direct explicit link between sensation and noir through her close reading of Wilkie Collins, whose characters she found so compatible as to adapt them and whose polyphonic structure she applied in many of her works beyond *Laura*..... She utilized witnessing statements and confessions across the same wide range as Collins, including narratives partially told in documents...” The study is published by McFarland & Co Inc of Jefferson, North Carolina; the UK price is about £30 but discounted at The Book Depository and Amazon; ISBN 978-0-7864-4786-2.

WILKIE THE TAPHEPHOBE

Wilkie makes a brief entry in Bill Bryson’s recent book, *At Home*. In his chapter on ‘The Bedroom’ he discusses the Victorian fear of premature burial. “So many people became morbidly obsessed with the fear of being interred before their time that a word was coined for it: *taphophobia*. The novelist Wilkie Collins placed on his bedside table each night a letter bearing standing instructions of the tests he wished carried out to ensure that he really had died in his sleep if he was found in seemingly corpse-like state.” Bryson gives no source for this perhaps apocryphal story which doesn’t feature in *The Public Face* collected letters. It is, however, mentioned by our new Journal editor Andrew Mangham in his essay ‘Buried Alive: The Gothic Awakening of Taphophobia’ (*Journal of Literature and Science*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 2010). Here he quotes the source as the late Chris Willis ‘A House for the Dead: Victorian Mausolea and Graveyard Gothic’ (*Victorian Gothic: Leeds Centre Working Papers in Victorian Studies* 6 (2003): 155-65).

Collins had explored the theme of being buried alive first in his play *The Red Vial* (1858) and secondly when this was rewritten as the novel *Jezebel’s Daughter* (1880). Both culminate in a dramatic scene in the Hamburg deadhouse where Mrs Wagner recovers from a deathlike coma, ringing an alarm bell attached to her foot which in turns alerts the watchman.



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NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2011

SUBSCRIPTION FOR 2012

Reluctantly we have decided that the continuing rise in postage costs necessitates an increase in the annual subscription for 2012. It will be £12 for the UK and Europe and £21 for the rest of the world. The increase is still well below the rise in postage and other prices since we last increased it ten years ago. Those who have already paid for 2012 will not, of course, be asked for the extra this year. Those who haven't will find a form with this mailing.

THE WILKIE COLLINS JOURNAL

We hope that the first issue of the Third Series of the *Wilkie Collins Journal* will be available online from early 2012. We have already placed searchable archives of the Second Series on the Wilkie Collins Journal website (<http://acc.wilkiecollinssociety.org/articles>). Editorial assistant, Verity Burke, provides the following write up of the *Journal's* official launch in November.

A bunch of enthusiastic academics, a wonderful paper, and a Wilkie Collins cake henceforth known as Wilkie Cakeins was the perfect way to relaunch the prestigious *Wilkie Collins Journal* on Monday 14th November. Set in motion by the editor of the *WCJ*, Dr Andrew Mangham, and held in the Humanities and Social Sciences building of the University of Reading, the launch served to draw together those interested in the world of one of the most influential sensation writers of the nineteenth century, and was attended by many, including Society Secretary Paul Lewis and Chairman Andrew Gasson.

The relaunch incorporates a brand new website, which as one guest aptly commented, provides the air of sitting in a Victorian parlour, reflecting the manner in which the publication aims to draw together those interested in the writer and in sensation fiction generally, whilst retaining its high standing in the world of academic research. The *WCJ*, formerly the *Wilkie Collins Society Journal*, continues to provide a forum for the publication of new research on

Collins, and the Wilkie Collins Society itself continues to publish a reprint of one of Collins's lesser known works once a year. The *WCJ* also includes useful reviews of other academic works on Collins and related topics.

Due to the *Journal's* online rather than paper presence, it can avoid many of the pressures which routinely face academic publications, and alongside the Collinsian emphasis, the publication is also interested in articles on other sensation authors and the genre in its more broadly defined sense. It is also particularly keen to delve further into the vast wealth of Collins's lesser known work. Despite the focus on expanding the canon of studied Collins texts, the evening's paper, given by Dr Tatiana Kontou of Oxford Brookes University, reflected the continued interest of the Society in Collins's best known works, and incorporated the *WCJ's* main aim: "to promote new methodological approaches to Collins's writings as well as to broaden our understanding of the larger context from which those works emerged".

Dr Kontou's paper focussed on the relationship between Collins's 1868 novel *The Moonstone* and the public interest in the Koh-I-Noor diamond, examining the use of ekphrasis to convey the form and lustre of the diamond through Collins's written "eye-witness" accounts. Drawing parallels between the uncut Koh-I-Noor, the danger of division to the Moonstone itself, and the troubling multifaceted nature of the novel's first person narratives, Kontou refers to the legend of the Koh-I-Noor in contemporary publications to inform close readings of passages in which the Moonstone is the main focus of description. The paper was well received and ended in an insightful discussion about Collins's intentions regarding his representation of the jewel, and an impressive use of technology by Paul Lewis to investigate the plover, a wading bird featured in a passage of close analysis during the talk!

As the paper and the Q&A session wrapped up, the launch relocated to the reception. Featuring a cake (Victoria sponge, naturally) decorated with a cartoon of Collins (specifically, 'Caricature Portraits of Eminent Men', *Once A Week*, 24 February 1872), the discussion on all things Collinsian continued with great enjoyment. Dr Mangham summed up feelings about the event, and had a few words of gratitude for those involved: "It was fantastic to see friends, colleagues and fellow Collins enthusiasts celebrate the relaunch of the *Wilkie Collins Journal*. I'd like to say a special 'thank you' to Kate Gazzard, Diane Watts and Jan Cox for their help in organising the launch. Volume 1 of the third series is well on its way to being ready and will be appearing in the new year with some fantastic new approaches to Collins's life and works. I'm very grateful to the Wilkie Collins Society and my editorial colleagues, Tatiana Kontou and Verity Burke for their sustained enthusiasm for the Journal and for Collins research in general."

DEATH COMES TO PEMBERLEY

Our apparently indefatigable Patron has taken a trip back in time to 1803 for her latest novel. Never far from the scene of the crime, P. D. James has recreated the world of her favourite novel, Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, introduced us once again to the main characters and added a good murder. Her usual storytelling skills are then nicely employed to unravel the intriguing mystery. *Death Comes to Pemberley* is published by Faber & Faber at £18.99, (hardback ISBN 978-0-571-28357-6).

THE ARCHER ARCHIVE RESCUED

Frank Archer (1844-1917) was an actor of some note for twenty years from 1868 to 1888. Born Frank Bishop Arnold he was attracted to the stage rather than the commercial job his family arranged and eventually paid for training and gave up his work. He appeared originally on the provincial stage but soon made it to London. Wilkie met him in 1873 when he was recommended by the theatrical actors and impresarios Squire and Marie Bancroft to play the lead in Wilkie's stage version of *The New Magdalen*. Archer and Wilkie remained friends and corresponded over 14 years.

Archer was a methodical man who kept diaries for most of his life and press cuttings throughout his theatrical career. He also kept hundreds of letters neatly sorted into bundles including 32 from Wilkie and four from Wilkie's stepdaughter Carrie Graves. The existence of the letters was known but their location remained a mystery to scholars until they appeared as part of the Archer Archive in a dealer's catalogue in 2010.

This Archive has now been obtained by Wilkie Collins Society Secretary Paul Lewis. Transcripts of the letters will form part of the 2011 *Addenda & Corrigenda* to the complete letters which will be sent out shortly to WCS members.

The whole archive, which filled three Victorian trunks, is a unique and detailed record of a middle-ranking actor's career. His diaries cover more than 40 years with details of meetings - some with Wilkie - and journeys he made. The archive records every part he took in every play with cuttings, playbills and tickets - including special train tickets to the theatre in one case. His notebooks record what he was paid and the sometimes lengthy periods he was without work. They also reveal that in many cases he had to buy his own costume and props and what he paid for them. Two beards and a moustache remain in a cardboard box. More than 200 letters from friends, relatives and theatrical figures cover much of the nineteenth century.

From 1886 he tried to change career to become a writer. Although Wilkie advised and recommended him, Archer met with little success. Details of his rejections by publishers - and the rarer acceptances - are in a separate notebook. His letters from this period include many from publishers.

The Archive awaits a scholar of Victorian theatre to analyse it in detail.

DICKENS TO THE FORE

Anticipating 2012's 200th anniversary of his birth, there is much Charles Dickens in the press and on the bookstalls.

The latest, full-length biography is by Claire Tomalin. As the blurb says, "*Charles Dickens: A Life* is the examination of the Dickens we deserve. It gives full measure to his heroic stature – his huge virtues as a human being – while observing his failings in both respects with an understanding but unblinking eye." It is a handsome volume of 500 plus pages with numerous illustrations including the Millais portrait of Collins. The index gives twenty-five or so references to Wilkie but for WCS members they will prove something of a disappointment. The great majority give only a passing comment on his interaction with the Inimitable's life unlike, for example, Michael Slater's recent and truly definitive biography where Wilkie is accorded his proper place. Nineteenth century enthusiasts will enjoy reading this well written book about Dickens but will learn little if anything new about Collins.

Claire Tomalin's *Charles Dickens: A Life* (ISBN 978-0-670-91767-9) is published by Viking at £30 but can be had at a considerable discount from either The Book Depository or Amazon.

Also published recently is *Becoming Dickens: The Invention of a Novelist* by Robert Douglas-Fairhurst (ISBN 0674050037, Bellknap Press). Here the publicity material claims "This provocative biography tells the story of how an ambitious young Londoner became England's greatest novelist. Focused on the 1830s, it portrays a restless, uncertain Dickens who could not decide on a career path. Through twists and turns, the author traces a double transformation: in reinventing himself Dickens reinvented the form of the novel." Priced at £20, this volume is also available from the above discount suppliers.

OUP have now reissued an 'Anniversary Edition' of *The Oxford Companion to Charles Dickens*, originally published in 1999. Edited by Paul Schlicke, this comprehensive reference work contains 500 articles in an A-Z format covering Dickens's life, works and cultural context.

DICKENS ON DICKENS

Lucinda Dickens Hawksley's new book is called simply *Charles Dickens* but it is the most unusual of the bicentenary offerings. Produced in association with the Charles Dickens Museum it is a brilliant collection of pictures, play programmes, letters and manuscripts reproduced with great care and set in a broadly chronological sequence.

The 39 bite-sized chapters take you through the events of Dickens's life in a straightforward and engaging manner written with great style by his great-great-great-granddaughter. The highlights are the little pockets which contain separate reproductions of key printed artefacts from his life. Behind a fine reproduction of the playbill for *The Frozen Deep*, for example, a pocket contains pages from the manuscripts of *Oliver Twist* and *Pickwick Papers*, Charles and Catherine's marriage licence, a reproduction with a couple of pages of Dick's Standard Plays, and a whole four page letter from Dickens to Georgina Hogarth. There are 21 of these separately reproduced items, all taken from the collection of the Charles Dickens Museum. The text is full of quality images of places he visited, wrote about or which saw key moments in his life. Most of them you will not find anywhere else.

There are many references to Wilkie and his brother Charles including a very fine small reproduction of the 1853 portrait of Wilkie by Charles now hanging in the Fitzwilliam Museum. Wilkie's name or image also appears on playbills and photographs. It is a marvellous Christmas book ideally suited to dipping into. But it could also profitably be read from cover to cover for those who want a clear and straightforward guide to Dickens's life. Although a descendant, Hawksley does not demur from the difficult aspects of his life - referring consistently, for example, to Ellen Ternan as his mistress. At £30 (and cheaper at some outlets) it is amazing value and worth the price for the reproductions and photographs alone. Warning - at 310x270mm it is a bit big to read on the train! ISBN 978 0 233 003290.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND AND HOUSEHOLD WORDS ONLINE

One of the major projects for Dickens bicentenary is Dickens Journals Online. Masterminded at the University of Buckingham by John Drew, the project has digitised the entire run of Dickens two weekly journals *All The Year Round* and *Household Words*. Wilkie of course contributed widely to both and this project enables us to read the original form of many of his stories and non-fiction pieces as well as his novels *The Dead Secret*, *The Woman in White*, *No Name*, and *The Moonstone*. You can find the references to his contributions at www.wilkiecollins.com and go to menu item 1 e-texts. The DJO images have been converted to e-texts though many of them still need proofreading. Wilkie Collins Society members who want to help with that process can create an

account and join in. The project and the website are due for a formal launch at the end of March. More at www.djo.org.uk.

A COLLINS BIOGRAPHY – IN BRIEF

If the recently published biography of Collins by Melisa Klimaszewski in the Brief Lives series is still too long, then Professor John Sutherland's three or four page entry in his *Lives of the Novelists* may appeal as a lightning summary of Wilkie's life. The whole book of 704 pages provides brief biographies of 294 novelists writing in English, from the seventeenth-century to the present day. It is published by Profile Books Ltd at £30 (ISBN 9781846681578).

ACKROYD ON COLLINS

The forthcoming biography of Collins by the also indefatigable Peter Ackroyd is due to be published on 1 March 2012. It is now advertised to consist of 144 pages with eight pages of black and white illustrations. The illustration on the front cover is the same portrait of the young Wilkie painted in oils by his brother Charles which had previously been used for the rather speculative *The Life of Wilkie Collins* by Nuel Pharr Davis in 1956. This is the last known portrait of Collins which shows him without a beard. With the publication of *The Letters* and so much research on Collins over the last 50 years, any new biography is likely to be grounded on rather more solid facts. The cover price of £12.99 is already being discounted by the major online booksellers.

SOME FINANCIAL QUOTES FROM WILKIE

The nineteenth century possibly had the same financial crises as those hitting the modern world. Here are some quotations from Collins's works which might just as well have been written with today in mind.

Rosanna Spearman had been a thief, and not being the sort that get up Companies in the City, and rob from thousands, instead of only robbing from one, the law laid hold of her (*The Moonstone*).

Reckless speculation which is, so to speak, the national sin of the United States (*Poor Miss Finch*).

What right has anyone to be rich? (*Poor Miss Finch*).

I am not rich enough to care about money (*Poor Miss Finch*).

I thought a contract was the sort of thing a builder signs, when he promises to have the workman out of the house in a given time, and when the time comes (as my poor mother used to say) the workmen never go (*Armada*).

THE SWEDISH BIBLIOGRAPHY

Lars-Erik Nygren who compiled the first bibliography of Wilkie Collins titles in Swedish has now issued another supplement of newly discovered titles to add to the original 200. *Wilkie Collins på svenska – en bibliografi* can be obtained from the author price SEK160, £13.50 or €16.50. You can pay by PayPal – contact lars-erik.nygren@comhem.se for details.

SHORT STORIES ON YOUTUBE

Readings of some of Wilkie's short stories are now available on the internet on the Youtube website. 'The Dead Hand' which was originally published in *Household Words* in October 1857 as 'The Double-Bedded Room' as part of 'The Lazy Tour' and included in *The Queen of Hearts* (1859) can now be found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=QX7Qq9PP4Ps. This page in turn provides links to 'A Terribly Strange Bed' and 'Who Killed Zebedee?'

'FIE! FIE! OR THE FAIR PHYSICIAN'

The original manuscript of Collins's short story 'Fie! Fie! Or the Fair Physician' was sold as lot 182 on 3 December at the US auction house of Ira and Larry Goldberg for \$24,000. Although a considerable sum, this was significantly lower than the rather ambitious estimate of \$40-\$45,000. A full description and photographs of Wilkie's barely legible manuscript may still be available on the website: images.goldbergauctions.com/php/lot_auc.php.

'Fie! Fie!' was originally published simultaneously in the US in the special Christmas supplement to *The Pictorial World* and in *The Spirit of the Times*, 23 December 1882. It was not issued in England during Wilkie's lifetime. Along with 'Love's Random Shot' and 'The Devil's Spectacles' Collins wrote "These stories have served their purpose in periodicals but are not worthy of republication in book form. They were written in a hurry and the sooner they are drowned in the waters of oblivion the better. I desire that they shall not be republished after my death."

COLLINS IN THE PRESS

Wilkie has often cropped up in the most unlikely places and at the Leveson Enquiry into the murder of Joanna Yeats at the end of November the *Independent* reported on the testimony of the wrongly accused Christopher Jefferies. "It was also suggested that he was particularly fascinated with the Victorian "murder novel" *The Moonstone* by Wilkie Collins. Mr Jefferies said: "It is not a murder novel. It is quite well known as being the first significant detective novel in English." The full report is at www.independent.ie/world-news/europe/phone-hacking-inquiry-jo-yeatesrsquos-landlord-tells-how-he-used-safe-houses-2947560.html.

Wilkie receives another mention in a review of Anthony Horowitz's Sherlock Holmes revival, *The House of Silk*. "The question's a no-brainer. A Study In Scarlet is a mess. The Sign Of Four isn't a patch on the book it was so plainly modelled on: Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone*. As for *The Valley Of Fear*, well it is a nice primer on American mining but the reader in search of deductive thrills would do well to steer clear." For the full review see www.express.co.uk/posts/view/281686/Book-review-The-House-of-Silk-by-Anthony-Horowitz-Orion-18-99/.

An article in *The Guardian* (16 December 2011) about Catherine Dickens's book of menus *What shall we have for dinner* published under the pseudonym Lady Maria Clutterbuck quotes Wilkie referring to a dinner at the Dickens home with a nosegay by each napkin. In fact the reference is to a dinner in late August 1853 at the house in Boulogne where Dickens stayed. Collins joined him for a month and wrote to his mother, Harriet Collins, on 1 September 1853:

"The grand-dinner" (which Dickens had pledged himself should be the best that Boulogne could supply) was a banquet to make a classical epicure's mouth water. The table was charmingly decorated with flowers, and a nosegay was placed by each guest's napkin. As for the dishes, I say nothing; having preserved my Bill of fare, as a memorable document for my family to peruse when I come home.'

Recommendations of Wilkie's work are normally confined to the better known three or four books, but others occasionally appear. Not quite a recommendation but John Mullan writing in *The Guardian* (18 November 2011) listed *Miss or Mrs.?* as one of the few books with a question mark in the title, though he omitted the full stop which was the Victorian style and is found in contemporary editions.

Two short stories have had small mentions recently. The first was listed as an also-ran by Jess Nevins in her backdating of the Hugo Award for science fiction to 1887, found on the website io9.com/5860335/the-victorian-hugos-1887?tag=jessnevins. Among stories which "would have received votes" she included 'Mr. Percy and the Prophet' as "quite minor Collins of indifferent quality, written when he was in poor health but it was by Wilkie Collins."

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NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2012

PETER ACKROYD'S *WILKIE COLLINS*

I have been critical of Peter Ackroyd in the past - his *Dickens* is magisterial but annoyingly lacking in footnotes. But I warmed to this short biography of Wilkie from the first page where he begins with a charming description of “perhaps the sweetest-tempered of all the Victorian novelists.” (p2)

Of course the lack of footnotes in this book annoyed me too. There were points I wanted to track down and check. For example, Ackroyd says Wilkie “liked to ride on the omnibus because he wished to immerse himself in what he called ‘the Actual’, as opposed to ‘the Ideal’.” (p3) I thought as an adult he rode in cabs or walked only using the omnibus as a boy to go to school. Was he “used to bickering with waiters and cab drivers” (p7) due to his well known parsimony? Did he really quarrel with his servants so that two left him? (p10). And did he wear “pink shirts” (p160) and “a light camel hair” suit to dinner (p2)?

But the more I read of the book the more these minor scholarly quibbles faded to background detail. Ackroyd clearly admired Wilkie’s storytelling and descriptive powers as much if not more than any of his other biographers. Even *Antonina*, dismissed by many, is praised by Ackroyd as “crafted brilliantly by a young author already equipped with great technical powers”. (p41). *Hide and Seek* is “an extremely well-manufactured device, with an intricate mechanism at its centre.” (p60). On *The Woman in White* “One reviewer described him as ‘a machinist’; if he was, he was a machinist of genius.” (p.88). And of *I Say No* “a

compelling and almost irresistible narrative... a novel of pure suspense in which... people are linked by a deadly secret which only they can unravel. No-one could plot this more finely than Collins” (pi 74). The only novel he does not summarise is *Armadale* because “the plot is too detailed to be amenable to precis. You cannot turn a labyrinth into a straight path.” (pl 15)

Of course, using what we might *homage* as the ‘*méthode Ackroydois*’ (reading everything by the author then everything about the author then writing the biography from beginning to end) the book does repeat errors in other biographies. Though interestingly Ackroyd takes as read that Wilkie met Martha when she was his mother’s servant rather than through a chance meeting on a trip to Norfolk (pp127-128).

Ackroyd also dismisses the common complaint that later in life Wilkie wrote poorer novels because he tried to make socio-political points. Rather, says Ackroyd, Collins confines his ‘vision’ to the prefaces to his work and “never allows any ‘message’ to override the imperatives of plot, while his dislike of such practices as vivisection lends power and purpose to his prose” (p.146). Ackroyd appreciates his humour too. He quotes *Blind Love* where “a landlady provides food ‘cooked to a degree of imperfection only attained in an English kitchen’” (pl25).

The book is largely chronological and students of Collins will of course find the tale familiar. But seldom has it been written with such ease and grace, such admiration and power.

Ackroyd repeats with relish the words Collins gives to Fosco “One of the rarest of all the intellectual accomplishments that a man can possess is the grand faculty of arranging his ideas. Immense privilege! I possess it. Do you?” Collins of course did. Ackroyd certainly does. And that may lie at the heart of his admiration of Wilkie - that and the fact they can both be described as ‘the least *posé* public man I have ever met’ (p2).

Peter Ackroyd *Wilkie Collins*, Chatto & Windus, London 2012 ISBN 978-0-701-16990-9, £12.99, but widely discounted.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE

Louise Taylor of Brighton's Jubilee Library has created a ghostly life-size depiction in wire and textile of Anne Catherick for an exhibition in the Library of 'Desert Island Books'. These are depictions by staff of their favourite paperback books. The exhibition runs for the Brighton Festival from 5 - 26 May. You can see an image on the front page [of www.wilkiecollins.com](http://www.wilkiecollins.com).

EROTIC DREAMS

Jacky Tarleton is a WCS member who runs the Wilkie Collins Appreciation Society on Facebook www.facebook.com/groups/2228650086. Jacky is also a published poet and PhD student at the University of Exeter. She responded to a discussion in *The Guardian* of the ten best erotic dreams in literature. Her letter was published in *The Guardian* on 16 February and is reproduced here with Jacky's permission:-

'May I suggest an erotic dream which occurs in Wilkie Collins's 1852 novel, "Basil", when the eponymous hero dreams of the very young woman he saw on the omnibus thus:

"The woman from the woods clasped me more closely than before, pressing her warm lips on mine; and it was as if her long hair fell round us both, spreading over my eyes like a veil ... I was drawn along in the arms of the dark woman, with my blood burning and my breath failing me, until we entered the secret recesses that lay within the unfathomable depths of trees. There, she encircled me in the folds of her dusky robe, and laid her cheek close to mine ... I had given myself up, heart, and soul, and body, to the woman from the dark woods" (from chapter 8).

His never-to-be consummated love for this woman leads to appalling disaster, recounted in 344 pages of gripping detail. I think this is the most fascinating of Wilkie Collins's novels.'

NO NAME

One hundred and fifty years ago Wilkie's novel *No Name* was being serialised in *All The Year Round*. It ran from 15 March 1862 through to 17 January 1863. You can follow it week by week using the excellent Dickens Journals Online

www.djo.org.uk run by John Drew at the University of Buckingham. It reproduces the whole periodical with images of the original pages and a transcript. You can start with the first part here <https://www.djo.org.uk/all-the-year-round/volume-vii/page-1.html>

No Name was Wilkie's next novel after the phenomenal success of *The Woman in White*. On 24 May 1862 he wrote to his mother "I am slowly – very slowly – building up the scaffolding of the new book". The title though eluded him until the book was partly set up in type. On 27 January 1862 he wrote to the sub-editor W. H. Wills "Dickens sends several titles – some very good – but I hardly think the title has been found yet." Wilkie wrote again to his mother on 4 February 1862 saying "But the title – the terrible title – is not decided on yet! It must be settled tomorrow." In fact, as Virginia Blain shows in 'The Naming of *No Name*' (*WCSJ* 4 (1984) pp. 25-30), the title came to him even later than that. And Collins went through the manuscript adding references to the fact that Magdalen Vanstone had 'no name'.

THE FROZEN DEEP AND THE LIGHTHOUSE IN THE DICKENSIAN

The latest Bicentenary edition of *The Dickensian* for Spring 2012 (No. 486, Vol. 108, Part 1) features 'Selection Guide to Dickens's Amateur Theatricals – Part 2' by Robert C. Hanna. The essay gives a short resume of the plot, the playwright, Dickens's role, the locations and dates of performances and the type of performance. Collins is represented by *The Frozen Deep* (1857) and *The Lighthouse* (1855) and there is a reproduction of the dramatic scenery backdrop painted by Clarkson Stanfield. There are also details of Bulwer-Lytton's *Not So Bad as We Seem*. Wilkie was invited by Dickens to act in this play, first performed on 16 May 1851, and occasioned their first meeting.

The same issue of *The Dickensian* also includes several reviews of books published to coincide with the bicentenary, including Claire Tomalin's *Charles Dickens: A Life* (Viking ISBN 978-0670-91767-9).

JOURNALS ONLINE

There is also a notice in the current issue that the full archive of *The Dickensian* from 1905 -2000 is becoming available from Proquest's *Periodical Archive*

Online (PAO) and the years 2001 onwards will be published on Proquest's *Literature Online* (LION). Complimentary access is available to individual subscribers to *The Dickensian*.

The Guardian of 15 April records that the archives of *The Illustrated London News* are also now accessible online from 1842-2003, at this stage for libraries and educational institutions. The statistics are impressive with 250,000 pages and three-quarters of a million illustrations. At its peak, it had a circulation of 300,000. Apart from 'My Lady's Money' in the Christmas 1877 issue and the 1889 serialisation of *Blind Love*, there should be plenty of Collins material since there were regular reviews of his books and theatre productions.

FORTHCOMING FILMS

There are two forthcoming films with a Collins connection. The first is an adaptation of Claire Tomalin's *The Invisible Woman*. The story will revolve around Wilkie's play, *The Frozen Deep* and is being directed by Ralph Fiennes who will star as Dickens. Felicity Jones will play Nelly Teman, Kristin Scott Thomas Nelly's mother and Tom Hollander will feature as Wilkie. The adaptation is by Abi Morgan and according to the official synopsis "Nelly, a happily malTied mother and school teacher, is haunted by her past. Her memories take us back in time to follow the story of her relationship with Charles Dickens with whom she discovered an exciting but fragile complicity." See <https://wegotthiscovered.com/movies/ralph-fiennes-felicity-jones-charles-dickens-film-the-invisible-woman/>

The second film concerns the life of the popular composer and pianist Francesco Berger (1834-1933). Berger had his first opera performed in Trieste at the age of seventeen. On his return to London he became a member of Dickens's amateur theatrical company and wrote the music for both *The Frozen Deep* and *The Lighthouse*.

FICTION ABOUT A FICTIONAL MANUSCRIPT

A long lost Wilkie Collins manuscript appears in the recently published crime novel *Cloudland* by Joseph Olshan (Minotaur Books, New York, ISBN 978-1-250-00017-0, available from the Book Depository). In this decided work of

fiction, a serial killer follows the plot of *The Widower's Branch* where the dead bodies of married women are found near fallen trees. Allegedly "*The Widower's Branch* is actually the very last novel Wilkie Collins ever wrote written after *Blind Love* which many scholars advance as the author's last workand never tampered with by anybody; it was left by his literary executors a fragment, a mere eighty pages with a detailed outline published posthumously in an extremely limited edition."

Pure fiction, of course, since Collins's real lost novel *Iolani* was the first he wrote in 1844 and actually published in an unlimited edition in 1998. Interestingly enough, the notion of a Collins manuscript has been used before in a detective novel. Published in 1958, *The Dead Man's Knock* by the prolific writer of detective fiction, John Dickson Carr, also features a fictional, unrecorded Collins manuscript as well as letters to Dickens and a locked room murder.

90 GLOUCESTER PLACE

Collins's home for twenty years at 90 Gloucester Place (now renumbered 65) was for many years in a terrible state of dilapidation. It is good to be able to report that it has been completely renovated and seems to have been restored to residential use as in Collins's day, maintaining the large L-shaped drawing room where he did his writing and the impressive marble fireplace. There are details of the accommodation and some photographs on the property website <https://furnesspartnership.com/65-gloucester-place-london>. Pictures in its unrestored state can be found at https://www.wilkie-collins.info/home_gloucester.htm

KENSAL GREEN CEMETERY

WCS members who would like the opportunity of visiting Wilkie's grave (Number 31754, square 141, row 1, situated centrally behind the chapel) might like to combine this with the Kensal Green Cemetery open day, taking place on Saturday 7 July from 11.00am to 5.00pm. There will be frequent tours of the cemetery and catacombs together with historic hearses, stalls and refreshments. (See www.kensalgreen.co.uk)

BRITISH LIBRARY HISTORICAL REPRINTS

As mentioned in the 2011 Spring Newsletter, Collins's own adaptation of *Armada*, *Miss Gwilt*, had been published by the British Library Historical Reprints series in the Poetry & Drama section. Mysteriously, however, this disappeared almost as soon as it became available and even the staff at the British Library disclaimed all knowledge of its publication. The reprint does seem to be back together with several other rare Collins titles. These are virtually impossible to find on the British Library website but are listed by the Book Depository.

The series states that "The Poetry & Drama collection includes books from the British Library digitised by Microsoft. The books reflect the complex and changing role of literature in society... containing many classic works from important dramatists and poets, this collection has something for every lover of the stage and verse." The books are published in a large paperback format and are simply straight facsimiles of all pages of the originals but without the benefit of any introduction or any other additional material. They represent a way of obtaining texts of otherwise unobtainable Collins material. The following are some of the more interesting Collins titles listed by the Book Depository with their discounted prices.

Miss Gwilt: A Drama in Five Acts. Altered from the Novel of "Armada." by Wilkie Collins. ISBN 13: 9781241062606, ISBN 10: 1241062609 (£9.43).

No Name: A Drama, in Four Acts. Altered from the Novel for Performance on the Stage. by Wilkie Collins. ISBN 13: 9781241065997 ISBN 10: 1241065993 (£11.06).

The New Magdalen: A Dramatic Story, in a Prologue and Three Acts. by Wilkie Collins. ISBN 13: 9781241052324 ISBN 10: 1241052328 (£11.27).

The Moonstone: A Dramatic Story, in Three Acts. Altered from the Novel for Performance on the Stage. by Wilkie Collins. ISBN 13: 9781241064099 ISBN 10: 1241064091. (£11.53).

The Woman in White. a Drama, in a Prologue and Four Acts. Altered from the Novel for Performance on the Stage. by Wilkie Collins. ISBN 13: 9781241066642 ISBN 10:1241066647. (£13.99).

Another series from the British Library Historical Print Collections is 'Fiction & Prose Literature'. This includes two versions of *The Evil Genius*, the shorter of which is particularly interesting as it is a facsimile of the first chapter published by Tillotson in late 1885 as a one shilling 24 page pamphlet. This was what Collins called a 'bogus book', issued to protect the title before the main publication of the story.

The Evil Genius. ISBN 13: 9781241595081; ISBN 10: 1241595089 (£7.89)

WILKIE COLLINS VISITS THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF MUSICIANS

The archivist of the Royal Society of Musicians, Colin Coleman, has recently been working on the RSM's connection with Charles Dickens. He has kindly sent the following report of the 122th Anniversary Festival held at Freemason's Hall on 8 March 1860 which Wilkie attended as Dickens's guest.

The Society's Dinner, which soon came to be known as the Anniversary Festival, was held on an annual basis with food, music, speeches and much drink: in 1805 the caterer was to provide "Bread, Beer and strong Beer and one Bottle of Wine to each person".

Distinguished persons were invited to be Presidents for the evening and they gave lengthy speeches. The President was not necessarily a musician and in 1860 the author Charles Dickens held the position. The minutes of the Dinner Committee reveal that he was not the first choice as Lord Ward had initially been invited to take the position and the committee then proposed several names from which Mr Dickens was the then favourite. He was invited, accepted and gave a donation of £5. The Minute book records "A letter was read from Mr Chas Dickens promising to preside on the 8th of March".

Dickens brought along Wilkie Collins as his guest for the evening.

The Musical World of 10th March reported "The utmost hilarity prevailed throughout the evening in a great measure due to the president, who was the sun of the festival, and shed a light on all around, and infused warmth into every bosom. Mr. Charles Dickens ... made a decided hit. He was voted nem. con. the very best chairman who ever occupied the seat of honour at one of the Society's dinners".

THE WOMAN IN WHITE AND LOUISA NOTTIDGE: PARALLEL LIVES

James Miller has been continuing his research on the interesting parallels between the fictional Woman in White and the real life Louise Nottidge with the intention of publishing a book on the subject. Meanwhile, he has sent some of his current thoughts in the following piece which can be assessed **in** conjunction with the more usually accepted sources of Collins's novel such as Mejan's *Recueil des cause célèbres*.

The aims of this article are twofold: first, to record some of the striking parallels between the narrative of Wilkie Collins's 1860 novel and a series of events in the life of Louisa Nottidge; and second, to identify four episodes in the novel which can be traced, unmistakably, to the influence of the publicly recorded and debated experiences of Louisa Nottidge between 1846 and 1860.

Charles Dickens records Louisa's inveiglement in 1846 into an immoral Somerset sect, called The Abode Of Love, or Agapemone (1). Louisa's three sisters married three clergyman, also members of The Agapemone sect, on the same day in 1846 (2). The four Nottidge ladies were all unmarried heiresses, and fell under the influence of the sect's founder, Rev. James Henry Prince, a defrocked vicar.

Dickens compared his own private life in 1860 to an imagined stay at The Agapemone (3). William Thackeray submitted a cartoon to *Punch* magazine on May 1, 1851 called "The Original Agapemone in Danger".

Louisa's mother and brother-in-law, Frederick Ripley, feared that she also might marry into The Agapemone, thereby transmitting her considerable wealth to the sect. In 1846, Ripley travelled to Somerset and abducted Louisa against her will, imprisoning her in his London villa (12 Upper Woburn Place - less than a mile to the east of Regents Park), then placed her in Moor Croft House Asylum, Hillingdon, west London (4).

West London Asylums in 19th Century Literature (studymore.org.uk) examines Wilkie Collins' novel of 1860, and concludes that "The private asylum in which the woman in white had been confined appears to be west of London".

Louisa Nottidge escaped from Moor Croft House in 1848, and headed for London in order to meet up with Rev. William Cobbe, her brother-in-law from The Agapemone, at a small hotel in Cavendish Square (2). The evidence that the woman in white also took this journey lies both in her location, and her questions to the novel's narrator; Which way is it to central London?, Do you know any Baronets? Her question about a Baronet makes little sense within the narrative of the novel, until one learns that Rev. William Cobbe was an Irish Baronet, and the brother of Frances Power Cobbe, the feminist journalist and campaigner.

Frances Power Cobbe: Victorian Feminist, Journalist and Reformer - by Sally Mitchell, contains the following (5):

At the end of June 1849 brother Will 's name showed up in *The Times* reports of a sensational trial. Early in 1848 Louisa Nottidge had escaped from the lunatic asylum, and Will had tried to help her get back to the Agapemone. They were intercepted at Farringdon Road Station, but once Will learned where she had been he asked the Commissioners in Lunacy to investigate. On 23 June 1849 the relatives accused of confining Louisa Nottidge against her will were put on trial in London [*Nottidge v Ripley and Another*]. The heat was intense, the courtroom was crowded and the testimony of Will and others aroused gusts of laughter. According to Lewis Price, the husband of another Nottidge resident at the Agapemone: "We have horse and carriages and we live in style ... we abjure prayer altogether ... we are glorifying God when we eat and drink. All of us play at "hockey" [actually a game called Blind Hookey, where bets are laid on the identity of a hidden card; see Thackeray's cartoon for *Punch*. JM] ... females as well as males."

William Cobbe requested the Commissioners for Lunacy to review Louisa's case, following her escape and recapture in 1848. Commissioner Bryan Procter wrote the report that liberated Louisa from asylum custody (2, 4). Collins later dedicated his novel, *The Woman In White*, to the same Bryan Procter. Louisa's case became known to the public as a result of two law cases, reported daily in *The Times*: the first, *Nottidge v Ripley and Another 1849*; and second, *Nottidge v Prince 1860*.

These four episodes in particular from the novel, *The Woman in White* - the escape from the asylum, the Regents Park / Cavendish Square meeting by moonlight, looking for a Baronet, and the novel's dedication to Bryan Procter - can be directly linked to the events in the much publicised life of Louisa Nottidge after 1848. When Harriet Martineau wrote a biographical sketch of Bryan Procter (aka. the writer Barry Cornwall) he, or she, selected one case as the most prominent in his long career as Commissioner for Lunacy - the case of Louisa Nottidge and her abduction from *The Agapemone* (6).

Louisa Nottidge is a relative of this writer's mother, Faith Nottidge.

Sources

- (1) *The Household Narrative of Current Events*, 1850, p.110, Charles Dickens
- (2) *Spiritual Wives*, 1868, William Dixon
- (3) *The Uncommercial Traveller*, Chapter 16, 1860, Charles Dickens
- (4) *Religious Fanaticism and Wrongful Confinement in Victorian England: The Affair of Louisa Nottidge*, 1996, J.J. Schwieso
- (5) *Frances Power Cobbe: Victorian Feminist, Journalist and Reformer* - Sally Mitchell
- (6) *Biographical Sketches: Barry Cornwall*, 1869, Harriet Martineau

THE LEDBURY POETRY FESTIVAL

This year's Ledbury Poetry Festival takes place from 29 June to 8 July. As usual, it gives the opportunity to attend writing workshops, reading groups, meet publishers and agents or just attend readings and performances by the wide array of poets and performers. There is also the annual poetry competition with a prize of £1000. Further details from <https://ledburypoetry.org.uk> and 0845 4581743.

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NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2012

COLLINS SPORT AND EXERCISE

With the Olympics and a summer of sport still in our minds, Andrew Gasson has put together a selection of Wilkie's thoughts on exercise and sports. These are taken from both his fiction and his letters, with thanks to WCS members who made some helpful suggestions in response to our recent email.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

We are also including a follow-up publication to *All The Year Round Non-fiction by Wilkie Collins (I)* issued by the WCS in 2011. This is the result of additional research by Paul Lewis and includes three further Collins articles.

WILKIE AND THE CARDINAL

A new anecdote about Wilkie Collins and a Cardinal has come to light in *The Cornhill Magazine*. Written in 1899 by someone who signed herself M.H. the story forms just one paragraph in a series of often unconnected anecdotes under the title 'Links with the Past'.

"I cannot leave this subject without recalling an anecdote Wilkie Collins once told me. At the time when the excitement against the Papal aggression was at its height, a Catholic friend offered to take him to one of Cardinal Wiseman's receptions. Wilkie Collins accepted eagerly, and a few days later found himself ascending the stairs of the Cardinal's modest house in York Place. He soon noticed that the men in front of him, as they arrived near their host, bent their knee and kissed his episcopal ring. As a good Protestant Wilkie Collins could

not do likewise; ‘so it ended in our shaking hands and having a most pleasant talk after the crowd had passed.’ The remark which most struck him was when the Cardinal said that the best thing which could happen for his cause would be some fanatical attack upon himself. ‘If any one were to fire a shot at me, I know the innate justice of the English character too well not to feel certain that there would be so great a revulsion of feeling that all this agitation would cease, and my cause would be won.’” (*The Cornhill Magazine*, New Series vol. VII, November 1899, p. 628).

The event clearly took place in the early 1850s. In November 1850 Wiseman was appointed Cardinal and sent to England as the first Archbishop of Westminster when the Roman Catholic hierarchy was re-established in England. There were demonstrations, newspaper editorials and political action against what many Protestants saw as ‘Papal aggression’ – an attempt to re-establish the Catholic Church in England as the main religion. Wiseman died in London in 1865.

It is not clear when the anecdote was told to M.H. though it seems to have been some years later when Collins was famous. Her identity remains unknown but the context of the story indicates she was herself a Catholic.

Wilkie saw the Pope in 1853 on a trip to Rome and showed similar politeness without deference. He wrote to his brother Charles on 13 November 1853

“As I was walking along the street which leads from the Ponte S. Angelo to St Peter’s, two dragoons dashed past me, clearing the road at full gallop, two carriages came after, with cardinals inside – and next came a state coach with the Pope himself. Every creature near me fell on his or her knees. I stood up, of course, but pulled off my hat. The Pope (I suppose, seeing me the only erect figure out of a group of 30 or 40 people), looked straight at me as he passed – and bowed as he saw me with my hat in my hand.”

ARMADALE

Of all his novels, Wilkie stated in two letters that *Armadale* was his own favourite. On 17 May 1885 he wrote to a fan, apparently called Wilkie Collins Barr, ‘I am especially pleased to hear that you like “Armadale” – for, if I may venture to pronounce an opinion, I think “Armadale” the best book that I have written.’ He repeated this view in an interview in *Cassell’s Saturday Journal* in 1887 and the same year he wrote to a Miss Burt ‘The kind manner in which you write of “Armadale” cheers and encourages me. To you I may make the confession that I have always considered this novel to be the best that I have written.’ (25 June 1887).

So it is encouraging that *Armada* still impresses. Journalist Olga Wojtas wrote to WCS secretary Paul Lewis in August

‘You recommended *Armada*, which I’ve just finished, and I think it’s superb! I’m really sorry to have come to the end. The characters are absolutely unforgettable, and the plotting is immaculate. Thank you so much for suggesting it – I’m going around like a revivalist preacher telling everyone to read it.’

Armada figured in a slightly odd way in pieces by statistician and ‘uncomplicated Conservative’ Graeme Archer, a *Daily Telegraph* columnist. He says in the newspaper that *Armada* ‘has a plot more convoluted than any economic theory’ and then embarks on a critique of Government policy in which he also calls in aid the title of ‘A Terribly Strange Bed’. In this and another column he reveals that he started reading *Armada* this month on the train to a very wet Brighton but had finished it in a ‘sunny week’. See <http://goo.gl/SL9AG> and <http://goo.gl/jeXbH>

WALTER SCOTT

A new computer analysis of the influences on nineteenth century fiction puts Jane Austen and Walter Scott top of the list. Matthew Jockers of the University of Nebraska developed the software which categorises novels according to the frequencies with which certain words appear and how the words are grouped. The result is a series of fingerprints which characterise the novels. In an overview of his work he says:

“Jane Austen and Walter Scott are at once the least influenced (i.e. most original) of the early writers in the network and, at the same time, the most influential in terms of the longevity, or ‘fitness,’ of their thematic-stylistic signals. The signals introduced by Austen and Scott position them at the beginning of a stylistic-thematic genealogy; they are, in this sense, the literary equivalent of *Homo erectus* or, if you prefer, Adam and Eve.”

Scott’s influence would not have surprised Wilkie Collins. In his pantheon of novelists Walter Scott came top. On 12 July 1883 he wrote to Miss R— ‘It is not easy to tell you which is my “favourite work” – I must own that I have three favourites. They are written by the three Kings of Fiction: Walter Scott. Fennimore Cooper. Balzac. And they are called: *The Antiquary*. *The Deerslayer*. *Le Père Goriot*.’

He used the same phrase in a letter to Paul Hamilton Hayne on 3 May 1884. And on 21 March 1887 he wrote to B. E. Joseph ‘More than thirty years’ study of the art of writing fiction have convinced me that he is, beyond question, the greatest novelist that this country – or any other country – has produced.’ He used a similar phrase four years later to J. A. Stewart ‘ After more than thirty years’ study of the Art, I consider Walter Scott to be the greatest of all novelists, and “The Antiquary” is, as I think, the most perfect of all novels.’ (9 January 1888).

He gives this ‘word of advice’ to would-be author Frank Archer on 23 July 1886: ‘Study Walter Scott. He is, beyond all comparison, the greatest novelist that has ever written. Get, for instance, “The Antiquary” – and read that masterpiece over and over and over again.’

The WCS is in touch with Matthew Jockers to find out more on his findings as they relate to Collins. More at <http://goo.gl/HeDK8>

THE WOMAN IN WHITE

WCS member Richard Lewis has been reading Walter Scott and finds strong influences in his work on *The Woman in White*.

Richard writes: I'm currently reading Walter Scott's 'Guy Mannering' and am struck by startling links between this novel and TWIW. Wilkie greatly admired Sir Walter Scott and was influenced by him, but until reading 'Guy Mannering' I hadn't realized to what extent:

1. The character Brown appears suddenly in front of Julia Mannering as if 'he had started up from the earth' (almost the exact words Wilkie uses to describe the way the Woman in White appears).
2. Brown checks into an hotel under the alias of Dawson to maintain anonymity (the same name Wilkie adopts with Martha Rudd).
3. Scott presents the narrative from the point of view of various characters, an obvious feature of Wilkie's method.
4. One final tenuous but interesting thing, not related specifically to 'Guy Mannering', is that Walter Scott's son-in-law, John Gibson Lockhart, author and editor of 'The Quarterly Review', lived in Ramsgate, which Wilkie of course visited so often.”

We can add to Richard’s comments that Amelius Goldenheart in *The Fallen Leaves* (1879) turns to Scott as ‘The one supreme genius who soars above all other novelists.’

In addition, the plot in first part of the short story ‘Mr Cosway and the Landlady’ where the landlady forces her young creditor into marriage was thought to be taken from Lockhart’s *The Life of Sir Walter Scott* (1825). The story was originally published in the *Belgravia Annual* for Christmas 1881 and republished in *Little Novels* (1887).

RAMSGATE HOUSE FOR SALE

14 Nelson Crescent in Ramsgate Kent, where Wilkie Collins stayed with Caroline and her daughter for several summer holidays in the 1870s, is for sale. The five floor, six bedroom home has views over Ramsgate Harbour, a garage, and a small paved garden. One floor is a self-contained basement flat. A plaque was recently installed on its front wall to recognise Wilkie’s connexion with the property. The asking price is £480,000. Full details from Right Move <http://goo.gl/MIB0W>.

MRS ROBINSON’S DISGRACE

Kate Summerscale, who wrote *The Suspicions of Mr Whicher* about the Road murder which lent some details to the plot of *The Moonstone*, has turned her attention to another great Victorian scandal in *Mrs Robinson’s Disgrace*. It tells the tale of Isabella Hamilton Walker whose second husband Henry Robinson tried to divorce her in 1858. Theirs was one of the first cases to be heard by the new Court of Divorce and Matrimonial Causes and its lurid details were splashed across the newspapers.

It is quite possible that Collins was one of the many people who sat in court to hear the case. He begins *The Woman in White* thus:

“the story here presented will be told by more than one pen, as the story of an offence against the laws is told in Court by more than one witness — with the same object, in both cases, to present the truth always in its most direct and most intelligible aspect; and to trace the course of one complete series of events, by making the persons who have been most closely connected with them, at each successive stage, relate their own experience, word for word.”

In the preface to the French edition of the book he says that the court cases he heard that influenced the structure were ‘several years ago’ and ‘did not provide me with either characters or events’. But whether he was in court for the Robinson case or not he undoubtedly read the newspaper accounts and there are several aspects of the case which clearly did influence him.

The case was brought by Henry after he found his wife's diary when she was ill (as Fosco found Marian's diary when she was ill). It contained accounts – or rather hints – of intimacy between Isabella and a younger family friend Edward Lane as well as an unrequited passion for a much younger man who was her daughter's tutor. The hearing progressed in evidence by witnesses, extracts from letters, and the diary read into open court, very much as *The Woman in White* is told.

Summerscale refers to Wilkie's most famous book and also to *Armadale* in which the anti-hero Lydia Gwilt keeps a detailed diary of her crimes. At one point she asks herself "Why do I keep a diary at all? Why did the clever thief the other day... keep the very thing to convict him in the shape of a record of everything he stole...Why? Why? Why I don't care why!... There's a reason nobody can answer – myself included."

Apart from the Collins connexion, the book is a fascinating account of the early days of divorce law and the unequal way it treated men and women. To get a divorce a husband only had to prove his wife's adultery. But a wife had to prove not only her husband's adultery but another offence such as cruelty as well. It emerged that Henry in fact had a mistress and children with her. But ultimately, the court decided that Isabella's diary was a fantasy rather than a truthful account of an affair and the divorce was not granted, though Isabella and her husband lived separately thereafter.

Kate Summerscale, *Mrs Robinson's Disgrace – the Private Diary of a Victorian Lady*, Bloomsbury, London 2012 is available through Amazon and other online suppliers.

NEW DRAMATISATION OF *THE WOMAN IN WHITE*

Chicago's Lifeline Theatre is opening its 30th anniversary season with a new production of *The Woman in White*. Adapted by Robert Kauzlaric and directed by Elise Kauzlaric it stars Maggie Scrantom as Laura and Anne with Nicholas Bailey as Hartright, Christopher M. Walsh as Fosco and James Sparling as Glyde.

The blurb reads:

"Trapped in a loveless marriage and threatened by a conspiracy of ruthless men, young heiress Laura Fairlie faces a future of sorrow and misery. Her only hope lies with her true love, the poor artist Walter Hartright, and her sister Marian Halcombe, both of whom will risk everything to protect her."

The play runs from 7 September to 28 October. There are public discussions with the playwright and actors throughout the run. In 2011 the theatre put on a new adaptation of *The Moonstone*, also adapted by Robert Kauzlaric. More at www.lifelinetheatre.com

THE INVISIBLE WOMAN

The film of Claire Tomalin's book about Dickens's mistress the actress Ellen Ternan is currently in post-production and will be released in 2013. As we reported in earlier newsletters Tom Hollander will play Wilkie and Ralph Fiennes, who is directing the film, will play Dickens. The cast list also includes Michelle Fairley – who has appeared in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (Mrs Granger) and Sky's fantasy series *Game of Thrones* (Catelyn Stark) – as Caroline Graves. Kirsten Scott Thomas will play Ellen's mother Catherine.

Professor Michael Slater, who published his comprehensive biography of Charles Dickens in 2010, has turned his forensic brain on Dickens and Ellen Ternan. He looks not just at the relationship itself and the evidence for it, but also how the family tried to cover it up, and how after the death of Dickens's last surviving son in 1934, the story, often elaborated, entered the public domain. He also raises the interesting question of whether Wilkie played a part in covering up the presence of Ellen Ternan at Dickens's funeral on 14 June 1870. Wilkie gave Times lead writer William Stebbing the information to write a column about the funeral. It says there were 14 mourners. But further down in the column lists only lists 13 names. Slater suggests Ellen was the missing mourner. (See also Collins to Stebbing 14 June 1870).

Michael Slater, *The Great Charles Dickens Scandal*, Yale 2012, is available through Amazon and other sources.

DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

Longstanding WCS member, Paul Graham has just taken over from Joan Dicks as Joint Hon. Gen. Sec. of the Dickens Fellowship. In preparation for this he has been compiling a programme of events for 2013 – two of which may also be of particular interest to WCS members. They are:

Wednesday 22 May – Lynn Shepherd will talk about her novel *Tom All Alone's* inspired by both *Bleak House* and *The Woman in White* – and characters and incidents from both novels are introduced at the dénouement. The venue is Goodenough College, Mecklenburgh Square, London WC1N.

Wednesday 24 July – John Sutherland will talk on ‘*Great Expectations* and *All the Year Round* – What Did Dickens learn from Wilkie?’. The venue is Lumen United Reform Church, 88 Tavistock Place, London, WC1N.

[para]

Paul and the Dickens Fellowship have kindly agreed that any WCS member will be welcome to attend.

FRIENDS OF KENSAL GREEN CEMETERY

WCS members may be interested in forthcoming lectures of the Friends of Kensal Green Cemetery. Meetings will take place at 6.30 for 7.00pm in the Dissenters’ Chapel, best approached using the Ladbroke Grove entrance.

On 25 September FOKGC guide, Robert Stephenson will talk on ‘The Gruesome History of Body Snatching’ where he will explore the lengths to which ‘resurrectionists’ went to supply bodies to schools of anatomy and medical researchers.

[para]

On Thursday 1 November Signe Hoffos, also a FOKGC guide, will talk on ‘Dickens’ Connections at Kensal Green’ where she will look at associations with the life and work of Charles Dickens, including family, friends, illustrators, publishers and even models for his characters.

WILKIE IN RUSSIA

Our much travelled Dutch member Pierre Tissot van Patot writes that he was very surprised to discover how many books by Collins are printed in Riga, the capital of Latvia, including one edition dated 1892. He was able to purchase modern copies of *The Moonstone* both there and in Tallin, the capital of Estonia, in the Baltic languages dated 1975 when both countries were still nominally part of Russia. Wilkie was always very popular in Russia, almost all of his works were translated and print runs of his main novels ran into the hundred thousands.

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NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2012

THE WILKIE COLLINS JOURNAL

As mentioned in previous Newsletters, the former *Wilkie Collins Society Journal* has now become an online publication as *The Wilkie Collins Journal*. We are delighted to report that the first issue is now available at acc.wilkiecollinssociety.org and includes the following five essays:

‘The Decomposing Past and the Challenges to Modernity: Corporeal and Architectural Decay in Wilkie Collins’ by Mariaconcetta Costantini of the University of Chieti-Pescara, Italy.

‘Ugo Foscolo’s ‘Last Letters of Jacopo Ortis’ and Wilkie Collins’s ‘The Woman in White’: A Case for Possible Influence’ by Shifra Hochberg of the Ariel University Center, Israel.

‘Opening up the Secret Theatre of Home: Wilkie Collins’s ‘The Woman in White’ on the Victorian Stage’ by Valerie Pedlar

Wilkie Collins’s Legacies: ‘The Moonstone’ in Boris Akunin’s ‘Murder on the Leviathan’ and ‘Children’s Book’ by Marcia Morris of Georgetown University, USA.

‘There is nothing either of Wilkie or Collins about it’: Naming and Signing in Wilkie Collins’s ‘Memoirs of the Life of William Collins’ and ‘Blind Love’ by Ryan Barnett.

The first issue also contains reviews of *A Companion to Sensation Fiction* by Pamela K. Gilbert (Editor); *Ghost-Seers, Detectives, and Spiritualists: Theories of Vision in Victorian literature and Science* by Srdjan Smajić; and *Science, Sexuality and Sensation Novels: Pleasures of the Senses* by Laurie Garrison.

The WCS would like to record its thanks to the current editor, Andrew Mangham, for all his time and efforts in masterminding the reincarnation of the Journal in its new format; to Verity Hunt for her work on the archives; to Verity Burke for her editorial assistance; to Tatiana Kontou for her work as reviews editor; and to Tim Jennings at '[Really Simple Sites](#)' for his excellent work on the websites for both the WCS and the Journal.

Because of the pressure of other commitments, Andrew Mangham is now stepping down from his editorial role for which in this issue he has been ably assisted by Dr Anne-Marie Beller. For 2013 she will become the new Journal editor. We would also like to welcome Tara MacDonald as the new reviews editor.

PRE-RAPHAELITES AT TATE BRITAIN

Showing until 13 January is 'The Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant-Garde' at Tate Britain. The exhibition includes work from many of Collins's friends and acquaintances including Millais, Holman Hunt, Augustus Egg, D. G. Rosetti and Thomas Woolner. Although never formally a member of the movement, Wilkie's brother Charles is represented by two paintings. *Convent Thoughts* was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1851. *May in the Regent's Park* was painted in the same year and shows the view from 17 Hanover Terrace where Charles, Wilkie and their mother, Harriet, lived from 1850-56.

Another probable Collins connection is 'The Awakening Conscience' (1853-54) by William Holman Hunt. The subject is that of a young gentleman visiting his mistress in the house where he has installed her. "As they play and sing at the piano, the woman's conscience is awakened to memories of her childish innocence and she rises from her lover's lap." The appearance of the interior, which is painted in minute and symbolic detail, is generally considered to be based on Wilkie's 1852 description in *Basil* of the Sherwin drawing room at North Villa, Hollyoak Square to the north of Regent's Park.

“Everything was oppressively new. The brilliantly-varnished door cracked with a report like a pistol when it was opened; the paper on the walls, with its gaudy pattern of birds, trellis-work, and flowers, in gold, red, and green on a white ground, looked hardly dry yet; the showy window-curtains of white and sky-blue, and the still showier carpet of red and yellow, seemed as if they had come out of the shop yesterday; the round rosewood table was in a painfully high state of polish; the morocco-bound picture books that lay on it, looked as if they had never been moved or opened since they had been bought; not one leaf even of the music on the piano was dogs-eared or worn. Never was a richly furnished room more thoroughly comfortless than this - the eye ached at looking round it. There was no repose anywhere. The print of the Queen, hanging lonely on the wall, in its heavy gilt frame, with a large crown at the top, glared on you: the paper, the curtains, the carpet glared on you: the books, the wax-flowers in glass-cases, the chairs in flaring chintz-covers, the china plates on the door, the blue and pink glass vases and cups ranged on the chimney-piece, the over-ornamented chiffoniers with Tonbridge toys and long-necked smelling bottles on their upper shelves - all glared on you. There was no look of shadow, shelter, secrecy, or retirement in any one nook or corner of those four gaudy walls. All surrounding objects seemed startlingly near to the eye; much nearer than they really were. The room would have given a nervous man the headache, before he had been in it a quarter of an hour.”

A full description of the picture is given by the Tate’s catalogue entry at www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hunt-the-awakening-conscience-t02075/text-catalogue-entry

There is also a four minute video analysis of the painting by Dr Beth Harris and Dr Steven Zucker on youtube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=9gnM72T4DTE

‘THE GHOST’S TOUCH’

This year’s Halloween production at the Greenwich Theatre on 4 November was ‘The Ghost’s Touch.’ The adaptation of Wilkie’s story was by John Goodrum of the Rumpus Theatre Company which in 2010 had also turned to Collins with a version of ‘The Dead Hand’. The plot of this production was

loosely based on Collins's supernatural tale published with the original title in 1885 and reprinted as 'Mrs Zant and the Ghost' in *Little Novels* (1887).

The story begins when Mr Rayburn, a widower, and his young daughter, Lucy, meet Mrs Zant in Kensington Gardens while she is experiencing a vision of her dead husband. The actual cast on stage consisted only of Nicholas Gilbrook as Rayburn and Amanda Howard as Mrs Zant. The remainder of the cast was 'played' by recorded voices. In a way it gave an extra dimension to the production and added to the supernatural atmosphere but it also gave the impression of reducing production costs by eliminating most of the actors. The plot then diverged from the Collins original and ultimately became very confusing. In the end it was completely unclear as to which character was haunting which.

COLLINS FAMILY PAINTINGS

Three portraits of Wilkie, nine paintings by his brother Charles, and up to eighty by their father William Collins R.A. are now available online in a database of 210,000 oil paintings owned by the nation.

The Charles Allston Collins pictures include his well know works *Convent Thoughts* (Ashmolean), *May in the Regent's Park* (Tate London), and *The Pedlar* (Manchester City Galleries) as well as two much less well known canvasses both called *The Stream* (Southwark Art Collection). His portraits of William Collins (Nottingham City) and Wilkie himself (Fitzwilliam) are there too. Two other portraits of Wilkie – by Millais and Rudolf Lehmann – are also on the database.

Although a few of the 80 paintings by William Collins are 'attributed to' or 'in the style of this is the fullest online collection of his work anywhere. The database, which includes an image and location for each of the paintings, was prepared by the Public Catalogue Foundation and is hosted by the BBC www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE - THE GAMES VERSION

For those who would like a computer game based on Collins's well known novel, Avanquest Software have issued *Woman in White* in their Victorian

Mysteries series. “Walter Hartright, a poor drawing teacher, finds himself in the middle of an inexplicable mystery. Somehow his future is intertwined with an elusive woman who harbours a dreadful secret. A secret so damaging her life is in danger!” Not quite Wilkie but excellent graphics and most of the original characters make an appearance. Available from the Avanaquest website at £10.20 but it often appears on eBay for a good deal less.

A NEW (OLD) DESCRIPTION OF COLLINS

Most of the descriptions of Wilkie with which we are most familiar are those by writers in England such as Harry Quilter, Hall Caine and Edmund Yates. A less well known description is given in William H. Rideing’s 1912 *Many Celebrities and a Few Others: a Bundle of Reminiscences*. Rideing (1853-1918) was an Englishman who lived in America and worked in on the staff of the Boston weekly family paper, *The Youth’s Companion*, from the early 1880s. Rideing visited Collins in Gloucester Place and was in correspondence with him during 1886.

I call at Gloucester Place to see Wilkie Collins in his little house, a cheerful, rotund, business-like man of a height disproportionate to his ample girth. Already advanced in years, he had the briskness of middle age and the freshness of youth in his complexion. His luxuriant beard was like spun silver, and had he worn a long mediaeval cloak and peered out of it below its cowl, he would have made the traditional Faust as that character appears before Mephistopheles transforms him. Notwithstanding his matter-of-fact speech with its occasional cockneyisms of phrase and pronunciation; notwithstanding his well-tailored and modern apparel, as modish as that of any city man; there was a suggestion of the pictorial necromancer about him, which grew as one listened to him, and instead of prints, of which he was a connoisseur, against the walls, one almost expected to find the apparatus of an alchemist.

He was writing for us a few stories based on circumstantial evidence, and he frankly exhibited to me the books of remarkable trials which he was using as material... The trials are accessible to all, but the attempts to transmute them, as Wilkie Collins did, into little dramas enacted by

human beings in natural surroundings, are sure to be futile... [It] depends after all on the possession and exercise of that creative imagination which the books do not supply.

The stories in question, published in *The Youth's Companion*, were 'Victims of Circumstances Discovered in Records of Old Trials': 'A Sad Death and Brave Life' (Vol. 59, 19 August 1866); 'Farmer Fairweather' (Vol. 59, 16 December 1886); and 'The Hidden Cash' (Vol. 60, 20 April 1887). The first two stories were republished in *Boys Own Paper* 23 October 1886 and 26 February 1887). All three were republished by the WCS in June 2002 with a detailed history and introduction by Graham Law.

SUBVERSION AND SYMPATHY

Due to be published early in 2013 is *Subversion and Sympathy: Gender, Law, and the British Novel*, edited by two professors of law, Martha C. Nussbaum and Alison L. Lacroix. (Oxford University Press, New York, ISBN 978 0199812042). The book consists of papers presented at a conference of the University of Chicago Law School. There are four main parts, 'Marriage and Sex'; 'Law, Social Norms, and Women's Agency'; 'Property, Commerce, Travel'; and 'Readers and Interpretation'.

There is not a huge Collins content but the front cover features the Millais illustration to the Sampson Low 1864 edition of *No Name*. This shows Magdalen poised at an open window with a vial of poison, counting the passing ships to decide whether or not she should commit suicide. The novel is described with a very good plot summary in Chapter 7 on 'The Stain of Illegitimacy: Gender, Law, and the Trollopian Subversion'. Nussbaum cites *No Name* as "one of the era's most extensive critiques of the irrationality of inheritance law in relation to illegimates", a description which would no doubt have pleased Wilkie no end. The section concludes with "Collins makes Magdalen's story the occasion for a critical examination of society's stock portrait of the illegitimate woman. He plays a double game, soliciting a frisson of horror even while he shows Magdalen to be superior to the boring folks around her. Nonetheless, despite his evident enthusiasm for his uncanny heroine, he gives his Victorian audience what convention demands: energy punished, docility restored."

Other brief references to Collins occur later in the book, mainly in connection with the sensation novel. Nicola Lacey, a Professor of criminal law, points out in Chapter 8, 'Gender, Agency and Women's Criminality in the Novels of Anthony Trollope', that Madame Max is "the first female literary English detective (*Phineas Redux* 1874), by way of beating Wilkie Collins's Valeria Brinton of *The Law and the Lady* (1875) to the title by just one year." But perhaps Professor Lacey hadn't read Collins short story 'The Diary of Anne Rodway' published in *Household Words* in July 1856.

A DICKENS MISCELLANY

The Charles Dickens Museum at 48 Doughty Street where the Inimitable lived from 1837 to 1839 has now re-opened after a complete three million pound refurbishment for the bicentenary. There is not, in fact, much Wilkie on display amongst the amazing Dickensiana consisting of books, letters, pictures, playbills, furniture and other memorabilia. The house, now in wonderful condition, does however give a realistic idea of contemporary living in the mid nineteenth century and well worth a visit for any Collins enthusiast.

Oxford University Press has now published *The Selected Letters of Charles Dickens*, edited by Jenny Hartley (ISBN 978-0-19-959141-1), which for nearly 500 pages at £20 seems an absolute bargain. Each of the twelve volumes of the definitive Pilgrim edition of the letters now sells for around £200 although Collins researchers would probably manage with volume seven onwards. Further information is available on the OUP website.

Simon Callow, who is apparently a fan of Collins as well as Dickens, has now written *Charles Dickens and the Great Theatre of the World*, published by Harper Press at £8.99 (ISBN 978-0007445301). As the advertising blurb says, "Acclaimed actor and writer Simon Callow captures the essence of Charles Dickens in a sparkling biography that explores the central importance of the theatre to the life of the greatest storyteller in the English language." Further details at <https://harpercollins.co.uk/products/charles-dickens-and-the-great-theatre-of-the-world-simon-callow>.

There is also a new, illustrated edition of Forster's *The Life of Charles Dickens*, edited by Holley Furneaux (Sterling Publishing, ISBN 978-1402772856, £30). But don't expect much Wilkie content as Forster's original took pains to ignore him as much as possible.

DICKENS JOURNALS ONLINE

Hazel Mackenzie and Ben Winyard have completed indexing *Household Words* and *All The Year Round* for the Dickens Journals Online project. As reported in previous newsletters, it has images and transcripts of every issue of both periodicals to which Wilkie contributed for many years. The indexing allows the contents to be comprehensively searched by title, author and subject. All Wilkie's contributions to *Household Words* are easy to find. Authorship in *All The Year Round* is less certain but his major works *The Woman in White*, *No Name* and *The Moonstone* are there together with several shorter pieces, some of which are not by Wilkie such as 'Boxing Day' (probably by Charles Collins).

DJO makes one new attribution to Wilkie 'Good Qualities of Gout' (*All The Year Round* vol. I, 28 May 1859 pp. 102-105). Although the subject matter is clearly one close to Wilkie's heart, there is no definite evidence that he suffered from gout in the 1850s. He first mentions it by name in a letter to Charles Ward on 15 January 1863. The style of this piece does not seem like Wilkie – and is completely different from the piece which is by him that follows entitled 'The Royal Academy in Bed'. Although in that he refers to being confined to his bed by illness there is no evidence that he was in fact ill at that time. Now that the body of work is complete and indexed the WCS looks forward to working with the DJO project on attributions to both Wilkie and Charles.

This free online resource is also invaluable for anyone who wants to read in their original form Wilkie's early periodical work, three of his major novels, numerous short stories and works written in collaboration with Dickens www.djo.org.uk.

THE INVISIBLE WOMAN

The film based on Claire Tomalin's book about Dickens's mistress Ellen Ternan is currently in post-production and is due to be released in 2013. It stars

Ralph Fiennes as Dickens, Felicity Jones as Ellen, and Tom Hollander as Wilkie himself. Parts of it were filmed at Harrow School. There are more details at <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1700845> and <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/entertainment-arts-25910009>

PORTHGENNA AND *THE DEAD SECRET*

A new adaptation of *The Dead Secret* intended for the medium of film has recently been written by Yahna Katrina Tucker. Quoting from the publisher's comments,

“Literary critics have recently begun to rediscover the value of Wilkie Collins’s highly popular sensation novels of the 1850s and ’60s as art and social commentary and to recognize their influence on today’s mystery and suspense writers. However, more attention and credit is due to Collins’s early works, such as *The Dead Secret* published serially in 1857, which tells the story of the painfully timid Sarah Leeson, a lady’s maid who is burdened by her mistress with a terrible secret that threatens to drive Sarah mad ... Today a film version of his work is the perfect medium for this reintroduction. Though this has been tried with Collins’s most popular novels, *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone*, the length and complexity of these novels have not allowed adaptors to do them justice in film form. In contrast, the interesting characters, suspenseful plot, and sinister atmosphere of *The Dead Secret* are only heightened when adapted for the medium of film. ... thanks to Collins’s tight plotting and the story’s timeless relevance.... Since Collins wrote *The Dead Secret* for serialization and with a play adaptation in mind and thanks to Collins’s vividly visual style of writing, the transition from book to film is a remarkably smooth one.”

Porthgenna: A Screenplay Adaptation of Wilkie Collins’s “The Dead Secret” is published by Proquest, Umi Dissertation Publishing, ISBN 978 1243402691.

A THESIS ON *THE WOMAN IN WHITE*

The same publishers, ProQuest, have also issued *The Significance of Silence: The Muted Voices of Count Fosco and Laura Fairlie in “The Woman in White.”* by Melanie Virginia Page (ISBN 13: 978-1249892991). According to the advertising blurb,

“This thesis examines the intricacies of voice using narrative theory and reader-response theory with Wilkie Collins’ *The Woman in White*. Since Collins first wrote this epistolary novel serially, he wrote aware of his audience as he printed segments with different narrators. This novel allowed Collins the opportunity to reveal an internal set of narrators’ responses to other characters’ voices - responses that sometimes conflict with and modify one another. At the same time, Collins’ contemporary audience’s responses to the novel reveal the role of characters’ voices in shaping reactions of members of the novel’s reading public. Two opposing figures - Laura Fairlie and Count Fosco - aid this examination of understanding voice through multiple lenses as both of these characters are relatively silent in the context of the narrative while still remaining essential to the plot. Their distance from the narrative makes the interpretations the readership and narrators of the novel have of these two characters imperative to consider.”

The published version in paperback costs an alarming £59 from Amazon or £47.57 from the Book Depository (also owned by Amazon). The text can, however, be downloaded for free from the academic website <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1229&context=masters>

MARK TWAIN ESSAY

WCS member Chris Adye found an essay by Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens) which refers to Wilkie’s admiration for the American novelist James Fenimore Cooper. The essay does not share Wilkie’s view. Clemens begins with three quotations praising Cooper. Two are from literary professors and this one is attributed to Wilkie: “Cooper is the greatest artist in the domain of romantic fiction in America.” The essay then goes on to challenge these views in uncompromising terms.

“It seems to me that it was far from right for the Professor of English Literature at Yale, the Professor of English Literature in Columbia, and Wilkie Collins to deliver opinions on Cooper’s literature without having read some of it. It would have been much more decorous to keep silent and let persons talk who have read Cooper.”

The exact quote from Wilkie is untraced – though it is possible it was in a lost letter to Clemens or one Clemens had seen. Wilkie does praise Cooper in at least three recorded letters. He refers to him as one of the “three kings of fiction” in a letter to Miss R – along with Walter Scott and Honoré de Balzac (12 July 1883). And he uses the same phrase to Paul Hamilton Hayne opining that “It may be hundreds of years, or it may be only hundreds of days, before another Fenimore Cooper appears in America, or another Walter Scott in England.” (3 May 1884).

The letter to Miss R specifically mentions Cooper’s *The Deerslayer* as one of his favourite works - along with Scott’s *The Antiquary* and Balzac’s *Le Père Goriot*. It is *The Deerslayer* which Clemens goes on to slate as violating eighteen of the “nineteen rules governing literary art in the domain of romantic fiction”.

Mark Twain’s essay ‘Fenimore Cooper’s Literary Offences’ can be read here <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/hns/indians/offense.html>.

INCONVENIENT PEOPLE

Sarah Wise’s new book examines the Victorian use of the madhouse to get rid of inconvenient people - especially inconvenient women and in particular inconvenient wives.

There are numerous references in the book to Wilkie and, of course, to *The Woman in White* and Laura’s incarceration in a madhouse under the name of Anne Catherick. Sarah Wise has a whole chapter entitled ‘The Woman in Yellow’ about the novelist Bulwer Lytton’s relationship with his wife. They separated after a few years but Rosina’s pursuit of her husband for a bigger allowance lasted many years, eventually including disruption of public meetings when he stood for Parliament. In 1858 Bulwer had her incarcerated in the private asylum Wyke House. She became something of a cause célèbre and after pressure from influential friends was released after a few weeks. She wrote her own account of it in her book *A Blighted Life* (1880). Like Percival Glyde in *The Woman in White* Bulwer Lytton was a baronet. Apparently not seeing Glyde as a villain at all, Rosina wrote to Wilkie after its publication “the great failure of your book is the villain; Count Fosco is a very poor one, and when next you want a character of that sort I trust you will not disdain to come

to me. The man is alive and is constantly under my gaze. In fact he is my own husband.” (Cited in *Collected Letters of Rosina Bulwer Lytton*, 2008, vol. I).

Inconvenient People by Sarah Wise is published by Bodley Head at £20.

ARMADALE

A Wilkie Collins fan who blogs under the name Elizannie wrote in October of her trip to Armadale, the small town on the coast of Skye. She went there simply because she loved Wilkie’s writing and that “One of Collins’s best books in my opinion is *Armadale*.” In her blog she is pictured by an Armadale ferry sign: rephidimstreet.blogspot.co.uk/2012/10/on-road-or-whisky-and-kilts.html

There are, in fact, three Armadales in Scotland; two in Australia, plus an Armadale; one in Canada; and a Scottish cheese with the same name but which seems unobtainable south of the border. There was also an early English three-wheeler motor car manufactured from 1906 to 1907. (See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armadale). Wilkie would probably have first encountered the name in 1842 as it is a village about thirty miles from Thurso where he travelled with his father in 1842. (*Memoirs of William Collins, R.A.* vol. II, p. 209).

THE NAME’S THE SAME

Laura Glyde – the married name of Laura Fairlie in *The Woman in White* – is not a common name. But it turned up recently in the *Echo* – a local online paper in Essex. It reports that Laura Glyde, who runs the Stafford Hall care home in Benfleet, has been named as the care home manager of the year by the Essex County Council https://www.echo-news.co.uk/news/local_news/8971655.stafford-halls-laura-glyde-is-care-home-manager-of-the-year/

Our thanks to biographer Andrew Lycett for this information.

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NEWSLETTER

SPRING AND SUMMER 2013

COMBINED NEWSLETTERS

We are conscious that the 2013 Spring Newsletter is rather overdue. This is mainly because our efforts have been directed at publishing *The Lighthouse* (see below) which we have been keen to make available to members as part of their 2013 subscription at no extra charge. We have also spent a good deal of time in considering the future of the *Wilkie Collins Journal* and the WCS website (also see below). In addition, it has been necessary to keep an eye on the ever increasing cost of postage and for this year we have therefore combined Spring and Summer into this single Newsletter. The Winter Newsletter will put us back on schedule in due course.

THE LIGHTHOUSE

As part of Society's continuing programme of republishing Collins's works which have not been seen since their early publication, our latest production is *The Lighthouse*. This is a drama written by Wilkie Collins and first performed privately in 1855 under the enthusiastic direction of Charles Dickens at his home at Tavistock House. There were two professional productions, in London during 1857, and in New York during 1858. Although there was a French translation of the play with an introduction in French by Collins himself, because of his caution in preserving dramatic copyright there has until now been no English edition.

The Lighthouse is the story of a murder thought committed long before and confessed by its perpetrator when almost at the point death by starvation. The

play explores the psychological effects of the crime on the other characters and when the supposed victim is rescued from a shipwreck, it finishes with forgiveness and reconciliation.

The Lighthouse is published by the Wilkie Collins Society in association with Francis Boutle Publishers and consists of a transcription of the version licensed by the Examiner of Plays for the Olympic Theatre in 1857 with a detailed introduction by Andrew Gasson and Caroline Radcliffe (of the Drama Department of Birmingham University). This analyses the creation and the original stage production of the drama and is accompanied by a translation of Collins's own introduction to the French edition of the play and several contemporary reviews which set the drama in context as well as indicating the reception of both the play and its actors by the literary critics of the day. Our Patron, P. D. James, has graciously consented to write a Foreword to the publication and by one of those nice coincidences she had also written a crime story entitled *The Lighthouse*, published in 2005 – exactly 150 years after Collins's drama. The work includes numerous illustrations of the various productions, most of which are rarely seen, and a recently discovered sketch of Charles Dickens as he appeared in 1855. The date of publication is 16 June, the anniversary of the play's original production at Tavistock House.

Because of its importance in the canon of Collins's dramatic works, The Wilkie Collins Society has produced it as a hardback book for its members in a limited edition of 250 copies. As mentioned above, this is included within the 2013 subscription. Members can purchase additional copies from the WCS at £12.50 but there is also a paperback, trade edition available at £9.99 direct from the publishers, Francis Boutle, 272 Alexandra Park Road, N22 7BG (www.francisboutle.co.uk).

THE WILKIE COLLINS WEBSITES – THE FUTURE

The Society currently has two complementary websites. That for the Wilkie Collins Society now has all but the most recent Newsletters uploaded and presented in an easily searchable form. The other, for the online *Wilkie Collins Journal*, has had the first issue of the Third Series, under the editorship of Andrew Manghan, freely available since the end of 2012. Our new Journal editor, Ann-Marie Beller, is working hard on the issue for 2013 and under her guidance and a new web designer we will be making new arrangements for the future to give members a proper period of priority. The two websites will be combined and members will be given a password to access the latest issue which will not be available to non-members and casual browsers for at least a

year. The ability to print either individual articles or whole issues will be made much easier together with improvements to the search facility. We will be able to provide photocopies for those members who do not use the internet and Newsletters will continue to be sent in printed form.

TOM ALL ALONES

Tom-All-Alone's is an innovative novel by Lynn Shepherd which ends with a surprising Collins connection. Set in 1850s London, it uses the background and characters from *Bleak House*. The main protagonist is private detective, Charles Maddox, formerly of the Metropolitan Police and therefore well acquainted with Inspector Bucket who plays a major role in the plot. We also encounter Tulkinghorn, who is even more scheming and villainous than in *Bleak House*, along with Mr George and his shooting gallery, Dr Woodcourt, a series of 'Hester's Narratives' and descriptions of the eponymous London slums. The final denouement takes place in a Hampstead asylum wherein is detained none other than Anne Catherick, her treatment paid for by Sir Percival Glyde. In Lynn Shepherd's postscript she notes "Even if the relationship between this novel [*The Woman in White*] and my own is not made explicit until the closing chapters, the moment when *Tom-All-Alone's* really came to life for me was when I realised that the time-scheme of *Bleak House* could be made to run parallel with Collins' very precise chronology for *The Woman in White*, which culminates in Sir Percival Glyde's death in a fire in late November 1850." The ending is certainly a surprise but perhaps not entirely convincing to Collins enthusiasts.

A MISSING PORTRAIT

In 1890, the year following Collins's death, the then popular artist Walter Goodman exhibited at the sixty-seventh annual exhibition of the Royal Society of British Artists a portrait entitled 'The Late Mr. Wilkie Collins at the age of 56'. According to the catalogue, Goodman had his studio in Weston Place, Brighton and the painting was priced at £42. It was presumably unsold as there were reports in the Daily and Sunday Times for June 1891 that Goodman was attempting to sell it to the Garrick Club, pledging half the proceeds to a fund to support the comic playwright, Robert Reece.

Walter Goodman (1838-1912) was a student at the Royal Academy from 1851. He travelled extensively during the 1860s to Europe, the West Indies and the United States. His most prolific period for portraiture was during the 1870s. He also contributed articles to various periodicals, including 'People I have Painted' to Sala's Journal.

A lengthy biography can be found on Wikipedia which has several illustrations of Goodman's pictures. There is also an erroneous note that in 1877 *The Illustrated London News* carried "An illustration for a Wilkie Collins story, "A Bit for Bob" in the magazine's Christmas Number." Recent research has revealed details of nearly 100 of his works. Unfortunately the location of most of these – including the Collins – is unknown.

Most of the contemporary paintings of Collins are well known and include the Millais when he was aged 26; the Charles Collins, aged 29; and the Rudolf Lehmann, aged 56. There were also numerous photographic portraits nearly all of which can be found on the Paul Lewis website at www.wilkiecollins.com. Noting the similarity of the date for the Goodman painting, we can assume that it may have looked similar to the Lehmann; but where is its current location?

NOT BY WILKIE COLLINS

A very curious book by Duke de Medina Pomar called *Fashion and Passion; or Life in Mayfair* was published in three volumes in 1876. It consists of 94 short chapters, each one with the title of a contemporary work of fiction by other authors but clearly stated as not actually written by them. Many of them are well known although others are now very obscure. Thus we have *The Way we Live Now* – not by Anthony Trollope; *The Pathfinder* – not by Fennimore Cooper; *A Terrible Temptation* – not by Charles Reade; and *Pride and Prejudice* – not by Miss Austen. Collins is well represented by five titles, *The Woman in White*, *After Dark*, *Man and Wife*, *The Law and the Lady* and 'A Plot in Private Life'.

The book was apparently an extremely popular novel of London Society with the plot featuring the beautiful Señorita Consuelo and her lover Alfredo. They meet during a ship's passage from Spain to London following which melodramatic incidents in London Society abound. There is currently a copy for sale by Quaritch whose description notes:

What *Fashion and Passion* lacks in originality it makes up for in a lively descriptive style and good-humoured acknowledgement that it apes many of the tropes of popular fiction..... Medina Pomar revealed much about the novel's contemporary critical reception in the preface to his novel *Who is she?* of the same year. In a spirited defence he claims that 'no novel ever met with so much abuse at the hands of reviewers', but that their cruelty did him a service: 'every copy of the first edition was sold almost as soon as it was announced; and even my most intimate friends could not get a copy, for love or money, within two months of its publication – so that a new edition became immediately

necessary.' He ruminates on the irony that nothing buoys a novel's readership as much as a bad review.

***THE WOMAN IN WHITE* – A MUST-READ BOOK**

At the beginning of June, *The Daily Telegraph* featured its '500 Must-Read Books'. In the Crime section, top of the list is *The Woman in White* described as "the first great Victorian thriller." As ever, it resides in good company, along with Sherlock Holmes, Raymond Chandler, Agatha Christie, Robert Harris and Elmore Leonard. Also included is *The Suspicions of Mr Whicher*, which raises the question, why no *Moonstone*?

ANOTHER *MOONSTONE* FOR THE BBC

The Moonstone, however, according to the *Daily Mail* of 12 January will be made into a three-part series by the BBC. "It is more than 150 years since he first captured the nation's imagination, but Sergeant Cuff, star of Wilkie Collins' classic *The Moonstone*, is to be brought to the small screen ...Following the success of another 19th century detective, Sherlock Holmes, BBC One is to make a lavish new crime series following the adventures of Sergeant Cuff. Described by T.S. Eliot as the 'first and greatest of English detective novels', *The Moonstone* is widely regarded as a seminal work introducing fictional police drama to British literature. The three-part series will follow the original story but is being adapted for television. It sees Sergeant Cuff of Scotland Yard called in to solve the theft of a precious stone, which itself was originally stolen by a British army officer at the storming of a great palace in India."

The maths doesn't quite add up since *The Moonstone* was originally published in 1868 but with three episodes this new production may have time to do more justice to the original than the BBC's rather poor previous attempt in 2006.

THE FROZEN DEEP AND THE FRANKLIN EXPEDITON

Although the dramatic version of *The Frozen Deep* was written in 1857 and the story published in book form during 1874, it is now apparent that Collins still maintained his interest in the Arctic and the loss of the Franklin expedition at least until 1884. An interesting association copy has recently come to light.

The Narrative of the Discovery of the Fate of Sir John Franklin and His Companions by Captain McClintock was originally published by John Murray in 1859. This particular copy had originally been presented by the publisher to E. Osborne Smith, the Treasurer of the Geographical Club of London. It had subsequently been acquired by Collins who wrote the inscription "Purchased

from a London bookseller, in 1884, by Wilkie Collins.” This was a book which seems to have escaped previous notice since it isn’t mentioned in Professor William Baker’s comprehensively detailed *Wilkie Collins’s Library* nor in any of the sales catalogues following Collins’s death in 1889. The volume was later acquired in 1913 by Townsend W. Thorndike, a noted American collector of Arctic books.

The author, Captain 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.

THE INVISIBLE WOMAN

The film version of Claire Tomalin's biography of Charles Dickens's lover Ellen Ternan is now scheduled for release in February 2014. The film is directed by Ralph Fiennes, who also plays Dickens, and will include the first onscreen depiction of Wilkie Collins. That part will be played by Tom Hollander. The 45 year old actor is almost exactly Wilkie's age when Dickens died and, at 1.65m, is almost exactly Wilkie's height - which he put at 5'6". I look forward to seeing the beard! Hollander is perhaps best known recently for his depiction of Reverend Adam Smallbone in the BAFTA winning TV series *Rev.* Felicity Jones will play Ellen, Kristin Scott Thomas her mother Catherine, and Michelle Fairley will depict Wilkie's companion of thirty years, Catherine Graves. It is a BBC Films and Headline Pictures production.

CONFERENCE SEASON

Wilkie Collins will be the subject of two conferences in November, one in the USA and one in London.

The Midwest Modern Language Association conference focuses on the theme Art and Artifice and a special session will be devoted to Collins. "Often dismissed as a writer of lighter fare" the conference wants to put him in its critical spotlight to see how he "explored deeper social issues - marriage, sexuality, ethics, and science...while catering to his audience's taste for art and artifice." The conference takes place in Milwaukee, 7-10 November. Registration costs \$45 or \$95 but you may have to join MMLA first. <http://luc.edu/mmla/annualconvention.html>

In the same week in London on 9 November the Victorian Popular Fiction Association will devote a study day to Collins. 'Wilkie Collins: New Directions and Readings' will include papers by Tara MacDonald of University of Amsterdam, WCS Journal editor Anne-Marie Beller (Loughborough) and Joanne Ella Parsons of Bath Spa. The day will be at the English Institute, Senate House, London. More information from Janice Allan j.m.allan@salford.ac.uk.

CAMBODIAN ECHO OF *THE MOONSTONE*

The *Indian Express* saw parallels between the return to Cambodia of two tenth century Khmer statues and the plot of Wilkie's 1868 novel *The Moonstone*. New York's Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art recently decided to return the figures after evidence that they were plundered during the Vietnam War. Cambodia has appealed to other American museums to return artefacts stolen after 1970. In *The Moonstone* Indian priests track down the unique yellow diamond stolen from the head of a statue by a British soldier in Seringapatam in 1799. At the end of the novel the diamond is returned to its original place.

SPOOKY PASTICHE

"I woke, as it seemed, from a nightmare of being stretched on the rack." With those words John Harwood opens his novel *The Asylum*. Described by the *New York Times* as 'a clever simulation of a sensation novel' it draws heavily on the plot of *The Woman in White*. Georgina Ferrars, unmarried and living with her uncle over his Bloomsbury bookshop, awakens to find herself locked in an asylum in Cornwall. The doctor in charge says she is Lucy Ashton and her uncle swears Georgina is still with him. But she knows they are both wrong. You can buy this 'deliciously spooky pastiche of high and low gothic' from Amazon in various formats including Kindle and MP3 and, of course, as a hardback for about £14.

THOMAS HYDE HILLS AND JOHN BELL

On the recently refurbished fascia (Welbeck Street side) of well known London chemists, John Bell & Croyden, is an artist's representation of Thomas Hyde Hills. Hills was a pharmaceutical chemist who became the sole proprietor of the original firm of John Bell & Co in June 1859.

Hills was a friend of Dickens, Millais and Landseer. He was also very helpful to Wilkie who wrote to his mother about *Armada* in March 1866 "And as to the work, I am better than halfway through the last number. I should have been

nearer the end, if I had not encountered difficulties in reconciling necessary chemical facts, with the incidents of the story. But Hills has helped me nobly, and the difficulties are vanquished, and I hope and trust I shall have written the last lines.” Earlier, in 1863, Collins had written to Hills “Mr Beard willingly approves of my trying the prescription which you have so kindly sent to me. I enclose it, in order to save you the trouble of referring to your books again before making up the lotion. Please leave directions that it may be returned to me – for I shall take it abroad in the capacity of travelling companion.” The two obviously became quite friendly so that during the run of *No Thoroughfare* in January 1868 Hills was invited to dinner and to see the play in the ‘author’s Box’ along with Forster, Landseer and Charles Collins.

A CANINE WILKIE COLLINS

There is yet another new Wilkie Collins web page at www.graysonhumane.org/animals/detail?AnimalID=1506515. This one, however, is rather unusual as it’s the personal page on the Grayson County Humane Society site of a rescued Jack Russell terrier. “I’m called Wilkie Collins, named after the writer because of my adorable curled up whiskers. I’m not interested in being quite so prolific as he; I just want to write a nice long autobiography with a happy ending.”

Wilkie would probably have approved as he was a great animal lover, writing in *The Fallen Leaves* "There are periods in a man's life when he finds the society that walks on four feet a welcome relief from the society that walks on two."

39 AVENUE ROAD

Wilkie’s early home with his father, mother and brother from 1838 to 1840 at 20 Avenue Road in London’s St John’s Wood had been on the market for some while. It is now renumbered 39 and the entire original house was pulled down and rebuilt in an enlarged version a few years ago. According to one of the local property magazines, it was sold during 2012 for £38 million. Pictures can be found at www.wilkie-collins.info/home_sjwood.htm.

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NEWSLETTER

WINTER2013

WILKIE COLLINS A LIFE OF SENSATION, ANDREW LYCETT, 2013.

The main Collins event of the autumn is the publication of Andrew Lycett's eagerly awaited biography which has been comprehensively reviewed by the press. Paul Lewis writes:

There have been around twenty book length biographies of Wilkie Collins - the first by Wolzogen in 1885. Add on two major editions of his letters and two dozen critical analyses of his work and nearly 50 books - and many shorter works - have ploughed the field of Wilkie's life in all directions.

So Andrew Lycett faced a major task to produce a new authoritative account, not least because his is the third biography in three years - following Peter Ackroyd in 2012 and Melisa Klimaszewski the year before. He has succeeded. This book is certainly the best life of Collins since *The King of Inventors* by Catherine Peters in 1991 and quite possibly the best ever.

Lycett had the advantage of more than twenty years of subsequent scholarship and analysis and was able to dip electronically into many resources that Peters had to fly around the world to see, though he did his share of travelling too. But he has discovered many new details about Wilkie's two lovers and their families, about his closest friends and his education and has made good use of the newly obtained Coutts bank accounts to illuminate parts of his life.

The book has excellent short summaries of Wilkie's books and stories and Lycett's analysis of Wilkie's later works - often dismissed by other biographers

- is masterful. The summary of his life in the last few pages is as good as anything I have read. At the outset Lycett sees Wilkie plunged into a world which he had to grasp and develop in and then adapt to succeed. He chronicles Wilkie's struggle to do this and shows how he mainly succeeded right to the end. Lycett also pins down convincingly Wilkie's attitude to the church and his own simple Christian belief.

Lycett writes beautifully and his engaging story carries the reader along, not quite like a Wilkie novel but certainly a lot better than Wilkie's biography of his father!

Of course I had niggles - a few minor errors and inevitable moments when I disagreed with his analysis. And despite a 46 page index and 56 pages of notes referenced to each page of the book I missed detailed footnotes and on occasion found references hard to follow up. But if you want a Christmas present, or to treat yourself, or to introduce someone to the Life of Sensation that was Wilkie Collins, then Lycett's book is well worth even its full price. But look for big discounts on the £20 cover price and there is an almost half price Kindle edition.

Andrew Gasson adds: The book is very handsomely produced with numerous illustrations, many of which have rarely been seen or are completely new to Collins studies. Where the text is particularly good is the intelligent way in which Lycett has used the *Letters* to draw subtle inferences which have filled in at least some of the previous blanks in Wilkie's life. If you want an entirely readable account which gives an immense amount of detail compared with the other recent biographies, then this is the biography for you.

There is a complete list of all book length biographies and studies of Collins at www.wilkiecollins.com/biogs.htm.

THE WILKE COLLINS JOURNAL

The journal's new editor, Ann-Marie Beller, writes the following:

The next issue of the *Wilkie Collins Journal* will be online and available to Society members in mid-December. In addition to new articles on Collins's work, this issue will include an essay on Collins scholarship - past, present, and

future - by Professor William Baker (Northern Illinois University); a 'roundtable' discussion of the current *No Name* online reading project; and a range of book reviews, including the recent new edition of Collins's *The lighthouse*.

The WCJ will be in the members' area of the Society's website at <http://wilkiecollinssociety.org/>. The login details for the next twelve months are: Username: **count** and Password: **fosco**.

For those members who do not have ready access to the internet or are unable to download the *Journal*, we will on request arrange to provide a printed version.

EMAIL ADDRESSES

Paul Lewis writes: An annoying computer malfunction has led to the destruction of the database of email addresses of members. I use this to send Wilkie information to members in between Newsletters. I intend to reinstate this service and if you would like to be on the list please send an email to me at paul@paullewis.co.uk and I will add your name. Addresses will not be used for any other purpose and will not be passed on to any third parties.

THE INVISIBLE WOMAN

The film of Claire Tomalin's book about Dickens's affair with Nelly Ternan will be released in the UK on 14 February 2014. Directed by and starring Ralph Fiennes as Dickens with Felicity Jones as Nelly, the film also depicts Wilkie himself (played by Tom Hollander) and his live-in companion Caroline Graves (Michelle Fairley). Several other people Wilkie knew well also appear including, Dickens's wife Catherine, Francesco Berger the composer who wrote the music for *The Lighthouse* and the overture for *The Frozen Deep* as well as some Dickens children.

The film was first shown in the UK at the London Film Festival on 17 October and has been seen at various festivals in the USA. Reviewers have praised it highly. Clips from the film and a two minute trailer can be seen at www.imdb.com/title/tt1700845 but none shows Wilkie.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE-A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL POSTSCRIPT

In the 2011 analysis of *The Woman in White's* publishing history, three states of the US first edition were described. Two of these, (1) and (3), are noted in Parrish's 1940 bibliography whereas (2) had originally been identified in 1942 by the American bookseller and bibliographer, Howard Mott. Now a fourth state has come to light in a copy in red-brown cloth. Other bindings for the various states exist in paper wrappers; or brown or black cloth.

The advertisements form part of the collation and the three states already described are:

1. p [261] has 'Muloch' for 'Mulock' and lists nine titles; p [262] advertises *The Mill on the Floss*.

2. 'Mulock' is correctly spelled on p [261], eleven titles are listed and p. [262] advertises *The Mill on the Floss*.

3. 'Mulock' is correctly spelled with eleven titles listed, but p [262] advertises nine titles by Thackeray.

This latest state has:

On p. [261] 'Muloch' for 'Mulock' and lists nine titles; p. [262] advertises nine titles by Thackeray.

With the uncorrected 'Muloch', this version presumably lies between (1) and (2) or (3). One theory to explain the different advertisements and bindings is that because of the huge demand for *The Woman in White* the novel was produced at different sites or on different presses. Whatever the explanation, we can now record four states for the first US edition although none of these precedes - as often stated erroneously - the first English edition in three volumes.

WILKIE AS A THEATRE DIRECTOR

The tough side of Wilkie's character comes out in a recently discovered eye-witness account of how he dealt with dissent by an actor in one of his plays. Henry Herman (1832-1894) knew Wilkie as stage manager for the revival of

The New Magdalen in 1875 and then prepared *Miss Gwilt* for its first production at the Alexandra Theatre on 9 December 1875. Wilkie wrote to him on 8 November "I can only leave it to your knowledge and experience - in which I have perfect confidence - to prepare the piece for production. I hope to attend all the later rehearsals myself." Wilkie did so, arriving in Liverpool on 6 December and leaving on 11th.

Herman collected anecdotes from his literary and theatrical life in a book published towards the end of his life that is exceedingly rare and has been missed by every scholar so far. Here is Herman's account of Wilkie dealing with an actor who altered the words in his script.

When Wilkie Collins's *Miss Gwilt* was rehearsed for the first time on any stage, at the Alexandra Theatre, Liverpool, it contained a part omitted at its production - namely that of the old gardener, Abraham Sage. The role was allotted to a young man who was then the second comedian of the theatre, and who has since made a name for himself both in England and the Colonies. The aspirant for stage honours was dissatisfied with his part - a very short one - and at one of the final rehearsals he interlarded his principal speech with a copious admixture of the word "sir." When he had got through, Wilkie Collins looked at him over his spectacles and said sternly: "Young man, I have written the word 'sir' four times. You have used it thirteen times. Please understand that I want my words spoken as I wrote them." "I am very sorry, Mr. Collins," replied the young comedian; but, you see, the part's such a poor one, and I wanted to give it character."

"Thank you," Wilkie Collins replied quietly; "I will look into this." When the rehearsal of the act was finished, Wilkie Collins turned to Miss Cavendish's stage manager, who had charge of the production, and asked him for a pencil.

"I think, **Mr -----**," he said "if we put our heads together, we may do without Abraham Sage," and **m** the result every line of the gardener's part was struck out of the piece.

When the Alexandra Theatre Company, including Edmund and Robert Lyons, A. W. Pinero, and others, were engaged for the London

production, that young comedian regretted his inconsiderate speech, and three years elapsed before he found a London engagement. He has made up for it since.

(Henry Herman, *Between the Whiffs*, Bristol, [1890], pp. 108-109.)

There are more than 100 contemporary accounts of Wilkie, updated to include all of those now mentioned in Lycett's biography, at www.wilkiecollins.com/biography/biographies.htm.

ANOTHER LIGHTHOUSE

Hot on the heels of the WCS book publication of *The lighthouse* comes another version by Robert C. Hanna, Professor of English, Bethany Lutheran College, Minnesota. *The Storm at the Lighthouse* - the longer version in Collins's hand held by the Victoria & Albert Museum - is published on pp. 289-364 of *Dickens Studies Annual*, Vol. 44, no.1, July 2013 (AMS Press, ISSN 0084-9812, Online ISSN: 2167-8510). The rather enormous price of £X is currently discounted online by the Book Depository and Amazon at £134.57.

The online blurb suggests that Hanna has taken a slightly different approach:

"Charles Dickens was the first to recognize the play's dramatic possibilities, producing, directing, and acting in its premiere at Tavistock House in June 1855. An introduction includes a summary of *The Storm at the Lighthouse*, an examination of its themes of guilt and forgiveness in writings of both Collins and Dickens, influences of the 1827 play *Trente Ans* on both Collins and Dickens, a summary of major differences between Collins's 1853 short story "Gabriel's Marriage" and his reworking of that story into *The Storm at the Lighthouse*, and an examination of the four surviving manuscripts, including locales mentioned therein. An appendix contains the play's performance history during Collins's lifetime."

THE LIGHTHOUSE - POSTSCRIPT 1 - COLONEL WAUGH

Following performances of *The Lighthouse* at Tavistock House, there was one further, charitable performance at Camden House in aid of the Brompton Consumption Hospital, courtesy of Colonel Waugh. The subsequent history of

the house and its occupant make fascinating reading, and could have been taken from the annals of our current financial crisis.

The munificent Colonel Waugh, famed member of London society at the time of *The Lighthouse* turned out to be a swindler of gigantic proportion. According to *The Times* of 29 October 1859, he had until 1847 been a Captain in the Indian army "mentioned in despatches, but who has since been more noticeably mentioned in Gazettes" [for bankruptcy]. He "confederated with one Stephens to start a joint-stock bank, - not with the intention, as events showed, of initiating an honest banking establishment, but for the purpose of acquiring access to a large heap of other people's money, in order that he might abstract and squander it." Stephens, a cavalry surgeon, became Managing Director of the London and Eastern Bank whilst Waugh became one of its directors. "Deposits flowed in, and as they flowed in so Colonel Waugh made them flow out. Colonel Waugh now burst forth upon the town in a career of magnificent expenditureTime, and fashion, and extravagance, and Colonel Waugh ran their course, and one morning the doors of the London and Eastern Bank were closed and Colonel absconded to the Continent." In fact he travelled to Spain "for the benefit of his health." With the connivance of Stephens, Waugh had taken a loan from the bank of £280,000 with "securities of merely nominal value." The Colonel's formal description was "William Petrie Waugh of Branksea Island, brick and tile maker, limeburner, dealer and chapman."

According to *The Public Ledger* of 12 January 1858 "A warrant is out for the apprehension of Mr John Edward Stephens" who had similarly absconded from the Edinburgh Court of Bankruptcy. As the *Ledger* put it "The public will never learn wisdom. Experience stands no chance against I O per cent. And an Eastern Bank How it all ends we have, among other interesting illustrations, the bursting of the last bank bubbles." Plus i;;a change.

THE LIGHTHOUSE - POSTSCRIPT 2 - CAMPDEN HOUSE

Campden House was built in 1612 by a wealthy silk mercer named Baptist Hickes who subsequently became Viscount Campden. In 1691 the house was occupied by Princess (later Queen) Anne and her son, William Duke of Gloucester. Around this time was built the adjoining Little Campden House, much later to be occupied by Wilkie's artist friend Augustus Egg. In 1704, the

mansion came into the possession of the Burlington family and was subsequently owned by Lord Lechmere and a Mr Stephen Pitt who, in the middle of the eighteenth century converted it into a fashionable boarding-house. A full description and illustration of the magnificently built mansion can be found at www.thebookofdays.com/months/march/23.htm which also describes its fate in detail and how in 1862 "Within the last dozen years, large sums had been expended upon the restoration and embellishment of the interior: a spacious theatre had been fitted up for amateur performances, and the furniture and enrichments were in sumptuous taste, if not in style accordant with the period of the mansion; but, whatever may have been their merits, the whole of the interior, its fittings and furniture, were destroyed in the conflagration of March 23rd; and before the Londoners had risen from their beds that Sunday morning, all that remained of Campden House, or 'Queen Anne's Palace,' as it was called by the people of Kensington, were its blackened and windowless walls."

The house had since 1847 been leased to a Mr Woolley of mysterious origins who according to *The Daily News* of December 1863 had married well and used his wife's fortune to convert a dilapidated mansion into a palace, spending an estimated £50,000. "There was no more fashionable resort than Campden-House. The small theatre and spacious ball-room which it contained afforded peculiar facilities for large entertainments, whilst good nature or ambition constantly induced the proprietor to place his house at the service of the charitable public or of his private friends." The notorious Colonel Waugh stepped into Woolley's place when the latter retired for a season during 1855 and permitted a charitable performance of *The Lighthouse*.

Woolley had no money of his own, borrowing £17,000 from his sister-in-law, and insuring the house in November 1861, just four months before the fire, for £29,000 spread over three separate companies. These obviously thought that Woolley had perpetrated an insurance fraud to recover £12,000 in rebuilding costs and repayment of his debts so that "after some hesitation [they] determined to resist his demand." Woolley therefore brought actions which became known as The Great Insurance Case against the companies. They attempted to show that he had "wilfully set fire to the house by showing that Mr Woolley had given a false account immediately after the occurrence;

that the house had burned with such marvellous rapidity that it must have been set on fire in several places, and on both floors at once." However, after a trial lasting a full five days the jury found "little difficulty in coming to a conclusion in favour of Mr. Woolley and against the insurance companies."

Campden House was rebuilt as a reasonable facsimile of the original, presumably from the insurance money, but was eventually demolished about 1900 and became part of the general redevelopment of the area.

NINETEENTH CENTURY MERCHANDISE - *THE WOMAN IN WHITE*

The Woman in White firmly established Collins's reputation with the reading public and helped raise the circulation of *All the Year Round*. As Smith, Elder found to their cost, 'everyone was raving about it.' S. M. Ellis in his 1951 *Wilkie Collins, Le Fanu and Others* (Constable) described how *The Woman in White* was so popular that 'every possible commodity was labelled "Woman in White". There were "Woman in White" cloaks and bonnets, "Woman in White" perfumes and all manner of toilet requisites, "Woman in White" Waltzes and Quadrilles.'

Copies have certainly been seen of 'The Woman in White Waltz' and 'The Fosco Galop' but we are unaware of any examples of the other items. There have been numerous references in articles and the biographies to the merchandise but they all seem to refer back (with or without acknowledgement) to the paragraph on pp. 29-30 in Ellis. This appears to be the only source for reports of merchandise.

Ellis in his essay refers to Thackeray who was said "to have sat up all night in order to read the exciting tale he could not put down" although Page in *The Critical Heritage* (1974, pp. 121-122) suggests that "the only source for the legend" is a passage from 'De Finibus' in the *Cornhill* of August 1862: "Think of a whole day in bed, and a good novel for a companion. No cares: no remorse about idleness: no visitors: and the Woman in White or the Chevalier d'Artagnan to tell me stories from dawn to night."

Ellis does quote accurately a letter from Edward Fitzgerald "I really think of having a Herring-lugger I am building named 'Marian Halcombe', the brave

Girl in the story." (To Frederick Tennyson of 29 January 1867, *letters and literary Remains of Edward Fitzgerald*, London: Macmillan, 1889). But **it** was Gladstone (not mentioned by Ellis) who wrote in his diary of **18** October 1860 "I did not get to the play last night from finding *The Woman in White* so very interesting (*The life of William Ewart Gladstone* by John Morley, Macmillan: London, 1903).

The only other, earlier reference found to merchandise is in the 1935 *Victorians and their Books* by Amy Cruse (George Allen & Unwin, p. 322). This is unacknowledged by Ellis and may have been somewhat embellished.

With these doubts we would therefore be interested to hear from any members who know of any other sources which independently corroborate the Cruse/Ellis story or who have actually seen examples of merchandise for *The Woman in White*. Have they simply not survived or did they never exist?

A VERY BRITISH MURDER

'A very British Murder' was a BBC2 series about the British national obsession with murder. It was stylishly presented by historian Lucy Worsley in three parts from 23 September. Collins featured largely in the second episode which narrated details of the 1860 Road House murder by Constance Kent which gave some inspiration for *The Moonstone* (1868). Viewers were also introduced to the notion of the Sensation Novel of which Wilkie was the prime exponent. The programmes were accompanied by the elegantly produced and well illustrated book of the series, also by Lucy Worsley (BBC Books, ISBN 9781849906340, £20).

THE TEN GREATEST LIVING ENGLISHMEN

Professor Graham Law of Waseda University, Japan, has sent us the *Pall Mall Gazette* for 19 January 1885. Here we have the results on page 6 of its prize competition 'Who are the ten greatest living Englishmen? The contest was subdivided into ten groups including Statesmen, Painters, Actors and Men of Science.

"We offered ten guineas for the best list of the ten greatest living Englishmen. As we pointed out, it would have been manifestly unfair to allow the preferences or prejudices of any single judge, or even a committee of judges, to decide who are the ten greatest of their contemporaries. The prize has, therefore, been awarded on the following principle. Each coupon has been treated as a ballot paper, and the ten notables who have gained the greatest number of votes we have regarded for the purpose of settling the competition as the ten greatest among us.

In the Novelist's group Wilkie is a clear winner with 346 votes compared with William Black (329) and Walter Besant (289). Other notable contenders were well behind with Thomas Hardy (20), Anthony Trollope (5) and Charles Reade (3). There was a separate Writers group led by Ruskin (568) and Tennyson (262).

These results perhaps give the lie to the view sometimes held that Wilkie's popularity declined during his later years. He had published *Heart and Science* in 1883 and *'I Say No'* in 1884 with the serialisation of *The Evil Genius* to come at the end of 1885.

JOHN SUTHERLAND AT THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

On 24 July Professor John Sutherland gave a talk to the Dickens Fellowship on 'Great Expectations and All the Year Round - What did Dickens learn from Wilkie?' Sutherland has edited *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone* for Oxford University Press and provided the introduction for the Penguin edition of *Armada*. His talk began with some interesting reminiscences about how he became interested in Victorian fiction, then a rather neglected area of English literature.

Dickens and *All the Year Round* created the journalistic environment in which Collins could flourish and added that all of the great Victorian novelists were affected by and learned from each other. Collins learned from Dickens the notion of the detective story. Dickens, on the other hand, learned two things from Collins - *Eruption* and *the Secret*. This was typified by *The Woman in White* where we have the dramatic opening with the meeting with Anne

Catherick; and the continuing theme of Glyde's secret. Overall an excellent evening with the doyen of Victorian fiction.

LETTERS SUPPLEMENT

The eighth supplement to the *Letters of Wilkie Collins* will be sent out with the next mailing, early in 2014. It will add 32 letters to the database taking the total to 3226. Among the new finds is an important group of letters to Wilkie's friend George Russell, a letter to Dickens's eldest son Charles, the first known letter to the publisher William Tillotson, and letters to the actor Arthur Pinero. *Addenda and Corrigenda (8)* also corrects a dozen previously published letters using new evidence.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University Press still has eleven Collins titles available in their World's Classics Series. Apart from the big four they include *Basil, Man and Wife* and *Poor Miss Finch*. The full Collins list can be found from www.oup.co.uk/academic/series/owc/completelist/.

THE HAUNTED HOTEL

BBC radio 4 broadcast an adaptation by Rod Beacham of *The Haunted Hotel* on 9 July. This was a repeat of its first appearance in May 2012 with Jasmine Hyde as Agnes Lockwood, Adjoa Andoh as Countess Narona and Harry Lloyd as Henry Westwick. Limited to one hour, it somehow didn't quite capture the flavour of the original but it is always encouraging to have adaptations of Wilkie's lesser known works.

<http://wilkiecollinssociety.org/>

Username: **Count**

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THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2014

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

We are grateful to several members who have anticipated the Newsletter and membership renewal notice and already paid. The subscription notice accompanies this Newsletter for those who have not paid. With the ever increasing cost of postage, we have had to raise dues to £16 for UK members and £28 for those overseas. Payment details are on the form enclosed for those whose payment has not yet been recorded. If you have already paid we will not, of course, expect you to pay the difference this year.

EMAIL ADDRESSES

As mentioned in an earlier Newsletter, our list of members' email addresses was lost following a computer crash. Only a few members have so far let us have current email details to bring our membership list up to date. This will prove useful in letting you know of events at short notice. Obviously, addresses will be kept confidential and not released to any third parties.

THE LETTERS OF WILKIE COLLINS

Enclosed with this newsletter is the eighth supplement to the Collected Letters of Wilkie Collins. It includes 33 new items, 27 of which have not been published before and the rest have lain un-remarked in old periodicals or books. An important group of six new letters turned up at auction in a collection of

correspondence to Wilkie's friend Sir George Russell. Previously only one other letter to him had been identified. Other interesting finds include the only known letter to Hans Christian Andersen and a letter defending his sole authorship of *The Woman in White*. In another he writes to the mother of an aspiring writer - the granddaughter of a sculptor known to Wilkie's father:

"The number of ladies who are plunging head foremost into Literature is alarmingly large - and the competition is formidable as a necessary consequence.

But there is always a welcome ready for a writer who has a real vocation for the Art."

No trace of anything published by her has been found.

With this latest supplement the editors have added 245 letters to the corpus making a total of 3227. The editors confidently predict that number will rise again by the time the ninth supplement is published at the end of 2014.

THE LIGHTHOUSE AT THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

WCS members are cordially invited to a meeting of the Dickens Fellowship at 6.30 pm on Tuesday 20 May at Lumen URC, 88 Tavistock Place, London, WC1H 1HD. Dr Caroline Radcliffe will give a talk entitled: 'We mean to burst on an astonished World' which will concentrate on Dickens's involvement with Wilkie Collins's 1855 drama, *The Lighthouse*.

This follows the publication by the Wilkie Collins Society in 2013 of the first printed edition to appear in English, to which Caroline and Andrew Gasson wrote the introduction. Initially staged at Tavistock House, Dickens took the lead role of Aaron Gurnock and described the play as 'a regular old-style Melo Drama'. Dickens also contributed 'The Song of the Wreck' which was sung by his daughter Mamie who played the role of Phoebe. It is hoped to hear this song performed at the meeting with piano accompaniment.

Caroline Radcliffe lectures in the department of Drama and Theatre Arts at the University of Birmingham, publishing on popular Victorian theatre and sensation drama. She is also an active performer and has directed Wilkie Collins's play *The Red Vial*. (www.wilkie-collins.info/play_redvial.htm).

COPIES STILL AVAILABLE OF *THE LIGHTHOUSE*

Members are reminded that there are still some copies available of the WCS publication of *The Lighthouse*. Hardback copies can be obtained from the WCS

at a cost of £12.50 and paperbacks direct from the publisher, Francis Boutte, at www.francisboutle.co.uk for £9.99.

THE INVISIBLE WOMAN

The long awaited film of *The Invisible Woman* has now been released. It is directed with great attention to detail by Ralph Fiennes who also contributes a superbly over-the-top performance as Dickens, exactly as one imagines the real life Dickens would be. WCS member, Angela Richardson, has written the following review.

In Ralph Fiennes' new film, the second one he has directed, he puts himself into what might be thought the star role, that of Charles Dickens. But, as is fitting for the biography on which the film is based, it is the women who have the important parts. Felicity Jones as Nelly Ternan (Dickens's mistress), Kristin Scott Thomas as her mother and Joanna Scanlan as Catherine Dickens all deliver strong performances. The latter, though on screen the least and with the fewest lines, conveys a powerful dignity in the face of heartbreak. Although the main relationship in the film is the complex one between Charles Dickens and Nelly Ternan, there is also a strong emphasis on the relationships between parents and children. We see Catherine Dickens's closeness to her oldest son and Charles Dickens's critical and intimidating stance towards his children. The moral dilemma of Mrs Ternan and the difficult decisions she comes to make with her daughter are sensitively shown. And in the Wilkie Collins/Caroline Graves household, we are given glimpses of the loving way little Harriet is brought up.

Along with the entire cast of *The Frozen Deep* we are kept waiting for the first appearance of Wilkie Collins, when he is late for the first rehearsal with the 'real' actors - the Ternans brought in to replace Dickens's daughters. Wilkie arrives, breathless but unrepentant and wonderfully played by Tom Hollander. It is as if a portrait of Wilkie stepped out of its frame and made jokes with us.

The author of the book on which the film is based, Claire Tomalin, is said to have been consulted about the film but not to have become engaged in the screenplay. All the main facts contained in her biography are followed, except for one crucial scene where Nelly Ternan meets Caroline Graves. Tomalin wrote that Nelly was 'not in the same category' as Caroline and believed

Dickens would not have taken her to visit Wilkie at home. The medium of film however demands they are brought together in order to show us what it meant to be a 'fallen' and a 'respectable' woman in Victorian England.

The ambiguity of endings is explored in the film where the two different conclusions for *Great Expectations* are discussed. Nelly refers to this twice in key scenes and the film plays with two versions of her later marriage after Dickens's death.

Do see this film. The seascapes are stunning and the dim Victorian interiors authentic. It is not only charming to see Wilkie brought to life but to see him in his context shows the extent of his unconventionality, something we are apt to overlook from our 21st century viewpoint.

WILKIE COLLINS: NEW DIRECTIONS AND READINGS'

On 9 November 2013, the Victorian Popular Fiction Association devoted a study day to Collins under the title 'Wilkie Collins: New Directions and Readings'. The conference began with a keynote address by Professor William Baker of Northern Illinois University on "Wilkie Collins: Scholarship and Criticism: Past, Present and Future". This tour de force presentation covered the entire range of Collins studies and apart from setting the tone for the rest of the meeting gave a valuable insight into current Collins scholarship.

The rest of the morning session - Panel A - included papers by Tabitha Sparks (McGill University) on "Wilkie Collins's *The Law and The Lady* and Feminine Reason: 'Quite incredible, and nevertheless true'; Meredith Miller (Falmouth University) on "Popular Interiority and Political Address: *The New Magdalen* and *The Law and the Lady*"; and Tara MacDonald (University of Amsterdam) on "Sympathetic Doubles in Collins's Fiction."

The afternoon session began with Panel B with papers by Catherine Delafield "'The patience of cats,... the ferocity of tigers': Comparative Editing and the Serialization of *The Moonstone*."; Caroline Radcliffe (University of Birmingham) "*The Lighthouse* by Wilkie Collins: 'situations dramatique non encore exploitees"; and Jessica Cox (Brunel University) "Women in White: Neo-Victorianism and Wilkie Collins's Literary Descendants."

The final Panel had papers by Anne-Marie Beller (Loughborough University) on "'I want a husband to vex, or a child to beat': Sensation and Emotion as

Redemption in *Armada*"; and Joanna Ella Parsons (University of Bath) on "Fosco's Fat: Bodily Control and Transgressive Consumption in *The Woman in White*."

WILKIE COLLINS AND COPYRIGHT

Wilkie Collins and Copyright: Artistic Ownership in the Age of the Borderless Word by Sundeep Bisla was published during 2013.

Paul Lewis writes: Prolix is the word that came to mind when I embarked on Bisla's book. But then if you take ten years to write a book - as he tells us he did - you can perhaps be forgiven a little verbosity. This is not a book about Wilkie's long struggle with publishers around the world to be paid a fair price for his labours. Rather it is an analysis of his literary output for clues and perhaps hidden messages about his belief that intellectual property is indeed as much property that can be stolen as is a watch.

Each of the five main chapters is devoted to his search for these clues in one of Wilkie's pre-1870 novels - *Basil*, *The Woman in White*, *No Name*, *Armada*, and *The Moonstone*.

I am not competent to judge Bisla's academic success in what he finds - "an author locked in fierce negotiation with the theoretical underpinnings of his medium, the written word, underpinnings best delineated by the twentieth-century deconstructionist Jacques Derrida seeks to show" as the blurb has it.

But I do have the temerity to suggest that in terms of clarity and economy his writing is in the opposite corner from the author he studies. Perhaps it is my fault that 'The Comfortable Deniability of the Paradox of Iterability' conveys little and a discussion of it even less.

Wilkie wrote to aspiring writer Frank Archer

"You must be very much more careful than you are at present in the matter of Style. Look at your first paragraph - and at the marks which I have made on it - and you will see what I mean. When you have seen, cut out the first paragraph. It is quite useless. The right beginning of the story is at the second paragraph.

Again! The central interest in your story is in the walk across the heath, and in what came of it. You are too long in getting to this - and the frightful consequence follows - you will be "skipped."...

"Study Walter Scott. He is, beyond all comparison, the greatest novelist that has ever written. Get, for instance, "The Antiquary" - and read that masterpiece over and over and over again." (To Frank Archer 23 July 1886).

Bisla's book is, of course, not a novel. It is well grounded in academic writing, referring copiously to other studies and, in its own way, challenges them or takes them on. But it is not an easy read.

Wilkie Collins and Copyright: Artistic Ownership in the Age of the Borderless Word (ISBN 13:978-0-8142-1235-6) is published by the Ohio State University Press both in hardback and CD format. The book is available from the Book Depository for £40.35 or from Amazon for £26.99 plus postage.

APPRECIATION

The Moonstone came in at Number19 in *The Observer* newspaper's 2014 list of the hundred best novels - one place behind *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and ahead of Alcott's *Little Women*. Robert McCrum wrote "Wilkie Collins's masterpiece, hailed by many as the greatest English detective novel, is a brilliant marriage of the sensational and the realistic." In an earlier list, a decade ago, McCrum put *The Woman in White* at number 23. www.theguardian.com/books/2014/jan/27/100-best-novels-moonstone-wilkie-collins

Solicitor Louise Eccleston confesses to the *Chester Chronicle* in February that her favourite book is *The Woman in White* by Wilkie Collins. She also likes Dickens's *Bleak House* "but that is probably too close for comfort as it gives lawyers a bad press!" Wilkie generally liked lawyers, in his books at least. <http://www.chesterchronicle.co.uk/lifestyle/day-life-private-client-solicitor-6727507#.UwtFweN t8E>

WILKIE COLLINS: A LIFE OF SENSATION

Andrew Lycett's excellent and thoroughly researched new biography of Collins will appear in paperback on 10 April 2014 with one or two minor errors in the original hardback text corrected. *Wilkie Collins: a Life of Sensation* will be published by Windmill Books, an imprint of Random House, at the recommended price of £9.99.

TALKING BOOKS AND LIBRIVOX

There have been several Collins audiobooks produced over the last few years, originally on tape and more recently on CD. *The Moonstone* (Naxos and Fantom Films) and *The Woman in White* (Audiogo and BBC Audiobooks) are available in both abridged and unabridged versions. Other recordings are *The Evil Genius* (Tantor Media); *The Haunted Hotel* (Blackstone Audiobooks); *The Two Destinies* (Assembled Stories); *Supernatural Stories* (Fantom Films); and *Mr Wray's Cash-Box* (Assembled Stories). There are also various downloads available from Audible.co.uk.

Librivox, which rather grandiosely describes itself as "Acoustical liberation of books in the public domain" now has twenty-five Collins titles with one in progress. These therefore include most of the full length novels, from *Armada* to *The Woman in White* as well as shorter works such as *The Dead Alive* and *The Dream Woman*. There are also German language renderings of two or three books plus a Dutch version of *A House to Let*.

The books can either be listened to online or downloaded and subsequently recorded to CDs for use on a normal CD player; or listened to on a smartphone, player or tablet. Downloads for sale on ebay seem to be playable only on a computer. The readers are all volunteers rather than the professional actors found with the published versions. So although the sound quality is generally quite good the readers vary greatly in quality from good 'Standard English' through strong American English to sometimes other, less comprehensible, foreign accents. Nevertheless Librivox provides a great resource for those wishing to listen to rather than read not only Collins but a huge range of other out of copyright authors. They can be found at <https://librivox.org/search>

COLLINS ON MASTERMIND

Brave WCS member Terry Saunders decided to put his Wilkie Collins knowledge to the test on BBC television's Mastermind. This was broadcast on Friday 21 February with his specialist subject 'The Novels of Wilkie Collins'. This was a courageous undertaking with the plots of thirty or so novels and something like 200 characters to memorise. Ten novels featured in the thirteen questions. A previous Collins contender on Mastermind in the 1980s had limited her topic to the 1860s. Terry with his much wider remit and despite some difficult questions scored a very creditable overall total of 23 points, just beaten into second place by the winner, Lindsay Ashford, on 24.

MODERN CRIME

For those members who also enjoy modern crime fiction, dramatizations of the novels of our Patron P. D. James are regularly revived on Radio 4 Extra. The latest offering, in February, was *The Skull Beneath the Skin* which features her detective, Cordelia Grey, played by Greta Scacchi. This also contains a nice reference to the Constance Kent murder case.

ANOTHER 'WOMAN IN WHITE'

A headline on the Cricinfo website at the beginning of February gave us a new definition for a 'Woman in White'. This time it referred to the New Zealand cricket umpire Kathy Cross who became the first woman to be named to an ICC umpires panel. She has been added to the ICC Associate and Affiliate Panel of Umpires. Henceforward she will no doubt be known as the 'Woman in White Coat'.

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NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2014

ANNIVERSARY OF WILKIE'S DEATH AND FUNERAL

The 125th anniversary of Wilkie's death is on 23 September and he was buried four days later on Friday 27th September 1889 in Kensal Green Cemetery in west London.

The Wilkie Collins Society will be holding a short event to mark the occasion on the afternoon of Sunday 28th September by his grave.

Will those who would like to attend please contact Paul Lewis either by email paul@paullewis.co.uk or letter to 4 Ernest Gardens, London W4 3QU. More details will follow nearer the time.

WILKIE'S GRAVE

The Friends of Kensal Green have chosen Wilkie's grave as one of five to be carefully recorded and restored by City & Guilds conservation students. In a long report, student conservators Liza Nathan and Anna Don record the material of the kerbs, four stepped plinths, and cross as Carrara marble with lettering in lead and a brick base. The lettering reads "Wilkie Collins. Author of *Woman in White* and other works of fiction". The lead outline of the cross is missing as well as the iron railings and six posts, possibly taken for scrap in World War II. Although the overall condition is sound, they report some biological growth on the base and plinths, including moss and lichen. The marble has eroded in parts due to acid rain and smog from local industries until the closure of the nearby gasworks in the 1970s.

Although the grave has at times suffered from neglect the bed has now been planted and it looks as good as it has for some while, thanks to the work of the Kensal Green gardeners. Its upkeep is now paid for by Wilkie's great grand-daughter, Faith Clarke. The students plan to restore the grave in the autumn and the Wilkie Collins

Society is considering replacing the railings. A new plaque to mark the grave is being commissioned.

EMAIL LIST

Many thanks to those members who have sent their email addresses. The new emailing list is now working and will be used to update members between newsletters. If you did not get a short email announcing this on 1 August then you are not on it! If you would like to be on the list please send your email address to paul@paullewis.co.uk. Some people did send an email but it did not work for some reason. Some servers are set to reject group emails as spam. So please find an alternative if you can.

THE WILKIE COLLINS JOURNAL

Just a reminder that The WCJ is in the members' area of the Society's website at <http://wilkiecollinssociety.org/>. The current login details are: Username: **count** and Password: **fosco**. Our publications list will also be online in the near future.

WILKIE COLLINS - COURSE 1 - CAMBRIDGE

The University of Cambridge is offering a three day weekend course "Crime and Passion: Wilkie Collins and the sensation novel" starting with a lecture and dinner on Friday 31 October and finishing after lunch on Sunday 2 November. There are seven sessions: the term sensation, *The Woman in White*, *The Moonstone*, domestic crime and the detective, Film adaptations – with excerpts, the social context of sensation, and reverberations in time. The £250 price includes food but accommodation is £120 extra (£100 each sharing). A £100 bursary is available for teachers. More information and an application form see www.ice.cam.ac.uk/component/courses/?view=course&cid=13262&q=wilkie+collins.

WILKIE COLLINS - COURSE 2 - DETROIT

'Collins in the City' is a Midwestern Modern Language Association conference in Detroit 13-15 November 2014. It will explore how urbanisation in the 19th century permeates Wilkie's writing. It is too late to submit a paper but if you fancy a trip to Detroit in November it sounds a fascinating contribution to Wilkie Studies. More details here navsa.org/2014/05/12/cfp-mmla-14-collins-in-the-city-5302014-1113-162014/.

THE RED VIAL

The Red Vial is an unpublished play produced at the Royal Olympic Theatre from 11 October 1858; it starred the then famous Frederick Robson as Hans Grimm, a lunatic cured by kindness, and Mrs Stirling as Madame Bergman. The plot was later expanded and adapted as the basis for *Jezebel's Daughter* published in 1880.

The play was not a great success and was sometimes referred to as 'the most brilliant failure of the day'. During his lifetime, Collins therefore resisted requests to revive the play. For example, he wrote to the playwright J. Stirling Coyne, on 6 May 1859:

I am much obliged to you for your note on the subject of The Red Vial, which I have just received. Considering the reception which this play met with in London, under all the advantages of being interpreted by an admirable company, under the immediate supervision of the author, I must honestly confess that I am unwilling to trust it to the chances of provincial representation by a company of whom I have no knowledge and over whose rehearsals I can exercise no control. On this ground, therefore - though I feel sincerely indebted to you for offering me the opportunity of producing again the play on the stage - I must beg you to excuse me if I abstain from availing myself of the proposal which your note contains.

As far as is known there has been no further performance of *The Red Vial* until fairly recently. A new production by the Department of Drama and Theatre Arts of Birmingham University ran from 10-12 February 2011 and was directed by Dr Caroline Radcliffe, co-editor of *The Lighthouse*. For credits and photographs see www.wilkie-collins.info/play_redvial_2011.htm.

Rather like *The Lighthouse*, there is still no printed version of the text and according to the *Index of English Literary Manuscripts* two copies of the ms survive, one in the British Library (Add. MS 52976D) "Draft, 46 leaves, submitted to the Lord Chamberlain's Office; licensed 2 October 1858"; the other a signed draft dated 11 October 1858 which had been sold at auction in 1891 after Collins's death.

Now, at last, the text of the play is readily available. The British Library version has been transcribed as part of the Victorian Plays Project by Richard Pearson at www.wilkiecollinsplays.net/texts/BLRedVial.html. The website is not complete but other titles currently available are *The Frozen Deep*, *Man and Wife* and *The Lighthouse*.

A NEW PORTRAIT?

Julien Foster's piece on 'Wilkie in Parliament' – enclosed with this newsletter – contains a reference to a portrait of Wilkie sold at Sotheby's in 1973. It was described as "A small portrait of Wilkie Collins...by his painter brother Charles Allston Collins. The portrait measures 10¼ inches by 7 inches and is dated 1850." *The Times* reported that it fetched £2,200. The portrait seems to be one that is not widely known. It is not the Millais in the National Portrait Gallery – which it acquired in 1894 – nor the portrait by Charles in the Fitzwilliam Museum which has been there since 1897. **Both are larger.** Enquiries continue.

The other missing portrait is that by Walter Goodman, mentioned in last summer's Newsletter. Entitled 'The Late Mr. Wilkie Collins at the age of 56', this was exhibited in 1890 at the sixty-seventh annual exhibition of the Royal Society of British Artists. The painting was priced at £42 but was presumably unsold as there were reports in the *Daily* and *Sunday Times* for June 1891 that Goodman was attempting to sell it to the Garrick Club.

'THE WOMAN IN WHITE, BORN IN BROADSTAIRS.

Kent Connections is a 'Knowledge Exchange Project' run by the English and Language Studies Department of Canterbury Christ Church University. The contribution for 19 May by Alyson Hunt, Research Associate, International Centre for Victorian Women Writers at CCCU, had, printed over a nice period photograph, the bold headline "The Woman in White, born in Broadstairs: Wilkie Collins loved the seaside resorts of East Kent, and brought his double life with him." The post of about 550 words begins with an intriguing paragraph:

"It's been a tough year producing story after story with increasingly complicated plotlines, brilliantly illuminated characters and that all important sensation of fear, excitement and suspense. Everywhere you go you are recognised as a celebrity, the public stop you in the street for inside information about the latest cliff-hanger and clamour after each and every word you say as well as write, but you feel the pressures of success and the encroachment of age. Gout brings a constant discomfort and pain, laudanum becomes your trusty friend and companion during the dark times. But stop! There is another way to relieve your mind and embrace your unorthodox lifestyle. A trip to the seaside town you visited as a boy, the place in which your mother declared that you "behaved nobly in the sea", frolicking at the water's edge with your siblings and indulging your passion for sailing."

Alyson Hunt continues with an oblique introduction to Wilkie's unconventional lifestyle, how he took both Caroline and Martha to Ramsgate; where Ramsgate appears in the novels (*Poor miss Finch*, *The Law and the Lady* and *The Fallen Leaves*); and the story of how the North Foreland lighthouse inspired the title for *The Woman in White*. She concludes with "Today, the houses he stayed at are marked by obligatory blue plaques which give no hint of his non-conformist ways and the great genius that inspired them. For the full article, see medium.com/kent-connections/8dfcbd9c6ff1

LOCATIONS IN *THE WOMAN IN WHITE*

An enthusiastic new reader of *The Woman in White*, Rob Sawyer from Hampshire has been wondering about the real life settings for the novel.

The likeliest candidate for Limmeridge House in Cumberland is Ewanrigg Hall on the outskirts of Maryport. Closely following the Collins-Dickens route in 'The Lazy Tour', Walter Hartright writes "My travelling instructions directed me to go to

Carlisle, and then to diverge by a branch railway which ran in the direction of the coast..... When I rose the next morning and drew up my blind, the sea opened before me joyously under the broad August sunlight, and the distant coast of Scotland fringed the horizon with its lines of melting blue." Ewanrigg Hall was the home of the Christian family and Fletcher Christian of *Mutiny on the Bounty* fame was born there in 1764. The house was demolished in 1903. For a contemporary illustration, refer to the Lost Heritage website at www.lostheritage.org.uk/houses/lh_cumbria_ewanrigghall_gallery.html.

Glyde's country house at Blackwater Park in Hampshire is more problematical. We do know that an irate correspondent of Collins accused him of describing the landscape of his own estate without permission. Nor do we have a positive identity for Welmingham and Old Welmingham where Glyde meets his death. Rob Sawyer suggests that because of the prefix, Alresford and Old Alresford in Hampshire could be contenders.

FILM AND TELEVISION VERSIONS OF COLLINS'S NOVELS

There are listed details of 47 film and television adaptations on IMDb (Internet Movie Database, www.imdb.com/name/nm0172741). These date from the beginnings of the silent film era with a version of *The Moonstone* in 1909 to a Japanese serialisation in 25 episodes of *The Woman in White* in 2011. Wilkie's appeal obviously remains worldwide with other adaptations in Russian, German, Spanish and Italian. Recently there has been interesting activity in respect of the silent versions - gone but not forgotten.

***THE WOMAN IN WHITE* - THE SILENT FILM**

There were several silent film versions of *The Woman in White*. One of the earliest, originally released on 1 July 1917 and reissued about 1920 as *The Unfortunate Marriage*, is currently available on DVD from Classic Cinema Originals (www.ccoriginals.co.uk, CCO-272) at the very reasonable price of £3.95. There have also been copies on ebay for about the same price.

This version is the same as that recently reissued as part of the Thanouser Collection (volumes 7, 8 and 9, which included as a complete set several other shorter silent films of the era (www.thanouser.org/videos)).

The Woman in White was directed by Ernest C. Warde with the script based on Collins's novel by Lloyd F. Lonergan. The cast included Florence LaBadie as Laura Fairlie and Anne Catherick; Richard R. Neill as Sir Percival Glyde, Arthur Bauer as Count Fosco and Wayne Arey as Walter Hartright.

The film is taken from a copy in the Library of Congress and is now in the public domain. It can therefore also be watched online at various locations. These include www.youtube.com/watch?v=kAL6oZkH5qw as well as <http://vimeo.com/20908725>. Perhaps the most interesting site is www.thanhouser.org/tcocd/Filmography_files/k_8xhq which gives a detailed history of the film with several contemporary reviews.

THE NEW MAGDALEN

A rare poster of the 1912 silent film version of Wilkie's novel *The New Magdalen* (1873) was sold recently for just over \$448 (£285). See <http://movieposters.ha.com/itm/movie-posters/drama/the-new-magdalen-imp-1912-british-one-sheet-30-x-40-/a/7098-84277.s>. The short, approximately 24 minute, silent black and white film was directed by Herbert Brenon and starred Vivian Prescott as Mercy Merrick and William E Shay as Julian Gray, who are depicted on the poster, and Jane Fearnley as Grace Roseberry. It is not known if any copies of the film itself have survived or of the two other silent versions in 1910 and 1914.

The New Magdalen may seem a strange choice for such an early adaptation but the play, originally staged at the Olympic Theatre in 1873, continued to be revived into the twentieth century. There were productions at the Princess Theatre in New York (with the title *Zira*) in 1905, and in London at the Marlborough Theatre in 1906 and the Parkhurst Theatre. The latter closed as a live theatre in 1909 and after purchase by the Biograph Company was converted into a cinema.

THE TWIN PAWNS

Available on ebay has been an advertising 'lobby card' for *The Twin Pawns*. According to IMDb this is another version based on *The Woman in White*. Judging from the description, the connection seems rather tenuous.

Two girls separated nearly since birth by divorce...Daisy and Violet White [both portrayed by Mae Murray] have no knowledge of one another. Violet is the idol of her father's eye. He tries to and succeeds in giving her everything she wants. Harry White has some guilt over his family failures. Daisy, on the other hand, is raised by her indigent mother. She is poorly dressed and obviously underfed. This poor child of the slums is about to unknowingly become part of a scheme of the shady character John Bent. He possesses certain papers and documents which confirm daisy's true relationship to Harry White. By hiding the truth of her existence Bent is able to manipulate the twins to his own best advantage - they become his "Twin Pawns". He places Daisy into a boarding school but soon switches her with Violet whom he has forced into marriage. Soon death visits and Bent has the real Daisy declared insane and locked away. It appears that everything is going Bent's way until Bo Anderson who loves Daisy finds her and gets her out of the asylum.

WILKIE COLLINS, EUGÈNE SUE AND THE 'LITTLE WIFE'

Amongst the surviving 3,000 or so Collins's letters, perhaps the most remarkable correspondence took place with the young Nannie Wynne, daughter of the widowed Mrs Henry Wynne whom Collins probably met through his friend and doctor, Frank Beard. The letters span the period from June 1885 to February 1888, when Nannie was aged between 12 and 15. Even the recent and excellently researched biography by Andrew Lycett sheds no real light on how Wilkie, who had always eschewed marriage, engaged in a light-hearted charade writing to her as 'Dear and admirable Mrs Collins' (5 November 1885) and continued to call her 'wife' or 'Mrs Wilkie'. On two occasions he calls her his 'little wife' (28 December 1885 and 1 July 1886).

There is, however, a strange parallel with one of the French novels which Collins read, *The Mysteries of Paris* by Eugène Sue (1804-1857). In Book 3 of this long and rambling story the chief protagonist, Rodolphe, who is really a Grand Duke in disguise, takes up with a young seamstress who on at least two occasions he also calls "my little wife". Perhaps this is just a coincidence but Collins briefly mentions Sue as early as 1859 in 'Portrait of an Author, Painted by his Publisher (*All the Year Round*, 18 June 1859). There were also several editions of Sue's works in Collins's library with at least two of *The Mysteries of Paris* (See William Baker's reconstruction of Wilkie's Library, pp. 153-154).

NEW LETTERS

A new cache of letters has been unearthed by Wilkie biographer Andrew Lycett. Written to the American actress Mary Anderson, the 19 letters date from 13 March 1884 to 9 June 1888. Previously just seven letters were known – two in American libraries and five from extracts in Anderson's autobiography *A Few Memories* (London 1896). The discovery provides full texts for four of those extracts and a further fifteen new letters. The full texts with notes will be published by WCS in *Addenda and Corrigenda IX* around the turn of the year.

FIRST EDITIONS

A first edition of Wilkie's first published novel, once owned by the famous collector of Victorian novels Morris L. Parrish, is on sale at Blackwell's Rare Books. *Antonina* was published in three volumes in white embossed cloth on 27 February 1850. Parrish's collection of first and early editions of Victorian novelists is located at Princeton University Library. The slightly less than perfect condition indicates that it may have been an early copy owned by Parrish which he later replaced with a finer one, as was his wont.

In its description it appears identical to the one recorded in Parrish's bibliography of his own collection *Wilkie Collins and Charles Reade* published in 1940, pp.11-12. Parrish was the first comprehensive bibliography of Collins's first and early editions and is still used as the standard reference. *Antonina* is in its original cloth and is in

very good condition though “covers slightly discoloured and spotted, spines darkened”. The price is £6000.

Also on sale at Blackwell’s is a first edition of *The Woman in White*. Unlike the *Antonina* this copy is not in its original cloth but is a rare presentation copy ‘From Wilkie Collins August 15th 1860’ which Blackwell’s suggests is to the person to whom the book was dedicated, Bryan Waller Procter. It also contains a letter from Wilkie dated 13 May 1875 which Blackwell’s suggests is to Anne Benson Procter, his widow. The book is priced at £25,000.

ENDEAVOUR MORSE

Followers of the television detective series, 'Endeavour', may have noticed a small homage to *The Moonstone* in the episode 'Nocturne' on 13 July. Reviewing a 100 year old unsolved (fictional) murder investigation, the notes of the time record one of the investigating officers as [detective constable] Cuff. This seems to be a literary habit of the author, Russell Lewis. As noted in 'London Particular', the online Newsletter of the Dickens Fellowship, "The final episode of the latest series of ‘Endeavour’, entitled ‘Neverland’, showed the young Morse entering a firm of solicitors. They were called ‘Vholes, Jaggars and Lightwood’.” LP readers will of course recognise Dickensian lawyers (two shady and one bored!) from *Bleak House*, *Great Expectations* and *Our Mutual Friend* respectively."

SUMMER READING

The start of the summer holiday season is the cue for light features in the newspapers on ‘best for the beach’ reading. And Wilkie usually appears – normally *The Woman in White* or *The Moonstone*. Keren Levy gave the latter a full recommendation after re-reading it on a beach in Sicily. “I read it, for the first time, aged 15, as a set text. I chose to read it, on holiday, 20 years later because I wanted to hear those voices again and because I had the time and the space in which to do so.” You could do worse!

Paul Lewis
Andrew Gasson

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THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

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Membership Paul Lewis, 4 Ernest Gardens, Chiswick, London W4 3QU

NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2014

BARONESS JAMES OF HOLLAND PARK (P. D. JAMES)

Members will no doubt have heard the sad news of the passing of Baroness James of Holland Park at the end of November at the age of 94. Better known as crime writer extraordinaire, P. D. James and creator of detective policeman Adam Dalgleish, she has been a distinguished Patron of the Wilkie Collins Society since 2002. Her name will sadly appear for the last time at the head of this Newsletter.

Born in Oxford in 1920, her family moved to Cambridge when she was eleven and with holidays taken at Lowestoft, East Anglia has become a frequent setting for her novels. P. D. James worked for the National Health Service and Civil Service for several years where she secured a senior promotion to the criminal policy department at the Home Office. In this position she was responsible for appointing forensic scientists and advising ministers on juvenile crime, also issues which reappear in her novels.

P.D. James's first novel, *Cover Her Face*, was published in 1962 and has been followed by seventeen other equally successful novels. Her enduring fame was established with the 1977 *Death of an Expert Witness* and she began writing full-time in 1979. Since then, the books and television adaptations have thrilled us all and both she and her characters have become household names.

Since honouring the Society by becoming its patron, she wrote the equally successful *The Murder Room* (2003); *The Lighthouse* (2005), a title she shared with Wilkie; *The Private Patient* (2008); and her final novel, *Death Comes to Pemberley* (2011), a mystery sequel to *Pride and Prejudice* by her favourite author, Jane Austen. In addition she wrote the non-fiction *Talking about Detective Fiction* (2009) which of course featured references to Wilkie and *The Moonstone*. In 2013 P. D. James graciously consented to write a Foreword to Collins's *Lighthouse*, his previously unpublished play, issued by the WCS.

P. D. James was awarded the OBE in 1983, became a magistrate in 1989 and was created a Life Peer in 1991. She chaired the Booker Prize panel in 1987 and from 1997-2013 was President of the Society of Authors - of which Wilkie was a founder member but only a vice-president. Throughout her writing career, there have also been numerous awards which include *Shroud for a Nightingale* (1971), Silver Dagger Award (Crime Writers' Association) and Best Novel Award (Mystery Writers of America); *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman* (1973) Best Novel Award (MWA); *The Black Tower* (1975) Silver Dagger Award (CWA); *A Taste for Death* (1986) Best novel Award (MWA); Diamond Dagger Award (CWA 1987); *The Children of Men* (1992) Deo Gloria Award for a science fiction story; the Grandmaster Award (MWA 1999); and more recently the Best Critical Non-Fiction Anthony Award for *Talking about Detective Fiction*.

Wilkie would have been delighted to know he had as a patron such an illustrious successor in the art of crime fiction as Baroness James. There is also no doubt that he would have agreed with her writing philosophy that "a first-class mystery should also be a first-class novel." We shall all mourn her passing.

Phyllis Dorothy James, 3 August 1920 - 27 November 2014.

THE HAPPY READER

The Woman in White elegantly fills the second half of *The Happy Reader*. This is a new magazine published by Penguin Classics in collaboration with the creators of the award-winning *Fantastic Man*. As its blurb says "For avid readers and the uninitiated alike, it is a chance to reengage with classic literature and to stay inspired and entertained. The concept of the magazine is excitingly

simple: the first half is a long-form interview with a notable book fanatic and the second half explores one Penguin Classics title from an array of surprising and invigorating angles, through fashion, art, lifestyle, history, film and more."

The first half of the issue for Winter 2014 has a lengthy interview with actor and bookworm Dan Stevens. We are then treated in the second part to 30 or so pages with features devoted entirely to *The Woman in White*. Editor-in-Chief, Seb Emina, introduces the title with 'An Inferno of Suspense': "There's a reason why *The Woman in White*, the nerve-racking novel by Wilkie Collins, first published in 1860, is regarded as the ultimate winter read.... Do not start *The Woman in White* if you have other things you should be doing."

The next article by Henry Jeffreys, 'The Year Eighteen-Sixty', sets the novel into its historical and literary perspective. This was the year that cocaine was developed although Wilkie, of course, maintained his loyalty to laudanum. 'Bon-Bons de Chocolat à la vanille' by food writer Hattie Ellis gives a dark chocolate recipe inspired by Fosco's box of sweets. Lilie Ferrari contributed 'To Write a Soap' since "After *The Woman in White* was published, the appetite for serialised stories kept growing. Eventually they just made them endless." In 'White Gothic', "To make an appearance in head-to-toe white is always a strong statement" notes fashion critic Tim Banks, supporting his piece with stylised black and white photographs.

'Walter's Walk' is based on the route researched and mapped by Paul Lewis for the WCS in 2010. "Our first encounter with the woman in white takes place during Walter's now-legendary stroll across Hampstead. It is evoked in beautiful but also painstaking detail. The distances between landmarks, the weather, and even the angle and intensity of moonlight are plotted. The excellently drawn map is accompanied by six of Google's Streetview photographs, as the scenes appear today.

In 'White, Red, Green, Yellow, Purple and Blue', author Emily King discusses "single-colour outfits in art and discovers women being pigeon-holed and men revealing their identity." 'Unputdownable' was a joint piece by detective duo Nicci French (married couple Nicci Gerrard and Sean French). "To remember exactly where, when, and how one read a cherished novel is an art in itself."

These various essays are followed by an appendix which includes the Frederick Walker poster of *The Woman in White*; Wilkie's WC monogram which the WCS uses; screen shots from the video game of the Victorian Mysteries series; stills from television and cinema adaptations of the novel; and the William Collins portrait of Wilkie as a baby.

Overall *The Happy Reader* provides a feast of *Woman in White* and Collins related material from an entirely new perspective. It is available by free subscription plus £8 a year to cover the cost of postage from Penguin at <https://thehappyreader.com/>; or the Collins issue can be obtained from www.antennebooks.com/books/happy-reader-issue-1.

THE MYSTERY PORTRAIT

The 'mystery' of the portrait of Wilkie mentioned in the Summer Newsletter has now been solved. It was sold at Sotheby's in 1973 and described as "A small portrait of Wilkie Collins ... by his painter brother Charles Allston Collins. The portrait measures 10¼ inches by 7 inches and is dated 1850." The painting was in fact bought by Faith Clarke, Wilkie's great granddaughter and can be seen as the cover illustration to William Clarke's 1988 *The Secret Life of Wilkie Collins*.

The other missing portrait, 'The Late Mr. Wilkie Collins at the age of 56' by Walter Goodman remains untraced.

CHARLES COLLINS WATERCOLOUR

A rare watercolour by Wilkie's brother, Charles, was sold at Christie's on 4 September. Described as 'Lost Love' it fetched £2750. The small picture is a portrait of a kneeling woman in a pink gown with a green scarf in a rural landscape and inscribed "Idolo de] mio cuor | Nume adorato" (Idol of my heart, beloved name). It was previously sold by Christie's as 'A Cry for Help' in May 2012 for £1125. The buyer then – Neil Wilson – died in June 2014 and this sale was of his collection of romantic pictures.

KENSAL GREEN CEMETERY

WCS members including Faith Clarke gathered on 28 September by Wilkie's grave at Kensal Green Cemetery to mark the 125th anniversary of his death on

23 September and his burial four days later on Friday 27th September 1889. Also in attendance were members of Friends of Kensal Green Cemetery. As well as their kind hospitality afterwards in the Dissenters' Chapel, they exhibited the results of their detailed research. This included numerous reports of the funeral from the major London newspapers and from those as far afield as Aberdeen and Belfast; extracts from Wilkie's will; and copies of the early entries in the Register of the then General Cemetery Company. The grave is already looking much better but artist plans to restore all aspects were also on display.

A GREEN PLAQUE FOR WILKIE COLLINS

On 23 September, exactly 125 years to the day since Collins died, a Westminster Council green plaque was unveiled to his memory by Faith Clarke at 96-100 New Cavendish Street. This address, originally number 11, was the spot where Wilkie was born in 1824. The present block of sixteen flats was built in 1932.

Cllr Robert Davis, deputy leader of Westminster City Council, made a short introductory speech before the official unveiling. "He becomes the sixth novelist to be remembered with a Westminster green plaque, following other greats such as Jane Austen and Arthur Conan Doyle. He truly embodies exactly the kind of individual I am keen to celebrate - a great talent combined with great character. This is the twenty-fifth year of Westminster's green plaque scheme, which has seen over one hundred commemorations dotted across the city. They give recognition to the diverse range of individuals and organisations who have made a lasting contribution to the City of Westminster. The scheme plays a pivotal role in giving communities access to their history."

Faith Clarke said he would have appreciated the pomp and ceremony. "I think he would think it great fun," she added. "He was very much a man of the theatre, he was quite a showman."

Jacqueline Glasser, who lives in a flat in the building, campaigned for the plaque to be placed there and kindly provided refreshments for the 30 people attending who included several members of the Society.

Further details with photographs were published by *West End Extra* on 26 September and can still be found on their website.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE ON STAGE

Members may recall the adaptation of *The Woman in White* by Nicola Boyce which was staged at the Cambridge Arts Theatre as well as several other provincial theatres around the country between July and October 2011. The cast then included Colin Baker as Fosco, Peter Amory as Glyde and Isla Carter as both Laura and Anne Catherick. This adaptation has now been published in paperback during 2014 in book form by Josef Weinberger Plays (ISBN 978 0 85676 342 7; £8 but less expensive from the Book Depository or Amazon).

Until now the standard adaptation has been that by Constance Cox, written many years ago but not actually published until 2005 by theatrical publishers, Samuel French (ISBN 0 573 11578 8; 52 Fitzroy Street, London, W1P 6JR). French also publishes a spoof version of the play with the title *Egad!, The Woman in White: an Astonishing and Inspiring Melodrama* by Tim Kelly (ISBN 0 573 60870 9). Kelly (1931- 1998) was an American who wrote more than 300 comedies, dramas, mysteries and melodramas.

We are unaware of any previous performances but *Egad!* has now been staged by the Richmond Shakespeare Society at their own Mary Wallace Theatre in Twickenham, directed by Simon Bickerstaffe. "A phantasmagorically festive feast of farce and fun. You know the story. Well you think you do a lunatic, multi-layered play within-a-play....." The adaptation was performed from 13 to 20 December.

Egad! is essentially a pantomime based on *The Woman in White*, complete with deliberate over-acting, bad puns and asides to the audience. There is indeed a woman in white but Glyde's villainous accomplice has become Countess Fosco, dressed throughout as a woman in black. The production cleverly blended in clips from the 1948 Sydney Greenstreet film version of *The Woman in White* between the various scene changes. Would Wilkie have approved? Probably not but he might have thought it good fun.

THE SONG OF THE WRECK FROM *THE LIGHTHOUSE*

'The Song of the Wreck' was written by Dickens for *The Lighthouse* and set to a tune composed by George Linley for Charlotte Young's ballad 'Little Nell'. It has now been reconstructed by Caroline Radcliffe and performed by soprano Philippa Althaus and pianist Steven Teo, originally for a performance at the Book to the Future Festival at the University of Birmingham on 27 October 2013. It was repeated in part for the Dickens Fellowship meeting in Central London on 20 May 2014 but the performers were unavailable to attend. They therefore kindly agreed to make an informal recording of the song to be played for the meetings.

This recording is now available on the WCS website together with an introduction and a more detailed history by Caroline at wilkiecollinssociety.org/publications/the-song-of-the-wreck/.

The recording was made in one take on very basic hand-held recording equipment in a small practice room with a rather out of tune piano! Listeners are asked to bear this in mind and to view the recording as an informal and spontaneous rendition that does not aim to meet professional standards. We are very grateful to Philippa and Steven, who agreed to release the recording, but if anyone would like to sponsor a higher quality recording please contact c.radcliffe@bham.ac.uk.

THE BEARDED WILKIE

The fine Rudolph Lehman portrait of Wilkie, executed in 1880, heads an article by Lucinda Hawksley in the BBC News Magazine on the growth of the beard in the nineteenth century.

"The beard fashion of the past 10 years on both sides of the Atlantic mirrors an earlier facial hair craze, which started during the Crimean War, lasted for three decades, and was only entirely stamped out with the invention of the disposable razor in the early 1900s."

The portrait appears in company with Charles Darwin and Holman Hunt, all in colour. There is no further mention of Wilkie nor how at one point he and Dickens were growing facial hair at the same time in preparation for the

amateur production of *The Frozen Deep* in 1857. The full piece can be found at www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-30037914.

THE SOCIETY OF AUTHORS

The Society of Authors journal *The Author* in its Summer 2014 issue also shows the bearded Wilkie in a piece by Jane Casey on the Society's archives where for "the earliest members, a luxuriant beard was essential." This time Wilkie is shown in black and white in the company of fellow founders and leading lights, Tennyson and Walter Besant.

The Author has another mention of Collins in an article on 'Exceptional Blindness' by Selina Mills in its Autumn issue. "Wilkie Collins' *Poor Miss Finch* (1872) relied on the heroine's blindness to show how she was not 'poor' at all, but in fact self-determined, single-minded and, horror of horrors, possibly at peace with her blindness."

A LAZY TOUR IN CUMBERLAND

The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices is a humorous account of Collins's and Dickens's walking tour of Cumberland during September 1857. Written in collaboration, it was originally published in five parts in *Household Words* from 3-31 October 1857.

Stephen Mathews in his *A Lazy Tour in Cumberland* as well as reproducing the original text succeeds in tracing the journey of Collins and Dickens as closely as possible and portraying the communities they visited as they were at the time. The book is well illustrated with commendable attention to detail in all eight chapters following the route. There is, for example, a lengthy analysis of the possible location for Limmeridge Hall in *The Woman in White*. *A lazy Tour in Cumberland* was 'Lakeland Book of the Year for 2013'. It is published by Bookcase at £12 paperback (ISBN 9781904147688).

A MODERN MOONSTONE

Collins's fabulous Moonstone was probably based on a combination of the priceless Koh-i-Noor, Orloff and Pitt diamonds. The recent Sale of Important Jewels at Sotheby's New York on 23 September featured an "18 Karat White Gold, Moonstone and Diamond Necklace of graduated design, composed of 31

moonstone beads measuring approximately 21.7 to 14.8 mm, the clasp accented by small cabochon moonstones weighing approximately 4.75 carats, accented by round diamonds weighing approximately 1.15 carats." This particular necklace sold for \$6,250. Franklin Blake in the original summed it all up, however: "Carbon, Betteredge! Mere carbon."

MISS GWILT

WCS member, Susan Hanes from Chicago, writes that on 15 October the Real Thing Reading Group met to discuss Collins's play, *Miss Gwilt*.

Wilkie Collins's supernatural mystery novel *Armada* was first serialized in English and American magazines from 1864 to 1866, and was published in book form in both countries in 1866. That same year, Collins adapted it for the stage in order to protect dramatic copyright, though it was never produced. A later adaptation, called *Miss Gwilt*, was first performed in Liverpool in 1875 and in London the following year. It opened in New York in 1879.

The prompt copy of *Miss Gwilt*, held at the Rare Book & Manuscript Library of the University of Illinois, contains copious notes, diagrams, and even a drawing of the set, all done by the producer of the play at London's Globe Theatre, Henry Herman. Included are four letters to Herman from Collins regarding the production. A digital version of the Library of Congress copy of the play can be found at <https://archive.org/details/missgwiltmain00coll>. A facsimile of the text is also published by the British Library as one of its Historical Print Collections in the Poetry and Drama category (£13.20 from the Book Depository).

Three of the Herman letters were published in *The Public Face* and one further letter is in the latest *Addenda* enclosed with this newsletter.

COLLINS IN RUSSIA

Ralph Fiennes's recent film, *The Invisible Woman*, which features Tom Hollander as Wilkie Collins, was shown at the New British Cinema festival in Moscow from Tuesday 28 October to Thursday 6 November.

Wilkie's books were widely translated into Russian where he seems to have been very popular. Andrew Gasson's *Illustrated Guide* lists a number of early

editions, many of which appeared very shortly after they were published in England. Translations throughout the 20th century can easily be found with *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone* being constantly republished, sometimes in editions of several hundred thousand copies. Collins has an entry in the *Great Soviet Encyclopaedia* of 1979.

WCS Russian member Zlata Antonova published her 2006 thesis *The Life and Work of Wilkie Collins* in Russian and its three sections look at childhood and youth and the early work 1843-1860; the Golden Ten Years (1861-1870); and the third period and his 'second manner' of writing 1871-1889.

Marcia Morris wrote a lengthy article on the influence of *The Moonstone* on Boris Akunin's detective fiction in the 2012 *Wilkie Collins Journal* <http://wilkiecollinssociety.org/wilkie-collinss-legacies-the-moonstone-in-boris-akunins-murder-on-the-leviathan-and-childrens-book/>

Уилки Коллинз is the transliteration of Wilkie Collins's name in Russian and from time to time Russian language editions are to be found for sale on eBay.

A recently discovered edition of *No Thoroughfare* in Russian shows how rapidly Collins and Dickens appeared - presumably with no copyright paid! - in Russia in the 19th century. The translation was passed by the Imperial censor on 3 January 1868, just weeks after it appeared as the Christmas number of *All The Year Round*. It was published in St Petersburg under the title (in old Russian script) БЕЗЪ ВЫХОДА which literally means 'no way out' and subtitled in Russian 'Christmas Story'.

THE MANUSCRIPT OF *BASIL*

The manuscript of Wilkie's novel *Basil* featured in a new exhibition at the British Library 'Terror and Wonder -the Gothic Imagination'.

It is a chronology of 250 years of gothic fiction and thought, beginning with Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) and ending with photographs from the Goths Weekend in Whitby in April 2014.

Wilkie reports reading "the most terrible portions of the Monk and Frankenstein" in a letter to his father 24 August 1842 recounting how he had scared the company when staying with his aunt Catherine Gray. M. G. Lewis's gothic novel *The Monk* published in 1796 and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818) feature among many gothic works in the exhibition. In 1874 Wilkie ordered unabridged editions of both *The Monk* and *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) by Anne Radcliffe from a book dealer. The latter four volume illustrated edition dated 1803 was still in his library at his death. Wilkie did later, of course, go to Whitby himself in 1861 writing part of *No Name* while there before leaving due to the excessive noise.

The exhibition was full of amazing artefacts, mainly books and periodicals from the Library's own collection, but some short extracts from films - including Sarah Waters explaining the importance of sensation fiction and Wilkie Collins to her own work - as well as posters tracing gothic and horror fiction through to the present day.

Wilkie appeared several times in labels and accounts of how the gothic novel moved from distant medieval castles to the 'secret theatre of home' - the shiny new suburbs with their neat front doors. Quite rightly that was represented by the manuscript of *Basil* which for Collins fans was the most important artefact in the exhibition. Catherine Peters in her 1991 biography of Collins, *The King of Inventors*, argued the case that *Basil* was the first sensation novel. A neighbouring label explained the significance of *The Woman in White* but it was only represented by the cover of the sheet music called *The Fosco Gallop* by George Richardson.

MY DEAR COLLINS

A fragment of a letter from Charles Dickens to Wilkie Collins was recently sold at auction. It contains just the valediction, signature, and addressee

Faithfully yours always | Charles Dickens | Mr. W. Wilkie Collins Esquire

Wilkie stopped signing himself off 'W. Wilkie Collins' at the end of 1854 so it is likely Dickens would not have used this form much later. Dickens signed himself off to Wilkie 'Faithfully yours always' on only two occasions during

this era - 12 May 1851 and 24 February 1854 (Pilgrim VII 280). Pilgrim records one letter dated 14 December 1853 as 'sig. cut off' (VII 226). It is possible this is the missing portion of that letter - or the end of another which is unidentified.

WALKING WITH WILKIE

WCS member Jak Stringer is pursuing her Walking with Wilkie events celebrating and retracing Wilkie's walk in 1850 around Cornwall which he recounted in *Rambles Beyond Railways*. Her Facebook page now includes videos and extracts from letters written to his mother and others during the walk. And she has put several videos on YouTube. Search 'Walking with Wilkie' to find them both.

WILKIE, CONAN DOYLE, AGATHA CHRISTIE

Many reviews of current detective stories reference their debt to Wilkie. Critic Mark Smith followed the pattern in the autumn with a critique of !TV's Morse spin-off drama *Lewis*. "The format was invented by Wilkie Collins. . .Look carefully at any detective show and you can always see something of Wilkie, Arthur, or Agatha." (*The Herald* 11 October 2014).

EDWIN DROOD AND "I SAY NO"

WCS member, Kishor Kale, notes an article in the *Times* of 5 January 2014 about Edwin Drood. Kishor, reminds us that his article 'Intentionality and Generic Conventions' extends the argument in his earlier 1998 WCSJ paper 'Yes and No: Problems of Closure in Collins's "I Say No"' to include Edwin Drood. It was published last year in the refereed online journal, *The Victorian*, and can be found at <http://journals.sfu.ca/vict/index.php/vict/issue/view/1/showToc>.

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NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2015

P. D. JAMES - A LAST FAREWELL

Our late Patron, P. D. James died at the end of November aged 94. A memorial 'Service of Thanksgiving for the Life and Work of Baroness James of Holland Park' was held on Wednesday 29 April 2015 at the Temple Church. This is situated in the heart of London's Barristers area, not far from Lincoln's Inn where Collins, himself, studied law between 1846 and 1851.

Those present were privileged to witness a very dignified service conducted by the Reverend Robin Griffith-Jones, Master of the Temple Church; the Reverend Dr Peter Groves of St Mary Magdalen Church, Oxford; and the Right Reverend and Right Honourable Richard Chartres, Bishop of London. The music was conducted by Mr Greg Morris and beautifully enhanced by the choir of the Temple Church.

The sermon, eloquently delivered by the Bishop of London, was enlivened by numerous personal reminiscences. But perhaps the finest overall tribute to her life and works was delivered by Stephen Page, chief executive of her publishers Faber & Faber. His eulogy was followed by a moving reading by Sheila Mitchell from *Time to be in Earnest*, the autobiography of P. D. James.

The congregation consisted of the great and the good of the literary world. The Wilkie Collins Society was represented by our Patron, Faith Clarke, and Chairman, Andrew Gasson. A full list was published in *The Times* of Thursday 30 April 2015.

But the final memorial to P. D. James, crime writer extraordinaire, will remain - like that of Wilkie Collins - in the immortality of her books.

MEMBERSHIP

Our thanks to most members who have already paid their 2015 subscription of £16 (UK and Europe) or £28 for the rest of the world. Those still outstanding can be paid by cheque to Paul Lewis at the above address; by direct BACS payment (sort code 40-03-28; account number 11019988); or by Paypal.

COLLINS THE CAMPAIGNER

Accompanying this Newsletter is 'Collins the Campaigner', an article originally published in the Journal of the Society of Authors, *The Author*, VOL CXXVI, No. 1, Spring 2015. Written by Andrew Lycett, it is reproduced with his kind permission and that of the editor, James McConnachie. Andrew Lycett, of course, is the author of the excellent new biography *Wilkie Collins: a Life of Sensation* which is now available in both hardback (Hutchinson) and paperback (Windmill Books). He has recently been elected to the SOA Council.

The Society of Authors was established in 1884 for 'the maintenance, definition and defence of Literary Property' following a meeting held on 28 September 1883. Tennyson was elected President and Walter Besant became Chairman of the Committee of Management. Collins was an enthusiastic founder-member and honorary vice-president, along with Charles Reade, G. A. Sala and Margaret Oliphant. The Society was launched at a Lord Mayor's Banquet on 18 October 1884, at which 150 members were present. The Society's first objective was to obtain copyright for English authors in the United States while other aims included the promotion of a Bill for the Registration of Titles.

Collins attended the Society's annual dinners when he was well enough. His last appearance was as a steward at a dinner held on 15 July 1888 at the Criterion Restaurant, to honour visiting American authors. The Society was presented by Besant with a large collection of Collins's papers connected with International Copyright. In 1890 it republished in its journal '*Considerations on the Copyright Question, Addressed to an American Friend*' under the title 'Thou Shalt Not Steal' (*The Author*, June 1890, pp 31-35).

Today, the SOA is a valuable source of information for its members on a variety of subjects. It particularly offers exceptional advice to both established and prospective authors on publishers contracts. (www.societyofauthors.org; 84 Drayton Gardens, London SW10 9SB, 020 7373 6642).

ARTWORK AT TATE BRITAIN

A recent trip to Tate Britain in London the showed that the wonderful, full-size artwork by Frederick Walker which was used for posters advertising the play of *The Woman in White* when it opened at the Olympic Theatre in 1871 is now on permanent display. It is usually reproduced in black and white but the original gouache on paper measuring 2172 x 1289mm demonstrates the subtle use of colour. The Tate, itself, declares "It combines a Pre-Raphaelite-style beauty with black and white graphic design. Sweeping lines pull the viewer's eye to the woman's mysterious and inviting expression." It can be seen online at www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/walker-the-woman-in-white-n02080 .

Tate Britain also has one of Charles Collins's most famous works *May in the Regent's Park* painted in 1851 from the family home in Hanover Terrace where he lived with Wilkie and their mother www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/collins-may-in-the-regents-park-t03025.

THE INVISIBLE WOMAN

The Invisible Woman which has Tom Hollander playing a likeable Wilkie Collins and Ralph Fiennes playing a realistically over-the-top Dickens shows the infamous fire when Dickens burns his letters – including probably hundreds from Wilkie. The DVD can now be found for a few pounds on the internet and may be available with some online services.

UNWRITTEN BOOKS

The Private Libraries Association recently printed a short piece by Bryan Welch on 'Unwritten Books'. These are works where an intended sequel or second volume never actually appeared. He quotes examples such as Evelyn Waugh's autobiography *A Little Learning*; and *Journey to the Ends of Time, Volume one, Lost in the Dark Wood* by Sacheverell Sitwell.

In Collins's case, his unwritten book would have been the Second Series of *The Fallen Leaves* (1879). The 'Fallen Leaves' of the title are 'The people who have drawn blanks in the lottery of life.....the friendless and the lonely, the wounded and

the lost'. The novel was not well received and a planned Second Series, showing an unconventional marriage failing because of outside pressures, was never written. Collins's letters to a variety of correspondents – who seem to be fans anxious for a sequel - shows both his intentions and excuses. On 22 June 1880 he wrote:

The Second Series will be written - if all goes well with me - when our English system of publication sanctions the issue of the first cheap edition of "The Fallen Leaves". That is to say, the first Edition which really appeals to the people. I know "the General reader", by experience, as my best friend and ally when I have certain cliques and classes in this country arrayed against me - and, when I "return to the charge", I shall write with redoubled resolution, if I feel that I have the Great Public with me - as I had them (for example) in the case of "The New Magdalen". ([1924] to Louise Chandler Moulton)

The following year, on 8 August 1881 he continued:

Thus far, the second part of the story only exists in my "rough notes". I am waiting to write the work itself (for one among many reasons) until the "First Series" has been circulated in the third, and cheapest, form of publication, among a far wider circle of readers than any to which the book has yet appealed. You can hardly form an idea of the astonishment and indignation with which the character of "Simple Sally" has been received in certain prudish and prejudiced quarters. On this account, I am waiting (with some confidence, inspired by previous experience) for the Verdict of the People. ([1968] to Charles H. Willes)

In June 1883 he recorded that:

I have the materials by me for writing a sequel to "The Fallen Leaves". Various obstacles (with the enumeration of which it is needless for me to trouble you) have hitherto prevented me from continuing the story. ([2168] to Ezra Bower)

And in November 1885 he was still procrastinating with:

Obstacles of various kinds, which I will not trouble you by mentioning in detail, have thus far prevented me from writing the contemplated sequel to my story. ([2496] to Eleanor Selfe)

During this time Collins had written *The Black Robe* (1880), *Jezebel's Daughter* (1880), *Heart and Science* (1883) and *I Say No!* (1884) but the Second Series of *The Fallen Leaves* remains an 'Unwritten Book'.

THE MOONSTONE LEGACY TRILOGY

Wilkie Collins's classic story, *The Moonstone*, ends with "So the years pass, and repeat each other; so the same events revolve in the cycles of time. What will be the next adventure of the Moonstone? Who can tell?"

In May 2010, Pushkin Press published the first in the *Moonstone Legacy* trilogy which provided a continuation of the fabulous diamond's story by Diana de

Gunzburg and Tony Wild. The book took the form of a young adults' mystery adventure novel, partly set in Shalimar, a splendid Anglo-Indian mansion on the North Yorkshire Moors. In part one, fourteen year-old Lizzy Abercrombie's mother dies in a tragic accident on the full moon. But was it really an accident? Lizzy discovers that her death may be linked to a mysterious family curse. Determined to find the truth, her quest takes her to the Temple of the Moon in India, where she uncovers the terrible past of her ancestor George Abercrombie. The Temple of the Moon at Somnath is, of course, the setting of *The Moonstone*'s visionary final chapter and there is a nicely ambiguous ending for the first book.

We now have the whole trilogy published in a single volume as an eBook or in a Kindle edition. The second book is entitled *Dreamtime* and the third *The Age of Aquarius*. The three-volumes-in-one was ceremoniously launched on 29 January at the University Women's Club in the heart of Mayfair. There was an introductory speech by His Excellency Ranjan Mathai, the High Commissioner of India to the UK, followed by Professor Sara Russell of the Natural History Museum who provided the geological basis for the moonstone diamond. The evening concluded with a reading from the book by Terry Jones of Monty Python fame.

Diana de Gunzburg was born in Pakistan and is Anglo-Russian-Afghan. Her great-grandfather was the last person to be publicly hanged for insurgency by the British in the North West Frontier of Pakistan. Tony Wild explored the Indian subcontinent as a young man, and wrote popular histories for HarperCollins - *The East India Company: Trade and Conquest from 1600* (1999) and *Remains of the Raj* (2001).

The Moonstone Legacy is written mainly for younger readers in an easy to read style and the Epilogue to the third book once again ends with Wilkie's last line "What will be the next adventure of the Moonstone? Who can tell?"

Further details of *The Moonstone Legacy Trilogy* are available at www.moonstonelegacy.com.

LAST TRAIN TO ASPATRIA

The Maryport & Carlisle Railway was one of the many small and profitable railways that sprang up in the 19th century. It connected Maryport in Cumbria to the county town of Carlisle and was also used to take coal mined inland to Maryport for onward sea transport. In a book published in 1947 Jack Simmons identifies the line as the

one which Walter Hartright took on his journey to Limmeridge House in the opening chapters of *The Woman in White*.

The Maryport and Carlisle Railway makes one shadowy appearance in English Literature. The scene of Wilkie Collins's novel *The Woman in White* is laid at Limmeridge House, which may be placed, from the evidence in the text, somewhere near Allonby. Near the beginning of the novel Walter Hartright, travels down to Limmeridge from London by way of Carlisle, taking what is clearly the last train at night on the Maryport line.

The Maryport & Carlisle Railway, Jack Simmons, Oakwood Press, 1947 p.34 footnote.

Wilkie Collins describes the journey in the second part of the story in *All The Year Round*, 3 December 1859.

My travelling instructions directed me to go to Carlisle, and then to diverge by a branch railway which ran in the direction of the coast. As a misfortune to begin with, our engine broke down between Lancaster and Carlisle. The delay occasioned by this accident caused me to be too late for the branch train, by which I was to have gone on immediately. I had to wait some hours; and when a later train finally deposited me at the nearest station to Limmeridge House, it was past ten, and the night was so dark that I could hardly see my way to the pony-chaise which Mr. Fairlie had ordered to be in waiting for me.

The driver was evidently discomposed by the lateness of my arrival. He was in that state of highly-respectful sulkiness which is peculiar to English servants. We drove away slowly through the darkness in perfect silence. The roads were bad, and the dense obscurity of the night increased the difficulty of getting over the ground quickly. It was, by my watch, nearly an hour and a half from the time of our leaving the station before I heard the sound of the sea in the distance, and the crunch of our wheels on a smooth gravel drive. We had passed one gate before entering the drive, and we passed another before we drew up at the house.

From the description of the journey it is likely that Walter alighted at Aspatria station rather than Maryport which is more distant from Allonby and also by the sea. Aspatria to Allonby by cross country road is just under six miles. So an hour and a half by pony chaise at night over rough roads is about right.

The Maryport & Carlisle Railway opened fully in 1845 and was absorbed into the London Midland and Scottish Railway in 1923. Aspatria station reopened as an unmanned halt in 2000. The 28 minute railway journey from Carlisle to Aspatria can still be made today on Northern Rail. Though the pony chaise to Limmeridge House will not be there.

WILKIE AT WORK

A newly discovered letter has cast some light on Wilkie's working timetable when he was writing *No Name*. We know from other correspondence that he moved to The Fort House Broadstairs on 1 July 1862 having taken the house for four months to try to keep up with the demands of writing the novel for serialisation in London in *All The Year Round* and in *Harper's Weekly* in New York. The simultaneous publication in New York meant he had to work six weeks ahead of the publication date and on Friday 18 July he wrote to James Birtles, at the printer of *All The Year Round*, correcting part 25 – published on 30 August – and sending manuscript copy for part 26 published a week later.

This new letter is dated a few days earlier, Monday 14 July, to his friend the novelist and playwright John Palgrave Simpson (1807-1887). Inviting him to stay at The Fort House for a weekend Wilkie sets out his writing timetable – he works every day except Sunday until 3pm. After that he is free.

The dire necessity of getting on a little faster with “No Name” drove me from London – and here I am, with the sea on three sides of me and a garden on the fourth, working in blessed seclusion from all London interruptions. I make a holiday of every Sunday (as a concession to the principles of a brother-writer – Moses, author of “The Ten Commandments” &c &c) – and if you feel inclined this summer or autumn to try the Kentish Coast from Saturday to Monday, let me know a day or two beforehand – and you will find a bed here very much at your disposal – I only mention from Saturday to Monday because my Sunday holiday leaves me at the disposal of my friends. If you don't mind my being shut up till 3 P.M. the rest of the week is as much yours as Sunday.

Others invited for the weekend included George Russell, Charles Ward, and John Millais.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE WALK ON STRANGE MAPS

Paul Lewis's research and map of Walter Hartright's night time walk from Hampstead to London in *The Woman in White* was reproduced in the first issue of *The Happy Reader* mentioned in the previous WCS Newsletter. It is once again used to good effect - although without proper acknowledgement - by Frank Jacobs on the Strange Maps website. The entire walk with photographs of key points is to be found at bigthink.com/strange-maps/wilkies-walk-with-the-woman-in-white.

KENSAL GREEN CEMETERY

This year's open day for the Friends of Kensal Green Cemetery will take place on Saturday 4 July, 11.00am to 5.00pm. Together with their usual guided tours, the day will provide the perfect opportunity to visit Wilkie's grave, situated near the central chapel (Grave number 31754/ square 141/row 1).

A LUCKY WILKIE FIND

A few years ago one of our extraordinarily lucky members bought at a charity auction in Australia for \$30 a three-volume first edition in the original brown cloth of *Poor Miss Finch* (Richard Bentley, 1872). We can only imagine his delight when examining the book on returning home to find the title-page signed and dated February 1872 by Wilkie Collins. A pencil note opposite the signature states that the book was bought at the sale of Collins's books by auctioneers Puttick & Simpson, 20 January 1890. It is referred to in William Baker's *Wilkie Collins's Library: a Reconstruction*, item 118 on page 93. The book now re-appears as lot number 255 at the sale by Dreweatts Bloomsbury on 21 May 2015. As with most Collins firsts, this is a rare title but the high estimate of £2000-£3000 is at least partly justified by the Collins signature and dating.

ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES

The Wilkie Collins Society continues to be affiliated to the Alliance of Literary Societies. The Annual General Meeting is this year hosted by the Trollope Society and is being held at the King's Manor, York, on Saturday 30th May 2015, at 1.45 pm. In 2016 the AGM will be held at Haworth by the Brontë Society; in 2017 by the Siegfried Sassoon and Owen Societies in Edinburgh; and in 2018 by the Katherine Mansfield Society at Bath; 2019 would be hosted by the George Eliot Society in Nuneaton.

DAYDREAMS AND NIGHTMARES

Longstanding WCS member Katherine Haynes has been writing and publishing short stories for many years but this is her first collection. Within the pages of *Daydreams and Nightmares* are seven uncanny tales. Like Wilkie before her, the author draws on her background in law for 'A Good Try', while a modern-day version of Dickens's Cloisterham is the setting for 'The Lure of the Copse'. Here the brightest of days can be darkened by shadow, a dream turned to nightmare and both of these stories are concerned with black magic. Other tales concern murder, ghosts and visits from unearthly beings. Published by Phantasm Press in paperback, it is available from Amazon from £7.50.

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NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2015

The two main themes for this issue of the Newsletter are the newly discovered works by Collins in *All the Year Round* and how it has now become possible to download from the internet even really obscure books and articles by or about Wilkie.

NEW COLLINS WORKS IN *ALL THE YEAR ROUND*

An extraordinary discovery by book dealer and academic Dr Jeremy Parrott has been described as the Rosetta Stone of Victorian literature. It has long been a mystery who wrote what in Dickens's periodical *All The Year Round* as all entries - bar some of Dickens's own - were published without a byline. That was common in Victorian periodicals. Less than a third of the pieces have been even tentatively ascribed to an author.

Dr Parrott has found a set of 20 volumes of the periodical from 1859 to 1868 which contains a pencil annotation of the author's name by each article. Hundreds of names now tie more than 3000 pieces to their writer. Parrott believes the set - which is in a luxury and very rare binding - belonged to Dickens himself and that the annotations are by him.

Collating the list with pieces known - or speculated - to have been written by Wilkie turns up eight new articles - one written jointly with Henry Morley. It confirms his authorship of three other pieces which Paul Lewis identified as by Wilkie in the WCS publication *All The Year Round - Non-Fiction by Wilkie Collins* (April 2011). And it shows that 14 other items which have been variously attributed to Wilkie in the past were in fact written by others - six of

them by his brother Charles Allston Collins. One of those is 'Suggestions from a Maniac' which Lewis wrongly attributed to Wilkie in that publication.

The eight items with Wilkie's name by them are

1. The Crusoe of the Snowy Desert (7 May 1859, vol. I, pp. 44-48)
2. Occasional Register (14 May 1859, vol. I, pp. 64-66). Jointly written with Henry Morley
3. Appalling Disclosure for the Lord Chamberlain (9 July 1859, vol. I, pp. 261-264)
4. The Last Leaves of a Sorrowful Book (30 July 1859, vol. I, pp. 318-323)
5. Managers and Music Halls (23 March 1861, vol. IV, pp. 558-561)
6. Hear the Postman (13 July 1861, vol. V, pp. 366-368)
7. The Sentiments of Martha Jones (26 July 1862, vol. VII, pp. 472-476)
8. A Florentine Procession (14 December 1867, vol. XIX, pp. 5-6)

The timing of these pieces fits in with what we know of Wilkie's work for *ATYR* and his other writing commitments. And the style of most of them seems to be Wilkie like. 'Hear the Postman' is perhaps the least like anything else he wrote and some experts say some of the others are a bit heavy-handed. But it is possible they were written under pressure to fill a gap in the weekly's 24 pages and one - 'Managers and Music Halls' - is perhaps more of Dickens's view than Wilkie's.

Collins collected just five of his pieces in *ATYR* for republication in *My Miscellanies* so we should not expect these passed over pieces to match those standards.

There is a serious question mark over only one. 'The Sentiments of Martha Jones' is a companion piece to an earlier article 'Seaside Lodgers' (17 August 1861, vol. V, pp. 496-500) and was written at a time when Wilkie was holed up in his 'tower of refuge', Fort House in Broadstairs, struggling to keep up with the demands of the London and New York press for his weekly parts of *No Name*. 'Seaside Lodgers' is marked in the Parrott volumes as by Charles Collins. It is possible that 'Martha Jones' is also by him.

Parrott admits there are other odd errors in the annotations. But an examination of some of the volumes by Dickens expert and biographer Professor Michael Slater and by John Drew, who runs the Dickens Journals Online Project at Buckingham University, confirms that they are contemporary and possibly by Dickens himself.

The eight newly identified items can be read or downloaded at Drew's project website www.djo.org.uk. Let us know what you think.

Apart from the Wilkie items, around 90 new Charles Collins pieces have been identified, confirming him as one of the most prolific contributors to *ATYR*. Plans for the publication of the data in the volumes – and of the new Wilkie Collins material – will be announced later.

COLLINS ETEXTS

One of the indefatigable e-texters of Wilkie's works is the American fan James Rusk. Many of his e-texts are on www.wilkiecollins.com. But that website is in dire need of updating and James has changed the urls of his Wilkie e-texts from those originally given there. You can now find his whole collection at <http://jr.digitalpixels.org/wc/>.

Another site where Collins's works can be downloaded is www.online-literature.com/wilkie-collins. This includes most of the full length novels and short stories, together with *Rambles Beyond Railways*. The site is easy to use but you have to run the gauntlet of typical online advertisements.

MR WRAY'S CASH-BOX

Mr Wray's Cash-Box was originally published in December 1851 although the title-page records it as 1852 and there was a second edition a few months later. In the USA *Mr Wray* was published much later in about 1869, by the relatively well known pirate press of Peterson's of Philadelphia, as *The Stolen Mask: or, the Mysterious Cash Box*. Issued in paper wrappers at 25cents, this edition is a difficult item to find.

There is, however, an even more scarce edition, *The Stolen Mask; or the Mysterious Cash-Box. A Story for a Christmas Fireside*, published in 1864 by the obscure Confederate publisher, The Steam Power-Press of F. G. DeFontaine & Co. in Columbia, South Carolina. It consists of 31 pages printed in double columns. It is a very strange choice by the publishers since most of the Confederate publications are tedious official documents.

A copy of *The Stolen Mask* appeared at auction in October 2009 and sold for the relatively large sum of \$540. This version can now be downloaded from <https://cdm.bostonatheneum.org/digital/collection/p16057coll14/id/53966/rec/1>

BLACK AND WHITE

Black and White was a play written by Collins from an idea by Charles Fechter who suggested the outline of the first two acts. With Fechter's agreement, Collins provided the ending, developed the characters and wrote the dialogue. The story is set in Trinidad in 1830 and treats the theme of slavery.

The play opened at the Adelphi on 29 March 1869 and ran for about sixty nights followed by an unsuccessful provincial tour. Collins considered it a better play than *No Thoroughfare* but felt it achieved only limited success because English audiences had been saturated with adaptations of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. *Black and White* was also staged at the Globe Theatre, Boston, from 26 December 1870.

In England, the play was printed for acting purposes by C. Whiting but never published to preserve Collins's copyright. It also appeared in New York as number 296 of de Witt's *Acting Plays* which includes a diagram and description of the stage, details of the Costumes and a synopsis of the play with a cast list.

It is this edition which has now been digitised and can be downloaded directly from Google Books. If preferred it can be obtained as a print on demand bound copy from companies like SN Books through ABE for about £5 (but can take up to a month to arrive); or from Amazon which might be quicker.

GENERAL THEATRICAL FUND

From the same sources, it is also possible to download *The Proceedings at the Seventh Anniversary Festival of the General Theatrical Fund* which took place in 1852. The General Theatrical Fund was a charitable institution which Collins, Dickens, a trustee, and most of the well known theatrical personalities of the day supported by donations at its annual festival, usually held in April. This is possibly Collins's first attendance since he had originally met Dickens in the spring of 1851. There is much mention of Dickens but only one note of W. Wilkie Collins in the publication, showing that he donated the sum of one guinea.

We assume that Wilkie attended the same function most years. In 1863, the Eighteenth Festival, Charles Dickens was in the Chair. On that occasion it is recorded that Collins donated five guineas whereas Dickens gave five pounds. This donation is recorded on 1 April in Wilkie's bank account at Coutts. In 1865, Collins took the chair for the Twentieth Festival and his speeches are recorded in the *Proceedings*. On this occasion he is recorded as donating an obviously quite generous ten guineas. His account at Coutts shows a total payment to the Fund on 15 April of £15-9s. No other payments to the Fund are

found in his bank account which was opened in 1860.

COLLINS BIOGRAPHIES

Over the years Wilkie Collins has been well served by several biographers. In approximately reverse chronological order, these include the up to date and comprehensive *Wilkie Collins: a Life of Sensation* (2014) by Andrew Lycett; the excellent but brief summaries by Peter Ackroyd, (2012) and Melisa Klimaszewski (2011), both entitled *Wilkie Collins; The King of Inventors* by Catherine Peters (1991); William Clarke's more personal *The Secret Life of Wilkie Collins* (1988); the partially completed *Wilkie Collins* by Dorothy L. Sayers (1977) and the rather speculative *The Life of Wilkie Collins* by Nuel Pharr Davies (1956), although this does contain some very useful footnotes.

If we put to one side the obscure German critical biography by von Wolzogen in 1885, the first ground breaking biography in English, particularly for its time - 1951 - was Kenneth Robinson's *Wilkie Collins*. Highly readable, it turns up fairly regularly on ebay or ABE Books. It is now available for downloading in various formats at archive.org/details/wilkiecollinsbio1952robi.

FREDERICK WALKER AND THE WOMAN IN WHITE POSTER

Frederick Walker (1840-1875) was an influential painter in oils and water-colours; he was also a friend of both Wilkie and Charles Collins. Walker was responsible for the striking theatre poster of *The Woman in White*. Recently discovered in the *Life and Letters of Frederick Walker, A.R.A.* by John George Marks (London; Macmillan, 1896) is correspondence revealing some of the background to this classic piece of poster art.

On 6 September 1871 Walker wrote to William Harcourt Hooper (1834-1912), the noted wood engraver:

I write to ask you to help me in a certain little matter. Mr. Wilkie Collins is [as certain advertisements show] about to have produced on the stage, 'The Woman in White,' and there has been a little discussion on the subject of a good poster; the result being that I made at the house of his brother, Mr. C. Collins, where I write this, a sketch of the said 'Woman in White,' and it is thought to be in some degree suitable, so I propose trying my hand at the thing itself - a dashing attempt in black and white. The figure ought not to be less than 4ft. 6, or 5ft. in height; and to my way of thinking a vigorous wood-cut would be the thing, on a sheet of wood the size of a door. Will you help me with your counsel and graver, or I might say chisel.

In another letter (now lost), Walker wrote to Hooper with the prescient comment: "I am bent on doing all I can with a first attempt at what I consider might develop into a most important branch of art."

On 11 September Walker commented to his friend the landscape painter J. W. North (1842-1924: "Am just about knocked up trying to do a poster for Wilkie Collins - his 'Woman in White,' about to be produced in the theatre - but the poster not a bad idea, if I can do it. A figure in white, cut out of a black ground, and Hooper, the engraver, rather enters into it." He had also written to his mother on the same date:

Your two letters received this morning, also a very charming one from Wilkie Collins, thanking me warmly for helping 'The Woman in White' by my poster. I am going on with it, and do not think I shall commence anything else before going away.

No trace of the Collins letter has been found but by 13 September he was able to write: "The poster is going on beautifully, and I'm expecting C. Collins every minute." On 14 September Walker wrote again to Hooper:

Wilkie Collins has just been, and expresses himself delighted with what I've done. I have got it on to the big paper, but not on to the blocks. These I have had fastened together by a carpenter, and I don't quite know whether you'd say they fit close enough. I don't like to ask you to come round again, but you could tell in an instant whether they'll do to proceed upon..... I have got more 'go' and purpose in the figure, and it strikes me we shall make a good thing of it.

Walker's biographer, J. G. Marks notes:

As far as I am aware, this poster was the first thing of the kind done in England by an artist of Walker's eminence. It represents the back view of a life-sized figure of a woman, a shawl partly over her head, her face seen in profile as she looks back; one hand raised with finger to her lips, the other holding the door by which she passes out into the starry night. The drawing was first made on paper, in chalk and charcoal; the outlines were pricked through for transfer on the wood, and the design then drawn by Walker on the wood itself. The original drawing was exhibited at the Dudley Gallery in 1872, and again at the exhibition of 1876, when, Mr. Hooper tells me, the holes made for the transfer were still distinctly visible!

On 28 September Walker wrote to Hooper during a fishing trip in Scotland: "I cannot resist asking after the small engraving of the 'Woman in White,' though I fear that you will have left town before this reaches it. Was the photograph satisfactory? Pardon a natural curiosity I feel in the welfare of the poor woman, and give me a line to say how all has gone off." He followed this up on 15 October with "I've done no work since I left; the poster appears to be a success.

I have here a photo of it; will send one of 'em to you if I can get one. There are some horrible small copies made of it I hear - lithographs - enough to make one's hair stand up." On 21 October he again wrote to Hooper:

I returned from the North yesterday morning, and your letter and the small copy of the poster followed me this morning. Of course I am much disgusted with some one [whoever it may be] for so treating me. Nothing would have been easier than to copy on to the wood a photo, which I am sure you would not have refused to cut. It has taken from me all the interest and pleasure I felt in the thing.... I am almost inclined to send in a surprising bill for the big poster; seeing now that they forget I made it quite a labour of love.

And once again on 24 October to Hooper:

I should be glad if you could procure for me one or two copies of the big poster. You'd be surprised to hear that the theatre people have been too busy even to have the courtesy to send me one. I hear that the play will be produced at Paris, where also the poster will perhaps be seen. I suppose the lettering could easily be altered. If it goes to Paris, I hope and think it will meet with better treatment than it has here.

Despite this last comment, it is uncertain whether *The Woman in White* was actually staged in Paris although Collins was in correspondence with Régnier, asking his advice on the dramatic version. The London production opened at the Olympic Theatre on 9 October 1871.

The full text of the correspondence and indeed the entire biography can be downloaded from archive.org/details/lifelettersoffre00markrich.

The drawing for the full size poster is currently on display at the Tate Gallery in London and can be seen at www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/walker-the-woman-in-white-n02080

SWEDISH BIBLIOGRAPHIES

Lars-Erik Nygren is an indefatigable bibliographer from Sweden who published his *Wilkie Collins in Sweden* during 2010. This consists of 77 illustrated pages spanning Wilkie's works from 1845 to the present day. Since then he has issued four supplements to complement the original publication with a fifth in preparation. Lars-Erik has also compiled other bibliographies which contain some information about Wilkie Collins's stories although he notes these are all in the Wilkie Collins bibliography as well!

Romanforlag och Romanblad (2015)

The story of small book companies which issued "cheap" books (crime and love stories, colportage-novels/dime novels) in Sweden during the period 1850-1920 is still to a great extent unknown in the history of Swedish literature. This book investigates two of these companies: Carl Anderson Book Company, Andersson & Co. and Nordiska Konstförlaget. They frequently co-operated with the European Book company, Eichler. The same covers have been found on books from France, Germany, Denmark and Sweden. Many foreign books were translated into Swedish, not issued as books, but just as feuilletons in daily newspapers or in special feuilleton magazines. (76 pages, illustrations mostly in colour. (SEK 240).

Edgar Allan Poe.

A bibliography, printed 1998, listing all known versions of Poe's prose stories in Swedish, from 1860 to 1998. Books, anthologies, magazines, feuilletons etc. (A few copies in stock, SEK 70).

Anna Katharine Green (2001).

About this early female crime writer's life and works and all editions of her stories printed in Swedish in books, magazines and as feuilletons; with a supplement. (Now out of print).

Allers Illustrerad Familj-Journals Bibliotek & Pa lediga stunder (2004).

A list of feuilletons enclosed with every issue of the magazine *Allers Familj-Journal* from 1879 to 1913 in two different series. (60 pages, illustrations in black and white, SEK 95).

Nordiska Forlaget (2004, revised 2015).

Contains the complete story of the publisher, Nordiska Forlaget, 1909-1922. They issued cheap books of good quality including those by A. Conan Doyle, R. L. Stevenson, Wilkie Collins, and H. Rider Haggard.

Foljetonger i svenska dagstidningar (2012).

A study of feuilletons in Swedish daily newspapers and a listing of feuilletons in some of them, mostly for the period of 1860 to 1920. (272 pages, illustrated mostly in b/w and colour, SEK 350).

H. Rider Haggard and Jules Verne.

The Swedish bibliography of H. Rider Haggard has been revised and is now on the internet on the Scandinavian website for Jules Verne and H. Rider Haggard. There is also a Danish Haggard bibliography and a bibliography for Jules Verne

in all the Scandinavian languages. Lars-Erik has made some contributions to the Swedish version. See www.jules-verne.dk .

More information can be obtained directly from the author, lars-erik.nygren@cornhem.se.

GARRICK VOTES NO TO WOMEN

An historic vote by members of the Garrick Club took place on 8 July to decide whether to admit women as members. Although a narrow majority of 50.5% voted 'yes' that was not the necessary two thirds needed to change the constitution. However, enough members are angry at the result that it may be re-run later this year. The interest is so great that rather than meeting at the club itself the Palace Theatre in Cambridge Circus was hired for the night. That was the theatre where Andrew Lloyd Webber's short-lived musical of *The Woman in White* opened 15 September 2004.

But Wilkie Collins has a much stronger connection to this vote than that.

Wilkie was a member of the Garrick from 3 June 1854 until he resigned more than ten years later, ostensibly over the refusal of the Club Committee to accept William Henry Wills as a member because he "was lacking both in social and literary distinction". Wills was the *Household Words* and *All The Year Round* sub-editor and a friend of both Wilkie and Dickens, who had jointly proposed him along with 37 others.

The rejection was on 25 February 1865 and Wilkie's initial letter of resignation is dated that day on club notepaper. Dickens also wrote to resign that day. However, their actual departure was delayed because Dickens and Wilkie wanted to visit the club one last time together and Wilkie was then in Paris. Wilkie wrote again on 10 March confirming that the Secretary could now communicate his resignation to the Committee. Dickens wrote in similar terms the day before and *Pilgrim* notes that the Committee had been told of their resignations the day before. Wilkie's resignation is recorded in the Member's Book on 18 March 1865.

Although Wills's rejection gave Wilkie the reason to leave, he had been in dispute with the management of the Club for at least three years. He supported a motion on 27 April 1863 "to preserve as far as possible the original constitution of the Club ... [and] to restore the influence of the Literary, Artistic, and Dramatic element in our Society to something like its former proportions". A similar motion had been rejected a year earlier but on that occasion Wilkie arrived too late for the vote.

Wilkie had written to Millais on 6 April 1863 "Unless something is done, the old Club will fall to pieces in the new house - and it seems a pity to let it go without an effort to save it". They were concerned that its original aims might be lost when the Club moved from its old premises at 35 King Street to "the new house" at 15 Garrick Street where it remains to this day.

It seems the motion was lost. On 6 June Wilkie wrote to his friend and fellow Club member George Russell "Many thanks for your note. I am surprised at nothing which is done by these two gentlemen - or by a good many others of a like way of thinking. When you see your way to a certain means of smashing the Club to atoms, let me know and I will help you. In the meantime, I leave the little puddle in King Street to stink without any further stirring on my part." The move was delayed more than once and eventually took place on 4 July 1864, causing the annual Shakespeare's Birthday dinner on 23 April to be deferred.

Even after his resignation Wilkie visited the club on occasion with others who were members.

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

Alice in Wonderland was published 150 years ago this year. (See <http://goo.gl/MfvdRK>). Catherine Peters in *The King of Inventors* said that Lewis Carroll acknowledged Mrs Wragge in *No Name* to be the inspiration for the White Queen in Carroll's later book *Through the Looking Glass* (1871). Oddly Wikipedia claims the connection was the other way round even though *No Name* predates Carroll's sequel by eight or nine years.

Carroll himself wrote of the White Queen "There is a character strangely like her in Wilkie Collins' novel "No Name": by two different converging paths we have somehow reached the same idea, and Mrs. Wragg [sic] and the White Queen might have been twin sisters." (Lewis Carroll, "'Alice" on the Stage', *The Theatre*, N.S., vol. 9, No. 52, April 1887).

Lewis Carroll contributed at least one poem to *All The Year Round* where *No Name* first appeared in 1862. Both Carroll and Collins opposed vivisection and some writers have seen something in Wilkie's letters to the young Nanny Wynne which echoes Carroll's belief in the spirit of innocence of young girls.

WILKIE AND BEETHOVEN

Members might have been enjoying Beethoven at the Proms. On Proms Extra on BBC2 on 25 July there was a performance of the climax of the Kreutzer Sonata with Nicola Benedetti on violin and Alexei Grynyuk on piano. One of Wilkie's rare pronouncements on music occurred in a letter to Nina Lehmann on Tuesday 12 June 1860 when he wrote:

"In one respect only, I have been the worse for the delightful party at Hallé's - the "Great Kreutzer Sonata" has upset me about classical music. I am afraid I don't like classical music, after all - I am afraid I am not the Amateur I once thought myself. The whole violin part of "The Great K.S." appeared to me to be the musical expression of a varying and violent stomach-ache, with intervals of hiccups."

Why not see if you can also agree with Collins's view of this at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b0643ny7/bbc-proms-proms-extra-2015-25072015> and scroll to 35'50".

Charles Hallé (1819-1895) founded and conducted the Manchester orchestra that took his name. He was a Beethoven specialist and would certainly have played the piano part at this soiree. He gave a recital on Thursdays in the season at his home at 8 Mansfield Street near Cavendish Square.

Wilkie's ire was not confined to Beethoven. A few years later (26 February 1869) he wrote to Elizabeth Benzon:

I hope you were not the worse for the concert. As for me, Herr Schumann's music, Madame Schumann's playing, and the atmosphere of St James's Hall, are three such afflictions as I never desire to feel again. I think of sending a card to Erards: "Mr Collins's compliments, and he would be glad to know how the poor piano is?"

On Monday 22 February Schumann's widow Clara had played her late husband's *Études en forme de Variations* and then, presumably equally unwelcome to Wilkie, a piano trio Op.1 No.2 in G major by Beethoven!

Sebastian Erard, based in Great Marlborough Street, was the dominant piano maker for concert platforms www.piano-tuners.org/history/erard.html

Wilkie preferred Mozart and told this joke in a letter to his friend Frederick Lehmann (15 August 1872) about how dull and empty London was that Summer.

I have only heard one moderately good story, of a Yankee at the Boston Musical Jubilee who was present at a performance of Mozart's twelfth Mass - and was asked what he thought of it. He said "Waal, sir!, I do think Mozart's twelfth Massachusetts is a pretty compliment to My Country- but it is a trifle too long."

WCS member, the internationally renowned cellist Steven Isserlis, emailed to remind us that Wilkie also hated his instrument, or at least he put this view into a letter of Ovid Vere writing to his beloved Carmina Graywell in *Heart and Science* (1883).

I have made a new friend here - one Mr. Morpew. Last night, he was so kind as to invite me to a musical entertainment at his house. He is a medical man; and he amuses himself in his leisure hours by playing on that big and dreary member of the family of fiddles, whose name is Violoncello. Assisted by friends, he hospitably cools his guests, in the hot season, by the amateur performance of quartets. My dear, I passed a delightful evening. Listening to the music? Not listening to a single note of it. Thinking of You.

WOMAN IN WHITE PAINTING

A picture by John Atkinson Grimshaw, *A Moonlit Street after Rain*, painted in 1881 was sold for £209,000 at Sotheby's in London on 15 July. <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2014/victorian-pre-raphaelite-british-impressionist-art-115132/lot.29.html>

The painting, with a full moon and a lone figure on the road by a wall, is very reminiscent of the opening scenes of *The Woman in White*. A similar picture by Grimshaw, *Tree Shadows on the Park Wall*, in Leeds City Art Gallery was used as the cover for the 1996 new edition of the Oxford World's Classics, edited by John Sutherland. See <https://www.ebay.com/p/109104313>

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NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2015

We begin this Newsletter with a theatrical flavour with two new books featuring Wilkie Collins and an article on the famous *Woman in White* poster.

VICTORIAN WRITERS AND THE STAGE: THE PLAYS OF DICKENS, BROWNING, COLLINS AND TENNYSON

Victorian Writers and the Stage by Richard Pearson is a study of the plays of Dickens, Browning, Collins and Tennyson together with the fiction and periodical writings of Thackeray and others. These major Victorian writers wrote numerous professional plays but Pearson questions why these have been largely overlooked despite enjoying long and successful theatrical runs. He examines the aspirations of these writers to become part of the growing theatrical establishment and

"the problems they encountered in risking their reputations on a literature felt by many to be vulgar and illegitimate. A wealth of new detail carefully positions the plays within the context of the changing Victorian theatre industry and the great battle between the Major and Minor theatres for the future of the modern stage."

The book consists of six chapters in three sections: 'Comedy and Tragedy, Before the Theatres Act of 1843'; 'Collaborations at Mid-Century, 1845-1868'

and 'Dramatic Identities, 1870-1883'. The material relating to Collins is mainly contained in Chapters 4 and 5. 'Dramatic collaboration: Dickens' and Collins' melodramas' mentions *The Lighthouse* but concentrates on *The Frozen Deep*. Pearson's assessment is that

"Collins could do drama better than Dickens. Dickens could collaborate so long as he was in charge; but Collins could *defer*, something essential for the playwright in the Victorian theatre."

Further along he adds

"In Collins' early plays we see a confrontation with the simplicity of action-based melodrama and an attempt to develop a drama that incorporates sensationalistic elements while endowing them with more social significance or meaning. By the time he began stage adaptations of his famous sensation novels, he had developed a working theory of drama that resisted the popular desire for an Adelphi 'screamer', and defeated audience expectations by excluding the sensational entirely."

Chapter 5, 'Adapting to the stage: Wilkie Collins and the double text', discusses *The Woman in White*, *Man and Wife*, *The New Magdalen*, along with adaptations of *Miss Gwilt* and *The Moonstone*. There are some unfamiliar illustrations, including a scene from *The Woman in White* originally published in the *London Journal* of 9 December 1871.

Richard Pearson lectures at the National University of Ireland Galway. He is the director of an AHRC-funded digital archive, The Victorian Plays Project. *Victorian Writers and the Stage* is published by Palgrave Macmillan, ISBN 9781137504678, at £55; also available on Kindle for £52.25.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE IN THE EPHEMERIST

The latest issue of *The Ephemérist*, the journal of the Ephemera Society (No. 170, Autumn 2015) has an interesting article by Graham Hudson on 'The woman in white: a famous theatre poster and the part it played in 'the streets as arts-galleries'.'

The essay gives a brief idea of the plot and a history of the novel's dramatic adaptation, from the unauthorised production at the Surrey Theatre in 1860 to Collins's own successful version at the Olympic Theatre in October 1871 which ran for nineteen weeks. Hudson notes that he has taken biographical details from Andrew Lycett's *Wilkie Collins, a Life of Sensation* and there is the frequently repeated quote about spin-offs such as *Woman in White* cloaks, bonnets, perfumes and toiletries (although nobody seems ever to have located any of these articles of merchandising). The article does, however, include colour illustrations of 'The Woman in White Waltz' and 'The Fosco Galop'.

Most of the essay is devoted to the famous poster

"which publicised the drama - which through its striking appearance can have played no small part in the play's success and was to earn an honoured place in design history."

This of course refers to the artwork produced by Frederick Walker, originally sketched out at the home of Charles Collins, Wilkie's brother. Walker wrote to the wood engraver William Hooper

"I propose trying my hand at the thing itself - a dashing attempt in black and white. The figure ought to be not less than 4 ft. 6, or 5 ft in height; and to my way of thinking a vigorous woodcut would be the thing, on a sheet of pear wood the size of a door."

Walker later wrote rather presciently to Hooper that he considered "it might develop into a most important branch of our art."

Hudson considers it likely that Walker was influenced by the bright posters of Jules Chéret which were to be seen on the boulevards of Paris from about 1866. Apart from two versions of Walker's poster, the article also shows the Frederick Waddy caricature of Collins acting as his own bill poster posed in front of Walker's original, published in the issue of *Once a Week* for 24 February 1872. The article concludes with more on the use of posters in advertising and notes:

"Close on twenty years after that poster had disappeared, Sir John Millais RA observed, 'Fred Walker's "Woman in White" was just what wall advertising ought to be, not a bad copy of a picture disingenuously twisted to suit the advertising, but a splendidly designed figure, serving to decorate the hoarding, and please every intelligent person who looked at it; whilst it exactly served its purpose as an advertisement.'"

Further details of The Ephemera Society can be obtained from PO Box 112, Northwood, Middlesex HA6 2WT.

THE ART OF ADAPTING VICTORIAN LITERATURE

The Waddy caricature is the front cover illustration for *The Art of Adapting Victorian Literature, 1848-1920: Dramatizing Jane Eyre, David Copperfield, and The Woman in White* by Karen E. Laird. Quoting from the publisher's blurb:

"[In *The Art of Adapting Victorian Literature, 1848-1920*, Karen E. Laird alternates between readings of nineteenth-century stage and twentieth-century silent film adaptations to investigate the working practices of the first adapters of Victorian fiction. Laird's juxtaposition between stage and screen brings to life the dynamic culture of literary adaptation as it developed throughout the long nineteenth-century. Focusing on Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield*, and Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*, Laird demonstrates how adaptations performed the valuable cultural work of expanding the original novel's readership across class and gender divides, exporting the English novel to America, and commemorating the novelists through adaptations that functioned as virtual literary tourism. Bridging the divide between literary criticism, film studies, and theatre history, Laird's book reveals how the Victorian adapters set the stage for our contemporary film adaptation industry."

There are two chapters devoted to Collins. 'Adapting the Sensation Plot: *The Woman in White* on the Victorian Stage,' goes into details not easily found elsewhere of reviews of J. M. Ware's unauthorised adaptation at the Surrey Theatre as well as providing details of his version of the plot, noting that "*The Times* goes so far as to warn that reading the novel is a prerequisite for understanding the play." I think we would all like to have witnessed Hartright fighting an unequal duel with Fosco, only to be saved when the Count is shot by a Brotherhood assassin. The second part of the chapter discusses Collins's own successful 1871 adaptation of *The Woman in White* and how he in turn altered the novel's plot for the stage.

Laird provides exemplary detail throughout, although some of us might take issue with her comment that

"Collins's subsequent public protests against the practice of adaptation was hypercritical, as his own career was marked by creative borrowing, recycling, and reimagining of texts - both his own original texts and those first conceived by other writers."

We might also disagree with her description of Collins's position in relation to Dickens as "servile."

In Chapter 6, 'Sensational Modernity: *The Woman in White* on the American Screen,' Laird wants "to consider more deeply how the form of the sensation novel, as adapted by American filmmakers in the 1910s, helped to establish the dominant style of film adaptation." More usefully, we are given plot summaries of lost early films and details of the second Thanhouser 1917 adaptation of *The Woman in White* (which is currently available to purchase on DVD). This chapter is well illustrated with film stills and early advertising material.

Karen Laird has taught Victorian literature and film history at the universities of Colorado, Missouri and Salford. *The Art of Adapting Victorian Literature, 1848-1920: Dramatizing Jane Eyre, David Copperfield, and The Woman in White* is published by Ashgate Publishing, ISBN 9781472424396 at £60 but cheaper on the Ashgate website or from Amazon.

THE CASE OF THE LIVING GHOST

A curious website, aptly named strange.co.blogspot, featured in August a summary of the eighteenth century Douhault case which was one of the main inspirations for *The Woman in White*. This real life case of abduction, substituted identity and incarceration in a lunatic asylum was originally described in Méjan's *Recueil des Causes Célèbres* of 1808-9. The case was the subject of a full length book, *The Woman without a Name*, by G. Lenotre, translated from the French, in 1923. The summary can be found at strange.co.blogspot.co.uk/2014/08/the-case-of-living-ghost.html.

WILKIE COLLINS: A BRIEF LIFE - THE CD

Peter Ackroyd's short but readable biography of Collins was originally published in hardback during 2012. There is now an unabridged audio CD from

Blackstone Audio read by Gildart Jackson at about £25 from Amazon. The Book Depository (incidentally, owned by Amazon) is now discounting the paperback version by about 50% and currently sells it for £4.29. By comparison, the hugely more comprehensive biography by Andrew Lycett is available in paperback through Amazon from £5.81.

'VOLPURNO' OR 'A MANIAC BRIDEGROOM'

Collins's first identified short story, 'Volpurno', was discovered by Daniel Hack, Associate Professor in the Department of English at the University of Michigan, during the autumn of 2008. It was particularly significant because it preceded 'The Last Stage Coachman' which has previously been the earliest known work by Collins (appearing in Douglas Jerrold's *Illuminated Magazine* in August 1843).

'Volpurno' was originally published in New York on 8 July 1843 in *The Albion, or British, Colonial, and Foreign Weekly* and in the same month in two other broadsheets - in Philadelphia in the *Pennsylvania Inquirer and National Gazette* on 20 July and again in New York in *The New Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction* on 29 July. Later that year, on 25 December 1843, it was republished in *The Rover, a Weekly Magazine of Tales, Poetry, and Engravings* using the entirely different title, 'A Maniac Bridegroom'.

Further research now reveals that 'Volpurno' was also published as 'A Maniac Bridegroom', "A thrilling told Love Story of Venice", in at least two other newspapers: *The Evansville Journal* of Evansville, Indiana of 2 November 1843 (Vol. IX, No. 50); and *The Union* of Lexington, Mississippi on Saturday 11 November 1843 (Vol. V, No. 38). Both of these can be seen and printed from the extensive 'Chronicling America' newspaper website.

It was almost certainly published earlier in England but so far the original journal has not been identified. This is still a challenge for WCS members in the course of their other reading or research to trace the first publication of 'Volpurno'. It was, of course, issued by the WCS in 2009 and a few copies are still available for new - or existing - members.

FRENCH BIBLIOGRAPHY

There is also useful information available online from the Gallica website of the Bibliothèque National de France (gallica.bnf.fr). A search on Wilkie Collins shows, for example, the front cover illustrations of a 5 centimes version of *The Evil Genius (Le Mauvais Genie)* and an equally dramatic picture of the 50 centimes version of *The New Magdalen (La Nouvelle Madeleine)* in No. 76 of the Grande Collection Nationale. There is also *Un Menage de la Mer*, a French translation of 'A Message from the Sea', the 1860 Christmas number of *All the Year Round*.

It is also possible to download an article by Paul-Louis Hervier to commemorate the centenary of Collins's birth, 'Le Centenaire de Wilkie Collins', published in the Paris journal *La Nouvelle Revue*, Vol. LXXI, 1 June 1924, pp. 239-243.

WILKIE COLLINS AND GRAPHIC NOVELS (COMIC BOOKS)

The Woman in White and *The Moonstone* have both been available in the *Classics Illustrated* series from the Gilberton Company for many years. *The Woman in White* is Number 61, originally issued in the 1960s; *The Moonstone*, number 30 in the USA and 102 in England was originally published in 1946. Both titles were frequently reprinted with different artwork. They were also translated into several foreign languages. More details can be obtained from various online sites such as dcomicsartists.com/classic%20comics/-classics%20illustrated%20uk%20by%20date-2.htm.

Our ever alert Dutch member, Pierre Tissot van Patot, has come across some more recent French graphic novels. **He** tells us that:

In 2006/ 2007, Roger Seiter and Vincent Wagner created two comic books based on Wilkie Collins's *The Law and the Lady*. *Mysteries, Seule contre la Loi*, Parts one and two were originally published by Casterman in French and later translated into Dutch.

In 2012/ 2014 Roger Seiter and Vincent Wagner created two more comic books now based on Collins's *The Haunted Hotel (Venise Hantée)*. In the first part,

Wilkie Collins is one of the possible investors in a new hotel in Venice. Later, he goes to Venice where he becomes one of the main characters, investigating the marriage and death of Lord Montbarry.

The comic books are in an artistic modern style and very popular with collectors since they are well printed with lively colours. Roger Seiter and Vincent Wagner have used the original stories to create their own plot, Collins, of course, not appearing in the original nineteenth century version.

Currently, there are only French and Dutch versions of these graphic novels. They will probably not be published in English.

Venise Hantée - Mort de Lord Montbarry; 15.11.2012; 48 pages, ISBN-13: 9782848104232. *Venise Hantée - Le Mystère de la Chambre*; 28.06.2014; 48 pages; ISBN-13: 9782848104607. Emmanuel Proust éditions Paris.

Mysteries - Seul contre la Loi - première partie; 12.05.2006; 48 pages; ISBN-13: 9782203392487. *Mysteries - Seul contre la Loi - seconde partie*; 26.04.2007; 48 pages; ISBN-13: 9782203392526. Casterman, Brussels.

There was also a schools edition with some extra information in the final pages of the book about both the story and Wilkie Collins. The format is much smaller which makes the pictures less interesting. It concludes with an interview with the (modern) authors. Apparently it was Roger Seiter's idea to use novels by Wilkie Collins as he is interested in nineteenth century English authors.

THE HAUNTED HOTEL

These days we are fortunate that nearly all of Collins's works are back in print. There is now an attractive new paperback edition of *The Haunted Hotel* published by Vintage Classics at £5.99. This is part of Vintage Publishing, itself part of the Random House Group which in turn owns Chatto & Windus. So Wilkie has come full circle since the first edition of *The Haunted Hotel* was published by Chatto in 1879. This edition also includes another supernatural

Collins story, 'The Dream Woman', originally published in *Household Words* in 1855. The website quotes a nice review from the *Daily Telegraph*:

"Wilkie Collins is the finest practitioner of the novel of sensation... he took the elements gothic fiction relied upon - secret lives, lovers, villainy - and moved them into the suburbs... here the genre fused with the already established crime novel and took it in a new direction, more familiar and more frightening."

Vintage Classics also publish *The Woman in White*, *The Moonstone* and *No Name*.

'MY LADY'S MONEY'

The Haunted Hotel was originally published together with 'My Lady's Money.'

The Times of 3 August 2015 reported that British writer Annie Dalton has been commissioned to write two novels about dog detectives - where a dog helps its human to solve a crime. In the USA this genre is, the article says, already big. Of course, you can guess who wrote the first dog detective story? Yes, of course, Wilkie Collins!

'My Lady's Money', originally his 1877 Christmas story for *The Illustrated London News*, features Tommie, a Scotch terrier, who solves the mystery of a missing £500 note by finding a crucial piece of evidence. Tommie is modelled on Wilkie's own much loved Scotch terrier with similar name. Wilkie kept a note in his travelling desk, along with other anniversaries, that Tommy died on 28 August 1885. He wrote to his friend and doctor Frank Beard three days later, on 31 August:

"I am getting on fairly well - and finding the refuge from myself which I had hoped to find, in my work. How closely that poor little dog had associated himself with every act of my life at home, I only know now. I can go nowhere and do nothing - without missing Tommy."

WILKIE'S TAILOR

The Archives of Henry Poole & Co, the Savile Row tailor, are being opened to the public. Some details about Churchill and Dickens have already been published. But Wilkie and his brother Charles were also customers.

We know from bank accounts at Coutts that Wilkie was a customer of Poole paying a dozen bills from 1861 to 1867 totalling around £150 with an average payment of just over £13 a time. Wilkie started paying Poole after his success with *The Woman in White* and it is possible that Dickens recommended the tailor to Wilkie. The coat and trousers he wore in the photograph by Herbert Watkins as a frontispiece to the one volume edition published in 1861 may have been a Poole creation and so may the outfits seen in subsequent photographs until at least the 1866 portrait by Elliott & Fry.

It is hoped the Poole records will show the style of the clothes he bought there as well as perhaps his size and details of the fittings he attended. Charles Allston Collins was also a customer over much the same period with one final bill paid from his estate in 1874. He paid Poole a total of £123. We hope to visit the archives shortly and publish a full account in the next newsletter.

WILKIE'S SCHOOL BILL

A bill from Cole's academy which Wilkie attended from 1838 to 1840 has been identified in the Victoria & Albert museum in London. Headed 'Mrs Cole's Acc^t Mast^r Collins' it is dated Xmas 1839 and lists various miscellaneous items for the Michaelmas Term.

Most of the charges are for posting letters. Collating it with the eight known letters from Wilkie while he was at the school reveals the existence of three new ones, though of course we have no texts. Letters were charged at 2d to post and there is also a charge of 6d for the receipt of a parcel which is mentioned in one of Wilkie's extant letters.

"I did not write until I had tasted the cake, as I thought you would like to know that it was most delectably luscious. The whole parcel arrived quite safe, and I am very much pleased with the trowsers, I think they are the nicest pair I ever had."

(This to his mother, Harriet Collins, 15 October 1839).

There is a final item of 6d for the omnibus, presumably taking him home at Christmas, and an initial charge of 8d for the carriage of a box, presumably of his clothes and possessions at the start of the term.

The extras total £4-17s-8d, with by far the largest amount being £4-15s paid to a Mr Armstrong, perhaps for extra tuition. Wilkie's school fees were £30 a term as he reported in two much later letters.

The bill was found by art dealer Alan Bean who is researching the life of William Collins. If any members have pictures, prints, or information that may help him please let Paul Lewis know.

NEW LETTERS

Almost 20 new letters have been identified in the last twelve months. The new documents range from envelopes to responses to autograph hunters to full letters to his friend John Palgrave Simpson, publishers Thomas D. Galpin and George Bentley, and the wife of the actor Charles Fechter. We will be publishing our usual supplement in the New Year.

ANDREW LYCETT ON *NO NAME*

The latest number (Issue 48, Winter 2015) of *Slightly Foxed*, a quarterly literary magazine publishes an article by Wilkie's biographer on *No Name*. Each issue, edited by Gail Pirkis and Hazel Wood, contains around 16 essays on books and authors and encompasses a wide variety of genres. Lycett's essay is not actually available online but further details of subscription to *Slightly Foxed* are available at foxedquarterly.com.

***THE WOMAN IN WHITE* - IF YOU'VE READ IT, FLAUNT IT**

The current issue of *The Happy Reader* for Winter 2015 (which featured *The Woman in White* in its first issue) contains "in the age of the empty bookshelf and the full Kindle" a letter concerning the gentle art of seduction.

"Could I please urge all readers to leave some physical evidence or what they're reading around the house. Or better still, use your reading tastes as part of a Tinder seduction strategy. I'm convinced posing with a copy of, say, *The Woman in White* on your profile pic would make you far more attractive than someone else next to, say, a tiger or flash car."

Incidentally, almost all of Collins's titles are available to download for free from Amazon's Kindle Classics.

TWO FINAL QUESTIONS

This Newsletter raises two questions for which we would like to hear from anyone who knows the answers:

1. In which English journal was 'Volpurno' first published either under this or its alternative title 'A Maniac Bridegroom'?
2. Apart from the musical Waltzes, Quadrilles and Galops, has anyone ever seen any actual evidence of the *Woman in White* merchandising material - bonnets, perfumes, cloaks, toiletries?

Answers on a postcard or email will do nicely.

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THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2016

THE WILKIE COLLINS JOURNAL

The latest issue of the *Wilkie Collins Society Journal* - Volume 13 (2015) is now available online at <http://wilkiecollinsociety.org/journal>. This has been produced under the joint editorship of Anne-Marie Beller and Joanne Parsons. Our thanks go to Anne-Marie for her hard work in editing both this and the previous issue. With the pressure of other commitments, she has now made way for Joanne although we are very pleased that with her experience she will remain on the editorial board. This has been reorganised to include the promotion of Verity Burke to Associate Editor and Dr Fiona Peters to the editorial board.

Joanne and her team have exciting ideas for the future of the Journal and full details are included in the Editor's Note to the current issue. This is available only online but members will be able to download and print off any articles they wish. The book reviews are freely available to anyone interested but to access the essays membership of the society is required.

Use the username **count** and password **fosco** - all in **lower case**.

For members unable to access the internet, as in the past, we will arrange photocopies.

FROM THE NEW EDITOR OF THE JOURNAL

I'd like to introduce myself, Joanne Ella Parsons, as the new editor of the *Wilkie Collins Journal*. I've been obsessed with Wilkie Collins since I first read *The Woman in White* as a teenager; so obsessed in fact that I've named my cat Fosco! He is also a murderous little fiend who loves mice! I am a lecturer at Falmouth University and Bath Spa University. My research focuses on men's relationship with food in the Victorian novel, which obviously reflects my fascination with Fosco. I also examine the two Armadales and their differing interactions with food. Further details about my work can be found on my website at (www.joanneparsons.co.uk) or follow me on Twitter (@joparsons).

In addition to my appointment, Verity Burke, after serving as our brilliant editorial assistant, will now become Associate Editor. I'm so pleased that Verity's ideas (such as the exciting special issue theme for our 2016 edition) and her enthusiasm will continue to inform the Journal. More about Verity's work, which focuses on the body as a scientific subject (for example, vivisection in Collins's *Heart and Science*) can be found on her Academia page (<https://reading.academia.edu/VerityBurke>) or on Twitter (@VerityBurke).

Sadly, however, we must say goodbye to our previous editor Anne-Marie Beller and I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for all her hard work on the Journal. While Anne-Marie will no longer be editing the Journal we are thrilled that she has agreed to join our editorial board where her expertise and experience will be invaluable.

In addition to Anne-Marie's new position, we have also asked Dr. Fiona Peters to join the editorial board. Dr. Peters is a Senior Lecturer and Higher Degrees Tutor in English at Bath Spa University. Her teaching specialisms include Crime Fiction - her 2011 monograph is on Patricia Highsmith, with her second, on Ruth Rendell, forthcoming in 2016. She teaches a Crime Fiction module to second year students that follows the development of the genre from the mid C19th to today, and begins with *The Moonstone* as the first full-length detective novel. She

has also published on the Sensation Novel. We are delighted to be working with, and have the support of, such brilliant and innovative scholars.

We have many exciting plans for the journal and later in the year we will kick off with a special issue devoted to the ‘Heart’ and ‘Science’ of Wilkie Collins. We are also planning a conference to promote the journal and further academic research into Collins. You can also follow the Journal on Facebook (look for The Wilkie Collins Journal <https://www.facebook.com/The-Wilkie-Collins-Journal-515149621860783/?fref=ts>) and Twitter (@WilkieCJournal) where we will keep you updated on all things Collins!

I also want to draw your attention to the Wilkie Collins Appreciation Society (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2228650086/?fref=ts>). Jacky Tarleton started this Facebook page and she shared with me her motivations for doing so:

“I was studying for an MA in English Literature as a mature student when I joined Facebook. I looked around for something about Wilkie Collins, and finding nothing decided to start the group. I have read everything Wilkie wrote and firmly believe he is seriously underrated. Group members posted photos at the top of Wilkie’s grave, his houses, his portrait - anything Wilkie-related. People added whatever they had. We even tried to plan a meeting in Ramsgate - his holiday destination.”

It is a wonderful group so I would suggest that, if you are on Facebook, you have a look and put in a join request.

Finally, I’m looking forward to working closely with the Wilkie Collins Society and would love to hear your responses to the Journal.

A WILKIE COLLINS CONFERENCE

Here are some preliminary details of a Wilkie Collins Conference being organised by Joanne Parsons for Saturday 24 September 2016. It will be jointly sponsored by the Wilkie Collins Society and the Victorian Popular Fiction Association. The venue will be Barts Pathology Museum near Holborn and the City of London. The anticipated cost will be £20 with concessions at £10.

The theme will be the ‘heart’ and ‘science’ of Wilkie Collins and fellow authors. We are also pleased to announce that our keynote speaker will be Dr. Tara MacDonald from the University of Idaho.

Details of a call for papers will either be sent by email to members on the WCS list or added to the Society’s website.

COLLINS AND COPYRIGHT

Collins was at the forefront of trying to achieve the recognition of copyright for his own works and for authors in general. He won a successful battle of words with the Belinfante Brothers in Holland over their unauthorised publication of *Man and Wife* in 1870 but he reserved his greatest anger for American publishers. These views he published in 1880 as ‘Considerations on the Copyright Question Addressed to an American Friend,’ a strongly worded essay in the form of a letter protesting at literary piracy and the lack of International Copyright in the US. Noting the ‘honourable example’ by then of treaties in Europe, Collins levels the accusation that ‘the President and Congress of America remain content to contemplate the habitual perpetration, by American citizens, of the act of theft.’ He laments that ‘...*one* American publisher informed a friend of mine that he had “sold one hundred and twenty thousand copies of ‘The Woman in White’”. He never sent me sixpence.’ Collins concludes, ‘I must go back to my regular work, and make money for American robbers, under the sanction of Congress.’

We have recently come across a periodical called *Puck*, originally published in Germany by Keppler & Schwarzmann and subsequently by them in America. Volume XVIII, pp. 408-9, 24 February 1886 contains a double-page full colour illustration with the title ‘The Pirate Publishers - an International Burlesque that has had the Longest Run on Record.’ It features a prosperous looking pirate trading on a volume entitled *Law* surrounded by books at give-away prices of 9 or 10 cents and by British, European and American authors pointing accusatory fingers. Perhaps reflecting his then popularity, Collins is shown full length prominently in the bottom right hand corner. Amongst the numerous other authors beneath their national flags, all as gentle caricatures, are Hugh Conway,

Tennyson, Browning, Stevenson, Hardy, Lewis Carroll, Sardou, Zola, Mark Twain, Bret Harte and many others. At the very bottom are the following verses:

CHORUS OF BRITISH AUTHORS:

Behold the Pirate Publishers stand,
Stealing our brains for Yankee-land;
He's rude, uncultured, bold and free-

THE PIRATE PUBLISHERS:

You bet your life: The Law - that's Me.

CHORUS OF FRENCH VICTIMS:

He takes our novels and our plays,
And never a red centime he pays;
He is more Monarque than the Grand Louis-

The P. P.: You bet your life: The Law - that's Me.

CHORUS OF GERMAN AND OTHER SUFFERERS:

The labors of our studious brains
All go to swell his sinful gains;
He ravages Norway and Germanee

THE P. P.: You bet your life: The Law - that's Me.

CHORUS OF HUMBLE AMERICAN AUTHORS:

Though no one ever, in all this fuss,
Has thought of according rights to us-
Remember we're pillaged across the sea-

THE P. P.: Who cares for them: The Law- that's Me.

The original may be found through The Online Books Page which shows all of the currently available volumes and their source; or go to babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101074880574;view=1up;seq=96. There is also a page on Wikipedia - put in 'pirate' and 'Puck' and possibly 'Keppler.' More surprising, there is a mouse mat with the colour illustration available from www.zazzle.co.uk.

SERIALIZATION AND THE NOVEL IN MID-VICTORIAN MAGAZINES

Serialization and the Novel in Mid-Victorian Magazines by Catherine Delafield was published by the Routledge during 2015 as part of their 'Nineteenth Century Series.'. Quoting from the publisher's blurb,

"Examining the Victorian serial as a text in its own right, Catherine Delafield re-reads five novels by Elizabeth Gaskell, Anthony Trollope, Dinah Craik and Wilkie Collins by situating them in the context of periodical publication. She considers how first publication affected the consumption and reception of the novel through the periodical medium. The novel's later re-publication still bears the imprint of the serialized original, and this book's investigation into nineteenth-century periodicals both generates new readings of the texts and reinstates those which have been lost in the reprinting process. Delafield's case studies provide evidence of the ways in which *Household Words*, *Cornhill Magazine*, *Good Words*, *All the Year Round* and *Cassell's Magazine* were designed for new audiences of novel readers."

The Contents include an Introduction and six chapters over 222 pages. There are twenty-three illustrations of which three relate to Collins's works in respect of *The Moonstone* and *Poor Miss Finch*

ISBN 978-1472450906, published at £60 and also available in a Kindle edition.

CORNWALL, RAMBLES AND 'WALKING WITH WILKIE'

Jak Stringer is a one woman Wilkie wonder. Living in Penzance, she is single-handedly bringing to life the 1851 stories and experiences of the young Wilkie

Collins as narrated in *Rambles Beyond Railways*. Here in her own words is what it's all about.

How did it start? Well one day by chance, I saw some information which, for me, would change my life and it was this...

In the summer of 1850, Wilkie Collins, hoping to make his name as a writer, commenced a walking-for-pleasure tour of Cornwall, which resulted in his book, *Rambles Beyond Railways; or, Notes in Cornwall taken A-foot*. I didn't know this and nor, so it seemed, did many other people in Cornwall. I requested what was to be my first copy of *Rambles* from the British Library and my journey had commenced.

So in 2013 I began retracing the footsteps of Wilkie Collins, with the aim of bringing the forgotten stories from his book alive once more and create a performance that intertwines the life of Collins with a snapshot of Victorian Cornwall and also a taste of how a hobby can easily become an obsession. Did the people of Looe eat their rats, the women of Saltash clean the boots of strangers, for sixpence worth of liquor; what saved the Logan Rock and why did Collins find a tavern full of babies on the Lizard? All questions to which it was a pleasure to find the answers.

My 'Walking with Wilkie' evolved and became a combination of contemporary live performance, original music and film, all to make an interesting, humorous and informative production for all ages.

As I toured 'Walking with Wilkie' performing in village halls, museums, studios and pubs, I was always surprised how many people had never heard of Wilkie Collins. But rest assured, I am working hard to change this; well in Cornwall at least. After a performance one night, a lady came up to me and said, "Before tonight, I didn't even know who Wilkie was but now you have made me love him!" I left for home delighted. Wilkie Collins should not be left dusty on the shelf, he is a writer that, in my view, is as contemporary as any top writer today and in his own era had a fan base as large as boy band One Direction - and there was only one of him.

For me Wilkie Collins has changed my life and feels like one of my family and maybe he is, if rumours of a possible Cornish marriage are true! So if you're coming down to Cornwall check out my Facebook page for shows or contact me for a tour and we'll strap on a trusty friend the knapsack and 'Ramble A-foot' together.

The following performances are confirmed for 'Wilkie Collins Rambles in Cornwall':

29th April 2.30pm - Roseland Festival, Roseland Institute, St Mawes, Cornwall

19th September 7pm - St Ives September festival, Porthmeor Studios, Cornwall

Jak would be delighted to meet any Wilkie enthusiasts venturing to far flung Cornwall. She can be contacted at www.walkingwithwilkie@outlook.com or on her mobile 0781 4614764. There are some videos on YouTube but take a look at her Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/Wilkie-Collins-Rambles-in-Cornwall-250671535012659/>

THE LOVE THAT DARE NOT SPEAK ITS NAME

Featured online in 'The Victorianist: BAVS Postgraduates' in February, was a piece by Clare Walker Gore entitled 'The Love that Dare not Speak its Name: Queer Desire in the Mid-Victorian Novel.' The author, who has recently submitted her PhD thesis exploring disability in the Victorian novel, begins "If you're looking for a way to escape the oncoming juggernaut of heteronormativity otherwise known as Valentine's Day, Victorian novels might be the last place you would think to look."

The novels she concentrates on are *John Halifax, Gentleman* (1856) by Dinah Mulock Craik and Collins's *The Moonstone* (1868) where "It is not only love between men that is enabled by disability. Wilkie Collins allows one of his disabled female characters to declare her love for another disabled woman in unmistakably passionate terms. Heartbroken by her beloved Rosanna's death, Limping Lucy tells our narrator:

“I loved her,’ the girl said softly. ‘She had lived a miserable life, Mr Betteredge - vile people had ill-treated her and led her wrong - and it hadn’t spoiled her sweet temper. She was an angel.” Later Gore continues “While Collins arguably conforms to what would become the pattern for homosexual relationships in twentieth century fiction and film, by having Lucy and Rosanna’s story end in tragedy, it is telling that it is Rosanna’s heterosexual desire for Franklin, not Lucy’s homosexual desire for her, that leads to disaster.”

The full essay can be found at victorianist.wordpress.com/2016/02/01/the-love-that-dare-not-speak-its-name-queer-desire-in-the-mid-victorian-novel.

MARIAN HALCOMBE’S MOUSTACHE

The New York Times for 26 February 2016 printed a piece by Julia Baird with the title ‘Sarah Palin’s Mustache’. It began by mentioning a minor furore over an unretouched photograph of Palin with “untended lip and eyebrow hair.” The piece then moved on to enquire “Why, in particular, do we stigmatize female facial hair so savagely? As Victorian literature reveals, women have long sported mustaches, and were not always judged so sorely for it.”

Amongst the various examples it quotes the line in *The Woman in White* describing Marian Halcombe where the “dark down on her upper lip was almost a mustache.” The full passage is:

Never was the old conventional maxim, that Nature cannot err, more flatly contradicted—never was the fair promise of a lovely figure more strangely and startlingly belied by the face and head that crowned it. The lady’s complexion was almost swarthy, and the dark down on her upper lip was almost a moustache. She had a large, firm, masculine mouth and jaw; prominent, piercing, resolute brown eyes; and thick, coal-black hair, growing unusually low down on her forehead.

ARMADALE IN ‘A GOOD READ’

The long running BBC radio 4 series ‘A Good Read’ is from time to time repeated on Radio 4 Extra. The edition originally broadcast in 2001 was repeated on 29

February and featured Wilkie's own personal favourite, *Armadale*. The panel consisted of Louise Doughty, Patrick Gale and Michael White. They all appeared creditably knowledgeable about Collins and his background and their discussion ranged over feminist issues, the clever choice of names for the characters and mention of another "terrific novel", *The Woman in White*. Their final verdict on *Armadale* – a fabulous book!

WILLIAM COLLINS PAINTING

A painting said to be by William Collins failed to sell at a Christie's sale in March. *Taking a turn at low tide* was catalogued as signed W. Collins R.A. with an estimate of £2,500-£3,500. But it failed to meet its reserve. Before the sale Christies downgraded the painting to 'circle of' William Collins after doubts were cast on its attribution on stylistic and other grounds. That means Christie's decided it was "a work of the period of the artist and showing his influence" but not by him. We know that many artists copied William Collins whose paintings for a time in the nineteenth century fetched as much as Constable. The picture appeared as Lot 30 and can now be seen on the internet at www.christies.com/PDF/catalog/2016/KEN12308_SaleCat.pdf.

THE DEAD SECRET -A NEW MS EXTRACT

A long extract from *The Dead Secret* in Wilkie's hand has been turned up by book dealer and Dickens specialist Jarndyce. The 440 word extract describing Miss Sturch is dated 14 May 1858 and was probably written for the wife of Collins's friend Joseph Stringfield, a Weston-super-Mare doctor with whom Wilkie was staying at the time prior to a sailing trip to Wales. Later Wilkie wrote many extracts from his books for fans and friends but this is the earliest example known and the only one from *The Dead Secret*. The £4,800 (+VAT) price reflects its rarity.

A PRE-RAPHAELITE TYPESCRIPT

An unpublished typescript of more than 500 pages called 'History of the Pre-Raphaelite Movement' by Holman Hunt's daughter, Gladys (1876-1951; Mrs Michael Joseph) was sold at a Chiswick saleroom on 27 January. The document

probably dates from the late 1940s and contains some information about Charles Collins – including a hitherto unknown letter about his wedding clothes – and a mention or two of Wilkie and Mrs Collins. The typescript had an estimated sale price of between £100 and £200. But after fierce bidding it sold for an astonishing £2,800 which with premium would have cost the buyer almost £3,500. Nothing is known of the buyer or future plans for the document.

ORIGINAL COLLINS MANUSCRIPTS

Two important manuscripts were sold by Bonham's in New York in April.

The manuscript of “Fie! Fie! or, The Fair Physician: (Edited, Under the Instructions of Mrs. Crossmichael),” which was originally sold after Wilkie's death in 1890, fetched \$17,500 (£12,341) including premium against an estimate of \$8,000-12,000. The 20pp manuscript contained extensive revisions as Wilkie's manuscripts always did. The story originally appeared in *The Spirit of the Times* in New York and *The Pictorial World Christmas Supplement* in 1882. The manuscript had been previously sold in 1923 and 1994.

“Fie! Fie!” was never published in England during Collins's lifetime. In fact, he wrote of this and ‘Love's Random Shot’ “These stories have served their purpose in periodicals, but are not worthy of republication in book form. They were written in a hurry, and the sooner they are drowned in the waters of oblivion the better. I desire that they shall not be republished after my death.” Both stories, however, were published in the *Complete Shorter Fiction* edited by Julian Thompson and published by Robinson Publishing in 1995.

The partial manuscript of the dramatic version of *The New Magdalen* which was much less well known sold for \$100,000 (£70,520) including premium against an estimate of \$60,000-80,000 in the same sale. The manuscript consisted of 160 leaves and covered most of the play except for part of Act III. The play was written in great haste to ensure that it could be performed and therefore copyrighted as soon as the story was published in *Temple Bar* of October 1872 - July 1873. It opened at the Olympic Theatre on 19 May 1873 with Ada Cavendish as Mercy Merrick and was a great success. It ran for four months before touring

the provinces and was also produced in New York as well as Paris, Rome, Berlin, and Vienna.

The details and some images can be seen on the Bonham's website for 'Fine Literature', 11 April 2016, New York, lots 4 and 5.

STUDIES ON HORROR AND THE GOTHIC

'Palgrave Communications', an open access online-only journal, is inviting submissions and article proposals for a thematic collection dedicated to 'Studies in Horror and the Gothic'. The collection is Guest Edited by Dr John Edgar Browning (Georgia Institute of Technology, USA). The deadline for article proposals is 1 September 2016.

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NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2016

THE WILKIE COLLINS CONFERENCE - 24 SEPTEMBER 2016

We are delighted to announce that the programme is now available for our forthcoming conference: 'The 'Heart' and 'Science' of Wilkie Collins and his Contemporaries.' The event is being organised by our Journal editor, Joanne Parsons, for Saturday 24 September 2016. It will be jointly sponsored by the Wilkie Collins Society and the Victorian Popular Fiction Association.

The venue will be Barts Pathology Museum, 3rd Floor Robin Brook Centre, St Bartholomew's Hospital, West Smithfield, EC1A 7BE, (near Holborn and the City of London). The costs will be £20 or £10 for student/unwaged plus a small processing fee (tickets are available from: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-heart-and-science-of-wilkie-collins-and-his-contemporaries-tickets-25104106057>) The Keynote speaker is professor at the University of Idaho's English Department, Tara MacDonald, whose work focuses on nineteenth century literature, gender and emotion. The conference will also feature an exciting performance from 'Rambles in Cornwall' by Jak Stringer.

We do hope you will be able to join us at this exciting event. The full programme is listed on the flier which accompanies this Newsletter.

WILKIE AND THE SUMMER WEATHER

In his letters, Wilkie frequently commented on the fine summer weather which in his youth he seemed to enjoy. Writing from Antwerp to his mother at the end of July 1846, he noted “The heat in this place is of a superior degree of intensity to the temperature of Timbucto. I write this, literally in a reeking state..... my physical energies - so awful is the intensity of the heat - completely fail me - My strength will carry me no further than the bottom of this page.” To his brother, Charles, in June 1856 he wrote “I am getting sunburnt even by this time, and my general health is improving rapidly - but I can’t get rid of the d—d rheumatism. In this respect, I suppose my inevitable exposure to all varieties of temperature at sea is rather against me. Today, however, has been lovely - scorching hot summer weather at last.

Later on, Wilkie enjoyed the heat rather less, writing again to his mother in July 1864: “It is all very well for you to talk of heat - but if you only felt the difference between Tunbridge and London! I am writing in a profuse perspiration.” To his literary agent, A. P. Watt he commented in July 1887 “The heat has quite overpowered me” and to his close friend, Sebastian Schlesinger in May 1889 “After that delightful drive had done me the greatest good, and had given me a sound night’s rest, the thunderous heat of yesterday afternoon completely prostrated me.”

Collins’s feelings towards the weather showed up in his works writing in *The Evil Genius* (1886) “Of all oppressive summers, a hot summer in London is the hardest to endure.” Although for those inclined to a more indolent approach to life, Gabriel Betteredge in *The Moonstone* decided to “set [himself] in the warm summer air next – seeing that what is good for old claret is equally good for old age.” (*The Moonstone*).

Wilkie’s solution to the heat was twofold. He regularly obtained ice from the Wenham Lake Ice Company in Massachusetts, USA, but he also drank the driest of champagnes and sheries, writing to his wine merchants Beecheno, Yaxley in 1886 “The Pints of Champagne have disappeared. Will you send me six dozen more of the same “Vin Brut,” in half bottles? The Sherry also is reported to be on its last legs. Please let me have a three-dozen case (as before) – and send another three-dozen case.” And as Mr Galli lee asked in *Heart and Science* (1883) “Isn’t a pint of champagne nice drinking, this hot weather? Just cooled with ice - I don’t know whether you feel the weather as I do? - and poured, fizzing, into a silver mug. Lord, how delicious!”

And a final summer thought with the Pakistani cricket team currently in England, the Test selectors should bear in mind that “Doctor Chenney ... was the best bowler in the Long Beckley cricket-club. A strictly orthodox man in the matter of wine and mutton.” (*The Dead Secret*).

The WCS is fortunate to have amongst its ranks some very talented members. At least two of these are called Ha(y)nes!

KATHERINE HAYNES AND GRACE POOLE

Long-time WCS member Katherine Haynes is publishing a part-work, *Grace Poole*. The story concerns the life and adventures of the servant who Jane Eyre encounters at Thornfield. Quoting from the cover blurb:

What would the life of the singular Grace Poole have been both before and after Jane Eyre came to Thornfield? Follow Grace’s adventures in childhood, in the employ of Mr Rochester and as servant in the house of one Henry Jekyll. See events described in classical works from another angle, as you share in her joys and sorrows, triumphs and disasters. Look beyond the tapestry which covers the attic door and see the woman.

It will show familiar characters like Jane and Rochester through Grace’s eyes as well as learning about her early life and what happens to her after the fire. At one point she moves to another book and is employed by the Jekyll family. The secrets she and her employers keep - and like to keep - fit in well with Wilkie’s stories. There is no direct connection but nevertheless highly recommended.

Nicely written in very much the style of the era, Part I consisting of 48 pages is now available (ISBN 978-0-9927030-6-6; £3.20 UK, £4.20 Europe, £5 rest of world including pp). There will be nine more parts. Cheques to Katherine Haynes, 150 Elstree Park, Barnet Lane, Borehamwood, WD6 2RP.

SUSAN HANES AND HER ‘PERSISTENT PHANTOM’

Overseas devotee, Susan Hanes, is author of *Wilkie Collins ‘s American Tour, 1873-4*, published by Pickering & Chatto in 2008. Also a long-standing WCS member, she has been an avid Collins fan for many years. Susan has now contributed the majority of the June 2016 monthly issue of the journal of the Chicago Caxton club,

the *Caxtonian*. Under the title of ‘My Persistent Phantom: A life with Wilkie Collins,’ it consists of lovely personal reminiscences of her fascination with Collins.

I have a confession to make. I have a relationship with a certain gentleman that has endured for more than 40 years and yet continues to captivate me even today.

Does it lessen the intrigue that the target of my obsession would now be over 190 years old? That he was short, bespectacled, and had a long, shaggy beard and unusually small hands and feet? I have been fascinated by Wilkie Collins ever since the summer before my sophomore year in high school, when I picked up his novel *The Moonstone* as part of a summer reading assignment.

And so her journey with Wilkie continues, part biographical and part personal recollections. This splendidly written piece is beautifully illustrated with portraits of Wilkie and favourite examples from Susan’s own library. The full article can be found at www.caxtonclub.org/reading/2016/jun16.pdf

WILKIE AT THE GROLIER CLUB

Susan Hanes was also featured in a recent exhibition at the distinguished Grolier Club of New York. Founded in 1884 it is America’s oldest and largest society for bibliophiles and enthusiasts in graphic arts (www.grolierclub.org). Susan writes:

It was a pleasure to share items from my Wilkie Collins collection with members of the Grolier Club of New York City at their annual New Members Exhibit, which opened on June 15, 2016 and continues through July. Coming from Chicago, I knew that one of my three allowed choices must be a letter from Wilkie, dated 31 October 1871, to the Committee of the American Chicago Relief Fund. He wrote of his “sincere admiration of the heroic spirit with which your countrymen have met the disaster that has fallen on them,” referring to the catastrophic Chicago fire of that same year. The note was accompanied by his cheque for five pounds. Two years after he sent that heartfelt letter, he arrived in Chicago during his speaking tour of America in 1874, admitting to a friend that he was less than impressed with the brash new city that had grown from the ashes of the Great Fire, calling Chicago “this city of magnificent warehouses.”

Whilst mentioning Haynes, there is another, Annie Haynes, a crime writer from the 1920s whose *The Secret of Greylands* (1924) is described as “an absorbing golden age crime novel matching Wilkie Collins’s high Victorian gothic to the agility of

early jazz age fiction.” It has just been republished by the Dean Street Press in paperback and on Kindle (ISBN 9781911095231).

‘THE FATAL CRADLE’

Members may remember the news story from Ecuador on 2 June 2016 where two babies who had been switched at birth by the hospital were finally reunited with their correct parents. (www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-36432343). Wilkie, of course, had got there first in his short story ‘The Fatal Cradle: otherwise the Heartrending Story of Mr Heavysides’. It was first published as ‘Picking up Waifs at Sea’ as Chapter 4 of the extra Christmas number of *All the Year Round* for December 1861.

Wilkie’s story is a humorous tale of two babies born simultaneously on a crowded ship bound for Australia. One is the eighth child of a poor family, the Heavysides, the other the first-born of a well-to-do couple, the Smallchilds. Their identities become confused when they are placed in the same makeshift cradle and the captain, after trying several unsuccessful methods, finally allocates them by weight, giving the heavier baby to the heavier mother. The narrator claims his life has been blighted by the captain’s mistaken choice with the immortal line “My weight has been the grand misfortune of my life.”

FRITH TO PIGOTT - FRIENDS OF WILKIE COLLINS

Four newly discovered letters between two of Wilkie’s friends add to our knowledge of them. They are from the artist William Powell Frith (1819-1909) to Edward Frederick Smyth Pigott (1824-1895). The numbers in square brackets refer to the numerical sequence of letters in the *Collected letters*.

Pigott and Collins studied together for the bar and Pigott edited *The leader* to which Wilkie contributed from 1851 to 1855. After that Pigott became foreign correspondent of *The Daily News*. Then in 1873 he applied for the post of Secretary to the Royal Academy. Frith gave him his support and this advice:

The candidates have been - & are-calling on the R.A.s - go and do thou likewise ... your chances will be increased if you can be talked to & seen. (Frith to Pigott 25 June 1873).

Despite letters of support from Frith and from Collins, [3100] to Thomas Faed (12 May 1873) and [1342] to the Royal Academy (20 May 1873), Pigott lost at the election on 10 July 1873 to Frederick Eaton. Afterwards Wilkie wrote to Pigott:

I cannot tell you how sorry I am for this disappointment of your expectations. All the artists (RAs) I saw appeared to think you were certain to be chosen. Who is "Mr Eaton"? and what does it mean? ([1362] to Pigott 17 July 1873).

The new letters confirm that Frith was equally surprised. "If certain promises - or what were tantamount to promises - had been respected the result of the election might have been very different." (Frith to Pigott 14 July 1873). It turned out to be for the best. A year later on 1 August 1874 Pigott was appointed Examiner of Plays in the Lord Chamberlain's Office.

Frith wrote to Pigott "Most heartily & sincerely do I congratulate you on what I read in the papers. After all it was a... good thing you didn't succeed in becoming Secretary seeing that you have become something much more honourable and important." (Frith to Pigott 1 August 1874). His wife Isabella joined in, writing separately: "Few things have given us greater pleasure than seeing the good news about you in today's papers" (Isabella Frith to Pigott, 1 August 1874).

In fact Pigott did not formally take up the role until 25 August to allow his predecessor William Donne to "complete his twenty five years." No letter of congratulation from Collins is known. But he must surely have been pleased to have such a close friend in this key role.

It was William Donne who had intervened a year earlier when Wilkie's play *The New Magdalen* was advertised during its run with a biblical quote on repentance "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." (Luke 15:7). Donne wrote to the manager of the Olympic Theatre on 9 July 1873 to request the immediate removal "of this unprecedented and unnecessary allusion to a verse of scripture" in advertising the play. It also seems that there may have been some scripture read on stage. *The Illustrated London News* review complained that "the citation of Gospel texts on the stage is... repulsive". (See Stephens *The Censorship of English Drama 1824-1901* p. 107 and fn 41, p. 181). That seems to have been the last time the Examiner of Plays intervened in a Wilkie Collins production.

More letters by Wilkie, himself, continue to tum up in ones and twos but we have decided to postpone the next update to the *Collected Letters* until the end of this year.

TO THE STUPID READER.

‘To the Stupid Reader’ is the title of the introduction to *Cape Cod and all along the Shore: Stories by Charles Nordhoff*, published by Harpers in New York during 1868. Decide whether you think the opening lines can be regarded as a back-handed compliment or a criticism of Collins.

The stories collected in this volume have been printed at different times in *Harper’s Magazine* except one which appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*. Collections of stories like this, I have noticed, are commonly published at the earnest solicitation of friends, or to gratify the desires of an amiable but indiscriminating public. To prevent misunderstanding in the present case, it is perhaps well to say that the public is guiltless in respect to this volume, and that no fond friend has ever expressed even a willingness to have my stories assume this more enduring form - except the publishers, who, it will be readily believed, have no especial desire to see the book permanently on their shelves.

I have noticed that it is customary with writers, when they collect their shorter tales, to set them into one general story, which serves as a frame-work to the small pieces, and furnishes a name for the volume, such as the “Queen of Hearts” of Mr. Wilkie Collins, and Miss Edwards’s “Miss Carew.” In this way a story writer gives his collection the appearance, at first sight, of what is called a novel. It naturally occurred to me to follow this fashion, which has the advantage of deceiving purchasers, who buy what they imagine from the title and chapter heads to be a novel, and do not discover, until they get home, that what they took to be a fat chicken is only a small basket full of stale eggs. But I refrained, for two reasons: 1st., I think it wrong to practice such a cheat upon an unoffending and confiding public; and, 2dly., I tried in vain to invent a tale which should serve me as such a frame-work; and had at last to give it up, for lack of ingenuity.

THE MOONSTONE AND ITS PLAGIARISTS

Bookseller Adrian Harrington Rare Books of Tunbridge Wells, Kent recently listed *The Hawkmoor Mystery* by W. H. Lane Chauford with the following description:

London: Ward Lock and Co. 1932, FIRST EDITION. Crown octavo, pp. 256. Publisher’s cloth in dust-wrapper [correctly priced at 3/6] with striking period artwork of skulls and a giant moth. Some trivial wear, a few minor nicks and tears but essentially a clean, bright and attractive book. A curious, dastardly tale, summarised in the publisher’s blurb as follows; “A diamond of incalculable value is stolen from an Indian Temple by Captain Berrington. Then, some twenty years afterwards, in an English country house, there are strange and bewildering happenings” (possibly the sound of Mr. Wilkie Collins instructing his copyright lawyers from beyond the grave).

Priced at a not so modest £195 the book is currently still available on Harrington’s website.

The Hawkmoor Mystery is far from the only tale of a stolen diamond with a curse. Modern examples are the highly acclaimed *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr and Essie Fox's *The Goddess and the Thief*; but perhaps the first *Moonstone* look-a-like was *Under Lock and Key* by the prolific nineteenth century author T. W. Speight. The book was published by Wilkie's then publisher, William Tinsley, in 1869, the year after *The Moonstone*. Immediately following the title-page appears the following disclaimer:

In justice to himself the author thinks it requisite to state that the entire plan of this story was sketched out, and several of the chapters written, before the first lines of Mr. Wilkie Collins's "Moonstone" had been given to the Public. He has further declined himself the pleasure of reading "The Moonstone" till after the completion of his own story, so as to preclude any possible charge of having derived the outline of his plot from the work of another writer. London, February, 1869.

Although the main very readable plot is different from *The Moonstone*, *Under Lock and Key* features the Great Mogul Diamond and a character who is a regular consumer of opium. In Speight's much later 1906 novel *The Grey Monk*, he also borrows from *The Moonstone* the family name Verinder.

ADAPTATIONS OF *THE MOONSTONE* AND *THE WOMAN IN WHITE*

Filming has recently started in Yorkshire for the new adaptation of *The Moonstone* due to be shown in the autumn over five consecutive afternoons on BBC I as part of the #LoveToRead season.

John Thomson (*Cold Feet*, *The Fast Show*) and Sarah Hadland (*Miranda*, *The Job Lot*) will play Sergeant Cuff and Miss Clack. They will be joined by rising stars of theatre Joshua Silver (*Photograph 51*, *Wolf Hall/Bring up the Bodies*) and Terenia Edwards (*Hero's Welcome*, *Five Finger Exercise*) in television debuts in the central roles of Franklin Blake and Rachel Verinder - one of literature's most enduring couples.

The five-part series will also feature Sophie Ward as Lady Yerinder, Stewart Clarke as Godfrey Ablewhite, Leo Wringer as Betteredge, and David Calder as Mr Bruff. It is adapted for TV by Rachel Flowerday (*Father Brown*, *EastEnders*) and Sasha Hails (*Versailles*, *Casualty*) and made by King Bert Productions. The series will be directed by Lisa Mulcahy (*Red Rock*, *The Clinic*) and produced by Joanna Hanley

(Billionaire Boy). The full details can now be seen online at www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/2016/the-moonstone-casting.

The BBC has also commissioned a new four-part adaptation of *The Woman in White*. Written by Fiona Seres this Origin Pictures production “will take viewers on a thrilling ride down the paths and corridors of English country houses and, ultimately, into the depths of the Victorian madhouse” says the BBC. Executive Producer David Thompson promises it will be “as thrilling for contemporary readers as it was for Victorians” because “Fiona’s unique take really brings out the intense psychological drama that has captivated so many over the years.”

No doubt we shall see but it is a bit sad that of the 23 novels which Wilkie wrote the BBC has only ever commissioned TV versions of *The Moonstone* and *The Woman in White*.

A NEW PORTRAIT OF WILKIE

There is a lovely new drawing of Wilkie by Katherine Messenger to illustrate a long review of Peter Ackroyd’s new Brief Lives version of his 2012 biography. The review in the *Weekly Standard* by academic Sara Lodge is not entirely complimentary. Although “Ackroyd is at his best when Dickens steps into the frame given the depth and breadth of his knowledge, however, this digest of Collins’s life is both more superficial, and more plodding, than one would hope.” The full piece is available to read online at www.weeklystandard.com/sensational-novelist/article/2002165

JEZEBEL’S DAUGHTER AT OXFORD ACADEMIC

Oxford Academic (Oxford University Press) as part of its Soundcloud series features an interview with Jason Hall, editor of the Oxford World’s Classics edition, discussing the history and plot of *Jezebel’s Daughter* (1879). The discussion is wide ranging covering the history and plot as well as Collins’s life.

With its intricate plot and memorable characters, *Jezebel’s Daughter* is reminiscent of Collins’s blockbusters *The Woman in White* and *Armada*, this suspenseful case study in villainy is set against the financial world of 1820s Frankfurt and tells the story of two widows, one of them devoted to realizing her husband’s social reforms, the other equally devoted to the pursuit of her daughter’s happiness.

The full I interview lasts nearly fifteen minutes and can be listened to at:

<https://soundcloud.com/search?q=jezebels%20daughter>

THE RED VIAL

Jezebel's Daughter was based on the plot of Collins's much earlier play, *The Red Vial*, which was staged at London's Olympic Theatre in 1858. The text of the play has never been published so that Caroline Radcliffe of the University of Birmingham and Andrew Gasson are currently working on an edition. It will follow the style of their previous collaboration on *The Lighthouse* in 2013 and will be published by Francis Boutle.

ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES (ALS)

The WCS continues to be affiliated to the Alliance of Literary Societies. Valerie Pedlar, our representative at their AGM weekend in Haworth on 21-22 May sends the following report:

Since this year is the 200th anniversary of Charlotte Brontë's birth, the Brontë Society volunteered to host the AGM of the ALS this year at Haworth. This meant that members had an opportunity to visit the Parsonage before it was open to the public on the Saturday, and to be shown some of the Society's treasures. All the same, there were still quite a lot of us milling round this very attractive house. But it was a pleasure to be able to pore over some of the objects in the glass cases without other people breathing down your neck! I think the objects that fascinated me most were Charlotte's 'mourning' shoes, which she had darned with Emily's hair.

Arriving on the Friday afternoon, I had time to look around Haworth itself, which was free of the hundreds of tourists that arrived on the Saturday and Sunday. Nineteenth-century Haworth, and its writers, was the topic of the Saturday afternoon speaker, Ian Dewhirst. His amusing and informative account of the various and numerous amateur writers in Haworth made me think that not only was it not surprising that the Brontë sisters had written, but it would have been surprising if they hadn't.

The Saturday morning speaker was Juliet Barker, well-known of course for her biography of the Brontës. Her talk, a revisionist approach to Mrs Gaskell's

biography of Charlotte, was very interesting - and aroused quite a lot of comment from members of the Gaskell Society.

A formal dinner in the evening was a good opportunity to chat to members of other literary societies. And this year activities were arranged for the Sunday. But the steam railway proved an irresistible attraction for some, and I decided to imagine myself as one of the Bronte women and to walk on my own to the so-called Bronte waterfall and Top Withens (the supposed inspiration for *Wuthering Heights*).

This is the second ALS weekend that I have attended and I found both to be friendly occasions. But any member of the Wilkie Collins Society is also a member of ALS and therefore entitled to attend the AGM weekend. Next year it will be hosted by the Siegfried Sassoon Fellowship and will be held at Napier University, Edinburgh, from 2-4 June.

PRICES AT AUCTION

A painting of a girl by Wilkie's brother Charles Allston Collins fetched a record price in June. *The Thoughts of a Christian Child* is a small (13.5" x 10") oil on panel in a later arched frame, signed by Collins and dated 1852 with a verse written by him pasted to the back. Gorrings auction house in Lewes, Sussex estimated it would fetch £3000 to £5000. But on 22 June after fierce bidding from more than a dozen telephone and internet bidders the hammer finally fell at an amazing £305,000 - a total cost to the new owner of £381,860. An image can be seen at goo.gl/h0X6Ta.

Not everyone was surprised. Art Dealer Rupert Maas told Paul Lewis "Not a crazy price, if you consider it was the most Pre-Raphaelite of pictures for sale this year anywhere." Maas's long essay on Charles was published in *The British Art Journal*, Spring 2015, Vol. XV no. 3, pp 38-50. A copy will be circulated to members on the email list when this Newsletter goes out.

At the same sale, a more modest 2" x 3.75" watercolour and chalk sketch of Vesuvius by William Collins fetched £100 including premium. It was taken in 1837, probably on 5 May 1837, when Wilkie and his father climbed the mountain, or possibly on 17 May when the family rode out towards it.

On the subject of crazy prices, internet searches occasionally tum them up. A copy of *Man and Wife* in the fairly common *Harper's Library Edition* of 1873 is on line for \$17,495. It claims to have Collins's inscription in it but is in fact the facsimile printed dedication 'To The American People' found in all these volumes which can usually be bought for less than \$50.

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE: LIVERPOOL'S WILD(E) POET

Richard Le Gallienne (1866-1947) sounds like a Bohemian Victorian figure of whom Wilkie would have approved. Inspired by Oscar Wilde's personal style and ideas about art, the 17 year-old Dick Gallienne renamed himself Richard Le Gallienne, wore long hair and artistic clothes, and dedicated himself to becoming an equally flamboyant figure and unconventional writer, devoted to Beauty in all its forms.

An exhibition at the Liverpool Central Library (William Brown Street, Liverpool L3 8EW) from 5 August to 31 October 2016 commemorates the 150th anniversary of the birth in Liverpool of Richard Le Gallienne – poet, critic, and novelist – with an exhibition in its Hornby Library. It is curated by Margaret D. Stetz; Mae and Robert Carter Professor of Women's Studies and Professor of Humanities at the University of Delaware; and Mark Samuels Lasner, Senior Research Fellow, University of Delaware Library.

On display are over 50 rare or unique items, many highlighting his lifelong connections to Oscar Wilde (1854-1900). Original photographs, drawings, manuscripts, unpublished letters, Victorian periodicals, and first editions tell the story of Le Gallienne's successful literary career, which took him from Liverpool to London, the US, and France. Drawn from public and private collections and local institutions (including family papers in the Liverpool Record Office of Liverpool Central Library), these materials show his importance to the Aesthetic and Decadent movements, his involvement with the *Yellow Book*, his intimate ties to late Victorian feminists known as "New Women," and his links to artists such as Max Beerbohm and Walter Sickert.

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NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2016-2017

THE 'HEART AND SCIENCE' CONFERENCE

As most WCS members will know, we held a very successful conference on Saturday 24 September at the Barts Pathology Museum in the heart of the City of London. Our thanks go out to all of the excellent speakers as well as to our ever efficient Journal editor, Joanne Parsons, who deserves the credit for arranging everything so successfully. One of her able assistants was Elena Syvokaite of Brunel University who contributes the following review of the conference.

The 'Heart' and 'Science' of Wilkie Collins and his Contemporaries conference was hosted in the fantastic location of Barts Pathology Museum, unanimously agreed to be a perfect place to discuss all the 'heart' and the 'science' of Collins's work. The conference was hosted by editor and associate editor of *Wilkie Collins's Journal*, Joanne Parsons (*Falmouth*) and Verity Burke (*Reading*), and sponsored by the *Wilkie Collins Society*. The event proved to be enjoyable, valuable and stimulating, delivering fine research from keynote speaker Tara MacDonald (*Idaho*) as well as other excellent guest speakers, and a truly witty performance by Jak Stringer.

The day was split into three panels discussing 'Science in Society and Relationships;' 'Differentiated and Troublesome Bodies;' and lastly 'Madness, Pathology and the Body: Interpreting the Pathologised Body.' Though the subject areas seem rather dense the guest speakers delivered them in a light-hearted manner and more often than not produced chuckles in the audience. The audience also showed themselves to be inquisitive, not only participating in discussion but also provoking new ideas in the guest speakers. Live tweets were posted under #WCJheart throughout the day, keeping those who could not come updated and informed about the progress of the conference. Keynote speaker Tara MacDonald (*Idaho*), who travelled a long way to be here for Wilkie Collins did not disappoint in her talk. Discussing a favourite novel of Collins's, *Armada*, she spoke about public feeling and sensation and how the two reconcile in the novel.

Albeit an academic conference the atmosphere was far from sombre. The room buzzed with excitement during tea breaks which mostly consisted of more Collins talk but those of a strong stomach and peculiar curiosity revelled in the unique specimens of the museum. A talk and performance delivered by Jak Stringer produced high spirits in everybody. Her ‘Rambles in Cornwall’, describing influences and relationships of the county on Collins’s work produced laughter and gaiety in the crowd. Jak’s use of props and sounds was also a delightful way to learn about Collins’s adventures in Cornwall.

For the last talk of the conference Martin Edwards (*Institute of Advanced Studies, UCL*) brought a day full of speculations on ‘heart’ and ‘science’ to a perfect close by discussing the myths and narratives of therapeutic bed rest, as part of the third panel on ‘Interpreting the Pathological Body.’ It was an ideal topic to end with so as to, for the last time, absorb the surrounding scene of dismembered and diseased body parts in jars. This conference marked 127 years since the death of Wilkie Collins, and without a doubt this day, rightly, consisted of all things Collins. Joanne Parsons and Verity Burke truly made this day what it was.

Photographs of the various speakers in action can be seen at https://www.facebook.com/wilkiecjournal/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1294420060600398

There was a further, equally enthusiastic review of the conference by Alison Moulds in *Journal of Victorian Culture Online*, posted on 11 December 2016. “For a conference to get me out of bed and into central London for 9 am registration on a Saturday, the theme has to be good.”

“The study day was anchored around a wonderful keynote delivered by Tara MacDonald (University of Idaho) on ‘Wilkie Collins, Armadale and Public Feeling’, which was based on her emerging research about sensation fiction as meta-fiction.” “Ultimately, however, the study day was a wonderful way of facilitating discussion about this prolific author, with the conference themes and quirky venue undoubtedly helping to attract a diverse line-up of speakers and delegates and to generate a range of responses to Collins’s rich body of work.”

The full JVC online report can be found at <http://blogs.tandf.co.uk/jvc/2016/12/11/alison-mouldsreview-the-heart-and-science-of-wilkie-collins-and-his-contemporaries-24-september-2016-barts-pathology-museum/>.

MORE ‘HEART’ AND ‘SCIENCE’ FOR THE JOURNAL.

Journal editor, Joanne Parsons, hopes to produce the next issue of the *Wilkie Collins Journal* over the next few weeks. She is also planning a special issue ‘The “Heart” and “Science” of Wilkie Collins and his Contemporaries’ for later in the year and has put out the following call for papers:

Deadline for Abstracts: 28 February 2017

Deadline for Articles: 31 May 2017

“Why can’t I look into your heart, and see what secrets it is keeping from me?”

The protagonist of Wilkie Collins’s *Heart and Science* (1883), surgeon Ovid Vere, laments the difficulty in deciphering hidden emotions and secrets. Yet the language suggests his medical background, striking a note with the novel’s supposedly anti-vivisection message and highlighting contemporary debates into the nature of experimental medicine, observation and epistemology. What is the best way of uncovering secrets, and what part does knowledge of the body play in this? Can medical training benefit from a thorough understanding of emotion? And does gender play a part in this? Issues of ‘heart’ and ‘science’ reverberate across Collins’s work, from the Major’s collection of women’s hair in *The Law and the Lady* (1875) to Ezra Jennings’s solution to the crime of *The Moonstone* (1868). The special issue will take as its focus the proliferation of “heart” and “science” throughout Collins’s work.

We welcome both abstracts and full article submissions on, but not limited to, the following topics:

- ***Wilkie Collins’s Heart and Science (1883) and/or any of Collins’s work***
- ***The Body***: As a scientific subject, as a site of emotion, bodily representations, and the body in forensics, news reportage and the home.
- ***The Victorian origin of disciplines***: Collins as an interdisciplinary figure, the divide (or not) of “heart” and “science”, the definition of sensation in literature and/or science.
- ***Medicine and anatomical science***: vivisection, taxidermy, anatomical atlases and the nineteenth-century doctor and/or scientist.
- ***Psychology and psychiatry***: the physicality of mental illness, hysteria, the asylum, treatment and therapeutics.
- ***Gender***: the gendered body, representations of gender, the gendered connotations of “heart” and/or “science”.
- ***Sensation***: As genre, as sense or emotion, as subjective.
- ***Detection***: forensics, interrogation, the body as clue, the science of detection, and crimes of the heart.
- ***Relationships***: Romantic, familial, or otherwise.
- ***Neo-Victorian Approaches to “Heart” and “Science”***
- ***Work by other contemporary sensation writers***

Submissions are not limited to papers on Wilkie Collins’s *Heart and Science* (1883) but to “heart” and “science” at work in the full range of Collins’s fiction. The *WCJ* is also interested in related authors and sensation fiction more broadly: interdisciplinary perspectives are also welcome.

Email abstracts to jo.parsons@falmouth.ac.uk and V.Burke@pgr.reading.ac.uk by 28th February 2017.

A POSSIBLE PERFORMANCE OF *THE LIGHTHOUSE*

Jak Stringer whose Cornwall ‘Rambles’ delight all those who witness them, is trying to arrange a performance of *The Lighthouse* to coincide with the Penzance Literature festival, later this year around 6-8 July. If it can be arranged, a Cornwall venue would be splendidly appropriate for the first public performance of *The Lighthouse* since its first staging in 1855. Further details will be confirmed as soon as available.

WEBB LIBRARY

A major collection of more than 7,500 books and manuscripts has been given to Trinity College Cambridge’s Wren Library. It was bequeathed by Mary Duchess of Roxburghe, the granddaughter of Richard Monckton Milnes. Wilkie dined with Milnes on several occasions in the late 1850s and early 1860s and visited him at least once at his Yorkshire estate. So far there are three finds in the library with Wilkie connections. The first is a letter from Collins to Milne’s wife Annabel pasted into a first edition of *No Name*. The second is a note to Milnes enclosing a photograph for him to paste into the first edition of *The Woman in White*; the third is that actual copy complete with a dedication inscription to Milnes.

***THE MOONSTONE* ON TV**

The BBC broadcast its new – sometimes rather confused - dramatization of *The Moonstone* on five consecutive afternoons from 31 October 2016. Writers Rachel Flowerday and Sasha Hails have remained fairly faithful to the story and the dialogue is largely Wilkie’s own.

Franklin Blake was played by Joshua Silver with Terenia Edwards as Rachel Verinder, John Thomson as Sergeant Cuff, and Leo Wringer as a good but totally miscast Gabriel Betteredge.

The programme page is www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0824cbr with links to interviews with the writers and an essay by Executive Producer John Yorke which puts *The Moonstone* in context. He concludes “we can’t wait to introduce a new audience to the jewel that is The Moonstone.”

The television critic of the *Daily Mail*, although noting “Enter the Great Detective: Sergeant Cuff, the morose crimebuster whose genius for deduction set the template for an entire literary genre,” was less than sympathetic, describing the first episode as a “disappointing muddle, all false starts and laboured explanation.”

Sad also that the BBC schedulers consigned this first new production of the classic for twenty years to the afternoon slot. Critic Alison Graham wrote in *Radio Times* “It’s just not the kind of story that would find its way to the heart of the big schedules again.” It was repeated – once more on consecutive afternoons – in the week between Christmas and New Year. A previous dramatization was a two-part version first broadcast on 29/30 December 1996.

You can buy the DVD for £12.99 on Amazon – search ‘The Moonstone 2016’. The earlier 1996 version starring Keely Hawes and Greg Wise is also available dated 2009 and frequently turns up on ebay.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE ON TELEVISION

Those who did see the recent dramatization of *The Moonstone* may be wondering what has happened to the promised new version of *The Woman in White*. It was announced in December 2015 as four 60 minute episodes. It has apparently not been cancelled or forgotten but we still await an announcement with more details of cast and filming dates.

HAUNTED HOTEL ON THE RADIO

Wilkie seems to fare rather better on radio where writers and producers are a good deal more adventurous than those on television where *The Moonstone* and *The Woman in White* appear to be the limit of their imagination. In the past we have had *No Name* and *Basil* plus dramatisations of various short stories. In November, the Radio 4 Saturday Drama presented a one hour adaptation by Rod Beacham of *The Haunted Hotel*. It was produced and directed by Bruce Young and managed to encapsulate the essentials of Wilkie’s plot. Overall, a good production although omitting the forensic details found in the original. It is no longer available on the BBC iPlayer but look out for future repeats on Radio 4 Extra.

THE LIFE OF WILKIE COLLINS ON BBC RADIO 4

Peter Ackroyd’s biography of Wilkie Collins was the recent ‘Book of the Week’ on BBC Radio 4, excellently read by Michael Pennington. The Ackroyd book has always presented a well written and good summary of Wilkie’s life but our recommendation for a comprehensive biography remains Andrew Lycett’s *Wilkie Collins: A Life of Sensation*.

THE FIRST COLLINS BIOGRAPHY

The first book length biography and literary study of Wilkie Collins – and the only one published in his own life – is available in a reprint. *Wilkie Collins – ein biographisch-kritischer Versuch* by Ernst von Wolzogen was first published in German in 1885. The biographical and critical study has been hard to find and even harder to read in German in its traditional gothic typeface.

Its significance was first realised by biographer Catherine Peters who discovered that it corroborated the revelation by Dickens that at the age of twelve Collins fell in love with an older woman “a married woman who was at least three times as old, and his jealousy of her excellent husband was so violent that he could not stand his presence, but ran away when he saw him coming.”

When Wilkie's letters were collected in 2005 a letter to von Wolzogen written in 1882 was found buried in the text. In it Wilkie set out his method of working. "I have four rules. First, the main idea. Secondly, the end. Thirdly, the beginning. The difficulty with carrying out this last rule, is that you always have to start from the beginning! Anyone who can solve that will also be able to manage the fourth rule – you must always be able to move the story forward. People often ask me about my 'secret' and that is what it is!"

The new reprint edition – still in the original German but not in Gothic typeface – was first published in 2012 and copies can most easily be found online by searching on the ISBN 9783955078027.

THE FRIENDS OF KENSAL GREEN CEMETERY

The Friends of Kensal Green Cemetery – where of course Wilkie is buried - continue to offer a wide range of events and produce a regular Newsletter. The issue for November 2016 featured a review by Jenny Freeman of a talk by Andrew Lycett which included a description of Collins's final journey. "Today new audiences find resonance in some of the ideas and themes Collins explored so vividly in his books, and the memorable personalities he created." For details of membership, contact Tim Robertson, 3 Mead Court, Egham, Surrey TW20 8XF (director@cryptair.co.uk).

WILKIE THE THRILLER PIONEER

John Mullan, Professor of English at University College London, traces the rise of the psychological thriller from *The Moonstone* to *The Girl on the Train* in an essay in *The Guardian* where he "explains how *The Girl on the Train*'s themes of adultery, murder and secret identity are rooted in the Victorian era." Crediting Collins with "a series of narrative tricks and peculiar plot elements that thriller writers still draw on...even some of his unaccountable quirks have become conventions of thriller writing, though modern practitioners will have been unaware that they were following a pattern set by this unconventional Victorian." His essay was published on Saturday 8 October during the same month that the new TV adaptation of *The Moonstone* began. The full essay can be found at www.theguardian.com/books/2016/oct/08/how-we-got-to-the-girl-on-the-train-moonstone-the-rise-of-the-psychological-thriller.

WILKIE IN CONTEXT

Collins turns up several times in the essays collected in *Charles Dickens and the Mid-Victorian Press 1850-1870* edited by Hazel Mackenzie and Ben Winyard.

Collins's ground breaking essay 'The Unknown Public' in *Household Words* 21 August 1858 gets several pages in Helen McKenzie's 'A Defence of the Pen'. In it Wilkie describes his

view of who readers of periodicals are but then laments that the readers of penny journals are not reached by the literary élite. It was an audience he sought to attract for the rest of his life.

Harriet Martineau's objections to his serialised story 'The Yellow Mask' as anti-Catholic is also featured in a later essay.

Overall Collins's massive contribution to *Household Words* and *All The Year Round* was rather underplayed. A final essay by Victoria List editor Patrick Leary puts an interesting gloss on the scandal of Dickens's affair with the actress Ellen Ternan. He points out that Ellen's name was widely published in the American press, free of the libel and taste issues that dogged the London papers. Far from being hidden it actually, as he put it, went viral.

The book is currently free from Amazon in a kindle edition but the paperback is £24.99.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

In 2015 book dealer and academic Jeremy Parrott found a set of *All the Year Round* which had been annotated throughout with the names of the authors of the 2,500 pieces which it contains. He published his early findings in July 2015 and in the WCS Newsletter for Summer 2015 we listed eight pieces newly identified as by Wilkie Collins. Parrott now believes he now knows who wrote the annotations. It was not, as he first thought, Dickens himself but two members of staff - George Holsworth and Henry Walker. Some oddities and errors in the transcriptions lead him to believe that Walker read the names out loud from another annotated set – now lost – and Holsworth made the pencil notes in the margins of the set Parrott now possesses.

The provenance of the eight pieces is analysed in the pamphlet *Wilkie Collins: Newly identified contributions in All the Year Round* sent out with this mailing. The Society will be publishing six of the contributions in pamphlets during the course of 2017.

Important though those Wilkie works are, it is the reputation and biography of his brother, Charles Allston Collins, which will be changed far more by the Parrott discovery. There are 60 titles by him which are newly identified, making him one of the most prolific and regular contributors to *All the Year Round*. They show his work for the periodical was far more than a kindness shown by his father-in-law, Dickens, after Charles gave up painting in pursuit of literature.

In addition to an excellent presentation to the Dickens Fellowship in December, Parrott has also published an updated piece, 'George Holsworth and Henry Walker: the Backroom Boys at *All the Year Round*', in *The Dickensian*, Winter 2016, No. 500, Vol. 112 Part 3, pp. 247-259.

COLLINS AND THE BERGER CONNECTION

John Berger (1926-2017) the well known art critic who wrote *Ways of Seeing* and who died earlier this year was a great-great-nephew of Francesco Berger (1834-1933) a composer who was commissioned to write the incidental music for Wilkie's play *The Lighthouse* (1855) and the Overture for *The Frozen Deep* (1857). The Society discovered the latter work in 2008 and published it on CD where it was performed by pianist Vyvian Bronk. Copies are still available from the WCS at a cost of £5 plus postage.

PUBLICATIONS LIST UPDATED

The comprehensive range of the Society's publications can be found on the WCS website. The list is currently being updated with recent additions.

BRITISH LIBRARY BUYS *THE NEW MAGDALEN* MANUSCRIPT

It has emerged that the extensive 212 page working draft of Wilkie's dramatization of *The New Magdalen*, which was sold at auction earlier this year for nearly £76,000, (Newsletter Spring 2016) was in fact bought by the British Library. The BL already has an annotated script submitted to the Lord Chamberlain for approval before its performance on 19 May 1873 at the Olympic Theatre. The new manuscript shows an earlier stage in the play's development and will be a valuable addition for scholars working on Wilkie's plays. The auction catalogue states

"The whole play was written by Collins at a feverish pace, as demonstrated by the slashing handwriting and the abundant and rough changes throughout the manuscript. A wonderful example of a playwright's train of thought in action, the hand hardly able to keep up with the brain." www.bonhams.com/auctions/23644/lot/4/.

THE *BIRMINGHAM MAIL* ON 23 SEPTEMBER

The *Birmingham Mail* for Friday 23 September 2016 in its 'Nostalgia – On this Day' feature duly noted the date of Collins's death together with a small photograph of the young Wilkie. The date is shared by a variety of other events including the victory of the Greeks over the Persians at the Battle of Salamis in 480 BC; the discovery of the planet Neptune in 1846; the death of Sigmund Freud in 1939; and Peron's re-election as Argentinian President in 1973.

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THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2017

THE WCS JOURNAL

Members are reminded that the latest issue of the Wilkie Collins Journal, Volume 14, for 2017 is now online at wilkiecollinssociety.org/journal/current-issue/. The login details are the same as previously, username: **count**; and password: **fosco**, both in lower case. The essays in the current issue are:

‘The Nature of the Law: Struggles between Statute and Morality in Wilkie Collins’s *The Woman in White* and *No Name*’ by Abigail K. Boucher.

‘A Lost Biographical Sketch’ by Emily Bowles.

‘Cornwall and Kamtschatka: Domesticating Cornwall through Pedestrian Travel in Wilkie Collins’s *Rambles Beyond Railways* (1851)’ by Erika Behrisch Elce.

‘Gravy Soup: humouring conformity and counterfeiting in *A Rogue’s life*’ by Rebecca Lloyd

‘In the Mystery and Terror of a Dream’: Sensationalism, Consistency, and Mental Science in Wilkie Collins’s *Armada/e* by Daniel Matlock.

‘You must give up’: Gothic Detection and the Rhetoric of Protest in *The Law and the Lady* by Karen Beth Strovas.

We are grateful once again to the editor, Joanne Ella Parsons, and to all the contributors for producing such an interesting collection of articles. It is also hoped to have a further issue ready towards the end of the year.

WCS NEWSLETTERS

In addition to past copies of the Journal on the WCS website, all of the Society's Newsletters from 1994 to the end of 2016 are also available for either search online or for download from wilkiecollinssociety.org/category/newsletters.

THE RED VIAL AND THE LIGHTHOUSE

The Red Vial is an unpublished play written by Collins and produced at the Royal Olympic Theatre from 11 October 1858. It starred Frederick Robson as Hans Grimm, the lunatic cured by kindness, and Mrs Stirling as Madame Bergmann. Described as 'the most brilliant failure of the day,' the plot was later adapted as the basis for *Jezebel's Daughter* in 1880.

Following the publication in 2013 by the WCS of *The Lighthouse*, the editors, Caroline Radcliffe and Andrew Gasson, have been working on an edition of *The Red Vial* which has until now never appeared in print. It will be published by Francis Boutle and follow the same format as *The Lighthouse*, consisting of an introduction, the text of the play, plot summaries and a variety of contemporary reviews; it will also include several rarely seen illustrations. It is hoped that the publication will be ready later in the year and will be sent out to all members of the Society.

If all goes to plan, *The lighthouse* will be staged at the Acorn Theatre, Penzance, on Saturday 14 October, the first performance for over 100 years. Full details will be confirmed in the next Newsletter and by email.

A NEW ADDRESS FOR E-TEXTS

Most of Collins works have been available as e-texts for some while, mainly as a result of the dedication of James Rusk who carried out all of this work. James has recently moved his website to www.jhrusk.github.io. He has now also produced e-texts of the works of Charles Reade.

Incidentally, the bibliography by Parrish, *Wilkie Collins and Charles Reade: First Editions described with Notes*, as the title suggests, includes both authors. It was originally published in 1940 in a limited edition of 150 copies but reprinted by

Burt Franklin in 1968. This later edition frequently turns up on ebay at fairly reasonable prices.

A WILKIE COLLINS THESIS ON *THE WOMAN IN WHITE*

WCS member, Dr Kirsten Hüttner from Germany, obtained her PhD with a study on *The Woman in White*. Her thesis was issued as a book in 1996 - in English - as *Wilkie Collins's "The Woman in White": Analysis, Reception and Literary Criticism of a Victorian Bestseller*, published by Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier.

Kirsten has very kindly donated six copies to the WCS to distribute to interested members. Anyone who would like a copy should contact Andrew Gasson at apogee@apgee.co.uk. The thesis runs to some 300 pages so although there will be no charge for the book, the cost to cover second class p. & p. will be £3.

COLLINS AND THE HORROR OF CLOTHING

Stephanie Lethbridge of the English Department of the University of Freiburg includes several mentions of Collins in her essay 'The Horror of Clothing and the Clothing of Horror: Material and Meaning in Gothic and Sensation Fiction' which appeared in the recently published *Sensationalism and the Genealogy of Modernity* (ISBN 978-1-137-56148-0, Palgrave-Macmillan). The article puts an interesting slant on Collins in relation to an exploration of "the potential of clothing to create horror or terror in gothic and sensation fiction."

Most of the comments relate to *The Woman in White* with examples such as "The true horror of the situation ... emerges when it becomes clear that Jacob's ghost is not a ghost but Anne Catherick" and "It is perhaps not surprising that Routledge ... pushed the aspect of lurid sensationalism ... to extremes. The 1904 Routledge edition no longer focused on the comparatively harmless "woman in white" but on a "skeleton in the cupboard." *The Moonstone* also receives a mention "when Franklin Blake finally finds the nightgown to prove who the thief of the diamond was: ... 'I found the mark, and read: MY OWN NAME.'"

A DRAMATIC REVIVAL OF *THE WOMAN IN WHITE*

The Rose Theatre Kidderminster has become the latest provincial playhouse to put on a performance of Wilkie's most popular novel. Using the well-known

adaptation by Constance Cox, the Nonentities Society entertained the audience for six nights from Monday 8 May. Details may still be found on the website www.rosetheatre.co.uk which called it “A wonderful slice of Victoriana mystery and intrigue.” The company used French’s Acting Edition of Cox’s adaptation which can easily be found via Amazon or direct from the publishers at www.samuelfrench.co.uk/p/11891/woman-in-whitethe.

NO NAME ON BBC RADIO 4 EXTRA

The excellent radio adaption of *No Name* which was originally broadcast in 1989 has recently been repeated on Radio 4 Extra in its original six weekly episodes. It was adapted by Elizabeth Bradbury with such long gone radio stalwarts as Jack May as Captain Wragge and John Moffatt as one of Collins’s best lawyers, Mr Pendril. *No Name* has stood the test of time extremely well; it has turned up before on the BBC iPlayer so may well do so in future. Radio 4 Extra has also been the home of several other adaptations of Collins’s works so from time to time it is always worth checking the schedules.

DOGGED DETECTIVE

Wilkie’s dog detective, Tommie, in *My Lady’s Money* is widely credited as the first crime-solving canine. The story was published in the *Illustrated London News* for Christmas 1877. But Kate Watson in *Women writing Crime Fiction 1860-1880* claims that he was beaten by four years by an Australian woman called Mary Helena Fortune (c1833–c1910). Her story ‘The Dog Detective’ was published in *Journal*, an Australian magazine, in May 1873. Some academics believe that Fortune’s work was available in the UK and Watson suggests Wilkie might have read it. Whether he did or not it seems he was not the first to feature a dog detective.

Tommie is thought to be an *homage* to Wilkie’s own Scotch terrier Tommy who died 28 August 1885. He wrote to his agent A. P. Watt on 7 September “I have lost the dear old friend and companion of many years – my dog.”

Apart from this revelation about the dog detective there are dozens of other references to Wilkie Collins in Watson’s book including mentions of six of his

novels and four short stories. It is well worth getting for those interested in Wilkie and crime.

Kate Watson *Women Writing Crime Fiction 1860-1880*, McFarland & Co, Jefferson and London 2012, ISBN 978-0-7864-6782-2.

LETTERS AND MANUSCRIPTS

Milton Roger Slater was born in Brooklyn in 1918 and died in Sleepy Hollow, Westchester, New York on 30 April 2014. During his long life he made a massive collection of manuscripts, beginning with the American Civil War and moving on to a variety of other things including English Literature. Following his death, his collection has been auctioned in a long series of sales by Swann Galleries in New York. This May six Wilkie Collins items went under the hammer.

There was a page of the manuscript of the stage adaptation of *The Moonstone* from 1877. The single page – numbered 17 – had more than 30 lines from the second Act. They are written, overwritten, amended, re-amended, and in one case pasted over with a small piece of paper with fresh changes. It is always a wonder how printers ever got his texts right either for his plays or stories.

The five other items were all letters. One was sold in the American Civil War section of the sale. Dated 12 September 1862, it was sent to an American fan who seems to have written asking for an autograph, possibly in response to *No Name* which was being serialised at that time in *Harper's Weekly*. Instead Charles Edward Bennett received a three-page letter including Wilkie's thoughts on the American Civil War, then raging.

My horror of all war, my very firm conviction that the remedy of fighting is the most devilish and the most useless of all remedies... it seems to my mind the interest of America, the interest of Liberty, and the interest of Humanity that this strife should end no matter how it ends. Better your one republic should be two than that the cause of Freedom should suffer in American hands.

This letter had been bought by Slater from Swann in 1958.

(Incidentally, in an earlier letter also on the subject of war and dated 7 August 1870 (but not auctioned in this sale) Collins was perhaps the first to consider the idea of Mutually Assured Destruction.

I begin to believe in only one civilising influence - the discovery one of these days, of a destructive agent so terrible that War shall mean annihilation, and men's fears shall force them to keep the peace.)

Another important letter in the Swann sale was to Samuel Carter Hall, a friend of Wilkie's father, and publisher of engravings of several of his paintings in the 1830s in his *Literary Souvenir*. Hall had clearly sent his condolences to Wilkie on his father's death and asked for biographical material of his father to use in a memoir. Wilkie's reply on 18 March 1847 explains in some detail that he is embarking on a biography of his father's life. He sends Hall some biographical material and states his confidence in what Hall will use it for.

For the Critical part, your just and generous appreciation of my father's genius, leave me no anxiety or doubt whatever.

Three other letters were acquired by Slater in 1983. They include two enclosing extracts from his novels for collectors and a letter of 9 July 1881 to the actor and manager Charles Lamb Kenney regretting that his illness means he will miss Kenney's daughter Rosa when she next performs on stage.

Details of these letters arrived too late for the latest Addenda & Corrigenda enclosed with this mailing but will be fully reproduced and annotated in the next edition.

Altogether 130 lots in the sale on 4 May 2017 were letters from writers, the great majority from the Slater collection. Generally items were highly priced, partly reflecting their content and partly their provenance. Agatha Christie's 1940s notebook, for example, fetched \$18,750.

WILKIE IN THE *NEW YORKER*

Don Olson of Texas State University has noticed mentions of Collins and more particularly Dickens in an article by Kathryn Schulz entitled 'Literature's Arctic Obsession' in the *New Yorker* of 21 April 2017.

Schulz regards polar fiction as “a largely overlooked body of literature in the nineteenth century. It included works by many of the greatest writers of the era, or of any era: Mary Shelley, Edgar Allan Poe, Jules Verne, Wilkie Collins, Charles Dickens. Almost invariably, the poles appear in these works as the place where nature reveals its horrifying indifference to humanity; where humanity itself falls away, leaving men to descend into madness and violence.”

Collins and Dickens, of course, acted together in Wilkie’s *The Frozen Deep* and in the context of the lost Franklin expedition Dickens always maintained that no Englishman would stoop to cannibalism. The full article can be found online by searching on <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/04/24/literatures-arctic-obsession>. And Dickens’s piece from *Household Words* (2 and 9 December 1854, pp. 362-65, 387-393) denying cannibalism is reproduced at www.victorianweb.org/authors/dickens/arctic/pva342.html

Don Olson is a self-styled Celestial Sleuth “Using Astronomy to Solve Mysteries in Art, History and Literature. He has already produced one volume based on his fascinating researches. His second volume of ‘Further Adventures’ will contain an astronomical analysis of Walter Hartright’s walk in the opening pages of *The Woman in White*. This should appear early in 2018.

CHARLES DICKENS THE MAGICIAN

Published in 2014, *Charles Dickens Magician* explores Dickens relatively unknown conjuring talents. Quoting from the blurb: “For the first time Dickens’s journey to a conjurer has been properly researched and narrated: using his own letters and other contemporary reports, the evolution of the novelist to enthusiastic performer is plotted. What is particularly unique about this book is that Ian Keable brings his own experiences as a magic historian and professional magician to branch out into related subjects.” (ISBN 978-0-9557353-2-5, priced at £10 paperback and £25 hardback).

Wilkie is duly mentioned in the context of *The Frozen Deep* and his trips to Paris with Dickens although Keable considers that Collins’s influence “might not have been entirely benign.” He also mentions their going to seances and Wilkie’s initial acceptance of spiritualism. Collins in fact wrote a series of articles in 1852

on the subject for *The Leader* under the title ‘Magnetic Evenings at Home’ which were subsequently attacked by G. H. Lewes. These can be found online at ncse-viewpoint.cch.kcl.ac.uk/ although the WCS itself reprinted *Magnetic Evenings* in 2001. This publication included the four articles by Wilkie, a rejoinder by the editor G. H. Lewes, and Wilkie’s reply to him. Copies are still available and can be ordered through the society’s website (see final page).

W. H. SMITH AND YELLOWBACKS

W. H. Smith, the newsagents, booksellers and stationers was founded in 1792 and became the second largest circulating library. It expanded rapidly under William Henry Smith II (1825-1891) during the railway boom of the 1850s. Smiths were a prominent presence with more than 500 of their railway bookstalls by 1870. Much of Victorian literature was sold in three volume editions (three-deckers) at the then very expensive price of 10s 6d a volume. It was at the railway stations that Smiths sold vast quantities of cheap ‘railway fiction’ or yellowbacks. They were issued from a few weeks to several months after the first editions.

To celebrate their 225th anniversary, W. H. Smith have just re-issued seven classic titles broadly in the style of their historical antecedents. Unfortunately, the series does not include any of Collins’s titles but gives a rough idea of the original appearance. Books can be seen at local branches of W. H. Smith or at www.whsmith.co.uk/lists/books/whsmith-225th-anniversary-yellowback-special-editions-02x09247. Examples of the Victorian originals can be seen at www.wilkie-collins.info. In particular look at *The Dead Secret*, *The New Magdalen* and *Little Novels*.

All but five of Collins’s 34 titles were issued in yellowback format, excluding *The Memoirs of William Collins*, *Rambles Beyond Railways*, *Mr Wray’s Cash-Box*, *The Guilty River* and *The Lazy Tour*. Single volume yellowbacks were usually priced at 2s and as the cheap version of fiction were the equivalent of today’s paperbacks. The binding consisted of strawboard covered with glazed coloured paper, usually yellow, on which appeared a vivid and eye-catching illustration. The construction was therefore quite fragile and although many have survived they are rarely found in good condition. Their price today varies from about £25 upwards. In Collins’s case, they are generally more expensive.

Currently they can be found on ebay for an excessively ambitious £600 for *The Haunted Hotel* and on ABE for *The Moonstone* an even more kite-flying £1,500!

RESTLESS SHADOW

A new exhibition at the Charles Dickens Museum is called *Restless Shadow: Dickens the Campaigner*. Curated by John Drew, who runs Dickens Journals Online at Buckingham University, the exhibition could have been called ‘anything but the novels’. It is a timeline of Dickens’s work as a journalist, speechwriter, and tireless campaigner for reform. Drew thinks that Dickens was heavily influenced to campaign for the poorest in society by his own time working in a blacking factory while his father John was shut up in the Marshalsea debtor’s prison. The exhibition covers his journalistic writing in his periodicals *Household Words* and *All The Year Round* where he campaigned for changes in workhouses, prisons, boarding schools, and the treatment of the poor and indigent. It contains a blacking bottle, a shorthand book such as Dickens learned from, his chair from the *All The Year Round* office, and a petition used to incarcerate a debtor in the Marshalsea. There is also one volume of the newly discovered set of *All The Year Round* with the author of each piece identified. The annotation next to ‘What is Sensational?’ in vol. XVII newly identifies Dickens as joint author of a polemic against appalling conditions in workhouses and the subsequent denial of any wrong-doing by the managers. This exhibition could be the only chance for the public to see one of these unique volumes.

Restless Shadow: Dickens the Campaigner runs until October 2017 and entrance is included with the museum ticket.

A NEW PORTRAIT BY CHARLES COLLINS

A painting of a young woman at the Charles Dickens Museum is now thought to be a portrait of Catherine (Kate) Dickens by Wilkie’s brother Charles who married her in 1860. Previously the Museum had thought it was a portrait of Dickens’s eldest daughter Mamie by Daniel Maclise. But Museum Director Cindy Sughrue has told the Society that the portrait has been professionally re-evaluated and she is confident it is by Charles and of Kate. The painting is on display at the Museum next to a portrait of Kate by her second husband Charles Perugini.

BARMOUTH SANDS BY WILLIAM COLLINS

One of William Collins's paintings made a rare appearance on a front page of *The Times* on Tuesday 21 March 2017. *Welsh Peasants Crossing the Sands to Market* was painted by Wilkie's father in the autumn or winter of 1834 at their home at 30 Porchester Terrace in West London. Exhibited at the Royal Academy the following year, it was bought by a man called R. Coils for 115 guineas (£120.75) and then bought by a Mr Gillott. Later it was sold for £1,700 at Christies in 1879 and renamed, possibly at that time, *Barmouth Sands*. It was subsequently sold again by Christie's for £1,050 in 1888 and is now owned by The Guildhall Art Gallery in the City of London, along with five others of William Collins's major works. They are usually on display there.

The picture appeared as part of the front cover illustration of *Times 2* - the arts tabloid issued with *The Times* - to illustrate a piece by Giles Coren on his new TV series *Fake! - the great Masterpiece Challenge* which began on Sky Arts on 28 March. The painting itself did not appear in the piece nor, as far as is known, has it been in the series. It was simply there as an illustration with Coren in front of it.

MORE WILLIAM COLLINS PICTURES

Two important paintings by Wilkie's father, William Collins, have surfaced at auction.

Morning: Fishermen on the look-out was begun in February 1819 in his painting studio at 11 New Cavendish Street. A few days earlier William had lost out by one vote to be elected as a full Royal Academician; he had been an Associate since 1814. In all he spent 24 days from February to April on the large 36" x 48" canvas and it was exhibited at the Royal Academy Exhibition in May of that year in the main gallery as number 175. Referring to the artist David Wilkie, after whom he was named, Wilkie Collins writes in *Memoirs of the Life of William Collins RA*, the biography of his father,

In the poetical composition of the sky - in that power of presenting original and faithful combinations of atmosphere and cloud, for which, in Wilkie's opinion, his friend stood unmatched among his contemporaries - this picture surpasses all its predecessors.

Artists were admitted to membership of the Royal Academy largely on the basis of their exhibited works and this painting is likely to have been instrumental in his election in 1820 as a full Academician allowing him put the letters RA after his name.

The picture was painted for the Earl of Liverpool, Robert Jenkinson (1770-1828) who was then the Prime Minister. He bought it for 150 guineas (£157.50) – approximately £11,000 in today’s money. He still owned it in some years later when an engraving by Joseph Phelps was made and which was published on 1 March 1827.

The painting was sold by Stacey’s Auctions on 21 March 2017, lot 1737. The hammer price was £2,900.

The second painting emerged in an auction in Madrid. Although catalogued as *Bendición de la mesa* (Grace), art dealer and William Collins expert Alan Bean believes it to be *The Two Disciples at Emmaus* painted in 1841 and exhibited as No.106 at the Royal Academy that year. Wilkie’s *Memoirs* devotes a paragraph to the painting and his words seem to describe perfectly the image published in the sale catalogue. It shows two disciples sitting at a table at the moment “immediately following the supernatural disappearance of our Saviour.” Wilkie adds “In every respect the picture is a thoroughly faithful reflection of Italian life and landscape.” The Royal Academy Exhibition catalogue quotes Luke 24:30-31

And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

After the family’s Italian trip from 1836 to 1838, Collins painted a handful of pictures in the style of the Italian masters; they were not popular with the public, however, and he soon returned to coastal scenes. *Disciples* was originally bought by City grocer George Knott for 150 guineas but when sold after his death in 1844 by Christie’s on 25 April 1845 it fetched only 145 guineas (£152.25). The *Memoirs* states that the price was 260 guineas but it seems likely Wilkie confused it with another Collins picture in the Knott sale, *The Peacemaker*.

The 30” x 24” inch canvas was lot 198 in a sale at the auction house Duran on 27 April 2017 and the hammer price was €3,000 (£2,540).

COLLINS AND JOURNALISM

Former *Wilkie Collins Journal* editor, Graham Law, has contributed ‘Wilkie Collins and the Discovery of an ‘Unknown Public’ to the recently published collection of essays, *Journalism and the Periodical Press in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. The elegantly produced volume is edited by Joanne Shattock, Emeritus Professor of Victorian Literature at the University of Leicester. (Hardback, ISBN 9781107085732 at £74.99)

Graham Law’s essay concentrates on ‘The Unknown Public’, Collins’s most widely cited piece of journalism, originally published in *Household Words* in August 1858. Collins’s article discussed the estimated three million readers of Penny novel-journals who should be taught to appreciate better quality fiction. Graham’s essay provides a useful overview of Collins’s career in journalism.

The collection is divided into sections on ‘Periodicals, Genres and the Production of Print;’ ‘The Press and the Public;’ ‘The ‘Globalisation’ of the Nineteenth-Century Press’ and ‘Journalists and Journalism.’ John Drew writes on ‘Dickens and the Middle-class Weekly’ and from Joanne Shattock’s essay on Margaret Oliphant we learn that she may have adapted a subplot from *No Name* (1862) for *The Perpetual Curate*, published in 1864.

WCS PUBLICATIONS

All of the Wilkie Collins Society’s publications are listed on the website at wilkiecollinssociety.org/publications/ from where they can be ordered. Currently there is a 25% off sale and all receipts go to help the Society continue its work.

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NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2017

NEW BANK ACCOUNT DETAILS FOR THE WCS

HSBC have changed our WCS bank account details to the following:

SORT CODE:	401158
ACCOUNT NUMBER	60113743
NIC	HBUKGB4194P
IBAN	GB63HBUK40115880121908

In theory, HSBC will allocate any payments made to the old account to the new one but members paying for their subscriptions or items from the Publications List by bank transfer should use the new account details from now on.

A PERFORMANCE OF *THE LIGHTHOUSE*

The details for the performance of *The Lighthouse*, organised by Jak Stringer, have now been finalised. It will take place on Saturday 14 October 2017 at the Acorn theatre, Parade Street, Penzance, Cornwall, TR18 4BU.

The evening will commence with a lively performance lecture by **Jak**, who will transport us back to 1855, followed by a reading of '*The Lighthouse*' by the *Speakeasy Players*. This event will be the first full reading of *The Lighthouse* for 146 years and the performance aspires to recreate its opening night in the nursery of Charles Dickens's home, where you will be immersed in a very Dickensian evening.

Tickets are currently on sale at £6 and for further details and advance booking see the Acorn website at theacornpenzance.com/events/the-lighthouse-by-mr-wilkie-collins/.

This will not quite be the first modern performance of *The Lighthouse* as Caroline Radcliffe of the University of Birmingham directed most of Act 1 including her reconstruction of ‘the Song of the Wreck’ as ‘Wilkie Collins and Charles Dickens, *The Lighthouse*: A dramatic situation never before exploited’ in the *Book to the Future* Festival, University of Birmingham, Barber Institute of Fine Arts on 27 October 2013. This particular event brought to life the first published edition of *The Lighthouse* - with newly discovered music, illustrations, and scenes from the play including Dickens’s prologue and his ‘Song of the Wreck’, acted and sung by students from the University of Birmingham’s Department of Drama and Theatre Arts and the Department of Music.

DUNKIRK AND THE WILKIE CONNECTION

We are always impressed at how observant some of our WCS members are. Jackie Irwin writes:

I went to see the Dunkirk movie today and spotted what I think may be a Wilkie Collins connection. The owner of the small boat going to rescue people in Dunkirk is called ‘Moonstone’. Its owner /captain is called Mr Dawson and the pilot he rescues is called Collins. There may be other references that I may have missed but perhaps the Director or the screen writer is a Collins fan?

If any other member has noticed Wilkie references in the film please let us know!

WILKIE IN THE SHETLANDS

Wilkie seems to get in everywhere. On a recent trip to the Shetland Isles, Sumburgh Head was on the itinerary. This is the most southerly point on the main Island and next to the old lighthouse building is a display sign for tourists about the multitude of sea-birds; and there, running along the base is a quote from the 1848 *Memoirs of the Life of William Collins, R.A.*

“The immense precipice of Sumburgh Head, hanging over as if it would fall into the sea, with the waves writhing about its jagged base, and hundreds on hundreds of sea-birds whirling above its mighty summit.” This is taken from Chapter II, 1842-1844, and recalls the time when Wilkie visited the Northern Isles with his father in early 1842. William Collins had embarked on the trip with a commission to illustrate Sir Walter Scott’s *The Pirate* (1822), first published with his

engravings in 1844 by Robert Cadell of Edinburgh. The full quote from *The Memoirs* is:

The immense precipice of Sumburgh Head, hanging over as if it would fall into the sea, with the waves writhing about its jagged base, and hundreds on hundreds of sea-birds whirling above its mighty summit, was, he declared, one of the sublimest natural objects he had ever beheld. He made a careful sketch of it from the beach; from which he produced a striking and original illustration of the scene in "The Pirate," where Cleveland is saved from the wreck of his vessel, by Mordaunt Mertoun.

The Memoirs also narrate the difficult circumstances under which the illustrations were made.

Most of the painter's studies in his northern sojourn were produced under unpropitious skies; and he and his party would frequently have formed no bad subject for a picture in themselves, when they halted on a bleak hill-side: Mr. Collins, with one knee on the ground, steadying himself against the wind; his companion [Wilkie Collins] holding a tattered umbrella over him, to keep the rain off his sketch-book; the guide standing by, staring at his occupation in astonishment; and the ponies browsing near their riders, on the faded grass, with mane and tail ever and anon floating out like streamers on the gusty breezes that swept past them. Obstacles of weather, however, wrought no bad influence on my father's studies; he preserved his patience and composure through them all, and finished his sketches determinately, in spite of Shetland showers and northern gales.

A detailed plot summary of *The Pirate* can now be found <http://www.walterscott.lib.ed.ac.uk/works/novels/pirate.html>.

THE FROZEN DEEP AT THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

The Dickens Fellowship in London has arranged an additional meeting to its previously advertised programme. On Tuesday 14 November, Dr Joanna Robinson, Lecturer in Victorian Literature at University College, Cork, will speak on 'Staging Dickensian Drama: *The Frozen Deep*'. The talk will be based on Joanna's experience of producing and directing 'Is She His Wife?' in 2015 and *The Frozen Deep* in 2016.

The Fellowship meeting will take place at Lumen URC, 88 Tavistock Place, WC1H 9RS.

The website at www.dickensfellowship.org/central-fellowship gives a reminder that the annual Dickens Day at the University of London will take place on Saturday 14 October. The theme this year will be 'Dickens and Fantasy'. Further details will follow on the Fellowship website.

WILKIE COLLINS'S JEWISH CONNECTIONS

Andrew Gasson and Professor William Baker have recently published an essay entitled 'Forgotten Terrain: Wilkie Collins's Jewish Explorations' in *Jewish Historical Studies*, Volume 48, December 2016, pp. 177-199. The essay explores Wilkie's numerous connections with the nineteenth century Anglo-Jewish community and discusses the appearance of Jewish characters in his works. It covers most of his life from about 1836 and records friendships with, for example, his close friends Frederic and Nina Lehmann, dedicatees of *Man and Wife*; Solomon Hart, R.A., the portrait painter; Sir David Salomons, MP and first Jewish Lord Mayor of London; and Sir Francis Goldsmid, philanthropist and first Jewish QC and his wife Lady Louisa to whom Collins presented a copy of *Armada*. In his later days, he was in close touch with industrialist Sebastian Schlesinger who became the final executor after Collins's death in 1889.

Jewish historical Studies is an open access journal distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC-BY) 4.0 which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. The full article may be downloaded from www.ingentaconnect.com/contentone/uclpress/jhsj/2016/00000048/00000001/art00012.

***THE WOMAN IN WHITE* – A REVISED MUSICAL VERSION**

Andrew Lloyd Webber's 2004 musical version of *The Woman in White*, which starred Maria Friedman and Michael Crawford, is due to be revived at the Charing Cross Theatre for twelve weeks from Monday 20 November to Saturday 10 February 2018. It will be directed by Thom Southerland with lead possibly taken by Laura Pitt-Pulford. Andrew Lloyd Webber and lyricist David Zippel have apparently revisited their original work to refresh the storytelling for a new generation of theatregoers.

Southerland, Artistic Director of Charing Cross Theatre, is quoted as saying "I am so excited about this new production. *The Woman in White* is a wildly exciting romantic thriller which is frequently tender and personal. The music is grand, sweeping and instantly captivating. Having long been an admirer of *The Woman in White*, I know that Charing Cross Theatre is the ideal intimate space for audiences to experience it for the first time or rediscover this lush Victorian Gothic thriller."

The Woman in White will be produced by Patrick Gracey, Steven M Levy and Vaughan Williams, by arrangement with the Really Useful Group.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE ON TV

Filming for the new BBC production of *The Woman in White* around Belfast was completed in the first half of the year. But there is still no transmission date announced. Charles Dance plays Mr Fairlie with Ben Hardy as Walter Hartright and Olivia Vinall as Laura Fairlie. Jessie Buckley is Marian Halcombe, with Dougray Scott as Sir Percival Glyde. The five 60-minute episodes have been written by Fiona Seres who says it “is a powerful, poignant story and I have absolutely loved adapting this epic for the screen. I’m thrilled it’s attracted such an exciting, high-calibre cast who I know will bring it to life in a unique and intimate way.”

The BBC blurb promises “*The Woman in White* will take viewers on a chilling ride down the shadowy paths and corridors of English country houses and ultimately into the depths of the Victorian madhouse.”

It is the fourth BBC TV adaptation of the story. Others were broadcast in 1966, 1982, and 1997.

NEWSPAPER ARCHIVES

The British Newspaper Archive is the growing online record of the British Library’s astonishing collection of newspapers published in England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland.

Out of around 21 million pages – the number grows daily – a search for Wilkie Collins produces more than 30,000 hits. Several hundred of those are new to the archive in the last month as the ten-year project with the genealogy firm Find My Past reaches its half way point in digitising the 40 million pages of newspapers in the British Library’s vast collection. The search produces images and transcripts – though it has to be said some of those are very poor and as a consequence searches may miss items if they were wrongly transcribed. The archive costs £72 a year for unlimited access. www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk.

Newspapers.com is a digital archive of American newspapers. Wilkie Collins produces more than 25,000 hits in its 300 million digitised pages. It is part of the online genealogical firm ancestry.com and users get a reduced subscription. Prices vary and there are many special offers but reckon on around \$100 a year.

Newspaperarchive.com is also American and claims more than 42,000 hits for a simple Wilkie Collins search. Much of the material will overlap with

newspapers.com. It also costs around \$100 a year but beware auto-renewals that might come in at a higher price. Look for special offers.

Spectator sport

The *Spectator* archive is also worth a look. It gives full access to all issues from 1828 to 2008, with excellent transcripts and images of the original. A search on Wilkie Collins will find dozens of articles from his own time right up to the present century. Contemporary pieces range from this appreciation on 10 January 1857:

The "Tavistock House Theatricals," which commenced on Tuesday at the residence of Mr. Charles Dickens, have been the talk of the week in literary, artistic, and professional circles. Mr. Wilkie Collins, who on a former occasion supplied the same body of amateurs with a drama entitled *The Lighthouse*, is likewise the author of the present season. *The Frozen Deep*, as the new piece is called, is of larger dimensions than its predecessor...

to this obituary on 28 September 1889:

WILKIE COLLINS. THE position of Mr. Wilkie Collins in literature was a very unusual one. He was an extremely popular writer—deservedly popular, as we think—who was not very highly esteemed. Of all the Englishmen who read novels, few have failed to read some of his best stories; fewer, having begun them, ever laid them down unfinished....

Those pieces and more than a dozen others about Wilkie can be read in full, free at www.archive.spectator.co.uk which is a model of archive access.

SALE OF WILKIE'S FURNITURE

On 24 October 1889, just a month after his death, Wilkie's furniture and household goods were auctioned at his home 82 Wimpole Street. We published an account of the sale in our Winter 2010 newsletter which you can find online, along with all the previous Newsletters back to 1994, at our website wilkiecollinssociety.org. The pamphlet enclosed with this mailing, *A Visit to Wilkie Collins*, includes a contemporary illustration of the sale which has never been republished before.

But more details of the items and the prices paid have emerged from the archive of the London evening newspaper *Pall Mall Gazette*. In the days before and after the sale it published the following paragraphs in its 'Today's Tittle Tattle' section. They have not been republished before.

Pall Mall Gazette 22 October 1889, p. 6.

All sorts of rickety articles, from boots that clothe the feet to hats that cover the head, have been brought together by the assiduous collector. Hitherto a collection of the ink-pots of famous novelists have escaped the vigilant hunter after articles of *vertu*. An opportunity occurs on Thursday to form a nucleus for such a collection. The furniture and effects of Mr. Wilkie Collins are to be sold under the hammer at 82, Wimpole-street on that day. There are some odd fragments. To wit his triple alliance of ink pots, stationery case, and writing table, all of which have done duty for his most ingenious romances.

Besides these items there are others which might serve to give stimulus to a yet unwritten tale—such as Wilkie Collins's arm-chair, of oak, quaintly carved, with its seat of crimson plush; or the very fine cabinets that held his household goods. There are also the desk over which his hand played as he jotted down 'his ideas to startle the world', and the mirrors in which he sometimes conjured up a new world, and the handsome buhl clock that marked time in the dining-room, or the striking marble timepiece that bade welcome to the coming guest and chimed a requiem to the departing caller.

The Pall Mall Gazette 23 October 1889, p. 6

I mentioned a few interesting items which will be offered to the public at Mr. Wilkie Collins's sale. In addition to those, I noticed yesterday a pair of bronze figures of boys and some sets of Indian vases. The other 180 lots put down for sale are the ordinary everyday household effects and furniture, without a shred of romance in them. It is said that an American has made up his mind to secure the best pieces for his fatherland. Perhaps Barnum may desire the most curious for his Dime Museum.

The Pall Mall Gazette 25 October 1889, p. 6

Most of the really interesting things had been removed from Mr. Wilkie Collins's house before the sale began yesterday. There were no books, no pictures, and only a scratch lot of odds and ends. It is understood that the pictures of the dead novelist, some of which were valuable and curious, will be sold at Christie's later on.

I was much amused to hear the badinage of the brokers, whose profession is an arduous one. One always admires a little genuine enthusiasm in this "vale of tears," and some of these husky gentlemen really get excited when a good "lot" is up, although they have been living on "lots" all their lives. Only the auctioneer remains unemotional, like the croupier who rakes in the Napoleons at Monte Carlo. "No wonder he wrote gloomy books if he wrote on a table like that," remarked one of them, with literary leanings; "they say he saw ghostesses, too. I don't wonder, do you marm," to a lady. "Why, look at them porteries. You can just pictur 'em swingin' about of a dark night, with the draught from the winder. You'd like to buy 'em; what'll they fetch? Five bob. Why, they ain't only fit to lay down on macadamized roads."

Mr. Collins was evidently fond of red as a colour. His dining-room walls were covered with a deep red paper, which gave the sombre chamber a warm and cheerful look even yesterday.

The Pall Mall Gazette 26 October 1889, p. 6.

A correspondent sends me some further details of the sale at Wimpole-street which may be useful to the biographer of the dead novelist. A japanned champagne cooler that had seen service, two fire- guards, hanging glass, and a drum clock brought 3s., the novelist's bedstead fetched 10s.; the mattress 28s., and its companion another 28s.; the bolster, pillow, and coverlet, 14s. His bedside table fetched £2-4s. A hungry amateur, after a little discussion, secured the two bedroom chairs that had seen the late novelist to bed many a night, and up in the morning many a day, with his bed rest, which he had used times out of number whilst jotting down his midnight or early morning thoughts for 9s. Certainly this was one of the most interesting lots in the sale.

The plaster bust of W. Collins, R.A., fetched 10s. The drawing-room chairs, six in number, 30s.; his couch £2-6s., easy chair £3-15s.

Two mantel-boards were sold for 20s. In the dining-room the walnut-frame armchair bought 4-4s. The mahogany-frame indulging chair £3-15s.; the dining table, £6; the beautiful oak sideboard, £23-2s.; the antique carved armchair that Collins used brought £6 12s.; the Buhl clock £5-10s.; and the plaster busts that stood over the library shelves brought 7s. the pair.

[**Note:** There were twenty shillings to the pound so a shilling was worth 5p. Multiply by 100 to get an idea of the current price equivalent. The 'indulging chair' thus fetched about £375 in today's terms].

A WILKIE COLLINS THESIS ON *THE WOMAN IN WHITE*

As mentioned in the last Newsletter, WCS member Dr Kirsten Hüttner very kindly donated for WCS members copies of the published book of her PhD thesis, *Wilkie Collins's "The Woman in White": Analysis, Reception and Literary Criticism of a Victorian Bestseller*.

We still have one copy left so any member who would like it should contact Andrew Gasson at apogee@apgee.co.uk. The thesis runs to some 300 pages so although there will be no charge for the book, the cost to cover second class p. & p. will be £3.

WCS PUBLICATIONS

All of the Wilkie Collins Society's publications are listed on the website at wilkiecollinssociety.org/publications/ from where they can be ordered. The previous 25% off sale continues with all receipts going to help the Society continue its work.

Paul Lewis paul@paullewis.co.uk
Andrew Gasson apogee@apgee.co.uk

www.wilkiecollins.com
www.wilkie-collins.info



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NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2017-2018

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR 2018

Members who have not already renewed for 2018 are reminded that the annual subscription is unchanged at £16 for UK and Europe and £28 for other overseas members. Payment may be made by cheque, Paypal or BACS bank transfer to the Society's new account details:

SORT CODE	401158
ACCOUNT NUMBER	60113743
NIC	HBUKGB4194P
IBAN	GB63HBUK40115860113743

THE RED VIAL

Wilkie Collins's play, *The Red Vial: a Drama in Three Acts*, was written and professionally staged at the Royal Olympic Theatre in 1858. It was never published. The plot was later expanded and adapted by Collins as the basis for the novel, *Jezebel's Daughter* (1880). *The Red Vial* followed Collins's earlier dramas, *The lighthouse* in 1855 and *The Frozen Deep* in 1857 but this time without the apparent involvement of Dickens. The cast was led by Frederick Robson as Hans Grimm and the renowned actress, Fanny Stirling, as Madame Bergmann. Despite its strong cast and carefully staged production, *The Red Vial* was not well received by the Olympic's first night audience and suffered at the hands of the critics. Although the play ran for a month, it was described as 'the most brilliant failure of the day.'

The Red Vial has now been published in paperback by Francis Boutle in the same format as *The lighthouse*. It consists of an introduction by Caroline Radcliffe and Andrew Gasson, the text of the play as presented at the Olympic Theatre, illustrations,

contemporary reviews, a foreword by Stephen Isserlis, a cast list and synopses of both the play and *Jezebel's Daughter*.

Members who have paid for 2017 will receive a copy of the limited hardback edition, produced for the WCS, with this Newsletter. Additional copies are available at £12.50; the paperback version is available direct from Francis Boutle Publishers at £9.99 (272 Alexandra Park Road, London N22 7BG, info@francisboutle.co.uk).

THE LIGHTHOUSE IN CORNWALL

The performance of *The Lighthouse*, organised by Jak Stringer, duly took place on 14 October 2017 at the Acorn theatre, Penzance. Most of the audience were Comish locals, supplemented by a handful of WCS members who had made the journey to the far west.

The evening began with an introductory performance by Jak in her own inimitable style. The Speakeasy Players then gave a thoroughly professional play reading of *The Lighthouse*, using the text published by the WCS in 2013. This was the first full reading of the play for nearly 150 years, complete with projected images, Dickensian style sound and special effects and a virtuoso rendering of Dickens's 'Song of the Wreck'.

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MOONSTONE

4 January 2018 marked the 150th anniversary of the first appearance of *The Moonstone*. It was first serialised from 4 January – 8 August 1868 in both *All the Year Round* and *Harper's Weekly* in the United States. The novel was published in book form in an edition of 1500 copies six months later in July 1868.

The complete manuscript of *The Moonstone* was sold as Lot 22 of the sale by Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge on 18 June 1890. It consists of 413 numbered quarto leaves and is now held at the Morgan Library (MA 78). The British Library holds a transcript consisting of 193 leaves in an unidentified hand but revised by Collins (Add. MS 53191).

The Moonstone was described by T. S. Eliot as 'the first and greatest of English detective novels' (although priority is now usually given to *The Notting Hill Mystery*). *The Moonstone* has several archetypal features of modern detective fiction and created many of the ground rules for the genre. The plot is Collins at his intricate best and a contemporary critic stated that "not a window is opened, a door shut, or a nose blown, but, depend upon it, the act will have something to do with the end of the book."

In addition to its success as a detective story, *The Moonstone* is notable for its enlightened social attitudes as well as Collins's respectful handling of the Indians and their religious motivation in their quest for the Moonstone. Collins is also ahead of his time in his sympathetic characterisation of the reformed thief and servant Rosanna Spearman where his description has resonance with today's financial machinations in the City of London.

“Rosanna Spearman had been a thief, and not being the sort that get up Companies in the City, and rob from thousands, instead of only robbing from one, the law laid hold of her.”

WILKIE IN THE ‘GOLDEN AGE’

Over the years, Wilkie has consistently been a reference point for detective fiction. The now mainly forgotten writer of some excellent mystery stories, Joseph Smith Fletcher, observes about one of his characters in *The Middle of Things* (1922)

“Brought up in her youth on Miss Braddon, Wilkie Collins and Mrs Henry Wood, Miss Penkridge had become a confirmed slave to the sensational What she loved was a story which began with a crime and ended with detection, a story which kept you wondering who did it, how it was done, and when the doing was going to be laid bare to the light of day.”

Fletcher must have paid more attention to reading Collins than Agatha Christie who in *The Third Girl* (1966) had Hercule Poirot complain of “the lack of method or order in the romantic outpourings of Wilkie Collins.” – That must have been another Wilkie Collins.

Of the so called ‘Golden Age of detective fiction’, Wilkie's most consistent devotee was Dorothy L. Sayers who began a biography of Collins which she was never able to finish.

Sayers greatly admired Collins who strongly influenced her works. She followed his example in taking great pains to ensure the accuracy of her plots. *The Documents in the Case* (1930) is written in the epistolary style of *The Moonstone*. Lady Mary in *Clouds of Witness* (1926) behaves like Rachel Verinder, trying to protect Gerald, Duke of Denver, whom she incorrectly assumes is guilty of the crime, and in ‘Other People's Detectives’ (1939) she cites Cuff when writing that for a detective to be truly great he must have presence.

Sayers managed to compete only five chapters of her biography but these were eventually published as *Wilkie Collins: A Critical and Biographical Study*, edited by E. R. Gregory, Toledo, Ohio, 1977. This fairly often turns up on ebay.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE - THE MUSICAL

The musical version of *The Woman in White* has been running at the Charing Cross Theatre for a 12 week season until 10 February. This version, directed by Thom Southerland, is revised by Andrew Lloyd Webber and David Zippel from the original production in 2004 at the Cambridge Theatre. Despite being staged in a much smaller theatre, the much simpler set with sliding panels has the plot flowing rather more easily between the numerous scenes. Gone are the over-elaborate revolving stage and video technology, together with Fosco's white mice and the 'fat suit' of the original production.

Marian Halcombe is played by a much too attractive Carolyn Maitland ("The lady is ugly" in the novel); Laura Fairlie by Anna O'Byrne; Walter Hartright by Ashley Stilburn and a suitably evil Glyde by Chris Peloso. The 'immensely fat' Fosco of the novel is portrayed by a relatively thin but very Italian looking Greg Castiglione.

The musical has had mixed reviews. The *Times* of 15 December 2017 suggested "The Gothic chills and spills ... are slow in coming. The Narrative is clogged and the staging looks cramped." The *Stage* of the same date regarded it as "hard to take seriously" and "a brave salvage attempt," concluding that "As enjoyable as Southerland's production is though, it feels like this cast and creative team are wasted on this mediocre material." The *Guardian* preferred to say "A masterly set of actors leave their mark on a gothic revival" transforming the novel into "something far more tasteful and far less disturbing ...nicely dull, perfectly pleasant and completely inoffensive."

London Theatre is a good deal more positive, telling us that *The Woman in White* is "brilliantly restored" and "beautifully designed by Morgan Large, supported by a superb team that also includes sterling work from costume designer Jonathan Lipman and lighting designer Rick Fisher."

What would Wilkie have made of it? He would probably have approved of the logical condensing of the plot - as he did with his own stage adaptations of the novels - but he might have winced at some of the dialogue!

EMIL FORGUE IN *THE DICKENSIAN*

The latest issue of *The Dickensian* (No. 502, Vol. 113, Part 2) has several references to Collins in 'A Final Indiscretion: Emil Forgues and his Authorised 1856 Biographical

Sketch of Dickens' by Robert C. Hanna, Professor of English at Bethany Lutheran College, Minnesota.

Forgues was a French critic and translator. He was the dedicatee of *The Queen of Hearts* (1859) in recognition of his positive essay on Collins in *la Revue des Deux Mondes* of November 1855. Forgues also translated *The Lighthouse*, *The Dead Secret*, *The Woman in White* and *No Name*.

A COURT DUEL

Robert C. Hanna has also published in *Dickens Studies Annual* (Vol. 47, 2016) '*A Court Duel* as Performed by Wilkie Collins, with an analysis of the Manuscript, Playbill, and Advertisement'. Quoting from Hanna's abstract, the article

"examines the performance's advertisement and playbill, including the venue and charity; identifies the amateur and professional performers; summarizes the play's intricate plot; lists major differences between the original play and its English translation; analyses the manuscripts (Act III of which is in Collins's handwriting); considers why Collins might have selected this play for a charitable performance; and reviews themes and plot events in the play subsequently explored by Collins in his own literature from 1850 through 1860. The article then presents the full text of *A Court Duel*."

A Court Duel was Collins's first dramatic adaptation, in which he made his first appearance on a public stage on 26 February 1850, at the Soho Theatre at 73 Dean Street. It was advertised in *The Times* of 22 and 26 February and afforded a wider public audience than that of Collins's earlier amateur theatricals.

Collins translated from the French a melodrama set in the French court of 1726. The original was by 'Monsieur Lockroy' (J. P. Simon) and Edmond Badon. Charles Collins played the lead and Wilkie the part of Soubise, a comic courtier. The cast also included Henry Brandling and the professional actress, Jane Mordaunt. The play was staged in aid of the Female Emigration Fund which assisted impoverished women to settle in the colonies. This theme later appears in *No Name* (1862) where Magdalen's maid, Louisa, emigrates to Australia.

A Court Duel was never published and this article in addition to its superbly detailed and scholarly analysis presents a welcome addition to Collins's 'lost' works which are now available in print.

AN AUSTRALIAN AUCTION

There were three interesting Collins items in the December sale by Michael Treloar of Adelaide. The star item was Lot 5, the dedication copy of *The Legacy of Cain* to Mrs Henry Powell Bartley, who ‘has skilfully and patiently helped me, by copying my manuscripts for the printer’. At the head of the printed dedication page, the author has written boldly in ink ‘From | Wilkie Collins 16th December 1888’. Mrs Henry Powell Bartley (Elizabeth Harriet Laura Graves, 1851-1905) was the only child of Caroline Graves and Wilkie’s goddaughter. She married Bartley, his solicitor, who ultimately embezzled money from Wilkie’s estate. The lot sold for A\$18,000 (about £10,000 plus auction costs of some 20%).

Lot 6 was a small French colour pictorial greetings card with a short note signed by Robert du Pontavice de Heussey, Collins’s French collaborator and translator, writing in ink on the verso: ‘A mon maître et ami Wilkie Collins avec les vœux sincères du plus humble et du plus dévoué de ses disciples ... Rennes 29 décembre 1884’. Lot 4 consisted of a copy of *The Charles Dickens Birthday Book*’ signed on Collins’s birthdate, 8 January (“Wilkie Collins 1888”)

The provenance of the three items was from Mrs Henry Powell Bartley, by descent to her great-grandson. All of the further details of the interesting sale are at www.treloars.com/catalogue/archive.

A DUTCH BIBLIOGRAPHY

Long-standing WCS member, Pierre Tissot van Patot has just published *Wilkie Collins: Bibliographic overview of the Dutch language translations* (ISBN 978-90-8273 75-0-9). This elegantly produced publication is the result of many years of worldwide research. It covers editions of the novels and short stories with detailed information on their periodical publication. It is heavily illustrated with numerous colour illustrations on almost every page. Pierre has provided a comprehensive introduction which includes biographical material as well as excellent detail of numerous aspects of publishing history in the Netherlands. There is everything from Collins’s relationship with the Dutch publishers Gebroeders Belinfante to a report of the meeting of Collins and Dickens with Queen Sophie of the Netherlands.

For further information, Pierre can be contacted on tissotvanpatot@gmail.com.

SWEDISH BIBLIOGRAPHIES

Continuing the bibliographical theme, WCS members will remember from mentions in earlier Newsletters that Lars-Erik Nygren has produced a comprehensive

bibliography of Swedish editions of Wilkie Collins's novels and short stories. He has now issued five supplements which have recently been incorporated into a single document.

Lars-Erik has just published a new edition of an earlier bibliography of Edgar Allan Poe. This consists of 146 pages, illustrated in colour with many new items and an index. There is a revised layout which makes it easier to follow how Poe's stories were introduced into Sweden. Copies can be obtained direct from Lars-Erik at lars-erik.nygren@comhem.se or from Per Olaisen Forlag <http://www.olaisen.se/>. The price is 250 SEK plus postage.

In addition to the above, Lars-Erik has also produced several other bibliographies including those for Anna Katherine Green, H. Rider Haggard and Jules Verne. Some details of his other works can be found at the University Library in Lund, www.alvin-portal. Obviously an indefatigable bibliographer, he writes that he will "continue to search for interesting literature as long as it is fun."

ANDREW LYCETT AND THE LONDON LIBRARY

Andrew Lycett, author of the recent *Wilkie Collins: A Life of Sensation*, recently figured in issue 37, Autumn 2017, of *The London library Magazine*. It is very evident from the biography that it involved a large amount of detailed research. In this piece, 'Behind the Book', Lycett describes the resources he used in the London Library's collections. These included amongst others *Inconvenient People* by Sarah Wise (2012) which explored Collins's use of asylums and mental illness; *Mudie's Circulating Library* by Genevieve Griest (1971) which details publishing history in the nineteenth century; and *Memories of Half a Century* compiled by R. C. Lehmann (1908) which gives many personal anecdotes of Collins's great friends Frederick and Nina Lehmann.

NINA LEHMANN'S PORTRAIT BY JOHN EVERETT MILLAIS

The John Everett Millais portrait of the Lehmann's seven year old daughter, also Nina, featured as Lot 12 in the Sotheby's New York sale of European Art on 21 November 2017. The estimate was \$400,000-600,000 and the picture remained unsold. The lengthy catalogue description begins:

Outside of one trip to the salesroom over thirty-three years ago, John Everett Millais' opulent portrait of the young daughter of Augustus Frederick Lehmann (1826-1891) and the former Jane Gibson Chambers (1830-1902), herself known as Nina, has not been seen in public since the memorial exhibition for the artist at the Royal Academy of Arts in London in 1898. This work represents one of Millais' earliest masterpieces of *chi Id* portraiture, a genre in which he would excel and become known for throughout

the world by the time of his death. First exhibited at the Royal Academy summer show in 1869, in that institution's initial display at its new home, Burlington House, Piccadilly, Millais was cognizant of trying to make a good showing, and the present work was hung in the privileged Gallery III.

The full catalogue description with a large image of the portrait together with its detailed provenance and exhibition history can be found at www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2017/european-art-n09940/lot.12.html

‘THE GHOST’S TOUCH’

The Rumpus Theatre Company has revived for its Autumn 2017/Spring 2018 tour their earlier adaptation of Collins's 'The Ghost's Touch'. The supernatural short story was written especially for the young Anne (Nannie) Wynne. Originally published in *The Irish Fireside*, 30 September-14 October 1885 and in *Harper's Weekly* for 23 October 1885, it was reprinted as 'Mrs Zant and the Ghost' in Collins's collection of short stories, *Little Novels* in 1887.

Full details of the production and the remaining dates and venues can be found at www.rumpustheatrecompany.co.uk/future.htm.

BBC PRODUCTION OF THE WOMAN IN WHITE

There is still no firm transmission date for the new BBC One production of *The Woman in White*. 'Sometime in the Spring' is the only guidance we could get. Several articles have appeared in newspapers about the cast which includes *Eastenders* actor Ben Hardy who plays Walter Hartright and Cathy Belton, interestingly listed as 'Mrs Hartwright'. Charles Dance also appears and the series has a skeleton entry at imdb.com.

RICHARD DALBY

The editors are sad to report the death of WCS member Richard Dalby. Richard devoted his life to supernatural fiction. He made many collections of ghost and supernatural stories including *Crime for Christmas* (1991) in which he included Wilkie's early story 'Mr Wray's Cash-box'. In 1993 he founded with David Tibet the Ghost Story Press which altogether published 14 volumes. He was for a time described as an 'unofficial' deputy editor of the *Book and Magazine Collector*. He was a member of the Wilkie Collins Society from 2005. Richard Dalby died 4 May 2017 aged 68.

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NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2018

THE BBC'S WOMAN IN WHITE

The BBC publicity machine really went into overdrive in the lead up to its new five-part adaptation of *The Woman in White*. I stopped counting at 20 articles in the press about the serial or, more often, one of its cast members. *Radio Times* was a little unfair when it said “The BBC’s latest version, written by Fiona Seres and directed by Carl Tibbetts, takes the existing plot and re-works the storytelling structure.” It referred to un-signposted and, I suspect, to many viewers confusing flash-forwards. That was simply the dramatic technique used to convert to a narrative serial the nature of the original which was relayed in a series of testimonies.

Yes, there was some very un-Victorian language such as ‘subconscious’ and ‘totally’. But Wilkie himself reworked his novels for the stage and his own dramatic version of the story was very curtailed – as it must be to fit the huge complexities of the three-volume novel into two or three hours in the theatre – or even five hours on screen.

Critics complained about anachronisms in the costumes. I was shocked in episode one when Laura seemed to suggest skinny-dipping to her new art master even though accompanied by her cousin and a chaperone. And of course, having pieced together carefully the famous walk where Walter Hartright encounters

Anne Catherick on the high road from Finchley, I despaired a little at the muddy path through the woods where it was depicted in the adaptation. But, as with the book, the dramatization grew on me from that moment onwards.

The acting was generally excellent. Charles Dance made you laugh at first but then turned on the cruel indifference of the dreadful print and coin collector Frederick Fairlie. "I hope your collection is devoured by flames" spits Marian at his agreement to the marriage of Laura to Glyde, in a wonderful line that is not in the book. Jessie Buckley was not of course ugly, as Wilkie described Marian, and there was barely a hint of the "dark down on her upper lip" which "was almost a moustache". But bright, frank, and intelligent she was, as well as brave and determined. Lara Croft one reviewer called her.

Dougray Scott's oily Glyde made my skin crawl until he was eclipsed by Riccardo Scamarcio as Fosco. Not fat and without mice but overwhelmingly sinister. And he does once utter the word 'mice' just to let us know that the writer knows that we know. The main characters - Olivia Vinall as both Laura Fairlie and Anne Catherick and the seemingly 12-year-old Ben Hardy as wet Walter Hartright - were serviceable. Many small parts - Gilmore especially and Mrs Michelson - were just right.

Early publicity stressed the #MeToo aspects of the oppression of women -which Wilkie clearly set out himself in the novel. Laura's wonderful line on the forced marriage "I may be your true and faithful wife, Sir Percival-your loving wife, if I know my own heart, never!" survived almost intact into the script, as did this stirring speech from Marian:

No man under heaven deserves these sacrifices from us women. Men! They are the enemies of our innocence and our peace-they drag us away from our parents' love and our sisters' friendship-they take us body and soul to themselves, and fasten our helpless lives to theirs as they chain up a dog to his kennel. And what does the best of them give us in return?

Both Gilmore and Mr Fairlie also spoke many original lines from the book, as did Glyde at times, and the creepily loyal Countess Fosco - well played by Sonya Cassidy.

Perhaps in a subtle nod to the problem Wilkie had with dates in his complex plot the wedding on 22 December in the book is moved to 22 September. The scene

where Laura refuses to sign the document giving Glyde her fortune is brilliantly done conveying both the power of men and the determination women must show to resist them. Laura's incarceration and then rescue from the asylum - which was rather flat in the book - was turned into a frightening and then gripping piece of drama. The death of Glyde ended in as dramatic a fiery death as you could wish to see. Old Welmingham Church was itself brilliantly cast, though the daft notion that both copies of the parish register were in the church is of course not Wilkie's.

The adaptation created a new character, Ebenezer Nash, described as a scrivener though in fact a lawyer too, who is revealed as the mystery man in the flash forwards taking evidence from a variety of people and at the end, in real time, collects the final pieces of the puzzle for Walter and Marian to establish Laura's identity. The serial ends oddly with Marian travelling in countries where - in a hint of Wilkie's own description of her - she can hide her face.

Overall this was to me by far the best screen adaptation of Wilkie's most popular and in many ways best novel. The wonderful backdrops of Limmeridge House and Blackwater Park and the scenes in London and other towns captured the feel of the late 1840s. And throughout it all the horror and sheer injustice of Laura's treatment by Glyde poured out in tear-making moments.

The man who instructed that his gravestone should bear the words "The author of *The Woman in White* and other works of fiction" would, I like to think, have been amazed and pleased in turn. (The Paul Lewis verdict. Andrew Gasson was less enthusiastic and would still prefer the 1982 version with Jenny Seagrove, Alan Badel and Ian Richardson).

The DVD and Blu-ray are available from 14 May.

***THE WOMAN IN WHITE* – A NEW EDITION**

No doubt timed to coincide with the television series, Macmillan have recently published a new edition of *The Woman in White* in their *Collectors Library*, described as "books to love and treasure." This edition features an afterword by writer, editor and playwright David Stuart Davies. (£9.99 paperback, ISBN 9781509869367). Macmillan also feature *The Moonstone* ("one of the great

Victorian novels”) in the same series with an introduction by writer and historian, Judith Flanders.

THE RED VIAL

The new publication of Wilkie’s 1857 play, *The Red Vial*, was originally launched with dramatic readings from the text in Birmingham at the end of last year. The publishers, Francis Boutle, arranged for a second launch in London on 15 March at the Bookmarks bookshop. This once again featured dramatic readings, by Di Sherlock, Simon Vaughan and editor, Caroline Radcliffe.

All members should have received their copies of the WCS limited edition of *The Red Vial*. Additional copies of the hardback version are available from the Society at £12.50; paperback copies can be had direct from the publishers at www.francisboutle.co.uk/ for £9.99.

THE CAMERA NEVER LIES – BUT ARTISTS DO!

It’s interesting to try to recreate a modern photographic image of a nineteenth century scene. Obviously, we expect modern intrusions after 150 years but a recent attempt to recreate the lithographic illustrations from *Rambles Beyond Railways* revealed quite how much artistic licence was introduced by the illustrator, Henry Brandling. Perhaps the best example is St Michael’s Mount where the main axis of the castle-like edifice at the summit runs from left to right. This appears to be an angle which it is impossible to recreate from the front and equally impossible from the rear where there is firstly no access and secondly a sheer drop to the sea- until you notice that the lithograph is a mirror image of the scene! Whether this was Brandling’s deliberate intention or whether the reversal was a change introduced by the printers or publishers - by design or otherwise - we shall probably never know but it invites questions about the other illustrations.

‘Tintagel’, although not reversed, represents another impossible angle and also shows castle walls which even in Wilkie’s time had probably not existed for generations. ‘Kynance Cove’ shows a steeping rock surrounded by waves at high tide; but to take the picture from that viewpoint the photographer would be under water! ‘Logan Rock’ shows another impossible viewpoint and ‘Lamoma

Cove' includes a huge rock in the foreground which has either been quarried out of existence or was possibly never there.

SERIALS REDISCOVERED

Our Patron, Faith Clarke, noticed an interesting piece in *The Times* for 12 March 2018 about serials. The author, Matthew Moore, has discovered that “Nearly two centuries after Charles Dickens won public attention by publishing stories as monthly serials the format is enjoying an unlikely revival. Young people and commuters are driving the demand just as digital technology develops the means to deliver stories in regular chunks.” The chief executive of Serial Box, Molly Barton, suggests “A growing number of people take pleasure in plots that unfold in manageable instalments.” The company charges £1.15 to download as an audiobook each episode of a story which will typically stretch over 10 to 16 weeks.

Wilkie, of course, knew all about serial publication. From *The Dead Secret* (1857) onwards most of his novels were first published in instalments, frequently in weekly publications such as *Household Words* or *All the Year Round*. He was a master of the cliffhanger ending but also suffered the stress of having to produce regular copy for the printers despite often suffering from ill health.

COLLINS IN ‘THE 100 BOOKS TO GIVE TO A FRIEND’

Book critic and author, Craig Brown, in his regular page in the *Mail on Sunday* on 15 April introduced his ‘100 Books to give to a Friend’. *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* took first position followed by *Middlemarch*, *Great Expectations* and *Alice in Wonderland*. With a pleasant change from *The Woman in White* or *The Moonstone*, Brown placed *No Name* at Number 11:

“Wilkie Collins had a soft spot for liars and frauds. [In the at times unbearably tense *No Name*, his heroine dons a bogus identity in order to seduce her weedy cousin into marrying her and thus gain the fortune that, but for a fault in the law, should rightly be hers. Will she succeed in her duplicity? We all hope so.”

COLLINS AND DICKENS AT AUCTION

The sale by Forum Actions on 22 March 2018 featured some interesting theatrical Collins-Dickens items. The prices mentioned below are without the buyer's premium.

Lot 85 included a series of playbills for the Dickens touring production of Bulwer Lytton's comedy *Not So Bad as We Seem* in 1852. Wilkie acted in this production as he had the previous year on the occasion when he first met Dickens. The item sold for £3,800.

Lot 88 featured a playbill for the performance of *The Lighthouse* on Tuesday 19 June 1855 at Tavistock House of "An Entirely New and Original Domestic Melo-Drama, in Two Acts, by Mr. Wilkie Collins, now first performed." *The Lighthouse* was Collins's first theatrical collaboration with Dickens and members of course have the 2013 WCS edition of the play. The playbill sold with a hammer price of £2,200.

Lot 89 offered the playbill for Collins's second theatrical collaboration with Dickens, *The Frozen Deep*, performed at Tavistock House on 6 January 1857. This sold for £1,800.

Lot 90 featured *The Frozen Deep* playbill for the Command Performance at the Gallery of Illustration on 4 July 1857 in the presence of Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, King Leopold of Belgium, Prince Frederick William of Prussia, Princess Victoria, William Thackeray and Hans Christian Anderson. The Playbill sold for £1,700.

Lot 91 offered another playbill for *The Frozen Deep* at the Gallery of Illustration, this time for the performance on 11 July 1857 "In Remembrance of the late Mr. Douglas Jerrold." With the benefit of Dickens's manuscript corrections, the item sold for £4,000.

Lot 92 included a programme for the first professional production of *The Frozen Deep* at the Olympic Theatre in December 1866 which sold for the more modest price of £450.

THE KING'S ARMS HOTEL, LANCASTER

Another interesting item recently appeared on ebay in the form of a bill for a Major Thornton at the King's Arms, Lancaster. The Hotel's claim to literary fame is the visit of Dickens and Collins during their walking tour to Cumberland in 1857. This was subsequently recorded in 'The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices' in *Household Words* from 3-31 October 1857. They visited Lancaster en route from Carlisle to Doncaster which they reached on 14 September.

The King's Arms produced a small booklet (5" x 3" in paper wrappers) in 1866 with the following introduction:

The reader is perhaps aware that Mr. Charles Dickens and his friend Mr. Wilkie Collins, in the year 1857 visited Lancaster and during their sojourn, stopped at Mr. Sly's King's Arms Hotel. In the October number of *Household Words*, under the title of "The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices," Mr. Dickens presents his readers with a remarkable story of a Bridal Chamber, from whence the following extracts are taken.

The booklet includes a steel engraving showing the entrance hall and main staircase of the establishment and includes a quote from Dickens which noted that "There is a good old Inn at Lancaster, established in a good old house."

IS THERE ANY LAW IN ENGLAND WHICH WILL PROTECT ME FROM MRS BADGERY?

So begins Collins's 'Mrs Badgery', the story of how a bachelor, on moving into his new house, is persecuted by the constant presence of the widow of its former occupant. It was originally published in *Household Words* on 26 September 1857 (shortly before the publication of 'The Lazy Tour') and reprinted in *My Miscellanies* (1863). The ever alert Pierre Tissot van Patot has recently noticed that it was published in the Australian *Spectator* in December 20 15. The piece was introduced by writer and columnist, Philip Hensher:

Wilkie Collins's 'Mrs Badgery', rarely seen since its first publication in Dickens's *Household Words* magazine in September 1857, is an enchanting little chip off the block. Like a lot of British short stories, it is absurd, very funny, and in uproarious bad taste. British writers have often enjoyed stories of making a home, and also the theatrical trappings of grief. (George Bernard Shaw

commented on the national enthusiasm for requiems). Here they collide, with richly enjoyable results. The narrator is clearly stuck with Mrs Badgery for ever. [In time, he might even regard her as a picturesque addition to his home, like an indoor and rather saline water feature.

‘Mrs Badgery’ can be downloaded from <https://www.spectator.com.au/2015/12/mrs-badgery/> It can, of course, also be found on the excellent resource, ‘Dickens Journals Online’ (www.djo.org.uk/).

SOME OBSCURE COLLINS TRANSLATIONS

Pierre has also located some rather obscure translations. The first is a French version, of Collins short story, ‘Qui est le Voleur?’ (The Biter Bit). This was published anonymously in the *Revue Britannique*, Volume 16 for 1858. It can still be found online and downloaded from www.delpher.nl/nl/boeken1/gview?query=theakstone&coll=boeken1&identifier=NfVfAAAAcAAJ

‘The Biter Bit’ was originally published with the title ‘Who is the Thief?’ in the *Atlantic Monthly* for April 1858 and subsequently included in *The Queen of Hearts* (1859). It makes a claim to be an early, if not the first, humorous crime story, featuring a comically inept detective, Mathew Sharpin, as well as other features of the detective genre.

From rather further afield, Java in the Dutch Indies, there was a translation of ‘A Queen’s Revenge’ as ‘De Wraak Eener Koningin’ in *Samarangsch Advertentie-Blad* for 27 January 1860. The story was originally published in *Household Words* for 15 August 1857 and reprinted in *My Miscellanies*. ‘A Queen’s Revenge’ is an historical account of the murder at Fontainebleau in 1657 of the Marquis Monaldeschi at the instigation of the Swedish Queen Christina. The full issue with a transcript in Dutch can be located at www.theeuropeanlibrary.org/tel4/newspapers/issue/3000115908149?record-spatial=NLD&hp=1&page=1&decade=1860-1869&month=1

THE LIGHTHOUSE - MORE FROM THE NETHERLANDS

Pierre Tissot van Patot who recently published the incredibly detailed *Wilkie Collins: Bibliographic overview of the Dutch language translations* has now issued *Wilkie Collins: The Lighthouse: Six versions in one document*.

The six versions in question are transcripts of the four extant manuscripts - held at the British Library, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the two copies at Berg - together with the French translation (*Le Phare*) and the Dutch translation (*De Vuurtoren*). The six texts are presented side by side so that differences between the different versions can easily be determined.

Pierre's edition includes an introduction and numerous illustrations including pages from the original French and Dutch texts and from *L'Ami de la Maison*; extracts from the various manuscripts; and pictures of the Eddystone lighthouse itself.

Altogether a remarkable piece of work and the definitive edition of the various versions of *The Lighthouse*.

WILKIE IN RUSSIA

Wilkie's works have always been extremely popular in Russia. Most of his titles have been published in translation from the nineteenth century to the present day, often in large editions in the hundred thousands. Wilkie Collins Society member and author Susan Hanes recently spent six weeks in Russia and her account of, as she puts it, 'my relationship with Wilkie' will appear in Russian in the 2018 volume of *Bibliofily Rossii Almanakh* (Bibliophiles of Russia: Almanac) on pp. 67-90.

LINCOLN'S INN

Barrister and WCS member Julien Foster has recently moved with his legal practice to Lincoln's Inn Fields. In a short history of the square, which has long been associated with the law, he reminds us that Wilkie Collins, gave one of his fictional solicitors, John Loscombe, an address there. In *No Name* John Loscombe writes to Noel Vanstone's cousin, George Bartram, from 'Lincoln's Inn, London, September 6th 1847'. Julien could not, of course, resist a reference to Wilkie in the short history he wrote for the Chambers website <https://1gc.com/about-us/history>

And, of course, Wilkie attended Lincoln's Inn as a law student for five years from May 1846 although he confessed to engaging in "little or no serious study. Nevertheless, on 21 November 1851 he went through what he described as "the affecting national ceremony" of being called to the bar. He never actually practised as a barrister but used his knowledge of the law in several novels. Remember poor Alan Armadale who "fell headlong into the bottomless abyss of the English Law."

NOT A WILKIE LETTER!

A newly discovered Wilkie Collins letter appearing at auction is always exciting for the editors of *The Public Face of*. But a recent lot ascribed to him by the Berlin auction house Bassenge continued a confusion with another W.W. Collins which has been going on for more than 150 years.

On 20 April 1864 Wilkie wrote to William Whitaker Collins a civil engineer living at Hereford Square, SW, to thank him for forwarding a letter which had been wrongly sent to him. It clearly was not an unusual occurrence

"I begin to despair of our ever persuading certain people that we are two Mr Collinses, and not one."

The German art, book, and photograph auctioneers clearly had the same problem. Despite coming from 2 Hereford Square and being in a very different hand from Wilkie's, it ascribed the letter of 2 February 1866 to a Miss Cooke as from Wilkie Collins "English novelist and close friend of Charles Dickens (1824-1889)" with an estimate of €400. After our intervention the description was changed to "Collins, Whitaker not an English novelist and not a close friend of Charles Dickens" though it still mentions that the letter was written in the same year as "his *Armadale*". It appears to have been sold after the auction for €200 - perhaps to someone who collects letters from Victorian engineers!

EAST ANGLIAN APPRECIATION

The 128th anniversary of Wilkie's death was the peg for a long and generous appreciation of him by Norwich journalist Courtney Pochin in the *East Anglian Daily Times*. Under the heading "So scandalous: a look back at the wonderful

work of Wilkie Collins' Pochin writes a short biography, summarises five of his novels - the big four plus *Poor Miss Finch* - together with 'Five things you may not have known' about him. Read it at www.eadt.co.uk search for 'Wilkie Collins'. There is also a review of the television *The Woman in White*.

SOUTH AMERICAN NOVEL

Eagle-eyed WCS member, the cellist Steven Isserlis, spotted this brief reference "near the beginning of a book I'm reading, *Where there's Love there's Hate* by Adolfo Bioy Cesares and Silvina Campo"

"Like Betteredge with *Robinson Crusoe* I resorted to my Petronius ..." Wilkie really does pop up everywhere!

P. F. COLLIER

There has been no complete edition of Collins's works although there have been several partial collections by nineteenth publishers which included Sampson Low (7 titles), Smith, Elder (10 titles) and Chatto & Windus (29 titles), Harpers of New York (17 titles). The most complete edition, however, was published around 1900 by P. F. Collier, also of New York, in thirty illustrated volumes. This is based almost entirely on Collins's fiction and the pamphlet enclosed with this Newsletter gives full details.

A NEW COLLECTION OF SHORT STORIES

Longstanding WCS member and author, Katheryn Haynes, has just published a collection of ten short stories entitled *Waiting in the Shadows*. It is published by Sarob Press, La Bliniere, 53250, Neuilly-le-Vendin, France; The press can be contacted at sarobpress@gmail.com with further details at <https://sarobpress.blogspot.com/2018/02/waiting-in-shadows-new-title-news.html>. Katherine has previously published *Grace Poole* which was a novel interpretation of *Jane Eyre* from the point of view of the housekeeper.

THE WCS JOURNAL - CALL FOR ARTICLES

The editor of the WCS Journal, Joanne Parsons, is planning a special issue on the theme of 'Materiality in Wilkie Collins and his Contemporaries' with Guest Editors, Dr Kym Brindle, Dr Laura Eastlake.

Wilkie Collins's fiction depicts a rich cabinet of material curiosities. His novels evidence the wealth of objects with which the Victorians surrounded themselves in everyday life. This special issue looks to explore the entanglements between object and subject in Collins's work. We seek proposals exploring the ways in which aspects of identity in Collins's novels are articulated through forms of material culture. What is the significance of property and personal possessions for identity formation?

In her work, *Material Identities*, Joanna Soafaer suggests that two approaches to materiality 'what one might broadly categorize as the aesthetic and the social - are not necessarily mutually exclusive', and this issue will focus on intersections between material aesthetics and their social implications and consequences. In what ways do the curiosities and clutter of Victorian life contextualize debates about issues of authenticity and disguise? What are the consequences of things for the Victorian body and its sufferings, pleasures, and performances? What social impact do material objects have for characters (and readers) in the quest for meaning?

Suggested topics include, but are not limited to: Property and property law; Wills, records, ledgers, testimonies, documents; Collecting and collections; Thing theory; Art, decoration, and ornamentation; Dress, fashion, and fabric; Publication, printing, print culture; Letters, diaries and narrative; Embodying the materiality of the body; Appearance and disguise; Nineteenth-century burial practices and relics of death; Memory and materiality; Medical materials; Neo-Victorianism and Wilkie Collins.

Please email abstracts of approximately 500 words to laura.eastlake@edgehill.ac.uk and brindlek@edgehill.ac.uk by Friday 27th July 2018.

Full articles of 5-8,000 words in MLA format due: Monday 27th October 2018. Further information is available at the journal site: <https://wilkiecollinsociety.org/journal/>

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NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2018

SUMMER PUNCH

In 1854 Mark Lemon, editor of the humorous magazine *Punch* from 1841-1870, wrote to Wilkie Collins from the *Punch* office

Let me thank you for your excellent story. I shall have it in type some time next week when we will have a chop together at the Garrick & arrange abt the illustrations to it if you are so minded. (Morgan Library, record ID 122171).

So, somewhere in volumes XXVI or XXVII for 1854 or, possibly, XXVIII for early 1855 (The letter is dated only '1854') there is a Wilkie Collins story, perhaps illustrated, waiting to be found.

One of these volumes does contain a very brief reference to Wilkie. Drawing an analogy between his new book *Hide and Seek* and the game being played out in the conflict between the Russians and the French and English in the Baltic (XXVII, p.14).

We already know of four other volumes of *Punch* that contain items related to Wilkie:

1. 6 April 1861 Vol. XL, p. 140
A half page cartoon by an unknown artist

AWFUL APPARITION!

Mrs. T. (to T., who has been reading the popular novel). “Pray, Mr. Tomkins, are you Never coming Up-stairs? How much longer are you going to sit up with that ‘Woman in White?’”

2. 7 March 1868 Vol. LIV, p.105, A NEW NOVEL COMPANY

The first novel by the Sensational Novel Company (Limited).

This one page announcement is then followed for the next 16 issues from 14 March 1868 Vol. LIV pp. 112-113 to 27 June 1868 p. 276 by CHIKKIN HAZARD, a parody by F. C .Burnand of sensation fiction in general including Wilkie’s – for example *The Woman with No Name* and *No Thoroughfare without a Heart*.

3. 14 January 1882, Vol. LXXXII, p. 22

A cartoon by Linley Sambourne titled Punch’s Fancy Portraits. — No.66 Wilkie Collins, as ‘The Man in White doing Ink-and-Penance for having written *The Black Robe*’.

Then there is reference to Wilkie’s brother, Charles Collins:

4. 1851, Vol. XX, p. 219, PUNCH AMONG THE PAINTERS

A page mocking four works of art and specifically on Charles Collins:

‘Nothing can be more wonderful than the truth of Collins’s representation of “Alisma Plantago,” except the unattractiveness of the demure lady, whose botanical pursuits he has recorded under the name of...CONVENT THOUGHTS’. It also parodies Millais’s *Mariana in the Moated Grange*. Both sections are illustrated by a cartoon parody of the paintings.

You can read almost all the volumes (but not 1882) online at <https://sites.google.com/site/punchvolumes>.

THE HARLEY STREET BASEMENT

Being in the presence of the buildings where Wilkie wrote his books is always exciting. But the house in Harley Street where he finished *The Woman in White* and wrote *No Name* was demolished probably in the 1970s and is now an ophthalmology medical centre – 22 Harley Street W1G 9AP.

When Wilkie lived there from March 1860 to the end of 1864 this house was numbered 12 Harley Street. The house next door, No.13, was on the corner of Queen Anne Street. Later Harley Street was renumbered and No.12 became No. 26. So don't be fooled by the current No.12, that was No.5 in the 1860s.

There is a photograph of the house at [https://collage.cityoflondon.gov.uk; search '26 Harley Street'](https://collage.cityoflondon.gov.uk/search/26%20Harley%20Street). There is also a splendid picture there, taken in 1959, of the staircase Wilkie would have walked up each day.

When Wilkie lived there the house was owned by Edward Foxhall, an architect in his sixties, and let to George Gregson, a dentist. Wilkie rented the upper floors from him for £27-10s a quarter. Even after he left he consulted Gregson about his teeth. In 1868 when he had finished the final instalment of *The Moonstone* he wrote

My labours are over at last, and I take this first opportunity at my disposal of consulting you about my teeth. ([0843] to George Gregson, 8 July 1868).

Although the house has gone you can still stand in the area that was its basement. Beneath the modern development of the medical centre and flats is the Harley Street Q Car Park (entrance on Chandos Street, turn left from Wigmore Street up Chandos Street to find the entrance on the left). A one hour stay will cost you £7.50. Look through the grill into the basement from the pavement outside what was 26; you will be able to see which vehicle is parked there or near it and find the spaces that are where the basement was. It may well have been where Wilkie kept his dry champagne!

Wilkie's final years were spent just around the corner at 82 Wimpole Street. This house was also rebuilt and further details can be found at www.wilkie-collins.info/home_wimpole.htm. A description of the sale of Wilkie's effects held at this address was published in the Pall Mall Gazette for 25 October 1889. This was reprinted in the WCS Newsletter for Winter 2010 with illustrations published in 'A Visit to Wilkie Collins' (WCS August 2017).

AUGUST CHOICE

To celebrate the 150th anniversary of the final instalment of *The Moonstone* being published in *All The Year Round* on 8 August 1868, *The Guardian* has picked

Wilkie's novel for their August reading club. The selector Sam Jordison writes on 24 July 2018

William Tinsley, who published *The Moonstone* in book form, reported crowds of "anxious readers" waiting around his office, as well as "several" bets being taken on the book's eventual outcome. ...

...Sergeant Cuff, the man who unravels *The Moonstone's* mystery, set the template for many of the literary detectives that followed. Harder to dispute is Eliot's other claim – that *The Moonstone* was the "longest and best" detective novel. Not least because the great Dorothy L. Sayers (who knew something about the genre herself) agreed, and labelled it: "probably the very finest detective story ever written." (*The Guardian* 24 July 2018).

Wilkie used to boast that no-one had ever guessed the solution before reaching the end of the book. Read more - theguardian.com and search 'moonstone'.

There is also a recommendation by Alexandra Shulman in *The Spectator* to read *No Name*. She found herself in Aldeburgh where Wilkie set the novel. She explains why she recommends it in 'Why British weather is like a bad boyfriend' at spectator.co.uk search 'bad boyfriend'.

MOONSTONE CARTOON

There was a brief mention of Wilkie Collins by Matthew Sweet on Suzy Klein's *Essential Classics* programme on Radio 3 on 13 June. Sadly the programme is no longer on i-Player. He referred to a cartoon strip parody of *The Moonstone* in a magazine called *Judy* (full title *Judy; or the London Serio-Comic Journal*) – and yes it was a rival to *Punch*! Published in Vol. XVIII, 15 December 1875, p. 88, it was by the little known Victorian cartoonist Marie Duval. You can see it on the website that commemorates her work at www.marieduval.org/drawings/judy-v18-p88.

Members who have had time to read the Introduction to the *Red Vial*, recently published by the WCS, will have seen 'Dialogues with Dramatists' on p. 20, another cartoon from *Judy*, published two weeks earlier than *The Moonstone* parody, on 1 December 1875.

LEWIS CARROLL

Lewis Carroll read and enjoyed Wilkie Collins and also read three books by his brother, Charles Allston Collins.

Charlie Lovett's *Lewis Carroll Among His Books* (Jefferson: 2005) is a catalogue of 2365 books which Charles Dodgson was known to own or read. The information comes from detailed analyses of sales, auction records, catalogues, Lovett's own collection, and Dodgson's diaries, such as this entry for 14 February 1871:

I write at 2 a.m. having been sitting up reading *Man and Wife* by Wilkie Collins – a most interesting tale as far as I have gone. (p. 85, #444)

Lovett also identified that Dodgson read *The Fallen Leaves* in 1880 (p. 84, #443) and owned a copy of *Blind Love* (p. 85, #445). He also possessed *A Message from the Sea*, the 1860 Christmas number of *All The Year Round*. But Lovett is less clear than he should be about who wrote it “Many believe Dickens collaborated with Wilkie Collins and others on this work. (p. 103, #585).” In fact it was known even in the nineteenth century that Collins wrote chapter IV ‘The Seafaring Man’ and parts of Chapters II and V. Harriet Parr, Amelia B. Edwards, and Henry Chorley wrote other parts.

What Dodgson knew about the authorship is unclear and it is listed by Lovett as one of 21 of Dickens's works.

Dodgson also owned three books by Wilkie's brother Charles. He read *The Bar Sinister* (1864) during an illness in 1895 and owned a copy of both *A Cruise upon Wheels* (1862) and *The Eye-Witness* (1860). See p. 84, #440-442.

I am grateful to Saad al-Maliky for this reference to Lovett in his PhD thesis *Charles Allston Collins (1828-1873): A Literary and Artistic Life* (Buckingham: 2018); he kindly sent a copy.

MISS GWILT

Wilkie's dramatised version of *Armadale*, called *Miss Gwilt*, opened in London at the Globe Theatre on 15 April 1876 after its inaugural run from 9 December at Liverpool's Alhambra. Erected in 1868 in Newcastle Street near the Strand, the Globe was described as ‘shoddily built’ and backed onto the equally poor Opéra Comique: they were dubbed the rickety twins. The Globe was demolished for road widening in 1902 – the same scheme that took away the office of *Household Words* at 16 Wellington Street.

You can see an image of the interior of the Globe theatre at www.victorianweb.org/victorian/art/architecture/london/151.html. The engraving shows the inside and allows us to picture the play being performed there and rehearsals with Wilkie directing it. He wrote to the publisher George Bentley the day before it opened

My eye still persists in recovering – in spite of the unfavourable weather. This week I have been obliged to devote all the energies which my illness has spared to the rehearsals of my new play – which is tried in London for the first time tomorrow night. ([1606] to George Bentley, 14 April 1876).

Miss Gwilt ran at The Globe until 4 July 1876 produced by and starring Ada Cavendish. An account of how Wilkie rehearsed the play is told in a letter from Arthur Pinero who played Darch in the production.

He used to sit, his manuscript before him, at a small table near the footlights, and there he made such additions and alterations as Miss Ada Cavendish deemed necessary. He did this with the utmost readiness and amiability, influenced perhaps by her habit of calling him ‘Wilkie’, a familiar mode of address which, I recollect, surprised and shocked me not a little. (Walter de la Mare, ‘The Early Novels of Wilkie Collins’, in *The Eighteen-Sixties* ed. John Drinkwater, Cambridge: CUP, 1932, pp. 68–69 n. 1.)

WILKIE IN THE CARLYLE LETTERS

The online Carlyle letters made available by Duke University have produced two little titbits of information about Wilkie. On 2 April 1861 he went to dine at John Forster’s house with Dickens, and Jane Carlyle who writes to Isabella Barnes [3 April 1861]

I was engaged to dine at Mr Forsters, with Dickens and Wilkie Collins. (<http://carlyleletters.dukeupress.edu/content/vol37/#lt-18610403-JWC-IEB-01>)

This event was presumably Forster’s 50th birthday dinner on 2 April 1861.

Wilkie was also at Forster’s 55th birthday party on 2 April 1866. Jane Carlyle was not at the party this time but took round a telegram about to show all the company about her husband Thomas Carlyle’s success in his inaugural address as Lord Rector of Edinburgh University. She writes to Thomas:

And it was pleasant to see with what hearty good will all there, Dickens, Wilkie Collins, as well as Fuzz, received the news. Search online at <http://carlyleletters.dukeupress.edu//content/vol43/#lt-18660403-JWC-TC-01>

Neither event appears in Wilkie's letters nor was his presence noted in Forster's *Life of Dickens*.

‘A STOLEN LETTER’

The ever alert Pierre Tissot van Patot has found what is almost certainly the earliest translation of ‘A Stolen Letter’. This was discovered in the Paris *Revue Britannique* of January 1855, pp. 239-247 with the title ‘A Bon Chat Bon Rat’ and attributed to Charles Dickens. Collins's story had only recently been published with the title 'The Fourth Poor Traveller' in 'The Seven Poor Travellers', the Extra Christmas Number of *Household Words* for December 1854. It was subsequently included in *After Dark* (1856) as 'The Lawyer's Story of a Stolen Letter.'

THE DEAD ALIVE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Members who have read either *The Red Vial* or *Jezebel's Daughter* will recognise a news item from South Africa at the beginning of July. A woman believed to have been killed in a car accident gave workers in the local mortuary a fright after they realised she was actually alive. Paramedics had pronounced the woman dead at the scene “showing no form of life.” It wasn't until workers checked on the bodies in the mortuary fridges that it became clear she was actually breathing. The woman was then taken to hospital where she made a recovery.

Apparently this situation is not that uncommon in South Africa (and elsewhere in the world) so perhaps they should take a leaf out of Wilkie's book and attach a bell to ‘dead’ victims's right hand. Those with a suitable degree of morbid curiosity can find other examples online including one man who woke up in the middle of his own funeral. Search for ‘South African mortuary’.

FRANKLIN BLAKE AND A MURDER MYSTERY IN PARIS

Published in June 2016, *Coup de Pierre: A Murder Mystery in 1850s Paris* is another novel using characters from Wilkie Collins. This time it borrows Franklin and Rachel (Verinder) Blake from *The Moonstone*. The story begins in Paris during September 1852. Quoting from the publisher's blurb:

Four years after the revolution that brought down the last king of France, Paris is coming to terms with the regime installed by Louis-Napoleon, nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte. Lucien de Boizillac, a young captain in the Paris police, is deployed to track down the last few dissidents still resisting the rebirth of imperial rule. Now that the recent disorder has been suppressed, English visitors are returning to the city. Among them are Franklin Blake and his young wife, Rachel (née Verinder), married three years before, following the disentangling of the mysterious theft of a priceless diamond (described in "The Moonstone" by Wilkie Collins). But Blake is snared by a loose end left from his youthful excesses in the French capital, before his marriage. Lured into a meeting with a former lover, he is discovered in a back-street tavern, slumped over her lifeless body. Blake is thrown into prison, to stand trial for murder. Boizillac is drawn into unravelling the murder, despite the hostility of Alfred Graize, the police inspector who leads the investigation. As he digs deeper, he exposes a network manipulated by the new regime which seems set on achieving Blake's condemnation. Can Boizillac overcome these hostile forces to get at the truth? Or will Franklin Blake be found guilty of a crime which, contrary to all the evidence, he denies committing?

There is one positive review on Amazon from which the book can be bought. (ISBN-13: 978-1786971111, paperback); or direct from the publisher, FeedaRead, from where an extract can be downloaded.

WILLIAM COLLINS

Paintings by William Collins continue to appear in galleries and at auction. Probably the finest repository of available paintings can be found at Sigmund and Jocelyn Fine Art. Their most recent acquisition is the oil on canvas 'The Virgin and Child' at the not so modest price of £20,000. All of their Collins pictures are fully detailed with several full colour illustrations to be found at www.sandjfineart.co.uk/gallery/william-collins.

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NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2018-2019

HOW WILKIE WORKED

An extraordinary account of Wilkie's working methods has been found in a letter dating from 1882 which had lain unnoticed for seventy years.

To me, my characters are living beings, and my mind becomes (in some way quite incomprehensible to me) their mind, in the process of creating them. I make no apology for speaking of myself in this way to you. Such experience as your's [*sic*] of the inner mental mysteries may even be interested in the mental process which produces works of fiction. When I am walking up and down my study, completely absorbed in the joys and sorrows of a non-existent person, I am inclined (when the "fit" is over) to ask myself if the line may not be a fine one which divides this sort of excitement from the approaches perhaps of certain forms of insanity? (Wilkie Collins to Murdoch Macleod, 23 March 1882).

The letter was written to a psychiatrist – as we would call him now – Murdoch Macleod when he was Superintendent of the East Riding of Yorkshire Asylum in charge of more than 250 patients and 40 staff. Macleod had clearly written to Wilkie about *Poor Miss Finch* published ten years earlier, the main character of which is blind but has her sight briefly restored. Macleod had himself written a short note for the *Journal of Mental Science* about blindness and other sensory loss causing insanity.

The letter was in the collection of publisher, bookseller, and wigmaker James Stevens (1910-1997) who bought it for £2 at Sotheby's in 1948. Although that passage was transcribed in Sotheby's catalogue it had not been noticed until it was sold by Forum Auctions in 2018.

The full text – along with eleven other newly-found letters – is in *The Letters of Wilkie Collins Addenda & Corrigenda 12* which is enclosed with this newsletter.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE

The *Woman in White* continues to fascinate and influence people. An interesting article by crime writer Radha Vatsal was found by Sorcha Ogle and posted to the Facebook pages of The Wilkie Collins Appreciation Society. You can join at www.facebook.com/groups/2228650086/ and read Sorcha's lengthy essay 'What we owe to Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White*' at <https://crimereads.com/what-we-owe-to-wilkie-collins-the-woman-in-white/>

The extraordinary range of secondary characters that Collins employs. These might be minor figures like Laura's governess Mrs. Vesey: "Some of us rush through life; and some of us saunter through life. Mrs. Vesey sat through life." Or Laura's uncle and guardian, Frederick Fairlie, "a bundle of nerves dressed up to look like a man," who would prefer that his niece sign a reckless prenuptial agreement rather than deal with the bother of contesting it.

Another very enjoyable account of Wilkie and his love of women is found at <https://narratively.com/this-novelists-female-heroes-and-brazen-polyamory-shocked-victorian-england/>. This includes of course the account of his meeting with the acknowledged real life woman in white – his lover Caroline Graves – recounted by the son of his friend John Everett Millais.

The Woman in White also features in a Language and Literature Timeline on the British Library website <http://www.bl.uk/learning/timeline/item126943.html>. Author Pat Barker listed *No Name* as Wilkie's underrated novel in *The Guardian* (31 August 2018), giving this rather strange analysis of Wilkie's work.

As good as *The Moonstone* or *The Woman in White*. It has Collins's trademark ability to create powerful female characters who then make him so nervous he can't wait to put them back in their box.

MORE ON THE ORIGINS OF *THE WOMAN IN WHITE*

A letter inserted in a first edition of *The Woman in White* has recently come to light and possibly sheds some new light on the origins of Wilkie's most popular novel.

The handwritten note dated 18 December 1954 from a Rita Browne to Georgette Agnew, refers to the John Monsell Christians: 'Through one of the Curwens I have secured portraits, from a family who farmed Ewanrigg, of Henry Taubman Christian 19th. & his mental wife. Rather awful daubs, but interesting as Wilkie Collins based "The Woman in White" on Uncle Henry's Wife.' It has been known for some time that Ewanrigg Hall in Cumberland was the likely model for Limmeridge House in *The Woman in White*. Closely following the Collins-Dickens route in 'The Lazy Tour', Walter Hartright writes

My travelling instructions directed me to go to Carlisle, and then to diverge by a branch railway which ran in the direction of the coast..... When I rose the next morning and drew up my blind, the sea opened before me joyously under the broad August sunlight, and the distant coast of Scotland fringed the horizon with its lines of melting blue.

Limmeridge House can also be found on a map of fictional locations, although a WCS member has pointed out “It’s not sufficiently close to the sea!”.

<https://londonist.com/london/maps/fake-britain-map-fictional-locations-england-scotland-wales>.

Ewanrigg Hall was the home of the Christian family and Fletcher Christian of *Mutiny on the Bounty* fame was born there in 1764. Henry Taubman Christian (1810-1859) occupied the house for many years and his widow apparently descended into madness and ended her days in the Dunston Lodge Lunatic Asylum in Gateshead. The famous meeting of Wilkie and Caroline Graves was always assumed to be the origin for ‘the woman in white’ but do we now have another contender?

The main building was demolished in 1903 leaving just a farmhouse. This was destroyed by fire in 2015 and has been sold to a property developer seeking to obtain planning consent for its conversion to five homes and the building of another 125 units on the surrounding land. An opportunity to live in the Fairlie’s ancestral home!

For contemporary illustrations and a more detailed history of the house refer to the House and Heritage website houseandheritage.org/2017/04/07/ewanrigg-hall/; the Lost Heritage website also features a contemporary illustration. For a Heritage Statement which gives a comprehensive history and architectural assessment you can refer to: planning.allerdale.gov.uk/portal/servlets/AttachmentShowServlet?ImageName=327028.

THE CELESTIAL SLEUTH AND *THE WOMAN IN WHITE*

Professor Daniel Olson, a physics professor at Texas State University, has recently published *Further Adventures of the Celestial Sleuth; Using Astronomy to Solve More Mysteries in Art, History, and Literature*. (Springer Praxis Publishing, Chichester, ISBN 978-3-319-70319-0). The mysteries cover such varied topics as the life of Monet, Ansel Adams in Alaska, the Korean War, J. M. W. Turner, the comets of Edgar Allan Poe and Wilkie Collins and *The Woman in White*.

Olson, using astronomical data, diaries, letters, newspapers, weather reports, and other scientific data, makes a detailed analysis of Collins’s famous walks – both in the novel where Hartright meets Anne Catherick and the real life walk from the Collins’s home in Hanover Terrace to the house of John Everett Millais in Gower Street. On this walk Wilkie is reported to have first met Caroline Graves, the main account of which is described in the biography of Millais by his son John Guille Millais published in 1899. This can be read at www.paullewis.co.uk/wilkie/biography/Millais1905.htm

For Hartright’s walk, Olson uses astronomical data, walking speeds, and other information to locate “the place where four roads met” at the start of *The Woman in White*. He calculated the date to around the full moon of 31 July 1852. Members may recall that Paul Lewis made a

similar analysis in *Walter's Walk* (WCS 2010) but put the location rather further north and calculated the date as Summer 1853.

Olson's Collins analysis covers 22 pages complete with copious illustrations, maps and references but forms only a small part of a fascinating book based on meticulous research and experiment. Further details at www.springer.com/gb/book/9783319703190.

WILKIE COLLINS AND PPI

Wilkie was fortunate in not receiving financial cold calls and emails for PPI but he did suffer from Plagiarism, Parodies and Imitations. The most recent of these is *A Most Dangerous Woman* by Brenda Clough. It purports to be "A thrilling and romantic standalone sequel to Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White*." It mainly uses the character of Marian Halcombe, "Victorian literature's most exciting heroine." It is serialised in nine episodes at www.serialbox.com/serials/mostdangerous. Each episode can be downloaded for \$1.99 or the entire work bought for \$12.99.

Clough's story follows closely on *Coup de Pierre: A Murder Mystery in 1850s Paris* by Paul Bristow. (FeedARead.com Publishing, 2016). A mystery set in Paris during September 1852, it uses the characters of Franklin and Rachel Blake (Verinder). The family lawyer, Mr Bruff, also makes an appearance. See the Summer Newsletter, 2018, for further details.

Recently discovered by Pierre Tissot van Patot, is *Young Lord Stranleigh*. Robert Barr. London: Ward Lock & Co, 1908. It features a large motor yacht called 'Wilkie Collins' with a captain and the chief engineer named respectively 'Wilkie' and 'Collins'. There is also a copy of *The Woman in White* in each cabin with a different colour to match the décor. Yet another example is *The Hawksmoor Mystery* by W. H. Lane Chauford (Ward Lock, 1932) where a valuable diamond is stolen from an Indian Temple and twenty years later strange events occur in an English country house.

And most recently, there has been published a homage to Collins by Elly Griffith, a crime writer based in Brighton. Her latest book is a murder mystery which features a host of tributes to Wilkie Collins. It is told through diaries and accounts by several authors including the main character, a teacher called Clare Cassidy, her daughter, Georgia, and a detective Harbinder Kaur. The whole tale is contained within a rather good gothic framing story by R. M. Holland called *The Stranger*, also of course an invention by Griffiths. Elly Griffiths is a fan of Wilkie Collins and the fictional Clare Cassidy peppers her diaries and accounts with quotes from his works. There is an annoying anachronism about a framed photograph hung on a wall dating from 1832 - seven years before Daguerre perfected his images on silver and two decades before paper photographs became common. The image is among other early Victorian photographs which Elly helpfully points out are 'all black and white'. Nevertheless, the book is thoroughly enjoyable and you will probably not be able to guess the murderer. Elly Griffiths's *The Stranger Diaries*, Quercus 2018 (£12.99 or much less via Amazon, and £8.99 for Kindle.)

Would Collins would have appreciated these the posthumous borrowings, especially knowing how hard he fought for the protection of his copyrights? We doubt it but, in any event, they have been listed in the accompanying compilation which runs from 1860 to the end of 2018.

THE RED VIAL

WCS member Caroline Radcliffe, editor of the recent edition we published of *The Red Vial*, reminded the Wilkie Collins Facebook group that 160 years ago on 11 October 1858 Wilkie Collins's controversial play *The Red Vial* was performed for the first time at the Olympic Theatre in London.

The Red Vial was mocked by the audience – which laughed at moments of dramatic tension – and generally panned by the critics. Nevertheless, it ran for 30 nights at the Olympic closing on 13 November. It is even possible Wilkie made some money from it – in November 1858 several unidentified payments were made into his mother's bank account (Wilkie used her account until he opened his own in 1860). But he found the audience reaction troubling and upsetting and refused all subsequent offers to revive the play. It was eight years before he returned to the theatre with *The Frozen Deep*.

In 1862 Wilkie wrote: "The Red Vial traces the slow degrees by which circumstances distort the love of a mother for her child into the commission of a crime by the mother for the child's sake" and he reworked the plot for his novel *Jezebel's Daughter* (1880). You can read Caroline Radcliffe's excellent introduction and analysis in the copy of the play which we sent out to members during 2018.

MILLAIS PARTY

A new letter has emerged which reveals that Wilkie hosted a party on Saturday 9 June 1855 for the artist John Everett Millais before he left London for Scotland to marry Euphemia ('Effie') Chalmers Gray in Perthshire on 3 July 1855. Edward Lear wrote to Alfred Tennyson on 9 June

Collins has just now written to say I will dine there at 6 to meet Millais, who sets out tomorrow for Perth. He says "do come and see the last (for us) of John Millais". So I throw over a lesser engagement and shall go. I feel woundily like a spectator – all through my life – at what goes on amongst those I know – very little an actor.

(Tennyson Research Centre, Lincolnshire Archives, TRC/LETTERS/5415).

Perhaps Lear was referring to the bawdy nature of such events. A few weeks later Wilkie invited some friends round for another party on the eve of Millais's wedding. He wrote to his long-time friend Edward Pigott inviting him to join John Luard, the painter and close friend of Millais, and Wilkie's friend Charles Ward with his wife. In that letter Wilkie writes

We dine at six, and shall drink limitless potations. May he consummate successfully! and have the best cause in the world to lie late on Wednesday morning! I can't resist Prianpian [*sic* for 'Priapic'] jesting

on the marriages of my friends. It is such a dreadfully serious thing afterwards, that one ought to joke about it as long as one can. (Collins to Pigott, 2 July 1855 [0215]).

Millais wrote to Charles Collins the day after his wedding

By George, Charlie, I am truly a favoured man... It is such a delight to feel a woman always about one part of oneself. (Peters, p. 126).

GOSSIP ABOUT WILKIE COLLINS

Another letter has come to light written by a Scottish born journalist called David Gray (1836-1888) who worked on the *Buffalo Courier* in New York State and then acquired an interest in its rival the *Buffalo Express*. Gray writes to a friend Alfred Wilkinson

I wish I could wind my horn some Saturday outside your castle gate on the hill yonder & smoke one of those good cigars in your library, & tell you a number of things I have had in mind for you. I should like also to ask some questions: such as your further opinion of Wilkie Collins. I have heard some rather unpleasant gossip about him. (David Gray to Alfred Wilkinson, 24 October 1873, Lewis Collection).

Wilkinson was probably the wealthy banker who lived in neighbouring Syracuse. The subject of the gossip is unknown. At this time Wilkie was on his American tour but he did not visit Buffalo until two months after this letter was written, arriving on 29 December 1873 and leaving on 7 January 1874. It may have related to the fact that the American Literary Bureau, which acted as Wilkie's agent when he first arrived in America, had booked him, without his knowledge or agreement, to give a reading to the Buffalo Young Men's Association. Unaware of the appointment Wilkie had not turned up. However, the date of that non-event is unclear but it was revealed by Wilkie's new agent, James Redpath, in an apology to the *Buffalo Courier* during Wilkie's visit. For more information on Wilkie's time in Buffalo see *Wilkie Collins's American Tour, 1873-4* (London: 2008) pp. 65-69, written by WCS member Susan Hanes.

LOST PORTRAITS

There was a good deal of publicity concerning a lost portrait of Charles Dickens which came to light in an odd lot at auction in South Africa. The miniature was painted by Margaret Gillies in 1843 and shows the 31-year-old Dickens. See for example *The Telegraph* and *The Guardian* for 21 November and *The Times* for 22 November 2018. There is much more detail and a reproduction of the image in 'The Lost Portrait: *Charles Dickens* by Margaret Gillies' by Emma Rutherford in the latest issue of *The Dickensian* (No. 506, Vol. 114, Part 3, Winter 2018). See also the website of the Charles Dickens Museum which is trying to raise £180,000 to save the picture for the nation. Should you wish, you can make a donation at <https://dickensmuseum.com/pages/lost-portrait-appeal>

There is also a lost portrait of Collins which has evaded discovery. It was painted by Walter Goodman and entitled 'The Late Mr. Wilkie Collins at the age of 56'. The painting was exhibited in 1890 at the sixty-seventh annual exhibition of the Royal Society of British

Artists. It was priced at £42 but was presumably unsold as there were reports in the *Times Daily* and *Sunday Times* for June 1891 that Goodman was attempting to sell it to the Garrick Club. But where is it now?

ROYAL ACADEMY

William Collins is a noticeable omission from a battle in a new Royal Academy gallery which pits John Constable against J. M. W. Turner. The gallery hangs side by side Constable's *The Opening of Waterloo Bridge* and Turner's *Helvoetsluis*; – "*The City of Utrecht*" 64 going to sea. The last time they were next to each other was 187 years ago at the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1832. They were later said to be the subject of great rivalry between the two Royal Academicians. But it is not clear that contemporaries saw it that way. The account of the Exhibition in *The Times* only mentions the Constable, placing it second to the similar scene *The Opening of London Bridge* by George Jones (1786-1869). *The Times* critic says the Constable painting was

A clever, bold painting, rough and coarse, but possessing nevertheless some fine qualities which having produced the artist has done his best to spoil, in his accustomed manner, by sprinkling white spots all over the canvass. (*The Times* 8 May 1832, p.3).

The critic fails to mention Turner's sea scene at all out of the thousand or so works exhibited. He also omits any reference to the three paintings exhibited there by Wilkie's father William Collins RA. They were hung in the Great Room at that 1832 Exhibition, while the Constable and the Turner were confined to the smaller room called the School of Painting.

In the 21st century we see Turner and Constable as two giants of the 19th century with Collins barely a footnote. But it was not so at the time. One of Collins's paintings, *Rustic Civility*, was sold at the 1832 exhibition to the Duke of Devonshire for 250 guineas and it went on to be one of William's most popular works, reproduced in engravings and prints for many years. He painted a copy of it the next year for the collector John Sheepshanks which is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum. It shows two country lads opening a gate and saluting a passing gentleman rider, who is shown only as a shadow on the ground.

Skittle Players, a scene in the yard of a public house, was sold in 1844 to George Young for 400 guineas. Within 20 years it had been sold at auction for almost three times the price – 1150 guineas while at the same 1866 sale Constable's *Hay Wain* – now priceless – fetched just 1300 guineas. Constable's *Opening of Waterloo Bridge* exhibited in 1832 was sold for just 94 guineas fifty years later. In 1875 *Skittle Players* doubled in price again to 2300 guineas. It is fully described by Wilkie in his biography of William Collins (Vol. II, pp. 6-10) and you can see an image at www.paullewis.co.uk/wilkie/Family/skittlespic.htm.

Taste and artistic appreciation change, of course, but throughout much of the nineteenth century William Collins was among the artistic greats, both among the public and wealthy collectors.

The exhibition runs from 12 January to 31 March 2019 in the Collection Gallery at the Royal Academy.

A CATALOGUE RAISONNÉ FOR WILLIAM COLLINS

WCS member Alan Bean is working on a definitive catalogue (a catalogue raisonné) of William Collins's oil paintings. He writes:

Until about five years ago, and in common with many people, the only two books by Wilkie Collins that I had read were *The Moonstone* and *The Woman in White*. That all changed when I bought a lovely watercolour of a girl gathering mushrooms by Wilkie's father, the artist William Collins. I hadn't heard of him before, and tried to find out more about him. It was soon very clear that next to nothing had been written about the artist since 1848, when Wilkie published his biography of his father *Memoirs of the Life of William Collins Esq., R.A.* I began to read biographies of Wilkie Collins in the hope of learning more. I learned very little more, but I did become sufficiently interested in Wilkie to join the Wilkie Collins society and start reading more of his novels and short fiction - I've just finished *Poor Miss Finch*.

One thing led to another, and I began in-depth research about William Collins and his paintings. In 2017 the Wilkie Collins Society very kindly published a pamphlet which dealt with part of that research – 'Wilkie Collins's religious upbringing.' My research has brought me into contact with many admirers of his work – museum curators, private collectors, and academics – all of whom have expressed the hope that the artist can be rescued from obscurity and recognised for what he was – one of the handful of great English painters of the first half of the nineteenth century. So now I am working on a catalogue raisonné of his oil paintings. I am also trying to get a small exhibition of his work off the ground as part of that work.

The location of quite a number of his paintings is not known at all at present. Many others have been through the salerooms in the last thirty years, so photographs of varying quality are available, but the whereabouts of the paintings themselves are not known. Major auction houses have been as helpful as they can, for example by contacting owners with whom they are still in touch, but they are bound by rules of confidentiality and there are strict limits on what they can do to help me find them.

So, if you know the whereabouts of any of his paintings (apart from the few which are in public collections), or indeed own any of them, I'd be very glad to hear from you. Naturally, I do not disclose details of the private ownership of his paintings to third parties, and the information I hold about their whereabouts is held securely. Do please get in touch with me by email if you have any information which you think might be useful - my email address is asbean@blueyonder.co.uk. (Alan Bean).

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