

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.