



THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

PATRONS Faith Clarke Benny Green
Chairman Andrew Gasson, 3 Merton House, 36 Belsize Park, London, NW3 4EA
Membership Louise Marchant, 10A Tibberton Square, Islington, London, NI 8SF
Publicity Katherine Haynes, 150 Elstree Pk, Barnet Lane, Boreham Wood, WD6 2RP

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 It contains details of the recent discovery in New York of *Iolani*, Collins's first unpublished novel.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 Thoroughfare*, *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.