



# ***THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY***

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## **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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.bouchercon2001.com).

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### **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 CV11 5AA.

### **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 20<sup>th</sup> 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".

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## **'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; 7<sup>th</sup> 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; 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, May, 1996; 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, March, 2000. ISBN: 84-88730-98-5.

*Sin nombre [No Name]*, translation by Gema Moral Bartolome, first published December, 1997; 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, February, 1998; 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 Tahití 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