



# ***THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY***

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## **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](mailto: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](http://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.  
Rev. by M. Bowman in ELT41:124.

Allan, Janice M. "Scenes of Writing: Detection and Psychoanalysis in Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone*." *Imprimatur* 1 (1996):186-93

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

Heller, T. *Dead Secrets*.... See VB 1992, 604. Rev, by R. 1110mas in VLC24( 1996):367-79.

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](http://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 18<sup>th</sup> 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 non1ally 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 100<sup>th</sup> 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 177<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:prog@poetry-festival.com). [www.poetry-festival.com](http://www.poetry-festival.com)).

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