



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**

Paul Lewis
Andrew Gasson

paul@paullewis.co.uk
apogee@apgee.co.uk

www.wilkiecollins.com
www.wilkie-collins.info