



## *THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY*

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**NEWSLETTER**

**SPRING 2016**

### **THE WILKIE COLLINS JOURNAL**

The latest issue of the *Wilkie Collins Society Journal* - Volume 13 (2015) is now available online at <http://wilkiecollinsociety.org/journal>. This has been produced under the joint editorship of Anne-Marie Beller and Joanne Parsons. Our thanks go to Anne-Marie for her hard work in editing both this and the previous issue. With the pressure of other commitments, she has now made way for Joanne although we are very pleased that with her experience she will remain on the editorial board. This has been reorganised to include the promotion of Verity Burke to Associate Editor and Dr Fiona Peters to the editorial board.

Joanne and her team have exciting ideas for the future of the Journal and full details are included in the Editor's Note to the current issue. This is available only online but members will be able to download and print off any articles they wish. The book reviews are freely available to anyone interested but to access the essays membership of the society is required.

Use the username **count** and password **fosco** - all in **lower case**.

For members unable to access the internet, as in the past, we will arrange photocopies.

### **FROM THE NEW EDITOR OF THE JOURNAL**

I'd like to introduce myself, Joanne Ella Parsons, as the new editor of the *Wilkie Collins Journal*. I've been obsessed with Wilkie Collins since I first read *The Woman in White* as a teenager; so obsessed in fact that I've named my cat Fosco! He is also a murderous little fiend who loves mice! I am a lecturer at Falmouth University and Bath Spa University. My research focuses on men's relationship with food in the Victorian novel, which obviously reflects my fascination with Fosco. I also examine the two Armadales and their differing interactions with food. Further details about my work can be found on my website at ([www.joanneparsons.co.uk](http://www.joanneparsons.co.uk)) or follow me on Twitter (@joparsons).

In addition to my appointment, Verity Burke, after serving as our brilliant editorial assistant, will now become Associate Editor. I'm so pleased that Verity's ideas (such as the exciting special issue theme for our 2016 edition) and her enthusiasm will continue to inform the Journal. More about Verity's work, which focuses on the body as a scientific subject (for example, vivisection in Collins's *Heart and Science*) can be found on her Academia page (<https://reading.academia.edu/VerityBurke>) or on Twitter (@VerityBurke).

Sadly, however, we must say goodbye to our previous editor Anne-Marie Beller and I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for all her hard work on the Journal. While Anne-Marie will no longer be editing the Journal we are thrilled that she has agreed to join our editorial board where her expertise and experience will be invaluable.

In addition to Anne-Marie's new position, we have also asked Dr. Fiona Peters to join the editorial board. Dr. Peters is a Senior Lecturer and Higher Degrees Tutor in English at Bath Spa University. Her teaching specialisms include Crime Fiction - her 2011 monograph is on Patricia Highsmith, with her second, on Ruth Rendell, forthcoming in 2016. She teaches a Crime Fiction module to second year students that follows the development of the genre from the mid C19th to today, and begins with *The Moonstone* as the first full-length detective novel. She

has also published on the Sensation Novel. We are delighted to be working with, and have the support of, such brilliant and innovative scholars.

We have many exciting plans for the journal and later in the year we will kick off with a special issue devoted to the ‘Heart’ and ‘Science’ of Wilkie Collins. We are also planning a conference to promote the journal and further academic research into Collins. You can also follow the Journal on Facebook (look for The Wilkie Collins Journal <https://www.facebook.com/The-Wilkie-Collins-Journal-515149621860783/?fref=ts>) and Twitter (@WilkieCJournal) where we will keep you updated on all things Collins!

I also want to draw your attention to the Wilkie Collins Appreciation Society (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2228650086/?fref=ts>). Jacky Tarleton started this Facebook page and she shared with me her motivations for doing so:

“I was studying for an MA in English Literature as a mature student when I joined Facebook. I looked around for something about Wilkie Collins, and finding nothing decided to start the group. I have read everything Wilkie wrote and firmly believe he is seriously underrated. Group members posted photos at the top of Wilkie’s grave, his houses, his portrait - anything Wilkie-related. People added whatever they had. We even tried to plan a meeting in Ramsgate - his holiday destination.”

It is a wonderful group so I would suggest that, if you are on Facebook, you have a look and put in a join request.

Finally, I’m looking forward to working closely with the Wilkie Collins Society and would love to hear your responses to the Journal.

### **A WILKIE COLLINS CONFERENCE**

Here are some preliminary details of a Wilkie Collins Conference being organised by Joanne Parsons for Saturday 24 September 2016. It will be jointly sponsored by the Wilkie Collins Society and the Victorian Popular Fiction Association. The venue will be Barts Pathology Museum near Holborn and the City of London. The anticipated cost will be £20 with concessions at £10.

The theme will be the ‘heart’ and ‘science’ of Wilkie Collins and fellow authors. We are also pleased to announce that our keynote speaker will be Dr. Tara MacDonald from the University of Idaho.

Details of a call for papers will either be sent by email to members on the WCS list or added to the Society’s website.

### **COLLINS AND COPYRIGHT**

Collins was at the forefront of trying to achieve the recognition of copyright for his own works and for authors in general. He won a successful battle of words with the Belinfante Brothers in Holland over their unauthorised publication of *Man and Wife* in 1870 but he reserved his greatest anger for American publishers. These views he published in 1880 as ‘Considerations on the Copyright Question Addressed to an American Friend,’ a strongly worded essay in the form of a letter protesting at literary piracy and the lack of International Copyright in the US. Noting the ‘honourable example’ by then of treaties in Europe, Collins levels the accusation that ‘the President and Congress of America remain content to contemplate the habitual perpetration, by American citizens, of the act of theft.’ He laments that ‘...*one* American publisher informed a friend of mine that he had “sold one hundred and twenty thousand copies of ‘The Woman in White’”. He never sent me sixpence.’ Collins concludes, ‘I must go back to my regular work, and make money for American robbers, under the sanction of Congress.’

We have recently come across a periodical called *Puck*, originally published in Germany by Keppler & Schwarzmann and subsequently by them in America. Volume XVIII, pp. 408-9, 24 February 1886 contains a double-page full colour illustration with the title ‘The Pirate Publishers - an International Burlesque that has had the Longest Run on Record.’ It features a prosperous looking pirate trading on a volume entitled *Law* surrounded by books at give-away prices of 9 or 10 cents and by British, European and American authors pointing accusatory fingers. Perhaps reflecting his then popularity, Collins is shown full length prominently in the bottom right hand corner. Amongst the numerous other authors beneath their national flags, all as gentle caricatures, are Hugh Conway,

Tennyson, Browning, Stevenson, Hardy, Lewis Carroll, Sardou, Zola, Mark Twain, Bret Harte and many others. At the very bottom are the following verses:

**CHORUS OF BRITISH AUTHORS:**

Behold the Pirate Publishers stand,  
Stealing our brains for Yankee-land;  
He's rude, uncultured, bold and free-

**THE PIRATE PUBLISHERS:**

You bet your life: The Law - that's Me.

**CHORUS OF FRENCH VICTIMS:**

He takes our novels and our plays,  
And never a red centime he pays;  
He is more Monarque than the Grand Louis-

**The P. P.:** You bet your life: The Law - that's Me.

**CHORUS OF GERMAN AND OTHER SUFFERERS:**

The labors of our studious brains  
All go to swell his sinful gains;  
He ravages Norway and Germanee

**THE P. P.:** You bet your life: The Law - that's Me.

**CHORUS OF HUMBLE AMERICAN AUTHORS:**

Though no one ever, in all this fuss,  
Has thought of according rights to us-  
Remember we're pillaged across the sea-

**THE P. P.:** Who cares for them: The Law- that's Me.

The original may be found through The Online Books Page which shows all of the currently available volumes and their source; or go to [babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101074880574;view=1up;seq=96](http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101074880574;view=1up;seq=96). There is also a page on Wikipedia - put in 'pirate' and 'Puck' and possibly 'Keppler.' More surprising, there is a mouse mat with the colour illustration available from [www.zazzle.co.uk](http://www.zazzle.co.uk).

### ***SERIALIZATION AND THE NOVEL IN MID-VICTORIAN MAGAZINES***

*Serialization and the Novel in Mid-Victorian Magazines* by Catherine Delafield was published by the Routledge during 2015 as part of their 'Nineteenth Century Series.'. Quoting from the publisher's blurb,

"Examining the Victorian serial as a text in its own right, Catherine Delafield re-reads five novels by Elizabeth Gaskell, Anthony Trollope, Dinah Craik and Wilkie Collins by situating them in the context of periodical publication. She considers how first publication affected the consumption and reception of the novel through the periodical medium. The novel's later re-publication still bears the imprint of the serialized original, and this book's investigation into nineteenth-century periodicals both generates new readings of the texts and reinstates those which have been lost in the reprinting process. Delafield's case studies provide evidence of the ways in which *Household Words*, *Cornhill Magazine*, *Good Words*, *All the Year Round* and *Cassell's Magazine* were designed for new audiences of novel readers."

The Contents include an Introduction and six chapters over 222 pages. There are twenty-three illustrations of which three relate to Collins's works in respect of *The Moonstone* and *Poor Miss Finch*

ISBN 978-1472450906, published at £60 and also available in a Kindle edition.

### ***CORNWALL, RAMBLES AND 'WALKING WITH WILKIE'***

Jak Stringer is a one woman Wilkie wonder. Living in Penzance, she is single-handedly bringing to life the 1851 stories and experiences of the young Wilkie

Collins as narrated in *Rambles Beyond Railways*. Here in her own words is what it's all about.

How did it start? Well one day by chance, I saw some information which, for me, would change my life and it was this...

In the summer of 1850, Wilkie Collins, hoping to make his name as a writer, commenced a walking-for-pleasure tour of Cornwall, which resulted in his book, *Rambles Beyond Railways; or, Notes in Cornwall taken A-foot*. I didn't know this and nor, so it seemed, did many other people in Cornwall. I requested what was to be my first copy of *Rambles* from the British Library and my journey had commenced.

So in 2013 I began retracing the footsteps of Wilkie Collins, with the aim of bringing the forgotten stories from his book alive once more and create a performance that intertwines the life of Collins with a snapshot of Victorian Cornwall and also a taste of how a hobby can easily become an obsession. Did the people of Looe eat their rats, the women of Saltash clean the boots of strangers, for sixpence worth of liquor; what saved the Logan Rock and why did Collins find a tavern full of babies on the Lizard? All questions to which it was a pleasure to find the answers.

My 'Walking with Wilkie' evolved and became a combination of contemporary live performance, original music and film, all to make an interesting, humorous and informative production for all ages.

As I toured 'Walking with Wilkie' performing in village halls, museums, studios and pubs, I was always surprised how many people had never heard of Wilkie Collins. But rest assured, I am working hard to change this; well in Cornwall at least. After a performance one night, a lady came up to me and said, "Before tonight, I didn't even know who Wilkie was but now you have made me love him!" I left for home delighted. Wilkie Collins should not be left dusty on the shelf, he is a writer that, in my view, is as contemporary as any top writer today and in his own era had a fan base as large as boy band One Direction - and there was only one of him.

For me Wilkie Collins has changed my life and feels like one of my family and maybe he is, if rumours of a possible Cornish marriage are true! So if you're coming down to Cornwall check out my Facebook page for shows or contact me for a tour and we'll strap on a trusty friend the knapsack and 'Ramble A-foot' together.

The following performances are confirmed for 'Wilkie Collins Rambles in Cornwall':

29<sup>th</sup> April 2.30pm - Roseland Festival, Roseland Institute, St Mawes, Cornwall

19<sup>th</sup> September 7pm - St Ives September festival, Porthmeor Studios, Cornwall

Jak would be delighted to meet any Wilkie enthusiasts venturing to far flung Cornwall. She can be contacted at [www.walkingwithwilkie@outlook.com](mailto:www.walkingwithwilkie@outlook.com) or on her mobile 0781 4614764. There are some videos on YouTube but take a look at her Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/Wilkie-Collins-Rambles-in-Cornwall-250671535012659/>

### **THE LOVE THAT DARE NOT SPEAK ITS NAME**

Featured online in 'The Victorianist: BAVS Postgraduates' in February, was a piece by Clare Walker Gore entitled 'The Love that Dare not Speak its Name: Queer Desire in the Mid-Victorian Novel.' The author, who has recently submitted her PhD thesis exploring disability in the Victorian novel, begins "If you're looking for a way to escape the oncoming juggernaut of heteronormativity otherwise known as Valentine's Day, Victorian novels might be the last place you would think to look."

The novels she concentrates on are *John Halifax, Gentleman* (1856) by Dinah Mulock Craik and Collins's *The Moonstone* (1868) where "It is not only love between men that is enabled by disability. Wilkie Collins allows one of his disabled female characters to declare her love for another disabled woman in unmistakably passionate terms. Heartbroken by her beloved Rosanna's death, Limping Lucy tells our narrator:



“I loved her,’ the girl said softly. ‘She had lived a miserable life, Mr Betteredge - vile people had ill-treated her and led her wrong - and it hadn’t spoiled her sweet temper. She was an angel.” Later Gore continues “While Collins arguably conforms to what would become the pattern for homosexual relationships in twentieth century fiction and film, by having Lucy and Rosanna’s story end in tragedy, it is telling that it is Rosanna’s heterosexual desire for Franklin, not Lucy’s homosexual desire for her, that leads to disaster.”

The full essay can be found at [victorianist.wordpress.com/2016/02/01/the-love-that-dare-not-speak-its-name-queer-desire-in-the-mid-victorian-novel](http://victorianist.wordpress.com/2016/02/01/the-love-that-dare-not-speak-its-name-queer-desire-in-the-mid-victorian-novel).

### **MARIAN HALCOMBE’S MOUSTACHE**

*The New York Times* for 26 February 2016 printed a piece by Julia Baird with the title ‘Sarah Palin’s Mustache’. It began by mentioning a minor furore over an unretouched photograph of Palin with “untended lip and eyebrow hair.” The piece then moved on to enquire “Why, in particular, do we stigmatize female facial hair so savagely? As Victorian literature reveals, women have long sported mustaches, and were not always judged so sorely for it.”

Amongst the various examples it quotes the line in *The Woman in White* describing Marian Halcombe where the “dark down on her upper lip was almost a mustache.” The full passage is:

Never was the old conventional maxim, that Nature cannot err, more flatly contradicted—never was the fair promise of a lovely figure more strangely and startlingly belied by the face and head that crowned it. The lady’s complexion was almost swarthy, and the dark down on her upper lip was almost a moustache. She had a large, firm, masculine mouth and jaw; prominent, piercing, resolute brown eyes; and thick, coal-black hair, growing unusually low down on her forehead.

### **ARMADALE IN ‘A GOOD READ’**

The long running BBC radio 4 series ‘A Good Read’ is from time to time repeated on Radio 4 Extra. The edition originally broadcast in 2001 was repeated on 29

February and featured Wilkie's own personal favourite, *Armadale*. The panel consisted of Louise Doughty, Patrick Gale and Michael White. They all appeared creditably knowledgeable about Collins and his background and their discussion ranged over feminist issues, the clever choice of names for the characters and mention of another "terrific novel", *The Woman in White*. Their final verdict on *Armadale* – a fabulous book!

### **WILLIAM COLLINS PAINTING**

A painting said to be by William Collins failed to sell at a Christie's sale in March. *Taking a turn at low tide* was catalogued as signed W. Collins R.A. with an estimate of £2,500-£3,500. But it failed to meet its reserve. Before the sale Christies downgraded the painting to 'circle of' William Collins after doubts were cast on its attribution on stylistic and other grounds. That means Christie's decided it was "a work of the period of the artist and showing his influence" but not by him. We know that many artists copied William Collins whose paintings for a time in the nineteenth century fetched as much as Constable. The picture appeared as Lot 30 and can now be seen on the internet at [www.christies.com/PDF/catalog/2016/KEN12308\\_SaleCat.pdf](http://www.christies.com/PDF/catalog/2016/KEN12308_SaleCat.pdf).

### **THE DEAD SECRET -A NEW MS EXTRACT**

A long extract from *The Dead Secret* in Wilkie's hand has been turned up by book dealer and Dickens specialist Jarndyce. The 440 word extract describing Miss Sturch is dated 14 May 1858 and was probably written for the wife of Collins's friend Joseph Stringfield, a Weston-super-Mare doctor with whom Wilkie was staying at the time prior to a sailing trip to Wales. Later Wilkie wrote many extracts from his books for fans and friends but this is the earliest example known and the only one from *The Dead Secret*. The £4,800 (+VAT) price reflects its rarity.

### **A PRE-RAPHAELITE TYPESCRIPT**

An unpublished typescript of more than 500 pages called 'History of the Pre-Raphaelite Movement' by Holman Hunt's daughter, Gladys (1876-1951; Mrs Michael Joseph) was sold at a Chiswick saleroom on 27 January. The document

probably dates from the late 1940s and contains some information about Charles Collins – including a hitherto unknown letter about his wedding clothes – and a mention or two of Wilkie and Mrs Collins. The typescript had an estimated sale price of between £100 and £200. But after fierce bidding it sold for an astonishing £2,800 which with premium would have cost the buyer almost £3,500. Nothing is known of the buyer or future plans for the document.

## **ORIGINAL COLLINS MANUSCRIPTS**

Two important manuscripts were sold by Bonham's in New York in April.

The manuscript of “Fie! Fie! or, The Fair Physician: (Edited, Under the Instructions of Mrs. Crossmichael),” which was originally sold after Wilkie's death in 1890, fetched \$17,500 (£12,341) including premium against an estimate of \$8,000-12,000. The 20pp manuscript contained extensive revisions as Wilkie's manuscripts always did. The story originally appeared in *The Spirit of the Times* in New York and *The Pictorial World Christmas Supplement* in 1882. The manuscript had been previously sold in 1923 and 1994.

“Fie! Fie!” was never published in England during Collins's lifetime. In fact, he wrote of this and ‘Love's Random Shot’ “These stories have served their purpose in periodicals, but are not worthy of republication in book form. They were written in a hurry, and the sooner they are drowned in the waters of oblivion the better. I desire that they shall not be republished after my death.” Both stories, however, were published in the *Complete Shorter Fiction* edited by Julian Thompson and published by Robinson Publishing in 1995.

The partial manuscript of the dramatic version of *The New Magdalen* which was much less well known sold for \$100,000 (£70,520) including premium against an estimate of \$60,000-80,000 in the same sale. The manuscript consisted of 160 leaves and covered most of the play except for part of Act III. The play was written in great haste to ensure that it could be performed and therefore copyrighted as soon as the story was published in *Temple Bar* of October 1872 - July 1873. It opened at the Olympic Theatre on 19 May 1873 with Ada Cavendish as Mercy Merrick and was a great success. It ran for four months before touring

the provinces and was also produced in New York as well as Paris, Rome, Berlin, and Vienna.

The details and some images can be seen on the Bonham's website for 'Fine Literature', 11 April 2016, New York, lots 4 and 5.

### **STUDIES ON HORROR AND THE GOTHIC**

'Palgrave Communications', an open access online-only journal, is inviting submissions and article proposals for a thematic collection dedicated to 'Studies in Horror and the Gothic'. The collection is Guest Edited by Dr John Edgar Browning (Georgia Institute of Technology, USA). The deadline for article proposals is 1 September 2016.

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