



THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

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# WILKIE COLLINS ON THE BBC 1926-2024

A 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary publication

by  
Paul Lewis



**HAUNTING**  
Will Laura (Olivia Vinall) be avenged in the final episode?

### The Woman in White

9.00pm **BBC1**

**DRAMA** A complex plot involving identification, guilt, shame and revenge resolves in the final episode of this adaptation of Wilkie Collins's classic novel and at last we see the mysterious scrivener, Erasmus Nash, come into his own. He's quietly been taking down testimony and witness statements from everyone closely involved in the sorry saga as a means of building a case against the wicked Sir Percival Glyde.

But Sir Percival (Dougray Scott) is driven by his need to protect a powerful secret, something that threatens to overwhelm him. Looking seedy and dissipated, he makes one last effort to protect himself from exposure.

As the threads of the story knit together, redoubtable Marian (Jessie Buckley) joins forces with Walter Hartright (Ben Hardy) to get their revenge on the men who conspired to steal Laura's fortune. But can all of that gothic gloom be lifted? **AG**

Radio Times 5 May 2018 p. 65

Wilkie Collins Society  
August 2024



THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE B.B.C

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Broadcasting During the Fourteen Days.

WITH the sudden and almost complete cessation of printed news during the first few days of the emergency, broadcasting immediately came to occupy a position of unprecedented importance in the life of the nation as the sole general channel of communication for news, official and otherwise. It is not easy to estimate what would have been the effect of the strike if there had been no such thing as wireless communication. For one thing, the whole country might have been a prey to panic. Even as it was, a large part of our service was devoted to tracking down and slaying false and dangerous rumours.

It was stated in some quarters that the B.B.C. had been commandeered by the Government. This was not the case actually or literally, though under the Emergency Regulations the Government would have been well within their powers if they had taken over Savoy Hill and the whole organization beyond, and had made broadcasting an official medium altogether, comparable with *The British Gazette*. We were bound, as we always have been bound, by the terms of the Licence under which we work, to act as a channel for official announcements, and during the strike these were received from various sources in the Government and when broadcast were duly announced as such. Even here, in some cases, our advice as to their form and delivery was invited and accepted.

That the Government abstained from taking the drastic step of definitely commandeering the B.B.C. was probably due to their realization that the B.B.C. could

be trusted, and that the confidence and goodwill which it had built up during three and a half years, through its record of sincerity and impartiality, was an asset to the cause of good citizenship not lightly to be discarded. Complete impartiality during the emergency was, in the circumstances, not to be expected. But we endeavoured throughout the emergency to preserve our tradition of accuracy and fair-play.

Information from Trade Union sources was not excluded. On the contrary, the speeches of Trade Union leaders both in Parliament and outside were given proportionate notice, and references were made to *The British Worker*, the official organ of the Council of the Trade Union Congress. In our news service our aim was to present a true and dispassionate account of the state of the country. Our special service of emergency news bulletins

given five times daily, with the co-operation of those responsible for official reports, and of the News Agencies, consistently gave the country a connected view of the progress of events. About thirty of the staff were absorbed in this task in relays from eight a.m. till midnight daily.

Certain of our correspondents have expressed some doubt as to the veracity of our news because they have happened to witness some act of rioting or violence which was not mentioned in any of our bulletins, but we would remind these critics that important as such incidents may appear in the locality in which they happen, they are not of sufficient general interest or importance to warrant inclusion in a brief survey of the national situation.

The special speakers who addressed the nation through the microphone during the week exercised, we believe, a moderating influence which was calculated to counteract any extremists on either side. Such was the tenor of the Prime Minister's speech, of the Archbishop's sermon, and of Lord Grey's talk. We have been criticised in some quarters for not having invited a representative Labour leader to speak, but in this connection it should be remembered in fairness to ourselves that our liberty of action was not complete.

For the rest of our programmes we conceived it as our duty to carry on "business as usual" as far as circumstances allowed. The service we thus performed in providing

HERE WE ARE AGAIN!!

WE regret that, owing to the strike, *The Radio Times*, in common with nearly every other weekly journal throughout the country, could not be printed last week. Peace has now been restored to the printing industry, and we are glad to be able to present ourselves to our readers again, though in a somewhat attenuated form. Next week we hope to do better. Owing, however, to its very large and widely distributed circulation, *The Radio Times* is obliged to go to press some considerable time ahead of publication; it will, therefore, take two or three weeks to get back to normal conditions. But like the rest of the country, we are doing our best!

The first mention of Wilkie Collins was in this issue of *Radio Times*, 21 May 1926

| SHEFFIELD PROGRAMMES.  |  | Week Beginning May 23rd.  |
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| <p><b>SUNDAY, May 23rd.</b></p> <p>3.30-6.0.—Programme S.B. from London.</p> <p>6.30-7.45.—SERVICE from CATHEDRAL. S.B. from Newcastle.</p> <p>8.10-10.30.—Programme S.B. from London.</p> <p><b>MONDAY, May 24th.</b></p> <p>10.0-11.0.—Whitsuntide Hymn Singing, relayed from Weston Park (Old Sheffield Custom).</p> <p>4.0.—Orchestra, relayed from the Grand Hotel.</p> <p>5.15.—FOR THE CHILDREN: Grand Holiday Empire Day Programme.</p> <p>6.0.—Musical Interlude.</p> <p>7.0.—Programme S.B. from London.</p> <p>7.40.—The Rev. G. J. JORDAN, D.D., Litt.D., "Psychology—(5) The Building of Character."</p> <p>8.0-11.0.—Programme S.B. from London.</p> <p><b>TUESDAY, May 25th.</b></p> <p>4.0.—Afternoon Topics.</p> <p>4.15.—Orchestra, relayed from the Café de Messrs. T. and J. Roberts.</p>                  |  | <p><b>FRIDAY, May 28th.</b></p> <p>11.30-12.30.—Gramophone Records.</p> <p>4.0.—Afternoon Topics.</p> <p>4.15.—<b>Tea-Time Concert.</b></p> <p>GERTRUDE GILPIN (Contralto).</p> <p>GEORGE JEFFERSON (Pianoforte).</p> <p>5.15.—FOR THE CHILDREN.</p> <p>6.0.—Musical Interlude.</p> <p>6.30-11.0.—Programme S.B. from London.</p> <p><b>SATURDAY, May 29th.</b></p> <p>4.0.—Afternoon Topics.</p> <p>4.15.—Orchestra, relayed from the Café de Messrs. T. and J. Roberts.</p> <p>5.15.—FOR THE CHILDREN: Hilda Kenyon (Pianoforte), Ian Nicholson (Songs), Vera Nichols (Recitations).</p> <p>6.0.—Musical Interlude.</p> <p>6.30.—David Milner and his Banjo, George Jefferson (Piano).</p> <p>7.0.—Programme S.B. from London.</p> <p>7.40.—"PETRONIUS."</p> <p>8.0-12.0.—Programme S.B. from London.</p> |
| <p>5.15.—FOR THE CHILDREN.</p> <p>6.0.—Mr. Desmond MacMahon, L.R.A.M., A.R.C.M., "Musical Appreciation—(4) Design in Music."</p> <p>6.30-12.0.—Programme S.B. from London.</p> <p><b>WEDNESDAY, May 26th.</b></p> <p>11.30-12.30.—Gramophone Records.</p> <p>4.0.—Mrs. A. Wainwright: (8) "Woman, Clothes and Economy."</p> <p>4.15.—Orchestra, relayed from the Grand Hotel.</p> <p>5.15.—FOR THE CHILDREN.</p> <p>6.0.—Musical Interlude.</p> <p>6.30.—Programme S.B. from London.</p> <p>7.0.—Programme S.B. from London.</p> <p>7.40.—The Rev. Canon W. ODOM, "Fourteen Years' Captivity of Mary, Queen of Scots, in Sheffield, 1570-1584—(6) From Sheffield to Wingfield, thence to the Scaffold."</p> <p>8.0.—THE SHOW WITH A NEW IDEA. "THE SMILESMITH'S REMARKABLE INVENTION." Written and Produced by JACK SAYES.</p> |  | <p>Music by JACK WOODS SMITH.</p> <p>Played by THREE OF THE LADS AND A LADY:</p> <p>JACK SAYES, JACK WOODS SMITH, CLIFFORD BRAN, DORIS NICHOLS.</p> <p>9.30.—Programme S.B. from London.</p> <p>10.0.—THE SHOW Continued.</p> <p>10.30-11.0.—Programme S.B. from London.</p> <p><b>THURSDAY, May 27th.</b></p> <p>4.0.—Afternoon Topics.</p> <p>4.15.—Orchestra, relayed from the Albert Hall.</p> <p>5.15.—FOR THE CHILDREN.</p> <p>6.0.—Musical Interlude.</p> <p>6.30.—Programme S.B. from London.</p> <p>7.40.—Mr. ERIC N. SIMONS: "Rambles Round a Library—(5) 'The Frozen Deep' (Wilkie Collins); 'The Open Boat' (Stephen Crane); 'Alroy and Ixion' (Benjamin Disraeli)."</p> <p>8.0-12.0.—Programme S.B. from London.</p>   |

Radio Times, 21 May 1926, p. 344, col. c: Thursday, May 27th, 7.40

## Wilkie Collins on the BBC

### Introduction

New research into the BBC's programme archives and *Radio Times* has turned up a great deal of new material by and about Wilkie Collins on BBC radio and television. From the earliest mention nearly 100 years ago to the most recent programmes celebrating the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth.

Sadly, almost all the historic dramas, readings, and discussions no longer exist, The very earliest were live and not recorded. Later, when recordings were made, the tapes were routinely re-used, destroying much precious material. And a cull of archives in the 1990s and early 2000s destroyed much more.

So what we have are shadows. Like Victorian playbills, we know what was broadcast and the names of those involved but for the years before the 1980s we only have a few survivors to tell us what they said and how they sounded.

### The early years

The very first mention of Wilkie Collins in *Radio Times* was on Thursday 27 May 1926 in a twelve-part series broadcast fortnightly called *Rambles Round a Library*.<sup>1</sup> The presenter – or speaker as it was called then – was Eric N. Simons. Programme 3 covered 'The Frozen Deep' by Wilkie Collins; 'The Open Boat' by Stephen Crane; and 'Alroy and Ixion' by Benjamin Disraeli. The 20-minute item was only found on the schedule of the Sheffield station known as 6FL. National broadcasting was confined to news, weather bulletins, and some music, with local stations producing most of their own material. Simons appeared more than 50 times on 6FL from 1924 to 1926, often talking about novelists and writers. He also wrote a novel himself *The Amazing Sanders* (Chatto & Windus, London: 1927). Little else is known about him. But he gave Wilkie Collins his first mention on the BBC less than four years after it began.<sup>2</sup>

A couple of years later on Tuesday 17 January 1928 Miss Ann Spice – as she was billed – talked on *The Woman in White*. That was the first mention of Wilkie Collins on the London station 2LO, also transmitted on Daventry 5XX. The 15-minute programme was number IX in her series 'A Bookshelf of Old Favourites'. She is quoted in *Radio Times* as saying

for sheer ingenuity of plot and creation of interest, Wilkie Collins is very hard to beat. 'The Woman in White' is not merely one of his most successful novels ; it is the 'starring vehicle' (as the film people would say) for Count Fosco--as attractive a villain as ever wrote the story of his life and crimes.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Radio Times*, 21 May 1926, p. 344c.

<sup>2</sup> The BBC was formed on 22 October 1922 and broadcasts began on 14 November. The first issue of *Radio Times* was 30 September 1923.

<sup>3</sup> *Radio Times* 13 January 1928 p. 66.

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|---|--|
|   | <p><b>8.0 'The Great St. Leger'</b><br/> A Radio Racing Feature<br/> by A. R. PARKER<br/> and G. H. DAYNE<br/> On the Course:<br/> Mr. Daniel Defoe<br/> General St. Leger<br/> Mrs. Sarah Siddons<br/> Mr. John Gully, a prize fighter<br/> Mr. Charles Dickens<br/> Mr. Wilkie Collins<br/> and various other notables and historic personages who assembled from time to time on the Town Moor at Doncaster<br/> The programme finishes with a recording of this afternoon's commentary on the race<br/> Produced by CECIL MCGIVERN<br/> (From Newcastle)</p> |
| <p>THE ST. LEGER AS IT WAS IN 1832<br/> Tonight at 8.0 a radio racing feature will introduce various historic figures who from time to time assembled on the Town Moor at Doncaster. The Programme will finish with a recording of this afternoon's commentary on the race.</p> |  |

Radio Times, 4 September 1936, p. 45.

The only other time Collins appeared before World War II was 9 September 1936 in a drama about the town of Doncaster in St. Leger week. It included his trip there with Charles Dickens who was pursuing the young actresses Ellen and Maria Ternan who were due to act in the town during race week. This is the first time Wilkie Collins appears as a character on radio.

### World War II and the 1950s

The first dramatisation of a Wilkie Collins novel was made in the middle of the war. The seven-part series of *The Woman in White*, adapted by Audrey Lucas and produced by Howard Rose, ran on the BBC Home Service at 7pm every Monday evening from 20 September to 15 November 1943. Billed at the start as six episodes it eventually ran to seven. There were also gaps of two weeks between episodes 4 and 5 and between 6 and 7. So it seems likely that Audrey Lucas was writing scripts just ahead of transmission, rather as Collins produced his serial stories, and had difficulty keeping up and squeezing the story into six episodes. Not only is this the first dramatisation, *Radio Times* also carried the first illustration of a Wilkie Collins piece.<sup>4</sup>

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|  | <p>Menuet.....Loupenn<br/> Gavotte.....Louis Marchand<br/> Sarabande<br/> Jacques Champion de Chambonnières<br/> Gigue d'Angleterre.....Le Bégué<br/> Sonatine.....Ravel</p> <p><b>1.50 FOR THE SCHOOLS</b><br/> FOR RURAL SCHOOLS<br/> (Scotland): 'What happens when<br/> ... a letter is posted', by George<br/> Scott Moncrieff</p> <p>2.10 app. Interval music</p> <p>2.15 STORIES FROM WORLD HISTORY.<br/> 'The Last Voyage of Henry<br/> Hudson', by Rhoda Power: how the<br/> great explorer sought the North-West<br/> Passage, and was cast adrift by muti-<br/> neers in the bay which bears his<br/> name</p> <p>Interval music</p> <p>2.35</p> <p>2.40 ORCHESTRAL CONCERT SERIES:<br/> 'Looking at the Score': John<br/> Horton gives an introductory talk,<br/> with illustrations, on what is in<br/> store for listeners this term</p> | <p><b>7.0 'THE WOMAN IN WHITE'</b><br/> by Wilkie Collins, adapted in six<br/> parts by Audrey Lucas. Produced<br/> by Howard Rose. Part 1</p> <p>Walter Hartright.....Terry Morgan<br/> Mrs. Hartright.....Ann Codrington<br/> Sarah Hartright.....Freda Falconer<br/> Professor Pesca.....Bernard Rebel<br/> Anne Catherick.....Lucille Lisle<br/> Marion Halcombe.....Joan Carol<br/> Laura Fairlie.....Belle Chrystall<br/> Mr. Fairlie.....Richard Williams<br/> Mrs. Vesey.....Gladys Spencer<br/> Louis.....Cyril Gardiner<br/> Manservant.....Preston Lockwood<br/> Cab-driver.....Foster Carlin<br/> Second man.....Heron Carvic</p> <p><b>7.30 BBC<br/> NORTHERN ORCHESTRA</b><br/> Conducted by Julius Harrison.<br/> Henry Cummings (baritone)<br/> Overture and Agamemnon's aria, Diana<br/> unforgiving (Iphigenia in Aulis).....Glück<br/> Pastorale d'été.....Honegger</p> |
|--|--|--|

'THE WOMAN IN WHITE' makes her first mysterious appearance in the opening instalment of the serial this evening at 7.0.

<sup>4</sup> *Radio Times*, 18 September 1943, p. 8.

The next dramatisation was of *The Moonstone* in 13 weekly episodes broadcast on the Home Service at 8.30 pm on Sundays from 11 August to 3 November 1946. and repeated Tuesday lunchtimes. Written by Jonquil Anthony and produced by Hugh Stewart it had a cast of 19 characters.<sup>5</sup>

This dramatisation of *The Moonstone* came just after its first appearance in the programmes for schools which ran on the Home Service in the afternoons. Senior English II included a three part 'book talk' where the story was read and discussed perhaps for a later examination.

Earlier that year schools had been treated to the first reading on BBC radio of a Wilkie Collins story when 'A Terribly Strange Bed' was given a 25-minute slot on 12 March 1946, also part of Senior English II, placed between half an hour of gramophone records and Choral Evensong from King's College, Cambridge.

**1.40 'YOU CAN'T RIDE THAT TRAIN'**  
Gramophone programme written by James Asman

**2.10 FOR THE SCHOOLS**  
HOW THINGS BEGAN. 'The First Stew Pots,' by Rhoda Power. The 'BBC Observer from the Past' visits a neolithic settlement in prehistoric Egypt, watches people making pottery, and sees the uses to which pots are put at a burial. (BBC recording)

2.35 SENIOR ENGLISH II. 'A Terribly Strange Bed': short story by Wilkie Collins, adapted by Silvia Goodall

**3.0 CHORAL EVENSONG**  
from the Chapel of King's College, Cambridge

The first major reading of a Wilkie Collins novel came a couple of years later when his longest book – and his own favourite – was read in sixteen 15-minute instalments. That would still represent only about one eighth of its 300,000 words. There was little fanfare, just a plain notice in *Radio Times*.<sup>6</sup>

**11.0 Time, Greenwich**  
**'ARMADALE'**  
An abridged version of the novel by Wilkie Collins, read as a serial in sixteen instalments by Philip Cunningham. Episode 1—'The Letter'

It ran on the Home Service from 11 April to 25 July 1948.

Nothing remains of these programmes. But from 17 January 1950 there is a rare survivor in the BBC Archives. 'Blow up with the Brig!' was another schools programme read by Bernard Miles with Stanley Mackenzie billed as the narrator. Adapted and produced by Philippa Pearce, the recording of the 20-minute programme is the earliest known Wilkie Collins story that still survives.

The 1950s went on to be a rich time for Wilkie Collins lovers. *Poor Miss Finch* was read in 15 parts at the end of *Woman's Hour* on the Light Programme in 1952 and *The*

<sup>5</sup> *Radio Times* 9 August 1946, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> *Radio Times* 9 April 1948, p. 8.

*Moonstone* was serialised that year for schools. *The Dream Woman*, *Mr Lepel and the Housekeeper* and *Miss Bertha and the Yankee* were a Book at Bedtime in the summer of 1954. *The Woman in White* and *The Dead Secret* were also on Woman's Hour on the Light programme in 1956 and 1957 as was *No Name* in 1958.

The drama department was also busy. A 12-episode dramatisation of *No Name* adapted by Howard Agg was broadcast on the Home Service in the summer of 1952 followed five years later by Agg's new dramatisation of *The Moonstone* in 11 parts.

Collins appeared in the talks department too. On the Home Service in 1955 Roy Herbert chose Count Fosco as 'My Favourite Villain'.

Count Fosco was a mountainous man. He never stopped eating sickly cakes, trifles, cream, and sugar. He would sit, overflowing the arms of his chair, letting his white mice run all over him. He was very partial to small animals but did not care a great deal for human beings. He believed that the body lies at the mercy of that most omnipotent of all potentates, the chemist. Chemistry aided him in his foul career.<sup>7</sup>

Robert Gladwell read the part of the villain and the programme was on at the suitably late hour of 10.45 pm. Three years later, Fosco was picked again, this time by the author Michael Innes as a favourite fictional character with Felix Hilton playing Fosco. And as the 1956 dramatisation of *The Woman in White* came to a close, Wilkie's first modern biographer Kenneth Robinson MP provided what *Radio Times* called 'a footnote to the recent serial'.<sup>8</sup>

The fifties closed with the first television adaptation of a Wilkie Collins book. *The Moonstone* burst onto black and white screens as the Sunday tea-time serial on 23 August 1959 at 5.40. It ran for seven Sundays until 27 September. Again, with a full cast this time with three Indians listed, at least two of whom seem to have been played by Indian actors. It was so successful it was repeated a year later.

Opposite: *Radio Times*, 24 August 1959, p. 5.



'THE MOONSTONE'—a new serial beginning on Sunday

The first English detective story, the first detective of English fiction, and a strong cast to re-create the exciting story of how the Brahmins attempt to regain possession of the huge diamond that has been taken from the forehead of an Indian god—these are the ingredients of the new Sunday serial which begins this week. Written by Wilkie Collins, less than a hundred years ago, *The Moonstone* has inspired thousands of writers to follow the classic formula and to create a whole new convention in popular literature. But even

today Collins can still be relied upon to provide excitement, mystery, and humour in a way that many of his imitators must envy. Although *The Moonstone* is based on a true story—the Road Hill Murder Case—Sergeant Cuff, 'the first English detective,' is a piece of pure fiction. Adapted by Lieut.-Colonel A. R. Rawlinson, who was also responsible for *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, *The Moonstone* stars Rachel Gurney and James Hayter (above) who incidentally will shortly be taking over the Stanley Holloway role in *My Fair Lady*.

<sup>7</sup> *Radio Times* 18 September 1955, p. 30. The penultimate sentence is taken from Fosco's own words in his account of the crimes at the end of *The Woman in White*.

<sup>8</sup> *Radio Times*, 20 January 1956, p. 23.

But at some point after that repeat the recordings of six of the seven episodes were lost, probably wiped over by someone trying to save money by re-using the expensive TV recording tapes. Only episode six remains in the archives, never seen since 1960.

### **The 1960s and 1970s**

We come now to thinner times. The decade started well in August 1960 with a 12-part dramatisation of, again, *The Woman in White* which was Howard Agg's third dramatisation of a Wilkie Collins book. It was followed a year later by *The Dream Woman* in a single episode.

Then came a 1964 drama of *No Thoroughfare*. Although lost by BBC Archives a tape of it was recently recovered by the enthusiasts of the Radio Circle, cleaned up, and given to the BBC. It is an adaptation by Mollie Hardwicke of the drama *No Thoroughfare* written by Wilkie Collins in 1867/68 from the story he and Dickens collaborated on for the 1867 Christmas Number of *All the Year Round*. The 90-minute play was originally broadcast on 18 July 1964 and repeated four days later. But it was nearly sixty years before it was heard again on Tuesday 26 March 2024 on Radio 4 Extra. It was available online for a month but has now been retired into the darkness of the archive. Hopefully it will see the light again soon.

The sixties closed as they began – with a Howard Agg 12-part drama of *The Woman in White* starting on 12 October 1969. The cast and producer were different. But the script may have been the same.

Readings didn't fare much better in these decades. But there was an extraordinary one of *The Woman in White* in fifty – yes 50 – parts. Split into three eras the 12-minute episodes were aired at 11:02pm each weekday. The first fifteen parts were read by Derek Hart starting on 18 October 1965. The next 20 were read by Mary Wimbush from 29 November. Then Derek Hart returned to read the final fifteen from 24 January to 11 February 1966. It was abridged by Donald Bancroft from the original 250,000 words probably to around 100,000. That surely makes it the longest radio adaptation of any of Wilkie's works. No trace of it remains.

Television did not return to Wilkie Collins until 1966 with a six part *The Woman in White* produced by the BBC's West region, which is now lost.

Six years later came a five part *The Moonstone* adapted by Hugh Leonard and directed by Paddy Russell starring Vivien Heilbron as Rachel Verinder, Robin Ellis as Franklin Blake, Martin Jarvis as Godfrey Ablewhite, Basil Dignam as Gabriel Betteredge, and Peter Sallis as Mr. Bruff. The recordings still exist and are the earliest surviving complete BBC TV adaptation of Wilkie Collins.



Opening credits for *The Moonstone*, BBC 1972

On radio, the seventies opened in January with a ten-part reading of *The Moonstone* adapted by Neville Teller and told by Robert Wallace as Betteredge. That summer *A Stolen Letter* followed in one part. But then there was a long blank period for readings until 1977 – a ten-part version of *The Dead Secret* in May was followed by a ten-part reading of *A Rogue's Life* in July and August.

Over in the drama department, a four-part *The Dead Secret* adapted by Frederick Bradnum was broadcast in July 1970 followed in October 1973 by a dramatisation of *No Name* in six parts by Elizabeth Bradbury. It starred Angela Pleasance as Magdalen Vanstone and Frank Thornton as Captain Wragge. Three years later *Mad Monkton* was dramatised as the eighth episode of a World Service production called *Murder International*.

I see the figure of a dark-complexioned man, standing up, with his head uncovered. One of his hands, still clutching a pistol, has fallen to his side; the other presses a bloody handkerchief to his mouth. And thus I have seen him ever since the moment of his death.<sup>9</sup>

Frederick Bradnum's 1970 adaptation of *The Dead Secret* may have inspired him to write a short biography of Collins called 'A Terribly Strange Man', first broadcast on 28 January 1971. It was described as a 'dramatised portrait of Wilkie Collins in 1868, his

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<sup>9</sup> *Radio Times*, 26 August 1976, quoting from the original story.



44<sup>th</sup> year'.<sup>10</sup> Haydn Jones played Collins with half a dozen actors playing other parts. It still exists in the archives, but it has not been broadcast since its only repeat in March 1973.

Before that programme, the fifth episode of a series called *The Other Victorians* was about opium taking in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It included Wilkie Collins – played by Ed Kelsey – but was mainly about the original Opium Eater, Thomas De Quincey (1785-1859). The episode has disappeared.

### **The rest of the twentieth century**

Thinner and thinner it gets with only a six-part drama of *No Name* in 1989 and then, more than eight years later, five of the stories from *Little Novels* were dramatised. All are in the archives.

A reading by David Markham of *The Dream Woman* in 3 parts in 1980 was introduced in *Radio Times* with this quote from the version in *The Queen of Hearts*.

What was the fair woman with the knife? The creature of a dream, or that other creature from the unknown world, called among men by the name of ghost?<sup>11</sup>

After that came *A Terribly Strange Bed* (1 part), *Mrs Zant and the Ghost* (3 parts) and a two-part *The Dead Hand*. They paved the way in the early 1980s for a 15-part Book at Bedtime reading of *Basil* from 24 October 1983. Five short stories at the end of 1989 closed the decade.

In 1987 *Britain Revisited* took “journeys in the footsteps of five literary travellers whose inquiring spirit found excitement in what to 20th-century eyes seems everyday.” And Episode 4 on 27 January found Anthony Burton with actor Anthony Hyde as Collins

Foot-slogging through Cornwall in 1850 with Wilkie Collins. 'You, who in these days of vehement bustle can still find time to travel for pleasure alone, patronise, I exhort you, the first and oldest established of all conveyances, your own legs...!'.<sup>12</sup>

Collins was also played as a character by John Baddeley in a life of Dickens. *The Best of Times, the Worst of Times* was a 1988 Radio 4 essay on of Dickens in his home at Tavistock House. And in September 1989 David Suchet took on the role in two dramas by Michael Bakewell about Collins to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death. The Dickens survives in the archives as does part 1 of the drama.

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<sup>10</sup> Wilkie became 44 years old on 8 January 1868 so technically this was his 45<sup>th</sup> year.

<sup>11</sup> *Radio Times* 6 November 1980, 12 November, Radio 4.

<sup>12</sup> Wilkie Collins, *Rambles Beyond Railways*, 1851 Chapter III – slightly adapted.

Television dramatised *The Woman in White* in five parts for BBC 1 in 1982 starring Diana Quick, Ian Richardson, Jenny Seagrove, John Shrapnel, and Alan Badel. But it waited fourteen years to do the next TV adaptations – a two part *The Moonstone* in 1996 and in 1997 a two part *The Woman in White*. They clearly thought the attention span of audiences had almost vanished.



*Radio Times*, 21 December 1996, p. 146.

Back on the radio, the crime Writer P D James, who was the Wilkie Collins Society Patron until her death in 2014, “Examines why *The Moonstone* still exerts an influence over crime writers” on Radio 4 in 1994. In 1998 *The Man in White* by Martyn Wade is set in 1858 and has “fun with the novelist Wilkie Collins, who’s having a spell of writer's block.” Something he never suffered from.

### **The 21<sup>st</sup> century**

The only Wilkie Collins stories read on the radio in the noughties were *Who Killed Zebedee* in 2003, *The Woman in White* in 2004, and *A Terribly Strange Bed* in 2009. It

wasn't until 2019 that *Mrs Badgery* was let out in a reading that is still available. So far, she remains the last the BBC has done.

Radio dramatisations were more common – *The Woman in White* in four parts in 2001, adapted by Martyn Wade, part of *The Law and the Lady* in a series on Lady Detectives in 2005, a two part *Basil* in 2006, followed by a five part *A House to Let* – parts of which were written by Wilkie Collins – at the end of that year.

*No Name* was squeezed into two 2 parts in 2007 and *Armadale* positively squashed into three in 2009, while *The Moonstone* got four in 2011. *The Haunted Hotel* and *The Dream Woman* were one-parters in May 2012 and February 2013. And that marked the start of the long drought to the present day.

There has been more interest from the factual departments with 30 programmes since 2000 about or featuring Wilkie Collins. A dramatisation of Dickens's story *The Bride's Chamber* – part of *The Lazy Tour* – featured Alan Cox as Wilkie. Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical of *The Woman in White* brought several interviews as did the biographies by Peter Ackroyd and Andrew Lycett. The most recent were two programmes for his 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary in December 2023 and January 2024.

Contributors over these decades included Mathew Sweet, Roy Hattersley, Andrew Lloyd Webber, Mariella Frostrup, Peter Ackroyd, whose biography was book of the week in 2012. Even the author of this research appeared a few times.

On TV there were five-parters of *The Moonstone* and *The Woman in White* in 2016 and 2018. The writers decided not to cram the story into a couple of episodes and gave both stories more room to breathe. But there has been nothing since.

## **Analysis**

The BBC has made a total of 31 radio dramas from 19 different titles. Some such as *The Moonstone* and *The Woman in White* have appeared multiple times but most just once. There have been 38 radio readings of 19 titles with similar biases. Combined, 29 of Wilkie's titles have been read or dramatised on BBC radio. Six novels have been both dramatised and read, two just dramatised and two more just read. Of the 19 story titles three have been both dramatised and read, and of the rest eight each have been just dramatised or just read. In addition, there have been 55 discussions, dramas, reviews, interviews, talks, biographies, readings, and even one comedy which all have some Wilkie Collins content.

Television has been much more restrained. There have been just eight dramatisations – four each of *The Moonstone* and *The Woman in White*. In 1981 BBC1 also broadcast the 1948 film of *The Woman in White*, directed by Peter Godfrey and starring Eleanor Parker and Gig Young. Only another eleven TV programmes even mentioning Wilkie

Collins have been traced, including two editions of *Mastermind* (1997 and 2014), book battles between Collins and Dickens – the latter won in both 2003 and 2004 – and one showing of the film *The Invisible Woman* based on Claire Tomalin’s biography of Dickens’s lover Ellen Ternan with Tom Hollander as Wilkie Collins. The reconstruction of the walking trip Collins did with Henry Brandling – *The Countryman* in 1975 – remains the most substantial of these using the words of *Rambles beyond Railways* with a modern commentary. It is in the BBC Archives.

The table below summarises the findings of this research.

| BBC RADIO AND TV BROADCASTS OF WILKIE COLLINS’S WORKS OR ABOUT WILKIE COLLINS   |       |             |     |            |        |            |
|---|-------|-------------|-----|------------|--------|------------|
| —   |       |             |     |            |        |            |
| AVAILABILITY IN ARCHIVES AND ONLINE   |       |             |     |            |        |            |
|   |       | In Archives |     |            | Online |            |
|   | Total | No          | Yes | % in Arch. | Number | % of Arch. |
| <b>RADIO</b>  |       |             |     |            |        |            |
| Drama   | 31    | 10          | 21  | 68%        | 1      | 5%         |
| Readings*   | 40    | 27          | 13  | 33%        | 1      | 8%         |
| About etc~  | 55    | 24          | 31  | 56%        | 17     | 55%        |
| * The 3-part <i>The Woman in White</i> (1965/66) is listed as three items<br>~ The 5-part reading of Ackroyd’s biography is listed as one item                          |       |             |     |            |        |            |
| <b>TELEVISION</b>   |       |             |     |            |        |            |
| Drama**   | 9     | 2^          | 7   | 78%        | 0      | 0%         |
| About etc~~   | 11    | 0           | 11  | 100%       | 0      | 0%         |
| ** includes the 1948 film <i>The Woman in White</i> .<br>^ The <i>Moonstone</i> (1959) is missing bar 1 episode<br>~~ Includes the 2013 film <i>The Invisible Woman</i> |       |             |     |            |        |            |

Appendix I has two summary tables of radio dramatisations and readings. Appendix II has the full tables of the Radio and TV productions on the BBC chronologically in each category. Please report any additions or corrections through the Wilkie Collins Society website contact page.<sup>13</sup>

### Listening now

A search for Wilkie Collins on BBC Sounds finds nine programmes about or mentioning him from *Spotlight* in 1999 to *The Wilkie Collins Guide to Modern Life* of 2024.<sup>14</sup> Only one story – *Mrs Badgery* from 2019 – is included.

More programmes are found by searching the oddly named BBC genome.<sup>15</sup> Press the ‘playable programmes’ slider to find a list of 38 items – some duplicates or irrelevant – which can be listened to including another story – *A House To Let* – which was the 1858

<sup>13</sup> [wilkiecollinssociety.org/contact](http://wilkiecollinssociety.org/contact).

<sup>14</sup> [www.bbc.co.uk/sounds](http://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds).

<sup>15</sup> [genome.ch.bbc.co.uk](http://genome.ch.bbc.co.uk).

Christmas number for *Household Words*. Collins wrote two parts of that and wrote a third jointly with Dickens, though the boundaries are not clear in this five-part reading. The others are mainly factual programmes or mentions of Collins in, for example, the pianist John Ogdon's 1989 *Desert Island Discs* when his chosen book was *The Moonstone*. There are also nine BBC Sounds episodes of *Shedunnit* with Caroline Crampton which mention his novels.

There is only one programme listed with Collins as a character, played by Ben Crowe. *What Walls Hold* is about Dickens's home Tavistock House and joins the cast of Wilkie's play *The Frozen Deep* as they rehearse before Christmas in 1856 (said to be 1851 in the programme).

The four-part *The Woman in White* first broadcast in 2001 was given another outing on BBC Radio 4 Extra for Wilkie's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday starting on Monday 8 January 2024. It had previously been repeated in 2008 and 2011. See [www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b007jlgx](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b007jlgx) for details. It is sadly not currently playable but it is available as an audiobook.

Since then, the BBC has not pulled out any more archive material specifically for Wilkie's 200<sup>th</sup> year. It is worth keeping an eye on Radio 4 Extra schedules which dive into the archives and occasionally fish out a Wilkie Collins drama or reading. Once broadcast there they are normally available for 30 days on BBC Sounds to listen to or download.

All the TV adaptations from 1982 are available on DVDs and *The Woman in White* from 2018 is currently on Netflix and for a while was trending in the top ten.

## Sources

This research has drawn on the excellent online index to *Radio Times* and BBC programmes recently made available on the internet by the BBC, supplemented by the author's own research in the BBC archives.<sup>16</sup>

There have been few previous listings of adaptations of Wilkie Collins on radio and television. Andrew Gasson's *Illustrated Guide* (1998) listed some,<sup>17</sup> and in 2006 Rachel Malik wrote an analysis of TV, film, and radio adaptations but did not attempt a formal listing.<sup>18</sup> The present author's 'Wilkie on the Airwaves' published in December 2005 by

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<sup>16</sup> Radio Times is free online at [genome.ch.bbc.co.uk/issues](http://genome.ch.bbc.co.uk/issues) and lists programme information as well as images of original editions before 1960. BBC Archives of programmes requires registration <https://archivesearch.tools.bbc.co.uk>.

<sup>17</sup> Andrew Gasson, *Wilkie Collins – An Illustrated Guide*, Oxford 1998 pp. 129, 145.

<sup>18</sup> Rachel Malik, 'The Afterlife of Wilkie Collins' in Jenny Bourne Taylor (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Wilkie Collins* Cambridge, 2006, pp. 181-193.

the Wilkie Collins Society did attempt to be comprehensive but in fact missed many items which now been identified.<sup>19</sup>

## APPENDIX I

### BBC Radio productions of short stories and novels – dramatisations and readings

| <b>BBC RADIO PRODUCTIONS OF WILKIE COLLINS STORIES</b> |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>First Transmission</b>                              |  |   |
| <b>NOVELS</b>  |  |   |
| <b>Drama and Reading</b>                               | <b>Drama</b>   | <b>Reading</b>  |
| Armadale   | 7 June 2009  | 11 April 1948   |
| Basil  | 18 June 2006   | 24 October 1983   |
| No Name  | 15 June 1952<br>7 October 1973<br>24 September 1989<br>10 June 2007                                | 19 June 1958  |
| The Dead Secret  | 12 July 1970   | 4 May 1957<br>9 May 1977  |
| The Moonstone  | 11 August 1946<br>9 February 1956 (extract)<br>31 March 1957<br>14 October 1979<br>23 January 2011 | 27 November 1945<br>25 June 1946<br>23 September 1952<br>26 January 1970<br>20 July 2003 (extract)                            |
| The Woman in White                                     | 20 September 1943<br>11 September 1960<br>12 October 1969<br>11 November 2001                      | 20 May 1947 (extract)<br>24 June 1948 (extract)<br>2 January 1956<br>24 September 1957<br>18 October 1965<br>10 December 2004 |
| <b>Drama only</b>                                      | <b>Drama</b>   |   |
| The Haunted Hotel                                      | 26 May 2012  |   |
| The Law and the Lady                                   | 24 January 2005  |   |
| <b>Reading only</b>                                    |  | <b>Reading</b>  |
| A Rogue's Life   |  | 30 July 1979  |
| Poor Miss Finch  |  | 31 May 1952   |

<sup>19</sup> Paul Lewis, 'Wilkie on the Airwaves – Part I' is available online – search the title at [wilkiecollinssociety.org](http://wilkiecollinssociety.org)

| <b>BBC RADIO PRODUCTIONS OF WILKIE COLLINS STORIES</b> |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <b>First Transmission</b>                              |  |  |
| <b>SHORT STORIES</b>                                   |  |  |
| <b>Drama and Reading</b>                               | <b>Drama</b>   | <b>Reading</b>   |
| A Terribly Strange Bed                                 | 26 June 1988 (Welsh)<br>22 August 1989 (experimental<br>not transmitted) | 12 March 1946<br>26 September 1975<br>21 May 1982<br>17 November 1989<br>14 October 2009 |
| Miss Bertha and the Yankee                             | 21 January 1998  | 29 July 1954   |
| The Dream Woman  | 19 July 1961<br>13 February 2013   | 12 July 1954<br>12 November 1980<br>3 November 1989                                      |
| <b>Drama only</b>                                      | <b>Drama</b>   |  |
| A House to Let   | 11 December 2006   |  |
| Mad Monkton  | 1 September 1976   |  |
| Miss Jéromette and the Clergyman                       | 7 January 1998   |  |
| Miss Morris and the Stranger                           | 28 January 1998  |  |
| Mr Marmaduke and the Minister                          | 14 January 1998  |  |
| Mr Percy and the Prophet                               | 21 November 1998   |  |
| Mr Policeman and the Cook                              | 31 December 1997   |  |
| No Thoroughfare  | 18 July 1964   |  |
| <b>Reading only</b>                                    |  | <b>Reading</b>   |
| A Stolen Letter  |  | 20 July 1970<br>24 November 1989 (as The)  |
| Blow up with the Brig!                                 |  | 17 January 1950<br>5 June 1956   |
| Mr Lepel and the Housekeeper                           |  | 19 July 1954   |
| Mrs Badgery  |  | 26 April 2019  |
| Mrs Zant and the Ghost                                 |  | 18 August 1982   |
| The Biter Bit  |  | 10 November 1989   |
| The Dead Hand  |  | 6 January 1983<br>1 December 1989  |
| Who Killed Zebedee?                                    |  | 13 October 2003  |

## APPENDIX II

### Chronological list of BBC productions relating to Wilkie Collins

- Radio
  - dramatisations
  - readings
  - discussions, dramas, reviews, interviews, biographies, misc.
- Television
  - dramatisations
  - biographies, talks, discussions, quizzes

| BBC RADIO – DRAMATISATIONS |                           |              |                            |                         |                 |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Start date                 | Title                     | Parts        | Adapter/ Actors            | Channel                 | BBC Archives    |
| 20 September 1943          | <i>The Woman in White</i> | 7 weekly     | Audrey Lucas               | Home Service            | NO              |
| 11 August 1946             | <i>The Moonstone</i>      | 13 weekly    | Jonquil Anthony            | Home Service            | NO              |
| 15 June 1952               | <i>No Name</i>            | 12 weekly    | Howard Agg                 | Home Service            | NO              |
| 9 February 1956            | <i>The Moonstone</i>      | Extract only | Marion McWilliam, Ian Ball | Home Service            | NO              |
| 31 March 1957              | <i>The Moonstone</i>      | 11 weekly    | Howard Agg                 | Home Service            | NO              |
| 11 September 1960          | <i>The Woman in White</i> | 12 weekly    | Howard Agg                 | Home Service            | NO              |
| 19 July 1961               | <i>The Dream Woman</i>    | 1            | Derek Hoddinott            | Home Service            | NO              |
| 18 July 1964               | <i>No Thoroughfare</i>    | 1            | Mollie Hardwicke           | Home Service            | YES (RECOVERED) |
| 12 October 1969            | <i>The Woman in White</i> | 12 weekly    | Howard Agg new production  | Radio 4                 | NO              |
| 12 July 1970               | <i>The Dead Secret</i>    | 4 weekly     | Frederick Bradnum          | Radio 4                 | NO              |
| 7 October 1973             | <i>No Name</i>            | 6 weekly     | Elizabeth Bradbury         | Radio 4                 | NO              |
| 1 September 1976           | <i>Mad Monkton</i>        | 1            | Michael Robson             | Radio 4 (World Service) | YES             |
| 14 October 1979            | <i>The Moonstone</i>      | 6 weekly     | Brian Gear                 | Radio 4                 | YES             |



|   |  |          |                 |                |            |
|---|--|----------|-----------------|----------------|------------|
| 26 June 1988                                  | <i>Y Gwely Rhyfeddaf Fyth (A Terribly Strange Bed)</i> |          | Unknown         | Radio Cymru    | YES        |
| 22 August 1989<br>(recorded, not transmitted) | <i>A Terribly Strange Bed</i> (experimental drama)     | 1        | Peter Fozzard   | Radio 5 trials | YES        |
| 22 September 1989                             | <i>No Name</i>   | 6 weekly | Ray Jenkins     | Radio 4        | YES        |
| 31 December 1997                              | <i>Mr Policeman and the Cook</i>                       | 1        | John Arden      | Radio 4        | YES        |
| 7 January 1998                                | <i>Miss Jéromette and the Clergyman</i>                | 1        | John Arden      | Radio 4        | YES        |
| 14 January 1998                               | <i>Mr Marmaduke and the Minister</i>                   | 1        | John Arden      | Radio 4        | YES        |
| 21 January 1998                               | <i>Miss Bertha and the Yankee</i>                      | 1        | John Arden      | Radio 4        | YES        |
| 28 January 1998                               | <i>Miss Morris and the Stranger</i>                    | 1        | John Arden      | Radio 4        | YES        |
| 21 November 1998                              | <i>Mr Percy and the Prophet</i>                        | 1        | John Arden      | Radio 4        | YES        |
| 11 November 2001                              | <i>The Woman in White</i>                              | 4 weekly | Martyn Wade     | Radio 4        | YES        |
| 24 January 2005                               | <i>The Law and the Lady</i>                            | 1        | Roger Danes     | Radio 4        | YES        |
| 18 June 2006                                  | <i>Basil</i>   | 2 weekly | Robin Brooks    | Radio 4        | YES        |
| 11 December 2006                              | <i>A House To Let</i>                                  | 5 daily  | Martyn Wade     | Radio 4        | YES ONLINE |
| 10 June 2007                                  | <i>No Name</i>   | 2 weekly | John Fletcher   | Radio 4        | YES        |
| 7 June 2009                                   | <i>Armada</i>  | 3 weekly | Robin Brooks    | Radio 4        | YES        |
| 23 January 2011                               | <i>The Moonstone</i>                                   | 4 weekly | Doug Lucie      | Radio 4        | YES        |
| 26 May 2012                                   | <i>The Haunted Hotel</i>                               | 1        | Rod Beacham     | Radio 4        | YES        |
| 13 February 2013                              | <i>The Dream Woman</i>                                 | 1        | Derek Hoddinott | Radio 4        | YES        |

| <b>BBC RADIO – READINGS</b> |   |              |                                |                                    |                     |
|-----------------------------|---|--------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Start date</b>           | <b>Title</b>  | <b>Parts</b> | <b>Adapter/ Reader</b>         | <b>Channel</b>                     | <b>BBC Archives</b> |
| 27 November 1945            | <i>The Moonstone</i> (extract)                          | 1            | Penelope Knox                  | Home Service, Schools              | NO                  |
| 12 March 1946               | A Terribly Strange Bed                                  | 1            | Sylvia Goodall                 | Home Service, Schools              | NO                  |
| 25 June 1946                | <i>The Moonstone</i> (extracts incl. 27/ 11/ 45 part 1) | 3 weekly     | Penelope Knox                  | Home Service, Schools              | NO                  |
| 20 May 1947                 | <i>The Woman in White</i> (extract)                     | 1            | –                              | Light Programme, Forces            | NO                  |
| 11 April 1948               | <i>Armada</i>   | 15 weekly    | Philip Cunningham              | Home Service                       | NO                  |
| 24 June 1948                | <i>The Woman in White</i> (extracts)                    | 1            |                                | Light Programme, Forces            | NO                  |
| 17 January 1950             | <i>Blow up with the Brig!</i>                           | 1            | Philippa Pearce, Bernard Miles | Home Service, Schools              | YES                 |
| 31 March 1952               | <i>Poor Miss Finch</i>                                  | 15 daily     | Ursula Torday/ Helen Burns     | Light Programme, Woman's Hour      | NO                  |
| 23 September 1952           | <i>The Moonstone</i>                                    | 6 weekly     | Penelope Knox                  | Home Service, Schools              | NO                  |
| 12 July 1954                | <i>The Dream Woman</i>                                  | 5 daily      | Wilfred Babbage                | Light Programme, A Book at Bedtime | NO                  |
| 19 July 1954                | <i>Mr Lepel and the Housekeeper</i>                     | 5 daily      | James McKechnie                | Light Programme, A Book at Bedtime | NO                  |

|                   |                                    |                          |                                   |                                    |    |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|----|
| 26 July 1954      | <i>Miss Bertha and the Yankee</i>  | 5 daily                  | Patricia Field                    | Light Programme, A Book at Bedtime | NO |
| 2 January 1956    | <i>The Woman in White</i>          | 15 weekdays over 3 weeks | Donald Bancroft/<br>Derek Hart    | Light Programme                    | NO |
| 5 June 1956       | <i>Blow up with the Brig!</i>      | 1                        | John Slater                       | Home Service, Schools              | NO |
| 4 February 1957   | <i>The Dead Secret</i>             | 15 weekdays over 3 weeks | Becky Cocking/<br>Derek Hart      | Light Programme, Woman's Hour      | NO |
| 24 September 1957 | <i>The Woman in White</i>          | 6 weekly                 | Sylvia Goodall                    | Home Service, Schools              | NO |
| 19 June 1958      | <i>No Name</i>                     | 15 weekdays over 3 weeks | Donald Bancroft/<br>Derek Hart    | Light Programme, Woman's Hour      | NO |
| 18 October 1965   | <i>The Woman in White (part 1)</i> | 15 weekdays over 3 weeks | Donald Bancroft/<br>Derek Hart    | Home Service                       | NO |
| 29 November 1965  | <i>The Woman in White (part 2)</i> | 20 weekdays over 4 weeks | Donald Bancroft/<br>Mary Wimbush  | Home Service                       | NO |
| 24 January 1966   | <i>The Woman in White (part 3)</i> | 15 weekdays over 3 weeks | Donald Bancroft/<br>Derek Hart    | Home Service                       | NO |
| 26 January 1970   | <i>The Moonstone</i>               | 10 weekly                | Neville Teller/<br>Robert Wallace | Radio 4                            | NO |
| 20 July 1970      | <i>A Stolen Letter</i>             | 1                        | Terence Tiller/<br>Norman Shelley | Radio 4                            | NO |
| 26 September 1975 | <i>A Terribly Strange Bed</i>      | 1                        | –                                 | Radio 4, Schools                   | NO |

|                  |                                   |                          |                                     |                          |     |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----|
| 9 May 1977       | <i>The Dead Secret</i>            | 10 weekdays over 2 weeks | Neville Teller/<br>David March      | Radio 4, Story Time      | NO  |
| 30 July 1979     | <i>A Rogue's Life</i>             | 10 weekdays over 2 weeks | Elizabeth Bradbury/<br>Bob Grant    | Radio 4, Story Time      | NO  |
| 12 November 1980 | <i>The Dream Woman</i>            | 3 daily                  | Maurice Leitch/<br>David Markham    | Radio 4                  | NO  |
| 21 May 1982      | <i>A Terribly Strange Bed</i>     | 1                        | –                                   | Radio 4, Schools         | YES |
| 18 August 1982   | <i>Mrs Zant and the Ghost</i>     | 3 daily                  | Maurice Leitch/<br>Stephen Murray   | Radio 4, Book at Bedtime | NO  |
| 6 January 1983   | <i>The Dead Hand</i>              | 2 daily                  | Robbi Pengelly/<br>Stephen Murray   | Radio 4                  | NO  |
| 24 October 1983  | <i>Basil</i>                      | 15 weekdays over 3 weeks | Edward de Souza                     | Radio 4, Book at Bedtime | YES |
| 3 November 1989  | <i>The Dream Woman</i>            | 1                        | Michael Bakewell/<br>David Suchet   | Radio 4                  | YES |
| 10 November 1989 | <i>The Biter Bit</i>              | 1                        | Michael Bakewell/<br>John Rowe      | Radio 4                  | YES |
| 17 November 1989 | <i>A Terribly Strange Bed</i>     | 1                        | Michael Bakewell/<br>Paul Daneman   | Radio 4                  | YES |
| 24 November 1989 | <i>The Stolen Letter</i>          | 1                        | Michael Bakewell/<br>Garard Green   | Radio 4                  | YES |
| 1 December 1989  | <i>The Dead Hand</i>              | 1                        | Michael Bakewell/<br>Peter Marinker | Radio 4                  | YES |
| 20 July 2003     | Reading from <i>The Moonstone</i> | 1 (extract)              | David Collins                       | Radio 4                  | YES |
| 13 October 2003  | <i>Who Killed Zebedee?</i>        | 2 daily                  | Joanne Reardon/<br>Ronald Pickup    | BBC 7                    | YES |

|                  |                               |          |                                 |         |            |
|------------------|-------------------------------|----------|---------------------------------|---------|------------|
| 10 December 2004 | <i>The Woman in White</i>     | 8 weekly | Paul Kent/<br>Dougray Scott     | Radio 2 | YES        |
| 14 October 2009  | <i>A Terribly Strange Bed</i> | 2 daily  | Robin Bailey/<br>Clive Stanhope | BBC 7   | YES        |
| 26 April 2019    | <i>Mrs Badgery</i>            | 1        | Christopher Harper              | Radio 4 | YES ONLINE |

| <b>BBC RADIO – DISCUSSIONS, DRAMAS, REVIEWS, INTERVIEWS, BIOGRAPHIES, MISC.</b> |   |   |                                |                             |                     |
|---|---|---|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Start date</b>   | <b>Title</b>  | <b>Description</b>  | <b>Series</b>                  | <b>Channel</b>              | <b>BBC Archives</b> |
| 27 May 1926   | (3) <i>The Frozen Deep</i> (Wilkie Collins)           | A talk about books  | Rambles Round a Library        | 6FL Sheffield               | NO                  |
| 17 January 1928   | IX, " <i>The Woman in White</i> ," by Wilkie Collins' | Wilkie Collins is very hard to beat                                       | 'A Bookshelf of Old Favourites | 2LO London and 5XX Daventry | NO                  |
| 9 September 1936  | The Great St Leger                                    | Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins, and others on the Town Moor at Doncaster | Radio Racing feature           | Northern and 5NO Newcastle  | NO                  |
| 15 October 1945   | <i>The Woman in White</i>                             | Colin Brooks talks on the book and Collins                                | Forces Educational Broadcast   | Light Programme             | NO                  |
| 31 August 1947  | Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins in Cornwall        | –   | Writers and Places             | Home Service – West         | NO                  |
| 11 June 1949  | <i>The Moonstone</i> by Wilkie Collins                | Review  | New Books and Old Books        | Light Programme             | NO                  |
| 21 September 1955   | Roy Herbert chooses Count Fosco                       | An analysis of Fosco  | My Favourite Villain           | Home Service                | NO                  |

|                 |   |  |  |                   |     |
|-----------------|---|--|--|-------------------|-----|
| 24 January 1956 | The Mystery of Wilkie Collins and <i>The Woman in White</i>                         | A footnote to the recent serial with Kenneth Robinson                            | Woman's Hour   | Light Programme   | NO  |
| 6 July 1958     | Favourite Characters  | Michael Innes picks Count Fosco played by Felix Felton                           | Writers of today present favourite characters in fiction | Home Service      | NO  |
| 17 June 1962    | A Painful Stay in Aldeburgh   | Background to <i>No Name</i>   | Maurice Hussey talks about the Suffolk sea coast         | Home Service West | NO  |
| 28 January 1971 | A Terribly Strange Man  | Dramatised portrait of Collins in 1868   | Frederick Bradnum with Haydn Jones as Wilkie             | Radio 4           | YES |
| 11 May 1972     | The Opium Eaters Eric Ewens   | Mainly about Thomas De Quincey but also Wilkie Collins played by Edward Kelsey   | The Other Victorians                                     | Radio 4           | NO  |
| 23 April 1982   | BBCTv <i>The Woman in White</i>   | Review with Sheridan Morley  | Kaleidoscope   | Radio 4           | NO  |
| 1 May 1982      | BBCTv <i>The Woman in White</i>   | Review   | Critics Forum  | Radio 3           | NO  |
| 27 January 1987 | 4: Cliff-paths and Copper Mines - Anthony Burton and Anthony Hyde as Wilkie Collins | In the footsteps of literary travellers – follows <i>Rambles Beyond Railways</i> | Britain Revisited  | Radio 4           | YES |

|                   |   |  |  |         |            |
|-------------------|---|--|--|---------|------------|
| 22 May 1988       | 6. Another Sort of Life                                   | Dramatised life of Dickens – includes John Baddelly as Wilkie Collins                  | The Best of Times the Worst of Times               | Radio 4 | YES        |
| 20 September 1989 | Wilkie Collins 1: The author of <i>The Woman in White</i> | Centenary of death biography with David Suchet as Wilkie Collins                       | The Wednesday Feature                              | Radio 4 | YES        |
| 24 September 1989 | John Ogdon  | The pianist chooses <i>The Moonstone</i> as his book                                   | Desert Island Discs                                | Radio 4 | YES ONLINE |
| 27 September 1989 | Wilkie Collins 2: Appearances not always to be Trusted    | See part 1 20 September 1989   | The Wednesday Feature                              | Radio 4 | NO         |
| 9 October 1989    | <i>No Name</i> on Radio 4                                 | Review of the new dramatisation  | Kaleidoscope                                       | Radio 4 | NO         |
| 15 September 1994 | Classic Storylines  | P D James examines why <i>The Moonstone</i> still exerts an influence on crime writers | -  | Radio 4 | YES        |
| 8 April 1998      | 3. The Doctors  | Leslie Forbes on Wilkie Collins and Thackeray being indebted to their doctors          | Dedicated to – the stories behind book dedications | Radio 4 | YES        |
| 9 August 1998     |   | Adam Thorpe's new book <i>Pieces of Light</i> evokes Wilkie Collins                    | Open Book  | Radio 4 | YES        |

|                  |                                 |  |                            |               |            |
|------------------|---------------------------------|--|----------------------------|---------------|------------|
| 3 September 1998 | 3. The Man in White             | Comic fun with Collins and writer's block in 1858  | Bookcases                  | Radio 4       | YES        |
| 1 April 1999     |                                 | Discussion of <i>The Moonstone</i> , <i>Mr Percy and the Prophet</i> , and <i>The Woman in White</i>                       | Spotlight                  | World Service | YES ONLINE |
| 1 May 2001       |                                 | Interview with James Wilson on his sequel to <i>The Woman in White</i>   | Nightwaves with Paul Allen | Radio 3       | NO         |
| 21 November 2002 | 4. Wilkie Collins               | Writers who gained their inspiration through long walks  | Thinking on their feet     | Radio 4       | YES        |
| 19 March 2004    |                                 | Charlotte Jones who helped write the musical <i>The Woman in White</i>   | Front Row                  | Radio 4       | NO         |
| 25 June 2004     | The Bride's Chamber             | Adaptation by Michael Eaton of ghost story in <i>The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices</i> . Alan Cox plays Wilkie Collins | Afternoon Play             | Radio 4       | YES        |
| 24 August 2004   | 1 of 2 The Man Behind the Music | John Barrowman interviews him as his musical <i>The Woman in White</i> opens next month                                    | Andrew Lloyd Webber        | Radio 2       | YES        |



|                   |   |  |                  |         |            |
|-------------------|---|--|------------------|---------|------------|
| 3 September 2004  | Wilkie Collins's Women                        | Martha Kearney with Catherine Peters, Sonia Friedman   | Woman's Hour     | Radio 4 | YES        |
| 16 September 2004 | Review  | Mark Lawson reports on opening night of musical <i>The Woman in White</i>                                      | Front Row        | Radio 4 | YES        |
| 20 September 2004 | <i>The Woman in White</i> – Maria Friedman    | Edward Seckerson talks to her, and she sings songs from musical <i>The Woman in White</i>                      | Stage and Screen | Radio 3 | YES        |
| 22 June 2005      | Discussion                                    | Kirsty Lang interviews Matthew Sweet and Paul Lewis on publication of <i>The Public Face of Wilkie Collins</i> | Front Row        | Radio 4 | YES        |
| 4 August 2009     | The Victorian Novel                           | They are a rich treasure trove, with Matthew Sweet, Roy Hattersley   | Proms Plus       | Radio 3 | YES        |
| 20 November 2009  | <i>The Woman in White</i> Anniversary project | Wilkie Collins Society publishes it in original parts<br>Kirsty Lang and Paul Lewis                            | Front Row        | Radio 4 | YES ONLINE |

|                  |                            |   |                     |         |            |
|------------------|----------------------------|---|---------------------|---------|------------|
| 28 January 2010  | <i>The Woman in White</i>  | <i>The Woman in White</i> 150 years old. Matthew Sweet round table with Paul Lewis        | Night Waves         | Radio 3 | YES        |
| 20 April 2010    | Madwomen in the Attic      | Vivienne Parry Includes Lady Glyde in <i>The Woman in White</i>                           |                     | Radio 4 | YES        |
| 8 May 2011       |                            | Literary friendship between Dickens and Collins<br><br>with Roy Hattersley and John Bowen | Open Book           | Radio 4 | YES ONLINE |
| 23 February 2012 |                            | Ackroyd's new biography of Collins  | Front Row           | Radio 4 | YES ONLINE |
| 27 February 2012 | Wilkie Collins             | Ackroyd's biography read in five parts  | Book of the Week    | Radio 4 | YES        |
| 27 February 2012 | Wilkie Collins             | Matthew Sweet interviews Peter Ackroyd  | Night Waves         | Radio 3 | YES ONLINE |
| 20 May 2012      | Peter Ackroyd              | Kirsty Young interviews Peter Ackroyd   | Desert Island Discs | Radio 4 | YES ONLINE |
| 9 September 2013 | <i>A Life of Sensation</i> | Andrew Lycett interviewed about his new biography   | Night Waves         | Radio 3 | YES ONLINE |
| 14 July 2015     |                            | Jeremy Parrott on annotated <i>All the Year Round</i>                                     | Front Row           | Radio 4 | YES ONLINE |

|                  |                                     |  |                   |                |            |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------|----------------|------------|
| 29 February 2016 | A Good Read                         | Discussion of <i>Armada</i>  | A Good Read       | Radio 4        | YES ONLINE |
| 25 October 2016  | Tuesday Review                      | BBC tv adaptation of <i>The Moonstone</i>                                    | Jane Forsyth Show | Radio Scotland | YES        |
| 29 October 2016  |                                     | New period drama <i>The Moonstone</i>  | Saturday Review   | Radio 4        | YES ONLINE |
| 6 December 2016  | Voices in our Ears                  | Clare Walker Gore who writes about Wilkie Collins                            | Free Thinking     | Radio 3        | YES ONLINE |
| 4 October 2017   |                                     | Interviews actors in <i>Ghost's Touch</i> at the theatre                     | Wynne Evans       | Radio Wales    | YES        |
| 21 April 2018    |                                     | About the BBC tv adaptation of <i>The Woman in White</i>                     | Saturday Review   | Radio 4        | YES ONLINE |
| 25 December 2022 | What Walls Hold                     | How Tavistock House shaped Charles Dickens, with Ben Crowe as Wilkie Collins | Sunday Feature    | Radio 3        | YES ONLINE |
| 5 January 2023   | Wilkie Collins and Disability       | <i>Poor Miss Finch</i> and Collins's own health                              | Free Thinking     | Radio 3        | YES ONLINE |
| 31 December 2023 | Wilkie Collins Guide to Modern Life | Woke Wilkie and how he changed literature – 200 <sup>th</sup> anniversary    |                   | Radio 4        | YES ONLINE |

|                |  |   |           |         |            |
|----------------|--|---|-----------|---------|------------|
| 7 January 2024 | <i>The Moonstone</i> by Wilkie Collins | 200 years since his birth how good is the book? | Book Club | Radio 4 | YES ONLINE |
|----------------|--|---|-----------|---------|------------|

| <b>BBC TELEVISION – DRAMATISATIONS</b>       |                           |              |                                  |                |                     |
|--|---------------------------|--------------|----------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <b>Start date</b>                            | <b>Title</b>              | <b>Parts</b> | <b>Adapter</b>                   | <b>Channel</b> | <b>BBC Archives</b> |
| 23 August 1959<br>repeated 16 August 1960    | <i>The Moonstone</i>      | 7 weekly     | A R Rawlinson                    | BBC            | EPISODE 6 ONLY      |
| 2 October 1966                               | <i>The Woman in White</i> | 6 weekly     | Michael Voysey                   | BBC 1          | NO                  |
| 16 January 1972                              | <i>The Moonstone</i>      | 5 weekly     | Hugh Leonard                     | BBC 1          | YES                 |
| 20 March 1981                                | <i>The Woman in White</i> | 1948 Film    | Peter Godfrey                    | BBC 1          | YES                 |
| 14 April 1982                                | <i>The Woman in White</i> | 5 weekly     | Ray Jenkins                      | BBC 1          | YES                 |
| 29 December 1996                             | <i>The Moonstone</i>      | 2 daily      | Kevin Elyot                      | BBC 2          | YES                 |
| 28 December 1997                             | <i>The Woman in White</i> | 2 daily      | David Pirie                      | BBC 1          | YES                 |
| 31 October 2016 repeated<br>26 December 2016 | <i>The Moonstone</i>      | 5 daily      | Sasha Hills and Rachel Flowerday | BBC1           | YES                 |
| 29 April 2018                                | <i>The Woman in White</i> | 5 Sun/ Mon   | Fiona Seres                      | BBC1           | YES                 |

**BBC TELEVISION – BIOGRAPHIES, TOURS, DISCUSSIONS, QUIZZES**

| <b>Start date</b> | <b>Title</b>                                   | <b>Type</b>   | <b>Writer/<br/>Presenter</b>    | <b>Channel</b> | <b>BBC Archives</b> |
|-------------------|--|---|---------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 12 June 1964      | A city crowned with green                      | Biography in programme about how London has changed   | Richard Banham                  | BBC 1          | YES                 |
| 25 May 1975       | The Countryman: <i>Rambles Beyond Railways</i> | Dramatised walk round Cornwall  | Duncan Carse                    | BBC 1          | YES                 |
| 5 November 1978   | Crime Writers: The Great Detective             | Includes mentions of. <i>The Woman in White</i> and <i>The Moonstone</i>                        | Julian Symons                   | BBC 1          | YES                 |
| 15 May 1982       | Did You See?                                   | Discussion of <i>The Woman in White</i> serial just ended                                       | Ludovic Kennedy                 | BBC 2          | YES                 |
| 8 March 1993      | Lucinda Lambton's Alphabet of Britain          | K is for Kensal Green - a tour round the cemetery   | Lucinda Lambton                 | BBC 2          | YES                 |
| 22 December 1996  | Bookworm                                       | Visiting Victorian London in search of Collins  | Gryff Rhys Jones                | BBC 1          | YES                 |
| 27 August 1997    | Mastermind                                     | Quiz: Fiona Richmond chooses as her subject <i>The Life and 1860s novels of Wilkie Collins.</i> | Andrew Gasson set the questions | BBC 1          | YES                 |
| 30 September 2003 | Battle of the Books                            | <i>The Woman in White</i> v. <i>Bleak House</i> , which won                                     | Sandy Toksvig                   | BBC 4          | YES                 |

|                  |                            |  |                                 |       |     |
|------------------|----------------------------|--|---------------------------------|-------|-----|
| 1 March 2004     | Before the Booker:<br>1860 | <i>Great Expectations</i> beat <i>The Woman in White</i> to win the 1860 Booker Prize. | Clive Anderson.                 | BBC 4 | YES |
| 21 February 2014 | Mastermind                 | Terence Saunders picks The Novels of Wilkie Collins                                    | John Humphrys                   | BBC 2 | YES |
| 22 October 2016  | <i>The Invisible Woman</i> | Film of Claire Tomalin's book about Ellen Ternan                                       | Tom Hollander as Wilkie Collins | BBC 2 | YES |

14 RADK

**TUESDAY** NOVEMBER 5

342.1 m. (877 kc/s)

## The Home Service

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|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>6.30 a.m. Big Ben</b><br/>'BRIGHT AND EARLY'<br/>Gramophone records</p> <p><b>6.55 General Weather Forecast</b><br/>and forecast for farmers and shipping</p> <p><b>7.0 Time, Greenwich: NEWS</b></p> <p>7.10 <b>Programme Parade</b></p> <p><b>7.15 MORNING MUSIC</b><br/>BBC Revue Orchestra: conductor,<br/>Frank Cantell. (BBC recording)</p> <p><b>7.50 'LIFT UP YOUR HEARTS!'</b><br/>Devotional readings and prayers</p> <p><b>7.55 General Weather Forecast</b><br/>and forecast for farmers and shipping</p> <p><b>8.0 Time, Greenwich: NEWS</b></p> <p>8.10 <b>Programme Parade</b></p> <p><b>8.15 MARCHES AND WALTZES</b><br/>from operetta and musical comedy:<br/>on gramophone records</p> <p><b>9.0 RECITAL</b><br/>Lesley Duff (soprano); Bertha Hagart<br/>(piano)<br/>Piano:<br/>Fantasy Impromptu; Waltz in C<br/>sharp minor.....Chopin<br/>Songs:</p> | <p><b>12 noon CARLTON MAIN</b><br/><b>FRICKLEY COLLIERY BAND</b><br/>Conductor, Albert E. Badrick<br/>March: Viva Pettee.....Rimmer<br/>Gems of Haydn.....arr. Rimmer<br/>Waltz: The Skaters.....Waldteufel<br/>March: On Tour.....Badrick<br/>Selection: Rose Marie.....Friml</p> <p><b>12.30 WORKERS' PLAYTIME</b><br/>From a canteen in Darlington, with<br/>George Myddleton at the piano. Pre-<br/>sented by Bryan Sears. (BBC record-<br/>ing)</p> <p><b>1.0 Time, Greenwich</b><br/><b>NEWS</b></p> <p><b>1.10 'THE MOONSTONE'</b><br/>by Wilkie Collins, adapted for broad-<br/>casting by Jonquil Antony. Produced<br/>by Hugh Stewart. Episode 13<br/>Lady Verinder.....Cathleen Nesbitt<br/>Miss Clack.....Muriel Aked<br/>Sergeant Cuff.....Cecil Trouncer<br/>Gabriel Betteredge.....Henry Hallatt<br/>Rachel.....Patricia Hilliard<br/>Franklin Blake.....Noel Johnson<br/>Godfrey Ablewhite.....John Byron<br/>His sisters<br/>Beryl Calder and Anne Cullen<br/>Mr. Bruff.....Lionel Stevens<br/>Mr. Murthwaite.....Valentine Dyall<br/>Mr. Luker.....Alexander Sarner<br/>Dr. Candy.....William Trent<br/>(Recording of Sunday's broadcast)<br/>(Cathleen Nesbitt broadcasts by per-<br/>mission of Claude Sonon; Cecil<br/>Trouncer, of H. M. Tennent, Ltd.;<br/>Henry Hallatt, of Firth Shephard and<br/>Henry Sherek)</p> |
|--|--|

*Radio Times*, 1 November 1946, p. 14. The last repeat  
of the last episode of the first dramatisation of *The Moonstone*, now lost.

# The WOMAN in WHITE



Wilkie Collins' classic mystery

**BBC** ONE

Publicity brochure for the 1997 BBC production

This edition of  
WILKIE COLLINS ON THE BBC  
Is limited to 200 copies

