

The DISTRICT MESSENGER



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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Please note that I give such addresses and prices as I have. If I don't provide details of importers or agents, it's because I don't have those details.

Peter Blau notes the deaths of **Don Hardenbrook** BSI ('Huret, the Boulevard Assassin'), a founder of **The Trained Cormorants** back in 1947 and an active member for over 50 years, on 18 December, and of **Phyllis White**, widow of Anthony Boucher and a stalwart of **The Scowrers & Molly Maguires**, four days later

The latest book in the Baker Street Irregulars History Series is Jon Lellenberg's *Disjecta Membra*, 'a catch-up collection of items, reproduced in facsimile, which came too late to be included in the 1930s and 40s volumes'. For the most part these documents are peripheral to the main argument of the history project, but how fascinating it is to read the letters and notes of Vincent Starrett, Christopher Morley, William Gillette, Edgar W. Smith and others (including the egregious Alexander Woollcott) as they originally appeared! There are side-lights on the early classic studies of the life and times of Holmes & Watson, on the birth and development of the BSI, on the poverty of the great illustrator Frederic Dorr Steele, on the madness of the Conan Doyle brothers — and much more, all presented with Jon Lellenberg's customary incisive wit. Jon has copies of this large (11"x 8¼") 96-page booklet for sale at \$13.00 within the USA or \$13.50 outside (3133 Connecticut Avenue NW, #827, Washington, DC 20008, USA).

More expensive but much more expensively produced is the first book from la Société Sherlock Holmes de France. *It Is Always a Joy . . . to Me to Meet an American, a Briton, a Japanese, a Canadian, a Swiss . . .*, the collected Sherlockian caricatures, cartoons and illustrations of Jean-Pierre Cagnat, is rightly described as a de luxe edition. There are 160 pages of drawings and paintings, with illuminating comments by the artist's wife Christilla, translated into English by Wladimir & Nissa Bogomoletz. Jean-Pierre Cagnat is a leading illustrator and political cartoonist and his wonderful drawings have featured widely in Sherlockian and other magazines over the past 15 years. It's a revelation, though, to see them in full colour. Here are the images he captured in New York, California, London, Dartmoor, Meiringen, Santa Fe, Tokyo, Montpellier, Paris and his own home of Barbizon. A quick flick through the pages shows the faces of Albert Kunz, Tom Stix Jr, John Farrell, Frank Allen, Vosper Arthur, John Bennett Shaw, Bob Thomalen, Hirayama Yuichi and — er — Mickey Mouse among many others. *It Is Always a Joy . . .* is the most handsome Sherlockian volume I've seen since Bill Blackbeard's *Sherlock Holmes in America*. It really is worth the price of 485 French Francs — £48.00 or \$70.00 — plus postage (67 Francs or £7.00 within the EU and Switzerland; 75 Francs in the rest of Europe and Africa; 110 Francs or \$16.00 elsewhere). Order copies from Mycroft's Brother Editions (26 avenue de la République, 75011 Paris, France; e-mail mycrofts@noos.fr). Make French currency cheques payable to Mycroft's Brother, sterling cheques to Mr Le Page, and US dollar checks to Mrs Mignon.

You can get an idea of the book from the French society's website at www.chez.com/mycroft/English-index.htm or from our own at

www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk. Both sites are worth a visit anyway, of course.

Hirayama Yuichi has published a most interesting separate edition of 'Jelland's Voyage', the only one of Conan Doyle's stories set in Japan, annotated and introduced — in English — by Yuichi himself. Nothing to do with Sherlock Holmes, of course, but it's a powerful, ironic and rather Kiplingesque little tale. *The Annotated Jelland's Voyage* is a nicely produced 20-page pamphlet, available at \$7.00 post-paid from Hirayama Yuichi BSI, 2-10-12 Kamirenjaku, Mitaka-shi, Tokyo 181-0012, Japan. Make US dollar checks payable to Mel Hughes.

Yuichi, of course, is the founder and editor-in-chief of *The Shoso-in Bulletin*, the most international of all Sherlockian journals — and Mel Hughes is the editor. The 10th annual volume is available at £7.25, postpaid, from John Hall, 20 Drury Avenue, Horsforth, Leeds LS18 4BR, England (cheques payable to John Hall), or at \$12.00 (plus \$3.75 postage within the USA; enquire about foreign rates) from Classic Specialties, P.O. Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA. The contributions — from Russia, America, England, France, Switzerland, Belgium, Japan, Australia, Italy, Germany, Spain and Brazil! — cover the whole gamut: Sherlockian miniatures, Dr Watson's love life, historical identification, pastiche, parody, Holmes's family, the study of Sherlockians, poetry, astrology, parody ... *The Shoso-in Bulletin* is one of the liveliest and most interesting of all publications in our field, and there really is something here for everyone. www.parkcity.ne.jp/~hirayama/index.htm is the website in English.

What looks to be an important new study of the detective and the doctor is Bevis Colmer's *Elementary, My Dear Watson*, a substantial 416-page volume published at £16.99 by Minerva Press (6th Floor, Canberra House, 315-317 Regent Street, London W1R 7YB). I hope to review the book in the next DM.

Meanwhile John Dennis Vose has written *Sherlock Holmes and the Yellow Menace*, an exciting, but politically incorrect one-act melodrama that pits Holmes against Dr Fu Manchu. John is looking to get the play published and performed. Interested parties should contact him at 24 Norcliffe Road, Blackpool, FY2 9AW.

Issue 40 of *Sherlock Holmes: The Detective Magazine* features a comparison by Matthew Booth of Holmes and Hercule Poirot, an interview with David Suchet, the definitive Poirot, a review of the disappointing Canadian TV film of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Paul Chapman on the decadence of Holmes, Kathryn White on TV portrayals of Lord Peter Wimsey, Roger Forsdyke on the extraordinary Dr Minor, Gaynor Coules on the crime fiction of Margaret Murphy, James Melville on Inspector Ghote, Bob Byrne on mystery websites, Pat Ward with news from America, a look at **The G.K. Chesterton Society** — and much more. The magazine is published six times a year, at £3.50 or \$6.00 the issue. A six-issue subscription is £20.00 (Europe £22.00, rest of world £25.00 or \$40.00) from the Admin. Dept, PO Box 100, Chichester, West Sussex PO18 8HD. The US representative is Classic Specialties (PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA; e-mail sherlock@sherlock-holmes.com).

New from the Battered Silicon Dispatch Box (P.O. Box 204, Shelburne, Ontario, Canada L0N 1S0) is the final collection of Michael Harrison's Holmesian writings, *A Sheaf of Sherlock*. Murder One in Charing Cross Road has copies at £34.00. From

the same publisher, under the Mycroft & Moran banner, comes *The Original Text Solar Pons Omnibus Edition*, which restores all the text amended by Basil Copper in the 1982 *Solar Pons Omnibus*. Peter Blau says that the 2-volume book costs \$138.00 postpaid (**excessive, even so!**), from **The August Derleth Society** (Box 481, Sauk City, WI 53583, USA).

New catalogues are available, full of Sherlockiana and Doyleana, from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (22 & 25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; e-mail nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk; website www.nigelwilliams.com).

Joe Eckrich (914 Oakmoor Drive, Fenton, MO 63026-7008, USA; e-mail jeckrich@earthlink.com) has a number of Sherlockian collectibles for sale. Contact Joe for a catalogue.

Due in June is a short (96-page) *Pocket Essential Guide to Sherlock Holmes*. Half will be devoted to Conan Doyle's stories and half to film, radio, TV and stage presentations. The author, Mark Chapman, tells me that a member of our Society is providing help and advice. More on this as it reaches me!

I've had a catalogue from Swallowtail Books of 3 Danesbrook, Claverley, Shropshire WV5 7BB — dealers and publishers. They offer a book ordering service 'through which most new books of crime, mystery or detective fiction from any publisher can be obtained and supplied to you at a discount of 20% off the normal retail price' (postage is extra).

Brian Pugh, Curator of the **Conan Doyle (Crowborough) Establishment** tells me that there is still no date set for the unveiling of the statue of Arthur Conan Doyle in Crowborough, though the statue is completed.

Gareth Negus, Marketing Officer for Norden Farm Centre for the Arts in Maidenhead, sends word that at 7.30 pm on Friday 16 February, Footloose Theatre will present *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* at the Centre. It's a solo show in which Paul Lehmann performs 'The Blue Carbuncle' and 'The Engineer's Thumb'. The Centre is in Altdoan Road, Maidenhead. You can book by phone on 01628 788997, or through the website at www.nordenfarm.org. The play will be at the Trinity Arts Theatre in Tunbridge Wells at 8.00 pm on Friday 23 February (box office 01892 678678).

News from Catherine Cooke is that Westminster Libraries' catalogue (including the Sherlock Holmes Collection at Marylebone Library) is now on the Internet at www.westminster.gov.uk/el/libarch/index.html. She says, 'Click the search button on the left, then the Westminster Libraries and Archives catalogue button.'

Recently reissued by Image Video at £12.99 each are *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (IMG 10358) and *The Sign of Four* (IMG 10359) with Ian Richardson as Sherlock Holmes. They're fast-moving, witty adaptations, but uneven, largely because of the unnecessary liberties taken with the original stories. That said, *The Hound* is much more enjoyable than Granada's version, while *The Sign of Four* makes for an amusing romp. There are some splendidly bravura performances, particularly from Denholm Elliott and Ronald Lacey as Dr Mortimer and Inspector Lestrade (the only time he's been given his due in a film of *The Hound*) and from Joe Melia, as a splendidly menacing Jonathan Small, and Thorley Walters, as Major Sholto. Cherie Lunghi is quite adorable as Mary Morstan. Donald Churchill is a subdued Watson in *The Hound*, while David Healey in *The Sign* has something of Oliver Hardy's bashful charm. Ian Richardson, of course, is always worth watching, and makes a splendid Holmes. Not classic movies, but good fun.

New from Granada Video/VCI are two pairings from *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes*, first broadcast in 1991, with Jeremy Brett & Edward Hardwicke: *Shoscombe Old Place* & *The Boscombe Valley Mystery*, and *The Illustrious Client* & *The Creeping Man*. I found the relocation of Boscombe Valley from Herefordshire to Cheshire annoying, but otherwise these are among the best of the later Granada series, with Brett on good form. *The Illustrious Client* in particular has a wonderfully evil performance from Anthony Valentine as Baron Gruner.

The Greater Manchester Police Museum is housed in the former Newton Street Police Station, which is thoroughly Victorian and (I seem to remember) was used for some location filming by Granada. It's open on Tuesdays 10.30 am - 3.30 pm and at other times by appointment (phone 0161 856 3287). The Museum is supported by **The Friends of Newton Street**, who can be contacted c/o the Museum at Newton Street, Manchester M1 1ES.

We've found another *Sherlock Holmes* pub! Don't get too excited, though. The *Sherlock Holmes* Free House at 270/274 Station Road, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex, has nothing Sherlockian about it beyond the name. It can be summed up as an inner-city pub, with decent beer.

The Parallel Case of St. Louis will meet on 19 February at the Big Sleep Bookstore to discuss 'The Lion's Mane'. Get information from Joseph J. Eckrich, 914 Oakmoor, Fenton, MO 63126, USA (e-mail jeckrich@earthlink.com). **The STUD Sherlockian Society** will celebrate its 10th birthday at the annual dinner on 2 March at Sheraton Four Points in Schiller Park, IL. The following day there'll be the *Solar Pons Breakfast* a visit to Scotland Yard Books, and the annual STUD pizza party. Get details from Bill Sawisch, 418 Galahad Road, Bolingbrook, IL 60440, USA. **The Occupants of the Empty House** will meet on 2 March and 6 April at Alongi's Restaurant at Du Quoin (William R. Cochran, 517 North Vine Street, Du Quoin, IL 62832-2047, USA). There'll be a host of interesting speakers at the 20th Annual *Sherlock Holmes/Arthur Conan Doyle Symposium*, held at the Holiday Inn in Fairborn, Ohio (Cathy Gill at chirpsworth@fuse.net).

Periodicals received. *The Sherlock Holmes Journal*, Winter 2000 (**The Sherlock Holmes Society of London**) (**late, but worth the wait!**). *The Parallelogram*, February 2001 (**The Parallel Case of St Louis**, Joseph J. Eckrich, 914 Oakmoor Drive, Fenton, MO 63126-7008, USA) (**lots of interesting snippets — and more of PJA's excruciating verse**). *Communication*, Special January/February 2000 (**sic**) (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Jeff & Wanda Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA) (**David McCallister reaches some startling conclusion about Cyril Overton's physique**). *3 Pipe Problem Plugs and Dottles*, January 2001 (**The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem**, Gael Stahl, 1763 Needmore Road, Old Hickory, TN 37138, USA; e-mail gaelbstahl@juno.com) (**an interview with the clever Sherlockian writer Rosemary Michaud, another with Larry Millett, author of Sherlock Holmes and the Red Demon and others**).

Bohemian Newsletter, no. 0 (**Ceska spolecnost Sherlocka Holmese** (The Czech Society of Sherlock Holmes) Ales M. Kolodrubec Milesovska 1, 130 00 Praha 3, Czech Republic (e-mail classifieds@praguepost.cz) (**my knowledge of Czech is limited, but I can tell you that The District Messenger gets a mention**). *The Camden House Journal*, January 2001 (**a dream brings Patricia King a revelation about 'The Solitary Cyclist'**) and *Beeman's Christmas Annual 2000: Flora and Fauna in the Canon* (**a good collection of short articles and reviews**) (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, P.O. Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). *The Illustrious Clients News*, February 2001 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T. Doyle, 540 W. Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA) (**a brief sketch of Elmer Holmes Davis, who drew up the Constitution and Buy-Laws [sic] of the Baker Street Irregulars, a nice illustrated report from the New York festivities, and more**).

Scuttlebutt from the Spermacti Press, January 2001 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA; e-mail pblau@dgs.dgsys.com) (**the invaluable newsletter**).

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