The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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I omitted to report the death last July of **Bill Owen**. He'll be remembered as Compo in the comedy *Last of the Summer Wine*, but his long and varied career also included the rôle of Inspector Lestrade in the world's first *Sherlock Holmes* television series, to Alan Wheatley's Holmes, for the BBC in 1951. In December we lost the delightful actress and singer **Madeline Kahn**, whose performance as Jenny Hill was one of the best things about Gene Wilder's uneven 1975 comedy *The Adventure of Sherlock Holmes' Smarter Brother*.

Friends of **Robert E. Thomalen** BSI will want to know that he's recovering well from triple heart bypass surgery and the repairing of an aneurysm. Cards are welcome at Highview Drive, Carmel, NY 10512, USA (no phone calls yet, please).

At the Baker Street Irregulars' annual dinner on 14th January, the following nine investitures were awarded: 'Emilia Lucca' (Karen Anderson), 'Jabez Wilson' (Donald E. Curtis), 'Canadian Pacific Railway' (Douglas Elliott), 'Jacob Shafter' (Andars Hammerqvist), 'Jack Stapleton' (C. Frederick Kittle), 'The Englischer Hof' (Michael A. Meer), 'Elsie Cubitt' (Jean Upton), 'Alexander Hamilton Garrideb' (Ben Vizoskie) and 'The Lyceum Theatre' (Douglas Wilmer). Congratulations to all!

The Siam Question by Timothy Francis Sheil (Camden House Publishing Ltd, 54 Kestrel Avenue, London SE24 0EB; £19.50 + £6.65 postage) is a very handsome hardback novel of over 600 pages. Surtitled *The Holmes Report 1891-1894, Vol. I*, it purports to recount Sherlock Holmes's adventures during the Great Hiatus. Mr Sheil lives in Thailand (formerly Siam) and has evidently familiarised himself with the international diplomacy of a century ago. As many have surmised, Holmes undertook his Eastern travels on behalf of the British Government - accompanied by the perceptive French agent François le Villard - encountering much more excitement and danger than he would later permit Dr Watson to record. The events in India, Tibet and Siam have their repercussions in England, and when Holmes returns to Baker Street he must deal not only with Colonel Moran, but with Colonel Moriarty and other less expected foes. *The Siam Question* is an engrossing tale of high adventure, nicely presented and well written. The framing narrative is in a reasonable simulacrum of Dr Watson's style, but the bulk of the report, by le Villard, requires only an acceptably Victorian idiom, which Mr Sheil carries off admirably. The second part of *The Holmes Report*, entitled *The Egypt Question*, is in preparation. Good-oh, say I.

Company 164 (8 Inverdene, Peverell, Plymouth PL3 4LE) has published an attractive paperback edition, in 100 copies, of Conan Doyle's novella of psychic vampirism *The Parasite*, with a perceptive and informative introduction by Martin Edmonds. The book can be had for £5.99 + £1.00 postage from the publisher. (*The Nightmare Room, and Other Macabre Tales*, by Arthur Conan Doyle, will be issued later this year.)

Among the booklets I acquired in New York: *The Many Faces of Mycroft Holmes* by William S. Dorn (2045 S. Monroe Street, Denver, CO 80210-3734, USA; e-mail Holmespage@aol.com); *Cab 2704: A Transport of Delight* by A.A. Gregory (Pipe & Fiddle Publishing, 118 South Prospect Street, Verona, NJ 07044, USA), a survey of the hansom cab, with a list of Sherlockian license plates; *Who Was Bruce-Partington?* by Michael H. Kean (The Battered Silicon Dispatch Box, P.O. Box 204, Shelburne Ontario, Canada L0N 1S0; *Yougottabekidding: The Unauthorized Biography of Dorothy D. Stix* (The Montague Street Lodgers of Brooklyn, 1533 64th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11219, USA).

Newly out is *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, edited and annotated by Leslie S. Klinger as vol. II in *The Sherlock Holmes Reference Library* (Gasogene Books (P.O. Box 68308, Indianapolis, IN 46268, USA; $26.96). This project is one of the most important of our time, as those who've read *The Adventures* will agree. *(*Gasogene's catalogue is brief but offers some very choice plums indeed.*)*

Murray Shaw, who devised the splendid *Match Wits with Sherlock Holmes* series, has turned his hand to writing new stories. *Anatomy of Two Murders* has been published by the Mysterious Bookshop in its series of Sherlockian booklets (129 West 56th Street, New York, NY 10019, USA; $10.00).

The 15th round-robin pastiche of The Pleasant Places of Florida is *The Adventure of the Glorious Scot*, available at $6.00 from Carl Heifetz, 3693 Siena Lane, Palm Harbor, FL 36685, USA.

Another novel purporting to tell of Holmes's exploits after Reichenbach is *Chronicles of the Lost Years: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery* by Tracy Cooper-Posey (Turnstone Press, 607-100 Arthur Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3B 1H3; no price). The Toronto *Globe & Mail* says: 'Cooper-Posey attempts to account for the change in Watson/Conan Doyle's writing style once Holmes returns, and does a mighty good job. She also inserts a terrific woman into Holmes's life, Elizabeth Sigerson, who matches Holmes deduction for deduction.'

Due this month at £9.99 from i Books (c/o Simon & Schuster Ltd, 4th Floor, Africa House, 64-78 Kingsway, London WC2B 6AH) is a belated British paperback of *The Revenge of the Hound* by Michael Hardwick. In December Second Opinion (84 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1PX) published Barry Day's *Sherlock Holmes and the Copy Cat Murders* at £7.99.

Catalogues featuring Holmes/Conan Doyle material are newly available from: **Adrian Harrington** (64A Kensington Church Street, London W8 4DB; rare@harringtonbooks.co.uk); **The Mysterious Bookshop** (129 West 56th Street, New York, NY 10019, USA; e-mail mysteriousny@worldnet.att.net); **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (22 & 25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk); **Black Cat Bookshop** (36-39 Silver Arcade, Leicester LE1 5FB); **Crime In Store** (14 Bedford Street, London WC2E 9HE; CrimeBks@AOL.com); **Janus Books** (P.O. Box 40787, Tucson, AZ 85717, USA; mike@janusbooks.com).

A warning to would-be collectors from Derek Eve: a first edition of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* in fine condition recently went for just under £2,000 at an auction in Swindon.

Here's a story that seems to have had more coverage abroad than in Britain. From the ages of 5 to 7 Arthur Conan Doyle lived away from his family, with the sister of the Historiographer Royal, John Hill Burton, in a house at Liberton Bank, Edinburgh. A campaign led by Dr Allen Simpson has persuaded the City Council to refuse planning permission for McDonald's to demolish the house and build a burger restaurant. In addition, the Council has issued a preservation order. Conan Doyle can still work his magic!

Naxos AudioBooks, whose output already includes two sets of Holmes stories superbly read by David Timson, has moved its offices to 18 High Street, Welwyn, Herts. AL6 9EQ (e-mail Naxos_Audiobooks@compuserve.com). There's a website at www.naxosaudiobooks.com. Volume 3 of *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* read by David Timson is due this month.

Tony Howlett notes that on Tuesday 16 February the National Film Theatre in London will screen two of the five surviving movies from the uneven 1968 BBC TV series with Peter Cushing and Nigel Stock. I remember *The Sign of Four* as good, and *The Blue Carbuncle* is excellent (it has good fun with Holmes's deductions from Mr Baker's hat). The show starts at 6.20 pm, and the box office phone number is 0171 928 3232.

The magnificent re-creation of the Baker Street sitting-room, formerly at S. Holmes Esq. in San Francisco, is now in the care of Chuck Kovacic in Los Angeles and can be viewed by appointment. Phone (818) 891 4069, or e-mail cfkovacic@aol.com.

Brian Pugh tells me that there won't be a Sherlock Holmes Festival in Crowborough this year *(*no great surprise*)*, but that the Town Council has agreed to be the main sponsor for the statue of Arthur Conan Doyle. It's several years since Dame Jean approved David Cornell's design, and it's good to know that the statue will at last be made and that the town will at properly commemorate its great resident. The unveiling is expected to take place later this year.

The Essex *Evening Gazette* for 19 January notes that the Nautilus Art Foundry, which cast the statue of Holmes by John Doubleday that now stands outside Baker Street Station, has been commissioned to cast another. The new statue 'will stand pointing over the Reichenbach falls - the setting of Holmes' apparent death after a battle with Professor Moriarty'.

The Baker Street Irregulars don't organise many events in the year, preferring to leave it to the many scion societies. On 19 August, however, the BSI will sponsor the Silver Blaze stakes at the Saratoga Racetrack in Saratoga Springs, New York. Questions about the programme for the weekend should be addressed to Francine & Wayne Swift (representing the Committee) at Sumatra Lodge, 4622 Morgan Drive, Chevy Chase, MD 20815-5315, USA (e-mail wigmore-street@erols.com).

The Sherlock Holmes Club of Dunedin has changed its name to **The Antipodean Holmesian Society**. The Secretary is still Edwin R. Nye (51 Irvine Road, The Cove, Dunedin, New Zealand; e-mail ted.nye@stonebow.otago.ac.nz).

The Glades of the New Forest and **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company** (both based at 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU) will take a walking tour of Doylean Portsmouth on 19 February.

The annual dinner of **The STUD Sherlockian Society** will take place on 3 March at the Starlight Inn in Schiller Park, Illinois, followed next morning by *The Solar Pons Breakfast* (get details from Allan T. Devitt, 16W603 3rd Avenue, Bensenville, IL 60106-2327, USA; e-mail atdevitt@mediaone.net). **The Northern Musgraves** will hold their Birthday Celebration at the Victoria Hotel in Leeds on 4 March (Eilidh Gunson, 1 Dene Royd Close, Stainland, Halifax HX4 9QP). On the same day **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company** and **The Baker Street Branch Lines** will visit Holmesian railway sites in Hampshire (6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU; e-mail franco.midland@btinternet.com).

Our own Society, as announced at recent meetings and on the website, plans an excursion to Paris for the bank holiday weekend 28 April to 1 May. Numbers are strictly limited. Interested parties should contact Pam Bruxner *pronto* (2b Hiham Green, Winchelsea, East Sussex TN36 4HR). *(*Booking is now open for the Baltic Cruise in 2001. A brochure is being dispatched with the winter issue of* ***The Sherlock Holmes Journal****. Get details from Arena Travel, FREEPOST 1H 1047, Felixstowe, Suffolk IP11 7BR; website <www.arenatravel.com/sherlock.htm>.*)*

The Second Bimetallic Colloquium will be held at McGill University in Montréal on 2-4 June. Speakers include Peter Calamai, Patrick Campbell, Dayna McCausland and the Redmonds, *père et fils*. (**The Bimetallic Question**, P.O. Box 883, Stock Exchange Tower, Montréal, Québec, Canada H4Z 1K2.) **The Pleasant Places of Florida** plan the *Sunshine State Sherlockian Scion Symposium II* for 9-11 June, at Dolphin Beach Resort on St Pete Beach, Florida. The Banquet on Saturday will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the First Spring Gathering of the Pleasant Places of Florida. (Carl Heifetz at 3693 Siena Lane, Palm Harbor, FL 34685, USA.) On 25-27 August **The Northern Musgraves** will visit Arthur Conan Doyle's *alma mater*, Stonyhurst School; guests will include Douglas Wilmer and Bert Coules. (Christine Fell, 13 Greavestown Lane, Lea, Preston, Lancs. PR2 1PD).

Even further ahead, on 26-28 October 2001, Toronto will celebrate the centenary of the publication of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and the 30th anniversary of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection at the Toronto Reference Library. The event is sponsored by **The Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection**, **The Bootmakers of Toronto**, **The Arthur Conan Doyle Society** and **The Toronto Public Library**. Get information from HOUND2001, 18 Jackson Avenue, Etobicoke, Ontario, Canada M8X 2J3 (e-mail sherlox@attglobal.net).

Periodicals received. ***The Baker Street Journal***, December 1999 (P.O. Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA) *(*after four years' sterling work Donald Pollock is handing over the editorship to Steven Rothman - thanks, Don! and good luck, Steve!*)*. ***The Petrel Flyer***, November/December 1999 (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7P 3C6). ***The Serpentine Muse***, Winter 1999 *and* Birthday 2000 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 360 West 21st Street, ~5A, New York, NY 10011, USA). ***The Passengers' Log***, Spring and Summer Issue (**The Sydney Passengers**, Bill Barnes, 19 Malvern Avenue, Manly, NSW 2095, Australia) *(*Navigator Rosane McNamara joined us in London in September, and it was likewise a great pleasure to meet Captain Bill Barnes in New York last month*)*. ***Communication***, Endings & Beginnings Special Issue (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Jeff & Wanda Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA). ***The Camden House Journal***, January 2000 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, P.O. Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). ***The Log of the Canonical Hams***, January 1999 - June 1999 *(*sic!*)* (**The Sherlock Holmes Wireless Society**, Ron Fish, P.O. Box 4, Circleville, NY 10919-0004, USA).

And, of course, ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, December 1999 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA).

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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.

Captain W.R. Michell, R.N. died last month after a long bout of ill health. I don't know that Bill Michell produced much of what's called Holmesian scholarship, but he was our Society's Hon. Sec. for 15 years, and a superb ambassador both for the Society and for Sherlock Holmes. He was a good organiser, a good friend and grand company. His BSI investiture, 'The Rock of Gibraltar', could hardly have been more appropriate.

Late last year we lost the British actor **Peter Jeffrey**, whose distinguished career included portraying an improbably natty Mycroft Holmes to Edward Woodward's grim, squat Sherlock, in that undistinguished movie *Hands of a Murderer*; and the American actor **John Archer**, who played Lt Peter Perriam in the weak Rathbone entry *Sherlock Holmes in Washington*.

Just published at £18.99 by The Penguin Press (27 Wrights Lane, London W8 5TZ) is the British edition of Daniel Stashower's *Teller of Tales: The Life of Arthur Conan Doyle*. The author is himself a novelist and knows how to tell a good story. And, let's face it, Conan Doyle's life *is* a good story. This is perhaps the most readable biography of him since John Dickson Carr's, and of course it pays proper attention to his literary career, neither downplaying nor over-emphasising his major achievement, Sherlock Holmes. In addition, the book acknowledges the central place of Spiritualism in Conan Doyle's later life, rather than trying to ignore it, as some have done. Alas, like all his predecessors since Pierre Nordon, Mr Stashower has been denied access to the Conan Doyle papers; until they are made available the definitive biography cannot be written. The best studies of Arthur Conan Doyle are the two that deal with specific periods of his earlier life: Owen Dudley Edwards' *The Quest for Sherlock Holmes* and Geoffrey Stavert's *A Study in Southsea*. These, of course, are necessarily incomplete. Meanwhile, *Teller of Tales* is an admirable account, very attractively presented, of a man who achieved remarkable things — the most remarkable being something *he* considered trivial.

Following *The Siam Question* by Timothy Francis Shiel (see DM 197), comes another conjecture about the events of the Great Hiatus. In *Chronicles of the Lost Years: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery* (Turnstone Press, 607-100 Arthur Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3B 1H3; Cdn$16.95 or US$14.95) Tracy Cooper-Posey introduces a woman — not Irene Adler, but the even more remarkable Elizabeth Sigerson. For very good reasons her name has been excised from the Canonical accounts, but we learn here that Miss Sigerson played an important rôle in Holmes's private and professional life. Before and after the struggle at Reichenbach, her presence was both a help and a danger to him. She was his companion in his travels to Tibet and back, and has an important part in the capture of Colonel Moran and its deadly aftermath. It always jars rather to think of Holmes as other than essentially asexual — 'as a lover, he would have placed himself in a false position,' says Watson — but if any woman could have captured his heart, Elizabeth Sigerson is that woman. *Chronicles of the Lost Years* is a clever, exciting and very engaging adventure.

Murray Shaw's clever short story *Anatomy of Two Murders* has been published as no. 12 in the Mysterious Bookshop's series *The Mysterious Sherlock Holmes*. 221 copies of each title are issued, priced at $10.00.

The Illustrious Clients of Indianapolis have long been noted for their excellent and varied collections of essays, beginning with *The Illustrious Clients' Casebook* in 1947. Now comes *The Illustrious Clients' Second Case-Notes*, edited by Steven T. Doyle and Mark A. Gagen (Gasogene Books, P.O. Box 68308, Indianapolis, IN 46268, U.S.A.; $12.95). The cream of this 94-page paperback is a trio of essays on Holmes's character, by Pamela Wampler, Steven Doyle and Patricia Ward, followed closely by Donald Curtis's diagnosis of 'The Musgrave Ritual', Patricia Ward's look at 'A Scandal in Bohemia', and Paul Herbert's observations on 'The Priory School'. Verses, puzzles and a sprinkling of lighter articles make up the rest of this stimulating volume.

I owe an apology to Arthur M. Alexander, whose *Hot on the Scent: A Visitor's Guide to the London of Sherlock Holmes* (Calabash Press, P.O. Box 1360, Ashcroft, B.C. V0K 1A0, Canada; Cdn$37.50 / US$27.50 / £17.50) I reviewed enthusiastically in DM 196. Catherine Cooke has pointed out that Eros in Piccadilly Circus is indeed a fountain, though it rarely operates these days.

Due about now is *The Lost Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by William C. Paxton, comprising a long story, 'The Macabre Affair', and three shorter ones, 'All That Glitters', 'The Bab Deception' and 'The Eight-Pointed Cross'. The book is available from Mr Paxton (12097 E. 36th Street Terrace, Independence, MO 64055, U.S.A.; e-mail WPaxton159@AOL.com) at $25.00 plus $5.00 postage.

M.C. Black notes that **Bibliophile Books** (5 Thomas Road, London E14 7BN; phone 020 7515 9222) offer Charles Viney's *The Authentic World of Sherlock Holmes* (a reprint of the lovely 1989 *Sherlock Holmes in London*) at £12.50. There are more Sherlockian bargains in Bibliophile's catalogue. Please quote reference 1045 when you enquire. Another remainder bookseller, **Postscript** (24 Langroyd Road, London SW17 7PL; 020 8767 7421) offers Jack Tracy's *Ultimate Sherlock Holmes Encyclopedia* (formerly *The Encyclopædia Sherlockiana*) at £4.99. *(*I've spotted both at other bookshops. They're well worth buying.*)*

A mailing from Galde Press Inc. (P.O. Box 460, Lakeville, MN 55044, U.S.A.; pgalde@minn.net) reminds me of Rolf J. Canton's *The Moriarty Principle*, a 50th anniversary volume for **The Norwegian Explorers** ($19.95 plus postage) *(*favourably reviewed in DM 172*)*, and Mona Morstein's novel *The Childhood of Sherlock Holmes* ($24.95 plus postage). Check the publisher's website at www.galdepress.com. From Greenwich Exchange (50 Langton Way, Blackheath, London SE3 7TJ) comes notice of *The Case of the Scarlet Woman: Sherlock Holmes and the Occult* by Watkin Jones (£9.95 or $16.00, both post-paid). Greenwich Exchange has a website too: www.greenex.co.uk. Published last month was *Detective Fiction and the Rise of*

Forensic Science by Ronald R. Thomas (Cambridge University Press, Edinburgh Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 2RU; £37.50).

I've had an e-mail from Bradley C. Hodge of **Bradley's Books** (P.O. Box 225702, Dallas, TX 75222-5702, U.S.A.; e-mail bradleysbooks@juno.com) to say that he has a complete set of *The Strand Magazine* and other Sherlockiana for sale. Check his website at www.bmdbooks.com/bradleysbooks/. New catalogues are out from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (22 & 25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk); and **Post Mortem Books** (58 Stanford Avenue, Hassocks, Sussex BN6 8JH; ralph@pmbooks.demon.co.uk).

Sherlock Holmes will feature in at least one instalment of a new antiques-based show called *Bargain Hunt*, beginning daily transmission on BBC TV at 11.00 am on Monday 13 March.

Newly available recordings are *The Adventure of the Lion's Mane and Other Stories*, read by Christopher Lee (HarperCollins Audio, 77-85 Fulham Palace Road, London W6 8JB), and *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, no. 4*, read by Edward Hardwicke (CSA Telltapes Ltd, 101 Chamberlayne Road, London NW10 3ND) *(*a new edition of Tangled Web's **Sherlock Holmes: Tales of Intrigue**, comprising 'The Crooked Man', 'The Greek Interpreter' and 'The Naval Treaty*).*

A reminder that Vosper Arthur (Spynishlake, Doddiscombsleigh, Exeter EX6 7PR) offers a nice binder that happens to fit *The Sherlock Holmes Journal*. The spine bears the simple inscription in gold: *Sherlock Holmes*. It's modestly priced at £7.50, post-paid, to non-members of **The Poor Folk Upon The Moors**.

Westminster Libraries have an interesting web page dedicated to Marylebone Library's Sherlock Holmes Collection *(*I think I detect the hand of Catherine Cooke here*).* You'll find it at http://westminster.gov.uk/el/libarch/services/special/sherlock/.

Chuck Kovacic points out that I'd made an error in DM 197. He has nothing to do with the Baker Street sitting-room that formerly adorned S. Holmes Esq. in San Francisco. 'However,' he says, 'I do have *my own* re-creation of the sitting-room. I'm careful to say that it is an entire room re-creation and not one wall or a corner. . It's been up for about a year now and I invite all to see it! My room, along with others, will be featured in an upcoming book on the famed sitting-room of Sherlock Holmes.' You can contact Chuck at CFKovacic@aol.com.

Bernard Davies passes on the news that the Downsview Players will stage Anthony Hinds' dramatisation of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* on 26, 27 and 29 April at Downsview Methodist Church Hall in Upper Norwood. The hall is at the junction of Waddington Way and Downsview Road (bus 450 to Northwood Road, 468 or 196 to Beulah Hill, or 250 to Virginia Road). Performances start at 8.00 pm. Tickets are £4.00 from Yvonne Sharvell (0181 764 1968) or Eileen Newson (0181 764 5741). *(*Yes, that's Anthony Hinds who devised the story for **The Masks of Death** and was associate producer of Hammer's **Hound**.*)*

Mark Chadderton notes that the Inner State Theatre Company is touring with a parody version of *The Hound*. Dates I'm aware of are: 9 March at Abbots Bromley Village Hall, 10 March at Bedworth Arts Centre, 11 March at Calton Village Hall, and 1 April at Cheswick Green Village Hall.

Issue 35 of *Sherlock Holmes: The Detective Magazine* offers Bert Coules speaking with Michael Valle, writer of the forthcoming *Sherlock Holmes and the Vengeance of Dracula*, David Stuart Davies on *The Last Vampyre*, Toby Earnshaw on the rather unsatisfactory *Murder Rooms: The Dark Beginnings of Sherlock Holmes* and an interview with the scriptwriter David Pirie, Pat Ward with news from America, Douglas Wynn on Lew Archer, John Hall on the Holmes brothers, the first Benjamin Jowett mystery by Martin Edwards, Gaynor Coules on Margaret Yorke, Mike Ripley on the forthcoming crime fiction, 'Lomax the Sub-Librarian' on the Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections — and, as always, much more The magazine is published six times a year, at £2.50 or $5.50 the issue. A six-issue subscription is £18.00 (Europe £20.00, 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).

The magazine's second annual Sherlock Awards were presented by Peter Lovesey at Murder One on 2 March. The winners were Colin Dexter, Patricia Cornwell, Lindsey Davis and (the Special Sherlock for *A Study in Celluloid*) Michael Cox.

I omitted to mention that at the Baker Street Irregulars' dinner in January, besides the Irregular Shillings, the rare Two Shilling Award, for services beyond the call of duty to the BSI, was made to Scott Bond. No-one has deserved it more.

The 19th annual Dayton *Sherlock Holmes/Arthur Conan Doyle Symposium* at the Holiday Inn, Fairborn, Ohio, on 10-12 March will celebrate the late Alvin E. Rodin (get details from Greg Sullivan, 39 Sherwood Avenue, Danvers, MA 01923, U.S.A.). **The Sydney Passengers** will discuss 'The Five Orange Pips' on 11 March (Bill Barnes is the Captain, 19 Malvern Avenue, Manly, NSW 2095, Australia). The Guest of Honour at the AGM and Luncheon of **The Poor Folk Upon The Moors** on 18 March, at the Globe Hotel in Topsham, will be General Sir Anthony Farrar-Hockley. For June, the Poor Folk plan a weekend investigation of 'The Devil's Foot' in Cornwall (Shirley Purves, Lea House, Couches Lane, Woodbury, Exeter EX5 1HL). **The Sherlock Holmes Society of London** will meet on 23 March at the Old Operating Theatre at Guy's Hospital; the topic will be Victorian surgery (Pamela Bruxner, 2B Hiham Green, Winchelsea, East Sussex TN36 4HR). The Annual Case Study Day of **The Priory Scholars** will be held in Leicester on 26 March (Horace Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY). The Annual Spring Meeting of **The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes** will be at Midtown Executive & Chemists' Club, New York, on 1 April (Evelyn Herzog, 360 West 21st Street, New York, NY 10011, U.S.A.)

Periodicals received. ***The Ritual***, Autumn 1999 (**The Northern Musgraves**, Paul M. Chapman, Langford, Thirsk Road, Easingwold, North Yorkshire YO61 3HL) *(*the delay in recording this one is my fault; I'm delighted to note that Clive Merrison and Michael Williams are now Honorary Members of the Musgraves*).* ***Communication***, January/February 2000 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Jeff & Wanda Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, U.S.A.). ***The Gaslight Gazette***, April to December 1899 *(*sic*)* (**The Survivors of the Gloria Scott & Knights of Shag**, found on the Internet at http://members.carol.net/~whyatt/KOS/) *(*lots of Sherlockian activity in Greenville, South Carolina!*).*

The Parallelogram, February 2000 (**The Parallel Case of St Louis**, Joseph J. Eckrich, 914 Oakmoor, Fenton, MO 63126, U.S.A.). ***Interim Newsletter***, January 2000 (**The Conan Doyle [Crowborough] Establishment**, Brian Pugh, Curator, 20 Clare Road, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1PN). ***The Camden House Journal***, February 2000, and ***Beeman's Christmas Annual 1999: Geology in the Canon*** (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, The Camden House Journal, Stan Tinsley, P.O. Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, U.S.A.) *(*I like these themed anthologies; the vein seems inexhaustible*).* ***The Petrel Flyer***, January/February 2000 (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7P 3C6).

And, of course, *(*and at last*)* ***The Sherlock Holmes Journal***, Winter 1999 (**The Sherlock Holmes Society of London**). And by no means least ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, January 2000 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, U.S.A.; pblau@dgs.dgsys.com).

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Stephen Farrell died after a long illness on 6 March. He contributed frequently to the literature, participated wholeheartedly in the activities of our Society and of The Poor Folk Upon The Moors (editing *The Torr* in the early days), and impersonated Sherlock Holmes and Baron Grüner. He was firmly opposed to the idea that the Sherlockian world is a competitive one, where a person's worth is gauged by pseudo-academic 'qualifications'. He was good company and a good friend. Jean and I miss him very much.

We all extend our deep sympathy to **Isobel** and **John Doubleday**, whose son **Edwin** was recently killed in a tragic accident at Liverpool Street underground station. He was 23 years old.

That fine actor **Charles Gray** also died last month. Inevitably the papers stressed his rôle as Blofeld in one of the worst James Bond movies, *Diamonds Are Forever*, but I shall remember him as the silkily vicious Mr Mocata in *The Devil Rides Out* and as an excellent Mycroft Holmes to both Nicol Williamson and Jeremy Brett. (**Desmond Llewellyn** - 'Q' in the Bond films - died in December. Opposite Clive Merrison & Michael Williams, he played Bannister in Radio 4's *The Three Students* and Palfreyman in *Shoscombe Old Place*. **Peter Jeffrey**, whose death was reported in DM 198, was Dr Leslie Armstrong in *The Missing Three-Quarter*.)

More cheerful news is that **Bob Thomalen** BSI is recovering wonderfully well from his recent heart surgery and has attended a couple of Sherlockian meetings.

It's a pleasure to recommend *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes III*, (Naxos AudioBooks, 18 High Street, Welwyn, Herts. AL6 9EQ), which includes 'The Man with the Twisted Lip', 'The Musgrave Ritual', 'The Cardboard Box' and 'The Blue Carbuncle', unabridged and superbly read by David Timson, one of our great vocal actors. His Jim Browner and James Ryder are outstanding, but all the characters are beautifully personified, and the reading is excellently paced. The music, by Holbrooke, Bridge, Moeran and Paganini, is chosen by David Timson from the wonderful Naxos catalogue, and complements the narratives admirably. *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes III*, like its two predecessors, is available as a 3-cassette pack at £9.99, or on 3 CDs at £13.99. Either way, it's something to treasure, like all the Naxos output.

I'm less happy with *The Case of the Scarlet Woman: Sherlock Holmes and the Occult* by Watkin Jones (Greenwich Exchange Ltd, 50 Langton Way, Blackheath, London SE3 7TJ; £9.95 or $16.00, post-paid). The basic story is simple, as in most detective stories, but everything else appears to be padding, enhancing neither the atmosphere nor the mystery. Mr Jones clearly knows about the Golden Dawn and the OTO, and seems familiar with the facts of the Ripper murders, but he has the two Holmes brothers speaking and acting quite out of character, and his attempt at Dr Watson's writing style is poor. *(*If you want a good story pitting Holmes against Aleister Crowley, try Ron Weighell's 'The Case of the Fiery Messengers', soon to be available in a collection of his Sherlock Holmes stories from Calabash Press.*)*

The Adventures of the Second Mrs Watson by Michael Mallory (Deadly Alibi Press, Vancouver, WA 98668-5947, USA; no price given) collects the stories first published in *Murderous Intent Mystery Magazine*. Amelia Watson is not content to sit at home while her husband drops everything to accompany Sherlock Holmes on yet another case. The stories have been well received, and I hope to be able to review the book here.

Two hardback volumes are just out, or due soon, from Ian Henry Publications Ltd (20 Park Drive, Romford RM1 4LH). *Upon the Distinction Between the Ashes of the Various Tobaccos* purports to be Sherlock Holmes's own monograph, reprinted in a limited, numbered edition at £14.99. *Sherlock Holmes and the Midnight Bell* is a collection of five new stories by David James, also priced at £14.99. Again, I hope to review the books shortly.

Sherlock Holmes on the Western Front by Val Andrews is the latest paperback publication from Breese Books (164 Kensington Park Road, London W11 2ER; £6.99). Roy Templeman notes that his book *Sherlock Holmes and the Chinese Junk Affair* is now out in a large print edition from Linford (F.A. Thorpe [Publishing] Ltd, Anstey, Leicester LE7 7FU) - as are Val Andrews' *Sherlock Holmes and the Sandringham House Mystery*, John Hall's *Sherlock Holmes and the Disgraced Inspector*, Barrie Roberts' *Sherlock Holmes and the Man from Hell* and others.

Ian (Henry) Wilkes tells me of *I casi proibiti di Sherlock Holmes* (1998) and *Sette misteri per Sherlock Holmes* (2000), both by Enrico Solito and published by Giallo & Nero (via XXV Aprile 39, 20091 Bresso, Italy), and *I diciassette scalini: enciclopedia di Sherlock Holmes*, a series of short essays on various aspects of Holmesiana, by Enrico Solito & Stefano Guerra, published by Edizioni il Torchio (Piazzale Junio 54, 00141 Roma, Italy).

Murray Shaw, whose story *Anatomy of Two Murders* was recently published by The Mysterious Bookshop (129 West 56th Street, New York, NY 10019, USA; $10.00) is still writing. His latest story, *Sherlock Holmes Finds the Lost Dutchman Mine*, takes Holmes and Watson to the Superstition Mountains of Arizona, north of Phoenix, where Murray lives.

More books: Laurie R. King's *The Beekeeper's Apprentice* was issued in paperback by HarperCollins in February at £6.99. Allison & Busby publish Barrie Roberts' *Sherlock Holmes and the Devil's Grail* in paperback this month at £6.99, and June Thomson's superb *Holmes and Watson* is due from them in July also at £6.99. *(*Like Constable, A&B are classing Miss Thomson's book as fiction, whereas it truly belongs in the great tradition of Holmesian scholarship, alongside Starrett, Brend, Harrison, Dakin et al.*)*

The inevitable new catalogue is available from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (22 & 25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk).

The 1999 edition of *The Shoso-in Bulletin*, the most evidently international of all Holmesian periodicals, is available in the UK from John Hall (20 Drury Avenue, Horsforth, Leeds LS18 4BR) for a modest £7.25, including postage. The main agent outside Britain is Classic Specialties (PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA; e-mail sherlock@sherlock-holmes.com).

Peter Harkness points out that the prices for *Sherlock Holmes: The Detective Magazine* have changed. The correct details are now: 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).Peter also reminds me of the separate edition of the magazine that contains a four page insert of Japanese translation from the main text. This is of course intended as a service to Japanese readers, but others may like to know that they can get this edition from Mitch Higurashi BSI, 3-13-7-305 Nishikubo, Musashino, Tokyo 180-0013, Japan.

Freddie Jones's reading of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* for Penguin Audiobooks will be issued as a 3-CD set in May at £8.50. *(*It'll likely be abridged further from the cassette version.*)*

London's famous **Sherlock Holmes** public house is launching a series of Murder Mystery Dinners on Wednesday 26 April. This first one may be fully booked, but check about future dinners with the managers, Sue & Ken Collier, on 020 7930 2644 (fax 020 7839 5864). The pub is at 10/11 Northumberland Street, just near Charing Cross Station and Trafalgar Square.

The Sherlock Holmes Memorabilia Company of 230 Baker Street, London NW1 5RT, has arranged with MBNA International Bank Ltd to issue its own credit card. You can get details of the Platinum Plus Visa Card by phone: 020 7486 1246, fax: 020 7935 0522, or e-mail: sales@shmc.demon.co.uk. Check the company's website at http://www.sh-memorabilia.co.uk.

Can anyone tell me what the situation is regarding the house at Liberton Bank in Edinburgh, where Arthur Conan Doyle lived between the ages of five and seven?

Geoff Jeffery's sister Karen, a leading tobacconist in Chicago, has created a Sherlock Holmes label cigar collection. You can see her 221B Baker Street cigar set, item BS100, on the Internet at http://www.harb.net/CUs4Cigars.

Sherlock Holmes will feature, along with Basil the Stunt Cat, in the 26 April instalment of the television antiques programme *Bargain Hunt*, broadcast at 11.00 am on BBC 1.

Our Society's weekend in Paris, 28 April - 1 May, is fully booked now. The next general meeting will be the AGM at the Savage Club on 18 May, which will precede a talk on 'Horse-Drawn Traffic in the Canon'. Future events include the *Sail and Steam* weekend based at the University of East Anglia in Norwich (8 - 10 September), a talk at the Savage Club by Rosemary Hawthorne on Victorian dress (11 October), and of course the Golden Jubilee Baltic Cruise (25 August - 7 September 2001).

20 - 24 April will see the Easter Pack Meet (on Dartmoor) of **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company**, **The Baskerville Hounds**, **The Baker Street Branch Lines** and **The Phoenician Tin Traders**. Get details from 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU.

La Grande Réunion de ***La Société Sherlock Holmes de France*** will be held in Paris over the weekend 29 April - 1 May. Get details from 26 avénue de la République, 75011 Paris, France.

Periodicals received. ***The Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections,*** March 2000 (The Sherlock Holmes Collections, Suite 111, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, 222 21st Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55455, U.S.A.) *(*articles about a Vincent Starrett spoof, Conan Doyle's friend Grant Allen, **The London Mystery Magazine**, the Arthur Conan Doyle Collections at the Toronto Reference Library, etc..*).* ***The Serpentine Muse,*** Spring 2000 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn A. Herzog, 360 West 21st Street #5A, New York, NY 10011, U.S.A.) *(*Dorothy K Stix writes movingly about Dorothy Rowe Shaw, Linda Spessotti spots the connection between Magna Carta and the Musgrave Ritual, Sue Vizoskie records the unveiling of the statue in London in September*).*

SSHF, January 2000 and February 2000 (**La Société Sherlock Holmes de France**, 26 avénue de la République, 75011 Paris, France *(*news and reviews: the society's own Xavier Mauméjean has published a novel called **Les Mémoires de l'Homme-Éléphant** - and did you know there's a children's book called **Wiggins et Sherlock contre Napoléon**?*).* ***The Baker Street Journal Christmas Annual***, 1999 (*The Baker Street Journal*, P.O. Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, U.S.A.) *(*this nice little volume is subtitled **The Best of the Pips volume II: More Papers on the Sundial**; wholly devoted to writings by the Five Orange Pips of Westchester County, it comes 43 years after the original **Best of the Pips***).*

The Crowborough Conan Doyle Trust Newsletter, Spring 2000 (c/o The Town Hall, The Broadway, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 1DA) *(*as reported in DM 197, Crowborough Town Council has agreed to underwrite the cost of the statue of Arthur Conan Doyle, which will be made and erected this year; donations to the Trust's statue fund are still welcome c/o the Town Hall*).* ***The Illustrious Clients News***, March 2000 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T. Doyle, 540 W. Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 46077, U.S.A.) *(*news and reviews, plus Steven Doyle's engaging piece on the Indiana novelist Booth Tarkington, who told William Gillette: 'I would rather see you play Sherlock Holmes than be a kid again on Christmas morning'*).*

The Tin Box, February 2000 (Barbara & Terry Harding, Riverbank, 2 Bohemia Cottages, Stalybridge, Cheshire SK15 1JY) *(*the official first issue of the Sherlockian 'Exchange & Mart' - a must for collectors*).* ***The Camden House Journal***, April 2000 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, P.O. Box 21, Zeigler, IL, 62999, U.S.A.) *(*Samuel Smith looks at 'the great standing perennial problem' of the origin of life*).* ***3 Pipe Problem Plugs and Dottles***, March 2000 (**The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem**, Gael Stahl, 1763 Needmore Road, Old Hickory, TN 37138, U.S.A.) *(*Bill Mason initiates a discussion on the minutiae of Sherlockian scholarship; Gael Stahl and Billy Fields remember January in New York*).* ***The Parallelogram***, March 2000 (**The Parallel Case of St Louis**, Joseph J. Eckrich, 914 Oakmoor, Fenton, MO 63126, U.S.A.) *(*a summary of thoughts on 'The Sussex Vampire', and the conclusion of Pasquale Accardo's strange tale 'The Case of the Disappearing Detective'*).*

Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press, February 2000 and March 2000 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, U.S.A.) *(*the original Sherlockian newsletter*).*

Our 200th issue will soon be upon us. There may be some sort of celebration. Watch this space!

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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no. 200 8th May 2000

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £6.00 or US$13.00 for 12 issues. Dollar checks should be payable to Jean Upton. Dollar prices quoted without qualification refer to US dollars. 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.

Sorry for the rise in overseas rates: Royal Mail has put up its postal charges yet again, and I just can't afford to absorb this latest increase. In less than two years, postage to America, Japan, Australia, etc. has risen from 40p to 44p to 45p, and postage to Europe has risen from 26p to 30p to 34p to 36p! So much for the benefits of the European Union . . .

Peter Blau reports that **Sy Weintraub** died on 4th April. He produced *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and *The Sign of Four* for TV, with Ian Richardson as Holmes; though enjoyable, they suffered by comparison with Granada's excellent series. **Edward Gorey** died on 15th April. He applied his unique gothic genius to illustrating various Sherlockian publications, most prominently in the credits for the *Mystery!* series on American PBS TV. **E.W. McDiarmid** ('The Bruce-Partington Plans', BSI) died on 27th April. A founder of **The Norwegian Explorers** of Minnesota, he was there to celebrate their 50th birthday in 1998.

Congratulations to Michael Doyle and Christopher Roden, both subscribers to this newsletter, who were appointed Master Bootmakers at the January Awards Dinner of **The Bootmakers of Toronto**. (Christopher joins his wife Barbara, who was already entitled to the letters M.Bt. after her name.)

The Adventures of the Second Mrs Watson by Michael Mallory is a very neat idea stylishly executed. Sherlock Holmes knew where he stood with Mary, the first Mrs Watson, but he thinks that the doctor's spirited second wife Amelia takes up too much of his friend's time. She has quite a different view on the matter, and as she is pretty much the detective's match in ingenuity, intelligence and stubbornness the relationship is not exactly smooth. These twelve exceptionally clever stories give us a fresh view of Holmes and Watson, and a lot of entertainment besides. You'll find echoes of 'real life' crimes here (a bizarre solution to the Ripper case, for instance), as well as new twists on Canonical matters. This attractive 168-page paperback is published by Deadly Alibi Press Ltd (P.O. Box 5947, Vancouver, WA 98668-5947, USA) at $15.99.

Before the publication date of 17th May, Dan Kilcup's *Chinese Box Mysteries, volume II* can be ordered from the 'Washington Needs You' charities website at www.needsyou.org at $16.00 (post-paid within the USA); $8.00 will go to the Hospice of Northern Virginia. Orders for this 260-page hardback can also be placed with Amazon.com and Barnes&Noble.com, at $24.00.

Ted Nye's even more improbably titled volume of Sherlock Holmes stories, *The Teddy Bear's Ribbon, and Other Tales*, is due shortly from Halvon Press, priced at NZ$15.00 or £5.00 plus postage (51 Irvine Road, The Cove, Dunedin, New Zealand; e-mail ted.nye@stonebow.otago.ac.nz).

Bob Ellis passes on news that the Minstead Women's Institute has published a millennium history of the village, naturally including material about Conan Doyle and Sherlock Holmes. The cost is £12.50 plus £2.50 postage.

Sherlock Holmes' Puzzles of Deduction by Tom Bullimore was published in April at £3.99 by Sterling Publishing Co. (Orca Book Services, Stanley House, 3 Fleets Lane, Poole, Dorset BH15 3AJ).

Phil & Karen Woolley tell me that the **Black Cat Bookshop** can now take orders and messages by e-mail at blackcatuk@aol.com, and that they have a website in the making, at www.blackcatbookshop.com. New in at the shop is 'a set of beautifully painted miniature metal figures', seven in all: Jack the Ripper, Holmes, Watson, a victim, a 'shocked bystander', a PC and a Chief Superintendent. Price is £50.00 the set, plus postage (£4.00 in the UK; ask about overseas rates).

Bert Coules' *Unrecorded Cases of Sherlock Holmes* hasn't yet been broadcast, but the BBC Radio Collection announces a recording for release on cassette in September. In November the Beeb plans to release a boxed set of *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* by Arthur Conan Doyle, at £127.65 plus VAT. An unabridged recording (I don't know who the reader is) of 'The Musgrave Ritual', 'The Red-Headed League', 'The Speckled Band' & 'The Final Problem' has been issued at £12.99 by Sound Room (Gazelle Book Services Ltd, 4 Falcon House, Queen Square, Lancaster LA1 1RN). And as of this month the first 8 cassettes of the 1945/46 radio series *The New Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, with Basil Rathbone & Nigel Bruce, are available in Britain from Simon & Schuster Audio.

Issue 36 of *Sherlock Holmes: The Detective Magazine* offers a new Sexton Blake story by John Hall, Bill Nadel on *The Thin Man*, Gaynor Coules on Natasha Cooper and her 'Willow King' novels, Sarah Neville on *The Moonstone*, Paul Chapman on the Shadow, Toby Earnshaw on *Randall & Hopkirk (Deceased)*, Mike Ripley on *The Oxford Companion to Crime & Mystery Writing*, Christine Simpson on the Dorothy L. Sayers Society, Kathryn White on doctors who go wrong, Roger Forsdyke on Victorian punishment, David Stuart Davies on *The Last Vampyre* and

Reginald Owen's *A Study in Scarlet* — and of course much more besides. 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).

Charles Hall has produced a handsome new bust of Sherlock Holmes and a flat-backed model of Conan Doyle's birthplace, 11 Picardy Place, Edinburgh. He says, 'I may put these models on the market in July'. To find out more, drop a line to 12 Paisley Terrace, Edinburgh EH8 7JW.

Even non-smokers might like to have the **221B Baker Street Collection**, a boxed set of six cigars (in Churchill, Torpedo, Pyramid, Lonsdale, Corona and Grand Corona sizes), with attractive Sherlockian labels. They can be had for $30.00 plus postage from GSI, South Illinois Route 59, PMB 175, Aurora, IL 60504, USA. *(*The proprietor, Karen Jeffery, is the sister of our subscriber Geoff Jeffery.*)* Check the website at www.CUs4Cigars.com.

Charles Hall passes on news that members of the Japan Society Scotland have written to city leaders in Edinburgh calling for Liberton Bank House (where Arthur Conan Doyle lived between the ages of 5 and 7) to be rescued from McDonald's bid to build a fast-food restaurant on the site.

From 9th to 25th May, the Hay Gallery at Colchester Institute will house an exhibition, by various artists, entitled **Drawing Dead Detectives**. It will be open 9.30 - 5.30 Monday - Friday, and 9.30 - 4.00 on Saturdays.

The first Murder Mystery Dinner at **The Sherlock Holmes** public house was extremely enjoyable, thanks to the excellence of the restaurant and the engaging ingenuity of the Irregular Special Players. Check about future such events with the managers, Sue & Ken Collier, on 020 7930 2644 (fax 020 7839 5864). The pub is at 10/11 Northumberland Street, just near Charing Cross Station and Trafalgar Square. *(*If you fancy mounting a Murder Mystery party, you can contact the Irregular Special Players at 170 Woodland Road, Sawston, Cambridge CB2 4DX.*)*

Elfed Jones of **Yesterday's News** (43 Dundonald Road, Colwyn Bay, Clwyd LL29 7RE; phone 01492 531195) says that he can supply copies in very good condition of *The Times* (London) and *The Pall Mall Gazette* at £10.00 each.

The central public library in Dunedin, New Zealand, currently has a Sherlock Holmes exhibition, thanks to **The Antipodean Holmesian Society**, whose founder Ted Nye will give a talk there on Holmes and his creator, on 9th May at 5.40 pm. Unlike Arthur Conan Doyle, but like John H. Watson, Ted is a graduate of St Bartholomew's Hospital Medical School.

The entertaining but historically deeply flawed TV film *Murder Rooms: The Dark Beginnings of Sherlock Holmes* will be broadcast in America on *Mystery!* on 18th and 25th May. David Stuart Davies tell me that more adventures of Joseph Bell and Arthur Conan Doyle are being produced.

The Annual General Meeting of **The Sherlock Holmes Society of London** at the Savage Club on 18 May will precede a talk by Peter Horrocks on 'Horse-drawn Traffic in the Canon'.

The Bimetallic Question will host The *Second Bimetallic Colloquium* at McGill University in Montréal on 2 - 4 June. Write to P.O. Box 883, Stock Exchange Tower, Montréal, Québec, Canada H4Z 1K2 for information about this important Sherlockian convention.

On 10 June **The Stormy Petrels** will host the 4th annual *Reichenbachfall Games & Picnic* at Shannon Falls near Squamish (Fran Martin, 13020 - 104 Avenue, Surrey, B.C., Canada V3T 1T7).

From 16 to 18 June, **The Phoenician Tin Traders** and **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company** will investigate 'The Devil's Foot' country, on and around the Lizard peninsula in Cornwall (Brian Knuckey, 1 Cross Street, Penzance, Cornwall TR18 2EY).

The Poor Folk Upon The Moors will explore the same area in their first weekend expedition, 30 June - 2 July. Shirley Purves has details of The Poor Folk, at Lea House, Couches Lane, Woodbury, Exeter EX5 1HL.

Periodicals received. ***The Illustrious Clients News***, April 2000 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T. Doyle, 540 W. Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA) *(*Ed & Karen Lauterbach remember the Sherlockian bard Charles E. Lauterbach; Steven Doyle argues convincingly that Dr Watson was a slob, and reports on* ***The Friends of Baron Gruner****, one of the most exclusive Sherlockian societies*).*

The Antipodean Holmesian Society Newsletter, April 2000 (Ted Nye, 51 Irvine Road, The Cove, Dunedin, New Zealand) *(*Derek F. Evered contrasts the medical skills of A. Conan Doyle and John H. Watson*).*

The Petrel Flyer, March/April 2000 (**The Stormy Petrels**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7P 3C6) *(*Michael Doyle considers the life and character of ACD; Michael Higgs examines amputation in the Canon*).*

Communication, 'Special Paste-Up Issue 2000' *and* March/April 2000 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Jeff & Wanda Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA) *(*the former is Sherlockian cuttings from here and there; the latter recommends what sounds like a pleasant restaurant at 10063 Dixie Highway in Clarkston, Michigan — it's called 221B Baker Street*).*

And ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, April 2000 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA; e-mail pblau@dgsys.dgsys.com) *(*the great Sherlockian newsletter*).*

This is our 200th issue, and as with the 100th there's a competition. Just write a *bad* opening sentence for a Sherlock Holmes story, as if Dr Watson was really off form. One sentence only, please. Get it to me by the 8th June, and there will be a prize for the best (i.e. worst) example.

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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no. 201 13 June 2000

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £6.00 or US$13.00 for 12 issues. Dollar checks should be payable to Jean Upton. Dollar prices quoted without qualification refer to US dollars. 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.

Sir John Gielgud died last month, in his 96th year. His contributions to the world of Sherlock Holmes were minor events in his mighty career, but his 16 radio outings as the detective, and his 1979 performance as Lord Salisbury in *Murder by Decree* can still be enjoyed, thanks to audio and video recordings. The Booker Prize winning novelist **Penelope Fitzgerald** died on 28 April; she was the daughter of E.V. Knox and niece of Ronald A. Knox, founder of the game of Holmesian 'scholarship'. In 1977 she published *The Knox Brothers*, a biography of her father and three remarkable uncles.

Cameron Hollyer ('The Three Students', BSI) died a couple of weeks ago. He was largely responsible for making the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection at Toronto Reference Library the internationally respected resource that it is today. He was a nice guy as well. A memorial service will be held at 6.30 pm on 19 June at St John's Norway, Kingston Road at Woodbine, Toronto

Well done to all who entered our bicentennial competition. You came up with some wonderfully awful opening sentences for your (fortunately apocryphal) Sherlock Holmes stories. Try these:

'Really, Holmes,' I said to my friend after breakfast one morning, 'how many times must I tell you that your nasty old pipe gives me ***such*** *a headache, and it's absolutely* ***ruining*** *Mrs Hudson's lovely lace curtains.'* (Eric Monahan). *Holmes, waving his egg spoon about, inveighed against the shocking new format adopted by his morning paper, for there was an advert for a sausage merchant on the first page, followed by the likeness of a nubile nude on the next page, and he was hardly mollified when I said, 'It was the bust of Times, it was the wurst of Times.'* (Frank Darlington). *It was a dark and stormy night, and Sherlock Holmes burst into our Baker Street sitting room shouting, 'I* ***do*** *appreciate you, Watson, I do, I do, I do!'* (Marilyn MacGregor). *I found Holmes in a brown study, for it and the sitting room had both been repainted a most unfortunate shade, and the paint in the sitting room was still wet and smelly; the tarps were lying limply over the furniture (truthful tarps being very unusual).* (Wayne Swift).

The joint winners are: *'Please God, not another case, Watson,' moaned Sherlock Holmes, shifting the ice bag on his forehead as I passed him the telegram which had just been handed in at the door of 221B Baker Street.* (Donald A. Redmond). And: *Since the recent death of Sherlock Holmes, I have decided to investigate all future cases myself.'* (Auberon Redfearn). They each win a copy of *The Crime and Mystery Book* by Ian Ousby.

Volume 9 of *The Shoso-in Bulletin*, perhaps the world's leading international Sherlockian periodical, contains 200 pages of fascinating material from the likes of Paul Smedegaard, Stu Schiffman, John Hall, Eric Monahan, Harada Kakuko, Alan Olding, Jean-Pierre Cagnat, Hirayama Yuichi, Aziz Bin Adam, Michael A. Meer, Rosemary Michaud and Philip Weller — between them covering Canonical exegesis, pastiche, parody, reports on activities in the Sherlockian societies and more beside. Highly recommended! Copies can be had at £7.25 from John Hall (20 Drury Avenue, Horsforth, Leeds LS18 4BR — cheques payable to John Hall), or at $12.00 plus postage from Classic Specialties (P.O. Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA).

Disjecta Membra, a nice 260-page hardback collection of stories and essays by Eric Monahan, is published by George Vanderburgh's Battered Silicon Dispatch Box (420 Owen Sound Street, P.O. Box 204, Shelburne, Ontario, Canada L0N 1S0), at US$37.00 post-paid. *(*Murder One stocks it, and other dealers may do as well.*)* Meanwhile, Eric has issued *The Great Fires of London, and The Darlington Substitution Scandal* a 36-page booklet containing two clever and entertaining new Holmes stories. Cost including postage is £5.00 or $9.00, direct from Eric (Highcliff, 14 Silver Bridge Close, Broadsands Park, Paignton, Devon TQ4 7NW). Also new from Eric is a Special Edition of *The South Devon & Dartmoor Enquirer*, a neat single sheet 'newspaper', reporting on the Baskerville case. Copies are £1.00 or $1.65 if ordered with the booklet, £1.20 or $2.40 if ordered alone.

New from Calabash Press (P.O. Box 1360, Ashcroft, B.C., Canada V0K 1A0) is *The Irregular Casebook of Sherlock Holmes* by Ron Weighell, containing the well-received 'The Case of the Fiery Messengers' and 'The Shadow of the Wolf', along with three new Holmes stories. The cost, excluding postage, is: (hardback) £19.00/ US$30.00/ Cdn$40.00; (paperback) £12.50/ US$19.50/ Cdn$23.50.

New catalogues are available from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (22 & 25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; website www.nigelwilliams.com; e-mail nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk); **Janus Books** (P.O. Box 40787, Tucson, AZ 85717, USA; website janusbooks.com; e-mail mike@janusbooks.com); and **Postmortem Books** (58 Stanford Avenue, Hassocks, Sussex BN6 8JH; e-mail ralph@pmbooks.demon.co.uk).

The sale on 15 June at **Bloomsbury Book Auctions** (3 & 4 Hardwick Street, London EC1R 4RY; phone 020 7833 2637; e-mail info@bloomsbury-book-auct.com) will contain over 75 lots of Sherlock Holmes, the property of a private collector. Contact Roddy Newlands for details.

Forbes and Marie Gibb are between houses at present. Forbes is still acquiring books but won't issue another catalogue until they're settled again. *(*The temporary address is Flat 37, Chancellor House, 4 Parsonage Square, Glasgow G4 0TH.*)*

Thanks to the initiative of Nick Utechin, BBC Radio 4 will mark the 70th anniversary of Conan Doyle's death with a series of programmes. Look out for: *The Archive Hour: 'Do What You Like With Him'*, 8 - 9 pm, Saturday 1 July (Nick himself surveys Holmesian pastiche and parody); *Book at Bedtime*, 10.45 - 11 pm, Monday 3 - Friday 7 July (Simon Russell Beale reads five Brigadier Gerard stories); *The Secret History of Conan Doyle*, 11 - 11.30 am, Tuesday 4 July (Humphrey Carpenter looks at the man and his background; interviews with Charles Foley [ACD's great-nephew], Owen Dudley Edwards, Richard Lancelyn Green, Catherine Cooke, Jon Lellenberg & Daniel Stashower); *The Real Sherlock Holmes*, 9 - 9.30 pm, Thursday 6 July (Ruth Dudley Edwards examines the impact of ACD and SH on forensic science; interviewees include Wladimir Bogomoletz). It's good to see the Beeb paying proper attention to Sir Arthur himself.

Phil Attwell, who first brought this grand venture to my attention, has also alerted me to a number of interesting websites. Check

these out: www.evo.org/sherlock/international, www.sherlockbones.com/html/menu.html, www.strangemag.com/rosenblatt.fauna.html, www.sherlock-holmes.org/atlas/world.html, home.pacbell.net/klingerl/Chrotable.htm, www.members.tripod.com/~msherman/holmes.html, www.oi.beeb.com/chat/transcripts/980623_holmes/, www.asherlockholmes.com/radioshow.html. www.geocities.com/Athens/Acropolis/8950/pastiche.htm, www.hypercon.com/charmingwoodworks/sherlock.htm.

Our Society still has some of the bone china mugs produced for the unveiling of the statue of Holmes in Baker Street. They're white, with statue silhouette in black, Society logo on the back, and gold trim on handle and rim. A snip at £10.00 ($19.50) each, or £15.00 ($29.00) a pair, including postage, from Lynne Godden, Apple Tree Cottage, Smarden, Ashford, Kent TN27 8QE.

Over the weekend 14, 15 & 16 July, the National Film Theatre will host *Crime Scene 2000*, 'a major festival of crime literature, films and television'. Bookings and information can be had from the NFT box office on 020 7928 3232, or check the website at www.bfi.org.uk/nft/.

The Sherlock Holmes Museum at 239 Baker Street, in an attempt to rival the *Tribute to Jeremy Brett* exhibition at the Sherlock Holmes Memorabilia Company opposite, has installed 'a unique waxworks exhibition of characters and scenes from the popular Sherlock Holmes stories'. *(*But what of the unpopular ones, eh?*)*

Now that European Union copyright in Conan Doyle's writings is due to expire (again), Andrea Plunket is trying desperate measures to continue making money out of other people's work. She has applied to register the name and image of Sherlock Holmes (and, separately, the Hound of the Baskervilles) as trademarks in the EU, and having already failed once is attempting to register Sherlock Holmes as a trademark in the USA.

From the Daily Express, 16 May: 'New Holmes adventures and a big screen outing, I gather, are in the literary estate's pipeline, along with a worldwide flood of memorabilia. Plunket ... continues: "Sherlock's image will be updated but not significantly altered — he won't have Gucci loafers or a Versace beret — he'll still use English bootmakers and hatters. . . The favourite characters will also be resurrected, such as Professor Challenger and Brigadier Gerard and there will be a series of children's books involving the puppies of the original Hound of the Baskervilles."' *(*Dear God, no!*)*

Charles Hall sends good news from Edinburgh: on 23 May Historic Scotland listed Liberton Bank House as a building of special interest. It's highly unlikely now that McDonald's will get permission to demolish or alter this childhood home of Arthur Conan Doyle, though they 'may try to claim compensation if the decision means their planning bid is turned down.'

Charles has produced a new version of his handsome Conan Doyle medallion, in resin, with Conan Doyle's face on one side and the profile of Sherlock Holmes on the other. It's priced at £3.25, post-paid, from 12 Paisley Terrace, Edinburgh EH8 7JW.

Douglas Johnstone notes that Orbit Media Ltd has released *Sherlock Holmes and the Deadly Necklace* on video as ORB 0044 at £9.99. Douglas got his copy from Mr Benson, 375 Harrow Road, London W9 3BR (postage £2.50). He says it's a nice clear print, though still with 'the dreadful dubbed soundtrack'. *(*Orbit's Screen Classics series includes several of the Rathbone Holmes movies.*)*

Francine Swift notes that the next (and possibly last) *Dinner with Sherlock Holmes* at the Culinary Institute of America *(*the **other** CIA*)* in Hyde Park, New York, will be on Saturday 12 May 2001. Interested parties should contact Albert M. Rosenblatt, BSI *now* at 300 Freedom Road, Pleasant Valley, NY 12569, USA.

The Illustrious Clients of Indianapolis plan a picnic for 17 June (details from Steven T. Doyle, 540 W. Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). That same weekend, **The Phoenician Tin Traders** and **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company** will investigate 'The Devil's Foot' country, on and around the Lizard peninsula in Cornwall (Brian Knuckey, 1 Cross Street, Penzance, Cornwall TR18 2EY). Two weeks later (30 June - 2 July) **The Poor Folk Upon The Moors** will explore the same area in their first weekend expedition (Shirley Purves, Lea House, Couches Lane, Woodbury, Exeter EX5 1HL).

On 15 July, **The Stormy Petrels** will hold Lawn Games and BBQ *chez Martiné* on the borders of Surrey, British Columbia (Fran Martin, 13020 - 104 Avenue, Surrey, B.C., Canada V3T 1T7). **The Friends of Dr Watson** will hold their Maiwand Luncheon at the Caravan Serai Afghan Restaurant off Baker Street, on 29 July (Richard Stacpoole-Ryding, 14 Western Close, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 4SZ). The same day will see the Film Meeting of **The Illustrious Clients of Indianapolis** (Steven T. Doyle, as above).

On 25-27 August **The Northern Musgraves** will visit Arthur Conan Doyle's *alma mater*, Stonyhurst School in Lancashire; guests will include Douglas Wilmer, Grant Eustace and Bert Coules (Christine Fell, 13 Greavestown Lane, Lea, Preston, Lancs. PR2 1PD). **The Sherlock Holmes Society of London** will explore the Country of the Broads on its *Sail & Steam* excursion, 8 - 10 September; besides 'The *Gloria Scott*' and 'The Dancing Men', the weekend will examine Conan Doyle's own activities in Norfolk (Pamela Bruxner, 2B Hiham Green, Winchelsea, East Sussex TN36 4HB).

Periodicals received. ***3 Pipe Problem Plugs and Dottles***, May 2000 (**The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem**, Gael Stahl, 1763 Needmore Road, Old Hickory, TN 37138, USA). ***The Camden House Journal***, May 2000 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, P.O. Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). ***Sherlockiana***, no. 1, 2000 (**Sherlock Holmes Klubben i Danmark**, Bjarne Nielsen, Sherlock Holmes Museet, Algade 3, 4500 Nykøbing Sjælland, Denmark). ***The Parallelogram***, May 2000 (**The Parallel Case of St Louis**, Joseph J. Eckrich, 914 Oakmoor, Fenton, MO 63126, USA). ***The Formulary***, June 2000 (**The Friends of Dr Watson,** Richard Stacpoole-Ryding, 14 Western Close, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 4SZ) *(*includes as a bonus **The Maiwand Dispatch**, 18 March 2000 [**The Watsonians**, Susan Diamond, 16W603 3rd Avenue, Bensenville, IL 60106-2327, USA]*).*

The School Report, Summer Term 2000 (**The Priory Scholars**, Horace Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY). ***The Torr***, Spring 2000 (**The Poor Folk Upon The Moors**, Eric Monahan, Highcliff, 14 Silver Bridge Close, Broadsands Park, Paignton, Devon TQ4 7NW). ***French Holmesian Studies***, April-May 2000 (**Société Sherlock Holmes de France**, Thierry Saint-Joanis, 26 avenue de la République, 75011 Paris, France) *(*the first issue of an English language journal from the enterprising French society; it's stylish, full of interest and good value at 40 francs or 6.10 euros, including postage*).* ***The Baker Street Journal***, Spring 2000 (P.O. Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA) *(*the first issue under the editorship of Steven Rothman; as always, correspondence for **The Baker Street Irregulars** should go to Michael Whelan, 7938 Mill Stream Circle, Indianapolis, IN 46278, USA*).*

The Ritual, Spring 2000 (**The Northern Musgraves**, Paul M. Chapman, Alderley, Chapel Street, Easingwold, North Yorks. YO61 3AF). ***The Soft-Nosed Bullet-In***, Herbst 1999, and ***The Striking (T)Rifles***, Mai 2000 (**Von Herder Airguns Ltd**, Michael Ross, Postfach 42 06 70, D-50900 Köln, Germany). ***The Arthur Conan Doyle Research File***, 2000 (**The Conan Doyle [Crowborough] Establishment**, Brian Pugh, Curator, 20 Clare Road, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1PN). ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, May 2000 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA).

TELL ME IF YOU'D PREFER TO RECEIVE THE DM BY E-MAIL!

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON
Roger Johnson, Mole End, 41 Sandford Road, Chelmsford CM2 6DE
e-mail: roger_johnson@hotmail.com

no. 202 16 July 2000

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £6.00 or US$13.00 for 12 issues. Dollar checks should be payable to Jean Upton. Dollar prices quoted without qualification refer to US dollars. 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.

Katherine McMahon ('Lucy Ferrier', BSI) died on 26 December 1999. Peter Blau notes that she was the last survivor of the elite band who earned membership in the Baker Street Irregulars by submitting correct solutions to the Sherlock Holmes crossword devised by Frank Morley and published by Christopher Morley in *The Saturday Review of Literature* on 19 May 1934. However, when invitations to membership were distributed to the winners, Miss McMahon and the other women were ignored, and she did not receive her investiture until 1991.

F. Dennis France, who died on 20 June, was a keen member of several Sherlock Holmes societies in the Chicago area and a valued subscriber to this newsletter.

That fine actor **Nicholas Clay** died on 5 May. Sherlockians will remember especially his excellent Jack Stapleton (and Hugo Baskerville) opposite Ian Richardson in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, and his Percy Trevelyan to Jeremy Brett's Holmes in *The Resident Patient*.

Only one or two people seem to have noticed that the last DM was mis-numbered 196. Sorry about that!

There's a real collectors' item out from Ian Henry Publications Ltd (20 Park Drive, Romford RM1 4LH): *Upon the Distinction between the Ashes of the Various Tobaccos* by Sherlock Holmes! The editor is Nino Cirone, and the whole is very nicely got up in sepia print on cream paper, with many period illustrations, and bound in yellow cloth. It is, needless to say, a spoof, but perpetrated with an admirably straight face. The tobaccos named include 'Ouvrier Cabaret' by Lausanne & Montpellier, 'Black Formosa' by Smith & Smith, 'Negretto Head' by Minories Crown Diamond, and Adler's Gold Filter Blend no. 2. This very nice book is priced at £14.99.

On the Internet at www.221bthebakerstreetflat.com Baker Street Publishing 'is proud to announce a publishing event for the discriminating Sherlock Holmes bibliophile. Newly discovered manuscripts available for the first time in a leather bound, numbered, limited first edition publisher's run, each with a book plate, certificate of registration and correspondence from Doctor Watson.' The titles of 'the first three of these newly discovered' chronicles are *The Adventure of Sherlock Holmes and the Father of Lies*, *The Mysterious Case of the Nefarious Seafarers* and *Mister Holmes, You Have Been Followed . . . Tomorrow*. Great care seems to have been taken in producing these curiosities, but the ad suggests a distinct lack of the true Watson touch. No price is mentioned.

Sherlock Holmes and the Tandridge House Murder, a collection of stories by Eddie Maguire, is due later this year from Breese Books (164 Kensington Park Road, London W11 2ER). Breese Books have accepted a novel from Eddie as well.

The Conan Doyle (Crowborough) Establishment has published a 24-page monograph by Philip Weller: *Doctor Arthur Conan Doyle and the Boer War: A Consideration of Some Non-Military Perspectives*. 'It examines what seems to have been, by his own confession, ACD's primary concern during the period he spent in South Africa in 1900, which is the writing of his grossly flawed history of the conflict, *The Great Boer War*, in terms of what his major preoccupation should have been: the treatment of the sick.' (Brian Pugh, 20 Clare Road, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1PN; UK £5.00; Europe £5.50 or $11.00; elsewhere £6.00 or $12.00) Cheques payable to the ACD Memorial Fund, or US dollars cash, please.

Catalogues 79 and 80 are available from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (22 & 25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk) website www.nigelwilliams.com.

Issue 37 of *Sherlock Holmes: The Detective Magazine* features Grant Eustace on Holmes's weaknesses; Jeffrey Richards on Radio 4's third series of *The Radio Detectives*; David Stuart Davies on *The Eligible Bachelor* and less cuttingly (just) on *The House of Fear*; Mike Ripley on TV's Inspector Rebus; Alan Perry on fictional police inspectors; Paul Chapman on Batman; an interview with Ron Weighell, author of *The Irregular Casebook of Sherlock Holmes*; Russell James on Peter Cheyney's gumshoe Lemmy Caution; the debut of a new private investigator, Johnny One-Eye; Gaynor Coules on the comic thrillers of Peter Gutteridge; Pat Ward's report from the USA; a look at The Antipodean Holmesian Society - and, as always, 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).

BBC Worldwide (Woodlands, 80 Wood Lane, London W12 0TT) has released *The Complete Sherlock Holmes*, the entire Canon as dramatised, superbly, by Bert Coules and others for Radio 4, in a boxed set of cassettes priced at £150.00. *(*It may still be possible to order the set by post at no extra charge, and get four free tapes of **Agatha Christie's Miss Marple**, starring June Whitfield. Phone 0870 727 4188 to check.*)*

BBC TV's entertaining but historically deeply flawed *Murder Rooms: The Dark Beginnings of Sherlock Holmes* is out on video at £14.99 or DVD at £15.99 from Mosaic/BBC. Further series are in preparation, and I'll admit it will be good to see Ian Richardson's excellent Joseph Bell again. The Beeb also plans to film *The Lost World*, with effects by the team behind the stunning *Walking with Dinosaurs*. Sounds promising!

Gerit Stenitzer sends a cutting from the magazine *Elle*. If my schoolboy French serves me correctly, Goyard, purveyor of very high quality luggage, maintains a small museum in which can be seen a suitcase owned by Arthur Conan Doyle (Goyard Malletier, 233 rue Saint-Honoré, Paris 1er; phone 01 42 60 57 04).

Would-be Tongas may like to know that Hawkin's Bazaar (St Margaret, Harleston, Norfolk IP20 0HN; phone 01986 782468; e-mail sales@hawkin.co.uk) sells a blow-pipe with (sucker-tipped) darts. It's no. A614 in the Summer Supplement catalogue, and

costs £3.99 plus postage. Great fun! Visit Hawkin's shops in Salisbury, Southampton, Tunbridge Wells or Windsor - or the website at www.hawkin.co.uk.

Mike 'Wiggins' Whelan sends news of an exhibition in the Lilly Library at Indiana University in Bloomington: *Bloomington by Gaslight: Sherlock Holmes in the Lilly Library*. The library's collection was compiled by the late David A. Randall, BSI, and includes the manuscript of 'The Red Circle' and a copy of *Beeton's Christmas Annual* for 1887 among other treasures.

Peter Blau notes an exhibition in the Wilson Library at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis: *Better Holmes and Gardens: Sherlock Holmes, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Architectural Design 'Down Under'* is co-ordinated by Derham Groves BSI and runs till the first week in August.

The Gila Lizards of the Arid and Repulsive Desert are (or is) a new Sherlock Holmes society in New Mexico. Visitors to that fascinating state should contact Marilynne McKay at 4903 Guadalupe Trail NW, Albuquerque, NM 87107, U.S.A. (e-mail mmckayABQ@aol.com).

The Maiwand Luncheon of **The Friends of Dr Watson** will be held at the Caravan Serai Afghan Restaurant in Paddington Street, near Baker Street, on 29 July (Richard Stacpoole-Ryding, 14 Western Close, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 4SZ). The same day will see the Film Festival of **The Illustrious Clients of Indianapolis** (Steven T. Doyle, 540 W. Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). **The Inspector Morse Society** plans a *The Wench Is Dead* day on the Trent & Mersey Canal at Rugeley on 29 July, following the real-life murder of Christina Collins (details from Antony Richards, 170 Woodland Road, Sawston, Cambridge CB2 4DX; e-mail arichards@msi-eu.com).

The Annual Membership Meeting of **The Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections** will be held on 2 August at the Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. For information about the Friends contact Dr Richard J. Sveum at Sveum001@tc.umn.edu, or Julie McKuras at Mike9750@aol.com.

A Lodge of **The Red Circle** will be held on 11 August at the National Press Club in Washington. The Adventure of the Evening will be 'The Three Garridebs' (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA; pblau@dgs.dgsys.com).

The annual Silver Blaze of the **Baker Street Irregulars** will be held on 19 August at Saratoga Race Track (Lou Lewis at Box 2990, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603, USA; lewis-greer@aol.com).

After three years, **The Northern Musgraves** will return to Arthur Conan Doyle's *alma mater*, Stonyhurst School in Lancashire on 25-27 August. Guests will include Douglas Wilmer and Bert Coules (Christine Fell, 13 Greavestown Lane, Lea, Preston, Lancs. PR2 1PD). **The Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn** will meet on 26 August at the Mother-in-Law Restaurant in St Charles (Michael E. Bragg, Box 256, St Charles, MO 63302-0256, USA).

The Irregular Special Railway Company will hold *The Remorseful Weekend* in and around Oxford on 30 September and 1 October: a celebration of the filming of *The Remorseful Day*, plus the launch of Inspector Morse beer and a plaque unveiling at Brakspear's brewery by Colin Dexter (Antony Richards, as above).

Bill Barnes passes on news from Enrico Solito of **Uno Studio in Holmes**: 'The next Sherlock Holmes Symposium in Italy will be constituted in two shows (posters, books, magazines, old pipes and so on) in Milan and in Sesto Fiorentino, close to Florence. The shows will go on for several weeks. We will have two meetings: the first on 9 - 11 September in Milan, the second on 15 - 17 September in Sesto Fiorentino. (The Sesto Fiorentino meeting has been dedicated to the memory of a Sherlockian from Trieste, Daniele Radacich, 25 years old, who became seriously ill and passed away recently.)' Speakers will include Thierry St-Joanis, Jane & Philip Weller, and a number of distinguished Italian academics and Sherlockians. You can get more information from Gianluca Salvatori at cp 14, 55042 Forte dei marmi (LU), Italy (mycroft@versilia.toscana.it).

Periodicals received. ***Sherlockian Snippets***, 20 June 2000 (Tabitha Smith, SaralockH@aol.com) *(*the world's first entirely e-mail newsletter devoted to Sherlock Holmes; enthusiastic and enjoyable*).* ***The Camden House Journal***, June 2000 and July 2000 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, P.O. Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA) *(*June features a good essay by Jack Crelling on the historical background to 'The Engineer's Thumb'; in July, William Cochran looks at Watson's rôle in 'The Crooked Man'*).* ***The Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections***, June 2000. (The Sherlock Holmes Collections, Suite 111, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, 222 21st Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA) *(articles about Bret Harte, author of one of the best Holmes parodies, President Truman BSI, Sherlockian smoking collectibles, and more*).* ***The Tin Box***, vol. 2, May 2000 (Barbara & Terry Harding, Riverbank, 2 Bohemia Cottages, Stalybridge, Cheshire SK15 1JY) *(the market place for Sherlockiana of all sorts - a must for collectors*).*

The Illustrious Clients News, June 2000 and July 2000 (**The Illustrious Clients of Indianapolis**, Steven T. Doyle, 540 W. Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA) *(*June features a couple of brief pieces by the late Pete Williams, and Steven T. Doyle on Holmes's Irish heritage; July has articles by Pat Ward on the exhibition at the Lilly Library and the Illustrious Clients' Film Festival at the Wayne Public Library*).* ***The Serpentine Muse***, Spring 2000 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 360 West 21st Street, #5A, New York, NY 10011, USA) *(*outstanding are Joe Fink's very tall tale about Conan Doyle and Houdini, and Susan Diamond's almost equally tall one about the third Mrs Watson*).* ***The Cormorant's Ring***, Spring 2000 (**The Trained Cormorants of Long Beach** and **The Frenzied Hands**, Jim Coffin, 6570 E. Paseo Alcazaa, Anaheim Hills, CA 92807-4910, USA) *(*a nice parody by Kevin Reed; Ron Doerfler on 'Why Sherlock Holmes Taps His Fingers'; a curious story by Georgia Carlton-Adams*).* ***Communication***, May-June 2000 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Jeff & Wanda Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA) *(*a jolly account of the Sunshine State Sherlockian Symposium last month, and an intriguing piece about* ***The Salon Pistols of Gainesville*****).*

The Passengers' Log, 22nd May 2000 (**The Sydney Passengers**, Bill Barnes, 19 Malvern Avenue, Manly, NSW 2095, Australia; e-mail bbarnes@ozemail.com.au) *(*includes Bill Barnes's entertaining memories of the January festivities in New York, a very good piece on Holmes the swordsman by Erin O'Neill, and an interview with that human dynamo Susan Dahlinger; Rosane McNamara's editing and Philip Cornell's design ensure that the* ***Log*** *remains one of the most stylish of all Sherlockian magazines*).* ***3 Pipe Problem Plugs and Dottles***, July 2000 (**The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem**, Gael Stahl, 1763 Needmore Road, Old Hickory, TN 37138, USA) *(*among much of interest, the standout is the interview with Paul Smedegaard*).* ***SH-ACTU: L'actualité de Sherlock Holmes en France***, Juillet 2000 (Alexis Barquin, moucham@hotmail.com) *(*a sort of French equivalent of* ***Sherlockian Snippets*****).*

The Sherlock Holmes Journal, Summer 2000 (**The Sherlock Holmes Society of London** - of course) *(*still one of the best*).* ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, June 2000 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA) *(* the original Sherlockian newsletter*).*

I can send the DM as an attachment by e-mail. If you'd prefer to receive it that way, please let me know!

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

Roger Johnson, Mole End, 41 Sandford Road, Chelmsford CM2 6DE
e-mail: roger_johnson@hotmail.com

no. 203 17 August 2000

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £6.00 or US$13.00 for 12 issues. Dollar checks should be payable to Jean Upton. Dollar prices quoted without qualification refer to US dollars.

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.

If you need to contact our Chairman Peter Horrocks, by the way, his address is 33 Claremont Road, Surbiton, Surrey KT6 4RL.

Sherlock Holmes at the Varieties is the latest short novel from Val Andrews (Breese Books, 164 Kensington Park Road, London W11 2ER; £6.99/$12.95). A phantom seems to be haunting Murphy's Theatre of Varieties, and a rising comedian's life is threatened. As the comedian in question is the great George Robey, we know that he'll survive, but it's fun to see how Holmes handles the case. As always, Val Andrews is on sure ground with the world of variety. He has an inventive imagination, and he writes good, clear English. I enjoyed *Sherlock Holmes at the Varieties* very much.

New from Ian Henry Publications Ltd (20 Park Drive, Romford RM1 4LH) is *Sherlock Holmes and the Midnight Bell*, a collection of five stories by David James. The cases are all cleverly plotted and exciting, very much in the canonical manner, though Conan Doyle would have been more careful with his punctuation. This £14.99 156-page hardback is produced to Ian Henry's usual high standards.

Yesterday's meeting of the Antipodean Holmesian Society at the Dunedin City Library saw the launch of *The Teddy Bear's Ribbon, and Other Tales*, new Sherlock Holmes stories by E.R. Nye (Halvon Press, 51 Irvine Road, The Cove, Dunedin, New Zealand; e-mail ted.nye@stonebow.otago.ac.nz; NZ$15.00 or £5.00 plus postage).

The Hidden Adventures of Sherlock Holmes by William C. Paxton (comprising a long story, 'The Macabre Affair', and three shorter ones, 'All That Glitters', 'The Bab Deception' and 'The Eight-Pointed Cross') is available from Omnibus Enterprises Ltd (12097 E. 36th Street Terrace, Independence, MO 64055, USA; e-mail WPaxton159@AOL.com) at $25.00 plus $5.00 postage.

Monographs available from the Conan Doyle (Crowborough) Establishment are: *Doctor Arthur Conan Doyle and the Great Boer War* by Philip Weller (UK £5.00; Europe £5.50/$11.00; elsewhere £6.00/$12.00); *Recollections of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle by Residents of Crowborough*, collected by Malcolm Payne and edited by Philip Weller (prices as above); *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Groombridge Place* (UK £2.00, Europe £2.50/$5.00, elsewhere £3.00/$6.00); and the brand-new *A Chronology of the Life of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle* by Brian W. Pugh (UK £11.90, Europe £12.40/$24.80, USA £13.00/$26.00, Japan £13.30/$26.60). US dollars can be accepted in cash only. Sterling cheques or Traveller's Cheques for the *Chronology* should be payable to B.W. Pugh; for the other monographs they should be payable to The ACD Memorial Fund. Prices include postage. Send orders to the Curator, Brian Pugh, 20 Clare Road, Lewes, Sussex BN7 1PN.

Philip Attwell recommends what looks like an extraordinarily interesting book, *The Code Book: The Secret History of Codes*, published by Fourth Estate.

Peter Blau notes *The Sherlock Holmes Book of Magic* by Jeff Brown (Colorado Springs: Piccadilly Books; $10.00), and a new edition of Chris Redmond's excellent *A Sherlock Holmes Handbook*, available from the University of Toronto Press (5201 Dufferin Street, Toronto, ON, Canada M3H 5T8) at CA$29.99 0r £14.99.

Also from Peter: *The Philatelic Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by Larry Dodson, priced at £12.00 for non-members (The American Tropical Association Box 50820, Albuquerque, NM 87181, USA).

And news of the revival of *Prescott's Press* (the quarterly journal of **The Three Garridebs** (details from Warren Randall, 15 Fawn Lane West, South Setauket, NY 11702, USA).

And finally *The Unknown Holmes, Vol. III*, the latest collection of Bill Brown's humorous one-act radio plays, 'performed by **The Squeaking Axles** to amuse and bemuse the **Hansom Wheels** of Columbia, S.C. (Lloyd W. Brown Jr, 103 Snow Court, Lexington, SC 29073, USA; £15.00).

More new and forthcoming titles: *The Flying Scotsman*, a Mycroft Holmes novel by Quinn Fawcett (Tor Books, c/o Melia Publishing Services Ltd, P.O. Box 1639, Maidenhead, Berks. SL6 6YZ; £16.99); *Detective Fiction and the Rise of Forensic Science* by Ronald R. Thomas (Cambridge University Press, The Edinburgh Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 2RU; £37.50); *Sherlock Holmes and the Devil's Grail* by Barrie Roberts (Allison & Busby, c/o Biblios Publishers Distribution Services Ltd, 114 New Cavendish Street, London W1M 7FD; £6.99); *Holmes and Watson* by June Thomson (Allison & Busby; £6.99) *(*Like Constable, A & B are classing Miss Thomson's book as fiction, whereas it truly belongs in the great tradition of Holmesian scholarship, alongside Starrett, Brend, Harrison, Dakin et al.*)*; and an educational folio, *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle* by Roger & Louise Machin (Folens Ltd, Albert House, Apex Business Centre, Boscombe Road, Dunstable, Beds. LU5 4RL; £17.95).

Bob Ellis reminds me that Simon & Schuster Audio is releasing the 1940s radio series *The New Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, written by Denis Green & Anthony Boucher and starring Basil Rathbone & Nigel Bruce. Each single cassette containing two 30-minute plays is priced at £6.99. (HarperCollins Publishers Ltd, Campus 400, Maylands Avenue, Hemel Hempstead, Herts. HP2 7EZ.)

On the 27th August the Three Garridebs, a scion society of the Baker Street Irregulars, will auction the rest of the collection of the late Tom Stix. There's not much time left, but you can still get a catalogue (70 pages of wonderful Sherlockiana!) as an e-mail attachment from Ben Vizoskie at GARRIDEBS@aol.com. If you're quick you might get a copy by post from Ben at 90 Ralph Avenue, White Plains, NY 10606, USA.

The collection of another greatly missed old friend, Bill Michell, has mostly been disposed of, but one outstanding item remains. This is a complete set of *The Sherlock Holmes Journal* from vol. 1 no. 1 to vol. 24 no. 3. Prospective buyers should contact Shirley Purves at Lea House, Couches Lane, Woodbury, Exeter EX5 1HL.

The BBC (BBC Worldwide Product & Sales, P.O. Box 308, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8LW) is offering what looks like a very nice boxed set of the complete Holmes Canon as dramatised on Radio 4, with Clive Merrison and Michael Williams as Holmes

and Watson. For £150 you get 36 cassettes (48 hours 10 minutes) plus 'a book by Bert Coules about the making of this historic series'. *(*The series really owes everything to Bert Coules, whose idea it was and who wrote most of the scripts. Is the book a new edition of Bert's Musgrave Monograph **221 BBC**?*)*

Charles Hall, whose work I have recommended frequently in this newsletter, has two new items available. The handsome model of Conan Doyle's birthplace is cast to order in antique brown or a greyish finish; it stands about 7 inches high, and the sides carry a lot of detail relating to Doyle and Holmes. The price is £25.00 (or £22.50 for an unpainted casting). The caricature head of Sherlock Holmes, about 4 inches high in resin, costs £14.50. Prices include postage within the UK (12 Paisley Terrace, Edinburgh EH8 7JW).

Christopher Roden and Philip Weller have sent details of the latest film version (for TV) of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, made by Muse Entertainment for CTV. It will be broadcast in Canada this autumn, and distributed in the USA by Odyssey Network and by Hallmark world-wide. The script is by Joe Wiesenfeld (*Sleepy Hollow*). Matt Frewer (*Max Headroom*) & Kenneth Welsh (*Twin Peaks*) look the part as Holmes & Watson, but Philip notes that the shooting script contains plenty of Canonical and historical horrors!

Richard Greep of the Conan Doyle (Crowborough) Establishment has sent an attractive photographic mock-up of the statue of Arthur Conan Doyle proposed for Crowborough. As he says, 'Hopefully, the real thing will be in place late Sept. - early October. (Am unable to get a firm date from the Town Council!)'

Charles Hall sends further news of Liberton Bank House, the only surviving Edinburgh home of Arthur Conan Doyle. According the Daily Mail (5th August), 'The McDonald's fast food chain say they will include Sherlock Holmes memorabilia as part of their design if they are allowed to develop a restaurant on the site where Sherlock Holmes' creator Sir Arthur Conan Doyle once lived.' Dr Allan Simpson, co-ordinator of the campaign to save the building, 'said he expected the people of Edinburgh to be outraged when the McDonald's plans were made public.'

A reminder of the work of Kate Woodlock (Role Models, 2A Stonehouse Road, Liphook, Hants. GU30 7DD; phone 01428 723083). Ms Woodlock offers a good 3½-inch bust of Basil Rathbone (with turned-up coat collar, as in the Universal Holmes movies) and a superb Peter Cushing (in deerstalker, as in *The Masks of Death*). In white resin they're £12.00 each, and in bronzed resin £14.00 - a bargain! There are also 5-inch pewter figures of Sherlock Holmes and the Hound of the Baskervilles at £18.00 each. Prices include postage (ask about international prices).

A reminder of the wonderful exhibition at the Sherlock Holmes Memorabilia Company at 230 Baker Street, London NW1 5RT. It re-creates the 221B sitting-room with furniture and props from the Granada TV series, and also features production stills and other photographs of Jeremy Brett, David Burke and Edward Hardwicke. Entry to the exhibition is £1.50 adult and £1.00 child. The shop is well worth a visit anyway, and it's open seven days a week. Check out the website at http://ww.sh-memorabilia.co.uk (e-mail sales@shmc.demon.co.uk).

'Managing personal finances in a way that saves time and money is important to us all. The Sherlock Holmes Memorabilia Company Platinum Plus Visa Card helps you do this.' UK applicants will receive a free Vodafone mobile phone (while stocks last). Ask for an application form.

Amazon Vinegar & Pickling Works Drygoods, 411 Brady Street, Davenport, IA 52801-1518, USA (the website's at http://www.victoriana.com.amazon/) is a wonderful source of repro Victoriana.

Our Society's website at www.sherlock_holmes.org.uk is (I quote our chairman, Peter Horrocks) 'being rebuilt by an outside contractor. When finished it should be very impressive indeed.'

The annual Silver Blaze of the **Baker Street Irregulars** will be held on 19 August at Saratoga Race Track. Get details from Lou Lewis at Box 2990, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603, U.S.A. (lewis-greer@aol.com).

The Northern Musgraves will return to Arthur Conan Doyle's *alma mater*, Stonyhurst School in Lancashire on 25-27 August. Guests will include Douglas Wilmer and Bert Coules (Christine Fell, 13 Greavestown Lane, Lea, Preston, Lancs. PR2 1PD). **The Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn** will meet on 26 August at the Mother-in-Law Restaurant in St Charles (Michael E. Bragg has details at Box 256, St Charles, MO 63302-0256, USA).

The Sydney Passengers are staging a rival event to the Sydney Olympics, the Sherlockian Olympics, which will take place on 3 September (Bill Barnes, 19 Malvern Avenue, Manly, NSW 2095, Australia; bbarnes@ozemail.com.au.)

The Sherlock Holmes Society of London will explore the Country of the Broads on its *Sail & Steam* excursion, 8 - 10 September, based at the University of East Anglia in Norwich (Pamela Bruxner, 2B Hiham Green, Winchelsea, East Sussex TN36 4HB). At their Dinner Meeting in Indianapolis on 9 September **The Illustrious Clients** will discuss 'The Solitary Cyclist' (Steven T. Doyle, 540 West Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA e-mail IllustClients@aol.com). *(*The Clients have a new lapel pin available, in two versions, for members and for non-members, each at $10.00. They can be had from Yvonne De Tar, 1838 Portage Terrace #C, Indianapolis, IN 46227, USA.*)*

News from Enrico Solute of **Uno Studio in Holmes**: 'The next Sherlock Holmes Symposium in Italy will be constituted in two shows (posters, books, magazines, old pipes and so on) in Milan and in Sesto Fiorentino, close to Florence. The shows will go on for several weeks. We will have two meetings: the first on 9 - 11 September in Milan, the second on 15 - 17 September in Sesto Fiorentino. (The Sesto Fiorentino meeting has been dedicated to the memory of a Sherlockian from Trieste, Daniele Radacich, 25 years old, who became seriously ill and passed away recently.)' Speakers will include Thierry St-Joanis, Jane & Philip Weller, and a number of distinguished Italian academics and Sherlockians. You can get more information from Gianluca Salvatori at cp 14, 55042 Forte dei marmi (LU), Italy (mycroft@versilia.toscana.it).

The Poor Folk Upon the Moors will take a railway trip from Exeter to Okehampton on 17 September; this is a route that Stapleton may have taken with the hound of hell. Get details from Vosper Arthur (Spynishlake, Doddiscombsleigh, Exeter EX6 7PR). *(*The Poor Folk's AGM and Christmas lunch will be in Exmouth on 25 November.*)*

On 18 September, **The Parallel Case of St Louis** will meet at the Big Sleep Bookstore (Joseph J. Eckrich for details at 914 Oakmoor, Fenton, MO 63126, USA).

Don't forget our Society's 50th anniversary cruise to the Baltic Sea. Check the website at www.arenatravel.com/sherlock.htm.

Periodicals received. ***The Petrel Flyer***, May/June 2000 (**The Stormy Petrels**, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7P 3C6. ***The Camden House Journal***, August 2000 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, P.O. Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). ***Sherlockian Snippets***, 1 August 2000 (Tabitha Smith <SaralockH@aol.com>). ***Communication***, Special Movie Issue and July/August 2000, and ***Roster 2000*** (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Jeff & Wanda Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA). ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, July 2000 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA).

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

Roger Johnson, Mole End, 41 Sandford Road, Chelmsford CM2 6DE
e-mail: roger_johnson@hotmail.com

no. 204 25th September 2000

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £6.00 or US$13.00 for 12 issues. Dollar checks should be payable to Jean Upton. Dollar prices quoted without qualification refer to US dollars. 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.

The silly-season news has been that Conan Doyle stole the plot of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* from his friend Fletcher Robinson, had an affair with his wife, and murdered him. All will be revealed in *The House of the Baskervilles* by Rodger Garrick-Steele — which has been rejected by 90 publishers! Coverage has been wide, but evidence is thin. *(*The forename Rodger, spelt thus, is so rare in Britain as to be unknown. ACD himself apparently took it from an Edinburgh surname and applied it to characters in 'The Three Garridebs' and — er — **The Hound of the Baskervilles**. Spooky, eh?*)*

Meanwhile the saga of Liberton Bank House continues. McDonald's and Pearl Assurance still want to build a drive-through restaurant yards away from the sole remaining Edinburgh home of Arthur Conan Doyle, making it impossible to restore the house properly. The City Council is considering the new application.

In November, John Murray (50 Albemarle Street, London W1), for many years Conan Doyle's publishers, will publish *The Mandala of Sherlock Holmes: The Missing Years — His Exploits in India and Tibet as Faithfully Recorded by Hurree Chunder Mookerjee, CIE, FRS, FRGS, Rai Bahadur* by Jamyang Norbu, price £16.99. (**The Great Hiatus seems to be very popular. We've recently had **The Travels of Sherlock Holmes, Chronicles of the Lost Years**, **The Siam Question** and probably some titles I've forgotten.*)*

Dennis Collins sends news of 15 year-old Edmund Hastie, whose first book, *Sherlock Holmes: The Disappearing Prince*, has been accepted for publication by Breese Books in October, with an introduction by H.R.F. Keating. (Breese Books, 164 Kensington Park Road, London W11 2ER; price unknown.)

William S. Dorn BSI has published *A Study Guide to Sherlock Holmes, Volume 1: The Novels, The Adventures and the Memoirs* in two formats. The regular edition, a 300-page paperback book, costs (to Canada) $25.95, or (other international orders) $27.95. The student edition, on CD-ROM, costs $10.95 or $12.95. (Prices are in US dollars, and include postage. Sorry, I don't have prices for the USA.) Make checks payable to The Sherlock Store, and order from the Store at 2045 S. Monroe Street, Denver, CO 80210-3734, USA. Check Bill's website at www.TheSherlockStore.com for details.

Phil Attwell sends information about more new and forthcoming books. The 2000 edition of Richard Lancelyn Green & John Michael Gibson's *Arthur Conan Doyle: A Bibliography* can be had at £65.00 from Post Mortem Books (58 Stanford Avenue, Hassocks, Sussex BN6 8JH), Nigel Williams Rare Books (22 & 25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE) and other dealers. In December, Constable & Co. will publish Barrie Roberts' novel *Sherlock Holmes and the Crosby Murder* (3 The Lanchesters, 162 Fulham Palace Road, London W6 9ER; £16.99).

In December the Arthur Conan Doyle Society (P.O. Box 1360, Ashcroft, B.C., Canada V0K 1A0) will publish 'The Haunted Grange of Goresthorpe' with an introduction by Owen Dudley Edwards and a preface by Ian McGowan of the National Library of Scotland.. This unpublished story is quite different from the well-known 'Selecting a Ghost: The Ghosts of Goresthorpe Grange'.

Sail and Steam is an attractive 24-page A4 booklet, published by the Sherlock Holmes Society of London to accompany its expedition to Norfolk earlier this month. Articles by Frank Meers, David Walsh, Peter Bower, David Hammer, Richard Lancelyn Green, Shirley Purves and Roger Johnson are complemented by Victorian photographs and facsimiles of letters from Conan Doyle. The price including postage is: UK £8.00; Europe £8.50; USA $14.50; elsewhere £8.75. Cheques should be payable to the Society, and orders sent to Mrs E.M. Godden, Apple Tree Cottage, Smarden, Kent TN27 8QE.

*(*Check the Society's website at www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk for details of publications, events, membership, etc. — and an archive of The District Messenger back to no. 160.*)*

New catalogues are available, full of good (and expensive) things, from **Adrian Harrington Ltd** (64A Kensington Church Street, Kensington, London W8 4DB; rare@harringtonbooks.co.uk; website www.harringtonbooks.co.uk/rare), and **Nigel Williams Rare Books** ((22 & 25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk; website www.nigelwilliams.com).

Issue 38 of *Sherlock Holmes: The Detective Magazine* features Roger Llewellyn on his Canadian tour with *Sherlock Holmes — The Last Act!*; Robert Barnard on detective duos; David Stuart Davies on Granada's *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* and on the Arthur Wontner film *Silver Blaze*; Mike Ripley on best-selling crime fiction; Nick Utechin on Sherlockian parody and pastiche; Paul Chapman on detective heroes; Chris Senior on *Department S*; a new Luther Darke mystery by A.L. Blake; Gaynor Coules on Michael Dibdin's tales of Aurelio Zen; Pat Ward's report from the USA; a look at the Edgar Wallace 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).

Friends of Marilyn MacGregor BSI will be pleased to know that she's established in her new home at 1515 Shasta Drive, #4210, Davis, CA 95616-6692, USA (marylinmac@urcad.org). Bert & Gaynor Coules have also moved, to Trackside, 70 Romney Way, Hythe, Kent CT21 6PN (bert.coules@fonix.org).

Roger Llewellyn, having taken David Stuart Davies's play *Sherlock Holmes — The Last Act!* to the USA, Canada and Hong Kong, is now touring Britain again. Look out for it at a theatre near you.

Christopher Roden put me on to a website that has a good deal about the new TV film of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, complete with stills: www.geocities.com/sirharryflashman1/hound.html. It's due for transmission this autumn on CTV in Canada and the Odyssey Network in the USA.

Peter Horrocks notes that Leslie Klinger is seeking prospective purchasers for the complete *Baker Street Journal* on CD-ROM. The project needs 100 buyers to make it viable. The cost would be about $100.00. If you have a ROM drive and $100.00, this would be a great chance to own a complete run of one of the great

Sherlockian magazines. Contact Les at 2029 Century Park East, Suite 3290, Los Angeles, CA 90067, USA.

Brian Pugh, Curator of the Conan Doyle (Crowborough) Establishment, tells me that the town's proposed statue of Arthur Conan Doyle will probably be ready for unveiling by January. *(*The Establishment supports the project, but is not responsible for its progress.*)*

Marcelle Shulman at **The Sherlock Holmes Memorabilia Company** (230 Baker Street, London NW1 5RT) is looking to buy more second-hand Holmesian & Doylean books. Please contact her if you have books to sell.

Have a look at http://home.ptd.net/~dobry/. Denny Dobry, who lives in Reading, Pennsylvania, and is evidently dedicated beyond the call of duty, has installed in his basement a complete re-creation of Holmes & Watson's famous sitting-room. There are 8 photographs of this magnificent project. Mr Dobry welcomes visitors, by appointment. E-mail him at dobry@ptdprolog.net or phone him on 610 779 2363.

Joe Bevilacqua's iconoclastic ten-part series of 30-minute radio parodies, *The Mis-Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, is available on 5 cassettes or 5 CDs at $16.00 each or $59.00 the set. Prices include postage. Order from Joe at Waterlogg Productions, Box 10723, Austin, TX 78766, USA.

Douglas Johnstone reminds me of the unabridged recordings available from Isis Audio Books (7 Centremead, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES; phone 01865 250333): *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (10 cassettes, £18.99), *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (5 cassettes, £15.99) and *The Sign of Four* (4 cassettes, £14.99) — all read by Patrick Tull — and *A Study in Scarlet* (4 cassettes, £14.99), read by Peter Mesney. Isis has a very full catalogue, with more of Doylean and Sherlockian interest.

Societies whose brief includes Victorian costume may like to be reminded of Amazon Drygoods, who have the most amazing range of reproduction clothing and household accessories. You can write to them at 2218 East 11th Street, Davenport, IA 52803-3760, U.S.A., or e-mail info@amazondrygoods.com. Check the website at www.amazondrygoods.com.

Chris Redmond's invaluable website, a sort of Internet equivalent of Mycroft Holmes in its omniscience, is now called Sherlockian.Net, and can be found at www.sherlockian.net. Just about everything of Sherlockian interest on the web is there.

The Mini-Tonga Society, devoted to the collection and creation of Sherlockian miniatures, has a very attractive new website at hometown.aol.com/minitongasociety/mini1.htm, with stunning photos of $^{1}/_{12}$ scale models of the fabled sitting-room by Yves-Charles Fercoq, and by Trish & Jay Pearlman — who have just taken over running the Society (1656 East 19th Street, #2-E, Brooklyn, NY 11229, USA; minitongasociety@aol.com).

The Sherlock Holmes Society of London Christmas card bears a new painting by Douglas West of a scene from *The Sign of Four*. Packets of ten (post-paid, cost: UK £5.50; Europe £6.00; USA $13.00; elsewhere £7.00, from Geoffrey Stavert (22 Homeheights, Clarence Parade, Southsea, Hants. PO5 3NN).

The Northern Musgraves also have merchandise for sale, including a new Musgrave Cup: a white bone china mug, gold-rimmed, and bearing the society's logo and the text of the Musgrave Ritual (UK £7.00; Europe £8.00; North America $15.00), and two of Kate Woodlock's lovely sculptures: the 3.5" bronzed resin bust (UK £18.00; Europe £19.00; N. America $30.00) and the 5.5" pewter statuette (UK £25.00; Europe £26.00; N. America $42.00), both of Peter Cushing as Holmes. Send orders to Ann Jordan, Fairbank, Beck Lane, Bingley, West Yorks. BD16 4DN.

On 7 October **The Occupants of the Empty House** will meet at Alongi's Restaurant in Du Quoin (details from William R. Cochran, 517 North Vine Street, Du Quoin, IL 62832-2047, USA). **The Sherlock Holmes Society of London** will meet at the Savage Club, on 11 October; Rosemary Hawthorne will give an illustrated talk on 'Fashion Observed: Dress, 1880 - 1930' (Pamela Bruxner, 2B Hiham Green, Winchelsea, East Sussex TN36 4HB). **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company** will explore Dartmoor over the weekend of 13 - 15 October, based in a barn at Hound Tor (6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU). 'The Priory School' will be the subject for **The Illustrious Clients** on 21 October (Steven T. Doyle, 540 W. Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). The fall dinner of **The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes** will take place on 27 October in New York (Evelyn Herzog, 360 West 21st Street, #5A, New York, NY 10011, USA).

The Northern Musgraves will meet at the Bagshaw Museum at Batley, near Leeds, on 4 November for a meeting devoted to *Collectable Holmes* (Eilidh Gunson, 1 Dene Royd Close, Stainland, Halifax HX4 9QP). Also on 4 November, **The Friends of Dr Watson** will visit Salisbury, taking in the Museum of the Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment, and concluding with their Annual Dinner at the *Haunch of Venison* (Richard Stacpoole-Ryding, 14 Western Close, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 4SZ). The Annual Film Evening of **The Sherlock Holmes Society of London** at St Bartholomew's Hospital on 17 November will feature the rare 1931 Arthur Wontner movie *Sherlock Holmes's Fatal Hour*, supported by the première of the Society's documentary *Sherlock Holmes — The Statue* (Pamela Bruxner, 2B Hiham Green, Winchelsea, East Sussex TN36 4HB). *(*The documentary will shortly be for sale on video. Watch this space.*)*

The Red Circle will meet on 20 November to celebrate its 50th anniversary; founder and president Karen Anderson will be visiting from the West Coast, with her husband Poul Anderson (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW, #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA). The AGM and Luncheon of **The Poor Folk Upon The Moors** will be on 25 November at The Grove Hotel in Exmouth (Vosper Arthur, Spynishlake, Doddiscombsleigh, Exeter EX6 7PR). On the same day, **The Sydney Passengers** will discuss 'The Sussex Vampire' over dinner (Bill Barnes, Captain, 19 Manly, NSW 2095, Australia; bbarnes@ozemail.com.au).

Periodicals received. ***All that Is Ours,*** **'**the second occasional newsletter' (**The Northern Musgraves**, John Hall, 29 Drury Avenue, Horsforth, Leeds LS18 4BR). ***Practice Notes***, September 2000 (**The Friends of Dr Watson,** Richard Stacpoole-Ryding, 14 Western Close, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 4SZ). ***The Maiwand Dispatch***, 1 June 2000 (**The Watsonians**, Susan Diamond, 16W603 3rd Avenue, Bensenville, IL 60106-2327, USA). ***The Serpentine Muse***, Fall 2000 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 360 West 21st Street, #5A, New York, NY 10011, USA).

The Illustrious Clients News, September 2000 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T. Doyle, 540 W. Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). ***The School Report***, Autumn Term 2000 (**The Priory Scholars**, Horace Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY). ***The Parallelogram***, September 2000 (**The Parallel Case of St Louis**, Joseph J. Eckrich, 914 Oakmoor, Fenton, MO 63126, USA). ***The Camden House Journal***, September 2000 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, P.O. Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA).

The Petrel Flyer, July-August 2000 (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7P 3C6). ***Communication***, 'Special Opposites issue, 2000' (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Jeff & Wanda Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA).

And the essential ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press*** (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA).

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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e-mail: roger_johnson@hotmail.com

no. 205 24th October 2000

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £6.00 or US$13.00 for 12 issues. Dollar checks should be payable to Jean Upton. Dollar prices quoted without qualification refer to US dollars.

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.

Rodger Garrick-Steele's campaign against Arthur Conan Doyle continues. *The Observer* for 15 October reports that a movie company has taken an option on his allegation that Conan Doyle stole *The Hound of the Baskervilles* from his friend Fletcher Robinson, had an affair with his wife and murdered him with laudanum. Garrick-Steele says he will put the advance towards an exhumation and autopsy of Fletcher Robinson's body. The journalist, Tracy McVeigh, gratuitously and falsely states that Sir Arthur was 'a violent man, a bully as a child who later terrorised his own children.' I'm grateful that his daughter Dame Jean isn't around to see this attack on the father she loved.

Look for coverage on *Inquest 2000*, a bi-monthly InterNet forensic science publication, at www.inquest2000.com.

From Peter Blau: Bob Ennis reports that **Eve Titus** (the creator of Basil of Baker Street) is seriously ill, but she is awake and alert, and you can send get-well cards to her at Columbia-Aventura Hospital (CCU-8), 20900 Biscayne Boulevard, Aventura, FL 33180, USA; Bob also will be happy to bring her e-mail greetings sent to him at lsterndale@aol.com.

Curt Siodmak died on 2 September. He will be remembered for his classic SF novel *Donovan's Brain* and his screenplay for the 1941 horror classic *The Wolf Man*, but he was also responsible for the script of that hilariously confused multinational movie *Sherlock Holmes und das Halsband des Todes* (*Sherlock Holmes and the Deadly Necklace*) with Christopher Lee and Thorley Walters.

Eric Monahan sends news of the recent death of **Hylton Bayntum-Coward** of Dunkerton Grange, the former rectory where Conan Doyle's sister Dodo lived with her husband, Revd Cyril Angell. **The Poor Folk Upon The Moors** called at the Grange when they visited Dodo's grave in 1997.

I've received by e-mail notice of a new Holmes novel, *The Charters Affair: Being a Reminiscence of Dr John H. Watson* by James R. Stefanie. The publisher's name isn't given, but it's a 428-page trade paperback, priced at $20.95, ISBN 0-595-09926-2; it's available from Barnes & Noble, Borders, Amazon.Com and other sources. The synopsis suggests an exciting tale of mediæval charters, ancient British barrows and 19th century murder.

Due in November from the Mysterious Press is *The Quotable Sherlock Holmes* by John H. Watson, MD ($12.95 or $18.95 Canadian). *(*It's claimed to be 'the only comprehensive compendium of the First Consulting Detective's wit, wisdom and philosophy', so presumably Bruce R. Beaman's 1980* ***Sherlock Holmes Book of Quotations*** *is no longer in print.*)*

Next month also Wordsworth Editions (Cumberland House, Crib Street, Ware, Herts. SG12 9ET) will publish *The Valley of Fear* in the Wordsworth Classics series as a £1.00 paperback.

The Hidden Adventures of Sherlock Holmes by William C. Paxton (Omnibus Enterprises Ltd, 12097 E. 36th Street Terrace, Independence, MO 64055, USA; $25.00 plus $5.00 postage; e-mail WPaxton159@AOL.com) is getting favourable reviews in the American press.

The Baker Street Irregulars hope to issue a CD-ROM edition of the complete *Baker Street Journal*. The cost is likely to be $100.00. Get details from Leslie Klinger at 2029 Century Park East, Suite 3290, Los Angeles, CA 90067, USA (e-mail lsklinger@home.com).

New catalogues are available from **Classic Specialties** (P.O. Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA; sherlock@sherlock-holmes.com; website www.sherlock-holmes.com); **The Black Cat Bookshop** (36-39 Silver Arcade, Leicester LE1 5FB; blackcatuk@aol.com; website www.blackcatbookshop.com); **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (22 & 25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk; website www.nigelwilliams. com); Black Cat and Classic Specialties offer all sorts of Sherlockiana, not just books, and the former offers a free Sherlockian book search.

Issue 39 of *Sherlock Holmes: The Detective Magazine* features a preview of the new *Hound of the Baskervilles* TV movie, and an interview with Matt Frewer, who plays Holmes; Alan Perry on posh 'tecs; David Stuart Davies on Granada's *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* and on the Michael Pennington-Margaret Colin movie *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* (which he doesn't like, but I do); Nick Utechin on Sherlockian parody and pastiche; Paul Chapman on fictional detectives and the law; Margaret Lewis on Roderick Alleyn; part 2 of 'The Curse of the Griswold Phantom' by A.L. Blake; Mike Ripley on the dangerous business of compiling lists; Pat Ward's report from the USA; a look at the Occupants of the Full House — 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).

Douglas Wilmer's excellent abridged reading of *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* has been released as a 6-cassette boxed set by Penguin Audiobooks (27 Wrights Lane, London W8 5TZ). I've seen it priced at less than £18.00 at Waterstone's.

Elfed Jones of Yesterday's News (43 Dundonald Road, Colwyn Bay, Clwyd LL29 7RE, Wales; phone 01492 531195) offers 'excellently preserved' original 1880s & 1890s issues of *The Times* and *The Pall Mall Gazette* at £9.00 each.

Lovers of Holmes on the radio should enquire about membership of ORCA (the Old-time Radio-show Collectors' Association), which gives you access to a library of many thousand recordings, including many Sherlock Holmes plays, British, American and other.

Chuck Kovacic, who has constructed a full-scale reproduction of the famous Baker Street sitting-room at his own house, has founded a new society for such people. **The Baker Street Builders** have their own lapel pin, in gold for full members and pewter for others. Chuck lives at 9337 Sophia Avenue, North Hills, CA 91343, USA (e-mail cfkovacic@aol.com), and his version of the room is open to visitors by appointment.

On the morning of Saturday 18 November, the 21st annual programme of talks at the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore will be presented under the title *Sherlock Under the Lens*. The eight brief talks and a quiz will be topped and tailed by William Hyder BSI. The organisers of the event are **The Six Napoleons of Baltimore**, **The Carlton Club** and **Watson's Tin Box of Ellicott City**. You can get details from William Hyder, 5488 Cedar Lane #C3, Columbia, MD 21044-1220, USA.

A great source of information about Sherlock Holmes societies (and a great many other things besides) is Chris Redmond's recently revamped website, now called Sherlockian.Net. You'll find it at www.sherlockian.net.

The fall dinner of **The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes** will take place on 27 October. Contact Evelyn Herzog, 360 West 21st Street, #5A, New York, NY 10011, U.S.A., for details. The next night will see the final *Autumn in Baker Street* at the Tarrytown Hilton, 455 Broadway, Tarrytown, NY 10591, USA. You can get information from the hotel.

Alongi's in Du Quoin will be the meeting place for **The Occupants of the Empty House** on 3 November. Get information from William R. Cochran, 517 North Vine Street, Du Quoin, IL 62832-2047, USA. **The Friends of Dr Watson** will spend a day in Salisbury on 4 November, visiting the museum of the Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire & Wiltshire Regiment, and concluding with the Annual Dinner at The Haunch of Venison. Details from Richard Stacpoole-Ryding, 14 Western Close, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 4SZ.

On 8 November, **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company** will present a talk about Arthur Conan Doyle at Portsmouth Grammar School — where Arthur's younger brother Innes was a pupil (6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU).

At the Annual Film Evening of **The Sherlock Holmes Society of London** on 17 November, David Stuart Davies will present the rare 1931 Arthur Wontner movie *Sherlock Holmes's Fatal Hour* (also known as *The Sleeping Cardinal*), supported by the première of the Society's documentary *Sherlock Holmes — The Statue*. The venue will be the Robin Brook Centre at St Bartholomew's Hospital.

On 18 November **The Pleasant Places of Florida** will discuss 'The Missing Three-Quarter' at their 25th Annual Fall Gathering in Palm Harbor. Get details from Carl L. Heifetz, 3693 Siena Lane, Palm Harbor, FL 34685, USA.

A Lodge of **The Red Circle** will be held on 20 November at the National Press Club in Washington, DC to celebrate the society's 50th anniversary. Founder and president Karen Anderson will be visiting from the West Coast, with her husband Poul Anderson. Contact Peter E. Blau at 3900 Tunlaw Road NW, #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA (e-mail pblau@dgs.dgsys.com). On the same evening **The Parallel Case of St Louis** will meet at The Big Sleep Bookstore to discuss 'The Creeping Man'. Details from Joseph J. Eckrich, 914 Oakmoor, Fenton, MO 63126, USA (e-mail jeckrich@earthlink.net).

The Annual General Meeting and Bruce-Partington Luncheon of **The Poor Folk Upon The Moors** will be on 25 November at The Grove Hotel in Exmouth. The Guest of Honour will be General Sir Anthony Farrar-Hockley. Details from Vosper Arthur, Spynishlake, Doddiscombsleigh, Exeter EX6 7PR. (The Poor Folk have a website at www.scn.org/arts/poorfolk.)

On the same day, but half a world away, **The Sydney Passengers** will discuss 'The Sussex Vampire' over dinner. Contact Bill Barnes, Captain, 19 Manly, NSW 2095, Australia; bbarnes@ozemail.com.au. (The Passengers' website is at www.ozemail.com.au/ ~bbarnes/sp.htm.)

Periodicals received since the last DM. ***The Baker Street Journal***, Summer 2000 *(*sic*)* (P.O. Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA) *(*the usual stimulating mixture, ranging from a discussion on the authorship of the American chapters of* ***A Study in Scarlet*** *and an interview with the founder of* ***Playboy!****; as always, correspondence for* ***The Baker Street Irregulars*** *should go to Michael Whelan, 7938 Mill Stream Circle, Indianapolis, IN 46278, USA*).*

The Camden House Journal, October 2000 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, P.O. Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA) *(*includes a biblical interpretation of the beryls in the coronet*).* ***Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections***, September 2000 (Sherlock Holmes Collections, Suite 111, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, 222 21st Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA) *(*memories of E.W. McDiarmid and profiles of Joseph Bell and Jay Finley Christ*).*

The Antipodean Holmesian Society Newsletter, August 2000, September 2000 & October 2000 (**The Antipodean Holmesian Society**, Ted Nye, 51 Irvine Road, The Cove, Dunedin, New Zealand; ted.nye@stonebow.otago.ac.nz) *(*entertaining snippets from the most southerly Sherlock Holmes society*).*

The Torr, Autumn 2000 (**The Poor Folk Upon The Moors**, Eric Monahan, Highcliff, 14 Silver Bridge Close, Broadsands Park, Paignton, Devon TQ4 7NW) *(*Reggie Musgrave, still looking for stamps for Vosper Arthur, discovers a connection between Sherlock Holmes and Biggles; Eddie Maguire looks at the 'Luck' of the Musgraves; Eric Monahan wonders where Moriarty lived*).*

The Illustrious Clients News, October 2000 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T. Doyle, 'Lomax the Sub-Librarian', 540 West Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA) *(*Steven Doyle recalls a fortunate meeting with a real Professor Moriarty*).*

Communication, September/October 2000 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Jeff & Wanda Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA) *(*David R. McAllister examines educational themes in* ***The Return of Sherlock Holmes*** *and offers the improbable suggestion that Willoughby Smith was a compatriot of Professor Coram and Anna*).*

And by no means least, the invaluable newsletter ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press*****,** September 2000 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA; e-mail pblau@dgs.dgsys.com).

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

Roger Johnson, Mole End, 41 Sandford Road, Chelmsford CM2 6DE
e-mail: roger_johnson@hotmail.com

no. 206 25th November 2000

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £6.00 or US$13.00 for 12 issues. Dollar checks should be payable to Jean Upton. Dollar prices quoted without qualification refer to US dollars.

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.

The actor **Morton Lowry** died in August. Sherlockians will always honour him for his excellent Jack Stapleton in the 1939 *Hound of the Baskervilles*. He also played opposite Basil Rathbone's Holmes as Sanford in the 1945 *Pursuit to Algiers*.

An interesting sub-division of Holmesian studies involves speculation about the Great Hiatus, the years between the duel at Reichenbach and Holmes's return to London. Did he really spend two years in Tibet and go on to visit Persia, Mecca and Khartoum? To the horror of some, half a dozen or so scholars have applied their imaginations to the subject in the form of fiction, from Richard Wincor's *Sherlock Holmes in Tibet* (1968) and Hapi's *221A Baker Street: The Adamantine Sherlock Holmes* (1974) to more recent novels such as John Hall's *The Travels of Sherlock Holmes*, Tracy Cooper-Posey's *Chronicles of the Lost Years* and T.F. Shiel's *The Siam Question*. Now another title has been added to the list. *The Mandala of Sherlock Holmes: The Missing Years* purports to be an account by Holmes's companion Hurree Chunder Mookerjee — a name that will be familiar to readers of Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*.

The actual author is Jamyang Norbu, whom the Tibet Society calls 'one of Tibet's foremost intellectuals in exile and a former member of the Tibetan resistance'. Unsurprisingly, the novel exudes a fierce idealistic passion for Tibetan freedom, which sustains a plot that sometimes seems to owe as much to Indiana Jones as to Kipling or Conan Doyle. I enjoyed it, but I can understand the frustration of those who complain that Holmes's place is not with the supernatural. The novel is published by John Murray (50 Albemarle Street, London W1X 4BD), a firm long associated with Sherlock Holmes and his creator. The price is £16.99. *(*Mr Norbu delivered the David Ennals Memorial Lecture on 'The Reality of Tibetan Independence' at the School of Oriental & African Studies on 14 November.*)*

Eric Monahan has written and published an attractive booklet in good time for Christmas. In 'The Isadora Persano Affair' he gives his own interpretation of the remarkable worm, said to be unknown to science, while 'The Swan Upping Adventure' is a jollier affair, touching on a famous English tradition and a peculiar secret of West London. *'The Isadora Persano Affair' and 'The Swan Upping Adventure'* is available at £5.00 or $9.00, including postage, from Eric at Highcliff, 14 Silver Bridge Close, Broadsands Park, Paignton, Devon TQ4 7NW. *(*Has no one but me considered the possibility that the feminine name 'Isadora' in 'Thor Bridge' is a misprint for 'Isadore'?*)*

The Sherlock Holmes Walk is a nice little booklet written by Paul Garner and published by Louis' London Walks (phone 07050 224991; e-mail llw@cableinet.co.uk). The walk, in two stages, covers most of the Canonical sites in Marylebone and the West End, with clear directions and appropriate quotations. Mr Garner has confused John Doubleday's London statue with the one in Meiringen — not an obvious mistake — but that's a rare error in this pleasant guide. The Sherlock Holmes Memorabilia Company (230 Baker Street, London NW1 5RT; phone 020 7486 1426) has copies at £2.50.

John Sutherland's three books of bookish puzzles are now available in a single volume, *The Literary Detective*, (Oxford University Press, Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP; at £12.99). Prof. Sutherland is one of the few literary critics who enjoy playing our Game, which he's applied to all sorts of authors and their work — as the titles of the original books attest: *Is Heathcliff a Murderer?*, *Can Jane Eyre Be Happy?*, and *Who Betrays Elizabeth Bennet?* And of course each contains a Holmesian investigation.

Other new and forthcoming books: *Maggots, Murder and Men: Memories and Reflections of a Forensic Entomologist* by Zakaria Erzinçlioglu (Harley Books, FREEPOST, Great Horkesley, Colchester CO6 4YY; phone 01206 271216; e-mail harley@keme.co.uk; November; £13.95 plus postage); *Favorite Sherlock Holmes Detective Stories* by Arthur Conan Doyle (Dover Publications, David & Charles PLC, Brunel House, Brunel Road, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ12 4PU; December; £1.90); *Sherlock Holmes vs Dracula* by Loren D, Estleman (i Books, Simon & Schuster, 4th Floor, Bought Ledger Dept, Africa House, 64-78 Kingsway, London WC2B 6AH; January; £9.99); *Sherlock Holmes and the Crosby Murder* by Barrie Roberts (Robinson Publishing, 3 The Lanchesters, 162 Fulham Palace Road, London W6 9ER; January; £16.99).

News from the Frankfurt Book Fair: 'Joseph J. Healey, an American currently domiciled in Cologne, claims to have sold film rights in his *Houdini Meets Holmes*; Nellessy Uitgeverij of Postbus 30227, 6803 AE Arnhem, Netherlands, propose to issue a new pastiche for the 100th anniversary of *The Hound*; and Eulen Verlag, Hebelstrasse 11, 79104 Freiburg in Breslau, Germany, have published *London von Scotland Yard bis Jack the Ripper: Ein Führer zu über 400 Kriminalschauplätzen* by Gerald Hagemann' (thanks to Ian Wilkes for this information).

There are new catalogues, full of Sherlockiana and Doyleana, from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (22 & 25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk; website www.nigelwilliams. com); **Bibliotective** (21861 Stratford, Oak Park, MI 48237, USA; e-mail wroth@mich.com); and **Janus Books** (PO Box 40787, Tucson, AZ 85717, USA; e-mail mike@janusbooks.com).

Francine & Wayne Swift note that the complete Holmes Canon is available on CD-ROM from **John Thibeau**, Insight Engineering, PO Box 10785, Franconia, VA 22310, USA (e-mail thibeau@erols.com), priced at $95.00. That includes postage within the USA.

Hirayama Yuichi tells me that volume 10 of *The Shoso-in Bulletin* is due next month. This Japanese-originated but truly international journal is one of the great success stories of the Sherlockian world. There's now an English language website at www.parkcity.ne.jp/~hirayama/index.htm. European readers

can order copies at £7.25 post-free from John Hall, 20 Drury Avenue, Horsforth, Leeds LS18 4BR (cheques payable to John Hall). The American agent is Classic Specialties, PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA (website www.sherlock-holmes.com); and the price is $12.00 plus postage.

The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes - IV, read by the excellent David Timson, is due in March as a 3-cassette or 3-CD set from Naxos AudioBooks (18 High Street, Welwyn, Herts. AL6 9EQ; e-mail Naxos_Audiobooks@compuserve.com).

Last month, CSA Telltapes (101 Chamberlayne Road, London NW10 3ND) issued *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes vols. 1 & 2*, read by Edward Hardwicke, as a set of four cassettes. These recordings, originally released in 1993 and 1994, are first-rate.

It's a bit late to mention it, I know, but on Wednesday mornings at 11.30 BBC Radio 4 is currently running a 4-part dramatisation of Laurie R. King's *The Beekeeper's Apprentice*, with Monica Dolan as Mary Russell and James Fox as Sherlock Holmes. The script is by Shaun Prendergast.

The BBC's entertaining but deeply flawed *Murder Rooms: The Dark Beginnings of Sherlock Holmes* was popular enough to spawn a series of four 90-minute films, currently in production. David Pirie has written two of the scripts and is consultant and associate producer on all four. Three books have been commissioned, of which the first, *The Patient's Eyes*, is due from Random House next May.

Alexis Barquin sends word that *Sherlock Holmes et le Chien des Baskerville* will be performed at Espace Paris Plaine, 13 rue du Général Guillaumat, 75015 Paris (phone 01 40 43 01 82) from 2 to 7 December.

On 21 November Reuters Financial reported that **Abbey National**, whose connection with Sherlock Holmes goes back some 70 years, has had great success with its Holmes (No. 2) PLC, 'Europe's largest ever residential mortgage-backed bond'.

I've had a message from Ales Kolodrubec (Milesovska 1, 130 00 Praha 3, Czech Republic), who tells me that the former kingdom of Bohemia now has a Sherlockian Society. **Ceska spolecnost Sherlocka Holmesa** (The Czech Society of Sherlock Holmes) is holding its first meeting in Prague even as I write! Mr Kolodrubec is Classified Advertising Manager at the Prague Post; his e-mail address is classifieds@praguepost.cz.

Earlier today, the Christmas Luncheon of **The Sydney Passengers** celebrated 'The Sussex Vampire' in true Draculean form. The Passengers plan a weekend jaunt next year to mark the centenary of *The Hound*. (Get details of this lively group from Bill Barnes, 19 Malvern Avenue, Manly, NSW 2095, Australia; e-mail bbarnes@ozemail.com.au).

Mrs Hudson's Lodgers, under the guiding hands of Tom & Ruth Ann Stetak, have changed their meeting place to Borders Books in Westlake, Ohio. Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month. November's featured a play entitled *Holmes in Egypt, or A Question of De-Nile*. A similar jocular offering is planned for December. (Contact J.W. Gombarcik, 1593 Ridgewood Avenue, Lakewood, OH 44107-5040, USA).

The Illustrious Clients will discuss 'Black Peter' over dinner on 2 December (details from Steven T. Doyle, 'Lomax the Sub-Librarian', 540 West Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). The Annual General Meeting and Christmas Social of **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company** will take place on 3 December in Cambridge (6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU; or check the FMHC website at www.btinternet.com /~sherlock.fmhc).

The Annual Dinner of **The Baker Street Irregulars** will be held on 5 January, at the Union League Club in New York (Michael Whelan, 'Wiggins', 7936 Mill Stream Circle, Indianapolis, IN 46278-2105, USA). At the same time, the Baskerville Bash at the Manhattan Club is open to all Sherlockians (Paula J. Perry, 346 East 87th Street #4A, New York, NY 10128, USA). There'll be lots of other things happening on and around that weekend. On 6 January, **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company** will explore *Hound* literary connections in London, 'from Baker Street to the Northumberland Hotel'.

That wonderfully funny man Barry Cryer will be Guest of Honour at the Annual Dinner of **The Sherlock Holmes Society of London** on 13 January, at the House of Commons. The Morning After luncheon party will be held next day at the New Commonwealth Club (Bob Ellis at 13 Crofton Avenue, Orpington, Kent BR6 8DU; check the website at www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk). Also on 13 January, **The Illustrious Clients** will hold their Victorian Dinner. Details from Steven T. Doyle, as above.

The Baker Street Journal Christmas Annual 2000 will be a history by Wayne Swift of the Silver Blaze Races around the world. 'This 64-page collection of recollections, contemporary reportage, and racetrack statistics is a fitting companion to the BSI History series. This Annual will be printed only in a number sufficient to satisfy those who order before 10 December 2000. *This is not part of your subscription.*' Price including postage: USA: $11.00; international: $12.00. Orders to *The Baker Street Journal*, PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA. *(*It's odd that the Silver Blaze idea has never caught on in Britain.*)*

Periodicals received. ***The Petrel Flyer***, Sept/Oct 2000 (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7P 3C6). ***3 Pipe Problem Plugs and Dottles***, Sept/Nov 2000 (**The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem**, Gael Stahl, 1763 Needmore Avenue, Old Hickory, TN 37138, USA; website www.thehawk.net/3ppEZ.htm/. ***The Passengers' Log***, Winter & Spring issue (**The Sydney Passengers**, Rosane McNamara, 4/2a Merlin Street, Neutral Bay, NSW 2089, Australia; website www.ozemail.com.au/~bbarnes/sp.htm).

The Parallelogram, November 2000 (**The Parallel Case of St Louis**, Joseph J. Eckrich, 914 Oakmoor, Fenton, MO 63126, USA). ***The Illustrious Clients News***, November 2000 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T. Doyle, 540 West Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). ***The School Report***, Winter Term 2000 (**The Priory Scholars**, Horace Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY). ***The Franco-Midland Hardware Company Annual Report 2000: The Devil's Foot Contract*** *(*principal content is an excellent comprehensive topographical study by Philip Weller*)* and ***The FMHC Memo,*** August 2000 *(*sic. — but the delay is my fault, not the FMHC's*)* (6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU).

The Camden House Journal, November 2000 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). ***Sherlockiana***, no. 2, 2000 (**Sherlock Holmes Klubben i Danmark**, Bjarne Nielsen, Sherlock Holmes Museet, Algade 3, 4500 Nykøbing Sjælland, Denmark). And the invaluable newsletter, ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press,*** October 2000 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA; e-mail pblau@dgs.dgsys.com).

This is the last DM before Christmas, so -

THE COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON!

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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no. 207 14th January 2001

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £6.00 or US$13.00 for 12 issues. Dollar checks should be payable to Jean Upton. Dollar prices quoted without qualification refer to US dollars.

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.

A happy new year to all — and indeed a happy new millennium!

Within the last few days we've lost two outstanding figures in the world of Sherlock Holmes. On Thursday 10 January **Michael Williams** died after a long battle with cancer. His acting career, mostly on stage and radio, was inevitably overshadowed by that of his wife Dame Judi Dench, but he was a fine actor, and particularly he was a great Dr Watson, to Clive Merrison's Holmes, in the ground-breaking BBC Radio 4 series which dramatised the entire Canon. It's good that he was recently awarded a Papal Knighthood. Yesterday my good friend **Wayne Swift** ('The Giant Rat of Sumatra', BSI) died, also from cancer. I say 'my friend', but Wayne's friends — Sherlockian and otherwise — are legion. At least he was able to enjoy the Baker Street Irregulars' dinner and to see the publication of his *magnum opus*, the BSJ Christmas Annual. Our thoughts are with Francine.

Wiggins made the following investitures at the BSI dinner; 'Marlowe Bates' (**Charles Foley**), 'Rosenlaui' (**Marcus Geisser**), 'The Duchess of Devonshire' (**Julie McKuras**), 'Corporal Henry Wood' (**Scott Monty**), 'George Sand' (**Lloyd Rose**), 'Thurston' (**Daniel Stashower**), and 'Professor Coram' (**Andy Solberg**). **Donald Pollock** received the Two-Shilling Award (*in absentia*), and **Ben Vizoskie** won the Morley-Montgomery Award. Congratulations to all!

The Baker Street Journal Christmas Annual 2000 is a worthy memorial to Wayne B. Swift, being his *History of the Silver Blaze*. What do you mean, I hear you cry, by *the* Silver Blaze? Well, 50 years ago Thomas L. Stix Sr had the clever idea of re-creating the race for the Wessex Cup, in sound, with the scene set by the sports journalist Red Smith, and the race described by the well known commentator Joe Palmer. (Our Society did the same thing 40 years later, with Sir Peter O'Sullevan providing the commentary.) The success of the recording led Tom Stix to propose an actual race, to be called the Silver Blaze Cup; in the event the race, run at Jamaica, NY, was the Silver Blaze Purse — most subsequent races have been known simply as the Silver Blaze. Wealthier organisations actually sponsor a race, with prize-money and a copy of an appropriate Canonical volume for the owner of the winner; more modest groups adopt an existing race. The original Silver Blaze was run for nearly half a century at one or other of the various racetracks in New York, before moving last year to Saratoga. Other societies took up the idea, and notable races have been run in Chicago, Copenhagen, Washington, Toronto, St Louis, Winnipeg, Tampa and elsewhere. *(*Isn't it time that the Sherlock Holmes Society of London had a day at the races?*)* This nice 64-page booklet opens with a brief survey of the Wessex Cup as described by Dr Watson, and goes on to look at all the Silver Blaze races. As the publishers say, 'This collection of recollections, contemporary reportage, and racetrack statistics is a fitting companion to the BSI History Series.' It's well illustrated too. The cost, postpaid, is: USA $11.00, check only; elsewhere $12.00, by check, Visa or MasterCard (*The Baker Street Journal*, PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA). If you'd rather pay in sterling, Francine Swift has a few copies at £8.00 each plus postage (4622 Morgan Drive, Chevy Chase, MD 20815-5315, USA — cheques payable to Francine).

The latest book in the BSI 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'. Jon has copies at $13.00 within the USA or $13.50 outside (3133 Connecticut Avenue NW, # 827, Washington, DC 20008, USA). I'll be reviewing the book in the next DM.

Musgrave Monograph Number Ten is a very engaging survey by Susan Rice of Vincent Starrett and his life-long affair with Sherlock Holmes. Starrett's books *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* and *221B: Studies in Sherlock Holmes* are essential reading, and his sonnet '221B', written in the dark days of the war, is a perfect encapsulation of the appeal and the importance of Holmes and Watson. I wish I'd known him personally. *The Somnabulist and the Detective* is a well illustrated, strongly bound 60-page brochure; copies can be had from Anne Jordan (Fairbank, Beck Lane, Bingley, West Yorkshire BD16 4DN), priced at £7.00 (UK), £9.00 (Europe), Cdn$25.00(Canada), US$15.00 (USA & rest of world). Please make sterling cheques and US and Canadian dollar checks payable to The Northern Musgraves.

New from Calabash Press (PO Box 1360, Ashcroft, B.C., Canada V0K 1A0) are *The Haunted Grange of Goresthorpe*, a previously unpublished early story by Arthur Conan Doyle (hardback: £21.00; US$35.00; Cdn$45.00); *The Transcendent Holmes*, a collection of essays by John Warwick Montgomery (paperback: £12.50; US$19.50; Cdn$26.50); and *Knight Errant: The Singular Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, stories by Jane Rubino (hardback: £19.00; US$30.00; Cdn$42.50; paperback: £12.50; US$19.50; Cdn$26.50). These prices exclude postage. Check the Calabash website at www.ash-tree.bc.ca/calabash.html for details of other publications.

More new and forthcoming books. *Arthur Conan Doyle and the Meaning of Masculinity* by Diana Barsham (Ashgate, c/o Bookpoint Ltd, Gower House, Croft Road, Aldershot, Hants. GU11 3HR; November 2000; £40.00). *The Man Who Became Sherlock Holmes: The Tortured Mind of Jeremy Brett* (revised edition) by Terry Manners (Virgin Books, Units 5 & 6, Thames Wharf, Rainville Road, London W6 9HA; February 2001; £14.99).

Over Christmas, BBC Knowledge, the digital TV channel, broadcast Nigel Williams' unsatisfactory but entertaining series *The Great Detectives*, along with *Top Cops*, a new series of four short films (10 minutes each) about detective story fans. Both series featured Sherlock Holmes, of course; in *Top Cops* a dozen of our members followed Watson's trail from *A Study in Scarlet* — the Criterion to Holborn to Bart's to 221B Baker Street (actually the sitting-room exhibit at the Sherlock Holmes pub). It's an entertaining and very agreeable little film.

John Addy, membership secretary of the Northern Musgraves, is writing a book, probably the first, about W. Clark Russell, whose fine sea stories Dr Watson enjoyed. John is keen to trace his relatives, letters, books, short stories and any sources of information about him. If you're interested in this unfairly

neglected Victorian author, or have information about him, please contact John at 184 Bradford Road, Otley, West Yorkshire LS21 3LT (phone 01943 464760; e-mail john.addy@redcats.co.uk).

A reminder that just about everything of Sherlockian interest on the Internet is accessible through one or both of the two great sites: Chris Redmond's *Sherlockian.Net* at www.sherlockian.net, and members.home.net/sherlock1Sherlocktron.html, which is Willis G. Frick's *Sherlocktron*.

The world-famous *Sherlock Holmes* public house at Charing Cross is always worth a visit. The food and drink are excellent. Moreover, though it was never officially called that, the pub was the first Sherlock Holmes museum, featuring the first re-creation of the sitting-room at 221B Baker Street. The exhibits were originally assembled for the Festival of Britain in 1951, when they were to be seen at Abbey House in Baker Street. Then they went on tour to New York and around the world before finding their permanent home here. It was the organising of the exhibition 50 years ago that prompted Tony & Freda Howlett, Colin Prestige and others to found the Sherlock Holmes Society of London, so our Society and the pub are really inseparable! The *Sherlock Holmes* has a nice new website at www.sherlockholmespub.homestead.com**.** It's even better to go there in person, however. The pub is at 10 Northumberland Avenue, London WC2N 5DA (phone 020 7930 2644).

Other sites of interest that you might like to investigate include *Sherlock Holmes on Oxford Lane*, which is largely devoted to Holmes on screen, at www.geocities.com/upabob/ (the site is run by Bob Byrne, who reviews mystery-themed websites for *Sherlock Holmes: The Detective Magazine*); *SHADoWS — Sherlock Holmes And Doctor Who Site* at www.shadws.freeserve.co.uk; *Pinacotheca Holmesiana*, which aims to present as many illustrations of the Canon as possible, at www.spiner.org/ch/gallery/index.html; and *The Tourist's Sherlock Holmes: A Not So Elementary List of Filming Locations* at pages.prodigy.net/jcnash/sherlock_places.htm.

Lynne Godden sends news that at 8.00 pm on Friday 23 February at the Trinity Arts Theatre in Tunbridge Wells, Footloose Theatre will present *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, in which Paul Lehmann will perform 'The Blue Carbuncle' and 'The Engineer's Thumb'. The box office is at 01892 678678.

Issue 38 of Geoff Bradley's admirable magazine *CADS: Crime And Detective Stories* features much of interest to Sherlockians, especially Donald A. Yates's article 'The Musgrave Ramble'. Get details from Geoff at 9 Vicarage Hill, South Benfleet, Essex SS7 1PA.

Peter Blau notes that Ron Fish has founded a new society, **The Master's Masons**, open to any male belonging to a Masonic Lodge. Ron's address is PO Box 4, Circleville, NY 10919-0004, USA.

Ales M. Kolodrubec reports that at the first meeting of **Ceska spolecnost Sherlocka Holmese** (The Czech Society of Sherlock Holmes) Zora Wolfova and Miroslav Kucera were elected Vice-Presidents, and Ales himself was elected President. The society's members include Rudolf Cechura, a long-time member of our own Society. Contact Ales at Milesovska 1, 130 00 Praha 3, Czech Republic (e-mail classifieds@praguepost.cz).

The Friends of Dr Watson invite entries for the 3rd *Dr John H. Watson Annual Prize Essay*. The subject this year is to explore Holmes's remark, 'I never get your limits, Watson. There are unexplored possibilities about you.' The judges this year are John Hall, associate editor of *The Ritual*, Steven Rothman, editor of *The Baker Street Journal*, and Nicholas Utechin, editor of *The Sherlock Holmes Journal.* The competition is open to all. Get details and entry forms from Dr Watson's Dresser,

The big event in Canada this year will be the *Footprints of the Hound* symposium in Toronto on 19-21 October, to celebrate 100 years of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and 30 years of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection at the Toronto Reference Library. The speakers will include Christopher Frayling, Richard Lancelyn Green, Daniel Stashower, Leslie Klinger, Christopher & Barbara Roden, Richard Sveum, Chris Redmond and Roy Pilot. Some exciting treasures from the Collection and from other sources will be on display. Register before 31 March and the fee (excluding the banquet on Saturday) will be Cdn$160.00; after that it's Cdn$180.00. Get full details from *Footprints of the Hound*, 10 Pinetree Crescent, Brampton, Ontario, Canada L6W 1C8.

Allan Devitt sends word that the **STUD Sherlockian Society** will celebrate its 10th birthday at its annual dinner on 2 March at Sheraton Four Points in Schiller Park, IL.. The main speaker will be Steven Doyle, and there'll be a silent auction of the collection of the late Dennis France, as well as the usual STUD toasts and awards. The following day there'll be the *Solar Pons Breakfast* at Walker Brothers Original Pancake House, 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 Red Circle will hold a Lodge at the National Press Club in Washington on 2 February (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA). **The Franco Midland Hardware Company** and **The Baker Street Branch Lines** will meet in Southampton on 3 February to explore Sir Henry Baskerville's place of disembarkation (both societies are at 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU). **The Northern Musgraves** birthday party at the Huddersfield Hotel on 10 February will be entitled *The Hound Hip Hooray*; the special guest will be Roger Llewellyn (details from David Stuart Davies, Overdale, 69 Greenhead Road, Huddersfield HD1 4ER). The FMHC also plans a weekend in Cromer, 24 - 25 March, where Conan Doyle and Fletcher Robinson discussed the Dartmoor legends that gave rise to *The Hound of the Baskervilles*.

Periodicals received. ***Cliff Notes on Mrs Hudson's Cliffdwellers***, December 2000 (**Mrs Hudson's Cliffdwellers**, Henry Boote, 184 Central Avenue, Old Tappan, NJ 07675-9069, USA). ***The Ritual***, Autumn 2000 (**The Northern Musgraves**, Paul M. Chapman, Alderley, Chapel Street, Easingwold, North Yorks. YO61 3AF). ***The Illustrious Clients News***, December 2000 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T. Doyle, 540 W. Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 460777, USA).

Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections, December 2000 (Sherlock Holmes Collections, Suite 111, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, 222 21st Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA). ***The Serpentine Muse***, Winter 2000 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 360 West 21st Street # 5A, New York, NY 10011, USA). ***The Camden House Journal***, December 2000 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). ***The Dr John H. Watson Annual Prize Essay Competition 2000: The Winning Entries***; and ***The Formulary***, December 2000, and index 1997-2000 (**The Friends of Dr Watson**, 14 Western Close, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 4SZ.).

Communication, November-December 2000, and 'Special End of the Year Clearance Issue'; and ***25th Annual Fall Gathering Report, November 18, 2000*** (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Jeff & Wanda Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA). ***The Log of the Canonical Hams***, July 1999 - December 1999 *(*sic*)* (**The Sherlock Holmes Wireless Society**, Ron Fish, PO Box 4, Circleville, NY 10919-0004, USA). ***The Baker Street Journal***, Autumn 2000 (PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA).

And the invaluable newsletter ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, November 2000 and December 2000 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA; e-mail pblau@dgs.dgsys.com).

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON
Roger Johnson, Mole End, 41 Sandford Road, Chelmsford CM2 6DE
e-mail: roger_johnson@hotmail.com

no. 208 11th February 2001

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £6.00 or US$13.00 for 12 issues. Dollar checks should be payable to Jean Upton. Dollar prices quoted without qualification refer to US dollars.

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 Altwood 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 Elliot 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 Spermaceti 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*)*.

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON
Roger Johnson, Mole End, 41 Sandford Road, Chelmsford CM2 6DE
e-mail: roger_johnson@hotmail.com

no. 209 29th March 2001

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £6.00 or US$13.00 for 12 issues. Dollar checks should be payable to Jean Upton. Dollar prices quoted without qualification refer to US dollars. 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.

Elementary, My Dear Watson by Bevis Colmer (Minerva Press Ltd, 6th Floor, Canberra House, 315-317 Regent Street, London W1 7YB; £16.99) is clearly a labour of love. In a way it *is* 'elementary', but hard work and profitable: Mr Colmer has read and re-read the Canon, picking out every reference to Holmes, Watson, their personalities and their careers, and grouping the information under an appropriate 60 headings, such as 'Letters to Dr Watson', 'Sherlock Holmes' Waxen Busts', 'Sherlock Holmes' Conceit' and 'Visitors to Baker Street'. This isn't a volume of extracts either, though there are many passages quoted. Because the book is based entirely on the Canon, without reference to earlier commentators, Mr Colmer's statements are usually basic (he deals in facts rather than theories) but presented with a fresh voice. There are errors, perhaps inevitable in a book of over 400 pages, but mostly negligible (Isadora Persano was a duellist, not a 'dualist'; Watson was full of unexplored, not 'unexplained' possibilities). The book's only really important fault is that there's no indication of which story each fact or statement comes from. If there were, the book would have to be rather longer, but its usefulness as a reference tool would be enhanced immeasurably. *Elementary, My Dear Watson* is a strongly and attractively produced quality softback.

Carlton Books Ltd (20 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JW) have published an excellent history of 20th century forensic science: *Every Contact Leaves a Trace* by Dr Zakaria Erzinçlioglu (£14.99). The author is a prominent scientific detective with the ability to explain his subject without either talking down to the reader or talking above the reader's head. I like the personal touch in the writing, the impression that Dr Erzinçlioglu is addressing me. A good deal of the material covered is from his own experience, and he brings an expert's eye to bear on the cases of such luminaries as Bernard Spilsbury, Francis Camps, Keith Simpson and Sydney Smith. Moreover, he isn't afraid to be critical of the great men of the past (especially Spilsbury, whose attitude of infallibility was responsible for at least one very dubious conviction). I'd have liked to see more about ballistics, but more coverage of such a large area would have made the book unnecessarily big. *Every Contact Leaves a Trace* is the most authoritative account of forensic science for the layman that I've encountered in a long time.

Two recent books have arrived from Magico (P.O. Box 156, New York, NY 10002-0156, USA), whose new catalogue is available for $2.00, refundable on the first order of $30.00.

A Sherlock Holmes Gazetteer by Virginia Powell ($25.00 + $2.00 postage within the USA) is subtitled *An Alphabetical Compilation of the Geographic References, Both Identifiable and Disguised, Found within the Canon*. The author has been thorough in her research, but she has perpetrated a few errors (Swindon in Wiltshire is a far cry from Swinton near Rotherham; the Royal Albert Hall, unlike Carnegie Hall, takes the definite article; and I think the burghers of Pershore would object to their town's being called a village). It's a handsome, well produced hardback that should serve as a useful reference tool for years to come.

Sherlock in the Trib ($35.00 + £2.00) is a particularly engaging volume. The late John Nieminski scoured the issues of the *Chicago Tribune* for the many Sherlockian references in the 'Line O'Type or Two' column, mainly written between 1938 and 1951 by the witty and observant Charles Collins, in the days when a journalist was expected to be literate and knowledgeable. His fondness for Sherlock Holmes was matched, or exceeded, in other contributors, most notably Jay Finley Christ and Vincent Starrett. You'll find little profound scholarship in this charming volume, but there's a lightness of touch that's missing from far too many of today's Sherlockian publications.

Due on 1 May from Paradise Books (no address to hand, but it will be available from Murder One) is *A Pictorial Tribute to Jeremy Brett, The Definitive Sherlock Holmes* by Linda Pritchard. Charles L. Allen, Chairman of Granada Television, has provided a foreword. On 20 July Titan Books (Titan House, 114 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP) will publish David Stuart Davies's important new history of Holmes on screen *Starring Sherlock Holmes*, introduced by Ian Richardson (£29.99). It is due to be launched at Crime Scene 2001 at the National Film Theatre.

Scarecrow Press Inc. (4720 Boston Way, Lanham, MD 20706, USA) has published *An Actor and a Rare One: Peter Cushing as Sherlock Holmes* by Tony Earnshaw, who is the programmer for the National Museum of Photography, Film & Television in Bradford. The price is $26.50. I'm awaiting news of British distribution.

At the **Sherlock Holmes Memorabilia Company** (230, Baker Street, London NW1 5RT; website www.sh-memorabilia.co.uk) I recently spotted half a dozen or so new Holmes stories written and illustrated by Gerard M. Kelly. The booklets are published by Baker Street Books, 774 Crofton Avenue, Timperley, Cheshire (e-mail gmkelly@bakerstreetbooks.co.uk), and priced at £4.00 each. There is a website at www.bakerstreetbooks.co.uk. Titles include *The Riddle of the Carstairs Legacy*, *The Mysterious Death of the Kennington Verger*, *The Mystery at the Golden Cockerel* and *The Mystery of the Locked Study*.

Oakmagic Books (2 South Place Folly, Penzance, Cornwall TR18 4JB) has a programme of forthcoming. booklets about Conan Doyle and Sherlock Holmes: *The Psychical Doyle part 1* by Kelvin I. Jones (20 April, £3.95); *What Does Spiritualism Actually Think and Stand For?* by Arthur Conan Doyle (20 May, £3.50); *Spiritualism and Rationalism* by Conan Doyle (20 June, £4.50); *The Sherlock Holmes Pharmacopoeia* by Kelvin Jones (20 August, £4.50). Oakmagic is taking orders, sterling cheques payable to D. Jones. Prices include postage in the UK; EU residents add 50p; outside the EU add £1.00.

The latest catalogue from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (22 & 25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; e-mail nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk) includes over 200 items from the library of Dorothy L. Sayers.

Issue 41 of *Sherlock Holmes: The Detective Magazine* features a Clive Merrison's moving tribute to his Watson, Michael Williams; Paul Chapman on the literary background of *the Hound of the Baskervilles;* Jared Cade on *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*; David Stuart Davies on Granada's *The Three Gables*; Barry Forshaw on the past, present and future of crime fiction; Bert Coules on Conan Doyle as a literary stylist; Alan Perry on TV's of Inspector Morse; Philip L. Scowcroft on Inspector Hanaud; Gaynor Coules on the novels of Michelle Spring; Tony Howlett on the founding of **The Sherlock Holmes Society of London**; Mike Ripley on the 2000 Sherlock Awards (June Thomson deservedly won the Special Sherlock for her biography *Holmes and Watson*); and as always very 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).

To provide access to the material in the first 40 issues, the publisher has issued *Sherlock Holmes: The Detective Magazine — The Electronic Archive* on CD-ROM in a limited edition of 100 copies at just £39.99. Everything's there, pictures and all, in full colour. It's not perfect (the indexes list me more often than not as 'Robert Johnson'), but it is very easy to use, and very helpful. I think it's well worth the selling price.

At the National Film Theatre on Wednesday 25 April, Gavin Collinson will present *The Many Lives of Sherlock Holmes*, featuring clips from film and TV over the decades There's more information on the website www.bfi.org.uk/showing/nft/archivespecials/holmes. Do take time to complete the survey on the website. Booking is now open. Phone the NFT box office on 020 7928 3232.

From Bert Coules: BBC Radio 4 will repeat *The Final Problem* on 19 April as a tribute to Michael Williams, with a specially recorded appreciation from Clive Merrison. Bert's series of new adventures will go ahead with a new Watson to Merrison's Holmes.

This month Naxos AudioBooks (18 High Street, Welwyn, Herts. AL6 9EQ) release *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes IV*, read by David Timson. The featured stories are 'A Case of Identity', 'The Crooked Man', 'The Naval Treaty' & 'The Greek Interpreter'. I've strongly recommended Mr Timson's earlier readings, and I'm looking forward to reviewing this latest recording in an excellent series.

The first follow-up to the uneven — to say the least — Canadian TV film of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* is *The Sign of Four*, again with Matt Frewer & Kenneth Welsh as Holmes & Watson. It premiered on the Odyssey Network last Friday. Apparently this one has a normal-sized Tonga, no river chase, and no disguises for Holmes. The next in the series will be *A Scandal in Bohemia*, containing many elements of *The Bruce-Partington Plans*.

David Stuart Davies and others have sent information about another proposed film version of *The Sign of Four*, to star Alan Rickman and Gabriel Byrne as Holmes and Watson (good casting), and Catherine Zeta Jones as — wait for it — Holmes's love interest! Hm . . .

On 3 April in the USA Image Entertainment will release a restored print of the classic 1925 film of *The Lost World*, with Wallace Beery as Challenger, on DVD & video. This version contains 50% more material than any seen in the past 70 years, and there are bonus features on the DVD. (DVD catalogue no. ID0319DSDVD; video ID0320DS).

Roger Llewellyn will take *Sherlock Holmes — The Last Act!* to the Georgian Theatre, Richmond, Yorks. (11 April), Bacon Theatre, Cheltenham (1 June) Playhouse, Alnwick (16 June), Harlequin Theatre, Redhill (21 June), Ebbw Vale (29 June) and Pontardawe (1 July). From 6 to 20 May he'll be touring Singapore and Bangkok!

From Crowborough Town Council comes the long-awaited news that the world's first statue of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle will be unveiled in Crowborough on Easter Saturday, 14 April. This is very short notice, and Jean and I can't make it, but I hope some of you will be there. Details from 01892 652907; e-mail crowborough@mistral.co.uk.

Louise Graham of The Rosary, Syerston, Newark, Notts. NG23 5NE (01636 525341) has a Sherlock Holmes teapot for sale at £40.00 o.n.o. It's about 8" high and in 'excellent condition'. Holmes's head is the pot, with handle and spout on either side, and his deerstalker is the lid.

The battle of Liberton Bank continues. McDonald's have toned down their plans for a fast food 'restaurant' in the grounds of Conan Doyle's only surviving childhood home in the city, but the protestors fight on.

The Victorian Society plans a study day on **Victorian Popular Culture** at London University Senate House on 9 June. Catherine Cooke will talk about *Sherlock Holmes and the creation of a legend*. The other 5 talks include Chris Willis on *The Female Sherlock: women detectives in Victorian fiction*. Tickets can be had from Rebecca Daniels, Events Organiser, 1 Priory Gardens, Bedford Park, London W4 1TT (events@victorian-society.org.uk). Also from Catherine: a dramatisation of Conan Doyle's *Lot 249* by Jason Brown is 'coming soon to Portsmouth' (no date, but he's hoping for Hallowe'en week). Contact him for details at 100 Waverley Road, Southsea, Hants. PO5 2PS.

John Radford notes that the head of the Sherlock Holmes Private Detective Agency in the Chinese province of Henan has been arrested for extortion!

Ales Kolodrubec and **Ceska spolecnost Sherlocka Holmese** (The Czech Society of Sherlock Holmes) feature in a nice double-page spread in the Czech magazine *Květy*, issue 5/2001. Contact Ales at classifieds@praguepost.cz).

The Annual Meeting of **The Occupants of the Empty House** will be on 6 April at Alongi's Restaurant at Du Quoin (William R. Cochran, 517 North Vine Street, Du Quoin, IL 62832-2047, USA). **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company** and **The Baskerville Hounds** (both at 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU; franco.midland@btinternet.com) have planned an Easter Pack Meet on 12-16 April to explore non-Doylean literary connections on Dartmoor. Alas, the Moor, like much of Britain's countryside, is closed off, and I fear that this is just the first of many events in this *Hound* centenary year that will have to be re-scheduled. At least the FMHC's next meeting should be safe. That'll be held in Crowborough on 20 May in collaboration with **Gerard's Hussars**.

On 28 April **The Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn** will meet at The Mother-in-Law House in St Charles where Bill Cochran will present a programme about 'The Three Gables' (Michael E. Bragg, PO Box 256, St Charles, MO 63302-0256, USA). **The Illustrious Clients** will meet at Stony's Steak House on 5 May to discuss 'The Three Students' (Steven T. Doyle, 540 W. Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IL 4607, USA). On 8 May, **The Stormy Petrels** will hold an auction at the 'riverside chateau' of Don McLachlan and Barbara Sigerson (Fran Martin, 10662 129 Street, Surrey, B.C., Canada V3T 3H4).

Periodicals received. ***The Whaling News***, March 2001 (**The Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn**, Michael E. Bragg, PO Box 256, St Charles, MO 63302-0256, USA). ***The Serpentine Muse***, Spring 2001 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 360 West 21st Street, #5A, New York, NY 10011, USA). ***Practice Notes***, March 2001, and ***The Practice Report***, 2001 (**The Friends of Dr Watson**, Richard J. Stacpoole-Ryding, 14 Western Close, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 4SZ). ***The Passengers' Log***, 6th January 2001 *(*the Summer issue*)*, (**The Sydney Passengers**, Rosane McNamara, 4/2a Merlin Street, Neutral Bay, NSW 2089, Australia). ***The Maiwand Dispatch***, April 12, 2001 *(*sic!*)* (**The Watsonians**, Susan Z. Diamond, 16W603 3rd Avenue, Bensenville, IL 60106-2327, USA; szdiamond@mediaone.net).

The Petrel Flyer, Jan/Feb 2001 *and* Spring 2001 (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7P 3C6). ***The Illustrious Clients News***, March 2001 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T. Doyle, 540 W. Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IL 4607, USA). ***The Musgrave Papers 2000*** (**The Northern Musgraves**, Anne Jordan, Fairbank, Beck Lane, Bingley, West Yorks. BD16 4DN) *(*special **Return of Sherlock Holmes** issue, the last to be edited by David Stuart Davies & Kathryn White*)*. ***The Camden House Journal***, March 2001 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). ***The School Report***, Spring Term 2001 (**The Priory Scholars**, Horace L. Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY). ***Bohemian Newsletter No. 1*** (**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). ***3 Pipe Problem Plugs and Dottles***, March 2001 (**The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem**, Gael Stahl, 1763 Needmore Road, Old Hickory, TN 37138, USA).

Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press, February 2001 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830; pblau@dgs.dgsys.com).

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON
Roger Johnson, Mole End, 41 Sandford Road, Chelmsford CM2 6DE
e-mail: roger_johnson@hotmail.com

no. 210 27th April 2001

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £6.00 or US$13.00 for 12 issues. Dollar checks should be payable to Jean Upton. Dollar prices quoted without qualification refer to US dollars. 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.

My report in 206 that **Morton Lowry** died in August 2000 was mistaken. Lowry, who played Stapleton in the 1939 *Hound of the Baskervilles* and Sanford in *Pursuit to Algiers*, actually died back in 1987. Thanks to Peter Blau for the correct information.

Naxos AudioBooks (18 High Street, Welwyn, Herts. AL6 9EQ) have released the latest volume in their excellent series of unabridged readings from the Canon by David Timson. *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes IV* includes 'A Case of Identity', 'The Crooked Man', 'The Naval Treaty' and 'The Greek Interpreter' — a selection that gives Mr Timson plenty of scope to exercise his talent for characterisation and narration. His Mycroft Holmes is a particular treat. The pacing of the stories is splendid, and the atmosphere is enhanced by Mr Timson's own choice of music: string quartets by Dvorak and Grieg, and Indian ragas. *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes IV* is available on 3 cassettes at £9.99 or 3 CDs at £13.99. It's a gem in either format.

The Sherlock Holmes Reference Library, edited and annotated by Leslie S. Klinger, and published by Gasogene Books (PO Box 68308, Indianapolis, IN 46268, USA) is fulfilling its promise of being *the* annotated Canon for the 21st century. The latest volume, *A Study in Scarlet* ($19.95), has all the virtues of its predecessors: an authoritative text, clearly laid out and printed, with comprehensive, intelligent and authoritative notes and commentary. The appendices give a table of major events and brief summaries of scholars' findings on Watson's middle name, Holmes's university, and the dates of the case. Donald Pollock has contributed a perceptive introduction, the publishers have done a very nice job in producing this large-format paperback (10"x 7"), and the result is a first-rate reference work. We're promised *The Hound of the Baskervilles* next. No surprise there.

From Gasogene's parent company Wessex Press (same address) comes Philip A. Shreffler's second 'Baker Street Irregulars' detective novel, *The Twentieth Century Limited Mystery* ($15.95). Eliot Simpson sets off on the fabulous Pullman train from New York to Chicago, in the welcome company of fellow BSIs Christopher Morley and Edgar W. Smith. His task is to write a magazine article about the Limited, but — it always seems to happen when the Irregulars get together — crime gets in the way. Phil Shreffler conjures up the America of the late 1930s and gives life to the fabulous characters who made the Baker Street Irregulars so special. *The Twentieth Century Limited Mystery* isn't a Sherlock Holmes story, of course, but the ghost of Holmes is always present, and like its predecessor, *The War of the Worlds Mystery*, this is an atmospheric, classy whodunnit. It proves that they do still write them like that.

More modest in scope is *The Mystery at the Golden Cockerel* (Baker Street Books, 74 Crofton Avenue, Timperley, Cheshire; e-mail gmkelly@timperley74.freeserve.co.uk), one of the series of new Holmes short stories written and published by Gerard M. Kelly. The plot is neat (and I think I recognise in it an element from Margery Allingham's novel *Death of a Ghost*), the characterisation effective, and the reproduction of Dr Watson's narrative style competent. Mr Kelly has not achieved the near-perfection of Denis O. Smith's and June Thomson's pastiches, but his story is very enjoyable. You can read one of the tales free at www.bakerstreetbooks.co.uk to see how well he's captured the Canonical style. There are eight booklets so far, priced at £3.99 each (or three for £9.99, or all eight for £19.99), including postage.

Through the Granada TV series and the play *The Secret of Sherlock Holmes*, Jeremy Brett was undoubtedly *the* Holmes of the late 20th century, but of course he was much more than that. Linda Pritchard's handsome new book is a timely reminder that he was a compelling, versatile and, in his younger days, beautiful actor, who was touched with greatness. *Jeremy Brett: The Definitive Sherlock Holmes* (Paradise Books, c/o Rupert Books, 58/59 Stonefield, Bar Hill, Cambridge CB3 8TE; £15.00) features a foreword by Charles L. Allen, Chairman of Granada Television, an introduction by Linda herself, a brief biography by Derek Granger, career details for JB, credits for all the Granada films, and letters from half a dozen of the people whose lives were touched by him. The essence of the book, however, is in the 100 photographs, a dozen or so in colour, from throughout his life. The several informal shots help remind us of the man behind the actor. Publication is on 1 May, and the book will be available from the **Sherlock Holmes Memorabilia Company**, **Rupert Books**, the **Black Cat Bookshop**, **Murder One**, **Crime in Store**, and — in the USA — **Ashland Books** (132 Seventh Street, Ashland, OR 97520-2016), and **Classic Specialties** (PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219). Linda Pritchard will be signing copies of this large format 120-page paperback at the Sherlock Holmes Memorabilia Company, 230 Baker Street, London, on 5 May at 3.00 pm.

I didn't have room in DM 209 to mention that *Sherlock in the Trib*, the delightful volume of Sherlockiana gleaned by the late John Nieminski from the 'Line 'o Type or Two' column in the *Chicago Tribune*, also includes an introduction, notes and comments by Nieminski's friend Ely Liebow. The regular price for this very nice hardback from Magico Magazine (PO Box 156, New York, NY 10002-0156, USA) is $35.00 plus $2.00 postage, but there's currently a special introductory price of $29.95 plus $2.00.

Peter Blau notes *Conned Again, Watson! Cautionary Tales of Logic, Math, and Probability* by Colin Bruce (Cambridge: Perseus Publishing, 2000; $24.00), which 'employs Holmes and Watson to explain scams, game theory and statistics, and does a good job of making it all sound easy.'

Due in June from Halsgrove Publishing (Halsgrove House, Tiverton Business Park, Tiverton, Devon EX16 6SS; e-mail

sales@halsgrove.com) is *The Hound of the Baskervilles: Hunting the Dartmoor Legend*, which will include the full text of the novel and 'a major new study of the geographical, historical and literary background' by Philip Weller, illustrated by 'rare Victorian photographs'. The book will be priced at £19.95.

New catalogues, featuring lots of Doyleana and Holmesiana, are available from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (22 & 25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; e-mail nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk), and **Janus Books** (PO Box 40787, Tucson, AZ 85717, USA; e-mail mike@janusbooks.com).

José Chautens offers a first edition of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* at £500.00 or near offer, and a first of *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes* at £300.00 o.n.o. Interested parties should contact him on soje@freesurf.ch.

Charles Hall (12 Paisley Terrace, Edinburgh EH8 7JW) has issued a catalogue of Holmesian collectibles, from which I'd single out as especially desirable his white metal figures of Laurel && Hardy as Holmes & Watson (£9.00 the pair), the figure of Sherlock Pig the Farmyard Detective (£4.00), and the books that he wrote with Peter Blythe: *Sherlock Holmes and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in Edinburgh* (£2.85) and the two-part *On Stage Sherlock Holmes* (£3.85). These are great bargains, and they're just a couple among many.

Kerry Murphy of **The Sydney Passengers** will be visiting London in July. He has some spare tickets for various days of the Test Match at Lord's. If you're interested in buying them, contact Kerry at kmurphy@craddock.com.au.

On 2 April the *Daily Mirror*, hardly the most reliable of papers, reported that Robson Green & Jerome Flynn have been signed up to play Holmes & Watson in a 'gritty, sexy' new series for ITV, which will make use of Granada's Baker Street set (and give Holmes a girlfriend). David Stuart Davies reports that Granada is indeed planning a new Holmes series, but *not* with Robson & Jerome *(*and, I hope, not with the girlfriend*)*. More on this as it reaches me.

The Phoenix Players will stage *The Hound of the Baskervilles* at the Rotherham Civic Centre during the week beginning 30 April. Performances start at 7.15 pm, and tickets are available from Gail Edlington on 01709 556669 or the theatre box office on 01709 823640.

From 6 to 20 May, Roger Llewellyn will be taking DSD's play *Sherlock Holmes — The Last Act!* to Singapore and Bangkok. In June he'll be at the Bacon Theatre, Cheltenham on the 1st, the Playhouse, Alnwick on the 16th, the Harlequin, Redhill on the 21st, and Ebbw Vale on the 29th. On 7 July he'll be in Pontardawe.

Something that didn't make it into the last DM: Anna Smyth has passed to Catherine Cooke a number of items from her late husband Fraser's collection to *give* to interested Sherlockians. They are *not* available to dealers. E-mail Catherine for details at c.m.cooke@dial.pipex.com or phone her on 020 8879 0332 evenings and weekends.

Our Society's next meeting, of course, will be the AGM at the Savage Club on 23 May, followed by 'Looking Forward', chaired by Sebastien le Page. In June there'll be a week of events, kicking off with Bernard Davies's day trip into Sussex on the 3rd and concluding with a cricket match to 1895 rules against the P.G. Wodehouse Society. Our original choice of ground has had to be cancelled because of the foot & mouth outbreak. Keep your eye on the website at www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk for updates.

The Illustrious Clients will discuss the case of 'The Three Students' at their dinner meeting in Indianapolis on 5 May (details from Steven T. Doyle, 540 W. Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 4607777, USA). The same day sees the 26th Annual Spring Gathering of **The Pleasant Places of Florida**, devoted to 'Black Peter' (Wanda Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698,USA). On 8 May, **The Stormy Petrels** will hold an auction at the 'riverside chateau' of Don McLachlan and Barbara Sigerson (Fran Martin, 10662 129 Street, Surrey, B.C., Canada V3T 3H4). **The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem** will examine the adventure of 'Black Peter' on 19 May (Gael Stahl, 1763 Needmore Road, Old Hickory, TN 37138, USA; e-mail gaelbstahl@juno.com). On 19 May **Gerard's Hussars** and **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company** will meet in Crowborough to discuss 'literary aspects', and next day they'll attend a Napoleonic display at Fort Newhaven (Brian Pugh, 20 Clare Road, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1PN).

On 3 June, **The Priory Scholars** will host a Hound Video Day in Leicester for **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company** (6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU; e-mail franco.midland@btinternet.com). *2001: A Sherlockian Odyssey — A Journey Among the Shaw 100* will be hosted by **The Norwegian Explorers** in Minneapolis on 29 June to 1 July; Speakers including Arthur Axelrad, Peter Blau, Jon Lellenberg and Jennie Paton will discuss the 100 books that John Bennett Shaw considered essential for Sherlockians, and the books will be exhibited at the University of Minnesota's Elmer L. Andersen Library, where a meeting of **The Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections** will be held in conjunction with the conference (Julie McKuras, 13512 Granada Avenue, Apple Valley, MN 55124, USA; e-mail mike9750@aol.com).

Periodicals received. ***Communication***, March/April 2001 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Jeff & Wanda Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA) *(*a real newsletter, and full of quirky information and humour*)*. ***The Illustrious Clients News***, May 2001 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T. Doyle, 540 W. Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA) *(*includes a review of the new Canadian* ***Sign of Four*** *with Matt Frewer, and Steven Doyle's thoughts on pastiche*)*. ***Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections***, March 2001 (Sherlock Holmes Collections, Suite 111, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, 222 21st Avenue S., Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA) *(*among much else: background to Eve Titus's charming 'Basil of Baker Street' books, and a profile of Theodore C. Blegen*)*. ***Sherlockiana***, no, 1 2001 (**Sherlock Holmes Klubben I Danmark**, Bjarne Nielsen, Sherlock Holmes Museet, Algade 3, 4500 Nykoping Sjaelland, Denmark) *(*a classy and intelligent magazine, nearly all in Danish*)*.

The Parallelogram, April 2001 (**The Parallel Case of St Louis**, Joseph J. Eckrich, 914 Oakmoor, Fenton, MO 63126, USA) *(*a survey of Dorothy L. Sayers'* ***Unpopular Opinions****, and a look at 'The Veiled Lodger'*)*. ***The Camden House Journal***, April 2001 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA) *(*features a very interesting piece about the Bruce-Partington submarine by Samuel Smith*)*. ***The Torr***, Spring 2001 (**The Poor Folk Upon The Moors**, Eric Monahan, Highcliff, 14 Silver Bridge Close, Broadsands Park, Paignton, Devon TQ4 7NW) *(*Eddie Maguire on cinematic Hounds, Eric Monahan on hansom cabs, an amusing anonymous parody ... I miss the atmospheric cover photos of Dartmoor, but the overall appearance is really classy*)*.

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

Roger Johnson

For the first time this newsletter is printed in Baskerville type. I hope you like it.

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

Roger Johnson, Mole End, 41 Sandford Road, Chelmsford CM2 6DE
e-mail: roger_johnson@hotmail.com

no. 211 27th May 2001

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £6.00 or US$13.00 for 12 issues. Dollar checks should be payable to Jean Upton. Dollar prices quoted without qualification refer to US dollars. 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.

I'm reminded that, though **Nyree Dawn Porter**, who died on the 9th April at the sadly early age of 61, is best remembered for her rôle as Irene Forsyte, she was perfectly cast as Lady Brackenstall to Douglas Wilmer's Holmes in the 1965 BBC TV production of 'The Abbey Grange'.

The latest publication from Baskerville Bücher (Michael Ross, Postfach 42 06 70, 50900 Köln, Germany; e-mail baskerville@d3.net) is *Der Hund von Baskerville*, the second Sherlockian play by Ferdinand Bonn — which, like the first, *Sherlock Holmes*, takes considerable liberties with the Canon. In fact, Bonn acknowledges that the play is '*Frei nach Motiven aus Poes und Doyles Novellen*'! Holmes and his friend Forbs travel to Schloss Baskerville in the Scottish Highlands, to assist Lord Walter Baskerville. Other characters include Argyll (a *Naturforscher*) and his sister Miss Argyll, Dr Brown (*Arzt*), Bench (*Gutsbesitzer*), Robin (the Baskerville *Haushofmeister*) and his wife, and two police inspectors named Knox and Smallweed. Even if your knowledge of the German language is limited, you'll find *Der Hund von Baskerville* fascinating — especially the three photos from the original 1907 Berlin production. Michael Ross provides a detailed introduction, and an appendix with reviews, source material and other items. This nice 124-page paperback costs DM29.80 — or £10.00 or $16.00 postpaid (dollar and sterling payments in cash or by PayPal only). Forthcoming is Bonn's third Holmes play, *Die tanzenden Männchen*. Check Baskerville's website at www.baskerville.de.

Due on 7th June from Pocket Essentials (18 Coleswood Road, Harpenden, Herts. AL5 1EQ) at £3.99 is what promises to be a most useful basic guide, *Sherlock Holmes* by Mark Campbell, whose 96 pages contain a wealth of information and opinion. Richard Lancelyn Green has contributed a foreword, and Mr Campbell examines all 60 stories, gives a concise biography of Conan Doyle, and looks at the major dramatic productions, the best pastiches and parodies, and the best websites. Check out the publishers at www.pocketessentials.com.

John Radford tells me that the Japanese edition of his book *The Intelligence of Sherlock Holmes and Other Three-Pipe Problems* is also due in June, translated by our distinguished Japanese member Dr Tsukasa Kobayashi and colleagues. The original English version is available from Dr Radford (38 Cephas Avenue, London E1 4AT) at £9.95 postpaid. He will sign the book if you wish.

An oddity that's just come to my attention is *Deadly Season* by Tim Champlin, published last year in large print by Camden: 'Jay McGraw of Wells Fargo & Company is helping his friend, Detective Fred Casey of the police squad of San Francisco's Chinatown. Their mission is to stem the flow of opium into the city, for which they need the help of a certain Sherlock Holmes.' And that's all I know at present.

There are several Holmesian references in my own book of short stories, *A Ghostly Crew: Tales from The Endeavour*, to be published in June by Sarob Press (Brynderwen, 41 Forest View, Mountain Ash CF45 3DU) at £22.00.

The Hounds' Collection: volume 6, containing '98 pages of humour, thoughtful writing, pastiche, serious research and artwork by members of **The Hounds of the Internet**' is available at £8.00, US$12.00 or Can.$18.00 (cash preferred but personal cheques acceptable), from Bill Barnes (19 Malvern Avenue, Manly, NSW 2095, Australia), or via PayPal to bbarnes@ozemail.com.au.

Daniel Stashower's outstanding biography *Teller of Tales: The Life of Arthur Conan Doyle* will be published in paperback by Penguin Books (27 Wrights Lane, London W8 5TZ) on 5th July, at £8.99. On the same day, Penguin will issue *A Study in Scarlet*, edited by Iain Sinclair (£4.99); *The Sign of Four*, edited by Peter Ackroyd (£4.99); *The Adventures and Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, edited by Iain Pears & Ed Glinert (£5.99); *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, edited by Christopher Frayling (£4.99); *The Valley of Fear & Selected Cases*, edited by Charles Palliser (£5.99) *(*an odd one this: besides the novel it contains just ten of the stories from **The Return of Sherlock Holmes** and **His Last Bow***)*; and *The Lost World and Other Thrilling Tales*, edited by Philip Gooden (£5.99).

New catalogues are available from: **Bibliotective** (21861 Stratford, Oak Park, MI 482377, USA) *(*a wide range of Sherlockiana*)*; **Richard Williams (Bookdealer)** (The Dragonby Press, 15 High Street, Dragonby, North Lincs. DN15 0BE) *(*not much Conan Doyle, but a number of volumes of **The Strand***)*; and **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (22 & 25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; e-mail nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk) *(*much of interest, but the prices reflect the West End location*)*.

The Sherlock Holmes Exhibition at Abbey House in Baker Street was opened on 22nd May 1951, Arthur Conan Doyle's 92nd birthday. Now, 50 years later, Westminster Libraries have launched a website at www.westminsteronline.org/holmes1951 celebrating the exhibition and featuring some grand photographs, the catalogue (fascinating!), and a good deal else; there's also a link to Westminster Libraries' catalogue, including the Sherlock Holmes Collection. It's intended to develop the site over the next few months, and later to include the American version of the exhibition. If you have any memories of the exhibition, Catherine Cooke would like to hear from you: contact her at c.cooke@dial.pipex.com.

Issue 42 of *Sherlock Holmes: The Detective Magazine* features a report of the Sherlock Awards; a review of the new TV film of *the Sign of Four*; Phil Attwell on Sherlock in the comic books; a super little story by Peter Guttridge in which Basil Rathbone displays his detective prowess; Allan Perry on the Saint; Oliver Johnson on Marcus Didius Falco; David Stuart Davies on celluloid Hounds; Aziz Bin Adam on the Malaysian society **The Common Loafers**; plus contributions from Phil Rickman, Gaynor Coules, Mike Ripley, Pat Ward and others. 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).

In June and July, **Bibliomania**, the award-winning world literature website, is putting many of Conan Doyle's novels online,

including *A Study in Scarlet*, *The Sign of Four*, *The Valley of Fear* and *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, all with new introductions by David Stuart Davies. *The Hound of the Baskervilles* is already on site. Look at www.bibliomania.com. For the anniversary of Arthur Conan Doyle's death on 7th July, Bibliomania has also commissioned an article from David, copies of which can be had from Anna Burt by e-mailing anna@bibliomania.com.

The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, a radio series written and produced by Jim French, can be heard as part of *Imagination Theater* on KNWX in Seattle and on about 135 radio stations in the USA, Canada and Australia. It's also syndicated internationally as part of *Imagination Theater* over the Internet. Can anyone give me a listener's opinion of the series?Those who appreciate the long radio career of Holmes and Watson may be interested to know of ORCA, the Old-Time Radio-Show Collectors' Association, which maintains an immense and growing library of recordings, mainly from the British Isles and North America. Contact John Wolstenholme, 15 Melbourne Avenue, Dronfield Woodhouse, Sheffield S18 8YW.

*(*Tony Freeman, our inestimable Webmaster, has introduced me to another giant leap in technology. The process called MP3 can condense a digital recording sufficiently to pack something like 50 hours onto a single CD-ROM. Thanks to the peculiarities of the American copyright laws, a huge number of radio programmes are in the public domain in the USA, and you can buy — very cheaply — MP3 CD-ROMs containing over 100 Sherlock Holmes plays. They can be played on most modern personal computers.*)*

Michael Bragg alerts me to a new identification of Jack the Ripper. According to *The Globe & Mail* of Canada, Tom Slemen and Keith Andrews claim that an archaeologist and intelligence agent named Claude Conder was the harlot-killer. Conder, apparently, was a colleague of Sir Charles Warren, the much-maligned Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police at the time of the murders.

The Conan Doyle (Crowborough) Establishment is preparing a video of the unveiling of Sir Arthur's statue on Saturday 14 April. The statue, alas, was vandalised within a week of the unveiling: the hat held in Sir Arthur's hand was broken off and stolen (a 17-year-old was arrested and cautioned, but released without charge). Meanwhile the Establishment has produced a limited edition souvenir cover: it shows a likeness of the statue, has a Crowborough postmark, and contains details of the event; get details from R.J. Greep, The Limes, Eridge Road, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 2SL. Profit from sales will be donated to Crowborough Hospital.

Roger Llewellyn will take David Stuart Davies's play *Sherlock Holmes — The Last Act!* to the Bacon Theatre, Cheltenham on the 1st June, the Playhouse, Alnwick on the 16th, the Harlequin, Redhill on the 21st, and Ebbw Vale on the 29th. On 7th July he'll be in Pontardawe, and on 4th and 17th August at the Paxton Theatre, Buxton.

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe will feature a new dramatisation of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* by Edward Viney, to be seen at the Stage by Stage Edinburgh Academy in Henderson Row from 5th to 19th August. The box office opens on 1st June: phone 0131 557 1155. The company's website is at www.stagebystage.org.

Clyro Court on the Welsh borders, built for Thomas Baskerville in 1839, is now a hotel, called — what else? — **Baskerville Hall**. The publicity rather controversially claims that it 'features in Conan Doyle's story *The Hound of the Baskervilles*'. The address is: Baskerville Hall Hotel, Clyro Court, Hay-on-Wye, Powys, Wales HR3 5LE (phone 01497 820033).

At the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore on 6th October, the 22nd annual programme of talks presented by **The Six Napoleons of Baltimore**, **The Carlton Club** and **Watson's Tin Box of Ellicott City**, will be *The Hundred Year Hound*. The speakers will include William Hyder, Philip Sherman, Rosalind Cheslock and Andrew L. Solberg. Get details from Bill Hyder, 5488 Cedar Lane #C3, Columbia, MD 2104-13774, USA.

Our Society's 50th anniversary celebrations continue. On 3rd June, Bernard Davies conducts a coach trip to Kent and Sussex in the steps of the regrettably clueless Stanley Hopkins. During the week, there's an open day at Marylebone Library's Sherlock Holmes Collection (5th June), an informal evening at the Players' Theatre Music Hall (6th June), an informal evening at the Sherlock Holmes pub (7th June), a walking tour of Holmes's Bloomsbury, led by M.C. Black & B.J. Rahn (8th June), and the momentous cricketmatch against the P.G. Wodehouse Society at West Wycombe (10th June). Check the website at www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk.

Also on 3rd June, **The Priory Scholars** host a Hound Video Day in Leicester for **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company** (6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU; e-mail franco.midland@btinternet.com). On 16th June **The Illustrious Clients** hold their summer picnic (Steven T. Doyle, 540 W. Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA; IllustClients@aol.com). On 23rd June, **The Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn** discuss 'The Lion's Mane' (Michael E. Bragg, PO Box 256, St Charles, MO 63302-0256, USA). On 26th June a party of Sherlockian sailors, including the Captain, from the Belfast-based **Crew of the S.S. May Day** visit London, to explore Baker Street and environs and take refreshment at the Sherlock Holmes pub. Fellow-Holmesians are welcome to join them on their Great Day Out — contact Oscar Ross, the Crew's Communications Officer, at oscarross@hotmail.com or by phone on 028 90878593.

2001: A Sherlockian Odyssey — A Journey Among the Shaw 100 is hosted by **The Norwegian Explorers** in Minneapolis on 29th June to 1st July; Speakers including Arthur Axelrad, Peter Blau, Jon Lellenberg and Jennie Paton discuss the 100 books that John Bennett Shaw considered essential for Sherlockians, and the books are exhibited at the University of Minnesota's Elmer L. Andersen Library, where a meeting of **The Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections** is held in conjunction with the conference (Julie McKuras, 13512 Granada Avenue, Apple Valley, MN 55124, USA; e-mail mike9750@aol.com).

The Friends of Dr Watson hold their annual Maiwand Luncheon at the Caravan Serai Afghan Restaurant (in Paddington Street, just off Baker Street!) on 28th July. Richard Stacpoole-Ryding has details at 14 Western Close, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 4SZ. (Don't forget the Friends' prize essay competition — contact Richard for information.) The 10th *Watsonian Weekend* on 27th-29th July 2001 includes the 42nd running of The Chicago Silver Blaze at Arlington Racetrack. Contact Susan Z. Diamond, 16W603 3rd Avenue, Bensenville, IL 60106-2327 USA; e-mail SZDiamond@mediaone.net.

Periodicals received. ***The Arthur Conan Doyle Research File VIII*** (**The Conan Doyle [Crowborough] Establishment**, (Brian Pugh, 20 Clare Road, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1PN). ***The Illustrious Clients News***, May 2001 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T. Doyle, 540 W. Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). ***The Camden House Journal***, May 2001 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, P.O. Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). ***The School Report***, Summer Term 2001 (**The Priory Scholars**, Horace L. Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY). ***SSHF, l'actualité de Sherlock Holmes en France et ... ailleurs***, Mars 2001 (**La Société Sherlock Holmes de France**, Thierry St Joanis, 26 avenue de la République, 75011, Paris). ***The Cormorant's Ring***, Fall 2000 (**The Trained Cormorants of Long Beach, CA**, Jim Coffin 6570 E. Pasao Alcazaa, Anaheim Hills, CA 928077-4910, USA) *(*this necessarily delayed issue is dedicated to the late Margaret and Don Hardenbrook, and is the last to be edited by Jim Coffin — also the co-ordinator of a unique society, **The Frenzied Hands**, whose membership is limited to Sherlockian drummers!*)*.

And the outstanding newsletter: ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, April 2001 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830; pblau@dgs.dgsys.com).

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON
Roger Johnson, Mole End, 41 Sandford Road, Chelmsford CM2 6DE
e-mail: roger_johnson@hotmail.com

no. 212 30th June 2001

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £6.00 or US$13.00 for 12 issues. Dollar checks should be payable to Jean Upton. Dollar prices quoted without qualification refer to US dollars. 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.

There never was a *Carry On Sherlock*, but *Carry On Screaming* came close, and it was pretty funny. One of the stars was **Joan Sims**, who died last Wednesday. As she never to my knowledge appeared in a Sherlock Holmes play or movie, let's salute her for that, and her many other grand comic performances.

Congratulations to **Christopher Lee** (the only man to have played Sherlock and Mycroft Holmes, and Sir Henry Baskerville!), who was awarded the CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours.

Due on 26 July at £25.20, Tony Earnshaw's *An Actor and a Rare One: Peter Cushing as Sherlock Holmes* is a long-awaited study of an actor who is always associated with the great detective by the public but too often overlooked by Sherlockians. When Cushing died, BBC TV could have paid a proper tribute to him by broadcasting the magnificent 1968 two-part *Hound of the Baskervilles*, which is by far the best television treatment of the book and may even be better than the 1939 Rathbone *Hound*. Instead, they trotted out, yet again, the entertaining but deeply flawed Hammer movie. After an incomplete repeat of Cushing's TV series in 1970, the BBC wiped two thirds of the films and have since refused to broadcast the rest or to issue them on video. Rare showings at the National Film Theatre, however, have proved that the series did contain a number of gems, despite the notoriously bad conditions under which it was made, and the Beeb's refusal to allow the series to be seen generally (along with the earlier and overall better Douglas Wilmer series) is frankly disgraceful. Peter Cushing's final performance as Holmes, in the apocryphal adventure *The Masks of Death*, was a triumph, and it's sad that the proposed follow-up, *The Abbot's Cry*, wasn't made (after ill-health forced him to retire from the project Cushing told me that Ian Richardson would be taking over the rôle). Tony Earnshaw's book, admirable as it is, left me wanting more. He interviewed a lot of people, but no one, apparently, who could comment on those films from the 1968 series that don't survive. It's time that Cushing's performances were properly assessed, and *An Actor and a Rare One* is a very welcome book. (Scarecrow Press Inc., 4720 Boston Way, Lanham, MD 20706, USA; British distributor Shelwing Ltd, 4 Pleydell Gardens, Folkestone, Kent CT20 2DN).

Val Andrews' two most recent short novels, *Sherlock Holmes and the Holborn Emporium* and *Sherlock Holmes and the Long Acre Vampire* (Breese Books, 164 Kensington Park Road, London W11 2ER; £7.50 each), maintain the author's reputation for intelligent entertainment. The former sees Holmes investigating sabotage at a great Edwardian department store, easily recognisable as the much-missed Gamage's; while the latter involves Sir Henry Irving, a hitherto-unknown play based on Stoker's *Dracula*, a visit to Brighton, and an apparently supernatural killer. Clever, nicely told, and with lots of good period detail. Recommended.

Penguin Books Ltd (27 Wrights Lane, London W8 5TZ) have undertaken a major project. On 5 July they will publish a very nice paperback edition of Daniel Stashower's *Teller of Tales: The Life of Arthur Conan Doyle* (£8.99), along with six volumes by ACD himself: *The Lost World, and Other Thrilling Tales*, edited, introduced and annotated by Philip Gooden (£5.99); *A Study in Scarlet*, introduced by Iain Sinclair, with notes by Ed Glinert (£4.99); *The Sign of Four*, introduced by Peter Ackroyd, notes by Ed Glinert (£4.99); *The Adventures and The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, introduced by Iain Pears, notes by Ed Glinert (£5.99); *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, edited, introduced and annotated by Christopher Frayling (£4.99); and *The Valley of Fear and Selected Cases*, introduced by Charles Palliser, notes by Ed Glinert (£5.99). The 'selected cases' consist of just six tales from *The Return* and four from *His Last Bow*. Only Gooden and Frayling, apparently, have prepared Conan Doyle's texts for this new edition; it would be nice to know the provenance of the others. This Penguin Classics edition won't replace *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, the Oxford World Classics edition, or Gasogene's Sherlock Holmes Reference Library, but it is an important edition, and I'd like to have seen it complete. The introductions reflect their different authors' interests in Holmes, Conan Doyle and their world; each is fascinating, but Gooden's and Frayling's are the fullest and seem to me the soundest (Ackroyd says: 'It has been suggested that Major Bartholomew Sholto is loosely based upon Oscar Wilde...' That's three serious errors in a sentence). The notes are wide-ranging and, as far as I can tell, accurate. With reservations, then, this is an important addition to the bibliography of Sherlock Holmes. As to *Teller of Tales*, it's simply the best life of Conan Doyle in 35 years; we won't get a better until Sir Arthur's papers are made available again.

The Pocket Essentials series does live up to its name. I'm very impressed with Mark Campbell's *Pocket Essential Sherlock Holmes* (Pocket Essentials, 18 Coleswood Road, Harpenden, Herts. AL5 1EQ; £3.99), whose 96 pages contain clear, accurate information about Holmes, his adventures and his creator, together with a run-down of the more important parodies and pastiches, famous (and not famous) actors who have played the detective, and recommended books and websites. Mr Campbell is not afraid to be opinionated (he thinks *The Hound of the Baskervilles* is 'much overrated'), but he carefully distinguishes between fact and opinion. *The Pocket Essential Sherlock Holmes* is the best thing of its kind since *The Sherlock Holmes Companion*. Actually, I think it's better.

I'm looking forward to reviewing David Stuart Davies's *Starring Sherlock Holmes*, just out from Titan Books (144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP) at £29.99. Then on 15 August comes *Sherlock Holmes on the Screen: The Complete Film and TV History* by Alan Barnes (Reynolds & Hearn, 61A Priory Road, Kew Gardens, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3DH; £14.95).

Other new or forthcoming books: *The Childhood of Sherlock Holmes: The Butler's Tale* by Myles D. Ferguson (Galde Press Inc., PO Box 460, Lakeville, MN 55044, USA; £20.50; August 2000). *Sherlock Holmes and the Running Noose* by Donald Thomas (Macmillan London Ltd, 25 Eccleston Place, London SW1W 9NF; £16.99; August 2001). *Our African Winter* by Arthur Conan Doyle (Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd, 61 Frith Street, London W1V 5TA; £16.00; April 2001). *Deadly Season* by Tim

Champlin *(*large print — see DM 211*)* (Chivers Press Ltd, Windsor Bridge Road, Bath BA2 3AX; £7.99; January 2000).

There are new catalogues, full of Holmesiana and Doyleana, available from **The Black Cat Bookshop** (90 Charles Street, Leicester LE1 1GE; e-mail blackcatuk@aol.com; website www.blackcatbookshop.com; and **Classic Specialties** (PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA; website www.sherlock-holmes.com). Check out **Bradley's Books** (Bradley Hodge, PO Box 225702, Dallas, TX 75222-5702, USA; e-mail bradleysbooks@earthlink.net; website home.earthlink.net/~bradleysbooks.

In issue 43 of *Sherlock Holmes: The Detective Magazine* Paul Chapman asks who really wrote *The Hound of the Baskervilles;* there's Susan Moody on the adventures of Gervase Fen; Jared Cade on *Murder on the Orient Express;* Barry Thomas on the danger (or necessity) of dramatic alteration; Alan Perry on John Steed, David Stuart Davies on more celluloid *Hounds*, and Sue Feder on **The Historical Mystery Appreciation Society**; plus a new Luther Darke story by A.L. Blake, and contributions from Roger Forsdyke, John Hall, Pat Ward, Mike Ripley, me and Moriarty. 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).

To my regret I couldn't attend the launch of the Library Benefactors' Gallery at Edinburgh University earlier this month. The occasion also marked the donation by our good friend Forbes Gibb of a major collection on Conan Doyle and crime fiction.

Phil Attwell reminds me that the mail order company SilverMinds Direct (PO Box 400, Southampton SO14 0TH) stocks the Christopher Lee videos *The Leading Lady* and *The Incident at Victoria Falls* at £13.99 each or £25.98 for the two. Also that the BBC Radio Collection has released Bert Coules's dramatisation of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* on CD. Check the website at www.bbcworldwide.com/spokenword or ring for a free catalogue on 01672 562255.

Bob Bishop, whose company The Fossick Valley Fumblers has performed a series of Sherlockian parodies at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe over the years, has launched a website: www.sherlockholmescomedystor.homestead.com/index.html, featuring excerpts from the plays.

Aspiring Conan Doyles still have time to try for the Crime Writers' Association's *Debut Dagger 2001*, open to anyone whose work hasn't been published before, as the closing date is 14 August. Get details from the website at www.thecwa.co.uk, or send a stamped & self-addressed envelope to CWA Competition (TT/ST), PO Box 62, Okehampton, Devon EX20 2YQ.

Brian Pugh notes that 'there is a rather poor display of Conan Doyle pictures at Groombridge Place, called the Conan Doyle Collection.' This has nothing to do with **The Conan Doyle (Crowborough) Establishment**, whose own very full collection can be seen at Beacon Community College in Crowborough, open Monday to Friday, admission free.

I'm delighted to pass on the news that that splendid actor Ian Richardson has accepted honorary membership of **The Poor Folk Upon The Moors.** For details of this delightful group, contact Vosper Arthur, Spynishlake, Doddiscombsleigh, Exeter EX6 7PR. **The Northern Musgraves** will meet on 21 July at Hebden Bridge Doctors' Surgery, near Halifax, and there'll be a distinctly medical touch to the occasion (Dr Eilidh Gunson, 1 Dene Royd Close, Stainland, Halifax HX4 9QP). On 27 July **The Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn** will meet at The Mother-in-Law House in St Charles to discuss 'The Blanched Soldier' (Michael Bragg, PO Box 256, St Charles, MO 63302-0256, USA).

The same day there'll be a Lodge of **The Red Circle**, who'll discuss 'The Six Napoleons' at the National Press Club (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA; pblau@dgs.dgsys.com). **The Friends of Dr Watson** will hold their annual *Maiwand Luncheon* on 28 July at the Caravan Serai Afghan Restaurant, just off Baker Street (Richard Stacpoole-Ryding, 14 Western Close, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 4SZ). The following day sees the beginning of the week-long *Hound 100 Convention* of **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company** on Dartmoor. The 10th *Watsonian Weekend* on 27 - 29 July 2001 will include the 42nd running of The Chicago Silver Blaze at Arlington Racetrack (Susan Z. Diamond, 16W603 3rd Avenue, Bensenville, IL 60106-2327 USA; e-mail SZDiamond@mediaone.net).

Periodicals received. ***Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections***, June 2001 (Sherlock Holmes Collections, Suite 111, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, 222 21st Avenue S., Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA) *(*Peter Blau on a really rare rarity, Steve Miller on G.K. Chesterton, Julie McKuras on the Conan Doyle signature hoax*).* ***The Formulary***, June 2001 (**The Friends of Dr Watson**, Richard Stacpoole-Ryding, 14 Western Close, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 4SZ) *(*Tim Healey wonders if Watson really had any friends; John Hall considers Watson's finances; Philippe Selvais looks at poisonous gas; Nino Cirone examines Watson's abilities ...*).* ***The Whaling News***, April, May & June 2001 (**The Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn**, PO Box 256, St Charles, MO 63302-0256, USA) *(*reports of this lively group's meetings, and brief but illuminating articles on 'The Illustrious Client' and 'The Blanched Soldier'*).* ***The Camden House Journal***, June 2001 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA) *(*a good piece by Patricia King on Leonardo the strong man*).* ***The Baker Street Journal***, Spring 2001 (PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA) *(*Holmesian psychology, philately, ecology, academe and anti-Semitism — a heady mixture*).*

The Antipodean Holmesian Society Newsletter, April, May & June 2001 (**The Antipodean Holmesian Society**, Ted Nye, 51 Irvine Road, Dunedin, New Zealand; ted.nye@stonebow.otago.ac.nz) *(*snippets of Holmesian news and reviews*).* ***3 Pipe Problem Plugs and Dottles***, May 2001 (**The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem**, Gael Stahl, 17763 Needmore Road, Old Hickory, TN 37138, USA) *(*an interview with the author of* ***The Childhood of Sherlock Holmes****, a look at Sherlockian websites, a consideration of 'The Mazarin Stone', and the birth of a new society —* ***The Fresh Rashers of Nashville*****).* ***The Parallelogram***, June 2001 (**The Parallel Case of St Louis**, Joseph J. Eckrich, 914 Oakmoor, Fenton, MO 63126, USA) *(*reviews of the new* ***Sign of Four*** *TV movie and of a rather peculiar play, plus reports of meetings*).*

The Illustrious Clients News, June 2001 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T. Doyle, 540 W. Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA) *(*in 1949 a society was founded called* ***The Six Little Scoundrels****: Steven Doyle wonders what became of them*).* ***Communication***, Special Buddy Issue, and May-June 2001 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Jeff & Wanda Dow, 17377 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA) *(*outstanding in the former is a brilliantly funny parody script for the Three Stooges, cast as Holmes, Watson & Lestrade; the latter is mostly engaging accounts of activities*).* ***Tonga Times***, Winter 2001 (**The Mini-Tonga Society**, Trish & Jay Pearlman, 1656 E. 19th Street #2E, Brooklyn, NY 11229, USA) *(*there are good reasons why it reached me in mid-Summer; anyone interested in Sherlockian miniatures should check out the Mini-Tonga Society, whose website is at hometown.aol.com/minitongasociety/mini1.htm*).*

And ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, May 2001 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA; pblau@dgs.dgsys.com) *(*the original Sherlockian newsletter*).*

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON
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no. 213 30th July 2001

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £6.00 or US$13.00 for 12 issues. Dollar checks should be payable to Jean Upton. Dollar prices quoted without qualification refer to US dollars. 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.

Several people spotted my mistake in the last DM. **Joan Sims**, who died on 27 June, did indeed appear in a Sherlock Holmes play: she was Mrs Warren in Peter Ling's adaptation of *The Red Circle* for BBC Radio 4 (at about the same time as her fellow Carry On star Kenneth Connor was playing *Mr* Warren for Granada TV). All the more reason to salute her.

Peter Blau reminds me that **Angela Browne**, who died on 20 June, had appeared as Mrs Toller in Granada's film of *The Copper Beeches*. She was married to that fine actor Francis Matthews, who played Sherlock Holmes on stage in 1988, in Brian Clemens' play *Holmes and the Ripper*.

Peter also points out that besides **Christopher Lee's** CBE, the Queen's Birthday Honours included a CBE for **Dudley Moore** (Watson and several other rôles in the dire 1978 parody *The Hound of the Baskervilles*), and an OBE for **Leslie Bricusse** (writer-composer of *Sherlock Holmes: The Musical*).

Congratulations to three newly invested Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes: **Catalina Hannan** ('A Basket of Coloured Silks'), **Dayna McCausland** ('Art in the Blood'), and our very own **Shirley Purves** ('The Ancient Cornish Language').

The Hound of the Baskervilles: Hunting the Dartmoor Legend by Philip Weller (Devon Books, Halsgrove House, Lower Moor Way, Tiverton Business Park, Tiverton, Devon EX16 6SS; £24.95) is as near as dammit the definitive study of the greatest of all Sherlock Holmes's exploits. Half the book contains the annotated text of the original novel; the other half is a thorough investigation of the literary, historical, legendary, geographical and fictional aspects of the story, as well as an authoritative look at the authorship controversy, a glance at film adaptations, and an assessment of what the author calls the 'Houndian phenomenon'. The considerable 'select bibliography' is dominated by the name of Philip Weller, but then he has written more on the subject than anyone else. I don't find his writing style very graceful, but what he has to say is so important that it doesn't matter. Besides, with its splendid archive photos and magnificent new pictures by Bryan Harper, this is a beautifully produced book, a delight to handle. It's available from stockists throughout the area, or from Halsgrove Direct (address above; phone 01884 243242).

The other important book this month is, of course, *Starring Sherlock Holmes* by David Stuart Davies (Titan Books, 144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP; £29.99). David's *Holmes of the Movies* was published an astonishing twenty-five years ago, and he has had the chance to revise or confirm his more youthful judgements, as well as to include a huge amount of material that's accumulated since — especially, of course, the Granada TV series with Jeremy Brett and his two great Watsons. I should emphasise, though, that this is far from being a mere updating of the earlier book. It's differently planned and vastly better illustrated. I fancy that it's the wonderful illustrations, many of them from the Lancelyn Green Collection, that will first impress the reader — there's a whole lot of them that I've never seen before. The book isn't wholly error-free (that's H. Reeves-Smith on the boat with Clive Brook, not Reginald Owen; Dr Budd's middle name was Turnavine, not Turnaville), but it's the most thorough study of its kind in far too many years, and very welcome too. Mind you, David and I must agree to differ on the relative merits of the forgettable Anthony Higgins TV film *1994 Baker Street: Sherlock Holmes Returns* and the witty *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, with Michael Pennington. What we need now is a similar volume about Holmes on radio — are you reading this, Bill Nadel?

Two very collectible booklets are newly in print from the Sherlock Holmes Society of London, and available from the Merchandising Officer, Lynne Godden (Apple Tree Cottage, Smarden, Ashford, Kent TN27 8QE). *The Victorian Cricket Match*, edited by M.C. Black for last month's match against the P.G. Wodehouse Society, contains in its 56 A5 pages Derek Hinrich's introduction to the game, the complete 1894 laws of cricket, Marilyn MacGregor on PGW and cricket, a neat parody by Eddie Maguire, Catherine Cooke on dressing the part, Richard Lancelyn Green on ACD and cricket, and more, including extracts from Conan Doyle, the complete 1894 laws of the game, and a brief account of West Wycombe Cricket Club. Post-paid prices for *The Victorian Cricket Match* are: UK £3.00; Europe £3.50; USA $6.50; elsewhere £4.50.

More than half the 36 A4 pages of *Helping Out Hopeless Hopkins*, edited by Pam Bruxner & Bob Ellis, are taken up with an important topographical investigation by Bernard Davies of the three 'Stanley Hopkins' cases. Then we have Shirley Purves on Anna the anarchist, Derek Hinrich on the nihilists, John Hall on pig-sticking and Professor Coram, and Richard Green on Conan Doyle's experience aboard a whaler. There are maps, photographs, and a great cartoon by Jeff Decker. UK £7.00; Europe £8.00; USA $14.50; elsewhere £9.00.

Next month the Mythopoeic Society (Joan Marie Verba, PO Box 1363, Minnetonka, MN 55346, USA) will publish *Sayers on Holmes: Essays and Fiction on Sherlock Holmes* ($9.50), being Dorothy L. Sayers' Sherlockian essays along with her script for Lord Peter Wimsey's section of the 1954 BBC radio centenary tribute to Holmes. That last hasn't appeared in print before, but the four essays were collected by our Society's in the long out of print *Studies in Sherlock Holmes* by Dorothy L. Sayers in 1996.

Recently published by Magico Magazine (P.O. Box 156, New York, NY 10002-0156, USA; $10.00 postpaid) is a 50-page collection of the Sherlockian art of Norman Schatell. (To give you an idea, Schatell was the creator of The Late Professor Moriarty Oscillating & Magnetic Dashboard Goodluck Figure!) Magico's new catalogue is available for $2.00, refundable on the first order of $30.00.

Aficionados of crime and mystery fiction, including Sherlock Holmes, should get the new catalogue of **Swallowtail Books** (3 Danesbrook, Claverley, Shropshire WV5 7BB; e-mail swallowtail.books@claverley88.freeserve.co.uk), whose book ordering service will obtain most new books in the field at a 20% discount (postage is £1.00 for one book or £1.95 for two or more). A new catalogue is also available from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (22 & 25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; e-mail nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk).

Diane Publishing has acquired a bulk lot of *The Original Illustrated 'Strand' Sherlock Holmes: The Complete Facsimile Edition* (paperback) and *The Original Illustrated Sherlock Holmes: The Strand Facsimile Edition* (bonded leather binding, gilt-edged pages). Both feature only the stories illustrated by Sidney Paget. Diane offer a substantial discount to anyone who'll buy a large number of either book. Contact Dave Bergman at dianepublishing@hotmail.com if you're interested. There's a website at www.dianepublishingcentral.com.

More new and forthcoming books. *Our African Winter* by Arthur Conan Doyle (Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd, 61 Frith Street, London W1V 5TA; September 2001; £16.00). *A Study in Scarlet, and The Sign of the Four* (Wordsworth Editions Ltd, Cumberland House, Crib Street, Ware, Herts. SG12 9ET; December 2001; £1.00). *The Adventures and Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (Modern Library, c/o Orca Book Services, Stanley House, 3 Fleets Lane, Poole, Dorset BH15 3AJ; June 2001; £21.99). *Sherlock Holmes and the Running Noose* by Donald Thomas (Macmillan Publishers Ltd, 25 Eccleston Place, London SW1W 9NF; due late August; £16.99). *Murder Rooms: The Patient's Eyes* by David Pirie (Century Publishing Co. Ltd, Random House, 20 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 2SA; May 2001; £12.99). *Sherlock Holmes and the Limehouse Horror* by Philip Pullman (Nelson Thornes Ltd, Delta Place, 27 Bath Road, Cheltenham, Glos. GL53 7TH; March 2001; £6.00) *(*I think this may be the play that was produced several years ago at the Polka Children's Theatre under the title of* ***Sherlock Holmes and the Sumatran Devil****. Several of us saw it and enjoyed it hugely.*)*

M.C. Black notes that Bibliophile Books (5 Thomas Road, London E14 7BN; phone 020 7515 9222) are offering Thomas W. Ross's useful 1997 volume *Good Old Index: The Sherlock Holmes Handbook* at £4.00. If you ask for a free catalogue or place an order, please quote reference 1045.

Shirley Purves still has some of Bill Michell's *Sherlock Holmes Journals* for sale on Bud's behalf. Volumes 9 to 15 are £10.00 per volume and the later ones are £8.00 per volume. Please e-mail Shirley at sap001@madasafish.com or phone 01395 232397.

Conan Doyle's creepy story *Lot 249* has been adapted for the stage and will be produced at Portsmouth Arts Centre, appropriately at Hallowe'en, by Anyone Can Play. It will run from 31 October to 3 November, at 7.30 pm. Tickets are £5.00 (£4.00 concessions). The Box Office phone number is 023 9283 7373; or write to Jason Brown at Anyone Can Play, 100 Waverley Road, Southsea, Hants. PO5 2PS.

Great news from Thierry Saint-Joanis — the **Sherlock Holmes Museum** established by Adrian Conan Doyle at the Château de Lucens in Switzerland, closed to the public since the 1980s, is open again, thanks to the dedicated work of the Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Foundation, the municipality of Lucens, and the **Association des Amis du Museé Sherlock Holmes de Lucens**, assisted by the **Société d'études holmésiennes de la Suisse romande** and the **Société Sherlock Holmes de France**. The Museum's new premises are at La Maison Rouge in the town of Lucens, and the official inauguration will be on 8 September. I can't be there in person, but like every other Sherlockian in the world, I guess, I'll be there in spirit! Well done, les Amis, and *bonne chance!*

Too late for inclusion in DM 212 was the good news that Roger Llewellyn, currently *the* Holmes of the stage, is now an honorary member of **The Northern Musgraves** — and to find out about that eminent group contact Anne Jordan at Fairbank, Beck Lane, Bingley, West Yorkshire BG16 4DN.

There was another error in the last issue: the actor who has accepted honorary membership in **The Poor Folk Upon the Moors** is, of course, Ian Richardson, portrayer of Holmes and of Dr Bell**,** and one of our finest actors. For details of the Poor Folk, contact Vosper Arthur, Spynishlake, Doddiscombsleigh, Exeter EX6 7PR.

Whether or not you're going on the **Sherlock Holmes Society of London** Golden Jubilee Cruise, you can find a regularly updated itinerary in printable format on our website (which is always worth a look anyway, of course) at www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk/rtf_files/THE%20GAME%20IS%20AFLOAT!.rtf *(*that's how it came out in the message Peter Horrocks sent. I'd suggest just going to www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk and follow the signs*).*

The Illustrious Clients will hold their annual film meeting, concentrating mainly on the small screen, and including the Tom Baker *Hound of the Baskervilles*, at the Wayne Public Library in Indianopolis on 4 August (get details from Steven T. Doyle, 540 W. Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA).

The featured story for the meeting of **The Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn** on 25 August will appropriately be 'The Retired Colourman' (Michael E. Bragg, Box 799, St Charles, MO 63302-0799, USA). The Harpooners' website is at www.fortunecity.com/victorian/poetry/1213/harpooners/index.htm.

On the weekend 8 - 9 September, **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company** (6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU; e-mail franco.midland@btinternet.com) will investigate *Baskerville Connections on the Welsh Border*.

The weekend of 28 - 30 September will see **The Poor Folk Upon The Moors** and **La Société Sherlock Holmes de France** joining forces on Dartmoor. The Secretary of the Poor Folk is Shirley Purves, of Lea House, Couches Lane, Woodbury, Exeter EX5 1HL. The French society can be contacted via 26 avenue de la République, 75011 Paris, France.

At the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore on 6 October, the 22nd annual programme of talks presented by **The Six Napoleons of Baltimore**, **The Carlton Club** and **Watson's Tin Box of Ellicott City**, will be *The Hundred Year Hound*. The speakers will include William Hyder, Philip Sherman, Rosalind Cheslock and Andrew L. Solberg. (Bill Hyder, 5488 Cedar Lane #C3, Columbia, MD 2104-13774, USA).

Periodicals received. ***The Ritual***, Spring 2001 (**The Northern Musgraves**, Paul M. Chapman, Alderley, Chapel Street, Easingwold, North Yorks. YO61 3AF) *(*Tim Healey on the medical aspects of 'The Sussex Vampire', Patrick Michael on Charles Chaplin & Holmes, Nino Cirone on the fate of Mary Morstan, John Addy on associational collecting*).* ***Tonga Times***, Summer 2001 (**The Mini-Tonga Society**, Trish & Jay Pearlman, 1656 E. 19th Street #2-E, Brooklyn, NY 11229, USA) *(*full of information, tips, anecdotes and pictures of Sherlockian miniature [and not so miniature] rooms — did you ever wish you could make a really convincing tiny tantalus? Now you can!*).*

The Illustrious Clients News, July 2001 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T. Doyle, 540 W. Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA) *(*Pat Ward's report on June's Sherlockian Conference in Minneapolis, Steven Doyle on early TV outings for Holmes*).* ***The Serpentine Muse***, Summer 2001 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes** (Evelyn Herzog, 360 West 21st Street, #5A, New York, NY 10011, USA) *(*Joe Fink on Moriarty's men and music, a selection of witty toasts, and some great photos of ASH and friends*).* ***The Sherlock Holmes Journal***, Summer 2001 *(*the 50th Anniversary Issue, a splendidly produced and unashamed wallow in nostalgia*).*

And of course ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, June 2001 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA; e-mail plau@dgsys.com) *(*despite a nasty bout of hepatitis A, Peter has continued to put out the excellent* ***Scuttlebutt*** *with only a little more irregularity than usual; by now he should be able to enjoy a good malt whisky again, and I'm with him in spirit!*).*

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON
Roger Johnson, Mole End, 41 Sandford Road, Chelmsford CM2 6DE
e-mail: roger_johnson@hotmail.com

no. 214 1st September 2001

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £6.00 or US$13.00 for 12 issues. Dollar checks should be payable to Jean Upton. Dollar prices quoted without qualification refer to US dollars. 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.

Poul Anderson ('The Dreadful Abernetty Business', BSI), who died on 31 July, is known to the world at large as one of the great masters of fantasy & science fiction, but to Sherlockians he will be remembered as a leading member, with his wife Karen ('Emilia Lucca', BSI) of **The Scowrers & Molly Maguires** of San Francisco. He was friendly, polite, modest, and hugely talented. I'm sorry I didn't know him better.

James Bernard, composer and scriptwriter, died on 12 July. Much of his film music was written for Hammer, including the splendidly dramatic score for the 1959 *Hound of the Baskervilles*. Peter Blau notes that Bernard won an Academy Award for the screenplay of the movie *Seven Days to Noon.*

Sherlock Holmes and the Limehouse Horror by Philip Pullman, published by Nelson Thornes in the *Superscripts* series (Nelson Thornes, Delta Place, 27 Bath Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL53 7TH; £6.00) is indeed the play that was produced at the Polka Children's Theatre in 1985 as *Sherlock Holmes and the Sumatran Devil.* This tale of the Giant Rat of Sumatra, which involves both Colonel Moran and Professor Moriarty at their most villainous, is an absolute cracker. Mr Pullman knows his Canon and he knows how to write engrossing melodrama (the editor calls it 'an affectionate spoof', but it's more than that). This edition is intended for use and discussion in the classroom and the drama studio, but it would serve well as an acting script, and the play would work well in the hands of a disciplined and imaginative amateur or professional theatre company. Meanwhile the script itself is great fun to read.

The industrious and inventive Eric Monahan has written and published another nice booklet of stories, *The Triumphs of Sherlock Holmes*. There are three neatly plotted and pleasantly told tales, of which the first and longest enlarges on one of Watson's tantalising references, this time to 'The Little Problem of the Grosvenor Square Furniture Van'. *The Triumphs of Sherlock Holmes* is available from Highcliff, 14 Silver Bridge Close, Broadsands Park, Paignton, Devon TQ4 7NW. It's priced at £4.95 or $8.95, post-paid.

A bit of advance information from Christopher Roden: the 2001 *Baker Street Journal Christmas Annual* will be *On the Shoulders of Giants: Jack Tracy and The Encyclopaedia Sherlockiana* by Christopher Roden with Barbara Roden. It promises to be exceptionally interesting.

Three of M.J. Trow's witty and ingenious Sholto Lestrade novels are out in paperback from Ian Henry (20 Park Drive, Romford RM1 4LH). *Lestrade and the Ripper*, *Lestrade and the Sawdust Ring* and *Lestrade and the Sign of Nine* are each priced at £9.99.

There's a new catalogue of first editions (including *His Last Bow*, priced at £525.00) available from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (22 & 25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; e-mail nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk).

Coolmedya's *The World of Sherlock Holmes* is something special in the way of CD-ROMs. Volume 1: *Lifestyle* contains a huge amount of information, attractively presented and easily navigated. There's a tour of Holmes's sitting-room and bedroom (actually the rooms at the Sherlock Holmes Museum at 239 Baker Street, which seems to have improved since I visited it), but we also call in at Simpson's-in-the-Strand, Lock's the hatters, Lobb's the bootmakers, James Smith's umbrella and stick shop, St Bartholomew's Hospital — and numerous other places that help illuminate Holmes and Watson's way of life. We are introduced to Arthur Conan Doyle, Sidney Paget and *The Strand Magazine* (Conan Doyle's consulting-rooms are identified at 2 Devonshire Place, though it was ascertained back in 1994 that they were actually in Upper Wimpole Street). There are detailed maps, both historical and modern, and visits to the Sherlock Holmes pub, the Sherlock Holmes Hotel and Marylebone Library. I'd like to have seen a little about the Sherlock Holmes Memorabilia Company, but I suppose you can't have everything, especially as there's already over two hours of unique video here. And I haven't even mentioned the Canonical quotations, the illustrations, the bibliography, the web-links, the horoscope . . . It's a fascinating, entertaining and illuminating programme. Sherlockians visiting London should find it extremely useful.

Coolmedya plans a second disc (or possibly an upgrade of the present one) enlarging on the subject of Holmes's lifestyle, and the producers would like to interview people with specialist Sherlockian interests. You can contact them via the website at www.worldofholmes.com. You can buy the disc directly from the website, at £29.00 plus £2.50 postage. The cost to non-EU countries is £24.68 plus postage, as there's no VAT. If you can't access the website or the shop isn't operational, you can send a cheque, payable to P.W. Brown, to *The World of Sherlock Holmes*, 7 Candover Street, London W1W 7DN — or you can buy it from the Sherlock Holmes Museum.

Val Andrews, as many of us know, is a very entertaining storyteller with a huge respect for Holmes, Watson and Conan Doyle. On Wednesday 26 September he will be the main speaker at an evening dedicated to Sherlock Holmes, to be held at Loughton Library. Tickets are available at £1.00 each from the library.

Talking of full-blooded melodrama (as we were earlier), our member Carolyne Bevan will be directing Brian Clemens's *Holmes and the Ripper* for the Kings Langley Players on 1, 2 & 3 November. The play had a national tour in 1988, with Francis Matthews & Frank Windsor as Holmes & Watson, and hasn't, I think, been staged since, so this production will be very welcome. It will be performed at The Nap, Kings Langley, Hertfordshire (about 3 miles from Watford). Tickets are £6.00 (concessions £5.00), and the box office phone number is 01923 263205.

I've also heard from John White of Exit Stage Left, a theatre group based very Canonically in South Norwood, who plan to produce Tim Kelly's dramatisation of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. I don't yet know precisely where or when the play will be performed, but I'll pass on the news when I do know. Or you can check with John White at j.white19@ntlworld.com.

On 4 & 5 October, Chelmsford Theatre Workshop will perform a dramatised documentary called *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*, written and directed by me. The Friday performance will

be at Hylands House, a lovely Palladian mansion just outside the town; Saturday's will be at CTW's home, the Old Court Theatre in Springfield Road, opposite Chelmsford Prison. Tickets are £5.00, and the box office number is 01245 606505.

From 12 November, Halsgrove Fine Art, a sister company to the distributors of Philip Weller's strongly recommended *The Hound of the Baskervilles: Hunting the Dartmoor Legend* (see DM 213), is offering a rather magnificent bronze sculpture by Mary Laing. Called *Master of the Moor*, it depicts a gigantic hound passing the well-known landmark Goldsmith's Cross. The statuette is 9 inches high and 12 long, and it weighs nearly a stone! There are just 500 copies, priced at £200.00 each, plus £15.00 delivery. The address is Halsgrove Fine Art, Halsgrove House, Lower Moor Way, Tiverton, Devon EX16 6SS (e-mail sales@halsgrove.com.) The website at www.halsgrove.com is worth a visit.

Peter Blau notes that Scott Monty has launched a Calendar of Sherlockian Events at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Sherlockian_Events. You'll need to register with Yahoo in order to access it.

The next meeting of **The Sherlock Holmes Society of London** will be an informal gathering on 20 September at the *Old Dr Butler's Head* in Masons Avenue, off Coleman Street, London EC2. No doubt those who are currently on the Golden Jubilee Cruise will have lots of photographs to show the rest of us.

The next formal meeting will be the *Hound of the Baskervilles* evening at the Savage Club on 17 October. Meanwhile M.C. Black has arranged a series of regular informal Club Nights to be held on the first Friday of the month at the Royal Commonwealth Society, 18 Northumberland Avenue. The first will be on 5 October. Members, prospective members and their guests are welcome to turn up any time between 6.00 and 9.00 pm. As with the evening at the *Old Dr Butler's Head*, there's no charge; just pay for what you order to eat or drink.

The Friends of Dr Watson will celebrate their first half-decade with a 5th Birthday Luncheon at the Wig & Pen Club on Saturday 8 September. The Club, one of London's landmarks, is at 229-230 The Strand, opposite the Law Courts. For information about this pleasant and lively group, contact Richard Stacpoole-Ryding, 'Dr Watson's Dresser', 14 Western Close, Letchworth, Hertfordshire SG6 4SZ.

On 8 - 9 September, **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company** will investigate 'Baskerville Connections on the Welsh Border' (6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU; e-mail franco.midland@btinternet.com).

The Inspector Morse Society plans a 'Back to Basics Oxford Weekend', 14 - 16 September, to include dinner with Colin Dexter at Magdalen College, a classical concert at the Holywell Music Room, and the unveiling by Mr Dexter of a plaque at the Randolph Hotel (Antony Richards, Endeavour House, 170 Woodland Road, Sawston, Cambridge CB2 4DX).

On 15 September, **The Illustrious Clients** will discuss 'The Golden Pince-Nez' over dinner in Indianapolis (Steven T. Doyle, 540 W. Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA).

On 22 September **The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem** will meet to discuss 'The Missing Three-Quarter' (Gael Stahl, 1763 Needmore Road, Old Hickory, TN 37138, USA).

Over the weekend 28 - 30 September **The Poor Folk Upon The Moors** and **La Société Sherlock Holmes de France** will visit Dartmoor. Among the year's many special Sherlockian events this one promises to be more special than most! The Poor Folk's Secretary is Shirley Purves, of Lea House, Couches Lane, Woodbury, Exeter EX5 1HL. The French society can be contacted via 26 avenue de la République, 75011 Paris, France.

For their 'Fog, Dog and Bog' symposium from 29 September to 1 October, **The Sydney Passengers** will be at their own 'Baskerville Hall', the neo-gothic Bishopthorpe Manor at Goulburn, some two hours south of Sydney (Sally Cornell, 24 Byron Street, Croydon, NSW 2132, Australia; e-mail sally_cornell@optusnet.com.au).

At their Case-Study Meeting at the *Cricketers* in Leicester on 30 September, **The Priory Scholars** will discuss *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (Horace L. Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY).

The Margery Allingham Society will be based at Danbury Park in Essex from 5 to 7 October; there'll be talks, a quiz, a video show and visits to various places connected with the writer and her work (Pamela Bruxner, 2B Hiham Green, Winchelsea, East Sussex TN36 4HB).

The 6 October meeting of **The Northern Musgraves** will be based on the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway, which was used in Granada TV's *Sherlock Holmes* series (Anne Jordan, Fairbank, Beck Lane, Bingley, West Yorkshire BG16 4DN). On the same day, at the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore, **The Six Napoleons of Baltimore**, **The Carlton Club** and **Watson's Tin Box of Ellicott City** will present 'The Hundred Year Hound'; speakers will include William Hyder, Philip Sherman, Rosalind Cheslock and Andrew L. Solberg (Bill Hyder, 5488 Cedar Lane #C3, Columbia, MD 2104-13774, USA). Also on the same day **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company** will investigate *Hound* locations around Hindhead in Surrey.

Periodicals received. ***The School Report***, Autumn Term 2001 (**The Priory Scholars**, Horace L. Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY) *(*the first report I've seen of the well publicised Hound convention on Dartmoor, plus some amusing doggerel allegedly written by the Hound himself, and a good piece on 'The Dancing Men' by the society's late founder, Sheila Redfern*).* ***The Parallelogram***, September 2001 (**The Parallel Case of St Louis**, Joseph J. Eckrich, 914 Oakmoor, Fenton, MO 63126, USA) *(*a good piece about Sanger's and Wombwell's menageries, as background to 'The Veiled Lodger'; however, the meat this time is in the 50-page supplement entitled* ***Romancing the Hound****, containing articles by Pat Accardo, Don Hobbs, Catherine Cooke, Peter Blau, Julie McKuras, Peter Wood, Peter Liddell and others*)*

The Camden House Journal, August 2001 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, P.O. Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA) *(*interesting surveys of aspects of 'The Missing Three-Quarter' by Samuel Smith and Raymond L. Holly*).* ***3 Pipe Problem Plugs and Dottles***, July/August 2001 (**The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem** (Gael Stahl, 1763 Needmore Road, Old Hickory, TN 37138, USA) *(*reports on meetings, including a séance for Arthur Conan Doyle on his birthday, a review of David Hammer's memoirs, and a fair collection of snippets*).*

Communication, Special Summer Issue 2001 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Jeff & Wanda Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 31698, USA) *(*one of the PpoF's occasional spoof issues, and nicely produced as always, with a neat little story and great ads for Professor Presbury's Bed & Breakfast, Clay Airlines and the like*).* ***The Passengers' Log***, Autumn & Winter Issue (**The Sydney Passengers**, Rosane McNamara, 4/2a Merlin Street, Neutral Bay, NSW 2089, Australia) *(*the Sherlock Holmes Society of London put Dr Watson on trial — the Sydney Passengers did the same to Sherlock Holmes, and you'll be relieved to know that the verdict was Not Guilty; there are also grand pieces about* ***The Sign of the Four,*** *by Chris Sequeira, and about the unpublished* ***Angels of Darkness****, by Hugo Koch — and a whole lot more; Phil Cornell's illustrations, as always, are wonderful*).*

Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press, July 2001 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA) *(*the original Sherlock Holmes newsletter*).*

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON
Roger Johnson, Mole End, 41 Sandford Road, Chelmsford CM2 6DE
e-mail: roger_johnson@hotmail.com

no. 215 13th October 2001

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £6.00 or US$13.00 for 12 issues. Dollar checks should be payable to Jean Upton. Dollar prices quoted without qualification refer to US dollars. 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.

Michael Doyle alerts me to the death last month aged 93 of **William Ricker**, both a leading fisheries scientist and a major Canadian Sherlockian, remembered for his prize-winning paper 'The Absent Corpse Mystery Solved, or Professor Moriarty in the Yukon'.

Three of M.J. Trow's Sholto Lestrade novels are out in paperback - and not before time! *Lestrade and the Sawdust Ring, Lestrade and the Ripper* and *Lestrade and the Sign of Nine* are each priced at £9.99 from Ian Henry (20 Park Drive, Romford RM1 4LH). The series has gone well beyond Sherlockian parody now and can be enjoyed as an achievement in its own right. *Lestrade and the Sawdust Ring* exemplifies the dazzling mixture of wit, slapstick, excitement and ingenuity. Mr Trow knows his history and he knows just how to subvert it. We start with Benjamin Disraeli and the Duke of Cambridge discussing, if that's the word, the Zulu wars and Britain's responsibility for the Prince Imperial. We progress to a dead body on the Yorkshire moors. Can Detective Sergeant Lestrade be sure it isn't the elusive French prince? And how do the nasty events at Lord George Sanger's circus fit into the case? I'd love to see Trow and Lestrade win the Sherlock Award for the best comic detective series.

Romancing the Hound, the collection of essays by Don Hobbs, Pasquale Accardo, Peter Blau, Catherine Cooke, Julie McKuras, Peter Wood and others, published by **The Parallel Case of St Louis**, was issued in an edition of 100 copies, of which an unspecified number are available at $10.00 postpaid. Send checks to Joe Eckrich at 914 Oakmoor Drive, Fenton, MO 63126, USA (e-mail jeckrich@earthlink.net).

Here are details, taken from Amazon.com, of more new and forthcoming books. *Sherlock Holmes and the Running Noose* by Donald Thomas (Macmillan London Ltd, 20 New Wharf Road, London N1 9RR; August; £16.99). *Murder in Baker Street: New Tales of Sherlock Holmes* edited by Martin H. Greenberg, Jon L. Lellenberg & Daniel Stashower (Carroll & Graf, c/o HI Marketing Ltd, 38 Carver Road, London SE24 9LT; 10 October; £17.06). *Chapel Noir: An Irene Adler Novel* by Carole Nelson Douglas (Forge, c/o Melia Publishing Services Ltd, PO Box 1639, Maidenhead, Berks. SL6 6YZ; October; £18.05).

Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Alliance, the latest novel by Larry Millett (Viking, Penguin Books Ltd, 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL; 11 October; £16.66). *Night Watch: A Long-Lost Adventure in which Sherlock Holmes Meets Father Brown* by Stephen Kendrick (Pantheon Books, c/o Kuperard [London] Ltd, 311 Ballards Lane, London N12 8LY; 13 November; £16.00). *Sherlock Holmes on Screen: The Complete Film and TV History* by Alan Barnes (Reynolds & Hearn Ltd, 61A Priory Road, Kew Gardens, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3DH; 26 November; £14.95) *(*publication was postponed from August*). Sherlock Holmes and the Giant Rat of Sumatra* by Alan Vanneman (Carroll & Graf, c/o HI Marketing Ltd, 38 Carver Road, London SE24 9LT; December; £16.27).

Shelwing Ltd (4 Pleydell Gardens, Folkestone, Kent CT20 2DN) have sent their latest catalogues of Scarecrow Press and McFarland publications, which include several valuable Sherlockian reference books. Look out for *Terence Fisher: Horror, Myth and Religion* by Paul Leggett (McFarland; March 2002; £30.40) and, despite its non-Sherlockian subject, *Ronald Colman, Gentleman of the Cinema* by R. Dixon Smith (McFarland; January 2002; £19.00).

Catalogue 92 from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (22 & 25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; e-mail nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk) includes the 1960 BSI/SHSL *Beeton's* facsimile priced at £425.

Serious book collectors should consider R.B. Russell's *Guide to First Edition Prices, 2002/3* (Tartarus Press, Coverley House, Carlton, Leyburn, North Yorks. DL8 4AY; November; £14.99 postpaid). Previous editions are very highly regarded.

Recently released by Naxos AudioBooks (18 High Street, Welwyn, Herts. AL6 9EQ) is an abridgement of Hesketh Pearson's *Arthur Conan Doyle: A Life*, very engagingly read by Tim Pigott-Smith. Pearson was the archetype of the popular biographer — his subjects included Shaw, Shakespeare, Wilde, Disraeli and Tom Paine — and he had a talent for bringing them to life. But he always insisted on his right to tell the truth as he saw it, and this was the reason for the notorious falling-out with Adrian Conan Doyle, who first supported and then vilified Pearson's life of his father. Listening to Mr Pigott-Smith's mellow reading it's easy to see why Adrian objected. His fanatical devotion would never have allowed him to accept Pearson's portrait of Sir Arthur as a spiritually undeveloped and simple thinker. Personally I think Pearson strains too hard to present Conan Doyle as 'the man in the street', just as Adrian strained too hard to present him as a paragon of all the virtues, but when it comes to biography Pearson wins hands down. The reading is, as always with Naxos, enhanced by appropriate music, in this case from Dvorak, Grieg and Smetana. It's available on two CDs or two cassettes and can be highly recommended in either format.

Something to look forward to: due from Naxos AudioBooks in February is an unabridged reading by the excellent David Timson of *A Study in Scarlet*.

In issue 44 of *Sherlock Holmes: The Detective Magazine* David Stuart Davies interviews Ian Richardson and Charles Edwards, the stars of *Murder Rooms*; there's Jared Cade on *The ABC Murders*; Paul Chapman on the appeal of Sherlock Holmes; Chris Senior on *The Persuaders*; David Stuart Davies on more celluloid *Hounds*, Calum McLeod on Paul Johnston's futuristic novels and Gael Stahl on **The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem**; plus a *Murder Rooms* story adapted from *The Patient's Eyes* by David Pirie, and contributions from Roger Forsdyke, John Hall, Pat Ward, Mike Ripley, me and Moriarty. 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).

Look out also for *The Strand Magazine* (PO Box 1418, Birmingham, MI 48012-1418, USA) which strikes an admirable balance between homage to its glorious original and celebration of today's best talents. Check the website at www.strandmag.com.

Here's some really exciting news! We've known for some time that four films from the 1968 Peter Cushing/Nigel Stock series survive in the BBC archives, but the Beeb has been terribly keen not to let anyone see them. Now it emerges that there's fifth, *A Study in Scarlet*, to add to *The Blue Carbuncle, The Boscombe Valley Mystery, The Sign of Four* and the two-part *Hound of the Baskervilles*. And BBC Worldwide is considering releasing them on video through its subsidiary BBC Learning. If you're in favour, send suggestions (eg.

release in NTSC as well as PAL would be a good idea) or messages of support to Gavin Collinson at BBC Worldwide, Room A-3022, 80 Wood Lane, London W12 0TT; or e-mail him at gavin.collinson@bbc.co.uk. The first release, possibly later this year, is likely to be *A Study in Scarlet* and *The Blue Carbuncle* on one tape (and possibly on DVD as well).

There's a lot of Sherlock Holmes theatrical productions this year. Our member Carolyne Bevan will direct King's Langley Players in Brian Clemens' play *Holmes and the Ripper* on 1, 2 & 3 November at **King's Langley Community Centre**. Tickets are £6.00 (concessions £5.00) from 01923 263205.

Dramatis Personae will put on a new stage version of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, claimed to be the most faithful yet, by Nick Scovell, with our member Rob Thrush as Holmes. The play will be at the **New Theatre Royal,** Portsmouth, from 7 to 10 November (tickets £7.50 or £6.50 from 023 9264 9000). On 6 November there'll be a preview performance following an illustrated talk on board HMS *Warrior* by Philip Weller. Get details from the theatre. The play will be at the **Phoenix Theatre,** Bordon on 23 November (01420 472664); the **Theatre Royal,** Margate on 30 November & 1 December (01843 293877); and the **Central Studios,** Queen Mary's College, Basingstoke on 7 December (01256 418318).

On 28, 29 & 30 November, Exit Stage Left will produce Tim Kelly's adaptation of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* at the **Braithwaite Hall, Croydon Clock Tower.** Tickets are £6.00, but Sherlock Holmes Society of London members can get in at the concessionary rate of £4.00 on the opening night if they show proof of membership at the box office.

Roger Llewellyn's success touring with *Sherlock Holmes — The Last Act!* continues. On 9 November he'll be at **Theatr Hafren** in Newtown, Powys; from 21 to 24 November at **Wimbledon Theatre** Studio; and from 26 November to 3 December in **Antibes**!

Meanwhile Paul Lehmann is touring with two one-man plays: *Dickens' Ghosts* and *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. The latter, being 'The Blue Carbuncle' and 'The Engineer's Thumb', will be at the **Rhodes Centre** in Bishop's Stortford on 27 October; **The Maltings**, Berwick upon Tweed, on 8 December; and **The Maltings Arts Centre**, St Alban's, on 14 December. The productions come highly recommended, and Mr Lehmann is open for bookings. Contact him at footloose@paullehmann.co.uk or 07801 755 157.

Finally, for the moment, you can see an adaptation of Conan Doyle's spooky tale *Lot 249* staged by Anyone Can Play at **Portsmouth Arts Centre** from 31 October to 3 November. Tickets at £5.00 or £4.00 are available from 012 9283 7373.

A 1968 Canadian Broadcasting Corporation production of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* has been released on cassette by Scenario Productions at $18.99 (US and Canadian). I don't have an address, but there's a website at www.scenarioproductions.com and you can e-mail them at info@scenarioproductions.com.

Bart Bechtel, a former member of our Society, is now manager of a rather unusual company called SpyCruise, which offers cruises, in March and April next year, in the company of former intelligence agents. SpyCruise is a new project from the Centre for Counterintelligence & Security Studies of Alexandria, VA. For more information contact Cindy Kwitchoff at ci@cicentre.com.

Essex Police's bloodhounds, Sherlock and Morse, are off active duty while their performance is evaluated. A spokesman said, 'No decision has been made yet, but their future role is certainly under scrutiny.'

A wristwatch with portraits of Holmes & Watson by Kerstin Paxton is available from Omnibus Enterprises Ltd at $25.00 plus $5.00 postage. Bill Paxton's book *The Hidden Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* is available through stores, but there's a limited period special offer of book and watch for $45.00 postpaid from Omnibus (12907 E. 36th Terr, Independence, MO 64055, USA; e-mail WPaxton159@aol.com).

Chuck Kovacic's stunning full-scale re-creation of the Baker Street sitting-room is well worth a visit. Take a virtual tour at www.221bbakerstreetla.com.

A Mexican Sherlockian asks whether there's someone who'd like to correspond with him about Sherlock Holmes. He's very enthusiastic and writes reasonably good English, which he's keen to improve through correspondence. Please contact Catherine Cooke on 020 7641 1206 or c.cooke@dial.pipex.com.

Our Society's next meeting will be a *Hound of the Baskervilles* evening at the Savage Club on 17 October. The biggest celebration of *The Hound* will be the 'Footprints of the Hound' symposium in Toronto, from 19 to 21 October, with a constellation of speakers (details from 10 Pinetree Crescent, Brampton, Ontario, Canada L6W 1C8). On 20 October **The Priory Scholars** will study 'The Three Students' (Horace Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY), and **The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem** will discuss 'The Abbey Grange' (Gael Stahl, 1763 Needmore Road, Old Hickory, TN 37138, USA). On 27 October **The Illustrious Clients'** will discuss *The Hound* (Steven T. Doyle, 540 W. Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA), and **The Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn** will look at 'Shoscombe Old Place' (Michael E. Bragg, Box 799, St Charles, MO 63302-0799, USA).

On 2 November, at the British Film Institute **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company** will watch the 1921 silent *Hound of the Baskervilles*, starring Eille Norwood, and the talkie of ten years later, with Robert Rendell (6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO 14 3RU). Next day **The Friends of Dr Watson** will explore a part of Watson's London and then take their Annual Dinner (Richard Stacpoole-Ryding, 14 Western Close, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 4SZ). The weekend meeting of **The Jeremy Brett Society of France** at Aix-en-Provence on 2, 3 & 4 November will be dedicated to Jeremy Paul's play *The Secret of Sherlock Holmes*, though there'll be much else on the programme (JBSF, rés, Le clos de l'Arc, entrée 5, av. Gaston Berger, 13090 Aix-en-Provence, France; e-mail JBSF.com@wanadoo.fr).

Steve Duke of **The Sherlock Holmes Society of Victoria** (The Elementary Victorians) says Sherlockians in the northern hemisphere *(*not DM readers, evidently*)* have been whingeing that their Australian brethren seem to be doing nothing for the Hound's Hundredth. We know of the 'Dog, Fog & Bog' celebration by **The Sydney Passengers**, and Steve says that the Victorians have something in the pipeline. They are also hoping to arrange some collaboration with **The Sherlock Holmes Society of Melbourne** and **The Antipodean Holmesian Society** in New Zealand. Sherlockians visiting Oz should contact Steve at PO Box 340, Reservoir 3073, Australia (e-mail stirlingsteve@netscape.net).

Periodicals received. ***The Baker Street Journal***, summer 2001 (**The Baker Street Irregulars**, Michael Whelan, 7938 Mill Stream Circle, Indianapolis, IN 46278, USA; subscriptions to ***The BSJ***, PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA). ***The Camden House Journal***, September and October 2001 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). ***The Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections***, September 2001 (The Sherlock Holmes Collections, Suite 111, Elmer L. Anderson Library, University of Minnesota, 222 21st Ave S., Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA). ***Morning Echo***, no date, (**The Sherlock Holmes Society of Victoria**, Steve Duke, PO Box 340, Reservoir 3073, Australia). ***The Friends of Dr Watson 5th Birthday Annual*** and ***Practice Notes***, September 2001 (**The Friends of Dr Watson**, Richard Stacpoole-Ryding, 14 Western Close, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 4SZ). ***The Tin Box***, January 2001 *(*sic*)* and ***Exhibit 'A': The Magazine of The Friends of Newton Street, Greater Manchester Police Museum***, May 2000 - April 2001 (Barbara & Terry Harding, Riverbank, 2 Bohemia Cottages, Stalybridge, Cheshire SK15 1JY). ***The Illustrious Clients News***, September 2001 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T. Doyle, 540 W. Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA), ***The Whaling News***, July, August and September 2001 (**The Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn**, Michael E. Bragg, Box 799, St Charles, MO 63302-0799, USA). ***3 Pipe Problem Plugs and Dottles***, September/October 2001 (**The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem**, Gael Stahl, 1763 Needmore Road, Old Hickory, TN 37138, USA). ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, September 2001 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA; pblau@dgsys.com).

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON
Roger Johnson, Mole End, 41 Sandford Road, Chelmsford CM2 6DE
e-mail: roger_johnson@hotmail.com

no. 216 11th November 2001

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £6.00 or US$13.00 for 12 issues. Dollar checks should be payable to Jean Upton. Dollar prices quoted without qualification refer to US dollars. 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 that **Herbert Ross** died on 9 October. His contribution to our field was the uneven but enjoyable 1976 film *The Seven-per-Cent Solution*, which Ross produced and directed.

I'm sorry to have to report the death of **Morse**, who with his fellow bloodhound Sherlock, was recently taken off duty with Essex Police while their performance was evaluated. Morse had to be put down after suffering severely with a twisted gut. Sherlock, as far as I know, is alive and well.

Just in time for Christmas I can offer the script of my well received drama-documentary *The Great Detective: The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*, as a 48-page booklet from the Pyewacket Press (Mole End, 41 Sandford Road, Chelmsford CM2 6DE), illustrated with a couple of photos from the Chelmsford Theatre Workshop production. The cost is £4.00 or $8.00, post-paid (airmail outside the UK). Sterling cheques should be payable to me and US dollar checks payable to Jean Upton.

Due on 23 November from Quotable Books (Windsor Books International, The Boundary, Wheatley Road, Garsington, Oxford OX44 9EJ) is *Quotable Sherlock*, compiled and edited by David W. Barber, a strong and handsome 118-page paperback retailing at £7.95. The editor has chosen his quotations judiciously and arranged them under appropriate headings – mostly the words are spoken by or about Holmes himself, of course, but I think Mr Barber may have picked up a few pointed passages that escaped Bruce Beaman in his out-of-print *Sherlock Holmes Book of Quotations*. I can see that this will be a very useful reference tool.

This year's *Baker Street Journal* Christmas Annual promises to be an extraordinarily interesting monograph: *On the Shoulders of Giants — Jack Tracy and the Encyclopaedia Sherlockiana* by Christopher & Barbara Roden. The story of one of the most important reference works in our field is told mostly through its creator's own letters. The Annual will be printed only in a number sufficient to satisfy those who order before 1 December, and prices, including postage, are: (within USA) $11.00, payable by check only; (elsewhere) $12.00, by check, Visa or Mastercard. Send orders to *The Baker Street Journal*, PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA.

Recently published by Berkley Prime Crime (Penguin Putnam, 375 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014, USA) at $22.95 is *The True Crime Files of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle*, edited by Stephen Hines and Steven Womack. The editors have gone back to ACD's letters to the press, his rare books *The Case of George Edalji* and *The Case of Oscar Slater*, and the trial transcripts and other contemporary writings, with much background detail.

Other new and forthcoming books. This month Penguin (80 The Strand, London WC2R 0RL) publish a film tie-in edition of *The Lost World* at £5.99. *The Moor*, which sees the return of the phantom hound to Dartmoor, is the latest adventure of Sherlock Holmes and Mary Russell by Laurie R. King (HarperCollins, 77-85 Fulham Palace Road, London W6 8JB; December; £16.99). For December, the House of Stratus (Lumley Close, Thirsk Industrial Park, York Road, Thirsk, North Yorks. YO7 3BX) plans paperbacks of the Holmes Canon as well as *The Lost World*, *The Surgeon of Gaster Fell*, *The Mystery of Cloomber*, *The Doings of Raffles Haw*, *The Parasite*, *The Exploits of Brigadier Gerard*, *Round the Fire Stories*, *The Last Galley* and *The Poison Belt*. In December also Wordsworth Classics (Cumberland House, Crib Street, Ware, Herts. SG12 9ET) will publish *A Study in Scarlet* and *The Sign of Four* in one paperback at £1.00.

MC Black notes that **Bibliophile Books** (5 Thomas Road, London E14 7BN) offer *Sherlock Holmes: The Complete Illustrated Long Stories* and *Sherlock Holmes: The Complete Illustrated Short Stories* at £7.50 each – they were originally £12.99 each. If you place an order or ask for a free catalogue, please quote reference 1045.

Catalogue 93 from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (22 & 25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; e-mail nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk) has the first US edition of *The Valley of Fear* without dustwrapper at £295.00.

I have four spare copies each of two exceptionally interesting monographs by Hugo Koch. *'Mr Holmes, They Were the Footprints of a Gigantic Fox': Middleton and the Genesis of the Baskerville Plot in the Mind of Stapleton* and *'The Martyrdom of Man' and 'The Sign of the Four': Edward Horace Man, Richard Temple, Augustus H. Keane and Edwin W. Streeter — A Prolegomenon to Previously Suppressed Facts behind SIGN and the Quest for the Great Mogul Diamond* are rather crudely printed and presented, but quite fascinating contributions to the scholarship of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and *The Sign of Four*. They're free to the first enquirers within the UK.

From Peter Blau, a report of a new comic book, *Sherlock Holmes and the Clown Prince of London*, written by Joe Gentile and illustrated by Rich Gulick (Moonstone, 582 Torrence Avenue, Calumet City, IL 60409, USA; $2.95). The website's at www.moonstonebooks.com. And something even odder-sounding: *Sherlock Holmes: The Adventure of the Dead Rabbits Society: The Lost Reminiscence of John H. Watson, MD* by Philip J. Carraher (1stBooks Library, 2595 Vernal Pike, Bloomington, IN 47404, USA). The website is at www.1stbooks.com.

In issue 45 of *Sherlock Holmes: The Detective Magazine* David Stuart Davies remembers Jeremy Brett, whom he got to know better than most during the filming of the Granada TV series; there's Jared Cade on Agatha Christie's *Curtain*; Paul Chapman on Nicholas Freeling's Van der Valk books; Cristian Matthews on Inspector Rebus; David Stuart Davies on *1994 Baker Street: Sherlock Holmes Returns*, a TV movie that even Anthony Higgins couldn't save from being confusing and dull *(*David, for some reason, likes it*)*; Calum McLeod on the crime novels of Martyn Waites and Andrea Badenoch; and Bill Barnes on **The Hounds of the Internet**; plus a new Harry Devlin story by Martin Edwards, and contributions from Roger Forsdyke, John Hall, Pat Ward, Mike Ripley, me and Moriarty. 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).

Bert Coules passes on the exciting news that *The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* has been recorded from Bert's scripts for broadcast by BBC Radio 4 in January and February 2002. Holmes, as in the rightly applauded Canonical series, is played by Clive

Merrison, and his new Watson, replacing the much-missed Michael Williams, is Andrew Sachs. He's best known as Manuel in *Fawlty Towers*, but connoisseurs know him as a splendid actor in all media; he played the King of Bohemia in the first short story in the Radio 4 complete Canon back in 1990, and he was a memorable Father Brown before that. The five stories in this first series are *The Peculiar Persecution of Mr John Vincent Harden; The Star of the Adelphi; The Singular Inheritance of Miss Gloria Wilson; The Saviour of Cripplegate Square* and *The Madness of Colonel Warburton* — all derived from Watson's hints of 'unrecorded cases'. Guest stars in the series include Jane Asher, Tom Baker, Eleanor Bron, Roy Hudd, Siobhan Redmond, Timothy West and Toyah Wilcox. Bert adds that BBC Worldwide will release four of the plays on cassette.

Peter Blau notes that Daniel Stashower's *Teller of Tales: The Life of Arthur Conan Doyle* is available as an unabridged reading by Richard Matthews on 11 90-minute cassettes for $66.00 from Books on Tape, Box 7900, Newport Beach, CA 92658, USA.

Talking of such things, IMC Vision has recently released the whole *Murder Rooms* series (*The Patient's Eyes; The Photographer's Chair; The Kingdom of Bones* and *The White Knight Stratagem*) on video at £12.99 each episode or £34.99 for the boxed set. Ian Richardson, of course, is mesmeric as Dr Bell. I'll review them in the next DM.

You can buy 'a high quality signed reproduction' of Trish Prehn's painting *221B Baker Street, London*, measuring 18" x 14½", from Trish Prehn Art Co., 312B West 34th Street, Austin, TX 78705, USA. The cost is $67.00 within the USA or $70.00 to destinations outside. E-mail for details at trishart@swbell.net.

A reminder of some current stage productions. On 28, 29 & 30 November, **Exit Stage Left** will produce Tim Kelly's adaptation of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* at the Braithwaite Hall, Croydon Clock Tower. Tickets are £6.00, but Sherlock Holmes Society of London members can get in at the concessionary rate of £4.00 on the opening night if they show proof of membership at the box office.

From 21 to 24 November **Roger Llewellyn** will perform David Stuart Davies's play *Sherlock Holmes — The Last Act!* at Wimbledon Theatre Studio. Paul Lehmann is touring with *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* ('The Blue Carbuncle' and 'The Engineer's Thumb'); he'll be at The Maltings, Berwick upon Tweed, on 8 December; and The Maltings Arts Centre, St Alban's, on 14 December. Mr Lehmann is open for bookings. Contact him at <footloose@paullehmann.co.uk> or 07801 755 157.

Bits and Pieces (UK) Ltd (Fortuna House, Manchester M5 4JD) offer a couple of 550-piece jigsaw puzzles, *The Watson Inheritance* and *The Case of the Fallen Actress*, priced at £7.95 each or available as a pair at £11.95.

The Norwood Building Inspectors sell a Sherlock Holmes calendar for the year 2002. It measures 8½ by 11 inches, and covers two days per page. You can order a copy for $16.00 from **The Sherlock Holmes Society of Charleston**, 305 Highland Avenue, South Charleston, WV 25303, USA.

Issue 6 of *The Strand Magazine* maintains the standard of its predecessors. The fiction includes a good new Sherlock Holmes story by David Ellis, and a not-quite-Holmes-story by Harry Keating, called 'Wistaria Lodge'. Mike Ripley looks at Margery Allingham's enigmatic sleuth Albert Campion. Paul Begg goes 'On the Trail of Jack the Ripper'. And Andrew Gulli conducts a fascinating interview with Christopher Lee. The magazine is published quarterly, and a subscription costs $24.95 in the US and Canada, or $35.95 elsewhere. The address is *The Strand Magazine*, PO Box 1418, Birmingham, MI 48012-1418, USA (e-mail strandmag@worldnet.att.net). There's a website at www.strandmag.com.

The subject of the 2002 Dr John H. Watson Prize Essay Competition is 'Dr Watson's contribution to *The Hound of the Baskervilles*', which must surely get the ink flowing. Richard Stacpoole-Ryding of **The Friends of Dr Watson** has details at 14 Western Close, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 4SZ.

Friends of Francine Swift BSI will be interested to know that her new puppy has been registered with the American Kennel Club in the name of 'Corgi Glen's Hatty Doran'.

The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem will meet on 17 November, to discuss 'The Devil's Foot'. Get more information from Gael Stahl, 1763 Needmore Road, Old Hickory, TN 37138, USA. Our Society's next meeting will be the Annual Film Evening on 23 November at the Museum of London, at which David Stuart Davies will present the 1921 silent version of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (with piano accompaniment) and the Pathé Gazette film of the 1968 Swiss Pilgrimage. That same evening will see the Film Night of **The Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn** (get details from Michael E. Bragg, Box 799, St Charles, MO 63302-0799, USA). The Harpooners have now completed the Canon twice and will begin on the apocrypha and other associated writings next year!

The Illustrious Clients will meet on 1 December to discuss 'The Missing Three-Quarter' over dinner. Get details from Steven T. Doyle, 540 W. Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA. On 2 December **The Sydney Passengers** will look at 'The Noble Bachelor'. Bill Barnes has the gen at 19 Malvern Avenue, Manly, NSW 2095, Australia (e-mail bbarnes@ozemail.com.au). Our Society's next informal Club Night for members, prospective members and friends will be held at the New Commonwealth Club in Northumberland Avenue (not far from the Sherlock Holmes pub) on Friday 7 December. Just turn up any time between 6 and 9 pm and pay for whatever you eat and drink. There'll be another Club Night on the eve of the Annual Dinner — that's Friday 4 January. If you have any questions, contact MC Black on 01920 467930, or e-mail mc.black@physics.org. The joint AGM and Christmas Social of **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company** and **The Priory Scholars** will take place in Leicester on 9December. 'This is mostly a seasonal fun event (plus a little scholarship).' Contact the FMHC at 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU; or the Priory Scholars c/o Horace Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY. **The Red Circle** will hold a Lodge at the National Press Club, Washington, DC, on 14 December. The topic will be 'The Blue Carbuncle'. Get details from Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA; pblau@dgsys.com.

Looking ahead a bit, the Distinguished Speaker Lecture of **The Baker Street Irregulars** will be given on Thursday 10 January at the Williams Club, 24 East 39th Street, New York — and the speaker will be our own Bert Coules. Tickets are $10.00, from Michael Whelan, whose address is in the next paragraph.

In the last DM I gave information about ***The Baker Street Journal*** (**The Baker Street Irregulars**, Michael Whelan, 7938 Mill Stream Circle, Indianapolis, IN 46278, USA; subscriptions to ***The BSJ***, PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA). It's accurate as far as it goes, but the editor of the BSJ is Steve Rothman, 220, West Rittenhouse Square, #15-D, Philadelphia, PA 19103, USA.

Periodicals received. ***The Illustrious Clients News***, October 2001 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T. Doyle, 540 W. Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). ***The Torr***, Autumn 2001 (**The Poor Folk Upon The Moors**, Eric Monahan, Highcliff, 14 Silver Bridge Close, Broadsands Park, Paignton, Devon TQ4 7NW). ***Morning Echo*** *(*undated*)* (**The Sherlock Holmes Society of Victoria**, Steve Duke, PO Box 340, Reservoir 3073, Australia; e-mail <stirlingsteve@netscape.net>). ***The Serpentine Muse***, Fall 2001 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 360 West 21st Street, #5A, New York, NY 10011, USA). ***The Parallelogram***, November 2001 (**The Parallel Case of St Louis**, Joseph J. Eckrich, 914 Oakmoor Drive, Fenton, MO 63126, USA). ***Communication***, July/August 2001, September/ October 2001, and 'Special Halloween Issue' (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Jeff & Wanda Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA) *(*yes, that's three separate issues*).* ***The Antipodean Holmesian Society Newsletter***, August 2001, September 2001, and October 2001 (**The Antipodean Holmesian Society**, Ted Nye, 51 Irvine Road, The Cove, Dunedin, New Zealand) *(*so is this*).* ***SSHF***, no. 10 - 2001, and no. 11 - 2001 (**La Société Sherlock Holmes de France**, 26 avenue de la République, 75011 Paris, France).

And the invaluable newsletter, ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, October 2001 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA.

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON
Roger Johnson, Mole End, 41 Sandford Road, Chelmsford CM2 6DE
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no. 217 7th December 2001

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £6.00 or US$13.00 for 12 issues. Dollar checks should be payable to Jean Upton. Dollar prices quoted without qualification refer to US dollars. 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.

From *CADS 40* I learn of the deaths this year of two fine British actors. **Norman Rodway** was Dr Watson to Ronald Pickup's Holmes in Cecil Jenkins' 1990 BBC Radio 3 play *The Singular Case of Sherlock H and Sigmund F*. **Paul Daneman** played Watson in Gillette's play at the old Birmingham Rep in 1952, to Alfred Burke's Holmes; in 1968 he was the Sholto brothers in BBC TV's production of *The Sign of Four* with Peter Cushing and Nigel Stock. Richard Dalby notes the death on 31 October of **Jenny Laird**, whose long acting career included playing Mrs Hudson in *The Masks of Death* (1984), with Cushing and John Mills.

Barrie Roberts is one of the most reliable writers of new Sherlock Holmes stories, so I'm delighted to see his first novel *Sherlock Holmes and the Railway Maniac* newly reissued in an attractive paperback edition by Allison & Busby (Suite 111, Bon Marche Centre, 241 Ferndale Road, London SW9 BJ; £6.99). He captures the Watson-Doyle style better than most, and he knows his Canon and his history. It's astonishing that no one else seems to have thought of having Holmes investigate the anarchist outrages that culminated in the siege of Sidney Street in 1912. *Sherlock Holmes and the Railway Maniac* is an engrossing and intelligent read. I look forward to seeing the rest of Barrie Roberts' books in paperback.

Also from Allison & Busby, but in hardcover at £17.99, is *The Secret Diary of Dr Watson* by Anita Janda. It's not a new idea to present the uncensored truth behind the published writings, but other writers have used it to parody the Canon; Ms Janda gives us a generally plausible and always entertaining account of what *really* happened in those cases of the Severed Ears, the Phantom Hound, Black Jack of Ballarat and the rest. In addition she gives us a self-portrait of an intelligent, thoughtful, courageous and very likable man. It's right that Watson's name should be in the title: *The Secret Diary of Dr Watson* is his story, not Holmes's, and the better for it. I wonder if Ms Janda will be tempted to continue the diary . . . I almost hope not.

Just published at £8.99 by the Mercat Press (53 South Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1YS) is *McLevy: The Edinburgh Detective* by James McLevy. The splendid cover photograph of Edinburgh in the 1890s gives a slightly false impression, but it's the only wrong thing about this excellent book. McLevy, an Irishman with no love for the English, entered the city's police force in 1830, became a detective three years later, and wrote these memoirs in the 1850s. Quintin Jardine, who has written a foreword to this new edition, observes: 'McLevy was clearly a one-off, a character who would have trouble fitting into a modern police force, yet whose perception and knowledge of his streets and his subjects would have made him too valuable to be excluded from it.' This welcome new edition of his writings shows us the city into which Arthur Conan Doyle would be born in 1859 — but that's a bonus. *McLevy: The Edinburgh Detective* is a cracking good read.

Volume 11 of *The Shoso-in Bulletin* sums up the international nature of our great game, boasting as it does contributors from Japan, the USA, the UK, the Czech Republic, France, Denmark, Taiwan, Switzerland, Brazil, Canada, Belgium, Russia, Italy and Spain! The names of John Hall, Hirayama Yuichi, Carolyn & Joel Senter, Stu Shiffman, Sébastien Le Page, Mia Stampe, Jean-Pierre Cagnat and Wladimir Bogomoletz alone should have the Sherlockian grinning happily. This latest addition to a distinguished series can be had for £9.00 post-paid from John Hall (20 Drury Avenue, Horsforth, LeedsLS18 4BR), or for $12.00 plus postage from Classic Specialties (PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA).

Watson's Weapons — For and Against by Dr Tim Healey is the latest publication of the Friends of Dr Watson. If you want to know what life was like for the British army medico in Afghanistan 120 years ago, it's all here. This 44-page A4 booklet costs £7.00 or $14.00 to non-members (sterling cheques payable to Richard J. Stacpoole-Ryding; US dollars in cash, please), from Richard Stacpoole-Ryding, 14 Western Close, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 4SZ.

Over the years various pranksters have devised comic captions for Victorian illustrations, most of them genuinely funny, thank heaven. Eric Monahan's new 40-page booklet *Sherlock Holmes Illustrated, with Alternative Captions* stands up well, and would make a nice silly Christmas present — for a friend or for yourself. You can buy copies post-paid at £4.70 or $8.95 from Highcliff, 14 Silver Bridge Close, Broadsands Park, Paignton, Devon TQ4 7NW.

Eric tells me that *Sayers on Holmes: Essays and Fiction on Sherlock Holmes*, published by the Mythopoeic Society (Joan Marie Verba, PO Box 1363, Minnetonka, MN 55346, USA) at $9.50, is in stock at Crime In Store (14 Bedford Street, London WC2E 9HE) at £8.99.

On Thursday 13 December there'll be a sale of 'valuable printed books and manuscripts' at **Sotheby's** (34-35 New Bond Street, London W1A 2AA; phone 020 7293 5000), which will include various works by Arthur Conan Doyle as well as items from his library (among them Bram Stoker's *The Mystery of the Sea* inscribed to Sir Arthur 'from his old friend' the author), and several watercolours by Richard Doyle. These lots are 'the property of a great nephew of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle'. *(*Any prizes for guessing which one?*)* Viewing is on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Well worth a visit, I'd say.

There are new catalogues available from **Janus Books** (PO Box 40787, Tucson, AZ 85717, USA) and **Classic Specialties** (PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA) — both with a good amount of Sherlockiana. Classic Specialties carry a lot besides books, of course.

CADS 40 is, as always with this splendid magazine, full of stimulating and entertaining articles about Crime And Detective Stories. Nothing specifically Sherlockian this time, but *CADS* is a must if you're at all interested in the field. The price is: UK £5.00; Europe £5.50; USA (airmail) $10.00, (surface) $9.00. Sterling cheques should be payable to G.H. Bradley; US payments should be in dollar bills. (Geoff Bradley, 9 Vicarage Hill, South Benfleet, Essex SS7 1PA.)

Play the Game: Victorian and Edwardian Sporting Songs is a delicious CD of ditties on the subject of, well, just about every sport known to our great-grandparents — cycling, rugger, boating, golf, billiards, soccer ... and huntin', shootin' and fishin'. Arthur Conan Doyle is represented as the author of 'A Hunting Morning', from his 1898 book *Songs of Action*. Listening to Ian Partridge, Peter Savidge and the Song & Supper Club, with Jennifer Partridge on piano, is like attending a really good smoking concert at an Edwardian country house — gorgeous! The CD is available at major record stores or

direct from the publishers, Just Accord Music (PO Box 224, Tadworth, Surrey KT20 5YJ) at £9.99 post-paid.

The recent, very entertaining BBC TV drama series *Murder Rooms* is just out on video. I need hardly remind you that these fictional mysteries deal with the friendship between the young Arthur Conan Doyle and his mentor Dr Joseph Bell — recreating them, in effect, as Watson and Holmes. Charles Edwards (who was, astonishingly, allowed to play the part clean-shaven) is pleasant enough as Conan Doyle, but it's Ian Richardson who's the real star of these films. He is quite superb as Dr Bell — authoritative, coldly scientific, but humane. The plots, particularly of *The White Knight Stratagem*, are elegant and ingenious (though *The Patient's Eyes* does tend to give the impression that Conan Doyle must have been incapable of inventing a character or a situation, instead drawing everything from his own experience). The supporting casts are impressive — John Sessions, Rik Mayall, Annette Crosbie, Anton Lesser, et al. And by golly, the films look good. The four *Murder Rooms* videos — *The Patient's Eyes* (IMC390), *The Photographer's Chair* (IMC391), *The Kingdom of Bones* (IMC393) and *The White Knight Stratagem* (IMC394) — cost £12.99 each, or £34.99 for the boxed set. Quite a saving!

BBC Learning will shortly release three videos from the Beeb's archives: *The Picture of Dorian Gray* with Jeremy Brett, *Count Dracula* with Louis Jourdan, and — ta-da! — *The Hound of the Baskervilles* with Peter Cushing and Nigel Stock. These are intended for schools rather than home use, and it looks as if they'll be in PAL format only. There'll be quite small quantities, and they won't be as cheap as home videos, but individuals will be able to buy copies. The cost will be £19.99 per video, plus postage (in the UK) of £1.50 for one video and £2.50 for two or three. Or — a special offer — buy two of the three titles for £35.00 all in. You'll have to order direct from Video Offer, BBC Learning, Room A3022, 80 Wood Lane, London W12 0TT, and cheques or postal orders should be payable to BBC Worldwide. Or you can e-mail Gavin Collinson at gavin.collinson@bbc.co.uk with credit card details. If these releases are successful, it's probable that the rest of the 1968 Cushing series will follow, and perhaps more BBC Holmes.

Look out for *The Lost World* on BBC TV and *The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* on BBC Radio 4. *(*There's a lot of the BBC in this issue, isn't there?*)*

Real Victorian pantomime thrives at the famous Players' Theatre, under the Arches at Charing Cross — rhyming couplets, marvellous puns and all. This year's panto, running until 10 February, is *Aladdin, or The Wonderful Scamp*. The Players' is a club, but you don't have to be a member to attend the panto or the regular Late Joys music hall — and it's probably the best value of any West End theatre. Call the box office on 020 7839 1134.

The Players' has a very nice restaurant, but so has the *Sherlock Holmes*, which is just a couple of minutes' walk away in Northumberland Street. The pub does excellent beer as well, and of course it houses the memorabilia originally collected for the Sherlock Holmes Exhibition at Abbey House in 1951. The restaurant offers a grand view of Holmes and Watson's sitting-room, which has been decorated for Christmas (by Mrs Hudson, we presume). You can book lunch or dinner on 020 7930 2644 — or just call in for a drink.

Some more ideas for treating yourself (or a friend) this Christmas. To provide access to the material in the first 40 issues, the publisher has issued *Sherlock Holmes: The Detective Magazine — The Electronic Archive* on CD-ROM in a limited edition of 100 copies at just £39.99. Everything's there, pictures and all, in full colour. It's not perfect (the indexes list me more often than not as 'Robert Johnson'), but it is very easy to use, and very helpful. I think it's well worth the selling price. Order from the Admin. Dept, PO Box 100, Chichester, West Sussex PO18 8HD. **The Baker Street Irregulars** have issued a CD-ROM edition of the complete *Baker Street Journal* at $100.00 plus $10.00 postage outside the USA or $5.00 within the USA (Leslie Klinger at 2029 Century Park East, Suite 3290, Los Angeles, CA 90067, USA; e-mail lsklinger@home.com).

And Phil Attwell points out that Choices Direct (PO Box 190, Peterborough PE2 6UW; phone 01733 232800; e-mail orders@choicesdirect.co.uk) offer the complete BBC Radio *Sherlock Holmes*, with Clive Merrison & Michael Williams, as a boxed set of 36 cassettes with Bert Coules's book, at £112.50.

It must be the Silly Season. According to the Torquay Herald Express for 2 November, Rodger Garrick-Steele now accuses Arthur Conan Doyle of murdering Charles Dawson — to cover up his (ACD's) perpetration of the Piltdown hoax. What next — the invasion of Poland?

The Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn will talk about 'The Blue Carbuncle' after dinner on 15 December (Michael E. Bragg, Box 799, St Charles, MO 63302-0799, USA).

The Annual Dinner of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London will be held at the House of Commons on Saturday 5 January. The Guest of Honour will be the Commissioner of the City of London Police, Perry Nove, QPM. The previous evening there'll be a Club Night at the New Commonwealth Club in Northumberland Avenue, to which members, prospective members and their guests are welcome to turn up any time between 6.00 and 9.00 pm. On the day after the dinner there will be the now-traditional 'hair of the dog' get together at lunchtime, at the Royal Commonwealth Society.

The same day **The Illustrious Clients** will hold their Victorian Dinner in Indianapolis (details from Steven T. Doyle, 540 West Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA), and there'll be a joint meeting in Winchester of **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company** and **The Glades of the New Forest** to investigate the bibliography of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU). On 11 January, the Annual Dinner of **The Baker Street Irregulars** will take place in New York, as will the Baskerville Bash. Information about **The Baker Street Irregulars** can be had from Michael Whelan (7938 Mill Stream Circle, Indianapolis, IN 46278, USA). There's a web page for the Baskerville Bash at www.baskervillebash.org, or write to P.J. Perry (346 East 87th Street, #4-A, New York, NY 10128-4944, USA).

The Poor Folk Upon The Moors will enjoy their AGM and Annual Lunch at the *Globe Hotel*, Topsham on 26 January. David Stuart Davies will be guest speaker (details from Shirley Purves, Lea House, Couches Lane, Woodbury, Exeter EX5 1HL). On 3 February, **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company** and **The Baker Street Branch Lines** will meet in Salisbury to investigate the London & South-Western Railway route from London to Dartmoor (6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU). The birthday meeting of **The Northern Musgraves** will be held on 9 February, and among the topics for discussion will be *The Valley of Fear* (Anne Jordan, Fairbank, Beck Lane, Bingley, West Yorkshire BD16 4DN). At their dinner meeting on 16 February **The Illustrious Clients** will discuss 'The Abbey Grange' (Steven T. Doyle, 540 West Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA).

Periodicals received. ***The Formulary***, December 2001 (**The Friends of Dr Watson**, Brian Scrivener, 94 Reigate Avenue, Sutton, Surrey SM1 3JJ). ***The Camden House Journal***, November 2001 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). ***The Illustrious Clients News***, November 2001 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T. Doyle, 540 West Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). ***Communication***, November/December 2001 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Jeff & Wanda Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA). ***The School Report***, Winter Term 2001 (**The Priory Scholars**, Horace L. Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY).

And the invaluable newsletter ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, November 2001 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA).

I'll be taking a break now until around the end of January, so Jean and I wish everybody

THE COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON!

Roger Johnson