The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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A couple of days after sending out the last issue of the DM, I learned that our old friend **G W Welch** had died on 14 December. Active in our Society, which he joined more than half a century ago, in the Northern Musgraves, the Poor Folk Upon the Moors and the Franco-Midland Hardware Company, George Welch was a valued contributor to the literature of Sherlock Holmes, but he is likely to be best remembered, with a smile, for his polite good nature and his characterisation of Cardinal Tosca.

Lord Merlyn-Rees, who died on 5 January aged eighty-five, was a politician of integrity, summed up by the Daily Telegraph as 'Minister who handled the Northern Ireland Office with aplomb and became a stern but diligent Home Secretary.' As guest of honour at our Society's 1987 annual dinner he gave a witty and thought-provoking address.

At the annual dinner of **The Baker Street Irregulars** on 13 January, Shillings were awarded to: Richard M Olken ('Bob Carruthers'), Regina Stinson ('A Little Ribston Pippin'), Curtis Armstrong ('An Actor and a Rare One'), Paul Churchill ('Corot'), Jerry Kegley ('Nathan Garrideb'), Trevor S Raymond ('Horace Harker'), and Jennie C Paton ('Laura Lyons'). Last year Donald J Terras was invested as 'The Politician, the Lighthouse and the Trained Cormorant'. And the winner of the 2005 Morley-Montgomery Prize for the best contribution to *The Baker Street Journal* was Catherine Cooke. Congratulations to all!

In DM 257 I gave a brief review of *The League of Heroes*. From the same publisher comes *Tales of the Shadowmen: Gentlemen of the Night* edited by Jean-Marc and Randy Lofficier (Black Coat Press, Hollywood Comics.com, LLC, PO Box 17270, Encino, CA 91416, USA; £14.99 or $22.95), an anthology of new stories about old favourites from French, British and American popular fiction. The authors reflect this wonderful mixed heritage, including as they do Philippe Ward, Sylvie Miller, Kim Newman, Brian M Stableford, Rick Lai and Win Scott Eckert (that's not all of them, and in any case I shouldn't omit Jean-Louis Trudel from Canada). It's many decades since Maurice Leblanc decided to pit Arsène Lupin against Sherlock Holmes, and the years since then have seen many such matches. Batman has encountered Sherlock Holmes and Judge Dredd. At least four writers have had Holmes meet Count Dracula — one has even posited a blood relationship *[sic]*. And Philip Jose Farmer devised a complex and almost convincing connection between just about all the popular heroes you can think of, including of course Sherlock Holmes. Several of the authors represented in *Gentlemen of the Night* have consciously drawn on Farmer's 'Wold Newton Universe'. The range of sources represented in these stories is extraordinary. Besides Leblanc and Conan Doyle, you'll find the creations of Georges Simenon, Sax Rohmer, Gaston Leroux, Dashiell Hammett, Alexandre Dumas, Grant Allen, Jules Verne — and so the list goes on. The temporal settings generally range from the 1870s to the 1920s, though as at least one adventure involves H G Wells's Time Traveller, you'll appreciate that there are exceptions. Holmes is in there, of course, in a neat little tale called 'Be Seeing You!' by Xavier Mauméjean, which suggests an even more intriguing background to Patrick McGoohan's extraordinary 1960s television series *The Prisoner*. As always from Black Coat Press, the book is attractive and enticing, and these Tales of the Shadowmen are deliriously exciting. The publisher's website is at www.blackcoatpress.com.

(Due on 20 February is a restored print on DVD of the five-episode silent serial *Fantômas*, directed by Louis Feuillade. Special features include a documentary by Kim Newman, *Who Is Fantômas?* Play.com is offering the two-disc set at £23.99.)

The Secret Policeman by Rafe McGregor (Classic Mysteries) is not a Sherlock Holmes story. It's an authentic and gripping narrative of a murder investigation in 1990s South Africa. Superintendent Jack Forrester of the Durban Police is reluctant to take it on, because his Special Investigations Unit is already working on two top priority cases — and because the murdered man was a member of the Criminal Intelligence Service, the successor to the feared Security Branch of the apartheid era. His superiors give him no choice, and such information as he is allowed is severely restricted. The case involves him with terrorists, drug traffickers, Muslim vigilantes and all the dangers of that volatile time. Maybe it's because I've been watching the *Maigret* series on television, but *The Secret Policeman* seems to me to have some of the qualities of Simenon's short novels. It's exciting and thought-provoking. Worth a read. Check the website at www.lulu,com/classicmysteries.

Rafe McGregor is looking for contributors for an anthology of Sherlock Holmes pastiches to be published by Classic Mysteries. You can get information from him at classicmysteries@aol.com.

The Baker Street Journal Christmas Annual 2005 is a quite fascinating survey of a period of just over two years in the history of the Sherlock Holmes radio series in the United States. H Paul Jeffers, the author of *Once a Week in Baker Street: The Boucher-Green Years*, is also responsible for the recently published *The Forgotten Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, the second book of adaptations from the classic scripts by Anthony Boucher and Denis Green (Carroll & Graf, 245 West 17th Street, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10011, USA; $14.95). He grew up with the radio series and has made good use of the correspondence between to two writers, now held at the Lilly Library at Indiana University in Bloomington, and of the memories of many who took part in the shows, recorded by 221A Baker Street Associates as introductions to their commercial releases. *Once a Week in Baker Street* makes a good companion to *Edith Meiser and Her Adventures with Sherlock Holmes*, published by the Sherlock Holmes Collections at the University of Minnesota in 1999. It's available from The Baker Street Journal (PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA) post-paid for $11.00 (US orders) or $12.00 (international orders). You can buy it on-line at www.bakerstreetjournal.com.

Editions MacGuffin have published a new adventure of Hergé's famous comic-strip character, *Tintin à Baker Street* by Bob Garcia. The cover illustration by Harry Edwood is a superb fusion of Tintin and Sherlock Holmes. I've no other details at present, but you can get them from editions.macguffin@tiscali.fr.

Published this month by Sleuth/Philomel at $10.99 is *The Case of the Missing Marquess: An Enola Holmes Mystery* by Nancy Springer. This adventure of Sherlock and Mycroft's fourteen-year-old sister was favourably mentioned in *Kirkus Reviews*. *{*Could this be a tribute to the great Sherlockian book dealer Enola Stewart, I wonder?*]*

Due on 6 March is *The Baker Street Boys: The Case of the Captive Clairvoyant*, the second in Anthony Read's series about Holmes's band of street urchins (Walker Books Ltd, 87 Vauxhall Walk, London SE11 5HJ; £4.99). *[*Super cover pictures on these books.*]*

It was recently announced that HarperCollins has bought the UK and Commonwealth rights to *Just a Line, Dearest*, letters from Arthur Conan Doyle to his mother, due for publication in 2007.

Catalogue 131 is available from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk).

Rodger Garrick-Steele's accusation of murder and adultery against Arthur Conan Doyle is indeed vicious nonsense. Forensic scientist Paul Spiring says, 'We're on the verge of drawing some conclusions which categorically refute the allegations that Conan Doyle stole the plot of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* from Fletcher Robinson.[...] We have new evidence from eye-witness statements that Fletcher Robinson was content with Doyle's published acknowledgements of his contribution. [...] It would appear that Conan Doyle never met Gladys Fletcher Robinson. If we accept that there was no adulterous relationship or conflict about authorship, then there is no motive and the theory of murder must be dismissed.' (*Western Morning News*, 20 December 2005.)

On Tuesday 31 January viewers in the Tyne-Tees region will be able to see a programme in the new series *G P Taylor's Uninvited Guests*, in which the priest-turned-author claims that the Hound of the Baskervilles is really the Barguest, the phantom Black Dog of the Yorkshire Moors! *[*The Black Dog is known all down the east coast and is particularly notable around Cromer, where Conan Doyle and Fletcher Robinson first discussed what was to become* ***The Hound of the Baskervilles****. Just thought I'd mention it.*]*

Ludovic Debono has sent the address of a website listing 'all the 126 (annotated) places where Watson & Sherlock Holmes go in their adventures':
http://bbs.keyhole.com/ubb/showthreaded.php/Cat/0/Number/338870/an/0/page/0#238870. I haven't been able to access the site, but perhaps you can.

The Principal Planning Officer of Waverley Borough Council has informed Heather Owen that Undershaw, ACD's former home at Hindhead, has been bought by a developer who wants to turn it into flats. Well, it's a better fate than demolition.

Hirayama Yuichi BSI has set up a weblog, *Sherlockiana in Japan*, with material in Japanese and English. Worth a look! You'll find it at http://shinjapan.blogspot.com/.

David Stuart Davies sends word that *Sherlock* is to rise from the ashes. The magazine has a new , experienced publisher, and an old, experienced editor — none other than DSD himself. There will certainly be some changes, but when it's relaunched in early April *Sherlock* will be firmly back on course.

More good news! Bert Coules has been commissioned to write a third series of *The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* to be recorded for transmission on Radio 4, probably early in 2007. Take a look at Bert's website, www.bertcoules.co.uk. (*The Complete Sherlock Holmes Box Set* — the Radio 4 recordings of the whole Canon on CD — is currently offered by the BBC Shop at £115.00. Check www.bbcshop.com.)

More Deaths than One Must Die, the first episode of Matthew Booth's detective series *The Anthony Rathe Chronicles* will be broadcast on 12 February. Terry Edward Moore, who plays Rathe, has appeared on stage as Sherlock Holmes and as Lord Peter Wimsey. As Matthew says, Rathe is in exalted company! You can hear the play on-line at www.transmediasf.com/imag.html.

MC Black notes that **Bibliophile Books** (5 Thomas Road, London E14 7BN) offer a large selection of Sherlock Holmes audiobooks on cassette, readings by Douglas Wilmer and by David Timson, at rock-bottom prices. If you place an order or ask for a free catalogue, MC asks you please to quote reference 1045.

Roger Llewellyn brings *Sherlock Holmes — The Last Act!* to **The Byre Theatre**, St Andrews (01334 475000) 1 February, **Carnegie Hall**, Dunfermline (01383 314000) 3 February, **Eastgate Theatre**, Peebles (01721 725777) 4 February, **Yvonne Arnaud Theatre Mill Studio**, Guildford (01483 440000) 23-25 February, **Tamworth Castle**, Tamworth (01827 709581) 11 March, and **The Clocktower**, Croydon (020 8253 1027) 23 & 24 March.

Charles Hall (12 Paisley Terrace, Edinburgh EH8 7JW) has published an attractive set of Sherlock Holmes postcards, full-colour cartoon paintings by Edinburgh artist Ian M Fraser. A pack of twelve costs £6.50, including postage.

For last year's Swiss trip Guy Marriott produced a nice facsimile reprint of pages from an 1895 Foreign Office paper, *Report on Apiculture in Servia*, which Guy maintains was actually private information intended for Sherlock Holmes. He has extra copies, available to anyone who e-mails him at guy@angloinfo.com. Remember to give your address.

There have been changes in the Committee of **The Poor Folk Upon the Moors**, with David Guest, Vosper Arthur and Cherry Arthur all standing down. The new Chairman is Shirley Purves, the Secretary is Jenny Phillips, and the Treasurer & Membership Secretary Judy Marshall. Reggie Musgrave still edits *The Torr*. A full year of activities is planned, in London, Devon, Cornwall and Somerset.

Periodicals received. ***The Baker Street Journal***, Winter 2005 (Steven Rothman, 220, West Rittenhouse Square, #15-D, Philadelphia, PA 19103, USA; subscriptions, PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA; correspondence for **The Baker Street Irregulars** should go to Michael Whelan, 7938 Mill Stream Circle, Indianapolis, IN 46278, USA). ***The Camden House Journal***, January 2006 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). ***Canadian Holmes***, Christmas (Winter) 2005 (**The Bootmakers of Toronto**, Trevor Raymond, 4 Lyons Court, Georgetown, Ontario L7G 1P1, Canada). ***The Collected Essays: The Dr John H Watson Annual Prize Essay Competition 2004/5*** (**The Friends of Dr Watson**, Nino Cirone, 31 Muswell Avenue, Flat 2, London N10 2EB). ***Communication***, Special Romance Issue 2005 and January/February 2006 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Wanda & Jeff Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA) *[*the former is another of the PPoF's grand parody issues*]*. ***For the Sake of the Trust***, Fall 2005 (**The Baker Street Irregulars Trust**, Julie McKuras, 13512 Granada Avenue, Apple Valley, MN 55124, USA) *[*the first issue of the newsletter of the Trust, which administers the BSI Archives*]*. ***Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections***, December 2005 (Suite 111, Elmer L Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, 222 21st Avenue S, Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA).

The Illustrious Clients News, December 2005 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). ***Ineffable Twaddle***, January 2006 and February 2006 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA). ***Irregular Newsletter***, January 2006 (**The Conan Doyle [Crowborough] Establishment**, Brian Pugh, 20 Clare Road, Lewes, Sussex BN7 1PN). ***The Magic Door***, Winter 2005 (**The Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection**, Doug Wrigglesworth, 16 Sunset Street, Holland Landing, Ontario, Canada L9N 1H4) *[*regrettably Peter Wood has resigned as editor, because of failing eyesight*]*. ***Mayday Mayday***, January 2006, *and* ***C-Extra***, 27 December 2005 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardcarn Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). ***The Petrel Flyer***, January/February 2006 (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7P 3C6). ***Prescott's Press***, June and December 2005 (**The Three Garridebs**, Warren Randall, 15 Fawn Lane West, South Setauket, NY 11720-1346, USA). ***Quivers on the Web***, January 2006 (**221B**, Philip Weller, 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 6RU). ***The Serpentine Muse***, Winter 2005 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 301 Warren Ave, #203, Baltimore, MD 21203, USA). ***The Sherlock Holmes Journal***, Winter 2005 *[*you should already know about this!*]*. ***Tonga Times***, Fall 2005 (**The Mini-Tonga Society**, Trish & Jay Pearlman, 1656 E. 19th Street, #2-E, Brooklyn, NY 11229, USA). ***The Whaling News***, November and December 2005 (**The Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn**, Michael E Bragg, PO Box 256, St Charles, MO 63302-0256, USA).

And of course ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, December 2005 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

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no. 260 28 February 2006

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £6.00 or US$15.00 for 12 issues (dollar checks payable to Jean Upton, sterling cheques to me). Dollar prices quoted without qualification refer to US dollars. You can receive the DM electronically free of charge, as a Word attachment or as plain text. Please contact me by e-mail.

Allen Mackler died on 29 December. Besides music (implied in his BSI investiture, 'Sarasate'), his interests included cats and good food. The last time we met him in England Jean and I were able to direct him to a nice gasogene for his collection. Bill Sawisch tells me that Allen 'left his books and a sizable donation to the Holmes Collections in Minnesota'. The actor **John Woodnutt**, who died on 3 January aged eighty-one, may be best remembered as the irascible Sir Watkyn Bassett in *Jeeves and Wooster*, but his many rôles also included the stationmaster in *The Bruce-Partington Plans*, the pawnbroker in *Lady Frances Carfax* (both with Douglas Wilmer & Nigel Stock; BBC TV 1965), and Mr Merryweather in *The Red-Headed League* (with Jeremy Brett & David Burke; Granada 1985).

In his ninety-seven years **Ernest Dudley**, who died on 1 February, was actor, journalist, song-writer, scriptwriter, biographer and novelist. In 1930 he married Jane Grahame, step-daughter of Eille Norwood. Fifty years ago he revised Harold Terry & Arthur Rose's play *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, written for Norwood in 1923, and wrote a new version forty years later, which toured successfully in 1997. In 1998 he attended our Society's annual film evening, providing a living link to the greatest silent Holmes. Actor and political activist **Al Lewis**, perhaps best known as the comic vampire Grandpa Munster, died on 3 February aged ninety-five. In 1971 he played the uncomprehending messenger in the opening sequence of James Goldman's film *They Might Be Giants*. **Michael Gilbert**, who died on 8 February aged ninety-three, was one of the giants of crime and detective fiction. His story 'The Two Footmen' is one of the best in Greenberg & Waugh's 1987 collection *The New Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. In 1980 he was a drily witty and erudite speaker at our Society's annual dinner.

The Illustrious Clients of Indianapolis celebrate their sixtieth birthday this year, and they've marked the occasion by publishing *Sherlock Holmes in the Heartland: The Illustrious Clients' Fifth Casebook* (The Illustrious Clients, c/o Gasogene Books, PO Box 68308, Indianapolis, IN 46268, USA; $16.95). Like its predecessors (the first *Illustrious Client's Case-Book* [sic] appeared in 1948) it's a splendid medley of material from a remarkable range of contributors. Clients represented include Paul Herbert, Edward & Karen Lauterbach, Pam Wampler, and Vince Wright. There are also pieces from John Bergquist, Peter E Blau, David Stuart Davies, Edward Hardwicke, H Paul Jeffers, Gary Lovisi, Kathryn White, and others. It's an impressive line-up, and I'm honoured to have been asked to contribute. Not everything here is right on the button, and there's some rough proofreading (Constantine Rossakis is informally referred to as both 'Costas' and 'Costa'; John Bergquist's name is printed without the G; Christopher Redmond's book *Welcome to America, Mr Sherlock Holmes* is attributed to Donald Redmond), but this is an important collection, full of Good Things. I especially appreciate the accounts by Steven Doyle, Mary Ann Bradley and Don Curtis of the links between Sherlock Holmes, Conan Doyle, and Indianapolis; also outstanding are Michael Cox on Irene Adler, Constantine Rossakis on the first US edition of *The Sign of Four*, Leslie Klinger on the MS of 'The Red Circle', Joella Hultgren on interpretations of that story, Brad Keefauver on the artistic strain in the Moriarty family, Michael Whelan on Holmes's wartime experiences in Ireland, Pat Ward on some of Holmes's successors, and Terence Faherty on an episode in Rathbone's memoirs.

Black Coat Press (PO Box 17270, Encino, CA 91416, USA; www.blackcoatpress.com) has published *Sherlock Holmes: The Grand Horizontals*, a collection of short plays by Frank J Morlock, who adapted *Arsène Lupin vs Sherlock Holmes: The Stage Play* into English (see DM 252). The title play, which would be fun to stage, pits Holmes against the super-crook Fantômas and involves two notorious real-life courtesans of the period, Caroline Otero and Liane de Pougy. Both, I think, feature in Michael Harrison's book *A Fanfare of Strumpets* — but the literal translation of the phrase *Les Grandes Horizontales* seems rather clumsy. In 'The Tomb of Merlin' Holmes meets the young Father Brown, but the author seems ignorant of the situation and organisation of the Roman Catholic church in Victorian England; and Essex transmutes into Derbyshire for no apparent reason. I prefer 'The Mulberry Street Irregular' (Holmes and Teddy Roosevelt) and 'The Silent Treatment', which isn't really a Holmes piece at all, but should work very effectively as a dramatisation of Poe's 'The Tell-Tale Heart'. 'The Man Who Fell from Heaven' is good, but 'Clash of the Vampires' is jokey and doesn't really work for me. 'The Maid's Mustache' is a genuine joke that doesn't outstay its welcome. An interesting mixed bag over all.

Rafe McGregor has followed up his gripping non-Holmes thriller *The Secret Policeman*, reviewed in DM 259, with *The Secret Service*, also published by Classic Mysteries, which I'll review in the next issue. See the website at www.lulu.com/classicmysteries.

Tracy Cooper-Posey's *Sherlock Holmes: Chronicles of the Lost Years* was favourably reviewed in DM 198. Now comes *The Case of the Reluctant Agent*, set during the Great War (Turnstone Press, 607-100 Arthur Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3B 1H3; no price). Check the website at www.sashaproductions.com/agent.htm.

Matthew Elliott has alerted me to *Erasing Sherlock* by Kelly Hale, a novel in the 'Faction Paradox' sequence. It looks good and weird! www.madnorwegian.com/fp/product.php?item=Bfp05Sherlock has the details.

Catalogue 132 is available from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk).

Peter Blau reports that Leslie Klinger has been nominated for an Edgar award (best critical-biographical) for *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes: The Novels*. The winners will be announced by the Mystery Writers of America on 27 April.

On 23 February Mosnews.com reported that Vassily Livanov, a great Sherlock Holmes in a Russian television series twenty-five years ago, is to be awarded the OBE. (I'm seeking confirmation of this news from the Honours Scrutiny Committee.) *[*Good DVDs of the films can now be bought fairly easily over the Internet, though not all have English subtitles.*]*

From today's Evening Standard: 'The rebuilding of Bart's and the Royal London Hospitals has finally been given the go-ahead... The project guarantees the future of Bart's in Smithfield and will make the Royal London in Whitechapel the biggest in Britain. There will be 1,248 beds across the two sites. The two hospitals will get 30 new operating theatres and Bart's will retain its cancer and heart

specialisms.' *[*The London Hospital played a large part in the true story of Joseph Merrick, the 'Elephant Man'.*]*

It's expected that the famous **Sherlock Holmes Memorabilia Company** at 230 Baker Street will change hands within the next few weeks. Depending on who takes over the shop it may become an exhibition or a tea-room, but it will retain the Sherlockian connection. Before then some of the present stock will be offered at a discount. Watch this space!

The 1965 Broadway musical *Baker Street* wasn't a commercial or critical success, but it had good performances and songs. The original cast LP isn't too rare, but it's only now been released on CD, by Decca. Besides the original performances by Fritz Weaver, Inga Swenson, Peter Sallis, Martin Gabel, and co., there's a couple of bonus tracks (Richard Burton singing Watson's song 'A Married Man', and a jazzy instrumental called 'A Baker Street Mystery'), and an account by Laurence Maslon of the show's rise and fall. I bought the CD from Amazon.co.uk.

'I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere...' This is from Peter Blau: 'How many members of The Baker Street Irregulars have had songs named for them? Just one (known so far, at least): "The H C Potter's Ball" (recorded in 1946 by Johnnie Mercer with Freddie Slack and his Orchestra) released last year by Mosaic Records in a 3-CD set *Mosaic Select: Freddie Slack* (MS-018; $39.00). Jon Lellenberg heard it played on WAMU-FM's *Hot Jazz Saturday Night* on Jan. 21; host Rob Bamberger talked about Potter's career as a movie director. Potter was "The Final Problem" in the BSI (1971), and he is the only member of the BSI to have a star on Hollywood Boulevard.'

Imagination Theatre has released two new CDs, both available from www.harrynile.com/. *The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes vol. 10* contains *The Aldgate Noose* by Matthew Booth, *The Serpent's Tooth* by MJ Elliott, and *The Wycliffe Codicil* by Jim French; *Raffles the Gentleman Thief vol. 3* contains *A Long Night* by MJ Elliott, *The Ardagh Emeralds* by John Hall, and *Wilful Murder* by MJ Elliott from EW Hornung's story.

The latest issue of *ThrillerUK: The Journal of Cult Fiction* features Philip Wood's article 'The Myths and Realities of the Sherlock Holmes Stories'. It costs £3.95 plus postage (55p inland, £1.55 overseas) from T Fountain, 130 Sackville Road, Hove, East Sussex BN3 7AA. Or order on-line at www.thrilleruk.fsnet.co.uk.

Bob Byrne is working on a website, www.SolarPons.com, to include summaries of Pons' cases, with comments, and an on-line Solar Pons Annual. Pons devotees should contact Bob for details at bob.byrne@holmesonscreen.com.

Roger Llewellyn's March bookings for *Sherlock Holmes—The Last Act!* are **Tamworth Castle**, Tamworth (4th), **The Assembly Rooms**, Ludlow (9th), **Arts Centre**, Wexford (15th), **Gleneagle Hotel Theatre**, Killarney (18th), **Friarsgate Theatre**, Kilmallock (20th), **Everyman Theatre**, Cork (21st-25th), **Town Hall Theatre**, Galway (27th-28th), **Parochial Hall Theatre**, Clonmel (29th), and **Backstage Theatre**, Longford (31st).

A transcript of the teleplay for *Who Shot Sherlock?*, the not wholly satisfactory Sherlockian episode of *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*, is on-line at www.webphilia.com/~anthology/wnp.html.

Gideon Hill reports that as **Mycroft's League** of Philadelphia enters its fourth year he will hand over the leadership to Frank Ferry. You can contact Frank at fferry@comcast.net.

Our Society's 2006 London mini-festival, *Another Capital Idea, Watson*, will begin on Thursday 6 April with tea at the House of Commons, courtesy of John Horam MP, followed by MC Black's City of London walk . On Friday there's tea at the Diogenes (the Travellers' Club in Pall Mall) and the second Richard Lancelyn Green Memorial Lecture, given this year by actor and writer Jack Klaff. Probably the only man to have played the Hon. Philip Green on both radio and television, Mr Klaff is also a Visiting Professor at Princeton University; his topic for the lecture is 'Science versus Séance: Holmes Cross-Examines Conan Doyle'. Saturday begins with a visit to Davidoff's, the St James's Street tobacconist, continues with a flight on the London Eye, and concludes with an evening of Victorian Music Hall at the Old Dr Butler's Head in the City, chaired by the inimitable Dominic Le Foe ('as British as the Flag!'). On Sunday Bernard Davies leads an investigation of the topography of 'The Bruce-Partington Plans', concluding with lunch at a suitable substitute for Goldini's Restaurant. Details should be on the website at www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk, or drop a line to Catherine Cooke at 15 Copperfield Court, 146 Worple Road, Wimbledon, London SW20 8QA.

The Society's expedition this year will be to Derbyshire over the weekend 8-10 September, to investigate two possible candidates for the Priory School.

The STUD Sherlockian Society and **The Watsonians** will host the fifth annual combined STUD/Watsonian weekend from 31 March to 2 April. Guest of Honour at the STUD Annual Dinner (at the Sheraton Four Points, Schiller Park, IL) will be Leslie Klinger; on Saturday, the 47th annual Chicago Silver Blaze, sponsored by the Watsonians, will be run at Hawthorne Race Course, Cicero, IL, and Susan Diamond & Allan Devitt will host a 'Fun(d)-raiser' pizza party. On Sunday the Watsonians' Fortescue Honours Brunch concludes the weekend. You can get details from Susan at szdiamond@comcast.net, or from Bill Sawisch at 1008 Pleasant St, # 1B, Oak Park, IL 60302, USA.

The Return Dinner of **The Poor Folk Upon the Moors** will be at the *Nobody Inn* at Doddiscombsleigh on 7 April. At the end of the month (28-30 April) the Poor Folk will visit Devil's Foot country in Cornwall. Get details of both events from Shirley Purves (Lea House, Couches Lane, Woodbury, Exeter EX5 1HL).

One of the year's high points will undoubtedly be *ACD at 35*, from 19 to 22 October, celebrating thirty-five years of Toronto's Arthur Conan Doyle Collection, and sponsored by **The Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection**, **The Bootmakers of Toronto**, **The Arthur Conan Doyle Society** and **Toronto Public Library**. Speakers confirmed include Peter Calamai, Michael Dirda, Cliff Goldfarb, Gideon Hill, Glen Miranker, Hartley Nathan, Chris Redmond, Barbara & Christopher Roden, and Dick Sveum. Oh, and Leslie Klinger. Details are on-line at www.acdfriends.org, or e-mail ACD35@sympatico.ca.

Looking even further ahead, Peter Blau reports that **The Baker Street Irregulars** plan a visit to Salt Lake City over the weekend 29 August-1 September 2008. The Mormon capital features largely in *A Study in Scarlet*, and Conan Doyle visited the city in 1923. You can get details from Gideon Hill at onbridle@verizon.net.

Periodicals received. ***Bohemian Newsletter*** no. 61 (**Česká společnost Sherlocka Holmese**, Aleš Kolodrubec, Milešovská 1, 130 00 Praha 3, Czech Republic). ***The Camden House Journal***, February 2006 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). ***Communication***, March/April 2006 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Wanda & Jeff Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA). ***Grimpen Mire Gazette***, January 2006 (**Hugo's Companions**, David C Humphrey, 1843 Winnetka Road, Northfield, IL 60093, USA). ***Explorations***, Spring/Summer, Autumn, and Winter 2005 (**The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota**, John Bergquist, 3665 Ashbury Road, Eagan, MN 55122, USA). ***The Illustrious Clients News***, January 2006 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). ***Mayday Mayday***, February 2006 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardcarn Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). ***Sherlockiana***, nr. 1, 2006 (**Sherlock Holmes Klubben i Danmark**, Mia Stampe Lagergaard, Nivågade 3, 2. th., 2200 København n., Denmark) *[*a celebration issue for the magazine's fiftieth anniversary*]*.

And the great Sherlockian newsletter, ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, January 2006 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

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Further to the brief obit of **John Woodnutt** in DM 260, Peter Blau reminds me that he also appeared with Clive Merrison and Michael Williams, playing Mr Frankland in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* on Radio 4.

Alan Fitzpayne, who died on 4 March aged fifty-seven, was a formidable bowler for the PG Wodehouse Society, playing a notable part in the first Victorian Cricket Match in 2001. In 1962, at the age of thirteen, he drove Scotland's last tram on its final journey from Clydebank to Dalmarnock. *[*Thanks to Dennis Collins for the obit from The Scotsman.*]* **John Junkin** (d. 7 March, aged seventy-six) was a prolific comedy scriptwriter, responsible with Denis King for some of my favourite comic songs ('Moon Over Romford' and the like). As an actor, he played both comedy and drama; in 1961 he was in the original production of *They Might Be Giants* with Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop. Bernard Davies has alerted me to the death on 13 March of our member **Charlotte Regester**, aged eighty-nine. Charlotte was one of the seven participants in the 1978 Swiss Pilgrimage who were also members of the Dracula Society.

To set the record straight about the award made to **Vassily Livanov**: Alan Tuomey of the Ceremonial Secretariat at the Cabinet Office has confirmed that in February Mr Livanov received an honorary **MBE**. 'Because honorary awards are not published in the twice-yearly Honours Lists no citations in respect of them are published... I can tell you, however, that Mr Livanov was honoured for his portrayal of the character Sherlock Holmes in a series of television films made in the former USSR during the period 1979-86.' Philip Weller reports that Vassily Livanov was nominated by the British Ambassador, who presented the award. (Mr Livanov is an honorary member of **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company**.)

A couple of other honours got overlooked in the last DM. On 9 February, along with the England cricket team, there were Sherlockians at Buckingham Palace. **John Barker**, attended by Heather Owen and Shirley Purves, received the OBE, and **Nancie Ross**, attended by her husband Ken, received the MBE. Belated congratulations!

Sherlock Holmes: The Way of All Flesh by Daniel Ward (Classic Mysteries) is a commendably exciting thriller. In 1886, the murder and mutilation of an Italian diplomat suggests political skulduggery, but when a young solicitor dies a similarly horrible death Holmes suspects something much darker. What he and Watson uncover, at great danger to the doctor, is more reminiscent of Dennis Wheatley than of Conan Doyle, but it is all very well handled. The style is acceptable, and the narrative carries the reader giddily forward. The person behind the outrages proves to be one of the less likely candidates for the Whitechapel murder of 1888, and I'm glad that Mr Ward doesn't follow that path. You can buy *Sherlock Holmes: The Way of All Flesh* direct from the author at 78 Byron Gardens, Tilbury, Essex RM18 8BD; send a cheque for £5.00 payable to D Ward. For more information contact Mr Ward at scarlet1881@hotmail.co.uk. The book is also available in large print in the Linford Mystery Series.

Also from Classic Mysteries (www.classicmysteries.co.uk or www.lulu.com/classicmysteries) is Rafe McGregor's second contemporary thriller *The Secret Service*. There is a link to his first, *The Secret Policeman*, though I didn't grasp the fact until Chapter 9, as this one is set largely in England, with excursions to Ireland and Barbados. Jackson, retired from the South African Secret Service, reluctantly agrees to help thwart Operation Condor, a plan set up by East German security police before the fall of communism and now set in motion by al-Qaeda. He soon discovers that Stasi-trained agents aren't his only enemies, and that to survive he must out-think his employers. It was a special pleasure for me that Jackson's mission takes him to a couple of pubs I know, the Red Lion in Colchester and the Sherlock Holmes in London. That's the only Sherlockian connection, but there's a better reason for reading the book: Rafe McGregor is a damn' good storyteller. My only adverse criticism is that *The Secret Service* is a novella rather than a novel, but made to appear longer by spacing the lines widely.

The Baker Street Boys: The Case of the Captive Clairvoyant (Walker Books Ltd, 87 Vauxhall Walk, London SE11 5HJ; £4.99) is the second in Anthony Read's new series based on the television series that he created in 1983. The Irregulars — Wiggins, Queenie, Shiner, Beaver, Sparrow, Rosie and Gertie (yes, the Boys do include three girls, and no, Gertie wasn't in the TV series) — are as resourceful, independent and likeable as ever in this ingenious tale of a crooked hypnotist and his unwilling accomplice. Lestrade is as supercilious, Holmes as encouraging, and the influence of Moriarty as malign. The atmosphere of the 1890s is as satisfyingly thick as pea soup. A particular appeal of *The Baker Street Boys* is that their adventures give a refreshingly different view of the great detective and his world.

David Stuart Davies's second 'Johnny One-Eye' novel continues the gripping exploits of the private detective in wartime London, introduced in the pages of *Sherlock* magazine. *Comes the Dark* is out now from Robert Hale (Clerkenwell House, Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0HT; £16.99). Its predecessor *Forests of the Night* will be published in America by St Martin's Press towards the end of the year, but with a different title. Keep an eye on DSD's website at www.davidstuartdavies.com.

And from Wordsworth Editions Ltd (8B East Street, Ware, Herts. SG12 9HJ) comes *Vintage Mystery & Detective Stories*, a huge anthology, nearly 1300 pages, edited by David Stuart Davies. The fifty stories cover the familiar ('Silver Blaze', 'The Problem of Cell 13'), the unfamiliar ('The Sapient Monkey', 'The Gylston Slander') and even the new (three of DSD's own tales of Luther Darke). The book concludes with *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* by Fergus Hume, a novel both praised and panned over the years; I'm with H R F Keating, who ranks it among the best of the pre-Holmes detective stories. *Vintage Mystery & Detective Stories* is a remarkable bargain at £5.99. The book is dedicated to David's friends and colleagues on *Sherlock* magazine.

Hertfordshire A-Z by Pamela Shields (Sutton Publishing Ltd, Phoenix Mill, Thrupp, Stroud, Gloucs. GL5 2BU; £12.99) contains an entry for Sherlock Holmes, but not for Sidney Paget, though it was the latter who actually lived at Chipperfield, near Hemel Hempstead. Peter Sellers was a later resident, and ex-President Carter's family came from there. The book is a fascinating quirky guide to a frequently overlooked county.

Dr Francis O'Gorman of Leeds University has edited a new annotated edition of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, published by Broadview Press at £5.99. It sounds very interesting, but I'm having some difficulty in tracking down the publishers!

E J Wagner's book *The Science of Sherlock Holmes* is due this month from John Wiley & Sons (The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester PO19 8SQ) at £13.95. The first chapter is on Wiley's website at www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0471648795.html.

Reviewing *Arthur & George*, I said that there was no full authoritative account of the Edalji case. It looks as if that situation may have been rectified with *Conan Doyle and the Parson's Son: The Edalji Case* by Gordon Weaver (Vanguard Press [Pegasus Elliott MacKenzie], Sheraton House, Castle Park, Cambridge CB3 0AX; £9.99), which draws on newspaper reports, Public Record Office information and other sources.

The Times reports that www.bedbooks.net offers a selection of books with the text printed sideways for bedtime reading. Titles include *Pride and Prejudice*, *The War of the Worlds* and 'two Sherlock Holmes mysteries'.

I D Edrich (17 Selsdon Road, London E11 2QF; phone 020 8989 9541; e-mail idedrich@idedrich.co.uk has many issues of *The Strand Magazine* for sale at good prices.

Catalogue 133 is available from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk). **Janus Books** (PO Box 40787, Tucson, AZ 85717, USA) aren't sending out lists now, as the catalogue is on-line at www.biblio.com/bookstores/janus100.html.

From 20 to 22 April Roger Llewellyn will appear in David Stuart Davies's play *Sherlock Holmes — The Last Act!* at the Mill Studio at the **Yvonne Arnaud Theatre** in Guildford; on 28 April he'll be at **The Beaufort**, Ebbw Vale.

Teddy Hayes' musical *The Baskerville Beast* will be staged on 28 and 29 May at **Baskerville Hall Hotel** (Clyro Court) during the Hay-on-Wye Festival. See www.thebaskervillebeast.co.uk for details.

Cenarth Fox's play *The Real Sherlock Holmes* will begin its third tour of Victoria, Australia in July. The CD of the play (recommended in DM 256) is available in Europe from Fox Plays UK at foxplays@magicfox.co.uk and in America from Classic Specialties at www.sherlock-holmes.com/audio.html.

Tim Evers tells me that in the autumn he and John Patrick Bray will play Holmes and Moriarty in *A Problem Presents Itself...*, a short silent film in the German expressionist style based on 'The Final Problem.'. Tim expects to resume touring with his play *The Demons of Sherlock Holmes* in the autumn as well.

Matthew Booth's latest Sherlock Holmes play, *The Adventure of the Invisible Hand*, will be aired by Imagination Theatre on 23 April. See www.harrynile.com/.

At www.ourmedia.org/user/27817 you should be able to download *Sherlock Holmes and the Christmas Garfunkel*, an episode in the podcast series *The Naked World of Psycho Dave*.

Peter Calamai ('The Leeds Mercury', BSI) wants to buy a late Victorian issue of, er, *The Leeds Mercury*. If you can help, please contact Peter at <pcalamai@magma.ca> or write to him at 33 Orrin Avenue, Ottawa, Canada K1Y 3X5. He says he'll make 'a handsome offer' to anyone who can provide him with the paper.

Take a look at www.victoriana.com. This is 'The Victorian Era Online' covering all sorts of aspects of the nineteenth century (advertising, ceramics, etiquette, photography, and much more) mainly from an American angle.

Rodger Garrick-Steele still hasn't gone away. In the face of all the evidence against his accusation of plagiarism, adultery and murder against Arthur Conan Doyle, he now claims that Fletcher Robinson's death certificate is a forgery (*Western Morning News*, 20 February 2006).

I have a job lot of shirt collars available to whoever would like them, for the cost of postage. They're all fold-down collars, mostly white, and mostly size 15½. Those that aren't — a dozen or more — are size 18. If there are no takers I'll give them to a charity shop.

Country singer, satirist and novelist Kinky Friedman — his books include a series about a detective named Kinky Friedman — is running for governor of Texas with the slogan 'Why the Hell Not?' One of his mysteries is entitled *Spanking Watson*.

Holmes was never known to write when a telegram would serve. The British Post Office abolished its telegram service several years ago. Now Western Union has done the same. I suppose Holmes would use e-mail today — or (horrors!) txt mssgs.

On 29 July **The Baker Street Irregulars** will sponsor a running of the Silver Blaze at the Saratoga Racetrack in Saratoga, New York. Fuller details are available from Lou Lewis, Chairman of the Silver Blaze Race Committee, at llewis@lewisgree.com, or on the website at www.silverblazeny.homestead.com.

The Saratogian for 20 March reports that Dale Easter is looking to sell **Professor Moriarty's** restaurant in Saratoga Springs.

Smokers, beleaguered as they are, may like to take note of **The Sherlock Holmes Pipe Club of Boston** — that's Boston, Mass, not Boston, Lincs. See the website at www.shpcboston.org.

The Baker Street Gaslighters is (are?) a new group based in Petoskey, MI, founded by Duane Pajak. The first meeting will be on 20 April in the Staffordshire Room at Stafford's Bay View in Petoskey. E-mail for more information at dpajak@charter.net.

Periodicals received: ***The Baker Street Bugle***, 1 January 2006 and 1 March 2006 (**The Deerstalkers of Welshpool**, Joan & Roy Upton-Holder, Baskerville, 146 Little Henfaes Drive, Welshpool, Powys SY21 7BA). ***The Baker Street Picayune***, vol. II no. 1, 2006 (**Le Cercle de Sherlock Holmes** (Jens Byskov Jensen, 4324 Loveland Street, Metairie, LA 70006, USA). ***Bohemian Newsletter***, no. 62 (**Česká společnost Sherlocka Holmese**, Aleš Kolodrubec, Milešovská 1, 130 00 Praha 3, Czech Republic). ***The Camden House Journal***, March 2006 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). ***Communication***, no. 261 (Special Issue) (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Wanda & Jeff Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA). ***The Formulary***, March 2006 (**The Friends of Dr Watson**, Nino Cirone, 31 Muswell Avenue, Flat 2, London N10 2EB). ***The Illustrious Clients News***, March 2006 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). ***Ineffable Twaddle***, March 2006 and April 2006 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA).

Mayday Mayday, ***Chronicler*** and ***Chronicler 2***, March 2006 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardcarn Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). ***The Petrel Flyer***, Spring 2006 (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7P 3C6). ***Prescott's Press***, January and March 2006 (**The Three Garridebs**, Warren Randall, 15 Fawn Lane West, South Setauket, NY 11720-1346, USA). ***Quivers on the Web***, February 2006 (**221B**, Philip Weller, 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 6RU). ***The School Report***, Spring Term 2006 (**The Priory Scholars**, Horace L Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY). ***The Serpentine Muse***, Spring 2006 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 301 Warren Ave, #203, Baltimore, MD 21203, USA). ***3 Pipe Problem Plugs and Dottles***, January - March 2006 (**The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem**, Kay Blocker, 5017 Maywood Drive, Nashville, TN 37211, USA pkblocker@comcast.net). ***The Whaling News***, January 2006 and February 2006 (**The Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn**, Michael E Bragg, PO Box 256, St Charles, MO 63302-0256, USA).

And of course ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, February 2006 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON
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no. 262 8 May 2006

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £6.00 or US$15.00 for 12 issues (dollar checks payable to Jean Upton, sterling cheques to me). Dollar prices quoted without qualification refer to US dollars. You can receive the DM electronically free of charge, as a Word attachment or as plain text. Please contact me by e-mail.

Peter Blau notes the death on 12 April of the German-born actress **Christiane Maybach**, who played Polly Nichols in the 1965 film *A Study in Terror*, with John Neville as Sherlock Holmes.

In 1910, as a hasty replacement for his play *The House of Temperley*, Arthur Conan Doyle wrote *The Speckled Band*, which, with HA Saintsbury as Sherlock Holmes and Lyn Harding as Dr Grimesby Rylott (*sic*), was a huge success. Nevertheless, some aspects of the play were recognised even then to be unsatisfactory. Holmes does not explain how he reached his conclusions, for instance, though that's an essential part of the original story; and, as Conan Doyle acknowledged, 'in trying to give Holmes a worthy antagonist I overdid it and produced a more interesting personality in the villain.' Now we have 'The Author's Expanded Edition' edited by Alan Lance Andersen, which very cleverly adjusts the play to provide a *metamenusis*, and to redress the balance between Holmes and Rylott, as well as tidying up one or two other irregularities. The subtitle may seem rather presumptuous, but Mr Andersen has drawn entirely on the original story for this, except, as he admits 'for some of the stage directions and 17 words of my own that were necessary for clarification'. It's a brilliant idea very cleverly executed, and the result is an exciting and intelligent thriller that should be powerful on stage. *The Speckled Band: Author's Expanded Edition* costs $13.10 from from ADTP Publishing, LLC (122 West Ash Lane, Roland, IA 50236, USA).

Ron Nicol has perhaps not felt quite so bound to Conan Doyle's original words in deriving one-act plays from two of the later short stories. Even so, *The Mazarin Stone* and *The Man Who Collected Women* combine the virtues of effective drama and fidelity to their sources. The former is based on a story that itself was based on a play (though *The Crown Diamond* was notably less successful than *The Speckled Band*), so the essentials of a good short play with a single setting — the sitting-room at 221B — were already there. The latter dramatises 'The Illustrious Client', which has a much more complex structure, yet Mr Nicol again sets the action entirely within Sherlock Holmes's sitting-room, and the result is both stylish and natural. I'm impressed, and I'd very much like to see the plays performed. *The Mazarin Stone* and *The Man Who Collected Women* (great title!) are published by New Theatre Publications (2 Hereford Close, Woolston, Warrington, Cheshire WA1 4HR). There's a website at www.plays4theatre.com.

Comes the Dark (Robert Hale Ltd, Clerkenwell House, 45-47 Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0HT; £16.99) is the second Johnny One Eye novel by David Stuart Davies, and it's at least as good as the first, *Forests of the Night*. Johnny was established in short stories in *Sherlock* magazine, and both character and author seem at home in either format. Wartime London is an unusual and exciting setting, offering many possibilities beyond those of peacetime — possibilities that the writer has seized gratefully. He's also done his homework. The language is sometimes stronger than in books published in the nineteen-forties, but nothing rings false. The descriptions, the characterisations, and the atmosphere are spot-on: you can hear the whine of the buzz-bombs, smell the sweat and the engine oil, and taste the spam and dried egg. A nasty encounter with a crypto-fascist group precedes Johnny Hawke's investigation of the killer dubbed 'the blackout strangler' by the press. In Johnny's world nothing is straightforward, which is bad for him but good for the reader. *Comes the Dark* is a cracking good read, and a book moreover that makes you think.

Catalogue 134 is available from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk).

David Ashton has scripted four splendid series for BBC Radio 4, in which Brian Cox plays the Victorian Edinburgh detective James McLevy (a real person, whose own highly readable, and probably ghosted, memoirs are being reprinted by Edinburgh's Mercat Press). Ashton also plays McLevy's superior Lieutenant Roach. His first novel about McLevy, *Shadow of the Serpent*, is due this year from Polygon, and he has hopes of a television series.

Michael Sims has edited and annotated a selection of the best stories from Maurice Leblanc's first four books about Arsène Lupin, in the original English translation by Alexander Teixeira de Mattos. *Arsène Lupin, Gentleman-Thief* will be published in the Penguin Classics series later this year. Mr Sims' 5,000-word introduction promises to be a valuable commentary on the literature of Lupin.

EJ Wagner's book *The Science of Sherlock Holmes* (John Wiley & Sons, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester PO19 8SQ; £13.95) arrived in today's post. I'm looking forward to reading it, and will review it in the next DM.

The Hound of the Baskervilles with 'The Adventure of the Speckled Band' by Arthur Conan Doyle, edited and annotated by Francis O'Gorman, published by Broadview Press (c/o NBN International, Plymbridge House, Estover Road, Plymouth PL6 7PY) at £5.99, has attracted some very appreciative comments from academic readers.

Brian Pugh, Curator of **The Conan Doyle (Crowborough) Establishment**, tells me that he's working on a *Chronology of the Life of Bertram Fletcher Robinson*, in collaboration with Philip Weller and Paul Spiring, which will be available from the Establishment (20 Clare Road, Lewes, Sussex BN7 1PN) around the end of this year. Brian is also working with Paul Spiring on a touring guide to Conan Doyle's Dartmoor. More on these as it reaches me.

Nicholas Utechin's long planned first volume of *The Best of The Sherlock Holmes Journal*, covering the years 1952-1968 and introduced by the late Tony Howlett, will be launched by **The Sherlock Holmes Society of London** at the AGM on the 24th May. This will be a 300-copy hardback, priced at £25.00 (Europe £26.00 or €40.00; rest of world £30.00 or $60.00). Twenty-five 'special' copies will be numbered and signed by the Editor, the President, and the Chairman, and priced at £40.00 (Europe £41.00/€60.00; elsewhere £45.00/$90.00). Prices include postage. Send cheques payable to The Sherlock Holmes Society of London (Euros in cash only) to Judi Ellis, 13 Crofton Avenue, Orpington, Kent BR6 8DU.

Also new from our Society is a CD recording of *The Yellow Face* and *The Three Students*, dramatised by MJ Elliott and performed by the Old Court Radio Theatre Company. These half-hour plays will be performed at the AGM, but are here professionally recorded by an experienced team of radio actors. The CD is available from

me, post-paid, at £5.00 (Europe £6.00; elsewhere £9.00 or $12.00). I think they're great, but as the director I may be biased.

Our Society's archive of Sherlock Holmes films on 35mm and 16mm will be auctioned on 15 May at Christie's South Kensington (85 Old Brompton Road, London SW7). Full details are on Christie's website at www.christies.com under sale no. 4915. On 23 May at the same venue Christie's will auction the pipe presented to HA Saintsbury on his 500th performance as Sherlock Holmes in 1903 (sale no. 5076, lot 800).

Westminster Libraries have an interesting Conan Doyle website at www.westminsteronline.org/conandoyle. Worth a look.

The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh bought quite a lot of important material when the Conan Doyle Collection was auctioned at Christie's in 2004. Some of it will be on display at the College's museum in Nicolson Street, from 1 July to 29 October as part of an exhibition called *Conan Doyle and Joseph Bell — The Real Sherlock Holmes*. You'll also be able to see Conan Doyle's 1892 letter to Bell, acknowledging his debt to his old professor.

Jon Lellenberg, the American agent for the Estate of Dame Jean Conan Doyle, has moved from Washington to Chicago. All correspondence relating to Estate business and related matters should be sent to Hazelbaker & Lellenberg, 1570 Oak Avenue, suite 612, Evanston, IL 60201, USA.

The leading American Sherlockian specialists, **Classic Specialties** (PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA; www.sherlock-holmes.com) now issue their catalogue-magazine by e-mail only, as *The Sherlockian E-Times*. E-mail the proprietors Carolyn & Joel Senter at sherlock@sherlock-holmes.com.

Heather Owen has heard from Austin Shaw of Peppermint Pictures Ltd, who have restored and assembled the original 1921 score for Stoll's silent film *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, with Eille Norwood. Peppermint hopes to restore all the surviving Stoll Holmes films and release them on DVD.

At http://open.bbc.co.uk/catalogue/infax the BBC has launched its 'experimental prototype' *BBC Programme Catalogue*, a list of nearly a million radio and TV programmes. You can't access the programmes themselves, but you can now track down all the extant Sherlock Holmes plays, documentaries and so forth. On 5 June BBC Worldwide will release a DVD set *The BBC Sherlock Holmes Collection*, comprising the five Peter Cushing films from 1968, Richard Roxburgh in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and Rupert Everett in *The Case of the Silk Stocking* (all previously released) plus *The Strange Case of Sherlock Holmes & Arthur Conan Doyle* (*sic*, according to the BBC Shop website, from whom the set can be ordered at £31.99 — see www.bbcshop.com).

Just released by Naxos AudioBooks (18 High Street, Welwyn, Herts. AL6 9EQ) is *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* read complete and unabridged by the wonderful David Timson. The ten-CD set is priced at £35.00, and worth every penny.

Cenarth Fox reports that **David Small**, Arthur Conan Doyle in Cen's play *The Real Sherlock Holmes*, will visit his native England in September. 'If there is a Sherlockian Society looking for a good after-dinner speaker, David with his many appearances as Sir Arthur would be well worth considering.' If you're interested, please contact Cen Fox at writer@labyrinth.net.au.

Donald Pollock notes that it's not just *Spanking Watson* — all the detective novels of **Kinky Friedman**, currently running for Governor of Texas, 'are saturated with Sherlockian references'.

Aleš Kolodrubec, President of **The Czech Society of Sherlock Holmes**, announces that *Dvojí hra na Baker Street* was launched at the Prague International Book Fair on 6 May. This is the Czech translation of *The Veiled Detective* by our own David Stuart Davies! (To keep up with Sherlockian events in Bohemia, visit www.SherlockHolmes.cz.)

Jeremy Brett was a strong supporter of the Manic-Depressive Fellowship — now **MDF The Bi-Polar Organisation**, which, with the support of Lambeth Council, will hold two memorial events at the newly refurbished Bandstand on Clapham Common, close to JB's home. On 24 June at 7.00pm, Roger Llewellyn will perform David Stuart Davies's play *Sherlock Holmes — The Last Act!* and on 25 June at 2.30pm there'll be a concert of Victorian and Edwardian songs. Appropriate costume will be welcome. Tickets for both events are £5.00 each, of which £4.00 goes to MDF. Check our Society's website for details at www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk, or contact drkimgilbert2thepractice@yahoo.co.uk.

John Bergquist has a good website, *Sherlockian Resources on the Internet: A Survey* at www.tc.umn.edu/~bergq003/holmes.

As well as its website at www.bakerstreetjournal.com *The Baker Street Journal* now has a 'blog' — a web-log, and if you don't know what that is check it out at http://bakerstreetjournal.blogspot.com.

Douglas Johnston also has a good Sherlockian blog, *A Study in Sherlock*, at www.astudyinsherlock.net.

The Mini-Tonga Society, which specialises in miniature re-creations of Canonical structures, notes that Nancy Garces has a website with photos of her beautiful mini-221B sitting-room at www.pufichek.com/sherlock/nsgsherlock.htm. Friends will be pleased to know that Trish Pearlman of the Mini-Tonga Society is out of hospital and doing well.

The ninth Annual Outing sailing of **The Crew of the SS May Day**, anchored at Belfast, is entitled *Loose Canon*. This unique walk in Belfast city centre on 17 June will investigate sites relating to 'The Cardboard Box', the ulster coat, and Conan Doyle's 1925 visit to the city. This is a free event, open to non-members. Contact Oscar Ross for more information at rocross221b@yahoo.co.uk.

The 2006 *Victorian Cricket Match* between the Gentlemen of **The Sherlock Holmes Society of London** and the Gentlemen of **The PG Wodehouse Society** will take place on Sunday 25 June at West Wycombe in leafy Bucks, starting at 1l.00. Details of the ground are on the Cricket Club's website at http://westwycombe.play-cricket.com/home.asp. *[*This is the same day as the Victorian concert at Clapham Common, which the Society is supporting.*]*

Periodicals received. ***Bohemian Newsletter,*** no. 63 (**České společnost Sherlocka Holmese**, Aleš Kolodrubec, Milešovská 1, 130 00 Praha 3, Czech Republic). ***The Camden House Journal***, April 2006 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). ***Canadian Holmes***, Lady Day (Spring) 2005 (**The Bootmakers of Toronto**, Trevor Raymond, 4 Lyons Court, Georgetown, Ontario L7G 1P1, Canada). ***Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections***, March 2006 (Suite 111, Elmer L Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, 222 21st Avenue S, Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA). ***The Illustrious Clients News***, April/May 2006 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). ***Ineffable Twaddle***, May 2006 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA). ***Mayday Mayday***, May 2006 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardcarn Way, Belfast BT5 7RP).

The Parallelogram, December 2005, January-April 2006 (**The Parallel Case of St Louis**, Joseph J Eckrich, 914 Oakmoor Drive, Fenton, MO 63026-7008, USA). ***The Passengers' Log***, Summer Issue (**The Sydney Passengers**, Rosane McNamara, 4/2a Merlin Street, Neutral Bay, NSW 2089, Australia). ***The Scion***, Spring 2006 (**The Musgraves**, Anne Jordan, Hallas Lodge, Greenside Lane, Cullingworth, Bradford BD13 5AP). ***The Whaling News***, March and April 2006 (**The Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn**, Michael E Bragg, PO Box 256, St Charles, MO 63302-0256, USA).

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no. 263 12 June 2006

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £6.00 or US$15.00 for 12 issues (dollar checks payable to Jean Upton, sterling cheques to me). Dollar prices quoted without qualification refer to US dollars. You can receive the DM electronically free of charge, as a Word attachment or as plain text. Please contact me by e-mail.

Jay Pearlman passes on the sad news that his wife **Trish Pearlman**, his partner in revivifying and running the Mini-Tonga Society, died at the age of just fifty-six on 26 May as the result of a stroke. Trish was a lively, funny, dedicated Sherlockian, and she's much missed.

That prolific and versatile actor **Richard Bebb** died on 12 April aged seventy-nine. In 1954 he shared with Richard Burton the narration in the original BBC production of *Under Milk Wood*, and in 1986 he played Sir John Hardy in *The Empty House* for Granada TV. Frankie Thomas, who died on 11 May aged eighty-five, is best known as the actor who played 'Tom Corbett, Space Cadet' on American television in the early 1950s; in later life, as **Frank Thomas**, he turned to writing, including a series of Sherlock Holmes pastiches. The first, *Sherlock Holmes: Bridge Detective*, a collaboration with George Gooden, is well worth a look. As a writer, **David Butler** created important TV dramas such as *Edward the Seventh*, *Lillie* and *Disraeli.* His acting career included playing Jack Woodley to Peter Cushing's Holmes in *The Solitary Cyclist* for BBC TV in 1968. He died on 27 May aged seventy-eight.

The Science of Sherlock Holmes by EJ Wagner (John Wiley & Sons, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester PO19 8SQ; £16.99) is a first-rate introduction to forensic science, with chapters covering criminal pathology, poisons, disguises, the methods of Lombroso and Bertillon, ballistics, handwriting, fingerprinting and more. Each topic is related to an episode in the Holmesian Canon, and the author demonstrates how often Holmes anticipated the work of later detectives such as Edmond Locard and Sydney Smith — and how, sometimes, his ideas were already becoming outmoded. The coverage of specific cases, including those of Constance Kent, Lizzie Borden and John George Haigh, is accurate and to the point. Some critics have dubbed this book *CSI: Baker Street*, and the comparison is apt, not least because EJ Wagner tells a damned good story. I can strongly recommend *The Science of Sherlock Holmes* to all Sherlockians and to all interested in the development of detection in fact and fiction.

His Last Bow by Arthur Conan Doyle, edited and annotated by Leslie S Klinger (Gasogene Books, Wessex Press, PO Box 68308, USA; $22.95), is the penultimate volume in *The Sherlock Holmes Reference Library*, and as such it really shouldn't need any endorsement from me, but it will get one anyway. For those who don't know, *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes* is essentially a very handsome version of this series, but aimed at the general reader, whereas *The Sherlock Holmes Reference Library* is for the dedicated Holmesian. Not that it's dry or dull: Les Klinger has a neat turn of phrase and an eye for the incongruous. After their nearly disastrous experience with *Radix pedis diaboli* Holmes lights his pipe and offers Watson his tobacco pouch, saying, 'Some fumes which are not poisonous would be a welcome change,' on which Klinger notes, 'Ah, the innocence of those days before Surgeon General warnings!' The stories in *His Last Bow*, late though they may be, include some of the best and most memorable in the whole Canon — 'The Bruce-Partington Plans', 'The Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax', 'The Dying Detective', and of course the case that gives the collection its over-all title. Such an important, almost essential, edition of the Canon will surely be updated and corrected as often as possible, so I'll note that 'Barclay Square' in BRUC almost certainly does refer to Berkeley (pronounced 'Barclay') Square; that the parish of which Mr Roundhay was vicar in DEVI was the ecclesiastical rather than the governmental division; and that discussion of the location of Von Bork's house in LAST omits what is surely the definitive identification, Bernard Davies's paper 'The Eagle's Nest', first published by this Society in *An East Wind* in 1997 and reprinted last year in *Colour It Prussian Blue*.

(This month Naxos AudioBooks [2nd Floor, 40A High Street, Welwyn, Herts. AL6 9EQ] will release *The Reminiscences of Sherlock Holmes*, the latest unabridged reading from the Canon by the brilliant **David Timson**. I hope to review it in the next DM.)

David L Hammer's *Cases of Identity: Real People in the Sherlock Holmes Canon* (Gasogene Books; $19.95) is, I think, something new in Sherlockian literature. Mr Hammer's approach is different from Donald Redmond's in *Sherlock Holmes: A Study in Sources*, the explorer rather than the academic — which is, I suppose, to be expected from the author of *The Game Is Afoot* and its successors. Besides the usual suspects, we read here of the soldiers of the Clan Murray, Caroline Otero, Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria, Judge John Moriarty, Violet Manners, Violet Hunt, the Duke of Rutland, and Surgeon-Major Preston, all entertainingly and often convincingly proposed as the originals of Canonical characters. The longest and most interesting section, though it makes no new identifications, deals with the Mollie Maguires, the detectives and the real Valley of Fear. David Hammer is the nearest thing we have today to Michael Harrison: polymathic, literate, witty, opinionated and sometimes careless. We should treasure him.

There's lots of bad Sherlockian verse and remarkably little good stuff. Charles E Lauterbach (1884-1962) was responsible for some of the best, and two small posthumous volumes appeared in 1971 and 1979. Now, nearly thirty years on, comes *The Complete Baker Street Ballads* (Gasogene Books; $16.95), eighty poems in all, thirty-seven previously unpublished. It's not all funny stuff either — try 'Dirge' and 'In Pessimistic Mood'. The verses are nicely set off by Henry Lauritzen's stylish illustrations, and there's a good introduction by the editors, Edward and Karen Lauterbach.

The Best of The Sherlock Holmes Journal, Volume One is a splendid production. Nicholas Utechin has chosen material from the years from 1952 to 1968, from members both notable and obscure, and non-members too, and ranging from sound scholarship to charming frivolity, taking in Society reports on the way. The proof-reading is fine (except that Philip Dalton is named as 'Philip Green' in the list of contents). Illustrations, especially maps, would be welcome, but otherwise my only complaint is that the first lines of paragraphs are not indented. The book is a beautifully printed and bound hardback, worth every penny of the price. £25.00 (Europe £26.00 or □40.00; rest of world £30.00 or $60.00). Send cheques payable to The Sherlock Holmes Society of London (Euros in cash only) to Judi Ellis, 13 Crofton Avenue, Orpington, Kent BR6 8DU.

Anna Massey's father Raymond played Sherlock Holmes, as did her first husband Jeremy Brett, and her brother Daniel played J Neil Gibson. They all feature, of course, in her newly published memoirs *Telling Some Tales* (Hutchinson, Random House Group Ltd, 20 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 2SA; £17.99). It's an intelligent, honest and well written book, far better than the average

theatrical autobiography. Just don't expect to find more than a passing reference to Sherlock Holmes.

There's much of interest in *The Sherlockian E-Times* from **Classic Specialties** (PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA; www.sherlock-holmes.com) and in Catalogue 135 from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk).

Eric Monahan (Highcliff, 14 Silver Bridge Close, Broadsands Park, Paignton, Devon TQ4 7NW; highcliff@tesco.net) is offering reprints of his Sherlockian stories: *The Adventure of Billingsgate Blacksmith* £4.49; *The Tower Bridge Affair* £4.49; *The Wednesday Murders* £4.49; *The Isadora Persano Affair/* £4.49; *The Great Fires of London* £4.49; *The Man with the Shaven Scalp* £3.99; *The Singular Affair of the Aluminium Crutch* £3.99; *Holmes Right and Wrong* £4.49; *The Adventure of Marston Lodge* £4.49; *Murder in the Open* £4.49; *To Err Is Human* £4.49. And finally *Sherlock Holmes Illustrated with Alternative Captions* (humorous captions to some Paget illustrations) £4.99. Prices include postage within the UK, and there's 10% discount for orders above £12.00.

Something new and quite different is *The History of the Calabash Pipe* by Gary B Schrier (the author, 14229 Bethel-Burley Road SE, Port Orchard, WA 98367; USA; gbs@wavecable.com). It's an 11" x 8½" paperback of 235 pages, with 335 photographs — 100 in colour, and it comes highly recommended by Howard S Smith of Alfred Dunhill Ltd. There's plenty of direct Sherlockian interest. Orders sent by 30 September are charged at $60.00 plus postage; thereafter it's $70.00. Full details are at www.calabashpipe.com.

David Stuart Davies is an editor on Wordsworth's new series of Mystery & Supernatural Tales. His first volume, *Dracula's Guest* by Bram Stoker, is already out. Due this month is DSD's own *The Tangled Skein.* All the books are priced at £2.99 (Wordsworth Editions Ltd, East Street, Ware, Herts. SG12 9HJ).

Alan Lance Andersen's edition of Conan Doyle's play, *The Speckled Band: The Author's Expanded Edition* is available at www.amazon.com and at www.lulu.com/content/218901. The book was recommended in DM 262.

Last Saturday an introductory exhibition opened at Portsmouth City Museum featuring up to 150 of the best artefacts from the Richard Lancelyn Green Bequest and running till 24 September. It's intended to make most of the 16,000 items accessible from next year. Check the website at www.portsmouthmuseums.co.uk.

A reminder that **MDF The Bi-Polar Organisation** will hold two Jeremy Brett Memorial Events at the Bandstand on Clapham Common. On Saturday 24 June at 6.00pm, following contributions from Michael Cox (presented by Dr Kim Gilbert) and David Stuart Davies, Roger Llewellyn will perform David's play *Sherlock Holmes — The Last Act!* On Sunday 25 June at 2.00pm there'll be a concert of Victorian and Edwardian songs by the Garden Operatic Company. Appropriate costume will be welcome. Tickets for both events are £5.00 each, of which £4.00 goes to MDF, from www.mdf.org.uk.

Next month the *Eastern Daily Press* in conjunction with the Norwich School of Art & Design plans to put up a blue plaque at the Hill House Inn at Happisburgh in Norfolk, to mark Conan Doyle's visits there, which he drew on for 'The Dancing Men'. For details, contact Keiron Pim at Keiron.Pim@archant.co.uk.

Charles Hall (12 Paisley Terrace, Edinburgh EH8 7JW) has published two colourful Christmas cards with paintings by Ian M Fraser: a benign Hound painting the portrait of Sherlock Holmes in the snowy grounds of Baskerville Hall, and Holmes accompanying a group of (mostly) recognisable Canonical carollers outside 221B. Only 1,000 of each have been printed, priced at 60p each (no envelopes, but they fit standard A6). The carollers picture is also available as a postcard at 45p, as is a painting of Holmes and Watson in a hot-air balloon ('The Hound') hovering over the Lost World. Again, only 1,000 of each.

At www.221b-baker-street.com/index_cover.php is *A Trifling Reference*. it's a very useful research tool, containing the complete Canon in searchable form and all the major chronologies, with the capacity to sort the stories chronologically according to each. This is just one item that's come my way via Scott Monty's *Baker Street Blog* at http://bakerstreetjournal.blogspot.com.

Catherine Cooke notes that the Spring 2006 issue of *National Railway Museum Review* contains a Sherlock Holmes story.

Brian Pugh reports that the excellent Russian Sherlock Holmes series, made by Lenfilm between 1979 and 1986, is available as a set, with English subtitles, from www.alldvd.ca for a total cost of about US$97.54.

David Ian Davies's recording of Barry Day's gripping novel *Sherlock Holmes and the Apocalypse Murders* was released on CD last month and is available from www.audible.com. where you can hear a sample. There are other Holmesian recordings there too.

'The Yellow Face' and 'The Three Students', dramatised by **MJ Elliott** and performed by the **Old Court Radio Theatre Company** has been well received, and Matthew Elliott is working on more scripts from the Canon. You can hear the recording at www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk or it's available post-paid from me on CD at: UK £5.00; Europe£6.00 or □9.00; elsewhere £9.00 or US$12.00. Sterling cheques payable to me, please, and dollar checks to Jean Upton. Euros in cash only.

Jim French Productions offers *The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, #11*, a CD from Imagination Theatre, featuring 'The Moriarty Resurrection' by MJ Elliott and 'The Strange Death of Lady Sylvia Eicchorn' by Jim French. These splendid productions, very reminiscent of the great radio series of the 1940s, can be bought or downloaded at www.jimfrenchproductions.com. See also www.sherlockholmesradio.com.

Great creations of Scottish writers, including Sherlock Holmes, are celebrated at the Scottish Storytelling Centre, opened on 1 June in Edinburgh's Royal Mile and incorporating the John Knox House.

Periodicals received. ***The Arthur Conan Doyle Birthday File and Research File XIII***, 22 May 2006 and ***Irregular Newsletter*** (**The Conan Doyle [Crowborough] Establishment**, Brian Pugh, 20 Clare Road, Lewes, Sussex BN7 1PN). ***The Baker Street Bugle***, issue 31 (**The Deerstalkers of Welshpool**, Joan & Roy Upton-Holder, Baskerville, 146 Little Henfaes Drive, Welshpool, Powys SY21 7BA). ***The Baker Street Journal***, Spring 2006 (Steven Rothman, 220, West Rittenhouse Square, #15-D, Philadelphia, PA 19103, USA; subscriptions, PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA; correspondence for **The Baker Street Irregulars** should go to Michael Whelan, 7938 Mill Stream Circle, Indianapolis, IN 46278, USA). ***Bohemian Newsletter,*** no. 64 (**České společnost Sherlocka Holmese**, Aleš Kolodrubec, Milešovská 1, 130 00 Praha 3, Czech Republic). ***The Camden House Journal***, May 2006 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). ***Communication***, May/June 2006 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Wanda & Jeff Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA).

The Illustrious Clients News, June 2006 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). ***Ineffable Twaddle***, June 2006 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA). ***Mayday Mayday***, June 2006, ***Chronicler***, June 2006, and ***C-Extra***, 28 May 2006 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardcarn Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). ***The Petrel Flyer***, June 2006 (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7P 3C6). ***The School Report***, Summer Term 2006 (**The Priory Scholars**, Horace L Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY). ***The Torr***, Spring 2006 (**The Poor Folk Upon The Moors**, Reggie Musgrave, Drummond Cottage, Old Tavern Yard, Westbourne, Chichester, West Sussex PO10 8TA).

And of course ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, May 2006 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON
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To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £6.00 or US$15.00 for 12 issues (dollar checks payable to Jean Upton, sterling cheques to me). Dollar prices quoted without qualification refer to US dollars. You can receive the DM electronically free of charge, as a Word attachment or as plain text. Please contact me by e-mail.

Michael Cox alerts me to the death on 25 June, at the age of seventy-eight, of **Pieter Rogers**, producer of the 1982 Granada TV serial *Young Sherlock: The Mystery of the Manor House.* In the course of his career he was personal assistant to Joseph Losey and aide to George Devine and then to Laurence Olivier before breaking into television. Peter Blau reports the death on 12 May of the prolific and versatile author **Arthur Porges**, whose stories of Stately Holmes began publication in the 1950s.

Naxos AudioBooks (18 High Street, Welwyn, Herts. AL6 9EQ) have released the antepenultimate set in David Timson's recording of the complete Canon: *His Last Bow* — or as Naxos entitles it *Reminiscences of Sherlock Holmes (His Last Bow): The Adventure of Wisteria Lodge and other stories.*'The Cardboard Box' was correctly reinstated in *The Memoirs*, so the current volume contains just seven stories. What stories they are, though, and what an opportunity for a first-class reader! Mr Timson makes the most of it; his intonation and timing are impeccable. His handling of the humour in 'Wisteria Lodge' is as precise as that of the tragedy of 'The Devil's Foot' and of the sheer excitement of 'The Bruce-Partington Plans'. That last is a favourite of mine, featuring as it does fog, espionage, the London Underground, Brother Mycroft, Inspector Lestrade, and Holmes and Watson on their best form. It lacks only Mrs Hudson. So when I encounter a particularly fine treatment of the story, I rejoice. My one quibble with this set is that, in 'His Last Bow', Von Herling and Von Bork speak to each other in German-accented English, a cliché that has, perhaps, had its day. But that's a minor point. Nicolas Soames's production is immaculate, David Timson provides full and pertinent notes, and the reading is enhanced by incidental music by Mendelssohn. I have no hesitation in recommending this grand six-CD set. And we still have *The Valley of Fear* and *The Casebook* to look forward to!

The Friends of Dr Watson (Nino Cirone, 31 Muswell Hill, Flat 2, London N10 2EB) have published a new monograph, *Gangsters and Gadabouts* by Tim Healey, priced at £6.00, □9.00 or $12.00, postpaid. Cheques payable to Nino Cirone, please.

The Book People are currently offering the nine-volume Penguin edition of the complete Canon, plus Richard Lancelyn Green's excellent anthology *The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, for just £9.99. You can buy on-line at www.thebookpeople.co.uk. Search for 'Sherlock Holmes Collection'.

Next month I hope to review *Holmes of the Raj* by Vithal Rajan, recently published by Writers Workshop (162/92 Lake Gardens, Kolkata 700 045, India) at 300 Rupees or $6.50 plus postage. Dr Rajan says, 'This book is more about the Raj at the height of its power than about detection. It is deliberately written as an "Orientalist" piece of fiction, tongue in cheek, with Holmes and Watson appropriating to themselves leadership in several fields, from hockey to mathematics.'

Look under 'Sherlock Holmes' on www.amazon.co.uk or, better, on www.amazon.com and you'll find any number of new Holmes stories. As an example: *The Secret Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by Paul E Heusinger (Authors To Believe In, c/o Lifevest Publishing Inc., 4901 E Dry Creek Road #170, Centennial, CO 80122, USA; $14.95). 'These are the adventures of Holmes and Watson deemed too secret to be recorded. Although never written down by Dr John T Watson *[*sic*]* he did compose them nonetheless; by memorizing them, each one in turn, long enough for a mental telepathy, of sorts, to occur...' I don't think I'll be reviewing this one.

More new and forthcoming titles. *Sherlock Holmes on Screen*, the third, revised edition of Alan Barnes's invaluable reference guide (Reynolds & Hearn, 61A Priory Road, Kew Gardens, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3DH; 28 July; £17.99). *Oscar Slater: The Immortal Case of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle* by Thomas Toughill (Sutton Publishing, Phoenix Mill, Thrupp, Stroud, Gloucs. GL5 2BU; 1 August; £10.99). *[*Mr Toughill featured in the BBC4 documentary* Conan Doyle for the Defence *last Christmas.*] Sherlock Holmes' Guide to Life* — quotations from the Canon (Vince Emery Productions, PO Box 460279, San Francisco, CA 94146, USA; 1 September; £11.50). *Evidence-based Medicine in Sherlock Holmes' Footsteps* by Jorgen Nordenstrom (Blackwell Publishing, 9600 Garsington Road, Cowley, Oxford OX4 2DQ; 31 October; £12.99. *Conan Doyle: Detective* by Peter Costello (Robinson Publishing, 3 The Lanchesters, 162 Fulham Palace Road, London W6 9ER; 12 October; £7.99). *[*This may be a new edition of* The Real World of Sherlock Holmes.*] Sherlock in Shanghai: Stories of Crime and Detection* by Cheng Xiaoquing, translated by Timothy C Wong (University of Hawaii Press, 2840 Kolowalu Street, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822, USA; November; £38.50 [paperback £16.95]). *[*These tales of Huo Sang and Bao Lang were written in the 1920s, and consciously inspired by the adventures of Holmes and Watson.*] Narcissism of Empire: Loss, Rage and Revenge in the Novels of Thomas De Quincey, Robert Louis Stevenson, Arthur Conan Doyle, Rudyard Kipling and Isak Dinesen* (Sussex Academic Press, PO Box 2950, Brighton BN2 5SP; December; £55.00 [paperback £17.95]).

There are new catalogues from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk) and **Janus Books** (PO Box 40787, Tucson, AZ 85717, USA; http://janusbooks.com/unusual_SH.html).

Big things have happened within the past few weeks. The exhibition *Conan Doyle and Joseph Bell, the Real Sherlock Holmes* opened at the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (Surgeons' Hall, Nicolson Street, Edinburgh) on 5 July. It's open 10.00am - 4.00pm till 14 September. Charles Foley, Sir Arthur's great-nephew, visited the exhibition and met Dr Bell's great-grandson. While in Edinburgh, Charles also presented the manuscript of 'The Illustrious Client' to the National Library of Scotland, to whom it was bequeathed by Dame Jean Conan Doyle. *[*Thanks to Dennis Collins for a report from The Dundee Courier.*]*

On 15 July, Norman Lamb MP unveiled a Blue Plaque at the Hill House hotel at Happisburgh in Norfolk, commemorating Arthur Conan Doyle's visits there when it was owned by a member of the Cubitt family. Out of those visits came 'The Dancing Men'. The plaque was organised and sponsored by the *Eastern Daily Press* in conjunction with the Norwich School of Art & Design.

Finally, an application for 'listed building consent' to convert Undershaw, the house that Conan Doyle had built for himself and

his first wife and children at Hindhead, into apartments was withdrawn after protests by the Victorian Society, supported by the Sherlock Holmes Society of London, the Baker Street Irregulars, the Arthur Conan Doyle Society and other interested groups. Conan Doyle's years at Undershaw (1897 - 1906) were among the most productive and significant of his life. Undershaw is the only surviving residence to retain important features installed by Conan Doyle himself, and the aim now is to get its listing upgraded to Grade I.

To the list of notable Holmesian chronologists can now be added the Swiss scholar **Vincent Delay**. Our Society would like to publish his chronology in English (the fairly brief original is in French) but needs the services of a competent translator. If you're interested, please contact me.

The Sherlock Holmes Memorabilia Company (230 Baker Street, London NW1 5RT; phone 020 7486 1426) is running what amounts to a closing-down sale, as Marcelle and Justin expect to be out of the premises before the end of August.

Bob Byrne, whose website www.holmesonscreen.com is a must for the Sherlockian film fan, has learned that the National Film & Television Archive of the British Film Institute has copies on non-flammable stock of all forty-seven of Eille Norwood's Sherlock Holmes films, made by Stoll between 1921 and 1922. There are no plans to make them commercially available, but they can be viewed by students, academics and researchers at the Archive.

Andrew Baldwin notes that the 1954 television films with Ronald Howard and H Marion Crawford as Holmes and Watson are currently being shown on Sky's Bonanza channel (channel 165) at 10.00am and 7.00pm daily.

As promised, *Sherlock* has returned. Its title is now *Sherlock Magazine*, David Stuart Davies is back in the editor's chair, and the focus is once more on Sherlock Holmes *[*hurrah!*]*. Issue 67 features Paul Chapman on Holmes and the softer emotions; Richard Valley on *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror;* M J Elliott on Mr Holmes and Dr Who; Mark Valentine on villains in the Canon; Matthew Booth on Holmes and justice; David Stuart Davies on the Reichenbach business; a grand new story by M J Elliott — and much besides. The presentation is glossy, colourful and professional. A single issue costs £3.95. A six-issue subscription is £23.70 UK; £35.00 Europe; £46.00 or $70.00 rest of world; from Atlas Publishing Ltd, Jordan House, Old Milton Green, New Milton, Hants. BH25 6QJ (subs@sherlockholmes.com). The website is at www.sherlockholmes.com.

M J Elliott tells me that Murder One in London now stocks volumes 1 - 11 of *The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* on CD. This is the American radio series from Imagination Theatre, to which Matthew Booth, John Hall and Matthew Elliott all contribute. The productions, very reminiscent of the great radio series of the 1940s, are also accessible at www.jimfrenchproductions.com. *[*The third season of Bert Coules' similarly titled series, starring Clive Merrison and Andrew Sachs, will be broadcast next year by BBC Radio 4.*]*

On 7 September Hodder & Stoughton Audio Books will release *The Sherlock Holmes Collection*, an eight-CD set of the radio plays by John Keir Cross, with John Gielgud and Ralph Richardson as Holmes and Watson (130 Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon. OX14 4SB; £24.99).

The Metropolitan Police Crime Museum (the famous 'Black Museum') was reopened on 14 July after refurbishment. One of the new exhibits is *The Lighter Side of My Official Life* by Sir Robert Anderson, head of the CID at the time of the Whitechapel murders of 1888. This copy had belonged to ex-Superintendent Donald Swanson, who had charge of the investigation from 1 September to 6 October. His handwritten notes in the book enlarge on many of Anderson's references, notably naming the chief suspect as Aaron Kosminski. This is not actually news, though, as the 'Swanson marginalia' have been known for some twenty years. You'll find a good account in, for example, *The Jack the Ripper A to Z* by Paul Begg, Martin Fido and Keith Skinner (Headline, 1991). *[*The Black Museum is not open to the public.*]*

Goode Press, who published a lovely limited edition of *A Scandal in Bohemia* for Sidney Paget's 145th birthday, will mark his 146th with an online version, including all Paget's illustrations in full colour. The 'cyber-chapbook' is a cost-free, advertisement-free gift to the Sherlockian community, accessible at www.sidneypaget.com from 4 October. All rights and copyrights are reserved by Goode Press.

Bob Byrne is preparing the first annual edition of *The Solar Pons Gazette*, to be available at www.solarpons.com. This is excellent news for admirers of 'the Sherlock Holmes of Praed Street', especially as the last issue of *The Pontine Dossier*, journal of **The Praed Street Irregulars**, was published in 1977!

Simon Hall of **The Baker Street Fellowship** informs me that the Fellowship now has a website, at <221bbakerstreet.com.ar> *[*that's a suffix I haven't encountered before*]*.

Publications received. ***The Arthur Conan Doyle Collection Lancelyn Green Bequest Newsletter,*** Spring/Summer 2006 (Stephen Baily, Head of Culture, Portsmouth City Council, Civic Offices, Guildhall Walk, Portsmouth PO1 2AD; e-mail lancelyngreencollection@portsmouthcc.gov.uk; the website is at www.conandoylecollection.co.uk) *[*the introductory exhibition at Portsmouth City Museum runs till 24 September*]*. ***Bohemian Newsletter*** no. 65 (**České společnost Sherlocka Holmese**, Aleš Kolodrubec, Milešovská 1, 130 00 Praha 3, Czech Republic). ***The Camden House Journal***, June 2006 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). ***Communication***, 'Special Spin Issue 2006' and July/August 2006 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Wanda & Jeff Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA). ***The Confederate Chronicles***, July 18, 2006 (**The Confederates of Wisteria Lodge**, Kent Ross, 6875 Fielder, Rex, GA 30273, USA). ***Explorations***, Spring 2006 (**The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota**, John Bergquist, 3665 Ashbury Road, Eagan, MN 55122, USA). ***For the Sake of the Trust***, ***For the Sake of the Trust***, Spring 2006 (**The Baker Street Irregulars Trust**, Julie McKuras, 13512 Granada Avenue, Apple Valley, MN 55124, USA) *[*this is the Trust that administers the BSI Archives*]*. ***The Illustrious Clients News***, July 2006 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). ***Ineffable Twaddle***, July 2006 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA).

The Magic Door, Spring 2006 (**The Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection**, Doug Wrigglesworth, 16 Sunset Street, Holland Landing, Ontario, Canada L9N 1H4) *[*a Board of four has taken over editorial responsibilities from Peter Wood*]*. ***The Parallelogram,*** June 2006 (**The Parallel Case of St Louis**, Joseph J Eckrich, 914 Oakmoor Drive, Fenton, MO 63026-7008, USA). ***Practice Notes***, June 2006 (**The Friends of Dr Watson**, Nino Cirone, 31 Muswell Avenue, Flat 2, London N10 2EB). ***Prescott's Press***, June 2006 (**The Three Garridebs**, Warren Randall, 15 Fawn Lane West, South Setauket, NY 11720-1346, USA). ***Quivers on the Web***, July 2006 (**221B**, Philip Weller, 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 6RU). ***The Serpentine Muse***, Summer 2006 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 301 Warren Ave, #203, Baltimore, MD 21203, USA). ***The Sherlock Holmes Journal***, summer 2006 *[*but I trust you already knew about this*]*. ***Sherlockiana***, nr. 2-3, 2006 (**Sherlock Holmes Klubben i Danmark**, Mia Stampe Lagergaard, Nivågade 3, 2. th., 2200 København n., Denmark). ***3 Pipe Problem Plugs and Dottles***, April-June 2006 and July 2006 (**The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem**, Kay Blocker, 5017 Maywood Drive, Nashville, TN 37211, USA pkblocker@comcast.net).

And ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, June 2006 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON
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no. 265 27 August 2006

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Brian Mills, who died on 3 June aged seventy-two, is most closely associated with *Coronation Street*, but he directed many other quality dramas for Granada, including *Silver Blaze* and *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (both 1988). **David Maloney**, who died on 18 July also aged seventy-two, worked mainly for BBC TV, directing many episodes of *Doctor Who,* including the 1977 thriller *The Talons of Weng-Chiang,* in which the Doctor dons a deerstalker and Inverness to investigate horrible murders in Victorian London. Michael Cox alerted me to the death on 28 July of that splendid actor **Patrick Allen** at the age of seventy-nine. Allen's career embraced Shakespeare, Dickens, action movies, comedies, and much else. In 1986 he was a superb Colonel Sebastian Moran in *The Empty House* for Granada TV.

Sherlock Holmes and a Question of Science by Christopher Lindsey (Hadley Pager Info, Fetcham Park House, Lower Road, Fetcham, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 9HD; £12.50) deals, as the title suggests, with aspects of science in the stories. Sample chapters, for instance, are headed 'The Medical Record (Medicine and Pharmacology)', 'Lady Nicotine and the Three Pipe Problem (Tobacco and Smoking)' and 'Bullets, Sharp Blades and Blunt Instruments (Ballistics and Weaponry)'. The main part of each chapter is essentially a list — under 'Animal or Vegetable? (Natural History)' we find Dr Roylott's household zoo, Teddy the mongoose, the 'remarkable worm, said to be unknown to science'... and, *inter alia*, the worms that 'are seen to have eaten their way through the wooden box Holmes finds in the chamber beneath the cellar of Hurlstone'! Equally important, though, are the extensive notes to each chapter, which could almost have been published separately as a Sherlock Holmes encyclopaedia. Mr Lindsay is conscientious (though he misses the significance of the spelling 'plows' in 'The Three Garridebs', and the difference between a gasogene and a seltzogene) and he has a dry sense of humour: of smoking concerts he notes, 'It is unlikely that cigarettes were smoked by the instrumentalists between pieces, least of all the woodwind and brass players, as they needed quite a different kind of puff to give a satisfactory musical performance.' The curious Sherlockian (is there another kind?) will find much of interest in *Sherlock Holmes and a Question of Science*. You can order it direct from the publisher (send a cheque for £12.50 payable to Hadley Pager Info), or any good bookshop. It's in stock at Murder One in Charing Cross Road and the Sherlock Holmes Museum at 239 Baker Street.

In his new booklet, *The* Real *Irene Adler: Caroline Norton née Sheridan*, Hugo Koch makes a convincing case for Richard Brinsley Sheridan's granddaughter as the inspiration for *the* woman. Mr Koch has kindly sent me four extra numbered and signed copies, which can be had by the first four applicants within the UK, for the price of postage.

The Agony Column Codes & Ciphers by Jean Palmer (authorsonline.co.uk, c/o Gardners Books Ltd, 1 Whittle Drive, Willingdon Drove, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN23 6QH; £12.95) reprints over a thousand secret messages, with their keys where available, from the personal columns of various newspapers. It sounds likes something that would pique Holmes's interest.

On Friday 6 October, Marylebone Library will host the press launch of a new book about Jeremy Brett and Sherlock Holmes, published by **MDF the Bi-Polar Organisation** (formerly the Manic-Depression Fellowship, of which JB was a strong supporter). Details are currently under wraps.

From Oneworld Publications (185 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7AR) in November comes *Edgar Allan Poe and the Murder of Mary Rogers* (£16.99) in which Daniel Stashower tells the story behind Poe's second tale of the Chevalier C Auguste Dupin, 'The Mystery of Marie Rogêt'.

There's much of interest in *The Sherlockian E-Times* from **Classic Specialties** (PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA; www.sherlock-holmes.com), and in the new catalogues from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk) and **Black Cat Bookshop** (90 Charles Street, Leicester LE1 1GE; blackcatuk@aol.com).

A handsome cover portrait of Jeremy Brett shows that issue 68 of *Sherlock Magazine* maintains the pattern set by the previous number. Richard Valley revisits the Rathbone film *Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon;* Paul M Chapman considers Holmes as a lasting cultural icon; David Stuart Davies interviews Nick Rennison, author of *Sherlock Holmes. the Unauthorised Biography;* DSD also observes Holmes as a boxer; Matthew Booth concludes his look at Holmes as a dispenser of justice; Denis O Smith contributes a cracking new Sherlock Holmes story, 'The Adventure of the Brown Box'; Neil McCaw surveys the introductory exhibition drawn from the Richard Lancelyn Green bequest at Portsmouth; I investigate Holmes's relationship with the police; Robert Sanderson reviews the achievement of the American radio drama company Imagination Theatre ... and there are contributions from Charles Prepolec, Pat Ward, Kathryn White and Moriarty. A single issue costs £3.95. A six-issue subscription is £23.70 UK; £35.00 Europe; £46.00 or $70.00 rest of world; from Atlas Publishing Ltd, Jordan House, Old Milton Green, New Milton, Hants. BH25 6QJ (subs@sherlockholmes.com). The website is at www.sherlockholmes.com.

*[*David and Kathryn have moved from Huddersfield, so the temporary editorial address is: 31 Matthew Lane, Meltham, West Yorks. HD9 5JS; phone 01484 854576.*]*

The monthly National Rail Timetable, the successor to Bradshaw, is to be discontinued since the information is now, theoretically, available in seconds online or by phone. Railway enthusiast Pete Waterman lamented its passing in The Daily Telegraph on 18 July.

Last month Andrew Sachs played Adso of Melk in a two-part BBC Radio 4 dramatisation of *The Name of the Rose* — appropriate, since he's Watson to Clive Merrison's Holmes in Bert Coules' series *The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes.* If anyone recorded *The Name of the Rose* I'd be most grateful for a copy.

Looking towards Inside Justice Week in November, the government has set up an online poll where you can vote for the best fictional agent of justice. A couple of days ago Sherlock Holmes was well ahead of the field, but his rivals are a pretty odd bunch. Besides Inspector Morse, James Bond, Rumpole of the Bailey and Miss Marple, they include Iris Cope (of *Probation*

Officer), Mr Barrowclough (of *Porridge*) and Danger Mouse! The website is http://insidejustice.cjsonline.gov.uk/polls/index.php.

Dr **Vithal Rajan** of Hyderabad and Montreal, author of *Holmes of the Raj* (Writers Workshop, 162/92 Lake Gardens, Kolkata 700 045, India; 300 Rupees or $6.50 plus postage) has been appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada for achievement and merit in voluntary service.

Michael Harper informs me of a lecture at 12.30pm on Thursday 28 September at the National Army Museum in Royal Hospital Road, Chelsea: *Conan Doyle at War: From the White Company to the Western Front, 1914-18* by Dr Andy Simpson of the Centre for First World War Studies. Admission is free, and no booking is needed. The website is at www.national-army-museum.ac.uk.

From 9.30am till noon on 7 October, the Newberry Library at 60 W. Walton Street, Chicago will host a **Sherlock Holmes/Arthur Conan Doyle Colloquium** featuring lectures on 'Doyle's Favorite Book', 'Dr Arthur Conan Doyle: A Self Portrait', and more. Speakers will be Dan Posnansky, Paul Martin and Glen Miranker. Phone 312 943 9090 for details. This is one item of many that have come my way via Scott Monty's *Baker Street Blog* at http://bakerstreetjournal.blogspot.com.

Cotton Grass Theatre Company will shortly tour with Justin Webb's play *Sherlock Holmes and the Final Problem*, which 'explores the complex and creative minds of both his creator, Arthur Conan Doyle, and the real life deductive genius on whom he was based — Dr Joseph Bell.' September venues are: 8th, **Cannock Wood Village Hall**; 9th, **Bedworth Arts Centre**; 10th, **Lantern Theatre**, Sheffield; 12th, **Roses Theatre**, Kidderminster; 14th-16th, **Pomegranate Theatre**, Chesterfield; 17th, **Square Chapel**, Halifax; 21st, **The Hub**, Oswestry; 22nd, **Talbot Theatre**, Whitchurch; 23rd, **Cawley Hall**, Morton Eye; 27th, **Highfields School**, Matlock; 28th, **Derby Guild Hall**; 29th, **Berwick Maltings Arts Centre**. The website is at www.cottongrass.mirai.co.uk.

Mark Dindal, director of *Chicken Little*, is due to make his live-action debut with *Sherlock's Secretary*, written by Julie Golden. Reuters says, 'Holmes famously resided at 221B Baker Street, and the address — now the Sherlock Holmes Museum — has been receiving letters from people seeking Holmes' help in solving real crimes. The film will centre on the person living at that address, whose world is turned upside down when he gets one of these letters and decides to take on a case.' *[*It was Abbey National whose offices incorporated 221 Baker Street and who for nearly sixty years employed a succession of people to act as Holmes's secretary. The Sherlock Holmes Museum at 239 Baker Street pretends that its address is 221B, but it isn't and never has been.*]*

Peter Blau reports Ken Lanza's discovery of www.dailyscript.com, 'a collection of movie scripts and screenplays intended "to serve as a resource for writers and actors and those who simply enjoy reading movie scripts".' Billy Wilder and IAL Diamond's script for *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* is one of those accessible on the site.

Our member **MC Black** is an established guide for walking tours through Holmes's London, and his portfolio of routes continues to expand. He currently offers: Bloomsbury to Charing Cross; St James's Park to Marble Arch; Oxford Circus to Baker Street (the Empty House walk); and Liverpool Street to Saxe-Coburg Square. No, you won't find the name of Saxe-Coburg Square on any official map, but MC reckons to have discovered the real location of Jabez Wilson's pawnshop! There's no schedule: he will arrange walks to suit clients. Phone him on 01920 467930, or e-mail him at MCB@DetectiveWalks.co.uk.

Guided tours are also offered at **Stonyhurst College**, Arthur Conan Doyle's *alma mater* near Clitheroe in Lancashire. According to the Lancashire Evening Post, 'Tours are available daily (except Fridays and the August Bank Holiday). No dogs allowed. 1-5pm. For more information, call 01254 826345.'

Conan Doyle's Hampshire house, **Bignell Wood** at Brook, near Minstead where he and his second wife are buried, is currently for sale by Savills. The asking price is in excess of £1,450,000 — which gets you eight bedrooms, eight reception rooms, conservatory, detached garage block, five acres of grounds, and private access to the New Forest. See savills.co.uk.

Scott Monty has created a new feature arising from the *Baker Street Blog*. He 'started with Peter Blau's master list of Sherlockian societies, then mapped them all on a new site called Frappr in order to give us the beginnings of **Sherlockians Around the World**. This site uses Yahoo's/Google's mapping technology and allows us to create a visual/virtual community of Sherlockians around the world. It is entirely interactive, so you can add your name, photo, make comments, edit your scion society contact information (including adding a Web address if appropriate). It works for individuals as well as scions, and Sherlockian sites of interest. Take a look at http://bakerstreetjournal.blogspot.com/2006/08/well-i-chose-august.html.

LM Goode, sole proprietor of Goode Press, announces the formation of a new Sherlock Holmes Society with a membership of one. The 'group' will be called **The Friendless Drifter** — one of the world's most dangerous classes. When queried if this name sounded self-pitying, Goode replied. 'It's tongue-in-cheek. I'm sure all the Sons of Beeches will understand.'

Periodicals received. ***The Baker Street Journal***, Summer 2006 (Steven Rothman, 220, West Rittenhouse Square, #15-D, Philadelphia, PA 19103, USA; subscriptions, PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA; correspondence for **The Baker Street Irregulars** should go to Michael Whelan, 7938 Mill Stream Circle, Indianapolis, IN 46278, USA). ***Bohemian Newsletter,*** nos. 66 and 67 (**České společnost Sherlocka Holmese**, Aleš Kolodrubec, Milešovská 1, 130 00 Praha 3, Czech Republic). ***The Camden House Journal***, July 2006 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). ***Canadian Holmes***, St Jean Baptiste Day (Summer) 2006 (**The Bootmakers of Toronto**, Trevor Raymond, 4 Lyons Court, Georgetown, Ontario L7G 1P1, Canada). ***The Confederate Chronicles***, August 5, 2006 (**The Confederates of Wisteria Lodge**, Kent Ross, 6875 Fielder, Rex, GA 30273, USA). ***Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections***, June 2006 (Suite 111, Elmer L Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, 222 21st Avenue S, Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA). ***Grimpen Mire Gazette***, July 2006 (**Hugo's Companions**, David C Humphrey, 1843 Winnetka Road, Northfield, IL 60093, USA).

Ineffable Twaddle, August 2006 and September 2006 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA). ***The Passengers' Log***, Autumn & Winter Issues (**The Sydney Passengers**, Rosane McNamara, 4/2a Merlin Street, Neutral Bay, NSW 2089, Australia). ***The Petrel Flyer***, Summer 2006 and Autumn 2006 (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7P 3C6). ***The School Report***, Autumn Term 2006 (**The Priory Scholars**, Horace L Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY). ***The Scion***, Summer 2006 (**The Musgraves**, Anne Jordan, Hallas Lodge, Greenside Lane, Cullingworth, Bradford BD13 5AP). *The Solar Pons Gazette*, Summer 2006 (**www.solarpons.com**, Bob Byrne, bob.byrne@solarpons.com.) ***3 Pipe Problem Plugs and Dottles***, August 2006 (**The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem**, Kay Blocker, 5017 Maywood Drive, Nashville, TN 37211, USA <pkblocker@comcast.net>). ***The Whaling News***, May, June, July and August 2006 (**The Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn**, Michael E Bragg, PO Box 256, St Charles, MO 63302-0256, USA).

And of course ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, July 2006 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON
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no. 266 26 September 2006

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Barbara Van Buskirk, who died on 30 August aged fifty-six, was a long-time member of the Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes and a frequent contributor to *The Serpentine Muse*, whose cover she designed. **Ronald Mansbridge,** the oldest member of the Baker Street Irregulars, died on 1 September in his hundred and first year. English by birth, he was to found the American branch of Cambridge University Press, having been recruited to the company by S C Roberts. He attended his first BSI dinner in 1936 and received his investiture as 'A Case of Identity' in 1998! **Robert S Schultz** ('The *Gloria Scott'*, BSI), who died on 7 September aged eighty-nine, began contributing to *The Baker Street Journal* in the mid-1940s and won the BSJ's Morley-Montgomery Award for 2002, in which year he also received his investiture.

Though her career encompassed much else, the actress and singer **Stella Moray**, who died on 6 August, shortly after her eighty-third birthday, will be remembered fondly by habitués (and Sons of Habitués) of the Players' Theatre Music Hall. **David Plowright**, who died on 25 August aged seventy-five, was MD of Granada Television 1975-1987 and chairman from 1987 until his dismissal in 1992 by the new boss of the Granada Group. Plowright's legacy of quality television, including the *Sherlock Holmes* series, now seems a world away. **Frank Middlemass**, who died on 8 September, aged eighty-seven, played Dan in *The Archers*, Algy Herries in *To Serve Them All My Days*, Rocky Hardcastle in *As Time Goes By*, and was extraordinarily moving as the Fool to Michael Hordern's King Lear, on stage and screen. In 1968 he played Peterson in *The Blue Carbuncle* for BBC TV, and in 1984 was outstanding as Henry Baker in Granada's production of the same story.

Holmes of the Raj by Vithal Rajan (162/92 Lake Gardens, Kolkata 700 045, India; at 300 Rupees or $6.50 plus postage) is, I think, the most stimulating new Holmesian fiction I've read in several years. Dr Rajan writes well, and is familiar with the usage of a century ago (though neither Watson nor Doyle would have allowed the word 'farting' into print). There are occasional typographical errors — the image of Watson 'pouring over dispatches' is an odd one — but the book is very handsomely produced: 'gold-embossed, hand-stitched, hand-pasted & hand-bound by Tulamiah Mohiuddin with handloom sari cloth woven & designed in India.' But the essence of it is the content. The Holmes and Watson we meet here are the men we know so well from the writings of Arthur Conan Doyle, and they think and behave just as they should. It's entirely plausible that they should be sent on a confidential mission to India in 1888, and that they should meet the Viceroy and various senior officials and nobility, as well as Madame Blavatsky, Rudyard Kipling, Motilal Nehru, Rabindranath Tagore and others. This was when 'the Great Game' was at its height, and movements for independence were beginning to be taken seriously.

It's even plausible that Holmes and Watson should encounter the people upon whom Mowgli and Kim were based — and that the latter should prove to be something rather different from the character described by Kipling. Vithal Rajan says that the book 'is deliberately written as an "Orientalist" piece of fiction, tongue in cheek,' and he clearly had fun in writing it, just as I had in reading it. In the story 'Kim and Kim Again' he comes perilously close to parody, but despite introducing a character who calls himself 'Clark Gable' he never quite succumbs. The most impressive feature of the book may be the way in which he treats serious episodes in his country's history — and many of them are deadly serious, with profound effects still felt today. Dr Rajan's touch is light but never frivolous. His Holmes and Watson are humane imperialists, which is just what they would be. *Holmes of the Raj* is an admirable collection and well worthy of your attention The publisher's website is at www.writersworkshopkolkata.com.

Those who missed the recent expedition to the Peak District should invest in a copy of the handbook, *This Dark Square: A Priory School Examination*, edited by Bob Ellis (£6.00 or $15.00 postpaid from Judi Ellis, 13 Crofton Avenue, Orpington, Kent BR6 8DU). Nicholas Utechin writes on class, Bob Ellis on the plover and the curlew, and 'Horace' gives his Sidelights on Huxtable, but most of the forty-six pages are given over to admirable work by Jonathan McCafferty and Guy Marriott, who between them consider the location of the school and Holdernesse Hall, the railway journey from Euston, the running of the Priory School, a parallel to James Wilder, cockfighting in the Ashbourne area, trams, and a curious educational legacy.

The really exciting feature of the book, and of the weekend, is Jonathan's discovery of a new and geographically convincing candidate for Holdernesse Hall, with associated identifications of Mackleton, the 'Fighting Cock', and the Priory School itself. *[*Ilam Hall is the house. All it lacks is the ducal connection.*] This Dark Square* is a worthy addition to our Society's distinguished catalogue of publications.

On Friday 6 October, Marylebone Library will host the press launch of David Stuart Davies's book *Dancing in the Moonlight: Jeremy Brett — a Celebration*, published by **MDF the Bi-Polar Organisation** (formerly the Manic-Depression Fellowship, of which JB was a strong supporter). The topic is currently in the spotlight, thanks to Stephen Fry's excellent two-part documentary on BBC2. [**I wonder if Stephen Fry would have been so open about his manic-depression if it hadn't been for Jeremy Brett.*]*

I've just received a copy of *The Printer's Proof* by Shuggie Ó Scolláin (Cadds Printing Ltd, 59 Lancaster Avenue, West Norwood, London SE27 9EL; no price given). There is some Sherlockian relevance, and I'll review the book in the next DM.

Rehearsals for Oblivion, Act I: Tales of the King in Yellow edited by Peter A Worthy (Dimensions Books, PO Box 389, Lake Orion, MI 48361-0389, USA; $17.95) is a collection inspired by the extraordinary weird tales written in the 1890s by Robert W Chambers. The reason I have a copy is that I contributed one of the stories, but I mention it here because another, 'The Adventure of the Yellow Sign' by G Warlock Vance, is a Sherlock Holmes story — which I haven't yet had the chance to read.

Michael Connolly notes that *Dracula, Bk 1: Asylum* by Paul Witcover (Dark Horse Comics; £4.99 from www.amazon.co.uk) features Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson.

There's lots of interest in *The Sherlockian E-Times*, the latest catalogue-newsletter from Classic Specialties. See it at www.sherlock-holmes.com/e-times14.htm, request an electronic subscription at the website, www.sherlock-holmes.com or write to PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA.

It's not certain yet whether L M Goode will admit others to the provocatively named society **The Friendless Drifter**. Meanwhile the Goode Press offers another treat for Sidney Paget's birthday on 4 October. The lovely chapbook edition of *A Scandal in Bohemia* (see DM 256) has been converted by a technological miracle to an even more splendid cyber-chapbook, with additional illustrations, annotations, dialogue, music, a new portrait by Pablo Carreno, and more besides. The website at http://sidneypaget.com deserves the patronage of all who treasure the work of Sidney Paget.

From Russ Mann via Peter Blau: now accessible on the internet is *Crime Scene Sketches*: *Reproduced in Fac-Simile from the Pen and Ink Drawings in the Note Book of a Private Enquiry Agent*, edited by Thomas F Hanratty and Daniel P King, published in 1976 with an introduction by John Bennett Shaw. 'Hanratty, a forensic investigator, analyzed crime scenes in seventeen Sherlock Holmes stories.' It's at www.redbirdstudio.com.CrimeScenes.' *[*An ingenious and original look at the Canon. I'm very pleased to see it available again.*]*

There's just time to go to www.quillsvote.com and register your support for *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes: The Novels*, edited by Leslie Klinger, nominated for a Quill Award in the Mystery/Thriller/Suspense category. The Quills are voted for by the reading public. The closing date is 30 September, and the winners will be announced at a dinner in New York City on 10 October. The book is also in the running for an Anthony at Bouchercon 2006, held in Madison, WI. The winners will be announced on 30 September.

Arthur Conan Doyle, played by Richard Wilson, is due to feature in BBC4's Christmas offering *The Acid Test*, based on Ian Rankin's short story, and with Inspector Rebus replaced by Jim Buchan, played by Alec Newman. Ian Rankin says he's 'delighted' and will make a cameo appearance.

Despite all the evidence, Rodger Garrick-Steele is still trying to have Bertram Fletcher Robinson's body exhumed in hopes of proving that the poor fellow was murdered by Arthur Conan Doyle to cover up the latter's non-existent plagiarism of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and his non-existent affair with Mrs Robinson. Peter Blau reports that Thunderball Films plan to start filming a 'reality documentary' based on this nonsense. Their website is at www.thunderballfilms.com.

After twenty-one years Geoff Bradley's excellent magazine *CADS* (G H Bradley, 9 Vicarage Hill, South Benfleet, Essex SS7 1PA; £5.50) has reached its 50th issue. There's nothing specifically Sherlockian this time, but any devotee of Crime And Detective Stories will find lots of interest: Dashiell Hammett, Victor Canning, Michael Gilbert, V C Clinton-Baddeley, Leslie Charteris, and more.

At www.geocities.com/jim_hollingsworth/baker.htm?20066 you'll find the first act of *The Baker Street Irregulars*, a new Sherlock Holmes musical, book by J E Hollingsworth, music by S Carlton and D L Graham. Characters include Mrs Hudson, Professor Moriarty, Colonel Moran, Irene Adler, Alexander Holder and his family, and Inspector Lestrade. If you're looking for a musical to stage, this could be it.

Matthew Elliott has alerted me to the extensive catalogue of spoken word Sherlockiana available from www.audible.com. Besides the BBC radio recordings and the readings by David Timson, Edward Hardwicke, David Ian Davies, and Christopher Lee; there are also readings by Walter Covell, Tony Britton, Frederick Davidson, and Richard Green, and writings by Barry Day, Mitch Cullin, Laurie R King, Daniel Stashower, Hesketh Pearson, David Pirie, Michael Chabon, Colin Dexter, and David Stuart Davies.

In January Ascaron Entertainment (UK) will release the new Sherlock Holmes computer game from Frogwares/93 Games. *The Awakened* takes Holmes into the world of H P Lovecraft's weird tales: 'The game, based on an excellent scenario, plunges the player into the heart of a terrifying investigation. Sherlock Holmes, assisted by the loyal Doctor Watson, investigates strange disappearances, which seem related to the activity of a secret sect. The adventure begins in London, in the renowned Baker Street, taking us then to investigate a disturbing psychiatric hospital near Basle, Switzerland, then on to Louisiana and finally to Scotland.' It looks like fun! www.sherlockholmes-thegame.com is the website. Ascaron is at www.ascaron.com.

Peter Blau notes that the **Sherlock Holmes Festival** in Tryon, NC, 3-6 November 'will include theatrical performances, meals, memorabilia, presentations, displays, and a contest.' See the website at www.sherlockholmesfestival.com.

The autumn meeting of **The Musgraves** on 14 October will take the theme *Time for Holmes;* it will consider how the media portrayal of Holmes and Watson is influenced both by Conan Doyle's writing and by the writers' and producers' own time. The meeting will be held at Steeton Hall Hotel, Steeton, near Keighley. Get details from Anne Jordan, Hallas Lodge, Greenside Lane, Cullingworth, Bradford BD13 5AP.

Autumn in New Orleans on 22 October is organised by **Le Cercle de Sherlock Holmes.** Steven Rothman, editor of *The Baker Street Journal* will be guest speaker. Details are available from Jens Byskov Jensen at 221b@byskovjensen.com.

The annual meeting of the Geological Society of America will be held in Philadelphia, and **The Practical, But Limited, Geologists** will dine at McGillan's Ale House on 25 October 'in honour of the world's first forensic geologist. There will be no scholarly papers, slide shows or quizzes ... only toasts (and often quite a few of them).' Peter Blau is the organiser: <blau7103@comcast.net>. On 27 October **The Sons of the Copper Beeches** will hold their Diogenes Luncheon at the Union League in Philadelphia, followed in the evening by a meeting at the Racquet Club. Next day **Mycroft's League** will tour the Edgar Allan Poe House, then have lunch at Fair Mount, and discover Poe, Dickens ans Conan Doyle in Philadelphia. Details from Gideon Hill: onbridle@verizon.net.

Periodicals received. ***Bohemian Newsletter,*** no. 68 (**eské spole nost Sherlocka Holmese**, Aleš Kolodrubec, Milešovská 1, 130 00 Praha 3, Czech Republic). ***The Camden House Journal***, August 2006 and September 2006 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). ***Communication***, September/October 2006 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Wanda & Jeff Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA).

The Confederate Chronicles, August 5, 2006 (**The Confederates of Wisteria Lodge**, Kent Ross, 6875 Fielder, Rex, GA 30273, USA). ***Grimpen Mire Gazette***, September 2006 (**Hugo's Companions**, David C Humphrey, 1843 Winnetka Road, Northfield, IL 60093, USA). ***The Illustrious Clients News***, August 2006 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). ***Mayday Mayday***, and ***Chronicler***, September 2006 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardcarn Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). *[*This is the last issue of* ***Chronicler****. From next April it will be replaced by a yet-unnamed bi-annual journal, and each issue of* ***Mayday Mayday*** *will be bigger.*]* ***3 Pipe Problem Plugs and Dottles***, September 2006 (**The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem**, Kay Blocker, 5017 Maywood Drive, Nashville, TN 37211, USA pkblocker@comcast.net).

And ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, August 2006 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

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no. 267 31 October 2006

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Peter Ling, who died on 14 September aged eighty, created two famous soap operas, *Compact* and *Crossroads*, and wrote for many different TV and radio dramas, including *The Avengers*, *Doctor Who*, *The Gideon Fell Mysteries* — and five scripts for Radio 4's Sherlock Holmes series with Clive Merrison and Michael Williams. **Val Andrews** died of a heart attack on 12 October. His popular Sherlock Holmes novels served him in lieu of the pension that a lifetime at the lower end of show business didn't provide, and his deep knowledge of magic and the music hall is evident in the best of them. I miss him for his kindness, his courtesy, and his fascinating reminiscences of people like Tommy Cooper and Orson Welles.

Just before the 'ACD at 35' celebrations in Toronto came the news that **Maureen Green** had died on 17 October as the result of a fall. With her husband Edwin van der Flaes, Maureen was held in affection and esteem by Holmesians in Canada, America, Britain and elsewhere (they participated in last year's Swiss Pilgrimage in which Maureen took the role of Agatha). In 1992 she was invested into the Baker Street Irregulars as 'Kitty Winter'. **Peter Barkworth** (d. 21 October, aged seventy-seven) was a highly watchable actor, who may be best remembered for dramas such as *The Power Game*, *Telford's Change* and *Crown Matrimonial.* In 1988 he was the perfect Colonel Ross in *Silver Blaze* for Granada TV.

Two new books were launched at Marylebone Library this month, both published by MDF The BiPolar Organisation (Castle Works, 21 St George's Road, London SE1 6ES). *Dancing in the Moonlight: Jeremy Brett — a celebration* by David Stuart Davies (£14.95) is something of a supplement to the same author's *Bending the Willow: Jeremy Brett as Sherlock Holmes* (Calabash Press, 1996). It fills in some of the details, notably relating to JB's manic-depression, in a more considered way than would have been possible soon after his death. Written by one who knew his subject, the book also serves as a corrective to *The Man Who Became Sherlock Holmes* by Terry Manners, which, despite the great title, is shallow, exploitative and tacky. Here, by contrast, we have a portrait of a great actor and his fight with both mental and physical illness. Edward Hardwicke and Jeremy Paul attended the launch; need I say more? Well, yes. Thanks to Stephen Fry's recent brave BBC documentary, manic-depression is probably more widely understood now than it has ever been, but we should remember that Jeremy Brett's last public engagement, shortly before his death, was an appeal on behalf of the Manic-Depression Fellowship. Sales of this admirable book will benefit what is now called MDF The BiPolar Organisation.

Rags to Riches: The Case of the Hire Shop Fiend by Richard Roberts (£7.99) is a much slighter affair. It's a story in rhyme for young children, with full-colour illustrations by the versatile author. The characters are all costumes in a hire shop, and it takes Sherlock (deerstalker and tweed cape, of course) to find out who shot Saville the evening suit and destroyed Tiffany the ball-gown. This nice little fantasy is a very charming addition to the list of Holmesian books for young readers.

The Printer's Proof by Shuggie Ó Scolláin (Cadds Printing Ltd, 59 Lancaster Avenue, West Norwood, London SE27 9EL; £8.99) is a fictionalised account of how the British printing unions were screwed by crooked newspaper barons. An investigator named Wiggins who lives at 11½B Baker Street is really the only connection with Sherlock Holmes. The novel is full of anecdotes of the trade and is written with passion and knowledge, but it's disappointingly badly written. To give you an idea, this is supposed to be an Irish workman speaking: 'Jamesy may jest be tryin' tae get me out of de syndicate, but I t'ink it's deeper den dat. He wouldn't want the Brothers on his case. Dem boyo's kick arse, and when ye mess wid dem, den gawd help ye. Look, we've been stringing deez result t'gether fae tae years now.' I tried hard to like the book, but it defeated me. It's incoherent, the punctuation is lousy, and so is the proof reading (Jack Scargill? Kate Addie?). Not recommended.

A British edition of Laurie R King's *The Art of Detection* — not a Mary Russell novel but Sherlockian all the same — has been published by Poisoned Pen Press at £15.95.

The Man from the Diogenes Club by Kim Newman (Monkeybrain Books, $19.95) envisages the club in the 1960s and 70s as a front for a secret counter-espionage organisation. Reviews suggest that the stories have more in common with *The Avengers* than with the Holmes Canon.

In *The Beautiful Cigar Girl: Mary Rogers, Edgar Allan Poe and the Invention of Murder* (Dutton, $25.95) Daniel Stashower examines the 1841 murder of a shop girl in Manhattan, the inspiration for Poe's story 'The Mystery of Marie Rogêt', which transfers the events to Paris, enabling Poe to investigate the case through his fictional detective, C Auguste Dupin. The book does apparently mention Conan Doyle and Sherlock Holmes. A British edition is due in November from Oneworld Publications (185 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7AR) under the title *Edgar Allan Poe and the Murder of Mary Rogers* (£16.99).

Flat at 221B Baker Street by Joseph R Cammarata (Outskirts Press, $15.95; £11.95 — see www.outskirtspress.com) sees one Geoffrey Holmes set up as a private detective in the flat once occupied by his forebear. In the course of his first investigation he teams up with the beautiful Dr Bridget Watson-Burns, a descendant of *the* Dr Watson.

Arthur Conan Doyle plays a part in *Agatha Christie: The Finished Portrait*, a new biography by Andrew Norman (Tempus Publishing). Both he and Dorothy L Sayers took an interest in Christie's mysterious disappearance in 1926, which Dr Norman believes was the result of a fugue state or psychogenic amnesia. In February Tempus will publish Andrew Norman's *Arthur Conan Doyle: Beyond Sherlock Holmes* (£18.99).

Classic Specialties (PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA) recommends a new novel on a theme that's been used several times before, *Sherlock Holmes and the Plague of Dracula* by Stephen Seltz. You'll find it listed, with much else, in *The Sherlockian E-Times*, at www.sherlock-holmes.com/e-times14.htm.

And there's always something of interest in the catalogues from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk).

Lots 247 - 278 in the sale of modern first editions at Christie's on 1 November (85 Old Brompton Road, London SW7 3LD) are works by or about Conan Doyle, the property of René de Chochor, who was director of the estate of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle from 1956 to 1967, during which time he negotiated the many contracts for cinema. All, I think, are first editions, and several are signed.

The famous *Sherlock Holmes* pub in Northumberland Street, just off Trafalgar Square in London, reopened last week after a much-needed refurbishment, extensively and sensitively carried out for the owners Greene King. Sue Collier, the manager, had a final say in the decoration, taking advice from members of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London. The building is handsomer than ever, the exhibits in the bar and on the walls are shown to best advantage, and the Baker Street sitting-room looks as it was intended to — as if Holmes and Watson have just popped out and will be back any moment. The food and drink, of course, are of the expected high quality. Look out for Murder Mystery dinners, beginning on 1 December. There's a website at www.sherlockholmespub.com, or you can phone for information on 020 7930 2644.

A new two-part family drama is planned for Sunday afternoons on BBC1 next year. '*Baker Street Irregulars* is an original Sherlock Holmes mystery written by Richard Kurti and Bev Doyle, which pits Holmes and the Irregulars against one of Holmes' greatest enemies.' Jonathan Pryce and Bill Paterson play Holmes and Watson, with Anna Chancellor and Michael Maloney also starring. The director, for RDF Television, is Julian Kemp. Filming began last week in Dublin.

E J Wagner reports that Trillium Productions has bought an option on television rights for her highly recommended book *The Science of Sherlock Holmes*. She says, 'They plan a documentary series based on the book, on which I will collaborate.' See DM 263 or visit www.forensic.to/webhome/ejwagner.

Robert Graham passes on news of two new stage productions. The Rotary Club of Chatham presents *The Revenge of Sherlock Holmes* by Leslie Bricusse (formerly known as *Sherlock Holmes the Musical*), performed by Second to None Productions on 14 November at the **Hazlitt Theatre, Maidstone**, in aid of Cerebral Palsy Care and Rotary Foundation. This is a black tie event with a champagne reception. Tickets are £18.00 from 01622 859538. And TableNine Productions present *The Extraordinary Adventures of Mr Sherlock Holmes* in the studio theatre of **South Hill Park Arts Centre, Bracknell**, from 23 to 25 November. Tickets are £7.50 (£6.50 concs) from 01344 484123, or www.southhillpark.org.uk.

Next June the Midsommer Actors' Company will perform a unique walkabout production of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* in **Peel** on the Isle of Man. 'The plan is to start the first scene on the site of St Peter's Church, in the town centre, and to involve as much of the local community as possible to create the feel of a late Victorian country fair. The opening scene, to set the legend of the ghostly hound, will be conveyed as a rustic melodrama... After the scene at the church, the audience will walk, via the new footbridge, to the castle, which will represent Baskerville Hall and its environs on Dartmoor. There will be about 10 scenes in the castle grounds, becoming more spookily atmospheric as the evening progresses and darkness falls.' Get more information from the Isle of Man Arts Council on 01624 694598.

Listed under 'pre-production' on the Thunderball Films website at www.thunderballfilms.com Oscar Ross found: '3. *The House of the Baskervilles*. This project is currently in negotiation with European financiers and treatment being drafted for the Reality Documentary to begin filming in Jan 07.' Yes, that's *House* of the Baskervilles, as in Rodger Garrick-Steele's accusations against Arthur Conan Doyle of plagiarism and murder. Somehow I can't see this one getting a theatrical release — if it's made at all.

Solihull in the West Midlands is polling its residents to determine the greatest Silhillian of all time. So far the names include John Wyndham, Felicity Kendal, Stephanie Cole and Gordon Giltrap, but in the lead are the *Top Gear* presenter Richard Hammond and ... Jeremy Brett! The top ten will be announced on 20 November.

The army base at Colchester, which proudly proclaims itself 'a garrison town since Roman times', is being completely redeveloped, with the several barracks dating from the 1930s and 40s replaced by one. That one, which will also be the headquarters of 16 Air Assault Brigade, is called Merville Barracks. I'd love to think that it's named after General de Merville 'of Khyber fame', but the name actually comes from a site in the French campaigns of 1918. Conan Doyle visited that site just a month after the fighting and surely remembered it when writing of the old soldier in 'The Illustrious Client' (see Donald Redmond's *Sherlock Holmes: A Study in Sources*).

The Bootmakers of Toronto will present the first public playing of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* at 2.00pm on 2 December in the Beeton Auditorium, Toronto Reference Library 789 Yonge Street, Toronto. Made for *The Footprints of the Hound* conference in 2001 of Edith Meiser's 1941 radio script, the recording will be introduced by Philip Elliott, Doug Wrigglesworth and Karen Campbell. Admission is free. (The recording is available on CD. Contact Doug Wrigglesworth at 16 Sunset Street, Holland Landing, Ontario, Canada L9N 1H4.) Meanwhile there's an exhibition at the library, *A Case of Considerable Interest*, marking thirty-five years of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection, running till 7 January.

Periodicals received. ***The Baker Street Journal***, Autumn 2006 (Steven Rothman, 220, West Rittenhouse Square, #15-D, Philadelphia, PA 19103, USA; subscriptions, PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA; correspondence for **The Baker Street Irregulars** should go to Michael Whelan, 7938 Mill Stream Circle, Indianapolis, IN 46278, USA). ***Bohemian Newsletter,*** no. 69 (**České společnost Sherlocka Holmese**, Aleš Kolodrubec, Milešovská 1, 130 00 Praha 3, Czech Republic). ***Irregular Newsletter***, October 2006 (**The Conan Doyle [Crowborough] Establishment**, Brian Pugh, 20 Clare Road, Lewes, Sussex BN7 1PN). ***The Confederate Chronicles***, October 17, 2006 (**The Confederates of Wisteria Lodge**, Kent Ross, 6875 Fielder, Rex, GA 30273, USA). ***The Formulary***, September 2006 (**The Friends of Dr Watson**, Nino Cirone, 31 Muswell Avenue, Flat 2, London N10 2EB). ***Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections***, September 2006 (Suite 111, Elmer L Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, 222 21st Avenue S, Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA).

Ineffable Twaddle, October 2006 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA). ***Ironmongers Daily Echo and Franco-Midland Branches Advertiser***, October 1906 *[*sic*]* (**Société Sherlock Holmes de France**, Thierry Saint-Joanis, 2 impasse de la Serre, Saint Julien, 63320 Montaigut-le-Blanc, France). ***The Magic Door***, Fall 2006 (**The Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection**, Doug Wrigglesworth, 16 Sunset Street, Holland Landing, Ontario, Canada L9N 1H4). ***Mayday Mayday***, October 2006, ***Chronicler***, June 2006, and ***C-Extra***, 28 May 2006 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardcarn Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). ***Prescott's Press***, September 2006 (**The Three Garridebs**, Warren Randall, 15 Fawn Lane West, South Setauket, NY 11720-1346, USA). ***The Serpentine Muse***, Fall 2006 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 301 Warren Ave, #203, Baltimore, MD 21203, USA). ***3 Pipe Problem Plugs and Dottles***, October 2006 (**The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem**, Kay Blocker, 5017 Maywood Drive, Nashville, TN 37211, USA pkblocker@comcast.net). ***The Torr***, Autumn 2006 (**The Poor Folk Upon The Moors**, Reggie Musgrave, Drummond Cottage, Old Tavern Yard, Westbourne, Chichester, West Sussex PO10 8TA).

And ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, September 2006 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON
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no. 268 2 December 2006

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £6.00 or US$15.00 for 12 issues (dollar checks payable to Jean Upton, sterling cheques to me). You can receive the DM electronically free of charge, as a Word attachment or as plain text.

Hilary Mason died on 5 September at the age of eighty-nine. Her most notable performance among many was as the blind psychic in Nicholas Roeg's 1973 film *Don't Look Now*. In 1992 she played Miss Ruddock in *The Last Vampyre* with Jeremy Brett and Edward Hardwicke. (Richard Dalby adds: 'Her husband was Roger Ostime, Holmes in *The Baker Street Boys*, 1983.') Peter Blau notes that **Gordon E Kelley**, author of *Sherlock Holmes: Screen and Sound Guide*, died on 23 October. **Marian Grudeff**, responsible with Raymond Jessel for (most of) the songs for Jerome Coopersmith's 1965 musical *Baker Street*, died on 4 November **John Hallam**, who died on 14 November, aged sixty-five, played Black Gorgiano in Granada's 1994 production of *The Red Circle*, but he's likely to be remembered as the brutal squire in the 1979 TV serial from Catherine Cookson's *The Mallen Streak*. M J Elliott passes on news of the death at sixty-seven in early November of **John Gilbert**, who created the role of Sherlock Holmes for Jim French's Imagination Theatre.

In time for Christmas, Breese Books (Baker Street Studios Ltd, Endeavour House, 170 Woodland Road, Sawston, Cambridge CB2 4DX) have issued two new Holmes novels. *Sherlock Holmes and the Chilford Ripper* by Roger Jaynes begins with a telegram to Dr Watson from a former colleague at Netley, desperate to consult Holmes about a series of murders in a small Essex town. The earlier victims were men, but the brutal methods of the killer suggest a link with the Whitechapel murders of 1888. The American author achieves the Watson style, and makes good use of his knowledge of late Victorian England and north-east Essex in particular. Inspector Lestrade is present, and treated as a dedicated and sensible police detective — which is nice. The plot is clever, with ramifications reaching to high levels of government, and all in all *The Chilford Ripper* is a highly entertaining read.

Sherlock Holmes: The Ghost of Baker Street is actually a long overdue mass-market edition of the late Val Andrews' self-published 2002 book *The Baker Street Ghost*, of which I said in DM 225: "Scriptwriter Greg Hargreaves, obliged to leave the USA by the unwelcome attentions of Senator McCarthy and the House Committee on Un-American Activities, rents a flat in London — in Baker Street to be precise — and finds that there's a resident ghost. But this is not, in the usual sense, a 'ghost story'. The relationship between Hargreaves and Holmes reminds me a little of that between Jeff Randall and the late Marty Hopkirk. The result is a completely fresh view of Sherlock Holmes, a fascinating picture of the British film and TV industry in the early 1950s, a portrait of Orson Welles, and a clever murder mystery. Val Andrews is at his best when writing about the world of entertainment, in which he worked as writer and performer for fifty years. You can hear the port wine and cigars in Welles's dialogue, as the author knew him and worked with him; and I'm sure Val Andrews won't mind my mentioning that the character of Greg Hargreaves was inspired by the late Cy Endfield." This new edition is a thoroughly professional production, of course, and it opens with the lyric (slightly garbled) of the music hall song 'The Ghost of Sherlock Holmes'. Val meant this to be the first of a new series of novels, exploring different territory, but it looks as if *The Ghost of Baker Street* must serve as his worthy farewell.

Both books are priced at £7.50 or €12.50 or $18.50. There's a website at www.baker-street-studios.com.

The Singular Adventures of Mr Sherlock Holmes by Alan Stockwell (Exposure Publishing, Diggory Press, Three Rivers, Minions, Liskeard, Cornwall PL14 5LE; £7.95 or $12.95) was first published in 2003. In DM 235 I said: ' ... a very enjoyable collection of fifteen stories by an author new to me, Alan Stockwell. The style is an acceptable simulacrum of Dr Watson's, and Mr Stockwell clearly knows his period and his Canon. He also has an engagingly inventive imagination. I particularly like his explanation of the case of Mr. James Phillimore, who, stepping back into his own house to get his umbrella, was never more seen in this world.' The same goes for this new edition, which contains three extra stories (but appears to have dropped one of the original ones, 'The Vanishing Nobleman'). The titles are less reminiscent of the Canon than of the classic American radio series of the forties, but 'The Disappearing Bubbles', 'The Red Nosed Artist' and 'The Intermittent Jig-Saw Puzzle' maintain the high standard. The cover bears a handsome photograph of a statue of Holmes by Peter Quinn, owned by Lynne Godden, our former Merchandising Officer and a neighbour of the author's. Mr Stockwell has a website at www.mrsherlockholmes.co.uk.

Robert Graham came back from the *ACD at 35* celebration in Toronto laden with goodies from The Battered Silicon Dispatch Box (George A Vanderburgh, PO Box 204, Shelburne, Ontario L0N 1S0, Canada; no prices are given for any of these books). *The Adventure of the Victorian Vulcan* by P Whitney Hughes is a clever brace of fantasies involving Holmes with Professor Challenger, Solar Pons, Mr James Phillimore and the USS Enterprise. *SH@35* features an essay by the wonderful Stephen Leacock, three new short adventures by Howard Engel, Robert Weinberg and Ed Hoch, and a neat little poem by Raymond Souster. Bruce Harris's *Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson: ABout Type* examines our heroes' personality types (and 'ABout' is a reference to types A and B). Finally *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* is a new edition of Ernest Dudley's play, adapted from the work written by J E Harold Terry and L Arthur Rose for Dudley's father-in-law Eille Norwood in 1923. This version toured Britain in 1994, with Michael Cashman and Frederick Pyne as Holmes and Watson. Great fun it was too. (I think the edition published that year by Ian Henry is still in print.)

This morning's post brought *Flat at 221B Baker Street: Holmes Meets Watson*, a novel by J R Cammarata (Outskirts Press Inc., 10940 S Parker Road-515, Parker, CO 80134, USA; $15.95; £11.95). A quick glance shows a lack of punctuation throughout that suggests a Joycean stream-of-consciousness approach — probably not intended. I'll review the novel next time.

In this year's *Baker Street Journal Christmas Annual: Quartering in the Fifties*. Nicholas Utechin draws on the correspondence between Colin Prestige and four distinguished American Sherlockians — Nathan L Bengis, Jay Finley Christ, James Montgomery, and Edgar W Smith — to illuminate the trans-Atlantic camaraderie of half a century ago. *Quartering in the Fifties* costs $11.00 (or $12.00 outside the USA) from *The Baker Street Journal*, Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA. Or you can order it on-line from the BSJ website at www.bakerstreetjournal.com. You should also consider a subscription to the BSJ itself. They take PayPal.

Following the success of their new edition of Jane Austen's books, on 18 December Headline Review (338 Euston Road, London NW1 3BH) will publish the Sherlock Holmes Canon as nine £4.99 paperbacks. See also www.rediscover-sherlockholmes.com. And a reminder of a lovely edition of the Canon, in six cloth-bound volumes, three containing two books each, and all featuring afterwords by David Stuart Davies (CRW Publishing, 69 Gloucester Crescent, London NW1 7EG; £5.99 each). Also from CRW, *The Complete*

Sherlock Holmes (CRW Publishing, £25.00), a splendid big cloth-bound volume containing the whole Canon, with a good selection of the *Strand Magazine* illustrations and a foreword by David Stuart Davies.

Headline Review has also published *Fragile Things: Short Fictions & Wonders* by Neil Gaiman (£17.99). One story, "A Study in Emerald", puts Sherlock Holmes in the world of Great Cthulhu, and, says Kim Newman, 'turns the assumptions of Arthur Conan Doyle and H P Lovecraft inside-out'.

www.sherlock-holmes.com/e-times14.htm is where you'll find *The Sherlockian E-Times*, the catalogue-newsletter from **Classic Specialties**. Or you can write to PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA. And there's always something of interest in the catalogues from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk).

The Sherlock Holmes Memorabilia Company is still in business, though the shop in Baker Street has closed. Check the website at www.sherlockholmes.co.uk. The material from Granada TV's 221B set has been donated to the Lancelyn Green Bequest at Portsmouth.

I wasn't able to attend Christie's auction at in South Kensington on 6 June, so missed the sale of a first edition of *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, inscribed to an unnamed god-daughter, 'With Arthur's love, Nov. 8th/92'. It went for a staggering £45,600!

At http://sherlockholmes.stanford.edu/ Stanford University gives a link to facsimiles of early Holmes tales in *The Strand Magazine*. They're in PDF format, with useful notes and commentaries, and they're free to download. (Thanks to Ray de Groat for this.)

At http://ephemeris.alcuinius.net/holmesiaca.php is something a little more unexpected — *Proxenetae Functionarius*. That's 'The Stock-broker's Clerk', translated into Latin by Stanislaus Tekieli. Other stories so far by *Equitis Arturi Conan Doyle* are *Facies Lutea* ('The Yellow Face') and *Fulmen Argentum* ('Silver Blaze').

Switzerland, Japan and London already have public statues of Sherlock Holmes. Now a striking new one is to go up near the British Embassy in Moscow, on the Smolenska Embankment. And it includes Dr Watson, seated on a bench and waiting for Holmes, who is standing, to speak. Andrei Orlov, the sculptor, has based the two figures on the actors Vassily Livanov and the late Vitaly Solomin, who made the characters their own in a long-running series of Russian TV films. (Mr Livanov received an honorary MBE from the British ambassador last February.) *[*Thanks to Marina Stajic for translating the Russian news report.*]*

David Timson's superb recording of the Canon is nearing its conclusion. *The Valley of Fear* is due in April, and I'm greatly looking forward to it! (Naxos Audiobooks, 40A High Street, Welwyn, Herts. AL6 9EQ; £19.00.)

Meanwhile, there are new CD audiobooks in five different series from Jim French's Imagination Theatre: *The Hilary Caine Mysteries* (written by M J Elliott) , *Mr Darnborough Investigates* (by John Hall), *The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, Raffles: The Gentleman Thief,* and *The Adventures of Harry Nile*. Great listening, all of them. See www.jimfrenchproductions.com. And if you fancy having a go at writing a radio play, check out the Second Annual Imagination Theatre Radio Script Competition. Details and instructions are at www.jimfrenchproductions.com, or e-mail Sable Jak at jrfpress@yahoo.com.

The first Sherlock Holmes recording by the Old Court Radio Theatre, 'The Yellow Face' and 'The Three Students', both dramatised by M J Elliott, with Jim Crozier and Dave Hawkes as Holmes and Watson, has been gratifyingly well received. The second, featuring 'The Mazarin Stone' and 'The Veiled Lodger', is now complete. The plays will shortly be posted on the Society's website at www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk, and copies of the CD will be available from me, post-paid, at £5.00 (Europe £6.00; elsewhere £9.00 or $12.00).

At 6.00pm on Sunday 10 December, Paul Singleton will play Sherlock Holmes in a revised staged reading of Andrew Joffe's play *The Blue Carbuncle,* at **Workshop Theater Company's** little theatre at 312 West 36th Street, New York. Admission is free but seating is limited. Contact Paul for details at psingleton@pershing.com.

From 19 February to 3 March, **The Theatre Royal** in Windsor will stage *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, dramatised by Clive Francis. The play attracted highly favourable reviews at Nottingham Playhouse a couple of years ago. So far the only named member of the Windsor cast is Philip Franks as Watson. You can book on-line at www.theatreroyalwindsor.co.uk, or phone 01753 853888.

You can sample the new Frogwares game *Sherlock Holmes: The Awakened* at www.sherlockholmes-thegame.com.

Arthur Conan Doyle's former home, Undershaw, in Hindhead, remains very much under threat, as a report in The Times on 1 November makes clear. However, one of his early homes, Liberton Bank House in Edinburgh, has been saved from conversion to a fast-food outlet. It will now house Dunedin School, and there are plans to create a 'literary garden' in the grounds.

Family history researchers can now consult the 1851 and 1861 Scottish censuses on-line at ancestry.co.uk. Yes, Arthur Conan Doyle is there.

The Six Napoleons of Baltimore celebrate their sixtieth anniversary this year with a Diamond Jubilee Dinner on 13 December. The society takes its name from the six interested parties who turned up for the first meeting on 11 September 1946, and from the historical connection between Baltimore and Napoleon Bonaparte — a connection, says Bill Hyder, largely forgotten now. *Eheu fugaces.*

Periodicals received. ***Antipodean Holmesian Society Newsletter***, November 2006 (**Antipodean Holmesian Society**, Ted Nye, 51 Irvine Road, The Cove, Dunedin 9077, New Zealand). ***Bohemian Newsletter,*** no. 70 (**České společnost Sherlocka Holmese**, Aleš Kolodrubec, Milešovská 1, 130 00 Praha 3, Czech Republic). ***The Camden House Journal***, October 2006 and November 2006 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). ***Canadian Holmes***, Michaelmas (Autumn) 2006 (**The Bootmakers of Toronto**, Trevor Raymond, 4 Lyons Court, Georgetown, Ontario L7G 1P1, Canada). ***Communication***, Special Employment Issue 2006 and November/December 2006 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Wanda & Jeff Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA). ***Explorations***, Autumn 2006 (**The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota**, John Bergquist, 3665 Ashbury Road, Eagan, MN 55122, USA). ***The Illustrious Clients News***, October 2006 and November 2006 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA).

Ineffable Twaddle, November 2006 and December 2006 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA). ***Mayday Mayday***, November 2006 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardcarn Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). ***The Passengers' Log***, Autumn & Winter Issues (**The Sydney Passengers**, Rosane McNamara, 4/2a Merlin Street, Neutral Bay, NSW 2089, Australia). ***The Petrel Flyer***, November/December 2006 (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7P 3C6). ***Quivers on the Web***, November 2006 (**221B**, Philip Weller, 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 6RU). ***The School Report***, Winter 2006 (**The Priory Scholars**, Horace L Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY). ***The Scion***, Autumn 2006 (**The Musgraves**, Anne Jordan, Hallas Lodge, Greenside Lane, Cullingworth, Bradford BD13 5AP). *The Solar Pons Gazette*, December 2006 (**www.solarpons.com**, Bob Byrne, bob.byrne@solarpons.com.) ***The Whaling News***, September 2006 and October 2006 (**The Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn**, Michael E Bragg, PO Box 256, St Charles, MO 63302-0256, USA).

And ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, October 2006 and November 2006 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

THE COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON
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no. 269 29 January 2007

At the Baker Street Irregulars' annual dinner on 12 January, Michael Whelan awarded investitures to: **Warren Randall** ('Harold Stackhurst'), **Dayna McCausland** ('Lady Clara St Simon'), **Mike Homer** ('Enoch J Drebber'), **Mike Berdan** ('Henri Murger'), **Maggie Schpak** ('The Soup Plate Medal'), **Mattias Boström** ('The Swedish Pathological Society'), and **Elaine McCafferty** ('Eliza Barrymore'). The newly-minted Editors' Medal was bestowed upon **Peter Blau**, **Steven Doyle**, **Mitch Higurashi** and **Bill Hyder**. At our Society's dinner last weekend Mike Whelan also invested **Jonathan McCafferty** as 'Barrymore', BSI, Freda Howlett presented the Tony Howlett Award to **Bob Ellis**, and **Nicholas Utechin** received our Society's highest recognition, honorary membership.

Headline Review (338 Euston Road, London NW1 3BH) has issued the complete Sherlock Holmes in nine paperback volumes, each priced at an attractive £4.99. The books themselves are also attractive, with subtly decorative covers, each having a different colour theme and a different silhouette illustration by Sarah Gibb (I love those illustrations!). The texts are good and set in a clean, clear font. The only extra is an unattributed brief introduction, interesting and generally accurate, though it seems odd to list Michael Caine as an actor who has 'defined' the character of Holmes. Altogether this would make a very nice everyday edition for the seasoned Holmesian and an ideal present to encourage the newcomer. There's a website at www.rediscoversherlockholmes.com.

Kelvin I Jones's new 44-page book *The Phantom Hound: Myth and Reality in Conan Doyle's The Hound of the Baskervilles* (Oakmagic Publications, 33A Red Lion Yard, Aylsham, Norwich NR11 6LW; www.oakmagicpublications.com; £4.95) gathers three previously published essays ('The Psychology of The Hound', 'The Mythology of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*' and 'The Mythic Hound') with a short piece about the inception of the novel at Cromer and a neat fictional account of that occasion, narrated by Fletcher Robinson.

I wish I could be enthusiastic about *Flat at 221B Baker Street: Holmes Meets Watson* by J R Cammarata (Outskirts Press Inc., 10940 S Parker Road-515, Parker, CO 80134, USA; $15.95; £11.95). The characters are engaging and the story is entertaining: Geoffrey Holmes sets up as a private detective at 221B Baker Street; in the course of a murder investigation he meets the lovely Dr Bridget Watson-Burns and is surprised to find that she is descended from John H Watson. The writing isn't bad, though Mr Cammarata should bone up on his British usage (they don't have semesters or a campus at Cambridge University...). But the appalling punctuation makes the book ultimately unreadable. Try this: *My name is Geoffrey and this is my fiancée Bridget we are from across the pond I presume; you mean Great Britain. Yes."* And there are 444 pages like that!

There have been various attempts to prove that Sherlock Holmes subscribed to a particular religious faith, usually Christian, and several to claim him for a particular branch of Christianity. *An Opened Grave: Sherlock Holmes Investigates His Ultimate Case* by L Frank James (The Salt Works, Publishers Design Group Inc, Roseville, CA 95678, USA; $14.95) is unusually well done. Mr James captures the Doyle-Watson style acceptably (though there's the occasional alien phrase such as a 'flat of rooms'). More importantly he achieves the considerable feat of treating a serious subject — the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ — seriously within a story that's both thrilling and funny. With Watson as a Doubting Thomas, Sherlock Holmes takes his search for the truth to the extreme lengths of travelling in space and time to ancient Jerusalem. There's excitement in plenty, and the reasoned arguments for and against the Christian faith are thoroughly stimulating. Like G K Chesterton and C S Lewis, Mr James is a fine storyteller and a notable Christian apologist.

Sherlock Holmes claimed that he could easily read 'the apocrypha of the agony column: such crude devices amuse the intelligence without fatiguing it'. Jean Palmer has collected over a thousand in *The Agony Column Codes & Ciphers* (Bright Pen, Authors OnLine Ltd, 19 The Cinques, Gamlingay, Sandy, Beds. SG19 3NU; £12.95), and even when the keys are available they're usually baffling. Some are simply encrypted, though, and some are quite open. From the Daily Telegraph in 1904: 'MORAIRTY. — Send address where I can write you. Important. — M.W.R. 9, Wetherby-terrace, Earl's-court, S.W.' *[*A misprint for 'Moriarty', perhaps, but who was MWR?*]* It's a fascinating book!

In the 2006 *Baker Street Journal Christmas Annual: Quartering in the Fifties*, edited by Nicholas Utechin (*The Baker Street Journal*, Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA; USA $11.00, elsewhere $12.00), Colin Prestige's correspondence with four distinguished American Sherlockians (Nathan L Bengis, Jay Finley Christ, James Montgomery, and Edgar W Smith) tells us of the transatlantic Holmesian friendships of the nineteen-fifties and of our own Society in its early days. (In 1952 the Conan Doyle estate 'flatly refused permission for us to give *private* showings of the old Holmes films'!) The letters also give us an insight into the personality of Colin Prestige himself, a founder of our Society and the third Briton to be invested into the Baker Street Irregulars. In later years he was a deaf old curmudgeon, and I wish I'd known the eager, friendly young fellow he was half a century ago.

The latest offering from Bjarne Nielsen is *Sherlock Holmes: Paa Spor efter Houdini*, an unauthorised exploit of the great detective, first published in 1909 (Sherlock Holmes Museet, Egebjergvej 206, DK-4500, Nykøbing Sjæland, Denmark; Kr.75 — approximately £6.85, $13.00 or €10.00)).

Also recent or forthcoming: *Alas, Poor Sherlock: The Imperfections of the World's Greatest Detective (to Say Nothing of His Medical Friend)* by Joseph Green and Peter Ridgway Watt (CBD Research, Chancery House, 15 Wickham Road, Beckenham BR3 5JS; £16.95). *The Baker Street Boys: The Case of the Ranjipur Ruby* by Anthony Read (Walker Books, 87 Vauxhall Walk, London SE11 5HJ; £4.99). *The Lost Files of Sherlock Holmes* by Paul D Gilbert (Robert Hale, 45-47 Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0HT; March; £18.99). *Sherlock Holmes and the American Angels* by Barrie Roberts (Severn House, 9-15 High Street, Sutton, Surrey SM1 1DF; April; £18.99).

The Belgian at Baker Street by **Rafe McGregor** is available from www.amazon.co.uk as an 'Amazon Short' (no price to hand). **David Stuart Davies** (31 Matthew Lane, Meltham, West Yorks. HD9 5JS; overdale@btinternet.com) is preparing an anthology of new pastiches for Wordsworth, and invites stories of 5000-7000 words, 'in the spirit of Conan Doyle but with some panache and originality'. **Brian Pugh** (20 Clare Road, Lewes, Sussex BN7 1PN; brianpugh140@btinternet.com) is working on a booklet about the various Conan Doyle and Sherlock Holmes memorials: plaques and statues. He needs good photos of some of the older plaques.

Not quite Holmesian is *The Missing Museum* by Andrew Thorburn (Trafford Publishing, 9 Park End Street, 2nd Floor, Oxford OX1 1HH; £12.99/ $22.59/ €18.56). Mr Thorburn was invited to construct, finance and operate a permanent museum of the London police, to be housed in the former Bow Street Police Station. After much work and expense the plans were scuppered when the building was sold by a partner in the project — the Metropolitan Police Authority!

See www.sherlock-holmes.com/e-times14.htm for *The Sherlockian E-Times*, **Classic Specialties**' catalogue-newsletter. Or write to PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA. And there's a new catalogue from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk).

It looks as if *Sherlock Magazine* really has folded. Well, it's gone out in style, and David Stuart Davies can be proud of having brought high editorial standards to the magazine. Enquiries about unfulfilled subscriptions should be directed to Atlas Publishing Ltd, Jordan House, Old Milton Green, New Milton, Hants. BH25 6QJ (phone 01425 623960; e-mail subs@sherlockholmes.com).

Andrey Orlov's handsome new statue of Holmes and Watson will be unveiled in Moscow next month. The figures depict the characters as played by the great Russian actors **Vasily Livanov** and the late **Vitaly Solomin**, and there are pictures of Mr Livanov and Mr Orlov with the statue at http://alek-morse.livejournal.com/tag/photos. Vasily Livanov was in London a couple of weeks ago, being filmed for Russian television, and a group of us had the great pleasure of meeting him at the *Sherlock Holmes* pub. There are photos on the Society's website at www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk.

Paul Lamond Games (PO Box 3353, London N1 1SR) has released a 'DVD Murder Mystery', *Sherlock Holmes: The Case of the Silver Bullet*. It's available from Amazon and other sources at about £12.00.

At www.storyteller.net/amphitheater/18 you can hear *The Dying Detective* read by **David Ian Davies**. *Sherlock Holmes on the Rails*, **Miles Richardson's** reading of 'The Bruce-Partington Plans' and 'The Wealden Pullman Theft', has been reissued by the Irregular Special Press (Baker Street Studios Ltd, Endeavour House, 170 Woodland Road, Sawston, Cambridge CB2 4DX)as a two-CD set priced at £7.00. And on the Society's website you can listen to *The Mazarin Stone* and *The Veiled Lodger*, dramatised by **M J Elliott** and performed by the Old Court Radio Theatre Company.

Due in April from Tadlow Music (57 High Street, Tadlow, Royston, Herts. SG8 0EU) is the first ever official recording of Miklos Rosza's score for *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*, performed by the City of Prague Philharmonic conducted by Nic Raine.

A 'contemporary romantic drama' entitled *Where There's a Will* is in development as a feature film. Characters include the Hereafter Literary Council, of which Arthur Conan Doyle is a member. See www.deepwaterfilms.co.uk/wherewill/htm for more details. Also 'greenlit for development' is *Sherlock Holmes and the Banshee*, for the American series *Sci Fi Saturday*.

A video recording of *Sherlock Holmes — The Last Act!* can be seen at www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZG7U7y-OUZg. **Roger Llewellyn** says, 'At last! And with what effort... on both sides of The Pond!'

The Hound of the Baskervilles dramatised by Clive Francis begins a national tour next month. Venues are: **Mercury Theatre**, Colchester (01206 573948) 8 - 17 Feb, **Theatre Royal**, Windsor (01753 853888) 19 Feb - 3 Mar, **Theatre Royal**, Brighton (08700 606650) 6 - 10 Mar., **Arts Theatre**, Cambridge (01223 503333) 12 - 17 Mar, **Yvonne Arnaud Theatre**, Guildford (01483 440000) 19 - 24 Mar, **Civic Theatre**, Darlington (01325 486555) 26 - 31 Mar, **Clwyd Theatr Cymru**, Mold (01352 755114) 3 - 14 Apr, **Greenwich Theatre** (020 8858 7755) 16-21 Apr, **Theatre Royal**, Nottingham (0115 989 5555) 23 - 28 Apr. **Peter Egan** and **Philip Franks** are Holmes and Watson.

The comedy trio **Peepolykus** have a rather different take on *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Their spoof version is at **West Yorkshire Playhouse**, Leeds (0113 213 7700) till 17 Feb, and is getting very good reviews. It will then tour to **Everyman Theatre**, Liverpool (0151 709 4776) 20 - 24 Feb, **Theatre Royal**, Winchester (01962 840440) 27 Feb - 3 Mar, **Palace Theatre**, Watford (01923 225671) 6 - 10 Mar, and **Oxford Playhouse** (01865 305305) 13 - 17 Mar.

Conan Doyle called one of his short story collections *Round the Red Lamp*, the lamp being the sign of a Victorian doctor's surgery. **Yves-Charles Fercoq** asks if anyone can provide him with a picture of a doctor's red lamp for a project he's engaged in. E-mail him at yvescharlesfercoq@tele2.fr.

An installation by the artist **Ian Rees**, comprising several interactive models of scenes from the Sherlock Holmes stories, is on display at Marylebone Library. There's more information and a short video at www.westminster.gov.uk/libraries/special/sherlock.cfm.

If you fancy your chances in the next **Victorian Cricket Match** against the P G Wodehouse Society on 24 June, please contact Peter Horrocks on 0208 786 6471 or e-mail horrocks@1gc.com.

Jay Pearlman notes that the **Mini-Tonga Society** website has been updated at http://hometown.aol.com/minitongasociety/mini1.htm. Look and marvel at the miniature re-creations of Canonical scenes!

Jens Byskov Jensen tells me that after many years' service Bjarne Nielsen BSI has handed on the presidency of the **Sherlock Holmes Klubben i Danmark** to Bjarne Rother Jensen.

The Musgraves will hold their Spring Spectacular at the Huddersfield Hotel on 24 February. Get details from Anne Jordan, Hallas Lodge, Greenside Lane, Cullingworth, Bradford BD13 5AP.

Periodicals received. ***The Baker Street Journal***, Winter 2006 (Steven Rothman, 220, West Rittenhouse Square, #15-D, Philadelphia, PA 19103, USA; subscriptions, PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA; correspondence for **The Baker Street Irregulars** should go to Michael Whelan, 7938 Mill Stream Circle, Indianapolis, IN 46278, USA). ***Bohemian Newsletter,*** no. 71 and no. 72 (**České společnost Sherlocka Holmese**, Aleš Kolodrubec, Milešovská 1, 130 00 Praha 3, Czech Republic). ***The Camden House Journal***, December 2006 and January 2007 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). ***Canadian Holmes***, Christmas (Winter) 2006 (**The Bootmakers of Toronto**, Trevor Raymond, 4 Lyons Court, Georgetown, Ontario L7G 1P1, Canada) *[*Trevor's last issue as editor; he's handed over the reins to Barbara Roden, a worthy successor*]*. ***Communication***, Special He's Everywhere Issue 2006 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Wanda & Jeff Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA). ***Explorations***, Winter 2006 (**The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota**, John Bergquist, 3665 Ashbury Road, Eagan, MN 55122, USA). ***Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections***, December 2006 (Suite 111, Elmer L Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, 222 21st Avenue S, Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA). ***The Illustrious Clients News***, December 2006 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). ***Ineffable Twaddle***, January 2007 and February 2007 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA).

Mayday Mayday, December 2006 and January 2007 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardcarn Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). ***The Petrel Flyer***, January/February 2007 and The Master's Dinner Special Edition (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7P 3C6). ***Practice Notes,*** December 2006 (**The Friends of Dr Watson**, Nino Cirone, Highcroft Cottage, 14 Totteridge Common, London N20 8NL). ***Prescott's Press***, December 2006 and 'Sherlockian Sing-a-Longs' (**The Three Garridebs**, Warren Randall, 15 Fawn Lane West, South Setauket, NY 11720-1346, USA). ***The Serpentine Muse***, Winter 2006 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 301 Warren Ave, #203, Baltimore, MD 21203, USA). ***The Sherlock Holmes Journal,*** Winter 2006 *[*Nick Utechin's last issue as editor, after an amazing thirty years*]*. ***Sherlockiana***, nr. 4, 2006 (**Sherlock Holmes Klubben i Danmark**, Mia Stampe Lagergaard, Nivågade 3, 2. th., 2200 København n., Denmark) ***3 Pipe Problem Plugs and Dottles***, January 2007 (**The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem**, Kay Blocker, 5017 Maywood Drive, Nashville, TN 37211, USA pkblocker@comcast.net). ***The Whaling News***, November 2006 and December 2006 (**The Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn**, Michael E Bragg, PO Box 256, St Charles, MO 63302-0256, USA).

And ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, December 2006 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £6.00 or US$15.00 for 12 issues (dollar checks payable to Jean Upton, sterling cheques to me). You can receive the DM electronically free of charge, as a Word attachment or as plain text.

Something I missed last month: in the New Year's Honours List **Penelope Keith**, who had a small part in the dire Cook-Moore *Hound of the Baskervilles*, was appointed CBE (Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) as was **John Wood**, the superb Sherlock Holmes in the RSC's outstanding 1974 production of William Gillette's play. **Hugh Laurie**, who has read *The Hound of the Baskervilles* on BBC Radio 2 and whose character in the Fox TV series *House* is strongly inspired by Holmes, became OBE (Officer of…). *[*Thanks to Peter Blau for reminding me of this good news.*]*

Nearly a century ago in his verse 'To an Undiscerning Critic' Arthur Conan Doyle warned against taking a fictional character's opinions as those of his author, yet people still claim that ACD himself was disdainful of Poe, Gaboriau and their creations. The latest is Andrew Norman in *Arthur Conan Doyle: Beyond Sherlock Holmes* (Tempus Publishing Ltd, The Mill, Brimscombe Port, Stroud, Glos. GL5 2QG; £18.99; 5 March). Dr Norman — like his subject a GP turned author — is on dangerous ground in stating that just about every mention of an alcoholic in ACD's fiction is a direct allusion to his own father. David Pirie makes such claims, but he's writing fiction. This new book makes an interesting case for ACD's having inherited a schizo-affective disorder from his father. There is clear evidence in the medical records, in his wife's letters, and in his own journal (published in 1978 as *The Doyle Diary*) that Charles Doyle suffered mental aberrations well beyond epilepsy and alcoholism, but evidence for genuine mental aberration on Arthur's part is less certain. Charles shared with his brother Richard and with his son a fascination with fairies, but, as a recent exhibition at the Royal Academy showed, such interest was widespread in the 19th century, particularly among artists; it was perhaps equivalent to today's fascination with angels. Dr Norman's arguments are thought-provoking, if not wholly convincing, but he does his case no good with such careless errors as identifying 'Jean Paul', mentioned in *The Sign of Four*, as Jean-Paul Sartre instead of Johann Paul Richter!

I've just received copies of the latest publications from **The Baker Street Irregulars**, which I'll look at more fully in the next issue. *Scandinavia and Sherlock Holmes* edited by Bjarne Nielsen ($39.95) gives some background to the enduring popularity of Holmes in Denmark and Sweden, along with an admirable collection of essays from Sherlockian scholars in both countries, either translated into English or written in English. *[*Holmes doesn't seem to have attracted a following in Norway, for some reason.*]* The manuscript of 'The Red Circle' in facsimile is at the core of *Mandate for Murder* edited by Roy Pilot, Gianluca Salvatori & Enrico Solito ($35.00). The MS is transcribed and annotated by Philip and Jane Weller, and there are illuminating essays by Italian and American scholars. Each book can be ordered from *Baker Street Journal*, 2 Dettling Road, Maynard, MA 01754, USA; or from www.bakerstreetjournal.com.

Philip Weller notes that the map of La Gaiola is misprinted in his essay. He and Jane will send by e-mail free copies of the map, in colour, and of the appropriate size to be pasted into the book. You can request it from acdsg@acd-221b.info.

Arthur Conan Doyle is a character in *Murder on the 'Celtic'* by Conrad Allen (St Martin's Press, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010, USA; $23.95). *[*'Conrad Allen' is the prolific and respected Edward Marston.*]* University of Nebraska Press has reissued Conan Doyle's *The Coming of the Fairies*, introduced by John M Lynch, (233 North 8th Street, Lincoln, NE 68588-0255, USA; £7.99).

Conan Doyle: The Man Who Created Sherlock Holmes by Andrew Lycett, the first biography in over fifty years to draw on the family papers, is due on 9 August from Weidenfeld & Nicolson (Orion House, 5 Upper St Martin's Lane, London WC2H 9EA; £20.00). And on 1 October comes *Arthur Conan Doyle: A Life in Letters* edited by Daniel Stashower, Jon L Lellenberg & Charles Foley (HarperPress, Westerhill Road, Bishopbriggs, Glasgow G64 0QT; £25.00). *On the Trail of Dr Arthur Conan Doyle: An Illustrated Devon Tour* by Brian Pugh & Paul Spiring has been accepted for publication in late 2007 or early 2008.

The Conan Doyle (Crowborough) Establishment (Brian Pugh, 20 Clare Road, Lewes, Sussex BN7 1PN www.the-conan-doyle-crowborough-establishment.com) offers *Recollections of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle by Residents of Crowborough* (UK £6.00, elsewhere £7.00 or $14.00) and *The Conan Doyle Crowborough Walk: An Investigation into the Connections of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and His Family in Crowborough* (post-paid UK £4.90; elsewhere £7.00 or $14.00). In preparation are *Dr George Turnavine Budd* by Brian Pugh, *Bertram Fletcher Robinson* by Paul Spiring, and *A Chronology of the Life of Bertram Fletcher Robinson* by Paul Spiring & Philip Weller.

The Belgian at Baker Street by Rafe McGregor is not available on Amazon.co.uk — my error in DM 269. It can be downloaded for just 49c at www.amazon.com. Look for Amazon Shorts.

Sherlock in L.A. (1741, Via Allena, Oceanside, CA 92056 USA) is offering Theodore G Schulz's collection of *Strand Magazines* (474 single UK issues, 201 single US issues, 100 bound volumes, plus 19 *Strand Quarterlies* and a complete run of *The New Strand*) for £20,000 plus shipping. Serious collectors with serious money can phone Vincent Brosnan on 760 630 2013. Understandably, Ted Schulz wants the collection to remain intact.

The Sherlockian E-Times, **Classic Specialties'** catalogue-newsletter, is at www.sherlock-holmes.com/e-times14.htm. Or write to PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA. **Nigel Williams Rare Books** also has a new catalogue out (25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk).

The fullest quickly accessible information about Fletcher Robinson is at www.bfronline.biz. **BFRonline.BIZ** is a German company for whom Paul Spiring acts as consultant. Worth a look!

I noted last time that the Irregular Special Press (Baker Street Studios Ltd, Endeavour House, 170 Woodland Road, Sawston, Cambridge CB2 4DX) has re-released *Sherlock Holmes on the Rails*, **Miles Richardson's** reading of 'The Bruce-Partington Plans' and 'The Wealden Pullman Theft', as a two-CD set priced at £7.00 (Europe €12.00, elsewhere $17.00). Each story is also available individually (£4.00, €8.00, or $10.00), as is 'The Final Problem'. Or you can buy all three as *The Sherlock Holmes Railway Trilogy* (£10.00, €17.00, or $25.00)! And there's a nice recording of *Sherlock Holmes and the Prince of Ventriloquists*, a Val Andrews story of the Edwardian Music Hall, read by Martin Goldman (£4.00, €8.00, or $10.00).

At www.tadlowmusic.com you can hear an extract from the forthcoming world premiere recording of Miklos Rosza's score for *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*, which will be available only by mail order or on-line (Tadlow Music, 57 High Street, Tadlow, Royston, Herts. SG8 0EU).

The patronising response of Tessa Jowell, Secretary of State for Culture Media & Sport, to requests for Conan Doyle's house

Undershaw to be listed Grade 1 has provoked accusations of literary snobbery. Having stated that ACD doesn't occupy a high enough place in the nation's literary consciousness, she said in a letter to The Guardian on 13 February: 'The building most closely associated with Sherlock Holmes is 221B Baker Street. I would be only too pleased to consider that building Grade 1 should such a request come forward.' Is this a joke or just shocking ignorance? (Clue: this is the politician who confused Isambard Kingdom Brunel with ' the Islamic Kingdom of Brunei'.) On the Society's website at www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk British voters can follow a link to an on-line petition which they can sign. Peter Turner, who set up the petition, points out that anyone can contact Ms Jowell via the government website at www.culture.gov.uk/about_us/our_ministers/tessajowell.htm.

Clive Francis' dramatisation of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* will be at **Theatre Royal**, Brighton (08700 606650) 6 - 10 Mar., **Arts Theatre**, Cambridge (01223 503333) 12 - 17 Mar, **Yvonne Arnaud Theatre**, Guildford (01483 440000) 19 - 24 Mar, **Civic Theatre**, Darlington (01325 486555) 26 - 31 Mar. The Peepolykus comedy version will be at **Palace Theatre**, Watford (01923 225671) 6 - 10 Mar, and **Oxford Playhouse** (01865 305305) 13 - 17 Mar. And a company called Illyria will tour with an open-air production of the same story during the summer (details to be announced)!

Announced as 'in pre-production' by Redfield Arts is a film called *The Crimes of Sherlock Holmes.*

Besides the video recording of Roger Llewellyn in *Sherlock Holmes — The Last Act!* www.youtube.com also has extracts from *The Man Who Loved Sherlock Holmes, Tribute to Sherlock Holmes*, various of the Ronald Howard series, and other Holmesian items.

Peter Blau reports that at www.switchpod.com you can listen to excellent readings by Patrick Horgan of *the Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* and some of the old Rathbone-Bruce radio plays.

hvgateway.com/Mycroft.htm is the website of **Mycroft Holmes Antiques** (144 Main Street, Cold Spring, NY 10516, USA).

A small selection of the original artwork for **Nis Jessen's** beautiful illustrations to *a Study in Scarlet* is for sale at comicart.dk. Prices start at 9,000 Kroner ($1,500). E-mail info@comicart.dk.

Donna Goldthwaite reports that the exhibition *Conan Doyle & Joseph Bell: The Real Sherlock Holmes* remains at Surgeons Hall Museum in Edinburgh until 31 May. There's information at www.rcsed.ac.uk/site/619/default.aspx.

Friends of **Jeremy Brett** have arranged for a tree to be planted in his memory, to the west of the bandstand on Clapham Common at 2.30pm on 30 March. David Burke and other friends from the theatre hope to be there. All are welcome.

Robert Fisk has a salutary piece in The Independent on 25 February: '27 July 1880. A date Mr Blair should look up. Those sending British troops to Afghanistan should learn the lessons of the Battle of Maiwand.'

The Caithness Glass Company, now owned by Dartington Crystal, offers some attractive Holmesian paperweights: 'The Hound of the Baskervilles', 'The Final Problem' and 'The Speckled Band'. See www.caithnessglass.co.uk/caithnews.htm. These are announced as 'new for 2006' but are, worryingly, '©1996 Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Copyright Holders'.

From her online shop at www.spreadshirt.net/shop.php?sid=74810 (Europe) or www.spreadshirt.com/shop.php?sid=3589 (USA) **Stefanina Hill** sells a range of sweatshirts and the like featuring the Dancing Men code. The items have the word 'Elementary' in Dancing Men, or your own choice of wording. Prices start at about £9.00. For custom orders e-mail stefaninahill@yahoo.co.uk.

Rafe McGregor wants a recording of the 1943 Rathbone-Bruce radio play *The Dundas Separation Case.* If you can help, please contact him at RafeG@aol.com.

Peter Blau notes the death on 17 January of the great humorist **Art Buchwald**, who frequently mentioned Sherlock Holmes in his columns. 'In 1952 he interviewed Bill Rabe, then an Army Officer in Europe, about the Old Soldiers of Baker Street (and in a later column published a letter in which Adrian Conan Doyle complained that his father had been neglected in Bill's interview).'

The Independent notes that **Anna Cropper**, who died on 22 January, aged sixty-eight, 'was a commanding presence in challenging television plays of the 1960s and 1970s, most shockingly as the young schizophrenic, Kate Winter, in the writer David Mercer's *In Two Minds.*' Her many other roles included Mrs St Clair in 1965's *The Man with the Twisted Lip*, with Douglas Wilmer as Sherlock Holmes.

Ian Richardson will be known to many of us as a very good Sherlock Holmes in two enjoyable TV films, and an outstanding Joseph Bell in the series *Murder Rooms.* To the world at large he was the scheming politician Francis Urquhart in *House of Cards* and its sequels. To me he was one of the half-dozen finest classical actors of our generation. He had tremendous stage presence, a glorious voice, a genius for Shakespeare's verse, and a talent that encompassed high tragedy, low comedy and just about everything else. Why he was never knighted is a mystery. In 2003 he attended our annual dinner, and I had hopes that he'd be offered honorary membership, but it was not to be. He died unexpectedly in his sleep on 9 February at the age of seventy-two.

Derek Waring, who died on 19 February aged seventy-nine, was a prominent actor on stage and television. In 1968 he played Henri Fournaye in *The Second Stain* for BBC TV, with Peter Cushing as Holmes, and in 1989 was Dr Watson to Ron Moody's Holmes in the West End production of *Sherlock Holmes – The Musical.* Amanda Waring, his daughter by Dorothy Tutin, played Violet Westbury in the Granada production of *The Bruce-Partington Plans.*

The 48th running of the Chicago **Silver Blaze** will be held at Hawthorne Race Course on 28 April, during the sixth annual **STUD/Watsonian Weekend**. For details, contact Susan Diamond or Allan Devitt at 16W603 3rd Avenue, Bensenville, IL 60106-2327, USA, or e-mail szdiamond@comcast.net.

The Bootmakers of Toronto will celebrate their 35th anniversary with a one-day symposium on 9 June at the Metro Reference Library in Toronto. Contact Dave Drennan at drennan@allstream.net.

Periodicals received. *For the Sake of the Trust*, Winter 2007 (**The Baker Street Irregulars** Trust, Julie McKuras, 13512 Granada Avenue, Apple Valley, MN 55124, USA). ***The Baker Street Journal***, Winter 2006 (Steven Rothman, 220, West Rittenhouse Square, #15-D, Philadelphia, PA 19103, USA; subscriptions, PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA; correspondence for **The Baker Street Irregulars** should go to Michael Whelan, 7938 Mill Stream Circle, Indianapolis, IN 46278, USA). ***Bohemian Newsletter,*** no. 73 (**České společnost Sherlocka Holmese**, Aleš Kolodrubec, Milešovská 1, 130 00 Praha 3, Czech Republic). ***The Camden House Journal***, February 2007 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). ***Communication***, 2007 (no month) (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Wanda & Jeff Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA) *[*Carl Heifetz has stepped down as Representative both with the Servants and with the Tradespeople. Ave atque vale.*]*. ***The Illustrious Clients News***, January 2007 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). ***Ineffable Twaddle***, March 2007 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA).

Irregular Newsletter, February 2007 (**The Conan Doyle (Crowborough) Establishment**, Brian Pugh, 20 Clare Road, Lewes, Sussex BN7 1PN). ***The Magic Door***, Winter 2007 (**The Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection**, Doug Wrigglesworth, 16 Sunset Street, Holland Landing, Ontario, Canada L9N 1H4). ***Mayday Mayday***, February 2007 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardcarn Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). ***The School Report***, Spring 2007 (**The Priory Scholars**, Horace L Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY). ***The Whaling News***, January 2007 and February 2007 (**The Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn**, Michael E Bragg, PO Box 256, St Charles, MO 63302-0256, USA).

And ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, January 2007 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

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: rojerjohnson@yahoo.co.uk

no. 271 10th April 2007

The last and best of the long stories, *The Valley of Fear*, may yet achieve the recognition due to it. David Timson's unabridged reading for Naxos AudioBooks (2nd Floor, 40A High Street, Welwyn, Herts. AL6 9EQ; £19.99) certainly does it justice — but we expected no less. The novel has the same two-part structure as *A Study in Scarlet*, but improves on it in every way. The main narrative, 'The Tragedy of Birlstone', is one of the finest detective stories ever written, and 'The Scowrers' ranks with the greatest thrillers in the English language. Holmes and Watson are at their best, among a cast of vividly depicted characters — notably the admirable Alec MacDonald and the ferociously hearty Jack McGinty. The mystery of Birlstone is bewildering, and the solution dazzling; the struggle against the reign of terror in Vermissa Valley is almost unbearably tense. I had waited eagerly for David Timson's reading of this outstanding story, and my hopes were justified: every character, from whichever side of the ocean, is individual, every description tells, and every incident is given its due weight. Roy McMillan's production is as precisely nuanced as Nicolas Soames's in the earlier recordings. The incidental music, this time by Bottesini, Delius and Janácek, is perfectly appropriate. Once more Mr Timson himself contributes knowledgeable and informative sleeve-notes. In July Naxos will release *The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes volume I*, so this monumental project is rapidly nearing completion.

Scandinavia and Sherlock Holmes edited by Bjarne Nielsen (The Baker Street Irregulars, 2 Dettling Road, Maynard, MA 01754, USA; www.bakerstreetjournal.com; $39.95) is a fascinating selection of writings, in English, from Danish and Swedish scholars (and one Norwegian, Nils Nordberg). The history of Holmesian scholarship in Scandinavia, recounted in the twin introductions by Mr Nielsen and Mattias Boström, includes such familiar names as Storm-P, A D Henriksen, Tage La Cour, Henry Lauritzen, and Åke Runnquist from the past, and, among today's luminaries, Mia Stampe Lagergaard, Jens Byskov Jensen, Ted Berman, and Hans-Uno Bengtsson. The subjects range from 'that little thing of Chopin's' to the dynamics of an asteroid, the silent cinema, and the weather in the Canon. Aage Rieck Sørensen's reply when asked about the popularity of Holmes in Denmark was, 'England used to be a Danish country.' Just so.

Mandate for Murder edited by Roy Pilot, Gianluca Salvatori & Enrico Solito is the latest in *The Baker Street Irregulars Manuscript Series* ($35.00). The MS of 'The Red Circle' is reproduced in facsimile, with a transcription and exhaustive notes by Philip and Jane Weller. Philip Weller also writes about six British residents of Naples, including Conan Doyle, his cousin Nelson Foley and his brother-in-law Willie Hornung. Gianluca Salvatori looks at Italian secret societies. Enrico Solito examines the background of Emilia and Gennaro Lucca. John G Genova considers the two artists who illustrated the story for *The Strand Magazine*, H M Brock and Joseph Simpson. Peter Blau traces the history of the manuscript, now owned by the Lilly Library at Indiana University. It's all exceptionally interesting, but to me the most appealing piece is Steven T Doyle's. He has uncovered what must surely be the definitive answer to that vexed question: just what *was* 'the Long Island Cave mystery'?

Philip Weller notes that the map of La Gaiola is misprinted in his essay. You can request a free e-mail copy from acdsg@acd-221b.info.

I don't dislike Holmesian pastiche as such, but increasingly I feel that a successful new Holmes story needs either to bear a marked fidelity to the Canonical originals in style and substance (e.g. June Thomson, Barrie Roberts) or to take a radically different *but justified* approach to the subject (*The Seven-per-cent Solution*, *The Veiled Detective*). Paul D Gilbert's stories in *The Lost Files of Sherlock Holmes* (Robert Hale Ltd, Clerkenwell House, 45-47 Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0HT; £18.99) don't do it for me. The plots seem more muddled than complex, but that might not matter if the narration were more convincing. Mr Gilbert's style is stodgier than Conan Doyle's; it seems to strain for an archaic effect, but is in any case let down by such infelicitous phrases as Watson's description of Simpson's-in-the-Strand as 'one of my favourite eateries'. Worse, Holmes is unpleasantly arrogant and ill-mannered: he is simply not the Holmes that we know from the narratives of Dr John H Watson. Perhaps I'm being over-harsh, but it seems to me that Paul Gilbert can — and, I hope, will — do better than this.

For the new Penguin Classics collection *Arsène Lupin, Gentleman-Thief* by Maurice Leblanc (Penguin Books Ltd, 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL; £9.99 or $14.00), Michael Sims has chosen thirteen of the best stories (there are many more) about the charming and ingenious Lupin in the original translations by Alexandre Teixeira de Mattos. The brilliant criminal, more stylish and less sanctimonious than his British prototype Raffles, encountered the master detective in four tales, which show Holmes and Watson in a refreshingly different light — though naturally Lupin comes off best. I have to take issue here with Mr Sims, who calls the Lupin-Holmes stories 'feeble parodies', and includes only the first in this book. (Black Coat Press has published all four in new translations: see DM 243 and DM 251). But it's a real treat to have the best of Arsène Lupin available, with Michael Sims' informative introduction and notes.

The Strange Affair of Madeleine Smith: Victorian Scotland's Trial of the Century by Douglas MacGowan (Mercat Press, 10 Coates Crescent, Edinburgh EH3 7AL; 16 April; £9.99) is an authoritative account of one of the most remarkable murder cases of the 19th century. In March 1857, the attractive daughter of a wealthy Glasgow architect was charged with poisoning her lover, Emile L'Angelier, who stood in the way of her proposed marriage. The unique Scottish verdict of 'Not Proven' has encouraged continuing debate. Madeleine Smith's case was not helped by the frank nature of her letters to Emile (seventy-odd years later such explicitness ensured that Edith Thomson was hanged as a participant in the murder of her husband, an act of which she was probably innocent). According to Scottish law the jury was right: the known facts simply don't permit a definite statement as to Madeleine's guilt or innocence. Douglas MacGowan deliberately takes a neutral stance, unlike most previous biographers. He tells an engrossing tale of romance and drama, but it's a tale whose protagonist we can never quite know. In 1861 she married George Wardle, William Morris's business manager, by whom she had a son and a daughter. Naturally the Wardles became involved in the Socialist movement, and Bernard Shaw found Madeleine good-humoured and capable. For nearly eighty years it was believed that she emigrated to America after George's death, dying in New York in 1928, the widow of one William Sheehy, but Mr MacGowan cites compelling reasons for doubting that Lena Sheehy was actually Madeleine Smith. To the end she remains an enigma.

New from Ramble House Books is *The Secret Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by Gary Lovisi, with an afterword by Richard A Lupoff (www.ramblehouse.com; $18.00, hardback $30.00, plus postage).

The Hilltop Writers: A Victorian Colony Among the Surrey Hills by W R Trotter was published in 2003. It concentrates on the Hindhead-Haslemere area and features Conan Doyle, Bernard Shaw, Flora Thompson and others (John Owen Smith, 19 Kay Crescent, Headley Down, Bordon, Hants. GU35 8AH; £9.95).

There's always something informative, amusing, or both in *The Sherlockian E-Times* (**Classic Specialties**, PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA; www.sherlock-holmes.com/e-times14.htm). **Nigel Williams Rare Books** also has a new catalogue out (25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk).

In June the manuscript of 'The Three Gables' will be auctioned at Sotheby's in New York. The estimate is $350,000-$500,000.

The asking price for Ted Schulz's collection of *Strand Magazines* is actually $20,000 and not £20,000 as I reported in DM 270. Interested parties should contact Vincent Brosnan at **Sherlock in L.A.,** 1741, Via Allena, Oceanside, CA 92056 USA; phone 760 630 2013.

L M Goode's research into **Sidney Paget's** life and work continues to produce fascinating material. Take a look at the website at www.artintheblood.com. You'll be hooked!

On 24 March *Det Danske Kriminalakademi* (the Danish crime writers' association) awarded a well-deserved special diploma to **Nis Jessen** for his magnificent illustrated edition of *A Study in Scarlet.*

Geoff Bradley's magazine *CADS* enters its second half-century this month, with the expected wide-ranging coverage of crime and detective stories. It kicks off with a real humdinger: a transcript of a 1930 radio broadcast by Dorothy L Sayers and Anthony Berkeley, during which they devise the plot for a (never written?) story. (G H Bradley, 9 Vicarage Hill, South Benfleet, Essex SS7 1PA; $5.50).

David Ian Davies has completed his recording of the Holmes Canon — see www.audible.com. He adds, 'I would like to dedicate this accomplishment to Charles Prepolec who has always been a guiding force to me throughout this endeavor of love.' One Voice Recordings has also released Matthew Elliott's Holmes story *The Honourable Cracksman* read by Mr Davies — see www.spokennetwork.com.

Peter Egan and **Philip Franks** are Holmes and Watson in Clive Francis' play *The Hound of the Baskervilles* at **Clwyd Theatr Cymru**, Mold (01352 755114) till 14 April, moving to **Greenwich Theatre** (020 8858 7755) 16-21 April, and finally **The Theatre Royal**, Nottingham (0115 989 5555) 23 - 28 April.

The **Peepolykus** comedy version will be at **The Duchess Theatre** in Catherine Street, London for fourteen weeks from 16 April. For the first twenty performances (not Saturdays) all seats are £20.00 — see www.whatsonstage.com/dl/page.php?page=comp&id=4246. The Society has booked fifty seats for the evening of 23 May, the day before the London Mini-Festival begins. Look for the mailing.

Cloak & Dagger Theatre Company will stage *The Mystery of Sherlock Holmes* by Richard James, which looks like an interesting two-hander, at **Wycombe Swan** (Town Hall, High Wycombe; 01494 512000; www.wycombeswan.co.uk) on 25 May. *[*If you'd like to review it for **The Sherlock Holmes Journal**, please let me know.*]*

BBC 1's enjoyable two-part drama *Sherlock Holmes and the Baker Street Irregulars*, with Jonathan Pryce and Bill Paterson as Holmes and Watson, will be released on DVD on 14 May by Acorn Media UK.

On 15 March HNR reported that 'the Sci Fi TV movie *Sherlock Holmes and the Curse of the Banshee* starts filming next month in Vilnius, Lithuania, written by Brook Durham and Jacob Eskendar, based on a story by Tim Cox.'

Warner plans to film a yet-to-be-published *Sherlock Holmes* graphic novel by Lionel Wigram — who will produce, with Michael Johnson, and Neil Marshall as writer and director. We shall, apparently, see 'Holmes losing some of his Victorian stuffiness and being more adventuresome, including playing up his skills as a bare-knuckle boxer and expert swordsman as he goes about solving crimes'. Russell Crowe seems to be the bookies' favourite to play Holmes. *[*Good grief!*]* Rumours that Nicholas Rowe has been offered the part are, alas, mistaken, deriving from Scott Monty's April 1st hoax.

David Stuart Davies needs a copy of *The Sherlock Holmes DVD Collection* — the four TV movies starring Matt Frewer. If you can help, please contact David at overdale@btinternet.com.

Rafe McGregor has an article about Holmes, 'Yorkshire's Greatest Detective', in the April/May issue of *Around the Wolds & North Yorkshire* (www.aroundthewolds.co.uk; £1.15).

The World of Mr Sherlock Holmes is **Alan Stockwell's** website at www.mrsherlockholmes.co.uk. Worth a look.

New from **Baskerville Carriages** (Laughter Hole House, Postbridge, Devon PL20 6TT; info@baskervillecarriages.co.uk; 01822 880386) is 'The Baskerville Dining Experience'. For £80.00 a head you get a carriage ride from Princetown, a five-course Victorian dinner, and the mystery of the phantom hound — plus Sherlock Holmes. The company offers other experiences too. See the website at www.baskervillecarriages.co.uk.

It's not just Fletcher Robinson. Now there are plans to exhume Harry Houdini, following claims that he was murdered by peeved spiritualists, with the support of Arthur Conan Doyle…

The Crew of the SS May Day (anchored at Belfast) will make a day excursion to London on 23 May. They'll be at the Sherlock Holmes pub between 12.30 and 2.00, and will be pleased to meet any fellow-Holmesians there. If you're interested in taking a greater part in this Great Day Out, contact Oscar Ross at rocross@yahoo.co.uk.

Victorian Secrets and Edwardian Enigmas: A Conference on the World of Sherlock Holmes will be held at the Elmer L Andersen Library at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, from 6 to 8 July, presented by **The Norwegian Explorers** and the University's Sherlock Holmes Collections. Speakers include Michael Dirda, Cliff Goldfarb, Jon Lellenberg, Elaine Hamill, Jonathan McCafferty and Daniel Stashower. Get details from Julie McKuras, 13512 Granada Ave, Apple Valley, MN 55124, USA; mike9750@aol.com.)

Freddie Francis, who died on 17 March aged eighty-nine, was a brilliant cinematographer, but is more famous as a director, being responsible for 1967's *The Deadly Bees* (based on Gerald Heard's *A Taste for Honey*, but omitting the Sherlock Holmes character, Mr Mycroft), and two episodes of the little-seen 1980 TV series *Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson*, with Geoffrey Whitehead and Donald Pickering. He is also reported to have 'worked on' *The Masks of Death* in 1984. **Michael Dibdin** died on 30 March, aged sixty. His first book, *The Last Sherlock Holmes Story*, involved Holmes with Professor Moriarty and Jack the Ripper, but he made his lasting reputation with his Italian-based novels about Inspector Aurelio Zen. **Ely Liebow** ('Inspector Gregory', BSI) also died on 30 March, just a couple of weeks after Bowling Green University Popular Press reissued his estimable biography *Doctor Joe Bell: Model for Sherlock Holmes*. **Bob Clark**, sixty-seven, whose credits as a director include the outstanding 1980 film *Murder by Decree*, with Christopher Plummer as Holmes was killed, with his son, in a car crash on 4 April.

Periodicals received. ***Baker Street Essays: The Canon Examined,*** no. 1 (Bob Byrne; www.holmesonscreen.com) *[*Bob's new on-line outlet for his own Holmesian musings; attractive, interesting, sometimes contentious*]*. ***Bohemian Newsletter,*** no. 74 (**České společnost Sherlocka Holmese**, Aleš Kolodrubec, Milešovská 1, 130 00 Praha 3, Czech Republic). ***The Camden House Journal***, March 2007 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). ***Communication***, no. 270 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Wanda & Jeff Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA). ***The Formulary***, March 2007 (**The Friends of Dr Watson**, Nino Cirone, Highcroft Cottage, 14 Totteridge Common, Totteridge, London N20 8NL) *[*note the new address*]*. ***The Illustrious Clients News***, March 2007 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). ***Ineffable Twaddle***, April 2007 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA). ***Irregular Newsletter***, February 2007 (**The Conan Doyle [Crowborough] Establishment**, Brian Pugh, 20 Clare Road, Lewes, Sussex BN7 1PN). ***Mayday Mayday***, March 2007 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardcarn Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). ***Prescott's Press***, March 2007 (**The Three Garridebs**, Warren Randall, 15 Fawn Lane West, South Setauket, NY 11720-1346, USA). ***The Serpentine Muse***, Spring 2007 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 301 Warren Ave, #203, Baltimore, MD 21203, USA). ***Sherlockiana***, nr. 1, 2007 (**Sherlock Holmes Klubben i Danmark**, Bjarne Rother Jensen,Højbovangen 24, 9200 Aalborg SV, Denmark). ***3 Pipe Problem Plugs and Dottles***, February 2007 (**The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem**, Kay Blocker, 5017 Maywood Drive, Nashville, TN 37211, USA pkblocker@comcast.net). ***Tonga Times***, Spring 2007 (two issues) (**The Mini-Tonga Society**, Jay Pearlman, 1656 E 19th Street #2-E, Brooklyn, NY 111229, USA).

And ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, February and March 2007 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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no. 272 15th May 2007

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £6.00 or US$15.00 for 12 issues (dollar checks payable to Jean Upton, sterling cheques to me). You can receive the DM electronically free of charge, as a Word attachment or as plain text.

With *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes* (Gasogene Books, PO Box 68308, Indianapolis, IN 46268, USA; $26.95) Leslie S Klinger completes *The Sherlock Holmes Reference Library*. The nine large paperback volumes don't look as impressive on the shelf as the three huge hardback tomes that constitute *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, but this is really an even more splendid achievement, because, being aimed at the Holmesian scholar, it's fuller and more detailed. The annotations are probably as complete and accurate as any editor could achieve, though (which is better than 'but') Mr Klinger seems unaware of Bernard Davies's definitive identifications in 'The Haven Horror', and once again he confuses two great but separate British Sherlockians, Lord Donegall and Sir Paul (later Lord) Gore-Booth. Christopher Redmond contributes a perceptive introduction, evaluating the stories and relating them, as Les Klinger does not, because that isn't his brief, to the life of Arthur Conan Doyle. There are appendices that touch on Watson's marriages, vampires *[*Les Klinger is currently working on an annotated edition of* ***Dracula*****]*, Professor Presbury's timetable, the authorship of 'The Mazarin Stone', and the identity of Shoscombe Prince, as well as chronologies and a bibliography. Editor and publisher deserve our deepest gratitude. The whole project is a triumph!

Four years ago Joseph Green and Peter Ridgway Watt gave us *The Alternative Sherlock Holmes*, the fullest survey yet of Holmesian pastiche and parody (see DM 234). Now we have *Alas, Poor Sherlock: The Imperfections of the World's Greatest Detective (to say nothing of his medical friend)* (Chancery House Press, 15 Wickham Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 5JS; £16.95 or $35.00). The subtitle gives us a good idea of what to expect. The editors have scoured the Canon and researched the writings about the writings to produce a substantial volume — 370 pages — devoted entirely to errors, omissions and falsehoods. Put that way, it sounds thoroughly negative, but when you think about it nearly all Sherlockian scholarship is based on the exposure of errors and (which Messrs Green and Watt don't attempt) the explaining of them. *Alas, Poor Sherlock* makes for entertaining reading, though at times the authors strain just that bit too hard, especially with their comments on the illustrations (one per story, and reproduced very small). Just one example: of F D Steele's picture for 'The Empty House, captioned, *With my face over the brink I saw him fall for a long way*, they say, 'If this is Watson, he looks remarkably like Holmes. He is even, it seems, wearing Holmes' deerstalker hat. Did he walk round and pick it up after Holmes had lost it when he went over the falls?' Ho ho. But of course it *is* Holmes, who did *not* go 'over the falls' — and this carelessness merely suggests that the authors haven't read the story, though otherwise it's clear that they have. The great value of the book, I fancy, will be as a source of inspiration for future scholarship.

In the last DM I noted the death of Ely M Liebow, shortly after the welcome reissue, after twenty-five years, of his book *Dr Joe Bell: Model for Sherlock Holmes* (Popular Press, 3 Henrietta Street, London WC2E 8 LU; £16.50). There are, I suppose, two basic kinds of biography, the personal memoir and the fully researched posthumous account. Dr Bell's life has attracted one of each, Jessie M Saxby's *Joseph Bell, MD, FRCS, JP, DL: A Appreciation by an Old Friend*, and the present book. Between them they tell us probably as much about this brilliant, brave and likeable man as we can know. Miss Saxby's book is hard to find now, but Mr Liebow's, thank goodness, is available. It would be absurd to claim that Joseph Bell *was* Sherlock Holmes (it must be stressed that David Pirie's entertaining *Murder Rooms* films and novels are fiction) but there can be no doubt that without Bell the Holmes we know wouldn't exist. *Dr Joe Bell* is essential reading, for that reason and, more importantly, because the man himself deserves to be remembered and celebrated. (Which reminds me: the exhibition *Conan Doyle & Joseph Bell: The Real Sherlock Holmes* remains at Surgeons Hall Museum in Edinburgh until 31 May. See www.rcsed.ac.uk/site/619/default.aspx.)

Oscar Wilde and the Candlelight Murders by Gyles Brandreth (John Murray, 338 Euston Road, London NW1 3BH; £12.99) grew from the realisation that Wilde and Conan Doyle were both guests of J M Stoddart of *Lippincott's* at that dinner in 1889, which resulted in both *The Sign of Four* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Mr Brandreth knows his Wilde — he attended Bedales, where Cyril, Wilde's elder son, was a pupil, and became friends with the school's founder, John Badley, who had known the family well. He knows his Holmes too. The events of this novel, the first of nine, begin shortly before that momentous dinner at the Langham. Oscar Wilde discovers the naked body of a young male prostitute, his throat cut, surrounded by candles, in an otherwise deserted house, and he determines to find the killer. Wilde as detective is thoroughly convincing. He was, after all, highly intelligent, imaginative and observant. The narrator, looking back after fifty years, is Oscar Wilde's friend and first biographer, Robert Sherard, through whom we get a generous but rounded view of our protagonist. The period, and the two or three worlds in which Wilde himself moved, are richly evoked (mention of 'the twopenny tube', a term coined for the Central London Railway in 1900, can be excused on the grounds of the elderly Sherard's faulty memory). *Oscar Wilde and the Candlelight Murders* is an excellent detective story. I'm keenly looking forward to the rest of the series, in which Conan Doyle will continue to play a major part.

There are many Sherlock Holmes books available at www.lulu.com, as paperbacks or in some cases as downloads. Most authors' names are unknown to me.

Dave Blank of Redbird Studio points out that the website for *Crime Scene Sketches*: *Reproduced in Fac-Simile from the Pen and Ink Drawings in the Note Book of a Private Enquiry Agent*, edited by Thomas F Hanratty and Daniel P King (see DM 266) is actually www.redbirdstudio.com/CrimeScenes. And Sam Bonnamy tells me that his first Mycroft Holmes novel *The Other Mr Holmes* is now available from www.writers-exchange.com.

The manuscript of 'The Three Gables', formerly owned by Lord Donegall and then by Walter Pond, will be auctioned at Sotheby's in New York on 21 June, the estimate being $350,000 - $500,000, as will Mr Pond's copy of *Beeton's* — estimate $75,000 - $125,000. Meanwhile Biblioctopus (120 South Crescent Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90212, USA; phone 310 271 2173) offers the MS of 'Lady Frances Carfax' at $500,000, the MS of 'His Last Bow' at $375,000, and 'a very good copy' of *Beeton's* at $260,000. *[*It's another world…*]*

BBC News on 24 April reported that Sean Connery and Ian Rankin are among those backing a campaign to raise £5,000,000 to ensure the purchase by the National Library of Scotland of the **John Murray Archive**, which includes manuscripts and letters from Lord Byron, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens and Arthur Conan Doyle.

Winners of the Mystery Writers of America's **Edgar Awards**, presented on 26 April, included *The Science of Sherlock Holmes* by E J Wagner (best critical or biographical book) and *Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure* by Stephen Dietz (best play). Thanks to Laura Kuhn and others for passing this on. See www.theedgars.com/nominees.html.

The plaque recording the first meeting of Holmes and Watson in the chemical laboratory at **St Bartholomew's Hospital** is now housed in the

hospital's museum, inside the Henry VIII Gate. The museum is open from 10.00 till 4.00, Tuesday to Friday. Admission is free — and there's much more to the history of Bart's than Holmes and Watson!

Arthur Conan Doyle has been accused of having his alcoholic, epileptic father committed to a mental asylum. On 5 May The Scotsman reported the discovery of Charles Doyle's medical records, proving that Arthur had no hand in the matter, and that Charles's 'repeated drinking had resulted in brain damage and loss of memory.'

Hurrah for Waverley Borough Council, who have sent builders to carry out urgent repairs to ACD's former home **Undershaw** at Hindhead, which the owners have signally failed to do. Meanwhile we await a response to the Victorian Society's widely supported appeal against the government's refusal to upgrade the house to Grade 1 listing.

The **statue of Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson** in Moscow was unveiled, later than originally thought, on 27 April. The ceremony was attended by Vasily Livanov, on whom the figure of Holmes is based, and the British Ambassador, Anthony Brenton. There's a report, with good photos, on the website of the **Société Sherlock Holmes de France** at www.sshf.com/index.php3?file=news&num=587, with a link to more pictures on the website of Alek Morse.

The first complete recording of Miklós Rózsa's score for Billy Wilder's film *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* (Tadlow Music, 57 High Street, Tadlow, Royston, Herts. SG8 0EU; www.tadlowmusic.com) can only be bought from Tadlow Music, but they've done Rósza proud for his centenary. There's ten minutes of bonus material and a 24-page booklet, and the City of Prague Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Nic Raine, and solo violinist Lucie Svehlová are on top form.

BBC TV's very enjoyable two-part family drama *Sherlock Holmes and the Baker Street Irregulars* is now available on Region-2 DVD from Acorn Media UK (10 Smith's Yard, Summerley Street, London SW18 4HR). Yes, there are liberties taken. It's no secret now that the villain of the piece is Irene Adler, but she's not the wronged contralto of 'A Scandal in Bohemia'. As played by Anna Chancellor, she's a master-criminal, beautiful, brilliant and ruthless, and she provides a very serious challenge for Holmes and his friends, even getting the detective himself arrested for murder. It's time Jonathan Pryce played Sherlock Holmes, and the character fits him very comfortably. I hadn't thought of Bill Paterson in terms of Dr Watson, but he's right for the part, and the rapport between the two actors is a pleasure to see. Wisely, the suspicious and resentful policeman who arrests Holmes isn't one of the Canonical regulars, but one Inspector Stirling, portrayed with just the right amount of moral integrity by Michael Maloney. The Irregulars themselves are older than the kids of the 1983 series *The Baker Street Boys*, and they come across as strong characters. The plot crackles with ingenuity, tension and humour, and the Dublin locations look just right for late-Victorian London. I very much hope more will follow.

In the Daily Mail for 11 May, Baz Bamigboye reported that **Hammer Film Productions** has been sold, and the new owners are keen to 're-imagine the classic films with new productions'. That's to be expected, but what do you make of this? 'Simon Oakes, one of the executives behind the takeover, told me how, when researching Hammer, he found hand-written documents from Arthur Conan Doyle in 1930 giving the company the right, at that time, to make the "moving motion picture of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*."' I'd love to see those documents!

In Dallas, Texas, on 30 & 31 March, at the **Heritage Auction Galleries** sale of vintage movie posters, a 'beautiful six sheet for Errol Flynn's *The Adventures of Robin* Hood and a stone litho six sheet for Basil Rathbone's *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, previously unknown to exist, finished at $31,070 each.' That includes buyer's premiums.

A play called *The Reluctant Resurrection of Sherlock Holmes* by David Belke of Edmonton, Alberta, has had considerable success since it was first staged in 1992. Last September, Mr Belke was startled to receive an e-mail from Peter E Blau: '*The Unexpected Return of Sherlock Holmes*, a comedy by Jack L Herman, is being performed at the Sierra Stage in West Hollywood, and it appears to be a slightly revised version of your *The Reluctant Resurrection of Sherlock Holmes*…' Not just 'slightly revised', as Mr Belke discovered, but actually plagiarised. Jack L Herman seems to have made a habit of it — and, worryingly, he's a police detective! (There are full accounts in The Edmonton Journal for 6 May and, increasingly, in other papers.)

A pity that it clashes with our own Society's London weekend, but — Cloak & Dagger Theatre Company's production of *The Mystery of Sherlock Holmes* by Richard James, at **Wycombe Swan** (Town Hall, High Wycombe; 01494 512000; www.wycombeswan.co.uk) on 25 May promises to be both entertaining and thought-provoking.

Next time I visit The Hague I shall look for **The Sherlock Holmes** bar at 314 Sumatrastraat, 2585 CZ.

Howard Goorney, who died on 29 March aged eighty-five, was, says The Daily Telegraph, 'one of Joan Littlewood's longest-serving and most dedicated lieutenants in the Theatre Workshop'. His career was mainly in theatre and television. In 1968 he impressed as Jonathan Small in the BBC's *The Sign of Four*, with Peter Cushing and Nigel Stock. **Stanley Holden,** during his long service with Sadler's Wells and the Royal Ballet, created the characters of Widow Simone in Frederick Ashton's ballet *la Fille Mal Gardée*, and Pierrot in John Cranko's *Harlequin*. In 1953, when Kenneth Macmillan took the title rôle in *The Great Detective* at Sadler's Wells, Holden was 'his friend, the Doctor'. Stanley Holden died on 11 May, aged seventy-nine.

The Bootmakers of Toronto will celebrate their 35th anniversary with a one-day symposium on 9 June at the Metro Reference Library in Toronto. Contact Dave Drennan at drennan@allstream.net.

The summer meeting of **The Musgraves** will be at Stonyhurst College on 21 July. You can get details from Christine Fell, 13 Greaves Town Lane, Lea, Preston, PR2 1PD.

Jens Byskov Jensen has returned from Louisiana to Denmark, and can be contacted at Egtvedvej 132, DK-6000 Kolding, Denmark.

Simon Hall tells me that **The Baker Street Fellowship** now has a branch for funeral directors, called **The Clean Collared Victorians**. They can be contacted via Simon at sdehall2000@yahoo.co.uk.

The Crew of the SS May Day (anchored at Belfast) will be in London on 23 May. They'll be at the Sherlock Holmes pub between 12.30 and 2.00, and will be pleased to meet any fellow-Holmesians there. If you're interested in taking a greater part in this Great Day Out, contact Oscar Ross at rocross221b@yahoo.co.uk. *[*I gave Oscar's e-mail address wrongly in the last issue. Apologies!*]*

Periodicals received. ***The Arthur Conan Doyle Birthday File and Research File XIV*** **(The Conan Doyle [Crowborough] Establishment**, Brian Pugh, 20 Clare Road, Lewes, Sussex BN7 1PN). ***The Camden House Journal***, April 2007 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). ***Canadian Holmes***, Christmas (Winter) 2006 (**The Bootmakers of Toronto**, Trevor Raymond, 4 Lyons Court, Georgetown, Ontario L7G 1P1, Canada) *[*this one really is Trevor's last issue as editor before handing over the reins to Barbara Roden*]*. ***Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections***, March 2007 (Suite 111, Elmer L Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, 222 21st Avenue S, Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA). ***The Illustrious Clients News***, May 2007 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). ***Ineffable Twaddle***, May 2007 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA). ***Mayday Mayday***, April 2007 and May 2007 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardcarn Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). ***The Passengers' Log***, Summer & Autumn Issues (**The Sydney Passengers**, Rosane McNamara, 4/2a Merlin Street, Neutral Bay, NSW 2089, Australia). ***The Petrel Flyer***, Spring 2007 and May/June 2007 (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7P 3C6). ***QuinCahier 1***, Mai 1907 (**Société Sherlock Holmes de France**, 36 avenue Jean-Jaurès, 63500 Issoire, France) *[*a new and, as always with the SSHF, very stylishly presented journal, with a tribute to John Bennett Shaw, research into the origins of* ***A Study in Scarlet****, an account of Conan Doyle's contribution to the entente cordiale, and more*]*. ***The Soft-Nosed Bullet-in & Striking (T)Rifles***, Winter 2006/7 (**Von Herder Airguns Ltd**, Michael Ross, Hermeskeiler Platz 14, 50935 Köln, Germany). ***The Torr***, Spring 2007 (**The Poor Folk Upon The Moors**, Reggie Musgrave, Drummond Cottage, Old Tavern Yard, Westbourne, Chichester, West Sussex PO10 8TA). ***The Whaling News***, March 2007 and April 2007 (**The Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn**, Michael E Bragg, PO Box 256, St Charles, MO 63302-0256, USA).

And ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, April 2007 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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no. 273 24th June 2007

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £6.00 or US$15.00 for 12 issues (dollar checks payable to Jean Upton, sterling cheques to me). You can receive the DM electronically free of charge, as a Word attachment or as plain text.

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.

Our Society has a genuinely special relationship with **The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota**: both names appear on the famous plaque at the foot of the Reichenbach Falls — though most of the credit, I think, belongs to the Explorers. These days they play an important part in supporting the world's largest publicly accessible Sherlock Holmes collection, at the University of Minneapolis in Minnesota, and they continue to issue a stimulating journal, *Explorations*. Since their foundation in 1948 they've also published four slim books of scholarship and learned whimsy, books that have long been out of print, causing frustration for those who'd like to follow up a reference, say, to Theodore C Blegen's study of the emotional Holmes, "These Were Hidden Fires, Indeed!' So it's a great pleasure to have all four newly available in one nicely presented 300-page paperback volume, *The Norwegian Explorers Omnibus*, published for *Victorian Secrets and Edwardian Enigmas: A Conference on the World of Sherlock Holmes*, to be hosted by the Explorers and the Sherlock Holmes Collections from 6 to 8 July at the Elmer L Andersen Library at the University of Minnesota. Here, for instance, are Philip S Hench on the conception and execution of the Reichenbach plaque, Stephen G Palmer on Holmes and the law, John Bergquist on wine in the Canon, and Jack D Key on Conan Doyle as a medical author. Lovely stuff! (The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota, Julie McKuras, 13512 Granada Ave, Apple Valley, MN 55124, USA; mike9750@aol.com; $25.00.)

Hounding the Hound of the Baskervilles: A Poetic Portrait of the Detective Novel by Yair Mazor (Goblin Fern Press, 6401 Odana Road, Madison, WI 53719, USA; $12.95) is an unusual and penetrating study of the world's most famous murder mystery. As a distinguished scholar of Hebrew literature, the author brings a fresh eye and mind to this popular English language classic. It's not a big book — 100 pages of fairly large type, illustrated with twenty-nine pencil drawings whose relevance escapes me — but it has caused me to reconsider my former low opinion of *The Hound* as a detective story. Professor Mazor has noticed what so few others have: how elegantly Conan Doyle devised his plot and how cunningly he inserted verbal clues to guide the perceptive reader to the solution of the mystery. I should perhaps mention that the numbering of the notes in *Hounding the Hound* has gone rather awry, but that's a minor matter.

Four years ago, as I noted in the last issue, Joseph Green and Peter Ridgway Watt gave us *The Alternative Sherlock Holmes*, the fullest survey yet of Holmesian pastiche and parody (see DM 234). Now we have *Parodies and Pastiches Buzzing 'Round Sir Arthur Conan Doyle* by Charles Press (The Battered Silicon Dispatch Box, PO Box 204, Shelburne, Ontario L0N 1S0, Canada), which studies the unofficial exploits that were published during Conan Doyle's lifetime. Mr Press considers the distinction between parody and pastiche, and examines the qualities that make some examples outstanding while others are merely good or mediocre… or in some cases downright awful. He also looks at Conan Doyle's reactions, and those of the reading public. His own writing is relaxed, and he puts his points across in a friendly way: a whole book of parodies, he says, 'may be like eating too many sweets all at once. Perhaps it's best to dip into collections of Sherlockian parody, as we are doing here, or take just a few full helpings at a time from those collections listed later on, rather than trying to swallow them all at once in one or two helpings. Parodies do make good bedside reading, though. Put us to sleep relaxed.' The greater part of this book gives me the feeling of a conversation with an intelligent and like-minded friend over a pint in a favourite pub. The extensive bibliography is invaluable, but necessarily less relaxed in style.

Some while ago I recommended the two volumes of Inspector James McLevy's memoirs, published by Mercat Press. McLevy was a real and very successful detective in mid-nineteenth century Edinburgh, where Arthur Conan Doyle would certainly have known of him. Back in 1999, before his reminiscences were reissued, David Ashton had written the first of an equally engrossing series of plays for BBC Radio 4, with that fine actor Brian Cox as McLevy, and Ashton himself as his superior, Lieutenant Roach. Now David Ashton has turned his hand to novels, and in *Shadow of the Serpent* (Polygon, Birlinn Ltd, West Newington House, 10 Newington Road, Edinburgh EH9 1QS; £6.99) and *Fall from Grace* (Polygon; £9.99) he's able to enlarge the picture of the smoky, dangerous, beautiful city and its infinitely varied denizens — and to present in more depth the fascinating, flawed but triumphantly human character of the Edinburgh detective. *Shadow of the Serpent* takes McLevy into the muddy and uncertain world of politics, in search of a brutal murderer. In *Fall from Grace* a murder investigation leads to more and even darker crimes, all centring upon the catastrophic collapse of the Tay Bridge in December 1879, in which ninety railway passengers and staff were killed. The stories are told in the third person, with occasional glimpses of an individual's thoughts, including passages from McLevy's diary. David Ashton's writing is excellent, his characters thoroughly convincing, and his narrative grabs you — I was going to say, by the throat — and doesn't let you go. Quintin Jardine has said that the seeds of the fictional anti-hero are there in the real-life James McLevy. David Ashton's novels prove him right.

Some exciting news from Jon Lellenberg: *Arthur Conan Doyle: A Life in Letters* (1 October: HarperPress, Westerhill Road, Bishopbriggs, Glasgow G64 0QT; £25.00) will be the BBC Radio 4 Book of the Week, 24-28 September. Five 15-minute readings will be broadcast at 9.45 am, drawn from chapters 3-9, from when Conan Doyle was a struggling young writer to when he was knighted. If you miss the broadcast, you can catch it over the following week at www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/arts/book_week.shtml.

Catalogue 143 from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk) has some Conan Doyle material.

It's good to note that **Peter Sallis**, best known these days for *Last of the Summer Wine* and *Wallace & Gromit*, was awarded the OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours. In 1965 he was Dr Watson to Fritz Weaver's Holmes in the Broadway musical *Baker Street*.

A few of the Baker Street Irregulars are invested with the names of newspapers — 'The Evening News', 'The Western Morning News', 'The Pall Mall Gazette', and 'The Leeds Mercury'. Peter Calamai, who holds that last title, is searching for a copy of the *Mercury* from the period 1880-1903. If you can help him, please contact me.

*[*There may well be copies out there. I now have half a dozen issues of* The Pall Mall Gazette, *thanks to the internet.*]*

Scott Monty, in addition to the *Baker Street Blog*, which you'll find at http://bakerstreetjournal.blogspot.com, has collaborated with **Burt Wolder** to set up *I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere*, a podcast at www.ihearofsherlock.com. *[*It needs more powerful and sophisticated equipment than I currently have at my disposal, alas.*]*

Two touring productions of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* have now closed, though Peter Egan tells me that there are plans to do more with Clive Francis' play in the autumn, and it looks as if Peepolykus may also tour further with theirs. Meanwhile the highly-praised company Illyria will start touring open-air venues with another production of *The Hound*. Dates for July are: 13 **The Vyne**, Hampshire (0870 428 8933); 14 **Cliveden**, Maidenhead (0870 428 8933); 15 **East Riddlesden Hall**, Keighley (01535 683800); 17 **Hawth Amphitheatre**, Crawley (01293 553636); 18 **Escot Country Park & Gardens**, Exeter (01404 822188) 19 **Hanbury Hall**, Droitwich (01527 821214); 20 **Erddig**, Wrexham (01978 355314); 21 **Greys Court**, Henley (0870 428 8933); 22 **Clandon Park**, Guildford (0870 240 4068); 24 **Tonbridge Castle**, Tonbridge (01732 770929); 25-26 **Tamworth Castle**, Tamworth (01827 709618); 27 **Wallington**, Northumberland (01670 773939); 28 **Sunnycroft**, Telford (01743 708162); 29 **Ham House**, Richmond (0870 428 8933); 31 **Castell Coch**, Cardiff (02920 880011). There's more information at www.illyria.uk.com.

Peter Blau notes that those attending *Victorian Secrets and Edwardian Enigmas* will be able to see Charles Marowitz's play *Sherlock's Last Case* performed by the University of Minnesota Showboat Players, the best day being Friday 6 July. Their website is at www.showboat.umn.edu/sherlock.html. The conference site is www.tc.umn.edu/~bergq003/norwegianexplorers/2007_conference.html.

Thomas Wheeler is reported to be adapting his own novel *The Arcanum* (Bantam, 2004) for production by Gold Circle Films. 'The Arcanum' is a secret society of occult investigators, comprising Arthur Conan Doyle, H P Lovecraft, Harry Houdini, and Marie Laveau *[*who she?*]*, who 'battle demons descending on New York City, including a serial killer of angels'. Hm.

Stephen Doyle of Wessex Press has alerted me to *From Gillette to Brett II*, the second weekend conference devoted to Sherlock Holmes on stage, screen and radio. It'll be held at the Hilton Indianapolis North Hotel (8181 N Shadeland Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana) from 16 to 18 November. Speakers include Scott Allen Nollen (author of *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle at the Cinema*), Terence Faherty (Rathbone expert), David Stuart Davies & Kathryn White (who need no gloss from me), and Julie McKuras (Edith Meiser expert). Special guests are Jeremy Paul (dramatist: author of *The Secret of Sherlock Holmes*) and Patricia Garwood (actress: Kate Whitney in Granada's *The Man with the Twisted Lip*). You can get full details and a registration form at www.wessexpress.com — or contact Steve Doyle at sdoyle221@sbcglobal.net. There's a trailer at www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLP2OJ5hqe0.

Tom Pocock, who died on 7 May aged eighty-one, was a notable naval historian and biographer, focussing particularly on the life and times of Lord Nelson, and a distinguished journalist. His 1973 book *London Walks* was one of the first to include Sherlock Holmes's Baker Street. There's less of Holmes and Watson than a specialist might expect, but the enthusiasm, wit and knowledge of the guide is more than adequate compensation.

The director **Robin Midgley** enjoyed a successful career in the theatre, encompassing everything from *Oedipus Tyrannus* to *Oliver!* — and on radio and television. In 1960, for the BBC Home Service, he directed Carleton Hobbs and Norman Shelley in *The Valley of Fear*, followed in 1961 by *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, and two series of short stories for the Light Programme in 1961-62. His production of *The Speckled Band* in the 1964 BBC TV series *Detective*, with Douglas Wilmer and Nigel Stock, led to the fondly remembered *Sherlock Holmes* series of 1965. Douglas Wilmer has said that he wanted Midgley to direct some of the plays in that series, but it didn't happen. Robin Midgley died on 19 May, aged seventy-two.

Peter Blau reports the death of **Hans-Uno Bengtsson** on 18 May. 'He was Assistant Professor of Theoretical Physics at Lund University in Sweden, a former Assistant Associate Professor at UCLA, and an enthusiastic Sherlockian: his articles appeared in *The Baker Street Journal* in the 1980s and 1990s, and his analysis of "The Depth Which the Parsley Had Sunk into the Butter" (which was translated into English in the recent *Scandinavia and Sherlock Holmes*) is a fine example of his application of physics to Canonical problems.

Periodicals received. ***The Arthur Conan Doyle Collection Lancelyn Green Bequest Newsletter,*** Spring/Summer 2007 (Stephen Baily, Head of Culture, Portsmouth City Council, Civic Offices, Guildhall Walk, Portsmouth PO1 2AD; e-mail lancelyngreencollection@portsmouthcc.gov.uk; the website is at www.conandoylecollection.co.uk) *[*published to coincide with the official opening of the Collection on Friday last, which to my regret I wasn't able to attend*]*. ***Bohemian Newsletter,*** no. 75, 76 and 77 (**České společnost Sherlocka Holmese**, Aleš Kolodrubec, Milešovská 1, 130 00 Praha 3, Czech Republic). ***Communication***, no. 271 and 272 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Wanda & Jeff Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA) *[*the former is one of the PPoF's occasional parody issues, this time of food and drink — and Wanda Dow contributes four perfectly sound recipes*]*.

The Illustrious Clients News, June 2007 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). ***Ineffable Twaddle***, June 2007 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA). ***The Magic Door***, Winter 2007 (**The Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection**, Doug Wrigglesworth, 16 Sunset Street, Holland Landing, Ontario, Canada L9N 1H4) *[Dayna McCausland's piece about Conan Doyle's 1894 visit to Toronto is particularly interesting, and Peggy Perdue's shows how some of items in the collection help us to understand Conan Doyle and his family*]*.

Mayday Mayday, June 2007 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardcarn Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). ***Musgraves Matters*** no. 1 (**The Musgraves**, Rafe McGregor, 62 Willow Park Road, Wilberfoss, York YO41 5PS; musgravesmatters@aol.com) *[*the first issue of the bimonthly on-line newsletter, which will undoubtedly grow and grow*]*. ***Practice Notes,*** June 2007 (**The Friends of Dr Watson**, Nino Cirone, Highcroft Cottage, 14 Totteridge Common, London N20 8NL) *[*the Friends continue to research the life and times of John H Watson, and the results are always of interest*]*. ***The School Report***, Summer 2007 (**The Priory Scholars**, Horace L Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY).

The Scion, Spring 2007 (**The Musgraves**, Anne Jordan, Hallas Lodge, Greenside Lane, Cullingworth, Bradford BD13 5AP) *[*among much else, some more good discussion of parody and pastiche*]*. ***The Sherlock Holmes Journal***, Summer 2007 *[*my first issue as joint Hon. Ed. — please treat it kindly*]*. ***The Solar Pons Gazette***, June 2007 (Bob Byrne, www.solarpons.com) *[*though only available online, the* ***Gazette*** *is proving a worthy successor to* ***The Pontine Dossier****; thank you, Bob!*]*. ***Tonga Times***, Summer 2007 (**The Mini-Tonga Society**, Jay Pearlman, 1656 E 19th Street, #2-E, Brooklyn, NY 11229, USA) *[*I'm always impressed by the miniature 221Bs created by the Mini-Tongas*]*. ***The Whaling News***, May 2007 and June 2007 (**The Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn**, Michael E Bragg, PO Box 256, St Charles, MO 63302-0256, USA).

And ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, April 2007 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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no. 274 31st July 2007

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £6.00 or US$15.00 for 12 issues (dollar checks payable to Jean Upton, sterling cheques to me). You can receive the DM electronically free of charge, as a PDF file or as plain text.

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 didn't really expect to enjoy *Sherlock Holmes & The Heir of Albion* by Ronan Coghlan (Xiphos Books, 1 Hillside Gardens, Bangor BT19 6SJ; £7.99 or $11.25). The cover picture is of (I think) a velociraptor, and the blurb promises Holmes's 'most incredible adventure ever, battling otherworldly entities of which his imagination had never dreamed' – not to mention his 'most astounding secret, of which Watson never had an inkling'… In fact it's a very entertaining romp, involving a frustrated Professor Moriarty, granted a pardon on condition that he cares for a rather special baby, a mind-boggling revelation about the Giant Rat of Sumatra, skulduggery in the royal family, and, well, a good deal else. It's funny, exciting and fast-paced – and Mr Coghlan has wisely chosen to have as narrator a young journalist named Hector Wace, so dispensing with the need to imitate the Watson style. The book can be ordered direct from the publisher. Cheques should be payable to Ronan Coghlan.

A by-product of *Conan Doyle & Joseph Bell: The Real Sherlock Holmes*, the recent exhibition at Surgeons Hall Museum in Edinburgh, is a book with the same title, written by Alan Mackaill and Dawn Kemp and published by the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (Nicolson Street, Edinburgh EH8 9DW; www.rcsed.ac.uk; www.edinburgh.surgeonshall.museum) at £8.00. It's not a large book – 98 pages, approximately 8" x 6" – and it doesn't aim to replace Ely Liebow's *Dr Joe Bell: Model for Sherlock Holmes* (see DM 272). Instead it provides an invaluable companion to Dr Liebow's biography, with a clear, succinct text, beautifully reproduced pictures and documents from the College archives and elsewhere, and a select catalogue of objects from the exhibition. I can't agree that the portrait Walter Paget placed in Holmes's bedroom in 'The Dying Detective' is of Arthur Conan Doyle: the face is fat, smug and cruel – one of the 'pictures of celebrated criminals with which every wall was adorned'. But that's a quibble. Anyone with a serious interest in Holmes, Bell or Doyle will want a copy of this excellent book.

The Discreet Interventions of Verdon James by Julian Roach (Harbour Books Ltd, 20 Castlegate, York YO1 9RP; £9.99) comes with a recommendation from Francis Wheen, which is encouraging and thoroughly deserved. These five novellas, which span the mid-twentieth century, are in the grand tradition of the great spy thriller. Verdon James manages, with ingenuity and diplomacy, to uncover the truth in certain very complex situations, and to cover it up, when necessary. There's nothing directly Holmesian here, so I'll just add that the settings – the Spanish Civil War, the Second World War, the Cold War – are evoked with easy authority, and that Julian Roach's writing is a pleasure to read. Verdon James has the potential to join Richard Hannay and James Bond in the pantheon of British espionage fiction.

In the last DM (and in the Summer issue of *The Sherlock Holmes Journal*) I mistakenly gave the publication date of *Arthur Conan Doyle: A Life in Letters*, edited by Jon Lellenberg, Daniel Stashower and Charles Foley, as 1 October. In fact it will be published by HarperPress (Westerhill Road, Bishopbriggs, Glasgow G64 0QT) on 17 September, at £25.00. And from 24 to 28 September it will be the BBC Radio 4 Book of the Week, with five 15-minute readings broadcast at 9.45 am each day. The details are on the BBC website at www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/arts/book_week.shtml.

www.filmsofthegoldenage.com/articles/2006/12/18/current_issue/hoey.txt will take you to an interview with writer-director-producer Michael A Hoey, about his father Dennis Hoey, who will forever be remembered as Inspector Lestrade to Basil Rathbone's Holmes in the Universal films of the 1940s. Michael Hoey's memoirs *Elvis, Sherlock and Me: How I Survived Growing Up in Hollywood* will be published in September. (Thanks to Laura Kuhn.)

A paperback edition of *The Science of Sherlock Holmes* by E J Wagner (see DM 263) was published this month by John Wiley & Sons (The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester PO19 8SQ) at £10.99. The book is shortlisted for an Anthony award at this year's Bouchercon, as is Dan Stashower's *The Beautiful Cigar Girl: Mary Rogers, Edgar Allan Poe and the Invention of Murder*.

Due on 1 September from Wordsworth Editions (8B East Street, Ware, Herts. SG12 9HJ) at the remarkable price of £3.99 is a paperback edition of Arthur Conan Doyle's autobiography *Memories and Adventures*, with an introduction by David Stuart Davies. A revised edition of Mark Campbell's *The Pocket Essential Sherlock Holmes* (see DM 212) is due on 20 September, at £9.99 (Pocket Essentials, 18 Coleswood Road, Harpenden, Herts. AL5 1EQ). And on 26 October Titan Books (Titan House, 144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP) will publish a revised edition of *Starring Sherlock Holmes* by David Stuart Davies (see DM 213), priced at £24.99. And on 13 December comes *The Rivals of Sherlock Holmes* edited by Nick Rennison (No Exit Press, 18 Coleswood Road, Harpenden, Herts. AL5 1EQ; £7.99). There have been at least three major anthologies of the adventures of Holmes's contemporaries, drawn from *The Strand Magazine* and elsewhere. This promises to be good, but I could wish that Mr Rennison hadn't chosen a title that's been used by two previous editors…

Dumitru Scortanu informs me that **les éditions Fides** (based in Iasi, Romania) have published *La Malle de l'Ingénieur*, a Sherlock Holmes adventure by a new French author, Luc Zana. If you want to find out more, you can contact editura_fides@yahoo.fr.

Dorothy Stix is selling her extensive library of foreign-language editions of Holmes, and has prepared a 48-page catalogue, which she'll e-mail if you contact her at dorothystix@aol.com. Besides the obvious, there are books in Catalan, Croatian, Galician, Hebrew, Korean, Pig Latin, Serbian, Swahili, Ukrainian… Amazing!

Wessex Press, incorporating **Gasogene Books**, now has its own website at www.wessexpress.com, where you can consult the catalogue and buy direct from the publisher. Gasogene publishes *The Sherlock Holmes Reference Library* edition of the Canon, edited by Leslie Klinger. Enough said!

There's always something informative, amusing, or both in *The Sherlockian E-Times* (**Classic Specialties**, PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA; www.sherlock-holmes.com/e-times14.htm). **Nigel Williams Rare Books** also has a new catalogue out (25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk).

With *The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes 1* (Naxos AudioBooks, 2nd Floor, 40A High Street, Welwyn, Herts. AL6 9EQ; £16.99) David Timson has almost completed his unabridged reading of the entire

Sherlock Holmes Canon – and what a triumph it is! As fine an achievement in its way as the complete BBC Radio 4 dramatisation. Once again Mr Timson proves that he is the equal of any of our great 'voice men', capable of creating a living character by the pitch of his voice and the rhythm of his speech. As an example, there are bellicose old autocrats in four of the six stories here ('Thor Bridge', 'The Mazarin Stone', 'The Creeping Man', and 'The Blanched Soldier') but each comes across as a unique individual. The stories themselves vary considerably in quality; Mr Timson has treated the worst as seriously as the best – and so unintentionally made me aware while listening of just how poor the writing is in 'The Mazarin Stone'! As usual, David Timson himself has provided perceptive and informative notes to the stories, and Sarah Butcher has chosen thoroughly appropriate music, this time by Saint-Saens, Grieg and Borodin. The complete catalogue is online, by the way, at www.naxosaudiobooks.com.

Another remarkable recording of the complete Holmes Canon should now be available as *One Voice Chronological: The Consummate Holmes Collections* at www.audible.com. The One Voice is that of the strikingly versatile David Ian Davies – who has so impressed the distinguished cartoonist Tom Richmond that Mr Richmond has provided the artwork for the recordings!

Matthew Elliott points out that two of the three Sherlock Holmes plays recorded by the One-Act Players (see DM 225) can be downloaded at www.podcastdirectory.com/podcasts/224, and the scripts of all three are online at www.oneact.org. (I can't check right now, but the plays were all online at www.mp3.com/oneact.)

Illyria's production of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* continues to tour open-air venues. Dates for August are: 1 **Lanhydrock**, Bodmin (01208 265950); 2 **Ecos Amphitheatre, Merlin Theatre**, Frome (01373 465949); 3-4 **Northwood House**, Cowes (01983 289842); 5 **Bodiam Castle**, Robertsbridge (0870 2404068); 10 **Tatton Park**, Knutsford (01625 534400); 11 **Gibside**, Newcastle upon Tyne (01670 773939); 12 **Fyvie Castle**, Aberdeenshire (01651 891266); 15 **Narberth Castle** (01834 869323); 16 **Welsh Wildlife Centre**, Cilgerran (01239 621200); 17-18 **Conwy Castle** (02920 880011); 19 **Lytham Hall**, Lytham St Annes (01253 658666); 23-24 **Newstead Abbey**, Nottingham (0115 989 5555); 25 **Sutton Hoo**, Woodbridge (01394 389737); 26 **Folkestone Amphitheatre** (free event); 29 **Althorp**, Northampton (01604 770107); 30 **Corfe Castle**, Wareham (0870 300 0579); 31 **Packwood House**, Solihull (01564 783294). See also www.illyria.uk.com.

I understand that Peepolykus have no plans to travel further with their production of *The Hound*, but that the Clive Francis play will begin touring again in autumn 2008.

The National Library of Scotland (George IV Bridge, Edinburgh) has opened a new permanent exhibition drawing on the treasures in the **John Murray Archive**. Now owned by Hodder Headline, the company was founded in Edinburgh and over more than two centuries was run by seven successive John Murrays, who numbered Byron, Scott, Austen, Darwin, Livingstone, Melville and Conan Doyle among their authors. £5 million is still needed to complete the purchase of the archive.

Caen in Normandy is twinned with the English city of Portsmouth, where the **Lancelyn Green Bequest** forms the core of the Conan Doyle Collection. Arrangements are being discussed for the introductory exhibition created in Portsmouth in 2006 to be displayed in Caen from October 2007 to May 2008, as one of a series of events to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the twinning. (Thanks to **Le Société Sherlock Holmes de France** – see the website at www.sshf.com.)

Scott Monty notes that the exhibition *Victorian Secrets and Edwardian Enigmas* continues until 20 August at the Sherlock Holmes Collections at the University of Minnesota's Elmer L Andersen Library in Minneapolis. Go to Scott's Baker Street Blog at www.bakerstreetblog.com, and click on "My Collection of M's is a Fine One". In the article is a link to the complete exhibition catalogue, downloadable as a PDF file. Note the Blog's correct address, by the way.

Victorian Secrets and Edwardian Enigmas was also a major conference. Wessex Press are sponsoring another conference, *From Gillette to Brett II*, at the Hilton Indianapolis North Hotel (8181 N Shadeland Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana) from 16 to 18 November. Special guests Jeremy Paul (dramatist: author of *The Secret of Sherlock Holmes*) and Patricia Garwood (actress: Kate Whitney in Granada's *The Man with the Twisted Lip*) will be augmented by Michael A Hoey (son of Dennis) and Jenny O'Hara (female lead in *The Return of the World's Greatest Detective*). You can get full details and a registration form at www.wessexpress.com — or contact Steve Doyle at sdoyle221@sbcglobal.net.

Enjoy the Café Royal while you can. Apparently the Crown Estate wants to 'revitalise' the 'scruffy wedge of buildings to the north-west of Piccadilly Circus' according to the Evening Standard for 21 June, and plans to turn the Café Royal block, 'which includes some of London's finest Victorian interiors', into a five-star hotel.

Gordon Gostelow, who died on 3 June aged eighty-two, was an actor of integrity and empathy. I remember him on BBC TV in the 1960s – as Perks in *The Railway Children*, as Bardolph in *An Age of Kings*, and as Mr Sidney Johnson in *The Bruce-Partington Plans*, with Douglas Wilmer and Nigel Stock.

Andrew Gulli of *The Strand Magazine* reports the death on 10 June of **Barrie Roberts**, one of the select few whose Sherlock Holmes stories have the consistent ring of authenticity. He used to be a folk singer, and I have a vague memory of meeting him in the 1960s when I was helping to run a folk club in Birmingham. Small world!

Fred Saberhagen died on 29 June. Probably best known for his *Berserker* science-fantasy novels, his other writings include an uneven series that began with *The Dracula Tape*, in which the vampire Count tells the story from his point of view. Then came *The Holmes-Dracula File*, which claimed a blood relationship *[*sic*]* between the vampire and the detective, and others, less good, followed.

Periodicals received. ***The Baker Street Journal***, Summer 2007 (Steven Rothman, 220, West Rittenhouse Square, #15-D, Philadelphia, PA 19103, USA; subscriptions, PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA; correspondence for **The Baker Street Irregulars** should go to Michael Whelan, 7938 Mill Stream Circle, Indianapolis, IN 46278, USA). ***The Camden House Journal***, May 2007, June 2007 and July 2007 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). ***Communication***, no. 273 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Wanda & Jeff Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA). ***Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections***, March 2007 (Suite 111, Elmer L Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, 222 21st Avenue S, Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA). ***The Illustrious Clients News***, July 2007 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). ***Ineffable Twaddle***, July 2007 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA). ***The Petrel Flyer***, Summer 2007 (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7P 3C6). ***Prescott's Press***, June 2007 (**The Three Garridebs**, Warren Randall, 15 Fawn Lane West, South Setauket, NY 11720-1346, USA). ***The Serpentine Muse***, Summer 2007 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 301 Warren Ave, #203, Baltimore, MD 21203, USA). ***Sherlockiana***, nr. 1, 2007 (**Sherlock Holmes Klubben i Danmark**, Bjarne Rother Jensen, Højbovangen 24, 9200 Aalborg SV, Denmark).

And ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, June 2007 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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no. 275 1st September 2007

The Society has responded to a message of greeting from Tomoka Sakihara, director of business planning and marketing for Kobe Ijinkan in Japan. In Kitano-cho on the edge of the port of Kobe about twenty western-style houses remain of the hundred built a century ago by European and American merchants. The English House is actually a hundred years old this year, which ties in nicely with the 120th anniversary of *A Study in Scarlet*, so a re-creation of the Baker Street sitting-room will be opened in the English House on 7 October. For more about the Ijinkan area of Kobe, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kitano-ch%C5%8D.

This is a remarkable year for Holmesian and Doylean studies. In the next DM I'll review the two major new biographical works, ***Arthur Conan Doyle: A Life in Letters***, edited by Jon Lellenberg, Daniel Stashower and Charles Foley (HarperPress, Westerhill Road, Bishopbriggs, Glasgow G64 0QT; 17 September, £25.00), and ***Conan Doyle: The Man Who Created Sherlock Holmes*** by Andrew Lycett (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, Orion House, 5 Upper St Martin's Lane, London WC2H 9EA; 6 September, £20.00). Meanwhile you can win a copy of *A Life in Letters* by answering a question that's posted on our Society's website at www.sherlockholmes.org.uk and at Westminster Libraries' Sherlock Holmes Collection site www.westminster.gov.uk/libraries/special/sherlock.cfm. You can send answers to arthurconandoyle@harpercollins.co.uk.

Andrew Lycett will be speaking about his book at Daunt Books at 83 Marylebone High Street at 7.00pm on 13 September (phone 020 7224 2295 or e-mail talks@dauntbooks.co.uk for tickets). Then he'll be at various literary festivals: Henley on 21 September, Ilkley on 4 October, Cheltenham on 7 October, Lichfield on 12 October, Beverly on 13 October, Guildford on 18 October. On 25 October he'll be at Toronto Public Library, on 7 November at the British Library, on 20 November at the Authors Club, and on 21 November at the National Liberal Club, where he'll give the Richard Lancelyn Green Lecture to our own Society.

Talking of which — Judi Ellis (13 Crofton Avenue, Orpington, Kent BR6 8DU) is accepting orders now for *To Keep the Memory Green: Reflections on the Life of Richard Lancelyn Green, 1953-2004*, edited by Steven Rothman & Nicholas Utechin (The Quartering Press, 1 October). This joint publication by **The Sherlock Holmes Society of London** and **The Baker Street Irregulars** features contributions by June Lancelyn Green, Douglas Wilmer, Owen Dudley Edwards, Doug Wrigglesworth, Christopher Frayling, Marina Stajic, John Michael Gibson and others. The regular edition costs £17.50 postpaid within the UK, £20.00 or €30.00 to Europe, and £22.50 or $45.00 elsewhere. The limited edition (signed by Nick Utechin, Steve Rothman, Douglas Wilmer, Michael Whelan and Guy Marriott) is: £40.00 postpaid within the UK, £42.00 or €63.00 to Europe, and £45.00 or $90.00 elsewhere. (The book will also be available from The Baker Street Irregulars, 2 Dettling Road, Maynard, MA 01754, USA; email@bakerstreetjournal.com.)

The title of *Ladies, Ladies: The Women in the Life of Sherlock Holmes*, edited by Patricia Guy & Katherine Karlson (Aventine Press, 1023 4th Avenue #204, San Diego, CA 92101, USA; $11.95) indicates immediately to the cognoscenti that this delightful slim volume owes its being to **The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes** — though it's not an official ASH publication, nor is it as thin a book as I've implied. The 136 pages contain stimulating articles by notable Adventuresses, including M E Rich, Mickey Fromkin, Joanne Zahorsky-Reeves and Evelyn Herzog, along with some of Dorothy Belle Pollack's witty verse. There are also contributions from well-known male Sherlockians Grant Eustace, Enrico Solito and Philip Shreffler, and some from names new to me — Edmund D Cane, Rita D Scribner, Mike Brosnan, and, er, Mlle Vernet. The essays are good-natured, often incisive, and necessarily wide-ranging, since the ladies of the Canon match Dr Watson's 'women on three different continents' (one of whom, if we are to believe Marilyn MacGregor, shared the rooms at 221B — and I'm not talking about Mrs Hudson, whose case is separately examined by Catherine Cooke). There are snippets of relevant information about clothing, food and drink, Italians in America, and *the* woman on the screen (in the 1921 Stoll production of *A Scandal in Bohemia* she was renamed Irene Adair, but 'sexy' isn't how I'd describe Joan Beverly's performance). And I love the way in which the book is illustrated, not with pictures but with contemporary Music Hall songs, including of course 'The Ghost of Sherlock Holmes' and the less familiar 'Sherlock Holmes, DT'. All profits from *Ladies, Ladies* will be divided between the Doctor Watson Fund and the British Music Hall Society.

Like James McLevy's in Edinburgh, Allan Pinkerton's accounts in *The Pinkerton Casebook: Adventures of the Original Private Eye* (edited by Bruce Durie: Mercat Press, 10 Coates Crescent, Edinburgh EH3 7AL; £9.99) are surely recast for dramatic effect by a ghost-writer — or more likely several, given the volume of work published under Pinkerton's name between 1874, after his recovery from a stroke, until *Thirty Years a Detective* in 1884, the year of his death. But what a career he had! From poverty and radicalism in Glasgow to strike-breaking in the USA, taking in the foiling of an attempt on President Lincoln's life, the founding of the American Secret Service during the Civil War, and the establishment of the world's most successful private detective agency, this American Secret Service during the Civil War, and the establishment of the world's most successful private detective agency, this fascinating collection shows us a world that's both familiar and unfamiliar. Here, unmistakably, is the America of Dashiell Hammett — not surprisingly, as Hammett had been a Pinkerton operative — and so that of all subsequent tough but intelligent private eyes of fiction, though the style is both more florid and more stilted (McLevy, oddly enough, is closer to the lean, literate prose of Hammett). There's less in common with the world of Sherlock Holmes — except that the best of the novels, *The Valley of Fear*, was inspired by the exploits of a Pinkerton agent, James McParlan, in infiltrating and breaking the Mollie Maguires. But you won't find that story in this book. Perhaps Mercat Press might consider reprinting Pinkerton's book *The Mollie Maguires and the Detectives*?

Ian McQueen, author of that excellent book *Sherlock Holmes Detected: The Problems of the Long Stories*, has for sale a first edition of *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, which he says is 'about as pristine as you will find'. If you're interested, please drop him a line at 55 Albany, Manor Road, Bournemouth BH1 3EJ (phone 01202 292058). Current dealers' catalogues suggest that you should be thinking in terms of £500 or so.

Jeff Falkingham's 2001 novel *Sherlock Holmes and the County Courthouse Caper* 'tells the story of Browns Valley's frontier days, from the town's founding in the 1860s to the Traverse County Seat War in 1887'. This year the town was devastated by floods, and Beaver's Pond Press has published a special limited edition of the book to raise money for the relief fund. Copies are available for a donation of $17.00 or more plus $3.00 shipping (more, presumably,

to non-US addresses) from BV Flood Relief, PO Box 307, Browns Valley, MN 56219, USA.

Michael Mallory reports that 'The Singularity Society of London', his new Amelia Watson story (I enjoyed his books *The Adventures of the Second Mrs Watson* and *Murder in the Bath*) is available as an Amazon Short for 49¢. Go to www.amazon.com and enter the name Michael Mallory.

Fans of the Devil Doctor will be interested to know that artist and writer Michael McQuary is 'reinventing' Dr Fu Manchu! Take a look at www.michaelmcquary.com — there's some remarkable and curious artwork there. Mr M aims to bring pulp fiction art into a new age and is working on a book of new Fu Manchu stories.

Gael Stahl has received a flyer for *Eye of the Crow* by 'acclaimed author' Shane Peacock (Tundra Books, 11 September; Cdn$24.99). The strapline is, 'The Boy Sherlock Holmes — His 1st Case.' See www.tundrabooks.com.

Ian McQueen has kindly sent a copy of 'The Mysterious Case of the Viennese Poste Restante', a fascinating and unexpected historical investigation by Keith Brandon, in the form of a conversation between Holmes and Watson. It's taken from the Autumn 2006 issue of *Austria*, the journal of the Austrian Philatelic Society (Andy Taylor, 10 Eastfields, Stokeley, North Yorks. TS9 5EJ).

From 30 August 2007 to 30 September 2008 the **Swiss Post Office** offers a set of stamps designed by the British artist James Peel, representing Switzerland as seen by classic English writers. CHF0.85 is the Mönch and Mary Shelley's Frankenstein; CHF1.00 is Lauterbrunnen and Wordsworth's 'At Staubach Falls'; CHF1.30 is Lac Leman and Byron's 'The Prisoner of Chillon'; and CHF1.80 is Reichenbachfall and 'The Final Problem'.

Peter Steiler the Younger (Ferdinand Salverda) offers members of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London a 20% reduction (room, bed & breakfast, or half-board) and a free room upgrade if possible, at the Parkhotel du Sauvage (Englischer Hof), CH-3860 Meiringen, Switzerland. Accommodation must be booked in advance, by letter, phone (0041 33 971 4141), or e-mail (info@sauvage.ch).

The Malvern Theatre Players are putting on Simon Williams' play *The Hound of the Baskervilles* at the **Festival Theatre** (Malvern Theatres, Grange Road, Great Malvern, Worcs. WR14 3HB; 01684 892277) from 5 to 8 September. There's more information at www.malvern-theatres.co.uk.

Illyria's open-air production of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* is reaching the end of its tour. Dates for September are: 1 **Weston Park**, Shifnal (01952 852100); 2, **Rufford Old Hall**, Ormskirk (01704 821254); 5 **Fulham Palace**, London (020 7736 3233); 6 **Cockington Court**, Torquay (01803 606035); 7 **Chepstow Castle** (01291 625981); 8 **Lyme Park**, Disley (0870 428 8934). See also www.illyria.uk.com.

Sherlock Stock and Barrel by Cenarth Fox is playing at **Clayton Auditorium**, Cooke Street, Clayton, Victoria, Australia (phone 0500 842 538) on 6, 7 and 8 September. Rather different from Cen's earlier play *The Real Sherlock Holmes*, this one offers '25 Sherlockian stories in a laughter-filled night of comedy', '5 actors play 73 roles', and 'sparkling songs'. The play is available to tour and will be on sale as a DVD. See www.foxplays.com.

New York choreographer Merete Muenter informs me of another musical, *Sherlock Holmes – The Early Years*, to be staged at **The Theater at St Clements** as part of the New York Musical Theatre Festival 2007, on September 24, 25 & 30, and October 3, 5 & 6. 'Thrilling adventures abound in this mysteriously-romantic comedy complete with dancing bobbies!' Interestingly, it's an Anglo-American venture, with the book by Kate Ferguson & Robert Hudson, and lyrics by Susannah Pearse — all Londoners. Music is by New Yorker Jared M Dembowski. Check the website at www.nymf.org/Show-117.html.

Nick Utechin seems busier than ever after vacating the editor's chair at the SHJ. He's recorded four Sherlock Holmes stories on CD for Antony Richards' Baker Street Studios (Endeavour House, 170 Woodland Road, Sawston, Cambridge CB2 4DX). Jolly good they are too! The company had its origins in the now-dormant **Irregular Special Railway Company**, and most of its recordings have a railway connection. In *The Norwood Builder* it's the fact that Jonas Oldacre drafted his will on a suburban train. *The Pullman Blackmailer* and *The Pullman Recluse* by Richard Stannoy are out-and-out railway stories, based on murder mysteries devised by Antony Richards for the Irregular Special Players. The exception is *A Death at the Cricket* by Eddie Maguire, in which Holmes and Watson are briefly reunited with Young Stamford. The three non-canonical tales are neatly plotted and well written. I need hardly say that all four are very well read. Nick is a radio presenter of many years' experience, and it shows. He's an engaging storyteller with a pleasing voice. The CDs cost £4.00, €8.00 or $10.00 each, post-paid. There's a website at www.baker-street-studios.com.

Charles Hall (12 Paisley Terrace, Edinburgh EH8 7JW) offers Sherlockian postcards and Christmas cards, with bright colourful cartoon illustrations by Ian M Fraser. £5.50 will get you 5 different Christmas cards with envelopes, 3 different Christmas postcards, and 6 different postcards. For £6.50 you get 10 Christmas cards. Prices include postage.

In 1993 **Peter Tuddenham** played Inspector Martin in Granada TV's *The Dancing Men* — a waste of his authentic East Anglian accent, as the story was relocated from Norfolk to Derbyshire. Best known as the voice of the computers in *Blake's 7*, though his finest hour was as the voice of Old Tom in Peter Hall's *Akenfield*, he died on 9 July aged eighty-eight. **John Gardner**, who died on 3 August aged eighty, said, 'I feel I'm probably going to be remembered as the "guy who took over from Fleming",' but the James Bond novels were really a minor part of his considerable output. *The Return of Moriarty* and *The Revenge of Moriarty* were well received in the mid-1970s, but he didn't complete the third volume, provisionally called *The Redemption of Moriarty*, till just before his death. In 1988 he was invested into the Baker Street Irregulars as 'Moriarty'. **Melville Shavelson** began his career writing gags for Bob Hope, and went on to become a prolific writer-director-producer. He wrote a good script for the TV movie *The Great Houdinis*, and Paul Michael Glaser was well cast as Harry Houdini, but Peter Cushing was quite wrong as Arthur Conan Doyle. Mel Shavelson died on 8 August aged ninety. **W F Deedes** — Lord Deedes — was a Fleet Street legend. The only Briton to have been editor of a national newspaper and a Cabinet minister, he gained a secondary fame through his friendship with Denis Thatcher and the spoof 'Dear Bill' letters in *Private Eye*. In 1992 he was the amiable and erudite Guest of Honour at our Society's 40th anniversary dinner. He died on 18 August aged 94, and his last unfinished piece for the Daily Telegraph had a Holmesian twist. The antiquarian bookseller **Madeleine B Stern** died on 25 August aged ninety-five. Her major contribution to Sherlockian scholarship is her 1953 book *Sherlock Holmes: Rare Book Collector*.

Periodicals received. ***The Camden House Journal***, August 2007 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). ***The Illustrious Clients News***, August 2007 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). ***Ineffable Twaddle***, August 2007 and September 2007 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA). ***Irregular Newsletter***, August 2007 (**The Conan Doyle [Crowborough] Establishment**, Brian Pugh, 20 Clare Road, Lewes, Sussex BN7 1PN). ***Mayday Mayday*** and ***The Look Out***, September 2007 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardcarn Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). ***Musgraves Matters*** no. 2 (**The Musgraves**, Rafe McGregor, 62 Willow Park Road, Wilberfoss, York YO41 5PS; musgravesmatters@aol.com). ***The School Report***, Autumn 2007 (**The Priory Scholars**, Horace L Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY).

And ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, July 2007 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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no. 276 5th October 2007

As everyone, surely, knows by now, the man who used to be referred to in Sherlockian circles as 'the Literary Agent' is the subject of two highly important new biographical works. First out was Andrew Lycett's *Conan Doyle: The Man Who Created Sherlock Holmes* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, Orion House, 5 Upper St Martin's Lane, London WC2H 9EA; £20.00), which may be the closest we'll get to that elusive and probably unattainable thing, the definitive biography. Over the years, even before the family papers were finally made available, the various aspects of Sir Arthur's life and character were discovered and described, but only now is the whole story told in a single book. Andrew Lycett's genius as a biographer matches Holmes's as a detective: his dedicated and inspired research is complemented by his admirable ability to acknowledge and appreciate all aspects of his subject, and to present his impeccably balanced conclusion in a lucid and thoroughly engaging form. Conan Doyle was, perhaps more than most, a man of contradictions — or maybe it only seems so because he was such a public figure. He created 'the quintessentially rational Sherlock Holmes', yet became the great spiritualist apostle. But Mr Lycett points out that Conan Doyle regarded spiritualism as a science, 'or, at least, a natural extension of science.' His character and beliefs were not as paradoxical as many have thought. The real contrast is, it seems to me, between his generally open and generous nature and the madly over-protective possessiveness of his second wife and their two sons.

What you can't get from Mr Lycett's book is the feeling of immediate contact with his subject. For that, you must — and you should — read *Arthur Conan Doyle: A Life in Letters*, edited by Jon Lellenberg, Daniel Stashower and Charles Foley (HarperPress, Westerhill Road, Bishopbriggs, Glasgow G64 0QT; £25.00). John Carey complains that the letters can't compare with, say, Lord Chesterfield's, but that's missing the point. We read Conan Doyle's correspondence (those that survive are mostly to his mother, with whom he was always able to share his thoughts) in order to understand the man, not for literary elegance or social philosophy — though those qualities are not absent. He rarely dated his letters, so the editors have had to become detectives themselves, as Richard Lancelyn Green had to, when tracing the genesis of *The Hound of The Baskervilles* (see the SHJ, Winter 2001 & Summer 2002). With their joint expertise they have, of course, done an excellent job, both in the chronological arrangement and in the succinct and informative commentary. *Arthur Conan Doyle: A Life in Letters* was the BBC Radio 4 Book of the Week at the end of September. Five extracts, drawn from chapters 3-9, were very effectively read by Forbes Masson and John Dougal. They were repeated the following week at www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/arts/book_week.shtml, but it would be nice if the Beeb were to release a recording.

Conan Doyle's letters weren't written for publication, so they provide an interesting contrast with, and complement to, his autobiography, *Memories and Adventures*, first published in 1924 and now available as an attractive and remarkably cheap paperback (Wordsworth Editions, 8B East Street, Ware, Herts. SG12 9HJ; £3.99). This is very much the public face of Sir Arthur. He can't be blamed for writing the story as he did, but it's far from being the whole story, as David Stuart Davies indicates in his instructive introduction. Look, I don't really need to recommend this book, do I? Everyone should have a copy.

The first publication of the Quartering Press, a joint venture by **The Sherlock Holmes Society of London** and **The Baker Street Irregulars**, is *To Keep the Memory Green: Reflections on the Life of Richard Lancelyn Green, 1953-2004*, edited by Steven Rothman & Nicholas Utechin. I knew Richard for more than twenty-five years, and had some idea of how remarkable he and his family were, but since his death I've learned so much more about his talents and his achievements that his loss — or rather, *our* loss — is even more regrettable. There's an inevitable sadness in these essays by family and friends, but there are happy recollections too, and tributes to Richard's singular achievements. I doubt now that even he could have written the definitive biography of Conan Doyle, though he'd hoped to do so, but his legacy is monumental, and he's unlikely to be overtaken as the world's greatest Conan Doyle expert. The regular edition costs £17.50 postpaid within the UK, £20.00 or €30.00 to Europe, and £22.50 or $45.00 elsewhere. The limited edition (signed by Nick Utechin, Steve Rothman, Douglas Wilmer, Michael Whelan and Guy Marriott) is: £40.00 postpaid within the UK, £42.00 or €63.00 to Europe, and £45.00 or $90.00 elsewhere. The book is available from Judi Ellis (13 Crofton Avenue, Orpington, Kent BR6 8DU) and from The Baker Street Irregulars (2 Dettling Road, Maynard, MA 01754, USA).

Maurizio Ascari's *A Counter-History of Crime Fiction*, the latest volume in the 'Crime Files' series from Palgrave Macmillan (Brunel Road, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hants. RG21 6XS) is of peculiar interest. The subtitle is *Supernatural, Gothic, Sensational* — so you can guess where we're heading. Arthur Conan Doyle wrote tales of the supernatural as well as stories of detection, as Poe had done before him, and as others were to do after. *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, after all, shares a heritage with *Wuthering Heights*, and the 'sensational' pervades the work of Joseph Conrad, Thomas Pynchon and Umberto Eco just as much as that of Mrs Braddon, Lord Lytton and Agatha Christie. After Conan Doyle, the most space in this fascinating survey seems to be devoted to Wilkie Collins and — the writer who perfected the art of creating a supernaturally impossible situation and then explaining it rationally — G K Chesterton. John Dickson Carr raised the technique to even greater heights, and it's rather surprising that his superb detective stories are not mentioned here. The detective story as we know it is a child of both reason and unreason, the latter sometimes masquerading as the former (think of phrenology and eugenics). *A Counter-History of Crime Fiction* is well worth reading, but at £45.00 for 222 pages, with no illustrations, it's unlikely to be bought by anyone outside specialist academic libraries.

Cenarth Fox has sent a copy of his latest play *Sherlock Stock and Barrel*. Being half a world away I didn't see the world première season in Australia, but just reading the script made me chuckle, and I can easily imagine what fun it must be to see — or indeed to stage. If the Reduced Shakespeare Company were to tackle Sherlock Holmes the result might be something like this, but it would probably lack Cen Fox's profound knowledge of the Holmesian Canon. Five actors set out to present all sixty stories in one show; they manage just twenty-five, which is still quite a feat. There's plenty of good comedy, some slyly pointing up absurdities in the stories and some of the 'Which character am I now?' variety, but none of it detracts from the magic of Holmes, Watson and their world. You can read the script and find out about performance rights at www.foxplays.com.

This month sees the second edition of *Starring Sherlock Holmes* by David Stuart Davies (Titan Books, 144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP). Remarkably, it's not only twenty pages longer than the original, but £5.00 cheaper, at £24.99! As I said back in 2001, I fancy that it's the wonderful illustrations, many of them from the Lancelyn Green Collection, that will first impress the reader, but those are the icing on the cake of David's deep knowledge and love of the

cinematic and televisual Holmes. For reference, I turn first to Allan Barnes's *Sherlock Holmes on Screen*, but *Starring Sherlock Holmes* is more handsomely presented — even though H Reeves-Smith is still named as Reginald Owen in the photo on page 4…

On the Trail of Dr Arthur Conan Doyle: An Illustrated Devon Tour by Brian Pugh & Paul Spiring is due on 31 January from Book Guild Publishing (Pavilion View, 19 New Road, Brighton BN1 1UF; www.bookguild.co.uk), at £12.99. You can order copies now from www.amazon.co.uk. German, Japanese, French and Spanish editions are planned.

John Addy reminds me that Bibliophile Books (5 Thomas Road, London E14 7BN; phone 020 7515 9222) are offering the revised edition of *A Bibliography of A Conan Doyle* by Richard Lancelyn Green and John Michael Gibson for £20.00 plus £3.00 postage. That's one hell of a bargain, as the publishers' price is £65.00.

Steven Dietz's play *Sherlock Holmes — The Final Adventure* has been doing good business in theatres across the USA. Now the script has been published, and is available at $6.75 from the Internet Theatre Bookshop at www.stageplays.com.

The Unusual Sherlock Holmes by Jerry 'B-P' Riggs, featuring 'three singular problems', is available for $18.95 plus postage from the usual sources, or direct from the author at 303 S Norton Street, Corunna, MI 48817, USA — sherlockianscout@yahoo.com.

New from our member John Radford is *Don't You Believe It! Some Things Everybody Knows That Actually Ain't So* (Stepney Green Press; £9.95). Sherlock Holmes features, but not for the reason you think. Copies can be bought from Amnesty International UK (*Don't You Believe It*, c/o Lara Woolston, Human Rights Action Centre, 17-25 New Inn Yard, London EC2 3EA; www.amnestyshop.org.uk) and the National Secular Society (25 Red Lion Square, London WC1 4RL; www.secularism.org.uk). Cheques or postal orders should be payable to the organisation concerned, which will receive all money from the sale. Overseas purchasers should contact John at j.k.radford@btinternet.com.

The subject of the Society's Christmas card this year is the ***Sherlock Holmes*** pub in London, which opened under that name in December 1957. To celebrate its Golden Jubilee, on Tuesday 6 November, from 4.00pm to 6.00pm, the pub will offer a selection of food and drink at 1957 prices. I'm told that Holmes and Watson will be present.

Undershaw, Conan Doyle's house at Hindhead, is on the market again. Heloise Brown of the Victorian Society said, 'It is vital that the right buyer comes forward now. This is not just a charming and intriguing historic house, but a nationally and internationally significant building.' The Victorian Society has appealed, with strong support from our Society and others, against the Department of Culcha, Meeja 'n Sport's refusal to list the house at Grade 1.

A touring version of the 2006 exhibition *The Case of the Portsmouth Doctor: The Story of Arthur Conan Doyle, Sherlock Holmes, and their Greatest Collector* is on display until 25 October at the Hôtel de Ville in Caen, Portsmouth's twin city. **La Société Sherlock Holmes de France** has arranged activities linked to the exhibition. See www.sshf.com/index.php3?file=news&num=610.

Shakespeare & Company are staging Jeremy Paul's play *The Secret of Sherlock Holmes* at the **Founders' Theatre** at 70 Kemble Street, Lenox, Massachusetts until 28 October. On 20 October Scott Monty BSI and Leslie Klinger BSI will give presentations in Lenox. For details see www.shakespeare.org.

Paul Singleton and Todd Butera will play Holmes and Watson in *The Blue Carbuncle*, dramatised by Andrew Joffe, for the **WorkShop Theater Company** in New York on 6-8, 12-15 & 19-22 December.

Roger Llewellyn will portray the Great Detective again in *The Death and Life of Sherlock Holmes*, a new play by David Stuart Davies, whose première is scheduled for 6 March at the **Yvonne Arnaud Theatre** in Guildford. A tour will follow, provisionally starting in Belfast, and taking in the Edinburgh Festival in August — at the **Assembly Rooms**, no less!

Not long after the first complete recording of Miklós Rózsa's score for Billy Wilder's film *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* (Tadlow Music, 57 High Street, Tadlow, Royston, Herts. SG8 0EU; www.tadlowmusic.com) comes a very welcome new recording of Rózsa's *Violin Concerto*, on which the film music was based (the reverse procedure to Vaughan Williams', when he derived his *Sinfonia Antarctica* from the score for *Scott of the Antarctic*). The violinist is Anastasia Khitruk, and Dmitri Yablonsky conducts the Russian Philharmonic Orchestra. The CD also includes Rózsa's *Sinfonia Concertante* for violin cello and orchestra. It's on Naxos — www.naxos.com — and it's gorgeous.

An unabridged reading by David Ian Davies of all sixty stories was released last month in nine instalments as *One Voice Chronological: The Consummate Holmes Canon*. You can hear a sample of each, and buy downloads, at www.audible.com. David's Holmesian recordings stretch much further than the Canon, including works by David Stuart Davies (no relation, believe it or not), M J Elliott, and most recently my own play *The Great Detective*.

The 2008 calendar published by the Pilgrims Hospices in Kent feature very accomplished landscape paintings by Peter Cushing, who was cared for at the hospice in Canterbury before his death in 1994. The Pilgrims Hospices Fundraising Office is at Hythe Road, Willesborough, Ashford, Kent TN24 0NE (e-mail Lindsay Goode at lindsay_goode@pilgrimshospice.org).

The New Zealand Mint has produced four $2.00 coins for the Cook Islands. A set will cost you rather above face value — NZ$325.00 in fact, because they're solid silver, each bearing a full-colour image based on the Russian TV Sherlock Holmes series, and only 8,000 of each will be issued. See www.newzealandmint.com.

Look out next month for a *Sherlock Holmes Weekend* on ITV 3, with contributions from Richard E Grant, Gyles Brandreth and Antony Richards among many others.

What was I thinking of? Bert Coules points out that the late **Peter Tuddenham** did indeed use his East Anglian accent to good effect when playing Inspector Martin in *The Dancing Men* — because he was in the BBC Radio 4 production, which Bert quite properly located in Norfolk. The actor in the Granada TV film was David Ross, to whom my apologies.

Congratulations to **Uno Studio in Holmes**, which was founded in Florence ('the only Italian city surely visited by the Master') in 1987, and will celebrate its twentieth birthday on 23 November.

Periodicals received. ***The Baker Street Irregulars Trust Newsletter***, Summer 2007 (**The Baker Street Irregulars Trust**, Julie McKuras, 13512 Granada Avenue, Apple Valley, MN 55124, USA). ***The Camden House Journal***, September 2007 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). ***The Formulary***, September 2007 (**The Friends of Dr Watson**, Nino Cirone, Highcroft Cottage, 14 Totteridge Common, Totteridge, London N20 8NL). ***Ineffable Twaddle***, October 2007 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA). ***Musgraves Matters*** September 2007 and October 2007 (**The Musgraves**, Rafe McGregor, 62 Willow Park Road, Wilberfoss, York YO41 5PS; musgravesmatters@aol.com).

The Passengers' Log, August 2007 (**The Sydney Passengers**, Rosane McNamara, 4/2a Merlin Street, Neutral Bay, NSW 2089, Australia). ***The Petrel Flyer***, Special Edition (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7P 3C6). *[*This year marks the twentieth anniversary of both **The Passengers' Log** and **The Petrel Flyer**. Long may they continue to stimulate and delight!]*. ***Prescott's Press***, September 2007 (**The Three Garridebs**, Warren Randall, 15 Fawn Lane West, South Setauket, NY 11720-1346, USA). ***The Serpentine Muse***, Fall 2007 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 301 Warren Ave, #203, Baltimore, MD 21203, USA).

And ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, August 2007 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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Gary Lovisi's monographs *Relics of Sherlock Holmes*, *Souvenirs of Sherlock Holmes* and *Sherlock Holmes: The Great Detective in Paperback and Pastiche* may not constitute the last word upon the subject, but they are most useful reference works for the collector. He is also responsible for some Holmesian fiction, now collected as *The Secret Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (Ramble House, 443 Gladstone Blvd, Shreveport, LA 71104, USA; $18.00 pbk, $30.00 hbk). The earliest, 'The Loss of the British Bark *Sophy Anderson*', is the most fantastic, with a strong whiff of the pulp magazine, and the least successful, though not for that reason. The style doesn't ring true, either to Dr Watson or to the time and place. In the first sentence we have Watson 'overlooking' his notes, which gives the erroneous impression that he is neglecting rather than scanning them, and reference to a 'stage actress', though there were no other dramatic media in the 1890s. The story is otherwise luridly entertaining. The other two tales, 'Mycroft's Great Game' and 'The Adventure of the Missing Detective', are more satisfactory, being narrated respectively by Mycroft and Sherlock Holmes, who each give a different account of what lay behind the Moriarty affair and the Great Hiatus. I don't say that they're convincing, mind, but they are intelligent and thought-provoking.

Twelve years ago I welcomed the first edition of Patricia Guy's *Bacchus at Baker Street: Sherlock Holmes & Victorian Drinking Lore*, now revised and republished by iUniverse (2021 Pine Lake Road, Suite 100, Lincoln, NE 68512, USA) at $13.95. As I said then, Ms Guy speculates with expert authority on the wines, beers and spirits mentioned or implied in the Holmesian Canon, setting the references firmly in their historical context. She goes into fascinating detail on the different kinds of drink, native and imported, good and bad, strong and weak. She also provides recipes, some of them very tempting, for Victorian mixed drinks, for medicinal brews, and for domestic tipples. This edition goes into more depth about beer and Arthur Conan Doyle (separately) and features more Victorian cocktail recipes — no, the cocktail was not an invention of the Jazz Age. The elegant cover is the work of Gianni Burato. I've said in another context that one of the great pleasures of our Game is the way in which the Canon serves as a firm base for exploring the world in which Holmes and Watson lived, and *Bacchus at Baker Street* is prime evidence of that.

Formal Investigations: Aesthetic Style in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Detective Fiction, edited by Paul Fox and Koray Melikoğlu (***ibidem***-Verlag, Melchiorstr. 15, D-70439, Stuttgart, Germany; £20.90) is rather more academic, as the subtitle suggests. These essays, constituting the fourth volume in the *Studies in English Literatures* series, naturally approach their subject from a literary standpoint. Sherlock Holmes, naturally, features prominently, and two at least of the essays have encouraged me to reconsider certain aspects of the Canon. In 'The Science of Detection: Geology and Aesthetics in Victorian and Edwardian Detective Fiction' Helen Sutherland uses geology more or less as a metaphor for Holmes's method, contrasting it with the ostensibly more intuitive practice of Father Brown; she also contrasts Holmes's proclaimed practicality with the undeniable influence on him of the Victorian aesthetes — a topic considered also by Nick Freeman in 'Double Lives, Terrible Pleasures: Oscar Wilde and Crime Fiction in the *Fin de Siècle*'. The eleven essays cover an unexpectedly wide range, including the psychic detective tales of Algernon Blackwood, and even Arthur Machen's 'The Great God Pan' among the stories examined. The most interesting from a purely Holmesian point of view, though, is 'Horrifying Ho(l)mes: Conan Doyle's Bachelor Detective and the Aesthetics of Domestic Realism', in which Rudolph Glitz convincingly argues that Conan Doyle was strongly influenced, for all the apparently fantastic nature of some of his plots, by the French realist school, exemplified by Balzac and Zola. As far as I am aware, this idea is quite new, and it seems to me to be incontestable.

While we await the final set in David Timson's magnificent recorded reading of the complete Holmes Canon, Naxos AudioBooks (2nd Floor, 40A High Street, Welwyn, Herts. AL6 9EQ) has issued a very nice twin-CD pack for the holiday season. *A Family Christmas*, priced at £10.99, contains a magical variety of stories and poems, by Dylan Thomas, L Frank Baum, Hans Christian Andersen, Thomas Hardy and others — including, of course, Arthur Conan Doyle. 'The Blue Carbuncle' remains, as Christopher Morley termed it, a Christmas story without slush. David Timson reads it superbly, and he's matched by the other readers: Jenny Agutter, John Chancer, Teresa Gallagher, Philip Madoc, Benjamin Soames and Benjamin Zephaniah. Like other Naxos recordings, this can now be downloaded at www.naxosaudiobooks.com.

Due on 30 November from Quirk Books (215 Church Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106, USA) is *The Crimes of Dr Watson: An Interactive Sherlock Holmes Mystery* by John Watson, edited by Duane Swierczynski). The publisher's price is £14.99. Brian Pugh reports that *The Mysterious World of Sherlock Holmes* by Bruce Wexler is due around now from Colin Gower Enterprises. I can't trace an address for the publisher. The author has previously written on the works of Margaret Mitchell and Louis L'Amour.

Brown's Valley, Minnesota was devastated by floods earlier this year. Beaver's Pond Press has published a special limited edition of Jeff Falkingham's 2001 novel *Sherlock Holmes and the County Courthouse Caper* to help the relief fund. Copies are available for a donation of $17.00 or more plus $3.00 shipping (more, presumably, to non-US addresses) from BV Flood Relief, PO Box 307, Browns Valley, MN 56219, USA. See www.cccaper.com.

In the last issue I gave an enthusiastic thumbs-up to the script of Cenarth Fox's new musical extravaganza *Sherlock Stock and Barrel*. Now the show is available on CD from sales@foxplays.com. And you can see more details at www.foxplays.com. Twenty-five Canonical adventures in eighty minutes — I'm really looking forward to hearing this! Cen Fox's excellent earlier play *The Real Sherlock Holmes* is also out on CD, with the original cast.

The latest recording from the Old Court Radio Theatre Company will be up on the Society's website very shortly, at www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk, where you'll be able to listen to and download *'The Beryl Coronet' and 'The Speckled Band'*, both dramatised by Chris Drake. Jim Crozier and Dave Hawkes return as Holmes and Watson, impeccably supported by Angie Budd, Ivor Jevons, Sarah Bell, Mark Preston and Brian Adrian. The two plays are also available from me on a CD. The price post-paid is: UK £5.00; Europe £6.00 or 9.00 Euros; elsewhere £9.00 or US$12.00. Sterling cheques should be payable to Roger Johnson and US dollar checks to Jean Upton; Euros in cash only, please. *'The Yellow Face' and 'The Three Students'* and *'The Mazarin Stone' and 'The Veiled Lodger'* can also be had from me.

The Texas Radio Theatre Company has recorded *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and, most recently, *The Final Problem*. The former is available as a CD for 'a $12 donation'. See the website at www.texasradiotheatre.com/html/Home.htm, or e-mail info@texasradiotheatre.com.

David Ian Davies (who has just beaten David Timson in recording the complete Canon) has won the Moonbeam Children's Book Awards Silver Medal for *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Congratulations! You'll find Mr Davies's *One Voice Chronological: The Consummate Holmes Canon* at www.audible.com.

Back in 1993, before it became a news & sport channel, BBC Radio 5 broadcast *The Unopened Casebook of Sherlock Holmes*, a highly entertaining series of six apocryphal adventures written by John Taylor and starring Simon Callow and Nicky Henson as Holmes and Watson. They were the closest thing the Beeb had done to the ingenious, fast-moving plays from the classic American radio. At last BBC Audiobooks (Woodlands, 80 Wood Lane, London W12 0TT) plan to release the series on CD — but not till next March.

Philip Woolley reports that the **Black Cat Bookshop** has closed its shop premises, but the business is still alive and active. See the website at www.blackcatbookshop.com. Phil and Karen trade online and by post. They have stalls at Leicester Market (Tuesday – Saturday) and exhibit at book fairs around the country. And they still specialise in Sherlock Holmes! You can contact the Black Cat Bookshop at PO Box 8662, Wigston, Leicester LE18 9BB (phone 0116 251 2756; e-mail blackcatuk@aol.com).

Charles Hall (12 Paisley Terrace, Edinburgh EH8 7JW) offers Sherlockian Christmas cards, with seven different bright colourful cartoon illustrations by Ian M Fraser. A pack of ten cards and envelopes costs £6.50, including postage.

Tuesday to Saturday from 6 to 22 December, our good friend Paul Singleton will play Holmes, with Todd Butera as Watson, in *The Blue Carbuncle*, dramatised by Andrew Joffe, for the **WorkShop Theater Company** at 312 West 36th Street, New York. The programme also includes O Henry's classic *The Gift of the Magi*. Performances are at 8.00pm, with Saturday matinees at 2.00pm. For details see http://www.workshoptheater.org/mainstage/2006-2007/carbmagi/art.php.

From 10 January to 3 February, Resonance Ensemble presents Victor L Cahn in the world premiere of his own play *Sherlock: Solo* at the **Kirk Theatre** (Theatre Row, 410 West 42nd Street, New York, NY 10036). Details are at www.resonanceensemble.org.

Doug Wrigglesworth notes that as part of the Toronto Reference Library's 30th anniversary project several MURMUR posts have been set up, one of the in the **Arthur Conan Doyle Room.** You can listen in at http://murmurtoronto.ca/place.php?306545.

The Autumn 2007 issue of *The Pipe Smoker's Thing* is a Holmesian number, featuring articles on Holmes and tobacco by John Hall, Regis McCafferty and Albert Mendez. Copies are available from Mr Mendez (142-35 38th Avenue, Flushing, NY 11354, USA) 'in consideration of a small donation to help defray the cost of printing and postage'. One for collectors! And Steve Moss has kindly sent the November issue of *Guns & Ammo* (InterMedia Outdoors Inc., 6420 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90048-5515, USA), which contains a good article by Garry James on 'The Guns of Sherlock Holmes'. See also http://www.gunsandammomag.com/117_1107NS/.

In November 2008 the University of Regina will host **Re-examining Conan Doyle: Arthur Conan Doyle Symposium**. 'Scholars interested in all aspects of the life and work of Arthur Conan Doyle are invited to submit papers… no more than 10 pages (20 minutes) and suitable for presentation as part of a panel of three papers… Submit papers/abstracts to: Dr Nils Clausson, Department of English, University of Regina, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada S4S 0A2. Deadline: April 30, 2008. Please send **three** copies; author's name should appear only on the covering sheet or letter.' You can get more information from Dr Clausson at Nils.Clausson@uregina.ca.

Reviewing *The Norwegian Explorers Omnibus* in DM 273, I mentioned the connections between **The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota** and our own Society. In early January the Explorers will celebrate 60 years as a scion society of **The Baker Street Irregulars**. Congratulations and happy birthday!

Francine Swift, a good and generous friend, died on 10 October. Seemingly inseparable from her husband Wayne, she never really recovered from his death in January 2001, but she will be remembered by many as a very active member of Sherlock Holmes societies on both sides of the ocean. Her investiture in **The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes** was 'Hatty Doran'. In 1994 she was invested into the BSI as 'The Wigmore Street Post Office'.

Our member **Sal Angelle** died in June. Catherine Cooke notes that he regularly attended our summer weekends, booking his leave specifically to come over for them. Peter Blau reports the death on 24 August of actor and writer **Denny Martin Flinn**, whose novels *San Francisco Kills* and *Killer Finish* feature Spencer Holmes, private eye and grandson of Sherlock. In 1993 Flynn dramatised his friend Nicholas Meyer's *The Seven-per-Cent Solution* for BBC Radio 4. Also from Peter: '**L Frank James** died on Sept. 2. He was a pastor and an actor, and author of *An Unopened Grave: Sherlock Holmes Investigates His Ultimate Case*.' The book was favourably reviewed in DM 269. **Mary Schulz** died on 15 October. A delightful lady, she was the supportive and indulgent wife of Ted Schulz for fifty-four years — indulgent to the extent of allowing their son to be named William Sherlock. Peter Blau notes that the BSI honoured her as *The* Woman in 1998.

Alan Coren, who died on 18 October aged sixty-nine, may be remembered for his appearances on *The News Quiz* and *Call My Bluff*, but essentially he was an unbeatable humorous writer (his hero was S J Perelman). There are several Sherlock Holmes parodies in the dozen or more collections of his newspaper and magazine columns, and his children's books about Arthur, the boy who lived in the flat next to Holmes and Watson, are a joy.

Paul Smedegaard died on 15 November, around the time of his sixty-sixth birthday. His father was a Dane who settled in Wisconsin, and in the early 1960s Paul was welcomed into the **Sherlock Holmes Klubben i Danmark**. Later he was admitted by Vincent Starrett to **Hugo's Companions**, becoming in time 'Sir Hugo XIII'. His BSI investiture in 1977 as 'The Randall Gang' was followed twenty years ago by his wife Margaret's, as 'Criterion Bar'. As Scott Monty says, Paul was not only a joiner but a leader. He was also a nice guy.

Periodicals received. ***Bohemian Newsletter,*** no. 79, 80, 81 and 82 (**eské spole nost Sherlocka Holmese**, Aleš Kolodrubec, Milešovská 1, 130 00 Praha 3, Czech Republic). ***The Camden House Journal***, October and November 2007 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). ***Canadian Holmes,*** St Jean Baptiste Day (Summer) 2007 **(The Bootmakers of Toronto**, Barbara Roden, PO Box 1360, Ashcroft, B.C. , Canada V0K 1A0). ***Communication***, no. 274 and no. 275 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Wanda & Jeff Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA) *[*no. 275 is a spoof shopping catalogue for goods such as the Carfax-o-pedic bed — 'So comfortable you'll think you're dead'*]*. ***Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections***, September 2007 (Suite 111, Elmer L Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, 222 21st Avenue S, Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA). ***The Illustrious Clients News***, October 2007 and November 2007 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). ***Ineffable Twaddle***, November 2007 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA). ***The Magic Door***, Fall 2007 (**The Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection**, Doug Wrigglesworth, 16 Sunset Street, Holland Landing, Ontario, Canada L9N 1H4). ***Mayday Mayday***, October 2007 and November 2007 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardcarn Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). ***The Petrel Flyer***, November/December 2007 (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7P 3C6). ***The School Report***, Winter 2007 (**The Priory Scholars**, Horace L Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY). ***The Whaling News***, July 2007, August 2007, September 2007 and October 2007 (**The Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn**, Michael E Bragg, PO Box 256, St Charles, MO 63302-0256, USA).

And ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, September 2007 and October 2007 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

Roger Johnson

The DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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no. 278 17th December 2007

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £6.00 or US$15.00 for 12 issues (dollar checks payable to Jean Upton, sterling cheques to me). Dollar prices quoted without qualification refer to US dollars. You can receive the DM electronically free of charge, as a PDF attachment or as plain text. Please contact me by e-mail.

There are two good reasons for buying *Sherlock Holmes and the County Courthouse Caper* by Jeff Falkingham (Beaver's Pond Press, 7104 Ohms Lane, Suite 216, Edina, MN 55439, USA; $17.00). One, that all proceeds from this limited edition of 1,000 copies go to support the flood relief programme in the town of Brown's Valley, Minnesota. Two, that's it's a cracking good read. In 1886 Sherlock Holmes comes to America, where his friend Dr Watson is studying the latest surgical techniques – and getting married. All right, that's from Baring-Gould, not Conan Doyle, but it gets Holmes to Brown's Valley, to investigate the true source of the Mississippi. He refuses a commission to help settle the town's dispute with neighbouring Wheaton as to which should be the capital of Traverse County – until his native guide is brutally murdered…

The quarrel over the County Courthouse really happened, and the people of Brown's Valley did employ a detective to investigate possible corruption. The larger background to the murders – that of Red Thunder is only one of six – is the Sioux Uprising of 1862, and that too is history, as is the story of Brown's Valley itself. Many of the people we meet did exist, and the others, including the narrator, twelve-year-old Petey Smith, are as real as Sherlock Holmes. Too many writers attempt to copy the Doyle-Watson style, and fail, often because they have no real knowledge of late Victorian London. The bold few, who know their Holmes well enough, put him in a historical setting that they are thoroughly familiar with. And that's what Jeff Falkingham has done. He can bring old Brown's Valley to life for us, because he knows it so well. And, I should add, because he's a damned good storyteller. *Sherlock Holmes and the County Courthouse Caper* is a real page-turner, made the more interesting by the final chapter, which sorts out the fact from the fiction. British readers can send a check for $27.50 (which includes $10.50 postage) to BV Flood Relief, PO Box 307, Browns Valley, MN 56219, USA. Two copies would be $49.00. For larger orders, e-mail Jeff@cccaper.com. And check the website at www.cccaper.com.

Rafe McGregor accurately describes his Amazon Short *A Study in Watson: The Extraordinary Life of the Man Behind Sherlock Holmes* as a 'mini-biography'. It summarises the known facts about Dr Watson, all taken from the sixty accounts in the Canon, and offers soundly-based speculation to create a portrait of the whole man. Amazon Shorts can be downloaded (by American subscribers only, I understand) at www.amazon.com/shorts, for $0.49. (Rafe's own website at www.rafemcgregor.co.uk is worth a look, by the way.)

Those interested in the London and the England of Sherlock Holmes should check www.OldHouseBooks.co.uk, where they'll find a wealth of facsimile guide books and maps on offer. For instance: *Baedeker's Guide to Great Britain 1890* (£15.99), *Baedeker's London & Its Environs 1900* (£14.99), *Murray's Modern London 1860* (£13.99), *Bacon's up to date Map of London 1902* (£9.99), *London Railways Map 1897* (£9.99), *Dickens's Dictionary of London 1888* (£12.99)… You can get a catalogue from Old House Books, The Old Police Station, Pound Street, Moretonhampstead, Devon TQ13 8PA (01647 440707; e-mail info@OldHouseBooks.co.uk).

Rohase Piercy's remarkable novel *My Dearest Holmes* caused some raising of eyebrows when it was first published by GMP in 1988. If you've wondered what all the fuss was about, you can buy it from BookSurge, through www.amazon.co.uk where it's available as a print-on-demand book at £6.44 (dealers are asking considerably more for used copies of the original edition). As the title suggests, the story posits a homoerotic element, but, thank heaven, without the sensationalism that such an idea stimulates in some other writers. It's elegantly done, very well written, and rooted in a sound knowledge of the Canon.

I don't think I've mentioned the *Classic Specialties Sherlock Holmes Calendar for 2008*, containing goodness knows how many dates of importance, interest and amusement for the Sherlockian, and great graphics in full colour. It's printed and distributed by CafePress and costs $19.99. The details are at www.sherlock-holmes.com - or you can write to Classic Specialties, PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH, 45219, USA; or e-mail sherlock@sherlock-holmes.com. On the website you'll also find essays, puzzles, information about people and societies, and of course a full list of the many Sherlockian and other items for sale – including some attractive new Christmas cards.

Back in October I commented favourably on Cenarth Fox's latest theatrical extravaganza, *Sherlock Stock & Barrel*, though I was only able to read the script. Now I've heard the show on CD and can report that it works beautifully. To recap: five actors set out to tell all sixty stories in eighty minutes. Kirk Alexander, Gareth Wilding-Forbes, Chris Gaffney, Joanne Gabriel and Catherine Munday only manage twenty-five, and the result, necessarily played at a frantic pace, is dramatic, tuneful, ingenious, and above all very funny. You can buy the CD from Fox Plays UK (Ms. Anne Nichols, 4 Drovers Way, Burton, Carnforth LA6 1HU; phone 01524 781868; e-mail inquiries@foxplays-uk.co.uk) or from Fox Plays (Mr Cenarth Fox, PO Box 2078, Richmond South, 3121 Victoria, Australia; phone +61 3 9429 3004; e-mail sales@foxplays.com). You can read the script and find out about performance rights at www.foxplays.com.

BBC Worldwide (Woodlands, 80 Wood Lane, London W12 0TT) has released the full radio series of *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* and *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, each as a twelve-CD set at £45.00. These are the classic performances with Clive Merrison and Michael Williams. I hope to review the recordings in the next newsletter.

In February, HarperCollins Audio Books (Westerhill Road, Bishopbriggs, Glasgow G64 0QT) will release some classic readings as 3-CD sets: *The Final Problem and other stories* read by Basil Rathbone; *The Adventure of the Lion's Mane and other stories* read by Christopher Lee; *The Hound of the Baskervilles* read by Tony Britton; and *The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire and other stories* read by Christopher Lee. Each set is priced at £13.99.

If you're after a 'Sherlock Holmes' hat, **Stephen Gough** offers tweed deerstalkers at prices starting at £9.99 plus £1.99 first class postage (£2.99 airmail worldwide). E-mail Mr Gough for further details at deerstalkerhats@hotmail.co.uk.

Dana Davies, son of the actor David Ian Davies, designs and makes novelty pens. His latest is a striking Sherlock Holmes pen, reproducing in 3D the caricatures by the *Mad Magazine* cartoonist

Tom Richmond. There are good photos of the unpainted prototype at http://www.tomrichmond.com/blog/index.php?paged=2, which is Tom Richmond's website.

Thierry Saint-Joanis passes on news of a musical to be produced in Montréal next February, at the **Segal Centre for Performing Arts**, part of the Saidye Bronfman Centre Yiddish Theatre (5170 Côte-Ste-Catherine, Montréal, Quebec, Canada H3W 1M7; phone 514 739-2301). The book of *Houdini* is by Ben Gonshor, and the music and lyrics by Elan Kunin. Despite being staged at a Yiddish theatre in a French-speaking city, this play about Arthur Conan Doyle's one-time friend is actually in English. It runs from 10 February to 2 March.

Tony Armitage has sent a cutting from a local paper in Tamworth, headed, '"Sleuth" postie solves the case.' The postman in question is Tony's brother **Pete Armitage**, who managed to track down the intended recipient of a letter that arrived from Australia, addressed to "Roy Ashby (violinist – a brilliant one!) living in a village close to Tamworth, Staffs, England". And there's a very nice photo of Mr Ashby with his fiddle and Mr Armitage with deerstalker, pipe and magnifying glass.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was born on 22 May 1859. From 4 May to 15 August 2009, the **Houghton Library at Harvard University** will mount an exhibition to mark Conan Doyle's sesquicentennial. *[*If we used the expression in Britain, I suppose it ought really to be 'sesquicentenary'…*]* The exhibition will feature 'rare books, manuscripts, and ephemera from Houghton's collections, the archives of the Baker Street Irregulars, and private collections'. From 7 May to 9 May, the library will also host a symposium to honour Sir Arthur. You can follow developments on the website at http://hcl.harvard.edu/libraries/houghton/doyle_symposium.html.

Billy Fields of **The Nashville Scholars of the Three-Pipe Problem** passes on a report from the Associated Press: 'Researchers in a remote jungle in Indonesia have discovered a giant rat and a tiny possum that are apparently new to science, underscoring the stunning biodiversity of the Southeast Asian nation, scientists said Monday… The animals were found in the Foja mountains rainforest in eastern Papua province in a June expedition, said US-based Conservation International, which organized the trip along with the Indonesian Institute of Science. "The giant rat is about five times the size of a typical city rat," said Kristofer Helgen, a scientist with the Smithsonian Institution in Washington. "With no fear of humans, it apparently came into the camp several times during the trip." The possum was described as "one of the world's smallest marsupials."'

All right, it's not Sumatra, but both are provinces of Indonesia, and who can say that the giant rat didn't exist in Sumatra a century ago?

Steve Duke of **The Elementary Victorians** sends greetings, and adds, 'Couldn't help noticing your remarks about using the Canon as a springboard to finding out more about the world from that angle. How very true! This is what we in the Antipodes have been forced to concentrate on due to not having many Canonical sites to visit. Just last weekend a small expedition searched Melbourne Town for the sites connected with ACD (visited Oct. 1920 for 5 wks)… We fully intend to slaughter the fatted goose for any visitors from the UK… We have no end of Victoriana here to show members of the SHSL. So where are you all????' Well, if you're heading for the state named after Her Great and Glorious Majesty, you should get in touch with Steve. E-mail stirlingsteve@aim.com, or write to: The Elementary Victorians, Steve Duke (President), P.O. Box 340, Reservoir, VIC 3073, Australia. You can be sure of a friendly welcome.

Not being much of a cyclist, I wasn't really aware till recently of **The Elusive Bicyclists**, an international scion society of the Baker Street Irregulars. It was founded in January 2003 by Holmesians from Denmark, England, France, Italy and the USA – who have since been joined by others from Germany, Lesotho and Switzerland. Membership requirements are "Love of the Master and of bicycling", and the rest you can learn at http://mysite.verizon.net/vzepmb4x/ - or e-mail Richard Olken at olken@post.harvard.edu.

Peter Haining, who died on 19 November aged sixty-seven, was, said Jack Adrian, probably the only writer ever to make a living out of editing anthologies. He pioneered the republishing of obscure but worthwhile ghost and horror stories from the old magazines, but his interests spread much more widely than that, and his many books include *The Sherlock Holmes Scrapbook*, *The Sherlock Holmes Compendium*, *The Television Sherlock Holmes* and *The Final Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. That last gathers together much of Conan Doyle's Holmesian writing that doesn't fall within the Canon. It's been republished two or three times – though the considerably superior collections edited by Jack Tracy (*Sherlock Holmes: The Published Apocrypha*) and Richard Lancelyn Green (*The Uncollected Sherlock Holmes*) haven't…

Anton Rodgers, best known for his performances in television sit-coms like *May to December* and *Fresh Fields*, was actually a remarkably versatile and sincere actor – I was impressed by his Henry V at the Belgrade in Coventry in the late 1960s – and director. In 1965 he was an excellent Neville St Clair to Douglas Wilmer's Holmes in the BBC TV production of *The Man with the Twisted Lip*. He died on 1 December, aged seventy-four.

Dr Benton Wood, who had been in failing health for some years, died peacefully on 8 December. Headmaster of a church school, he was appointed Chaplain to the Baker Street Irregulars on the death of Leslie Marshall, whose investiture "A Scandal in Bohemia" was also conferred upon him. Ben was for many years head of **The Pleasant Places of Florida** (which is how I came to know him). His principal contribution to the Writings about the Writings is a seminal study, *The Philatelic and Numismatic Holmes*. His wife Joan was honoured as *The* Woman at the 1991 BSI dinner, and Ben himself received the Two Shilling Award 'for extraordinary devotion to the cause beyond the call of duty' in 1997.

Periodicals received. ***Bohemian Newsletter,*** no. 83 (**České společnost Sherlocka Holmese**, Aleš Kolodrubec, Milešovská 1, 130 00 Praha 3, Czech Republic). ***Cobwebby Bottles*** November 2007 and December 2007/January 2008 (**The Musgraves**, Rafe McGregor, 62 Willow Park Road, Wilberfoss, York YO41 5PS; RafeG@aol.com) *[*Rafe notes that 'The name change from **Musgraves Matters** is due to the increased scope and popularity of what started as a newsletter in June.' **Cobwebby Bottles** features reviews, fiction, illustrations and a great deal else. It's available only online – go to www.rafemcgregor.co.uk*]*. ***The Log of the SS May Day***, 2007 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardcarn Way, Belfast BT5 7RP) *[*the Crew's new publication is a real magazine, not just a newsletter; there are contributions by Alex Kane, Victor Hamilton, Tim Healey, Brian Pugh, Ann Bell and Oscar himself in this very welcome first issue*]*. ***Prescott's Press***, December 2007 (**The Three Garridebs**, Warren Randall, 15 Fawn Lane West, South Setauket, NY 11720-1346, USA) *[*several of the American participants in our Society's recent trip to Prague turn Foreign Correspondent for 'An instructive and even classical series of demonstrations…'*]*. ***Studies of the Nippon Sherlock Holmes Club***, September 17 2007 (**The Sherlock Holmes Research Committee Japan**, Saburoh Hiraga, 3-6-24 uneno-higashi, Toyonaka-shi, Osaka 560-0013, Japan) *[*I regret that my ignorance of the Japanese language prevents me from appreciating this admirable volume to the full; fortunately for me there are passages in English*]*. ***The Torr***, Autumn 2007 (**The Poor Folk Upon The Moors**, Reggie Musgrave, Drummond Cottage, Old Tavern Yard, Westbourne, Chichester, West Sussex PO10 8TA) *[*Conan Doyle, Sexton Blake, Cricket, the Hound – **The Torr** is ever reliably entertaining and interesting*]*.

And ***Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press***, November 2007 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

THE COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON

Roger Johnson