

THE DISTRICT MESSENGER

The Newsletter of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London
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opinions expressed are the editor's unless noted otherwise

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William Rushton — cartoonist, novelist, actor, satirist, comedian, wit and one of the nicest and funniest people in the business — died last Wednesday aged 59. His novel *W.G. Grace's Last Case*, which teams Dr Grace with Dr Watson during the Great Hiatus, is an outrageously funny sideways look at the world of Holmes and Watson. Talk of a sequel seems to have come to nothing. Francine Swift passes on the news that **Ben Wolf**, a distinguished artist, teacher and critic, died recently aged of 82. He was invested a Baker Street Irregular in 1964 as "Vernet the French Artist".

Jon L. Lellenberg points out that the situation regarding EU copyright in Arthur Conan Doyle's published work is actually very fuzzy. Despite Andrea Reynolds' statement to Nigel Dempster in *The Daily Mail*, it's not at all certain that she has any legal claim.

The Whitechapel Horrors by Edward B. Hanna — as the title suggests — pits Holmes & Watson against Jack the Ripper (Carroll & Graf, Worldwide Media Services, c/o Biblios Publishers' Distribution Services Ltd, Star Road, Partridge Green, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 8LD; £9.99). It's not a new idea, and there isn't a new identification for the murderer. (Mr Hanna chooses a real person whom most serious criminologists have dismissed; he gets around the historical difficulties with great ingenuity.) The literary and the factual aspects of the book are very well researched, as the extensive footnotes attest. Unusually, the story is told in the third person, so the reader isn't distracted by any failure to capture the Watsonian voice. *The Whitechapel Horrors* makes for a gripping read; it's certainly the best novelistic attempt yet to match Holmes and the Ripper.

A less ambitious venture is Tony Lumb's latest Sherlock Holmes story, *Sherlock Holmes and the Study of Death* (Briton Press, 21 Albert Street, Featherstone, Pontefract, West Yorkshire WF7 5EX; £2.50 plus postage). On their third visit to Featherstone, Holmes & Watson are confronted with a complex locked-room mystery: there have been two deaths in the study at Purston Hall — suicide or murder? Mr Lumb's deep knowledge of his home town is evident throughout, and he treats the detective and the doctor with respect. The result is a very pleasant 48-page booklet that would make a good Christmas gift for a friend — or for yourself.

Two new booklets from William S. Dorn, published by The Battered Silicon Dispatch Box (P.O. Box 204, Shelburne, Ontario L0N 1S0, Canada), are no less desirable. In *The Parlour Games of Sherlock Holmes (Exercises in Logic)* Mr Dorn gives a clear explanation of the three types of logic used by Holmes: deduction, induction and retroduction. He illustrates each with several examples from the Canon, and then challenges the reader to follow Holmes's reasoning in half a dozen classic cases. *Five Sherlockian Walks in London* comes with a recommendation from David L. Hammer, and doesn't disappoint after such a

good start. Mr Dorn takes us along Baker Street, along the Strand, and on the trail of three seminal cases: "A Scandal in Bohemia", "The Red-Headed League" and "The Blue Carbuncle", pointing out places of Canonical interest on the way. He scrupulously notes possible alternative sites, and acknowledges his predecessors. The booklets bear the author's likeness by Jean-Pierre Cagnat, and *Five Sherlockian Walks* is illustrated with photos and maps. These booklets are excellent aids to exploring more deeply Holmes's world. Each costs US\$8.00/Can.\$10.00/£5.00 + postage.

I'm reminded that David Stuart Davies's funny and affectionate *The Annals of Skelington Bones no. 3: The Ghoulie from the Globe* (Overdale, 69 Greenhead Road, Huddersfield HD1 4ER; £4.00 or \$8.00) is particularly apt for the season, being, as the author calls it, "a Christmas story with slush"!

Following my note in DM 163, I learn that Charles Hall's excellent book *Sherlock Holmes: The Great Detective and His Creator* is now out of print, but copies may still be available from Rupert Books (58/59 Stonefield, Bar Hill, Cambridge CB3 8TE). Charles's *Sherlock Holmes and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in Edinburgh*, however, is still in print, and can be bought for £4.50 from him at 12 Paisley Terrace, Edinburgh EH8 7JW. (*He has produced some nice Christmas cards featuring Sherlock Pig, the Farmyard Detective and The Bacon Street Irregulars. Sherlock Pig is among the numerous white metal miniatures that Charles Hall makes and sells. Write to Charles for details, and remember to enclose postage for a reply.*)

Phil Atwell notes that *Mr Holmes in Cornwall: A Critical Explanation of the Late Dr Watson's Narrative Entitled "The Devil's Foot"* by "Percy Trevelyan" is no longer available from the Institute of Cornish Studies, but can be had from the author, Prof. Charles Thomas (Lambessow St Clement, Truro, Cornwall TR1 1TB), priced at £2.00 post-paid. It's an exceptionally clever, attractive and useful booklet. Phil passes on the current Preview catalogue from TSP — The Softback Preview — which includes an exclusive edition of the Canon at £22.98 for all 9 volumes, or £14.99 for the first 5 and £12.99 for the last 4. Details from The Softback Preview, P.O. Box 415, Uxbridge UB11 1DZ.

Musgrave Monograph no. 7 is *Some Knowledge of Baritsu: An Investigation of the Japanese System of Wrestling Used by Sherlock Holmes*. In its 52 pages Hiram Yuichi and John Hall produce a thorough and engrossing study that experts may well hail as the last word upon the subject. The book costs, post-paid: UK £9.50; Europe £11.00; elsewhere US\$25.00. Cheques and checks should be payable to **The Northern Musgraves**. (Anne Jordan, Fairbank, Beck Lane, Bingley, West Yorkshire BD16 4DN.)

Issue 17 of *Sherlock Holmes Gazette & Classic Detective Magazine* (46 Purfield Drive, Wargrave, Berks. RG10 8AR) contains the 3rd part of Michael Cox's compelling account of the making of Granada TV's Holmes series; an interview with Colin Dexter, creator of Inspector Morse; Catherine Cooke's search for the real 221B Baker Street; a look at Sherlockian greeting cards by Jean Upton; a good piece by Barbara Roden on Conan

Doyle's unpublished play *Angels of Darkness*; a critique of the movie *The Seven-per-Cent Solution* — and much more. (*I'd still like to hear from you for the *Gazette's* "Societies Forum" department.*)

New catalogues are available from **Richard Beaton** (11a St John's Street, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2DL) (*Mr Beaton specialises in 19th century fiction*); **The Black Cat Bookshop** (36-39 Silver Arcade, Leicester LE1 5FB); **Crime In Store** (14 Bedford Street, Covent Garden, London WC2E 9HE); **Robert C. Hess** (559 Potter Blvd, Brightwaters, NY 11718, USA); **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (22 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE).

Ian Henry Publications issued last month a mystery novel called "After You, Holmes..." by Douglas Moreton (20 Park Drive, Romford RM1 4LH; £9.95). Due next year from Constable & Co. (3 The Lanchesters, 162 Fulham Palace Road, London W6 9ER) are *Sherlock Holmes and the Man from Hell* by Barrie Roberts and *The Secret Notebooks of Sherlock Holmes* by June Thomson.

M.C. Black recommends *The Forest Guide to Smoking in London* by James Leavey (Quiller Press Ltd, 46 Lillie Road, London W6 1TN; £7.95) as useful for smokers and non-smokers alike, since it states the policy of numerous establishments in London. There are 8 pages on the London of Sherlock Holmes.

Richard Greep, Treasurer of **The Conan Doyle (Crowborough) Establishment**, says that plans are afoot for the 1997 Sherlock Holmes Festival. Some souvenirs from this year's festival are available from Richard at Limes, Eridge Road, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 2SL. There's a limited edition of a postcard showing Crowborough Cross in 1900 and postmarked for the 1st day of the Festival (£5.00 each, including £2.00 to the ACD Statue Fund); programmes from the cricket match between the Holmes XI and the Moriarty XI, signed by the President of Crowborough Cricket Club (£2.00); and T-shirts with the legend *Doyle the Sportsman* and seven of Charles Hall's cartoons depicting ACD as cricketer, boxer, golfer, skier, balloonist, footballer and billiard-player (1 medium, 5 large & 2 extra large; all at £12.50 including postage and £5.00 to the Statue Fund).

Richard also notes that on 6 November Guernsey issued a set of 5 postage stamps marking 100 years of cinema: each depicts a movie detective, with the 35p showing Basil Rathbone as Sherlock Holmes. Sets and first day covers can be had from Guernsey Post Office, Postal Headquarters, St Peter Port, Guernsey GY1 1AA. (More first day covers are available from Maurice Tanner, 180 Whitehorse Road, West Croydon CR0 2LA.) The Commonwealth of Dominica has had the same idea: in July it issued 11 stamps of cinematic detectives, including a \$1.00 Sherlock Holmes (Rathbone again). (*On 13 May, Royal Mail will issue a set of stamps on the theme of Horror, including *The Hound of the Baskervilles*.*)

Claire Wightman sends an ad for *Sherlock Holmes on American Radio*, "an audio documentary of the great man's adventures". This one-hour cassette costs \$20.00, from Lawrence Nepodahl, 1230 Vienna Blvd, DeKalb, IL 60115, U.S.A. (*If you can't find Sherlockian recordings in your local shop, you could try Talking Tapes Direct, P.O. Box 190, Peterborough PE2 6UW.*)

David Stuart Davies passes on the news that in March the Victoria Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, will stage Christopher Martin's play *The Hound of the Baskervilles*.

Our Society's next meeting will be the Annual Dinner at the House of Commons on Saturday 4th January, with a get-together at the Falkland Arms the next day. Celebrations in New York will take place the following weekend, with the *Martha Hudson Breakfast*, the *William Gillette Memorial Luncheon*, the *Baskerville Bash* and the *Baker Street Irregulars' Annual Dinner*

on Friday 10th; on Saturday there's the Merchants' Room, and the Annual Reception for all Sherlockians and their friends.

The Franco-Midland Hardware Company's Disjecta Membra VII on the 4th January takes in visits to London rail termini and the London Transport Museum, with lunch at the Great Western Hotel (details from the Stock-broker's Clerk, 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU). The 25th sees the **Northern Musgraves' Birthday Party** at the Huddersfield Hotel, which celebrates the theme of *The British Empire* — appropriate for the centenary of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. Cost is £15.00. (Details from Mark Hunter-Purvis, 6 Deer Park Way, Axwell, Blaydon-on-Tyne NE21 5PD.) The AGM of the **Irregular Special Railway Company** will be held at the Holmes Restaurant, Weybridge, on the 22nd February (The Station Master, 163 Marine Parade, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 2RB).

Periodicals received. **The Ritual** no. 18 (**The Northern Musgraves**, Overdale, 69 Greenhead Road, Huddersfield HD1 4ER) (*a nice essay on "The Sherlockian Higher Criticism" by Richard Lancelyn Green, a symposium on Sherlockian pastiche, a good piece on the original Baskerville hound by Joanna Arthur, an interview with ACD reprinted from **The Idler**, and the usual fine departments — this is David Stuart Davies & Kathryn White's last issue: from no. 19 **The Ritual** will be edited by Paul M. Chapman & John Hall — good luck, chaps!*); **The Pleasant Places of Florida Communication** no. 168 (Wanda & Jeff Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA) (*more changes: after 20 years as Recorder, the Revd Dr Benton Wood, BSI, has handed over the reins — thanks for all your hard work, Ben!*); **The Petrel Flyer** November 1996 (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C. V7P 3C6, Canada) (*a nice report on the 8th Annual Holmesian Games — long may such friendly silliness continue*);

The New Baker Street Pillar Box no. 28 (**The Franco-Midland Hardware Company**, 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants, PO14 3RU) (*an excellent essay on the search for "the King of Scandinavia" by members of the Swedish Pathological Society, a very interesting comparison by Mark Chadderton of two superficially dissimilar non-Holmesian stories, and a devastating criticism by Jane Weller of Dr Jenny Ward's talk on ACD at Grayshott Literary Festival — a timely warning to anyone tempted to attend a talk by Dr Ward*); **The School Report** no. 27 (**The Priory Scholars**, Horace Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY) (*interesting sidelights on Holmes's contemporary A.J. Raffles, and notes on "Clothes in the Canon" by Jeffrey Thrift*); **3 Pipe Problem Plugs & Dottles** November-December 1996 (**The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem**, Gael Stahl, 1763 Needmore Road, Old Hickory, TN 37138, USA) (*intriguing contributions by David Bradley on "Sherlock Holmes on the Web" and on Jeremy Brett*).

Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press November 1996 (Peter E. Blau, 39090 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA). Peter notes "The Sussex Vampire" as a one-shot comic-book at \$2.95 (Caliber Comics, 225 North Sheldon Road, Plymouth, MI 48170), and *The Floor Plans of Baker Street* by Edwards S. Smith as a 38-page booklet (Box 353, Williston Park, NY 11596; \$7.50 post-paid in North America or \$9.50 elsewhere).

The Compliments of the Season!

Roger Johnson