

# 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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*Sherlock Holmes and the Man from Hell* is the 3rd new Holmes adventure by Barrie Roberts. The title is sensational but apt: the entrance to the harbour at Port Arthur was known as the Gates of Hell, and the story tells of events arising from the transporting of two innocent boys to Van Dieman's Land and the ill-treatment and bad company they encounter. There are echoes of 'The Gloria Scott' and *The Valley of Fear* in this case of murder, abduction, robbery and blackmail on a west country estate. The philanthropist Lord Backwater has been brutally killed in an attack meant for the mysterious Man from Hell. Sherlock Holmes must find out who he is and why he brings such danger with him. Barrie Roberts has done his homework thoroughly (except for an apparent ignorance of correct titles within the English peerage: a viscount's daughter would be the Honourable Patricia Lisle, not Lady Patricia), and he writes in a very acceptable simulacrum of Watson's style. He remains faithful to the Canon throughout, and the result is a very enjoyable story indeed. The publisher is Constable & Co. Ltd, 3 The Lanchesters, 162 Fulham Palace Road, London W6 9ER. The book costs £16.99.

Our French member Bernard Oudin has kindly sent a copy of his new book, just published by Editions Gallimard (5 rue Sébastien-Bottin, 75328 Paris, France) as no. 333 in their Découvertes Gallimard series. *Enquête sur Sherlock Holmes* is a quite delightful 96-page paperback, heavily illustrated, with excellent printing on high-quality paper. The five sections are headed 'Naissance d'un Personnage', 'L'Impossible Assassinat', 'A la Recherche d'un Visage', 'Le Monde des Holmésiens' and 'Témoignages et Documents'. Within this pocket-sized volume, M. Oudin has managed to pack a great deal of good material. I am charmed to know that the French title of the movie *Without a Clue* is *Elémentaire mon cher...* *Lock Holmes!* I can't find a price but I do urge you seek out a copy of *Enquête sur Sherlock Holmes*.

Eddie Maguire's next Sherlock Holmes story, provisionally called *The Voice from the Ether*, will be set in and around Maldon in Essex. Eddie, who used to live nearby, has received a small grant towards publishing costs from Maldon District Council. (Big House Books, 63 Wellington Road, Bridgwater, Somerset TA6 5EZ).

There are tempting new catalogues out from **Jeremiah Vokes** (61 Coniscliffe Road, Darlington DL3 7EH; phone 01325 469449) (\*a very welcome newcomer among British Holmesian specialists\*); **Post Mortem Books** (58 Stanford Avenue, Hassocks, East Sussex BN6 8JH; phone 01273 843066) (\*an established and respected dealer in crime fiction\*); **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (22 and 25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; phone 0171 836 7757; e-mail [nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk](mailto:nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk)) (\*the prices tend to reflect the rarity of the books and the location of the shops\*); **Bibliotective** (Box 47347, Oak Park, MI 48237, USA; phone [248] 968 2437) (\*a big list of crime & detective fiction, with much Sherlockiana\*); **Black Cat Bookshop** (36-39 Silver Arcade, Leicester LE1 5FB; phone 0116 251 2756) (\*a very full list entirely devoted to Holmes and Doyle\*).

**Classic Specialties** (P.O. Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219; phone [513] 281 4757; e-mail [sherlock-holmes.com](mailto:sherlock-holmes.com)) puts out a catalogue that's a magazine in itself. The 1997/98 issue of *The Sherlockian Times* contains an article about Holmes in India, a brief

piece on **The Irregular Special Railway Company**, another on Sherlock Down Under, and much wonderful stuff for sale. There are audio-cassettes from America and Britain (including *Sherlock Holmes on the Rails* produced by the ISRC); 'The Abominable Wife' screen saver; an Instant Sherlockian Costume Kit; a lovely Blue Carbuncle Christmas card; and *The Formidable Scrap-Book of Baker Street*. I'm particularly looking forward to seeing that last item. Classic Specialties has a homepage at <http://www.sherlock-holmes.com/books.htm#scrapbook>.

Gerit Stenitzer recommends *The Mammoth Book of New Sherlock Holmes Stories* edited by Mike Ashley (Robinson; £6.99 - see DM 173) and tells me of *Crime through Time: Original Tales of Historical Mystery* edited by Miriam Grace Monfredo and Sharon Newman (Berkley Publications, 200 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, USA; \$6.99). This paperback contains Laurie R. King's story 'Mrs Hudson's Case', along with stories by Anne Perry, Edward Hoch, M.J. Trow and others.

Christopher and Barbara Roden's Calabash Press (P.O. Box 1360, Ashcroft, B.C. V0K 1A0, Canada) has two new titles for autumn. *Absolute Discretion* is a novel by our own Grant Eustace, chronicling an investigation by an undergraduate who just might be the young Sherlock Holmes. *The Chronicles of Sherlock Holmes* reprints Denis O. Smith's first three excellent Holmes stories, 'The Purple Hand', 'The Zodiac Plate' and 'The Unseen Traveller'. (Price of each book is Canada Cdn\$25.80; USA US\$23.55; elsewhere £16.85/US\$26.55 airmail, £15.05/US\$23.65 surface.) Forthcoming are John Hall's *Sidelights on Holmes*, David Stuart Davies's *Sherlock Holmes and the Scroll of the Dead* and *The Case Files of Sherlock Holmes: The Dying Detective*. (\*Some readers may not yet be aware that Barbara and Christopher are now the parents of Timothy Paul Roden, born on the 15th September. Congratulations.\*)

From Thumbprints (Overdale, 69 Greenhead Road, Huddersfield HD1 4ER) come two titles by David Stuart Davies. *Sherlock Holmes and the Reichenbach Secret* provides 'a stimulating and provoking coda to "The Final Problem" and, indeed, the whole Canon' (prices including postage: UK & Europe £3.50; USA US\$8.00; Canada Cdn\$11.00). *The Annals of Skelington Bones no. 4: The Curse of Captain Codpiece* will need no recommendation to fans of David's grand humour (UK & Europe £4.00; USA US\$8.00; Canada CDN\$10.00).

*The Sherlock Holmes Gazette* is now *Sherlock Holmes: The Detective Magazine*, and continues to flourish under the editorship of the ubiquitous David Stuart Davies. The latest issue (no. 21) continues Michael Cox's gripping personal account of the making of Granada's *Sherlock Holmes* series. In addition there's Brian Kennedy on Holmesian cartoon strips, Paul Chapman on the Edinburgh connection, Barbara Roden on vampires, DSD on *A Study in Terror*, Susan Rice on **The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Gaynor Coules on the novels of Elizabeth George, a grand new Holmes story by John Hall. And more besides. Subscriptions (from 46 Purfield Drive, Wargrave, Berkshire RG10 8AR) are: UK £14.00; Europe £18.00; North America £21.00/\$35.00; elsewhere £22.00. The US representative is Classic Specialties.

That gloriously funny spoof *Move Over, Moriarty*, written and performed by Lip Service (Maggie Fox and Sue Ryding) is currently touring, in repertoire with *Withering Looks*. MOM will play during November at: **Roses Theatre**, Tewkesbury (7th); **Havant Arts Active** (8th); **Ashcroft Arts Centre**, Fareham (13th);

**The Mill**, Banbury (15th); **Marina Theatre**, Lowestoft (20th); **Quay Theatre**, Sudbury (21st & 22nd); **Music Hall**, Shrewsbury (26th); **Old Town Hall**, Hemel Hempstead (28th); **Borough Theatre**, Abergavenny (29th). For more information, including spring tour dates, call Rachel Sharman on 01422 360502. This is one to treasure!

Interested parties *may* still be in time to acquire a video copy of the famously rare 1937 German film *Der Hund von Baskerville*, starring Bruno Güttner. Uwe Sommerlad has found a print and arranged with the copyright holder for 100 copies, to be distributed world-wide by Michael Ross's Baskerville Bücher (Bendheide 65, D-47906 Kempen, Germany; e-mail [Baskerville-Buecher@bigfoot.de](mailto:Baskerville-Buecher@bigfoot.de)). The videos will be in VHS-PAL format. Prices including postage are: Germany DM52.90; Europe DM61.90 or £23.50; rest of world DM64.90 or \$38.50. British and US cheques should be payable to Anke von Hasenhorst.

You can find out about the range of material offered by Baskerville on [www.sis-online.com/cgi-local/hp/Baskerville](http://www.sis-online.com/cgi-local/hp/Baskerville), Michael Ross's homepage.

If you haven't bought a copy of *The Sherlock Holmes Video*, then you should — for yourself or for the friend who's always asking you what you see in this rather strange hobby. This 'excellent, affectionate and knowledgeable documentary' (\*I quote myself, but what the hell\*) can be had post-paid for: UK £13.99 for VHS PAL; North America US\$35.00 for VHS NTSC; Japan 3,000 Yen plus US\$5.00. Cheques should be payable to Martin Hesp, Countryside TV Productions, Higher Haynes, The Old Mineral Line, Watchet, Somerset TR23 0RN.

Brian Pugh sends information about the 1998 *Sherlock Holmes Festival*, to be held in Crowborough over the week from the 3rd to the 10th July (again clashing with our own Society's summer weekend, which next year is based in Truro and exploring 'Devil's Foot' country). **The Conan Doyle (Crowborough) Establishment** will organise the following: an illustrated talk by Philip Weller on Friday the 3rd July, called *The World of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle*; a stall in the street market on Saturday the 4th; the Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Memorial Ceremony at Terrace Montargis at 10.30 am on Sunday the 5th, and on the same day a five-mile 'Walk with Sir Arthur' in and around the town.

Brian asks if anyone can provide him with a recording of the recent Radio 4 broadcast *The Airmen Who Would Not Die*. He will pay costs. (20 Clare Road, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1PN.) (\*Can anyone please help me with recordings of the recent plays from John Dickson Carr's novels: **The House in Gallows Lane** and **To Wake the Dead**?\*)

Cindy Stevens tells me that Bits & Pieces has a number of Sherlockian items in its new catalogue — including '*Nesting Sherlock Holmes & Associates*': 14 cm tall, 5 nesting figures include Holmes, Watson, Inspector Lestrade, the evil Moriarty and the mysterious Hound of the Baskervilles', priced at £5.95! (Bits & Pieces [UK] Ltd, P.O. Box 3, Diss, Norfolk IP22 3HH; phone 01379 649 629). (\*I phoned a couple of weeks ago and ordered a catalogue. No sign of it yet...\*)

The famous *Sherlock Holmes* public house and restaurant (10-11 Northumberland Street, London WC2N 5DA; phone 0171 930 2644/0410; e-mail [sherlock@popmail.dircon.co.uk](mailto:sherlock@popmail.dircon.co.uk)) is gearing up for Christmas. It will be open every day over the festive season, and booking for the restaurant is advised. Besides the usual range of souvenirs and gifts a 1998 calendar will shortly be available. The pub's homepage is at [www.users.dircon.co.uk/~sherlock/](http://www.users.dircon.co.uk/~sherlock/).

Our Society's next meeting will be the Annual Film Evening at the Museum of London on the 26th November, when David Stuart Davies will present the famously rare silent *Sherlock Holmes*, with John Barrymore as Holmes, Roland Young as Watson and Gustav von Seiffertitz as Moriarty. This restored print has never been shown outside North America before.

The Annual Dinner of **The Baker Street Irregulars** (Michael F. Whelan, 'Wiggins', P.O. Box 2189, Easton, MD 21601, USA) will be held on Friday the 9th January, and the Annual Dinner of **The Sherlock Holmes Society of London** on Saturday the 17th January. The Guest of Honour at the latter event will be Colin Dexter, creator of Chief Inspector Morse. The 17th January also sees the dinner of **The Pleasant Places of Florida** (Carl L. Heifetz, 3693 Siena Lane, Palm Harbor, FL 34685, USA).

At the time of writing the date for the Master's Dinner of **The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia** (Fran Martin, at 10662, 129 Street, Surrey, B.C. V3T 3H4, Canada) is not settled — it will probably be on the 10th January.

**The Franco-Midland Hardware Company** (contact The Stockbroker's Clerk, 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU) will hold its Christmas Social Meeting in Oxford on the 6th December. At the annual *Disjecta Membra* event on the 3rd January the Company will explore some of the London railway termini associated with the Canon. The AGM of **The Poor Folk Upon The Moors** will also be on the 6th (H. Vosper Arthur, 'Spynishlake', Doddiscombesleigh, Exeter EX6 7PR). **The Priory Scholars of Leicester** will hold their Annual General Meeting and Christmas Social on the 7th December (Horace Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY).

Mark Chadderton has sent copies of *The Cerebral Tentacle*, the very nicely produced newsletter/magazine of **The Arthur Conan Doyle Study Group**, a branch office of the Franco-Midland Hardware Company. The magazines are very lively and contain worthwhile articles by Philip Weller and (especially) the late Malcolm Payne, along with facsimiles of some most interesting documents relating to ACD. Mark welcomes enquiries at 32B Watcombe Road, Bournemouth BH6 3LU.

Periodicals received. *The Baker Street Journal*, September 1997 (P.O. Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331) (\*the BSJ is published by the Baker Street Irregulars and is available to members and non-members alike; the editor is Donald Pollock, 19 Putnam Street, Buffalo, NY 14213, USA; correspondence for **The Baker Street Irregulars** should be addressed to Michael F. Whelan, 'Wiggins', P.O. Box 2189, Easton, MD 21601, USA\*).

*The Musgrave Papers*, 1997 (**The Northern Musgraves**, Overdale, 69 Greenhead Road, Huddersfield HD1 4ER). *The Parallelogram* November 1997 (**The Parallel Case of St Louis**, Joseph J. Eckrich BSI, 914 Oakmoor, Fenton, MO 63126, USA). *Communication* October 1997 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Jeff & Wanda Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA). *The Petrel Flyer* Sept./Oct. 1997 (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C. V7P 3C6, Canada).

*The School Report* Autumn Term 1997 (**The Priory Scholars**, Horace L. Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY). *The Devon County Chronicle* September 1997 (**The Merripit House Guests**, Robert W. Hahn, BSI, 2707, South 7th Street, Sheboygan, WI 53081, USA). *Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections* September 1997 (**The Sherlock Holmes Collections**, 466 Wilson Library, 309 19th Avenue South, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA).

*Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press* September & October 1997 (Peter E. Blau BSI, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830) (\*the father of all Sherlockian newsletters; I'd intended to quote a number of reports from these issues, but the clock seems to have beaten us — and if you recognise that reference then you're old, baby!\*)

*Roger Johnson*