

THE DISTRICT MESSENGER

The Newsletter of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London

Roger Johnson, Mole End, 41 Sandford Road, Chelmsford CM2 6DE

opinions expressed are the editor's unless noted otherwise

no. 176 6th February 1998

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £5.50 or US\$11.00 for 12 issues. Dollar checks should be payable to Jean Upton. Dollar prices quoted without qualification refer to US dollars.

Dame Jean Conan Doyle has left three Sherlock Holmes MSS to the British Library, a museum in Edinburgh and a museum in Portsmouth or Southsea; six more Conan Doyle MSS will be sold and the proceeds shared among her chosen charities; letters and other papers go to the British Library; her copyrights go to the Royal National Institute for the Blind; and £1,000.00 to Minstead Church. Those wishing to do something in her memory should send donations to the RNIB at 224 Great Portland Street, London W1N 6AA.

Our former President **Frank Allen** died in December. Born into a theatrical family, the godson of Herbert Beerbohm Tree, he became a major figure in the world of pharmacology and a learned and witty Holmesian scholar. Pilgrims to Switzerland will remember him as a magnificent Count Negretto Sylvius. Perhaps above all, he was a great conversationalist and grand company. His Chestertonian presence is much missed at our meetings.

The radio writer and producer **Glyn Dearman** died in November. His achievements were many (in recent years he worked with Kenneth Branagh's Renaissance Theatre Company on superb productions of Shakespeare), but I'll remember him especially for *Sherlock Holmes vs Dracula*, broadcast in 1981, in which he turned Loren D. Estleman's adequately good novel into a great radio play. In the same month we lost **Jeremy Potter**, who was among other things a distinguished historian and detective story writer. He combined the two in investigating the case of the Princes in the Tower (I recommend his novel *A Trail of Blood*), and he was a memorable Guest of Honour at our 1986 Annual Dinner. **Glenhall Taylor** who produced the excellent Rathbone-Bruce *Sherlock Holmes* radio series from 1943 to 1945 died on 28 December.

At the **Baker Street Irregulars'** Annual Dinner on 9 January, Michael Whelan awarded investitures to **John F. Baesch** ('State & Merton County Railroad'), **Susan Z. Diamond** ('The Great Mogul'), **Lou Lewis** ('William Whyte'), **Thierry Saint-Joanis** ('Monsieur Bertillon') and **James E. Smith II** ('Winner of the Jackson Prize'). **Pam Bruxner** received her investiture ('The British Government') from Mike on the day of our Society's dinner, 17 January. Congrats to all!

Recent catalogues are available from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (22 & 25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; e-mail nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk) (*Nigel Williams now has a website at <http://freespace.virgin.net/nw.books/>); **Post Mortem Books** (58 Stanford Avenue, Hassocks, East Sussex. BN6 8JH; e-mail ralph@pmbooks.demon.co.uk) (*Post Mortem has a website as well, at <http://www.postmortembooks.co.uk>); and **Gravesend Books** (Box 235, Pocono Pines, PA 18350, USA; phone 1-717-646-3317). All three are full of interest, but be prepared for prices that reflect the specialist nature of the books offered.

Douglas Moreton follows his book *After You, Holmes*, reviewed in DM 167, with *The Papers in the Case*, containing 5 new tales. The author knows his Holmes and his period; he has an ingenious imagination, and he captures the style acceptably. The plots range from an investigation of the Whitechapel murders of 1888 to the kidnapping of Mycroft Holmes in 1902. The stories are graced with appropriate period illustrations, and Mr Moreton has provided

copious footnotes (so many as to be distracting: the information might have been better conveyed in an afterword to each story). The book is nicely presented - 100 pages in card covers - but there are several typos, which begin, alas, on the contents page: 'Mandarin' becomes 'Manadarin', and 'Cotswold' is 'Costwold'. The title of 'The Dedicated Dentist' seems to be a deliberate pun, but if so it's a bad one. *The Papers in the Case* (Cadds Printing Ltd, 59 Lancaster Avenue, West Norwood, London SE27 9EL) makes for an enjoyable couple of hours' reading at £9.50 inclusive (cheques to Cadds Printing Ltd) or \$18.00 payable to Hugh Scullion. (*Would a senior civil servant have been called a mandarin in 1902?*)

Geoffrey Stavert sends a flyer for two interesting books from Seymour/Kyper Productions (PO Box 1369, Sandwich, MA 02563). *The Great Suit Case Mystery* is a Holmes story by Jacques Futrelle, first published in *Hearst's Boston American* in 1905, in which Holmes correctly identified the culprit in a then current murder case. (\$5.00 inclusive; \$8.00 outside the USA). *The Thinking Machine: Jacques Futrelle* is the first biography of this major figure in detective literature, who died on the *Titanic*. It includes five of Futrelle's classic 'Thinking Machine' stories. (\$12.00 or \$15.00 outside the USA). Checks should be payable to Seymour/Kyper Productions.

The fourth and last volume of Kelvin Jones's biography *Sherlock Holmes - Consulting Detective* is out from Oakmagic Publications (2 South Place Folly, Penzance, Cornwall TR18 4JB) at £3.95 inclusive. Volumes 1, 2 & 3 are still available, at £3.95, £4.75 and £4.50 respectively. Cheques should be payable to K.I. Jones.

A new catalogue is expected this year from Magico (PO Box 156, New York, NY 10002-0156, USA). Meantime you may like to know of *Holmes' Range*, a collection of essays by Walter P. Armstrong, Jr, BSI (\$19.95 + \$1.50 postage); *August Harvest: Essays Penned by Various Hands to Keep the Memory of August Derleth Green*, edited by Ely Liebow (\$25.00 + \$2.00); and *The Detective Business* by Robin Dunbar, a reprint of a 1909 volume, believed to be the first book of mainly non-fiction writings about Holmes (\$7.00 + \$100). Magico has a whole lot more besides.

Sigurdur Gustavsson (Vidihlid 33, 105 Reykjavik, Iceland) has about 40 Conan Doyle books to sell, mostly in Icelandic, but some in Swedish and a few in German. The asking prices seem rather high to me. Mr Gustavsson can be contacted by phone or fax on 354-5687312, or by e-mail at gussi@vortex.is.

Philip Attwell sends an ad for the Literary Guild (book club), which is offering all nine volumes of *The Oxford Sherlock Holmes* (hardback) at £4.99 + £2.95 postage as an introductory offer. If you're interested, contact The Literary Guild, FREEPOST, Swindon SN99 1BB.

Bert Coules sends news that the BBC Radio 4 Sherlock Holmes series now has its own (non-official) website: 'pictures and biographies of the stars, full cast lists, details of the cassettes, background information, photographs of the recording sessions, and - coming shortly, as they say - audio clips.' The address is: <http://freespace.virgin.net/bert.coules/sh-home.htm>. Bert notes that *The Valley of Fear* will be released by the BBC on cassette in March, followed by *The Sign of the Four* in June and *A Study in Scarlet* in August. Also that three episodes from *The Casebook* are scheduled for repeats on Wednesdays at 2.00 pm: *The Lion's Mane* on 18 February, *The Veiled Lodger* on 25 February and *Shoscombe Old Place* on 4 March.

Volume 3 of *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* read by Douglas Wilmer is out this month from Penguin Audiobooks (27 Wrights Lane, London W8 5TZ). These are among the best readings ever.

Can anyone please lend, sell, or provide me with a good photocopy of the article 'Step Inside the World of TV' (about Granada Studios Tour) from *TV Times* for 26 March - 1 April 1988?

On the net at <http://www.cyberhaven.com/trademarks/sherlock.html> Jean found a real stunner It's so extraordinary that I'll quote it in full. 'SloaneVision Unlimited, Inc. (formerly Pyramid Licensing Group) is proud to announce the addition of the most famous detective in the world - Sherlock Holmes - to its list of impressive clients. Through Sherlock Holmes Ltd., SloaneVision has acquired all licensing, promotional and advertising rights. "Sherlock Holmes fits into our overall plan of acquiring celebrity rights to merchandise products geared towards the adult market. His name has the status necessary to be of tremendous value in collectibles as well as promotional tie-ins and advertising," says Lois N. Sloane, chairman of SloaneVision Unlimited, Inc. Senior Vice President, Glenn R. Hendricks sees the potential of Sherlock Holmes catering to the many unique consumer interests surfacing today. "Sherlock Holmes has worldwide recognition and has great potential in the merchandising area. With niche markets being prevalent today and with the growing popularity of detectives and mysteries, we see Sherlock Holmes emerging as the leader. The obvious icons of Sherlock Holmes' hat, cape and pipe are a natural for the creation of apparel, accessories, small leather goods, home furnishings and jewelry geared to the discriminating consumer." SloaneVision Unlimited, Inc., 305 Madison Avenue, Suite 1337, New York, NY 10165. Telephone: (212) 922 0555. Fax: (212) 922 1306.'

(*Who is Sherlock Holmes Ltd? All I know is that the registered address is 5 Parkgate Road, Battersea, London SW11 4NL; and that the company was incorporated in 1993 when the works of Conan Doyle were out of copyright in Britain.*)

Classic Specialties (PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA; phone 513 281 4757; e-mail <sherlock@sherlock-holmes.com>) deal in all sorts of Sherlockiana and act as a focal point for North American Sherlockians. Their publication *The Formidable Scrap-Book of Baker Street* (\$32.50) is an eclectic assembly of letters, articles, photos, cartoons and all sorts, reflecting the world of - well, people like us. Due shortly is *Old Bibliophile's Book Shelf*. There's a website at <http://www.sherlockholmes.com>.

Conways' Miniatures (Bill & Lynda Conway, 2330 Benson Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15216-3444, USA; e-mail 76241.3027@compuserve.com) specialise in hand-painted miniature figures, mostly 54mm high. They have a wide range of Sherlockian figures.

There's a *Sherlock Holmes Pub-Restaurant* at 3772 The Barnyard, Carmel, California 93923, USA (phone 408 625-0340) - see the homepage at <http://pw1.netcom.com/~sh-pub/mainf.html>.

The June/July issue of *British Heritage* ('North America's leading magazine of English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh history, travel and culture') will feature a major article on Arthur Conan Doyle. Single copies can be ordered by phone on 800-358-6327 (USA & Canada) or 413-622-2610 (elsewhere). There's a website at www.thehistorynet.com/britishheritage.

Admirers of 'the Sherlock Holmes of Praed Street' should check out Ralph Smith's *Annotated Solar Pons Biography* on the Internet at <http://www.clysmic.com/pons/pons.html>.

The William Le Queux Society was formed last year to celebrate the life and work of perhaps the most popular writer of *fin-de-siècle* thrillers. Donald V. Campbell is the current Editor of the Society's (un-named) Magazine, and welcomes enquiries at Woodlawn Cottage, Apperley Lane, Apperley Bridge, West Yorks. BD10 0PH.

The 2nd *Sherlock Holmes Festival* will be held at Crowborough, 3 - 10 July. **The Conan Doyle (Crowborough) Establishment**, has details (Brian Pugh, 20 Clare Road, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1PN).

The Beryl Coronet Society, based in the United Nations community in New York, is open to all interested parties. Contact Dr Thomas Cynkin, 245 East 40th Street, Apt. 11F, New York, NY 10016, USA.

The 8th "Wessex Cup" of **The Pleasant Places of Florida** will be run at Tampa Bay Downs on 14 February. (Details from David McAllister, 8142 Quail Hollow Boulevard, Wesley Chapel, FL 33544, USA.) **The Red Circle** meet on 20 February at the National Press Club, Washington, DC; the speaker is Marilyn MacGregor, expert on Wodehouse and Conan Doyle (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830). **The Irregular Special Railway Company's** AGM on 21 February is just part of a packed day (Antony J. Richards, 170 Woodland Road, Sawston, Cambridge CB2 4DZ; phone 01233 833418). **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company** and **The Glades of the New Forest** plan a Winter Wander in Hampshire on 23 February (The Stock-broker's Clerk, 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hampshire PO14 3RU). On 7 March, **The Pleasant Places of Florida** visit *Titanic: The Exhibition* in St Petersburg. (Carl Heifetz, 3693 Siena Lane, Palm Harbor, FL 34685, USA.) **The Sherlock Holmes Society of London** holds a medical panel discussion on 17 March at the Royal Society of Medicine. (Bob Ellis, 13 Crofton Avenue, Orpington, Kent BR6 8DU.) **The Japan Sherlock Holmes Club** celebrates its 21st birthday on 21 March 1998 in Kamakura and on 22 March in Tokyo (Mitch Higurashi at 3-13-7-305 Nishikubo, Musashino, Tokyo 180, Japan; e-mail hgd02506@niftyserve.or.jp). At about the same time **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company** and **The Japanese Cabinet** have an "East Wind" gathering in Tokyo. **The Priory Scholars** present papers on "Shoscombe Old Place" at their Annual Case Study Day at the Guild Hall in Leicester on 22 March (Horace Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY).

Periodicals received. *The Sherlock Holmes Journal*, Winter 1997 (**The Sherlock Holmes Society of London**, Bob Ellis, 13 Crofton Avenue, Orpington, Kent BR6 8DU). *The Baker Street Journal*, December 1997 (PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA) (*the *BSJ* is published by **The Baker Street Irregulars** but it should be a must for any Holmesian or Sherlockian; correspondence for the *BSJ* should go to Michael Whelan, 'Wiggins', PO Box 2189, Easton, MD 21601, USA*). *The Cormorant's Ring*, December 1997 (**The Trained Cormorants of Long Beach, CA**, Jim Coffin, 6570 E. Paseo Alcazaa, Anaheim Hills, CA 92807-4901, USA). *The Serpentine Muse*, Winter 1997 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 360 West 21st Street, #5A, New York, NY 10011, USA). *The Petrel Flyer*, November-December 1997 and January-February 1998 (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C. V7P 3C6, Canada). *The Irregular Special Railway Company Newsletter*, no. 22 & no. 23 (Antony J. Richards, 170 Woodland Road, Sawston, Cambridge CB2 4DX). *Communication*, December 1997 and January-February 1998 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Jeff & Wanda Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA). *The Devon County Chronicle*, November 1997 (**The Merripit House Guests**, Robert W. Hahn, 2707 S. 7th Street, Sheboygan, WI 53081, USA). *The Parallelogram*, January 1998 (**The Parallel Case of St Louis**, 914 Oakmoor, Fenton, MO 63126, USA). *3 Pipe Problem Plugs and Dottles* Nov. 1997-Jan. 1998 (**The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem**, Gael Stahl, 1763 Needmore Road, Old Hickory, TN 37138, USA).

Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press, December 1997 and January 1998 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830; e-mail: <pblau@capaccess.org>). The following are from *Scuttlebutt*. Brilliance Audio (Box 481, Grand Haven, MI 49417) has released a twin cassette read by Michael Page, 'The Darkwater Hall Mystery' by Kingsley Amis, and *Other Stories*, at \$16.95. The title story is based on Amis's 1974 TV play starring Edward Fox as Dr Watson. Gary F. Boothe's *The Secret of Sherlock Holmes* has Holmes foiling a threat to the US economy in 1907 (G.F. Boothe, 3909 Meadow Beauty Drive, Pasco, WA 99301; \$13.00 post-paid). (*No connection with Jeremy Paul's play, then?*)

Roger Johnson