

The DISTRICT MESSENGER



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON
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Dorothy Rowe Shaw, widow of John Bennett Shaw, died on 24 November. Peter Blau notes that 'she was toasted as *The Woman* in 1974, and received the BSI's Queen Victoria Medal in 1995. She created the magnificent miniature of 221 Baker Street now on permanent display at the Special Collections at the University of Minnesota.' I can add that she was a kind and gracious hostess at the Shaw house in Santa Fe.

Those in search of Holmesian London should equip themselves with Arthur M. Alexander's excellent guidebook *Hot on the Scent: A Visitor's Guide to the London of Sherlock Holmes* (Calabash Press, P.O. Box 1360, Ashcroft, B.C. V0K 1A0, Canada; Cdn\$37.50 / US\$27.50 / £17.50). Others have devised admirable walking tours of London — notably Charles Merriman, Antony Richards and Bill Dorn — but Mr Alexander's 35 'adventures' are more comprehensive than any. He gives useful information for the American or other non-British visitor, and in a series of appendixes goes into such subjects as the Battle of Maiwand, the Festival of Britain, *The Strand Magazine*, and the Black Museum. There are occasional oddities (Eros in Piccadilly Circus was never, I think, a fountain, and Prince Philip, unlike Prince Albert, is not known as the Prince Consort), but very few. As with David Hammer's travel guides, you feel that you're in the hands of a knowledgeable and congenial friend. *Hot on the Scent* is a thoroughly enjoyable book.

From Christopher Roden via Peter Blau, the news that Christopher Frayling is working on an annotated edition of the Canon for Penguin. The first volumes, including *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, are due next year.

Other new and forthcoming books. Breese Books (164 Kensington Park Road, London W11 2ER) continue their programme of new adventures, including *The Elementary Cases of Sherlock Holmes* by Ian Charnock and *The Case of the Frightened Golfer* by J.M. Gregson. In September Mustard (Parragon Book Service Ltd, 13 Whiteladies Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8 1PR) published a children's picture puzzle book *Sherlock's Missing Bone* at £2.99. In October Oxford University Press (Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP) published a picture book version of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* at £4.99. *The Monster of St Marylebone: The Journals of Dr Watson* by Wayne Worcester is out from Signet (Penguin Putnam Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014, USA) at \$5.95. Last month Players Press (c/o 20 Park Drive, Romford RM1 4LH) issued three more Sherlock Holmes plays by Stanley S. Reyburn: *The Kiangnan Blueprint*, *The Scarab of Abu-Simbel* and *The Soong Conspiracy* (each £7.00).

Barrie Roberts' *Sherlock Holmes and the Harvest of Death* is out from Constable this month (3 The Lanchesters, 162 Fulham Palace Road, London W6 9ER; £16.99). *The Art of Detective*

Fiction by Warren L. Chernaik et al. (Macmillan Press, Brunel Road, Houndmills, Basingstoke RG21 6XS; £42.50) is due in January 2000, as is *The Sherlock Holmes Classic Compendium* (Siena Publishing, Unit 13, 17 Avonbridge Trading Estate, Atlantic Road, Bristol BS11 9QD). Laurie R. King's first Mary Russell novel, *The Beekeeper's Apprentice*, is coming in paperback at £6.99 from HarperCollinsPublishers (77/85 Fulham Palace Road, London W6 8JB) in February, and *The Moor*, is due in hardback in January 2001 at £15.99, according to Whitaker's BookBank.

The 6th and last catalogue of the Thomas L. Stix, Jr collection is available from Dorothy K. Stix (34 Pierson Avenue, Norwood, NJ 07648, USA), but orders must be received by 20 December as Dorothy will shortly be moving to Florida. (*This is a rare chance to buy something from one of the great Sherlockian collections.*)

New dealers' catalogues are those from **Violet Books** (Jessica Amanda Salmonson, 3214 Preble Street, Bremerton, WA 98312, USA; e-mail haunted@violetbooks.com); **Rupert Books** (58/59 Stonefield, Bar Hill, Cambridge CB3 8TE; e-mail rupert_books@compuserve.com); and **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (22 & 25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; e-mail nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk).

A reminder (with correct details this time!) of Good Places in London: The only place these days that you can experience a real Victorian pantomime, with rhyming couplets and wonderfully awful puns, is **The Players' Theatre** in The Arches under Charing Cross Station. This year's panto is *Cinderella, or, The Lover, the Lackey and the Little Glass Slipper*. Check with the box office on 0171 829 1134 (there's a website at <http://www.theplayerstheatre.co.uk>). The theatre's just along from **The Sherlock Holmes** pub in Northumberland Street, which is always worth a visit. The restaurant does excellent lunches and dinners (phone 0171 930 2644; fax 0171 839 5864), and Mr Holmes's sitting-room has been decorated (by Mrs Hudson and Dr Watson, presumably) for the Festive Season.

Issue 34 of *Sherlock Holmes: The Detective Magazine* offers David Stuart Davies on *The Master Blackmailer*, Catherine Morrell on that excellent series *Sergeant Cribb* and an interview with Cribb's creator Peter Lovesey (*it's time the series was released on video!*), Pat Ward with news from America, Cath Staincliffe on female detectives, John Hall on Holmes's upbringing, Jean Upton on *Jonathan Creek*, Gaynor Coules on Michael Connelly, Toby Earnshaw on murder in the Canon, Mike Ripley on the 1999 Sherlock Awards, me on the Margery Allingham Society - and, as always, much much more. The magazine is published six times a year, at £2.50 or \$5.50 the issue. A six-issue subscription is £18.00 (Europe £20.00, rest of world £25.00 or \$40.00) from the Admin. Dept, PO Box 100, Chichester, West Sussex PO18 8HD. The US representative is Classic Specialties (PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA; e-mail sherlock@sherlock-holmes.com).

The East Anglian Magazine (weekend supplement of *The East Anglian Daily Times*) for 27 November - 3 December had a good two-page article about John Doubleday, sculptor of the London and Meiringen statues of Sherlock Holmes.

Columbia Pictures intend to produce *Sherlock Holmes and the Vengeance of Dracula* from Michael Valle's script. Chris Columbus (*Young Sherlock Holmes*) may 'develop' and direct the movie. This account we have from all quarters received.

Thierry Saint-Joanis points out that the manager of the **Hotel Dulong**, the Lyon branch of **La Société Sherlock Holmes de France**, is Jean-Pierre Crauser, whose address is Résidence Récamier, allée 4, 69130 Ecully, France. There are other branches in Toulouse, Le Mans, Marseilles, Valenciennes, Bruxelles and elsewhere. Thierry says: 'Everywhere you go in France, you will find a Holmesian, so a friend!'

Vosper Arthur of **The Poor Folk Upon The Moors** (Splynshlake, Doddiscombsleigh, Exeter EX6 7PR) offers a handsome binder that by lucky chance fits *The Sherlock Holmes Journal*. It's very modestly priced at £6.00 to members of the Poor Folk and £7.50 to non-members (including postage). Membership of the society is £9.00 a year; cheques payable to The Poor Folk Upon The Moors should be sent to Vosper.

The Poor Folk are planning their first weekend expedition within the West Country, a visit to the Lizard peninsula ('Devil's Foot' country) on 1 & 2 July next year. Get details from Shirley Purves, Lea House, Couches Lane, Woodbury, Exeter EX5 1HL.

Dr Benton Wood has produced a *Y2K Sherlockian Calendar* at \$2.00 including postage (9840 Sucia Circle, Parrish, FL 34219-9080, USA).

Naxos Audiobooks (Unit 4, Wyllyotts Manor, Potters Bar, Herts. EN6 2HN) will release *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes III*, on 3 CDs or 3 cassettes, in February. The reader is again the splendid David Timson, and the stories ('The Cardboard Box', 'The Musgrave Ritual', 'The Man with the Twisted Lip' and 'The Blue Carbuncle') are enhanced by appropriate music. This is an excellent series of recordings.

The Christmas show at the Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham (Regent Street, Cheltenham, Gloucs. GL50 1HQ; phone 01242 512515) is *Sherlock Holmes and the Christmas Star*. At the Guildhall in Leicester on 12, 13 & 14 December, the Herrick Theatre presents *Sherlock's Christmas Cracker* (box office: 0116 270 7679).

Essex Police are justly proud of their bloodhounds Sherlock and Morse. Sherlock recently received a silver medal at the PRO awards after living up to his name with a nifty bit of life-saving detective work. Sherlock, who will be two in January, attended the awards ceremony at the Hilton Hotel in Surrey.

Issue 36 of Geoff Bradley's excellent magazine *CADS* (that's Crime And Detective Stories) is our now, with articles on Nicholas Blake, E.R. Punshon, James Crumley, Bradshaw's railway guide, and a whole lot more. Enquire of Geoff at 9 Vicarage Hill, South Benfleet, Essex SS7 1PA.

Phil Attwell has spotted 'Wishbone' from Equity Toys: 'a little dog with a big imagination'. Wishbone is a posable figure with five snap-on costumes including a Sherlockian one.

Our Society's next meeting will be the Annual Dinner in the great hall at Lincoln's Inn on Saturday 8 January. The annual dinner of **The Baker Street Irregulars** will be held on Friday 14 January at the Union League Club in New York. The weekend will also see the Baskerville Bash, the William Gillette Luncheon, the Martha Hudson Breakfast and other associated junketings. (Get information about the BSI from

Michael Whelan, Wiggins, 7938 Mill Stream Circle, Indianapolis, Indiana 46278, USA.)

The Footprints of a Gigantic Hind will be crossing Mount Kilimanjaro at midnight on 31 December 1999. An enquiry to 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU, will no doubt establish the connection with Sherlock Holmes. The 50th anniversary dinner of **The Sherlock Holmes Klubben I Danmark** - otherwise *The Danish Baker Street Irregulars* - will be held on 7 January 2000 (Bjarne Nielsen, Sherlock Holmes Museet, Algade 3, DK-4500 Nykøbing Sjælland, Denmark; e-mail sherlock@sherlockiana.net). January 8 sees the *Disjecta Membra* outing of **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company**, taking in a tour of Canonical hotels in London (6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU; e-mail franco.midland@btinternet.com).

The Sydney Passengers, naturally, will celebrate Holmes's birthday in high summer - on 9 January (Bill Barnes, at 19 Malvern Avenue, Manly, NSW 2095, Australia; e-mail bbarnes@ozemail.com.au). **The Poor Folk Upon The Moors** will make a special visit on 15 January to *The Sherlock Holmes Experience* museum & tea rooms in Princetown, Dartmoor (just opposite the High Moorland visitors' centre); the museum comprises a collection originally belonging to Mike Philipson of the Poor Folk (get details of the visit from Vosper Arthur, Splynshlake, Doddiscombsleigh, Exeter EX6 7PR). **The Pleasant Places of Florida** plan *Sherlock's Sunshine Celebration III: Birthday Bash* for 29 January at Leverock's Restaurant in St Petersburg (Carl L. Heifetz, 3693 Siena Lane, Palm Harbor, FL 34685, USA).

Periodicals received. *The Camden House Journal*, December 1999 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, P.O. Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). *Communication*, November—December 1999 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Jeff & Wanda Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA). *The Cormorant's Ring*, Fall 1999 (**The Trained Cormorants of Long Beach, CA**, Jim Coffin, 6570 E. Paseo Alcazaa, Anaheim Hills, CA 92807-4910, USA). *The School Report*, Winter Term 1999 (**The Priory Scholars**, Horace Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY). *The Tin Box*, introductory issue, 1999 (Barbara & Terry Harding, Riverbank, 2 Bohemia Cottages, Stalybridge, Cheshire SK15 1JY) (**a magazine specifically for collectors of Holmesiana; the first issue proper is due in January**).

The Musgrave Papers, 1999, and *All That Is Ours*, first issue (**The Northern Musgraves**, Eilidh Gunson, 1 Dene Royd Close, Stainland, Halifax HX4 9QP) (**All That Is Ours is the Musgraves' new 'occasional newsletter'**). *Sherlockiana*, nr. 3, 1999 (**Sherlock Holmes Klubben I Danmark**, Bjarne Nielsen, Sherlock Holmes Museet, Algade 3, 4500 Nykøbing Sjælland, Denmark). *The Formulary*, December 1999, *Practice Notes*, supplementary issue, December 1999, and *The Dr John H. Watson Annual Prize Essay Competition 1999: The Winning Essays* (**The Friends of Dr Watson**, Richard J. Stacpoole-Ryding, 14 Western Close, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 4SZ). *3 Pipe Problem Plugs and Dotiles*, November 1999 (**The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem**, Gael Stahl, 1763 Needmore Road, Old Hickory, TN 37138, USA).

And, by no means least, the admirable *Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press*, November 1999 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA).

The Compliments of the Season to all!

Roger Johnson