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2008 is (astonishingly) the fortieth anniversary of The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes. This month men were honoured with full membership for the first time: 16 Americans, two Canadians, and one Englishman — me. The full list is at http://www.ash-nyc.com/. (My ASH investiture is ‘Shinwell Johnson’, by the way.)

At the Baker Street Irregulars annual dinner, Wiggins announced the following investitures: Betsy Ferriennes (‘Lucky Resilient’), Dana Richards (‘The Priory School’), David Morrill (‘Count von Kramm’), Barbara Roisman Cooper (‘Mary Baberley’), Randall Stock (‘South African Securities’), John Genova (‘Harry Pinner’), and Guy Marriott (‘The Hôtel du Louvre’). Sherry Rose-Bond received the Two-Shilling Award, and the Eddies (the editors’ medals) went to Roy Pilot, Al Rosenblatt, and Christopher & Barbara Roden.

At our Society’s annual dinner, Freda Howlett presented the Tony Howlett Award to Derek Hinrich.

And in the Queen’s New Year’s Honours List, June Lancelyn Green received the MBE for services to the community in Merseyside.

Wordsworth Editions (8B East Street, Ware, Herts. SG12 9HJ) have published a welcome paperback edition of David Stuart Davies’s Sherlock Holmes and the Hentzau Affair, priced at just £2.99. As I said when the book was first published in 1991, what we have, as the title suggests, is a sequel to The Prisoner of Zenda. A sequel: not the official sequel that Anthony Hope gave us, under the title of Rupert of Hentzau. David has speculated on what might have happened if Sherlock Holmes had been brought into the affair, and a jolly good job he’s made of it, re-creating Hope’s world of romantic intrigue and the vivid characters that inhabit it. The Hentzau Affair is a less reflective, less elegaic tale than Rupert of Hentzau, with a much happier conclusion: a comedy rather than a tragedy, and a cracking good read.

You Know My Methods, Watson (The Battered Silicon Dispatch Box, PO Box 204 Shelburne, Ontario LON 1SO, Canada: www.batteredbox.com; Can$20.00) is the latest volume from David Hammer, an amiably discursive collection of articles and talks. Mr Hammer is a notable Holmesian scholar: see, for instance, his account of the Molly Maguieres, and his investigation of John Francis Moriarity, Arthur Conan Doyle’s contemporary at Stonyhurst and a likely inspiration for the Napoleon of Crime (though he wasn’t a mathematician but, like Mr Hammer, a lawyer). He regales us with tongue-in-cheek theories such as the identification of Inspector MacDonal with… no, no spoilers! — and with some curiously undignified experiences from his many years as a Sherlockian. And he reminisces fondly about friends, living and dead, among them Michael Harrison, Richard Lancelyn Green, and Donald Izbam. His editor, Susan Diamond, notes that David Hammer, ‘like the late John Bennett Shaw, is both a stellar Sherlockian and an excellent raconteur’. I couldn’t have put it better myself.

In the last DM I mentioned Old House Books, (The Old Police Station, Pound Street, Moretonhampstead, Devon TQ13 8PA; 01647 440707: www.OldHouseBooks.co.uk), who specialise in facsimile editions of guidebooks and maps. Before me now is Baedeker’s Great Britain 1890: A Handbook for Travellers (£15.99) a solid, beautifully produced volume of what I suppose was regarded as ‘pocket size’ a century ago. I use maps and guides of the late 19th and early 20th centuries both for research and for simple pleasure, as I love to explore the London and the England of Holmes and Watson. Here we have, inter alia, practical information for the Victorian visitor to Britain, a brief outline of English history (and a page about Wales and the Welsh, though nothing about the Scots), and a good chapter on English architecture. But the bulk of the book, nearly 600 pages, takes us all around the country, from Land’s End to John O’Groats and beyond, plus 50 pages of maps and plans, most in full colour. I find that when Violet Hunter went to Winchester to take up her position in the Rucastle family, the journey from Waterloo was 66½ miles, taking between 1¾ and 2¼ hours. Her second-class fare would have cost her 9/8d. Originals of this sort of book are getting hard to find, and harder yet to find in good condition. This Old House edition is cherishable in its own right. The reproduction is clean and crisp, the print and the maps enticingly legible, and the whole book splendidly bound. Other publications of immediate interest from Old House Books include 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)… not to mention The Lady’s Dressing-Room 1892 (£12.99) and Enquire Within upon Everything 1890 (£14.99)!

The Trained Cormorants of Long Beach have just celebrated their Diamond Jubilee, which was marked by, among other things, a picnic at a lighthouse, a meal at the only McDonald’s in the world with a Sherlockian theme, and a large-format 48-page booklet, full of personal reminiscences, photographs, newspaper cuttings and so forth. I love to learn about other Holmes societies, and especially the people who founded, nurtured and developed them. Some of the Cormorants are almost legendary (Dean and Shirley Dickensheet, Don Hardenbrook, Robert Patrick, Irving and Mary Jaffee, crime writers John Ball and Stuart Palmer, Doylean scholar Al Rodin) and others, such as Vinnie Brosnan, Jim Coffin, John Farrell, and June and Ross Kinnee, are friends to many of us. Among the honorary members I note not only August Derleth, but John Gielgud and T S Eliot — and Luther Norris, who directed me to the Sherlock Holmes Society of London and, indirectly, to the Baker Street Irregulars. Proof reading isn’t all it should be (T S Eliot’s name has only one l!), but The Trained Cormorants 60th Anniversary Commemorative is a pleasing read. It costs $20.00 postpaid from Vincent Brosnan (1741 Via Allena, Oceanside, CA 92056, USA). It might be wise to ask about overseas rates: sherlockinla@cox.net.

Just out is A Remarkable Mixture edited by Steven Rothman, marking fifty years of the Morley-Montgomery Award for the best essays in The Baker Street Journal (The Baker Irregulars, 2 Dettling Road, Maynard, MA 01754, USA; www.bakerstreetjournal.com; $35.00 plus postage). I hope to review the book in the next DM, along with The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes: 75th Anniversary Edition by Vincent Starrett, edited by Ray Betzner (Gasogene Books, PO Box 68308, Indianapolis, IN 46268, USA; $29.99), and possibly The Quintessential Sherlock Holmes, a deluxe illustrated omnibus of Richard L. Boyer’s good Holmes stories (Alexander Books, 65 Macedonia Road, Alexander, NC 28701, USA; SherlockHolmesLives.com; $75.00).

Hugo Koch has uncovered an unexpected original for Neville St Clair alias Hugh Boone. He has generously sent me six copies of his booklet The Real ‘Man with the Twisted Lip’: Francis Thompson, which are free to the first six applicants within the UK (a ‘large letter’ stamp would be appreciated).

I mistyped the URL of Jeff Falkingham’s website last time. Find out about his fine book Sherlock Holmes and the County Courthouse Caper (Beaver’s Pond Press, 7104 Ohms Lane, Suite 21, Edina, MN 55439, USA; $17.00) at www.cccaper.com.
Henry Mancini’s grand score for Without a Clue is available on a limited edition CD (BSX Records, BuySoundtrax.com, Att. Customer Service, 2828 Cochran Street PMB #287, Simi Valley, CA 93065-2780, USA) from buysoundtrax.stores.yahoo.com/witchchourson.html. His equally enjoyable music for The Adventures of the Great Detective (i.e. Basil the Great Detective) is out on a Varèse Sarabande CD (11846 Ventura Boulevard, Suite 130, Studio City, CA 91604, USA) and is available from www.amazon.com and other outlets.

Due in February from Naxos AudioBooks (2nd Floor, 40A High Street, Welwyn, Herts. AL6 9EQ) is an unabridged reading by Glen McReady of The Lost World. Should be good!

An odd-looking DVD documentary called The Madness of Sherlock Holmes: Conan Doyle and the Realm of the Faeries by Phil Gardiner (Real2Can Films, info@real2can.com) is available from www.real2can.com/store/dvd.htm for £11.99/$23.95 plus postage.

Charles Hall (12 Paisley Terrace, Edinburgh EH7 7JW) deals in a range of Holmesian collectibles, including his own fine resin sculptures. Drop him a line for details.

Tony Tenser, who died on 5 December aged eighty-seven, was an unashamedly commercial film producer (it was he who dubbed Brigitte Bardot a ‘sex kitten’), but his output did include Roman Polanski’s Repulsion, Michael Reeves’ Witchfinder General, and James Hill’s A Study in Terror. Our member David Husain, a distinguished chemist, winner of the RSC’s Tilden and Corday-Morgan medals, and Emeritus Fellow of Pembroke College, Cambridge, died on 26 December at the age of seventy. A memorial service will be held on 1 March in Pembroke College Chapel. Edward D Hoch (pronounced ‘Hoke’) wrote more than 900 mystery and detective stories and a handful of novels. As well as his own many characters he wrote half a dozen ingenious Sherlock Holmes stories for Ellery Queen’s Mystery Magazine, the latest being in the current issue (February 2008, which features cover art by Philip Cornell). Ed Hoch died on 17 January aged seventy-seven.

Periodicals received: The Baker Street Journal, Autumn 2007 and Winter 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). Bohemian Newsletter, no. 84 (České společnost Sherlock Holmesu, Alča Kolodrubec, Milosvěská 1, 130 00 Praha 3, Czech Republic). The Camden House Journal, December 2007 (The Occupants of the Empty House, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). Communication, no. 276, no. 277 and no. 278 (The Pleasant Places of Florida, Wanda & Jeff Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA). The Illustrious Clients News, December 2007 (The Illustrious Clients, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). Ineefable Twaddle, December 2007 and January 2008 (The Sound of the Baskervilles, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcourt Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 98322-8981, USA).


Roger Johnson