

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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Henry W. Enberg ('John Garrideb', BSI) died last month. Peter Blau notes that he was the poet laureate of The Friends of Bogie's, contributing to many of their performances as well as to Sherlockian meetings in New York. Though seriously ill, Henry attended and enjoyed the January festivities in NYC.

Congratulations to **Sir John Mills**, who recently turned 90. His sole contribution to the world of Sherlock Holmes is a very memorable one: in the 1984 film *The Masks of Death* he played the elderly Watson, superbly matching Peter Cushing's Holmes.

I've now read the two books from Seymour/Kyper Productions (P.O. Box 1369, Sandwich, MA 02563, USA) mentioned in DM 176. Very engaging they are, too. *The Thinking Machine: Jacques Futrelle* by Freddie Seymour and Bettina Kyper is, surprisingly, the first biography of a very important writer of detective stories. This American author, a great admirer of Conan Doyle and Sherlock Holmes, created one of the most purely cerebral of all sleuths, Professor Augustus S.F.X. Van Dusen, dubbed 'The Thinking Machine'. Futrelle's astonishing ingenuity and logical creativity pitted the professor against all manner of extraordinary problems. (A classic is the case of the elegant woman who instructed a surgeon to amputate one of her — perfectly healthy — fingers. Only the Thinking Machine can deduce her sinister reason.) Between 1905 and 1912, he wrote 48 short stories and seven novels. The stories are witty, challenging and stimulating. A complete edition is long overdue; fortunately this book includes five of the best as a bonus, among them the professor's first appearance in 'The Problem of Cell 13', in which he makes good his bet that he can think himself out of the condemned cell of a prison. *The Thinking Machine: Jacques Futrelle* isn't a deep and scholarly biography; rather it's an affectionate sketch of a charming and intelligent man, who died long before his time when the R.M.S. *Titanic* went down in 1912. This sturdy 294-page paperback is very reasonably priced at \$12.00, plus \$3.00 postage outside the USA. (Overseas, international cheque or postal money order in US dollars only, payable to Seymour/Kyper Productions.)

Jacques Futrelle's delight in Sherlock Holmes led him to write a story in which the great detective investigated an actual murder committed near Boston, MA, in 1905. What Mesdames Seymour and Kyper call the author's 'gift of psychic intuition' (actually relentless logic) led him to a correct identification of the guilty parties some weeks before the police arrested them. *The Great Suit Case Mystery* was serialised in *The Boston American* and has never been reprinted until now. Production standards aren't top-notch, but this 60-page booklet deserves a place on the shelves of anyone seriously interested in the phenomenon that is Sherlock Holmes, as an instance of a brilliant writer using the character to explain his own logical reasoning. *The Great Suit Case Mystery* costs a very reasonable \$5.00, plus \$3.00 outside the USA.

Due shortly is Eddie Maguire's fourth Sherlock Holmes story, *A Voice from the Ether*, which finds Holmes trapped on Osea Island near Maldon. (Big House Books, 63 Wellington Road, Bridgwater, Somerset TA6 5EZ). More details as they reach me.

Kelvin Jones's Oakmagic Publications have just issued what must be something of a rarity: *A Study of the Chaldean Roots in the Ancient Cornish Language, with Observations on the Early Tin Trade in West Cornwall*, 'by Sherlock Holmes'. This booklet purports to be a reprint of a monograph originally published by Bell and Brown of Truro in 1898. Copies cost £3.50 each from Oakmagic (2 South Place Folly, Penzance, Cornwall TR18 4JB). Cheques should be payable to K. & D. Jones.

More recent publications. *The Crime and Mystery Book* by Ian Ousby (Thames & Hudson Ltd, 30 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1B 3QP; £12.95). *The Travels of Sherlock Holmes and Sherlock Holmes and the Telephone Murder Mystery*, both by John Hall (Breese Books Ltd, 164 Kensington Park Road, London W11 2ER; e-mail MBreese999@aol.com; both £6.99). (*A catalogue is in preparation. Send your name and address to Breese Books to reserve a copy.*) John Hall's *Sidelights on Holmes* has been published by Calabash Press (P.O. Box 1360, Ashcroft, B.C., Canada V0K 1A0). Post-inclusive prices are: USA \$24.75; Canada Cdn\$35.00; rest of world (airmail) £17.85 or US\$28.00, (surface) £16.00 or US\$25.15.

From St Martin's Press (175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010) come *The Confidential Casebook of Sherlock Holmes* edited by Marvin Kaye (£16.00), and *The Moor*, the fourth Mary Russell adventure by Laurie King (£16.00). The third Mary Russell book, *A Letter of Mary* is now out in paperback in America from Bantam Books (£5.99). (*The prices given are those in the current **Post Mortem Books** catalogue, available from 58 Stanford Avenue, Hassocks, East Sussex BN6 8JH.*)

The Danish company Antikvariat Pinkerton has published *Great Northern Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by Bjarne Nielsen — in English! This survey of the Holmes films produced in Denmark between 1908 and 1911 features over 80 stills, most of them never reprinted before. Copies are available at £18.00 each from **Rupert Books**, 58/59 Stonefield, Bar Hill, Cambridge CB3 8TE. The 5th and 6th Rupert Books Monographs are *Our Reply to the Cleric*, a 32-page facsimile of a 1920 Spiritualist pamphlet by Arthur Conan Doyle, and *Jeremy Brett and David Burke: An Adventure in Canonical Fidelity*, a new 40-page edition of R. Dixon Smith's 1986 study of the early years of the Granada series. Each monograph costs £10.00 from Rupert Books. There's a new catalogue out as well. Rupert's e-mail address is rupert_books@compuserve.com. The homepage is at http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/rupert_books.

The Bibliophile's Book Shelf & Miscellanea is the new catalogue from **Classic Specialties** (P.O. Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA), and as usual there are personal recommendations, a puzzle and pleasant chat. With Classic Specialties you feel you're with friends. (I made an error in the

last DM: the correct address for the homepage is <http://www.sherlock-holmes.com>. The e-mail address is: sherlock@sherlock-holmes.com.)

The Mysterious Bookshop (129 West 56th Street, New York, NY 10019, USA; e-mail mysteriousny@worldnet.att.net) has issued a *Sherlock Holmes Catalogue*. (*The London shop doesn't seem to have the same range. The address is 82 Marylebone High Street, London W1M 3DE.*) There's also a new catalogue, no. 53, from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (22 & 25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; nwrrarebook@tcp.co.uk.)

Sherlock Holmes: The Detective Magazine no. 23 is a Special Ladies Issue. It features a moving obituary of Dame Jean Conan Doyle by our President, Tony Howlett, to whom she was a friend for over 40 years. John Curran turns his lens on Miss Marple. David Stuart Davies interviews P.D. James, and Gaynor Coules examines her novels. Catherine Cooke continues her Musical Tour of Sherlockian London. Kathryn White asks if Sherlock Holmes is a Romantic Hero. Barbara Roden looks at the feminist Mrs Westmacott in Conan Doyle's *Beyond the City*. Michael Cox continues his engrossing account of the Granada TV series, now in the hands of June Wyndham Davies. There's a new Sherlock Holmes story by A.L. Blake. Paul Chapman finishes his look at the early publishing history of Holmes. Thom Utecht tells of **The Montague Street Lodgers of Brooklyn**. John Hall observes Dr Watson. Moriarty mutters. It's a jolly good read, and the standard of presentation continues to improve. The magazine is now 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 46 Purfield Drive, Wargrave, Berks. RG10 8AR. The US representative is Classic Specialties.

The British Philatelic Bulletin for January and February featured a two-part article on 'The Philatelic Hound of the Baskervilles'. John Hoath can provide photocopies if you send a stamped & self-addressed envelope to him at Randalls, Lodge Road, Hazeleigh, Chelmsford CM3 6QX.

Geoff Bradley's *CADS* no. 32, featuring a piece on the Solar Pons canon, among much else, is available from 9 Vicarage Hill, South Benfleet, Essex SS7 1PA, at £5.00. Another British magazine for crime & detective story lovers is *Tangled Web*. Issue no. 6 is now available at £2.95 from Andrew Osmond (69 Holm Oak Park, Watford, Herts. WD1 8TH).

Look out for any local production of Chris Bond's play *The Mystere of Maria Marten and the Murder in the Red Barn*, which gives the old melodrama several entertaining and intriguing new twists (and don't think that knowing the facts of the actual murder will help you solve the mystery). The sleuthing is done by a strong-willed bluestocking named Lady Augusta Holmes.

Patrick Kirkby tells me that plans are nearly complete for the Netley Veterans Reunion and Display at the Royal Victoria Military Hospital on 14 May. This was where Dr Watson trained as a military surgeon, of course, and it's expected that he'll put in an appearance. Exactly 100 years ago, Queen Victoria visited Netley to present the Victoria Cross to Piper Findlater of the Gordon Highlanders and Private Vickery of the Dorset Regiment. Information about the event can be had from the Reunion Office, Royal British Legion Netley, 100 Station Road, Netley Abbey, Southampton (phone 01703 452996).

Nuneaton & Bedworth Council has issued leaflets listing guided tours and events in 'George Eliot Country'. They're available from the Chief Executive's Department, Town Hall, Nuneaton, Warwickshire CV11 5AA (01203 376490).

The 2nd Daphne du Maurier Festival of Arts & Literature will be held at Fowey in Cornwall from 8 to 17 May. For a brochure, phone the information line on 01726 74324 or 01726 74466.

Phil Attwell sends news of a major crime fiction convention, *Dead on Deansgate*, to be held at Waterstone's in Deansgate and the Ramada International Hotel in Manchester, 23-25 October. Tickets are priced at £55.00 (£50.00 if booked before 31 March), or £45.00 if you're a published author, from *Dead on Deansgate*, Waterstone's, 91 Deansgate, Manchester M3 2BW. (*Shouldn't that be *Dead IN Deansgate*?*)

The Reichenbach Irregulars and **The Société Sherlock Holmes de France** will host *The Sherlock Holmes Worldwide Congress of the Holmesian Societies* in Meiringen from 30 April to 4 May. One aim is to create a federation of Sherlock Holmes societies. Information can be had from Joaquim Vergés, Services Touristiques, Hauptstrasse 8 Postfach 700, CH-3860 Meiringen, Switzerland.

The Sherlock Holmes Society of London meets on 17 March at the Royal Society of Medicine, for *Materia Medica Canonica* (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). On 21 March **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company** and **The Japanese Cabinet** have an "East Wind" gathering in Tokyo (Hirayama Yuichi, 2-10-12 Kamirenjaku, Mitaka-shi, 181 Tokyo, Japan). **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). **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company**, **The Baskerville Hounds** and **The Baker Street Branch Lines** will explore Dartmoor between 10 and 13 April (all three societies have the same address: 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU).

Our Society's AGM on 12 May will precede a talk by Nicholas Utechin on *Holmes and the BBC*. **The Northern Musgraves** plan the second Mini Tonga Cruise — on the River Ouse in York — for 16 May (Mark Hunter-Purvis, 6 Deer Park Way, Axwell Park, Blaydon-on-Tyne NE21 5PD).

Periodicals received. *Communication* Special Valentine Issue 1998 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Jeff & Wanda Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA) (*features some charming whimsy on the Valentine theme, and Linda Anderson's report on the January weekend in New York*). *The New Baker Street Pillar Box* no. 31 (**The Franco-Midland Hardware Company**, 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU) (*includes a grand essay on jezails and wounds by Michael Higgs, with some interesting addenda by Philip Weller; good material on Conan Doyle's use of American slang by Peter Calamai and Michael Duke; and Dame Jean Conan Doyle's correction of some points about her father raised in Malcolm Payne's last article*).

Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press, February 1998 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA; e-mail pblau@dgs.dgssys.com) (*the indispensable Sherlockian newsletter*).

Roger Johnson