

The DISTRICT MESSENGER



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON
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The superb new *District Messenger* letterhead was designed by Philip Cornell of **The Sydney Passengers**. Many thanks, Philip!

William Berner ('Aloysius Doran Esq. of San Francisco', BSI) died last year. Until his retirement he was one of the best specialist Sherlockian booksellers. **James Goldman**, who wrote the play and film *They Might Be Giants*, and who won an Oscar for *The Lion in Winter*, died on 28 October.

The Norman Rosenbaum collection of books and MSS by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, one of the world's finest, will be auctioned at Sotheby's on 17 December. There's a lot of Sherlockiana, of course (first editions, signed copies, an autograph letter from ACD explaining that Holmes wouldn't work on stage, an unpublished Paget portrait of Holmes) and much relating to other aspects of ACD's life and work — 217 lots in all. The catalogue is available now, and the full text is posted on Sotheby's website: www.sothebys.com. Enquiries to Peter Selley, Sotheby's Book Dept, 34-35 New Bond Street, London W1A 2AA (phone 0171 293 5295; fax 0171 293 5904).

The London Festival of Sherlock Holmes will run from Wednesday 22 to Sunday 26 September 1999. John Doubleday's statue of Holmes will be unveiled outside Baker Street Station on 23 September. Details of the associated events will follow.

The Bedside, Bathtub & Armchair Companion to Sherlock Holmes by Dick Riley & Pam McAllister (Continuum Publishing Co., 370 Lexington Ave, New York, NY 10017, USA; \$19.95) is an attractive book, engagingly written and profusely illustrated in black & white. The authors have done their homework, and their essays on, for instance, the British peerage, drug use and abuse, and Sherlockian parody & pastiche, are brief but often enlightening. They seem sound on Holmesian societies, though a few addresses might have been helpful. The book is distributed in Britain by Cassell PLC (Wellington House, 125 Strand, London WC2R 0BB) at £12.99 paperback or £25.00 hardback.

The core of *Holmes, Chemistry & The Royal Institution* is Bryson Gore's paper 'Chemistry Is ... Elementary', presented to our Society at the Royal Institution in 1994. Antony J. Richards adds essays on Sherlock Holmes's chemical career and has some intriguing ideas about his university education. This handsome, well illustrated softback can be bought from Pam Bruxner (2B Hiham Green, Winchelsea, East Sussex TN36 4HB; cheques payable to **The Sherlock Holmes Society of London**). Until 15 December, prices postpaid are; UK £13.50; Europe £14.50; USA \$27.50; elsewhere £16.50. After then the price will be £15.75.

The latest title from Calabash Press (PO Box 1360, Ashcroft, B.C. V0K 1A0, Canada) is *The Abominable Wife, and Other Unrecorded Cases of Mr Sherlock Holmes*, in which the indefatigable John Hall speculates on the truth behind Watson's tantalising hints. Many writers have attempted to write accounts of various of the untold tales, but John's is a different approach, and perhaps more valuable. *The Abominable Wife* is a worthy companion to his *Sidelights on Holmes*. It's available from good Sherlockian booksellers or from Calabash at £12.50, US\$19.50 or Cdn\$23.50. Postage is extra: USA US\$3.75, Canada Cdn\$5.30; elsewhere (air) US\$7.05 or £4.35, (surface) US\$4.15 or £2.55.

The latest *Musgrave Monograph*, due shortly from **The Northern Musgraves**, is *221 BBC: Writing for the World's First Complete Dramatised Canon* by Bert Coules. Bert was the originator and head writer of the unique BBC Radio series with Clive Merrison & Michael Williams, and his illustrated 76-page brochure puts that achievement firmly into the context of Sherlockian radio drama. It can be ordered from Mark Hunter-Purvis (6 Deer Park Way, Axwell Park, Blaydon-on-Tyne NE21 5PD), at £6.50, US\$15.00 or Cdn\$23.00, including postage.

The good news for fans of Skelington Bones, Spook Detective is that David Stuart Davies has written a 5th instalment of the incompetent ghost-hunter's adventures. The bad news is that *The Final Spooking* is the last. To find out how Bones gets the better of his arch-enemy Dr Cadabra at the cost of his own corporeal existence, send a cheque payable to David Stuart Davies to: Overdale, 69 Greenhead Road, Huddersfield HD1 4ER (UK £5.00, Europe £6.00, USA \$10.00, Canada \$12.00 — postpaid).

The Winter issue of *This England* (PO Box 52, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL50 1YQ; £3.50) contains an article by John Hall: 'In the Footsteps of Sherlock Holmes'. December's *Book & Magazine Collector* (43-45 St Mary's Road, Ealing, London W5 5RQ; £2.70) has a piece on Sherlockian pastiche: 'The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes' by David Whitehead.

Sherlock Holmes: The Detective Magazine no. 28 is a 'Special Parody Issue'. Brian Adrian surveys early Sherlockian travesties; David Stuart Davies looks at the Peter Cook & Dudley Moore *Hound of the Baskervilles*; Jean Upton examines Schlock Homes; 'The Case of the Danish Prince' by Miles Kington gets a welcome reprint; Barbara Roden notes that Conan Doyle too could send up his hero; 'Socialites Forum' (*sic*) casts the spotlight on **The Sidney James Passengers**... Fortunately for our sanity, there's also Michael Cox's *A Study in Celluloid*, looking at Granada's *Hound*, and a Christmas story by John Hall, as well as Colin Dexter on his TV career, Gaynor Coules on Simon Brett and Mike Ripley on the new *Sherlock* awards, while the real Societies Forum looks at **The Bimetallic Question of Montréal**. 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 46 Purfield Drive, Wargrave, Berks. RG10 8AR. The US representative is Classic Specialties (PO

Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA; e-mail sherlock@sherlock-holmes.com).

There are new catalogues from **Post Mortem Books** (58 Stanford Avenue, Hassocks, Sussex BN6 8JH); **Bibliotective** (Box 47347, Oak Park, Michigan 48237, USA); and **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (22 & 25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE).

New from Constable & Co. Ltd (3 The Lanchesters, 162 Fulham Palace Road, London W6 9ER; £16.99) is *Sherlock Holmes and the Royal Flush* by Barrie Roberts.

Jennie Paton sends news that 12 of the late 1940s American radio plays with John Stanley & Alfred Shirley as Holmes & Watson have been released by Radio Spirits as *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* on 4 cassettes at \$24.98 or 4 CDs at \$39.98. (MysteryNet: www.MysteryNet.com/offer/sherlock01/ offers the cassettes at \$19.00 and the CDs at \$30.00.)

Catherine Cooke passes on two enquiries. One is from **Maya Vision International Ltd**, who produce *The Real History Show* and are looking for an engaged couple who would like to have a small and historically accurate Victorian wedding in the spring or summer of 1999. Phone 0171 836 1113 and speak to Paula or Sam. The other is from **Genootschap Nederland-Engeland**, a Dutch-British cultural exchange society, who want a Sherlockian or Doylean speaker to give half a dozen lectures in Holland at some time between September 1999 and June 2000. No fee is offered, but travel and accommodation expenses will be paid, and out-of-pocket expenses. Contact Mrs Kathleen Tripp (Haydnlaan 10, 3723 KH Bilthoven, Holland; phone +31 030 2293418).

Catherine herself will be busy with a new IT system at Marylebone Library through much of next year, so she stresses that people wanting to visit the Sherlock Holmes Collection *must* make an appointment. Write to her at Marylebone Library, Marylebone Road, London NW1 5PS, or phone 0171 641 1206.

Jon Lellenberg notes that **ACD Holdings PLC** is looking for investors for a very ambitious project. The idea is to turn Undershaw, Conan Doyle's former home at Hindhead, into an exclusive club offering 'one of the largest single collections of ACD and Sherlock Holmes memorabilia; Magic & Mystery evenings; Conventions, Banquets & Superior Dining; Séances in ACD's original Study complete with "Butler" service; Exclusive Member's overnight Accommodation; TV Dramatised Documentary of the life and times of ACD'. The company seems to be unknown, and no terrestrial address is given, but you can get details from Scott Clifton Lucy at slucy@suprailfe.co.uk.

Bob Ellis sends notice of a conference on *Victorian Crime* to be held at London University Centre for English Studies on 24 April 1999. You can get full details from the website at www.geocities.com/Athens/Crete/3783/crimeconf.html or from Centre for English Studies, Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU (phone 0171 862 8672). Also from Bob comes notice of Bill Dorn's illustrated *Sherlock Holmes Calendar 1999*, marking important dates in the world of Sherlock Holmes. Send \$9.95 (+ \$2.00 postage overseas) to William S. Dorn, 2045 S. Monroe Street, Denver, CO 80210-3734, USA.

Mad Dogs & Englishmen will perform *A Collector of Women* (based on 'The Illustrious Client') at **Greyfriars Adult Community College** in Colchester on 11 December at 7.30. Tickets are £5.50. Phone 01206 542242.

Maurice Tanner (180 Whitehorse Road, West Croydon CR0 2LA) offers philatelic covers to mark the anniversaries of the

1939 and 1959 films of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. No. 9 features the 1939 poster plus the five 1993 Holmes stamps and the 1997 Hound stamp (£13.99, or £14.99 overseas); no. 10 shows Peter Cushing & Christopher Lee, plus the 1993 and 1997 Hound stamps (£11.99, or £12.99 overseas).

We found in Lawley's a charming figurine of a small hedgehog examining a ladybird through a lens. It's called 'Sherlock', and is one of the *Hedgies* series from Paw Prints (The Mill, Avenue Farm, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwicks. CV37 0HR). Cost is about £15.00.

The *Sherlock Holmes Public House & Restaurant* (10-11 Northumberland Street, London WC2N 5DA; phone 0171 930 2644) has some nice new memorabilia for sale, with lots of nice older stuff. The website at www.sherlock-dircon.co.uk/ has the full list.

Michael Ross of **Von Herder Airguns Ltd** has just moved. His new address is Postfach 42 06 70, 50900 Köln, Germany.

The Annual Dinner of **The Baker Street Irregulars** will be held on Friday 8 January 1999. (Contact Michael Whelan, *Wiggins*, 414 N. Park Avenue, Indianapolis, IN 46202, USA) The Annual Dinner of **The Sherlock Holmes Society of London** will be held at the House of Commons on Saturday 16 January. The Guest of Honour will be Dr Pierre Nordon.

On 9 January **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company** will hold its Disjecta Membra event (6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hampshire PO14 3RU), and **The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia** will hold the Master's Dinner (Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C. V7P 3C6, Canada). **The Sydney Passengers** will celebrate Sherlock Holmes's birthday and the centenary of 'Charles Augustus Milverton' on 10 January. (Bill Barnes, 19 Malvern Avenue, Manly, NSW 2095, Australia), and **The Pleasant Places of Florida** plan to hold Sherlock's Birthday Celebration on 16 January (Carl L. Heifetz, 3693 Siena Lane, Palm Harbor, FL 34685, USA). The winter party of **The Poor Folk Upon The Moors** is scheduled for 6 February, which will allow time for the other commitments of the Festive Season to have abated (Shirley Purves, Lea House, Couches Lane, Woodbury, Exeter EX5 1HL).

A very brief round-up of periodicals received. *ACD: The Journal of the Arthur Conan Doyle Society*, 1998 (PO Box 1360, Ashcroft, B.C. V0K 1A0, Canada). *The FMHC Memo*, November 1998, and *The Franco-Midland Hardware Company Interim Report 1998: The Engineer's Thumb Contract Reviewed* (6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hampshire PO14 3RU). *The Formulary*, December 1998, and *Watson's Wanderings: A Tour of Some Walks Taken by Dr Watson (The Friends of Dr Watson*, Richard Stacpoole-Ryding, 14 Western Close, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 4SZ).

The Baker Street Journal, September 1998 (PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA) (*all correspondence for *The Baker Street Irregulars* should be addressed to Michael Whelan, 414 N. Park Avenue, Indianapolis, IN 46202, USA*). *The Parallelogram*, November 1998 (**The Parallel Case of St Louis**, Joseph J. Eckrich BSI, 914 Oakmoor, Fenton, MO 23126, USA).

Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press, October 1998 and November 1998 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA).

The Compliments of the Season to all!

Roger Johnson