

The DISTRICT MESSENGER



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON
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Michael Cox passes on sad news that the stunt man Marc Boyle died on 21 July, aged 51 from a brain aneurysm. His most publicised appearance was as Jeremy Brett's double at the Reichenbach Falls. Peter Blau reports the death of John D. Clark ('The Politician, the Lighthouse and the Trained Cormorant', BSI), who first suggested that Nero Wolfe was the son of Sherlock Holmes and Irene Adler - a notion 'now accepted in many quarters as gospel', says Peter (*and in many quarters as twaddle!*).

Happier news from Michael is that Jeremy's son David Huggins has just had his second novel published. There's nothing overtly Sherlockian about *Luxury Amnesia* (Faber & Faber Ltd, 3 Queen Square, London WC1N 3AU; £9.99), but reviews suggest it's a better than average thriller.

Anna Smyth's admirable anthology *The Boscombe Valley Mystery Tour* can be had from our Merchandising Officer Lynne Godden (Apple Tree Cottage, Smarden, Ashford, Kent TN27 8QE) priced including postage at: UK £6.50; Europe £7.50; USA \$13.50; elsewhere £7.50. Cheques and checks should be payable to the Sherlock Holmes Society of London.

The Sherlock Holmes Collections at the University of Minnesota has (or have) published a guide to one collection: *Edith Meiser and Her Adventures with Sherlock Holmes*, by Lucy Brusic, James Hubbs & William Nadel, is an invaluable and all-but-complete listing of the classic American radio scripts by Edith Meiser, Denis Green, Leslie Charteris and Anthony Boucher. (The Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections help support the world's greatest public collection. Get details from 466 Wilson Library, 309 19th Avenue South, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA.)

The Adventure of the Awful Apparition by Ellay Aitchison (alias Len Haffenden) is Volume 3 in the *Petrel Premium* series published by Hansom Press for **The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**. The title piece is a short three-act play based on the 'plot for Sherlock Holmes story' found by Hesketh Pearson among Conan Doyle's papers (see *The Uncollected Sherlock Holmes* edited by Richard Lancelyn Green); it is followed appropriately by an encore, *How Watson Learned the Trick*, dramatised from ACD's own parody; and to round off the 52-page booklet there's a script for a Punch & Judy show, based on Len's childhood memories (*I can't remember when I last saw the Devil get the better of Punch as he does here*). It's all nicely produced, with endearing illustrations by Xerez, and very entertaining. Prices including postage are: Canada \$17.00; USA \$12.00; UK £8.50; checks and cheques should be payable to Hansom Press and sent to 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada, V7P 3C6.

The Maiwand Luncheon Monograph, published by **The Friends of Dr Watson** (14 Western Close, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 4SZ) is an instructive 'Account of the Battle of Maiwand & Associated Canonical & Military Matters'. Particularly

interesting is the coverage of the Afghanistan Medal and other awards made to participants in the battle. This 26-page A4 brochure can be had by non-members for £5.00 or by members for £3.00.

Calabash Press (P.O. Box 1360, Ashcroft, B.C., V0K 1A0, Canada; e-mail ashtree@ash-tree.bc.ca) offer a special deal on their ground-breaking *Case Files of Sherlock Holmes* series. Order the latest volume *The Blue Caruncle* with *The Dying Detective* and/or *The Speckled Band* and you get the additional volume(s) post free. Calabash also, of course, publish the script of David Stuart Davies's triumphant play *Sherlock Holmes - The Last Act!* (see DM 191). Write for details, or check the web page at <http://www.ash-tree.bc.ca/calabash.html>.

Brian Pugh reports that John Sutherland's third quirky collection of essays is out from Oxford University Press at £4.99; *Who Betrays Elizabeth Bennett* includes 'Cabinets and Detectives', an investigation into 'A Scandal in Bohemia'. Peter Blau notes that Roberta Rogow's novel *The Problem of the Missing Miss*, featuring Arthur Conan Doyle and Lewis Carroll, has been published in Britain by Robert Hale as *The Problem of the Missing Hoyden* at £16.99. The sequel, *The Problem of the Spiteful Spiritualist*, is out from St Martin's Press at \$23.95, and Ms Rogow has completed the third novel, *The Problem of the Evil Editor*.

Bantam Books have recently published the fifth Mary Russell novel, *O Jerusalem*, which takes Russell and her husband Sherlock Holmes to Palestine (US\$13.95 or Cdn\$21.95). Coming in November from Constable is Barrie Roberts' latest novel *Sherlock Holmes and the Harvest of Death* (£16.99), and from Robinson the first British edition of *The New Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* edited by Martin Greenberg & Carol-Lyn Rossel Waugh (£7.99).

The Black Cat Bookshop (36-39 Silver Arcade, Leicester LE1 5FB; phone 0116 2512 756), one of Britain's most reliable specialist dealers, offers a free Sherlock Holmes/Conan Doyle booksearch service. There's a new catalogue from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (22 & 25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; e-mail nwrrarebook@tcp.co.uk).

The writing in the second issue of the new *Strand Magazine* maintains the standard of the first issue, with fiction by H.R.F. Keating, Michael Gilbert and others, a new Sherlock Holmes story by Denis Smith, an interview with Michael Bond by Andrew Gulli, and articles by Mathew Prichard, Christopher & Barbara Roden and Charles L.P. Silet. The artwork shows an immense improvement, being now in the hands of the incomparable Chris Senior. The magazine is published quarterly and can be had from P.O. Box 1418, Birmingham, MI 48012-1418, USA. Annual subscriptions in USA and Canada are \$24.95, and international \$29.95. Trade distribution in UK: Diamond Magazine Distribution, Unit 7, Rother Ironworks, Fishmarket Road, Rye, East Sussex TN31 7LR.

Peter Blau notes that the July issue of *In Britain* features 'The Greatest Detective', an article about Crowborough's associations with Conan Doyle and Sherlock Holmes (British Tourist Authority, Thames Tower, Blacks Road, London W6 9EL; £2.75 or \$6.25).

Peter Blau notes that the BBC video-cassette of *The Speckled Band* and *The Illustrious Client*, with Douglas Wilmer & Nigel Stock, can be had in NTSC format for £30.99 post-paid from Blackstar, 11 Ravenhill Road, Belfast BT6 8DN, Northern Ireland. There's a website at www.blackstar.co.uk. This may be the only chance to obtain these fine productions in NTSC.

On 10th July Brad Keefauver posted a note on *The Hounds of the Internet*: 'Mr Victor Godfrey has asked that the following notice be made public: 'The will of Sir Henry Baskerville will finally be executed in the manner specified by the deceased at approximately 8:00 pm on the evening of September 11, 1999. All further attempts by certain individuals to claim, either legally or illegally, the Baskerville fortune will be met with the harshest measures. The estate will be distributed according to Sir Henry's wishes as long as there is a single lawyer still breathing at the firm of Whyte, Norton, Morris, Fordham, Hebron, Reilly, Barelli, Sutro, McFarlane, Morrison and Dodd. And, as the name implies, the firm has a lot of lawyers. To quote John H. Watson, M.D., "There is at least one reader who will understand."' (*Do you? I don't!*)

The **Conan Doyle (Crowborough) Establishment** collection of memorabilia and photos of Sir Arthur will move in late September or early October to a new home at the Crowborough Beacon Community College. Brian Pugh, the Curator, expresses his thanks to the management at Groombridge Place, who have housed the collection for the last four years, to Mrs Alison Banks, Principal of the College, and to Mrs Barbara Payne, who actually owns the collection for which the Establishment acts as trustees.

The **Crowborough Conan Doyle Trust** (reg. charity no. 1073842) has commissioned a fine statue of Sir Arthur by David Cornell. To make a donation, or for more information, contact The Town Clerk, The Town Hall, The Broadway, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 1DA. Cheques should be payable to the Trust.

Those interested in the Whitechapel murders of 1888 may like to know of **The Cloak & Dagger Club** and its magazine *Ripperologist*. The club meets six times a year at The City Darts pub, near Aldgate East station. You can get information from Coral Kelly at 71 Penwortham Road, Streatham, London SW16 6RH (phone 0181 677 0337; e-mail coralkelly@usa.net).

Douglas Warren recommends Bristol University's extra-mural course on 'The Science of Crime Detection' to be held on 6th November. The fee is £18.00, and you can get application forms from: University of Bristol, Public Programmes Office, 8-10 Berkeley Square, Clifton, Bristol BS8 1HH.

Sherlock Holmes — The Last Act! by David Stuart Davies is at the Edinburgh Festival, at Roman Eagle Lodge, until the 29th August (0131 622 7207). I do urge you to see the play, at Edinburgh or elsewhere on its tour. Roger Llewellyn's mesmerising performance does justice to a first-rate script. (Late news is that the tour has become international as Roger has been invited by the Baker Street Irregulars to perform the play in New York in January.) In Edinburgh, the main rival to *Sherlock Holmes — The Last Act!* is Exacting Theatre Company's production of Jeremy Paul's *The Secret of Sherlock Holmes*, running 16th - 21st August (box office: 0131 225 9893). Our member Adam Dodd plays Holmes, fresh from his triumph at Exeter's Northcott Theatre in his own play *Sherlock Holmes and The Sign of the Four*.

The Cambridge Footlights' Christmas show at the ADC Theatre will be *Sherlock Holmes, the Pantomime*. More details as they reach me.

The new President of **The Arthur Conan Doyle Society** (P.O. Box 1360, Ashcroft, B.C., V0K 1A0, Canada; e-mail ashtree@ash-tree.bc.ca) is Owen Dudley Edwards. The Society

has published the tenth anniversary issue of its journal *ACD* - a full 180 pages. The annual subscription is: Cdn\$33.00, US\$27.00, £20.00 (airmail, rest of world) or £16.00 (surface mail, rest of world).

As usual, August is a quiet month for Sherlockian societies. **The Red Circle's** Lodge on the 13th at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., will feature a discussion of Sherlockian parodies, a performance, and a quiz on 'The Greek Interpreter' (details from Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA; pblau@dgs.dgsys.com). On the 21st **The Irregular Special Railway Company** will tour Freemasons' Hall, take lunch at the Charing Cross Hotel, and visit a candidate for The Myrtles at Beckenham (Antony Richards, 170 Woodland Road, Sawston, Cambridge CB2 4DX). On the same day **The Cardboard Boxers of Croydon** will be walking around Croydon — which takes in Conan Doyle's former home in Tennyson Road, South Norwood (Andrew Butler, 35 Fleetwood Close, Croydon CR0 5HD).

There's a new(ish) Sherlock Holmes society in Malaysia, **The Common Loafers**, founded by Aziz Bin Adam (no. 12, Lorong 14/54A, 46100 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan, West Malaysia; e-mail benoy@tm.net.my). The society has a website at <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Thebes/6513/afoot.htm>.

Periodicals received. **The Irregular Special Railway Company Newsletter**, February-April 1999 and May-July 1999 (Antony J. Richards, 170 Woodland Road, Sawston, Cambridge CB2 4DX). **The Petrel Flyer**, July-August 1999 (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7P 3C6). **Communication**, July-August 1999 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Jeff & Wanda Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA).

The Passengers' Log, Autumn Issue, 22nd May 1999 (**The Sydney Passengers**, Bill Barnes, 19 Malvern Avenue, Manly, NSW 2095, Australia) (*still one of the most stylish journals around*). **The Camden House Journal**, July 1999 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, P.O. Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). **Sherlockian Snippets**, 2nd August 1999 (Tabitha Grace Smith (618 4th Street SW, Spencer, Iowa 51301-6218, USA) (*this lively newsletter is available only by e-mail; Tabitha seems to have reverted to her original e-mail address of SarahlockH@aol.com, but you may get her at sherlockian_snippets@e-mail.com*).

3 Pipe Problem Plugs and Dottles, July 1999 (**The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem**, Gael Stahl, 1763 Needmore Road, Old Hickory, TN 37138, USA). **Franco-Midland Daily Echo**, 9, 11, 13, 14 and 15 août 1998; **Ironmongers Daily Echo**, August 1898, April 1899, May 1899 and undated; **The Gas Factory Newsletter**, April 1899 (**La Société Sherlock Holmes de France**, 26 avenue de la République, 75011 Paris, France) (*these are also among the most stylish Sherlockian periodicals! Flatteringly, they now include a French translation, by Alexis Barquin, of *The District Messenger**).

The Sherlock Holmes Journal, Summer 1999 (**The Sherlock Holmes Society of London**, of course) (*and I hope you've all received your copies by now*). And **Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press**, July 1999 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, D.C. 20007-4830, USA; e-mail pblau@dgs.dgsys.com).

Roger Johnson