

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON
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I give such addresses and prices as I have; if I don't provide details of importers or agents, it's because I don't have those details.

David Kossoff, who died on 23 March at the age of eighty-five, was loved and respected as an actor, a writer and a raconteur. In 1952 he played Peterson in Felix Felton's BBC Radio dramatisation of *The Blue Carbuncle* with Carleton Hobbs & Norman Shelley, but his role in Billy Wilder's film *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* was cut (with much else) from the release print. After his son Paul, lead guitarist with Free, died of a heroin overdose, David Kossoff devoted much of his time to campaigning against hard drugs.

Happier news is that on 19 March **Patricia Morison** celebrated her ninetieth birthday. After years of amiable movies, including Basil Rathbone's last Sherlock Holmes film *Dressed to Kill*, she got rave reviews opposite Alfred Drake in the original production of *Kiss Me, Kate*, and quickly established herself as a Broadway legend.

Last October **The Baker Street Irregulars** held their first organised expedition to a Canonical location, the Pennsylvania coal country of *The Valley of Fear*. In the tradition of our own Society's excursions, an accompanying book has been published: *Murderland*, edited by Steven T Doyle (*The Baker Street Journal*, PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA; \$19.95). What a pleasure it is to see this, the most inexplicably under-rated of the chronicles of Sherlock Holmes, given the attention it deserves! In *The Valley of Fear* Conan Doyle not only gave us Holmes and Watson at their best and most assured, but in 'The Tragedy of Birlstone' he wrote a dazzling detective story, and in 'The Scowrers' (as Gary Lovisi maintains in his contribution to *Murderland*) he effectively created the American private eye thriller. There are Sherlockians, intelligent people but blinkered, who regard *The Valley of Fear* as in some way negligible. *Murderland* is unlikely to open their eyes, but for those who appreciate quality, the essays by Julia Rosenblatt, Steven Doyle, David Hammer, Pasquale Accardo, Gary Lovisi, Catherine Cooke, Pat Ward and Jon Lellenberg will surely enhance their enjoyment of this, the best of the long stories. And there are bonuses: a reprint of 'The Overthrow of the Molly Maguires' from *McClure's Magazine* for June 1893, and a facsimile (with a surprisingly inaccurate transcription) of Conan Doyle's manuscript notes for the novel, which show that 'the Valley of Fear' replaced 'Murderland' as an epithet for the Scowrers' country. (*Murderland* can be ordered online from www.bakerstreetjournal.com).

Arsène Lupin vs Sherlock Holmes: The Blonde Phantom by Maurice Leblanc, adapted into English by Jean-Marc & Randy Lofficier (Black Coat Press, PO Box 17270, Encino, CA 91416, USA; www.blackcoatpress.com; \$20.95) completes the account begun in *Arsène Lupin vs Sherlock Holmes: The Hollow Needle* (reviewed in DM 243). Here we have the two novellas, 'The Blonde Phantom' and 'The Jewish Lamp' (originally published together in English as *The Arrest of Arsène Lupin, The Blonde Lady or The Fair-haired Lady*, depending on the publisher) along with two short stories by the translators, which neatly fill gaps in the saga. The Lupin-Holmes tales appeal to me for several reasons. The protagonists are remarkably evenly matched; unlike Chief Inspector Ganimard,

Holmes really gives Lupin a run for his money, though of course Lupin comes out on top. The narrator (named as Leblanc himself) admires the detective but is firmly on the burglar's side, and the portrayal of Holmes and Watson is refreshingly different from that given in the Canon, as Anthony Boucher pointed out long ago. Moreover, the plotting is ingenious, and there's that touch of the outrageous that British writers didn't seem to master fully until the television age (when it flowered gorgeously in *The Avengers*). There's nothing actually impossible in the exploits of Arsène Lupin, but there's a great deal that's improbable, and the better for it. Maurice Leblanc was not allowed to use the name of Sherlock Holmes in the original publications; he resorted to 'Herlock Sholmès', which a British publisher cleverly transformed into 'Holmlock Shears'. But how nice to encounter Holmes under his real name in this extraordinary continuing duel.

There's a new catalogue, worth looking at, as always, from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; 020 7836 7757; nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk).

On 19 March The Scotsman reported that James Boyle, chairman of Scotland's cultural commission, urges Scotland to exploit Sherlock Holmes 'as a prime example of Scottish rationalism'. Owen Dudley Edwards adds: 'Conan Doyle remained a great Scottish writer to his death. So did Robert Louis Stevenson and so did J M Barrie.'

Several items are due in July. From Stone Publishing House — no author given — there's *Dr Joseph Bell: The Original Sherlock Holmes* (17 Stone House, North Foreland Road, Broadstairs, Kent CT10 3NT; £4.99). From Gaslight Publications comes *Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Clothes-Line* (c/o Players' Press [UK], 20 Park Drive, Romford RM1 4LH; £7.00). And BBC Worldwide will release on CD *The Adventures, The Memoirs, The Return, His Last Bow, The Casebook* and series 1 of *The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, all with Clive Merrison. Thirteen double-CD sets in all, at £17.99 each, according to Whitaker's LibWeb. They'll be available online from www.bbcshop.com.

In November Atlantic Books (Ormond House, 26-27 Boswell Street, London WC1N 3JZ) will publish *Sherlock Holmes: The Biography* by Nick Rennison, priced at £14.99. The publisher's description suggests that this 'biography' is as imaginative as those by W S Baring-Gould, Michael Hardwick and Michael Harrison.

The Haslemere Literary Weekend 'featuring the life and times of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle' runs from 6 to 8 May. Events include a talk on Saturday by Philip Weller of **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company** and **The Conan Doyle (Crowborough) Establishment**, who will also attend the lunch at ACD's old home Undershaw at Hindhead, and a talk on Sunday by Catherine Cooke BSI, who needs no introduction. For details contact Melanie Odell at initiative@haslemere.com or check www.haslemere.com.

Pam Bruxner sends a flyer from the Cecil Higgins Art Gallery in Castle Lane, Bedford, whose exhibition *Inspired: The Golden Age of Watercolours* (till 19 June) feature's Turner's magnificent painting 'Great Fall of the Reichenbach'. The website is at www.cecilhigginsartgallery.org.

From 23 April to 7 May the **New York State Theatre Institute** at Try, NY will stage the professional world premiere of *Sherlock's Legacy* by Ed Lange, author of *Sherlock's Secret Life*. The new play is a mystery set in Holmes's retirement cottage. The NYSTI website is at www.nysti.org.

Nearer home (my home, anyway) from 8 to 18 June **The Loft Theatre**, Victoria Colonnade, Leamington Spa will give the first

production of *The Final Problem for Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson* by David Fletcher. 'This new play includes some of Conan Doyle's best stories of Holmes and Watson dealing with high level politicians, low level murders and the infamous Professor Moriarty. But Fletcher also focuses on the darker aspects of the lives of two complicated human beings, who struggle to maintain a balanced relationship and who carry deep psychological scars.' Details and tickets are available from the theatre box office on 01926 426341, or the Tourist Information Office on 01926 742756.

A reminder that Alan Barnes & his Octet will perform his *Sherlock Holmes Suite* at 7.30 pm on 22 May at the **Bury St Edmunds Festival** (Theatre Royal, Westgate Street, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk; phone 01284 769505 or e-mail booking@theatreroyal.org) and at 8.00 pm on 6 June at **Portsmouth Jazz Society** (The Garden Room, Inn Lodge, Burrfields Road, Portsmouth; phone 02392 824373 or e-mail portsmouthjazz@btinternet.com).

Cenarth Fox, author of the play *The Real Sherlock Holmes* and of the Nicholas Twit mysteries, has a new agent for the United Kingdom and the EU: Gareth Bannister, Fox Plays UK, 9 Forsyth Court, 6-8 Cambridge Avenue, New Malden, Surrey KT3 4JE (phone 07812 547462; e-mail foxplays@magicfox.co.uk).

CSA TellTapes (6A Archway Mews, London SW15 2PE) have released a CD set of *Classic Detective Stories* read by Edward Hardwicke. The authors are Arthur Conan Doyle, Edgar Wallace, Muriel Spark, Colin Dexter, G K Chesterton, Nicholas Blake and Sax Rohmer. Retail price is £15.99.

Blackstone Audiobooks (PO Box 969, Ashland, OR 97520, USA; sales@blackstoneaudio.com) have released *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes Theatre* on CD (\$45.00), cassette (\$34.95) or MP3 CD (\$29.95). The set comprises William Gillette's *Sherlock Holmes*, Conan Doyle's *The Speckled Band*, and the director Yuri Rasovsky's *Ghastly Double Murder in Famed Detective's Flat*. Martin Jarvis plays Holmes and Kristoffer Tabori is Watson. There's a website at www.blackstoneaudio.com.

Matthew Elliott, who put me on to that enticing production, also points out that Jim French Productions have released several volumes of *The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* on CD [**a different project, of course, from the BBC Radio series**] and so far two sets of *Raffles - The Gentleman Thief*. Both series include episodes scripted by M J (Matthew) Elliott. In May Matthew's own original series *The Hilary Caine Mysteries* begins transmission on Imagination Theater. Information about the company's radio dramas and recordings is at www.harrynile.com.

Matthew has also directed me to a website with information and clips from the recent French movie *Arsène Lupin*, about the other great 'gentleman burglar': www.club-internet.fr/arsenelupin/. It looks very stylish and great fun.

Lenny Picker is trying to find the script for the unmade Tyburn movie *The Abbot's Cry*. If anyone can help him, please let me know, as I'd like to see a copy as well!

Canadian singer-songwriter Emerald Doyle, whose debut single *Move On* is just released in the UK, reckons to be related to Arthur Conan Doyle. Whether or not that's so, she's evidently talented and attractive. See www.emerald-doyle.com.

A reminder of a very worthwhile website: Adrian Nebbett, at www.schoolandholmes.com, provides excellent indexes for more than twenty classic Sherlockian texts whose publishers omitted them. They range from *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* by Vincent Starrett and James Edward Holmes to *The Baker Street Byways* to *The Intelligence of Sherlock Holmes* by John Radford and June Thomson's *Holmes and Watson*.

Until 31 May, the Royal National Lifeboat Institute (RNLI [Sales] Ltd, Freeport BH1654, Poole, Dorset BH15 1BT; phone 0845 126 6999; e-mail sales@rnli.org.uk) is offering the classic *221B Baker Street* board game by mail order for £10.00. Even with £4.50 postage & packing that's a saving of over £5.00 on the shop price.

A reminder that **The Sydney Passengers** celebrate twenty years of 'An Excellent Voyage' on the weekend of 14th/15th May (get details from Bill Barnes, 19 Malvern Avenue, Manly, NSW 2095, Australia;

bbarnes@ozemail.com.au), and that **The Parallel Case of St Louis** host the *Holmes Under the Arch II* symposium from 20th to 22nd May (Barbara Roscoe, 7101 Mardel, St Louis, MO 63109, USA).

The Musgraves will spend the weekend of 3 to 5 June in the lovely city of Edinburgh, birthplace of Arthur Conan Doyle, who also graduated from the city's famous and ancient University. Echoes of the Scottish capital are evident throughout the Sherlock Holmes Canon, so it's fitting that the expedition title is *A Study in Scarlet* and that the party will stay in Lauriston Place. Get details of the Musgraves from Lesley Skoyles, 138 Albert Street, Leith, Edinburgh EH7 5LT.

In Exeter on 5 June **The Poor Folk Upon The Moors** will enjoy Sunday lunch, croquet and afternoon tea (Vosper Arthur, Spynishlake, Doddiscombsleigh, Exeter EX6 7PR).

Periodicals received. *The Alibi*, no. 1 (**The Baker Street Fellowship**, Simon Hall, 67 Lower Kirtlington Road, Southwell, Notts.; sdehall2000@yahoo.co.uk). *The Camden House Journal*, March 2005 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). *Communication*, March/April 2005 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Wanda & Jeff Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA). *Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections*, March 2005 (Suite 111, Elmer L Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, 222 21st Avenue S, Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA). *The Illustrious Clients News*, March 2005 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). *Ineffable Twaddle*, January and April 2005 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA). *Mayday Mayday*, April 2005, and *Chronicler*, March 2005 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardcarney Way, Belfast BT5 7RP).

The Parallelogram, March 2005 (**The Parallel Case of St Louis**, Joseph J Eckrich, 914 Oakmoor, Fenton, MO 63026, USA). *The Petrel Flyer*, Spring 2005 (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7P 3C6). *Prescott's Press*, March 2005 (**The Three Garridebs**, Warren Randall, 15 Fawn Lane West, South Setauket, NY 11720-1346, USA). *Quivers on the Web*, March 2005 (**221B**, Philip Weller, 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 6RU). *The School Report*, Spring Term 2005 (**The Priory Scholars**, Horace L Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY). *The Serpentine Muse*, Spring 2005 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 360 West 21st Street, #5A, New York, NY 10011, USA). *3 Pipe Problem Plugs and Dottles*, February/March 2005 (**The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem**, Kay Blocker, 5017 Maywood Drive, Nashville, TN 37211, USA pkblocker@comcast.net). *The Torr*, Spring 2005 (**The Poor Folk Upon The Moors**, Reggie Musgrave, Drummond Cottage, Old Tavern Yard, Westbourne, Chichester, West Sussex PO10 8TA). *The Whaling News*, January, February & March 2005 (**The Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn**, Michael E Bragg, PO Box 256, St Charles, MO 63302-0256, USA).

And of course *Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press*, March 2005 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

I've occasionally been asked about availability of early issues of *The District Messenger*. Such are the wonders of modern technology that I can now provide the first hundred issues (1 December 1982 - 23 July 1990) on CD-ROM. They're in (non-searchable) PDF format, requiring an easily and freely down-loadable Adobe Acrobat reader. It's all here, on one disc, cased and labelled, for £6.00 or \$15.00, including postage and packing. Please make sterling cheques payable to me and US dollar checks to Jean Upton.

Roger Johnson