

## 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.

Further to the brief obit of **David Kossoff** in DM 251, Bert Coules reminds me that nearly forty years after playing Peterson the Commissionaire, he appeared as 'Count Orlovsky' in Peter Ling's BBC Radio 4 adaptation of *The Resident Patient*, with Clive Merrison and Michael Williams.

**John Bennett** died on 11 April, a month before his seventy-seventh birthday. His major rôles included Philip Bosinney in *The Forsyte Saga*, Xenophon in *I, Claudius* and Dr Ehrlich in *The Pianist*. His Sigmund Freud was one of the better features of the 1992 film *Sherlock Holmes and the Leading Lady*, with Christopher Lee and Patrick Macnee. **Kay Walsh**, who died on 16 April aged ninety-three, was an actress and writer of great talent, contributing the conclusion of *Great Expectations* and the opening sequence of *Oliver Twist* (in which she played Nancy), both directed by her first husband David Lean. She had leading rôles in *This Happy Breed*, *Vice Versa* and Hitchcock's *Stage Fright* among others, and a cameo as Cathy Eddowes in *A Study in Terror*, with John Neville and Donald Houston. In Noel Coward's *In Which We Serve* Kay Walsh was partnered with **John Mills**, who died one week after her, at the age of ninety-seven. His long and varied career began in 1933 and ended seventy years later with a cameo in Stephen Fry's *Bright Young Things*. He played military types of all ranks, Pip in *Great Expectations*, Mr Polly, Captain Scott, the Oscar-winning Michael in *Ryan's Daughter*, and in 1984 an excellent Watson to Peter Cushing's equally fine Holmes in *The Masks of Death*. He was knighted in 1976.

Peter Blau reports the death on 21 April of **Robert H Dinegar**, who was both an episcopal priest and a chemist at Los Alamos! In our world, he was a stalwart of **The Brothers Three of Moriarty** (I first met him twenty-five years ago at the Shaw home in Santa Fe), and was invested as 'Henry Ward Beecher' by the BSI in 1984.

Our old friend **George Welch**, a long-time member of our Society, has been in very poor health for a long time but continues to take an interest in matters Sherlockian. Friends might like to drop him a line or send a card, care of his brother, Mr A J Welch, 48 Vaughan Road, Manchester M21 0YL.

*The Italian Secretary* by Caleb Carr (Carroll & Graf, 245 West 17th Street, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10011, USA; \$23.95) is the only Sherlock Holmes novel to have been commissioned by the Estate of Dame Jean Conan Doyle. Mr Carr, as crime fiction aficionados will know, is the creator of Dr Laszlo Kreizler, an early criminal psychologist, introduced in the best-selling novel *The Alienist*; he is also a military historian, specialising in terrorism. As this book proves, he knows his period and his Sherlock Holmes. He submitted a short story for Jon Lellenberg's forthcoming anthology *The Ghosts of Baker Street*, but Lellenberg recognised that it deserved to be

treated at book-length, and the result is *The Italian Secretary*. Mycroft Holmes summons Holmes and Watson to Edinburgh, where two of the party renovating Holyrood House for Queen Victoria have been murdered. Mycroft suspects a plot against the Queen herself, and Sherlock is reminded of the violent murder in 1566 of David Rizzio, the Italian secretary of Mary, Queen of Scots. The place and the time are richly evoked, and the characters ring true. Caleb Carr evidently has an accurate ear for the nuances of Scottish and English speech, too, and conveys it without the impenetrable phonetic rendering that Victorian authors (though rarely Conan Doyle) seemed to love. This is a darker tale than most in the true Canon, but Mr Carr has resisted any temptation to make Holmes a double of Dr Kreizler. If I were new to Sherlock Holmes, and this book was presented to me as the work of Arthur Conan Doyle, I might well accept it as such. Caleb Carr is an exceptional writer, and *The Italian Secretary* is an exceptional story. (One quibble: Holmes might have said a century ago that the telegraph lines were subject to 'electric eavesdropping', but surely not 'electronic eavesdropping'!) Jon Lellenberg has contributed an engaging afterword.

*Arsène Lupin vs Sherlock Holmes: The Stage Play* (Black Coat Press, PO Box 17270, Encino, CA 91416, USA; [www.blackcoatpress.com](http://www.blackcoatpress.com); \$20.95) is not the work of Maurice Leblanc, but of Victor Darlay and Henri de Gorsse, who present to us a Holmes accompanied not by Dr Watson, but by his young son Frederick Holmes, known as 'Little Sherlock'! This gives rise to such unfortunate dialogue as: 'Ah! Bravo, Papa. You are truly the greatest detective in the world.' 'Oh, a simple consulting detective, Frederick.' 'Yes, but smarter than all the other detectives combined. Oh, Papa, one day I'd like to be as good a detective as you.' — and so on. That aberration apart, however, this is an ingenious and imaginative comedy, matching the master burglar once again with the master detective. Holmes actually does arrest Lupin and recover the Sultan Diamond, but of course Lupin escapes. It would be nice to see *Arsène Lupin vs Sherlock Holmes* staged, though the fact that it requires a cast of over thirty might make that difficult. As a bonus, the translator has contributed an original one-act play *The Real Sherlock Holmes*, which turns upside-down all we thought we knew about Professor Moriarty.

The latest Sherlockian publication from Magico (PO Box 156, New York, NY 10002, USA) is an attractive 56-page chapbook by Bud Livingston, *Some More Trifling Monographs*, fourteen short articles on Canonical subjects including overcoats, alcoholic drink, the Deity and the devil, and praise and blame. The most interesting (and by far the most substantial) is an essay on Henry Ward Beecher. *Some More Trifling Monographs* costs \$9.95 plus \$2.00 postage with any other title from Magico; write for a catalogue. (Only a few copies remain of the 2002 Magico volume *A Singular Sense of Humor* [reviewed in DM 237], priced at \$29.95 plus postage.)

**Sherlock Holmes Museet Antikvariatet** (Egebjergvej 206, 4500 Nykøbing Sjælland, Denmark) has issued a new catalogue with items, some of them very desirable, in English and Danish. Newly published are *The Misadventures of Sherlock Holmes*, *World Detective* by Nils Nordberg (a 32-page survey in English, with bibliography by Bjarne Nielsen, of the series of *groschen*, or penny dreadfuls published in various European countries from about 1907 and featuring unauthorised and apocryphal exploits of the detective) and *Detectivkongen Sherlock Holmes: Det Dobbelte Juveltyveri* (a

Danish example reprinted from 1909). Both booklets are nicely presented, with full colour illustrations, and both are priced at Kr.75 (approximately £6.85, \$13.00 or €10.00). *The Great Northern Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, Bjarne Nielsen's authoritative study in English of the many Danish and German Holmes movies produced in the early silent era, is still available (Kr. 180, £15.00 or \$30.00) and so is a very nice region-free DVD recording of the only survivor of those films, *Sherlock Holmes i Bondefangerkløer (The Confidence Trick)* (Kr. 100, £10.00 or \$16.00). Prices exclude postage. Check the website at [www.sherlockiana.net](http://www.sherlockiana.net).

Mitch Cullin's *A Slight Trick of the Mind*, published last month by Doubleday at \$23.95, 'imagines a 93-year-old Holmes living in a Sussex farmhouse, coping with old age and a faulty memory'. It's been getting very good reviews. Peter Blau notes HighBridge has released an unabridged recording by Simon Jones on cassette and CD (\$29.00). In June comes Laurie R King's latest Mary Russell mystery *Locked Rooms* (Bantam, \$24.00), in which Russell and Holmes are in San Francisco 'settling her parents' estate and coping with Russell's unsettling dreams'. Catherine Cooke reminds me that Julian Barnes' novel *Arthur and George*, about the Edalji case, is due in July from Jonathan Cape (Random House, 20 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 2SA; no price).

There are Sherlockian references in my [*\*modest cough\**] award-winning collection of ghost stories *A Ghostly Crew: Tales from The Endeavour* (Sarob Press, 2001). It's now out of print, but I have half a dozen copies which I'm offering at £15.00 or \$30.00 plus postage — about a third off the published price.

*The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes: The Complete Short Stories* edited by Leslie S Klinger has won the Mystery Writers of America's Edgar Allan Poe Award for the best critical or biographical work of 2004. A well deserved honour!

There's a new catalogue from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; [nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk](mailto:nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk)).

*Sherlock* no. 65 is the last issue to be edited by David Stuart Davies. The new editor is Teddy Hayes, creator of *The Baskerville Beast*, who reckons to run the magazine on a greatly reduced budget. I wish him luck, but I think he'll find it difficult, as all the regular contributors have decided not to continue (they were working for peanuts anyway). Well, this isn't a bad issue to go out on. It shows what high standards David brought to the magazine. Paul Chapman compares Sherlock Holmes's urban and rural cases, MJ Elliott cracks *The Da Vinci Code*, DSD watches *The Case of the Silk Stocking*, Calum McLeod reads Zoë Sharp's novels, Mark Valentine reassesses Philip MacDonald, part four of DSD's survey of Moriarty on screen ends on a cliffhanger (will we ever see part five?), Robert Sanderson looks at Ellery Queen on TV, Leonard Rose reviews *The Baskerville Beast*, Martin Edwards meets HRF Keating, Alan Perry considers Holmes's imperfections; there are the usual columns from Roger Forsdyke, Pat Ward, Bob Byrne, MJ Elliott, Kathryn White, Moriarty and me; and a fine new Johnny One Eye story from DSD. [*\*Hale will publish Johnny's first novel-length adventure Forests of the Night next month\**]. *Sherlock* is published six times a year by Atlas Publishing Ltd, at £3.95 or \$7.50 the issue. A six-issue subscription is £23.70 (rest of world £26.00 or \$45.00) from Atlas Publishing Ltd, Jordan House, Old Milton Green, New Milton, Hants. BH25 6QJ. The website's at [www.sherlockholmes.com](http://www.sherlockholmes.com). The US representative is Classic Specialties (PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA; [sherlock@sherlock-holmes.com](mailto:sherlock@sherlock-holmes.com)).

Brian Pugh tells me that he bought all three Blackstone Audiobooks releases — *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes Theatre*, *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and *The Lost World* — and had to pay an import charge and Royal Mail clearance charge totalling £13.13. Be warned! (Blackstone Audiobooks, PO Box 969, Ashland, OR 97520, USA; [sales@blackstoneaudio.com](mailto:sales@blackstoneaudio.com))

BBC Scotland is preparing a biographical television documentary about Arthur Conan Doyle. No transmission dates yet.

Heather Owen reminds me that the Undershaw restaurant (Conan Doyle's old home in Hindhead) is due to close about now. The idea is to convert the house into flats, but I understand that there are

planning and/or financial problems. In Edinburgh, a lack of funds may scupper the plans to turn ACD's childhood home Liberton Bank House, saved from becoming a McDonald's 'restaurant', into a special school, with a GP's practice in the grounds.

From Mark Valentine: 'The Government has ordered the killing of at least one in ten British cormorants, in defiance of its own scientists' advice, to appease anglers and fish farms who say the dark bird is stealing too much of their quarry. Amongst the argument advanced by anglers for the cull were that "in the Bible, cormorants are described as an abomination, so we have God on our side!" ... Under the announcement, sneaked out [in early April], at least 1,800 and up to 3,000 of the cormorants, normally protected by wildlife laws, can be shot each year: the total population is currently only 17,000. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is strongly opposed to the move, and believes more humane deterrents against cormorants around inland fishing sites have not been properly tried.' [*\*Almost unbelievable, isn't it?\**] Take a look at the RSPB website: [www.rspb.org.uk/policy/wildbirdlaw/1in10shot.asp](http://www.rspb.org.uk/policy/wildbirdlaw/1in10shot.asp).

**The Musgraves** have 'finally embraced new technology' and can be contacted by e-mail at [the.musgraves@amservice.com](mailto:the.musgraves@amservice.com).

The annual spring meeting of **The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes** will be held in New York on Saturday 28 May. The contact address for the Principal Unprincipled Adventuress, Evelyn Herzog, is now 301 Warren Avenue, #203, Baltimore, MD 21230, USA.

**Le Cercle de Sherlock Holmes** will hold its first annual Baskerville Banquet on 14 June at Andrea's Italian Restaurant in Metairie, New Orleans. Get full details from the President, Jens Byskov Jensen at [byskovjensen@cox.net](mailto:byskovjensen@cox.net).

The Maiwand Luncheon of **The Friends of Dr Watson** will be held at the Rajdoot Tandoori Restaurant in Paddington Street, off Baker Street on 23 July. Get details from Nino Cirone, Flat 2, 31 Muswell Avenue, London N10 2EB; [Dr.Watson.Surgery@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:Dr.Watson.Surgery@hotmail.co.uk).

Periodicals received: *The Baker Street Journal*, Spring 2005 (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). *Canadian Holmes*, Lady Day (Spring) 2005 (**The Bootmakers of Toronto**, Trevor Raymond, 4 Lyons Court, Georgetown, Ontario L7G 1P1, Canada). *Communication*, May/June 2005 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Wanda & Jeff Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA). *The Illustrious Clients News*, May 2005 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). *Ineffable Twaddle*, May 2005 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA).

*Mayday Mayday*, May 2005 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardcarney Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). *The Petrel Flyer*, Spring 2005 (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7P 3C6). *Practice Notes*, June 2005 (**The Friends of Dr Watson**, Nino Cirone, Flat 2, 31 Muswell Avenue, London N10 2EB) [*\*this issue is actually the last edited by Brian Scrivener, who is relinquishing the post of Practice Manager to Nino Cirone — thanks for three years of hard work, Brian, and welcome, Nino!\**]. *The Scion*, Spring 2005 (**The Musgraves**, Anne Jordan, Hallas Lodge, Greenside Lane, Cullingworth, Bradford BD13 5AP) [*\*it's good to see the Musgraves publishing something reasonably substantial again, but — this is Issue 2 of The Scion, and I'm still waiting for Issue 1...\**]. *Sherlockiana*, nr. 1 2005 (**Sherlock Holmes Klubben i Danmark**, Mia Stampe Lagergaard, Nivågade 3, 2 th., 2200 København N, Denmark) [*\*it was good to get together for a drink and a chat last weekend, though briefly, with the President of the Club, Bjarne Nielsen\**].

And the invaluable newsletter *Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press*, April 2005 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; [blau7103@comcast.net](mailto:blau7103@comcast.net)).

The first hundred issues of *The District Messenger* (1 December 1982 - 23 July 1990) are now available in (non-searchable) PDF format on CD-ROM, 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*