

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.

Peter Blau reports that **Helen Heinrich** ('Lady Hilda Trelawney Hope', ASH) died on 19 June. 'She presided over The Long Island Cave Dwellers and was active in Sherlock Holmes societies in the New York area.' She took part in our Society's 1987 pilgrimage to Switzerland. I'm grateful to Anna Smyth for informing me of the death of **Maurice Casket** on 25 June. Maurice joined the Society in 1987, and although the distance from Cheshire to London made it impracticable for him and his wife Maureen to attend regular meetings they were always excellent company on the weekend jaunts and at the annual dinners. Our thoughts are with Maureen.

Good news from M C Black: donations from those who have requested copies of the catalogue of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection sold at Christie's in May 2004 have amounted to £82.40, which he has sent to the Parkinson's Disease Society.

The major publication this month is *Arthur & George*, Julian Barnes's novel about the case of George Edalji (Jonathan Cape, The Random House Group Ltd, 20 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 2SA; £17.99). Mr Barnes says that he was astonished to discover how important and how little-known this miscarriage of justice is, in contrast to the notorious and equally important Dreyfus case in France. Each involved what we now know as institutional racism, official whitewash, and possible official corruption, and each attracted the crusading zeal of a famous author (Zola, in the French case) with results that eventually helped influence a change in the law. We are all familiar with Arthur Conan Doyle's investigation into the Great Wyrley outrages — the vicious maiming of animals and the anonymous letters accusing the son of the local vicar. The accused man was an industrious solicitor, and his family was thoroughly respectable, but his father was a Parsee, an Indian of Persian descent. (I am reminded of the more recent case of Sergeant Gurpal Viridi, convicted of sending racist e-mails to himself, despite clear proof that he could not have done so.) The Edalji story is told in just about every biography of Arthur Conan Doyle, but no full authoritative account of the case has yet been published. *Arthur & George* is not such an account, of course, not does it pretend to be. Even though all but one of the many documents quoted are authentic, Julian Barnes's rich imagination is not ultimately subservient to his deep and wide research. This could so easily have been no more than a shallow fictionalised retelling of historical events; instead the author has recreated Arthur and George, their families, their friends and their enemies, bringing them to life for us, as complex human beings. Particularly Arthur and George, whose lives he covers almost

from birth to death, so that we can appreciate and understand them. as — in the phrase he gives Conan Doyle — 'unofficial Englishmen' who do not always understand each other. They are both good men, and he does not patronise them or the codes, which may seem very quaint today, by which they live. The narrative is elegantly handled, giving us both a revealing dual biography and a thrilling criminal investigation, which, sadly, must lack the neat conclusion of a fictional detective story. *Arthur & George* is authentic literature, though not without a few flaws (Sir Arthur's second wife was Lady Conan Doyle, not 'Lady Jean'), and this reader was slightly shocked now and then to be reminded that it is post-Lawrence literature. The book as an object is a treasure: the cloth binding (there is no dustwrapper) is beautifully designed in a style that is completely right for the story's period.

I'm sure that David Upton will agree that in *Sherlock Holmes's Christmas* (Park Publishing, Flat 15, 51 Upton Park, Slough, Berks. SL1 2GB; £8.50 — plus £1.50 if ordering direct; make cheques payable to D W Upton) he set out with no more exalted aim than to write a cracking good detective story about Holmes and Watson. He's certainly succeeded. The plot takes the detective and the doctor to a Christmas house party just outside Eton, to investigate the murder of the host's secretary. Inevitably the guests at Tilstone Court are not all as respectable as they seem, and their host, Major Yates, presents some increasingly mysterious features. More deaths follow, and an old enemy re-emerges. It's a complex plot, handled astutely, and the explanations at the end are generally very satisfactory. Three things are vital to the story's success: an unerring sense of place (Mr Upton knows Eton and Windsor intimately), an equally sound feeling for period, and a thorough familiarity with Sherlock Holmes. The writing is sometimes less fluid than Conan Doyle's, and perhaps there are too many phrases repeated verbatim from the Canon, but *Sherlock Holmes's Christmas* is a jolly good read, presented as a handsome strong paperback. Just one thing puzzles me. Major Yates's arrival at Baker Street is announced by 'the stamping of a horse's hoofs in the heavy snow and the long grind of a wheel as it rasped against the icy kerb', yet no one comments on his statement that he walked from Paddington Station! [**Neither David Upton nor Upton Park is, as far as we know, related to my wife Jean Upton.**]

In 1983 BBC Television broadcast a hugely enjoyable children's series called *The Baker Street Boys* — four adventures of Holmes's band of street urchins. Two of the scripts were written up as novellas by Brian Ball, whose book has become quite a collectors' piece. Now, more than twenty years later, the series' creator Anthony Read has revived it with *The Baker Street Boys: The Case of the Disappearing Detective* (Walker Books Ltd, 87 Vauxhall Walk, London SE11 5HJ; £4.99). While investigating a suspicious American in London, Sherlock Holmes is kidnapped, and it is up to the Irregulars to find him — and to foil a Fenian plot against Queen Victoria, masterminded by the Napoleon of Crime himself. This is unashamedly a story for the intelligent younger reader, which means that older readers will enjoy it too. Conan Doyle himself said that he wrote for 'the boy who's half a man and the man who's half a boy'.

Like David Upton's book, Anthony Read's is partly set in Windsor, and the same old foe reappears; that apart, the two are quite different. *The Case of the Disappearing Detective*, the first in proposed series, is published on 1 August. It's a pleasure to welcome back the Baker Street Boys.

Caleb Carr's fine Sherlock Holmes novel *The Italian Secretary* — reviewed in DM 252 — will be published on 8 August by Little, Brown, Bretteham House, Lancaster Place, London WC2E 7EN, at £12.99. Mr Carr will be in Dublin 5-6 August, in London 8-9 August, and in Edinburgh 12-13 August. And Catherine Cooke tells me that she is hugely impressed with the new edition of *A Study in Scarlet* with 600 magnificent illustrations by Nis Jessen (Hakon Holm Publishing, Borgmester Nielsens Vej 24, 3700 Rønne, Denmark; e-mail post@hakon-holm.dk). The regular edition costs €60.00; the deluxe edition is €70.00, and the special limited edition of 500 numbered and signed copies is €78.00. See the website at <www.mr-holmes.com>. Breese Books (Baker Street Studios Ltd, Endeavour House, 170 Woodland Road, Sawston, Cambridge CB2 4DX) continue their schedule of new Holmes stories. Look out for books by Eddie Maguire and Val Andrews among others. There's a website at www.baker-street-studios.com.

There's much of interest in the latest catalogue from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; 020 7836 7757; nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk). **Sherlock's Books** (Brian Grimshaw; phone 01942 200340 or e-mail hg@221b.co.uk) is selling a collection of Holmesiana valued at £27,000. Offers of £10,000 and above will be accepted up to 7 August.

On 18 July, BBC Worldwide (Woodlands, 80 Wood Lane, London W12 0TT) released on CD all the remaining programmes in the complete Radio 4 series with Clive Merrison and Michael Williams, as well as the first series of *The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* written by Bert Coules and starring Clive Merrison and Andrew Sachs. Each four-disc set costs £17.99. It's a worthy issue of wonderful achievement. Now, BBC Worldwide, how about releasing the 1965 Douglas Wilmer TV series on DVD...?

Both Anna Smyth and Bob Ellis alerted me to the splendid photos of *Making a Beeline for Switzerland* posted on the Switzerland Tourism site at http://uk.myswitzerland.com/en/news_list.cfm. Alas, over the past few days the whole file has disappeared from the site! I very much hope that when I next check they'll have been restored — they really are excellent.

The Society's new webmaster Charles Markham has really got stuck in to updating our website at www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk. Take a look.

If you've received the summer issue of *The Sherlock Holmes Journal* you'll have found enclosed with it the summer 2005 *Newsletter of The Arthur Conan Doyle Collection Lancelyn Green Bequest* (Stephen Baily, Head of Culture, Portsmouth City Council, Civic Offices, Guildhall Walk, Portsmouth PO1 2AD). If not, you can access it at www.portsmouthand.co.uk/history/213.htm as a PDF file. [**Thanks to Oscar Ross for the website address.**] Enquiries can be sent to LancelynGreenCollection@portsmouthcc.gov.uk. The Director of the Collection is Dr Neil McCaw of University College Winchester, and the Patron is Stephen Fry. It's hoped to mount an introductory exhibition in 2006 and a more substantial one in 2007.

From Peter Blau: the **Sherlock Holmes Festival** scheduled in Tryon, NC on 11-13 November can be contacted at 317 North Trade Street, Tryon, NC 28782, USA (phone 800-440-7848), and there's now a website at www.sherlockholmesfestival.com. David Milner reports that Henry Zecher and his new biography of William Gillette will feature in the festival.

Also from Peter, a reminder of **Springtime in Baker Street**, to be held at the Doubletree Hotel in Tarrytown, NY on 22-23 April 2006. Bob Thomalen has details at the3garridebs@sus.com.

There's usually at least one Sherlockian production in the Edinburgh Fringe. This year there's E D Darling's one-woman play *The Lipstick Sherlock Holmes*, staged at **Studio 2, Greyfriars Kirk**

House by Femme Sole Theatre from 23 to 29 August. Phone 08452 262721 or e-mail edvenue@paradise-green.co.uk.

From 17 to 22 October **The New Wolsey Theatre** (Civic Drive, Ipswich IP1 2AS; phone 01473 295900) will house a new play by Carl Miller, *Sherlock Holmes: The Athenaeum Ghoul*. You can book on-line at www.wolseytheatre.co.uk. [**It's a Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds production, so presumably is on tour.**]

Last Wednesday's BBC 2 production *The Strange Case of Sherlock Holmes & Arthur Conan Doyle* was at least dramatic and thought-provoking. There should still be background material accessible at www.bbc.co.uk/print/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2005/07 and Oscar Ross notes that www.douglashenshall.com has stills.

Naxos AudioBooks (3 Wells Place, Redhill, Surrey RH1 3SL; phone 01737 645600; e-mail cds@selectmusic.co.uk) has a discount on cassettes (including ten Sherlock Holmes sets) until 30 September.

Old time radio fans may like to check on **OTR Club** (78 Leeds Road, Liversedge, West Yorks. WF15 6HX), which has an archive of over 35,000 programmes.

Till I read about them in *Scuttlebutt* I didn't know about the *other* Baker Street Irregulars. They're a nine-piece pop band from Preston, Lancs! There's a website at www.thebakerstreetirregulars.com.

Jaron Summers has alerted me to *Sherlock Holmes: The New Beginning*, a film which he and Jon Povill have scripted and which is now in 'active development' by the Ilya Salkind Company. See www.ilyasalkindcompany.com/current/current.php. 'This wry action-adventure love story brings Sherlock Holmes to the present day for a final showdown with his arch-Nemesis Moriarty, and an unexpected, highly unorthodox love affair with Samantha Watson, the great-great-great-granddaughter of his old comrade.' Ye-e-essss. Well, I'll let you know what I think when I've read the script.

Sherlock no. 66 is Teddy Hayes's first as editor and co-publisher, and it's very different from the magazine that David Stuart Davies built up. It's punchy, it's glossy, it's slick. It's also shallow, and with hardly any Sherlock Holmes content. There's a new Holmes story by Johnny S Geddes that suggests to me a fatal lack of familiarity with the writings of Conan Doyle, and a respectful but unnecessary article by Richard Milner about the death of Richard Lancelyn Green, which I'm sure I've read elsewhere. Here it's coupled with a crude, tacky and thoroughly offensive 'scene of crime' drawing by one Fahimeh Tari. The rest of the magazine really holds no interest for me. I wish it well, but I'm glad I'm out of it. *Sherlock* is published six times a year by Atlas Publishing Ltd, at £3.95 or \$7.50 the issue. A six-issue subscription is £25.00 from Atlas Publishing Ltd, Jordan House, Old Milton Green, New Milton, Hants. BH25 6QJ. The website's at <www.sherlockholmes.com>. The US representative is Classic Specialties (PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA; sherlock@sherlock-holmes.com).

The Players' Theatre begins its new season of Victorian Music Hall at **The Venue** (5 Leicester Place, off Leicester Square) on Sunday 18 September. Shows will be on Sundays at 4.00 pm. The doors open at 3.30 pm, and there's no need to book. Two hours of variety, comedy and song for £15.00 — enquire about concessions and discounts (020 7839 1134; e-mail info@playerstheatre.co.uk). Check the website at www.playerstheatre.co.uk.

Periodicals received. *The Arthur Conan Doyle Collection Lancelyn Green Bequest Newsletter*, Summer 2005 (Stephen Baily, Head of Culture, Portsmouth City Council, Civic Offices, Guildhall Walk, Portsmouth PO1 2AD). *The Camden House Journal*, June and July 2005 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). *Canadian Holmes*, St Jean Baptiste Day (Summer) 2005 (**The Bootmakers of Toronto**, Trevor Raymond, 4 Lyons Court, Georgetown, Ontario L7G 1P1, Canada). *C-Extra*, 26 June and 10 July 2005 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardcaran Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). *Communication*, July/August 2005 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Wanda & Jeff Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA).

Irregular Newsletter, July 2005 (**The Conan Doyle [Crowborough] Establishment**, Brian Pugh, 20 Clare Road, Lewes, Sussex BN7

1PN). *Grimpen Mire Gazette*, September 2004 and June 2005 (**Hugo's Companions**, David C Humphrey, 1843 Winnetka Road, Northfield, IL 60093, USA). *The Illustrious Clients News*, July 2005 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). *Ineffable Twaddle*, July and August 2005 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA). *The Serpentine Muse*, Summer 2005 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 301 Warren Ave, #203, Baltimore, MD 21230 USA) [**note Ev Herzog's new address**]. *The Sherlock Holmes Journal*, Summer 2005 — but you already knew about that, didn't you?

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

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