

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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Allen Mackler died on 29 December. Besides music (implied in his BSI investiture, 'Sarasate'), his interests included cats and good food. The last time we met him in England Jean and I were able to direct him to a nice gasogene for his collection. Bill Sawisch tells me that Allen 'left his books and a sizable donation to the Holmes Collections in Minnesota'. The actor **John Woodnutt**, who died on 3 January aged eighty-one, may be best remembered as the irascible Sir Watkyn Bassett in *Jeeves and Wooster*, but his many rôles also included the stationmaster in *The Bruce-Partington Plans*, the pawnbroker in *Lady Frances Carfax* (both with Douglas Wilmer & Nigel Stock; BBC TV 1965), and Mr Merryweather in *The Red-Headed League* (with Jeremy Brett & David Burke; Granada 1985).

In his ninety-seven years **Ernest Dudley**, who died on 1 February, was actor, journalist, song-writer, scriptwriter, biographer and novelist. In 1930 he married Jane Grahame, step-daughter of Eille Norwood. Fifty years ago he revised Harold Terry & Arthur Rose's play *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, written for Norwood in 1923, and wrote a new version forty years later, which toured successfully in 1997. In 1998 he attended our Society's annual film evening, providing a living link to the greatest silent Holmes. Actor and political activist **Al Lewis**, perhaps best known as the comic vampire Grandpa Munster, died on 3 February aged ninety-five. In 1971 he played the uncomprehending messenger in the opening sequence of James Goldman's film *They Might Be Giants*. **Michael Gilbert**, who died on 8 February aged ninety-three, was one of the giants of crime and detective fiction. His story 'The Two Footmen' is one of the best in Greenberg & Waugh's 1987 collection *The New Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. In 1980 he was a drily witty and erudite speaker at our Society's annual dinner.

The Illustrious Clients of Indianapolis celebrate their sixtieth birthday this year, and they've marked the occasion by publishing *Sherlock Holmes in the Heartland: The Illustrious Clients' Fifth Casebook* (The Illustrious Clients, c/o Gasogene Books, PO Box 68308, Indianapolis, IN 46268, USA; \$16.95). Like its predecessors (the first *Illustrious Client's Case-Book* [sic] appeared in 1948) it's a splendid medley of material from a remarkable range of contributors. Clients represented include Paul Herbert, Edward & Karen Lauterbach Pam Wampler, and Vince Wright. There are also pieces from John Bergquist, Peter E Blau, David Stuart Davies, Edward Hardwicke, H Paul Jeffers, Gary Lovisi, Kathryn White, and others. It's an impressive line-up, and I'm honoured to have been asked to contribute. Not everything here is right on the button, and there's some rough proofreading (Constantine Rossakis is informally referred to as both 'Costas' and 'Costa'; John Bergquist's name is printed without the G; Christopher Redmond's book *Welcome to America, Mr Sherlock Holmes* is attributed to Donald Redmond), but this is an important collection, full of Good Things. I especially appreciate the accounts by Steven Doyle, Mary Ann Bradley and Don Curtis of the links between Sherlock Holmes, Conan Doyle, and Indianapolis; also outstanding are Michael Cox on Irene Adler, Constantine Rossakis on the first US edition of *The Sign of Four*, Leslie Klinger on the MS of 'The Red Circle', Joella Hultgren on interpretations of that story, Brad Keefauver on the artistic strain in

the Moriarty family, Michael Whelan on Holmes's wartime experiences in Ireland, Pat Ward on some of Holmes's successors, and Terence Faherty on an episode in Rathbone's memoirs.

Black Coat Press (PO Box 17270, Encino, CA 91416, USA; www.blackcoatpress.com) has published *Sherlock Holmes: The Grand Horizontals*, a collection of short plays by Frank J Morlock, who adapted *Arsène Lupin vs Sherlock Holmes: The Stage Play* into English (see DM 252). The title play, which would be fun to stage, pits Holmes against the super-crook Fantômas and involves two notorious real-life courtesans of the period, Caroline Otero and Liane de Pougy. Both, I think, feature in Michael Harrison's book *A Fanfare of Strumpets* — but the literal translation of the phrase *Les Grandes Horizontales* seems rather clumsy. In 'The Tomb of Merlin' Holmes meets the young Father Brown, but the author seems ignorant of the situation and organisation of the Roman Catholic church in Victorian England; and Essex transmutes into Derbyshire for no apparent reason. I prefer 'The Mulberry Street Irregular' (Holmes and Teddy Roosevelt) and 'The Silent Treatment', which isn't really a Holmes piece at all, but should work very effectively as a dramatisation of Poe's 'The Tell-Tale Heart'. 'The Man Who Fell from Heaven' is good, but 'Clash of the Vampires' is jokey and doesn't really work for me. 'The Maid's Mustache' is a genuine joke that doesn't outstay its welcome. An interesting mixed bag over all.

Rafe McGregor has followed up his gripping non-Holmes thriller *The Secret Policeman*, reviewed in DM 259, with *The Secret Service*, also published by Classic Mysteries, which I'll review in the next issue. See the website at www.lulu.com/classicmysteries.

Tracy Cooper-Posey's *Sherlock Holmes: Chronicles of the Lost Years* was favourably reviewed in DM 198. Now comes *The Case of the Reluctant Agent*, set during the Great War (Turnstone Press, 607-100 Arthur Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3B 1H3; no price). Check the website at www.sashaproductions.com/agent.htm.

Matthew Elliott has alerted me to *Erasing Sherlock* by Kelly Hale, a novel in the 'Faction Paradox' sequence. It looks good and weird! www.madnorwegian.com/fp/product.php?item=Bfp05Sherlock has the details.

Catalogue 132 is available from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; nwrrarebook@tcp.co.uk).

Peter Blau reports that Leslie Klinger has been nominated for an Edgar award (best critical-biographical) for *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes: The Novels*. The winners will be announced by the Mystery Writers of America on 27 April.

On 23 February Mosnews.com reported that Vassily Livanov, a great Sherlock Holmes in a Russian television series twenty-five years ago, is to be awarded the OBE. (I'm seeking confirmation of this news from the Honours Scrutiny Committee.) [**Good DVDs of the films can now be bought fairly easily over the Internet, though not all have English subtitles.**]

From today's Evening Standard: 'The rebuilding of Bart's and the Royal London Hospitals has finally been given the go-ahead... The project guarantees the future of Bart's in Smithfield and will make the Royal London in Whitechapel the biggest in Britain. There will be 1,248 beds across the two sites. The two hospitals will get 30 new operating theatres and Bart's will retain its cancer and heart specialisms.' [**The London Hospital played a large part in the true story of Joseph Merrick, the 'Elephant Man'.**]

It's expected that the famous **Sherlock Holmes Memorabilia Company** at 230 Baker Street will change hands within the next few weeks. Depending on who takes over the shop it may become an

exhibition or a tea-room, but it will retain the Sherlockian connection. Before then some of the present stock will be offered at a discount. Watch this space!

The 1965 Broadway musical *Baker Street* wasn't a commercial or critical success, but it had good performances and songs. The original cast LP isn't too rare, but it's only now been released on CD, by Decca. Besides the original performances by Fritz Weaver, Inga Swenson, Peter Sallis, Martin Gabel, and co., there's a couple of bonus tracks (Richard Burton singing Watson's song 'A Married Man', and a jazzy instrumental called 'A Baker Street Mystery'), and an account by Laurence Maslon of the show's rise and fall. I bought the CD from Amazon.co.uk.

'I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere...' This is from Peter Blau: 'How many members of The Baker Street Irregulars have had songs named for them? Just one (known so far, at least): "The H C Potter's Ball" (recorded in 1946 by Johnnie Mercer with Freddie Slack and his Orchestra) released last year by Mosaic Records in a 3-CD set *Mosaic Select: Freddie Slack* (MS-018; \$39.00). Jon Lellenberg heard it played on WAMU-FM's *Hot Jazz Saturday Night* on Jan. 21; host Rob Bamberger talked about Potter's career as a movie director. Potter was "The Final Problem" in the BSI (1971), and he is the only member of the BSI to have a star on Hollywood Boulevard.'

Imagination Theatre has released two new CDs, both available from www.harrynile.com. *The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes vol. 10* contains *The Aldgate Noose* by Matthew Booth, *The Serpent's Tooth* by MJ Elliott, and *The Wycliffe Codicil* by Jim French; *Raffles the Gentleman Thief vol. 3* contains *A Long Night* by MJ Elliott, *The Ardagh Emeralds* by John Hall, and *Wilful Murder* by MJ Elliott from EW Hornung's story.

The latest issue of *ThrillerUK: The Journal of Cult Fiction* features Philip Wood's article 'The Myths and Realities of the Sherlock Holmes Stories'. It costs £3.95 plus postage (55p inland, £1.55 overseas) from T Fountain, 130 Sackville Road, Hove, East Sussex BN3 7AA. Or order on-line at www.thrilleruk.fsnet.co.uk.

Bob Byrne is working on a website, www.SolarPons.com, to include summaries of Pons' cases, with comments, and an on-line Solar Pons Annual. Pons devotees should contact Bob for details at bob.byrne@holmesonscreen.com.

Roger Llewellyn's March bookings for *Sherlock Holmes—The Last Act!* are **Tamworth Castle**, Tamworth (4th), **The Assembly Rooms**, Ludlow (9th), **Arts Centre**, Wexford (15th), **Gleneagle Hotel Theatre**, Killarney (18th), **Friarsgate Theatre**, Kilmallock (20th), **Everyman Theatre**, Cork (21st-25th), **Town Hall Theatre**, Galway (27th-28th), **Parochial Hall Theatre**, Clonmel (29th), and **Backstage Theatre**, Longford (31st).

A transcript of the teleplay for *Who Shot Sherlock?*, the not wholly satisfactory Sherlockian episode of *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*, is on-line at www.webphilia.com/~anthology/wnp.html.

Gideon Hill reports that as **Mycroft's League** of Philadelphia enters its fourth year he will hand over the leadership to Frank Ferry. You can contact Frank at fferry@comcast.net.

Our Society's 2006 London mini-festival, *Another Capital Idea, Watson*, will begin on Thursday 6 April with tea at the House of Commons, courtesy of John Horam MP, followed by MC Black's City of London walk. On Friday there's tea at the Diogenes (the Travellers' Club in Pall Mall) and the second Richard Lancelyn Green Memorial Lecture, given this year by actor and writer Jack Klaff. Probably the only man to have played the Hon. Philip Green on both radio and television, Mr Klaff is also a Visiting Professor at Princeton University; his topic for the lecture is 'Science versus Séance: Holmes Cross-Examines Conan Doyle'. Saturday begins with a visit to Davidoff's, the St James's Street tobacconist, continues with a flight on the London Eye, and concludes with an evening of Victorian Music Hall at the Old Dr Butler's Head in the City, chaired by the inimitable Dominic Le Foe ('as British as the Flag!'). On Sunday Bernard Davies leads an investigation of the topography of 'The Bruce-Partington Plans', concluding with lunch at a suitable substitute for Goldini's Restaurant. Details should be on the website at www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk, or drop a line to

Catherine Cooke at 15 Copperfield Court, 146 Worpole Road, Wimbledon, London SW20 8QA.

The Society's expedition this year will be to Derbyshire over the weekend 8-10 September, to investigate two possible candidates for the Priory School.

The STUD Sherlockian Society and **The Watsonians** will host the fifth annual combined STUD/Watsonian weekend from 31 March to 2 April. Guest of Honour at the STUD Annual Dinner (at the Sheraton Four Points, Schiller Park, IL) will be Leslie Klinger; on Saturday, the 47th annual Chicago Silver Blaze, sponsored by the Watsonians, will be run at Hawthorne Race Course, Cicero, IL, and Susan Diamond & Allan Devitt will host a 'Fun(d)-raiser' pizza party. On Sunday the Watsonians' Fortescue Honours Brunch concludes the weekend. You can get details from Susan at szdiamond@comcast.net, or from Bill Sawisch at 1008 Pleasant St, # 1B, Oak Park, IL 60302, USA.

The Return Dinner of **The Poor Folk Upon the Moors** will be at the *Nobody Inn* at Doddiscombsleigh on 7 April. At the end of the month (28-30 April) the Poor Folk will visit Devil's Foot country in Cornwall. Get details of both events from Shirley Purves (Lea House, Couches Lane, Woodbury, Exeter EX5 1HL).

One of the year's high points will undoubtedly be *ACD at 35*, from 19 to 22 October, celebrating thirty-five years of Toronto's Arthur Conan Doyle Collection, and sponsored by **The Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection**, **The Bootmakers of Toronto**, **The Arthur Conan Doyle Society** and **Toronto Public Library**. Speakers confirmed include Peter Calamai, Michael Dirda, Cliff Goldfarb, Gideon Hill, Glen Miranker, Hartley Nathan, Chris Redmond, Barbara & Christopher Roden, and Dick Sveum. Oh, and Leslie Klinger. Details are on-line at www.acdfriends.org, or e-mail ACD35@sympatico.ca.

Looking even further ahead, Peter Blau reports that **The Baker Street Irregulars** plan a visit to Salt Lake City over the weekend 29 August-1 September 2008. The Mormon capital features largely in *A Study in Scarlet*, and Conan Doyle visited the city in 1923. You can get details from Gideon Hill at onbridle@verizon.net.

Periodicals received. *Bohemian Newsletter* no. 61 (Česká společnost Sherlocka Holmese, Aleš Kolodrubec, Milešovská 1, 130 00 Praha 3, Czech Republic). *The Camden House Journal*, February 2006 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). *Communication*, March/April 2006 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Wanda & Jeff Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA). *Grimpen Mire Gazette*, January 2006 (**Hugo's Companions**, David C Humphrey, 1843 Winnetka Road, Northfield, IL 60093, USA). *Explorations*, Spring/Summer, Autumn, and Winter 2005 (**The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota**, John Bergquist, 3665 Ashbury Road, Eagan, MN 55122, USA). *The Illustrious Clients News*, January 2006 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). *Mayday Mayday*, February 2006 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardarn Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). *Sherlockiana*, nr. 1, 2006 (**Sherlock Holmes Klubben i Danmark**, Mia Stampe Lagergaard, Nivågade 3, 2. th., 2200 København n., Denmark) [**a celebration issue for the magazine's fiftieth anniversary**].

And the great Sherlockian newsletter, *Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press*, January 2006 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

Roger Johnson