

# The DISTRICT MESSENGER



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON  
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**George C. Scott**, one of the finest stage and film actors, died last month aged 71. Sherlockians cherish his performance as Justin Playfair, who believes himself to be Sherlock Holmes, in James Goldman's 1971 movie *They Might Be Giants*.

Our good friend **Marcus Geisser** is in the Congo with the Red Cross. Letters can be addressed to: Marcus Geisser/ Lumumbashi/ RDC, c/o CICR, 19 avenue de la Paix, CH-1202 Geneva, Switzerland. Or you can send e-mail via his brother at [hannes.geisser@kttg.ch](mailto:hannes.geisser@kttg.ch).

The Conan Doyle Room at Groombridge Place has closed, and the Conan Doyle Collection is now in its permanent home at the Beacon Community College. It will be officially opened by Georgina Doyle on Saturday 9 October. For information about the Conan Doyle (Crowborough) Establishment (ten years old this year!) and its work, contact the Curator, Brian Pugh, at 20 Clare Road, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1PN (01273 475558).

The Sherlock Holmes Statue Festival was a great success, and the organisers have a right to be proud of themselves. Lynne Godden (Apple Tree Cottage, Smarden, Ashford, Kent TN27 8QE) has a good amount of attractive souvenir merchandise for sale.

In *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, an anthology of lasting value, Peter Horrocks & Richard Lancelyn Green have garnered essays from an international constellation of scholars, on Holmesian statues, Baker Street, Sexton Blake, the Players' Theatre, cricket, peers of the realm, and Holmes in Germany, France and Japan. There are forewords by Prince Charles (a Holmes devotee) and Tony Blair, and it's splendidly illustrated. Prices including postage are: UK £13.25; Europe £14.25; USA \$31.00; elsewhere £16.25.

*Irregular Crises of the Late 'Forties* is the fifth and fullest volume in the BSI Archival History Series. Having survived World War II, the Baker Street Irregulars had to weather the disillusionment of their founder Christopher Morley, the start of the Cold War, the greed of Adrian and Denis Conan Doyle, the failure of the BSI's business enterprise, and the demise of *The Baker Street Journal*. Jon L. Lellenberg presents an assemblage of letters and other documents, which with his own witty commentary helps the reader to know the people who created our Great Game. Morley, Starrett, Ben Abramson, Helene Yuhasova, Louis Greenfield, James Montgomery - and above all the wise and diplomatic Edgar W. Smith. Personally I want to know more of Pope R. Hill's theory that there is a deliberate code in the Sherlock Holmes stories for those who can read it! *Irregular Crises* can be had from *The Baker Street Journal* (P.O. Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA) for \$28.95 plus postage: \$2.95 in the US, or \$3.95 elsewhere. I recommend the book to everyone who's interested in the phenomenon that is Sherlock Holmes.

*The Intelligence of Sherlock Holmes, and Other Three-Pipe Problems* by John Radford (Sigma Forlag International, 22 Jellicoe House, 4 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3AY; £9.95) is an excellent psychological study of Holmes and Watson for the lay reader. Prof. Radford is a member of our Society, and writes in the

best tradition of Holmesian scholarship. He indicates the points of contact between the methods of Holmes and those of his great contemporaries Sigmund Freud, Francis Galton and Alphonse Bertillon; he points out the differences in thinking between the society of Holmes's time and that of our own; and he offers pertinent observations on Holmes's disappearance after Reichenbach. This attractive 176-page paperback is a valuable addition to the fairly small number of books that actually illuminate the characters of Holmes and Watson. My only gripe is that there's no index and no bibliography.

*The Strange Affair at Glastonbury* is Eddie Maguire's fifth Sherlock Holmes story and *The Poor Folk Upon The Moors*' third *Charles Merriman Monograph*. After settling a delicate matter for the Diocese of Bath & Wells, Holmes and Watson find that some very odd things are happening in nearby Glastonbury. Signposts are turned around in the night; a butcher's sign is stolen, as is the flag of The George hotel; a horse-trough is emptied; and the blossoms are cut from the famous Glastonbury thorn... This ingenious mystery brings Holmes face to face with an old adversary - but not the one I expected. The price, including postage, of the pleasant 40-page booklet is £3.95, from Big House Books, 63 Wellington Road, Bridgwater, Somerset TA6 5EZ (cheques payable to E. Maguire). (\*Eddie has a few copies left of the early American parody *The Old Age of Holmes*, at £3.00 each, and packs of Sherlockian greetings cards at £3.25 each.\*)

Bob Ellis sends notice of a limited edition (150 copies) of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, illustrated by Jason Powers and published by Micawber Fine Editions. 20 copies 'in a deluxe clamshell box with a set of all the illustrations, signed by Jason Powers, laid in' are priced at \$395.00 each. 35 copies 'in a box with two signed prints laid in' are \$195.00 each. 95 copies, signed but unboxed, are \$95.00 each. Postage is extra. (Book Buffs Ltd., Janis Frame, 1307 Bannock Street, Denver, CO 80204, USA; e-mail [jframe6383@aol.com](mailto:jframe6383@aol.com).)

There are new catalogues out from **Post Mortem Books** (58 Stanford Avenue, Hassocks, Sussex BN6 8JH; e-mail [ralph@pmbbooks.demon.co.uk](mailto:ralph@pmbbooks.demon.co.uk)) and **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (22 & 25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; e-mail [nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk](mailto:nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk)).

The latest of Kinky Friedman's funny and clever private eye novels concerns Kinky's attempts to find the right Watson to his Sherlock. The book is called *Spanking Watson*, and it's published by Faber & Faber Ltd (3 Queen Square, London WC1N 3AU) at £5.99.

More new and forthcoming books. *Sherlock's Home* by Jenny Dale (Macmillan Children's Books, 25 Eccleston Place, London SW1W 9NF; £2.99) *Detective Fiction & the Rise of Forensic Science* by Ronald R. Thomas (October; Cambridge University Press, The Edinburgh Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 2RU; £37.50). *The Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction: Mapping History's Nightmares* by Robert Mighall (November; Oxford University Press, Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP; £40.00).

50 years ago Adrian Conan Doyle took *The London Mystery Magazine* to court for using the 221B Baker Street address and mentioning Sherlock Holmes in its advertising. He lost his case. Now Andrea Plunket, who claims to own the Conan Doyle copyrights, is trying on the same trick, threatening organisations

like the Sherlock Holmes Memorabilia Company. There seems no reason to suppose that Mrs Plunket would fare any better in court, but it strikes a sour note of greed in the Sherlockian world. (\*See **Irregular Crises of the Late 'Forties and the Sunday Telegraph for 12th September 1999.**\*)

Barbara & Terry Harding have established a forum for collectors of Holmesiana. *The Tin Box* is a quarterly magazine of sales, wants and swaps, at an annual cost of £2.50 (UK), £3.50 (Europe), £5.50 (USA), or £6.50 (elsewhere). Send enquiries and subscriptions to Barbara & Terry at Riverbank, 2 Bohemia Cottages, Stalybridge, Cheshire SK15 1JY. Cheques payable to B. Harding, please. (\*Ask about their *Baker Street Portfolio of Canonical illustrations.*\*)

CSA Teltapes (101 Chamberlayne Road, London NW10 3ND) have released more of Edward Hardwicke's excellent readings from the Canon. *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes vol. 4* comprises 'The Crooked Man', 'The Greek Interpreter' and 'The Naval Treaty'. (\*It's a British issue of *Tangled Web's* recording **Sherlock Holmes: Tales of Intrigue**, released in 1995.\*) Due in January from HarperCollins Audio (Harper-Collins Publishers Ltd, 77/85 Fulham Palace Road, London W6 8JB) is *The Adventure of the Lion's Mane, and Other Stories* read by Christopher Lee.

Bill Dorn offers what looks like a splendid *Sherlock Holmes Calendar for the Year 2000*, featuring Canonical dates based on Zeisler's chronology, and significant dates in the lives of Conan Doyle and others who are part of the great phenomenon that is Sherlock Holmes. The calendar costs \$11.95 from The Sherlock Store (William S. Dorn, Prop., 2045 S. Monroe Street, Denver, CO 80210-3734, USA). Canadian orders add \$1.00 postage; other international orders add \$2.00. Check Bill's website at <http://www.TheSherlockStore.com>.

The DiFalco Bear Co. (Box #700192, Plymouth, MI 48170) makes a prize-winning Sherlockian teddy bear - details on request.

Hugh Parry will run a course on *Sherlock Holmes & Victorian Detection* at Woburn, Bedfordshire, from 28 to 30 April 2000. The fee is £89.00, or £115.00 including accommodation (Maryland College, Leighton Street, Woburn, Milton Keynes MK17 9JD; phone 01525 292901).

Hampstead Theatre (Swiss Cottage Centre, Avenue Road, London NW3 3EX; phone 0171 722 9301) will present Snoo Wilson's *Moonshine* (about Conan Doyle and the fairies) later this month.

A reminder that *Sherlock Holmes: The Pantomime* will run at the ADC Theatre, Cambridge, from 23 November to 4 December, at 8.00 pm. Book now at the Arts Theatre Box Office (6 St Edwards Passage, Cambridge; phone 01223 503333). A limited edition programme will be available for £3.50 including postage from Gemma Rougier (ADC Theatre, Park Street, Cambridge CB5 8AS); make cheques payable to Gemma Rougier. For details, write to Gemma, or e-mail her on [gcer2@cam.ac.uk](mailto:gcer2@cam.ac.uk).

The most amazing source of repro. Victorian & Edwardian goods I've come across - everything from stereoscopes to spats - is **Amazon Vinegar & Pickling Works Drygoods** of 2218 E. 11th Street, Davenport, IA 52803, USA (fax 319 322 4003). Write for a copy of the latest catalogue.

Don't forget the second annual *Dr John H. Watson Prize Essay Competition*. Essays are invited on the subject of Dr Watson's medical abilities, knowledge and skills. The judges are David Stuart Davies, Leslie S. Klinger and Philip Weller. Get entry forms and rules from: Dr Watson's Dresser, 14 Western Close, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 4SZ. Please enclose a stamped & self-addressed envelope (in UK) or 2 International Reply Coupons.

Peter Blau tells us that Moonlight Cinema (416 West 3rd Street, London, KY 40741, USA) has 'an interesting list of old and new Sherlockian and Doylean films on videocassette, with seldom-seen titles such as *Sherlock Holmes' Fatal Hour* [*The Sleeping Cardinal*] (1931) with Arthur Wontner...' (\*exciting news! I thought that was a *Lost Movie*.\*) Peter also notes that Ian

Richardson (Edinburgh born and bred) is to play Joseph Bell in BBC TV's *Bloodline*, with Robin Laing as Arthur Conan Doyle.

Our Society's next meeting is on 28 October, at the Museum of London, when Roy Davenport & Larry Barnes will re-create the magic act of Roy's great-grandfather Lewis Davenport; get details from Pam Bruxner (2B Hiham Green, Winchelsea, East Sussex TN36 4HB). The Pack Meet of **The Baskerville Hounds** will be based at the Prince of Wales inn at Princetown, Dartmoor, from 15 to 17 October (The Kennel Maid, 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants, PO14 3RU). On 5 November, **The Occupants of the Empty House** will hold their regular meeting at Alongi's Restaurant in Du Quoin (P.O. Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA).

**The Sherlock Holmes Society of London** will celebrate its 50th birthday in 2001 with a Golden Jubilee Cruise of the Baltic on the *Princess Danae*, taking in Oslo, Tallinn, St Petersburg, Riga and Kalliningrad. Get details from Arena Travel, FREEPOST 1H 1047, Felixstowe, Suffolk IP11 7BR. The cost is likely to be £1098.00 (\$1758.00) per person.

Periodicals received. *The Passengers' Log*, 7th August 1999 (**The Sydney Passengers**, Bill Barnes, 19 Malvern Avenue, Manly, NSW 2095, Australia) (\*it was a great pleasure to meet the editor Rosane McNamara and her husband Frank in London for the *Statue Festival*.\*). *The Camden House Journal*, September 1999 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, P.O. Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). *The School Report*, Autumn Term 1999 (**The Priory Scholars**, Horace Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY) (\*the Scholars have some copies available of their useful booklet, *The School Register no. 1: Where and When in SIXN - Locations and Chronology in The Adventure of the Six Napoleons* by Philip Weller\*). *Sherlockiana*, nr. 2, 1999 (**Sherlock Holmes Klubben I Danmark**, Bjarne Nielsen, Sherlock Holmes Museet, Algade 3, 4500 Nykøbing-Sjælland, Denmark) (\*Bjarne also deals in antiquarian crime & detective literature, and runs Scandinavia's only Sherlock Holmes Museum!.\*).

*The New Baker Street Pillar Box*, August 1999 (**The Franco-Midland Hardware Company**, 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU) (\*a double issue to mark the FMHC's 10th anniversary\*). *Practice Notes*, September 1999 (**The Friends of Dr Watson**, Richard Stacpoole-Ryding, 14 Western Close, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 4SZ). *Communication*, September-October 1999 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Jeff & Wanda Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA). *The Serpentine Muse*, Fall 1999 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 360 West 21st Street, # 5A, New York, NY 10011, USA) (\*it was likewise a delight to meet Ev Herzog and a bevy of ASH in London last month\*). *The Baker Street Journal*, June 1999 (P.O. Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA) (\*all correspondence for **The Baker Street Irregulars** should be sent to Michael Whelan, 'Wiggins', 7938 Mill Stream Circle, Indianapolis, IN 46278, USA\*).

*Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections*, September 1999 (**Sherlock Holmes Collections**, 466 Wilson Library, 309 19th Avenue South, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA). *3 Pipe Problem Plugs and Dottles*, September 1999 (**The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem**, Gael Stahl, 1763 Needmore Road, Old Hickory, TN 37138, USA). *The Waterloo Sherlockian Letter*, no. 48 (Chris Redmond, 523 Westfield Drive, Waterloo, Ontario N2T 2E1, Canada) (\*the engaging ramblings of a master Sherlockian: a unique publication!\*). *Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press*, August & September 1999 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA) (\*the great Sherlockian newsletter\*).

*Roger Johnson*