

# The DISTRICT MESSENGER



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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*Sherlock Holmes Mystery Magazine* no. 1 (Wildside Press, 9710 Traville Gateway Drive #234, Rockville, MD 20850, USA) is not a pictorial like the much-missed *Sherlock*, but, as the name suggests, a digest-sized volume in the tradition of the similarly-titled publications that bear the names of Ellery Queen and Alfred Hitchcock. The editor is Marvin Kaye, whose work I've enjoyed since reading his chapbook *The Histrionic Holmes* in 1971 (though he and I differ in our assessment of Ellery Queen's novel *A Study in Terror*). The non-fiction in this first issue understandably focuses mainly on Holmes. Kim Newman reviews *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes* and *Sherlock Holmes: The Hidden Years*: Lenny Picker explains why there has yet to be a satisfactory film of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*; there's a jokey 'answers to correspondents' column called 'Ask Mrs Hudson'. But there's also an interview with the prolific Ron Goulart, who contributes a new tale about his series character Harry Challenge. The six new stories include just one Holmes adventure – a good one, 'The Strange Case of the Haunted Freighter' by Carole Buggé. The other stories, also good, are by Marc Bilgrey, Hal Charles, the late Jean Paiva and the late Edward D Hoch. And the issue concludes appropriately with a reprint of Sherlock Holmes's first case, 'The Gloria Scott'. Wildside's website is at [www.wildsidepress.com](http://www.wildsidepress.com), but I don't see any mention of the magazine there yet. It is available, though, from [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk).

Next Monday Harper Perennial (HarperCollinsPublishers, 77-85 Fulham Palace Road, Hammersmith, London W6 8JB) will publish the paperback edition of *Arthur Conan Doyle: A Life in Letters*, edited by Jon Lellenberg, Daniel Stashower & Charles Foley. It's a satisfyingly solid book of 710 pages, not-unreasonably priced at £12.99, and it's essential reading for everyone who wants to understand the man who created Sherlock Holmes.

At [www.artintheblood.com](http://www.artintheblood.com) you'll find information about the new Goode Press chapbook, *The Final Problem*, and a link to Lulu, where you can buy a copy. L M Goode has coloured Sidney Paget's illustrations (and one of Arthur Twiddle's) with delicacy and taste – as Leslie Klinger said of the first chapbook, 'It certainly demonstrates the world's loss because the *Strand Magazine* only appeared in black-and-white! The illustrations have never looked better.' Extras include a new portrait of Paget himself by Pablo Carreño, and one of Paget and Conan Doyle by Philip Cornell. There are only 222 copies, and, though it would be exaggerating to call this edition of *The Final Problem* essential, it is a delightful thing to have!

Peter Blau recommends *There's No Place Holmes: Exploring Sense of Place Through Crime Fiction* by Derham Groves, BSI (Black Jack Press, Michael Jorgensen, 392 Station Street, Carlton North, Victoria 3054, Australia; [mickjorg@alphalink.co.au](mailto:mickjorg@alphalink.co.au); \$41.00 postpaid by airmail or \$36.00 by surface).

For over a century writers have imagined encounters between Holmes and other famous people, real and fictional. Moonstone Books ([www.moonstonebooks.com/](http://www.moonstonebooks.com/)) are publishing a series of graphic novels, written by Joe Gentile and illustrated by Carlos Magno & Andy Bennett, featuring Holmes and Kolchak the Night Stalker. Rather refreshingly, the two don't meet. Rather they 'try to untangle the same mystery... one

hundred years apart from each other'. [\*I enjoyed the *Kolchak* films and TV series, much more so than *The X Files*. These new stories sound promising.\*]

*The File on Colonel Moran – Vol. I: The Lure of Moriarty* by our member V A (Vernon) Meador will be published at the end of August by The Clyvedon Press (95 Maes-y-Sarn, Pentyrch, Cardiff CF15 9QR; no price yet). This collection of three stories will be followed next year by *The File on Colonel Moran – Vol. II: Sherlock Holmes Takes a Hand*.

The hardback edition of *Bertram Fletcher Robinson: A Footnote to The Hound of the Baskervilles* by Brian W Pugh and Paul R Spiring, priced at £18.99/\$28.95, is due on 1 September, and the paperback, priced at £12.99/\$19.95, on 17 October (MX Publishing, 10 Kingfisher Close, Stanstead Abbots, Herts. SG12 8LQ; [www.mxpublishing.co.uk](http://www.mxpublishing.co.uk)). The book is dedicated to the memory of Richard Lancelyn Green, and I'm pleased to say that I've contributed a foreword.

Les Klinger's work in editing and annotating the Holmesian Canon is justly appreciated. Since completing *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes* he's been hard at work on *The New Annotated Dracula*, which is due from W W Norton & Co. (500 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10110-0017, USA) in October, with an introduction by fellow-BSI Neil Gaiman.

Debbie Haynes has some Holmes books, old and new, available to the first claimants for the cost of postage. Various editions of the Canon, plus Michael Hardwick's *Complete Guide to Sherlock Holmes*, Charles Viney's *The Authentic World of Sherlock Holmes*, a BBC Radio two-cassette set, a programme and some flyers for *The Secret of Sherlock Holmes* (Brett & Hardwicke) and Charles Merriman's *Tourist Guide to the London of Sherlock Holmes*. You can contact Debbie at [debbie.symons@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:debbie.symons@hotmail.co.uk).

Ray Pinfold is obliged to sell his Holmesian library, which is much more extensive and varied. I shan't attempt to list the items here. Please contact him at 47 St Margarets Road, Ward End, Birmingham B8 2BB (phone 0121 327 2319, after 6.30 pm).

The most expensive of many items at the 2008 **Antiquarian Book Fair**, held at Olympia last month, was probably the manuscript of 'The Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax', brought from Los Angeles by Mark Hime of Bibliotopus. The price asked was £250,000, but there were no takers.

Lot 21 at Sotheby's auction on 17 July at Bond Street will interest those who heard E J Wagner's talk to our Society or who have read her book *The Science of Sherlock Holmes*. It's the autopsy case notes of the famous criminal pathologist Sir Bernard Spilsbury, comprising nearly 4,000 3" x 5" index cards, each with autograph notes detailing cause of death, sex, date of birth and name of subject, date and place of autopsy, details of external and internal examination, and case history. The catalogue is on-line at [www.sothebys.co.uk](http://www.sothebys.co.uk).

Tomoyuki Tanaka, author of the stimulating 'Holmes is Box; Watson is "James" Cox' in the Winter 2007 SHJ, takes his investigation further in an even more remarkable paper, 'Box and Cox, the Homeric Sherlock Holmes, and Joyce's *Ulysses*', accessible on-line at <http://hjs.ff.cuni.cz/essays/tanaka.htm>.

After the Summer School at Marlborough College on 15 July, Roger Llewellyn will take a break before resuming his tour with the retitled *Sherlock Holmes... The Death and Life* in the autumn. His website is now up and running at <http://www.makinprojects.co.uk/page31.html> (not an obvious address to remember but easy to add to one's favourites), where you'll find the touring schedule. 4 Sept: **Brewery**

**Arts Centre**, Kendal ([www.breweryarts.co.uk](http://www.breweryarts.co.uk); 01539 725 133); 6 Sept: **Theatre Royal**, Dumfries ([www.theatreroyaldufries.co.uk](http://www.theatreroyaldufries.co.uk); 01387 267894); 11 Sept: **Theatr Mwdan**, Cardigan, ([www.mwldan.co.uk](http://www.mwldan.co.uk); 01239 621 200); 20 Sept: **Underground Theatre**, Eastbourne ([www.undergroundtheatre.org.uk](http://www.undergroundtheatre.org.uk); 01323 737677); 24 Sept: **Arts Centre**, Southport ([www.seftonarts.co.uk](http://www.seftonarts.co.uk); 01704 540011); 26 Sept: **Library Theatre**, Darwen ([www.darwenlibrarytheatre.com](http://www.darwenlibrarytheatre.com); 01254 706 006); 3 Oct: **Torch Theatre**, Milford Haven ([www.torchtheatre.co.uk](http://www.torchtheatre.co.uk); 01646 695 267); 21 Oct: **Off the Shelf Literature Festival**, Sheffield ([www.sheffield.gov.uk](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk)); 23 Oct: **Theatre at Headington**, Oxford ([www.headington.org/theatre](http://www.headington.org/theatre); 01865 759138); 13 Nov: **Arts Centre**, Bridport ([www.bridport-arts.com](http://www.bridport-arts.com); 01308 424 204); 14 Nov: **The Exchange**, Sturminster Newton ([www.stur-exchange.co.uk](http://www.stur-exchange.co.uk); 01258 475 137); 21 Nov: **Old Town Hall Arts Centre**, Hemel Hempstead; ([www.dacorum.gov.uk/arts](http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/arts); 01442 228091); 25 – 29 Nov: **The Tabard Theatre**, London ([www.tabardtheatre.co.uk](http://www.tabardtheatre.co.uk); 08448 472 264); 5 Dec: **The Hall for Cornwall**, Truro ([www.hallforcornwall.co.uk](http://www.hallforcornwall.co.uk); 01872 262466); 13 Dec: **Norden Farm Arts Centre**, Maidenhead, ([www.nordenfarm.org](http://www.nordenfarm.org); 01628 788 997).

Peter Blau reports that *Faeries*, a new musical about the Cottingley fairies by Stephen Langston & Wendy McPike, will be produced at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in August. There's information at <http://www.edfringe.com/>.

Shortly after the last DM it was announced that **Guy Ritchie**, director of *lock*, *Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* and husband of Madonna, will direct an as-yet untitled Sherlock Holmes film, for release by Warner in 2010. The screenplay, based on an as-yet unpublished graphic novel by Lionel Wigram, will emphasise Holmes's skills as a swordsman and boxer. Neil Marshall was to have directed, from a script by Michael Johnson. Ritchie is apparently rewriting Johnson's script. Current favourite to play Holmes is Robert Downey, Jr.

And today comes news of another film, this one a comedy, written by Etan Cohen and starring **Sacha Baron Cohen** as Holmes with Will Ferrell as Watson. Best known for *Borat* and *Ali G*, Sacha Baron Cohen recently played Pirelli in Tim Burton's film *Sweeney Todd*. He could make a good Holmes. The film, also untitled, will be released by Columbia.

*The Hollywood Reporter* notes that **Central Partnership**, Russia's top independent film producer, plans 'the country's largest-ever TV series production, a \$16 million, 32-episode series based on Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories. The shooting will begin in summer 2009 and continue through 2010. Half of the episodes will be based on Holmes stories not yet adapted for the screen in Russia.' If the result is as good as the Lenfilms series with Vasily Livanov and Vitaly Solomin, it will be outstanding.

Richard Taylor reports that the December 2007 issue of the popular railway history magazine *Backtrack* features a six-page article by Nigel Digby, 'The Railway Journeys of Sherlock Holmes'. Despite some niggles, Richard says that the piece is well written and well illustrated, with appropriate photographs and with Paget drawings. Back issues of *Backtrack* are available from Pendragon Publishing (PO Box 3, Easingwold, York YO61 3YS) for £4.40, postpaid within the UK. There's a website at [www.pendragonpublishing.co.uk](http://www.pendragonpublishing.co.uk).

According to an article in today's *Independent* scientists have finally discovered why Stradivarius and Guarnerius violins are superior to any made since. 'A study has found that the secret may be explained by the consistent density of the two wooden panels used to make its body, rather than anything to do with the instrument's overall contours, varnish, angle of the neck, fingerboard or strings.'

**The Museum in Docklands**, a branch of the Museum of London, currently hosts an exhibition on *Jack the Ripper and the East End*. Naturally, Holmes gets a mention among the innumerable fictional treatments of the Whitechapel murders, but the real interest is in the dual emphasis on life in the slums of 1888 and on the criminology – in the widest sense. The brochure says, 'Like the Whitechapel murders, recent "Ripper" murders have forced us to acknowledge the vulnerability of women who work as prostitutes. The endless obsession with Jack the Ripper glamorises serial murderers and trivialises violence against women.' The statements seem to contradict each other, but they're both true. People have always been fascinated by murder, and

these still-unsolved atrocities, like the chronicles of Sherlock Holmes, can serve to open our eyes to aspects of late Victorian life that we might not otherwise have considered. *Jack the Ripper and the East End* can be seen until 2 November at the Museum in Docklands, West India Quay, Canary Wharf, London E14 4AL. See the website at [www.museumindocklands.org.uk/jacktheripper](http://www.museumindocklands.org.uk/jacktheripper).

Dr Jeanne Youngson, founder and President of The Vampire Empire, the world's oldest Dracula society, informs me that there's now a branch for Sherlockian members, called **The Sherlock Holmes Auxiliary**. The Empire's website is at [http://wiki.benecke.com/index.php?title=2007-07-23\\_The\\_Vampire\\_Empire](http://wiki.benecke.com/index.php?title=2007-07-23_The_Vampire_Empire) (e-mail [vampireempire146@hotmail.com](mailto:vampireempire146@hotmail.com)).

A reminder that **Charles Hall** (12 Paisley Terrace, Edinburgh EH8 7JW) has a variety of distinctive Sherlock Holmes collectibles for sale: caricature bookmarks, postcards, greeting cards, international postage stamps, play scripts and flyers, and, perhaps most importantly, the two books that Charles wrote with Peter Blythe: *On Stage Sherlock Holmes* (reviews of plays and musicals around the world) and *Sherlock Holmes and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in Edinburgh*. [*\*Edinburgh City Council should consider a new edition for ACD's 150th anniversary next year.\**]

Scott Monty passes on news of the death of **Bruce Montgomery** on 21 June, the day after his eighty-first birthday. 'He was, for many years, the voice and spirit of the Baker Street Irregulars annual dinner in New York, where he would invariably sing the BSI's unofficial anthem, "Aunt Clara." Monty ... picked up where his father, James Montgomery, BSI ("The Red Circle") left off. The elder Montgomery was also a gifted tenor and provided musical entertainment during the BSI's early years.' Unlike his father, Bruce did not, I think, contribute to the literature of Holmes, but he became a national authority on Gilbert & Sullivan, director of the Gilbert & Sullivan Players of Philadelphia and director of musical studies at the University of Pennsylvania. In 1994 he too received the BSI investiture 'The Red Circle'.

Steve Duke informs me that **The Elementary Victorians**, one of two Holmesian Societies in the Australian state of Victoria, will celebrate its (their?) twentieth anniversary on 5 August. Congratulations! You can contact the Victorians at [redman.duke@gmail.com](mailto:redman.duke@gmail.com), or write to: The Elementary Victorians, Steve Duke (President), P.O. Box 340, Reservoir, VIC 3073, Australia.

Periodicals received. *The Arthur Conan Doyle Collection Lancelyn Green Bequest*, Spring/Summer 2008 (The Conan Doyle Collection, Arts & Cultural Development Service, 2nd Floor, The Guildhall, Portsmouth PO1 2AJ; [lancelyngreencollection@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:lancelyngreencollection@portsmouthcc.gov.uk); the website is at [www.conandoylcollection.co.uk](http://www.conandoylcollection.co.uk)). *The Camden House Journal*, June 2008 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). *Communication*, no. 281 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Wanda & Jeff Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA). *The Illustrious Clients News*, June 2008 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). *The Pipe Smoker's Thing*, Spring 2008 (Albert Mendez, 142-35 38th Avenue, Flushing, NY 11354, USA) [*\*includes an account of The Holmesian Society, founded in 1966 and now down to one member!\**]. *Practice Notes*, June 2008 (**The Friends of Dr Watson**, Nino Cirone, Highcroft Cottage, 14 Totteridge Common, London N20 8NL). *Prescott's Press*, June 2008 (**The Three Garridebs**, Warren Randall, 15 Fawn Lane West, South Setauket, NY 11720-1346, USA). *The School Report*, Summer 2008 (**The Priory Scholars**, Horace L Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY). *The Serpentine Muse*, Summer 2008 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 301 Warren Ave, #203, Baltimore, MD 21203, USA). *Tonga Times*, Spring 2008 (**The Mini-Tonga Scion Society**, Jay Pearlman, 1656 E 19th Street, #2-E, Brooklyn, NY 11229, USA; [minitongasociety@aol.com](mailto:minitongasociety@aol.com)) [*\*Welcome back, Mini-Tonga!\**].

And *Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press*, May 2008 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; [blau7103@comcast.net](mailto:blau7103@comcast.net)).

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