

COMMUNICATION 265



FROM YOUR REPRESENTATIVE BOTH WITH THE SERVANTS AND WITH THE TRADESPEOPLE (FIVE), *PLEASANT PLACES OF FLORIDA* a.k.a. Carl L. Heifetz

OUTSTANDING 31st FALL GATHERING PLANNED FOR NOVEMBER 11 IN BEAUTIFUL DUNEDIN, FLORIDA

Our very own **Wanda Dow**, one of the "Papers on the Sundial," has announced an outstanding Fall Gathering to take place in Dunedin, Florida on **November 11**. Please see the sign-up sheet on page 5 for details and **respond promptly**. To you newbees, don't be shy. Sign up to give a toast or to make a presentation. You will have a very friendly and attentive audience and learn from the experience.

And while we are on the subject of meetings, it's never too early to plan for the next **Spring Gathering** in late May or Early June in 2007. All members are invited to come up with ideas for an exciting new location. We have had a wide variety of locales - city parks, country clubs, breweries, restaurants and tea rooms, people's homes. You name it, we'll try it. Don't worry about how difficult it may seem. Your trusty gang of five will help guide you through the process. But, it is important to get an early start to make certain that everything is in place. Just contact Wanda or me with your ideas.

Further on the subject of meetings, there are two events coming up in October that might make a good vacation trip as well.

Jens Byskov Jensen, president of Le Cercle de Sherlock Holmes, announced that on Sunday, October 22, 2006 "Le Cercle de Sherlock Holmes" will host "Autumn in New Orleans." This meeting will take place at the New Orleans Country Club for brunch, and guest speaker will be **Steven Rothman**, BSI and editor of *The Baker Street Journal*, who will speak on Christopher Morley and Sherlock Holmes. This event is arranged together with the "English-Speaking Union" of New Orleans. Prices for attending will be available in September, and anyone interested in this event should contact the president of "Le Cercle de Sherlock Holmes," Jens Byskov Jensen at
Registrations can be made until
October 10.

To some, it will be good news that "Le Cercle de Sherlock Holmes" meets regularly in New Orleans. We have become the one fixed point in a changing age. For the rest of the city, still the only constant thing is that nothing is constant.

If you can't make that event, but would like to experience Sherlockian fellowship during your visit to New Orleans, Jens stated that "Le Cercle de Sherlock Holmes" meets on Tuesdays - October 10, November 14, and December 12 at 8:00 p.m. in the Polo Lounge on the 2nd floor of "The Windsor Court Hotel" at 300 Gravier in New Orleans.

If Indianapolis is your choice of itinerary, note that **Sherlock Holmes Month** has been declared in Indianapolis. **Pat Ward** made the following announcement on "Hounds of the Internet: 2006 marks the 60th Anniversary of the founding and first meeting of the **Illustrious Clients of Indianapolis**. As part of their celebration of this event, the Illustrious Clients are teaming with the Indianapolis Marion County Public Library to make October of 2006 Sherlock Holmes Month at all branches of the IMCPL. Members of the Illustrious Clients will lead story discussions and offer presentations on the Great Detective, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and the world of Sherlock Holmes. These presentations will include special screenings of Sherlockian films, a report on film and television portrayals of Holmes, and a history of Sherlock Holmes. There will also be exhibitions of Holmes memorabilia and artifacts, donated by members of the Illustrious Clients, at several branches of the IMCPL. For more information, please check the IMCPL website at <http://www.imcpl.org/events/index.php>, or call 317-269-1700, or contact Pat Ward at wardicus2002@yahoo.com or call 317-313-1079.

BAKER STREET BLOG

Pat Ward also wrote, on the Hounds of the Internet, that "**The Baker Street Blog**, is a wonderful daily update of Sherlockian news and information. It has an entry devoted to the House/Holmes connection. And a lot of other great stuff as well. It's at <http://bakerstreetjournal.blogspot.com/>."

SHERLOCKIAN SCHOLARSHIP BY MEMBERS OF THE PLEASANT PLACES OF FLORIDA

Thanks to members of the *Pleasant Places of Florida* for providing outstanding Sherlockian Scholarship over the years. This month we will enjoy two items by Phil Jones, a scholarly book review and one of his outrageous puns. Don't be shy, send your material in for all of us to enjoy. After all, the *Pleasant Places of Florida* is a **CORRESPONDING SOCIETY** - so please correspond. Share your writings on the writings with the rest of us.

MRS. HUDSON AND THE SPIRITS' CURSE

Type of material: Trade Paperback

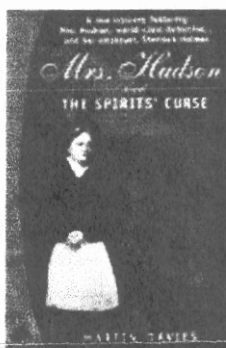
Publisher: Berkley Publishing Group

Year: 2004

Author: Martin Davies

Price: \$13.00

Review: This is the first in a new series of tales by the author set at 221b Baker Street. This book gives a somewhat skewed



vision of that familiar address and its inhabitants. Everything seems about 90 degrees out of the expected orientation, but all the old favorites are present. Holmes is up to his usual brilliant deductions, Watson bumbles on in his customary astonished fashion and evil doers are handed over to the law with the expected regularity.

On the other hand, Mrs. Hudson tempers Sherlock's brilliance with common sense and a methodical approach to dealing with problems. She doesn't have Sherlock's immense store of specialized arcanum, but then, neither does he have answers all the time. But Mrs. Hudson has friends who do have the requisite expertise and she consults them when appropriate. Indeed, a marvelous collection of characters parade through her kitchen and respond to her notes while she continues to prepare a supper to host an Earl or a cozy dine in for two on a cold Winter evening.

This tale is told from the point of view of Mrs. Hudson's maid-of-all-work, Flottie (short for Flotsam). Flottie is 14, an orphan and a refugee from a less well-run household whose butler combined several nasty features in one, unsavory package. Flottie runs errands, cleans silver, dusts, sweeps, washes and doubles in assisting Mrs. Hudson's sleuthing activities. In part, these tales are a "coming of age" cycle for Flottie; she is quite appealing. The two of them seem to feel that Holmes and the Doctor really need someone to look after them and are determined to add a healthy dose of common sense to Holmes' detective practice.

The present case is "The Giant Rat of Sumatra," and it starts out with all the trappings of the exotic East, including a native curse, sinister strangers, and inexplicable deaths. The "Matilda Briggs" hosts at least one mysterious death and all of Mrs. Hudson's contacts are called into play to discover the links between blinded corpses in Sumatra and a London Butler who dabbles in the drug trade. Those who flee the mysterious curse die, one by one in agony, but those who stay still also die horrible deaths.

Sherlockian purists will recognise a number of differences from the Good Doctor's account of the beginnings of the partnership, but the author is ahead of us and provides plausible, if not totally satisfying explanations. Meanwhile, the story moves quickly, hangs well together and is populated by a number of interesting characters. Part of the fun is playing the "Spot the Fictional Character" game. A. J. Raffles is only one of these personalities included in the tale.

The next book in the series, "Mrs. Hudson and the Malabar Rose" was published in the US shortly after this one and seems, at first reading, to be a worthy sequel.

During the Great War, Holmes was employed by the Government in a number of capacities. I only learned of some of these services long afterward. One fall day, after I had moved to the South Downs to share Holmes' retirement, his housekeeper served us a succulent Mulberry Pie. Holmes began eating and then began to laugh. Naturally, I asked the reason.

"The pie reminded me of a strange case I handled during the War," he said. It was in the late Fall and Winter of 1914, and we were beginning to lose merchant shipping to German raiders, both small surface ships and submarines. The losses were not frequent, but they were persistent and always seemed to be ships with particularly needed cargoes. Most of the losses occurred in the Irish Sea and the approaches to the Bristol Channel, so I was asked to look into the matter.

After a careful check of shipping records and Port logs, it became apparent that most of the valuable ships that had been lost were headed into Bristol. Further, they had notified the Harbormaster at Bristol of their expected arrival by radio and had asked that an escort be sent to meet them at an appropriate time and location. In almost every case, the ships had been attacked and sunk only hours before their escort was scheduled to arrive. Naturally, my thought turned to the security of the codes being used, however, the same codes were in use all over the UK Maritime Establishment and the coded messages gave no indication of cargos or even the type of ship concerned. All ships used arbitrarily assigned code names and those names were independent of the transmission codes.

The problem was finally cracked by analyzing the personnel with access to the combination of information required to select the proper ships. Only three clerks in the offices in Bristol could have assembled the necessary facts in the time available to spur action; Mr. Tristan Jones, The Honourable Wilberforce Penn and Shamus Casey. Each was put under observation, but no contact with possible enemy agents could be found.

Mr. Jones was Welsh and spent most of his time with his extended family in the country. Penn had relatives who managed two bakeries in the small village of Avonmouth where he was a frequent visitor, and consumer. Casey was from Ireland and kept up constant and voluminous mail communications with his relatives across the Irish sea. One of these persons had to be sending data to foreign agents who signaled the raiders when to attack.

My break came when I visited the Avonmouth bakeries. The two shops offered wide selections of pastries at wildly varying prices, all similar, but differing in details. A quick check with the local constable revealed that these prices changed almost daily, with no apparent reason or logic. This was the mechanism for passing information to the enemy agents."

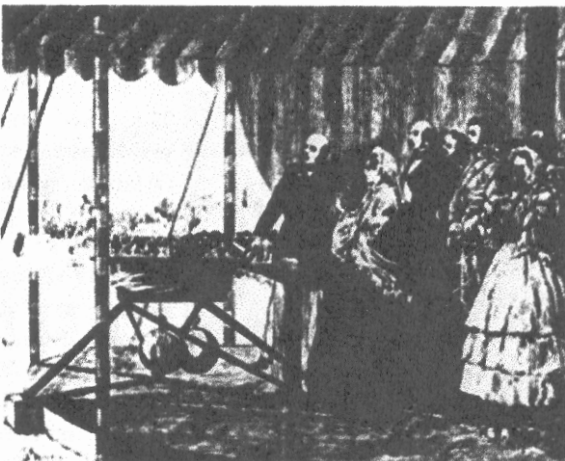
"Holmes," I gasped. "You can't mean..."

"Yes Watson, it was the pie rates of Penn's aunts that told the tales."

ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE WAS A GUN ENTHUSIAST.

Reported by "Bob", as posted on alt.fan.holmes for May 25, 2006, quoting an article by Philip Bourjaily in the *NRA-ILA* magazine, "Rudyard Kipling and Arthur Conan Doyle both witnessed the lethal fire that Boer farmer-riflemen rained on British troops in 1899. They returned home to promote civilian marksmanship through the expansion of rifle clubs in England."

The full text was available on the following web site.
<http://www.nraila.org/Issues/Articles/Read.aspx?ID=76>



Queen Victoria, whose reign stretched into the Boer War, fired the opening shot at the British NRA's first meeting at Wimbledon on July 1, 1860. The British NRA's birth preceded the American NRA's by 12 years.

SHERLOCK IS EVERYWHERE

Many thanks to member **Doris Ohanesian** for sending this item with a note stating "Sherlock is everywhere? He sure is!



Editors notes:

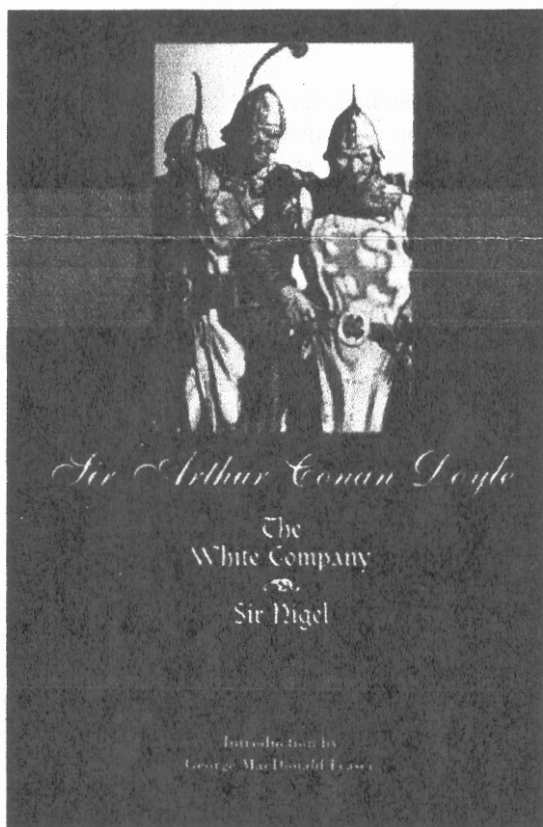
Thanks to our members for excellent literary and pictorial contributions to the *Communication*, and for planning past or upcoming events. Please keep them coming. This issue of your *Communication* will dwell on *Pleasant Places of Florida* aspects and some additional matters to spice up the mix. I welcome Sherlockian contributions from all of our members for future issues. If you have something of interest to report, or an item for publication, please send it to either **Wanda Dow** or **Carl Heifetz**. If you have any ideas for a meeting venue, please let us know. We are always looking for novel locales and topics.

I hate to bring up the subject of **money**, but there appears to be some confusion as to when memberships expire and dues need to be paid. Please note the mailing label on the back of your issue. Above your name is a date. That is the last month and year of your membership. Please see the box at the bottom of the back page for directions regarding membership renewal. We are also pleased to provide members with the opportunity to donate additional monies to the Marshall/Wood fund. The fund was established to purchase youth editions of Sherlock Holmes stories to be distributed to children's libraries to help "keep green the memory of the master." The fund is administered by **Mike Bryan**, Director of the Seminole Library.



WHITE COMPANY AND SIR NIGEL Fun Reads and High Adventure

Thanks to the kindness of **Bill Mason**, I was inspired to read, for the very first time, Arthur Conan Doyle's historical novel *White Company*. After all, this was an old fashioned historical novel, similar to *Ivanhoe*, an "uncool" type of book that I had cast aside as unworthy of my attention since the latter was required reading in high school. However, Bill recently sent me a Sherlockian writing of his entitled *Hints of Holmes in The White Company*. Intrigued by his interest in this novel, I pulled the musty old copy off my shelf and read it in only two days. What an exciting adventure! No wonder Dr. Doyle considered these works his best efforts. Now, I am not a big fan of most of Sir Arthur's other writings (with the exception of the Sherlock Holmes narratives that some experts attribute to him). This tome not only contains a series of adventurous incidents, but also paints a very interesting historical perspective on the life and times of the people who populated the Medieval world.



Naturally, I was motivated to obtain the prequel, *Sir Nigel*, that Doyle had written several years later. I was happy to find that both *The White Company* and *Sir Nigel* are still in print over 100 years after the initial publication of the former. And, I was able to obtain, via interlibrary loan from the Clearwater Library, a volume containing both novels. The publisher of this trade paperback, A Common Reader Edition by The Akadia Press (Pleasantville, NY), also included a wonderful introduction by George MacDonal Fraser. I strongly recommend this volume as a source of entertainment and enlightenment.

THE GAME IS AFOOT

In case you are planning a trip to the UK, check this out.

Across the Pond Tours offers many tours of Great Britain, the home of our hero Mr. Sherlock Holmes. According to Managing Director Anne Marie Clarke, "I believe our tour, **The Game is Afoot**, would be of particular interest to you. This tour is designed specifically for the Holmes enthusiast who wishes to walk the very footsteps of Holmes and Watson in the only place the experience can truly be recreated - England. To add extra interest, we have combined the tour with an opportunity to try your own hand sleuthing during an authentic English Mystery at a countryside hotel."

To sweeten the pot, they are offering a discount of \$250.00 to members of the *Pleasant Places of Florida* or other Holmesians.

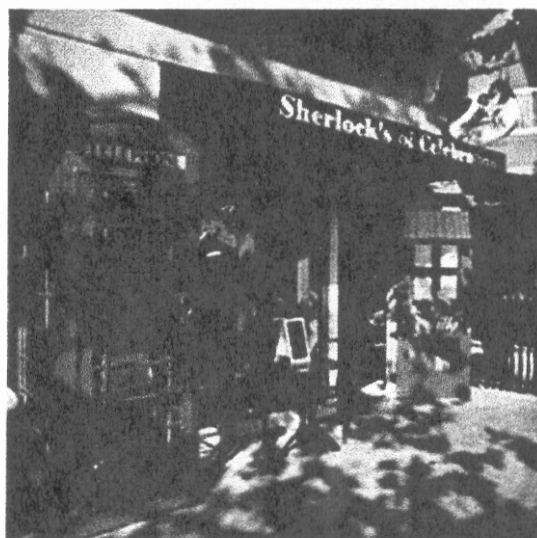
For details concerning itinerary, costs, etc, contact **Across the Pond Tours** by email at info@acrossthepondtours.com, their website www.acrossthepondtours.com, or by telephone toll free at 866-4-UK-TRAVEL (866-485-8728)

FOR THE SAKE OF THE TRUST

To preserve and archive their voluminous holdings, dating from the letters of Edgar Smith and Christopher Morley, the Baker Street Irregulars has set up The Baker Street Irregular Trust. Materials to be archived include videotapes, as well as thousands of letters and photographs. This organization is soliciting donations of monetary gifts as well as material contributions to the archives.

For details, visit their web site <http://www.bsitrust.org>

SHERLOCK'S OF CELEBRATION



The next time you are in Orlando area, check out Sherlock's of Celebration located at 715 Bloom Street, Suite 130, Celebration, FL (Phone number 407-566-1866). You can get a nice cup of tea and later browse through their selection of

Sherlockian item. For more information access their web http://www.teamap.com/tearooms/sherlocks_of_celebration_1564.html.

31ST ANNUAL FALL GATHERING 11/11/06 DUNEDIN, FLORIDA

Come join us at the Dunedin Public Library (223 Douglas Ave), in Dunedin for our 31st annual Fall Gathering! Come early to enjoy the BBC Jeremy Brett version of *The Illustrious Client* at 10:00am, or come after lunch at 12:30pm for the meeting. Both movie and meeting will be open to the public, so be ready to meet & greet. The plan is to view the film, break for lunch at one of the many fine eateries in the city, then join back up for our meeting at 12:30. Don't forget to wear your thinking caps for the infamous McCallister quizzes. \$3 donation requested to defer costs of beverages and printed matter. Any additional amount will be donated to the Marshall/Wood Fund.

Make checks payable to Wanda Dow,
Respond ASAP – the time will be here before you know it!

Fill out, cut & send with paper:

Name(s) of attendees:

Street Address, City, State, Zip:

Phone:

E-mail:

___ I have a presentation on _____

___ I have a show 'n' tell.

Please indicate your 1st three choices for a toast. Wanda will contact you as to your assignment:

The Master ___ The Doctor ___ The Woman ___

The Founder ___ (Rev. Leslie Marshall)

The Writer's Agent ___ (Dr. A. C. Doyle)

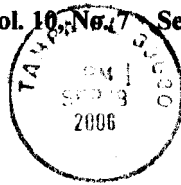
Sir James Damery ___ Baron Gruner ___ Violet De Merville ___

Le Brun ___ Sir Leslie Oakshott ___ Kitty Winter ___

Shinwell Johnson ___ Dr. Hill Barton ___ Lomax ___

Other _____





The Pleasant Places of Florida
c/o Carl L. Heifetz

THE PLEASANT PLACES OF FLORIDA
THE LAST COL

CARL L. HEIFETZ

REPRESENTATIVE B

Correspondence and Coi.....

JEFF & WANDA DOW

THE PAPERS ON THE SUNDIAL

Communications, Bookkeeping

DAVID MCCALLISTER

MASTER OF THE HOUSE

Master of Ceremonies, Quizmaster, Florida Wessex Cup

MICHAEL BRYAN

THE UNOPENED NEWSPAPER

Educational, Marshall/Wood Book Fund, Film Festivals

DR. BENTON WOOD, BSI

RECORDER EMERITUS

Guiding Light, Counselor, Advisor

Please note the date on the mailing label. This is the expiration date of your club membership. Please send your dues renewal to Wanda Dow. Make check out to Wanda Dow. Dues are \$12.00 US and Canada and \$13.00 elsewhere.