



2007

Communication No. 269

The Pleasant Places of Florida

Vol.11 No.1

We regret to inform you that our *Representative*, Carl Heifetz, upon much reflection, has decided to step down to leave way for (as he puts it) younger blood. If anyone would like to step forward into the position, please contact Wanda & Jeff Dow or David McCallister. There will be no change currently in dues or the newsletter. A fond adieu, Carl, and many thanks for all your hard work!



The Sherlock Holmes Pipe Club of Boston's new logo. By artist Larry Gosser, who will do original one of a kind Holmes pieces if anyone is interested. He can be reached via email at : ldgosser@insightbb.com The SHPCB on-line newsletter is viewable at : <http://www.shpcboston.org/>.



From the Papers on the Sundial:

Speaking of things Holmesian, did we mention the room number we had at The Marshall Inn in Savannah, GA last summer?

With Carl's retirement, we'd like to announce a return of the "published irregularly" newsletter. Our newsletters will continue to be numbered; you will continue to get 10-12 issues a year, but we will be publishing as soon as we have enough for an issue rather than bi-monthly. Hope you enjoy this issue. Philip Jones continues to send along his punny stories and a book review or two as well! How about the rest of you? Pastiches? Poetry? Art? Articles? SEND IT IN!!!!

Mycroft's Lodgings

by Philip Jones

After meeting Sherlock's elder brother, Mycroft, during the Melas affair, I became aware of the depth of the relationship between the brothers. However, it took many years for me to gain even small pieces of information about Mycroft's personal life. Of course, he was unsociable by the standards of the times, with no membership in gentlemen's gambling clubs and no participation in the social world except for attendance at official functions.

The Diogenes Club provided him with the standard gentleman's amenities of a place to dine and to entertain, albeit sparingly, the social contacts required by his position. The nature of that position was never, ever specified, but it became increasingly apparent that his contacts were with the highest levels of government and, indeed, numbered members of the Royal Family, including Her Majesty. Aside from these social contacts, only a few friends seemed to be included in his circle, with Sherlock as his most intimate friend as well as his sole surviving relative.

His history in government was strangely cloudy, with very little information ever given about his earlier assignments. At one time, I heard, he had served abroad in a diplomatic capacity after the American Civil War. There had also been some mention of a position in the Exchequer on loan to the Scottish government. Sherlock once claimed that Mycroft "audited the books of a government department" but that was merely a short explanation for a complex position that really defied description. Of course, at another time, Sherlock said that Mycroft "...occasionally is the British

Government..." but that was another approximation. His position was ubiquitous and all pervasive, but he once explained to me that he carefully avoided ever attempting to set policy, merely preferring to advise policy makers.

There seemed never to be any details of any personal life to be found. The single indication of any human contact that I ever encountered in Mycroft's life was a painting hung in his rooms. It depicted a striking young lady in an outmoded ball gown surrounded by gentlemen in unfamiliar grey uniforms trimmed in gold. The group were gathered in a panelled room, with a large fireplace, many books and a number of leather covered chairs and divans scattered about. A negro attendant was passing out a tray of drinks and the lady was laughing impishly. It was apparent that she was the social center of the room, attended by a court of handsome attendants.

I once asked Mycroft what was the subject of the painting and he replied that it was titled "Scarlett in a Study."
 First published on the Shamlockian's List on November 17th, 2006.

Voodoo in Cornwall

By Philip Jones

First Published on *The Shamlockians' List* on August 8th, 2006

Holmes' brush with Voodoo was occasioned by some rather odd events in Cornwall. In the late Summer of 1904, Holmes asked me to accompany him to Truro, where the Chief Constable had asked him to look into a series of disappearances. My wife was glad to see me get away from the minor monotony of my practice at a time when most of my patients were on Holiday and my presence around the house was, I suspect, becoming a burden. So Holmes and I settled in on the train to the West country.

At Truro, the Chief Constable met us at the train and had us driven straight to the local Police offices. He told us that more than a dozen people, from several households were missing. That so many were missing only became apparent recently, as in each case, the entire family had disappeared all at one time, leaving no one to inform the Police until (cont. on page 2)



(Cont. from page 1) Police until workers arrived at the farms on Monday. It was now two weeks since the disappearances and no progress had been made by the local officers. Holmes requested the particulars of each event and we retired to an excellent Inn for dinner and a solid night's sleep.

In the morning, we were assigned a Police Trap and driver and we began a journey to each of the isolated farms where the disappearances occurred. The first farm was really a small estate, owned by one Hezekiah Stone, a retired West Indies trader. Mr. Stone lived there with an elderly, spinster sister and had only daytime staff who worked the farm and a housekeeper who lived on a nearby farm. The Housekeeper had reported both Mr. Stone and his sister missing when she came to work on a Monday and found no one in residence. There were no signs of violence and only the fact that there were no lights burning and no doors locked at the farm seemed significant.

The same was true at each of the next two farms. Farm hands reporting for work reported no family members at home at the Cadwallader farm, where Mr. Cyrus Cadwallader, his wife, Leah Stone Cadwallader and their two, grown daughters had seemingly vanished into thin air. The St. Just farm followed the pattern. Mr. Armand St. Just, his wife Sarah Stone St. Just and their teenaged daughters were missing and the many cattle at the farm were all still in pasture when the hands arrived in the morning. The final farm which belonged to the younger Hezekiah Stone offered more clues. Apparently Hezekiah junior, his wife and his two, grown sons had put up a fight as there were indications of a large scuffle and some marks which might be blood in the dust of the extensive yards.

After returning to the Inn and spending the afternoon abusing the hospitality of the Inn's parlor with several pipes of noxious shag, Holmes used the telephone at the Inn to call the Chief Constable and ask if anyone notable had moved into the area in recent times. The only newcomer was a Haitian expatriate who had taken up a large estate to the North of town and Holmes pounced on this news with glee. He suggested an immediate descent on this estate with a large force of police, which was arranged.

At the Estate, a large staff of Haitians was found and arrested along with the missing persons, all of whom seemed stupefied and who had been working the fields under direction of the owner's overseer for the last two weeks. My examinations indicated that all had been extensively drugged, apparently as part of a ritual in which they had been "turned into zombies" for ease of control. The owner apparently had known the senior Hezekiah in the Islands and had developed some grudge against him. No doubt, he was the victim of sharp business practices, as old Hezekiah was noted for his cheese-paring ways.

On our way back to London, I commented to Holmes that the Haitian had been most thorough in his vengeance.

Holmes replied, "Yes, he left no Stone 'unturned'!"

More High Jinks in Cornwall

By Philip Jones

After the Great War, I saw Holmes only at wide intervals. His retirement in Sussex was more complete every day and my own ill-health kept me close to home. One summer, I visited him for a few weeks and time seemed to slip back to the old days in Baker Street, but without the constant stream of clients at the door. The more leisurely pace suited my own inclinations and Holmes was able to busy himself with his bees and his writings and still enjoy occasional company. Our daily contacts were undemanding and we were probably more comfortable together than we had ever been.

One day a cable arrived from Cornwall. A new Chief constable was in office, but the memory of Holmes' earlier services was still kept by the constabulary. A series of baffling robberies at society weekends had the local officers in a quandary. The individual crimes were all marked by seemingly impossible elements; valuables were taken from rooms with no access except through sleeping quarters, locks were bypassed, hidden compartments rifled and all the indications of a cat burglar at large were in evidence.

Since the tales of my literary agent's brother-in-law had appeared, society burglars were on everyone's mind. The fact that entertainment at all these affairs include a "Gentleman's Cricket Challenge Team" along with the usual raff and scaff of musical comedy troupes, performing midgets giving seances and a tempestuous coloratura and her "manager" kept all eyes looking for a "Raffles" among the guests.

Holmes was reluctant to leave the observations of his hives and, of course, I was not up to the strenuous activity that a trip to Cornwall would require. After some consideration of the problem, he wired the Chief Constable to take the midgets into custody and to search their gear thoroughly. This was met with disbelief, but an effort was finally mounted and their current accommodations were visited by a sergeant and two constables. To everyone's surprise, the police were overpowered, bound and gagged and locked in a cellar to be found only the next day.

It was obvious to the police that Holmes had been right in "fingering" the troop, but all managed to escape and none of the loot was found. Further, Holmes was incensed when the story hit the gutter press and the next day's newspapers appeared with the headlines "Small Mediums at Large!"

Suggested by Ann Margaret Lewis, A Vatican Cameo.

The Trained Cormorant

I have mentioned elsewhere the story concerning the Politician, the lighthouse and the trained cormorant and I do not propose to recount that affair as many features about it are still confidential. However, one aspect that may be of interest to the public can be revealed at this time, since the man involved has recently died.

The trained cormorant in question was quite a remarkable bird. It formed an otherwise untraceable linkage between the politician and the lighthouse, no matter which politician and which lighthouse. The manner in which Holmes discovered this linkage is quite mundane, a tip from an informant with a grudge and Holmes was on the scent.

The real interest in the matter was the methods used by the trainer. The activities performed by the cormorant should not be discussed, even at this late date. Suffice it to say (cont. on page 3)



(cont. from page 2) that the bird was an efficient and effective participant, although quite innocently, in the conspiracy that rocked cabinet circles. Training the bird to perform the required actions was done by a true genius.

Holmes was looking for the source of the bird which had been cited as the connecting link, but with little success. He knew it must be tamed and trained in order to participate so effectively, but he had no idea who was involved as trainer and handler. We were haunting seaside resorts in the area of the lighthouse for clues as to the home of the cormorant with no particular direction, merely trolling, as it were, for clues.

One day Holmes became fascinated by a crowd of seabirds surrounding a lone beach loafer. Some were sitting quietly on the ground and others were flying gracefully about the man's chair and screeching at him. The man seemed to be tossing items into the air for the birds to catch and then waiting for them to bring the items to him. Upon receiving the items, the man would uncover a cup and allow the bird a drink from it.

Holmes became convinced this was the trainer of the cormorant and arranged to have him watched at all times. Within a few days, Holmes had all the information he needed to confront those involved and to demand their cooperation. Since then, the matter has not been reopened, pending proper behavior by those concerned.

I asked Holmes what about the seaside scene had drawn his attention.

He explained that the man on the beach was training those seabirds to return articles thrown away and he was using beer to reward the birds that performed well. Almost all learned quite quickly what was required and persisted in returning thrown items until they could no longer fly, for having drunk so much beer. He said it was quite clear that the man was a thorough and competent trainer. When I asked why, he replied:

"The man left no tern unstoned."

Implausible, inconsistent, unforgettable

by Alexander McCall Smith

How did Sherlock Holmes become one of fiction's unlikeliest immortals? All the clues are there in our Christmas mystery

BY THE NORMAL RULES OF detective fiction, Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories should have been an abject failure. Everything about their creation was wrong. The author's heart was never in the enterprise — he disliked his principal character and very pointedly disposed of him. The resulting disappointment among Holmes's fans left Conan Doyle unmoved, even if he eventually relented; as far as he was concerned, getting Holmes out of the way would enable him to continue with what he really wanted to do — to write historical novels.

Now, a feeling of indifference, or even animosity, towards one's principal character is normally a failsafe way of ensuring that fiction gets nowhere. Not so with Conan Doyle and Holmes. The sloppier Conan Doyle

became about the details in his stories, the more cavalier he became, the more the readers liked it. Inconsistency or holes in a story have been meat and drink to Holmes enthusiasts.

And then there is the obscurity that surrounds Holmes himself. No contemporary writer of detective fiction could get away with telling us so little about the central character. But again, Conan Doyle pulls it off, and the less we know about Holmes the more interested we become. Few words are wasted in describing his appearance, though we know what he looks like — thanks to the illustrator. Holmes had a brother, but we are not told about that until well into the series of stories. He uses cocaine and he plays the violin, but these details are hardly enough to paint a full picture. And yet again, this is the attraction. The less we are told about him, the more real he becomes.

Holmes, in fact, is a mass of contradictions. If a writer today described a character as being a fine boxer and a good shot, and then at the same time made him positively slothful in his habits, he would be accused of implausibility. Holmes is certainly implausible, and yet he seems so real that Conan Doyle was constantly assumed to be Holmes and was commonly addressed as such.

Sherlock Holmes, then, succeeds in spite of everything and remains popular today, the very foundation stone of the edifice that is crime fiction. And his creator, too, has proved to have a measure of immortality that often eludes even the most popular of authors. Few know a great deal about the life of, say, Dickens or Trollope, but the popular memory of Conan Doyle is still quite vivid. Again, there are contradictions in his personality, and these perhaps explain why he has been remembered.

Conan Doyle was a man of science, a doctor who had been trained in rigorous diagnostic techniques by Joseph Bell, the Edinburgh medical man whose powers of observation were to be the inspiration for those shown by Holmes himself. In the last years of his life, though, he immersed himself in spiritualism, to the dismay of many of his readers, getting caught up in all sorts of parlour goings-on. And yet he was a good and loyal man, and is still admired for that. He stood by his wife even when he fell in love with another, and he did so for many years. He had a strong sense of right and wrong, and he helped a number of people who had been the victims of injustice. He was chivalrous in the extreme. And, as is shown in this story, *The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle*, he knew about forgiveness, which is a virtue that often evades the conventional detective story — even at Christmas.

The return of Sherlock Holmes

The most famous fictional detective of them all is about to make a comeback.

To mark the 120th anniversary of the publication of the first Sherlock Holmes mystery — *A Study in Scarlet* — *Headline Review* is reissuing all nine of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's classic mystery collections and full-length Holmes novels in attractive new jackets.

The great Victorian detective retains a powerful hold on readers' imaginations and retains a huge number of admirers all around the world.

As Stephen Fry says: "Arthur Conan (cont. on page 4)



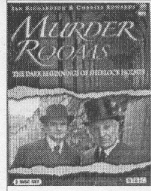
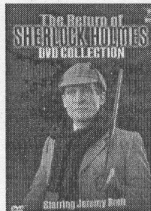
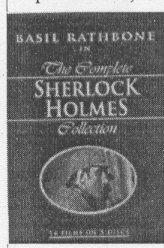
(cont. from page 3) Doyle is unique in simultaneously bringing the curtain down on an era and raising one on another, ushering in a genre of writing that, while imitated and expanded, has never been surpassed. Personally, I would walk a mile in tight boots to read his letters to the milkman."

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He's Everywhere... We've recently heard of actor Clive Francis doing his own version of *Hound of the Baskervilles* in 2007. Supposedly you can go to <http://thethunderchild.com/CliveFrancis/Video/HoundofBaskervilles.html> and see a clip. We couldn't get it to open up, but then, our virus protector is a little overprotective... if you like to review books, besides sending it in for publication here you can go to the website www.sherlockiana.net/books/index.html The web master Mia Stampe Lagergaard lists books for which she needs reviews ... you can order your *Baker Street Journal* online now. They even take PayPal. www.bakerstreetjournal.com ... Ready to read *Proxenetae Functionarius, Facies Lutea* or *Fulmen Argentum*? Go to ephemeris.alcuinius.net/holmesiac/p/hp for these Latin translations of *The Stockbroker's Clerk, The Yellow Face* and *Fulmen Argentum* by Stanislaus Tekieli ... our own PPOFer Paul Singleton performed 12/10/06 at Workshop Theater Company's little theatre at 312 West 36th St in NY as Sherlock Holmes in a revised stage reading of Andrew Joffe's play *The Blue Carbuncle* ... The master is mentioned in an article by Jonathon Rauch, *Sex, Lies And Video Games* in the November, 2006 issue of *The Atlantic*. "...they must be right about the human appetite for characters. A game, even a great game, is finished once played, but a great character, once met, lives forever. This of *Sherlock Holmes* and Mr. Spock, Don Quixote and Captain Ahab, Holden Caulfield and Humbert Humbert,

Scrooge and Gandalf, Charlie Brown and Severus Snape." ... Besides offering *The Complete Sherlock Holmes Collection* (Rathbone & Bruce) and *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* (Brett & Hardwicke) on dvds, PBS Home Video is also offering *Murder Rooms*.

"What inspired creation of the world's greatest fictional detective?" the ad asks. "Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's experience as a young physician with his mentor, Dr. Joseph Bell, early forensics expert, in 19th century Edinburgh, set the pace for the later duo of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson. Explore the "prequels" to Holmes in this entertaining collection, with Doyle (Charles Edwards) and Bell (Ian Richardson) in *The Patient's Eyes, The Photographer's Chair, The Kingdom of Bones and The White Knight Stratagem*." www.shoppbs.com One can imagine uninformed buyers being confused as to what is



real and what is not! ... Meanwhile, at salebooks.com, you can find the Ambrose Bierce mysteries, *A.B. and The One-Eyed Jacks* and *A.B. and The Trey of Pearls*. We mention this because the print ad states "Oakley Hall has found the perfect Holmes for the West in the guise of Ambrose Bierce, and an ideal Watson in the voice of Tom Redmond." ... Members from The Sherlock Holmes Society of France put together an interactive map of Holmes travels during the Great Hiatus. When each location is 'clicked' a list of pastiches set in those locations is listed. The pastiche list isn't all inclusive, but lists those stories more readily familiar, or easily available to French speaking people. It goes without saying most of it is in French, but it's fairly easy to follow. The team who put it together were Jean-Francois Sterrell, Jean-Claude Mornard, Manu Baranovsky, Sonia Duffresne, Frederic Chalangeas, Paul Andreau, Alexis Barquin, and Julia Huggins. <http://www.sshf.com/fr/dossiers/hiatus/hiatus>

CALENDAR SHERLOCKIANA

February 19 - March 3 - *The Hound of the Baskervilles* staged by Clive Francis at The Theatre Royal in Windsor. (see info on his website in "He's Everywhere")

March 9-11 - *Sherlock Holmes/Arthur Conan Doyle Symposium* Holiday Inn, Miamisburg, OH. Contact Cathy Gill,

April 14-15 - *Third Annual Gathering of Southern Sherlockians* Sheraton House, Chattanooga, TN. Visit www.nashvillescholars.net

April 21 or 28 (TBA) - Mike Bryan is trying to arrange another Sherlock Holmes film festival at one of the local libraries. Keep your eyes peeled for forthcoming information.

PPoF Spring Gathering - No date as yet, but arrangements have been taken on by Donna Vaurio. More info to follow.

April 27-29 - *STUD/Watsonian Weekend*. Friday-Dinner, Saturday-Silver Blaze & pizza party, Sunday-Fortescue Brunch. Contact Allan T. Devitt/Susan Z. Diamond at

May 4-6 - *Malice Domestic XIX* Central City Marriott, Arlington, VA Visit www.malicedomestic.org

July 6-8 - *Victorian Secrets & Edwardian Enigmas: A Sherlock Holmes Conference* held by The Norwegian Explorers of Minneapolis, The Friends of Sherlock Holmes Collection & The UofMinnesota's Special Collections & Rare Books. Conference, presentations, luncheon and banquet. Contact \$95 registration

September 27-30 - *Bouchercon 38* Anchorage, AK. Visit www.bouchercon2007.com

2008

October 9-12 - *Bouchercon 39* *Charmed to Death* in Baltimore, MD at the Wyndham (410-385-6605). Guests of Honor Laura Lippman & John Harvey with Toastmaster Mark Billingham. See bouchercon2008.blog.spot.com



Ghosts in Baker Street

Type of material: Trade Paperback Publisher: Carol & Graf Publishers, New York Year: 2006
Editors: Martin H. Greenberg, Jon Lellenberg, and Daniel Stashower



This anthology consists of a Foreword, ten stories, three essays and notes about the authors.

According to the Foreword, it was intended to tell about the "few cases (that) seemed to defy rational explanation..." The authors have done their best to comply with the editors' vision and the result is as grisly a group of Holmesian tales as one could wish without actually dragging in blatant supernatural effects. In a few instances, the reader may prefer the possible supernatural explanation, but rationality rules and a reasonable, mundane hypothesis is always available. The three included essays provide good insights into the antipathy of the Holmesian Canon to the supernatural and the ten tales skirt the edges thereof quite artfully.

The most unsettling of the tales is probably the first, Estleman's "The Devil and Sherlock Holmes." This is less a case than an investigation of what turns out to be a non-event, or is it? "The Adventure of the Librarian's Ghost," by Jon L. Breen, presents a solid, respectable English ghost, complete with legend and castle. Gillian Linscott presents a variation on this theme centered around St. Simeon's College at Oxford in "The Adventure of the Late Orang Outang."

Carolyn Wheat takes us into the history of the English Theatre in "A Scandal in Drury Lane, Or the Vampire Trap." This tale is a real period gem, complete with all the trappings of Victorian and Regency Theatrical lore. In "Sherlock Holmes and the Mummy's Curse," by H. Paul Jeffers, we are introduced to that remarkable Victorian gentleman, Flinders Petrie, the father of Egyptology. Colin Bruce then introduces us to treatment options for plague in "Death in the East End." I'm not sure but that I might prefer a comforting supernatural explanation for this one.

"The Adventure of the Dog in the Nighttime," by Paula Cohen, presents an awkward fusion of rationale and horror that doesn't quite seem to work, while "Selden's Tale," by Daniel Stashower is a genuine horror story that couples nicely with HOUN to fill in a small gap in the original. Bill Crider's "The Adventure of the St. Marylebone Ghoul" is nicely developed and works on several levels, while "The Coole Park Problem," by Michéal and Clare Breathnach, leaves a number of open questions to the reader's imaginations.

Taken all in all, this is an interesting and well-done set of tales that fit their theme nicely and avoid many of the pitfalls common to Sherlockian pastiches. Well worth your time.



Sherlock Holmes ~ The Way of All Flesh

Type of material: Trade Paperback Publisher: Classic Mysteries, UK Year: 2004 Author: Daniel Ward

This novella is the first in a planned series. Coming attractions include "Sherlock Holmes ~ Murder in Time" and "The Genesis of Sherlock Holmes."

This first entry is a respectable attempt at imitating Watson's style. It is carefully crafted to agree with The Canon and is liberally footnoted where questions may arise. Although it lacks the lean and deceptively simple style of the originals, it is otherwise hard to fault. The story is complex without being convoluted, the prose is clearly British, although not quite so crisp as the Victorian usage of the Canon.

The characterizations are also well in line with those presented in the original works with no absurdities or unsuitable emotionality. Holmes is curt and cerebral. Watson is long-suffering and considerate and the other characters are well-rounded. All-in-all, it is a satisfactory short novel or Novella of The Master and The Good Doctor. It is far better done than many other pastiches this reviewer has reviewed and was a real pleasure to read.

Reviewed by: Philip K. Jones, November, 2006. Reviewer: Philip K. Jones, December, 2006.



Savannah Morning News

Friday, January 19, 2007

Part one of The Live Oak Public Libraries Foundation's "Once Upon a Time" fundraiser drew scores of people Thursday night who were eager to support libraries in Chatham, Effingham and Liberty counties. The annual gala - "Chapter I: A Mysterious Evening" at the Bull Street Library - featured "Sherlock Holmes."

Sherlock Holmes," center, portrayed by John Sherwood listens intently during a conversation with David McCallister, left, and James McDonald at The Live Oak Public Libraries Foundation's annual fundraising gala Thursday evening at the Bull Street Library. (Photo: Stephen Berend)

BREAKING NEWS

'SCI FI SATURDAY: THE MOST DANGEROUS NIGHT OF TELEVISION' LAUNCHES IN JANUARY

2007 Sherlock Holmes & The Banshee: Sherlock Holmes investigates a wailing, soul-sucking ghost that turns out to be a banshee in this Pliny Minor produced film. Will Holmes be clever enough to find out the beasts secrets and stop its terrifying reign?

The Pleasant Places of Florida

*founded in 1972
by Leslie Marshall, B.S.I. (dec.)*

Recorder Emeritus: Dr. Benton Wood, B.S.I.

For the Record:

THE LAST COURT OF APPEALS

David McCallister, Master of the House,

(Master of Ceremonies at most gatherings, host of the annual Wessex Cup)

Wanda & Jeff Dow, The Papers on the Sundial,

(Communications and Bookkeeping)

Please make note of the date after your name on the mailing label. This is the expiration date of your club membership. You will not receive further Communications after this date unless you renew. Renewals should be sent, with any updates, to Wanda Dow. Make all checks payable to Wanda Dow. US\$12.00 (US/CAN) or US\$13.00 (INTL)

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