



2008

Communication No. 283

The Pleasant Places of Florida

From the Papers on the Sundial:

Be sure to join us in November for the 33rd Annual Fall Gathering of the Pleasant Places of Florida!



The Shadow of the Reichenbach

Type of material: Hard Cover

Publisher: Tom Doherty Associates, New York

Year: 2008 *Author:* John R. King

This book presents a revised version of the events in “The Final Problem.” It begins beside a rubbish heap in Meiringen with a young Thomas Carnacki, William Hope Hodgson’s “Ghost Finder,” negotiating with a fat old rat for a lump of moldy Gruyère cheese. Later in the day Thomas is picnicking near the Reichenbach Falls with one “Anna Schmidt” when they witness a struggle atop the Falls and rescue a fallen combatant.

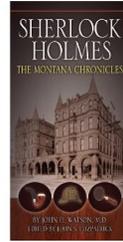
The other combatant pursues them in an effort to shoot his rival and events take off from there. “Anna Schmidt” turns out to be “Anna Moriarty” and events move on to Bern and then to Paris. Dr. John Watson appears and saves Thomas from an assassination attempt and the truth about Professor Moriarty, his wife and their daughter is revealed. The end of Jack The Ripper is explained and the creation of the Professor’s criminal empire is related along with some details of the struggle between Holmes and Moriarty.

The writing is very well done and the characters are clearly and precisely drawn. The action is intricate and complex and the story is engrossing. The reason for the inclusion of Thomas Carnacki becomes clear about half-way through the book. Events take a supernatural turn with the confrontation between the Professor and Jack The Ripper. From that point on, the action revolves around the cause of the Ripper murders and their effects on the Professor and his life and, ultimately, on Holmes through the Professor.

The events in the book are crafted with careful attention. For example, although Dr. Watson saves Thomas Carnacki from assassination by his prompt medical actions, Holmes and Watson are kept separate and the continuity of the events as known to Watson is maintained. The entire tale is revealed to the good Doctor in this manuscript, sent some twenty years later by Car-

nacki. For readers who follow the motto “No ghosts need apply,” this tale will be a disappointment. Hodgson fans will, no doubt, be delighted.

Reviewed by: Philip K. Jones; October, 2008



Sherlock Holmes: The Montana Chronicles

Type of material: Trade Paperback book

Publisher: Riverbend Publishing, Helena MT

Year: 2008 *Author:* John S. Fitzpatrick

This book is a group of four Novellas about events that occurred during two trips by Holmes and Watson to Montana in the late 1890s. They are connected in time with the narrative covered in Larry Millet’s publication, “Sherlock Holmes and the Ice Palace Murders.” James Hill, of Minneapolis, appears as a background character in this book as he does in those published by Mr. Millet, as do other 19th Century American Empire builders.

Among the four tales included, “The Opera House Murder” is, by far, the best of the lot. All four suffer from Americanisms and a non-English point of view, so purists will be satisfied in their distaste for pastiches. On the other hand, “The Opera House Murder” is well-plotted and infested with interesting and engaging characters. The plot nicely combines successive revelations and excellent work by Holmes to deliver an unexpected villain to justice. The sense of Holmesian insight and Watsonian wonder were both well handled and comfortable to those addicted to the Canon.

The ‘editor’ certainly displays a good sense of the world of 1890’s Montana and the transition of the American West from frontier to industrial powerhouse. The four stories taken together provide a wide spectrum of activities and personalities of the era. The horse racing community pairs nicely with the hard rock miners and the modern conveniences of ‘The Company Town’ contrast well with the Wild West Frontier image carried in the minds of visiting Englishmen. Unfortunately, the three following tales have not been so carefully crafted as the first so they were interesting stories, but did not really carry that same sense of being part of the Baker Street universe as appeared in the first narrative.

This is an interesting book by a talented author.



HE'S EVERYWHERE...In the book *Word Watching, Field Notes of an Amateur Philologist*, author Julian Burnside cites everyone from the ancient Greeks and Samuel Johnson to Sherlock Holmes and Tom Stoppard in 39 essays peppered with anecdotes and fiercely opinionated observations. From Daedalus Books (salebooks.com)...Clive Francis' play *The Hound of the Baskervilles* is currently running in Bath (Oct.13-18) and Northampton (Nov. 3-8)... Steven Moffat & Mark Gatiss are writing an updated Holmes drama serial for Hartswood Films... On display at The Cochrane Theatre Gallery in Southampton Row, London until January, 2009 is a panel of stained glass by artist David Palmer, evoking Conan Doyle's presence amidst his former haunts in Portsmouth... In the book *How To Read Novels Like A Professor* by Thomas C. Foster, he writes, "First person is good. British mystery novels incline more toward first person secondary, American toward first person central. Why? Because of the stories being told. British mysteries tend to be ratiocinative (from the Latin, meaning having to do with working things out by means of reason). They rely on the brilliance of the detective. If he tells the story, we'll see where his brilliance is taking us and lose all surprise. So instead, the story is told by someone who is, well, slightly dim. Sherlock Holmes has his Dr. Watson, Hercule Poirot his Captain Hastings (sometimes) or another, delegated-just-for-this-once civilian. These narrators aren't stupid, or no more so than ourselves, and we're not stupid. But they're only ordinarily intelligent, whereas Holmes or Poirot are brilliant in a way that's not entirely human." ... *Sherlock Tomes* is a bookstore in southern New Jersey that specializes in *NYTimes* Best-sellers, children's literature, classics and hard to find mysteries. Visit their website at www.sherlockstomes.com/index.asp ... *Sherlock Investigations, Inc.* is an investigation agency "serving the World from New York City." They specialize in locates, skips, missing person, backgrounds, bug detection and surveillance. Visit their website at www.sherlockinvestigations.com. Their icon looks more like Sam Spade, though! ...

He has shown that he can capture (cont. on page 2) (cont. from page 1) the magic of Baker Street, even in the wilds of Montana, but his work is not consistent and good stories suffer from the contrast with an excellent tale.



This is some artwork from the Japanese manga, *Ouran High School Host Club*. The high school is having a parent night of sorts, and the twins have decided their presentation will be a mystery for the visiting parents to solve. Note the booklets, a la Sherlock.

CALENDAR SHERLOCKIANA

2008

October 24-26 - *Magna cum Murder Convention* sponsored by Ball State University in Muncie, IN. Visit www.magnacummurder.com or email magnacummurder@yahoo.com

November 1 - *The 33rd Annual Fall Gathering of The Pleasant Places of Florida*. The Rose and Crown pub. Seminole, FL. Contact Mike Bryan at

November 7 - 9 - *Re-examining Conan Doyle: Arthur Conan Doyle Symposium*, University of Regina, Regina, SK, Canada. Contact Dr. Nils Clausson, Dept. Of English, University of Regina, Regina, SK S4S 0A2, Canada or www.uregina.ca/hri/Conferences/conan_doyle_2008.shtml

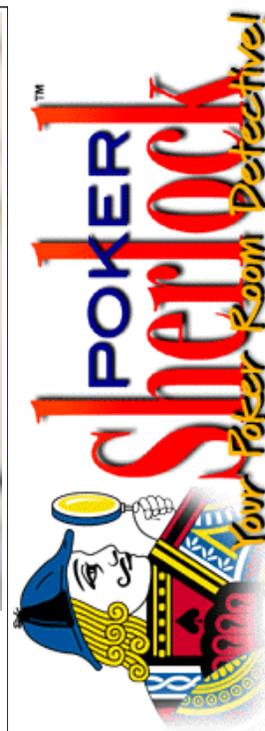
2009

January 8-11 - *BSI Weekend*

April 18-19 - *Gathering of Southern Sherlockians*. Presentations by scions from Atlanta, Birmingham, Nashville and Greenville. Focus on *Hound of the Baskervilles*. Contact Kent Ross at



Here's a pic of Robert Downey, Jr. in his role of Sherlock Holmes. We're hoping he's in disguise? Filming is taking place this month in London.



www.pokersherlock.com

Fall Gathering Of the Pleasant Places of Florida

A Scion Society of the Baker Street Irregulars

Saturday, November 1, 2008 • 11:30 am
Rose & Crown British Pub and Restaurant
12850 Walsingham Road, Largo, Florida

Join your fellow Sherlockians for a hearty British repast, good fellowship,
and vigorous debate and repartee on "The Adventure of the Stockbroker's Clerk."

Registration: \$5.00 per person
Luncheon will be off the menu according to your appetite.



Glancing at the haggard figure - From "The Adventure of the Stockbroker's Clerk"

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

I would like to: Make a toast Present a paper Make a presentation

Registration: _____

Donation to the Marshall/Wood Fund*: _____

Total: _____

*Funding the purchase and distribution of the Sacred Writings to Tampa Bay area libraries and schools.
Kindly post registration and remittance to: Wanda Dow,

The Pleasant Places of Florida

(founded in 1972)

Rev. Leslie Marshall, B.S.I. 1972-1977
Dr. Benton Wood, B.S.I. 1977 - 1988
Bill Ward, B.S.I. 1988 - 1999
Dr. Benton Wood, B. S.I. 1999 -1996
The Last Court of Appeals 1997 - present

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)

Carl Heifetz, Representative (both with the Servants and with the Tradespeople),

(Correspondent)

Wanda & Jeff Dow, The Papers on the Sundial,

(Communications and Bookkeeping)

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