**The Norbury Chronicle**

**newsletter of the Holmesian Studies SIG of American Mensa**

**since '88, Baker Street Irregulars scion since '95**

"Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed." (Mark 4:22)

XXIV May '01

Miscellaneous

We've upgraded from a word processor to a computer with a color scanner/printer. Although we do not yet have the many, many possibilities of the new technology, I hope you'll write (email) us your suggestions.

Searching the AxiomHome's telephone listings while surfing we found six Atlantas: Georgia (319,814(, Texas (5,222), Michigan (2,207), Indiana (998), Missouri (342), Louisiana (228), New York (216), Kansas (205), Nebraska (66) and Idaho (31). The reference in YELL could very well not be the one in Georgia.

Books

Among the stories presented in *The Misadventures of Sherlock Holmes* edited by Sebastian Wolfe, we find some old friends: Syaloch of the Street of Those Who Prepare Nourishment in Ovens in "The Martian Crown Jewels" by Poul Anderson, Dr. Verner in "The Anomaly of the Empty Man" by Anthony Boucher, Mr. Mycroft in "Mr. Montalba, Obsequist" by H. F. Heard.

Wolfe explains in his intro that there was "an earlier volume with the same title, edited by Ellery Queen in 1944, which he was unable to locate. In the Sherlock Holmes in LA catalog we see an autographed first edition that goes for $600.

In his book we also found the new-to-us "Singularge Experience of Miss Anne Duffield" by John Lennon apparently written in Anguish rather than English. "I find it recornered in my nosebook that it was a dokey and winnie dave toward the end of Marge in the ear of our Loaf 1892 in Much Bladder, a city of the North Wold." sounds vaguely like the opening of "The Adventure of Wisteria Lodge" (part 1), "The Singular Experience of Mr. John Scott Eccles": "I find it recorded in my notebook that it was bleak and windy day towards the end of March in the year of our Lord 1892." (WIST 1:A) The detective is Shamrock Womlbs and his sidekick, Doctored Whopper; the visitor, the escapee, Oxo Whitney; the Scotland Yard representative, Inspectre Basil; the victim, Mary Atkins; the murderer, Jack the Nipple (Sydnees Aspinall). The last line however's the most memorable: "...when he had mini-coopered he told me a story which to this day I can't remember."

*Victorian Conundrums: A 19th Century Puzzler* by Ken Russell and Philip Carter has some puzzles of interest to Mensans and even Holmesians.

(1) "Catch A Thief" asks "How many steps did the constable need to catch the thief?" given the thief was 27 steps ahead and that the thief took 8 steps to the constable's 5, while 2 of the constable's equal 5 of the theif's. Was the thief ahead 27 thief-steps by actual count or 27 constable-steps by distance estimate? The latter's the more difficult puzzle and the longer chase. Try to figure both ways.

The puzzles involving money help one think Britishly -- or just plain think.

[1 pound/sovereign = 4 crowns = 20 shillings = 240 pence = 960 farthings ≈ US$5, 2 days' room and board for 221B]

(2) If 1 pheasant, 2 ducks and 3 hens cost 4 pounds, 3 pheasants cost as much as 2 ducks and 3 hens and 3 hens as much as 2 ducks, what whould 1 duck, 1 duck and 1 hen each cost?

(3) Why are 1888 pennies worth more than 1887 pennies?

(4) Another asks to find 16 creatures hidden in "Kneel in the kayak grasping the boat, but don't wrench the bullion or scowl at the chart. Behind the taped and sealed planter is a benevolent collier. The foxglove is in the bath." (we found 19.)

(5) Another asks for words containing "nx". (We found 12, not including their "anxious".)

(6) Anagrams of a Charles Dickens novel: "noisy chicken ball", and another Victorian author, "the central robot".

(7) Most relevant to our group however would be "Murder in the Mansion". The murderer, one of the three visitors, Allen, Bixby and Crain, arrived later than at least one of the others. The detective, one of the three, arrived at midnight, earlier nthan atleast one of the others. Neither Allen or Bixby arrived after midnight. Of Bixby and Crain, the earlier was not the detective and of Allen and Crain, the later was not the murderer. Who was the murderer?

[Answers (read backward): NELLAEVITCETED (7), ETNORBETTOLRAHC,

 YBELKCINSALOHCIN (6), HSIXNIM, XNIM, NAMO WXNAM, NAMXNAM. XNAM, DEYEXNYL, SEXNYL, XNYL, GNIXNYL, SEXNIJ, DEXNIJ, XNIJ (5), TAAOB, PSA, KAY, LEE (4), EERHT, NEETNEVES, NEVENNAHTRETAERGSIECNEPRUOF,

 SGNILLHSNEETNEVES, SDNUOPNEVES 3. SGNILLHSNET, SGNILLNEETFIF,

 DNUOPENO 2. YAWREHTIEEVIFYTNEVES 1.]

The Ten Commandments of Mystery Writing

by Fr. Ronald A. Know [paraphrased]

I. Thou shalt not introduce the criminal early.

II. Thou shalt not invoke the supernatural or preternatural.

III. Thou shalt not bring in a second secret passage.

IV. Thou shalt not portray Chinese.

V. Thou shalt not portray Chinese.

VI. Thous shalt not invoke happey accidents or intuitions.

VII. Thou shalt not allow the criminal to be the detective.

VIII. Thou shalt not reveal all clues immediately.

IX. Thou shalt reveal all narrator's thoughts.

X. Thou shalt not write in unexpected twins or doubles.

More Oddities and Discrepancies

Who's Baxter, referred to by Holmes while quoting Bradford? (BOSC) Could it be Holmes' pre-Watson Watson? A classmate? A mentor? His confessor?

Who's the James referred to by Mary Watson? (TWIS) Our conjecture is that it is, not an early sign of Mary's later "brain fever", (Christopher Morley, 1940, Prof. H. W. Starr, 1946-7), notJohn'shypothetical brother (Bliss Austin, 1944), not a typo (John Hall, Jr., 1955), not the name of their stepson (Cecil Forrester'sson, A. Carson Simpson, 1958), not a pet name forthe Doctor (for Hamish, Dorothy Sayers, 1946; for James Boswell, Dr. Ebbe Curtis Hoff), not the name of Mary's first husband (Arthur K. Akens, 1960) or for their dog (Ralph A. Ashton, 1961), but of their son (*The Norbury Chronicle*, 1988).

The carbuncle comes in white, yellow, red, purple, green -- but not Riley and McAllister claim in The Bedside, Bathtub and Armchair Companion to Sherlock Holmes -- blue (BLUE). We do not think it too much of a challenge for the countess of Morcar's jeweler to combine yellow and green to simulate the highly coveted blue.

If not the New York City Police Department, what could the New York Police Bureau refer? (DANC) Perhaps a New York state branch of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, what our *American Educator Encyclopedia* calls "the most efficient detective force ever assembled in the United States"?

Why didn't Holmes use the telephone across the street since 1888 to call the Brixton Police or Admiralty (SIGN) rather than spend three days telegraphing Dundee? (BLAC) Perhaps he did try and had trouble with the telephone, the operator, the Brixton police, the Admiralty, a lost weekend? Any of which would have made for another adventure perhaps.

"How could Holmes and Watson run "two miles before stopping" across Hampstead Heath which is neither two miles long nor two miles wide?" is easily answered when one remebers that they presumed they were being pursued. (CHAR) They didn't run in a straight line, but in circles or zagzigs even, at least Watson would have and Holmes would have kept near.

Why didn't Holmes noticed McPherson's back was wet? (LION) Perhaps it was such lapses -- as well as the growing danger in London -- that Holmesretired to the coast.

What is "this Agency" to which Holmes refers? (SUSS) Is it the same as "Holmes' own small but very efficient organization"? (LADY) The now not-so-small and not-so-efficient organization is still the scions of the Baker Street Irregulars, us. Our *London Directory* (Sleuth Publications, Ltd.) lists Barker's, Francis Baird, Martin Hewitt, Moser's, Pascal Investigations, Pinkerton International and Tod's under "detective agencies" and also the Central News Agency. We suspect that this Agency would not be listed publically as such, a secret agency. It certainly subscribes to Knox's Commandment II. Gavin Brend asked, "Can the explanation have something to do with the missing year 1896?", the yearin which William S. Baring-Gould convincingly places SUSS. Perhapsit has something to do with the client in the case of Cardinal "Tosca" (identified by Francis Albert Young, 1964, as Luigi Cardinal Ruffo-Scilla, who died mysteriously May 29, 1895, who figures in the 1887 robbery of the Library of St. John the Beheaded, Lord Roxton, Prof. Challenger, Baron Marpertuis, Tir Ram, Sherringford Holmes, K'tear'ch, Shlangii and Rakshassi, but that's another story, (*All-Consuming Fire* by Andy Lane (1994))

A Holmesian Studies Chronology

1902 Frank Sidgewick's letter to *Cambridge Review* on "inaccuracies" in the *Canon*

1904 Andrew Lang

1911 Ronald Knox's analysis of Canon in the style of German Bible scholars

1931 *Doctor Watson: Prolegomena to the Study of a Biographical Problem* by Sydney Roberts (London: Faber & Faber, Ltd.)

1932 *Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson: The Chronology of Their Adventures* by Harold Wilmerding Bell (London: Constable & Co., Ltd.); Sherlock Holmes: Fact or Fiction by T. S. Blakeney (London: John Murray)

1933 *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* by H. Vincent Starrett (New York: Macmillan Co.), Christopher Morley

1934 *Baker Street Studies* by Harold Wilmerding Bell (London: Constable & Co., Ltd.)

1940 *221B: Studies in Sherlock Holmes* ed. by H. Vincent Starrett (New York: Macmillan Co.)

1944 *A Baker Street Four-Wheeler:* *16 Pieces of Sherlockiana* ed. by Edgar W. Smith (Maplewood, N. J. and New York: The Pamplet House), *Profile by Gaslight: An Irregular* *Reader about the Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* by Edgar W. Smith (New York: Simon & Schuster)

1945 *A Baker Street Folio* ed. by Edgar W. Smith (Morristown, N. J.: The Baker Street Irregulars, Inc.)

1946 *Unpopular Opinions* by Dorothy Sayers (London: Victor Gallanez), *Baker Street Journal*

1947 *An Irregular Chronology of Sherlock Holmes of Baker Street* by Jay Finley Christ (Chicago, Ill.: Fanlight House), *An Irregular Guide to Sherlock Holmes of Baker Street* by Jay Finley Christ (New York, N. Y.: The Pamphlet House and Argus Books), *Sherlockian Studies:* *Seven Pieces of Sherlockiana* ed. by Robert A. Cutter (Jackson Hts., N. Y.)

1949 *Studies in Sherlock Holmes* by Owen F. Grazebrook (reprinted in 1981 in New York, N. Y.: Magico Magazine)

1951 *My Dear Holmes: A Study in Sherlock* by Gavin Brend (London:George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.), *Sidelines on Sherlock Holmes* by James Montgomery (Philadelphia, Pa.)

1953 *Sherlock Holmes: Rare Book Collector* by Madeleine B. Stern (Sculte Publ.), *Holmes and Watson: A Miscellany* by Sydney C. Roberts (London, Eng.:Oxford University Press), *Sherlock Holmes' Wanderjahr: Fanget An!* by Syudney C. Roberts (Philadelphia, Pa.: International Printing Co.), *Shots from the Canon* by James Montgomery (Philadelphia), *Baker Street Chronology: Commentaries on the Sacred Writings of Dr. John H. Watson* by Dr. Ernest Bloomfield Zeisler (Chicago, Ill.: Alexander J. Isaacs)

1954 S*herlock Holmes' Wahderjahre: Post Huc Propter Huc Gabetque* by A. Carson Simpson (Philadelphia, Pa.: International Printing Co.)

1955 *Sherlock Holmes' Wanderjahr: In Farnen Land, Unnahbar Ruren,* *Schritten* by A. Carson Simpson (Philadelphia, Pa.: International Printing Co.), *The Chronological Holmes* by William S. Baring-Gould (New York, N. Y.), *Baker St. Chronology: Commentaries on the Sacred Writings of Dr. John H. Watson* by Ernest Bloomfield Zeisler (Chicago, Ill.: Alexander J. Isaacs)

1956 *A Sherlock Holmes Almanac* by Svend Petersen (Washington, D. C.), *Sherlock Holmes' Wanderjahre: Auf Der Erde Rucken Ruhrt' Ich Mich Viet* by A. Carson Simpson (Philadelphia, Pa.: International Printing Co.)

1957 *Exploring Sherlock Holmes* ed. by E. W. McDiarmid and Theodore C. Blegen (La Cross, Wisc.: The Sumac Press)

1958 *Incunabular Sherlock Holmes* by Edgar W. Smith (Morrison Co., N. J.; Baker Street Irregulars), *In the Steps of Sherlock Holmes* by Michael Harrison (London, Eng.: Cassell & Co., Ltd.)

1959 *Baker St. Byways: A Book About Sherlock Holmes* by by James E. Holroyd (London, Eng.: George Allen & Unwin), *An Irregular Anglo-American Glossary of More or Less Unfamiliar Words, Terms and Phrases in the Sherlock Holmes Saga* (Toranto: Castleotte & Zamba), *Introducing Sherlock Holmes* ed. by Edgar W. Smith (Morrostown, N. J.: The Baker Street Irregulars, Inc.)

1960 *I'm Off for Philadelphia in the Morning* by A. Carson Simpson (Philadelphia, Pa.: International Printing Co.), *The Third Cab: A Collection of Sherlockiana from the Files of the Speckled Band* (Boston, Mass.)

1962 *Sherlock Holmes, Esq. and John H. Watson M. D.: An Encyclopedia of Baker St.: A Life of the World's First Consulting Detective* by William S. Baring-Gould (New York, N. Y.: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc.)

1963 *London by Gaslight* (London, Eng.: Peter Davies), *Sherlock Holmes in Portrait and Profile* by Walter Klinefelter (Syracuse, N. Y.: Syracuse University Press)

1964 *Through the Years at Baker St: A Chronology of Sherlock Holmes* (Washington, N. J.), *The Man Who Was Sherlock Holmes* by Michael and Mollie Hardwick (London, Eng.: John Murray)

1967 *Seventeen Steps to 221B: Studies in Sherlock Holmes* ed. by Vincent Starrett, *World of Sherlock Holmes* by Michael Harrison, *World Bibliography of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson* by Ronald B. DeWaal (New York, N. Y.: Graphic Soc.)

1975 *Holmesian Clerihews* by Martin D. Dakin (Pontine Press), *The Public Life of Sherlock Holmes* by Michael Pointer (New York, N. Y.: Drake Publ.)

1977 *The Encyclopedia Sherlockiana or a Universal Dictionary of the State of Knowledge of Sherlock Homes and His Biographer John H. Watson, M. D.* by Jack Tracy (New York, N. Y.: Doubleday)