**The Norbury Chronicle**

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

"It is all surmise. But at least it covers all the facts." (YELL 121-122A)

Issue 1 June '88

Holmesian Studies Group Recognized

Ronald J. Roley, Special Interest Groups Officer, announced in his May *Bulletin* column entitled "Holmes is where the heart is" a newly recognized Holmesian Studies SIG with our own editor Michael Halm as coordinator.

"Halm lays responsibility for the group's formation on the recent centennial for "A Study in Scarlet" published in the Beaton Christmas Annual 1887. Halm lost his heart over 25 years ago to, as his not unbiased biographer wrote "him whom I shall ever regard as the best and the wisest man whom I have ever known". (FINA 137F)

[Editor's note: References to passages from the Writings are by convention referenced by a four-letter abbreviation, usually the first four letters from the first keyword in the title, followed by the paragraph number and a letter for the sentence. FINA 137F would mean the sixth sentence in the hundred thirty-fifth paragraph of "The Final Problem".]

"This first story began that series of 56 stories and four novels published over the next forty years known to Holmesians as 'the Canon' or 'the Writings'," Halm explains. "These helped make this most private of private detectives known to the reading public. Sir Arthur gave the world some knowledge of this detective, but also of its greatest mystery, the hunt for the true Sherlock Holmes.

"The intriguing aspect about the chronicling of Holmes cases is what was not written. 'The reader will excuse me, " Watson wrote, "if I conceal the date or any other fact by which he might trace the actual occurrence." (CHAS 1D) Holmesians don't. They ask 'Which college did Holmes and Victor Trevor attend?' In 'The Gloria Scott' Holmes only says, "He was the only friend I made during the two years I was at college.' (GLOR 11B) Was it a college at 'the university' in 'The Adventure of the Creeping Man', Prof. Presbury (CREE 1A), 'the famous Camford physiologist' (CREE 13C)? Was it the same college as that attended by Reginald Musgrave? (MUSG 19B, 20) How many schools did Holmes attend anyway?

"'Some, and not the least interesting, we're complete failures,' Watson wrote. 'A problem without a solution may interest the student, but can hardly fail to annoy the casual reader.' (THOR 1C-D) Holmesians are students, non-casual readers. The cases then mentioned, the disappearance of James Phillimore and the *Alicia* and the maddeningly remarkable worm of Isadora Persano, are just the sort of things Holmesians love.

"The apocryphal pieces, one lost, two suppressed and four others of questionable verosity, interest students. "The Lost Special" and "The Man With the Watches" do not specifically name Holmes, but do describe a self-confident amateur; they do have solutions, but alas not his.

"The significant trifles remembered after multiple readings prompt deducing, such as having the page boy Billy in 'The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone' put use of the wax dummy in spring 1894 (EMPT 24A) before his time, yet putting a 'Billy the page' also in *The Valley of Fear* during 'the early days at the end of the '80's.' (VALL 67A)We know therefore thatthere must have been two Billies, one perhaps fifteen years younger 'but very wise and tactful.' (MAZA 1C)

"We want to try to solve the mysteries between the lies: 'What happened to the older Billy? Was he too unwise and untactful? Where did the young Billy learn wisdom and tact? As messenger boy fornmysterious brother Mycroft of the Diogenes Club, 'the queerest club in London' (GREE 16A) perhaps? Was he 'a confederate ..., an ideal companion,' like Watson? (BLAN 1G) Did Holmes only choose Billies as page boys? If not, why did not Watson name the others?

"Did Billy write the third-person account of 'The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone' as G. B. Newton has proposed? Or did Mrs. Watson? (Christopher Morley) Dr. Watson? (Page Hellenbrand, Gavin Brend) Dr. Verner (O. F. Grazbrook) Lestrade? (S.T. L. Harbottle) Doyle? (Edgar W. Smith)

Fantastical films and dubious documents obscure

d the scholarship, but bolstered Holmes' popularity: "Sherlock Holmes" ('99), "Inconsistences of ..." ('02), "Sherlock Holmes: Fact or Fiction?" ('32), "Sherlock Holmes Faces Death" ('43), *The Misadventures of* ..." ('44), *Regarding* ... ('45), *The Exploits of* ... ('54), *The Private Life of* ... ('60), *Sherlock Holmes of Baker Street* ('62), *Sherlock Holmes: Ten Literary Studies* ('69), "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes' Smarter Brother" ('75), *Non-Canonical* ... ('76), *Son of Holmes* ('86), "Holmes and Me" ('88). Some have blatantly trifled with the significant. It's that sort of deviltry the SIG has been formed to oppose."

Halm has become well aquainted with both mysteries and fantasies. He has for 11 years coordinated the Fortean Mysteries SIG, continuing the investigations of Charles Fort and for 7 the Mythopoeic SIG on writings like that of the Inklings (J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis and Charles Williams).

"After a hundred years however much still remains a mystery about this master mystery solver," he says. "Largely due to the successors to 'the most powerful syndicate of criminals in Europe.' (FINA 61B) They have changed leadership several times since '91, but are still committing "petty thefts, wanton assaults, purposeless outrage" (NORW 4E), still behind more than half that is evil and nearly all that is undetected in the world.

"There has already been an encouraging response from Holmesians.In the SIG listing this September we will be offering subscriptions at $2 for 3 issues and then see how it goes from there. "The game is afoot." (ABBE 2B) The SIG has begun to share as believers "in God's own Wind and that cleaner, better, stronger land that will lie in the sunshine when the storm has cleared."

100 Years Ago

By June '88 only Watson's first story, "A Study in Scarlet" had been published, to which Holmes had commented, "Honestly, I cannot congratulate you." He could later -- much later -- change his attitude. With Watson's marriage he returned to practice medicine, buying out Old Mr. Farquhar's practice in Paddington. It had been three months since he visited his old bachelor friend and heard of the strange wedding of two grooms at St. Monica's. Now Holmes returned the visit, involving him in the impersonations of Hall Pycroft, 'Arthur Pinner','Mr. Harris' and 'Mr. Price'.

75 Years Ago

By June 1913 "Altamont" had infiltrated the Von Herling spy ring as a bitter Irish-American auto mechanic. After ten years he still had anothernyear's work on his *magum opus*, the most obstruse cryptogram and most intricate analysis: *The Practical Handbook on Bee Culture with Some Observations upon the Segregation of the Queen*.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Michael,

This is to introduce me to you. I am the original founder of Mensa's Sherlock Holmes SIG. It was founded in 1975. I could send you copies of the original issues of Mycroft's Messenger in exchange for your issues. The club was Sherlock Holmes SIG or Mycroft's Isolated CoMpanions -- dually chartered as a BSI scion.

Sincerely,

Dennis Kluk

Michael,

I see by the current Mensa Bulletin that you're trying to restore the Sherlock Holmes SIG. All good luck with that. I took your predecessor up on his suggestion of doing an astrological analysis of Holmes and Watson, both individually and as a team. If you want to follow up on that, I'll be glad to send something in.

Dale Neiburg

[Actually, Dale, this is classified as a new SIG rather than a restoration of an old SIG. More Holmesian and less Sherlockian, with more discussion of crime, mysteries and mystery writing is how I envision it.

Care to send in your input on such a topic, friends? Or another? I've read that Prediction did an analysis some time ago, but since controversy about the year, month and day -- even the decade -- in which Holmes was born continues, I wonder what such ann analysis could show. I'd like some reader response on this to make the best choice. What do you want?]

Dear Mr. Halm,

I note the account of the formation of the Holmesian Studies SIG on page 16 of the Mensa *Bulletin*. I was a member of Mycroft's Isolated Companions and am still not quite sure what happened to it.

Enclosed are the first three issues of the Deal Table, the newsletter of the Fragile Philophical Instruments of Sherlock Holmes, which is both a scion society of the Baker Street Irregulars and the first SIG formed in the International Society for Philosophical Enquiry (The ISPE is another high-IQ society, which sometimes advertises in the Mensa *Bulletin*. It is also known as "the Thousand".)

Would you be interested in exchanging newsletters?

Sherlogically yours,

Raymond L. Holly

"Bunsen Burner"

[R. J. Roley, retiring SIGs officer, wrote back in january when I asked, "The coordinator ran out of steam, I guess. He's been looking for someone to take over, but the last I heard had no success." I received no answer from Jared Towler.]

**"If I ... comprehend all mysteries ...**

**but have not love, I am nothing."** (1 Cor 13:2)

Classifieds

**PERSONALS**

NEEUQ EHTFO NOITA GERGE SEHTN OPUSN OITAV RESBO EMOSH TIWER UTLUC EEBNO KOOBD NAHLA CITCA RPEHT --- Box 101

As of this date the person formerly known as Guru Mahanimshi of Mindak will be known as William Christian Sigerson.

James, all is forgiven. Please com home. We love you. -- the Phillamores

Thank you, St. Jude!

**SERVICES**

Loved ones lost? Need answers? Contact Norbury Investigative Consultants 1-800-GOTCHYA. e-mail, videographer, couriers, escorts, plain-clothed and uniformed agents

Want to get away for a while? Come visit restful Roxford Sanatarium. You may never leave. Contact Dr. Percy Trevelyan, 666 Brook St., Cavendish Sq., London

**PUBLICATIONS**

*Mpossibilities*, newsletter of the Fortean Mysteries SIG, 2439 Kremer Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45225 ($3/4 issues)

*The Sherlock Holmes Review*, 3209 E. 10th St. #8C, Bloomington, IN 45401 ($8/4 issues)

*The Cauldron*, newsletter of the Mythopoeic SIG, 2439 Kremer Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45225 ($4/5 issues)

*Canadian Holmes*, 47 Manor Rd., W. Toronto, Ont. M5P 1E6, Canada ($8/yr)

*The Baker St. Journal*, Fordham University, University Box L, Bronx, NY 10458 ($12.50/yr)

*Baker St. Miscellanea*, The Sciolist Press, P. O. Box 2579, Chicago, IL 60960 ($10/yr)