**The Norbury Chronicle**

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

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

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New Books

Books about, in the manner of and on the Master continue to thrive. Judy Wolfsohn has *Sherlock Holmes Wordsearch Vol. 1* at club discounts (for example one free for buying the Baker St. dozen). Gasogene Press, Ltd., has *London by Gaslight* by Michael Harrison and also his *Immortal Sleuth*. It offers *Good Old Index* by William Goodrich and *The Ragged Shaw* by John Bennett Shaw and three by David L. Hammer: *The Game Is Afoot*, its sequel *For the Sake of the Game* and *The Twenty-second Man*. Coming in the spring, they promise Studies in Scarlet, new monographs by Ball, Harrison, Hardwick, etal. with an intro by Dame Jean herself.

The whole library of nine books would put a Holmesian out (in U. S. funds) some $175. If you haven't the funds, why not put a suggestion in your local library's suggestion box? Let them know your reading wants. (For that matter, let us know your wants: quizzes? wordsearches? cipher? mini-mysteries? serializations?)

Old Tales

The do intrigue the more-than-casual reader of Watson's canonical writings. When we read of"queer things ... strange coincidences" (IDEN 1C), "all that is bizarre and outside the conventions and humdrum routine of everyday life" (REDH 8B), "all that is strange and bizarre" (IDEN 4C), "tending towards the unusual and even the fantastic" (SPEC 1A), we naturally want all.

Here's a list of the cases mentioned by Watson in the telling of better known cases [Please write us of any omissions, if you find any.] and the story wherein it's mentioned:

Abbey School (BLAN), Aberdeen (VALL), Abergavenny murder (PRIO), Abernetty business (SIXN), Abraham threat (LADY), Addleton tragedy (GOLD), Aluminum crutch (MUSG), Amateur Mendicant Society (FIVE), Arnsworth Castle (SCAN), Camberwell poisoning (FIVE), Carere disappearance (HOUN), Col. Carruthers (WIST), Coptic patriarchs (RETI), Crosby death (GOLD), Darlinton substitution scandal (SCAN), Dowson's capital case (MAZA), Dundas separation (IDEN), Farintosh tiara (SPEC), Ferrers documents (PRIO), Folkestone Ct. murder attempt (HOUN), Forresters' complication (SIGN), *Friesland* (NORW), Grafebstein murder attempt (LAST), Grosvenor Sq. furniture van case (NOBL), Hammerford will (SOLI), Harold death (MAZA), Hobbs' problem (REDC), Holland royalty (SCAN), Huret murders (GOLD), Khalifa (EMPT), Lhassa (EMPT), Maberley (3GAB), Manor House (GREE), Matilda Briggs (SUSS), Mecca (EMPT), Monpellier (EMPT), Netherland-Sumatra (REIG), Paradol chamber (FIVE), Persano (THOR), Phillimore disappearance (THOR), politician, the lighthouse and the trained cormorant (VEIL), Ricolettis (MUSG), Russian woman (MUSG), Saunders (BLAN), Scandinavian king (NOBL), Smith-Mortimer succession (GOLD), *Sophy Anderson* (FIVE), Staunton murders (MISS), Tankervill Club scandal (FIVE), Tarleton murders (MUSG), Tired Captain adventure (NAVA), Cardinal Tosca death (BLAC), Upwood exposé (HOUN), Vamberry (MUSC), Vatican cameo (HOUN), Warburton (ENGR), Wilson (BLAC), Woodhouse (BRUC).

Letters

J. A. Munson writes on the [yes, it is still continuing] Giant Rat Contest:: "The best and the wisest of the Holmesian short stories come from the Adrian Conan Doyle/John Dickerson Carr collections. The Last one, "The Adventure of the Red Widow" has always been my favorite non-ACD Holmes short story. [You do mean Arthur Conan Doyle here for ACD, don't you?] (Who can resist Himself playing 'Auld Lang Syne' on the violin on a snowy New Year's Eve?), but if others are supporting "The Adventure of the Highgate Miracle, I should be glad to vote for it, to help insure one of the Exploit stories win.

For the best novel, head and shoulders above the rest, *The Last Sherlock Holmes Story* by Michael Dibdin. Excellent, truly excellent; Holmes was never more brilliant, nor Watson ever more noble. The story is a heart-breaker; in all my years of diligent Holmesian reading I have never found its equal.

For the worst short story, I guess I'll have to pass. I've read a few annoying ones, but never any flat obnoxious ones. In novels, however, I have not been so lucky. I loudly proclaim *An East Wind Coming* by Arthur Byron Cover as worst. Not only is it incomprehensible, but it treats us with Holmes talking about, well, things Holmes certainly wouldn't talk about. The book goes out of its way to be offensive, and succeeds.

Dishonorable mention goes to *The Private Life of Dr. Watson* by Michael Hardwick. If you thought *Prisoner of the Devil* was awful. *PLODW* should re-define the word. Mr. Hardwick manages to make Dr. Watson both over-sexed and boring at the same time, a feat I had not considered possible."

Donald Izban writes about the book he's working on for Gasogene on Holmesian groups, a "guide for the scion-hearted".

[I must admit that until beginning this SIG and The Norbury Chronicle I had no clue to the extent of Holmesiana. But as another writer once is said to have said: "From a drop of water a logician could infer the possibility of an Atlantic or a Niagara with without having seen or heard of one or the other." So too I knew of the possibility of a vast number of other Holmes-lovers. Now it's more than a mere possibility!]

Michael Antonucci writes: "Thank you for the newsletter. Please consider me a new member of the Holmesia SIG. As for ideas and suggestions, you can expect more of these in time. But for starters, how about a list of those cases which Watson mentioned, but never wrote about?" [Good idea, Michael. See this issue.]

Bobbye Crawford writes: "I would term myself a serious Sherlockian who hopes to be a scholarly one someday."

Patrick Slaney writes: "I happened to notice in Porlock's article on the Dancing Men cipher the interesting pattern that the word "WIZARD" makes, being made up as it is of three mirror image pairs. If the figure he assigned to "X" were "D" it would be a perfect palindrome. Old Patrick of Chicago didn't want it to be too easy, I guess.

Has anyone tried to put the figures together into a dance? It would, it seems, require some head- and hand-standing: the dis-Joint?