

THE TWEET SHEET



The occasional newsletter of **The Notorious Canary-Trainers** of Madison, Wisconsin
A Scion of the Baker Street Irregulars • communities.madison.com/canary

July 2006

Issue 2006-4



IT'S 'THE FINAL PROBLEM' FOR OUR FINAL MEETING OF 2006.

"The Final Problem" will be our case study for December, when we meet Dec. 10. That's a week earlier than our normal pattern because of the holidays. Both the story and the meeting date have been confirmed since our last issue, as is the meeting location for both November and December - Booked for Murder on University Ave. All the rest will be held at Barnes & Noble West. Here's the complete schedule, then, for the remainder of 2006:

□ **July 16** "The Engineer's Thumb" □ **August 20** "Crooked Man" □ **September 17** "Wisteria Lodge" □ **October 15** "Silver Blaze" □ **November 19** "Beryl Coronet" □ **December 10** "Final Problem"

Upcoming meetings and events of the Notorious Canary-Trainers now are being posted online on the Sherlockian Calendar at <http://sherlockiancalendar.homestead.com/> Right now it lists our meetings through January 2007. The manager of the Sherlockian Calendar says the Web site is aimed at helping Sherlockians who are traveling and might like to connect with other Sherlockians, are scheduling Sherlockian events to avoid conflicts, or "are just curious." If you haven't visited the site before, you may wish to check it out, particularly if you're traveling around the U.S.



INTRODUCING FOUR MORE CANONICAL CHARACTERS.

We welcome four additional Canonical characters to our midst, including a mother-daughter pair,, each of whom is being remembered by members of the Notorious Canary-Trainers who now bear their names. This brings our list of those holding Canonical names to 15 since this new feature of the Notorious Canary-Trainers began April 10 of this year.

Christine Soder has chosen Hilda Adair, while **Louise Soder** has chosen Lady Maynooth. Both Canonical characters appear in "The Adventure of the Empty House."

Christine relates that her mother, Louise, "searched The Encyclopedia Sherlockiana for a mother/daughter pair. She found only a few mentioned so we decided on these women."

"Better to have had an honorable son rather than a snob like Lord St. Simon, even if that would make Louise a duchess.

"The story and characters in 'The Empty House' hold no particular significance for us except Louise has eye problems and Lady Maynooth came to England for cataract surgery." And Christine also offers this useful advice: "I still prefer to be called Christine but from now on mom wishes to be addressed as Her Ladyship or Lady Louise." So noted.

Bill Ernst has chosen Sgt. Tuson from "The Stockbroker's Clerk" and **Resa Haile** has selected Violet Hunter, from "The Copper Beeches." We look forward to their explanations as to the reasons for their selections.



AFTERWORD ON 'THE NAVAL TREATY'.

Our case study for May, "The Naval Treaty," included an observation by Holmes about boarding schools being "lighthouses." A May 30 article in The Guardian, from the United Kingdom, indicates those lighthouses may be going dim and disappearing, at least in the guise that Sherlock Holmes knew them.

In "Victorian value," Mark Gould reports on moves "to preserve historic schools from today's remorseless" building program. It begins:

"Arthur Conan Doyle, speaking through his alter ego, Sherlock Holmes, likened redbrick Victorian board schools to lighthouses. 'Beacons of the future! Capsules with hundreds of bright little seeds in each, out of which will spring the wise, better England of the future', Holmes says. "But the demands of the modern curriculum, coupled with one the biggest school building programmes since the Victorian age, are putting many of these schools at risk of demolition...."

For the rest of the article, go to <http://education.guardian.co.uk/egweekly/story/0,,1785310,00.html>



JUNE A BIRTHDAY -- OF SORTS -- FOR THE BSI. On June 5 in 1934, Christopher Morley convened the first dinner meeting of the Baker Street Irregulars at Christ Cella's restaurant at 144 East 45th Street in NYC (with an emphasis here on "dinner"). Eight Irregulars attended. It is this function that is celebrated by many in the BSI as the official start.

However, the latest issue of the Baker Street Journal (Spring 2006) contains an interesting article by Paul Singleton stating the case for the first actual get-together six months earlier, on Jan. 6, at the Hotel Duane at 237 Madison Avenue (still standing today under another name). The gathering apparently was confined to drinks around the bar to celebrate Holmes' birthday anniversary.

Still, discussion at the gathering, according to Christopher Morley in his Saturday Review of Literature column "The Bowling Green" of Jan. 27, 1934, included the creation of official toasts -- to "The Woman," "Mrs. Hudson," "Mycroft." "The Second Mrs. Watson," "The game is afoot!" and "The second most dangerous man in London." Those remain BSI toasts to this day. The Constitution of the Baker Street Irregulars, prepared by famed radio newscaster Elmer Davis, followed in the Feb. 17 "Bowling Green" column.

The Hotel Duane is now Morgans Hotel, and the room where that first meeting took place was in what now is known as "Morgans bar" but then was called the "Grille Room."



ALL 14 RATHBONE 'HOLMES' MOVIES IN NEW COLLECTION. The "Complete Sherlock Holmes Collection" was released June 27, featuring all 14 of the Basil Rathbone-Nigel Bruce films on five DVD's. The retail price is \$129.98, but check your favorite online DVD sites and stores for price comparisons.)

Several of the movies have been available on VHS and DVD's in the discount bins for several years, but others have been harder to find. Most of the movies have been restored for this edition.

The collection just happened to be released in the same month as Basil Rathbone's birthday -- on June 13. Rathbone -- who IS Sherlock Holmes for many fans who grew up with these movies -- was born Philip St. John Basil Rathbone in Johannesburg, South Africa in 1892



FROM THE WIRES AND WIRELESS...

This year's **Canonical Convocation and Caper** will take place in Door County, Wis., on Sept. 15-17; there's a web-site at <www.cccdooorcounty.com>, or you can request additional information from Jane Richardson, 3427 East Exchange Street, Crete, IL 60417. On that Saturday the famous 'Sherlockathon' will be run. A combination rally/scavenger hunt/quiz for teams, it has been the centerpiece of the CCC since its inception. Various quizzes and contests will also be held throughout the weekend, beginning on Friday before the formal opening. The venue will again be the Waterbury Inn in Ephraim.

Our counterpart scion, the Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota, has scheduled its next Sherlock Holmes conference for July 6-8, 2007 in the Twin Cities. The conference is held only once every three years, and usually attracts one or more members of the Notorious Canary-Trainers. More details will be announced. The theme will be "Victorian Secrets and Edwardian Enigmas"; the contact is Julie McKuras (13512 Granada Avenue, Apple Valley, MN 55124

Observations on "Sherlock Holmes: The Last Adventure," produced by the Milwaukee Repertory Theater.

By Christian Neuhaus

My main interest in seeing the play was to see Lee Ernst, who's one of the area's top actors, in the role. While he didn't resemble the physical description of Holmes, he was very convincing in attitude and personality. In fact, I liked all of the performances. Torrey Hanson played Watson as a worthy and competent associate. I liked James Pickering as Moriarty: a villainous manner without being melodramatic, menacing voice, and good chemistry with Holmes.

The plot was a combination of *A Scandal in Bohemia* and *The Final Problem*: it opens with Holmes telling Watson about the Moriarty threat and the approaching conclusion of their struggle, Holmes takes on the King of Bohemia's case as a "final adventure," and learns that Moriarty's influence extends even to the Adler problem. There are recognizable elements from both stories: "I am lost without my Boswell," the interchange between Holmes and Moriarty, the quick marriage ceremony where a disguised Holmes was a witness, the clergyman disguise, and Reichenbach Falls. The play gave an explanation as to why Holmes had to wait for a certain day to close the net on Moriarty: police department red tape and a need to catch the entire Moriarty gang at once.

There were some extras, too, some pulled from other stories and some original. Based on the position of Irene Adler's farewell note in a cabinet, Holmes deduces that she was abducted. Moriarty sets a trap in a cellar that Holmes seemingly walks into. The romantic implications of the Irene Adler - Sherlock Holmes relationship were made explicit in this play, and Irene accompanies Holmes and Watson on their flight to Europe. When Irene suggests to Holmes that maybe he should talk to her about things other than his monograph on tobacco ash or the various kinds of pipes he uses, Holmes gives the moss rose speech from *The Adventure of the Naval Treaty*. The King of Bohemia had a larger part, primarily for (effective) comic relief. The play also features Holmes taking cocaine but like many dramatizations, it disregards Holmes' claim in *The Sign of Four* that he doesn't need the drug when he's mentally engaged.

There were some fun visual things going on, like Holmes applying the clergyman disguise and creating a chemical concoction center stage and Watson consulting Holmes' index, which was thirteen rows and two columns of card catalog-type drawers that went up the wall. The Reichenbach duel was staged dramatically and effectively. Interestingly, the iconic deerstalker and Inverness outfit was not part of the play.

The script was closer in tone and content to the original stories than to a modern drama, in that it didn't raise any challenging or provocative themes or ideas. (The Holmes play that the Madison Repertory Theater did a while ago, *Sherlock's Last Case*, was more provocative but it made some problematic assertions about Holmes' character.) The script doesn't speculate on the characters' backgrounds beyond what's in the text (no explanations about why Holmes *really* has that attitude towards women, for example), which is probably a good thing. I expect this is a kind of script that a community theater group like the Madison Theater Guild or talented high school drama department could mount a good production of. It's great to see a Holmes story dramatized with such high-caliber actors, but I don't know if I would insist that people pay the full \$50 ticket price. If someone had never read a Holmes story before I would probably recommend that they read a couple of stories before they see the play, since there's an almost overwhelming amount of Holmes stuff going on.

I'll conclude with one of the most interesting lines associated with the play, which wasn't a line of dialogue but an observation from playwright Steven Dietz: "Holmes is unredeemable as a man, without Watson; Watson is unremarkable as a man, without Holmes."

Additional thoughts from the playwright:

<http://www.milwaukeeerep.com/season/moreinfo.holmes.htm>

The August 15 "Tuesdays with Murder" program at the Baraboo Public Library focuses on "The Master Sherlock Holmes." The assignment is to come having read one novel and at least one short story. The group is lead by the Librarian and Canary-Trainer Richard MacDonald ("Inspector Alec MacDonald") and meets the third Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. in the Library Program Room unless noted. Anyone is welcome to drop in on any of the meetings,

Thom Boykoff ("Godfrey Norton, Esquire") missed our June 18 meeting as he traveled to the West Coast where his son received his Ph. D. degree June 16 at the University of California-Santa Cruz. Thanks to Richard MacDonald for filling in at the meeting in Thom's absence.

Minutes of our May and June meetings have been prepared by Joan Penn ("Irene Adler") (May) and Richard MacDonald (June) and are available at both our madison.com Web site and Yahoo Group. Thanks to both for providing this record.

The current (Spring) issue of the Baker Street Journal takes a lengthy look at "The Adventure of Shoscombe Old Place" in an article entitled "Shoscombe Through the Looking-Glass," by Sonia Fetherston. It's the featured article of the month at the Baker Street Journal Web site, which means it's the one article made available to non-subscribers from the current edition to review. You can read it online at <http://www.bakerstreetjournal.com/currentissue/shoscombealice.html>

Sherlock, the magazine, is making another go at it after several incarnations that were none to successful since the departure of David Stuart Davies and, it appears, a suspension in publication. He's now returning. You can decide for yourself whether you're interested in this new -- or new old -- version by checking out <http://www.sherlockholmes.com/> Sherlockian Don Hobbs from our counterpart group in Peoria, Ill., provides more background at this link on the changes: <http://www.sherlockpeoria.net/ManiacCollector/Maniac2006/ManiacColl052106.html> Still to be determined is whether the publication will be on any newsstands in Madison anytime soon.

The June issue of Scuttlebutt from Spermaceti Press now is available online at <http://members.cox.net/sherlock1/most.txt> Past issues of the journal, which covers all things Sherlockian, are available at <http://members.cox.net/sherlock1/scuttle.htm>

Think you're up to checkmating Sherlock Holmes? We've received word of a British firm that has produced a Sherlock Holmes chess set. As noted Sherlockian Chris Redmond reports after viewing it, it's not the first such set but may well be among the most striking. Take a look at <http://www.chessbaron.co.uk/chess-ST2002.htm>

The internet search engine Google honored Arthur Conan Doyle on his birthday anniversary, May 22, with the modified company logo you see to the right. For some of its other holiday-themed logos, go to <http://www.google.com/holidaylogos.html>



DIFFERENT WAYS TO RECEIVE THE TWEET SHEET. If we don't have your email address and you'd like to help us save money by allowing us to send you a copy of the Tweet Sheet via email, let us know what address to use. We also can notify you of last-minute meeting changes, etc., the same way. We'll also have a few printed copies of the latest issue available at each of our meetings for visitors and copies of the current and past recent issues otherwise will be available from our madison.com Web site and Yahoo Group.

There's now also a way to get the Tweet Sheet by regular mail if you don't have email or easy access to the Internet. Anyone who would like copies of the Tweet Sheet mailed to them should let Mike McCoy have a self-addressed stamped #10 envelope for the next issue. When you receive an issue in the mail, send Mike another self-addressed stamped envelope -- or send him several at one time and he'll use the supply until all are gone. (He will remind you when he's using the last envelope you supplied.)

To nominate items for publication, send them to mikemccoy1852@yahoo.com or Tweet Sheet Editor, One Hiawatha Circle, Madison, WI 53711. This and future editions of this publication will be posted in our Web site archives. For information: Thom Boykoff 608/833-3369 □ Mike McCoy 608/274-1638