

March 2009 Volume 13 Number 1

Sherlock Holmes



"Your merits should be publicly recognized" (STUD)

Francine and Wayne Swift

By Peter E. Blau, ASH, BSI

t has been said that marriages between two Sherlockians are the most permanent. Many Sherlockians have found it easy enough to persuade a spouse to enjoy the Sherlockian world, but when two people who already are Sherlockians marry they will sooner or later merge their collections, as well as their lives. And there is no custody battle, whether over the car, the house, the pets, or the children, that can possibly match the difficulty of dividing a collection that has no duplicates.

So for two Sherlockians it's a matter only of the better, and never the worse. That certainly was true of Wayne B. Swift and Francine Morris, who were Sherlockians when they met for the first time. Francine started her Sherlockian life in Texas, where she was a librarian; she founded The Sub-Librarians Scion of the Baker Street Irregulars in the



Wayne and Francine Swift

American Library Association, and was one of the founders of The Practical, But Limited, Geologists at an informal luncheon in the Zodiac Room at Nieman Marcus in Dallas. When she moved to Washington she quickly became a member of The Red Circle, and was one of the ringleaders in planning the society's fullfledged costume party at the National Press Club.

Wayne was from Nebraska, an electrical engineer and a teacher, and an early convert to the world of com-

puters. When he moved to Washington he decided to take an adult-education course in Sherlock Holmes at a local community college and soon attended his first Sherlockian function, a running of The Silver Blaze (Southern Division) at Pimlico Race Track in Maryland, where he and Francine quickly discovered they shared more than an interest in Sherlock Holmes. They courted , and wed, and had many happy years together, sharing a multitude of interests, Sherlockian and otherwise.

Wayne became a member of The Baker Street Irregulars in 1978 (as "The Giant Rat of Sumatra"). Francine became a member of The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes in 1977 (as "Hatty Doran") and was honored by the BSI as The Woman in 1983, and awarded her Irregular Shilling and Investiture in 1994 (as "The Wigmore Street Post *Continued on page 6*



The March 2008 issue of this newsletter featured an article about *The Flag*, published in 1908, which benefitted the Union Jack Club. One of the entries in *The Flag* was Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Grey Dress – Unpublished Dialogue from 'A Duet."

The following year, in 1909, The Press Album was published to aid the Journalists' Orphan Fund, and as he had done the previous year, Conan Doyle stepped forward with a contribution. The book, edited by Thomas Catling and published by John Murray, has an introductory note which gives the history of the Fund. It began in "1892 with a gift of £1,000 by the late Lord Glenesk and £500 by the late Sir John Willox...Working pressmen throughout the country commenced contributions, and in the same year the first orphan was adopted." The reader is assured that "Every penny contributed to the Fund, from its beginning seventeen years ago, has been devoted to the keep and education of the orphans...Avoiding any expenditure on bricks and mortar, the principle laid down was that of saving the child to its home and its home to the child."

Thomas Catling edited *The Press Album*. Born September 23, 1838, he worked for *Lloyd's Weekly News*, as a compositor, writer, news editor from 1866 through 1884, then editor from 1884 through 1907. The Scoop Database, subscription biographical dictionary of British and Irish journalists from the period of 1800 – 1950, indicates he extended the circulation of the paper beyond London and was reputed to be the first to use the automobile for "journalistic purposes." Catling was active in the Institute of Journalists and traveled extensively through America, Canada, the Middle East and Europe, including France during World War I. He served as a delegate to the Conference of the International Association of Journalists at Berlin in 1908, and later as President of the British International Society of Journalists during 1915. He passed away on December 25, 1920.

Catling's name also appears in conjunction with The Savage Club of London. Founded in 1857, the members come from the worlds of art. drama, law, literature, music or science. Former members have included notables such as Charlie Chaplin, Mark Twain, Wilkie Collins, James McNeill Whistler, Sir Alexander Fleming, W. S. Gilbert, Sir Henry Irving, Dante Rossetti, Dylan Thomas, Herbert Beerbohm Tree, Edgar Wallace and Peter Ustinov. It is currently located at 1 Whitehall Place, London and their website indicates it "remains one of the leading Bohemian Gentleman's Clubs in London."

In 1882, the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII, became an honorary member of the Club. He enjoyed the atmosphere and suggested that a masonic lodge would be a good addition to the facilities. On December 3, 1886, Catling wrote to the Grand Secretary of United Grand Lodge, enclosing an "imposing group of petitioners," proposing that a new lodge be founded for the approximately 25% of the membership who were Masons. On January 18, 1887, The Savage Club Lodge was consecrated at Freemasons' Hall and Sir Henry Irving was invested as Treasurer. There is no longer a formal connection between the Lodge and the Club.

After his retirement from *Lloyd's Weekly News*, Catling undertook the editing task for *The Press Album*. The table of contents for this 224 page illustrated book includes works by Alfred Noyes, Arthur Morrison, Rosamund Marriott-Watson, Eden Phillpotts, John Galsworthy, F. Anstey and Jerome K. Jerome, to name but a few of the contributors. Page 20 features the poem "By the North Sea" by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. It is a short poem, and there is a facsimile of the last stanza as written by Conan Doyle.

Her cheek was wet with North Sea spray, We walked where tide and shingle meet, The long waves rolled from far away To purr in ripples at our feet. And as we walked it seemed to me That three old friends had met that day: The old old sky, the old old sea, And love, which is as old as they.

Out seaward hung the brooding mist, We saw it rolling, fold on fold, And marked the great Sun Alchemist Turn all its leaden edge to gold. Look well, look well, oh lady mine! The grey below, the gold above; For so the greyest life may shine All golden in the light of love.

The Press Album added over £1000 to the Institute of Journalists Orphan Fund.

Christy Allen, who contributes frequently to the ConanDoyle (ACD) list on the Internet, is interested in Conan Doyle's poetry. She wrote:

I've tried to do some research about the poem proper and how/why it was written, but have come up empty.

What I did learn was that it was almost certainly written when Jean was pregnant with Denis (who was born in March of 1909, just one month before *The Press Book* was published).

According to Doyle's own correspondence (from *A Life in Letters*), this was a worrisome time. Jean was pregnant with her first child at age 34 and Doyle was worried about her



Collections of writings by scion societies have long been a staple of Sherlockian scholarship. Starting with The Second Cab, by the Speckled Band of Boston in 1947, and The Best of the Pips, by the Five Orange Pips of Westchester County in 1955, societies across the country have made valuable contributions to the "writings about the writings." Other early collections were the Illustrious Clients [of Indianapolis] Case-Book in 1948 and its follow-up volume, The Illustrious Clients Second Case-Book in 1949, and our own Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota's Sherlock Holmes Master Detective in 1953 and Exploring Sherlock Holmes in 1957. Not least among these scion publications is Leaves from The Copper Beeches, produced by The Sons of the Copper Beeches of Philadelphia (informally, the Sons) in 1959.

Leaves from The Copper Beeches was co-edited by Ames Johnston, Thomas Hart, Henry A. Shalet, and H.W. Starr, all active members of the Sons who penned contributions for the volume. The book was published by Livingston Pub. Co. of Narberth, Pennsylvania in a limited edition of 500 numbered copies. The Sherlock Holmes Collections at the University of Minnesota now holds numbers 152, 158, 193 and 331, from the former collections of John Bennett Shaw (two copies), Howard Haycraft and W.T. (Bill) Rabe.



Illustration of Holmes at Oxford by H.W. Starr in *Leaves from The Copper Beeches*

The book opens with Robert Aucott's dedicatory poem to the late James (Jim) Montgomery, a popular member of the Sons who had died in 1955. The poem evokes memories of Montgomery's celebrated singing of "Aunt Clara" at the group's meetings. Next comes Thomas Hart's ten-year history of the scion (its entire history at the time). Hart relates that the Sons' first formal meeting was held on December 8, 1947; many Norwegian Explorers will observe that this was a mere six weeks before the first formal meeting of our scion on January 15, 1948. Mr. Hart praises those in the Sons' early years who kept thorough records of meetings and other goings on of the society, providing him with documentation and anecdotes from which to weave his history. He points out that early members of the Sons had made significant contributions to the writings about the writings, chiefly (James) Montgomery's Christmas Annuals and (A. Carson) Simpson's Sherlockian Studies.

Among the pieces that follow in the book's 134 pages are some works of serious scholarship – including T.S. Blakeney on the location of "The Three Students" (Oxford, says Blakeney) some light-hearted scholarship, including Winifred M. Christie's identification of her candidate for "that little thing of Chopin's" played by Madame Norman-Neruda, inspiring Holmes in A Study in Scarlet to "[carol] away like a lark" (score provided) - and several pastiches (some better than others). Of note is a tongue-in-cheek account of a Baker Street Irregulars (BSI) meeting at the Murray Hill Hotel in New York City as seen through the eyes of the hat check girl and the assistant cashier at the hotel - by Edgar W. Smith, "Buttons" (leader) of the BSI. The Appendix is an "Excerpt from the Condensed Version of the By-Laws" of the Sons, so lengthy and overblown that it clearly must actually be a complete listing of the pixyish by-laws, with "excerpt" and "condensed" being used ironically.



Melody line from Chopin's Study in A Minor, Opus 25, No. 11, identified by Winifred M. Christie as "that little thing of Chopin's," as printed in *Leaves from The Copper Beeches*

As one measure of the high standing of the book's contributors, three of them have been subjects of 50 Years Ago columns in previous issues of this newsletter: A. Carson ("Deak") Simpson in Volume 7 Number 4 (December 2003), Page Heldenbrand in Volume 12 Number 1 (March 2008) and Edgar W. Smith in Volume 12 Number 2 (June 2008).

Co-editor H.W. (Bill) Starr, who provided the whimsical illustrations found throughout the book as well as an article in which he adroitly identifies Professor Moriarty with Captain Nemo of Jules Verne's Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea, likely had more to do with the book – behind the scenes – than he is given credit for in the acknowledgments or table of contents. In his Irregular Crises of the Late 'Forties (The Baker Street Irregulars: New York, 1999), Jon Lellenberg writes "The story of The Sons of the Copper Beeches, certainly its first thirty years, is largely the story of H.W. Starr" (239). Lellenberg goes on to give us a picture of Starr as an inspired and inspiring leader with profound organizational skills leavened with wit and a ribald sense of humor. An example that reveals both traits is shown in the detailed instructions Starr prepared for his successor as Headmastiff, Jack Koelle, to help him prepare for the group's annual meeting and dinner. Regarding the liquor to be procured before the event, "Starr listed not only quantities but brands. The instructions called for three quarts of martinis, but with the illuminating caveat that if two particular members were to be absent, two quarts would be enough" (248). "The instructions also called for one Continued on page 8

From the President

he 75th Anniversary of the Baker Street Irregulars was celebrated in January in New York City. One of the Birthday Weekend activities was a visit to Roslyn, Long Island and the grave of the Baker Street Irregulars founder Christopher Morley. I enjoyed meeting with many of our Friends. I'm looking forward to the Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Sesquicentennial Celebration at Harvard's Houghton Library in May and having the opportunity to meet with our Friends again.

I hope that everyone will send in their 2009 Friends membership donation. I am always moved by the generosity of Sherlockians who want to see The Sherlock Holmes Collections grow and become the World Center for the study of Sherlock Holmes. I know that in economic hard times it is difficult, but I want to thank everyone for donating material and money to The Sherlock Holmes Collections. Our current endowment fund has, like most accounts, lost ground, but I believe that we will reach our goal of having a E.W. McDiarmid Curatorship soon.

Richard J. Sveum, MD, BSI

Musings

B usiness continues as usual at The Sherlock Holmes Collections. On any given day, Curator Tim Johnson is hosting visitors and leading classes, packages with books, pins and journals are received, phone calls are made and taken. We're happy to report that globe-hopping Tim Johnson is back at the Elmer L. Andersen Library, full of compliments for the staff at the Portsmouth Library. He was missed during his trip. Tim will provide us with a more complete account of his adventures in the next issue.

Peter Blau has written about his friends Wayne and Francine Swift. It's hard to capture the spirit of two people in one short article, but Peter has given us a glimpse into the various interests they held and the joy they had in each other's company. Like Peter, Jon Lellenberg knew them for many years. In proofreading this issue of the newsletter, Jon wrote of some memories that Peter's article brought to mind:

"That Montgomery (Md.) College course in Sherlock Holmes was presided over by a professor who belonged to The Red Circle of Washington and had some of us come and lecture, Peter talking about the BSI and its scion societies, and me about Sherlock Holmes in parody and pastiche. Wayne (already a Ph.D. in engineering) had heard about the course somewhere, and signed up for it. He sought us out for one-onone dinners afterwards, and I remember mine with him, at a restaurant called The Iron Skillet, in the Bailey's Crossroads neighborhood of Arlington, Va. He was seeking deeper insight into this thing called The Baker Street Irregulars, and particularly its personal dimension, but what really emerged in talking to Wayne was his humanity and an unforced charm, qualities that created lasting friendships for him. I never knew anyone who did not like Wayne; I never heard him say an unkind word about anyone, not even people whom I know he didn't care for. Soon after, Francine came to Washington, already a devoted Sherlockian with John Bennett Shaw as a mentor, with the intention of getting a doctorate in library science at Washington D.C.'s American University. But to those of us in The Red Circle who saw them meet and then watched them

become serious about each other, it seemed completely natural that they ended up together. They were not the first nor the last Irregular marriage, but I never saw one in which the two halves seemed more right for each other or complemented each other better. Their lives together seemed to proceed in perfect harmony. Eventually Wayne fought a long fight against cancer, and it eventually killed him. It was a cheerful fight on his part throughout, completely lacking in self-pity. But when Francine was alone again it was devastating for her in a way that others found painful to behold, and perfectly understandable to us that it hit her so hard. It had become impossible for us to think of them separately."

I remember being fairly new in the Sherlockian world and having people tell me how sad it was that I never met John Bennett Shaw. Now, years later, I believe I could say to new Sherlockians how sad it is for them that they never met Wayne and Francine. They were two people who found each other later in life, and you couldn't imagine one without the other. When Wayne lost his battle with cancer, I think it's fair to say life was

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An Update from the Collections

m just back from a wonderful and productive trip to England. I'll offer a fuller report in a later issue of this newsletter, but I wanted to give you a brief summary now about this very rewarding adventure. (For those readers who can't wait for my next installment here a fuller "travelogue" of my trip may be found on my blog at http://umbookworm.blogspot.com)

Over sixteen days I had the opportunity—through a staff development grant from the Friends of the Libraries and the hospitality of colleagues old and new—to experience

Doyle/Holmes collections in London and Portsmouth. My primary focus was the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection Lancelyn Green Bequest in Portsmouth, with the goals of a) doing research in the Collection b) consulting with the research and technical staff who are processing the materials

c) making personal contacts and developing relationships with members of the staff at Portsmouth that might facilitate further collaborations and cooperative projectsd) visiting sites connected with the life and work of Arthur Conan Doyle.



Catherine Cooke, BSI

Through the generous support and interest of my new colleagues in Portsmouth, my goal was met. I came away with a better sense of the breadth and depth of the Portsmouth Collection (I ended up with nearly forty pages of notes and printouts from my research) and was very impressed with the work of staff and volunteers in making the Collection accessible for future research. Work remains to be done, but the Portsmouth staff should be highly commended for what they've done to date-through exhibits, cataloging, processing and public programs. I'm especially thankful for the gracious support of Claire Looney, Michael Gunton and Stephen Bailey with my visit. The city of Portsmouth has much to be proud of; the Doyle Collection is a new jewel in their cultural crown. My week in Portsmouth was surrounded by two separate stays in London, where I had the chance to spend time with Catherine Cooke and Andrew Lycett, spend additional research time at the British Library, and enjoy the rich history of the city. It was a very memorable trip and one that will benefit my own work with our own rich Collections.

Tim Johnson

Recent Acquisitions

eter Blau's "It Might Be His Portrait" keepsake prepared for the Annual Dinner of the Baker Street Irregulars, January 9, 2009

Robert Katz sent a number of Sherlockian pins including: A Hound it Was 1901 Centenary 2001 Cox and Company The Six Napoleons Silver Blaze The Master's Class B.S.I. 60 three others featuring the silhouette of Holmes The latest *Camden House Journal*, *Scuttlebutt from the Spermacetti Press*, *Hugo's Companion Newsletter*, and the newsletter of The Three Garridebs.

Hugo Koch sent his latest work, *The Adventure of John Wilkes Holmes*, to the Sherlock Holmes Collections. He has subtitled it "In which the blood-relationship between Sherlock Holmes and John Wilkes Booth is revealed, and in which Holmes and Watson assist John Surratt in finding the missing diary of John Wilkes Booth." This was a limited edition of 100 numbered copies. Warren Randall gave an inscribed booklet *Christopher Morley* 1934 – *The Baker Street Irregulars* – 2009, which he prepared for the excursion to several locations associated with Christopher Morley. It was printed for the 75th anniversary of The Baker Street Irregulars.

Gary Thaden donated *The Medical Science of House, M.D.* by Andrew Holtz.

Francine and Wayne Swift... Continued from Page 1

Office"). It was in 1980 that Wayne attended the Red Circle's costume party as the Giant Rat, attracting some notice when he walked through the lobby of the National Press Building in full costume.

Their interests included their dogs, always corgis (one of them contributed a keepsake to a meeting of The Sherlock Holmes Society of London 1992), horse racing (they worked together on a History of the Silver Blaze for *The Baker Street Journal Christmas Annual* in 2000), travel (they participated in many of the excursions, costumed and otherwise, arranged by the London society), dramatics (in the Red Circle Players in the 1970s), literature (particularly P.G. Wodehouse and P.D. James), their church (they were devout Episcopalians), trains (one of the nicest presents Wayne ever received from Francine was a chance to learn how to drive a train), and the National Symphony Orchestra (they volunteered each year to work in the NSO's Show House fundraisers). And they collected, books and magazines and artwork and figurines, and a lifesize giant rat.

Wayne died in 2001, and Francine in 2007. She bequeathed their Sherlockian collection to the University of Minnesota, and visitors to the Special Collections will be able to see how widely their interests ranged, and get a sense of how much fun they had together.



Francine Swift and her corgi

To the Editor

nce again I have much enjoyed reading the latest journal from Minnesota. A couple of observations about Richard Sveum's interesting article occasioned by the Conan Doyle/James Payn photograph. The earliest publication of this that I have found (apart of course from the *Collier's* magazine) was in Dickson Carr's biography of

1949. Here it is captioned "with James Payn, 1897." I am sure Mr. Sveum is correct in supposing the photograph was taken in the housebound James Payn's library, which seems to be extremely untidy. However, Arthur's appearance is remarkably similar to his depiction in the famous Sidney Paget portrait, begun at Undershaw on 20 November 1897 (the move there was in the autumn of 1897 and not 1898). I tentatively suggest that Arthur on this occasion visited James Payn from Undershaw at around the same time as the portrait was painted.

Best wishes, Georgina Doyle

A Beacon of the Future

ur December 2008 issue featured a visit from Soren Eversoll and his family. Shortly after that visit, Curator Tim Johnson received a note from Soren's mother, Mary Gallagher. We received the Sherlock Holmes Quarterly with the article on Soren's visit. Thank you so very much for the generous and insightful article. We'll treasure it always! Thanks again and we continue to appreciate your warm welcome to the collection. I overheard Soren tell a family friend that he plans to go to the University of Minnesota someday!

100 Years Ago...Continued from Page 2

health during and after the pregnancy. This certainly would explain the somewhat sombre tone of the poem. The use of the word "lady" in the last stanza seems to strongly suggest that it was written to/for Lady Jean.

Also, the fact that they were expecting their first child may have influenced Doyle's decision to contribute to *The Press Book* in the first place. Being a father himself, I'm sure he could easily empathize with the fatherless children which would benefit from the sale of the volume.

Finally, Doyle wrote a poem about orphans which was published in *Songs of the Road*, just a few pages after "By the North Sea." It was called "The Orphanage" and is reproduced below.

I wonder, perhaps, if he was thinking of the Orphan's Fund when he wrote this?

The Orphanage

When, ere the tangled web is reft, The kid-gloved villain scowls and sneers, And hapless innocence is left With no assets save sighs and tears, 'Tis then, just then, that in there stalks The hero, watchful of her needs, He talks! Great heavens, how he talks But we forgive him, for his deeds.

Life is the drama here to-day And Death the villain of the plot. It is a realistic play; Shall it end well or shall it not The hero? Oh, the hero's part Is vacant—to be played by you. Then act it well! An orphan's heart May beat the lighter if you do. ◆

Christy Allen and Julie McKuras

References: http://www.scoopdatabase.com/bio/catling_thomas http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Savage_Club http://www.savageclub.com/



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Musings...Continued from Page 4

never the same for Francine; she missed sharing their interests and most of all, she missed his companionship. And when she passed away, their friends had the same reaction as people had when George Burns died; his passing meant that he was together with Gracie again.

Francine Morris Swift, ever the librarian, planned to donate her Sherlockian collection to The Sherlock Holmes Collections. Sadly, her death in October 2007 meant her collection, which she amassed with her beloved Wayne, was ready to move to Minnesota. Boxes of books, photographs, ephemera and even a giant stuffed rat now adorn the Collections. Our thanks go to Peter Blau, not only for writing about his friends Wayne and Francine but also for helping with the packing and mailing of the many, many boxes.

John Bergquist has provided us with a look at *Leaves from The Copper Beeches*, and its interesting authors and editors, published 50 years ago. I'd like to thank Christy Allen for providing information about Conan Doyle's poetry as featured in our 100 Years Ago column. Dick Sveum updates us on the status of the drive for the E.W. McDiarmid Curatorship. It's gratifying to receive notes from readers and other interested parties, and this issue features two of those: Georgina Doyle, author of *Out of the Shadows: The Untold Story of Arthur Conan Doyle's First Family*, read Dick Sveum's article from December 2008 with a careful eye and has corrected a date. Soren Eversoll, an honored visitor to the Collections last year, continues his interest in Sherlock Holmes, according to a note sent by his mother.

So it's business as usual at The Sherlock Holmes Collections, for which we are all thankful.

Julie McKuras, ASH, BSI

50 Years Ago...Continued from Page 3

bottle of Courvoisier plus one fifth of New Jersey cognac, with the note: 'Tell the bartender to serve the Courvoisier first. Then by the time the Sons get to the New Jersey cognac, they may not spot the difference''' (250). Today, Lellenberg says of Starr, "I'm convinced that Julian Wolff [who took over leadership of the Baker Street Irregulars under the title "Commissionaire" after Smith's untimely death in 1960] would have retired as Commissionaire sooner than he did if Bill Starr had not died at a somewhat early age in 1976 and had been around in the early '80s to take over."

Leaves from The Copper Beeches was partially financed by contributions from members of the Sons, who are listed in the acknowledgments. In his memoir of the history of the scion mentioned earlier, Thomas Hart reports that a publication fund was established as early as 1952 (with the princely sum of \$4.00.) Hart, as treasurer of the Publication Committee, goes on to apologize to the membership for "his many exhortations for funds, and many stern admonitions against failure, made at meetings" over the years.



Illustration by H.W. Starr, captioned "The appeal for the Publication Fund," printed in Jon Lellenberg's *Irregular Crises of the Late 'Forties* (New York, 1999)

The physical book is an interesting artifact in itself, featuring quarter binding with textured morocco-colored endpapers of the same stock as the covers.

Leaves from The Copper Beeches was followed up by a second volume, *More Leaves from The Copper Beeches*, in 1976. The Sons are still flourishing as an active scion society; perhaps someday we will be able to look forward to a third volume.

John Bergquist, BSI

Remembrances

In supporting the Sherlock Holmes Collections, many donors have made contributions either in honor or in memory of special persons.

In Honor Of

Peter Blau Fred Levin

In Memory Of

Paul Churchill Paul Churchill Paul Churchill Joseph Gillies Allen Mackler Allen Mackler Allen Mackler Beatrice McCaffrie E.W. McDiarmid E.W. McDiarmid E.W. McDiarmid E. W. McDiarmid Robert Pattrick Ian Stauber Jan Stauber Tom Stix Dr. Richard Sturtz

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Timothy J. Johnson, Curator