“Your merits should be publicly recognized” (STUD)

The Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections Annual Meeting; “A Review of Sherlockian Rarities”  
by Phillip Bergem

A stated goal of the Sherlock Holmes Collections is to make the collected materials available to researchers. The success of this goal is frequently illustrated in this newsletter through photographs of people visiting or using the Collections. One who has taken advantage of the accessibility of the Collections is Randall Stock.

Randall lives in California and does marketing and product management consulting for high-tech firms in Silicon Valley. He kindly accepted an invitation to speak at the Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections annual meeting held on September 29th. More than 50 people gathered to listen to his presentation “Manuscripts and Magazines: A Review of Sherlockian Rarities.”
With Holmes there lived a foolish man, To whom I briefly must allude, Who gloried in possessing an Abnormal mental hebetude; Once could describe the grossest betise To this (forgive the rhyme) Achates.

‘Twas Doctor Watson, human mole, Obrusely, painfully polite; Who played the unambitious role Of parasitic satellite; Inevitably bound to bore us, Like Aristophanes’s Chorus."

The poem concludes by noting that “London town is sad today, and preternaturally solemn” at the news of Holmes’s retirement.

He bids farewell to Baker Street, Though Watson clings about his knees; He hastens to his country seat, To spend his dotage keeping bees; And one of them, depend on it, Shall find a haven in his bonnet!

But though in grief our heads are bowed, And tears upon our cheeks are shining, We recognize that ev’ry cloud Conceals somewhere a silver lining; And hear with deep congratulation Of Watson’s timely termination.

Who was this man who chose to praise Holmes and skewer Watson? Poet Jocelyn Henry Clive Graham, known as Harry, was born in London on December 23, 1874. He was the second child of Sir Henry John Lowndes Graham, clerk of the parliaments, and his first wife, Lady Edith Elizabeth Gathorne-Hardy, who died two weeks after Harry’s birth. Harry Graham was educated at Eton College and at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, and in 1895 he joined the Coldstream Guards. From 1898 to 1904 he served as aide-de-camp to the Earl of Minto, Governor-General of Canada, with an interruption in 1901-02 for service in the Second South African War. In 1904 he began a two year term as private secretary to the former Prime Minister and President of the Liberal League, Lord Rosebery.

While serving as an aide to Lord Minto, Graham published his first and best known work in 1899, Ruthless Rhymes for Heartless Homes, written under the pseudonym “Col. D. Streamer” as a pun on his regiment. Lady Minto was impressed with Graham’s talent for writing, producing, and starring in musical shows but Lord Minto found himself in the awkward position of having his aide publish a comic poem about President Theodore Roosevelt. Much like dealing with a naughty child, Minto was angry with the sarcastic tone of the poem but amused by Graham’s wit.

With the success of his 1899 book, Graham later decided to try writing as a full-time profession. His achievements included playing the piano, singing, and songwriting in addition to his poetry. He was briefly engaged to American actress Ethel Barrymore, sister of John Barrymore – who portrayed the master detective in the 1922 film “Sherlock Holmes.” (Ethel broke off the engagement, but Graham fared somewhat better than Winston Churchill, whose offer of marriage she refused.) On February 8, 1910 Graham married widow Dorothy Villiers, daughter of Sir Francis Hyde Villiers. They had one child, Virginia Graham (1910-1993), who followed him as a writer and contributed many articles to Punch.

Although Graham was almost forty when World War I began, he rejoined his regiment and served in France. Amid the horrors of the battlefield, he wrote poetry as well as lyrics for musical comedies that ran during the war in London. After the war he continued his poetic and musical pursuits and often had several productions running at the same time. His songs were often set in “that imaginary country in Central Europe, which has to be imaginary because no actual country ever could be governed on such pleasantly frivolous lines.” (The Times, 11 Feb 1931).

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In 1955, The Five Orange Pips of Westchester County, a scion society of the BSI, published a collection of its canonical scholarship. Its approximately 120 pages contain a dozen essays and two poems, plus (in keeping with a reputation for exclusivity, and the opaqueness of their affairs) a brief and none too informative introduction by founding Pip Richard W. Clarke — Jephro Rucastle to his fellow Pips, and “The Copper Beeches” in the BSI.

The Pips were not the first scion to publish a collection of their writings; The Speckled Band of Boston had done so with The Second Cab in 1947. But The Best of the Pips was deluxe: a full-fledged hardback book that met, or exceeded, the production standards of professional publishers. It is not known how many copies were printed, but enough were to make it fairly easy today to acquire a copy. (Since then a second collection of Pips papers has been assembled by A Norwegian named Sigerson as the 1999 BSJ Christmas Annual, and for his fellow Pips ten copies were bound by hand in orange cloth with a green morocco spine, orange-edged paper, and marbled endpapers by Richard Brunton.)

The Pips was not originally a BSI scion society. It began an independent existence in 1935, though Clarke’s introduction to The Best of the Pips mistakenly gives the date as 1934, the same year as the BSI. The Pips did not know about the BSI at the time, and were not bowled over when they did learn of it. But then, the Pips were meeting in the late 1930s, and the BSI was not. Edgar W. Smith was the Sixth Pip before he was a Baker Street Irregular, joining the Pips in October 1938; the BSI would continue to be dormant until its dinner at the Murray Hill Hotel in January 1940, which Smith helped organize. He was the only Pip to attend it, and for some years remained the sole link between the two societies, until other Pips finally began attending BSI dinners in 1946. (For several years, even before that, the Pips sent a canonical quiz to the Irregulars at their annual dinner, as if to make a point about where scholarly prowess lay, and when they began attending the BSI dinner, they cautioned together beforehand and were seated together by Smith, as the BSI dinner photographs of the those days show.)

The Five Orange Pips had actually been of New York City more than anything else in 1935, its original Five being prosperous men of business or law, most of them commuting to Manhattan from homes in tonier Westchester County suburbs like Katonah. They met formally once a year, except during World War II when some Pips were away in military service. By 1955, the Pips were being listed as “of Westchester County” in Smith’s BSI dinner minutes, and by then were eager to claim the honor of “First Scion Society,” as Clarke’s introduction to The Best of the Pips asserts. But except for Smith, the Pips still disdained the BSI in the spring of 1940 when The Speckled Band of Boston was founded by P. M. Stone, James Keddie Sr. and Jr., H. W. Bell, and the scion-minded Smith up from New York. Subsequent generations of Pips have dropped “of Westchester County,” and today’s group is mischievously vague on the subject of their connection to the BSI.

The Five Orange Pips prides itself on being the most scholarly of Sherlockian societies, but at first was more social than anything else – grown-up boys taking noms de Pip for themselves, which may have been Smith’s inspiration for Titular Investitures for the BSI in 1944. (Smith was Professor Thorneycroft Huxtable in the Pips.) But they grew ambitious, and had a short flirtation with writing pastiches that they read at their dinners, circa 1939-40. That made for long evenings, and one Pip acknowledged that perhaps they had been a trifle over-ambitious. So it became the custom instead to write scholarly papers: to “put the papers on the sundial” before dinner, and read them afterwards; and with a policy of ten members, conciseness became a necessity as well as a virtue.

Four of the original five — Clarke, Frank Waters, Owen Frisbie, Norman Ward — are represented in The Best of the Pips; the other, Gordon Knox Bell, had fallen from the ranks by then. Joining them are Smith, James Montgomery, Thayer Cumings, and Ben Clark. No editor is credited, but it was Smith who was the experienced Sherlockian editor. They had a great advantage in Frisbie being an executive at a printing company, the H. Wolff Book Manufacturing Co. of New York. A young designer there named Marshall Lee made a nice job of it, using Linotype Baskerville for the text, and Frisbie had it printed on Warren’s Old Style paper (says the production data in the back of the book), which has survived the fifty years to date without deterioration or discoloration. Lee eschewed a dust jacket, and instead put the outline of an envelope containing five orange pips onto the blue cloth of the cover in gold, and a bee on the darker blue of the spine and on the title page. His nom de Pip of John Swain appears at the bottom of the production data, though it was not until 2000 that he actually attended a Pips dinner, after being tracked down by Henry Baker II thanks to what had been a prizewinning career as a book designer in the intervening years. By then in his 70s, Lee was surprised to find that the band for which he had designed The Best of the Pips had survived so long. But this year the Pips marked their 70th anniversary, and there seems no reason why it shouldn’t go on indefinitely.

Arthur Cadogan West
From the President

The Annual Membership Meeting of the Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections was held on September 29, 2005 at the Elmer L. Andersen Library. I wish to thank everyone who was able to attend. Californian and Collections patron Randall Stock gave the keynote address, "Manuscripts and Magazines: A Review of Sherlockian Rarities," which Phil Bergem covers in this issue’s lead article. The business meeting covered the various committee reports. Your elected Board of Directors officers include: President Richard Sveum, Vice President John Bergquist, Secretary Michael Eckman and Treasurer Timothy Johnson. Re-elected to the Board of Directors were Phil Bergem, Lucy Brusic, Pat Nelson, Julie McKuras, Michael McKuras, Steve Stilwell and Gary Thaden. The annual Silent Auction that evening was successful in raising money for the Collections. Thank you to everyone who donated or purchased items. Timothy Johnson, Curator of Special Collections and Rare Books presented the State of the Collections.

The Bryce L. Crawford, Jr. Award for the best article in The Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections Newsletter in the last year was announced. The winner was Jon Lellenberg for his 50 Years Ago article published in the December 2004 issue. Jon wrote about the Baker Street Christmas Stocking by Bliss Austin.

Last year we made the transition from a quarterly to an annual fund drive. It is that time of year to think about an annual contribution to the Friends. Enclosed with this newsletter is an envelope for your donation. I hope that you will be generous again this year.

Thank you for being a member of the Friends.

Richard J. Sveum, MD, BSI

Musings

Our Annual meeting, a 100 year old poem, a 50 year old book, the Bryce Crawford Award, as well as updates from Tim Johnson and Dick Sveum are covered in this issue of our newsletter.

Didn’t you always want to know who was one of the forerunners of the sick joke? How could Alfred E. Neuman and magazines like Mad exist without our 100 Years Ago featured author and his pioneering work in sick humor? Our 50 Years Ago column is a bit more distinguished and features the scholarly work done by the Five Orange Pips, as written by the Pips own Arthur Cadogan West, who is better known to most of our readers as Jon Lellenberg. Jon was the recipient of the Bryce L. Crawford Award, given for his article about Bliss Austin.

I’d like to welcome Phil Bergem to our newsletter. Phil is a member of the Norwegian Explorers and serves on both the board of the Explorers as well as The Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections. He was instrumental in arranging Randall Stock as the keynote speaker for the 2005 annual meeting and gives our readers an idea of the great presentation made by Randall that evening. Tim Johnson and Dick Sveum both update us on what’s going on the Collections and our annual renewal for membership.

As 2005 draws to a close, I’d like to express my appreciation for everyone who gives so much of their time to produce this newsletter. I appreciate their consistent and welcome assistance. Have a safe and happy holiday season.
Using the Collections

Tim Johnson displays recent acquisitions to Simon Rudge and family, from Chelmsford, England, during a tour of the Sherlock Holmes Collections arranged by John Bergquist, BSI. Simon is a co-worker of Jean Upton, BSI, who recommended that he seek us out while he and his family vacationed in the Minneapolis area.

Tim Reich, a member of the Norwegian Explorers, toured the Collections and had the opportunity to see firsthand the contents of the treasure trove.

Randall Stock combined pleasure with pleasure on his trip to Minneapolis this fall. He was not only the keynote speaker at the Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections Annual Meeting but also pursued his research into Sherlockian rarities.
Randall has made a name for himself in the past few years with articles in *The Baker Street Journal*, and with his website (http://members.aol.com/shbest/). Among the information presented on his site are lists of the locations of the 1887 *Beeton’s Christmas Annuals*, locations and details about Conan Doyle’s non-Sherlockian manuscripts, a list of facsimile reprints of Holmes story manuscripts and sale information regarding the Conan Doyle materials sold at the Christie’s auction in May 2004. Mentioned in these lists are the four *Beeton’s Christmas Annuals* and the manuscript for ‘The Horror of the Heights’ that are part of the Minnesota Collections. Randall has made several trips to the Andersen Library in the past to conduct research, always sending a meticulously prepared list of the materials he wanted to see several weeks in advance of his visit. On September 29th, he could be found in the reading room until shortly before his presentation squeezing out a last few minutes of precious research time.

The presentation began with tales of research he has conducted at various libraries, including the University of Minnesota, in pursuit of information for his checklists and censuses. One of the subjects covered concerned his work on the 1887 *Beeton’s* census. Much of his research has been assisted by advances in on-line resources. Many of the libraries who have copies of that rare issue have cataloging or bibliographic information accessible through the web. Several libraries also have images of the *Beeton’s* cover and Randall showed illustrations of these. He went on to outline some of details he found regarding items and prices of materials auctioned off at Christie’s in 2004. Many of the items sold for much more than originally expected.

The second part of Randall’s presentation centered on the manuscript ‘The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist.’ The bulk of the manuscript, two 20-page exercise books handwritten by Conan Doyle, came up for sale at Sotheby’s in November 2004. Randall had the opportunity to study the two booklets, and he discussed his findings. He also outlined the past history of the booklets, the prices realized at auctions over the decades, and how a third booklet, containing the last two pages of the manuscript, was separated from the first two booklets years ago and is owned by another collector.

The presentation was enthralling. Randall is a good public speaker and made effective use of PowerPoint images to illustrate his talk. It was stimulating to listen to a person who has a strong passion for his interests and appreciates the resources available through public institutions and private collectors. Tim Reich, a member of the Norwegian Explorers for the past few years, sent this note regarding Randall’s presentation:

“I had an enjoyable evening listening to Randall Stock’s presentation during The Friends annual meeting. Randall truly lives up to the title of ‘Sherlockian Scholar.’ His presentation was captivating and he has clearly devoted an extensive amount of time to his research. I particularly liked his discussion and photos of the 1887 *Beeton’s Christmas Annuals*. Julie McKuras had recently taken me on a tour of the collections and I posed for a picture with one copy of the *Beeton’s*. I didn’t realize until Randall’s speech that I was holding 1 of only 28 confirmed copies in existence! He’s done a great job with his website as well. The background he has presented on each of the confirmed *Beeton’s* is fascinating. I’m glad he was willing to share this research with all of us.”

Randall’s involvement is the embodiment of how the accessibility of the Sherlock Holmes Collections works; something that makes the Collections an active part of the vibrant world of Sherlock Holmes. Randall himself is an embodiment of the youth and enthusiasm present in the Sherlockian world, and an example of those who will lead the group in the future and ensure that an interest in all things Sherlockian will continue.
An Update from the Collections

“We were residing at the time in furnished lodgings close to a library where Sherlock Holmes was pursuing some laborious researches in Early English charters—researches which led to results so striking that they may be the subject of one of my future narratives.”

One of the joys I experience as curator of the Sherlock Holmes Collections is to assist researchers with their needs and requests (either in person or via electronic means for those unable to visit the Collections). At times those needs might not involve the collection, but rather the logistics of facilitating a visit such as “furnished lodgings close to a library” (in our case the Metrodome Holiday Inn) or the provision of a map in order to find us (among the many buildings that make up the University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus). For researchers doing their work on site we try to smooth the way with the provision of any desired photocopy or scanning requests, the need for additional equipment (such as a magnifying glass or book cradle), or even the suggestion of a good place for lunch. These activities, and many others, are all part of our attempt to provide researchers with an enjoyable and productive experience during their visit.

One of our most recent visitors, Randall Stock, is a very well-organized investigator. One of the items Randall has provided, before each visit, is a list of items from the Collections that he wishes to use. We suggest this practice for any scholar or student who is planning an extended stay. The advantage to this approach, for us, is the ability to retrieve materials ahead of the scheduled visit and have them ready on a cart once our visitor comes through the door. At times, the list of desired items may be more than we wish to have present in the Reading Room at any one moment. In that event, we will have a second cart ready to go in the vault or will phase the materials on to the existing cart as items are finished and removed back to the vault.

Occasionally, a researcher’s interest will also prompt us to take action on some item or part of the Collection. Such was the case with Randall’s interest in our copies of the Bellow’s Christmas Annual and our four original leaves from The Hound of the Baskervilles. In each case, we discovered that the items were not yet a part of the online catalog, having been set aside during the major cataloging project of a few years ago. So, with the help of our Special Collections and Archives cataloger, Christine Dezelar-Tiedman, we had these items added to the catalog. It was one of those happy times, as noted by Holmes in the Hound, when we could say with Randall that “our researches have evidently been running on parallel lines, and when we unite our results I expect we shall have a fairly full knowledge of the case.”

Anyone who examines Randall’s meticulous work will soon acknowledge that he has a “fairly full knowledge of the case.” For our part, we were glad to be of assistance.

Finally, allow me to send warm holiday greetings to all of our Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections. We enjoy receiving the many holiday cards sent by our Friends and usually have them on display for a time before adding them to the Collections. May the holidays be a time of joy and relaxation, and may the New Year bring you rewarding times and pleasant adventures.

Tim Johnson
100 Years... Continued from Page 2

the only subject treated with such disrespect. Graham was raised with the idea that nothing was sacred when it came to humor. After unsuccessful attempts at fiction, he settled on the comic poem, marked by what Wikipedia online describes as “grotesquerie and black humor” and others noted as the forerunners of the sick joke. One example of his humor often quoted is from Ruthless Rhymes; “Billy, in one of his nice new sashes, Fell in the fire and was burnt to ashes; Now, although the room grows chilly, I haven’t the heart to poke poor Billy.” It has been suggested that Graham was an influence upon one of his admirers, P. G. Wodehouse. Others propose that he came close to the level of W. S. Gilbert as a versifier.

Graham, a well-liked man despite his barbed poems, was described as tall with a military bearing. He died of cancer in London on October 30, 1936.

Julie McKuras, ASH, BSI

References:
Oxford Encyclopedia online
The Times, Feb. 11, 1931
Wikipedia on line

Bryce Crawford Award

While visiting Chicago, I had the opportunity to personally present Jon Lellenberg with this year’s Bryce L. Crawford Award for his article about Bliss Austin in the December 2004 Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections Newsletter.

Jon indicated his appreciation for the award, which took him by surprise. A subsequent email from Jon noted “I feel I’m not altogether entitled to it, down deep, because – even though I got around to writing the article at the last moment, in fact a bit beyond it – it simply flowed out of me onto paper because it was about Bliss Austin.”

Julie McKuras, ASH, BSI

Remembrances

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

In Memory of
Richard Lancelyn Green BSI
Richard Lancelyn Green BSI
Al Rodin, MD, BSI
Jan Stauber
Dr. Richard M. Sturtz

From
Andrew Malec, BSI
C. Paul Martin, MD, BSI
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