

THE PIPE SMOKER'S THING

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PETER C. WISEMAN

LONDON PIPE REPORT



IN the question of firms manufacturing pipes and tobacco products in England, I have done some research, with the assistance of a 1993 copy of *The Tobacco Trade Index*, and a copy of *The Pipe Smoker's Handbook*. The last edition of *The Pipe Smoker's Handbook* was issued in June of 2002. These were published by The Pipe Smoker's Council, originally formed in 1978 to provide 'a central reference point for all adult pipe smoking enthusiasts', and help fill the void left by the end of The Pipe Club of Great Britain, which in its time supported over three hundred pipe clubs in the U.K. The Pipe Smoker's Council is now also defunct, thanks to the pressure exerted by the government and a motley throng of health fascists and 'dogooders', blindly determined to obliterate all references favourable to smoking. To return to my findings, here is a list of firms currently manufacturing tobacco products in Great Britain:

Gallaher Tobacco (UK) Ltd
 Imperial Tobacco Ltd
 Tabak World Ltd
 Samuel Gawith & Co. Ltd
 Gawith, Hoggarth & Co. Ltd

The following firms have—to the best of my knowledge—ceased production of tobacco products in Great Britain:

Rothmans (UK) Ltd
 John Solomon Inc.
 Forrestal Group
 Hunters & Frankau Ltd
 Benson & Hedges Ltd
 Charles Fairmorn (UK) Ltd
 Autran & Seita Ltd
 Manchester Tobacco Co. Ltd
 London Tobacco Co.
 Murray, Sons & Co. Ltd

Similarly for pipes; the following firms remain active to a lesser or greater degree:

Cadogan—a Division of A. Oppenheimer Ltd
 W. J. Ashton-Taylor
 Blakemar Briars
 Comoy's
 L. & J. S. Briars (Ferndown pipes)
 Millville Ltd
 Tilshead Pipe Co. (James Upshall and Tilshead pipes)
 Ian Walker—The Northern Briar Pipe Repair Service
 Alfred Dunhill Ltd (The current pipes are reputedly machine-turned in Spain (presumably from Spanish briar) and 'finished-off' at St Andrew's Road, London, whereby a £45 pipe is enhanced into a considerably dearer article.

Pipe makers no longer trading or making:

Invicta Briars Ltd
Messrs G. Hubrecht

As for pipe shops, there are currently in London only five worth entering, where the proprietors know what they are selling. These are:

J. J. Fox and Robert Lewis
G. Smith and Sons
Segar & Snuff Parlour
(Mullins & Westley Ltd)
Shervington's
Davidoff of London (possibly)

Mr Wiseman further advises that both Mr William J. Ashton-Taylor and Mr R. M. Billington (Blakemar Briars) are members of The Pipe Club of London.



RICHARD ESSERMAN

PIPE TRAVELS



WILL never forget that fateful day in 1979 when my friend Chris Simser called me and said I had to rush over to see this new pipe periodical he had picked up while visiting With Pipe and Book in Lake Placid, New York. It was the 15th Anniversary issue of *The Pipe Smoker's Ephemeric*. I could not believe it and read it from cover to cover.

My favorite was a missive from Fred Janusek, an account of the big Iwan Ries 1978 Dunhill pipe sale. Fred wrote about a giant ODA "Pavel" — I did not know what that was, and it turned out to be a misspelling of panel. To quote Tom Dunn — Ugh!

I wrote in to the *Ephemeric* for years and in one issue (part two of the 25th Anniversary edition) Tom printed a lot my stuff and got a really good response, so I just continued. One reason I enjoyed writing for Tom Dunn's *Ephemeric* so much was that it allowed me to share the satisfaction of smoking my pipe and my adventures in collecting pipes.

In those days, I was living in my hometown of Endicott, New York, having just returned from Syracuse University with a BA in Philosophy and an MS in Accountancy (unfortunately there was no way to make a living, even with a PhD in Philosophy, and my father had an accounting practice). As a graduation gift, my parents bought me a used car — a gold-colored Plymouth Duster. I used this faithful car for all of my early pipe travels.

My first real foray into pipe shop touring was in 1978, when I visited W.C. Field's favorite place, the lovely City of Philadelphia. It was a three and a half hour ride and I had no idea where I was going, but I had heard from a friend that there were many great pipe shops that carried Dunhill pipes. My first visit to Philadelphia in the Winter of 1978 was to look for a Dunhill Group 4 bent bulldog. While I have always liked extra-large pipes, when I was living in Endicott, I used to go home for lunch

and smoke a small bowl. I had many wonderful smaller bulldogs of all makes.

I did find the downtown Philadelphia area, and began walking along the main drag. I happened to start with Holt's Tobacconist and ended at a wonderful little store about ten blocks down the main drag. Along the way was Wanamaker's Department store where they had a big Wilke display. Working at Wanamaker's was Steve Johnson. Steve was a young pipe maker who actually made pipes for Wilke, working in a small room right in the middle of the store. Over time we became friends and I always enjoyed looking at the great pipes he was making.

One time I stopped by and Steve showed me this very large stack bent with just beautiful cross grain. Steve told me that the pipe was going up to the Wilke shop NYC with a selling price of \$500 — a gigantic amount in those days. The pipe sold the next week.

In my first visit to Holt's, I saw their 24-pipe Dunhill Principal Pipe Dealer ("PPD") display plus a lot more, and met their main pipe guy Chuck Cohn. This PPD display was the most Dunhill pipes I had ever seen at one time. There were many big "Group 8" (ODAs) pipes as Chuck called them plus some huge Charatan straight grains. The next month I went to New York City and did my first pipe tour there — the Lane (Charatan) shop, Wally Franks, Wilke Pipe Shop, Connoisseur Pipe Shop, Barclay Rex, Arnold's, De La Concha and Dunhill's on Fifth Avenue. WOW! I would come in around ten a.m. and leave about five p.m. — it was an exhilarating day.

Wally Franks was the retail arm of Hollco-Rohr and they actually stocked Castello pipes, which were impossible to find in those days. What I remember most from this first visit were the unstained XXL Micolis that featured wonderful straight grains and their unique carving.

I remember the Dunhill store with its grand staircase and loads of luxury pens and watches. Pipes were at the back of the store on the first floor. On the right side were Dunhills on cases on the wall racks. The pipes were grouped by finish — Root Briar, Bruyère, Shell Briar, and Tanshell — each case held about seventy-five to one-hundred pipes. In the show cases in front of the racks were many handmade DR straight grains, the newly produced Collectors' Grade, and a black-and-white lacquer Dunhill-Namiki pipe. There was also a 366-day set in a huge fitted case.

When I first went into the store again, in the Winter of '78, I was a young whippersnapper and the salesman behind the counter must have thought I was not a serious customer. He would not let me look at but a few pipes and was quite surprised that I actually purchased a pipe. Over the following few months, I would visit the Dunhill store and spend many hours at the pipe section.

Dunhill at that time was just getting back into the American market in a big way. I remember speaking to a senior member of the Dunhill team who told me that they stockpiled wood for seven years to gear up for the 1978 production. In 1975, Dunhill decided to forego using the ODA stamp and introduced the Group 6 pipe. These pipes were as big as the ODA but the pipe buying community began clamoring for the return of the ODA. 1978 saw the return of the ODA (albeit without shape numbers), the introduction of the Collectors' Grade (smooth handmade Roots) and the hand-turned DR (Dead Root) straight grain.

I visited the Dunhill store at least once a month and eventually the salesman (whose name unfortunately I have completely forgotten) allowed me the run of the store so to speak. One of the great highlights was being able to leisurely go through all the drawers of the 366-day set. This was a great adventure. Each drawer was filled with great specimens, many with gold bands and a few with gold windscreens. At the time, my favorite shape was



1970 DUNHILL ODA 840 SHELL

the 612 and 622 bent, like an ODA 840 bent, and there were several in those drawers that I wanted. Later, they broke the set up but I found out too late and missed getting those bents. I did get a wonderfully deep blasted Shell pear.

Ahhh... those days are long gone, as are most of the stores mentioned. I was still a young whippersnapper just learning about pipes and it was exciting time, when new things were popping up all the time and everything was an adventure. Yet even today, after some thirty-odd years of smoking and collecting, nothing gives me more pleasure than coming home from a long day at work, discussing the events of the day with my wife of nearly twenty-five years, then lighting up a briar filled with a wonderful hand-blended Latakia and puffing away while reading a good book, or perhaps an old *Ephemeris*. Good puffing to you all!



BRYANT & MAY began manufacturing matches in July of 1861; this advertisement, which dates from one-hundred and four years later (1965), appeared in various tobacconists' trade journals. The last plant in England (Liverpool) closed in 1992; the firm is now part of Swedish Match (*Svenska Tändsticksaktiebolaget*) founded by the notorious 'Swedish Match King', Ivar Kreuger.



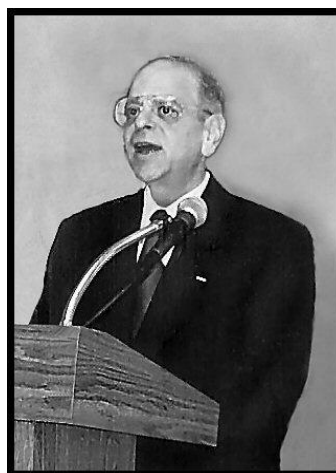
EDWARD R. KALNY & MAXWELL P. KALNY

MARK H. DUBNO



HUMAN nature being what it is, it's unusual for anyone to be liked by everyone; Mark Dubno enjoyed that singular distinction, but then, there really wasn't a single thing about him to dislike. Mark was thoughtful, generous, a good talker, an even better listener, and could converse easily and intelligently with anyone about anything. Born in March of 1949, Mark attended Westbury High School, and then went on to Stony Brook University, where he played what he always spoke of as 'old-school hockey' with the original Stony Brook Patriots, 1969 to 1971. Later he worked for the KeySpan Corporation, a leading energy supplier in the north-eastern United States.

In common with many pipe smokers, Mark had a tremendous number of interests, including all kinds of music, from traditional jazz to the Grateful Dead. Vintage movies and television—especially *The Honeymooners*, *The Twilight Zone*, and even *The Prisoner*—were one of his greatest interests, and his knowledge of little-known character actors was extensive. Sports never ceased to appeal to him, and he followed hockey and the New York Yankees avidly. His special subject was the history and technology of the two world wars, and he was Secretary of the Great War Association, until failing health forced him to retire in the Autumn of 2000.



Mark assembled a very fine collection of pipes, including Dunhills, Upshalls, Sasiensis, GBDs, and Trinities, the last from the local pipe shop, Trinity East [215 Sunrise Highway in Rockville Centre], where he was to be found whenever the state of his health permitted. Dunhill's Early Morning was his favorite mixture, and he always kept pounds of it on hand. His passion for collecting was not limited to pipes, and he also sought out sports memorabilia,

stamps, pencils, knives, firearms, and watches.

He never lost his taste for good food, and for the ever-present glass of seltzer. Although he was plagued by poor health for twenty years, he tried to have a life full of life, and he made it.

Mark H. Dubno took his leave of us on 4 November 2007.



Ich hatt' einen Kameraden,
Einen bessern findst du nit.
Bleib du im ew'gen Leben.

Johann Ludwig Uhland



ALBERT MENDEZ

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE HOLMESIAN SOCIETY

What is become of all those vernal fancies, which had so much power to touch the heart?

John Foster *Essays* (1805)



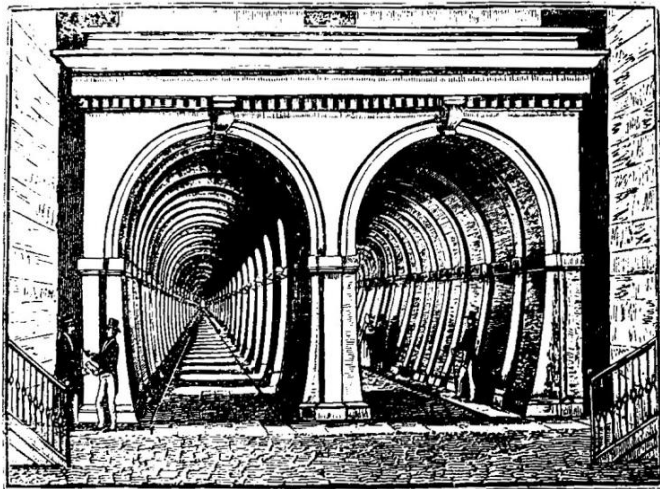
LN Spring, the untrammelled anima of youth takes wing, gliding lightly over a limitless mental panorama. The earliest origins of The Holmesian Society may be traced to this expansiveness, which gave rise to a series of casual conversations between some like-minded young men, late in March of 1966. As a result of these carefree discussions, The First Five (for they were five in number) agreed to meet in London later that year and establish a Holmesian Society.

Looking back upon those days from the vantage point of old age, one can only smile at the simple enthusiasm of youth, which made it appear a matter of paramount importance that some quite ordinary gentlemen, with no greater object than exploring their common fondness for the chronicles of Sherlock Holmes, should immediately form a society.

Thames Tunnel Paper,

PRINTED BY AUTHORITY, 76 FEET BELOW HIGH-WATER MARK.

To commemorate the day of opening the Tunnel as a Thoroughfare for Foot Passengers, March 25, 1843.



The location of the first meeting was in itself a matter for some discussion; the Brunel tunnel under the Thames—one of the signal achievements of Victorian engineering—was viewed as ideal by all concerned, but the presence of the Underground made it entirely impractical. Similarly, the Tower Subway—somewhat claustrophobic to begin with—was now filled with hydraulic pipes, and teeming with distinctly unfriendly rats. Blackfriars Bridge was also proposed and rejected, as was the Vale of Health Pond on Hampstead Heath, and the Fun Fair at Battersea Park.



Highgate Cemetery—then-a-days a neglected, solitary place—was ultimately settled upon, and on a sunny day in late September, the five young men repaired there with a luncheon hamper from Fortnum and Mason's, two bottles of a 1961 Beauce, and their largest pipes. The day was passed in a tranquil spot west of Swain's Lane, near the final resting place of Christina Georgina Rossetti and many of her relations; afterwards, no one could remember precisely what

was said, but everyone came away firmly convinced that they had spoken with telling effect, and successfully placed the nascent society on a firm footing.

These founders were high-minded young men—above mean condescension, but impatient of false formulæ and tiresome conventionalities—so that petty regulations were deemed unnecessary, and only some Usages and Customs of the Society agreed upon. The first of these established that the members of the society should be known as Fellows and—for reasons that should be palpable to any Holmesian—fixed their number at seventeen. Later, it became customary for Fellows to append the letters 'FHS' to their surname on Holmesian cards and correspondence, which occasionally led to some confusion with Fellows of The Heraldry Society.

During the initial discussions, entrance and subscription fees were quite rightly decried as vulgar and summarily dispensed with; indeed, whenever the members gathered in some public place, they were wont to vie keenly for the honour of discharging the reckoning, and each sought to outdo the other in open-handedness.

It was further resolved that admission to the Society should be solely by general consent and unanimous invitation. These were honours not easily obtained, for quite apart from a conversance with, and an appreciation of, the chronicles of Sherlock Holmes, an aspirant also required an easy acquaintance with the society, literature, and engineering of the nineteenth-century, and—although not an absolute prerequisite—a particular familiarity with one or more aspects of Victoriana.

Since Holmes could find (in the words of William Walsh) 'No love for love from womankind', no provision was made for the inclusion of ladies, and when an extraordinary one was admitted in the seventies, she agreed to appear as 'Mr' on the list of members, and to be addressed in this fashion. Entirely on her own initiative, this remarkable young woman routinely appeared at Society gatherings in the dress of a gentleman, which displayed

her fetching figure to advantage, and proved a great source of distraction to the company.

By the end of the decade only three new Fellows had been admitted, bringing the total to the inauspicious number of eight, and the Society in its minute entirety had met twice (in 1967 and 1969) in London, and once (1968) in Paris. This last was particularly memorable, as the city was then in the grip of *la révolution de mai*, complete with barricades and bloody engagements between youthful street-combatants and *les Compagnies républicaines de sécurité*.



Three new Fellows from America were admitted in April of 1970, when the Society met in New York for the first time, in a strange, echoing room, high up in the mansards of the sadly decayed Broadway Central Hotel. Three years later, this eerie mid-nineteenth century pile, situated on the west side of Broadway, between Bleeker-street and West 3rd-street, collapsed spectacularly in the middle of an early August afternoon.

The seventies were to be a flourishing decade for the Society; by the Autumn of 1971 there were no vacancies, and a resolution was agreed upon, *nemine contradicente*, creating the Neodamodes, a sort of brevet grade, which allowed aspirants some privileges without admitting them to full fellowship.

Although the Society never acquired premises of its own, at various times the Fellows enjoyed the use of three locations. The largest of these was in New York, where in May of 1970, the entire seventh floor of an early twentieth-century, 'American Renaissance' building, located at 710 Broadway (near Astor Place), was placed at the disposal of the Society. Originally leased by one of the founders of the Society, to serve as an electro-acoustical workshop, this 'loft' (as such commercial premises are commonly known in New York) was an austere and rather dirty apartment, with exposed pipes on the high ceilings, and festooned with early Edison direct-current wiring applied directly to the walls on wooden mouldings. Apart from a woodworker and a furniture restorer on two lower floors, there were no other tenants, and the building being mostly empty, it was at all times uncannily silent. Similar buildings, occupied for the most part by small workshops, lined the surrounding streets, and after five o'clock the pavements were largely deserted.

Although the vicinity was not then fashionable, the many pubs, bistros, and cafés of Greenwich Village were only a few minutes' walk distant, and in the other direction, McSorley's Old Ale House, where one could buy two pints for twenty-five cents, was still a 'local', and drunken louts from office and university (and others suffering from premature inebriation) were not welcome.

The Society's benefactor undertook extensive refurbishing, including the reopening of a fireplace and flues long closed-up, and the addition of a complete kitchen, and well-appointed bath. The front of the apartment, with three tall windows overlooking Broadway, was dedicated to a spacious sitting-room, furnished with comfortable arm-chairs, writing tables, 'the books that no gentleman's library should be without', and a small collection of



710 BROADWAY (right); the Society's rooms were located on the floor with the small, semi-circular balcony.

Holmesian titles. A good sized dining-room, two bedrooms, and an odd-room, comprised the remainder of the apartment.

Some excellent clarets, burgundies, and ports were kept here, supplied for the most part by the then recently-established wine merchants on the corner of Astor Place and Lafayette-street. Viands and dainties came from small shops in neighbouring 'Little Italy', which was not then a mere remnant infested with whingeing suburbanites and fastuous attitudinizers, but a lively district of working-class families. Mr Tirso Vaillant, a former H. Upmann *capataz* who kept a shop on Broadway, near West 23rd-street, made two *vitolas* of cigar for the Society; one was a 42x6 *piránide*, and the other a classic 45x6 *corona*, both *colorado*. Clay pipes were also kept in the New York rooms; these were large, handsome churchwardens, hand-pressed in iron moulds by a gentleman in Kent. Each had the owner's initials in an elaborate black and red Gothic letter, executed in lacquers by one of the Fellows with a Series 7 '0' sable.

This happy situation came to an end in late 1976; New York University's relentless encroachment had reached the west side of Broadway and blocks of 'luxury' flats were going up, so that the character of the area had changed drastically, and it was found impossible to renew the lease upon advantageous terms.

The loss of the rooms in New York coincided with a curious, indefinable alteration in the character of the Society. Every week brought fresh additions to the ranks of the Neodamodes, but entirely too many of these were men who knew all of the words by heart, but knew little of the heart within the words. Their knowledge of the life and times of Sherlock Homes was considerable, but shallow and perfunctory; their appreciation limited to the precise insertion of the relevant passage from the chronicles, or of an apposite citation from a ‘well-respected’ commentator. These new men had a tendency to frequently consult their wrist-watches, to express themselves in tiresome popular jargon, and to speak of money a great deal. There were also far too many of them, and the restful intimacy, and pleasant, studious isolation, were irretrievably gone.



The second location, in terms of size, was in London. This writer kept a largish flat in Highgate, and his wife kindly consented to set aside a suite therein for the use of the Society. Originally intended for a cook or housekeeper, it had in more recent years served as a guest-suite; it had a separate entrance, and consisted of a small bedchamber and a good-sized sitting room, isolated from the rest of the apartment by baize-lined double doors.

The rooms were redecorated in the comparatively restrained early-Victorian fashion—somewhat incongruous in a thirties-*moderne* flat—and furnished with a small selection of appropriate books and prints. When more than two or three Fellows gathered here, and the fumes from their pipes or cigars grew objectionable to the olfactory sensibilities of the distaff, the gentlemen repaired to the balcony. The fragrant clouds that hung over those assemblages often aroused the undisguised curiosity (frequently mixed with hostility) of the neighbours, most of whom were inclined towards the green tea and nut cutlet regimen. The flat was sold in late 1989, and the Fellows lost their *pied-à-terre* in the most important (to Holmesians) of cities.

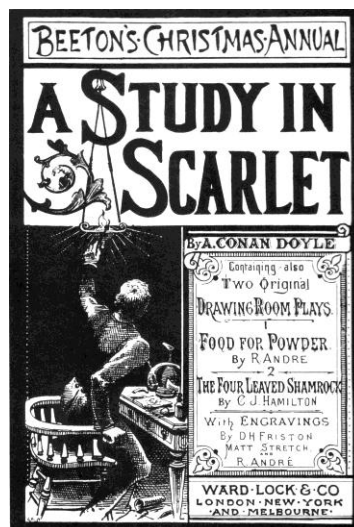


The third and smallest location was in Paris, at the far end of rue de Chanaleilles, near the Invalides, where one of the founders made over a small, square book-room to the Society, for the use of visiting Fellows. This elegant room opened on to a fine court-yard, and here one could sit contentedly with one’s pipe in the soft sunshine, watch the swallows glide

over in graceful formation, and the quarrelsome sparrows ceaselessly search the *pavé* for stray crumbs. The lack of sleeping accommodations did not in any way diminish the appeal of this place, as there were some excellent hotels and pensions close by, and it was a great favourite until 1995, when the Society’s benefactor was laid low by impartial death, which ‘mingles all men together’.

By the end of 1988, there were seventeen Fellows and nearly forty Neodamodes on the list of members, and having reached this apogee, the Society was precipitated from the heights of prosperity, to the depths of adversity, by two unpleasant occurrences in the same year.

The first of these unhappy incidents (‘The Incident’) involved a party of Neodamodes from America, who found themselves in Paris and spent a jolly day at the book-room in rue de Chanaleilles, reportedly emptying a half-dozen bottles of Muscat de Beaumes de Venise. Following their departure, the Society’s host noticed that his Holmesian books had been much disturbed, and set about returning them to strict order. To his surprise and chagrin, he discovered that one of the most important items was not to be found; Beeton’s Christmas Annual for 1887, where Holmes and Watson appeared for the first time, in *A Study in Scarlet*.



This copy of this rare and desirable publication had been quite handsomely and sympathetically bound (the well-worn covers and the pages of advertisements were carefully preserved and included) in olive morocco by the firm of Rivière and Son, probably in the late twenties, and had the bookplate of Hubert Allan Rose on the front paste-down. Enquiries were made of the visitors, but all four indignantly denied any knowledge of the book’s whereabouts. Overwhelmed



by this calamitous episode, the gentleman retired to mourn his loss, and subsequently advised the members of the Society (in a circular letter) that henceforth the book-room would be forbidden to all save a handful of Fellows who were his particular friends.

The second blow (‘The Other Incident’) came hard on the heels of the first; the Society’s Book of Wagers, where members entered the details of their private wagers, mysteriously disappeared for a few days, and upon its equally mysterious return, one of the entries was found to have been clumsily altered. Suspicion quite naturally attached to the gentleman who stood to gain a considerable sum by the ‘correction’, but as there was always a possibility that the



falsification was devised by some third party, to discredit one or both of the principals, the bet was simply expunged.

These deplorable episodes gave rise to a contagion of uneasiness and mistrust, which raged unchecked through the ranks of the Society. The Fellows were now unwilling to associate much with newer members, and small cliques developed within the Society, which met privately and kept their activities *sub rosa*. This invidious and divisive situation could not continue without inflicting irreparable damage to the fabric of the Society, and this is precisely what came to pass.

Offended by the coldness of the older members, new aspirants were discouraged from seeking admittance, and many of the more recent arrivals began to drift away. The new men who had swelled the ranks of the Society in the late seventies and early eighties, the very ones who had committed entire passages of the chronicles to memory, were particularly disconsolate, as their peculiar appreciation of Holmes required a constant influx of even newer men, to whom they could display their erudition. These pseudo-Holmesians soon decamped, leaving behind them many unanswered questions, equivocal situations, and lingering suspicions, all of which were offset by a fresh blossoming of serenity and decorum, both of which had long lain dormant.

By the mid-nineties, the Society consisted of nothing more than eleven Fellows; this has been further reduced by the incessant demands of death, which has whittled the eleven down to a handful. Of the First Five, only one—the present writer—is unquestionably (albeit temporarily) alive, and there may be one other survivor, out in the inhospitable deserts of Western America, but his exact situation is beyond the ken of mortal man.



Odds & Ends

To begin at the beginning, the handsome sketch that appears on the cover page is from the pen of Mr Peter C. Wiseman, the Life President of The Pipe Club of London. Mr Wiseman keeps an ms. pipe book, with details and drawings of his collection, and he graciously gave us permission to reproduce one of his sketches. Another member of The Pipe Club of London, my honourable friend Mr Wolfgang Waach, keeps a similar, rather more elaborate book.

Along with his most welcome *London Pipe Report*, Mr Wiseman also very kindly sent me a copy of *The Journal of The Pipe Club of London* for the Spring of 2008, and herein I read—with great interest and not a little alarm—that the club meetings were frequently attended by a gentleman wearing a Tyrolean hat and driving an open top car. I think the blood-chilling name of ‘Alpine Joe’ occurred to me at once; I uttered a cry of despair, the copy of *The Journal* dropped from my nerveless fingers, and I fell into a swoon, from which I was brought round only with great difficulty, by copious draughts of brandy and soda-water. Anyone who has read P. G. Wodehouse’s *Stiff Upper Lip*, *Jeeves* will remember Alpine Joe, the notorious lifter of umbrellas, silver cow creamers, and black amber statuettes, who always wore an Alpine hat and drove an open two-seater.

The object of this fellow’s attendance at the club meetings is immediately obvious; he wishes to abscond with the fine, cased, eight-panelled Canadian, presented by Mr William Ashton-Taylor to Mr Peter C. Wiseman, upon the latter’s retirement (after seventeen years) from the post of Secretary and Treasurer, and his investiture as President for Life (Mrs Bridgette Wiseman was named First Lady upon the same occasion) of The Pipe Club of London.

One trusts that the authorities will take firm steps to prevent this monstrous action being brought to pass, and will select some stalwart club members, swear them in as Special Constables, and give them strict charge to apprehend the villain when next he is seen.

Membership in The Pipe Club of London is open to pipe smokers from anywhere in the world, and the Club presently has over three-hundred members in twenty-six different countries. Details may be had from the Secretary and Treasurer, the estimable Mr Michael P. Gratruck, 24 Mawbey Street, Stockwell North, London SW8 2TX England.



Mr Richard Esserman is entirely too well-known to require any introduction, and his writings too universally admired to benefit from any laudatory commentary. His voluminous ‘missives’ (as Tom Dunn invariably characterized them) were a regular feature (*Rich Esserman Reports*) in *The Pipe Smoker’s Ephemeris* since 1993. These observations were (and remain) immensely popular, and they still appear (in a somewhat abbreviated form) in *The Pipe Collector*, under the title of *News and Views*. These pages are far too few to do justice to Mr Esserman’s sweeping style, but he has kindly agreed to honour us with some reminiscences of his earlier pipe smoking days.



The loss of Mr Mark H. Dubno occasioned great sorrow to all that knew him, and to many who did not. Messrs Edward R. Kalny and Maxwell P. Kalny were in his company a great deal, especially during his final months, and their remembrance of him is particularly apt and poignant.



Mr Richard S. Newcombe recently returned from the well-known Chicagoland International Pipe & Tobacciana Show, and he favoured us with an ‘e-mail’ about what transpired there:

Chicago was great overall, but the new fascists of the 21st century managed to forbid smoking. They did so on the day before the show was to open, as 2,200 people from all over the world were in planes, trains and automobiles en route to the pipe show.

They had been planning an Eliot Ness-style raid on the show—no kidding—but because of advance publicity, they were forced to confront the show’s organizers in advance and tell them they could not hold the show if people smoked inside.

The Chicago pipe club is remarkably resourceful, and, fearing something like this, had invested \$14,700 to rent a giant tent that held at least 400 of us at one time—a tent with heaters, a floor, a full service bar and buffet lines of food. It was open 24 hours a day and located only a few steps from the Mega Center. They had put in comfortable lounge chairs, couches and plenty of round tables with folding chairs.

The only problem was that I always felt out of place. When I was in the Mega Center, I wanted to be in the tent smoking my pipe with friends. When I was in the tent, I felt like I was missing the pipe show in the Mega Center.

Still, that was a small price to pay considering that the alternative would have been a non-smoking pipe show. As one of the participants told the Chicago Tribune, it would be like attending a wine tasting party without being permitted to sip the wine.

Mr Newcombe's speech, *A Quiet Revolution*, delivered at the annual dinner of the Seattle Pipe Club on 26 January 2008, has attracted a good deal of attention (and not a little admiration) for its candour. It has appeared in print at various times, most recently in the April 2008 issue of *The Pipe Collector*. A German edition of Mr Newcombe's celebrated work on pipes, *In Search of Pipe Dreams*, has recently been published (*Der Traum vom Pfeifenrauchen* Heel Verlag GmbH, Königswinter, 2007), and a Chinese translation has just been completed. Both translations are uncommonly competent, and faithfully preserve the spirit of the original. Details of the handsomely presented, hard-cover German edition may be had at info@heel-verlag.de. Contact information for the Chinese edition will be available shortly.



The Holmesian issue of the *Thing*, which appeared in November of 2007, was very well received; a lady who is neither a Holmesian nor a pipe smoker pronounced it the best thing that she has ever read on Sherlock Holmes. Mr Fred Heim wrote *...Number 3 of The Thing. I enjoyed it immensely. It was a treat to read John Hall once again. Do try to convince him to share some new examples of his marvelous fiction. Reading Regis McCafferty, his excellent fiction or thoughtful essays, is always a delight...* and his comments are typical of those received. One chap did intimate some doubts about the intellectual pursuits of Holmesians, and their interest in 'counting the number of pipes'. Nothing would persuade me to reveal this fellow's name, address, and details of his daily routine, including the route followed by him from office to train every day. Unless, of course, I do not find the specified number of used notes in a plain brown envelope behind the cold water pipe in the gentlemen's lavatory in Grand Central Station.



Hardly Odd, and not quite the End: a looking-glass for all to gaze into, from the scintillating pen of Mr Steven DaGama.

STEVEN DA GAMA

BURNING THE MIDNIGHT OIL

I grew up in America. My childhood and youth were physically demanding, intermittently thrilling: farms, horses, wilderness, girls. My college years were dreadful: isolation, violence, fear, betrayals, death, the ever-present specter of war. I took to wandering. I grew up in Brazil. My Portuguese paternal grandmother had friends in Rio de Janeiro. Carnival, at the time, was a celebration of life fantastic, not the commercialized spectacle of today. I donned a macaw mask and danced with the poor. I grew up

in Canada. My body worked tedious jobs, the rest of me wrote and drew and painted; my allies in Canada were poets and artists. Once, I wanted to visit some Estonian artists whose creations I admired, but I never reached Estonia. Bad luck, I guess. I wish those artists well. I loathe the slaughterhouse mentality. I always craved beauty. The uglier the world becomes, the more I crave beauty. Without beauty, I malfunction. Abject poverty taught me what I needed to know; Gypsies in southern France and eastern Portugal taught me how to put that knowledge into practice. I first arrived in Portugal on an Italian ocean liner, then again on airplanes, and again on foot across the Spanish border. I walked everywhere. Walking is the art of slowness. Slowness enabled me to see and remember. I grew up in Portugal.



Those of us who have smoked a pipe for many years know just how important pipe cleaners are; the finest tobaccos come to grief in a pipe that has not been thoroughly cleaned. The Hong Kong firm of Gloredo, previously noted for hand-made pipes that are aesthetically and spiritually harmonious, has introduced a painstakingly engineered and produced pipe cleaner that is simply superb. The construction, the quality of the material, and the attention to detail are all remarkable; the cotton is of a fine grade and finish, and exhibits no signs of chemical bleaching, which weakens the fiber and may be injurious to health. The wire core is heavier and stiffer than that found in ordinary cleaners, and this eliminates the extremely annoying tendency for kinks to develop when the cleaner encounters an irregularity in the draught hole.



A small, nylon pipe brush is included in the elegant, heavy paper packets, and the cut ends of the wire are thoughtfully protected with a drop of sealant, to avoid scratching the draught holes. I examined the brush filaments under 10X magnification, and they are of extremely high quality, uniformly dimensioned and trimmed. This is one of the most original and useful notions that I have met with in recent years. These cleaners are absolutely first-rate; further details may be had from info@gloredo.com.