DETECTIVE FICTION

The Collector's Guide

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and
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Barn Owl Books

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ABBREVIATIONS

AHMM	*Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine* (New York, Davis)
a.k.a.	also known as
BL	British Library
CC	*Catalogue of Crime*, by Jacques Barzun and Wendell Hertig Taylor (New York, Harper & Row 1971)
CWA	Crime Writers Association (UK)
DBC	Detective Book Club (US)
ECB	*The English Catalogue of Books*
EN	*Evening News* (London)
ES	*Evening Standard* (London)
EQMM	*Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* (New York, Davis)
EWMM	*Edgar Wallace Mystery Magazine* (UK)
GMP	Gay Men's Press (London)
Hubin	*Crime Fiction 1749–1980* by Allen J. Hubin (New York, Garland 1984) (the comprehensive bibliography of the genre)
JCMM	*John Creasey Mystery Magazine* (UK)
LMM	*London Mystery Magazine*
MWA	Mystery Writers of America
NAL	New American Library
n.d.	no date given
NEL	New English Library
OUP	Oxford University Press
Reilly	*Twentieth-century Crime and Mystery Writers* edited by John M. Reilly (New York, St Martin's Press 1980); second edition (New York, St Martin's Press/London, St James Press 1985)
SF	Science Fiction
TAD	*The Armchair Detective* (New York, Mysterious Press: founder-editor Allen J. Hubin)
UK	United Kingdom
ULP	University of London Press
US	United States (of America)
V & A	Victoria & Albert Museum (London)

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John Cooper
B. A. Pike

The authors will be glad to hear from readers with suggested corrections or additions to the information contained in this book. They may be contacted c/o Barn Owl Books, at the address given on the reverse of the title-page.

INTRODUCTION

This book is intended as a handbook for collectors of detective fiction, and it seeks to include practical advice on all aspects of assembling and maintaining such a collection. It is also a celebration of the mystery or detective story, and largely disregards hard-boiled, gothic, espionage, thriller, adventure, and psychological suspense fiction. This is not from contempt for any of these fields, but from enthusiasm for the genuine whodunit, which is too seldom given its due.

We have chosen to concentrate on Golden Age authors and their modern successors, with 1920 as an approximate starting-point. The earliest novel discussed is *At the Villa Rose*, which came out in 1910, but in general we have held clear from that era. Conan Doyle and Edgar Wallace are outside our brief, and we have excluded G. K. Chesterton and R. Austin Freeman because both are well documented elsewhere: the former in John Sullivan's Bibliography (ULP 1958) and in *TAD*, summer 1983, the latter in *In Search of Doctor Thorndyke* by Norman Donaldson (Popular Press 1971). An author's exclusion does not mean that he or she is regarded by us with contempt. We simply do not have the room to include every deserving writer. In an ideal world, Anthony Gilbert, for instance, would certainly be included. A. E. W. Mason *is* in, purely for enthusiasm for his work; and Ernest Bramah is included for the same reason, and also to enable us to put certain aspects of his record straight.

Authors are featured under the names by which they are principally known within the crime fiction genre, even where their real names were also used for mysteries. Thus, Anthony Berkeley takes precedence over A. B. Cox, and Ellis Peters over Edith Pargeter. All featured authors are listed at the beginning of Chapter 5 with their pseudonyms.

Because we are concerned with crime fiction, we have generally ignored works by our chosen authors in other areas of literature. In such a context, *Blackkerchief Dick, Nurse Matilda*, and *English Farming and Why I Turned It Up* are irrelevant. Reference is made to some works outside the genre, where their status needs to be clarified: *The Three Cornered Halo* is a good example of this. We have tried to avoid excessive factual detail in the discussions of writers, though some, inevitably, are heavily weighted with information. In general, the author entries are intended to give a complete survey of the writers' books and stories within the crime fiction genre, with descriptions of first editions and their dust-wrappers and some account of series characters and their frequency. There are, however, exceptions to this. JC has chosen to disregard the Gothic novels of Jennie Melville and the thrillers of John Rossiter, for instance; and BP's entries on A. E. W. Mason and Roy Vickers are selective, the latter extremely so, since it deals only with Vickers' later stories. The checklists are designed to give as much as possible of the significant information, and to provide complementary detail to the text.

In our descriptions of books, we have aimed to limit ourselves to what we know and have seen. Where we have given in to the temptation to speculate, we hope to have made it clear that this is what we have done. Checklists are based on books we have seen rather than on previously published lists, and we can vouch for the datings of all British first editions given here, which we have, almost without exception, verified by reference to the books themselves. Where books are undated, we have relied initially on the advertisement sections and printers' codes many of them contain; and where these are not present, we have consulted the *English Catalogue of Books* (*ECB*) or visited the British Library (which almost always agree in their dating of first editions). We cannot, unfortu-

nately, vouch for the dating of American books in the same way, since we have had access to relatively few US texts. Here, our principal authority has been Allen J. Hubin, whose bibliography of crime fiction will always be indispensable to collectors.

Accuracy is obviously crucial in a book of this kind, but we are of course subject to human fallibility. Where the word 'known' occurs in the text, it means known to us or to one of us. The claim that 'no variant bindings are known' of Margery Allingham's first editions means, specifically, that we have never encountered any. With the older authors, in particular, we have aimed to pass on all we know and have learnt; but for current authors, we have been more selective (very few modern dust-wrappers, for instance, are worth describing).

We are amateurs in bibliography, with no training or specialized knowledge of this field (as, perhaps, will be painfully apparent to those with such expertise). However, we have tried, conscientiously and responsibly, to describe accurately all the books included in this survey. Appendix E assembles many of the terms we have consistently used, with indications of what we understand and intend them to mean. In the matter of colour description we have found a major area of uncertainty, especially since we cannot always agree between ourselves (JC maintains that pre-war Gollancz books are lettered in red, but BP persists in regarding this colour as orange). The binding colours given in this book are accurate in essentials, in that no green books are said to be red; but we are as fallible as anyone when the finer shades are in question, and whether a binding is purple or maroon, pink or mauve, fawn or beige or sand-coloured, depends on, and varies with, the individual.

In general, we do not mention that the publisher is named on the spine of a book, since this is standard publishing practice. 'Spine lettering' may be taken to include title, author, and publisher. Title and author are often singled out, however, since they occur jointly on many front covers, in a way that publishers, as a rule, do not.

In a few checklists, some months of publication are given, as well as the years. This may indicate that the months are stated in the books, as with Patricia Wentworth; but it is more often intended to establish exact chronology when two or more books appeared in the same year (particularly where a checklist is divided between novels and story collections). Authors who benefit from this kind of precision include H. C. Bailey, Philip MacDonald, and Rex Stout. It has not always been possible to establish the exact order of publication for all an author's books: we still do not know, for instance, which of Phoebe Atwood Taylor's 1942 books preceded the other.

We have tried to ensure that publishers are named in full when they first appear in a checklist (e.g. Hodder & Stoughton), but for later references we have adopted the convenient shorter form (e.g. Hodder). Since Collins' crime fiction appeared both under the firm's general imprint and within the Crime Club series, books from this house are identified either as Collins or as Crime Club books. The Crime Club formula is used here exclusively for Collins books, and never for those from the US Crime Club, which are invariably attributed to their publisher, Doubleday.

We have not given the place of publication in checklists, since we believe that doubts about which are British and which American publishers may be dispelled by reference to the text. We are uncertain of the distinction between the US publishers British Book Centre and London House, which at times appear to be interchangeable. Where they occur in a checklist, they follow Hubin exactly.

We make the common assumption that books by British authors were first published in Britain, and that books by American authors first appeared in the US, except where we know this to be untrue. If a number of books in sequence have bindings and lettering in a variety of colours, it has sometimes been judged wise to include such details in the checklist, rather than in the text of the essay. 'Red, green' after a title indicates that the book has a red binding with green lettering on the spine (and the text will confirm whether it is also on the front cover). If these details are not present for any title in a checklist, they will be found in the course of the entry on the author.

We have tried to make checklists complete and, with authors currently active, as up-to-date as possible. We regard uncollected stories as of prime

importance, and have listed many that were previously little known or unknown. They are listed according to the earliest known appearance of each story. Ideally, we have given details of the first publication, and also of the first book appearance, if this is different. In many cases, we have listed additional appearances, where these occur in books or journals likely to be more generally accessible to collectors than the others listed: we have, for example, usually listed details of publication in *EQMM*. In many cases we have *not* listed all known appearances of a story, particularly since space is limited. When two months are given in a checklist for the *Saint* magazine, the former is the US date, and the latter the UK.

Series characters contribute greatly to the appeal of the mystery novel, and their appearances are indicated in checklists accordingly. Some indication of series characters' contributions to story collections is usually given, and the uncollected stories have also largely been checked for the presence or absence of series detectives.

Appendices are provided for various aspects of collecting, and to illustrate and enlarge upon points made in the opening chapters. Of particular importance is Appendix I, which lists other authors who deserve representation in a book such as this but have been excluded for reasons of space. Many of these are excellent performers, and all have something to offer to followers of the civilized mystery. Many also deserve to be far better known than they are.

It will be apparent, not only from the title-page and from the dominant pronoun in this introduction, that this book is a collaboration. There have been two of us involved, each with his own distinctive ideas and objectives. We began with the intention to present our information formally, according to a standard pattern; but it became increasingly obvious that our approaches were essentially different, particularly with regard to the main business of the book, the discussions of individual authors. Accordingly, we have gone our separate ways, though always with the sole desire to be informative, interesting, accurate, and helpful. It has seemed advisable to attribute each discussion of a writer to its author, so that readers know in every case with whom they have to reckon. Though we hope that the checklists are standardized, we know that the author discussions are not.

Alice in Wonderland felt that a book without pictures was of no use. Since we sympathize with her, we have included as many as could be elegantly accommodated within these pages. Dust-wrappers naturally preponderate, but there are also maps, plans, frontispieces, endpapers, title-pages, and inscriptions.

CONTENTS

APPROACHES TO COLLECTING 1

Collections of crime fiction vary, like those who cater for them, from the high-powered to the unassuming. The level at which you operate depends on your temperament and your financial resources. For a number of admirable reasons, most collectors now prefer to have the books of their favoured authors in first edition; but there is a world elsewhere, and, for those who inhabit it, the range of crime writing available in paperback is wider now than for many years past, and there are many reissues available on the second-hand market. There are also vast numbers of dilapidated ex-library books still circulating, for collectors unconcerned about the condition of their acquisitions.

This book, however, is intended for the committed collector, who gets high on detective fiction first editions, craving them as others long for drugs or casinos or soap operas or alcohol. It pays tribute to the power of the first edition, to its status as an antique, as a survivor, as a part of man's cultural history, like the Sheraton sideboard or the long-case clock. It acknowledges that a reproduction must always be inferior to the original, and that rarity imparts an additional lustre to an already desirable object.

First editions can, and often do, increase in monetary value. Ten years ago, an Agatha Christie first from the 1930s cost about £10 without its dust-wrapper. Nowadays it is more likely to cost £40. Colin Dexter's first book sold for £2.50 in 1975, on first publication; recently, a copy was sold for £35. P. D. James' first book is now worth about 200 times what it originally cost in 1961. It is important to remember, however, that *Cover Her Face* is desirable only partly because it is rare. The chief reason is that it is the distinguished first novel of a major writer. Those who collect purely as an investment are surely missing this point and, perhaps, also much of the fun. The rules of their particular game permit them to collect only fashionable authors, who are not always necessarily the best. Since investors intend eventually to sell what they acquire, they distance themselves from reader-collectors, who would always rather have the book than the money it might raise.

Restricting oneself to first editions has certain advantages. It limits the rate at which one acquires books; it makes each acquisition a cause for celebration; and it imposes worthwhile standards from the outset. It would be easy and still quite cheap to amass a large collection of ex-library books or second-hand paperbacks; and if this would satisfy you, it is the obvious path to follow. But it is also very easy to become disenchanted with inferior copies, and the itch to replace them with better ones tends to make itself felt. When you find yourself buying the same book twice, or even three times, you will know that the curse of the upgrader is well and truly upon you.

It is better by far to get the perfect copy of a book you want the first time around – or, if not a perfect copy, at least one that will continue to satisfy you and will not demand to be replaced. The more elusive a book, the more absorbing the business of trying to track it down – and the more rewarding its eventual acquisition. Some books are more elusive than others, largely because the original editions were smaller. Agatha Christie's first novel was published in an edition of 2,000 copies, so it is inevitably much harder to find than a later work like *A Murder Is Announced*, of which 50,000 copies were printed. Many modern crime novels have smaller print-runs than might reasonably be expected: 2,000 or 3,000 copies in many cases. Most of these will be bought for libraries, so that relatively few will survive for collectors. It has become advisable to acquire as they appear new books by the writers one collects, since they may not surface again later. Anyone now

seeking the original editions of Ruth Rendell's and P. D. James' first novels will know what rarity means.

First edition collections, inevitably, vary with the individual collector. Some meticulously follow the recommendations of accredited gurus, regardless of personal taste and judgement. James Sandoe's *Readers' Guide to Crime* and the Haycraft–Queen 'definitive library' of cornerstones of mystery fiction are two such influential listings. A third, *Queen's Quorum*, claims to identify 'the 106 most important books' of short crime stories, for those who like to have these things cut and dried. Some collectors aim to assemble the books that have won awards from the professional associations of crime writers (see Appendix C). Others try to find all the crime fiction issued by a particular publisher. Each of these procedures must surely entail the acquisition of some items one would not otherwise have wanted; but substantial collections of books from the major publishers would undoubtedly be of considerable interest.

Some collections are limited to a particular period of time, such as the 'Golden Age' between the wars. This means that only the earlier works of many writers are collected, and the collector hardly knows the pleasure of a complete collection of an admired author's work. Single-author collections are also known, especially with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle as their subject (or, rather, Sherlock Holmes, since interest appears to centre on the character rather than his creator). Anyone aiming to acquire every item relating to Holmes has a lifetime's pleasurable endeavour ahead. A common setting for a group of novels can be the basis of a collection: the English country house or village, a boat or train, a hospital or theatre, London or New England. Locked-room mysteries and impossible crimes are widely and keenly sought. Feminists seek and study the cases of women detectives, and there is increasing interest in the 'ethnic' investigators, especially those with a distinctive culture, defined in the course of a series. Police procedural novels are popular, and so are the historical crime novels, ranging through time from the classical Greece of Margaret Doody to the early twentieth century of Peter Lovesey. (See Appendix A.)

The stories of a chosen author can be fascinating to the collector, particularly if they have not been brought together and published in volume form. Ideally, an author's stories should all be available in this way, or at least in mixed anthologies with the work of other writers, but in practice this is seldom so and many stories remain uncollected in book form. All Dorothy L. Sayers' stories have now been collected together and all Lillian de la Torre's; but these are exceptions rather than the rule. Two established annual anthologies are the *Winter's Crimes* series and *John Creasey's Crime Collection*. The former, now in its nineteenth year, has always been published by Macmillan, and contains largely new stories. The latter is the anthology of the Crime Writers Association, and is now edited annually by Herbert Harris. It invariably contains an unbalanced mixture of new stories and reprints, with the accent heavily on the latter. It is now in its twenty-sixth year and is currently published by Gollancz. The Mystery Writers of America also issues frequent collections. (See Appendix B.) *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* is published monthly in New York by Davis, with Eleanor Sullivan as editor. A complete collection is a pearl of great price.

Personal taste is, of course, the ultimate criterion for any collector, and it is generally safe to assume that one doesn't buy something one doesn't expect to enjoy. Problems arise when a favoured writer changes direction: do you, or do you not, follow? Julian Symons, for instance, began with entertaining detective novels in the grand tradition, but later diversified into a bewildering range of styles and themes; and Ruth Rendell's more recent novels and stories are deeply disconcerting to admirers of her earlier work. A selective collection is the obvious answer in such cases, but it is hard to abandon an author in midstream, and there is always the hope that normal service will be resumed. The possibilities are infinite: all the collector has to do is make the decisions (and pay for the books). John Dickson Carr rightly regarded mystery fiction as 'the grandest game in the world', and its collection is an enthralling activity. For its devotees, the game is continually afoot.

FORMING A COLLECTION 2

Any potential repository of books should be investigated, however unpromising: charity shops, antique markets, auction rooms, car boot sales, or church fêtes. With sufficient energy and resilience to tackle anything, the determined collector has a better chance of making worthwhile discoveries than those of us who wait for books to come to them. Though the stock of most second-hand bookshops is depressingly static, significant acquisitions are still made, particularly by dealers, who are often able to hunt more assiduously than most collectors. The number of bookshops stocking second-hand crime fiction seems, sadly, to be dwindling (though the remarkable concentration of booksellers in Hay-on-Wye appears still to be flourishing).

Because many book-dealers have short business lives, it is advisable to phone in advance of a visit, to confirm opening hours, and even to establish that the concern is still active. It is very disheartening to track down a bookshop and find it with whitewash on the windows, or an announcement that the premises will shortly reopen as a burger bar. Three publications list the country's bookshops and dealers, with details of specialization: Sheppard's *Book Dealers in the British Isles* (Europa 1987); Cole's *Register of Antiquarian Booksellers*; and *In Quest of the Perfect Book* or *Driff's Guide to All the Secondhand and Antiquarian Bookshops in Britain*. Europa also publishes Sheppard's *Book Dealers in North America* and *European Booksellers*. Some dealers offer a book-search service, but it has to be said that they are no more likely to locate elusive books than anyone else, without untapped resources unknown to the rest of us. More reliable sources of supply must be book fairs and auctions, which are continually advertised in the specialist press. Collectors may themselves advertise in the *Book and Magazine Collector*, a monthly journal first published in 1984.

The market in crime fiction tends to centre nowadays on specialist dealers, who will almost certainly charge more for desirable books, but will also have a better chance than most of actually locating some (see Appendix D). Dealers' catalogues are the most likely regular source of decent second-hand crime fiction, and the collector should aim to figure on as many mailing lists as possible. Catalogues are a mixed blessing, since they spare one the necessity of trudging round the country in an often futile search, but put collectors directly into competition with each other for the more desirable items. Whether or not one secures a book from a list largely depends on the speed at which the local postal service delivers that list. Most dealers profess to work on their customers' wants lists, but few actually do so. It is a common occurrence to see books from one's wants list advertised for sale in the catalogues of dealers who ought to have offered them to you – and it is deeply irritating to ring and find them sold.

The condition of books has increased in importance, and collectors generally are becoming more demanding in this respect. Ideally, a book should be in the same state as when it was published, but it is unrealistic to expect this in most cases; and it is reasonable to tolerate in an older book faults that would be unacceptable in a more recent one. Defective copies are especially undesirable: whatever else may have happened to a book, all its pages, including both free endpapers, should be intact. People tend to read detective novels during meals, so that food-stains and greasy thumbmarks are always a danger, to be avoided if possible. Ex-library books are wholly unacceptable to a serious collector, since not only are they too heavily read, but they also carry the inevitable stigmata of public ownership. In particular, they

are often rebound for library circulation, and a book without its original binding is worthless to a collector. Heavy foxing is a disfigurement more tolerable to some collectors than others: the more scrupulous will insist that it is light or, preferably, non-existent. A book with bumped corners, caused by some collision, is also essentially undesirable to the fastidious. Inscriptions in general are unwelcome to a collector, particularly those that take over a front free endpaper (unless, like Helene Hanff, you cherish them as part of the individual history of each book). Only when the inscription is in the hand of the author is it an asset. A writer's signature is desirable, but presentation inscriptions are obviously more so. The more considered an inscription, the more enthralling it is to the collector. An inscription at the time of publication is more desirable than a later one, but both are enhancements. Best of all is a written dedication to reinforce a printed one.

Dust-wrappers have become increasingly important to first-edition collectors, to such an extent that a book with the wrapper may be worth much more than the same book without it.

Because they tend to be scarce, dust-wrappers for books published before the 1950s make a considerable difference to the books' value. The brief table below may illustrate this point.

Even collectors who are unhappy about this price differential do not deny the appeal of the dust-wrapper, and accept that, as a collector's item, a book without it is deficient. It is part of the book as first issued and so, in an ideal world, inseparable from it. It can also be a source of aesthetic pleasure or invaluable information. Some wrappers have little or no appeal beyond the fact that they belong with the books, but others are works of art in themselves, with something of the dignity of collaboration about them. It is to be regretted that so many modern wrappers derive from the photographer rather than the graphic artist.

It is advisable to set limits as to what is and is not acceptable without the dust-wrapper. It might be foolish to insist on it for pre-war books, since relatively few have survived in this state (and are highly priced, accordingly); but for post-war books the chances are usually better, and the collector may well live to regret the acquisition of a book without its wrapper when a copy with the wrapper turns up. Most collectors and dealers switch wrappers from inferior to better copies of books. Sometimes the wrapper of a later impression is identical to that of the first, so that it may reasonably (and, surely, legitimately) be transferred to the first edition. If a later wrapper carries reviews of the book or new publicity for the publisher it should be regarded only as a makeshift substitute for the genuine article. The ultra-fastidious collector prefers dust-wrappers with the price still present, but the rest of us tend to consider this unrealistic.

Booksellers' lists define books according to a common code (which is, none the less, variously interpreted by different dealers). A 'fine' book should be virtually as new, and a 'very good' one ought to be in a decent state, with no serious blemishes. The word 'good', in relation to second-hand books, in fact means 'not good', and the discerning collector should avoid anything so described. Reading copies are precisely that – for reading only, and worth no more than a pound at the outside.

Collectors need to be wary of false first editions, those which appear to make the claim but are not

	Without dust-wrapper	*With dust-wrapper*
Nicholas Blake, *Thou Shell of Death*	£30	£150
John Dickson Carr, *To Wake the Dead*	£30	£120
Agatha Christie, *Ten Little Niggers*	£50	£250
Edmund Crispin, *Holy Disorders*	£20	£80
Michael Gilbert, *Close Quarters*	£15	£50
E. C. R. Lorac, *Case in the Clinic*	£15	£40
Dorothy L. Sayers, *Gaudy Night*	£18	£100
Josephine Tey, *The Franchise Affair*	£8	£25

actually doing so. Ward Lock, Bles, Longmans Green, Constable, Gollancz, Methuen, and Collins Crime Club all issued certain books in cheaper-edition form without making that distinction clear in the books themselves (though presumably they did so on the dust-wrappers). If a book states that it was first published in a particular year, there is no reason to doubt the truth of that statement: but it does not necessarily mean that the copy in question is the first edition. In some cases, it is merely recording the year of first publication, rather than staking a claim to be the original edition. It is hoped that our discussions of individual authors will make this point more clearly and forcibly, since no single issue causes greater confusion. (For a general guide to publishers' practice, see Appendix F.) Later issues of first editions are also very problematical. If a printer bound some copies of book in one colour and some in another, who is to say which is the 'true' first edition? We have invariably assumed that the British Library has the primary issue, especially if the Library's dating coincides with the *English Catalogue of Books*, as is usually the case.

British book club editions are easily identified, since they state clearly that this is what they are; but US book clubs are trickier. Unfortunately, the original publisher is named on both title-page and spine of American book club editions, so that mistakes are easily made. If it is slim, with shiny covers and cheap paper, an American book may well be a book club issue. Confirmation will be found on the dust-wrapper, unless some unscrupulous person has removed the evidence: where British books show the price, the words 'Book Club edition' appear, so that the obvious assumption for a British collector is that the price has been removed from a first edition wrapper. Some cheaply produced firsts from publishers like St Martin's Press and Doubleday are virtually indistinguishable from book club editions: only the magic words 'first edition' within separate the sheep from the goats. Doubleday books always state the fact if they are first editions: if they do not, they are not. In Britain, Collins Crime Club is an authentic imprint, under which many important writers have had their books first published. Another particular feature of some US books that causes confusion is the system of numbering whereby the status of the issue is indicated. In general, it seems to be true that a book is a first edition if all the numbers from one to ten appear with the copyright details on the reverse of the title-page. In some cases, however, the lowest figure in the first edition is a two, so this is not a hard-and-fast rule. Often the figure 2 shows that the book is a second issue (and a 3 that it is the third, and so on). Sometimes the words 'first printing' appear, even when the numbers indicate that it is no such thing.

MAINTAINING A COLLECTION | 3

Once a book is in your possession, you can, of course, do what you like with it in an attempt to restore to it some of its former glory. If a page is loose, you can stick it back in, discreetly, with a thread of Prittstick, for preference. Covers may be cleaned with Backus Bookcloth Cleaner (obtainable from Edgar Backus Ltd, 44–6 Cank Street, Leicester). Inscriptions by and to previous owners may irritate you to the point where you wish to remove them, but if so, you should be aware that you will also remove the surface of the paper, however gently you proceed. Despite this, gratifying results can be obtained, if the paper is thick enough, and if an ink-rubber or a typewriter-rubber is applied with a featherlight pressure and unlimited patience. Labels and bookplates may be removed from the pastedown of a book by painting them with water, and leaving this to penetrate, before lifting them clear. The wet paintbrush may be used to wipe away any remaining gum, and the damp area should be dried with absorbent paper. This is much less likely to work with labels attached to the front free endpaper of a book, since the paper will almost certainly buckle. Chipped and defective dust-wrappers may be repaired internally with sticky white or brown paper, but never with sellotape, which deteriorates with the passage of time. The ideal way to make good a wrapper's deficiencies is, perhaps, to enshroud it in protective, unshrinkable plastic and to stick the paper to this rather than to the wrapper itself. If you use ordinary commercial cellophane, you should fold it clear of the top edge of the wrapper, to allow for shrinkage.

In comparison with stamps or porcelain, books are robust, but they are still vulnerable in a number of ways – to sunlight, to damp, to radiators, and to careless handling. Damp is probably the arch-enemy, but clumsy handling is perhaps more insidious (and must be more widespread). Glass-fronted bookcases are the ideal storage places, but since these are so hideously expensive, most books take their chance, like many cars, out in the open. Books should support each other on the shelf, without being so tightly packed that there is difficulty in removing one. Split spines result from careless removal of a book from the shelf. The grasp should encompass the spine; this is built to stand the pressure, while the top of the spine is not. Most readers and even some collectors read books clumsily, creasing, thumbing, and generally bashing the pages about in the process of getting from start to finish. It is possible to re-read a book several times without leaving a trail of devastation – or to maul it once, sufficiently to mark it for ever. The pleasure of reading is the primary reason for collecting books, and a scornful reader who does not also collect might regard this book and all it celebrates as window-dressing. Those of us who do collect seriously know better. To the pleasures of reading are added the pleasures of collecting, and both are infinite. As a purpose in life or a relief from its pressures, book-collecting has a great deal to recommend it. Books do not only furnish a room, as Lindsay Bagshaw has it in Anthony Powell's novel: they also entertain, instruct, transport, and give delight.

SECONDARY ACTIVITIES | 4

As enthusiasm for the mystery has grown, many supplementary activities and amenities have become available to readers and collectors.

Societies exist to celebrate the lives and works of specific authors. Pre-eminent among these are the Sherlockian societies, which are legion. The Wolfe Pack in the US and the Sayers Society in the UK are other flourishing groups. A comprehensive listing appears in Appendix H. The Mystery Readers of America is a general society, run with energy and imagination by Janet A. Rudolph, for the benefit of those defined by its name. The CWA and MWA are professional associations for authors, rather than for those who read and collect their work. It is open to 'fans' to join the MWA as affiliated members, but to join the CWA one needs some kind of professional credential. The mass of members are, naturally, fiction writers, but critics and reviewers, true-crime writers, publishers, agents, and dealers can and do join. Members of both organizations receive newsletters, *The Third Degree* for the MWA, *Red Herrings* for the CWA. Awards are presented at an annual dinner: Edgars (after Poe) in America, and Gold and Silver Daggers in Britain. Sustained excellence is recognized by both associations: the MWA through its Grand Master awards, and the CWA through its Diamond Daggers.

Since 1970, an annual convention for mystery enthusiasts has been held in the US. It is known as the Bouchercon and is named after the late Anthony Boucher. The conventions are held in turn on the west, in the centre, and on the east of the country. Minneapolis was the venue in 1987 and San Diego is named for 1988. Recent Bouchercons have had a hard-boiled bias, reflecting the domination of the contemporary American scene by the heirs of Hammett and Chandler. Alternative programmes run simultaneously, so that those who attend have a choice of diversion. Talks, films, author interviews, discussions, signing sessions, and book sales are among the events on offer. Nothing similar occurs in Britain.

Specialist magazines come and go, according to the waxing or waning of their resources or readership or the editor's enthusiasm. Most welcome contributions from readers and collectors – who should not expect to be paid for their efforts, since no one gets rich on publishing a fan magazine. The veteran in the field is *The Armchair Detective*, founded in 1967 by Allen J. Hubin, and now, in its twenty-first year, published by Otto Penzler and edited by Michael Seidman. Britain has three magazines, the US many more. A selective listing appears in Appendix G.

There is much more supplementary activity in the US than in the UK. Courses in crime fiction are on offer at certain American colleges. American bookshops arrange regular promotional sessions, at which authors and their admirers may meet. Certain hotel chains and bookshops organize 'murder weekends' for those who wish actively to engage in a mystery scenario. Mystery tours and other social events also occur.

The opportunities for tributary collections are considerable, and range from postage stamps and theatre programmes to games and Doulton china. Films and TV and radio transmissions are increasingly available to collectors. The more ambitious will seek unique material: holograph manuscripts and letters, original illustrations and cover art. On such a tide of activity, the books might get forgotten – except that none of it would mean very much without them.