

THE DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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Q. What is huge and furry, has vicious fangs, big ears and a long tail, and sings "My Way"?

A. The Giant Rat of Sinatra.

A couple of days ago, Constable & Co. published the ninth of M.J. Trow's Inspector Lestrade novels. Mr Trow's invention and wit show no signs of failing; like its predecessors, **LESTRADE & THE GIFT OF THE PRINCE** combines high drama, low humour and a very clever detective story. In 1904, Sholto Lestrade is commissioned confidentially by the Duke of Connaught to investigate a murder at Balmoral Castle, and as usual with Lestrade one murder leads to another. Balmoral to Glamis to Skye, Lestrade follows a trail of corpses in his efforts to discover who is after the secret of Drambuie - the gift of Bonnie Prince Charlie. Lestrade is a likable and much put-upon hero, but Holmes (the late Holmes) & Watson are quite scurrilously treated. Not for purists, but I find it great fun. Sample throwaway joke; "They were to have spent their first night at the Loch Laggan Hotel, but... the place was owned by a member of the clan Macdonald. And Sphagnum would rather die than eat at Macdonald's." The book costs £12.99. (Inspector G. Lestrade writes: "Sholto Lestrade? Never heard of him.")

Much slighter, though, is a booklet I bought recently at Murder One: **LESTRADE OF THE YARD** by J.W. Mort (an anagram). For £2.50 you get a brief summary of each of Mr Trow's novels, along with highly accomplished caricatures of some of the characters and an amusing introduction. More worthy of your attention is the 1st issue of **THE SHERLOCK HOLMES GAZETTE**, whose 24 A4 pages handsomely printed, contain an interview with Michael Cox, an analysis of the character & career of Sherlock Holmes, a piece about the Society's recent pilgrimage to Switzerland, a brief piece about the Northern Musgraves, a full article about Deirdre Keetley's Studio Gallery and one of its most ambitious projects; the Reichenbach Centenary Jug, based on a design by our own Peter Horrocks (for details write to Studio Gallery, 50 Caledonian Road, Kings Cross, London N1 9DP), a good piece about the Arthur Conan Doyle Society - and much more. Murder One and other outlets are selling it at £2, or you can subscribe at £12.50 for 4 quarterly copies (cheques to Theme Publications). US subscription rate \$40; Europe £18 or equivalent; Japan 6000 yen. The address is 43 Bowleaze Coveaway, Weymouth, Dorset DT3 6PL. The editor, Elizabeth Wiggins, accompanied the Pilgrims to Switzerland and promises a full report and picture spread in issue 2.

The latest issue of **THE BAKER STREET PILLAR BOX**, newsletter of the Franco-Midland Hardware Company, is full of interest, including the news that Company Share Issue no. 3, **THE DARTMOOR OF "THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES"** by Philip Weller will be out shortly; also news of the Welsh Sherlock Holmes Society, recently formed (send an SAE or 2 IRCs to Andrew Bevan, Delfan Station Terrace, Llanydydder, Dyfed SA40 9XX, Wales). The address of the Franco-Midland is: The Stock-Broker's Clerk, 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants PO14 3RU. Meanwhile the Northern Musgraves are planning a Reichenbach Memorial Meeting on Saturday 6th July at Hardraw Force Waterfalls near Hawes, North Yorkshire. If you're interested, drop a line for details to Mrs Anne Jordan, Fairbank, Beck Lane, Bingley, West Yorks. BD16 4DN. David Stuart Davies of the Musgraves reports favourably on the current touring production of Christopher Martin's play **A STUDY IN SCARLET**, as does Richard Dalby; some press reports haven't been so complimentary. David offers for sale 5 coloured lobby stills from the film **THE SCARLET CLAW**, 13"x 10", at £10 each including postage - first come, first served (Overdale, 69 Greenhead Road, Huddersfield HD1 4ER).

More books: Kelvin Jones tells me that **CONAN DOYLE & THE SPIRITS** has been remaindered. He can offer copies (signed if preferred) at £3.95 + £1.25 postage; cheques payable to K.I. Jones, please (10 Athelstan Road, Chatham, Kent ME4 6EJ). Ben Wood's **SHERLOCKIAN SING-ALONG** (\$6 in North America) is available to British buyers for £5 (Rev. Dr Benton Wood, BSI, PO Box

740, Ellenton, Florida 34222, USA). John Bennett Shaw is the author of COLLECTING SHERLOCKIANA: AW ESSAY, a 16 page booklet published by Opuscula Press (6307 Forrester Drive, Bradenton, Florida 34202, USA) at \$5.50 + \$1.50 postage for buyers outside the US; payment in US currency, please. A reminder that Ian Henry Ltd (20 Park Drive, Romford, Essex RM1 4LH) has published the following pastiches: SHERLOCK HOLMES & THE EMINENT THESPIAN by Val Andrews (£8.95), SHERLOCK HOLMES & THE BRIGHTON PAVILION MYSTERY by Val Andrews (£9.95), SHERLOCK HOLMES & THE GERMAN NANNY by John North (£9.95), SHERLOCK HOLMES & THE ARABIAN PRINCESS by John North (£9.95) and SHERLOCK HOLMES & THE HENTZAU AFFAIR by David Stuart Davies (£9.95); plus one play: THE SECRET OF SHERLOCK HOLMES by Jeremy Paul (£5.95); one musical: SHERLOCK HOLMES IN THE DEERSTALKER by Terence Mustoo (£3.50); and one TV script: THE PROBLEM OF THOR BRIDGE by Jeremy Paul (£5.45) with more to come.

Arlington Supplies Ltd (PO Box 1102, Barnet, Herts. EN5 5AF) offer a programme from the Eastbourne venue of the current tour of A STUDY IN SCARLET (£2), a programme from the Eastern Angles' production of SHERLOCK HOLMES & THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSING CAROL at the Sir John Mills Theatre, Ipswich last December (£2) (the DM missed this production, alas), and an attractive 1st day cover from Dominica, 6 May 1991, whose stamp shows Holmes and Watson on their way to Reichenbach (£3.20). Mark Chadderton draws my attention to a series of miniature character bears in some sort of hard material; naturally Holmes is among them, but - beware - you have to buy the full set of 36 at £9.95 the pair (The Teddy Guild, Thistle Mill, Biggar ML12 6LP). Mark also mentions the Marvel comic STAR TREK - THE NEXT GENERATION no. 11, with a full colour poster from the neo-Sherlockian TV episode, "Elementary, My Dear Data" (60p), and a generally amusing strip called BAKER STREET which appears 6 times a week in the COVENTRY EVENING TELEGRAPH.

Kate Prinsley, Curator of the Florence Nightingale Museum (Cassiot House, 2 Lambeth Palace Road, London SE1 7EW) invites members of the Society to a charity dinner, given in aid of the Museum by Fortnum & Mason on Tuesday 4th June at 7.30. Tickets are £35 each, from Miss Prinsley at the Museum. The 5 course dinner will be based on the recipes of Alexis Soyer, and there'll be what promises to be a fascinating talk by Admiral Sir William Staveley about the role of Army doctors in the Crimean War. News of yet another new society: ACTAS DE BAKER STREET, founded by our subscriber Cristina Macia, editorial director of the ambitious publishing project LOS ARCHIVOS DE BAKER STREET (Bajada de la Plana 8, 08032 Barcelona, Spain). Correspondence is, naturally, in Spanish. And another: THE REICHENBACH IRREGULARS, three of whose members enlivened the Society's Swiss Pilgrimage (Markus Geisser & Patric Kees, Postfach 678, CH-3860 Meiringen, Switzerland).

Accounts of the Pilgrimage have appeared in: THE DAILY TELEGRAPH 6 May*, TODAY 6 May*, SUNDAY EXPRESS 5 May*, THE ECONOMIST 11 May*, SUNDAY TELEGRAPH 12 May*, EUROPEAN 3 May*, DER BUND 1 May*, BERNER ZEITUNG 1 May*, THUNISCHE TAGBLATT 3 May, OBERLANDISCHE VOLKSBLATT 3 May*, BERNER OBERLANDER 3 May*, OBERLANDISCHE VOLKSBLATT 6 May*, BERNE OBERLANDER 6 May*, DER BUND 6 May*, and LE MONDE 11 May*. Forthcoming, I'm told, are reports in THE UNIVERSE, the Edinburgh EVENING NEWS and the BIRMINGHAM EVENING POST. Those marked * I have and will be happy to make copies for anyone who wants them. If anyone can help with any of the others, or of others that I don't know about, I'd be extremely grateful.

A card reached me today from TOR Books to the effect that Carole Nelson Douglas' well-received novel GOOD NIGHT, MR HOLMES will appear in a TOR paperback edition at \$4.99 in June, while in July its sequel GOOD MORNING, IRENE will be out in hardback at \$19.95. Peter Blau reports that there'll be at least one more adventure of Irene Adler. Also reported by Peter, the death on 8th March of Trevor Hall, once a member of our Society and author of SHERLOCK HOLMES: TEN LITERARY STUDIES, THE LATE MR SHERLOCK HOLMES, SHERLOCK HOLMES & HIS CREATOR and THE LAST OF SHERLOCK HOLMES. Our subscriber Robert C. Hess (559 Potters Boulevard, Brightwaters, NY 11718, USA) has a new list of over 100 items of Sherlockian for sale. Sgt David A. Reinhardt (76 Lord Simcoe Drive, Bramalea, Ontario L6S 5G6, Canada) is agent for a number of collectibles (lapel pins, ties, pencils) promoting the Canadian version of HOLMES - Home Office Large Major Enquiry System.

