

THE DISTRICT MESSENGER

The Newsletter of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London
Roger Johnson, Mole End, 41 Sandford Road, Chelmsford CM2 6DE

no. 130 13th April 1993

More on **Sherlock Holmes: The Rathbone Casebook** by Bruce Eder (not Eden, as I gave it in DM 128). It was published last year at \$14.95 by Windsong Publishing Inc., PO Box 2978, Staunton, VA 24401, USA. This information comes from **American Books in Print**, and should be enough to enable those interested to get hold of a copy of the book.

Catherine Cooke put me on to a talk entitled **Sherlock Holmes in Streatham** by John W. Brown; unfortunately there wasn't time enough to get a notice in the DM, as the talk was given on Monday the 5th April. However, Mr Brown has written a booklet with the same title, which is just out from Local History Publications (316 Green Lane, Streatham, London SW16 3AS) at £3.35 including postage. It's essentially an investigation of the actual places and people hidden by Dr Watson's pseudonyms in the story of "The Beryl Coronet" (the story itself is reproduced in facsimile from the original publication in **The Strand Magazine**). An attractive and interesting book, well worth your attention. Mr Brown, in a recent letter to me, says, "I would be most interested to hear from any of your readers who have their own theories concerning Sherlock Holmes's visit to Streatham."

The Bristol Old Vic production of **Sherlock Holmes: The Musical** by Leslie Bricusse, starring Robert Powell & Roy Barraclough, has just started its run at the **Wimbledon Theatre** (box office phone 081-540 0362), finishing on Saturday the 24th April. The rest of the tour will be: 26 April - 8 May at **Manchester Opera House**; (10-15 May week out); 17-22 May at King's Theatre, **Edinburgh**; 24 May - 5 June at Alexandra Theatre, **Birmingham**; 7-19 June at Grand Theatre, **Blackpool**; 21 June - 3 July at Pavilion, **Bournemouth**; 5-10 July at Theatre Royal, **Newcastle**; 12-17 July at New Victoria, **Woking**; 19-24 July at **Liverpool Empire**; 26-31 July at Theatre Royal, **Nottingham**; 2-7 August at Theatre Royal, **Plymouth**; 9-21 August at **York Opera House**; 23 August - 4 September at His Majesty's, **Aberdeen**; (6-11 September TBC); 13-18 September at Apollo, **Oxford**; 20-25 September at Marlowe, **Canterbury**; 27 September - 2 October at Mayflower, **Southampton**; 4-9 October at **Bradford** or **Chichester**; 11-16 October at Hexagon, **Reading** (TBC); 18-23 October at New Theatre, **Cardiff**; 25 - 29 October at Lyceum, **Sheffield**. You'll see that some of these bookings have yet to be confirmed; when I get further news I'll pass it on. (Gerit Stenitzer, sharper-eyed than I am, points out that TER has issued a cast recording on CD and cassette.)

The Victoria & Albert Hotel in Water Street, Manchester M60 9EA (phone 061-832 1188) - yes, it's attached to Granada TV studios - offers a special package for Friday 7th May: for £69 you get a seat at the Opera House to watch **Sherlock Holmes: The Musical**, supper in the Cafe Maigret at the hotel, 4 star accommodation overnight at the hotel with full English breakfast in the morning, a visit to the Granada Studios Tour next door, and a river trip on the Princess Katherine. A second night at the hotel will set you back only £31. A pretty good deal all round, it seems.

New books. Chancellor Press has published **The Bedside Conan Doyle** at £4.99; it contains an extract from STUD, the full text of HOUN, and a

dozen or so selected Holmes stories, along with "When the World Screamed", "The Parasite" and "Through the Veil"; a curious selection. From Barnes & Noble this month comes a £5.95 hardback edition of **The Exploits of Sherlock Holmes** by Adrian Conan Doyle & John Dickson Carr. A company called Creative Education has published **The Red-Headed League**, **Silver Blaze** and **The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist**; the price is £5.99 each, which seems rather steep.

Catherine Cooke drew my attention to the April issue of **Book and Magazine Collector** (£1.95 from newsagents), featuring an article, "Holmes on Screen: a guide to collectable 'Sherlock Holmes' film and TV spin-off items" by Mike Richardson. It's a good piece, though I don't agree with all the author's opinions. He acknowledges help from a couple of DM readers, Michael Connolly and David Stuart Davies. The magazine also carries an ad for the Black Cat Bookshop (37-39 Silver Arcade, Leicester LE1 5FB; phone 0533 512756), whose 2nd Sherlock Holmes list is now available for £1 ("or 4 IRCs if abroad").

The promised renaissance of **The Sherlock Holmes Gazette** has come about with the spring issue. No longer in newspaper format, it's now an eye-catching 36 page A4 magazine, with a UK cover price of £1.95. Elizabeth Wiggins remains as editor, but the publisher is Baker Street Productions of PO Box 221, Alderney, Channel Islands, G.B. Annual subscriptions (from Gazette Subscriptions at the publisher's address) are: UK £9.50; Europe & Eire £10.50 (France 100F, Switzerland 25F); Middle East, USA, Canada, South America £13.00 (USA \$32.00); Australia, New Zealand, Japan £14.00. The articles in this issue include coverage of the High Moorlands Visitors' Centre, formerly the Duchy Hotel at Princetown on Dartmoor, to be opened later this year by Prince Charles; Philip Weller and the Franco-Midland Hardware Company have organised the Conan Doyle/Sherlock Holmes exhibition which will be a feature of the centre.

More from the **Gazette**. There's a piece on the refurbishment of the Criterion Restaurant in Piccadilly, a review of a new video, **The Brünig Line - part 1**, which takes us to Meiringen and the Reichenbach Falls (available for £18.95 + postage - UK £1, overseas £4 - from MITV Ltd, Dept SHG, 15 Trent Way, Southampton SO3 3FW), and the good news that Edward Hardwicke plans to take on Martyn Read's play "221B", in which Nigel Stock toured with great success in the early 1980s.

The Dracula Society (Chairman and co-Founder Bernard Davies) will celebrate in May the centenary of the events of Bram Stoker's novel. To quote Bernard: "Never mind Peter Haining's **The Dracula Centenary Book**, produced in 1987 apparently on the authority of Leonard Wolf... With Messrs Florescu and McNally's chance discovery of Bram Stoker's working notes for **Dracula** it was revealed that the various diary entries were geared to one particular year's calendar - that of 1893. This was hailed as a great discovery, though in truth the internal evidence in the novel had always pointed to that being the year. The key references are (1) to **The Westminster Gazette**, first published in January 1893, and (2) to the regrettable recent death of the great neurologist Charcot (1825-1893) - 'Alas, that he is no more'... Together these show that events could not have been earlier than 1893. The opening of the Fetesti railway bridge across the Danube rerouted the Orient Express to terminate at Constanta from 1895 instead of Varna, which leaves only 1893 or 1894. The calendrical layout of events leading up to the storm and shipwreck at Whitby as well as the local tide-tables do not fit the latter year at all, whereas they correspond to 1893 fairly well."

That being so, it rather puts paid to the credibility of **The Tangled Skein** by David Stuart Davies, **Sherlock Holmes vs Dracula** by Loren D. Estleman, and **The Holmes-Dracula File** by Fred Saberhagen, since in 1893 Sherlock Holmes was still on his travels somewhere. Tibet, perhaps, the Sudan, or - as some would have it - Montenegro...

A while back I noted that a company called Storm had issued two Rathbone/Bruce movies on video, **Terror By Night** and **Dressed To Kill**. Unfortunately it ain't so. Storm had intended to do it, but changed their minds; the misleading entry is no longer to be found in Videolog. That's the bad news. The good news is that the two films have after all been issued on video by a company called Orbit. You still won't find them listed in Videolog (nor will you find an address or other details for Orbit), but you'll find the videos themselves at various remaindered-book shops, priced as low as £3.99. **Terror By Night** is SVC 0004; **Dressed To Kill** is SVC 0005. Stephen Farrell (19 McLeod Road, Abbey Wood, London SE2 0BP; phone 081-311 3432) has a few copies left of **A Study in Terror**, the 1965 classic with John Neville and Donald Houston, on European format VHS. This is the full cinema version (showings on British TV have been horribly cut about), and will set you back £20 the copy.

The Sherlock Holmes Merchandise Co. Ltd (Prymus International Ltd, Fox House, 10 Eton Avenue, Sudbury, Middlesex HA0 3AX) is now offering a limited number of its products to individual buyers: the "Sherlock Holmes" paperweight (£15); the "Dr Watson" paperweight (£15); the "221B Baker Street With the Door Ajar" plaque (£13.50); the "Sherlock Holmes Public House" model (£35.95); the "Sherlock Holmes" 3D stoneware pottery mug (£7.99); and the "Dr Watson" 3D stoneware pottery mug (£7.99). Those are the basic prices. Postage is a pretty ferocious extra - £5.50 for each item within the UK, if I read the ad correctly. Fuller details are available from the Company.

Penguin are reissuing the Sherlock Holmes books, including Richard Lancelyn Green's excellent **The Uncollected Sherlock Holmes**, in their handsome "classic" format. Look out for them.

Stephen Farrell has sent a couple of interesting newspaper articles: "A Lost World is letting us in on its secrets" in **The Mail On Sunday**, 28 March (travel article, with a bit about Mount Roraima, the probable inspiration for ACD's Lost World); and "Will they ever really unmask Jack the Ripper?" in the **Daily Mail** 26 March (the forthcoming publication by Smith Gryphon of the alleged journals of the butcher of Whitechapel - journalist Bill Moulard is understandably sceptical).

Stephen also mentions "Snoopea", the Sherlockian stuffed toy in the **Poddington Peas** series, retailing at about £5 and of very high quality. (Your local newsagent or sweetshop may stock a new range of plastic toys called **Mini Boglins**, which cost 60p each and come in sealed packets, so that you don't know which one you've bought until you open up. There are 56 of these ugly little creatures, the rarest being the 8 "scouts". Completists will no doubt want to try for "Scout Perlock", toggged up in deerstalker, pipe and magnifying-glass.)

Joseph J. Eckrich (7793 Keswick Place, St Louis, MO 63119, USA) still has a good way to go in selling off his huge collection of Sherlockiana. His latest list to reach me is dated March 1993, and contains a great many desirables. Write to Joe for a copy, but don't forget to enclose stamps or IRCs for reply. Just too late for mention in DM 129 was issue no. 20 of Geoff Bradley's splendid magazine **CADS**, which covers all aspects of crime

& detective fiction. Details from Geoff at 9 Vicarage Hill, South Benfleet, Essex SS7 1PA.

A recent issue of **The Daily Telegraph**, under the headline "Three-pipe conundrum", carried this piece: "A three-pipe problem for the Arthur Conan Doyle Society: its founder, Chris Roden of Chester, has discovered that his British members care more for slap-up dinners than debating the great man's oeuvre. The most recent Conan Doyle weekend - a £165 bash in Edinburgh - drew almost no Brits at all, leading Roden to threaten to hold future conventions in the United States. Roden claims he cannot put together a meeting here 'unless there is a bar and a meal-table involved'. Americans apparently need only a cup of coffee."

I've been asked to run the following notice: "The Arthur Conan Doyle Society is planning a Doylean weekend in Toronto in 1994 (probably in early May). If you would like details as they become available, please contact the Society at Ashcroft, 2 Abbottsford Drive, Penyffordd, Chester CH4 0JG, telephone (0244) 545210."

Recently received Holmesian periodicals include **The Baker Street Journal** March 1993 (PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA) (*The BSJ is available to all interested people, and indeed any self-respecting Sherlockian should have a subscription; rates are \$17.50 within the USA or \$20.00 foreign.*); **The Waterloo Sherlockian Letter** no. 23 (Chris Redmond, 523 Westfield Drive, Waterloo, Ontario N2T 2E1, Canada); **The Parallelogram** April 1993 (The Parallel Case of St Louis, Joseph J. Eckrich, 7793 Keswick Place, St Louis, MO 63119, USA); **The Baker Street Dispatch** March 1993 (Baker Street Dispatch Inc., PO Box 5503, Toledo, OH 43613, USA); **The School Report** no. 13 (The Priory Scholars of Leicester, Mary Hercock, 13 Gaddesby Avenue, Leicester LE3 1BN) ; and - as always - **Scuttlebutt From the Spermaceti Press** March 1993 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA).

News from **Scuttlebutt**. Peter Ackroyd's less-than-enthusiastically-received recent novel **English Music** plunges its protagonist for some 20 pages into a "more-or-less Sherlockian" dreamworld. H. Paul Jeffers, author of **The Adventure of the Stalwart Companions** hasn't overlooked Holmes and Conan Doyle in his latest book **Bloody Business: An Anecdotal History Of Scotland Yard** (Pharos, New York; \$19.95). Lucky Americans can find 18 videocassettes, each with two of the 1954 Ronald Howard TV series, priced at just \$2.96 each at WalMart stores. Carol Nelson Douglas' third Irene Adler novel, **Irene At Large** is due in paperback in June, and she's finished work on the fourth, to be called **Back To Bohemia**. Donald Girard Jewell's "Sherlock Holmes Natural History Series" now runs to four titles, the latest being **Canonical Cats: A Monograph On Felines In The Time Of Sherlock Holmes** and **Blind Beetles: A Monograph On Insects And Insect Collecting In The Time Of Sherlock Holmes** (\$9.95 each from the author at 4685 Geeting Road, Westminster, MD 21158, USA - in this country, try Murder One).

Can anyone please help me out with a recording of **The Miles Kington Interview** with Edward Hardwicke as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, broadcast on BBC Radio 4 on the 26th January? Thanks.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. J. L.', written in a cursive style.