

THE DISTRICT MESSENGER

The Newsletter of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London

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Vincent Price died last month, as no-one can fail to have noticed. For several years he hosted **Mystery!** on American television, introducing and commenting on some outstanding British detective series, including Granada's **Sherlock Holmes**. He was also, of course, the voice and the model for Professor Ratigan in **The Great Mouse Detective**. He was an art expert, a wit, a gourmet cook and an authority on the life and works of Oscar Wilde. There was no-one else quite like him.

The Case of Emily V (Martin Seeker & Warburg Ltd, Michelin House, 81 Fulham Road, London SW3 6RB; £9.99, the first novel of Keith Oatley, is a remarkably rich and intelligent thriller. Forget that Nicholas Meyer book for the moment; Mr Oatley, London-born but currently a professor of psychology in Canada, presents to us the authentic Sigmund Freud and a very acceptable simulacrum of Sherlock Holmes. The two great minds encounter each other in their initially independent investigations of a young Englishwoman - who may or may not have killed her former guardian. I have no intention of revealing any more of this admirable novel. Buy it yourselves, and read it.

Val Andrews has acquired a number of copies of **The Exploits of Billy the Page**, which he wrote in the mid-1980s for Magico under the name of "Willoughby Lane". Handsomely produced to Magico's high standards, with a nice dust-wrapper by Scott Bond, this is a set of six amusing and exciting short stories about the page-boy to a certain celebrated detective. An ideal present for a young Holmesian, and an equally ideal present for yourself. Personally inscribed copies can be had for £11.00 each from Val Andrews at 1 George Court, 67 Willoughby Lane, London NW17 0QZ.

The Baker Street Briefs (Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario M4W 2G8, Canada; no price given) is the long-awaited collection of the Holmesian writings of S. Tupper Bigelow, who died in June at the age of 91. Judge Bigelow's essays mostly appeared in **The Baker Street Journal** and **The Sherlock Holmes Journal** in the 50s and 60s; they are a model of clear thinking and lightly-worn erudition. Cameron Hollyer and George Vanderburgh have done the Holmesian world a service in collecting and editing them.

The Northern Musgraves have just published a new Musgrave Monograph: **I Looked In At Mecca** by Anne Jordan. It's available from Anne for £3.00 inclusive (Fairbank, Beck Lane, Bingley, West Yorkshire BD16 4DN) .

Wordsworth Classics (Wordsworth Editions Ltd, Cumberland House, Crib Street, Ware, Hertfordshire SG12 9ET) have completed their 3-volume edition of the Canon with **The Case-book of Sherlock Holmes**, containing **His Last Bow**, **The Valley of Fear** and **The Case-book**, all reproduced in facsimile from **The Strand Magazine**. Don't expect the quality of Dr Watson Books' recent facsimile of the 1888 Ward Lock **Study In Scarlet** (Dr Watson Books, P.O. Box 1888, London E3 5PJ; £38.00 or \$57.00); this is a handy, attractive pocket edition, unbeatable value at £1.00.

New American titles, all available from regular bookshops in the UK: **Sherlock In Love** by Sena Jeter (DR Godine Publishers; £17.99); **Sherlock Hound and the Case of the Missing Pumpkin** and **Sherlock Hound and the Case of the Foul Smell** both illustrated by Scott Ross and published by Unicorn House at £3.95 each; **The Sexual Adventures of Sherlock Holmes** by Larry Townsend (Masquerade Books; £4.99) (*this is a reprint of the notorious Olympia Press edition of the early 70s; Lord Donegall called it "wholly-filthy"*). **The Illustrated Sherlock Holmes** (Studio Editions; £5.99) is an unacknowledged reprint of **The World of Sherlock Holmes**, published in 1991 by Prion at £7.95 (reviewed in DM 115).

News from George Vanderburgh is that Ronald De Waal's **The Universal Sherlock Holmes** has had to be delayed until 22nd May 1994 (ACD's 134th birthday). The press run will be limited to the number of firm orders received by George himself (P.O. Box 204, Shelburne, Ontario L0N 1S0, Canada) and the four agents. Price will not exceed US\$100.00 or equivalent. The European agent is Sherlock Publications, 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hampshire PO14 3RU, England. Available now from George is the first known translation of a Canonical story into Kiswahili; **Maajabu Ya Utepe Wenye Madoadoa** (to you, "The Adventure of the Speckled Band") was sponsored by Dr Sterndale's Lion Hunters, the Sherlock Holmes Society of Kenya, who hope, in collaboration with the Bootmakers of Toronto, to translate the entire Canon. This little book costs US\$5.95 or Canadian \$7.95 or £3.00, plus \$2.00 or £1.00 postage in each case. The computer-literate should contact George for his list of Holmesian and Doylean material in electronic form.

I've had a letter from Sandra L. DeKay, member of The Game Is Afoot, and proprietor of the New Dominion Bookshop (P.O. Box 141, Charlottesville, VA 22902, U.S.A.; phone (0101) 804 295-2552), who very enterprisingly offers to supply copies of Nicholas Meyer's new novel **The Canary Trainer** at \$19.95 per copy. Postage is extra: air insured \$16.85, surface insured \$9.15, air uninsured \$10.61, surface uninsured \$3.32. Sandra can take U.S. funds, or Visa or Mastercard. She's happy to answer enquiries about other Holmesian material too.

John Warwick Montgomery has kindly provided a copy of the **Christian Legal Journal** vol. 2 issue 3, containing four of his own papers, including "The Search For Ultimates: A Sherlockian Inquiry". Copies may be had for \$5.00 Canadian from Will Moore, The Christian Legal Fellowship, 7203-90 Ave., Edmonton, Alberta T6B 0P5, Canada. Christopher Roden tells me that the special postcards are available only to North American purchasers of **The Oxford Sherlock Holmes**, who in any case get the set rather cheaper than we do in Britain. Thanks to the Northern Musgraves, and no thanks to Oxford University Press, I have had the chance to review one volume, and can tell you that **The Valley of Fear** at least is a first-rate production, intelligently and illuminatingly edited, and handsome to look at.

There will be another Sherlock Holmes Weekend from 25th to 27th March 1994, based at the Blackaller Hotel, North Bovey, Devon TQ13 8QY (phone 0647 40322). £92.00 gets you dinners, breakfasts, packed lunches, mini-bus transport in search of Baskervillean sites on Dartmoor, a talk by the Devon historian Paul Rendell (a member of the Poor Folk Upon the Moors), and one by a Holmesian authority. Susan O'Brien, who looks after the Dorothy L. Sayers Centre at Witham Library in Essex, tells me of the special Sayers Centenary Issue, volume 10 of **Seven: An Anglo-American Literary Review** (the seven are George MacDonald, G.K. Chesterton, C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Charles Williams, Dorothy L. Sayers and Owen

Barfield). The contents include an essay by P.D. James on "Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Novels Today". **Seven** is available from The Marion E. Wade Center, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL 60187-5593, U.S.A. The cost is (in U.S.A.) \$12.50 + \$2.00 postage; (other countries) £11.00 or \$17.50 surface, £14.00 or \$22.50 airmail.

David Izzard (32 Pentland Road, Bushey, Watford WD2 3QN) offers to lend three Sherlock Holmes episodes from Russian television (the last is missing 5 minutes). They are in Russian, and not sub-titled.

It may still be possible to buy some of the First Day Covers that were devised to mark the Royal Mail's Sherlock Holmes stamps last month. Besides those already mentioned in the DM, St Bartholomew's Hospital has one, available at £4.50 from Henry Murray, Arlington Supplies (Stamps & Coins Ltd), P.O. Box 1102, Barnet, Herts. ENS 5AF (phone 081-449 7775). CoverCraft (P.O. Box 432, Beckenham, Kent BR3 3SZ), who produced our own Society's cover, have one marking BBC TV's broadcast 25 years ago of **The Sign of Four** with Peter Cushing and Nigel Stock. This is £6.25 with a Baker Street postmark (plus £1.00 overseas), or £5.00 with a Norwood postmark. CoverCraft has also arranged for 40 numbered copies of our Society's First Day Cover to be franked at Swiss Valley in Wales and at Meiringen; the cost to members is £15.00 each. Benham (A. Buckingham) Ltd, (Benham House, The Bayle, Folkestone, Kent CT20 1SD) has issued two different designs for Granada TV, one franked Baker Street, the other Granada, Manchester. Cost is £4.99 each, or £8.99 signed by Jeremy Brett.

Malcolm Payne, Curator of the Conan Doyle (Crowborough) Establishment, has sent a very nice letter and a couple of cuttings from his local paper. The Establishment's own First Day Cover made the front page of **The Clarion**, with a photograph of Philip Weller in the familiar deerstalker and tweeds, and Malcolm Payne made up to look quite uncannily like Arthur Conan Doyle himself. For information about its aims and activities, including the recently published **Recollections of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle**, write to the Establishment at "The Conan Doyle Room", The Cross Hotel, Crowborough, East Sussex.

Mark Chadderton has kindly sent a copy of the 13th November issue of the science-fiction comic **2000 AD**, in which a new adventure for Canon Fodder involves the Church's strong-arm man with a latter-day Sherlock Holmes, suicide, violence and theology, but not necessarily in that order. It's pretty bizarre, and powerfully drawn. Mark passes on the news that Gibson Games' **221B Baker Street** board game is out in a pocket edition at prices ranging from £6.99 to £9.99.

Not Strictly Holmesian But Christmas Is Getting Pretty Close After All Department: David Stuart Davies has diversified into the field of the weird tale. **Mindsapes**, an attractive booklet containing five well-written stories of the supernatural, is available from David at £3.00 inclusive (Overdale, 69 Greenhead Road, Huddersfield HD1 4ER). For unusual and appropriate presents, try Past Times; there are shops in various towns, and they run an excellent mail order service. A recent addition to stock is a rather splendid Sherlock Holmes chess set at £69.99. Write for a catalogue to Past Times, Witney, Oxford OX8 6BH. We discovered Hawkin & Co. through an ad in **The Oldie**. Hawkin's sell all sorts of things that you didn't know were even made any more, and their range of "Victorian" stocking-fillers couldn't be bettered. The catalogue can be had from Hawkin & Co., St Margaret, Harleston, Norfolk IP20 0PJ. The Sherlock Holmes pub in Northumberland Street is a favourite watering-hole for Holmesians; only about 100 yards away, underneath Charing Cross Station,

is the famous Players' Theatre, where Victorian Music Hall continues to delight, and the restaurant serves excellent food and drink (for information and bookings, phone 071-839 1134, or write to The Players' Theatre, The Arches, Villiers Street, Strand, London WC2). Finally, CoverCraft (address above) has also issued, in association with the Dickens House Museum, a First Day Cover to mark the issue on the 9th November of stamps commemorating the 150th anniversary of the publication of **A Christmas Carol**. The cost is £5.50 each; there are 100 covers signed by the author's great-grandson, Cedric Charles Dickens, at £8.50 each.

Hugh Steele Scullion of Cadds Printing Ltd (59 Lancaster Avenue, West Norwood, London SE27 9EL; phone 081-761 4927) has sent photographs of Cadds' latest project, a rather beautiful pill-box in (we think) hand-painted china, bearing on the lid a copy of Steele's famous picture of Holmes gazing into the depths of the Reichenbach; inside the lid is the legend "The Return of Sherlock Holmes, 1894-1994". The box comes in a lovely custom-made, silk-lined case, and costs £85.00 or US\$145. Dollar checks should be made payable to Mrs Ferrara. If you'd like further information or a photograph, send a 10"x 8" stamped, self-addressed envelope to Mr Scullion. Copies of the attractive 1994 desk calendar are available direct from Cadds at £5.25.

Periodicals of interest recently received include: **The Petrel Flyer** October and November 1993 (The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, BC V7P 3C6); **The Waterloo Sherlockian Letter** #25 and #26 (Chris Redmond, 523 Westfield Drive, Waterloo, Ontario N2T 2E1, Canada) (*Chris Redmond's **A Sherlock Holmes Handbook** is available as follows: U.K. - £16.75 from Dundurn Distribution, 73 Lime Walk, Headington, Oxford OX3 7AD; U.S.A. - \$26.50 from Dundurn Press, 736 Cayuga Street, Lewiston, NY 14092; Canada -\$29.99 from Dundurn Press Ltd, 2181 Queen Street East, suite 301, Toronto, Ontario M4E 1E5; Dundurn accepts cheques and indeed checks, Visa and Mastercard*); **The School Report** no. 15 (The Priory Scholars, Mary Hercock, 13 Gaddesby Avenue, Leicester LE3 1BN) (*the admirable Holmesian artist Maria Lockley will be having an exhibition of her work in Leicester in the Rutland Suite of the Holiday Inn in Leicester from Saturday 4th December*); **The New Baker Street Pillar Box** no. 16 (The Franco-Midland Hardware Company, The Stock-broker's Clerk, 6 Bramham Moor, Hillhead, Fareham, Hants. P014 3RU) (*always full of interesting and stimulating material; the highlight this issue is "What Kind of Chemist Was Sherlock Holmes", closely followed by "The Baring-Gould Substitution Scandal"*); **Communication** no. 130 (The Pleasant Places of Florida, Dr Benton Wood, P.O. Box 740, Ellenton, FL 34222, U.S.A.); **Le Catalogue de la Franco-Midland** no. 2 (La Société Sherlock Holmes de France, Thierry Saint-Joanis, Grand dépôt de Paris, 47. rue de Montmorency, 75003 Paris, France); **The Striking (T)Rifles** #2/93 (Von Herder Airguns Ltd, Michael Ross, Bendheide 65, D-47906 Kempen, Germany); **The Devon County Chronicle** vol. xxviii No. 2 (Robert W. Hahn, 2707 South 7th Street, Sheboygan, WI 5301, U.S.A.); **The Serpentine Muse** vol. 12 no. 2 (The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes, Evelyn Herzog, 360 West 21st Street # 5A, New York, NY 10011, U.S.A.); **The Parellelogram** November 1993 (The Parallel Case of St Louis, Joseph J. Ekrich, 914 Oakmoor, Fenton, MO 63026, U.S.A.); **Scuttlebutt From The Spermaceti Press** October 1993 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW, #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, U.S.A.).

If this is the last issue of 1993, **The Compliments of the Season!**

