

THE DISTRICT MESSENGER

The Newsletter of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London

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David Stuart Davies passes on the sad news that Robert Godfrey, the owner of **The Sherlock Holmes Gazette**, died recently after a long illness. He and Elizabeth Wiggins worked hard to make the **Gazette** a practical commercial publication. It is hoped that the **Gazette** will continue; I'll let you know when I do. **Baker Street Miscellanea** is to close after its 76th issue. Donald Pollock, the editor, says that he hasn't enough good material to keep it going, and he doesn't want it simply to decline. Sad. It seems that other journals, linked with active societies, are now claiming the first loyalty of many scholars.

Virgin Publishing Ltd (332 Ladbroke Grove, London W10 5AH) will reissue on the 7th March Peter Haining's **The Television Sherlock Holmes**. This £14.99 paperback is advertised as "now fully revised and updated". It isn't. The updating consists of giving the credits for the six episodes in Granada's forthcoming **The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes** - though the cast of "The Cardboard Box" apparently comprises only Brett and Hardwicke. The revision consists of a new foreword by Jeremy Brett and a new afterword by Michael Cox. Otherwise, the book remains a visually impressive but flawed tribute to Granada's series, not the comprehensive study of Holmes on the small screen that we had hoped for. Peter Cushing's 1968 BBC TV series is still illustrated with pictures from Hammer's 1958 **The Hound of the Baskervilles** (p. 66). Tom Baker's 1982 BBC TV **Hound** is still illustrated with a picture from the Dr Who adventure **The Talons of Weng-Chiang** (p. 83). A cartoon by the female artist Merrily Harpur is still referred to as "his sketch" (p. 180). Worse yet, on page 17, we still read: "After qualifying as an MD, Conan Doyle satisfied his natural bent for adventure by serving as a ship's surgeon on an Arctic whaling cruise. But the harsh conditions and poor pay soon drove him back to dry land. Returning to London in the depths of winter, he spent a memorable night wandering around the fog-bound streets in the vicinity of Regents Park where he had digs." This farrago of inaccuracies and untruths was fully dealt with by Jon Lellenberg in his **Baker Street Miscellanea** review of the first edition! And so it goes on. As a background to the Granada series, this book is attractive, but with all its flaws, it simply is not worth the asking price.

But I'm happy to recommend **Baker Street and Beyond: Essays on Sherlock Holmes** by Lord Donegall, a joint publication by our own Society and Westminster Libraries. Fraser Smyth and Catherine Cooke have gathered together for the first time all Donegall's articles in this series, the first 15 having originally appeared in the short-lived **New Strand**, and the last 4 in **The Sherlock Holmes Journal**. Donegall is best remembered in our field as the editor who made the SHJ what it is today, but he was also a witty and perceptive Holmesian scholar, as this very nice book shows. Tony Howlett has written an affectionate introduction, and there's a superb illustrated section, reproducing in full colour all Donegall's ten Christmas cards, six of them featuring Julian Wolff's Sherlockian maps, specially coloured for the occasion. Send orders to the Sherlock Holmes Collection, Marylebone Library, Marylebone Road, London NW1 5PS; sterling

or US dollar cheques should be payable to City of Westminster. The inclusive cost is: UK, £16.50; Europe, £17.50; North America, \$35.00; Far East/Australia, £19.50.

A recent publication from Magico Magazine is **They Came to Baker Street** by Reginald L. Johnson. The author summarises the facts, and makes sensible deductions, about those who brought their problems to Sherlock Holmes. Nicely produced, to Magico's usual standards. Write for further details to P.O. Box 156, New York, NY 10002, U.S.A.

Elkin Mathews second-hand book shop (16 Stoneham Street, Coggeshall, Essex CO6 1TT; phone 0376 561730) a couple of days ago had the first 12 volumes of **The Strand Magazine** in the original blue binding, and in very nice condition, at £115.00 the lot - just under £10.00 a volume.

Provisionally scheduled from Constable (3 The Lanchesters, 162 Fulham Palace Road, London W6 9LR) is **The Adventures of Charlotte Holmes** by H. Bailey (£14.95). In April, Warner (Little, Brown & Co. [UK] Ltd, Brettenham House, Lancaster Place, London WC2E 7EN) will publish a new edition of **The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes** (£5.99). Family Vision Press (Multimedia Communication Inc., 575 Madison Avenue, Suite 1006, New York, NY 10022, USA) has published **The Adventures of Shelly Holmes, case #1: Dead Man's Confession** by Cass Lewis.

There's a new collection of four Solar Pons novellas by Basil Copper recently out in hardback from Fedogan & Bremer (700 Washington Avenue SE, Suite 50, Minneapolis, MN 55414, USA): **The Exploits of Solar Pons** (\$24.00). Two of Copper's Pons books are available in the UK: **The Dossier of Solar Pons** and **The Further Adventures of Solar Pons** (Academy Chicago, 425 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60611, USA; £6.99 each). Sadly, only the last of August Derleth's original books is in print here: **The Chronicles of Solar Pons** (Robson Books Ltd, 28 Poland Street, London W1V 3DB; £4.99). However, nearly all the Pontine canon is in the two-volume **Solar Pons Omnibus**, still available from Arkham House Publishers Inc., Sauk City, Wisconsin, USA, at about \$40.00. Plans are afoot for a small book containing the few remaining pieces. Watch this space.

Dr Watson Books (PO Box 1888, Bow, London E3 5PJ) are doing a special promotion offer on their handsome facsimile of the first book edition of **A Study in Scarlet** (illustrated by Conan Doyle's father): while stocks last, a copy costs £25.00 or \$37.50, including postage worldwide. At the other end of the scale, Penguin has launched a "Popular Classics" list, spurred by the success of Wordsworth Classics. All titles cost just £1.00. Forthcoming is **Selected Sherlock Holmes**. Richard Wein sends January's catalogue from Barnes & Noble (126 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011, USA), whose Pick of the Month is a new edition of Ken Greenwald's **The Lost Adventures of Sherlock Holmes** (\$4.98 + shipping and insurance), and including **The Annotated Sherlock Holmes** (\$29.95) and **100 Dastardly Little Detective Stories**, featuring many Holmes parodies, (\$7.98).

Catherine Cooke points out that guided reading schemes from various publishers include Holmes stories. Oxford Bookworms publish **Sherlock Holmes Short Stories** (£1.60) and **The Hound of the Baskervilles** (£1.90); these feature Paget and other good illustrations. Heinemann Guided Readers publish **The Sign of Four** (£2.00), **The Speckled Band and Other Stories** (£2.10) and **Silver Blaze and Other Stories** (£1.70), while Nelson Readers publish **Three Sherlock Holmes Adventures** (£1.40). These all have nice line drawings. Cassette recordings are available for most of the books at about £5.00 each. The Black Cat Bookshop (37-39 Silver Arcade, Leicester LE1 5FB)

asks me to say that the shop's new Holmes/Doyle catalogue can be had for: UK, £1.00; overseas, £2.00 or DM5 or \$6.00, or six IRCs (German or US currency in cash, please).

Geoffrey Stavert passes on issue no. 7 of **Ripperana: the Journal of Ripperology** (16 Costons Avenue, Greenford, Middlesex UB6 8RJ). There's interesting material here, but the only piece that strikes me as substantially new is Jon Ogan's summary of David Canter's psychological profile of Jack the Ripper. This 2-8-page A5 magazine looks fuller than it is because the print is double-spaced. I'm left feeling a bit lukewarm; perhaps I'm sated by the amount of Ripperature that's appeared recently. **Ripperana** is a quarterly. A year's subscription in the £6.00 (UK) or £8.00 (overseas). Sterling cheques or money orders should be payable to N.P. Warren; US dollar bills can be accepted.

New at the Sherlock Holmes pub in Northumberland Street, Charing Cross, is a palatable brew called Sherlock Holmes Fine Ale. Just over the road from the Sherlock Holmes Memorabilia Company in Baker Street is a new shop called At Present, which has some nice gift ideas. We found a lead figure of Holmes, about 2" high and neatly painted, with grey Inverness, green cravat, and brown deerstalker. Fair value at £6.95. The China Ware House Company (14-16 Canton Street, Carnaby Street, London W1V 1LB; phone 071-734 2174), has several items of Holmesian interest. A wooden music-box broadly representing the Sherlock Holmes pub, about 7"x 7"x 5", and made by Pauline Ralph of Devon; when the lid is raised, it plays "Home Sweet Home" (£52.95). The Bossons heads of Holmes, Watson and Moriarty are priced at £13.95 each. The Warwick Models pewter thimbles of Holmes are £12.95. There's also a Baker Street sign fridge magnet.

The first four plays in Radio 4's **The Return of Sherlock Holmes**, with Clive Merrison and Michael Williams, are out now on a double cassette from the BBC Radio Collection (Room A2106, BBC Enterprises Ltd, 80 Wood Lane, London W12 OTT; £7.99); the second and third will follow in March and April. Also due out now is the first cassette of **The New Adventures of Sherlock Holmes** with Rathbone and Bruce (Simon & Schuster Audioworks, Simon & Schuster Ltd, West Garden Place, London W2 2AQ; £7.99). Granada's **The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes** with Brett and Hardwicke (comprising "The Three Gables", "The Dying Detective", "The Golden Pince-Nez", "The Red Circle", "The Mazarin Stone" and "The Cardboard Box") should begin transmission on ITV about now. David Stuart Davies (Overdale, 69 Greenhead Road, Huddersfield HD1 4ER; phone 0484 42□957) informs me that Granada will host an evening on the Baker Street set at 6.30 pm on Tuesday the 15th March, primarily for the press. Called **The Making of Sherlock Holmes**, it will feature Edward Hardwicke, June Wyndham Davies and several of the writers. There may be some places available for Holmesians. Check with David!

Alan Saunders (12 Booth Drive, Laleham, Staines, Middlesex TW18 1PR) reminds me that The Head Llamas will hold a Field Trip to Sherman's Animal Emporium (the Natural History Museum, London) on Sunday the 13th March, meeting at the museum's main entrance at 11.30 am. A full day is planned, ending at about 5.30. The only charge will be the museum's entrance fee. Clare Taylor (2 Lynbridge Court, Chapel Street, Tavistock, Devon PL19 8DX) tells me that The Poor Folk On The Moors have struck up a good relationship with the Governor of H.M. Prison, Dartmoor, who has extended to them a provisional invitation to the opening of a museum that is being set up at the prison. More on this when I know more. David Stuart Davies passes on news that the Northern Musgraves' meeting **Mr Holmes & Dr Doyle** (at the George Hotel in Huddersfield, Saturday 26th March; £13.50 per person,

including a 3-course lunch) will feature Catherine Cooke as chief speaker, with John Addy on Joseph Bell, Richard Lancelyn Green and Christopher Roden on their contribution to **The Oxford Sherlock Holmes**, a seminar on that edition, and a performance of a section from David's work in progress **Art in the Blood: An Evening with Conan Doyle and Sherlock Holmes**. More details can be had from David. (Do remember to enclose a stamped and self-addressed envelope when sending your enquiries.)

Frank Darlington (141 NW 181st Street, Seattle, WA 98177, USA) heads this issue's Agony Column: "Wanted - a London agent to do some occasional trifling on-site research. Ideal billet for a retiree who rebels at stagnation. Will recompense by providing mental exaltation and, as well, any quid pro quo services that I can fulfil from here in the colonies." Michael Connolly (Tirgarve, Allistragh, Armagh, Northern Ireland BT6 8EZ) is next: "Collector requires a copy of **The Tangled Skein** by David Stuart Davies. If anyone has a copy for sale or would consider swapping it for some (i.e. more than one) of a dozen available Holmesian books (mainly pastiches), please contact..." Then comes Allan Smith (1 Wilmington Close, Tudor Grange, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE3 2SF), who wants video recordings of **Murder by Decree** and the **Hammer Hound Of the Baskervilles**. And finally Georgina Ledger (Rose Cottage, Coton, Milwich, Stafford ST18 OET) : "Wanted: A **Puzzle for Sherlock Holmes** by Robert Newman (paperback), **Disguises in the Adventures of Sherlock Holmes** by Alvin Rodin & Jack Key, **Sherlock and Porlock** by Kelvin T Jones, and **Good Old Index** by W.D. Goodrich."

R.J. Greep, Treasurer of the Conan Doyle (Crowborough) Establishment tells me that he has a few left of the Establishment's First Day Covers from the issue of the Sherlock Holmes stamps, as well as a limited edition of covers celebrating Holmes's 140th birthday on the 6th January. Future plans include covers for the 65th anniversary of Sir Arthur's death, the 135th anniversary of his birth, and the 95th anniversary of his dismissal of W.G. Grace. Fuller details from Mr Greep at The Limes, Bridge Road, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 2SL. Don't forget that a donation of £10.00 a year gets you Associate Membership in the Establishment, with a bulky annual newsletter and other privileges. All profits support the Establishment's work.

Recent periodicals of interest. **The Pleasant Places of Florida Communication** no. 134 and 135 (Dr Benton Wood, BSI, Box 740, Ellenton, FL 34222, USA). (*Particularly good on philatelic matters. *) **Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press** January 1994 (Peter E. Blau, 390 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA). (*The newsletter.*) **The School Report** no. 16 (The Priory Scholars of Leicester, Horace L. Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY). (*This friendly and active group has recently affiliated to the Franco-Midland Hardware Company.*) **The New Baker Street Pillar Box** no. 17 (The Franco-Midland Hardware Company, The Stock-broker's Clerk, 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. P014 3RU) (*The highlight of this issue is an article on the Bruce-Partington Submarine by Philip Weller.*)

The Rotary Club of Northampton Becket is planning to step back a century on Sunday the 1st May with a Victorian Extravaganza. Those local to the area and interested in taking part should contact Andrew Metcalfe at Wahroonga, Stoke Park, Towcester, Northants. NN12 7RZ (home phone 0604 862256, work phone 0604 581421).

