

THE DISTRICT MESSENGER

The Newsletter of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London
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Some long-awaited items have finally appeared, among them the Summer issue of **The Sherlock Holmes Journal**, excellently produced as always, and containing a variety of stimulating essays, mostly by new contributors. I'm sure Nick Utechin will agree that it's good not to see the same old names each time (and I speak as one of them).

Then there's the Summer issue of **The Sherlock Holmes Gazette**, the first to be edited by Eddie Bissell and published by Peter Harkness. They've scooped our own journal in reporting May's "Back to Baker Street" festival, with an overview by David Stuart Davies and detailed accounts of the plaque to ACD at 2 Upper Wimpole Street and the portrait of him in the restaurant at the Sherlock Holmes pub. The activities of the Arthur Conan Doyle Society, the Franco-Midland Hardware Company, the Poor Folk Upon the Moors and the Northern Musgraves are chronicled. The **Gazette** now has an American correspondent in the person of our own Paula Brown. And there's much more besides. An individual issue costs £1.95; a year's subscription is: UK £14.00; Europe and Eire £18.00 (France 140F); Middle East, USA, Canada, South America (Zone 1) £21.00 (USA \$35.00); Australia, New Zealand, Japan (Zone 2) £22.00. The new address for the **Gazette** is 46 Purfield Drive, Wargrave, Berkshire RG10 8AR. The US representative is Classic Specialties, P.O. Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219.

The Arthur Conan Doyle Society may have copies still available of the fascinating booklet **Conan Doyle of Wimpole Street**, at £4.00 or US\$7.00 or C\$9.00 from Ashcroft, 2 Abbotsford Drive, Penyffordd, Chester CH4 0JG. There are none left of our own **Lunch at the Sherlock Holmes**, but you can still buy **Back to Baker Street**, the 100-page anthology edited by Jean and me (£11.50 or \$21.50), from the Sherlock Holmes Society of London's Merchandising Officer, Lynne Godden, at Apple Tree Cottage, Smarden, Ashford, Kent TN27 8QE. Lynne also has copies of Pam Bruxner's 52-page **In Beds with Sherlock Holmes**, featuring new essays by Bernard Davies, Simon Smyth, Derek Hinrich, John Hall, John Gilbody, Jonathan McCafferty and Colin Prestige. You may have missed the Society's day exploring "The Three Gables", "The Man with the Watches" and "The Blanched Soldier", but you can make up for it by buying (and reading) the book. It costs £7.00 including postage.

Bob Payton died on the 13th July. He was the man behind the Chicago Rib Shack and the Chicago Pizza Pie Factory, and with Rocco Forte he was responsible for restoring the Criterion Restaurant to its Victorian magnificence, enabling the "Back to Baker Street" festival to be launched there in proper style.

Tom Stix reminds me of the Doctor Watson Fund, which provides financial assistance to Sherlockians (not just Baker Street Irregulars) who can't otherwise afford to attend the January festivities in New York. Watson and his fellow administrators are deliberately anonymous. Donations and requests for assistance can be sent to John H. Watson MD (to whom cheques should be payable), c/o Thomas L. Stix Jr, 34 Pierson Avenue,

Norwood, NJ 07648, USA. (Tom himself is not Dr Watson. He forwards all correspondence unopened.)

The Universal Sherlock Holmes by Ronald B. De Waal, published by George Vanderburgh on behalf of the Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library, is out at last. It's a huge undertaking, combining the contents of Ron's two previous bibliographies plus much more. It will prove very useful - but, it has to be said, not as useful as those first two volumes. Almost unbelievably there is no index! (and the apparently arbitrary concordance is no substitute). We're told that the bibliography will be updated by regular supplements, and I know that Ron will welcome suggestions (638 12th Avenue, Salt Lake City, UT 84103). I suggest that the production of an index should be a top priority.

More books. Published this month by Diehard at £4.50 is a play called **Port and Lemon: The Mystery Behind Sherlock Holmes** by John Cargill Thompson. A couple that previously escaped my attention are **The Case of Blind Man's Buff** by David Cobb and J. Dalley, published by Longman as a videcript for schools at £2.00 (apparently part of a "Sherlock Holmes & Dr Watson" series, but I can find no trace of any others) and **Lady Dither's Ghost: a Musical Version of a Sherlock Holmes Mystery** by Dumont Howard (I.E. Clark; £3.50). Bailliere-Tindal have currently available **Watson's Medical-Surgical Nursing and Related Physiology** at £16.95, but it's probably a different Watson. Peter Blau notes that the Indigo Press in London has published a series of "Little Brown Notebooks" including one called **Scenes from Sherlock Holmes**, a pocket-size hardback, 256 pages, with quotations from the long stories and illustrations by Debra Thompson. It's stocked in the USA by Sterling Publishing Co. (387 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016) at \$6.95.

Musgrave Monograph no. 5, published shortly by the Northern Musgraves (Anne Jordan, Fairbank, Beck Lane, Bingley, West Yorkshire BD16 4DN) will be **140 Different Varieties**, a study of tobacco in the Canon by John Hall. The pre-publication price (before August 15th) is: UK and EEC £3.50; rest of Europe £4.00; USA & Canada £4.50/\$7.00; rest of world £5.00/\$8.00.

Peter Blau notes that "Cheryl Hurd plans to publish a **Victorian Yellow Pages** early next year: it will be a compendium of modern sources for Victoriana ('antimacassars to zithers'), and she would be happy to hear from people who know about Victorian places, shops, events, resources, books, periodicals, etc. Her deadline is September 30th, and her address is: Teapot Press, Box 2048, Scotia, NY 12302, USA."

The industrious George Vanderburgh has more projects forthcoming from his Battered Silicon Dispatch Box: **The Shaw Festival's "Sherlock Holmes"** by William Gillette, with lots of illustrations and commentary essays; the 1st Canadian edition of Vincent Starrett's **Born in a Bookshop; The Curious Incident of the Missing Link: Arthur Conan Doyle and Piltdown Man** by Douglas Elliott; **The Sherlock Holmes Radio Show Companion** by Edith Meiser, Bill Nadel, George Vanderburgh and Ray Stanich; Mark Twain's **A Double-Barrelled Detective Story** with an essay by Cameron Hollyer; Cameron's own **The Curator's Egg and Other Pieces; Sing Along with Sherlock Holmes** volumes 1 and 2 - and much more besides, as well as various "electronic books" and lapel pins. (When shall we see **The Solar Pons Portfolio**, George? And will it be issued as a real book for us old-fashioned types?)

The Pleasant Places of Florida have published yet another of their

round-robin pastiches: **A Case of Hide 'n' Tea** costs inclusive \$3.50 from Dr Benton Wood (Box 740, Ellenton, FL 34222, USA). Gerit Stenitzer points out that Mark Frost's novel **The List of Seven**, which involves the young Arthur Conan Doyle in the sort of adventure that he'd have considered too outlandish for Sherlock Holmes, is out in paperback from Arrow Books (20 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 2SA) at £4.99. **Lady Cottington's Pressed Fairy Book** by Terry Jones & Brian Froud is due from Pavilion Books on the 13 October, at £12.99.

Gravesend Books (Box 235 Pocono Pines, PA 18350, USA) has just issued Catalogue #31, listing books and other desirables for sale. Nick Utechin reports that Sylvian Hamilton, from whose catalogues many of us have increased our collections, has had to give up trading because of ill health. However, Peter Blau tells us that Gaby Goldscheider is in business again, dealing in Holmesiana and Doyleana; her address is now Deep Dene, Baring Road, Cowes, Isle of Wight PO31 8DB, And on the other side of the ocean (and then some) Vincent Brosnan's "Sherlock in LA" has a splendid catalogue #10 available, well worth the asking price of \$2.50 (1741 Via Allena, Oceanside, CA 92056, USA).

Listen for Pleasure (1/3 Uxbridge Road, Hayes, Middlesex UB4 0SY) is at last following up its recording of abridged texts of the Sherlock Holmes long stories. Just out is **His Last Bow and Other Stories** read by Martin Jarvis (LFP 7808), a double cassette containing "Wisteria Lodge", "The Red Circle", "Lady Frances Carfax" and "His Last Bow". It was a bold move, and a successful one, to go for later stories, rather than the better known earlier ones. Martin Jarvis is one of the most experienced and listenable readers in the business, and a great "voice man" to boot. The production is pretty near impeccable (though someone should have caught and corrected "irrrability" in "Lady Frances Carfax"), and the texts are pretty much complete ("His Last Bow" on my review copy lacks the final sentence; the result makes sense, but it's curious nonetheless). Anyway, I'm delighted to welcome Martin Jarvis to the small but distinguished company of readers of the short stories. He's fully the equal of Basil Rathbone, Robert Hardy, John Wood, Donald Pickering and Edward Hardwicke.

Peter Blau notes that Simon & Schuster's cassette series **The New Adventures of Sherlock Holmes**, produced by 221A Baker Street Associates from the 1940s radio plays with Rathbone & Bruce, has reached no. 25: "The Night Before Christmas" and "The Darlington Substitution" (the latter features Tom Conway as Holmes). This is the last-but-one cassette in the series. Dove Audio has reissued cassettes of Ben Kingsley's readings from the Canon at discount prices: **A Treasury of Sherlock Holmes** has four stories, and **More Sherlock Holmes** has three. Price is \$8.99 each set.

The work of Deirdre Keetley can be seen at her own Studio Gallery (50 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DP; phone 071-837 9947) and at a number of selected outlets such as the Sherlock Holmes public house at 10 Northumberland Street, London WC2, the Sherlock Holmes Hotel in Baker Street, and the Sherlock Holmes Memorabilia Company at 230 Baker Street, London NW1 5RT. Deirdre's versatility encompasses everything from stained glass, through bone china, to crystal glassware. The famous "Portrayals of Sherlock Holmes" plate features her own exquisite painting. A recent addition is the range of Sherlock Holmes honey cosmetics.

The American artist Cathy Childs, whose portrait of Jeremy Brett features on the cover of the new **Sherlock Holmes Gazette**, trades as

Sherlock & Co. Ltd (1510 Lake Drive, Grand Island, Florida 32735, USA). She has numerous items of original artwork for sale, as well as prints and other collectibles - T-shirts, stationery, paperweights and so forth. The prints include "Highlights from the **Sherlock Holmes Series**", ten pen-and-ink scenes originally commissioned by Baskervilles Restaurant at Walt Disney World. Cathy's favourite of her own work is **The Bits Watson Doesn't Tell Us**, a large volume of cartoons, some of which have appeared in **The Sherlock Holmes Gazette** and other Sherlockian publications. Write to Cathy for a catalogue, and do remember to enclose postage.

Rafael de Swarte of CoverCraft (who produced the excellent First Day Cover for our Society) has kindly sent a sample of his **Return of Sherlock Holmes Centenary Souvenir Cover**, which is produced to the same superb standards. The main illustration is Paget's picture of Watson and the old book-seller in Park Lane, and there are two smaller reproductions from the same issue of **The Strand**. A pair of last year's Sherlock Holmes stamps is franked with a special 1st April 1994 Park Lane hand-stamp. It's a very attractive item. Only 500 have been produced, and the price is £5.00 each (overseas add £1.00 each for airmail). CoverCraft has a new address: P.O. Box 432, Beckenham, Kent BR3 3SZ. The handstamp was mentioned in the March 25th issue of **The British Postmark Bulletin**. Holger Schott points out that the Royal Mail's current leaflet, advertising its priority services, features a nice photo of the famous Holmesian props ready to be packed and posted to "D. Luvvies & Co., Theatrical Costumiers". Pick up a copy at your local post office.

As I noted in DM 141, our much-missed Patsy Dalton featured in "The Obituary Game", a regular feature in Richard Ingrams' admirable organ **The Oldie**. People who haven't encountered it sometimes ask me what **The Oldie** is like, and the best answer I can come up with is that it's like **Punch** but with jokes, but that's only a part of it. **The Oldie** is humane, perceptive, infuriating, hilarious and frequently politically incorrect. We love it, and I'm happy to report that, despite the premature obit by E.J. Thribb in **Private Eye**, it is still alive, and will continue publication on a monthly basis. A year's subscription costs £20.00, two years' is £36.00, and three years' £50.00. A bargain. Cheques should be payable to Oldie Publications, and orders sent to Oldie Sub., FREEPOST CN2/97, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 3HP.

Periodicals received since the last DM, apart from the new issues of **The Sherlock Holmes Journal and The Sherlock Holmes Gazette**, mentioned above: **The Pleasant Places of Florida Communication** #139 and #140 (Dr Benton Wood BSI, Box 740, Ellenton, FL 34222, USA); **The Petrel Flyer** July/August 1994 (The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C. V7P 3C6, Canada) (*The Petrels will host the Sherlympiad - the 6th International Holmesian Games - on Saturday & Sunday the 17th/18th September*); **Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press** July 1994 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA) (*Peter goes into more detail than I've done about the good and less good points of **The Universal Sherlock Holmes***).

