

THE DISTRICT MESSENGER

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

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To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes, or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £5.00 or US\$10.00 for 12 issues. Dollar checks should be payable to Jean Upton. (Warning: British postal rates are due to rise sometime shortly.)

Kathryn White ("The Musgrave Ritual" BSI) and David Stuart Davies ("Sir Ralph Musgrave" BSI) were married at Haworth on Saturday the 6th April, in the presence of many Sherlockian friends. Congratulations!

Patricia E. Moran ("Patience Moran" BSI) died on 12th March, after a long period of illness, necessitating several operations. A founder of the Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes, and editor of the ASH journal, **The Serpentine Muse**, Pat was also good company and a good friend.

The BSI History Project is undoubtedly Jon L. Lellenberg's **magnum opus**. Now we have the fourth volume, **Irregular Proceedings of the Mid 'Forties** (The Baker Street Irregulars, The Baker Street Journal, P.O. Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA). It's engrossing reading for anyone interested in the world of Sherlockians and their activities, drawing on an apparently immense archive of correspondence and other documents. Smith, Morley, Starrett, Steele, Stout, Davenport, Wolff **et al.** - these are the people who founded our Great Game, finding out as they went along what could be done (sometimes at great financial cost, as in Ben Abramson's case). This period from 1944 to 1947 saw the publication of seminal books (by Edgar W. Smith, Christopher Morley and Ellery Queen) whose promotion by the BSI - throwing "the emphasis away from Doyle and toward Holmes" - incensed Denis and Adrian Conan Doyle, resulting in a notorious feud. It also saw the establishment of many scion societies, and the creation of **The Baker Street Journal**. The BSI History Project gives today's Sherlockians the chance to know their predecessors, appreciating who they were, and what they did. **Irregular Proceedings of the Mid 'Forties** runs to nearly 400 pages, with numerous illustrations. It costs \$24.95 plus postage (\$2.95 in USA; \$3.95 elsewhere). Highly recommended.

Also newly published is **Sherlock's Veiled Secret** by K.C. Brown, a play which has been well received in performance by American Sherlockians. What is the family connection between the elderly Sherlock Holmes and the young sculptress Violet Sheridan? Why is he so keen for her to join him in solving a blackmail case? Can she solve the problem of her own identity? It's a complex and clever mystery, with well-rounded characters; I'd be interested to see the play performed. The publisher is Dramatists Play Service Inc. (440 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016, USA). I have no record of a price.

Murray Shaw, author of the grand series **Match Wits with Sherlock Holmes**, has written and illustrated a delightful children's story in which all the characters are cats. **The Case of the Clever Kipperred Herring** runs to 32 pages, with some 70 illustrations. Copying, spiral-binding and hand-colouring is all done by Murray himself. The book costs \$8.50 postpaid

(within the USA), and is available from Murray Shaw at 3601, N. 5th Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85013, USA.

Ian Henry Publications (20 Park Drive, Romford RM1 4LH) is importing a few copies of a volume called **The Lost Adventures of Sherlock Holmes** by Martin P. Edward. This 144-page paperback is published by Pragma Books of Prague, and the author is Czech, despite the pseudonym. The text is in English, good but not Watsonian, and there are a lot of misprints. The stories take Holmes and Watson to New York, St Petersburg, Singapore, Tokyo, Capri, and somewhere improbably called Askerville. This curiosity is available from late April at £5.25 including postage. Also newly in stock is **The Duties of Servants**, reprinted by Copper Beech Books from the 1861 original (£6.99 + 61p postage); **Sherlock Holmes Little Brown Notebook** (£3.50 + 43p), Paul Lester's **Sherlock Holmes in the Midlands** (£9.95 + 61p), and a die-cast metal Franco-Midland Hardware Company lorry (£8.50).

Dated 1995, but only recently available from the Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library (c/o George A. Vanderburgh, P.O. Box 204, 420 Owen Sound Street, Shelburne, Ontario L0N 1S0, Canada), is a big cerlox-bound volume containing just about the ultimate collection of songs inspired by Sir Arthur's great creation: **Singalong with Sherlock Holmes**, compiled and arranged by Jim Ballinger. Jim is better known in North America than over here, but if you can imagine a combination of Tim Owen, Auberon Redfearn and Peter Horrocks you may get some idea of his song-writing/singing activities (he writes his own music too). Here are the BSI and ASH favourites (yes, including "We Never Mention Aunt Clara" and the notorious "Reindeer Song"), classics by Harvey Officer, a number of Jim Ballinger's own songs, and much more besides, including a substantial selection from our own Society's **The Final Songbook** and **Chansons Domiciles et Quel Fils**. The list of contributors is extraordinary. So is the book! It costs £15.00 + £1.50 postage. Cheques should be payable to George A. Vanderburgh.

A couple of years ago Magico Magazine (P.O. Box 156, New York, NY 10002) published **Sherlock Holmes Vintage and Spirited**, an anthology of essays on Sherlockian drink, edited by Michael H. Kean. Magico seems desperately keen not to let anyone know about its publications, so I only came across this one by chance, and can't give you a price (though it may be stocked by Murder One and other specialist dealers). It makes an excellent companion to Patricia Guy's **Bacchus in Baker Street** (indeed, Ms Guy is a contributor to this nice volume).

Roman Stus notes that County Bookshops, a remainder store, has recently had copies of **The Annotated Sherlock Holmes** at £16.99. Michael Ross has made arrangements with D.O. Smith to publish a German translation of his fine Holmes story, **The Adventure of the Purple Hand**, as **Die Violette Hand**. It should be available now from Baskerville Bücher (Bendheide 65, 47906 Kempen, Germany) at DM 15. Dixon Smith of Rupert Books (58-59 Stonefield, Bar Hill, Cambridge CB3 8TE) tells me of what must be the oddest Holmes anthology yet, **Sherlock Holmes Resurrected** edited by Marvin Kaye (St Martin's Press, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010, USA; \$24.95). Living authors have been encouraged to write Sherlock Holmes stories in the styles of dead authors - Kerouac, C.S. Forester, Hemingway... Due in August from the University of Michigan Press is **The Secret Marriage of Sherlock Holmes & Other Eccentric Readings** by Michael Atkinson (£19.95).

Forbes Gibb (29 Falkland Street, Hyndland, Glasgow G12 9QZ) has issued his **Catalogue Evans**, featuring books about "cops, spies and private eyes"; he's also having a spring clearance sale on selected titles. Nigel Williams Rare

Books (22 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE) has issued **Catalogue 37: First Editions**, including a number of Conan Doyle titles, at prices up to £9,500.00. (Please enclose return postage when you write off for a dealer's catalogue.)

Christine Fell wrote to Granada Television regarding video release of **The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes**, the final series, broadcast in 1994. The Viewers' Liaison Administrator replied: "...regrettably these stories were not released on video. Mr Brett was very ill during filming of these programmes and therefore did not appear for very much of the story. Because of that fact it was decided not to release these stories on video. Now, I understand that **The Memoirs** is available on video in America, so it seems rather unfair that we should be denied them. The programmes were good enough to broadcast, so they should be good enough to release on video. If you agree, please tell Granada so. The address is Granada Television Ltd, Manchester M60 9EA.

The BBC Radio 4 production of **The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes**, with Clive Merrison & Michael Williams, has now been released on cassette. The third 2-tape set appeared this month, completing the magnificent project of dramatising all 56 of the short stories, in order and with the same actors. Bert Coules, the "onlie begetter", tells me that there is still a good chance of doing **The Hound of the Baskervilles** and **The Valley of Fear** to complete the Canon. The double cassettes are issued by BBC Radio Collection, P.O. Box 190, Peterborough PE2 6UW.

Random House Audiobooks plan to re-release Christopher Lee's good (abridged) reading of **The Valley of Fear** in August at £4.99.

Seen recently in Long Melford: a resin statuette of Sherlock Holmes from Royal Doulton. It doesn't seem to feature in a catalogue yet, and there's no title or serial number. It stands about 8" tall, and shows Holmes on Dartmoor, examining the footprint of a gigantic hound. It's exquisitely made and painted; the magnifying glass even contains a real convex lens. Well, it should be good. The price is £99.95.

Classic Specialties (P.O. Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA) has issued "**Quick Watson...**", the first of its brief and frequent catalogues - brief, but full of good stuff, including Vanessa Maroney's recording of David Stuart Davies's play **Sherlock Through the Magnifying Glass**. Classic Specialties is one of the world's best and most reliable Sherlockian dealers.

Bob Ellis sends advance notice of **Sherlock Holmes: The Adventure at Sir Arthur Sullivan's**, a play by Tim Heath, to be produced on tour in the autumn by Stage One Theatre Company. Bob will pass on further news as it becomes available, but if you're impatient you can phone Desmond Maurer on 0181-778 5213.

The Northern Musgraves' autumn meeting will be **Write On Sherlock**, held at the Victoria & Albert Hotel in Manchester on the 26th & 27th October. The theme is writing on Sherlock Holmes in all its forms: speakers will include Granada scriptwriter Trevor Bowen, BBC Radio scriptwriter Bert Coules, Doylean authority Richard Lancelyn Green, and crime-writer June Thomson. For £125.00/\$190.00 per person (twin or double room; £140.00/\$215.00 single room) you get Saturday lunch, afternoon tea. Gala Dinner, bed & full English breakfast, morning coffee, and all the events. Cost without bed & breakfast is £75.00/ \$115.00, Details from Write On Sherlock, Overdale. 69 Greenhead

Road, Huddersfield HD1 4ER. The summer meeting will be a joint event organised by the Poor Folk Upon The Moors: **The Milverton Upon the Moor Weekend** on the 22nd & 23rd June. Details from Shelley Philipson, 4 Dolvin Road, Tavistock, Devon PL19 9EA.

Dorothy Stix tells of a new Sherlockian society, for collectors of foreign-language editions, It's called Sherlock Holmes Around the World - or S,H.A.W. (no coincidence). A subscription of US\$10.00, gets you the quarterly newsletter. Jeff Decker has designed a lapel pin, which is also \$10.00; sign up for both at the same time, and it's \$18.95. Details from Ralph Hall BSI, 2906 Wallingford Court, Louisville, KY 40218-2363, USA. And a reminder that the Conan Doyle (Crowborough) Establishment welcomes associate members; for a minimum donation of £11.00 you get the annual Birthday Newsletter and ACD Research File. Cheques payable to ACD Memorial Fund should be sent to Malcolm Payne, 4 Wealden Close, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 2ST.

The Irregular Special Railway Company will visit the Post Office Underground Railway and dine at the Middlesex Old Sessions House on Friday the 19th April (details from Antony J. Richards, 163 Marine Parade, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 2RB), The Priory Scholars will hold an informal meeting on Saturday the 20th April to study "The Three Students" (Mr H.L. Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY). On Sunday the 21st, there'll be a joint meeting of the Franco-Midland Hardware Company, Baker Street Branch Lines and the Baskerville Hounds (details from "The Stockbroker's Clerk", "Bradshaw" or "'The Kennel Maid" - all of 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RD), On Saturday the 27th April Roger Matthews will give an afternoon talk to the Poor Folk Upon The Moors, entitled **The Bruce-Partington and All That** (Shelley Philipson, 4 Dolvin Road, Tavistock, Devon PL19 9EA) .

Publications received. **Irregular Special Railway Company Newsletter** no. 16 (Antony J. Richards, 163 Marine Parade, Leigh-on-sea, Essex SS9 2RB) (*this enterprising society continues to flourish*). **The Pleasant Places of Florida Communication** no. 159 & no. 160 (Dr Benton Wood BSI, Box 740, Ellenton, FL 34222, USA) (*Ben Wood is retiring as Chaplain to the Baker Street Irregulars after 15 years*). **The Petrel Flyer** vol. 8 no. 2 (The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C. V7P 3C6, Canada) (*Hichimes Lagg is on his travels again, this time to Singapore, and there's a good pictorial survey of the "Rache" scene from **A Study in Scarlet***). **The School Report** no. 24 (The Priory Scholars of Leicester, Mr H.L. Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY) (*Syd Goldberg writes about Christopher Morley's famous non-Sherlockian novel **Kitty Foyle***). **The Parallelogram** April 1996 (The Parallel Case of St Louis, Joseph J. Eckrich BSI, 914 Oakmoor, Fenton, MO 63026, USA) (*Pasquale Accardo contributes some thoughtful notes on "Charles Augustus Milverton", though he probably overestimates the severity of a London winter*). **The Waterloo Sherlockian Letter** no. 38 (Chris Redmond BSI, 523 Westfield Drive, Waterloo, Ontario N2T 2E1, Canada) (*by far the most personal Sherlockian periodical I know - refreshingly so*). **The Baker Street Journal** December 1995 and March 1996 (P.O. Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA) (*Donald K. Pollock, who made **Baker Street Miscellanea** such a respected publication, takes over as editor from the March issue - which, coincidentally, marks the BSJ's 50th anniversary*). **Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press** March 1996 (Peter E. Blau BSI, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830) (*the indispensable Sherlockian newsletter*).

