

# THE DISTRICT MESSENGER

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

opinions expressed are the editor's unless noted otherwise

no. 167 3rd February 1997

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £5.50 or US\$11.00 for 12 issues. Dollar checks should be payable to Jean Upton. Dollar prices quoted without qualification refer to US dollars.

Over the weekend of the 10th/11th January, Tom Stix announced the following new investitures into the Baker Street Irregulars: **William J. Hyder** ('A Most Remarkable Institution'), **Richard J. Kitts** ('The Battered Tin Dispatch Box'), **Kenneth C. Lanza** ('His Last Bow'), **Theodora Niver** ('Carina'), **Roy E. Pilot** ('The Chemical Laboratory of St Barts'), **Paul G. Singleton** ('Covent Garden'), **Margaret Smedegaard** ('The Criterion Bar') and **Dorothy K. Stix** ('Martha'). Congratulations to all! It was also announced that, after 11 years as head of the BSI, Tom was retiring, and handing over the post and the title of *Wiggins* to Mike Whelan. From now, all correspondence for the BSI (\*not for *The Baker Street Journal*\*) should be sent to Michael F. Whelan, **The Baker Street Irregulars**, PO Box 2089, Easton, Maryland 21601-2089, USA.

Christopher & Barbara Roden have moved, so **The Arthur Conan Doyle Society** and the Calabash Press have a new address: P.O. Box 1360, Ashcroft, British Columbia V0K 1A0, Canada (from 20th February phone 250 453-2045, fax 250 453-2075)

Just out from Ian Henry Publications Ltd (20 Park Drive, Romford RM1 4LH) is *After You, Holmes...* by Douglas Moreton, a collection of four new Sherlock Holmes stories set variously in Lancashire, Yorkshire and Shropshire. This pleasant paperback is enticingly illustrated with late 19th century photographs ('from the collection of John H. Watson, MD'). The author achieves a competent likeness of the Watson style, his characters and locations are engaging, and his plots ingenious. His meticulous historical research compensates for his use of a perhaps over-familiar villain from the Canon. *After You, Holmes...* makes for an enjoyable couple of hours' reading at £9.95 (add 85p if ordering direct from the publisher). Also newly available from Ian Henry are four more film scripts: *The Scarlet Claw*, *The Pearl of Death*, *A Study in Terror* and *Without a Clue* (£25.00 each). Ian has a Spring 1997 catalogue of Sherlock Holmes titles — write for a copy, enclosing return postage.

There are several recent publications from the Battered Silicon Dispatch Box (George A. Vanderburgh, Box 204, 420 Owen Sound Street, Shelburne, Ontario L0N 1S0, Canada). *Bibliomania* by 'The Engineer's Thumb' is a collection, compiled by Vincent Brosnan, of the columns that Bliss Austin contributed to *The Northumberland Dispatch*, the newsletter of the Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers of Pittsburgh, between 1978 and 1981. Austin was one of the great Sherlockian collectors, and he loved to share his fortune and his knowledge. These essays cover the Canon, the *Exploits* and other pastiches, translations and more, all in 50 pages; they're quirky, wise and fascinating — and I can't find a price quoted anywhere! Carl

William Thiel has written *The Basic 100: The 100 Most Important Critical Studies and Association Items to the Sherlock Holmes Canon as suggested by John Bennett Shaw* (US\$10.00/Can\$12.50/ £6.25). The title says it all, really, except that the booklet has 56 pages, Mr Thiel has done his work thoroughly (\*and I have a long way to go to catch up with the 100\*). Steve Clarkson is known to the members of Watson's Tin Box of Ellicott City, MD, as 'Torquemada'. *The Sherlockian Star Chamber* shows why. There are 69 quizzes here, one for each story in the Canon, plus another six multiple examinations and three quizzes on the apocrypha. All the questions are fair, most are tough, some are very tough indeed. There's a hardback edition (US\$30.00/Can\$37.50/ £18.75), or two paperbacks: *Questions* (US\$12.00/ Can\$15.00/£7.50) & *Answers* (US\$14.00/ Can\$17.50/£8.75). Postage is extra on all the books.

Last month, Kelvin I. Jones published the third booklet in his series on *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. This is *The Psychology of The Hound*, and it costs £3.50, post-free within the UK (overseas, add 50p per copy or £1.00 for airmail). Sterling cheques should be payable to K & D Jones — no foreign cheques, please. (Oakmagic Publications, 2 South Place Folly, Penzance, Cornwall TR18 4JB).

Whitaker's BookBank says that February publications include *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle at the Cinema: A Critical Study of the Film Adaptations* by Scott Allen Nollen (McFarland & Co. c/o Shelving Ltd, 127 Sandgate Road, Folkestone. Kent CT20 2BL; £40.50) and *Good Old Index: A Sherlock Holmes Handbook* by Thomas W. Ross (Camden House Inc., c/o Boydell & Brewer Ltd, PO Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 3DF; £14.95). Due in March is *The Man Who Became Sherlock Holmes: The Tortured Mind of Jeremy Brett* by Terry Manners (Virgin Books, 332 Ladbroke Grove, London W10 5AH; £15.99).

New catalogues are available from **Rupert Books** (58/59 Stonefield, Bar Hill, Cambridge CB3 8TE; tel. 01954 781861) (\*Rupert now has a homepage & InterNet catalogue on: [http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/rupert\\_books](http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/rupert_books). At [Rupert\\_books@compuserve.com](mailto:Rupert_books@compuserve.com).\*), orders can be placed by e-mail. **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (22 and 25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE), and **Post Mortem Books** (58 Stanford Avenue, Hassocks, Sussex BN6 8HJ; 01273 843066).

Linda M. Jones, Managing Director of Tangled Web Audio (1063 King Street West #133, Hamilton, ON L8S 1L8, Canada) tells me that her company's recordings have received due recognition in 1996. Notably *Sherlock Holmes: Tales of Suspense*, read by Edward Hardwicke, won Best New Voice Audie award from the USA Audio Publishers' Association, and *Sherlock Holmes: Tales of Betrayal* won Best of Mystery Listen Up award from *Publishers Weekly*. These and other titles are well worth seeking out.

*The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, Ernest Dudley's adaptation of the play that Harold Terry & Arthur Rose wrote for Eille

Norwood, will be at the Tyne Theatre & Opera House, Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4AG, from Monday 17th to Saturday 22nd March. Michael Cashman and Frederick Pyne are Holmes & Watson, and Nicholas Smith is Lestrade. The director is Harry Landis. The box office number is 0191 232 0899 (fax 0191 261 2488). Rebecca Collis of the theatre's Marketing dept. is keen to organise an evening for Holmes enthusiasts, probably on Friday 21st March. If you're interested, call her on 0191 232 1551 (mobile 0973 693 691). (\*This is a Middle Ground Theatre production — presumably touring, but I've been unable to find an address or phone number for Middle Ground. Does anyone know of other venues and dates?\*)

Alex Stobie put me on to a good article in the February issue of *Stamp & Coin Mart* (Aceville Publications Ltd, 82C East Hill, Colchester CO1 2QW): 'Watching the Detectives' by James Mackay, about the recent Dominica and Guernsey stamps issues featuring cinematic sleuths (see DM 166). Maurice Tanner, 180 Whitehorse Road, West Croydon CR0 2LA, has issued a handsome first day cover for the Guernsey Sherlock Holmes card, at £9.99 post-paid (overseas £10.99), and two different 'maximum cards' at £6.99 the pair.

The Royal Mail's *Nightmare* stamps will be issued on the 13th May, and A.G. Bradbury (3 Link Road, Stonegate, Leicester LE2 3RA) plans a spectacular first day cover for *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. More information in the next DM.

The January 16th issue of *Country Life* (PO Box 666, London E15 1DW) features a brief guide for a Dartmoor walk in the prints of the Hound. The author, David Edelstein, makes use of Philip Weller's *The Dartmoor Locations of The Hound of the Baskervilles*, and scrupulously acknowledges the fact.

**The Solar Pons Society of London** sends details of extremely impressive black & white prints, portraits of Holmes, Watson, Conan Doyle & Moriarty (and Hercule Poirot), by Tom Rieschick. Each 8½" x 11" print is a reasonable \$10.00 (or 3 for \$25.00) plus \$3.00 postage. He also produces lovely Sherlockian greeting cards. For a brochure, or to order prints or cards, contact Tom at 179 Gold Kettle Drive, Gaithersburg, MD 20878, USA; phone 301 330-1893 (e-mail [TRieschick@aol.com](mailto:TRieschick@aol.com)).

Peter Neugebauer has produced two very attractive designs for Sherlockian greeting cards (Holmes watching the *Aurora*, and Holmes with the Dancing Men cipher). A set of six (3 of each) costs £2.00/\$3.50 from **Von Herder Airguns**, c/o Michael Ross, Bendheide 65, 47906 Kempen, Germany (add £1.00/\$3.00 postage irrespective of the number of sets ordered). Cheques and checks should be payable to Anke van Hasenhorst.

Jean Upton and I, with Joyce Allingham and Barry Pike, are helping to set up a **Margery Allingham Room** at the new Maldon Museum (opening, all being well, in April). Among other things we are looking out for is a shop-window dummy, to represent Albert Campion. Offers and suggestions will be very welcome.

A major event this spring will be *L'affaire de l'Hôtel du Louvre*, to which the **Société Sherlock Holmes de France** has invited Holmesians from all over the world. The hotel, which features in 'The Bruce-Partington Plans', has become the official rendezvous of Parisian Holmesians. The events of 8th-11th May will include the unveiling of a plaque at the hotel, an exhibition of reconstructions of a dozen Holmesian scenes, and the launch of a Sherlock Holmes suite — recreating the Baker Street sitting-room. The SSHF is one of the most active and exciting Sherlock Holmes societies in the world. For

information, please contact the *Société Sherlock Holmes de France*, 26 avenue de la République, 75011 Paris, France (tel. 33 01 43 55 96 76; fax 33 01 43 38 58 07).

In sending out the invitations, the SSHF has also celebrated the recently issued postage stamp, which features Holmes's great French rival Arsène Lupin.

On Saturday 8th February, the **Franco-Midland Hardware Company** and the **Glades of the New Forest** will hold their joint Museum Day, visiting an arms collection and Doylean sites from Havant (details from 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU). **The Irregular Special Railway Company** will hold its Annual General Meeting and lunch on Saturday 22nd February at the Holmes Restaurant, 20 Baker Street, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 8AU. This will follow coffee and an informal talk on forensic science (by Dr Roger Berrett) at Oatlands Park Hotel. After lunch there will be a visit to Brooklands and tea at Silvermere Golf Club. (Details from Antony Richards, 163 Marine Parade, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 2RB.)

Periodicals received. First a welcome to *The Serpentine Muse*, winter 1996 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 360 West 21st Street, Apt 5A, New York, NY 10011, USA) (\*because of illness and death among the Adventuresses, there was a very long hiatus since the last issue, and a good part of this new issue properly pays tribute to the original editor, Pat Moran, and two more ASH who have died since: Marlene Aig and John Bennett Shaw; there's much more, of course, in this always lively journal\*). **The Irregular Special Railway Company Newsletter** no. 19 (Antony Richards, 163 Marine Parade, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 2RB) (\*contains reports on the Company's autumn events that make me even more disappointed that I couldn't be there\*).

*The Cormorant's Ring*, December 1996 (**The Trained Cormorants of Long Beach**, Jim Coffin, 6570 E. Paseo Alcazaa, Anaheim Hills, CA 92807, USA) (\*has a good piece about John McMurdo and the Scowlers by Michael J. Brady and an announcement that Jim Coffin has set up a Sherlockian correspondence group for percussionists!\*). **The Parallelogram**, January 1997 (**The Parallel Case of St Louis**, Joseph J. Eckrich BSI, 914 Oakmoor, Fenton, MO 63126, USA) (\*features a controversially Freudian analysis of 'The Speckled Band' by Pasquale Accardo and good basic detail on 'The Missing Three-Quarter' and 'The Abbey Grange'\*).

*Pleasant Places of Florida Communication*, no. 160 (The Papers on the Sundial, c/o 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA) (\*the first under the editorship of Wanda and Jeff Dow, who are maintaining Ben Wood's tradition, striking a balance between the light and the serious\*). **The Petrel Flyer**, Jan./Feb. 1997 (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada) (\*Michael Higgs on 'Watson's Military Mannerisms' and tunnels in the Canon — and more\*).

*The Soft-Nosed Bullet-In*, no. 21 and *The Striking (T)rifles* November 1996 (**Von Herder Airguns Ltd**, c/o Stefan Weishaupt, Bruchof 18, 32457 Porta Westfalica, Germany) (\*from this issue, 'The Soft-Nosed Bullet-In' is published biannually, with 64 pages of articles, reports and stories from members of Germany's leading Sherlock Holmes Society, fully illustrated; this issue contains a grand variety of articles and some fascinating illustrations, old and new\*).

*Roger Johnson*