

THE DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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no. 111 24th July 1991

I hope you'll forgive me for taking the cheapskate's way out and using this newsletter to express delighted and overwhelmed thanks to all who've wished well to Jean Upton and me on our engagement. I'm knocked out by the explosion of good feeling we seem to have inspired (can we live up to it, I ask myself?). To all, many thanks!

On a sadder, but not perhaps more sober note, I remember with affection Archie Mitchell, who died last month. Participants in the Great Swiss Pilgrimage of '88 recall what a magnificently, jovially menacing Patrick Cairns he made, complete with ten-foot harpoon + surely one of the more bizarre Holmesian props to be introduced into Switzerland. Archie was a staunch supporter of the DM, and I trust, with his wife Isabel, that he continues to enjoy it, reading over her shoulder with a quiet chuckle now and then.

Fr Francis Hertzberg still deals in *Holmesiana*. No. 27 of "The Unique Steam list" contains a good many desirable rarities at prices that aren't too close to the outrageous (ROOTS, 48 Shalmarsh Road, Higher Bebington, Cheshire L63 2JZ). One more Jack the Ripper study, published late last year, is SICKERT & THE RIPPER CRIMES by Jean Overton Fuller (Mandrake, £14.95). Forthcoming in December is THE WORLD OF SHERLOCK HOLMES, a selection from the canon edited by Nigel Flynn (Multimedia, £7.95).

When it's published in September, I'll be reviewing THE REAL WORLD OF SHERLOCK HOLMES by Peter Costello, a study of Conan Doyle's criminal investigations (Robinson, £14.95). There'll be a special offer by which Society members can, if they wish, buy copies post-free directly from the publishers. Watch this space. Recently (?) published by Kylix Media Inc. (5165 Sherbrooke Street West, Suite 414, Montreal, Quebec H4A 1T6, Canada) is THE BACCHUS CLUB MYSTERY, "a further adventure of Sherlock Holmes" by Wayne Howell which proves what many had suspected: that Holmes was an enlightened oenophile. Price is \$10.95 US, or \$22 US for the hardback (excluding postage).

Mysteriously missing from the last DM was notice of Senlac Theatre's open-air performance at Bateman's, Burwash, East Sussex (a National Trust property) of Kipling's play HARBOUR WATCH and Conan Doyle's WATERLOO (7 pm for 8 pm on the 25th + 27th July). Tickets £4.50 in advance or £5.50 on the night, numbers permitting, from Bateman's (credit card bookings, phone 0892 891001). Thanks to Geoffrey Stavert for this information.

Kevin Jacklin passes on news of two new Holmesian games: SHERLOCK HOLMES & CO., a family boardgame from Germany with simple rules (in German only) and high quality production & artwork (£24.95); and SHERLOCK HOLMES: THE CARD GAME by Roger Heyworth (Gibson's Games, £6.99), with "high-quality Paget-derived illustrations", re-creating a typical Holmes adventure (available from Esdevium Games of Aldershot; phone 0252 311443). Kevin says, "This is definitely one of the best-ever Sherlock Holmes games". Mark Chadderton kindly sent a copy of the BBC Radio Collection cassette catalogue, listing, among many other goodies, the six Holmes sets + three each from the Hobbs/Shelley series and the Merrison/Williams series. Also from Mark is a children's bright plastic pencil case, bearing a Holmesian cartoon and the legend (I like this) "The Case of the Missing Pencil". Mark found it in W.H. Smith, reduced from 99p to 49p. Mark's final news is that "Elementary, Dear Data" from the 2nd series of STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION is now out on video.

Michael Cox, though he's no longer connected with the Granada TV Holmes series, confirms that the 2-hour Christmas special, with Brett & Burke, of course, will be Jeremy Paul's adaptation and expansion of "Charles Augustus Milverton". Michael's own current project is THATCHER: THE FINAL DAYS. No comment!

A few people have wondered about the possibility of some sort of suitable memorial to David Kirby. Christopher Roden tells me that David's wife Paula has approved the idea of a memorial essay competition, "annually inviting people to contribute an essay on any aspect of ACD... depending on the size of the fund, we should be able to arrange for a worthwhile prize each year". The competition would be administered by the Arthur Conan Doyle Society. No one will disagree, I think, that this would be a happy and practical way to perpetuate the memory of David's immense contribution to our particular hobby.

The price given in the last DM for Anthony Hinds' play script THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES (£5.45) seems to be the cost for overseas purchasers; in Britain it's £4.25 plus 37p postage (New Playwrights' Network, 35 Sandringham Road, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK10 1QB). Some readers have queried my statement that Hinds devised the story for THE MASKS OF DEATH, but it's true: he used, as he occasionally still does, his old pseudonym from Hammer's heyday "John Elder".

I recently received samples from the Quality Badge Company, "makers of traditional enamel badges for companies, associations, clubs, historic houses; crests, logo belt buckles, brooches, pins; in base metal, silver and gold" (68 Wesley House, Fairways, Ferndown, Dorset BH22 8RB). What I have before me are 1) a very attractive lapel pin, about 1" by 1/2", in royal blue with the legend "221B" in silver, and 2) a handsome and practical black leather belt whose buckle is about twice the size of the pin and with the digits in gold. Stylish and discreet is my verdict. Individual belts cost £9.50, including postage within the UK; individual lapel pins (sorry, "tacks" is the correct term, I see) are £3 including postage. Both come attractively and sturdily boxed. There would be reductions for quantity + please contact the company for details. (The company's range of products is prodigious, and the letter that came with the items concludes, "We can also offer items manufactured in silver or gold with our lost wax casting process".)

From John E. Stephenson: the 3rd edition of Henry T. Folsom's Holmes chronology THROUGH THE YEARS AT BAKER STREET is now available at \$25 from the author (RR no. 1, Box 1413, Randolph, New Hampshire 03750, USA); all copies signed by Mr Folsom. Peter E. Melonas of the Sherlock Holmes Mystery Book Store (1726A Sycamore Square Mall, Memphis, Tennessee 38134, USA) "offers lots of Sherlockian goodies for sale". Another dealer worth considering is Bibliotective (Box 47347, Oak Park, Michigan 48237, USA).

And from Peter Blau: the spring 1991 issue of THE COMPLETE SMOKER (\$6.25 including postage from Box 7036, Evanston, Illinois 60201, USA) contains a long illustrated article by Alan Smith, "A Three+ Pipe Problem: Pipes, Tobaccos and Sherlock Holmes". "Professor Presbury's Required Reading" is a 12+page list of Sherlockiana, old and new, with much comic+book material, available from Tim O'Connor (R.R.1, Box 138+B, Herscher, Illinois 60941, USA). THE ILLUSTRATED INTERNATIONAL SHERLOCK HOLMES, edited by Tsukasa Kobayashi, Akane Higashiyama & John Bennett Shaw (reviewed in DM 100) is available from William Berner (4712 17th Street, San Francisco, California 94117, USA) at \$32.50. News of the workshop & conference called SHERLOCK HOLMES IS ALIVE AND WELL IN THE HEARTS OF READERS EVERYWHERE! at Santa Fe Community College, Santa Fe, New Mexico (25th + 26th July) comes too late to be of practical use to those who read about it here first, but + Shaw, Cohen, Dinagar & the rest + my thoughts are with you!

At a stall in the Jubilee Market in Covent Garden I recently saw some rather crude and vivid reproductions in various sizes of the (or at least a) Sherlock Holmes pub sign on sale, as well as those absorbent flannel cloths that you find on bars to soak up spilt drinks; these latter each had the name of a well-known pub woven into them + needless to say, "Sherlock Holmes" was one. Visitors to London might be interested. Then again...

Finally, for anyone who didn't know, the rather handsome statue of Sherlock Holmes presented by the Federation of Master Builders in memory of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was unveiled last month in Picardy Place, Edinburgh. Shirley Purves and Pam Brunner were there as official representatives of the Society. It all sounds like yet another good reason for visiting that lovely city...

