

THE DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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Peter B. Spivak and Francine & Wayne Swift have passed on the sad news of two deaths among the stalwarts of the Baker Street Irregulars. Much the more famous was Isaac Asimov, one of the great science-fiction writers, who was also a commentator on the Bible and on Shakespeare, a communicator of science and history, a quick-witted deviser of scurrilous limericks, a writer of pure detective fiction, and a Sherlockian of note. W.T. (Bill) Rabe may be best-known for WE ALWAYS MENTION AUNT CLARA, his extraordinary investigation into the origins of the BSI's anthem, but he also contributed many articles to Holmesian publications, and was a genial leading member of The Old Soldiers of Baker Street of the Two Saults.

Sherlock Publications (6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hampshire PO14 3RU) has issued a new edition of Philip Weller's admirable THE DARTMOOR OF 'THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES', in which the author has taken the opportunity to correct a few errors of earlier scholars that had found their way into the first edition, and to include a select bibliography. This handsome little book will be invaluable for those attending our Society's Dartmoor weekend in June, and indeed for anyone interested in tracing the locations of THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES. Prices; UK (1st class post) £5.50; Europe (air mail) £6.00/\$12; rest of world (air mail) £6.50/\$13. Sterling payments by UK banker's cheque, Girobank cheque or Eurocheque, payable to Sherlock Publications. Dollar payments in US dollar bills (no cheques). Orders to The Stock-Broker's Clerk at the Hill Head address.

Stanley MacKenzie points out that J.M. Dent has published this month THE BEST OF SHERLOCK HOLMES by Arthur Conan Doyle (£4.99), a volume in the Everyman's Library,, containing the text of THE ADVENTURES and THE HOUND and having a colour reproduction of the famous "Spy" cartoon on the cover. Also published this month was GREAT TALES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES, an abridged text for English language students (Macmillan Educational, £2.50). In February, Gleniffer Miniature Books issued a limited edition of 200 copies of THE THREE STUDENTS, at £15 the copy.

SHERLOCK AND WATSON by Carin Rafferty (Mills & Boon, £1.65), published last week, is a light romance, with nothing Holmesian about it except the title. On the other hand, the acting edition of SHERLOCK HOLMES: THE MUSICAL by Leslie Bricusse (Samuel French, £5.25), published in February, at least has a firm basis in the Canon. Mark Chadderton tells me that Marshall Cavendish (58 Old Compton Street, London W1V 5PA) is currently reissuing the nice part-work series "The Great Writers"; each fortnight offers a package of an attractive hardbound book plus a magazine giving information about the book and its author. Issue no. 15 will be THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES. Mark also points out that THE PENGUIN JOHN LENNON is still in print at £4.99; it includes Lennon's Holmesian parody "The. Singularge Experience of Miss Anne Duffield".

Two notable British scholars have collaborated on THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES by Philip Weller and Christopher Roden, which is due from Studio Editions on the 25th May at £12.95. The 3rd Musgrave Monograph will be "READY WHEN YOU ARE, MR RATHBONE", a review of the Universal Holmes films by Roger Johnson, published in August by the Northern Musgraves. This will be a limited edition of 200 copies; if you're interested, please contact David Stuart Davies (Overdale, 69 Greenhead Road, Huddersfield HD1 4ER).

Charles Hall (12 Paisley Terrace, Edinburgh EH8 7JW) has produced an ideal paperweight for the Holmesian: on a shallow wooden base is a low-relief bust (side view) of Holmes, with deerstalker and pipe; turn it round and you have the snarling head of the Hound superimposed on Holmes' profile. The casting is in white metal, to Charles' usual high standards. Cost is £6.50 (post-free within the UK). Charles has much else of interest to offer. Do write and enquire - and

don't forget to enclose postage for the reply.

The Quality Badge Company (QBC & Superior Logo Mfg Co., 68 Wesley House, Fairways, Ferndown, Dorset BH22 8BB; phone 0202 873163), who make handsome "221B" lapel tacks and belt-buckles (see DM 111), have produced a hand-enamelled and chromium-plated bronze car badge, approximately 4"x 3", in "the form of a shield bearing a deerstalker and magnifying glass, with the motto "Veritas Per Investigatio" ("Truth Through Discovery"). The cost is £21.50 (overseas add £2 for postage). Or for £9.50 you can have a Sherlock Holmes plaque, 2" diameter, with a silhouette of Holmes and an inscription; it comes in a presentation box.

Robert Harrop Designs (Coalport House, Lamledge Lane, Shifnal, Shropshire TF11 8SD) makes an attractive series of 6" high figurines called "Country Companions", different breeds of dog, appropriately costumed. The Bloodhound (CC26) is dressed in deerstalker and Inverness, with pipe and cane, while the Beagle (CC27) wears bowler, black overcoat and white muffler, with medical bag and cane. Retail price of each figure is in the region of £20. (These two are also available as a "Country Couple" on a single base, under the title "Elementary!" - CC07.) A good deal cheaper are a couple of 2" high figurines that we bought at a souvenir shop in Cheddar Gorge: a fox in deerstalker and Inverness (and carrying a shotgun!) and an owl in topper and black overcoat, carrying a medical bag. These cost 99p each! (We think they're from a series called "Woodland Friends".) Also at 99p from the same shop was a low-relief plaster owl, about 3" high, with a magnet inserted in his back for attachment to the fridge door; he wears deerstalker and Inverness, and carries a magnifying glass.

Recently established just north of Baker Street Station is the Sherlock Holmes Memorabilia Company (230 Baker Street, London NW1 5RT; phone 071-486 1426), offering "books, clothes, pipes and much more. Ideal gifts or keepsakes." The Black Cat Bookshop (37/39 Silver Arcade, Leicester LE1 5FB) offers a list of Conan Doyle titles available; send two 1st class stamps (UK) or two International Reply Coupons (overseas).

Despite the confident announcement in DM 118 that BBC TV had bought SHERLOCK HOLMES & THE LEADING LADY and SHERLOCK HOLMES & THE INCIDENT AT VICTORIA FALLS, both with Christopher Lee and Patrick Macnee, I'm now assured that the Corporation has changed its corporate mind. However, Philip Weller passes on the good news that the films will shortly be released to video hire outlets, though it'll be some time before they're available on sell-through.

Should you find yourself in Bradford, you may like to know of Sooty's World, which offers "the history of Sooty, Harry and Matthew Corbett in photos and film", etc., etc. The feature of importance to us is the sign outside, like a pub-sign, which shows the little bear wearing a deerstalker and brandishing a magnifying glass! (Sooty's World, Windhill Manor SC1, Leeds Road, Shipley, Bradford BD18 1BP - closed on Fridays.)

Tony Medawar has passed on three of the four parts of a Holmesian pastiche in comic-strip form, "The Adventure of the Missing Manuscripts", that appeared in THE YOUNG TELEGRAPH in late February or early March. If you can help us out with part 3, we'd be grateful! The spring 1992 issue of THE ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE (129 West 56th Street, New York, NY 10019, USA; available from Murder One and other specialist shops) contains an account by B.J. Rahn of the Society's 1991 Swiss Pilgrimage - she makes it seem almost as much fun as it actually was. There are also some pointed reviews of the film, THE CRUCIFER OF BLOOD.

David Stuart Davies reminds me that there's, not much time left to book for the Northern Musgraves' summer outing, "An American Ritual", to be held on Saturday the 4th July. For £12 you'll get lunch, a number of papers on American elements in the Canon, and a visit to Baddesley Clinton (Granada's Hurlstone in "The Musgrave Ritual". Book with Anne Jordan now (Fairbank, Beck Lane, Bingley, West Yorkshire BD16 4DN). The Musgraves commissioned Ron Weighell to write a, Holmesian ghost story; the result is a splendid 20 page booklet called SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE SHADOW OF THE WOLF, illustrated by Colin Langeveld. It's available for £3, post paid, from Mark Valentine (Flat 3, Castlegate House, 10-12 Castlegate, Clitheroe, Lancashire BB7 1AZ).

