

THE DISTRICT MESSENGER

The Newsletter of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London

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Sherlockian Bookplates by W.E. Butler (Silent Books, £8.95) is a beautifully presented introduction to an aspect of our field that most of us have given little thought to. The author discusses what is and what isn't a bookplate, describes a number of Sherlockian examples, and gives a brief account of the mystery of "Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's bookplate". Then there are the illustrations, taken from the plates of Stanley MacKenzie, John Bennett Shaw, Tom Stix, Vincent Starrett and a host of others (surprise - not all Sherlockian bookplates were made for Sherlockians; Dr Remo Palmirani's in particular are very artistic, and in a couple of cases downright kinky). The book was to have been David Kirby's first venture as a publisher; as it is there's a grateful dedication to him.

Talking of handsome books, The Tri-metallic Question is being reprinted. Copies can be ordered from Peter Horrocks at 22 Old Buildings, Lincoln's Inn, London WC2A 3UJ at £15 + postage or \$33 including surface mail overseas, while Hound and Horse can be had from Shirley Purves at Heronsbrook, Doddiscombsleigh, Exeter EX6 7RE for £12.50 + postage or \$30 including surface mail overseas. Please make cheques payable to the Sherlock Holmes Society of London.

The church where Arthur Conan Doyle and Louise Hawkins were married is selling copies of the marriage certificate; they may be had at £2.50 from R.F. Taylor, 2 Greta Heath, Burton-in-Lonsdale, via Carnforth, Lancashire LA6 3LH. Less personally associated items are sold by the Sherlock Holmes Memorabilia Company (230 Baker Street, London NW1 5RT), which is just over the road from the Sherlock Holmes Museum - don't let that put you off, though, because there's no connection between the two and the shop has lots of nice tchatchkes.

Granada's The Master Blackmailer was due for video release recently by Castlelevision, while W.H. Smith has an exclusive boxed set from the Granada series featuring Houn, Blue, Sign, Croo, Copp, Soli, and Fina. CBS/Fox has released 3 more of the Rathbone/Bruce films from the Universal series: Sherlock Holmes Faces Death, The Spider Woman and Sherlock Holmes in Washington.

From video to audio. Music For Pleasure on the 1st September will re-issue another of the splendid Argo recordings by Robert Hardy: The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes as well as MFP's own fine abridged readings of A Study in Scarlet and The Sign of Four (by Tony Britton) and The Hound of the Baskervilles (by Hugh Burden) - plus a brand new recording of The Valley of Fear by Martin Jarvis. (Already re-released on Argo are Hardy's double-cassettes Four Sherlock Holmes Stories, More Sherlock Holmes Stories and The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes.)

Accent Educational Publishers have put out in their Easy Reader series The Speckled Band (£2.95), The Hound of the Baskervilles (£3.25), Black Peter

and The Red-Headed League (£3.25), and The Red Circle (£2.95). Macmillan Educational has issued Greatest Tales of Sherlock Holmes edited by Kerry Edwardes (£2.50), and Wordsworth Classics has published Sherlock Holmes: Selected Stories edited by Marcus Clapham and Clive Reynard (£1.00). Due in October are three books of interest: M.J. Trow's Lestrade and the Sign of Nine, (Constable, £13.99), The Television Detectives' Omnibus (Orion, £8.99), and Detective Stories From The Strand edited by Jack Adrian (Oxford University Press paperback, £6.99).

Out next month from Jasper Publishing is a play by Jim Sperinck: Holmes, Sweet Holmes - a Comedy (£2.40). Tony Layton tells me that Asda has on sale at £1.50 The Hound of the Baskervilles in the Classic Comics series. I need hardly mention that Maeve Binchy's forthcoming Copper Beech has no Holmesian connection. Sherlock Holmes and the Shadow of the Wolf by Ron Weighell definitely has, though; it's available at £3 including postage from Mark Valentine (Flat 3, 10/12 Castlegate, Clitheroe, Lancashire BB7 1AZ).

The Summer issue of The Sherlock Holmes Journal will be with us shortly (honest); meanwhile you might like to try The Serpentine Muse vol. 10, no. 4 (Evelyn Herzog, 360 West 21st Street, # 5A, New York, NY 10011, USA), and The Sherlock Holmes Gazette issue no. 5 (Theme Publications, 43 Bowleaze Coveaway, Weymouth, Dorset DT3 6PL). Theme Publications are on the point of issuing their first book, an admirable pastiche by David Stuart Davies (I read it in manuscript) called The Tangled Skein, which will be available initially only in a de-luxe limited edition at £25.00. Write for details.

A new name to me is The Sherlock Holmes Merchandise Co., presented by Prymus International Ltd, Fox House, 10 Eton Avenue, Sudbury, Wembley, Middlesex HAD 3AX (phone 081-903 8691). Sounds interesting,

Last month our member B.J. Rahn presented at Mecklenburgh Square an "audience participation whodunit" called Goodbye, Mr Holmes, written, produced and directed by B.J. herself for the London Goodenough Trust. All present enjoyed themselves, and B.J. says, "Now that I know it works I'll be looking for other venues where it can be presented." If you're interested, drop a line to Prof. B.J. Rahn, 20 Byron Court, 26 Mecklenburgh Square, London WC1.

The actress and singer Georgia Brown died recently. Of course, she'll be remembered especially as the definitive Nancy in Oliver!, but she made a mark in two Holmesian films, A Study in Terror and The Seven-per-Cent Solution.

From Peter Blau. A new and expanded edition of the splendidly illustrated Granada Companion; A Sherlock Holmes Album is due out in the autumn. The third Sherlock Holmes Review Symposium will be held over the weekend of the 21st/22nd November at the Omni Severn Hotel in Indianapolis; for details contact Steven T. Doyle (Box 583, Zionsville, Indiana 46077, USA).

