

# THE DISTRICT MESSENGER

## The Newsletter of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London

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Members unable to attend last Friday's AGM will like to know that two of our senior ladies have received signal honours. Patsy Dalton has been awarded Honorary Membership of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London, and Shirley Purves has been invested into the Baker Street Irregulars as **The Dog In The Night-Time**. I think I'm right in saying that there are now ten living British BSI's (Dame Jean Conan Doyle, Charles Merriman, Colin Prestige, Stanley MacKenzie, Richard Lancelyn Green, Nick Utechin, Bill Michell, Bernard Davies, Roger Johnson and Shirley Purves), and that Charles and Shirley are the first brother and sister both to be invested.

That superb, versatile, and thoroughly reliable actor Denholm Elliott died recently. One of his lesser roles was as Dr Mortimer to Ian Richardson's Holmes in **The Hound of the Baskervilles**, in which he turned in a delightful performance.

Spotted in the 22nd September issue of **The Lady** was a "sits vac" ad: the Sherlock Holmes Museum needs a Mrs Hudson, a Sherlock Holmes - and "an experienced person to look after two horses"! If you're interested, consult the magazine; don't ask me.

The facsimile edition of the manuscript of "The Lion's Mane" will be launched on Tuesday the 20th October. This book is being jointly published by the City of Westminster and our Society, and will have an introduction by Colin Dexter and a scholarly preface by Richard Lancelyn Green. There'll be two editions: the standard will cost £25, strongly and handsomely hard-bound, while the de-luxe, at £100, will be a strictly limited run, each copy signed by Colin, Richard, and by Dame Jean Conan Doyle. Copies can be ordered from Catherine Cooke, Library Systems Manager, Technical Services, Marylebone Library, Marylebone Road, London NW1 5PF. Postage will be charged.

Currently running at the Watermill Theatre at Bagnor, Newbury, Berkshire is a production of Paul Giovanni's full-blooded melodrama **The Crucifer of Blood**. Details from the box office (phone 0635 46044). The run ends on Saturday the 7th November.

David Stuart Davies' s **The Tangled Skein** is out at last, and it was worth the wait; it's a very handsome production indeed from Theme Publications, bound in red, stamped in gold, with marbled end-papers, and beautifully illustrated by Peter Charles Rees and Kathryn White. Those who enjoyed **Sherlock Holmes and the Hentzau Affair** will need no encouragement to read David's new Sherlock Holmes story.

Published last month by Ravette at £3.99 was **Red Death**, a Sherlock Holmes comic album edited by Andre-Paul Duchateau. In May, Wordsworth

Classics published **Sherlock Holmes: Selected Stories** by Arthur Conan Doyle, at £1.00. On the subject of books (though she offers many other items of memorabilia), Sylvian Hamilton's catalogue **SH 26** is out; write to Sylvian at Hermitage, Mount Pleasant, Duns, Berwickshire TD11 SHU, Scotland.

The AGM of the Poor Folk Upon The Moors will be held on Saturday the 31st October at the Dartmouth Inn, Warland, Totnes, Devon, starting at 11.45. Following the official business, Stephen Farrell will deliver "a treatise upon Sherlockian firearms". For information about the Poor Folk, write to Clare Taylor at Tor Farm, Advent, Camelford, North Cornwall PL32 9QN. The Northern Musgraves once again have a delightful Christmas card available, featuring a drawing by Peter Charles Rees (illustrator of **The Tangled Skein**), showing Holmes & Watson greeting carol-singers at the door of 221B. A packet of 5 costs: UK £3.50; rest of Europe £4.50; USA (airmail) \$12.00 cash or sterling equivalent. All prices include postage. Orders to David Stuart Davies (Overdale, 69 Greenhead Road, Huddersfield HD1 4ER); cheques should be payable to The Northern Musgraves. The Musgraves plan a second major weekend event, **Aspects of Holmes II**, from the 11th to the 13th June 1993 at the Royal Hotel in York. The cost is £168 per person; if you'd like to attend, send a deposit of £25 to David no later than the 10th November.

The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia will hold what promises to be a fascinating meeting on Tuesday the 3rd November at St James's Church, 303 East Cordova Street in Vancouver. This special event will centre on **Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Spiritualism - and the Occult**. For information about the Stormy Petrels, contact the President, Fran Martin, at 10662 129 Street, Surrey, BC V3T 3H4, Canada (phone 604 581-5926). (Thanks to Michael Doyle.) The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes are holding their Autumn Dinner (or "The Feast of All Saints and Sinners") on Friday the 23rd October. For information about ASH, contact the Principal Unprincipled Adventuress, Ms E.A. Herzog, at 360 West 21st Street, New York, NY 10011, USA.

Those who, like me, have an interest in radio, television, and other dramatic interpretations of Holmes & Watson will be interested to learn of a society dedicated this field: Listeners of the Modern Mazarin Gramophone. The founder is Lawrence P. Nepodahl (1230 Vienna Boulevard, De Kalb, Illinois 60115, USA), and I'm sure he'll be pleased to hear from fellow-enthusiasts. Ray de Groat of the Sounds of the Baskervilles of Seattle (organisers of the notorious Annual International Sherlockian Games, which no doubt were as surrealistic this year as before) is also "David Benjamin" of the Praed Street Irregulars. The PSI have been rather in abeyance since the death of Luther Norris, despite attempts by various very busy people to get things moving again. Ray may succeed. As a first move, he's trying to compile a list of all invested PSI's. Does anyone know of any, particularly in Britain or Europe? If you can tell us their canonical investitures too (the Solar Pons canon, of course), that would be greatly appreciated. Drop a line to me if you can help, and I'll pass the information on to Ray.

On a frivolous tack, Lynne Godden recently introduced us to a very pleasant range of snacks which go out under the name of **Baker's Street** and are widely available in supermarkets. Less frivolously, Stanley MacKenzie has apprised me of a Mr Harold Crystal (56 Lumbertubs Lane,

Boothville, Northampton NN3 1AH; phone 0604 644110), whose firm Crystal Antiques has for sale a silver-mounted pipe, made by Barnard Bros in 1890/91, offered in its original case, both in exceptional condition, at £150. Mr Crystal says of the pipe, rather mysteriously, "We believe it to be a 'Sherlock Holmes' type." Make of that what you can.

A while back, I noted that Disney's delightful cartoon feature **Basil the Great Mouse Detective** was to be re-released to cinemas this autumn. Well, I was wrong, but the truth is even more welcome: the film's been issued on sell-through video at £13.99 and is now available in the shops. (Various sharp-eyed people spotted this; thanks to all.) According to a new magazine, **Video Re-View** two more films of interest have recently been issued on video, both from a company called Storm; these are **Terror By Night** and **Dressed to Kill**, both with Rathbone & Bruce. No prices are given. Bert Coules can supply VHS copies (PAL format) of the 1981 US TV production of Gillette's play **Sherlock Holmes**, recorded in a live performance at the Williamstown Theatre in Massachusetts and featuring Frank Langella as Holmes with, among others, Christian Slater as Billy. Running time's about 2 hours. £12 the copy, including postage, from Bert at Fairway, Sandling Road, Saltwood, Hythe, Kent CT21 4QJ.

The new issues and re-issues of audio tapes from EMI are of uniformly first-rate technical quality. The abridgements on the Listen For Pleasure cassettes are sensitively done, and the readings are excellent all round, though I have to say that I can't quite accept the late Hugh Burden's voice as that of John H. Watson. No problems with the others, however. The tapes, in the shops now, are (on LFP) abridged texts of: **A Study In Scarlet** (LFP7613) and **The Sign of Four** (LFP7610), both read by Tony Britton, **The Hound of the Baskervilles** (LFP7607) read by Hugh Burden, and **The Valley of Fear** (LFP7616) read by Martin Jarvis; and (on Argo) complete texts of **Four Sherlock Holmes Stories** (Argo1004) (3STU, SUSS, GREE, CHAS), **More Sherlock Holmes Stories** (Argo1202) (DYIN, SHOS, MUSG, CROO), **The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes** (Argo1337) (YELL, STOC, GLOR, FINA), and **The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes** (Argo1286) (3GAB, 3GAR, LION, RETI), all read by Robert Hardy. CSA Telltapes (a name new to me) have issued **Classic Detective Stories** (TTDMC412) read by Edward Hardwicke, and including "The Dying Detective" along with tales by G.K. Chesterton, Edgar Wallace and Sapper.

The Sherlock Holmes Merchandise Co. Ltd (Fox House, 10 Eton Avenue, Sudbury, Wembley, Middlesex HA0 3AX; phone 081-903 8691) is a wholesaler/distributor with a very wide range of goods, some specially commissioned. Clubs and societies may well be interested in purchasing items in quantity for their members (we're talking just about everything from thimbles to music boxes, taking in deerstalkers and toothfairy boxes on the way).

Magazines of interest recently received include **The Baker Street Pillar Box** 12 (The Franco-Midland Hardware Company, The Stockbroker's Clerk, 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hampshire PO14 3RU); **The Musgrave Papers** 5 - a special Basil Rathbone Centenary issue (The Northern Musgraves, David Stuart Davies, Overdale, 69 Greenhead Road, Huddersfield HD1 4ER) (\*my copy's probably unique: it was bound back-to-front!); **CADS** 19 (that's Crime And Detective Stories, from Geoff Bradley, 9 Vicarage Hill, South Benfleet, Essex SS7 1PA); **The School Report** 9 (The

Priory Scholars, Ken Savery, 12 Links Road, Kibworth, Leicestershire LE8 OLD); **The Baker Street Journal** vol. 42, no. 3 (The Baker Street Irregulars, Thomas L. Stix Jr, 34 Pierson Avenue, Norwood, NJ 07648, USA); **The Parallelogram** vol. 1, no. 6 (The Parallel Case of St Louis, Joseph J. Eckrich, 7793 Keswick Place, St Louis, MO 63119, USA); **The Baker Street Dispatch** vol. 2, no. 5 (Thomas Biblewski, PO Box 5503, Toledo, OH 43613, USA); **The Soft-Nosed Bullet-In** 10 (Von Herder Airguns Ltd, Corinna Koch, Hamburger Allee 66, D-3000 Hannover 1, Germany).

Special mention should go to **The Nezire Zanmai International** 2 (The Men With the Twisted Ronjo, Hirayama Yuichi, DDS, 2-10-12 Kamirenjaku, Mitaka-shi, Tokyo, 181 Japan). The title translates, Yuichi tells us, as "The Twisted Magazine", but that hardly reflects the content and presentation, both of which are fascinating. This provides the only access most of us will have to the works of eminent Japanese Holmesians in English; there are articles by the Kobayashis, Dr Tanaka and Yuichi himself, among others from Japan, along with contributions from scholars in the USA, Australia and the UK. The cover design by Iwamoto Tsutomu is a gorgeous adaptation of Steele's famous **Collier's** cover illustrating "The Priory School", but this time with a strikingly Japanese Holmes! The issue is strictly limited to 300 numbered copies, and the cost, including airmail postage, is: US\$10.00 (USA), £6 (UK) or A\$11.00 (Australia) - or 8 International Reply Coupons. Please pay cash, postal order (payable to Hirayama Yuichi) or IRC's - no cheques or credit cards.

From John E. Stephenson. Richard D. Lesh found and, in June, re-published one of the rarest of early Holmes parodies, **The Weirdly Thrilling Adventure of the Lost Bathing Suit**, in a handsome hardbound edition limited to 50 copies at \$25.00 the copy. There may be one or two left. (Richard D. Lesh, 1205 Lory Street, Fort Collins, CO 80524, USA). Donald Girard Jewell's 3rd volume in the Sherlock Holmes Natural History series is now out; this is **Canonical Cats: a Monograph on Felines in the Time of Sherlock Holmes**. Copies are \$7.95 + postage from Pinchin Lane Press, 4685 Geeting Road, Westminster, MD 21158, USA.

From Peter Blau's **Scuttlebutt**. Due this month from Carroll & Graf at \$19.95 is **The Whitechapel Horrors** by Edward B. Hanna, "with Holmes & Watson again in pursuit of Jack the Ripper". Peter also reminds us that Stephen Fry's new collected volume of his humorous pieces, **Paperweight** (Heinemann, £14.99), includes his strange pastiche "The Adventure of the Laughing Jarvey", as well as a review of Martin Gardner's **The Annotated Innocence of Father Brown**, "in which Fry notes that as a schoolboy he was the youngest member of The Sherlock Holmes Society of London"!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. J. L.' or similar, written in a cursive style.