

THE DISTRICT MESSENGER

The Newsletter of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London

Roger Johnson, Mole End, 41 Sandford Road, Chelmsford CM2 6DE

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The (London) **Evening Standard** of 29th October had an article "Is This the Real Sherlock Holmes?" by Bill West, who identifies Edwin Holmes and his assistant Thomas Watson, pioneers of the electrical security system in the 19th century. I can provide photocopies if you're interested.

The BBC Radio 4 series **The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes**, with Clive Merrison and Michael Williams, concluded a couple of weeks ago with a full-blooded "Final Problem", written by Bert Coules. Tape cassettes of the plays were already in the shops, and very good they are too. Vols 1 & 2 each contain four stories, while vol. 3 has three ("The Final Problem" occupies a whole cassette, being split neatly in the middle). Bert tells me that the recording of **The Return** is well under way. Guest stars include Denis Quilley as Bob Carruthers, Peter Sallis as Jonas Oldacre, Peter Vaughan as Milverton and David March as Lord Bellinger; Michael Pennington and Frederick Treves will be heard again as Moriarty & Moran in "The Empty House".

Charles Hall (12 Paisley Terrace, Edinburgh EH8 7JW; phone 031-661 2822) has a new list of **Sherlock Holmes Mementos & Related Items**, featuring the various aspects of his own artistic versatility: caricature postcards, in colour and black & white, earthenware busts and mugs, metal figures, and the few remaining copies of his book **The Sherlock Holmes Collection** - all very collectable stuff. The latest additions to Charles' range are three low-relief metal sculptures: a double-sided profile of Holmes about 1½" high (£2.60), and full-figure caricatures of Dr Watson and Mrs Hudson about 2" high (each £2.70); the pieces each come mounted on a shallow wooden plinth. More details in Charles' list, which is free from him on receipt of a stamped, self-addressed envelope or an International Reply Coupon.

New, recent and forthcoming books. Paul Lester has apparently expanded his brochure **Sherlock Holmes in Birmingham** of a few years ago into **Sherlock Holmes in the Midlands**, published in late September by Brewin Books at £9.95. Michael Cox (no, the other Michael Cox) has edited **Victorian Tales of Mystery and Detection** (Oxford University Press, £17.95), while for the same publishers John Mortimer has edited **The Oxford Book of Villains** (£16.95); each contains a Sherlock Holmes story. Kim Newman's novel **Anno Dracula** (Simon & Schuster, £14.99) assumes that Count Dracula was victorious, and indeed Victoria's, marrying into the British Royal family; there's a good deal of reference to literary worlds of the late 19th century, including that of Sherlock Holmes.

Yet another "definitive" investigation into the Whitechapel murders is **Murder & Madness: The Secret Life of Jack the Ripper** by Dr David Abrahamsen (publisher unknown, £14.95): "... 'the Ripper' was two men, one of whom was a member of the Royal family in direct line to the throne...". (Need I say more?) Oxford University Press plans to re-

publish the entire Holmes canon, with editorial expertise from Owen Dudley Edwards, Professor Wallace Robson, Richard Lancelyn Green and Christopher Roden; all of them will contribute to the Arthur Conan Doyle Society's **Edinburgh '93** weekend from the 19th to the 21st March next year. For information about the trip, and about the ACD Society generally, drop a line to Christopher at Ashcroft, 2 Abbottsford Drive, Penyffordd, Chester CH4 0JG.

Barbara Alder (or, rather, Barbara Roden as of last weekend - felicitations to her and Christopher) tells me of Mark Alberstat's 1993 **Sherlockian Calendar**, featuring a Paget illustration for each month and using Baring-Gould's chronology (£6.00 the copy from Mark at 6258 Payzant Avenue, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3H 2B1, Canada); the 1992 calendar is a very nice piece of work. Gravesend Books (Box 235, Pocono Pines, PA 18350, USA) have issued a mouth-watering supplement to their catalogue no. 29, covering Holmes and Doyle material.

The Reichenbach Irregulars have produced a handsome Sherlock Holmes book-end, hand-made in Germany from beech-wood, varnished, non-slip, with an exclusive Holmes medallion set into each side. Height 20 cm, length 20 cm, depth 11.5 cm. This is a limited edition of 221 copies, available at 60 Deutschmarks each + DM8 postage in Europe or DM10 overseas (surface mail). Send cash with order to Klaus Worner, Törkelgasse 9, D-6990 Bad Mergentheim, Germany - no cheques, please. For information about the Irregulars, write to them at Postfach 678, CH-3860 Meiringen, Switzerland.

Another keen young Holmesian scholar in Switzerland is Manuel Kiefer, who will be remembered by participants in the 1988 Great Swiss Pilgrimage. Manuel is having great difficulty in getting hold of VHS video recordings (European format) of the Rathbone/Bruce Sherlock Holmes films. If you can help, please write to Manuel at Brunngasse 60, CH-4153 Reinach BL, Switzerland (or drop me a line). Repeat of an earlier request: can anyone provide photocopies of numbers 13, 14 & 15 in Lord Donegall's series **Baker Street and Beyond** for Joseph J. Eckrich (7793 Keswick Place, St Louis, MO 63119, USA)?

From Peter Blau: The Cardboard Boxers of Croydon, The Cardboard Boxers of Susanville, and the The Crew of the S.S. Mayday of Belfast plan to meet simultaneously (with a telephone link for appropriate toasts) on the 23rd January to celebrate the centenary of the first publication of "The Cardboard Box". For information about the societies contact Andrew A.P. Butler (64 Firth Road, Croydon CR0 1TA), or William Ballew (Box 1954, Susanville, CA 96130, USA), or R.O.C. Ross (19 Ardcarne Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). Fans of **Star Trek: the Next Generation** will be pleased to know that Dame Jean Conan Doyle has authorised Paramount to resurrect Professor Moriarty from the Holodeck's computer for a story tentatively called "Ship in a Bottle".

