

THE DISTRICT MESSENGER

The Newsletter of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London

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

no. 127 5th January 1993

A Happy New Year to all, and thanks from Jean and me for your Christmas cards. If we had the space, I'd follow Nick Utechin's example and describe in detail the ingenuity you displayed.

Please, if you have our address on some sort of computer file, may I ask you to check to make sure that it's up to date? We've been at Mole End nearly seven months, and we're still getting a lot of mail re-directed from Rainsford Road! Thanks.

Derek Hinrich sends news that Paul Giovanni's splendid melodrama **The Crucifer of Blood** will be mounted at the Wimbledon Theatre from Tuesday the 16th to Saturday 20th March. Holmes & Watson will be played by Mark (**Trainer**) Greenstreet and Michael (**Eastenders**) Cashman, while Susan Penhaligon (who really is famous) will play Irene St Claire.

Donald Silk tells me that **Ars Quatuor Coronatorum** (not a title I'm familiar with, but I take it to be a Masonic publication), edited by Frederick Smyth (40 The Drive, Amersham, Bucks. HP7 9AD), contains an article called "Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Sherlock Holmes & Freemasonry" by Robert Runciman.

Simplifying and rewriting the canon for young readers has been done before, but rarely with such style and affection as by Murray Shaw in his **Match Wits With Sherlock Holmes** series, now up to (I think) its 8th volume. The clues in each case are presented with a scrupulous fairness sometimes missing in the original, and the young readers really are given the chance to pit their abilities against those of Holmes. The books (excellently illustrated, by the way) are published by Carolrhoda Inc. of 241 First Avenue North, Minneapolis, MN 55401, USA; they are available in this country from Murder One and probably from other specialist dealers.

News from Catherine Cooke of the latest "publication" from the Sherlock Holmes Collection at Marylebone Library: **The Baskerville Mug**, whose pictorial design is the same as on the tea-towel: light blue, with the hound itself in dark blue, and mist and lettering in white; the moon is red, but turns white when you pour hot liquid in, fading to red again as the drink cools. The mugs aren't generally available by mail order, but are on sale at about £5 each at Marylebone, Charing Cross and Victoria Libraries. It may be possible to make special arrangements for bulk purchase; similarly Catherine can within reason deliver mugs to be collected at Society meetings, but if you have a special requirement, please ring Catherine first on 071-798 1206.

Just next door to the Sherlock Holmes Memorabilia Company, at 232 Baker Street, is a nice wine merchant's called IDA Wines Ltd, who keep a vin ordinaire that goes by the name of **221Bin**, has a label bearing the familiar silhouette, and costs £3.68 the bottle. The red is very

palatable; I can't speak for the white, but have no reason to doubt that it's any less good. The shop also sells attractive wine glasses, decorated with the Holmes silhouette and the **221Bin** name, at £1.75 each. A couple of bottles and a pair of glasses would make an inexpensive and thoughtful present. The Memorabilia Company, at 230 Baker Street, continues to add to its stock of Holmes-related items; I particularly like the pocket cup and the card case, the sort of Victorian nick-nack that's not easy to come by anyway.

Mark Chadderton reminds me that issue #56 of **Viz**, the "adult" comic, contained a one-page strip called "Sherlock Homo". I thought it was quite funny; Mark didn't. He also tells me of a punk r 'n' b outfit called Thee Headcoats, who have released two 7" singles of marginal interest. **Headcoat Lane** (Damgood 7) has no mention of Holmes, but the sleeve has a photo of Peter Cushing in the Hammer **Hound** and a Dorr Steele illustration (Damaged Goods Records, PO Box 671, London E17 6NF); the sleeve of **My Dear Watson** (ES 726) has a nice cartoon of Holmes & Watson in bed, Holmes smoking and Watson reading **Gray's Anatomy** (Estrus Records, PO Box 2125, Bellingham, WA 98227-2125, USA).

Recently received periodical: **The Irregular News** no. 10 (Bob Gellerstedt, 1035 Wedgewood Drive, Fayetteville, GA 30214, USA). Also recently received: news of a society specialising, as far as I can see, in codes, ciphers and philology - but mostly in Sherlock Holmes - this is The Phoenician Tin Traders, Gentlemen's International Corresponding Club (John D. Whitehouse, 10825 Hitchcock Avenue, El Paso, TX 79935-1419, USA). The club is looking for correspondents, particularly in Eastern Europe, Russia and China.

Joseph J. Eckrich, who is obliged to sell his extensive Holmesian collection, has so far issued two lists; there will be more. If there is something particular that you want, you may well find it here. The lists may be had for the cost of postage from Joe at 7793 Keswick Place, St Louis, MO 63119, USA (phone 314 961 0474).

From Peter E. Blau. The latest acquisition at the Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library's Arthur Conan Doyle Collection is the manuscript of ACD's unpublished play **Angels of Darkness**, an adaptation of the American portion of **A Study in Scarlet** that features Watson without Holmes. International Churchill Societies (ICS Stores, 9807 Willowbrook Circle, Louisville, KY 40223, USA) has or have published **The Boer Conspiracy: a tale of Winston Churchill and Sherlock Holmes** by John C. Woods at \$15.00, post-paid. The Simon & Schuster audio-cassette series **The New Adventures of Sherlock Holmes**, with Rathbone & Bruce, has now reached no. 18, featuring "The Speckled Band" & "The Purloined Ruby". **Dragons on the Town** by Thorinn Gunnarsson (Ace Books, \$4.99) seems quite a whacky science fantasy that features Sherlock Holmes among various other phenomena.

David Stuart Davies tells me that Theme Publications, who put out **The Sherlock Holmes Gazette**, have found a buyer. Elizabeth Wiggins will remain as editor, and the next issue will appear in February/March. David will be a regular contributor.

