

# THE DISTRICT MESSENGER

The Newsletter of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London

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

no. 132 24th June 1993

Charles Hall (12 Paisley Terrace, Edinburgh EH8 7JW, Scotland) asks me to pass on the news that his handsome Edinburgh medal is no longer available. Look out next year for a re-designed medal!

Available only from the publishers, Turnstone Press (Albany House, 11 George Street West, Luton LU1 2BJ) at £12.95 plus £1 postage is **Mysteries Suspended**, a new collection of ten pastiches by Richard Stone. The stories are ingeniously plotted, and Mr Stone seems to know the period well enough, but he doesn't really capture the Watsonian style; in fact a proof-reader could profitably have been employed. Here's Holmes telling Watson about Mrs Hudson's new servant boy: "... I deduced that he had been riding his old bicycle in the park that morning. 'How could you possibly know that Mr Holmes?' he cried. Quite simple, says I - observation!" (That Mr Holmes as distinct from this Mr Holmes, presumably.) The clever plots deserve more care in the writing, but it's a handsomely produced hardback, and I recommend it to those who, like me, take an interest in Holmesian apocrypha.

Due in November is **The Oxford Sherlock Holmes**, the nine volumes of the Canon, published by the Oxford University Press. A **Study In Scarlet**, **The Valley Of Fear** and **His Last Bow** are edited by Owen Dudley Edwards; **The Sign Of The Four** and **The Memoirs** by Christopher Roden; **The Adventures** and **The Return** by Richard Lancelyn Green; and **The Hound Of The Baskervilles** and **The Case-Book** by W.W. Robson. Each volume contains introduction, chronology, bibliography and notes. Initial publication will be in hardback at £7.99 each. In July Young Lions will publish four "zany adventures" of Shirley Holmes, schoolgirl detective (her arch-enemy is the fiendish schoolgirl gangster Molly Harty); at £2.99 each, they are **The Case Of The Missing Case**, **The Case Of The Hollywood Soap Star**, **The Case Of The Sheik's Missing Shake-Maker** and **The Case Of The Illegal Sherbet Shake Down**.

Ian Wilkes of Ian Henry Publications Ltd (20 Park Drive, Romford RM1 4LH) tells me that plans for a limited, numbered edition of the play **The Return of Sherlock Holmes** by J.E.H. Terry & Arthur Rose (Eille Norwood played Holmes) are nearing fruition. There will be an introduction by Norwood's stepson-in-law, Ernest Dudley, and a wealth of cast photos. The book will probably appear in September, cloth-bound, in a slip-case, at £25 the copy. Before then Ian will publish John Hall's chronology **I Remember the Date Very Well**.

Von Herder Airguns Ltd (Michael Ross, Bendhelde 65, D-4152 Kempen 1, Germany) plans in early 1994 to issue **A Centenary Bibliography of German Sherlockiana, 1894 - 1994**, with a text in both German and English. Before the 31st October 1993, members of VHAL can order copies at 20 Deutschmarks each, while the cost to non-members is DM25. Write for details. Gerit Stenitzer tells me that **Richard Doyle's Journal, 1840**, a facsimile of the diary of ACD's uncle "Dickie" Doyle, the artist, published by Bartholomew,

is on sale at Henry Ponders, 58-60 Charing Cross Road, London, at £2.99.

(The book isn't listed in the current **British Books In Print**; neither is the next one.) A shop called Fact In Fiction offers **The Great Tales Of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle**, 47 short stories, at £3.99.

Gerit adds that the cast recording of Leslie Bricusse's **Sherlock Holmes: The Musical**, with Robert Powell & Roy Barraclough, is out on CD (TER1198) at £12.99. (\*There's also a cassette, but I can't trace the number. Incidentally, Mark Chadderton tells me that the proposed run of **The Musical** at the Pavilion Theatre, Bournemouth, 21 June -3 July, has been cancelled; does anyone know if other dates are going ahead?\*) And that **Ship In A Bottle**, the 2nd **Star Trek: The New Generation** episode featuring the Holodeck's own Professor Moriarty, is out on video (Star Trek no. 69; £11.99). Gerit also spotted the next item!

CSA Telltapes (101 Chamberlayne Road, London NW10 3ND) has issued an excellent double-cassette pack, **The Adventures Of Sherlock Holmes** (TTDMC422), three tales read by the admirable Edward Hardwicke: "The Empty House", "The Devil's Foot" and "The Abbey Grange". Price in the shops varies between £7.49 and £8.49; it's sold at most major stores stocking spoken word recordings, but in case of difficulty you can order direct from CSA Telltapes enclosing a cheque for £8.00, or phone 081-960 0804 quoting your Visa, Access or Eurocard details.

Clive Stanhope of CSA tells me that the magazine **Active Life** recently had an article about our Society. Can anyone help me with a copy, please? Following up last issue's news of the Folio Society edition of the complete short stories, Roy Simmons kindly apprised me of the summer issue of the society's journal, **Folio**, containing an article by R.L. Green, "The Toxicological Sherlock Holmes", and a pretty fiendish crossword puzzle by Mervyn Horder. The Folio Society can be contacted at 202, Great Suffolk Street, London SE1 1PR. **Chemistry In Britain** for May 1993 was a forensic science special, sporting a cover photo of J. Brett in **The Devil's Foot**. The June 7th issue of **Chemistry & Industry** contains an article on Holmes's prowess as a chemist, and has a cover photo of JB in **The Final Problem**. The travel section of **The Guardian Weekend** for 22nd May has an account of last August's Holmesian/Jeromean ballooning party chez Porter, by one Judith Cook (a Jeromean, who seems to think that the eminently desirable cars at Hill Top belonged to the Holmesians, when in fact they belonged to the balloonists).

The summer issue of **The Sherlock Holmes Gazette** is now in the shops at £1.95 (or write to P.O. Box 221, Alderney, Channel Islands, G.B.) It's full of interesting articles - on the Société Sherlock Holmes de France, Count Mattel's unorthodox medicine, the Sherlock Holmes Collection at Marylebone Library, the Edinburgh weekend of the Arthur Conan Doyle Society, Tom Stix and the Baker Street Irregulars, Peter Cushing at 80, and much more - and plenty of lively correspondence. U.S. enquiries should be addressed to Classic Specialties, P.O. Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, who have much other Holmesiana to tempt the collector. Val Andrews' new pastiche **Sherlock Holmes and the Egyptian Hall Adventure** (Breese Books, 104 Kensington Park Road, London W11 2ER; £4.95), advertised in the spring issue of the **Gazette**, is currently at the printers' and will be issued shortly.

Stephen Farrell put me on to an article from **The Sunday Times** for the 23rd May: "On The Shelf", in which Keith Waterhouse "takes a fresh look at **The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes**. Wayne & Francine Swift have sent a piece from the **Chicago Tribune** for the 14th February: "Hound Dog of the Baskervilles, an account of the January meeting of the Criterion Bar Association of Chicago, including a report on Susan Z. Diamond's paper "proving" that Elvis Presley was the son of SH and IA.

Catherine Anderson reminds me that the BBC World Service will be broadcasting 6 Sherlock Holmes stories dramatised by Grant Eustace and featuring Roy Marsden & John Moffatt. The first will be at 12.30 pm (British Summer Time) on Thursday the 24th June, repeated at 6.15 pm, and again at 3.30 am on Friday the 25th. Most of western Europe can get the World Service on 6.195 MHz, 3.955 MHz SW, and 648 KHz MW (you won't get the 6.15 transmission on medium wave). Followers of the Great Detective on radio should be aware of ORCA - the Old Time Radio Show Collectors' Association (Barry Hill, 4 Prospect Terrace, Farsley, Leeds LS28 5ES), which issues an occasional magazine, **Tune Into Yesterday**, and holds a staggering library of radio shows on tape, nearly 1,000 of which are available on cassette for loan to members. There's a good deal of Sherlock Holmes. Write to Barry for details.

A favourite place to meet Holmesian visitors in London is the Sherlock Holmes pub in Northumberland Street. Close, in The Arches under Charing Cross Station, is the Players' Theatre Club, which offers a first-class Music Hall show with full Victorian ambience every evening except Monday. Food and drink are available in the auditorium, and there's an excellent restaurant. I've been a member for nearly 15 years now, and consider the annual sub. of £45 well worth while, as it allows free entry all year. Non-members (visitors from overseas may like to consider this) can buy tickets for any show at £15 each. (The Players' Theatre Club, The Arches, Villiers Street, London WC2N 6NG; phone 071-839 1134.)

Tonga wannabees will be interested in the **Blopipe**, produced by Blowdart of P.O. Box 1, Lustleigh, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ13 9YT (**Hound** country rather than **Sign Of Four** country, but let it pass). For £9.99 you get a 2-foot long plastic blow-pipe, 3 sucker-tipped darts, and a self-adhesive target. But there's more; Ian and Amanda Brown (3 High View Cottages, Duton Hill, Great Dunmow, Essex; phone 0371 870760) are selling the sets for only £4.99 each, plus postage. They're great fun. (Also fun, but less intrinsically safe, are the sets with sharp-pointed darts.) Crosse & Blackwell now do a range of packet soups with "Disney pasta characters". There's one called **detectives**, a tomato variety, whose packet shows Huey, Dewey & Louie in deerstalkers (we haven't opened it up to see what the pasta shapes are like). It costs 55p.

The connection with Sherlock Holmes is indirect, but it's there all right (see the very Holmesian sequence in **The Wind In The Willows**, when Ratty traces Mole in the Wild Wood and finds Badger's house, and E.H. Shepard's delightful pictures of Ratty in deerstalker and tweeds): an English Heritage Blue Plaque honouring Shepard was unveiled last month at 10 Kent Terrace, London NW1, his childhood home.

I have four spare copies of the first issue of **The Dispatch Box**, the newsletter of the Baker Street Associates (P.O. Box 351453, Los Angeles, CA 90035-998, USA) available to the first enquirers within the U.K. Baker

Street Associates are the producers of that marvellous series of cassettes from **The New Adventures of Sherlock Holmes** radio series with Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce. This first newsletter tells how the project came about.

Periodicals of interest recently received include: the 2nd issue of **Le Catalogue de la Franco-Midland: Le Journal de la Société Sherlock Holmes de France** (Thierry Saint-Joanis, Grand dépôt de Paris, 47 rue de Montmorency, 75003 Paris, France); this is a St-Malo special, but unfortunately my French isn't up to appreciating the connection. **The Parallelogram** for June 1993 (the Parallel Case of St Louis, Joseph J. Eckrich, 2757 Baccara Drive, Arnold, MO 63010, USA) (\*this is a new address for Joe\*); **The Appledore Tower** nos. 4, 5, 6 & 7 ("Sir Charles Appledore", 2632 Central Court, Union City, CA 94587-3128); **Communication no. 126** (The Pleasant Places of Florida, Dr Benton Wood, P.O. Box 740, Ellenton, FL 34222, USA); **U.S.A. Colonial Office Newsletter** vol. 2 no. 2 (U.S.A. Colonial Office of the Franco-Midland Hardware Company, Robert W. Wright, RD #3, Box 401, Myerstown, PA 17067, USA); **The Petrel Flyer** vol. 5 no. 6 (The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, BC V7P 3C6, Canada); **The Striking (T)Rifles #1/93** (Von Herder's Airguns Ltd, Michael Ross, Bendhelde 65, D-4152 Kempen 1, Germany) (\*I'm constantly astounded at the apparently effortless way in which our German colleagues can pun in English.\*); **Scuttlebutt From The Spermaceti Press** May 1993 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA).

From Peter Blau's **Scuttlebutt**: "The first issue of **The Whitechapel Journal** has appeared, edited by Troy Taylor, with 36 pages of nicely illustrated Sherlockian and Doylean articles (and one pastiche). \$6.00 postpaid, from Troy Taylor at 605 West North, Decatur, IL 62522"; a new comic in the shops is DC's **Eclipse** #8, with a "gory and weird and macabre" new adventure called "Good Night, Mr Holmes!"; the spring issue of **Scarlet Street** includes David Stuart Davies' article "Sherlock Holmes Meets The Twilight Zone", being his review of **The Last Vampyre** and **The Eligible Bachelor**, and news of a new book: **Peter Gushing: The Gentle Man Of Horror And His 91 Films** by Deborah Del Vecchio & Tom Johnson (McFarland & Co, Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640; \$45.00) (\***Scarlet Street** costs \$18.00 a year - 4 issues - from R.H. Enterprises, 271 Farrant Terrace, Teaneck, NJ 07666; in Britain, contact David Stuart Davies for information at Overdale, 69 Greenhead Road, Huddersfield, HD1 4ER\*)

Final note: Erica Harper, who has been "Sherlock Holmes' secretary" at Abbey House, head office of Abbey National PLC, for three years, is moving, appropriately, to the company's security department. There's no news yet about her successor. If you find yourself in upper Baker Street, though, do pop in to Abbey House and pick up a (free) copy or two of the handsomely produced booklet **Sherlock Holmes**, explaining the company's long and companionable relationship with the Great Detective.

