

THE DISTRICT MESSENGER

The Newsletter of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London

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no. 133 10th August 1993

I regret the delay in getting this issue out. I've been in hospital for minor (but disconcerting) surgery.

Chris Steinbrunner died recently of a heart attack, after a long debilitating illness. Two of his books at least have become invaluable in our field, **The Encyclopedia of Mystery and Detection** with Otto Penzler, and **The Films of Sherlock Holmes** with Norman Michaels. He will be much missed.

Out now is Val Andrews' new pastiche, **Sherlock Holmes and the Greyfriars School Mystery**, in which the author combines two of his boyhood passions. This pleasant brochure is published by Mr Andrews himself, and it has to be said that production could be better: there's a lot of irritating minor errors that should have been corrected by a competent proof-reader. But the important thing is that it's an ingenious story, well told. Holmes is called out of retirement to investigate a theft at the famous public school, encountering on the way Billy Bunter, the "Famous Five", the Bounder of the Remove and others. We discover the strange secret of Mr Quelch, and learn an odd fact or two about Ferrers Locke. Personally inscribed copies of **Sherlock Holmes and the Greyfriars School Mystery** are available direct from Val Andrews (at 1 George Court, 67 Willoughby Lane, London N17 0QZ) for £6.50 each including postage, or \$12.00 airmail. (**Sherlock Holmes and the Egyptian Hall Adventure**, also by Val Andrews, is just out from Breese Books at £4.95; I hope to review it in the next DM.)

Those who went on our Society's day-trip in June will know how good is the 42-page handbook edited by Pam Bruxner, containing Bernard Davies's definitive exploration of "Lion's Mane" country, and a number of other grand articles. A few copies remain of **Sunday In Sussex**, available from Pamela Bruxner (St Cuthbert's Cottage, 23 North Street, Barming, Maidstone, Kent ME16 9HE) at £5.80 each, or £7.00 to North America (cheques payable to the Sherlock Holmes Society of London).

I Remember the Date Very Well, John Hall's chronology of the canon, should be out now from Ian Henry at £6.25. Published in June were **Sherlock Holmes Short Stories** and **The Hound of the Baskervilles** both by A. Conan Doyle (Longman Fiction Series, £2.65 each). In August, Paperback Classic Shorts will issue both **The Speckled Band** and **Wysteria Lodge** (sic according to **Whitaker's Bookbank**) at £1.00 each. In May, Wordsworth Editions put out **Sherlock Holmes** in hardback at £8.99. From Wordsworth Classics in June came **The Return of Sherlock Holmes** (paperback, £1.00), and they complete the canon in September with **The Casebook**. In September also Warner paperbacks will reissue **The Final Adventures of Sherlock Holmes** edited by Peter Haining, at £4.99. From Constable in September comes **The Secret Journals of Sherlock Holmes**, a new collection of June Thomson's fine pastiches, and in October **Lestrade and the Mirror of Murder**, the latest adventure by M.J. Trow.

Just out from the Men With the Twisted Konjo (2-10-12 Kamirenjaku, Mitaka-

shi, Tokyo 181, Japan) is vol. 3 of **The Shoso-in Bulletin**, formerly **The Nezire Zanmai International**. The cover neatly parodies that of **The Baker Street Journal**, and the magazine is full of fascinating articles and illustrations from Holmesian luminaries world-wide. The very reasonable cost is: U.S.A., Asia & Oceania \$15.00; Britain, Europe and rest of world £10 or \$17.00 (cash or international postal order only, please, payable to Hirayama Yuichi).

New catalogues of crime and detective fiction are out now from G.H. Bradley (9 Vicarage Hill, South Benfleet, Essex SS7 1PA) and Post Mortem Books (58 Stanford Avenue, Hassocks, Sussex BN6 8JH).

Susan Z. Diamond has pointed out a careless mistake in my reference in DM 132 to her paper proving that Elvis Presley was the son of Sherlock Holmes. The putative mother was not, of course, Irene Adler, but Wallis Simpson! This entertaining paper was printed in full in **The Serpentine Muse** vol. 11 no. 3.

If you were hoping to see **Sherlock Holmes: The Musical**, you'll be disappointed. It had been well received, but bookings were low, and apparently the backers decided to cut their losses. The show closed at Blackpool in June. Sad. Ronald Becker (1672 Cavell Avenue, Highland Park, Illinois 60053, U.S.A.) wants to acquire a poster from the production. If you can help, please contact Ronald directly.

A selection from the BBC Radio 4 production of **The Memoirs** is currently being repeated on Sunday evenings. Bert Coules tells me that **The Return** will not appear on cassette until February next year, and that recording of **His Last Bow** is now complete, with Clive Merrison and Michael Williams on top form. A few cast details: Patrick Allen is Dr Leon Sterndale; Joan Sims is Mrs Warren; Edward Petherbridge is Culverton Smith; Kevin Whately is Jim Browner; Stephen Thorne takes over as Lestrade, Donald Gee being unavailable; John Hartley returns as Mycroft; in "His Last Bow", Preston Lockwood is H.H. Asquith, Donald Pickering is Lord Gray, Michael Cochrane is Vernon Kell, founder of MIS, Norman Rodway is Stamford, Ed Bishop is one of Von Bork's agents and Bob Sherman is Altamont. (*Yes, that gave me a bit of a start too. I thought Altamont was Holmes in disguise...*)

Word from David Stuart Davies is that there will be another Granada TV series with Brett and Hardwicke, and - hurrah! - the films will return to the original one-hour format. Betty Marsden will play Mrs Warren in "The Red Circle", and another famous comedy actor, Kenneth Connor, will appear somewhere. The only other story I know to be included is "The Dying Detective".

Clare Taylor, Secretary of the Poor Folk Upon the Moors, sends news of a new touring play. Baskerville Productions present **Dr Watson Investigates** by M.C. Philipson. Mike Philipson (Watson) and Rob Thrush (Holmes) are members of the Poor Folk. The play will be at Stansted Park Theatre, Rowlands Castle, Hampshire from 26 to 28 August; Rudolph Steiner, Park Road, London 17 & 18 September; West Wilts Arts Centre, Warminster on 23 October; Phoenix Arts Centre, Borden, Hants on 30 October; Compass Arts Theatre, Ickenham, Middlesex on 5 November; Two Bridges Hotel, Dartmoor on 13 November; Ashcroft Arts Centre, Fareham, Hants on 20th January. For fuller information, write to Mike Philipson at Portway Mews, 13/15 Portway, Frome, Somerset BA11 1QP. (Clare has moved house: her new address is 2 Lynbridge Court, Chapel Street, Tavistock, Devon PL19 8DU.)

The performance at the Two Bridges will be part of a special weekend,

Sherlock Holmes Returns to Dartmoor, running from the 12 to the 14 November. All sorts of jollities are promised, hosted by eminent members of the Poor Folk. Details and booking forms from: Two Bridges Hotel, Two Bridges, Dartmoor, Devon PL20 6SW (phone 082 289 581).

Derek Hinrich drew my attention to an article in **The Spectator** for 17th July: "Brought to Book - The Sherlock Holmes Stories", by the famous literary critic Laurence Lerner. All very interesting and superior, but how seriously can one take a pundit who thinks that Sergeant Fox is Adam Dalgliesh's sidekick?

B.J. Rahn sends an attractive greetings card created by Lola Fiur, a photographer who is a member of the Mystery Writers of America (360 East 65th Street, #17A, New York, NY 10021, U.S.A.). Mounted on the card is a real colour photo of a still-life grouping of Holmesian objects (it's one of a series of cards with crime fiction motifs). The cost is \$3.00 in the U.S.A or £2 in the U.K. If you're going to France with the Society in September, look out for the first two lead figures in a new Sherlock Holmes series designed by Alexis Poliakoff of La Société Sherlock Holmes de France and manufactured by the famous Pixi & Cie (6 rue de l'Echaudé, 75006 Paris), of which he's a director.

The latest Holmesian product from Cadds Printing (59 Lancaster Avenue, West Norwood, London SE27 9EL; phone 081-761 4927) is a tile, some 6" square with hook attached for hanging on your wall, printed in full colour with Steele's famous picture of Holmes gazing over the edge of the Reichenbach Fall. It's a lovely thing, well up to Cadds' high standards, and worth the mail order price of £12.95 (cheques in sterling only, please, drawn on a British bank, made out to Cadds Printing Ltd). The next project, in collaboration with Westminster Libraries, Richard Lancelyn Green, the Sherlock Holmes Memorabilia Company and others, will be a Holmesian calendar, which will be available in September at £5.25; orders are invited now. Cadds also do various items of stationery, plus posters, tee-shirts, busts, and the full Granada range of postcards. Write for details to Hugh Scullion, the Managing Director.

Geoffrey Stavert passes on a letter and photo from Jean Graham, who trades as Dollymania (2 Windmill Court, Windmill Road, Coventry CV6 7AU; phone 0203 686799). Among her dressed character dolls is Sherlock Holmes; the photo shows it to be a nicely made, round-faced figure, 18" tall, wearing deerstalker and tweeds, and holding a magnifying glass. The price is a very reasonable £15. We recently found a "Sherlock Holmes" troll, made by Russ Berrie (UK) Ltd, of Southampton, PO5 3LT. It's a pleasantly ugly little plastic figure, about 4" high, wearing deerstalker and tweeds, holding pipe and lens. Cost is £5.99.

Roman Stus tells me that the five 24p stamps to be issued on 12th October will bear illustrations by Andrew Davidson for: "The Reigate Squires", **The Hound of the Baskervilles**, "The Six Napoleons", "The Greek Interpreter" and "The Final Problem". First Day Covers, postcards and presentation packs will be available. Our Society will put out a First Day Cover commissioned from the specialist company Covercraft in a strictly limited edition. Fuller details in the next DM.

There will be others too, equally collectible. The Conan Doyle (Crowborough) Establishment will issue one, to be posted at the box outside Conan Doyle's home of Windlesham. The cost is £6.75 for postage within the U.K., £10.00 or \$15.00 overseas (US dollar bills only); sterling cheques should be payable to "ACD Memorial Fund", and orders should go to Richard

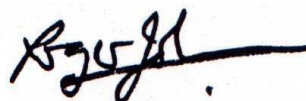
Creep, Hon. Treasurer, The Limes, Bridge Road, Crowborough, East Sussex. The Arthur Conan Doyle Society (Ashcroft, 2 Abbotsford Drive, Penyffordd, Chester CH4 0JG) plans two First Day Covers: the Victorian Print series by A.G. Bradbury (envelopes bearing one stamp £3.75 or \$8.00 each, £18.75 or \$36.00 for the set of five; envelopes bearing all five stamps £6.75 or \$13.00; postage and packing will be extra); and the Heritage Collection by Benham (large envelopes with all five stamps £4.99 or \$10.00; smaller envelopes each with one stamp £2.50 or \$5.00 each; again postage and packing extra). The ACD Society will have information leaflets and order forms ready this month. For details of these desirable items, please contact the body concerned.

The Arthur Conan Doyle Society's Toronto '94 Convention will be held from the 29 April to the 1st May 1994 at Hotel Plaza II, just a block from the Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library and its world-famous Conan Doyle Collection. It's a 4-star hotel in the same group as the Raffles in Singapore and the Ritz in London. Provisionally booked speakers include Alvin E. Rodin, Chris Redmond, Philip K. Wilson and Christopher & Barbara Roden. The full package, including 2 nights' accommodation, will cost £155 (Cdn\$295 or US\$235) per person; attendance without accommodation will be £70 (Cdn\$130 or US\$105). A leaflet is available this month, and bookings can be taken now. Non-returnable deposits per person: £30 (Cdn\$60 or US\$50). Address as above.

I learn from the Franco-Midland Hardware Company that Charles Hall has issued a re-designed version of his lovely **Edinburgh Medal**, depicting the head of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. The price is £11.50 within the U.K. or £15.00 overseas (add £2.50 for insurance). Sterling cheques only, please. Send your order to Charles Hall, 12 Paisley Terrace, Edinburgh EH8 7JW. Something that is definitely no longer available, alas, is the Crosse & Blackwell tomato soup, with the Disney pasta characters; we have this on the authority of the manufacturers. So if you've been looking for the "Detectives" packet - sorry!

Michael Doyle tells me that the Sound of the Baskervilles will hold their 5th and last International Holmesian Games in Seattle, on Saturday 25 September. Reports of previous Sherlympiads suggest a high level of inspired silliness. For details contact Sharon Johnson, 6520 24th Avenue NW, #B01, Seattle, WA 98117, U.S.A.

Periodicals of interest recently received include: **The Serpentine Muse** vol. 12 no. 1 (The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes, Evelyn Herzog, 360 West 21st Street, #5A, New York, NY 10011, U.S.A.); **Baker Street Miscellanea** no. 72 (P.O. Box 225, Winnetka, IL 60093-0225, U.S.A.); **The Baker Street Journal** vol. 43, no. 2 (P.O. Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, U.S.A.); **The New Baker Street Pillar Box** no. 15 (The Franco-Midland Hardware Company, "The Stock-broker's Clerk, 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU); **The Petrel Flyer** vol. 5 no. 6 (The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C. V7P 3C6, Canada); **Scuttlebutt From the Spermaceti Press** July 1993 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW, #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, U.S.A.); **The Pleasant Places of Florida Communication** no. 128 (Dr Benton Wood, Box 740, Ellenton, FL 34222, U.S.A.); **The Appledore Tower** no. 8 (Paul H. Brundage, 2632 Central Court, Union City, CA 94587-3128, U.S.A.).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. J. J.', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.