

# 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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Our Honorary Member Peter Cushing died on the 11th August. A couple of years ago I wrote an 80th birthday tribute for **The Sherlock Holmes Journal**, to which I wish only to add that a re-assessment of his performances as Sherlock Holmes is long overdue. Some at least of the BBC TV series from 1968 still exists and should be shown again. I believe it will prove to the doubters that Peter Cushing was a great Holmes. (It's just been brought to my attention, by Bernard Davies, that Michael Carreras died on the 19th April. Among his many contributions to the success of Hammer Films, Carreras was Executive Producer on the 1958 **Hound of the Baskervilles**, with Peter Cushing as Holmes.) Peter Blau reports: "Cay Van Ash died in April. He was a friend of Sax Rohmer for many years, and collaborated with the author's widow on the biography of Rohmer called **Master of Villainy**. Van Ash's novel **Ten Years Beyond Baker Street** (1984) pitted Sherlock Holmes against Fu Manchu, and was well-received."

We were shocked to learn of the death, of a heart attack on the 22nd August, of James O. Duval ("The Battered Tin Dispatch-Box", BSI), a founder of Cox & Company of New England, and a long-time friend of this newsletter. I first met Jim in Montreal in 1990, and again in New York last January, after he'd had to miss the BSI dinner because of jury service. We saw him last in May, at the Back to Baker Street festival in London. He was a nice guy and we liked him very much.

Friends of John Bennett Shaw will be glad to know that he's recovering from his heart attack (the timing was perfect: it hit while he was actually at the hospital). He's on a walking frame, and spending more time in his library. He welcomes letters and cards, but can't promise to reply (1917 Fort Union Drive, Santa Fe, NM 87501, USA).

Geoffrey Stavert has passed on an attractive little volume put out, at £4.50, by Diehard Publishers (3 Spittal Street, Edinburgh EH3 9DY), and containing two one-man plays by John Cargill Thompson: **Port and Lemon: The Mystery Behind Sherlock Holmes** and **The Laird of Samoa**, both performed by John Shedden at the Edinburgh Festival. It's difficult to describe **Port and Lemon** without giving away some of the play's secrets, but it reads well, and, imaginatively produced, as it clearly was, it should play very well indeed. In the aftermath of **Sherlock's Last Case** it must be hard to come up with a fresh twist on the ins and outs of the Baker Street household, but Mr Thompson manages it. There may still be a limited number of signed copies available direct from the author at: Top Flat C, 16 Marchmont Crescent, Edinburgh EH9 1HL. New from Ian Henry Publications Ltd (20 Park Drive, Romford RM1 4LH) is the first British (and the first hardback) edition of **Sherlock Holmes and the Earthquake Machine** by Austin Mitchelson and Nicholas Utechin (£12.99). It's an ingenious tale, well told, of an international conspiracy that threatens to bring down the empires of the world, and can only be foiled by Sherlock Holmes. Besides Winston Churchill, Tsar Nicholas II, the daughter of Irene Adler and - of course - Brother Mycroft, we meet an enemy from the past, now more deadly than ever. And then there is the Earthquake Machine itself... I wonder

now, as I did when the book first appeared nearly 20 years ago, whether the authors were familiar with Ronald Clark's marvellous novel **Queen Victoria's Bomb**. No matter. Messrs Mitchelson and Utechin have given us a rattling good yarn, and I hope it'll be followed in due course by a new edition of their second pastiche, **Hellbirds**.

In the last DM I was only able to give the UK price for Pam Bruxner's **In Beds with Sherlock Holmes**. Copies can be had from the Society's Merchandising Officer, Lynne Godden (Apple Tree Cottage, Smarden, Kent TN27 8QE), at: UK £7.00; Europe £7.85; USA \$13.50; rest of world £8.50. All prices include postage & packing. Lynne also has stocks of the Society's new umbrella: "a large golf umbrella, British made, with straight wooden handle... alternate panels of black and cream, with our motif of deerstalker and pipe ringed by the words 'The Sherlock Holmes Society of London' on each cream panel." Cost, including surface post: UK £21.50; Europe £22.50; USA \$39.50; rest of world £22.50. It can be sent airmail to the USA for an extra \$8.00.

More books. Instead of the announced selection of Holmes stories, **The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes** is out in the Penguin Popular Classics series, at £1.00. The Wordsworth Classics volume gives you four books in one for the same price, but the Penguin print is easier on the eye (Penguin Books Ltd, 27 Wrights Lane, London W8 5TZ). Pavilion Books (26 Upper Ground, London SE1 9PD) announce for October, at £17.99, something called **The Complete Sherock Holmes** (*sic*, according to Whitaker's BookBank) by one M. Bunson. Victor Gollancz (14 Henrietta Street, London WC2E 8QJ) plans for October **Crime Yellow: Gollancz New Crimes 1** (£14.99), including a Holmes story by Robert Richardson. Titles recently published in the USA, and available here from Murder One and other specialist dealers: **The Angel of the Opera** by Sam Siciliano (Otto Penzler Books, 129 West 56th Street, New York, NY 10019, USA; \$21.95/£16.99); **The Game Is Afoot: Parodies, Pastiches and Ponderings of Sherlock Holmes** edited by Marvin Kaye (St Martin's Press, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010, USA; \$24.95/£18.50); **Irene's Last Waltz** by Carole Nelson Douglas (Forge Books, Tom Docherty Associates, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010, USA; \$22.95/£17.50); **Inspector Gingko Tips His Hat to Sherlock Holmes** by Alex Jack (One Peaceful World Press, Box 10, Becket, MA 01223, USA; \$12.95/£10.99). Otto Penzler has also published paperback editions of Gavin Brend's **My Dear Holmes: A Study in Sherlock**, and J.E. Holroyd's **17 Steps to 221B**. I'm waiting for a reprint of Holroyd's elusive **Baker Street By-ways**.

New or newish material about the Whitechapel murders: **The Complete History of Jack the Ripper** by Philip Sugden (Robinson Publishing, 7 Kensington Church Court, London W8 4SP; £20.00); **The Diary of Jack the Ripper** edited by Shirley Harrison (Smith Gryphon Ltd, Swallow House, 11-21 Northdown Street, London N1 9BN; £4.99); **Sickert & the Ripper Crimes** by Jean Overton Fuller (Mandrake, PO Box 250, Oxford OX1 1AP; £14.95); **Jack the Ripper: The Mystery Solved** by Paul Harrison (Robert Hale Ltd, Clerkenwell House, 45-47 Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R OHT; £5.99); **Jack the Myth: A New Look at the Ripper** by A.P. Wolf (Hale; £15.99); **The Ripper & the Royals** by Melvyn Fairclough (Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd, 48 Hoxton Square, London N1 6PB; £6.99); **The Jack the Ripper A-Z** by Paul Begg et al. (Headline Book Publishing Ltd, 338 Euston Road, London NW1 3BH; £7.99); **Murder & Madness: The Secret Life of Jack the Ripper** by David Abrahamsen (Robson Books Ltd, Bolsover House, 5-6 Clipstone Street, London W1P 7EB; £7.99); **The True Face of Jack the Ripper** by Melvin Harris (Michael O'Mara Books Ltd, 9 Lion Yard, Tremadoc Road, London SW4 7NQ; £14.99); **Jack the Ripper Revealed** by John Wilding (Constable & Co. Ltd, 3 The Lanchesters, 162 Fulham Palace

Road, London W6 9ER; £6.95). There's no slowing-up, is there?

George Vanderburgh has taken note of the many comments regarding the lack of an index to Ron De Waal's **Universal Sherlock Holmes**: a title/ author index will be available in the first quarter of 1995 as Volume 5 of the set. It will cost an extra £20.00 (US\$30.00/Can.\$40.00), plus £4.00/\$6.00 postage. The "electronic hypertext edition", called **Hypert.U.S.H.**, will be ready shortly, as will a user manual by Doug & Diane Elliott. (George A. Vanderburgh, P.O. Box 204, Shelburne, Ontario LON 1S0, Canada.) **The Solar Pons Portfolio**, mentioned in DM 143, is, I understand, an electronic edition of **The Solar Pons Omnibus** by August Derleth (still in print from Arkham House Inc., Sauk City, Wisconsin, USA, at about \$39.00, and well worth it), but George does plan a small book containing three uncollected Pons stories.

Michael Ross tells me that **The Case of Blind Man's Buff**, published by Longman in a Sherlock Holmes & Dr Watson video-script series (DM 143), is one of 8 issued for use in schools, to accompany selected videos from the TV series with Geoffrey Whitehead and Donald Pickering. The others are **The Case of Harry Rigby**, **Magruder's Millions**, **The Deadly Tower**, **The Sitting Target**, **The Body in the Case**, **The Perfect Crime** and **The Travelling Killer**. Michael adds that "Jörg Kastner, a fellow member of Von Herder Airguns, has published his first Holmesian novel, in German, some weeks ago: **Dr Watson und der Fall Sherlock Holmes (Dr Watson and the Case Sherlock Holmes)** features Sebastian Moran escaping from prison, a strange Sherlock Holmes making secret business with Professor Moriarty, and Arthur Conan Doyle helping Dr Watson out of some mess. It's fun to read and the first original German pastiche for a long time. The 162pp paperback costs DM 20.00 (plus p&p, I believe) and is available from the publishers, Logos Verlag (Mühlenstr. 20, 66111 Saarbrücken, Germany)."

Hugh Scullion of Cadds Printing Ltd (59 Lancaster Avenue, West Norwood. London SE27 9EL) has sent a copy of his latest project: a nice 1995 **Sherlock Holmes Calendar**, well illustrated with scenes from Granada's TV series, and reminiscent of the very collectible calendar put out by Granada themselves in 1984. Cost is £5.50 direct from Cadds (cheques payable to Cadds Printing Ltd), or it's available from Murder One, the Sherlock Holmes Memorabilia Company, and other outlets, or from Classic Specialties in the USA (PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219). Mail order from Cadds to the USA is \$9.00 (checks payable to Mrs Ferrara). A second batch of the lovely enamel boxes (DM 137) is now available at £100.00/\$145.00. Murder One is charging £145.99 each. Anthea Sinclair says, "If anyone has worn out the green strap on their Sherlock Holmes Swiss watch, John Lewis in Oxford Street sells almost identical straps for £9.95" (\*I settled for a brown one at £4.95.\*)

Following the mention of Gravesend Books catalogue #31 in the last DM, I've had a letter from Enola Stewart, the proprietress: "I assure you that anyone who contacts us because of your notice will be treated with the same professionalism that I have brought to the field for the past 23 years." (Gravesend Books, Box 235, Pocono Pines, PA 18350, USA.) Also recently received is catalogue #48 from Post Mortem Books (58 Stanford Avenue, Hassocks, Sussex BN6 8JH), full of interest, as always. (The catalogue offers a copy of our **Back to Baker Street** in fine condition at £16.00 plus postage. It is still available from the Society's Merchandising Officer at £11.50/\$21.50, including postage.)

Bert Coules sends news of BBC Radio 4's schedule for **The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes**. The series will be transmitted on Wednesday afternoons at

2.02: "The Illustrious Client" 21 Sept.; "The Blanched Soldier" 28 Sept.; "The Mazarin Stone" 5 Oct.; "The Three Gables" 12 Oct.; "The Sussex Vampire" 19 Oct.; "The Three Garridebs" 26 Oct. Then we must wait till next year for the rest: "Thor Bridge" 1 March; "The Creeping Man" 8 March; "The Lion's Mane" 15 March; "The Veiled Lodger" 22 March; "Shoscombe Old Place" 29 March; "The Retired Colourman" 5 April. In between, the first 8 plays from **The Return of Sherlock Holmes** will be repeated on Sunday evenings at 10.15: "The Empty House" 27 Nov.; "The Norwood Builder" 4 Dec.; "The Dancing Men" 11 Dec.; "The Solitary Cyclist" 18 Dec.; and after a break "The Priory School" 22 Jan.; "Black Peter" 29 Jan.; "Charles Augustus Milverton" 5 Feb.; "The Six Napoleons" 12 Feb. (\*Which reminds me: the new British address for ORCA [The Old-time Radio-show Collectors' Association] is Roger Bickerton, Ulverscroft, 3 Park Hedge, Harrogate HG2 8JU. Barry Hill has been enabled to move the world HQ to a temperature & humidity controlled building at Route 1, Box 197, Belpre, OH 45714, USA.\*)

Douglas Warren tells of an adult education course at Crystal Leisure Centre in Stourbridge: **Investigating Sherlock Holmes**. Klair Norton MA will run 10 classes on Tuesdays at 2 pm, starting 4 October. Cost is £35.00 (concessions £26.00). Details from The Admissions Office, School of Continuing Studies, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT (phone 021-414 5607).

Our own Society's musical weekend in Cambridge is over, but The Priory Scholars have a Video Afternoon in Leicester on 18 September (details from Horace L. Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY); The Poor Folk Upon The Moors host a debate on 24 September at Warland, Totnes: **Who Was the Best Holmes?** (Vosper Arthur, Spynishlake, Doddiscombsleigh, Exeter EX6 7PR); the Northern Musgraves weekend study of **The Neglected Cases** will be held in Manchester on 8 & 9 October (David Stuart Davies, Overdale, 69 Greenhead Road, Huddersfield HD1 4ER); the Franco-Midland Hardware Company plans "a Holmesian investigation in the Midlands" for 30 October (The Stock-broker's Clerk, 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU); and the Irregular Special Railway Company has a rail tour in Sussex on 5 November (Antony J. Richards, 163 Marine Parade, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex. SS9 2RB).

Periodicals recently received: **Llama Droppings** no. 3 (The Head Llamas, Alan & Catherine Saunders, 12 Booth Drive, Laleham, Staines, Middlesex TW18 1PR) (\*the Llamas have uncovered a fascinating link between Holmes and M.R. James\*); **Baker Street Miscellanea** no. 75 (The Sciolist Press, PO Box 225, Winnetka, IL 60093-0225) (\*only one more issue to come of this most stimulating journal\*); **The Parallelogram** September 1994 (The Parallel Case of St Louis, Joseph J. Eckrich BSI, 914 Oakmoor, Fenton, MO 63026, USA); **Communication** no. 141 (The Pleasant Places of Florida, Dr Benton Wood BSI, Box 740, Ellenton, FL 34222, USA); **The Cormorant's Ring** August 1994 (The Trained Cormorants of Long Beach, Jim Coffin, 6570 E. Paseo Alcazaa, Anaheim Hills, CA 92807, USA); **The Soft-Nosed Bullet-In** no. 16 (Von Herder Airguns Ltd, Michael Ross, Bendheide 65, 47906 Kempen, Germany); **The School Report** no. 18 (Horace L. Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE1 0FY); **Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press** August 1994 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830) (\*from which I learn that the 4th issue of **The Shoso-in Bulletin**, the fine journal of The Men With the Twisted Konjo, is now out\*).

