

THE DISTRICT MESSENGER

The Newsletter of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London
Roger Johnson, Mole End, 41 Sandford Road, Chelmsford CM2 6DE

no. 145 18th October 1994

John Bennett Shaw ('The Hans Sloane of My Age', BSI) died on the 2nd October, of a heart attack, just a week before his 81st birthday. He didn't lose consciousness and was not in pain; death itself came suddenly and instantaneously. Much of the December 1990 issue of **The Baker Street Journal** was devoted to John's life and career as a Sherlockian, and a proper tribute should be that long. Briefly though: he was probably the world's greatest and most omnivorous Holmesian collector; he was responsible for starting more Holmes societies than most of us can imagine; he vetted applications to become scions of the Baker Street Irregulars; he had a taste for good food, good drink and bad puns; he was Big Brother in the most stimulating and comfortable way possible, and as such he had hundreds (perhaps thousands) of little brothers and sisters world-wide. He was irreplaceable.

Another long-time supporter of this newsletter died recently, Mr L.T. Archer of Clacton-on-Sea; an elderly gentleman who was unable to attend the Society's meetings often, he was related to George Lusk of the Whitechapel vigilantes ('From Hell. Mr Lusk, Sor...'). Peter Blau reports that Robert Bloch died on the 23rd September; though he'll be forever tagged 'the author of **Psycho**', he made good use in his stories and essays of his knowledge and love of the Holmesian canon.

A reminder: if your envelope bears the message **This is your last envelope** or **Your subscription expires with this issue**, will UK subscribers please send me half a dozen or so more stamped and self-addressed envelopes to renew; European subscribers can send an appropriate number of International Reply Coupons; USA subscribers can send a check for US\$10.00 payable to **Jean Upton** for 12 issues; subscribers elsewhere can send US\$10.00 as above or 18 IRCs for 12 issues. Thanks.

Crime Yellow: Gollancz New Crimes 1 edited by Maxim Jakubowski (Victor Gollancz, Villiers House, 41/47 Strand, London WC2N 5JE; £14.99) is a meaty, satisfying collection of new crime and detective stories, long and short. Of special interest to us is 'The Woman of Goodwill', a Sherlock Holmes story for Christmas by Robert Richardson. The natural comparison is with 'The Blue Carbuncle'. Mr Richardson's tale is much darker - tragic, even - but encouraging in showing that humanity can rise as well as fall. Like all the stories in the book, 'The Woman of Goodwill' is exceptionally well devised and written. Recommended.

Forthcoming from Ian Henry Publications Ltd (20 Park Drive, Romford RM1 4LH) are the first hardback edition of **Sherlock Holmes and the Hellbirds** by Austin Mitchelson and Nicholas Utechin, and a new Mycroft Holmes adventure, **The Hampstead Poisoning** by Glen Petrie. (Ian Henry has quite a lot of Holmesiana available; send an SSAE for a list. The titles are available in North America from Empire Publishing Services, PO Box 1132, Studio City, CA 91604, USA.) Coincidentally, Shapolsky Publishers in the USA have published this month **The Adventures of Mycroft Holmes: Sherlock Holmes' Brother** by Quinn Fawcett. (*I'll try to have more details for the next DM*). In December Warner Books (Little, Brown & Co. (UK) Ltd,

Brettenham House, Lancaster Place, London WC2E 7EN) will issue Peter Haining's **Sherlock Holmes Compendium** in paperback at £6.99. Peter Blau notes **Lady Brackenstall's Lord and Master**, 'J.C. Charles' latest contribution to adults-only Sherlockiana, providing details of Brackenstall's cruel and humiliating treatment of his beautiful young wife, and of his attentions to the pretty upstairs maid; the eight-page pamphlet costs \$5.00 postpaid from The Filmoods Co. (Box 475, Scarsdale, NY 10583).' Seen at 99p in Claude Gill: **Buster Bunny in 'Buster's Big Case'** by Brad Gilchrist, a Tiny Toon Adventure (Book Sales Inc., 110 Enterprise Avenue, Secaucus, NJ 07904, USA). (*For completists or parents of very young children.*)

Penguin Books Ltd (27 Wrights Lane, London W8 5TZ) plan for January **Sherlock Holmes** by Arthur Conan Doyle, in their Puffin Classics series at £3.50. Between May and August next year Wordsworth Editions Ltd (Cumberland House, Crib Street, Ware, Herts. SG12 9ET) will publish their 3-volume edition of the Canon in hardback at £3.99 each volume. Forthcoming at £3.50 from Running Press Miniature Editions (c/o Biblios PDS Ltd, Star Road, Partridge Green, Horsham, Sussex RH13 8LD) is a tiny hardback volume containing 'The Five Orange Pips' and 'The Blue Carbuncle' complete. The big news on this front, though, is that **The Oxford Sherlock Holmes** will be out in paperback at £3.99 a volume in the World's Classics series in November (Oxford University Press, Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6DP).

One to add to the Ripper up-date in DM 144: published last month was **The Complete History of Jack the Ripper** by Philip Sugden (Robinson Publishing, 7 Kensington Church Court, London W8 4SP; £20.00)

In November, Hodder Headline Audiobooks (338 Euston Road, London NW1 3BH) will issue for the first time in Britain some of the Gielgud/Richardson radio plays, written by John Keir Cross and produced by Harry Alan Towers in the early 1950s. The ads indicate that **The Best of Sherlock Holmes** will be a boxed set of 3 double cassettes, priced at £19.99, which will be issued separately in January at £7.99 each. Recordings previously released in the USA have all been taken off-air; it looks as if these are taken from the masters. Douglas Johnstone points out that on the 28th November HarperCollins Audiobooks (77-85 Fulham Palace Road, Hammersmith, London W6 8JB) will release **The Sherlock Holmes Collection** read by Basil Rathbone at £7.99. No further details yet, but these will be some, at least, of the fine readings Rathbone did for Caedmon in the 1960s. Douglas also mentions that all three recordings, originally broadcast on LBC, with Edward Petherbridge & David Peart as Holmes & Watson (**A Study in Scarlet**, **Four Adventures of Sherlock Holmes** and **The Valley of Fear**) are available from Murder One and elsewhere. (*They're produced by Independent Radio Drama Productions Ltd, whose address I can't immediately trace. I've yet to see any of these tapes in a shop, which is a pity, as they're very good.*)

Both Gerit Stenitzer and Mark Chadderton have told me of a good 10-page article in issues no. 7 and 8 (July/August and September/October) of **Movie Collector** magazine (PO Box 186, Twickenham, Middlesex TW1 IRQ) on the missing bits of Billy Wilder's **The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes**. Apparently there are lots of marvellous stills. Peter Blau (3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA) asks if anyone can help him with a recording of Tony Palmer's film **Testimony** (1987), based on the memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich. Along with Shostakovich, Stalin, Meyerhold and others, the characters apparently include Sherlock Holmes, played by Rodney Litchfield...

The Occupants of the Full House have passed on information that Pobjoy Mint Ltd (Mint House, Oldfields Road, Sutton, Surrey SM1 2NW; order hotline 081-644 6255) has issued the world's first legal tender 'Sherlock Holmes' coins, commissioned by the Government of Gibraltar. They were launched yesterday in the Abbey National in Gibraltar, but 3,000 sets of 8 are available in the UK. Nominally each coin is a crown (25p), but being of sterling silver they're worth rather more: the issue price is £29.95 each, but the first is offered at £19.95. (*The cupro-nickel sample I've seen is very attractive.*)

Seen in a local pharmacy at £1.99 each: a series of plastic toys called 'Playmobil Special' - jointed dolls about 3" high, with appropriate accessories. No. 4501 is a very 1960s-looking Sherlock Holmes figure with separate deerstalker, cape, lens and spats. (Playmobil UK Ltd, 6 Argent Court, Sylvan Way, Southfields Business Park, Basildon, Essex SS15 6TH; Playmobil USA Inc., 11-E Nicholas Court, PO Box 877, Dayton, NJ 0880 , USA; other offices world-wide.)

Steven Emmons (#206, 70A Greenwich Avenue, New York, NY 10011, USA) offers sets of his full-colour 'Scandal in Bohemia' postcard commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Baker Street Irregulars, with a blank message area, at 10 for \$13.50. The Northern Musgraves (Kathryn White, 149 Myrtle Terrace, Cross Roads, Keighley, West Yorks. BD22 9AJ) have produced a limited edition, 50 copies each, of three superb black & white prints by Kathryn herself, illustrating **The Hound of the Baskervilles**: 'Baskerville Hall, 'An Enormous Coal Black Hound' and 'A Hound It Was...' Each costs £15.00 including postage (US airmail \$30.00), or £40.00 the three (US \$80.00). Cheques should be payable to The Northern Musgraves.

(*A note on prices: if I quote a price only in pounds or only in dollars, it's because I have no other information.*)

Following the success of the Sherlock Holmes cartoon exhibition in May, Deirdre Keetley's Studio Gallery (50 Caledonian Road, King's Cross, London N1 9DP; phone 071-837 9947; fax 071-278 2396) has plans for a larger one. More on this as it reaches me. Deirdre's own meticulous work, in a variety of media, can be seen and purchased at the Sherlock Holmes pub (10 Northumberland Street, London WC2), the Sherlock Holmes Hotel (Baker Street, London W1M 1LB) and elsewhere. Another versatile artist is Cathy Childs (Sherlock & Co. Ltd, 1510 Lake Drive, Grand Island, FL 32735, USA; phone 904 669 6419) who offers a wide range of portraits, caricatures, stationery and other collectibles, as well as her book, a cartoonist's look at **The Bits Watson Doesn't Tell Us** (available direct from Cathy at £18.15; be warned, this isn't a children's book). Write to her for a list, but do send IRCs or stamps to cover postage.

On the 15th October 1894 Arthur Conan Doyle arrived at Union Station, Indianapolis, Indiana, while on a literary speaking tour of the USA. On the 15th October 1994 the Illustrious Clients of Indianapolis dedicated a memorial to Sir Arthur in the Great Hall of the station. Information about the project can be had from Donald E. Curtis, 6137 Meridian, West Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46208, USA. The Conan Doyle (Crowborough) Establishment and Crowborough Lions are producing a Christmas card in an edition of 500, reproducing a watercolour by Bill Pickering of Windlesham in Victorian winter snow, with carol singers. Price is 25p each or £2.25 for 10; your name and address will be printed on the card, as well as the Establishment's imprint. Cheques should be payable to 'ACD Memorial Fund', and orders sent to Malcolm Payne, 4 Wealden Close, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 2ST. The Northern Musgraves also have their own Christmas card,

in an edition of 300: this year's features a nice drawing by Colin Langeveld of Holmes gazing through the frosted window of his Baker Street sitting-room at the night sky on Christmas Eve, 1895. A pack of 5 costs: UK £3.60; Europe £4.60; USA (airmail) \$12.00. Cheques should be payable to The Northern Musgraves (dollar checks can be accepted), and orders sent to Anne Jordan, Fairbank, Beck Lane, Bingley, West Yorks. BD16 4DN.

The Shoso-in Bulletin has quickly established itself among the leading international Holmesian journals. No. 4 contains a wealth of admirable articles, serious and light, from America, Australia, Britain, Canada, France, Japan, Spain and Switzerland. (The cover design is a lovely Japanisation of the cover of **The Sherlock Holmes Journal**.) Hirayama Yuichi and Keith Webb have done us proud. **The Shoso-in Bulletin** is available from Hirayama Yuichi BSI, The Men With The Twisted Konjo, 2-10-12 Kamirenjaku, Mitaka-shi, Tokyo 181, Japan, for US \$10.00 cash. Or it can be had for £6.00 from John Hall, 20 Drury Avenue, Horsforth, Leeds LS18 4BR (cheques payable to John Hall).

The Northern Musgraves' next meeting will be the Birthday Celebration at the Huddersfield Hotel on the 28th January. The Musgraves plan a 3rd 'Aspects of Holmes' weekend from the 6th to the 8th May 1995, at the Scandic Crown Hotel in Edinburgh. The full package including accommodation and two dinners costs £178.00/\$270.00 per person; single room supplement is £10.00/\$15.00. Details can be had from David Stuart Davies, Overdale, 69 Greenhead Road, Huddersfield HD1 4ER. On Sunday the 30th October the Franco-Midland Hardware Company will visit the Black Country Museum in Dudley and the Sherlock Holmes pub in Coseley (The Stock-broker's Clerk, 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU). On the 5th & 6th November the Irregular Special Railway Company will have a Golden Pince-Nez Steam Weekend in Kent and Sussex (Dr Antony Richards, 163 Marine Parade, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 2RB).

Periodicals of interest received since DM 144. **The Shoso-in Bulletin** no. 4 (see above). **The Musgrave Papers** no. 7 (The Northern Musgraves, Overdale, 69 Greenhead Road, Huddersfield HD1 4ER) (*solid, chunky, something Holmesians can really get their teeth into*); **The Petrel Flyer** September & October 1994 (The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia. Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C. V7P 3C6, Canada) (*'The Case of the Five Orange Pimps' in the Sept. issue is hilarious, and the 6th Sherlympiad, reported in the Oct. issue, must have been great fun*); **The New Baker Street Pillar Box** vol. 19 (The Franco-Midland Hardware Company, The Stock-broker's Clerk, 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU) (*full of fascinating and scholarly material*); **Communication** no. 142 (The Pleasant Places of Florida, Dr Benton Wood BSI, Box 740, Ellenton, FL 34222, USA); **Newsletter** no. 10 (The Irregular Special Railway Company, Dr Antony Richards, 163 Marine Parade, Leigh-on-sea, Essex SS9 2RB); **Baker Street Gazette Journal** vol. 13 no. 44 (Baskervilles Restaurant, Grosvenor Resort, Lake Buena Vista, Walt Disney World, Florida); **Sherlockiana** no. 2 1994 (Sherlock Holmes Klubben i Danmark, Bjarne Nielsen BSI, Hestehavevej 30, DK-4572 Nr. Asmindrup, Denmark) (*thanks to Ian Wilkes for these last two*); **Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press** September 1994 (Peter E. Blau BSI, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA) (*the Sherlockian newsletter*).

