

THE DISTRICT MESSENGER

The Newsletter of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London
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Something a little **recherché** to open our review section. Michael Ross has kindly sent a copy of **Sherlock Holmes: Detektivmodie in vier Aufzügen**, a play by Ferdinand Bonn, originally performed at the Berliner Theater in 1906 and now handsomely reprinted by Michael's own 'Baskerville Bücher' (Bendheide 65, 47906 Kempen, Germany) at DM24 or US\$16.00, including postage. (Payments by Eurocheque or in cash, please.) The text is in German, but there's a 16-page summary in English, as well as a nice selection of photos from the original production. If you thought British and American dramatists had taken liberties, get this: Holmes shares rooms with an unemployed piano-teacher named Forbs; their landlady is a Mrs Chease; the comic police inspectors are named Knox and Smallweed... And so it goes. It's fascinating stuff, and Michael is to be congratulated on introducing a new generation to the work of Ferdinand Bonn. In 1995, 'Baskerville Bücher' will publish new editions of Bonn's **Der Hund von Baskerville** and **Die Tanzenden Manchen**, as well as **Ferdinand Bonn & Sherlock Holmes** by Michael Ross, and two listings: **Sherlockiana**, covering German Sherlock Holmes publications, and **Sherlockiana Dramatika**. Those last three have text in German and English. If you write for information, I'm sure an International Reply Coupon will be appreciated.

A pastiche of another kind is **The Beekeeper's Apprentice: or On the Segregation of the Queen** by Laurie R. King (St Martin's Press, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010, USA; \$21.95), which investigates the supposition that the elderly Sherlock Holmes had befriended a bright young woman, recognising in her a fellow intellect. It's intelligent and well-written and rather different from the usual run of post-ACD Holmes stories. (*Please note: if I give dollar prices without qualification, the reference is to US dollars.*)

An attractive paperback edition of **The Oxford Sherlock Holmes** is now out in the World's Classics series (Oxford University Press, Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6DP; each volume £3.99/US\$5.95/Can\$6.95). Illustrations by F.D. Steele have replaced the enigmatic cover designs of the hardbacks, and the editors have worked hard to right errors in their introductions and notes ('ophthalmic' is now correctly spelled in **The Adventures...**), though there appears to be a line missing between the end of p. 281 and the start of p. 282 **in The Memoirs**. Owen Dudley Edwards and his team, Richard Lancelyn Green, Christopher Roden and the late W.W. Robson, deserve our thanks. This is as near as we're likely to get to a definitive edition. A pity the paperbacks didn't appear first, so that the revised versions would have been available in the more expensive and durable hardback.

Courage Classics (Running Press, Glen House, 200-208 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 9LA) have published **Sherlock Holmes Reader**, by Arthur Conan Doyle, containing eight stories, chosen and introduced by Christopher Clausen. There's also a sensible essay by Clausen, taken from his book **The Moral Imagination: Essays on Literature and Ethics**, and a relevant section from Conan Doyle's **Memories and Adventures**. At £4.99 for a nicely produced hardback, it's a bargain - as, by the look of things, are the other Courage

Classics.

The Great Adventures of Sherlock Holmes by Arthur Conan Doyle, a Puffin Classic, contains eight stories, five from **The Return of Sherlock Holmes** and three from **The Adventures**. (Penguin Books, 27 Wrights Lane, London W8 5TZ; £3.50) It's unclear whether this is a different book from the **Puffin Sherlock Holmes**, announced for January. The Puffin edition of **The Hound of the Baskervilles** was re-issued in September at £2.99. Bloomsbury Books (42 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1B 3QT) has issued **The Penguin Complete Sherlock Holmes** in hardback at £4.99 - cheaper than Penguin's paperback. This is the old Doubleday-Doran edition, with the introduction by Christopher Morley.

Sherlock Publications (6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hampshire PO14 3RU) continue their busy schedule. **The Company Canon** aims to reprint each canonical story in a definitive, annotated version. **Alphabetically, My Dear Watson** by Philip Weller is a listing of all the named characters in the canon, with a summary of each. **Sherlock Holmes & Air-Guns** by Philip Weller speaks for itself. Non-members of the Franco-Midland Hardware Company can have them at the following prices; **The Company Canon - EMPT** UK £3.50, Europe £4.00/\$8.00, world £5.00/\$10.00; **The Company Canon - THOR** UK £4.00, Europe £4.50/\$9.00, world £5.50/\$11.00; **Alphabetically, My Dear Watson** UK £6.00, Europe £6.50/\$13.00, world £7.50/\$15.00; **Sherlock Holmes & Air-Guns** UK £4.50, Europe ££5.00/\$10.00, world £6.00/\$12.00. Sterling cheques should be payable to Sherlock Publications; dollar payments in cash - no cheques (or checks). Dr Benton Wood, Chaplain to the BSI, has compiled **Mycroft's Puzzle Book**, available from Ben (Box 740, Ellenton, FL 34222, USA) at \$7.50 or \$10.00 for foreign orders.

I'm delighted to pass on the news that Europe's premier Holmesian dealer is up and running again. After their recent marriage, Paula (formerly Kirby) and Dixon Smith have issued **Rupert Books catalogue no. 11**. There's a good morning's reading just in the catalogue, which can be obtained by writing to Rupert Books, 58/59 Stonefield, Bar Hill, Cambridge CB3 8TE (phone 01954 781861). The Black Cat Bookshop (36-39 Silver Arcade, Leicester LE1 5FB) has issued its 5th Sherlock Holmes & Conan Doyle catalogue, full of familiar and less familiar goodies. Please send (UK) £1.00, or (overseas) \$5.00/DM5.00 or 6 IRCs. US and German currency in cash, please.

Other new and forthcoming books. Last month Pavilion Books (26 Upper Ground, London SE1 9PD) published Matthew Bunson's **Encyclopedia of Sherlock Holmes: A Complete Guide to the World of the Great Detective** (£17.99). (*Pavilion have also published Terry Jones & Brian Froud's **Lady Cottington's Pressed Fairy Book**.) **The Adventures of Mycroft Holmes: Sherlock Holmes' Brother** by Quinn Fawcett came last month from Shapolsky Publishers Inc. (136 W. 22nd Street, New York, NY 10011, USA), available in the UK at £14.99. In February, Pan Books (Cavaye Place, London SW10 9PG) will issue **The Sherlock Holmes IQ Book** by E. Butler, at £4.99. This month Chivers Press (Windsor Bridge Road, Bath BA2 3AX) published **The Hound of the Baskervilles** in large print, at £6.95; Chivers have also put out large print editions of June Thomson's **The Secret Chronicles of Sherlock Holmes** (£11.95) and **The Secret Files of Sherlock Holmes** (£9.45). Prima Publishing (3875 Atherton Road, Rocklin, CA 95765) have issued **Sherlock Holmes Consultant Detective: The Official Strategy Guide** by Bruce Shelley, available here at £18.49.

The Wordsworth Classics 3-volume edition of the canon will appear in hard covers next year, starting with **The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes** in May

(Wordsworth Editions Ltd, Cumberland House, Crib Street, Ware, Herts. SG12 9ET; £3.99 each volume). (Next month Wordsworth will issue **Sir Nigel** in paperback at £1.00, to be followed in April by **The Lost World**, also £1.00.) In December, the White Eagle Publishing Trust (New Lands, Brewells Lane, Liss, Hants. GU33 7HY) will publish **Arthur Conan Doyle's Book of the Beyond**, edited by Ivan Cooke, a new edition of **The Return of Arthur Conan Doyle** (£7.95).

Some more American books. **The Game Is Afoot: Parodies, Pastiches & Ponderings of Sherlock Holmes** edited by Marvin Kaye (St Martin's Press, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010; \$23.95) is the most ambitious thing of its kind since Ellery Queen's **The Misadventures of Sherlock Holmes** in 1944. Greenwood has published **Adventures of the Detected Detective: Sherlock Holmes in James Joyce's Finnegans Wake** (I can't find an address or a price for this one). **Classic Mysteries of Sherlock Holmes** is \$18.95 from Longmeadow Press (PO Box 10218, 201 High Ridge Road, Stamford, CT 06904). Southern Illinois University Press (PO Box 3697, Carbondale, IL 62902-3697) has published **Whatever Happened to Sherlock Holmes? Detective Fiction, Popular Theology and Society** by Robert S. Paul, at \$24.95. From Anchorage Press (PO Box 8067, New Orleans, LA 70182) comes **The Death and Life of Sherlock Holmes** by Suzan L. Zeder (\$5.50). Jack Tracy's Gaslight Publications (112 East Second, Bloomington, IN 47401) has issued **Myth and Modern Man in Sherlock Holmes: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and the Uses of Nostalgia** by David S. Payne (\$24.95). Finally (for now) Bruce Eder's **Sherlock Holmes: The Rathbone Casebook** is still listed as in print from Windsong Publishing Inc. (PO Box 2978, Staunton, VA 24401) at \$14.95. Has anyone ever seen a copy?

The Autumn 1994 issue of the **Sherlock Holmes Gazette** is just out, with a shop price of £1.95. The cover design, featuring the familiar profile of Peter Cushing, is more tasteful and less bitty than on recent issues. There are full, touching tributes to Cushing (by David Stuart Davies) and John Bennett Shaw (by Paula Brown). A good essay on Holmes' London by Martin Pallant is complemented by a specially commissioned map. There's a nice piece about the new exhibition of Sherlockian cartoons at Deirdre Keetley's Studio Gallery (50 Caledonian Road, King's Cross, London N1; phone 071-837 9947 - the exhibition runs until the 30th November, and features the work of a lot of brilliant cartoonists; some may still be unsold). "Collectors' Corner" begins, with a look at the gasogene and the tantalus. There's a round-up of societies' activities. And there's more besides. A 4-issue subscription is £14.00 (Europe and Eire £18.00/FF140/SF38; Middle East, USA, Canada, South America £21.00/\$35.00; Australia, New Zealand, Japan £22.00) from 46 Purfield Drive, Wargrave, Berks. RG10 8AR. The USA representatives are Classic Specialties, PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219.

Geoff Bradley's magazine **CADS: Crime And Detective Stories** continues to fascinate. There's usually something specifically Holmesian, but the coverage of the crime/detective genre makes it well worth our attention even when there isn't. No. 24 is just out; the smart typesetting and reproduction is a world away from the magazine's simple beginnings, and the new production format makes it much more manageable. Cost is £4.00 including postage in the UK; ask Geoff about overseas rates. (9 Vicarage Hill, South Benfleet, Essex SS7 1PA.)

The Eastern Angles Theatre Company's Christmas treat this year is **Sherlock Holmes and the Curse of the Mummy's Tomb** by Julian Harries, running at the Sir John Mills Theatre, Gatacre Road, Ipswich IP1 2LQ (0473 211498) from

Thursday 8th December to Saturday 7th January. Holmes and Watson travel from Suffolk to Egypt, 'to unravel a bizarre mystery involving missing treasure, a kidnapped archaeologist, ancient mummies and the wrath of an ancient deity.' The **East Anglian Daily Times** said of last year's Lord Peter Wimsey play: 'A real Christmas Cracker. To see it is pure enjoyment.' Prices start at £7.00.

Bert Coules sends the latest information from Broadcasting House. The first four stories in the Radio 4 **Return of Sherlock Holmes** will be repeated on Wednesday evenings (not Sunday, as before) at 8.45, from the 30th November to the 21st December; then there'll be a break until the 25th January, when the next four start. The final six stories from **The Casebook** are being recorded for transmission on Wednesday afternoons at 2.02, beginning with 'Thor Bridge' on the 1st March and ending with 'The Retired Colourman' on the 5th April. The casting includes: Harriet Walter as Eugenia Ronder, Robin Ellis as Professor Presbury, Charlotte Attenborough as Grace Dunbar, William Hootkins as Neil Gibson, and George Cole as Josiah Amberley. 'Stephen Thorne and John Hartley return as Lestrade and Mycroft in cameo roles in "The Retired Colourman".'

There's no definite news yet of the Radio 4 **His Last Bow** coming out on cassette, but there are other issues to keep us occupied. The big news is that our own Society has produced two cassettes of unabridged readings by our Honorary Member Douglas Wilmer: '**The Speckled Band**' and '**The Devil's Foot**' and '**The Musgrave Ritual**' and '**Charles Augustus Milverton**'. Copies can be had from the Society's Merchandising Officer, Lynne Godden (Apple Tree Cottage, Smarden, Kent TN27 8QE) at £5.50 each including postage (Europe £5.75; USA \$11.50; rest of world £6.50). Cheques should be payable to the Sherlock Holmes Society of London, All involved in the recordings are extremely enthusiastic.

The Edward Petherbridge/David Peart recordings from The Drama Collection should be in the shops as follows: A **Study in Scarlet** (DC513), **Sherlock Holmes: Four Adventures** (DC514), **The Valley of Fear** (DC517). If you can't find them, try contacting Independent Radio Drama Productions, PO Box 518, Manningtree, Essex CO11 1XD; phone 0206 395795. Presumably intended as in-car entertainment is a double cassette from MCI Spoken Word (Music Collection International Ltd, 36-38 Caxton Way, Watford WD1 8UF). **The Return of Sherlock Holmes: 'The Musgrave Ritual' and 'The Second Stain'** (TALKMC 023) contains the soundtracks of the Granada TV films with additional narration. TALKMC 024 is forthcoming; no more details. Next month sees the release of **The Sherlock Holmes Collection**, readings by Basil Rathbone (HarperCollins Audiobooks, 77-85 Fulham Palace Road, Hammersmith, London W6 8JB; £7.99).

The Sherlock Holmes Gift Pack, launching the 'Golden Days of Radio' series, should be in the shops now. It contains six tapes from Harry Alan Towers' 1954 radio plays with John Gielgud and Ralph Richardson as Holmes and Watson (Hodder Headline Audiobook, 338 Euston Road, London NW1 3BH; £19.99). The three double-cassettes will be released separately next year at £7.99 each. Philip Attwell sends an ad for The Audio Book Collection (Freepost (BA 1686/1), Bath BA2 3SZ; phone free on 0800 136 919), which appears to be a sort of book club dealing exclusively with Chivers' high-quality, unabridged talking books. One of those on special offer at £9.95 + postage is **Morse's Greatest Mystery and other stories** by Colin Dexter. One of the other stories is an excellent parody-pastiche called 'A Case of Mis-Identity'. Catherine Cooke alerts me to a CD called **The Composer Conducts** (EMI Classics: COM 7 64718 2), digitally remastered recordings by Alan Rawsthorne, John Addinsell,

Arthur Bliss, Malcolm Arnold - and Richard Arnell, who conducts his own **Great Detective Ballet Suite**.

John English Gifts Ltd (6 Princes Arcade, Piccadilly, London SW1Y 6DS; phone 071-437 2082) has a good deal of Sherlock Holmes memorabilia in stock, including a lovely hand-painted chess set at £164.50, a nice nine-inch caricature figurine by Cloudside Studios ('The Detective') at £48.95, the miniature edition of Malcolm Cooper's model of the Sherlock Holmes Pub at £19.95, and the Bosson's wall masks at £21.95 each (*we have seen these cheaper elsewhere in London*).

Smith Gryphon (Swallow House, 11-12 Northdown Street, London N1 9BN) has issued the controversial **The Diary of Jack the Ripper** in paperback at £5.99 (not £4.99 as noted in DM 144). The editor and commentator Shirley Harrison has Colin Wilson's support for this updated edition of her thesis: he says, 'Maybrick is far and away the most likely Ripper candidate so far.' Personally I find the implied coincidence (that the most infamous murderer of Victorian times should himself be the victim in a sensational murder case) rather hard to swallow.

Not quite Sherlockian, but worth considering as a Christmas present for intelligent children (and adults) is **The Mystery of the Russian Ruby: a pop-up whodunnit** by Iain Smyth (Orchard Books, 96 Leonard Street, London EC2A 4RH; £12.99). The ingenious construction of the book is capped by the fact that having once solved (or failed to solve) the case, the reader can substitute a new set of clues, leading to a new solution - there are three in all. Past Times, which now has 38 shops in addition to the mail-order business, stocks an amazing variety of Victoriana, and even a certain amount of Holmesiana, You could have a wholly Victorian Christmas, catered exclusively by Past Times. Write or phone for a catalogue (Past Times, Witney, Oxford OX8 6BH; 0993 779339). Hawkin & Co. (St Margaret, Harleston, Norfolk IP20 OPJ) is a mail-order firm specialising in 'curiosities and oddities, scraps and masks, party toys and stockingfillers, tin toys for collectors'. There are things in Hawkin's catalogue that you've never heard of, and even more things that you didn't know were still made. Lots of ideas for Christmas presents.

Gerit Stenitzer spotted a report in a German newspaper that the conflict continues between the Abbey National, whose HQ covers the address that would be numbered 221 Baker Street and has for 60 years answered Sherlock Holmes' mail, and the proprietor of the Sherlock Holmes Museum, located at 239 Baker Street, who thinks that he should have the right to the number 221B. Catherine Cooke has kindly provided some details. John Aidiniantz has claimed that because Westminster City Council won't renumber the street he's unable to set up a mail-order business which would employ disabled people. 'There is now no home on Baker Street for Sherlock Holmes. He is being kicked out of Baker Street because the council does not want to put his address up in the street legally,' he said; and later: 'But if we cannot have the address we cannot have the mail order business.' The council considers it wrong to allocate a street number for commercial purposes, and Dame Jean Conan Doyle opposes the museum's plan because she does not want to encourage the idea that Holmes is a real person. Grace Riley, a director of the museum, said: 'If he had really existed, Sherlock Holmes would be turning in his grave at the thought of a bunch of money-lenders answering his mail.' The museum has persuaded Nigel Griffiths, MP for an Edinburgh constituency, to draft a private member's bill requiring Parliament to reverse Westminster's decision.

(*This

coincides eerily with the publication of a scathing report on the museum in **Baker Street Miscellanea** no. 76.*)

The Baker Street Irregulars will hold their annual dinner on Friday 6th January. I wish we could be there - maybe in 1996. It'll be the usual packed weekend, including that admirable feature, 'the annual reception for all Sherlockians and their friends' held at 24 Fifth Avenue on the afternoon of 7th January. Tickets are \$35.00 per person (checks payable to the Baker Street Irregulars) from Donald Novorsky, 5182 Mahoning NW, Warren, OH 44483, USA. Our Society's dinner on Saturday 14th January will be followed by a 'morning after' meeting at the Museum Tavern, jointly hosted by the Northern Musgraves.

The Franco-Midland Hardware Company's AGM and Christmas Social will be held in Winchester on Saturday 3rd December ('The Stock-broker's Clerk', 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. P014 3RU). The Priory Scholars will celebrate in Leicester the next day (Horace L. Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 OFY). The Poor Folk Upon the Moors will hold their AGM and Christmas Dinner at the Two Bridges Hotel, Princetown, Dartmoor, on Saturday 10th December (Clare Taylor, 2 Lynbridge Court, Chapel Street, Tavistock, Devon PL19 8DX). The FMHC has plans for the 7th January, too: 'Disjecta Membra V will be a coach excursion from London to 'Birlstone Manor'.

Periodicals recently received: **Baker Street Miscellanea** no. 76 (211 Church Road, Winnetka, IL 60093, USA) (*The final issue of one of the great Sherlockian journals. It's good to note that the British were there to the end. Thanks are due Don Pollock and his merry band for their hard work in putting BSM together for 76 issues.*); **The Torr** no. 5 (The Poor Folk Upon The Moors, Clare Taylor, 2 Lynbridge Court, Chapel Street, Tavistock, Devon PL19 8DX) (*I love the cover design, incorporating a photo of Dartmoor.*); **Communication** no. 143 (The Pleasant Places of Florida, Dr Benton Wood, Box 740, Ellenton, FL 34222, USA); **The School Report** no. 19 (The Priory Scholars of Leicester, Horace L. Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 OFY); **The Army Medical Corps Gazette (of the Franco-Midland Health Dpt.)** no. 1, **Ironmongers Daily Echo and Franco-Midland Branches Advertiser** nos, 2, 3 and 4, and **The Ladies Standard Magazine** April 1894 (all from la Société Sherlock Holmes de France, Les Quincailliers de la Franco-Midland, 26 Avenue de la République, Paris XI, France) (*All in French, of course, and delightfully imaginative.*); **Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press** October 1994 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830) (*Peter sensibly reminds us that The **Baker Street Journal** is a must for all Sherlockians. An annual sub in the USA is \$17.50, and elsewhere \$20.00, from **The Baker Street Journal**, PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA.*)

The Compliments of the Season to all!

