

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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Stanley MacKenzie died on the 25th February, as I noted in DM 148. He was an early member of our Society, serving as joint hon. secretary in the early 1980s. In 1967 he was invested into the Baker Street Irregulars as "The Man with the Twisted Lip". Stanley was a man of the theatre (he acted as deputy stage manager for the RSC's production of **Sherlock Holmes** in 1974) and a collector to rival the late John Bennett Shaw. For 13 years he and I co-operated on the Society's annual film evening. He was polite, helpful, encouraging and infinitely knowledgeable. I miss him very much. (Francine & Wayne Swift tell us that Stanley MacKenzie's collection will be auctioned at Sotheby's in London on 13 July. The catalogue will be ready in June.)

Congratulations to **Andrew Jay Peck** ("Inspector Baynes, Surrey Constabulary", BSI), inducted on 31 March as US Magistrate Judge for the Southern District of New York.

Last week Constable & Co. Ltd (3 The Lanchesters, 162 Fulham Palace Road. London W6 9ER) put out **The Hound of the Baskervilles** as a Dover Thrift Edition at 95p. The type is clean and legible, the text seems to be free of errors, and all things considered it's a nice edition at a very good price. Bowling Green University Popular Press (Bowling-Green, OH 43403, USA) has published **In The Beginning: First Novels in Mystery Series** edited by Mary Jean DeMarr (hardback \$39.95, paperback \$17.95). This is another collection of essays exploring specific aspects of crime and detective stories, though it's less directly relevant to us than **It's a Print!** (reviewed in DM 147) as the Holmes canon is not one of those considered. Nevertheless, lovers of the genre will find it well worth while.

Dr Benton Wood, BSI & PPofF (Box 740, Ellenton, FL 34222, USA) has revised his book **Philatelic & Numismatic Holmes: A Handy Reference Guide to Sherlockian Stamps & Coins**. This new edition has full-colour illustrations (mostly) and covers all sorts of canonical connections. Price is \$10.00 in the USA, \$15.00 elsewhere, including postage (unless stated otherwise, dollar references in the DM are to US currency).

Ernest Dudley's revised acting edition of **The Return of Sherlock Holmes** appears today from Ian Henry Publications Ltd (20 Park Drive, Romford RM1 4LH) at £5.95 (+ 45p If ordered direct from the publisher). Ernest Dudley has retained the essence of the play written by Harold Terry & Arthur Rose for Eille Norwood (reviewed in DM 137), but has tightened it considerably, reducing the number of characters, and making it an attractive proposition for a competent amateur theatre company - or a professional one, for that matter. Certainly I'd very much like to see a production of **The Return of Sherlock Holmes**. Ian Henry also stocks a number of relevant American publications, including Jack Tracy's **Subcutaneously, My Dear Watson: Sherlock Holmes and the Cocaine Habit** (£10.00), Jon L, Lellenberg's **Nova 57 Minor: The Waxing & Waning of the 61st Adventure of Sherlock Holmes** (£20.00), **Schlock Homes: The Complete Bagel Street Saga** by Robert L. Fish (£26.00) and Michael Harrison's **A**

Study in Surmise: The Making of Sherlock Holmes (£20.00). Prices exclude postage.

Malcolm Payne tells me that **The History of the Crowborough Beacon Golf Club**, containing much about ACD, is now available from the Secretary, Crowborough Beacon Golf Club, Beacon Road, Crowborough, East Sussex (phone 01892 661511). Price is £11.00, which does include postage.

The spring issue of **The Sherlock Holmes Gazette** is out, with a shop price of £1.95. The attractive cover bears an excellent drawing by Tom Rieschick of Jeremy Brett & Edward Hardwicke. David Stuart Davies reports on the BSI dinner in January and the associated New York festivities; there is an interview with Otto Penzler by Tim Yarro; John Hall responds to last issue's dismissive comments about "scholars"; Robert Coffen contributes a curious apocryphal tale; "Collector's Corner" looks at teddy bears and dolls - all this and more! Subscriptions or correspondence should be addressed to 46 Purfield Drive, Wargrave, Berks. RG10 8AR. The American representative is Classic Specialties of PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA.

More books. Anchorage Press (Kenyon-Deane Ltd, 10 Station Road Industrial Estate, Colwall, Malvern, Worcs. WR13 6RN) has published **The Death and Life of Sherlock Holmes: A Play Based upon the Stories of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle** (£5.00). Val Andrews' new novel **Sherlock Holmes and the Houdini Birthright** is out from Breese Books Ltd (164 Kensington Park Road, London W11 2ER; £5.99) (*I've heard that Val's long-awaited **Silver Vengeance** has been published by Magico, of PO Box 156, New York, NY 10002, USA, but have no further details.*) Bounty Books (Michelin House, 81 Fulham Road, London SW3 6RB) have issued **Sherlock Holmes - Illustrated Short Stories** at £4.99. Michael Coren's **The Life of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle** is due in November from Bloomsbury Publishing Ltd (2 Soho Square. London W1V 5DE), price £20.00.

Sherlock Publications (6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU) have a catalogue of publications available. Send two 1st class stamps (in UK) or two International Reply Coupons or one US dollar bill if you want a copy.

Jack Tracy (Gaslight Publications, 2309 Wilmington Way, Las Vegas, NV 89102-5989, USA) says, "You will be happy to know that we have just signed a world-wide distribution agreement with Empire Publishing, a British-owned organisation with a major centre in Los Angeles, and that all Gaslight's works will soon be available from any bookstore through British distribution sources. It will no longer be necessary for individuals or stores to write all the way to the States for any of our titles."

Catherine Cooke (**The Sherlock Holmes Collection**, Marylebone Library, Marylebone Road. London NW1 5PS; phone 0171-798 1205; fax 0171-798 1019) tells me that she can now accept enquiries over the Internet. The e-mail address is: c.cooke@bbcnc.org.uk.

Bob Ellis sends a catalogue from Conquistador (158 Kent House Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1JY; phone 0181-659 9714): **Thriller Picture Library, Classics Illustrated**, and numerous other comics, including various interpretations of Sherlock Holmes. The catalogue is free, but the comics come pretty expensive! Geoff Bradley's magazine **CADS** (Crime And Detective Stories) has reached its quarter-century. The 25th issue features material on Rex Stout, Sara Paretsky, Freeman Wills Crofts, and

a vast range of other writers, books and characters. Information from G.H. Bradley, 9 Vicarage Hill, South Benfleet, Essex SS7 1PA.

More good news from Malcolm Payne: since leaving the Cross Hotel, the **Conan Doyle (Crowborough) Establishment** has been offered accommodation for its collection in the Victorian dairy at **Groombridge Place**. The house was well known to ACD, and is generally recognised as the "real" Birlstone Manor. The owner, Andrew de Candole, opens the gardens and wooded estate on weekends and bank holidays in April and May, daily except Thursday and Friday from June to September, and the first two weekends in October. Regular events are planned, and special events can be accommodated. For details, contact The Estate Office, Groombridge Place, Tunbridge Wells TN3 9QG; phone/fax 01892 863999. Malcolm Payne acts as contact for The Conan Doyle (Crowborough) Establishment, at 4 Wealden Close, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 2ST; phone 01892 653021. The Establishment offers associate membership, with various privileges, for a minimum annual donation of £10.00.

At 1.00 pm on Saturday 22 April Philip Weller will be at Southampton Civic Centre to give an illustrated talk on Conan Doyle, Sherlock Holmes and their connections with Hampshire. Admission is free.

Catherine Cooke reports that there is now a **Holmes Restaurant** in Baker Street - that's Baker Street, Weybridge! (Holmes Restaurant, 20 Baker Street, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 8AU; phone 01932 851333.) The menu looks tempting.

Bob Ellis passes on some publicity from our member Rachel Powell for **Sherlock Holmes Country Tours**, who offer a two-day break in Holmesian and Doylean Sussex based at Deans Place, Alfriston. The cost is £220.00. (Rachel Powell, Sherlock Holmes Country Tours, 2A Cockshut Road, Lewes, East Sussex; phone 01273 473683; fax 01273 771146.) Peter Padwick & Christine Ball's **Mystery, Suspense & Slaughter Weekends** come impressively recommended. They're taking place at hotels throughout England, at prices from £84.00 to £129.00. For details ring 0181-367 6793.

In a joke & novelty shop in Colchester we recently found a Taiwanese-made **Sherlock Holmes Pipe** for £1.20, a full-sized plastic "calabash", surprisingly convincing from a short distance. It would do well as a theatrical prop. The importers are R.H. Smith & Sons, Lincs. DR21 2HX.

Lynda Henderson, responding to "Collectors' Corner" in the spring issue of **The Sherlock Holmes Gazette**, tells of Dean's Replica Bears, limited edition teddy bears made by Dean's Rag Book Co. Ltd of Pontypool, Gwent. The range includes a very handsome **Mycroft**, who stands 16" tall and is copied (in a limited edition of 500) from a wartime original bought at Christie's in 1993, Despite the name, his costume is actually Sherlockian rather than Mycroftian!

I learn from Peter Blau that Bert Coules (Fairway, Sandling Road, Saltwood, Hythe, Kent CT21 4QJ) is offering copies of his scripts from the BBC Radio 4 Merrison/Williams series. Those available are: "A Scandal in Bohemia", "The Boscombe Valley Mystery", "The Blue Carbuncle", "The Noble Bachelor" "Silver Blaze", "The Crooked Man", "The Final Problem", "The Empty House", "The Norwood Builder", "The Dancing Men", "The Solitary Cyclist", "Charles Augustus Milverton", "The Six Napoleons", "The Second Stain", "Wisteria Lodge", "The Bruce-Partington Plans", "The Devil's Foot", "His Last Bow" "The Illustrious Client", "The Mazarin

Stone", "The Sussex Vampire", "Thor Bridge", "The Lion's Mane" and "The Retired Colourman" (each £12.00 or £14.00 airmail; or Bert will take US dollar currency: \$19.00 or \$22.00; or dollar checks: \$28.86 or \$30.02). In addition, **A Study in Scarlet**, **The Sign of the Four** and **The Hound of the Baskervilles** (the last broadcast with Roger Rees and Crawford Logan) each cost double.

I remarked in DM 148 that the first part of **The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes** was currently being broadcast. Wrong! It was, of course, the second part, and it's now concluded. Thanks to Bert Coules. Clive Merrison & Michael Williams have played Holmes & Watson in all 56 of the short stories. Let's hope they're given the chance to complete the set with **The Hound of the Baskervilles** and **The Valley of Fear**. A repeat of **The Return** is currently being broadcast on Radio 4 on Wednesday evenings.

Back in Sussex for the moment, those resident in or near that lovely county will be interested to know of **The Lion's Maners**, "The Sussex Sherlock Holmes Study Group". The Membership Secretary is Russell Markham (6 Crede Lane, Bosham, Chichester, W. Sussex PO10 8TR; phone 01243 572475), and the Meetings Secretary is Melvyn Stinson (Downsview, Southease, Lewes, E. Sussex BN7 3HX; phone 01273 472523).

The Northern Musgraves' next meeting will be **Aspects of Holmes III: Study in Scotland**, held in Edinburgh over the weekend of the 6th - 8th May (details from David Stuart Davies, Overdale, 69 Greenhead Road, Huddersfield HD1 4SR). On the weekend of the 14th - 17th April the Baskerville Hounds and the Grimpen Post Office have their **Easter Pack Meet** on Dartmoor ("The Kennel Maid", 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU.) The Franco-Midland Hardware Company's **Works Outing** will be an investigation of "Thor Bridge", based on Portsmouth over the weekend 28th - 30th April.

Periodicals received. **Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press**, March 1995 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA) (*the invaluable international newsletter*); **The Hurlstone Chronicle** vol. 5 no. 3 (The Shadows of the Elm, PO Drawer G, Corrales, NM 87048-0178, USA) (*an exceptionally lively young group in the wilds of New Mexico*); **Ironmongers Daily Echo** 20 & 22 February 1895 (*sic*) (La Société Sherlock Holmes de France, Thierry Saint-Joanis, 25 avenue de la République, Paris XI, France) (*one of the most delightfully designed news-sheets I've come across*).

To continue: **Communication** no. 147 & no. 148 (The Pleasant Places of Florida, Dr Benton Wood, Box 740, Ellenton, FL 34222) (*light-hearted fun, always strong on Sherlockian philately: see the note about Ben Wood's new book on p.1 above*); **The Cormorant's Ring** vol. 2 no. 1 'The Trained Cormorants of Long Beach, Jim Coffin, 6570 E. Paseo Alcazaa, Anaheim Hills, CA 92807, USA) '*contains a fascinating apocryphal snippet from 1906*); **Irregular Special Railway Company Newsletter** no. 12 (The Irregular Special Railway Company, Dr Antony Richards. 163 Marine Parade, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 2RB) (*Antony can be contacted directly at PO Box 221, Cambridge CBS 8XT*).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. J. A.', written in a cursive style.