

THE DISTRICT MESSENGER

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

no. 154 30th September 1995

Jeremy Brett died on the 12th September, not of a broken heart, but of an overworked heart. He had come to terms with his precarious condition, and knew that his only chance of cardiac stability was a heart transplant, an option he had considered and rejected. The cardiomyopathy was not correctly diagnosed until comparatively late, but it was this rather than his manic-depression that made his later performances as Sherlock Holmes so uneven, though the tabloids made the most of the latter. Jeremy Brett played Holmes in 41 television productions and one stage play. For more than three-quarters of the time he was a great Sherlock Holmes. In Pace Requiescat.

The next issue of **The Sherlock Holmes Gazette** will be a Jeremy Brett memorial issue. Look out for it.

Admirers of John Doubleday's famous statue of Holmes in Meiringen, Switzerland, will be pleased to learn that the sculptor has been persuaded to produce a miniature version in cold-cast bronze on a mahogany base. The height of the statuette, without the base, is 6½" (160mm), and the price is a maximum of £77.55 including VAT (plus postage of £4.45 = total £82.00). It's available from Albert Kunz, 20 Highfield Road, Chislehurst, Kent BR7 6QZ (phone 01689 836256). Cheques should be payable to A. Kunz; they won't be cashed until the statuettes are sent out.

As mentioned in the last DM, Calabash Press (Barbara & Christopher Roden, Ashcroft, 2 Abbotsford Drive, Penyffordd, Chester CH4 0JG) will issue its first publication on 15th October, **The Tangled Skein** by David Stuart Davies, whose first, very limited edition is no longer obtainable. What starts as a direct sequel to **The Hound of the Baskervilles** rapidly becomes even darker and stranger, as Holmes and Watson find themselves facing the lord of the un-dead, Count Dracula. Instead of slotting Conan Doyle's characters into Bram Stoker's plot, David has created a completely new story as a sort of alternative, taking place in London and on Dartmoor. The result is a rattling good tale, excellently told. (Movie fans might enjoy spotting the allusions to **A Study in Terror**, **The Brides of Dracula** and a Rathbone film that I can't for the moment place.) The book is produced to the Rodens' invariable high standards, with an attractively Victorian type-face and atmospheric illustrations by Kathryn White and Paul Lowe. You can reserve copies from Calabash at £14.95 (US\$24.50; Cdn\$33.00).

Eddie Maguire (63 Wellington Road, Bridgwater, Somerset TA6 5EZ) has imported copies of a booklet called **The Old Age of Holmes**, being a facsimile of a rare early parody that appeared in **The Cincinnati Commercial Gazette** on 2nd December 1894. Paul D. Herbert, who found it, has written an interesting introduction, pointing out the curious links between this spoof and "His Last Bow", published 23 years later. An oddity of more than historical interest, and worth the £2.65 asked.

Andrew Butler has produced a nice illustrated A4 booklet, **The Tragical Misty Row Tour**, resulting from the Cardboard Boxers' investigation of the murder

of Mary Browner (née Gushing) and Alec Fairbairn. This summary of Holmesian Liverpool and New Brighton costs £2.00 (UK) or US\$5.00 (cash) from 64 Frith Road, Croydon CRO 1TA. Philip Weller's **Sherlock Holmes and Air-Guns** was delayed by printing difficulties but has now appeared as a nicely illustrated 40-page A4 booklet. The author's professional expertise makes this probably the most important Holmesian monograph he has written. Details of price can be had from Sherlock Publications, 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hampshire PO14 3RU.

Baskerville Bücher (Michael Ross Verlag, Bendheide 65, 47906 Kempen, Germany) has published a 2nd, expanded edition of his centenary bibliography **Sherlockiana 1894-1994: Eine Bibliographische deutsch-sprachiger Sherlock-Holmes-Veröffentlichungen**. The text, including Peter Neugebauer's introduction, is in both German and English. Price is: DM58; SFr58; OS435; £26.00 (recommended); US\$44.00 (recommended). Baskerville publications are available from Michael Ross or from Rupert Books and other specialist booksellers. (*Michael asks if anyone knows the whereabouts of Denis O. Smith, author of **The Adventure of the Unseen Traveller** and four other well received Holmes stories in the mid-1980s. Please contact Michael if you can help.*)

Our local Asda store has copies of **Sherlock Holmes: The Short Stories** (Parragon Book Service Ltd, Unit 13-17, Avonbridge Trading Estate, Atlantic Road, Avonmouth, Bristol BS11 9QD). It's a good, solid paperback, and a considerable bargain at £1.99. Ian Wilkes reminds me that the Gaslight Publications listed in DM 153 (including Michael Harrison's **A Study in Surmise** and Jon L. Lellenberg's **Nova 57 Minor**) are distributed in Britain by Ian Henry Publications Ltd, 20 Park Drive, Romford RM1 4LH.

There are very appetising catalogues of Holmesiana & Doyleana newly available from Rupert Books (58/59 Stonefield, Bar Hill, Cambridge CB3 8TE) (*includes Val Andrews' **Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Silver Vengeance**, as by "W. Lane" at £15.00; published by Magico in 1993, but only now on sale, apparently*), Robert C. Hess (559 Potter Blvd, Brightwaters, NY 11718, USA) and Harrington Bros Antiquarian Booksellers (The Chelsea Antique Market, 253 King's Road, London SW3 5EL) (*prices go up to £4850.00*). Tim Clarke (Little Meadow, Kings Lane, Chipperfield, Herts. WD4 9EN; phone 01923 263745) has some Holmesiana for sale; contact him for details.

The Sherlock Holmes Joke Portfolio is now available from Cadds Printing Ltd (59 Lancaster Avenue, West Norwood. London SE27 9EL) at £20.00. Send a stamped & self-addressed envelope to Cadds for a copy of their 1996 catalogue; it's full of interest. Geoff Bradley's fine magazine **CADS** (that's Crime And Detective Stories) has reached its 26th issue. There's nothing of specific Holmesian relevance in this issue, but no lover of crime & detective fiction should be without **CADS**. (Details from Geoff at 9 Vicarage Hill, South Benfleet, Essex SS7 1PA.)

Christmas isn't that far off now. If you haven't yet treated yourself or a friend to a copy of **The Sherlock Holmes Video**, this would be a suitable occasion. The video, an affectionate and knowledgeable documentary, was very favourably reviewed in DM 147 (and in many other publications). It costs £12.99 (+ £1.00 postage in UK) for the PAL version; US\$30.00 or 3000 Yen for NTSC (+ \$5.30 shipping). Orders to Countryside TV Productions, Chargot Manor, Luxborough, Watchet, Somerset, TA23 OSL. Another Christmas present worth considering is membership of the celebrated Players' Theatre Club, London's classic Victorian Music Hall for more than 50 years. The theatre is situated under Charing Cross Station, opposite Sherlock Holmes

In The Arches and very close to The Sherlock Holmes Public House. Membership information can be had from The Players' Theatre, The Arches, Villiers Street, Strand, London WC2N 6NG (phone 0171-976 1308; fax 0171-839 8069). This year's pantomime, starting on 6th December, is J.R. Planché's **The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood**.

Don't forget that our own Society has a good deal of Holmesiana for sale, including 9 excellent books, back issues of **The Sherlock Holmes Journal**, SHSL umbrellas, and the new bow-tie (all available from the Merchandising Officer, Lynne Godden, Apple Tree Cottage, Smarden, Ashford, Kent TN27 8QE).

Sherlock Holmes: Tales of Intrigue is a two-cassette pack comprising "The Crooked Man", "The Greek Interpreter" and "The Naval Treaty" read by Edward Hardwicke. It's available from Tangled Web Audio (P.O. Box 700, Greenhurst, NY 14742-0700, USA) at the rather high price of \$16.95 plus \$5.00 postage (there are discounts for quantity). Wynne Howard Publishing (10 Betula Close, Kenley, Surrey CR8 SET), who issued Miles Elward's **Sherlock Holmes in Canterbury** (see DM 151), has imported six audio cassettes of stories from **The Adventures**. The twist is that these are in French! **Un Scandale en Bohème, L'Association des Hommes Roux, Un Cas d'Identité, Le Mystère de la Vallée de Boscombe, L'Aventure des Cinq Pepins d'Orange** and **L'Homme à la Lèvre Retrouvée** cost £8.95 each (+70p postage). There is a special price of £8.00 post-free to members of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London. (*Teachers may be interested in the special rates for schools.*)

ORCA, the Old-Time Radio Show Collectors' Association, is a wonderful source of information about (and recordings of) British, American and other radio shows, including the numerous Sherlock Holmes series. Enquiries should go to Maggie Monk at 9 The Gateways, Lowry Park, Swinton, Manchester M27 6LA. Another organisation that you may find interesting is the Oscar Wilde Society (14 Syke Ings, Richings Park, Iver, Bucks. SLO 9ET).

Philip Weller reminds me that the connection between Arthur Conan Doyle and Crowsley Park (see DM 153) had been noted as long ago as 1977 in Roger Robinson's essay "The Hound: Dartmoor or Oxfordshire?" in **The Sherlock Holmes Journal** vol. 13 no. 2. He adds, "The claim that ACD was a neighbour of the Baskervilles at Crowsley Park is, of course, an exaggeration, since, as Robinson correctly points out, ACD was only a visitor at the nearby Blackmoor's Farm." (*The Links Hotel at Cromer is where ACD and Fletcher Robinson were staying in 1931 when **The Hound of the Baskervilles** took shape. It's still an hotel, offering special winter breaks between 29th October and 28th March, including a Murder & Mystery Weekend. Details from FREEPOST IH3651, West Runton, Cromer, Norfolk NR27 9BR; phone 01263 838383; fax 01263 838264.*)

From 7th December to 30th March the Croydon Clocktower Museum and Galleries will stage a major exhibition called **The Sherlock Holmes Experience**. It's easy to forget that Norwood, where ACD used to live, is now a part of the Borough of Croydon, and the Borough is doing its former resident proud. "The displays will be a blend of three dimensional theatrical scenic work and props, along with special effects, lighting and sound, to blur the division between the reality of Conan Doyle's Victorian London and the fictional world of the sleuth. The sets include the scene of the crime, an inspector's office at Scotland Yard, a mortuary, Holmes' study and chemistry corner, Conan Doyle's study in Norwood." Admission will be £3.50 (concessions £1.75). Croydon Clocktower is in Katharine Street, Croydon CR9 1ET (phone 0181-253 1030; fax 0181-253 1003).

Our Society's next meeting will be the Annual Film Evening, at the Museum of London on Wednesday 25th October. This, the first arranged and presented by David Stuart Davies, will feature a tribute to Stanley MacKenzie. Over the weekend of the 13th-15th October the Baskerville Hounds' Annual Pack Meet will be based upon Ashburton in Devon (details from "The Kennel Maid", 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU). The Poor Folk Upon the Moors will hold a Social Pub Lunch on Saturday 14th October, at The Riverside Inn, Bovey Tracey, Devon (Shelley Philipson, 4 Dolvin Road, Tavistock, Devon PL19 9EA). On the same day, the Northern Musgraves' annual film meeting will be held at the Granada Studios Tour in Manchester under the title "Sherlock Holmes: Out of Time and Place" (The Northern Musgraves, Overdale, 69 Greenhead Road, Huddersfield HD1 4ER). The Glades of the New Forest and the Franco-Midland Hardware Company will hold a Historical Ramble in Southampton on Sunday 22nd October (details from Jane Weller, 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU - or "The Stock-broker's Clerk" at the same address).

Periodicals received: **The Soft-Nosed Bullet-In** no. 18 (Von Herder Airguns Ltd, Michael Ross, Bendheide 65, 47906 Kempen, Germany) (*includes the full English text of Heinz Schulte's address "German Humour? The Bitter Revenge of Mycroft Holmes"). **The Parallelogram** vol. 4 no. 20 (The Parallel Case of St Louis, Joseph J. Eckrich BSI, 914 Oakmoor, Fenton, MO 63026, USA) (*full of news and opinion*). **The Pleasant Places of Florida Communication** no. 153 & no. 154 (Dr Benton Wood BSI, Box 740 Ellenton, FL 34222, USA (*one of the most pleasantly light-hearted Holmesian publications I know*). **The School Report** no. 22 (The Priory Scholars of Leicester, Horace L. Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY) (*features a brief, perceptive look at descriptions of Canonical villains, by Ken Savary*). **Irregular Special Railway Company Newsletter** no. 14 (Dr Antony Richards, 163 Marine Parade, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 2RB) (*unlike most, this really is a newsletter, full of interest*).

More periodicals: **Annual Report 1995: The Thor Bridge Contract** (The Franco-Midland Hardware Company, "The Stock-broker's Clerk", 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU) (*the highlight is Philip Weller's geographical investigation, expanded from his essay in our Society's anthology **The Tri-Metallic Question***). **Prescott's Press** new series no. 20, December 1993 (sic) (Warren Randall, PO Box 610. Levittown, NY 11756-0710, USA) (*fiction, non-fiction and humour*). **The Musgrave Papers** no. 8 (The Northern Musgraves, Overdale, 69 Greenhead Road, Huddersfield HD1 4ER) (*the humour, contributed by the likes of Barry Took, Gahan Wilson, Jeff Decker and Auberon Redfearn, is balanced by sound scholarship from the likes of Paul M. Chapman, Grant Eustace and Christopher Roden*). **The Shoso-in Bulletin** vol. 5 (The Men with the Twisted Konjo, Dr Hirayama Yuichi BSI, 2-10-12 Kamirenjaku, Mitaka-shi, Tokyo 181, Japan) (*another superb collection of Holmesian scholarship, drawn from all over the world; it's available in the UK from John Hall, 20 Drury Avenue, Horsforth. Leeds L18 4BR, at £7.60 including postage; the USA distributor is Jennie C. Paton, 206 Loblolly Lane, Statesboro, GA 30458, and the cost is \$12.00; both Jennie and John have some back issues*). **Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press** August 1995 (Peter E. Blau BSI, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA).

