

# 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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If your subscription is due for renewal, please send several stamped & self-addressed envelopes, or (overseas) send £5.00 or US\$10.00 for 12 issues. Dollar checks should be payable to Jean Upton.

The Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library (c/o George A. Vanderburgh, PO Box 204, 420 Owen Sound Street, Shelburne, Ontario LON 1S0, Canada) has published an excellent collection of essays: **From Baltimore to Baker Street; Thirteen Sherlockian Studies** by William Hyder. The author cuts through the accretion of error and fantasy that has bogged down Holmesian scholarship since before the days of Vincent Starrett, and presents well-researched, well-reasoned and intensely readable papers on Holmes' musical ability, Watson's education and career, religious figures in the Canon, and more. His investigation of the Abernethy business and of what he calls "The Martha Myth" are models of their kind. There's really funny humour in "The Root of the Matter" and "The Detectives of Penzance", and the two short plays are so good that I want to see them performed ("The Impression of a Woman" is admittedly similar to David Stuart Davies' **Sherlock Through the Magnifying Glass**, though neither could have influenced the other). Look, this one's really good, and every home should have a copy. It's a nice 216-page hardback, costing £15.00 + £2.00 postage. Cheques should be payable to George A. Vanderburgh.

The Baker Street Irregulars have published **Irregular Proceedings of the Mid 'Forties**, edited by Jon L. Lellenberg (PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA; \$24.95 + postage). I hope to review it before long.

Cadds Printing Ltd (59 Lancaster Avenue, West: Norwood, London SE27 9EL) have produced a 1996 **Sherlock Holmes Diary**, available in two versions at £6.00 each: 'filofax' or wire-bound. It's nicely done, with Holmesian or Doylean facts for appropriate dates, and a quotation for each week, but now a sixth of the year's gone it's a bit late.

Our member William Green has bound volumes of **The Strand Magazine** to sell: 6, 9 (2 copies), 10, 11, 12, 13 & 14. No. 6 has the last five of **The Memoirs**; the others all have Conan Doyle material. Offers, please, to Mr Green at 30 Hinksford Gardens, Swindon, Dudley, West Midlands.

Michael Cox points out that Worldbooks (BCA, Guild House, Farnsby Street, Swindon X SN99 9XX) is offering members the hardcover edition of **The Oxford Sherlock Holmes** at £34.97 (publisher's price £69.95).

Gravesend Books' 2nd supplement to their Catalogue no. 32 is full of Holmesiana and Doyleana (Box 235, Pocono Pines, PA 18350, USA).

The 27th issue of that splendid magazine **CADS** (Crime and Detective Stories) is out, with extensive contributions from our member Tony Medawar (enquiries and orders to Geoff Bradley, 9 Vicarage Hill, South Benfleet, Essex SS7 1PA). Tony is also responsible for volume 1 no. 1 of **Notes for the Curious**,

a journal for admirers of John Dickson Carr (the greatest detective-story writer bar none, and a major Doylean and Holmesian to boot). Like **CADS**, it's on sale at Murder One. Enquiries should go to The Noughts-and-Crosses Club, 24 FitzJohn's Avenue, Hampstead, London NW3 5NB.

Charles Hall (12 Paisley Terrace, Edinburgh EH8 7JW) has excelled himself with his latest white metal miniature figures. Brace yourselves: these are **Oliver Hardy & Stan Laurel as Holmes & Watson!** They're exquisitely detailed, with stance and expression perfect. They stand just over 2½" high, and they're a bargain at £7.50 the pair. (Charles has a considerable range of delightful figures and other productions. Send a stamped & self-addressed envelope for a list.)

The Enesco Corporation (One Enesco Plaza, Elk Grove Village, IL 60007-9941, USA), who make the Cherished Teddies figurines (see DM 156) have another series from the same designer, Priscilla Hillman's Calico Kittens. No. 129585, "It's No Mystery We're Friends", is actually a companion piece to the "Sherlock" Cherished Teddy: a seated kitten, dressed in deerstalker, waistcoat and cape, holding a magnifying lens and with a book in front of him entitled "A Story of Mystery". He's very cute and not over-expensive at about £13.00, but he comes with a truly emetic "certificate of friendship" ("As one of the Calico Kittens and a faithful companion, I will always be close to your heart to share your joys and sorrows..." \*Yuck!\*).

Deirdre Keetley has produced a fine limited edition plate in commemoration of Jeremy Brett's Sherlock Holmes. **The Sherlock Holmes Gazette** has forty copies for sale, numbered 61 - 100, at £29.95 each plus postage (UK £1.50, EEC £2.00); USA/Canada and rest of world US\$45.00 + \$5.00 airmail. Send cheque or credit card details to: Plate Offer, 46 Purfield Drive, Wargrave, Berkshire RG10 8AR. The products of Simpich Character Dolls (2413 West Colorado Avenue, Colorado Springs, CO 80904, USA) are considerably more expensive. The Sherlock Holmes "dressed sculpture" is \$225.00; the cold-cast white porcelain bust is \$85.00 (painted, it's \$135.00) - and so on. Photos show these works to be very handsome, but there's no mention of size.

The exhibition **The Sherlock Holmes Experience** is running at the Croydon Clocktower until next Sunday, the 10th March. On Friday the 15th there'll be a conference at St Mary's University College, Strawberry Hill, Twickenham TW1 4SX: "Does Crime Pay: Uncovering Criminal Heritage". Among a very wide-ranging programme will be a discussion of the mystery devised for the Croydon exhibition. Attendance fee is £35.00, including lunch and refreshments. For more details contact Honor Godfrey on 0181-240 4078 (fax: 0181-240 4255).

Pam Bruxner passes on the news that the Undershaw Hotel & Restaurant (formerly ACD's Surrey home) is for sale. The asking price is a staggeringly low £150,000, but apparently a lot will need to be spent on the fabric. Further information can be had from the Operating Director & General Manager, Ivan Sljivic, at the Undershaw Hotel & Restaurant, 1 Portsmouth Road, Hindhead, Surrey GU26 6AH.

Malcolm Payne of the Conan Doyle (Crowborough) Establishment sends more information about the statue of ACD that the Town Council plans to erect at Cloke's Corner. A statue fund has been set up to raise the necessary £20,000, and the names of all subscribers will be recorded in a memorial book to be on permanent display at the town hall. Subscriptions can be sent to the Conan Doyle Statue Fund, Town Hall, The Broadway, Crowborough, or to

National Westminster Bank PLC, 7 High Street, Crowborough (Sort Code 60-06-27, Account Number 51597055).

Mark Hunter-Purvis sends a list of Northern Musgraves merchandise available from him at 6 Deer Park Way, Axwell Park, Blaydon-on-Tyne NE21 5PD. Sweatshirt (L or XL, black or blue) with Peter Cushing's Holmes design on breast: £12.50. T-shirt (L or XL, white) with Kathryn White's Hound design in black: £8.50. Car windscreen sticker (12"x 2") with Cushing design & NM name: £2.00. Half-size sticker: £1.50. All prices include postage.

Recently issued on video is **Sherlock Holmes Returns: The Adventure of the Tiger Murders** (Arena Home Entertainment). This is the TV movie about the cryogenically frozen Holmes being revived in present-day San Francisco, originally broadcast in America as **1994 Baker Street**. Holmes is played by Anthony Higgins, and the film is quite good fun, though not as enjoyable as the similarly-themed **The Return of Sherlock Holmes**, with Michael Pennington and Margaret Colin.

I'm delighted to note that Michael Doyle's remarkable story "Sherlock Holmes and the Legacy of Rachel Howells" (see DM 157) is joint winner of the Derrick Murdoch Memorial Award for the best paper published in **Canadian Holmes** in 1995. Nice one, Michael!

Issue no. 14 of **The Sherlock Holmes Gazette** is just out. The outstanding feature for me is Michael Cox's account of Jeremy Brett's memorial service, but there's a great deal else here. David Stuart Davies pays tribute to Robert Stephens, and Uwe Sommerlad remembers Erich Schellow; April Carlucci looks at Nero Wolfe; Barbara Roden writes about "The Terror of Blue John Gap"; Catherine Cooke continues her survey of **The Strand Magazine**; Martin Pallant visits Crowborough and the Sherlock Holmes Memorabilia Company; Jean and I consider Sherlockian miniatures in "Collectors Corner"... The retail price is £2.25; an annual subscription is £14.00 (UK), £18.00 (Europe), £21.00/\$35.00 (USA & Canada), £22.00 (rest of world). The address is 46 Purfield Drive, Wargrave, Berkshire RG10 8AR. (The US representative is Classic Specialties, PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219.)

Our Society's next meeting will be on Wednesday the 20th March, at the Law Society in Chancery Lane, when Frederick Bryan-Brown will be the speaker. On the previous Saturday, the 16th, the Northern Musgraves will host the Jeremy Brett Celebration Luncheon at the Café Royal in Regent Street. There may still be places available: contact Kathryn White at Overdale, 69 Greenhead Road, Huddersfield HD1 4ER.

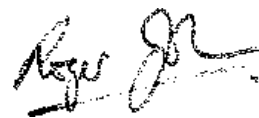
On Sunday the 24th March the Priory Scholars will meet in Leicester to present case studies of "The Six Napoleons" (details from Horace L. Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY). The following weekend the American Exchange will explore **The Valley of Fear's** American setting, based at Pottsville, Pennsylvania (Bob Carter, PO Box 762, Fort Montgomery, NY 10922, USA), and on Sunday the 31st, the Franco-Midland Hardware Company and the Head Llamas will follow a Holmesian trail around the Victoria & Albert Museum in London ("The Stockbroker's Clerk", 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU).

For Friday the 19th and Saturday the 20th April, the Irregular Special Railway Company plans to visit the Post Office Underground Railway, the Middlesex Assize Court, Bart's Hospital, some Newgate Prison cells and the House of Detention (Antony J. Richards, 163 Marine Parade, Leigh-on-Sea,

Essex S39 2RB). (\*There will probably be changes or cancellations to this programme now that the ISRC is independent of the Franco-Midland Hardware Company.\*) On Saturday the 27th April, The Poor Folk Upon The Moors will host a talk by Roger Matthews on "The Bruce-Partington and All That" at the Dartmouth Inn, Totnes, Devon (Vosper Arthur, Spynishlake, Doddiscombsleigh, Exeter EX6 7PR). (\*The Poor Folk also have a range of merchandise: send Vosper a stamped & self-addressed envelope for a list.\*)

Periodicals received. **The Pleasant Places of Florida Communication** no. 158 (Dr Benton Wood BSI, Box 740, Ellenton, FL 34222, USA) (\*contains one of the most magnificently tortured puns I've encountered in a long time\*); **Ironmongers Daily Echo and Franco-Midland Branches Advertiser**, Thursday May 25 1895, Wednesday May 25 1895 (sic), Thursday October 19 1895 and **Bulletin d'adhesion** 1896 (La Société Sherlock Holmes de France, 26 avenue de la République, Paris Xle, France) (\*superb spoof newspaper accounts designed and produced by Thierry Saint-Joanis and Jean-Pierre Cagnat; these cover the society's visit to Reichenbach last May and a tribute to Jeremy Brett\*); **The Parallelogram**, January 1996 (The Parallel Case of St Louis, Joseph J. Eckrich BSI, 914 Oakmoor, Fenton, MO 63026, USA) (\*some interesting observations on "Charles Augustus Milverton" by Joe Eckrich and a rather far-fetched list of twos in "Black Peter" by Pasquale Accardo\*); **The Petrel Flyer** vol.8 no.1 (The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C. V7P 3C6, Canada) (\*Hichimes Lagg explains British railway terms for North Americans, Frank Darlington writes about Eleanor of Castile, and there's a good collection of toasts from the Master's Dinner, with a fine lot of photographs for the rogues' gallery\*).

**The Irregular Special Railway Company Newsletter** no.15 (Antony Richards, 163 Marine Parade, Leigh-on-sea, Essex SS9 2RB) (\*it really is a newsletter\*); **The Sherlock Holmes Railway Journal** vol.3 (The Irregular Special Railway Company, address as above) (\*the high point is undoubtedly Bernard Davies' definitive identification of both Hugo Oberstein's house and the spot where Cadogan West's body was found - a coup de maître! - but the other essays, by Bernard Prunet, Catherine Cooke and Malcolm Payne are well worth reading too; non-members can buy copies at £4.00 (UK & Europe) or \$8.00 (rest of world) including postage\*); **The New Baker Street Pillar Box**, no.25 (The Franco-Midland Hardware Company, "The Stockbroker's Clerk", 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU) (\*the outstanding feature of this issue is an exceptionally interesting account of Sven Hedin's explorations in Asia by members of the Swedish Pathological Society, opening up the possibility that he, not Holmes, was "a Norwegian named Sigerson"\*); **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company Interim Report 1995: The Thor Bridge Contract Renewed** (as above) (\*there's more of interest here than in the Annual Report, notably Don Redmond's piece on Canonical names, Philip Weller's on the "Thor Bridge" hand-guns, and David Trenchard's on how the length of a piece of string can determine the approximate height of the bridge\*). **The Baker Street Journal**, September 1995 (sic) (PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA) (\*the pick here is Francine & Wayne Swift's identification, impeccable by the criteria they use, of George Alexander Baird as Sir Robert Norberton, closely followed by Marilyn MacGregor's comparison between the works of Conan Doyle and those of Wodehouse\*); **Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press**, Jan. 1996 and Feb. 1996 (Peter E, Blau BSI, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA) (\*the invaluable newsletter\*).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Asquith' or similar, written in a cursive style.