

THE DISTRICT MESSENGER

The Newsletter of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London
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opinions expressed are the editor's unless noted otherwise

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Fraser Smyth, a friend of great personality and kindness who gave much to the Society's meetings and publications, died last month after a long illness. His fascination with the character of Mary Morstan resulted in *The Diaries of Mrs John H. Watson* (privately published, 1995). Our thoughts are with Anna and their family.

Despite mistaken obits, **Vassily Livanov** (Russian TV's Holmes) is still alive and working, according to Peter Blau's *Scuttlebutt*.

Sherlock Holmes: "Draco, Draconis" is published at £14.99 by Altamont Publishing, Italy (distributed by Amalgamated Book Services Ltd, Suite 1, Royal Star Arcade, High Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1JL). This complex and clever Holmes adventure is credited to Brett Spencer Altamont and Dorian David Altamont, which are certainly pseudonyms. (The publisher is our Italian friend Laura Altomonte.) It's a lovely book, graced with nearly 50 photos from the Granada TV series, most not published before.

Michael Atkinson's *The Secret Marriage of Sherlock Holmes, and Other Eccentric Readings* (University of Michigan Press, PO Box 1104, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1104, USA; \$29.95 or £19.95) takes an off-centre look at 9 of the stories, reading each in an appropriate way. He approaches "A Scandal in Bohemia" as classic romance, follows the theme of the snake in "The Speckled Band" and psychoanalyses *A Study in Scarlet*. This is literary criticism that actually adds to the reader's appreciation of the text. Highly recommended. (The British distributor is Trevor Brown Associates, 114-115 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 0BY.)

Marcus Geisser says: There are various circumstances that make the publication of *5 Neue Sherlock Holmes Story's* special. Martin Hasler, the author of these short Holmes pastiches (the 5th is a mystery in itself!) is a very young but very promising Sherlockian at just 11 years old. The book, in German, is the first Holmesian publication from one of Europe's smallest countries, the Fuerstentum Liechtenstein. *5 Neue Sherlock Holmes Story's* is privately printed by Klaus Woerner in an edition of 50 numbered copies of 30 pages. Price including postage is \$8.00 or £5.00 (cash only). Orders to Martin K. Hasler, Dorfstrasse 59, FL-9495 Triesen, Fuerstentum Liechtenstein, Europe.

The Littlewood Press (32 Belson Street, Malvern East, Victoria 3145, Australia; fax 03 9576 1950) publishes *You Bastard Moriarty* by Derham Groves BSI: "a consideration of the collectability of Sherlock Holmes ephemera, together with a detailed description of the life of John Bennett Shaw and his 57 years of collecting". This richly illustrated limited edition of 100 numbered & signed copies is hand printed and sectionally sewn, with endpapers from the Holmes, Watson and Moriarty pages of the telephone directories. The standard version (90 copies) costs \$75.00, and the 10 deluxe copies, bound in kangaroo leather, are

\$450.00. There's also a souvenir of the book's launch: an illustrated 8-page octavo booklet: *The Coming Out of Holmes & Watson*. Copies 1 - 10, with more than 40 relevant autographs, are priced at \$75.00; copies 11 - 50 are \$50.00 each. (*These prices are in Australian dollars.*)

Kelvin I. Jones (Oakmagic Publications, 2 South Place Folly, Penzance, Cornwall TR18 4JB) has reissued his 1980 monograph *Sherlock Holmes & the South Eastern* at £2.50 + 50p postage (cheques payable to K.I. Jones). He plans *The Psychology of The Hound* (£3.50) for the spring, and a guide to the Dartmoor locations of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* for the summer.

The December catalogue from Ian Henry Publications Ltd (20 Park Drive, Romford RM1 4LH) will include the film scripts of *The Adventure of Sherlock Holmes' Smarter Brother*, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1939), *The Seven-per-cent Solution* and *Young Sherlock Holmes*, each at £25.00. Jeremy Paul's *The Secret of Sherlock Holmes* is back in print from Ian Henry at £5.95.

There are full and exciting new catalogues available from **Rupert Books** (58/59 Stonefield, Bar Hill, Cambridge CB3 8TE; phone 01954 781861); **Forbes Gibb** (29 Falkland Street, Hyndland, Glasgow G12 9QZ; phone 0141 339 3752); and **Classic Specialties** (PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219). That last, *The Sherlockian Times, 1996-97*, lists *The Life and Times of Mr Sherlock Holmes*, *John H. Watson, MD*, *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle*, and *Other Notable Personages* by Leslie S. Klinger (\$10.00), *I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere* by Joe Kruth (\$5.00), *Fixed Point — The Audio* by David Stuart Davies (\$7.95), and more new to me.

Tangled Web Audio (1063 King Street West, Suite 133, Hamilton, Ontario L8S 1L8, Canada) has released two more sets of unabridged readings by Edward Hardwicke. *Sherlock Holmes: Tales of Betrayal* has "A Scandal in Bohemia", "Silver Blaze" & "The Copper Beeches"; *Sherlock Holmes: Tales of Avarice* has "The Red-Headed League", "The Blue Carbuncle" & "The Priory School". Recording and production are impeccable; Hardwicke proves again that there's no better interpreter of Conan Doyle. Marvellous stuff! Each double cassette costs US\$16.95 or Can.\$19.95. Tangled Web takes direct orders, and Rupert Books, Classic Specialties and selected bookstores carry these tapes.

Peter Blau says: The first 8 audiocassettes in the series *More New Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* from the fine 1946-47 radio series that starred Tom Conway & Nigel Bruce are still available (\$9.95 each) from Brilliance Audio, Box 481, Grand Haven, MI 49417; more cassettes are due in the shops in November.

Phil Attwell notes that the Audio Book Collection (Freeport [BA 1686/1], Bath BA2 3SZ) offers a complete reading by Terrence Hardiman of Colin Dexter's book *Morse's Greatest Mystery*, which includes his good revisionist Holmes story "A Case of Mis-identity". The special price is £9.95.

Other recent titles: *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (Andre Deutsch, 106 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LJ; £4.99); *Sherlock Holmes: The Original Illustrated Strand Edition* (Wordsworth Editions, 88 East Street, Ware, Herts. SG12 9HJ;

£3.99); *Sherlock Holmes & The Red Demon* by Larry Millett (Viking/Penguin Books USA Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014 \$22.95); *Canonical Crime Scenes & Investigations, vol. 1* by William H. & Linda L. Conway (Classic Specialties, Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA; \$17.95); *Chinese Box Mysteries: Sherlock Holmes* by Dan Kilcup (Allen Wayne, 5404A Port Royal Road, Springfield, VA 22151, USA; \$24.00).

Holmes for the Holidays, a new anthology edited by Martin H. Greenberg, Jon L. Lellenberg & Carol-Lynn Waugh (Berkley Publishing Corp., 15 E. 26th Street, New York, NY 10010, USA; \$21.95); *Sherlock Holmes: Travels in the Canadian West* by Ronald C. Weyman (Simon & Pierre Ltd, PO Box 280, Adelaide Street Postal Station, Toronto, Ontario M5C 2J4, Canada); *The Herpetological Holmes* by Donald Girard Jewell (Pinchin Lane Press, 4685 Geeting Road, Westminster, MD 21185, USA; \$12.95); *The Armchair Baskerville Tour* by Brad Keefauver (Magico, Box 156, New York, NY 10002, USA; \$27.00). Due in March from Virgin (33-34 Grand Union Centre, 332 Ladbroke Grove, London W10 5AH) is *The Man Who Became Sherlock Holmes: The Torment of Jeremy Brett* by Terry Manners.

Cindy Stevens notes two Holmesian jigsaw puzzles from Bits & Pieces (UK) Ltd (Harrington Dock, Liverpool L70 1AX): *The Adventures of the Fellow Lodgers* and *The Phantom of Sorrel House*. They're £7.95 each or £12.95 for both. Kevin Jacklin tells me that Electronic Arts plan a sequel to their PC-based adventure game *The Case of the Serrated Scalpel*, provisionally entitled *The Case of the Rose Tattoo*. "On the boardgame front, John N. Hansen Co., Inc. of Millbrae, California, has released an addition to its *221B Baker Street* range. This is *Sherlock Holmes & the Time Machine*, wherein Holmes is challenged by H.G. Wells to solve some baffling unsolved cases of the 20th century. Available from games stores, priced around \$35.00."

Julie Sharples makes Victorian and Edwardian costumes to order. Contact her at Budds Farm, Gibbs Lane, Barrington, Somerset (phone 01460 57266).

Forthcoming on BBC TV is *Nightmare: The Birth of Horror*, "a series exploring horror myths". John ("Bergerac") Nettles plays Holmes in extracts from *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. (*Did anyone record BBC 1's *The Bookworm* on Sunday 3rd November, when Griff Rhys Jones looked at the origins of Sherlock Holmes? [And can anyone lend or sell me a recording of ITV's *Cadfael: A Morbid Taste for Bones*?]*)

Catherine Cooke sends news of a production of *The Revenge of Sherlock Holmes* by Leslie Bricusse, at the Barn Theatre, Oxted, 18th - 23rd November. Tickets from Ibbett Mosely, Station Road East, Oxted, Surrey (phone 01883 712241).

Michael Phillips, the manager of *The Sherlock Holmes* public house & restaurant at 10-11 Northumberland Street, London WC2N 5DA (just off Trafalgar Square), tells us that the pub is now on the InterNet. The homepage is www.users.dircon.co.uk/~sherlock/ and e-mail sherlock@popmail.dircon.co.uk.

Peter ("Holy") Horrocks has moved chambers from Lincoln's Inn to a more Canonical address: 1 Garden Court, Temple, London EC4Y 9BJ (phone 0171 797 7900; fax 0171 610 4331).

The Conan Doyle (Crowborough) Establishment has conducted a world-wide survey on the 1996 **Sherlock Holmes Festival**, and come up with some positive suggestions for future events. Contact the Curator, Malcolm Payne (4 Wealden Close, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 2ST), or the Assistant Curator, Brian Pugh (20 Clare Road, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1PN).

Stage One Theatre Company (34 Jasmine Grove, London SE20 8JW), who mounted Tim Heath's stimulating and enjoyable play *Sherlock Holmes: The Adventure at Sir Arthur Sullivan's*, have a

limited number of collectible items for sale: copies of the script, programmes, posters, leaflets, photos — all signed — and various official props: the two letters, Violet Jones's visiting card, the Opera House programme, the benefit soirée programme, and the railway ticket. This sort of souvenir is pretty well unique in my experience.

The 29th issue of the excellent magazine *CADS* (Crime And Detective Stories) is available from Geoff Bradley (9 Vicarage Hill, South Benfleet, Essex SS7 1PA). Less bulky than the 80-page *CADS* is issue 1 of *Tangled Web*, a new magazine devoted to crime & detective fiction edited by Andrew Osmond (69 Holm Oak Park, Watford Herts. WD1 8TH; £2.95 in UK, £3.95 elsewhere). It was issued in June, but has only just come to my attention. Nothing overtly Holmesian in this first issue, but contributions are welcome.

Our Society's next meeting is *John H. Watson, This Is Your Life*, on the 26th November. The **Glades of the New Forest** and the **Franco-Midland Hardware Company** will have their Dr Watson Day on the 10th (details from "The Stock-broker's Clerk", 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU — or from Jane Weller at the same address). The **Priory Scholars** plan their AGM and Christmas Social for 1st December, in Leicester (Horace Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY). On 7th December, **The Poor Folk Upon The Moors** will hold their AGM and Christmas Lunch at the Grand Hotel in Torquay (Eric Monahan, Highcliff, 14 Silver Bridge Close, Broadsands Park, Paignton, Devon TQ4 7NW), and the **Franco-Midland Hardware Company** plans its own AGM and Christmas Social for the same day in Oxford ("The Stock-broker's Clerk", address as above).

Periodicals received. *The Baker Street Journal*, September 1996 (PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA) (*published by *The Baker Street Irregulars*, the *BSJ* is available to all; outstanding pieces in this issue are S.E. Fry's "The Influence of Mr Sherlock Holmes on 20th Century Arctic Exploration" and W.A. Vail's "Premature Burial: New in the Annals of Crime?"). *The Parallelogram (The Parallel Case of St Louis*, Joseph J. Eckrich BSI, 914 Oakmoor, Fenton, MO 63126, USA) (*features a good piece by Dave Schlatter on "The Golden Pince-Nez"). *3 Pipe Problem Plugs & Dottles*, September/August 1996 (**The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem**, Gael Stahl, 1763 Needmore Road, Old Hickory, TN 37138, USA) (*lively accounts of the activities of a lively society*). *The Franco-Midland Hardware Company Annual Report 1996: The Lady Contract* ("The Stock-broker's Clerk", address above) (*a dozen articles on a rather neglected case; those by Juan Requena, Jose Errazquin, Antonio Iriarte, M.C. Black and Jane Weller are particularly interesting — the last covers some of the same ground as W.A. Vail's in *The Baker Street Journal**). *Llama Droppings* no. 4 (**The Head Llamas**, Alan & Catherine Saunders, 12 Booth Drive, Laleham, Staines, Middlesex TW18 1PR) (*the first issue in two years, because of upheaval caused by the growth of the Saunders household; Alan writes a good piece about Ramón Cabrera, a possible original of the Tiger of San Pedro; the next meeting of the Head Llamas won't be until 14th September 1997!*).

Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press, October 1996 (Peter E. Blau BSI, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA), from which the following: the manuscripts of *The White Company* and *The Sign of Four* will be auctioned at Sotheby's in New York on 4th December. The latter is expected to fetch \$250,000-\$300,000...

Roger Johnson