

The DISTRICT MESSENGER



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON
Roger Johnson, Mole End, 41 Sandford Road, Chelmsford CM2 6DE
e-mail: roger_johnson@hotmail.com

no. 188 29th March 1999

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £5.50 or US\$12.00 for 12 issues. Dollar checks should be payable to Jean Upton. Dollar prices quoted without qualification refer to US dollars.

Christopher Roden sends news of the death on 18th March of **Dr Alvin Rodin**, one of the most formidable Conan Doyle scholars of our time. His work on *The Medical Casebook of Dr Arthur Conan Doyle* and *The Annotated Lost World*, in particular, will remain as a worthy memorial. From Francine Swift we learn of the loss of another American stalwart, **Lynn Willis**. Peter Blau notes the deaths of **Ezra Wolff** ('Sir James Damery', BSI), and the composer **John Addison**; besides his Oscar-winning score for *Tom Jones*, Addison's many credits include the theme for BBC TV's 1964 series *Detective* and the score for *The Seven-per-Cent Solution* in 1976.

The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, edited, with annotations by Leslie S. Klinger, was published late last year by Gasogene Books as the first volume in **The Sherlock Holmes Reference Library**. No-one can take from William Baring-Gould the honour of being the first to produce an annotated edition of the Canon, nor can we deny the achievements of Owen Dudley Edwards and his team in *The Oxford Sherlock Holmes*. However, it seems to me that as a collation of Holmesian (rather than Doylean), commentary Leslie Klinger's monumental project seems likely to surpass both its predecessors, choosing wisely from pretty much the full range of scholarship worldwide. I'm looking forward eagerly to the other 8 volumes. (Gasogene Books, P.O. Box 68308, Indianapolis, IN 46268, USA; \$26.95.)

Philip A. Shreffler, former editor of *The Baker Street Journal* and scholar of note, has turned his hand to fiction. *The War of the Worlds Mystery* (Wessex Press, P.O. Box 68308, Indianapolis, IN 46268, USA; \$15.95) sees Eliot Simpson, journalist, and other members of the Baker Street Irregulars investigating murder against the background of Orson Welles's famous 1938 Hallowe'en broadcast of *The War of the Worlds*. Simpson and the BSI will return in *The Twentieth Century Limited Mystery*.

Eric Monahan's *After the Beryl Coronet: The Further Misadventures of Alexander Holder* is a nice little pamphlet whose title tells you pretty much what to expect. Any profit will be shared equally with the **Poor Folk Upon The Moors**. (Parallel Publications, 14 Silver Bridge Close, Broadsands Park, Paignton, Devon TQ4 7NW; £2.20 including postage, or \$4.90 airmail to USA – please make cheques payable to Eric Monahan.) (*How did Alexander Holder manage to achieve a respected place in the City?*)

Jennie C. Paton has drawn my attention to a couple of astounding re-interpretations of the Canon. *The Red-Necked League* and *The Adventure of the Wild Turkey* are described as 'from the Continuing Adventures of Hamhock Holmes, by Billy Joe-Bob "Bubba" Watson, edited by John Atkins & C.

Bryan Gassner'. Atkins and Gassner are real, but I can't guarantee anything else in these very funny booklets. They're published by Wilson's Basement Dwellers, c/o 234 Mockingbird Lane, Corrales, NM 87048, USA.

The 11th Rupert Books Monograph is *To Arms!*, a 62-page facsimile of a scarce 1914 Conan Doyle propaganda work, with an afterword by Sqn Ldr Philip Weller. (Rupert Books, 58/59 Stonefield, Bar Hill, Cambridge CB8 8TE; £10.00.)

Bob Ellis passes on news of *Raffles and His Creator* by Peter Rowland, the first full study of the Amateur Cracksman and his author, Conan Doyle's brother-in-law E.W. Homung (Nekta Publications, P.O. Box 18514, London E11 2YH; £11.95). Peter Rowland is the author of the well-received *The Disappearance of Edwin Drood*.

Philip Attwell has spotted *Sherlock Sooty Picture Book*, based on a story by Matthew Corbett (World International Ltd, Deanway Technology Centre, Winslow Road, Handforth, Cheshire SK9 3FB). The published price is £2.99, but it seems to be remaindered all over the place at about 40p.

More new books. *Embassy Row* is the 2nd Mycroft Holmes novel by Quinn Fawcett (Forge, February, £16.99). *A Letter of Mary* is an adventure of Sherlock Holmes and Mary Russell by Laurie R. King (Collins Crime Club, June 1999, £15.99). *The Secret Documents of Sherlock Holmes* by June Thomson was reissued this month in paperback by Allison & Busby at £5.99. And according to Whitaker's BookBank Nelson Dramascripts have published a play based on that well-known Sherlock Holmes story *The Speckled Hen*.

New catalogues are available from The Mysterious Bookshop (129 West 56th Street, New York, NY 10019; e-mail mysteriousny@worldnet.att.net), and Nigel Williams Rare Books (22 & 25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; e-mail nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk).

The April issue of the BBC *Homes & Antiques* magazine includes a 3-page article about Richard Lancelyn Green and his celebrated collection (BBC Magazines, Woodlands, 80 Wood Lane, London W12 0TT; 01795 414713). The February issue of *Norfolk Journal* has two pages 'On the trail of the Dancing Men', with some coverage of our Society's trip to Norfolk in 1984 (The Journal Magazines, The Old County School, Northgate Street, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 1HP).

The first issue of *The Strand Magazine* tries hard to emulate its illustrious predecessor and does capture some of the interest and excitement, with good stories by Denis Smith, Henry Slesar and others, and articles by Chris Willis, Christopher and Barbara Roden and Andrew Gasson. The new illustrations are fairly awful, though. You can buy it at the Sherlock Holmes Memorabilia Company, 230 Baker Street, London NW1 5RT, and other outlets, or subscribe to P.O. box 1418, Birmingham, MI 48012-1418, USA.

A. Leigh sent an e-mail saying 'I have recently discovered around 15 *Strand Magazines* dating 1891 to 1899 in a cellar. They are without covers unfortunately.' Anyone interested is asked to contact him or her at jellibabi@globahiet.co.uk. (*My reply to the message was bounced back by the server..*)

A plea from Peter Blau: 'According to Bill Liman (to **The Hounds of the Internet**), on Feb. 19 1999, Greater London Radio (the BBC's station for London) had an item about "a statue of Holmes which is to be erected outside Baker Street tube station in central London. There were some snuffy comments about him not really existing." Any chance of getting a dub of this?' (**Sherlock Holmes not exist? Next they 'II be saying Peter Pan didn 't exist!**) If you can help, please contact Peter sat 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA (e-mail pblau@dgs.dgsys.com).

On Sunday 18th April the **Keighley & Worth Valley Railway** will hold its first Steam on the Screen day, celebrating Sherlock Holmes. Several of the Granada TV films had railway sequences filmed on this historic line in Yorkshire, so besides a vintage steam train service there'll be re-creations of scenes from the Canon by the Irregular Special Players. For information, contact the railway on 01535 645214 or check the website at www.kwvr.co.uk. (*On 23rd May Steam on the Screen will celebrate that lovely movie *The Railway Children*.*)

From 14th to 17th April, the Pranksters Theatre Company will present *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* – 'devised by Mr Richard Brookman, with sincere apologies to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle' – at the **Electric Theatre**, Onslow Street, Guildford GU1 4SZ (phone 01483 444789). 'In a remote country, famous for its gold and sausages, Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson are desperately trying to find out – why the King has gone mad and where the evil Moriarty has imprisoned the Princess...' It looks like fun!

Sherlock Holmes: The Last Act by David Stuart Davies opens at the **Playhouse** in Salisbury on 18th May, running until 22nd May with a matinee on Thursday 20th May (box office 01722 320333). Other dates include: one performance at the **Maddermarket** Theatre in Norwich on 9th June (01603 626560); the **New Vic Theatre**, Newcastle-under-Lyme, 9th & 10th July (01782 717962); the **Quay Theatre** at Sudbury in Suffolk, 31st July, 01787 374745; a run at **Roman Eagle Lodge** during the Edinburgh Festival – 6th and 7th August, and then three weeks from 9th to 29th August (0131 622 7207); the **Brewery Arts Centre**, Kendal, 1st September, 01539 725133; the **Cockpit Theatre** in Gateforth Street, London NWS (about 5 minutes walk from Baker Street Station), 20th September to 10th October (0171 402 5081).

This month Naxos Audiobooks released *Sherlock Holmes volume 2*, available on three cassettes at £9.99 or three CDs at £13.99. I've no more details at present, but should mention that I was very impressed with *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes 1*, read by David Timson and released last year. (Naxos Audiobooks, Select Music & Video Distribution, 34A Holmethorpe Avenue, Redhill, Surrey RH1 2NN.)

Dr Eilidh Gunson will spend twelve days in August walking and cycling in Little Tibet, in northern India, in aid of Mencap – a charity which works for people with learning disabilities, and supports their carers. Eilidh has funded the cost of the trek herself, and asks for sponsorship from fellow-Sherlockians, all of which will go directly to Mencap.

To support this venture, or to get further information, contact Eilidh Gunson at 1 Dene Royd Close, Stainland, Halifax HX4 9QP (phone 01422 310597). Cheques should be payable to Eilidh Gunson Trek Account.

The Phoenician Tin Traders and **Gerard's Hussars** will host an Easter Pack Meet on Dartmoor, 1st – 5th April (details from Tracey and Brian Knuckey, 1 Cross Street, Penzance, Cornwall TR18 2EY). The Tibet Trek of **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company** is scheduled for 2nd – 25th April, taking in visits to Lhasa and the North Everest Base Camp (6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hampshire PO14 3RU). **The Practical, But Limited, Geologists** will meet for dinner in San Antonio on 14 April (Ben Fairbank, Box 15075, San Antonio, TX 78212, U.S.A.). **The Irregular Special Railway Company's** weekend away, 16 –18 April, will take members to York, Manchester (for the Granada Studios Tour), and the Worth Valley Railway (see above) (Antony J. Richards, 170 Woodland Road, Sawston, Cambridge CB2 4DX).

Last year's was a huge success, so this year's *221 Beach*, planned for 23 – 25 April at Spring Lake, New Jersey, should be just as much fun (Al Gregory, 118 South Prospect Street, Verona, NJ 07044, USA). April also sees the first open meeting of **The Napoleons of Crime**, who are devoted specifically to the villains in the Canon, at Gelnhausen, near Frankfurt am Main, a village with a curious history (Uwe Sommerlad, Rodelheimer Landstr. 32, 60487 Frankfurt am Main, Germany).

Periodicals received. *The Camden House Journal*, March 1999 (The Occupants of The Empty House, 105 Wilcox Street, P.O. Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA) (**Bill Cochran dates The Valley of Fear**). *Sherlockian Snippets*, March 1999 (received by e-mail from Tabitha Smith at SaralockH@aol.com) (**just what the title says: informative and fun**). *Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections*, March 1999 (**Sherlock Holmes Collections**, 466 Wilson Library, 309 19th Avenue South, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA) (**Jon Lellenberg looks at the background of John Dickson Carr's Life of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle**).

The Striking (T)Rifles, February 1999 (**Von Herder Airguns Ltd**, c/o Michael Ross, Postfach 42 06 70, D-50900 Köln, Germany) (**an always informative newsletter about Sherlockian events in Germany**). *Communication*, Mad March 1999 Special Issue, and March/April 1999 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Jeff & Wanda Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA) (**among many good jokes in the Mad March issue, I particularly like Dave Scott's Monty Python skit, 'ACD's Flying Circus'; the regular issue is simply full of interesting reportage**). *Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press*, January 1999 (Peter E. Blau BSI, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA) (**the original Sherlockian newsletter**).

I'm very honoured to have been elected to membership of **The Edmonton Deerstalker**. The Membership Secretary, Peter H. Wood, notes that 'there are no annual fees and no annual dinner or other activities. Members of the society who find they are in the company of a fellow "Edmonton Deerstalker" may, of course, celebrate the occasion in any manner they consider fitting.'

I shall therefore sign this issue of *The District Messenger*,

Roger Johnson, E.D.