

The DISTRICT MESSENGER



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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Peter Blau notes that **Herbert Ross** died on 9 October. His contribution to our field was the uneven but enjoyable 1976 film *The Seven-per-Cent Solution*, which Ross produced and directed.

I'm sorry to have to report the death of **Morse**, who with his fellow bloodhound Sherlock, was recently taken off duty with Essex Police while their performance was evaluated. Morse had to be put down after suffering severely with a twisted gut. Sherlock, as far as I know, is alive and well.

Just in time for Christmas I can offer the script of my well received drama-documentary *The Great Detective: The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*, as a 48-page booklet from the Pyewacket Press (Mole End, 41 Sandford Road, Chelmsford CM2 6DE), illustrated with a couple of photos from the Chelmsford Theatre Workshop production. The cost is £4.00 or \$8.00, post-paid (airmail outside the UK). Sterling cheques should be payable to me and US dollar checks payable to Jean Upton.

Due on 23 November from Quotable Books (Windsor Books International, The Boundary, Wheatley Road, Garsington, Oxford OX44 9EJ) is *Quotable Sherlock*, compiled and edited by David W. Barber, a strong and handsome 118-page paperback retailing at £7.95. The editor has chosen his quotations judiciously and arranged them under appropriate headings – mostly the words are spoken by or about Holmes himself, of course, but I think Mr Barber may have picked up a few pointed passages that escaped Bruce Beaman in his out-of-print *Sherlock Holmes Book of Quotations*. I can see that this will be a very useful reference tool.

This year's *Baker Street Journal* Christmas Annual promises to be an extraordinarily interesting monograph: *On the Shoulders of Giants — Jack Tracy and the Encyclopaedia Sherlockiana* by Christopher & Barbara Roden. The story of one of the most important reference works in our field is told mostly through its creator's own letters. The Annual will be printed only in a number sufficient to satisfy those who order before 1 December, and prices, including postage, are: (within USA) \$11.00, payable by check only; (elsewhere) \$12.00, by check, Visa or Mastercard. Send orders to *The Baker Street Journal*, PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA.

Recently published by Berkley Prime Crime (Penguin Putnam, 375 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014, USA) at \$22.95 is *The True Crime Files of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle*, edited by Stephen Hines and Steven Womack. The editors have gone back to ACD's letters to the press, his rare books *The Case of George Edalji* and *The Case of Oscar Slater*, and the trial transcripts and other contemporary writings, with much background detail.

Other new and forthcoming books. This month Penguin (80 The Strand, London WC2R 0RL) publish a film tie-in edition of *The Lost World* at £5.99. *The Moor*, which sees the return of the phantom hound to Dartmoor, is the latest adventure of Sherlock Holmes and Mary Russell by Laurie R. King (HarperCollins, 77-85 Fulham Palace Road, London W6 8JB; December; £16.99). For December, the House of Stratus (Lumley Close, Thirsk Industrial Park, York Road, Thirsk, North Yorks. YO7 3BX) plans paperbacks of the

Holmes Canon as well as *The Lost World*, *The Surgeon of Gaster Fell*, *The Mystery of Cloomber*, *The Doings of Raffles Haw*, *The Parasite*, *The Exploits of Brigadier Gerard*, *Round the Fire Stories*, *The Last Galley* and *The Poison Belt*. In December also Wordsworth Classics (Cumberland House, Crib Street, Ware, Herts. SG12 9ET) will publish *A Study in Scarlet* and *The Sign of Four* in one paperback at £1.00.

MC Black notes that **Bibliophile Books** (5 Thomas Road, London E14 7BN) offer *Sherlock Holmes: The Complete Illustrated Long Stories* and *Sherlock Holmes: The Complete Illustrated Short Stories* at £7.50 each – they were originally £12.99 each. If you place an order or ask for a free catalogue, please quote reference 1045.

Catalogue 93 from **Nigel Williams Rare Books** (22 & 25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; e-mail nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk) has the first US edition of *The Valley of Fear* without dustwrapper at £295.00.

I have four spare copies each of two exceptionally interesting monographs by Hugo Koch. 'Mr Holmes, They Were the Footprints of a Gigantic Fox': *Middleton and the Genesis of the Baskerville Plot in the Mind of Stapleton* and '*The Martyrdom of Man*' and '*The Sign of the Four*': *Edward Horace Man, Richard Temple, Augustus H. Keane and Edwin W. Streeter — A Prolegomenon to Previously Suppressed Facts behind SIGN and the Quest for the Great Mogul Diamond* are rather crudely printed and presented, but quite fascinating contributions to the scholarship of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and *The Sign of Four*. They're free to the first enquirers within the UK.

From Peter Blau, a report of a new comic book, *Sherlock Holmes and the Clown Prince of London*, written by Joe Gentile and illustrated by Rich Gulick (Moonstone, 582 Torrence Avenue, Calumet City, IL 60409, USA; \$2.95). The website's at www.moonstonebooks.com. And something even odder-sounding: *Sherlock Holmes: The Adventure of the Dead Rabbits Society: The Lost Reminiscence of John H. Watson, MD* by Philip J. Carraher (1stBooks Library, 2595 Vernal Pike, Bloomington, IN 47404, USA). The website is at www.1stbooks.com.

In issue 45 of *Sherlock Holmes: The Detective Magazine* David Stuart Davies remembers Jeremy Brett, whom he got to know better than most during the filming of the Granada TV series; there's Jared Cade on Agatha Christie's *Curtain*; Paul Chapman on Nicholas Freeling's Van der Valk books; Cristian Matthews on Inspector Rebus; David Stuart Davies on 1994 *Baker Street: Sherlock Holmes Returns*, a TV movie that even Anthony Higgins couldn't save from being confusing and dull (**David, for some reason, likes it**); Calum McLeod on the crime novels of Martyn Waites and Andrea Badenoch; and Bill Barnes on **The Hounds of the Internet**; plus a new Harry Devlin story by Martin Edwards, and contributions from Roger Forsdyke, John Hall, Pat Ward, Mike Ripley, me and Moriarty. The magazine is published six times a year, at £3.50 or \$6.00 the issue. A six-issue subscription is £20.00 (Europe) £22.00, rest of world £25.00 or \$40.00) from the Admin. Dept, PO Box 100, Chichester, West Sussex PO18 8HD. The US representative is Classic Specialties (PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA; e-mail sherlock@sherlock-holmes.com).

Bert Coules passes on the exciting news that *The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* has been recorded from Bert's scripts for broadcast by BBC Radio 4 in January and February 2002. Holmes, as in the rightly applauded Canonical series, is played by Clive

Merrison, and his new Watson, replacing the much-missed Michael Williams, is Andrew Sachs. He's best known as Manuel in *Fawlty Towers*, but connoisseurs know him as a splendid actor in all media; he played the King of Bohemia in the first short story in the Radio 4 complete Canon back in 1990, and he was a memorable Father Brown before that. The five stories in this first series are *The Peculiar Persecution of Mr John Vincent Harden*; *The Star of the Adelphi*; *The Singular Inheritance of Miss Gloria Wilson*; *The Saviour of Cripplegate Square* and *The Madness of Colonel Warburton* — all derived from Watson's hints of 'unrecorded cases'. Guest stars in the series include Jane Asher, Tom Baker, Eleanor Bron, Roy Hudd, Siobhan Redmond, Timothy West and Toyah Wilcox. Bert adds that BBC Worldwide will release four of the plays on cassette.

Peter Blau notes that Daniel Stashower's *Teller of Tales: The Life of Arthur Conan Doyle* is available as an unabridged reading by Richard Matthews on 11 90-minute cassettes for \$66.00 from Books on Tape, Box 7900, Newport Beach, CA 92658, USA.

Talking of such things, IMC Vision has recently released the whole *Murder Rooms* series (*The Patient's Eyes*; *The Photographer's Chair*; *The Kingdom of Bones* and *The White Knight Stratagem*) on video at £12.99 each episode or £34.99 for the boxed set. Ian Richardson, of course, is mesmeric as Dr Bell. I'll review them in the next DM.

You can buy 'a high quality signed reproduction' of Trish Prehn's painting *221B Baker Street, London*, measuring 18" x 14½", from Trish Prehn Art Co., 312B West 34th Street, Austin, TX 78705, USA. The cost is \$67.00 within the USA or \$70.00 to destinations outside. E-mail for details at trishart@swbell.net.

A reminder of some current stage productions. On 28, 29 & 30 November, **Exit Stage Left** will produce Tim Kelly's adaptation of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* at the Braithwaite Hall, Croydon Clock Tower. Tickets are £6.00, but Sherlock Holmes Society of London members can get in at the concessionary rate of £4.00 on the opening night if they show proof of membership at the box office.

From 21 to 24 November **Roger Llewellyn** will perform David Stuart Davies's play *Sherlock Holmes — The Last Act!* at Wimbledon Theatre Studio. Paul Lehmann is touring with *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* ('The Blue Carbuncle' and 'The Engineer's Thumb'); he'll be at The Maltings, Berwick upon Tweed, on 8 December; and The Maltings Arts Centre, St Alban's, on 14 December. Mr Lehmann is open for bookings. Contact him at <footloose@paullehmann.co.uk> or 07801 755 157.

Bits and Pieces (UK) Ltd (Fortuna House, Manchester M5 4JD) offer a couple of 550-piece jigsaw puzzles, *The Watson Inheritance* and *The Case of the Fallen Actress*, priced at £7.95 each or available as a pair at £11.95.

The Norwood Building Inspectors sell a Sherlock Holmes calendar for the year 2002. It measures 8½ by 11 inches, and covers two days per page. You can order a copy for \$16.00 from **The Sherlock Holmes Society of Charleston**, 305 Highland Avenue, South Charleston, WV 25303, USA.

Issue 6 of *The Strand Magazine* maintains the standard of its predecessors. The fiction includes a good new Sherlock Holmes story by David Ellis, and a not-quite-Holmes-story by Harry Keating, called 'Wistaria Lodge'. Mike Ripley looks at Margery Allingham's enigmatic sleuth Albert Campion. Paul Begg goes 'On the Trail of Jack the Ripper'. And Andrew Gulli conducts a fascinating interview with Christopher Lee. The magazine is published quarterly, and a subscription costs \$24.95 in the US and Canada, or \$35.95 elsewhere. The address is *The Strand Magazine*, PO Box 1418, Birmingham, MI 48012-1418, USA (e-mail strandmag@worldnet.att.net). There's a website at www.strandmag.com.

The subject of the 2002 Dr John H. Watson Prize Essay Competition is 'Dr Watson's contribution to *The Hound of the Baskervilles*', which must surely get the ink flowing. Richard Stacpoole-Ryding of **The Friends of Dr Watson** has details at 14 Western Close, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 4SZ.

Friends of Francine Swift BSI will be interested to know that her new puppy has been registered with the American Kennel Club in the name of 'Corgi Glen's Hatty Doran'.

The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem will meet on 17 November, to discuss 'The Devil's Foot'. Get more information from Gael Stahl, 1763 Needmore Road, Old Hickory, TN 37138, USA. Our Society's next meeting will be the Annual Film Evening on 23 November at the Museum of London, at which David Stuart Davies will present the 1921 silent version of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (with piano accompaniment) and the Pathé Gazette film of the 1968 Swiss Pilgrimage. That same evening will see the Film Night of **The Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn** (get details from Michael E. Bragg, Box 799, St Charles, MO 63302-0799, USA). The Harpooners have now completed the Canon twice and will begin on the apocrypha and other associated writings next year!

The Illustrious Clients will meet on 1 December to discuss 'The Missing Three-Quarter' over dinner. Get details from Steven T. Doyle, 540 W. Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA. On 2 December **The Sydney Passengers** will look at 'The Noble Bachelor'. Bill Barnes has the gen at 19 Malvern Avenue, Manly, NSW 2095, Australia (e-mail bbarnes@ozemail.com.au). Our Society's next informal Club Night for members, prospective members and friends will be held at the New Commonwealth Club in Northumberland Avenue (not far from the Sherlock Holmes pub) on Friday 7 December. Just turn up any time between 6 and 9 pm and pay for whatever you eat and drink. There'll be another Club Night on the eve of the Annual Dinner — that's Friday 4 January. If you have any questions, contact MC Black on 01920 467930, or e-mail mc.black@physics.org. The joint AGM and Christmas Social of **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company** and **The Priory Scholars** will take place in Leicester on 9 December. 'This is mostly a seasonal fun event (plus a little scholarship).' Contact the FMHC at 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3RU; or the Priory Scholars c/o Horace Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY. **The Red Circle** will hold a Lodge at the National Press Club, Washington, DC, on 14 December. The topic will be 'The Blue Carbuncle'. Get details from Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA; pblau@dgsys.com.

Looking ahead a bit, the Distinguished Speaker Lecture of **The Baker Street Irregulars** will be given on Thursday 10 January at the Williams Club, 24 East 39th Street, New York — and the speaker will be our own Bert Coules. Tickets are \$10.00, from Michael Whelan, whose address is in the next paragraph.

In the last DM I gave information about *The Baker Street Journal* (**The Baker Street Irregulars**, Michael Whelan, 7938 Mill Stream Circle, Indianapolis, IN 46278, USA; subscriptions to *The BSJ*, PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA). It's accurate as far as it goes, but the editor of the BSJ is Steve Rothman, 220, West Rittenhouse Square, #15-D, Philadelphia, PA 19103, USA.

Periodicals received. *The Illustrious Clients News*, October 2001 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T. Doyle, 540 W. Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). *The Torr*, Autumn 2001 (**The Poor Folk Upon The Moors**, Eric Monahan, Highcliff, 14 Silver Bridge Close, Broadlands Park, Paignton, Devon TQ4 7NW). *Morning Echo* (*undated*) (**The Sherlock Holmes Society of Victoria**, Steve Duke, PO Box 340, Reservoir 3073, Australia; e-mail <stirlingsteve@netscape.net>). *The Serpentine Muse*, Fall 2001 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 360 West 21st Street, #5A, New York, NY 10011, USA). *The Parallelogram*, November 2001 (**The Parallel Case of St Louis**, Joseph J. Eckrich, 914 Oakmoor Drive, Fenton, MO 63126, USA). *Communication*, July/August 2001, September/October 2001, and 'Special Halloween Issue' (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Jeff & Wanda Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA) (*yes, that's three separate issues*). *The Antipodean Holmesian Society Newsletter*, August 2001, September 2001, and October 2001 (**The Antipodean Holmesian Society**, Ted Nye, 51 Irvine Road, The Cove, Dunedin, New Zealand) (*so is this*). *SSHf*, no. 10 - 2001, and no. 11 - 2001 (**La Société Sherlock Holmes de France**, 26 avenue de la République, 75011 Paris, France).

And the invaluable newsletter, *Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press*, October 2001 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA).

Roger Johnson