

The DISTRICT MESSENGER



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON
Roger Johnson, Mole End, 41 Sandford Road, Chelmsford CM2 6DE
e-mail: rojerjohnson@yahoo.co.uk

no. 236 22 October 2003

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £6.00 or US\$15.00 for 12 issues (dollar checks payable to Jean Upton, sterling cheques to me). Dollar prices quoted without qualification refer to US dollars. You can receive the DM electronically free of charge, as a Word 97 attachment or as plain text. Please contact me by e-mail (and note the different e-mail address).

I give such addresses and prices as I have; if I don't provide details of importers or agents, it's because I don't have those details.

John Hawkesworth died on 30 September at the age of 82. His contribution to British film and television, as designer, writer and producer, includes *The Fallen Idol*, *The Third Man*, *Father Brown and Tiger Bay* for the cinema, and *Upstairs Downstairs*, *The Duchess of Duke Street*, *Danger UXB*, *By the Sword Divided* and *The Short Stories of Conan Doyle* for television. And of course Granada TV's *Sherlock Holmes* series. Michael Cox says: 'Over a period of nearly ten years John acted as consultant on the style of the whole adaptation, choosing the stories and writers while delivering eight of the scripts himself.'

Denis Quilley, who died on 5 October aged 75, acted in two Sherlockian productions in his long and distinguished career. In 1988 he was a dominating but very human Dr Leon Sterndale in Granada TV's *The Devil's Foot*, and seven years later he played Bob Carruthers in Bert Coules's adaptation of *The Solitary Cyclist* for BBC Radio 4, a part that showcased his fine singing voice.

Congratulations to **Richard Stacpoole-Ryding**, founder and 'Dresser' of **The Friends of Dr Watson**, who has been very modest about the fact that last year he was awarded the MBE by a Certain Gracious Lady for his services to the armed forces.

After the death of **Dame Jean Conan Doyle** in November 1997, it was announced that she had left three Sherlock Holmes MSS to the British Library, a museum in Edinburgh and a museum in Portsmouth or Southsea; and letters and other papers to the British Library; and that six more Conan Doyle MSS will be sold and the proceeds shared among her chosen charities. The BL apparently is still waiting, but those six MSS will go under the hammer at Christie's in London on 19 November for the benefit of the RAF Benevolent Fund, the Not Forgotten Association, the RAF Association, the Elizabeth Finn Trust, Help the Hospices and the Royal Star & Garter Home, Richmond. They include two Brigadier Gerard stories, a poem: 'Ypres, September 1915', a 1900 article: 'A Glimpse of the Army', *The Maracot Deep* and *A Duet (With an Occasional Chorus)*. For more details or to buy a catalogue, e-mail Clare Roberts at croberts@christies.com, or phone 020 7389 2117.

Naxos AudioBooks (18 High Street, Welwyn, Herts. AL6 9EQ) have just released their eighth recording from the Sherlock Holmes Canon, a thoroughly engrossing unabridged reading of *The Sign of Four* by the excellent David Timson. The production, enhanced as always by atmospheric music — this time works by Paganini and Bella — is first-rate, and David Timson's narration is beautifully paced in this, the most exotic and most romantic of the long stories. His characterisation is wonderfully precise; if I single out Jonathan Small and old Sherman it's to show that both the major and the minor characters are fully individual and convincing. Mr Timson also wrote the perceptive and informative liner-notes. *The Sign of Four* is available on four cassettes at £11.99 or on four CDs at £16.99. David Timson's reading of *A Study in Scarlet* won Naxos

the 2002 Audiobook of the Year Award. *The Sign of Four* is at least as good!

Thomas B Wheeler's book *Finding Sherlock's London* (see DM 230) is now available as an attractive 108-page paperback, 9"x 6", priced at \$12.95 or £10.99. Mr Wheeler lists an astonishing 200 Sherlockian sites, both by adventure and by the nearest Underground station, identified, as he says, 'with humble detective skills, a 1902 London street map, and a large magnifying glass'. The book is essentially a gazetteer, to take along on a tour of Holmes's London — a pilgrimage of several days; every location has the appropriate, accurate information from the Canon. (Mary Morstan's name is given twice as 'Morrison', but that's the only error I've spotted.) *Finding Sherlock's London* is an excellent traveller's tool. You can order it directly from the publisher iUniverse at the website www.iuniverse.com, or write to iUniverse Inc., 2021 Pine Lake Road, Suite 100, Lincoln, NE 68512, USA.

As mentioned in DM 234, the next volume in the BSI Manuscript Series is *The Six Napoleons* edited by William Hyder of **The Six Napoleons** of Baltimore and due in January. Bill notes that besides the facsimile MS, the book includes a chapter on notes on Conan Doyle's writing practices, the changes he made in the story and the changes imposed by the editor of *The Strand Magazine*, plus articles on radio dramatisations of 'The Six Napoleons', the statue-duplicating machine that lost Conan Doyle money but suggested the plot for the story, the story of the Borgias and their black pearl, the world of Victorian journalism, and a survey of the Italian community in Victorian London. *The Six Napoleons* can be ordered from The Baker Street Irregulars, c/o Calabash Press, PO Box 1360, Ashcroft, B.C., Canada V0K 1A0 — or check the BSI website at www.bakerstreetjournal.com. The price is \$35.00 plus postage at \$8.00 within North America or \$9.50 elsewhere.

I can thoroughly recommend our Society's latest handbook *Lend Me Your Ears*, edited and largely written by Richard Lancelyn Green, with contributions from Bernard Davies, Oscar Ross, Derek Hinrich, Eddie Maguire, Auberon Redfearn and Marina Stajić. It will certainly be the standard source of information about the Holmesian connection with Merseyside. Moreover it's very readable, splendidly illustrated, and full of fascinating facts. Copies are available from the Merchandising Officer, Lynne Godden (Apple Tree Cottage, Smarden, Kent TN27 8QE) priced at: UK £13.50; Europe £14.50; USA \$31.00; elsewhere £17.50. Prices include postage. Sterling cheques and US dollar checks should be payable to the Sherlock Holmes Society of London.

Peter Blau reports: 'Philip Bergem's 56-page pamphlet *The Family and Residences of Arthur Conan Doyle* offers some of the results of his continuing research on the family, birth, marriage and death dates of the Doyles and Conan Doyles, and information about residences, military service, and gravestone inscriptions. It is available from the author (3829 172nd Avenue NW, Andover, MN 55304); the postpaid cost is \$22.50 (\$23.00 to Canada), and it's also available (£13.00 plus shipping) from Rupert Books www.rupert-books.co.uk.'

Also from Peter: 'Derham Groves recommends (and so do I) a website at www.crimefactory.net that offers a special Sherlockian issue with interesting contributions from Sherlockians. Some of the material (and other material that's not available at the website) will be published in the catalogue for an exhibition on Sherlockian private presses at the University of Melbourne in April.'

The 2003 *Baker Street Journal Christmas Annual* from **The Baker Street Irregulars** is *'The Strength and Activity of Youth': The Junior Sherlockian Movement* edited by Stephen Clarkson — 'a walk down Memory Lane to those long-gone days of the sixties and seventies when "youth must be served" was the byword. Foment in the air affected even the world of Sherlockiana, as young men and women reached out to become part of the Sherlockian scene. In a *Rashomon*-like fashion the stories of such groups as **The Baker Street Pageboys**, **The Trifling Monographs**, **The Three Students Plus** and **The Three Garridebs** unfold. The tales of disappointment and triumph are shared from the distance of decades. Many of those eager youths are today's leading Sherlockians.' It sounds fascinating (well, I was there, you see ...). *'The Strength and Activity of Youth'* costs \$11.00 within the USA or \$12.00 elsewhere (prices include postage), from *The Baker Street Journal*, PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA. Or on-line at www.bakerstreetjournal.com. They take Visa, Mastercard or US dollar checks.

Early next year **The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes** will publish *Serpentine Musings: An Anthology from the Journal of the Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes*, edited by Susan Diamond and Marilynne McKay. The 2004 *Baker Street Journal Christmas Annual* will be a history of the ASH edited by Susan Rice. More on these as it reaches me!

The Daily Mail is running a 25-week promotion, offering each week a classic of children's literature in a nice hardback edition at £2.30 when you buy the paper. *The Hound of the Baskervilles* is due some time before Christmas. Check your local newsagent's.

Georgina Doyle, the widow of Sir Arthur's nephew Brigadier John Doyle, has filled a gap left by the existing biographies. *Out of the Shadows: The Story of Arthur Conan Doyle's First Family* draws on diaries and letters of Sir Arthur's daughter Mary, his son Kingsley, his brother Innes, and others, as well as the fruits of Mrs Doyle's personal research to give fuller information about his family life during the years before his second marriage in 1907. The book is due for publication in the new year, thanks in part to **The Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection** at the Toronto Public Library. At 3.00 pm on 25 October — Saturday next — Mrs Doyle will be at the Elizabeth Beeton Auditorium at Toronto Reference Library in Yonge Street to talk about *Out of the Shadows*. All are welcome, and admission is free.

Hirayama Yuichi tells me that he has just published volume 13 of *The Shoso-in Bulletin*, which is perhaps the most genuinely international Sherlockian periodical. It's available at \$13.00 plus postage from Classic Specialties, (PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA; sherlock@sherlock-holmes.com). John Hall will be acting as British agent for *The Shoso-in Bulletin*. Drop him a line at 20, Drury Avenue, Horsforth, Leeds LS18 4BR. Yuichi notes that next year's *Bulletin*, volume 14, will be the last.

The holiday issue of *The Strand Magazine* (PO Box 1418, Birmingham, MI 48012-1418, USA) features fiction by John Mortimer, Ray Bradbury and Ruth Rendell, a Sherlock Holmes story by Martin Edwards, an article about Bram Stoker, a feature on Tommy and Tuppence Beresford, interviews with John Mortimer and Joss Ackland, and an extensive review section. Check the website at www.strandmag.com and the on-line bookshop at www.shopmysteries.com.

Chuck Kovacic, founder of **The Baker Street Builders** and creator of one of the most impressive re-creations of the Baker Street sitting-room at his home in California, offers Sherlock Holmes mysteries for conference, business events and so on, with himself as a convincing-looking Holmes. Have a look at www.generalpattoncorporatelog.com/Sherlock_Holmes.htm, or write to 9337 Sophia Avenue, North Hills, CA 91343, USA.

Roger Llewellyn will return to the **Cramphorn Theatre** in Chelmsford on the 14 and 15 November with David Stuart Davies's play *Sherlock Holmes — The Last Act!* The box office phone number is 01245 606505. For seven nights, from 1 to 7 December, Roger will be at the **Jermyn Street Theatre** in Jermyn Street, near Piccadilly Circus, at 8 o'clock nightly with a 4.00 pm matinée on Saturday. Check the theatre's website for details (it's a small theatre, so don't miss out).

The Chicago 'Silver Blaze' will see its 45th annual running on Saturday 17 April at Hawthorne Race Course. By no coincidence at all, the **STUD-Watsonian Weekend** will be held from 16 to 18 April, with the annual STUD dinner on the Friday at the Sheraton Four Points in Schiller Park — also the venue for the Fortescue Honours Brunch on the Sunday. For details of this increasingly popular jollification, contact Allan Devitt and Susan Diamond at 16W603 Third Avenue, Bensenville, IL 60106-2327, USA. Or e-mail szdiamond@comcast.net.

The Sons of the Copper Beeches will meet on 24 October at the Franklin Inn Club in Philadelphia, when the topic will be 'The Cardboard Box'; **Mycroft's League** will meet for lunch that same day at noon at the Meredith Café of the Union League of Philadelphia, and on 25 October the League will consider 'The Devil's Foot' at a panel discussion led by noted toxicologist Marina Stajić BSI, at the College of Pharmacy at the University of Sciences of Philadelphia (for both the Sons and the league, Gideon Hill has the details at onbridle@verizon.net). The dinner meeting of **The Illustrious Clients** on 25 October is devoted to 'The Red Circle'; get details from Steven Doyle (540 W Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 4607, USA). On the same day **The Criterion Bar Association** talks about 'The Norwood Builder', first published in *Collier's* 100 years ago (Brenda Rossini, 550 Sheridan Road, Winnetka, IL 60093, USA).

On 4 November **The Practical But Limited Geologists** are in Seattle (Peter Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW, #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA). In the same area, **The Sound of the Baskervilles** meet as usual at T S McHugh's on 10 November (David Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 98332-8981, USA). **The Sherlock Holmes Society of London** holds its Annual Film Evening at the Museum of London on 26 November, presented by David Stuart Davies.

Periodicals received. *The Serpentine Mews*, Fall 2003 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 360 West 21st Street, #5A, New York, NY 10011, USA). *The Baker Street Journal*, Autumn 2003 (Steven Rothman, 220, West Rittenhouse Square, #15-D, Philadelphia, PA 19103, USA; subscriptions, PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA; correspondence for **The Baker Street Irregulars** should go to Michael Whelan, 7938 Mill Stream Circle, Indianapolis, IN 46278, USA). *The Formulary*, June 2003, and *Practice Notes*, September 2003 (**The Friends of Dr Watson**, Brian Scrivener, 94 Reigate Avenue, Sutton, Surrey SM1 3JJ). *Mayday Mayday*, October 2003 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardcarney Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). *The Crier*, Fall 2003 (**The Criterion Bar Association**, Brenda Rossini, 550 Sheridan Road, Winnetka, IL 60093, USA).

The Illustrious Clients News, October 2003 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 540 W Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN, 46077, USA). The *Magic Door*, Autumn 2003 (**The Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection**, Doug Wrigglesworth, Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge Street, Toronto, ON, Canada M4W 2G8). *3 Pipe Problem Plugs and Dottles*, October 2003 (**The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem**, Davice Sharpe, 110 Gay Street, Apt 1108, Nashville, TN 37219, USA). *Canadian Holmes*, Michaelmas 2003 (**The Bootmakers of Toronto**, Trevor Raymond, 4 Lyons Court, Georgetown, ON, Canada L7G 1P1). *Communication no. 235*, September/October 2003 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Jeff & Wanda Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA). *Ineffable Twaddle*, October 2003 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA).

And the father and mother of all Sherlockian newsletters, *Scuttlebutt from the Spermacti Press*, September 2003 (Peter E Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA; pblau@dgsys.com).

Roger Johnson