

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](mailto:roger_johnson@hotmail.com)

no. 212 30th June 2001

To renew your subscription, send 12 stamped, self-addressed envelopes or (overseas) send 12 International Reply Coupons or £6.00 or US\$13.00 for 12 issues. Dollar checks should be payable to Jean Upton. Dollar prices quoted without qualification refer to US dollars. Please note that 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.

There never was a *Carry On Sherlock*, but *Carry On Screaming* came close, and it was pretty funny. One of the stars was **Joan Sims**, who died last Wednesday. As she never to my knowledge appeared in a Sherlock Holmes play or movie, let's salute her for that, and her many other grand comic performances.

Congratulations to **Christopher Lee** (the only man to have played Sherlock and Mycroft Holmes, and Sir Henry Baskerville!), who was awarded the CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours.

Due on 26 July at £25.20, Tony Earnshaw's *An Actor and a Rare One: Peter Cushing as Sherlock Holmes* is a long-awaited study of an actor who is always associated with the great detective by the public but too often overlooked by Sherlockians. When Cushing died, BBC TV could have paid a proper tribute to him by broadcasting the magnificent 1968 two-part *Hound of the Baskervilles*, which is by far the best television treatment of the book and may even be better than the 1939 Rathbone *Hound*. Instead, they trotted out, yet again, the entertaining but deeply flawed Hammer movie. After an incomplete repeat of Cushing's TV series in 1970, the BBC wiped two thirds of the films and have since refused to broadcast the rest or to issue them on video. Rare showings at the National Film Theatre, however, have proved that the series did contain a number of gems, despite the notoriously bad conditions under which it was made, and the Beeb's refusal to allow the series to be seen generally (along with the earlier and overall better Douglas Wilmer series) is frankly disgraceful. Peter Cushing's final performance as Holmes, in the apocryphal adventure *The Masks of Death*, was a triumph, and it's sad that the proposed follow-up, *The Abbot's Cry*, wasn't made (after ill-health forced him to retire from the project Cushing told me that Ian Richardson would be taking over the rôle). Tony Earnshaw's book, admirable as it is, left me wanting more. He interviewed a lot of people, but no one, apparently, who could comment on those films from the 1968 series that don't survive. It's time that Cushing's performances were properly assessed, and *An Actor and a Rare One* is a very welcome book. (Scarecrow Press Inc., 4720 Boston Way, Lanham, MD 20706, USA; British distributor Shelwing Ltd, 4 Pleydell Gardens, Folkestone, Kent CT20 2DN).

Val Andrews' two most recent short novels, *Sherlock Holmes and the Holborn Emporium* and *Sherlock Holmes and the Long Acre Vampire* (Breese Books, 164 Kensington Park Road, London W11 2ER; £7.50 each), maintain the author's reputation for intelligent entertainment. The former sees Holmes investigating sabotage at a great Edwardian department store, easily recognisable as the much-missed Gamage's; while the latter involves Sir Henry Irving, a hitherto-unknown play based on Stoker's *Dracula*, a visit to Brighton, and an apparently supernatural killer. Clever, nicely told, and with lots of good period detail. Recommended.

Penguin Books Ltd (27 Wrights Lane, London W8 5TZ) have undertaken a major project. On 5 July they will publish a very nice

paperback edition of Daniel Stashower's *Teller of Tales: The Life of Arthur Conan Doyle* (£8.99), along with six volumes by ACD himself: *The Lost World, and Other Thrilling Tales*, edited, introduced and annotated by Philip Gooden (£5.99); *A Study in Scarlet*, introduced by Iain Sinclair, with notes by Ed Glinert (£4.99); *The Sign of Four*, introduced by Peter Ackroyd, notes by Ed Glinert (£4.99); *The Adventures and The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, introduced by Iain Pears, notes by Ed Glinert (£5.99); *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, edited, introduced and annotated by Christopher Frayling (£4.99); and *The Valley of Fear and Selected Cases*, introduced by Charles Palliser, notes by Ed Glinert (£5.99). The 'selected cases' consist of just six tales from *The Return* and four from *His Last Bow*. Only Gooden and Frayling, apparently, have prepared Conan Doyle's texts for this new edition; it would be nice to know the provenance of the others. This Penguin Classics edition won't replace *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, the Oxford World Classics edition, or Gasogene's Sherlock Holmes Reference Library, but it is an important edition, and I'd like to have seen it complete. The introductions reflect their different authors' interests in Holmes, Conan Doyle and their world; each is fascinating, but Gooden's and Frayling's are the fullest and seem to me the soundest (Ackroyd says: 'It has been suggested that Major Bartholomew Sholto is loosely based upon Oscar Wilde... That's three serious errors in a sentence). The notes are wide-ranging and, as far as I can tell, accurate. With reservations, then, this is an important addition to the bibliography of Sherlock Holmes. As to *Teller of Tales*, it's simply the best life of Conan Doyle in 35 years; we won't get a better until Sir Arthur's papers are made available again.

The Pocket Essentials series does live up to its name. I'm very impressed with Mark Campbell's *Pocket Essential Sherlock Holmes* (Pocket Essentials, 18 Coleswood Road, Harpenden, Herts. AL5 1EQ; £3.99), whose 96 pages contain clear, accurate information about Holmes, his adventures and his creator, together with a run-down of the more important parodies and pastiches, famous (and not famous) actors who have played the detective, and recommended books and websites. Mr Campbell is not afraid to be opinionated (he thinks *The Hound of the Baskervilles* is 'much overrated'), but he carefully distinguishes between fact and opinion. *The Pocket Essential Sherlock Holmes* is the best thing of its kind since *The Sherlock Holmes Companion*. Actually, I think it's better.

I'm looking forward to reviewing David Stuart Davies's *Starring Sherlock Holmes*, just out from Titan Books (144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP) at £29.99. Then on 15 August comes *Sherlock Holmes on the Screen: The Complete Film and TV History* by Alan Barnes (Reynolds & Hearn, 61A Priory Road, Kew Gardens, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3DH; £14.95).

Other new or forthcoming books: *The Childhood of Sherlock Holmes: The Butler's Tale* by Myles D. Ferguson (Galde Press Inc., PO Box 460, Lakeville, MN 55044, USA; £20.50; August 2000). *Sherlock Holmes and the Running Noose* by Donald Thomas (Macmillan London Ltd, 25 Eccleston Place, London SW1W 9NF; £16.99; August 2001). *Our African Winter* by Arthur Conan Doyle (Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd, 61 Frith Street, London W1V 5TA; £16.00; April 2001). *Deadly Season* by Tim

Champlin (\*large print — see DM 211\*) (Chivers Press Ltd, Windsor Bridge Road, Bath BA2 3AX; £7.99; January 2000).

There are new catalogues, full of Holmesiana and Doyleana, available from **The Black Cat Bookshop** (90 Charles Street, Leicester LE1 1GE; e-mail [blackcatuk@aol.com](mailto:blackcatuk@aol.com); website [www.blackcatbookshop.com](http://www.blackcatbookshop.com); and **Classic Specialties** (PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA; website [www.sherlock-holmes.com](http://www.sherlock-holmes.com)). Check out **Bradley's Books** (Bradley Hodge, PO Box 225702, Dallas, TX 75222-5702, USA; e-mail [bradleysbooks@earthlink.net](mailto:bradleysbooks@earthlink.net); website [home.earthlink.net/~bradleysbooks](http://home.earthlink.net/~bradleysbooks)).

In issue 43 of *Sherlock Holmes: The Detective Magazine* Paul Chapman asks who really wrote *The Hound of the Baskervilles*; there's Susan Moody on the adventures of Gervase Fen; Jared Cade on *Murder on the Orient Express*; Barry Thomas on the danger (or necessity) of dramatic alteration; Alan Perry on John Steed, David Stuart Davies on more celluloid *Hounds*, and Sue Feder on **The Historical Mystery Appreciation Society**; plus a new Luther Darke story by A.L. Blake, 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](mailto:sherlock@sherlock-holmes.com)).

To my regret I couldn't attend the launch of the Library Benefactors' Gallery at Edinburgh University earlier this month. The occasion also marked the donation by our good friend Forbes Gibb of a major collection on Conan Doyle and crime fiction.

Phil Attwell reminds me that the mail order company SilverMinds Direct (PO Box 400, Southampton SO14 0TH) stocks the Christopher Lee videos *The Leading Lady* and *The Incident at Victoria Falls* at £13.99 each or £25.98 for the two. Also that the BBC Radio Collection has released Bert Coules's dramatisation of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* on CD. Check the website at [www.bbcworldwide.com/spokenword](http://www.bbcworldwide.com/spokenword) or ring for a free catalogue on 01672 562255.

Bob Bishop, whose company The Fossick Valley Fumblers has performed a series of Sherlockian parodies at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe over the years, has launched a website: [www.sherlockholmescomedystor.homestead.com/index.html](http://www.sherlockholmescomedystor.homestead.com/index.html), featuring excerpts from the plays.

Aspiring Conan DoYLES still have time to try for the Crime Writers' Association's *Debut Dagger 2001*, open to anyone whose work hasn't been published before, as the closing date is 14 August. Get details from the website at [www.thecwa.co.uk](http://www.thecwa.co.uk), or send a stamped & self-addressed envelope to CWA Competition (TT/ST), PO Box 62, Okehampton, Devon EX20 2YQ.

Brian Pugh notes that 'there is a rather poor display of Conan Doyle pictures at Groombridge Place, called the Conan Doyle Collection.' This has nothing to do with **The Conan Doyle (Crowborough) Establishment**, whose own very full collection can be seen at Beacon Community College in Crowborough, open Monday to Friday, admission free.

I'm delighted to pass on the news that that splendid actor Ian Richardson has accepted honorary membership of **The Poor Folk Upon The Moors**. For details of this delightful group, contact Vosper North, Spynishlake, Doddiscombsleigh, Exeter EX6 7PR. **The Northern Musgraves** will meet on 21 July at Hebdon Bridge Doctors' Surgery, near Halifax, and there'll be a distinctly medical touch to the occasion (Dr Eilidh Gunson, 1 Dene Royd Close, Stainland, Halifax HX4 9QP). On 27 July **The Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn** will meet at The Mother-in-Law House in St Charles to discuss 'The Blanched Soldier' (Michael Bragg, PO Box 256, St Charles, MO 63302-0256, USA).

The same day there'll be a Lodge of **The Red Circle**, who'll discuss 'The Six Napoleons' at the National Press Club (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-

4830, USA; [pblau@dgs.dgsys.com](mailto:pblau@dgs.dgsys.com)). **The Friends of Dr Watson** will hold their annual *Maiwand Luncheon* on 28 July at the Caravan Serai Afghan Restaurant, just off Baker Street (Richard Stacpoole-Ryding, 14 Western Close, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 4SZ). The following day sees the beginning of the week-long *Hound 100 Convention* of **The Franco-Midland Hardware Company** on Dartmoor. The 10th *Watsonian Weekend* on 27 - 29 July 2001 will include the 42nd running of The Chicago Silver Blaze at Arlington Racetrack (Susan Z. Diamond, 16W603 3rd Avenue, Bensenville, IL 60106-2327 USA; e-mail [SZDiamond@mediaone.net](mailto:SZDiamond@mediaone.net)).

Periodicals received. **Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections**, June 2001 (Sherlock Holmes Collections, Suite 111, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, 222 21st Avenue S., Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA) (\*Peter Blau on a really rare rarity, Steve Miller on G.K. Chesterton, Julie McKuras on the Conan Doyle signature hoax\*). **The Formulary**, June 2001 (**The Friends of Dr Watson**, Richard Stacpoole-Ryding, 14 Western Close, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 4SZ) (\*Tim Healey wonders if Watson really had any friends; John Hall considers Watson's finances; Philippe Selvais looks at poisonous gas; Nino Cirone examines Watson's abilities ...\*). **The Whaling News**, April, May & June 2001 (**The Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn**, PO Box 256, St Charles, MO 63302-0256, USA) (\*reports of this lively group's meetings, and brief but illuminating articles on 'The Illustrious Client' and 'The Blanched Soldier'\*). **The Camden House Journal**, June 2001 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA) (\*a good piece by Patricia King on Leonardo the strong man\*). **The Baker Street Journal**, Spring 2001 (PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA) (\*Holmesian psychology, philately, ecology, academe and anti-Semitism — a heady mixture\*).

**The Antipodean Holmesian Society Newsletter**, April, May & June 2001 (**The Antipodean Holmesian Society**, Ted Nye, 51 Irvine Road, Dunedin, New Zealand; [ted.nye@stonebow.otago.ac.nz](mailto:ted.nye@stonebow.otago.ac.nz)) (\*snippets of Holmesian news and reviews\*). **3 Pipe Problem Plugs and Dottles**, May 2001 (**The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem**, Gael Stahl, 17763 Needmore Road, Old Hickory, TN 37138, USA) (\*an interview with the author of *The Childhood of Sherlock Holmes*, a look at Sherlockian websites, a consideration of 'The Mazarin Stone', and the birth of a new society — *The Fresh Rashers of Nashville*\*). **The Parallelogram**, June 2001 (**The Parallel Case of St Louis**, Joseph J. Eckrich, 914 Oakmoor, Fenton, MO 63126, USA) (\*reviews of the new *Sign of Four* TV movie and of a rather peculiar play, plus reports of meetings\*).

**The Illustrious Clients News**, June 2001 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T. Doyle, 540 W. Sycamore Street, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA) (\*in 1949 a society was founded called *The Six Little Scoundrels*: Steven Doyle wonders what became of them\*). **Communication**, Special Buddy Issue, and May-June 2001 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Jeff & Wanda Dow, 17377 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA) (\*outstanding in the former is a brilliantly funny parody script for the *Three Stooges*, cast as Holmes, Watson & Lestrade; the latter is mostly engaging accounts of activities\*). **Tonga Times**, Winter 2001 (**The Mini-Tonga Society**, Trish & Jay Pearlman, 1656 E. 19th Street #2E, Brooklyn, NY 11229, USA) (\*there are good reasons why it reached me in mid-Summer; anyone interested in Sherlockian miniatures should check out the Mini-Tonga Society, whose website is at [hometown.aol.com/minitongasociety/mini1.htm](http://hometown.aol.com/minitongasociety/mini1.htm)\*).

And *Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press*, May 2001 (Peter E. Blau, 3900 Tunlaw Road NW #119, Washington, DC 20007-4830, USA; [pblau@dgs.dgsys.com](mailto:pblau@dgs.dgsys.com)) (\*the original Sherlockian newsletter\*).

Roger Johnson