

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON
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Thomas W Ross died on 2 January at the age of eighty-one. Academic, jazz musician and churchman, Tom Ross wore his learning lightly and had a great gift for friendship. His 1997 *Good Old Index: The Sherlock Holmes Handbook* is a distinctly idiosyncratic reference work. **Basil Hoskins**, who died on 17 January aged seventy-five, had a long and successful acting career, mainly on the stage, alternating between the classic drama and musical comedy. In 1988 he played the Tiger of San Pedro in Granada's TV production of *Wisteria Lodge*, with Jeremy Brett and Edward Hardwicke.

Bill Barnes reports the death at the age of ninety-four, in Newcastle, New South Wales, of **Sherlock Holmes**. Yes, that was his real name! 'He once attended a Sherlockian convention in Australia and those who met him said he was a very nice fellow.' The producer **Otto Plaschkes** died on 14 February aged seventy-five. His most successful film was *Georgy Girl*. His many other productions included the 1983 TV movies *The Sign of Four* and *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, both with Ian Richardson. Otto Plaschkes was at school with William Golding and is believed to have been the inspiration for 'Piggy' in *The Lord of the Flies*.

Better late than never, I hope! The following investitures were announced at the annual dinner of **The Baker Street Irregulars** in January: John Bergquist ('The King of Scandinavia'), Peter Calamai ('The Leeds Mercury'), Neil Gaiman ('The Devil's Foot'), Art Renkwitz ('The Bar of Gold'), Barbara Roden ('Beryl Stapleton') and Gianluca Salvatori ('The Dacre Hotel'). Two-Shilling Awards (for extraordinary devotion to the cause beyond the call of duty) were presented to Leslie Klinger, Julia Rosenblatt and Steven Rothman. [**I think it's the first time that three have been awarded in one year.**]

The title of Kevin Smith's book *Sherlock Holmes Was a Pompey Keeper* (Halsgrove Ltd, Halsgrove House, Lower Moor Way, Tiverton Business Park, Tiverton, Devon EX16 6SS; £19.95) is a deliberate attention-grabber. It was actually Arthur Conan Doyle who played in goal for Portsmouth AFC, and it's that club's successor that is known as 'Pompey' — which has long been the British sailor's name for Portsmouth. This is not a life of Conan Doyle. What Mr Smith gives us is an engrossing and handsomely presented history of Portsmouth's first, strictly amateur soccer club, with lots of information about outstanding members during the twelve years of its existence. Of most interest to us, of course, are Arthur Conan Doyle (to biographical data mainly taken from Geoffrey Stavert's *A Study in Southsea* is added material about his achievements on the football pitch) and Alfred H Wood, who captained the team that won the Portsmouth Senior Cup in 1891 and who much later became Conan Doyle's secretary. I am neither a player nor a follower of the game, but I found that *Sherlock Holmes Was a Pompey Keeper* threw a new light on social and sporting aspects of late Victorian life. Halsgrove, who published Philip Weller's *The Hound of the Baskervilles: Hunting the Dartmoor Legend*, have here produced an equally admirable volume: a splendidly illustrated 152-page hardback measuring 12" x 8½". It's available from booksellers in the Portsmouth area or from Halsgrove Direct on 01884 243242.

John Hall is one of three English writers now contributing scripts to Jim French's Imagination Theater radio dramas. Well known as a Holmesian, he has, like many others, turned his attention to Holmes's near mirror-image, and the result is *The Ardagh Emeralds, and Other Exploits of A J Raffles* (Plane Tree, Unit E,

Old Station Offices, Llanidloes, Powys SY18 6EB; £5.99). This sturdy, attractive paperback contains an informative introductory essay and eight ingenious and engaging stories. I have admitted publicly to a dislike of E W Hornung's tales of the 'gentleman thief', but I've so enjoyed reading John Hall's new adventures that I'm determined to give the originals another go! The publishers have a website at www.planetree.com.

Jean-Marc Lofficier of the Black Coat Press (PO Box 17270, Encino, CA 91416, USA; website www.blackcoatpress.com) tells me that the second volume of stories about the other great 'gentleman burglar' has just been published. *Arsène Lupin vs Sherlock Holmes: The Blonde Phantom* by Maurice Leblanc was first published in 1906. This new translation includes Leblanc's two novellas 'La Dame Blonde' and 'La Lampe Juive' plus two new stories, 'Arsène Lupin Arrives Too Late' and 'The Unkindest Cut'. I hope to review the book in the next DM. (*Arsène Lupin vs Sherlock Holmes: The Stage Play*, will be published next month.)

From Hakon Holm Publishing (Borgmester Nielsens Vej 24, 3700 Rønne, Denmark; e-mail post@hakon-holm.dk) comes a splendid new edition of *A Study in Scarlet* — in English — with 600 magnificent illustrations by Nis Jessen, whose work has featured on Chris Redmond's excellent website at www.sherlockian-net. The regular edition costs €60.00; the deluxe edition is €70.00, and the special limited edition of 500 numbered and signed copies is €78.00. You can get an idea of the lovely quality of the book at www.mr-holmes.com.

Luke Steven Fullenkamp's trilogy, concluded with *Sherlock Holmes and the Search for Excalibur*, is available 'from most online retailers' and from www.authorhouse.com. The other volumes are *Sherlock Holmes and the Three Dragons* and *Sherlock Holmes and the Ghost of the Flying Dutchman*.

The Holmes Factor, a follow-up to Brian Freemantle's very dubious pastiche *The Holmes Inheritance*, is due this month from Severn House (9-15 High Street, Sutton, Surrey SM1 1DF) at £18.99. Next month the same publisher will issue *Sherlock Holmes and the King's Governess* by Barrie Roberts (£18.99). In July come Julian Barnes's new novel *Arthur and George*, about the Edalji case (Jonathan Cape, Random House, 20 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 2SA; no price) and *The Science of Sherlock Holmes* by someone named only as Wagner (John Wiley & Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester PO19 8SQ; £13.95). I'm told that Caleb Carr, author of *The Alienist*, wrote *The Italian Secretary* (Little, Brown, Brettenham House, Lancaster Place, London WC2E 7EN; 4 August, £12.99) 'at the invitation of the Conan Doyle Estate'.

Ian Henry Publications Ltd (20 Park Drive, Romford RM1 4LH; phone 01708 749119; fax 01708 736213) has a singular variety of Sherlockiana available. Ask for a catalogue.

Andrew Lycett is working on a biography of Arthur Conan Doyle, and would like to hear from anyone with new or unusual Doyle material. Please contact him at 34 Torbay Road, London NW6 7DY, or e-mail altorbay@btinternet.com. Congratulations to Leslie Klinger; *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes* (WW Norton Ltd, Castle House, 75-76 Wells Street, London W1T 3QT; £35.00) has been nominated for an Edgar award by the Mystery Writers of America and for an Agatha award by Malice Domestic. The winners will be announced next month. Norton's have ordered a second printing for late spring, in which errors noted to date will be corrected.

For World Book Day last Tuesday, The Independent asked 100 'literary luminaries' to name their favourite characters. A N Wilson chose Sherlock Holmes, and Judith Kerr opted for Dr Watson.

David Timson is coming closer to recording the whole Canon for Naxos AudioBooks (18 High Street, Welwyn, Herts. AL6 9EQ). The first four titles in the Naxos Complete Classics series of unabridged readings include *The Hound of the Baskervilles* on five CDS and *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* on eighteen CDs. Although Mr Timson's readings of *The Adventures* (including *The Memoirs*) have already been released in six volumes, the texts in the first were abridged; now we can hear them *in toto*. I've reviewed each Naxos volume as I've received it, and now I'm delighted to welcome the greatest adventure of Sherlock Holmes told by one of the finest readers of our time. David Timson's pacing is immaculate — helped, of course, by Nicolas Soames' production, and by the usual inspired choice of incidental music. For the first time in the series this production uses film music from the Marco Polo catalogue, specifically Frank Skinner's from *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror* and Hans Salter's from *The House of Frankenstein*. It works beautifully, providing just the right atmospheric frisson. Even more impressive is Mr Timson's subtle vocal versatility (and it is subtle — just listen to Holmes in conversation with Dr Mortimer or with Jack Stapleton). You never get the feeling that he is showing off his range of voices and yet you're never in doubt as to who is speaking. Moreover, unlike some readers, David Timson doesn't force his own personality or his own interpretation upon the story. What you get is unadulterated Conan Doyle, and the storyteller is unmistakably John H Watson. Six and a quarter hours of storytelling at its best, in fact, for £19.99.

The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes costs £58.50, and provides twenty-eight hours' listening, but of course the set comprises twenty-four separate narratives. (The other two books in the initial Complete Classics release are *Pride and Prejudice* and *Three Men in a Boat*.)

Briefly available on video several years ago, *A Study in Terror* will be released on DVD by Fremantle Home Entertainment on 28 March, at £12.99. I for one say hurrah! It was the first really lavish Sherlock Holmes film since 1939, and the first since then to use a really good apocryphal story — for which the writers, Donald and Derek Ford, are rarely given proper credit. It was the first major work in any medium to pit Holmes against the butcher of Whitechapel, though the film presents Jack the Ripper's East End as more picturesque than the atrocious, squalid reality. In an outstanding cast, Robert Morley's performance as Mycroft and Frank Finlay's as Lestrade must surely be definitive. John Neville and Donald Houston, meanwhile, present an eminently acceptable partnership as Holmes and Watson. The result is a film that seems to mature with age, like a good whisky. Check the website at www.fremantlehomeentertainment.com.

Due on 21 March from BBC Worldwide, and also priced at £12.99, is the DVD recording of *Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Silk Stocking*, with Rupert Everett and Ian Hart as Holmes and Watson. Available only on Region 1 DVD is Granada TV's very entertaining 1984 serial *Young Sherlock: The Mystery of the Manor House*, with Guy Henry as the teenage Holmes. Look on www.amazon.com.

A reminder that Teddy Hayes' musical *The Baskerville Beast*, will be staged at the **Questors Theatre** at 12 Mattock Lane, Ealing, London W5 5BQ (box office 020 8237 1111), 22-26 March. The director & choreographer is Peter Gorden, and Holmes is played by John Elnaugh. There are matinees on Wednesday and Saturday.

The Sherlock Holmes Outpost restaurant opened on 26 February in Fort Davis, Texas. The restaurant, incorporating Dr Watson's Club, Mrs Hudson's Dining Room and Dr Watson's Pub, is at 210 front Street along the old San Antonio-El Paso Road. The owner, Bob Bauer, is a longtime Sherlockian collector.

Issue 47 of Geoff Bradley's estimable magazine *CADS* features a provocative article by H R F Keating, 'Deep under the Deerstalker', looking at the last Professor Challenger narrative, *The Land of Mist*, as a detective story. There's much else, of course, on crime and detective stories old and new. *CADS 47* cost £5.00 from G H Bradley (9 Vicarage Hill, South Benfleet, Essex SS7 1PA).

Desmond Tyler passes on a message from John Shelton of the Portsmouth Jazz Society, who will be putting on Alan Barnes's acclaimed *Sherlock Holmes Suite* at The Garden (Inn Lodge, Burrfields Road, Portsmouth) at 8.00 pm on Monday 6 June. Get more details from johnshelton@btinternet.com.

Russell Paterson points out that the latest edition of the Ordnance Survey Landranger Sheet 66 — the 1:50,000 map of Edinburgh — has on its cover 'a magnificent photograph of the Sherlock Holmes statue in Picardy Place, Edinburgh.

In view of the tsunami disaster, Rod Baser has postponed plans for a Sherlockian pilgrimage to India and the Andaman Islands. Keep an eye on his website at www.sherlockholmesinindia.com.

Talking of such matters, check out the discussion group at www.jamesbondandbeyond.com/detectives/index.php?act=idx — it's not by any means limited to 007.

A few society events. On 2 April **The Sound of the Baskervilles** hold their 25th anniversary celebration. All are welcome. Get details from Terri Haugen (3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 98332-8981, USA; phone 253-853-5187; e-mail terri@soundofthebaskervilles.com). 'The Return' dinner of **The Poor Folk Upon the Moors** is at The Nobody Inn on 15 April (Vosper Arthur, Spynishlake, Doddiscombsleigh, Exeter EX6 7PR). **The Confederates of Wisteria Lodge** and **The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem** host a *Gathering of Southern Sherlockians* on 16 April at the Sheraton Read House in Chattanooga, TN (Kent Ross, 6875 Fielder, Rex, GA 30273, USA). *The STUD/Watsonian Weekend* opens on 29 April at the Sheraton Four Points, Schiller Park, IL, and includes the 46th Chicago Silver Blaze and the Solar Pons/Fortescue Honours Brunch (Bill Sawisch, 418 Galahad Road, Bolingbrook, IL 60440, USA). **The Sydney Passengers** celebrate twenty years of 'An Excellent Voyage' on the weekend of 14th/15th May (Bill Barnes, 19 Malvern Avenue, Manly, NSW 2095, Australia; bbarnes@ozemail.com.au). **The Parallel Case of St Louis** host the *Holmes Under the Arch II* symposium from 20th to 22th May (Barbara Roscoe, 7101 Mardel, St Louis, MO 63109, USA).

Periodicals received. *Sherlock Holmes-Kurier*, Winter 2004/5 (**Von Herder Airguns Ltd**, Uwe Sommerlad, Rödelheimer Landstrasse 32, 60487 Frankfurt am Main., Germany). *The Confederate Chronicles*, 5 March 2005 (**The Confederate of Wisteria Lodge**, Kent Ross, 6875 Fielder, Rex, GA 30273, USA). *Quivers on the Web*, February 2005 (**221B**, Philip Weller, 6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 6RU). *Ineffable Twaddle*, March 2005 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen (3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 98332-8981, USA). *Mayday Mayday*, February 2005 and March 2005 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardcarth Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). *The Baker Street Picayune*, vol. I no. 1 (**Le Cercle de Sherlock Holmes**, Jens Byskov Jensen, 5316 Wingate Drive, Apt B, New Orleans, LA 70122, USA). *Antipodean Holmesian Society Newsletter*, March 2005 (**Antipodean Holmesian Society**, Ted Nye, 51 Irvine Road, The Cove, Dunedin, New Zealand). *The Parallelogram*, January 2005 (**The Parallel Case of St Louis**, Joseph J Eckrich, 914 Oakmoor, Fenton, MO 63026, USA). *3 Pipe Problem Plugs and Dottles*, January 2005 (**The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem**, Kay Blocker, 5017 Maywood Drive, Nashville, TN 37211, USA pkblocker@comcast.net). *The Passengers' Log*, Summer 2005 (**The Sydney Passengers**, Rosane McNamara, 4/2a Merlin Street, Neutral Bay, NSW 2089, Australia). And *Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press*, January 2005 and February 2005 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

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